PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

DESCRIPTION	Construction of new floral tribute canopy, exit canopy and timber art sculpture/shelter.
ADDRESS	Wessex Vale Crematorium Bubb Lane West End Southampton SO30 2HL

SITE VISIT DATE – 17 September 2014

ARE PLANS ACCURATE? – It is considered that sufficient information has been provided to allow for a full and proper assessment of the development proposed. Amended plans were received on 16 October 2014.

HAVE ALL NECESSARY NEIGHBOURS BEEN CONSULTED? – Yes. Owing to the proposals constituting Major development, a site notice was displayed at the entrance to the site and the application was advertised in a newspaper circulating in the local area.

THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION	The application seeks approval for the development as described above. The proposals consist of three elements: • A new canopy structure to be positioned in the proximity of the chapel exit on the south-eastern elevation of the building. The structure is 8.4m in length and is open sided, being formed of timber posts with a fabric canopy roof. • A curved floral tribute area situated at the end of the existing walkway to the south-east of the crematorium building. This is again constructed of timber posts with a fabric canopy roof and will be set into the existing landscaped bank. Along with wicker fence and mobiline 'green screen' panels, this will provide for shelter for the users of the tribute area. • A public arts shelter which is to be set into an existing landscaped bund to the north-west of the building. The shelter will be accessed via an existing block paved pathway and is constructed of curved timbers with surrounding fabric canopies to match the other elements of the proposals as listed above.
SITE AREA	4.42ha
RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT DENSITY (NET)	n/a
TOPOGRAPHY	The natural level of the ground is relatively flat and level. There are, however, a number of earth embankments and bund 'walls' that have been created as part of the landscaping scheme for the crematorium which serve to soften its visual impact upon the surrounding landscape. There is an area of dense woodland forming the north-eastern boundary of the site with there being open fields to the south and west.
TREES	There will be no trees affected by the proposed

THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

	development.
BOUNDARY TREATMENT	The entrance to the crematorium off Bubb Lane is marked by a low-level timber post-and-rail fence and associated access gates. The remaining boundary of the site with Bubb Lane is formed of trees and somewhat sporadic hedging.
SITE CHARACTERISTICS	Existing crematorium opened in December 2009. The site consists of a relatively sizeable single building of traditional construction. The building is finished in red brick and has a pitched roof with natural clay plain tiles, with its windows and doors being of stained hardwood timber (Sapele). There is a Porte Cochere formed of timber posts and glulam beams to its south-western end. The crematorium has an existing unattached floral tribute canopy situated to its south-eastern side which is formed of timber posts with a tiled pitch roof. A memorial garden is sited to the west/north-west of the main building with further landscaped areas, which surround gravel and tarmac hardstandings providing for on-site car parking for the premises, to the south/south-west.
CHARACTER OF LOCALITY	The site falls within designated countryside and forms part of a parcel of land situated between Bubb Lane to the south and Burnetts Lane to the north-west. A railway line and an area of woodland forms the north-eastern boundary of the site with there being open fields to the south and west.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION	DECISION
F/06/58578	Construction of Crematorium with new access, ancillary landscaping & formation of new cycleway/footpath & change of use of agricultural land to gardens of remembrance	WITHDRAWN – 05/03/2007
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 agricultural land to gardens of remembrance	REFUSE – 07/09/2007 (ALLOWED ON APPEAL – 10/11/2008)

REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

SOURCE	SUMMARY OF CONTENT
None	

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

CONSULTEE	SUMMARY OF RESPONSE
West End Parish Council	(18/09/2014): *No objection*
Health and Safety Executive (HSE)	(28/08/2014): *HSE has no further comments to make on this application.*

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

CONSULTEE	SUMMARY OF RESPONSE
Head of Planning Policy and Design	Landscape Design Officer: *The proposed new sculpture/seating element needs to be set within a landscape structure. At present the layout plan appears to show the sculpture/seating in the middle of a grassed area. This would look odd and some more shelter would also make using the seating a more comfortable experience. I would suggest some flowering shrubs around the sculpture/seating reinforced with framing trees or a ring of trees. What material are the seats in? Some more detailed construction drawings would be useful. The new spur of the footpath serving the sculpture/seating needs to match the main path it connects to- no details of this provided to date.* Public Arts Officer: *In principle I have no objections to the Arts Shelter on the Crematorium site. The site is extremely open and would benefit from a structure where one could go for quiet contemplation. The Design & Access Statement sets out the project aims to be as follows: contribute to a distinctive and unique identity for the Crematorium; involve the users and stakeholders of the crematorium in the creation of a piece of public art; provide public art on site that is integral to the landscape.* *Could the applicant clarify how the community work will be integrated into the final shelter as it's not clear from the drawings? Opportunities previously discussed with the applicant included birds in the paving and community drawings engraved on the stainless steel panels on the curved uprights which are indicated in the shelter drawings but no details have been submitted.*

POLICY CONTEXT

DESIGNATION APPLICABLE TO SITE
Outside Built-up Area Boundary Within Designated Countryside In Proximity of Southern Gas High Pressure Pipeline

DEVELOPMENT PLAN SAVED POLICIES, EMERGING LOCAL PLAN POLICIES AND SPD'S

Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review (2001-2011), saved policies 1.CO, 11.CO, 59.BE.
Submitted Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011 - 2029, July 2014, (the Submitted Local Plan) comprising: Revised Pre-submission Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011 - 2029, published February 2014; and Schedule of Proposed Minor Changes, submitted to the Secretary of State in July 2014, Policies S9, DM1, DM16.
Supplementary Planning Document: Quality Places

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE

The following sections of the National Planning Policy Framework are considered to be of relevance to this proposal:

- Paragraph 6 which states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE

achievement of sustainable development.

