

Development Management
Planning Services
Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices
19 Bridge Street
Reading
RG1 2LU

17th June 2026

Dear Sir or Madam,

RE: Prior Approval application for the change of use of the commercial (office) property from Class E to residential to create one 1-bedroom self-contained unit at 2a – 2c Donnington Gardens, Reading, RG1 5LY

DC Planning, on behalf of the owners of the above property, is pleased to enclose a Prior Approval application for the change of use of the commercial (office) property from Class E to residential to create one 1-bedroom self-contained unit, at 2a – 2c Donnington Gardens, Reading, RG1 5LY (hereafter referred to as 'the site' or 'the property').

This application has been prepared pursuant to Schedule 2, Part 3, Class MA of the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO or 'the Order'), most recently updated on the 5th March 2024.

This statement sets out an assessment against the specific criteria within Schedule 2, Part 3 of the Order. And should be read in conjunction with the following associated submission documents:

- Site Location Plan;
- Site Plan;
- Existing Floor Plans;
- Proposed Floor Plans;
- Completed Application Forms;
- Completed CIL Form;
- Planning Statement (this Cover Letter); and,
- Other submitted documents

The Site

The site comprises an existing single-storey office unit comprising 43.87 sqm, historically split into three separate units but most recently in use as a single office unit. The internal space comprises of office space with an ancillary kitchenette and wc within the rear of the property.

The property fronts Donnington Gardens and abuts residential properties and is within and characterised by traditional residential streets. The site comprises an off-street parking area in front of the office unit that is accessed directly from Donnington Gardens.

The site was most recently in use as an office until around August 2025. The site is not located within a Conservation Area.



Figure 1: An image of the entrance to Mandeville Courtyards as accessed from Warriner Gardens to the north.

The Proposal

The proposal comprises the change of use of the existing office space spread over the single storey unit to create a one-bedroom residential unit.

No external works are proposed as part of this application.

The proposal would create a high-quality, 50.00 sqm one-bedroom residential unit with the open plan living / kitchen / dining room situated at the western end of the property and an en-suite bedroom at the eastern of the property.

The proposed unit would include significant areas of internal storage space with additional storage located within the loft areas. Externally, bin storage and sufficient space for one off-street parking would be provided to serve the proposed residential unit.

The internal floor-to-ceiling heights at the would be 2.40m. Therefore, the floor-to-ceiling heights exceed the minimum requirements for residential dwellings.

The proposal would create a high-quality residential unit that is commensurate with the other residential properties that exist along Donnington Gardens.

The proposed development is illustrated in Figure 2, 3 and 4 below.

