

Saffron Lodge, 46 Kingsway
Craigweil, Bognor Regis
West Sussex, PO21 4DN

My Ref: AW/344/14/HH-1

11th February 2015

The Head of Planning Services
Arun District Council
Arun Civic Centre, Maltravers Road
Littlehampton, West Sussex
BN17 5LF
FAO Head of Planning Services

BY EMAIL

Dear Sirs

Ref: **OBJECTION : AW/344/14/HH (68 The Drive, Craigweil)**

Having studied the papers for the above Application, I wish to strongly OBJECT to the proposed alterations to the existing buildings on several grounds.

1. In considering the details, I am very aware of the content of the Pre-Application advice, given by Officer Mrs A.Gardner in her letter to the Agent dated 3rd October. At this stage I am assuming that the submitted Application above contains amendments to original plans placed before Mrs. Gardner. I commend Mrs Gardner for drawing specific attention to the requirements within Arun District Council's Policies and supporting statements regarding Conservation Areas (CA) and in particular the Craigweil House Conservation Area (CHCA), within which this Application property is contained. The area is also an Area of Special Character (ASC) within Arun's Policies.

2. I would add that the house borders the beach at Craigweil, an SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest - Bognor Reef), the owner possessing the beach down to the high water mark and must be seen therefore as of particular concern regarding the proposed changes, affecting such an important classification. I note this especially as already, during my inspection of the area, builder's sand is scattered immediately on the beach side shingle of the property, outside the owner's fence, placement unlikely to have come from any other source than the property itself. Contaminating an SSSI is I believe an offence.

(Sussex & Surrey Team for SSSI's:

Phoenix House, 32 – 33 North Street, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2PH

Tel: 0300 060 6000

Sussex Area Manager: Elaine Webster--

3. From a Conservation standpoint, **I must disagree with Mrs Gardner** that the proposed plans for the east side extension are acceptable. In her letter of 3rd October she specifically, under Amenity (iii) reports a requirement that plans **“do not (must not - my bracketing) have an adverse overshadowing, overlooking or overbearing effect on neighbouring properties.”** These plans to remove the existing concrete exterior stairs to the eastern 1st floor, changing them into a broader stairway of stainless steel and timber to provide what is now described on the plans as “a terrace”, indicates to anyone thinking about this change that the use to which this “terrace” will be put, will be considerably greater than the previous, simple stairway access. It will be an obvious place to come out of the house and enjoy the fresh air of that terrace, congregating for extended conversations at least, the terrace being an ‘extension’ to the adjacent kitchen/diner on the first floor of this upside down house. On paper it may seem the change is a simple one but as I say, with a bit of thought, a newly created social position will prevail, causing

considerable annoyance to the immediate neighbour and inconveniencing the use of that neighbour's own garden space and bedroom balcony. It is a CHANGE OF USE, not strictly in planning jargon, but nevertheless, **A CONSIDERABLE CHANGE OF USE**. I do urge the Case Officer to visit and inspect these points from the garden and house at No. 70 (Mr & Mrs Fraser) to properly assess the neighbour's concerns. They cannot be assessed without that inspection.

4. In addition, by removing the broad central stairway to the south of the building, access between garden area and the kitchen/dining/communal areas on the 1st floor **will all be by the replacement stairs/terrace** to the east of the building.

5. The attached photographs illustrate the close proximity to the neighbour **at both ground floor and first floor levels**, the "terrace" being extended toward and further along the neighbours viewpoints only a short distance away.

6. Not only is the increased footprint of that "terrace" an intrusion upon the neighbour, but the plans indicate (and Mrs Gardner seems not to worry about it) the newly constructed panels to the replacement timber and steel structure are to **CLEAR GLAZING**, which means not only will the neighbour hear intrusive noise, but the adjacent neighbours and their visitors will also be clearly visible at close quarters. The height of the eastern 'terrace' balustrading surely must also **be raised to 2M/6 feet**.

7. All these factors concerning the proposals for replacing the existing side access surely must be **an unneighbourly and unacceptable intrusion** upon the residents of No.70 The Drive. I understand by enquiry that neither the Applicant nor his Agent have made contact with immediate neighbours to discuss/present these 'plans' for their polite consideration and comment. Had they done so, some of the above might have been mitigated.

8. **POLICY DEV 19(iii)** 'the extension does not have an adverse overshadowing, overlooking or overbearing effect on neighbouring properties' must surely be called into question therefore. **Para(v)** 'the extension does not compromise the established special character and pattern of the street' is also relevant to this development and the plans do not meet these requirements.

9. **Policy GEN 7(para(iv)** 'does not have an unacceptable adverse impact on adjoining occupiers, land, uses or property.....' **and at (v)** takes account of any unacceptable adverse impacts that may arise from adjoining land uses or property' similarly are not complied with in these plans.

10. The CHCA is also classified as **'An Area of Special Character' (ASC)**. I now turn to **POLICY AREA 1, Areas of Special Character, within Section 2- Area Policies**. Under (iii) of the above, the Policy states "permission will be granted subject to - the development makes a positive contribution to the special character of these areas". There is no such positive contribution here.

