

**Turners Hill Crematorium and
Natural Burial Ground**

Request for an EIA Screening Opinion

For

Hartmires Investments Limited

Project Number:

13475

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Turners Hill Crematorium and Natural Burial Ground Request for an EIA Screening Opinion

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This report has been produced by CampbellReith on behalf of Hartmires Investments LTD (the 'Applicant') to assist Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) in determining whether an outline planning application for a new single-chapel crematorium and natural burial facility (the Proposed Development) on a parcel of land to the north of Turners Hill Road (the Application Site), would require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as defined within the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations) 2017 (the Regulations), as amended.
- 1.2. This report constitutes a formal request for an EIA Screening Opinion for the Proposed Development.
- 1.3. In accordance with the procedure set out in the EIA Regulations, this request for an EIA Screening Opinion includes the following information:
 - A plan sufficient to identify the land;
 - A description of the location of the development, with particular regard to the sensitivity of the geographical areas likely to be affected;
 - A description of the development, including its physical characteristics;
 - A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development;
 - A description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment resulting from expected residues and emissions, and the use of natural resources;
 - Conclusions on the potential of the development for significant environmental effects.
- 1.4. To assist MSDC with this process, the checklist used by the National Planning Casework Unit and the Planning Inspectorate when screening for EIA has been used within Chapter 6.0 of this document.

2.0 APPLICATION SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. The Application Site comprises approximately 7.2 hectares of land that is situated to the west of Turners Hill village in Mid Sussex, and lies within the jurisdiction of MSDC and West Sussex County Council.
- 2.2. The Application Site is a non-agricultural and part-developed parcel of land north of Turners Hill Road, Turners Hill, RH10 4PD, with a National Grid Reference of 533418E and 135609N. The geographical context of the Application Site is shown in **Appendix 1**, with an aerial image of the Application Site shown in **Figure 1** below.



Figure 1: Aerial photograph of the Application Site (Image provided courtesy of Google 2020 via Google Earth Professional. ©Google)

- 2.3. The Application Site has no existing buildings, although it is noted that there is extant planning permission for a reception building, a chapel and / with basement and an associated maintenance / storage building on the Application Site. Consent for the reception, chapel and storage building followed the grant of planning permission in 2015 for a change of use on the site to a natural burial ground. These previous consents are part-implemented.
- 2.4. The Application Site falls fairly steeply away from Turners Hill Road towards the northern and eastern boundaries. At its highest level in the south east, the Application Site is approximately 170 metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), falling to its lowest level in the north east of the Application Site, which is at approximately 130 metres AOD. Levels of the land surrounding the Application Site are comparable; decreasing to the north and south. The Application Site has no known history of previous built development.

- 2.5. The Application Site is immediately bound on all sides by a narrow band of vegetation. It is bound to the north by agricultural land; to the east in part by Butcher's Wood and in part by agricultural land; to the south by Turners Hill Road; and to the west by Tulley's Farm Fun Park, which is a large-scale family entertainment complex.
- 2.6. The Application Site is situated within a rural setting located approximately 794 metres to the west of Turners Hill and 7 kilometres to the east of Crawley. Turners Hill is characterised by a largely linear development form focused around the central junction where the B2028 running north-south through the settlement meets the B2110 which runs east-west. Land immediately surrounding the Application Site is predominantly agricultural.
- 2.7. The Parish Church of St Leonards is located 250 metres east from the Application Site and is a notable landmark on this natural ridge. The church has a churchyard containing burials. Gatwick Airport is located approximately 7 kilometres to the northwest.
- 2.8. The Application Site has an agricultural land quality of Grade 3, and is not situated within or near to any Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs).

Access

- 2.9. The Application Site is located to the north of Turners Hill Road, a public highway exhibiting the National Speed Limit (60mph) and a two-way single lane flow, no pedestrian facilities (pavements or lighting) and grass verges. Turners Hill Road links to East Street (B2110), which runs through Turners Hill Village to Three Bridges in the west. Vehicular access into the Application Site is off Turners Hill Road via an existing entrance.
- 2.10. Public footpath 68W follows the western edge of the Application Site along the field boundary and partly traverses the Application Site to the eastern boundary. This footpath links to Turners Hill Village through Butcher's Wood to the east. The footpath also links south to route 69W that travels south from the Application Site to Paddockhurst Road.

Ecological Designations

- 2.11. There are no statutory or non-statutory sites designated for nature conservation on Application Site. Two statutory designated sites lie within 2 kilometres of the Application Site.
- 2.12. Turner's Hill Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located approximately 349 metres to the southeast. This area is designated for its unique geology, as a disused quarry exposes the Ardingly Sandstone Member of the upper Lower Tunbridge Wells Formation (upper Hastings Beds Group), Wealden Series.
- 2.13. Wakehurst and Chiddingly Woods Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located approximately 1.2 kilometres to the south. It is designated due to its nationally rare habitat (extensive exposures of sandrock which are of biological and geological importance), supporting unique flora, rare invertebrates, woodland habitats and diverse breeding bird populations.
- 2.14. Worth Forest SSSI is situated approximately 3.6 kilometres to the south west and Weirwood Reservoir Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and SSSI and Stone Hill Rocks SSSI are located approximately 4.2 kilometres to the south east.
- 2.15. The London Area Greenbelt is located approximately 4.1 kilometres to the north of the Application Site and the Ashdown Forest SSSI/Special Protection Area (SPA)/Special Area of Conservation (SAC) are located approximately 7 kilometres to the south west.

- 2.16. There are no known Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) present on the Application Site or within the immediate vicinity. The closest known TPOs to the Application Site are situated approximately 302 metres to the southeast within the grounds of the Vicarage associated with St Leonard's Church.
- 2.17. Butchers Wood lies adjacent to the eastern boundary of the Application Site. It is Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland that is also classed as Priority habitat (Deciduous Woodland) and is noted within the National Forest Inventory (Broadleaved Woodland). A section of woodland on the Application Site that borders Butchers Woodland is similarly designated as Priority habitat (Deciduous Woodland) and noted within the National Forest Inventory (Broadleaved Woodland). Tulley's Farm Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland, Priority Habitat (Deciduous Woodland) and noted within the National Forest Inventory (Broadleaved Woodland) lies approximately 105 metres to the north west of the Application Site.

Landscape and Visual

- 2.18. The Application Site lies within Natural England's National Character Area 'High Weald National Character Area (NCA 122)', which is described as a: *'...a mixture of fields, small woodlands and farmsteads connected by historic routeways, tracks and paths. ...prominent medieval patterns of small pasture fields enclosed by thick hedgerows and shaws (narrow woodlands) remain fundamental to the character of the landscape.'*
- 2.19. The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is situated adjacent to the Application Site's southern boundary.
- 2.20. A set of power lines on steel lattice towers (none of which lie within the Application Site) transverse the very northern-most tip of the Application Site.

Heritage

- 2.21. There are no Scheduled Monuments on or within 2 kilometres of the Application Site, with the nearest (Philpots Camp) located approximately 3.6 kilometres to the south.
- 2.22. There are no Listed Buildings located on the Application Site, however twenty Listed Buildings lie within 1 kilometre. Sixteen of the Listed Buildings are situated in Turners Hill Village (approximately 650 metres to the east), with the remaining four Listed Buildings scattered in the wider locality; three to the south of the Application Site and one to the north of Turners Hill village. The closest Listed Building to the Application Site is the Church of St Leonard, which is Grade II and located approximately 250 metres to the southeast.
- 2.23. There are no Registered Parks and Gardens within 2 kilometres of the Application Site, with the nearest (Gravetye Manor) located approximately 2.5 kilometres to the south east.
- 2.24. The Application Site does not lie within any conservation areas, with the nearest being 'Turners Hill Conservation Area' located approximately 387 metres (at its nearest point) to the east.

