Officer Report

Application Number:	**HGY/2026/2798**
Application Type:	**Full planning permission**
Address:	2 Cromwell Court, Cromwell Avenue, Hornsey, London, N6 5HH
Proposal:	Installation of a new window at first floor level and installation of one ground floor level external air conditioning inverter unit with associated cables and conduit.
Case Officer:	Ben Coffie
Valid Date:	09/10/2026
Applicant:	Mr Simon Edwards
Agent:	Mr Craig Douglas

RECOMMENDATION

Approve with Conditions

1. SITE LOCATION

The application site is Flat 2, Cromwell Court, Cromwell Avenue, a first floor flat within a 1960s purpose-built, end-of-terrace red brick building containing four flats. The building is set over four floors, with Flat 1 at ground floor level, Flat 2 at first floor level, and Flats 3 and 4 over the second and third floors. Its windows and doors at ground, first and second floor levels are white uPVC, and the roof is clad in grey tiles with zinc-clad dormers.

The site is a corner plot that slopes steeply on three sides, so the building sits well above street level. It is enclosed by boundary walls on its street sides and contains a number of large trees and shrubs.

The site is located within the Highgate Conservation Area. The building is not listed and is not within the curtilage of a listed building.

2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The application proposes the following works on the north (side) elevation of the building:
- a new window at first floor level to the living room of Flat 2, designed to match the existing adjacent kitchen window (white uPVC); and
- a wall-mounted air-conditioning unit at ground floor level, serving the living room of Flat 2.

3. PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT HISTORY

HGY/2014/0896 – Enclosure of existing external amenity space within roof by formation of dormer – Approved.

4. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

N/A

Social/Amenity Groups

Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) commented on the application as follows:
- the CAAC welcomes the apparent intention to install a more sustainable heat pump-based cooling system rather than a basic air-conditioning unit, but notes that the application is vague about which lower-energy unit would be used, if any;
- London Plan paragraph 9.4.1 notes that, whilst the cooling hierarchy applies to major developments, its principles can also be applied to minor development, and the CAAC encourages the Council to follow this approach;
- a condition should be imposed to ensure that the cooling system used meets the highest sustainability standards; and
- the Design and Access Statement asserts that the unit would not cause undue noise, and a condition should be imposed to ensure that the unit chosen does not harm neighbours' amenity through noise or vibration, or cause problems for wildlife and nature.

5. LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

The application was publicised by way of a site notice, press notice and neighbour notification letters.
No of individual responses 0

6. MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main planning considerations in the assessment of the proposal are:
1. Design and heritage;
2. Impact on neighbouring amenity.

Design and Heritage

DPD Policy DM12 'Housing Design and Quality' states that extensions or alterations to residential buildings will be required to be of a high, site specific, and sensitive design quality, and respect and/ or complement the form, setting, period, architectural characteristics and detailing of the original building. High quality matching or complementary materials should be used appropriately and sensitively in relation to the context.

DPD Policy DM1 'Delivering High Quality Design' requires development proposals to relate positively to their locality, while Local Plan (2017) Policy SP11 requires the highest standard of design that respects local context and character. Local Plan Policy SP12 and DPD Policy DM9 require development within conservation areas to preserve or enhance their character and appearance. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of

preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area, and Chapter 16 of the NPPF and London Plan Policy HC1 require great weight to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets.

Cromwell Court is a 1960s building, and its contribution to the Highgate Conservation Area derives mainly from its scale, its red brick construction and its landscaped, elevated setting behind boundary walls and mature trees, rather than from any particular architectural detailing.

New window
The new window would be on the north side elevation, which is a secondary elevation. It would match the adjacent kitchen window in its size, proportions and white uPVC frame, and would be positioned to relate to the existing fenestration. Although it would be visible from the street, it would be seen behind existing trees and would read as a natural part of the existing pattern of windows on the elevation. The installation of the side window here is not considered to appear at odds with the existing fenestration and would not result in any harm against the host property and the conservation area.

Air-conditioning unit
As is generally the case, external plant equipment is discouraged where it would be visually prominent on principal elevations or visible from the street, particularly within a conservation area. In this instance, the external unit would be modest in size (840mm x 350mm x 550mm, approximately 0.16 cubic metres) and fixed low on the north side elevation, just above ground level. The site sits well above street level and is enclosed by boundary walls, trees and shrubs, so the unit would not be visible from the street. The power and refrigerant cables would be small and would run in black trunking alongside the existing rainwater downpipe, which would minimise their visual impact.
The works would not require any excavation, as the unit would be wall-mounted, and would therefore not affect the trees on the site.

