



Committee Report

Planning Committee North – 9 January 2024

Application no DC/23/3115/FUL

Location

Seacroft
Millfield Road
Walberswick
Southwold
Suffolk
IP18 6UD

Expiry date 3 October 2023

Application type Full Application

Applicant Ms Pip Jenkins

Parish Walberswick

Proposal Part demolition, refurbishment and extension of an existing single family home.

Case Officer Matthew Gee
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1. Summary

- 1.1. Planning permission is sought for the partial demolition of the existing dwelling, refurbishment and extension to the dwelling. The proposed scheme is considered to result in a high-quality design outcome that preserves the existing character and appearance of the Conservation Area and surrounding area. Furthermore, it is not considered to result in any adverse impacts upon the amenity of neighbouring residents or upon nearby European Protected (Habitats) Sites. Therefore, the proposal is considered to adhere to local and national planning policy, and as such it is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to conditions.
- 1.2. The Parish Council raised objections to the application, contrary to the officer recommendation of approval. The application was referred to the Planning Committee (North) by the Referral Panel.

2. Site Description

- 2.1. Seacroft is a two-storey detached dwelling, located within the Settlement Boundary of Walberswick. The property falls within the Walberswick Conservation Area and is situated within the National Landscape designation (formerly known as the AONB). The application site also falls within a known Archaeological Site. The property fronts Millfield Road to the north. Millfield Road is a quiet residential lane that provides shared access to the surrounding neighbouring properties. There are neighbouring properties located to the east (The Beeches) and west of the site (Rippleway and Seaspray). To the south of the site, the property enjoys views over the Dunwich River and the Suffolk coastline beyond. A Public Right of Way runs along the southern boundary of the site, which provides access back to The Street and access down to the coast.

3. Proposal

- 3.1. The proposal is for the part demolition and extension of Seacroft. The demolition includes the removal of the garage, kitchen, W.C, conservatory area and Terrace. The proposed two-storey extension looks to change the current footprint of the dwelling to more of an angle. The proposed extension will provide a kitchen/dining room, snug and utility at ground level. At first floor the extension will provide a living area, terrace, and study. A detached garage/workshop is also proposed to the north of the dwelling.
- 3.2. The proposed materials are to differ to those of the existing dwelling. On the north elevation dark brick is proposed, incorporating the use of Purbeck Stone for the Chimney. A zinc roof is proposed and will also replace the existing roof of the dwelling. There are to be dark aluminium windows incorporated into the roof structure. The south elevation also proposes the use of dark brick with timber boarding to the top. The zinc roof is proposed to have solar panels to the centre of the roof, again with Purbeck Stone being used for the Chimney. The garage is proposed to be of dark brick with a green roof and a timber door.

4. Consultees

Third Party Representations

- 4.1. Nine representations of objection have been received raising the following key concerns (inter alia):
- Access issues
 - Damage to private track
 - Light pollution
 - Out of character
 - Amenity issues
 - Impact on Conservation Area
 - Disrespectful of the existing scale, form or detailing
 - Inappropriate materials
 - Loss of trees
 - Construction disruption
 - Tree protection
 - Potential future uses
 - Impact on AONB

- Ecology impacts

4.2. Two representations neither objecting nor supporting have been received raising the following matters:

- Limiting impact from the south
- Potential loss of trees

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Walberswick Parish Council	14 August 2023	12 September 2023

Opinion of the Parish Council:

In the opinion of the Parish Council this application should be withdrawn and the comments below relating to materials, landscape and residential amenity addressed by the applicant / agent. If this application is not withdrawn and the points addressed then the Parish Council OBJECTS to the application.

Description

Seacroft is a sizeable detached dwelling, dating from the early to mid 1970s, accessed from a shared driveway. Millfield Road is a private lane with houses of varying dates, including large villas designed by Frank Jennings and other notable arts and crafts architects. The property and its sizeable garden are located within the Walberswick Conservation Area and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It is proposed to part demolish the existing property and to extend the retained house to the west creating a 5 bedroom house with detached 3 bay car garaging with separate workshop and WC. The Design & Access Statement mentions that the dwelling “will continue to be occupied by a single family as a holiday home” (p20).

