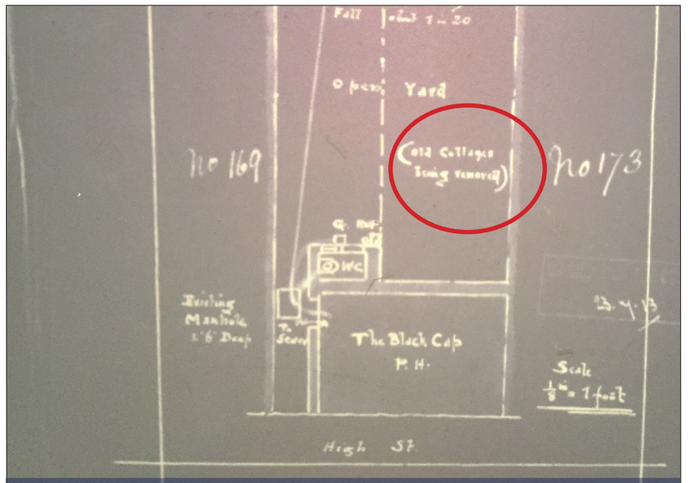
## 4.1 Early History

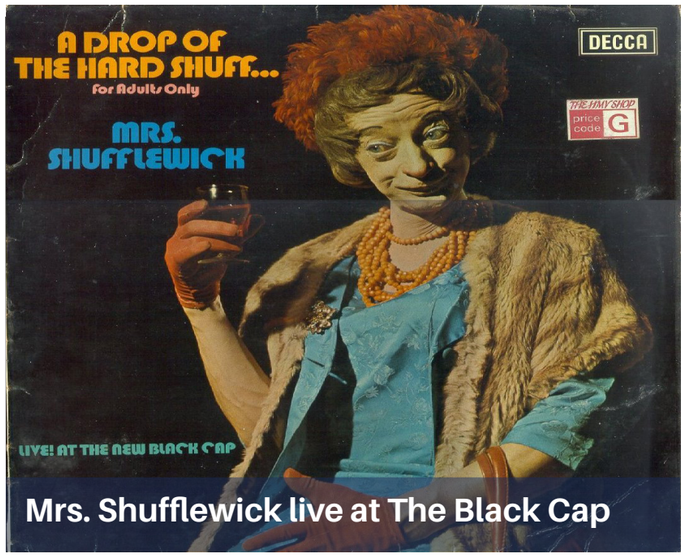
The pub was initially called the Mother Black Cap after a local legend concerning a witch, and had that name, according to licensing records, as early as 1751. Sometimes called the Halfway or New Halfway House, as it was halfway to Hampstead from central London, the original pub stood on the site of the current Camden Town underground station. This pub was used as a workhouse for the parish of St. Pancras from 1778-1809.

The existing pub was built to the south of the original, on the west side of Camden High Street, and licensing records show it in operation from 1781, which lines with the transition of the original location to a workhouse. Evidence of the pubs early development is scare, though in 1841 it is listed as 91 Camden High Street, and in later records as 171 Camden High Street, though the streets were renumbered around 1864. Mapping indicates that 91 and 171 are the same premises between these dates. The 1841 census also includes the occupants for an un-numbered house on the High Street, which is deduced to be the Black Cap, as a barmaid, servants, and a Victualler. Early OS mapping indicates the pub originally occupied a much smaller footprint, with a series of small cottages to the rear. Four cottages are visible until 1879, and in 1896, the footprint of the pub has extended west to occupy the space created from the removal of two of the cottages. Drainage plans dating from 1913 indicate an intention to remove the remaining two cottages, and the OS map from 1916 illustrates that these works were carried through, with the pub further extending toward the back of the property. A smaller ancillary building still stood at the very west of the Site at this time. By 1952, this ancillary building had been removed, and the pub had taken on its current form, with the ground floor occupying the majority of the Site.

The building, developed from an earlier predecessor, appears to retain some fabric from the late eighteenth century, but there is little question that the vast majority of the building dates from 1889; internally and externally, it almost entirely reads as a late nineteenth century public house. These features are at the top storey, and include timber framing visible internally, as well as a rear window. The window, although clearly a late nineteenth century casement, sits within an opening that appears to be flush with the wall, which is characteristic of window hangings from the late 18th century, before the frames were hung behind the wall, or inserted into it. The hung tile finish of the surrounding wall also indicated an early construction date. At ground and first floor, there are no notable elements that are likely original, and the visible expansion of the structure through map regression suggest it underwent a number of significant alterations. At first floor there is, perhaps, an original or early fireplace concealed behind modern panelling, and on the top floor there is a 19th century cast iron fireplace.




**Drainage plans 1913 - removal of cottages**




**Mrs. Shufflewick live at The Black Cap**

The main façade of the building is also clearly later than the original structure, given the style and material of its design. Though the Black Cap existed in some form from the late 18th century, the Queen Anne style Dutch gable and detailing is more characteristic of a mid to late 19th century building. An undated photograph, likely late 19th or early 20th century, shows how the façade would have looked when the Black Cap was in use as a distillery. The general form of the building remains broadly as it appeared in this photograph, but many features that remained into the early twentieth century have now been lost. The columns, pilaster, and some of the framing of the shopfront survive, although the latter was heavily altered by at least the 70s to include unoriginal features such as the stallriser and other detailing. By this time, too, the original detailed windows were replaced with simple glazing. Large features such as signage and ornate lamp have also been lost.

