

## Heritage Statement

# 147 Kentish Town Road, Camden, NW1 8PB

### Introduction

1. This Heritage Statement has been produced by Heritage Collective on behalf of 147 Kentish Town Road Ltd, owners of 147 Kentish Town Road (the former Castle Public House). The report considers the heritage significance of this vacant, unlisted building and the merits of the proposed development, which consists of demolition behind the facade of the former public house, with a roof extension and development to the rear for residential accommodation.
2. Included on Camden's draft Local List this building is not listed or in a conservation area. Heritage Collective has been instructed to provide advice on the proposed development and the effect of this alteration on the heritage significance of the building and was instructed in June 2014, having had no prior involvement.
3. A site visit and review of background information on the planning history has enabled an understanding of the context and surroundings of the building and its former condition, prior to works to its external envelope. Whilst there is scaffolding up around the building, the hording is such that its appearance and role in the street scene can still be appreciated.
4. Pre-application advice on the proposed development has been sought and received from Camden planning and design officers. The designs have been amended as per their commentary and the scheme has been developed following consultation with the local community.

### Relevant Background

5. The draft Local List provides a description of the building;

*Mid 19th century public house on corner of Kentish Town Road and Castle Road. Rendered facade with fine {sic} strong detailing including rusticated quoins, window architraves with projecting cornices at first floor and*

*bracketed sills at second floor, and a substantial cornice. This building replaces an earlier pub on this site called the Castle Tavern, as recorded in a coloured print of c1855 by John Wykeham Archer, held by the British Museum. An undated quote states 'a splendid gin palace is erected in lieu of the Old Castle Tavern. Sold and all cleared away for improvements in 1849'.*

6. This corner public house has been altered and extended over time. It replaced an earlier building and is typical of public house architecture of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century (from its outward appearance). It addresses both Kentish Town Road and Castle Road and sits within a varied streetscape, close to the junction with St Pancras Way. Historically the public house fronted Kentish Town Road (from 1849) and had four terraced houses fronting Castle Road behind it. Prior to this the Castle Tavern was set back from the road in a slightly different position. Over time the public house was extended, taking up land previously occupied by terraced houses; there are now only two remaining houses behind the application site (No.3 and No.5 Castle Road). These ad hoc extensions are generally in brick and tile and single or one and a half storey.
7. The building is not listed (despite being considered for listing in 2013) and does not lie within a conservation area, although there are conservation areas close by. It is the subject of an Article 4 direction, served by Camden Council on 3rd June 2013 preventing total demolition of the building.
8. In 2013 an application to demolish the building and develop the plot with a new block of flats and offices up to five storeys was never determined by Camden. The non-determination by the Council led the applicant to appeal but an Inspector dismissed the appeal, stating that;

*11. From the information and photographs available to me I can see that, until recently, the building formed an attractive feature within the local townscape. It is a Victorian building in the Italianate style with decorative plaster mouldings and a pleasant composition, and it enhanced this corner location'*

*'14. ...Having taken account of the evidence presented at the Hearing and the attractive design and age of the building, I consider that it has a degree of heritage interest which needs to be taken into account in*

*determining this appeal. In the context of the proposal for a replacement building, which I considered to be unacceptable, there is insufficient merit to outweigh, the albeit modest, heritage interest in the existing building'*

9. Of note is a recent approval at No.3 Castle Road, the town house immediately adjacent to the application site. Application 2014/2831/P was granted approval and allows for the erection of a mansard roof extension to No.3, as well as a second storey roof extension. No.3 would therefore be a three storey building with an additional mansard adjacent to the application site.

## **Heritage Value and Significance**

10. Dating from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century the former Castle Public House has both historical and architectural interest and is a building of local interest.

