

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Thames

App Ref: PL/25/0019 Full planning permission

Address: Caversham Road Fire Station, 65 Caversham Road, Reading , RG1 8AD

Proposal: Installation of an air source heat pump, with an acoustic cover and fence enclosure on westerly (rear) elevation, replacement of existing rooflights with double glazed rooflights. The installation of blown cavity insulation.

Applicant: Ms Sophie Fox

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, made up of the main fire building which fronts on to the Caversham Road, with various other buildings located behind the front façade which home the offices, the workshop and plant room, with a large open yard and parking. The fire station directly abuts a busy railway line to the southerly boundary, abuts residential properties to the westerly boundary and commercial property to the northerly boundary. 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 installations of an air source heat pump, with an acoustic cover and fence enclosure on westerly (rear) elevation. Replacement of existing rooflights with energy efficient double glazed rooflights and the installation of blown cavity wall insulation. 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: 5229549-100-Caversham Road Fire Station Location Plan, dated Nov 24

Drawing no: 5229549-101-Caversham Road Fire Station Existing Site Plan, dated Nov 24

Drawing no: 5229549-102-Caversham Road Fire Station Proposed Site Plan, dated Nov 24

Drawing no: 5229549-110-Caversham Road Fire Station East & West Existing Elevation, dated Nov 24

Drawing no: 5229549-111-Caversham Road Fire Station North & South Existing Elevation, dated Nov 24

Drawing no: 5229549-120-Caversham Road Fire Station North & South Proposed Elevation, dated Nov 24

Drawing no: 5229549-121-Caversham Road Fire Station East & West Proposed Elevation, dated Nov 24

Drawing no: 5229549-130-Caversham Road Fire Station Existing Roof Plan, dated Nov 24

Drawing no: 5229549-140-Caversham Road Fire Station Proposed Roof Plan, dated Nov 24

Rooflight Layout Plan (Brauder), dated Jul 24

Schedule of works (Brauder), dated July 24

Drawing no: BA-X2-F-01-SF (Brauder) window section/profiles plan, dated Oct 15

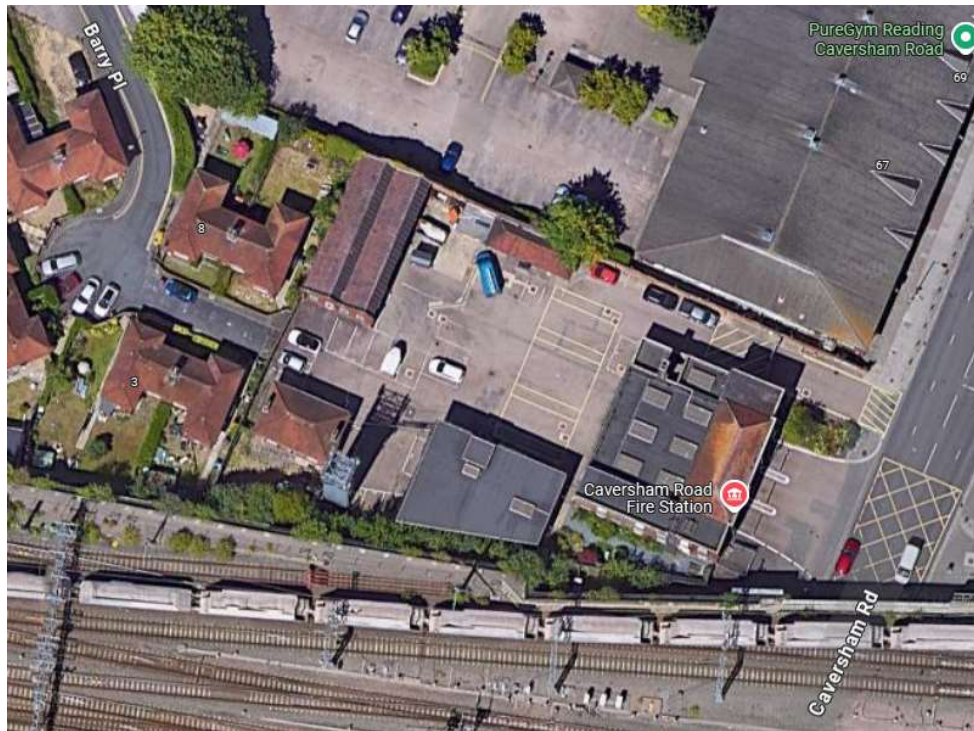
Design and Access Statement (AtkinsRealis).

Caversham Road Fire Station Plant Noise Impact Assessment Rev01 (Mach Group).

