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## 1.0 Marine Gardens Conservation Area: An Overview

- 1.1 Marine Gardens is a new conservation area proposed for designation as part of the statutory requirement on local authorities to review conservation areas under section 69 [2] of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 1.2 The proposed boundary is centred on Marine Gardens, a small municipal park which opened in 1931 on land gifted to the local authority by the owners of the Marine Park Estate. It is located approximately 1.5 miles west of Worthing Town Centre with a frontage onto West Parade and the sea front.
- 1.3 It comprises the gardens themselves and the three large residential blocks of flats around the perimeter of the gardens. Examples of detached housing which forms part of the wider suburb are also included within the tightly drawn boundary.
- 1.4 This Conservation Area Character Appraisal (CACA) provides a description of the historic development of the area and an assessment of the characteristics which warrant its inclusion as a conservation area.

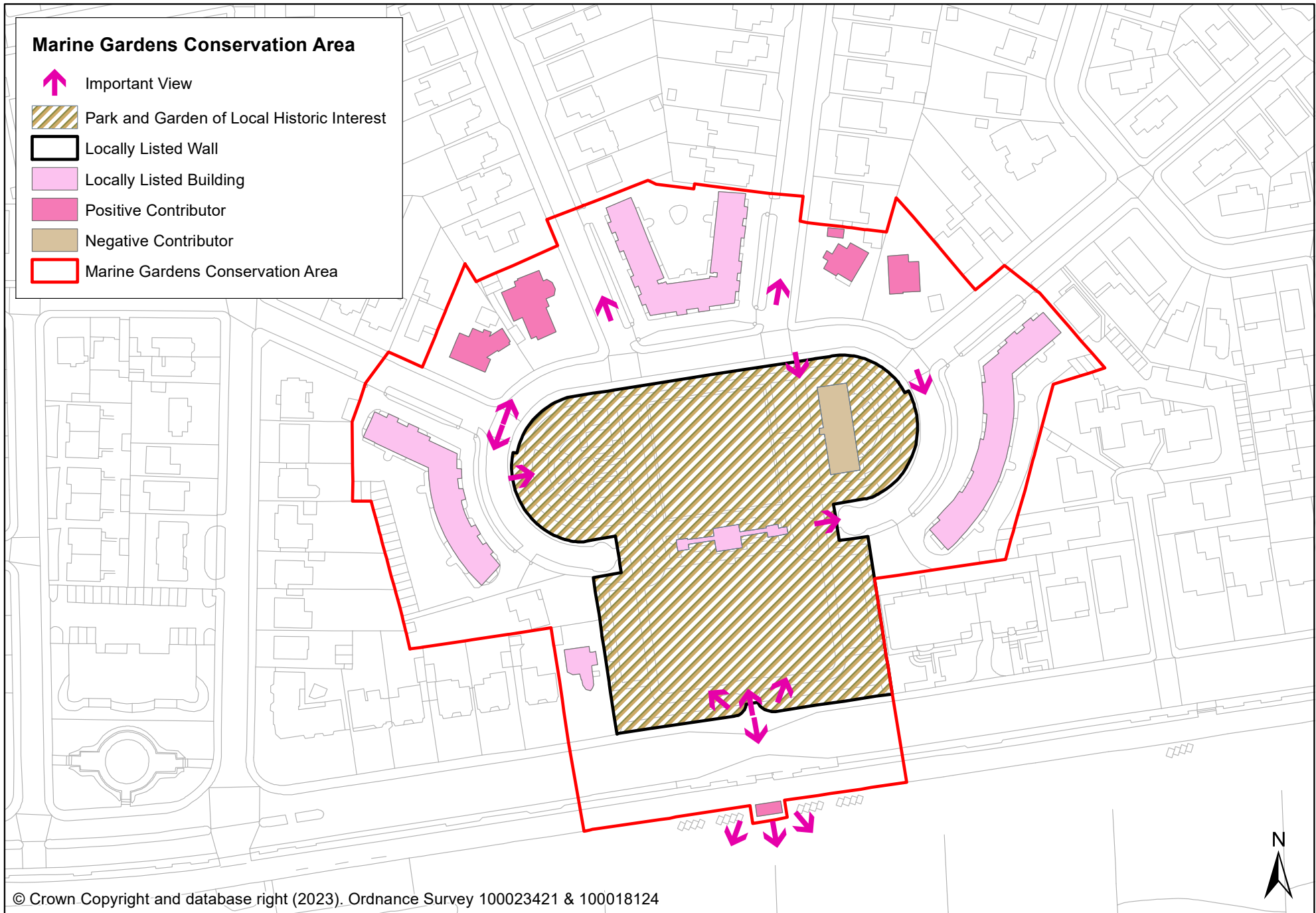
### Marine Gardens Summary of Significance

Marine Gardens Conservation Area is historically interesting as an example of a planned municipal garden and public housing development, consciously eschewing the prevailing forms of development of Worthing in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Marine Gardens is a conservation area of inter-war date and sits at the transition from traditional building forms associated with vernacular revival housing, and the emerging ideas of modernism in the landscape and townscape elements. Thus, the detached houses and some of the detailing of built elements within Marine Gardens draw on Arts and Crafts styles, while in morphology the gardens, and the streets radiating from it are modern.

The three principal building blocks of Hastings, Romney and Winchelsea Courts adopt a modernist philosophy characterised by an emphasis on volume and minimal ornamentation, and also draw on the elegance of design found in ocean liners.

As a public park approaching 100 years old, Marine Gardens holds an important place in the collective memory of local people. The conservation area can be said to have high historic, aesthetic and communal value.



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## 2.0 Conservation Areas: Background and Legislation

### What is a conservation area?

- 2.1 A conservation area is an area that has been determined as being of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. A conservation area is usually determined, and designated by local planning authorities, under the requirements of Section 69 of The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (The Act), which also requires local authorities to review, and if necessary designate, further conservation areas.

### Purpose of a conservation area

- 2.2 Designation of a conservation area introduces a further level of control over the way that individuals 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.
- 2.3 In practice, conservation area designation exerts control over demolition of unlisted buildings; control over works to trees; limitations on the types of advertisements that can be displayed with deemed consent; restrictions on the types of development that can be carried out without planning permission; clarification of archaeological interest.
- 2.4 In spite of these additional potential restrictions, conservation area status can often elevate the value of the properties within them as set out in Historic England's recent research report: <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/research/assessment-ca-value- pdf>

### What is a Conservation Area Character Appraisal (character appraisal)

- 2.5 A conservation area character appraisal is a document that describes the history of an area and the characteristics that make it special. An appraisal should evaluate the contribution made by different features of an area, both

positive and negative, and set out a framework for managing change in the future.

