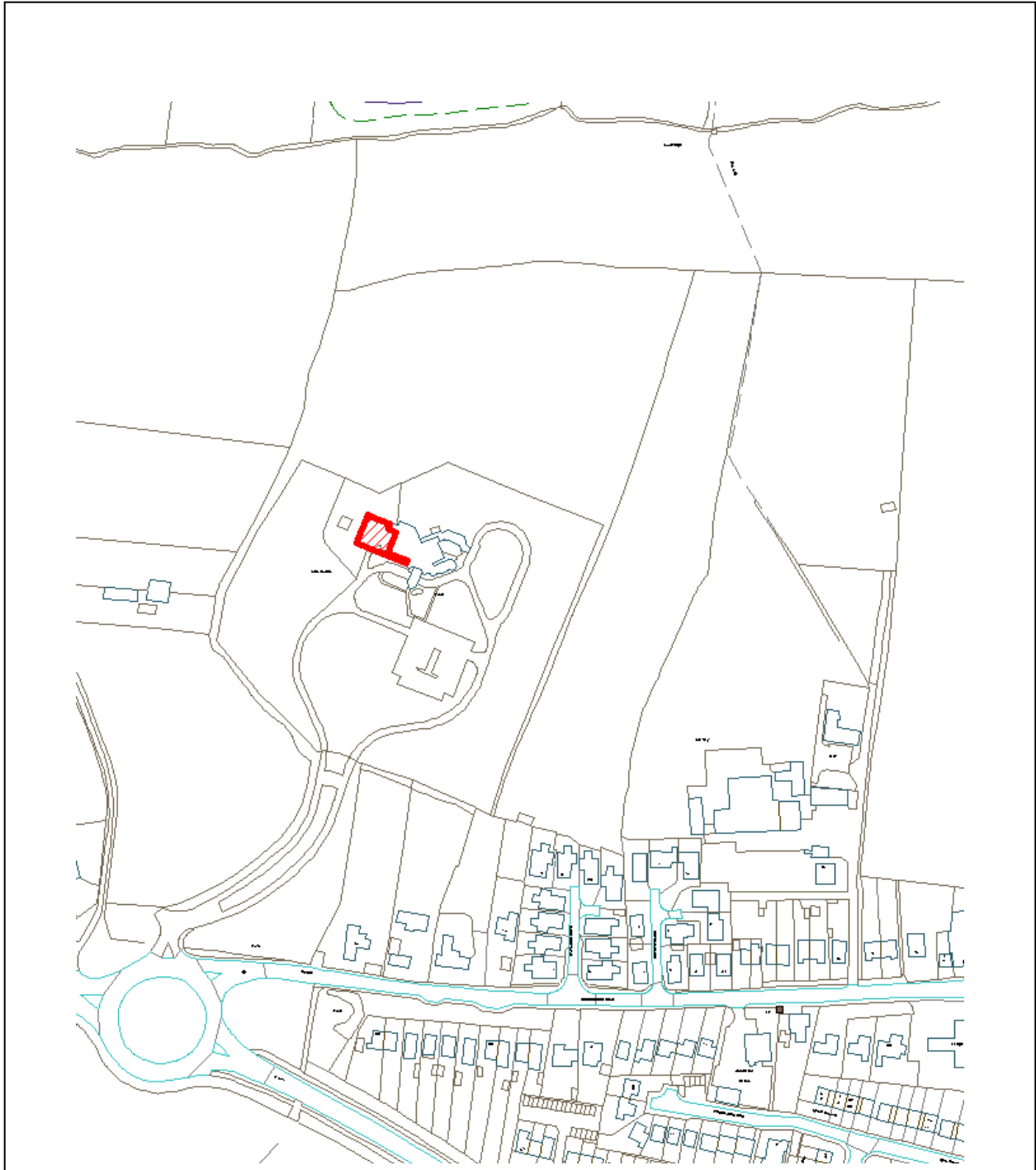


PLANNING COMMITTEE

5th NOVEMBER 2013

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING

A.4 PLANNING APPLICATION - 13/00950/OUT - WEELEY CREMATORIUM THORPE ROAD, WEELEY, CLACTON ON SEA, CO16 9AH



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Application:	13/00950/OUT	Town / Parish: Weeley Parish Council
Applicant:	Building Services - Tendring District Council	
Address:	Weeley Crematorium Thorpe Road Weeley CO16 9AH	
Development:	Extension to the existing crematorium building to accommodate two new cremators and allow provision of abatement equipment.	