Overall, the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the host building and the Highgate Conservation Area, in accordance with Policies DM1, DM9 and DM12, Local Plan Policies SP11 and SP12, London Plan Policies D3 and HC1, and the NPPF.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity
London Plan Policy D6 requires development to safeguard residential amenity, including daylight, outlook and privacy, whilst London Plan Policy D14 requires noise impacts to be appropriately managed and mitigated. These principles are reflected locally within Policies DM1 and DM23.

New window
The new window would serve the living room of Flat 2 and would face north. Views from it would be similar to those from the existing adjacent kitchen window, and it would not result in a material loss of privacy to neighbouring occupiers.

Air-conditioning unit
Given its small size and low position on the wall, the unit would have no impact on the daylight, outlook or privacy of neighbouring occupiers. There are no windows at ground floor level on the north elevation. The nearest window would be the proposed new window to Flat 2 itself, which belongs to the applicant. The nearest windows of other occupiers are

the ground floor windows of Flat 1, approximately 5 metres away, which are on separate elevations and do not face the unit.

The manufacturer's data for the unit Daikin RXA35A8 external unit give a sound power level of 61 dB(A) and a nominal sound pressure level of 49 dB(A) in cooling mode. The data also state that the unit's sound power can be reduced by a further 6 dB(A) using its quiet operating mode.

No acoustic assessment has been submitted. Officers have estimated the likely noise levels using the method set out in the Microgeneration Certification Scheme Planning Standard (MCS 020), assuming the unit is mounted on a wall close to the ground. On that basis, the predicted level at the nearest windows of Flat 1, approximately 5 metres away, would be approximately 42 dB(A) in normal operation and 36 dB(A) in quiet mode, before any allowance for screening. Because the windows of Flat 1 are on separate elevations and do not face the unit, the building itself would provide additional screening, so actual levels at those windows would be lower than these figures.

These figures indicate that the unit is capable of operating without unacceptable noise impacts. Nonetheless, a condition will be attached to the decision securing compliance with the Council's plant noise standard for the air-conditioning unit.

The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in amenity terms.

Conclusion
The proposed development is considered acceptable in planning terms. The new window would match the existing fenestration on a secondary elevation, and the air-conditioning unit would be small, low-level and hidden from the street by the site's boundary walls and landscaping. The proposal would therefore preserve the character and appearance of the host building and the Highgate Conservation Area.

The proposed development accords with Policies DM1, DM9, DM12 and DM23 of the Development Management DPD 2017, Policies SP11 and SP12 of the Haringey Local Plan 2017, Policies D3, D6, D14 and HC1 of the London Plan 2021, and the NPPF. All other relevant policies and considerations, including equalities, have been taken into account. Planning permission should be granted for the reasons set out above.

7. CIL
N/A - The development would not result in any increase in internal floorspace.

8. RECOMMENDATION
GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following conditions:

Conditions:

1 The development to which this permission relates must be begun no later than three years from the date of this decision notice, failing which the permission shall be of no

effect.

Reason: This condition is imposed by virtue of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and to prevent the accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions.

2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved plans and drawings listed below, other than where those details are altered pursuant to the conditions of this planning permission.

Approved drawings list: CRO_EX_103 (Existing Side Elevation and First Floor Plan); CRO_GA_101 (Proposed Ground Floor Plan); CRO_GA_102 (Proposed First Floor Plan and Side Elevation)

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3 Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved drawings, the air-conditioning unit hereby approved, including any acoustic enclosure, casing or housing, shall not exceed an external volume of 0.6 cubic metres.
The air-conditioning unit shall be designed, installed and thereafter maintained so that the rating level of noise emitted from the plant does not exceed the existing background sound level (LA90) by more than 5 dB when measured or calculated at a point one metre from the façade of the nearest noise-sensitive premises, in accordance with BS4142:2014+A1:2019.
Any acoustic enclosure or noise mitigation measures shall be installed prior to first operation of the equipment and retained thereafter.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers and to ensure that the equipment remains subordinate and visually unobtrusive within the Crouch End Conservation Area, in accordance with London Plan Policies D6 and D14 and Policies DM1, DM9 and DM23 of the Haringey Development Management DPD (2017).

Informatives:

INFORMATIVE: Hours of Construction Work
The applicant is advised that under the Control of Pollution Act 1974, construction work which will be audible at the site boundary will be restricted to the following hours:-
8.00am - 6.00pm Monday to Friday
8.00am - 1.00pm Saturday
and not at all on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

INFORMATIVE: Land Ownership

The applicant is advised that this planning permission does not convey the right to enter onto or build on land not within his ownership.