



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 July 2025

by R Cahalane BA(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/W/25/3363667

36 Ellesmere Road, Chiswick, London W4 4QH

- 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 Mr Raymond Mackey against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref is P/2025/0046.
 - The development proposed is “change of use - C3(a) Domestic garage to Sui Generis (Dog Groomers)”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The application form indicates that development commenced in December 2024 but has not been completed. During my site visit, I noted that alterations to the domestic garage had already been undertaken, namely the installation of glazed French doors on the garage's southern elevation facing the main dwelling of the appeal site (No 36), and installation of a smaller side elevation access door facing a paved walkway running from No 36's rear access gate towards the main dwelling. The abovementioned works appear to correspond with the submitted plans.
3. I also noted an external air conditioning unit installed in broadly the same location as indicated in the site plan (Drawing No. 172-08-00-DR-02). Within the garage, I found a large washing basin, cutting machines and two benches with various equipment that could be used for dog grooming. In light of the above, I have determined the appeal scheme as being at least part-retrospective in nature.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the development on the living condition of surrounding residents, with particular regard to noise and disturbance;
 - whether the location outside of a town or neighbourhood centre is acceptable, with particular regard to the development plan; and
 - the effect on highway safety, with particular regard to location, parking provision and pedestrian access.

Reasons

Living conditions

5. The appeal site (No 36) comprises a two-storey semi-detached dwelling facing Ellesmere Road, which is part of the A4 trunk road from central London to the west of England. No 36 is near the Garth Road junction and its garage subject of this appeal is to the rear, adjacent a rear unadopted access road forming a cul-de-sac.
6. The appellant intends to undertake the dog grooming use as a form of home business, with no other employees and fully operating within the garage's existing envelope, avoiding external storage or display. The garage's access points are near to each neighbouring side boundary and the main dwelling of No 34 has also been extended to the rear at single storey level towards No 36's garage.
7. Hours of use are from 9am to 5pm Mondays to Fridays. It is put to me that over a busy four-hour period, two customers would arrive and depart, and that an online booking scheme avoids customers arriving to No 36 en masse. However, the typical range and length of specific customer appointments is not before me. Operation of the dog groomers use could therefore potentially lead to back-to-back booking slots, whereby different owned dogs could unexpectedly encounter each other during changeover periods.
8. Dogs taken in for grooming would also in some cases be stressed, agitated or otherwise energised, despite best endeavours. This would inevitably lead to unpredictable barking and noise generation, including outside of the outbuilding.
9. Although my visit was only a snapshot in time, I noted significant road noise emanating from the A4, despite the slow eastbound traffic speeds. This road noise was quieter but still audible within No 36's rear garden. Given this along with the suburban location, the ambient noise level of the site may be higher than many typical residential locations.
10. However, the appeal submission is not supported by a noise survey and assessment that captures the precise existing ambient noise levels, or that quantifies the likely levels of noise generation from the dog groomers use. Far from being imperceptible, noise from dogs barking is typically unpredictable and can potentially be loud. Such noise characteristics could be less easy to ignore or tolerate by neighbouring occupiers than road traffic noise, even during periods of more intensive traffic than that during my site visit.
11. Moreover, any dogs to be kept as pets within nearby dwellings could also disturb or be disturbed by the dogs to be groomed, which would also create further unwanted noise. Although the operating hours are limited to avoid early morning and evening periods, harm to residential living conditions can still nonetheless occur.
12. The existing external air conditioning unit is at a right angle adjacent to the rear garden side boundary with the dwelling of No 34. At the time of my visit, the unit was mounted above ground level, supported by metal brackets, and enclosed by bamboo-style material. The evidence before me does not set out the precise noise output of this unit. Even if the air conditioning unit is only operated at times when the dog grooming use is operating, this could still lead to a significant amount of noise beyond typical domestic levels and characteristics that would be reasonably expected for a suburban residential area.

13. Given the lack of detailed evidence establishing the precise ambient and operational noise levels, along with the proximity to residential neighbours, I do not have sufficient certainty at this stage that adverse noise and disturbance levels can be controlled by the planning conditions suggested by the appellant.
14. I therefore must conclude that the development unacceptably harms the living conditions of surrounding residents in terms of noise and disturbance, contrary to Policies SC7 and EQ5 of the Council's Local Plan 2015-2030 (LP) (adopted 2015). These policies require, amongst other things, development proposals to minimise harm to neighbouring residents and demonstrate that new plant and machinery (including ventilation) do not harm the amenity of neighbouring properties and generate noise level that is at least 10dB below the background noise levels.
15. The decision notice cites conflict with LP Policy EC2. However, this policy does not refer to living conditions and is therefore not relevant to this main issue.

