

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
PLANNING AND COMPENSATION ACT 1991
THE TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING
(DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2015**

Application for Full Planning Permission

To: Laura Coombes-Baker
Churchill House,
Parkside,
Ringwood,
BH24 3SG

Application No: PL/26/0138
Application type: Full Planning Permission

Applicant: .

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL as Local Planning Authority **REFUSE** planning permission for the following development.

Proposal: 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.

At: HEMDEAN HOUSE SCHOOL, HEMDEAN ROAD, CAVERSHAM, READING, RG4 7SD

For the attached reasons

PLEASE READ THE NOTES ISSUED WITH THIS DECISION NOTICE

Date: 8 June 2026



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**Acting Director, Planning, Transport &
Public Protection**

Application At: HEMDEAN HOUSE SCHOOL, HEMDEAN ROAD, CAVERSHAM, READING, RG4 7SD

Application No: PL/26/0138

Application type: Full Planning Permission

REASONS FOR REFUSAL

1. In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure the provision of an acceptable amount, mix and tenure of Affordable Housing, the proposal fails to contribute adequately to the housing needs of Reading Borough and the need to provide sustainable mixed and balanced communities. Contrary to Policies H3 (Affordable Housing) and CC9 (Securing Infrastructure) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, the adopted Affordable Housing SPD 2021, and paragraph 64 of the NPPF 2024.
2. The proposed development fails to demonstrate that there is no need to retain the existing educational and community use of the site. Contrary to Policy OU1 (New and Existing Community Facilities) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and Para 100 of the NPPF 2024.
3. The proposed development, due to the excessive scale, site coverage and bulky form of buildings and associated development, together with their incongruent design and disjointed arrangement, would represent an unattractive and visually dominant overdevelopment of the site and loss of openness, which fails to accommodate buildings (including outbuildings), new accesses, bin stores, tree planting and other soft landscaping in a manner that enhances the character and appearance of the area. This harmful arrangement together with the visual prominence of the site would result in harm to the street scene and character of the areas. Contrary to Policies CC7 (Design and the Public Realm), H2 (Density and Mix) and EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and paragraphs 96, 129, 131, 135 and 136 of the NPPF 2024.
4. The proposed development, due to the excessive scale and bulky form of buildings, combined with their siting and expansive areas of hardstanding would result in an overly

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dominant, visually stark, intrusive and unsympathetic development that would result in a harmful impact on the legibility of the original site layout and the visual and functional relationship between non-designated heritage assets within the site and their setting. As such the proposal would detract from the significance of the non-designated heritage asset at Hemdean House School and Lodge. 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.

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 fail to conserve the character and appearance of these non-designated heritage assets, with consequent harm to their heritage 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.
6. The proposed development would 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.
7. The proposed development, due to the inappropriate cramped building layout and single-aspect rooms, combined with enclosure from trees and retaining structures, would result in a poor quality of accommodation in terms of outlook, daylight and sunlight. Furthermore, there would be insufficient defensible space between ground floor units and communal gardens areas. This arrangement would result in a poor standard of amenity for future occupiers. Contrary to Policies CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity), H5 (Standards for New Housing) and H8 (Residential Conversions) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and paragraphs 96, 135 and 198 of the NPPF 2024.
8. The proposed development would fail to provide sufficient bin storage for all aspects of the development resulting in likely informal storage with associated visual harm and harm to the functioning of the site. This would be contrary to Policies CC5 (Waste Minimisation) and H5 (Standards for New Housing) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

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9. The proposed development would provide insufficient garden space to serve the converted Hemdean House School building and Lodge building which, combined with overshadowing from trees, would fail to provide an adequate quality of outdoor garden space for future occupiers, harmful to their amenity. Contrary to Policies CC7 (Design and the Public Realm), H8 (Residential Conversions), H10 (Private and Communal Garden Space) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, the Residential Conversions SPD 2023 and paragraphs 96, 135 and 187 of the NPPF 2024.
10. The proposed development, due to its excessive scale, height, fenestration, and proximity to No.126 Hemdean Road would result in harm to the amenity of this neighbouring property due to its overbearing effects and loss of privacy. Contrary to Policies CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) and H2 (Density and Mix) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and paragraphs 96, 135 and 198 of the NPPF 2024.
11. The proposal fails to demonstrate that it would not result in harmful loss of daylight or sunlight to adjacent dwellings to the north of the site in Hemdean Road and Knighton Close. Contrary to Policies CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) and H2 (Density and Mix) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and paragraphs 96, 135 and 198 of the NPPF 2024.
12. The proposed development, by reason of its excessive scale, inappropriate siting and number and position of windows and balconies in close proximity to neighbouring properties and gardens to the north of the site on Knighton Close would result in actual and perceived overlooking and loss of privacy to those dwellings and their gardens with consequent harm to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers. Contrary to Policies CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) and H2 (Density and Mix) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and paragraphs 96, 135 and 198 of the NPPF 2024.
13. The proposed development would involve an extended raised car parking area at the western end which, due to its elevated position, extensive retaining walls and other associated works, and proximity to properties existing to the north of the site at Knighton Close, would result in an unneighbourly, overbearing and dominant arrangement exacerbated by disturbance from vehicle movement and other activity, with consequent harm to the amenity of neighbouring properties and their gardens to north of the site at Knighton Close. Contrary to Policies CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) and H2 (Density and

