

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Redlands Ward

App Ref: PL/25/1229 Prior approval Part 3 Class MA: Commercial, business and service uses to dwellinghouses

Address: 13-15 BOULT STREET, READING, RG1 4RD

Proposal: Change of use of from Class E (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 3 new dwellings. Prior Notification under Class MA, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015.

Applicant: Savoys Properties

Received date: 04/08/2025

Decision date: 01/10/2025 (agreed extension)

Case Officer: Sian Hickey

Introduction

The application site is a part two storey and part single storey end-of-terrace building located on the North side of Boulton Street in Reading. Boulton Street falls within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The application site is within Redlands Ward and falls just outside of the nearby Eldon Square Conservation Area. The application site is not listed, and there are no listed buildings in the area immediately surrounding the site. The site is not situated on Article 4 Land. Town centre amenities and services are walking distance from the building. The site is also well served by local bus services.



Figure 1: Site Location Plan



Figure 2: Application Building

Proposal

Prior approval is sought under Class MA Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended) for the change of use of the ground and first floor of the building to create 3 self-contained dwellings.

More specifically, 1 x 1-bed dwelling (2 persons), 1 x 2-bed dwelling (3 persons), and 1 x 2-bed dwelling (4 persons).

Bin and cycle storage has been shown on the plans.

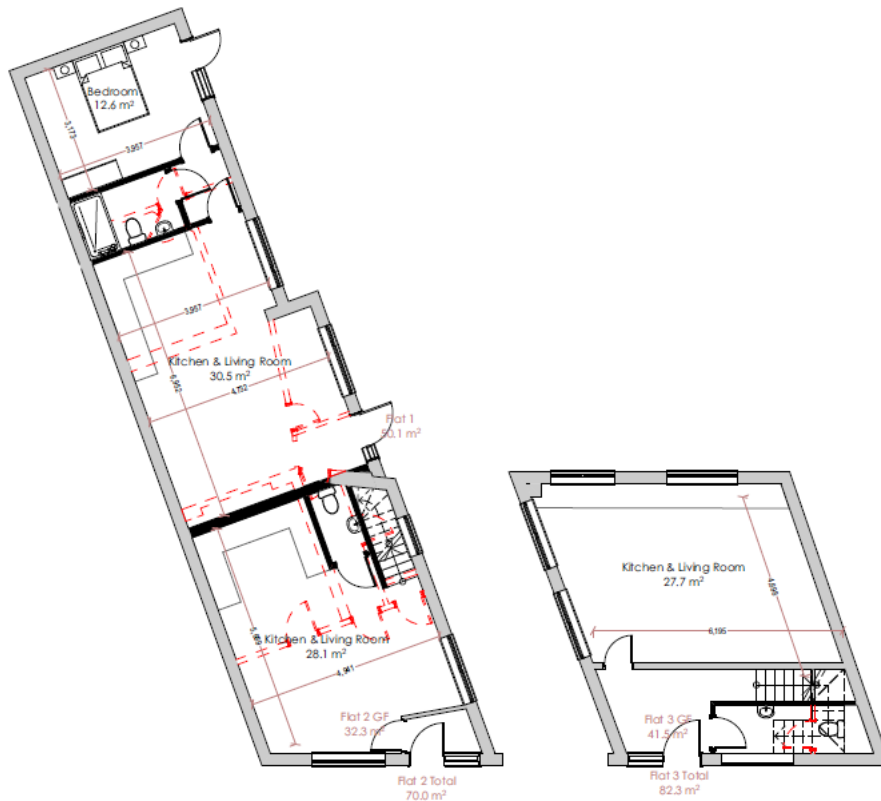


Figure 3: Proposed Ground Floor Plan

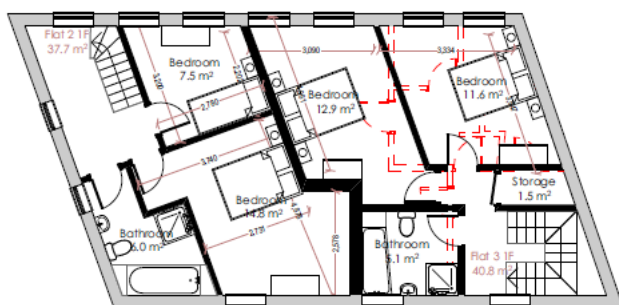


Figure 4: Proposed First Floor Plan

Information Submitted

The completed application form, including a written summary of the proposed development and the developer's contact details.