- 2.6 If properly undertaken, a character appraisal can assist local planning authorities in discharging their duties to preserve and enhance the character of conservation areas, as set out under Section 71 [1, 2 and 3] of the Act. This requires them to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas, and to consult the public in the subject area, taking account of the views expressed.
- 2.7 Character appraisals can also be beneficial to local communities, by allowing them a say in what they consider makes their area special, and inspiring owners and residents to maintain and enhance the area, in partnership with other relevant parties.

### Planning Policy

- 2.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's advice in respect of sustainable development, including that relating to the historic environment in Chapter 16. It seeks to ensure that conservation area designation is applied only to areas deserving of the status, so as not to devalue the concept of conservation through designation of areas that lack special architectural or historic interest (paragraph 191).
- 2.9 Development management policies advise local planning authorities to look for opportunities to enhance or better reveal the significance of conservation areas (paragraph 206); and to consider proposals that would harm the significance of the conservation area proportionately, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected, and its contribution to the conservation area.
- 2.10 The Worthing Local Plan (2023) was adopted in March 2023 and now forms part of the statutory development plan, which sets the strategic development and land-use priorities for Worthing (outside the South Downs National Park) up to 2036, and contains the policies against which development management decisions within that area will be made.

2.11 Policy DM23 sets the strategic approach to the historic environment. It includes a commitment to:

- update Worthing's Conservation and Heritage Guide (now complete and available at <https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/media/Media,135364,smxx.pdf>)
- review Worthing's Conservation Areas (updating their Character Appraisals and producing Management Plans) and seek opportunities to enhance their character and appearance in accordance with their Character Appraisals and Management Plans;
- take opportunities to seek improvements to listed buildings and buildings within Conservation Areas when their condition has deteriorated. Where requests are not complied with the Council may use its statutory powers to enforce positive change;
- identify and protect important views between settlements, across character areas, and capturing transitions between landscape, townscape and seascape. This will include considering the relationship between 'views' and the 'function' such views serve;
- recognise the role of and encourage the best use of heritage assets in regeneration, design, tourism and education;
- use Article 4 directions where important heritage assets are under threat;
- work with others, including the local community where appropriate, to address how best to conserve any assets listed on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register, or any other assets at risk of loss, and to understand the significance of the historic environment in Worthing's character and sense of place; and
- have regard to Historic England's range of published information, guidance and advice, and will work with others towards implementing best practice.

2.12 This series of CACA reviews seek to meet some of these strategic objectives in relation to the historic environment.

2.13 This CACA identifies locally listed buildings. Within Worthing, locally listed buildings were identified through two separate studies. The first list was included as an Appendix to the Local Plan 2003. The full list can be found

at the following link: <https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/media/Media,169207,smxx.pdf>. A further Local Interest Study was undertaken in 2003 which identified further heritage assets for inclusion on the local list. This can be located at <https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/media/Media,99455,smxx.pdf>.

2.14 A list of all designated and non-designated heritage assets within the proposed conservation area boundary is included at the end of this appraisal at Appendix I.

2.15 This CACA further identifies buildings that contribute positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area. These buildings are not on the adopted local list, but are identified as having some significance, particularly for the visual contribution they make to the streetscene. Locally listed buildings may have been assessed for their historic, evidential or communal heritage values, as much as for their aesthetic contribution to the conservation area.

### **Conservation Area Appraisal Methodology**

2.16 The following CACA is one of three that are being produced in support of the duties on local authorities to regularly review conservation areas. Research and physical surveys were undertaken for two existing and one potential conservation area, and the resultant recommendations included:

- Revision of boundary of the Steyne Gardens Conservation Area and update of conservation statement to a full CACA;
- Update of the Goring Hall conservation statement to a full CACA; Designation of a new conservation area at Marine Gardens and creation of a new CACA.

2.17 The character appraisals have drawn principally on two documents, widely used in preparation of conservation area character appraisals: Historic England's Advice Note 1 (Second Edition, 2019): Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management-advice-note-1/heag-268-conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management/>; and The Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit which was produced by Oxford City

Council with funding from Historic England and provides comprehensive advice on undertaking character surveys.

- Assessment of condition
- Management recommendations

2.18 The following steps were taken in appraising the conservation areas:

- Review of the existing conservation area character appraisals, as well as secondary research resources such as local history studies, historic photographs and maps and architectural reviews.
- A survey of each of the existing/proposed conservation areas and their boundaries, including survey of the setting of the conservation areas.
- Assessment of the condition of each conservation area.
- Description of the special interest of the area including the historic context; positive, neutral and negative contributing elements (both buildings and spaces); any key views within, into or out of the conservation areas.
- Presentation of the survey data with annotated maps and photographs.
- Recommendations for boundary changes and future management of the conservation areas.

2.19 The surveys utilised the Oxford toolkit rapid and detailed character assessment resources which are available here: [https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20193/character\\_assessment\\_toolkit/878/character\\_assessment\\_toolkit](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20193/character_assessment_toolkit/878/character_assessment_toolkit)

2.20 Visual surveys included consideration of spaces, buildings, views, landscape setting and ambience of the conservation areas to compile a full picture of the character and appearance of the conservation area, and its special architectural or historic interest.

2.21 Each character appraisal is divided into the following sections:

- Conservation area overview
- Map of conservation area
- Historical development
- Built and landscape character
- Boundary changes (where appropriate)
- Character areas (where appropriate)
- Setting and views

## 3.0 Historical Development

### Early History

- 3.1 The early history of Worthing goes back to the Palaeolithic period, with finds belonging to nomadic populations having been unearthed in the area. There is evidence of settled communities from 4500BC including flint mines, Bronze Age barrows and of course the Iron Age hillfort at Cissbury Ring.
- 3.2 Also at Cissbury is evidence of Roman occupation, comprising of 11 buildings and two rectangular enclosures. The discovery of two successive issues of coinage struck between AD1009 and AD1023 suggests there was also once a mint here. Present-day north-south roads from the Downs to Worthing town are also likely to represent the lines of Roman droveways, as at Charmandean Lane, which eventually becomes the High Street and Steyne. Remains of Roman farmhouses, bathhouses and mileposts have also been found beneath town centre sites.

### Medieval

- 3.3 The conservation area falls within the former parish of Heene. The parish was almost square in shape, bounded to the north and west by West Tarring. The northern and western boundaries were formed by the Teville stream and by the modern Tarring Road, Elm Grove, and Wallace Avenue, formerly Sea Lane. The coastline here fluctuated considerably in these early modern times, a process which continued until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century construction of groynes, which has stabilised the coast.
- 3.4 A pre-conquest manor at Heene was held by Earl Godwin (d. 1053) passing to William de Braose by 1086. The Domesday survey records another estate as being retained by its pre-Conquest owner Alward, though it too passed later to the de Braose family. These two estates appear in the 13<sup>th</sup> century as the manors of Falconer and the Bavent. Following the seizure of the estate at the time of the Dissolution, the Falconer estate fell to Sir Thomas Palmer, in whose family the manor remained into the 17<sup>th</sup> century.
- 3.5 The manor of Bavent is recorded as held by John de Braose in the early part of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, with free right of warren and wreck. A manor-

house of Heene Bavent was recorded in 1357 and 1427, and one of Heene Falconer in 1279, 1397, and 1616. It is thought that Heene Farmhouse near the chapel was one of these houses, but it was demolished in 1973.

