

Proposed development: Full Planning Permission - Installation of air source heat pumps (ASHP) including 3 no. ASHP islands with enclosures, and 3 no. brick built external plant rooms adjoining main building

Site address: Blackburn Technology Management Centre, 2 Challenge Way, Blackburn, BB1 5QB

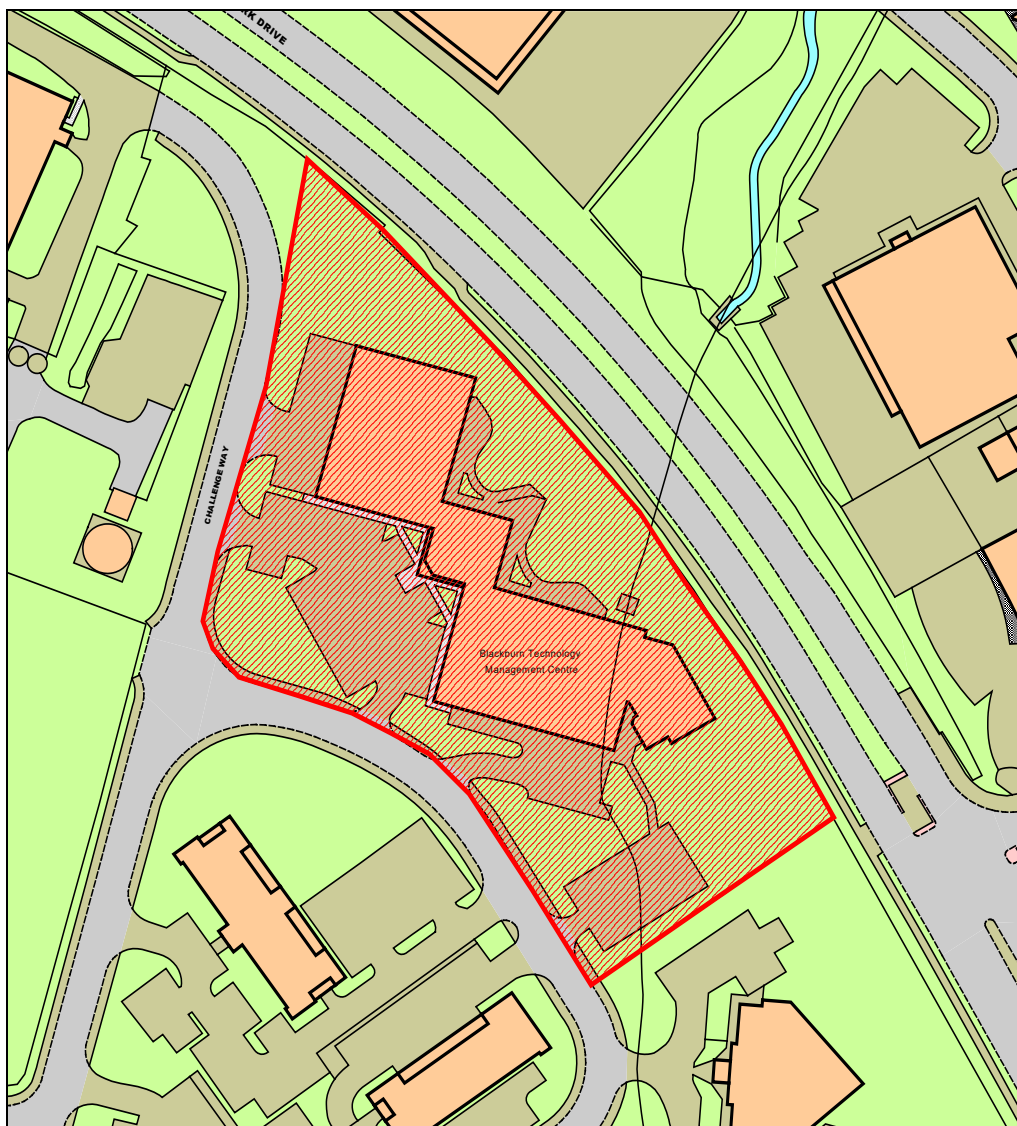
Applicant: Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

Ward: Little Harwood and Whitebirk

Councillor Pat McFall

Councillor Abdul Patel

Councillor Mustafa Ali Desai



1.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 The proposed development is recommended to be granted planning permission, subject to the conditions detailed in Section 5.

