

DEVELOPMENT

PLANNING

AGENCY

PROFESSIONAL

VALUATIONS & SURVEYS

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

BUILDING & PROJECTS

COMMERCIAL EPC

RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

## Market Insight

### Unearth the potential of Brownfield Sites

We have recently unearthed the latent development potential in three brownfield sites – and in doing so have shown what can be achieved from derelict or underused parcels of land that are not typically seen as being ripe for development.



One site is in Bury St Edmunds, where Januarys have helped MPM Investments secure planning permission for nine townhouses.

The other two sites are in Cambridge; Wellington Court, where Januarys and Gibson Developments are working on a project for fourteen studio flats, and Ditton Walk, where the plan is to build seven townhouses on behalf of Blues Property.

In all three cases, the sites are in locations that might otherwise have remained redundant and it is thanks to the approach of the developers and to the skill and ingenuity of Januarys that schemes providing new housing have got off the ground.

Commenting on the projects, Colin Brown, Planning Director of Januarys said, "It is well understood that this part of the UK is under extreme housing pressure and it is therefore very important that we make use of every available piece of under-used urban land whilst at the same time ensuring a decent standard of accommodation for future residents.

"In building these homes, the developers are not only revitalising some unloved brownfield plots, but are also in some small way helping to ease the stress on greenfield and green belt sites in the locality.

"All three sites will consist of a mix of market housing and will offer a more sustainable way of living. In the case of the Wellington Street site, this will be entirely car free and residents will be encouraged to use other, more environmentally friendly forms of transport.

"The way brownfield sites are being developed has changed dramatically in recent years and this will be a continuing theme in the next few years, irrespective of whether there is a change

in Government. The demand for housing is increasing and the need to build not just homes but supporting infrastructure that is both greener and cleaner is self evident.

"These factors – and others - will have a huge impact on the way developers work in the future and it's critical that they join forces with surveyors and planners who have sufficient innovation, knowledge and experience to see potential in areas where others might not."

#### Specialist advice to the NHS

**As you'd expect, we offer a wide range of services to its clients. These can range from day-to-day issues such as property management and to more specialist advice.**

One such service involves designing and adapting properties to reduce the opportunity for self harm and this comes under the watchful eye of Senior Project Designer Stephen Brookes.

"Adapting buildings to minimise the ability of patients to commit suicide is one of those niche markets that most people don't give a second thought to, but is actually vitally important," says Stephen

"When we're working on projects like these, we'll recommend things such as magnetic curtain tracks, specialised shower fittings, vision panels in doors etc.



"The idea behind all these innovations is to offer patients little opportunity to harm themselves whilst they are being treated.

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#### property performance indicator

##### Cambridge Rents

Offices →

Industrial →

Retail →



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## New Government Planning Policy puts focus on City and Town Centre



Senior Project Designer  
**STEPHEN BROOKES**

"We'll work with ward managers and hospital staff to agree a complete programme of works and whether we're looking at existing premises or starting from scratch, every building's needs are different.

"We're also completely up-to-date with the latest legislation and best practice so that hospitals and other sections of the caring professions can be absolutely certain they are getting excellent advice."

Desmond Hirsch, a director of Januarys Professional Services department added, "Using a consultancy such as Januarys offers clients access to a huge range of enormously skilled people.

"Away from the everyday issues we handle, Januarys brings its expertise to a number of small but very important markets.

"Clients are constantly surprised by what we can offer them; it's usually much more than they were expecting."

The latest in a series of Planning Policy Statements (Planning Policy Statement 4) has been released by Central Government and, according to Cambridge Consultant Surveyors Januarys, it puts the focus firmly on city and town centres.

The statement is subtitled 'Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth' and has been produced in response to the difficulties – both economic and environmental – being faced by communities. Its aim, according to Housing and Planning Minister Margaret Beckett, is to promote investment and competition whilst at the same time safeguarding city, town and village centres.

The statement makes a number of points that developers and councils will need to be aware of when submitting or considering planning applications. These include; to deliver more sustainable patterns of development and respond to climate change; promote the vitality and viability of town and other centres; encourage competition and choice through the provision of innovative and efficient services in town centres; and raise the quality of life and the environment in rural areas by promoting thriving, inclusive and locally distinctive rural communities.

Commenting on the new statement, Januarys' Associate Justin Bainton said, "This latest



Statement marks a clear desire on the part of the government to promote existing town, city and village centres as the best places for economic growth over out of town developments. In addition to this direction from central

government, the Statement also encourages local authorities to give favourable consideration to applications for economic growth and to speed up the planning process, something all would support.

"The previous 'needs test' will be replaced by an 'impact test.' This will give councils better controls over big developments that put smaller shops and entire town centres at risk. Projects will be assessed against key factors including climate change, impact on the high street, consumer choice, consumer spending and jobs. The 'sequential test' remains. This requires the most central town centre sites to be developed before out of town sites that could potentially lure high street shoppers away."



## Cash Buyers bring strength to Retail Property Market

We are delighted to announce that we have achieved more than the asking price for a retail unit and flat on Chesterton Road.

The property, which comprises 600 sq. ft of retail space on the ground floor and a one-bedroom flat on the first floor, was put up for sale freehold with offers sought in excess of £250,000.

Ultimately, with seven bidders interested in buying the premises, five of whom were cash buyers, it went for considerably more.

Nick Muncey, who handled the sale on behalf of Januarys said, "Properties like this are attracting substantial interest and I'm not entirely surprised that there was such a fierce bidding war. The unit forms part of a prominent local retail parade on one of the main arterial

routes into Cambridge and there is on street parking immediately outside the shop.

"The number of cash bidders is also significant. Many shrewd investors with spare capital are eschewing the stock market in favour of bricks and mortar. Property, both commercial and residential, is once again becoming a favourable vehicle for people to invest in; a sure sign that the market is on the move and that things are getting better.

"I fully expect that the way this sale went is the shape of things to come."

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