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7th May 2026

Dear Jemma Foster

Change of use of an existing agricultural barn to a Use Class B2 (General Industrial) workshop for vehicle repair and maintenance. (Retrospective).

South Farm, Norton Bavant, Warminster, BA12 7BB

Application reference PL/2026/02196

We act on behalf of our clients, Dr and Mrs Vivian Stevens of Norton Cottage, 20, Norton Bavant, Wilts. BA12 7BB. Our clients' home is a Grade II listed property, consisting of a detached cottage dating from the early 17th Century. It stands on the south eastern side of Norton Bavant, directly facing the application site which sits on the opposite side of the road in an elevated position.

On behalf of our clients, we wish to object to this retrospective planning application for change of use of an existing agricultural barn to a Use Class B2 (General Industrial) workshop for vehicle repair and maintenance, in the strongest possible terms and as set out below.

Amenity issues

The planning application is retrospective, with the current use of the agricultural barn commencing approximately 18 months ago. Consequently, our clients base their objection on their first-hand

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experiences of noise and disturbance that has occurred since the barn was first used as a car repair workshop. It is also important to state that our clients have lived at Norton Cottage for 32 years, always in the knowledge and understanding that active farm buildings were located in close proximity to their cottage. The agricultural activities associated with these have never caused a problem for Dr and Mrs Stevens.

Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF) states, amongst other matters, that planning decisions should ensure that developments have a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Core Policy 48 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy states, *inter alia*, that proposals to convert and re-use rural buildings for employment, tourism, cultural and community uses will be supported where they satisfy a range of criteria. Criterion ii. requires that the use should not detract from the character or appearance of the landscape or settlement and would not be detrimental to the amenities of residential areas.

Noise

Specifically relating to noise, paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should be made in order to prevent “new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or **noise pollution**” (our emphasis).

Paragraph 198 of the NPPF continues by stating that planning decisions should also “ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development”. The NPPF specifies that decisions should “mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life”.

To reiterate, the agricultural use of the farm buildings opposite Norton Cottage have always been of a relatively low intensity and of a manner commensurate with the countryside setting of Norton Bavant. However, ever since the material change of use of the barn to a car repair workshop,

activities have been far more intensive, with considerable noise emanating from the site. Our clients report that the most intrusive sounds consist of the intermittent banging bursts of noise, which they liken to an air hammer, drilling and angle-grinder noise, the frank striking of metal with a hammer and the revving of vehicles that are being worked on.

This situation is made worse as a consequence of these intensive and noisy activities taking place in the evenings and at weekends, with work frequently continuing until 10.00pm and, on one occasion, continuing until midnight. The operating hours of the change of use are not explicitly set out within the Planning Statement that accompanies the planning application. However, paragraph 1.3.1 of the Industrial Noise Impact Assessment that accompanies the application confirms that the workshop will operate between 8.00am and 10.00pm; no doubt based on current operations.

The noise emanating from the application site is loud and intrusive, having a significantly detrimental impact upon our clients' amenity, with noise being heard all over their property and gardens. The levels of noise are made worse by the fact that the agricultural building and the area to the front of the building are at a higher level when compared to our clients' property. Such a level of noise is likely to impact upon their wellbeing and health. This is unacceptable. Regardless of the evening and weekend working, it is crucially important to state that the levels of noise emanating from the site have a significantly detrimental impact upon our clients at all times; therefore, the issue cannot be resolved through restricting the use to normal working hours within the week. Even during these periods, the level of noise is unacceptable, adversely affecting our clients' amenity.

In addition, cars come and go from the forecourt, and when the workers leave there is typically obtrusive engine-noise associated with their departure, made worse due to this occurring as a regularity late into the night. Again, these activities have a significant adverse impact upon the amenity of our clients.

Such a level of noise and disturbance is wholly incongruous with the setting of the site and the rural hamlet at Norton Bavant. Our clients have been reluctant to confront this issue with the landowner or operators as a means of avoiding conflict, but they have had to resort to speaking with the operators on a couple of occasions as a means of trying to enjoy their own home without disturbance. However, there has been no change in the significant and substantial levels of noise and disturbance.

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The Industrial Noise Impact Assessment

As previously mentioned, a noise impact assessment has been submitted in support of this planning application. We raise a number of concerns about this assessment.

Firstly, paragraph 1.4 of the noise impact assessment states that “worst-case scenario modelling has been undertaken **for this type of building**” (our emphasis). It is clear that existing noise levels of the actual operations taking place within the building have not been measured, with only modelling taking place. We find this surprising, especially as the application is retrospective and noise measurements could have been readily obtained, especially at receptor sites in close proximity to the workshop. Therefore, we assert that the noise modelling cannot be relied upon in reaching any conclusion as to the acceptability of noise levels emanating from the site.

