Expiry Date - 05/08/2025

Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0733/25 **Recommendation – APPROVE**

Site: **West Worthing Club Titnore Way Worthing West Sussex**

Proposal: **Proposed 1no. additional floodlit Padel tennis court comprising steel frame superstructure with barrel roof, tempered glass and mesh panels. Re-siting of 4no shipping containers (groundsman's stores) & groundsman's shed within new fenced compound area**

Date of site visit: 01.09.2025 (with GP)

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: Revised drawings

Site and Surroundings

The application relates to an existing leisure facility located on the periphery of the town just outside the built-up area boundary. The site is accessed from Titnore Way with a drive running parallel to the eastern side boundary leading to a loose-surfaced car park with 92 spaces located in the northeast corner. The main Club building adjoins the car park, incorporating squash courts together with the Club reception, offices, meeting rooms, function room/bar etc. An indoor tennis court building lies immediately to the north and west of the main building with 7no floodlit, hard tennis courts sited to the south and west of it. There are petanque courts plus an outdoor seating area to the north of the indoor tennis building and hard courts.

There are several grass tennis courts (unlit) located on the southern half of the site, with the 3no southernmost courts adjoining Titnore Way mostly used for croquet. 2no roofed Padel courts are located on the western side of the site, south of the hard tennis courts.

Treed margins bound the edges of the site, with trees also lining the access drive, subject to TPO No.1 of 1973.

The site adjoins the Caravan Club to the east and Titnore Lane to the west. To the north the treed margin merges into the adjoining woodland and countryside beyond.

A detached grade II Listed dwelling, Flint Cottage, adjoins the site to the southwest.

Proposal

The application submission initially sought permission for 2no additional Padel courts, but has been amended in response to discussions, and now proposes the erection of 1no additional Padel court located to the south (and parallel to) the existing southernmost Padel court. The Padel court would be positioned on one of the existing grass tennis courts which would be lost.

The proposed green (RAL 6005), steel-framed Padel court would be similar but not identical to those existing. It would be 20m long by 10.8m wide. The structure would be 6m high to eaves with a barrel-vaulted roof above having a maximum height of 8.97m. The sides of the court would consist of tempered glass (up to 3m high) with sections of green square mesh fencing at either end up to 4m high and in the centre of the longer (north/south) sides (incorporating the entrances). Above 4m and up to the eaves, the sides would consist of fine woven green mesh/netting. The 'Opal' barrel-vaulted roof would consist of a tensioned membrane on a steel frame. The edges of the roof would overhang the sides of the court by up to 0.9m to provide weather protection for waiting players. The proposed Padel court is 25cm higher than the existing Padel courts to allow for the roof overhang

The Padel court would be illuminated with LED floodlights to achieve 500 Lux (E av) with 0.7 uniformity in accordance with LTA recommendation for competition play (the same as the existing Padel courts). The floodlights would be mounted on the roof framing and be controllable from the Club building.

The proposed Padel court would be used (as are the existing) between 08.00 and 10.00hrs daily.

In addition, it is proposed to relocate the existing groundsman's shed and (shipping) container stores from their current position alongside the treed margin to the western site boundary, to a new fenced compound adjoining the southern site boundary with Flint Cottage.

The application is supported by a Planning Statement, Design & Access Statement, Heritage Impact Assessment, Lighting Assessment, Noise Impact Assessment, BNG Metric and Landscape, Arboricultural and Ecology Report.

The application has been re-publicised following the submission of an amendment which 'tightens' the red line of the application site area to around the proposed new Padel court, and the existing and proposed locations of the groundsman's hut and container stores, with the remainder of the site now outlined in blue.

Relevant Planning History:

AWDM/0502/22 Two-storey extension and balcony to west elevation, first floor extension and provision of balcony to south elevation, ground floor extension incorporating beer and bin store to east elevation. Various internal

alterations. New windows to west elevation new entrance door and canopy to east entrance. New entrance doors and window to south elevation and new windows to north elevations. Proposed 2no. Padel tennis courts enclosing with steel frame with tempered glass and steel mesh panels. Permitted 02.09.2022.

Consultations:

WSCC: The Local Highway Authority (LHA) has raised no objection, commenting:

"*The application is for two additional Padel courts at West Worthing Club, Titnore Way. The site benefits from 92 existing car parking spaces and 6 cycle parking spaces.*

Considering the scale of the proposed development, the LHA does not anticipate that the proposals would give rise to a significant material intensification of movements to or from the site. No alterations are proposed to the existing access/parking arrangements.
In conclusion, the LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 116), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal."

