

Planning Committee: 03 July 2012

Item Number: 10

Application No: W 12 / 0230

Town/Parish Council: Stoneleigh
Case Officer: Penny Butler

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Registration Date: 04/05/12

Expiry Date: 29/06/12

Stoneleigh Park, Main Gate, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth CV8 2LZ

Replacement of existing access arrangements at Stoneleigh Park main gate with a proposed roundabout junction on B4113 Stoneleigh Road FOR LaSalle Investment Management

This application is being presented to Committee due to an objection from Ashow Parish Council.

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

Ashow Parish Council: Raise an objection as it would be premature at this stage to approve this application until the master plan for this site has been submitted and agreed. As present the impact of the expansion of the Park on traffic volumes is unknown and this application may be inadequate to deal satisfactorily with the future traffic volumes.

Stoneleigh Parish Council: Support the application. Currently the turn into the Park for vehicles coming from Stoneleigh is dangerous with cars travelling at full speed in the opposite direction. Moreover, while cars are waiting for an appropriate moment to make this dangerous turn, there is a significant backlog of cars waiting to drive straight towards Leamington. Building a roundabout near the entrance will resolve both problems but a longer length of right turn pocket before the roundabout should be provided to allow for at least the Coventry to Leamington traffic to flow freely. WDC and WCC are urged to give this planning application preferential treatment so that construction can start as soon as possible.

WCC Highways: No objection, subject to standard advisory notes.

WCC Ecology: Recommend bat and nesting bird notes.

Natural England: The proposal does not affect any statutorily protected sites or landscapes, or have significant impacts on the conservation of soils, nor is the proposal EIA development. The LPA should assess impacts on protected species.

English Heritage: The context of the historic park in this location was radically altered by the construction of the show ground, and the main entrance conveys very little sense of the former historic park. In recognition of this the designated area of the park is reduced to a narrow strip, representing the former and much degraded boundary belt, expressed by a few remaining mature trees. The Grade II Listed Lodge survives but is isolated by modern development and no longer seen as part of the park; the harm to this asset has therefore already taken place, and the proposal would not significantly increase that level of harm. The

greatest potential harm will arise from the loss of trees, which are the biggest single surviving evidence of the registered park in this area. Only six trees will

be removed, which are of 'limited value', therefore 'substantial' harm will not occur (Para. 132 NPPF). Works are also proposed to improve the health and safety of a number of other trees which will benefit the public, and the heritage asset by extending the life of the trees.

Community Protection Area Engineer (Flood Risk): No objection.

RELEVANT POLICIES

- DP1 - Layout and Design (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP2 - Amenity (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP3 - Natural and Historic Environment and Landscape (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP6 - Access (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP7 - Traffic Generation (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP11 - Drainage (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DAP4 - Protection of Listed Buildings (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- SSP2 - Major Developed Sites (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- National Planning Policy Framework
- DAP3 - Protecting Nature Conservation and Geology (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DAP11 - Protecting Historic Parks and Gardens (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)

PLANNING HISTORY

There is extensive history on the wider Stoneleigh Park site, having been originally approved in 1963. The following are the most recent applications:

W12/0229- Improvements to junction with B4115 at Gate 3

W12/0262- Creation of 111 space car park

W11/1358- Change of use of CASE building from sui generis to B1 office use

W11/1259- Installation of replacement bridge at Gate 3

KEY ISSUES

The Site and its Location

Stoneleigh Park is located in an isolated position within the Green Belt, and is designated as a Major Developed Site within Policies SSP2 and SSP3 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011. The Park was formerly the National Agricultural Centre, and adjoins the Grade I Listed Stoneleigh Abbey site which has been converted into dwellings. Stoneleigh Park is surrounded by the Grade II* Registered Park and Garden of Stoneleigh Abbey and the Deer Park. The site lies a short distance from the village settlements of Ashow, Stoneleigh and Stareton. The application site is located at the main entrance to Stoneleigh Park, which is opposite the road leading to Stareton village. Currently the Stoneleigh Road/B4113 operates as single carriage way with a right turn ghost island providing access into Stoneleigh Park.

The site is partly within the boundary of the Major Developed Site designation, since this follows the Western edge of Stoneleigh Road, and partly within the

Registered Park which runs along each side of the road. The application site generally follows the line of roads and verges. On the Western side, the site extends into the entrance to Stoneleigh Park as far as the main gate, to the edge of the curtilage of the Grade II Listed East Lodge to the North, and on the Eastern side of the road it clips the edge of the field opposite the existing entrance. On three corners of the existing junction and along the verges are a number of mature trees.

Details of the Development

A new roundabout is proposed within the public carriage way in order to improve access arrangements to the Park. There would be two approach lanes from each direction, enabling right hand turning traffic to proceed without delaying onward flow, and one exit lane in each direction aside from the entrance to the Park where two are proposed. An existing access from the Park entrance road to residential properties to the North will be closed and replaced with another further into the site. The road leading to Stareton village will be closed and realigned around the root protection area of a large Oak tree, currently within the roadside hedge line.

The roundabout is proposed in order to improve the safety of the operation of the junction and create a high quality entrance to the Park. Collision data shows eight collisions since 2006, all of which involved vehicles turning at the junction. The roundabout will reduce the speed of vehicles travelling along the B4113, and approaches will be sign posted accordingly. Currently the junction operates adequately, aside from event days when delays are caused by vehicles using the junction, especially those travelling from the north and turning right into the site. The roundabout will increase the capacity of the junction enabling more traffic to enter and exit the site simultaneously. The proposal forms part of the new management company's strategy for securing regeneration of the Park to ensure its sustainable development, and the proposal is part of the initial infrastructure improvements to support this strategy.

