

Alternative Use Assessment

Applicant:

Mr S Woodruff

Site Address:

Stone Bar Farm
Moor Lane
Birdwell
Barnsley

Proposal:

Conversion of Redundant
buildings to residential dwellings

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Introduction

RBA Town Planning in conjunction with John Early Architects have been instructed to prepare a revised application following the refusal of a previous scheme to convert redundant buildings on the site known as Stone Bar Farm. The previous scheme included enabling development of detached dwellings on land south of the existing buildings which has now been removed from the proposal.

Reason within the Decision Notice included the opinion of the Local Authority that the application had not demonstrated sufficiently that other alternative uses had been explored.

This Statement seeks to address that notion and provide suitable assessment of other uses in line with Policy GB3 of the adopted Local Plan January 2019.

Policy

The Council have a newly adopted Local Plan, it was adopted in January 2019 and replaces the previous adopted Unitary Development Plan. Policy GB3 of the new Local Plan replaces the Unitary Development Plan Policy GS8.

Local Plan Policy GB3 Changes of use in the Green Belt

We will allow the change of use or conversion of buildings in the Green Belt provided that:

- The existing building is of a form, scale and design that is in keeping with its surroundings;
- The existing building is of a permanent and substantial construction and a structural survey demonstrates that the building does not need major or complete reconstruction for the proposed new use;
- The proposed new use is in keeping with the local character and the appearance of the building; and
- The loss of any building from agricultural use will not give rise to the need for a replacement agricultural building, except in cases where the existing building is no longer capable of agricultural use.

All such development will be expected to:

- Be of a high standard of design and respect the character of the existing building and its surroundings, in its footprint, scale and massing, elevation design and materials;
- Have no adverse effect on the amenity of local residents, the visual amenity of the area, or highway safety; and

- Preserve the openness of the Green Belt.

In addition to the above, when a residential use is proposed, we will allow the change of use provided that:

- There are not strong economic reasons why such development would be inappropriate; and
- Residential use would be a more appropriate way of maintaining and improving the character and appearance of the building than any other use
- We will not generally allow the change of use of Green Belt land to extend residential curtilages for use as gardens.

Assessment

Policy GB3 of the Local Plan outlines that change of use would be permitted where “the loss of any building from agricultural use will not give rise to the need for a replacement agricultural building, except in cases where the existing building is no longer capable of agricultural use.” The policy later outlines “when a residential use is proposed, we will allow the change of use provided that residential use would be a more appropriate way of maintaining and improving the character and appearance of the building than any other use”.

The following assessment will consider primarily Agricultural use and the sites potential for use as an Agricultural Enterprise. Exploration of other alternative uses will then be undertaken.

Agricultural Use

The application site no longer operates as a farming enterprise and has not done so for a considerable period of time. This is due to the fact that no other land other than the application site is associated with the farm house or buildings either by ownership or by lease. The area of land now associated with the farm house and buildings is that of identified by the blue line boundary of the application site. Given the lack of current agricultural use the conversion of the buildings would not give rise to the requirement of further replacement buildings within the site.

In terms of bringing the farming enterprise back into use a search has been undertaken to identify agricultural land available for either lease or ownership within

the immediate and wider area of 5 miles. No available land was found within the search area, the following established Agricultural agents within the area were searched.

UK Land and Farms

Fisher German

Brown & Co

Savills

A wider search may result in the potential for land use, however, more than a five-mile radius of the application site would be an unreasonable distance to establish an agricultural business.

In terms of modern day farming the existing buildings would not be of sufficient size and scale to accommodate modern and up to date machinery and therefore any new potential farming enterprise would likely require the erection of a new building.

It is not considered that the site has any viable or likely future as a commercial farming enterprise