## 4.2 1960s-70s: The Black Cap as a LGBT+ Venue

Though the pub had been in operation since 1781, its ownership had been passed along several times, and attracted a variety of clientele over its lifetime. The Black Cap was originally likely to be an inn, but also served as distillery, pub, and later in its life, as a predominantly Queer space.

In the 1950s, the Black Cap had a significant Irish patronage, and was well known for live performances of Irish music, including the performances by fiddle player Michael Gorman. The Cap was rebranded in the early 60's

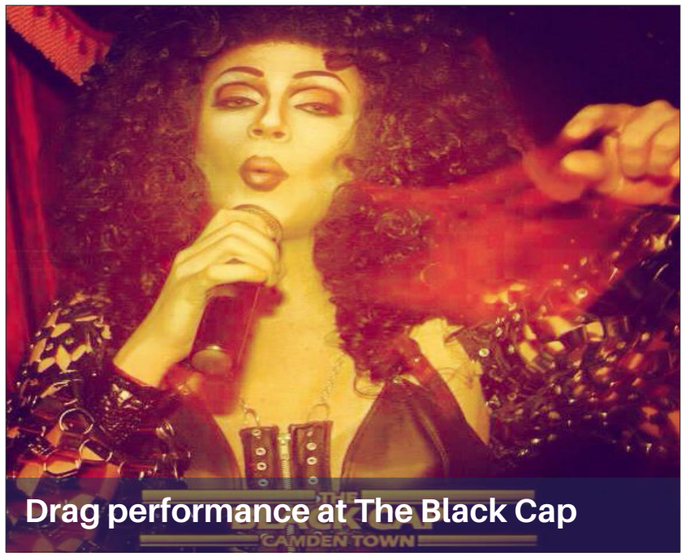
as the 'New' Black Cap, and by the winter of 1965/66 the pub become predominantly known for a homosexual clientele. The 60's was a period where homosexuality was still a criminal offence, and as such, places for meeting and socialising became important and safe spaces for individuals to live and express themselves authentically. For entertainment, the Black Cap organised cabaret performances, which often featured adult elements, or performance aspects deemed more 'strange' or 'fringe' as part of their regular schedule. This type of venue could have included drag performances as part of a wider show, where they would be viewed perhaps less suspiciously than an exclusively drag based show. In time, drag became a prominent aspect of the Cap's appeal and brand.

A notable regular performer at The Black Cap was Rex Jameson's drag persona, Mrs. Shufflewick, with a performance, 'A Drop of the Hard Stuff,' recorded at the Cap in 1972. Rex Jameson was a variety artist who became a prominent performer in the 1950s and 1960s, and had amassed a substantial following by the 1970s, with the character, Mrs Shufflewick, celebrated by her contemporaries. Mrs. Shufflewick became a staple of the Black Cap, and made weekly appearances for Sunday Lunch during the 1970s. Jameson died in 1983 and the upstairs bar was renamed the Shufflewick Bar in memoriam. A book, The Amazing Mrs. Shufflewick, was also authored about the persona.

A number of some of London's most well-known and influential queer cabaret performers were also regulars at The Black Cap, some which went on to help establish other venues and performers in the capital.

Phil Starr (Arthur James Fuller), who had a career that spanned over fifty years, was one of the most recognised names within the cabaret circuit. Starr performed across London and the South East of England, including regular performances at The Black Cap during the early part of his career, as well as The Union Tavern in Camberwell

Later, Starr ran the Two Brewers in Clapham with is partner, which in the 70s was a struggling straight bar, which became a successful gay bar that started the career of Paul O'Grady / Lily Savage. Starr performed until his death in 2005.




Drag performance at The Black Cap


The Meth Lab and Familyyy Fierce

H.I.H Regina Fong (Reg Bundy) became popular after performing with the drag trio 'The Disapointer Sisters' in the early 80s, and later she had a regular spot at both the Black Cap and the Royal Vauxhall Tavern. Regina helped pull drag in London from music hall acts and miming into performance, and helped redefine gay cabaret, while also making it appealing to a broader spectrum of audiences. Regina was the top act at The Black Cap for seventeen years, and a memorial party at the Cap in 2003 was a great affair.

Adrella (Peter Searle) started her career by winning a talent contest at The Black Cap in 1975 and performed as a solo artist or with partners in London, and on brief tours in Europe. From 1977 Adrella hosted six nights a week at The Black Cap, and had a partnered residency at RVT for ten years with David Dale starting in 1982. Adrella's 'Sunday School' shows at RVT were the busiest Sunday gathering at the time, and influence drag even today. During the 80s he was known for his charitable work and outspokenness during the AIDS crisis, speaking about his own positive diagnosis, and received an award from the Terrance Higgins Trust in 1987.

Though the Black Cap is associated with some well-known acts, it was rare for these types of performers to find a break or establish themselves at a particular venue. Rather, exposure was key, and artists performed across multiple venues within the London drag/cabaret circuit, and beyond, to find popularity. In time, venues would hire popular acts for residencies, but these were not exclusive contracts, and often performers balanced multiple while rotating between venues. The Black Cap, as one such venue, supported the wider scene, but itself was not integral to establishing acts, nor advancing the art of the performance.

