

259-263 Kentish Town Road
Objection from South Kentish Town CAAC to proposals:
2015/1289/P Redevelopment

The property is on Camden's **Local List** 2015 (ref 644).



History

While Camden's local list gives a date as 'mid-nineteenth century', the property evidently has a longer history. It stands at the north end of a central Kentish Town row shown in this map of 1810:



"Plan of the hamlet of Kentish Town and its vicinity (1810)"

British Library Online Gallery

<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/crace/p/largeimage88247.html>



The characteristically shaped plots are also shown on Thompson's map of 'around 1800', see page 26 of John Richardson's *Kentish Town Past* (Historical Publications, London 1997).

The plot 259-263 is three strips wide and the frontage is directly to the street (now pavement). Adjacent, Crown Place retains original cobblestones



On the left is no 243, forming the other end of the original row.

This section of Kentish Town Road was called Old Chapel row in the redrawn maps from 1804 in Gillian Tindall's *The Fields Beneath* (1977). (Old Chapel stood to the south until 1784).

The Kentish Town Panorama (1849, reprinted LB Camden 1986) shows the Kings Arms on the corner of Crown Place. Richardson, in *Kentish Town Past*, says 'The Kings Arms began as the Green Dragon in 1751 ... one of the earliest public houses in Kentish Town'. The Panorama annotation says of the Green Dragon: 'In this house, the parish Vestries were holden. It was taken down in 1811...'



The Kings Arms shown in the panorama has a classical exterior – a top pediment and a balustrade on the extended frontage. It is a similar building to the present one, and entirely different from eighteenth and nineteenth century terraces surrounding. [However, the panorama was drawn in 1848-50, so is a reconstruction, perhaps from earlier sketches.] In front of the Kings Arms is a coach stop, also visible on the 1810 map, as might be expected for an inn – and this is still the bus stop today. [However, the 1810 map could read this as a Toll House: while there was no toll gate in Kentish Town in [1791](#), it appears to be in the centre of the street in [1857](#)]

A history of the pub licensees is available given from 1854 to 1944.

<http://londonpublichouse.com/LondonPubs/StPancras/KingsArmsKentish.shtml>

or, by another account, from 1861-1966

<http://www.pubology.co.uk/pubs/7999.html>

Architectural quality

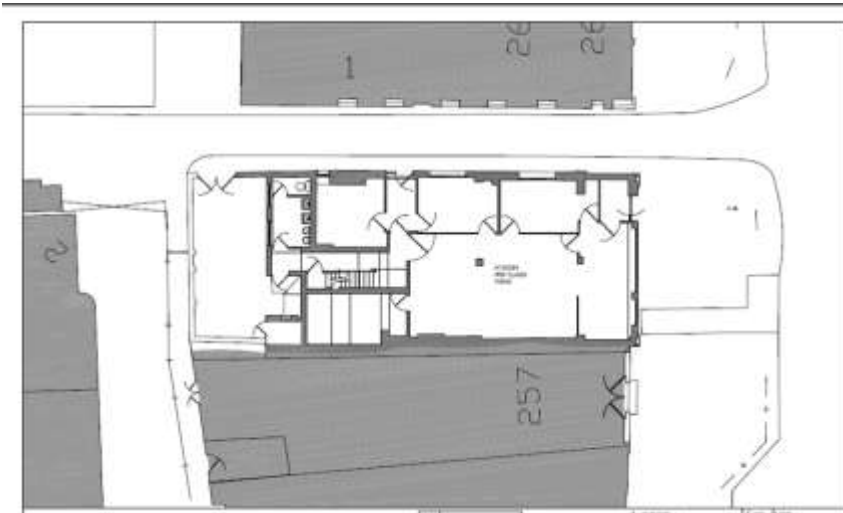
There has been little alteration to this building in contrast with other old buildings along Kentish Town Road. The facade is mainly white stucco with the back in London stock brick and the south facing back wall is white-tiled. The ground floor has Georgian flat side columns with strong top consoles, and a cornice with mouldings in quite good repair. The upper two floors, set back from the balustrade (currently a single railing), each have three windows in classical order. Although of lesser size, these are the style of the contemporary nearby terraces in Regents Park, and probably constructed at the same time.

There is also a cellar without front or side lighting, where beer would have been stored, with good access from the back (and a pathway which extends along the back of the whole row). The rear elevation of the building is one to two-storeys, of London stock brick with the original first floor sash windows forming a pleasing pattern of two room windows and narrower middle staircase window.

Commercial use

Camden Retail Survey 2013 identifies the property as A2 (financial and professional services) <http://gis.camden.gov.uk/geoserver/RetailSurvey.html>

This confirms the 1982 planning decision for the ground and first floor to be used only as solicitors' offices, and the top as caretaker's residence. The ground floor plan demonstrates the public access use, with two back rooms a staircase down to non-habitable cellar.



The property is a Core Frontage within central within Kentish Town Town Centre, designated by LB Camden. CPG5 (with DP 12) says the Council will resist

- proposals that would result in less than 75% of Core Frontages are retail use.
- loss of shopping floorspace
- proposals that harm residential amenity

and will not grant consent for proposals that it considers would do so.

Kentish Town Draft Neighbourhood Plan gives primary emphasis to "Shopping & Working: The Plan will identify environmental improvements to shopping street frontages and restrictions on non-retail facades ... A Town Centre needs a good mix of business and retail."

Proposal

The proposal is to create a single bedroom flat in the back half of the existing premises. Camden's policy is to resist loss of commercial floor space in town centres. This proposal would halve the usable space, a small 'front' shop only, with far less potential for use than the existing full-length shops. (The economic danger of small shops is evident in two recent conversions nearby at Nos 130 and 132 Kentish Town Road.)

On the first floor, the proposal section would extend the existing frontage forwards, and create an extra floor and a half on top. **NB** – the floor plan only one room on top (new, fourth) floor, while the section proposes both front and back. At the back, where there currently are traditional sash windows, the proposal is to raise the height and create modern picture-frame windows with balconies.

The proposed frontage and increased height would destroy the character of this 200-year old building. It is proposed to 'pull back' the frontage in line with other buildings, whereas maps show this has strong historic position as the end-of-line building opposite the former coach / toll stop. Equally, it proposes to push forward the upper floors, rather than maintain the existing balcony. The height would be increased by a fourth storey, greatly increasing massing. At the side and rear, the current building slopes from two to one storey, originally down towards the River Fleet branch which ran along this border (towards 'Anglers Lane').

Objection

All these changes would be of great disservice to this historic and significant building and reduce the capability of maintaining this property as a valuable central commercial site contributing to foot-fall along Kentish Town's central high street. The application should be rejected and the developer recommended to review their task within the strict limits of the existing building envelope, its Listed status and its potential contemporary functions.