Location

16. Policy TC1 of the LP states, amongst other things, that development proposals are expected to be located appropriately in the context of the town and neighbourhood centre network, consistent with Policy TC3. LP Policy TC3 seeks development to be located in one of the borough's four town centres where retail floorspace or other main town centre uses are proposed.
17. The LP's Appendix 2 Glossary does not provide a definition of "main town centre uses". The supporting text to LP Policy TC3 however advises that main town centre uses, as outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework), include retail, leisure and entertainment facilities, more intensive sports and recreation uses, offices, hotels, arts, culture and tourism development.
18. A dog groomers use does not fit within the above definition. Therefore, simply put, the sequential test as outlined in LP Policy TC3 and the Framework does not apply to the appeal development.
19. Policy TC1 also requires development proposals to be of a scale and type that is appropriate in the context of the town or neighbourhood centre, consistent with Policy TC4 and Policy TC5. No 36 however is not within a town centre or neighbourhood centre as defined in the LP. This element of Policy TC1 is therefore not relevant to the appeal development.
20. The decision notice also cites conflict with LP Policy C2. However, as this is a permissive policy relating to certain proposals within town centres, it is also not relevant to the appeal scheme. Conflict with Policy ED1 is also cited. This policy is however also not relevant to the appeal development, as it is also a permissive policy that supports certain employment-generating proposals.
21. I therefore conclude that the development does not conflict with Policies TC1, TC2, TC3 and ED1 of the LP, and I have not identified any other conflict with the development plan in regard to the location of the development.

Highway safety

22. Despite the location of No 36 within walking distance of sustainable modes of transport, the nature of a dog groomers use will inevitably lead to some private

- vehicle trips. No 36 is however near to sustainable transport modes that avoids a total reliance on private vehicle trips.
23. The submitted evidence also indicates that the previous location of the appellant's business was in Chiswick's commercial centre area, which I found to be in walking distance to No 36. Given this context, it is therefore unlikely that the appeal development amounts to an adverse increase in private vehicle use.
24. The unadopted road behind Ellesmere Road is not a through route and is clearly relied upon for vehicle parking by many surrounding dwellings, especially those that do not have their own private driveways. I also observed that surrounding residential roads, including Garth Road, were subject to parking restrictions, requiring payment or permits during certain morning and afternoon periods, with a maximum duration restriction of four hours.
25. Whilst my visit was only a snapshot in time, Garth Road had a notable amount of free parking space. Bearing in mind its daytime operating hours, such spaces could be used by customers of the appeal development, despite the parking bay restrictions. Many surrounding residents would likely be away from their properties during the operating times of the dog groomers use. Based on all parties' submitted evidence and what I have seen on site, it has not been demonstrated that the appeal development would generate excessive parking demands in the surrounding area.
26. The rear access road is wide, which allows for vehicles to be parked on both sides along the private garages. I noted numerous rear garages, private parking spaces and access doors to residences. This road is therefore already used by vehicles and pedestrians to access many of the dwellings off it, and vehicle speeds would likely be low given the characteristics of the rear access road. I therefore do not envisage that the impact arising from the dog groomers use amounts to a detrimental impact on highway safety.
27. Had I been minded to allow the appeal, I am satisfied that there is sufficient space within the site of No 36 to secure appropriate cycle parking facilities by means of a suitably worded planning condition.
28. For the above reasons, I conclude that the development complies with policies EC1 and EC2 of the LP. These policies require, amongst other things, development proposals to ensure that access to existing strategic transport connections is considered, to avoid adverse impacts on the transport network, and to demonstrate that sufficient public car parking remains to serve local needs where there will be a reduction in off-street car parking, together with the resulting increase in demand arising from the development. For the same reasons, I have also found no conflict with Policies T2, T3, T4, T5 and T6 of the London Plan.

Other Matter

29. The officer report indicates that the change of use is not in keeping with the prevailing pattern of development in the area, although this concern is not reflected in the reasons for refusal. However, as I am dismissing the appeal for other substantive reasons, I need not consider this matter any further.

Conclusion

30. The proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole, and the material considerations before me do not indicate that a decision should be made otherwise than in accordance with it. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

R Cahalane

INSPECTOR