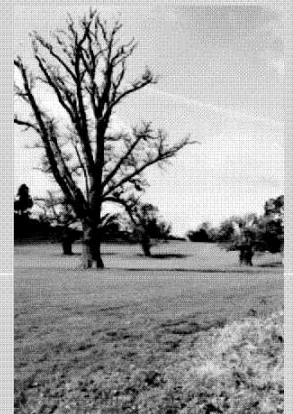




WARWICK DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN Public Local Inquiry 2006

Core Topic Paper 6

Historic Environment



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Warwick District Local Plan - Public Local Inquiry Core Topic Paper

Historic Environment

1. Introduction

1.1 This core topic paper gives information on the historic environment policies addressed within the Warwick District Local Plan. This is one of a total of 12 core topic papers that have been prepared for the Public Inquiry into the Local Plan. These core topic papers do not seek to respond to individual objections to the local plan, but to provide background information on various key topics. The Council is also preparing detailed proofs of evidence and written statements that will respond to the detailed comments of objectors to the Local Plan. These will refer back to these core topic papers as necessary.

1.2 This core topic paper is structured to provide background information on the following key areas:-

- The Historic Environment of Warwick District
- Context
 - National
 - Regional and sub regional
 - Local
- The strategy of the Local Plan
- The policies of the Local Plan
 - Archaeology
 - Listed Buildings
 - Conservation areas
 - Parks and gardens

2. The Historic Environment of Warwick District

2.1 Warwick District has a reputation as a desirable place to live, work and visit. Fundamental to this reputation is the rich history of the area that has left a legacy of fine historic buildings and areas. Warwick has a mediaeval town centre and

has become a popular national tourist destination focussing on its famous castle. Royal Leamington Spa grew in size and prominence during the 18th and 19th centuries and this has left a fine legacy of Regency and Georgian buildings. Kenilworth's history focuses on its castle, the largest ruined castle in England.

- 2.2 The District also contains many other important historic buildings, areas and parklands, ranging from formal Victorian gardens to historic Deer Parks. The district also contains a range of fine historic houses including Stoneleigh Abbey (which underwent a major restoration a few years ago) and Packwood House and Beddesley Clinton, now both owned by the National Trust.
- 2.3 This historic legacy has been carefully guarded and today Warwick District has 26 conservation areas and over 1,500 listed buildings, 12 parks and gardens that are recognised nationally as being of special historic interest and a large number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments.
- 2.4 Much work has been done to protect and enhance this historic environment by the Council together with local groups and national bodies such as English Heritage. This work is described in paragraphs 3.7 to 3.22. In carrying out this work, and in seeking provide appropriate planning policies through this Local Plan, there is recognition locally that the historic environment is important for its own sake as well as for the role it has in creating an attractive environment to live and work.

3. Context

National context

- 3.1 At a national level the historic environment is protected statutorily by the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The contents of the Act are wide ranging and relate to the statutory protection of listed building and scheduled ancient monuments, the designation and protection of conservation areas and the awarding of grants for the maintenance of the historic environment.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment

- 3.2 Guidance in terms of administration of the Act and the wider protection of the historic environment is given in the Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15). Part 1 of PPG15 covers planning and conservation, development plans, development control, listed building control, conservation areas and transport management. Part 2 of PPG15 covers the identification and recording of the historic environment, the upkeep and repair of historic buildings, and churches and the ecclesiastical exemption.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology

- 3.3 Guidance is also given in PPG16 for the management and preservation of Schedule Ancient Monuments and archaeological sites.
- 3.4 The management of the historic environment is currently undergoing major changes in the way in which listed buildings are handled. This will not involve changes to the statutory legislation but will result in changes in the way in which applications are categorised for the various levels of protection of the historic environment and will result in a revision to PPG15. Once these changes have been approved by Central Government, there may be a need for re-consideration at a local level of the way in which certain aspects of the historic environment are dealt with. However, at this stage the impact of the changes cannot be fully assessed.

Regional and sub regional context

Regional Spatial Strategy

- 3.5 At a regional level, guidance is given in the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy. **Policy QE5** of that document relates to the protection and enhancement of the historic environment. It has four sections which deal with the protection, enhancement, identification and regeneration of the diverse historic environment of the whole region. Linked with the historic environment in the Regional Spatial Strategy is **Policy PA10** (Tourism and Culture) which seeks to improve the level of facilities and development of key tourism and cultural assets including historic town centres, Warwick Castle and the other significant historic sites, buildings and gardens. It is against the background of the Regional Spatial Strategy that the Structure Plan policies are now to be interpreted at a county level.

