

## MINUTES OF MEETING

### Warwick District Conservation Advisory Forum

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023  
14:30 via Microsoft Teams

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#### Attendees:

Cllr Carolyn Gifford  
Cllr George Illingworth

Mr Angus Kaye (The Victorian Society)  
Mr James Mackay (20<sup>th</sup> Century Society)  
Ms Susan Rasmussen (The Leamington Society)  
Ms Gill Smith (Warwick Society)

Mr Robert Dawson (WDC)  
Ms Jane Catterall (WDC)

#### Apologies:

Mr Gordon Cain (RICS)  
Dr Christine Hodgetts (Warwickshire Gardens Trust)  
Ms Cathy Kimberley (CPRE)

#### 1. **Substitutes and New Members**

None.

#### 2. **Declarations of Interest**

None.

#### 3. **Minutes of Last Meeting** (23 February 2023)

Were agreed.

#### 4. **Planning Committee Agenda**

No comments.

#### 5. **Planning Applications**

5.1 W/23/0184 – Demolition of existing single storey retail unit and erection of proposed new building to provide replacement retail space at ground floor and first floor with 3no. commercial units over (Use Class E) – 7 Bedford Street, Leamington Spa, CV32 5DY

CAF members were not adverse to the principle of development to this location, with it being remarked upon as to how much could be concentrated in such a small area. It was acknowledged that Bedford Street is known for its eclectic character, which lends itself to variety in design, however there is some continuity, such as red brick being the predominant facing material. The proposed white painted brick, with a white rusticated brick section to the first floor, was considered to be inappropriate and out of keeping, resulting in a muddled finish. It was felt that this should be unpainted brick to represent the character of a back street, though there may be scope for sensitive differentiation to the lower floors to break up the massing of the elevation.

There was also discussion regarding the fenestration, with the windows to the front elevation felt to be somewhat confused, due to faux regency proportions being paired with industrial-style, metal units. The large windows to the rear were also acknowledged as somewhat odd but necessary to provide natural light to a relatively enclosed location and the windows. It was however questioned if other options, such as a central lightwell, had been considered.

Overall, the principle of development was considered acceptable, but the details of the design were felt to require greater consideration to ensure the building sits comfortably within the surrounding conservation area.

5.2 W/23/0079 & W/23/0080/LB – Change of use of part ground and first floors and all of the second and third floors from retail use to residential use and formation of eight 1 bedroom apartments with associated internal and external works to enable the proposed conversion – 44-46 Parade & 60-62 Warwick Street, Leamington Spa, CV32 4DD

CAF members were, once more, not adverse to the principle of development regarding this site however urged caution due to the rather invasive works proposed. The plans intend to produce eight, very small, one-bedroom flats which are only attainable by the loss of historic features such as the original stairs and the proportions of the rooms. Members lamented the current trend towards the eradication of historic internal features and layouts to accommodate as many flats as possible within any space available, at a detriment to both buildings and occupants. In terms of design, the proposed balconies to the Warwick Street elevation were also not supported, as these were considered to be out of character with the surroundings.

Overall, it was felt that the proposal should be reconsidered with an emphasis on sensitive development, in order to achieve accommodation which works with the historic space available, rather than altering the listed building to maximise returns. It was also noted that the elevation drawings were inconsistent with the physical building, which should be rectified by the applicant.

5.3 W/23/0026 – Conversion of existing coach house into 2no. one bed flats and erection of 1no. detached three bed dwelling – Noor Niwas, 1 Emscote Road, Warwick, CV34 4PH

In regards to this proposal, whilst CAF members were divided in regards to the principle of development, the unsuitability of this scheme in particular was fully

agreed upon. The majority of the members were opposed to the development of the land facing onto the Emscote Road, as being actively harmful to the character of this section of the conservation area, damaging the street scene by introducing a dwelling which would be out of keeping in terms of scale, age and character. Some members noted that the site may be able to sustain a new dwelling but that any development should be subservient yet modern, with pastiche agreed upon by all members as being undesirable. The proposed development is considered to resemble a doll's house, being a poor mimicry of the surrounding architecture, lacking in material choice, detail, proportion and design.

The proposed coach house dwellings were also considered by the committee to be out of character and an insensitive development, with detailing such as the proposed large, sweeping staircase felt to be particularly unsuitable. Wharf Street is a service road, with the existing historic buildings primarily ancillary spaces to the large Victorian Villas fronting Emscote Road. Members considered that this proposal would completely change the character of the streetscape, introducing large openings for undercroft parking and being clearly identifiable as separate domestic spaces rather than associated outbuildings, and could form an undesirable example for further redevelopment of these spaces within the wider conservation area.

Overall, this application as a whole was found to be lacking and as such, the committee strongly objects.

## 6.0 Any Other Business

Mr R Dawson updated the forum on the successful dismissal of an appeal regarding 2 Kingswood Cottages which was discussed in a previous meeting.

In regards to the refusal of Application W/22/0860 - Land at Althorpe Street, Royal Leamington Spa, members thanked Mr J Mackay for adeptly presenting the views of CAF at the planning committee.

Cllr G Illingworth noted the discovery of medieval remains within the Scheduled Monument of Abbey Fields. The WDC Conservation Team are being kept up to date with the findings by the WCC Archaeological Team who are managing the works.

**Date of next meeting:** 20<sup>th</sup> April 2023

### **Enquiries about the minutes please contact:**

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