



Worthing Planning Committee
20th September

WORTHING BOROUGH COUNCIL

Agenda Item 10
Key Decision: No

Ward(s) Affected: Central, Goring & Marine

Worthing Conservation Area Reviews

Report by the Director for Place

Executive Summary

1. Purpose

1.1 This report updates Members of the Planning Committee on the review of character appraisals undertaken for the following existing conservation areas:

- Goring Hall
- Steyne Gardens

1.2 In addition, the report recommends that a new conservation area is designated at Marine Gardens and provides a draft character appraisal for the proposed area.

1.3 Members are asked to comment on the draft character appraisals. These comments will be passed to the Executive Member for Regeneration to inform decisions on the consultation and adoption of the character appraisals, proposed boundary changes and the creation of Marine Gardens conservation area.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Planning Committee recommends that the Executive Member for Regeneration authorises:

- Public consultation on the revised draft character appraisal for Goring Hall Conservation Area;
- Public consultation on the proposed boundary changes of Steyne Gardens Conservation Area and accompanying draft character area appraisal; and
- Public consultation on the proposed designation of Marine Gardens Conservation Area and accompanying draft character area appraisal.

3. Background

3.1 Conservation Areas were introduced through the Civic Amenities Act of 1967. A conservation area is an “area of special architectural and/or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to:

- Keep its conservation areas under review
- Prepare policies and proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the character or appearance of its conservation areas
- Pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area in exercising its planning function.

3.2 Designation of a conservation area introduces a further level of control over the way that individual owners can alter their properties, in order to allow local planning authorities to exercise their duty to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area under Section 72[1] of the Act.

3.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out Government policy and guidance on the protection of conservation areas and other elements of the historic environment. Local Planning Authorities must ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest (NPPF paragraph 191). Historic England’s guidance on Conservation Areas advises that there are many benefits to providing a character appraisal for a conservation area, including as a tool to demonstrate any areas of special interest and in providing a basis for development control and informing management proposals.

- 3.4 The Worthing Local Plan 2023 includes Policy DM23 : Strategic Approach to the Historic Environment which commits to producing and reviewing character appraisals, encouraging appropriate and productive use of heritage assets and working with other parties to ensure that Adur's historic environment is conserved.
- 3.5 Policy DM24: The Historic Environment sets out the development management framework within which proposals for change to heritage assets will be assessed. It states that conservation area character appraisals will be used as a tool to assess applications for change.
- 3.6 There are 26 designated Conservation Areas within Worthing which cover areas of special architectural or historic interest. Two of these (Castle Goring and Highdown) are also located within the South Downs National Park.
- Broadwater
 - Broadwater Green
 - Chapel Road
 - Durrington
 - Farncombe Road
 - Goring
 - Goring Hall
 - Heene
 - Ivy Place
 - Little High Street
 - Marine Parade & Hinterland
 - Mill Road
 - Montague Street
 - Park Crescent
 - Richmond Road
 - Robson Road
 - Salvington
 - Shaftesbury Avenue
 - Shakespeare Road
 - South Street
 - Steyne Gardens
 - Warwick Gardens
 - West Tarring
 - Winchester Road
- 3.7 The Worthing Society submitted three requests to Worthing Borough Council to consider the following requests:

1. Extend Goring Hall Conservation Area boundary to include the Goring-Ferring Gap;
 2. Extend Steyne Gardens Conservation Area boundary to include a number of heritage assets; and
 3. Designate Marine Gardens and Environs as a new conservation area.
- 3.8 The current Conservation Area Character Appraisal (CACA) Report for Steyne Gardens Conservation Area was produced in September 2001. The Conservation Character Area Appraisal Report for Going Hall is undated, however, it is likely it was produced in the early 2000s. Given the age of the appraisals and distinctive character of the CACAs, together with the requests received from The Worthing Society, it was considered timely that these two conservation areas underwent a review as required by Section 69(2) of the Act.
- 3.9 The CACAs and maps are appended to this report. Each document serves as an introduction setting out the legislative and policy background and methodology employed in compiling the appraisals. It also provides a short summary of the landscape character and historical development of the district of Adur.
- 3.10 There follows an appraisal and management plan for each of the conservation areas, including a map showing proposed boundary changes and character areas where relevant.
- 3.11 Subject to approval by the Executive Member of Regeneration, the character appraisals and boundary amendments will be subject to a six week period of public consultation. Under section 70(8) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, a local planning authority is required to notify both the Secretary of State and Historic England; and to publicise designation of a conservation area by a notice placed in the London Gazette and a local newspaper.
- 3.12 In addition to the statutory consultation processes set out above, the Council will work with The Worthing Society to ensure that the proposals have reached a wider audience, and that the character appraisals have taken their views into account.

