

HORIZON FUNERAL CARE

March 9, 2021

Planning Division
City of Mesa
55 N Center St.
Mesa, AZ 85211
RE: Horizon Funeral Care, 7530 E. Main St.

Dear Staff,

Please accept this justification & compatibility statement for a proposed addition to offer cremation services at Horizon Funeral Services located at 7530 E. Main St. (NW Corner of Sossaman & Main), in Mesa. The site is in an existing mixed use business area with mercantile as well as medical uses.

The proposed project is a +/- 300 S.F. attached addition to the rear of the existing building to accommodate the installation of a new retort machine to allow for cremation services to be offered at the current facility. There is ample separation from this building and other businesses from a shared parking area, which renders this addition as un-obtrusive, and likely unnoticed, by adjacent properties.

Cremation services are generally accepted under other current zoning categories as a use by right for funeral parlors. In this case, the 'LC', Limited Commercial category, requires the SUP to establish compatibility with the zoning ordinance. This service will allow for a more robust business offering in a general business zone, which we believe to be aligned with the 'Mixed Use Activity District' indicated in the General Plan.

The proposed addition is located to the rear of the existing (fire sprinklered) building, fully screened from view of Main St., and shall be constructed as an attached addition using materials and finishes to match the existing building. A parapet shall be utilized to fully screen all mechanical components. It is stipulated that to the North and east of this addition, foundation base landscaping will be added to further unify this addition with the existing. Circulation, fire access and solid waste services to this facility will all remain unaffected by this addition. The proposed addition will also provide for added privacy non cremation related operations at the funeral home e.g. decedent transport. The cremation equipment that will be installed in the proposed addition is brand new and of the latest design, and exceeds applicable standards for emission mandated by the EPA.

The addition of cremation services will come online only after the procurement of the applicable licensing through the Arizona State Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers and the Maricopa County Air Quality Department which highly regulates this type of use for compliance of physical facilities as well as function and operation of such equipment. A review of this license happens on an annual basis.

We appreciate your review and feedback of this proposed project. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,



James Robinson

Funeral Director, License #FUN-001535

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February 20, 2021

This is a request for a Special Use Permit for 7530 E Main Street. The property is zoned as Limited Commercial. The application seeks approval from the Board of Adjustment for an Accessory Crematory/Building Addition at an existing Funeral Establishment. The new landscape strip around the building addition will be landscaped to comply with foundation base landscaping requirements of MZO Section 11-33-5(B).

The operation of cremation equipment is a natural extension of funeral home occupancy. In Arizona, consumers of funeral services choose cremation at a rate close to 70%. Maintaining modern cremation equipment on site provides utility for both the operator and the consumer of cremation services. Modern equipment, competent operation by professionals, and common sense oversight by local government facilitates this without negatively impacting surrounding properties or the public.

Under normal operating conditions, modern crematories operate efficiently, inconspicuously, and without smoke or odor. Unless specifically identified, a modern crematory is not noticeable to an outside observer. 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 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.

Human remains are mostly made of organic compounds such as hydrogen and water. Cremation (chemically known as oxidation) is ideal for disposing of human remains, as organic compounds can be completely transformed into carbon dioxide and water. Only 2% to 8% of human remains are inorganic and comprised of sodium and potassium (bones). At the end of the cremation cycle, only a few sterile bone fragments remain.

Modern cremators have a 99.99% combustion efficiency, emitting extremely low levels of carbon monoxide. Cremation caskets, if used, are designed to be cremated without causing Hazardous Air Pollutants as defined by the EPA under the Clean Air Act. The brand new, state of the art cremator that will be installed at 7530 E Main Street fully complies with all stringent Federal, State and local environmental requirements. Ongoing regulation of the crematory for regulatory compliance and emissions is the purview of both the State and County, through the Arizona State Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers, and the Maricopa County Air Quality Department respectively.

Furthermore, the proposed 340 square foot addition on the north side of the building will not only house the cremation equipment, but will allow for discreet transportation of human remains into and out of the funeral establishment. It is anticipated that between one and five cremations will take place on a daily basis, with a corresponding number of decedents being transported into/out of the facility. Transportation vehicles will be enabled to back into the structure, and staff will be able to perform their necessary function with complete privacy.

Horizon Funeral Care LLC began operations in Mesa in April of 2015 at a leased location, 7510 E Main St, and has subsequently grown to become a mainstay in Mesa. In 2020 the property next door at 7530 E Main St was purchased and Horizon is in the process of opening up a permanent and newly renovated funeral establishment. This new funeral home will provide an estimated 900-1200 families each year with burial and cremation services.

A Special Use Permit allowing for the installation of on site cremation equipment will create 2-3 new full time jobs and allow Horizon Funeral Care to better serve the needs of the public in Mesa specifically, and in the Valley at large.

The demographics of East Mesa indicate that there will continue to be a growing need for reputable funeral establishments to provide a needed service in the area. As a result of the ongoing COVID-19 public health crisis and the relatively high volume of deaths, I request that consideration and approval be expedited if at all possible.

Sincerely,


James Robinson

Funeral Director, License #FUN-001535