



Committee Report

Application no DC/24/0415/FUL

Location

Box Bush
Seven Acres Lane
Walberswick
Southwold
Suffolk
IP18 6UL

Expiry date 1 April 2024

Application type Full Application

Applicant Mackesy

Parish Walberswick

Proposal New dormer window, alterations to fenestration and internal layout, general repairs to existing fabric and insulation on external walls and roof.

Case Officer Ellie DeGory
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1. Summary

- 1.1. Planning permission is sought for a new dormer window and front porch, alterations to fenestration and insulation to the external walls and render finish.
- 1.2. The application was presented to the Referral Panel as the 'minded-to' recommendation of Officers is contrary to the recommendation of refusal from Walberswick Parish Council.

Walberswick Parish Council's objection is summarised as;

"The proposal fails to accord with the NPPF 205 to 208. The application also does not satisfy the following sections from the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, policy 11.4 (Listed Buildings).

The accumulative effect of the proposed external and internal work represents significant change to a designated heritage asset, and the lack of clarity regarding the age and significance of some of the fabric to be altered, or removed, means there is a danger of harm being caused to the special interest of the listed building.

Finally, the online application details highlight that ESC have not consulted the National Amenity Societies (NAM), specifically The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and The Twentieth Century Society – this is a requirement where applications propose "relevant works" comprising the demolition or partial demolition of a listed building, including:

"(a) a proposal to retain less than 50 per cent of the surface area of that part of a principal building represented on any elevation (ascertained by external measurement on a vertical plane, including the vertical plane of any roof) is treated as a proposal for the demolition of a principal external wall;
(b) a proposal to demolish any principal internal element of the structure including any staircase, load-bearing wall, floor structure or roof structure is treated as a proposal for the demolition of a substantial part of the interior"

- 1.3 The Referral Panel considered the application and decided that the proposal should be presented to Planning Committee North for determination.
- 1.4 Officers do not consider that the proposal is contrary to the NPPF or Local Policy and that the correct procedures have been carried out. It is therefore recommended that the application be approved.

2. Site Description

- 2.1 The site is situated in on the southern edge of Walberswick and is located within the Suffolk and Essex Coast and Heaths National Landscape (Article 2(3) land).
- 2.2 The property is a detached, two-storey house in a generous garden plot on an unadopted lane amongst neighbouring residential properties of a similar scale. The rear garden backs on to open countryside and Walberswick coastline beyond. The rear of the property is visible from the Seven Acres Lane and Stocks Lane Public Right of Ways.

2.3 The property was built around 1938 to designs by Frank Jennings and has been recently listed at Grade II as a well-preserved, timber framed vernacular style house. It is listed for the following principal reasons:

Architectural interest:

- it is a picturesque and idiosyncratic building that demonstrates Jennings' reverence for historic fabric and his care in its re-use;
- its timber-framed structure and architectural detailing are typical of the vernacular style prevalent in Suffolk, characterised by plain and pantile roofs, red brick chimneystacks, weatherboarding and exposed timbers to the gables, and pink coloured render to the exterior;
- it is particularly well-preserved both internally and externally, retaining a high proportion of its exposed timber frame, fixtures, fittings and joinery.

Historic interest:

- it represents a dominant trend in the architectural taste of the inter-war years for recreating older styles, part of the wider craze for Tudor architecture and the perennial myth of Elizabethan 'Merrie England' that was symptomatic of a nostalgia for pre-industrial society;
- for the legacy of Jennings' work in Walberswick, which contributed to the idyllic setting of an important artistic colony.

3. Proposal

3.1 The proposed works are;

- New roof dormer to the front elevation.
- Extension of the existing front roof to form a front porch.
- Alterations to windows and doors to side and rear elevations including demolition of the existing conservatory.
- Insulation to external walls and roof and new render finish.

