Horsham District Council

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:
DC/25/0671
St Marys Church of England School, Link Lane, Pulborough, West Sussex, RH20 2AN

DESCRIPTION:
Installation of 3no. air source heat pumps to the rear of the school and associated works, including installation of new metal mesh compound enclosures.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/21/0904	Installation of a new path and trim trail equipment.	Application Permitted on 10.08.2021
DC/25/0503	Demolition of existing derelict school building and formation of new nursery and community building.	Pending Consideration

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The application site is located on the northern side of Link Lane. The main building is a detached school building. The site comprises of 1 no. school building which has been extended in the past. The school is located on a large plot which includes the school building, playgrounds to the south of the school and a playing field to the east. To the west of the main school building there is a car park, a community building and a school swimming pool. The school is located within in a residential area along Link Lane.

The main school building is not a listed building nor does the site fall within a conservation area. The application site is situated within the defined built up area boundary of Pulborough.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION
This application seeks planning permission for the installation of 3 no. air source heat pumps to the rear of the school and associated works, including installation of new metal mesh compound enclosures.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):
Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use
Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
Policy 38 - Strategic Policy: Flooding

Pulborough Neighbourhood Plan
There is no Made neighbourhood plan for Pulborough Parish Council.

Pulborough Parish Design Statement May 2013

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 Environmental Health: (22.07.2025) confirm my comment that If the application is approved I would recommend the following condition is attached:

- The air source heat pumps hereby approved shall be operated in reduced power/set back mode between the hours of 23:00 and 07:00.

Representations:
None received

Parish Comments:
Pulborough Parish Council: 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

Design and Appearance:

Policy 32 and 33 of the HDPF seeks 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 proposal would involve the installation of 3 no. air source heat pumps to the rear of the school and associated works, including installation of new metal mesh compound enclosures.

During the course of this application amendments were negotiated to bring the proposal to an acceptable standard for approval.

The proposed air source heat pumps are to be installed on the rear elevation of the main school building and adjacent to the swimming pool plant room. Whilst glimpse of the units would be visible from the school car park, the proposed units would be screened by the swimming pool boundary fence and the school's existing shed. It is considered that the proposed reduced size of the ASHPs and the position of the units would not be unduly prominent or intrusive. Therefore, it is judged that there would be no adverse impact on the visual amenity resulting from the proposal. As such there is considered to be no conflict with Policies 25, 32, and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

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.

It is noted that the Council's Environmental Health Officer has suggested a planning to ensure that any potential harm is minimised to an acceptable level of tolerance, if the development were to be approved.

The proposed pool heater air source heat pump (ASHP) would be positioned on a suitable location and screened by the pool boundary fence. Further 2 no. ASHPs would be located opposite the main school windows serving classrooms 035 and 079. Concerns were raised regarding the initial designs of these ASHP, the excessive height would have resulted in an adverse effect upon the amenity of the students and teachers using classrooms no. 035 and 079. The height of these ASHPs have been reduced significantly to prevent the overbearing and unacceptable impact to the users of classrooms 035 and 079. The revised height of ASHPs is now considered acceptable, whilst the units would obstruct a small section of the classroom windows the overall outlook would remain intact due to the size of the windows.

Following consultation with the Council's Environmental Health Officer, planning conditions have been imposed to ensure that any potential harm is minimised to an acceptable level of tolerance. It is therefore considered that the siting and layout of the proposed development would not create an effect that significantly harms to any neighbouring properties.

Water Neutrality:

The application relates to the installation of air source heat pumps on the site of an existing school. Therefore, there is no clear or compelling evidence to suggest the nature and scale of the proposed development would result in a more intensive occupation 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) and that every planning permission granted for the development of land in England shall be deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that development must not be begun unless a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority and the planning authority has approved the Plan.

The Biodiversity Gain Plan must show how the development will achieve the required minimum 10% BNG using the statutory biodiversity metric tool, and must demonstrate how the habitats will be managed and maintained for 30 years, starting from the date the development is completed. Off-site gains and significant on-site enhancements will be secured over this period by way of a Legal Agreement.

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. The application relates to the installation of air source heat pumps with open fence enclosure to be situated within the same footprint as the existing oil tank.

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 approved shall be operated in reduced power/set back mode between the hours of 23:00 and 07:00.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenities by ensuring an acceptable noise level for the occupants of neighbouring dwellings in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

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/25/0671

Schedule of plans/documents **approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Supporting Statement	Biodiversity Statement	NONE	23.04.2025
Supporting Docs	Cover Letter	NONE	23.04.2025
Supporting Docs	Management Plan	NONE	23.04.2025

Supporting Docs	Noise Assessment	NONE REV 2	10.07.2025
Design & Access Statement		NONE	10.07.2025
Supporting Docs	Sustainability Appraisal	NONE	23.04.2025
Supporting Docs	Technical Guide	NONE	10.07.2025
Location plan		24-1161-03/DWG-001 REV A	15.05.2025
Site plan	Existing	24-1161-03/DWG-002 REV A	15.05.2025
Site plan	Proposed	24-1161-03/DWG-003 REV B	10.07.2025
Elevation plan	Existing and Sections	24-1161-03/DWG-004 REV A	15.05.2025
Elevation plan	Proposed and Sections	24-1161-03/DWG-005 REV B	10.07.2025
Supporting Docs	User Manual	NONE	10.07.2025

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Halima Chowdhury Date: 22.07.2025

Authorising Officer sign/initial RHERMITAGE Date: 29.07.2025