

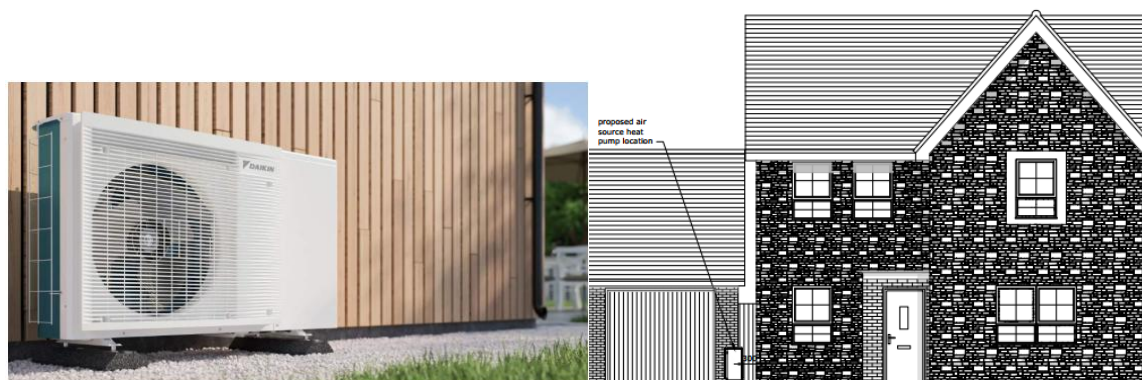
APPLICATION FOR HOUSEHOLDER PLANNING PERMISSION DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2025/08584
APPLICATION TYPE:	Householder planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	8 Gladstone Road, Melksham, SN12 7GZ
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Installation of air source heat pump to side elevation of dwelling
RECOMMENDATION:	That Planning Permission be GRANTED

PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks planning permission for the installation of an air source heat pump to the side elevation. The application is submitted using Householder application forms.

During the course of the application, a recalculated Noise Assessment was submitted.



Proposed ASHP (l) and proposed front elevation showing siting of ASHP (r)

It is proposed to site a free standing air source heat pump (ASHP) to the rear of the side elevation, adjacent to the side wall of the building. The pump would be situated on existing hardstanding which is currently used for off-road parking and separates the host dwelling from the neighbouring property. The siting of the pump will not alter or interfere with the current parking arrangements given that there is sufficient space for adequate parking.

The dimensions of the pump are approx. 0.77m high, 1.2m wide and 0.36m deep, whilst it is proposed to be positioned approx. 0.3m from the side wall of the building. The manufacturer's specification provided illustrates that the proposed heat pump is of standard size and design.

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The property known as 8 Gladstone Road is a detached two storey dwelling house, situated within a modern housing development in Melksham. The property is constructed from Cotswold stone and features a brick porch to the front elevation, a tiled pitched roof and front

and side gables. Adjacent to the property is an area of hardstanding fronting the rear detached single garage. The surrounding area is characterised by modern predominantly detached dwellings of similar style and construction, utilising both Cotswold stone and render construction materials.



The application site is subject to the following planning policy constraints:

- Countryside Character Area – Avon Vale
- Historic Building Site and Monument Record
- Risk of Flooding from Surface Water – Very Low
- Archaeology Monument Polygon- Undated Banks, East of Melksham

PLANNING HISTORY – None relating to this property

RELEVANT POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Wiltshire Core Strategy:

- Core Policy 15: Melksham Community Area
- Core Policy 41: Sustainable Construction and low carbon energy
- Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping

Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 - 2020-2038:

- Policy 1: Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy 2: Local Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and Associated Infrastructure
- Policy 20: Locally Distinctive, High Quality Design

The National Planning Policy Framework:

- Section 12: Achieving well designed places

- Section 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Wiltshire Design Guide: Appendix D – Design Guidance for Householder extensions

The Planning Practice Guidance

National Design Guide

ISSUES

- Design and Impact upon the character and context of the area
- Residential Amenity
- Addressing Climate Change

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Melksham Town Council: No objection

Wiltshire Council Public Protection: Comment –

The applicant has submitted the MCS 020 calculation which demonstrates that this installation has failed, and as such is not eligible for permitted development. No information has been submitted on noise reduction proposals to reduce the noise level to 37dB to comply.

As such, the Environmental Protection comment is that we recommend mitigation to bring the combined rating level at noise-sensitive façade down to 35dB.

When considering the installation of an Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP), applicants are advised to provide details of specific noise mitigation measures prior to determination of the application. These measures should demonstrate that the ASHP will achieve a maximum Rating Level of 35 dB LAeq,15mins at any noise-sensitive façade of neighbouring premises, in both full duty and reverse mode, with adjustments made for acoustic characteristics, in accordance with the CIEH/IOA guidance.

Compliance should be demonstrated using the CIEH/IOA calculation tool, and the completed tool output should be submitted with the application. Where compliance cannot be demonstrated using this tool, a comprehensive noise assessment should be undertaken by a qualified acoustic consultant in accordance with BS 4142:2014+A1:2019, accompanied by a detailed design and mitigation scheme.

Upon the submission of a recalculated Noise Assessment, further comments were provided as follows:

The new calculation states the ASHP is 6.27m from the assessment point, where originally it was stated to be 5.5m. I would suggest that the 0.1dB is indeed a minimal failure and an improvement on the initial 38.2.

REPRESENTATIONS

The application was publicised by direct neighbour letter, however no representations have been made.

ASSESSMENT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

In accordance with this statutory requirement, this application has been assessed against the relevant policies of the Development Plan, including the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and, where applicable, any made Neighbourhood Plans.

