

Parish Council Planning Committee Report

Site: Land East of 19 Orchard Way, Chigwell

Applications: EPF/0922/26 and EPF/0925/26

Background

Planning permission has already been granted on appeal for two 2-bedroom semi-detached houses with parking, amenity space and landscaping.

The Inspector accepted that the houses themselves were outside the Green Belt, but the rear gardens were within the Green Belt. The Inspector found this acceptable because the garden use would preserve openness, subject to controls over future extensions, outbuildings, fences and similar works.

The appeal statement gave the approved rear garden sizes as 135.2 sqm for Plot 1 and 120.5 sqm for Plot 2.

EPF/0922/26 - Alteration to balcony and windows

This application seeks to vary the approved plans. The stated changes are to the front windows and the first-floor rear balcony.

The loss or alteration of the balcony would reduce one element of private outdoor amenity. However, the main amenity space for these houses is the rear garden. The balcony is additional space, not the main garden area. Its loss may also reduce overlooking.

When looked at by itself, this change is not considered to cause unacceptable harm to residential amenity.

Recommended resolution

The Parish Council raises no objection to EPF/0922/26, provided the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the revised balcony/window design does not cause overlooking or visual harm and that the appeal conditions remain in force.

EPF/0925/26 - Single-storey rear extension

This application seeks permission for a single-storey rear extension. The applicant says the scheme has been reduced, the first-floor balcony and garage conversion have been removed, and the proposal is now for a rear ground-floor extension of 2.9 metres. The applicant also states that each extension would occupy less than 25 sqm.

The approved houses are 2-bedroom dwellings. On the information submitted, the proposal does not appear to increase the number of bedrooms. This matters because the amount of garden space should be considered against the size of the homes.

Taking the extension and balcony change together, there would be some reduction in amenity space. However, even if each extension took almost 25 sqm from the rear garden, Plot 1 would retain about 110 sqm, and Plot 2 about 95 sqm. For two-bedroom houses, that is still a reasonable amount of private garden space. The loss of the balcony is not considered enough to make the remaining amenity space unacceptable.

The main concern is Green Belt. The Inspector allowed the appeal partly because the approved buildings were not in the Green Belt and the Green Belt land was to be used as garden only. A rear extension may change that position if any built development would be in the Green Belt. The LPA should check this carefully.

Recommended resolution

The Council OBJECTS to applications which may result in inappropriate development in Green Belt whether with or without special circumstances. The Council, therefore, OBJECTS to this application. If, however, all relevant Officers deem this application acceptable, whether with amendments or not, then the council is willing to waive this objection.

The Parish Council also asks EFDC confirm that the proposal would not increase the number of bedrooms and that the remaining garden space is not in Green Belt and is acceptable when considered together with the balcony alteration under EPF/0922/26.