THE WORTHING SOCIETY

[redacted]

[redacted]
Principal Planning Officer
Planning Department
Worthing Borough Council
Town Hall
Chapel Road
Worthing BN11 1HA

11 March 2024

[redacted]

Dear [redacted]

WORTHING SOCIETY CONSULTATION RESPONSE

AWDM/0183/24 | FOREST BARN, FOREST LANE, WORTHING, WEST SUSSEX BN13 3FD

Application: Extension to existing dwelling (Forest Barn) and the subdivision of existing residential curtilage and erection of 1no. 3-bedroom chalet bungalow, retention of existing access, provision of landscaping.

Thank you for requesting our comments in respect to the above application. I have now had the opportunity to discuss the plans with our Heritage Team and we have the following observations:

LOCATION

The development site is located in a sensitive position adjoining the Castle Goring Conservation Area (CA) and the designated South Downs National Park (SDNP). Forest Barn contributes positively to the significance of these heritage assets. There are also considerable wildlife and landscape concerns.

FOREST BARN

The Worthing Society has established, through research with the Enquiries Team at the West Sussex Library Service, that Forest Barn was originally part of the historic Castle Goring Estate and appears on the earliest Goring Tithe Map. The building dates from circa 1790 and is built of flint and brick in the Sussex vernacular style. Forest Barn adds character and distinctiveness to the local heritage environment.

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Although not included on the Statutory List, this building is an undesignated heritage asset which contributes positively to the 'setting' of both the Castle Goring CA and the SDNP. The Worthing Society has submitted an application to the Council for inclusion on the Council's 'Local Interest List' commensurate with the previous application. At the time of writing this application is under consideration and we look forward to receiving notification of the decision.

In addition, it is regrettable that the historic flint cow sheds and flint walls to the rear of the building have, apparently, been allowed to decay and collapse. However, this facilitates the space for an extension at the rear of the main building. It would be desirable for any flint materials to be preserved and incorporated into future works or boundaries for the important landscaping.

We consider therefore that any restoration of the building needs to acknowledge the vernacular character of Forest Barn and the importance of the location.

THE PLANS

We welcome the retention of this unique building and note that demolition was refused in the Planning Application AWDM/1471/22. Whilst we appreciate some changes will be necessary to restore this late Georgian building and return it to viable use, we consider an extension to the front elevation of Forest Barn is out of character. This would be a significant alteration and will diminish its value to the group setting of the CA and SDNP. In our view, this would not be consistent with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

NEW BUILDING

The available site is a linear rectangular plot and comprises a rather compact area. In our view a three-bedroom chalet-style property represents over-development of the available site and we have noted the concerns of near residents. A more modest two-bedroom dwelling would 'release space' to allow an extension to the rear of Forest Barn so that the characterful façade could be retained.

We note the proposed materials for the new build are, overall, reflective of Forest Barn Mews but it would be desirable to include some Sussex flint to provide connectivity to complement the historic character of Forest Barn.

AMENITIES

There are indications that further discussions are needed with the nearby residents to resolve access details and the parking provision. An extension to the rear of Forest Barn could also contribute to additional parking amenity. Concerns remain regarding the layout for the surface water drainage facilities which need to be resolved. Again, a more modest new building would seem to be more appropriate for the site. Close attention to sensitive landscaping will be required to complement the setting of the SDNP.

RELEVANT PLANNIG POLICIES

- Planning (Listed Buildings Conservation Areas)Act 1990
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 16: and, in particular, paragraphs 202 and 203.
- Local Plan Policies DM 23 and DM24

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SUMMARY

The Society appreciates that the restoration of Forest Barn and regeneration of this site is challenging. Whilst we welcome the retention of Forest Barn, we consider the application in its present form represents both unsympathetic changes to the character of Forest Barn together with an over-development of the available site area. The proposal is not consistent with the Planning Policies protecting our heritage assets. In our view an alternative scheme needs to be considered.

For the reasons stated, the Worthing Society objects to this present application.

Yours sincerely

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Cc: [redacted], Design & Conservation Architect, Worthing Borough Council
Cc: [redacted]), Worthing Society Heritage Team
Cc: Planning Dept., Worthing Borough Council (REDACTED)