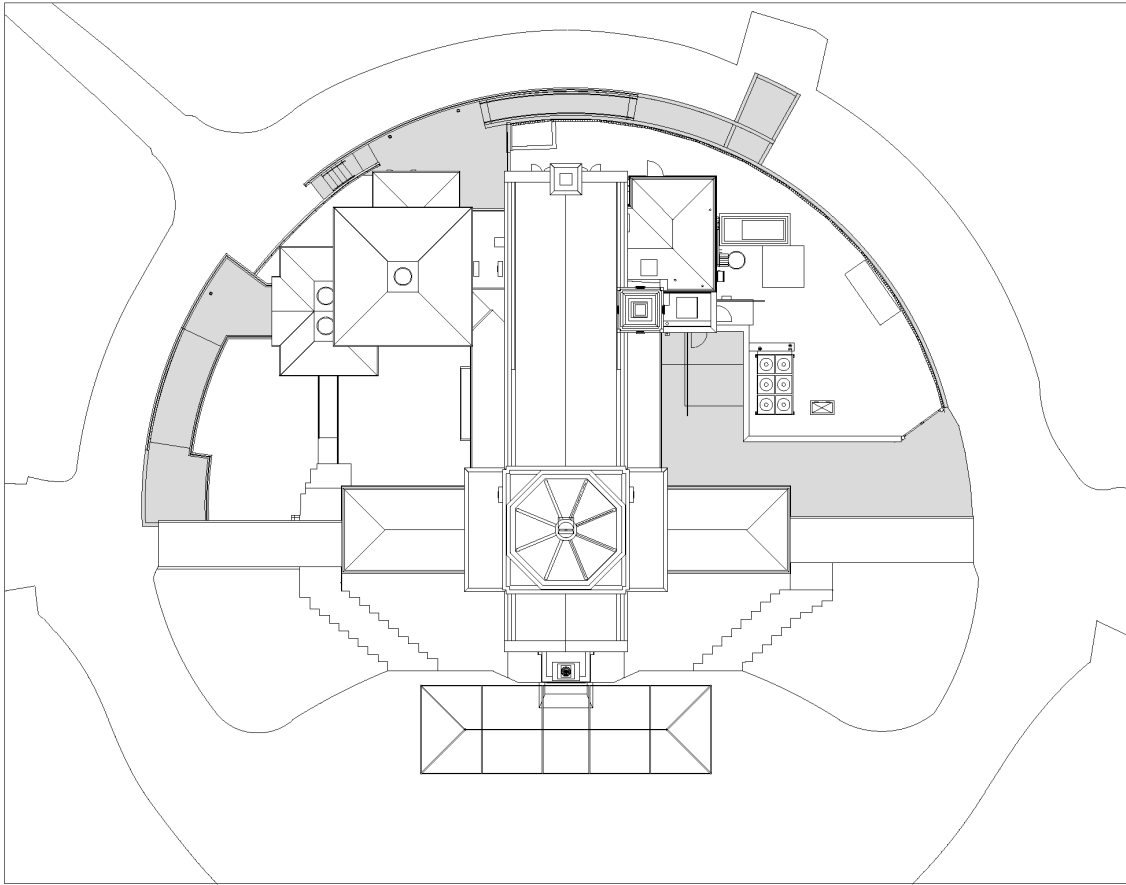


 Reading Borough Council		PLANNING STATEMENT
	Job No.	2856-2022
	Issued Date:	31 October 2025
PROPERTY SERVICES, CIVIC OFFICES, BRIDGE STREET, READING RG1 2LU	Revision:	01

Project Title:	Reading Crematorium - 2022 Cremators Replacement Works
Applicant:	Reading Borough Council / Henley Road Cemetery and Reading Crematorium
Issued by:	Property Services, Property & Asset Management, Reading Borough Council, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU



PLANNING STATEMENT
For
Proposed redevelopment of the crematorium building, including
part demolition, alterations, and extensions
at
READING CREMATORIUM & HENLEY ROAD CEMETERY,
CAVERSHAM, READING

1. Executive Summary

Pre-Application Reference: **PL/25/0666**

Officer: **Matt Burns, Principal Planner**

Following receipt of Level 3 Pre-application advice regarding the proposed redevelopment of the crematorium building, which comprises partial demolition, internal and external alterations, and extensions, we are now submitting a Full Planning Permission application as outlined in this document.

