

Camden Town Conservation Area Advisory Committee

Application for Mansard Roof Extension at 5 Mornington Place Application no. 2021/0124/P

OBJECTION

No.s 3-7 Mornington Place are listed as positive buildings in the Conservation Area.

Mornington Place is first recorded in the St Marylebone Borough survey of 1834, and forms the earliest development westwards of Mornington Crescent. Initially known as Crescent Place, the street historically provided a link to Serpentine Road (now lost), part of John Nash's Grade II* "Rus in Urbe" Park Villages of 1820, situated between Camden Town and the boundary of Regent's Park. Mornington Place was thus of great importance in connecting two neighbouring areas with very different physical characteristics.

On 17th September 1839 the Morning Post records the sale at auction of 3-7 Mornington Place by Mr George Robins as follows: "a Valuable Leasehold Estate, held of Lord Southampton, for ninety two years, consisting of 5 remarkably well built houses" with the houses "all let on leases of 3 years":

May be viewed two days previous, and catalogues then had.

On the Southampton and Northampton Estates.—A solid investment.

MR. GEORGE ROBINS will **SELL** by
AUCTION, at the Mart, London, on **THURSDAY**, the 26th
instant, at Twelve o'Clock, in Two Lots, a
VALUABLE LEASEHOLD ESTATE,

held of
LORD SOUTHAMPTON, FOR NINETY-TWO YEARS,
subject to a trifling ground rent. It consists of
**FIVE REMARKABLY WELL-BUILT HOUSES, OF THE
GRECIAN DORIC ORDER;**
They are of a size conformable to that class of persons who are in
need of such delightful abodes upon a small scale and at an easy rent.
Stone galleries and balconies, waterclosets, small gardens, &c. They
are in
CRESCENT-PLACE, MORNINGTON-CRESCENT,
near to the Hampstead-road, Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, all let for three
years, at a moderate rental, producing
TWO HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIVE POUNDS A YEAR.

Also, on
THE NORTHAMPTON ESTATE,
Five Houses, on a moderate scale, with outward pretensions not in-
ferior to the last. They consist of
**FIVE HOUSES IN SPENCER-STREET, NEAR TO
CANONBURY-SQUARE, ISLINGTON,**
from No. 14 to 18, inclusive, suited to clerks upon respectable sala-
ries, or retiring tradespeople; with stone galleries, balconies, small
gardens, &c.
SEVENTY-EIGHT YEARS OF THE LEASE IS UNEXPIRED,
at a ground rent of 4*l.* only.
They can only be seen by consent of the tenants, and with printed
particulars, to be had at the Auction Mart; and at Mr. George Ro-
bins's Office, Covent-garden.

In Dorsetshire, between Wareham and Poole, a capital Villa Resi-
dence, near the Sea, extensive Gardens, and a Domain of One Hun-

As is noted in the Camden Town Conservation Area Appraisal: "By the 1840's the western part of the Conservation Area had been developed as family homes for professional families and created a transition between the grand Nash properties of Regent's Park and Park Village and the gritty realities of working life in the more shabby industrial and commercial areas to the east."

No. 5 Mornington Place is the central house in this short terrace of 5 houses, all with rusticated ground floors on the north side of the street. No. 5's unique elevational treatment comprises a raised and highly modelled architrave above giant order Tuscan pilasters which frame 2 single windows: the piano nobile being a tall arched sash, set within a shallow brick recess under a separated arched stopped hood; the second storey being a simple rectangular sash framed by a matching narrow architrave. The house provides an interesting and unusual central focus to the terrace, the houses either side having more typical fenestration patterns on the upper storeys, and single arched windows to their rusticated ground floors - no. 5's ground floor window being rectangular in contrast. The design of the terrace is thus well considered as a whole, with single arched windows being a shared feature between all houses, but treated differently in the central bay. The diminutive scale of these houses, very much smaller than those of Mornington Crescent, ensures that the grand pilasters of no. 5 are afforded a special prominence being set on such a small house.

Camden Local Plan Policy D2 Heritage Other heritage assets and non-designated heritage assets *"The Council will seek to protect other heritage assets including non-designated heritage assets (including those on and off the local list). The effect of a proposal on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, balancing the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset."*

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) identifies the features of age, quality of detail/architectural design as belonging to the category of non-designated heritage assets (NDHAs).

