

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Tilehurst

App Ref: PL/24/1534 Full planning permission

Address: Peter Moss Services, 20 Norcot Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6BU

Proposal: Demolition of existing garage workshops, canopy extension, and detached spray booth building, and replacement with metal clad building for General Industrial purposes (Class B2 – Vehicle Workshop and Vehicle Body Spraying) accessed via Lemart Close, with carparking, and waste storage

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Sajmir & Eglantina Klosi

Received date: 18 November 2024 (valid 24 January 2025)

Target Decision date: 21 March 2025

Case Officer: Anthony Scholes

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application form refers to the property as “Peter Moss Services, 20 Norcot Road, Tilehurst”. It is noted that the red line plan relates to land to the rear of 20 Norcot Road, accessed via Lemart Close. The documents submitted with the application, including the location plan, and other plans are clear that this application relates to land to the rear of 20 Norcot Road, though the address may not be the best descriptor of the site.

The application site, within the red line plan, is land to the rear of 20 Norcot Road, and accessed via Lemart Close, with a blue line incorporating the land fronting Norcot Road (see figure 1 below). It is noted that the view of the site at the time of the site visit (figure 2 below) does not reflect the lawful use of the land. An enforcement notice issued by Reading Borough Council as amended by appeal references: APP/E0345/C/24/3338521 & APP/E0345/C/24/3338522, requires: “(ii) *Cease to use the land for vehicle body paint spraying*; (iii) *Cease to use the land for vehicle storage*; (iv) *Dismantle and remove the vehicle paint spraying building from the land*; (v) *Dismantle and remove the lean-to extension to the garage workshop from the land* (vi) *Remove all plant, machinery & equipment for vehicle bodywork & repair and vehicle body spraying from the land*; (vii) *Remove all vehicles and vehicle parts from the land*; (viii) *Remove all business advertisements from the land.*” The compliance date for the above, was 6 months from the date of the appeal decision (13 August 2024), being 13 February 2025. It is understood that, with relation to the red line plan area only, that there has been little compliance with the enforcement notice.

Notwithstanding the above, and lack of compliance with the enforcement notice requirements, the existing use must be considered as the use that would be capable of being undertaken following the above points (ii – viii of the enforcement notice).

The wider application site, including the blue line plan include land fronting Norcot Road. The site as a whole is within the Tilehurst District centre and is considered a transitional area between the district centre and the wider residential area of Tilehurst. This is evident given the mix of uses within the site, and the adjacent site. The front of 20 Norcot Road, containing a ground floor restaurant, upper floors of residential. It would also appear that the adjoining site to the west contain ground floor residential uses behind the frontage active centre uses. To the east and south, the sites contain three attached single storey residential uses and residential gardens associated with Norcot Road properties, and the rear gardens of properties fronting Recreation Road.

The site is not listed, nor is it located within a conservation area. The site is identified as contaminated land. The site is not within an air quality management area.



Figure 1 - Site location plan transposed onto aerial image



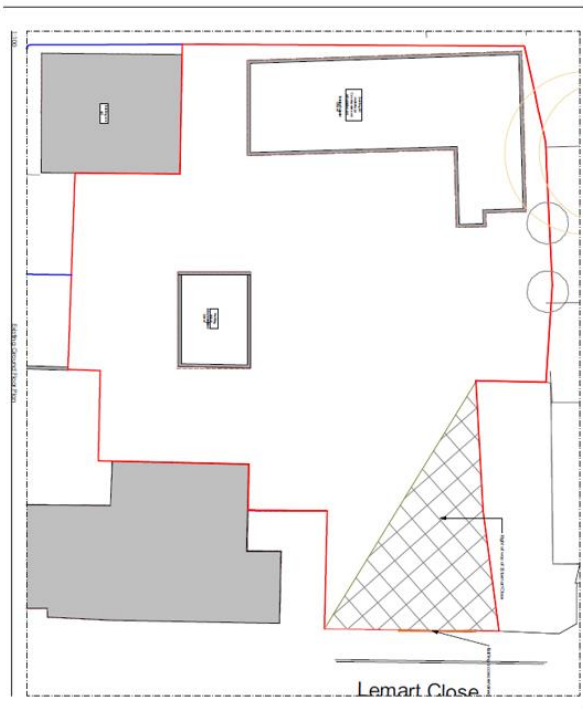
Figure 2 - Site visit photos 25 January 2025

