Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1536/22 **Recommendation: Refuse**

Site: **35 Falcon Close, Shoreham-by-sea**

Proposal: **Replacement boundary wall and hedge planting (retrospective).**

Date of Site Visit: 23rd January 2023

Neighbours Checked: Y

Additional neighbour notification: N

Proposal, Site and Surroundings:

This application seeks retrospective permission to retain a new wall which has been constructed around the front boundary of this detached bungalow which sits at the entrance to Falcon Close, on a corner plot. There was previously a low wall and hedge around the property edge fronting the road.

A 0.9m high wall has been constructed to replace the previous wall, with 10no. 1.8m high single pillars plus 2no. double width pillars where the angle of the wall changes. In between each pillar is a trellis. The applicant is proposing to plant ivy which they hope will climb over the wall and eventually hide the pillars and trellis. The wall is rendered and painted white.

The plans also show a sliding gate across the vehicular access on the north side of the boundary.

The applicant was first advised that the application was unacceptable in street scene terms back in November 2022. He has since sought the advice of a planning consultant who has submitted a supporting statement and further plans to support the application.

Planning History:

None relevant

Consultations:

None

Representations

1 representation received from the occupier of 3 Falcon Close:

- Plans are confusing and inaccurate.
- The wall is built already and does not reflect either drawings showing the crossover in its original place on the north side.
- Concerned that permission is being sought and yet construction is already well underway.

Relevant Planning Policies

Adur Local Plan 2017 Policy 15
'Supplementary Planning Guidance' comprising: Development Management Standard No.2 'Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings''
National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)

Planning Assessment

Principle

The relevant issues are the effects on the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers and the effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Visual amenity

Falcon Close is a cul-de-sac where front boundaries are defined by low walls typically below 1m in height. The wall as built is 0.9m high with pillars regularly spaced along the entire length (which measures 10m along the eastern boundary and 12m along the northern boundary). Trellis panels sit between the pillars. A sliding gate is proposed to close the vehicular access.

None of these features can be found elsewhere in the Close and the height and the number of the pillars, plus the gate and the trellis panels, have resulted in an unduly dominant and assertive means of enclosure which is out of character with, and harmful to, the wider street scene of the cul-de-sac.

The visual impact of the wall is exacerbated by its prominent location on a corner plot at the entrance to the Close, resulting in the wall running along two frontages to the east and north.

The applicant has shown an ivy hedge planted behind the wall which it is hoped will grow over and down the wall, hiding the pillars and trellis from view. It is likely that this will take some time however, and there is some doubt whether the pillars and trellis will be as effectively screened as shown on the submitted plans. The

development is therefore likely to remain as an intrusive and visually incongruous feature.

Examples of higher walls and pillars elsewhere on Shoreham Beach have been highlighted by the agent but these are not considered to be relevant in the consideration of this proposal. It is the impact on the immediate vicinity of Falcon Close that is under consideration here and, in that respect, the wall is markedly out of keeping.

Residential amenity

The development does not have an adverse impact on residential amenity.

Other matters

The applicant has put forward an argument that the wall is needed for security and safety reasons. However, the application must be judged on its planning merits and, given that the property is within a small cul-de-sac which is characterised by low garden walls, such security issues are not considered to outweigh the harm caused by the development and the application should be refused. Other means of securing the property could be achieved which would have less visual impact.

Recommendation

REFUSE, for the following reason:

The height, design, appearance and location of the wall, pillars, trellis and sliding gate results in an incongruous and intrusive feature which is out of character with, and harmful to, the street scene of Falcon Close. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy 15 of the Adur Local Plan and paragraphs 130 and 134 of the NPPF.

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation N

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern with the proposal and discussing those with the Applicant. However, the issues are so fundamental to the proposal that it has not been possible to negotiate a satisfactory way forward and due to the harm which has been clearly identified within the reason(s) for the refusal, approval has not been possible.

Case Officer: Peter Barnett Date: 25 April 2023

Authorised by: Gary Peck Date: 25 April 2023