4. Consultees

Parish/Town Council

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Walberswick Parish Council	12 February 2024	7 March 2024
Summary of comments: 1. Opinion In the opinion of the Parish Council this application proposes significant external and internal change to a designated heritage asset, which would fail to preserve or enhance the significance of the asset, and should be refused. 2. Description Box Bush was designated as Grade II listed during August 2023.		

The house is a detached property designed by the acclaimed architect Frank Jennings who worked extensively in Walberswick and left the village with some of its best architectural legacies. Box Bush was built c1938 using a reclaimed timber frame, windows and historic internal joinery.

The submission for planning and listed building consent proposes the following work:

- New large dormer window to the north (entrance) elevation
- Alteration of roof to form an open porch to the north elevation
- Removal of render to all elevations
- Insulation of timber frame (increasing wall thickness by 60mm)
- Re-rendering with lime
- Repair of chimneystacks
- Ridge height raised by approximately 100mm
- Repositioning of all windows and external doors to suit new external wall thickness
- Alteration of bay window to provide French doors to south elevation
- New door in place of a window to the south elevation
- Application of brick slips to existing brick plinth to accommodate off-set of new render
- Removal of modern conservatory to the south elevation
- Changes to the original plan form to the ground floor, first floor and attic, including loss of partition walls and lowering of part of the attic floor to create a bathroom

Prior to listing a similar (but less comprehensive) scheme of alterations was submitted to ESC (DC/23/2257/FUL). This application was withdrawn after the house was listed. The property is located within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

3. Comment

The listing description report prepared by Historic England states: "It (Box Bush) is particularly well-preserved both internally and externally", and it is clear that the preservation of fabric and plan form contributes significantly to the property meeting national listing criteria.

The removal of the modern conservatory to the south elevation is welcomed.

The need for improved thermal performance is understood, but such intervention must be weighed against any harm this could cause to the asset (see p16 Historic England: Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Insulating Timber-Framed Walls). Externally applied insulation requires the removal of existing render (and any laths) and results in an increase of the external wall thickness – in this case an increase of approximately 60mm. This means eaves projections are reduced, all doors, windows and door surrounds need to be removed and repositioned (to maintain a flush relationship with the render) and an increased overhang where the render meets the plinth (resolved here by the proposed use of applied brick slips).

All downpipes would also need to be refixed.

The effect of re-rendering, combined with re-roofing, raising the ridge height (due to insulating between and on top of the existing rafters), a large new dormer and the extension of the roof (to provide an open porch) is considered to effectively be a rebuilding the external envelope, which is not considered to accord with paragraphs 205-8 of the NPPF where "great weight should be given to the asset's conservation" (para 205).

The application states that the existing render is cementitious, with the inference being this is not original. As lime can be mixed to a whole spectrum of strengths and breathability analysis of the render should be completed to determine its composition. Box Bush is in an exposed location and

the use of cementitious render on properties of this date is not uncommon. As the house is 85 years old and has received little repair or maintenance for several decades, the likelihood of lime render having been applied, failing and to have been replaced with cementitious render in a short period of time seems highly unlikely. It is therefore necessary to understand exactly what exists, its originality and significance, before removal can be justified. The impact of the large dormer and proposed roof extension (to the north elevation) has been commented on in a previous report (DC/23/2257/FUL) and it remains our view that these interventions to the entrance façade are excessive and would erode the character and quality of the original design. The Heritage Impact Statement suggests (p6) that the stair was possibly originally in a different location – if it were (and could be returned without loss of fabric and significance) the need for the dormer is removed. The insertion of a dormer would require a section of purlin (part of the historic re-used timber frame) to be removed.

The extended roof / porch roof would dilute the impact of the original door and surround (obscuring the top of the door surround from view – see proposed north elevation) and would put the door and surround in shadow as well as effecting considerable change to an elevation which exists as originally designed.

