



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

President: The Countess of Harewood

Vice-presidents: Lady Legard, Peter Goodchild, Nick Lane Fox

www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk

Mrs C Griffiths
Planning Officer
Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Cleveland House
Kirkleatham Street
Redcar
TS10 1RT
Claire.Griffiths@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

Mrs Val Hepworth
Trustee
Conservation and Planning

conservation@yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk

26th April 2024

Dear Mrs Griffiths

R/2023/0746/RSM RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF 56 HOUSES WITH ASSOCIATED ACCESS, OPEN SPACE, LANDSCAPING, PARKING AND DRAINAGE INFRASTRUCTURE. (Resubmission). LAND OFF TREFOIL CLOSE AND MEYNELL AVENUE, GUISBOROUGH.

On behalf of the Yorkshire Gardens Trust (YGT), I wrote to you on 8th December last year about the above planning application and the damage that we consider it would cause to Tudor Croft gardens if implemented.

We understand that you and the planning committee have not visited Tudor Croft, and although there are many factors to be taken into account to determine this planning application, we are strongly of the opinion that in order to understand the significance of the gardens and the impact of development, a site visit is highly desirable. In fact, in YGT trustee's view, it would not be possible to reach a fair and balanced decision without a site visit which included the gardens.

You will know that YGT, an educational and amenity charity, works in partnership with the Gardens Trust in respect of the protection and conservation of historic parks and gardens and has had many years researching and developing expertise in our regional park and garden heritage. (The Gardens Trust (GT) is the Statutory Consultee with regard to any proposed development affecting a site listed by Historic England (HE) on their Register of Parks and Gardens.)

Tudor Croft, Stokesley Road, Guisborough is a significant Arts and Crafts designed house with associated gardens dating from 1934. (See Appendix). Its significance is such that it has featured in a long article in 'Country Life' (August 30th 2007) in which the author wrote:

"The result is a richly harmonious Arts-and-Crafts garden in keeping with Crossley's house, and containing a number of facets after the style of Lutyens and Jekyll"

"... Tudor Croft is perhaps the only large private garden built in Teesside during the 20th century and it is a fine example of a garden of its time".

The gardens include rock work by the nationally important Backhouse nursery of York and are laid out as a series of 'rooms' interlinked through a succession of vistas, including the 'borrowed landscape' of Highcliff, which dominates the views from the garden to the south and towards the

moors. Tudor Croft gardens include a filmy fern cave, distinguished from other sorts of fern caves by the glass roof; a rare survival (* see below).

As a rare example of an 'inter-war 'suburban' garden attached to the house it was designed for and that still exists, Tudor Croft is on a par with the National Trust garden, Goddards at York. In design terms and planting Tudor Croft has similarities with the great National Trust gardens of Hidcote (Gloucestershire) and Sissinghurst (Kent) and in the north, St Nicholas, Richmond and York Gate, Adel, Leeds. York Gate, a one-acre garden created between 1951 and 1994 has now been added to the HE Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest.

Tudor Croft, we suggest, easily meets the criteria for being designated as a Registered Park and Garden. It is the only mid-20th century garden in this region that meets these criteria. As such, we draw attention to the importance of the buffer zone provided at present by the Open Space to the south and east of the garden. This space not only provides an aesthetic buffer as to visibility, but also a key ecological reservoir for the interpassing of pollinators, birds, reptiles (Including nearby great-crested newts) and small mammals. Development of this open space would harm the health of the garden by diminishing its vital contact with the natural world beyond its borders. Again, we suggest that this can only be appreciated by a site visit.

Similarly, otters are known to pass up and downstream using the beck and bankside that passes through the garden. Otters require clean, unpolluted water to thrive, and are currently inhibited by the sewer overflow. This overflow, we understand, would also receive additional new volumes from the proposed development, adding further damage to this unique and precious site.

Tudor Croft gardens are a significant heritage and horticultural asset to the area, much appreciated by locals and visitors alike who have visited since 1954 raising huge sums for charity. The gardens provide employment for several skilled gardeners and some twenty-three volunteers also drawn from the community. We feel sure that the owners Mr Heagney and his sister Miss Heagney would welcome a site visit and YGT would much appreciate your confirmation that this can be arranged.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Val Hepworth

Trustee Conservation and Planning

Cc Dr Tristan Learoyd, Chairman Redcar and Cleveland BC Regulatory Committee (tristan.learoyd@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk ; Conservation@ the Gardens Trust

APPENDIX: Tudor Croft, Guisborough, Further Information

John Crossley ran a brickworks in Comondale, near Guisborough with his son Alfred. When it closed down in 1885 Alfred emigrated to North America. His son Ron was born in America but the family returned and they bought back the brickworks, and the whole village of Comondale.

Ron Crossley and his wife Lilian built their house in the Arts and Crafts style using his company's special hand-made sand-faced 'Tudor' bricks, and therefore named their home 'Tudor Croft'. He employed his friend Robert 'Mouseman' Thompson to panel the entire living and dining room with oak panelling including an inglenook fireplace, front door and beams. All of these have carvings of Mr Thompson's famous trademark mouse. The south face of the house features a loggia beneath a balcony which is supported by a large Thompson oak beam engraved 'RGC 1934'.

Ron engaged Backhouses of York (of the famous Darlington Quaker family), to design and build the garden. It is known that Mr Everard, who later set up a nursery of his own at Melsonby, worked for

Backhouses at Tudor Croft. It is also clear that Ron influenced the design because Crossley bricks and many ornaments feature in different parts of the garden. Thousands of tons of stone were used in the construction of the garden with much of this stone originating from Gisborough Priory, reused after the Dissolution and then re-used again at Tudor Croft. Along with all this dressed stone he collected many carved Priory stones which have since been catalogued by English Heritage.

- Filmy Ferns (*Trichomanes* and *Hymenophyllums*) were grown in a fern cave with a glass roof. Tudor Croft is a really late example of a filmy fern cave; searching the HE site brings up only two, both 19th century examples - Warley Place (the Backhouse Filmy Fern cave there is a now a complete wreck) and the other at Penjerrick, in Cornwall. The owners were Quakers from the Fox/Barclay family, so the likelihood of Backhouse involvement is high, although not apparently documented. Both these sites are Grade II listed on the basis of the designed landscape and gardens.

Ron Crossley died in the late 1940's and Tudor Croft was sold to the Heagney family in 1952. The garden had become overgrown with the rose pergola impassable, and many features lost in the undergrowth. It took ten years of hard work by two full time gardeners and all the members of the family to bring the garden back to some sort of order. Lost paths, steps and features were discovered and restored.

Many of the original trees and shrubs still have their metal identification labels from when they were planted in the 1930s. Meanwhile all trees, shrubs, perennials etc. planted since the 1990s have been painstakingly catalogued and are clearly, but subtly labelled. When I last visited, this extraordinary collection stood at about 3750 different plants. This is why the garden is sometimes referred to as a Botanic Garden. The garden has featured twice on BBC's 'Gardeners' World' and in many publications.