

CONSERVATION ADVISORY PANEL

(Incorporating the Civic Society Development Panel)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD REMOTELY ON 5TH OCTOBER 2022

Present: Mr C Potterton in the Chair
Dr H Barrett, Cllr Bissett, Ms A Burton, The Dean, Cllr Mrs Lucy Hodgson, Ms A Marles, Mr M McCurdy, Mr S Laws, Mr D Saunders, Mr D Davis, Mr R Lockett

Officers: Dr P Collins and Mr P Round, Service Manager, Development Management

Apologies: Councillor Barnes.

POST MEETING NOTE – The Chair has received belated apologies from Mr Mark Hughes who has confirmed that he is off work at present and unable to attend any such activities.

61. INTRODUCTIONS

Paul Round, the recently appointed Service Manager, Development Management, introduced himself to the Panel and provided an overview of the work of his team.

62. MINUTES

The minutes of the remote meeting held on 7th September 2022 were approved as a correct record, subject to the following:

Minute No. 50 Local Validation Checklist Consultation

Panel members commented that notes of the discussion regarding the local validation checklist consultation and the quality of applications may require modification. The Chair requested that suggested amendments be forwarded to him for further consideration.

Panel members suggested clarification may also be required regarding the 're-consultation' point under the same heading.

63. CHAIR'S REPORT

1. Appeal Decisions and Notifications of Appeal.

Officers made Panel Members aware that 21/00478/FUL 1-6 Court Mews had been recommended for approval prior to the meeting and had therefore been removed from the agenda.

CONSERVATION ADVISORY PANEL

(Incorporating the Civic Society Development Panel)

2. Chair's Correspondence and Information for discussion

The Chair briefed members on the West Midlands Historic Buildings Trust (WMHBT) Buildings at Risk project, inviting Panel members to become involved, including nominating local buildings to be included in the list. This is the link as referred to in the meeting - <https://wmhbt.org.uk/blog/about-the-project/>

64. OUTCOME OF APPLICATIONS

Dr Collins reported on the outcome of items considered at the September meeting:

22/00634/LB – 17 Reindeer Court – **Approved**

22/00663/LB – 18 Albany Terrace – **Approved**

22/00666/HP & 22/00667/LB – 18 Albany Terrace – **Approved**

22/00682/FUL & 22/00683/LB – Eagle Vaults, 2 Friar Street – **Approved**

22/00696/HP & 22/00697/LB – 22 Britannia Square – **Approved**

65. REPORT ONLY ITEMS

22/00745/ADV – 10 High Street

3 x replacement fascia signs, 2 x replacement entrance door signs and 1 x projecting box sign.

No Objection

22/00664/ADV – 53-54 Flat 5, Broad Street

Erection of 3 no. non-illuminated temporary wrap signage to scaffolding hoarding.

No Objection

22/00750/HP – 51 Shrubbery Avenue

Erection of single storey side and rear extension with dormer window [Revision of withdrawn application 21/00882/ | HP].

No Objection

22/00624/HP – 102 Lansdowne Road

Retrospective application for a garden shed in the rear garden.

No Objection

22/00288/FUL – 40 The Shambles

Part change of use of first and second floor from retail storage (use class E) to 2no. residential studio apartments (use class C).

No Objection

22/00810/ADV – 79 Friar Street, corner of College Street

Internally illuminated fascia sign.

No Objection

CONSERVATION ADVISORY PANEL

(Incorporating the Civic Society Development Panel)

MAIN AGENDA ITEMS

66. 22/00725/FUL & 22/00726/LB - 36 Broad Street

Conversion of basement into residential use.

The Panel considered that application details were inadequate and did not address potential flooding issues.

The Panel deferred the application with a request to see again – inadequate detail provided in the application.

67. 22/00753/FUL & 22/00754/LB - 49 Broad Street

Conversion of storage space to a 2-bedroom residential flat (Use Class C3).

The Panel did not object in principle but commented on the issue of poor access and lack of amenity space for the proposed dwellings. They further noted that the red line plan did not encompass a proposed studio unit at the rear of the property.

The Panel concluded that the application was not acceptable in its current format due to poor access and lack of amenity space.

68. 22/00727/FUL & 22/00728/LB – Land adjacent to 1 Newport Street

Erection of shop and self-contained flat above and associated works.

Panel Members noted that the application cited no risk of flooding and no nearby running water courses despite the fact that the site was clearly located near to the River Severn and was obviously at risk of flooding. Panel Members further commented that the heritage statement was poor. There was also inadequate information on proposed materials.