Drawings and Documents ref.

- Planning Statement
- Drawing No. 9458 PL-04.04 – Proposed Daylight, received on 4th August 2025
- Drawing No. 9458 PL-04.01 – Proposed Site Plan, received on 4th August 2025
- Drawing No. 9458 PL-03.04 – Existing and Proposed Elevations, received on 4th August 2025
- Air Quality Assessment, dated July 2025, received on 4th August 2025
- Drawing No. 9458 PL-03.01 – Existing Ground Floor Plan, received on 4th August 2025
- Drawing No. 9458 PL-01 – Location Plan, received on 4th August 2025
- Drawing No. 9458 PL-02 – Block Plan, received on 4th August 2025
- Drawing No. 9458 PL-04.03 – Proposed First Floor Plan, received on 4th August 2025
- Drawing No. 9458 PL-04.02 – Proposed Ground Floor Plan, received on 4th August 2025
- Drawing No. 9458 PL-03.02 – Existing First Floor Plan, received on 4th August 2025

Policy Context

Legal context

The application has been submitted to determine whether prior approval is required in accordance with Schedule 2, Part 3, Class MA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). Class MA involves development consisting of a change of use of a building and any land within its curtilage from a use falling within Class E (commercial, business and service) of Schedule 2 to the Use Classes Order to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of Schedule 1 to that Order.

Before development can be carried out under Class MA, the developer must submit a Prior Notification to determine if 'Prior Approval' of the Local Planning Authority is required in respect of the following matters:

- (a) transport impacts of the development, particularly to ensure safe site access;
- (b) contamination risks in relation to the building;
- (c) flooding risks in relation to the building;
- (d) impacts of noise from commercial premises on the intended occupiers of the development;
- (e) where—
 - (i) the building is located in a conservation area, and
 - (ii) the development involves a change of use of the whole or part of the ground floor,

the impact of that change of use on the character or sustainability of the conservation area;

(f) the provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the dwellinghouses;

(g) the impact on intended occupiers of the development of the introduction of residential use in an area the authority considers to be important for general or heavy industry, waste management, storage and distribution, or a mix of such uses; and

(h) where the development involves the loss of services provided by—

(i) a registered nursery, or

(ii) a health centre maintained under section 2 or 3 of the National Health Service Act the impact on the local provision of the type of services lost.

(i) where the development meets the fire risk condition, the fire safety impacts on the intended occupants of the building

Class MA requires development to be completed within a period of 3 years starting with the prior approval date. Any building permitted to be used as a dwellinghouse by virtue of Class MA is to remain in use as a dwellinghouse within the meaning of Class C3 of Schedule 1 to the Use Classes Order and for no other purpose, except to the extent that the other purpose is ancillary to the use as a dwellinghouse.

If the Local Planning Authority determine that Prior Approval is required, Paragraph W of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) states that the Local Planning Authority should, when determining an application, have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 'so far as relevant to the subject matter of the prior approval, as if the application were a planning application' (Paragraph W, para 10b).

Planning History

PL/03/0265 (15 Boulton Street) - Use of property as offices. – Certificate of Lawfulness granted 12/06/2003.

PL/11/0758 (15 Boulton Street) - Remove felt from flat roof and replace with shallow pitch slate roof covers (part retrospective). – Approved 14/01/2012.

Consultations

Transport (RBC):

This application seeks prior approval under Class MA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) for the change of use of the ground floor and first floor of 13-15 Boulton Street from Class E (office use) to Class C3 (residential use) to create three self-contained flats.

The site currently provides 3 off-street parking at the rear of the site accessed from Boulton Street which will be retained.

