Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0738/23 Recommendation: Approve

Site: 17 Ashurst Drive, Worthing

Proposal: Retrospective application for alterations to front boundary treatment (Resubmission of planning application ref: AWDM/0048/23)

Date of site visit: 11.07.2023

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Site, Surroundings and Proposal

The application site relates to a detached two storey house located on the south side of Ashurst Drive, to the west of its junction with Falmer Avenue. The house appears to have been recently altered with the inclusion of a flat roof over the protruding front garage and porch area, new render finish and timber board details, and with replacement windows and front door in a dark grey finish. The front garden area is given over to parking, with a tarmac hardstanding that appears to have been recently laid, served by a vehicular access onto Ashurst Drive.

Permission was refused earlier this year to regularise the construction of front and side boundary walls and piers at the frontage which replaced low boundary walls and hedging that existed previously. The new front boundary wall measured 1.2 metres in height set within 1.8m high piers, and to the side boundaries the side walls measured 1.75 metres in height set between 1.8 metre high piers. AWDM/0048/23 refers. The reasons for refusal are as follows:

The boundary walls and piers, by reason of their design, height and resulting fortified appearance, represent an unsympathetic and incongruous feature out of keeping with the distinctive prevailing character of the locality and detrimental to the visual amenities of the site and surrounding streetscene. As such the development is considered contrary to saved policy H16 of the Worthing Local Plan, policy 16 of the Worthing Core Strategy, policy DM5 of the Submission Draft Worthing Local Plan (As Modified), and the relevant paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The current application proposes a reduction in height to the front boundary wall to 1 metre and with the 1.8m high piers to include a pier cap. A narrowed access and additional pier has also been indicated as originally submitted but this has since been deleted following negotiations. The central pier to the front boundary has also since been deleted in the revised plans. The side walls and piers would remain at the height previously proposed and with dog-tooth detailing to their top section.

Relevant Planning History:
As above.

Consultations:

The **Highway Authority** has commented as follows:

This application seeks retrospective permission for alterations to front boundary treatment. The site is located on Ashurst Drive, an unclassified road subject to a speed restriction of 30 mph.

WSCC in its role as Local Highway Authority (LHA) previously provided consultation advice for this site for similar application AWDM/0048/23, raising no highway safety concerns. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) refused the application on grounds unrelated to highways.

The proposed works were retrospectively started on 01/11/2022. From inspection of the plans, the proposed walls and piers are located in lieu of hedging along the site boundaries. The walls and piers are not anticipated to have a detrimental impact on vehicular/pedestrian visibility in this location.

In summary, the LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 111), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

Representations:
None received

Relevant Planning Policies
Worthing Local Plan policies (WBC 2023): SP1, DM5
National Planning Policy Framework (HCLG 2021)
National Planning Practice Guidance
SPG 'Extending or Altering Your Home' (WBC)

Planning Assessment

There is no objection in principle to extensions and alterations to residential dwellings within the built-up area. The key considerations are the effects on the visual and residential amenities of the locality.

Visual Amenity

The previous report noted that boundary treatments have a role to play in contributing to the character and appearance of the street. Whilst there is some variation in height to boundary treatments, those at Ashurst Drive are generally very low brick walls, less than 1 metre in height, providing continuity to the street frontage and allow planted front gardens to contribute to the landscape character of the street. The notable exception to this is at No. 16 opposite the site where the boundary wall is flanked by

2 metre high brick piers to the frontage. Nevertheless the walls themselves remain reasonably low level (less than 1m) at each side so that a relatively open aspect is still retained to each boundary at the site frontage and includes recessed brick panels and pier detailing that help provide visual relief in the brickwork.

The current application has sought to address the reasons for refusal by firstly reducing the height of the front boundary wall to 1 metre (previously 1.2m proposed). The reduction in height would bring the front wall itself within the limitations of permitted development. However the height of the side walls and piers would remain as previously proposed (1.8m) but this now includes pier caps to the frontage and a course of dog-tooth brickwork to the sides which provide some detailing. The applicant has also agreed to remove the central pier within the front wall and also revert to the wider vehicular entrance previously proposed to avoid an additional high pier at the front. The wall would be finished with a rowlock course. Although the side walls would remain at the height previously proposed, the reduction in height of the front wall and deletion of a pier would reduce some enclosure to the frontage and whilst the height of the piers would remain, the effect would be more similar to that seen at No.16 opposite and with the addition of pier caps and detailing to provide some contrast to the expanse of brickwork. On balance, and having regard to permitted development allowances, it is considered that a refusal would not be justified on visual amenity grounds in this instance.

Residential Amenity

As was the case previously, although the boundary walls would be relatively close to neighbouring dwellings, given their scale and nature the alterations to the boundary treatment would not pose any significant threat to residential amenity.

Recommendation

APPROVE subject to Conditions:-

1. Drawing Numbers
2. Works to remove pier etc and complete within 3 months

Informative

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern within the application (as originally submitted) and negotiating, with the Applicant, acceptable amendments to the proposal to address those concerns. As a result, the Local Planning Authority has been able to grant planning permission for an acceptable proposal, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

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

Case Officer: Rebekah Hincke Date: 16.08.2023

Authorised by: Gary Peck Date: 16 August 2023