

## MINUTES OF MEETING

### Warwick District Conservation Advisory Forum

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2022  
14:30 via Microsoft Teams

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#### Attendees:

Cllr Carolyn Gifford  
Cllr George Illingworth

Dr Christine Hodgetts (Warwickshire Gardens Trust)  
Ms Cathy Kimberley (CPRE)  
Mr James Mackay (20<sup>th</sup> Century Society)  
Ms Gill Smith (Warwick Society)  
Mr Richard Ward (RIBA)

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

#### Apologies:

Mr Angus Kaye (The Victorian Society)

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

None.

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

None.

#### 3. **Minutes of Last Meeting** (16 June 2022)

Were agreed.

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

No comment.

## 5. **Planning Applications**

### 5.1 W/22/0860 – Demolition of existing buildings and erection of a mixed-use scheme comprising commercial floorspace (Use Class E) and purpose-built student accommodation (Sui Generis) in three buildings of up to six storeys with associated landscaping, tree works, footpaths, parking, servicing, communal amenity area and associated works and improvements – Land at Althorpe St, Leamington Spa

CAF voiced concern regarding this application and its potential impact upon the Canal Conservation Area, not least through the creation of a false narrative of large waterside warehousing in an area that was, historically, primarily vernacular housing. The current application was noted as being extremely large, sitting at five to six storeys, with extraneous roof lines that serve to visually confuse the bulk of the buildings rather than reduce them. There was unease in a development of this size managing essential services such as waste or parking, which would then have a detrimental impact upon the conservation area.

Opening up the canal area to the public was welcomed and the secluded nature of the site was acknowledged. Forum members noted, however, that the focus of the supporting documentation for this application was on the replacement of unsuitable existing office buildings and echoing the neighbouring new development, without proper consideration of factors such as the adjacent Flavells factory, a notable site in the industrial history of Leamington, or the overall nature of the surrounding area which consists mainly of small, local businesses.

Overall, CAF felt that the current scheme was dense and overly large, dwarfing neighbouring new development by up to two storeys, and completely overwhelming the existing small-scale, local character of the area. The proposal was also criticised for being in contravention of Local Plan Policy TC12, with respect to retention of existing employment land and buildings within the defined Town Centre Employment Area, and for the potential adverse impact on the conservation area from increased parking and pressure on services such as waste management. The design itself is also considered as confused and overbearing in terms of scale and mass, creating a false narrative for the canal conservation area and, as such, CAF strongly objects to this application.

## 6. **Any Other Business**

A CAF member noted that Applications W/22/0610 & W/22/0611 regarding the Priory Medical Centre in Warwick, which were discussed during June's forum, were refused by the Council. CAF had objected to the proposals so members were pleased that the Council was in agreement.

CAF members voiced concern regarding the former King's High School site in Warwick due to vandalism and trespassing being noted. There is a fear that the surrounding historic buildings may suffer damage or even arson due to the vacant nature of the site. Mr R Dawson has agreed to approach the Council's Development Manager for updates on this sensitive, central location.

Members noted that improvements to road surfaces within Warwick Town Centre were being considered by Warwickshire County Council but questioned if the protection of historic character was being properly considered alongside traffic management. Mr R Dawson has agreed to approach WCC regarding a possible presentation to the forum.

CAF were informed that no further amended design schemes had been received for Application W/22/0463, regarding development of land adjacent to 9 Clarendon Place, beyond those that were discussed during June's forum.

Finally, members discussed the current operating procedures of CAF and it was agreed that, whilst the possibility to meet new members in person would be welcomed, the forum was functioning well online and virtual meetings should continue.

**Date of next meeting:** 11<sup>th</sup> August 2022

**Enquiries about the minutes please contact:**

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