Application Number: ADC/0032/08 **Recommendation – REFUSE**

Site: **Trelawneys Cottage, West Street, Sompting**

Proposal: **Demolition of damaged/defective flint front boundary wall and replacement by brick wall of similar height**

The Application

Trelawneys Cottage lies within the Sompting Conservation Area, the countryside and Strategic Gap between Lancing and Shoreham. It comprises a large detached house situated on the main street which runs through the village, the front (southern) boundary wall of which immediately abuts the road. It is constructed of flint but has been damaged at its eastern end where there is a section missing. The remainder of the wall has visible cracking in places and has been repointed at its western end, where it abuts a brick pier and gated entrance.

It measures 2.4m high and 10.25m long and is to be replaced to the same dimensions. There is a line of trees immediately behind the wall which are, in the view of the applicant, contributing to the weakening of the wall. It is proposed to fell these trees as part of the application.

Consultations and Representations

County Planning Services - The Conservation Architect considers this to be an important flint wall which is typical of this district. It should be rebuilt in field flint.

Assistant Parks Manager – The trees are in a reasonable condition with no obvious signs of damage or decay. Although of some significance, these trees are of more benefit to the owners than the general street scene. The trees would not be considered for a TPO and permission should be given to fell them.

Adur District Conservation Advisory Group – Support the Conservation Architect's findings. The loss of the flint wall would be unacceptable.

Third Parties – 1 letter of objection received. The grounds for objection are:

- Site is within a Conservation Area where important features and characteristics need to be protected
- Flint walls are a feature of the village
- It should be replaced with a similar flint wall, not brick

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-2016 (WSCC 2005): LOC1, CH1, CH4
Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993 – 2006 (ADC 1996): AG1, AB4, AB6, AB23

Planning Assessment

Policies

Policy CH4 of the West Sussex Structure Plan states that permission should not be permitted unless character and appearance of conservation areas is preserved and, where possible, enhanced. The use of traditional or appropriate materials is expected in all new developments.

Policy AB4 of the Adur District Local Plan requires development to be of a high standard of design and construction materials while Policy AB6 requires the retention of original features within conservation areas.

Visual amenity and impact on the Conservation Area

The existing wall is in poor state of repair and it is clear that works are required to make it structurally sound and to improve its appearance. However, as the wall is located in a prominent position within the conservation area, it is important that any repair or replacement is carried out as far as possible using traditional materials.

Flint is a common material within Sompting village and the conservation area and there are other examples of flint walling in close proximity to the site. To demolish the wall at Trelawneys Cottage and rebuild it in brick would not preserve or enhance the historic character or appearance of the conservation area and would detract from the street scene at this location. The wall should be rebuilt using traditional flint, as recommended by the Conservation Architect.

With regard to the trees to be felled, the Assistant Parks Manager is of the view that they are not worthy of retention and considers that they are of little benefit to the street scene. This is not a view shared by the planning officer. The trees collectively form an attractive feature in this semi-rural area and are considered to add to the character of the conservation area. Their loss would be regrettable. Consequently, while the comments of the applicant in respect of damage to the wall caused by the trees are noted, it is considered that if the applicant wishes to fell the trees he should notify the Council in writing with a survey report to support the case for felling.

Recommendation

REFUSE for reason that:-

The site lies within an area designated as a Conservation Area and the proposed loss of the flint wall and its replacement with a brick wall, by reason of the use of unsympathetic and non traditional materials, and the resulting loss of trees, would conflict with the aim of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of such areas, and would be contrary to Policy CH4 of the West Sussex Structure Plan and Policy AB4 of the Adur District Local Plan

Case Officer P Barnett ..... Date 15/2/08