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

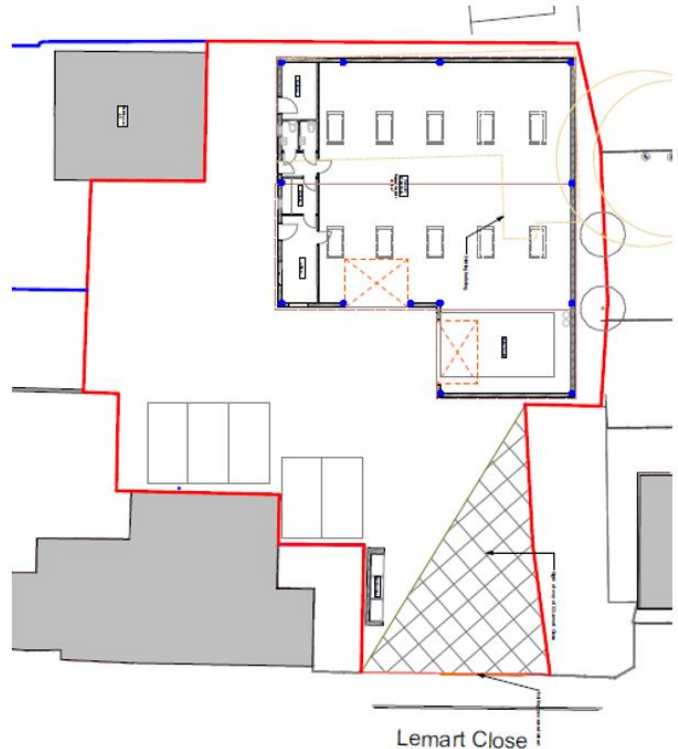
The proposed development seeks approval for the demolition of the existing garage workshops, canopy extension, and attached spray booth building (part of which is required to be removed under aforementioned enforcement notice), and replacement with metal clad building for General Industrial purposes (Class B2 – Vehicle Workshop and Vehicle Body Spraying) accessed via Lemart Close, with carparking, and waste storage.

The proposal would remove all structures from the land (authorised and unauthorised) and replace the low profile lawful building (3.4m high), with a 5.7m (at peak) to 3.6m (at eaves) of approximately double the size.

Existing Plans



Proposed Plans



The application was supported by the following plans and documents:

- Drawing No. 9213-100 – Location Plan
- Drawing No. 9213-101 – Existing block and Proposed Block Plan
- Drawing No. 9213-102 – Proposed Site Plan
- Drawing No. 9213-103 – Existing Ground Floor Plan
- Drawing No. 9213-105 – Existing Elevations
- Drawing No. 9213-106 – Existing Side Elevations
- Drawing No. 9213-107 – Proposed Ground Floor Plan
- Drawing No. 9213-108 – Proposed Roof Floor Plan
- Drawing No. 9213-109 – Proposed Elevations
- Drawing No. 9213-110 – Proposed Side Elevations
- Appeal Refs: APP/E0345/C/24/3338517 & APP/E0345/C/24/3338518 and APP/E0345/C/24/3338521 & APP/E0345/C/24/3338522 - Costs Decision Letter
- APP/E0345/C/24/3338517 & APP/E0345/C/24/3338518 Land at Norcot Road, Tilehurst, Reading RG30 6BU – Appeal decisions letter
- Application form
- CIL form
- The Keen Partnership, Planning Statement

As received 18 November 2024

- The 'Arbtech', Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost assessment, dated 3 December 2024
- The 'Jostec', 'BS4142 Assessment of addition of spray booth to Tilehurst hand car wash, Norcot Road, Reading, dated 12 June 2023
- Drawing No. MWA TPP 01 – Tree Protection Plan
- The MWA Arboriculture, MWA Tree Survey Schedule, as received 8 January 2025
- The MWA Arboriculture, Arboricultural Appraisal Report, Ref: DEV241126-1251, dated 6 January 2025
- Amended application form (corrected owner declaration)

- The RF Environmental, Odour Assessment, Ref: RFE-0508-23-02-02-AQ FINAL, dated 23 June 2023

