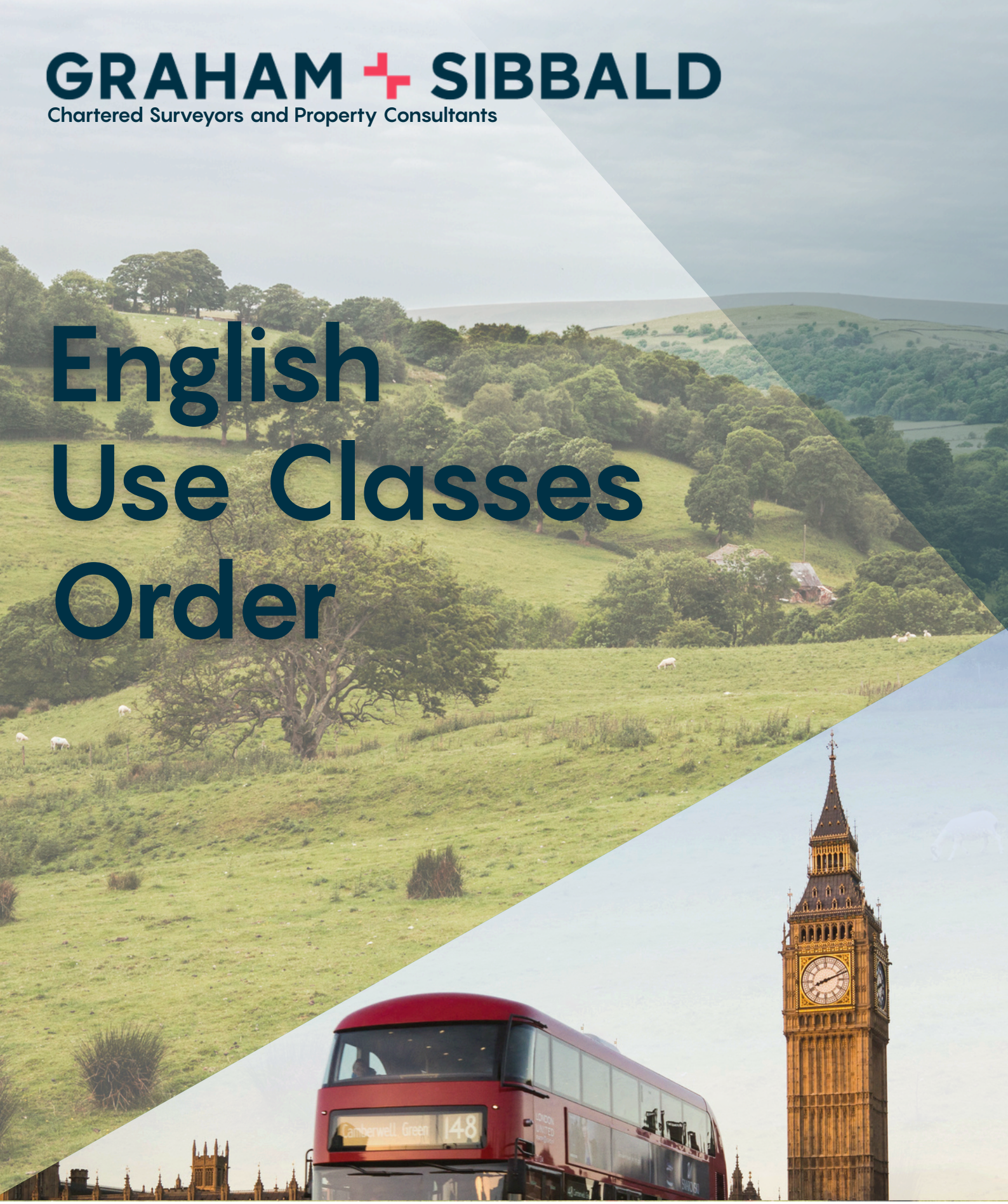
GRAHAM + SIBBALD
Chartered Surveyors and Property Consultants

English Use Classes Order



As of March 2024

Quick Reference Guide

The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order groups land and buildings into different categories according to how they are used. In many cases, changes of use within the same use class do not require planning permission.

