

**Planning Committee:** 06 December 2004  
**Application No:** W 04 / 1281

**Principal Item Number:** 05

**Town/Parish Council:** Leamington Spa  
**Case Officer:** John Beaumont  
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**Registration Date:** 08/07/2004  
**Expiry Date:** 02/09/2004

**Quicks Site, Station Approach, Leamington Spa, CV31 3PS**

Demolition of all existing buildings and redevelopment for 3 linked buildings to provide 183 apartments, alterations to access and associated works, including construction of decked car parks. FOR Miller Homes & Quicks Finance Ltd.

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**This report is brought before members as a preliminary report setting out the key issues requiring assessment in order for a site visit to be held prior to the complete report being available at the January 4th meeting.**

**SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS**

Leamington Spa Town Council have the following comments:-

- Express concern at the impact of increased vehicular movements at the junction with Avenue Road, particularly in the vicinity of the existing mini roundabout.
- A five storey development is considered intrusive and will over dominate the surrounding streetscene. A four storey alternative is preferable.
- The opportunity should be taken, via legal agreement, to ensure the provision of significant social (affordable) housing.
- The Council notes with concern the absence of CCTV cameras and in many areas adequate lighting along the public footway leading from the railway station to the town centre via Station Approach and the rear of the college campus off York Road. It is submitted that the opportunity should be taken to obtain improvement in this important access route to the town centre, having regard to the reliance within the application on the proximity of the site to public transport.

The Town Council has written further to emphasise the fact that given the selection of the Quicks site for residential purposes is justified in part by reference to accessibility to public transport facilities, then a financial contribution should be sought from the applicant to upgrade the public footway leading from the railway station and other public transport links to this site.

Neighbours: Three letters have been received from residential neighbours (two from Avenue Road and one from York Road). The main points of concern/objection are:-

- Whilst residential use of the site is preferred, the density of the development will lead to significant traffic and parking problems for the area with consequent adverse effects on highway safety.
- The amount of development proposed constitutes overdevelopment of the site.
- The height and scale of development is inappropriate and unsympathetic to the area, likely to dominate the Avenue Road houses in particular.
- The number of flats is far in excess of previous guidelines set out in the document "A Practical Vision" issued in 1999.
- The development will overshadow the Avenue Road houses, be visually intrusive to these properties and will adversely affect their privacy.
- The large number of additional flats is not needed in the area, given the existing numbers of flats allowed in recent times.

Letters have also been received from other neighbouring properties/uses as follows:-

Chiltern Railways: No objection to residential development on the site; new flats will need to be designed to avoid nuisance from noise, vibration and lighting from the railway; Chiltern have proposals to build about 150 parking spaces on land between the station and Station Approach and this should be taken into account.

Avenue Bowling Club: Raise objection on grounds of loss of availability of roadside parking in Station Approach; height of building may interfere with light and sunlight to the bowling green and also light to the clubhouse; proposed mini roundabout at junction of Avenue Road, Station Approach and Adelaide Road will be insufficient for increased traffic which will be generated by the development.

Leamington Spa Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses: Accepts that the proposed new building will improve and enhance the locality but have strong concerns about impact on localised vehicle parking and considered that Station Approach should remain available for kerb side parking on both sides, whilst at the same time being wide enough for two Stagecoach buses to be able to pass one another in their passage to and from their depot. Demand from new residents additional vehicles will exacerbate the existing on-street parking situation. It is considered to be imperative that Station Approach remains available for parking without restriction.

C.A.A.F.: Site considered inappropriate for the level of development proposed being so close to the railway station with a poor environment for the residents. Choice of large scale classical blocks felt to be completely inappropriate in this location where such set piece buildings would not have been constructed. Concern about effects of the development on buildings in Avenue Road which is within the Conservation Area and the views across the bowling green.

