expires 17/7/08

Application Number: ADC/0279/08 Recommendation – APPROVE

Site: Trelawneys Cottage, West Street, Sompting

Proposal: Replacement front boundary wall (2.4m high with flint and brick facing to highway)

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 and to reduce the level of the raised bank behind the existing wall.

A previous application to rebuild the wall in brick was refused earlier this year (ADC/0032/08) due to its unsympathetic appearance and resulting harm to the Conservation Area. This application seeks to rebuild it with a flint facing, salvaged from the existing wall and red brick quoins, piers, string courses and coping.

Consultations and Representations

County Architect – This is a traditional wall design. It will not be out of keeping in this location.

Assistant Parks Manager – (Comments on previous application ADC/0032/08) - 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.

Third Party Representations – none received

ADCAG - No objection

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 have preserved or enhanced the historic character or appearance of the conservation area and would have detracted from the street scene at this location.

Following the refusal of the previous application, discussions with the applicant have resulted in this revised scheme which proposes to rebuild the wall with a flint-faced wall. It will have a blockwork backing, out of public views, and will contain brick string courses, piers and coping. While not a like-for-like replacement, the proposal reclaims flint from the existing wall and will largely maintain the present character of the wall.

There are examples of walls containing flint panels elsewhere in Sompting and it is not considered that this proposal will harm the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

With regard to the trees to be felled, the Assistant Parks Manager is of the opinion 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.

However, the comments of the applicant in respect of damage to the wall caused by the trees are noted and it would be unreasonable to require the trees to be retained as they are likely to cause further damage in the future.

Recommendation

APPROVE for reason:-

1PPi Add after "properties", "or the character and appearance of the Conservation Area"

Subject to:-

1. C1Ci
2. C12A3 amended. The wall shall be constructed using flint reclaimed from the existing wall and in accordance with a sample panel to be erected on site and approved by the local planning authority in writing before work to construct the wall is commenced. Amended reason – "To preserve the special character of the conservation area in accordance with policy AB4 of the Adur District Local Plan and CH4 of the West Sussex Structure Plan"

Case Officer P Bamber ..... Date 23/6/08