Comment and Relevant Policy

The house to be part demolished has no architectural or historic merit, and is currently well screened by trees from the main sweep of Millfield Road. The house and its treed surroundings are visible in long views from the AONB, particularly to the south of the site, and form part of a larger cluster of trees and an important backdrop to the beach, marshes and also the public footpath to the southern boundary of the site.

The proposal looks to create a sizeable dwelling, commensurate with some of the existing larger dwellings on Millfield Road, although the effect that nearly doubling the size of the property will have on neighbours needs to be carefully assessed. The Design & Access Statement contains conflicting comments between the planning officer and the agent regarding the total percentage increase of the proposal, and this should be clarified.

Of concern is the lack of a detailed landscape proposal and strategy, and it is requested that this is supplied to facilitate understanding regarding what trees are to be retained, the extent of any tree works proposed, and any replanting on the site. If correctly handled tree retention / replanting has the potential to greatly reduce the impact this development could have on views from the road, from the footpath and dunes to the south and from the neighbouring properties The Beeches, Seaspray, Rippleway and Millstones. Until detailed information relating to landscape is supplied the application does not satisfy SCLP 11.1: Design Quality, sub-section i.

Roofscapes are important in long views of the village and Conservation Area, often being the only element visible above hedges and trees. The lack of proposed rooflights and dormers to the south facing roof pitch is a welcome element of the design, particularly in a village that values its dark skies.

However, the impact of light spillage from the north facing clerestory window, located just below the ridge, should be assessed against policy SCLP 11.2: Residential Amenity, sub-section f.

The proposed material palette does not display an understanding of village vernacular design and detailing, with materials such as zinc and Purbeck stone being inconsistent with the Conservation Area.

The examples cited as ‘precedents’ within the Design & Access Statement are not from Walberswick, and the proposed ‘dark brick’ is an inappropriate choice in a Conservation Area where ‘Suffolk red’ bricks are often seen. Consequently, the proposed materials should be reconsidered so that the proposal satisfies SCLP 11.1: Design Quality, sub-sections b and c (v) and SCLP 11.5: Conservation Areas, subsection e.

The footprint of the proposed house will maintain the existing boundary distance to the east (with The Beeches), but the extended form means the house will sit in closer proximity to the west boundary (shared with Rippleway and Seaspray). The proposed glazed south west corner to the extension, lighting the main living area, is therefore an unfortunate one given the increased likelihood of light spillage, and is contrary to SCLP 11.2: Residential Amenity, sub-sections e and f. Given the prominent location of the property within the AONB, this application should be referred to the AONB Planning Officer for comment.

Summary

This proposal does not satisfy Local Plan policy regarding materials, light pollution and landscape, and should be withdrawn and resubmitted with the information requested above. If this is not withdrawn and addressed then the Parish Council OBJECTS for the reasons stated above.

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Natural England	22 September 2023	21 November 2023
Summary of comments: No objections.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Ecology	18 August 2023	26 September 2023
Summary of comments: Internal comments – included in report.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
SCC County Archaeological Unit	14 August 2023	No response
Summary of comments: No comments received.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
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SCC Coasts And Heaths Project	14 August 2023	No response
Summary of comments: No comments received.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
SCC Rights Of Way	14 August 2023	No response
Summary of comments: No comments received.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Landscape Team	14 August 2023	5 September 2023
Summary of comments: No objections following submission of further information.		

5. Publicity

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

Category	Published	Expiry	Publication
Conservation Area	24 August 2023	15 September 2023	East Anglian Daily Times

Site notices

General Site Notice	Reason for site notice: Conservation Area Date posted: 18 August 2023 Expiry date: 11 September 2023
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6. Planning policy

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

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

SCLP11.3 - Historic Environment (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

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

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

National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF)

7. Planning Considerations

Design considerations

- 7.1. The application site is situated within the settlement boundary and Conservation Area for Walberswick, as well as a National Landscape. The proposal represents a substantial increase in the footprint of the dwelling; however, the majority of the existing structure of the dwelling will be retained, and as such the proposal is not considered to represent a replacement dwelling, despite the resulting size of the development. Notwithstanding this, the assessment of the application in terms of its impacts upon the wider area, including the Conservation Area and National Landscape is similar. The application site is accessed off Millfield Road via an unmade track, the area is heavily screened by surrounding foliage, and views from the wider Conservation Area (in particular along The Street), which is the main public vantage point, are limited.
- 7.2. The Conservation Area Appraisal sets out that Millfield Road *"is one dominated by large Edwardian villas in mature landscaped grounds which can be occasionally glimpsed behind*

