

CHECAA

Craigweil House and its Environs

Conservation Area Association

'Preserving our Regal, Historic and Architectural Heritage for Future Generations'

AW-184-14-HH – The White House, 24 Kingsway – 28-8-2014

28 August 2014

Head of Planning Services
Arun District Council
Maltravers Road
Littlehampton
BN17 5LF

Dear Sir

OBJECTION - AW/184/14/HH – The White House, 24 Kingsway
To erect fencing, after unlawful demolition of boundary trees, fencing and hedging
in the Craigweil House Conservation Area and Area of Special Character

It is important to keep at the front of the mind the fact that the application property is of original 1930's very distinctive design and construction massively enhanced by the overall careful choice of materials used. It is rightly noted on the Local List as a Heritage Asset within the criteria set out in the Supplementary Planning Document 'Buildings or Structures of Character' adopted by Arun District Council in September 2005 and located in a most prominent position on the Craigweil House CA. Criteria 2-5 are applied to the building and these embrace and laud its merits as including those which are '*...extremely good examples of traditional or established style, or unusual type*'; '*those which contribute towards the local townscape or have historical associations*'; '*largely intact and not affected by later extension or alterations*' and preferably those which *make a positive contribution to their surroundings or the street scene.*' It ticks all these boxes!

CHECAA considers it important to attribute weight to the fact that the next property, Brus Lodge, 28 Kingsway is also on the Local List as a Heritage Asset, as is No. 21, across the road. **Legislation requires that they and their settings be respected and not harmed by any development or other activity.** There is no 26 Kingsway.

Immediately behind (south of) The White House is 'Little Fellows', 31 The Drive (the very first house built here by Sir Arthur Du Cros as a wedding present for his daughter. This, also, is designated a Heritage Asset and its former driveway runs alongside No. 24 with the original 'Little Fellows' garage remaining intact and used by Brus Lodge.

The site is located within the Craigweil House Conservation Area (CA) and the Craigweil House Area of Special Character (ASC) – a dual designation unique in Arun District and, we stress that The White House is at the most prominent position and sensitive point in Kingsway, the main entrance to the Craigweil Private Estate which is part of the CA and ASC. This area has been described by Officers as ‘*An important part of the fabric of the Conservation Area*’ and abutting the new fence – to the east is THE LAST REMAINING SECTION OF ORIGINAL OAK PANELLED FENCING PRESERVED AND ENHANCED BY BRUS LODGE. That fencing continues N/S on the boundary of Brus Lodge next to the original ‘Little Fellows’ garage.

Government guidance in England provides that:-

‘It is the quality and interest of areas, rather than individual buildings, which should be the prime consideration in identifying conservation areas. There has been increasing recognition in recent years that our experience of a historic area depends on much more than the quality of individual buildings – on the historic layout of property boundaries and thoroughfares... on vistas along streets and between buildings... and of ensuring that conservation policy addresses the quality of townscapes in its broadest sense as well as the protection in individual buildings.’

CHECAA finds this Government Guidance to be of particular significance in this case and within the Craigweil House CA it is regrettable to find that trees and shrubs should have been decimated by this applicant for his works within the construction industry and, furthermore, was involved, in 2012, with his neighbour at 28 Kingsway in a project to develop the land between them and, in the process, to take down trees and shrubs. Objectors addressed BS5837 at great length and he must be closely familiar with its provisions.

Indeed, on the basis of the applicant’s undoubted knowledge on the subject, the writer deferred from reporting his cutting of branches during these works to Enforcement and wrongly assumed that he was undertaking work accepted upon a 6 week CA Notification. He answers ‘No’ to both questions relating to trees at question 7 when the truthful answer would have been ‘Yes’, we suggest!

CHECAA

CHECAA, we must put on record is an association formed on the 20 January 2001 and comprises a membership in excess of 200 people each committed to ensuring that the spirit and intent of conservation as set out in Section 69 of the Act; in Policy Area 2 of the Arun District Local Plan 2003 and elsewhere is respected and observed in every application submitted for development at the Craigweil House Conservation area and that it serves to ‘*preserve or enhance the character or appearance or setting*’ of the CA and that it, similarly, serves to make a ‘*positive contribution*’ to the character and to the environment (GEN7). Much more of the Local Plan will apply to applications, of course.