Warwickshire Structure Plan

- 3.6 Policy in the Warwickshire Structure Plan is provided primarily in **policies ER.1** and ER2. **Policy ER.1** relates to the natural and cultural environmental assets and seeks to ensure that Local Authorities within Warwickshire make a consistent approach towards the protection of the character and quality of the towns and countryside in the county. **Policy ER.1** sets out 6 principles which should, as appropriate, be included in Local Plan policies. These include the maintenance and preservation of conservation areas and scheduled ancient monuments and listed buildings registered parks, gardens and battlefields, together with the natural environment. **Policy ER.2** recognises the environmental impact of development and requires Local Authorities to address environmental impact on all areas including historic assets which are particularly sensitive in this context.

Local context

- 3.7 The importance that is attached to protecting the historic environment in the District is seen in a wide number of ways:-
- through local action to protect the historic environment
 - through providing grant schemes for historic buildings
 - by supporting major conservation projects
 - by promoting awareness of, and interest in, the historic environment
 - by ensuring that conservation areas are kept under review
 - by providing advice to owners of historic properties
 - through the Community Plan for Warwick District; and
 - through Warwick District's own Corporate Strategy

- 3.8 These will now be examined in turn.

Local action to protect the historic environment

- 3.9 There is a widespread support from local people for the maintenance of the environment in which they live and work. This was strongly recognised in the Local Plan key issues consultation carried out in 2001 where 96% of local people agreed that it was essential to support the protection of the historic environment.

This local support is evidenced by the number of local amenity and interest groups that are active in the area. These include the following:-

- Civic Societies in Leamington, Warwick, Kenilworth and Whitnash
- The Central Leamington Residents' Association (CLARA)
- Royal Leamington Spa Building Conservation Trust
- Kenilworth Local History Society
- Friends of Kenilworth Abbey Fields
- Kenilworth Abbey Advisory Forum
- Friends of Warwick Castle Park
- Hill Close Gardens Trust
- Friends of Hill Close Gardens
- Warwickshire Garden Trust

3.10 Several of these groups are members of the Warwick Towns Conservation Area Advisory Forum, details of which are set out in paragraph 3.18. Many also actively support the District Council's contribution to the annual Civic Trust "Heritage Open Days" weekends in September each year (see paragraph 3.19).

3.11 Support has been maintained consistently at national level for the local historic environment by the advice and attention to the area, and grants given by English Heritage over a long period of time. The District Council have maintained a good working relationship with English Heritage who have been involved in providing advice on many proposals within the District.

Grant schemes for historic buildings

3.12 Over the past 20 years, the District Council has supported historic building grant schemes. The current level of Council commitment for this financial year is £100,000. Warwick District is the only authority in the whole of the West Midlands which still offers discretionary grants towards the restoration of historic buildings. Grant aid is offered as a percentage of the cost of works undertaken thereby drawing down a significant contribution from the property owner.

3.13 A number of grant schemes have also received match funding from organisations such as English Heritage, the Heritage Lottery Fund and Advantage West Midlands. From the early 1980's, Town Schemes Grants were operating in

Leamington, Warwick and Kenilworth as a partnership scheme jointly funded by the Local Authority and English Heritage. Each of these schemes concluded following successful restoration of groups of historic buildings in each of the town centres.

- 3.14 Following the conclusion of these schemes, separate match funded grant schemes have continued in Warwick and Leamington Spa. In the case of Leamington, there has been a Conservation Area Partnership (CAP) Scheme followed by Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme (HERS), both supported with match funding from English Heritage. In the Old Town of Leamington Spa, following on the wider regeneration initiative in this part of the town¹, a successful bid was made for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and also from Advantage West Midlands under the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI). The works provided for under this three year scheme included restoration of buildings as a whole and also specific restoration initiatives for shopfronts in the historic core streets. This initiative has included a successful shopfront enhancement scheme, as a result of which upwards of 60 shopfronts have been restored since the schemes inception.
- 3.15 In the rural areas significant progress has been made with Historic Buildings Grant Schemes directly funded by the District Council. Funding from these schemes has been extended into Kenilworth and Whitnash where again buildings have been maintained and restored under the schemes. In the case of all of these schemes, it has been the individually owned properties (usually householders) that have benefited.

Major Projects

- 3.16 At a different scale, the Council has supported a number of key major projects to maintain and enhance the historic environment over the past 20 years. These have included:-
- the restoration of the largely council-owned Lansdowne Crescent in Leamington Spa

¹ This was the Single Regeneration Budget scheme for Old Town which led to the setting up of the local regeneration agency "Regenesis". The work of Regenesis is discussed in more detail in other Core Topic Papers.

