



**PLANNING DIVISION
STAFF REPORT**

Board of Adjustment

April 7, 2021

CASE No.: BOA21-00151	CASE NAME: Horizon Funeral Care Crematorium
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Owner's Name:	Reed Park Investments, LLC.
Applicant's Name:	James Robinson
Location of Request:	7530 E. Main Street
Parcel Nos:	218-16-034
Nature of Request:	Requesting a Special Use Permit (SUP) to allow an accessory crematory for a funeral home in the LC district.
Zone District:	Limited Commercial (LC)
Council District:	5
Site size:	0.6± acres
Proposed use:	Funeral Home with Accessory Crematory
Existing use:	Funeral Home
Hearing date(s):	April 7, 2021 / 5:30 p.m.
Staff Planner:	Kellie Rorex
Staff Recommendation:	APPROVAL with Conditions

HISTORY

On **June 20, 1976**, the property was annexed into the City of Mesa as part of a larger 144± acre annexation and was subsequently rezoned C-2 to establish City of Mesa comparative zoning (Ordinance No. 1005, Ordinance No. 1031, and Case No. Z76-047).

On **April 16, 1984**, City Council approved a site plan and preliminary plat for Sun Valley Plaza, to accommodate the development of an 18± acre shopping center that included the subject site as a pad building (Case No. SPR84-007).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background:

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit (SUP) to allow for an accessory crematory use at an existing funeral home in the LC zoning district. The subject site is located within the Sun Valley Plaza shopping center, on the northwest corner of Main Street and Sossaman Road. The existing building is 5,228 square feet; the proposed crematory addition is 380 square feet.

The site was previously occupied by a restaurant and was purchased in 2020 by Horizon Funeral Care. The site is currently undergoing tenant improvements for the funeral home. The accessory crematory will be a standard addition for the use. The 380 square foot addition will house the crematorium and allow for discreet transportation of human remains in and out of the site. The use will not create any smoke or odor, as the smoke created in the combustion process is retained and converted into CO₂ gas and water vapor. Modern crematories also include an opacity sensor that monitors exhaust. If emissions reach the maximum allowed opacity, the systems computer will shut down the primary burner to slow combustion and prevent visible emissions from exiting the building. There are no specific development standards for the crematorium, which is a permitted accessory use to a funeral home with the approval of a SUP.

General Plan Character Area Designation and Goals:

The Mesa 2040 General Plan Character Area designation on the property is Mixed-Use Activity District with a Community Scale Sub-type. Per Chapter 7 of the General Plan, the focus of the Mixed-Use Activity District is for large-scale community and regional activity areas that usually have a significant retail commercial component. The Mixed-Use Activity District encourages a mixture of uses, including services, medical, and professional offices. Per the General Plan, the Community Scale Sub-type is intended to serve the population within a four-mile radius and typically contains one or two big box buildings and associated shops and pad sites. The existing building is located in a large commercial center and adds to a mixture of uses, complying with the General Plan by provide a service to the nearby population.

Site Characteristics:

The crematory addition will be located on the north side of the existing building. Exterior access to the crematory will be on the west side of the addition through a roll up door. The applicants are proposing a five-foot (5') landscape strip north and east of the addition in compliance with foundation base requirements per Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO) Section 11-33-5(A)(2)(b) and landscaping requirements per MZO Section 11-33-5(B). The addition's elevations have been designed to use similar colors and materials so that it matches the existing building.

Surrounding Zoning Designations and Existing Use Activity:

Northwest LC Existing Commercial Center	North LC Existing Commercial Center	Northeast LC Existing Commercial Center
West LC	Subject Property LC	East LC

Existing Commercial Center pad site	Existing Commercial Center pad site	Existing Commercial Center pad site
Southwest (Across Main Street) LC Vacant	South (Across Main Street) LC Vacant	Southeast (Across Main Street) LC Vacant

Mesa Zoning Ordinance Requirements and Regulations:

Per Section 11-70-5 of the City of Mesa Zoning Ordinance, the Board of Adjustment shall find upon sufficient evidence when making a decision on a SUP that:

1. Approval of the proposed project will advance the goals and objectives of and is consistent with the policies of the General Plan and any other applicable City plan and/or policies;

The subject site is located within the Mixed-Use Activity District (MUAD) Character Area, per the Mesa 2040 General Plan. The focus of the MUAD Character Area is to provide large-scale community and regional activity areas that usually have a significant retail commercial component and include shopping areas such as malls, power centers, or lifestyle centers designed and developed to attract customers from a large radius. The MUAD further encourages a mixture of uses, including services, medical and professional offices. The existing funeral home is located within a commercial center and adds to a mixture of uses provided to nearby residents, complying with the General Plan.

The proposal meets this criteria.

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 with any other applicable City plan or policies;

The intent of the Limited Commercial (LC) District is to provide areas for indoor retail, entertainment, and service-oriented businesses that serve the surrounding residential trade area within a one (1) to ten-mile radius. A funeral home is a permitted use within the LC district and the accessory crematory use is a permitted with the approval of a SUP.

The proposal meets this criteria.

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; and

The accessory crematory will not be injurious or detrimental to adjacent or surrounding

properties. The crematory will not produce any odor or smoke. Smoke created in the initial combustion process is retained in a secondary chamber, and re-burned at a temperature of 1,600-1,800 degrees Fahrenheit, and thus fully converted to clear CO2 gas and water vapor. An opacity sensor will be located in the stack monitors exhaust, and if emissions reach the maximum allowed opacity, the internal computer shuts down the primary burner and adjust air supply to slow combustions and prevent visible emissions from exiting the stack. In addition, crematories do not discharge wastewaters or use any water in the cremation process.

The proposal meets this criteria.

4. Adequate public services, public facilities and public infrastructure are available to serve the proposed project.

The addition of the crematorium does not add any additional burden on the public services, public facilities, nor public infrastructure. The public infrastructure is already on-site and will adequately serve the site and proposed use.

The proposal meets this criteria.

Findings:

- A. The subject site is currently used as a funeral home.
- B. Crematories are permitted as an accessory use to a funeral home in the LC district with the approval of a SUP.
- C. The crematory will not create any smoke or odor.
- D. The addition for the crematory will be designed to meet all landscaping and foundation base requirements.
- E. There are no specific requirements for the proposed crematory beyond the SUP and the addition will not trigger any additional code requirements.
- F. This request conforms with the criteria for the granting of a SUP as outlined in Section 11-70-5(E) of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance.

Neighborhood Participation Plan and Public Comments

The applicant mailed the required notification letters to all property owners within 500 feet of the site. As of writing this report, staff has not been contacted by any resident or property owner to express support or opposition to the request.

Staff Recommendation:

Based upon the application received and preceding analysis, Staff finds the request for a SUP for an accessory crematory at an existing funeral home in the LC zoning district meets the approval criteria of Section 11-70-5(E), and therefore recommends approval with the following conditions:

Conditions of Approval:

1. Compliance with the final site plan and project narrative as submitted.
2. Compliance with all applicable City of Mesa Development Codes and Regulations.

3. Compliance with all requirements of the Development Services Department regarding the issuance of building permits.
4. Compliance with all requirements of SPR84-007.

Exhibits:

Exhibit 1 – Vicinity Map

Exhibit 2 – Staff Report

Exhibit 3 – Narrative/Justification Statement

Exhibit 4 – Site Plan

Exhibit 6 – Elevations/ Floor Plan