Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0576/12 **Recommendation – Approve**

Site: **81 Wembley Avenue Lancing West Sussex BN15 9JY**

Proposal: **Two rows of wire (one barbed/one plain) plus metal brackets above existing north side boundary wall (not forward of front elevation) to a maximum height of 2.1 metres (part retrospective)**

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The application property comprises a detached bungalow on the east side of Wembley Avenue adjoining the narrow tarmac access road leading to Wembley Gardens. The surrounding land slopes down to the east. The site boundary with the access road is defined by a brick wall varying in height between 1.7 and 1.8 metres high, staggered to follow the changing ground levels.

Permission is sought to erect 2 rows of wire (one barbed and one plain) on brackets (maximum height 0.3 metres) above the wall (38 metres in length) to act as a deterrent to anti-social behaviour. The application is part retrospective as the metal brackets are already in place.

Relevant site history

Consultations

Lancing Parish Council: No objections (although the Committee would prefer to avoid the use of barbed wire, commenting that anti climb paint might be a possibility with plain wire as an alternative).

Representations None

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

Principle

There is no objection in principle to small-scale extensions and alterations to domestic dwellings, the relevant considerations are the effects on the visual and residential amenities of the locality.

Residential amenity

The lengths of wire would be relatively insubstantial, constituting more of a visual deterrent and would not detract from the residential amenities of neighbouring properties.

The flank of the property on the north side of the access road (No.79) incorporates two high level windows (within the original dwelling and a rear extension). The rear garden is enclosed by a wall similar in height to that at No.81.

Visual amenity

The rows of wire would not project forward of the front elevation facing Wembley Avenue, but would be clearly evident from the access road leading to Wembley Gardens. The tops of the windows in the north side of the application property are visible above the wall from the access road, and although the rear garden is enclosed by a taller wall, the occupiers have been subjected to anti-social and intimidating behaviour with youths regularly climbing up the wall (via the adjacent lamp post) and walking along its length. Intruders have also stolen lead from the flat roof of a rear extension, gaining access from the wall.

The wire rows and brackets would be utilitarian in appearance and not wholly sensitive to a residential area, albeit the immediate environment of the access road is of rather poor quality. Alternative means of enclosure have been discussed with the applicant such as adding ‘square’ trellis fencing, which would prevent people from being able to climb onto the wall, avoid any overbearing effect by allowing views through from the windows in the north elevation, but would appear more attractive than barbed wire. Unfortunately, the applicant indicates that the costs involved would be prohibitive owing to the length of the boundary, and considers the alternative suggestion of 2 rows of plain wire would not act as a sufficient deterrent to anti-social behaviour and vandalism.

NPPF states that planning decisions should aim to ensure that developments create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion.

The quality of life of the applicant is being affected by anti-social behaviour related to the public use of the access road serving Wembley Gardens (a maintained public footpath). The proposal represents a low cost solution that would act primarily as a visual deterrent and need not be a permanent feature of the street scene. [The wire and metal brackets could be simply removed from the wall at some point in the future.] Limiting any permission for only a

temporary period would help safeguard the visual amenities of the locality in the longer term, but would also impose a financial burden on the applicant (in terms of applying for a continued planning permission).

On balance, it is considered the improved security of the property and improvement to the applicant's quality of life through a reduced fear of crime outweighs the adverse visual effects of the wire (including 1 barbed row) and brackets.

Recommendation

APPROVE for the reason:-

The utilitarian appearance of the wire rows (one plain and one barbed) and metal brackets does not meet the high quality of design sought for all development in the National Planning Policy Framework, but is outweighed by the security benefits, leading to a reduced fear of crime and improved quality of life for the applicant. Thus while not in strict accordance with the saved policies of the Adur District Local Plan (AG1, AH7), the development would secure other benefits which accord with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Standard 3 year time limit
2. Approved plans
   The two wire rows shall consist of one plain wire row and one 'barbed' wire row only.

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

Case Officer: Jo Morin Date: 11 July 2012

Authorised by: Peter Barnett Date: 12 July 2012