

APPLICATION NO: 20/01311/FUL	OFFICER: Miss Michelle Payne
DATE REGISTERED: 26th August 2020	DATE OF EXPIRY : 21st October 2020
WARD: St Pauls	PARISH:
APPLICANT:	Ruth Hendry
LOCATION:	Lotty Lodge, 33 Wellesley Road, Cheltenham
PROPOSAL:	Use of part of ground floor as dog grooming business (sui generis)

REPRESENTATIONS

Number of contributors	27
Number of objections	7
Number of representations	0
Number of supporting	20

March Mews
Wellesley Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 4LD

Comments: 7th September 2020

Wellesley Road is a residential street and I would prefer it to remain so. Any change to commercial use would set a precedent. I do not wish the character of the street to be changed in that way.

28 Wellesley Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 4LD

Comments: 15th September 2020

Proposal suggests a maximum of 10 dogs per day during hours of 08:45-16:00 and this would cause additional traffic arriving or leaving the premises on average once every 20 minutes, over and above residential use.

Proposal places no limits on the maximum capacity given the indoor area of 17.8m². Given stated demand from over 400 clients, it is likely this will need to be managed.

Application comments show that associated demand for parking for Lotty Lodge includes 2x on-street residential permits, 1x allocated parking for customers, and 1x on-street permit along Wellesley Road to support the Pet Taxi.

Comments: 15th September 2020

I live near by and had an incident during lockdown when they opened the business. I was in the house with my children, heard knocking and someone tried to open the door

without waiting to be opened and it was one of their customer thought our house is a dog grooming business.

I agree other people's comment on parking, through traffic and have seen people park/turn around their car on our drive way.

Noise are trouble around the area. Constant hearing dryers from the business as their doors widely open and crying dogs! This must be reviewed. As current situation, we have to stay home more than usual and hearing dog barking, crying and dryer sounds everyday is not what you expect in residential area.

Comments: 15th September 2020

Concerned that proposed change-of-use removes residential use of off-street parking during business hours, contrary to planning permission of 2019 requiring it "remain free of obstruction for such use at all times."

Concerned that proposed change-of-use does not address refuse and recycling storage facilities for commercial waste.

Flat 2
Priors Lodge
Pittville Circus Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL52 2PX

Comments: 3rd September 2020

Having been a client of Smudgers Mutts for some time now, I have taken my dog to all the premises she has groomed from. Lotty Lodge is a nice modern, light, convenient establishment within walking distance of Cheltenham town centre. I am lucky enough that I don't need to drive to Smudgers Mutts as I live round the corner, however, on the occasion I have needed to drive, there's never been any traffic/issue with parking and am aware of the parking space for clients.

The only issue with Wellesley Road is the roadworks.

I can honestly say I have never heard dogs bark whilst being groomed at smudgers Mutts, of course there will be the occasional noisy dog but overall, the dogs are well behaved and love the fuss and attention! There are plenty of dogs living in surrounding properties up and down Marle Hill Parade and Wellesley Road and they can constantly be heard barking - are the people objecting to this planning also taking into consideration other animals in the area and the noise they make?

Whilst already noted, Phoebes Pad is another dog groomers in Marle Hill parade - whilst I understand this is in an old shop, it's still a dog groomers (ie, noise of dogs, clippers, driers etc), there is no parking there.

I think it would be a real shame if Smudgers Mutts had to close. Not only would the owner lose her business that she's worked incredibly hard to build, but all her staff would be unemployed. During the current situation, it's not easy to find alternative employment so these people would be left with no income.

74 Marle Hill Parade
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 4LH

Comments: 5th September 2020

I live in Marle Hill Parade and fully support planning permission to granted. This is a small business, which we should be supporting and encouraging in the present climate.

I haven't noticed an increase in traffic and I often walk down Wellesley Road without any problems. I also haven't been aware of any noise from dryers or dogs when walking past.

Lotty Lodge
33 Wellesley Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 4LD

Comments: 3rd September 2020

My partner and I moved into the flat above Smudgers Mutts the beginning of June of this year. I was concerned before moving in about the sound of the dog groomers being below our flat, and whether it would affect my boyfriend's work life, as he works from home doing calls and video calls. However, he reassured me a few weeks into moving in, that the sound from the dryers and people talking below was not an issue at all. The owner was also very understanding and even explained that all dryers are kept to a minimum when possible, with back doors closed, until it becomes a welfare issue with it being too hot in the grooming area for both dogs and employees. Another issue we were concerned about was the volume of dogs barking or whining, however, even though a few times we have heard barking, the staff have been able to quickly sort the dogs out and the level of barking is near to none the majority of the time. My boyfriend and I grew up with dogs, and we understand that dogs can't be kept quiet at all times. We were also worried about parking, due to the road only being a Z11 permit, which we both have, and how the employees and customers would park. Before moving in, I had discussed with our landlady that the drive would be used by customers of Smudgers Mutts, which I was understanding about and agreed it would be perfectly fine. On move-in day Smudgers Mutts was open, the three employees on that day were extremely welcoming and friendly. I asked how all the staff travelled to work, due to it being a permitted area and being concerned that parking space on the road would be taken up by employees, they explained that most of them get public transport and walk from the closest bus stop, and a few often get lifts near work and walk the rest.

I am employed by a small cake business in Bishops Cleeve. We often have customers coming to our premises to talk about their designs and to pick up their cakes, meaning we were concerned about the increased flow of traffic around us. However, all residents around our premises were understanding and very positive about this new business. Coming from a small business who struggled over covid-19 and lock down, I feel Smudgers Mutts and I can relate on that level. This year has not been great for any businesses, especially small businesses, who often struggle even without the ordeal we have been through this year. I have found it fairly disheartening how a few of this community, I now live in, have been extremely negative towards Smudgers Mutts. All

employees I have met have been lovely towards myself and my boyfriend, they often only have 3-4 employees in a day, who seem to be like a small family, due to knowing each other for years.

