

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Alex Howard.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
25/01142/FP	Installation of two air source heat pumps and concrete bases, with associated screening (as amended by information and plans received 28th August 2025 and 9th September 2025).	5 Lower King Street Royston Hertfordshire SG8 5AL

Submitted Plan Nos

Location Plan 01 Site Plan V2 02 Elevation plan V2 ENG - Noistop Steel Enclosure Datasheet NP-013079 - Noise Impact Assessment - NOVA Acoustics Ltd

1.0 Policies

D1	Sustainable design
D3	Protecting living conditions
HE1	Designated heritage assets
HE3	Non-designated heritage assets
SECN12	Achieving well-designed places
SECN16	Conserve + enhance historic environment

2.0 **Site History**

2.1 None relevant.

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Royston Town Council** – None received.

3.2 **Conservation Officer** – None received.

3.3 **Environmental Health** – Initial responses on the 9th June 2025 and 22nd July 2025 seeking a Noise Impact Assessment to be undertaken and submitted for consideration, given the nature and potential receptors of the proposal.

Following the submission of a Noise Impact Assessment which recommended two methods for mitigation to give 'no observed adverse effect level', amended plans were submitted showing a 1.4m Noistop Essential acoustic fence.

Further comments were received on the 29th September 2025, stating that further to the additional information, they are satisfied with the mitigation as proposed. A condition requiring the proposals to be installed in accordance with the submitted details is recommended.

- 3.4 **Site Notice and Neighbour Consultation** – Comments received from 3 Lower King Street raising the following matters:

*“These machines are noisy under normal operation and are likely to be poorly maintained, making them even noisier.
I object on the grounds that these machines are very likely to interfere with the peaceful enjoyment of my home”.*

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

- 4.1.1 The site comprises 5 Lower King Street, which is Royston Museum, located on the west side of Lower King Street. The building is set back from the highway down a private pedestrian access. The building itself is a Building of Local Interest (BLI) and is within the Royston Conservation Area. There are a number of listed buildings/BLIs fronting Lower King Street and neighbouring the site generally.

4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 The application seeks planning permission for the installation of two air source heat pumps and concrete bases, with associated screening (as amended by information and plans received 28th August 2025 and 9th September 2025).

4.3 **Key Issues**

- 4.3.1 The key issues in this case are the principle of development, the impact on heritage assets/design, impact on neighbouring amenity, and other matters:

Principle of Development

- 4.3.2 The proposal seeks to install two air source heat pumps (ASHPs) in front the building to improve the heating system in the building and reduces the carbon footprint. The existing building is old and uses a gas boiler which is no longer fit for purpose, such that it does not provide sufficient heat to the ground floor areas which are open to the public. The new ASHPs will provide more efficient thermal performance and be more sustainable generally, which is considered acceptable.

Heritage Assets/Design

- 4.3.3 The host building is a Building of Local Interest and is within the Royston Conservation Area. Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that in the exercise of planning powers in conservation areas *“special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area”*.
- 4.3.4 The two proposed ASHPs are to be sited in front the building in the forecourt area on top of concrete bases, where the existing planters and benches are currently sited. The ASHPs will be located behind a 1.4m Noistop essential acoustic fencing which will screen it from the front and side. It is proposed to clad the acoustic fencing in wooden slats to soften its appearance.

- 4.3.5 Following a surgery session with the Councils Conservation Officer, it is considered that the proposal will not result in any significant harm to the host building as a BLI, nor would it result in any significant harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The ASHPs are to be screened by a 1.4m acoustic fence, which will in turn be screened by wooden slats to improve its appearance when looking from Lower King Street on the pedestrian access. There is a possibility for further screening in the future through planters, but this will be for the applicant to consider in the future. The benefits of this proposal, to improve the efficiency and heating of the BLI, outweighs the very limited harm to the designated and non-designated heritage assets.
- 4.3.6 The proposal is considered acceptable in its impact on the relevant designated and non-designated heritage assets, in line with Policies D1, HE1 and HE3 of the Local Plan and Section 16 of the NPPF.

Neighbour Amenity

- 4.3.7 The site is located within relatively close proximity to a number of immediate neighbours to the northwest, northeast and southeast, which are residential properties. Whilst the nature of the proposal is such that the scheme will not be overbearing, result in loss of privacy, or loss of daylight/sunlight, the ASHPs have the potential to result in noise impacts.
- 4.3.8 The Councils Environmental Health Officer (EHO) has been extensively involved in this proposal, providing expert advice on several occasions. The EHO requested that a full Noise Impact Assessment be carried out which was submitted on the 28th August 2025. This assessment provided two possible mitigation measures to offset the impact of the ASHPs such that they will give 'no observed adverse effect level'. The applicant has chosen to incorporate the 1.4m Noistop acoustic fence screen and amended plans have been submitted on this basis. Subject to the amended plans and the further information, the EHO has confirmed that they are satisfied the proposal is acceptable in its impact on noise towards neighbours. They have recommended a condition to ensure that the scheme and associated mitigation measures be installed in accordance with the submitted Royston Museum Trust CIO Heat Pump Installation plan version 2 dated 9/9/25.
- 4.3.9 Overall, subject to the above condition and in accordance with the submitted details and additional information, the proposal will not result in any adverse harm to the reasonable living conditions and well-being of neighbouring properties. This is in accordance with Policy D3 of the Local Plan.

Other Matters

- 4.3.10 The proposal is exempt from the mandatory 10% BNG.

4.4 Conclusion

- 4.4.1 The proposal is considered acceptable in planning terms against the relevant Local and National planning policies.

4.5 Alternative Options

4.5.1 None.

4.6 **Pre-Commencement Conditions**

4.6.1 N/A.

5.0 **Recommendation**

5.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out wholly in accordance with the details specified in the application and supporting approved documents and plans listed above.

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with details which form the basis of this grant of permission.

3. The development hereby permitted shall be installed in accordance with the submitted Royston Museum Trust CIO Heat Pump Installation plan version 2 dated 9/9/25.

Reason: To ensure the development has an acceptable impact on neighbouring amenity, in line with Policy D3 of the Local Plan.

4. The acoustic fence for the development hereby permitted shall be clad in wooden slats/fencing as agreed via email on the 30th September 2025, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the completed development has an acceptable visual impact, in line with Policy D1 of the Local Plan.

Biodiversity Net Gain

1. This development is not subject to the statutory Biodiversity Gain Plan condition because it is considered exempt under the statutory exemptions (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments>) or

transitional arrangements in respect of the biodiversity gain condition.

Proactive Statement:

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. The Council acted proactively through positive engagement with the applicant during the determination process which led to improvements to the scheme. The Council has therefore acted proactively in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraph 38) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Signed  Anne McDonald	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Determining Officer Date: 30 September 2025	