The Panel concluded that the application was not acceptable in its current format as the flood risk had not been addressed, insufficient detail provided and an inadequate heritage statement.

69. 22/00760/FUL – Land at Moor Street

Proposed erection of 2 dwelling houses. Unlisted, Riverside conservation area.

The Panel were aware of concerns around the lack of parking but noted that the principle had already been established with a prior consent. The green credentials of the building were to be welcomed.

CONSERVATION ADVISORY PANEL

(Incorporating the Civic Society Development Panel)

The Panel has no objection in principle, subject to concerns about lack of parking provision.

70. 22/00623/FUL – 42 Foregate Street

Erection of 3 storey building to provide 4 residential apartments (4 x 1 bed) with undercroft car parking (7 spaces), alongside associated amenity space, refuse and cycle storage to the rear.

The Panel had considered a similar scheme on this site previously (21/00470/FUL & 21/00471/LB on 07 July 2021) and considered it appropriate to reiterate their comments made at that time. These were that: -

'It was agreed that the proposal would be a harmful infilling of one of the few remaining open 'back land' sites in Farrier Street. It would obscure the view of the main listed buildings, and this would cause considerable harm to the character of the Conservation Area i.e., loss of back land space and blocking views of the listed buildings. This is noted in the Conservation Area Appraisal, which, as published evidence is a material consideration. The panel noted that there are other tall structures in the area but considered that this places even more importance on the need to keep these few remaining back land areas open and undeveloped'.

The Panel noted that the development had been reduced in height by a storey but remained of the opinion that the scale of the proposal needed further consideration as the scheme was still insufficiently subsidiary to the host building and therefore still too dominant on Farrier Street.

There was an extended debate about where any possible new building could sit, and it was suggested that any such building needed to be of a scale and location that better reflected a historical reference and that this could be based upon evidence from historic mapping. It was noted that Farrier Street had, in effect, been a service road to the rear of properties on Foregate Street, and most of these did have outbuildings, upon whose scale a scheme might be based.

The Panel concluded that the application was not acceptable in its current format due to scale and location and that the scheme needed to be revised accordingly.

71. 22/00777/HP & 22/00778/LB – 9 Lansdowne Crescent

Demolition of out building and carport. New single storey extension, insertion of window at first floor, retaining wall to drive, basement tanking/conversion new driveway and new metal gates.

Overall, the Panel has no objection to the principle, but noted that the scale and more contemporary style design of the gates was inappropriate.

CONSERVATION ADVISORY PANEL

(Incorporating the Civic Society Development Panel)

The Panel has no objection in principle, subject to the retention of the existing gates.

72. 22/00684/FUL & 22/00783/LB – 1 Shaw Mews, Shaw Street

Change of use from office (use class E) to residential use (use class C3) in the form of three apartments over three floors with associated external works.

The Panel has no objection to the principle but noted that there was insufficient detail regarding internal structural alterations and alterations to existing features. It was noted that Historic England had been consulted upon the application. More detail is required upon how the proposed light wells will be formed and the basement (Lower Ground) unit tanked. This could be provided as part of a schedule of works. Given that part of the scheme is within a grade II* listed building, a schedule of surviving historic features should be provided ahead of any works commencing, together with a commentary upon how these will be retained within the proposed conversion works.

The Panel has no objection in principle, subject to a detailed schedule of work and schedule of existing features to be retained.

MAJOR APPLICATIONS

73. 22/00649/FUL – Lowesmoor Wharf, Lowesmoor

Demolition of buildings and structures, reuse and regeneration of buildings and redevelopment of land at Lowesmoor Wharf to provide mixed use development within seven buildings (Block A comprising up to 5 storeys, Block B comprising up to 8 storeys, Block C comprising up to 7 storeys, Block D comprising up to 7 storeys, Block E comprising up to 7 storeys, Block F comprising up to 8 storeys, Block G re-use and conversion of existing buildings, Block P: re-use and ground floor extension of existing building) floorspace to comprise 238 residential apartments (Class C3), 845 sq. m retail floorspace (Class E), 789 sq. m café and restaurant floorspace (Class E), 3,553 sq. m office floorspace (Class E), 431 sq. m community floorspace (Class F2), 358 sq. m ancillary and plant floorspace together with new pedestrian and vehicular accesses and car parking, new public space, hard and soft landscaping and associated site infrastructure.

The Panel considered the recent amended scheme for the site, but maintained their overall objection to the proposed development, which was regarded as being totally inappropriate in this location. The Panel stood by their detailed seven-page response, dated 12 November 2020, which remains uploaded on the application.

Mr Round confirmed that Historic England had been given an extension to 12th October to provide comments and confirmed the new deadline would also be applied to the Panel's comments.

