

## GUIDE TO SITE APPRAISALS

**If you need help to appraise your site and identify its development potential, PPS Planning can help.** An appraisal based on the factors listed below will allow you to decide how best to proceed with drawing up detailed proposals, indicate the likely costs in pursuing a planning application, and your likely return on investment and the likely timescales involved. We recommend a staged approach to appraisals, so that the work carried out is proportionate to a site's prospects. A brief appraisal is often sufficient to rule out an unsuitable site for an intended use (e.g. housing in an area of high flood risk). A more thorough appraisal will normally be necessary and in some cases, specialist advice may need to be sought and issues discussed with the local planning authority. A thorough appraisal will help to minimise delays and abortive costs and maximise the chances of achieving development potential. **Site Appraisals cover the following :**

### Site Characteristics

*The site's characteristics, its content and condition are basic factors which need to be assessed at the outset and a site visit is advised.*

- Location, setting, topography, views.
- Greenfield or previously developed (brownfield).
- Site features (enclosure and boundaries, evidence of previous development, vegetation etc.).
- Scale and form of development (buildings, size / floorspace).
- Current and previous uses and activities.
- Use of individual buildings and spaces.
- Condition of buildings and site.

### Physical Constraints and Technical Issues

*There may be physical constraints which will limit or affect in some way the site's development potential or the costs of securing a satisfactory development. Not all information can be established from existing records and in some cases specialist expert advice on technical issues may be required from certain agencies, the Local Planning Authority or other consultants (e.g. an ecologist)*

- Ground conditions (e.g. risk of contamination).
- Access and accessibility (vehicular access, visibility, footpaths, transport links).
- Current and future traffic impact.
- Landscape and ecology (TPOs, biological importance).
- Surface water and drainage issues (e.g. flood risk).
- Services (easements, sewers, pylons etc.).
- Conservation value (architectural and historic importance of buildings and features, archaeology etc.).



## Briefing Note: 2 Guide to Site Appraisals



### For your Appraisal, contact:

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### PPS Planning can also help by:

- arranging pre-applications discussions with the Local Planning Authority,
- discussing your proposals with neighbours, interested parties and key organizations,
- managing inputs from other experts if necessary,
- recommending a strategy on how best to proceed, and
- submitting your application to the Local Planning Authority.

## Inputs from other experts

Often, specialist expertise will be required to explore the site's potential, its constraints and the cost of addressing those constraints. Technical studies and research may be needed to explore the case for development or the physical practicalities of development. Such specialist information may also be required to support an eventual planning application. In the first instance though, PPS Planning can assess the likely need for such information taking account of the circumstances of the site and local planning policy. If additional expert inputs are necessary, PPS Planning can arrange this on your behalf. Examples of specialist support would include:

- A surveyor (e.g. for a topographical survey)
- An Architect (e.g. to prepare a draft layout)
- A quantity surveyor (e.g. to assess development costs)
- An ecologist or landscape architect / arboriculturalist (e.g. to prepare an ecology survey or a tree survey)
- A drainage engineer (e.g. to carry out a flood risk assessment)
- A highways/traffic engineer (e.g. to assess traffic capacity, access arrangements)
- A conservation expert (e.g. to assess historical or archeological value).

## Surroundings

*An assessment of the site's context, by looking at what happens on the edges of the site and the sites relationship to other development and the available local infrastructure will help to evaluate the suitability of the site to meet your objectives.*

- Adjoining uses and restrictions.
- Character and local distinctiveness (scale of buildings and spaces, age, architecture, scale, density).
- Micro climate.
- Proximity of community facilities (e.g. shops, parks, health facilities), transport links and key routes.
- Environmental issues (e.g. noise and other pollution, parking issues, crime and safety).
- Opportunity to secure wider development potential (e.g. opportunities on adjoining land).

## Planning History

*Records of previous planning decisions should be assessed. The site may have had planning applications for development approved or refused in the past. Those decisions may give an indication as to whether your proposals might be acceptable to the local planning authority. Decisions made in the local area may also be useful in assessing your chance of success.*

- Lawful uses and planning restrictions on activities (planning conditions).
- Previous planning approvals and refusals (and appeal decisions).
- Enforcement history.
- Approvals on adjacent land and buildings.

## Planning Policy Considerations

*A review of planning policy at an early stage can help avoid abortive work on schemes that would not be supported by planning policy. This includes establishing the current and emerging policies of the Local Development Plan and relevant national planning policies and appraising whether those policies would lend support for your development proposals or whether your proposals may be in conflict with the Development Plan. The following would need to be examined.*

- Government policy, specifically the National Planning Policy Framework and related publications.
- Saved Local Plan or UDP policies.
- Core Strategy and Site Allocations Document.
- Neighbourhood Plan.
- Wider economic and regeneration strategies, policies and initiatives.
- Supplementary Planning Documents (e.g. affordable housing, open space standards, parking standards, design etc.).
- Required developer contributions for infrastructure e.g. Community Infrastructure Levy, S 106 Obligations).
- Current policy evidence base (e.g. local studies and assessments e.g. housing land supply, monitoring reports, etc.).