4. Proposals

- 4.1 Proposals for each Conservation Area are set out within the relevant Character Appraisal Report. Each appraisal is accompanied by a map showing the proposed boundary.

Boundary changes

- 4.2 **Steyne Gardens:** The appraisal proposes that Steyne Gardens Conservation Area is extended by the addition of Denton Gardens, Beach House Grounds and Beach House Park as shown on the map.
- 4.3 **Goring Hall:** The appraisal recommends that Goring Hall Conservation Area is not extended, but that the revised CACA should recognise the positive contribution that is made to the setting of the conservation area from the 'Goring-Ferring Gap'. The Interim Report (June 2023) sets out the following reasoning as to why the conservation area should not be extended:

The historic research undertaken into the extent and interest of Goring Hall estate does not support a case to extend the conservation area across the Goring-Ferring gap. Historic England's Advice Note 1 clearly states that conservation area designation is rarely appropriate for protecting a wider landscape, particularly as agricultural land use falls outside the planning framework and is not affected by designation as a conservation area. It is clear that the designed landscape elements associated with Goring Hall were concentrated around the house; and within a parkland area southeast of the house and The Plantation, which is now completely developed.

It is however clear that the Ilex Avenue forms a key component of Goring Hall and marks the extent of the 1830s estate to the west. The open fields south of the avenue west of the house are an important element of the setting of the house and the estate, and so are important to the understanding of the character of the conservation area.

It is therefore recommended that the current CACA is updated to reflect the historic development of the estate and the importance of the open spaces in which Goring Hall is experienced. It should identify areas outside of the conservation area that form an important part of its setting.

The losses of designed landscape elements within Goring Hall grounds are very sad. While the former gardens have not been extensively surveyed, there are remnant built features within the grounds including steps, walls, gates and planting, as well as the raised terrace itself, and possibly the linear garden feature within the western part of the gardens. The setting of the house is irretrievably damaged by the modern hospital development and parking. A Conservation Area Management Plan would provide a useful framework not only to resist development on existing open spaces, but also for future restoration works to the landscape at Goring Hall and maintenance of the Ilex Avenue.

New conservation area designation

- 4.4 **Marine Gardens & Environs:** The review proposes that a new conservation area is created centred on Marine Gardens, with a tightly drawn boundary around the mid-century blocks of flats that radiate from Marine Gardens as shown on the map.

Other recommendations

- 4.5 The Conservation Area Character Appraisals includes a management plan that makes a number of further recommendations relating to the following:
- Opportunities for improvement to infrastructure and public realm (see paragraph 4.7 of this report)
 - Alterations, maintenance and enhancement opportunities
 - Public awareness
 - Development affecting the setting of the conservation area
 - New development within the conservation area and alterations to existing buildings in the conservation area
 - Specific guidance for the replacement refurbishment and restoration of shop fronts should be developed for the conservation area.
- 4.6 The management plan and recommendations should be taken into account when decisions are made that affect the conservation area.
- 4.7 Opportunities for improvements to infrastructure and public realm may fall within the remit of other agencies. However, where opportunities arise through the planning system, the management plan should inform any proposals for the area.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The document was part of the Planning Policy team's general work programme. Any expenditure that has been incurred to date has been contained within existing budget resources.

Finance Officer: Marie Maskell

Date: 11th September 2023

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 Under Section 69(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the 1990 Act) the Council, as local planning authority, is required from time to time to determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and to designate those areas as conservation areas.
- 6.2 Section 69(2) of the 1990 Act imposes a duty from time to time to review the past exercise of functions to designate areas as conservation areas and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas; and, if so, to designate those parts. There is no requirement for the review to take place at particular intervals.
- 6.3 The Authority is under a further duty under Section 71(1) of the 1990 Act from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas.

Legal Officer: David Jones

Date: 7 September 2023

Background Papers

- Worthing Local Plan 2023
- Worthing Conservation Area - Interim Report (June 2023)
- Draft Goring Hall Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Map (August 2023)
- Draft Steyne Gardens Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Map (August 2023)
- Draft Marine Gardens Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Map (August 2023)

Officer Contact Details:-

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Sustainability & Risk Assessment

- 1. Economic**
 - Matter considered and no issues identified.

- 2. Social**
 - 2.1 Social Value**
 - Matter considered and no issues identified.

 - 2.2 Equality Issues**
 - Matter considered and no issues identified.

 - 2.3 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)**
 - Matter considered and no issues identified.

 - 2.4 Human Rights Issues**
 - Matter considered and no issues identified.

- 3. Environmental**
 - Matter considered and no issues identified.

- 4. Governance**
 - Matter considered and no issues identified.