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DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Littlecott Mill, Enford, Wiltshire, SN9 6AW

Dated: 17th September 2026

Introduction

This Design and Access Statement accompanies a Full Planning Application for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the installation and operation of seven small-diameter boreholes (150mm diameter), each extending to a depth of approximately 120m, to serve a Ground Source Heat Pump (GSHP) system at Littlecott Mill, Enford, SN9 6AW.

The proposed development forms part of a wider programme of improvements to the property and seeks to provide an efficient, reliable, and sustainable long-term heating solution whilst minimising disturbance to the site, its setting, and the surrounding environment.

The Site

The application site lies within the Enford Conservation Area and is partially located within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The property is situated adjacent to the River Avon, which is designated as both a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The proposed boreholes will be located within the existing residential curtilage and will be entirely below ground upon completion. As a result, there will be no material alteration to the appearance of the property, the surrounding landscape, or the wider character of the Conservation Area. All disturbed areas will be fully reinstated following completion of the works.

The Proposal

This application has been submitted as a Full Planning Application in accordance with the requirements of Wiltshire Council following an Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Opinion ref: PL/2025/06298 and in connection with the wider approved development under application reference PL/2024/07733.

The proposal comprises the installation of seven boreholes, each approximately 120m deep and 150mm in diameter, to facilitate the operation of a Ground Source Heat Pump system. The works will involve a temporary drilling operation within the property curtilage, after which all boreholes, associated pipework, and infrastructure will remain below ground. The land will then be restored to its existing condition.

The design has been developed to minimise land disturbance, avoid unnecessary intervention within the site, and ensure that the development has no lasting visual or environmental impact on either the surrounding landscapes, habitats, the property or its historic setting.

The proposed GSHP system will replace reliance on conventional fossil-fuel-based heating and will significantly improve the energy efficiency and environmental performance of the property. In particular, the proposal will reduce dependence on fuel oil storage within an area susceptible to flooding and located adjacent to environmentally sensitive watercourses. The system will deliver a low-carbon, renewable heating source, reducing operational carbon emissions over its lifetime whilst improving the long-term resilience and sustainability of the property.

Furthermore, Ground Source Heat Pump technology benefits from a long operational lifespan and low maintenance requirements, reducing the need for future replacement of heating infrastructure and assisting in future-proofing the property against evolving energy efficiency standards and environmental objectives.

Environmental Assessment

Comprehensive ecological, hydrological, and geological assessments have been undertaken to evaluate the existing environmental conditions and the potential impacts arising from both the installation and operation of the proposed boreholes.

These assessments conclude that the development will not give rise to significant adverse effects on the surrounding environment, including protected habitats, ecological networks, groundwater resources, or the adjacent River Avon SSSI and SAC.

The installation process will result only in limited and temporary disturbance within the site. Upon completion of the works, all affected areas will be reinstated, ensuring no permanent loss of habitat or degradation of landscape character.

The Environment Agency has previously reviewed the proposal and confirmed that, as each borehole is located more than 20 metres from the River Avon and will not result in floodplain displacement or adversely affect flood risk characteristics, it has no objections to the proposed development.

Access

Access for drilling equipment and associated construction vehicles will be obtained via the existing site entrance and established access routes which have been already approved under permit by the EA for the ongoing site works under application reference PL/2024/07733. No permanent changes to site access arrangements are proposed.

The temporary nature of the drilling works ensures that any impacts associated with construction traffic, noise, and site activity will be short-term and appropriately managed through the contractor's working practices and environmental controls.

Conclusion

The proposed development represents a sustainable and environmentally responsible intervention that will facilitate the installation of a renewable energy heating system with substantial long-term benefits.

The proposal:

- Represents a sustainable and low-impact form of development that is entirely appropriate within the Conservation Area.
- Will have no permanent visual impact on the property, its setting, or the wider landscape.
- Delivers significant carbon reduction and environmental benefits when compared with conventional fossil-fuel heating systems.
- Reduces reliance on fuel oil storage within a flood-prone and environmentally sensitive location.
- Future-proofs the property through the adoption of modern, low-carbon heating technology.
- Will not adversely affect local ecology, habitats, groundwater resources, watercourses, or designated environmental assets.
- Supports the wider refurbishment and long-term conservation of the property as approved under application reference PL/2024/07733.

For these reasons, it is considered that the proposal constitutes an appropriate and sustainable form of development that accords with relevant national and local planning policy objectives, and we respectfully request that planning permission be granted.