As received 8 January 2025

- Drawing No. 9213-101 – Existing Block & Proposed Block Plan REV A
- The Arbtech, Preliminary ecological appraisal and roost assessment, dated 3 December 2024

As received 9 January 2025

- The Keen Partnership, Sustainability Statement

As received 13 January 2025

- The Groundsure, Enviro+Geo Insight, dated 14 January 2025

As received 24 January 2025

3. PLANNING HISTORY

20 Norcot Road

0000006930 – Residential Development – Unconditional Consent on 04/12/1959

0000009063 - MOTOR SHOWROOMS 8 GARAGES ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING PREMISES – Conditional Consent granted on 10/11/1961

0000009492 - ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS – Conditional Consent granted on 27/04/1962

0000010561 - USE AS BETTING OFFICE – Conditional Consent granted on 07/06/1963

85/TP/0266 - CHANGE OF USE FROM FLAT TO OFFICES – Refused on 07/06/1985

890472/FUL - CHANGE OF USE FROM RESIDENTIAL FLAT TO OFFICE (B1) – Refused on 23/03/1989

891093/FUL - CHANGE OF USE 1ST FLOOR PLUS ATTIC FROM RESIDENTIAL TO PRIVATE OFFICE – Refused on 29/08/1989

200766/OPA - Change of use of bookmakers (sui generis) to B1(a) use (offices). Prior Notification under Class JA, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended). – Granted Prior Approval on 06/08/2020

210433/RPA - Change of use of ground floor from Betting Office (Sui Generis Use) to C3 (dwellinghouses) to comprise 1 flat. Prior Notification under Class M, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended). (Amended Description) – Application Withdrawn on 12/05/2021

230179/FUL - Relating the use to Class E (b) Restaurant, erection of front canopy, provision of disabled ramp, removal of internal staircase & erection of external staircase to existing first/second floor flat over. Rear single storey extension, provision of flues to the rear to service the Restaurant. Retrospective. Permitted 05/11/2024.

APP/E0345/C/24/3338517 & APP/E0345/C/24/3338518 – Appeal against issuing of enforcement notice by Reading Borough Council. Enforcement notices amended, and appeal dismissed 13 August 2024 (date for compliance with amended enforcement notice – 13 February 2025)

20a Norcot Road

200373/FUL - Erection of part 1.5 storey, part 2.5 storey apartment block comprising 1 x 1-bed flat and 2 x 2-bed flats following demolition of existing car sales building – Application Permitted on 26/04/2021 (lapsed)

20b Norcot Road

190849/CLP - Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for a Proposed change of use from B2 to B1 - Application Withdrawn on 06/11/2020

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following consultation responses were received.

RBC Transport Development Control

Initial objection. The applicant has failed to demonstrate that the proposed intensification and on-site parking provision complies with the Local Planning Authority's standards in respect of vehicle parking and servicing provision. This could have a detrimental impact on the functioning of the transport network through on-street parking and servicing, or conflicting traffic movements, compromising the safety of users of the transport network including pedestrians and cyclists, contrary to Policies TR1 and TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

A follow up response following additional information on 19 March 2025, the transport response is no objection subject to conditions.

RBC Environmental Protection

I object to the application in its current form. The noise assessment submitted pre dates the latest plans. They would need to submit a noise assessment demonstrating that the proposed building will contain the noise sufficiently to not impact on surrounding residents and they have not done so.

The spray booth extraction is not acceptable and is too close to the boundary with Recreation Rd.

The proposal is likely to be detrimental to amenity of surrounding residents as a result of noise and odour.

RBC Ecologist Consultant

No objections subject to conditions relating to biodiversity enhancements and control of construction and demolition activities (outside bird-nesting season or survey by ecologist ahead of works).

RBC Natural Environment

No objections. Subject to condition regarding implementation in accordance with the Arboricultural Appraisal Report ref DEV241126-1251 dated 06/01/25, Tree Survey Schedule and MWA's associated Tree Protection Plan ref MWA TPP 01.

Thames Water

Thames Water recognises this catchment is subject to high infiltration flows during certain groundwater conditions. The scale of the proposed development doesn't materially affect the sewer network and as

such we have no objection, however care needs to be taken when designing new networks to ensure they don't surcharge and cause flooding. In the longer term Thames Water, along with other partners, are working on a strategy to reduce groundwater entering the sewer networks.