- 3.6 The land west of the settlement of Heene was farmland growing wheat, barley, oats, rye, flax, peas and beans, and vetches. Two farms of the manors of Falconer and Bavent operated until they were combined in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, occupying most of the land in the parish. Despite the development of West Worthing in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century there was apparently still at least one farm in the parish in 1896. The tithe map of 1839 shows the strip fields east of the settlement of Heene, and large swathes of unenclosed land lay to the west and south; including Heene common, on the sea shore.
- 3.7 The common land at Heene was used for the pasture of cattle, sheep and horses into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but was later improved and given over to arable farming. A windmill belonging to Heene Falconer was recorded from 1279, and windmill survived in the open field later (Mill field), west of the church, until 1903. As would be anticipated from the coastal location, local people supplemented their incomes with fishing and coastal trading.

### Hamlet to Seaside Town

- 3.8 The growth of Worthing owing to the popularity of sea bathing, gradually resulted in the westward growth of the town and the gradual expansion of Heene as a smaller seaside resort.
- 3.9 The change from an agricultural economy to one centred on the tourist trade is reflected in the professions of inhabitants. The early economy was agrarian with farmers, fishermen, a basket-maker and a brewer resident in Heene; by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century a shopkeeper was recorded, and into the 19<sup>th</sup> century retailing expanded with a tailor, grocer, surgeon, dressmaker and laundresses living and working in the parish, indicating the shift in demographic and industry. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a bath-chair proprietor and boat-builders are also listed.
- 3.10 Between 1801 and 1811 the number of houses in the parish trebled, centred on Little Heene comprising houses in Brunswick Road in the south-east part of the parish. Along Heene Road, a number of villas and terraces

appeared, and a scattering of lodging houses had been built; sea-bathing machines are also recorded.

- 3.11 The expansion of West Worthing as a residential suburb was hindered by delays in securing a reliable water supply. Early roads were laid out including Grand Avenue, then tree-lined, leading from the old Tarring Road to the seafront. An enormous hotel development was intended at the southwest side of Grand Avenue, which was only ever partly constructed and today is Dolphin Lodge. The land between Grand Avenue and Heene Road was sold for development, with houses being built out in the third quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 3.12 With the growth of the town came the requirement for market gardens, common in this part of Sussex, and found here in the northern part of the parish by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Market-gardens and glasshouses still occupied much land in West Worthing well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- 3.13 In 1863 most of the parish was bought by the Heene Estate Land Co., which in the following year sold the south part to the West Worthing Investment Co. for development. Sea defences and an esplanade were soon after constructed along with Heene Terrace and the Heene (later Burlington) Hotel. Venetian Gothic swimming baths and an assembly room north of Heene Terrace followed, but were demolished in 1973. Further leisure facilities including a roller-skating rink, pleasure grounds and a tennis lawn were also constructed, and a pier was planned, but never built.

### Cartographic Evidence of Marine Gardens

- 3.14 The Yeakell and Gardner Sussex map of 1778-1783 shows the layout of the former hamlet of Heene, west of Worthing, itself a small fishing village at this time. Heene parish boundary can be seen marked out by Sea Lane to the west, Heene Road to the east and Tarring Lane connecting the two to the north. The site of the conservation area lies in the southwest part of this square, east of Grand Parade, which was formed from the central lane running south and terminating in the fields west of Heene shown on this early map.

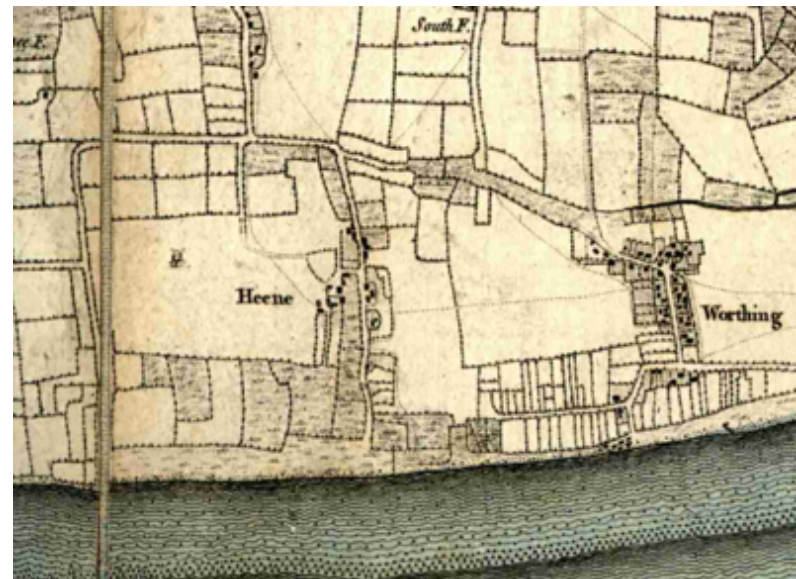


Figure 1: Yeakell and Gardner's Sussex 1778-1783, 2inch to 1 mile

- 3.15 The 1839 Tithe Map shows the southward expansion of the village, along with the linear field patterns between Heene and West Worthing. To the west, the open field pattern survives.



Figure 2: 1839 Tithe Map







Figure 5: Sussex LXIV.13 Revised: 1909, Published: 1912



Figure 6: Sussex LXIV.13 Revised: 1932, Published: 1934

## Marine Gardens

3.19 Further residential development of Heene and West Worthing in the conventional pattern found elsewhere in the town was intended under the ownership of the West Worthing Commissioners in the 1860s with a grid road structure mapped out by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The project clearly stalled and at the opening of Marine Gardens in 1931, the area was described as having been an ‘eyesore’. The land for Marine Gardens was donated to the Council by Mr H. P. Brazier, along with a contribution towards the construction of the esplanade and parade to the south of the gardens.



Figure 7: Land west of Grand Avenue, now Marine Gardens, 1927; Source: Historic England

3.20 The gardens themselves pre-dated the later residential development around them, and designs are attributed to the Borough Surveyor, Mr P.E. Harvey. The original design for the gardens was printed in *The Worthing Gazette*, and showed an elliptical ornamental garden incorporating two bowling greens east and west, with a square plan lily pond in the Centre. South of this a shelter is shown as a seemingly lightweight structure with a square central building flanked by covered shelters terminating at the east

and west ends in octagonal pavilions. South of this was a putting green, with planted beds either side.

