

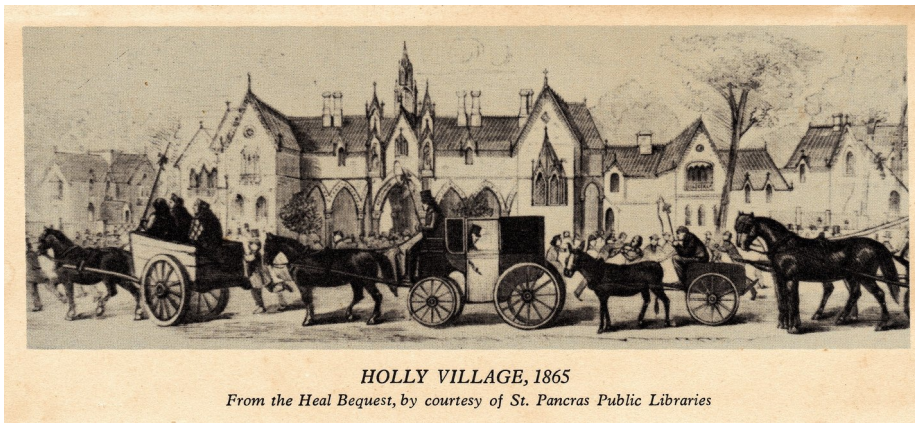
Ref: 2019/0105/T... a year ago I asked the London Borough of Camden's Tree Section for a consultation on the subject of felling a holly tree in the front garden of 1 Holly Village. The request was made on Camden's website and went to the section responsible solely for trees owned by Camden. The matter was therefore passed to the Tree Section of the Planning Department and, in the process, was transformed into a 'notification to carry out works to trees in a conservation area', not a response to the request for discussion. I continued to ask for a discussion. The notification, created by Planning, has prompted a number of objections to replacing a tree or trees and some of these objections even contain personal slurs.

In 2017 we had submitted a planning application, 2017/0975/L proposing the re-instatement of fence posts and chains, as per the original design. Drawing 10 in the documentation shows the idea of restoring a clear view of the main elevation, which had been the architect's intention. There is no problem understanding the architect's intention since we have the building that came from it, employing, as it does, groups of both symmetrical and asymmetrical elements. The north elevation of 1&2 Holly Village would represent the twelve private houses to the public on a prominent corner. When 19<sup>th</sup> century boxer Tom Sawyer's funeral cortege passed the village, it was pictured passing that public face of Holly Village, namely 1 & 2.

The architect continued the juxtaposition of symmetry and asymmetry throughout the Village. Nos. 5&6 and 9&10 have symmetrical elevations whereas 7&8 are asymmetrical, deliberately intended.

To reinforce the particular nature of the elevation of 1&2, the fences that line Chester Road, Swains Lane and the rear gardens of St.Albans Road are brought to a deliberate end where they touch 1 and 2 Holly Village respectively. The boundary then changed to shorter posts with chains that provide a foil to the principle elevation, allowing for the low windows on the ground floor of 1 Holly Village. This definite architectural consideration has not been maintained by the owners (shown below, right) who have also objected to the idea of felling a holly tree. Furthermore, the elevations of 1&2 are not identical, reflecting differences in plan and design, unlike nos. 5&6 and 9&10, that are also semi-detached pairs.





Ref: the Highgate Society comments, I did not claim that “...the original architect would not have intended a tree for that location.” My words were: “...It was not the architect’s intention to obscure the elevation with foliage...”as it now does. There’s a very large difference between a trimmed plant and a 6 meter tree. The planning officials dealing with 2017/0975/L were faced with the same conflict of interest and belief and after deliberation, chose to agree with the proposer by granting listed building permission.

The elevation facing the corner of Chester Road and Swains Lane is the most prominent street view of this group of private houses. Owners and occupiers do not want tourists to move freely about inside the Village. However, with a listed building having a public face, this at least gives the public an intriguing and aesthetically pleasing view. Let’s not continue to submerge it in an excess of vegetation.

There is nothing to prevent the second tree being felled by accepting the goal of providing an unencumbered view of both houses. Clearly I disagree with the Planning Group of the Highgate Society, which remained silent when listed building consent for changes to 1 Holly Village was sought in 2017. English Heritage likewise declined to comment on that application. Really, are trees now regarded as more important than listed buildings? We can grow a better, less obtrusive example of a holly tree if we wish, we cannot say the same for a listed building.

Mr. Hammerson states that “...the estate was only built in 1865, so the shrubs there at the time were only young and there is no evidence as to how tall they were intended to grow, or at what shape or size it was proposed to maintain them.” If that is so, then it should be a matter for the owner of the tree, whose opinion is equal to or more significant than that of third parties. One objector refers to ‘listed gardens’. There are no listed gardens and owners of 2,3,9,11 and 112 have made efforts to define their ownership of their properties, indicating with one ploy or another, where ‘their’ garden begins, in complete contravention of the covenant attached to their freeholds.

Finally I ask, where may one find Camden's policy when a conflict arises between a striking architectural composition on public view and accompanying trees grown large enough to conflict with that presentation? Discussion of a second tree could have been made if the original request for discussion had been met, instead of being transformed into a ‘Notification to fell a tree’!

