

16. MECHANICAL PLANT INSTALLATIONS AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS

Domestic mechanical plant installations can include air or ground source heat pumps, air conditioning units, mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR) and plant associated with hot tubs and swimming pools.

Under planning legislation, permitted development rights may apply to domestic plant installations. We recommend that you refer to the planning portal to ensure that your installation meets the detailed limits and conditions. If you are installing an air source heat pump and you live in a Listed Building or in a Conservation Area, there are further limitations on where the unit can be located. Contact your local authority planning team for advice.

To comply with the Scheme of Management any external plant unit should be sized and sited to minimise its impact on amenity. An application is required if the unit is visible from beyond the property boundaries at ground level. The installation of services via ducts or trenches must not impact tree roots and a tree root survey may be required to demonstrate this. Installations should comply with the building regulations and the applicable British Standard, and they should not generate sound levels that cause a nuisance to neighbouring properties. A detailed acoustic report should be submitted with your application.

Large and obtrusive extract ducts and flues will not be permitted, and design consideration is required with details being submitted for approval. Domestic boiler flues should be discretely located and in keeping with the location avoiding noise nuisance to neighbouring properties.

The installation of air conditioning is not a sustainable solution to cooling buildings, and other measures should be considered to prevent overheating such as increasing insulation levels and installing solar shading.

Electric vehicle (EV) charging points can be installed to front gardens without a permit. The location should be carefully considered, and where possible concealed in a garage or side passageway. The outlet can be wall mounted or installed on a timber up-stand or post located discretely at low level. Choose a discrete colour that blends in and try to avoid trailing cables and speak with your neighbours to make sure the installation does not impact them.

Substantial government grants are available such as the Boiler Upgrade Scheme (BUS) until 2028, which could contribute towards the cost of an air source heat pump (ASHP) a biomass installation, or a ground source heat pump (GSHP). Your installer would apply for this grant on your behalf and will be able to advise you. If you are seeking expert advice a directory of qualified contractors registered with the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) is available here.