

Guildford

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Simon J Davis MRTPI
Principal Planning Officer

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JD/cp

22 September 2021

Dear Mr Davis

M/99/21/PL Guernsey Farm, Yapton Road

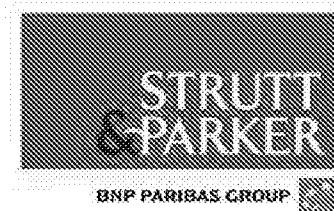
We understand that you require a little further information on how the proposed change of use at the Guernsey Farm Buildings will address Arun Local Plan Policy EMP DM1 (10), in particular how it would “benefit the economy of the rural area of which it is part” and “set out how the scheme will assist in retaining the viability of the farm and its agricultural enterprise, and how it links with any other short or long term business plans for the farm.”

The proposals at Guernsey Farm have been developed to ensure that the land associated with the agricultural unit can continue to be farmed. As we note in the planning submission, the land at Guernsey Farm is best suited to arable crops. However, farming methods and practices have moved on to the extent that the size of the holding as it currently exists is not attractive to arable farmers. The buildings themselves are too small to store equipment and machinery (which is now much bigger than that for which the buildings were originally designed) or indeed the crops themselves.

However, our client remains committed to supporting agriculture in West Sussex, and wants to ensure that the agricultural land at Guernsey Farm continues to be farmed. As such, it has recently re-let the arable land at Guernsey Farm for a seven-year term to a local farmer who will work the land as part of their larger agricultural unit. Indeed, the recent advertising and marketing of the farmland supported our expectation that the buildings were not essential to the letting of the land holding. We received a number of strong offers for the land, all from local farming businesses, even though no buildings were included. The land will be appropriately farmed as a result of this proposal.

The client does not want the existing buildings to remain disused despite being at the end of their useful agricultural life. The buildings were therefore separated from the land so that an appropriate alternative use could be found. We intend that the mix of commercial uses sought at the site will increase the amount of small business space in the local area and provide the opportunity for more than once occupier to relocate to the site. This should provide some local economic benefit by providing a flexible commercial space for small business in the area.

It has become commonplace for farms to diversify in order to ensure sustainability. Whilst this is not an owner occupied holding, seeking appropriate small scale commercial uses for otherwise redundant buildings, and ensuring the associated agricultural land continues to be farmed, is in our view the correct approach. This is



preferable to our client retaining a range of farm buildings in agricultural use which would be underutilised or redundant due to their extremely limited value to modern day farming methods. It is better that they be repurposed for a use that helps attract and support local enterprise and the economy, whilst the land continues to be appropriately farmed.

We trust this information is what you require in order to positively determine the planning application.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely



James Dear MRICS FAAV
Associate Director