Having lived in the flat for three months, I have to say, Smudgers Mutts has never been an issue for me. They are understanding of it being a residential area, and take all the precautions they can to make sure they are considerate of residents around them. Having come into the area after Smudgers Mutts opened means I didn't have to go through the area changing, I can understand why some residents may be against this business being open here, as change in an area you live in can be difficult. However, this is a forever changing world and small businesses are opening all over the place this day and age. As someone in their early 20's, I am all for small businesses and helping keep these businesses alive, especially ones who have survived throughout lock-down and Covid-19. This is such an uncertain time for all businesses, and everyone should be more positive towards these businesses as they help employees live, financially and mentally, providing financial income and social interaction.

29 Jesson Road
Cheltenham
GL52 8PE

Comments: 2nd September 2020

I have been working for Smudgers Mutts for nearly 5 years. I started on a work experience basis and then the manager offered me an apprenticeship in dog grooming which tempted me to leave college to focus on a career as a dog groomer. I spent a whole year training with Smudgers Mutts about how to wash, dry and groom dogs, and even the handling, restraining and first aid of dogs. After my apprenticeship I became self employed and have worked at Smudgers Mutts since. Working at Smudgers Mutts has provided me with an income and I have been able to move out of my family home. I have a house of my own to afford, so losing Smudgers Mutts would have a huge negative impact on my personal life as well as my work life.

30 Wellesley Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 4LD

Comments: 15th September 2020

The reasons I am objecting to this planning application are:

1. Wellesley Road is a very narrow residential road which is already unable to provide safe movement of vehicles in both directions. Because of this vehicles use residents' parking areas to turn. This resulted in the damage to the wall housing dustbin and recycling boxes as reported to the police as the driver didn't stop to provide details.

To have cars attending a business and off loading animals would add to the present problems.

2. Cars attending the business have parked on my outside area without permission. This prevented any visitors to my home from parking on my designated area.

3. While sitting in my courtyard area my peace is further disturbed by frequent dog barking.

25 Marle Hill Parade
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 4LG

Comments: 18th September 2020

Wellesley Road and Marle Hill Parade are part of the Central Conservation Area. The Plan for this areas states that Cheltenham Borough Council will work with Gloucestershire County Council to address and improve parking and traffic management in the area. There is existing high traffic volume and poor traffic flow in the area particularly around St Pauls Road which must be used to access this proposed new business premises, either via Marle Hill Parade or Wellesley Road.

Wellesley Road is a densely populated residential area with many homes for families of all types whose daily circumstances have all been changed by recent events. This proposal does and will add traffic congestion, car-parking and noise issues and is potentially dangerous.

Wellesley Road is a narrow service Lane with no pavement; vehicles must travel in single file and pedestrians must move carefully using gaps in parked cars or staying close to the sides of the road.

Wellesley Road is a popular route for children/parents travelling to town from Dunalley School and visitors to Pittville Park, plus the students attending and living at the Star College campus at Pittville Park. The additional cars/traffic pose further risk for these pedestrians/wheelchair users.

This proposal is an addition or extension to the dog boarding business in adjoined premises of 27 Marle Hill Parade. This needs to be considered as an additional business on the same footprint and question that this was not mentioned. The two properties are co-joined at the rear of both premises via a gate, used by the owner and employees of 'Smudgers Mutts' registered at 27 Marle Hill Parade and the dog grooming at 'Lotty Lodge' throughout the day. Cars/customers arriving at both premises create additional noise, traffic volume and pollution to both Marle Hill Parade and Wellesley Road. It is likely that because the businesses are co-owned and joined from the front of Marle Hill Parade extending to the to the back at Wellesley Road it creates additional impact of noise and activity over a larger expanse of space.

The original and most prominent argument for approving the original plans was to fulfil the need for additional homes in the residential area of Wellesley Road. For the former reason I did not object to that proposal. However, this proposal is totally inappropriate in many ways not least that it does not preserve the character of the area and it would set a precedent to turn an access lane into a potentially busy commercial area which is simply not sustainable for previous mentioned reasons. This would have a substantial impact in many ways. If this were to be approved what would stop any business operating at that residence and given the applicant is a tenant, there is every likelihood of this occurring.

The introduction of a commercial premise with all its associated activity is inappropriate and I am against this kind of change.

I would question the that the planning application does not address potential fire hazard to the flat above, and other potential health and safety at work issues and Covid measures including social distancing, wearing of masks etc.

The space for this proposed business is currently extremely limited. There are frequently three or more members of staff working together at the same time with no social distancing and no masks. I note the comment regarding the business providing employment however, the issue here pertains to change of planning and not employment and the applicant points out that the business has previously been successfully run at another premises across town, so presumably could still be and further questions the need to change this residential home into a busy commercial premise. Indeed, with such glowing support from customers from all over Cheltenham and Gloucester I am sure they would be happy to travel to a more appropriate setting to access this service. This is not providing a service for local people.

I am a life-long dog owner and challenge that dog grooming is an 'essential service'.

I question that planning application does not address commercial recycling and waste provision.

I question that the application does not address reduction in noise, and it is not accurate to say there is no additional noise from commercial driers.

The obvious lack of space at the premises necessitates the doors to be open all day which also increases the noise level to above average throughout the day. My daily observation (that looks directly onto these premises from the rear) is that the doors are almost always open when one or more driers are in use. The applicant admits that "high temperatures in the afternoon demand greater ventilation and therefore the large door at the back of the property is opened for the welfare of the dogs and staff". Surely this further supports the non-suitability/legality of the premises for commercial use.

