



## Committee Report

**Planning Committee North - 10 October 2023**

**Application no DC/23/2369/FUL**

**Location**

Toby Cottage  
Leveretts Lane  
Walberswick  
Southwold  
Suffolk  
IP18 6UF

**Expiry date** 10 August 2023

**Application type** Full Application

**Applicant** Mr and Mrs Ian and Sara Karet

**Parish** Walberswick

**Proposal** Renovation of existing house and annexe wing. New link extension between annexe and house. Rebuilding of existing kitchen extension.

**Case Officer** Rachel Smith  
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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1. Planning permission is sought for a single storey link extension, replacement western extension on the same footprint and design as the existing, other than a gable ended roof instead of hipped and new north gable windows. The application site is located within the Walberswick settlement boundary, the AONB and on the northern edge of the Walberswick Conservation area.
- 1.2. The proposal is compliant with local and national planning policy, and therefore it is recommended that planning permission be granted.
- 1.3. The objections from the Parish Council are contrary to the officer's recommendation of approval, therefore the Planning Referral Panel considered the proposal at its meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2023. The panel decided that the design considerations should be discussed at Planning Committee (North).

## **2. Site Description**

- 2.1. Toby Cottage was designed by prominent local architect Frank Jennings for his sister. Jennings' influence can be found in many of the dwellings constructed in the village through his role as an advisor to the Blois estate, which is the owner of much of the surrounding land. His designs demonstrate a thorough knowledge and appreciation of traditional local building styles and materials. Toby Cottage is identified as a positive unlisted building in the Walberswick Conservation Area Appraisal.
- 2.2. At pre-app (DC/23/0963/PREAPP), Toby Cottage was identified as a non-designated heritage asset. It meets five of East Suffolk Council's criteria for identifying non-designated heritage assets (NDHA):
  - Aesthetic value and Representativeness - The house has a vernacular, Arts and Crafts design. Features such as the weatherboarding, leaded lights, and overhanging eaves are typical of Jennings designs and are common features of the Suffolk vernacular tradition.
  - Known architect - The house was designed by Frank Jennings, a prominent local architect.
  - Integrity - The house has undergone little change from the original design, particularly on the public facing elevations.
  - Association - The house was designed by Frank Jennings for his sister Mary. Following Mary's death the house was occupied by the poet and author Alfred Edgar Coppard who is noted for his short stories of English rural life.
- 2.3. Toby Cottage is within the setting of The Old Corner House, a Grade II listed building which is situated immediately to the south. It is one of the oldest houses in the village dating to the 16th century, it has a timber framed core but was faced in red brick in the 18th century. Its setting has changed substantially over time as the village has grown and the space around it infilled with new development. The most important feature of its setting is its relationship with The Street, the main road through the village.

### 3. Proposal

3.1. The proposals are similar to those seen at pre-app with a few minor amendments in response to comments raised.

- o Single storey link extension
- o Replace western extension - same footprint and design other than gable ended roof instead of hipped
- o New north gable windows

### 4. Consultees

#### Parish/Town Council

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Walberswick Parish Council	22 June 2023	17 July 2023

#### **Opinion**

In the opinion of the Parish Council this application should be refused on the grounds that the design of the new 'link' is not appropriate in detailed design terms and does not 'preserve or enhance' the Conservation Area or a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA).

#### **Description**

Toby Cottage is within the Conservation Area, and adjacent to the Old Corner House which is a listed building (Grade II), so clearly extra care is necessary when considering the planning implications of the proposed works. Since Toby Cottage sits immediately adjacent to Leveretts Lane (with only a very narrow front garden) the impact on the street scene is an important consideration.

The proposal is for 'renovation and refurbishment', but in terms of the main elements of the planning application the most significant aspect is the construction of a link between the house and an existing single storey annexe. Additionally, there is some modest re-modelling of the roof structure of a single storey rear extension. Internal works will also be carried out, but are not subject to planning permission.