The West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service recommend a condition requiring a fire hydrant to be installed at the site, noting that there is an increased risk for the fire serve to control a potential fire in circumstances where a requirement for additional water supply is identified by the Fire and Rescue Service but subsequently not supplied: -

(i) Prior to the commencement of the development details showing the proposed location of one fire hydrant or stored water supply (in accordance with the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Guidance Notes) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with West Sussex County Council's Fire and Rescue Service. These approvals shall not be unreasonably withheld or delayed.

(ii) Prior to the first occupation or use of any additional Padel court forming part of the proposed site that they will at their own expense install the fire hydrant in the approved location to BS 750 standards or stored water supply and arrange for their connection to a water supply which is appropriate in terms of both pressure and volume for the purposes of firefighting.

(iii) Prior to the first occupation or use of any additional Padel court forming part of the proposed site they will notify the West Sussex County Council's Fire and Rescue Service that the fire hydrant(s) have been installed and are operational, to ensure that the Fire and Rescue Service are aware that the hydrant(s) is/are now a usable asset in the event of a fire.

The fire hydrant shall thereafter be maintained as part of the development by the water undertaker at the expense of the Fire and Rescue Service if adopted as part of the public mains supply (Fire Services Act 2004) or by the owner / occupier if the installation is retained as a private network.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and in accordance with policy DM9 of the Worthing Local Plan and in accordance with The Fire & Rescue Service Act 2004

Further Comment (received 02.06.2026)

"*Following further checks and consideration of the new build paddle court on this site, I have re-evaluated the type and use of the building and a fire hydrant would not be required for this type of structure.*

After speaking to the Director of the Club, it has also been identified there is a locked gate in close proximity to the existing fire hydrant that allows access to a footpath up to the location of the new paddle court, within 90-metres of an existing water supply. Therefore, the fire hydrant condition raised for this planning application is compliant and the condition can be discharged."

Heritage Adviser

Initial Comments

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 confers a statutory duty to LPAs when considering whether to grant planning permission, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses."

The LPA's duties are reinforced within Section 16 of the NPPF, Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

As such, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. Other elements held within Section 16 will also be considered as will Local Policy.

The site is located to the north west of Worthing and lies immediately to the north of the Garden II listed Cottage Farm, also known as Flint Cottage. The

modest yet handsome cottage is constructed from brick and flint under a clay tile roof. The Historic England listing detail is as follows:

TITNORE ROAD 5406 (East Side) Cottage Farm TQ 1004 8/167 II 2. Circa 1875. 2 storeyed symmetrical cottage, of large flints with brick quoining to windows surrounds and to corners and brick band between storeys. Tiled roof with decorated bands. Gabled chimneys with decorative brick corbelling. 3 casement windows with cambered heads. Central gabled porch.

Despite its application of vernacular materiality the cottage conveys a polite rural character, that is assumed to hold some form of association to the land around it, most probably as an agricultural farmhouse though no heritage statement has been supplied. It is also noted that some modest outbuilding appears to be within the rear garden which could also be a curtilage listed building.

The proposal seeks planning permission to erect a further 2no covered Padel tennis courts to the south of the existing courts that will also have the same floodlit arrangement. The proposal also seeks to relocate shipping containers to the southern boundary of the site.

The Design and Access Statement goes into great detail regarding the success of the club and its place in the community, which is not in dispute. However, the Statement omits any mention of the Grade II Listed Building in the vicinity or the potential impact of the proposed works. Moreover, and somewhat associated, there is no heritage statement to discuss matters of heritage either. I note the Grade II Listed Building is of a polite rural typology and is modest in size, although precise measurements have not been provided, it would be reasonable to assume a height of 5m to the eaves and 8m to the ridgeline of the house. The proposed would bring about a significant impact upon the setting of the listed building:

Massing, Bulk, Appearance and Proximity

The proposed Padel tennis courts will be located only 15m from the boundary between the Listed Building and the development site. Little of the documentation or drawings submitted show a clear indication for comparison of layout, massing and other contextual aspects in relation to the heritage asset. On the basis of observations that can be made the height of the proposed courts being some 2m higher than the cottage, combined with the proximity of the proposed being significantly closer to the listed building will lead to the listed building being overwhelmed by a large contemporary steel structure which has no contextual relevance to the listed buildings origins or current semi-rural context. The character of the listed buildings setting will be seriously eroded by providing a wholly harmful backdrop to a modest rural listed building that will appear to be a particularly alien form in an otherwise semi-rural environ.