Old Town Issues: Express concern about the impact of the density of housing and consequent vehicle ownership on traffic in the area. Consider strongly that there should be traffic lights leading into a one-way system out of the site and further traffic lights replacing the mini roundabout at the junction of Avenue Road and Adelaide Road. The site would be ideal for a no car/low car/car share scheme development.

### **The responses of statutory and other consultees**

W.C.C. (Planning): Require contributions in respect of libraries and public transport based on a development of 183 units of which 79 are 2 bed units. The required contributions are £12,580 for libraries and £8,235 for public transport (to provide welcome packs for flat residents).

W.C.C. (Highways): Comments are awaited.

W.C.C. (Ecology): Request a bat survey to be carried out.

W.C.C. (Archaeology): Request a "watching brief" condition.

W.C.C. (Fire Service): Request condition to require fire hydrants.

Leisure & Amenities: Have no objections but consider that a contribution should be made for generally improving the streetscene in Station Approach, incorporating CCTV (£20,000) and other visual enhancements including landscaping.

C.E.H.O. has noted the exposure of the site to adverse environmental impacts from noise, contaminated land and air quality and requires a scheme of noise and vibration mitigation measures to be agreed prior to commencement of development, and also development to be carried out in accordance with an agreed method statement for

dealing with contaminated land. Further clarification of air quality and its impact on the proposed development is required.

British Waterways: Raise no objections.

C.P.R.E.: Raise objections. They consider that the proposal will block the opportunity to make public transport more attractive to the people of Leamington Spa. They consider that development on part of the site to provide access to the station from the town side of the railway would make travel by rail much more attractive to a significant proportion of people and they consider that a planning brief, which would incorporate this requirement' should be prepared.

Councillor Gifford: has written in to request that this application be determined by committee.

### **RELEVANT POLICIES**

(DW) ENV3 - Development Principles (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)  
(DW) H17 - Lower-Cost Housing in the Towns (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)  
(DW) H5 - Infilling within the Towns (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)  
(DW) H1 - Level of New Housing Provision 1989-2001 (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)  
DP6 - Access (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011 First Deposit Version)  
DP7 - Traffic Generation (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011 First Deposit Version)  
DP8 - Parking (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011 First Deposit Version)  
SC9 - Affordable Housing (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011 First Deposit Version)  
DP1 - Layout and Design (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011 First Deposit Version)  
(DW) ENV3A - Sustainable Development and Energy Conservation (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)  
DP3 - Natural Environment (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011 First Deposit Version)  
DP5 - Density (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011 First Deposit Version)  
DP2 - Amenity (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011 First Deposit Version)  
UAP1 - Directing New Housing (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011 First Deposit Version)  
DAP10 - Protection of Conservation Areas (Warwick District 1996 - 2011 First Deposit Version)

### **Warwickshire Structure Plan 1996-2011**

GD1 - Overriding Purpose  
GD3 - Overall Development Strategy  
GD5 - Development Location Priorities  
TC1 - Town Centre Uses

### **National Policy Guidance**

PPG 3 -Housing  
PPG 6 - Town Centres and Retail Developments  
PPG13 - Transport  
PPG 15 - Planning and the Historic Environment  
PPG 23 - Planning and Pollution Control  
PPG 24 - Planning and Noise

## **PLANNING HISTORY**

The site has been in commercial use for many years with the current car showroom premises originally dating from the late 1970's/1980's (and subsequently extended).

A permission was granted for office development in 1992 (W900170).

Alternative applications for 146 apartments were submitted in January 2001 (W20011410) and early in 2003 (W20030183). Both of these applications were withdrawn.

## **KEY ISSUES**

### **The Site and its Location**

The site lies immediately to the north of the main railway line and comprises an area of 1.34 hectares. It is currently occupied by a collection of one and two storey part glazed/part metal clad industrial scale buildings, with large areas of open on-site parking.

The area of the site is slightly elevated and is serviced by two roads, one at site level and one adjacent at a lower level.