However, planning permission may still be required where:

- Development involves operational works or physical alterations;
- Permitted development rights have been removed by an Article 4 Direction;
- Conditions attached to a planning permission restrict changes of use;
- The property is a listed building; or
- Other planning restrictions apply

This guide provides a summary of the main use classes in England and should not be relied upon as a substitute for professional planning advice.

USE CLASS	USE DESCRIPTION	PERMITTED CHANGE / RESTRICTIONS

Class E **Commercial, business, and service**	Use, or part use, for all or any of the following purposes:
	• (a) For the display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food, principally to visiting members of the public
	• (b) For the sale of food and drink principally to visiting members of the public where consumption of that food and drink is mostly undertaken on the premises.
	• (c) For the provision of the following kinds of services principally to visiting members of the public.
	  ◦ (i) Financial services,
	  ◦ (ii) Professional services (other than health or medical services), or
	  ◦ (iii) Any other services which it is appropriate to provide in a commercial, business or service locality
	• (d) For indoor sport, recreation or fitness, not involving motorised vehicles or firearms, principally to visiting members of the public.
	• (e) For the provision of medical or health services, principally to visiting members of the public, except the use of premises attached to the residence of the consultant or practitioner,
	• (f) For a creche, day nursery or day centre, not including a residential use, principally to visiting members of the public,
	• (g) For:
	  ◦ (i) An office to carry out any operational or administrative functions,
	  ◦ (ii) the research and development of products or processes, or
	  ◦ (iii) Any individual process, being a use, which can be carried out in any residential area without detriment to the amenity of that area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit
		To Class C3, subject to prior approval and compliance with the relevant requirements of Class MA of the GPDO
		
		To a mixed-use for any purpose within Class E and up to 2 flats, subject to prior approval
		
		To a mixed-use for any purpose within Class E and as up to 2 flats (and back to the previous lawful use)
		
		To a state-funded school falling within Class F1(a) (and back to the previous lawful use) Temporary changes of use, see below
		
		Permitted Change / Restrictions" column: Local Article 4 Directions may remove some permitted development rights

*Class E was introduced in September 2020 and groups together a range of previous commercial uses. Changes between uses within Class E generally do not constitute development requiring planning permission, although any planning conditions and Article 4 Directions should always be checked.

USE CLASS	USE DESCRIPTION	PERMITTED CHANGE / RESTRICTIONS
Class F1 **Learning and non-residential institutions**	Any use not including residential use: • (a) For the provision of education, • (b) For the display of works of art (otherwise than for sale or hire), • (c) As a museum, • (d) As a public library or public reading room • (e) As a public hall or exhibition hall, • (f) For, or in connection with, public worship or religious instruction, • (g) As a law court	Temporary changes of use only, see below

Class F2
Local Community
	Use as:
	• (a) A shop mostly selling essential goods, including food, to visiting members of the public, where:
	  ◦ (i) The shop's premises cover an area not more than 280 square metres, and
	  ◦ (ii) There is no other such facility within 1000 metre radius of the shop's location
	• (b) A hall or meeting place for the principal use of the local community
	• (c) An area or place for outdoor sport or recreation, not involving motorised vehicles or firearms
	• (d) An indoor or outdoor swimming pool or skating rink
		No permitted change

Class B2 **General Industrial**	Use for the carrying on of an industrial process other than one falling within the uses described in Class E	To Class B8, up to 500sqm Temporary changes of use, see below
Class B8 **Storage or distribution**	Use for storage or as a distribution centre	Temporary changes of use only, see below
Class C1 **Hotels**	Use as a hotel or as a boarding or guest house where, in each case, no significant element of care is provided	Permitted change to state-funded school or nursery within Class F1(a), and back again Temporary changes of use, see below

