

Planning Committee: 06 November 2012

Item Number: **10**

Application No: W 12 / 0535

Town/Parish Council: Stoneleigh

Registration Date: 18/06/12

Case Officer:

Liam D'Onofrio

Expiry Date: 03/09/12

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Abbey Park, Stareton Lane, Stoneleigh, Kenilworth, CV8 2LJ

Application for outline planning permission to include 14,010 sqm B1 (a) and B1 (b) office space requiring demolition of existing WW II hospital huts. Revised hard and soft landscaping plan for the whole site, including 466 no. new car-parking spaces FOR West Register (Relisations) Ltd

This application is being presented to Committee due to objections received from the Parish Council and the number of objections received from local residents.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning Committee are recommended to grant outline planning permission, subject to conditions.

DETAILS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

Outline planning permission is sought, with all matters reserved for subsequent approval, for the demolition of existing WWII hospital huts and the creation of 14,010sq.m of new B1(a) office and B1(b) research and development, laboratories, high technology, set within five detached buildings with associated landscaping and 550 No. new car parking spaces. Given the outline nature of the scheme the siting and design of buildings and associated landscaping are indicative only and will be considered in greater detail at reserved matters stage.

The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, Historic Landscape Statement, Landscape Design Statement, Energy Statement, Travel Plan, Transport Assessment, Planning Statement, Tree Survey, Arboricultural Development Statement, Bat Survey, and a Phase 1 Habitat Survey.

THE SITE AND ITS LOCATION

The application site relates to Abbey Park, also known as Stoneleigh Business Park a 21 hectare site located within the Green Belt. The site is part of the original Stoneleigh Deer Park and is on English Heritage's Register of Historic Parks and gardens, graded II*. The site comprises several modern office buildings to the east and a complex of single storey buildings to the west of the site established as a military hospital in WWII.

PLANNING HISTORY

There are numerous applications for the site relating to advertisements and minor buildings, the key schemes are:

W/12/0245 Application for outline planning permission to include 14,010sqm of new B1 (a) and B1 (b) office space, requiring demolition of existing WWII hospital huts. Revised hard and soft landscaping plan for the whole site, including 550 No. new car-parking spaces: Withdrawn 20th March 2012 to allow master plan to be updated.

W/08/1693 Erection of new office block to replace existing office block: Granted 12th March 2009.

W/08/1196 Erection of new office block to replace existing office block: Withdrawn 12th November 2008.

W/05/0928 Erection of building (1380sq.m) for use as training centre and training workshops: Granted 5th September 2005.

W/04/1229 Application for Approval of Reserved Matters in respect of Conditions 1(a), (siting, design and external appearance of buildings) 1(b) (access arrangements) and 1(c) (landscaping) imposed on Outline Permission W/00/0396 for the redevelopment of the site for business purposes (Class B1(a) and (b)): Granted 8th March 2005.

W/00/0396 Demolition of existing buildings and phased redevelopment of site with buildings for Business purposes [Class B1 (a) and (b)], together with associated access road, car parking and landscaping works: Granted 1st October 2002.

RELEVANT POLICIES

- DP1 - Layout and Design (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP2 - Amenity (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP3 - Natural and Historic Environment and Landscape (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP4 - Archaeology (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP6 - Access (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP7 - Traffic Generation (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP8 - Parking (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP9 - Pollution Control (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP11 - Drainage (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP13 - Renewable Energy Developments (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DAP11 - Protecting Historic Parks and Gardens (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- SSP2 - Major Developed Sites (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- RAP6 - Directing New Employment (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- Sustainable Buildings (Supplementary Planning Document - December 2008)
- Vehicle Parking Standards (Supplementary Planning Document)
- National Planning Policy Framework

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

Stoneleigh & Ashow Parish Council: Objection. The fact that consent was given some 10 years ago must now be entirely irrelevant in the light of current views on development. The site is an English Heritage Registered Park and

Garden Grade II. The areas to be developed are mainly aged single storey hospital huts dating back to WWII. The location of a hospital in this area away from the city, at that time, would have been reasonable. Permitting further development of yet another business park in the Green Belt in 2012 is not reasonable.

