



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 July 2025

by **A Oyebade MSc, FCILT**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M2840/W/25/3365929

119 High Street, Rushden, NN10 0NZ

- 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 Nasir Rashid against the decision of North Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref is NE/24/00801/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the change of use from former beauty studio to taxi Booking office.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. I have utilised the description given on the Council's decision notice as it more accurately describes the development proposed.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the existing on-street parking and any resultant highway safety implications.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is within a row of 2 and 3 storey mixed-use properties on this side of the road, which comprises a range of shops and cafes on the ground floor plus residential properties above.
5. There are 2 disabled car parking spaces and 1 long delivery bay next to this development plus other car parking bays staggered on both sides of this stretch of road and on one side of the adjacent Queen Street. I did observe that most of these spaces were occupied at the time of my visit around 3pm.
6. Policy 8 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031, Adopted July 2016 (the Core strategy), seeks to secure satisfactory parking provision in accordance with adopted standards. As guidance, for taxi offices, the Northamptonshire Parking Standards, September 2016 (the NPS) seeks 1 on-site space per fulltime based site staff and 1 space per 5 registered vehicles. The document does note that there may be exceptional circumstances where lower provision may be justified such as where there are no road safety or amenity implications.
7. No on-site car parking spaces would be provided and so any parking would rely on the existing local on-street car parking provision. The appellant has indicated that customers would book the site's minicabs online via an app or by phone and,

neither customer visits nor drop off or pick up of passengers shall take place at or in the vicinity of the appeal site. It is also stated that drivers would operate remotely rather than visit the office, with only up to 2 administrative staff using the building. The proposed taxi booking office would operate 24 hours every day.

8. The number of drivers and associated vehicles that would serve this facility plus their rate of travel at any point in time have not been evidenced or indicated. Without this information, the extent of the car parking spaces required, as per the parking standards, cannot be established as a starting point before an exemption is considered. Even if it was possible to prevent drivers and customers visiting the office, up to two staff members would still be employed at any given time and their parking needs should be considered.
9. The appellant has not submitted any car parking survey to show that the surrounding highway would have sufficient residual capacity to absorb the car parking demand that would be generated by this development proposal (with or without the need to accommodate drivers and customers). In view of the parking pressure I observed in the area, the commissioning of a survey does not appear to be an excessive requirement.
10. While the appellant has listed the capacities of the neighbouring private and public car parks, their occupancy ratios have not been given to ascertain whether they would have ample spare capacity to accommodate the parking needs of this development. In any event, it is unclear how this would be controlled, for example a planning condition that sought to prevent staff from using on-street parking and requiring the use of nearby car parks is unlikely to be enforceable.
11. In addition, the workings of the proposed online booking app in relation to how the minicab office staff would interact with drivers while in transit or waiting somewhere and customers, as required, is uncertain. The appellant has indicated that planning conditions could control how the business is operated to prevent driver and customer visits, however details of how such a condition could be worded has not been provided. Moreover, it is possible that the use of the building as a taxi booking office would be conspicuous, which would attract customers already in or passing through the town centre to itself.
12. I note the submitted drawings indicate a shopfront with advertisements, indicating a taxi business is in operation and, I observed that signage to this effect was already present on the building. In addition, one of the submitted proposed floor plans indicates a seating area at the front of the premises with what appears to be a couch and coffee table. Taking these matters together, the appellant has not demonstrated how this potential passing trade could be managed to prevent customers visiting the office.
13. I therefore conclude that it has not been demonstrated that the proposal could avoid undue impact on the on-street parking in the locality which, from my observations on site and in the absence of survey data, appears to be under pressure. Cumulative additional pressure on on-street parking could lead to inappropriate parking ultimately resulting in an adverse effect on highway safety in this area. Consequently, the development does not accord with Policy 8 of the Core Strategy (Adopted July 2016). This Policy seeks to resist developments that would prejudice highway safety and ensures satisfactory parking is provided.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

A Oyeade

INSPECTOR