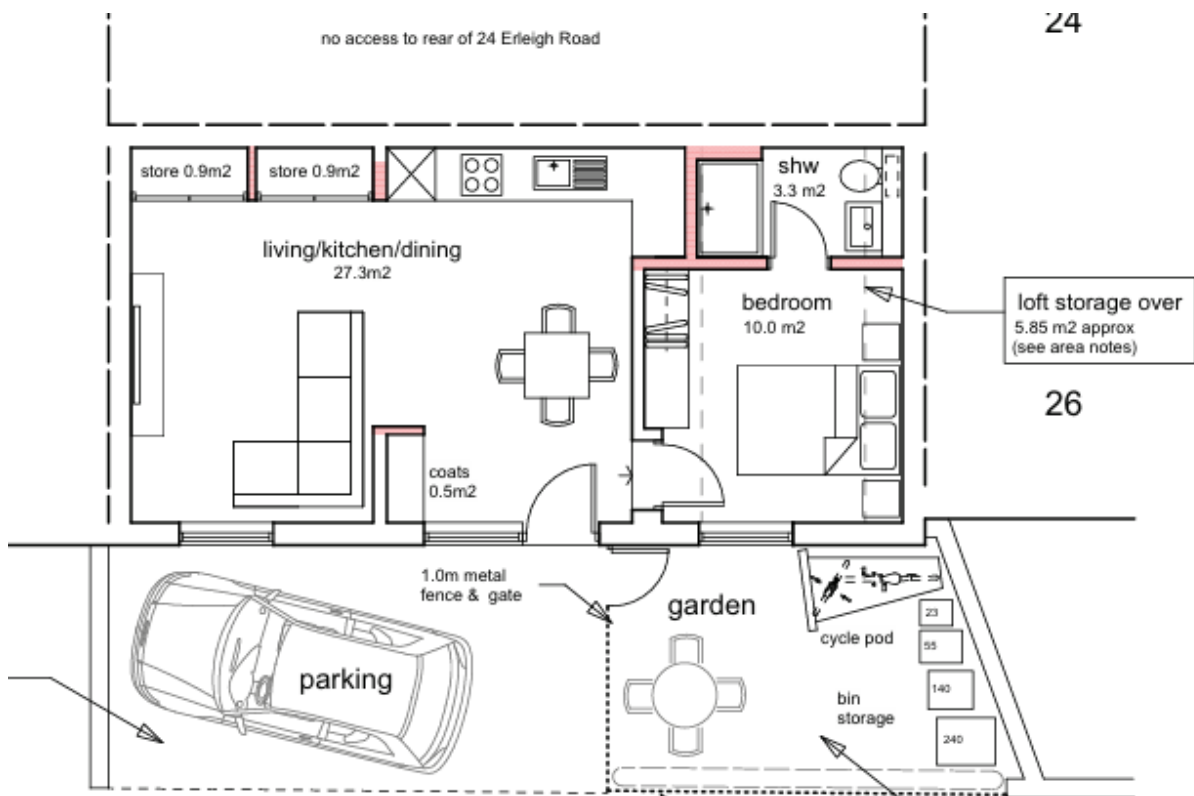
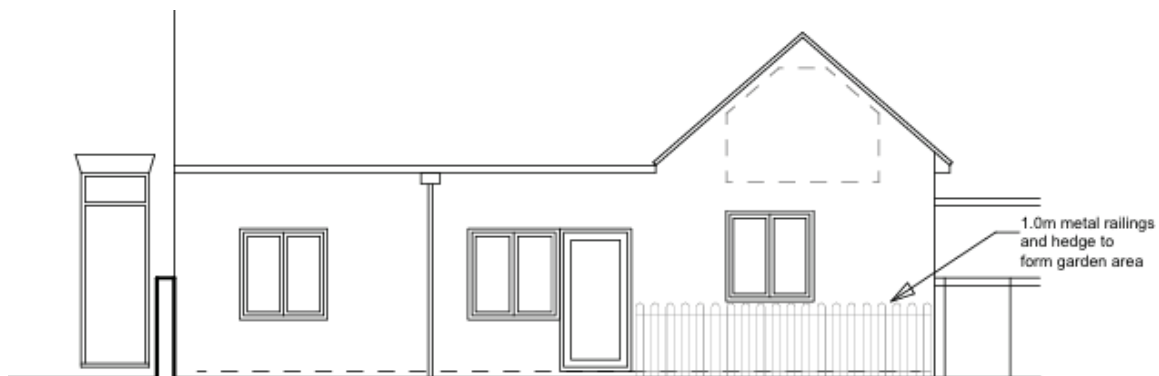
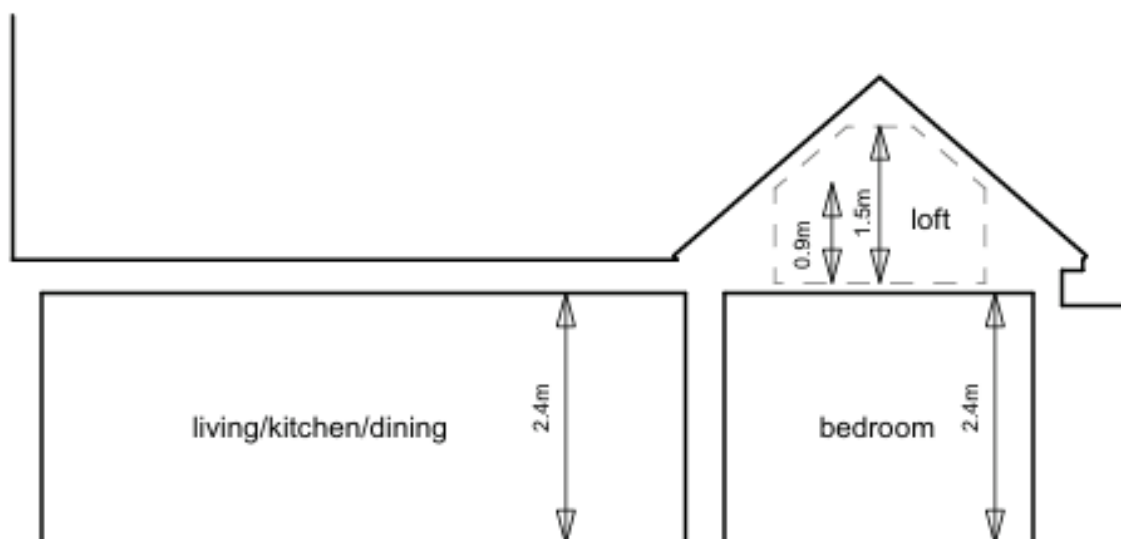


