

23rd March 2022

251 Goldhurst Terrace, NW6 3EP

DESIGN & HERITAGE STATEMENT
Planning Application for Air Source Heat Pumps

Site Context

The site is located at number 251 Goldhurst Terrace and is a private residence set within an existing Victorian 3 storey brick semi detached house. The property benefits from a relatively long rear garden, being approximately 38m at it's longest part. The garden is accessed through a narrow gated alleyway on the right of the residence and is not visible from the public domain.

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The site is located in the South Hampstead Conservation Area which was designated as such in 1988. South Hampstead is a well preserved example of a leafy Victorian suburb, almost exclusively residential in nature, and largely homogenous in scale and character. The area is characterised by large, semi-detached and terraced late-Victorian properties, in red or gault (white / cream) brick, with a particularly distinctive and attractive roofscape. One of the most prominent features of the area is vegetation – both to the front and rear of properties. Building lines of the residential streets are generally set-back from the pavement.

Design Proposal

The proposals set out in this application relate to the rear garden of this property.

The applicant wishes to replace their 2 old and very inefficient gas boilers with a new hot water and heating system run off highly efficient air source heat pumps. This, in conjunction with a comprehensive scheme of internal wall insulation and loft insulation, will greatly reduce the properties carbon footprint in line with various planning policies both at local and national level. It is clear from Camden's key policy documents that addressing the climate emergency is now a central part of the planning process. The Camden Climate Action Plan 2020-2025 (CCAP) ambitiously states that the borough has the aim of achieving zero carbon by 2030, demonstrating truly progressive leadership far in excess of that of central government. Page 25 of the CCAP states: *'To help solve this we need to improve the energy efficiency of buildings to reduce heating demand, and replace gas heating systems with low carbon alternatives such as air or ground source heat pumps'*.

Furthermore, Camden's Local Plan Policy CC1 - Climate Change Mitigation part D, states that the council will seek to: *'support and encourage sensitive energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings;'*

The transition from gas as a heating source to ASHP in this regard will be in line with these aspirations, and represent a logical approach to retrofitting the existing housing stock.

Design Guidance

Guidance on the application of various renewable and low carbon energy solutions has been sought from Camden's CPG - Energy Efficiency and Adaptation prior to settling on the use of ASHP's in this instance. Two of the key issues noted in the CPG are:

1. Consideration of noise and vibration; and
2. Consideration of the visual impact.

The accompanying noise assessment and report details how the proposals would satisfy the noise and vibration criteria, primarily by siting the units to the rear of the properties long garden. This would be over 30m distance from the nearest sensitive noise receptors. The location at the back of the garden also helps address the matter of visual impact, whereby the units would not be visible from the public domain, and indeed would be barely visible from the rear of adjoining properties due to substantial natural screening from existing garden vegetation.

In terms of ASHP's and their appropriateness in the setting of conservation areas, Camden's SPD on Energy Efficiency Planning Guidance for Conservation Areas provides some insight. Whilst not discussing ASHP's directly, the document does give an indication of the general direction of travel with regards to measures designed to combat climate change. Page 20 says the following:

'On the basis that climate change is real and a risk to the public, and given that research suggests that local and national carbon reduction targets will be difficult to achieve without making significant energy efficiency improvements to existing homes, it may be reasonable to conclude that improving the energy efficiency of existing homes does provide a public benefit.'

This clearly demonstrates that there is positive gain to be had from the sensitive use of low carbon technologies within the conservation area if they do not create substantial harm to the CA, which would clearly be the case in this instance.

More technical guidance on the introduction of ASHP's at this site has also been sought from the Carbon Trust's 2020 guide 'Heat Pump Retrofit in London' produced for the GLA. Indeed, the guide notes that 'heat pumps are the primary technology choice for decarbonising heat in existing London buildings' and provides a number of practical recommendations for the installations of heat pumps for existing buildings such as this.