

CHECAA

Craigweil House and its Environs Conservation Area Association

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

AW-71-18-HH – CHECAA Objection – 20-4-2018

Group Head of Planning Services
Arun District Council
Littlehampton
BN17 5LF

20 April 2018

Dear Sir

OBJECTION TO – AW/71/18/HH – New vehicular entrance over Estate verge and house alterations all within the Craigweil House Area of Special Character and the Craigweil House Conservation Area.

The development site, 'Queenslawn', 36 Kingsway, Aldwick, was granted planning consent on the 20 April 1934 – 84 years ago this day! It was designed by Mr. Joshua Auty, FRIBA, the architect commissioned to establish the road layout - which stands intact to this day, much to the satisfaction of the English Heritage Historic Areas Inspector, Mr. Graham Steaggles who found it a rare, but fine, example of important 1930's preservation. During this 84 year period successive owners have lived in Queenslawn without feeling the need of another vehicular entrance in Kingsway which, apart from any other consideration, will, of necessity, if allowed, destroy the continuity of the wide Kingsway grass verge, also created by Auty and lauded by English Heritage, The purpose of this wide verge, as with wide spaces, particularly at first floor level, was to create a sense of spaciousness as part of this unique Marine Estate where recuperated King George the Fifth with Queen Mary at the former Craigweil House in 1929.

That verge is now owned equally by all resident members of the Craigweil Private Estate Limited (CPEL) who hold one share each – it is communally held and one individual resident is not entitled to develop it or to hard surface the verge. An Article 4 Direction, removing, permitted development, attached to the Conservation Area (CA) designation directs that Planning Consent is required for such works. Yet, no such application is made, despite its appearance on drawings and there exists no notification to or consent from CPEL to develop its land. It follows that access should not be considered by the LPA. Furthermore, the Site and Location plans wrongly indicate that the site extends to the roadway, embracing the verges. This land owned by CPEL cannot be taken over by this applicant except by legal process and there are none. The plans make false claims.

OBJECTIONS

1. CHECAA is of the view that, taking a fair and objective view of the development proposals presented for this heritage asset (shown by Arun as being one of the 'Buildings that make a positive contribution' to the CA); that it will serve only to detract from its long established and familiar character; that it will make no 'positive contribution' as is required by the ASC status and that it will not serve to 'preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA or its setting.'
2. CHECAA considers that, in conflict with Policy DEV19, (i) the extension will not 'sympathetically relate to and be visually integrated with the existing building its siting, design, form, scale and materials.
3. We note the extensive arboricultural work it is claimed is necessary and will be undertaken and how arrogantly the applicants tell us what action they intend to take with the verges and trees in Kingsway and Queensway – not one millimeter of the verge and not one tree is owned by them.
4. We note at Certificate A in paragraph 13 of the application form that written Notice was served by someone about something on the 5 March 2018 and, yet, no copy of this is attached and we have no knowledge of it. We respectfully ask for full disclosure of any content and of what was granted to the applicants and for these to be published promptly, please.
5. CHECAA contends that, even when cases are considered upon their own merits, issues of importance and significance should be viewed and taken into account by Decision Makers and we say that this applied to the proposed additional entrance in Kingsway, close to the junction with Queensway. The last application by the Olive-Jones's sought a similar gate in a similar position and had substantial detail and drawings of it. That application was withdrawn yet, still, seeking a new access, there is no detail of the gates, gate posts, materials so we know nothing and can address nothing except the principle of the introduction of another opening and to which we object. Five such 'precedents' have been refused!
6. We draw attention to Appeal Ref; APP/C3810/D/13/2207441 (AW/150/13 in which the owner of 'Kingslawn', 38 Kingsway – on the opposite (eastern) corner of the junction of Kingsway and Queensway, as shown on the attached plan as another of the 'Buildings that make a positive contribution' – also make application for a virtually identical in-and-out access to replace a single driveway. **The Inspector in his Appeal Decision Notice, dismissing the appeal wrote, inter alia, at paragraph 8 –**

'The Conservation Area Statement recognises that wide grass verges, as found to the front of the appeal property, form an important part of the character of Kingsway.'

The appellant considers that paving over the verge in relation to the second access would appear natural given the separation distance between the two access points and the rhythm of accesses with the street. However, the majority of properties in Kingsway only have on the vehicular access point. Therefore, two accesses serving one property would appear incongruous. Furthermore, part of the wide grassed verge, which is an important part of the character of Kingsway, would be lost at a prominent location to the junction’.

The Inspector continued at paragraph 9:

‘Accordingly, the proposed development from the appellant’s perspective are acknowledged but they do not outweigh the greater need to the character and appearance of the area’.

This clear and firm view of the Inspector of December 2013 applies today as much as it did then and aligns itself, of course, with paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework which CHECAA says is also breached and this says:

‘Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use’. CHECAA says that this development proposal fails to meet this NPPF test.

Next to Queenslawn, at 34 Kingsway was a similar such application for an in-and-out driveway in a much smaller mock Georgian house to be found under AW/50/05 that was Refused and the Dismissed upon Appeal under reference APP/C3810/A/05/1186224 on the 25 November 2005.

More recently, there was yet another at 37 Kingsway – a bungalow across the road – where an in-an-out driveway was also Refused and the development plan re-submitted, and approved, without it.

7. CHECAA respectfully suggests that the concept of in-and-out driveways at Craigweil is a design feature not liked or popular with either the residents, the LPA or the Inspectorate and that applicants and Agents should start to understand this. The very thought of devouring more and more of the wide grassed verges – the initial 1930 Sir Arthur Du Cros/ Joshua Auty FRIBA, design concept, as with the wide spaces between substantial properties is simply not acceptable. In this case, as with them all, it destroys the impressive public amenity value of the continuity of the green swathe of grass verge – a rare sight as time goes by and one to be cherished and preserved – and that is what conservation area designation is all about. Owners should think of enhancing and not destroying.

8. Sadly and somewhat distressingly to CHECAA is the fact that one of these applicants, Mrs. Olive-Jones, the latest arrival on the estate, is now the CPEL Director of VERGES!

9. Trees have not been addressed in detail because this applicant submitted much inaccurate data on the last application that we find ourselves unable to trust to ANY of those now submitted, and we cannot get access. However, one thing seems certain from the extent of their survey and it is that they seem to think they own the verges (they DO own the south strip in The Drive) and the trees upon them. THEY DO NOT and we repeat what we have recorded many times as owner after owner has tried to build a house and fell trees etc - and it is that the magnificent Horse Chestnut on the west side of Queensway and close to the corner with Kingsway WILL be harmed because it is at risk with this, as well as previous, development proposal. Works and the laying and storing of materials cannot fail to harm or kill this noble tree which was one of an archway of 14 in 1978 – a wonderful sight that had mindlessly been butchered. We ask that the Tree Officer take especial care of this tree which we asked to be TPO'd.

Please refuse this application.

Yours faithfully

Richard D. Ostler
Chairman

Attached: Plan of area and all houses mentioned – all designated by ADC.

Established 20 January 2001

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

