

Hero Granger-Taylor's comments on the document

'Heritage Agreement Method Statement (HAMS - monitoring and conservation management of ground movement due to below ground construction at 22 Park Village East - ADP-ESCT-02', SCS Railways document number 1MCo3-SCJ-EV-MST-SSo1_SLo3-000015.

1. Introduction

This HAMS document was submitted to Camden as a HS2 Schedule 18 Table 2 application and registered by Camden as 2024/4745/HS2 30 October. On Camden's website the applicant is given as Mr Kenneth Whittaker. In the comments below it is referred to as 'the document' or 'the present document'.

On its front page the date of approval within SCS Railways is given as 30 July 2024 and the author as Ken Whittaker, yet it is evident that different parts were written by different people. HG-T also notes the three-month gap between the internal approval of the document – 30 July 2024 – and the submission to Camden – 30 October 2024.

22 Park Village East (22 PVE) is the long term-home of Hero Granger-Taylor (HG-T) and of her son. However, she was not shown this document, in draft or in final form, before its submission to Camden. Furthermore, her neighbour at 24 Park Village East, Mrs Annemarie Papanikitas, has not been contacted at all, either by SCS Railways or by Camden, even though the present document shows monitoring equipment attached to 24 PVE (p.59). No equivalent document for 24 PVE appears to have been registered at Camden.

22 PVE and 24 PVE are semi-detached: they are a single building. Along with the other original houses in the Park Village, they were listed in 1974 as Grade II*.

The 1974 dates shows that, whatever the previous history of 22 PVE and 24 PVE (and HG-T's position is that 22 PVE has been very little damaged or altered), they were at that date, and still are, considered to be a '*particularly important building of more than special interest*' (as in the Historic England definition - <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/listed-buildings/#dcf32b53>.)

The whole of Park Village East is also within the *Regent's Park Conservation Area*, designated in 1969. Additionally, the 'Canal cutting in gardens of Park Village East' is on the *Camden Local List*. The lower parts of the gardens of 22 PVE and 24 PVE are within this canal cutting.

The Regent's Park Conservation Area Appraisal, not mentioned in the present document, designates 'Park Village East and West' as one of its 'Character Zones' (pp.20-21). A key

sentence in it is *'The buildings are unified by the setting, a picturesque landscape which largely survives.'*

The present HAMS document is 60 pages long. We learn from Camden's website that it is a *Heritage Agreement Method Statement for the installation of monitoring instruments to external elevations of building and details of remedial works, in connection with potential ground movement from HS2 tunnelling works*. However, in the document itself, the only paperwork submitted to Camden, 'the installation of monitoring instruments' is not mentioned until p.51 of 60.

Both 22 PVE and 24 PVE were damaged by a sudden ground movement in the summer of 2012 (24 PVE more seriously than 22 PVE). But no movement has been detected since 2012.

Following the completion of the strengthening and repair works to 22 PVE, the loss adjusters, Crawford and Co, issued as a Certificate of Structural Adequacy, dated 2 February 2024. This states that: *The property was monitored by us from 14/01/2013 to 21/01/2020 and found to be stable.*

In the present document, it is stated at 7.2.3 that *horizontal movement data from routine patch scanning has been taken on the front elevation of 22 Park Village East since 2020 (SCjv/SCSjv) [and] show no significant movement.*

The present document gives no vertical data for the house. But on the nearby pavement, 'varying seasonal movements' have been recorded (also 7.2.3). The pavement is physically independent of the house itself and separated from it by a minimum distance of 2 m. The nearest stud used for measuring vertical movement is 5.3 m away.

All parts of 22 PVE, with the exception of the roof, are currently in excellent condition. On the roof, as part of the insurance works, the gutters and adjoining areas of slates were renovated. It is intended to complete the work to the roof (re-insulation, renewing of felt and reattachment of slates) during the redecoration of the exterior specified by the Crown Estate to take place in 2026.

In the present document, at 5.3.2, damage due to be caused by the proposed HS2 tunnelling is set out as here:

22 and 24 Park Village East are jointly assigned Building Damage Category 4 (severe) due to a combination of:

- *predicted HS2 induced vertical and horizontal ground movements*

- *different foundation typologies between 22 PVE and 24 PVE exacerbating the impact of predicted differential ground movements*
- *historic factors that may compromise the integrity of the building, including post-war reconstruction and recent subsidence induced rotation towards neighbouring Ash tree.*

HG-T accepts the first two of these statements. But the third is definitely incorrect. As clarified below, there was no structural damage to 22 PVE during World War II and no ‘reconstruction’. And although 22 PVE and 24 PVE both suffered sudden southwards horizontal ground movement in 2012, there was very little ‘subsidence’ as such and no ‘rotation to towards a neighbouring Ash tree’.

The Ash tree in question is to the south of 22 PVE, within the boundary of 26 PVE. Shortly below 5.3.2 in the document, at 5.3.4, this is asserted: *22 Park Village East appears to be rotating away from 24 Park Village East towards the north*, i.e. rotation in the opposite direction from that stated at 5.3.2! Yet, as already copied above, in the document at 7.2.3 it is written that: *‘horizontal movement data from routine patch scanning has been taken on the front elevation of 22 Park Village East since 2020 (SCjv/SCSjv) [and] **show no significant movement.**’*

‘Rotation’ would suggest that there were more/worse cracks at one or other side of the house, and this was certainly not true at 22 PVE. Additionally, the two statements about the Ash tree contradict each other. In HG-T’s view, only the statement at 7.2.3 is correct. HG-T imagines this was written by a different person from whoever composed the text at 5.3.2 and 5.3.4.

Considering the document more broadly, its intention is evidently to lay the ground for a major ‘mitigation’ in the form a ‘Targeted Structural Intervention’. At 5.3.18, this is written: *Targeted Structural Interventions (underpinning works) are to be further detailed in a separate HAMS.* These works would have the aim of ensuring that the two halves of the building, 22 PVE and 24 PVE, react in the same way to the ground movement due to be set off by the HS2 tunnelling. This ground movement is predicted to be very substantial: in a recent map of predicted ‘Surface Settlement Contours’, 1MC03-SCJ_SDH-GT-DSK-S001-981002, made available in June this year though undated, 22 PVE and 24 PVE are shown bisected by a 50 mm contour with a 60 mm contour immediately adjacent on the railway side.

