

## Former Baliol School Site

Baliol School was closed by North Yorkshire County Council in 2012. The property was sold to the current owners Visiondale Limited in 2016. Since that time efforts have been made to engage potential interest, ranging from hotels, other visitor accommodation and the potential for elderly or extra-care accommodation. Alongside this development opportunities were explored with Planning Officer's at the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. This effort has been largely ineffective and little interest in a remote rural site was forthcoming.

Baliol is an allocated site in the current Local Plan (2015 – 2030), as a business development site. This is in recognition of employment opportunities lost when the school closed. The site is allocated for a range of possible uses including:

- B1 = business uses (office/research/industrial)
- C1 = Hotel/hostel
- C2 = residential institution eg. nursing home, college, training
- D1 = non residential institution (health, hall, crèche, school)
- D2 = Assembly and leisure
- Live work = workspace with an ancillary residential element
- Extra care = County council self contained specialist residential eg. elderly

Initial market analysis and communication by Visiondale Limited confirmed limited interest in the site, with those contacted identifying Baliol House (dilapidated traditional building) as a specific development constraint. Anecdotal concerns raised include proximity to Kendal, distance from the M6 Motorway, the constrained rural road network, lack of suitable on-site premises, limited access to markets, desire for new build premises.

Since Stephenson Halliday Limited (professional planning consultancy) involvement in the site, a more structured and evidence-based approach to understanding site viability has been developed. This has included an ongoing site viability appraisal, undertaken in conjunction with Aspinall Verdi (specialist market viability consultants). A soft marketing exercise ongoing

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throughout 2020 has yielded limited interest, with no specific commercial proposal or lines of enquiry being made. Stephenson Halliday are continuing to explore opportunities, alongside the preparation of the second phase of the viability appraisal.

To date no viability appraisal of the site has been undertaken in connection with the allocation of the site for employment purposes. It is unknown how realistic the site allocation is. A range of other socio-economic factors might also constrain development opportunities. These have been most recently reported by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority in late 2019.

In light of the limited substantive commercial interest in the site, a range of options for its development are being explored and appraised. These will range from employment only, through mixed employment – housing uses, to housing only. The purpose of this is to understand what is likely to be a viable development of the site, that would, subject to an appropriate planning consent, have a reasonable prospect of coming forward.

These options are being prepared with the assistance of Garsdale Design Limited. It is not intended that the options will be used to *filter* out a scheme, but instead use the evidence to inform an appropriate option. This will then be prepared taking into account the socio-economic needs of the area, planning policy and other relevant planning factors.

Visiondale Limited is also undertaking assessment of the site in relation to ecological, highway and arboricultural matters.

Overall, there is an ongoing significant investment taking place in order to generate a positive use of the site.

Adam Perry

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