

**DC/23/3765/FUL**

**Longwood, Church Field, Walberswick, Suffolk IP18 6TG**

*“Rear extension including accommodation and garden store on the footprint of the existing garage and shed, replacement porch, associated landscaping and driveway access and upgrading the thermal performance of the whole property”*

**24.10.23**

---

**1. Opinion**

In the opinion of the Planning Advisory Group this application can be approved subject to:

- Items 3.1 to 3.3 (below) being resolved.
- Conditions being attached to consent to restrict use and materials (see 4.0 Summary, below).

If these points are not fully addressed support for the application is removed.

**2. Description**

The application proposes the enlargement of a 3 bedroomed bungalow, the demolition of an existing garage and workshop and the construction of a wing to provide bedroom / bathroom / living accommodation and a garden store / workshop.

Longwood occupies a corner position on Church Field, an unadopted road, where modest houses sit in large gardens. The proposed site is partly screened from Church Field by an existing orchard which contributes to the rural quality and character of the site.

The southern boundary of the site abuts the Walberswick Conservation Area and the churchyard of the Grade I listed St Andrews Church. The site lies within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB.

**3. Comment**

This application is the fifth scheme to have been submitted by the applicant over a seven year period. Previous schemes have been withdrawn, refused, and refused at Appeal.

Longwood is unusual in sharing its boundaries with five other sites. The potential impact of development on neighbouring properties (including a Grade I listed church and sanctity of the churchyard) is now well-established, as are the highly sensitive qualities of the site.

The proposed scheme removes elements from previous applications judged to harm the setting of the Grade I listed church (cart lodges, PV panels, Velux rooflights and alterations / extensions to the south west elevation). The reduced ambition for the site, combined with a material palette which repeats what exists, is welcomed.

However, the scheme continues to propose a new wing, extending to the north east of the site and directly towards the neighbouring property Half Acre. Internally the wing contains two double bedrooms, two bathrooms, garden store and workshop and a large space designated for a music room / gym / home office / art studio. This arrangement is similar in scale and

arrangement to a plan previously submitted, and subsequently withdrawn (DC/22/4176/FUL, October 2022).

The PAG / WPC remains concerned about the following aspects of the submitted application, which should be addressed in full:

### **3.1 Impact on Neighbouring Properties (Residential Amenity)**

The new wing is large, with a floor area of approx.105m<sup>2</sup> (about the size of a modest three-bedroomed house) and contains expanses of glazing, including French doors to the south east and north west elevations. The impact of light and noise pollution in a particularly dark and quiet corner of the village (plus the impact of 3.3, below), in close proximity to Half Acre and The New House, potentially does not comply with **SCLP 11.2, Residential Amenity, sections d), e) and f)** and should be given further thought to minimise impact.

### **3.2 Screen Wall**

The proposed brick wall enclosing the new wing and existing entrance serves to highlight the size, formality and prominence of the extension, as well as creating a discordant aesthetic. This element of the design is contrary to **SCLP 11.1, Design Quality, section i)**. The wall should be removed from the scheme.

### **3.3 Repositioned Drive Entrance / Loss of the Orchard**

The proposal to move the existing drive entrance to the north of the site will result in the loss of an established orchard. The PAG / WPC have previously commented:

*Site access will be repositioned closer to Half Acre (and an existing telegraph pole), accessed off a tight bend in the lane, and destroying a productive orchard. The drive, parking, new wing and workshop/store will result in unacceptable levels of disturbance and light pollution close to the boundary with Half Acre. It will also create an unbalanced and cluttered spatial quality between the two sites. PAG / WPC report, DC/22/4176/FUL, 14 Nov 2022.*

Repositioning the entrance on the bend of Church Field is considered to be a safety concern. It also has the unfortunate consequence of moving traffic associated with Longwood towards the boundary with Half Acre, which will impact Residential Amenity through increased noise and light pollution. Additionally, establishing the new entry point would result in the loss of the orchard which, if retained, would beneficially screen the new wing from Church Field.

The existing entrance arrangement should be retained along with the orchard in order to comply with **SCLP 11.1 Design Quality, section b), d) and i)**. This would also satisfy the provision of a bin presentation area (existing arrangement); an alternative arrangement for the new entrance is not shown on proposed drawings.

## **4. Summary**

The proposed scheme contains elements that seek to reduce the impact development would have on the Grade I listed church and churchyard. However, elements of the design still challenge the residential amenity of neighbouring properties through excessive fenestration and the relocation of the drive / loss of trees.

Materials, including the exact type and finish of the replacement windows, should be made a pre-commencement planning condition.

The proposed use of the extended house must remain as a single dwelling with no subdivision or attempt to establish a second independent property on the site.