

EFDC Householder & Other Minor Applications Check List

Application Details & Constraints

Case Ref:	EPF/0207/26	PL No:			
Site Address:	50, Forest Lane, Chigwell, IG7 5AE				
Proposal:	Proposed extensions & alterations to existing dwelling house to facilitate a basement level gym.				
Green Belt	Yes ☐	No ☒	TPO	Yes ☒	No ☐
Conservation Area	Yes ☐	No ☒	Heritage Asset (Listed)	Yes ☐	No ☒
Flood Zone	Yes ☐	No ☒	Enforcement	Yes ☐	No ☒

Representations

Town/Parish Council Comments, if any:

Chigwell Parish Council **Strongly Objects** to the proposal:

The Council OBJECTS to this application because the Basement Impact Assessment does not give me confidence that the risks to neighbouring properties have been properly assessed. The report makes very reassuring statements, but much of it reads as assertion rather than proof. It says the basement could be as close as 0.8m to neighbouring buildings and still claims the impact will be negligible, yet members could not see a clear, detailed movement or settlement assessment to support that conclusion. The ground investigation also appears limited while the report downplays groundwater issues even though the appended material suggests water seepage may be present. In the Council's view, that is not a sound basis for such a substantial excavation next to existing homes.

Members were also concerned by errors and inconsistencies within the document itself. The appendices contain conflicting address details, parts of the report are internally inconsistent about the size and extent of the basement, and one of the structural calculation sheets in Appendix B appears to show a clear "FAIL" for bending and deflection. That alone raises serious questions about the reliability of the submission. Overall, this does not look like a careful, robust assessment of the likely effects of the development and for that reason the Council request the application should be refused unless a fuller and properly verified Basement Impact Assessment is provided.

Objection ☒	No Objection ☐	Comment ☐	None Received ☐
Neighbour Responses, if any:		None received	

Site and Context

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The subject site is a detached dwelling occupying a corner plot at the intersection of the eastern side of Forest Lane and Manor Road. The dwelling appears to be the dwelling approved under planning permission EPF/0734/24. That said, officers note that the in-situ dwelling appears to differ to the approved plans. Moreover, further discrepancies between the current drawing set, previously approved schemes and satellite imagery. The subject site is not subject to any relevant land policy designations other than there is a TPO Oak Tree on the eastern side of the site.

Planning History

- EPF/0734/24: Proposed extensions & alterations to existing dwelling house. Similar schemes previously approved schemes under planning reference EPF/2574/21 & EPF/0708/22. This revised scheme looks to retain existing structural elements (where possible) and extend upon them rather than a complete re-build. Furthermore this revised scheme removes the basement element, Approved.
- EPF/0708/22: Application for Variation of condition (reduction in the overall GIA) to EPF/2574/21. (Proposed demolition of existing dwelling house and erection of a new seven bedroom dwelling house), Approved.
- EPF/2574/21: Proposed demolition of existing dwelling house and erection of a new seven bedroom dwelling house, Approved.

Planning Considerations

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Basement, Character and Appearance:

A key component of the proposal is the extension of the existing basement, the proposed subterranean gym.

Local plan policy DM12 seeks to ensure that basement proposals are acceptable and can be accommodated without adverse impact. The acceptability of basements is assessed against a set of criteria, which include, but are not limited to geological impact, suitability in its context, scale, depth and structural impacts on the main dwelling and other buildings within its vicinity.

Paragraph 4.79 of the Local Plan, which sets out further guidance on the application of policy DM12, states that basement development is carried out in a way that does not damage the character of the area, including historical and natural environments. In part, due to ensuring adherence to these aims, paragraph 4.80 is explicit that the size of a basement would be controlled by the Council. For buildings with limited curtilage, the basement should not exceed 50% of the curtilage; for larger gardened properties, there will be a smaller percentage applied.

Criterion (i) of Limb (a) of policy DM12 states that basements will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposal will not adversely affect the structural stability of the host building, neighbouring buildings or other infrastructure, including the adjoining highway, having regard to local geological conditions. To demonstrate compliance with this policy, a Basement Impact Assessment (BIA) is required.

The Council have assessed the BIA submitted by RSA Design, dated July 2021 and have found the BIA insufficient to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of DM12. The first issue is that construction methodology clearly relates to the previous schemes, which were for the demolition of the existing dwelling to be replaced with a new dwelling, including a basement (paragraph 1.2, BIA). The BIA appears to just be a resubmission of that document. A second concern is that document clearly sets out a construction methodology that follows a specified sequence (Chapter 5, BIA), which necessitates a particular sequence. Now that the dwelling is in-situ, it is unclear how the methodology can be retroactively adapted to follow the proposed methodology. It is unclear how the sequence starting at paragraphs 5.1(a) of the BIA are feasibly implementable. A third and final concern is that the executive summary presents the basement's structural integrity and construction as fully resolved, alongside vague, but inadequately explained statements as those found in paragraphs 10.6 and 10.7 of the report. This is particularly poignant as the failure results for the linear wall analysis Appendix B (page 32, BIA) are not addressed. It is possible that resistance calculations resulting in a failure do not undermine the overall structural integrity of a structure; however, these qualifications, should there be any, have conspicuously been omitted. Therefore, the Council is unable to

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Acceptable	☐	Unacceptable	☐	N/A	☐
Neighbouring Amenities:					
Acceptable	☐	Unacceptable	☐	N/A	☐
Green Belt:					
Acceptable	☐	Unacceptable	☐	N/A	☒
Highway Safety/Parking:					
Acceptable	☐	Unacceptable	☐	N/A	☒
Trees and Landscaping:					
Acceptable	☐	Unacceptable	☐	N/A	☒
Comments on Representations, if any:					
Additional Notes:					
Officer Recommendation:			Approve	☐	Refuse
				☒	