

Mr D Huckfield, Senior Planning Officer
Planning/Development Management
Eastleigh Borough Council
Eastleigh House
Upper Market Street
Eastleigh
SO50 9YN

Our Ref: E-500-NM
Your Ref: F/25/98786
Email: neil@southernplanning.co.uk
Date: 03.04.2025
Status: Letter addressing 3rd party
reps

By Email - david.huckfield@eastleigh.gov.uk

Dear Mr Huckfield,

Application ref: F/25/98786 - Freeways, 47 The Drove, West End, Southampton, SO30 2EF

The applicants have been monitoring the progress of the application online and would like the opportunity to respond to some of the comments that have been made by 3rd parties and the Parish Council, as well as clarify some of the details relating to the application.

They are aware of the issues that have been raised by neighbours in relation to 49 The Drove.

However, just to be clear, the applicants do not own 49 The Drove.

Acorns Health Care (AHC), the applicant's associated care provider, do though provide support to one of the two residents living there.

Providing suitable housing and community-based living remains the foundation of the Government, NHS England and the Care Quality Commission's vision. Ensuring that vulnerable individuals with learning difficulties have the opportunity to live independently, within least restrictive environments, and enhancing the quality of lives, is a priority for all. Should placements not be available within the community, these vulnerable individuals run the risk of either being inappropriately housed within hospital settings putting further strain on already stretched health services or placed within alternative clinical environments where their quality of life is often significantly diminished.

Individuals with Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) can display a wide range of behaviours, which can sometimes result in challenging behaviours, especially when combined with other health conditions. Whereas in other cases, individuals with ASD can be highly functional and have no additional health issues.

All new placements into homes where personal care is provided by AHC are carefully assessed to understand their behaviour, care needs and any other health issues.

As explained in the submission, the applicants own a number of homes throughout the Southampton, Winchester and Fair Oak area, and they are not aware of any significant issues with any these properties. One of the properties is in Fair Oak, within Eastleigh Borough Council's area (and was the subject of planning permission). The property comprises 2 self-contained units where supported living is provided by AHC to individuals with learning difficulties and operates successfully within a residential setting without any known issues.

The neighbours comments and experience of the issues at 49 The Drove and their concerns that this would be repeated with the proposal at No. 47 is not therefore considered a justifiable reason to refuse planning permission. By ensuring that the placements are appropriately assessed and the property is appropriately managed there is no reason to conclude that the proposed use would not be acceptable within this setting, in planning terms (as demonstrated in the case of the property in Fair Oak).

A further relevant point to mention is that the property could be used for supported living for up to 6 persons receiving care (under Use Class C3(b)) without the need for planning permission. This includes individuals with learning difficulties, ASD, etc.

With regards to parking, the Highway Authority has commented that additional spaces could be achieved if they are arranged in a tandem layout, which the applicants are happy to do. We can show that on an amended site plan if you would like us to do that.

In relation to the Parish Council's comment, we note that there were two abstentions and one conflict of interest, so only one councillor actually voted. Consequently, we would argue that this surely brings into question the significance (and therefore weight) that can be applied to their objection.

The Chief Executive of Acorns Health Care, Cass Palmer, and Hayden Foster, Director/Registered Manager, would be more than happy to meet with neighbours or the Parish Council, or District Councillors, to talk through their concerns and answer any questions they might have regarding the proposal. They can be contacted at <https://acornshealthcare.co.uk/contacts.html>.

If there is any further information that you require or anything that we can provide or clarify at this stage, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Can you please arrange for this letter to be uploaded to the EBC website.

Yours sincerely,



Neil March, BSc (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI
Director