SPC PLANNING COMMENTS 49 WEST DRIVE 18 NOVEMBER ’26 (FINAL)

Application to vary condition 2 of planning consent 241427 for proposed erection of 1no seven-bedroom dwelling following demolition of the existing dwelling. Variation is to allow changes to layout, raising of the roof and changes to fenestration.

Sonning Parish Council have carefully considered this application and have the following comments:

West Drive is a leafy tree lined private road with individually designed large dwellings set in spacious plots. Unfortunately, 49 West Drive is the exception, set on a much narrower plot and is already out of keeping with surrounding properties. The general spaciousness of West Drive is not reflected, and can never be, due to the narrowness of the plot. This latest proposal would do nothing to improve this unbalance particularly the raised roof and by extending the front wall.

There are numerous applications for this dwelling each with significant changes and at each stage the applicant has sought to increase the size, the plans online note 446.9 square metres (for 241427 approved plans) increasing to 585.1 square metres (for 262523 application) on the respective CIL1 forms, which represents a 31% increase on previously approved mass.

These repeat applications cause great concern for the neighbours as well as time and effort for them and the parish council who find this very regrettable.

The first proposal (222932) was soundly refused. The wording in the refusal notice would very aptly apply to this proposal. ‘*The proposed development would result in detrimental material harm by virtue of its excessive height and bulk and proximity close to neighbouring property boundaries, the combination of the two storey side extension and single storey rear extension would result in an overly dominant, overbearing and physically oppressive structure that would significantly detract from the amenities of either immediate neighbour, nos. 47 and 51 West Drive, contrary to Core Strategy policy CP1 and CP3, MDD Local Plan policy CC01, the Borough Design Guide SPD and section 12 of the NPPF’*. It is difficult to understand how subsequent applications failed to reflect this first refusal and why the policies quoted no longer applied.

Unfortunately, the principle of the proposal has been approved, despite the various drawbacks and severe effects, which were so very aptly conveyed to yourselves by the neighbours and the parish council at each stage. The latest changes include moving the front wall 2 metres forward, additional windows, revisions to the external appearance. Raising the roof by 500mm is perhaps the most alarming, A plan showing how small this increase is, in reality, actually highlights the opposite showing that it would be much higher than the adjoining property 47 West Drive. The result can be nothing but dominating, invasive and intimidating.

The parish council is pleased to see that the flank wall on the east has been moved thus increasing the side distance between the two properties.

However, this is created by increasing the height of the roof, thus requiring the roof lights and particularly the Juliet balcony to be raised. This, a result of the internal changes and will allow wider views of the gardens of 47 and 51 West Drive. The raised height would also allow wider views over the gardens of more properties and the subsequent loss of their privacy. There are also concerns about the loss of light and overshadowing of 47 and 51 West Drive.

Over the years the ambitions for the site have increased and its excessive height, bulk and proximity close to neighbouring property boundaries, has grown. This has resulted in an overly dominant, overbearing and physically oppressive structure that would significantly detract from the amenities of either immediate neighbour, nos. 47 and 51 West Drive, contrary to Core Strategy policy CP1 and CP3, MDD Local Plan policy CC01, the Borough Design Guide SPD and section 12 of the NPPF.

For the above reasons Sonning Parish Council strongly object to this application and urge the planning authority to refuse it. The Parish Council also hope that this will be the last of these.

Lesley Bates (Clerk) 18 November 2026

Consultation Response Submitted

You have successfully submitted a consultation response for application ref 262523.