



Private Hire Vehicles

This is a series of local planning guidance notes amplifying local planning proposals in a clear and concise format, adopted by the Council with the objective of improving development standards throughout its area.

A problem of formulating a comprehensive policy for the location of these operations lies in their diversity. Firms may vary in size from one car to a large fleet. They may operate from a house, small office or garage. Radio cars may only need to return to base for repairs (and even those may be carried out at an independent garage) whereas other operators may prefer their vehicles to return to base for new instructions, cashing up, rest periods, etc. Two main types of offices may be identified; non-operational and operational offices.

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Available in alternative formats

Non-Operational Offices

Non-operational offices are offices whose vehicles are directed by radio and do not operate from, or visit the office.

Only employing one or two persons, this minor office use would be acceptable in most areas, including ones which are predominantly residential, provided that the design of the radio mast and equipment is acceptable in visual and operating terms.

Operational Offices

Operational offices are offices from which vehicles operate and where a public waiting room and drivers' accommodation is normally provided. The location of these offices should be determined by reference to three factors; the highway network, the site and the character of the area.

Locational Criteria

The Site

An important criterion for the location of a base is the number of off-street parking places available in the ownership or control of the applicant. This must be sufficient to accommodate the total number of vehicles likely to be visiting that address at any one time. It may be appropriate to impose a condition on a planning permission restricting the number of vehicles visiting the address at any one time. Off-street parking sites should ideally be large enough to allow any manoeuvring to avoid situations where vehicles would reverse off the site onto adjacent roads, creating a potential hazard to other traffic and pedestrians. Where a private hire firm intends to carry out maintenance to its vehicles, this should be done off-street. In residential areas only routine maintenance should be permitted at the base.

The Highway Network

The road on which the office is located and, where appropriate, any link to the nearest classified road should be of standard (in terms of geometry and construction) adequate to cater for the number of vehicles trading from or visiting the site. In particular, reference would be made to the capacity and alignment of junctions near the base. This is to ensure the operations do not interfere with the free flow of traffic or create unsafe conditions for vehicular and pedestrian movements in the area.



Character of the Area

Private hire operations are compatible with many land uses. However, certain facets of their operation may make them incompatible with residential uses. These problems can occur even when the scale of the operation is very small.

The main problems associated with them are frequent vehicle movements, noise and unsocial hours of operation. Activity often continues after daylight hours when it can be most disturbing. It is, therefore, felt that an office which has more than one vehicle operating from it should not be located in a residential area. In areas of mixed use which include a residential element, the position will be more difficult to determine. In both residential and mixed use areas it is suggested that the permissions are initially granted for a short period e.g. one year, to enable the effects of the operations to be monitored.

District Shopping Centres

In district shopping centres, cars will not be allowed to operate from an office unless the full provision of off-street parking spaces can be made on or near the site to accommodate all vehicles likely to operate at any one time. This would prevent on-street parking which would cause congestion or nuisance to residents in nearby streets, or the use of public parking spaces, which would disadvantage other users.

Wrexham Town Centre

In Wrexham town centre slightly different considerations apply and it will rarely be possible to find a site with sufficient convenient car parking. However a reliance on on-street parking will disadvantage shoppers and other town centre visitors. Proposals will not be supported in principle shopping streets or streets subject to traffic management proposals. Proposals will only be supported where there is unlikely to be

an adverse effect upon vehicular movement (e.g. not on busy thoroughfares or near junctions) or upon car parking (e.g. site on single yellow lines may be favoured).

Settlement Limits

In accordance with established policies the establishment of private hire offices will not be accepted on land outside settlements as described in the Local Plan.

Checklist

- That the operation of a private hire car from a dwelling house requires planning permission.
- That where planning permission is granted in areas of mixed uses it will in the first instance be for a period of one year to allow the impact to be monitored.
- Conditions will be imposed to control booking arrangements, parking provision, hours of operation and number of vehicles.
- Planning permission is unlikely to be granted where:

a) The site is in a residential area and more than one vehicle is to visit the office;

b) The amount of off-street parking space associated with the site is insufficient to accommodate the total number of vehicles likely to be operating from it at any one time.

c) The local highway network is of a standard which cannot adequately cater for the additional traffic which would be generated.

- In district shopping centres sufficient off-street car parking in the control of the applicant will be required to cater for all vehicles likely to be operating at any one time.
- In Wrexham town centre, proposals will be judged on their impacts on traffic flow, safety and car parking. Proposals which are likely to disadvantage other users of the town centre through using limited public car parking will not be supported.



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