

APPLICATION NUMBER: 24/00178/FUL

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.	CASE OFFICER	DATE
24/00178/FUL	Hamish Rigg	16/05/2024

Address: Castleton Community Centre, Manchester Road, Rochdale, OL11 3AF

Proposal: Installation of 2no. Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) and associated equipment/ boundary enclosure works

PUBLICITY	Weekly list expired?	Y	Site notice expired?	Y
	Neighbour letters expired?	Y	Press Notice expired?	Y

DELEGATION	Significant departure from local plan?	N	Contrary to national policy?	N
	Applicant a Council Member or officer?	N	Contrary to previous decision?	N
	Major with 10 or more objections and recommending approval?	N	Called in or Planning Panel objection?	N

COMMENTS	Planning Panel comments received?	N
	Neighbour comments received?	N

EIA	Screening opinion completed and saved to Onbase?	n/a
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CONDITIONS	Pre-commencement conditions proposed?	Y
	Pre-commencement conditions agreed (or notification period expired)?	Y

RECOMMENDATION	Grant Subject to Conditions
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CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: RK

DATE: 28/05/2024

SITE

The application relates to Castleton Library and Community Centre, a large detached property on Manchester Road in the centre of Castleton. Both the Community Centre and the adjacent Public Baths date back to the late 19th and early 20th Century. Due to their original architectural features and ongoing public benefits, they have both been identified as non-designated heritage assets.

The immediate vicinity is typically urban with a mix of housing, public amenities, shops and businesses. Approximately 100m east of the site is a large industrial/business park with numerous warehouses. As such, and as a key transport route, Manchester Road accommodates plenty of vehicular traffic and pedestrian footfall.

The Community Centre faces east, fronting the public highway and overlooking a row of terraced houses; 703- 723 Manchester Road. To the north are the adjacent Public Baths, and to the south lies Keswick Street. Behind the Community Centre, to the west, is a large car park belonging to the site, whilst the rear boundary of the curtilage borders Knoll Street.

PROPOSAL

Permission is sought for the installation of 2no. Air Source Heat Pump and associated equipment to the rear of the property. The ASHPs would sit within an enclosure measuring approx. 7.2m x 4.5m with a height of 3m. The ASHPs will be located externally within the car park and screened by a timber acoustic fence, comprising horizontally arranged panels.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Sub-Regional

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE)

The Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan was adopted and became part of the statutory development plan for each of the 9 authorities covered by the plan on 21st March 2024. The following policies are relevant:

JP-P1 Sustainable places

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

SD1 Delivering sustainable development
DM1 General development requirements

SO3 Improving design, image and quality of place

P1 Improving image
P2 Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage
P3 Improving design of new development

SO4 Promoting a greener environment

G1 Tackling and adapting to climate change

- G2 Energy and new development
- G3 Renewable and low carbon energy developments

SO5 Improving accessibility and delivering sustainable transport

- T2 Improving accessibility

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

None

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Conservation 02/05/2024:

The impact on a non-designated heritage asset is a material consideration when assessing any planning application. A balanced judgement should be had having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset (NPPF paragraph 209).

The proposal is for the installation of air source heat pumps to the rear of the Community Centre within the car park. A new 3m high timber enclosure would be constructed to screen the air source heat pumps and to provide noise attenuation. The proposed structure would be visible from public viewpoints across the car park. However, it would be seen in the context of other equipment and structures located along the rear of the Community Centre.

While there would be some minor visual harm from the proposed structure, the installation of air source heat pumps is considered to be a public benefit. Overall, it is considered that the minor harm to significance would be outweighed by the public benefits stemming from the proposal.

Environmental Health 18/04/2024:

This section has no objections in principle to the proposals, we would recommend the following condition:

The enclosure is installed as per the submitted documentation.

Validation testing is undertaken upon completion.

REPRESENTATIONS

Letters of notification were sent to surrounding properties 03/04/2024; a press notification was published 10/04/2024; and two site notices were displayed 02/05/2024; no objections were raised.

ANALYSIS

Principle for development:

Paragraph 164 of the NPPF states that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should give significant weight to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings through, for example, the installation of heat pumps. Similarly, PfE policy JP-S2 promotes the retrofitting of existing buildings with measures to improve energy efficiency and generate low carbon energy in an effort to deliver a carbon neutral Greater Manchester no later than 2038. Lastly, policy G1 and G2 of the Core Strategy aim to address climate change by reducing CO2 emissions through the use of low carbon decentralised energy technologies.

