Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1248/26 Recommendation: REFUSE

Site: Land South East Corner Of Amberley Drive, Marine Drive, Worthing

Proposal: Proposed timber-clad tractor barn, providing secure storage for two tractors, grass-cutting machinery and equipment used to maintain the land. The building includes a rear storage mezzanine, pitched metal roof with solar panels on both slopes, front barn doors and a west-side pedestrian entrance, positioned along the northern perimeter of the site.

Date of Site Visit: Various, most recent October 2026

Neighbours Checked: Y

Additional neighbour notification: N

Proposal, Site and Surroundings:

This application seeks full permission for a tractor barn with a footprint of 90 square metres (10 x 9 metres) to be situated in the northeastern corner of the site. The site area is stated on the application form as 2 hectares. The proposed barn is shown as being able to accommodate 2 tractors with stairs and a space for a mezzanine above, resulting in a stated ridge height of 6.95 metres above ground level. Solar panels are proposed to the roof.

The application site is situated to the south east corner of Amberley Drive and north of Marine Drive and is outside of the built-up area as defined by the Local Plan. The site is also a designated Local Green Gap as identified by the Plan. To the south across the road is the Greensward with further open countryside to the immediate east and west. The nearest residential properties are beyond to the east in Aldsworth Avenue and to the west in Ferring, part of Arun District.

Planning History:

AWDM/0614/16: Change of use of land to caravan and camping site with 46 pitches. Erection of amenity block building comprising toilets and showers, laundry room, store, office and reception. Construction of vehicular crossover and provision of parking and bin storage area - REFUSED

AWDM/0099/24: Application for Certificate of Lawfulness for Proposed Construction of a large sandpit for children, with a large gazebo for shade over. Installation of boundary fence. Placement of three further gazebos around the main sandpit, selling cold and hot drinks, snacks, with additional other concessions on the site to offer food services. Installation of bin area. Installation of security CCTV to enable

children to view wildlife online. Area set aside for parking. Clear rubbish, earth, roots and debris to enter land through existing established entrances. Retain existing gate posts and gates. Insert sunken posts inside the land. Place a flowerpot boat on the edge of the land and decorate with flowers and other items. A fenced boules sand pit. A flag pole - no more than 4.6m with a flag of either country or town colours - REFUSED AND APPEAL DISMISSED

AWDM/0394/24: Application for Certificate of Lawfulness for proposed storage container for storing own equipment used to run own land on a commercial basis - REFUSED AND APPEAL DISMISSED

AWDM/0737/26: Commercial use of regenerated land, including use as a community green space for recreational and leisure use. Retention of land for biodiversity use. Bore hole for extraction of natural water. Use of land to produce natural green energy, for example solar. Provision of vehicle parking use (including overnight camping use for kite surfers and sea swimmers), 2 x 6m flag poles, provision of food and drink from temporary structures, mobile toilets, shower and baby changing facilities. Two recessed shipping containers for site storage and use. Tree shaded sandpit and tumble-down mound for young children and toddlers to use. Animals to use for entertainment purposes, for example Shetland ponies. A decorative flowerpot boat at site entrance. Bin storage use. A wheeled advertising trailer, measuring approx. 5 metres by 2.5 metres located within the site boundary to promote Worthing, local events and tourism. - APPEAL SUBMITTED AGAINST NON DETERMINATION OF THE APPLICATION. PLANNING COMMITTEE RESOLVED TO CONTEST THE APPEAL AS THE APPLICATION WOULD HAVE BEEN REFUSED HAD THE APPLICATION BEEN DETERMINED BY THEM.

Consultations:

Drainage Consultant - No objection subject to condition

West Sussex County Council Highways -

WSCC in its role as Local Highway Authority (LHA) has been consulted on highway matters by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for a proposed timber-clad tractor barn, providing secure storage for two tractors, grass-cutting machinery and equipment used to maintain the land. The site is located on Marine Drive, a C-classified road subject to a speed restriction of 30 mph. Following a review of the submitted application documents, the LHA requests more information from the applicant, subject to the following comments: Having inspected our records, our land charges team were unable to find any evidence of the gate having existed in this location prior to Google Streetview and Google Earth showing it in June 2016. It appears that the road was constructed in approximately the early 1950s, and historic mapping does not indicate that there has historically been an access here. This road

was surveyed for maintenance purposes on 12-05-1977 and does not mention an existing access or gate. Our area office team have also confirmed that no applications for a new access have been recorded and looking at google street view, photos confirm this has only been in place since 2016. Therefore, the applicant will need to submit plans and dimension drawings for the creation of a new access with visibility splays in line with the speed of the road.

