Officer Report - Chigwell Parish Council Planning Committee Application: EPF/0706/26
Site: 78 Bracken Drive, Chigwell, IG7 5RD
Proposal: Retrospective application for new detached single family dwelling to replace existing bungalow.
Recommendation: Object unless conditions are imposed

Summary

This is a retrospective application for the replacement dwelling at 78 Bracken Drive. The principle of a replacement dwelling has already been accepted through the earlier 2019 permission.

The main issue for the Parish Council is not the house itself, but the fact that the development was carried out without complying with the original tree protection and landscaping conditions. The applicant's own Planning Statement confirms that condition 5, relating to tree protection, and condition 7, relating to landscaping, were not complied with.

Those conditions were important because the site contains protected trees and forms part of the landscaped character of Bracken Drive. EFDC has previously refused attempts to vary/remove these conditions, stating that their removal would harm the protection of green infrastructure and conflict with Policy DM5 and the NPPF.

Main Issue

The Parish Council has previously objected to the applicant's failure to comply with the original planning requirements. That remains a valid concern.

Tree protection is meant to be in place before demolition and construction, not after the event. EFDC's Trees and Landscape officer has previously advised that lack of proper protection can cause root damage and soil compaction, with harm sometimes only becoming visible years later.

Later arboricultural reports suggest that some remedial work has been carried out, including soil decompaction, and that the trees are being monitored. However, the later tree survey was visual only and did not include root or soil investigation.

On that basis, the Parish Council should remain cautious. If EFDC is minded to approve the application, strong conditions should be imposed to secure continued tree monitoring, remedial measures and proper landscape maintenance.

Ecology

Essex County Council Place Services raises no ecological objection, but recommends conditions for biodiversity enhancement and wildlife-sensitive lighting. These should be included if permission is granted.

Other Matters

There is no clear basis for objection on parking, neighbour amenity, highway safety or flood risk from the information provided. The objection should therefore focus on trees, landscaping and ecological safeguards.

Recommendation

That the Parish Council **objects unless robust conditions are imposed**.

The objection should make clear that the Parish Council is concerned about the failure to comply with the original tree protection and landscaping conditions, and the possible long-term impact on protected trees and the landscaped character of the area.

Suggested Resolution

Resolved:
Chigwell Parish Council objects to application EPF/0706/26 at 78 Bracken Drive, Chigwell.

The Parish Council remains concerned that the replacement dwelling was carried out without compliance with the original tree protection and landscaping conditions attached to permission EPF/2132/19. These conditions were important safeguards for protected trees, green infrastructure and the landscaped character of Bracken Drive.

If Epping Forest District Council is minded to approve the application, the Parish Council requests that any permission is subject to conditions requiring independent arboricultural monitoring of the retained trees, implementation of any further tree or soil remediation required by the Council's tree officer, full implementation and five-year maintenance/replacement of the approved landscaping, biodiversity enhancement measures and wildlife-sensitive external lighting controls.

Reason:
To protect TPO trees, green infrastructure, biodiversity and the character and appearance of the area.