

Government announces permanent office to residential permitted development right

On 12 October 2015, the government announced that the permitted development right for change of use from offices (class B1(a)) to dwelling houses (class C3) will be made permanent.

The permitted development right was introduced in May 2013 on a temporary basis and grants deemed planning permission to developments converting offices into residential premises subject to certain exclusions (for example, buildings in exempt commercial areas and listed buildings).

Almost 4,000 conversions went ahead under this temporary right between April 2014 and June 2015 and it is due to expire on 30 May 2016.

In addition to confirming that the right will be made permanent, the government has also indicated that it will be extended to allow the demolition of office buildings to allow for the development of new residential premises (subject to certain limitations and prior approval by the Local Planning Authority).

This move should provide welcome certainty for developers wishing to take advantage of the permitted development right.