Water Management and Flood Risk

- 2.25. The Application Site is located within Flood Zone 1, which is the lowest probability of flooding (less than a 1 in 1,000 annual probability for river or sea flooding).
- 2.26. The surface water regime of the surrounding land is characterised by a network of linear drains, surface water features (predominantly ponds), rivers and springs. A spring is located just outside the northern-most tip of the Application Site boundary flowing north east as the River Medway.

Another surface water drainage feature is present to the east of the Application Site in Butcher's Wood, which also flows north east connecting into the River Medway. The majority of the Application Site is at very low risk of surface water flooding, with a small area in the north of the Application Site around the springs having low, medium and high risk of surface water flooding. There is also a small area in the east of the Application Site, having a low and medium risk of surface water flooding.

- 2.27. The Application Site is situated within a Drinking Water Safeguarded Zone (Kent and South London). The nearest groundwater abstraction borehole is approximately 630 metres to the south of the Application Site. This receptor is considered to be of a very low risk in terms of being susceptible to any mobile contamination from the Application Site due to the potential for attenuation over such a long pathway. There is however a spring approximately 10 metres beyond the north eastern corner of the Application Site, along the fault line where the unproductive Grinstead Clay to the north meets the Lower Tunbridge Wells Sand and Ardingly Sandstone

Geology and ground conditions

- 2.28. The bedrock, consisting of Sandstone (Ardingly Sandstone Member), is classed as a Secondary A aquifer, and the Application Site has no superficial deposits recorded. The Application Site is located within a nitrate vulnerable zone for surface water and is not located within a source protection zone.
- 2.29. There are no active landfills within 2 kilometres of the Application Site. There are 6 historic landfill sites within 2 kilometres of the Application Site, the closest of which is Rowfant Brickworks located approximately 832 metres to the north.

3.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1. The Cremation Act 1902 s.5, stipulates that a crematorium should not be built within 200 yards (182.88 metres) of a dwelling or house, or within 50 yards (45.72 metres) of any public highway. For the purposes of the Cremation Act, the expression "crematorium" is stated as meaning any building fitted with appliances for the purposes of burning human remains and includes everything incidental or ancillary thereto. In order to comply with relevant elements of the Act, the Proposed Development is to be predominantly set in the southern/south eastern section of the Application Site.
- 3.2. The Proposed Development is for a single 'chapel' crematorium with a single abated cremator and natural burial site with car parking, landscaping and drainage. The facility is designed as a secular building to cater for those of any faith or no faith. It is anticipated that the chapel will also be used for services associated with natural burial. The crematorium will be set within generous grounds with a garden of remembrance an area for floral tributes, natural burial area, a car park with overspill area and a servicing area to serve functions associated with crematorium. The illustrative masterplan for the Proposed Development is shown in **Appendix 2**.
- 3.3. The natural burial area will occupy the northern portion of the Application Site where the change in character compared to the current baseline will be limited, to allow a highly naturalised environment to develop over time, including longer intervals between cutting and maintenance to allow habitat diversity to develop. A transition zone will be present between the main crematorium area and the natural burial site.
- 3.4. The chapel building included within the Proposed Development will be of a relatively small scale, with an overall height of approximately 7 metres from the floor level to the top of the flue and skylight. The building from floor level to the flat roof level will be approximately 4.4 metres in height.
- 3.5. Historically crematoria have been designed with visible stacks (or chimneys) to vent emissions. With the benefit of efficient pollutant controls and improvements in technology, these have reduced in height over time and are now flues rather than stacks. The Proposed Development will integrate the flue within the building form, although this part of the building will be slightly elevated to ensure appropriate atmospheric dispersion. The building would be air-conditioned and offer live organ music, computerised on-line music and a visual system which also allows for the recording of services and increasingly live-streaming, which reduces attendance.
- 3.6. It is anticipated that natural materials will be used for the built form including stone and timber. Through sensitive design that is informed by a landscape appraisal of the Application Site and its surrounding area, the Proposed Development will create a high quality landscaped environment which enhances the built form, respects the existing landscape character and provides a tranquil environment for mourners. The garden of remembrance is orientated as such that it provides distant views out to the north.
- 3.7. Woodland planting and individual tree planting are proposed within the southern area of the Application Site within car park areas, in the parkland and around the built form. Additional woodland planting will be incorporated on boundaries, reinforcing the existing vegetation, around the southern section of the Application Site to provide additional mid-level screening. It is proposed that lines of hedgerows will be planted either side of the existing footpath that transverses/runs through the centre of the Application Site. These proposed hedgerow sections

will join into the existing hedgerow in the centre of the Application Site. Connections to the natural burial area will make use of existing breaks in the hedgerow, which over time will become entirely naturalised woodland planting.

- 3.8. Surface water drainage will be managed using a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) and will have a controlled discharge at Greenfield runoff rates to the River Medway north of the Application Site. Drainage assessment undertaken for the Application Site has concluded that infiltration will not be a viable option, and surface water will be managed through a combination of an attenuation basin located in the north of the main car park, a rain garden and below ground tanked storage. No hazardous waste is being produced and therefore, there will not be an associated pollution risk to controlled waters. There is no viable direct connection to mains foul drainage and therefore it is likely that the limited foul flows arising from the Proposed Development will be managed using a small on-site package treatment works.
- 3.9. The applicant has secured and implemented a direct footpath link to St Leonards Church which would allow mourners attending a Church service to walk to the Crematorium should they desire. This footpath is off-road and approximately 250 metres in length, offering a, traffic-free level route for pedestrians. There is the potential option for mourners and the Vicar/Celebrant to journey to the crematorium on foot after the Church service. It is not likely to be suitable for the transportation of the coffin by pallbearers. The alignment of this footpath would be continued across the Application Site from east to west, providing connection to Public Footpath 68W.
- 3.10. Proposals include parking for approximately 82 cars in the main car park, including 6 disabled spaces, which is commensurate with the capacity of the ceremony hall, with an overspill area catering for 26 vehicles. Car parking for staff and business visitors to the Application Site will be catered for in the service area (4 spaces). Proposed vehicular access to the Application Site will be via Turners Hill Road, utilising the existing junction, with improvements to visibility. The Proposed Development also provides suitable circulation for vehicles once on the Application Site and sufficient turning for all types of vehicles likely to use the Proposed Development.
- 3.11. Operational hours are likely to be between 9:00-17:00 Monday to Friday and it is expected that the chapel would offer one hour 'slots' for services to take place in, producing a maximum of 8 services per day and 40 services per week.

4.0 APPLYING THE SCREENING PROCESS

- 4.1. The EIA Regulations are applied to certain types of development that may have significant effects on the environment. Various development types are categorised in the EIA Regulations as Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 developments; the nature of the proposals, their location, and their scale being the determining factors, as to whether they are likely to have significant environmental effects.
- 4.2. Developments of a type described in Schedule 1, and those of a type described in Schedule 2 that are likely to have significant environmental effects, are termed 'EIA developments'. Planning applications for such developments have to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES) prepared in accordance with the EIA Regulations.
- 4.3. Screening is the term applied to the process of determining if a development should be categorised as an EIA development.
- 4.4. The first stage of the EIA screening process is to determine whether the development proposals are of a type described under Schedule 1 or Schedule 2. Development described under Schedule 1 must be subject to EIA. Development described under Schedule 2 may be EIA development, depending on whether it is likely to have significant effects on the environment.
- 4.5. In the case of Schedule 2 projects, the location of the development must be examined to determine if it is in a sensitive area. This is defined in the EIA Regulations as including SSSIs, national parks, AONBs, world heritage sites, and scheduled monuments. If the Application Site is classed as a sensitive area and the proposals are likely to have significant effects on the environment, then the development is an EIA development and an ES is required.
- 4.6. If the Application Site is not in a sensitive area, the next stage in the screening process is to assess whether the development proposals exceed or meet any of the applicable thresholds and criteria for that particular type / class of development. These thresholds and criteria are related to the attributes (e.g. size of the site, production / output, capacity of a facility) of a type of development, and not exceeding or meeting them is a strong indication that an EIA is not required¹.
- 4.7. If the development exceeds or meets any of the applicable thresholds and criteria, then it is termed a Schedule 2 development, and the next stage is to assess if it is likely to have significant effects on the environment.
- 4.8. This Request for an EIA Screening Opinion follows the above screening process as it applies to this development proposal, to assist MSDC in determining whether it is an EIA development, and so requires the preparation of an ES to accompany any planning application. The flow chart from the EIA Planning Practice Guidance (2014, as amended 2017) has been used as a guide to the various stages of the process.