Visibility splays - As Marine Drive is subject to a speed restriction of 30 mph, the LHA would request that visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m in both directions be demonstrated in accordance with Manual for Streets (MfS) specifications. • Access dimensions and gates - The applicant should also demonstrate that the access would provide the space required for the type of vehicles that need to access the site. If gated, then the access gates should open inwards and be set back at least 5m from the edge of the carriageway to allow the driver to park clear of the highway whilst opening the gates. Conclusion Please raise the above with the applicant and reconsult. Upon receiving the requested information, the LHA can assess the application further.

Worthing Society

I am writing on behalf of the Worthing Society which is a conservation charity dedicated to protecting our heritage and green infrastructure. We strongly object to the aforementioned Planning Application for the following reasons:

THE LOCAL PLAN

*The proposed construction of a relatively large timber-clad tractor barn is not consistent with the Worthing Local Plan which designates this land as a ‘Green Gap.’ The Goring-Ferring Gap has been designated as stated in the Local Plan for its , ‘historic associations including important views that contribute strongly to a sense of place’. Worthing and its coastline is relatively compact and the Gap prevents the coalescence with Ferring

*Introducing a structure of this size would undermine the openness of the area and would damage the qualities for which it is valued. This would not be consistent with Policies DM 23 and DM 24 of the adopted Local Plan.

THE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL - GORING HALL CONSERVATION AREA

*The Goring – Ferring Gap makes an important contribution to the ‘setting’ of the ‘Goring Hall Conservation Area’ allowing long views to the South Downs National Park (SDNP) and to the Coastline. This significance is confirmed in paragraphs 5.8 and 5.10 in the Conservation Area Appraisal Document of 2024. The Goring – Ferring Gap can be viewed from the SDNP and the Highdown Conservation Area Introducing this large barn , which is the size of a house which would house will

undermine the open character of the area. In our view this would not be consistent with the Planning (Listed Buildings Conservation Areas) Act 1990 THE BARN

The proposed barn is the size of a small house and with the equipment and car parking would introduce an unwelcome commercial element to the area. *The area of land concerned in the application is relatively and would not require two tractors plus all the cutting equipment. The structure is incongruous and unnecessary Secondly there is no explanation of the proposed use of the considerable number of solar panels. Why would this amount of power be required?

THE CHARACTER OF THE LAND AND FUTURE IMPACT

*The land is designated as agricultural land and there is a current Article 4 Directive, It is concerning that if this application is approved it will invite further plans for housing. In fact records show Planning Applications for housing were refused in 1951 and 1954 and this was upheld on Appeal. The CAAD shows the southern area planted since 1920.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE The proposal will not enhance or protect Worthing's Green Infrastructure Strategy which is an irreplaceable resource for this and future generations. The adjoining Arun Council also have a strategy to protect the Goring-Ferring Gap to prevent coalescence. Finally this land and is within a Designated Wildlife Site with many varied species . There is every likelihood they would be seriously disturbed in the long term by the introduction of the activities at the barn which is likely to have a commercial element In summary we believe it is important to protect the integrity of Worthing's Green Infrastructure Network and the Goring-Ferring Gap. Which includes the 'setting' of the Conservation Area.

We consider the proposal is not consistent with the Planning Policies stated. The Society considers therefore that this application should be refused.

Sussex Ornithological Society

I am writing on behalf of the Sussex Ornithological Society (SOS) to object to the above planning application.

Our objection is for identical reasons to our previous objection to application AWDM/0737/26 in respect of the same site.

