

Head of Development Management
Eastleigh Borough Council
Eastleigh House
Upper Market Street
Eastleigh
Hampshire
SO50 9YN

Rowan
Pinewood Park
Southampton
SO19 6AL

8th November 2022

Planning application number: F/22/93935

Site address: HILLTOP, PINEWOOD PARK, SOUTHAMPTON, SO19 6AL

Proposal: Change of Use from C3 Dwelling House to C2 Residential Care Home for 6 Adults with Learning Disabilities and Autistic Spectrum Disorder, with internal alterations to property

Dear Sir/Madam

We write in response to your letter of 21st October 2022 and as adjoining neighbours, we object to the proposal on the following grounds:

Reasons specific to Rowan:

1. Right of access.

Rowan has a right of access, at all times, by vehicle or otherwise, over the driveway positioned between our property and Hilltop. This provides us with access to our rear parking spaces, double garage and the "boiler room" at the side of the property. It is therefore required 24/7.

The proposal for three (3) parking spaces on the driveway would prohibit this access.

Any vehicles parked on the driveway would not enable vehicular access to said parking and garages, due to lack of turning circle. Please refer to the pic 1 below, taken from the entrance to the drive in the past week. Access to the rear of our property is via a double gate to the left and just before the garage/annexe (pic 2) and such is the angle that access requires the full width of the driveway. This in turn requires use of full width at approach.

The proposed parking spaces would prohibit this. Rowan's driveway only has capacity for two cars. Our household has four (4) members, all of driving age, with a fifth who periodically visits. Adopting the proposal's suggestion that a normal single-family dwelling would have a car each, the natural progression is that we require access to the rear of the property for two (2) cars.

We are also keen campers and until recently have had a folding camper, which was stored at the rear of our property and once again requires the full driveway for access. This was also a reason why we purchased the property.

We would argue that this means the three (3) parking spaces are not possible. With no space inside Hilltop's gates, those vehicles would be parked on Pinewood Park, causing obstruction close to the junction with the very busy A27. This would be of danger to motorists who have to turn almost blindly into Pinewood Park from traffic that doesn't always encourage slowing down.



Pic 1 Driveway from entrance



Pic 2 Rear gates

2. Loss of privacy.

As we know, the nature of the residency will change under this proposal, from a single-family dwelling to a residential care home for six (6) residents and seven (7) or four (4) staff. The current layout and arrangement of Hilltop is that there are 4 bedrooms, a lounge, games room, reception room, and dining/family room. Under such an arrangement not only would the family members not be resident 24/7 (going to work, school, college or simply going out), but when resident they would have wide range of ground floor rooms to utilise, collectively or individually. It is therefore reasonable to assume that time spent in bedrooms 2 and 1 would be limited.

Under the proposed arrangements, there is one additional bedroom, the reception room is lost and the dining/family room becomes a much smaller dining room, which is more functional than a communal gathering space. Effectively two rooms are lost.

The residents are also on site almost 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Rowan is overlooked directly by bedroom 2 and to a lesser extent bedroom 1. Bedroom 2 looks directly into Rowan's kitchen (pic 3). Bedroom 1 also has sight of the kitchen.

With the likelihood of a resident in those bedrooms for the majority of the day (and night) this represents a loss of privacy.

In addition, bedroom 2 directly overlooks our seating area/patios at the rear of the property (pic 4)



Pic 3 View from kitchen window



Pic 4 Patio and seating area

3. Noise.

Six (6) permanent residents, with mental health and autistic spectrum disorders, along with seven (7) or four (4) carers **WILL**, without doubt, create more noise than a single-family dwelling. Based on the numbers alone the noise **WILL** double and as such will impact on our lives, living directly next door. ie 13 or 10 people regardless of their situation.

Equally, the proposal would change the property from residential to commercial in nature and with that the level and type of noise changes, with little or no attention, or consideration given to neighbours' environment. The residents would be unaware and the staff we'd suggest wouldn't have any personal vested interest in a harmonious relationship; it's a job, not their home after all.

Taking the driveway in isolation, the linear style of parking would require multiple movement of cars each time a vehicle arrived and with a gravel surface and the proximity to Rowan this would impact on our lives. Already, the increased traffic, door slamming etc through the contractors on site undertaking the proposed works has impacted on the sleep of our son who sleeps upstairs and to our lounge which is adjacent to the driveway.

