

### Introduction

Plan-A were invited by a former client to advise and manage the planning application process associated with proposals for the residential conversion of a redundant agricultural barn located within their farm estate to provide two independent dwellings.

### The Site

Although set within the context of amongst a small cluster of other buildings, the existing barn lies within a relatively isolated location and is partially open to views across the wider landscape of the Cotswolds AONB. Whilst not listed, the barn's traditional design and appearance means that it is considered to constitute a 'non-designated heritage asset'.

Whilst relevant planning policies do not allow for new-build market housing outside of established settlements, they do allow for the residential conversion of existing rural buildings, subject to compliance with a series of strict criteria. These are generally aimed at limiting increases in the size of the existing buildings and ensuring that development does not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the wider landscape.



### Our Approach

Having previously worked with the clients in respect of other development projects, they knew the advantages in engaging our services at an early stage in the process. Accordingly, we were able to advise them during the course of an initial site meeting as to the issues that were likely to arise as part of the application process, so that these could be addressed as an integral part of the design process.

In common with most proposals involving the conversion of existing buildings, it was necessary to commission a preliminary roost assessment for bats and nesting birds. Subsequent follow-up surveys established that the barn was used as a night roost for two separate bat species, and this meant that the proposals had to accommodate provision for a bat roost within the roof space of one of the residential units. Other key considerations associated with the proposed residential use were to ensure that suitable outdoor amenity space was provided and that there was also sufficient car parking and manoeuvring space for each of the units.

Following submission of the planning application, both the landscape and conservation officers raised concerns in respect of the submitted proposals. The landscape officer considered that the extent of the domestic curtilage proposed should be reduced to minimise the impact of domestic use, whilst the conservation officer sought provision of a galleried section within the barn to better convey its existing openness. Subsequent discussions resulted in the submission of associated amendments which were considered to go far enough to satisfy the officer's concerns. Planning permission was subsequently granted under officer delegated powers without further issue and the development has now been implemented accordingly.