Although not explained in the present document, HG-T knows from earlier communications that the proposed ‘underpinning works’ at 22 PVE would follow those carried out at 24 PVE after the 2012 ground movement. In addition to direct support for the walls, they would involve piling and a concrete deck.

But without the threat of tunnelling, there would be no need to underpin 22 PVE. As mentioned, the insurance work followed on from sudden southwards horizontal movement of both 22 PVE and 24 PVE. 24 PVE was more badly damaged than 22 PVE and so it was decided by both parties that 24 PVE should be strengthened and repaired first. It was considered that underpinning 24 PVE would block any further southwards movement of 22 PVE and, in the context of the insurance claim, underpinning was never suggested to HG-T as necessary for her house.

As set out above, measurements given above confirm that 22 PVE has shown no horizontal movement since 2012.

At a meeting on 18 November with SCS Railways, it was suggested verbally that mitigation in the form of the proposed underpinning would bring the damage caused to 22 PVE and 24 PVE down from Building Damage Category 4 to Building Damage Category 2. But HG-T is doubtful about this estimate and believes, were the tunnelling to take place, level 3 damage would be a more likely outcome. Level 3 is currently predicted for Nash House immediately to the north of 22 PVE, a concrete construction of the mid-1960s resting on exceptionally long piles. Certainly, HG-T has not seen a written prediction of damage as low as level 2 for any of the buildings in this central part of Park Village East.

As a whole, the present document is hard to use and its aims are not clearly stated. But particularly in Section 4, 'Building Information' pp.12-33, and in section 5, 'Ground Movement and Building Damage Assessment' pp.34-38, HG-T has been able to identify some really serious errors. As mentioned, the document was published without reference to her and without her approval. Yet these errors are very damaging to the reputation of 22 Park Village East, an important historic building for which she has been responsible since the death of her mother in 1976. It is in her view improper to use this document for public consultation, as is at present being done.

Shockingly, the errors relating to the history and current condition of the house are all in one direction – they add up to an attempt to make out that the house has historically been much more damaged and more altered than is actually the case. Notably, there are no errors made in the other direction, mistakes which exaggerate the house's integrity. Essentially this is a dishonest document, HG-T would say deliberately deceitful.

One of the purposes of the misrepresentation is revealed at paragraph 5.3.20, p.38, where this absurd statement is made in support of the proposed 'Targeted Structural Intervention': *It will resolve underlying building defects that otherwise would likely result in significant harm even if*

no tunnel induced ground movements were to occur. Consequently, the effect of proposed SCSjv asset protection measures is beneficial rather than major averse.

THERE ARE NO UNDERLYING BUILDING DEFECTS AT 22 PARK VILLAGE EAST AND, IF LEFT TO ITSELF AND WITH NO NEARBY TUNNELLING, THERE IS NO REASON TO FEAR THAT THE EXISTING CONDITION OF 22 PARK VILLAGE EAST, OR OF 24, WOULD IN THE FUTURE ITSELF CAUSE THE BUILDING SIGNIFICANT HARM.

2. Major errors as to extent of historical damage

There is no surviving evidence of damage to the house predating World War II. Alterations (very few) are dealt with below here, at section 3.

2.a) Bomb damage versus damage through neglect during and following World War II

On p.18 of the document an extract from the London Bomb Damage map is reproduced with 22-24 PVE coloured orange. On p.17 it is stated that these two houses were categorised by the map as '*Seriously damaged but repairable at cost*'. In fact the key to the map, available online, identifies orange as indicating '*General blast damage, not structural*'. NOT STRUCTURAL!

On p.11, at Figure 11, there is a photograph of a house with the exterior wall of the upper storey completely missing, labelled '*Reconstruction of roof and side (north) elevation to 22 Park Village East*'. There are many reasons why **this cannot be a photo of 22 PVE** – there is a stud partition where no partition ever existed, the roof is too steep, there is a rainwater pipe where 22 PVE never had one, the bricks do not look like 'stock' bricks but manufactured bricks (dating to after the development of the railway). In terms of the actual fabric of 22 PVE, the upstairs bathroom, which would be completely missing if this photo was of 22 PVE, has much surviving lead piping including at least one pipe embedded in the wall beneath the window. (All the piping connected with post-war repairs at 22 PVE was of cast iron, probably because of the high price of copper at the time.)

It therefore follows that a further photograph reproduced as Figure 12, p.20, is incorrectly labelled as '*Rebuilt side (north) elevation to 22 Park Village East*'. Though the photo does indeed show the north elevation of 22 PVE (most of the existing stucco was removed and replaced during the post-war repairs) **THE NORTH ELEVATION WAS NEVER REBUILT !!!!**

A series of photos in HG-T's possession, source not recorded but perhaps copied from the Crown Estate archive, show 22 PVE just as post-war repair work was beginning in c.1948. In the first photo, here, the scaffolding is already in place on the East facade and one pole leans against the porch:



This photo confirms that no walls were blown away and that the worst damage was to the porch and the Victorian extension, seen roofless in the foreground. From a structural viewpoint, neither of these were part of the principal building.

Situated between a railway main line and a canal, the PVE houses were indeed very vulnerable to bombing and 18-20 PVE evidently received a direct hit on the north side. As a result, it was decided after the war to demolish the whole building. (During the war, probably in 1941, the canal was filled in with bomb rubble so that, on moonlit nights, German bombers could not use the reflection on the water to locate the railway lines.)

Because of the blitz, most if not all residents of Park Village East moved out 'for the duration'. Consequently, neglect became a major source of damage. In the interior of 22 PVE, the amount of surviving original joinery increases with each level: on the lower ground floor there is little original woodwork while on the first floor most is original. This presumably reflects damage from damp and water ingress whereas a bomb explosion in a neighbouring house would have hit the upper parts of the building worst (as indeed Figure 11 illustrates, though unrelated to 22 PVE). Because post-war repair works were delayed, the damage by neglect was greater than it might have been - evidently the Crown Estate had not categorized 22-24 PVE as their most urgent case. The restoration works were completed only in 1950 and appear to have begun in 1948.

