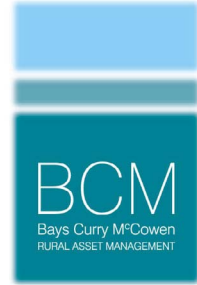


PRESS RELEASE



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Conversion Of Farm Buildings To Domestic Use

Local authority planning policy still prefers redundant farm buildings to be converted to a commercial use. This is becoming increasingly difficult to justify due to the increasing emphasis on “sustainable” development as most farm buildings are located some distance away from built up areas with poor communication links. There is also a considerable number of farm buildings already converted to commercial use in most areas, thus resulting in an over supply of rural commercial buildings.

The good news is that central and local government are finally looking at conversion of redundant farm buildings as an important and integral part of farm diversification, providing farmers with an additional source of income. English Heritage has also produced new guidance on the re-use of redundant farm buildings looking at the wider options for their use.

Planning Authorities currently will still resist proposals to convert redundant farm buildings to a domestic use. However, the facts are that it is often the only way to retain farm buildings, which are either in unsuitable locations for “sustainable” commercial use, or where there is already an over supply of commercial buildings.

It is therefore increasingly important to obtain correct and current advice to ensure the right approach is taken to achieve the required result. This is increasingly important as the planning system becomes ever more complex and involved.

During the past year Bays Curry McCowen (BCM) have completed the conversion of two large redundant farm building complexes to high quality residential units, and have also successfully obtained a number of planning and listed building consents for the conversion of historic farm buildings to residential use. This shows it can be done given the right approach.

For further information contact James Fraser at BCM on 01962 763900 or by e mail at jfraser@bcm.co.uk

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Revisions To The Way Planning Applications Are Made

In August 2006 the amount of information required by Planning Authorities for even the simplest of applications was dramatically increased by the introduction of mandatory “Design and Access Statements”.

While the idea behind their introduction is to improve the quality of Planning and Listed Building applications (good agents have been using “design statements” for many years) the change to mandatory statements has resulted in applications becoming more complex to prepare. Linked with the introduction of “Design and Access Statements” has been a tightening up of planning authorities validation procedures. While some Councils are also piloting “validation check lists” which again is part of the drive to improve standards.

The upshot of all these changes has meant the process of making planning applications has been made much more complex with the need to employ more specialist consultants thus extending timescales and increasing application costs.



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