Leisure Use

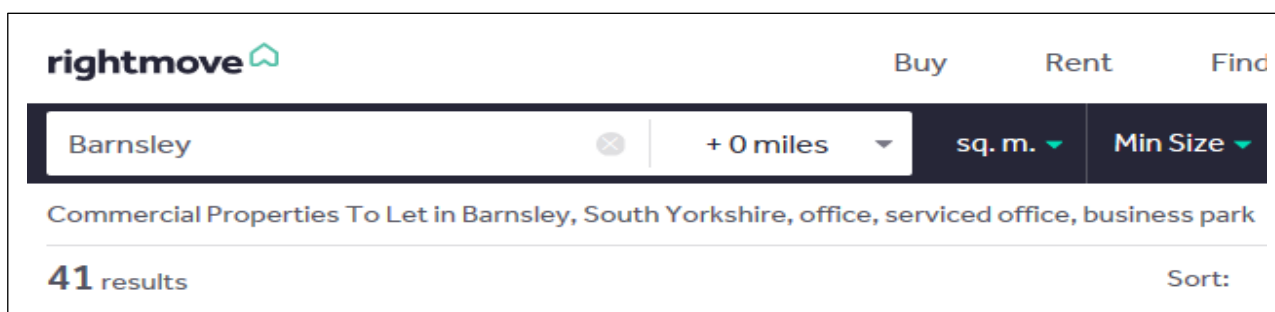
Given the size of the application site there is little opportunity for leisure uses, leisure uses would usually be situated within open countryside and or have abundance of space for which the site has neither.

Opportunity could present itself in holiday accommodation, however, in considering any commercial leisure use its economic viability should be at the forefront. In terms of holiday accommodation, the location is one not immediately associated with tourism, the site does have easy access to nearby tourist locations such as the Peak District, however, the location is unlikely to attract people wishing to visit the Peak District given the abundance of accommodation specifically within that area.

It is our contention that the conversion of the buildings for holiday accommodation would not be commercially viable given the lack of tourist destinations within the immediate area.

Office Space

Given the sites location and ease of access to the motorway network the site could lend itself to the development for office space without giving rise to conflict with neighbouring uses. The market for Office Space has been explored and identified below;



The screenshot shows the Rightmove website interface. At the top, there are tabs for 'Buy', 'Rent', and 'Find'. Below these is a search bar with 'Barnsley' entered, a distance filter set to '+ 0 miles', and two dropdown menus for 'sq. m.' and 'Min Size'. Below the search bar, the text reads 'Commercial Properties To Let in Barnsley, South Yorkshire, office, serviced office, business park'. At the bottom of the search results section, it says '41 results' and 'Sort:'.

rightmove  Buy Rent Find Agent

Barnsley  + 3 miles  sq. m.  Min Size  to Max Size 

Commercial Properties To Let in Barnsley, South Yorkshire, within 3 miles, office, serviced office, business park

111 results Sort: Lowest Price

rightmove  Buy Rent Find Agent

Barnsley  + 5 miles  sq. m.  Min Size  to Max Size 

Commercial Properties To Let in Barnsley, South Yorkshire, within 5 miles, office, serviced office, business park

189 results Sort: Lowest Price

rightmove  Buy Rent Find Agent

Barnsley  + 10 miles  sq. m.  Min Size  to Max Size 

Commercial Properties To Let in Barnsley, South Yorkshire, within 10 miles, office, serviced office, business park

544 results Sort: Lowest Price

The search of available office space was undertaken using the criteria of “office, Serviced Office and Business Park”. The search was applied using the Rightmove website which is the leading property search website in which all main estate agents are linked in to. The search was applied to area perimeters of Barnsley at 0, 3, 5, and 10 miles.

It is considered that the search results identify an over availability of Office Space within the immediate and wider area, in terms of viability, whilst the buildings could be suited to Office Space, the financial model and potential for guaranteed rental would be weak and not meet financial investment requirements.

Residential Use

Structural assessments undertaken have established that the buildings are of sound and suitable construction to enable conversion. The existing openings in terms of size and positioning would support residential use in terms of appearance and would be sufficient to allow the introduction of light in to the building. It is acknowledged that some additional openings would be required to facilitate the conversion to residential use, however, these are not considered to material alter the character and appearance of the building and their agricultural appearance and history is maintained.

The immediate surrounding area is one of a residential nature with levels of industrial and commercial development in the wider vicinity, that said the wider industrial and commercial forms part of a larger development scheme to bring investment and economic growth to the area, residential use would not conflict with this. Given the surrounding area is predominantly residential and the site is access off an adopted highway on which sit residential properties, it is not considered that the proposal would be discordant with the street scene or prevailing character of the area.

Residential use will maintain the buildings original character, appearance and fabric seeking to preserve the buildings as opposed them being unused and in decay.

Conclusion

It is concluded that that based on the research and exploration of alternative uses the sites only suitable option would be that of residential development. The redevelopment of the site for residential purposes would accord to the principle aims of the Councils Local Development Plan Policy GB3 and the wider reaching NPPF in terms of the re-use of redundant buildings.