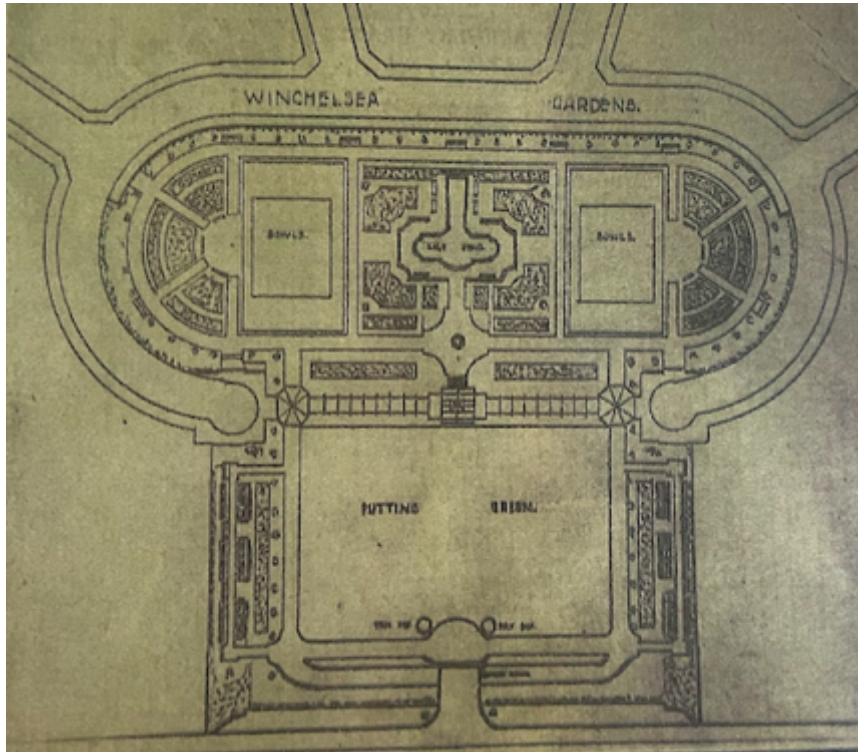


Figure 8: Marine Gardens, an extract from the Worthing Gazette, 1931; Courtesy of the Worthing Society

3.21 An early photograph of the site reproduced in The Worthing Herald on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1931, shows the early gardens executed to a slightly different design with a bowling green in the Centre of the elliptical gardens, rather than two smaller lawns either side. The central shelter is as currently exists – slightly shorter in length than originally conceived, and more solidly built with twin sided shelters terminating in square plan pavilions. In other regards the gardens were constructed much as planned, with Romney, Sandwich, Dover and Hastings Roads all integrated from the outset.

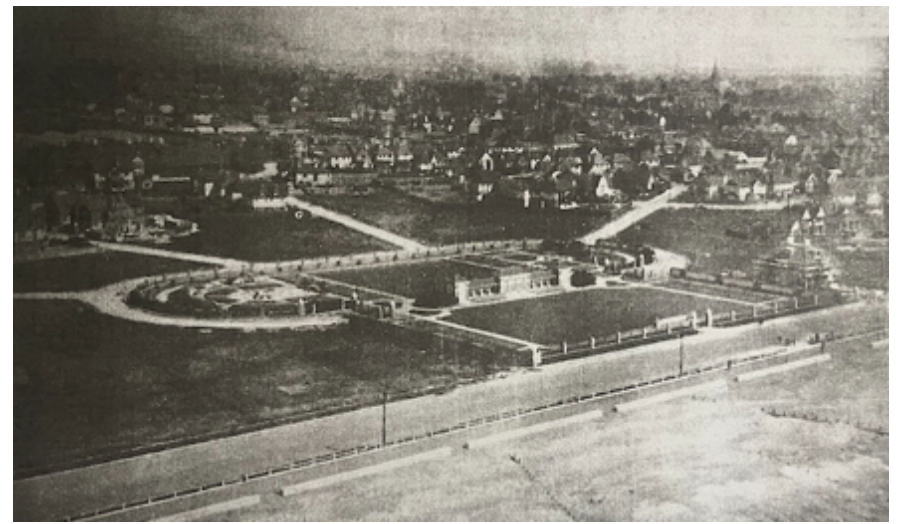


Figure 9: Marine Gardens on opening; Source: The Worthing Herald, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1931

3.22 The gardens were a consciously modern design, with clean lines and geometric shapes. The streets from the gardens fan out from the gardens, and while no drawings have been found of the plan for Marine Gardens and the streets that radiate from it; it is clear that it was intended as a new suburban centre, with a distinct character from the earlier 19<sup>th</sup> century development to the east.



Figure 10: Marine Gardens, view from the west; 1931; Source: Historic England



Figure 11: Marine Gardens (undated, but post 1931, pre-1937); Courtesy of Friends of Marine Gardens

3.23 As can be seen from the imaging sequence above, the gardens came first, with the houses at the northern ends of Dover and Sandwich Roads following. The blocks of flats surrounding the Gardens were built in the years that followed, starting with Hastings and Winchelsea, and then Romney to the west.

3.24 An earlier circular café at the northeast end of the gardens was not immediately installed, but is visible in a photograph dated 1937 (Figure x). The remains of it, with a curved east wall survive, but it has now been replaced by the larger modern café building.



Figure 12: Marine Gardens, view from the south; 1937; Source: Historic England

## 4.0 Built and Landscape Character

### Landscape context

- 4.1 Worthing Borough lies across the West Sussex coastal plain and the undulating dip slope hills of the South Downs. The contrasting geology and topography of the northern and southern parts of the Borough give rise to marked differences in character.
- 4.2 The majority of Worthing Borough occupies the coastal plain from the East Preston area of Littlehampton to the west, and Lancing to the east. The only breaks in an almost continuous band of urban development along the coast, are at the far eastern and western ends of Worthing. Inland, the settlement pattern comprises extensive settlement and twentieth century suburbs which extend to the foot of the South Downs. The northwest corner of the Borough contains wooded hills, the north-east corner of the Borough rises to relatively intact, mostly open, downland.
- 4.3 The West Sussex landscape character assessment identifies two regional character areas within the borough: the South Coast Plain and the South Downs. The lower, southern part of the town in which the conservation area is located is within the South Coast Plain. This is a large swathe of land stretching from Brighton in the east to Chichester Harbour in the west and beyond into Hampshire. The South Coast Plain is a flat open landscape of large arable fields, defined by low hedgerows, dominated in many parts on the coastal margin by major urban development. A complex series of creeks, mudflats and shingle beaches comprise parts of the coastal edge.
- 4.4 Worthing town is located on the Sussex south coast and it is now one of the largest south coast towns with a population of over 110,000 residents. Worthing's suburbs terminate to the east at the Local Green Gap separating Worthing from Lancing and Sompting; and to the west at the Goring-Ferring Local Green Gap. The northern fringes of the town sit below the foot of the South Downs and the largely suburban character of the town here has resulted from 20<sup>th</sup> century coalescence of smaller rural centres such as Broadwater and Tarring.