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Mix) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and paragraphs 96, 135 and 198 of the NPPF 2024.

14. The duplication of vehicle access onto the classified Hemdean Road would be detrimental to highway safety. Contrary to Policies TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy) and TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters) of the Reading Borough Local plan 2019, the Parking Standards and Design SPD 2011 and paragraphs 109, 115 and 117 of the NPPF 2024.
15. The proposed development fails to provide a continuous pedestrian footway to serve the proposed dwellings within Hemdean House School (main school house) and as such the proposal would fail to provide as safe, accessible and convenient pedestrian route contrary to Policies TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy), TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters) of the Reading Borough Local plan 2019, the Parking Standards and Design SPD 2011 and paragraphs 109, 115 and 117 of the NPPF 2024.
16. The proposed development would provide insufficient parking to serve future occupiers, including parking for disabled users, and which would result in additional on-street parking (the availability of which would be reduced by the proposed access) that would adversely affect road safety and the flow of traffic. Contrary to Policies TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy), TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters) and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, the Parking Standards and Design SPD 2011 and paragraphs 109, 115 and 117 of the NPPF 2024.
17. The proposed development would result in harm to trees of high amenity value including those subject to a TPO, due to felling of those trees. Furthermore, the proposal fails to demonstrate that it would not cause unacceptable harm to trees of high amenity value shown to be retained, including those subject to a TPO. As such the proposed development would result in harm to trees, and to the verdant, spacious and historic character of the site, and to the wider environmental and visual quality of the area. Contrary to Policies CC7 (Design and the Public Realm), H2 (Density and Mix) and EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, the Tree Strategy 2021 and paragraphs 135, 136 and 187 of the NPPF 2024.
18. The proposed development, in the absence of an acceptable landscape-led Sustainable Drainage Strategy, fails to provide for sustainable drainage, with

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consequent harm in respect of attenuating localised flooding, achieving ecological benefits, securing linkages to the existing Green Network and integration with tree planting and landscaping. Contrary to Policies EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network), EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) and EN18 (Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Systems) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD 2019 and paragraph 182 of the NPPF 2024.

19. The proposed development fails to make provision for appropriate open space to serve the needs of the development. Contrary to Policy EN9 (Provision of Open Space) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and paragraphs 98 and 103 of the NPPF 2024.
20. The application fails to demonstrate that 5% of the new build dwellings will meet the M4(3) standard of accessibility, contrary to Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
21. In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure an appropriate financial contribution towards carbon offsetting in the Reading Borough, the proposed development would fail to adapt to climate change, achieve zero carbon homes standard and would not provide appropriate energy infrastructure. Contrary to Policies CC3 (Adaption to Climate Change), CC9 (Securing Infrastructure) and H5 (Standards for New Housing) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD 2019 and Planning Obligations under S106 SPD 2015.
22. In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure an acceptable Employment and Skills Plan (or equivalent financial contribution), the proposal fails to contribute adequately to the employment, skills or training needs of local people with associated socio-economic harm. Contrary to Policy CC9 (Securing Infrastructure) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and the Employment Skills and Training SPD 2013 and Planning Obligations under Section 106 2015.

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INFORMATIVES

1. The Local Planning Authority has worked positively and proactively by advising of the Council's decision to determine the application within the statutory timeframe, and giving opportunity to withdraw the application in order to seek pre-application advice.

