

MINUTES OF MEETING

Warwick District Conservation Advisory Forum

Thursday 24th March 2022
14:30 via Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

Cllr Sidney Syson
Cllr George Illingworth

Ms Ruth Bennion (Leamington Society)
Mr Gordon Cain (RICS)
Dr Christine Hodgetts (Warwickshire Gardens Trust)
Mr Angus Kaye (The Victorian Society)
Ms Cathy Kimberley (CPRE)
Mr James Mackay (20th Century Society)
Ms Gill Smith (Warwick Society)
Mr Richard Ward (RIBA)

Ms Jane Catterall (WDC)

Apologies:

Mr Robert Dawson (WDC)

1. **Substitutes and New Members**

None.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr George Illingworth has declared an interest in Application W/22/0212 & W/22/0213/LB, to be discussed in Section 5.4, as a neighbour to the property and as his wife has recorded an objection. As such, he will not provide comment on the proposal.

3. **Minutes of Last Meeting** (24 February 2022)

Were agreed.

4. **Planning Committee Agenda**

A CAF member agreed to go to the Planning Committee to present the objections of the forum to application W/21/2192 – Land at Leafields, Warwick, which has been recommended for approval.

CAF made no comment regarding the remaining applications.

5. **Planning Applications**

5.1 W/21/2185 & W/21/2186/LB – Restoration of Offa House including the demolition of C20 extensions, and the construction of two new houses within the site, including rearrangement of garden area associated with Lodge Cottage – Offa House, Village Street, Offchurch, Leamington Spa, CV33 9AS

CAF were in agreement that this proposal for Offa House is a significant improvement on the previous submission, but were split as to whether this improvement equated to a wholly appropriate scheme. The relationship between a church and its vicarage, St Gregory's and Offa House in this case, is a vital component of a village which is why this application is being given such weight.

The removal of the modern extensions to the main house was praised, as this had previously been sought to be retained, however the addition of the kitchen extension was felt to be overbearing by some members. A member proposed that the area would be better identified as an orangery, which would be a suitable addition for a building of this age, however this would require the rooflights to be replaced with a roof lantern.

Concern was raised regarding a significant group of elms and a mound in the churchyard of St Gregory's, suggesting a pre-Christian site, which may be intersected by the proposed entrance drive to the main house and it was questioned as to whether the WDC Archaeology Team had been consulted. The termination of this entrance road was also not clear, as it appeared to continue past the main house with no obvious destination.

The size of the two new dwellings within the site was also debated, as it was felt they may possibly overwhelm or be in competition with the existing Coach House and the neighbouring Lodge. It was felt the size and scale of the houses could give the feel of a small rural housing estate rather than a country house and grounds with the new dwellings possibly going beyond enabling development to new development within the green belt.

Whilst it was agreed that there were positives and negatives to the application, it was noted by some members that the new houses were of an attractive and well thoughtout design, located at the boundaries of the site thereby preserving optimum green space, so whilst there are issues, a good scheme may be passed over for a faultless scheme that may never come, at an overall detriment to the asset.

5.2 W/22/0315 – Erection of single storey extension on part of the existing multi-storey car park to provide additional commercial floorspace for offices (Class E), creation of external terrace and associated physical works – Royal Priors Shopping Centre, Warwick Street, Leamington Spa, CV32 4XT

This proposal was not objected to in principle but nor did it garner much support. Members expressed a fear that the already overwhelming presence of The Priors on Park Street would be further compounded by an additional storey, composed of

glass and curtain walling which would be alien within the landscape.

Whilst there was an understanding from members that there has been a change in shopping habits which the 'High Street' will have to adapt to, there is concern as to whether this is being properly managed to ensure that harmful alterations are not being pushed as the only route for survival.

5.3 W/22/0140 – Erection of hotel at Stratford Road car park; extension to existing restaurant at Knight's Village and new decked areas; elevated walkway; landscaping works including at Leafields; outdoor play area and associated infrastructure works – Warwick Castle, Castle Hill, Warwick, CV34 4QX

CAF commented on the Pre-application for this submission and, as the only significant alteration to the proposal is the addition of an adventure playground, the previous objections regarding this were reiterated.

As a Grade I Registered Park and Garden, the importance of conservation of this asset cannot be understated and there was significant concern that the anticipated economic benefits for Warwick would not actually materialise nor would they justify the substantial, potential harm. Significant, convincing justification for the public benefits of the proposal were considered to be lacking, with the return in investment believed to be felt privately rather than as an essential endeavour to support the historic asset.

It was felt that the visual design was lacking in innovation, with function and the maximisation of square footage at the forefront rather than potential enhancement of the site. As the hotel would be the first building visible when entering the grounds from Stratford Road, the massing and design of the structure, with its flat, modern form clad in mock timber-studding, could undermine perceptions of the historic value of the wider surroundings of the site.

Overall, it was felt that the current proposals were detrimental to the significance of the Registered Park and Garden and setting of Warwick Castle and CAF strongly objects to the scheme.

5.4 W/22/0212 & W/22/0213/LB - Proposed part removal of existing garden wall to form new maintenance access into garden from road. Proposed erection of double hinged gate. Proposed new hardstanding as part of patio works - 48 New Street, Kenilworth, CV8 2EZ

Overall the forum does not support this application, due to the perceived harm of breaking the historic wall with an entrance gate. There was concern that this application may be for permanent vehicular access rather than occasional garden maintenance, which echoed the nature of Kenilworth Town Council's objection.

The existing wall is an attractive feature and the proposed entrance location is close to a bend which would not provide a safe point of entry or exit. Members are going to bring the application to the attention of the Highways Team to ensure that the correct consideration is given in regards to safety.

6. **Any Other Business**

- 6.1 A member enquired whether the Heritage Open Days would be scheduled for this year and it was confirmed that this the even is intended to proceed and the brochures would be produced in good time prior to September.
- 6.2 Ms J Catterall provided an update regarding ongoing work at the Wantage (1 Castle Hill), Kenilworth. It was noted that a site visit would be undertaken later in the year by an Enforcement Officer and Ms J Catterall, once approved works to the house had commenced in the good weather, to ensure that no unauthorised work or unnecessary harm is being caused to the Grade II Registered Park and Garden. The garden is being used as a store whilst approved works to the house are being untaken therefore some disruption is unfortunately anticipated. The owner is aware that the site and works will continue to be externally monitored and, if a breach is noted either by WDC Officers or reported by the public, necessary action will be taken.

Date of next meeting: 21st April 2022

Enquiries about the minutes please contact:

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