2.0 KEY ISSUES/SUMMARY OF PLANNING BALANCE

- 2.1 This application is presented to the Planning and Highways Committee, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, and given the fact that Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council is the Applicant. The planning application has been submitted under Regulation 3 of the Town & Country Planning Regulations 1992. No objections have been raised insofar from consultees. The proposed development has been publicised through the posting of a Site Notice and no public comments have been received.
- 2.2 The Council's Development Plan supports new renewable energy developments and associated works, provided they constitute sustainable development, and accord with the Development Plan when taken as a whole. The proposal would deliver sustainable energy provision for the Technology Management Centre in the form of three Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs), which extract the heat from the atmosphere and utilise it to heat air or water.
- 2.3 On balance, the proposal would be satisfactory from a technical point of view, with all issues having been addressed through the application process, or capable of being controlled or mitigated through appropriately worded planning conditions.
- 2.4 The key issues to be addressed in determining this application are;
- Design and assessing visual amenity impacts;
 - Assessing the potential for residential amenity impacts;
 - Assessing the potential for highways and parking impacts;

3.0 RATIONALE

3.1 Site and Surroundings

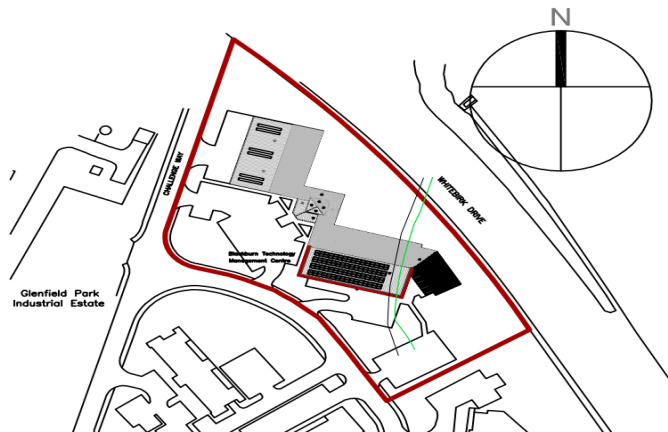
- 3.1.1 The application site is a Council owned building that is used for supporting small companies. The site is positioned within the Glenfield Park Industrial Estate, an allocated Primary Employment Area, and the settlement of Blackburn. The site also straddles the boroughs of Blackburn with Darwen and Hyndburn. Commercial buildings surround the site to three sides with Whitebirk Drive positioned immediately to the northeast.

Figure One – Satellite image of the site



3.1.2 The application site covers an area of circa 2.6 acres. It comprises of central building with a car parking area to the southwest and landscaped areas to all sides. Vehicle access is gained from the west off Challenge Way. The host building is distinctly commercial in its style with red brick and metal clad elevations, a metal clad roof, and white uPVC doors and windows.

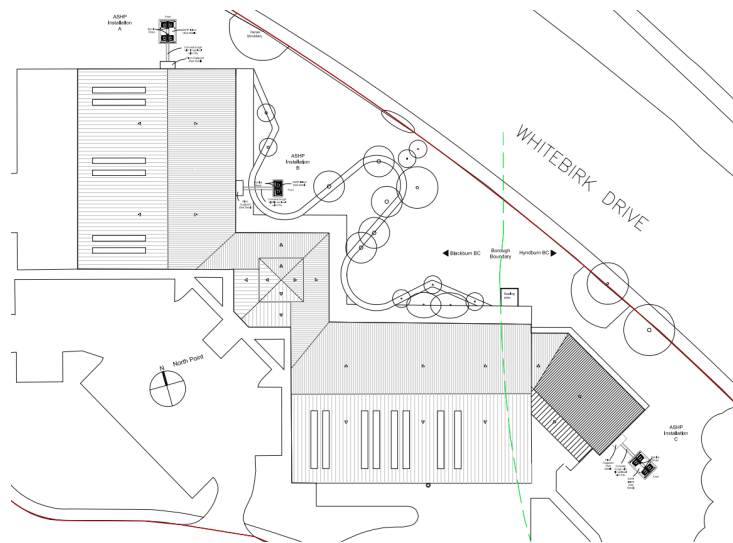
Figure Two – Location Plan showing the extent of the site and access points



