Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1028/23 Recommendation: Approve

Site: Rosecroft, The Street, Shoreham-by-sea

Proposal: Retention of fences with heights between 1.7m to 2.1m high (retrospective)

Date of Site Visit: 3rd August 2023

Neighbours Checked: Y

Additional neighbour notification: N

Proposal, Site and Surroundings:

The application relates to a detached bungalow at the northern end of The Street, within the Old Shoreham Conservation Area. It sits adjacent to the built up area boundary with fields rising to the Downs to the north. The Grade II listed Adur Lodge and its listed tall flint wall lie opposite the site to the south east.

Retrospective permission is sought to retain a closeboard fence which has been erected along all boundaries of the property. The ground undulates and the height of the fence varies from 1.7m to 2.1m high.

Planning History:

AWDM/0128/23 - Raising of the roof ridge height and remodelling of bungalow to form a two storey pitched roof dwelling, with raised patio to rear - approved

Consultations:

West Sussex County Council: Public Rights of Way: The fencing is approximately 2.5m away from the Footpath at its nearest point and there are open views to the north. On this basis, I have no objection.

Adur and Worthing Councils: Trees and Landscape Officer: Original Comments: I do not consider that the trees planted are sufficient to "soften" the effect of the fencing on their own, and that a lower understory of shrubs or hedging is required.
Further comments: I consider that the plants specified are of an acceptable size and numbers

Representations

Objection received from the occupiers of 8 The Street:

This is a retrospective application and the damage has already been done with respect to removal of trees and planting along the footpath.
Would be good if replanting of native species on the northern side of the fence could be a condition of approval to accelerate recovery.

The main problem is with the eastern 30m of the fence, forward of the front line of the house. Previously this was a low fence, approx 1m high, permitting views from the footpath over the Conservation Area and across to Adur Lodge. The new fence is up to 2m high and now taller than the ridge height of the property cutting off all views to the south. A solution might be to reduce the height by 300-600mm in this section and replace with open trellis.

This boundary is important to the Conservation Area, and if permission had been sought prior to construction, then no doubt conditions about height and landscaping would have been negotiated with the owners.

Relevant Planning Policies

Adur Local Plan 2017 Policy 15, 17
'Supplementary Planning Guidance' comprising: Development Management Standard No.2 'Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings''
Old Shoreham Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Strategy (ADC 2022)
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 Conservation area.

Visual amenity and impact on Conservation Area

The fence is most prominent when viewed from the footpath which runs to the north of the property and from views as one travels north along The Street. The fence has a stark appearance, particularly where it runs along the northern boundary, forward of the property. Its impact is exacerbated by the elevated position of the fence and the lack of planting to soften or screen it.

There was more planting within the front garden some years ago but it has been removed and the front garden mainly consists of lawn now. Views of the fence are therefore largely unbroken when looking from The Street. In order to soften its appearance the applicant has agreed to plant Cupressus at every fence post with a lower level of planting along the length of the boundary. The Council's Tree and Landscape Officer is satisfied with this approach.

From the footpath no screening exists or is proposed. While the fence will be a harsh feature when viewed from the path, it is not considered that the impact causes unacceptable harm and the footpath itself is outside of the Conservation Area. It will soften naturally over time, the open views to the north remain and the Rights of Way Officer has no objection. The tall and imposing flint wall of Adur Lodge remains the dominant feature in this part of the Conservation Area.

The fence on the other boundaries is not considered to have such an impact. In the rear garden it can only be seen by immediate neighbours, while on the southern boundary forward of the property it is screened by vegetation, including Cupressus which are now proposed for the northern boundary too.

Overall, with the addition of the landscaping, the character and appearance of the Conservation Area is considered to be preserved.

Recommendation

APPROVE

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Approved Plans
2. Planting, as specified in the email from Russell Goddard dated Sunday 24th September 2023 and including Cupresses Sempervirens as specified in the email from James Boys dated Thursday 7th September 2023, shall be carried out within the next planting season (Nov 2023- March 2024) and any plants that die, etc

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation Y

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.

Case Officer: Peter Barnett Date: 26 September 2023

Authorised by: Gary Peck Date: 26 September 2023