Throughout the Spring and Summer months the noise was significantly disturbing and various decibel counts will support that noise from this address measured constantly above average and often reached much higher levels. The impact of this is considerable. The consistently high levels of noise in turn necessitates the employees and visitors to 'Lotty Lodge' to shout above the level of the machines. Visiting clients often shout from the entrance to the back-grooming room. On top of this, the noise from dogs barking and whining continues throughout the day (and can continue all week including weekends from the boarding dogs). I would say that there is an accumulative effect here to be considered. When groomers have finished with a dog, they are frequently put outside on the adjoining patio. I challenge that most dogs have been quiet through the grooming process

Should this proposal be agreed this would add to the number of dogs and associated noise at the existing licensed dog boarding business at 27 Marle Hill Parade.

I have recorded the decibels over the previous 2-3 months on various days and times. Supporting comments made by those with vested interests regarding no sound impact lack validity.

I am a close neighbour, who works from home. I am a key worker in Special Educational Needs, supporting schools, teachers, children, and young people in Gloucestershire. I have no choice regarding working from home and have been doing so throughout 'lock-down' full-time and continue to do so from a room in my home at the rear of Marle Hill Parade. There is no foreseeable change to this arrangement. I feel significantly impacted by the unauthorised business at this premise so far and request that my response is considered fairly considering this.

Finally, no consideration is offered by the applicant regarding the impact of the increase in noise and decrease in privacy on the nature and enjoyment of my and other residents' homes and gardens. Not to mention the impact on residents' well-being during a time that we all have to consider the needs of others. Whether indoors at work or outdoors in my garden the noise is overbearing and intrusive, with extra car/dog/client/ noise and intrusion onto private parking areas.

I agree with all other comments of objection.

I genuinely wish the applicant well and every success in her business and hope that she will seek to provide her service at a more appropriate setting, as she does have a choice in this.

26 Marle Hill Parade
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 4LG

Comments: 14th September 2020

We completely agree with the other supportive comments.

We live adjacent and have not particularly noticed an increase in traffic or parking issues. While the dryers are of course audible, it is not a disruption, especially seeing as the hours of business operation are reasonable and when the doors are closed, you cannot hear anything.

The applicant has always been extremely considerate and respectful. We feel it is so important to support local businesses and the running of Smudgers does not bother us. It is imperative that you consider our response as we are direct neighbours and if anything, we and 28 Marle Hill Parade would be the most affected, yet we both strongly support the proposal.

Thank you.

28 Marle Hill Parade
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 4LG

Comments: 13th September 2020

My family and I live next door to the applicant, and the premises of Smudgers Mutts on the ground floor of Lotty Lodge sits adjacent to our back garden. As we live in such close proximity to the business concerned, we felt strongly that we should detail the reality of living next to the premises, and our comments would be as follows:-

1. Residents on these 2 roads live close to the very heart of a bustling town centre and on the edge of a main thoroughfare used daily for commuters from one end of town to the other, and beyond. Within walking distance from Wellesley Road there is a wide variety of small local businesses, conveniently placed for the residents of St Paul's/Pittville, providing a great mix of services to The business is now a part of this offer.

2. The anticipated increase in footfall specifically to this road due to the business at Lotty Lodge, has not been noted by us, even during the latter weeks of lockdown when the applicant was able to operate at a reduced capacity.

3. Car parking along Wellesley Road has long been an issue due to the narrow nature of this lane. However, any anticipated increase in parking problems for local residents has also not been noted by this household. We now have a double parking spot at the bottom of our garden and it has never been blocked by a patron of Smudgers Mutts.

4. It is our observation that cars are often parked across the yellow lines and pavement outside Phoebe's Pad on Marle Hill Parade, whilst the applicant is able to offer customers a drop off car parking spot outside her premises.

5. During our time at home for lockdown and subsequent homeschooling, we were not in any way disturbed by the industrial dryers used at Smudgers Mutts, by the frequent customers or by staff chatter to and from work.

6. The trading hours for the business are indeed less than other local businesses, coincide with school hours, and are certainly during the hours that most of the general public are up and about living life.

7. I have recently started a new job and am now working from home 5 days per week via computer and phone, and can confirm that even with my back door open I have not had any cause for complaint. Noise levels are minimal and I have found the applicant to be both considerate to her neighbours and informative throughout the process of the construction, moving in and opening of the business.

8. We feel you should be aware of a noticeable difference in noise at night and parking issues along Marle Hill Parade now the students have returned for the commencement of the university term. The applicants business "noise level" is much more acceptable by comparison!

Finally, we would like to say how disheartening we feel it is to find objections to the applicants business. As a local businesswoman, who has worked hard to build up and move her company to new premises in the middle of a global pandemic, we feel she has done remarkably well in maintaining both her loyal customers and being able to retain the jobs of her staff. From the evidence we have witnessed, the applicant has been consistently polite, reassuring and courteous. She is hugely respected by her staff and customers, which speaks volumes of her character, and makes an excellent role model for her young apprentices and local working women alike.

We wish her continued success and have no objections to her business continuing at these premises.

29 Marle Hill Parade
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 4LG

Comments: 18th September 2020

Having lived 2 doors down for over a year, I can honestly say I've never been bothered by any noise/ dogs. Not only is the owner a lovely neighbour, they are constantly respectful and always keep the dogs safe and contained.

19 Campion Park
Up Hatherley
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3WA

Comments: 11th September 2020

I completely support the application. This is a small business that is completely in line with the government's steer and attitude. I would even go 1 further in saying the small company owners have supported and guided young people in advancing their careers and that is another feather in their cap! With regards to the disruption in the local area, I feel (from a non local point of view) there would be minimal disruption unless you have very sensitive hearing! The operating hours are minimal...the so say reported noise is minimal and the sense of providing a service to the public is completely non selfish. I do not see any sensible reason why this business cannot operate when you have other residential businesses operating Child nurseries, for example. This business compared to other..more...(here say) sociably unacceptable positions is totally acceptable in my opinion. If this is not granted I would question why other groomer parlours have been allowed to operate! I would expect a written explanation as to why.

