



Design Principles

# Air Source Heat Pumps Guidance



In Letchworth Garden City

Published June 2025

**Letchworth  
Garden City**  
Heritage Foundation

# Introduction

**In order to ensure Letchworth remains true to its founding principles as the world's first Garden City, we seek to maintain the special character of its buildings and premises.**

Letchworth Garden City has a Scheme of Management and leases which means that most dwellings require our written approval before any external changes are made.

We publish guidance documents, known as Design Principles, to support homeowners with this process to design exterior changes that maintain the special character and appearance of Letchworth Garden City.

The Design Principles are split into two Character Areas. These are the Heritage Character Area and the Modern Character Area. The following guidance on air source heat pumps is applicable to both Character Areas.

Some dwellings in Letchworth Garden City are also Homes of Special Interest. These are typically the most architecturally and historically important dwellings in the Garden City.

The requirements under the Scheme of Management or your lease are separate from any permission required from the Local Planning Authority and other separate regulatory bodies.

## Contact us:

The Heritage and Stewardship Team provide free pre-application advice in order to help support a positive outcome for any submitted application through the compliance of the relevant Design Principles within your Character Area.

For pre-application advice, please contact the Heritage and Stewardship Team at:

**[home@lethworth.com](mailto:home@lethworth.com)** or on **01462 530335**.

When you are ready to formally submit an application, please visit the online portal on our website: **[portal.lethworth.com](https://portal.lethworth.com)**

# Air Source Heat Pumps Guidance

Air source heat pumps (ASHPs) present an opportunity for residents to heat their homes with low carbon emissions. However, the installation of ASHPs can negatively impact residents, neighbouring properties and the street scene when not installed appropriately.

ASHPs will usually be approved providing that they adhere to the following guidelines:

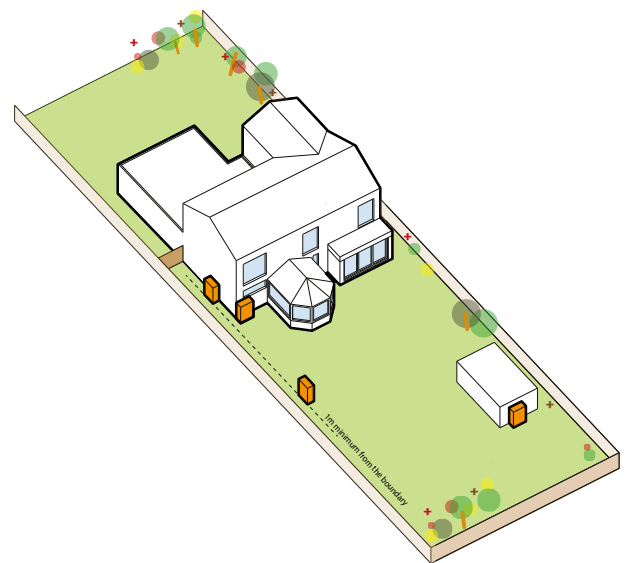
- ASHPs must not detract from the character of the property
- Units must be designed and located in order to minimise the visual and noise impact from the property, neighbouring properties, and the street scene
- Units must be sited at the rear of the property, or potentially to the side where adequate screening from the street scene is already in-situ
- Units should preferably be mounted on the ground
- ASHPs must be sited a minimum distance of 1 metre from any boundary
- Secondary equipment such as external condensers, pipework and air conditioning units must be discreet, and must not be visible from the street
- We would discourage the installation of more than one ASHP at the property

We would encourage ASHPs to be considered when designing rear extensions to properties, provided they adhere to the above guidelines.

Whilst our consent is not required for internal alterations, please be aware that there may be internal considerations involved when considering the installation of an ASHP.



*Air source heat pump unit located down the side of a property in Letchworth behind an existing gate.*



*Diagram showing a number of possible locations for an ASHP unit within the rear of the property (please note that this diagram is not exhaustive - other locations may be acceptable provided they comply with the guidance opposite).*

## Contemplating changes?

We're here to help, call  
us now on: 01462 530335

Planning home alterations can be complex and stressful. The Heritage and Stewardship team are happy to provide pre-application advice to develop a scheme that meets your needs, is sympathetic to your home, and complies with the Design Principles.

Once your application is submitted, it will be assigned to a team member who will be your consistent point of contact until the conclusion.

All advice is free unless the works have been carried out without Consent, in which case a fee is charged for administering the retrospective application.