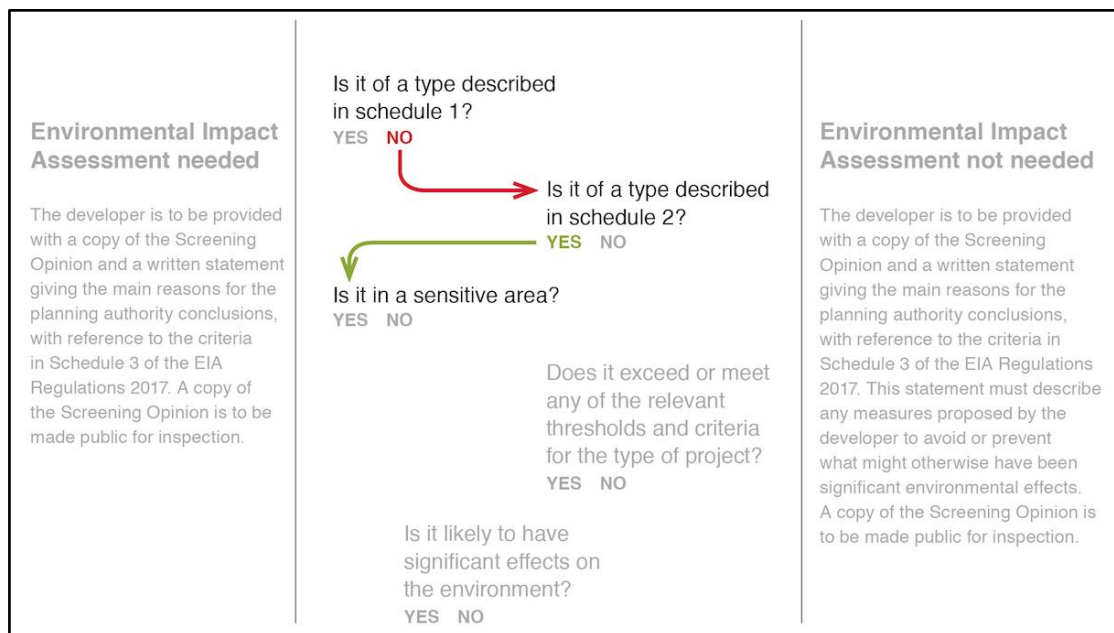
EIA Schedule 1

- 4.9. The Proposed Development is not listed under Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations. Therefore, the requirement for EIA is not mandatory.

¹ Regulation 5(7) of the EIA Regulations enables the Secretary of State to direct that a development described in Schedule 2 is EIA development even if it falls below the exclusive thresholds. The local authority or a member of the public is able to make a request to the Secretary of State for such a direction.

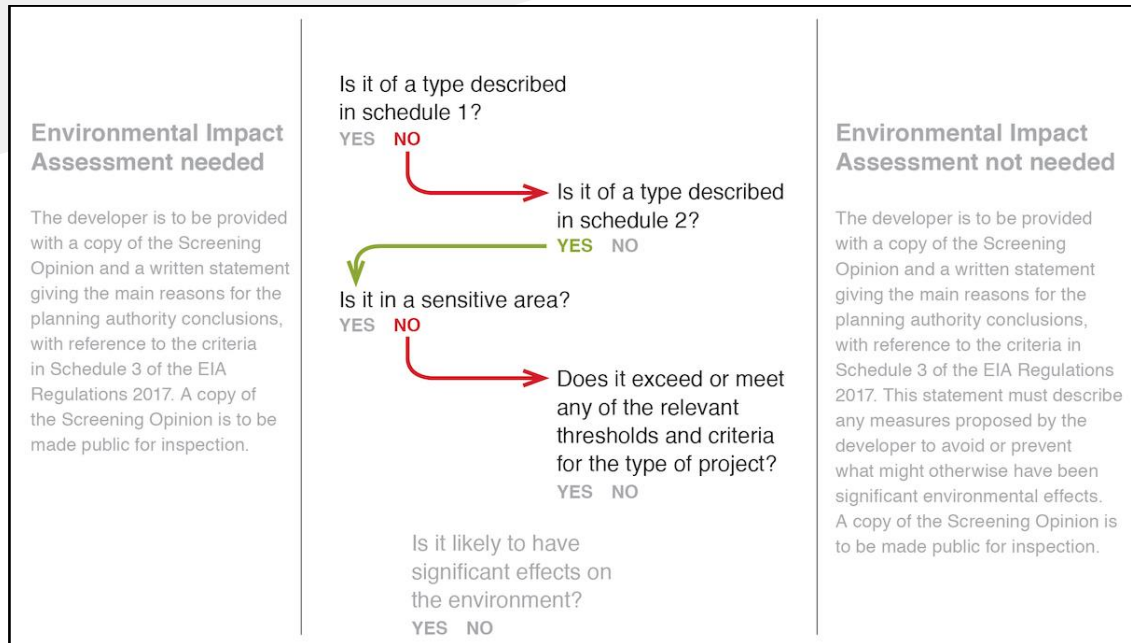
EIA Schedule 2

- 4.10. If the development does not fall within Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations, it may be described under Schedule 2. Where development is of a type described in Schedule 2, an EIA is more likely to be required if the Application Site is located in a sensitive area, or the scale of the development meets or exceeds the applicable threshold.
- 4.11. The Proposed Development is not specifically listed within Schedule 2 of the Regulations, however with these being intended to have a 'broad scope and purpose', it is considered that section 11 *Other Projects*, and specifically section 11(b) *Installations for the disposal of waste*, would be the closest of the Schedule 2 categories in terms of the proposed process and emissions.
- 4.12. The Proposed Development would be above the 0.5 hectare threshold provided for section 11(b) and hence can be considered to be Schedule 2 development.