Lotty Lodge
33 Wellesley Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 4LD

Comments: 28th August 2020

I rent a one bedroom flat above Smudgers Mutts, based in Lotty Lodge. I work from home, and so I must admit, knowing I was moving above the groomers was a concern for me. However, I have now lived here since the beginning of June and I have to say I've had no issue whatsoever with any part of the business downstairs. The noise level, even for me just being upstairs, is hardly noticeable and always kept to a minimum.

I also have a Z11 permit to park on Wellesley Road, and come and go during the day to run various errands or for work purposes. I've had no issue with the road being busier during the businesses opening hours. I've noticed most customers of the business utilise the driveway space in front of the property, which leaves the road clear for pedestrians

and vehicles. I think it is a good idea for a sign to be put up, as mentioned in the cover letter, to make it clear that the space should always be used for customer parking.

In my time living here, I have gotten to know the staff who work at the business below and the owner. They all have been nothing but welcoming and supportive. I think it would be an awful shame if this application was not approved considering the current climate we are living in. I am a firm believer that small businesses like this should be supported in these trying times, and allowed to survive just like the rest of us are trying so hard to do. In summary, I would like to show my full support for the application, I see no reason why it should not be approved.

Lyndale
Pirton Lane
Gloucester
GL3 2QN

Comments: 15th September 2020

I would like to write in support of the planning application for Smudgers Mutts Dog Groomers. Although I do not live locally, I work at Smudgers Mutts and would like to provide some insight into why this business needs to continue trading at this address, and the wider impacts on me personally, as well as the business, should planning be denied. There are a number of points that I have considered when making my decision to support this application.

1. Noise

I have worked for Smudgers Mutts for a number of years, in three different locations, all of them being in a residential street. I appreciate local residents' concerns over noise and changes to the feel of the street if change of use was granted. However, Wellesley Road is not situated in a quiet, rural village. It is in a busy town, surrounded by The Brewery, Pitville Park, The University of Gloucestershire and a local Primary School. Each of these bring some element of noise to the area - some during less sociable hours! I, myself, attended The University of Gloucestershire whilst studying for my degree, and stayed in Brunswick Road, so I know, first hand, how much noise students can make and the times of day they are using the surrounding streets coming and going into town! Whilst Pitville Park is a fabulous amenity to enjoy right on the doorstep, it too attracts an element of noise (both human and dog related) all through the day.

The team at Smudgers Mutts do all they can to limit noise whilst at work. They are professional, considerate people who would not wish to inconvenience neighbours or cause a nuisance and are willing to adapt working practices, should they need to, and are happy to discuss any concerns, should they arise. Windows and doors are kept closed whenever possible. Driers are used for a limited amount of their operating hours. When I am working at Smudgers Mutts, I leave by 2.30pm at the latest and it is usually the case that all dogs are dried by this point. Therefore any noise referred to within oppositional comments is limited to within a school's opening hours (not regular business hours) and kept to an absolute minimum. Rarely is there an issue with noise from dogs visiting the premises. Clients are given scheduled appointments so that all dogs are worked with and monitored by a member of staff at all times to keep them as settled as possible. The staff spend a lot of time acclimatising the dogs to the environment and making them as comfortable as possible. However, it is inevitable that, at some point, a dog will bark! The staff act quickly to quieten the dog should this occur. At this point, I

would like to state that whilst at work at Smudgers Mutts last week, I was able to hear, from the groom room, a dog barking from another property on Wellesley Road. It continued barking for a full 20 minutes without being quietened. I would hope that residents and planners will both consider that dog noise cannot simply be apportioned to Smudgers Mutts and that the local area is, in fact, home to countless other dogs who can give attended to, monitored dogs an unfairly bad name.

I was interested in an oppositional comment made about the sound levels of the high powered driers used by dog groomers and it prompted me to do a little of my own research. High powered driers do, indeed, have a reported average sound of between 94.8 and 108 dB. I was even more interested to learn that usual household domestic appliances, that we would consider acceptable to use at any time, produce a surprising amount of noise too. An average human hairdryer 85-90dB, an average vacuum 80dB, an average lawn mower 90dB, a chainsaw or leaf blower 106-115dB, a garden shredder 111dB and fireworks 140dB. When considering the limited hours per day dog grooming driers are used, over four days a week (never evenings or weekends) I believe the suggested impact to life enjoyment is questionable when compared to the noise levels of the frequently used domestic items mentioned earlier. I would finally like to respond to another oppositional comment which suggests the noise in the near vicinity of Smudgers Mutts 'must be intolerable'. I use these driers every day that I am at work and the noise from them (at very close quarters) is not intolerable! Indeed, the dogs who are dried with them (and who have far sharper hearing than we do) seem to tolerate them well.

2. Traffic

Members of staff do not add to traffic in the area. I do not live locally, but am respectful of the residents parking zones and choose to park out of town and walk in, as do a number of my colleagues (others cycle or live locally enough to walk the entire way). Customers use the designated parking bay or walk to their appointments. On my journey to and from work (on foot) I have not noticed any problems with traffic in Wellesley Road due to this business. The only issues I have been aware of, have come either from the building site at the top of the road or residents parking along the length of the road, limiting passing places. However, as a pedestrian, I have never, at any time, felt unsafe or felt that the traffic in the road was a danger to others.

3. Supporting local business

In these unprecedented times, it is more important than ever for small businesses to receive support from locals and to find new ways to adapt and survive. The Government's advice of 'work from home if you can' has certainly encouraged many to seek alternative ways to operate their businesses and I am saddened that there has been opposition to this application. I appreciate that Wellesley Road is residential, however, it is part of Cheltenham Town and is neighbour to other residential streets that include commercial premises - a general store, a take away and another grooming parlour to name a few. I am not local, however, my own next door neighbour has just been granted planning permission to run her business from her house as lockdown had such an impact on her income she was no longer able to afford to rent a separate commercial property. I am happy to say I supported her application and hope she can make a success of it now that her outgoings are vastly reduced. Our employer has stated that the impact of lockdown (the loss of earnings and the cost to set up premises in Lotty Lodge at short notice in order to continue operating with social distancing in the workplace) means that the business will close down should planning permission be denied. It is simply not affordable to start again, rent another property and relocate. The

precarious current economic climate and the uncertainty of the next few months just does not make it viable.