Figure 2: Proposed Floor Plan



FRONT ELEVATION as proposed

Figure 3: Proposed Elevation



SECTION as proposed

Figure 4: Proposed Section

The Framework

Schedule 2, Part 3, Class MA of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order (As Amended) 2015, permits development for the following:

“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 (dwelling houses) of Schedule 1 to that Order.”

Class MA sets out a criteria to establish the properties that are eligible for Class MA. An assessment against the criterion set out within Class MA is provided below. The regulations were most recently updated on the 5th March 2024 to remove the limit of 1500 sqm and the property being required to be vacant for 3 months prior to the application, which are noted below for completeness.

Development not permitted	Applicant's response
<i>Development is not permitted by Class MA.1</i> <i>If —</i> <i>(a) unless the building has been vacant for a continuous period of at least 3 months immediately prior to the date of the application for prior approval;</i> <i>(b)</i>	This section of the regulations is not relevant following amendments to the regs on the 5th March 2024.
<i>(b)unless the use of the building fell within one or more of the classes specified in sub-paragraph (2) for a continuous period of at least 2 years prior to the date of the application for prior approval;</i>	The building was entirely in use as offices when until recently including for a continuous period of at least 2 years . Google Street View images confirm the application site was in use as an Estate Agent office premises for at least the period extending from 2009 to 2025.
<i>(c) the cumulative floor space of the existing</i>	This section of the regulations is not relevant

<i>building changing use under Class MA exceeds 1500 square metres;</i>	following amendments to the regs on the 5 th March 2024.
<i>(d) 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;</i>	The site is not covered by any of these designations.
<i>(e) 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;</i>	The site is not covered by any of these designations.
<i>(f) if the site is occupied under an agricultural tenancy, unless the express consent of both the landlord and the tenant has been obtained; or</i>	The site is not occupied under an agricultural tenancy.
<i>(g) 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.</i>	The property was not located within an area subject to an Article 4(1) Order as of or before 1 st August 2021.

The classes mentioned in sub-paragraph MA1(b) (above) are the following classes of the Use Classes Order:

<i>a) the following classes of the Schedule as it had effect before 1st September 2020— (i) Class A1 (shops); (ii) Class A2 (financial and professional services); (iii) Class A3 (food and drink); (iv) Class B1 (business); (v) Class D1(a) (non-residential institutions – medical or health services); (vi) Class D1(b) (non-residential institutions – crèche, day nursery or day centre); (vii) Class D2(e) (assembly and leisure – indoor</i>	The property was in office use, which was referred to as Class B1 (business) before the 1 st September 2020.
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<i>and outdoor sports), other than use as an indoor swimming pool or skating rink;</i>	
<i>b) on or after 1st September 2020, Class E (commercial, business and service) of Schedule 2.</i>	The property has been in office use and therefore classifies as Class E use since the 1 st September 2020.

