

Delegated Decision
Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/24/2410	Case Officer:	Caroline Grist
Application Type:	Full Application		
Proposal:	Installation of new air source heat pumps to replace the existing defective gas fired boilers at the school.		
Site:	St Pauls Catholic College, Jane Murray Way, Burgess Hill, West Sussex, RH15 8GA, , ,		
Validation Date	15 Apr 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	5 Nov 2024
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	15 Jul 2025
Target Date:	10 Jun 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	Caroline Grist

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
---	--	------------------------	---

Signed and Agreed By:	Stephen Ashdown	Date:	15 Jul 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/24/2410

**St Pauls Catholic College, Jane Murray Way, Burgess Hill, West Sussex, RH15 8GA, ,
Installation of new air source heat pumps to replace the existing defective gas fired boilers at the school.**

Mrs Vanessa Milne

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

No representations have been received in response to this application.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

Nature Space

Thank you for consulting me on the above planning application. The proposed development is not considered to be relevant to the District Licensing Scheme in this case and we consider there would be no likely impact on great crested newts or their habitats. I therefore have no comments to make at this time. If the proposal changes, then please seek further advice from me if necessary.

Environmental Protection

I've reviewed the acoustic report by Evolved Acoustics, dated the 9th of October 2024, reference: EV2442-01-B.

The report includes data from unattended monitoring conducted over nine days, from 10th to 18th September, as well as attended monitoring for one hour between 4:00 AM and 5:00 AM on 18th September.

The report shows that at the nearest residence, the air source heat pump will achieve a noise level of 36dB, which is 6dB below the background level during the day and approximately at the background level at night, measured at the nearest residential façade.

While we usually require units to be 5dB below background noise levels, the background levels here are particularly low. Additionally, the report appears to have taken a worst-case scenario approach in determining the background noise levels.

Therefore, provided the unit is installed as specified in the report, I would have no objection to the application.

TOWN COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

Recommend Approval.

INTRODUCTION

Planning permission is sought for the installation of new air source heat pumps to replace the existing defective gas fired boilers at the school.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

00/02611/C3REG - Outline application for new secondary school complete with playing fields, playgrounds, car parking, access roads, cycle and pedestrian routes and caretaker's house. Permission.

01/01313/C3REG - Reserved matters application for new secondary school complete with playing fields, playgrounds, car parking, access roads, cycle and pedestrian routes, and caretaker's house. Permission.

02/01233/C3REG - Reserved Matters application for details of landscaping as part of the proposed construction of a new secondary school. Permission.

04/02611/C3REG - Single storey extension to new school to provide supplementary changing and shower facilities and artificial turf pitch. Permission.

09/00135/C3REG - To raise the levels of the existing college site by infill to provide additional playing fields. Permission.

10/00606/C3REG - Construction of a tensile fabric canopy over an existing internal courtyard. Permission.

11/04119/C3REG - To raise the levels of the existing college site by infill to provide additional playing fields (replacement of extant permission CD/09/135/C3REG. Permission.

14/02613/C3REG - Extension to existing science block - Block E - to provide for expansion of sixth form and science teaching accommodation. Permission.

DM/19/2926 - Erection of 160.4sqm permanent, detached, single storey, timber-framed flat roofed classroom building for D1 educational use on existing hard standing on school site. Permission.

DM/20/2214 - Erection of 160.4sqm permanent, detached, single storey, timber-framed flat roofed classroom building for D1 educational use on existing hard standing on school site. Permission.

DM/24/0585 - Installation of new air source heat pumps to replace the existing defective gas fired boilers at the school including acoustic fencing/ enclosure and gates. Permission.

DM/24/2686 - Proposed demolition of the existing caretaker garage to be replaced with a two storey side extension to the existing caretaker house. A complete new replacement roof and remodelling of the building to convert it into a reception area, offices and meeting rooms. The existing entrance is to be redeveloped into a new access with additional parking to the front and a new outdoor terrace is proposed at the rear. Pending Consideration.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

St Pauls Catholic College is a predominantly two storey building that is situated within the built up area of Burgess Hill. The building is generally brick built, with sections of cladding in timber and render. The location of the proposed development is situated to the west of the entrance and within the immediate grounds of this educational facility.