As described above 5 Mornington Place is a unique design within a short terrace of original and early houses. The Committee asserts that the applicant has not demonstrated that the addition of a mansard extension to number 5 enhances the original condition of the house nor the terrace of which it forms an integral part. The property is arranged over three floors and does not require an additional floor to be a viable dwelling - there is therefore no public benefit to this proposal.

The historic character of this part of the Conservation area is fragile owing to nearby modern developments of poor design quality: the unity of this terrace in its original early form is therefore precious, and the addition of a mansard

roof of any description in the centre of an otherwise intact terrace will detract from the terrace's present holistic presentation.

This contravenes the requirement in Camden's Design CPG at 5.14 which states that

"A roof alteration or addition is likely to be unacceptable in the following circumstances where there is likely to be an adverse affect on the skyline, the appearance of the building or the surrounding street scene:

- *Buildings designed as a complete composition where its architectural style would be undermined by any addition at roof level;*
- *The impact on adjoining properties both in terms of bulk and design and amenity of neighbours would be detrimental;*
- *Where the scale and proportions of the building would be overwhelmed by an additional extension/storeys."*

The proposal will have high visibility from the street, clearly presenting tall vertical party wall extensions that will jar with the unusual design of the principal facade below. This is quite clearly seen in the visualisations provided, despite assertions otherwise in the accompanying DAS/Heritage Statement. The proposed paired dormer windows have no relationship to the single windows aligned one above the other between the Tuscan pilasters. The mansard extension will also be overly visible in longer views from Mornington Terrace and Crescent and from the rear at the southern end of Albert Street. It will neither preserve nor enhance the Conservation Area. We note that the presence of mansards on Mornington Terrace and Albert Street cannot be seen as a precedent for these smaller houses none of which currently have mansards.

- **Roof alterations and extensions**

The Conservation Area retains many diverse historic roof lines which it is important to preserve. Fundamental changes to the roofline, insensitive alterations, poor materials, intrusive dormers, or inappropriate windows can harm the historic character of the roofscape and will not be acceptable (p43 of the CTCA Appraisal and Management Strategy)

The Committee thus strongly objects to the current application, and given the importance and age of the terrace would go further and regard any mansard extension here to be highly detrimental to the Conservation Area.

Listing Criteria:

No.s 3-7 Mornington Place are older than the Listed terraced houses of Albert Street, Arlington Road and Mornington Terrace, and they are arguably more sophisticated in their elevational composition than many Listed properties in the Conservation Area. As such the Committee believes that 3-7 should also be Listed to afford these houses greater protection from alterations that would undermine their original scale, features and appearance.

The criteria that are required to be provided when assessing whether a building is worthy of Listing are as set out below:

CRITERIA 1 - ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE this includes assets that; a) demonstrate distinctive artistic, craftsmanship, design or landscaping qualities of merit (e.g. form, layout, proportions, materials, decoration).

The front elevation of number 5 Mornington Place places this house within criteria 1: the integrity of its original features, which form a unique design within the Conservation Area, and the sophistication of articulation within the terrace as the central house, extends this significance.

CRITERIA 2 - HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE this includes assets that a) demonstrate rare evidence of a particular phase or period of the area's history.

The early age of the property within the locality and the terrace's original link to Park Village East is historically significant in the development of the Conservation Area. Houses that pre-date the impact of the Euston railway are of high value within the vicinity, and should be afforded particular respect. This terrace was developed prior to the truncation of Crescent Place, when the railway cutting was widened further for the railway. The subsequent transformation of Camden Town caused by the railway's impact (physically severing it from Regents Park, with the social impact and pollution that the steam trains brought to the area), bears witness to the current setting of the house as well as being historically significant.

CRITERIA 3 - TOWNSCAPE SIGNIFICANCE key part in supporting the distinctive neighbourhood either as a landmark, for their aesthetic qualities, through promoting collective identity or group value.

The loss of the surrounding historic properties mean that the terrace including 3-7 Mornington Place is arguably the most significant element of this street, contributing disproportionately to the inclusion of Mornington Place in the Conservation Area.