



PROJECT NARRATIVE
SUNFLOWER BURIAL AND CREMATORY
5650 EAST MAIN STREET
MESA, ARIZONA
May 3, 2023

This narrative is for City of Mesa Zoning Department approval for the above referenced facility. The current site consists of a 4500 square foot, single story funeral parlor. This request is to construct a 2800 square foot crematory adjacent to the existing building.

The first request is for a **Special Use Permit** in accordance with Section 11-70-5(E) of the MZO. Our request is for a crematory building to be constructed in a LC (Limited Commercial) zoning district. This new facility will be a stand-alone single story building adjacent to the existing Sunflower Burial facility. This building will contain 4 retort machines used for the cremation process in a controlled area, cooler for remains delivered for cremations plus a small office, restroom and conference room. For approval, we are addressing the three criteria required per 11-70-5(E).

1. Advance the goals and objectives of and is consistent with the policies of the General Plan and any other applicable plan and/or policies. *Being an the Limited Commercial zoning district, this facility serves as an ancillary function to the Sunflower Funeral Home. Access to this new building will be controlled by Sunflower staff and only staff will be occupying the building with the rare occasion in which visitors will be allowed in briefly to witness cremations. Visitors, when allowed will be accompanied by Sunflower staff and will be able to view the cremation in the conference room, where only one of the retort machines is visible. Operating house will be weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.*
2. The location, size, design and operating characteristics of the proposed project are consistent with the purposes of the district where it is located and conform with the General Plan and any other applicable City plan or policies. *The existing Sunflower Funeral Home is located on an arterial street (East Main Street) and the proposed crematory will be located to the west (side) and south (rear) of the existing building. This new building is consistent with the neighborhood characteristic of the area. This new building will be consistent with the policies of the Mesa General Plan and all applicable zoning requirements and building code requirements. The size, design*

and operating characteristics are further described in this narrative in the information under the requests for Substantial Conformance Improvement Permit and Alternative Compliance for the design.

3. The proposed project will not be injurious or detrimental to the adjacent or surrounding properties in the area, nor will the proposed project or improvements be injurious or detrimental to the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the city. *As described above, this facility will be an ancillary use to the funeral home and is operated and available only to Sunflower staff, with limited exceptions for public access, with staff. Because of the limited public access and control by staff, this facility will not have any negative impact on the surrounding neighbors. Operation is strictly controlled by both State of Arizona and Federal regulations.*

The actual cremation operations are done in a retort machine, with a total of 3 retort machines in use in this facility. The specific machine, manufactured and provided by Matthews Environmental Solutions. The retort machine consists of an insulated metal housing with a firebrick secondary chamber. The retort machine also has a "Smoke Buster System" which is part of the secondary chamber and completely controls the smoke and odor. There is no direct ventilation to the exterior of the cremation facility. And as a result no hazardous or noxious odors are sent to the exterior and public areas. Each machine also is equipped with air-cooled side panels to control dissemination of heat and an acoustical cabinet with integral seals that provide quiet operation and actually allow normal conversation in adjacent rooms.

Additionally, there are accessories including a). An electric remains processor that reduces remains to fit in standard size urns (average time for processing is less than 30 seconds and processor is quiet and dust-proof and b). processing station which recovers dust and eliminates need for any venting to outside of building.

In summary, due to advancements in the design and construction of retort machines, including the ones specified for this project, there will be no impact on the surrounding environment in terms of unwanted noise, dust or heat.

4. Adequate public services, public facilities and public infrastructure are available to serve the proposed project. *Due to its location on East Main Street, there are adequate public facilities, infrastructure and transportation available. There are public transportation facilities in the area. The proposed project will not create any strain on existing water, sewer or power services in the area. Again, as a tightly controlled facility with very limited public access, the facility will function as much needed operation for Sunflower and allow access to other Funeral homes in the area. And even though we have reduced the number of existing parking spaces by 6, we still have enough parking to meet the requirements of Section 11-32-3.*

Per the 1st Review comments dated October 4, 2022 we are submitting the following information for the approval of a **Substantial Conformance Improvement Permit**:

1. Included with this submittal is a completely dimensioned site plan including all drive aisle, parking, landscape island and sidewalk dimensions. Note: there are two new landscape islands in the parking rows on the east and south sides of the site.
2. Per Table 11-6-3 and Section of the MZO, a 20-foot wide building setback and landscape yard is required adjacent to 57th Street. *We are requesting a modification to the zoning ordinance to recognize the existing conditions along 57th Street. The existing building is set back approximately 90 feet west of the centerline of 57th Street and the new building is set back approximately 170 feet west of the centerline of 57th Street. There is no landscape area along 57th Street except for a small area between the two driveways. We request a modification to allow for the existing landscape areas to remain*
3. Per Table 11-6-3 and Section 11-33-3, a 15 foot wide building setback and landscape area are required adjacent to Main Street, measured from the 65 foot half-street right of way. *Currently there is a 55 foot half-street right-of-way along Main Street. The existing building is set back approximately 78 feet from the south property line and the new structure is set back approximately 110 feet from the south property line. There is a landscape area approximately 28 feet, however it is outside the property line between the sidewalk and the south property line. We request a modification to allow these existing conditions to remain as is.*
4. The site plan currently shows the new structure approximately 3 feet from the existing building. *We have revised the Site Plan to change this distance to 6'-3".*
5. Per Section 11-33-4, interior parking lot landscape island shall be installed at each end of a row of stalls and in between for maximum 8 contiguous parking spaces. *Landscape islands currently exist at the end of each row of parking and we have added on interior island at the south and east parking rows, so that there are no more than 5 spaces before a landscape island.*
6. *We have added an enlarged detail of the seating area, which is just north of the existing canopy at the north driveway.*
7. Verify and demonstrate compliance with MZO Section 11-33-5: Foundation Base; 15 feet for exterior walls with public entrances; 10 feet for exterior walls adjacent to parking; 5 feet adjacent to drive aisles. *1. The entrance to the existing building occurs at the southeast corner of the structure. There is approximately 2500 s.f. of existing landscape area on the south and east sides of the building. There is not landscape area adjacent to the entrance of the new crematory building, but again, this is not a public building as is the funeral home; 2. There is 9 foot area on the west side of the existing building and a 25 foot wide area on the south side, both adjacent to parking spaces. Again, there are no foundation bases adjacent to the new structure on any of the four sides. 3. On the north side of the existing building there is a 5 foot wide strip of landscape adjacent to the drive aisle. We are requesting that the existing conditions be allowed to remain as is, and to further bolster this request, we will enhance these existing areas with updated plant material.*

