

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
THE TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING
(DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2015
APPLICATION FOR PRIOR APPROVAL**

To: HGH Consulting

Application No: PL/25/1711

Application type: Prior approval Part 3 Class
MA: Commercial, business and service uses
to dwellinghouses

**Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed:
Change of use from Commercial, Business and Service (Use Class E) to Dwellinghouses
(Use Class C3)
Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as
amended) - Schedule 2, Part 3, Class MA**

Applicant: McGrath Group

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL as Local Planning Authority give notice that the prior approval of the Local Planning Authority is **GIVEN** for the following development in accordance with the plans and supporting information submitted in connection with this application.

Proposal: Change of use of part of building from Class E (offices) to Class C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 17 flats. Prior Notification under Class MA, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015.

At: ABBEY GARDENS, 4-6 ABBEY STREET, READING, RG1 3BA

Subject to such conditions and for such reasons as may be attached

**OTHER STATUTORY CONSENTS MAY BE REQUIRED
PLEASE READ THE NOTES ISSUED WITH THIS DECISION NOTICE**

Date: 19th January 2026



RE

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

Application At: ABBEY GARDENS, 4-6 ABBEY STREET, READING, RG1 3BA

Application No: PL/25/1711

Application type: Prior approval Part 3 Class MA: Commercial, business and service uses to dwellinghouses

CONDITIONS & REASONS

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:

- 309 Rev P.02 – Proposed Lower Ground Floor Plan
- 315(a) Rev P.03 - Proposed 5th Floor Plan (lower)
- 315(b) Rev P.03 - Proposed 5th Floor Plan (upper)
- 316(a) Rev P.03 - Proposed 6th Floor Plan (lower)
- 316(b) Rev P.03 - Proposed 6th Floor Plan (upper)
- 317 Rev P.01 - Proposed Roof Plan
- 400 Rev P.03 – Proposed Section AA
- 401 Rev P.02 – Proposed Section BB

As all received on 22/12/2025

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.

3. 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

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for no other purpose, except to the extent that the other purpose is ancillary to the use as a dwellinghouse.

REASON: To comply with the requirement of paragraph MA.2.—(6) of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

4. The dwellings hereby permitted shall not be occupied until all vehicle and cycle parking spaces have been provided in accordance with the plan (309 Rev P.02 – Proposed Lower Ground Floor Plan, as received 22/12/2025) hereby approved. The parking area shall be kept available for vehicle and cycle parking, as shown, at all times thereafter.

REASON: To ensure that the development is provided with adequate parking facilities to meet the needs of future occupiers, reduce the likelihood of roadside parking which could be a danger to other road users and to provide cycle parking to encourage travel by sustainable alternatives to private vehicle, in accordance with Policies TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

5. No residential unit hereby approved shall be occupied until the Local Planning Authority has been notified in writing of the full postal address of the units hereby approved. The notification shall be sent to the Local Planning Authority quoting the application reference specified on this Notice.

REASON: In order that the Council can update its records to ensure that parking permits are not automatically issued to the occupiers of the new residential units hereby approved, and thus ensure that the development does not harm the existing amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring residential properties by adding to the already high level of on street car parking in the area in accordance with Policy TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

6. Prior to any agreement being entered into for a new occupation of, or transfer of any interest in, the residential units hereby approved, the prospective occupier/transferee shall be informed that there is no automatic entitlement to a car parking permit for any existing residential parking permit schemes and future schemes on adjacent and surrounding streets. All material used for advertising or marketing the residential units for letting or sale shall make it clear to prospective tenants and occupiers that they will not be automatically entitled to a parking permit, but any application for a parking permit will be considered on its merits.

REASON: In order that the prospective occupiers are made aware of the fact that while they can submit an application they will not be automatically entitled to an on-street car parking permit. In the interests of the proper management of parking, and to ensure that the development does not harm the existing amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring residential properties by adding to the already high level of on street car parking in the area Policy TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

7. No dwelling hereby approved shall be occupied until the works approved under planning permission ref. PL/25/1175 on 03/12/2025, namely *“Installation of roof space windows on the north, east and west elevations of the north block and north, south and west elevations of the*

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central block and construction of a roof to enclose the plant area within part of the central block, all associated with the existing office use (Class E) (amended description).”, have been completed in accordance with the terms and conditions of that application, including the relevant approved plans: 315 Rev P.02 - Proposed 5th Floor Plan; 316 Rev P.03 - Proposed 6th Floor Plan; 317 Rev P.02 - Proposed Roof Plan; 500 Rev P.02 - Proposed East and West Elevation; 501 Rev P.02 - Proposed North and South Elevation; 502 Rev P.01 - Proposed North&South Elevation (Central Block); 401 Rev P.01 – Proposed Section AA; 450 Rev P.01 – Existing & Proposed Facade Section, as all received on 02/10/2025. The separately approved works shall be retained and maintained as such thereafter.

