

# Heritage Statement

## The Albert Public House, 11 Princess Road Primrose Hill (development at rear)



**AHP** Architectural  
History  
Practice

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This Heritage Statement was originally commissioned by Brooks Murray Architects on behalf of TLX Capital Ltd in March 2014 and revised in October 2014. It relates to a proposal to build a new dwelling behind The Albert (formerly The Prince Albert), a public house at 11 Princess Road, Primrose Hill in the London Borough of Camden. The Albert is not included on the statutory list of historic buildings and is not locally listed, but it is situated within the Primrose Hill Conservation Area which was designated in 1971.

The Statement was prepared by Esther Robinson Wild and Neil Burton of The Architectural History Practice Ltd. It should be read in conjunction with other supporting documents accompanying the planning application prepared by the architects.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT HISTORY**

Princess Road lies to the east of Primrose Hill and to the north of Regent's Park. The name Primrose Hill has been in general use from the fifteenth century and the early history of the area is well-documented. Over the centuries various parts were in the gift of the then reigning monarch which resulted in irregular ownership patterns and estate holdings which in turn influenced the later development of the area. Henry VI gave some of the land to endow Eton College in 1449, and Charles II granted the leasehold of another portion of the land to the Earl of Arlington, the father-in-law of Charles's illegitimate son, Henry Fitzroy. Three generations later in 1769 Henry's great grandson, Charles Fitzroy, acquired the freehold of the land on which Princess Road was laid out. He was created Baron Southampton in 1780 and with further land acquisitions in the area he formed the Southampton Estate to the north and east of Primrose hill. The Eton College lands were gradually disposed of with parts either exchanged for land closer to the college or sold to the Crown Estate.

As with many areas of London lying in close proximity to the City, Primrose Hill experienced rapid and widespread development as a result of London's expansion as a trade centre and the coming of the railway in the nineteenth century. Prior to the intensive development of the mid-nineteenth century, it was an area characterised by farmland and open fields. In 1822 London barely reached to Regent's Park in the north and Southwark in the south. Within a period of 40 years, the area around Primrose Hill, which was reserved as a park by an Act of Parliament in 1842 had, like dozens of villages in close proximity to London, joined along the railways to form part of the city that we know today.

The building of the Regent's Canal in 1820 and the establishment of the London-Birmingham railway in 1833 played a central role in the development of Primrose Hill, not only in terms of growth but also the character of the urban landscape. Lord Southampton had originally intended to develop his own estate for residential housing, specifically semi-detached Italianate villas that would attract a higher-end clientele. However, the proximity of the railway to the development land made it an unattractive prospect and Lord Southampton in 1841 started to sell off the freehold of strips of land.

It was often the case that strips of land were sold to builder/developers resulting in the piecemeal development of areas characterised by a variety of architectural styles and quality

of execution. *The Builder* trade journal of 25 February 1854, details the process followed by some speculative builders. In summary, if builders owned a corner site then they generally built a pub on the corner. The reasons for including a pub in the development were manifold; mainly it was for the sale value that these types of buildings could command following the liberalising of licensing laws by the 1830 Beerhouse Act but pubs could also function as both a site office and a canteen while building development was continuing.

*“In some instances, one speculative builder, reserving all the angle plots, runs up half-a-dozen public houses; he obtains licences for all that he can, and lets or sells such at incredible prices or enormous rentals”*

A map of c.1850 suggests that The Albert was one of the first buildings to have been constructed in the immediate area, and it is likely given the prevailing development norms at that time, that it was the first building in the street to be constructed



Fig.1 A detail from James Wyld's map of London and its environs with The Albert and adjoining terrace marked and circled, published c.1850 (Wyld, c.1850)

The Albert is clearly marked on the map and with the adjoining terrace it forms the only group of buildings to have been constructed at this time, although the surrounding roads have been laid out.

The present day streetscape of the pub and the adjoining terrace is not particularly cohesive in terms of architectural detailing, however a 1907 postcard (fig.2) illustrates a more uniform streetscape which suggests that the same builder/developer was responsible for both the pub and the adjoining terrace.



