

Officer Report – Planning Committee

Application: EPF/1277/26

Site: 112 Manor Road, Chigwell, IG7 5PW

Proposal: Part two-storey front and side extensions, two-storey rear extension, basement, front porch and roof extension with front and rear dormers

Recommendation: Object

Site and proposal

The property is a detached five-bedroom house on the northern side of Manor Road. The site is outside the Green Belt, although the rear boundary adjoins Green Belt land. The surrounding properties vary in size and design and include detached houses and the Regency Apartments immediately to the east.

The proposal would substantially remodel and enlarge the house. It would provide accommodation over four levels, including a basement containing a gym, bar and cinema, an enlarged ground and first floor and a loft bedroom. The number of bedrooms would increase from five to seven.

Design and appearance

This is a very substantial enlargement rather than a modest extension. Two-storey additions are proposed to the front, both sides and rear, together with a much larger roof, projecting front gables, dormers and a new columned entrance.

The proposed house would be considerably wider, deeper and more imposing than the existing building. The original house would be largely absorbed into the new development and would no longer be readily recognisable. The front elevation would have the appearance of a large replacement house rather than extensions which remain subordinate to the existing dwelling.

The proposed building would also occupy much more of the width of the plot, reducing the open gaps to the neighbouring properties. Although Manor Road contains buildings of different styles and sizes, the combined scale of the front, side, rear and roof additions would create an overly dominant and cramped form of development.

Neighbouring properties

A daylight and sunlight assessment has considered seven windows and two terrace areas at the neighbouring Regency Apartments. It concludes that all tested windows would retain at least 80% of their existing daylight and sunlight and that the terrace areas would meet the relevant BRE guidance.

There is therefore no clear technical reason to object solely on loss of daylight or sunlight. However, compliance with the numerical tests does not fully address the visual effect of such large two-storey additions. The reduced gaps, increased depth and enlarged roof could result in an overbearing outlook for adjoining occupiers, particularly when compared with the more modest scale of the existing house.

Basement

The basement would be below ground and would not itself add to the visible bulk of the house. However, Policy DM12 requires satisfactory evidence that basement development would not affect the stability of the house, neighbouring buildings or the highway.

The submitted Basement Impact Assessment describes itself as a “live document”, states that further assessments will continue during design and construction and says that the assumed construction method may be revised. More importantly, one of its structural calculations records that the proposed maximum crack width exceeds the permitted limit and gives the result as “FAIL”.

This apparent failure is not explained or corrected before the report concludes that the works would pose no significant threat to neighbouring properties. EFDC should not rely on the report without a revised calculation and confirmation from a suitably qualified structural or geotechnical adviser that the basement design complies with Policy DM12.

Parking, access and Green Belt

The existing access and three front parking spaces would be retained. The application form states that the parking arrangements would not change.

The house itself is outside the Green Belt and the development would remain within its residential curtilage. No direct encroachment into the adjoining Green Belt is proposed.

Officer recommendation

Chigwell Parish Council OBJECTS to the application.

The combined front, side, rear and roof extensions would overwhelm the existing dwelling and produce a building of excessive scale, bulk and width. The proposal would fail to appear subordinate to the original house, would reduce the characteristic gaps between buildings and would create an overly dominant and cramped form of development, contrary to Policy DM9 of the Epping Forest District Local Plan.

The Council is also not satisfied that the submitted Basement Impact Assessment demonstrates that the basement can be constructed without risk to the host dwelling or neighbouring property. The assessment is expressly provisional and contains an unresolved structural calculation which fails the stated crack-width limit. The application should not be approved unless a corrected and final assessment is independently reviewed and found to satisfy Policy DM12.