REASON: To ensure that every habitable room received adequate levels of daylight, in accordance with Policy H5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and part (f) of Schedule 2, Part 3, Class MA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

8. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted flood risk assessment document reference Flood Risk Assessment dated July 2025 by EAS Ref FRA – Abbey Gardens Rev A and the mitigation measures contained therein. These mitigation measures shall be fully implemented prior to occupation and subsequently in accordance with the scheme’s timing/phasing arrangements. The measures detailed above shall be retained and maintained thereafter throughout the lifetime of the development.

REASON: To reduce the risk of flooding to the proposed development and future occupants, in accordance with Policy EN18 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

9. No development shall commence on site including demolition and any preparatory works until an assessment of the nature and extent of contamination has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This assessment must be undertaken by a competent person, and shall assess any contamination on the site, whether or not it originates on the site. Moreover, it must include:

(i) a survey of the extent, scale and nature of contamination;

(ii) an assessment of the potential risks to:

- human health,
- property (existing or proposed) including buildings, crops, livestock, pets, woodland and service lines and pipes,
- adjoining land,
- groundwaters and surface waters,
- ecological systems,
- archaeological sites and ancient monuments;

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REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and to ensure the development is suitable for its end use and the wider environment and does not create undue risks to occupiers of the site or surrounding areas, in accordance with Policy EN16 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

10. No development shall commence on site including demolition and any preparatory works until a detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings and other property and the natural and historical environment has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme must include all works to be undertaken, proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria, an appraisal of remedial options, and proposal of the preferred option(s), and a timetable of works and site management procedures. The scheme must ensure that the site will not qualify as contaminated land under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use of the land after remediation.

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and to ensure the development is suitable for its end use and the wider environment and does not create undue risks to occupiers of the site or surrounding areas in accordance with Policy EN16 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

11. The approved remediation scheme under Condition 10 shall be implemented in accordance with the approved timetable of works. A validation report (that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out) shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before construction above foundation level.

REASON: To ensure the development is suitable for its end use and the wider environment and does not create undue risks to occupiers of the site or surrounding areas in accordance with Policy EN16 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

12. In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development not previously identified, development shall be halted on that part of the site the contamination reported in writing to the Local Planning Authority.

An assessment of the nature and extent of contamination shall be undertaken and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme, together with a timetable for its implementation, shall be submitted in writing to the Local Planning Authority for its written approval.

The measures in the approved remediation scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved timetable. Halted works shall not be re-commenced until the measures identified in the approved remediation scheme have been completed and a validation report has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

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REASON: To ensure the development is suitable for its end use and the wider environment and does not create undue risks to occupiers of the site or surrounding areas in accordance with Policy EN16 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

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 e.g. flats and hotels 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. Where developments involve a food related business then there is a greater risk of rats being attracted to the waste. 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 attention of the applicant is drawn to Section 59 of the Highways Act 1980, which enables the Highway Authority to recover expenses due to damage caused by extraordinary traffic. Any works affecting the Highway shall be in accordance with Reading Borough's Council's document "Guidance Notes for Activities on the Public Highway within the Borough of Reading". The applicant should note that compliance with this document is mandatory and licences to work on the Highway will only be issued if the requirements contained within it are met. A copy can be obtained from the Council's website.
5. The occupiers of the residential unit(s) will not be automatically entitled to an on-street car parking permit. Current and new occupiers should be informed of this and be advised to find out more about parking permits on the Council's website. 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.
6. A Building Regulations application may be required for the proposed development. Please go to our website for more advice. <https://www.reading.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/building->

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[control/apply-for-building-control/](#) You can also find advice and submit an application using the Planning Portal.

7. You are advised that no tree works are approved by virtue of this consent. Any works to trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order or to Conservation Area status will require submission of a tree works application or Section 211 Notice respectively.
8. You advised that demolition and related activity may harm adjacent trees and/or their Root Protection Areas (as defined by BS5837:2012). As such, it is recommended that protective fencing is erected prior to commencement of works to protect both tree canopies and Root Protection Areas. If trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order are present or the site is within a Conservation Area, such protection measures are a necessity to prevent tree damage (potentially subject to enforcement action) and advice should be sought from the Reading Borough Council Natural Environment Team.
9. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE - Fire Safety) is content with the fire safety design as set out in the project description, to the extent it affects land use planning considerations. However, HSE has identified matters that the applicant should try to address in advance of later regulatory stages, relating to Fire Service Access, Smoke Ventilation - Computational Fluid Dynamic (CFD), the material change of use (HSE highlights the requirements of building regulations relating to material changes of use of a building. It is understood that the proposed development, being an increase in the number of dwellings, would be within the definition of a material change of use. It will be for the applicant to demonstrate compliance with such requirements at subsequent regulatory stages) and the Building Safety Regulator (HSE advises that all higher risk buildings are now required to be registered with the Building Safety Regulator ('BSR') on occupation. Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/applying-to-register-a-high-rise-residential-building> . From April 2024 the BSR started the process of inviting accountable persons to submit a safety case for their registered buildings.
10. Thames Water has made a series of comments on these proposals, which you are strongly advised to take into account as soon as possible:

