

PLANNING NEWSLETTER

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LATEST NEWS

PPS3 HOUSING

The new Planning Policy Statement on Housing has just been issued by CLG.

PPS3 reaffirms the Government's commitment to delivery, good design and sustainable development

This is good news for the development industry – the tide has finally turned and the Government have recognised that more housing, in the right place and at the right price is needed – as a matter of urgency.

They say there is nothing new under the sun – welcome back 5 year housing supply – we have missed you!

Affordable housing will however now be required on all sites of 15 or more units nationwide. This had previously only been a requirement in London and some other metropolitan areas.

Particular emphasis has been placed upon rural communities, who have long been neglected in the planning process. The new focus is upon achieving more sustainable development in both urban and rural environments.

The approach taken in PPS3 is welcomed. However, its success, as always, will depend upon how it is implemented within local planning authorities.

There is clearly far more work now required to be undertaken by LPA's – the question is: have they got the resources to fulfil the Governments requirements in a fast moving climate.

The emphasis upon delivery and the 5 year housing supply, based upon need and demand, will require difficult decisions to be made in many constrained areas. Is the new planning regime sufficiently fast, fair and efficient to respond within the timescales required?

CgMs will be preparing a News Bulletin on the new PPS shortly.

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PLANNING GAIN SUPPLEMENT

A key Commons select committee has voiced conditional approval for the government's planning gain supplement (PGS) proposals but stressed that more consultation and clarification is needed on a number of key issues.

The MPs also urged a comparative cost-benefit analysis of, on one hand, PGS and scaled-back section 106 arrangements and, on the other, greater use by councils of s106 powers and other innovative solutions like tariff-based systems to capture the land value "uplift" from planning consents.

The MPs have made it clear, though, that PGS should not be implemented as a single solution but rather as part of an overall package of measures.

The MPs have largely rejected calls for exemptions and discounts and argued strongly that the threshold for liability should be set at a level which "removes those very small-scale developments where the imposition of PGS would be counter-productive".

On the question of whether PGS would help or hinder regeneration, the committee argued that the government had other tools and measures at its disposal to encourage brownfield development and so there was no case for discounts or exemptions in this area.

We are unlikely to know further information on PGS until early next year.

For further information contact Erica Mortimer at erica.mortimer@cgms.co.uk or Mike Straw at mike.straw@cgms.co.uk

QUEEN'S SPEECH

There is a promise in the Queen's Speech that there will be a White Paper in Spring 2007 aimed at streamlining the planning process, at least for large infrastructure proposals.

For further information contact Erica Mortimer at erica.mortimer@cgms.co.uk or Mike Straw at mike.straw@cgms.co.uk

MAYOR FOR LONDON – NEW POWERS

The Queen's Speech also heralded a new GLA Bill which would increase the Mayor's planning powers. These are likely to enable the Mayor to intervene in planning applications and to require London Boroughs to demonstrate how a planning application accords with the London Plan.

MILITARY KEY WORKERS

The definition of key workers has been expanded to armed forces personnel. Those living in service housing in London, the South East and the East will be able to buy a new build home, paying a minimum of 25% of the price and a reduced rent for the remaining cost of the home. This applies also to those on operational deployments and certain civilian workers.

FLOODING CONSULTATION

From 1/10/06 the Environment Agency has become a statutory consultee on:

- all planning applications in any area (whether a flood plain or not) where the site exceeds 1ha
- in Flood Zones 2 and 3, where there is a greater than 1:1000 (0.1%) chance of flooding in any one year and
- in Flood Zone 1 in areas with critical drainage problems.

This means that developers will have to consult the Environment Agency on all large scale developments – over one hectare – wherever they are located, to ensure that surface water runoff will not cause flooding elsewhere.

SI06 CONTRIBUTIONS

More and more Councils are producing a shopping list of required Section 106 contributions. In July, the London Borough of Redbridge published their adopted SPD on the subject. The Council will seek contributions in relation to as many as ten subject areas viz:

- Education
- Social/Community Facilities
- Housing
- Health
- Transport/Traffic Management
- Percent for Art, Archaeology & Conservation
- Open Space
- Employment and Training
- Libraries
- Sports Facilities

These can add very substantially to site development costs.

Because the formulae for calculating the required amounts are not always tried and tested, or are open to interpretation and indeed questions of need in the first instance, we anticipate there will be a number of important appeals over the next year which will challenge the methodology and applicability of such requirements.

The savings could be substantial. For example CgMs currently have applications before Redbridge in relation to education and health contributions, where there is a difference between the Council's formulae and our independent assessments of £1m.

For further information please contact Chris Hicks at chris.hicks@cgms.co.uk

CgMs NEWS

PLANNING

City Academy, London

CgMs have been appointed as planning consultants for the City of London KPMG Academy in Hackney. The proposal is for a new City academy for 1,140 pupils aged 11-18 on land at Morning Lane, Hackney. The Corporation of London and KPMG are joint sponsors of the academy and it would have an emphasis on business. The site contains Council offices, highway land, commercial uses and open land within a primary school site. The new school would help in the regeneration of the area and be consistent with Hackney's

aim of encouraging additional academy places.

For information please contact Malcolm Honour at malcolm.honour@cgms.co.uk

84 Eaton Place, City of Westminster

Planning Permission & Listed Building Consent have been secured by CgMs Ltd on behalf of Opera Trading Ltd for the refurbishment of this prominent Grade II listed building in the Belgravia Conservation Area. The company's Planning & Development and Historic Building's Departments combined forces to work up a scheme that was approved under delegated authority at officer level following a period of pre-application negotiation with the Local Planning Authority.

The scheme involves the conversion of the building from four flats to a substantial single dwelling house and external and internal alterations including an indoor swimming pool, a lift connecting all floors and a first floor outdoor roof terrace. CgMs assembled a comprehensive range of evidence to demonstrate to Westminster City Council that the significant alterations to the existing fabric of the listed building were justified on the basis that the proposal re-instates original detail that has been removed over the course of time.

For further information please contact Will Thompson at will.thompson@cgms.co.uk

ARCHAEOLOGY

British Archaeological Awards

Every two years the British Archaeological Awards team honours projects and individuals for their contribution to archaeology in many fields including publication, fieldwork, community involvement, presentations in the media and research. The Awards include commercial archaeology and recognise the immense contribution made by this part of the sector.

This year CgMs walked away with two awards, runners up in the Developer Funded Prize sponsored by the magazine Current Archaeology and in the professional practice award sponsored by the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

The Awards were presented by Prof Mick Aston, famous from the TV series Time Team and Lord Montague, former Chairman of English Heritage. The scheme which won these awards was managed by Michael Dawson, associate Director who runs CgMs Midlands in Kettering. Michael was acting as Contractor's Archaeologist with the design and build consortium of Capita Symonds and Edmund Nuttall on the Cambridge to MI link. Working with fieldwork sub-contractors Albion archaeology and Oxford archaeology over £1m of archaeology on 18 different sites was investigated to time and budget.

"A Romano-British farmstead just prior to excavation in 2004. It was found to be occupied from the 1st to 4th centuries AD on the edge of the Bedfordshire claylands close to Renhold. It is one of 18 sites excavated along the route of the A421/A428 Great Barford Bypass and Caxton to Hardwick Improvements Scheme. The archaeological project was managed by CgMs with sub-contractors Albion and Oxford Archaeology over three years from 2004. The scheme was sponsored by the Highways Agency with main contractors the design and build consortium of Capita Symonds and Edmund Nuttall" and will be published in 2007.

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