Fig. 2 A Postcard of 1907 showing The Prince Albert (ebay (2014), owner: Picture Postcards Ltd)

There appears to be a commonly held view (Carpenter, 1994; Camden History Society, 1995) that the road was named after one of Queen Victoria's daughters, either Princess Helen (born 1846) or Princess Louise (born 1848) and it is on this basis that the secondary sources place the laying-out of the road in the late 1840s. However, map evidence suggests that the road was originally called Albert Road, presumably after Prince Albert, the Queen's Consort, which was later changed to Princess Terrace (Camden Archives ref. A/01041/3/2). By 1894-95, it had changed to its present day name of Princess Road. The first change may have occurred following the death of Prince Albert in 1861.

The identity of the builder of The Albert is not known. The precise date of construction also remains unknown, but a rough lease for the pub dated 1846 survives in the Camden Archives (ref. A/01041/3/2) and it seems likely that the building was erected between 1840 and 1845.

The Ordnance Survey map of 1870 (fig.3) shows the main envelope of the building as a simple square form with ornamental circular planting in a substantial rear garden and several rectangular structures fronting Princess Mews. These could be the stables and coach house noted in the record of the negotiations for an 80-year lease on the pub between 1889-1891 (Camden Archives, ref. A/01041/3/3).

By the time of the 1894-95 edition of the map (fig.4) these buildings had been replaced by a short terrace of houses which returned into Calvert Street. These were constructed on behalf of the landlady of the pub, Mrs Sarah Spicer, and resulted in the footprint of the square open space in front of the cottages reducing by almost half. In 1891 Mrs Spicer negotiated the sale of some of the land to the rear of Nos. 13 and 15 for £30 (Camden Archives, ref. A/01041/3/19). It appears that this may have been executed in order to allow for improved access to the open space behind the pub following Mrs Spicer's building of the cottages

fronting Calvert and Kingstown Streets. This acquisition explains the present shape and extent of the rear garden of the pub.

During the first half of the twentieth century the area became increasingly impoverished and consisted of dilapidated, unsanitary and overcrowded working-class housing. This was especially the case with the terraces on Calvert and Kingstown Street (Camden Archives, ref. A/01040/6) and in 1964 they were sold by Mrs Spicer's family to Camden Council who cleared them for re-development, probably in the early 1970s.

The Ordnance Survey maps of 1968 and 1976 (figs. 5 & 6) show the effect of the Council's clearance and redevelopment and also show that the footprint of the pub itself had been extended further to the rear of the building. Drainage records show that the small lavatory extension (fig. 7) was added to the east of the rear elevation in 1937 (fig.8) and a garage was added 1973 and documented as proposals in drainage plans of the same year (Camden Archives, ref. 73127/1).



