



MINUTES

Meeting: PLANNING

2nd December 2024

Time: 6.45pm

Venue: PARISH HALL, THORNWOOD COMMON

PRESENT

Councillors: (11) B Clegg (Chairman), A Buckley, Mrs S Hawkins, Mrs S Jackman, MBE, R Spearman, N Born*, T Blanks, P Etherington, C Kinnear, Ms D Wood, M Stroud

* for part of meeting

Officers in Attendance (1)

Adriana Jones – Principal Finance Officer (meeting Clerk)

Members of the Public (2) * One for part of the meeting only

Members of the Press (1)

P24.68 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (2)

Councillors Irvine and Tyler. Cllr Bedford was not present, but it not part of this committee.

P24.69 OTHER ABSENCES

Nil.

P24.70 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Spearman declared an interest in the Local Plan.

P24.71 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the previous Planning Committee meeting held on 25th November 2024 were circulated at the meeting and **AGREED** and signed as a true record.

P24.72 REPRESENTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were No Representations from the Public.

P24.73 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The following comments on Planning Applications were **AGREED**:

No	Application Number	Location	Proposal
1	EPF/1436/24 Caroline Brown Minor (FPP)	Carisbrook Farm, Kiln Road, North Weald Bassett, Epping, CM16 6AD	Change of use from B2 to Sui Generis (for the internment of ashes (both animals and human) in a form of a Columbarium) - Demolish existing Nissan Huts and erect 2(no.) x Outbuildings - Car & Cycle Parking
Whilst the site itself falls within the parish boundary of Theydon Mount Parish Council, the access road and associated proposed vehicle and pedestrian movements are solely within the Parish Boundary of North Weald Bassett Parish. The Parish Council OBJECTS to this application for the following reasons: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The plans submitted do not show the dimensions of the proposed Columbarium, including height, width, construction, or materials. This was raised with EFDC prior to this meeting, and			

subsequently (2nd December) plans were added onto EFDCs website, however they remain insufficient in detail to enable the Parish Council to consider the impact of this proposal on the green belt. There are no details of height, construction, materials, etc. In addition, the photo of the columbarium uploaded onto EFDCs website on 2/12/24 shows a garden planter. This cannot be correct.

2. There is insufficient information setting out how the internments would take place (how / where, numbers, etc). Considering the proposals suggest there would be enough space for 39,960 internments, this needs to be clearly evidenced in terms of capacity, especially considering the average weight of ashes of an average person is 5kg, suggesting that over its lifetime 220 tonnes of ashes could be deposited at this location.
3. The applicant proposes there will be roughly one vehicle movement every 17 minutes (thus around 3 per hour), however the applicant also states it is not proposed that any internment service (religious or secular) would be provided. Thus, it is unclear exactly HOW the proposed columbarium would operate (in terms of the internment process), plus where the suggestion of 3 vehicles per hour comes from. In addition, many specific religious groups prefer the internment of ashes above ground, and will often attend the site frequently for prolonged periods of times, and on mass. Thus, the Parish Council questions both the interment process itself, and how this equates to vehicle movements.
4. Kiln Road is predominantly a single track road, with no passing places. To intensify activity along this road is inappropriate and would undoubtedly cause confrontation between drivers, as well as affecting the safety of the highway network.
5. The Council has concerns regarding the proposal to keep the current property on site. To do so would clearly detract from the suggested columbarium (as per the pictures in the supporting statements provided), and no rationale has been given to retain it. It doesn't seem to make sense.
6. The applicant has suggested the proposal would involve 4 full time staff, and 2 staff in the office. This seems excessive, given there is no internment service proposed, and without full and clear details regarding the proposed operation of the columbarium it cannot be accurately established if this is correct.
7. The Parish Council is extremely concerned about the longevity of a columbarium at this location. Advice has been sought from the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management who state that the proposed number of internments (being 39,960) is highly unusual and extremely large. They also state they have concerns about the long-term protection for those choosing to place ashes as such a location, as they have recently seen a human cemetery open and sell exclusive rights of burial, only for the company to go bankrupt, leaving people out of pocket. What would happen in this scenario?
8. The Epping Forest District Council Open Space Strategy dated November 2017 does not identify a need for such a facility in the Parish, as it already has one churchyard, one parish owned cemetery, and one natural burial park. To place another in the Parish seems excessive and unnecessary.
9. The Parish Council has concerns regarding the proposed change of use to Sui Generis, which encompasses over 250 possible uses, and the ability to 'flit' between uses without planning permission being needed.
10. The applicant has not clearly set out if this will be a human burial site, or a pet cemetery. This is extremely relevant, as the ashes of pets cannot legally be buried in a human cemetery, and pet cemeteries are highly regulated, need to be registered and must follow certain conditions. This needs to be clearly established.

In summary, the Parish Council **OBJECTS** for the following reasons:

1. Insufficient information provided (currently unable to assess against Policy DM9 High Quality Design, Policy DM4 Green Bel, Policy DM5 Green and Blue Infrastructure, and Policy DM6 Designated and Undesignated Open Spaces)
2. Potential impact on Green Belt (even though cemeteries may be permitted, unable to assess against Policy DM4 Green Belt, the lack of information means this cannot be fully assessed).
3. Access arrangements are contrary to Policy T1 Sustainable Transport Choices (E(ii)),

<p>4. Proposed operation is contrary to Policy E1 Employment Sites, as the site is not ‘of an employment character or function’.</p> <p>The Parish Council confirms its intention to attend and speak at any EFDC Committee meeting at which this application is discussed.</p>			
2	EPF/2306/24 <i>Suleman Uddin</i> Other (CDA)	The Old Coach Works, High Road, Thornwood, Epping, CM16 6LP	Externally illuminated fascia sign.
The Parish Council has <i>NO OBJECTION</i> to this application, however requests that the illumination is only permitted during business hours.			
3	EPF/2282/24 <i>Rhian Thorley</i> Other (HPP)	69, Weald Bridge Road, North Weald Bassett, Epping, CM16 6ES	Proposed front and rear extension and first floor.
The Parish Council has <i>NO OBJECTION</i> to this application.			
4	EPF/2292/24 <i>Yee Cheung</i> Other (HPP)	28, Tempest Mead, North Weald Bassett, Epping, CM16 6DY	Demolition of existing garage and construction of a new two storey building, with a bedroom and ensuite above a garage for ancillary use.
The Parish Council has <i>NO OBJECTION</i> to this application.			
5	EPF/2354/24 Samuel Finnis Minor (HPP)	2, George Avey Croft, North Weald Bassett, Epping, CM16 6JB	Demolish existing conservatory & build new single storey side extension.
The Parish Council has <i>NO OBJECTION</i> to this application.			

P24.74 DECISIONS BY EPPING FOREST DISTRICT

None received.

P24.75 FFDC LICENCES & CONSULTATIONS

None received.

P24.76 ANY OTHER MATTERS RELATING TO PLANNING

None.

Meeting Closed

Signed Date