This reduced full planning application seeks permission for targeted improvements to Reading Crematorium. The scope includes a modest extension to the staff area, courtyard works to improve drainage and levels, and external ramps to enhance accessibility. These works are confined to existing hardstanding and represent a low-impact, policy-compliant first phase of a broader enhancement strategy.

2. Site Context

The crematorium is centrally located within the Henley Road Cemetery site, owned and operated by Reading Borough Council. The site is not listed or within a conservation area but lies within the North Reading Dry Valleys and Chilterns Escarpment Major Landscape Feature (Policy EN13).

3. Proposal Overview

The reduced application includes:

- **Staff Area Extension:**
A 16m² increase to improve staff facilities and create a new Funeral Collection point. The current Funeral Collection will be converted to a Plant Room.
- **Plant Room (at the current Funeral Collection):**
A gulley will be added with a drainage run routed to the rear of the building, discharging into the courtyard manhole.
- **Cremator Room:**
Two large louvres will be installed in the **north-facing gable wall** to ventilate the new cremators.
- **Courtyard Works:**
Level changes and drainage improvements to support operational efficiency.
- **Other External Works:**
 - Construction of a new retaining wall to support the road following courtyard levelling
 - Installation of timber closed board fencing above the retaining wall
 - New ramps at both the entrance and exit of the West Chapel
 - Modifications to the one-way tarmac access road to accommodate ramped access

These works are confined to the existing hardstanding areas and do not affect designated or undesignated open space.

4. Planning Policy Compliance

Policy OU1 – Community Facilities

The proposal enhances the operational capacity of a civic facility, aligning with the policy's support for improved community infrastructure.

Policy CC6 – Accessibility

The proposed works include new access ramps to improve safe and inclusive movement around the crematorium, in line with Policy CC6 and Approved Document M of the Building Regulations. Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), all public buildings must provide level access. The current arrangements at the West Chapel fall short of these standards.

Operational Impact:

The West Chapel is operated using two access doors—an entrance door with a waiting lobby, and an exit door. This system allows the attendants of the next service to begin gathering at the chapel while the previous service is cleared and the space is made ready. This arrangement is essential for maintaining the dignity and efficiency of services.

Currently, the West Chapel has only one ramp, located at the entrance. The lack of a ramp at the exit compromises the intended flow and creates accessibility challenges for disabled users.

- **Entrance Ramp:**
 - Gradient: 1:15
 - Length: 6 metres
 - No landing at the base
 - Non-compliant with Part M
 - Requires assistance for wheelchair users; poses risk to ambulant disabled users
- **Exit Door:**
 - No ramp provided
 - Wheelchair users must exit via the entrance, conflicting with incoming attendees
 - Brick paving is slippery and has caused falls and near misses

Proposed Improvements:

- New ramps at both the entrance and the exit
- Compliant with Part M
- Slip/skid-resistant paving materials
- Enhances safety, independence, and dignity

Policy CC7 – Design and Public Realm

The proposed works integrate with the existing building in terms of materials and layout. The modest extension and ramps reflect existing site treatments and maintain visual coherence.

Policy EN13 – Major Landscape Features

The works are contained within the crematorium's circular plot and do not detract from the wider landscape character. No visual impact beyond the site is anticipated.

5. Ecology and Environmental Considerations

A Bat Scoping Survey will be commissioned to assess the potential for roosting bats. If required, **Emergence Surveys** will be scheduled during the active season (May–September), in line with ecological best practice and planning guidance.

There will be no loss of open space in this proposal,
The 16m2 extension will be on hardstanding, which is considered to have zero biodiversity value
The proposal does not impact any priority habitat, so we anticipate being exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain

6. Transport and Access

Policies TR1, TR3, and TR5 – Transport and Movement

The proposed development complies with the transport-related policies of the Reading Borough Local Plan:

- **Policy TR1 – Impact on the Network:**

The development is not expected to generate additional traffic or place strain on the surrounding highway network.

- **Policy TR3 – Access, Parking, and Servicing:**

The proposal will not increase visitor or staff levels. Existing access arrangements remain unchanged.