Lighting

Given the semi-rural nature of the area, that character is conveyed by rural characteristics that would include the limited use of lighting, it should also be

noted that the site is in the immediate vicinity of the South Downs National Park. The same rural characteristics of limited lighting at night is also a contributor to the rural character and context of the Grade II Listed Building.

Despite the previously approved Padel tennis courts also being harmful to this characteristic, there is significant concern that the lighting levels in combination with the close proximity, height and massing of the proposed would create further harm to the setting and further detract from the rural context of the site. The lighting report states that the environment is Rural 'E2' being comparable to a village or relatively dark outer suburban location (Institute of Lighting Engineers guidance). This would lead (given the area would exceed 10sqm) to a luminance limit of 200cdm2. There appears to be no clear explanation of the figures used within the report and thus it cannot be ascertained if that requirement has been met. The use of the below 10sqm figure is not acceptable for obvious reasons.

It is also queried as whether the additional lighting proposed would have a cumulative effect, creating further harm. These maters should also be addressed clearly. In any case it is considered that the light levels experienced in the vicinity of the listed building are harmful to the character and setting and the proposal would exacerbate the issue further.

It should be noted that community sport and activities are still possible by way of reconsidering the proposed layout and design. Relocating the proposed courts to the east of the existing rather than the south; full enclosure rather than open; and sheltered to reduce light pollution; are all options that could alleviate concerns regarding impact upon the setting of the listed building.

The Council has a responsibility in respect of the setting of listed buildings. Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 confers a statutory duty to LPAs when considering whether to grant planning permission, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. In this instance the proposed by way of proximity, appearance, massing, bulk, and light levels would have an overbearing impact upon the listed building and would also erode the semi-rural character of the setting of the listed building, as such the proposal is not acceptable.

Whereas the NPPF allows for the mitigation of harm, the harm in this case is wholly avoidable and through simple amendment that harm could be reduced or removed completely. Thus, the benefit of community sport and health is not exclusive to this scheme. At this stage the applicant should be invited to provide amendments or withdraw from the scheme to engage in pre-application advice

<u>Comments on Revised Scheme</u>

The proposed scheme has been reduced in scope to propose 1 additional Padel tennis court rather than the initial 2. A significant amount of supporting documentation has also been provided that in heritage terms addresses the

significant points of concern. Having considered the further information supplied, the proposed court will now be some 27m north of the rear boundary of Flint Cottage, this increase in separation in conjunction with the specification of appropriate lighting to reduce potential for light spill are considered to provide sufficient mitigation for any perceivable harm. Whereas development of such scale that is brought closer to the listed building is considered to cause less than substantial harm, that harm has now been reduced to such an extent that the public benefits of community engagement in sports and recreation that promote wellbeing and health is considered to outweigh any perceivable harm. As such the proposal is considered to accord with both local and national policy.

Having regard to Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the proposed by virtue of location, and distance from the heritage asset would not cause unacceptable harm to the setting of the Grade II Listed Building and is considered to accord with Local Policy DM24 of the Worthing Plan and paragraphs 135, 213 and 215 of the NPPF.

South Downs National Park Authority:

It is acknowledged that the site is situated to the western edge of the existing tennis complex. The proposed Padel courts are proposed to be located on one of the existing grass courts, adjacent to the existing Padel courts. It is considered that the siting of the courts closest to existing development is an appropriate location. This part of the National Park boundary is densely wooded, as such the proposed development would not be highly visible from public rights of way within the National Park.

It is noted that the proposal would involve the installation of LED floodlighting. Consideration should however be given to the International Dark Night Skies Reserve and dark night skies, which are a special quality of the National Park, and the Authority would encourage a sensitive approach to both external and internal lighting which conforms the Institute of Lighting Professionals for lighting in environmental zones, and tries to achieve zero upwards light spill in all respects**.**

WSP: The Council's Surface Water Drainage Consultant has no objection.

