

**Planning Committee:** 08 March 2005

**Principal Item Number:** 10

**Application No:** W 04 / 2292

**Registration Date:** 23/12/2004

**Town/Parish Council:** Warwick  
**Case Officer:** Steven Wallsgrove

**Expiry Date:** 17/02/2005

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**Warwick Printing Co Ltd, Theatre Street, Warwick, CV34 4DR**

Erection of 14 apartments with associated parking FOR Cala Homes Midlands Limited

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**SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS**

Warwick Town Council

"The Town Council, whilst considering the application more acceptable, still retain concerns regarding the effect of the mass of the building and in particular the development height facing Linen Street and the railing/fencing at ground floor level, which give the impression of an industrial building. The District Council should therefore continue to seek an improved design, which will enhance the appearance and visual amenity of this conservation area site, and reiterate the Council's concern the car park grill and gates at pedestrian level should be avoided. The proposal does not include any amenity landscape area, which would improve the visual amenity at pedestrian level.

Additionally, the Town Council considers that given the LPA is fully aware of the intentions of the Town Centre Traffic Proposals to improve pedestrian facilities, the development should be sited further back to permit a wider footpath.

Finally, in accordance with DP2 Policy the LPA should endeavour to ensure that the design of this scheme both harmonises with and enhances the area and positively contribute to the character and quality of this conservation area, rather than seek to merge with the lowest common design feature of the area, the Woolworth's building."

W.C.C. (Highways)

No objection subject to visibility and footway width conditions.

W.C.C. (Planning)

No objection, but may have impacts on services provided by the County Council. They therefore request contributions of £28, 294.00 towards education and £1,259.00 towards libraries.

W.C.C. (Archaeology) recommend an archaeological observation condition.

Environmental Health recommend a noise insulation condition for airborne noise from traffic and the lift shaft and request a contribution of £500 towards air pollution monitoring in accordance with principles set out in PPG23 Planning and Pollution Control.

Warwick Society

"Although the proposed building is still bulky, lacks any open space amenity and not what Warwick town centre deserves, there have been many improvements made on the previous application. We see that the height has been reduced and no longer matches

the Woolworth lift tower, the proportions of the windows have been improved and the facade has been stepped to produce a broken frontage. We also see that the height of the Winter Garden has been reduced to two floors (see Drg. C81370/201-rev D) and in doing so an identifiable recessed attic storey has been provided. We find the south end elevation unsatisfactory and would prefer to see the bedroom windows located closer to the toilet windows so improving the aspect of the window arrangement. The decorative banding or string course should run under the window sills.

We have strong objections to the treatment of the ground floor parking with its industrial grim railings and iron gates at street level. Theatre Street is in the Conservation Area and any new building should enhance this pedestrian thoroughfare. We see the failure to address this aspect of the development as grounds for refusal of planning permission.

We would ask the Warwick District Planning Committee to refuse this application in its present form."

Lammas and District Residents' Association object to residential use as neither necessary or desirable, out of scale with development opposite, unneighbourly with adverse impact on amenity of nearby residents, unsafe access arrangements, design manifestly fails to harmonise with the historic buildings nearby, will detract from the setting of Hill Close Gardens, fails to protect and enhance the historic environment due to its excessive height, unsatisfactory parking arrangements, and no affordable housing.

#### Neighbours

Letters of objection have been received from 5 local residents on grounds of being overpowering in relation to neighbours, inappropriate design and height out of character with the historic townscape, traffic safety, lack of parking, loss of privacy, and loss of view.

#### C.A.A.F.

"There was a marginal improvement by the lowering of the building from the previous proposal. It was still felt that this was a rather bland and inappropriate design for this important part of Warwick. This should be a trend setting design for any further redevelopments in Theatre Street which was inappropriately redeveloped in the 1960's. The tall winter garden feature was felt to be too high and the rest of the design very uninteresting. The rather bland ground floor area containing parking was felt to be unacceptable and generally the overall design needed to be reconsidered in this important location."

#### **RELEVANT POLICIES**

(DW) ENV3 - Development Principles (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)

(DW) ENV6 - Protection and Enhancement of Conservation Areas (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)

(DW) ENV3A - Sustainable Development and Energy Conservation (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)

#### **PLANNING HISTORY**

There is only one relevant previous proposal. This was for the erection of a block of 24 apartments and associated parking which was refused in August 2004 under delegated powers.

## **KEY ISSUES**

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

The application site lies opposite the top of Linen Street, in the Conservation Area, and between the taller 'Woolworths' building to the north and a former filling station to the south. The maisonettes over the shops in Market Street, which is at a significantly higher level to this part of Theatre Street, lies to the east beyond an open service yard and car park.

### **Details of the Development**

The proposal, which has been the subject of negotiation both before and after submission, now consists of the erection of a four and five storey block of apartments and parking (one space for each unit) which has a stepped frontage and a stepped height due to the fall in ground levels. Where it adjoins the back of the Woolworth building, it is shown as being the same height as that building (excluding the much taller staircase and lift shaft tower).

The stepping of the elevation (to provide the visibility splay from the entrance) also means that some variation in materials could be introduced to 'break up' the facade. This includes cream coloured render on two parts, brick on the other three, and a glazed oriel 'winter garden' facing down Linen Street.

The southern end, facing the garage, would have a brick ground floor with cream coloured render above. This has been altered through negotiation and includes a decorative string course at the change of materials.

