

SOME OF OUR PLANNING SUCCESSES

Major Housing Scheme Approved in Royston

Barford + Co has secured outline planning permission for 330 new homes on land to the north of Newmarket Road, Royston, Herts, following 16 years work promoting the site on behalf of the landowners, a private family trust.

In the 1980's, the land formed part of a larger area which was the subject of a planning application for development. This was however dismissed on appeal. Some new housing was subsequently allowed, but there was particular local opposition to the development of the area to the north of Newmarket Road which included visually prominent land on the edge of the town. In the late 1990's, Barford + Co was retained to promote the land through a new Local Plan, but the Council's timescales continuously slipped.

Martin Page, Planning Director at Barford + Co, picks up the story. "In 2013, it became apparent that North Herts District Council could not demonstrate a five year housing land supply. With no prospect of the new Local Plan coming forward in the foreseeable future, the landowners accepted our advice that there was a window of opportunity to achieve an early planning permission and an application was submitted with Barford +



Co appointed and leading the team of consultants and co-ordinating all the supporting reports, assessments and surveys. Notwithstanding the fact that the land was not allocated for development, we have been successful in negotiating planning permission for this significant housing scheme".

30% of the houses will be affordable under a Section 106 Agreement which also offers other community benefits. To

address concerns about the visual impact of the development, part of the site is to be transferred into public ownership for the creation of a chalk grassland community open space.

Following the approval of the application, Barford + Co was been instrumental in negotiating the detailed terms of the Section 106 Agreement. As a result of this Barford + Co is now appointed to market the site.

Planning Permission Secured for 60 Homes in Upwood

Barford + Co has secured full planning permission for 60 new homes on the site of the former medical centre at RAF Upwood, near Ramsey on behalf of local developer Campbell Buchanan.

Although not allocated, the Council accepted that the site was brownfield land within the built up area of the village. All of the material planning considerations

connected with the application were satisfactorily addressed by Barford + Co and this led to approval by Huntingdonshire District Council.

Martin Page commented "It is important for landowners to be aware of the potential for planning permission to be obtained for their land. In this case, the fact that the land was regarded as brownfield

meant that we were able to present a sustainable argument to the planning authority which has resulted in a successful outcome for Campbell Buchanan".

".... successful outcomes on non-allocated sites at Royston and Upwood".

Martin Page



Retirement Village Set for Wyboston Lakes

Barford + Co has secured a major planning permission on behalf of Wyboston Lakes Ltd at its complex just to the south of St Neots.

With an area of 14.5 acres, the owners had identified the potential for a continuing care retirement village to be developed on the site. Following a planning application in 2014, permission was eventually granted in mid-2015 for the retirement village. This comprises 90 care apartments, 69 care suites and 51 care bedrooms providing a mix of self-contained care apartments and extra care living units. A dementia unit with a range of supporting facilities for those in need of specialist care also forms part of the scheme.

The land which was subject to the



application had previously had planning permission for an innovation centre. However, this did not prove commercially attractive and the outline planning permission for the retirement village has been granted by Bedford Borough Council as an acceptable alternative scheme of development. Although the Council initially refused

the retirement village scheme on the grounds of accessibility, negotiations conducted by Barford + Co regarding improved access and links into St Neots led to this objection being overcome. The Council subsequently supported a resubmission application subject to the conclusion of the appropriate Section 106 Agreements.

Industrial Planning Permission Secured on St Ives Land

Acting on behalf of Burgess & Walker Transport Ltd, Barford + Co was appointed in 2013 to advise on the prospects for securing planning permission for the erection of warehouse building with adjoining open storage on land adjacent to the A1123 just to the north of St Ives.

Burgess & Walker was working in conjunction with a St Ives company, Arena Structures Ltd which has been based in the town for more than 25 years. The company provides temporary event structures to a range of clients including sporting, music and corporate events and exhibitions. Arena had been seeking a site to enable the relocation of an associated company from Berkshire. In the absence of suitable available expansion sites, the decision was taken to proceed with a planning application to develop the land owned by Burgess & Walker notwithstanding the fact that the site was outside the built up framework of St Ives and that the grant of permission would be contrary to the Councils' planning policies.

However, following consultation involving the local Parish and Town Councils, support was obtained on the basis that this would not only retain an important local company within St Ives, but also lead to further employment opportunities being created.

Barford + Co submitted an outline planning application in early 2015. Within the application it was demonstrated that there were no suitable alternative development options and all the technical issues identified by the Council could be overcome. Outline planning permission was granted in April 2015.

With the outline permission in the bag, a detailed application was submitted for a larger scheme comprising a 40,000 sq ft warehouse building, 10,000 sq ft of offices and 6.5 acres of open storage. Working again to secure local support was the key to a successful outcome, and the application was approved by Huntingdonshire District Council in late 2015.

An archaeological investigation was required and Barford + Co has assisted

in dealing with this condition. Initial construction works have commenced and Arena Structures anticipates being in occupation of its new facility in late 2016.

Martin Page commented "This is another example where the site was not allocated for development in the Council's current or emerging local plans, but we were able to demonstrate that there were no technical issues to prevent the development and importantly, that there is a lack of available commercial land to meet the needs of local businesses." With the support of the Parish and Town Councils, the District Council's stance has reflected national planning policy, encouraging economic growth and this has led to a positive outcome".