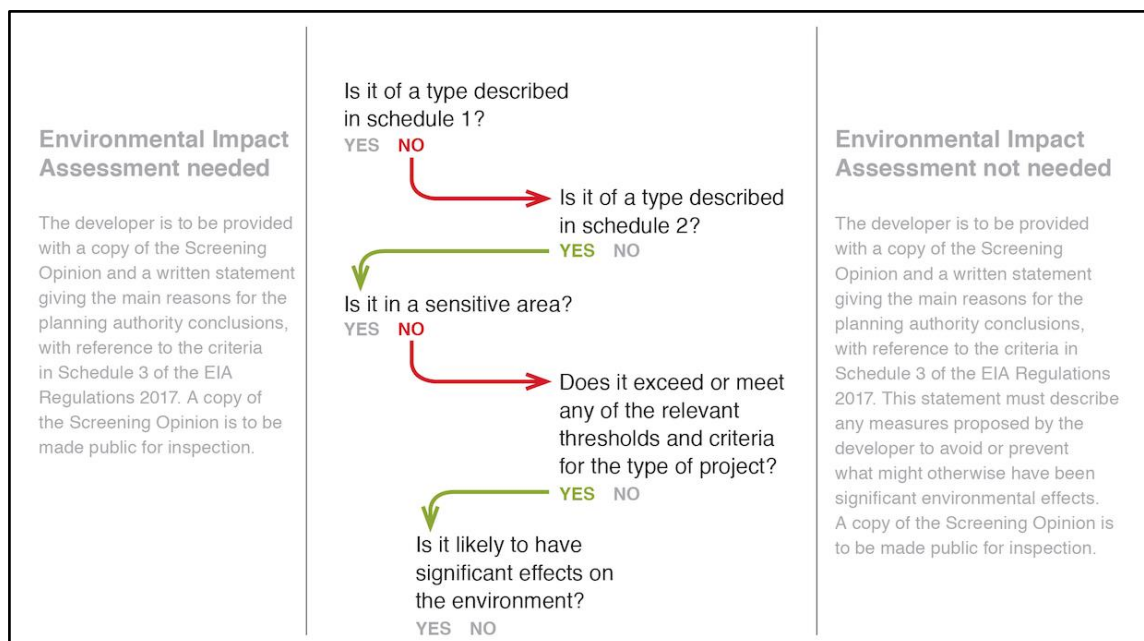
Sensitive areas

- 4.13. Where a development is listed under Schedule 2, the next stage is to identify whether the Proposed Development is located in a 'sensitive area'. Sensitive areas defined in the EIA Regulations include:
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs);
 - Land under nature conservation orders and international conservation sites;
 - National Parks (including the Broads);
 - Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
 - World Heritage Sites;
 - Scheduled Monuments.
- 4.14. The Application Site is not located within a 'sensitive area', as defined in the EIA Regulations. The requirement for EIA must now consider whether the Proposed Development exceeds applicable thresholds within Schedule 2.



Applicable thresholds

- 4.15. With respect to section 11(b) of Schedule 2, the relevant thresholds are:
- (i) *The disposal is by incineration; or*
 - (ii) *The area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectare; or*
 - (iii) *The installation is to be sited within 100 metres of any controlled waters.*
- 4.16. The Proposed Development meets two of the three thresholds noted above (i and ii). Having established that the Proposed Development falls within Schedule 2 and is not located within any of the 'sensitive areas' prescribed in the EIA Regulations, the determination of whether EIA would be required for the Proposed Development will rest on the likelihood of significant environmental effects.



5.0 POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

- 5.1. The EIA Planning Practice Guidance (2014, as amended 2017) provides further guidance and indicative thresholds on the potential for different forms of development to result in significant environmental effects.
- 5.2. With respect to section 11(b) of Schedule 2, the guidance suggests that EIA is likely to be required for *'installations (including landfill sites) for the deposit, recovery and/or disposal of household, industrial and/or commercial wastes where new capacity is created to hold more than 50,000 tonnes per year; or to hold waste on a site of 10 hectares or more.'* The guidance confirms that *'Sites taking smaller quantities of these wastes, sites seeking only to accept inert wastes (demolition, rubble etc.) or Civic Amenity sites, are unlikely to require EIA.'*
- 5.3. The Proposed Development will be well below these indicative criteria and thresholds. The guidance indicates that key issues to consider with respect to the potential for EIA to be required are the scale of development and the nature of potential impacts in terms of discharges, emissions or odour. The remainder of this report considers the specific context of the Application Site and the likelihood of significant impacts.

Traffic and transport

- 5.4. During the construction phase, the Proposed Development will increase the number of daily traffic movements on roads in the vicinity of the Application Site, however these traffic movements will be temporary and over a short period of time. The magnitude of construction traffic flows during construction will be within daily variation on surrounding roads and as such is not considered to have the potential for significant impacts on the local road network.
- 5.5. Once operational, the Proposed Development will generate additional traffic movements, however a crematorium is not a regular destination where repetitive trips take place by local residents or business activities. A crematorium is likely to attract people for each service from a wide catchment area and at different times of the day. As a result, the pattern of traffic flow will be spread both geographically and throughout the day. Predicted traffic generation associated with the Proposed Development has been based on evidence from operational crematoria, which suggest that on average each service at the Crematorium would involve 19 cars (38 movements) and each service at the natural burial ground would involve 22 cars (44 movements). Assuming full utilisation of the Proposed Development the daily average (Monday to Friday) would therefore be 316 vehicle movements. The additional vehicle movements associated with the operation of the Application Site are not likely to have a significant impact on the surrounding network.
- 5.6. The Highway Authority has been consulted and has accepted the level of traffic generation based on typical operation, as this has been accepted in numerous planning appeals for previous applications on Application Site.
- 5.7. A Transport Assessment will be submitted with the planning application and, taking account of the pre-application response from the Highway Authority, the Proposed Development is not considered likely to have significant impacts on the highway network.

Noise

- 5.8. The construction phase of the Proposed Development will create a new source of noise, although the scale of the Proposed Development is such that this will be a temporary source over a relatively short period of time. The closest residential receptor to the Application Site is 330 metres away and it is considered that construction noise impacts can be appropriately controlled using best practice construction techniques, and planning conditions (e.g. limiting hours of working). For these reasons, significant construction noise impacts are not considered likely.
- 5.9. The specific nature of the operational phase of the Proposed Development is such that there are no significant noise sources. The Application Site is located in a rural setting and has, in part, been selected due to its tranquil location. Due to the specifications within the Cremation Act 1902, the Application Site is not close to sensitive receptors. Therefore, with the nature of the operational use and no sensitive receptors close to the Application Site, significant noise impact from the Proposed Development is not considered likely.

Air Quality

- 5.10. The nature of the Proposed Development is such that there will be emissions to air but no odorous emissions. The 2018 background concentrations for key pollutants such as NO_x, PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀ and NO₂, on and within the vicinity of the Application Site are substantially below the National Air Quality Objectives (DEFRA).
- 5.11. An Air Quality Assessment using a dispersion model has been undertaken to predict the impacts associated with flue emissions from the cremator and will be submitted as part of the planning application. In order to provide a conservative assessment of potential impacts, pollutant emissions have been assumed to occur at the Environment Agency's emission limits for abated cremators. A flue height of 7 metres was selected to ensure adequate dispersion of the exhaust gases. Predicted maximum process concentrations at sensitive receptor locations are shown to be well within the relevant air quality standards for all pollutants considered. The significance of the impacts has been assessed as negligible in accordance with the EPUK/ IAQM planning guidance and Environment Agency's risk assessment guidance. The emissions process of the crematorium will be regulated through the Local Authority Pollution Prevention and Control (LAPPC) environmental permitting regime.
- 5.12. An air quality assessment has also been undertaken in support of an application to Natural England under its Discretionary Advice Service to confirm that emissions from road traffic potentially associated with the Proposed Development through the Ashdown Forest SAC/SPA will not require a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA). This initial assessment has been based on an assumption of full utilisation of the Proposed Development (6 cremation services and two natural burial services per day) and confirms that because predicted additional traffic movements within the SAC are well within normal daily fluctuations, emissions from additional traffic through the Ashdown Forest will be negligible.
- 5.13. Airborne Nitrogen Long Term (Annual) Impact on the SAC will be insignificant as it is less than 1% of critical level, which is 30 µg/m³. This is also the case with the anticipated impacts of nitrogen deposition which have been modelled at 0.01 kg/ha/yr for all the tested locations based on the dispersal modelling of flue gases.
- 5.14. Given the potential traffic generation from the Proposed Development is incorporated into the overall results of the local transport model (Mid Sussex Transport Study (Updated Transport

Analysis)), which indicates there would not be an overall impact on Ashdown Forest from planned development (from the HRA of the Mid Sussex Plan) there is not considered to be a significant 'in combination' effect on the Ashdown Forest SAC as a result of this development proposal given the negligible additional emissions demonstrated through the air quality assessment.

