Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0769/25 Recommendation: APPROVE

Site: Worthing Hospital, Lyndhurst Road, Worthing, BN11 2DH

Proposal: Installation of thermal stores and transformer, refurbishment of facade and associated works

Date of Site Visit: 24 July 2025

Neighbours Checked: Y

Additional neighbour notification: N

Proposal

This application seeks full permission for the following:

This planning application proposes the installation of thermal stores and transformer, refurbishment of façade and associated works.

As detailed on the accompanying plans, a total of 4no. thermal stores are proposed, with 2no. 6.445m stores located at the south of the energy courtyard and 2no. 5.600m stores within the western courtyard inlet. Each of the thermal stores will have a galvanised steel finish and a reinforced concrete base. These thermal stores will act as a mechanism for retaining excess heat for later use. As such, they reduce the need to generate heat and will therefore save energy.

The transformer will be located on the grass area just east of the access junction. The transformer walls will be constructed from 215mm thick double skin brickwork, to match the existing hospital surroundings. The roof will comprise 18mm marine-grade plywood deck over timber furring strips laid to fall, finished with a bitumen felt waterproofing system. This will be covered by a 18mm plywood fascia in anthracite grey (RAL 7016). A 100mm half round gutter will be fixed to the fascia board with a 100mm down pipe to drain rainwater into the existing site drainage. Access to the transformer will be gained through steel powder coated double leaf access doors with ventilation louvres (in RAL 8012 to match the existing hospital ventilation louvres).

It is proposed to refurbish the western [East Elevation] wall of the existing energy centre by replacing the existing curtain walling with masonry wall (with the colour and pattern to match the surrounding brickwork). The uppermost existing ventilation louvre will be retained, however, the 2no. ventilation louvres which are above the doors will be removed and replaced by 2no. new ventilation louvres in new locations (as demonstrated in the Existing and Proposed Elevations 01 plan). The new external pipework will be omitted from view and will be fixed to the façade with brackets/supports. The existing 1no. door within the curtain wall system is proposed to be replaced by a new insulated door in the same position, in addition to 3no. new insulated doors within the masonry wall. The new doors will match the existing louvres in terms of colour.

The background to the proposal is described in the covering letter as:

In October 2020, the NHS pledged to work towards delivering the world's first Net Zero Carbon health service, responding to climate change and improving health now and for future generations. University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust is committed to supporting the NHS in its efforts, as detailed within its green plan: Patient First, Planet First – Our Green Plan (January 2022). As such, the proposed development will support the aims of the Green Plan by decarbonising heat production and storage through the use of thermal stores and a transformer.

Site and surroundings

The hospital is located to the north of Lyndhurst Road and to the west of Homefield Road. The current hospital complex contains a variety of buildings set within parking. The main building is three-storeys and brick clad in a modified hash symbol layout with wings and external gaps and internal courtyards. The closest residential properties are to the east on Homefield Road.

The application site is not within a Conservation Area, does not contain a listed building and there are no protected trees that would be affected.

Planning History:

Various applications for works to the hospital

Consultations:

Environmental Health: there are no adverse EH comments for this application.

WSP (drainage):

Following a review of the submitted information, we have no objection on surface water grounds. Due to the site, size, location, and type of development we would recommend the approval of the application with the following informative attached: Informative 1: We have identified part of the site (specifically the thermal stores) is located within a high surface water flood risk. Therefore, appropriate flood resistance and resilience measures (for example, raising of essential infrastructure) should be considered to ensure the development is safe from flooding.

West Sussex County Council as LHA:

The Highway Authority would be unlikely to raise an objection to the proposal, however I do have a few queries which will need to be answered by the applicant: • What is the current use of the service area and the service road which runs parallel to Park Avenue? There are 2 access points from the public highway from Park Avenue. Access 1 is located approximately 15m from the junction with Homefield Road, is very wide and provides access to the service area relevant to this application. It currently appears to be used for parking and storage and possibly used by the Works Department. The installation of the Thermal Stores will reduce

space and the utilisation of this area. • The location of the Transformer adjacent to the public footway will reduce pedestrian visibility for vehicles existing the access. However the access is wide and it would be advantageous to reduce the width of this access and extend the footpath which will improve this. • A Construction Method Statement has been provided which details management of the site during construction. The Highway Authority require information on the current use of the area and level of parking/vehicle access required post proposal. In light of this information, investigation by the applicant into the narrowing of the access to improve the walking route for pedestrians, especially blind or partially sighted individuals who use kerb lines for directional guidance. Whilst this is an important issue on all of our public highways, given the location adjacent to a hospital (including a specialist eye unit) safe walking routes are essential.