- 4.5 The seafront is one of the most valued assets of the town and, owing to its historical development is a focus of most of the built heritage assets within the borough. The historic core of the town is notable for the very high concentration of conservation areas along the seafront and just inland of the seafront. The conservation areas located inland along the modern day A259 include those associated with the old settlements of Heene and Goring/Goring Hall, an early c20 conservation area centred on Winchester Road, and a 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century conservation area around Shakespeare Road.

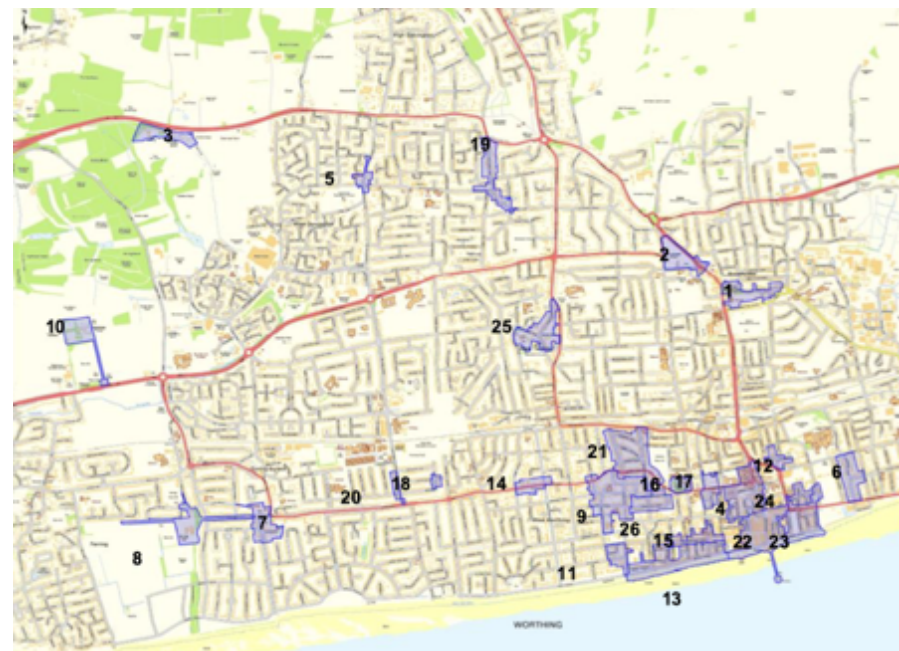


Figure 13: Worthing's existing Conservation Areas

- 4.6 Marine Gardens represents the 20<sup>th</sup> century westward expansion of the town, and a break in the more traditional seaside terraces and villas of the 19<sup>th</sup> century further east. It is located southwest of the ancient village of Heene and west of Worthing. It was an area formerly comprising fields, and earmarked for development in the mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century for housing.

### 20<sup>th</sup> Century Conservation Areas

- 4.7 Research by the Twentieth Century Society in 2017 sought to create a gazetteer of existing 20<sup>th</sup> century conservation areas nationally, and provide

recommendations to local authorities on the designation of new 20<sup>th</sup> century conservation areas. The report identified a number of themes and issues commonly associated with 20<sup>th</sup> century conservation areas. These included:

- Bombed Towns and Cities
- New Towns
- Public Housing Developments
- Private Housing Developments
- Single Design
- Single Ownership
- Tall Buildings

4.8 The Marine Gardens Conservation Area encompasses several of these themes as a public housing development of a single design built on land gifted to the local authority following a period of stagnation after the first world war. An emphasis on clean air, space and health was integral to the modernist movement, and many municipal gardens date from this period.

4.9 Residential conservation areas of this early (and later) 20<sup>th</sup> century period either publicly or privately developed tend towards a uniformity in design and usually integrate landscaped areas. These are characteristics that are found at Marine Gardens, and the surrounding residential streets.

4.10 Much of the housing stock along Sandwich Road, Dover Road, Wallace Avenue, Pevensey Road and Grand Avenue was carefully planned, and exhibits the uniformity of design that might make it a candidate for designation. However, the vast majority of the houses on these roads have been considerably altered with loss of architectural details including windows and doors. The impact of the alterations is such that it is not considered that the streets meet the threshold for local designation as a conservation area; and so the resultant boundary of the Marine Gardens Conservation Area is much more tightly drawn around the gardens themselves, and the interwar blocks of flats immediately around the garden.

## **Spatial analysis**

4.11 The Marine Gardens Conservation Area is located on the seafront and is part of the suburb of West Worthing. The land is predominantly flat, or slightly rising to the north and has been designed to benefit from sea views and the relationship with the esplanade to the south. It is bounded by West Parade to the south, and the pedestrian esplanade south of this. The boundary is tightly drawn around the three residential blocks of flats on Winchelsea Gardens, which connect with Romney Road to the west, Sandwich and Dover Roads to the north, and Hastings Road to the east.

4.12 The conservation area is centred on the geometrically designed gardens which consists of a northern elliptical area of land, from which a rectangular garden sits to the south. The central areas are occupied by bowling grounds, while the gardens within the western part of the northern section are formally landscaped, and a modern café is within the eastern section, along with some surviving elements of an earlier pavilion building.

4.13 The radial streets fanning out from the gardens were part of the early designs for Marine Gardens, and were laid out from the opening of the gardens in 1931, although the blocks of flats and many of the houses were not implemented until the later years of the 1930s.

4.14 The gardens are set out with simple perimeter paths leading to the central pavilion building, and to the ornamental gardens in the northwest of the park and café in the northeastern area. Winchelsea Gardens is a no-through road that terminates at the east and west ends of Marine Gardens.

## **Architectural interest and built character**

4.15 The conservation area boundary is small, drawn tightly around the gardens and blocks of flats which are nearly contemporary with the garden. Beyond the conservation area, along the radial streets is predominantly detached family suburban housing of a similar date. While historically interesting, the architectural qualities of the housing beyond the conservation area boundary has been eroded by recent alterations to the vast majority of houses.

4.16 The architectural interest of the conservation area is therefore contained to the quality of Marine Gardens themselves, and to the residential blocks of flats that surround it. Also included within the conservation area boundary are several of the less altered detached houses interspersed between the fanning streets and blocks of flats.

