

**Planning Committee**

11 March 2010

**Reference:**  
**DPP3/10/00069**

**Area Team:**  
**South Team**

**Case Officer:**  
**Ms C Berry**

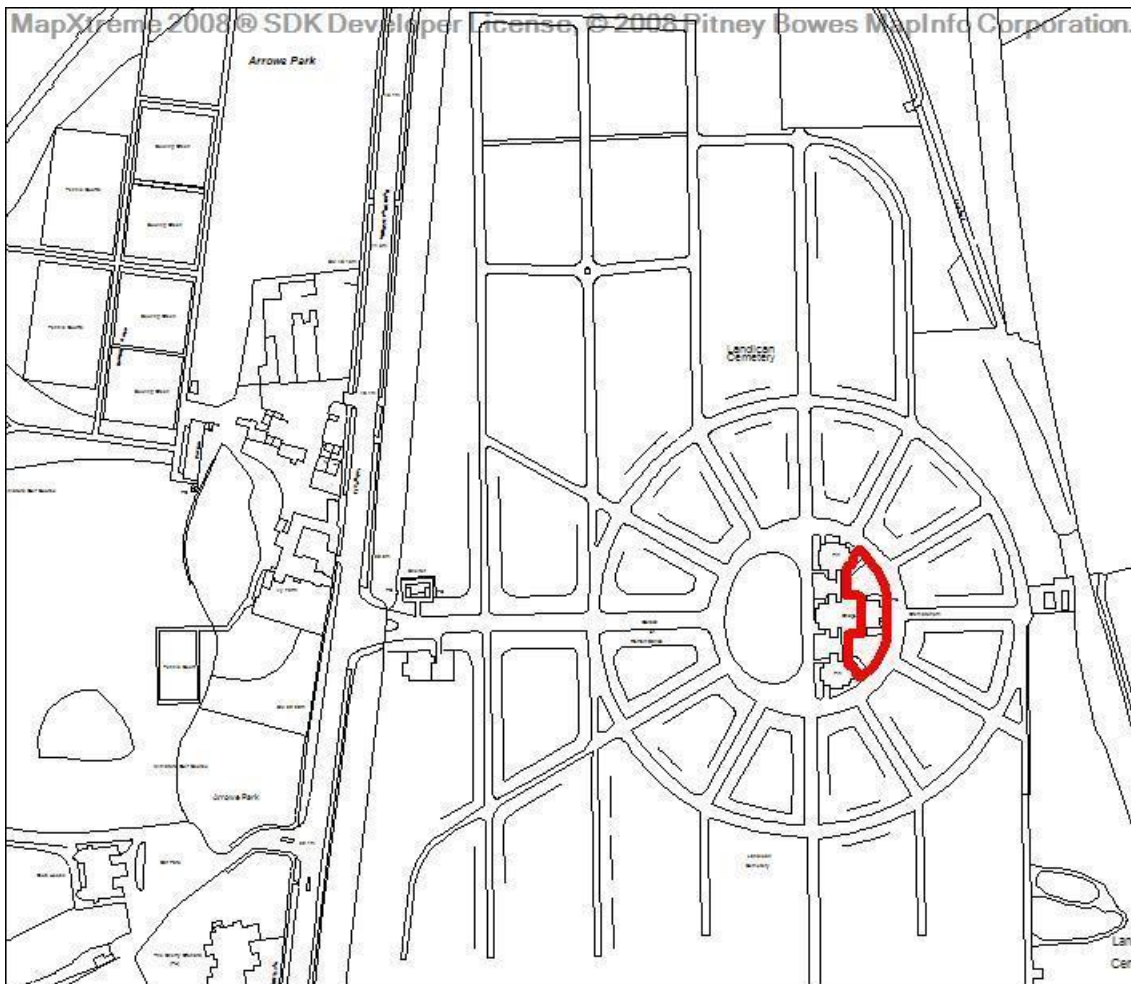
**Ward:**  
**Pensby and  
Thingwall**

**Location:** Crematorium, Landican Cemetery, ARROWE PARK ROAD,  
WOODCHURCH, CH49 5LN

**Proposal:** Mercury abatement & furnace room extension

**Applicant:** Wirral Council  
**Agent :** Wirral Council

**Site Plan:**



**Development Plan allocation and policies:**

Green Belt

## **Planning History:**

2005/6896 - Change of use of land to form extension to existing cemetery, approved, 18/11/05

## **Summary Of Representations and Consultations Received:**

### **REPRESENTATIONS**

The application was advertised in the press and a site notice was displayed.  
No comments have been received.

### **CONSULTATIONS**

Director of Regeneration – Housing & Environmental Protection Division: No objection  
Director of Technical Services – Traffic Management Division: No objection  
Green Belt Council - No response received at time of writing the report  
Environment Agency - No response received at time of writing the report

### **DirectorsComments:**

### **REASON FOR REFERRAL TO PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The site is within the Green Belt and the proposal is classed as a departure from the Unitary Development Plan and by definition is inappropriate development where very special circumstances need to be demonstrated.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The proposal is for an extension to the rear of the Crematorium to provide new cremators including heat exchange and recovery facilities, storage and improved vestry and staff facilities. The main reason for the extension is to provide an area to accommodate new equipment that is required to meet new statutory requirements following a Government Directive on the operation of Crematoria and to provide an improved meeting area for both visitors and staff members. The current equipment has high gas consumption and high CO<sup>2</sup> emission and the new equipment (cremators) will allow for considerable reduction in each. The heat recovery facility will recycle heat and the use of low energy electrical fittings, heating controls and water saving devices which help to reduce the consumption of natural resources.

