



Walmley Residents Association.

Re: Planning Applications for Change of Use from dwelling house to residential children's care home at Fowey Close, Walmley, B76 1YP.

Planning Applications Ref. 2023/03804/PA (2 Fowey Close) and
2023/03808/PA (7 Fowey Close) – Planning Officer -- Daniel Illott.

The above Planning Applications are essentially identical in that they seek to convert existing 4-bed dwellings into children's care homes, each to accommodate 3No. young adults, 8 – 17 years old, with "mild learning disabilities or challenging behaviour" plus 2-3No. staff in a quiet residential cul-de-sac in Walmley village. These proposals would require the converting of an existing integral garage into a staff room with ensuite at each property.

The WRA seeks to protect and enhance the interests and well-being of residents in Walmley and, to that end, we object to both of these Applications. We have been contacted by several residents local to the site of these Applications and all have expressed extreme concern that these proposals are totally inappropriate to the local context.

Fowey Close is a quiet residential cul-de-sac of 9No. dwellings leading off Dovey Drive which in turn leads off Calder Drive, a major distributor road for the "Oak & Ash housing estate". This area is in close proximity (waking distance via parkland) to Walmley Junior and Infant Schools located on Walmley Ash Road and already suffers from considerable and dangerous on-street parking by parents delivering/collecting children from those schools. It is also within easy walking distance of a Public House

and a Convenience Store which are already a magnet for young adults of 16+ years old.

The WRA endorses local residents objections to these proposals on the following grounds:-

- 1) Inappropriate location, out of character development.
 - 2) Inadequate parking provisions and a significant increase in generated traffic,
 - 3) Concerns that the Applicant has insufficient experience/capabilities to manage residential children's care homes of this type and size.
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- 1) The Applications would be totally out of scale and character for this small residential close (22% of dwellings) which houses either elderly residents or young families. To introduce young adults (8 – 17 years old) with “challenging behaviour” into this quiet community is not a reasonable option and we would ask Birmingham Planning Dept. to consider more appropriate locations for such facilities.
 - 2) The Applicant advises that each house would accommodate 3No. young adults plus 3No. staff during the daytime and 2No. staff overnight. By the very nature of the care to be provided, many of the staff would arrive by car. It is proposed that the staff would have a 30-minute overlap at shift changes at 7.00 - 7.30 hrs and 19.00 - 19.30hrs each day – so potentially 5No. cars per property, 10No. cars if two care homes are sanctioned. In addition, allowance should be made for visitors, deliveries and transport to convey the young adults to/from schools – which schools? The generated traffic would therefore substantially increase that currently used by the existing dwellings. But no additional parking provisions are proposed; indeed, the proposed layout would extinguish the existing integral garages. Only 2No. parking spaces would be available for each of the properties, which would be grossly inadequate. Reliance would then be placed upon on-street parking, which is already a major problem. Additionally, the access to No. 2 Fowey

Close is via the highway turning head; if used for parking then it would create a dangerous situation for all road users.

- 3) The Applicant notes that it is currently operating two children's care homes within Birmingham – one for 4No. young people and one for 2No. young people. For understandable reasons of security, neither of these is identified but research of Ofsted reports for Serenity Specialist Care Ltd. indicates that one of its homes for young people “requires improvement to be good” – Report SC471672, October 2019. The Applicant was also identified by BirminghamLive in November 2019 in a scathing report on Birmingham care homes for young adults.

Whilst Serenity Specialist Care Ltd (SSCLtd) advise that they are “an established organisation which provides accommodation and care for children from the ages of 8 to 17”, our research has revealed several reports of concern. It appears that SSCLtd are wholly owned by Made Special Care Ltd with capital reserves of some £3k. SSCLtd itself appears to have total liabilities of approx. £614k, a net worth of minus £516k and a credit rating of only 35%. The two companies are owned by the same two Directors (Naveed Ahmed and Sofia Younis) who also own at least 6No. associated businesses in the care sector. We are obliged to question whether, given the very sensitive nature of this care provision, SSCLtd is sufficiently experienced and robust to manage such establishments within the quiet family-oriented community of Fowey Close.

We accept that there is a great need for accommodation of the type proposed, and we note the advices of Birmingham Children's Trust and the Sufficiency Strategy report, **but** we do not accept that this proposed change of use is appropriate at Fowey Close. We therefore request that these Applications are refused and more appropriate locations are identified to satisfy this care need.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Cooke', with a stylized flourish above the name.

David Cooke, WRA Committee member for Planning issues.