Fig. 3 A detail from the 1870 Ordnance Survey, sheet VII.21



Fig. 4 A detail from the 1894-95 Ordnance Survey, sheet VII.21



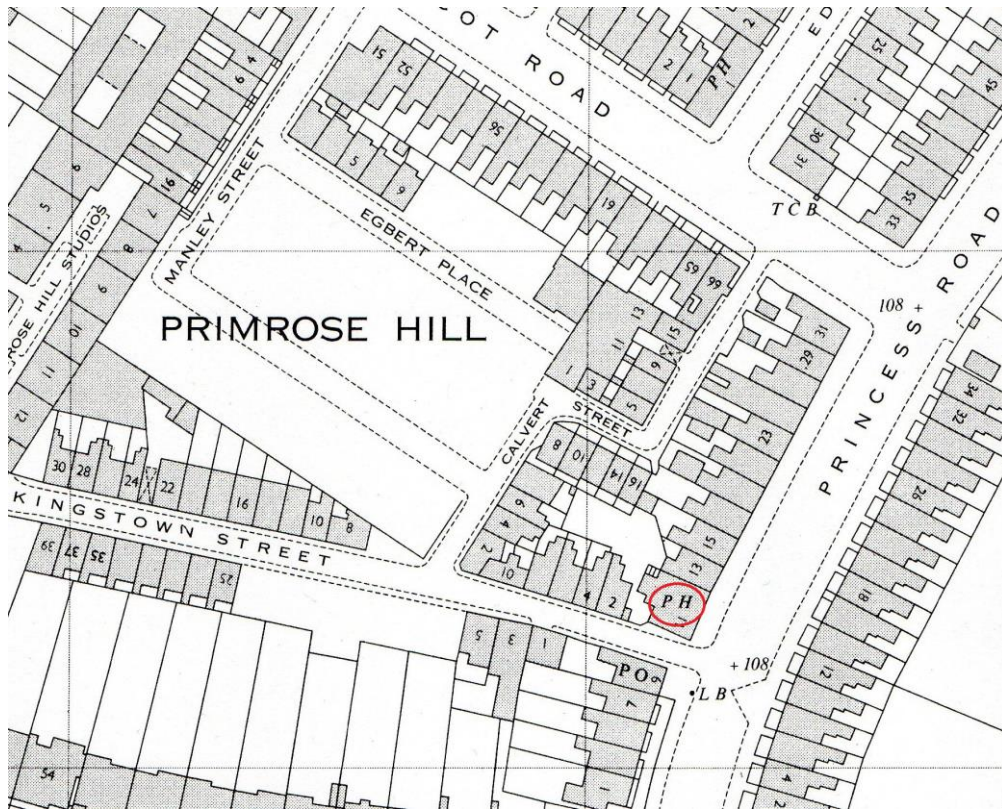


Fig.5 A detail from the 1968 Ordnance Survey, sheet 2883



Fig.6 A detail from the 1976 Ordnance Survey, sheet J10



Fig.7 Rear elevation of the building looking east showing the twentieth century additions of the ladies toilet block (1937) and the conservatory(1973).

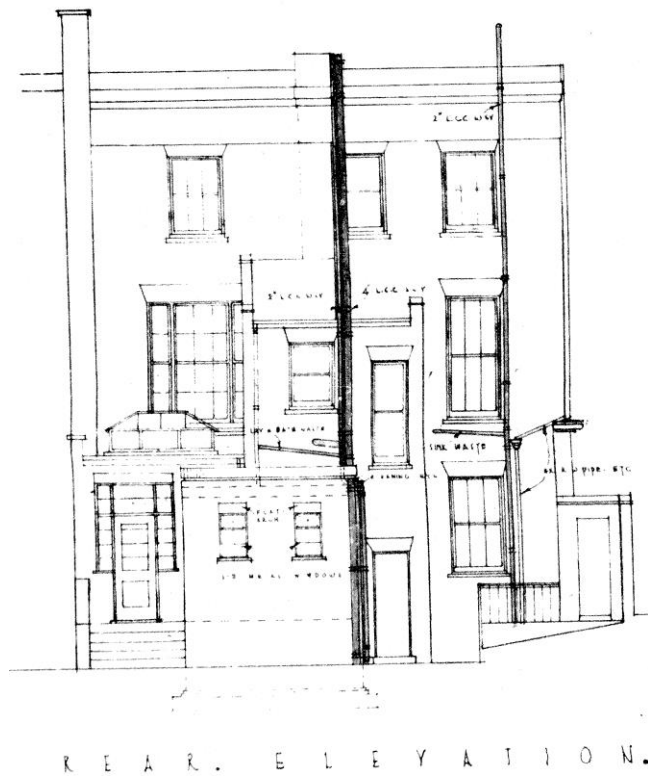


Fig.8 Rear elevation of the building in 1936 from a drainage application (Camden Archives, ref. 578/1080/2)

### 3.0 BUILDING DESCRIPTION

The Albert (formerly The Prince Albert) is an end of terrace property occupying a corner-site and is located on the west side of Princess Road (fig.9). It was built as a public house and probably as part of a speculative development that also encompassed the construction of the adjoining terrace.

#### Exterior

The building is three storeys high, built in London stock brick laid in Flemish bond, and set back from the pavement. The main frontage and principal elevation to Princess Road is three windows wide and has regular and uniform fenestration with vertical sliding small-paned sash windows with stucco window surrounds defining the first and second floors. The height of the windows differ between the floors and they follow the convention of the taller windows being to the first floor principal rooms to allow for more light. Above the second floor windows is a stucco parapet. The secondary elevation to Kingstown Street is blind on the first and second floors, with two slightly projecting chimneys topped by stacks. A comparison with the postcard view of the pub in 1907 (fig.2) shows that all the windows originally had moulded surrounds, with entablatures to the first floor windows, and that the facade was topped by a modillion cornice with a lettered timber fascia above.



