
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 October 2025

by **E Worley BA (Hons) Dip EP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/E0345/W/25/3367970

Peter Moss Services, Land rear of 20 Norcot Road, Tilehurst, Reading RG30 6BU

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Sajmir & Eglantina Klosi against the decision of Reading Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is PL/24/1534.
 - The development proposed is the demolition & rebuilding of workshop to rear of 20 Norcot Road, Reading, RG30 6BU.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have taken the description of development from the planning application form, as this is the development for which permission is sought. For the avoidance of doubt, while there may be other ancillary development shown on the submitted Proposed Site Plan, I have determined the appeal based on the description of the proposed development.
3. Whether or not the existing development which has taken place at the appeal site is lawful, together with the alleged breach of the Enforcement Notice, are matters for the parties to resolve outside of this appeal.
4. A Noise Assessment¹ (NA) was submitted as part of the appeal. As the Council and interested parties have had the opportunity to consider this information as part of the appeal process, no injustice would occur should I accept it. I have therefore determined the appeal based on this information.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - the living conditions of the occupiers of nearby properties; and
 - the character and appearance of the area.

¹ BS4142 ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING SPRAY BOOTH TO TILEHURST HAND CAR WASH, NORCOT ROAD, READING, RG30 6BU, by JosTec dated 13 June 2025

Reasons

Living conditions

6. The appeal site is located to the rear of the frontage development on Norcot Road. It comprises an area of hardstanding which is occupied by, among other things, a workshop building used for car repairs and refurbishment, a canopy and spray booth building. The application form indicates the existing use of the site is B2 general industrial use. This aligns with the findings of the Inspector in an earlier appeal², who considered the lawful use, for general vehicle repairs along with associated storage, to be general industrial (Class B2) use. Given my observations on site and the evidence before me, I have no reason to disagree.
7. The surrounding area contains a mix of commercial and residential uses. These include properties with commercial uses at ground floor and residential uses above on Norcot Road, residential properties immediately to the rear and side of the site, as well as various business uses nearby and a public car park. The submitted plans show that the appeal proposal would see the demolition of the existing workshop and its replacement with a new larger modern purpose-built general workshop, incorporating a paint spray booth in part of the unit.
8. The Council's main concern is the effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring residential properties through noise and odour pollution, given the increase in the size of the building. The appellants' NA indicates that the report was commissioned to determine the noise impact of the recently installed spray booth at the site. It expressly evaluated the effects of the spray booth extraction system on nearby noise sensitive receptors, specifically the residential properties on Norcott Road and Recreation Road that back onto the appeal site.
9. Notwithstanding the methodology and findings of the NA, which are a matter of dispute between the parties, the assessment is based on noise generated by the operation of the existing stand-alone vehicle spray booth and associated extraction system, which currently occupies the site. However, the submitted plans show a spray booth integral to the proposed workshop building, with the proposed flues to the roof of the building differing from those on the existing booth in terms of design and configuration. It would appear therefore that the NA considers the current situation, rather than the effects of the proposed development, including the spray booth facility as proposed, within the proposed building envelope and associated extraction system. Given that they are two entirely different scenarios, there is no clear evidence that the proposed development would operate in the same way as the existing spray booth or the effects would be the same in terms of noise levels.
10. In these circumstances, without certainty regarding the noise levels generated by the use of the proposed workshop, including the paint booth, on the nearest noise sensitive receptors, or the form or extent of any mitigation measures which may be necessary, it would not be appropriate to secure these details through a planning condition.
11. Moreover, the appeal submissions fail to provide a robust assessment of the effects of the proposed development with regard to odour and fumes which may

² Appeal Decisions: APP/E0345/C/24/3338517 & 3338518 and APP/E0345/C/24/3338521 & 3338522

be generated by the proposed spray booth, the effects of which may give rise to harm to air quality, as well as living conditions.

