



PLANNING BY DESIGN

FROM CONCEPT TO COMPLETION

Design and Access Statement (including Heritage statement)

85 Findhorn Forres, Moray, IV36 3YG

Air source heat pump at the rear ground
(retrospective)

On Behalf of Energy Pig LTD

Drafted by **Planning By Design**

15 January 2024

Application

Planning By Design (The agent) has been instructed to act on behalf of Energy Pig LTD (the applicant) to submit a planning application to Moray Council (the Local Planning Authority) for an air source heat pump at the rear ground (retrospective) at 85 Findhorn Forres, Moray, IV36 3YG (the site).

In support of this application, the following Design and Access Statement (including Heritage) has been constructed to demonstrate the suitability of this site for this proposal and evaluate its accordance with national and local planning policy along with supplementary design guidance.

Site Location

The application site is located at 85 Findhorn Forres, Moray, IV36 3YG. It comprises a small rectangular, single storey cottage with a side extension.

The property is located in a predominantly residential area, sitting within the Findhorn Conservation Area. There is an Article 4 direction imposed within the conservation area which has removed permitted development rights.

The Findhorn Area Character Appraisal states that The Findhorn Conservation Area is a fine example of a traditional Seatown settlement in Moray. It has a unique and distinctive "sense of place" and has a rich and well-maintained townscape. The built form is characterised by small traditional single-storey properties to larger 19th-century houses that are two/three and a half storeys in height. The majority of buildings within the Conservation are unlisted however these buildings are still of significant architectural merit and townscape value that must be protected.

In considering an application for planning permission in a Conservation Area, the 1997 Act directs planning authorities to ensure that new development will preserve and enhance the character and appearance of an area. The aim is to ensure that new development will enhance an area's quality and therefore the experience of visitors and residents alike. The design of new development should therefore be derived from a thorough understanding of the special qualities of the Conservation Area, which led to its designation in the first place.

The Proposal

The proposed development is for an air source heat pump to be installed at the rear ground of the property.

The pump is installed at the ground floor level. It is located 1.790m from the boundary and 0.3m away from the property. It is located immediately behind the house and it sits below the level of the existing boundary fencing. Its dimensions are illustrated below.

The unit is enclosed within a semi-open, slatted casing which is in keeping with similar colour schemes on neighbouring properties and screens the unit whilst allowing ventilation.

The heat pump has been installed in line with MCS and Scottish Government planning guidelines in terms of location and siting.

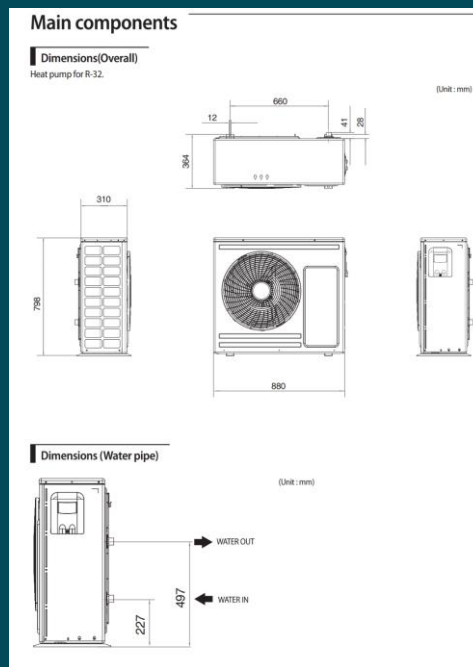


Fig 1 - dimensions



Fig 2 – screening enclosure

Planning History

N/A

Planning Policy

The following planning policy and guidance documents are recognised as material considerations for the assessment of this application

- Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) 2020
- National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

The following section will evaluate the proposals in accordance with the relevant policies and supplementary design guidance of the Council to demonstrate why the proposal should be considered as acceptable in principle and in strict accordance with the Council's development criteria.

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) was adopted by the Scottish Ministers on 13 February 2023 and forms part of the Council's Development Plan. NPF4 policies support the planning and delivery of Sustainable Places, Liveable Places and Productive Places and are the key policies against which proposals for development Page 3 of 7 23/04601/FUL are assessed. Several policies in the Edinburgh Local Development Plan (LDP) are superseded by equivalent and alternative policies within NPF4. The relevant policies to be considered are:

NPF4 Policy 1 - Policy 1 states that when considering all development proposals significant weight will be given to the global climate and nature crises.

NPF4 Policy 16g states in g) that householder development proposals will be supported where they:

- i. do not have a detrimental impact on the character or environmental quality of the home and the surrounding area in terms of size, design and materials; and
- ii. do not have a detrimental effect on the neighbouring properties in terms of physical impact, overshadowing or overlooking.

Local Plan

Policy DP1 Development Principles seeks to ensure that proposals meet siting and design requirements, these include development being of scale, density and character to its surroundings and integrating into the landscape, proposals not adversely impacting on neighbouring properties in terms of privacy daylight or overbearing loss of amenity.