Fig.9 The main front and side of the building

Of particular interest is the fenestration on the stuccoed corner (at the upper levels) of the building. It has vertical sliding 3 x 4 sash windows of the same size as those on the principal elevation first and second floors. In most nineteenth century pubs where such curved corners were typical, they were usually blind in order to carry advertising. The roof was originally of a typical butterfly design with a central valley hidden behind the parapet (fig.10). At some time after 1937 the roof was inverted to create a loft space.

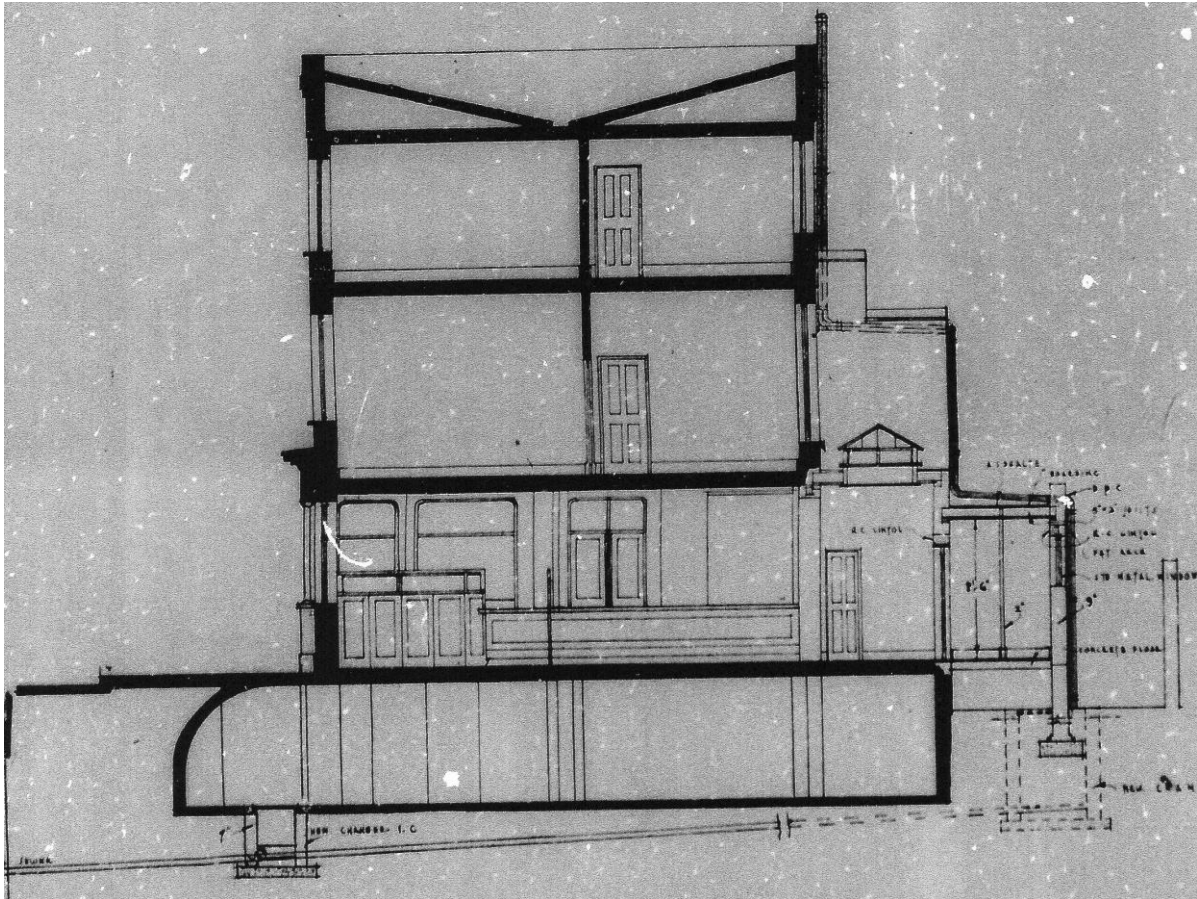


Fig.10 A section through the building in 1936 from a drainage application  
(Camden Archives, ref. 578/1080/2)

The ground floor has a pub frontage that has undergone some alteration since the mid-1840s. Anecdotal evidence (from the current landlord) suggests that the original windows were changed along as part of the extensive alterations to the interior in 1937. The simple lead glazing and frosted glass are certainly characteristic of the 1930s and the absence of decorative glass and brewery advertising further suggest that these are later replacements, in some or whole part. To the main frontage there are two half-glazed doors, one to the corner entrance and another to the east. There is also the remnants of a part-glazed door in the centre which now functions as a window. These three entrances along with the entrance on Kingstown Street are probably original.



