



Decision Notice and Statement of Reasons

Site visit made on 4 February 2026

By Benjamin Webb BA(Hons) MA MA MSc PGDip(UD) MRTPI IHBC

A person appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 February 2026

Application Reference: S62A/2025/0144

Site address: 115 Hampton Road, Redland, Bristol BS6 6JG

- The application is made under section 62A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
 - The site is located within the administrative area of Bristol City Council.
 - The application dated 3 December 2025 is made by Mr G Seddon of Penlane Ltd and was validated on 23 December 2025.
 - The development proposed is change of use/conversion of part of existing domestic garage (Use Class C3) to maintenance/office base (Use Class E(G)) including retention of existing cycle store and associated external alterations.
-

Decision

1. Planning permission is refused for the development described above, for the following reasons:
 - 1) The site is an inappropriate location for the proposed use, which would conflict with the strategy set out in Policy BSC7 of the Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy 2011 and Policy DM7 of the Bristol Local Plan – Site Allocations and Development Management Policies 2014.
 - 2) The proposed use would have an adverse effect on the living conditions of occupants of neighbouring and other dwellings within the surrounding residential area due to increased noise and disturbance, and increased competition for on-street parking space, contrary to Policy BCS21 of the Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy 2011.

Statement of Reasons

Procedural matters

2. The application was made under Section 62A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, which allows for applications to be made directly to the Planning Inspectorate where a Council has been designated by the Secretary of State. Bristol City Council was designated for non-major applications between 6 March 2024 and 27 January 2026. The application was made to the Planning Inspectorate during this period.

3. Consultation was undertaken on 5 January 2026 which allowed for responses by 2 February 2026. The Council provided a late response which was largely the same as the detailed pre-application advice included within the application documents. The applicant was given the opportunity to provide a further response. I have taken account of all these representations in reaching my decision.
4. I carried out an unaccompanied site visit on 4 February 2026. This enabled me to view the site and the surrounding area.

Main Issues

5. Having regard to the above representations, together with what I observed during my visit, the main issues for this application are:
 - whether the location of the development accords with the strategy set out in the development plan;
 - the effect of the development on the living conditions of occupants of 115 Hampton Road and other dwellings within the surrounding residential area;
 - whether safe access to the site can be provided; and
 - the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area, including Whiteladies Road Conservation Area.

Reasons

Location and Principle of Development

6. The development would involve partial conversion of a domestic garage into a maintenance/office base, which the applicant further explains would serve as a welfare facility. Its principal use would be that of an office falling within Use Class E(g). This is defined as a main town centre use within the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).
7. The Council's strategy for such uses is set out in Policy BCS7 of the Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy 2011 (the Core Strategy). This states that offices will be primarily located within, or where appropriate, adjoining the centres in the identified network and hierarchy serving Bristol. Within this context, Policy DM7 of the Bristol Local Plan – Site Allocations and Development Management Policies 2014 (the SADMP) similarly states that main town centre uses should be located within the centres identified on the Policies Map, but also provides criteria for consideration of locations outside. The sequential test it sets out generally reflects that contained within the Framework.
8. The garage currently forms part of a No 115, a residential property, and is located within a residential area. For the purposes of Policy DM7, it is located 'out of centre'. In such locations a proposal would be acceptable where no centre or edge of centre sites are available and the location is readily accessible on foot, by cycle and by public transport. Whilst the applicant indicates that visitors would arrive by vehicle, the site would also be accessible by these more sustainable

modes of travel. Surveys carried out of the availability of property to let within nearby Chandos Road Centre and Whiteladies Road Centre in November 2025 do not however confirm that there are no sites in suitable locations are available, but rather that there are no sites considered suitable by the applicant.

9. The proposed conversion would obviously be a cost effective and convenient option, and it is therefore one favoured by the applicant. However, paragraph 92 of the Framework indicates that applicants should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and scale, so that opportunities to utilise suitable town centre or edge of centre sites are fully explored.
10. Policy DM7 indicates that a proposal would alternatively be considered acceptable where of a small scale and aimed at providing for local needs. However, whilst the scale of the development would be small, it would not serve any specific local need, but rather the needs of a business with interests dispersed over a wide area.
11. It appears unlikely that a development of the type and scale proposed would have a significant adverse impact on the vitality, viability and diversity of existing centres, or impact on existing, committed and planned investment. It would nonetheless fail the sequential test set out within Policy DM7, and similarly that within the Framework, and would consequently conflict with Policy BCS7. Paragraph 95 of the Framework indicates that where an application fails to satisfy the sequential test it should be refused.
12. For the reasons set out above I conclude that the development would conflict with the strategy set out within Policy BCS7 of the Core Strategy and Policy DM7 of the SADMP.

Living conditions

13. Amongst other things Policy BCS21 of the Core Strategy sets out the expectation that development will safeguard the amenity of existing development. Insofar as it is relevant, Policy DM30 of the SADMP additionally sets out the expectation for alterations to existing buildings to safeguard the amenity of the host premises and neighbouring occupiers.
14. The garage is positioned very close to the rear elevation of No 115 and the properties to either side, all of which appear to feature windows serving habitable rooms. It also faces towards the front elevations of dwellings on the opposite side of Auburn Road.
15. The nature of the proposed use would be very different to that of a typical domestic garage. Though the applicant suggests that the proposed maintenance/ office base might only be visited by 1-3 persons per day on 3-4 days per week, the applicant's proposed conditions would allow for its use by up to 5 persons at any one time 07:45-16:00 on weekdays. The use could therefore be far more intensive than that of the existing garage, including a higher number of comings and goings throughout the day. This would generate noise, as would loading and unloading. Noise generated by gatherings within the building itself would be likely to leak out, particularly when the proposed rooflights were open. Each would have the potential to cause disturbance to occupants of adjacent dwellings, with those of No 115 most directly affected.

