Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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Application No: **PL/2023/10354**
New air source heat pump
The Manor, Church Street, Steeple Ashton, Trowbridge, BA14 6EW

Please find following comments in respect of the above application(s).

Recommendations:

	No comment
	Support in principle subject to amendments to the scheme (as set out below)
X	Support
	Object (for reasons set out below)
	No objections

Scope of comments: the following comments relate to the built historic environment.

Policy: From the point of view of the historic environment the main statutory tests are set out within the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Sections 16 (LBC) and 66 (PP) require that **special regard** be given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing listed buildings, their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 also requires the Council to pay **special attention** to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of designated Conservation Areas.

The NPPF outlines government policy, including its policy in respect of the historic environment. Section 16 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out the Government's high-level policies concerning heritage and sustainable development. Paragraphs 207-9 of the NPPF require a balanced approach with any harm which would be caused being weighed against the potential public benefits which might be achieved. Paragraph 203 requires local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

National Planning Practice Guidance provides guidance on interpreting the NPPF.

The Council's Core Strategy Policy CP58 'Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment' requires that "designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner appropriate to their significance." It is also required that distinctive elements of Wiltshire's historic environment, including non-designated heritage assets, which contribute to a sense of local character and identity will be conserved, and where possible enhanced.

Site and assets considered: The Manor House is a Grade II* listed building located within Steeple Ashton Conservation Area. The property has other listed buildings within its curtilage, namely The Granary (II*) and The Front Wall and Gate Piers (Grade II). The property is also in the nearby proximity of other listed buildings including the Church of St Mary The Virgin (Grade I).

Proposal: The proposal seeks to erect a new air source heat pump.

Relevant planning history: N/A

Issues: impact on the significance of the listed building, impact on the setting of neighbouring listed buildings, impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Information considered/provided: Paragraph 200 requires that applicants describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. This should include sufficient information to provide a clear understanding of the significance of the heritage asset and its setting and the potential impact of any proposals on that significance. In this case, the application is accompanied by a "Heritage, Design and Access Statement" which provides sufficient information to understand the impact of the proposal and is proportionate to their scope. The requirements of the NPPF are therefore met in this respect.

However, paragraph 201 also provides for the local planning authority to make its own assessment of impact and the following heritage recommendations are offered on this basis.

Significance of assets and contribution of setting (as appropriate): The NPPF defines significance as the "value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be **archaeological**, **architectural**, **artistic** or **historic**. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting." Historic England assesses significance in a similar manner, referring to evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal values of a place.

In this case the significance of the building lies largely with its historic fabric and architecture - its form, layout and architectural expression/detailing and use of high-quality design materials which have significant aesthetic and architectural interest and which contribute to the character of the conservation area.

Assessment: The proposals are for a new air source heat pump located on the south elevation concealed within a courtyard area off the Kitchen and Utility.

This would be a discreet location for the air source heat pump would be hidden from view by garden walls and as such would not detract from the listed building. The location of the unit would

be located on the least significant part of the listed building and would make a positive contribution to sustainability.

It would not be visible from the Grade I listed church or other nearby listed buildings and in addition there would be no impact on the significance of this part of the Conservation Area.

The air source heat pump unit would not be fixed to the listed building. The associated pipework would be attached to the wall with surface mounted fixings and the power cable would be attached to the wall with clips. From the unit, there would be a power cable and pipes from behind the unit and then routed on the right side, through the wall, into the adjoining Utility Room. This position would be discreet and mostly hidden from view. The Utility is part of the flat roofed mid-late 20th century infill building. The single storey range behind the air source heat pump has been extensively altered and dates from the late 19th century with 20th century additions and has recently been granted permission for internal and external alterations ref PL/2022/02724 & PL/2022/01502.

As such in heritage terms the location and fixing is discrete and would only have minimal impact on historic fabric. This would not harm the significance of any heritage assets.

Summary & conclusion: The NPPF confirms that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). It makes clear that any harm to a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification.

The impact of the proposals on heritage assets will be neutral and the requirements of current conservation legislation, policy or guidance are considered to be met and there is therefore no objection to the approval of the application.