By the later 20th century, the Cap became known for its drag queen cabaret, and promoted itself as the "Palladium of drag". It formed part of a wider circuit of drag venues, which as a whole helped to develop the careers of acts like Danny La Rue and Hinge and Bracket.

## 4.3 To Present

In more recent times the Black Cap had become home to The Meth Lab, a night of queer cabaret featuring Meth and the Familyyy Fierce. The Meth Lab hosted a number of stars from RuPaul's Drag Race including Season 6's Bianca del Rio, Adore Delano, and BenDeLaCreme, Season 3 winner Raja Gemini, and Season 7's Trixie Mattel.

## 4.4 Historic Fabric

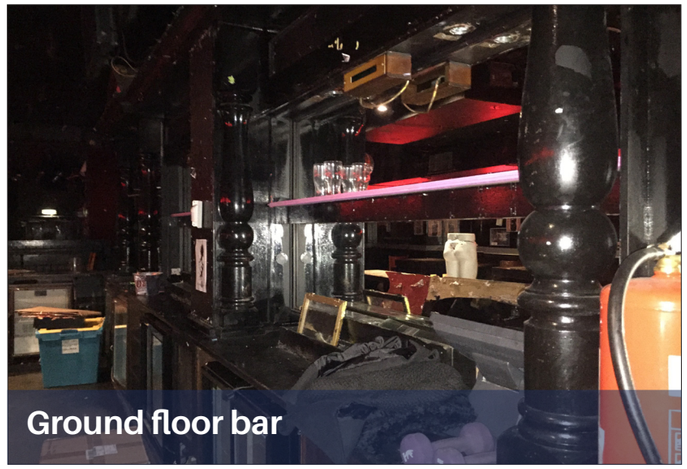
Internally, the condition of building is very poor, particularly to the upper storeys where these is extensive water damage and deterioration of the walls and ceilings. Though there are some historic timbers at the top storey, their presence is limited and the remainder of the space suggests extensive alteration. Though no additional timber framing was observed during a Site visit, the status of internal historic fabric is unknown. At roof level, the rear of the attic storey suggests it may be part of an earlier built form, as do the pitched roof and dormer windows.

The ground and first floors both house wooden bars, but these are likely later additions, possibly even mid-20th century, and both show evidence of alteration. At first floor, wooden ceiling details and a concealed fireplace are likely later 19th century additions when the façade was constructed. At ground floor, the majority of the pub was expanded up to the mid-20th century, so it is unlikely any historic fabric remains save for the shopfront

The shopfront and façade are late 19th century constructions, though they too show evidence of alteration, notable the alteration and replacement of fenestration at all levels, and the addition of a stallriser feature to the shopfront. The rest of the façade remains in good condition.

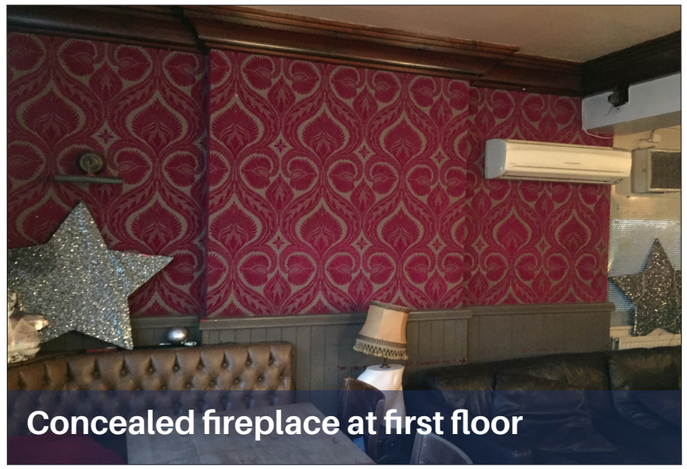
Overall there is limited historic fabric, with some dating from the pubs reconstruction in 1889, and even less from an earlier structure which occupied the site by the end of the 19th century. The fabric that remains has typically been altered in some way, and as the pub did not reach its current form until the mid-20th century, much of the fabric is not historic at all.

Water damage to interiors



Ground floor bar


First floor (Shufflewick) bar



Concealed fireplace at first floor

## 4.5 History and Overview of LGBT+ Meeting and Socialising Sapces

**The Importance of Queer Spaces: A Summary of the Sociological Environment From 1880's To Present**

Often, public places were often the most private opportunity for individuals to express their sexuality, given that they had to live heteronormative lives at home, school, or work. Queer spaces, therefore, including pubs, bars, and other venues, as well as more obviously public places such as toilets and parks, became popular safe havens for people to meet others in their community. An alternative to more public places were private parties, which emerged in the 20's and 30's. These were grand drag parties that were popular events amongst gay men, typically held in enormous flats where hosts and guests had lots of money. Notable examples include Lady Malcolm's Servants ball at Albert Hall a mecca for homosexuals, with contemporary organisers warning against 'sex perverts and degenerates,' and working class queans and dykes flocked to the event, held annually at the Royal Albert Hall. Though much smaller in scale, the Chelsea Arts Ball was another such party, with a more mixed crowd.