### *Historic Interest*

11. Historic interest is derived from its function as a public house, reflecting the long standing use of the site as a tavern and place for meeting (although the historic Castle Tavern did not sit on exactly the same footprint of the site, it's name and location are generally concurrent with the application site). Although the building has not operated as a public house for some time, the building remains as a tangible reminder of the public house function through its external appearance and former use.

### *Architectural Interest*

12. The two principal elevations possess architectural interest as a result of the use of rusticated quoins, window heads supported on scrolled brackets, floor bands and a parapet. The ground floor is characterised by large arched windows, typical of the public house architecture of the period, with a first floor lit with tall windows and a subservient second floor. The building is square on plan but sits within an irregular shaped plot that extends back from Kentish Town Road. It has been extended on a number of occasions with single storey brick additions, some of very poor quality and of no heritage interest.
13. The building is of no specific archaeological or artistic interest and the focus of its merit is in the external envelope of the main square on plan building, largely the two Italianate style facades. The rear elevation and extensions are of much

less value and add little to the heritage significance of the building, being utilitarian, later additions with no real architectural intent.

## Setting

14. Adjacent to the south is the former South Kentish Town Road Underground Station entrance, with distinctive red glazed tiles around a sweeping archway, similar in style to both Kentish Town and Camden Town Underground Stations. It operated from 1907 to 1924. This building contributes to the character of the street scene and the setting of the former public house.
15. To the north, opposite on the north side of Castle Road, a terrace of three storey brick built houses forms the main townscape of the west side of Kentish Town Road and to the rear three storey buildings of a more domestic character prevail on Castle Road. Permission was granted for a roof level extension on No.3 Castle Road, indicating that this house can take additional height without damaging its character.
16. Across Kentish Town Road to the east are taller mansion block buildings, reaching five storeys with large floor plates. The applicant currently occupies a three storey building with attic accommodation fronting the rounded corner of Kentish Town Road and St Pancras Way which forms a focal point for views south down Kentish Town Road.
17. Largely 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century in character the surroundings of the application site are formed of two, three and five storey buildings with varied architectural treatments and devices, such as dormer windows in roofs, mansards, large ground floor commercial windows, stucco, render, red brick dressings, window detailing, glazed tiling and use of slate for roofs.

## Proposed Development

18. It is proposed to retain the facade of the former public house and develop the building on the application site to form offices at basement and ground floors and residential above. The proposed design takes into account the contribution of the two primary elevations of the public house to Castle Road and Kentish Town Road and retains and restores them to form the focal point of the development. This includes an appropriate colouring scheme for the public house frontage with a darker ground floor and lighter upper floors with window surrounds picked out in the darker colour. Repair of the existing facades will

enhance the asset and its contribution to the street scene, which forms the primary heritage interest in this case.

19. Two design options were presented at pre-application phase and feedback provided on detailed design elements was provided by Camden Council. Camden expressed a preference for the modern appearance, which is what is being applied for.
20. The proposed works include the addition of a single storey onto the former public house, set back from the parapet line and as low as possible to avoid any effect on the prominence of the existing elevations, which are to be retained. In addition a new three storey building with set back fourth storey is proposed to front Castle Road. This bulk will be in keeping with the bulk of No.3 Castle Road when the consented mansard is built.
21. By using London Stocks the new building fronting Castle Road will be in keeping with the surrounding streetscene which is made up of brick buildings (some painted and rendered). It will appear as a high quality modern interpretation of a pair of townhouses, differentiated by the ground floor fenestration and the central dividing line in the middle of the facade (separating three bays on each side). More importantly the fenestration of the proposed new block respects the hierarchy of floors found on the public house elevations by having larger window openings at first floor, which reduce in size on the upper floors. The top of the new building elevation will line through with the bottom of the parapet of the former public house, as will the cill levels of the first floor windows. This carefully thought out pattern of fenestration will enable the new building to sit comfortably within the existing townscape, filling a gap site and adding to the tight urban grain of the area.
22. The use of a contemporary roof extension on the former public house will tie it in with the new rear building, indicating that the site is in one use and ownership and anchoring the new building to the frontage on Kentish Town Road. The contemporary design proposes a box roof extension with an overhanging canopy. Frameless glazing will be interspaced with grey metal cladding so that the fourth storey recedes from the elevation and provides a high quality interpretation of a mansard roof. The windows will be modern in appearance and will be fewer in number than the rest of the floor levels. This is a device

seen in original historic mansard roofs where there is not the space to comfortably accommodate the same number of windows at roof level than below.