Ecology and biodiversity

- 5.15. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was undertaken in March 2020 and there have been a range of ecological surveys undertaken in relation to previous planning applications for the Application Site. Habitats on the Application Site comprise hard-standing, grassland, scrub and hedgerows. The habitats on Application Site are common and widespread to the local area and are considered likely to be of no greater than low ecological value. No protected species were recorded utilising the Application Site during the PEA. All of the hedgerows on the Application Site are priority habitats and are suitable for a range of protected species including amphibians, nesting birds, invertebrates, bats, hazel dormouse and reptiles. Areas of dense scrub, hedgerow and woodland are suitable habitat for hazel dormouse. The Proposed Development will ensure net biodiversity gain through on-site planting and formation/creation of new habitats.
- 5.16. The Application Site does not lie within any statutory or non-statutory sites for nature conservation, nor is it in close proximity to any. Given the distance from the Ashdown Forest (the centroid of the SAC/SPA is 11.7 kilometres from the Application Site) and lack of recreational activity arising from the Proposed Development it is not likely to increase disturbance to the interest features of the SPA (near-ground and ground nesting birds). Due to the localised nature of the Proposed Development, the distance to the nearest statutory/non-statutory sites and the designation type (e.g. Turner's Hill being a geological SSSI), it is considered that none of these sites will be affected by the construction or operational phases.
- 5.17. The layout of the Proposed Development has sought to avoid effects to field margins and hedgerows but the potential for adverse effects to great crested newt (GCN) and reptiles has been considered.

Great crested newt

- 5.18. Previous 2014 surveys for GCN undertaken in five ponds within 500 metres of the Application Site concluded that breeding GCN were likely to be absent from the surveyed ponds. A combination of factors limited the suitability of the ponds for breeding GCN including low water levels, heavy shading by surrounding trees and a lack of suitable egg laying vegetation.
- 5.19. Five other ponds were identified within 500 metres of the Application Site but could not be surveyed because permission was not granted by the landowners. Whilst the previous survey could not rule out the likelihood of GCN presence in the surrounding area, these additional ponds are on the southern side of Turners Hill Road and Paddockhurst Road (B2110) which are busy roads and, although not an absolute barrier to newt movement, will limit dispersal. The surveyed ponds were therefore not considered part of a continuation of habitats (between surveyed and un-surveyed ponds) which would encourage dispersal through the Application Site.
- 5.20. The majority of the habitats within 500 metres of the Application Site are of good to excellent quality for GCN during their terrestrial phase, with hedgerows and rough grassland being abundant. It is therefore considered likely that GCN, if present within un-surveyed ponds, would use the foraging and hibernation opportunities closest to their breeding pond during their terrestrial phase.

- 5.21. The previous assessment considered it unlikely that GCN were present on the Application Site (in addition, no individuals were found during reptile refugia surveys), with no impact on the wider GCN population status, if any are present. The characteristics of the Application Site and the surrounding habitats are not considered to be materially different to that at the time of the survey and it is envisaged that the conclusions of the previous survey will remain applicable. It is acknowledged that ecological populations are dynamic and subject to change; updated GCN survey will therefore be undertaken to confirm this position.

Reptiles

- 5.22. Previous reptile surveys undertaken in 2014 confirmed that the semi-improved grassland fields comprising the Application Site provided good quality refuge and foraging habitat for reptiles due to the structure of the sward. The varied topography and undulating banks on the surveyed fields could also be used by basking reptiles. The hedgerows, both defunct and intact, provided habitat which could be used by sheltering, hibernating or dispersing reptiles. One adult grass snake was recorded at the northern boundary of the survey area. No other reptiles were recorded during the survey, though common toads were recorded throughout the survey area.
- 5.23. As is the case with GCN, the characteristics of the Application Site are not considered to be materially different to that at the time of the survey and there may be potential for common reptiles to be present. Updated survey will be undertaken to confirm the current status of the Application Site and if the presence of reptiles is confirmed, all reptiles within the construction zone will be captured and translocated to a suitable receptor site prior to the commencement of works. The translocation will be undertaken in accordance with a Method Statement, to be agreed with the relevant wildlife organisations and/or the Local Planning Authority once the development plans are finalised, to demonstrate that all reasonable precautionary measures have been taken to protect the population of reptiles during the works. The Method Statement will detail exclusion fencing specifications, capture methodology and the location and management of a suitable receptor site.

Mitigation and enhancement

- 5.24. The Proposed Development will retain habitats of importance and enhance features present in order to achieve a net gain in biodiversity. Mitigation that will be incorporated within the construction phase of the development will include:
- Hedgerow habitat dense scrub, and woodland habitat will be retained wherever possible and protected during construction.
 - Reasonable avoidance measures will be observed during construction as outlined by *Natural England (2015)*;
 - Works during the construction phase will be undertaken in accordance with guidance provided within *The Control of Dust and Emissions During Construction and Demolition SPG (July 2014)* to control any excess dust creation which may impact adjacent habitats;
 - The provision of hibernacula within the Application Site margins to provide hibernation opportunities for reptiles and amphibians;
 - The provision of bird and bat boxes within the development;
 - The planting of native species with wildlife value within the landscape scheme.

- 5.25. With the further survey and mitigation proposed, no significant impacts are anticipated on ecology and biodiversity for the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. Ecological enhancements will result in biodiversity net gain and a long-term positive increase on biodiversity within the Application Site and within the local area.

Contamination and ground conditions

- 5.26. The Application Site has not been subject to any significant development and due to its previous and current land use the potential for significant contamination is considered to be low. During the construction phase, utilisation of standard Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) by ground workers will mitigate potential contact with any localised contaminants that may be present within soils. No significant ground conditions effects are likely during this phase.
- 5.27. The nature of the Proposed Development is such that during the operational phase there would be no pathways to receptors and, in conjunction with the low likelihood of contamination on the Application Site, there would be no potential for significant impact.
- 5.28. The nature of natural burial and the associated degradation of human remains is such that there is potential for pollution of controlled waters. The layout of the Proposed Development has taken account of the potential contaminant risks to controlled waters, and is compatible with Government guidance on the prevention of groundwater pollution from burials (www.gov.uk/guidance/cemetaries-and-burials-prevent-groundwater-pollution), including avoidance of natural burials within 10 metres of the on-site drainage ditch and avoidance of natural burials within 30 metres of the spring just to the northeast of the Application Site. This primary mitigation is consistent with the principles established within the extant consent for the natural burial ground on the Application Site, which additionally ensured that there will be no natural burials into standing water. With the primary mitigation embedded into the proposed layout of the Application Site, no significant contamination of controlled waters is likely.

Flood risk and water management

- 5.29. The Application Site is located within Flood Zone 1, with the majority at very low risk from surface water flooding.
- 5.30. All construction projects have the potential to increase the risk of contamination to the water environment through leaks and spills, however these risks can be appropriately controlled through the implementation of good construction practice such as the former EA Pollution Prevention Guidance notes. There will be no liquid process emissions from the Proposed Development other than wastewater from sinks and toilets, which will be managed via an on-site package treatment works.
- 5.31. During operation, new permeable surfaces will be present on Application Site, and to ensure that there is no likelihood of increasing the flood risk on or off the Application Site, a surface water management strategy will be implemented to attenuate additional flows using SuDS. Final discharge will be controlled at the Greenfield runoff rate. It is therefore considered that there will be no significant effects in relation to flood risk and water management.
- 5.32. With the development being in excess of 1 hectare, a flood risk assessment will be submitted as part of the planning application.

