



Report to East Area Planning Committee

Application Number:	PL/22/1612/FA
Proposal:	2 extract fans with cowls (approx. 575mm in height) to be installed on the rear crematory roof, above the cremators, located within the roof valleys of the building - one lower pitch & one higher pitch. The cowls will be 176mm above the lower ridge line, but 105mm below the higher ridge line.
Site location:	The Chilterns Crematorium, Whielden Lane, Amersham, Buckinghamshire, HP7 0ND
Applicant:	Buckinghamshire Council (Ms Linda Francis)
Case Officer:	Mark Aughterlony
Ward affected:	Penn Wood & Old Amersham
Parish-Town Council:	Amersham
Valid date:	25 May 2022
Determination date:	20 July 2022
Recommendation:	Conditional permission

1.0 Summary & Recommendation/ Reason for Planning Committee Consideration

- 1.1 This application relates to the installation of 2 extractor fans on the rear elevation/roof slopes of the Chilterns Crematorium in Amersham.
- 1.2 The application is being considered by the Planning Committee by virtue of the fact that it is the Council's own application, as required by the Constitution.
- 1.3 The recommendation is to **APPROVE** the planning application subject to the imposition of conditions and reasons.

2.0 Description of Proposed Development

- 2.1 This application relates to the site of the Chilterns Crematorium located to the south-west of Amersham Old Town, effectively nestled between the A412 and the A404. The wider site comprises the main complex of buildings including two chapels (Hampden and Milton) set in landscaped, wooded grounds/gardens of remembrance.

- 2.2 Access to the site is taken direct from the A404 and ultimately leads to considerable areas of parking located to the front (west) and far side (south west) of the complex of buildings. The site lies within the GB and AONB.
- 2.3 The existing complex of buildings comprise a variety of designs and heights, ranging from the original (Hampden) Chapel to the more modern and recent (Milton) Chapel, with a number of functional/utilitarian buildings both serving & joining them, located to the rear (east).
- 2.4 As part of a wider scheme of refurbishment and improvement of the existing facility planning permission is being sought for the installation of two extractor fans, with cowls. They would be installed on rear roof slopes, above the existing cremators, located within the roof valleys of two existing buildings - one lower pitched & one higher pitched.
- 2.5 The fans/cowls would protrude some 176mm above the lower ridge line but 105mm below the higher ridge line. Both would be coloured to match that of the existing roof which, in this instance, is copper.
- 2.6 The application is accompanied by confirmation that a Bat Registration Licence has been granted for the works by Natural England.

3.0 Relevant Planning History

- 3.1 CH/2003/1715/RC – CP - 21 November 2003 - single storey extension to provide second funeral chapel and floral display area, together with additional car parking area and associated landscaping (amendment to planning permission 02/1308/CH)
- 3.2 CH/1996/1242/FA – CP - 14 November 1996 - alterations, two storey extension, formation of covered way and pergola, erection of 2.6 metre high wall to enclose yard on west elevation, removal of existing chimney and erection of replacement chimney
- 3.3 CH/1995/1438/FA – CP - 8 January 1996 - alterations, two storey extension, formation of covered way and pergola, erection of 2.6 metre high wall to enclose yard on west elevation, removal of existing chimney and erection of replacement chimney
- 3.4 CH/1993/1098/FA – CP - 28 October 1993 - change of use of agricultural land to memorial garden together with ancillary car park
- 3.5 CH/2002/1308/RC – CP - 25 November 2002 - single storey extension to provide second funeral chapel and floral display area together with additional car parking area and associated landscaping
- 3.6 CH/1999/0210/FA – CP 24 May 1999 - new chapel of remembrance

4.0 Summary of Representations

- 4.1 None received at time of writing report.

5.0 Policy Considerations and Evaluation

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), July 2021.
- National Design Guidance, October 2019

- Core Strategy for Chiltern District - Adopted November 2011:
- Chiltern District Local Plan adopted 1 September 1997 (including alterations adopted 29 May 2001), consolidated September 2007 and November 2011.
- C&SB Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedules (Feb 2020)

Principle and Location of Development

GB2 (Development in general in the Green Belt)

Principle of development.