The proposed ASHPs would support the Community Centre's move towards reducing their dependency on externally sourced electricity and gas and output of CO2 emissions. Subject to an assessment of other development management requirements, the proposal would accord with the requirements of the NPPF, Places for Everyone, and the Core Strategy.

Impact on Character and Appearance

Policies P3 and DM1 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy requires development proposals to adhere to high quality design and enhance the borough's identity and sense of place, by respecting context where it is positive and having regard to the scale, density, massing, height, layout, landscape, materials and access of surrounding buildings and areas in general. In addition, paragraphs 131 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) state that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Paragraph 139 states that development that is not well designed should be refused.

In addition, Paragraph 201 of the NPPF states that LPAs should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal. According to paragraph 209, this includes the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage assets. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

The proposed ASHPs would be enclosed within timber acoustic fencing, located externally in the car park to the rear of the building. Owing to the expanse of the car park, the rear of the building is exposed to public viewing and includes prominent architectural features. As such, the ASHPs would be particularly visible and in direct contradiction with the Community Centre.

Nonetheless, given the open surround of the building, there is limited opportunity to screen the ASHPs from public view. The proposed timber enclosure would be seen within the context of other equipment and structures to the rear of the building and considered for its purpose as a necessary energy source. Whilst there would be some minor visual harm, this is outweighed by the public benefit of the ASHPs as a low carbon energy source which will support the future and maintenance of both the Centre itself and the wider community.

In addition, the ASHPs would replace an existing energy generator, slightly smaller in scale, and contained within wire fencing. Given the similarities between the existing and proposed structures, the lack of viable alternative locations, and the public benefits, it is not considered that the proposals would unduly impact the character and appearance of the community centre or surrounding area and the proposals would comply with Policies DM1, and P3 of the adopted Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Impact on amenity

The Council's adopted Core Strategy policy DM1 states that proposals need to demonstrate that they do not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing, or noise. Furthermore, policy DM1 of the Core Strategy requires development proposals to demonstrate that they will not have a negative impact upon the amenities of future residents and occupiers. Additionally, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advises that planning should always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

The proposed development is of a siting, scale and design which would not threaten the amenity of surrounding land users by way of overbearing impact, overshadowing or through a loss of privacy.

The application is supported by a Noise Impact Assessment by Varisty Consulting Ltd (NCSL 1250A, 16/02/2024). It includes a survey conducted with two noise sensitive receptors positioned at the residential premises on Knoll Street and Keswick Street. The assessment indicated that the ASHPs would have a low impact on the noise sensitive receptors, and would not adversely affect public amenity through noise.

The Council's Environmental Health Officer has requested that the recommendations of the report be required via condition. Subject to this condition, the proposals are considered to be compatible with the surrounding environment and would satisfy the objectives of policies G9 and DM1 of the adopted Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Highways

Policy T2 of the adopted Core Strategy seeks to improve accessibility by locating development where good access to public transport is available or can be provided and in all circumstances, prioritises the safety, accessibility and amenity of those who live or have business in the area. Policy DM1 also states that all development proposals should provide satisfactory vehicular access with adequate parking, manoeuvring, and servicing arrangements taking into account of the proposed use and location. Paragraph 111 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

The application would not result in the loss of parking spaces and would not restrict visibility or the ability to manoeuvre vehicles within the car park. The proposed development would not result in an unacceptable impact to highway or public safety and would accord with policies DM1 and T2 of the adopted Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant subject to the following conditions:

1. The development must be begun not later than three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. This permission relates to the following plans:-

- Proposed heat pump enclosure: CAS - TRI - ZZ - ZZ - DR - A – 3201
- Existing and proposed elevations: CAS - TRI - ZZ - ZZ - DR - A – 3200
- Proposed site plan: CAS - TRI - ZZ - ZZ - DR - A – 3020
- Existing site plan: CAS - TRI - ZZ - ZZ - DR - A – 3010
- Location plan: CAS - TRI - ZZ - ZZ - DR - A – 3000
- Noise Impact Assessment, Varsity Consulting Ltd.: NCSL 1250A

and the development shall be carried out in accordance with these drawings hereby approved.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with the policies contained within the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, the saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. The development hereby approved shall not be first brought into use until the acoustic fence has been constructed in complete accordance with the recommendations of the submitted Noise Impact Assessment ref. NCSL 1250A by Varsity Consulting Ltd. dated 16/02/2024. The fence shall be retained as such at all times thereafter.

Reason: In the interest of amenity and in compliance with policies G9 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Procedure Statement

The Local Planning Authority worked proactively with the applicant to identify various solutions during the application process to ensure that the proposal comprised sustainable development and would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area and would accord with the development plan. These were incorporated into the scheme and/or have been secured by planning condition.