

Guide (9) How to find the planning Use Classes

This guidance is for information on finding the current class of property or land (details of what the use classes are is explained on page 2)

You will need to read each option to decide which one relates to your enquiry:

Option 1: A History Search

To conduct a search from 1948 to date to identify what planning permissions exist on the site / land please refer to www.bedford.gov.uk/searchplans and the sections on viewing applications from 1995 to present and finding historic application numbers. *Please note a history search does not lawfully establish the permitted use as the permissions may or not have been implemented or there may be a complex history to the site, which means the permitted use is not clear.*

Option 2: Ask for Advice

This is for advice on your options and does not lawfully establish the formal use, please note, this is a chargeable service. Please refer to www.bedford.gov.uk/planningenquiries

Option 3: Proposed change of Use

For a legal determination as to whether planning permission is required or not, i.e. to establish current use and whether or not your proposal falls within that use, submit a 'Lawful Development Certificate Proposed' with sufficient evidence of the existing and proposed uses. To submit form 15, view the validation requirements and the fee list; please click on this link www.bedford.gov.uk/planningforms.

Option 4: Establishing Existing Use of a Property

If you require confirmation from the Planning Department that your property has a certain Use Class you will need to apply for a 'Lawful development Certificate for an Existing Use'. To do this you will need to submit evidence to prove what use has been operating from the premises and for how long. Please refer to www.bedford.gov.uk/planningforms for Form 14 and the fee list.

Option 5: to submit a change of use Application (where required)

If you do not have sufficient evidence to submit a Lawful Development Certificate or you are of the opinion planning permission is needed for the change of use please refer to www.bedford.gov.uk/planningforms for Form 4 and the fee list.

If your proposal is permitted development or you wish to check this please refer to How to Guide 11, **to check and submit Prior Notifications** please refer to: How to Guide 13, both guides are available [here](#)

To assist you the list of Use Classes is shown below:

Please note that the list of uses stated below, are examples of each Use Class. All potential uses have not been stated, please refer to the following link [here](#) for more information.

Use Classes Order

A1 – Shops (e.g. convenience stores, hairdressers, undertakers, travel and ticket agencies, post offices (but not sorting offices), pet shops, sandwich bars, dry cleaners, funeral directors, retail warehouses)

A2 – Financial and Professional Services (e.g. banks, building societies, estate agencies, employment agencies)

A3 – Restaurants and Cafes (for the sale of food and drink for consumption on the premises)

A4 – Drinking Establishments (e.g. pubs, wine bars but not nightclubs)

A5 – Hot Food Takeaways (for the sale of hot food for consumption off the premises)

B1 – Business (B1(a) offices, B1(b) research and development, B1(c) light industry)

B2 – General Industrial (Industrial processes not suitable in residential areas)

B8 – Storage and Distribution (warehouses and open air storage)

C1 – Hotels (e.g. hotels, boarding and guest houses where no significant care is provided)

C2 – Residential Institutions (e.g. residential care homes, hospitals, nursing homes, boarding schools, residential colleges and training centres)

C2A – Secure Residential Institutions (e.g. prisons, young offenders institutions, detention centres, custody centres, secure hospitals, secure training centres)

C3 – Dwellinghouses (C3(a) single person or family occupiers, C3(b) up to six people living together as a single household e.g. students, C3(c) groups of people (up to six) living as a single household e.g. small religious community)

C4 – Houses in Multiple Occupation (between 3 and 6 unrelated individuals, as their only or main residence, who share basic amenities such as a kitchen or bathroom)

D1 – Non-Residential Institutions (e.g. clinics, health centres, crèches, day nurseries, schools, art galleries, museums, libraries, church halls, places of worship, law courts)

D2 – Assembly and Leisure (e.g. cinemas, music and concert halls, bingo and dance halls, skating rinks, gyms)

Sui Generis uses – these are uses that do not fall into any of the above categories (e.g. nightclubs, hostels, scrap yards, petrol stations, casinos, amusement centres, beauty parlours, dog grooming salons)