4.17 The gardens themselves are accessed primarily from the southern entrance off West Parade. The boundary to the gardens sits back on a wide pavement, and enclosure is provided by dwarf walls and planted beds, or taller walls of between 1-1.5metres. Centred on the southern boundary of Marine Gardens is a generous entrance demarcated with brick piers and an iron oversailing sign, which originally incorporated iron gates.



Figure 14: Southern entrance to Marine Gardens early 20<sup>th</sup> century



Figure 15: Southern entrance to Marine Gardens today

4.18 Taller walls enclose the southern section of the gardens to the east and west, and around the elliptical boundary of the northern section dwarf retaining walls are interspersed with short piers capped with green glazed pantiles. This detail is repeated around the perimeter of the site, and the roof of the central pavilion is also covered in the same characteristic tiles. Earlier photographs indicate that the enclosing boundary was formerly higher, with tall piers of the same design joined by wrought iron railings with planting on the inner perimeter of the park.



Figure 16: Brick boundary walls with green pantile capping



Figure 17: Marine Gardens from the west showing original enclosing boundary railings (undated); Courtesy of the Worthing Society

- 4.19 The walls of the southern section of the site are also capped with green pantiles, and periodically decorative brick planters are integrated into the inner walls in an Arts and Crafts idiom.



Figure 18: Brick and tile planters within Marine Gardens

- 4.20 The northwestern section of the park comprises an ornamental garden, shown in historic photographs as a rose garden. The eastern boundary of this section of the garden terminates in a low stone wall into which is built a water fountain feeding a short rill leading to a circular pond. This has been recently reinstated and a pergola has been installed providing structure for planting and a shaded walk.





Figure 19: Postcard of ornamental gardens, 1934; Courtesy of the Worthing Society



Figure 20: View of the northwest ornamental gardens

4.21 At the Centre of the garden is the bowling pavilion. This building is on Worthing's Local Interest List. It comprises a single storey building intersecting the north bowling green and south putting green. The central

part of the building is taller, with three arched headed sets of French doors to the north and south elevations, built in brick with stone dressings. The hipped roof is finished in the green glazed pantiles. Two wings extend from the central pavilion to the east and west terminating in two small square plan brick built pavilions with pyramidal roofs, also covered in green pantiles. The shelters appeared to have been open originally, but have subsequently been enclosed to provide storage. Toilets are located in the two end pavilions. While altered, the building remains in its original form, and contributes positively to the conservation area.



Figure 21: Marine Gardens Bowling Pavilion

4.22 A further two structures within the gardens warrant discussion. The surviving part of the 1930s pavilion remains in the northwest part of Marine Gardens where the rendered curved wall of a formerly circular building is now used as stores to the modern café. While this is only fragmentary, it retains historic interest, and could be used to inform future proposals for new buildings in this part of the park. An early photograph shows the café in the context of the seafront shelter with a timber pergola around the exterior providing a shaded seating area.



Figure 22: Postcard of the pavilion c1930



Figure 23: Remains of earlier circular pavilion

4.23 The current café building is a large, single storey pre-fabricated building of mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century date. The café is a well-used and much appreciated part of the local area, but regrettably has no relationship with the carefully

planned geometry of the gardens, and is considered to contribute negatively to the character and appearance of the conservation area.



Figure 24: Existing modern Marine Gardens Café

4.24 Beyond the gardens themselves, there are three main buildings within the conservation area: the residential apartment blocks of Romney Court, Hastings Court and Winchelsea Court. All three buildings are on Worthing's Local Interest List, and all contribute positively to the conservation area.



Figure 25: Aerial photograph of the conservation area showing Romney, Hastings and Winchelsea Courts; Source: Google Maps, 2023

- 4.25 The three buildings are subtly different, but are consistent in their scale, massing and materials, and were all designed by the same (unknown) architect and built between 1931 and 1937. Hastings and Romney Courts are three storeys in height with flat roofs and are located at the east and west ends of Marine Gardens where the long low buildings form a gentle arc around the southern part of the curved road (Winchelsea Gardens). Both Hastings and Romney Courts extend along Hastings and Romney Road with an angled wing in a northeast and northwest direction respectively. Hastings is the larger of the two buildings, the southern part of which extends further south than Romney to the west.
- 4.26 Winchelsea Gardens is located to the north of Marine Gardens and is arranged as a 'U' shaped block with frontages to Sandwich and Dover Roads. The southern section of the building terminates views from within the gardens. It is built in the same idiom as Romney and Hastings Courts, three storeys high with a flat roof behind a shallow parapet. The same language is repeated to the rear with half round stair towers, projecting balconies and tidy well maintained parking areas. At Romney Court, a

range of single storey brick garages are provided, likely to be later than the original flats, but built in a complementary design.



Figure 26: Hastings Court front elevation

- 4.27 The architectural detailing of the buildings is high quality. The buildings are three storeys in height and the horizontal emphasis of wide continuous brick bands is relieved by a rhythm of projecting bays, which return to the recessed block with a series of pleasing curved balconies. Within each of the projecting bays further relief is provided by contrasting solid and void elements provided by stacked recessed balconies.
- 4.28 To the rear of the buildings, the same care has been taken with the elevations with attractive half round projecting stair towers flanked by projecting balconies providing contrast to otherwise austere elevations. The curved elements of these buildings emulate the shape of Marine Gardens, unifying the design of the townscape and landscape here.



Figure 27: Winchelsea Court, rear elevation

- 4.29 The bricks are a striking burnt orange, and are longer and slimmer than standard stock bricks again lending horizontal emphasis. They are set with a similar red mortar, with white rendered bands providing visual contrast at plinth level and in the decorative banding at each storey.
- 4.30 There have been alterations and losses to these three buildings which compromise their architectural integrity, Most obviously, all the original crittal windows have been replaced with uPVC which drastically diminishes the striking 'Deco' appearance of the buildings, particularly where on curved parts of the buildings such as the stair towers. A number of the recessed balconies have also been enclosed which considerably alters the intended aesthetic of contrasting areas of solid wall and voids.
- 4.31 There are just six further residential buildings included within the conservation area boundary. Four are located along the northern part of Winchelsea Gardens on land between the blocks of flats. These houses are approximately contemporary with the development of Marine Gardens,

and are considered good examples of the prevailing housing type found along the radial roads leading from Marine Gardens.

- 4.32 St Elizabeth, and its neighbour, Winchelsea were present by 1931. The former is a detached two-storey house with a hipped roof. It has an interesting geometry with two full height canted bays on the south elevation connected by a recessed porch and balcony over creating a slight butterfly plan which addresses the curve of Winchelsea Gardens. The return elevation on Romney Road is more austere, with two robust chimney stacks and the deep eaves of the shallow pitched roof emphasised by the red pantiles, which are not original. A curved boundary wall encloses the gardens which continue along Winchelsea Gardens providing visual continuity to the conservation area. It contributes positively to the conservation area.



