

Planning Applications Committee

03 June 2026



Reading
Borough Council
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Title	PLANNING APPLICATION UPDATE REPORT
Ward	Caversham
Planning Application Reference:	PL/26/0138/FUL
Site Address:	Hemdean House School, Caversham, Reading
Proposed Development	Redevelopment and demolition of buildings, erection of 51no. retirement apartments and conversion of the former School House to form 10no. general open market apartments including communal facilities, access, car parking and landscaping. The conversion of former gate house lodge to form 1 no. general open market dwelling.
Deadline	22 nd June 2026
Recommendations	As per the main agenda report
S106 Heads of Terms	N/A
Reasons for Refusal	As per the main agenda report – with clarifications as set out below
Informatives	As per the main agenda report – with clarifications as set out below

Additional Letter from Owner of Nursery

1. A letter from the owner of the Nursery was received 29th May, after the main agenda report was published. To summarise, it suggests that efforts were made to identify a means by which the school could continue operating, with efforts made to explore educational, community and alternative uses before other options were considered. The letter suggests extensive marketing took place, as well as stating that the nursery's occupation of the site was never intended to be permanent.
2. As advised within the main agenda report, it remains that private matters between landowners and their lessees/tenants have little bearing on the Planning use or merits of the current proposal. No marketing evidence has been submitted with the application, and no evidence has been submitted to demonstrate why the education use of the main building is no longer needed or why it is no longer viable.
3. The contents of the letter do not alter the recommendation, and concern remains about the loss of the school and nursery use.

Reasons for Refusal – Clarifications

1. There are some typographical errors within the wording of the reasons for refusal. For completeness, these are corrected below:

Reason for refusal 5.

The proposed development would involve and require unsympathetic alterations to the historic buildings Hemdean House School and Lodge including inappropriate fenestration and other materials which would **result** fail to conserve the character and appearance of these non-designated heritage assets with consequent harm to their significance. Contrary to Policies EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment), EN4 (Locally Important Heritage Assets), EN6 (New Development in a Historic Context) and H2 (Density and Mix) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and paragraph 216 of the NPPF 2024.

Reason for refusal 6.

The proposed development would **provide** fail to provide dwellings of 3 bedrooms or more and as such would fail to adequately contribute towards meeting the identified housing needs of Reading Borough. Contrary to Policy H2 (Density and Mix) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and paragraphs 61 and 129 of the NPPF 2024.

Informatives – Clarifications

1. Reference to the s106 agreement should refer to reasons 1, 21 and 22 (instead of 1, 19 and 18).
2. Informatives should include reference to pre-application advice (not sought).

Errors within Main Agenda Report – Clarifications

1. *Paragraph 7.21*
The new-build element would provide for Class C3 accommodation to be age-restricted **recruitment retirement** living units.
2. *Paragraph 7.87*
Historic England's Advice note 7 states that local listing is a way to identify and celebrate historic buildings which enrich and enliven the area and that they build a sense of place and history and area intended to highlight assets in order to ensure that they are given due consideration when change is proposed. For the reasons given above, it is **not** considered that there would be an adverse impact on the historic assets.
3. *Para 7.88*
Reference is made to the NPPF 2024 paragraph 215 – it should refer to paragraph 216, which discusses the effect on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset.
4. *Para 7.129*
Refers to EN12 when this should be EN14.