Fig.11 Pub frontage

The advertising fascia above the ground floor has been boxed-in and the present day fascia is of a relatively plain and simple design. The 1907 postcard (fig.2) shows that originally the building was covered in a riot of advertising (the parapet most noticeably) typical of the mid-nineteenth century pub with its variety of boards advertising the facilities available and the range of drinks found within. The lower half of the frontage has green fascia tiles and twisted decorative columns between the windows.

The rear elevation (fig.7) which faces onto the large paved back garden of the pub is quite variegated and the lower part is obscured by small accretions at the ground floor level built of brick and timber, which are of no architectural interest. As with the front elevation, it is also three windows wide with a central projection containing the stair landing which is presumably original.

#### 4.0 SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

The assessment of the significance of historic buildings and their settings is not an exact science. The assessment of the significance of buildings is based on detailed knowledge of the building type, a comparison with what exists elsewhere, and the extent to which it may be distinctive or have special meaning for different groups of people.

In 2008 English Heritage published *Conservation Principles*, which identified four principal heritage values which might be taken into account when assessing significance of heritage assets, whether statutorily listed or not. These values are *Evidential*, deriving from the

potential of a place to yield (archaeological) evidence about past human activity; *Historical*, deriving from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present; *Aesthetic*, deriving from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place; *Communal*, deriving from the meaning of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience and memory.

In 2012 the Department of Communities and Local Government issued the National Policy Planning Framework which suggests that for planning purposes, the significance of historic buildings should be assessed under the headings of *archaeological*, *architectural*, *artistic or historic* (which in this case are essentially the same as the English Heritage values) and it points out that significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence but also from its setting.

Significance is essentially a hierarchical concept, using descending levels of value. These follow guidelines established by James Semple Kerr, which have been adopted by the Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage and others. The levels of significance are:

- *Exceptional* - important at national to international levels
- *Considerable* - important at regional level or sometimes higher
- *Some* - usually of local value only but possibly of regional significance for group or other value
- *Little* - of limited heritage or other value
- *Neutral* - features which neither enhance nor detract from the value of the site
- *Negative/intrusive* - features which detract from the value of the site

### **Evidential value**

Evidential value is essentially an archaeological measure and in this case below-ground archaeology is likely to be limited to evidence of the construction of the pub, the layout to the rear, specifically the location of the stables and the coach house and finds related to the occupants, none of which are likely to be unique. It is also very likely that the survival of any archaeological evidence from the mid-late nineteenth century will be limited due to the excavation and construction of Auden Place to the rear in 1970. Very little of the original fabric and the plan form of the 1840s building survive, with some later additions at the rear. Some of the original features survive in the interior. *The building has little evidential value.*

### **Historical value**

The Albert was probably the first building to be constructed on Princess Road (formerly Albert Road) and has been in continuous use as a public house for almost 169 years. The public space on the ground floor has undergone extensive alteration, the most significant and destructive of which took place in 1936-37 when the original Victorian plan form was destroyed. The present day interior dates from the mid to late twentieth century. On the upper floors the plan form survives little altered, apart from the insertion of services and some partition of space, notably between the kitchen and living room on the first floor. The interior retains a limited number of original and historic features, such as the decorative columns on the ground and first floors, a section of cornicing in the first floor living room

and fire surrounds in the front first floor rooms as well as the main stair. *The building certainly has some historical value.*

### **Aesthetic value**

The Albert is a typical mid-Victorian product of the London building world of the 1840s, with a plain and functional street front of stock brick articulated only by the window spacing and the parapet capping. The pub front on the ground floor has undergone alteration, probably in the 1930s but notwithstanding this, it is of some interest. Inside the building, the bar itself has a mid-late twentieth century character and retains a very limited number of period features. The first floor retains the main historic features of interest that still provide an understanding of how the original space was laid out and functioned. For this reason the building is considered to have *some aesthetic value.*

### **Communal value**

Public houses are usually significant buildings in local communities and often have strong associations with popular culture. In this case, The Albert was apparently frequented at one time Mick Jagger of *The Rolling Stones* . The Albert is also an important part of the familiar streetscape because of its conspicuous position at the corner of Princess Road. For these reasons the building has *considerable communal value.*

### **The setting**

The Albert is not formally or locally listed however it is considered in the Conservation Area Statement as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Primrose Hill Conservation Area. The Conservation Area appraisal specifically highlights the frontage of The Albert as being of special interest.