Thames Water recognises this catchment is subject to high infiltration flows during certain groundwater conditions. The developer should liaise with the LLFA to agree an appropriate sustainable surface water strategy following the sequential approach before considering connection to the public sewer network. The scale of the proposed development doesn't materially affect the sewer network and as such we have no objection, however care needs to be taken when designing new networks to ensure they don't surcharge and cause flooding. In the longer term Thames Water, along with other partners, are working on a strategy to reduce groundwater entering the sewer network.

With regard to SURFACE WATER drainage, Thames Water would advise that if the developer follows the sequential approach to the disposal of surface water we would have no objection. Management of surface water from new developments should follow Policy SI 13 Sustainable drainage of the London Plan 2021. Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required. Should you require further information please refer to our website. <https://www.thameswater.co.uk/help/home-improvements/how-to-connect-to-a-sewer/sewer-connection-design>

Thames Water would advise that with regard to WASTE WATER NETWORK and SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS infrastructure capacity, we would not have any objection to the above planning application, based on the information provided.

WATER:

If you are planning on using mains water for construction purposes, it's important you let Thames Water know before you start using it, to avoid potential fines for improper usage. More information and how to apply can be found online at [thameswater.co.uk/buildingwater](https://www.thameswater.co.uk/buildingwater).

On the basis of information provided, Thames Water would advise that with regard to water network and water treatment infrastructure capacity, we would not have any objection to the above planning application. Thames Water recommends the following informative be attached to this planning permission. Thames Water will aim to provide customers with a minimum pressure of 10m head (approx 1 bar) and a flow rate of 9 litres/minute at the point where it leaves Thames Waters pipes. The developer should take account of this minimum pressure in the design of the proposed development.

Three site notices were erected around the site, including one on Recreation Road.

One letter of objection was received, and is summarised below:

- Concerns the owner will not comply with the enforcement notice *Officer note: This is a separate matter to the application.*
- The spray booth will have negative impacts upon residential amenity and health
- Conflict with policy RL3 and harm to living conditions of nearby residents
- No justification for the proposed spray booth as part of the use being adjacent to residential uses

5. EQUALITY ACT 2010

In determining this application, the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore, in terms of the key equalities

protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

6. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

CC3: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

CC5: WASTE MINIMISATION AND STORAGE

CC6: ACCESSIBILITY AND THE INTENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK

EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLAND

EN16: POLLUTION AND WATER RESOURCES

EN17: NOISE GENERATING EQUIPMENT

EM1: PROVISION OF EMPLOYMENT

EM2: LOCATION OF NEW EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT

EM4: MAINTAINING A VARIETY OF PREMISES

TR1: ACHIEVING THE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS

TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

RL1: NETWORK AND HIERARCHY OF CENTRES

RL3: VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF SMALLER CENTRES

SPG/SPD

Affordable Housing (2021)

Design Guide to Shopfronts (2022)

Employment Skills and Training (2013)

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)

Residential Conversions (2013)

Planning Obligations Under S106 (2015)

Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

Site specific – refer online

Character and Appearance

7. APPRAISAL

Material change of use of site

It is well noted that the application site has been in use for motor related activities going back to 1961 and 1962 when two permissions were granted. Prior to 2017 it would appear that the land was in a mixed use, primarily that of motor vehicle repairs with ancillary uses, along with a car sales business which operated independently from the forecourt.

The proposed development is for the construction of a new building to house an expanded use of the site for B2 purposes, including the addition of a vehicle body spraying booth. The proposal plans show an existing floor area of 138.8m² for the car repair operations, and 30.6m² waiting room. Appeal A of the aforementioned appeal decision requires the removal of the 'waiting room' as an unlawful structure. The proposed development would therefore increase the area of the use from 138.8m² to 327.8m². The key issue in this instance appear to be the extent to which the proposed new buildings facilitate a more intensive use of the site (and the effects of that) and any fallback position which may exist.

