

Design and Access Statement
for
Installation of external Flue
At
Rochdale Crematorium



1.0 Introduction

This statement is submitted in support of a Full Planning Application for the installation of an external Flue to the west side of the existing chimney tower.

This application follows the Planning Approval for the extension and refurbishment of the existing chapel and crematory – ref: 20/01553/FUL.

The following documents are submitted in support of the application and should be read in conjunction with the Statement:

- 20.115.001E – os plan
- 20.115.003A – existing elevations
- 20.115.010F – proposed elevations

2.0 History and Project Background

The crematorium at Rochdale first opened in 1938 and although not a Listed Building itself, is set within the listed landscape of Rochdale Cemetery. Since this date it has largely retained the same basic appearance and layout, apart from a small extension to the existing crematory, enlarged staff facilities and the installation of a small book of remembrance building which is in a separate location to the left front of the main building. Overall the facilities therefore do not reflect those which are expected by visiting mourners in the modern day.

The current cremators at Rochdale crematorium were installed in 2011 by Crawford International, a company which went into liquidation in 2013. Subsequently in January 2015 a French-based company ATI installed a "mercury abatement" system, which is used to reduce the level of toxic emissions from the cremation process, on the back of the existing cremators and took over overall responsibility for maintaining both the Crawford equipment and their own. Unfortunately ATI too went into liquidation in March 2020 leaving the equipment without a robust maintenance agreement and in poor working condition.

In total eight Local Authorities fitted Crawford cremators and all of them have removed them and installed different manufacturer's equipment apart from Rochdale.

In total twenty Local Authorities installed ATI equipment. Despite the company's first installation only occurring eight years ago, five Councils had already removed and replaced this equipment prior to ATI's liquidation due to equipment failure and operational issues. The remaining installations were affected by the recent company's demise and of the remaining fifteen, eleven of them (including Rochdale) are currently taking steps to remove and replace their equipment with that from another company.

Cremation equipment usually has a life span of twenty years plus but unfortunately there have been numerous operational issues with both the Crawford cremators and the ATI abatement system at Rochdale since their respective installations. The problems have been compounded further by the poor quality of both the cremators and abatement equipment which has necessitated the Council to consider replacing the entire installation with proven equipment from a new manufacturer which will also be flexible to cope with anticipated future emission level requirements, and operate more energy efficiently than at present.

The necessary replacement of the cremators and abatement system at Rochdale provides an opportunity to improve both the public and staff accommodation, and to install quieter, more reliable and more energy efficient equipment. The area housing the existing cremation process is very restricted and requires enlargement together with strengthening works to the support slab, improvements to the electricity supply and replacement of the central heating boiler. A new cremulator and ash transfer cabinet (which process the remains post-cremation) are required along with capability to deal with larger "bariatric" coffins.

In addition the existing books of remembrance will soon be moved to a newly refurbished gatehouse adjacent to the main entrance room which will improve accessibility for the public and separate general visitors to the cemetery from those attending services at the crematorium. The current BoR building is too small to be easily converted into suitable waiting accommodation so the proposal is for this to be demolished and replaced with a new waiting room, offering greater capacity for visiting mourners, level access for those with mobility issues and internal and external modern toilets for visitors to the site. It is intended that the latter will, in due course, replace a basic and ageing toilet block currently situated to the rear of the main crematorium building (which is not DDA compliant).

Further improvements planned include upgraded accommodation for funeral directors on site and enhanced weather protection for mourners attending services between the new waiting room and the chapel entrance. Also integral with the new layout will be facilities for those mourners wishing to safely view the charging of a coffin into the cremator, as required by some religious groups – notably Hindu's and Sikh's.

In addition the cremator at Middleton Crematorium (also owned and operated by Rochdale Borough Council) is now well over twenty five years old. Whilst this cremator is fully operational it does not have mercury filtration equipment fitted, and therefore consideration will have to be given in the future to either replacing it, which may not be viable given the relatively small number of cremations being held there, or removing it entirely, offering the opportunity to expand the chapels capacity and carrying out the cremations at Rochdale instead.

3.0 New External Flue

In order to facilitate the refurbishment of the existing building and the replacement of the existing cremators within the building and new extension a new external flue will need to be installed externally to the west side of the existing chimney tower to allow the safe discharge of the abated vapours from the cremators.

The flue will be coloured Green Beige [RAL1000] to complement the existing structure.