

UPDATE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 22 June 2022

ITEM NO. 8

Page: 35

Ward: Thames

Address: Gas Works Social Club, Gas Works Road, Reading

Proposal: To add the Gas Works Social Club to List of Locally-Important Buildings and Structures

AMENDED RECOMMENDATION:

As per main agenda report.

1. Planning history clarification

1.1 On Monday 21 June, a representation regarding the report on the main agenda was received from a planning agent acting for a potential purchaser of the site. The agent wished it to be known, *'that the site benefits from an extant planning permission'* and that this should be a material consideration for Members' consideration. The agent considers that if the site is added to the Council's Local List, this is likely to prejudice the delivery of that planning permission.

1.2 The Planning permission being referred to is reference 160378/FUL and was for the following:

Change of use, conversion, extensions and various associated works to former Gas Works Buildings to create a part 4,5 and 6 storey building adjacent to the River Kennet and a 3 storey building fronting Gas Works Road, providing 20 (10x1, 9x2 and 1x3-bed) residential units (Class C3).

1.3 Planning permission was issued with a s106 legal agreement on 28 October 2016 giving the expiry date for implementation as 28 October 2019. On inspection of the material on the planning history files, officers advise that some works have occurred with the demolition of a side wing; however, as some of the pre-commencement conditions are outstanding it is not clear if it can be stated that the permission has been implemented. It has previously been advised to the owners of the site that the status of this planning permission - ie. whether it has been implemented or not - should be confirmed and the formal opinion of the Local Planning Authority clarified, through the submission of a Certificate of Lawful Existing Use or Development application. This has not been done to date.

1.4 Therefore, officers cannot confirm that there is an extant planning

permission for the site. However, even if there is, this extract from the Committee Report presented to PAC on 12th October 2016 makes clear that the preference was to retain the existing building:

Para. 6.8 The existing buildings, although not listed or within a conservation area, are considered to be of some heritage value given they represent two of the few remaining buildings of age in the vicinity of the site, with links back to the former industrial uses in the immediate locality. As such, in line with the NPPF, they are considered to be non-designated heritage assets. In light of this, the applicant was advised at the outset of pre-application discussions that officers would welcome the retention / refurbishment / extension of the existing buildings at the site, rather than the demolition of the existing buildings and resultant redevelopment. The applicant has considered this and, as such, the proposal submitted for full planning permission seeks the retention of and extension to the existing buildings. Such an approach is welcomed and strongly supported by officers.

- 1.5 It follows from the above that the adding of this building to the Local List will not hinder a developer seeking to implement the permitted development.

Case Officer: Bruce Edgar/Richard Eatough