Toby Cottage was designed by prominent local architect Frank Jennings for his sister. Jennings' influence can be found in several of the dwellings constructed in the village through his role as an advisor to the Blois Estate, which is the owner of much of the surrounding land. His designs demonstrate a thorough knowledge and appreciation of traditional local building styles and materials. Toby Cottage is identified as a positive unlisted building in the Walberswick Conservation Area Appraisal, and is considered to be a 'non-designated heritage asset' (NDHA), meeting East Suffolk Council's own criteria for identification of such assets.

#### **Comment**

There is clear acknowledgment by the applicant and East Suffolk Council (in their preapplication advice) that the location (adjacent to a listed building, and within the Conservation Area) and the history of the house (designed by and lived in by a relative of Frank Jennings) means that care is needed to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the area.

The scheme as a whole is modest, and the external appearance of the main house will not be significantly altered. However, there are a number of aspects which cause concern.

The new structure linking the main house to the existing annexe is intended to be subservient to the existing buildings. It has a shallow pitched roof of standing seam metal, but as the colour is not

confirmed it is difficult to give a definite opinion on the suitability. Vertical untreated boarding (left to weather naturally) is proposed as the external cladding. However, the juxtaposition of this vertical boarding (modern and precision cut) with the distinctly horizontal waney edge boarding to the first-floor of the house (and proposed in place of the annexe garage doors) would seem to be a discordant feature. Notwithstanding the intention to have a contemporary link building there would seem to be a clash of material use. A more appropriate design solution could be achieved by using render, as is present on the existing ground floor elevation of the main house. This would bring a more harmonious and low-key look to the Leverett's Lane frontage, which could further be softened with planting, thereby continuing and enhancing the rural qualities of the existing front garden to the cottage.

Additionally, the small windows proposed to the link introduce another different design feature to the house / link and make it read as accommodation rather than a more simple structure. A plain frontage to the link with no windows (perhaps replaced with roof lights in the link roof) would allow for the 'subservient' aspiration as stated in the Design and Access Statement.

The existing annexe is to be remodelled internally in conjunction with the new link. The current annexe has a pair of garage doors on the Leveretts Lane elevation. This currently gives a pleasant domestic feel to the property. These doors are lost in the proposals and replaced with waney edge board to the whole of the annexe (former garage) gable end. In the Parish Council's opinion it would be a more appropriate design solution to retain or re-make the garage doors, painted to match the joinery on the main house.

The purpose of making an objection to these design elements is to better preserve and enhance the Conservation Area in this important part of Leveretts Lane. Additionally, the design as presented displays a number of discordant elements, which taken together distract from the acknowledged 'non designated heritage asset' which is Toby Cottage. In this respect we find that the proposal does not meet **policy SCLP 11.1 (Design Quality) clauses b) and c)**. **In respect of policy SCLP 11.5 (Conservation Area Development) it does not adequately fulfil clause c) which calls for 'appropriate design'.**

The current annexe is self-contained in that it has bedroom, bathroom, living and, kitchen facilities. Although altered in the proposal the newly re-formed annexe (together with the improved facilities in the link) is still capable of being a separate unit of accommodation. On the basis of the improved / upgraded facilities, and the enhanced attractiveness of the separate accommodation unit it is requested that a condition be imposed on any permission that the annexe can only be occupied in conjunction with the main house and not let separately as holiday accommodation or sold as a separate unit. This should cause no problems as the applicants say Toby Cottage remains a single unit, and there is no change of use, but protects the village from increased pressure from extra short term holiday lettings.

Pre – application advice was sought from East Suffolk and the conclusions were:

- The proposals would not impact the significance of the adjacent Grade II listed building, The Old Corner House.
- Toby Cottage is a positive unlisted building within the Walberswick Conservation Area and has been identified as a non-designated heritage asset.
- Overall, the proposals are likely to be acceptable with a few minor amendments requested to ensure that the proposals will conserve the character and appearance of this building and the conservation area.

The Parish Council would clearly agree with the first two points but upon a detailed consideration of the design issues we find there are discordant features in the proposed design which suggests an objection as detailed above.

