

DC/19/2578/FUL – Three storey extension to north of property with second floor balcony; New single storey rear extension; Internal alterations; Construction of new 2 bedroom end of terrace dwelling, 11 Cautley Road.

Recommendation: Refusal

History of Application

The first application was withdrawn. This is the second application, but the file is incomplete.

- The site/block plan is out of date so cannot be relied to understand the urban grain.
- The block plan does not reflect the planning consent that resulted in the redevelopment of 9A Cautley Road, and the reduction of its garden by about 75%.
- The Heritage “Investigation Report” does not accord with WLP8.37 Historic Environment requirements for a Heritage Impact Assessment. It was not based on a view of the plans and includes a disclaimer in the last paragraph on P. 2 stating that it does not analyse their impact on the significance of the heritage assets (locally listed building and Conservation Area).
- The elevation drawings appear to provide contradictory orientations for the roof pitches.
- The application refers to out of date policies from the Old Local Plan.

Description of building/character area

The west side of Cautley Road is within the Seaside Corporation Character area in the Southwold Conservation Area and is comprised of the former Southwold Hospital (now being redeveloped) and “six substantial terraced houses all built between 1884 and 1904.” (SCAA, P. 44). The Southwold Conservation Area Assessment (p. 45, p. 61) clearly states that No. 11, the last building, is locally listed along with the rest of the terrace.

The SCAA’s description of the larger character area applies to the west side of Cautley Road -- “The area is one of predominantly quiet residential streets comprised of a wide variety of quality terrace houses generally set back a short distance from the back pavement edge behind low brick boundary walls... The terraces provide a *pleasing uniformity in construction materials and in scale and proportion*. The *repetition of narrow frontages*, or the *frequently repeated vertical elements of doors and windows* provide a *visually fast rhythm across the street face*. The frequent subtle variations in the design of the buildings’ facades prevents monotony and introduces much visual interest.”

Cautley Road has a downward (S-N) slope. The three southern buildings are lower and appear more delicate – two have decorative balconies at first floor level above their entry porches. In the north group of three buildings that ends with No. 11, the glazing lines line up horizontally – this feature is critical to preserving the rhythm that makes the terraces sit comfortably together notwithstanding small differences of detailing.

The east side of Cautley Road has a different character – modest low-lying social housing “cottages” with pleasant front gardens creating a homely feel that extends to the two story social housing flats on Hotson Road.

Compared to the rest of the terrace, No. 11 has a very small rear garden. Its most important amenity space is its side garden whose north boundary is the Guide’s Hut. The garden acts, as a visual gap and transition to the single story community facility and two story social housing on Hotson Road, which are built on the bottom of the slope.

Key issues with proposed plan

The extension is to create three ensuite bedrooms on the first floor; an ensuite bathroom on the second floor; a rear “garden” room on the ground floor (increasing the latter by about a third), a garage for two cars

PLUS the developer seeks a new two bedroom house with one car parking space.

The latter would be built on the side garden with a flying freehold consisting of two floors above the proposed two car garage for the original house.

Many of the design issues described below flow from the fact that plot on which the existing house sits, because of its size and shape, is not large enough to accommodate **both** an extension and a new house.

1. The extension and new build are read as a single new end of terrace building whose width, roof lines (a combination of north-south and east-west pitches, although this is hard to understand in the plans), windows (irregularly sized and placed within the elevation), and front bay brings the locally listed terrace to an incoherent end stop that does not relate to the rest of the terrace in regards to rhythm/ symmetry etc.

The second story balcony is just one example. Removing it would not change the fundamental problems with the scheme – the fact that its design in all respects breaks with the character of uniformity in scale and proportion and rhythm created by frequently repeated and aligned vertical and horizontal detailing that are subtly varied in a way that interests but does not disturb the eye.

2. The combined new structures are three stories (unusual in Southwold on a side street) and built up to the boundary of the community facility. Whatever is built needs to step down from the three stories of 11 and gently transition to the one- and two-story buildings, which are even lower because they are at the bottom of the slope, AND also leave adequate visual breathing space in the streetscape.
3. The new house provides an unacceptable level of amenity – the garden is only 3 metres by 6 metres according to our measurement whilst the existing dwelling loses about 2/3 its garden.
4. A resident of the flats on Hotson Road whose bedroom and sitting room will face the new scheme, confirms that it would be over-bearing and potentially affect their light and privacy.
5. The community facility has concerns about access to the Guide Hut for repairs and loss of light. The loss of a gap to this building will affect the street scene.
6. The elimination of the north garden, combined with the loss of most of the garden of 9A Cautley Road, would create an unacceptable cumulative impact on the density of development and green character of the area.
7. This car dominated scheme does not respect the boundary pattern of both sides of the street, with setbacks for front gardens that contribute to the street’s green character.

8. The new property will be at an angle to the rest of the road – this will appear incongruous with the rest of the street scene.

Relevant Policies

WLP8.29 – Design. Fails to demonstrate a clear understanding of the form and character of the built, historic and natural environment and use this understanding to complement local character and distinctiveness. It does not respond to local context and the form of surrounding buildings in relation to: the overall scale and character; layout; site coverage; height and massing of existing buildings; the relationship between buildings and spaces and the wider street scene and townscape. It does not protect the amenity of the wider environment; neighbouring uses and provide a good standard of amenity for future occupiers of the proposed development.

WLP8.33 – Residential Gardens and Urban Infilling. The scale, design and siting of the proposal is not in keeping with the character and density of the surrounding development and would generate a cramped for development. The proposal does not provide attractive, useable, and proportionately sized amenity spaces. It does not, by way of design, siting and materials integrate into the surrounding built and historic environment. It unacceptably harms the living conditions of proposed and existing properties through over-looking, loss of light or overbearing forms of development.

WLP8.37 – Historic Environment. It causes less than substantial harm to the rest of the locally listed terrace through its incoherent design, without an outweighing benefit. The application does not include a proportionate Heritage Impact Statement and not take account of guidance on extensions in the Built Heritage and Design SPD.

WLP 8.30 – Conservation Areas. The design of the scheme does not respect the character of the Conservation Area and is not a particularly high standard of design that preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area.

Built Heritage and Design Scheme SPD, 4.11. Extensions are acceptable provided they do not detract from the character of the area and are sympathetic to the design, size and massing of the building, are of an appropriate proportion and subsidiary to the existing building. ... New buildings and extensions can also impact upon historic spaces which surrounding building and dilute their character through incongruous styling.

Policy WLP 8.32 – Housing Density and Design. Proposals for residential development will be permitted provided that the development makes best use of the site in a manner that protects or enhances the distinctiveness and character of the area and takes into account the physical environment of the site and its surroundings. Development proposals in the built-up area of market towns should aim for urban scale development at a density of at least 30 dwellings per hectare, *unless local character indicate otherwise.* (italics added.)

Southwold Town Council

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