27 November 2023

Design and Access Statement

Highgate Branch Library, Chester Road, London N19 5DH – Siting of Air Source Heat Pumps in connection with the Decarbonisation works.

1. INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access Statement outlines the proposed project for the Highgate Branch Library which comprises the siting of Air Source Heat Pumps in connection with the proposed decarbonisation works to the building. It is structured under the following, four headings:

- Response to the Context
- Use
- Amount
- Layout Access and Appearance

2. RESPONSE TO CONTEXT

2.1 The Existing Building

2.1.1 The building was designed to be a Public Library and its use has not changed since it was erected in 1906. Named, The Highgate Branch Library, it is an embodiment of William Nisbet Blair's architectural vision, who served as the St Pancras Borough Engineer. This building stands as a single-storey structure, fashioned from red brick and intricate terracotta embellishments. Its design reflects symmetry, encompassing three bays. The central bay features a distyle-in-antis arcaded stone loggia, adorned with Corinthian capitals and terracotta keystones. Brick pilasters on either side of the loggia support a dentil pediment. At the centre of this pediment, a Diocletian window is framed by a terracotta architrave and keystone. The adjacent bays replicate this layout, with brick arcading featuring terracotta keystones, and each bay accommodating three windows. Above the arcading, terracotta balustrades are flanked by brick dies.

2.1.2 It was the first public library in St Pancras and is now a Grade II listed building. A single storey extension was added to the rear (south end) of the library in 1936 and this was used as a Children's Library. Nowadays it is used as a community space, housing fitness classes, yoga classes and the like.

2.1.3 The interior is simple. The central isle is barrel vaulted and flanking bays are flat; both painted lath and plaster. Internal walls to the main library have feature round-arched recesses in painted plaster. Covering a total gross internal floor area (GIFA) of 494m² it is arranged over two floors with a Basement Plant Room, Ground Floor and Attic space over the central bay which has vaulted ceilings.

2.1.4 The external walls are solid red brick with terracotta dressings, windows are timber painted, the flat roofs are all mineral felt and the pitched roof to the central isle is natural slate. There are carved Buff and Portland stone dressings and balustrades, columns and loggia to the front elevation. Internally, walls and ceilings are painted plaster. Roof windows are uPVC with single polycarbonate sheeting.

2.2 Proposed works

2.2.1 The project is the Decarbonisation of Highgate Library. As part of The London Borough of Camden's (LBC), Carbon Reduction Programme, Highgate Library has been identified as a suitable building with a number of opportunities to upgrade the life expired heating and ventilation system and improve the thermal properties to the main elements of the building, including the walls, roof and windows.

2.2.2 The decarbonisation works are being funded by the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) which is funded by The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and delivered by Salix Finance Ltd who are a non-departmental public body, owned wholly by government and is funded by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, the Department of Education, the Welsh and Scottish Government. The scheme was made available for capital energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation projects within public sector non-domestic buildings, including central government departments and non-departmental public bodies in England only, 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.

2.2.3 The driver to the proposed works is Camden Councils initiative to reduce the carbon footprint of their building stock in line with the UK's target to become net zero by 2050. Highgate Library is a historic building with a life expired gas fire heating system and inoperable natural ventilation system along with inefficient walls, single glazed windows and roof coverings. The existing systems and as-built construction present many opportunities to upgrade thermal performance, increase the efficiency of the heating and ventilation system and reduce the carbon footprint.

2.2.4 Upgrades to the thermal performance and ventilation are, where applicable subject to a separate Listed Building Consent Application. This application is concerned with the proposal to site, 3 nr Air Source Heat Pumps in the rear East Courtyard

3. USE

3.1 The building was originally designed as a Public Library in 1906 and has not changed use since. The proposed works do not include any change of use but include the decarbonisation of the existing heating system.

4. AMOUNT

4.1 There are three (3) Air Source Heat Pumps which are located on in the rear East Courtyard on galvanised metal staging. They are 1105mm wide x 1440mm high x 4790mm deep and each have a sound power level of 65bBA which is the equivalent to normal conversation.

5. LAYOUT ACCESS AND APPEARANCE

5.1 The project will address several aspects of layout, access, and appearance:

a) Layout: The Air Source heat pumps are to be located in the rear East Courtyard which has a minimum distance of 7m away from Chester House, the neighbouring residential property.

b) Access: Access to the rear courtyard is via double external doors. It is not accessible by the public.

c) Appearance: The Air Source Heat Pumps are concealed behind a c. 3m high brick boundary wall and will not be visible from the Public Highway. There are mature shrubs and tree on the neighbouring side providing additional separation.