16. The original planning permission for the garage included reference to cycle parking. Garages can indeed be readily used to store cycles. However, their primary function is as a place to park a motor vehicle. This is regardless of whether a garage is informally used for another domestic purpose such as storage. The conversion of the garage would thus result in loss of a parking space within an area where capacity for on-street parking is limited and further constrained by permit control and double yellow lines. This reduction in local capacity would increase competition for space. Notwithstanding the accessibility of the location, there is nothing to prevent occupants of No 115 from owning a vehicle and seeking to park it locally.
17. Though the size of the office would not generate a need to provide dedicated parking space, visitors to the office would still need to park. Whilst the same vehicles might occasionally park locally already, the frequency of this would be likely to increase. This would in turn increase local competition for space throughout the day whether or not visitors made use of permit-controlled spaces.
18. Insofar as the proposed development would increase competition for on-street parking space, it would generate stress and inconvenience for occupants of dwellings within the surrounding streets, including those of No 115.
19. Garage conversions have been permitted in the past at 2 other locations in Auburn Road. Those conversions did not however entail a change of use. Though they presumably also resulted in losses of parking space, the effects of the proposed development would differ. This is given that the proposed use would itself result in an increased demand for parking.
20. Having considered the use of the garage as a place to park a vehicle/cycles, harm would not arise from loss of its potential use as a domestic storage space. Again, even if the garage is or was to be used for this purpose by occupants of No 115, that is not its primary function.
21. For the reasons set out above I conclude that the development would have an adverse effect on the living conditions of occupants of neighbouring and other dwellings within the surrounding residential area. It would therefore conflict with Policy BSC21 of the Core Strategy and Policy DM30 of the SADMP.

Access

22. Amongst other things Policy DM23 of the SADMP sets out the expectation that development will provide safe access.
23. Auburn Road is generally straight and has a 20mph speed limit. Given its position within the road network it appears to be primarily used as a residential access, and does not therefore see heavy traffic. Despite the presence of discontinuous on-street parking, reasonably good visibility is possible in either direction when crossing the street. There is however no pedestrian pavement on the side of Auburn Road on which the garage is located.
24. Visitors to and from the proposed maintenance/office base would enter and access it from the road. This would be no different to the current situation, or indeed that which exists in relation to every rear access and garage which backs onto Auburn Road. As this relationship is clearly appreciable from the road, there

appears no reason to believe that drivers would be any more surprised to see a pedestrian emerge from the building in the future than they would be at present.

25. As established above, the use would support an increased level of comings and goings, thus resulting in an increased level of risk. However, there is no evidence to suggest that access and egress to and from properties backing onto Auburn Road has resulted in accidents in the past. As the garage is set back from the boundary, and the proposed replacement door would be inset, an improved refuge would otherwise exist for pedestrians upon leaving. As such, there again appears to be no reason to believe that safe access could not be achieved.
26. For the reasons set out above I conclude that safe access would be provided, and that the development would therefore comply with Policy DM23 of the SADMP.

Character and appearance

27. The site is located within Whiteladies Conservation Area. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. That objective is supported by Policy BCS21 of the Core Strategy, and Policies DM26 and DM31 of the SADMP.
28. Insofar as it is relevant, the significance of the conservation area resides in the layout of development along and within the network of streets to either side of Whiteladies Road, and the collection and interrelationship of historic buildings and spaces these contain. No 115 is a historic dwelling, as are other properties both backing onto and facing Auburn Road. The garage itself is modern but visually prominent within the historic street scene.
29. The change of use would entail only minor modifications to the external appearance of the garage including a change of door and the insertion of rooflights. Its visual character would as such remain largely unchanged. The development would therefore have a neutral effect on the significance of the conservation area, the character and appearance of which would be preserved.
30. For the reasons set out above I conclude that the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area, including Whiteladies Road Conservation Area, would be acceptable. In these regards it would comply with Policy BCS21 of the Core Strategy, and Policies DM26 and DM31 of the SADMP.

Other matters

31. The applicant has proposed a number of conditions to be imposed should the application be permitted, some of which I have addressed above. Considering the application as a whole, imposing these conditions would not overcome or otherwise outweigh the harm that I have identified.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

32. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. As the development would conflict with the development plan and there are no

considerations which indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with it, I conclude that planning permission should be refused.

Benjamin Webb

Inspector and Appointed Person

Informatives:

- i. In determining this application no substantial problems arose which required the Planning Inspectorate, on behalf of the Secretary of State, to work with the applicant to seek any solutions.
- ii. The decision of the appointed person (acting on behalf of the Secretary of State) on an application under section 62A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 ("the Act") is final, which means there is no right to appeal. An application to the High Court under s288(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is the only way in which the decision made on an application under Section 62A can be challenged. An application must be made within 6 weeks of the date of the decision
- iii. These notes are provided for guidance only. A person who thinks they may have grounds for challenging this decision is advised to seek legal advice before taking any action. If you require advice on the process for making any challenge you should contact the Administrative Court Office at the Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London, WC2A 2LL (0207 947 6655) or follow this link:
<https://www.gov.uk/courts-tribunals/planning-court>
- iv. Responsibility for ensuring compliance with this Decision Notice rests with Bristol City Council.