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This application has been referred to the Planning Committee because the applicant is Tendring District Council.
- 1.2 The application site forms a small part of the Weeley Crematorium site located on the northern side of Thorpe Road on the outskirts of Weeley village. The application site consists of a staff car park and a hedge. The wider crematorium site consists of the main crematorium building, public car parking and extensive perimeter landscaping.
- 1.3 The outline application seeks an extension to the existing crematorium building. This extension would accommodate the construction and commissioning of new cremators prior to the removal of existing cremators, thereby allowing a seamless continuity of service. Once the existing cremators are removed the Council is at liberty to consider the installation of abatement equipment. However, this aspect is not for consideration in this planning application.
- 1.4 National planning policy is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF promotes the principles of sustainable development through proposals that respect the intrinsic character of the countryside. Proposals should ensure high standards of design and respond to local character, whilst being visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscape design. Whilst the visual appearance and all other matters are reserved, the principle of using this site for cremations would be sustainable by virtue of the existing infrastructure which supports such a use on this site.

Recommendation: Approve

Conditions:

1. **Time limit for commencement – two years after last approved reserved matter**
2. **Time limit for submission of reserved matters – three years**
3. **No development until reserved matters approved for access, appearance, layout, landscaping and scale**
4. **Full noise assessment required**
5. **Air quality assessment required**

2. Planning Policy

National Policy:

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

Local Plan Policy:

Tendring District Local Plan (December 2007)

QL9	<i>Design of New Development</i>
QL10	<i>Designing New Development to Meet Functional Needs</i>
QL11	<i>Environmental Impacts and Compatibility of Uses</i>
COM25	<i>Cemeteries and the Crematorium</i>
EN1	<i>Landscape Character</i>

Tendring District Local Plan Proposed Submission Draft (November 2012)

SD9	<i>Design of New Development</i>
PEO19	<i>Green Infrastructure</i>
PEO24	<i>Cemeteries and the Crematorium</i>
PLA5	<i>Countryside Landscape</i>

3. Relevant Planning History

- 3.1 TEN/1692/81 – Erection of new crematorium. Approved 8.3.82.
- 3.2 TEN/1254/82 – Crematorium, car park access roads and incidental work. Approved 6.9.83.
- 3.3 94/00002/FUL – Single storey extension to form Book of Remembrance Room. Approved 15.02.94.
- 3.4 96/00907/FUL – Proposed rear extension and internal alterations to allow for the replacement of existing cremators. Approved 10.09.96.

4. Consultations

- 4.1 One letter of objection has been received from a member of the public. The grounds for objection, with officer comments are as follows:
 - New cremators are required by law to include mercury abatement equipment. Dental use of mercury in amalgam leads to the widespread dispersal of mercury vapour into the atmosphere from cremations. Evidence in other countries has shown that mercury is starting to enter the food chain.
Officer response: The law does not state that mercury equipment has to be fitted now. The Statutory Guidance indicates that nationally 50% of all the cremations (nationally) carried out had to be abated by 1 January 2013 and that all cremations had to be abated by 2020. In terms of the food chain, no evidence has been provided to this effect. However, the control of pollutants can be achieved with a suitable planning condition.
 - It would be more cost effective to install mercury abatement equipment now, rather than in the future. Also, “burden sharing” with neighbouring crematoria will mean that the Council pays a larger financial cost.

4.2 Officer response: This is not a material planning consideration

5. Representations

5.1 Pollution and Environmental Control will require a full noise assessment carried out by an independent acoustician to include any predicted noise levels from the new plant to be installed on the site. An independent air quality assessment will also be required for any new plant/ changes in any proposed stack to ensure that local air quality objectives are not exceeded. An application to vary the Environmental Permitting Regulation permit will also need to be made prior to the new equipment coming into beneficial use to ensure compliance with the relevant legislation.

