

**THE OAKS HAVANT CREMATORIUM, BARTONS ROAD,
HAVANT, PO9 5NA**



Planning application for an extension to the crematorium building

PLANNING STATEMENT

May 2021

Statement prepared by Matthew Holmes, BA (Hons), MA MRTPI

1. Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Southern Co-operative Properties Ltd and is submitted in support of a planning application for an extension to the existing crematorium building at The Oaks, Bartons Road, Havant.

1.2 The application site is located across two Local Authority boundaries. The main building lies within the East Hampshire District Council boundary whilst the access and driveway lies within Havant Borough Council boundary. This statement sets out how the proposed development conforms with the relevant planning policies of the respective Local Plans; the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy Policy and Havant Borough Core Strategy, in that the proposals comprise a high-quality designed development appropriate to its location in the countryside. The proposals will make a positive contribution to the overall character and appearance of the area by ensuring that the siting, scale, density massing, height and appearance of the extended building is appropriate to the local distinctiveness and sense of place. The alterations have been sympathetically designed to complement the existing building.

1.3 The application comprises:

- Completed application form
- Plans and drawings
- This Planning Statement
- Cremator Technical Details

2. Site context

2.1 The application site is located on the north side of Bartons Road, on the outskirts of Havant. The site extends back from the road and is surrounded by wildflower meadow and woodland to the west, north and east boundaries. Adjacent to the driveway access to the south is farmland to the west (that has outline planning permission for residential development with community orchard) and Portsmouth Spire Hospital to the east.



Aerial view of The Oaks Crematorium (www.google.co.uk)

- 2.2 On entering the site, a long private drive leads first to the parking area and then the crematorium building beyond. The site contains one main building that has been sensitively designed to give the appearance that it is rising from the wildflower meadow that it is set in. It is a single storey building with oak cladding and brick walls, complemented by a living sedum roof. The grounds are landscaped to enhance the natural setting.
- 2.3 The current facilities include two cremators located in the north section of the building, adjoining the service compound.



East elevation view of the service hall and cremator (www.havantcrematorium.co.uk)

- 2.4 The application site is located within countryside as defined by the East Hampshire policy map, but it is not in a conservation area or close to any designated heritage assets. It falls within flood zone 1 and is therefore not at high risk of flooding.

3. Relevant Planning History

- 3.1 The existing crematorium building with memorial gardens, landscaping, access, parking and nature conservation works was granted permission in March 2012, East Hampshire reference 53322/001 and Havant reference APP/11/01561.
- 3.2 An application to extend the parking area at The Oaks Crematorium was approved in September 2019, East Hampshire reference 53322/004 and Havant reference APP/19/00537.
- 3.3 On land north of Bartons Road, adjacent to The Oaks access road, outline planning permission for green infrastructure including community orchard in association with 72 dwellings on land within Havant Borough Council (reference APP/19/00007) was approved by East Hampshire in October 2020, reference 53322/003.

The associated outline application for access with all matters reserved for up to 72 new homes plus associated green infrastructure including community orchard was approved by Havant in October 2020, reference APP/19/00007.

4. The proposed development

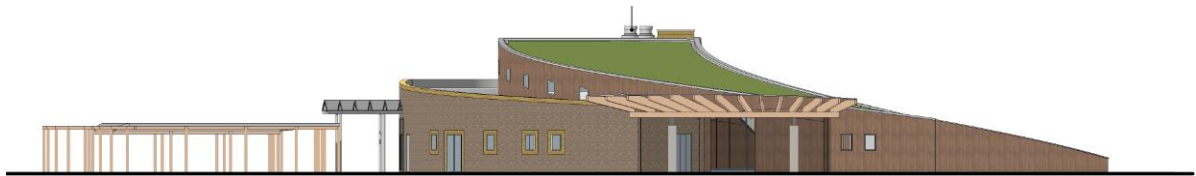
- 4.1 The application proposes to extend the existing building on the north elevation in order to accommodate an additional cremator and altered service compound. There will be no change to the private driveway and parking. The extension will be a continuation of the single storey brick section of the building, with a flat roof and the addition of a second chimney stack that will service the new cremator. The compound will be extended and include the construction of a storage shed.





Existing and proposed west elevation comparison (Southern Co-op)

- 4.2 On the west elevation, the existing Memorial Book Room is sited in front of the timber fence line of the existing compound. The proposed extension will occupy part of the existing compound and replace the fence line with brickwork. The new compound will extend to the north ensuring the crematorium still benefits from a discreet enclosed area to support day to day operations whilst preserving the tranquillity of the setting for visiting members of the public.
- 4.3 The proposed extension will have a limited impact on the view of the building from the south as one enters the site. The additional chimney stack will be the only visible feature, which in turn will be partially obscured by the existing chimney stack and roof. The use of matching materials will ensure the extension is harmonious with the existing building when viewed from any vantage point.



