

## MINUTES OF MEETING

### Warwick District Conservation Advisory Forum

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023

14:30 via Microsoft Teams

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#### Attendees:

Cllr Carolyn Gifford (Chair)

Mr James Mackay (20<sup>th</sup> Century Society)

Mr Gordon Cain (RICS)

Ms Gill Smith (Warwick Society)

Dr Christine Hodgetts (Warwickshire Gardens Trust)

Ms Cathy Kimberley (CPRE)

Mr Angus Kaye (The Victorian Society)

Mr Mark Sullivan (RTPI)

Ms Susan Rasmussen (The Leamington Society)

Mr Robert Dawson (WDC)

Ms Jane Catterall (WDC)

#### Apologies:

None.

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

None.

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

None.

#### 3. **Minutes of Last Meeting** (15 June 2023)

Were agreed.

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

No comments.

#### 5. **Planning Applications**

- 5.1 W/23/0894 – Proposed erection of second and third floor atop existing building to include parapet and mansard roof. Proposed remodelling of frontage, including removal of bay window. Proposed erection of part two storey, part single storey single storey rear extension – 8 Spencer Street, Leamington Spa, CV31 3NF

CAF agreed that whilst the building at present was not a particularly positive influence on the street scene of the conservation area, that this application had the potential to be worse. The building proposed has taken the height from the four storey building at 10 Spencer Street as a reference, aiming to continue the parapet, but has failed to align itself with the fenestration, causing the street scene to appear disjointed. Alongside this, it is not felt to conform with Leamington's architectural grammar in that the structures often step down away from proud corner buildings. Overall, the proposal results in an overly large structure in terms of height which apparently only contains one bedroom.

It is also felt that any works to the building should also include works to the shopfront, which is currently extremely prominent in a harmful manner. The building and the shopfront should work together therefore this should also be reviewed to ensure that any visual harm from the building is minimised overall. It was noted that whilst there may be the potential for redevelopment of this site, this application is not felt to be appropriate and would result in a harmful impact on the Conservation Area.

- 5.2 W/23/1048 – Proposed demolition of Stoneleigh Arms and reuse of materials for the erection of a new three storey building for use as a mixed used creative workspace. Proposed refurbishment and single storey extension to the Old School for education and community use at Court Street. Proposed creation of public realm landscaping – Stoneleigh Arms, 31, Clemens Street, Leamington Spa, CV31 2DP

CAF were supportive of the possible merits of the proposal but did not consider the design to achieve the full potential of the site. The Stoneleigh Arms pub sits just within the conservation area, with the site of the old school just outside of this, however some members considered that the works to the old school more sympathetic than that to the former pub. The reaction to the works to the old school were mixed however, as whilst the lightweight and interesting nature of the structure was supported, it was considered the timber cladding would look poor very quickly and some attractive features of the school building would be obscured.

In regards to the building to replace the Stoneleigh Arms, however, this was generally considered to be poor. The feeling of the committee was that the design for the new building was confused, with the front elevation attempting one style which related to the former public house, whilst the sides and rear aimed to be modern. It was considered that a completely new, contemporary style building would be more appropriate as there is the opportunity to be more bold on the site. At present, the proposal results in a structure that does not complement the good quality houses either side, as it has poor detailing such as large amount of plain brick to the sides, recessed eaves and a lack of definition to the floors within the building. As this is a key set of proposals for the intended Creative Quarter, it was considered by the forum that the designs were not very creative and that this should be reviewed to ensure a project that not only promotes creativity, but also inspires it too.

- 5.3 W/23/1115 – Up to 83 dwellings (including affordable housing), access, internal roads and footpaths, car parking, public open space, landscaping, drainage and other associated works and infrastructure (all matters of detail reserved except for the vehicular access to the site) – Land at Warwickshire Police HQ, Woodcote Lane,

Forum representatives considered that Planning Committee should be encouraged to not support this plan, due to the site being a locally registered Park and Garden. It was felt that the division of the site, without supporting policy in place, would leave the site without any guarantee of protection in the future. The current site was considered to not be well maintained and that a reliance on the police authority to spend money preserving this would not be sustainable. The Forum was concerned that a substantial part of the park and garden would be left without a caretaker.

The Forum considered that as the current 5-year target for homes was being met at present that this proposal could be paused until a solution could be achieved which would protect the entire site. The site was previously included within the original housing allocation due to Woodcote House, in an attempt to safeguard the building, but by removing the house from the proposal, there is no opportunity to secure the future of the whole estate. CAF agreed that they would be supporting a continued objection, on the ground that the proposal did not align with Policy DS22 and that the proposal should be halted until a new policy for the site, which could possibly account for the house remaining in separate occupation, could be introduced in the new local plan.

Council officers did advise the Forum that a conscious decision was made to keep the site out of the Leek Wootton Conservation Area and that the Park and Garden was not nationally Registered by Historic England, as well as there being public benefit from the provision of affordable housing when considering the planning balance of potential harm to heritage. Forum representatives noted that there is precedent for the protection of locally listed parks and gardens at Grays Mallory and Barford House and were content to raise their objection at Planning Committee.

## **6.0 Any Other Business**

A Forum representative noted that City Fibre cabinets were being installed within conservation areas and in front of listed buildings without consultation. Whilst it was understood that these actions were considered to benefit from predetermination, it was felt that the cabinets were adding a large amount of clutter to the street scene. The representative has stated that they are in contact with the company installing these structures to aim for greater consideration in terms of placement.

A current application at the Pump Rooms (W/23/1220/LB) was noted and Council Officers informed the Forum that an application for Change of Use was not needed in conjunction with the works proposed.

The Forum considered the possibility of an in person meeting however this was tabled for the foreseeable future until any possible new representatives have joined and also after establishment of a good period of representation, to ensure the Forum would be quorate for the potential meeting.

**Date of next meeting:** 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023

**Enquiries about the minutes please contact:**

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