- 5.1 Whilst located in the GB and AONB, the Chilterns Crematorium at Amersham is the largest crematorium in Buckinghamshire and currently operates with three cremators; it was retro-fitted with mercury abatement equipment in 2005.
- 5.2 Historically Chilterns Crematorium receives the bulk of cremations for the region and its level of activity remains very high (currently over 3,000 annual cremations). The crematorium consists of one large building, with a chapel on either side of a central crematory; the Hampden Chapel (the smaller and original Chapel), and the Milton Chapel (the larger and newer Chapel). Usage of the Crematorium will not change as a result of these proposals, as they do not seek to expand the existing facility but improve it.
- 5.3 Policy GB2 states that most development in the Green Belt is inappropriate and there is a general presumption against such development. The policy then lists development which is not inappropriate: of direct relevance to this proposal is:
- (b) New buildings to provide essential facilities for (i) outdoor sport and (ii) outdoor recreation; for (iii) cemeteries and for (iv) other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it.*
- 5.4 Whilst the proposal does not relate to the erection of a new building(s), the proposal nevertheless falls to be considered against the principle of this policy, which is to preserve the openness of the Green Belt.
- 5.5 The proposal relates to the insertion of two flues within the roof slope of single storey buildings that are located at the rear of the complex of existing crematorium buildings. The openness of the GB will not be diminished as a result of the proposal and the scheme therefore complies with Policy GB2.

Transport matters and parking

CS26 (Requirements of new development)

TR2 (Highway aspects of planning applications)

TR11 (Provision of off-street parking for developments)

Council's Parking SPD, 2015

- 5.6 The proposal does not involve the creation of any additional floor space. No additional traffic would therefore result from the proposal nor is there a requirement for any additional parking provision. The scheme therefore complies with Policies CS26, TR2 and TR11.

Raising the quality of place making and design

CS20 (Design and environmental quality)

CS22 (Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)

CS29 (Community)

GC1 (Design of development)

- 5.7 The Chilterns Crematorium comprises the original Hampden Chapel and service buildings, along with the more modern Milton Chapel, all of which are set in an undulating woodland setting/Garden of remembrance. It is an existing, well established facility that not only serves the immediate community of Bucks but also that further afield.
- 5.8 It is acknowledged that the extractor fans would protrude marginally above the ridge of the existing single storey buildings, but they would only be seen by visitors to the rear (east) of the wider site and only then would they be viewed against the existing, taller buildings.
- 5.9 Both fans/cowls would be coloured to match existing (copper) and it is considered that they would not appear as visually intrusive features. The scheme is therefore considered to accord with policies CS20, CS22, CS29 and GC1.
- 5.10 Whilst the installation of the fans/cowls requires the benefit of planning permission, as they would exceed 4m in height when placed within the roof slopes, there are a series of other works planned to improve and enhance the existing facility that constitute Permitted Development in accordance with Part 12, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, as amended. For information purposes only, these works relate to: -
- a) Enlarged blast cooler area required for repositioned and extended external cooling unit (air blast cooler) for cremator abatement system plus housing the required secure grounds machinery store. The latter is required due to the space previously used for storage of these items is now required for the fans for the cremator and abatement system. The materials will be as they are now for the extended area (i.e. a wooden hit & miss fence, coloured to match). New equipment would stand 3.8m above ground level.
 - b) Adjacent to the bottom of the main chimney stack will be housed an Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) array for the Hampden chapel heating system. This will be manufactured to match the materials around the enlarged blast cooler area
 - c) The ASHP will be used, initially for the temporary cremator flue supports during the transition from existing equipment to new. This structure will only be in place for this phase. It will first require a hardstanding to be installed at ground level which will then be used to support the external ASHP equipment thereafter.

Amenity of existing and future residents

GC3 (Protection of amenities)

GC7 (Noise-generating developments)

5.11 By virtue of the use and location of the site there are no concerns arising from the proposal in terms of impact on residential amenity.

Environmental issues

CS24 (Biodiversity)

GC9 (Prevention of pollution)

5.12 The site sits outside of the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation Zone of Influence.

5.13 It is considered that the proposals will not affect any adjacent trees by virtue of the fact that all development is limited to the existing buildings on site. The Tree Officer raises no objection to the proposal.

5.14 By virtue of the proposed development involving works to an existing roof, the applicant has already sought the necessary Bat Licence from Natural England. The scheme is therefore considered to comply with policies CS24 and GC9

Flooding and drainage

GC10 (Protection from flooding in the areas as defined on the Proposals Map)

5.15 This part of Amersham is classified as a Critical drainage area.

5.16 However, as the proposal does not involve any increase in floor area and only relates to works within the existing roof spaces there is not considered to be any conflict with this policy.

Landscape and visual impact Issues

CS20 (Design and environmental quality)

CS22 (Chilterns Area of Outstanding Beauty)

GC1 (Design of development)

LSQ1 (Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty as defined on the Proposals Map)

5.17 Policies GC1 and CS20 require new development, amongst other things, to be of a high standard of design which reflect and respect the character of the surrounding area. Policies LSQ1 and CS22 require, amongst other things, that all development in the AONB must conserve and enhance its special landscape character, heritage and distinctiveness as well as protecting its setting and safeguarding views into and out of the area.

