

Godalming, Westbury Barn - Initial Report

1. Background

There is one agricultural building on this 24 acre site.

This land has been plotted and is therefore not available for overall sale.

1.1 Property Address:

Westbury Barn, Prior's Field, Godalming.

1.2 Property Description

There is one agricultural building on the site.

1.3 Current use:

The site is currently in agricultural use. There are no dwellings, or significant buildings on the site.

1.4 Estimated percentage of land plotted and removed from title:

79%

1.5 Disposal possibilities, eg are there any obvious, accessible area / buildings that can be sold independently?

There are no specific buildings with potential for sale.

Much of land has been plotted and in therefore unavailable for individual resale.

2. Godalming, Westbury Barn - Planning

2.1 Current planning use / designation:

The statutory Development Plan for the area is the Surrey Structure Plan (adopted 2004) and the Guildford Borough Local Plan (adopted 2002).

The site is greenfield land, currently in agricultural use as pasture land/set aside meadow. There is a single agricultural building located centrally on the site with road access onto Priorsfield Road.

The site is designated as both Green Belt and as an 'Area of Great Landscape Value'. Further to this, the northern part of the site (north of the agricultural building and access road) is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

2.2 Opportunities for planning change and development:

Given the site's inclusion within the Green Belt, we consider that the current development potential of the site is very limited. There is a general presumption against inappropriate development within the Green Belt.

The purpose of including land in the Green Belt is given paramount importance and as such its continued protection takes precedence over other land use objectives. This represents an 'in principle' obstacle to most forms of development. Permission may be given for development reasonably required for agricultural/forestry, new buildings to provide essential facilities for outdoor sport recreation, cemeteries, or limited extension of existing dwellings. Any new agricultural dwelling/building will only be acceptable where it is essential to the operation of an established agricultural holding, or where required for the functioning of the agricultural enterprise.

Given the current nature of the site as open land, without any agricultural buildings, it is unlikely that planning permission for development for business, general industrial or storage or distribution purposes will be granted

2.3 Comment on UKLI report:

The UKLI report is correct in its assumption that there is little prospect of further development given the Green Belt and AONB designations.

The report considers that there may be the potential to redevelop the site for a hotel or country club use to be promoted through the emerging LDF planning system but recognises that this form of development is very unlikely to be favourably considered by the Local Planning Authority. We agree with this assessment.

We consider there is little argument for the need for any such use to overcome the presumption against development within the Greenbelt. Coupled with the access restriction, there is therefore likely to be little short to medium term development potential of this site.