Goring Gap is a Local Wildlife Site (LWS), designated as such in recognition of its importance as an undeveloped green gap in the otherwise built-up coastline of Littlehampton, Goring and Worthing. This makes it attractive as a landfall site for migrating birds, and which also offers them a green corridor onwards towards the South Downs. Aside from sea birds, a total of 98 species of land-based birds have been recorded at Goring Gap in the past 10 years (2016-2025). This very high species count at the site reflects its considerable ornithological significance. In recognition of this, Goring Gap has also been designated an Area of Particular

Importance for Biodiversity (APIB) in the recently-published West Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

The LNRS lays particular emphasis on moving away from habitat fragmentation, instead promoting a “bigger, better, more joined up” approach. These applications for development on this land run counter to these aspirations. The Worthing Local Plan (2023) gives due weight to Local Wildlife Sites, and, together with the fact that the area is recognised as a Local Green Gap, rightly contains policies which restrict development there – Policies SS4 (Countryside and Undeveloped Coast) and DM19 (Green Infrastructure).

We note that, once again, the applicant has not offered any compelling reasons why the facilities envisaged, which in this case are of a permanent nature, are of such importance as to command exemption from these designations and policies.

We trust that these comments will receive your consideration, and very much hope that this further application will be refused.

Ferring Parish Council

Ferring Parish Council strongly objects to the proposed timber-clad tractor barn on the grounds of its size, design and location within the site. The proposed building, which includes a storage mezzanine, pitched metal roof with solar panels on both slopes, and large barn doors, would introduce an overly large and visually intrusive structure into the site. Its position along the northern boundary will have a detrimental impact on the rural character and appearance of the area. Ferring Parish Council is also concerned about the potential impact on existing vegetation, wildlife habitats and biodiversity, as well as the effect of machinery storage and associated activity on neighbouring residents through noise and disturbance. For these reasons, Ferring Parish Council considers that the proposal constitutes an overdevelopment of the site that would result in unacceptable harm to its character, appearance, biodiversity value and neighbouring amenity and should be refused.

Goring and Ilex Conservation Society

Again, this seems to be an attempt to place some form of “development” on this piece of land.

In our objection to his AWDM/0737/26 – Commercial use of “regenerated” land etc., we noted various documents emphasising the worth of the Gap and the views to and through it and we consider that they are worth repeating below for this application.

The land referred to lies within the Goring/Ferring Local Green Gap in the latest Local Plan and whilst not particularly deep, north to south, its width has a great effect on the Gap. Within the Plan it is noted that the designation and protection of ‘Local Green Gaps’ helps to avoid coalescence and preserve the separate characters and identities of different settlements by providing physical and visual breaks. This is

particularly important given the compact nature of Worthing and how few and fragile the breaks in development are on the coastal strip between Brighton and Chichester. These form a critically important component of Worthing's landscape setting and Worthing's approach to protecting these areas is part of a strategic approach shared with adjoining authorities that are concerned to address the same issues of preventing settlement coalescence and protecting settlement identity.

This land also forms part of the Council's new Vision for Nature strategy as the "Goring Gap Corridor," providing a habitat connectivity between the South Downs and the coast. This strategy notes that, from an ecological perspective, our natural landscape has become increasingly fragmented by development, infrastructure, and intensive land use. This isolates wildlife populations, making them vulnerable and hindering their ability to find food, seek mates and adapt to environmental pressures. Nature corridors counter this by connecting these isolated pockets, allowing animals to move freely and safely between larger habitat areas. They are the essential arteries that maintain healthy, genetically diverse populations

There is mention of a pension fund and legal restrictions but he has omitted to state that the land registry documents include covenants prohibiting any hut caravan or house-on-wheels on the plot or any temporary building or erection be placed or built thereon at any time without the Vendors' consent in writing being first obtained. The application mentions 150 existing and retained car parking spaces. Previous comments on applications have queried the practicality of this number and in fact, although cars have been parked on the plot during the 28 days allowance for his "pleasure ground" there is no proper car parking layout provision or base at present. On biodiversity conservation, he notes that there are no priority species or important habitats. A previous Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre report found that between Goring and Ferring there were 30 BoCC Red List bird species and 79 recorded that were on the Amber listing, there were 4 protected species (not including bats, badgers or birds), 3 species of bats and a further 10 other rare species. Regarding biodiversity net gain, he states that this application is retrospective and a Lawful Development application (refused) was submitted in 2024 – NOT for this barn application! Non-residential floorspace. This application WILL involve the gain of non-residential floorspace. Hazardous substances. No doubt petrol and oils at least will be stored in the proposed barn.