Landscape and visual impact

- 5.33. The Application Site lies within the High Weald National Character Area (NCA 122), encompassing the ridged and faulted sandstone core of the Kent and Sussex Weald. It is also adjacent to the High Weald AONB.
- 5.34. There are relatively few sensitive receptor locations in the vicinity of the Application Site. The Application Site is enclosed on all boundaries by hedgerows and tree lines (including a stretch of hedgerow separating the northern and southern sections of the Application Site). These features provide existing visual screening which will be bolstered by additional planting as part of the landscaping of the Application Site. There will be no loss of landscape features (e.g. trees and hedgerows) as a result of the Proposed Development.
- 5.35. The built form of the Proposed Development will be designed to work with the surrounding landscape. It will have a low flue, which will be incorporated into the built form, reducing the visual impact. Landscaping and tree planting will be incorporated into the design. Over time, vegetation planted on Application Site will mature and provide further screening. The existing hedgerows along the northern, eastern, southern and western boundaries, and the section running alongside the public footpath which runs through the centre of the Application Site will be retained and enhanced as part of the proposals providing the dual function of further visual screening for those using the footpath and enhancing and creating further biodiversity corridors through the Application Site.
- 5.36. The Proposed Development is of relatively small scale and it is noted that extant planning permission was granted for a chapel within the Application Site (DM/17/1167) with a ridge height of 10.49 metres, which is over 3 metres taller than the proposed chapel. No landscape features will be lost as a result of the Proposed Development and landscape planting will strengthen the visual containment of the Application Site, to screen and filter potential views of the built form from surrounding receptors. No significant landscape and visual impacts are therefore likely.
- 5.37. Previous Landscape and Visual Assessment undertaken in relation to the approved (and taller) chapel concluded that there would not be any perceptible change to the special qualities of the High Weald AONB, due to the conservation and enhancement of dense vegetation along the edge of Turners Hill Road and the AONB boundary, providing visual filtration and maintaining landscape structure.
- 5.38. The Proposed Development would occupy a greater proportion of the Application Site than the consented and part-implemented development but will have a significantly lower overall height. With the proposed retention and enhancement of hedgerow and tree planting included as primary mitigation, there will be no inter-visibility between the Proposed Development and the AONB, and no significant landscape and visual impacts.
- 5.39. A landscape and visual impact assessment will accompany the application. It is anticipated that a landscape management plan reflecting the design rationale would be secured by planning condition.

Cultural heritage

- 5.40. There are no built historic assets or heritage destinations on or adjacent to the Application Site. The closest known heritage assets are Turners Hill Conservation Area (387 metres to the east) and the Church of St Leonard Grade II Listed Building located 295 metres to the southeast. The Proposed Development would have no direct effect on these assets and is considered unlikely to

have any impact on their setting due to the distance from the Application Site and the presence of existing screening from vegetation.

- 5.41. The Application Site is not known to be within an area of archaeological importance and there are no known previous archaeological finds on the Application Site. As such, no significant archaeological effects are considered likely. In common with many developments on undeveloped land, absence of archaeological evidence is not evidence of absence and a desk-based archaeological assessment will be submitted as part of the planning application.

Socio-economic

The Proposed Development will provide a new social facility to serve Mid Sussex and whilst this will create additional employment opportunities during and post-construction, this would not represent a significant beneficial impact in EIA terms.

Human health

- 5.42. The scale and nature of the Proposed Development including the requirement for compliance with the Environment Agency's emission limits is such that there will be no potential for significant human health effects.

Climate

- 5.43. The scale and nature of the Proposed Development is such that there will be no significant climate effects as a result.
- 5.44. In keeping with best practice, allowances for climate change will be taken into account within the flood risk assessment.

6.0 EIA SCREENING CHECKLIST

- 6.1. To assist MSDC to determine whether the Proposed Development is likely to have significant effects on the environment, this chapter includes the EIA checklist used by the National Planning Casework Unit and the Planning Inspectorate when screening for EIA.
- 6.2. This checklist has been transposed from the Planning Portal, and the questions answered based on the current understanding of the local environment, and the Proposed Development, as described in Chapter 3.0 of this report.

	Questions to be considered	Likely/Unlikely – briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes/No - why?
1	Will construction, operation or decommissioning of the project involve actions, which will cause physical changes in the locality (topography, land use, changes in water bodies, etc.)?	Likely The Proposed Development will not significantly change the topography of the Application Site or involve the removal of landscape features such as trees. There will be a change in land use.	Not significant The Proposed Development will have a minor physical impact on the landscape. Through the use of appropriate design and natural screening/landscaping methods the impact is considered to be minimal.
2	Will construction or operation of the project use natural resources such as land, water, materials or energy, especially any resources which are non-renewable or in short supply?	Likely Energy and materials will be used in the construction of the Proposed Development but once operational, the demand for energy and resources will be commensurate with a development of this nature.	Not significant Materials used within construction are not in short supply and most components can be recycled on decommissioning. Whilst natural gas must be used to operate the facility, the pattern of operation can be optimized to significantly reduce the level of gas consumption.
3	Will the project involve use, storage, transport, handling or production of substances or materials, which could be harmful to human health or the environment or raise concerns about actual or perceived risks to human health?	Unlikely The characteristics of the Proposed Development are not likely to involve any substances that are harmful to human health or that could be perceived as a risk to human health. The handling of all cremator residues is very carefully controlled and as such would also not be a risk to human health.	Not significant No impact predicted.
4	Will the project produce solid wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	Likely Waste will naturally be produced during the construction phase of the project. During operation, the Proposed Development will produce various (non-hazardous) waste from daily operations.	Not significant Appropriate waste management within the Proposed Development will be compatible with the prevailing methods of collection and recycling employed by the Waste Collection Authority. All other wastes (including cremated human remains and metal) will be dealt with as appropriate and as necessary.

5	Will the project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air?	<p>Likely</p> <p>The only pollutants that might be released to air would be process emissions from the flue, and exhaust emissions from the vehicles moving to, from and within the Application Site.</p> <p>Not significant</p> <p>Process emissions will be controlled by the LAAPC permit for the Application Site. Air quality modelling for Proposed Development has confirmed that emissions will not result in any significant changes to background concentrations or result in any exceedance of the UK air quality objectives.</p>
6	Will the project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat energy or electromagnetic radiation?	<p>Likely</p> <p>Temporary noise impacts are likely during construction and decommissioning and there will be low level noise and light emissions typically associated with the crematorium activities during normal working hours.</p> <p>Not significant</p> <p>Construction noise impacts will be temporary and controllable to industry standards. No significant increase in noise or light pollution is envisaged.</p>
7	Will the project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants onto the ground or into surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea?	<p>Likely</p> <p>The nature of proposed natural burial use such that there is potential for substances that could cause the contamination of controlled waters. There is a very low potential for contamination of controlled waters from the proposed crematorium and the proposed surface water management will include a degree of pollution control.</p> <p>Not significant</p> <p>The Proposed Development complies with Government guidance with respect to the proximity of burial grounds to controlled waters and will include appropriate management for runoff from the Application Site.</p>
8	Are there any areas on or around the location, which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected by the project?	<p>Unlikely</p> <p>None are known.</p> <p>Not significant</p> <p>Not applicable.</p>
9	Will there be any risk of accidents during construction or operation of the project, which could affect human health or the environment?	<p>Unlikely</p> <p>Whilst construction operations on the Application Site will be very carefully controlled in accordance with prevailing industry best practice, as with any construction site, there is the potential for accidents.</p> <p>Not significant</p> <p>Appropriate health and safety procedures will be deployed to ensure site operatives and visitors (invited or otherwise) to Application Site are safeguarded during construction, operation and decommissioning. Adherence to prevailing best practice guidance will minimise potential for adverse environmental effects during construction.</p>
10	Will the project result in social changes, for example, in demography, traditional lifestyles, and employment?	<p>Unlikely</p> <p>The construction of the Proposed Development will generate new employment, although it is acknowledged</p> <p>Not significant</p> <p>Whilst the construction will generate a number of jobs preparing the Application Site, constructing the proposed buildings, fencing and planting etc.,</p>

