

Planning Committee: 23 May 2006

Item Number: 18

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Registration Date: 04/04/06

Town/Parish Council: Leek Wootton

Expiry Date: 30/05/06

Case Officer: Penny Butler

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**The Warwickshire Golf Course, Warwick Road, Leek Wootton, Warwick,
CV35 7QT**

Conversion and extension of existing club house complex to form offices FOR
The Club Company

This application should be regarded as a departure from the development plan by virtue of its conflict with RA.1 and RA.3 of the Warwickshire Structure Plan which relate to development in rural areas and referred to the Secretary of State in the event of the Council wishing to approve the application. The Parish Council have also objected.

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

Parish Council: Object. "This application appears to be exactly the same as the one submitted in 2005 and withdrawn (comments on that are enclosed). This is a regionally significant planning application and the Parish Council objected at that time and endorse these objections as follows.

The Parish Council agreed to the original plan for the golf course with the club house to help protect the green belt, and to stop development between Warwick and Leek Wootton.

The farmhouse and additions is a listed building in a special landscape area and the Green Belt. Green belt is not being protected by all this development, and it is felt that this would significantly alter the character of the area by changing its use from leisure to business.

The proposal will put significant extra traffic on the road through the village and on the roundabout which the school also uses. Traffic peak in the morning for offices would coincide with the schools peak traffic time. Also there is now additional traffic caused by members visiting the leisure centre which is causing great concern, particularly in view of the separate application to further extend the car parks by the leisure centre.

Note: when the first application was submitted, the Regional Planning Body sought views on the application, will this be likely to happen again?"

Neighbours: One letter of objection received from the Director of The Hayes. No grounds given.

Ramblers Association: No objection. This could result in an increase in traffic along the private road, but the footpath runs beside it, and there is plenty of space off the road.

WCC Definitive Map Team: No objection. The footpath runs around the corner of the site and does not appear to be directly affected.

West Midlands Regional Assembly: Comments remain the same as the previous application (W05/1374/5LB). The conclusions are as follows:-

"5.1 It must be acknowledged that the floorspace the subject of this application already exists and is currently in a commercial use, which already contributes to the local economy. Furthermore this floorspace is relatively small when assessed at a regional level.

5.2 Thus as this proposal would provide only 2562 square metres of commercial floorspace and involves the re-use of existing buildings which are attractive and of permanent construction it is concluded that approval of this application would not undermine the overall direction of the RSS and that in this case the environmental policies which seek to re-use buildings and secure a future for historic listed buildings should take precedent over the policies which seek to direct growth towards the major urban areas.

5.4 It is therefore concluded that this development is in general conformity with the overall provisions and direction of the Regional Spatial Strategy."

WCC Highways: No objection subject to the applicant entering into a Section 106 agreement in respect of the Travel Plan targets, and developer contributions towards the Warwick-Kenilworth Cycle Route which is part of the Sustrans National Cycle Network.

RELEVANT POLICIES

- (DW) ENV1 - Definition of the Green Belt (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)
- (DW) ENV3 - Development Principles (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)
- (DW) ENV11 - Retention of Listed Buildings (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)
- (DW) ENV15 - Encouragement of full use of Listed Buildings (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)
- (DW) C8 - Special Landscape Areas (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)
- DP1 - Layout and Design (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011 Revised Deposit Version)
- DP3 - Natural and Historic Environment and Landscape (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011 Revised Deposit Version)
- DP6 - Access (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011 Revised Deposit Version)
- DP7 - Traffic Generation (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011 Revised Deposit Version)

- DP8 - Parking (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011 Revised Deposit Version)
- DAP1 - Protecting the Green Belt (Warwick District 1996 - 2011 Revised Deposit Version)
- DAP6 - Protection of Listed Buildings (Warwick District 1996 - 2011 Revised Deposit Version)
- DAP7 - Changes of Use of Listed Buildings (Warwick District 1996 - 2011 Revised Deposit Version)
- RAP7 - Directing New Employment (Warwick District 1996 - 2011 Revised Deposit Version)
- RAP10 - Safeguarding Rural Roads (Warwick District 1996 - 2011 Revised Deposit Version)
- RA.1 - Development in Rural Areas (Warwickshire Structure Plan 1996-2011).
- RA.2 - Scale and Distribution of New Housing and Industrial Development (Warwickshire Structure Plan 1996-2011).
- T7 - Car Parking Standards and Management (Regional Planning Guidance 11 - June 2004)

PLANNING HISTORY

The application property comprises of the existing club house (which was constructed in the early 1990's) and the adjacent Grade II Listed farmhouse and farm buildings, all of which were used by the golf club for golf related activities and located in the centre of the golf course.

A new clubhouse with health and leisure facilities has recently been constructed close to the entrance from Warwick Road. As a consequence the existing clubhouse and associated outbuildings are redundant. The applicants are seeking planning permission for a change of use from leisure to B1 offices. An identical application was withdrawn in 2005.

KEY ISSUES

The Site and its Location

The Warwickshire Golf Course, lies on the southern edge of the village of Leek Wootton. The existing clubhouse and former farm buildings are located on a hill in the centre of the golf course, overlooking the greens in a park like setting together with a large hard surfaced car park, covering an area of approximately 4.6 ha.

Access is gained from the roundabout on Warwick Road by a long drive around the southern periphery of the golf course.

Details of the Development

The proposal involves the change of use of the existing club house, farm house and farm buildings to provide a total of 2562 sq.m of B1 office floor

space. The alterations and extensions amount to 176 sq.m of this figure. The existing buildings cover 2712 sq.m.

