

Introduction

Plan-A were approached to advise on the development potential of a disused barn that had previously been converted to a yoga studio. The remote location, near Horsley falls within the jurisdiction of Stroud District Council. The site is located within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and was formerly associated with the main farmhouse, which is Grade II Listed. The barn is accessed via an existing shared private driveway.



Our Approach

Given the remote setting, proposals for residential development would not normally be allowed in the context of prevailing planning policies. Furthermore, as the barn had previously been converted and used for a non-agricultural use, it was no longer eligible for conversion under the permitted development rights regime. As the building was constructed in a traditional Cotswolds vernacular style, we were however able to make a case for its further conversion to a residential use on the basis that the barn should be regarded a 'non-designated heritage asset'.

The barn itself had some structural defects and the abutting cowshed and associated outbuildings were in a poor state of repair. As such, we were able to argue that the proposed conversion to a dwelling would help secure a long term viable future use that would help to preserve the historic structures.

Given the state of the existing structures and the barn's close proximity to nearby woodland, additional specialist input was sought and the application was accompanied by Structural Reports, an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and a Preliminary Ecological Assessment to ensure that potentially damaging impacts on nearby trees and local ecology would be avoided. Furthermore, the sensitive design limited the number of new window/door openings proposed in order to minimise the amount of historic building fabric that would need to be removed to facilitate the proposed conversion.

During the course of the application assessment process, some minor design amendments were made to limit potential light spill to the surrounding countryside and a suitable curtilage for the new dwelling was agreed with officers. Planning permission was duly granted and the site was then sold on to new owners to carry out the approved conversion.