CONSERVATION ADVISORY PANEL

(Incorporating the Civic Society Development Panel)

An updated version of those comments was submitted by The Chairman on 11th October 2022 and are appended at the rear of these minutes.

Whilst the panel is fully supportive of an appropriate redevelopment of the area, it considers that this scheme remains wholly unacceptable in its current format.

74. 22/00679/FUL – Heron Lodge, London Road

Erection of 61-bedroom care home and associated works.

Potential development on and around this site has been debated at length by the Panel over the years. As previously, the Panel remains resolutely against any such inappropriate development on this site. A detailed response was submitted by The Chairman on 6th October 2022 and are appended at the rear of these minutes.

The Conservation Area Panel object in the strongest possible terms to the proposed scheme at Heron Lodge.

75. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Panel Members were informed by The Dean that Mr Chris Guy, Cathedral Archaeologist, had retired and was therefore no longer an active member of the Panel.

76. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, 2nd November at 5pm.

Chair at the meeting
Date: 2nd November 2022

CONSERVATION ADVISORY PANEL

(Incorporating the Civic Society Development Panel)

CONSULTATION RESPONSE

20/00649/FUL - Lowesmoor Wharf Lowesmoor Worcester

11th October 2022

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Conservation Area Panel have responded to this application on a number of occasions in the past and have consistently repeated that whilst we acknowledge that there is a need for redevelopment, the aspiration should always be for the highest standard of architecture that grows from and responds to its surroundings.
- 1.2 The panel remains of the opinion that the current iteration of the scheme remains totally alien to the scale of Worcester in general and the Canal Conservation Area in particular. CAP again most strongly urges the City Council to refuse consent for the scheme in its current form.
- 1.3 The scheme is contrary to WCC's own advice in terms of impact on Conservation Areas. It is contrary to National Policies as set out in the NPPF. It remains excessively tall, bears no relationship to its surroundings in terms of design or materiality and will cause significant visual harm to the skyline of the City. The addition of walls and railings to its perimeter only serves to further disconnect it from the rest of the canal basin.
- 1.4 Worcester City Council has refused other buildings in this same area quoting excessive height and failure to respond to local character and distinctiveness. We urge WCC to be consistent in its approach.
- 1.5 Whilst the panel is fully supportive of an appropriate redevelopment of the area, it considers that this scheme is wholly unacceptable in its current format.
- 1.6 A Conservation Area is defined in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as an area of special architectural or historic interest, **the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance**. The Appraisal is in line with sections 69 and 71 of the 1990 Act which places a duty on the local authority to designate and manage their conservation areas. **Designation helps to ensure that an area identified for its special interest and significance is managed and protected appropriately.**
- 1.7 Conservation is the management of change to a significant place in a way that will best **sustain its heritage values**, while recognising **opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values** for present and future generations. The

CONSERVATION ADVISORY PANEL

(Incorporating the Civic Society Development Panel)

conservation area appraisal is a means of identifying and assessing what the special architectural or historic interest of an area is and how this contributes to the character of the place. The appraisal should be a material consideration in planning applications and should be read in conjunction with the management proposals for the conservation and enhancement of an area.

- 1.8 National planning policy, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), draws attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance which, subject to appropriate assessment and justification, can also include adaptation and change.
- 1.9 Paragraph 137 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas to enhance or better reveal significance, and **proposals that preserve those elements which make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of heritage assets should be treated favourably**.
- 1.10 The panel considers that this proposed scheme remains in direct conflict with these aims and objectives.
- 1.11 Further, the panel considers that no proper justification is shown for the demolition of early and mid-19th century buildings in order to treat the site as a single space as if the result of the Blitz. This sweeps away the history of sequential development, some of which pre-dated the introduction of the Canal.
- 1.12 The justification of scale is by reference to other over-scaled developments in the vicinity which is not a principle relevant to Conservation Areas.
- 1.13 This is a canal-based Conservation Area where any proposed development must be of a scale and design that is appropriate for the area and the City as a whole. The redevelopment of this site is accepted as necessary but should be setting the highest standards in design response.
- 1.14 The sections, elevations and other illustrations within the submission continue to demonstrate that the massing and height of the buildings do not accord with the scale of the conservation areas or canal side setting of this city.
- 1.15 South Worcestershire Development Plan policies 6 and 24 seek to protect and enhance designated and non-designated heritage assets and guide against development that would cause substantial harm to the significance of any heritage asset and SWDP 21 which sets generic design principles for development proposals.