A letter of 16 August 1977, from the Crown Estate to HG-T and quoted in Table 2, pp.24-26 of the present document, does indeed say that "[the] premises were considerably war damaged...and were restored by the Commissioners just after the last war from a total ruin, during which works considerable alterations and improvements were carried out, particularly in

the planning and layout of the lower ground floor, and the premises as they now exist are somewhat different from their original form.”

But ‘war damage’ is not necessarily bomb damage, and while damp and water can cause very serious harm to traditionally built houses, it is of a different kind to bomb damage and of much less relevance to the harm due to be caused by the HS2 tunnelling. (The letter of August 1977 is in fact in response to an enquiry from HG-T about possible ‘improvements’ she might make and how these might affect her rent. Therefore it was in the interest of the Crown Estate to emphasise –in reality, exaggerate - the amount invested by them in the post-war repair work.)

The author of the current document also overstates the condition of the building next door, 18-20 PVE after bombing: 4.3.14 *bomb impact that totally destroyed the neighbouring semi-detached villa*. Photos show this building very badly damaged but not ‘totally destroyed’, with damage considerably worse on the side next to 16 PVE than next to 22 PVE. For example, the tall chimneys and elaborate pinnacles of the façade adjacent to 22 PVE appear to have survived intact until eventual demolition of the whole building.

2.b) damage caused by movement of the railway retaining wall in the early 1960s did not affect the house itself

In the present document, at Table 2, p. 25, this is written:

1964: House subject to damage as a result of the movement of the railway retaining wall (approx. 18 inches) and subsidence of the roadway. As a result of this sub-soil disturbance the front gate piers and forecourt paving required renewing and a basement store and cloakroom were affected by damp and needed repair.

The railway retaining wall on the opposite side of the street has suffered historic sudden movement at intervals since its construction in 1900-1906. The worst was perhaps in 1920 when the top of the wall moved into the cutting, a tendency which was halted for a while by the construction of six concrete counterforts against the wall on the PVE side: the most southerly of these counterforts is opposite the double gates to 22 PVE.

But the wall moved again in c.1940 and c.1960, these periodic sudden movements recorded in a memorandum in the Crown Estate archive by the Deputy Crown Estate Deputy Surveyor, N.H.Ash, signed 20 November 1964. A copy of the memorandum is attached below.

In Table 2, p.25 of the present document, the text follows the wording in the second paragraph of this memorandum. However, this further wording in the memo -‘*other lessees in Park Village*

East who have suffered damage' – is not copied. The author of the document also does not explain why he has inserted '*approx.18 inches*', a huge amount of movement even for the railway wall itself and which certainly does not apply to 22 PVE.

The author also does not include Mr. Ash's conclusion about the historic instability of the wall, found in the memorandum, that '*sudden and serious settlements*' occurred '*at about 20 year intervals, i.e. in about the years 1920, 1940 and 1960, as a result of the movement of the retaining wall*'. In fact no '*sudden and serious settlements*' earlier than 1960 are mentioned at all in the present document (though, it must be said, there is no known record of these earlier settlements having caused direct damage to 22 PVE).

More pertinently, the author of the document does not make clear that, at 22 PVE, all the damage of the early 1960s occurred outside the house itself. The 'cloakroom' (in this case a lavatory plus basin) was in the retained rump of the Victorian extension which at that point could only be reached by stepping outside the house; the 'forecourt paving' lay partially over this. The 'basement store' is probably the original cellar on the east side of the house, the roof of which was also given a new slab at this time.

The present document in fact omits any mention of the contrasting stability of the house itself which, on present evidence, was built upon previously-undisturbed ground, and almost everything which lies outside it, in particular the perimeter wall and its pillars, presumed to have been constructed on 'made' ground, built up for the road. (More information on this contrast should soon be available from the cores about to be taken.)

At 22 PVE, the perimeter wall and pillars, like almost all others in the street, have been subject to more or less continuous movement. Mostly this has occurred without serious consequences. But at 22 PVE, the concrete slab over the cellar is supported on one side by the exterior wall of the house and on the other by the made ground of the road. And movement in the latter, versus the much greater stability of the house, has resulted in the cellar and its roof being particularly vulnerable, with much cracking ensuing.

The failure in the present document to make clear the limited effect of the ground movement of the early 1960s, taken on top of the attribution of too great a level of bomb damage, is severely misleading to readers who have no direct knowledge of 22 PVE themselves.

Very unfortunately, both these errors reappear in the letter from English Heritage to Camden in response to the registration of this HAMS document. This letter, dated 4 November 2024, has been uploaded onto Camden's website at reference 2024/4745/HS2, and is therefore publicly

available alongside the present document. Here it is written that *‘Both numbers 22 and 24 were ‘seriously damaged but repairable’ because of WW2 bombing and were largely rebuilt. By 1964, the building was experiencing structural damage because of the movement of the railway and roadway subsidence’*. This is an untrue statement - IT IS NOT CORRECT THAT ‘BOTH NUMBERS 22 AND 24 WERE LARGELY REBUILT FOLLOWING BOMB DAMAGE’ OR THAT ‘BY 1964’ THE BUILDING ITSELF ‘WAS EXPERIENCING STRUCTURAL DAMAGE’.

2.c No mention is made in the document of the recent insurance work at 22 Park Village East, carried out between April 2022 and the end of 2023, or of the ‘Certificate of Structural Adequacy’ issued in February 2024.

An overarching untruth embedded in the present document is the failure to mention altogether the insurance works, undertaken in all parts of 22 PVE and including strengthening of the fabric with steel reinforcements.

The insurance claim was made in 2012 following the sudden horizontal southwards movement of 24 PVE and to a lesser extent 22 PVE, mentioned above in the Introduction. This kind of movement is not known to have taken place before at 22 PVE or 24 PVE. But the same southwards pattern has been experienced by other Park Village East houses at different times, particularly numbers 30 and 8 Park Village East.

