expires
29.07.08

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: ADC/0299/08 Recommendation - Refuse

Site: **37 Abbey Road Sompting Lancing West Sussex**

Proposal: **Screen fence and gates (2m high) on north roadside boundary (to replace hedge)**

The Application

The application relates to a detached bungalow located on the north-east corner of the central island within Abbey Road, a residential road within the built-up area of Sompting.

The proposal is for a screen fence surrounding the curtilage of the dwelling. The fence would be 2.0m in height on the western boundary, 2.0m lowering to 1.0m on the northern boundary and 1.0m on the eastern front boundary.

The area is characterised by a variety of designs of bungalows. The gardens are generally mature within the area with a number of fences and walls at the front which are up to 1.2m in height. Some properties have high side boundaries 2.0m in height (not adjacent to the highway) and close board fencing is common.

The fence would replace an evergreen hedge that currently exists around the whole of the boundary, except for where there currently is a vehicular access, 4.0m from the most western side of the site. The existing hedge is between 2.0 and 2.4m in height for the majority of the northern side, which encloses and gives privacy to the rear garden of the bungalow. The hedge then steps down to 1.4m for the section that encloses the front garden on the NE and East side of the dwelling. The pedestrian footpath to the north of the site is 3.0m wide, made up with a 1.5m wide verge adjacent to the road.

Consultations and Representations

West Sussex County Council: The Highways authority have objected to the fence on the grounds that it would obstruct visibility for pedestrians and vehicles. They initially suggested a reduction to 0.6m for two metres either side of the vehicular access, but then reviewed their comments to request a reduction to 1.5m in height either side of the access.

Sompting Parish Council: No comments received.

Third Parties: There have been no objections to the proposals.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-2016 (WSCC 2005) (saved policies): LOC1, DEV1
Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies): AG1, AH7 and Appendix II 'Supplementary Planning Guidance' comprising: Development Control Standard No.3 'Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings.'
PPS 1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (ODPM 2005)

Planning Assessment

Policies

Structure Plan policies seek to protect, and where possible, enhance the character and distinctiveness of an area, requiring high standards of design, layout and construction (DEV1). Policy AH7 of the Local Plan states that development should be sympathetic to both the original dwelling and the area in general and should have regard to the character of the area.

Visual amenity

Within Abbey Road there are some other properties which have high boundary treatments adjacent to the road, mostly on corner plots where the rear garden space would otherwise be overlooked and privacy would be greatly reduced. No.39 directly to the west has a brick low wall with panelled fence above totalling 1.8m in height for the majority of its northern boundary, No.40 has a high hedge around the whole north and west side boundary approximately 2.5m in height, No.1 Abbey Road is in a far more prominent position at the entrance to the road, again located on a corner, with the rear garden fenced by a 1.6m in high wall and fence combination.

The applicant has stated that there are a number of properties in the wider surrounding area which have 2.0m high walls with gates and that any reduction would result in a loss of privacy. The examples given by the applicant are in roads within 0.5 of a mile however it is felt that each individual case is looked at on its own merits, and as such the character of Abbey Road is made up by the dwellings and examples of boundary treatments which directly surround it.

The proposed fence would be constructed in a close boarded style, with feather edged over lapping boards and the materials are considered to be in keeping with the type of fencing used within the area. The height of the proposed fence would be 2.0m, and it would stretch for the majority of the north side boundary, 27.5m (replacing the high part of the current hedge). It is considered that a fence of this height would be particularly overbearing and over dominant, and it would have a detrimental effect on the amenity of the streetscene. Although it would replace a hedge of similar height the hedge is

a natural material and has a softer effect on the streetscene without it appearing particularly overbearing or large.

The applicant has been requested on two occasions to modify the height of the fence, once to comply with WSCC highways, and once to reduce the overbearing effect, but they feel that due to the examples of high boundaries within the area and the loss of privacy that would be experience that they are not willing to do so.

Access

The Highways Authority have objected to the proposals on the grounds of reduced pedestrian visibility, and have requested that the fence and gates be reduced to 1.5m for 2.0m either side of the vehicular access. The applicant is unwilling to make this reduction, and although this is contrary to the Highway advice, it is felt that given the presence of the high hedge which allows for no pedestrian visibility, that on balance it would not be detrimental to highway safety.

In conclusion it is considered that the proposed 2.0m high fence would not contribute adversely to highway safety and that the materials proposed would be in keeping with other boundary treatments within the vicinity. However due to the proposed height of 2.0m which would stretch for a great proportion of the northern side of the property boundary that it would be overbearing, over dominant and would be detrimental to the visual amenity of the area.

Recommendation

REFUSE for reason that :-

The proposed fence, by reason of its excessive height, would be out of keeping in scale and appearance with the character of the existing built environment and would detract to an unacceptable extent from the visual amenities and residential environment of the locality, thereby conflicting with the policies of the West Sussex Structure Plan (CH1, DEV1) and the Adur District Local Plan (AG1, AH7).

Case Officer: [signature]
Date: 28.07.08.