Boulton Street and the surrounding road network all have extensive parking restrictions preventing on-street parking. The Council's residential parking permit scheme also operates in the area and Boulton Street is within Zone F1/11R. The applicant should be advised that future residents of the residential units would not be entitled to apply for resident or visitor parking permits for the surrounding residential streets where parking is under pressure. This will ensure that the development does not harm the existing amenities of the neighbouring residential properties by adding to the already high level of on street car parking in the area. The appropriate informative should be applied if the application is successful.

The proposed bin store will be located at the rear of the site, within the parking area with bins moved to Boulton Street on the day of collection. Secure cycle storage is proposed within cycle lockers also located at the rear of the site.

In summary, the Highway Authority do not have any objections to prior approval being given as the change of use would not have a material impact on the surrounding road network given the extensive parking restrictions in the area. However, I request that any permission granted is subject to an informative to advise that the residential units will not be entitled to an on-street car parking Permit.

Environmental Protection (RBC):

No objections.

Waste Services (RBC):

The Council's standard household waste collection service is for a fortnightly general waste collection, a fortnightly recycling collection and food waste is collected weekly. For 3 residential units there would need to be space for –

- 3 x 140L general waste bins*
- 3 x 240L recycling bins*
- 3 x 23L food waste bins*

We would expect that each flat have space for storage of their own bins within the boundary of the site's private property as there is no external front space for storage of bins. There does appear to be sufficient space for bin storage to the rear, and residents would be expected to present their bins for collection and retrieve them afterwards.

Developers should also take into consideration upcoming changes to residential waste collection services as per Simpler Recycling requirements in the future. These requirements will increase the amount of material recycled/collected at the kerbside (i.e. addition of glass & soft plastics) and so additional refuse space should be allocated to allow for this. Note: glass can currently only be recycled at local glass bottle banks or the tip.

We require at least 6 weeks' notice prior to residents moving into a development to ensure that bins can be purchased, delivered and collections scheduled in with the crews.

Officer note: Whilst not a relevant consideration for this type of prior approval application the proposed plans do indicate a bin store area to rear of the site. There is sufficient space here to accommodate the required number of bins. The developer is recommended to contact RBC Waste Services to ensure the appropriate number of bins for the development are provided on site. Given the site access arrangements and distance of the bin store from the carriageway bins would need to be brought to the kerbside for collection. Movement of the bins to and from the store and kerbside for collection would be the responsibility of the developer.

Publicity

A site notice was displayed at the application site on 9 September 2025 for a period of 21 days. No comments were received.

Appraisal

The proposal comprises the change of use of the building from Class E (office) to Class C3 (dwellinghouse) with the proposal to be considered against the criteria and conditions contained within Part 3, of Class MA.1. (1) (a)-(g), of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

In addition, to qualify for assessment under Class MA, all applications submitted under this class from 6th April 2021 must comply with Department for Communities and Local Government's Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standards, minimum space standards. As the application was received after the 6th April 2021 there is a requirement to comply with these minimum space standards. It can be confirmed that the proposed units comply with these minimum space standards as illustrated in the accompanying plans and the accommodation schedule.

Criteria MA.1.—(1)

Parts (a) (three month vacancy) and (c) (Floorspace qualification) were removed from the legislation on 5th March 2024 and so are no longer assessed.

(b) Previous use qualification – *“unless the use of the building fell within one or more of the classes specified in subparagraph (2) for a continuous period of at least 2 years prior to the date of the application for prior approval;”*

The Planning Statement and the Application Form specifies that the existing use of 13-15 Boulton Street is Class E. The planning history for the site also shows that a Certificate of Lawfulness was granted on 12/06/2003 (ref PL/03/0265) at 15 Boulton

Street for the use of the property as offices. Furthermore, the delegated report for the planning application granted on 14/01/2012 (ref PL/11/0758 - 15 Boulton Street) confirms the site was used as offices. No further applications have been received since this date to change the use of the site.

The agent provided a lease for the site, including plans and photographs, dated 21/01/2020 which states the permitted use as Class B1(a) (replaced with the new class E(g)).

Part of the site has also functioned as a Beauty Salon; however, Beauty Salons also fall within Use Class E and planning permission therefore would not have been required for this change.