3.2 Proposed Development

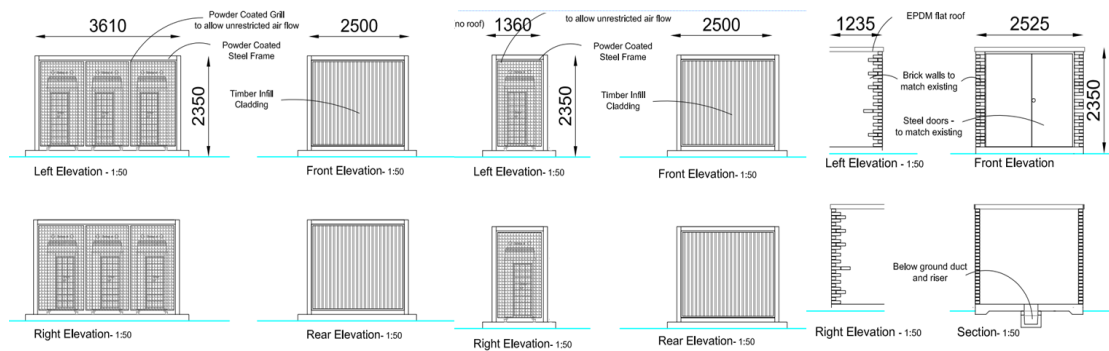
3.2.1 This planning application involves the citing of three ASHPs at three separate points on the building. The proposed locations are shown below in Figure Three. For clarity, the ASHP proposed for the eastern edge of the host building would be positioned within the boundary of Hyndburn Borough Council. Two types of ASHPs are proposed in the form of two triple units and one single unit. They would be positioned on concrete islands and connected to the host building via plant cupboards.

Figure Three – Proposed floor plan showing the extent of the extensions



3.2.2 The triple units would have lengths of 3.6m, depths of 2.5m, and heights of 2.4m. The single unit would have a length of 1.4m, a depth of 2.5m, and a height of 2.4m. All ASHPs would have power coated steel frames, timber clad midsections, and power coated grills to their elevations. The plant cupboards would have brick elevations and flat EPDM roofs. Steel access doors would also be fitted to the plant cupboards for maintenance reasons. Detailed plans of the ASHPs and plant cupboards are shown below in Figure Four.

Figure Four – Proposed ASHPs and Plant Cupboard Cross Sections



3.3 Case Officer Site Photos



3.4 Relevant Planning History

- 10/93/1166 – Technology Management Centre – Approve with Conditions – September 1993.
- 10/21/0564 – Installation of Solar Photo Voltaic (SPV) arrays to South facing roof slope – Approve with Conditions – August 2021.

3.5 Development Plan

3.5.2 Local Plan Part 2 (adopted December 2015):

- Policy 7: Sustainable and Viable Development
- Policy 8: Development and People
- Policy 10: Accessibility and Transport
- Policy 11: Design
- Policy 36: Climate Change

4.0 **ASSESSMENT**

4.1 Principle of Development

4.1.1 Policy 36 allows for the development of small-scale renewable or sustainable energy schemes, including heating schemes. The proposal would allow the carbon footprint and energy bills of the premises to be reduced through the harbouring of atmospheric heat within the building. The proposed development is therefore acceptable in principle and in accordance with Policy 36.