Research carried out by the Parish Council indicates that, given current demand (average for the last 10 years), there is already available in this locality, (within a radius of circa 6 miles), some 22 years of supply of existing B1 Offices, or more sustainable sites, mostly with B1 Office consents. There cannot be shown to be a need to build in the Green Belt to create more, particularly when this is now registered Park Land. The proposals are not only to replace the old hospital Nissan huts with similar sized buildings, but to increase the existing floor area by 5107m² to 25,551m², a substantial 25% increase. There are numerous Brown Field sites located in areas of population which must be utilised before new building is permitted in a Green Field Site.

Not only is the site in the Green Belt it is also relatively isolated. The traffic assessment submitted acknowledges that transport will be predominantly by private car. Whilst this may have been relatively acceptable in 2002 and 2005 it is not in 2012 and again raises the point that further development of such a remote site is inappropriate. Highway access does not consider the impact on Stoneleigh Village and the restricted bridge across the river. Stoneleigh Village and the Stoneleigh Road already suffer from severe traffic congestion. There is also no consideration given to the combined effects of the additional local traffic likely to be generated by other major developments in this area. These are currently HS2, the Coventry Gateway, Stoneleigh Park, proposed additional housing in the preferred sites in the Local Plan and further developments at the University and Science Park. The application ignores HS2 entirely even though it will pass through the narrow gap between Abbey Park and Stoneleigh Park. National Government insists that HS2 will go ahead and it has cross party support. The existence of this major project is known and cannot be ignored by the Council when assessing proposed developments in this area. The responsibility to take a strategic overview of the developments proposed for this narrow strip of Green Belt separating Coventry, Kenilworth and Leamington Spa clearly rests with the Council.

The continuing *raison d'etre* for Green Belts is to prevent urban sprawl. As regards the details of these proposed buildings the Parish Council object to the revision as the previous layout set the development further back within the site and folded the buildings into the landscape. The new layout sets the section of development nearest to Beehive Cottage right onto the brow of the hill where it is far more prominent in the view from the road. The full impact of the proposal cannot be appreciated as there is no drawn proof illustrating the differences from the original layout and that which is proposed. The original layout welded the development into the landscape and situated it further back within the site. This preserved more of the rural character of Abbey Park and the planting belt beside the road. Consideration should be given to setting the development further back nearer to the golf course which would help to preserve the integrity of the boundary of the Grade II* registered parkland.

Old Milverton & Blackdown Joint Parish Council: Objection on the grounds that urban sprawl should be avoided and that there is no need to expand business parks in the Green Belt since there are already adequate brown fields sites for this purpose, nearer centres of population and which would not

necessitate private car use; further, the District Council is encouraged to take a strategic view of the many proposals currently advocated on the Green Belt between Coventry, Kenilworth and Leamington Spa.

English Heritage: No objection. Primary interest in the application arises from the inclusion of the site on English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens at grade II*. The scale of development has potential to harm the significance of the heritage asset, although it is recognised that an outline consent for a business park was granted in 2002. The supporting Historic Landscape Statement is promising but incomplete. The related Landscape Design Statement and its design principles articulated in Section 2 of the documents are supported by English Heritage. The surviving WWII buildings possess historic interest and English Heritage suggest the applicant liaises with the County Archaeologist to agree an appropriate level of assessment. Given the existence of a previous consent and existing office buildings already constructed no objection is raised but suggestions on siting and design are made.

Natural England: The ecological survey submitted with this application has identified that there will not be any significant impacts on statutorily protected sites, species or on priority Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats as a result of this proposal.

Environment Agency: No response received.

WCC Highways: No objection, subject to condition.

WCC Archaeology: No objection, subject to condition.

WCC Ecology: Comments awaited at time of writing report.

Environmental Protection: No objection, subject to land contamination conditions.

Warwickshire Police: No objection.