The foul water network in this catchment is impacted by high infiltration flows during certain groundwater conditions. Care must be taken when designing new networks to ensure they don't surcharge and cause flooding. Whilst design and construction guidance for sewers allows for an element of infiltration, Thames Water would expect in high risk areas such as this that additional precautions are taken to minimise infiltration; this should be in the form of the installation of leak tight liners within sewers and resin injection to seal chambers. This will help to mitigate the risk of flooding in the vicinity of the development (e.g. reduce property flood risk and travel disruption in the locality) and also help to reduce the risk of pollutions in the wider environment, particularly considering the impact of climate change. In the longer term, Thames Water, along with other partners, are working on a strategy to reduce groundwater entering public sewer networks.

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The surface water network in this catchment is impacted by high infiltration flows during certain groundwater conditions. Care must be taken when designing new networks to ensure they don't surcharge and cause flooding. Whilst design and construction guidance for sewers allows for an element of infiltration, Thames Water would expect in high risk areas such as this that additional precautions are taken to minimise infiltration; this should be in the form of the installation of leak tight liners within sewers and resin injection to seal chambers. This will help to mitigate the risk of flooding in the vicinity of the development (e.g. reduce property flood risk and travel disruption in the locality) and also help to reduce the risk of pollutions in the wider environment, particularly considering the impact of climate change. Developers must liaise with the LLFA to agree an appropriate sustainable surface water strategy following the sequential approach before considering connection to the public sewer network. This must also ensure that the design of any SUDS or surface water management solution conveys exceedance flows away from public sewer networks. In the longer term, Thames Water, along with other partners, are working on a strategy to reduce groundwater entering public sewer networks.

Public sewers are crossing or close to the development. Build over agreements are required for any building works within 3 metres of a public sewer and, or within 1 metre of a public lateral drain. This is to prevent damage to the sewer network and ensures Thames Water have suitable and safe access to carry out maintenance and repairs. Please refer to the Thames Water guide on working near or diverting Thames Water pipes: <https://www.thameswater.co.uk/developers/larger-scale-developments/planning-your-development/working-near-our-pipes> Please ensure to apply to determine if a build over agreement will be granted.

Thames Water would expect the developer to demonstrate what measures will be undertaken to minimise groundwater discharges into the public sewer. Groundwater discharges typically result from construction site dewatering, deep excavations, basement infiltration, borehole installation, testing and site remediation. Any discharge made without a permit is deemed illegal and may result in prosecution under the provisions of the Water Industry Act 1991.

A Groundwater Risk Management Permit from Thames Water will be required for discharging groundwater into a public sewer. Any discharge made without a permit is deemed illegal and may result in prosecution under the provisions of the Water Industry Act 1991. We would expect the developer to demonstrate what measures he will undertake to minimise groundwater discharges into the public sewer. Permit enquiries should be directed to Thames Water's Risk Management Team by telephoning 020 3577 9483 or by emailing trade.effluent@thameswater.co.uk. Application forms should be completed on line via www.thameswater.co.uk Please refer to the Wholesale; Business customers; Groundwater discharges section.

Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required. Should further information be required please refer to the Thames Water website. <https://www.thameswater.co.uk/help/home-improvements/how-to-connect-to-a-sewer/sewer-connection-design>

There are water mains crossing or close to the development. Thames Water do NOT permit the building over or construction within 3m of water mains. If significant works are planned within 3m

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of Thames Waters mains, Thames Water will need to check that the development doesn't reduce capacity, limit repair or maintenance activities during and after construction, or inhibit the services we provide in any other way. The applicant is advised to read the Thames Water guide 'working near or diverting our pipes'. <https://www.thameswater.co.uk/developers/larger-scale-developments/planning-your-development/working-near-our-pipes>

If the applicant is planning on using mains water for construction purposes, it's important that the applicant lets Thames Water know before the applicant starts using it, to avoid potential fines for improper usage. More information and how to apply can be found online at www.thameswater.co.uk/buildingwater

Thames Water will aim to provide customers with a minimum pressure of 10m head (approx 1 bar) and a flow rate of 9 litres/minute at the point where it leaves Thames Waters pipes. The developer should take account of this minimum pressure in the design of the proposed development.

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