4.1.2 In accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development detailed in the Framework, and Policy 7, development proposals should proceed without delay, unless impacts which significantly and demonstrably

outweigh the benefits of the proposal are identified; subject to assessment of the following matters;

4.2 Design and Visual Amenity

4.2.1 In general terms, Policy 11 requires development proposals to represent a good standard of design through demonstrating an understanding of the sites wider context, and making a positive contribution to visual amenity.

4.2.2 As detailed above, the wider site is distinctly commercial in its nature and the host building is irregular in its form. The proposed installations would appear as very separate architectural additions yet they must be positioned away from the host building in order to extract air and function correctly. Their limited height would not upset the visual balance of the host building to a detrimental extent nor would the levels of landscaped areas sacrificed adversely injure the visual quality of the site as a whole.

4.2.3 Comments have been made from Hyndburn Borough Council regarding the potential need for landscaping. That said, when the relatively modest scale of the proposed ASHPs is considered alongside the distinctly commercial nature of the site and wider locality, the imposition of a condition requiring supplementary landscaping around the developments would not be necessary.

4.2.4 Materials are proposed for the plant cupboards that would compliment the appearance of the host building. In addition, the proposed materials have been used in abundance around the Borough for similar installations. As proposed, the development is therefore acceptable in visual design terms, in accordance with Policy 11.

4.3 Residential Amenity

4.3.1 Policy 8 states that all development proposals should secure a satisfactory level of amenity for surrounding occupants with reference to noise, vibrations, nuisances, and the relationship between buildings. As detailed above, the site is positioned within an exclusively commercial area and there are no residential occupants to consider within a close proximity. In addition, BwD Public Protection have raised no objections to the proposal on amenity grounds. As proposed, the development is therefore acceptable in relation to residential amenity, in accordance with Policy 8.

4.4 Highways and Parking

4.4.1 Policy 10 outlines a general requirement for development proposals to not prejudice road safety, or the safe and convenient movement of all highway users. The ASHPs are proposed within areas of the site that currently provide no parking or vehicle service function. They would not compromise parking availability or the manouvering of vehicles within the site in any way. As proposed, the development is therefore acceptable in relation to highways and parking, in accordance with Policy 10.

4.5 Summary

- 4.5.1 This application involves the installation of three ASHPs with associated brick built plants cupboards and wider works.
- 4.5.2 Subject to appropriate conditions, the proposed development would be acceptable on all the relevant planning grounds, and in accordance with the policies detailed in Section 3.5.
- 4.5.3 Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Subject to appropriate conditions, the proposal would be acceptable in principle, and in terms of design and visual amenity, residential amenity, and highways and parking. The development therefore complies with the development plan. There is a positive presumption in favour of approving the development and there are no material reasons to object to the application.

5.0 RECOMMENDATION:

That delegated authority is given to the Strategic Director of Place to approve planning permission, subject to the following conditions;

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

REASON: Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. Unless explicitly required by condition within this consent, the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in complete accordance with the proposals as detailed on drawings: Location Plan (1:2500), BTMC-CAP-00-ZZ-DR-BS-2001, BTMC-CAP-00-ZZ-DR-BS-2002, BTMC-CAP-00-ZZ-DR-BS-2003, and BTMC-CAP-00-ZZ-DR-BS-2004.

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to clarify which plans are relevant to the consent.

3. The external materials to be used for the construction of the development hereby approved shall be as stated on the application form and approved drawings and those materials shall not be varied unless first being agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: Those materials are appropriate for the development and site, in the interests of visual amenity, and to comply with the requirements of Policy 11 of the Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council Local Plan Part 2 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (Adopted 2015).

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1 BwD Public Protection – No objections, on environmental health grounds.
- 6.2 BwD Property Services – No objections.
- 6.3 Hyndburn Borough Council – We do not raise any objection to the development and request that the Case Officer deal with this in accordance with the relevant local and national planning policy. (Consideration should be made to suitable landscaping).
- 6.4 Ward Cllrs – no comments received.
- 6.5 Public consultation - Site notice was posted on the 20th August 2021. No representations have been received.
- 7.0 CONTACT OFFICER:** Christian Barton – Planning Officer
- 8.0 DATE PREPARED:** 02nd September 2021