tall hedges and trees. Many of these villas have well-designed gardens which are of considerable interest in their own right, and within the village is evidence that from the turn of the 20th century a tradition grew to construct sunken gardens, probably as a protection against the wind." The application dwelling, however, is not an Edwardian villa, and is a later 1970s addition to the area. The Conservation Area Appraisal also does not identify the building as particular importance, and it is not noted as an unlisted building that contributes positively to Millfield Road. Therefore, whilst the existing dwelling is not deemed to harm the Conservation Area, it is also not noted as being a significant contributor to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Therefore, the wholesale loss of the existing character of the dwelling, cannot be considered to harm the Conservation Area if what replaces it is of a high quality design. The key planning test is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

- 7.3. The proposal, as noted, does involve the wholesale loss of the existing character of the building, and seeks to erect a large two storey extension which has a footprint larger than the existing portion of the dwelling which is to be retained. The application also proposes the cladding of the existing dwelling with dark brick. This gives the existing dwelling and extension a unified visual appearance. The proposed extension is angled into the site, which will, to an extent, limit the visual massing of the extension. The submitted design and access statement identifies that *"the form of the building has been influenced by the immediate context and local vernacular. Key strategic moves:*
- *The extension massing is angled to maximise views towards the river Dunwich and the coastline and better align with the site boundaries.*
 - *The extension echoes the proportions of the existing house, with the new massing and orientation, generating a built form that sits more comfortably at the centre of the site and has a better relationship with the existing properties.*
 - *The rear elevation has linear windows and apertures reflective of the horizontal landscape, unifying the façades of the existing building and extension.*
 - *The new roof has a lightweight clerestory window to appear less dominant and subservient to the existing retained house.*
 - *References to local vernacular; pitched roofs, gables, arts and crafts motifs, expressed chimneys*
 - *Respectful of existing building heights, the new building matches existing levels and heights to ensure extension sites sensitively in context from views to and from the site.*
 - *Creating a recessed balcony on the first floor to maximise the views to the sea, whilst creating a sheltered spot to ensure the outdoors whilst ensuring privacy and minimising overlooking.*
 - *The garage and garden walls are conceived as devices to frame a sense of arrival within the forecourt, whilst also creating privacy from the closest neighbours."*
- 7.4. The design approach taken is also considered to be high quality and, whilst the extension is large, the dwelling and extension - when taken as a whole - are not considered to be out of proportion with surrounding dwellings or represent overdevelopment of the large site. The proposed material palette is not one seen within the immediate Conservation Area; however, it takes inspiration from the coastal area and the materials are of a high quality in line with the architectural ethos of the extension and redesign. Therefore, given the scheme is considered to represent a high quality design outcome, which takes inspiration from the wider area, and the limited views of the site within the Conservation Area, it will

preserve the Conservation Area in accordance with the historic environment objectives of the Local Plan and NPPF.

7.5. Views of the site are available from wider afield, notably from the south along the River Dunwich. A level of screening is available due to the foliage in the area and along the southern boundary of the site, but glimpses of the existing dwelling are available. It is likely that the upper portion of the proposed extension will also be visible. This is likely to mean that a level of glazing will also be visible, and therefore an increased level of light spill into the wider surrounding countryside and National Landscape could occur. To limit the level of light spill out from the site the dwelling has taken measures from the '*Lighting Design Guide - Dedham Vale National Landscape and Coast & Heaths National Landscape*' guidance document. This includes:

- No new garden lighting as part of this application.
- Any external building lighting to be non-intrusive, low-level, downward facing, and will turn off when not in use. Specification to be in-line with recommendations;
 - Not more than 500 lumens
 - Less than or equal to 3000k colour
- To the rear elevation (looking south towards the coastal path) roof lights have been avoided, and all proposed fenestration to the extension is recessed at first floor with an adjacent solid catslide roof.
- Windows will be deep recessed in external wall with large over hanging eaves.
- Ground floor openings set back under balcony.
- Internal lights installed away from perimeter glazing & Secondary lighting in the form of low-lux lamps.
- Low level downward facing external lighting on balcony.
- Curtains & Blinds on windows.
- Clerestory lights have been positioned facing towards the village.