As set out in the Introduction above, no movement has been detected in 22 PVE since this event of 2012.

In the current document the word ‘insurance’ does not occur. HG-T could only find the reference to *‘recent maintenance work,’* and *‘remedial crack repairs and redecoration works’*, at 4.5.1, p.31. The two references to ‘rotation’ further on in the document, at 5.3.2, and 5.3.4, already discussed in the Introduction, both incorrectly identify the cause of the cracks and fail to say that the damage has now been rectified.

It is hard to comprehend why there is no mention of the insurance work when the relevant documents have been shared with SCS Railways/HS2 Ltd and the work itself took place in plain sight. There is also ample evidence of it in the photographs included in the SCS Railways document ‘22 Park Village East Investigation Surveys Scope Document, Document no.: 1MC03-SCJ-EN-NOT-SS01_SL03-000001’, dated 3 October 2022. Here, for example, in Fig.8, a wide angle photo shows plastered-over reinforcements at the corner of the first floor principal bedroom, where an internal wall joins the party wall with 24 PVE:



The 2012 damage to the building was characterised in both houses by long vertical cracks, particularly at the junctions of walls. There was also, at least at 22 Park Village East, some evidence of actual subsidence in the form of diagonal cracks at the corners of windows on the garden side. This subsidiary damage might have been caused by trees. But it seems unlikely that trees, or one particular tree, directly caused the vertical cracks which were distributed through the house, though predominantly in the half closest to 24 PVE. The ash tree referred to at 5.3.2 is actually some distance away, in the forecourt of 26 PVE.

Because the ground movement was southwards, the damage was worse to 24 PVE than to 22 PVE and therefore insurers for each side agreed that 24 should be reinforced and repaired first. As referred to in the Introduction, the work at 24 included piles and a concrete deck below the lower floor; these are not described in the current document but are referred to at 5.3.4 as ‘underpinning’.

The work at 24 PVE was completed by 2016 and since then there has been no sign at all of additional movement either at 24 PVE or at 22 PVE. In fact the vertical cracks which had suddenly appeared in 2012 never worsened beyond that first year.

At 5.3.4 of the current document, the last two sentences read: *Evidence suggests that the cracks within 22 PVE attributed to foundation subsidence have not closed up as expected following underpinning of 24 Park Village East. These may have opened up further and 22 Park Village East appears to be rotating away from 24 Park Village East towards the north.*

The first of these two sentences adds nothing new – it was never expected that the underpinning of 24 PVE would cause the cracks at 22 PVE to close up! As to the second sentence, the cracks have been sealed as part of the repairs. **It is totally incorrect to suggest**

that the cracks ‘have opened up further’ – please note again the statement already quoted in the Introduction from the Certificate of Structural Adequacy: *The property was monitored by us [Crawford and Co] from 14/01/2013 to 21/01/2020 and found to be stable.*

As ‘rotation’, this has already been shown not to be present above in the Introduction and has never been suggested independently.

Following the repair work, 22 Park Village East has been redecorated externally and throughout the interior. The outside walls have been painted with the paint specified by the Crown Estate, which is rather stretchy, and it is not possible to guarantee that there are currently no cracks at all. But certainly there are no visible cracks.

As for the interior, HG-T refused the use of lining paper on the walls because, having already suffered the very negative experience of dealing with HS2 Ltd’s property department (in relation to a flat in the now-demolished Ainsdale, the property of her late husband) she was absolutely determined that there would be no suggestion that lining paper was covering cracks. The removal of existing lining paper was carried out by the insurer’s contractors and this was comparatively roughly done, causing some damage to the surface of the plaster. However, all the internal redecoration was done by her own decorator, in most rooms using Little Green’s Absolutely Matte Emulsion, and currently everything is in excellent order.

THERE ARE NO CRACKS AT ALL VISIBLE ON THE INTERIOR WALLS OF THE HOUSE ITSELF!!!

At paragraph 4.5.1 of the document, under the title Condition, the author writes that ‘22 Park Village East is in fair-good condition, given the age and following recent maintenance work.’

To HG-T, the assessment ‘*fair-good condition*’ seems completely inadequate and is yet another indicator of the unspoken aim running through the document of denigrating 22 Park Village East, its structural soundness, its comparatively unaltered state, its current excellent state of repair, and its exceptional picturesque setting which does ‘survive’ though not on the opposite side of the street.

3. Major errors as to extent of alterations to the house

3.a) Interior alterations to house

Interior changes that are known to have taken place at 22 PVE since it was built are few, and, apart from repairs, have affected very little of the original structure. The only change to any

internal structural wall which she can identify is the double-door opening made for her in 1980-82, between the Drawing Room and the adjacent room on the garden side. But this was a fully approved architect-led change and there have been no cracks or other problems associated with it.

In the document, the interior is introduced at 4.3.15, p.28, where the author sets out what he believes was the original arrangement.

Designed as a modest family home the interior originally comprised three floors, each with a specific set of functions:

- *lower ground floor- kitchen, laundry and domestic living spaces, inc. sitting room*
- *ground floor - main reception rooms - drawing room, dining room and parlour or study*
- *1st floor - principal bedrooms*
-

But the Park Village houses were highly original and at first very fashionable. And even if comparatively small, 'modest' is not the right word for them.

Throughout the PVE houses there is in fact a pattern of Dining Rooms on the Lower Ground floor. At 22 PVE, confirmation that the principal room on the Lower Ground floor was indeed the Dining Room occurs in the Christie's contents sale catalogue for the 6 June 1854.

At 4.3.17 of the document, the author writes with reference to a 1894 plan, *'The sitting room/dining room, which still retains its form and decorative detailing, gained new access to the garden via French doors.'*

But he is surely wrong again here. French doors opening from the Dining Room directly into the garden area are again a pattern for the Park Village East houses, and are an original feature.