### **Assessment**

The principal issues in this case are the impact on the Conservation Area, the impact on neighbours, and traffic safety. Parking is not considered to be a significant issue since 14 parking spaces are to be provided and the site lies in the town centre where central government guidance permits development to be carried out without any parking since there is good access to public transport. Similarly, affordable housing is considered not to be an issue since the number of units is below the threshold in both the Local Plan 1995 and the First Deposit version of its replacement.

In terms of traffic safety, the access to the site has been the subject of detailed study, including an on-site traffic speed assessment. The design of the layout has enabled the maximum visibility to be provided by being set back from the road, unlike the present building which severely restricts visibility to the south and has a narrow footway. In view of this research the Highway Authority are satisfied that the traffic generated by this proposal will not cause any serious traffic problem.

The residential properties affected by the redevelopment of this site are the maisonettes in Market Street, the flats on the corner of Linen Street, a bungalow on the opposite corner of Linen Street, and the first adjoining house in Theatre Street. The other houses in Theatre Street face onto the back of the Woolworth building. This one house will be little affected since it faces the junction of the Woolworth building and Warwick Printing, which is already quite tall, while the bungalow faces onto Linen Street rather than Theatre Street. The flats lie opposite the south end of the Warwick Printing building and mostly have their outlook over the open frontage of the garage. It is considered, therefore, that these properties will not be unreasonably affected by the increase in height of the building, which is only about 2 m at the northern end; where it will then match the existing Woolworth building.

Only a few of the maisonettes over the shops in Market Street will be affected, and these have balcony access along the west side with their principal rooms facing onto Market Street. The increase in height of the southern part of the proposed development, therefore, should have no significant affect on their amenities, although there will be some loss of view towards the racecourse from the balcony access side. Views, however, cannot be protected.

The remaining principal issue is the affect of the proposal on the character of the Conservation Area, for which there is central government guidance (PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment) in addition to the policies of the Local Plan.

In the present case, the existing industrial building is bland, quite tall, on the back of the narrow footway, and is considered to be of no architectural merit (see separate report under W20042294 for its demolition). The proposed replacement building is considered to be a major improvement and, with its articulation and use of more appropriate materials, will be a significant improvement to this part of the Conservation Area. The developers have also taken the opportunity to create an interesting feature at the top of Linen Street which will be seen in long distant views, namely the 'winter garden'. It is considered that this will further enhance the streetscene and the long distance views of the historic town centre on its hill.

### **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The proposal is considered to comply with the policies listed above.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

GRANT subject to the following conditions :

A) After completion of an Agreement undertaking to cover the contributions requested by County Planning and Environmental Health.

- 1 The development hereby permitted must be begun not later than the expiration of five years from the date of this permission. **REASON** : To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the details shown on the approved drawing nos. C81:370/101 Rev B, /102 Rev. B, /103 Rev C, /201 Rev. E, /202 Rev. B and /203 Rev. C and specification contained therein, received on 23/12/2004, and 25/2/2005 unless first agreed otherwise in writing by the District Planning Authority. **REASON** : For the avoidance of doubt and to secure a satisfactory form of development in accordance with Local Plan Policy ENV3.
- 3 Samples of all external facing materials to be used for the construction of the development hereby permitted, shall be submitted to and approved by the District Planning Authority before any constructional works are commenced. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. **REASON** : To ensure that the visual amenities of the area are protected, and to satisfy the requirements of Policy ENV3 of the Warwick District Local Plan.
- 4 No development shall be carried out on the site which is the subject of this permission, until large scale details of doors, windows (including a section showing the window reveal, heads and cill details), eaves, verges, grilles, gates and rainwater goods at a scale of 1:5 have been submitted to and approved by the

District Planning Authority. The development shall not be carried out otherwise than in full accordance with such approved details. **REASON** : To ensure an appropriate standard of design and appearance within the Conservation Area, and to satisfy Policy ENV8 of the Warwick District Local Plan.

- 5 The development hereby permitted shall not commence unless and until two weeks notice in writing of the start of works shall have been given to the Warwickshire Museum as the nominated representative of the District Planning Authority. During the construction period the developer shall afford access at all reasonable times to representatives of the Museum and shall allow them to observe the excavations and record items of interest and finds. **REASON** : To ensure any items of archaeological interest are adequately investigated, recorded and if necessary, protected, in order to satisfy the requirements of Policy ENV22 of the Warwick District Local Plan.
  - 6 No development shall be carried out on the site which is the subject of this permission, until satisfactory details of a noise insulation scheme to minimise transmission of airborne noise have been submitted to and approved by the District Planning Authority and the development shall not be carried out otherwise than in full accordance with such approved details. **REASON** : In the interests of the amenities of future occupiers of the building.
  - 7 The vehicular access to the site shall not be used until visibility splays have been provided to the public highway carriageway with an 'x' distance of 2.4 metres and 'y' distances of 70 metres to the north and 55 metres to the south. No structure, erection, trees or shrubs shall be placed, allowed to grow or be maintained within the visibility splays so defined. **REASON** : In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with the requirements of Policy ENV3 of the Warwick District Local Plan.
  - 8 The car parking areas shown on the approved plans shall be constructed prior to occupation of the development and thereafter be permanently retained for parking purposes for the development hereby permitted. **REASON** : To ensure that adequate parking facilities are retained for use in connection with the development, in accordance with the requirements of Policy ENV3 of the Warwick District Local Plan.
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