### **Summary**

The proposals for works to the main Toby Cottage structure are considered acceptable.

However, an objection is raised to the submitted scheme because of the effect the design of the new link from Toby Cottage to re-modelled annexe will have on the integrity of the 'non designated heritage asset', and the fact that it will not preserve or enhance the Conservation Area. This relates to the elements visible from Leveretts Lane.

The design objections relate to:

- The cladding material for the link, in detail the board type and orientation.
- Windows in the link building which are distinctly modern and contrast poorly with the main house.
- The loss of the garage doors on the existing annexe and the effect on the street scene

### Non statutory consultees

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Ward Councillor	N/A	17 July 2023

Summary of comments:

" This is acknowledged to be an important building for Walberswick and the parish council makes a valid argument for refusal as it stands. I feel that proper consideration should be given to this view and hopefully a compromise reached."

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
SCC Coasts And Heaths Project	22 June 2023	No response

Summary of comments:

No comments

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Design And Conservation	22 June 2023	29 June 2023

Summary of comments:

No objections, comments included within report

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Landscape Team	22 June 2023	6 July 2023

Summary of comments:

I can advise that the proposed renovations to this dwelling will have no impact on the wider AONB landscape, and no meaningful impact on the character of the Walberswick Conservation Area.

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Suffolk Preservation Society		7 July 2023

**Summary of comments:**

I am writing on behalf of the Suffolk Preservation Society to comment on the application for an extension to Toby Cottage, an Arts and Crafts dwelling on the north side of The Street and within the setting of The Old Corner House, a grade II listed building. The property has been identified as a positive building within the Walberswick Conservation Area appraisal, and is also within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB.

The building is a well-preserved example of Frank Jennings work, a local architect who designed a number of buildings in Walberswick in the Arts and Crafts style. Jennings' body of work makes an important contribution to the historic environment of the village and therefore it is appropriate that the local planning authority has identified the building as a Non-Designated Heritage Asset.

Accordingly, every effort should be made to carefully control works of external alteration to ensure that they preserve the character of the architect's original design.

The proposed link to the north elevation is a small accretion that provides WC and utility and an internal link to the existing guest annex. Whilst modest in scale, the shallow pitch and open porch appear incongruous in this context. A simple flat roof behind a parapeted wall would appear less obtrusive and more in keeping with the parent building. The false garage doors could be replaced with a simple garden gate which would lend itself to the back elevation suggesting a simple garden wall. The SPS considers that the proposed alteration by virtue of its design and appearance would fail to enhance the character of the conservation and NDHA.

We trust that you will find these comments helpful and would ask to be consulted on any further submitted amendments.

## 5. Publicity

The application has been the subject of the following press advertisement:

Category	Published	Expiry	Publication
Conservation Area	29 June 2023	20 July 2023	East Anglian Daily Times

## Site notices

General Site Notice

Reason for site notice: Conservation Area  
Affects Setting of Listed Building  
Date posted: 27 July 2023  
Expiry date: 17 August 2023

## 6. Planning policy

SCLP11.1 - Design Quality (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP10.4 - Landscape Character (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP11.5 - Conservation Areas (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP5.13 - Residential Annexes (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP11.6 - Non-Designated Heritage Assets (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP11.2 - Residential Amenity (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document (East Suffolk Council, Adopted June 2021)

National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF)

