



SWORDERS
Agricultural Commercial Residential

CASE STUDY

Planning for the residential conversion of an historic farmstead, including a Grade II* listed tithe barn, to provide a total of six dwellings.

SWORDERS CASE STUDY

Planning for the residential conversion of an historic farmstead, including a Grade II* listed tithe barn, to provide a total of six dwellings.

THE PROJECT

The conversion of five traditional barns, including a Grade II* listed tithe barn, into six dwellings

Programme

A carefully considered and phased approach, taking into account the level of difficulty associated with the conversion of individual barns

Key milestones

Planning permission granted for the first three buildings

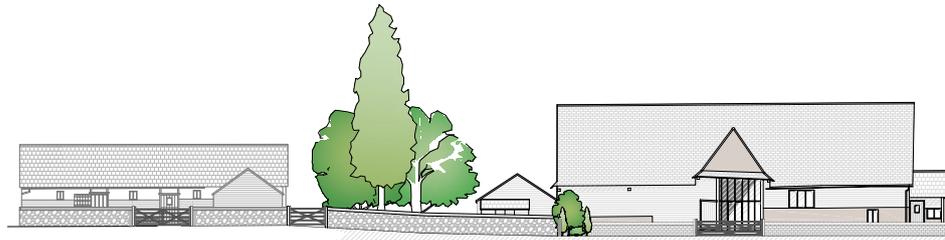
A further permission granted for the conversion of an individual barn to a single dwelling, involving a greater design challenge to comply with policy

Grade II* listed tithe barn, the last and most sensitive planning application, is submitted and later approved.

BACKGROUND

Local Planning Authorities (LPA) and English Heritage (now Historic England - HE) tend to resist the conversion of Grade II* listed buildings as they consider them too important and usually raise concerns that their residential conversion would compromise their character.

If Sworders had incorporated all five buildings on the site in a single application, the LPA and HE could have resisted the conversion of the Grade II* tithe barn, which is of particular historic interest. It is likely that the LPA and HE would have sought the proceeds from the other conversions to fund the tithe barn renovation works, thus securing the long term retention of the building in its agricultural form and effectively preventing its residential conversion.



THE APPROACH

Sworders recommended a phased approach to the barn conversions with the main aim being to increase the chances of securing planning permission to convert the main Grade II* tithe barn. Sworders first sought planning permission in 2009 for the three buildings most suited to conversion as this represented the best chance of securing an initial residential planning permission, and a basis by which to justify further permissions.

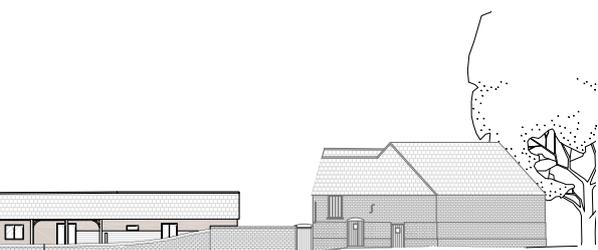
The original 2009 application was granted planning and listed building consent and was subsequently followed by a further application to convert a single barn to a dwelling. Although this proved more challenging from a design perspective, it was also successfully granted planning permission -

making five dwellings in all - which just left the Grade II* listed tithe barn.

This took considerable effort on Sworders' part, with numerous meetings being held with the Council's Conservation Officer and HE. Both were initially opposed to the scheme, although Sworders eventually managed to persuade them that a residential use was the best means by which to secure the building's long term future rather than a nil use.

A great amount of information was submitted with the subsequent applications, including detailed structural reports, design drawings, historic surveys and a viability appraisal which Sworders undertook in-house.





“We always knew this was a complex, delicate project and had every faith in Sworders in being able to reach a positive outcome. Progressing projects such as this on a phased basis can be frustrating, especially when the natural inclination is to try to progress things as quickly as possible, but with the substantial additional value generated, Sworders have demonstrated the virtue of patience.

We are delighted with the result: sensitive renovations of what were dilapidated barns that set off the ancient features beautifully, being used and enjoyed every day.”

Landowner, Suzanne Rea

THE RESULT

The Council were unable to insist on seeking the funds generated from the other barn conversions to renovate the tithe barn and thus resist the conversion proposal as these were separate applications that had long been concluded.

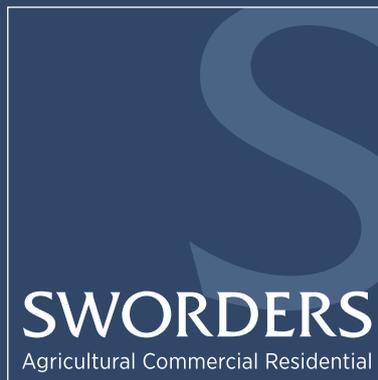
The LPA acknowledged that the Grade II* listed tithe barn was better off with a use rather than see it decline in condition if left vacant, so, subsequently granted planning for the conversion of the barn - despite its listing - to provide a total of six dwellings on the site. Sworders then marketed and sold the site with planning permission for all six dwellings.

THE SALE

The sale was complex as it involved multiple units as well as a number of complex issues to overcome including shared access and utilities and boundaries - in addition to the sensitive planning consent. It was important to consider the sale method in detail to help generate interest in the property. By lotting the different assets, Sworders was able to build competition to help generate negotiations.

Sworders utilised a variety of marketing methods to expose the property fully to the market, rather than rely on a limited list of known developers. The sale completed in 2014 and in 2016 the final and most sensitive renovation, The Tithe Barn, was completed and put on the market.





SURVEYORS | PLANNERS | ARCHITECTS

The Gatehouse, Hadham Hall,
Little Hadham, Ware,
Hertfordshire SG11 2EB
T: 01279 77 11 88

The Stables, Bourton Hall,
Bourton on Dunsmore,
Warwickshire CV23 9SD
T: 01788 435 435

11 Holkham Studios, Longlands,
Holkham Estate, Wells-next-the-Sea,
Norfolk NR23 1SH
T: 01328 85 44 00

post@sworders.com sworders.com