

MINUTES OF MEETING

Warwick District Conservation Advisory Forum

Thursday 19th January 2023

14:30 via Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

Cllr Carolyn Gifford
Cllr George Illingworth

Dr Christine Hodgetts (Warwickshire Gardens Trust)
Ms Cathy Kimberley (CPRE)
Mr James Mackay (20th Century Society)
Mr Mark Sullivan (RTPI)
Ms Susan Rasmussen (The Leamington Society)

Ms Jane Catterall (WDC)

Apologies:

Mr Robert Dawson (WDC)
Mr Richard Ward (RIBA)
Ms Gill Smith (The Warwick Society)
Mr Angus Kaye (The Victorian Society)

1. **Substitutes and New Members**

None.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

Mr Mackay noted that, as a resident of Warwick, he has personally registered an objection to the scheme to be discussed in Item 5.1. In Ms Smith's absence, Mr Mackay presented the objection to this application that has been put forward by The Warwick Society.

3. **Minutes of Last Meeting** (1 December 2022)

Were agreed.

4. **Planning Committee Agenda**

No comments. Due to the festive period, this CAF meeting fell after the January Planning Committee was held and the February agenda has not yet been published.

5. Planning Applications

5.1 W/22/1643 – Conversion of existing 3 storey building into 4no. dwellings and erection of 3no. new dwellings together with associated external works for vehicular access, parking and amenity areas – Priory Block, Kings High School For Girls, Chapel Street, Warwick, CV34 4HL

This application regards a site which has extant planning permission as part of a larger scheme in relation to the redevelopment of the Kings High site (W/19/1940). The prior approval was for the demolition of the existing building which fronts Chapel Street and the erection of five new homes with parking to the rear, adjacent to Priory Road. The current proposal consists of seven homes located in two areas on the site. CAF strongly objects to the new application as it is felt to be a large step backwards regarding treatment of this area, resulting in a scheme that would be at a detriment to the site, the neighbouring heritage assets and the wider conservation area.

Alongside three new houses facing onto Priory Road, this proposal aims to retain the existing 1960s block to Chapel Street, which is to be given a new frontage and a false mansard roof, intending to read as four individual units. The Forum remarked that this resulted in a structure with an even greater ridge height lacking in proper variation in rooflines, unduly increasing prominence in this area whilst employing unsympathetic detailing, consisting of inappropriate quoining and lintels to the front and extensive, incongruous balconies to the rear, undermining the historic character of the area.

Forum members also strongly objected to the three new houses to be located on an area previously designated for parking. Due to this development, parking spaces are now felt to be crammed onto the site through the provision of unsuitable tandem spaces at the loss of the rear gardens to the Chapel Street units, with the site further diminished by the installation of overly grand, inappropriate gates to Priory Road. The forum strongly feels the new houses should be resisted as their insertion heightens the overall feeling of harmful overdevelopment to the application, with impractical housing crammed onto all available space, compounded by unsuitable design.

Forum members also noted that, alongside the deviation from the previous sympathetic design scheme, the proposed alterations resulted in the loss of two affordable housing units and it was hoped that this would not be the start of a disturbing trend in which large schemes, considered to be acceptable as a whole, would be later broken down into additional piecemeal applications resulting in lower design quality and overdevelopment, eroding positive aspects of approved schemes through incremental harm.

5.2 W/22/1919 – Proposed purpose built student accommodation providing 85no. self contained studio units with ancillary accommodation at ground and basement levels – Land at Junction of High Street, Lower Avenue, Leamington Spa

CAF considered an extremely similar proposal (W/21/1315) on this site in the September 2021 Forum, which was for 87 units and it is felt that the previous concerns voiced remain valid. Though this site falls outside of the boundary of the Leamington Urban Conservation Area, it would have a direct impact upon the setting of this heritage asset, as well as neighbouring listed buildings and, as such, consideration of the application from a conservation perspective is important.

The proposal is felt to be out of scale in terms of height and massing, resulting in overdevelopment of the site. Members noted that this scheme would be in direct competition to the listed Railway Station and that as a gateway site, in a prominent position to welcome visitors to the town, it requires careful and sensitive treatment.

The forum felt that any development of this site should properly consider its surroundings, as this would place two large domineering buildings either side of the current car garage, create disparity and a visually jarring landscape. It was noted that a planning brief that included both the car garage and this site would most likely result in a better scheme for the whole area.

Overall, whilst the Forum was not against development of the currently vacant site, they strongly object to the current proposal due to its bulk, massing, inappropriate form and overdevelopment. It is felt that no comments were taken on board from the previously refused application in terms of design or scale and as such, this continues to be an unsympathetic and overbearing scheme.

6.0 **Any Other Business**

A Forum member raised the point of proposals at Warwick Castle as possible discussion points for the next meeting however the statutory period for consultation has passed and these applications are due to be determined before the next meeting.

Date of next meeting: 23rd February 2023

Enquiries about the minutes please contact:

Robert Dawson (Principal Conservation Officer)

Telephone: 01926 456546

Email: Robert.dawson@warwickdc.gov.uk

Jane Catterall (Assistant Conservation Officer)

Telephone: 01926 456533

Email: Jane.Catterall@warwickdc.gov.uk