To: Horsham District Council, Planning Dept

[redacted] **25 Millfield Southwater RH13 9HT (electronically signed)**

Date: 23.7.25

Application for Prior Approval – Objection Submission RE: DC/25/1032
Proposal: Erection of an additional storey at 5 Netherton Close, increasing the building height by approximately 3.14 metres.

1. Site Context and Background

Netherton Close comprises six modest chalet-style bungalows arranged within a quiet cul-de-sac. These properties follow a uniform architectural language—modest in scale, similar in design and materials—with first-floor extensions typically contained within the original roofline via sympathetic dormer additions.

The proposed development seeks to introduce a full third storey, effectively transforming one of these bungalows into a three-storey dwelling. This would represent a significant departure from the established pattern of development and an objection is lodged on the following material planning grounds pegged to policy.

2. Ground 1: Design, Appearance, and Visual Impact

The proposed increase in height and massing would create a discordant and dominant structure, materially at odds with the surrounding properties.

- **Scale and massing**: The three-storey form would undermine the modest character of the area and appear incongruous within the cul-de-sac.
- **Street scene**: The proposal fails to integrate with the existing visual rhythm, detracting from the established character and local identity.
- **Landscape and visual amenity**: The development does not respect the built surroundings and would disrupt the local architectural coherence.

Policy conflict:
Contravenes policies 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015); policies 16 and 17 of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan (2019–2031); and policies 19 and 20 of the Horsham District Local Plan (2023–2040) (Regulation 19) – relevant extracts copied below.

3. Ground 2: Loss of Residential Amenity

The development would negatively affect the amenity of neighbouring residents—especially at No. 6 Netherton Close, which sits at a right angle to the site and is in close proximity.

- **Overbearing presence**: The bulk and proximity of the proposed structure would create an oppressive environment for neighbouring occupants.
- **Incompatible relationship**: The resulting built form would be uncharacteristic for the area and visually intrusive.

Policy conflict:
Same as outlined above.

4. Ground 3: Inadequate Impact Assessment

The application form requires the applicant to assess and mitigate impacts such as overlooking, privacy loss, and reduced light—including to non-contiguous neighbouring properties.

- The applicant's response ("None") fails to acknowledge any such impacts or propose mitigation.
- This lack of consideration highlights a deficiency in the assessment process and fails to meet the standards expected for prior approval applications.

5. Ground 4: Increased Roof Height

Raising the roofline by over 3 metres (c.3.14 metres) presents substantial design and environmental concerns:

- Over-dominance, overshadowing, and visual disruption to the existing streetscape.
- Direct contravention of **Policy 17.2** of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan, which explicitly states that development will not be supported where increased building height adversely impacts neighbours or local character.

Additional policy conflict:
Policies listed above remain applicable.

6. Ground 5: Loss of Light, Privacy, and Overlooking

The proposed third storey and associated side extension (approved under a Certificate of Lawful Development) will:

- Extend beyond the roofline of all surrounding dwellings, appearing visually intrusive and out of scale.
- Result in demonstrable loss of light, greater overlooking, and diminished privacy—particularly affecting No. 6 Netherton Close.

Policy conflict:

Same as outlined above.

7. Closing Remarks

While it is regrettable to oppose an applicant's development aspirations, the severity of the proposal's impact—both aesthetic and amenity-related—necessitates a formal objection. Any private law issues arising from this situation will be pursued separately, with full respect for legal process and property rights.

PLANNING POLICY ENDORSING MATERIAL PLANNING GROUNDS FOR OBJECTION:

The following excerpts from the relevant planning policies clearly demonstrate that the proposed development is unacceptable, as it fails to meet established guidelines and would result in significant harm to the surrounding area and neighbouring properties.

A. Horsham District Planning Framework November 2015

Policy 32 states, inter alia, that good design is a key element in sustainable development. Development will be required to enhance and protect the locally distinctive characters, through good design, landscaping both within a scheme and having regard to the impact on surrounding landscapes, creating a "sense of place" and ensuring that local, social and environmental characteristics are considered.

In particular, development will be expected to [paraphrased]:

Provide an attractive environment;
Complement locally distinctive characters; and
Contribute a sense of place both in the buildings and spaces themselves and in the way they integrate with their surroundings and the historic landscape in which they sit

Policy 33 states, inter alia, that in order to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment developments shall be required to:

(a) Ensure that it is designed to avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers/users of nearby property and land, for example through overlooking or noise, whilst having regard to the sensitivities of surrounding development;

(b) Ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of the development is of a high standard of design and layout and where relevant relates sympathetically with the built surroundings, landscape, open spaces and routes within and adjoining the site, including any impact on the skyline and important views;

(c) Presume in favour of the retention of existing important landscape and natural features, for example trees, hedges, banks and watercourses. Development must relate sympathetically to the local landscape and justify and mitigate against any losses that may occur through the development.

B. Southwater Neighbourhood Plan

(i) SNP 16.1 (d) (Design) states, inter alia, that all development must be of high quality design.

In Southwater this means making sure the design of new development actively responds to other properties in the vicinity ensuring no unacceptable impacts on residential amenity occur.

(ii) SNP 17.2 (Site Levels) seeks to ensure, inter alia, that developments respect the existing topography of the area and that extensions will not be supported if they have an adverse impact upon the surrounding environment.

In Particular, SNP 17.2 states that development will not be supported if the final building's height would have an adverse impact upon neighbouring properties or the character of surrounding areas.

C. Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19)

Strategic Policy 19 (Development Quality):

This policy provides, inter alia, that development must:

(i) provide an attractive environment;
(ii) responds to locally distinctive characters and heritage of the surrounding area (including building types and architectural styles); and
(iii) have consideration to the built historic environment and townscape and the way they integrate with their structural surroundings and the landscape in which they sit.

Strategic Policy 20 (Development Principles):

Broadly, this policy seeks to ensure that proposals are of high quality, well designed and take account of the existing character of the area.

In particular, it states that design:

(i) must avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of the existing and future users and occupiers of nearby property and land, for example, due to overlooking, over dominance or overshadowing;
(ii) must ensure that the scale, massing and appearance relate sympathetically with the build surroundings and landscape;
(iii) must respect and respond to the character of the surrounding area; and
(iv) relate sympathetically to the local landscape.