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date

12/11/20

your ref

DM/20/2877

For the attention of: Mr. A. Watt

Description: Outline application for single chapel crematorium with a single abated cremator and natural burial site with associated access, car parking, landscaping and drainage. All matters reserved apart from access.

Location: Turners Hill Burial Ground, Turners Hill Road, Turners Hill, West Sussex RH10 4BP

The following comments are provided in response to the letter from Indigo Landscape Architects dated 5.11.20 as a response to comments provided by the East County Landscape Architect dated 2.11.20.

1. The site area is part of the landscape character of the surrounding countryside and the High Weald character area. The scale and significance of effects on the site itself are relevant to the potential impact on the local landscape character. The fact that a development cannot be seen from public vantage points in the wider area should not be considered a reason for development. Much of the wealden countryside is enclosed as a network of small-scale fields in a strong hedgerow framework. The assumption that because a site is not widely visible or that the proposed development would not impact on the character of the wider landscape should not be a presumption in favour of development. The application site is in fact elevated and sits on an open ridgetop and is an integral part of the surrounding rolling landscape. It is considered that the potential adverse impact of the development on the site and immediate surroundings would be significant.
2. With reference to the proposed woodland planting as mitigation and screening enclosure from wider views and the local footpath network. The LVIA describes the proposed planting in Paragraph 6.2.26/27 as follows:
Significant structural woodland planting would be undertaken on the crematorium site (south of footpath 68W) as part of the establishment part of the scheme. Structural

woodland planting would also be undertaken as part of the natural burial part of the establishment phase of the scheme, however the majority of 'memorial' planting would be undertaken in a phased approach over a number of years.

The descriptions of the landscape planting for this woodland planting and memorial planting are distinctly different. The woodland planting is of smaller feathered native trees or whips about 2.5 m in height planted one per square metre. This is very dense and would usually be specified to create a woodland screen, as is suggested for the Turners Road frontage. The proposed memorial planting is of larger specimens planted at 4.5 and 6m in height and no spacing is indicated for how far apart they would be planted.

The approved landscape drawing for application DM/15/1035 and drawing LLD787/04 indicates trees planted 3m apart and in a matrix with gaps between the groups of trees. The Landscape Design Strategy and Outline Plant Specification (Lizard Landscapes, December 2014) states that *'The proposals should include the planting of native species tree group trees and intermittent scattered trees to the southern and western boundaries. Native species tree planting should be implemented to the car park planting bays further diffusing and containing views made toward the proposed development.'* The annotation on this drawing is that *'The Natural Burial Ground proposals include the planting of a woodland extending across the site over time.'*

The implication for the memorial planting associated with the natural burial ground is that the planting would extend across the site over time and would not be planted at day 1. This is not consistent with the typical specification for woodland planting which is intended to provide a landscape screen. Woodland screen planting as mitigation would usually be comprised of trees and understorey shrubs.

The Phase 1 drawing 917-MP-02 indicates woodland planting across phase 1 and 2 of the site which would appear much denser than the memorial planting which is of individual trees spaced apart. The memorial type of planting can be seen in the aerial views of both Clayton Wood and Ham Down natural burial grounds. On the ground at Clayton Wood there are clear views through the trees and across the site. This is of a different character to the character that would be created with woodland screen planting.

3. The Structural Planting and Natural Burials plans set out in Fig 6 on p.18 of the current LVIA would suggest that the tree planting is specifically designed to screen the development. This contrasts with the memorial planting which would gradually develop over time and in a more formal arrangement. There appears to be a clear difference in the amount of woodland planting proposed from that approved in previous permissions.

Yours Sincerely,

Virginia Pullan CMLI

County Landscape Architect
East Sussex County Council