

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Application Number:	252065
Site Address:	United Reformed Church Hall, Church Street, Twyford, Wokingham, RG10 9DR
Expiry Date:	26 September 2025
Proposal: Application for non-material amendment to planning consent 230072 for inclusion of acoustic enclosures and relocation of the 2 no. heat pumps to ground level.	

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
230072	Full application for the installation of 2No air to air heat pumps to the existing roof.	Approved: June 2023

APPRAISAL

Is the proposed change non-material?

No	☒
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In 2009, the Government introduced a formal procedure for agreeing changes to an existing planning permission, to provide flexibility to facilitate small changes to consented schemes, without needing to apply for further planning permission. There is no statutory definition of what constitutes a non-material amendment. The Planning Practice Guidance sets out that they would be 'a less than substantial change', and that whether something is non-material depends on the specific context of a scheme.

Application 230072 obtained permission for the installation of 2no. heat pumps at the application site. The installation was intended to take place on top of the single storey flat roofed element of the building, adjacent to the northwestern boundary. This non-material amendment application seeks to alter the approved development through the relocation of the heat pumps, which are now proposed externally on the ground floor.

Assessment

In the context of the proposed development, changes are considered material if they:

- Considerably alter the external appearance or layout of the development;
- Affect the impact of the development on neighbouring properties or the surrounding environment;
- Require a reassessment of compliance with planning conditions.

In this instance, the relocation of the heat pumps is considered material, primarily on the basis that relocating the heat pumps closer to the neighbouring boundary would increase noise or vibration impacts, thus altering the effect on residential amenity.

Whilst the submitted noise impact assessment may well consider these impacts, the nature of the alteration is one that would require expert review from the WBC Environmental Health department, which is not available through this application type. Furthermore, it removes the opportunity for neighbours to comment on the relocation, which given the added impact on neighbouring amenity, would be required.

The proposed change would also not reflect the approved description of development, which stipulated that the 2no. heat pumps would be situated on the existing roof. As a change of description would therefore be required, given the changes materially affect the assessment of the scheme, the proposed alterations cannot be considered non-material in this instance.

For these reasons, the relocation of the heat pumps is considered to be a material alteration from the original consent.

It is also noted that the applicant was seeking unconditional planning permission through this submission. Even had the change proposed been considered non-material, this would not have alleviated the responsibility to discharge the conditions of the original permission.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010):

In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation:	Refuse
Date:	18 September 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	18 September 2025