CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2023/09691
Application Type:	Householder planning permission
Site Inspection:	07 December 2023
Consultation ends:	20 December 2023
Case officer:	Brook Bishop

Site Address:	26 Argyle Drive, Chippenham, Wilts, SN14 6RR
Proposal:	Installation of an Air Source Heat Pump
Recommendation:	Approve with Conditions

SITE DESCRIPTION:
The application site is a modern, two-storey, detached dwelling house externally constructed from coursed artificial stone. It lies at the end of a line of similar detached dwellings and has a long public green space to its east which runs north to south. No.26's property boundary is delineated by a knee-high fence which is set approximately 1m away from its east and north elevation.

The site is set within a modern residential area, and it lies within the settlement boundary of Chippenham, a principal settlement as set out in the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

PROPOSAL:
The application seeks planning permission for the installation of an air source heat pump (hereafter ASHP) to the east side elevation of the application site.

The proposed unit will be (L) 1380mm x (H) 870mm x (D) 460mm and be supported on 150mm feet and a 100mm drip tray.

POLICIES:
Legislation:
Town and Country Planning Act 1990
The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015:
• Part 14: Renewable Energy

National Policy:
National Planning Policy Framework – December 2023 (NPPF):
• Paragraphs 11, 131, 135, 158, 162, 163 and 164.
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
National Design Guidance (Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places) 2019 (NDG)

Local Policy:
Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS):
• Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy (CP1)
• Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy (CP2)

• Core Policy 10: Spatial Strategy for Chippenham Community Area (CP10)
• Core Policy 41: Sustainable Construction and Low Carbon Energy (CP41)
• Core Policy 42: Standalone Renewable Energy Installations (CP42)
• Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping (CP57)

Neighbourhood Plan:
Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan (Draft 2023) (CNP)
• Chippenham Identity Objective 4
• Housing Objective 4

ASSESSMENT:
Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 require that the determination of planning applications be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:
There is no planning history for the site which would materially affect consideration of this application.

ISSUES:
The main considerations which are material to the determination of this application are listed below:
• Principle
• Climate Emergency
• Impact on Local Character and Appearance
• Impact on Neighbouring Amenities

CONSULTEE RESPONSES:
Chippenham Town Council - no objection.

REPRESENTATIONS:
No letters of representation were received related to this proposal.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT:
Principle:
The site is in a residential area within the principal settlement of Chippenham. CP1, 2 and 13 of the WCS set out a settlement and a delivery strategy for Chippenham and confirm that within a principal settlement, the principle of development is considered acceptable, subject to assessment of site-specific impacts, related policy considerations and compliance with the other policies contained within the development plan and the guidance and provisions as contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Part 14 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 states that the installation or alteration etc of air source heat pumps on domestic premises is permitted development, subject to the conditions that:

(a) the air source heat pump is used solely for heating purposes;
(b) the air source heat pump is, so far as practicable, sited so as to minimise its effect on the external appearance of the building;
(c) the air source heat pump is, so far as practicable, sited so as to minimise its effect on the amenity of the area; and
(d) the air source heat pump is removed as soon as reasonably practicable when no longer needed.

However, the development would not be permitted in certain circumstances, including:

…(e) any part of the air source heat pump would be installed within 1 metre of the boundary of the curtilage of the dwellinghouse or block of flats;

Based on the information available, it is considered that the proposed location for the installation of an ASHP would come within approximately 1m of the boundary of the curtilage of the dwelling house and therefore an application for planning permission is required. However, the principle of altering and retrofit facilities with low-carbon or renewable technologies to be used in association with existing residential accommodation is considered acceptable in principle subject to assessment of site-specific impacts.

Climate Emergency:
In February 2019, Wiltshire Council resolved to acknowledge a climate emergency and to seek to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030. CP41 confirms that proposals that aim to retrofit existing buildings, by improving their energy efficiency or by integrating low-carbon or renewable energy technology, should be supported and (CP42) applicants will not be required to justify the need for such measures. Even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions and achieving a low-carbon future (NPPF paras 152 and 158).

Although currently only in draft form, and therefore of limited weight, the draft CNP (Chippenham Identity Objective 4 and Housing Objective 4) is clear that ensuring low carbon development and improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings is an important objective for the local area.

In short, an ASHP works by drawing air from the external environment and extracting the thermal energy from it which it then transfers into the building's heating system. This is considered a low-carbon heating system because it does not use fossil fuels nor produce greenhouse gases, unlike a traditional gas boiler for example.