Assessment

Impact on highway safety

The proposal is intended to address highway safety and congestion issues related to the existing T junction providing vehicular access to Stoneleigh Park. The junction currently requires vehicles leaving the site to give way to oncoming traffic, but visibility is limited from the junction due to bends in the road. The proposed roundabout will improve highway safety by providing a safer access in and out of the Park and will also enable traffic travelling from the north to turn right into the Park safely without blocking flow. The design of the roundabout has been informed by discussion with the Highway Authority, and they raise no objection to the proposal. It is considered that the proposal will lead to a safer, more convenient and attractive access route into the site, which will not in itself generate further traffic movements. The proposal will therefore comply with Local Plan Policies DP6 and DP7. The proposed drainage system includes sustainable methods including filter drains, ditches, swales and a retention pond and should not increase flood risk elsewhere, therefore it would accord with Policy DP11.

Impact on Green Belt

In planning policy terms, Stoneleigh Park is a Major Developed Site within the Green Belt, where appropriate limited infilling may be considered appropriate

under policy SSP2, although about half of the application site is outside the boundary. The NPPF states that engineering operations and local transport infrastructure projects are not inappropriate development providing they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it.

The proposed roundabout constitutes an engineering operation, which it is considered would preserve openness since it will not significantly intrude into currently open areas, as the majority of the works are proposed within the existing highway verges. There would be no conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt and on this basis the proposal would not be inappropriate development within the Green Belt, and would comply with the NPPF.

The proposed roundabout will result in the loss of some existing highway verge and six trees which is regrettable in visual amenity terms, but the improvements that will be made to highway safety are considered to outweigh this minor harm.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

It is considered that the proposed roundabout will not have a significant impact upon the amenity of the nearest residential property within the Lodge, since the roundabout will not bring vehicular traffic materially closer to the dwelling.

Impact on heritage assets and natural environment

The NPPF states that, when considering the impact of development upon the significance of a heritage asset (Para.132), greater weight should be given to the asset's conservation, the more important the asset is. The arboricultural report submitted with the application takes into account the arboricultural constraints of the site in relation to the mature and veteran trees surrounding it, and details the proposed removal of six trees which are of 'limited value' and improvement works to a remaining number. Policy DP3 requires proposals to demonstrate that they protect and/or enhance local ecology and protect the landscape character of the area. The NPPF (para.134) states that where a development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage assets, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

It is considered that the proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the registered park and the setting of the Listed Building. The benefits to the proposal includes the improvement to highway safety and flow, the contribution that the development will make towards improving the viability of the Park with its associated employment and financial benefits for the District, and the extension to the life of the retained trees. The public benefits are considered to carry greater weight than the limited harm that would be caused to the heritage assets, and would therefore accord with the NPPF. Suitable conditions will ensure compliance with Policy DP3, and the loss of the existing trees and hedging will be mitigated through a requirement for replacement hedging and six extra heavy standard English Oak trees. The replacement of the six trees of limited value with larger better quality specimens will provide a net gain in biodiversity in accordance with paragraph 109 of the NPPF. Amended plans are provided showing a relocated swale, to outside the RPA of the Oak tree.

CONCLUSION/SUMMARY OF DECISION

In the opinion of the District Planning Authority, the development does not prejudice the openness and rural character of this green belt area, or cause harm to highway safety, and is considered to comply with the policies listed.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT, subject to the conditions listed below.

CONDITIONS

- 1 The development hereby permitted must be begun not later than the expiration of three years from the date of this permission. **REASON** : To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the details shown on the application form, site location plan and approved drawing(s) (STH2677-(MID)/004 Revision B & STH2677-06 Revision C submitted on 21 June 2012) , and specification contained therein, . **REASON** : For the avoidance of doubt and to secure a satisfactory form of development in accordance with Policies DP1 and DP2 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011.
- 3 No development or other operations (including demolition, site clearance or other preparatory works) shall commence unless the tree protection measures identified in the approved application documentation have been put into place in full accordance with the approved details and thereafter shall remain in place during any such construction work. In addition no excavations, site works, trenches or channels shall be cut or pipes or services laid, no fires shall be lit within 10 metres of the nearest point of the canopy of any protected tree(s); no equipment, machinery or structure shall be attached to or supported by a protected tree(s); no mixing of cement or use of other contaminating materials or substances shall take place within, or close enough to, a root protection area that seepage or displacement could cause them to enter a root protection area or any other works carried out in such a way as to cause damage or injury to the tree(s) by interference with their root structure and that no soil or waste shall be deposited on the land in such a position as to be likely to cause damage or injury to the tree(s). **REASON** : To protect and enhance the amenities of the area, and to satisfy the requirements of Policies DP1 and DP3 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011.
- 4 Within six months of the implementation of the works hereby approved replacement planting shall be undertaken of trees of a size and species to be agreed in writing by the district planning authority in a location to be agreed in writing and shall be maintained in strict accordance with a schedule of maintenance for the tree(s) until successfully established in accordance with the details set out in the approved application documentation or any variation submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. All tree(s) shall be planted in accordance with British Standard BS4043 – Transplanting Root-balled Trees and

BS4428 – Code of Practice for General Landscape Operations (excluding hard surfaces). If within a period of five years from the date of planting the tree(s) (or any other tree(s) planted in replacement for it) is removed, uprooted, destroyed or dies or becomes, in the opinion of the local planning authority, seriously damaged or defective, another tree(s) of the same size and species as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place within the first planting season following the removal, uprooting, destruction or death of the original tree(s), or in accordance with any variation for which the local planning authority give their written consent. **REASON** : To protect and enhance the amenities of the area, and to satisfy the requirements of Policies DP1 and DP3 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011.