This 1894 plan of the Lower Ground floor, done for plumbing purposes and recording 'new drains', is reproduced at Figure 16, p.29 (it has been somewhat cropped). It is true that here the Dining Room is labelled 'Sitting Room'. But in the 1910 photo taken for the Montague-Smith family, reproduced below, the looped lace curtains visible through the open French window do not indicate a room for servants. (The 1894 plan's Old Kitchen would have been suitable as a sitting room for a housekeeper and in the 1948 plan – see below – this is labelled 'Maid's Rm.'. The 1854 catalogue lists two bedsteads in the 'Attic', i.e. above the 1st floor, and this is maybe where the servants slept.)

The earliest documented alteration to the house was the addition of a single storey extension to the NW corner of the house, a large 'Studio'. This is shown in plan and elevation in the drawings done for the National Buildings Record during WW II by Miss B.G.Bryan Brown, reproduced in the Survey of London (Vol .21 (1949), pt.3, pl.97) and as Fig.14, p.23 in the present document.

The studio extension is also present at the edge of the 1910 photograph below. No roof is visible here or in the National Buildings Record drawing, and it must be presumed it was hidden behind the parapet. Since the original purpose of the extension was as a studio, it is likely to have been of glass.

In the post-WWII restoration programme, most of this extension was demolished, with a rump kept for a boiler room, coal hole and outside lavatory.

The first appearance of the extension is in the 1894 plan of the Lower Ground floor and it may have been constructed at around this date. The 1894 plan also records a move away from an 'Old Kitchen', the room on the east side of the house at this level. This room has a broad chimney breast, suitable for a range.

The move was from the 'Old Kitchen' to a 'Kitchen' in what is still the present position of the kitchen. This change may have been made in order to take advantage of a newly-installed hot water system. From 1894, if not before, this room also had access to a subsidiary space which could have acted as a larder or a small scullery. It had its own window opening onto the exterior space below the porch. This larder is marked 'L' on the 1948 plan made for the Crown Estate reproduced as Fig.17, p.29. As can be seen from the 1948 drawing, it did not have load-bearing walls. It was removed during the 1980-82 alterations made for HG-T.

In the 1894 plan, a misunderstanding of this subsidiary space was probably the reason the 'Kitchen' itself has been drawn much too large. This plan shows the kitchen without the larder and instead puts in the structural wall on its east side much closer to the stairs than now. But if such a wall had been moved in such a way, or had even been built in this position, it would not have supported the wall above, the west wall of the main hall and also of brick. It should be noted that at this upper level, this wall has embedded in it at its northern end a lead soil pipe leading from the bathroom above, part of the original plumbing of the house. It is possible to conclude therefore that the position shown in 1894 for the east wall of the 'Kitchen' is wrong.

In other ways the 1894 plan also shows itself to be unreliable - a sketch made with a straight edge rather than a measured drawing. Tellingly, it shows the staircase squashed up against the

cupboard in the NE corner of the lower hall, leaving too much of a gap between it and the doorway to the 'Old Kitchen'. In reality the width of the staircase, including the volute of the handrail, measures 1.40 m. The equivalent width given for the staircase in the 1894 drawing is approximately 1.05 m. The scale and position of the cellars is also wrong.

In the present document, at table 2, p.24, this plumber's plan is interpreted as representing '*structural alterations undertaken to the walls, with new openings being formed*'. But, as just shown, the position of the walls of the original house could not have been changed. The only actual 'structural alteration' or 'new opening' recorded in the 1894 drawing seems to be the narrow doorway leading from the kitchen into the new studio (this opening is just visible in the post-war photo above). This must have been bricked up during the post-war restoration.

The 1948 drawing, in contrast and except for two minor details, records the layout of the Lower Ground floor as it survived until HG-T's own works of 1980-2. The minor differences are on either side of the staircase in the Lower Hall: immediately to the south of staircase there is no doorway where there is one now, leading to an area of coat pegs, electricity meter etc. and instead, in the drawing, the doorway to the cellar is further back, right underneath the stairs, in the exterior wall of the house; to the north of the stairs, the door of the cupboard is set back a little in comparison with now.

The removal of most of the 19th century extension, carried out during the post-war renovations and completed in the 1948 plan, has already been mentioned. Changes within the original house made at this time seem to have been few but must have included: the removal of the Upper Ground floor cloakroom shown immediately inside the front door in the National Buildings Record plan (up to this point, the door to the lavatory itself was evidently on the turn of the stairs, where one step is much wider than the others); the closing up of a double doorway between the Drawing Room and Morning Room (there was a serious shortage of accommodation at this period); the removal of a staircase which had led from the 1st floor to the attic (the 1854 contents sale catalogue records the existence of this staircase— as in other Park Village houses, it would have been narrow and steep and not a continuation of the main staircase).

During the war or shortly after, the marble mantelpieces must have been stolen. All but one (in the First Floor front bedroom where there is no longer a fireplace) were replaced post war with plaster imitations. Three of these survive. In the Drawing Room and in the Dining Room, the plaster mantelpieces have been replaced by HG-T with antique marble mantelpieces.

The post-war restoration also included the replastering of all the internal walls (over a skim of concrete because of a shortage of plaster at the time) and all the cornices. But evidently it had been possible to save a lot of the joinery and all the doors on the Upper Ground floor and all the doors and architraves of the First floor are clearly original. All the work of this date was carried out to a very high standard – there was apparently no shortage of craftsmen.

The alterations made by HG-T in 1980-82 consisted at Lower Ground level in the removal of the larder and the creation of a new doorway in place of the larder's window. This allowed the rump of the extension, where the old coal hole and lavatory were combined to make a second bathroom, to be reached without stepping outside, with a new doorway leading outside directly opposite the steps. The doorway of the original Tradesman's Entrance was converted into a new window.

Also in 1980-82, as mentioned, on the Upper Ground floor, a double door opening was created between the Drawing Room and the smaller room on the garden side. An outer door was also added to the porch, making this door the front door.