It is considered that this proposal will help reduce the carbon footprint of the existing building and is therefore compliant with CP41 and the draft CNP, and the proposal can be supported.

Impact on Local Character and Appearance:
CP57 states that a "high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings" and that development design is expected to be complementary to the locality. CP57 (v.) also considers that well-designed

development should maximise opportunities for improving energy efficiency and the use low-carbon and renewable energy technologies, in accordance with CP41 (discussed above).

Good design helps to provide a sense of place, creates, or reinforces local distinctiveness, and promotes community cohesiveness and social wellbeing; The layout and design of new developments must also be based on a thorough understanding of the site itself and its wider context, and seek to maximise the benefits of the site's characteristics. This will require careful consideration of the site layout as no two sites share the same landscapes, contours, relationship with surrounding buildings, street pattern and features. New development should integrate into its surroundings whilst seeking to enhance the overall character of the locality; The proximity of poor quality or indistinct development is not a justification for standard or poor design solutions.

The proposed ASHP is to be located on the east elevation and will be visible within the public realm to users of the landscaped public open space which it adjoins. However, the area in which the application site is set is of a modern character and modern technology, such as the proposed, would not appear incongruous with the locality. Furthermore, there are similar extraction-type units on more readily visible elevations in the area (qv No.27).

The east elevation of the application site is an unadorned wall, save for a few small window openings, and the installation of an ASHP at this location would not detract from the overall appearance of the building which is predominantly experienced from the north-west.

It is considered the proposal would not significantly harm the character of the locality or the appearance of the building and is therefore compliant with CP57 and the draft CNP and is acceptable. However, a condition is recommended so that the air source heat pump is removed as soon as reasonably practicable when no longer needed. Such a condition is considered appropriate and necessary in this instance and to meet the relevant tests.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenities:
CP57 requires that development should ensure the impact on the amenities of existing occupants/neighbours is acceptable, ensuring that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable within the development itself, including the consideration of privacy, overshadowing, vibration, and pollution (e.g. light intrusion, noise, smoke, fumes, effluent, waste or litter). Residential amenity is affected by significant changes to the environment including privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and living areas within private gardens and this, therefore, needs to be carefully considered accordingly.

The main concern, with regards the installation of an ASHP on neighbouring amenity, is the noise generated by the unit. In this case, the manufactures specifications state that a nominal noise level of 62 dBA can be expected. It is considered that this is the approximate noise level generated by a normal conversation and is not, therefore, felt to be significantly harmful to the amenity of neighbours. Furthermore, the east elevation faces away from adjacent properties and there is some distance, and acoustic obstacles, between this and the next property to the east.

No comments or objections were raised by consultees and no letters of representation were received from neighbours that would affect consideration of the proposal. The proposal is not considered to cause significant harm to residential amenity and is therefore in compliance with CP57 and is acceptable.

CONCLUSION:
The proposal is not considered to conflict with the statutory requirements, the national and local planning policies nor the draft Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan. The proposal would not result in significant harmful impacts to the residential character of the locality nor to residential amenity and will bring some environmental benefit. The proposal therefore can be supported.

It is recommended that the application should be permitted subject to relevant conditions.

Conditions: (3)

1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

Location Plan. Received: 8 November 2023.
Site Plan. Received: 8 November 2023.
Technical Specifications ASHP. Received: 22 November 2023.

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3 The Air Source Heat Pump equipment hereby approved shall be removed as soon as reasonably practicable when no longer needed.

REASON: To protect the long-term visual amenity of the area.

Informatives: (3)

4 Any alterations to the approved plans, brought about by compliance with Building Regulations or any other reason must first be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority before commencement of work.

5 The applicant is requested to note that this permission does not affect any private property rights and therefore does not authorise the carrying out of any work on land outside their control. If such works are required it will be necessary for the applicant to obtain the landowners consent before such works commence.

If you intend carrying out works in the vicinity of the site boundary, you are also advised that it may be expedient to seek your own advice with regard to the requirements of the Party Wall Act 1996.

6 The applicant is advised that the proposed air source heat pump needs to follow CIEH/IOA guidance on these devices. Further details can be found: https://www.cieh.org/media/7538/heat-pumps-briefing-note-professional-advice-note.pdf, and https://www.ioa.org.uk/catalogue/publication/ashp-calculation-sheet.