(d) Land designation criteria – “If land covered by, or within the curtilage of, the building —

- (i) is or forms part of a site of special scientific interest;***
- (ii) is or forms part of a listed building or land within its curtilage;***
- (iii) is or forms part of a scheduled monument or land within its curtilage;***
- (iv) is or forms part of a safety hazard area; or***
- (v) is or forms part of a military explosives storage area;”***

The site does not form part of a site of special scientific interest, listed building nor land within its curtilage, a Scheduled monument or land within its curtilage, safety hazard area, nor military explosive storage area.

(e) Landscape designation criteria – “if the building is within—

- (i) an area of outstanding natural beauty;***
- (ii) an area specified by the Secretary of State for the purposes of section 41(3) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981;***
- (iii) the Broads;***
- (iv) a National Park; or***
- (v) a World Heritage Site;”***

It can be confirmed the site is not within a landscape designation criteria.

(f) Agricultural tenancy criteria – “If the site is occupied under an agricultural tenancy, unless the express consent of both the landlord and the tenant has been obtained;”

It can be confirmed the site is not occupied under an agricultural tenancy.

(g) Previous use criteria - “before 1 August 2022, if—

***(i) the proposed development is of a description falling within Class O of this Part as that Class had effect immediately before 1st August 2021; and
(ii) the development would not have been permitted under Class O immediately before 1st August 2021 by virtue of the operation of a direction under article 4(1) of this Order which has not since been cancelled in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 3.***

Not applicable to proposal.

Conditions

MA.2.—(1) Confirms that development under Class MA is permitted subject to the condition that before beginning the development, the developer must apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to—

- (a) transport impacts of the development, particularly to ensure safe site access;
- (b) contamination risks in relation to the building;
- (c) flooding risks in relation to the building;
- (d) impacts of noise from commercial premises on the intended occupiers of the development;
- (e) where—
 - (i) the building is located in a conservation area, and
 - (ii) the development involves a change of use of the whole or part of the ground floor, the impact of that change of use on the character or sustainability of the conservation area;
- (f) the provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the dwellinghouses;
- (g) the impact on intended occupiers of the development of the introduction of residential use in an area the authority considers to be important for general or heavy industry, waste management, storage and distribution, or a mix of such uses; and
- (h) where the development involves the loss of services provided by—
 - (i) a registered nursery, or
 - (ii) a health centre maintained under section 2 or 3 of the National Health Service Act 2006,

the impact on the local provision of the type of services lost.

- (i) where the development meets the fire risk condition, the fire safety impacts on the intended occupants of the building and the provisions of paragraph W (prior approval) apply in relation to that application.

Assessment of MA.2.—(1)

(a) Transport impacts of the development, particularly to ensure safe site access

The Council's Transport Team raise no objection to the prior approval but have recommended that an informative is applied to advise that no future residents of the dwellings would be given a resident or visitor parking permit.

The proposed development is not considered to materially increase vehicle parking movements nor change the existing access and egress arrangements presently operating on the site. As such, the proposal is not considered to have any adverse transportation impacts.

(b) Contamination risks in relation to the building

The application site is not situated on land known to be at risk of contamination and the proposal is for a change of use only, with no physical alterations to the external elevations of the building or groundwork sought. The Council's Environmental Protection Team have confirmed they have no objections to the proposal. Therefore, the development is not considered to amount to any unacceptable risks in relation to contamination.

(c) Flooding risks in relation to the building

The site is wholly located within Flood Zone 1. A Flood Risk Assessment has not been submitted, with it agreed in this instance that no FRA is required owing to the low flood risk status of the site.

(d) Impacts of noise from commercial premises on the intended occupiers of the development

The surrounding area is a mixture of commercial and residential uses. There are no existing commercial premises in the area immediately surrounding the application site that would result in unacceptable impacts on any potential future occupants of the development in terms of noise.

(e) where— (i) the building is located in a conservation area, and (ii) the development involves a change of use of the whole or part of the ground floor, the impact of that change of use on the character or sustainability of the conservation area;

The site is not located within a conservation area.