Provision of employment land and premises

Policy RL1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 states: *"The vitality and viability of these centres should be maintained and enhanced. Some centres are based around a small area of green, and where this is an important part of the layout and function of the centre, it will be retained and where possible enhanced. The following improvements will be acceptable in all centres:*

- *Accessibility and transport improvements;*
- *Broadening range of facilities;*
- *Residential use of upper floors; and*
- *Environmental enhancements."*

Policy RL3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 states: *"... (c) Within and adjacent to district, major local and local centres, all new development should provide some 'centre uses' at the ground floor, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this would not be possible or appropriate."*

Policies EM1 and EM3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 states encourages an amount of industrial and/or warehouse space in Reading and support a variety of size and types of premises.

The provision of an improved facility for the provision of employment activities, to contribute toward the boroughs range of premises is considered in accordance with the policies mentioned above. The provision of a ground floor use as stated by the applicant to be in accordance with Policy RL3, is incorrect. B2 is not considered a centre use in accordance with para 4.6.16 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019. A B2 use is not considered to contribute toward the offering of a centre and is not sought by the Local Plan to be located within centres. Given the impacts of the use (discussed below), it is considered more appropriate to locate this use within a core employment area separate from residential areas. The proposed development has proposed an increased in area of the use, being a material change in the use, and is considered development for the purposes of assessment. The development, has not demonstrated that that it would be possible of inappropriate to locate a centre use at ground floor in accordance with policy RL3, and as such a reason for refusal will be included on this ground.

Amenity Impacts

It is noted that the Use Class Order includes the following definitions:

"Class B2. General industrial

Use for the carrying on of an industrial process other than one falling within the uses described in Schedule 2, Class E, sub-paragraph (g)."

Class E. Commercial, Business and Service

...

(g) for—

(i) an office to carry out any operational or administrative functions,

(ii) the research and development of products or processes, or

(iii) any industrial process,

being a use, which can be carried out in any residential area without detriment to the amenity of that area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit.”

Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 states: “development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of:

- Privacy and overlooking;
- Access to sunlight and daylight;
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;
- Harm to outlook;
- Noise and disturbance;
- Artificial lighting;
- Vibration;
- Dust and fumes;
- Smell;
- Crime and safety; or
- Wind, where the proposals involve new development of more than 8 storeys.

...

As well as immediate impacts, other aspects to which this policy applies will include matters such as hours of operation of businesses, and effects of traffic movements, particularly of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs). Proposals which would generate regular movements of HGVs on residential roads will not be acceptable...”

Policy EN16 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 states: “Development will only be permitted where it would not be damaging to the environment and sensitive receptors through land, noise or light pollution; where it would result in no deterioration in, or ideally enhance, ground and surface water quality; and where adequate water resources, sewerage and wastewater treatment infrastructure will be in place to support the proposed development prior to occupation.

Proposals for development that are sensitive to the effects of noise or light pollution will only be permitted in areas where they will not be subject to high levels of such pollution, unless adequate mitigation measures are provided to minimise the impact of such pollution.

Development will only be permitted on land affected by contamination where it is demonstrated that the contamination and land gas can be satisfactorily managed or remediated so that it is suitable for the proposed end use and will not impact on the groundwater environment, human health, buildings and the wider environment, during demolition and construction phases as well as during the future use of the site.

Policy EN17 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 states: “Where noise generating equipment is proposed, the noise source specific⁶¹ level (plant noise level) should be at least 10dBA below the existing background level as measured at the nearest noise sensitive receptor.”

The applicant has submitted both acoustic assessments, and noise assessments dated 2023. These assessments were submitted with withdrawn application PL/23/0312. Environmental health officers similarly objected at the time of the previous application. In addition to objecting to the assessments, as a part of other action to control emissions from the site (environmental health regulation matters) the reporting was reviewed by Syntegra Consulting on behalf of Reading Borough Council in December 2023. The Syntegra review concluded that: “It is therefore safe to conclude that there are considerable issues in the Jostec assessment and report and that the conclusions and recommendations in that report are inaccurate and potentially unsafe.” It is noted, that in conjunction with environmental protection

actions, the noise from the spray booth may have been attenuated further. No such information, nor an updated acoustic assessment has been provided, as such the details submitted have been assessed. This review is considered to be maintained as accurate and the acoustic assessment has failed to demonstrate that amenity of residents would be protected in accordance with Policy CC8 and 135 and 139 of the NPPF.