4. The impact on me personally

I have not always worked as a dog groomer. My profession was as a Primary School Teacher, until I became a registered carer. Financially, however, I still needed to work, so I joined Smudgers Mutts on a self employed basis. I consider myself very lucky to be able to juggle my caring commitments with a job I love and am grateful to the team at Smudgers Mutts for being so flexible and understanding. Due to my caring role, I am unable to work evenings, weekends, school holidays or out of school hours. I also need to be on call, and need days off to attend hospital appointments and it is not unusual for me to be late arriving at work. Finding an employer who is willing to work around all these demands is rare and I am certain that should planning be denied and the business forced to close, I would not find another job that fits around my needs as a carer - especially in the current climate. My job at Smudgers Mutts is crucial to me in order to make ends meet but it is also a lifeline to me personally. It is invaluable to work with a team of people who understand, who are willing to offer support, are flexible and happy to cover my hours when I need to be late or leave early.

5. The clients and their dogs

Finally, I would like to point out that Smudgers Mutts is not simply a business. We care for over 400 dogs between us. Dogs who we have introduced to the grooming process from puppies, dogs who are nervous and needed extra reassurance, dogs who have been ill and need to feel refreshed, dogs whose coats need cutting every 4-6 weeks or they become matted and uncomfortable, dogs whose owners need advice and help to care for their coats/nails/ears. We build relationships and trust with these dogs. We see them regularly and grow to care about them. We can often spot slight changes in health or personality that owners miss. Some of the dogs we care for have been with us so long, we have supported their owners when they come to the end of their life and share in their loss. Should this application be denied, it worries me that 400+ dogs will have to start again, somewhere else. Will have to build that relationship somewhere else. They will not understand, they will be nervous. They may even struggle to find another groomer with appointments available to accommodate them. We saw, first hand, how dogs struggled during lockdown, some missing several scheduled grooms. We at Smudgers Mutts would all be devastated to lose our jobs, our camaraderie and our income but we would be equally devastated to lose contact with our furry family.

I wholeheartedly support this planning application (and so do my dogs who would not want to go anywhere else!)

The Coppers
Wellesley Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 4LD

Comments: 31st August 2020

Design and impact on the conservation area

As has been stated in previous planning applications St Paul's is an area characterised by compact, high density artisan terraced housing, some modern infill development, high

levels of on-street parking. The terraces generally back onto one another with frequent service lanes running to the rears.

Wellesley Road is a densely populated residential area and any application should preserve the character of the area. With density of housing in the area, the introduction of a commercial premise, which does not need to be located in the area as it does not provide vital services for the area or local residents, is inappropriate.

We note the applicant's covering letter regarding a similar commercial operation, referred to as Phoebe's Pad in Marle Hill Parade. However, these premises were originally, we believe a shop. A property owner or purchaser near this shop would know about this commercial operation. This application is for change of use of a residential house in a residential area.

Traffic and Highway safety

Wellesley Road and Marle Hill Parade are part of the Central Conservation Area. The Plan for this area states that Cheltenham Borough Council will work with Gloucestershire County Council to address and improve parking and traffic management in the area. There is existing high traffic volume and poor traffic flow in the area particularly around St Pauls Road that has to be used to access this proposed new business premises, either via Marle Hill Parade or Wellesley Road.

It is estimated that this commercial premise would result in an additional 35+ cars per day visiting Wellesley Road. Each groomer will be expected to care for a minimum of 5 dogs a day (3 groomers x 5 dogs each); plus additional traffic with deliveries, the arrival and departure of six part-time staff, customers etc. This would be in addition to existing traffic created by the existing business (Dog boarding business) in adjoining premises of 27 Marle Hill Parade, which uses Lotty Lodge as a rear access.

Wellesley Road is a narrow service lane with no pavement. Due to the limited width of the road and further restrictions due to parked cars, vehicles have to travel in single file and pedestrians have to also move carefully using gaps in parked cars or staying close to the sides of the road when cars pass by. There are often no spaces between parked cars as the road is already very full with local residents parking.

Wellesley Road is also a popular route for people travelling to town and children travelling to and from Dunalley School plus visitors to Pittville Park. In addition the students attending and living at the Star College campus at Pittville Park often use this route. The additional cars pose further risk for these pedestrians, especially pushchair and wheelchair users, as they must walk on the road due to the lack of pavement.

Parking

We note the applicant's covering letter concerning the proposed use of the one parking space at Lotty Lodge for customers. However, the planning is for this parking space to be used by the tenant who lives at Lotty Lodge. Since operation there have been a number of occasions of double parking, inconsiderate parking and blocking of the road. If a customer does find a parking spot this will be a resident parking area and thus blocks a resident from parking.

Noise

For residents living close to 'Lotty Lodge' the increased noise levels are noticeable and impact on daily living. The drying and clipping machines are in constant use and make a

considerable level of noise which necessitates the employees and visitors to 'Lotty Lodge' to shout above the level of the machines continually throughout the day.

Following research we cite this extract from a 2012 Study entitled 'Noise Impacts From Professional Dog Grooming Forced-Air Dryers', link at the bottom,

"Four dryers were tested and the study found that the average sound level for three of the four makes of dryer was between 105 and 108 decibels, with the other dryer being recorded at 94.8 decibels."

The noise can be clearly heard from three houses away as you walk up or down Wellesley Road. Plus the noise from dogs barking and whining and the added noise from the existing licensed dog boarding business at 27 Marle Hill Parade.

We note the applicant's suggestion that residents have been particularly disturbed due to more people being at home during lockdown. However, lockdown has ended and the noise levels are still as intrusive as is the increased traffic etc. Also it is most likely that people will be working from home for the foreseeable future and some people are retired. We repeat that this is a residential area and a commercial premise is inappropriate at any time.