5.18 As stated above, the extractor fans would be sited in existing roof slopes at the rear of the Crematorium. They would be finished in a sympathetic colour (copper) to blend with the existing and would be viewed only marginally above the existing single storey roofs. They would not therefore appear as unduly or unsightly features. Whilst they would be 'functional' additions they would

nevertheless blend in with the mix of building designs and forms that comprise the Chilterns Crematorium.

Community facilities

CS4 (Ensuring that development is sustainable)

CS29 (Community)

GB23 (Limited infilling including local community facilities in the Green Belt in the areas defined in Policies GB4 and GB5, except development covered by Policies GB4, GB5, GB6, GB12 and GB15)

- 5.19 The Chiltern Crematorium is one of two Council facilities that serves Buckinghamshire and the surrounding areas.
- 5.20 Policy GB23 allows for the extension or alteration of an existing building situated in the GB. Any extension, or as in this case, alteration to a building that is sited on the edge of a settlement which would significantly extend built-form into the adjoining open land will not be permitted, particularly where the extension/alteration is also visually intrusive in the open countryside setting.
- 5.21 As explained above, the works which require the benefit of planning permission, that form the subject of this application, is the installation of the extractor fans. As these are to be inserted in existing roof slopes, they would not extend built form into the surrounding land nor would they appear visually intrusive in their setting. Despite the existing buildings being set on a higher ground level to the A404 (to the east) the fans would not be visible when viewed from here due to the presence of mature planting in between. Furthermore, when viewed from within the site, looking west, the fans would not appear as bold or stark additions due to the fact that they would be viewed against existing, higher buildings and roofs.
- 5.22 The proposed enhancement of the existing facility will therefore greatly benefit the local and wider community. The proposals therefore comply with the above policies relating to community facilities.

Infrastructure and Developer Contributions

CS31 (Infrastructure)

- 5.23 The development for the insertion of two extractor fans, is not of a type where CIL would be chargeable as it does not result in the creation of any additional floor space. In terms of policy CS31 therefore, this proposal is ultimately one which will enhance and improve the operation of an existing, well established community facility.

6.0 Weighing and balancing of issues / Overall Assessment

- 6.1 This section brings together the assessment that has so far been set out in order to weigh and balance relevant planning considerations in order to reach a conclusion on the application.
- 6.2 In determining the planning application, section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in

accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In addition, Section 143 of the Localism Act amends Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act relating to the determination of planning applications and states that in dealing with planning applications, the authority shall have regard to:

- a. Provision of the development plan insofar as they are material,
- b. Any local finance considerations, so far as they are material to the application (such as CIL if applicable), and,
- c. Any other material considerations

6.3 As set out above it is considered that the proposed development would accord with all relevant development plan policies and guidance contained in the NPPF.

7.0 Working with the applicant / agent

7.1 In accordance with paragraphs 39-41 of the NPPF (2021) the Council approach decision-taking in a positive and creative way taking a proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions and work proactively with applicants to secure developments.

7.2 The Council work with the applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by offering a pre-application advice service, and as appropriate updating applications/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.

7.3 In this instance the applicant sought pre-application advice from officers as to what works required planning permission and what could be carried out under permitted development. The application is considered acceptable and therefore no further assistance was required.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION:** It is recommended that the application be granted **CONDITIONAL PERMISSION** subject to the following conditions and reasons:

- 1) The development to which this permission relates must be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To prevent the accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions, to enable the Local Planning Authority to review the suitability of the development in the light of altered circumstances and to comply with the provisions of Section 91 (1) of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, as amended

- 2) The materials to be used in the development shall be as indicated on the approved plans unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development and to comply with policy GC1 of the Chiltern District Local Plan (Adopted September 1997:

Consolidated September 2007 & November 2011) and guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 3) The scheme hereby permitted shall be implemented in accordance with the scheme of Ecological works as outlined in the Natural England Licence WML-CL47 received by the Local Planning Authority on 5 May 2022

Reason: Reason: In order to safeguard the protected species identified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and to comply with policy CS24 of the Chiltern District Local Plan (Adopted September 1997: Consolidated September 2007 & November 2011) and guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 4) This permission relates to the details shown on the approved plans as listed below:

List of approved plans:

Received	Plan Reference
05/05/2022	4309-RHB-XX-XX-DR-M-1101-T1
05/05/2022	Roof Plan SK01. Rev. B.
23/05/2022	Location plan

APPENDIX A: Consultation Responses and Representations

Councillor Comments

No comments received at time of writing report.

Town Council Comments

“No comments” received 20.06.2022.

Consultation Responses

Environmental Health/Protection Officer – raise no objection to the application.

Tree Officer – No objection to the scheme.

Representations

None received at time of writing report.