The Black Cap became an important gathering place by 1965 – two years before the partial decriminalisation of homosexual acts under the Sexual Offences Act 1967, which decriminalised homosexual acts in private between two men, both of whom had to have attained the age of 21.

The change in legislation reflected a broader, though slight, shift in attitude that developed in the '60s, with organisations such as the Homosexual Law Reform Society coming forward to protect the rights and interests of the LGBT community. Groups such as this were created as a response to a new approach of sympathetic discussion on the topic of homosexuality, rather than a hostile one. More generally, and outside of politics, professionals were able to carry out analysis and study homosexuality, for the first time, and the topic was not approached as an illness.

The earliest of this work was completed by sociologists, and though they were now able to undertake and publish research, many were hesitant to do so, and those that did published their research under pseudonyms so as to protect their professional image or to avoid negative backlash. Michael Schofield, a pioneer of social research into homosexuality in the 1950s and 1960s, and a campaigner for the Homosexual Law Reform Society at a time before the Sexual Offences Act 1967, performed initial studies under the pseudonym Gordon Westwood. It was not until 1965 that he authored his third study using his own name.

Though there was a definite shift in attitudes in general, LGBT+ persons were still viewed with suspicion and scrutiny, particularly by law enforcement, who frequently intervened into safe spaces, and arrests were not infrequent. In fact, the prosecution of gay men actually increased after decriminalisation, where individuals were particularly targeted for behaviour which was contravening the narrow parameters of legality. Police targeted gay places and spaces, where they would often send an officer undercover to observe 'lewd' behaviour, and then return the next day for raids and arrests.

The difference between gay men and women was also significant, though both faced the same challenges in regard to unwanted attention. In 1963, the first explicitly Lesbian social and political organisation was established, and was called 'Minorities Research Group' so as to avoid police attention – their publication 'Arena Three' also avoided direct reference to homosexuality to evade close scrutiny. In general, many gay women felt they were left behind in the little progress that was being made, as change was still occurring in a male-dominated society and from a male point of view.

It is difficult to imagine the political and social environment and context of the time, particularly given that, largely, homosexuality and other aspects of the LGBT+ community are much less of an issue for the general public today. In context, however, at the time when the rights of LGBT+ people were only beginning to be discussed, parliament was still debating the very heterosexual topic of divorce. The Divorce Law Reform Act was not passed until 1969 – arguably, if the boundaries and expectations of heterosexual relationships were still being established, it is unlikely that a homosexual relationship was even to be considered as authentic.

That is not to say, however, that progress was not made, and visible. Though support was sometimes superficial, and evaporated when serious matters were in discussion. Socially, homosexuality was more prevalent with the development of a consumerist culture. 'Gay' became something that influenced clubs, clothes, and lifestyle magazines, but these are examples of superficial acceptance. The other side of decriminalisation was the expectation that this was enough, and that the homosexual community should be grateful, silent, and invisible. Even the Act itself was discriminatory, with the age of consent for consenting homosexual acts set at 21, while heterosexual acts were from the age of 16.

In response to this, a new sense of Gay Liberation developed, and a 'Gay' identity that lead to a new group of politics. This movement largely fed off the Stonewall Riots in July of 1969. The British Gay Liberation Front (GLF) was founded in 1970, and though they were fundamentally a leftist party, they had the approach of politics in a light hearted way, and were more about visibility, coming out, and pride.

Though homosexuality has become, broadly speaking, accepted in modern society, progress is still behind heteronormative social constructs and institutions. For example, the legalisation of gay marriage only becoming law in the UK in 2013, and 1-year ban in place for MSM who are sexually active.

Given that the LGBT+ community was quite secretive, for safety and to avoid scrutiny, there are limited records that exist to research the history of the social group in comparison to other minorities. Even today, there are enormous gaps in research and knowledge, some of which is, and will be, extremely difficult to uncover, given a lack of tangible evidence.

**Pubs and Clubs**

Clubs and pubs have long played a key role in the emergence of modern LGBTQ communities and identities. They offer spaces where queer

people can meet and socialise with relative freedom. Those that remain are often important community spaces imbued with shared memories.

**Private members clubs**

From the 1930s, a number of queer-run private members clubs appeared, mainly in London. These clubs allowed middle-class men the opportunity to meet others in a relatively safe environment. Clubs in London included the Arts and Battledress Club in Orange Street (later renamed the A&B Club in Rupert Street), the Rockingham in Archer Street, the Spartan in Tachbrook Street, and the Festival in Brydges Place. By the late 1960s and 70s, as politics and fashions changed, these more exclusive venues fell out of favour, dismissed by liberationists who described them as 'piss-elegant' and pretentious.

**Back bars across England**

It sometimes happened that Landlords would offer separate rooms, also known as 'back bars', to be used by LGBTQ clientele on occasion, or on set nights of the week, such as the Lockyer Tavern in Plymouth, now demolished, which offered queer men a place to socialise from the 1950s until the 1970s. The Old Dog and Partridge in Nottingham similarly had a 'back bar' that catered to queer patrons in an otherwise mainstream or 'straight' venue. The backroom of the Kings Head, on King Street in Leicester, was hired out for Women's Night, on Fridays. Beginning in 1980, it was run by Linda Grant, a lesbian activist from Leicester. It also provided backdoor access so that women would not have to come through the main entrance.