Secondly, the assessment position that has been used within the noise impact assessment may be physically closer to the workshop, but it is at an oblique angle to the source of noise. Furthermore, the large door into the workshop faces away from the assessment point. With this in mind, the noise impact assessment does not explain whether the door of the workshop was open or closed during noise modelling. Even if it is predominantly closed, there will be times when the door will be open; for example, when vehicles and operatives enter and leave the workshop, with the noise clearly being unmitigated at such times. Furthermore, the metal roller door will offer minimal noise mitigation when compared to the solid walls of the workshop, even when closed.

Thirdly, the noise impact assessment makes no consideration of the vehicles accessing and leaving the site at anti-social hours, with the site being secured and cars being started up and doors slamming late into the night. This adds to the severe noise and disturbance encountered by Dr and Mrs Stevens.

Fourthly, there has been no assessment of the change in noise emanating from the site as a consequence of the material change of use of the building from agricultural to a car repair workshop. This is a material consideration and would undoubtedly show a level of change in noise that is significantly perceptible and intrusive.

Finally, the noise impact assessment provides no indication of the weather conditions that were experienced during the course of the background noise measurements. There is no way of telling whether the weather conditions may have influenced the prevailing background noise levels.

Lighting

Paragraph 198 of the NPPF is clear in stating that planning decisions should “limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity”.

As set out within noise impact assessment, the workshop will operate between the hours of 8.00am and 10.00pm. For all intents and purposes, this could take place seven days a week. Our clients report that present activities result in the significant spread of artificial light from the barn into their house and front garden. This has already had a substantially detrimental impact upon their amenity. Again, this is made worse as a consequence of the agricultural building and its associated areas being at a higher level than our clients’ property. The grant of planning permission would the spread of artificial light to continue. In the winter months, this could result in the site being illuminated from 3.30pm through to beyond 10.00pm, seven days a week. This impact upon our clients’ amenity is unacceptable. There is no mitigation that could make such a situation any better for our clients.

Heritage Impacts

The NPPF states, at paragraph 193, that “when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation”, and that “the more important the heritage asset, the greater the weight should be”. It continues by saying that significance can be harmed or lost through such things as development within its setting.

Paragraph 194 of the NPPF states that where a proposed development would result in substantial harm or a total loss of significance, then planning permission should be refused unless the adverse impact is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss.

Paragraph 195 of the NPPF continues by stating that “where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use”.

One of the tenets of Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy is the need for development to be sympathetic to historic buildings. This is continued within Core Policy 58 of the Core Strategy which states, amongst other matters, that development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment; with designated heritage assets and their settings being conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Paragraph 6.3 of the Planning Statement submitted with the planning application states that “the functional and historic outlook from (Norton) Cottage towards the agricultural building also remains unaltered”. With respect, this is an inaccurate description of what has actually taken place. The change of use has resulted in cars being parked outside the workshop in direct view of – and within the setting of – the Grade II listed building of Norton Cottage. In addition, artificial lighting from within the workshop floods into the curtilage of Norton Cottage. These impacts have a clearly detrimental impact upon the setting of the listed building. Rather than protecting or conserving the historic environment – as required by the Core Strategy – the development has the effect of eroding Norton Cottage’s historic character and qualities.

The agricultural use of the application site was a historic use that one expects to see sit side by side with heritage assets. The change of use of a building to a car repair workshop is incongruous within this setting, being totally unsympathetic to the listed building at Norton Cottage.

CONCLUSIONS

The change of use of the agricultural building to a car repair workshop has already resulted in unacceptable levels of noise and disturbance, adversely affecting the amenity of our clients at Norton Cottage. The Industrial Noise Impact Assessment fails to properly assess this level of noise and disturbance upon our clients. There is no way in which the resultant impact upon our clients’ amenity can be mitigated. As such, the

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proposed development fails to adhere to national and local planning policies contained within the NPPF and the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

The artificial lighting of the site has also already had a significant detrimental impact upon our clients' amenity and wellbeing, again in breach of the requirements of the NPPF and the Core Strategy.

The development is unsympathetic to the listed building at Norton Cottage, adversely affecting its setting. The public benefits of granting planning permission would not overcome this harm. The development fails to sufficiently protect heritage assets, in breach of policies and advice contained within the NPPF and the Core Strategy.

For the reasons given, we assert that planning permission be refused.

Yours sincerely

AFA Planning Consultants on behalf of:

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