



WORTHING BOROUGH
COUNCIL

Key Decision: No

Ward(s) Affected: Central, Goring & Marine

Worthing Conservation Area Reviews - Public Consultation Responses and Proposed Conservation Area Designation

Report by the Director for Place

Executive Summary

1. Purpose

- This report updates the Planning Committee on public consultation carried out of the following documents:
 1. Goring Hall Conservation Area Character Appraisal
 2. Marine Gardens Proposed Conservation Area designation and Character Appraisal
 3. Steyne Gardens Conservation Area proposed boundary changes and Character Appraisal
- A summary of the representations received during consultation, together with Officer responses and recommendations is included as Appendix 1 to this report.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Planning Committee is asked to note these representations and responses. Any comments will be passed to Adur and Worthing Executive Members for Regeneration to inform their decisions on:

- Adoption of the character appraisals for each conservation area

- Adoption of Marine Gardens Conservation Area
- Adoption of boundary extension to Steyne Gardens Conservation Area
- Adoption of an updated Worthing Policies Map to reflect a new Conservation Area at Marine Gardens and revised boundary of Steyne Gardens Conservation Area.

3. **Background**

3.1 On 20 September 2023, the Planning Committee agreed the Executive Member for Regeneration could authorise:

- 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.

3.2 Public consultation was held in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, and the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (GPDO) (as amended).

3.3 The character appraisals were made available on the Council's website for a period of 6 weeks. Physical copies for reference purposes were also available at Worthing Town Hall, Goring Library and Worthing Library.

3.4 The Secretary of State, Historic England and West Sussex County Council were notified of public consultation on the draft character appraisals for the conservation areas. All addresses within the conservation areas were sent letters notifying them of the consultations as well as inviting them to attend a public meeting that was held on 16th October 2023 at Worthing Town Hall to learn more about the proposals.

3.5 In addition to the statutory consultation processes set out above, the Council consulted The Worthing Society, Goring and Ilex Conservation Group, Goring Residents Association, Ferring Conservation Group, Friends of Marine Gardens and Friends of Denton Gardens to ensure that the proposals reached a wide audience.

3.6 The Council placed site notices in all three areas as well as issuing a press release online. The Council also advertised the consultations on its social media accounts and notified subscribers on the Worthing Planning Policy Consultee Database.

3.7 The Council received the following representations:

- Goring Hall Conservation Area Character Appraisal - 15 representations
- Steyne Gardens Conservation Area Character Appraisal - 12 representations
- Proposed conservation area at Marine Gardens - 10 representations

3.8 A summary of the representations and Officer responses to these comments is provided as Appendix 1 to this report.

4.0 Goring Hall Conservation Area

4.1 A number of comments were received suggesting that the proposed Conservation Area boundary needs to be amended to include the Goring-Ferring Gap to protect the Gap from future development. Comments were also received regarding the need to consider wildlife, ecological emergency and flood mitigation and adaptation as special characteristics of the Conservation Area. These comments are noted and Adur & Worthing Councils have declared a climate emergency. However, it needs to be clarified that the principal purpose of a conservation area is to protect the identified special architectural and historic interest of a place. Any development proposals that will come forward within the Goring-Ferring gap will need to be assessed against policies in the Worthing Local Plan (2023) such as Policy SP2: Climate Change, Policy DM18: Biodiversity and Policy DM20: Flood Risk & Sustainable Drainage.

4.2 Historic England (HE) supports the Council's approach not to include the Goring-Ferring Gap within the Conservation Area boundary given that a conservation area designation is rarely appropriate for protecting a wider landscape. HE agrees that the Character Appraisal has correctly identified the importance of this gap as forming part of the setting to the Conservation Area and contributing to its significance but there are no relevant architectural or historic reasons to include this area within the boundaries of the conservation area. However, HE suggests that instead of identifying this as a landscape buffer, it may be more appropriate to identify this as land that positively contributes to the setting of the conservation area. This suggestion has been taken into account and the character appraisal has been amended accordingly.

4.3 In addition, a number of comments were raised regarding the management and maintenance of trees and vegetation on Ilex Way. These comments are acknowledged and have been passed to the Council's Parks Team for their consideration.

5.0 Proposed Conservation Area at Marine Gardens

5.1 No objections were received regarding the proposed Conservation Area designation at Marine Gardens.

5.2 Historic England support the proposed conservation area at Marine Gardens and the tightly drawn boundary.

5.3 A comment was raised questioning why the properties to the West of Marine Gardens as far as George Vth Avenue haven't been included within the proposed conservation area boundary. The heritage consultant has looked into this and it is considered that these properties do not warrant inclusion within the boundary. These buildings, while of a comparable age to those within the conservation area are quite altered, and were not considered to meet the threshold of intactness for inclusion in the CA. A note has been added to the Conservation Area Character Appraisal (see paragraph 2.22) to explain the reasons for excluding properties in the wider area originally proposed by the Worthing Society.

5.4 A representation was received regarding the redundant electricity box (covered by a yellow tarpaulin cover) located on the outside of the wall to the North West of the gardens. The Council recognises that this is an unsightly feature and if the conservation area is designated, then the infrastructure provider will be informed.

5.5 A number of comments have been raised regarding access improvements to Marine Gardens as well as allocating funding for garden improvements. These comments are acknowledged and have been forwarded to the Council's Parks Team.

5.6 In addition, a comment was raised regarding the need to restore Worthing Lido. This comment has been forwarded to the Assistant Director of Place & Economy to take into consideration given that a refresh of the Seafront Investment Plan is to commence within the next twelve months.

6.0 Steyne Gardens Conservation Area

- 6.1 No objections were received regarding the proposed extension to Steyne Gardens Conservation Area.
- 6.2 Historic England supports the identification of the two distinct character areas for this conservation area as the special interest of these areas is clearly different. They also considered that the rationale for the boundary changes are clear. They recommended that those buildings identified as positive contributors be included on the Local List. In addition, Historic England suggested that given the open spaces make such an important contribution to the special interest of this conservation area, identification of measures to enhance their character and appearance may be a useful addition in the management plan section.
- 6.3 The Character Appraisal has been amended to provide clarity that Splash Memorial Garden is included within the proposed Conservation Area boundary. A number of representations (this issue was also raised at the public meeting) were received regarding the areas marked as 'brick paving' on Steyne Gardens map. There was some confusion that these areas would become pedestrianised. This has been clarified by revising Steyne Gardens map which now indicates that the hatching is 'area with historic brick paving.'
- 6.4 A number of comments were made regarding public realm improvements particularly the need for improved street furniture and seating. Whilst not relevant to the scope of the conservation area reviews, these comments are acknowledged and have been passed on to the Assistant Director of Place & Economy to be considered as part of the Councils aspiration to deliver public realm improvements within the town.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 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.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 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.

- 8.2 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.
- 8.3 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.

Background Papers

- Worthing Planning Committee Report - 20th September (WBC-PC/39/23-24)
- Worthing Local Plan 2023
- Worthing Conservation Area - Interim Report (June 2023)
- Goring Hall Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Map (January 2024)
- Steyne Gardens Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Map (January 2024)
- Marine Gardens Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Map (January 2024)

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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

- Adopting Marine Gardens Conservation Area and the adoption of the boundary changes to Steyne Gardens Conservation Area along with adopting the Character Appraisals for each area will ensure that the special architectural and historic characteristics of the conservation areas as protected and enhanced.

4. Governance

- Matter considered and no issues identified.