		that this will be small-scale. The Proposed Development will provide a new social facility.	these jobs will be temporary. New permanent jobs will be created (although small in number).
11	Are there any areas on or around the location, which are protected under international or national or local legislation for their ecological, landscape, cultural or other value, which could be affected by the project?	Unlikely There are no features that are considered to be sensitive in this regard or potentially affected by the Proposed Development.	Not significant With the primary mitigation through the proposed design, no significant adverse effects are envisaged.
12	Are there any other areas on or around the location, which are important or sensitive for reasons of their ecology e.g. wetlands, watercourses or other water bodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, which could be affected by the project?	Likely The Application Site lies adjacent to ancient woodland and contains priority habitat hedgerows.	Not significant Hedgerows will be retained and enhanced where possible. Mitigation measures will be in place to protected vegetation on the Application Site during construction and avoid impacts on these features.
13	Are there any areas on or around the location which are used by protected, important or sensitive species of fauna or flora e.g. for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, overwintering, migration, which could be affected by the project?	Unlikely None are known.	Not significant Surveys will propose mitigation as necessary.
14	Are there any inland, coastal, marine or underground waters on or around the location, which could be affected by the project?	Likely There is a drainage ditch crossing the site and a spring approximately 10 metres to the north east of the Application Site	Not significant The nature and scale of Proposed Development, including primary mitigation, are such that there will be no potential for significant interaction with controlled waters.
15	Are there any areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location, which could be affected by the project?	Likely The High Weald AONB is adjacent to the site	Not significant The relative scale of the Proposed Development and the retention / enhancement of existing hedgerow and tree planting will ensure that there is no inter-visibility with the AONB and no significant effects on the designated area.
16	Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people?	Likely There are very few receptors in the vicinity of the Application Site. The most likely views will be glimpsed	Not Significant The relatively low level nature of the development, intervening vegetation and proposed landscape

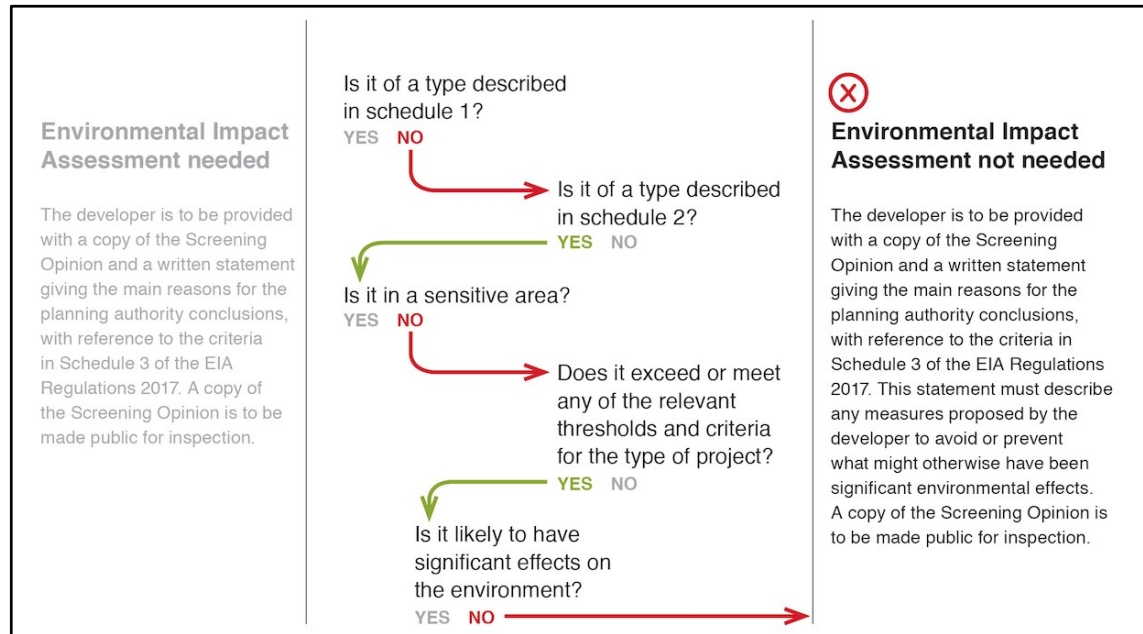
		from existing public footpaths and vehicles on Turners Hill Road.	screening enhancements and visual mitigation will minimise any views of the Proposed Development.
17	Are there any routes on or around the location, which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the project?	Likely There are public rights of way traversing the Application Site continuing to the west and south of the Application Site.	Not significant The relatively low level nature of the development, intervening vegetation and proposed landscape screening enhancements and visual mitigation will minimise views of the Proposed Development
18	Are there any transport routes on or around the location which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project?	Unlikely There are no known congestion issues associated with the highways close to the Application Site.	Not significant Not applicable
19	Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location, which could be affected by the project?	Unlikely There are no built heritage assets close to the Application Site that are likely to be affected by the Proposed Development	Not significant There will be no direct effect on any of the identified built heritage assets and the nature of the Proposed Development is such that there will be no significant effect on the setting of these features of cultural heritage importance.
20	Is the project located in a previously undeveloped area where there will be loss of greenfield land?	Likely The Application Site is part brownfield and part greenfield.	Not significant The loss of greenfield land is a very small proportion of the resource within the District or County.
21	Are there existing land uses on or around the location e.g. homes, gardens, other private property, industry, commerce, recreation, public open space, community facilities, agriculture, forestry, tourism, mining or quarrying which could be affected by the project?	Unlikely Surrounding land uses are predominantly agricultural, with small residential areas associated with the village of Turners Hill.	Not significant The Proposed Development will not have any significant impact on adjacent land uses.
22	Are there any areas on or around the location, which are densely populated or built-up, which could be affected by the project?	Unlikely Due to the nature of the Proposed Development, and the requirements of the Cremation Act 1902, it must be situated away from dwellings and main roads.	Not significant The nature of the Proposed Development is not anticipated to have any adverse effects on the surrounding land uses.
23	Are there any areas on, or around, the locations, which are occupied by sensitive land uses e.g. hospitals, schools, places of	Unlikely	Not significant Not applicable.

	worship, community facilities, which could be affected by the project?	There are no resources of this nature that could be adversely affected by the Proposed Development.	
24	Are there any areas on or around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources e.g. groundwater, surface waters, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, minerals, which could be affected by the project?	Unlikely No such important resources are known to exist.	No impact predicted Not applicable.
25	Is the project location susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding or extreme or adverse climatic conditions e.g. temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which could cause the project to present environmental problems?	Unlikely The area is not known to be susceptible to the aforementioned conditions.	No impact predicted Not applicable
26	Are there any plans for future land uses on or around the location, which could be affected by the project?	Unlikely There are no known plans for future land uses that could be affected by the Proposed Development.	Not significant Not applicable.
27	Are there any other factors, which should be considered, such as consequential development, which could lead to environmental effects, or the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or planned activities in the locality?	Unlikely There are no anticipated consequential impacts.	Not significant Not applicable.

7.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary

- 7.1. Having examined the potential key issues and the relevant criteria from Schedule 3 of the Regulations, it is considered that the Proposed Development will not have the potential to generate significant environmental effects, and hence is not a development for which EIA should be required.

