

MINUTES OF MEETING

Warwick District Conservation Advisory Forum

Thursday 23rd February 2023

14:30 via Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

Cllr Carolyn Gifford
Cllr George Illingworth

Mr Angus Kaye (The Victorian Society)
Mr James Mackay (20th Century Society)
Ms Gill Smith (The Warwick Society)
Mr Mark Sullivan (RTPI)

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

Apologies:

Ms Cathy Kimberley (CPRE)

1. **Substitutes and New Members**

None.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

None.

3. **Minutes of Last Meeting** (19 January 2023)

Were agreed.

4. **Planning Committee Agenda**

In response to Application W/22/0860 - Land at Althorpe Street, Royal Leamington Spa, CAF have agreed to send a representative to the Planning Committee to voice their objection.

5. **Planning Applications**

5.1 W/23/0158 – New pedestrian wayfinding signage – Various sites, Kenilworth

This application is to replace existing signage within Kenilworth with new monoliths and finger post signs. A member noted that a similar scheme had been successfully undertaken at the Pump Room Gardens in Leamington and the signage was an improvement on the previous, easily vandalized, finger posts. Before installation in Leamington, these proposed signs had been reduced in height to allow them to be more easily readable. This aligned with comments from members who questioned whether the proposed signage within Kenilworth, which is to higher than that installed in Leamington, would be legible to all visitors, especially wheelchair users, due to the intended height and small text size. It was also stated proposed 'walking times' to be displayed could be considered confusing and that displaying distances would be more appropriate, as these are not subjective to the individual.

Members raised the need for clarification regarding proposed signage, especially within Abbey Fields, specifically in the location marked as '09M' as it was unclear as to what signage, if any, was intended to be in this location. It was remarked that whilst there is signage which leads into Abbey Fields, it can be easy to become disorientated when within the park. As Abbey Fields forms part of the route from the train station and town centre to the Castle and High Street, it is important to provide directions on how to get out once inside, as the paths are not clear. It was noted it might also be beneficial to provide signage on the corner of Abbey Hill and Rosemary Hill, as this is a popular walking route from the train station.

The proposed signage is intended to replace existing signs within Kenilworth town centre, however the Forum raised the loss of existing educational signs that offer information beyond wayfinding, specifically locating to the history of the immediate locale. It was also criticized that this added another level of clutter to existing street furniture which could be addressed by working with the Highways Team. Members also deemed it concerning that the applicant had not considered Abbey Fields' status as a Scheduled Monument in supporting documentation, a factor which should be given great weight due to the importance of its designation. Members agreed that this lack of full consideration of a recognised heritage asset of national importance should be properly addressed by the applicant before any decision is issued.

Overall, there was a mixed reaction from the Forum to the proposed signage. Whilst elements were recognized as being positive, other aspects were felt to have the potential to do more harm than good, for example the height and information displayed. Some members were supportive of the colour scheme, whilst others felt it should better reflect the pinkish-red sandstone that is abundant within Kenilworth. One aspect upon which the Forum agreed upon was that whilst the principle of the application may be acceptable, the proposal in its current form still requires further revision regarding detail and greater consideration of the locations proposed. This is to ensure that signage which will form an important part of both initial impressions and daily life for the town, results in a lasting, positive impact for visitors and residents alike.

6.0 **Any Other Business**

A member has requested that App W/23/0026 - Noor Niwas, 1 Emscote Road be discussed at the next meeting.

Date of next meeting: 23rd March 2023

Enquiries about the minutes please contact:

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