

APPEAL COMMENTS OF THE CHIGWELL PARISH COUNCIL PLANNING COMMITTEE - Hillside Vicarage Lane Chigwell IG7 6LZ

Chigwell Parish Council objects to the appeal in respect of Hillside Vicarage Lane Chigwell and supports the refusal of planning permission issued by Epping Forest District Council.

The site lies in the Metropolitan Green Belt where the essential aim of policy is to keep land permanently open. The proposed replacement dwelling with its formal courtyard arrangement and large garage and annex would introduce a more intensive and urban form of development than exists at present. Even allowing for the removal of some structures and hardstanding the overall result would be a bigger and more complex group of buildings which would erode the openness of the Green Belt in both visual and spatial terms and would conflict with policies SP5 and DM4.

The surrounding area in this part of Vicarage Lane is mainly smaller semi detached cottage style and weatherboard properties. There are only two or three larger detached properties in their own grounds and these are generally less visible from public viewpoints because of mature screening. The appeal scheme by contrast would be much more visible and would appear as an overly grand and formal country residence out of keeping with the prevailing scale pattern and informal character of development. It would appear as a visually intrusive and discordant feature in the street scene and in longer views across the Green Belt contrary to policies DM3, DM9 and SP6.

The Parish Council is also concerned about the effect of concentrating vehicle movements and activity within the proposed courtyard next to the boundary with the neighbouring dwelling. The triple garage and associated driveway would focus cars people noise and lighting close to the neighbour for long periods of the day and evening. This would give rise to a material increase in disturbance and light spill compared with the present more dispersed arrangement and would unacceptably harm the living conditions of adjoining residents contrary to policy DM9.

In relation to ecology the original application did not contain sufficient information to demonstrate that protected species and habitats would be safeguarded and that opportunities for biodiversity enhancement would be fully secured. Any further survey work and mitigation suggested by the appellant has to be seen in the context of a scheme that remains harmful in principle in Green Belt and design terms. Such measures cannot therefore overcome the wider policy conflict and planning harm.

The claimed benefits of the proposal including updated building performance and short term construction jobs are generic and attract only limited weight. They do not outweigh the identified and continuing harm to the Green Belt to the character and appearance of the area and to neighbour amenity.

For these reasons Chigwell Parish Council considers that the appeal proposal is contrary to the development plan when read as a whole and that no material considerations justify granting permission. The Parish Council respectfully asks the Inspector to dismiss the appeal and uphold the decision of Epping Forest District Council.