- Paragraph 17 which states that planning should always seek to secure a high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings; and that is should take account of the different roles and character of different area including *inter alia* recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

- *Section 7: Requiring good design* which stipulates that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and is indivisible from good planning; that planning decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment; and that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

POLICY COMMENTARY

The above policies and guidance combine to form the criteria against which this application will be assessed with particular regard to the principle of the development proposed; its layout, design and impact upon the character of the countryside; residential amenity; and highway matters.

COMMENT ON CONSULTATION RESPONSES

The comments received are noted and are responded to where necessary in the below assessment of the proposals.

COMMENT ON REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

None received.

PLANNING OBLIGATION/CONSIDERATIONS

There are no planning obligation requirements associated with this application.

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL

DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND/OR LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

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."

Assessment of Proposals:

Principle:

The site falls within designated countryside where Saved Policy 1.CO applies. This policy sets out a general presumption against new development that is not for agricultural, forestry or horticultural purposes; for an outdoor recreational use; that is essential for the provision of a public utility service; or is an appropriate extension of an existing education or healthcare facility.

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL

DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND/OR LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

Saved Policy 11.CO, however, does allow for appropriate extensions to existing non-residential buildings within the countryside providing they do not have an unacceptable physical or visual impact upon it, they do not generate significant additional traffic, and where the existing building is not the result of the a temporary permission. As the Crematorium is an existing facility with a permanent planning approval, it is considered that the principle of the development is therefore acceptable subject to the particular details of the proposal conforming to the specific criteria contained within the relevant development plan policies (11.CO and 59.BE).

Layout, design and impact upon the countryside location:

Firstly with regards to the proposed exit canopy, this is considered to represent a proportionate and subservient addition to the crematorium building which it will be viewed against as a backdrop when entering the site from Bubb Lane. Its timber materials will complement those present both on the main building as well as the existing floral tribute canopy to its south-eastern side. The addition of a light coloured fabric roof canopy, whilst being a material currently not present elsewhere on the site, is not considered to be unacceptable and indeed will serve to tie this feature in with the new floral tribute area and public arts shelter which form the other elements of the proposals.

With regards to the curved floral tribute area, it is acknowledged that this has the potential to have a somewhat more notable visual impact upon the crematorium site than the exit canopy owing to its greater size and scale as well as its positioning in much closer proximity to the site entrance. The structure is, however, set into the existing earth bund which provides for a degree of screening for it, with the proposed provision of surrounding wicker fences and 'green screens' serving to further soften its visual impact. In addition, a condition will also be recommended to require the submission of details of additional landscaping/planting for the earth bund to mitigate against the potential visual prominence of the roof of the structure when viewed from the site entrance. With the inclusion of these measures it is considered that this element of the development is acceptable and will not be harmful to the character of the countryside location of the site.

The final element of the proposals is a timber shelter which will provide for a seating area within the memorial gardens. This will be partially set into an existing landscaped bund to the north-west of the main crematorium building. The structure is to include public art elements with the stated aims of contributing to a distinctive and unique identity for the Crematorium; to involve users and stakeholders of the Crematorium in the creation of a piece of public art; and to provide public art on the site that is integral to the landscape. It is considered that the structure is visually appropriate and ties in with the other elements of the proposals in terms of its materials, with timber and light coloured fabric canopies again being used. Owing to its small scale and its siting 'nestled' into the landscaped bund which extends above the height of the shelter, the structure will also have no unacceptable impact upon the countryside location of the Crematorium site. With regards to the need for further landscaping suggested by the Council's Landscape Design Officer, it is not considered that a condition is necessitated in relation to the public arts shelter in this instance owing to the limited visual impact of the development. Notwithstanding this, it is the understanding of the LPA that the planting which has been recently put in place further along this bund is intended to be continued across to the area behind the shelter which will in time further enhance the backdrop to it.

Finally, the proposals had in addition to the above, originally sought approval for the provision of a fabric screen to the existing timber floral tribute canopy at the site. Following concerns raised by the LPA in relation to the visual impact and prominence of this addition, the drawings were revised to remove this element from the proposals.

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL

DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND/OR LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

For the reasons given the development is considered to be acceptable in respect of its layout and design as well as its impact upon the character of the locality and the countryside setting of the site. Accordingly the proposals are deemed to comply with the provisions of Saved Policies 11.CO and 59.BE in this regard.

Neighbouring amenity:

Owing to the nature of the development as well as the location of the site relative to residential properties, the closest of which are situated approximately 150m from the proposed works, it is not considered that the proposals will have any notable or unacceptable impact upon the amenity of their occupiers. The application is therefore deemed to accord with the provisions of Saved Policy 59.BE (vii.) which requires development to avoid unduly interfering, disturbing or conflicting with adjoining or nearby uses.

Highway matters:

Based on the information provided, the proposed development is deemed to be of a nature that is supplemental to the existing operations at the premises and will not serve to increase the current capacity of the crematorium. It is not considered therefore that the proposals will result in the generation of additional traffic or visitors to the facility. In addition, the siting of the proposed structures will not result in any reduction or reconfiguration of on-site car parking or access arrangements.

Accordingly, the proposals are considered to be in compliance with the provisions of Saved Policies 11.CO (ii) and 59.BE (v.).

Conclusion:

Overall, for the reasons as outlined above, the application is considered to comply with the requirements of the relevant development plan policies, associated supplementary planning guidance, and national planning policy.

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Also of relevance is the Submitted Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011 - 2029, July 2014. While not yet adopted it does carry weight by virtue of being intended as the current local plan's replacement. With regards to this application, the new policies (S9, DM1, DM16) essentially echo the requirements of those of the current plan and are not considered to affect the recommendation put forward.

CONCLUSIONS

It is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to conditions.