DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:
DC/25/0672
Ashurst Church of England School, School Lane, Ashurst, Steyning, West Sussex, BN44 3AY

DESCRIPTION:
Installation of 2no. air source heat pumps to the rear of the school and associated works, including provision of new metal mesh fence with access gate between heat pumps and the existing external cabin. (Full Application).

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/25/0673	Installation of 2no. air source heat pumps to the rear of the school and associated works, including provision of new metal mesh fence with access gate between heat pumps and the existing external cabin. (Listed Building Consent).	Under Consideration

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE
The application site is located on the northern side of the School Lane. The main property is a detached school which has been extended in 2000. The original building is a Grade II listed building, built in 1870, is the Former School Master House.

The school site is compressed which includes the school building and a small playground to the front of the school. The school is accessed from School Lane and backs onto the gardens of a residential properties. The site is surrounded by nearby residential buildings and a recreation ground. The western boundary is screened by mature vegetation. The application site is located within the rural countryside and does not fall within a conservation area.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION
The proposal seeks planning permission for the installation of 2 no. air source heat pumps to the rear of the school and associated works, including provision of new metal mesh fence with access gate between heat pumps and the existing external cabin.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 34 - Cultural and Heritage Assets
Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use
Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction

Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19):
Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development

Strategic Policy 6: Climate Change
Strategic Policy 7: Appropriate Energy Use
Strategic Policy 8: Sustainable Design and Construction
Strategic Policy 9: Water Neutrality
Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality
Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles
Policy 21: Heritage Assets and Managing Change within the Historic Environment

REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES
Where consultation responses have been summarised, it should be noted that Officers have had consideration of the full comments received, which are available to view on the public file at www.horsham.gov.uk

Consultations:
HDC Conservation: No Objection.

HDC Environmental Health: No Objection, conditions recommended.

Representations:
None received

Parish Comments:
None received.

Member Comments:
None received

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY:
The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out a person's rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of the same Act, which sets out their rights in respect to private and family life and for the home. Officers consider that the proposal would not be contrary to the provisions of the above Articles.

The application has also been considered in accordance with Horsham District Council's public sector equality duty, which seeks to prevent unlawful discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people in a diverse community, in accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In this case, the proposal is not anticipated to have any potential impact from an equality perspective.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Character and Appearance:

Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF seek to ensure that development promotes a high standard and quality of design in order to enhance and protect locally distinctive characters. The policies also seek to ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of development relates sympathetically with the built surroundings, landscape, open spaces and routes within and adjoining the site, including any impact on the skyline and important views.

The proposed air source heat pumps are to be installed on the rear elevation of the main school building which would not be particularly visible from the public realm, with western and northern boundaries heavily screened and the existing boundary treatment limiting views from the west and south. It is therefore considered that the proposed size of the ASHPs and the chosen location would not be unduly prominent or intrusive.

Policy 34 of the HDPF seeks to ensure that proposals preserve, and ensure clear legibility of, locally distinctive vernacular building forms and their settings, features, fabric and materials. Moreover, proposed developments are required to secure the viable and sustainable future of heritage assets through continued preservation by uses that are consistent with the significance of the heritage asset.

The application seeks Listed Building Consent for the installation of 2 no. air source heat pumps to the rear of the school and associated works, including provision of new metal mesh fence with access gate between heat pumps and the existing external cabin. It is considered that the siting and nature of the proposal would not interfere with an appreciation of the special interest of the listed building, with the associated hardware not resulting in any harm to the historic fabric of the building.

The visual impact of the proposal is therefore considered acceptable and in accordance with the above policies.

Residential Amenity:

Policy 33 of the HDPF states that permission will be granted for development that does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of the occupiers/users of nearby properties and land.