Adjacent land uses include the Stagecoach Bus Depot to the west, the railway hinterland to the south, the rear of predominantly residential properties fronting Avenue Road to the north, with a number of small scale commercial uses in the locality.

### **Details of the Development**

This is a detailed planning application for a development of 183 apartments accommodated in four and a half storey blocks facing towards Avenue Road, with the building form creating a solid barrier to the railway line at the rear. The proposals provide for 30% affordable housing in accordance with the adopted Local Plan requirements. The density would be 136 units per hectare.

The majority of the car parking is within a decked car park sited away from the residential blocks at the western end of the site, with the remainder in an "undercroft" below the rear block adjacent to the railway, accessed through the courtyards between the blocks. 195 spaces are provided overall.

The building frontage will be set behind a rendered wall, separating the private area from the public realm. To the rear where the station platforms are at a higher level than the site, the building will appear lower and will be glimpsed through the fairly heavy tree screen which exists along the railway boundary.

In terms of materials, the building would have a smooth white render finish, with various architectural details used to create visual interest. The projecting blocks would have raised mansard roofs to create further interest and to accommodate plant/lift shafts. The linear block to the rear will have restricted window openings towards the railway line and will be lower in height than the main blocks running towards Avenue Road.

The applicant's agent has provided the following information on the height of the development:-

"The proposed ridge height of the tallest portion of the building will be 16.6 metres and the lowest height is 13.1 metres. With the proposed level of the ground floor slab being 55.3 this equates to 71.9 for the tallest portion and 68.4 for the lowest. No. 13 Avenue

Road has a ridge height of 65.64 and the Library opposite is 66.25. I would, however, draw your attention to the fact that the ground floor slabs for these two buildings are approximately 1.2 metres below our proposed development.

Finally, we would like the following surrounding buildings to be taken into consideration, Epperston Court (three and a half storey), Manor House Hotel (four and a half to five storey) and Manor Court (eight storey)."

## **Assessment**

It is considered that the application raises the following issues:-

### The principle of residential redevelopment of the site

The site clearly constitutes 'previously developed' land and "brownfield" and its use for residential purposes is entirely consistent with the government's commitment to promoting sustainable patterns of development, particularly given its location close to the town centre and railway station. This use also accords with the guidelines for the station environs published in 1999.

### The appearance of the proposed development and its impact on neighbours and the setting of the adjacent Conservation Area and listed Station complex

The development has been designed to have a strong architectural presence to reflect the large scale buildings in the locality.

The site adjoins the Conservation Area to the north, which contains Victorian villa properties fronting Avenue Road. The closest Avenue Road properties are Nos. 13 and 15 at the eastern end where the facade of the nearest flats block would be approx. 35 metres away. To the western end, the nearest facade of the proposed development would be over 45 metres away from the rear of Avenue Road properties.

The station complex is now listed and this development would have an impact on its setting.

### The impact of railway noise and vibration, and the living environment created for the new flats, including air quality considerations

A further response from Environmental Health is required following provision of detailed information by the applicant on these matters.

### Access and parking considerations

The application has been accompanied by a full Transport Impact Assessment which has been forwarded to W.C.C. Highways. Their final response is awaited. The plans indicate relatively minor junction improvements to affected highways and the applicant's assessment basically concludes that the traffic likely to be generated by the development can be accommodated without adverse consequences for adjacent public highways.

### Affordable Housing and Infrastructure Contributions

These matters are being discussed with the relevant consultees and a final position will be incorporated into the January Committee report.

## Conclusion

In view of the scale of the proposed development and its impact on a principal "gateway" into Leamington Spa, it is considered that a committee site inspection would be beneficial in order to assess the impact of the proposed scale of development both on immediate nearby properties and the wider townscape. I anticipate that a full report on the application with firm conclusions on all material considerations will then be able to be presented to the meeting on 6th January 2005.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That a committee site inspection be held.

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