Figure 28: St Elizabeth and Winchelsea (left)

- 4.33 The neighbouring building, Winchelsea is of the same period, and appears always to have been built with the two large flat-roofed protrusions to the south and east. While extended, and not as architecturally pleasing as St

Elizabeth, it too has heritage interest as a building contemporary with the buildings and green space in the proposed conservation area. It is similarly recognised as a positive contributor to the conservation area.

- 4.34 East of Winchelsea Court are two further detached dwellings, also considered to make a positive contribution to the conservation area: Number 2 Dover Road and No. 8 Hastings Road, which are mirror images of each other. Both are set well back in their plots with frontages to Dover and Hastings Roads. They are built in red brick with probably later tile hanging and clay tiled roofs. They have the same shallow sloping roofs as St Elizabeth with deep eaves. No. 2 Dover Road retains a small detached original garage located to the north of the house. While the pair do not possess some of the more interesting detailing of other houses along the roads beyond the conservation area boundary, they are well maintained and were clearly designed as a pair. Neither building retains its original windows.



Figure 29: No.2 Dover Road

- 4.35 No. 45 West Parade is a further locally listed building located immediately west of Marine Gardens on the seafront. It is built in the Art Deco style with a feature double height curved bay to the front providing sea views.

The flat roof provides a balcony enclosed with a curved railing reminiscent of the deck of a ship. The loss of original windows is harmful to the significance of the building.



Figure 30: No.45 West Parade

- 4.36 At the very southern extent of the conservation area is a locally listed beach shelter. This simple partly open structure is built in timber with a leaded roof capped with decorative ridge detailing and finials and supported on columns and decorative iron brackets. The screen is simply glazed, with benches installed within the shelter. It is placed on the north-south axis with the centre of Marine Gardens providing the start of a sequence of buildings from south to north within the conservation area: beach shelter, entrance gates to Marine Gardens, Marine Gardens Bowling Pavilion and Winchelsea Court. The experience of travelling from the sea front to the northern end of Marine Gardens requires users to circumvent the buildings, providing opportunities to enjoy the spaces the buildings separate.

### **Building Materials**

4.37 There is a restrained palette of materials in the Marine Gardens Conservation Area, the prevailing material being brick. Within the three main blocks of flats, this is an orange brick with a corresponding red mortar. Contrast is provided by the rendered plinth and plat bands which emphasise the horizontal lines of the buildings.



Figure 31: Brickwork at Hastings Court and within locally listed walls of Marine Gardens

4.38 The buildings and walls within the gardens themselves are also brick, with some of the inner walls partly rendered. Decorative motifs are employed in the planters within the walls including the use of tile on end and bricks laid in a chevron pattern. These are typical of the 'Arts and Crafts' style, which here is blended with the more modernist landscape plan of Marine Gardens. The other buildings and boundary walls within the conservation area are also mostly brick built, although with variation in colours and textures. Limited and variable examples of tile hanging exist, with roofing materials of tile, pantiles and the characteristic green glazed pantiles within the gardens themselves.

### Boundaries and streetscape

4.39 This small conservation area has extensive boundary treatments, which make an import contribution to the character and appearance of the

conservation area. The entrance to Marine Gardens is a prominent local landmark, announcing the entrance to the gardens with tall brick built piers, the gates now gone. Similar piers are located at the east and west ends of Winchelsea Gardens indicating that the entire garden was once enclosed by tall gates and railings and/or walls.



Figure 32: Brick piers at the east end of Winchelsea Gardens

4.40 The walls enclosing Marine Gardens are locally listed. The boundaries along the southern and northern parts of the gardens are porous, with short piers, capped in green glazed pantiles connecting low walls which serve as planters for hedges and perimeter trees. It appears that the piers were originally higher, with iron railings connecting them.



Figure 33: Boundary treatments at Marine Gardens



Figure 34: Boundary treatments at Marine Gardens

- 4.41 Today, boundary trees also make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area. The trees do not appear to be of sufficient age to be part of an original planting scheme, but they are now mature specimens which seem well adapted to the seaside environment.
- 4.42 Elsewhere, Hastings, Romney and Winchelsea Courts are enclosed by low brick boundary walls, which are continuous around the outer edge of Winchelsea Gardens providing a common boundary both to the flats in communal ownership, and the family housing along the radial roads branching off Marine Gardens.



Figure 35: Low brick boundary walls around Winchelsea Gardens

## Heritage Assets

- 4.43 Heritage assets are commonly considered to be buildings or structures, monuments, places or landscapes that have sufficient significance to warrant consideration in the planning process. They include designated assets such as scheduled monuments, conservation areas and listed buildings; and non-designated assets such as locally listed buildings and parks and gardens.
- 4.44 Conservation Area Appraisals provide an opportunity for local planning authorities to also identify unlisted buildings that contribute positively to the character or appearance of the conservation area, and therefore be recognised as non-designated heritage assets. Similarly, appraisals can also identify buildings that negatively contribute to the conservation area, usually because of inappropriate scale, poor design or incongruous materials.
- 4.45 Those buildings that have been identified as positive contributors within this conservation area are identified on the map on page X. In general, positive contributors have a degree of architectural and historic integrity, which may be derived from a street-facing elevation, or from another viewpoint; and they therefore illustrate an important part of the history of the area. There are no statutorily listed buildings in the Marine Gardens Conservation Area, however there are seven locally listed buildings or structures in the conservation area, along with Marine Gardens themselves which are listed on the register of parks and gardens of local interest. These are all described in the sections above.

## Detracting Elements

- 4.46 The modern café building has been identified as a negative contributor to the character and appearance of the conservation area. While it is a valued community resource, the building is of no architectural or historic interest. It is low in scale and therefore does not seriously compromise the character of the gardens, but the design makes no reference to the geometry or morphology of the gardens, or the more elegant architectural language of surrounding buildings.

4.47 The losses of original windows throughout the conservation area are very high, and this has eroded the architectural integrity of the three main blocks of flats, and also of the locally listed bowling pavilion. The enclosure of formerly open balconies is also harmful to the architectural and historic interest of Hastings, Romney and Winchelsea Courts.

## 5.0 Setting and Views

### Setting

5.1 Marine Gardens represents a key turning point in the development of West Worthing from the prevailing character of typical terraced 'set pieces' associated with the 19<sup>th</sup> century growth of the town, to an ambition to provide 'modern' housing. The conservation area is therefore the centrepiece of a highly designed urban extension which consciously turned its back on the former grid pattern proposed for development in the mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

5.2 Marine Gardens is therefore set within a much larger suburb of mainly detached family housing. The character of that housing has been briefly described above. Each street tends towards homogenous designs which are subtly different to neighbouring streets. Houses are fairly typical of the period employing various 'Arts and Crafts' or vernacular revival idioms including the use of steeply pitched roofs, bay and oriel windows, tile hanging, gables and chimneys. There are surviving examples of some very attractive art deco or art nouveau inspired features at some properties in surrounding streets to Marine Gardens, but on the whole, the losses of original fenestration are too great to merit designation as part of the conservation area.

