

Planning Committee: 24 January 2005
Application No: W 04 / 2194

Principal Item Number: 5

Town/Parish Council: Warwick
Case Officer: Steven Wallsgrove
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Registration Date: 10/12/2004
Expiry Date: 04/02/2005

**Land adjacent to Gymnasium, Kings High School for Girls, Smith Street, Warwick,
CV34 4HJ**

Erection of classroom block and sixth form centre and reconstruction of part of front
boundary wall. FOR Warwick Independant Schools

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

Warwick Town Council:

i) Any permission granted should be subject to a S106 Agreement being the submission and approval of a green traffic plan and requires the applicant to provide off road coach/bus standing to avoid highway congestion resulting from coach/bus descending and loading children attending the school.

ii) The Council are also concerned that the 45 degree angle from the adjoining flats and the development is not being observed.

English Heritage: Do not wish to make any representations.

Environment Agency: Have no objection.

WCC (Archaeology): Have no objection subject to archaeological excavation condition.

WCC (Highways): Have no objection subject to a School Travel Plan Condition.

Warwick Society: We wish to object to this planning application for the proposed erection of a Sixth Form Centre on the site located between The Butts and Chapel Street. This revision of planning application W2004/1587/1599CA does not address our previous objections which are reiterated at paragraphs 1 and 3 below.

1. The development is unneighbourly in that it overlooks the rows of houses in Chapel Street and will detract from their setting in the Conservation Area. The ground level of the site is already 2.5 metres above the level of the road so that the proposed building will seriously detract from the amenity of the residents in terms of loss of privacy and loss of light. We are concerned that there will be an irretrievable loss of trees on the boundary in The Butts during construction.

2. Notwithstanding our objection at paragraph 1, the quality of the proposed building is unworthy of a prestigious school such as Kings High. Its bulk and intrusion into the streetscape of The Butts and will exclude daylight from the houses in Chapel Street. Its frontage on to The Butts, with its restless gable ends and protruding gables, is out of place in a setting where eaves on all other buildings are parallel to the road. The fenestration is awkward and made worse by the heavy handed framing of windows in pre-cast concrete, the components are merely applied decoration and, together with the heavy hood mouldings, are non structural non functional and unnecessary. We find the vertical lettering proclaiming the sixth form centre frivolous and tiresome which belies the use of the building for serious educational purposes. These new proposals still compare unfavourably with the standard of design of other recent developments at the school.

3. It is understood that the proposal for a new building at the school is to meet the need created by the introduction of an additional stream of pupils which will build up over the next five years to a significant increase in school numbers. Because much of the traffic congestion that occurs in the morning and evening rush hours in the area of the school, particularly in Chapel Street, can be directly attributed to the activities of the School, the applicant should be required to provide a Traffic Assessment in accordance with Policy DP7 Traffic Generation of the 1996-2011 Local Plan and, if necessary, a Travel Plan. It would seem to us that further expansion of the school in its restricted town centre site is unsustainable.

We would ask the Warwick District Planning Committee to refuse planning permission for this application.

Neighbours: 5 letters of objection have been received on grounds of loss of privacy, loss of light, traffic pollution, parking problems, decreasing quality of life, building too large, Conservation Area, conflicts with Local Plan policies (e.g. 3.19, ENV8 & ENV9), and loss of view.

RELEVANT POLICIES

(DW) ENV3 - Development Principles (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)
(DW) ENV3A - Sustainable Development and Energy Conservation (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)
(DW) ENV6 - Protection and Enhancement of Conservation Areas (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)
(DW) ENV7 - Demolition of Non-Listed Buildings within Conservation Areas (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)
(DW) ENV8 - New Development within Conservation Areas (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)
(DW) ENV9 - Design Guidance for New Development within Conservation Areas (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)
(DW) ENV10 - Detailed Planning Applications within Conservation Areas (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)
(DW) ENV12 - Protection of the Setting of Listed Buildings (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)
(DW) ENV22 - Evaluation of the Archaeological Effects of Development Proposals (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)
(DW) ENV22A - Archaeological Investigations in Advance of Development (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)
The 45 Degree Guideline (Supplementary Planning Guidance)

PLANNING HISTORY

This school has been the subject of numerous applications with the last one being withdrawn. This was for a similar application to the present one but which attracted some 20 neighbour objections and a 28 signature petition. Since that time the applicants have revised the scheme and held a meeting with the residents to explain the background to their proposals.

KEY ISSUES

The Site and its Location

The application site forms that part of the playground/netball courts area which fronts The Butts between the gymnasium and Mitchell House. this land has a row of mature

trees behind the boundary wall and lies at a lower level to this road. The whole site lies within the Conservation Area.

