MINOR DEVELOPMENT PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT REF. NO. F/11/69814

DESCRIPTION/ ADDRESS	Change of use of agricultural land to Remembrance Garden with ancillary landscaping bund and dedication of land for cycleway Wessex Vale Crematorium, Bubb Lane, West End.

SITE VISIT DATE	23.11.11			
ARE PLANS ACCURATE?	X	Yes		No. If not why not…….
HAVE ALL NECESSARY NEIGHBOURS BEEN CONSULTED?	X	Yes		No. If not why not…….

THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION	C/U of agricultural field to an extension of the Remembrance Garden with landscaping and bund through redistribution of the spoil obtained during the construction of the crematorium and associated infrastructure.
SITE AREA	1.21 ha.
RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT DENSITY (NET)	N/A
TOPOGRAPHY	Land rises towards the site from the crematorium and drops towards Burnett's Lane. Woodland to the north is on a raised embankment.
TREES	Woodland along the northern boundary. No trees are to be felled as part of this proposal.
BOUNDARY TREATMENT	Currently a 1m high P&W fence separates the field from the existing Remembrance Garden. The woodland to the north acts as the boundary this side with a field hedge running along the majority of the southern boundary. To Burnett's Lane, is a thick hedge ranging between 2 – 4m in height that was considered in the 2009 ecological report as being of high value to local wildlife.
SITE CHARACTERISTICS	Agricultural field
CHARACTER OF LOCALITY	Part of an established crematorium and Remembrance Gardens allowed at appeal in 2008. Further afield is farmland and residential properties along Burnett's Lane

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION	DECISION
F/07/60158	Construction of crematorium with new access, ancillary landscaping & formation of new cycleway/footpath, off site highway works, external lighting & change of use of	Allowed at appeal October 2008.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION	DECISION
	agricultural land to gardens of remembrance	
F/09/65279	Chapel	Permitted 2009

REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

SOURCE	SUMMARY OF CONTENT
None	

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

CONSULTEE	SUMMARY OF RESPONSE
Head of Transportation and Engineering	No objection but wishes to secure the future provision of the cycleway/footpath. Could the land be adopted as part of a linear greenway?
West End PC	No objection
Head of Countryside and Trees - ecology	No objection. No harm to protected species.
Head of Regeneration and Planning Policy	No objection. The proposal involves land in the countryside adjoining the existing crematorium site. Use as a Remembrance Garden is not covered specifically in the adopted Eastleigh Borough Local Plan review 2001-2011, and is not identifed as a use permissible in the countryside under policy 1.CO. However, it is acknowledged that the crematorium use exists, and that it is unlikely that land could be found within the existing urban edge for such a use. The draft Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011-2029 includes a policy enabling the development of cemeteries subject to a number of criteria (Policy DM57). Of these criteria the most relevant is iv, which requires that such developments should not have a detrimental impact on the character of the countryside, or biodiversity or heritage interests. There are no known biodiversity or heritage interests on the application site, but, there are some concerns about the potential landscape impact of the scheme (see Design Officer comments below). Provided the Design Officer's recommendations are accepted no policy objection is raised to this proposal. Design - The proposed change appears broadly acceptable in this countryside location but would benefit from being more closely absorbed within the Hampshire landscape with some additional native tree planting along the western site boundary and at the junction of the this boundary with Burnett’s Lane. I suggest that the additional planting be English oak, planted in groups at a smaller size than the proposed birch. No further objection subject to planting details being amended. Amended details received as required and no objection raised.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

CONSULTEE	SUMMARY OF RESPONSE
HCC Rights of Way	No objection but notes under condition 16 of the appeal decision the applicants are obliged to retain the land for a cycleway.

POLICY CONTEXT

DESIGNATION APPLICABLE TO SITE
Outside Built-up Area Boundary Strategic Gap

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review (2001-2011) 1.CO, 2.CO,18.CO, 25.NC, 26.NC, 162.TA

PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE / STATEMENT

PPG -
PPS - 1 Delivering Sustainable Development
3 Housing

POLICY COMMENTARY

The above policies combine to form the criteria against which this application will be assessed with particular regard to highway matters, residential amenity, ecology and character of the area

COMMENT ON CONSULTATION RESPONSES

X	See below		Other……

COMMENT ON REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

X	See below		Other……

PLANNING OBLIGATION/CONSIDERATIONS

NA

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL

DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND/OR LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:-

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Policy 1.CO seeks to protect the character and appearance of the countryside by restricting development in such areas to that essential for agricultural, outdoor sports or public utility service providers. It was established at the appeal for the original crematorium in 2008 that such facilities

can not easily be provided within the urban area, and that a crematorium is, in certain ways a service that is often provided by the public sector. The extension of the gardens would not require any further structures, and through appropriate landscaping the development is not considered to cause harm to the countryside or how it is perceived. The agricultural land is classed as Grade 3, however policy 4.CO of the Local Plan was not saved and there is not a requirement to protect land of certain quality.

Policy 2.CO seeks to protect the identity of separate settlements through the designation of strategic gaps. This site is outside of, but close to, the gap. The more formal landscaped appearance of the site would be noticeably different to the rural field, but in the absence of structures and low level of the bunding (2.5m), together with existing boundary hedging the gardens would not visually undermine the function of the gap.

Similarly, the landscaping and use respect the intrinsic character of the landscape of the area as required by policy 18.CO. The draft Landscape Character Assessment background paper includes this site within “Area 9 – Horton Heath undulating farmland”, as small area of which is south of the railway line/NW of Bubb Lane. The paper highlights trees and hedgerows as notable landscape features, however the area is generally open. A key issue is future development and land management changes which increase intervisibility between settlements. The application site is small, abuts rural countryside to the west and NW, and would be sensitively landscaped such that it would not increase intervisibility between settlements.

New planting is appropriate and the southern hedge is to be extended to complete this boundary. The bunding predominantly bounds the entire southern boundary, which with maturing landscaping, will assist in assimilation of the site into the countryside setting. Amended plans secured additional bunding and landscaping to assist with screening views from Burnetts Lane.

Policy 59.BE seeks to ensure development is appropriate to its locality and avoids undue harm to existing uses. As established, the use is appropriate and with the additional landscaping to supplement the mature hedging along Burnetts Lane, views of the site will be limited from nearby houses. The provision of a small bund close to the gate on to Burnetts Lane further reduces views from a public vantage point and is therefore was secured via an amended plan.

The scheme would not generate additional traffic movements to the site, as such there is not a requirement for justifying the development, securing contributions towards sustainable transport measures or increasing parking provision all of which are sought under saved policies 100.T, 101.T and 104.T of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review. The applicant is committed to continuing with their obligation (condition 16 of appeal decision) to allow public access along the northern boundary through dedicating land for a footpath from Bubb Lane to Burnetts Lane, which sits comfortably with saved policies 152.OS (Greenways) and aspirations for improving the Strawberry Trail (policy 162.TA) which runs along the northern boundary of the site. This was also a requirement of condition 16 when the appeal was allowed for the crematorium.

The phase 1 Ecological report establishes the site as being of a low level of ecological importance, although the hedgerow to Burnnetts Lane is of significant value to local wildlife. No protected species are found to be on the site, and the formal gardens are not considered to cause harm to nature conservation. As such the scheme accords with saved policies 24.NC and 25.NC, and guidance set out in PPS 9.

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is considered that there are no other material considerations to warrant a decision otherwise than in accordance with the Development Plan and/or legislative background.

CONCLUSIONS

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The recommendation is to permit