**Gay Earl's Court**

Though Soho is often thought of as the centre of LGBTQ London, it was actually Earl's Court, starting in the 1970s Earl's Court that had been the focus of many gay men's urban socializing. The Coleherne pub at 261 Earls Court Road was popular with gay men throughout the post-war period, and is best known from the 1970s, when the pub was run as a leather bar with blacked out windows and patronised by Freddie Mercury.


Admiral Duncan Bombing 1999


Royal Vauxhall Tavern

**Supper clubs**

During the 1970s and 1980s, gay pubs and venues found ways of operating around licensing laws that required they were to serve food. At the Moulin Rouge in Bristol, a plate of wilted salad was passed around with strict orders that it was not to be eaten. At the Burleigh Arms in Cambridge chips were served at midnight.

**Super Clubs**

In 1979, the first American-style nightly disco, Heaven, opened under the arches behind Charing Cross Station, and the trend-setting spot was precursor to London's super clubs, transforming the LGBTQ clubbing scene in the capital. With increasing interest in the 'pink pound', gay pubs and clubs proliferated in London and other cities and towns across the country.

**Visibility**

By the 90s, gay venues across the country started to transform and become more visible as part of local nightlife. Gay venues no longer hid behind blacked out windows, but rather confidently faced the street without shame. The Village, first located at Hanway Place and later on Wardour Street, and Manto on Canal Street in Manchester, were among the first to have large transparent windows open to the street. The Yard, on Rupert Street was one of the first bars to have an outdoor space visible from the street.

**The Admiral Duncan**

Though LGBT+ places no longer hid behind closed doors, danger associated with visiting gay bars had not disappeared by the end of the 20th century. The Admiral Duncan at 54 Old Compton Street, trading since the 19th century, is a well-known gay venue, and had been for decades. In 1999, it was the location of a nail bomb attack that left three dead and dozens injured.

**Club Kali**

Club Kali, a large and successful mixed club for lesbians and gay men in operation since the 1990s, primarily at The Dome in Tufnell Park, though the event also tours to other venues. Playing Bollywood, bhangra and world music, it is women-friendly and represents the diversity of queer London.

## 4.6 The Royal Vauxhall Tavern

The Royal Vauxhall Tavern (RVT) is one of the oldest ongoing LGBTQ venues in England. It has been recognised for alternative entertainment and drag performance since the 1940s and has been an LGBTQ venue since at least the 1950s. It was built on the site of the Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens, meaning its LGBTQ heritage may go back even further.

Police raids on LGBTQ venues did not end with those seen at Billie's Club and the Shim Sham Club in the 1930s, however. During the HIV/AIDS crisis of the 1980s, in an infamous episode, police raided the RVT wearing rubber gloves. This was supposedly due to their fear of catching HIV from RVT patrons. Among the 11 people arrested was drag artist Lily Savage (Paul O'Grady), who regularly performed at the RVT.

In 2015, the RVT became the first building in England to be listed for its significance to LGBTQ history as well as for its architectural interest. The listing description explains that it 'has become an enduring symbol of the confidence of the gay community in London'.

Specifically, Historic England lists the following reasons for its designation:

Historic interest: the building has historic and cultural significance as one of the best known and longstanding LGBT venues in the capital, a role it has played particularly in the second half of the C20. It has become an enduring symbol of the confidence of the gay community in London for which it possesses strong historic interest above many other similar venues nationally

Architectural interest: it also possesses architectural interest in the handsome and well-designed mid Victorian curved facade, with a parade of arcades terminating in pedimented bays, which has a strong architectural presence despite alterations at ground floor level

Historic associations: built on the site of the England's best known place of pleasure for more than two centuries, Vauxhall Gardens; and this building's specifically acknowledged association, since the late C19/early C20, with alternative culture and performance

Interior interest: the structural decorative cast iron columns survive, although the later 1980s fittings are excluded from the listing; there are original fixtures at the upper floors .

It is important to note that the reasons for designation outlined in Historic England's Listed Building Description focus not only on the cultural significance of the Tavern with alternative culture and as a performance space, but equally includes its wider architectural and historic associations. Given the high standard for listing public houses, particularly buildings dating from decades on either side at the turn of the 19th century, it is entirely reasonable for candidates for listing to strongly and robustly demonstrate significance across all of these considerations in tandem. Given that this period was, according to Historic England's Designation Listing Selection Guide, when pub building was at its highest, those put forward for listing should demonstrate their significance broadly. The RVT is an excellent, and exceptional case, which holds merit in each of these categories, and exhibits justifiable cultural, architectural, and historic associations independently of each other.

### Pride of Place

Pride of Place, a vast new research project commissioned by Historic England that seeks to shine a light on the country's untold LGBTQ heritage.

In addition to publishing new research, the multi-platform initiative has led to Historic England relisting five places on account of their significance in the narrative of LGBTQ history.