## **7. Third Party Representations**

7.1. There were two neighbouring comments received 08.08.23. The neighbouring comments raised objections in relation to:

- Appearance and design
- Impact on historic environment

## **8. Planning Considerations**

### Design Quality, Conservation Area and Landscape Value

8.1. The single storey link extension is proposed to be clad in vertical timber which will have a natural finish that will weather over time. The use of vertical cladding on this new element will differentiate it from the main house while still being in keeping with its character, due to the boarding on the main dwelling. The link is proposed to have a contemporary appearance, allowing it to successfully contrast with the main house - although the soft timber cladding will ensure that it is not a stark contrast which would distract from the appreciation and character of the main house. The link will read as a clearly contemporary, subordinate addition, separate from the original house. This will allow for the form and character of the original house to still be read while creating additional living space and a better connection between the house and the annexe. The windows on the front elevation of the link were considered during the assessment of the proposal due to the concerns raised by the Parish Council. It is considered that these openings will match the contemporary design of the link, and attempting to implement matching windows would harm this design choice, detracting from the contrasting visual proposed. As well as this, the front elevation of the link is slightly 'sunken' from the front of the property, which will mean these openings are relatively obscured from the surrounding Conservation area. The loss of the garage door is also not considered to be a detrimental aspect of the proposal, as it will be replaced by boarding and will be obscured by car parking the majority of the

time. The infill of the existing garage door would be acceptable as the replacement cladding matches the existing.

- 8.2. The scale, materials, and most of the details of the replacement western extension will match the existing, other than changing the roof form from hip to gable, and inserting windows into the new western gable replacing the high-level metal windows currently in place. The pitch of the roof will also be increased with the ridge height being raised. The incentive for this proposal is due to the current roof pitch being insufficient at removing rainwater. At pre-app the proposed new glazing to the western gable was contemporary in character in contrast to the rest of the detailing on the proposed replacement extension, which has subsequently been amended with a more traditional window in the submitted proposals which is considered an improvement.
- 8.3. The proposed extensions would be single-storey in scale and within the existing built up settlement of Walberswick. There would therefore be no significant impact on the wider landscape or special characteristics of the AONB.
- 8.4. It is judged that the proposals are acceptable and in accordance with Policies SCLP11.1, SCLP11.3, and SCLP11.5.

#### Non-Designated Heritage Assets

- 8.5. The design of the proposal is purposefully contemporary, to allow for a visual break between the existing historical property and the new additions. Attempting to recreate the existing design and character of the property is considered likely to create a more detrimental impact on the property. Allowing for a contemporary divide will allow for the additions to be visually read as subsequent and subordinate to the main dwelling. Therefore, the proposals are considered to comply with Policy SCLP11.6.
- 8.6. This building is not listed and therefore there are no planning controls on internal changes. As there is no Article 4 Direction covering the Walberswick Conservation Area, consent is not required to change the windows as long as they are of similar appearance. However, going forward, the owners would be encouraged to retain the character of the existing windows as the leaded lights are a key feature of Jennings' architecture and are integral to the significance of the building.

#### Residential Annexes

- 8.7. The link extension is small in scale and will allow for a small shower room and utility, therefore it is not considered that the extension to the annexe will detrimentally increase the size of the annexe to a scale that is not considered clearly ancillary in scale to the host dwelling. The property will also retain sufficient parking for the retained annexe and the annexe will still relate well to the host dwelling. Therefore, the additions proposed in this extension are in accordance with Policy SCLP5.13.

#### Residential Amenity

- 8.8. It is judged that the proposals are unlikely to create a detrimental impact on the surrounding neighbouring dwellings. The change in the western extension is unlikely to create any harmful amenity impacts. The infill extension is small in scale and in a location that is considered to not harmfully impact on surrounding neighbouring amenity. The new openings will have the same general outlook as those currently retained by the existing dwelling. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal complies with Policy SCLP11.2.



## **9. Conclusion**

- 9.1. In conclusion, the principle and detail of the development is considered to be acceptable and in compliance with relevant development plan policies and the National Planning Policy Framework.

## **10. Recommendation**

- 10.1. Approve, subject to conditions as below.