We both operate businesses from home which intrusive noise would impact, particularly in summer months when the outside areas are used. The disturbance to our working environment would be unacceptable and detrimental to our businesses.

In addition, we purchased Rowan in part because of its secluded location in a quiet road with single-family dwellings and feel that the proposal will affect our property's valuation and marketability should we decide to sell.

4. Light invasion

Security lighting on the driveway between Rowan and Hilltop, due to the angle required shines directly into Rowan's kitchen and lounge windows, lighting up the WHOLE of the downstairs. This is so invasive that it wakes us whilst sleeping in the downstairs bedroom. With increased activity 24/7 this will further impact on our lives

The 24-hour nature of the care and characteristics of the residents will inevitably result in increased lighting. We've already noticed that the rear garden (trees and whole area, not just patio / house lighting) is invasive and not in keeping with the rest of Pinewood Park

5. Annexe

The annexe is positioned six (6) foot from our rear gate (pic 5) , with a door and a window (bedroom 6) that once again looks into Rowan, affecting our privacy.



Pic 5 Annexe from Rowan's rear gate

When the conversion from a garage was originally proposed it was for **occasional** use for Hilltop's family and as such we didn't object. As part of the agreement, it could not be sub-let or sold separately, both of which involve full time occupation.

The proposal converts this into a **full-time** residence thereby affecting the nature of its use, which we object to.

As well as noise and light (a resident, an office, and a medication room) the door and window represent a risk to the resident as they afford direct access to Pinewood Park and beyond. With a busy A27 at the end of the road and unfenced woods to the rear of all properties accessed further down Pinewood Park and resident could disappear in a matter of seconds. There is also a side gate to Hilltop onto the driveway offering the same access and a gate at the rear of Hilltop into the woods.

In addition, we have a dog that we muzzle when walking. The annexe door and window are six (6) feet from Rowan's back gate and our dog that will often be loose in our garden and who is territorial, thereby presenting a risk to anyone opening the gate.

6. Smell

All properties in Pinewood Park are serviced by their own septic tanks / water treatment units. Hilltop's will have been based on a single-family dwelling, with the expectation of normal usage. The proposal increases the usage from that of a normal family, not resident 24/7 to that of six (6) residents 24/7, seven (7) daytime carers or four (4) night-time carers and any visitors. The system almost certainly will not cope with the increased requirements and the results will not be pleasant, impacting on our lives next door. At the very least it will involve very frequent emptying, once again impacting on the traffic.

General reasons:

7. The application is contrary to Eastleigh Borough Council Principles regarding accommodation for those in need of care, in respect of location, accessibility and integration within the community.

- The location of Hilltop is not a pedestrian friendly environment to maintain mobility, retain independence and does not provide easy accessibility to community and local facilities.
- Pinewood Park is not within 400m walking distance of any shops, services, or amenities. A walk to Thornhill, Hedge End or Bursledon shops and amenities takes 40 to 60 minutes and involves walking along the busy A27 with traffic constantly passing by at a speed limit of 40mph. Furthermore, the pedestrian pathway is only on one side of the road, relatively narrow and visibility can be significantly reduced on dull or wet days, as much of the road is lined with overhanging trees.
- No public transport operates within 400m of Hilltop, the nearest bus stops in Thornhill, Hedge End or Bursledon, all of which are 30+ minutes' walk along the busy A27
- There is no provision in the application for a suitable pick-up / drop-off point for a dial a ride service.

Rymacare's proposed residents would be living in isolation rather than benefiting from living in the community.

8. The proposal does not provide adequate parking which will impact highway safety and traffic

- Referring to reason 1. above, three (3) of the proposed parking spaces would not be possible on the driveway between Rowan and Hilltop
- The proposal states there would be parking for seven (7) vehicles behind the gates and in front of the main Hilltop residence, but apart from the parking space closest to the entrance/exit gate there is no provision or possibility of vehicles coming or going independently. Vehicles would be parked on a first in, last out basis.

Rymacare's shifts overlap by 30 minutes which makes perfect sense given the nature of the care provided and required. The planning application states that there would be seven (7) carers on day shift and four (4) carers at night (although the application also states 14 full time and 2 part time staff?). With parking provision for seven (7) cars, albeit that number is debateable given the layout of the parking space, this means that potentially four (4) to nine (9) cars could be overspilling onto Pinewood Park, which would cause chaos and safety issues. This is particularly relevant as Hilltop is positioned at junction with the busy A27. Any cars parked at this part of the road, or even being manoeuvred at changeover time, would cause disruption and safety issues to any other road users entering or exiting Pinewood Park. The alternative would be for those cars to be parked elsewhere on Pinewood Park, inconveniencing other dwellings and being out of character with the road.

