



Planning Note – Prior Approval Application

Ref: DA24072 - Church St Ind Estate

Site address: 66 - 68 Rochdale Rd, Middleton, Manchester M24 2PU

Date: May 2025

Proposal: Conversion of ground floor Class E premises to four residential apartments (Prior Approval - Class MA)

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement is submitted in support of a **Prior Approval application under Class MA** of the General Permitted Development Order (as amended), for the **conversion of the existing ground floor Class E commercial units in Building A** into **four self-contained residential apartments**.

This application forms part of a coordinated strategy alongside a **concurrent full planning application** relating to a rear duplex conversion (Building B) and **external façade alterations** to Building A. These alterations are addressed separately under a full planning submission due to their requirement for express permission.

Together, both applications comprise a modest, well-integrated residential scheme delivering five homes. This statement outlines the rationale, compliance, and planning context for the permitted development component.

The application is supported by the following documentation:

- Existing and Proposed Floor Plans (Building A);
- Prior Approval Form and Location Plan;
- Net Internal Area (NIA) Statement.

2. Site Context

The site consists of two buildings situated along Rochdale Road, a key urban corridor in Middleton. **Building A**, the subject of this application, is a two-storey structure currently accommodating ground floor Class E units that have experienced limited commercial uptake in recent years.

The site lies within a mixed-use area, with nearby residential properties, light industrial sites, and local amenities. It is within easy walking distance of public transport, schools, and green space, making it a highly sustainable location for residential use.



The surrounding character includes:

- Residential properties directly opposite the site;
- A rear yard previously associated with commercial activity;
- A regular building pattern which this proposal respects through the retention of existing form.

3. The Proposal

This Prior Approval application seeks permission under **Class MA** for the conversion of the ground floor of **Building A** from Class E (commercial) to **four residential apartments**, specifically:

- Apartment A: 2B3P – 61.8m²
- Apartment B: 1B2P – 50.9m²
- Apartment C: 1B1P – 42.4m²
- Apartment D: 3B4P – 74.1m²

All proposed dwellings **meet or exceed** the **Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS)** and offer practical internal layouts.

A separate full planning application is being submitted simultaneously to secure consent for **external elevation works**, including new windows and doors. This ensures compliance with Class MA limitations, which do not permit external changes.

4. Planning and Policy Compliance

The proposed change of use falls within the scope of **Class MA permitted development**, subject to the following conditions and prior approval matters:

- **Use Test:** The premises were last used under Class E, and that remains the lawful use.
- **Floor Space Test:** The floor area falls well within the 1,500m² limit.
- **Location:** The site is not within a conservation area, AONB, or other protected designation.
- **Flood Risk and Transport:** The site is not in Flood Zones 2 or 3 and is served by suitable transport links.
- **Contamination and Natural Light:** Full compliance is demonstrated through accompanying statements and plans.
- **Noise:** A Noise Impact Statement is provided in support of both applications to address potential issues from adjacent uses.

5. Design Considerations

While external works are addressed separately, the internal layout of each apartment has been optimised for **light, privacy, and functionality**. The existing building form accommodates the units with minimal structural alterations, supporting a sustainable reuse approach.

The layout is further enhanced by the wider site strategy, including cycle and bin storage, landscaped courtyard areas, and access improvements—all forming part of the concurrent full application.

6. Sustainability and Amenity

The conversion supports key sustainability objectives by reusing an existing structure, **reducing the need for new-build development** and minimising environmental impact. In combination with the full application, the scheme will deliver:

- Private and communal outdoor space;
- Improved landscaping and ecological value;
- Secure cycle storage to promote active travel;
- High-quality living conditions consistent with national standards.

7. Positive and Proactive Engagement

In line with **Paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**, the applicant welcomes a **positive and collaborative approach** to the determination of this application. The paragraph states:

“Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.”

This application has been brought forward with the aim of **constructive engagement** and alignment with policy objectives. It forms part of a comprehensive site strategy and is submitted alongside a full planning application to ensure transparency and design coherence.

The applicant remains fully open to dialogue with officers to resolve any queries expediently and in good faith, with a view to delivering a high-quality outcome that enhances the site and contributes to Rochdale’s housing supply.



8. Suggested Planning Condition to Link Applications

Given the interdependent nature of the two submissions, it is proposed that a condition be included to ensure this development is only occupied following the completion of the external alterations:

Suggested

Condition:

"No part of the development approved under this Class MA Prior Approval application shall be occupied until the external alterations to Building A, as approved under the accompanying full planning application, have been fully implemented in accordance with the approved plans."

Reason: To ensure that the permitted residential use is delivered with the necessary physical alterations to secure design quality, amenity standards, and integration with the wider development.

9. Conclusion

This Class MA application presents a **policy-compliant and sustainable conversion** of underused commercial floorspace into much-needed residential accommodation. Submitted concurrently with a full planning application for external works and a rear duplex, this proposal:

- Delivers four high-quality apartments in a sustainable location;
- Respects the building's form while ensuring compliance with PD limitations;
- Addresses all relevant Prior Approval matters including noise, light, access, and sustainability.