12. Taking the above factors into account, there are clear uncertainties in relation to the effect of the development in terms of noise. Furthermore, there is no compelling evidence to demonstrate that the proposal would not have an adverse effect in terms of odour and fumes.

Thus, based on the evidence before me, I am unable to conclude that the proposal would not harm the living conditions of the occupiers of nearby residential properties. In that regard, it would conflict with the aims of Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, adopted November 2019 (RBLP), which sets out that, in order to safeguard amenity, development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties, in terms of, among other things, noise and disturbance, dust, fumes and smell, and Policy EN17 of the RBLP, which indicates acceptable noise source specific levels for schemes where noise generating equipment is proposed.

Character and appearance

13. The area surrounding the appeal site includes a range of buildings that vary in size, including the nearby residential properties and their gardens which are of a domestic scale, and commercial buildings of a greater overall bulk. While larger in footprint, the proposed workshop building would not be dissimilar in terms of eaves and ridge height to the commercial building immediately adjoining the site, or inconsistent with the overall scale of others in the vicinity. Moreover, the extent of built form would maintain a degree of ancillary space around the building. Consequently, while the proposed building would be greater in height and scale than the workshop it would replace, it would not appear as a visually incongruent feature or be at odds with the character and appearance of the area. Furthermore, given the siting of the proposed workshop, set back from Norcot Road and Recreation Road, it would not be visually prominent in views from these directions.
14. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, it would not conflict with the aims of Policy CC7 of the RBLP which seek development of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area, including, among other things, through its scale, height and massing.

Other Matters

15. I understand that the site has been in use for motor related activities for a considerable period. The appellants contend that, given the lawful use of the site for B2 general industrial use, activity associated with the repair of cars could and does take place beyond the confines of the existing workshop building. While it may be the case that car repairs can and do take place outside of the existing building, as acknowledged by the appellants, it may not be possible to carry out such activity during inclement weather. Indeed, the large canopy which has been erected at the site, which would enable outdoor activity in poor weather conditions, would appear to be testament to this. Moreover, I understand that it is preferable for vehicle spray painting to take place indoors. Consequently, while there is a greater than a theoretical possibility that the B2 use of the wider site, outside of the building, may take place, such activity is likely to be restricted by practical limitations and constraints such as weather conditions.

16. Furthermore, even if the workshop would enable existing activities which may occur outdoors to take place within the building, which the appellant suggests would be built to modern acoustic standards, in light of my findings in relation to the first main issue, I cannot be certain that the proposal would offer benefits in terms of the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties in that regard. I therefore attribute the fallback position limited weight.
17. The proposal may accord with other policies in the development plan, including those that relate to the principle of the type of development proposed in this location. However, the absence of harm or conflict with other relevant development plan policies is a neutral factor and does not weigh in favour of the proposal. Moreover, there is no substantive evidence that a shortfall in industry and warehousing space could not be met elsewhere.
18. The appellant suggests that the new workshop would improve the appearance of the existing site as it would enable the vehicles to be stored within the new building as opposed to being kept outside. While the current condition of the site may not make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area, I have found that the proposal would harm the living conditions of the occupiers of the adjoining properties. Furthermore, there is no compelling evidence that the building is the only solution to addressing security issues at the site.
19. While the proposal may offer benefits in terms of the working environment for employees at the site, providing continued employment and would support a local business, there is no substantive evidence that the appeal proposal is the only means by which improvements in that regard could be achieved, or that the business would not continue to operate successfully should the appeal not succeed.
20. The proposed development would reflect the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) that encourage effective use of land, including the use of suitable brownfield land within settlements. Nonetheless, the Framework also indicates that proposals should only be approved where they would not cause substantial harm.
21. I understand that a recent Abatement Notice in relation to activity at the site was withdrawn. However, this is separate to the planning regime.

Conclusion

22. While I have found that the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area, it has not been demonstrated that it would not give rise to harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring residential properties. The proposal would therefore conflict with the development plan read as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.

E Worley

INSPECTOR