

Introduction

Following a referral from one of our architect contacts, Plan-A were invited by the prospective purchasers of an existing agricultural barn to advise on its potential for conversion to residential use under ‘Class Q’ permitted development rights. These rights allow for residential conversions subject to strict compliance with an extensive set of qualifying criteria, all of which necessitate careful consideration in order to maximise the prospects of a successful outcome.



The Site

The barn comprised a large steel frame structure located at the edge of a cluster of other modern agricultural buildings to the west of Southrop village. It was constructed in a mix of blockwork and corrugated sheet walls under a corrugated panel roof. Since its construction, it had been used for a variety of agricultural storage purposes as part of an established agricultural unit. As the site fell outside of the AONB and a structural survey had confirmed that it was both structurally sound and thereby suitable and capable of conversion, the barn met two of the key qualifying criteria associated with Class Q developments. However, it was still necessary to ensure that the detailed design and proposed layout of the conversion scheme could be achieved within the scope of the other qualifying criteria.

Our Approach

Following our appointment, the first step was to brief both the client and scheme architect on the specific requirements associated with Class Q developments, so that the proposed conversion could be designed to meet the client’s accommodation requirements whilst staying within each of the relevant parameters from the outset. One of the client’s key requirements was the need for the conversion to provide an integral residential annexe that could be occupied by other members of the family whilst still providing a degree of independence. This was achieved by means of a vertical subdivision of the building envelope set to either side of a shared entrance whilst also providing an internal connecting doorway that linked the two units.



Other design features incorporated as part of the proposals included recessed balconies and verandas to ensure that development stayed within the existing building envelope (a relevant Class Q requirement), whilst the principle elevation was also designed to face away from the other buildings associated with the site in order to provide appropriate levels of privacy and amenity and reduce potential noise impacts.

Having worked closely with the clients and scheme architect, we prepared a robust prior approval application which addressed all relevant material considerations. As a consequence, no adverse consultation responses were received in respect of the proposals and the case officer determined that the development did not require the prior approval of the Local Planning Authority. The works have now been completed to a high standard and provide an exceptional quality of accommodation.

