



Background and Context

Plan-A were contacted by the owner of a number of dilapidated commercial storage sheds to advise on the scope for their replacement with larger buildings better suited to their needs. However, on the basis of our initial site appraisal, it was established that before we could progress with a scheme for their replacement, we first needed to submit an application for a Certificate of Lawfulness, to regularise the storage use.

The Site

The site lies adjacent to an existing employment area to the east of Fairford and, whilst most of the land was undeveloped, the western end of the site was occupied by a number of steel framed barns and sheds clad in corrugated sheeting and interspersed with areas of open storage and hardstanding. The area was accessed via a hard surfaced track from an existing gated entrance off the main road. Furthermore, whilst the commercial storage use had been in operation for many years, there was no relevant planning history associated with it.

Our Approach

Following a detailed site assessment, we advised and assisted in the preparation of a series of Statutory Declarations which evidenced the extent and nature of the use, together with the fact that it had been in continuous operation for well in excess of 10 years. In conjunction with additional photographic evidence, we then compiled an application for a Certificate of Lawfulness in respect of the existing use. No issues were raised by the District Council and, since they were satisfied that 'on the balance of probabilities' the use had been ongoing as described, they issued a Certificate of Lawfulness in connection with the site's use and development.

Having regularised the existing use of the site, we were able to progress with an initial application for replacement of two of the existing buildings with a new building incorporating ancillary office and welfare facilities. Whilst significantly larger than the buildings it replaced, the proposals enabled a net reduction in the amount of open storage associated with the site to be achieved, thereby resulting in an overall improvement in the site's appearance. Conditions were imposed requiring agreement of proposed materials to be used for the building, together with external lighting and details of a fuel interceptor and oil storage tank. Plan-A coordinated the submission and approval of all relevant details enabling the development to commence.



Some 2 years later, Plan-A were instructed to submit an application for an additional storage building to further reduce the amount of open storage located at the site.

This was located adjacent to the first replacement building and, since it was designed to match its external appearance, it was approved without issue. Then, after a further 18 months had elapsed, we were instructed to apply for the replacement of another two of the original buildings which had, by then, reached the end of their useful life. No objections were received in response to the application although a condition was imposed requiring submission of a biodiversity enhancement scheme. Plan-A coordinated the input of a suitable ecology consultant on behalf of the applicant and, once the condition was discharged, the development was implemented accordingly.