5.3 Marine Gardens is of course, designed to benefit from its seaside location. The gardens provide sea views, and likewise the gardens are a welcome open space on an otherwise mostly built up seafront, and provides a quiet and reflective space through which to pass to the suburbs to the north.

### Views

5.4 Views within this small conservation area include those between the seafront and the gardens, views towards Marine Gardens from the radial

roads fanning out from it; and local views from within the gardens themselves.

5.5 Three locally listed buildings sit along the central north-south axis of the gardens: Winchelsea Court, the bowling pavilion and the seaside shelter. These serve to shorten views, requiring users to follow paths and streets around Marine Gardens to reach their destination. This provides opportunity to appreciate the gardens and views out of them through trees to buildings beyond.



Figure 36: View north and south from entrance gates





Figure 37: View towards Hastings Court from eastern edge of Marine Gardens south of café



Figure 38: View towards Winchelsea Court from north side of the bowling pavilion



Figure 39: Views from southern perimeter path looking north, northeast and northwest



Figure 41: View towards Romney Court from Winchelsea Gardens



Figure 40: Kinetic views through western ornamental gardens



Figure 42: View towards Winchelsea Court, St Elizabeth's and Winchelsea in foreground



Figure 43: Views out of conservation area along Sandwich and Dover Roads



Figure 45: Views from north entrance to Marine Gardens looking south (left) and southeast (right)



Figure 44: View towards Hastings Court from Winchelsea Gardens

## 6.0 Assessment of Condition

- 6.1 The condition of the conservation area can be summarised as generally good and the properties within the conservation area are mostly well maintained. The gardens are carefully kept, and an active Friends Group is working to restore historic elements, improve planting and provide valuable public amenities. Marine Gardens has Green Flag status indicating the quality of the gardens and a commitment to their upkeep and contribution to the community.
- 6.2 In general, bins and bollards are sensitively sited, and the high quality wooden benches with green painted iron ends are pervasive throughout the gardens, and a feature of it.
- 6.3 There are however some instances of vandalism and antisocial behaviour, and the café has been targeted by thieves, in spite of the good levels of natural surveillance and installation of security cameras.
- 6.4 The rest of the conservation area is also well kept, including the service and parking areas of the three main blocks of flats.

## 7.0 Management Plan

- 7.1 The following management recommendations are intended to provide guidance to owners and interested parties regarding the future management of the conservation area. Where the local authority has jurisdiction over part of the area, recommendations will be brought forward as and where possible subject to availability resources.
- 7.2 The overall character of the conservation area is dominated by the gardens which make up the majority of the area. These are generally well maintained, and the street furniture within the gardens is high quality.

### Infrastructure and public realm

Public realm improvements should continue to be informed by an understanding of the significance of the conservation area, and respect the character and appearance of the interwar gardens and surrounding housing.

- 7.3 A holistic approach to installation of or alteration to road, street, telecommunications and lighting infrastructure should be encouraged to avoid excessive or inappropriate installations.
- 7.4 All relevant authorities should be reminded of the designation status to encourage a thoughtful approach to installation of signage, street markings, telephone and broadband boxes, litter bins and road surfaces. Historic England's Guidance 'Streets for All' provides a framework for managing change to the public realm in historic areas: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/streets-for-all/heag149-sfa-national/>

### Public awareness

Local residents and businesses should be made aware of the designation of the area as a conservation area, and what it means for development and change to their properties.

7.5 As a new conservation area, there would be benefit in providing residents and businesses with notification of the status of the conservation area, along with guidance on what in practice this might mean for the management of property.

### **New development within the conservation area**

7.6 Within the conservation area, development opportunities are limited, because of the small size and tightly drawn conservation area boundaries, as well as the landscape and heritage designations. Any new development should respect the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Proposals for new development should take into account the heritage values associated with the conservation area as set out in this appraisal, as well as Supplementary Planning Guidance produced by Worthing Borough Council including:

- Guide to Residential Development SPD
- Worthing Borough Council Conservation and Heritage Guide

Any new buildings within Marine Gardens should be limited to those required for essential facilities to avoid built form impeding an appreciation of the historic gardens. Re-use of or replacement buildings should have due regard to the significance of the conservation area and seek to enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

### **Alterations to Romney, Winchelsea and Hastings Courts**

7.7 There is not considered any value in imposing an Article 4 Direction within the conservation area given the small number of houses to which such a Direction would apply; and owing to the losses of original windows throughout the conservation area. Planning permission will be required for

replacement windows to the main blocks of flats in any case, and this would also apply to removal of boundary walls contiguous with blocks of flats.

7.8 There is however great value in educating management companies and residents about the benefits of installing windows to traditional designs as and when renewal is required in the future. It is recommended that guidance is issued to homeowners about appropriately designed double glazed windows which would enhance the appearance of their properties. It is recognised that this may be a process of gradual improvement over time.

Residents and management companies are encouraged to explore options to install historically accurate replicas of the original steel framed windows at Hastings, Winchelsea and Romney Courts. Some photographic evidence of the former windows exists and is replicated in this report.

Further infill of external balconies should be resisted to reduce the harmful impact to the architectural interest of Hastings, Romney and Winchelsea Courts. Where a convincing case can be made for the enclosure, this should be done sensitively, in such a way as to allow the void to remain partly legible, through setting glazing back behind the external face of the building, and using appropriately designed glazing.

## Appendix I: List of Heritage Assets

Street/Space	Building Name/Number	Designation
<b>Worthing Local Interest Study 2023 (relating to the Worthing Local Plan 2003)</b>		
West Parade	Marine Gardens	Park and Garden of Local Interest
<b>Worthing Local Interest Study 2003</b>		
Hastings Road	Hastings Court	Locally listed
Romney Gardens	Romney Court	Locally listed
West Parade	Pavilion, Marine Gardens	Locally listed
	Walls, Marine Gardens	Locally listed
	45 West Parade	Locally listed
Winchelsea Gardens	Winchelsea Court	Locally listed

## **Appendix 2: List of Sources**

The Worthing Herald, Saturday May 2, 1931 – Marine Gardens Open to German Visitors

The Worthing Herald, Saturday May 2, 1931 – Worthing's 80 Acres of Parks and Recreation Grounds

Worthing Gazette – Worthing's New Marine Gardens (n.d)

Twentieth Century Society Conservation Areas Project – Potential Conservation Areas Short Report, December 2017

Twentieth Century Society Conservation Areas Project Potential Conservation Areas Scoping Report, December 2017

Twentieth Century Society, Appendix 5.2 – Existing 20th century conservation areas