With regards to the extraction, details of the flue have not been provided. It is understood some details have been provided to environmental health officers though no information on this is within the application package. With regard to the application details have not been provided as to what exactly is being emitted from the building via the system i.e. ambient air or other, and how the emissions will be managed. Therefore, officers have not been able to confirm that the development would have an acceptable impact on residential amenity with regards to fumes generated from the use of the development as a spray booth.

The proposal would facilitate a substantial increase in the scale and intensity of industrial activity within the site, in close proximity to residential properties and district centre uses. General industry is considered incompatible with the location. Although the site has a B2 use, the associated buildings are small and this constrains their potential impact. Any fallback position is likely to be limited as most industrial activities would require a building to operate effectively, or within the limits of other environmental controls. The scope for industrial processes carried out in the open air is likely to be limited. As such it is considered that any works to facilitate a more intensive industrial activity in this location should be resisted based on its impacts on surrounding incompatible land uses.

The development is therefore considered to have a harmful impact on the living conditions of nearby residents along Norcot Road and Recreation Road. The development is considered to be a harmful intensification industrial uses that are unsuitable to the predominantly residential surrounding area. The development is considered not to be in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. In this regard, due to the harmful impact that this development would have on the character of the area, the development is also not considered in accordance with Policy CC8.

The proposed development includes the construction of a maximum height 5.7m tall workshop building backing onto the gardens of no's 15-19 Recreation Road. Due to the scale, it is likely that this will be visible from a number of properties along Recreation Road. This has the potential to result in an overbearing appearance on residential properties to the rear. Two existing buildings existing to the rear of no's 1-7 Recreation Road, being a two-storey and single storey brick built partly rendered buildings, these are uncharacteristic of the area.

The proposed development would expand increase the built form, and decrease the sense of openness and residential nature afforded to these rear gardens on the boundary of a transition from the district centre to residential uses. This is considered to give rise to an unacceptable degree of overbearing to neighbouring properties contrary to Policy CC8.

Design and impact on character of the area

Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 states: *"All development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The various components of development form, including: -*

- *Layout: urban structure and urban grain;*
- *Landscape;*
- *Density and mix;*
- *Scale: height and massing; and*
- *Architectural detail and materials*

will be assessed to ensure that the development proposed makes a positive contribution to

the following urban design objectives: -

- *Character - a place with its own identity and sense of place*
- *Continuity and enclosure*
- *Quality of the public realm and provision of green infrastructure and landscaping*
- *Ease of movement and permeability*
- *Legibility - clear image and easy to understand*
- *Adaptability – capable of adaptation over time*
- *Diversity – meets a wide range of needs.*

Developments will also be assessed to ensure that they: -

- *Respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm;*
- *Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;*
- *Address the needs of all in society and are accessible, usable and easy to understand by them, including providing suitable access to, into and within, its facilities, for all potential users, including disabled people, so that they can use them safely and easily;*
- *Are visually attractive as a result of good high quality built forms and spaces, the inclusion of public art and appropriate materials and landscaping.*

Applications for major developments, or other relevant developments, should be accompanied by a design and access statement that deals with all the above matters.”

The proposed development seeks the demolition of existing single storey garages to the rear of 20 Norcot Road, which is used lawfully for the B2 car repair and refurbishment. The existing garages are considered of no architectural merit, and the proposed demolition of the existing garages is considered acceptable. Nevertheless the existing buildings are small scale, visually discreet and do not harm the character or appearance of the area.

The proposed replacement building is a single storey, purpose-built workshop that has a significantly larger footprint than the combined footprint of the existing garages at the site. The ground to eaves height of the proposed building to side boundary of 22 Norcot Road is 3.6m, an increase of 0.2m from the height of the existing garages. The workshop features a pitched roof with a maximum height of 5.7m. The adjoining spray booth features a flat roof with a maximum height of 3.6m. The proposed workshop has a ground to eaves height that is not significantly taller than the maximum height of the existing garages to the east of the site.