The proposed ramps project slightly into the internal service road, which operates as a one-way system serving the crematorium only.

Vehicles approaching from the central road are directed left to **66 car parking spaces** and directed right to **58 car parking spaces**.

These arrangements are expected to remain effective and safe following the proposed modifications.

- **Policy TR5 – Pedestrian and Cycle Routes:**

The new ramps improve pedestrian access and support inclusive movement around the site. No changes to cycle routes or parking are proposed.

7. Environmental Protection

Policies EN16 (Pollution) and CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)

The crematorium site is inherently sensitive to noise, given its function and the need to maintain a quiet and respectful environment for services held in both chapels. Noise mitigation is therefore a key design consideration.

All mechanical and electrical equipment proposed for installation has been carefully selected with reference to its acoustic performance. An Acoustic Consultant is part of the design team to ensure compliance with relevant planning policies and to safeguard the amenity of both site users and nearby residential areas.

Appendix One contains detailed Acoustic Performance Notes for the three proposed items of equipment. A summary is provided below:

Acoustic Performance Note Summary

1. **LPHW Thermal Store – TS01**

- Classified as **low-noise equipment**

2. **UPS System (Kohler PowerWAVE 8000 ST120)**

- Housed in a prefabricated GRP enclosure
- Classified as **moderate-noise equipment** with **effective acoustic mitigation**

3. Diesel Generator (Kohler/SDMO J88K)

- Installed with an acoustic canopy and 24-hour base tank
- Classified as **moderate-noise equipment** with **integrated acoustic mitigation**

These measures ensure that the proposed development remains compatible with the sensitive nature of the site and complies with Policies EN16 and CC8.

8. Sustainable Design and Construction

Policies CC2 and CC3 – Sustainable Design and Climate Adaptation

The proposal is for a 16m² extension. We are mindful of the disproportionate cost and administrative effort associated with a full BREEAM assessment compared to the environmental impact of the proposal and its potential benefits.

Although the proposal is modest in scale, it incorporates several sustainability measures:

- **Management:**

The requirement for a stated commitment to Health & Safety and Sustainability is an essential part of the RBC Procurement quality question and evaluation. Contractors will be required to demonstrate their commitment to both.

- **Energy Efficiency:**

- Retention of the existing boiler
- Openings will be less than 25% of the Staff Area floor area.
- Heat Recovery implementation
- LED lighting specified
- Enhanced thermal performance exceeding Building Regulations:

Element	Proposed U-Value	Approved Document L U-Value
Pitched Roof – Ceiling Level	0.14	0.16
Flat Roof	0.18	0.18
Walls	0.18	0.26
Ground Floor	0.15	0.18
Window	1.6	1.6
Rooflight	0.75	2.2

- **Sustainable Materials:**

The requirement for sustainable materials is embedded in RBC's procurement evaluation. Contractors will be required to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability.

- **Water Conservation:**

Low-flow fixtures are specified for the wash hand basins.

- **Enhanced Wellbeing:**

The staff workstation and kitchen will benefit from north-facing glazed doors and windows to maximise daylight.

All new doors and windows will be specified with ventilation.

9. Conclusion

This reduced application delivers immediate operational, environmental, and accessibility improvements to Reading Crematorium. The proposal is low-impact, policy-compliant, and avoids complex planning constraints. It forms a logical and deliverable first phase of a broader enhancement strategy and is respectfully submitted for consideration.

Appendix One

7. Environmental Protection
Acoustic Performance Note Summary

Acoustic Performance Note – Thermal Store TS01

Project Reference: TS01

Location: External Courtyard

Equipment Type: LPHW Thermal Store

Capacity: 2000 litres

Operational Noise Profile

The thermal store is a passive vessel designed for the storage and distribution of low-pressure hot water (LPHW). It contains no moving mechanical components and operates silently under normal conditions.

- Minimum Noise Level: 0 dB(A) – during static operation or standby.
- Maximum Noise Level: Up to 35–40 dB(A) – under peak flow conditions or during pressure relief events.

These levels are well below typical HVAC equipment and are considered acceptable for installation in residential, commercial, and mixed-use developments without the need for additional acoustic treatment.