8. Per Section 11-32-4 of the MZO, parking spaces along the main drive aisles connecting directly to a street and drive aisles that cross main drive aisles shall be set back at least 50 feet from the property line abutting the street. *The parking, driveways and drive aisles are all existing, however we have revised the parking and drive areas as follows: (a) We have removed the 5 parking spaces at the north side of the site, revised them to 90 degree access for two spaces and created a 25 foot wide vehicle access area; (b) As shown on the site plan we have eliminate a portion of the drive at the northwest corner of the site where the new building will site; (c) We have eliminated a portion of the drive on the far west side of the site and created a turn around area. We have added new landscape materials in this area and (d) we have added one (1) each 8 foot wide (clear distance between concrete curbs) landscape island midway at the south and east side rows of parking stalls. We have recalculated the required and provided parking numbers based on code requirements of the two public areas (chapel and visitation). As a result, we have only three spaces to spare and it would be difficult if not impossible to satisfy this requirement without major financial implications. As the parking works for the new and existing structures, we request that we be allowed to maintain as per the revisions we have made and request modification from this requirement.*



Lastly, we are requesting approval for **Alternative Compliance** from existing Design Review standards and requirements. The current site consists of a 4500 square foot, single story funeral parlor. This request is to construct a 2800 square foot crematory adjacent to the existing building.

Per the comments dated October 4, 2022, we are requesting Alternative compliance from the required design standards. The requirements of MZO Section 11-6-3 address requirements of Character and Image (compatibility with existing buildings in the development); Massing and Scale (wall and roof articulation); Building Entrance and materials and colors.

The existing Sunflower facility is a single-story white stucco structure. The main building entrance is at the southwest corner, which is defined by a reddish Spanish style tile roof. Pop-outs for windows occur on all four sides of the building. There is a drive thru canopy on the north side, which is currently used and a drop off area for caskets. There are no proposed changes to this building and all these elements will remain.

Surrounding Developments:

There are three developments adjacent to Sunflower that we will address in this request for alternative compliance.

1. Directly to the south across Main Street is a development of single-family homes. We do not feel that this development has any relevance to the character of our new building request, therefore we will not address this area.
2. Directly north of Sunflower is a commercial development of 3 or 4 single-story structures. All these buildings have a stucco finish and painted in shade of brown and beige. All have flat roofs with parapets that hide, wholly or partially all roof top equipment. The building closest to the north has some building articulation with the footprint, but the others are basically rectangular in shape. There does not appear to be any relevant characteristics other than the sameness of color pallet. There is a central courtyard at this center, with a clock tower also of the same color and texture as the commercial buildings.
3. Directly west, and part of the same commercial development as the buildings to the north of Sunflower, is a single-story medical building, mostly rectangular in shape and with the same color pallet.

4. Directly to the east, across 57th Street is a small commercial development of single-story buildings with a covered parking area at the far east of the site. Again, all these buildings have a white or beige color scheme, with one building having a small area of stove veneer on the west side. All have flat roofs, some with parapets, some without.

Design proposal for new crematory:

Our design intent for the new building is not to replicate any of the design characteristics of the adjacent developments, but to compliment the existing Sunflower building. Our proposal calls for a combination of three different types and shades of integral colored masonry. The base of the building will be a 5'-4" wainscot of a charcoal shade of split face masonry "Black Mountain", the field color will be a smooth face medium gray "NW Gray". And the accents will be a 16-inch band of Papago Red split face masonry. Both the overhead door and hollow metal man doors will be painted to match the NW Gray block.

We believe that we are meeting the intent and expectations of the design requirements with our proposal. We are creating contrast through the use of color and texture on the building and while there is not articulation in building footprint, this is a direct result of the nature of this structure. As we have stated in our narrative for our initial planning submittal, this is a truly utilitarian building, with no public access, except on rare occasions. And while this does not exempt us from meeting design guidelines, we feel that we have proposed a building that fits the character and compliments the existing Sunflower building. Again, we acknowledge the design character of the adjacent developments, we feel it is in the best interest of our client to create something with a different character as outlined in MZO 11-6-3 (B)(1)(b).

With regards to massing and scale, we acknowledge the footprint of this building is rectangular, but this again is a function of available area on the site and the function of the building. We do not accentuate any entrances as the only occupants will be staff members and occasionally family of deceased. As the existing Sunflower building is a monochromatic white and the surrounding buildings are the monochromatic beige and light brown, we use color and texture of the masonry materials to create interest and articulation.

The only revisions to the existing parking areas are to eliminate one parking space on the south and west sides of and create a landscape island in its place. Additionally, we will enhance the existing landscape areas on all four sides to comply with the requirements of the MZO.

We feel that the project we are proposing can be an enhancement to the area while serving the needs of our client and the community.