Public response: 15 objections have been received from local residents raising the following concerns:

- Business Park in the Green belt is not reasonable; Brownfield before greenfield.
- Oversupply, no need for offices, better locations within urban area.
- The site is isolated/has poor public transport/dependent on private car use.
- Scheme will create traffic congestion/highway safety/highway safety issues/noise.
- Proposed buildings are ugly/modern buildings are out of character.
- Site is a registered park and garden.
- Impact upon historic WWII huts.

ASSESSMENT

The main issues in determining this application are: the principle for office development; highway matters, and other considerations including indicative design/layout, ecology, landscaping, archaeology and sustainability.

Principle

The application site is located within the Green Belt; however Policy SSP2 of the Warwick District Plan 1996-2011 identifies Stoneleigh Business Park at Stareton, Stoneleigh as a major developed site within the Green Belt and establishes a boundary around the existing built development, including its associated hard surfaced areas and access roads. Policy SSP2 indicates that the site remains within the Green Belt, however limited infilling or redevelopment is not inappropriate development.

The NPPF 2012, paragraph 89 states that the limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development would not be inappropriate development within the Green Belt.

The proposed layout and design of buildings are indicative only however Policy SSP2 notes that the redevelopment of the site offers the opportunity to reinstate the landforms of the historic park and replace the presently incongruous buildings with some higher quality, to a design and location appropriate to the Green Belt setting.

Built form will be considered in detail at the reserved matters stage; however the development will remain within the confines of the major developed site. Indicative plans show modern buildings, set away from the site boundaries with good separation between each unit. English Heritage considers that greater separation between units A and B would allow the landscape to flow better between them, an approach proposed for other buildings in the outline masterplan. Subject to agreeing at reserved matters stage the appropriate siting and design of buildings and external materials to aid assimilation into the landscape, the scheme is considered unlikely to have a greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it than the existing development.

The B1 office use will generate employment and Policy RAP6 – Directing New Employment, advises that new employment will be permitted in a number of circumstances, including proposals on identified major developed sites within the Green Belt, such as the application site, in accordance with Policy SSP2.

Highway matters

The submitted Transport Assessment states that: 'the site is accessible by non-car travel modes, although access to Abbey Park is predominantly car reliant'. 550 No. car parking spaces were originally proposed at a ratio of approximately 1 space per 25sq.m. There was concern that an over-provision of parking spaces would work against encouraging sustainable modes of transport and to providing a successful Travel Plan. The applicant has agreed to amend the description to provide 466 No. parking spaces, 1 space per 30sq.m in accord with the SPD Vehicle Parking Standards 2007.

The submitted Transport Assessment also states that: 'cycle parking will be provided or in accordance with adopted policy. All servicing and delivery activity can take place with all vehicles entering and exiting the site in a forward gear. The proposals will not change the level of trip generator approved under the

previous consented use (W/00/0396). On this basis it is considered that the proposals would not have a detrimental effect on the operation of the local highway and transport networks'.

The WCC Highway Engineer has raised no objections to the proposed scheme and suggests no further conditions other than a construction management plan to deal with construction traffic routes and a scheme to avoid mud/debris being deposited on the highway.

Indicative Layout/Design

The scheme provides an indicative layout demonstrating that a suitable layout of development could be achieved on site within the extent of the boundaries of the major developed site identified within Policy SSP2. Although the scale and mass of proposed buildings are larger there would appear to be visual improvements in terms of separation compared with the greater number of individual buildings currently on site and there is an opportunity to improve landscaping and visual openness between buildings. Such details will be agreed at reserved matters stage.

Ecology/landscaping

The Phase 1 Habitat Survey did not identify any protected species on the site. The WCC Ecologist's comments were not available at the time of writing the Committee report, however comments and any suggested conditions will be reported to Members at Planning Committee.

The submitted Historic Landscape Statement notes that although Abbey Park has been an established business location for 50 years it forms part of the 400 year old Deer Park and its defining landscape characteristics are its sweeping vistas of kept grassland between swathes of trees, some which have now matured to their full splendour. The park retains much of its original enclosure, although the original southern area was substantially altered in WWII in the construction of the military hospital. This obliterated landform where the land was cleared of trees and levelled out.