Adur and Worthing Councils

Tree & Landscape Officer: "*I consider that if the containers are on several supports that allow some air gap between them and the ground the trees within Flint Cottage should not be affected. However to cover the entire area (compound shed and containers) with a concrete base would very likely affect the trees."*

EHO (Public Health & Regulation)

<u>Initial Comments</u>

This application seeks to add two new Padel tennis courts to the existing two courts. Padel is a sport typically played in glass and metal cages. The glass is normally at the ends which provide some acoustic protection. The metal cages are on the sides and provide no acoustic protection. Padel is normally played in groups of four on small courts and rallies are very common. There is on average a shot every two to three seconds in a rally. For comparison, in tennis the shot rate is every three to five seconds so Padel creates double the number of shots in a rally. The balls also bounce off the walls and radiate noise through the glass. Padel makes a click sound when the ball hits the racket and so can be very noticeable off site. Whilst daytime ambient noise levels may be elevated due to nearby traffic noise, evening and early morning ambient levels will be relatively low. Being impulsive the noise will be considered more disturbing than a steady sound.

This application contains no information on acoustic impacts or any mitigation other than a mesh above the glass which, being open, will provide little noise reduction.

The proposed position of the two courts is less than 50m north of Flint Cottage, an adjacent residential property. As such there is the potential for noise and light to adversely affect the amenity of adjacent residential occupiers. Therefore a noise impact assessment is considered necessary to determine whether this may have any adverse impact at the closest noise-sensitive receptors. The assessment will need to assess not only the noise from the two new courts, but also the noise produced by all 4 courts operating simultaneously and subsequently recommend any mitigation measures to ensure no adverse impacts are caused to adjacent receptors. We would expect information on LAmax levels and not just LAeq’s. Unfortunately as there is currently no official guidance on noise from Padel courts in the UK, the assessment will need to consider conclusions and recommendations from similar schemes at other sites that have proved successful in demonstrating no adverse noise impacts.

In addition, lighting levels must comply with the ILP Guidance Note 1 for the reduction of obtrusive light 2021 and should contain a light spill diagram showing the impact of the lights off site. Without the above I am unable to support the application in its current form.

Final Comments

The Noise Impact assessment concludes there will be no adverse impact on the nearest residential receptors. This is not to say there will be no noise detectable, simply that it should not result in a loss of residential amenity. The Club may therefore wish to consider erecting a fence to screen the Courts from the residential property, not just for noise reduction but also from a visual point of view.

The light assessment concludes the scheme will comply with Environmental Zone E2 Rural. I would suggest obtaining an opinion from the National Park Authority on the impacts, if not already done.

Representations:

A representation in support of the revised application has been received on behalf of the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) noting that there is a need to develop additional Padel facilities in this area to meet growing demand locally. It highlights that the Club operates as a CIC (Community Interest Company) and is fully engaged with the delivery and activity programmes at public tennis facilities at Homefield Park and Church House Gardens in Worthing. Through the project the venue plans to build on its community engagement offer and extend access to this court to all members of the community demonstrating an understanding of different racquet sport user groups and needs.

An objection to the initial submission was received from the occupiers of Flint Cottage commenting

We find the planning application unfavourable both to our property as a listed building and to our family and home life - with the main emphasis on both noise and light pollution. I would like to emphasise the light already given o by the existing courts (even more so in the winter when the vegetation from the trees has fallen and the sun sets so early). I have attached an image I took the first year they were built during the winter which highlights just how bright the existing courts are. With the courts so tall at 10m, the light is a nuisance in the evenings, shining into our home and totally impossible to block out. I would also like to emphasise the noise pollution. Players are on the courts till late in the evening and throughout the day from our garden we can sometimes hear shouting and swearing when they play. With the planning application asking for these courts to be closer to our property at 12m to our garden boundary (and being a family of six with four young children) this is very unsettling both from the point of view of light and noise. I have described the di iculties of living with the existing courts to try and emphasise the impact the new courts would have.

I would also like to draw special attention also to the proposition of moving the storage containers along our boundary line. The existing storage containers are already noisy with the groundsmen accessing machinery throughout the day. The idea of the storage containers being lined up against our garden where we come to relax is very worrying at the least. I would also be concerned as to the health and safety of a line of permanent storage containers lined up with the possibility of vermin living underneath. I would plead that at a minimum the planning application should remove the storage containers along our boundary and instead there be landscaping to include tree planting at least 5m high and of an acceptable depth. This would also lower the impact of the courts on our listed property and our lives. Landscaping would help to lower the impact to our cottage which is a listed building.