## 5.0 PLANNING POLICY

The applicable planning policies include the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012), the London Plan (2011), and the Local Development Framework incorporating the Core Strategy (2010) and Unitary Development Plan Policies documents of the London Borough of Camden. The relevant heritage policies against which the proposal will be assessed are set out below.

### 5.1 National heritage policy

The relevant part of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) is Section 12: 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment'. The relevant sections of the policy are set out below.

Paragraph 128: In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary

Paragraph 129: Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

### 5.2 Regional heritage policy

The London Plan (2011) is the overall strategic plan setting out an integrated framework for the capital's development over the next 20-25 years. The relevant policy is 7.8 'Heritage Assets and Archaeology' and the relevant sections of the policy are set out below.

A. London's heritage assets and historic environment..... should be identified, so that the desirability of sustaining and enhancing their significance and of utilising their positive role in place shaping can be taken into account.

C. Development should identify, value, conserve, restore, re-use and incorporate heritage assets, where appropriate.

D. Development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.

### 5.3 Local heritage policy

The relevant policy of the London Borough of Camden is the Core Strategy forming part of the Local Development Plan. The relevant policy within this plan is CS14 - *Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage*. In addition, Development Policies 24 – *Securing high quality design* and 25 – *Conserving Camden's heritage*, contribute to



implementing the Core Strategy and specifically policy CS14. The relevant sections are set out below.

#### Core Strategy

(b) preserving and enhancing Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens

#### Development Policy 24

The Council will require all developments, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, to be of the highest standard of design and will expect developments to consider:

b) the character and proportions of the existing building, where alterations and extensions are proposed;

c) the quality of materials to be used;

#### Development Policy 25

##### Conservation areas

In order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the Council will:

a) take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans when assessing applications within conservation areas;

b) only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area;

##### Other heritage assets

The Council will seek to protect other heritage assets.....

The property is located in the Primrose Hill Conservation Area (designated 1971) for which there is a Conservation Area Statement. As a supplementary planning guidance document, the Statement is a material consideration for planning applications which are likely to affect the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. Although The Albert is noted in the Statement as having a shopfront of merit and as being one of a group of buildings on Princess Road that make a positive contribution to the area's character, given the nature of the Application's proposals, there is no requirement for recourse to this guidelines provided in this document.

## **6.0 THE PROPOSED WORKS AND THEIR IMPACT**

The current proposal is detailed in the drawings and statements by Brooks Murray Architects. A previous application was concerned with works to the main pub. building. The present application is concerned solely with the erection of a new dwelling on land behind the pub fronting Kingstown Road, which was formerly occupied by a short terrace of small houses. The design and other details have been revised to take account of the responses from public consultation.

The previous building on the site was No.2 Kingstown Street, the easternmost house of a short terrace of five houses (see figs. 4 & 5). These houses were built in the 1890s and demolished, probably, in the early 1970s as part of the Council's housing improvement programme. There appear to be no views of the terrace, but the houses were probably two storeys high and two windows wide. The houses were two rooms deep and the maps show that nos. 2-8 (even) Kingstown Street also had rear extensions.

The proposed new dwelling will be in a simple modern style. It will have a smaller footprint than the previous house on the site and will comprise a basement and two main storeys with a flat roof. The facing material for the walls will be traditional yellow London stock brick laid in Flemish bond to match the brick rear elevation of the listed building. The window-openings will be rectangular. The new building will be set forward slightly, following the line of the existing garage which it will replace and the front wall will rise directly from the rear of the pavement, as the previous houses did.

The proposed new building will have no direct impact on the adjacent public house but it will restore something of the modest residential character of Princess Mews/Kingstown Street, which was the immediate setting of the pub from the time it was built. The architectural design of the new building is simple, and uses appropriate materials which will fit readily into the area. The proposal will restore something of the earlier character of the immediate area and will enhance the wider Conservation Area

## 7.0 SOURCES

### General

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