Returning to the HAMS document, its author, having accepted the 1894 plumber's plan of the Lower Ground floor as accurate, finds himself interpreting the much more convincing 1948 plan as showing changes which had not happened. He writes at 4.3.17 that *'the 1894 and 1948 layouts of lower ground floor show significant changes (Figure 13 and 14 [actually Figs.17 and 18]).'* He assigns to this post-war period a *'reconfiguration of stair hall [i.e. lower hall] which is enlarged, taking a portion of the kitchen and adding a larder with small window and access from the new kitchen (which itself has been reduced in size by approximately half).'*

The author also writes of the 1948 plan in Table 2, p.25: *1948. Layout of the lower ground floor shown on drainage plans from Camden Archives with substantial alterations from the previous (1894) layout.*

Also in Table2, p.25, the author assigns to HG-T an alteration in the main hall itself: *'1979 amendments to the main hallway by the staircase'*. This is also incorrect – he perhaps mistook the removal of the small cloakroom, part of the post-war restoration, as a change made at this later time.

Finally in Table 2, p.26, he writes of a change made by HG-T much later: *2017: Proposals to open up and amend the lower ground floor to the north of the main entrance.* This seems to be a reference to the removal of the post-war window in the boiler room and replacing it with a door opening into the garden: a much larger boiler had been replaced with a smaller one,

making this change possible (the new door is visible in Fig.4, p.8). Despite the author's wording, this involved no change to the interior at all. The application to Camden, no. 2015/1995/L, is listed as: *Remove an existing sash window and install a single timber and glazed door, to the side wing at rear lower ground level.*

These mistakes lead to a more general statement at paragraph 4.3.16 (p.28):

Documentary evidence and visual inspection highlight numerous internal alterations to 22 Park Village East due to:

- *changes in room layout, related to external architectural alterations associated with post-war re-construction*
- *modifications in plan form and room function that reflect late 20th century lifestyle changes.*

THIS IS INACCURATE AND EXAGGERATED: 'NUMEROUS INTERNAL ALTERATIONS' IS PARTICULARLY UNTRUTHFUL. AND APART FROM THE MOVE OF THE KITCHEN DOCUMENTED IN THE 1894 DRAWING, AND THE INSTALLATION DURING HG-T'S TIME OF A KITCHENETTE IN THE 1ST FLOOR SMALLER BEDROOM ON THE GARDEN SIDE, THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE IN THE FUNCTIONS OF THE ROOMS.

Please also note the author's entry in Table 2: '1964: House subject to damage as a result of the movement of the railway retaining wall, already discussed above at 2.b). As explained above, the movement in the early 60s did not affect the fabric of the house itself, other than to let in damp.

On p.30, the author of the document sums up the changes he believes he has identified. Here it is easiest to comment directly within the text.

4.3.17 The 1894 and 1948 layouts of lower ground floor show significant changes (Figure 13 and 14). Figures 16 and 17, the 1894 and 1948 plans, seem to be meant here. As discussed, the changes to the interior of the original house were not significant.

The sitting room/dining room, which still retains its form and decorative detailing, gained new access to the garden via French doors. [The French doors to the Dining Room (Sitting Room in 1894 plan) are clearly an original feature and appear in both 1894 and 1948 plans as well as in the 1910 photo.

Other changes are more utilitarian: [Agreed]

4.3.18 There are fewer obvious alterations to the original ground floor layout design. Despite changes to the entrance hall (where in fact the only change has been the post-war removal of the cloakroom), slight modifications to the wooden stairs (HG-T is unable to identify any changes in the staircase, certainly none between Upper Ground and 1st floors), addition of new internal door openings (only one new opening)

3.b) Exterior alterations

The earliest known image of the house is the photograph of the garden side of the house taken in 1910 for the Montague-Smith family (one of four photos given to HG-T by a descendant, apparently taken on the occasion of the engagement of the daughter of the family).



This image is of the west elevation, the garden side of the house, and records a number of features no longer surviving:

- i) the elaborate upper trellised upper part of the balcony and which was doubtless part of the original design. This trellised part of the balcony and its roof are also recorded in the 1941 National Buildings Record drawing and must have been survived up to this time. A photo taken from the canal towpath, probably also during the war, shows this upper part of the balcony still in situ but 'blacked out'. A decision was made by the Crown Estate not to replace it as part of the post-war restorations, no doubt on grounds of cost.
- ii) a rectangular oriel window, clearly not original, projecting from the smaller 1st floor bedroom on the garden side. This was removed post-war and the lower part of the hole left by it is visible in one of the photographs in HG-T's possession recording the post-war restorations. The proportions and stucco detailing of the intact original window on the 24 PVE side was followed in the restoration, though the new window is a sash rather than a casement.
- iii) a dormer window, apparently original (there is one almost identical 'across the valley' on 11 Park Village West) – this was also removed post-war.
- iv) two windows show glazing which is now different – the window of the main bedroom is a casement window, replaced post-war as a sash, and the kitchen window has 4 panes across in the photo whereas the current window only has three, also a post-war change.
- v) the west wall of the late Victorian extension is present – as already described, most of this was demolished post war, leaving only a rump for a boiler room, lavatory and coal hole.

Original features retained or replaced include the arched window of the room above the kitchen – this sash employs classic 'lamb's tongue' section, as used at the same period by Nash at Buckingham Palace, indicating that that it is the one window in the house where the joinery is original.

Also visible in the 1910 photos are the two French windows, both open in the photo and, as now, the Dining Room window opens outwards and the Drawing Room window inwards: as they survive, the joinery of these windows is of post-war date.

The post-war series of photos indicate that much of the original stucco had become loose or had already fallen off, but whatever replaced it appears to have followed the original pattern. The document is misleading in stating at 4.3.11 that the *large central bay gable pediment with tympanum and stucco voussoirs and keystone to the ground floor arched window are surviving*

decorative architectural elements of the original design. But the majority of what we see today is as first built. HG-T is able to identify only one very minor change to the detailing – in the 1910 photo, the blind window at the centre of the building at first floor level has sash window details, presumably in wood. These did not survive the post-war restoration.

At this point, a couple of errors in the drawing done for the National Buildings Record should be mentioned. As correctly stated at 4.3.2 this recording was carried out during the war itself, no doubt at speed.