We really would not like to have any more paddle courts so close to our home and I ask that if there is an alternative place for them on the site that this was discussed. But if not and this application is to go ahead, I do ask that, at the very least, the application considers adding one court over two and I would like to emphasise again the importance of additional tree planting (instead of storage containers!) to lower the impact of the noise and light pollution on our property. I would also just like to add at this stage as explanation, that we would have commented on the existing courts application however we were away during that summer and so did not receive the letter. We returned from France and came back to the courts.

A photo has been supplied showing the existing illuminated courts from the rear window of Flint Cottage in Winter.

No further comments have been received following notification of amended plans.

Relevant Planning Policies

Worthing Local Plan policies (WBC 2023): SP1, SP3, SS4, DM5, DM7, DM18, DM19, DM22, DM24
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2024)
National Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Assessment

Principle

LP policy SP3 seeks to promote healthy lifestyles and address health and well-being needs including (amongst other things) through the improvement of opportunities for formal recreation. This objective is further reflected in policy DM7 which states that proposals for built sports facilities and formal sports provision will be supported where they are in accordance with the policies of the Plan.

Policy SS4 states that development outside of the built up area boundary should not result in a level of activity that has an adverse effect on the character of the area and should respect the setting of the SDNP and Designated International Dark Sky Reserve.

A Supporting Statement has been submitted to explain the background to the proposal, summarised as follows:

"*West Worthing Club is an award-winning, not-for-profit multi sports club which is registered as a Community Amateur sports club and CIC led by a team of volunteers who receive no payment or benefit with any surpluses reinvested into the Club's facilities. The Club has over 1,000 members and welcomes over 10,000 visitors every year to participate in the sports on offer through court hire, coaching or competition programmes via Sussex and*

National leagues. Facilities and programmes are open to the community all year round.

The Club places a strong emphasis on community outreach programmes and engages with local schools and community groups to promote an active lifestyle through participate in racquet sports.

The West Worthing Club is a centre of excellence for tennis and has strong links with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), considered by them to be one of the top 10 grass tennis venues in the country. National grade competitions are held on the grass courts including the LTA British Tour and LTA County Cup events. Due to the scarcity of large grass court venues in the UK, the LTA provides the Club with annual grant funding to support the upkeep of the grass courts. When hosting grass court tournaments is it important to provide a contiguous block of at least 9 grass courts to enable clear lines of sight for referees and officials.

In addition to delivering tennis in the community the Club's court play host to players of all levels including top-ranked British players (Jack Draper, Sonay Kartal and Emma Raducanu) who all competed at the Club as juniors and continue to use the facilities for practice and training from time to time.

The addition of 2no Padel courts in 2023 opened up racquet sports to a new cross-section of people and on their own have accounted for 200 new club members and over 2,000 visitors.

The increased popularity of Padel means that the courts are at maximum occupancy at peak-times and approaching maximum occupancy at off-peak times. The Club is proud to be growing a strong female player base and offer inclusive group sessions for adults with long-term health conditions. The Club wishes to keep attracting new players particularly children and people from under-represented groups but there is an urgent need for more Padel court time to accommodate the demand.

An enhanced Padel facility would reinforce the venue as a destination of national importance for sport and leisure."

The provision an addition Padel court would continue to broaden and diversify the current racquet-sport offer at the Club, helping to develop and meet growing demand for Padel as a relative new sport that is increasingly attractive and accessible to a broader section of community than traditional racquet sports. The development would therefore accord with the objectives of policy SP3 and DM7 and can be supported in principle subject to:

- The impact visual amenity and the setting of the SDNP;
- The effect on the setting of the nearby Grade II listed Flint Cottage;
- The effect on the residential amenities of the occupiers of Flint Cottage, including noise and visual impact;
- Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain.

Visual Amenity

The proposed additional Padel court will be positioned immediately south of the existing Padel courts (1 & 2) and will match their general design principal, materials and form. Whilst the mesh/netting and tempered glass to sides/ends of the existing courts blends in well against the backdrop of the treed margin onto Titnore Lane, the white colour of the membrane covering their barrel-vaulted roofs emphasises their height and scale, particularly viewed from within the Club site. This impact is further enhanced during the evening when Padel courts are illuminated.

The additional Padel court will be seen in the context of the 2no existing courts, reinforcing the evolving 'built up' appearance of western part of the site compared to the more open, informal nature of the grass tennis courts.

