

Heritage Statement

**Flat 4, 84 Albert Street
London NW1**

Application for Listed Building Consent
For Internal Alterations



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1.0 Introduction

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.

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.

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 numbers 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. However, number 84 has been converted into 5 residential units. From the street frontage it can be seen to have retained much of this original character. There are some original features within Flat 4 such as cornices and timber window shutters within the Drawing Room. Very little else appears to be original.

The Kitchen and Bathroom have lowered ceilings. None of the doors appear to be original except perhaps the Drawing Room door, which appears to show signs of extensive ageing, but it's possible that this door was used elsewhere originally.

The large Drawing Room has a fireplace at one end only. The room is symmetrical in its arrangement and so the introduction of a fireplace on the north chimney breast would balance the room and make it more attractive. Indeed we believe that originally the Drawing Room was in fact two rooms.

We believe this because there is a beam across the room, which runs across the width of the room from between the windows to the stair landing wall. The beam doesn't have any cornicing and it's rather crude in its design. Therefore we believe that a wall existed between the two windows. So the northern end would have been a separate room and therefore likely that there was a fireplace in the north chimney breast.

The Kitchen has very little original character. In addition the chimney breast takes up space that could be better used. Therefore it is proposed to open-up the chimney breast in the Kitchen, so that furniture can be set into an alcove which would appear to be for a range. There is no fireplace using this chimney from below so it would not be problematic for other occupants.

5.0 Conclusion

We believe that the alterations proposed in this application will have no effect on the Listing of this property. In fact the proposals may indeed enhance the property and restore some of it's original character.