

2 Berkley Crescent, Gravesend, DA12 2AD

Heritage Statement

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

Berkley Crescent comprises three storey buildings and basement arranged in part of a crescent to either side of Harmer Street. Directly in line with Harmer Street, when heading south, is the clock tower. The buildings have been altered over the years. No 2 has flat roofed rear extensions added although we haven't found a planning application for these changes. Neighbouring buildings in the crescent have been more extensively altered with some having had the ground floor frontage altered to create wide modern shop frontages. No 2 Berkley Crescent appears to be quite original to the front, other than the balcony which was replaced, but designed to appear as the original balcony did.

"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 street-lamps 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 balcony along the frontage to 1 to 7 Berkley Crescent was re-built around 1997 in a major project to restore the exterior appearance of these buildings.

Originally constructed as impressive houses and located on the outskirts of the then town centre, the ground floors, and in some cases, whole buildings, were used for

commercial uses including shops and office uses. 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.

The vast majority of the buildings in Hamer Street and Berkley Crescent have been divided with many now arranged as flats. Therefore, this building, being arranged as one dwelling is rare. The proposed alterations will enable the building to remain as a single dwelling, arranged as a 6 bedroom HMO.

The building is Grade 2 Listed. The listing details say:

Entry Name: 1-9, Berkley Crescent

Listing Date: 3 July 1975

Grade: II

Source: Historic England

Source ID: 1341492

English Heritage Legacy ID: 356334

ID on this website: 101341492

The crescent is part of the Milton Park Estate designed by the Brighton Architect, Amon Henry Wilds in 1830-35. There was originally intended to be another crescent facing it on the south side of Milton Road. 2 blocks of 5 houses each separated by Harmer Street. No 10 has been merged in No 9. 3 storeys 10 windows to the curved face of the east block and 11 windows to the curved face of the west block. Nos 5 and 6 have 4 windows each facing Harmer Street, No 1 has 3 windows in its flat front facing Milton Road and No 9 has 2 windows similarly. The houses are faced with brown brick, the ground floor stuccoed. Painted cornice and parapet. Slate roof. Glazing bars intact above the 1st floor. Originally there was a projecting stuccoed colonnade along the ground floor with iron balcony above for the whole length of both blocks, but this only remains at Nos 4 and 5. All except Nos 4, 5 and 8 have had modern shopfronts inserted. When this colonnade was complete the Crescent must have been very similar in character to Decimus Burton's Calverley Park Crescent at Tunbridge Wells.

The works required are limited to internal changes only to create en-suite rooms within the existing bedrooms or other rooms to be used as bedrooms. The works will be in timber to create a new wall or walls in each bedroom which means the studs can be fitted retaining the existing floorboards, ceilings and walls in place and, should these walls be removed in the future, the fixing can be taken out and the walls, floors and ceilings filled and put back into the current condition. The same applies to the new door opening in a stud wall on the second floor. Again, the new door opening is to be within an existing stud wall and so can be readily put back to the current layout as necessary.

Secondary glazing has been installed to the front windows which will be overhauled and retained.

Therefore, these internal changes will have no damaged impact on the building structure and no external alterations are required. The benefit from the building having a use which is viable being that the building can remain as one dwelling and not need to be subdivide in order to be economically viable.

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