CHECAA's Planning Applications Scrutiny Committee has studied this application and researched the property and is not persuaded that the fencing unlawfully erected satisfies any of the criteria of CA or ASC and, accordingly, asks that this application be refused and that the applicant be ordered PROMPTLY to take down the fencing and either to build a wall to the exact design of the existing, **using old weathered bricks to match, and/or to replace the c4' high fencing previously there and shown in our photographs. Plus shrubbery of a mature height of, say 4-5 feet in height.** The Arboriculturalist, we respectfully suggest and the Conservation Officer could be asked for input on this detail, perhaps, but that is for the Case Officer. We think it a significant CA feature.

SEQUENCE OF DEVELOPMENT AND DAMAGE TO APPEARANCE OF CA

Following on from what appeared to be extensive internal refurbishment of this property, and which lasted roughly two years, work was seen to be carried out to the front boundary, after the 1 October 2013, and it was wrongly thought that minor trimming of shrubs and trees, not TPO'd, was being undertaken with the approval of the LPA.

Eventually it was seen that the trees, shrubs and the whole fence, of trellis style in part, about 4' in height, had been ripped out and removed from site in a swift operation. Thereafter, six panels of fencing were erected **and consideration now must be given as to whether or not these acts of what CHECAA chooses to call 'vandalism' by the applicant serve to 'preserve or enhance the character or appearance or setting' of the CA and, also, serve to make a 'positive contribution to the special character of the area'(ASC) and 'make a positive contribution to the quality of the environment' as is required by Planning Policy GEN7.**

CHECAA contends that the application satisfies none of these requirements but that, on the contrary, serves only to cause damage and make a detrimental impact.

All the photographs (TO BE DELIVERED IN HARD COPY) submitted we ask to be published on the website IN COLOUR, please, for detail is lost when seen in monochrome. Further, we ask the Case Officer to view these in high quality on a computer screen when the fencing and detail will be seen.

Photo. 1 looks west in 2012, showing the destroyed area ringed in red and the site frontage arrowed with a red line. This shows an attractive and pleasant verdant area which runs on from that of Brus Lodge. If this is allowed to remain and create a precedent in Kingsway then it represents the destruction of the character for Brus Lodge may then be fenced with the loss of a massive public amenity.

Photo. 2 also looks west in August 2014, with The White House (part) marked with a red line and the remains of a stem of a shrub that has been cut off – part of the destroyed amenity.

Photo. 3 also August 2014, shows part of the new, unsightly and inappropriate harsh, cheap pine fencing (claimed to be the same as the ancient Oak of Brus Lodge) and a chopped down shrub ringed in red. The partially distorted tree roughly indicated the eastern site boundary.

Photo. 4 shows a close view of the off shrub clearly cut off to make way for fencing.

Photo. 5 looks south/east in 2012 showing the pleasant public amenity joining up to that of Brus Lodge.

Photo. 6 taken in 2012, shows the same area as is seen in the August 2014 Photo.3 and the comparison is stark. This is more suited to a modern 'Wimpey Home', built for starter homes, than for one of the most sought after marine estates in the county, built from 1930 on the famed Regal Craigweil House Estate.

Photo. 7 taken in 2012 again demonstrates the pleasant green amenity, ringed in red, which has been destroyed presumably for the selfish preference of the applicant and CHECAA says again that this is unacceptable and, if allowed and not ordered to be faithfully and speedily (this year) restored to its original form then it must be seen as the end of the beginning in destroying the character and appearance of this CA for far too much cheap, pine fencing has already been allowed. Now is the time to say 'no more'.

Finally, CHECAA feels it right to stress, particularly since the applicant has not even seen fit to mention the trees and shrubs in this application, that the very introduction of British Standard 5837:2012 states:-

'Trees can offer many benefit, including;

- Providing visual amenity, softening or complementing the effect of the built environment,
- Displaying seasonal change and providing opportunities for wildlife in built-up areas;
- Making places more comfortable in tangible ways by contributing screening and shade, reducing wind speed and turbulence, intercepting snow and rainfall and reducing glare.'

CHECAA asks that this application be refused, thus restoring just part of the beauty of this glorious Regal and Historic Craigweil House Conservation Area.

Yours faithfully

Richard D Ostler
CHAIRMAN

Established 20 January 2001

**Chairman: Richard D. Ostler: 'Silvergates', 52 The Drive, Craigweil-on-Sea, Aldwick, PO21 4DT
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