- resurfacing and environmental improvements carried out to Warwick Market Place in 1999
- restoration of the Royal Pump Rooms to significantly bring back into use the key building in Leamington Town Centre between 1998 and 2000
- the restoration of the Jephson Gardens through support of Heritage Lottery Funding between 2000 and 2003 and
- the improvement of the Parade as part of a safety demonstration project which has visibly improved part of Leamington Spa in 2005.

3.17 The Council has also supported initiatives from other groups and owners to restore historic buildings. It has supported the work of the Royal Leamington Spa Building Conservation Trust to restore 4 & 6 Clemens Street in the Old Town area of Leamington Spa and the Hill Close Gardens Trust with the restoration of Hill Close Gardens, a series of Victorian gardens in Warwick². In Old Town, Leamington Spa other work has been carried out in conjunction with Regenesys relating to the maintenance and the restoration of the historic environment.

3.18 In some instances the Council has used its role as planning authority to work alongside owners of historic properties to help achieve significant restoration projects. An example of this is at Stoneleigh Abbey where the Council worked alongside the owners of this property to deliver a package of proposals to ensure that sufficient funds were available to restore the house and find new uses for various buildings on the estate.

3.19 As a planning authority, Warwick District Council has supported the principle of good contemporary design in historic settings as originally promoted in the Leamington Design Guide of 1990. In Leamington Spa the redevelopment of Baptist Chapel site, Warwick Street resulted in a contemporary retail proposal now occupied by Waterstones which was followed by a complimentary contemporary redevelopment of Whiteheads Court. The delicate balance between the introduction of contemporary architecture and the use of traditional styles has been a challenge successfully met at Gem House and Regents Court

² The District Council previously owns Hill Close Gardens and has now passed the site on to the Hill close Gardens Trust. It has also offered over £100,000 in grant assistance to help the work of the Trust. This has assisted the work of the Trust which has now been awarded a Heritage Lottery Grant to provide carry out further works on the garden including providing an improved visitors centre.

Furthermore, the traditional infill in George Street and at William Thomas House represent successful examples of this delicate balance against a background of poor quality pastiche permitted in the 1980's. The District's response to this challenge has been recognised by the recent Festive Fives award from CABE for a consistent approach to design within an historic townscape.

Promoting awareness of, and interest in, the historic environment

- 3.20 The Council has worked alongside local and national initiatives to encourage and promote the maintenance of the historic environment and also encourage a wide spectrum of society to appreciate it. This is done partly through the involvement of various voluntary bodies in the Conservation Area Advisory Forum. This initially started as a Forum to discuss planning applications in the Leamington Conservation Area at the time when Leamington had no Town Council but the benefit of this Forum was appreciated and has now been extended to include all four towns in the District with appropriate representation.
- 3.21 The Council has also actively supported the national Heritage Open Days initiative sponsored by the Civic Trust. This is an initiative whereby people can visit historic properties across the country that are not normally open to the public over a one weekend in September. The Council has co-ordinated the support for this scheme from within Warwick District for the past three years, liaising with property owners and the Civic Trust and organising publicity for the event. This has included an annual "Heritage Open Days" exhibition in the Royal Priors Shopping Centre which takes place the weekend before the properties are open. In 2005, twenty six properties within the district were opened to the public as part of this scheme, including private houses, ruins, gardens and churches.

Reviewing conservation areas

- 3.22 As part of its responsibility towards conservation areas, the District Council launched a review of all its conservation areas beginning in 2001. During 2001 and 2002 all rural conservation areas were reviewed and boundary changes and conservation area statement leaflets were produced for each separate village. This was followed by a review of the Warwick, Leamington and Kenilworth conservation areas from 2003 to 2005. All of these reviews have involved wide ranging consultation with all residents in areas affected by boundary changes and have included advice from English Heritage. The Council is currently

involved in a further review of 19th and 20th Century areas to consider whether these also merit conservation area designation. This is being done as a comparative exercise with other districts that have undergone a similar exercise.

- 3.23 Conservation Area Statements are being produced for the four urban areas which will provide detailed advice applicable to specific parts of the conservation areas.

Advising owners of historic buildings

- 3.24 As part of its advice service, the Council have produced Guidance Leaflets relating to conservation issues, including leaflets on windows, roofs, shopfronts, agricultural buildings and shopfront security, all of which are now available on the Council's website and are contained in the Core Document Library for the Local Plan Inquiry. Advice is also given concerning the painting of buildings in Leamington Town Centre where a number of buildings are controlled by an Article 4 Direction, regulating the colour which they can be painted. These directions were introduced to ensure consistency of the colours used on the principal set piece terraces in the town.