The existing courts are less visible from outside the site, where the narrow angle of view along the tree-lined carriageway of Titnore lane allows only for very fleeting glances of the roofs of the existing Padel courts. Existing gaps within the tree margin adjacent to the position of the proposed addition Padel court will likely result in it being more visible from this direction than the existing courts, at least until the recent tree planting (implemented as a requirement of condition 4 of AWDM/0502/22) becomes established.

The proposed re-siting of the groundman's huts and containers would have little or no impact on views from outside of the site. The Council's Tree & Landscape Officer recommends that the these are raised off the ground to avoid compacting the roots of the (non-protected) trees growing within the garden of Flint Cottage alongside the rear boundary. It is considered this could reasonably be addressed by a condition requiring details to be submitted for approval prior to installation.

Lighting

As for the existing 2no Padel courts, the proposed additional court would be floodlit daily up to 22.00hrs. The Club considers this necessary to maximise use of the proposed facility throughout the year including during months of lesser daylight.

The proposed Padel court would be illuminated using 6no HiLux Gem LED luminaires positioned within the roof structure to achieve 500 Lux maintained at 0.7 uniformity, being the luminance standard necessary for competition games (the same as for Padel courts 1 & 2).

A lighting design report was submitted to support the initial proposal for 2no additional Padel courts in response to the comments of the EH Team Leader but includes several tested scenarios for including Courts 1-3 (consistent with the amended application).

The assessment is based on the location of the site on the edge of the built-up area within E2 (a low district brightness area) consistent with a rural, small village or relatively dark urban locations. The scheme has been designed with

downward directional lighting to channel light onto the courts and to avoid lighting spilling outside the court. The light spill assessment takes into consideration the roof membrane, green mesh and poly screening fitted to the sides of the Padel court structure.

The lighting design report shows that modest light spill will occur (1-5 Lux) in the area adjacent to the western site boundary comprising the treed margin but will not spill onto Titnore Lane (which has no street lighting). The western edge of Titnore Lane forms the boundary of the SDNP and the Dark Night Sky Reserve (Lighting Zone E1).

SDNPA has commented on the importance of avoiding upward light spill but has raised no objection to the proposed (including the lighting design scheme).

Heritage

The site adjoins Flint Cottage, a grade II Listed, 19th Century, detached, flint dwelling occupying a corner plot at the junction of Titnore Lane and Titnore Way. It is described as follows:

1. TITNORE ROAD 5406 (East Side) Cottage Farm TQ 1004 8/167 II 2. Circa 1875. 2 storeyed symmetrical cottage, of large flints with brick quoining to windows surrounds and to corners and brick band between storeys. Tiled roof with decorated bands. Gabled chimneys with decorative brick corbelling. 3 casement windows with cambered heads. Central gabled porch. Listing NGR: TQ1031504521.

Paragraphs 212 of the NPPF states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset – including from development within its setting – should require clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 215 states that where a proposed development results in less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. This is further reiterated by policy DM24(c) of the Worthing Local Plan.

The Heritage Assessment submitted to support the amended proposal has been prepared having regard to the Historic England Guidance GPA3 ‘The Setting of Heritage Assets’ (2017). It summarises the significance of Flint Cottage as a well-preserved example of local vernacular design and construction materials, reflecting C19 building traditions. It notes that although the recent 2-storey rear extension (AWDM/0655/23) has altered the original modest rural scale of the dwelling, its original form remains legible. It goes on to outline that the setting of the cottage has been significantly transformed over time, highlighting that whilst once part of an agricultural landscape, the wider rural setting of the cottage has been eroded by late C20 development in its vicinity. It states that the contribution made by the setting to the historic significance of the cottage is mainly from its immediate garden and the approach from the south, with tall fencing and planting filtering long ranging views from north. It concludes that the land to the north now part of the West

Worthing Club no longer contributes meaningfully to the significance of the cottage, with modern leisure buildings, activity patterns and a strong physical separation reinforced by the recent 2-storey extension to the cottage resulting in the Club site now having only a minimum contribution to how the heritage value of Flint Cottage is currently experienced or understood.

In assessing the impact of the proposed additional Padel court on Flint Cottage the Assessment concludes that although the additional court will be closer to the heritage asset, its curved roof form and silhouette will be closely associated and aligned with the existing Padel courts, arguing that the largely "open sided" construction will reduce perceptions of its mass and preserve a "high level of visual permeability" that will limit the sense of enclosure when viewed from Flint Cottage. It states that the low wattage illumination will be experienced in the current context of the tennis club and will not result in an appreciable change to how the heritage asset is experienced. The Assessment concludes that the proposal will have a neutral effect on the setting of Flint Cottage and will not harm its significance.