These include:

1. The Burdett-Coutts memorial at St. Pancras Gardens, which commemorates Chevalier d'Eon – an 18th century transgender spy who lived as a woman inside the Empress of Russia's court, upgraded to II*

2. 34 Tite Street in Chelsea, where Oscar Wilde lived until his trial (and subsequent prison term) for 'gross indecency' in 1895,

3. Red House in Aldeburgh, Suffolk, where the composer Benjamin Britten and his partner, Peter Pears, lived.

4. St Ann's Court, Surrey. Grade II* listed is also recognised as an example of "queer architecture". Owned by architect Christopher Tunnard and broker GL Schlesinger while homosexuality was still illegal, the master bedroom of the house could be separated by movable partitions to give the illusion of separate bedrooms.

5. The Halifax home of lesbian pioneer Anne Lister has also been listed

# 5. Assessment in the Context of Statutory Listing

## 5.1 Summary Assessment

From a detailed assessment of the Black Cap in both national and building type-specific contexts, it is concluded that the site does not meet the requisite standards to be considered for listing. This is especially so in the light of the requirement set out in the DCMS Principles of Selection for Listed Buildings.

Overall, the site has only very modest architectural and wider historic interest. Despite the building's positive contribution to the Conservation Area, neither its architectural design and execution, nor its construction methods or layout, are innovatory in any way that has been identified through comparison with other contemporary sites . As mentioned previously, the decades surrounding 1900 were the high point of construction for public houses in the UK, and with so many buildings dating from this time, there can only be a small selection of examples that are likely to be suitably significant to warrant listing. Comparative to contemporary structures, The Black Cap is a relatively standard pub, and although an earlier structure was redeveloped into the building that stands today, much of the 1889 redevelopment introduced a typical pub style from this period.

There is also plentiful evidence of this extensive expansion and alteration to the historic core of the building, and thus, though the Pub has been in operation since the late 18th century, the vast majority of the building dates from 1889 and later. It must therefore be concluded that the building does not merit listing on the basis of its architecture or wider historic associations.

Its historic interest too, is somewhat limited to local interest, as opposed to more prominently recognised LGBT+ areas, such as Earl's Court, the multiple venues of Soho, and the Royal Vauxhall Tavern, which has association with the community before the construction of the building itself.

## 5.2 National Listing Criteria

**Architectural Interest**

Overall, it is concluded that the architectural interest of the Black Cap is limited. Examination of the site's history and subsequent development has revealed a high degree of alteration to its initial design, form, and decoration; nor has it revealed that the Black Cap has held any wider influence in architectural terms.

Although the Site's core is relatively early, much historic fabric has been altered or lost, and the design of the Public House is an unexceptional example. There is no evidence that the internal layout was innovatory or special in any way, but rather a natural evolution as the Pub expanded to the rear and absorbed smaller buildings behind it .

This ad hoc progression is reflected in the existing building, which has a long ground floor extending the length of the lot, and smaller upper stories, possibly more closely aligning with earlier floorplates, which contain a number of low quality box room spaces. As a result of this expansion, much of the building, and particularly the rear and ground floor, have been heavily rebuilt. The attic floor has some historic timber visible, though the amount is limited and its internal extent is unknown. There are also some early 20th century features, including skirting and a cast-iron fireplace. On the second floor, a modern kitchen fit out has altered what may have remained of historic fabric, as has a modern toilet, with the remainder of this level subdivided into smaller rooms, currently occupied by guardians. These existing living quarters are small spaces, divided by modern partitioning, which demonstrate no architectural features of interest.

The first floor houses a wooden bar that is likely 20th century, with modern amenities added, with other standard pub detailing, including wood ceiling details. There is also likely a fireplace behind a visible mantle at first floor, concealed by modern materials. The ground floor also appears to possess some historic features, including large wood beams and brick arches, though these have been altered heavily to accommodate AV equipment such as lights and speakers, for the use as a club space. These features, as well as the bar itself, are more readily visible towards the front of the ground floor, while the rear appears to be constructed of modern materials, and lacks any features of note. This is likely due to the gradual expansion of the ground floor, which was extended from the same floorplate as the upper storeys, to the length of the entire plot. This progression occurred, according to historic mapping, beginning at the end of the 19th century, possibly to align with the construction of the current façade, and concluding in the mid-20th century, visible on the OS Map of 1952.

Though the main bar also demonstrates some 20th century features and woodwork, it too has been heavily altered. Though there are glimpses to some features of architectural and historic interest, those that do exist have been limited or altered in some way, and the features that are not authentic overwhelm these details.

As mentioned previously, the principal façade is likely a reconstruction dating from 1889 and is of a good quality and condition. There is evidence that the original windows have been replaced, and much of the original pub ephemera and signage has been removed. In addition to this, the pub shopfront has been somewhat altered, though there are also features, such as the pilasters and some of the ground floor window framing, that appear to be original. These details, along with the stone and brickwork, which are in relatively good condition as well, combined with the relative age of the reconstruction, justify the Sites inclusion as a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This is particularly true when compared to some of the surrounding buildings, which in some cases are entirely modern and of a low quality, with no architectural or historic interest. Though a positive contribution to the local character, the features of the existing building fail to meet the higher standards necessary for listing when considered in a wider context.

The building's commonplaceness is reflected in the lack of sources that refer to the Site that have been identified during comprehensive research, except for small, passing mentions when authors speak of the Mother Red Cap, the nearby associated pub, or when mentioned in local street guides. In these instances, it is the presence of the Public House that is

noted, rather than its architectural features or merit. There is no mention of the Pub in Pevsner's London 4: North volume.

