

Historical Statement

**Flat 2, 84 Albert Street
London NW1**

Application for Listed Building Consent
For Internal Alterations and New Rear Windows



January 2018

Norton Ellis Architects
42 Colebrooke Row
London N1 8AF
www.nortonellis.co.uk

1.0 Introduction

It is well recorded that Charles Pratt (Earl of Camden) is credited with the establishment of Camden Town in the mid eighteenth century. As the first of a number of wealthy individuals involved in the development and urbanisation of this part of London, his initial building programme focussed on land on the east side of Camden High Street. Pratt's role in shaping the area is marked by a street bearing his name in the heart of Camden today. By 1850 rural Camden had been enveloped by the expanding city. In the early nineteenth century Camden Town had been a quiet, middle class suburb. But by the 1910s the district had become shabby and run down, with a different social mix.

2.0 Camden Town Conservation Area (Extracts from Conservation area report)

Yellow stock brick is the predominant building material, with decoration in the form of rusticated ground floors, stucco mouldings around openings, and stucco parapet cornices. Roofs are mainly covered in natural slate, windows are mainly painted timber box sashes and doors are painted timber with moulded panels. Exceptionally, properties have projecting stucco porticos and arched head windows. Terraces are adorned with various good examples of historic ironwork. Cast-iron boundary railings are a feature of most streets, and cast-iron balcony screens in a variety of patterns accentuate the principal first floors of many residential properties, sometimes bridging two or more windows.

Although this part of the Conservation Area is dominated by early 19th century development, there are examples of 20th century residential building, many of which arise from World War II bomb damage to the original 19th century terraces. Some post-war housing developments take the form of blocks of flats set in green landscaping, but others are either out of scale or character with their surroundings by virtue of layout, excessive height or use of materials.

3.0 Albert Street

Most of Camden Town's early houses had been designed for middle class families. These houses, in yellow stock brick, were typically of three storeys, with a basement service area and often an attic containing the servants' quarters. Albert Street is a good example of this high quality streetscape. Lined on both sides almost without interruption by uniform historic terraces, it is wider than nearby streets, creating a sense of space. There are a large number of street trees, complemented by planting in the generous front gardens, which south of Delancey Street are as much as 5 metres deep. The terraces were built in most part by George Bassett, surveyor to the Southampton Estate, in the years 1844-48.

However, the terrace on the east side, Nos 50-88, of an equally homogenous appearance, was the work of seven different builders. The majority of terraces were erected as three storey buildings raised on basements. The terrace on the east side, south of Mornington Street, Nos 22-46, is of a symmetrical composition with a raised parapet forming a central feature spanning Nos 34-38. It is the only terrace in the street with an historic mansard attic storey. A large proportion of the houses in Albert Street survive as single family dwellings.

Although the architectural integrity of the terraces has been retained at the front, glimpses from side streets reveal an array of oversized and out-of-scale rear extensions, many of which were constructed under permitted development rights prior to the statutory listing of properties and the designation of the Conservation Area. Similarly, several properties have inappropriate roof extensions, partially visible above the front eaves parapets, ranging from oversized mansards and dormer windows to flat roofed accommodation set behind front roof terraces.

There are a variety of architectural styles at the southern end of the street. On the east side, Nos 2-6 are a group of three asymmetrical houses dating from c 2000, their flat roofs and white rendered walls loosely adhering to a Cubist style. They adjoin Nos 8-18, a short row of 1970s three-storey flat roofed houses built on the site of the former Grove Cottage, staggered behind a continuous white fascia incorporating distinctive shallow arches above each property.

4.0 Number 84 Albert Street

84 Albert Street is very typical of the street's architectural style. From the street frontage it can be seen to have retained much of this original character. Nevertheless none of the original internal walls, features and finishes exist within Flat 2 of 84 Albert Street.

84 Albert Street is a unique property in that it was non-typical of the regular plot widths along the street. It was / is a slightly wider plot. Historical records indicate that the extra wide plot included the entrance or covered access way to a large building at the rear which was used as a fibrous plaster works. It can be seen on the photograph of the façade that the frontage of Flat 2 is slightly recessed from the rest of the façade. This suggests that it was indeed a way through to the rear.



It is therefore likely that the original ground level of Flat 2, at the frontage was most likely a carriageway / walkway providing access to the rear. It's not clear when the walkway was transformed into a habitable space. However, it's likely this was prior to the existing conversion into flats as there is evidence of an older timber floor below the current floor level.

By the end of the nineteenth century most of the housing stock was soot-stained and run-down. Multiple occupancy had become the norm: large houses originally built for the middle classes and their servants had been divided into apartments, and few premises were without boarders or lodgers. 84 Albert Street was converted into 6 flats in 1973, one year prior to it becoming Grade II Listed.

The street elevation has retained many of the original features of the nineteenth century property. However the front window of Flat 2, which sits to the left hand side at the Ground Floor and currently brings daylight into a bedroom, is unlikely to be original, as this was most likely a way through to the rear. However, no alterations are proposed to this window. All other windows in this application were installed as part of the 1970's development, and these are proposed to be replaced in this application.