

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 March 2017

by George Arrowsmith BA, MCD, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 06 April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/D/17/3167321

Yogi Bhavan, Magpie Hall Road, Bushey Heath, Bushey, WD23 1NT

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Antonio Ahmed against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/5037/16, dated 26 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 20 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is conversion of a garage to habitable accommodation, rear ground and first-floor extensions, front ground and first-floor extensions, first-floor side extension, all with extended pitched roof over with rear dormers, alterations to front fenestration and new porch.
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Procedural Matter

1. The application that is the subject of this appeal is one of two applications that seek to supersede a grant of permission relating to the same dwelling. The permission is for single and two storey rear extensions, two rear dormers, and external alterations. It was granted under reference P/3544/16 in October 2016. Work to implement that permission was well underway at the time of my site visit. Application ref P/5036/16, which was refused and is now the subject of another appeal (ref APP/M5450/D/17/3167316), sought to vary the development permitted under P/3544/16 by adding a first-floor side extension and a front porch. Another application, which was also refused, is the subject of this appeal. Like P/5036/16 it seeks to add a first-floor side extension but it also includes a single and 2 story front projection and a front porch.

Decision

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the front and side extensions and porch, when seen in conjunction, would appear as an unsympathetic and disjointed form of development that would be unacceptably detrimental to the appearance of the parent dwelling and the street scene.

Reasons

4. Yogi Bhavan is a substantial two-storey property with a protruding front bay, facing onto Magpie Hall Road, a well-treed suburban street with several substantial residential properties. Pangbourne, immediately to the south west of Yogi Bhavan, and Moorside immediately to the north east, are similarly sized

two-storey dwellings in the same overall architectural style but with different features. Pangbourne, for example, has a deeper front roof slope, inset with first-floor dormers, and a turreted front bay. To the south of Pangbourne there is a terrace of two-storey dwellings, also with two-storey front bays, set at an angle to the main road on Alpine Walk. Immediately opposite the appeal site there is an imposing recently completed three-storey block of flats with dormers adding an extra storey in the hipped and gabled roof. These flats are set further away from the street frontage than Yogi Bhavan and Pangbourne and are to some extent screened by frontage trees. Nevertheless, because of their scale and the fact that the tree screen is by no means complete, the flats are a dominant presence in the street scene.

5. I am satisfied that, when considered in isolation from the other aspects of the proposal, the side extension would be a sympathetic addition to the host dwelling. I recognise the officer's concern that the extended dwelling would appear cramped because of the side extension's proximity to Pangbourne but I am also aware that Pangbourne does not have a facing first-floor side wall. Instead, the deep roof slope, which is a feature of its street elevation, continues on its side elevation as a deep hip which slopes away from Yogi Bhavan. This feature would maintain a visual gap between the buildings even if Yogi Bhavan was extended as proposed. Therefore, although there would be some diminution in the existing gap, I am satisfied that the extension would not have a significantly detrimental effect on the street scene especially in the context of the flats on the opposite side of the road and the terrace to the south of Pangbourne.
6. I agree with the officer's report that the proposed two-storey front extension would be relatively modest in its own right. The report does however consider that adding the extension would create a fussy front elevation for the building as a whole. The appellant asserts that the extension would be similar to the already existing front bay and would give the dwelling a more balanced appearance. I do not find this a convincing argument because the proposed extension would be narrower than the existing bay, have a different profile and not be set so far forward. Moreover, if extended as proposed, the dwelling would have three vertical first-floor walls all set back different distances from the road frontage. I am satisfied that if the dwelling had been in a street of similar dwellings the accumulation of unrelated features would have created a feeling of disharmony that would have been seriously damaging to the street scene. In this particular location, where there is no consistent overall architectural character, I consider that the extension's visual impact would be less damaging but still adverse.
7. The proposed porch, which would be built out from the dwelling's original recessed front elevation, would be an intrusive addition, not least on account of the entrance portico which would extend beyond the existing projecting bay and form the dwelling's forwardmost feature. In this regard, I agree with the officer's report that the porch would appear discordant and would detract from the dwelling's character and appearance.
8. The proposal contains several problematic elements. The first-floor side elevation would reduce the space between Yogi Bhavan and Pangbourne although the absence of a first-floor side wall would prevent the loss being decisive. The addition of the first-floor extension would contribute to an

uncomfortable mixture of features and the proposed porch would make a further contrasting contribution. Whilst none of these elements would by themselves be decisive objections to the proposal I am satisfied that, considered as a whole, they would cause unacceptable harm to the appearance of the host dwelling and to the street scene and would conflict with the objectives of policies in the National Planning Policy Framework, policies 7.4B and 7.6B in the London Plan (2016), policy CS1.B in the Harrow Core Strategy (2012) and policy DM1 in the Harrow Development Management Policies Local Plan (2103).

George Arrowsmith

INSPECTOR