Policy EP9 Conservation Areas states that all development within a Conservation Area must preserve and enhance the established traditional character or appearance of the area.

Policy DP9 renewable energy states that all renewable energy proposals will be considered favourably where they meet the following criteria:

- i) They are compliant with policies to safeguard and enhance the built and natural environment;
- ii) They do not result in the permanent loss or permanent damage of prime agricultural land;
- iii) They avoid or address any unacceptable significant adverse impacts including:
 - Landscape and visual impacts.
 - Noise impacts.
 - Air quality impacts.
 - Electromagnetic disturbance.
 - Impact on water environment.
 - Impact on carbon rich soils and peat land hydrology.
 - Impact on woodland and forestry interests.
 - Traffic impact mitigation during both construction and operation.
 - Ecological Impact.
 - Impact on tourism and recreational interests.

Assessment

Design and Impact upon the Conservation Area

In assessing the impact upon the Conservation Area, the proposal's design has been carefully considered to ensure it is sensitive to its historic setting and demonstrate a clear effort to minimise the visual impact on the area.

The design is a contemporary intervention that respects the conservation area's aesthetic, demonstrating that areas with heritage significance can be adaptively reused in an environmentally-conscious manner.

The heat pump has been installed at the rear of the property some distance from the boundary, and away from the public view, which respects the aesthetic integrity of the Conservation Area.

The slatted casing of the heat pump is consistent with the surrounding environment, reflecting the colour schemes of nearby buildings. This thoughtful choice of materials and colours aids in blending the unit with the existing built environment.

The dimensions and the proportion of the heat pump are modest relative to the cottage and the overall streetscape. It does not compete with or overshadow the historical features of the property or its neighbours.

The Findhorn Conservation Area is characterised by single and one-and-a-half-story stone gabled houses with small garden areas. The installation does not alter or obscure these defining characteristics and maintains the existing building line and form. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy EP9 and the NPF4, promoting energy efficiency and sustainability without compromising the heritage setting.

Residential amenity

In assessing the impact on surrounding neighbours, particularly in terms of noise, the design and installation of the air source heat pump (ASHP) at 85 Findhorn have been undertaken with due diligence to adhere to acceptable noise levels as recommended in planning guidelines and manufacturer's specifications.

The ASHP is situated discretely at the rear of the property, some distance from the neighbouring boundaries, which inherently reduces any potential noise disturbance. Moreover, the chosen location behind the cottage and below the level of the boundary fencing leverages natural sound insulation from the building's structure and the fence itself.

The unit's operational noise levels are within the permissible decibel range for residential areas, ensuring that the ASHP's operation does not constitute a nuisance or a significant disturbance to the neighbours. The semi-open, slatted casing around the unit not only blends with the environment visually but also contributes to muffling any operational sounds.

Additionally, the ASHP's installation complies with the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) and Scottish Government planning guidelines, which encompass noise impact assessment as a crucial consideration.

The proposal is in accordance with Policy DP9 of the Local Plan.

Landscape impact

The aim of the Policy Special Landscape Area (SLA) (EP3) is to protect landscapes from inappropriate development. It requires that all new development reflects the landscape qualities.

The proposal site is within the Culbin to Burghead Coast SLA which is classed as sensitive. The proposal will not have an adverse impact on the SLA. The criteria in the policy have been met.

Benefits

The ASHP represents a shift towards renewable energy sources, significantly reducing the carbon footprint of the property in accordance with Policy DP9 of the Local Plan and the principles of the NPF4.

The ASHP is a low-carbon technology that extracts heat from the air, which is a renewable resource. This installation at 85 Findhorn contributes to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, aligning with Scotland's ambitious targets to combat climate change and promote the use of clean energy. It showcases an environmentally responsible approach that can be

emulated within the context of Conservation Areas, offering a blueprint for sustainable living that does not compromise historical integrity.

ASHPs are known for their efficiency, potentially offering reduced heating costs for the homeowner and contributing to broader energy conservation efforts. They typically deliver 3 to 4 units of heat for every unit of electricity used, which is a significant improvement over traditional heating systems. By adopting this technology, the property will likely see a decrease in energy bills. Additionally, the system's efficiency can be further optimised when paired with proper insulation and draught-proofing measures, enhancing the overall thermal performance of the historic cottage. This benefit is not only financial but also contributes to energy conservation efforts, thereby supporting wider environmental objectives.

Conclusion

For the above reasons, we see no reason for the Council to withhold our request for planning permission and kindly request that the Council make a reasonable decision on this submission in line with the developmental objectives and timescales of the National Planning Policy Framework. Should the Planning Authority have any further questions in relation to this proposal or feel that certain conditions would be necessary to accommodate this proposal, Planning By Design would welcome conversation on any of these matters.