Proposed south elevation (Southern Co-op)

- 4.4 Vehicles accessing the compound will continue to use the existing resin bound gravel path. The path that leads visitors to the woodland glade will not be changed.

5. Relevant planning policies

National Planning Policy: The National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) confirms that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
- 5.2 The NPPF confirms that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking. For decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are

out-of-date, granting permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

- 5.3 The NPPF makes clear that planning decisions should promote an effective use of land. Paragraph 122 states that development should take place at appropriate densities, making *'optimal use of the potential of each site'* (paragraph 123).
- 5.4 Paragraph 124 of the NPPF confirms that the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and helps make development acceptable to communities.
- 5.5 Section 15 of the NPPF focuses on conserving and enhancing the natural environment including the protection of valued landscapes, recognising intrinsic character and beauty in the countryside and protecting biodiversity and geodiversity.

The Development Plan

- 5.6 In this instance, the Local Development Plan for the site comprises the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy (adopted June 2014), and the Havant Borough Core Strategy (adopted March 2011) and the emerging Havant Borough Local Plan (submitted 12 February 2021).
- 5.7 For East Hampshire Joint Core Strategy Policy CP1 states that the LPA will apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development when determining planning applications.
- 5.8 Policy CP19 'Development in the Countryside' states that *"The only development allowed in the countryside will be that with a genuine and proven need for a countryside location, such as that necessary for farming, forestry, or other rural enterprises"*. Policy CP6 includes that development will be permitted for the reasonable extension of existing firms in the countryside provided that it does not harm the character and natural beauty of the site or its surroundings.
- 5.9 Policy CP20 requires that new development will conserve and enhance the district's natural environment.
- 5.10 Policy CP23 aims to protect undeveloped gaps between settlements. Development will be permitted if it does not undermine the physical and/or visual separation of settlements, it does not compromise the integrity of the gap and it cannot be located elsewhere.

- 5.11 Policy CP29 'Design' requires that development achieves an exemplary standards in design and appearance. *"All new development will be required to respect the character, identity and context of the district's towns, villages and countryside and must help to create places where people want to live, work and visit."*
- 5.12 For Havant Borough emerging Local Plan Policy DR1 sets out the Council's commitment to support sustainable growth in homes, jobs and services.
- 5.13 Adopted Policy CS16 and emerging Policy E1 'High Quality Design' sets out the importance of high quality design. Proposals should demonstrate that its design responds positively to existing features and local character.

6. Design and Policy Assessment

Use

- 6.1 The existing use of the site is as a crematorium and burial ground. The crematorium building that houses the cremator is an integral part of that use. The proposal is to extend the existing building in order to accommodate an additional cremator. The additional cremator will provide extra capacity and also limit interruptions to service that can currently occur when the existing equipment is subject to maintenance. The use of the building and that of the wider site as a crematorium and burial ground will not change.
- 6.2 A crematorium is considered as a community facility and a service that benefits from a rural location with regards to providing mourners with a tranquil and natural environment in which to pay their respects. The Oaks already has many features that help to conserve the natural beauty of its setting and therefore the applicants consider that it is an appropriate sustainable location in which to expand the existing facilities rather than having to develop a second facility in an alternative location.

