Development Management - Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: **Recommendation – Approve**

Site: **115 Grinstead Lane, Lancing BN15 9DR**

Proposal: **Retrospective application for new front boundary wall up to 2.3 metres high and proposed new porch**

Date of site visit: 25.04.12

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Proposal, Site and Surroundings
The application relates to the northern half of a pair of 1970's semi-detached houses located on the east side of the road. The application dwelling has been extended to the north with a two-storey side extension, and is sited, along with the attached neighbour (No.117) at an angle, (14m – 18m) to the highway, on slightly sloping ground.

Retrospective permission is sought for a front brick wall, infill railing panels, and a pair of metal gates to the vehicular access. The wall is constructed with a base wall, which is 1m high to the south, increasing in height to 1.25m to the north. The wall is topped by 5 piers 0.4m square (two to the south and three to the north). The piers also increase in height with the gradient of the street from 2m at the southern end, to 2.3m high to the north. The piers are separated with black railing panels which follow the tops of the piers. There is a vehicular access to the site which is served by a pair of arched top, black metal gates, of similar design to the railing panels.

Permission is also sought for a proposed porch, 3m wide, by 1.3m deep, by 3.8m in height.

Relevant site history

Consultations

West Sussex County Council: The County Highways Officer raises concerns regarding the retrospective application for the walls and gates. Grinstead Lane is an 'A' classified road subject to a 30 mph speed restriction at this point. The lane is a significant carrier of vehicular movements and acts as a link road between the A27 in the north and the A259 coast road to the south. Grinstead Lane is the main route of access into Lancing from both of these 'A' classified roads. A footway which abuts the erected wall is present along Grinstead Lane; this footway also denotes the extent of adopted highway at this location.

At the time of our site visit it was observed that the gates were open and they did so inwards of the site. A gate set back distance of 5 metres is the standard used for gates fronting the highway servicing residential properties. This is so

that a vehicle can be fully removed form the highway while the gates are opened. A gate set back distance of 5 metres has not been incorporated into the design of the gates at 115 Grinstead Lane; however it was observed on site that other properties, particularly to the north of the site, do have gates with a similar set back distance. It would be assumed in this instance that when a vehicle leaves the site the gates are left open to allow for safe and convenient access on return to the site. There would be occasions such as holidays or extended periods away from the dwelling, when the gates would be closed on exiting the site for security purposes. As these occasions would be considered infrequent and taking into consideration that other accesses appear to be operating safety with gates, no overriding concerns would be raised to the gates themselves.

WSCC as the Highways Authority does however have an objection to the overall size of the wall and piers which we consider to have a detrimental impact towards pedestrian visibility. Pedestrian visibility is necessary where a footway runs along the frontage of a development that incorporates a point of access, particularly where there is expected to be a high level of pedestrian movement. As Grinstead Lane is an 'A' classified road, we would expect this to be the case. Therefore, pedestrian visibility spays should be incorporated by ensuring adjacent site boundaries remain free of obstruction in excess of 0.6 metres or an appropriate height which is in keeping with neighbouring dwellings with a similar access arrangement. From observations made on site I would suggest the height of the wall without the current piers would satisfy this requirement.

West Sussex County Council: On amended plans for a reduction in height to the wall and gates.

The applicant has provided an amended plan which would see the overall height of the wall reduced while allowing for a degree of pedestrian visibility through the railings between the piers of the wall. The height of the brickwork between the piers will be 0.6 metres, slightly more to the west due to the gradient of the road. While this does not meet the standards of a traditional 2 x 2 metre pedestrian visibility splay, I would considered this an improvement over what was previously proposed.

Lancing Parish Council: No objections.

Representations

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

Relevant Planning Policies
Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies): AG1, AH7 and Appendix 11 'Supplementary Planning Guidance' comprising: Development Control Standard No.3 'Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings'
South East Plan (GOSE 2009): CC1, CC6, BE1
National Planning Policy Framework (CLG 2012)

Planning Assessment

Visual amenity
The wall and gates with infill railing panels has been erected without planning permission and as such it is easy to see the impact that it has on the streetscene, and what context it is viewed. Whilst the wall has a degree of visual transparency due to the railing panels, the overall height at 2.3m at the northern end is uncharacteristically large in comparison to the surrounding area. The gates and wall have an overbearing impact on pedestrians who use the footpath directly to the front of the property, and it is felt that the height gives an overly enclosed appearance to the dwelling whereas others in the vicinity are more simply bounded with low walls and fences. A request to lower the wall has been agreed by the applicant as a result of concerns raised by the Highway Authority, and amended plans have been submitted.

The amended plans show a general reduction of the entire boundary by 0.6m. This which results in the base walls being 0.6m to 0.85m in height, and the piers being 1.3m – 1.65m in height. The central gates are also proposed to be reduced to 1.5m in height, still with an arched top profile.

The amendment to the boundary wall and gates is as a result of the reduction in height, more acceptable and less overbearing in streetscene terms. The reduction in height will be subject to a planning condition.

The proposed porch is relatively modest in scale, and given the orientation of the house, the context of the extended original dwelling size, and how far back it is set from the main highway, it is not considered that it would appear overly large or unsympathetic.

Residential amenity
The proposed porch would not have an impact on the privacy, outlook, or amount available to the neighbouring sites.

Accessibility and parking
Subject to the revised design being secured by planning condition the Highways Authority have no further objection to the front boundary. The reduction in height to 0.6m to the base wall of the wall would allow for adequate intervisibility between drivers of vehicles exiting the site and pedestrians using the footpath.

Recommendation

APPROVE for the reason:-

The proposed porch and boundary wall, (subject to a reduction in height of 0.6m), would not detract from the local environment and can take place without resulting in unacceptable detriment to the amenities of neighbouring properties or on highway safety. They would consequently not conflict with the saved policies of the Adur District Local Plan (AG1, AH7) or the policies of the South East Plan (CC1, CC6, BE1)

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Standard 3 year time limit for proposed porch.
2. Within two months of the date of this permission the boundary wall, railings and gates shall be reduced in height as per the approved amended wall detail plan received 19.06.12, unless otherwise approved in writing by the LPA.
3. Materials of proposed porch to match existing dwelling etc
4. Permission relates to approved plans:
   Notwithstanding details of boundary wall, drawing No: 2312:1 Date Received: 23.04.12
   Drawing No: Amended wall detail. Date Received: 19.06.12

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation? N

Case Officer: C. Hone Date: 28.06.12

Authorised by: P Barnett Date: 29.06.12