The existing club house would be converted to provide served offices with shared amenities. The existing former farm buildings, except for the steel framed barn which would be demolished, would be converted to provide self contained offices and the courtyards between landscaped.

The current car park would remain and be shared with the users of the driving range and pitch and put course. It is proposed that the offices would be allocated 85 out of the existing 340 spaces, which would be in accordance with PPG13 parking standards. A Transport Assessment and Draft Travel Plan has been included as part of this application. The Transport Assessment has been revised since the previous application was withdrawn, to include additional information requested by WCC Highways.

A small extension is proposed at first floor level on the existing club house and two small extensions at ground floor level. The only other alterations would be the introduction of new windows and roof lights and demolition of later additions to the farmhouse and farm buildings. A separate application for Listed Building Consent has been submitted.

Assessment

Alterations and Extensions

The proposal includes a very small amount of new building; in one case to infill a small courtyard entrance, in another to infill a gap of 5 metres between two buildings and in a third to add a 64sq.m office at first floor level on top of an existing ground floor room. These small scale extensions do not, in my opinion, significantly affect the openness of the Green Belt in this area, or the character of the Listed Building and the surrounding rural area. On balance, with the demolition of the barn and modern extensions to the farmhouse, the new works are not considered excessive or inappropriate.

Policy

PPS7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas) supports " the re-use of appropriately located and suitably constructed existing buildings in the countryside where this would meet sustainable development objectives". Re-use for economic development purposes is usually preferable, and this approach accords with RA.3 in the Warwickshire Structure Plan. Therefore the principle of converting rural buildings to form B1 offices use can be supported. WCC Highways have considered the contents of the revised transport assessment and travel plan submitted by the applicants, and now raise no objection, subject to a legal agreement securing the travel plan targets and contributions towards the Warwick-Kenilworth cycle route. On this basis it is considered that the proposed mitigation measures proposed in the travel plan would address sustainable development concerns.

Policy RAP7 in the revised draft of the Warwick District Local Plan Policy supports the conversion of rural buildings where these are "of a small scale or a low intensity, or can be demonstrated to meet a local need". This draws from Policy RA.3 of the Structure Plan which states industrial development should meet local needs as identified by the community. The applicant is not claiming that this proposal meets such a local need and I consider that the scale of the development proposed here would be clearly in excess of that required to meet the needs of the residents of Leek Wootton.

To reconcile the advice in PPS7 regarding the appropriateness of converting rural buildings for employment uses and the Structure Plan policy that such rural employment development should meet a local need, it is helpful to look further at PPS7 (paras 17&18). This considers the criteria that should guide policies for appropriate re-use of rural buildings. Key factors include the potential impact upon the countryside, landscape and wildlife, suitability of the buildings and the need to preserve historic buildings. Paragraph 18 also states that "Local Planning Authorities should be particularly supportive of the re-use of existing buildings that are adjacent or closely related to country towns and villages, for economic and community uses". With regard to the site's proximity to a country town, the site is close to Warwick and the A46.

I am therefore of the view that whilst the proposal does not meet the Structure Plan requirement for meeting local needs, it is appropriate when considered against the requirements in PPS7 for the conversion of rural buildings. The conclusions of the Regional Planning Body reinforce my views on this issues.

Transport

The Parish Council are concerned that the proposal would significantly increase traffic on the roundabout on Warwick Road at the entrance to the golf course which is shared with the school. The transport assessment submitted with the application concludes that the proposed redevelopment, in conjunction with the measures proposed in the draft travel plan, would not result in a material increase in traffic flows and will therefore have no adverse effects on the highway safety of roads in the vicinity of the site. The amount of car parking allocated for the business units is also considered satisfactory.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT after reference to the Secretary of State as a departure from the Development Plan subject to the conditions below, and a legal agreement securing Travel Plan targets and contributions towards the Warwick-Kenilworth Cycle Route:

CONDITIONS

- 1 The development hereby permitted must be begun not later than the expiration of three years from the date of this permission. **REASON** : To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act

2004.

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the details shown on the approved drawing(s) (3868-PLANNING-04; 3868-PLANNING-07; 3868-PLANNING-08; 6359/02; 6359/03A), and specification contained therein, submitted on 4 April 2006 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 All external facing materials for the development hereby permitted shall be of the same type, texture and colour as those of the existing building. **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 A landscaping scheme for the whole of those parts of the site not to be covered by buildings shall be submitted to and approved by the District Planning Authority before the development hereby permitted is commenced. Such approved scheme shall be completed, in all respects, not later than the first planting season following the completion of the development hereby permitted, and any trees removed, dying, being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased within five years of planting, shall be replaced by trees of similar size and species to those originally required to be planted. **REASON** : To protect and enhance the amenities of the area, and to satisfy the requirements of Policy ENV3 of the Warwick District Local Plan.
- 5 The premises shall be used for B1 (a) Business and for no other purpose including any other purpose in Class B1 of Part 3 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, (or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification. **REASON** : Other uses within this Use Class may not be appropriate in these premises by reason of its location in a rural area.
- 6 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 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 a high standard of design and appearance for this Listed Building, and to satisfy Policy ENV11 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1995.

INFORMATIVES

For the purposes of Article 22 of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (England) (Amendment) Order 2003, the following reason(s) for the Council's decision are summarised below:

In the opinion of the District Planning Authority, the proposed development does not adversely affect the historic integrity, character or setting of the listed building, or the openness or character of the green belt. The proposed use would not have a serious adverse impact on the surrounding highway network, or constitute an unsustainable form of development. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the policies listed.