USE CLASS	USE DESCRIPTION	PERMITTED CHANGE / RESTRICTIONS
Class C2 **Residential Institutions**	Use for the provision of residential accommodation and care to people in need of care (other than a use within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) Use as a hospital or nursing home Use as a residential school, college or training centre	Permitted change to state-funded school or nursery within Class F1(a), and back again Temporary changes of use, see below
Class C2A **Secure residential institutions**	Use for the provision of secure residential accommodation, including use as a prison, young offenders institution, detention centre, secure training centre, custody centre, short-term holding centre, secure hospital, secure local authority accommodation or use as military barracks	Permitted change to state-funded school or nursery within Class F1(a), and back again Temporary changes of use, see below
Class C3 **Dwelling-houses**	Use as a dwellinghouse (whether or not as a sole or main residence) by: • (a) A single person or by people to be regarded as forming a single household • (b) Not more than six residents living together as a single household where care is provided for residents • (c) Not more than six residents living together as a single household where no care is provided to residents (other than a use within Class C4)	To Class C4 Temporary changes of use, see below
Class C4 **House in multiple occupation**	Use of a dwellinghouse by not more than six residents as a HMO	To Class C3 Temporary changes of use, see below

Sui Generis

(No Class Specified)

Leisure & Entertainment • Cinema (t) • Casino (m) • Bingo hall (v) • Dance hall (w) • Nightclub (l) • Live music venue (s) **Drinking Establishments** • Public house (p) • Wine bar (p) • Drinking establishment (p) • Drinking establishment with expanded food provision (q) **Transport & Vehicle Related** • Petrol filling station (d) • Vehicle sales (e) • Taxi business (f) • Vehicle hire (f) **Waste & Industrial** • Scrapyard (g) • Hazardous waste facility (j) • Mineral storage yard (g) **Other** • Hot food takeaway (r) • Betting shop (n) • Payday loan shop (o) • Hostel (i) • Laundrette (c)	(m), (n), (o), and (r) can change to Class E, subject to prior notification (p) can change to (q), and vice versa (n) and (o) can change to a mixed-use for any purpose within Class E and as up to 2 flats, subject to prior approval (n) or (o) can change to a mixed-use including (n) and (o) and up to 2 flats, subject to prior approval Mixed-use (n) or (o) with up to 2 flats, can change to any use within Class E Mixed-use (n) or (o) with up to 2 flats can change to (n) or (o) (c), (n), (o), or (r), or one of these uses in a mixed-use with a dwellinghouse can change to a dwellinghouse, subject to prior approval (b) or (m) can change to Class C3, subject to prior approval

Temporary Change of Use	Any building in any Use Class (not including Sui Generis) and any land within its curtilage, except use class F2, can be used as a state-funded school for up to 2 academic years, with limitations and conditions, including that the site must be approved by the Secretary of State with responsibility for schools. Vacant use class C1, C2, C2A, or E land (with all buildings demolished) may be developed to provide temporary school buildings, and the land used as a state-funded school for up to 3 academic years, subject to prior approval, and with limitations and conditions, including that the building must be removed at the end of the third academic year. Betting office, pay day loan shop, hot food takeaway or Class E can change to a flexible use falling within Class E, Class F1(b) (display of art), Class F1(c) museum, Class F1(d) (public library or public reading room); or Class F1(e) (public hall or exhibition hall), for up to three years continuously, for areas up to 150sqm.
Agriculture Buildings	To Class C3, subject to prior approval, and with limitations and conditions on number of units and size. Flexible changes to Classes B8, C1, or E, subject to prior approval — the new use becomes Sui Generis. Some limitations and conditions apply. To a state-funded school, subject to prior approval, for areas up to 500sqm.

If you are looking for a Planning team that takes a pro-active approach and has a highly successful track record of securing planning permission, then we are the company to contact.

We work on a mix of commercial, residential and renewables projects throughout Scotland and England, providing a full range of planning services for both private and public sector clients.

Important Note

The Use Classes Order is only one aspect of planning control. Planning permission may still be required for operational development, external alterations, conditions attached to permissions, Article 4 Directions or restrictions applying to listed buildings and designated land. This guide provides a general summary of the Use Classes Order and associated permitted development rights. Legislation may be amended from time to time and users should confirm the current position before relying on this document.

Contact us

W: www.g-s.co.uk/services/planning
E: planning@g-s.co.uk