Design and Impact upon the character and context of the area

Core Policy 57 - Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to ensure that all new development is of high design quality, reflecting local context, character, and distinctiveness.

Policy 20 of the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan requires development proposals that contribute positively to the conservation, enhancement and extension of the quality and local distinctiveness of the neighbourhood area.

The Wiltshire Design Guide elaborates on WCS Core Policy 57 and requires consideration that should be given to the external appearance, design and materials used for development. Section 12 of the NPPF expects a good standard of design.

The proposed siting of the heat pump adjacent to the side elevation of the host dwelling is considered acceptable and enables the retrofitting of a low-carbon system for space and water heating. Its positioning, set back from the principal elevation and property frontage, will reduce visibility from public vantage points, thereby mitigating against any resulting unacceptable visual impact. The proposal would not appear out of keeping with the character of the existing property or the surrounding area, with the height, design and form of the ASHP considered to be proportionate to the vicinity.

Therefore it is considered that the proposal complies with the design principles set out in Core Policies 41 and 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, Policy 20 of the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan, Appendix D of the Wiltshire Design Guide and section 12 of the NPPF.

Residential Amenity

Point vii of Core Policy 57 - Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to ensure that developments do not adversely affect neighbouring properties.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly Paragraph 135(f), stresses that planning decisions should ensure developments provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended) and Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) guidance, air source heat pumps must comply with noise limits to protect residential amenity. The outdoor unit should not exceed 42 dB at 1 metre from the property boundary. To achieve this, most systems are designed to operate at or below 37 dB at 1 metre from the source, ensuring that noise attenuation over distance meets the required standard. This restriction is intended to minimise any adverse impact on neighbouring occupiers. Where permitted development standards are not met planning permission is required and a bespoke assessment is necessary.

The proposed siting of the heat pump is in proximity to the adjacent neighbour, 10 Gladstone Road, to the east of the site. The heat pump is proposed to be sited at the rear of the hardstanding separating the two properties, which would approximately be 3.4m from the neighbouring boundary, whilst the distance from the centre of the heat pump to the centre of the noise-sensitive facade at number 10 is approx. 6.2m, with the resulting noise rating level calculated as 37.1dB. The original Noise Assessment that was submitted stated that the noise rating level would have been over 38.2dB, which exceeds the noise level of 37dB, whilst the recalculated Noise Assessment confirms the resulting noise level will be 37.1dB.

The heat pump will be visible from the property across the road from the host dwelling – 7 Gladstone Road. The other adjacent neighbour to the host dwelling is 6 Gladstone Road to the west, whilst the properties to the rear of the building are 10 and 12 Macdonald Close. However the distances to the boundaries with the aforementioned properties is considered sufficient to mitigate against any resulting unacceptable impact to residential amenity.

Although the unit is specified at 37.1 dB, which is marginally above the 37 dB threshold used for assessing permitted development, this limit does not apply to the determination of a planning application. The difference of 0.1 dB is acoustically negligible and well below the level at which a change in sound would likely be perceptible. Having regard to the siting of the unit and the limited scale of associated activity, the proposal is not considered to give rise to any unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity. Wiltshire Council Public Protection have stated that the revised noise level calculations confirming 37.1dB would be a minimal failure but is an improvement upon the originally calculated 38.2dB.

On balance, the noise output is therefore considered acceptable and compliant with Core Policy 57 and the of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF, and the proposed is not considered to result in unacceptable impact to the residential amenity of the surrounding properties.

Addressing Climate Change

CP41, Policy 1 and Policy 2 are supportive of measures that align with a transition to net zero. As such these policies are clearly in accordance with the NPPF which states at paragraph 161 that the planning system should support the transition to net zero by 2050. It should help shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and support renewable and low carbon energy.

The proposed heat pump would provide an electrified solution for domestic space and water heating at this dwelling. Unlike gas boilers this has the potential to be powered using renewable energy either from building integrated renewables or through the national grid. The national grid is being decarbonised with decreasing reliance on coal and gas to generate its electricity and more reliance on solar and wind power combined with short and long duration energy storage. Around 80% of the built form in 2050 is already existing and so the retrofit is key to meeting the 2050 net zero target. It is noted that the host building has a large solar array on its south facing roof.

The proposed development would make a very modest contribution to net zero goals, but cumulatively with other similar development is critical to the transition to net zero over the coming decades. The proposals would align with development plan policies and the NPPF in making a positive contribution to the spatial planning objective in the development plan of addressing climate change. Any residual concern in terms of neighbour amenity is outweighed by the modest benefit from this individual proposal.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Householder planning applications are exempt from the requirement to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain under Schedule 7A, Section 4(2)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as inserted by the Environment Act 2021.

CONCLUSION

The proposed heat pump is considered to be acceptable in terms of its design, scale, siting and relationship with the surrounding area. It would not result in unacceptable harm to the host dwelling or the character of the locality and is not considered to result in unacceptable visual impact. Whilst the noise output is marginally above 37db, the increase of 0.1db is considered negligible and therefore is not considered to not result in unacceptable harm to residential amenity. Any residual concern is outweighed by the benefits of supporting a transition to net zero by 2050.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the Wiltshire Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. As such, the application is recommended for approval, subject to the conditions set out below.

RECOMMENDATION: That Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to conditions:

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 28.10.25

02 – Proposed Site Plan received 28.10.25

04 – Proposed Elevations received 05.11.25

Daikin Heat Pump Specification received 28.10.25

MCS020(a) Noise Assessment received 08.12.25