



PLANNING COMMITTEE NORTH - UPDATE SHEET

13 September 2022

Item 7 – DC/22/0479/FUL – Description To demolish a single-storey side addition and replace this with a new single-storey side entrance, a two-storey rear extension, and internal alterations. Erect a detached beach room to the side and upgrade the boundary fence. Revised design to the approved scheme DC/21/4971/FUL at 23 Ferry Road, Southwold, Suffolk, IP18 6HQ.

Additional Condition (5) to be included within the recommendation - Parking

The use of the beach house shall not commence until the area(s) within the site shown on drawing no.2401-05-M for the purposes of loading, unloading, manoeuvring, and parking of vehicles has / have been provided and thereafter the area(s) shall be retained, maintained, and used for no other purposes.

Reason: To ensure that sufficient areas for vehicles to be parked are provided in accordance with Suffolk Guidance for Parking 2019 where on-street parking and or loading, unloading, and manoeuvring would be detrimental to the safe use of the highway.

Southwold Town Council Additional Comments

“Addendum to STC Consultation Response

Our recommendation is for a refusal of this application. We cited three policies from the Southwold Neighbourhood Plan in support of our request for a refusal. We inadvertently omitted Section 8, Natural Environment, SWD12 – Loss of Private Garden Space, which also applies to this application. We ask that the LPA consider SWD12 in making its decision. The context and policy are quoted in full below with relevant sections highlighted in italics, followed by analysis of how the policy justifies refusal of this application.

Section 8 Natural Environment

‘8.17 Southwold’s’ gardens, including small paved courtyards, provide amenity for residents (including a sense of surrounding space); create an attractive streetscape; help to shape the character of different parts of the town; make an important contribution to bio-diversity, and

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support a range of housing suitable to people at different life stages.

8.18 Because much of the housing in the town consists of terraces or semi-detached houses, many gardens consist of a small area in the front that sets the dwelling back from the street, and a longer narrow rear garden. However, there are a number of larger gardens – chiefly in the Town Farm Character Area but also to be found in other parts of the town – which contribute to the supply of housing that is suitable for families. Maintaining a supply of houses with large gardens is essential to achieving one of the Town Council’s strategies for the town – reversing demographic decline by attracting families to live in the town.

8.19 The Conservation Area Appraisal 2008 and the Character Area Appraisal identify gardens that make an important contribution to the character of the town and so should be preserved from development. These are not exclusive lists. In the same way that an undesignated heritage asset may be identified through a planning application, gardens that make a positive contribution may likewise be identified.

8.20 Southwold’s gardens act as ‘stepping stones’ between blocks of interconnected wildlife habitats that help to compensate for the decline in rural wildlife habitat caused by modern farming techniques. It is therefore important to protect garden space in order to allow biodiversity to thrive.

8.21 The chief threat to gardens in Southwold comes from cumulative small scale in-fill development (either extensions or stand-alone structures) that has successively enlarged the footprints of original structures, resulting in the erosion of significant amounts of garden space. Some extensions and structures in gardens are permitted development and as such do not need planning permission. The major impact of the erosion of garden space is seen in the Conservation Area but increasingly applications for the Town Farm character area are reducing garden space. *A more recent trend is applications for permanent garden infill structures purportedly for ancillary uses (office/studios, game rooms, granny annexes), which are subsequently converted to holiday lets.* Robust enforcement is required to prevent the undermining of planning policies and decisions.

8.22 In light of the *cumulative impacts* of un-controlled infill of gardens in recent years, *stronger protection of garden space is required.*

POLICY SWD12 – LOSS OF PRIVATE GARDEN SPACE

Development proposals in gardens and courtyards will only be supported where the following criteria are satisfied:

- a) The size of the remaining garden is generally consistent with the predominant pattern of garden spaces in the surrounding character area; and**
- b) The scale, design and siting of the proposal will not detract from the visual amenity of the streetscape; and**
- c) Where vegetation is removed, detailed landscaping plans are provided for the re-greening of the site with replacement vegetation that promotes wildlife habitat.**

In addition, proposals for development in gardens which are identified in the Southwold Conservation Area Appraisal or Southwold Character Area Appraisal as making a positive contribution to the character of the area should demonstrate the way in which they retain or enhance the character of the garden space through their design, layout and use of materials. Development proposals which would have an unacceptable impact on the character of such garden spaces will not be supported.

Insofar as planning permission is required, proposals for garden structures with associated living space will be supported where they comply with the following criteria:

- they are ancillary to the main residence;**
- car parking can be provided within the curtilage of the building in accordance with Policy SWD7 (Parking); and**

- **they would not have an unacceptable impact on residential amenity or the operation of community services’.**

The policy requires that all criteria be satisfied. In this proposal, b) and c) are not satisfied. The applicant would need to supply the site and block plans for the row of houses on Ferry Road in order to show that a) was satisfied.

The applicant cannot show that bullet point 2 – ‘car parking can be provided within the curtilage of the building in accordance with Policy WD7 (Parking)’ – has been satisfied.”

Officer Response to Comments

In reference to the loss of private garden space under policy SWD12, the proposed beach house is no larger than the single garage which is already approved. As the Unilateral Undertaking will only allow for one of the permissions to be implemented, then the loss of garden space is no greater than the applicant's fallback position in building the garage. Sufficient amenity space would also remain whereby officers do not consider the scheme contrary to this policy.

The proposed block plan shows that it would be possible for a minimum of three vehicles to park within the site. This is the maximum level of off-road parking required for a dwelling with four bedrooms or more.

Change to Officer Report

In the officer report under para. 7.14 it was mentioned that the applicant has Permitted Development Rights in regard to the installation of ‘hard standing’ at the front of the property. This however is not the case, as the Article 4 Direction in the area removes permitted development rights for hardstanding within the Southwold Conservation Area. In any case, as set out in the report, the area of hardstanding proposed is deemed acceptable from a design and highways safety perspective, in accordance with the Development Plan.