The Camden Town Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy sates that 'The High Street contains several good examples of public house architecture including... the Black Cap at No 171, dating from 1889, [which] boasts elaborate stone decoration including a bust of a capped figure.' This, along with the building inclusion as a positive contributor to the Conservation Area, are the only referenced to the Black Cap specifically within the document. While it has been acknowledged that the stone decoration certainly is an appealing feature of good condition, the contribution of this element is limited to the Conservation, not outside of a local context. The date refereed to, 1889, is likely the date the façade was reconstructed, and not to the establishment of the pub itself in the late 18th century.

**Historic Interest**

As with architectural interest, again it is concluded that the historic interest of the Black Cap is limited. Detailed primary and secondary research has shown that, although the Site possess a relationship with the LGBT+ community, the venue was more important to the local community as part of the wider London drag and cabaret scene, and is clearly less historically significant than comparable sites when considered on a national scale. The venue started becoming popular as a drag and cabaret venue in the 1960s, and although this lines up with a time of social change in the UK, there were other, more prominent establishments that are considered to be of greater importance, particularly in Earl's Court and at the Royal Vauxhall Tavern. These other venues have longer established historic ties with the LGBT+ community.

In terms of the Cap as a public house more generally, the historic interest is again somewhat limited when scrutinised against other public houses dating from this period. Though The Black Cap pub as an entity dates from the late 18th century, and is of some historic significance, the extensive rebuilding of the pub in the late 19th century means that it, in reality, is largely a 19th century structure with a small number of historic features, and that the extant structure should be considered as such. When viewed in this context, there is no discernible evidence that The Black Cap was a significant establishment within London as a whole. As pubs were rapidly constructed at the approach to the 19th century, and shortly after, there are numerous contemporary examples, and as such, those eligible for listing should be exemplary examples. In order to achieve this, the pubs must demonstrate an interest cultural, historically, and architecturally. Given the extensive evolution of structure of the Black Cap, and the resultant works required for its expansion, the majority of the existing historic fabric is much later, likely later 19th century, than the venue itself. This limits the historic interest in the building fabric. As a venue, the Cap has little historic interest until it became part of the drag circuit in the 1960's, and its association with the LGBT+ community is where its main historic interest lies.

**Age and Rarity**

Small sections of the building appear to be of an eighteenth-century date, though extensive repair and alterations date from much later, from around 1889 and thereafter to the mid-20th century, and the use as a Public House is not particularly rare. The historic use as an LGBT+ offers some interest in terms of rarity, as these types of spaces have become less prominent with the social acceptance of the LGBT+ community .

In terms of use and architecture, there is no historic fabric that communicates to the use as a drag and cabaret venue, such as performance space or specific staging areas, but rather, the pub is of a standard design, a use which is still legible today. At present, there is a stage and DJ booth to the rear of the ground floor, but these are clearly later insertions to the traditionally laid out pub, which is particularly evident given that this section of the building was not constructed until the mid-20th century. It is possible that a stage could have been inserted at this time, but it would be of no historic interest, nor is there any indication its inclusion was intended for drag and cabaret instead of more general performance, such as live music.

It is not considered that the Site meets the rigorous standards that are set by Historic England for the listing.

**Aesthetic Merits**

Although most points regarding aesthetic merits have been addressed within the discussion of architectural merits, it is useful here to clarify aesthetic merits of the building, particularly as it is identified as making a positive contribution to the Camden Town Conservation Area. The pub certainly has some interest in its decorative stonework, and in its relative age when compared to surrounding modern development, and as such, makes a positive contribution to the local streetscape. The façade is a Dutch inspired gable of the Queen Anne style, and there are interesting features, notably the capped bust which tops the building. Also of interest is the fact that the façade fronts an earlier, probably vernacular pub.

It is clearly evident that the later façade was designed as a response to the existing storeys of the structure, and is visible as a compromise between the intended design and the limitations of constructing a new façade for an existing buildings. This is particularly evident in the form of the upper storey, where the pattern of fenestration is clearly infilled with terracotta detailing at attic level, with proper paned windows below as top lights above narrow windows along the second storey. A small balcony detail separates the first and second storey, with the first having a similarly designed window form that protrudes as a slight bay, and of course, a shopfront was maintained at the ground floor. The façade is an unusual design that was clearly forced to respond to an extant structure, where as an entirely new structure would perhaps have more balanced proportions and more clearly separated storeys.

Although there is certainly some visual interest offered from the Black Cap, the interest offers little to the significance of the building. There is no verifiable recording of the architects who inserted the façade, nor is its design or style unique. There are numerous examples amongst High Streets in London of similarly styled blocks which exhibit grander series of well-designed blocks in comparable condition. As such, although the

Black Cap is a relatively visually pleasing building, with some positive aesthetic merit, this interest does not extended to the architectural quality of the structure, nor any of the other criteria which would merit the buildings listing .

