

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Whitley

App Ref: PL/25/0020 Full planning permission

Address: Whitley Wood Fire Station, 270 Whitley Wood Rd , Reading , RG2 8FT

Proposal: Installation of an air source heat pump, with acoustic screening on south westerly elevation, replacement of single glazed windows to double glazed windows where required.

Applicant: Mr Paul Brooks

Received date: 06/01/2025

Target Decision date: 04/03/2025

Extension of Time agreed with agent: 14/03/2025

Case Officer: Gary Miles

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site consists of an operational fire station located in the south of Reading. The fire station is located within an urban area with the front south-easterly elevation abutting Whitley Wood Road, with residential properties located the other side of Whitley Wood Road approximately 20m away. Residential properties adjoin the northern site boundary, whilst the Thames Valley Police Roads Policing Department, and Highways England depot located to the south and southwest of the application site. The property is not listed nor in a conservation area.

Site visit date: 21st January 2025

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The application seeks approval for the installation for electrification of the heating systems via the installation of an air source heat pump with acoustic screening on the south westerly elevation of the main fire station. The application includes the replacement of single glazed windows to energy efficient double-glazed units on the southeast elevation, northwest elevation, southwest elevation and north east elevation where required, as highlighted on the submitted plans. The proposals form decarbonisation works to enhance the energy efficiency and sustainability of the building.

Plans & documents considered:

Application Form, dated Jan 25

Drawing no: 5229549-500-Whitley Wood Fire Station Location Plan, dated Nov 24

Drawing no: 5229549-501-Whitley Wood Fire Station Existing Site Plan, dated Nov 24

Drawing no: 5229549-502-Whitley Wood Fire Station Proposed Site Plan, dated Nov 24

Drawing no: 5229549-511-Whitley Wood Fire Station Existing Elevations Southwest & Northeast, dated Nov 24

Drawing no: 5229549-521-Whitley Wood Fire Station Proposed Elevations Southwest & Northeast, dated Nov 24

Drawing no: 5229549-510-Whitley Wood Fire Station Existing Elevations Southeast & Northwest, dated Nov 24

Drawing no: 5229549-520-Whitley Wood Fire Station Proposed Elevations Southeast & Northwest, dated Nov 24

Design and Access Statement (AtkinsRealis).

Jakoustic Absorptive acoustic fencing technical detail

Whitley Wood Fire Station Plant Noise Impact Assessment Rev01 (Mach Group) superseded

Air Conditioning ASHP Product Information (Mitsubishi Electric).

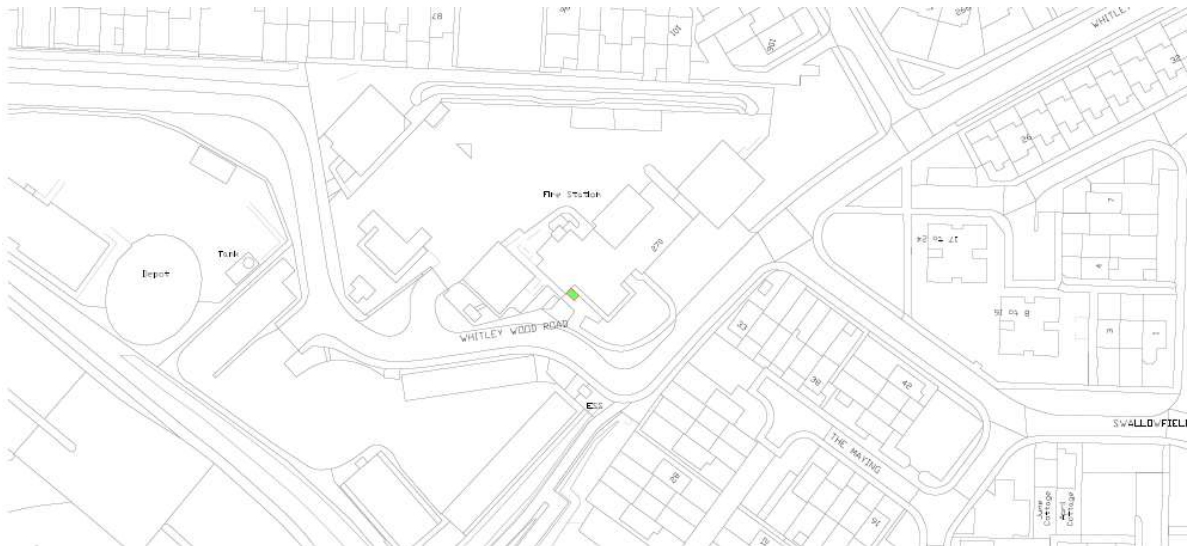
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 6th January 2025

Whitley Wood Fire Station Plant Noise Impact Assessment Rev02 (Mach Group)

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 5th February 2025



Location Plan



KEY:

