

BRADFIELD 10/02273/FULC Pins Ref 2157734	Travellers Rest Farm, Bradfield Southend Mr and Mrs D Pauling	Change of use of former agricultural buildings to car panel repair workshop and car workshop including outdoor storage areas	Delegated Refusal	Dismissed 23.12.11
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This appeal was in respect of the change of use of former agricultural buildings to car panel repair workshop (Unit 11) and car workshop (Unit 16), including outdoor storage areas.

This appeal relates to the change of use of two units in a former agricultural building complex. The complex comprises a mix of buildings, mostly simple, utilitarian block built structures. Now divided up into a total of 17 separate units, there is little evidence of agricultural use, which was reported by the appellant to have ceased a number of years ago. The site is approached by a lane off the rural road network and is located in open countryside within the North Wessex Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, (the AONB).

A number of units on the site have received certificates of lawfulness for car repairs and servicing, general and personal storage.

The Inspector considered that the main issues to be the effect of the change of use on the character and appearance of the countryside and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; the effect on the occupiers of neighbouring properties, with particular regard to noise; and whether the development makes reasonable provision to mitigate its impact on infrastructure and services in accordance with adopted policies.

The Inspector opined that the development would introduce uses which are more typically suited to industrial or commercial areas associated with the urban landscape and that a rural location is neither necessary nor appropriate for this type of use. Furthermore the Inspector considered that whilst there is some employment linked to the change of use it is limited, and car repair has no functional or economic relationship to a rural setting.

Moreover the activities such as panel beating and use of compressors or power tools associated with car repairs are inherently alien to the AONB and the outside storage of vehicles would represent a further negative impact on the character and appearance of the area. Despite their being similar lawful activities on site in the other units the Inspector agreed with the Council that the development would significantly increase and intensify that use, and the certificates of lawfulness for the other units cannot be seen as setting any sort of precedent for further harmful activities on this site.

In respect of the impact on neighbouring occupiers the Inspector opined that the noise associated with car repairs, which would be an alien one in this setting, could be harmful. However, given that there is existing similar activity taking place on the site, and that the harm could be limited through the imposition of conditions on the hours of

use the Inspector considered that, on balance, the harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of these two properties would not be sufficient on its own to warrant dismissal of this development.

With regard to developer contributions the Inspector opined that the evidence produced was insufficient to conclude that in this particular case, the financial contributions sought by the Council would be fairly, reasonably and directly related to the proposed development, or necessary to make it acceptable in planning terms.

Due to the change of use being an essentially unsustainable and harmful development in the countryside and the AONB the appeal was dismissed.