To the west of the wider site is the A2300, whilst Jane Murray Way is to the east. Countryside is to the north and the Link Road round-a-bout is to the south, from which access is gained to the college.

APPLICATION DETAILS

Planning permission is sought to install four air source heat pumps (ASHPs) on a grassed area between the wall of the school and area of vehicular parking. Each pump is to be approximately 3.3 metres wide, 2.31 metres high and 1.2 metres deep. The ASHPs are to be enclosed by an acoustic fencing enclosure that is to be 2.0 metres high. Overall the enclosure is to be some 9.4 metres wide and 7.1 metres deep.

This application follows a consent from ASHPs granted under reference DM/24/0585. The Design and Access Statement that accompanies this application sets out that:

'Following grant of planning for installation of new air source heat pumps to replace the existing defective gas fired boilers at the school including acoustic fencing/ enclosure and gates (Ref: DM/24/0585) and

dated 9th of July 2024, it is proposed to amend the number, size and location of the external ASHP units as indicated in the drawings submitted with this statement.

The proposal will provide a modern, lower emission, sustainable and energy efficient space heating provision for the school in place of the aged and poor condition existing gas heating service to the school.

The works are proposed in order to provide a sustainable solution to the space heating needs for the school. The works will provide a brand-new system with warranty and assist with the current pressure upon the school due to a failing gas heating system. The new system will provide a sustainable and energy efficient heating system for the school in line with Government targets and local policy guidance'.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND LIST OF POLICIES

Planning legislation holds that the determination of a planning application shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Using this as the starting point the development plan for this part of Mid Sussex consists of the District Plan, Site Allocations Document (DPD) and Burgess Hill Neighbourhood Plan.

National policy (which is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance) does not form part of the development plan but is an important material consideration.

Mid Sussex District Plan

The District Plan was adopted at Full Council on 28th March 2018.

Relevant policies:

DP25 - Community Facilities and Local Services

DP26 - Character and Design

DP40 - Renewable Energy Schemes

Site Allocations Development Plan Document

The Site Allocations DPD was adopted on 29th June 2022. It allocates sufficient housing and employment land to meet identified needs to 2031.

There are no relevant policies.

Burgess Hill Neighbourhood Plan

The Burgess Hill Neighbourhood Plan was made in January 2016.

No relevant planning policies.

Other Material Considerations

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021 - 2039 - Submission Draft (Regulation 19)

The District Council is reviewing and updating the District Plan. Upon adoption, the new District Plan 2021 - 2039 will replace the current District Plan 2014-2031 and its policies will have full weight. In accordance with the NPPF, Local Planning Authorities may give weight to relevant policies of the emerging plan according to the stage of preparation; the extent to which there are unresolved objections to the relevant policies; and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF. The draft District Plan 2021-2039 (Regulation 19) is currently at Examination and the stage 1 hearings were concluded on the 31st October 2024. There are unresolved objections to the majority of policies in the draft District Plan and as such, only minimal weight can be given to the Plan and this planning application has been assessed against the policies of the adopted District Plan.

Relevant policies:

DPS2 - Sustainable Design and Construction

DPS3 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Schemes

DPS6 - Health and Wellbeing

DPB1 - Character and Design

DPI6 - Community and Cultural Facilities and Local Services

Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

The Council has adopted a 'Mid Sussex Design Guide' SPD that aims to help deliver high quality development across the district that responds appropriately to its context and is inclusive and sustainable. The Design Guide was adopted by Council on 4th November 2020 as an SPD for use in the consideration and determination of planning applications. The SPD is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2023)

The NPPF sets out the government's policy in order to ensure that the planning system contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 sets out the three objectives to sustainable development, such that the planning system needs to perform an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective.

Paragraph 12 of the NPPF states *'The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed'*.

Paragraph 38 of the NPPF states *'Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible'*.