The importance of trees to the character and setting of the park are recognised and the application includes a detailed tree survey, arboricultural development statement and tree protection statement. There are a number of trees identified that may need to be removed in order to allow future development, however the report indicates that any trees that are removed will be replaced with a robust five year management plan. It is considered that appropriate hard and soft landscaping for the development can be successfully agreed through details and secured by condition at reserved matters stage to ensure the site, a registered historic park and garden, is restored and enhanced.

Archaeology

Supporting information notes that the majority of the WWII military hospital buildings on the north and east of the site were cleared in the early 2000s to allow for the construction of the business park. Those that remain on the west of the site are functional pre fabricated structures which are typical of their era and for the function they served in the war. They are single storey buildings of no architectural merit and in poor condition.

The buildings remain of interest and the Archaeologist has suggested a condition to secure and implement a programme to photographically record the buildings.

Sustainability

The Sustainable Building Statement confirms that the development will provide for renewable energy technologies in accordance with Policy DP13 and the Sustainable Buildings SPD. The most suitable solution is solar thermal and PV panels. Schemes can be successfully agreed and implemented through condition.

Local residents' concerns regarding traffic are noted. The NPPF requires all new development to encourage sustainable modes of transport where reasonable. The applicant states that a travel plan already exists for the developed part of the site and this will be expanded to include the application site. A condition is suggested to ensure that this expanded travel plan is agreed and implemented.

CONCLUSION/SUMMARY

In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, the proposed development is acceptable in principle and is unlikely to result in a greater impact on the character and openness of the rural area. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the policies listed.

CONDITIONS

- 1 Details of the means of access to the building(s) and site, appearance of the building(s), landscaping of the site, layout of the site and its relationship with adjoining development, and the scale of building(s) (hereinafter called 'the reserved matters') shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any development begins and the development shall be carried out in full accordance with these reserved matters as approved. **REASON:** To comply with Article 3(1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (as amended).
- 2 Application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the Local Planning Authority not later than three years of the date of this permission. **REASON:** To comply with Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
- 3 The development to which this permission relates shall begin within three years of the date of permission or within two years of the final approval of the reserved matters, whichever is the later. **REASON:** To comply with Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
- 4 The reserved matters to be submitted in accordance with Condition 1 shall include details of all earthworks, mounding and the finished floor levels of all buildings, together with details of existing and proposed site levels on the application site and the relationship with adjacent land and buildings, and the development shall be carried out in strict accordance with these approved details or any subsequently approved amendments. **REASON:** To ensure sufficient information is submitted to demonstrate a satisfactory relationship between the proposed

development and adjacent land and buildings in the interests of amenity in accordance with Policies DP1 & DP2 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011.

- 5 The development hereby permitted shall not commence until drainage plans for the disposal of surface water and foul sewage have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage details shall incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) including a long term management and maintenance plan, unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is first brought into use. **REASON :** To ensure that the development is provided with a satisfactory means of drainage as well as to reduce the risk of creating or exacerbating a flood problem and to minimise the risk of pollution in accordance with Policies DP9 and DP11 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011.

- 6 A Travel Plan comprising the following details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the District Planning Authority, in consultation with the Highway Authority, within 3 months of the date of the first occupation of the development hereby approved and should include the following:-
 - (i) a target for the proportion of employees who will travel by means other than single car occupancy;
 - (ii) a strategy for achieving the target(s);
 - (iii) a management programme;
 - (iv) a process for monitoring the process towards achieving the target(s); and
 - (v) measures should targets not be achieved.Thereafter the use of the site shall operate in strict accordance with the approved Travel Plan. **REASON :** In order to promote sustainable transport choices to the site and in accordance with Policy DP7 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011.

- 7 No development shall take place within the application site, unless and until a programme of archaeological works and investigations has been secured and initiated in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. **REASON:** In order to ensure any remains of archaeological importance, which help to increase our understanding of the Districts historical development are recorded, preserved and protected were applicable, before development commences in accordance with Policy DP4 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011.