2. This planning application was submitted without the benefit of first seeking pre-application advice from the Local Planning Authority, which can often result in the avoidance of refusal of planning permission. Please use the following link to the Council's pre-application service: <https://www.reading.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-applications/before-making-a-planning-application/pre-application-planning-advice/>

3. This decision relates to the following plans and documents submitted with the application:

Proposed Floor Plans – School House Drawing No.10137CS PA16 Rev A

Proposed Floor Plans – Lodge Drawing No.10137CS PA12 Rev A

Proposed Ground Floor Plan – Retirement Block Drawing No.10137CS PA02 Rev A

Proposed First floor Plan – Retirement Block Drawing No.10137CS PA03 Rev A

Proposed Second Floor Plan – Retirement Block Drawing No.10137CS PA04 Rev A

Proposed Roof Plan – Retirement Block Drawing No.10147CS PA05 Rev A

Planning Statement

As received 24th February 2026

Location Plan Drawing No.10137CS PALOC

Proposed Site Plan Drawing No.10137CS PA00

Proposed Site Plan and Roof Plan Drawing No.10137CS PA01

General Arrangement Plan Landscaping Drawing No.PLAN24902 09

Landscape Masterplan Drawing No.PLAN24902 10

Proposed East Elevation – Retirement Block Drawing No.10137CS PA06

Proposed North Elevation – Retirement Block Drawing No.10137CS PA07

Proposed South Elevation – Retirement Block Drawing No.10137CS PA 08

Proposed West Elevation – Retirement Block Drawing No.10137CS PA09

Proposed Elevations – Lodge Drawing No.10137CS PA13

Proposed Elevations – Hemdean School House Drawing No.10137CS PA17

Archaeological Assessment

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Affordable Housing and Viability Statement
Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement 25058-AIA-JB
Manual for managing trees on development sites
Badger Survey Report 784-B073665
Biodiversity Statutory Metric Bat Roost and Activity Report 784-B073665
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal 784-B03775
Design and Access Statement Part 1
Design and Access Statement Part 2
Great Crested Newts Report 3493-2025
Flood Risk Assessment 1953
Heritage Statement
Statement of Community Involvement
Energy Statement Transport Statement 536.0100/TS/1
Tree Protection Plan T5058-TPP-01
As received 2nd February 2026

4. Without prejudice to any future application or appeal, reasons for refusal 1, 21 and 22 could be overcome by entering into a satisfactory s106 legal agreement for a scheme that was in all other respects acceptable.
5. The applicant is advised that the refused scheme, had it been able to be approved, would have been subject to mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021).
6. The applicant is advised that the refused scheme, had it been able to be approved, would have been a CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) liable development.

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NOTES

APPEALS TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

If you are aggrieved by the decision of the Council to refuse permission for the proposed development or to grant it subject to conditions, then you can appeal to the Secretary of State under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

If this is a decision on a planning application relating to the same or substantially the same land and development as is already the subject of an enforcement notice, if you want to appeal against the Council's decision on the application you must do so within 28 days of the date of this notice.

If an enforcement notice is served relating to the same or substantially the same land and development as in your application and you want to appeal against the Council's decision on your application, you must do so within 28 days of the date of service of the enforcement notice, or within 6 months (or 12 weeks in the case of a householder appeal) of the date of this notice, whichever period expires earlier.

If the above circumstances do not apply, any appeal must be made within the following time limits:

If this is a householder application and you want to appeal against the Council's decision then you must do so within 12 weeks of the date of this notice. If this is an advertisement application and you want to appeal against your local planning authority's decision then you must do so within 8 weeks of the date of this notice. If you want to appeal against your local planning authority's decision for any other type of application (which is not a householder or advertisement application, or an application for a Certificate of Lawfulness) then you must do so within 6 months of the date of this notice.

Appeals can be made online at: <https://www.gov.uk/appeal-planning-decision>

If you are unable to access the online appeal form, please contact the Planning Inspectorate to obtain a paper copy of the appeal form on tel: 0303 444 5000.

The Secretary of State can allow a longer period for giving notice of an appeal but will not normally be prepared to use this power unless there are special circumstances which excuse the delay in giving notice of appeal.

The Secretary of State need not consider an appeal if it seems to the Secretary of State that the local planning authority could not have granted planning permission for the proposed development or could not have granted it without the conditions they imposed, having regard to the statutory requirements, to the provisions of any development order and to any directions given under a development order.

If you intend to submit an appeal that you would like examined by inquiry then you must notify the Local Planning Authority and Planning Inspectorate (inquiryappeals@planninginspectorate.gov.uk) at least 10 days before submitting the appeal. Further details are on GOV.UK.

Purchase Notices

If either the Local Planning Authority or the Secretary of State refuses permission to develop land or grants it subject to conditions, the owner may claim that he can neither put the land to a reasonably beneficial use in its existing state nor render the land capable of a reasonably beneficial use by the carrying out of any development which has been or would be permitted. In these circumstances, the owner may serve a purchase notice on the Council in whose area the land is situated. This notice will require the Council to purchase his interest in the land in accordance with the provisions of Part VI of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

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