7.6. Given these measures it is not considered that the light spill from the site would significantly increase to a degree whereby it would harm the character or appearance of the National Landscape, nor the setting of the Conservation Area. It is also noted that several dwellings are visible from along the River Dunwich and therefore the dwelling would not appear out of character in the context.

7.7. The application includes the removal of 1no. category B trees; 1no. category B group; 2no. category C trees; and 3no. category U trees. It is noted that four of these trees have been granted consent for removal under an application for trees works in a Conservation Area. The remaining trees on the site, notably along the western and southern boundaries, are to be retained. The Council's Landscape Officer has reviewed the application and notes that the trees to be removed are low/moderate quality specimens and are located more centrally within the site, thus being well screened by the boundary vegetation. It is considered that this will ensure that the tree loss will not have a notable detrimental impact on public amenity or the local landscape. The proposal includes construction within close proximity to retained trees and the protection measures given in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment are considered to be sufficient to safeguard their health and longevity.

7.8. The proposal is therefore considered to demonstrate a clear understanding of the character of the built, historic, and natural environment - and responds to local context and the form of surrounding buildings in accordance with policy SCLP11.1: Design Quality.

The developments are also considered to be of a high standard of design using high quality materials which - at the very least – preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, conforming to SCLP11.5: Conservation Areas. The development is also not considered to have any significant adverse impact on the natural beauty and special qualities of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths National Landscape, and as such conforms to policy SCLP10.4: Landscape Character.

Amenity

- 7.9. Policy SCLP11.2 (Residential Amenity) sets out that consideration should be given to the potential impacts of the development upon the amenity of neighbouring residential amenity. The application proposes the retention of the existing foliage along the boundaries of the site, notably along the western boundary, which creates a degree of privacy between the application site and Rippleway and Seaspray. There would be an approximately 8.5m distance to the boundary and 21.5m distance to the dwelling of Rippleway; and 11m distance to the boundary and 35m distance to the dwelling of Seaspray. The application does propose glazing on the western elevation facing the boundaries of these properties; however, these serve a voided area, with the nearest first floor area within the dwelling set 5m in from these windows. This would give an (approximately) 26m separation distance between the nearest first floor vantage point in the proposed extension to the nearest side of the neighbouring dwelling at Rippleway. This is considered sufficient distance to remove any significant overlooking and, given the existing foliage to be retained along the boundary, there is not considered to be any adverse impacts from overlooking or loss of privacy to Rippleway.
- 7.10. The existing dwelling has a first floor balcony with vantage views to the west, south and partially east. The proposal includes an external balcony; however, this will be largely recessed behind a projecting element on the western edge, and as such views from that will be limited looking west towards Rippleway. Views looking south-west would not be screen to the same degree; however, given the separation distance, existing screening, and existing balcony it is not considered that the proposed balcony would result in any significant increase in loss of privacy which would adversely impact upon the enjoyment of Seaspray or Rippleway. The main views from the balcony will be south and southeast, this could introduce an increased level of overlooking to parts of the rear garden of The Beeches; however, given the angle of the balcony and retained section of dwelling there is considered to be no overlooking into the rear windows of the Beeches. Therefore, it is not considered that the development would result in any significant overlooking to The Beeches which would adversely impact upon the enjoyment of that dwelling. The proposal therefore accords with the amenity objectives of SCLP11.2.

Biodiversity

- 7.11. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal including a Protected Species Assessment has been submitted within the application. The location of the proposed development is approximately 170m north of part of the Minsmere-Walberswick Special Protection Area (SPA) and the Minsmere-Walberswick Ramsar Site. The boundaries of these designated sites also overlap with part of the Minsmere-Walberswick Heaths and Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Walberswick is bounded as an urban area by the SPA on its north and south sides. There is no specified distance as to when there should be a Habitats Regulations Assessment carried out and it is not essential for applicants to submit a Shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment to inform our own assessment. There is also no

established in-combination effect of development in Walberswick to assess, but in any case, this has been reviewed in this application. Given this proposal is within 200m of the SPA and concerns have been raised locally an assessment has been carried out.