Layout and density of the building

Lotty Lodge was designed and gained planning consent as a two bedroomed detached house. The change in layout results in a smaller living area and a commercial premise of 17.8 square meters to handle the grooming of dogs. Within this area there are two grooming tables, dog baths, up to six part-time employees, visiting customers and deliveries. This tight area has no air conditioning facilities so the doors and windows are, understandable, constantly open and thus increases the noise levels.

Other

We are genuinely pleased that this business is doing so well - and wish the applicant well. We would prefer that her commercial business does not operate in Wellesley Road and for the reasons stated above we object to this application.

References:

<https://www.groomers-online.com/blog/2018/03/how-dryers-blasters-affect-your-hearing-what-you-need-to-know-as-a-groomer/#:~:text=Four%20dryers%20were%20tested%20and,being%20recorded%20at%2094.8%20decibels.>

Comments: 16th September 2020

[comments submitted to in response to consultee comments from Environmental Health]

I saw today your comments regarding the above planning application. I wish to complain at the levels of noise that are produced by this business in a residential area. The industrial blow drying machines are particularly disturbing. Recorded reading are at 88 dB. Indeed the difference in the noise levels when the business is closed are marked. There is also the noise from the dogs, 8 in the residential boarding and up to 3 in the grooming lodge.

91 Pennine Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL52 5HB

Comments: 16th September 2020

I support the application of Smudgers mutts operating using part of the ground floor. I am self employed and work for the business Smudgers mutts which has allowed me to be completely flexible as to when I work. Losing this job would be detrimental to not only my income but also to my mental wellbeing and state. Like many others, the impact of covid 19 has had a negative effect on both my wellbeing and income, and the closure of this business would bring even further negative effect upon this.

I cannot begin to describe the heartbreak it would also cause all of the staff at Smudgers and myself, if all of our nearly 500 clients had to go elsewhere. Some of these clients have been with Smudgers since the start of the business and therefore have built up an amazing relationship of both friendship and trust, dog and owner included! We work with many people and their pets to provide outstanding care and many would not wish to go elsewhere. I can vouch for this as I myself have 2 rescued collie crossbreeds which I would not trust to go elsewhere after building an amazing and trusting relationship with the staff at smudgers mutts.

As stated, the closure and refusal of application of this would be detrimental to my income and would result in more unemployment which during this pandemic has risen significantly. Being a young adult in this day and age is hard enough and comes with many challenges and being unemployed would add more, the future is uncertain enough as it is without the worry of becoming unemployed and losing a job which I love.

16 Springbank Drive
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 0PF

Comments: 20th September 2020

This is a well run grooming business. Dogs are well looked after and any barking will not be more than domestic dogs already resident in the road.

Appointments are staggered so the parking available directly outside Lotty Lodge is adequate. Clients are reminded not to block other properties.

This groom room is popular and provides employment to several people as well as an income for a single parent.

I fully support its continuation as I would if it were next door to me.

28 Fairview Close
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL52 2LB

Comments: 13th September 2020

As both a staff member and client of Smudger's Mutts, I'd like to share my views.

As a member of staff, I can say it would be a truly sad day if this application was not approved. She has worked tirelessly to build up her business and she provides a wonderful service to many happy clients, the vast majority of whom live locally.

She treats her staff excellently and it would be devastating to us all to lose our employment with her. We are a close knit team and we all also have great working relationships with the clients.

She has also gone above and beyond to help many people. From those just starting out in the business, to teens on work experience and young people looking for their first experience of employment, she has been nothing but kind and welcoming.

I'd also like to address some of the practical issues raised, starting with increased traffic. Wellesley Road has been highly impacted for many months by multiple building projects almost along its entire length. It's also fairly narrow, with cars parked solidly down one side at any given time. It's my view that an extra few cars using the road for access, stopping in the property's allocated off-road parking space, ONLY during daytime hours and just 4 days a week, is not going to negatively impact anyone's lives to any degree.

If parking and access is such a serious issue, then perhaps look to other areas such as restrictions on lorries using the road or lessening the space available for the use of on-road parking permits.

I'd also like to add that the estimates of increased traffic shown in another comment (35+ cars per day) are wildly off. Many clients bring 2 or 3 dogs at a time to be groomed. Myself and other members of staff are able to walk or cycle to work. Three groomers and 6 part time staff are obviously not all in the building at the same time! Part time hours are generally in the form of 1 or 2 full days a week, rather than people coming and going all day. My informed estimate would be closer to a max of 12 cars a day, spread over approximately 6 hours.

The lack of pavement on Wellesley Road is indeed unfortunate for pedestrians using it for access, particularly those with pushchairs or those in wheelchairs. However, it only takes a quick look at the map to see that, if this is a serious issue for any one person, using the adjacent Marle Hill Parade with its two pavements would obviously be the better option.

I'd also like it to be noted that due to the fairly central location of the property and its proximity to Pittville Park, a good percentage of clients enjoy walking their dogs to be groomed, either from home or from a town centre car park.

With regards to potential noise from the property, I can confirm that it's kept to an absolute minimum. Doors and windows are generally closed, and I have to say, that the first time I went to work at Lotty Lodge (on foot I might add) I struggled to find it. It was certainly not obvious that there were ANY dogs in the property, and there was no sound of dryers heard from the street. On the many occasions I have walked to Lotty Lodge since then, I have not heard the dryers at all, unless immediately outside the open front door, which is generally closed, unless welcoming a client in.

I have heard multiple dogs barking from other properties, either on Wellesley Road or from Marle Hill Parade properties that back on to it, and also what I would consider excessive noise from building works in the road. I would suggest that anyone complaining of noise from dogs should make certain their finger of blame is pointing at the correct target, rather than the obvious one!

