

Recession no reason to withhold permission for housing on employment site

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Notes to Editors

High resolution copies of the above images are available from Vincent & Gorbings.

Planning Inspectorate reference: APP/D1835/A/08/2088567.
Copies of the appeal decision are available from Vincent & Gorbings.

The LPA was Worcester City Council.

The planning application proposed approximately 160 units with 40% affordable housing.

The site was previously occupied by Littlewoods Shop Direct as a distribution centre and had been largely vacant since 2007.

The appellant accepted that neither employment nor residential was presently viable but argued that employment would not become viable in the future whereas residential would.

The appellant also argued that there was a realistic prospect of bring forward the affordable housing element prior to the market housing being delivered.

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Vincent and Gorbings have secured planning permission for housing on a 4ha. site safeguarded for employment in Worcester following a successful planning appeal.

The Inspector concluded that despite present economic conditions a robust assessment for employment could be undertaken which proved the site was of marginal viability. The City Council had argued that the current economic situation meant that neither employment nor housing was presently viable and therefore the land should continue to be protected for its present use. The Inspector disagreed and also gave weight to the delivery of housing, and affordable housing in particular.

Vincent and Gorbings Planning Director, Martin Friend, who acted for appellant Arndale Properties at the appeal, commented that the decision was a victory for common sense.

“Positive planning should not be shelved simply because of current economic conditions. The Inspector agreed that a prolonged period of uncertainty about the future of such a large site in a location which has been designated a Growth Point was against the public interest.”

Arndale were also advised by King Sturge (*viability*) and Tetlow King (*affordable housing*).

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