

INSIGHTS

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The time is right

2020 looks to be shaping up as a watershed year for landowners. Sustained growth of the new homes sector has sharpened the minds of many.

If you own land, and I don't just mean a large development site, but perhaps a large garden that could possibly be sold and built on one day, it's the perfect time to look at your options.

This is something we can help you with. If you've never heard of Homes before, we're the local land experts. And we're not here to convince you to sell.

What we do, week in-week out, is advise people like you on their options. We work with developers, house builders and landowners and are members of the national Land and New Homes Network.

So if you want to know about the planning process, or how you engage with an architect, or even just what options are open to you either now or in the future, we can help. And if you are thinking about selling, we can help with that too.

In the meantime, I hope you'll find plenty of ideas and insight in this, our latest newsletter. And do drop me a line via the contact details on the back page if there's anything I can do for you.

Enjoy the issue,

Peppe De Fazio



Your garden development questions answered

We've recently been seeing an increase in the owners of larger gardens getting in touch with queries about selling or developing. Here are a few of their most common questions...

Q: My house is listed – does this affect my situation?

A: If the garden is large enough, listed building status may not prevent development.

Q: I own a long term (99 year) lease on my property – am I still able to sell?

A: Sorry, you must own the freehold to be able to sell any land.

Q: We have a huge garden, but there's no back access. Does this matter?

A: You're right to think about access – and it's one reason why corner sites are particularly sought after – perhaps the new house can share the existing drive?

Q: Our garden is substantial enough to build on, but I'm reluctant to get rid of a large tree. Any ideas?

A: Large trees are not necessarily a drawback as a scheme might be designed around them and they could add to its attraction.

Q: We know that our neighbours will object to any plans. What can we do?

A: It is the planners who will decide if your land can be developed, not your neighbours, although they will listen carefully to their objections.

Q: Where can I find out if the local authority is likely to be behind my development ideas?

A: It's worth consulting your neighbourhood's local plan as it will often offer valuable insight.

Q: We're in a conservation area. Will this present us with any problems?

A: You're right, conservation areas can present issues in some instances – but all is not lost!

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For further information and a confidential appraisal of your land, contact us and we can advise you on whether it has development potential.



Is your land suitable for allocation?



Words: Pepe De Fazio, Director of Land Division, Homes

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The simple answer is to talk to us as we specialise in assessing the suitability of sites across the region.

In the past, planners used to approach landowners, but now larger tracts of land often have to be promoted if they are to be considered for future development. Here's how the system now works...

Every year, local councils put out a call for sites that can be included in their development plans. And if you own land in these areas, you'd be missing a trick if you didn't at least submit your site for consideration – for many landowners, it's seen as a 'golden ticket'.

So how can you find out if your land is suitable? The simple answer is to talk to us as we specialise in assessing the suitability of sites across the region. We understand what councils are looking for right now, and have built solid relationships with the house builders and developers that are actively looking for opportunities.

In fact, it's quite likely that we already know a house builder that might be interested in taking your land on to the next stage.

We can also advise on the various necessary assessments such as drainage and proximity to highways, and will offer guidance on the best way to fund and get the best results from your application. There are several routes to market (offering various degrees of risk and reward) and we'll talk you through all your options. And if required, we can introduce you to one of our experienced financial experts who'll outline what to consider when it comes to tax implications (or allowances!).

But first thing's first. Right now, all you need to do is get in touch for an initial discussion. We'll provide you with some impartial, no obligation advice and if you choose to take advantage of your council's current window of opportunity before it closes, we'd be delighted to help.

PLANNING SPOTLIGHT

Did you know it's now easier to convert a farm building?

Recent changes to **Permitted Development** (PD) rights mean that converting agricultural buildings into residential properties is now far simpler than ever before.

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It's a hugely significant ruling for rural landowners in England, who'll be able to generate some real value from their sites.

It pays to consider your options

If you have a barn or outbuilding, we'll be able to offer advice and insight on whether your site fits the bill and can let you know what it's likely to be worth.

We have a track record of delivering great returns and we won't charge you for our advice.

Here's what we can help you with:

- Planning advice and market intelligence
- We work with local planners and architects
- Site-specific insight and consultancy
- We can even connect you with active buyers

To talk to us in confidence, with no strings attached, get in touch today. We won't charge you for our advice.



The amendments, which took effect on 6 April 2018, allow up to five new homes to be created from existing agricultural buildings, rather than the previous maximum of three. And crucially, there is no need to expressly apply for planning permission to carry out the work.

It's a hugely significant ruling for rural landowners in England, who'll be able to generate some

real value from their sites. This is an area that we specialise in and, if you own a barn or outbuilding that has the potential for development, we can provide you with clarity on what options are available to you.

As with all Permitted Development frameworks, there are some properties that are exempt and certain criteria that need to be met. For example, the barn must have been in existence

on 20th March 2013 (barns built since can be converted into homes, but they must be used solely as agricultural buildings for at least a decade).

In addition, the total floorspace of the barn to be converted must be no more than 465m² and any development is subject to what's known as the 'Prior Notification' procedure.

IN CONVERSATION

Q&A with Kevin Ellis

Kevin Ellis

Founder of the Land & New Homes Network



Our agency is part of the Land & New Homes Network, a national association of leading independent agents that work in partnership with landowners, house builders and supporting businesses. We asked Kevin to tell us more about the network..

Hi Kevin. What's the Land & New Homes Network all about?

In a nutshell, we're here to support our flourishing land and new homes market. We do this in a number of ways, but our priority is to give leading independent agents the skills, the resources and the connections they need to empower landowners and house builders.

What's in it for landowners?

Landowners are at the heart of everything we do. From someone with a large site that's suitable for a major housing development, to a local property owner with a parcel of land, we can help them maximise their returns. And it can be at any stage – we work with landowners at every stage of the planning process, and from identification to disposal.

Crucially though, we primarily act in a consultancy role – any landowner can come to one of our members and discuss their options for free. They'll get the best possible advice and the very latest insight about their local market.

What if a landowner decides to sell?

Our agents are the on-the-ground experts in their area. They'll usually know a housebuilder or developer that is actively looking for specific site and will broker a deal on the landowner's behalf. They can also arrange auctions, advise on whether it's worth securing planning before taking the site to market, and a host of other considerations.

**You mentioned your members support house builders also...**

Absolutely. We're involved in every stage. Our members work with builders and developers by offering a dedicated sales and marketing service that goes beyond the usual high street package. Our agents have dedicated land and new homes divisions and have the infrastructure and strategies in place to secure the best deals.

Finally, what's your take on the land market right now?

If you're a landowner, I honestly believe there's never been a better time to look at your options. The bottom line is that our country needs new homes and the government has made a commitment to providing them. Over the past few years – despite everything that's been going on in the UK – that commitment has remained constant and housebuilding is in a very strong place. Don't wait until the ship has sailed!

If you'd like to learn more, just get in touch

 01428 778278  peppe@homesea.co.uk  www.homesathomes.co.uk