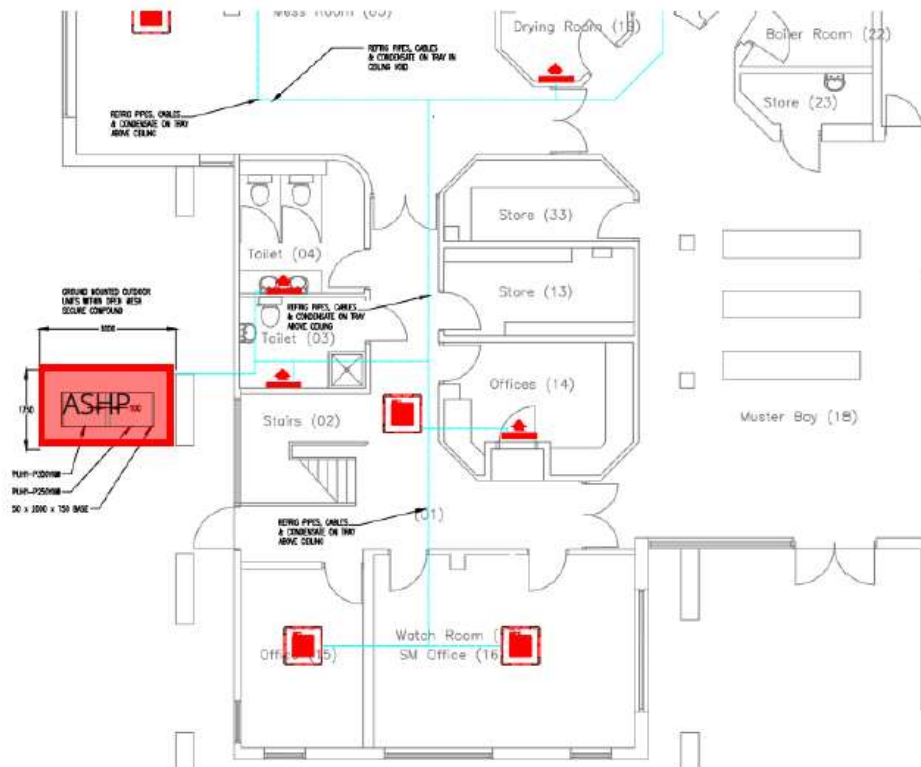


Air source heat pump
location

0 10 20 30 40 50 100
SCALE BAR 1:500

Proposed Site Plan

The following site plan shows the proposed plant installation.



Proposed Plant Layout

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/24/0797 - Application for Approval of Details Reserved by Conditions 6 (Hard and Soft Landscaping) and 7 (Habitat Enhancement Scheme) of application 231841 – Discharged November 2024

PL/24/0878 - Minor Amendment to condition 2 (Plans) of application 231841 for changes to windows on the front and side elevations – Approved August 2024

PL/24/0746 - Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 3 (Construction Management Plan) and 9 (cycle parking) of application 231841 – Discharged July 2024

PL/23/1841 - Demolition of the existing training centre and portacabin office on the site and its replacement with a new training building, relocation of existing fuel and LPG tanks together with associated development – Approved May 2024

4. CONSULTATIONS

Internal Consultees:

- Environmental Protection Officer

External Consultees:

A planning notice was attached to the street furniture in front of the fire station on 14th January 2025 and left in place for a minimum of 3 weeks for the duration of the public consultation period.

No letters of representation have been received.

5. EQUALITY ACT 2010

In determining this application, the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore, in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

6. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

Policy CC7 – Design and the Public Realm
Policy CC8 – Safeguarding Amenity
Policy EN17 – Noise Generating Equipment

7. APPRAISAL

The main issues to be considered are:

- a) Principle of development
- b) Design and impact on the character of the area
- c) Impact on amenity
- d) Environmental matters

a) Principle of development

In principle the proposed Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) and new double-glazed windows to the existing structure is acceptable, as the proposals will improve energy and thermal efficiency, reduce the buildings carbon footprint and overall reduce energy costs, which in turn could help to safeguard the future of the fire station for the community and wider area.

b) Design and Impact on the Character or the Area

The proposed ASHP is to be positioned southwest of the main building adjacent to the stairwell and toilets, officers believe it is positioned here as the ducting for cables and pipework already exist for an existing air conditioning unit. The ASHP will be screened with acoustic fencing measuring 3m in height, the acoustic fencing is dark grey and brown in colour and is not considered detrimental to the host building. The new double-glazed windows are replacing existing units, no new openings form part of this application.

In terms of character and appearance, the proposed ASHP and replacement windows are considered acceptable and therefore comply with policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

c) Impact on Residential Amenity

The proposed ASHP will be fully screened from view of nearby residential properties – the acoustic fencing has similar characteristics to that of a garden fence or acoustic barrier fencing which has been in place for many years adjacent to the South Whitley Recreation Ground, and the adjacent B3270 link road, south of properties off Swallowfield Drive in Whitley. The replacement double glazed windows will be similar in appearance to the existing single glazed units - no new openings are being created as part of this application. In terms of visual and residential amenity the proposals are not considered harmful to residential amenity.

The proposal is not considered to be harmful to the residential amenity to the surrounding area and is considered compliant with policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

d) Noise

The proposed ASHP will be enclosed within a 3m high acoustic screen, positioned southwest of the main fire station building. The agent submitted an original Noise Impact Assessment R01 and then a revised Noise Impact Assessment at the request of the Environmental Protection Officer (EPO). The revised Noise Impact Assessment R02, has been reviewed by the EPO is now considered acceptable subject to the ASHP and acoustic screening being installed correctly and as per the fitting and specification sheet.

The Environmental Protection officer has no objections. The proposal is considered acceptable in terms of noise and is therefore considered compliant with policy EN17 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

8. CONCLUSION

The proposed air source heat pump and replacement double glazed windows are considered acceptable in accordance with the above relevant policies and planning permission and can be granted subject to conditions as attached.

9. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT

TL1
AP1
M3
N10