- In the West elevation, the French windows leading out from the Dining Rooms of both 22 PVE and 24 PVE are shown as four panes high, whereas in reality they are only three panes high, and the depth of the Lower Ground floor is consequently less.
- There is a mistake in the representation of the stucco on all elevations. Looking at photos taken before the post-war restoration, all the banded rustication appears to be correct in the drawing. But in reality there was only one area with ashlar jointing, in the area of the kitchen window. Elsewhere, if there was no rustication, the stucco seems to have been left plain: in particular it appears to have been plain under the balcony and below the now-missing balcony roof, also on the walls of the porch of 22 PVE.

The author of the document evidently relies on the National Buildings Record drawing and mistakenly concludes 4.3.14, p.27: *plain stucco is present where formerly ashlar detailed render appeared to have been applied to the rear central ground floor bay and across the lower ground floor elevation.*

For the north elevation the oldest images are two photographs in the post-war series (one reproduced above) and again the wartime National Buildings Record drawing. Apart from the disappearance of the pipes (all now on the inside of the house), and the addition of a front door to the outside of the porch, there are no noticeable changes between then and now. This is the most architecturally innovative of the three elevations and in its deep eaves and segmental brick arch is close in design to the end elevations of Decimus Burton's London Zoo Giraffe House

For the east elevation, on the street side of the house, the earliest evidence is again two photos in the post-war series and, once again, the National Buildings Record drawing. On the evidence of these there has been no change since and from Upper Ground level upwards we must be looking at the original design. A change made post war which is not visible in the two photographs is the digging out of a front area, as indicated on the 1948 Crown Estate plan, Fig.17, p.29 in the present document. At the same time, the window opening at this Lower

Ground level was enlarged: the replacement window is shallower version of the tripartite window above. Before this, as indicated in the 1894 plumber's plan, though wrongly centred, there would have been a smaller window opening onto a curved lightwell of corresponding width – this original arrangement still survives at 6, 8 and 10 Park Village East.

4. Aspects and setting

Major mistakes in the document can be placed under this heading.

First is the failure to identify the 'Park Village' as a unity. It is made of two parts, East and West, but was conceived as one village. This is seen most obviously in Nash's own title for his 1823 plan: 'Plan of the Village proposed to be formed on the Banks of the Regent's canal

The name is correctly used Geoffrey Tyack's 1993 article, 'John Nash and the Park Village', referenced on p.54 of the present document, and in the name of the local residents' association, Park Village and Environs Residents Association (PVERA).

Yet the author of document throughout implies that there are two 'villages', most prominently at 4.2.2, *'The neighbouring Park Villages (East and West)* and at 4.2.3 *'Both Park Village villa suburbs....'*

One senses an attempt at 'divide and rule' here, as with the failure to alert HG-T's neighbours at 24 PVE of the present application, but on a larger scale. And it certainly suits the document's evident purpose, to downplay the historic importance of the PVE houses while at the same time presenting 22 PVE as more damaged and more altered than it actually is.

Undoubtedly, it would have been the case, had the surviving Park Village East houses ever faced eastwards onto the street, and the street been considered as the centre of a 'village', that the setting had been irreparably damaged by the early 20th century extension of the railway cutting and the demolition of all houses this east side.

IN FACT, ALL THE SURVIVING HOUSES IN PARK VILLAGE EAST HAVE THEIR PRINCIPAL ROOMS AND THEIR LARGEST WINDOWS ON THE WEST SIDE AND LOOK WESTWARDS ACROSS THE VALLEY OF THE CANAL CUTTING, IN THE CASE OF NUMBERS 14 TO 30 PVE, OVER TO PARK VILLAGE WEST.

Furthermore, these houses have always had, whatever is implied in this document, a Dining Room at Lower Ground level, leading directly out through French windows into the garden.

In the case of 22 PVE, of a total of 11 rooms including bathrooms, only two look out onto the road – one 1st floor bedroom and the study at Upper Ground level (the room below this looks only out into the area while the other two windows on this side are on the stairs).

The now-demolished houses on the east side of PVE, built after those on the west side, were always smaller and plainer and on much smaller plots. This can be seen in the excellently detailed 1836 drawing by J.C.Bourne, as here:



The drawing shows the excavation of Robert Stephenson's railway cutting underway, and the backs of 9 to 17 Park Village East, according to the post 1871 numbering (7-9 and 13-15 were semi-detached). The masonry wall at the back of no.9, on the extreme right, evidently correctly marks the boundary between the Crown and Southampton Estates. (National Railway Museum)

The present document is therefore misleading, in HG-T's view deliberately so, at 4.1.2, p.12, where this is written of the effect of early 20th century extension of the railway cutting and the demolition of these smaller houses: *As a result, 22 Park Village East, like the other surviving Nash villas, faces the parapet wall of the expanded railway cutting rather than the intended semi-rural setting.*

Not only did the extant houses never ‘face’ this way, Nash would never have perceived this eastern aspect as ‘semi-rural’. As a developer himself, he would have known well, given the pace of development of London at the time, that the fields between the limit of the Crown Estate and Camden Town were sure to become rapidly filled with new housing, even if he had not predicted the almost immediate arrival of the railway.

The pretence that the rural idyll was conceived for the east side of Park Village East rather than the west is maintained in the document by references in inverted commas to ‘Nash’s ‘wooded valley’’ or just “‘wooded valley” (no source is given for this exact phrase - it is not in Tyack). At 4.2.4 it is used appropriately, referring to the valley formed by the canal cutting which separates the east and west sides of the Park Village. But in contrast, at 4.6.8 and 4.2.9 it is used incorrectly, inferring that there had been a wooded valley on the east side of Park Village East, where there is no valley as such, only a gentle downwards slope and where, before the railway, there were fields. This is the wording at 4.2.9, written with reference to the ‘plantation’ squeezed in between the parapet wall and dwarf wall of the 1906 retaining wall. *A matching dwarf wall, originally designed with brick piers to support ornate metal railings and gates, forms planting beds for shrubs and trees, intended to soften the imposing street level retaining wall and maintain Nash’s ‘wooded valley’*

BY EMPHASISING THIS EASTERN ASPECT, THE DOCUMENT DOWNPLAYS THE CENTRALITY OF THE CANAL (NOW THE CANAL CUTTING) AND THE WAY THAT THE HOUSES, ALL NAMED ‘COTTAGES’, WERE GROUPED INFORMALLY AROUND IT.