- 8 Development, other than that required to be carried out as part of an approved scheme of remediation, must not commence until conditions (1) to (4) below have been complied with. If unexpected contamination is found after development has begun, development must be halted on that part of the site affected by the unexpected contamination to the extent specified by the Local Planning Authority in writing until condition (4) below has been complied with in relation to that contamination.

(1) Site Characterisation

An investigation and risk assessment, in addition to any assessment provided with the planning application, must be completed in accordance with a scheme to assess the nature and extent of any contamination on the site, whether or not it originates on the site. The contents of the scheme are subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken by competent persons and a written report of the findings must be produced. The written report is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The report of the findings must include:

- (i) a survey of the extent, scale and nature of contamination;
- (ii) an assessment of the potential risks to:
 - human health,
 - property (existing or proposed) including buildings, crops, livestock, pets, woodland and service lines and pipes,
 - adjoining land,
 - groundwaters and surface waters,
 - ecological systems,
 - archaeological sites and ancient monuments;
- (iii) an appraisal of remedial options, and proposal of the preferred option(s).

(2) Submission of Remediation Scheme

A detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings and other property and the natural and historical environment must be prepared, and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The scheme must include all works to be undertaken, proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria, timetable of works and site management procedures. The scheme must ensure that the site will not qualify as contaminated land under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use of the land after remediation.

(3) Implementation of Approved Remediation Scheme

The approved remediation scheme must be carried out in accordance with its terms prior to the commencement of development other than that required to carry out remediation, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Local Planning Authority must be given two weeks written notification of commencement of the remediation scheme works.

Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme, a verification report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be produced, and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

(4) **Reporting of Unexpected Contamination**

In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of condition (1) above, and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared in accordance with the requirements of condition (2) above which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a verification report must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority in accordance with condition (3) above.

REASON : To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other off-site receptors in accordance with Policy DP9 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011.

- 9 The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced unless and until a scheme showing how 10% of the predicted energy requirement of this development will be produced on or near to the site, from renewable energy resources, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be first occupied until all the works within this scheme have been completed and thereafter the works shall be retained at all times and shall be maintained strictly in accordance with manufacturers specifications. **REASON** : To ensure that adequate provision is made for the generation of energy from renewable energy resources in accordance with the provisions of Policy DP13 in the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011.
- 10 Any landscaping (other than the planting of trees and shrubs) including boundary treatment, paving and footpaths referred to in condition one shall be completed in all respects, with the exception of tree(s) and shrub(s) planting, within the first planting season following the first use of the office development and the tree(s) and shrub(s) shall be planted within six months of that first use. Any tree(s) or shrub(s) removed, dying, or becoming in the opinion of the local planning authority seriously damaged, defective or diseased within five years from the substantial completion of the scheme shall be replaced within the next planting season by tree(s) or shrub(s) of similar size and species to those originally required to be planted. All hedging, tree(s) and shrub(s) shall be planted in accordance with British Standard BS4043 – Transplanting Root-balled Trees and BS4428 – Code of Practice for General Landscape Operations. **REASON:** To ensure a satisfactory standard of appearance of the development in the interests of the visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policies DP1, DP2 and DP3 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011.

- 11 The development (including any works of demolition) shall proceed only in strict accordance with a construction method statement which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved statement shall be strictly adhered to throughout the construction period and shall provide for: the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors; the loading and unloading of plant and materials; the storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development; traffic routes for construction vehicles and wheel washing facilities and other measures to ensure that any vehicle, plant or equipment leaving the application site does not carry mud or deposit other materials onto the public highway, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. **REASON:** In the interests of highway safety and the amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties, the free flow of traffic and the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with Policies DP2, DP6, DP8 & DP9 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011.
- 12 All existing buildings on site identified for demolition shall be demolished and all rubble and other waste materials removed therefrom before first occupation of any of the replacement buildings. **REASON :** To ensure a satisfactory order of development in accordance with Policy DP1 and DP2 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011.
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