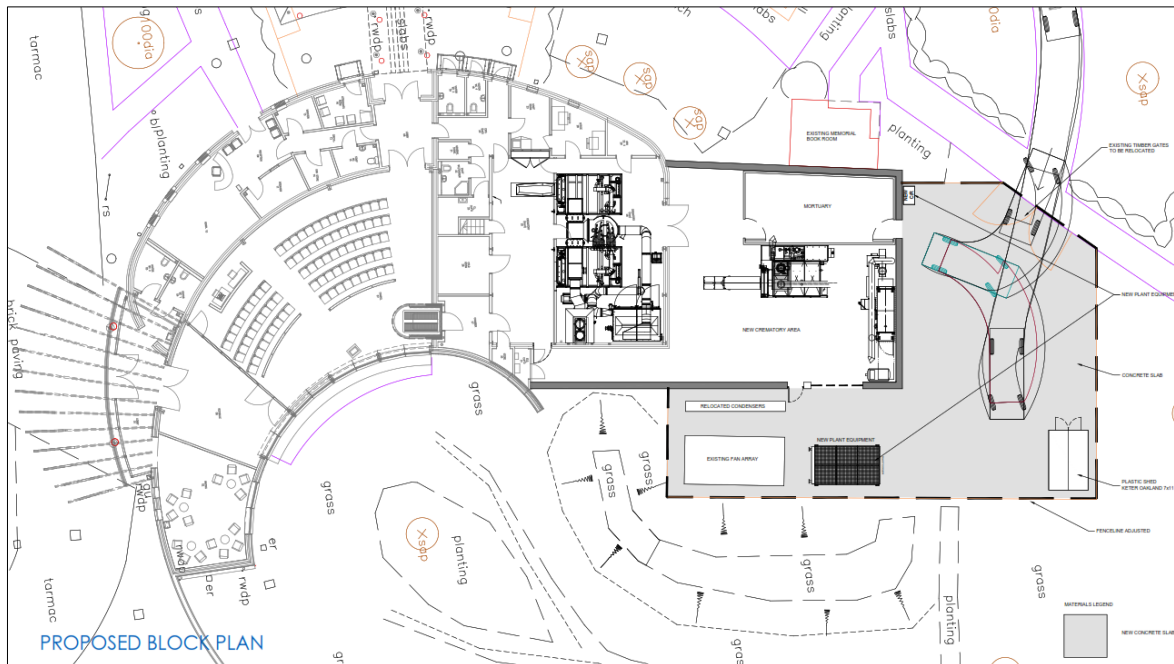
Amount

- 6.3 The crematorium currently operates with one cremator that is located in the north section of the building. The building is relatively small in comparison to the size of site overall. Therefore, it is considered that scope exists to extend the building on the north elevation whilst preserving the openness of the countryside, the tranquillity of the setting and the natural character of the site (per Policies CP19, CP20 and CP23).

- 6.4 The extension will be a continuation of the existing brick section of the building. It has been designed to use the same materials and respect the existing building line and ridge height. These features will ensure that the increase in building mass is appropriate and will give the impression that the extension is an integral part of the building, therefore conserving the integrity of the countryside gap in accordance with Policy CP23.

Layout

- 6.5 The proposed layout of development on the site has been informed by the existing site configuration and the requirements of needing to preserve the environment and make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. To that end the proposed extension will not change the layout of the existing building with regards to the main service hall, memorial gardens and flower courtyard. Instead the extension will provide more efficient layout for the behind the scenes operation of the crematorium. The new section of the building and compound will occupy an area that does not currently contain any significant landscaping and will therefore preserve the setting for visitors.
- 6.6 The existing cremators will remain in place and openings will be used to access the extended section. Services such as ventilation and cooling will be re-located to accommodate the extension. The existing timber gates to the compound will be re-sited adjacent to the existing path that leads to the woodland glade. This will ensure that vehicle access remains unchanged. The compound has been designed large enough for vehicles to manoeuvre within the new enclosed area. These features have all been designed to minimise the visual impact of the extension on the character and setting of the building in accordance with Policy CP23.



Proposed block plan extract (Southern Coop)

Scale

- 6.7 The existing building is a single storey spiral design that rises from the ground in the south and increases in height as it sweeps around west towards to the north. The current scale of the building is appropriate for the natural setting and it sits comfortably surrounded by ancient woodland.
- 6.8 The proposed extension will be a continuation to the north elevation which ensures that the scale of the proposed changes is consistent with the scale of the existing building.

Appearance

- 6.9 The original building, finished in oak cladding, brick walls and flint detail, has an appropriate, low key appearance that complements the setting and reflects the rural character of the area. The extension to the building is designed to maintain the building's relationship with its setting, preserving views over the existing landscaped grounds and wildflower meadow.
- 6.10 The new extension, chimney stack and compound have been designed to respect the form of the existing building. The alterations will be finished in the same materials to match the existing building and maintain its distinctiveness.

- 6.11 The new compound will sit comfortably in the context of the existing building and landscaped grounds, ensuring that, when viewed from the north, the distinctive upward curve of the building is still visible.



Proposed north elevation (Southern Coop)

Landscaping

- 6.12 The site has already been developed with formal landscaped grounds. The extension will have minimal impact on the existing landscaping as the extension and new compound will occupy an area that does not contain any significant landscaping and currently serves the existing compound and access route.

Access

- 6.13 The compound already has a purpose-built resin bound gravel track that leads to the compound gates and is sufficient to meet the needs of vehicles accessing the compound. The existing paths that service the flower courtyard and memorial book room will remain, therefore the proposed extension will not have a detrimental effect on the existing access for visitors or staff.
- 6.14 It is not anticipated that there will be significant additional traffic generated by the proposed development that will adversely affect road safety or the ability of the transport infrastructure to accommodate the additional traffic. Appropriate access to the crematorium is already established from Barton's Road along the private driveway and will remain unchanged.



View of the main entrance from Bartons Road (www.google.co.uk)

7. Conclusion

7.1 In accordance with the NPPF consideration needs to be given as to whether the proposal constitutes sustainable development. In this case the development is sustainable for the following reasons:

- The proposal is for alterations to an existing building that are of an appropriate design and scale and will respond well to the character of the area,
- The proposal preserves the existing building and the setting of the surrounding woodland, countryside and settlement gap,
- Extending the existing building to house an additional cremator represents a more sustainable option than developing additional sites in the future, and
- The proposal will continue to make efficient use of this highly accessible site.

7.2 It is therefore considered that the planning justifications and design rationale identified in this Planning Statement demonstrate that the development is acceptable.