CONSERVATION ADVISORY PANEL

(Incorporating the Civic Society Development Panel)

- 1.16 SWDP 21 requires that all development will be expected to be of a high design quality and integrate effectively with its surroundings and that development proposals must complement the character of the area.
- 1.17 SWDP 21 further states that proposals should respond to surrounding buildings and the distinctive features or qualities that contribute to the visual and heritage interest of the townscape, frontages, streets and landscape quality of the local area and states that the scale, height and massing of development must be appropriate to the setting of the site and the surrounding landscape character and townscape, including existing urban grain and density.
- 1.18 Whilst the panel is fully supportive of a redevelopment of this area, it is critical that the scheme is of an appropriate scale for its location. This scheme is massive in terms of height. It could be located anywhere and does not belong in Worcester. It will destroy its skyline and cannot be considered to be in line with any of the policies set in place to protect it.
- 1.19 The site has potential to be an exemplar of how to develop a scheme that is embedded in its surroundings, recognisably Worcester born and a pleasure to all who see it.
- 1.20 Retaining historic buildings in a development can be difficult but simply removing them is lazy, does not meet the 'preserve and enhance' objective set out in policy and ignores Climate Change policies.

2. Conclusion

- 2.1 The scheme is contrary to WCC own advice in terms of impact on the Canal Conservation Area. The scheme is contrary to National Guidance and Policy as to how to carry out sensitive development in and around these important areas.
- 2.2 The scheme is contrary to National Policies as set out in the NPPF. It is excessively tall, bears no relationship to its surroundings in terms of design or materiality and will cause significant visual harm to the skyline of the City.
- 2.3 Worcester City Council has previously refused consent for other buildings in this same area quoting 'excessive height' and 'failure to respond to local character and distinctiveness'. We urge WCC to be consistent in its approach.
- 2.4 **Whilst the panel is fully supportive of an appropriate redevelopment of the area, it considers that this scheme remains wholly unacceptable in its current format.**

CONSERVATION ADVISORY PANEL

(Incorporating the Civic Society Development Panel)

WCC APPLICATION REF 22/00679/FUL

Heron Lodge London Road Worcester WR5 2EE - Erection of 61-bedroom care home and associated works.

06th October 2022

The Conservation Area Panel object in the strongest possible terms to the proposed scheme at Heron Lodge.

This is a very important parcel of land. It is the green heart of the Larkhill Conservation Area, is protected Green Space and is the setting for a number of important listed buildings, to include Heron Lodge. It is clearly visible from London Road, one of the primary arteries leading into the City.

The Conservation Area Appraisal sets out, across numerous pages, how and why this area of 'open ground' is important. Whilst it might be correct to say the site would benefit from an increase in management and some of the railings, for example, should be repaired or replaced, its current condition is not a material consideration as to whether it should be developed or not.

Over the last number of years there has been an incremental erosion of the important space around Heron Lodge and this substantial proposal must be opposed in order to halt this erosion.

As a key part of the Larkhill Conservation Area, the primary question in this regard is whether the proposal 'preserves or enhances' the CA. To construct a Care Home with all its associated facilities, amenities and infrastructure could not, in our opinion, be construed as either preservation or enhancement. It is therefore contrary to Local and National Policy.

The submitted 'Landscape Statement' is not a proper assessment of the likely significant landscape and visual effects and, by its own admission, is based on a single site visit in May 2022. It concludes that the site has '*limited value in broader landscape terms*' because of its isolation from other GI elements within the city. This is a wholly incorrect understanding of what landscape value is or how it is assessed. Industry guidance (GLVIA3 Box 5.1 and TGN 02-21) clearly set out that 'Conservation Interests' are an important consideration and, most importantly in TGN 02-21 guidance, 'Cultural Heritage' is a major component of 'value' especially where a '*Landscape which contributes to the significance of heritage assets, for example forming the setting of heritage assets (especially if identified in specialist studies)*'.

CONSERVATION ADVISORY PANEL

(Incorporating the Civic Society Development Panel)

There will be a major adverse effect on landscape character that cannot be properly mitigated. There will be significant adverse effects on the setting of listed buildings and there will be significant adverse effects on the character of the Larkhill Conservation Area. There will be significant adverse visual effects on those that pass the site. Bearing in mind this is one of the key routes into the city, this should be a major consideration.

More recent development of Larkhill Orchard has already subdivided and eroded the 'grounds', or landscape setting of these listed buildings and any further loss of open land would cause even greater landscape harm. The loss of land to previous schemes places even greater importance on this piece of green space.

The Conservation Advisory Panel objects most strongly to this scheme and urges Worcester City Council to implement Local and National Planning Policy and refuse planning permission.