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DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

CHARTERED SURVEYORS & PLANNING CONSULTANTS  
THE OLD MARKET OFFICE - 10 RISBYGATE STREET - BURY ST EDMUNDS - SUFFOLK - IP33 3AA

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5 December 2012

Mr P Sexton  
Planning & Development  
South Cambs District Council  
South Cambs Hall  
Cambourne Business Park  
Cambourne  
Cambridge CB23 6EA

Dear Mr Sexton

**S/1987/12/VC - CADWIN NURSERIES, 37a RAMPTON ROAD, WILLINGHAM**

Further to your e-mail addressed to my colleague Leanne Frost dated 4 December 2012 attaching a report and appendices from Mr John Pocock dated 21 November 2012, I comment as follows:-

- 1) The Inspector's issue was regarding price. He did not say the process was unsatisfactory and had not demonstrated inadequate effort to sell. This statement is therefore misleading. The marketing methods etc were accepted.
- 2) The Inspector, based on the evidence, suggested a valuation of £245,000 - £280,000. The guide of £285,000 was perfectly in line with that allowing for offers.

Mr Pocock states he is not an expert in agricultural values. His suggestion of £50,000 to £70,000 for a block of land on the edge of a popular village with a good building and yard is totally out of line with what the land is worth. I attach some details of land and buildings for sale in Willingham. It is not edge of village so not as good a location which proves the point albeit with more land at a higher price. Land which abuts housing and villages is always more in demand and often makes significantly more than agricultural value.

- 3) This was a point regarding access and parking and the cost of providing it.
- 4) The vast majority of farmers and farm workers read the Farmers Weekly which Mr Pocock probably doesn't realise. Also they get extra readers when the Country Properties section is run. This property has been on Rightmove which is the most popular advertising medium by a considerable margin.

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- 5&6) Rightmove accounts for approximately 85% of on-line marketing, I don't understand the point being made? This had a number of photos and a plan and would have come up on all searches.
- 7) This is a specialist property for persons employed in agriculture, I am not sure Mr Pocock understands this? The vast majority of other agents' listings in Willingham do not have similar properties. Buyers for such properties typically use specialist agents and look further afield. The agent who sold to Dr Sangray was an example of this. Mr Pocock readily admits this is not his sort of property and that local adverts puts it alongside unrelated property.
- 8) Correct.
- 9) The local survey was part of the marketing and helps in the assessment of need.
- 10) I don't believe there can be anyone after all this time who is employed in agriculture who doesn't know this property is for sale through one of the mediums. There are approximately 6000 persons employed in agriculture other than on a casual basis in the whole of Cambridgeshire. The vast majority of the local ones will work for the businesses approached in the survey, the vast majority will read the Farmers Weekly and those looking to buy will have visited Rightmove. Buyers from further afield would seek out specialist agents.

I think it is agreed at least within an acceptable margin allowing for offers that the bungalow has been marketed at a reasonable price. Your Authority was informed of this in advance and made no comment, and it was in line with the Inspector. It is the bungalow that has the tie and it is its demand you are assessing. Comments about the land value from someone who agrees has no experience and whose own background is based on more urban properties, is merely a personal unsubstantiated view that doesn't get to the core of the argument. The land is not the key issue as it merely offers more options, your decision should be based on the bungalow which has been available if there was demand.

Yours sincerely



Brian Barrow BSc (Hons) MRICS  
Managing Director  
For Acorus Rural Property Services Ltd

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Further to your meeting with Brian, he has supplied the following notes.

The bungalow for sale in the village adjacent to the site is noted; at £299,950 it is priced at £15k more than Cadwin yet the bungalow itself is much smaller in footprint and the overall plot about 1/10 the size. This backs up the Inspectors conclusion regarding the bungalow being worth approximately £400k with approximately 2 acres. You can easily see that Cadwin must be worth at least £100k more. Mr Pocock doesn't seem to dispute this other than referring to his original thought of £250k which even if it were correct is within offer territory. On the key and only issue i.e. the bungalow it seems there is nothing of significance to suggest the price and marketing were wrong.

The land there is still some difference, I don't think this is central to the case but in any case I don't agree with the valuation, I supplied another 4 sets of details.

Grunty Fen – you will recall some land and a building we sold off Grunty Fen for approximately £170k, this was about 19 acres, there is a current block for sale just a few fields away with about 14 acres at £85k even though land has gone up in price. This shows the difference a building with services makes, that building was similar in size to Cadwin, I don't think Mr Pocock has taken into account the building and yard.

The particulars of the building at Great Barford illustrates this, a smaller building with only ½ acre priced at £165k.

The closet comparable is the site at Croydon, less in terms of buildings as 3 stables and a store and 8 acres, priced at £150k, probably a better location but Cadwin has better buildings with services.

The site at Rampton has no services, a rather small timber shed and what looks poor land that could flood, yet it is still £100k.

I think the £160k was justified as a guide allowing for the land and the fact it abuts housing in part and a very good building with yard and concrete. It would have invited offers at say £130k plus.

Overall your decision needs to be based on the need for the dwelling. You would need to believe there is demand somewhere not tapped into to refuse the application in my view. The current owners tried to make the site work, and I think attempts to push the price massively lower than they paid for it despite the money they have spent is not reasonable.