The Barn

Drawing GG-TB-04 Revision P08 notes that "Structural, fire, stair, electrical and drainage design are separate." These have not been included with this application so one may only surmise that there will be a concrete slab and foundations which is likely to be raised above ground level with resultant ramps for the proposed machinery and possible additional building height. The proposed barn is the size of a typical house in ground floor area and height with a proposed layout akin to a workshop or industrial unit. The stated purpose of this barn is to house grass cutting

machinery. We have already established that the area in question is far short of that claimed and would likely be able to be maintained by a domestic sit on mower and a strimmer. There is no need for such a large building and what is the proposed storage on the mezzanine and a large workbench for? At present the area has been maintained without any stored on-site machinery and this could be continued. Without permission for the previous application, grass cutting etc would only be for his own use and such a barn could not be said to be incidental to the land use. If permission is not granted for AWDM/0737/26 – Commercial use of “regenerated” land etc., then the plot should be left to revert to its previous state to foster biodiversity.

Although in a corner of the plot, the barn would be a prominent eyesore standing alone and away from The Plantation or other areas of height. The solar panels reflecting the sunlight only adding to the blemish on the landscape.

In Summary We have shown the value put on the Gap and the views therein and to the harm that would occur to these if the proposal were approved. We consider that the proposal is premature whilst awaiting the Planning Inspectorate’s decision on application AWDM/0737/26. The application is incomplete and inaccurate for the reasons given above; We object to this proposal for an out of character and unnecessary intrusion causing harm to the Gap and would urge the Council to refuse this application

Representations:

96 letters of objection have been received including on the following grounds:

- Adverse impact on the openness and rural character of the Goring Gap.
- Encroachment of built development into an undeveloped landscape.
- Increased urbanisation through access works, hardstanding, lighting, fencing and associated activity.
- Lack of demonstrated agricultural need
- Precedent for further buildings or future intensification.
- Fails to comply with Local Plan policies
- Adverse impact upon Local Green Gap
- Permanent building in open countryside
- Building is too large for agricultural requirement

Relevant Planning Policies:

National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026)

Worthing Local Plan 2020-2036:

SS1 - Spatial Strategy
SS4 - Countryside and Undeveloped Coast

SS5 - Local Green Gaps

DM5 - Quality of the Built Environment
DM6 - Public Realm
DM7 - Open Space, Recreation and Leisure
DM8 - Planning for Sustainable Communities/Community Facilities
DM10 - Economic Growth and Skills
DM12 - The Visitor Economy
DM15 - Sustainable Transport and Active Travel
DM18 - Biodiversity
DM19 - Green Infrastructure

Planning Assessment

The application site is located outside of the built-up area and is therefore subject to the relevant countryside policies of the Local Plan. Policy SS1 of the Plan states that *'valued open space and landscapes outside of the Built Up Area Boundary are protected. This includes important gaps between settlements, the undeveloped coastline and the features which provide connectivity between these areas.'*

Firstly, policy SS4 relates to the Countryside and Undeveloped Coast. The policy states:

a) Outside of the Built Up Area Boundary land (excluding sites designated as Local Green Space under SS6) will be defined as 'countryside and undeveloped coast'.

b) Development in the countryside will be permitted, where a countryside location is essential to the proposed use. Applications for the development of entry-level exception sites, suitable for first time buyers or those looking to rent their first home will be supported where these: • comprise of entry-level homes that offer one or more types of affordable housing; • are adjacent to existing settlements, and proportionate in size to them; and • comply with any local design policies and standards.

c) Development to support recreation uses on the coast will normally be permitted subject to: i. built facilities being located within the adjacent Built Up Area Boundary; ii. the need to maintain and improve sea defences.

d) Any development in the countryside and undeveloped coast should not result in a level of activity that has an adverse impact on the character or biodiversity of the area.

e) Improvements to green infrastructure, including (but not restricted to) enhanced pedestrian, cycle, equestrian access, and better access for those with mobility difficulties will be supported.

f) The setting of the South Downs National Park and the Designated International Dark Skies Reserve must be respected and opportunities to improve access to the

National Park will be sought through joint working with other organisations including the Park Authority, West Sussex County Council, National Highways and landowners. Any development within the setting of the National Park should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.

