OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/00134/HHFUL Householder (Full)

Proposal: Installation of air source heat pump

Location: 44 Lannesbury Crescent St Neots PE19 6AF

Applicant: Ann Chamberlain

Grid Ref: 520430 261103

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The dwelling is a two storey detached brick house, located within a residential area of St Neots. Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

The site is situated in flood zone 1 and there are no designated heritage assets in the vicinity.

The application is for the installation of an air source heat pump on the rear elevation of the property.
It is noted that air source heat pumps can be allowed under permitted development, where planning permission is not required, subject to certain conditions. This application would accord with Permitted Development Rights; however, a planning application has been submitted and therefore it has been formally considered as such, noting the fall-back position of the General Permitted Development Order 2015 (as amended).

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) (NPPF 2024) sets out the three objectives – economic, social and environmental – of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).'

The NPPF 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):
* delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
* building a strong, competitive economy;
* achieving well-designed safe places;
* conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 are also relevant and material considerations.

For full details visit the government website: https://www.gov.uk

PLANNING POLICIES

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)
LP11: Design Context
LP12: Design Implementation
LP14: Amenity

Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017):
* Place Making Principles – Part 3.7 Building Form

St Neots Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2029 (2016)
* Policy A3 – Design

Local policies are viewable at https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

PLANNING HISTORY

None

CONSULTATIONS

St Neots Town Council recommends approval. The proposal is considered to make efficient use of the site and is within a sustainable location.

HDC Environmental Health – no objections. The Environmental Health Officer has undertaken their own calculations of the likely sound pressure level at the nearest noise sensitive property and it is 33dB, well below the likely background level (40dB) for this area, so does not warrant a more detailed noise assessment.

Cadent Gas – no objection - initial holding objection removed.

REPRESENTATIONS

A response has been received from the neighbouring property to the south with the following concerns summarised below:

- Concern regarding noise levels. The boundary line to the neighbouring property is approximately 7.3 metres from the position of the proposed heat pump, with the noise levels just under that required for planning permission.
- Request for information on exact assessment positions which have not been provided. If an assessment has not been completed why not?

Officer comment – comments are noted and addressed in the main body of the report below.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
o Design and Visual Amenity
o Residential amenity

*Design and Visual Amenity

Policies LP11 and LP12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 state that developments should respond positively to their context, draw inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings and contribute positively to the area's character and identity.

The proposal is for the installation of an air source heat pump on the rear elevation of the property, within the rear garden. As the pump will be within the rear garden, there will be no view of the installation from the public realm. Therefore, it is considered that there will be no significant impact on design of the host dwelling or on the general character of the area.

Therefore, overall, it is considered that the scale, bulk and design of the development complements the host building and would not harm the general character of the area. The proposal, therefore, accords with LP11 and LP12 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019) and Policy A3 of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2029 (2016) in this regard.

*Residential Amenity

Policy LP14 of the Local Plan to 2036 states a proposal will be supported where a high standard of amenity is provided for all users and occupiers of the proposed development and maintained for users and occupiers of neighbouring land and buildings.

It is noted that the air source heat pump is to be placed at ground floor level in the centre of the rear elevation of the property. 4.6 metres from the boundary with the neighbouring property to the north and 4.3 metres from the side boundary treatment to the south, which has a further separation distance of just under 3 metres to the southern boundary due to applicant's garage between the neighbouring property to the south (no.42).

The comments from the neighbours to the south of the property are noted. HDC Environmental Health Team were consulted on the proposal and have undertaken their own calculations of the likely sound pressure level at the nearest noise sensitive property. This is calculated to be 33dB, well below the likely background level (40dB) for this area and therefore does not warrant a more detailed noise assessment. In addition, it is noted that the proposal accords with Permitted Development Rights, where planning permission is not required.

Given the comments from the Environmental Health Officer, as the statutory consultee, and the fall-back position of the General Permitted Development Order 2015 (as amended) it is considered that it would not be possible to sustain a refusal of the application.

Therefore, the development is considered acceptable in terms of residential amenity. The proposal, therefore, accords with LP14 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019) in this regard.

*Conclusion
The proposed development is considered to be compliant with the relevant national and local policy as it:
* Is of an appropriate scale and design;
* Would not have a harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the area;
* Would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbours.

Taking national and local planning policies into account, and having regard for all relevant material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

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CONTACT OFFICER: Enquiries about this report to **Olivia Manton**