French windows are proposed to the south elevation within an existing bay window. This bay (with its current configuration of windows) is shown on the original architect's drawings (usefully provided within the Heritage Impact Statement). The alteration of this feature, and the associated loss of fabric, has not been justified by the application and therefore is not supported. The room the French doors would serve currently has a side door which, as originally designed, lead to an open Loggia; reinstatement of the loggia (currently enclosed and serving the conservatory) would benefit the property and leave the existing bay window as originally designed.

The Heritage Impact Statement identifies work / fabric dating from 1938 as “insignificant” yet this is first phase construction and comprises part of the original design and plan form by Jennings. The original drawings show that the floor plans exist largely as Jennings designed, and this forms part of the special quality of the property. Therefore, the number of walls proposed to be removed would erode the significance of the accommodation and this work is not supported.

It is not clear from the existing and proposed elevations whether the front door is proposed to be changed (the proposed depiction differs from what is shown on the existing elevation). However, the “moulded door surround containing a four panel door with applied vertical panelling to the exterior” is specifically mentioned in the listing description and should be retained.

4. Summary

The proposal fails to accord with the NPPF 205 to 208. The application also does not satisfy the following sections from the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, policy 11.4 (Listed Buildings), which states: Proposals to alter, extend or change the use of a listed building (including curtilage listed structures) or development affecting its setting will be supported where they:

- a) Demonstrate a clear understanding of the significance of the building and its setting alongside an assessment of the potential impact of the proposal on that significance;
- b) Do not harm the character of the building or any architectural, artistic, historic, or archaeological features that contribute towards its special interest;
- c) Are of an appropriate design, scale, form, height, massing and position which complement the existing building;
- d) Use high quality materials and methods of construction which complement the character of the building;

- e) Retain the historic internal layout of the building; and
- f) Remove existing features that detract from the building to enhance or better reveal its significance.

The accumulative effect of the proposed external and internal work represents significant change to a designated heritage asset, and the lack of clarity regarding the age and significance of some of the fabric to be altered, or removed, means there is a danger of harm being caused to the special interest of the listed building.

Finally, the online application details highlight that ESC have not consulted the National Amenity Societies (NAM), specifically The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and The Twentieth Century Society – this is a requirement where applications propose “relevant works” comprising the demolition or partial demolition of a listed building, including:

- “a) a proposal to retain less than 50 per cent of the surface area of that part of a principal building represented on any elevation (ascertained by external measurement on a vertical plane, including the vertical plane of any roof) is treated as a proposal for the demolition of a principal external wall;
- (b) a proposal to demolish any principal internal element of the structure including any staircase, load-bearing wall, floor structure or roof structure is treated as a proposal for the demolition of a substantial part of the interior”

At the time of writing (01.03.24) the Design & Conservation Officer comments uploaded on the 29th February 2024 are dated 27/07/23 and relate the previous withdrawn scheme.

Statutory consultees

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
National Amenity Societies	N/A	11 March 2024
Summary of comments: Need for consultation contested with the C20th Society. No response received.		

Non statutory consultees

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Design And Heritage	12 February 2024	29 February 2024
Summary of comments: While a low level of less than substantial harm has been identified it is considered that the harm has been mitigated by the design of the specific elements and the reuse of historic fabric where possible. There are also substantial benefits of the scheme including the reinstatement of a traditional, breathable external finish, general repair and refurbishment, and the improvement to the energy efficiency and habitability of the building which will help to ensure its long term conservation.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
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East Suffolk Ecology	12 February 2024	13 February 2024
<p>Summary of comments: Works have the potential to cause the disturbance to bat roosts and the death/injury to roosting bats. Works should therefore take place under a European protected species mitigation license from Natural England. No other HRA considerations and no likely impact on other Statutory and Non-Statutory Designated Nature Conservation Sites.</p>		

5. Third Party Representations

- 5.1 One neighbour letter of support has been received.
- 5.2 The Suffolk Preservation Society raised concerns relating to the removal of the render and the application of external insulation together with the degree of proposed external alterations and in respect of the proposed external alterations that individually these represent quite benign interventions however, cumulatively the degree of alteration is more.

