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JAMES SLATER & CO
SURVEYING & ARCHITECTURE

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Date: 2nd July 2025

Ref: 25-132 JS

SEQUENTIAL TEST REPORT

Re: Land South West Of Middle Green Farm, Middle Green Lane, Dauntsey SN15 4HY

1. Instructions

Instructions were received by email from LPC Planning Consultants on behalf of their client, Flower and Hayes Ltd. who own the subject property.

LPC Planning Consultants are intending to submit an application for Planning Permission to convert the existing buildings on the land from business units to residential apartments.

Wiltshire Council have to be provided with confirmation that other uses, given higher priority under the Sequential Test procedure within the adopted Local Plan and in Central Government Planning Guidance, are inappropriate, non-sustainable or commercially unviable.

I am instructed to consider the following alternative uses, in sequence:

Commercial / Employment
Tourism
Cultural
Community

2. Curriculum Vitae

I am a Chartered Surveyor, RICS Registered Valuer and Principal Surveyor at James Slater & Co, which I founded in 1988. I have more than 40 years experience of Planning, Land Uses, and Valuation within the relevant and surrounding areas.

3. The Property

The land forms the rear part of a site that was subject to an early C21st Planning Permission which permitted a mixed use development comprising houses and business units. The owners bought the site with this Planning Permission and developed it, building the houses and two of the business units which were completed in 2007 and marketed to test the demand them, prior to the owners investing in the construction of the other four units that were permitted.

Despite being built to a good standard and in a pleasant rural location, the units stood empty as no demand materialised despite their being marketed by several different agencies using different tactics to encourage interest.

Principal Surveyor: James Slater FRICS
Building Surveyors: M C Wright BSc MRICS ~ CD Sealey MRICS ~ M Hutch MRICS ~ A Napier MRICS
Associate: A Innes MArch

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Royal Institution of
Chartered Surveyors

The owners thus shelved any ideas of building the other four units and left the site in an incomplete state. Repeated efforts to find occupiers for the units were unsuccessful and thus they have stood empty for nearly 20 years, which represents a waste of the buildings and a considerable loss to the owners. Latterly, they have been subject to vandalism and some undesirable activity so they need to find a beneficial use before any further deterioration occurs. In their present state they detract from the housing part of the development and will inevitably have a blighting effect on property values in the locality.

A previous application to convert the two buildings into eight flats failed as the requirements of Policy 48 had not been met. In this adopted Local Policy, which reflects Central Government requirements, the Planning Authority, Wiltshire Council, requires it to be shown that alternative uses had been considered before an application was made.

The attached schedule of photographs shows the buildings and their surroundings.

4. Planning Proposals and Applicable Policies

It is understood that that an application will be submitted to Wiltshire Council for conversion of the buildings within their existing structures with only very minor changes to the eill heights of the first floor windows, construction of bin stores and landscaping of the site and parking areas.

5. Consideration of Alternative uses

a. Commercial / Employment

The units have been marketed almost continuously since their construction without any significant interest. This was initially considered to be due to their location but business patterns change and interest in rurally located premises has steadily declined. Furthermore, the likelihood of finding tenants has decreased significantly since the Covid pandemic with the increase in working from home, facilitated by vast improvements in communications technology and infrastructure. Offices that now find tenants tend to be located in towns with their own parking or in business parks with good access to transport links, residential areas and facilities. Rural offices struggle to find any tenants.

The most recent sales brochure from Alder King and their May 2025 marketing report are both attached. Section 8 of the report sets out the current situation in relation to marketing. The agents conclude that alternative uses should be found for the buildings to give them a beneficial use and prevent further deterioration.

b. Leisure/tourism

It is hard to see any viable use within these categories without re-development of the site. The buildings are not in a location where there is significant visitor presence or anything to draw those visitors. They could be converted to holiday apartments but as this type of accommodation is almost always seen first on websites, the apartments would be unattractive when viewed on-line due to their modern, slightly dated and utilitarian appearance. Their proximity to and susceptibility to noise from the West of England main railway line and the M4 would also discourage people researching their holiday accommodation on-line.

c. Cultural

The same disadvantages that restrict leisure and tourism would negate any cultural use and the units' layout and structure will not be suitable for adaptation to cultural uses, which usually involve being able to accommodate groups of people.

This type of use could also lead to sporadic large traffic flows when events, workshops or performances were being held. The existing access via a small residential development is unsuited to this type of use.

d. Community

There has been no interest from the small, scattered communities in this rural area which already has adequate community facilities available.

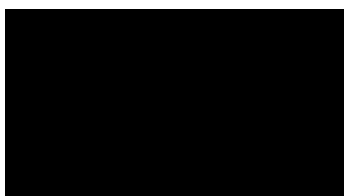
5. Conclusions

The buildings are in sound condition as the damage that has occurred is relatively minor. With some adaptation to their layouts and alterations to ensure the resulting apartments meet current Building Regulations, they can be converted to dwellings, which will provide much needed smaller housing stock for which Central Government targets have latterly been significantly increased, making them more difficult for planning authorities to meet.

Allowing these buildings to deteriorate or demolishing and replacing them would also be environmentally undesirable, in terms of waste materials and additional carbon emissions from the production of the new materials and the new construction works. To this end, the remaining undeveloped part of the site would lend itself to further housing as, following the initial development work, it holds a mound of topsoil intended for final landscaping and has become overgrown. It could not to revert to agricultural or related uses without significant and economically unviable work.

As the buildings have no viable use as initially envisaged and permitted, or for the other tested classes, their conversion to apartments retains the buildings in use with the minimum of additional alteration and thus provides additional, much needed dwellings.

For the reasons discussed above, the sequential test of alternative uses shows no viable alternative to its use as dwellings.



James Slater FRICS
RICS Registered Valuer

Attachments:
Photograph Schedule
Alder King sales brochure 2024
Alder King marketing report May 2025