

Underhill House

Warwickshire

Located in the heart of the Cotswolds, Hill Barn was a derelict 300 year old stone structure situated in a prominent and beautiful location at the top of a hill in an **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**. Being in AONB **open countryside**, together with the fact that there was a **Housing Moratorium** in the area, made the prospect of obtaining planning permission extremely unlikely.

We addressed these challenges by proposing to convert the barn into an office, and to slot the new house in underneath it. So, despite the **sensitive location**, the design of the house was able to be very bold. The existing barn has been carefully restored, whilst the new building underneath and adjacent to it is in contrast strikingly modern. Being dug into the hill to be invisible from the surrounding countryside, this is essentially a stealth house, with absolute **minimal visual as well as environmental impact** on the landscape.

Planning permission was granted under paragraph 11 of PPS7 (now NPPF para. 55), a policy which gives special dispensation for **new houses in open countryside** which are considered to be **'truly outstanding and ground-breaking'** and to reflect **'the highest standards in contemporary architecture'**. Underhill House is one of only 20 properties in the UK ever to be granted permission under this rule.

Underhill House is also designed as a **Passivhaus** – a German standard resulting in a 90% reduction in carbon emissions compared to that of an average home. This project was in fact the **first certified Passivhaus in England**.

SEYMOUR-SMITH
ARCHITECTS

North Wing, Barton House, Barton-on-the-Heath
Moreton-in-Marsh, GLOS, GL56 0PJ
01608 674 153

www.seymoursmith.co.uk
info@seymoursmith.co.uk