In light of the above, the site is eligible for the enclosed application under Class MA. Further to the above, development is permitted subject to the condition that before beginning the development, an application for Prior Approval is submitted to the Local Planning Authority to determine whether prior approval is required in relation to 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 dwelling houses;*

Each of the above items are taken in turn below:

Matter	Applicant response
<i>a) transport impacts of the development, particularly to ensure safe site access;</i>	This proposed development is located in an area with a very good public transport accessibility level. The proposed development is within walking distance of bus stops along Erleigh Road that provide onward sustainability connections to Reading town centre and the central Railway Station. The proposal is for the change of use from office to create one one-bedroom residential unit in place of one office unit. There is sufficient space for off-street vehicle and cycle parking on-site. It is therefore considered that there would be no material difference in the vehicle movements, cycle parking and car parking demand associated with the proposed development compared to the existing.
<i>b) contamination risks in relation to the building;</i>	The change of use would not result in any ground disturbance. There is no evidence to suggest that the site has been previously under any use that would result in historic contamination issues at the site. The proposal is therefore considered to comply

	with this part of the regulations.
c) <i>flooding risks in relation to the building;</i>	The site is situated within Flood Zone 1 and therefore is at low risk of flooding. The proposed use would not be at risk of flooding and as such, the proposal is therefore considered to comply with this part of the regulations.
d) <i>impacts of noise from commercial premises on the intended occupiers of the development</i>	The site is not located in close proximity to any significant noise generating uses. The majority of the space within the wider area is residential with some small-scale commercial uses along Erleigh Road. Therefore, the proposal is commensurate with the prevailing use of the site and wider area. The windows of the proposed flat would look onto Donnington Gardens. Therefore, the proposal would not result with any unintended noise impacts on the prospective residents.
e) <i>where —</i> <i>I. the building is located in a conservation area, and</i> <i>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;</i>	The site is not located within a Conservation Area and therefore this part of the Policy is not considered relevant.
g) <i>the provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the dwelling houses;</i>	The layout of the proposed residential unit has been carefully considered to ensure that adequate natural light is provided in all habitable rooms of the proposed residential unit. Both the Kitchen / Living / Dining and Bedroom will benefit from ample natural light from the existing windows seen on site that look out towards Donnington Gardens. The quality of the natural light is considered more than adequate and of a good level. The levels of natural light that the habitable rooms will receive can also be seen by the windows seen within the images within this Covering Letter. As a result, all habitable rooms within the proposed dwelling will have good provision of natural light.
h) <i>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;</i>	The site is not within an area identified to be of any local significance relating to heavy industry, waste management, storage and distribution, or a mix of such uses.

	Therefore, there would be no detrimental impact on prospective residents from such uses.
<i>i) 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>	The development would not result in the loss of a registered nursery or a health centre.
<i>j) where the development meets the fire risk condition, the fire safety impacts on the intended occupants of the building</i>	The development would relates to a building that does not trigger the need for a Fire Risk Assessment as set out by the Fire Risk Condition. As such, a fire risk assessment is not required.

Conclusion

In summary, the proposal complies with all of the regulations and considerations set out within the Schedule 2, Part 3, Class MA of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order (As Amended) 2015. The development would provide a high quality one-bedroom unit that meets the minimum space standards and therefore Prior Approval should be granted.

We would be grateful for the Council's considered assessment of the application and we respectfully request that planning permission is granted as the proposal complies with all relevant Development Plan policies.

Please do not hesitate to let me know if you require any further information – my email address is will@dcplanning.co.uk should you need to get in touch.

Yours faithfully,

for DC Planning



Will de Cani
Managing Director