

3 Berkley Crescent, Gravesend, DA12 2AD
Heritage Statement

Proposed Listed Building Alterations to create en-suite bathrooms and a kitchen with other minor alterations.



No 3 Berkley Crescent comprises a terraced three storey building with a basement forming part of a crescent on the west side of Harmer Street. The same design and layout was proposed to be built on the south side of Milton Road extending towards Windmill Hill.

Whilst all the buildings along Berkley Crescent have had some modifications, this property retains many original features although it has had a small two storey extension added to the rear on the ground and first floor. No 3 Berkley Crescent appears to be quite original to the front elevation. The original balconies were demolished and in 2000 they were replaced under an initiative proposed by Gravesham Borough Council to restore the appearance of the front of this section of the crescent. The replacement balconies were designed to match the original as far as possible.

The Conservation Appraisal describes the buildings within the Harmer Street Conservation area in more detail. Extracts taken from the Appraisal are shown below:

“Harmer Street and Berkley Crescent together form the initial stage of an ambitious, but uncompleted speculative "new town" plan attributed to the Brighton Architect Amon Henry Wilds (also the designer of Gravesend Town Hall in High Street) and constructed in the late 1830s. It was to have formed a north-south axis running from The Royal Terrace Pier, through The Grove (formerly Upper Harmer Street) towards Windmill Hill”

“The two corner buildings in The Terrace form important "gateway" features to Harmer Street, which widens out at its southern end - a conscious attempt to frame the view of Windmill Hill beyond and capitalised on fifty years later by the construction of the Jubilee Clock Tower, which also adds emphasis to the formal layout of Harmer Street and Berkley Crescent. By the 1990s, all that remained of the elegant colonnades, which framed Berkley Crescent, was a small portion in front of Nos. 4 and 5”

“The entire colonnades, including the balcony railings above, have now been restored to their former grandeur. Trees planted in front of the colonnades help to "soften" the buildings behind them and add character and interest to this attractive area of the town. The streetlamps which marked the four corners of the former square island containing the clock tower have also been reinstated. Some of the original timber-framed buildings such as the Terrace Tavern still survive and "The British Tar" P.H.(built 1805) (now TJ's), also timber-framed, exhibits Gravesend's only surviving example of mathematical tiling. The two buildings at the corner of The Grove and Milton Road are also important features of the Conservation Area, turning the corner and framing the view southwards to Windmill Hill” *Paragraphs taken from Discover Gravesham.*

The balconies along the frontage to 1 to 7 Berkley Crescent were reinstated around 1997 in a major project to restore the exterior appearance of these buildings.

Although the buildings were constructed as impressive houses and were located on the outskirts of the then town centre, later Harmer Street and Berkley Crescent become part of the main roads around the town and so the ground floors, and in some cases, whole buildings, were used for commercial purposes which included shops and office uses. The frontages were altered to create a shop front to many of the buildings in Harmer Street and Berkley Crescent. The area was still quite in demand for office uses until about the 1980's. After then, both office and retail users here declined and the buildings become vacant and run down with many unauthorised changes made including the loss of balconies and external railings. Since the decline in business uses here, many of the buildings have been converted to flats. Within Harmer Street only no 32 remains arranged as it was as a house, although a rear extension was added back in the 1980's and the buildings is use for commercial uses. Within Berkley Crescent, we believe No 2 and 3 are the only properties which retain most of their original dwelling layout. No 3 has been used as a dwelling previously.

No's 2, 3 and 4 and 5 have been vacant for some time. Works to restore No 2 are underway and it is hoped that this application will be approved enabling No 3 to be brought back into use as well as No 2 Berkley Crescent.

The works required are fairly limited as the creation of en-suite rooms within the existing rooms can be easily undertaken without carrying out major works to the building as timber stud walls can be created over the existing floors and fixed to the ceiling joists and walls in a way in which, should these wall be removed in the future, the fixing can be taken out an the walls, floors and ceilings filled and out back into the current condition.

Therefore, these internal changes will have no damaged impact on the building structure and no external alterations are required. Indeed, by being put into an economic use, the dwelling can remain as one house, used as a 6 bedroom HMO, which ensures there isn't the need to subdivide the building into flats.

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