The units would be sited within the boundaries of the application site with surrounding screening and the submitted specification such that no unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity is envisaged. A condition is though recommended to require the units operate in low power mode during nighttime hours (between 23:00 and 07:00), with this sufficient to reduce the potential for harm during period of lower background noise levels. It is not considered necessary to require only 1 unit to operate during these hours. The amenity impacts of the proposal are therefore considered acceptable and in accordance with the above policy.

Water Neutrality:

The application relates to the installation of air source heat pumps and there is no clear or compelling evidence to suggest the nature and scale of the proposed development would result in a more intensive use of the school necessitating an increased consumption of water that would result in a significant impact on the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. The grant of planning permission would not therefore adversely affect the integrity of these sites or otherwise conflict with policy 31 of the HDPF, NPPF paragraph 193 and the Council's obligations under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) mandates that every development must achieve at least a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) unless the development qualifies as exempt under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024).

The Applicant has demonstrated that the development is exempt from the requirement to achieve a minimum 10% BNG by reason of:

- The development qualifies as 'de minimis' under Regulation 4 of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

Conclusions:

The proposal is considered to comply with relevant local and national planning policies and is therefore recommended for approval.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

Conditions:

2 **Standard Time Condition**: The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3 **Regulatory Condition**: The materials to be used in the development hereby permitted shall strictly accord with those indicated on the application form and approved plans.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to control the development in detail in the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

4 **Regulatory Condition**: The air source heat pumps hereby permitted shall operate in night / low power model between the hours of 23:00 and 07:00.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenities of neighbouring properties and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Biodiversity Net Gain Condition
Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states that planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the "biodiversity gain condition" which means development granted by this notice must not begin unless:

(a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
(b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

Under Regulations 4, 5, 7 & 8 of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024 the statutory biodiversity gain condition required by Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) does not apply in relation to planning permission for development which:

1. does not impact an onsite priority habitat (a habitat specified in a list published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006); and
impacts less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero and less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat (a hedgerow habitat or watercourse habitat identified for the purposes of the biodiversity metric);

1. is the subject of a householder application within the meaning of article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015;

2. is undertaken solely or mainly for the purpose of fulfilling, in whole or in part, the biodiversity gain planning condition which applies in relation to another development (In determining whether a development is undertaken solely or mainly for this purpose, no account is to be taken of any facility for the public to access or to use the site for educational or recreational purposes, if that access or use is permitted without the payment of a fee);

3. consists of no more than 9 dwellings, is carried out on a site which has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares, and consists exclusively of dwellings which are self-build or custom housebuilding ("Self-build or custom housebuilding" has the same meaning as in section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended)).

Based on the information submitted in the planning application documents, the Planning Authority considers that this permission is exempt from biodiversity net gain, and as such does not require approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun.

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

Statement pursuant to Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received, in order to be able to, where possible, grant permission.

Plans list for: DC/25/0672

(The approved plans will form Condition 1 on the Decision Notice of all Permitted applications)

Schedule of plans/documents **approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Elevation plan	Existing and Sections	24-1161-01/DWG-004 REV A	15.05.2025
Elevation plan	Proposed and Sections	24-1161-01/DWG-005 REV A	15.05.2025
Design & Access Statement		NONE	23.04.2025
Supporting Docs	Management Plan	NONE	23.04.2025
Supporting Docs	Noise Assessment	NONE REV B	23.04.2025
Supporting Statement	Biodiversity	NONE	23.04.2025
Supporting Docs	Application Form	NONE	23.04.2025
Supporting Statement	Heritage Impact	NONE	23.04.2025
Supporting Docs	Sustainability Appraisal	NONE	23.04.2025
Supporting Docs	Technical Guide	NONE	23.04.2025
Location plan		24-1161-01/DWG-001 REV A	23.04.2025
Site plan	Existing	24-1161-01/DWG-002 REV A	15.05.2025
Site plan	Proposed	24-1161-01/DWG-003 REV A	15.05.2025

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Halima Chowdhury Date: 01.07.2025

Authorising Officer sign/initial Guy Everest Date: 10.07.2025