

MINUTES OF MEETING

Warwick District Conservation Advisory Forum

Thursday 27th January 2022

14:30 via Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

Cllr Sidney Syson
Cllr George Illingworth

Ms Ruth Bennion (Leamington Society)
Dr Christine Hodgetts (Warwickshire Gardens Trust)
Ms Cathy Kimberley (CPRE)
Mr James Mackay (20th 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, though members wanted to make it known that although CPRE have already submitted a response in regards to Application 5.1, this was not written by Ms Cathy Kimberley.

Also, Cllr Sidney Syson is no longer chairman of the Leamington Society or the Committee.

3. **Minutes of Last Meeting** (9 December 2021)

Were agreed.

4. **Pre-application presentation**

4.1 Presentation by Lichfields for proposed hotel (approximately 60 rooms) at Stratford Road car park, Warwick Castle

Matthew Halford and Nick Blofeld (Warwick Castle) / Sophie White, Madeleine Rigby (Lichfields) / Chris Jeffcoate (Manser Practice) presented the proposed scheme for a hotel within the Stratford Road car park at Warwick Castle.

As a Grade I Registered Park and Garden, the importance of conservation of the asset cannot be understated and, whilst CAF noted the economic arguments in order to maintain viability, there was significant concern that the possible benefits did not balance when weighed against the substantial, potential harm. It was felt that the visual design was lacking in innovation, with function at the forefront rather than potential enhancement of the site.

The retention of tree cover, low ridge level and location within Bays 9 and 10 of the car park were acknowledged as important attempts to reduce the visual impact of the proposal. However, 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.

Questions were posed by the Forum in relation to the suitability of further tarmac on the site; impact on surface drainage; loss of parking provision on the site which could cause over-reliance on the over-flow car park and the decision to tie the proposal visually to Knights Village rather than the castle itself, potentially disjointing the modern ancillary buildings from the historic core 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 did not support the scheme in its current form.

5. **Planning Applications**

5.1 W/21/2192 – Proposed relocation of car park at Leafields, comprising reinforced grass, with landscaping and associated works – Land at Leafields, Warwick

CAF noted that whilst the provision of an overflow car park was important to reduce potential parking strain on the wider town, this application was in regards to the relocation of the current temporary overflow carpark with a larger, more permanent solution which had the potential to regularise development in this area.

The impact upon the open pastureland - an important component of the Grade I landscape designed by Capability Brown - is perceived to be harmful, placing extra demand on the setting of the castle.

The forum also noted that there was the likelihood of an increased requirement impact upon the use of the over-flow car park, if approval of the pre-application presented in Section 4 was forthcoming, due to the loss of Car Park Bays 9 and 10.

CAF expressed their agreement with comments raised by WCC Landscaping and CPRE and support their objections to the proposed scheme. The forum also noted the important comments raised by Historic England, though disagreed with the conclusion that the location would be less harmful through relocation away from

the river due to the wider area and possible permanent nature of the proposal as opposed to the temporary nature of the current site.

Overall, it was felt that the current proposal was harmful to the national significance of the Registered Park and Garden within the setting of a Grade II listed heritage asset and CAF did not support the scheme in its current form

5.2 W/21/2166 – Demolition of The Waterside Inn public house/restaurant, and the erection of a split level four and five storey apartment building comprising 42 residential homes (Use Class C3), with parking, landscaping and associated works – The Waterside Inn, Queensway, Leamington Spa, CV31 3JZ

Overall, CAF were not opposed to a scheme replacing the current building, which is of no architectural or historic importance, however the size and scale of the proposal were felt to be inappropriate within the Canal Conservation Area. The area is felt to be a transitional space within the conservation area, moving from the rural nature of the Grand Union through Myton to the townscape of Leamington.

The height and massing of the building was felt to be alien in nature, overpowering both the canal and the intermediary nature of the space, with a suggested height of three storeys being more in keeping with the surroundings. It was also proposed by a member of CAF that clean lines of brick, as opposed to the upper cladding, could potentially minimise visual impact.

CAF felt that the proposal in its current form would be harmful to the setting of the Canal Conservation Area however, with careful revision in height and use of materials, it could present a beneficial development for the area.

5.3 W/21/1861/LB – Proposed internal alterations including additional internal door fitted from hallway into study on ground floor; Construction of a partition wall in the existing ground floor utility to create a separate WC; Bedroom one on first floor to be converted into main family bathroom; Demolition of partition walls in bedroom two and bedroom three on first floor to create one larger double bedroom; Demolition of fitted wardrobes in master bedroom on first floor; Demolition of existing bathroom and cupboard in bedroom four on first floor, with creation of newly situated en-suite to form a guest bedroom – Manor Farm, Holywell, Rowington, Warwick, CV35 7BH

The forum noted that this scheme was put forward by the Parish Council, not due to concern with proposal but rather, as the works were to the interior of a Grade II listed building, to ensure fair comment and consideration was given.

CAF fully supported the application, observing that the proposed alterations reinstate a more historic layout, with the removal of modern partitions, and that it was positive to see a move towards reinstatement and restoration.

6. **Planning Committee Agenda**

CAF made no comment.

7. **Any Other Business**

7.1 Cllr Illingworth raised awareness of ongoing work at the Wantage (1 Castle Hill), Kenilworth. The Forum is concerned about potentially unauthorised work and harm

being caused to the Grade II Registered Park and Garden. Mr R Dawson confirmed that the case is currently being investigated by WDC Planning Enforcement to establish what breaches of planning control may have taken place. undertaken to a Grade II-listed garden within the Kenilworth area, which was currently under investigation by the Council Enforcement Team. Certain forum members were aware and echoed their concern, with the importance of defending a listed garden, which is not afforded as much protection as a building, being stressed.

- 7.2 Request for further information regarding the former Kings High site was raised by the Forum. Mr R Dawson was hopeful to have an update by the next meeting.
- 7.3 A member of CAF raised concerns regarding the Kenilworth Castle Pavillion marquee and the danger of creeping development within the setting of the Grade I listed castle. It was noted that the structure had a temporary events license but that the Forum should monitor to ensure there was no harmful impact upon the heritage asset.
- 7.4 Forum members paid their respects to Roger Cullimore, a former WDC Conservation Officer and an important figure within the local heritage scene, who sadly passed away recently.

Date of next meeting: 24th February 2022

Enquiries about the minutes please contact:

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