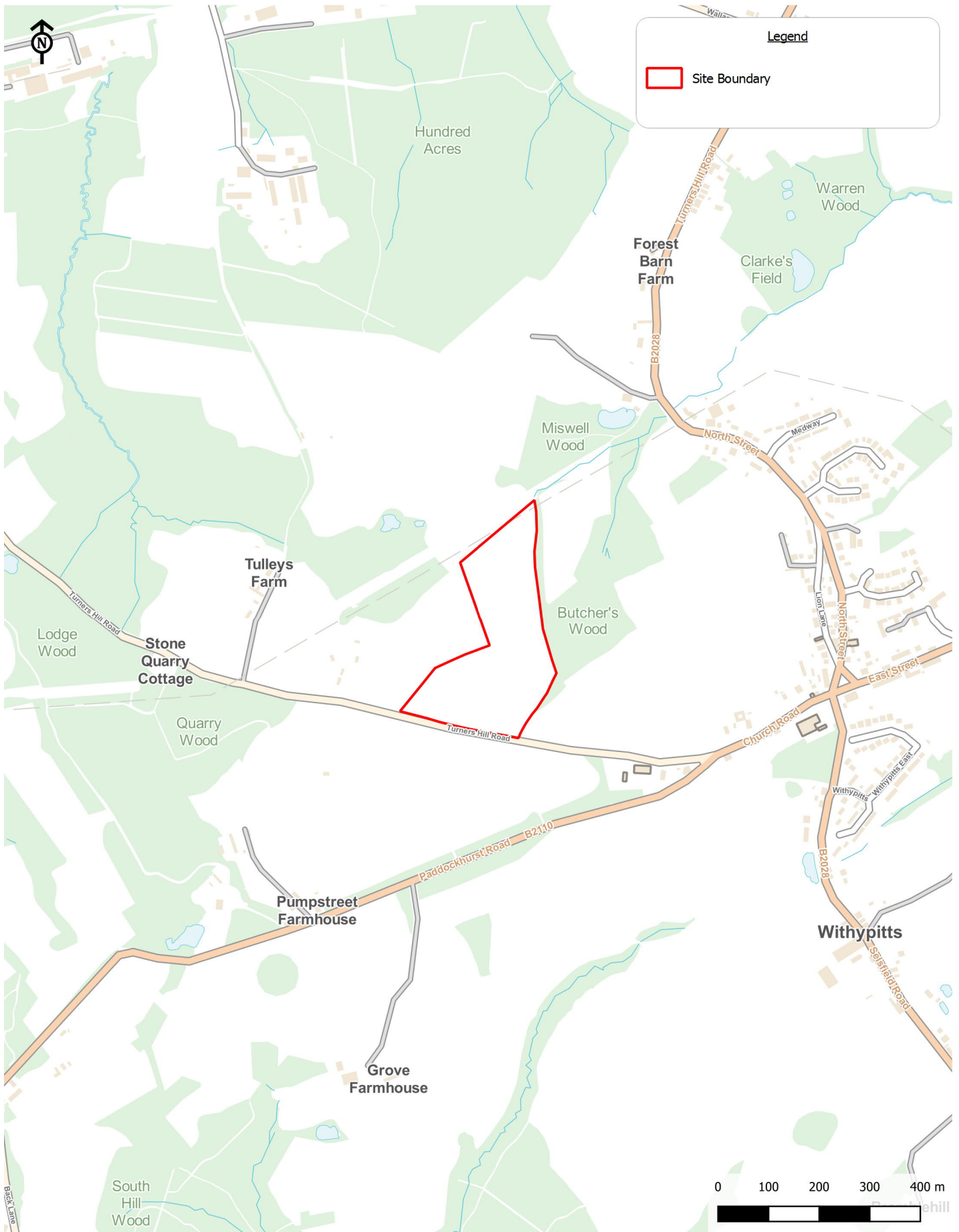


Conclusion

- 7.2. Hartmires Investments Ltd is formally requesting a Screening Opinion from Mid Sussex District Council to determine whether the proposed crematorium and natural burial ground constitutes an EIA development.
- 7.3. This request for a Screening Opinion has been prepared to provide relevant information to assist the local planning authority in its determination of the screening opinion. The request has provided a description of the Application Site and its surrounding environment, a brief summary of the development proposals and an evaluation of the potential effect of the Proposed Development on the environment.
- 7.4. The proposals have been assessed in accordance with the screening process set out in the EIA Regulations and this has concluded that:
- The Proposed Development is of a type described in Schedule 2;
 - The Application Site is not located within a sensitive area;
 - The development of the Application Site is above relevant thresholds in Schedule 2;
 - The development is not considered to have significant environmental effects;
 - The development does not require an EIA.

- 7.5. Whilst the decision remains with Mid Sussex District Council, this report concludes that the Proposed Development will not require an EIA, as it is considered unlikely to result in significant environmental effects.

Appendix 1: Application Site Context



Turners Hill Crematorium and
 Natural Burial Ground
 Client: Hartmires Investments LTD

Site Location Plan

Scale: 1:10000@A4
 CampbellReith OS Copyright: © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100020027
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 Job Number: 13475
 Drawn by - Checked by: RP - RC
 Drg No - Status/Revision: 13475-CRH-XX-XX-FG-G-7000 - P1
 File location: N:\13250 - 13499\13475 R - Turners Hill Crematorium\Project_Workspaces (pdf in Outputs)
 Date (Revision History): 27/05/2020 (P1, First Issue, 27/05/20, RP)

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Appendix 2: Illustrative Masterplan

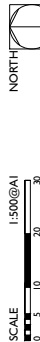
GENERAL NOTES:
Layout is for illustrative purposes only.

KEY

- Application boundary
- Other land owned by the applicant
- Ex Footpath
- Ex Drainage ditch
- Existing contours (1m)
- Setbacks
 - 15m standoff to ancient woodland (Butcher's Wood)
 - 45.72m (50ft) standoff to highways (Crematorium Act 1902)
 - Natural burial 10m from drainage ditches (per DPH/15/1035)
- Proposed
 - Woodland Planting
 - Tree
 - Hedge
 - Informal footpath
 - Reinforced grass track
 - Scenic Views
 - Visibility Splay

Maximum Height Parameters

Crematorium
Raised Skylights / Chimney: ±171.0 AOD
Roof line: ±168.5 AOD



SCALE 1:500@A1

Layout is for illustrative purposes only.

Rev.	Description	Date	By
A	General revisions	2020-05-27	MG
B	Layout revised per team comments	2020-06-01	ZH
C	Layout revised per team comments	2020-06-03	MG
E	Notations / dimensions added	2020-06-08	ZH
F	Notations / dimensions added	2020-06-17	MG
G	Minor revisions	2020-06-29	MG

CREMATORIUM - LAND NORTH OF TURNERS HILL RD

client: HARTMIRE INVESTMENTS LTD

drawing title: ILLUSTRATIVE LAYOUT PLAN

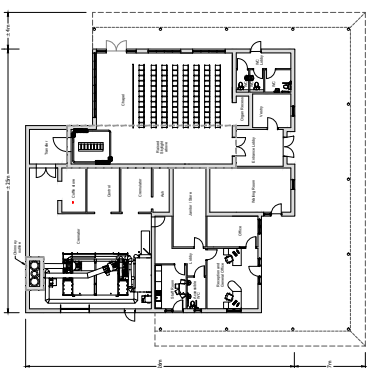
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revision: INFORMATION

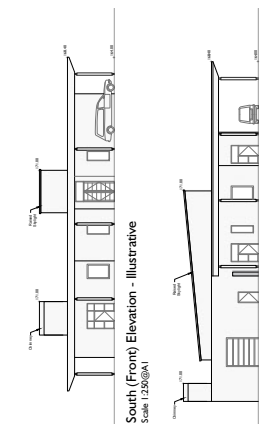
scale: 1:500@A1

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INDIGO LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS LIMITED



Proposed Ground Floor - Illustrative
Scale 1:250@A1



South (Front) Elevation - Illustrative
Scale 1:250@A1

West (Side) Elevation - Illustrative
Scale 1:250@A1

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN ONLY

Footpath

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