(f) the provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the dwellinghouses

Statutory Instrument 2020:632 introduces the requirement that consideration is given in respect to the provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms. This requires examination of the detailed floor plans and a judgement to be exercised as to whether appropriate levels of light can be achieved to rooms used for sleeping or living. This excludes bathrooms, service rooms, corridor, laundry rooms and hallways.

All rooms used for sleeping or living within the proposed development would be served by windows.

A proposed Daylight Diagram has been submitted with the application. This plan demonstrates the living, kitchen and bedroom spaces achieve adequate natural light levels.

Officers are satisfied that the proposal will provide adequate natural light to all habitable rooms of the dwellinghouses.

(g) the impact on intended occupiers of the development of the introduction of residential use in an area the authority considers to be important for general or heavy industry, waste management, storage and distribution, or a mix of such uses

The site is not within a core employment area or located in an area the authority considers to be important for general or heavy industry, waste management, storage and distribution, or a mix of such uses.

(h) where the development involves the loss of services provided by— (i) a registered nursery, or (ii) a health centre maintained under section 2 or 3 of the National Health Service Act 2006, the impact on the local provision of the type of services lost.

The development would not result in the loss of services provided by a registered nursery, or health centre maintained under the relevant sections.

(i) where the development meets the fire risk condition, the fire safety impacts on the intended occupants of the building

A Fire Statement would be required if the development involves the development of an existing 'relevant building'. These new criteria applies to a building which satisfies the height condition in paragraph (3) of the Procedure Order and contains— (a) two or more dwellings; or (b) educational accommodation. Paragraph (3) states the height condition is that— (a) the building is 18 metres or more in height; or (b) the building contains 7 or more storeys.

The building does not meet these criteria and therefore a Fire Statement is not required.

Recommendation:

Prior Approval is GIVEN, subject to the following conditions:

1. This development under Class MA is permitted subject to it being completed within a period of 3 years starting with the prior approval date on this decision notice.

REASON: To comply with the requirement of paragraph MA.2.—(5) of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended)

2. The development hereby permitted shall ONLY be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

Drawing No. 9458 PL-04.04 – Proposed Daylight, received on 4th August 2025
Drawing No. 9458 PL-04.01 – Proposed Site Plan, received on 4th August 2025
Drawing No. 9458 PL-03.04 – Existing and Proposed Elevations, received on 4th August 2025

Air Quality Assessment, dated July 2025, received on 4th August 2025

Drawing No. 9458 PL-01 – Location Plan, received on 4th August 2025

Drawing No. 9458 PL-02 – Block Plan, received on 4th August 2025

Drawing No. 9458 PL-04.03 – Proposed First Floor Plan, received on 4th August 2025

Drawing No. 9458 PL-04.02 – Proposed Ground Floor Plan, received on 4th August 2025

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out and adhered to in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.

Informatives

1. The proposal meets the relevant criteria set out in Class MA.

2. The applicant is advised that this decision represents the determination of the Local Planning Authority in respect of Schedule 2, Part 3, Class MA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended) as to whether Prior Approval is required in respect of the change of use only. Class MA does NOT afford any permitted development rights for external works which affect the exterior of the building in order to implement the change of use.

3. There is a widespread problem in Reading with rats as the rats are being encouraged by poor waste storage which provides them with a food source. Where developments involve shared bin storage areas, there is a greater risk of rats being able to access the waste due to holes being chewed in the base of the large wheelie bins or due to occupants or passers not putting waste inside bins, or bins being overfilled. It is therefore important for the bin store to be vermin proof to prevent rats accessing the waste and for the correct waste bin capacity to be provided so that waste is not deposited outside of bins.

4. The occupiers of the residential units will not be entitled to an on- street car parking Permit. The parking permit conditions above place a requirement that the Council be notified of postal addresses of the residential units before occupation and that the occupiers/transferees to be informed of the prohibition on entitlement to a car parking

permit. There is already a high level of on street car parking in the area and the site is located close to local facilities, with frequent public transport services on nearby roads.