The site is also subject to policy SS5, Local Green Gaps, it being located within the area a) shown in bold text below.

The four areas listed below are designated as Local Green Gaps between the settlements of Worthing & Ferring and Worthing & Sompting/Lancing, and will be protected in order to retain the separate identities and character of these settlements.

a) Goring-Ferring Gap;
b) Chatsmore Farm;
c) Brooklands Recreation Area and abutting allotments;
and d) Land east of proposed development (site A14) at Upper Brighton Road

Outside of those areas designated as Local Green Space, all applications for development (including entry level exception sites) within Local Green Gaps must demonstrate that individually or cumulatively:
i) it would not undermine the physical and/or visual separation of settlements;
ii) it would not compromise the integrity of the gap;
iii)it conserves and enhances the benefits and services derived from the area's Natural Capital;
and iv) it conserves and enhances the area as part of a cohesive green infrastructure network.

Having regard to the above policies, it is considered that this proposal is fundamentally unacceptable.

The application form states that the site has never been used for agricultural purposes and indeed a similar statement at the previous appeal for a Certificate of Lawful Use, the applicant that the land has not been used for such purposes. (although in confirming the fee for the planning application submission, the applicant stated: *The barn is for storage or agricultural equipment (a tractor is deemed agricultural equipment) and therefore the fee is correct.*

The application can therefore only be considered against an agricultural use that does not exist or is to support the 'community leisure' use that has not been granted planning permission and is subject to its own appeal. Having regard to policies above, therefore, the proposal fails to comply with them as a matter of principle.

Even if the case could be made for a building of some sort to support whichever use is said to occur on the site, there is no reason to justify a building of 90 square metres in footprint with a ridge height of over 6 metres. It is arguable whether such a size of building could even be justified to support a land holding much larger than the application site, but for a site measuring approximately 200 metres x 40 metres, there can be no justification for a building containing room for 2 tractors and a

mezzanine area above. There is a fundamental conflict with policy SS5 with no supporting information to justify a departure from policy.

The comments of the Highways Authority are also noted. The site access is another part of the site that does not have planning permission and during consideration of the recent community leisure application, the applicant was requested on a number of occasions to submit sufficient information to demonstrate a safe access. Satisfactory information had not been provided by the time an appeal was made on the previous application and consequently the Highways Authority has requested that the information be submitted in respect of this proposal. As the applicant had several months to provide the information requested previously, there is little prospect it will be submitted during the determination period of this application and having regard to the fundamental policy conflicts identified above, it is considered that the application should also be resisted on highways grounds.

The representations received have been noted, all in objection to the proposal and demonstrates further the value that the community puts on this land and the planning policies that support its retention as a valued part of land outside the built-up area.

In conclusion, therefore, the application must be refused permission.

Recommendation

01 The application site is located outside of the built up area and within a Local Green Gap as defined by the Worthing Local Plan 2023. It is not considered that a countryside location is essential for the proposed barn as there is no agricultural use on the land, nor any approved development on the site. Furthermore, the scale of the barn by virtue of its footprint and height would adversely affect the character of the area, compromise the integrity of the Local Green Gap, adversely affect the setting of the Goring Hall Conservation Area and would undermine the physical and visual separation of Goring and Ferring. Accordingly, the proposal fails to comply with the policies of the Worthing Local Plan, in particular policies SS1, SS4 and SS5 and policy S5 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2026.

02. The application submission has failed to demonstrate that vehicles can enter and exit the site safely and whether suitable mitigation can be achieved to overcome the concerns of the Highways Authority. Accordingly it is considered that the proposal fails to comply with decision making policy TR6 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2026.

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation? N

Case Officer:	Gary Peck	Date:	19 November 2026
Authorised by:	Stephen Cantwell	Date:	19th Nov 2026