6. Publicity

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

Publication	Published date	Expiry date	Reason
East Anglian Daily Times	15 February 2024	7 March 2024	Listed Building

Site notices

Site Notice Type	Date Posted	Expiry date	Reason
General Site Notice	21 February 2024	13 March 2024	Listed Building

7. Planning policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2023

SCLP10.1 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

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

SCLP11.1 - 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)

SCLP11.4 - Listed Buildings (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document

8. Planning Considerations

- 8.1 The proposals are assessed against Policy SCLP10.1: Biodiversity and Geodiversity, Policy SCLP10.4: Landscape Character, Policy SCP11:1: Design Quality, Policy SCLP11.2: Residential Amenity, and Policy SCLP11.4: Listed Buildings of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, which seeks high quality design, that protects and enhances the distinctive natural habitats and landscape and no adverse neighbour amenity impact.
- 8.2 Visual amenity and design
Dormer window;
The existing stair to the second floor has very restricted headroom. A new dormer is proposed to allow improved access at this point. While the introduction of a dormer is a departure from Jennings and Coleridge's design, the design of the dormer references dormers in other Jennings houses as well as the existing dormer on the opposite roof slope. Although large, is considered to be in keeping with the character and appearance of the building and not over scaled in context. The removal of sections of timber frame would result in less than substantial harm but this would be mitigated by their reuse in the dormer's structure. It is also proposed to reuse the window proposed to be removed at ground floor. This is continuing the tradition of reuse of historic timbers and features across this building.
- 8.3 The existing roof slope of the front elevation is proposed to be extended to provide a covered porch over the front door. In principle this extension of the roof is acceptable, overhanging roofs and covered porches are characteristic of Jennings' designs, but full details are required to ensure that the detailing is appropriate. The extension of the roof in this location would also help to balance the proposed new dormer within the roof slope. The first floor window would be covered by the extended roof but would otherwise be untouched
- 8.4 Alterations to windows and doors to side and rear elevations and rear elevations including demolition of the existing conservatory;
The existing window within the projecting bay on the rear elevation is proposed to be replaced with reclaimed Crittal doors, the window itself is proposed to be reused in the new dormer. There is no timber frame within the bay therefore the installation of doors would result in the loss of brickwork but would have no impact on the timber frame. The bay is part of Coleridge and Jennings' design and does contribute to the significance of the building, however it is not considered that the change from window to doors would impact this significance. The proposed Crittal windows would be in keeping with the character of the building and the re-use of the window mitigates concern about loss of fabric.

- 8.5 It is also noted that the modern conservatory is proposed to be removed from this elevation this would be a benefit of the scheme, removing an inappropriately detailed modern feature. This benefit is considered to outweigh any minor harm from the redesign of the fenestration in the bay.
- 8.6 The installation of a new door into the ground floor rear lobby is also proposed. This is in a location where there is no historic frame, only modern studwork and a modern window. Therefore, no historic fabric would be impacted, the location and scale of the proposed door is acceptable, full details are required by condition. Further new windows are proposed at first and ground floor, full details are required by condition.
- 8.7 Insulation to external walls and new render finish;
The existing render is an inappropriate cementitious render that has led to moisture being trapped against the frame. The render has failed on the east gable requiring temporary protection. As well as this inappropriate finish there is no insulation on the walls or the roof. The proposal is to address the lack of insulation and re-finish the exterior in lime render. The proposed wall insulation would be on the exterior of the frame and between the timbers to ensure this important feature remains exposed internally. Breathable wood fibre insulation is proposed in an appropriate material. The external build-up of the insulation will have an impact on the relationship of the windows with the external wall, it is therefore proposed to move the existing windows out to maintain the existing flush relationship externally. This will result in a deeper window surround internally but this is not considered to be out of keeping with the character of the building. The external finish will be a lime render with the existing pargetting detail replicated, this would be an improvement on the existing cement render finish. The brick plinth would need to be built out to avoid an overhang due to the added insulation. The half bricks proposed need to be a good match and should replicate the existing in bond, mortar mix and relationship to the wall face.
- 8.8 The roof is also proposed to be insulated with a breathable wood fibre above and between the rafters again maintaining exposed timbers internally. The existing roof is failing with defects in the existing dormer and the flashings and needs renewing. The existing roof tiles will be re-used where possible, but it is anticipated that a substantial proportion will need replacing. Sourcing well matched replacements will be key to ensuring the conservation of the external appearance of the building. The existing ridge line is characterful in its movement and every effort should be made to retain this character during the re-roofing.
- 8.9 The addition of insulation would result in a very low level of less than substantial harm to the significance of the building due to the external build out which changes the relationship at the windows, plinth and eaves. However, the approach proposed is considered acceptable as it conserves the significant feature, the timber frame, which also maintaining a very similar external appearance. The use of a breathable insulation and the reinstatement of a lime render finish will help to ensure the long term conservation of the building. Alongside this there are the energy efficiency and habitability benefits of providing a well-insulated dwelling.
- 8.10 Residential amenity
The proposed front dormer introduces a new window at second floor level to the front elevation. The new window serves the stair well and neighbouring properties are set well

