

CHECAA

Craigweil House and its Environs Conservation Area Association

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

AW/91/13 – 22 The Drive – front wall – 12-6-2013

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

BY EMAIL ONLY

12 June 2013

Dear Sir

OBJECTION: Proposed front wall and gates – 22 The Drive – AW/91/13 within the Craigweil House Conservation Area AND Area of Special Character

CHECAA is an association of over 200 members dedicated to the protection of this Regal and historic estate and to ensuring that representation is made to the LPA whenever a planning application appears to threaten its integrity or fail to 'preserve or enhance', as required in a Conservation Area (CA) or 'makes a positive contribution to the special character of these areas, particularly with regard to the characteristics included in the descriptions for each given in supplementary planning guidance' as is required in an Area of Special Character (ASC). **The Planning Applications Scrutiny Committee of CHECAA has studied this application and is not persuaded that it satisfies any of these planning criteria, nor that it complies with Policy GEN7.**

This short spur and cul-de-sac from the main road named The Drive, is a tranquil; leafy, dreamy back water which is a virtual oasis, with a very special sense of place, set back from the main road and enjoying its own privacy and very special identity within the overall established character that is Craigweil. This is what was created at one stage of the evolution of the Craigweil House Conservation Area where development started in 1933 and went on, in phases, with a significant gap during and after World War 2, to deliver that which was designated in April 2009 by Arun District Council as its very latest Conservation Area. Even some planning officers appear to think, erroneously, that there has been extensive infilling within this CA and that is totally wrong for the eclectic collection of properties and layouts has been dictated by the era in which they were built and the last original plots were sold in the late 1980's and 1990's. And they were built, of course, without the constraints of any of the existing designations or the Local Plan.

The applicant makes no claim that the planning proposal *'preserves or enhances the character or appearance of a Conservation Area or its setting'* and we say that it does not and that the application should, therefore, fail. CHECAA contends that the insertion of a hard brick wall at this point will be ugly, unsympathetic to the character of the area and damaging to the special, individual setting of this precious little 'time capsule'.

If enclosure is deemed necessary then, following the CA Statement, it may be better and undamaging to have the existing *'pleasing sense of enclosure'*, described by the English Heritage Historic Areas Adviser, maintained with attractive shrubs. Brick walls and iron fencing – probably bent light steel and not genuine solid Sussex wrought iron – have no place in this location and will represent a destructive, not enhancing element, in our view. *Furthermore, we consider, if granted, then compliance with 1m height should prevail.*

Nor does the applicant claim to have made a *'positive contribution to the special character of the area...'* and No.22 The Drive pleasantly and appropriately carries on the much lauded open verge and vegetated boundary as does No. 20 and beyond.

Mention is made in the index online of a 'Tree Survey' but there is none – merely a drawing claiming to indicate tree locations – by someone, but not an arboriculturalist! Elsewhere, it is mentioned that the writer has the telephone number of Ian Brewster, the District Principal Arboriculturalist; that the foundations will be hand dug and that ***'bridging arrangements will be made if any evidence is found of potential damage to the trees'***. Presumably – and it is not for us to presume but for the applicant to state his intentions – this applicant makes oblique reference to the requirements of BS5837: 2012 and to encountering roots of the nearby trees which are of great public amenity value. There is no facility for ***'bridging'*** tree roots – they grow on the circumference, they are not drains - but, by implication, the risk to trees is acknowledged and we ask that these be inspected by the ADC Arboriculturalist; that Tree Preservation Orders be made for their protection if appropriate and that instructions as to any form of construction technique be given if this application is granted.

Policy GEN7 needs to be addressed and satisfied and this requires that planning permission will only be granted, inter alia, if the scheme:

- (ii) *'demonstrates that it responds positively to the identified characteristics...to create attractive places and spaces with the needs of people in mind and respects and enhances local distinctiveness'. 'does not have an adverse impact on adjoining occupiers, land, uses...'*
- (iv) *'takes account of any unacceptable adverse impacts that may arise from adjoining land uses or property'.*
- (vi) *'retains significant open or wooded areas which, **in their own right**, make a material contribution to the local environment'.*

CHECAA contends that this scheme fails to satisfy any of the above criteria and is seriously in conflict with Planning Policy GEN7.

We say that to allow this application will be to destroy that tranquil; open; calm ambience around 22 The Drive and set another precedent for the hard, 'Berlin wall' style of development and enclosure of properties that flies in the face of the advice of English Heritage and the basis of CA and ASC designations as laid out in the CA Statement and ASC SPD – all of which reflects the original concept and aspirations of the owner Sir Arthur Du Cros and his eminent Architect Joshua Auty, FRIBA.

Enclosures such as this proposal reflect the destructive 2m boarding with concrete posts and concrete gravel 'boards' approved recently in Queensway, east Craigweil where a Planning Officer granted consent and would have long-standing residents believe that these highly damaging, hard structures serve to preserve or enhance and to make a positive contribution to the environment when just the reverse is the case. CHECAA maintains that they do not: they destroy our valued environment and we live here.

We trust that better judgement will prevail in determining this application, in which CHECAA can see no merit. We ask that this application, please, be refused.

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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