11. Since the construction of this house in the 1970's, a greater appreciation of what is meant by Conservation Areas prevails here and the acceptance of the Craigweil House Conservation Area, outlines the importance of that/this area as a valued part of Arun's heritage. The eclectic mix of styles and characteristics of the property here is valued. I for one am not against responsible changes and updating services to meet modern conditions. However, some changes removing the 'character' of a particular property destroy that heritage. I contend that the removal of the broad garden access to the 1st floor on the rear/sea-side of the house completely changes the character of the rear/sea side of this property. Replacement with modern stainless steel and timber changes the character and

appearance of this essential feature of the 1970's property. We must be asking ourselves, national guidelines **require proof** that **changes in Conservation Areas MUST not harm but improve their character and appearance** and does this action enhance what we have? Even though we are dealing here with a relatively late dated house in historical terms, the house has its own distinct character of that period. In this case, we are also, further closing the gap between property by the increase 'bulk' of the east side extension in particular, both width of the stairs and their length, and are therefore making detrimental steps away from what exists at present and as such, these plans are not preserving nor enhancing what exists now in terms of open aspects between property. The plans will 'close in' upon a neighbour and considerably reduce their privacy.

12. Returning to National and District Policies, Arun DC's Supplementary Planning Guidance at para 1.2 calls attention to Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990, stating "**Conservation Areas are statutorily defined as "areas of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance."**

13. At para 1.4 it says '**The principle of conservation is to protect and preserve those buildings, features, spaces, activities and uses which form the particular character and appearance of an area, whilst allowing for appropriate change and new development which preserves or enhances that special character.'**

14. This section of the CHCA has 'suffered' in recent years. **There was** a run of several well designed and characterful properties running along this end of The Drive. We have already seen the replacement of one, by a monstrous red brick clad house, entirely out of character with the area. It has not 'blended in' with time. This plan will change much of the character of this house (No.68). The poor neighbour (at No.70) with over-looking/overbearing concerns is sandwiched between these two 'new' developments, leaving his property standing alone as representative of the 1970's group, a group that was much appreciated by those creating the CHCA a few years ago. They were comparable, balanced, well-spaced and archetypal of their period.

15. It is a pity that within these plans there is the removal of the roof of the building. I do not believe that the structure is in such poor condition to warrant that. The suggested replacement however, includes not only a new tile format but also the provision of 'lights' in the roof slope directly facing the Conservation Area on The Drive. It is presumed that the north face is selected because there are also plans to install solar panels on the southern slope of the building. I ask that the Officer judging this application insists that the roof lights on the northern slope are of 'Conservation Standard' non-opening windows. I am aware that planning permission is not required but hope the Officer can influence this matter.

16. I note there is a swimming pool planned **for the south east side** of the garden. I ask that the Application is refused on the basis that regardless of the other matters covered in this letter, the positioning, the size and the effect of placing a pool as planned fails again to meet the requirements of a Conservation Area in Arun District Council Planning Policies.

POLICY DEV 19(iii) 'the extension does not have an adverse overshadowing, overlooking or overbearing effect on neighbouring properties' is clearly not met by the pool's plan. **Policy GEN 7(para(iv) 'does not have an unacceptable adverse impact on adjoining occupiers, land, uses or property.....' and at (v) takes account of any unacceptable adverse impacts that may arise from adjoining land uses or property'** similarly are not complied with in these plans. The effect of placing a pool in this particular position within the

property will have a clear and loud impact on the residents of No 70 The Drive and probably other neighbouring houses.

The impact upon the appearance of the Conservation Area from the SSSI beachfront will surely conflict with Arun DC's Supplementary Planning Guidance at para 1.2 calling attention to Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990, stating "**Conservation Areas are statutorily defined as "areas of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance."**

There is then the subject of how spoil etc may be removed from the property were the pool to be constructed. **Natural England**, details above, may/will have an interest to see that no damage comes to the SSSI Bognor Reef.

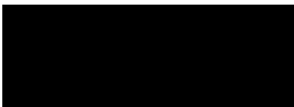
In the unhappy position where permission might be granted, may I request that the Applicant is persuaded in the light of neighbourliness and consideration, that the pool be constructed on the **south west side**, adjacent to the twitten between Nos.66 & 68. This would assist in minimising the disturbance to No. 70 The Drive as, the double twitten fencing will act as some form of sound absorber.

17. Finally, on the other side of the twitten leading to the beach from the application site is one of the original 1930's DuCros houses named 'The Cottage' (No.66). **That house is on Arun's Local List of Buildings** and stands in all its glory, a complete contrast to the new work planned for next door. To 'upgrade' in the manners suggested for No.68 further puts this original DuCros property at risk, taking away its surrounding defences should it too become the subject of new purchase and change for changes sake in the future. The erosion of what we have here is gradual but none the less effective toward destroying the very character of what exists at Craigweil.

I am pleased to see that the local Parish Council at Aldwick recognise the problems here and register an **OBJECTION** (opposing it).

For all the reasons outlined above, especially those relating to Arun DC's own Policy Statements, **please REFUSE this Application.**

Yours sincerely



Attached: 2 photographs from No.70 The Drive showing the overlooking aspect of the proposed new 'terrace' area at No.68.

CC Martyn White, ADC.Conservation Officer
& Councillor Mrs G.Brown, Ward Councillor



