

UPDATE REPORT:

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES READING BOROUGH COUNCIL PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 11 November 2015	ITEM NO.10
---	------------

Ward: Abbey

App Nos.: 151725/REG3

Address: The Abbey Gateway, The Forbury, Reading

**Proposal:** Change of use to B1 Offices (ground floor east side, first and second floors) and D1 Non-residential institution / Community education use (ground floor west side). Dismantling of south east yard wall and its replacement with a dwarf wall and railings. Conservation work and internal alterations as detailed in the separate application for Scheduled Ancient Monument consent.

**Applicant:** Reading Borough Council

**Date received:** 1 October 2015

**Application target decision date:** 26 November 2015

**26 week date:** 31 March 2016

1. Heritage

- 1.1 Paragraph 4.1 on page 67 of the main agenda refers to the comments of Historic England being awaited. These have now been received as follows:
- 1.2 *"Historic England welcomes this proposal to repair the building and to put it back into use.*
- 1.3 *The Abbey Gate is part of the scheduled monument known as Reading Abbey, List no. 1007932. The proposed works will therefore require scheduled monument consent from the Secretary of State before work can begin, and the applicants are aware of this. We note in section 2.3 of the Heritage Statement submitted with the application (HCC Property Services, Sept 2015) the intention to provide further detail with the scheduled monument consent application, and we are content with this approach."*
- 1.4 Paragraph 4.3 of the main agenda refers to any additional comments of Berkshire Archaeology being reported to Committee. Berkshire Archaeology have confirmed that they do not object, on the basis of

the Historic England response, and the fact that impacts on archaeology will be controlled under the Scheduled Monument Consent regime.

- 1.5 This advice is consistent with the assessment in section ii on page 70 of the main agenda and no change to the recommendation is considered necessary.

## **2. Ecology**

- 2.1 Paragraph 4.5 on page 67 of the main agenda refers to the comments of the Council's Ecologist being awaited. No objection has been received to date. Based on the findings of the submitted bat report, which did not identify any evidence of bats using the building, it is considered that the risk to bats is low and that the development can proceed without any further mitigation secured under the planning permission. The physical works to be secured under Scheduled Monument Consent (administered by Historic England) would be subject to their own separate assessment in respect of bats. On this basis it is considered that the proposed change of use and limited external alterations are acceptable in terms of their impact on protected species, in accordance with Policy CS36.

## **3. Representations**

- 3.1 Paragraph 4.12 on page 68 of the main agenda refers to any representations received being reported to Committee. None have been received to date.

## **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1 The application remains recommended for approval as set out on page 63 of the main agenda.

Case Officer: Steve Vigar