



What we've all been waiting for...
DEMOLITION & REBUILD
The new Class ZA

As many readers will be aware, there have been provisions in place which have allowed the conversion of rural buildings to dwellings under Permitted Development rights. These 'Class Q' provisions have been life-changing for many of our farming and rural clients, providing an opportunity to significantly uplift the valuation of a building, release capital or providing a boost to monthly incomes.

As a firm, we have now been involved with applications to create 100's of new homes under Class Q and so have been acutely accustomed with the intricacies of the criteria and the differing interpretations of the relevant matters by Local Planning Authorities. It is almost as if, just when the dust was beginning to settle on the various aspects of interpretation under this rule, and after many months of anticipation, the Government has now publicised amendments to the Permitted Development rules which, for the first time with any significance, will allow the demolition and rebuild of buildings without the need for any full planning permission – Class ZA.

These new provisions will allow any existing light industrial workshops or offices to be demolished and replaced with housing up to two storeys higher than the existing building. The replacement building will need to be within the footprint of the existing building, the existing building will need to have been redundant for at least 6 months, and there are various matters that will still need to be assessed by the Council. These will include, for the first time under permitted development,

consideration of the design and external appearance of the new build, the 'impact on business', impact on heritage and archaeology, and landscaping. It is therefore envisaged that there will, in some instances, still be a need for the full range of reports as may be necessary for planning applications, save for the principle of the proposal already being considered acceptable.

This new Permitted Development right excludes AONBs or Conservation Areas, or Listed Buildings. Although, it is felt that this does reflect the Government's intentions as to how proposals of this nature should be considered positively and pragmatically even in these particular areas (it should also be noted that the current PD right to convert workshops to homes is now due to expire at the end of September).

It is fair to say that many of our clients benefitted significantly from making an early application under Class Q. There were, for example, some very lightweight pole barns that were allowed through the net by Councils, which would not be permissible for conversion now. It may be prudent to discuss your new options for demolition and rebuild under Class ZA sooner rather than later.



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