back from the lane and so the window is not considered to pose any overlooking impact to neighbouring amenity.

8.11 Protected Species and UK priority Habitats and Species

Bat activity surveys undertaken on the site by Anglian Ecology confirmed the presence of a single pipistrelle species bat roost between the barge board and soffit on the southwestern corner of the house.

8.12 A further roof inspection for bats in February 2024 found further potential roosting features as well as droppings from pipistrelles and brown long eared in a hitherto inaccessible area of the loft.

8.13 Current plans show that a bathroom will be placed in the existing loft area and that the floor will be dropped by 500mm to facilitate this. These works therefore have the potential to cause the disturbance to bat roosts and the death/injury to roosting bats.

8.14 Works should therefore take place under a European protected species mitigation license from Natural England.

8.15 Other matters

With regards to the Parish Council's comment in relation to consultation with the Twentieth Century Society, the Council's Design and Heritage Team has advised them that we do not consider the replacement of render to meet the requirements for consultation of the Amenity Societies, which is why we did not request consultation in this case. The removal of render only affects the thin top layer of the external walls, a non-structural element (in this case using a non-traditional material), leaving the timber frame behind it intact. We therefore don't consider that it counts as demolition under the definition: "A proposal to retain less than 50 per cent of the surface area of that part of a principal building represented on any elevation (ascertained by external measurement on a vertical plane, including the vertical plane of any roof) is treated as a proposal for the demolition of a principal external wall". Measuring on a vertical plane, the external walls would be retained, with their 'cladding material' proposed to be changed.

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 controlling conditions.

11. Conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: This condition is imposed in accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in all respects strictly in accordance with the submitted Design and Access Statement and drawing nos. 204 PL 001, 110,111,115,116 and 120; received 05.02.2024; and revised drawing no. 204 PL 121B; received 08.04.2024;, 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. No works to the second floor which may kill, injure or disturb bats or damage or destroy a bat roost, shall in any circumstances commence unless the Local Planning Authority has been provided with either:
 - a) a licence issued by Natural England pursuant to The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) (as amended) authorising the specified development to go ahead or demonstration that the appropriate Natural England Class Licence is in place to allow works to commence; or
 - b) a statement in writing from the relevant licensing body to the effect that it does not consider that the specified development will require a licence.Reason: To ensure that the legislation relating to protected species has been adequately addressed as part of the implementation of the development.
5. No building work shall commence on the items below until details of the following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority:
 1. Specification of new roof tiles
 2. Full details of the porch
 3. Full details of the new fenestration
 4. Section through the bathroom ceiling
 5. Specification of the bricks for the plinth - panel on site

Thereafter, all work must be carried out using the approved materials and in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that any new detailing and materials will not harm the traditional/historic character of the building: the application does not include the necessary details for consideration.

