

Supporting Statement

Proposal: Installation of an air source heat pump at Campus West, Welwyn Garden City

Applicant: Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has set up a Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to provide grants for public sector bodies to fund heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency measures. The scheme forms part of the Governments pledge to deliver the UK target of achieving net zero by 2050. It is available for capital energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation projects within public sector non-domestic buildings, to deliver the following objectives:

- Deliver stimulus to the energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation sectors, supporting jobs.
- Deliver significant carbon savings within the public sector.

Welwyn Hatfield Council has been successful in its bid to BEIS and has been awarded grant funding for 3 decarbonisation projects to replace the gas fired boilers with combined air source heat pump and water source heat pump systems at 3 of its sites, including Campus East. Overall, the measures seek to achieve a significant reduction in CO2 emissions across the 3 sites, contributing towards the Council's own pledge to reach its goal of net zero emissions by 2030.

Campus West is one of the sites to be upgraded. The planning application seeks consent for a roof mounted air source heat pump to be installed at the site. The unit dimension is 7m length; 2.2m wide and 2.58m high mounted on a 0.3m high steel plinth. The siting for the unit has been influenced by the available roof space to avoid existing plant and a location that will minimise noise impacts to nearby dwellings and be screened by existing roof plant and the Campus West tower.

The proposed siting is set back from the front elevation of the building between the tower and the existing plant room to limit its visual appearance from both ground level/street views. It will be screened in the most part by the existing plantroom which is similar height and the tower itself so that at most, only glimpsed views may be gained from a distance and then it will be set in the context of the existing plant.

The proposed unit has a light grey finish to blend with the other plant. It will not be prominent from the street scene. There will be minimal visual impact arising from the proposal and it will not result in a discordant addition to the Campus West building.

The site is located within the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area. Section 16 of the 2019 NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' is broadly consistent with Policy SADM15 'Heritage' of the Emerging Local Plan. Also of relevance, and consistent with the NPPF, are Policies D1 and D2 of the adopted Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2005) which seek to provide a good standard of design in all new development and require that all new development respects and relates to the character and context of the area in which it is to be sited. Given the location of the small-scale structure at roof level, set within the context of existing plant and set back from the principle elevation of building alongside the tower, the impact upon the conservation areas as a whole is considered to be acceptable with no policy conflict. The proposal would also comply with the provisions of Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which seeks to preserve the Conservation Area.

Adopted Policy D1 and the Supplementary Design Guidance aim to preserve the amenity of neighbouring properties. An initial acoustic survey has been carried out by Hepworth Acoustics to guide the location of the pump. It is being updated to reflect the final proposal and will be forwarded when complete. It will include an assessment of the noise impacts of the pump upon the nearest residential properties in Scholars Mews to the north of the site. The heating is only required during the centre opening hours and it is not proposed to be operated between the night-time hours of 11pm and 7am.

The proposal is supported by the 2019 National Planning Policy Framework on tackling climate change. NPPF Paragraph 154 directs local planning authorities to approve this type of application where its impacts can be made acceptable. Overall, the impact upon the visual character and amenity of neighbouring properties will be negligible and planning permission should be granted.

Officers will note the application drawing includes an array of Photovoltaic Panels which form part of the decarbonisation project for the building. However, this PV array benefits from Permitted Development Rights under Schedule 2, Part 14, Class J of the General Permitted Development Order 2015, as amended. Accordingly, these do not form part of this application for planning permission.

Roebuck Land and Planning Ltd

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