Officer's response: Following additional information the following was received:

The applicant has responded to our previous comments on this application.
The area is currently used for salt deliveries and not permanent parking, providing there is still sufficient room for these deliveries to happen off the public highway then the Highway Authority would not raise an objection to the application.
A further comment was made on the extended with of the access. It has been explained by the applicant that a reduction in width would cause a problem for larger vehicles (including the Fire Service) to access the space, especially given the parking on the opposite site of the road.

No Highway Objection.

Representations:

No comments received

Relevant Planning Policies:

Worthing Local Plan (2023): SP1, SP2, SP3, DM5, DM8, DM9, DM16, DM17, DM18, DM19, DM20, DM22
National Planning Policy Framework (2024)
Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Assessment

Policy DM8 supports improvements to the provision of health facilities to ensure the needs of local communities are met. The main issues in the determination of the application are the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the area, the amenities of neighbouring properties, transport impacts, drainage and sustainability.

<u>Visual amenity</u>
The application relates to the rear of the site adjacent to Homefield Park. The cover letter describes the design as follows:

The refurbishment on the external façade will alter the outward appearance, whilst maintaining the overall aesthetic of the immediate surroundings and the wider hospital. This is achieved by refurbishing the existing curtain wall with brickwork which matches the colour and pattern of the existing brickwork (above the louvres in their current position). Furthermore, the new 4no. doors will match the colour of the proposed louvres. The transformer shed and new thermal stores are appropriate for their surroundings, given that they are proposed to be installed within the existing energy courtyard and maintenance zone.

It is considered that the proposed alterations to the building to remove the curtain walling and replace with insulated doors and brickwork would match in design the existing building and would have a complementary appearance.

The thermal stores are large but are relatively plain in appearance and located in an area where existing plant is clearly visible; they would not be out of character. They are adjacent to the existing energy store.

The transformer store would match in design and scale the building to the south. While it would be adjacent to the footpath and result in the loss of some greenery, it is not particularly deep and wouldn't have a detrimental impact on footpath users or the wider streetscene. It is adequately set away from the root protection area of street trees to the east.

The proposal is considered to comply with the requirements of policy DM5 of the Local Plan.

Neighbouring amenity

The proposed development is well separated from neighbouring residential properties beyond the boundaries of the hospital complex and would have no adverse impacts on residential amenity.

Hours of work will be conditioned to ensure that neighbouring amenity is protected during construction works.

The environmental health officer has raised no objection in relation to neighbouring amenity.

Transport

West Sussex County Council requested additional information to understand the impact on highways and parking. While they noted that the transformer would reduce public visibility on the highway they were satisfied with the applicant's response that the access could not be narrowed as it could create issues for larger vehicles such as the fire service.

The applicant also explained that the site is not used for permanent parking, although cars are visible in streetview images at various times. Given the site is allocated for deliveries such as for salt it is likely that once the transformers are in place the cars parked in the area now will be required to find alternative locations

No objection was raised and therefore impacts on transport are considered acceptable.

Drainage
The site is in an area at risk from surface water flooding. A short FRA was provided and the Council's drainage consultant had no objection subject to an informative on considering the impacts of surface water flooding.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity net gain is not applicable as the development would not result in any loss of more than 25sqm of priority habitat.

Recommendation

To GRANT planning permission subject to the following conditions:

01 Approved Plans
02 Time limit
03 Materials as annotated

Informatives

1. NPPF approved following discussion
2. Surface water

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation? N

Case Officer: Louise Prew Date: 23/10/2025

Authorised by: Jo Morin Date: 24.10.2025