

CHECAA
Craigweil House and its Environs
Conservation Area Association
'Preserving our Regal, Historic and Architectural Heritage for Future Generations'

31a The Drive, Aldwick - AW-367-21-HH - 21-12-2021

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

21 December 2021

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Sir,

OBJECTION – AW-367-21-HH – 31a The Drive –
‘UPWARD Extension to infill detached house east of the white gate’
all within the Craigweil House Conservation Area

THE OBJECTORS

This Association, comprises some 250 members, mainly residents and many former residents who continue to subscribe to our Aims and Objectives which are, primarily, having, secured Conservation Area Status (after directions from the 2003 Local Plan Examining Inspector) and, thereafter, to monitor the merit of all planning applications and proposals and take whatever action they consider appropriate to ensure that all future approved planning proposals serve, as is legislated, to make a *‘preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area and its setting’*.(TCP(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).

1. MAIN SOURCES OR REASONS FOR OBJECTION

In seeking to limit this document of objection to AW/259/19/HH. CHECAA has focused upon the following but not to the exclusion of other provisions of development control and the experienced and knowledgeable views of the residents whom best know the CA:-

- (1) The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 - (TCP)
- (2) The TCP (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 – (CAA)
- (3) The New Planning Policy Framework – (NPPF)
- (4) The ADC Craigweil House Conservation Area Statement – (CAS)

- (5) Arun Local Plan 2011-2031- (LP)
- (6) The Planning Inspectorate Appeal Decision 4 December 2014 – (Appeal)
- (7) Local Government Association ‘**Probity in planning**’, December 2019 - (PIP)

2. The Local Plan 2011-2031

Policy HER SP1 (adopted July 2018) decrees, inter alia) that:-

*Designated heritage assets including listed buildings, structures and their settings; and Conservation Areas will be given **THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE LEVEL OF PROTECTION AND SHOULD CONSERVED AND ENHANCED IN A MANNER APPROPRIATE TO THEIR SIGNIFICANCE**..*

At 16.1.5, it is laid down that ‘IT IS THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE THAT JUSTIFIES THE DEGREE OF PROTECTION OFFERED IN PLANNING DECISIONS. The aim of the Policies within the plan is to Conserve these assets, for the benefit of this and future generations’.

At 16.1.6, it is firmly laid out that ‘SIGNIFICANCE’ is a KEY TERM. Along with ‘HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT’ and ‘HERITAGE ASSETS’ which are defined in the glossary. It is used as a catch-all term to summarise the qualities that make an otherwise ordinary place a heritage asset.’

Importantly, Conservation Areas are defined in the LP at 16.4.1 which states ‘*Conservation Areas are statutorily defined as ‘areas of special or historic, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’*

THE CRAIGWEIL HOUSE CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENT is clear and unequivocally clear in opposing any forward extensions and to allow this at 31a The Drive would FURTHER ERODE THE CHARACTER which greatly impressed the LP 2003 Inspector AND FLY IN THE FACE OF ADC’S LAW ADOPTED ON 2018. CHECAA emphases that the view of the ‘TRANQUIL’ nature of the environment when passing through the white gates would be destroyed FOR EVER in conflict with the NPPF and that the very first house built here – by Sir Arthur Du Cros for his daughter’s wedding gift – would be further compromised. Surely, this cannot be allowed to happen for, within the time residing here - part of the reason for it – what was the garden to ‘Little Fellow’ at 31 The Drive has been devastated and replaced by a bungalow at 29 and then this house wedged in at 31a!

16.4.2, CHECAA respectfully suggests is of great significance and importance for a Decision-Make to have of his/her mind when considering this application for it says:

Conservation Areas are designated not on the basis of individual buildings but because of the special architectural or historic interest, quality of the area, its mix of uses, historic layout, characteristic materials, scale and detailing of open spaces...

...ONCE DESIGNATED, SPECIAL ATTENTION MUST BE PAID, IN ALL PLANNING DECISIONS, TO THE DESIRABILITY OF PRESERVING OR ENHANCING THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA. To allow this forward extension would be to fly in the face of Council's 2018 Local Plan!

Craigweil House Conservation Area, the former estate of Craigweil House, was built by Sir Arthur Du Cros, Bart., who lived in the original house and who, famously, in 1929, 'placed the house at the disposal of His Majesty King George V and Queen Mary in assisting the King's surgeons in their endeavour to aid his recovery from serious illness'. He stayed for three months, benefitting from the fresh sea air as was required by his surgeons and, in the Spring, happily, His Majesty recovered and returned to Windsor.

CHECAA says, and the Local Plan, and documents quoted above support the view that it is important to respect the Regal History of Craigweil House for is was King George V who bestowed the dignity of 'Regis' upon the small town of Bognor.

Yet we have nothing in Bognor Regis to celebrate the presence of our Monarch for three months – and still an unique historical event within the country. We contend Arun should place greater weight – and now urgency so - upon the area by ensuring that even the slightest erosion is REFUSED. An Appeal Inspector stressed this in a Brus Lodge appeal saying that : **'preserving and enhancing the Craigweil CA must be made a greater priority and the spirit and intent of the NPPF at paragraph 196 (Less Than Substantial Harm) than may normally be merited. 'ONCE DESTROYED IT CAN NEVER BE REPLACED' to quote that Inspector. Paragraph 128 of the NPPF refers.**

'In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made to the CA environment by their proposals. IT IS FOR THE APPLICANT TO PROVE. **This applicant makes NO reference to the CA or how the forward incursion (when the verge has already been cut back by half) will 'preserve or enhance' the CA.**

Added to this, at paragraph 131, it is required that *'the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to the local character and distinctiveness be taken into account'*. CHECAA says that this development will make no 'positive contribution' at all – it will preserve or enhance the CA but will create another brick face and further destroy the character of the area in an infill property next to the ORIGINAL and greatly valued of this heritage asset which, itself, has been mutilated with a superb roof after the style of Lutyens taken away to make space for this unattractive infill.

Arun LPA fought for many years - the records of THREE REFUSED APPEALS on the site lay this out clearly but eventually planning creep succeeded in destroying what was the most valuable section of this heritage asset, but only by what was then PD demolition, before CA designation.

The 2003 LP Inspector walked the area twice wrote ‘That said, there are however, positive survivals of the of the original form and layout, including a good deal of the landscaped street form which is the prevailing impression, particularly when entering from The Drive’s western gates (white gates) near to the water tower’s access road and No. 52 The Drive,

English Heritage dwelled upon the importance of enhancing the sense of spaciousness between properties which are well set back from the road. **The application defies this. We find it shocking and unacceptable, once again, that the Conservation Officer, has failed to visit and report on a matter in this valuable heritage asset. WE ASK THAT HE BE REQUESTED TO DO SO.**

The occupant of the bungalow, 29 The Drive recently dies and those inheriting are in the west country. However, we feel it right to stress that, if allowed, this extension will further distress the bungalow by being unacceptably overbearing and over-shadowing.

FINALLY, we repeat that this application fails to meet the humblest standards within the Local Plan or Conservation Area Act – it simply fails in every way possible to ‘preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area or its setting or to make any – even the slightest – positive contribution and should be dismissed.

We respectfully ask, bearing in mind the new requirements of the ‘*Probity in planning*’ advice of December 2019 from the Local Government Association, THAT THIS APPLICATION BE REFUSED.

Yours faithfully

Richard D. Ostler
Chairman

PLEASE NOTE, AND TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THAT :

31 The Drive (next door to the application site is on the Local List and that -

52 The Drive, opposite is a Grade 2 Listed Building.

Established 20 January 2001

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