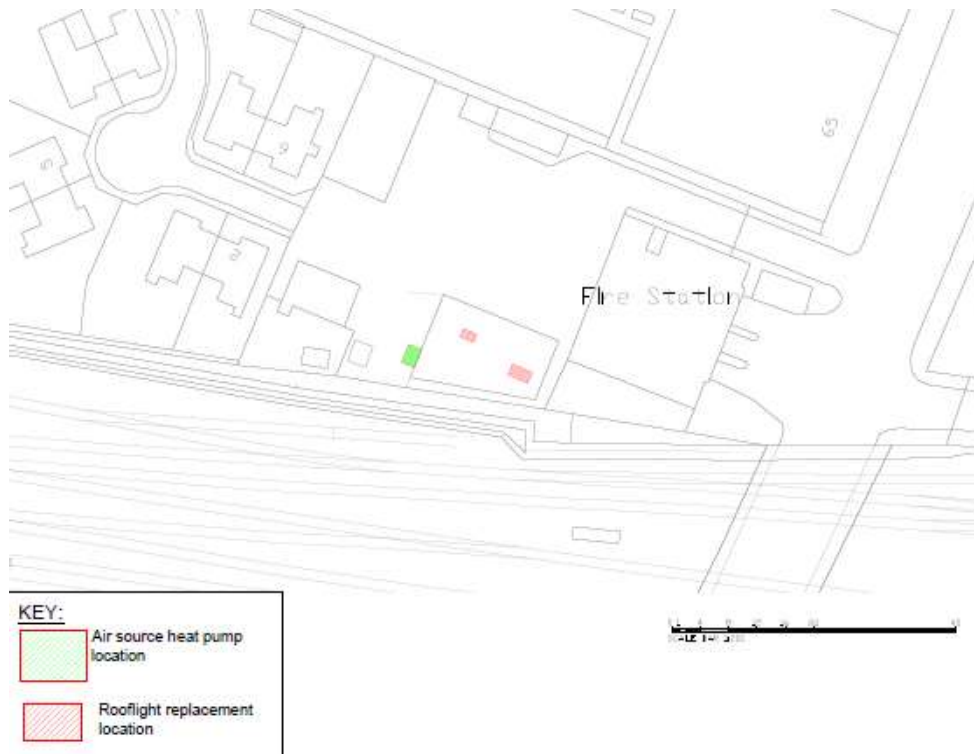
Air Conditioning ASHP Product Information (Mitsubishi Electric).

ASHP Acoustic Kits specification (Ambient Acoustics Ltd).

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 6th January 2025

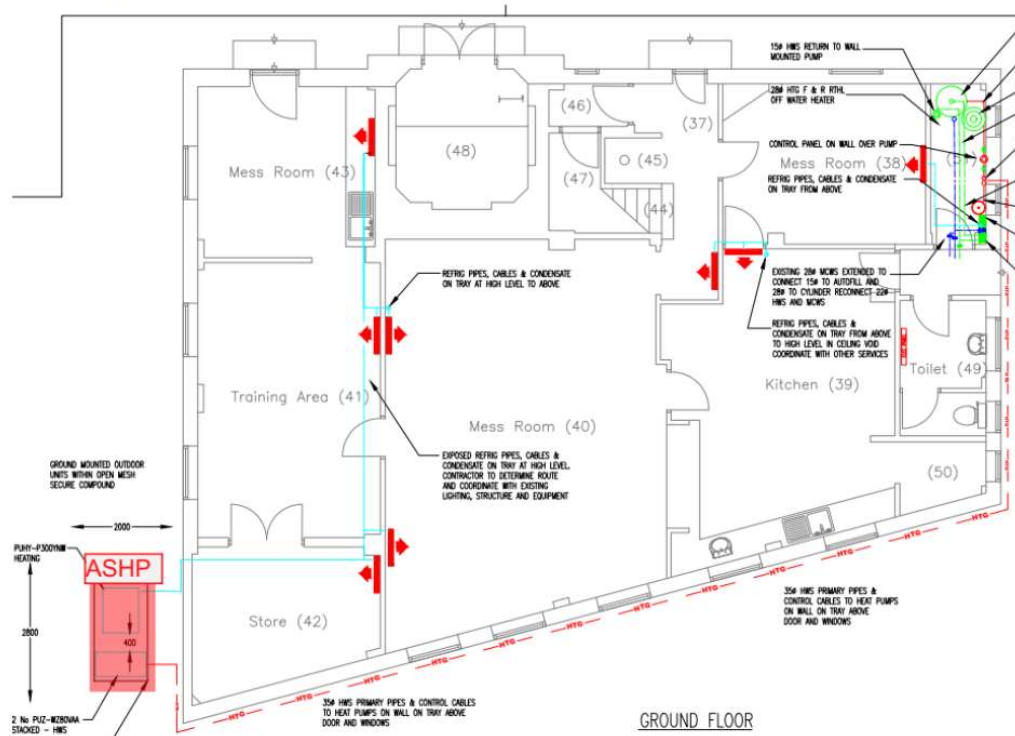


Location Plan



Proposed Site Plan

The following site plan shows the proposed plant installation.



Proposed Plant Layout

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None.

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 16th 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) new double glazed roof lights and blown cavity wall insulation 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 located to the rear elevation of the building containing a training area, mess room, kitchen and store. The proposed ASHP, new roof lights and cavity wall insulation is not considered to alter or harm the character of the existing property or wider area.

In terms of character and appearance, the proposal complies with policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

c) Impact on Residential Amenity

The proposed ASHP is to be located to the rear elevation of the building containing a training area, mess room, kitchen and store. The building is centrally located and effectively enclosed between the main fire station building to the east of site and the additional associated buildings to the west of the site. The ASHP is to be positioned near the railway embankment and railway bridge structure out of sight and away from residential properties.

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 agent submitted a noise impact assessment which has been reviewed by the Environmental Protection Officer, the impact assessment is considered acceptable. The proposed ASHP will be shrouded with an acoustic enclosure to further reduce the impacts of noise to residential properties. Any noise as a direct effect of the ASHP is considered acceptable when assessed against the background noise and the main railway line located directly adjacent to the application site.

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, replacement double glazed rooflights and the installation of blown cavity wall insulation is considered acceptable in accordance with the above relevant policies and planning permission and can be granted subject to conditions as attached.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT

TL1
AP1
M3
N10