Whilst it is true that the land to the north and east of Flint Cottage no longer provides it with a rural context, the Heritage Assessment somewhat understates the contribution made to its existing setting which at least in part derives from the relatively open character of the grass tennis courts/croquet lawns, being those activities within the Club closet to the heritage asset, and which are not illuminated. This current sense of openness is noticeably perceived in views of Flint Cottage from the east along Titnore Way.

The Heritage Assessment also understates the effect of illuminating the Padel court (replacing a grass tennis court which it unlit) and heightening perceptions of height and scale in closer proximity to the Listed Cottage than at present. Consequently, the Council's Heritage Adviser considers the effect of the proposal on the setting of Flint Cottage to result in 'less than substantial harm'. Whilst this is not to say that such harm is "insignificant", the Council's Heritage Adviser is satisfied that the amendment to the initial application submission in removing one of the initially proposed Padel courts and increasing the separation distance to the rear of Flint Cottage, has reduced the level of harm such that the public benefits of community engagement in sports and recreation that promote wellbeing and health is considered to outweigh the harm.

Residential Amenity

The only affected residential property is Flint Cottage adjoining to the southwest. Policy DM5(a)(viii) states that new development should not have an unacceptable impact on the occupiers of adjacent residential properties including unacceptable loss of privacy, daylight/sunlight, outlook and unacceptable increase in noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts.

<u>Visual Impact</u>

The proposed additional Padel court will be sited a minimum 24.5m to the site boundary with Flint Cottage and approximately 56m to the rear of the dwelling (including the recent extension).

The white barrel-vaulted roof of the nearest existing Padel court is clearly visible from the rear windows and garden of Flint Cottage, above the garden outbuildings and vegetation adjoining the northern boundary of the dwelling curtilage. Although the lighting design report confirms that the Cottage will not be affected by obtrusive light spill, the visual impact of the structure is evidently more pronounced when the court is illuminated, owing to the semi translucent nature of the white membrane roof covering.

The proposed additional court will be sited closer to the rear of Flint Cottage and thus the visual impact will inevitably be greater than at present. Whilst the amended proposal is undoubtedly an improvement on the original submission, the visual prominence of the roof, particularly when illuminated, will have a noticeable effect on the rear outlook of the dwelling. However, the separation distance is such that the impact will not be oppressive or overbearing and, on balance, it is considered would not be so severely intrusive on the amenities of the occupiers as to considered unacceptable.

The re-sited groundman's huts and containers (approximately height 2.5m) will be positioned alongside the boundary with Flint Cottage behind the taller roof pitched of the detached garage/workshop building, and the similar height roof of the pool building, both of which adjoin the south side of the boundary. Even with the buildings/containers slightly raised up (as recommended by the Council's Tree Officer) the effect of the buildings on the garden would not be harmful.

Noise

Following the initial concerns raised by the EH Team Leader a noise report was prepared to support the initial proposal for 2no Padel court. The report models the noise impacts of the 2no additional Padel courts in addition to the existing padel and tennis courts. It is based on a noise survey undertaken at the site from 25th-30th September 2025 between 08.00-19.00hrs (daytime) and 19.00-22.00hrs (evening) to establish the appropriate noise level criteria (NOEL, LOAEL and OAEL) for the site. Digital modelling predicts Padel noise propagation levels for ambient (LAeq) and maximum (LAmax) impacts to Nearest Sensitive Receptor (NSR) positions within the garden and at the nearest windows of Flint Cottage.

The predicted *ambient* padel noise level in the garden of Flint Cottage of 44LAeq matches the No Observable Adverse Effect Level (NOAEL) threshold. The predicted *ambient* padel noise level at the nearest window of Flint Cottage of 48LAeq exceeds the NOAEL threshold but matches the Lowest Observable Adverse Effect Level (LOAEL) threshold. The predicted maximum padel noise level in the garden of 50LAmax is below the NOAEL threshold (55LAmax). Similarly, the predicted maximum noise level at the nearest

window of Flint Cottage of 52LAmax is below the NOAEL threshold of 58LAmax.

These predictions estimated that the noise impact of the existing and initially proposed 2no Padel courts would likely be at the LOAEL level with the predicted overall incident noise 7 dB below the existing ambient, and just at, the threshold levels set out in WHO (World Health Organisation) and other relevant guidelines. These results mean that whilst play on the Padel courts would be audible at the NSR (Flint Cottage) it would be expected to produce only a low impact on quality of life and amenity of the residents.

