



10A South Grove, London N6 6BS

Josh Parker,
Planning and Building Control,
6th Floor, River Park House,
225 High Road, Wood Green,
London N22, 8HQ.

by Email

Dear Mr Parker,

Re: HGY/2023/1327, 17 Denewood Road, N6 4AQ

17 Denewood Road is a late 20th century newbuild house in the Bishops Section of the Highgate Conservation Area.

This is a two-part application seeking permission for: (i) “minor alterations to extant planning permission currently being constructed;” (ii) “some additional front wall alterations to improve security and safety of the applicants.”

(i) The planning history of applications for modification of this 1970’s detached house has been very protracted. In 2012 permission was granted for “excavation under dwelling to create a basement.” (HGY/2011/2316). A condition was imposed (5) that the extension “shall be used only for purposes incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling as the residential unit and shall not be occupied separately.” This grant was not acted upon, apart from the submission of a Construction Management Plan, and therefore lapsed.

A subsequent application was submitted a decade later, HGY/2021/1483, for works similar to those authorized under the previous expired grant. It was subsequently granted, in spite of several strong objections, subject to a condition that the basement works must not commence until a suitably qualified chartered engineer had inspected, approved and monitored the critical aspects of both permanent and temporary basement construction works to ensure compliance with the design which had been checked and approved by a building control body, the appointment to be approved in writing by Haringey prior to the commencement of the development. Further, the ensuing development was to be carried out in accordance with the enumerated plans submitted.

The present application seeks to carry out “minor alterations” to the 2021 grant. Works authorized by it are currently ongoing. A comparison of the plan for the basement submitted in 2021 (Stratton Architects drawing 21.02/110B) with that proposed in the current application by new architects (Bastet Designhouse BDH222 (PL) 009.2_) shows

that a rear lightwell is to be removed, and that the staff apartment intended for the front of the basement is to be replaced by a reconfigured and much enlarged plant room and laundry room. Objections had been made to the staff apartment in the previous application on the ground that it would provide substandard accommodation. However under the new design such accommodation could easily be created out of the space available. We consider that if the alterations are approved they should be subject to a condition that as under Condition 5 of the 2012 grant the basement must be used as ancillary to the main dwelling and must not be occupied separately.

(ii) The proposed alterations to the front boundary wall are more problematical. The documentation provided in support of this aspect of the application is confusing. According to the Bastet Designhouse Design Access Statement 2.0, Image 2, Photo of the Front, the existing front boundary consists of a low wall in two sections around a central wide opening. Each section is topped by metal railings, the wide opening leading to the entrance of the house. There is a wide open entrance and exit to the driveway in front of the house, with no gates.

This arrangement is fully compliant with Haringey's Statutory Development Plan DH6, Front Boundaries:

New boundary walls requiring planning permission and gated developments
Will not be permitted if they

- I have a detrimental impact on the open character of the street-scene or
- II result in the unnecessary removal of mature hedges or natural features
Which have a positive impact on the character of the local area
- III would result in a loss of visual permeability or public accessibility where
This contributes to the local character.

It has been noted that the streets within the Bishops Area are an excellent example of high quality residential development. The streets are wide with important views within the streetscapes. There are traditionally low boundary walls to the streets and gap views between buildings to rear gardens which with mature street trees are valuable contributors to the green character of the streets.

Also annexed to the current application is Bastet BDH222 (PL) 024.1 entitled "Existing Street Elevation." This shows extensive additions to the front boundary wall as shown in the photograph in the Design Access Statement and described as 'existing': a front gate of iron railings similar to those between the two sets of brick piers and two gates composed of iron railings at the entrance and exit to the driveway. There is no mention in either of the earlier applications of alterations to the front boundary, so that if such alterations were in fact made it appears they were made without planning permission.

A current visual inspection of the front of 17 Denewood Road does not assist because of the extensive hoardings erected while construction under the 2021 planning permission proceeds behind them. It is therefore unclear what “existing street elevation” in Bastet’s submission actually represents.

The proposed Street Elevation (Bastet BDH222 (PL) 024.2) shows not only six elevated brick piers in place of the original four, but also “new vehicular bifold solid horizontal panelled gates,” black in colour. The Design and Access Statement describes

Alterations to the existing boundary wall, increasing height slightly to be of similar height to neighbours in order to improve security with materials similar to existing. Metal railings to be replaced with simple metal railings with planters behind and replacement gates.

Although this suggests that new boundary treatment will be similar to the neighbours, it is not correct. While it is true that the piers at 15 Denewood Road are slightly higher, the iron railings on top of the front wall and forming the front gate extend to the gates opening onto the entrance and exist of the front driveway. Thus the visual permeability from the street is not lost, as it would be for 17 with the black bifold solid horizontal panelled gates proposed.

Further, the description of “simple metal railings with planters behind” is at variance with the Bastet “Existing & Proposed Front Garden Plans” (BH222 (PL) 040_) which states that the altered front wall will consist of “new black simple metal railing spindles with *artificial* hedge and planter behind.”

Another disturbing feature is the placing of a “black finish downlighter on the pavement side of each of the proposed six pillars.” There is adequate street lighting on Denewood Road, and this feature if approved would constitute unnecessary light pollution.

The Highgate Society considers that the application for alterations to the front boundary wall cannot be decided as it stands because it is uncertain what the “existing” state of the wall is, and whether any modification of the photograph of the “existing” wall in the Design and Access Statement was carried out, and if so under what authority. As the submission has been presented we can see no purposed in the slight increase in height of the piers and metal railings applied for, since it would have little effect on the safety and security of the dwelling behind, and the black bifold gates would contribute to a fortress-like appearance of the property, at variance with the open character and views into front and back gardens which are characteristic of the Highgate Conservation Area. This aspect of the application should not be nodded through as an aspect of the minor alterations sought to an extant planning permission.

Yours sincerely,

Arlene Polonsky,

Planning and Environmental Committee,
Highgate Society.

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