As a client of Smudger's Mutts Dog Grooming, I would be really very sad to have to take my business elsewhere. My dogs have a lovely relationship with the groomers, and this is only built up through time and trust. I also always try and use local "one man band" style businesses wherever possible and I feel that the Council should strongly consider the current political climate of supporting small businesses wherever possible.

As a Cheltenham local, and with Smudger's Mutts Dog Grooming now being located in Wellesley Road, I can walk my dogs there and back, as can many other clients. This is obviously preferable to having to drive for many reasons. It improves the health and wellbeing of the owners (another topic that's being heavily pushed by the government these days), it cuts pollution and environmental damage and lessens the risk of road accidents.

I'd also like to add that I am also a client of Smudger's Mutts Home Boarding. I can absolutely confirm that this is run entirely separately from the Grooming business. No boarding dogs are ever checked in or out through Lotty Lodge. No boarding dogs are taken out for walks through Lotty Lodge. No boarding dogs occupy any part of Lotty Lodge at any time.

In conclusion, it is my view that any concerns raised against this application are either unfounded, not the fault of Smudger's Mutts or very easily rectifiable. I whole heartedly support this application and wish S and Smudger's Mutts a long and happy future at Lotty Lodge.

61 Andover Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 2TS

Comments: 14th September 2020
Standing

These representations are made by me as an observer rather than as a resident or as a customer or employee of the business. I have known the family for about three years and have been familiar with Wellesley Road and its environs both before Lotty Lodge was built and afterwards.

Environment

Visual: I find the business signage to be minimal and discreet. I have not witnessed any extraneous visual evidence of a business being operated from the premises (eg business waste left on the street).

Noise etc: I have only witnessed the business in operation from the house and garden of No 27 Marle Hill Parade so immediate neighbours, residents, and employees are better

qualified to comment on noise, the likelihood of noxious smells, etc, than I. But I have experienced nothing to disturb me on that account from where I have stood.

I have visited the family most often at weekends (when most residents in the area are of course actually resident). It is otiose to state that the environmental impact of the business at the weekend is nil because it is closed, and there are no plans to change this.

The dog grooming business

The owner has built the business from scratch over many years of training, hard work and dedication. The business operates by personal recommendation as much as anything and she takes care to build relationships with owners and indeed dogs. Passing trade is not an issue. The business provides employment on flexible terms for a number of people and offers training opportunities for any that want them.

She is able to control dogs under her care (unlike some neighbours of mine that I could mention). I know that she has refused boarding business from owners whose dogs cannot settle or have behaviours that are intractable, regardless of whether any disturbance has resulted or not. I understand that she applies the same standards to the grooming business.

Another established dog grooming business exists in the same immediate area, which clearly is not exclusively residential. (Takeaways and shops also operate in the vicinity, often seven days a week). The signage for this comparable type of business is in keeping with advertising its presence in a busy and crowded street and I have witnessed noise from dogs and driers emanating from these premises when passing by, especially in summer. I have no criticism to make of this business given its nature, nor would I seek to make direct comparisons between two businesses that are superficially similar but operate in a different way. Nevertheless, I find these experiences illuminating in context.

Consequences of refusal

The refusal of change of use would result inevitably in the grooming business ceasing to exist, with the consequential loss of service and amenity to a wide community of dog owners, and the loss of employment to a number of staff. The loss would also have an impact on the family (apart from the obvious) as the current arrangement (including specifically its location) allows for some necessary flexibility which was thrown into stark relief during the ongoing pandemic but extends beyond that.

Summary

Personally, I would find it disappointing if the application were to be refused because I fail to discern any rational disinterested objection to it. I also appreciate that the consequential and inevitable loss of a thriving business in very challenging economic circumstances, and the personal impact that this would have on employees and family, would be substantial and tangible. On the other hand, the minimal impact of the business on the area (viewed both immediately and more widely), and its nature, which is not groundbreaking, should in my view argue in favour of the application being granted.

29 The Holt
Bishops cleeve
Cheltenham
GL52 8NQ

Comments: 22nd September 2020

I am a part time holiday worker at Smudger's Mutts and to hear that the business may be closed down is devastating, for the owner and all of her employees. While studying animal science at college I was looking for work experience relating to animals. I approached the owner of this business and immediately she was extremely friendly and willing to help me out. I went in multiple times and then I ended up coming to work for her in holidays, with very flexible working times. Working for this business has helped me greatly in my college course and it has also helped me out as an individual by providing me with flexible work during my time off at college.

As someone who has worked there a lot over summer, I can say that I have seen first hand, the effort which has gone into ensuring that the business is kept minimal and quiet. Customers are frequently reminded before appointments to park their vehicles on the drive in order to prevent traffic and blocking the road. The hand over of dogs is also made as brief as possible in order to ensure that customer noise is kept to the minimum. When dogs are barking, the doors are closed immediately to prevent noise outside the building. Therefore, I completely support this planning application.

Linnet
Wellesley Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 4LD

Comments: 12th September 2020

My main concern is that it is a residential road with normally more pedestrian than vehicle traffic going to and from the Brewery area/ the High Street/Pittville Park/ Dunalley Infants School etc.....but there is no pavement.

I have noticed an increase in parking and traffic problems with vehicles going down Wellesley Road from the st Paul's end and back again.

I live at the other end of Wellesley Road. However, when walking past with the business in operation I have noticed the noise from it. If I lived nearby I would find it intolerable.

15 Netherwood Gardens
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 8LQ

Comments: 16th September 2020

As a client of Smudgers Mutts Dog Grooming, I am somewhat disappointed and bemused to find out that the future of the business is hanging in the balance due to

unfounded complaints from a couple of residents who, it appears, do not even live close to the property.

Having used Smudgers Mutts at their previous location, I was happy to hear that during lockdown they were able to relocate to Lotty Lodge.

Knowing the area well, it is, indeed, a road that appears to be subject to a lot of growth residentially at St Pauls Road end, however Lotty Lodge fits in well, and is much like the houses that have already been constructed in the last few years.