The proposed workshop by virtue of its size, scale and appearance is not considered to be detrimental to the character of Norcot Road, or Lemart Close. The proposed workshop is proposed to the rear of the site and would be largely obscured from view along Norcot Road. However, the proposal would bring a significant change in the scale and bulk of the built form at the edge of the district centre and toward the prevailing character of residential garden land. The proposed height would not appear to be necessarily required, and a lower scale building may be more appropriate in design terms as the current operation is undertaken within a lower scale building. Therefore, the proposal is considered out of kilter with the transitional nature of the site between the more built up centre toward residential garden land. As such, the proposal is considered contrary to Policy CC7.

Transport and access

Policy TR1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 states: *“Proposed development should contribute appropriately to meeting the objectives of the most up-to-date Local Transport Plan or any successor document, including sub-strategies, specific projects identified and the local action plans.”*

Policy TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 states: *“In determining proposals involving a new or altered access onto the transport network, improvement works to the transport network, the creation of new transport infrastructure or the generation of additional trips on the transport network, consideration will be given to the effect on safety, congestion and the environment. Development will only be permitted where:-*

- i) Accesses and works to the highway comply with the adopted standards of the Transport Authority;*
- ii) The development would not have a material detrimental impact on the functioning of the transport network;*
- iii) The proposals would not be detrimental to the safety of users of the transport network, including pedestrians and cyclists;*
- iv) The proposal would not generate regular movement of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) on unsuitable roads, or on roads without easy access to the Classified Highway Network; and*
- v) For non-residential uses, or new dwellings on classified roads, off-street servicing would be provided. Proposals involving either the construction of a new site access, or a material increase in the use of an existing site access, directly onto the Classified Highway Network will not be acceptable if they would be likely to result in the encouragement of the use of the network for short local trips or compromise the safe movement and free flow of traffic on the network or the safe use of the road.”*

Policy TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 states: *“Development should provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport.”*

The previous appeals have established that the historic use of the site was primarily used for general vehicle repairs and associated activities (Use Class B2), along with an unrelated secondary use involving a car sales operation. The inspector concluded that the paint spraying of vehicles lawfully falls within Use Class B2, though the inclusion as above, would fall to be a material change of use as outlined above.

The proposal is to demolish the old workshop (building 1) & construct a new modern purpose-built unit. The additional information submitted on behalf of the applicant (email from Chris Keen dated 18th March 2025) has confirmed that *“the (proposed) building will allow the work to be carried out inside the purpose built building rather than under a temporary cover as currently exists, making the site more efficient”*. The applicant has also confirmed that there are no plans to intensify the site by providing MOT facilities, and all vehicles are pre-booked and parked in the allocated bays (once work is completed) to ensure the site is efficiently managed.

Based on the information submitted, I am satisfied that the enlarged building and nature of the operations can be accommodated within the site without any detrimental impact to the surrounding highway.

Natural environment and trees

Tree protection

The proposed development is within 15m of mature conifer trees to the rear of the site within the gardens of 11 and 17 Recreation Road. Policy EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 requires individual trees and groups of trees to be protected from damage or removal. The applicant has submitted sufficient information to demonstrate the proposal would not have an impact upon offsite trees. A condition would be recommended to secure implementation should approval have been recommended.

Biodiversity Improvements

In accordance with Policy EN12, all development should provide a net gain wherever possible. The proposal has not provided information to demonstrate biodiversity enhancements could be provided.

Notwithstanding, a condition could be attached to any permission should approval have been recommended.

8. CONCLUSION

The development is considered by officers to be an unacceptable use of the site for an increase scale and intensity of B2 (car repair and refurbishment) alongside a newly proposed spray booth facility. The development is not considered to respect the character of and would be incompatible with the surrounding area, with the development largely surrounded by residential dwellings and local amenities. It is acknowledged that there is a historic use of the site for car sales, car repairs and refurbishment, the scale of the offering of industrial services within the site is considered excessive and would harm the living conditions of nearby residents. The development is therefore considered to be materially harmful to the residential amenity of the surrounding area with regards to noise, disturbance and fumes.

The agent was advised that the officer recommendation would be for refusal of the application. The agent was provided with an opportunity to withdraw the application prior to a decision being made, but this was not forthcoming (also acknowledging the right to appeal). Hence the above conclusion reached on the application, on the basis of the information submitted and consideration of all material matters.

9. RECOMMENDATION

Refuse planning permission.