CHECAA

Craigweil House and its Environs Conservation Area Association

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

AW-344-14-HH – Objection to roof change – 20-4-2014

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

20 April 2015

Dear Sir

OBJECTION to removal of clay tile roof AW/344/14/HH – 68 The Drive – within Craigweil House Conservation Area and Craigweil House Area of Special Character

We have made clear our objection to the removal of the existing traditional Sussex clay tile roof and its replacement with Welsh slate and we feel, from reading the Officer's report to the Development Control Committee Councillors, that this issue has received scant attention – far less than its importance warrants. The stark and harmful effect the change of colour will have upon the Conservation Area generally and the Heritage Asset (Locally Listed) house at No. 66, in particular, has been accorded far less weight than its adverse effect on the immediate area demands.

The site is located in a prominent position, at the junction of Queensway and The Drive and is visible from each road and, also, from the private footpath and the extended CA on the beach (above MHWL) which is also an SSSI. It is centrally important, in considering any development within the Craigweil House Conservation Area, that respect and close consideration be given to the assets recognised in the Conservation Area Supplementary Planning Guidance and, equally, to the Craigweil House Conservation Area Statement – the most detailed in Arun District – and that the descriptions of the CA assets and their merit be respected and protected by being accorded substantial weight in the planning balance exercise.

The SPG is divided into four parts, two of which require that close attention be paid to:-

1.'Detailed guidance on quality, MATERIALS and change of use' and

2.*'STATEMENT of character for Arun District's designated Conservation Areas'.*

The designation of a conservation area imposes strict additional controls over development within the area or adjacent to it and requires sound design proposals in order to secure sound design bases in order *to achieve high quality buildings to maintain the character of the area.*

These additional controls allow the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to control works which may have a negative impact on the *character and appearance of the area* – and CHECAA maintains that such will be the impact if a black roof is to be allowed where the original design concept of Auty/ Du Cros in the early 1930's which was to see local Sussex building materials of high quality used. These extra controls would serve to preserve (cause no harm) or enhance the established character of the conservation area.

The relatively new Case Officer cites, as a precedent, the roof of No. 72 which CHECAA knows to be a rogue black roof (with a cheap Chinese and not a quality Welsh slate roof and the ONLY black roof at Craigweil House CA) which was allowed virtually by accident. The applicant, an infill builder, sought to use DYED CHEAP CONCRETE TILES AND TO INSERT TWO LARGE DORMER WINDOWS OVERLOOKING BUNGALOWS TO THE NORTH AND TO RAISE THE HOUSE BY 1m ABOVE EXISTING GROUND LEVEL. This was before CA designation. Much more was subject of dispute with CHECAA and the LPA.

Following an appeal, dormers were allowed looking south only – towards the sea: those to the north were removed. The height of the property was reduced by 1m and the black dyed concrete tiles were withdrawn. Unhappily, almost by default, the black slate roof prevailed, sticking out like a sore thumb or carbuncle and remaining unsightly from 2008 to this day.

That black roof is not there by design but as a sad reminder of how unsightly features can 'slip through the net' in the middle of prolonged planning disputes.

But CHECAA contends that this unhappy and prolonged planning dispute at No. 72 does not justify the LPA in considering the black roof, for one moment, to be regarded as a precedent for, in recent years, we would have been able to show the Officer a house in Kingsway that had deteriorated into an unsightly hovel with a corrugated iron and corrugated asbestos roof to the rear and a 200mm diameter metal chimney.

One hopes that this appalling mess would not have been accepted as PRECEDENT! CONSERVATION AREA STATUS SHOULD STOP undesirable development and not be seen as a precedent and a reason to perpetuate its harmful impact, surely?

A black roof is not in keeping with the character and appearance of Craigweil and flies in the face of ADC's latest, and most detailed, Conservation Area Statement created after massive research and containing great input from English Heritage and the previous Conservation Officer of vast experience.

That Conservation Area Statement, binding on Officers and not to be ignored, says, inter alia :-

'...a distinguishing characteristic on many beach frontages is the traditional Tamarisk hedging. Herringbone and tile creasing are important features of the Auty designs and the traditional construction materials are of local (Sussex) stock bricks and PLAIN CLAY TILED ROOFS'.

And we say, 'What can be more pleasing adjacent to the beach?

Such is the case with the black roof and we reflect upon recent reports of Planning Inspectors who have repeatedly drawn attention to the first houses built at Craigweil – 'Little Fellows' at 31 The Drive and No. 1 The Drive, each built for the owner, Sir Arthur Du Cros, Bart., for his children in 1934. **Inspectors have repeatedly called for new development to reflect the character and appearance of these houses, each, including Sussex Clay Tiles. The nearest producers of hand made Sussex Clay Tiles known to us are made at Billingshurst and we wonder what could be more pleasing than to follow Auty/Du Cros by using local materials and, thereby, to perpetuate traditional Sussex skills and crafts to be seen and enjoyed by future generations?**

We ask again for this application to be REFUSED.

Yours faithfully

Richard D. Ostler
Chairman

Att: Two photographs. The single house is the applicant site and the second is the designated Local List Heritage Asset at No. 66 The Drive.