

Officer Report – EPF/1897/26

18 Chigwell Rise, Chigwell, IG7 6AB

Proposal: Formation of lower level in void to create a games room.

Planning history

A very similar application, **EPF/0862/26**, was refused in June 2026. That proposal included the basement and a small side infill extension.

EFDC refused it for two main reasons, the basement was too large and not sufficiently subordinate to the house and there was not enough information to show that the works could be carried out without affecting the structural stability of the house or neighbouring properties.

What has changed?

The side extension has now been removed and the stairs moved inside the house. The applicant also says the basement has been narrowed and inset from the existing retaining walls. Larger rear windows and two patio rooflights have been added to improve daylight.

A new 63-page GeoSmart Basement Impact Assessment has also been submitted. This is much more detailed than the document submitted with the refused application but it mainly deals with groundwater and surface-water flooding, not structural stability.

The applicant's Planning Statement says a separate structural engineer's assessment and a further GeoSmart addendum for the revised scheme have also been prepared but that is not included in the documents provided

Officer assessment

The revised scheme is an improvement on the refused application and it would not be reasonable simply to repeat the previous objection.

However, the main test remains Policy DM12, which requires basement development to be subordinate to the house and to demonstrate that it will not harm the structural stability of the host property, neighbouring buildings or infrastructure.

The new GeoSmart report concludes that groundwater and surface-water risk is low, subject to measures such as waterproofing, a pump, non-return valves and keeping external ground levels falling away from the basement.

The remaining concern is structural stability. The GeoSmart report is not a structural assessment. The applicant themselves accept that separate engineering evidence is required.

There is also still a question over scale and subordination. The applicant says the basement has been reduced, but the Planning Statement does not give members a clear revised floor area or simple comparison with the size of the existing house. That was one of EFDC's main reasons for refusing the previous scheme.

Recommendation - OBJECT

It is recommended that the Committee **OBJECTS** on the basis that the submitted information does not yet clearly demonstrate that the previous concerns under Policy DM12 have been overcome.

Suggested comments to EFDC

Chigwell Parish Council OBJECTS to EPF/1897/26.

The Council acknowledges that the scheme has been amended since the refusal of EPF/0862/26, including removal of the side extension, relocation of the staircase inside the house and changes to the basement layout.

However, the Parish Council remains concerned that it has not been clearly demonstrated that the proposal complies with Policy DM12.

The new Basement Impact Assessment principally addresses groundwater and surface-water flooding and is not a structural stability assessment. As structural stability was a key issue in the previous refusal, EFDC should be satisfied that the separate structural engineer's assessment fully demonstrates that the excavation will not adversely affect the host dwelling, retaining structures, neighbouring properties or other infrastructure.

The Parish Council also asks EFDC to establish the actual revised basement floor area and whether its scale is genuinely subordinate to the host dwelling, given that excessive scale and lack of subordination formed part of the previous refusal.

The Parish Council considers that the application has not yet demonstrated compliance with Policies DM9 and DM12