With specific reference to decision-taking paragraph 47 states that planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

ASSESSMENT

Principle of development

Policy DP25 of the Mid Sussex District Plan relates to community facilities and local services, which includes education facilities. This policy sets out:

'The provision or improvement of community facilities and local services that contribute to creating sustainable communities will be supported.

Where proposals involve the loss of a community facility, (including those facilities where the loss would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs locally) evidence will need to be provided that demonstrates:

- o that the use is no longer viable; or*
- o that there is an existing duplicate facility in the locality which can accommodate the impact of the loss of the facility; or*
- o that a replacement facility will be provided in the locality.*

The on-site provision of new community facilities will be required on larger developments, where practicable and viable, including making land available for this purpose. Planning conditions and/ or

planning obligations will be used to secure on-site facilities. Further information about the provision, including standards, of community facilities will be set out in a Supplementary Planning Document.

Community facilities and local services to meet local needs will be identified through Neighbourhood Plans or a Site Allocations Development Plan Document produced by the District Council'.

With regards to renewable energy schemes, policy DP40 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states:

'Proposals for new renewable and low carbon energy projects (other than wind energy development - see below), including community-led schemes, will be permitted provided that any adverse local impacts can be made acceptable, with particular regard to:

- o Landscape and visual impacts, including cumulative impacts, such as on the setting of the South Downs National Park and High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the appearance of existing buildings;*
- o Ecology and biodiversity, including protected species, and designated and non-designated wildlife sites;*
- o Residential amenity including visual intrusion, air, dust, noise, odour, traffic generation, recreation and access.*

Assessment of impacts will need to be based on the best available evidence, including landscape capacity studies.

Proposals for wind energy development involving one or more wind turbines will only be granted if:

- o the development site is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in a Neighbourhood Plan; and*
- o following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by affected local communities have been fully addressed and therefore the proposal has their backing'.*

The proposed development relates to St Pauls Catholic College, which is an established education facility. It is considered that the proposed development would bring an improvement to the collage through the addition of a sustainable energy source, which would contribute to creating a sustainable community.

With regards to the ASHPs they are to be sited away from the South Downs National Park and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The site is not of ecological value, has not been identified as a habitat suitable for protected species and is not a wildlife site. A full assessment of the visual and amenity impact will follow and, subject to this assessment, the principle of the proposed development is considered to accord with the requirements of policies DP25 and DP40 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

Design and impact to amenity

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states:

'All development and surrounding spaces, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings and replacement dwellings, will be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development:

- o is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;*
- o contributes positively to, and clearly defines, public and private realms and should normally be designed with active building frontages facing streets and public open spaces to animate and provide natural surveillance;*
- o creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;*
- o protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;*
- o protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages;*

- o does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution (see Policy DP27);*
- o creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible;*
- o incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed;*
- o positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design;*
- o take the opportunity to encourage community interaction by creating layouts with a strong neighbourhood focus/centre; larger (300+ unit) schemes will also normally be expected to incorporate a mixed use element;*
- o optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development'.*

Principle DG37 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide supports incorporating renewable energy sources including air source heat pumps.

The ASHPs are to be sited away from the college entrance and would be screened by a limb of the building. Within this space there is currently an existing plant room and storage facility. Given this context, it is considered that the functional design of the proposal would not appear incongruous. The development would also not be visible from the neighbouring A2300 due to its scale, position and planted screening along the highway.

In terms of the impact on amenity, the proposal would be positioned within the school grounds. As such neighbour's light, outlook and privacy would not be adversely affected. No new lighting is proposed that would give rise to this form of pollution nor would air pollution be anticipated. The Environmental Health Officer has considered noise impact and is satisfied that neighbouring residential properties would not be significantly harmed by the proposal, providing that the development is installed as specified in the submitted acoustic report. A condition can be attached to any consent to ensure that this does occur.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain this application comprises development below the de-minimis threshold meaning that this development is exempt from providing biodiversity net gain.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the proposal would accord with the requirements of policies DP25, DP26 and DP40 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and is therefore considered acceptable.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Caroline Grist