6. Assessment

6.1 The main planning considerations are:

- Context and Background
- Proposal
- Planning History
- Policy Context
- Environmental Impact
- Impact on Landscape Character
- Loss of Safeguarded Local Green Space
- Design and Layout of Proposal

Context and Background

6.2 The application site amounts to a 0.03 hectare site within the wider Weeley Crematorium site on the northern side of Thorpe Road in Weeley. The site is outside of the Settlement Development Boundaries as established in the saved (2007) and submission (2012) Tendring District Local Plan (TDLP).

6.3 The application site consists wholly of a staff car parking area and a hedge. The application site is immediately adjacent to the main crematorium building and associated grounds and public car parking.

Proposal

6.4 The outline application with all matters reserved relates to the extension of the existing crematorium building to accommodate two new cremators. The intention is that this will allow a seamless service transition before the existing cremators are disposed of, thereupon providing additional space for potential abatement equipment at a future date. Members have made the decision to defer the installation of abatement equipment, however this application allows space for the future installation of such equipment when Members so decide.

6.5 As this is an outline application with all matters reserved, it is only the principle of development which is for consideration.

Planning History

6.6 Planning permission was originally granted in 1982 for a crematorium with subsequent approvals for associated projects in the intervening years. There are no existing planning conditions that would restrict the proposal.

Policy Context

- 6.7 National planning policy is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF promotes the principles of sustainable development through high quality design that respects the intrinsic character of the countryside. Proposals should ensure high standards of design and respond to local character, whilst being visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscape design. Whilst the visual appearance, and other matters, are reserved, the principle of using this site for cremations would be sustainable by virtue of the existing infrastructure. Furthermore, given the characteristics of the application site, with mature existing soft landscaping, it is possible for a design to be proposed that would be respectful of the intrinsic character of the landscape and the design features of the existing crematorium. Within this context the proposed development sits comfortably with the overarching sentiments of the NPPF.
- 6.8 The emerging Local Plan (Policy PEO24) supports the extension of existing crematoria subject to meeting the requirements of other relevant policies in the Local Plan. The Council also seeks to protect the district's landscape and its distinctive character through saved Local Plan Policy EN1 and emerging Local Plan Policy PLA5.
- 6.9 Subject to meeting other relevant policies, the Council will approve proposals which are compatible with neighbouring uses and which minimise any adverse environmental impacts.

Environmental Impact

- 6.10 The site is currently in use as a crematorium and the proposal represents the replacement of existing cremators. In this respect there will be no increase in capacity and no increase in environmental harm. Notwithstanding this, a noise and air quality assessment will be required with any subsequent reserved matters application to ensure that any new cremators do not have any increased environmental harm. As such the proposal would be consistent with saved Local Plan Policy QL11 and emerging Policy SD9.

Impact on Landscape Character

- 6.11 The proposal would increase the massing of the existing main crematorium building on this site. Whilst the design and appearance of the extension is a reserved matter and not for direct consideration with this proposal, it is evident that a modest extension of the indicative scale shown would be screened by the extensive perimeter landscaping at the crematorium. This landscaping includes mature evergreen trees and the proposal would therefore have no impact on the quality of the district's landscape and its distinctive local character. As such the outline proposal would be consistent with saved Local Plan Policy EN1 and emerging Local Plan Policy PLA5.

Loss of Safeguarded Local Green Space

- 6.12 In the emerging Local Plan the application site is designated as Safeguarded Local Green Space. However, this would conflict with the Council's Local Plan Policy PEO24 to support extensions to existing crematoria. In this instance the space in question is currently a staff car parking area and the integrity of the remainder of the crematorium site remains intact. So whilst the proposal would be contrary to emerging Local Plan Policy PEO19 (Green Infrastructure), it is supported by emerging Local Plan Policy PEO24 (Cemeteries and the Crematorium).

Design and Layout of Proposal

- 6.13 Whilst this is an outline application with all matters reserved, it is important to consider whether a design could be accommodated on site. Whilst the application site is relatively small compared to the wider crematorium site, it is of a size that could both accommodate new cremators and relate well to the existing crematorium building. In relating well it is recommended that the height of the extensions does not exceed that of the existing building, although functional requirements might dictate otherwise. An informative to this effect should be attached to any approval.
- 6.14 The loss of staff car parking is not considered to be significant and can be accommodated within the remainder of the crematorium site.

Background Papers

None