Graham Muir, Chief Executive for Arena Structures added "We are grateful for the support for our business growth and the two businesses are now working actively to bring the development forward as soon as possible with the opening of the new facility".

Listed Barn Success in Wilstead

In the early 1990's, the owners of a group of traditional former agricultural buildings obtained permission to convert most of the properties to residential use. However, at the time, the Council insisted that a Listed threshing barn, one of the buildings within the complex, should be restored and retained in agricultural use.

The owners submitted further applications for the conversion of the threshing barn to residential use but these were refused and a planning appeal was also unsuccessful.

With the barn falling into disrepair, and several failed attempts to obtain planning permission, Barford + Co was commissioned to assist in achieving an appropriate outcome. The barn was not viable for agricultural or commercial use. Discussions regarding a conversion to an office were started with the planning officers, but concerns about traffic generation, resulted in negotiations being reopened for the residential conversion. Barford + Co was able to



allay concerns from neighbours relating to issues connected with access and ecological matters and was able to demonstrate that the proposed conversion was sympathetic to this historic building. By working closely with an architect specialising in Listed Buildings, the support of the officers was gained and the application was approved by the Council. Barford + Co is now instructed to market and sell the site on behalf of the owners.

Planning Team Strengthened

We are pleased to welcome Simon Tindle to Barford + Co. Simon joins as a senior planner working closely with Martin Page, Director of Planning.

Prior to his appointment at Barford + Co, Simon occupied roles at both Northampton Borough Council and Sunderland City Council, providing him with a broad range of experience in development management which will be a significant benefit to the planning team.

Martin Page said "Simon brings with him a wealth of town planning and development experience and capabilities that will add value to the planning services we already provide to our clients."



Permission Secured Following Refusal

Following various failed attempts by the owners of a Grade II Listed cottage in Little Gransden to obtain planning permission for the erection of a house on an area of garden land to the rear of an existing cottage, the owners approached Barford + Co.

Planning applications had been refused by South Cambridgeshire District Council and the owners submitted an appeal which was also unsuccessful.

In 2014, Barford + Co secured planning permission to redevelop an adjoining coach depot site with three houses and this resolved one of the Councils' key objections. Following this, the owners of the cottage instructed Barford + Co to undertake a re-assessment of the development potential of the garden land. Notwithstanding that the site was

outside the village boundary, it was argued by Barford + Co that the character of the area had changed because of the grant of planning permission on the adjoining coach depot site. Furthermore, the Councils' planning policies could not be given significant weight as it could not demonstrate a five year housing land supply. Following the submission of a new planning application, permission was secured in late 2015 for a two bedroomed dwelling.

Simon Tindle stated "This case illustrates how changing circumstances can lead to a successful outcome. By monitoring the site, we were able to take advantage of the opportunity to reconsider the potential of the site which led to a successful outcome following a previous unsuccessful planning appeal".

Permission Secured Outside of the Biggleswade Town Boundary

In October 2015 Barford + Co secured outline planning permission for a development of three houses on the site of a former agricultural building situated outside of the Biggleswade town boundary.

Initial discussions with Central Bedfordshire Council were not positive, as the property is located outside of the built up area of the town, but the case was made that the site is in a sustainable location for residential development and the scheme made good use of the land. Furthermore,



Biggleswade is due to undergo considerable change in the coming years with the introduction of new housing estates on adjoining land.

These points were argued in the application and were accepted by the Council as a departure from its adopted policy.

IN BRIEF...

Revised Bungalow Scheme Secures Approval

Approval for the development of a bungalow in Bluntisham was secured following the previous refusal of a bungalow proposal by Huntingdonshire District Council and an unsuccessful planning appeal in 2009.

12 years after the first application was submitted Barford + Co was appointed to submit an application which successfully demonstrated to the Council that the amended scheme complied with local policies and met local housing need. This was approved in February 2015.

Installation of Solar Panels at Bickerdikes Garden Centre, Letchworth

Barford + Co was approached by the owner for planning advice regarding installation of renewable energy equipment at his premises in

Letchworth. We were subsequently able to advise on permitted development rights for the installation of a 30Kw non-domestic solar PV system on the roof of his main building enabling him to go ahead immediately without the need to submit a planning application.

Conversion of Industrial Building to Retail Use Granted in Huntingdon

Barford + Co has secured planning permission for the change of use of a vacant industrial building to retail use. "With our extensive knowledge of the local warehousing and retail markets, we were able to support the application with a retail sequential assessment, demonstrating that there were no other units suitable for our client's operation in a more preferable location." said Martin Page. The resulting planning permission is unrestricted in terms of the retail nature, giving the future occupier maximum flexibility to trade.



Extract from Business Weekly "New Year Honours" feature relating to East Anglia

"Barford + Co is a relatively small operator but certainly punches above its weight. The firm is brilliantly successful in its understanding of planning issues and its track record in winning planning cases is exemplary.

This skill gives Barfords an extra string to its bow in the advice it is able to deliver to clients on broader commercial property issues".