

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Redlands Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0900 Prior approval Part 3 Class MA

Address: 2A DONNINGTON GARDENS, READING, RG1 5LY

Proposal: Change of use from Class E (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 1 X one-bedroom residential unit. Prior Notification under Class MA, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015.

Applicant: Mr Stephen Beck

Received date: 07/07/2026

Target Decision date: 01/09/2026

Case Officer: Marcelina Rejwerska

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a single storey office set back from the road with a paved frontage. Donnington Gardens is a residential road comprised of terraced dwellings. The application site lies near the junction with Erleigh Road and falls within the Erleigh Road local centre designation under local policy RL2 (Network and Hierarchy of Centres). The site is not, however, a key frontage of that centre.



Front of the site. Image taken by case officer on 23 July 2026.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Prior approval is sought for the proposed change of use from Class E (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to create 1x 1-bedroom residential unit under Class MA, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015.

2.1. Information submitted:

25-008 Planning Statement

25-008 CIL Form

25-008-01A Location Plan

25-008-02B Existing Plans and Elevations

25-008-04A Block and Site Plan
Received 7 July 2026

25-008-03A Proposed Plans and Elevations
Received 11 August 2026

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/26/0223 - Proposed change of use from single storey office unit into a one-bedroom residential unit. Application withdrawn.

PL/05/1064 - Change of use from B1a (offices not within A2) to A2 (financial and professional services). Application permitted.

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- **RBC Transport Development Control –**

- The site is located on Donnington Gardens, a predominantly residential street where on-street parking is available on both sides of the carriageway. The property lies within Parking Zone 2, on the edge of Reading town centre's primary core area, which benefits from a wide range of services, employment opportunities and sustainable transport connections.
- The site benefits from an existing off-street parking area situated to the front of the building, accessed directly from Donnington Gardens via an existing vehicular crossing. Access protection markings are also in place. In accordance with the Council's adopted parking standards, a one-bedroom dwelling is required to be provided with one off street parking space.
- However, the submitted floor plan (Drawing No. 25-008-03E) shows the existing parking area being reduced in size to facilitate the provision of private amenity space.
- This revised arrangement is not supported. The reduction in the parking area would result with insufficient space for vehicles to conveniently manoeuvre within the site. As a consequence, the proposal could lead to additional vehicle manoeuvres over the footway when entering and exiting the parking space. It should be noted that it is not permissible for any part of a vehicle to overhang the public highway. Such overhanging may constitute an obstruction of the public highway pursuant to the provisions of the Highways Act 1980.
- Furthermore, the proposed 1.0-metre-high metal fence and hedging along the site frontage are not considered acceptable. Given the proximity of the parking space to the highway, boundary treatments should be limited to a maximum height of 0.6 metres in order to maintain adequate visibility splays and ensure that visibility between drivers and pedestrians is not obstructed.
- A previous layout submitted under an earlier application demonstrates a more appropriate arrangement that retains an adequately sized parking area whilst providing sufficient visibility at the site access. This layout could form the basis of an acceptable parking and frontage design and should be considered as part of any revised proposal.
- The development site is located in an area designated as a Residents Parking Permit Area; Zone 13R. Under the Borough's current parking standards, this proposal would generate additional pressure for parking in the area. Therefore, there should be an assumption that any future occupants of the proposed dwelling will not be issued with resident parking, or visitor permits which would be covered by condition and an informative applied. 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.

- Cycle storage should be provided in accordance with the Council's current adopted standards. In a development of this nature this can be in a secure garden shed in a private amenity area; However, under GPD we would not comment on this.
- The applicant should ensure that the refuse storage provisions comply with the Council's Waste Management Guidance which is available to view online. Bin storage has been located at the front of the site adjacent to the parking area, this location will allow for kerb side collection. The Council's waste and refuse department should be contacted to ensure the correct capacity and type of bins are provided.
- **RBC Environmental Health** – No comments to make.

Nearby residents were contacted via letter, and site notices were erected on Donnington Gardens and Erleigh Road on 23 July 2026 in the public interest.

One comment was received as follows:

The plan shows that the toilet / shower room and kitchen are directly against the back garden of 24 Erleigh Road. Care should be taken to ensure that no ventilation components protrude into or vent directly into this small urban garden. In particular the proposed toilet / shower room are directly against the rear French doors that open into the kitchen of the 24 Erleigh Road property. Any venting in this area will create a nuisance. A ventilation system should be installed that ensures there is an adequate separation from the adjacent properties.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY 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 a number of matters as set out in the 'matters requiring prior approval' section below ((a) to (i)).

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).

Equality Act 2010:

In determining this application, the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore, in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

6. APPRAISAL

Criteria MA.1.—(1)

~~(a) Vacancy qualification—“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;~~

Removed under GPDO Amendment 2024 No.141

(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;”

It can be confirmed that the building for which this application relates fell within one or more of the classes specified in subparagraph (2), in this case (iv) Class B1 (business), for a continuous period of at least 2 years prior to the date of the application for prior approval.

~~(c) Floorspace qualification—“if the cumulative floor space of the existing building changing use under Class MA exceeds 1,500 square metres;”~~

Removed under GPDO Amendment 2024 No.141

(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 any of the above (i) to (v).

(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;”

The building is not within any such area.

(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.

It can be confirmed that the site has not been subject to development of a description falling within a Class of this part immediately before 1st August 2021, nor would such development be prevented 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.

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 the various standards detailed within the legal context section above. Each is considered below:

The matters requiring prior approval:

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

The Council's Transport Team raised concerns with regards to highway safety due to the constrained parking space proposed adjacent to the proposed front garden. As such, the garden has been removed from the proposal and the frontage of the site is proposed to be retained as existing. This allows adequate visibility splays and manoeuvrability for parked vehicles.

Paragraph W(13) of the GDPO provides that 'The local planning authority may grant prior approval unconditionally or subject to conditions reasonably related to the subject matter of the prior approval'. Informatives relating to car park permits have been recommended and are considered relevant to this prior approval as they relate to transport impacts of the development.

(b) Contamination risks in relation to the building

No groundworks are required as part of the change of use. As such the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of contamination risks to the building.

(c) Flooding risks in relation to the building

The site is not located within Flood Zones 2 or 3 and as such the proposals are acceptable in flood risk terms.

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

There are no noise generating plants located immediately adjacent to the site and therefore no risk identified to future occupants.

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;

Not applicable as the proposal site is not within a Conservation Area.

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

The layout of the site will allow adequate access to natural sunlight/daylight.

(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 designated 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 does 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'. This criterion applies to a building which satisfies the height condition in paragraph (3) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 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 development is not of the type where a Fire Statement would be required.

7. RECOMMENDATION

The proposal meets the relevant criteria set out in Class MA, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 and Prior Approval can be given.