

Permitted Development Rights 2013 to 2020

On 21st July 2020 a [report](#) was published by the Government, which they had commissioned, showing that the introduction of Permitted Development Rights (PDRs) in 2013 for the conversion of offices and other properties had resulted in the delivery of many homes below size standards, with inadequate light and ventilation and not suitable to be lived in due to adverse outcomes on overcrowding, health and quality of life.

The report explained that only 22% of homes delivered through PDR conversions met national space standards, compared to 73% of homes built with full planning permission.

The Local Government Association supported the report and on 22nd July they [called for](#) the removal of all permitted development rights. They and Shelter had written an [open letter](#) in January 2020 to the previous Secretary of State to explain that a potential 10,000 affordable homes had been lost by office conversion due to no contribution towards affordable housing.

Also, PDR blocks of new homes were being found in industrial estates that lack public transport and local services, as Shelter has reported. They call for the Government to end the building conversion PDR and instead focus on increasing the delivery of the social homes and low cost rent homes that are needed. The latter are targeted in the New London Plan to be 47% of all new homes built.

On 22nd July, Robert Jenrick, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government seemed to ignore the evidence and introduced yet more permitted development from 1st September 2020 for England only. They affect town Use Classes which were listed two years ago [here](#).

The HUFFPOST had an [article](#) explaining the problems with the Government's PDR rules.

The [new regulations](#) will allow shops, cafes, gyms and other high street premises to be converted between those uses without applying for permission as usual. Section 7 onwards of the Government's [explanatory note](#) has details. The new "freedoms" are meant to "to provide the flexibility for businesses to adapt and diversify to meet changing demands."

A new use class F2 could protect some shops that are essential for local communities but only if they are more than 1,000m from a "commercial class retail unit."

The former A4 drinking establishments, A5 hot food takeaway and D2 cinemas, concert, dance and bingo halls have been removed, giving Councils some control over the loss or the excessive proliferation of such facilities. hgh Consulting has produced a helpful [briefing note](#).

Comments on the changes to use classes have been made in articles by Michael Bach for London Forum and by Michael Kochan in the Planning magazine. They can be read [here](#)

Removing controls that Councils and their communities can have over the use made of some properties in town centre high streets and district centres is unacceptable. [New PDR rules](#) for extending upwards buildings such as blocks of flats, offices and homes by two stories and the demolition of existing buildings to be replaced with new homes could add more problems.

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