The Council's EH Team Leader has accepted these results.

Following amendment of the application to omit of the Padel court nearest the boundary with Flint Cottage it can reasonably be expected that noise impacts affecting the occupiers of Flint Cottage will be less than those predicted.

Ecology and BNG

Policy DM19 states that opportunities should be taken to incorporate elements of green infrastructure onsite to create, protect, enhance and manage green infrastructure assets and/or networks to achieve environmental net gain. There should be no net loss of trees and any trees removed should, where practical and appropriate, be replaced on a greater than 1:1 basis.

No woodland, individual trees or hedgerows would be lost because of the development. The treed margin along the western boundary of the Club site comprising a piece of green infrastructure and an ecological corridor is unaffected. The new tree planting to supplement the margin (required by AWDM/0502/22) is understood to have been now carried out.

A BNG metric has been completed to meet mandatory BNG requirements and in accordance with policy DM18.

The amended site area (0.06ha) consists of buildings comprising a groundsman's shed and several shipping containers, a gravel access track and modified grassland, including a tennis court. The report identifies that intensive management in accordance with tennis standards result in a uniform structure with almost no floral diversity, and only grasses *Lolium perenne* present.

The Metric calculates a baseline habitat area of 0.09 units which will be lost to the development. To achieve the required 10% BNG new habitats (including compensation and enhancement) must deliver a minimum of 0.099 units. No net gain habitats will be created within the development site meaning that off-site delivery is required. The report recommends that 0.099 habitat units of 'low' distinctiveness be purchased from a national recognised biodiversity unit provider.

The report further recommends provision of dedicated swift boxes for hirundines (swallow family), multi species bird boxes and bat boxes which is considered in keeping with the requirements of policy DM19 above.

Conclusion

Padel is a growing sport, and the current proposal has been made in response to this growth and popularity of the existing 2no Padel courts at the Club which are already operating at maximum capacity during peak hours. The accessible nature of Padel is also recognised, as is the contribution made by West Worthing Club CIC to promoting and improving access to racquet sports generally throughout the wider community and the town.

The most harmful impacts of the initial submission on the setting of the Grade II Listed Flint Cottage, and the visual amenities of the occupiers of the cottage, have been mitigated by the omission of the proposed Padel court closest to the common site boundary. Even so, owing to its height, scale and roofing material, the prominence of which is accentuated when illuminated, the additional Padel will have some harmful effect on the visual amenities of the occupiers of Flint Cottage and on the setting of this designated heritage asset.

It is worth point out that discussions by officers to try to secure a less sensitive positioning of the proposed Padel court were unsuccessful. It being argued that an alternative siting would adversely impact the oversight and supervision necessary for national and regional level competitions held on the adjacent grass tennis courts.

On balance, taking into consideration the partial screening effects of the outbuildings and vegetation within the garden of Flint Cottage, the effect on the amenities of the occupiers is not considered so intrusive as to warrant refusal on this ground. The harm to the setting of the listed building is considered ‘less than substantial’ and as accepted by the Council’s Heritage Advisor, is outweighed in this case by the public benefits of the enhanced Padel provision and its contribution towards promoting wellbeing and healthy lifestyles in the wider community in accordance with key Local Plan objectives.

Recommendation

APPROVE subject to Conditions:-

1. Drawing Numbers
2. BNG Plan
3. Standard time limit
4. Materials, finishes and colours as stipulated within the application submission unless otherwise agreed
5. Padel court hereby permitted shall not be illuminated when not in use, nor after 22.00hrs on any day.

6. Padel court hereby permitted shall not be used except between the hours of 08.00 and 22.00 on any day.
7. Prior to re-sting the container stores and groundsman's hut, details of (i) the proposed permeable surfacing of the compound, (ii) the provision of an air gap so that the containers stores are not placed directly on the ground, to be agreed and implemented.
8. Details of bat and bird boxes and their positioning (within the 'blue' land) to be agreed and implemented
9. Construction hours
10. Provide fire hydrant *[Subsequently removed following further comments of WSCC Water & Access Manager rec'd 02.06.2026.]*

Informative
Pro-Active Amendment

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

Case Officer:	Jo Morin	Date: 27.05.2026
Authorised by:	Gary Peck	Date: 28 May 2026