Escape to the Country

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London firm Urbanist Architecture sees 65 per cent increase in demand for homes in rural areas due to pandemic

18th November 2020

Multidisciplinary architecture and planning firm Urbanist Architecture has reported a surge in enquiries for homes in the countryside, a trend seen as a direct result of the COVID-19 crisis, with the practice seeing a 65 per cent increase compared to Q4 of 2019.

The London-based practice is renowned for helping its clients achieve remarkable extensions, conversions and new build homes in the capital, and specialises in handling projects on constrained urban sites, listed buildings or those set within the green belt.

But with the UK population confined to their homes for the majority of 2020, lockdown has caused an increasing number of city dwellers to rethink their current surroundings and yearn for greener pastures and open spaces. This is having a knock-on effect on the property market, and firms such as Urbanist Architecture, which have a proven track record of securing green belt planning permissions and delivering exceptional countryside homes, are witnessing the effects first-hand.

Ufuk Bahar, Managing Director at Urbanist Architecture, comments:

> "Prior to COVID-19, around two-thirds of our projects were focused in highly desirable London boroughs such as Westminster, Islington, Camden and Greenwich, with work ranging from extensions to new build homes and flat conversions. Those working in London wanted to build a life in the city and its sought-after Zone 2/3 suburbs, and a fast commute into Zone 1 was, more often than not, a deciding factor when our clients were deciding where to live. Although our team has strong experience in delivering countryside and green belt projects, we could have never predicted the demand we're seeing now. More and more clients are coming to us looking for large plots of land in truly rural locations, with many deciding to ditch city life and the daily commute for good in the wake of the pandemic."

Urbanist Architecture also attributes increased demand to its historical ability to successfully leverage Paragraph 79, a section of the National Planning Policy Framework that relates to sustainable new build homes in the open countryside, which are notoriously difficult to get planning permission for. One of the team's most recent success stories was obtaining planning permission to build two family dwellings on green belt land in Amersham – approved due to its high-quality design which was sympathetic to the surrounding landscape.

Mark Morris, Planning Consultant at Urbanist Architecture, comments:

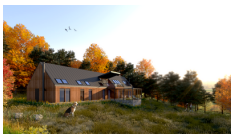
> "The fact that we've received so many commissions for Paragraph 79 homes is testament to our world-class team and our ongoing commitment to designing exceptional schemes for clients. With enquiries for rural dwellings up 42 per cent in Q2 of this year and then increasing to 65 per cent as we enter Q4, we expect more and more people to be asking for this kind of planning application – which offers them the chance to build their dream home in the country."

To find out more about Urbanist Architecture and its projects, visit https://urbanistarchitecture.co.uk/

Media:











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