

Listed buildings and conservation area in Silver End nr. Witham Essex

Dear Sir,

Could you please discuss with your committee the situation we have here in Silver End.

Silver End has one of the largest conservation areas in the Braintree district with 35 Grade II listed houses within its boundary.

Two of these listed houses namely 'Le Chateau' and 'Craig Angus' are officially, as you may know, are on the 'listed building at risk' register and are both privately owned and occupied. These houses are two of only three detached houses designed in the internationally important modern movement style. Built in 1927 these iconic flat roofed houses were built for managers at the Crittall factory in Silver End.

I have attended meetings with Essex Historic Buildings Trust and with officers of Braintree District Council to discuss the dilapidated state of these properties.

An important factor regarding both houses is that whilst owners have a moral duty to keep these properties in good repair it appears that they do not have a legal duty unless there is danger to the public by parts falling on them.

Compulsory purchase by the local authority could be the way forward in extreme cases, however I wonder of a type of incentive scheme could be effective?

Some suggestions:

- a. Give a 10-20% discount on Council Tax bill if property kept in good condition
- b. Buildings inspected every 2 years
- c. If in poor condition discount stopped until repairs are complete
- d. Inspections carried out by representatives of Essex County Council, Braintree District Council and Silver End Parish Council.
- e. If owners of listed buildings had to sign a legal charter, this could be used to partly finance a scheme such as this. Should owners neglect their buildings not only could they lose a discount, their council rates could be increased until repairs are carried out. To make this fair a grant/loan scheme would need to run parallel with this in cases of extreme hardship.

Regarding the conservation area in Silver End, this has currently an article 4 direction in force. However this has not stopped in many cases, inappropriate windows, doors, aerials, satellite dishes, fences and drives being installed by the owners.

Braintree District Council planning enforcement officers appear not to have the manpower or the resources to be very effective, consequently the conservation area is deteriorating year on year.

Yours sincerely

Alan Waine                      Chairman Silver End Parish Council