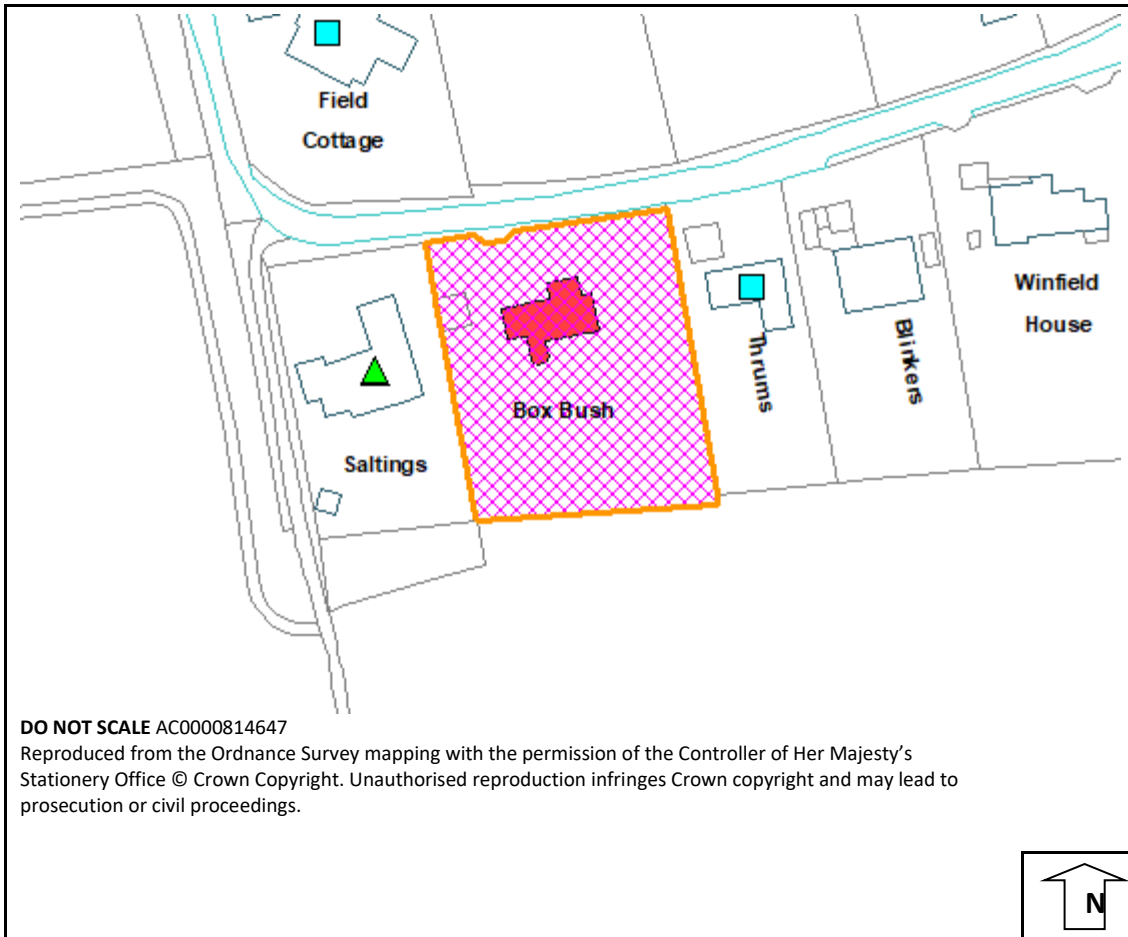
12. Informatives:

- 12.1 The Local Planning Authority has assessed the proposal against all material considerations including planning policies and any comments that may have been received. The planning application has been approved in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and local plan to promote the delivery of sustainable development and to approach decision taking in a positive way.





13. Background information

See application reference DC/24/0415/FUL on [Public Access](#)

Map



Key

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