Noise Sources and Mitigation

Potential noise sources include:

- Water flow turbulence through primary and secondary connections.
- Thermal expansion of the vessel body.
- Operation of pressure relief valves or immersion heaters (if fitted).

Mitigation measures incorporated:

- 100mm acoustic and thermal insulation.
- Air venting to eliminate gurgling from trapped air.
- Isolation from vibration sources.
- Pressure relief valves and tundish to safely manage discharge events.

Conclusion

The TS01 thermal store is classified as low-noise equipment. Its acoustic profile complies with standard planning requirements for external plant installations and does not pose a nuisance risk to occupants or neighbouring properties.

Acoustic Performance Note – Kohler PowerWAVE 8000 ST120 Modular UPS

Project Reference: UPS-ST120

Location: External Courtyard – Pre-fabricated GRP Enclosure

Equipment Type: Modular Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS)

Model: Kohler PowerWAVE 8000 ST120

Capacity: 100kVA

Operational Noise Profile

The Kohler PowerWAVE 8000 ST120 Modular UPS is a high-efficiency, solid-state power system designed for critical infrastructure. It operates with low mechanical noise, primarily generated by internal cooling fans and power electronics.

- Minimum Noise Level: ~45 dB(A) – during low-load or standby operation.
- Maximum Noise Level: ~65 dB(A) – under full load with active cooling fans.

Noise levels are measured at 1 metre from the unit under standard operating conditions.

Noise Sources

- Cooling fans activated during high thermal load.
- Power electronics producing low-frequency hum.
- Battery management systems and switching operations.

Mitigation Measures

- The UPS will be installed within a pre-fabricated GRP (Glass Reinforced Plastic) enclosure, which provides:
- Acoustic shielding to reduce airborne noise transmission.
- Weather protection and environmental containment.
- Barrier to vibration propagation through structural isolation.
- The enclosure is designed to attenuate operational noise and ensure compliance with planning noise thresholds for external plant installations.

Environmental Suitability

With the GRP enclosure in place, the UPS installation is suitable for use in residential, commercial, and mixed-use developments. The enclosure significantly reduces the risk of acoustic nuisance and supports compliance with local authority noise regulations.

Conclusion

The Kohler PowerWAVE 8000 ST120 UPS system, when housed in a pre-fabricated GRP enclosure, is classified as moderate-noise equipment with effective acoustic mitigation. It is expected to meet planning requirements for external plant installations and poses no significant impact on surrounding noise-sensitive receptors.

Acoustic Performance Note – Kohler/SDMO J88kVA Diesel Generator

Project Reference: GEN-J88

Location: External Courtyard – Acoustic Canopy Installation

Equipment Type: Diesel Generator

Model: Kohler/SDMO J88K

Capacity: 88 kVA Standby

Configuration: External acoustic canopy with integrated base tank (24-hour fuel capacity)

Operational Noise Profile

The Kohler/SDMO J88K diesel generator is equipped with a John Deere 4045TF220 engine and designed for standby power applications. It includes an acoustic canopy engineered to reduce environmental noise emissions.

- Noise Level:
67 dB(A) @ 7 metres under standby operation

This level is typical for enclosed diesel generators of this capacity and is compliant with most local authority noise thresholds for external plant installations.

Noise Sources

- Engine operation during load conditions.
- Cooling fan airflow and exhaust discharge.
- Mechanical vibration transmitted through the base frame.

Mitigation Measures

- Acoustic canopy designed to attenuate airborne noise and reduce sound pressure levels.
- Vibration isolators installed at the skid base to minimise structure-borne noise.
- Residential-grade silencer included within the exhaust system.
- Base tank integration ensures compact footprint and reduces external pipework noise.

Environmental Suitability

The generator is suitable for installation in external environments, including residential and mixed-use developments, provided standard separation distances and enclosure specifications are maintained. The acoustic canopy ensures compliance with planning regulations and minimises impact on nearby noise-sensitive receptors.

Conclusion

The Kohler/SDMO J88K diesel generator, when installed with its acoustic canopy and 24-hour base tank, is classified as moderate-noise equipment with integrated acoustic mitigation. It is expected to meet planning requirements for external plant installations and does not pose a significant acoustic nuisance.