- 7.12. Supported by specialist input from the Council's Principal Ecologist, a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) has been prepared and Natural England consulted on that HRA. The HRA identifies that based on the small scale, residential nature of the proposed development, the significant separation distances involved and the intervening land uses, it is not considered that there are any impact pathways between the proposal and the nearby designated sites. Therefore, these protected sites are screened out of any further assessment as no Likely Significant Effects are considered possible as a result of the proposed development, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects in the area.
- 7.13. Having considered the proposed avoidance and mitigation measures above, East Suffolk Council conclude that with mitigation the project will not have an Adverse Effect on the Integrity of the European designated sites identified. Having made this appropriate assessment of the implications of the project for the identified designated sites in view of those sites' conservation objectives, and having taken the opinion of Natural England, the authority may agree to the project under regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) (as amended).
- 7.14. Based on the information submitted, it is not considered that the proposed development is likely to result in significant adverse impacts on protected species or UK Priority habitats or species (under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006)), subject to the implementation of the avoidance and mitigation measures identified in the submitted ecological report. From the submitted plans it is also noted that there are a number of trees proposed for removal as part of the development. The ecological enhancement measures identified in the submitted ecological report should also be incorporated into the proposed development, and it is recommended that these are included on the relevant planning drawings to secure this as part of any permission.

Highways Safety

- 7.15. The site is accessed via the Private Road of Millfield Road. The proposed extension will increase the number of bedrooms from three to five. Under SCC Parking Guidelines a 4+ bedroom dwelling should include space for at least 3no. vehicles to park on site. The application proposes a single storey flat roof garage to the side and front of the dwelling, which will provide at least three parking spaces. Therefore, the proposed development is not likely to cause inconsiderate parking upon the highway which would adversely impact on highway safety.
- 7.16. Local concerns have been raised regarding potential impact upon the private road serving the dwelling. Whilst officers acknowledge this concern, any potential damage to third party land is not a material planning consideration that can be taken into account in determining this application.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1. In conclusion, the proposed development is acceptable and in compliance with the Development Plan and the NPPF.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1. Approve with conditions listed in section ten of this report.

10. 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:
- Site Location and Existing Site Plan, 2214_IFDO_XX_00_DR__A_001, received 08/08/2023;
 - Proposed Location Plan and Site Plan, 2214_IFDO_XX_00_DR__A_100, received 08/08/2023;
 - Proposed Site Plan, 2214_IFDO_XX_00_DR__A_101, received 08/08/2023;
 - Proposed Roof Plan, 2214_IFDO_XX_00_DR__A_112, received 08/08/2023;
 - Proposed Section B-B, C-C, D-D, 2214_IFDO_XX_00_DR__A_200, received 08/08/2023;
 - Proposed North & South Elevations, 2214_IFDO_XX_00_DR__A_300, received 08/08/2023;
 - Proposed East & West Elevations, 2214_IFDO_XX_00_DR__A_301, received 08/08/2023;
 - Proposed Ground Floor Plan, 2214_IFDO_XX_00_DR__A_110, received 08/08/2023;
 - Proposed First Floor Plan, 2214_IFDO_XX_00_DR__A_111, received 08/08/2023;
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Skilled Ecology Consultancy Ltd., received 14/08/2023;
 - Design and Access Statement, received 14/08/2023;
 - Light Spill mitigation, received 06/10/2023;
 - Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA), received 06/10/2023;
- 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. Development must be undertaken in accordance with the ecological avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures identified within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Including a Protected Species Assessment (Skilled Ecology, July 2023) as submitted

with the planning application and agreed in principle with the local planning authority prior to determination.

Reason: To ensure that ecological receptors are adequately protected and enhanced as part of the development.

5. No removal of hedgerows, trees or shrubs brambles, ivy and other climbing plants shall take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless a competent ecologist has undertaken a careful, detailed check of vegetation for active birds' nests immediately before the vegetation is cleared and provided written confirmation that no birds will be harmed and/or that there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site. Any such written confirmation should be submitted to the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that nesting birds are protected.

6. No external lighting shall be installed unless a "lighting design strategy for biodiversity" for has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The strategy shall:
 - a) identify those areas/features on site that are particularly sensitive for biodiversity likely to be impacted by lighting and that are likely to cause disturbance in or around their breeding sites and resting places or along important routes used to access key areas of their territory, for example, for foraging; and
 - b) show how and where external lighting will be installed (through the provision of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent the above species using their territory or having access to their breeding sites and resting places.

All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the strategy, and these shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the strategy. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that impacts on ecological receptors from external lighting are prevented.

