

ADDENDUM REPORT

Application Number:	AWDM/1439/23	Recommendation - APPROVE
Site:	Multi Storey Car Park, High Street, Worthing	
Proposal:	Proposed two storey Energy Centre, Thermal Store, electrical sub-station, car-park rooftop plant, and riser pipework	
Applicant:	Hemiko	Ward: Central
Agent:		
Case Officer:	James Appleton	

Additional Consultation Responses

The **Worthing Society** comment that,

“Thank you for requesting our comments in respect of the aforementioned application seeking full planning permission for the construction of an Energy Centre housing equipment to generate and distribute low carbon heat across Worthing Town Centre using the Worthing Heat Network. There will be an associated sub-station also on site with additional equipment on the upper storey of the car park.

I have now had the opportunity to discuss the scheme with our Heritage Team. Whilst we appreciate the Council declaring a Climate Emergency in 2019, and has the long term aims to decarbonise Worthing’s building stock, we are concerned about the proposed location. If approved the scheme will introduce a two storey industrial unit together with an associated sub-station into one of the oldest and most historic area of the early town centre. Although the layout of the High Street was compromised to facilitate the construction of the Guildbourne Centre and associated car park, the character of the area still survives.

This is illustrated by the fact that the High Street Car Park building is within an area identified by the Council as an ‘Area of Special Environmental Interest ‘ in Appendix 6 of the Council’s Local Interest Study of the Worthing Local Plan 2003 and published currently in 2023.

Please see the following description:

APPENDIX 6

‘HIGH STREET/CHARLECOTE ROAD (I) Character derives from isolated group of small historic buildings of varying but sympathetic architectural quality; a remnant of original High Street, Nos. 40, 42 and 44 High Street (all statutorily listed buildings) together with 46 High Street contribute to the area’s special character.’

Furthermore the development site is opposite the Steyne Gardens Conservation Area (CA) and in close proximity to the Warwick Gardens CA which is Edwardian in character. Located in the southwest corner of High Street is the historic Colonnade, (circa 1810) and the associated group of Georgian buildings (numbers 5 and 7 High Street). These have group value forming a link to the South Street CA and Warwick Street. High Street is one of the main routes into Worthing for visitors and offers 'key views' to these heritage assets with the elegant Steyne Gardens beyond

The additional equipment on the roof of the car park, the riser piping and the sub station will ensure the scheme appears incongruous and seriously out of context in this location. The introduction of the Energy Centre and its design will not enhance the setting of the three proximate Conservation Areas. In addition we have noted that the east facing elevation of the proposed development at the Union Place site seeks in part to 'repair' the 'street scene' which is welcome. This aspect could unfortunately be compromised by the introduction of this scheme .

Even with greening and landscaping this will not disguise the fact that the Energy Centre is a sizeable, modern industrial unit in a town centre setting. There would also be the issue of ongoing maintenance and the possibility of vandalism. A better alternative would perhaps have been to contain the equipment in a proper building which could then have been designed to complement the characteristics of the neighbouring heritage buildings .

Summary.

For the reasons stated, the Society objects to this application. We consider the location is unsuitable and the development would not in our opinion be consistent with the Planning (Listed Buildings Conservation Areas) Act 1990 together with Policies DM 23 and DM24 of the recently adopted Worthing Local Plan."