Smudgers Mutts, and more specifically the business owner, are the most professional and conscientious groomers I have used in the 30 plus years I have been a dog owner. Consideration for others is always at the forefront of the owner's work ethic (whether that be the staff she employs, neighbours to the business, owners and the dogs themselves)

I do not need to re-iterate the facts of this dispute with regards to noise, inconvenience etc as this is a matter that others have already discussed at length in their comments.

All businesses have teething problems when change happens, and these have already been addressed now the business is back to normal working hours.

Suffice to say that my support is on the side of Smudgers Mutts.

If, as a result of this consultation, the business were to cease trading, simply due to a matter of persecution by certain residents (who are not even close neighbours!) then perhaps the objectors to this matter should think carefully whether they have the same consideration for others as Ms Smith!

32 Folly Lane
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 4BY

Comments: 5th September 2020

I completely support this application. Having used Smudgers in the past and always recommend them when people ask for groomers.

We should be supporting local businesses, especially in the present climate. There are several people who could potentially be made redundant if this isn't approved.

I often drive down Wellesley Road as my Mother lives in Marle Hill Parade, and I have never encountered any traffic problems.

39 Wellesley Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 4LD

Comments: 15th September 2020

We wish to note that planning permission at the site was granted for much needed residential accommodation.

Planning permission to run a dog grooming business is now being sought retrospectively. The owner of the property must have been aware that such a business could not be run from a residential property without permission. The business started running from the premises shortly after building work on the house finished earlier in the year.

Whilst the merits of the dog grooming business taking place in providing employment and a service to dog owners are welcome, if permission is granted it would set a precedent for other businesses to move in to other underdeveloped parts of the road. A large red and white advertising board has been placed in front of the property during opening hours, which has altered the residential character of the road. It is not correct to say that there is no noise from the driers, as this can clearly be heard when walking past when the doors are open which they mostly are.

The business has attracted extra traffic to Wellesley Road which the infrastructure cannot accommodate. The parking space at the property was allocated for the resident of the dwelling. There is additional housing development taking place at the top end of the road which will increase traffic in the road when the houses are occupied.

Pedestrians are now at increased risk as there is no provision for safe walking along Wellesley Road.

Vehicular access out of Wellesley Road into St Paul's Road is extremely dangerous due to poor visibility and the increased traffic has made the situation worse. It is also very difficult to enter Wellesley Road from St Paul's Road when returning home. There isn't room for two vehicles to pass each other entering Wellesley Road and this can cause an obstruction in St Paul's Road creating a hazard to other traffic and the inevitable frustration this brings.

We therefore object to the proposal and hope the business can find more suitable premises in the area.

Comments: 28th September 2020

Regarding the above planning application. Should permission be granted, could a restriction be applied to limit future use in the event of the business closing down or moving from the premises. It could transpire that another type of business even more detrimental to Wellesley Road may locate here if change of use can be passed on.

Thank you for your consideration.

Orwell Villa
St Annes Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL52 2SS

Comments: 2nd September 2020

I have been using smudges mutts dog grooming for several years and have taken my dogs to the new premises namely Lotty Lodge. At no time has there been any issue with

driving along Wellesley road or parking outside to drop off my dog. There was no issue with noise from the grooming parlour And on one occasion when I chose to walk to the property it actually took me time to ascertain exactly where the property was. There was certainly no noise that could be heard on the street. As it is a small premises, there are very few dogs there at onetime and I believe that bathing or drying a dog can only happen with one or perhaps 2 dogs at a time. There are never going to be lots of dogs or staff there at the same time as the premises are not large enough to facilitate this. It would be very very sad to lose this business. My dogs are saying so as well as they love Lotty Lodge

29 The Nurseries
Bishops Cleeve
Cheltenham
GL52 8XB

Comments: 14th September 2020

I work at Smudgers Mutts and have done so for 5 years. This has been a fantastic experience as the owner provides flexible work to several ladies like me. If she is made to close the business after investing everything she has into this site it will be utterly devastating for her and all the people she employs. But that is no reason why a business MUST exist and I understand this. My point of view is that I have witnessed first hand, the amount of effort she has gone to provide a service that is discrete, quiet and safe. The owner insists that we cannot park near the premises so I drive to the park and ride and cycle in. We are doing our absolute best to protect the area and environment around us, having read some of the neighbor's comments, I think she/we have been successful. Both of her immediate neighbours have supported the application.

If this application fails then I know the owner will be financially forced to close. I find this terribly sad when someone has already battled to build a business and invested everything just prior to Covid - that decimated the business. After investing again to rebuild after lockdown only to be threatened by negative residents who live so far away from the property they can't be personally affected seems so very very sad.

23 King George Close
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL53 7RW

Comments: 15th September 2020

I chose to be a Smudger's Mutts customer, because of their exceptional personal & business integrity, which reassures me for the care they will show my dog.

The owner has successfully grown the business from its grass roots, continually using sound judgement to make decisions and has always taken her responsibility for her employees & neighbours seriously.

The impact of the business on the adjacent homes, will, I have no doubt been considered in the planning of the groom room's operational layout. As a client I have always been advised to park in the available (signposted) parking space at Lotty Lodge & leave via Courtenay St.

I also note that there are objections from addresses which are not adjacent or even local to Lotty Lodge (The Coppers & Linnet being at opposite ends of Wellesley road), so for these residents to comment on noise & additional traffic is unfounded & without fact.

The dog boarding company is run as an entirely separate business within the address of Marle Hill parade. As a customer of the dog boarding company, I was told that I must drop my dog at the Marle Hill Parade address and NOT Lotty Lodge. This area of St Pauls has many commercial businesses: multiple takeaways, another dog grooming parlour, shops and endless short term house rents (predominantly students).

Smudgers Mutts is a local business, contributing to the local economy. As well as supporting apprentice skills training schemes, job opportunities and work experience.

I whole heartily support the application for Smudgers Mutts at Lotty Lodge