### **Conditions:**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within a period of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be completed in all respects strictly in accordance with 700 05 Rev.E (proposed Floorplan), 700 06 Rev.D (Proposed elevations), 700 07 Rev.E (Proposed Block Plan) received 15 June 2023;, for which permission is hereby granted or which are subsequently submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority and in compliance with any conditions imposed by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt as to what has been considered and approved

3. The materials and finishes shall be as indicated within the submitted application and thereafter retained as such, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development in the interests of visual amenity

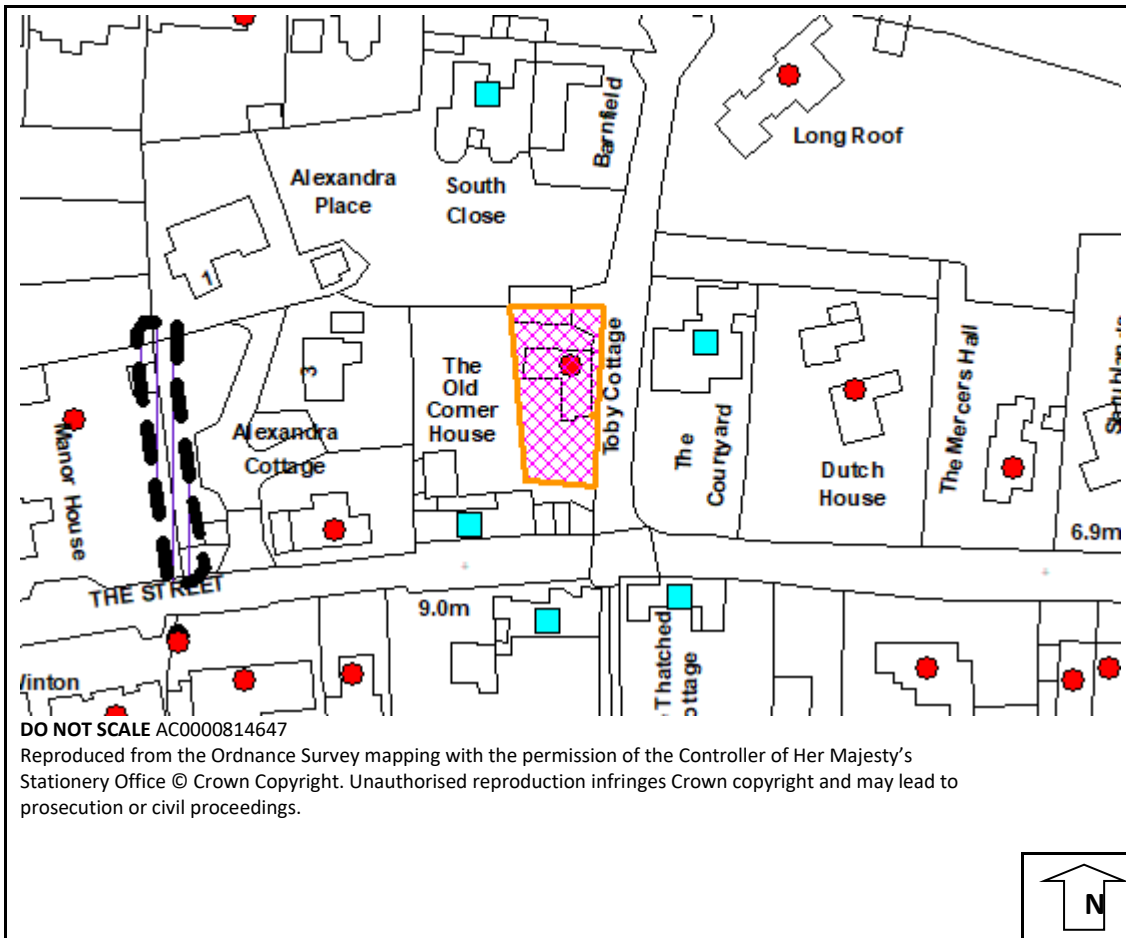
4. The development hereby permitted annexe shall not be occupied or let as a separate dwelling but shall be used only for purposes incidental to the use of the dwellinghouse to which it relates or for occupation by a relative, employee or parent of the householder or his/her spouse.

Reason: The development is not such that the local planning authority would be prepared to approve as a separate dwellinghouse in its own right.





### **Background information**

See application reference DC/23/2369/FUL on [Public Access](#)

## Map



## Key

-  Notified, no comments received
-  Objection
-  Representation
-  Support