



The 19th-century barn in Oxfordshire was not only nearly derelict, with most of its cladding falling off and the roof missing tiles, but it was also too small to use as a house



The original timber frame was incorporated into the new building. An extension was built, the floor level lowered and new cladding, windows, doors and roofs added

The brick plinth shows by how much the plot was dug out to give extra height to the barn

EXTREME
Transformations

BEFORE

From timber wreck ...

Seeing potential in an Oxfordshire barn, Caroline and Mark Wilson have created a home that combines country character with the latest mod cons

Take the 60-SECOND TOUR

THE PROPERTY

A converted 19th-century barn in Oakley, Oxfordshire.

WHO LIVES THERE

Caroline and Mark Wilson. Caroline is a curtain-maker and Mark is a chartered surveyor.

WHAT THEY DID

The couple dismantled and then rebuilt the old barn, reusing the original timber frame and adding new cladding and a proper roof. The floor level inside the barn was

lowered to create extra height inside to create an upstairs bedroom and en-suite bathroom, while a new extension was built at the back of the barn to provide a guest bedroom and bathroom, a TV room, a living room and a mezzanine study.

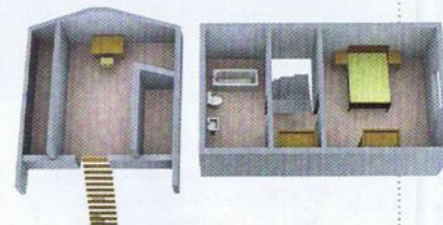
WHAT IT COST

Caroline and Mark bought the plot for £160,000 in 2007 and spent £400,000 on the building work. The converted barn is now worth around £750,000.



◀ **GROUND FLOOR**
The original part of the barn houses the kitchen, dining room and utility room. The extension has a living room, guest room with en suite and a TV room

FIRST FLOOR ▶
Caroline and Mark's bedroom and en suite is upstairs in the old barn. In the new extension, steps connect the living room with a mezzanine study



to country home

Only a brave couple would take on the ramshackle barn that Mark and Caroline Wilson have converted into their home. The previous owners wanted to demolish it to make room for a new build but couldn't get planning permission, so they asked Mark, a chartered surveyor, to investigate its potential, and he ended up making an offer on the barn himself. 'I'd always had a thing about barn conversions - they're quirky,' he says.

Apart from the building's poor condition, the main challenge was its size. It was big enough for two rooms, but not much else, so Mark and Caroline lowered the ground level to create enough height for an upstairs bedroom and en-suite bathroom, and built an extension at the back for a living room, study and guest bedroom. They worked with Ian Slater (01844 260860; ianslater.com) on the design, which took a year to be granted planning permission.

'I did a lot of research, looking in the local library and finding old Ordnance Survey maps, which showed there used to be another building on the site, but the planners insisted our extension to be lower in height than the barn,' explains Mark.

Building work took 10 months. The lower parts of their home had to be waterproofed, after they struck water when digging into the ground, and the property



'I still park in front of our home after a day at work and think, "I did that. I rescued that old building"'

needed to be connected to mains water, electricity and a phone line from an adjacent road. The conversion also required specialist skills, such as carpentry, and costly materials, such as reclaimed roof tiles and timber window frames, but Mark says it was worth it. 'I can look straight out of my study to a field with chickens and the Chiltern hills beyond,' he says. 'And I still park in front of our home after a day at work and think, "I did that. I rescued that old building."'



The old barn is fully fitted with mod cons including efficient insulation, underfloor heating, broadband and an integrated sound system, but it retains quirky original features, such as the exposed timber frame

WANT TO RESCUE A WRECK?
Turn the page for info and inspiration