Community Plan for Warwick District

- 3.25 The Community Plan for Warwick District (Warwick 2020) identifies two specific aspects within the historic environment in its key targets for 2005-2008. These are the development of cultural quarter at Spencers Yard and the development of longer term physical regeneration of Leamington Old Town. Furthermore, **priority P1** supports the continuation of the regeneration of town centres.

Corporate Strategy

- 3.26 The District's corporate strategy recognises the importance of protecting local heritage as part of the overall protection of the built and natural environment. The strategy also seeks to enhance the cultural life of the area to support a prosperous and mixed community, and to promote the accessibility and vitality of town centres.

4. Strategy of the Local Plan

- 4.1 Recognition of the importance of protecting the historic environment is a theme running through the Core Strategy of the Local Plan. It can be seen most clearly in

Objective 2C (to protect and enhance the historic environment) but is also reflected in **Objectives 1D** (enhancing the vitality of town centres), **Objective 2D** (maintaining and enhancing the quality of landscapes and townscapes) and **Objective 2E** (promoting excellence in sustainable design and enhancement of the built environment).

- 4.2 **Objective 2C** of the Core Strategy has a direct bearing upon the historic environment recognising the responsibility of maintaining and enhancing the historic assets for the benefit of future generations. This objective recognises the need to uphold statutory protection for those buildings in areas so designated. It also upholds the need for an appropriate level of protection to non-designated areas which form an important part of the historic heartland of towns and villages in the district.

5. The Policies of the Local Plan

- 5.1 The Local Plan policies seek to give proper protection to all aspects of the historic environment. There is a strong link between the specific policies relating to the historic environment and other design policies which give protection both to the natural and the built environment. **Policies DP1, DP2, DP3, SC5, TCP13, DAP1, DAP2 and DAP4** all support and refer to different ways in which these historic environment is protected and maintained. In particular **policy DP1**, which covers layout and design in general, makes reference to the architectural character of the environment including the historic environment. **Policy DP2** relates to amenity. The quality of the environment, of which the historic environment forms as part, is part of the overall amenity of an area. **Policy DP3** addresses both the natural and the historic environment and landscapes. All of these policies recognise the finite and fragile nature of the historic environment and therefore the need to give special protection to these areas to ensure that they are preserved now and in the future.
- 5.2 In focussing on the policies that are specifically related to protecting the historic environment this paper now looks at the following areas in turn:-

- A Archaeology
- B Protection for listed buildings

- C Protection for conservation areas
- D Parks and gardens

A. Archaeology

5.3 **Policy DP4** seeks to provide a level of guidance for protection and maintenance of archaeological areas. This policy seeks to protect scheduled ancient monuments which PPG16 recognises as fragile and finite, by not permitting development which would harm these sites. It also recognises in the case of regional and locally important sites that there are cases where development proposals will conflict with the presumption to maintain an archaeologically important site. The policy requires applicants to demonstrate that the benefits of development would outweigh the harm to archaeological remains where there is a conflict. An evaluation would then be necessary where works are proposed which will affect the setting or the maintenance of a monument. In all cases, there will be a requirement to carry out the programme of archaeological investigation and recording in accordance with nationally accepted guidelines by a recognised team of archaeologists.

B Listed Building

5.4 The protection of listed buildings is paramount in terms of protecting the historic environment as these are buildings which have been deemed to merit statutory protection. In the first instance, there is a presumption against the demolition of a listed building and in favour of the maintenance and enhancement of the fabric of the building (**policy DAP6**). Development which adversely affects the architectural interest and integrity of a building will not be permitted. Similarly, any development on a site adjacent to a listed building which affects the setting of the listed building, or within its grounds and which is of a detrimental nature, will also not be permitted.

5.5 Extensions to listed buildings should ensure that the original building retains prominence and that the extension is subsidiary to the main building. In certain instances, it may not be appropriate to extend the listed building as this will detract from the character and integrity of the building. There are examples of historic buildings that have completely lost their original integrity by excessive

and unsympathetic extensions. Examples of sympathetic extensions can be seen at the Royal Pump Rooms and the former Town House Hotel in Leamington Spa. An example of a contemporary garden room permitted at an 18th century house in The Butts in Warwick won an award from the RIBA.