### **PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT**

The site is within an area designated as Green Belt in the adopted Wirral Unitary Development Plan and the proposal does not fall into the category of appropriate development as set out in UDP Policy GB2 or PPG2 Green Belts (see Policy Context below). As such, inappropriate development such as this proposal will only be acceptable where very special circumstances are demonstrated and where there is no harm to the openness and character of the Green Belt.

### **SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

The cemetery is accessed from Arrowe Park Road and is within the green belt with open land to the southern and eastern boundaries and Woodchurch Road to the north. The existing crematorium is located to the rear of the three chapels, which are located centrally towards the rear of the cemetery site. The existing crematorium structure cannot be seen from the front of the chapels. The proposed extension will replace the existing single storey cremation room at the rear that will accommodate the new equipment along with office and staff room facilities.

### **POLICY CONTEXT**

The site is within an area designated as Green Belt in the adopted Wirral Unitary Development Plan. Paragraph 3.4 of PPG2 (Green Belts) and Policy GB2 of the Wirral Unitary development Plan advises that the construction of new buildings inside a Green Belt is inappropriate unless it is for certain specified purposes:

- agriculture and forestry;
- essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation;
- limited extension or replacement of existing dwellings;
- limited infilling in existing villages;
- limited infilling/redevelopment of major developed sites.

The proposed development does not fall into any of the above categories and is deemed as inappropriate development in the green belt, which is a departure from the adopted Wirral UDP. PPG2 and Policy GB2 make it clear that there is a general presumption against inappropriate development within green belts and that very special circumstances must be demonstrated to show why permission should be granted. Very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

### **APPEARANCE AND AMENITY ISSUES**

The proposed single storey extension will replace the existing flat roofed structure that houses the cremation room located at the rear of the three chapels. Whilst it increases in width across the rear elevation and the height is slightly increased (from 4m to 5m), the design of the flat-roofed structure includes details that are generally in keeping with that of the three chapels. The scale and design of the extension has been dictated by the technical requirements of the new equipment in terms of its size and the design of the flat roof. However, the extension will be constructed in red brick to match the chapels with the addition of brick detailing around the door and window openings. The location of the extension to the rear of the chapels maintains the existing view when entering the Cemetery and only part of the roof will be seen from the front of the chapel buildings. The scale and size of the extension is necessary to accommodate the new equipment in order to meet the statutory requirements and to achieve carbon reduction. It is considered that the scale and design of the extension does not detract from the character of the existing chapel buildings or the character of the green belt.

### **SEPARATION DISTANCES**

Separation distances do not apply in this instance, as no residential properties will be affected by the proposed development.

### **HIGHWAY/TRAFFIC IMPLICATIONS**

There are no Highway Implications relating to this proposal.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES**

The proposal is required to meet new statutory legislation that would result in a reduction of carbon emissions. The new equipment will result in a saving of 255 tonnes of CO<sup>2</sup> per year and the use of energy saving controls help to reduce the consumption of natural resources.

### **HEALTH ISSUES**

There are no health implications relating to this application.

### **CONCLUSION**

It is considered that the applicant has demonstrated there are very special circumstances provided in accordance with the advice contained in Policy GB2 of the adopted Wirral Unitary Development Plan and PPG2 Green Belts in that the extension is required to meet a Government Directive on the operation of Crematoria and the environmental benefits as a result of the reduction of carbon emissions and energy. The scale and design of the extension does not detract from the character of the existing buildings and does not result in any harm to the openness and character of the Green Belt.

### **Summary of Decision:**

Having regards to the individual merits of this application the decision to grant Planning Permission has been taken having regards to the relevant Policies and Proposals in the Wirral Unitary Development Plan (Adopted February 2000) and all relevant material considerations including national and regional policy advice. In reaching this decision the Local Planning Authority has considered the following:-

It is considered that the applicant has demonstrated there are very special circumstances provided in accordance with the advice contained in Policy GB2 of the adopted Wirral Unitary Development Plan and PPG2 Green Belts in that the extension is required to meet a Government Directive on the operation of Crematoria and the environmental benefits as a result of the reduction of carbon emissions and energy. The scale and design of the extension does not detract from the character of

the existing buildings and does not result in any harm to the openness and character of the Green Belt.

**Recommended Decision: Approve**

**Recommended Conditions and Reasons:**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

**Reason:** To comply with Section 91 (as amended) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. Before any construction commences, samples of the facing materials to be used in the external construction of this development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved materials shall then be used in the construction of the development.

**Reason:** To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development in the interests of visual amenity and to comply with Policy [§] of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.

**Last Comments By:** 24/02/2010 15:05:23

**Expiry Date:** 16/03/2010