7. All new glazing installed shall have a Visible Light Transmittance (VLT) of 0.65 or lower.

Reason: To reduce the level of light spill from the site to protect nearby European Protected Sites.

8. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order) (with or without modification), no first floor shall be installed above the room labelled snug on drawing 2214_IFDO_XX_00_DR__A_110.

Reason: To ensure that the amenity of neighbouring residents is protected.

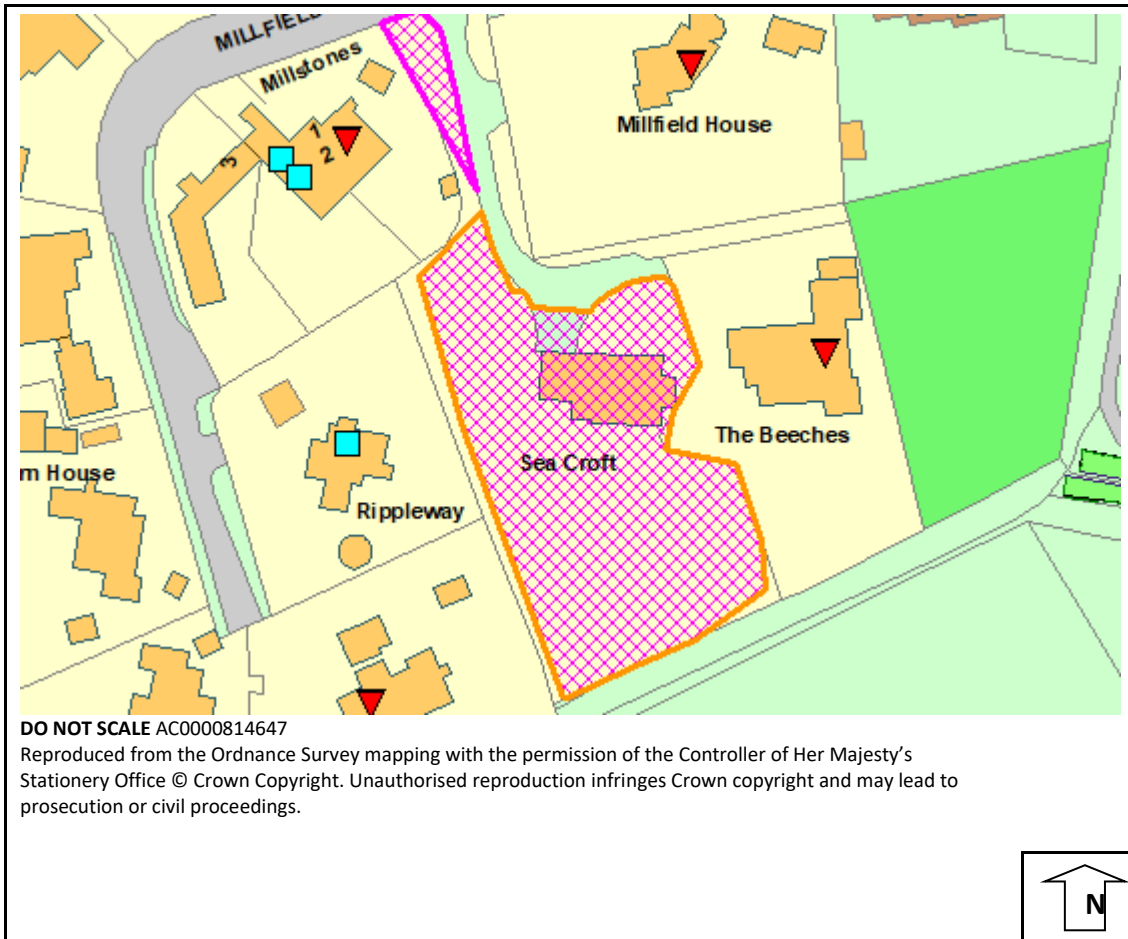
9. No development shall take place until the existing trees on site to be retained, as shown on drawing J231000-GGC-ZZ-ZZ-D-ARB-0101 P01, have been protected in accordance with the measures detailed in submitted and approved Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA).

Reason: For the avoidance of damage to protected trees included within the landscaping scheme in the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area.





Background information

See application reference DC/23/3115/FUL on [Public Access](#)

Map



Key

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