- 5.6 Works to listed buildings should be in character with the building. In all cases, as set out in **policy DAP7**, there is a presumption in favour of maintaining the original use of the historic building. If the original use is no longer viable then a sympathetic alternative which makes use of the existing space and retains the external appearance of the building without the need for unsympathetic alterations should be the preferred way forward. PPG15 states that *“the aim should be to identify the optimum viable use that is compatible with the fabric, interior and setting of the historic building. This may not necessarily be the most profitable use if that would entail more destructive alterations than other viable uses”* (paragraph 3.9). Any alterations necessary to a listed building should be carried out in character and should take account of how the alteration or extension may have been designed to respect the historic context of the building. Where listed buildings have been altered unsympathetically in the past, there is a presumption in favour of enhancing the building by the removal or alteration of these unsympathetic additions.
- 5.7 The use of appropriate materials is important in any restoration works or alteration to a listed building and this is set out in **policy DAP9**. This should include the use of natural materials and only in exceptional circumstances should modern materials be used. The use of such elements as uPVC windows, artificial slates, UPVC rainwater goods and other elements of decoration would all be rejected as unsuitable for listed buildings.
- 5.8 In terms of the use of listed buildings, it is important that any design should seek to maintain the original or a sympathetic use. In this context access to upper floors of listed buildings in commercial areas should always be maintained such that they can be used either for commercial or residential purposes. This principle is established in **policy DAP8**. The sealing off of upper floors or provision only of rear access to upper floors is not acceptable in terms of the sustainability and historical integrity of a listed building.

C Conservation Areas

- 5.9 The second important area of consideration in the historic environment is the designation and maintenance of Conservation Areas. Conservation Areas are a statutory designation made at a local level which give protection to areas which are considered to be of sufficient architectural or historic merit to warrant preservation and enhancement.
- 5.10 As is noted in paragraph 2.3 above, there are 26 Conservation Areas in Warwick District, the largest of which are in Royal Leamington Spa, Warwick and Kenilworth. The Royal Leamington Spa conservation area in particular regarded nationwide as an outstanding conservation area as it encompasses the whole of the Regency spa town, together with its later additions tracing the history of the town from its early 19th century beginnings.
- 5.11 **Policy DAP10** seeks to preserve the character of Conservation Areas. All applications for development within a Conservation Area will be carefully scrutinised to ensure that the development is of a sympathetic nature and does not detract from the quality of the Conservation Area. PPG15 seeks to ensure that any demolition in a Conservation Area should only be granted where the replacement building is an improvement to the Conservation Area.
- 5.12 The Council will also seek to introduce additional controls in Conservation Areas by the selective use of Article 4 Directions to remove permitted development rights for such development as re-roofing unlisted buildings, replacement of traditional windows and alterations to boundary treatments as these can currently be carried out without the need for planning permission. There are already in existence a series of Article 4 Directions which control the colour which buildings can be painted within the Leamington Spa Conservation Area.
- 5.13 It should be noted that **policy DAP8** applies equally to all buildings within Conservation Areas, whether listed or not (see paragraph 5.8 above).
- 5.14 **Policy DAP11** protects all unlisted buildings within the Conservation Area. Conservation Areas incorporate a large number of unlisted buildings which together as a whole make a contribution to the historic environment. There is a
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presumption in favour of maintaining all unlisted buildings within the Conservation Area which add to the character and quality of the Conservation Area. The policy requires that developments around the edge of a Conservation Area will also be scrutinised to ensure that it does not conflict with important views into or out of the Conservation Area.

- 5.15 **Policy DAP12** recognises the significant impact that advertisement hoardings can have upon the appearance of the conservation area. The Council has sought to remove these where possible (including making this a requirement of historic building grant offers in appropriate cases) and this policy seeks to reinforce this work by controlling advertisement hoardings within Conservation Areas.

D Parks and Gardens

- 5.16 Since the introduction of English Heritage's register of Historic Parks and Gardens there has been increasing interest in the maintenance of historic gardens. There are currently twelve parks and gardens in the district which appear on English Heritage's register. Although this is a non-statutory document, **policy DAP13** requires proposed development that affects the setting and character of parks and gardens on the register to ensure that the historic qualities of the parkland are maintained and enhanced.
- 5.17 The District Council also maintains a local list of important parks and gardens which add to the historic character of the district. From time to time entries may be upgraded within the English Heritage register as more of their historical significance is revealed. The important parks and gardens which add to the historic character of the district are listed in paragraph 9.51A of the Local Plan. It is the Council's opinion that special care should be taken in terms of any development which would affect the setting of these particular parks and gardens and accordingly **policy DAP13** states that development will be strongly resisted if it would harm the historic structure, character, principal components or setting of the park or garden.