- It is noted that Rymacare offers provision for bicycles, but it should be questioned how many employees would wish to cycle along the busy A27 after a 12 ½ hour shift or in the dark. cold and wet seasons from November to April.
- Staff are unlikely to use public transport to and from work due to the lack of any nearby bus stops and the subsequent need for a 30-40 minute walk along the A27 that is busy and poorly lit, being lined by woods. Not a safe environment for anyone to walk alone. This just makes the use of cars more likely.
- Rymacare's application states visits will be by appointment only, but there are bound to be visits by some relatives and friends, trade deliveries, professional services, etc... which will only exacerbate the parking inadequacy and the street access for current residents of Pinewood Park and Dumbleton Close. Consider also the industrial traffic needing access to and from the Electricity Substation at the bottom of Pinewood Park
- Furthermore, such care homes as the one proposed by Rymacare often combine residential care with day-care, leading to even more visitors and therefore compounding traffic access and parking issues.
- Pinewood Park is a short, relatively narrow, curvy road with driveway access to all residents' homes. Parking availability on the road is therefore somewhat limited. It is not unreasonable to conclude that parking related to Hilltop's use as a care home would lead to parking spilling onto the A27 and cause a severe safety hazard on the brow of a hill, in an area of no overtaking and with access to the concrete works almost directly opposite.

9. Hilltop's change of use WILL lead to excessive noise.

- With regards to noise and disturbance to neighbours, Rymacare's planning application attempts to compare Hilltop's use as a care home as being no different to a dwelling with a family of six (6) living in it, consisting of two (2) parents and four (4) grown up children. Such a comparison is, in our view, ludicrous. As previously stated, a family of six (6) would be away from the home for much of the day for five days a week, attending work, school, or college. At night they would all be sleeping for approximately eight (8) hours. How on earth does this compare to six (6) adults, suffering from mental health issues and/or autistic spectrum disorders, together with four to seven (7) carers, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week? This is bound to lead to disruption and noise to neighbours and residents living in Pinewood Park.

- People suffering from mental health issues or autistic spectrum disorders often have erratic sleep patterns and can scream, shout and lash out when they feel stressed or threatened. This would lead to a real possibility of inflicting disturbance to Hilltop's neighbours.
- The very fact that Rymacare are proposing care staff around the clock highlights their expectation of disruption, noise and disturbance which is unacceptable to neighbouring residents, particularly through the night.
- The frequency of tanker visits to remove the sewage would increase substantially and where would the tankers park if the front garden is filled with cars?

To summarise:

Planning application F/22/93935 is to all intent and purposes the same as Rymacare's previous application LDC/20/88428, which was refused. The only difference is the latest application is wrapped up with a change of use from a C3 dwelling to a C2 residential care home, whereas their previous application was submitted as a change of use from C3(a) to C3(b), but the contents of the application are really no different to the one refused two years ago.

We support the Council's principle of planning positively for the changing needs of those in care by providing integration within the community. The problem is Rymacare's application would place its residents away from the community, not integrated with it. It's residents would be living in isolation, not in the community.

For all the reasons stated in this letter, a change of use for Hilltop from a dwelling to a residential care home for people suffering from mental health and autistic spectrum disorder, would be detrimental for its residents not being able to integrate within the local parish community and negatively impact the residents of Pinewood Park.

As a footnote, we are disappointed by the lack of any contact made with us by the owners or contractors. Given that the driveway has been full of skips and contractors vans over the past few weeks, we would have hoped that common courtesy would have led to a "knock at the door", to forewarn us. This does not bode well for a future relationship or communication with what is obviously a commercial enterprise and not a new neighbour and does not encourage us that any issues with noise, parking, smell etc will be heard or actioned.

In addition, it should be noted that Rymacare have already actioned the internal and external modifications to both the annexe and main house and are already advertising for residents (see link below), prior to your decision having been made.

<https://www.carehome.co.uk/carehome.cfm/searchazref/65432248453>.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments and trust you will find them valid to refuse application F/22/93935.

Yours

Peter S

Jonathan Smith