

63 EXISTING USES

63.01 Extent of existing use rights

An existing use right is established in relation to use of land under this scheme if any of the following apply:

- The use was lawfully carried out immediately before the approval date.
- A permit for the use had been granted immediately before the approval date and the use commences before the permit expires.
- A permit for the use has been granted under Clause 63.08 and the use commences before the permit expires.
- Proof of continuous use for 15 years is established under Clause 63.11.
- The use is a lawful continuation by a utility service provider or other private body of a use previously carried on by a Minister, government department or public authority, even where the continuation of the use is no longer for a public purpose.

63.02 Characterisation of use

If a use of land is being characterised to assess the extent of any existing use right, the use is to be characterised by the purpose of the actual use at the relevant date, subject to any conditions or restrictions applying to the use at that date, and not by the classification in the table to Clause 74 or in Section 1, 2 or 3 of any zone.

63.03 Effect of definitions on existing use rights

The definition of a term in this scheme, or the amendment of any definition, does not increase or restrict the extent of any existing use right established prior to the inclusion of the definition or amendment.

63.04 Section 1 uses

A use in Section 1 of a zone for which an existing use right is established may continue provided any condition or restriction to which the use was subject and which applies to the use in Section 1 of the zone continues to be met.

63.05 Sections 2 and 3 uses

A use in Section 2 or 3 of a zone for which an existing use right is established may continue provided:

- No building or works are constructed or carried out without a permit. A permit must not be granted unless the building or works complies with any other building or works requirement in this scheme.
- Any condition or restriction to which the use was subject. This includes any implied restriction on the extent of the land subject to the existing use right or the extent of activities within the use.
- The amenity of the area is not damaged or further damaged by a change in the activities beyond the limited purpose of the use preserved by the existing use right.

63.06 Expiration of existing use rights

An existing use right expires if either:

- The use has stopped for a continuous period of 2 years, or has stopped for two or more periods which together total 2 years in any period of 3 years.
- In the case of a use which is seasonal in nature, the use does not take place for 2 years in succession.

63.07 Compliance with codes of practice

A use for which an existing use right is established must comply with any relevant code of practice incorporated in this scheme if either:

- The instrument of approval of the code of practice has been ratified by Parliament in accordance with Section 55 of the Conservation Forests and Lands Act 1987.
- The code of practice is approved or ratified by Parliament under an Act.

63.08 Alternative use

If land is used for a use in Section 3 of a zone for which an existing use right is established, a permit may be granted to use the land for an alternative use which does not comply with this scheme. The responsible authority must be satisfied that the use of the land for the alternative use will be less detrimental to the amenity of the locality.

63.09 Shop conditions

A permit must not be granted to:

- Construct or carry out a building or works under Clause 63.05 for a shop with a leasable floor area exceeding 500 square metres.
- Use land under Clause 63.08 for a shop with a leasable floor area exceeding 500 square metres.

63.10 Damaged or destroyed buildings or works

If at least 50 percent of the gross floor area of a building or at least 50 percent of the area of any works is damaged or destroyed so that the use cannot continue without the building or works being reconstructed, the land must be used in conformity with this scheme, unless a permit is granted to continue the use, and to construct or carry out buildings or works.

63.11 Proof of continuous use

If, in relation to an application or proceeding under the Act or this scheme, including an application for a certificate of compliance under Section 97N of the Act, the extent of any existing use right for a period in excess of 15 years is in question, it is sufficient proof of the establishment of the existing use right if the use has been carried out continuously for 15 years prior to the date of the application or proceeding.

An existing use right may be established under this clause even if the use did not comply with the scheme immediately prior to or during the 15 year period, unless either:

- At any time before or after commencement of the 15 year period the use has been held to be unlawful by a decision of a court or tribunal.
- During the 15 year period, the responsible authority has clearly and unambiguously given a written direction for the use to cease by reason of its non-compliance with the scheme.

63.12 Decision guidelines

Before deciding on an application under Clause 63.05, 63.08 or 63.10, in addition to the decision guidelines in Clause 65 and any other requirements of the Act, the responsible authority must consider the extent to which compliance can be achieved with all scheme requirements that can reasonably be met.