

Additional Planning Statement

Comparable Planning Examples and Closing Submission

Further to our application at Goring Gap, I would be grateful if the following comparator examples and appeal decisions could be taken into account when considering the principle of temporary, visitor-serving facilities within open, green and environmentally sensitive recreational spaces.

The purpose of these examples is not to suggest that any case is identical to Goring Gap. Rather, they demonstrate an established planning principle: cafés, bars, toilets, seating, parking and visitor facilities can be acceptable within green or sensitive recreational locations where they are modest, temporary or reversible in nature, support public enjoyment and recreation, and do not result in unacceptable harm to openness, landscape character, biodiversity or neighbouring amenity.

Comparable Planning Examples

Brown Hart Gardens, Westminster

Westminster City Council granted temporary planning permission for external tables and chairs associated with The Garden Café at Brown Hart Gardens, a historic public garden and open space in Mayfair. Committee reports record permission for twenty tables and forty-four chairs on part of the garden. This demonstrates that café-related activity within a protected public open space can be acceptable where appropriately managed through planning conditions and assessed against amenity and character considerations.

Roehampton Gate Café, Richmond Park

Planning permission was granted for a new café at Roehampton Gate in Richmond Park, a highly sensitive landscape designated as both a National Nature Reserve and a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The approved scheme replaced long-standing temporary café structures and sought to improve visitor facilities, landscape quality and biodiversity. This illustrates that visitor-serving facilities can be compatible with protected open landscapes where they support recreation and environmental enhancement.

Southbourne Promenade – Bistro on the Beach, Bournemouth

BCP Council recommended extending temporary permission for a beach dining and bar area at Southbourne Promenade until October 2027. The proposal included temporary structures, decking, a drinks bar, toilets, containers, fencing, seating and the sale and consumption of food and drink. A planning condition required all structures to be removed and the land restored at the end of the temporary period. This represents a particularly strong coastal comparator for a temporary and reversible hospitality use associated with beach recreation.

Delamere Forest Appeal Decision – APP/A0665/W/17/3185481

The Planning Inspectorate allowed an appeal for the reorganisation of visitor facilities at Delamere Forest, including a replacement visitor centre, café-related facilities, parking, trails, natural play areas and health and wellbeing uses. The Inspector accepted that visitor infrastructure could sit alongside outdoor recreation, health and wellbeing objectives and the enjoyment of the landscape.

Diddly Squat Farm Appeal Decisions – APP/D3125/C/22/3306729 and APP/D3125/W/22/3308506

The Planning Inspectorate granted permission for a café, farm shop, parking and lavatory facilities whilst refusing the more intensive restaurant use. The Inspector also permitted an extension to formalise parking and access arrangements. This distinction is particularly relevant as it demonstrates that modest visitor-serving facilities can be acceptable in sensitive locations, whereas more intensive forms of development may not be.

Additional Comparable Coastal Examples

Torre Abbey Meadows, Torquay

Torre Abbey Meadows comprises a large open seafront greensward used for recreation, events and tourism. It accommodates cafés and visitor facilities within open grassland despite its highly prominent coastal setting.

This is a strong comparator because both Torre Abbey Meadows and Goring Gap are open coastal greenspaces that serve residents and visitors while retaining their essential openness.

Lower Leas Coastal Park, Folkestone

Lower Leas Coastal Park is an important coastal landscape comprising public open space, recreational facilities and a seasonal café serving walkers, families and visitors. The park successfully integrates recreation, refreshment facilities and environmental enhancement.

This is a particularly strong comparator as it demonstrates that visitor-serving facilities can coexist within a valued coastal landscape without undermining its recreational or environmental function.

Hove Beach Park, East Sussex

Hove Beach Park incorporates cafés, toilets, seating areas and children's facilities within a seafront public open space. The facilities were approved to support recreation, tourism and public enjoyment of the coast.

This is one of the strongest comparators because it is located on the Sussex coast and demonstrates that refreshment facilities and supporting infrastructure can successfully sit within an exposed and sensitive seafront environment.

East Beach Café, Littlehampton

East Beach Café occupies a visually sensitive location directly on the Sussex coast and has become a significant visitor destination serving walkers, beach users and tourists. The development demonstrates that hospitality uses can be accommodated within sensitive coastal settings whilst respecting views and landscape character.

Planning Relevance to Goring Gap

The proposal at Goring Gap is not for permanent built development or residential development. It seeks a seasonal, managed and predominantly open recreational use supported by temporary and reversible facilities, including food and drink provision, toilets, parking, biodiversity enhancement and facilities for beach users.

The examples above demonstrate that planning authorities and Planning Inspectors have accepted the principle of visitor-serving facilities in open, green, rural, coastal and environmentally sensitive locations where:

- the use supports recreation, tourism, public enjoyment, health and wellbeing;
- structures are temporary, limited in scale or reversible;
- planning conditions can control hours of operation, lighting, noise, layout, removal and restoration; and
- the proposal delivers public benefits, including toilets, safer parking, managed activity and biodiversity enhancement.

I therefore respectfully request that the Goring Gap application is assessed on the same planning basis: not as permanent development, but as a managed, seasonal and reversible visitor facility that supports the recreational enjoyment of the coast whilst retaining the site's open and green character.

I would also respectfully request that full regard is given to all relevant policies within the Worthing Local Plan, including, but not limited to, Policy DM12 (The Visitor Economy), Policy DM8 (Planning for Sustainable Communities and Community Facilities) and all other relevant strategic and development management policies when determining this application.

Summary

No Permanent Development

- No houses, offices or permanent commercial buildings are proposed.
- Temporary and reversible structures only.
- The site can be fully restored should the use cease.

Public Benefits

- Free public access to open green space.
- Public toilets, baby changing facilities and a defibrillator.
- Facilities for sea swimmers, walkers and kite surfers.
- Improved health, wellbeing and community cohesion.

Environmental Benefits

- Previously neglected land regenerated and actively maintained.
- Biodiversity areas retained and enhanced.
- Additional planting and habitat creation.
- A progressive transition towards renewable energy.

Economic and Tourism Benefits

- Support for local Sussex businesses and producers.
- Facilities that encourage visitors to remain in Worthing for longer.
- Increased expenditure within the local economy.
- Alignment with policies that seek to strengthen and support the visitor economy.

Closing Submission

The comparator examples above demonstrate that cafés, bars, toilets, seating areas and associated visitor facilities are not inherently incompatible with open green or environmentally sensitive spaces. The common planning principle emerging from these examples is that visitor facilities can be acceptable where they support recreation, tourism and public enjoyment, remain proportionate in scale and do not cause unacceptable harm to landscape character, openness, biodiversity or neighbouring amenity.

The proposal at Goring Gap is consistent with this established planning approach. It seeks a seasonal, managed and reversible recreational use that enhances biodiversity, health and wellbeing, tourism and public enjoyment whilst retaining the essential openness and green character of Goring Gap.