

Chigwell Parish Council Planning Committee Officer Report

Application: EPF/0864/26

Site: 172 Manor Road, Chigwell, IG7 5PX

Proposal: 2 additional apartments, altering previously approved plans allowed at appeal under APP/J1535/W/22/3309160

Relevant history: EPF/2787/21

This application relates to 172 Manor Road, a block of flats on the corner of Manor Road and Mount Pleasant Road.

A previous application for two additional flats was refused by EFDC but later allowed on appeal. That appeal decision is important because it means the principle of two additional flats has already been accepted.

However, this current application is different from the appeal scheme. The appeal scheme was considered as an extension to the existing building. The current proposal appears to show a separate detached building, with only a narrow gap from the existing block.

That change matters. A detached building may look more cramped and more prominent than an extension. It may also look less in keeping with the existing block and the nearby houses in Mount Pleasant Road. EFDC should therefore assess the design, scale, bulk and spacing again, rather than simply relying on the previous appeal.

Parking is also unclear. The site is shown as having "Good" connectivity in the Essex Parking Guidance 2024, which falls within the Moderate Connectivity category. For two 1-bedroom flats, the normal standard is two resident spaces plus visitor parking, giving a requirement of about three spaces when rounded up.

The current documents appear to describe the scheme as car-free, but they do not explain how this would be achieved or enforced. There is no clear parking stress survey, no clear evidence of parking controls, no car club proposal and no clear mechanism to stop future occupiers parking in nearby streets. The documents also appear inconsistent, because the Design and Access Statement refers to 9 parking spaces, while other documents call the scheme car-free.

A car-free scheme may be acceptable in some well-connected locations, but it needs proper evidence and controls. That evidence has not been clearly provided.

EFDC should also check that enough amenity space, cycle storage, bin storage and landscaping would be provided for existing and future residents. The Inspector previously gave weight to improved landscaping, so this should not be weakened.

Ecology has not objected, subject to conditions and proper assessment of impacts on Epping Forest SAC. Any required SAC mitigation, biodiversity net gain, drainage and contamination conditions must be secured if permission is granted.

Recommendation

Chigwell Parish Council objects to the application as currently submitted unless EFDC is satisfied that the detached design, car-free parking position, amenity space, landscaping, biodiversity, SAC mitigation, drainage and contamination matters are all acceptable.

Grounds for objection if so minded

Chigwell Parish Council notes that planning permission for two additional apartments at this site was allowed on appeal under APP/J1535/W/22/3309160. The Parish Council accepts that the principle of two additional apartments has been established.

However, the current application appears materially different from the appeal-approved scheme. The appeal scheme was assessed as an extension to the existing block. The current proposal appears to create a detached building, separated from 172 Manor Road by a narrow gap.

The Parish Council asks EFDC to assess the amended design afresh under Policies DM9 and DM10. EFDC should be satisfied that the detached form, scale, bulk, massing, spacing and appearance would relate properly to the character and appearance of Manor Road and Mount Pleasant Road.

The Parish Council is concerned that the detached building may appear more cramped and less clearly subordinate to the existing block than the appeal-approved extension.

The Parish Council also asks EFDC to reassess parking and highway matters. The site is identified as having Good connectivity in the Essex Parking Guidance 2024, which falls within the Moderate Connectivity category. For two 1-bedroom flats, the normal parking standard would be around three spaces when visitor parking is included and rounded up.

The current application appears to rely on a car-free arrangement, but the submitted information does not explain how this would be secured or enforced. The documents also appear inconsistent, with the Design and Access Statement referring to 9 parking spaces while other material refers to a car-free scheme.

The Parish Council asks EFDC to require a clear parking statement before determination. This should confirm whether the scheme is genuinely car-free or whether existing on-site parking is being relied upon. If the proposal is car-free, EFDC should require evidence that this is justified and enforceable, including parking stress evidence, parking controls, sustainable travel measures and any necessary parking management arrangements.

The Parish Council asks EFDC to confirm that the proposal would not result in harmful overspill parking or highway safety issues on Manor Road, Mount Pleasant Road or nearby streets.

EFDC should also confirm that adequate amenity space, cycle storage, refuse storage and landscaping would be retained for existing and future occupiers, and that landscaping would be at least equivalent to that secured by the appeal decision.

The Parish Council asks EFDC to ensure that all required Epping Forest SAC mitigation is secured before any permission is issued, including any necessary SAMMs and air quality mitigation contributions. EFDC should also ensure that biodiversity net gain, drainage and contamination matters are properly addressed.

For these reasons, the Parish Council objects to the application as currently submitted unless EFDC is satisfied that the amended scheme would not create additional planning harm beyond the scheme allowed at appeal.