Details of the Development

The proposal is to erect a classroom and sixth form centre block fronting The Butts behind the trees. It would appear to be three and a half storeys in height when viewed from this side but, due to the differences in ground level, four storeys when seen from Chapel Street. The end adjoining the flats in Mitchell House would be single storey, and of lean-to design.

The building has been designed to look like a short row of substantial town houses (rather than a single, large, building), from The Butts but with a significantly different approach at the back, where the end units are still residential in appearance but the central two units have a more contemporary approach, being the foyer to the sixth form centre and the toilets.

The materials to be used are traditional brick, slate, and render, with timber windows.

Assessment

The principal issues in this case are the affect on the character of the Conservation Area, the affect on surrounding neighbours, and potential traffic impacts.

The proposed building is quite large but, in fact, it replaces a school and church hall complex which was only demolished in the early 1980's and which stretched from The Butts through to Chapel Street. The mature trees at the back of the wall on The Butts also form a significant "enclosure" feature in the street scene. It is considered, therefore, that while the proposed building will have an effect on the character of the Conservation Area, that effect will not be unreasonable in terms of its bulk.

The building has also been designed to respect the, quite varied, character of the street scene with the ridge line being broken up so that it steps down from the height of Mitchell House (which is lower than the adjoining, older, building) down to the existing gymnasium building. This has been achieved by the use of raised additional details which give an interesting street elevation while respecting the proportions of older buildings in the street. In this context, the Warwick Society have objected to the design, in particular the use of gable features, but there are, in fact, a number of similar features in The Butts, including on the most recent school building and older property (such as the County Museum building). It is considered, therefore, that the design is acceptable and reflects the details of traditional buildings in the area.

The rear elevation, being within the school site, is not so open to general view, although, of course, it can be seen from Chapel Street, despite the high wall on this frontage. It is considered, however, that this is an appropriate location for a modern, contemporary, element in the design and will not detract from the character of the Conservation Area.

In terms of the affect on surrounding residential properties, since the site lies in the Conservation Area, and there is a duty to protect the character of such areas, the normal distance separation standards and 45 degree Code need not be applied since to do so could prejudice the character of the area. In the present case, however, the scheme has been designed to comply with the 45 degree Code and the distance between the nearest windows (tutorial rooms, offices, etc) and the houses on Chapel Street is some 26 metres. This is considered to be acceptable, particularly since the intervening space is a netball court/playground used by pupils so that there is no increased loss of privacy.

On the traffic side, the applicants have made it clear that this building is not intended to increase pupil numbers beyond the level of about 600 for which the school is registered (There are, at present, around 570 girls, including about 140 in the Sixth Form). The intention is to meet modern educational requirements to meet the increasing need for specialist facilities for Science, Art, etc, to expand the use of I.T., to provide more large classrooms to increase flexibility to external access for disabled staff and pupils, to alleviate the shortage of staff and administrative accommodation, and to alleviate the shortage of storage space.

The school has been trying to discourage the use of cars and to encourage the use of public transport and car sharing. They say that 50% already use these methods, according to a survey, and that they are currently working with the County Council looking at Green Travel planning and the possibility of a Drop and Ride Scheme. This is reflected in the condition requested by the County Council. If the school moved out of the town centre, this could only be a less sustainable alternative to the present position and could reduce accessibility by public transport, e.g. trains. It is considered, therefore, that to develop the present site is the best option, but with greater attention to encouraging the use of public transport, shared cars, and walking.

In summary, it is considered that this revised application will protect the character of the Conservation Area and the setting of nearby listed buildings, will not have an unreasonable affect on residents amenities, and should not result in increased car use, subject to conditions.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

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

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT subject to the following conditions :

- 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. 2072-01D, -02D, -03D, -04D, .06 and .07, and specification contained therein, received on 10th December 2004 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 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 an appropriate standard of design and appearance within the Conservation Area, and to satisfy Policy ENV8 of the Warwick District Local Plan.

- 4 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.
- 5 No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a written programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the District Planning Authority. **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 The use hereby permitted shall not commence until the applicant has submitted and the planning authority has approved in writing a School Travel Plan and any measures proposed to be carried out in that plan before the use commences have been implemented. Following commencement of the use, the measures (and any variations) so approved shall continue to be implemented in full at any time when the use is being carried on. The plan shall:
- (a) Specify targets for the proportion of pupils and staff travelling to and from the site by foot, cycle, public transport, shared vehicles and other modes of transport which reduce emissions and the use of non-renewable fuels;
 - (b) Set out measures designed to achieve those targets together with timescales and arrangements for their monitoring, review and continuous improvement;
 - (c) Identify a member of staff using the site with overall responsibility for the plan and a scheme for involving pupils and staff in its implementation and development.
- REASON** : To minimise the number of motor vehicles coming to the school, reduce congestion, and minimise vehicle impacts on the environment in accordance with Policy (DW) ENV3 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1995.
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