As mentioned in the Introduction, the importance of this setting is correctly acknowledged in the Regent’s Park Conservation Area Appraisal as still existing: *‘The buildings are unified by the setting, a picturesque landscape which largely survives.’* It adds: *‘The infilled canal cutting can be appreciated in views from the east side of Gloucester Gate Bridge looking towards the gardens of Park Village East, where it appears as a wonderfully secluded and semi-wild area of mature trees and undergrowth.’*(pp.20-21).

The assessment given in the present document at 4.4.3 is much too harsh: *22 Park Village East has encountered dramatic changes in setting since construction, which applies equally to the neighbouring villas. Notably the loss of the canal, the 1901-1906 widening of the Euston Approaches railway cutting and associated demolition of the villas along the eastern side of Park Village East.*

At 4.4.4 the present document sees: *a lingering sense of Nash’s architectural and landscape design vision within a contemporary, dynamic urban environment.*

If nothing else, this is pretty good cheek, considering that Park Village East and its houses have been blighted now for more than ten years, with the street itself more or less cut-off, by the vastly over-budget and greatly delayed HS2 project.

A detailed point of correction should be made in reference to 5.2.2: at 22 PVE at least, the canal towpath retaining wall has not collapsed and is still in situ.

5. Comments on the rest of the document.

At Figure 18, p.34, part of a settlement contour map has been included which has no date, number or, more importantly, measurements in millimeters attached to the contour lines. Furthermore, the very large settlement predicted in a recent contour map, mentioned here in the Introduction, of between 40 mm and 60 mm for 22-24 PVE, is not referred to in the document: here we see only references to 1 mm and 10 mm.

The drawings of 22-24 at the end of the document, on pages 56 and 60, are distorted. And in all the drawings of the east elevation, the glazing is shown incorrectly for windows on Lower and Upper Ground floors. They have all been given a central vertical bar, as if French windows.

Neither of these errors is acceptable in what is essentially a Listed Building application.

Conclusion.

Overall, this is a deliberately dishonest document – HG-T would say deceitful. That it was produced at public expense is a scandal.

Hero Granger-Taylor, 22 Park Village East, London NW1 7PZ

 3 December 2024

Below: Crown Estate memorandum of 13.2.67 re damage due to movement of retaining wall

Park Village East
Subsidence

See reference dated 21.12.66.

I am not sure I can add much to the comments on this matter in the several earlier reports, but the main factors as I see them are as follows :-

1. When it was decided some years ago to leave lessees to claim direct from the Railways for subsidence damage, it was thought that the Legal Adviser had said that the benefit of the 1908 Agreement between the Crown and the Railways could pass to Crown tenants. It seems, however, that the Legal Adviser's advice was misinterpreted and Crown tenants are in no more advantageous position than any other member of the public.

In this connection it is perhaps of some significance that the ex gratia payment of 50% of the cost of the works offered by the Railways to Crown tenants, is no better than that understood to have been offered to the Local Authority in respect of works to the carriageway and footpaths.
2. The Railways contend that the retaining wall moved and let down the Park Village roadway for unknown reasons outside their control. They therefore repudiate responsibility for the damage. But under the terms of the 1908 Agreement the Railways agreed to "..... pay full and adequate compensation for and in respect of all damage injury or disturbance which may at any time happen or be caused to any property of His Majesty by or in consequence of any works of the Company constructed or to be hereinafter constructed upon the land". The basic "works" to the land were the excavation of a deep cutting and the removal of the natural support formerly afforded to Park Village East. Doubtless the Legal Adviser will be asked to advise whether the Railways can escape liability under the 1908 Agreement because a retaining wall, which theoretically should have supported the roadway and adjacent Crown property, has failed to do so for reasons which cannot be ascertained. I would only comment that if the Railways are in fact able to repudiate responsibility it is difficult to see in what circumstances they could ever be bound to pay compensation, under the terms of the Agreement.
3. Even if we do not make a claim against the Railways on behalf of the Crown tenants or in respect of a contribution paid to them by the Commissioners, I agree that it would be prudent to take the steps suggested in para.3 of Mr. Hogg's mem. dated 21.12.66.

Although it is not really relevant, it is possibly worth mentioning that the serious defects which appeared in No.1, Park Village East (the old Riding School) in 1962, are still worsening and it is only a question of time before we have to rebuild a substantial part of those premises. Although the 1908 Agreement does not apply to this building, the Legal Adviser has told us that under the terms of the licence for the counterparts under this building, any reconstruction necessitated by settlement would be the liability of the Railways. Perhaps therefore any approach to the Railways should make it clear that the Commissioners also hold them responsible for the repair of the defects at No.1, Park Village East.
4. There is a long history of movement in Park Village East. Apart from the sudden and serious settlements that have, I believe, occurred at about 20 year intervals, i.e. in about the years 1920, 1940 and 1960, as a result of the movement of the retaining wall,

/there

there has also been an almost continuous but slight movement of the sub-soil, which has evidenced itself by the appearance of small cracks in the external stucco and internal plaster.

It is a reasonable assumption that this continuing slight settlement occurs as a result of the slow consolidation process of the sub-soil following the periodical movements of the retaining wall. But it would be quite impossible to prove this particularly as the sub-soil is notoriously unstable, and the presence of the canal cutting at the rear of the houses has increased these conditions of instability. I therefore do not think that we stand much chance of holding the Railways responsible for any future damage due to settlement, unless there is some further significant movement of the retaining wall, which is clearly the cause of the settlement as was recently the case.

Should serious structural defects occur in the future at any house, we should presumably have to deal with the situation as we recently did at No.2, Park Village East, where in return for the underpinning of the main rear wall of the house we granted a new lease of 14 years instead of the usual 7 year term.

Alternatively we could return to the practice of granting leases with an escape clause, allowing tenants to relinquish premises in the event of serious defects developing.

I am surprised to learn that there is a limit of £50 to ex gratia payments made by the Commissioners as I seem to recollect payments of as much as £750 - £1,500 having been made to tenants as contributions to dry rot repairs.

N. H. Ash
D/C.E.S.
13.2.67

London Branch