23. This proposed development shows how additional bulk on the site can be treated in a sensitive way to the existing street scenes on Kentish Town Road and Castle Road. This additional bulk would not compromise the contribution of the facades to the townscape and would not unduly impact the surrounding buildings.
24. The infilling of the land to the rear of the main frontage building will be returning to a historic situation when there were two more terraced houses directly behind the public house (that have since been demolished and replaced by extensions to the public house). This is an urban environment with a tight urban grain. By introducing a new building to fill the gap on the application site, the side elevation of No.3 Castle Road will be hidden again. It was never designed to be revealed and is not an attractive feature in the streetscene.
25. This proposal is much more sensitive to the heritage interest of the site than what has been proposed in the past because it retains the elements of importance (the two key elevations). It is also much more appropriate for the wider street scene and setting of the application site, being reduced in height and bulk from the five storey building previously proposed and nestling into the street scene rather than dominating it. The additional roof storey is set in from all sides so that in views from the pavement the buildings will still read as three storey buildings. Longer distance views will include the roof but its low level and set back nature mean it would not be intrusive or dominating, especially in the context of other taller buildings close by.

## Policy Context

26. The NPPF states in paragraph 135 that;

*The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.*

27. This application directly affects a non-designated heritage asset, as it involves substantial demolition, retaining the two facades onto Kentish Town Road and

Castle Road. The effect of this demolition, whilst resulting in some loss of historic fabric, retains the important components of the asset, the areas with the architectural interest and the areas that demonstrate its past function as a public house. The significance of this asset is limited, as identified by a Planning Inspector in the recent appeal and the loss of fabric behind the facade is limited to fabric of no special interest. What interest there is concentrated in the outward envelope of the building, which is being restored and retained. Thus a balanced judgement in this case must take account of bringing the site into a viable use, providing sustainable development in the form of high quality residential and commercial floor space and tidying up an unattractive gap in the townscape on Castle Road.

28. Policy CS14 - Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage and DP24 - Securing high quality design are of key relevance to this application site, as is policy DP25 - Conserving Camden's heritage. The aim of these policies is to recognise the distinctive character of a place and encourage the reuse of buildings that contribute to local character and environment. The council will seek to protect Non-designated heritage assets where appropriate.
29. This proposal complies with local policy by protecting and retaining those parts of the non-designated asset that contribute to the surrounding townscape and indicate the past use of the site as a public house. In essence, what is important will be preserved by this proposal, while allowing the street scape to be improved by the new development.

## Conclusion

30. No.147 Kentish Town Road is a non-designated heritage asset with both historical and architectural interest as a mid 19<sup>th</sup> century public house. It has been closed since 2011. The proposed demolition behind the facades of the building and the addition of development would ensure its long term contribution to the street scene on Kentish Town Road and Castle Road. This proposal preserves the fabric worthy of preservation and restoration and removes only fabric that is of little or no heritage interest to enable a viable scheme to come forward.
31. The proposed building to the rear, fronting Castle Road, along with the roof extension are considered to be appropriate forms of development in the context

of the surroundings of the site and the application site has the ability to accommodate the additional bulk without the street scene being compromised.

32. Overall these proposals are considered appropriate in terms of bulk and height and the detailed design changes undertaken through the pre-application process have enabled a development that will result in a successful integration of new architecture supporting the existing historic facades of the former public house.

**Liz Stephen 12/09/2014**