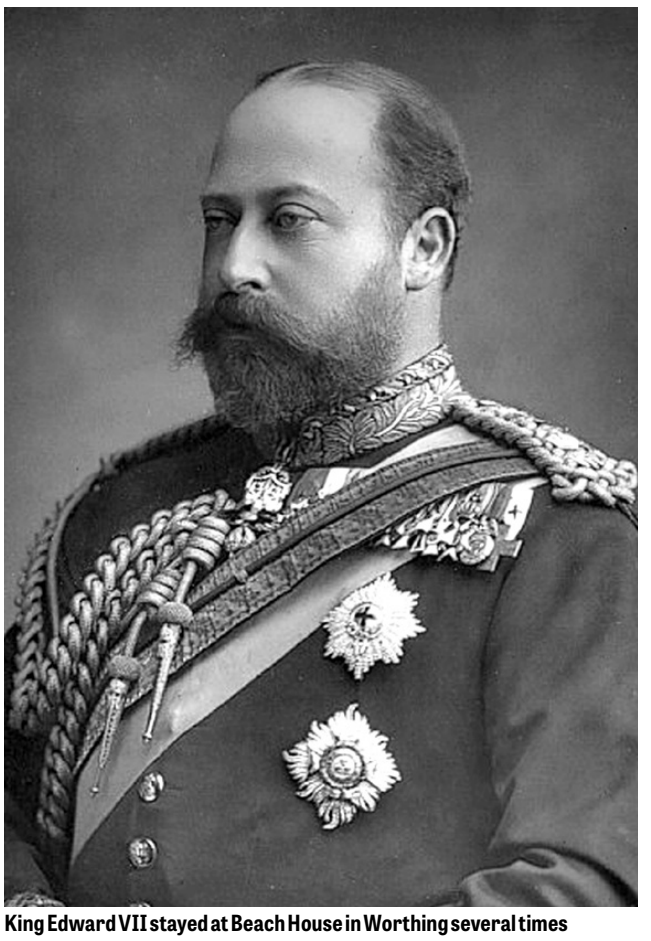
RETRO

Worthing Society founder Pat Baring, known as 'the battleaxe conservationist', was in constant battle with Worthing Borough Council, contesting planning applications with stamina and determination
FREDDIE FEEST

The elegant Victorian lamppost in Farncombe Road which Pat Baring saved from being demolished
ELAINE HAMMOND

Beach House Park's heritage has been celebrated for the centenary throughout 2024 by Creative Waves, which cares for the BugCycle Community Garden there
ELAINE HAMMOND



King Edward VII stayed at Beach House in Worthing several times
HILSEA ARCHIVE

Beach House Park has finally been included in a Conservation Area, for the first time, helping to protect them for the future
DEREK MARTIN

Beach House Park's heritage has been celebrated for the centenary throughout 2024 by Creative Waves, which cares for the BugCycle Community Garden there
ELAINE HAMMOND

Beach House in Worthing has three blue plaques. It is one of the last surviving villas of the Regency period and has been home to many people and organisations over the years.
ELAINE HAMMOND

Worthing Society chair Susan Belton, centre, at the unveiling of the blue plaque for Pat Baring, with her nephew James Thomas, Sir Peter Bottomley and Paul and Sandra Baker
JAMES BUTLER

s after it first opened to the public

First World War, the house was used as a doll making factory for the employment of refugees.

The northern part of the grounds were sold to the council in 1923. Four years later, the council purchased the house and the remaining grounds to the south of the property.

The house remained empty until 1936, when it became a home for Basque refugee children fleeing the Spanish civil war. In late 1939, a civil defence unit moved in and it remained the headquarters of the Air Training Corps for the duration of the Second World War.

When the council tried to demolish Beach House in 1978, Pat Baring and other local residents forged a five-year campaign to save it. It was converted into luxury flats in 1982 and three blue plaques are displayed there, for Edward Knoblock, the Spanish refugees and Edward VII, who stayed at the house several times.

Protection has been solidified this year, thanks to the Worthing Society, after it successfully applied to the council for a review of conservation areas.

Susan explained: "The Steyne Gardens Conservation Area boundary has been extended to include Denton Gardens, the lifeboat memorial, Beach House Grounds and Beach House Park.

"I am delighted that following a public consultation, the revised Conservation Area Character Appraisals have been adopted by the council. I hope these Character Appraisals will be an extra tool in protecting our heritage."

Blue plaque marking Beach House's use as a home for Basque refugee children fleeing the Spanish civil war
ELAINE HAMMOND

Beach House Park in Worthing was opened to the public in 1924
ELAINE HAMMOND