Alperin’s block-wise weight conjecture in the Knörr-Robinson formulation states that the number of irreducible characters in a nontrivial \( p \)-block of a finite group \( G \) can be expressed as an alternating sum of the numbers of irreducible characters in corresponding blocks of stabilizers of chains of non-trivial \( p \)-subgroups of \( G \). We explain how this is equivalent to the contractibility of a yet to be constructed natural chain complex associated to the block. Further, in joint work with Burkhard Külshammer, we give new refinements of the conjecture in terms of \( p \)-types of Wedderburn components of blocks over \( \mathbb{Q}_p \). (Received August 28, 2018)