**Selectivity**

Aside from its limited architectural and historical merits, it is not considered that the Site is worthy of listing on the basis of selectivity alone, as the late 20th century public house is not of sufficient interest or rarity as an example of this building type to warrant this treatment. This assertion is considered to hold further weight in the light of the lack of any reference to the Site in the recent thematic study by Historic England on Pride of Place, which has, through a national survey, sought to uncover and celebrates places of LGBT+ heritage across England, including gay pubs and clubs. To date, five locations have had their listings updated to include their association with the LGBT+ community, including the listing of the Royal Vauxhall Tavern.

**National Interest**

In view of broader outcomes that the Site possesses only low historic and architectural value, it is therefore considered that the Black Cap cannot be considered significant enough to contribute to a wider group of 'significant or distinctive regional buildings' in London that together make a group contribution to the national historic building stock.

While it is acknowledged that there is some significance in the building, in terms of cultural and historic value, and to a lesser extent, historic value, it is not considered that this significance is sufficient to meet the high standard of significance that needs to be apparent in order to consider a structure for listing. The Public House is a relatively standard example of a pub design, with evidence of heavy rebuilding, with the majority of existing fabric dating from the high point of pub construction. The pubs style, both internally and externally, are of a standard pub form, and there is no evidence of the pubs later use as a drag and cabaret venue, having any influence over its form. As pubs from this period are so common, those to be considered as a point of national interest should be exemplary examples of their building type, and The Black Cap fails to meet this requirement.

**State of Repair**

Although the state of repair of a building cannot be taken into account in deciding on a building's suitability for listing, it is nonetheless of note here that the building, which, in any case, is not judged to meet the wider set of national listing criteria, is in very poor repair, particularly the interior. As a result, many original internal elements are damaged or missing, while the later shopfront has been altered, and overall windows replaced in different styles.

## 5.3 Commercial Buildings Additional Criteria

In the light of the assessment findings at national listing criteria level and in the light of the cross-over between the two sets of criteria, further consideration of additional criteria here will not address areas already dealt with, specifically issues of selectivity, date, and rarity. Group value, alterations, interiors, signage, authenticity, and community interest will be addressed briefly below in turn.

As a summary note, further to the national listing criteria, it is not considered that the site meets the additional listing criteria.

**Group Value**

The Black Cap was an isolated construction along Camden High Street, and there is no evidence that it shared an architectural relationship with its neighbouring buildings. Historic images illustrate that, though it was once framed by other historic buildings of some architectural interest, there was no clear relationship between these other structures and the Black Cap. As the façade of the Black Cap has also been restructured, any association would have been lost anyway. The adjacent buildings have been demolished and replaced with modern buildings. It can be concluded that there is no group value associated with the Site.

**Alterations**

A high amount of alteration has been identified through research and site evaluation at the Black Cap, both internally and externally, including the extensive rear additions that resulted from the removal of small cottages/ ancillary buildings, beginning in the late 19th century, and reaching its current form by the mid-20th century. These alterations have detracted considerably from the special architectural and historical interest of the site as it was. Though the façade, which is deemed the primary reason the Site to be considered a positive contribution to the Conservation Area, does hold some architectural interest, it is likely that this is a later construction, probably late 19th or early 20th century, and therefore of lesser historic interest.

**Interiors**

Although due allowance has been made in this assessment for a hierarchy of spaces within the overall building, it remains a key finding that interiors overall are not of special architectural interest in terms of design or quality.

**Signage**

The existing signage from the Black Cap is modern, and is, as evidenced from historic photographs, not a replica of previous signage at the Site. It is therefore of no historic interest.

**Authenticity**

From research and site assessment, no reason has been identified to raise doubts about the authenticity of any of the features of the Black Cap.

**Community Interest**

There is a strong, local community interest in the Black Cap, evident primarily from the Black Cap Foundation, who run the 'We Are Black Cap' campaign in an attempt to garner local interest beyond the LGBT+

community. The Foundation has a web and social media presence, and their primary goal is to find a suitable partner to purchase and retain the Black Cap as an LGBT+ venue, with minimal redevelopment. The Foundation continues to be active, holding regular vigils and press releases, as well as supporting a Change.org petition which currently has over 8,000 signatures. The sudden closure of the Black Cap was met with surprise and reported by a number of both local and national news organisations.

The building was also granted the status of Asset of Community Value by Camden Council in 2015.

While the building has clear local value to the community, this is a single factor when considering the suitability of the building for statutory listing. As demonstrated above, a building must demonstrate cultural, historic, and architectural significance to be considered as nationally important. Unlike the Royal Vauxhall Tavern, which is, and remains, a fixture of the LGBT+ community, The Black Cap, as a part of a wider circuit, fails to demonstrate sufficient interest for these values, and is therefore considered to be an unsuitable candidate for listing.

# 6. Conclusion

The above report has sought, firstly, to understand fully the building both in terms of survival of historic fabric and in terms of its historic development and architectural interest. This appraisal has involved a site visit, primary research at the Camden Local Studies and Archives and The British Library particularly, and a detailed review of relevant secondary literature.

It has also involved a comparative assessment, which has sought to establish the standards for contemporary office buildings that have been listed, as well as to identify key national themes in LGBT+ meeting spaces architecture to help to draw out points of historic interest and architectural quality in the case of Black Cap. Through this assessment, the low historic and architectural interest of Sovereign House has been clearly established.

The second part of the report has sought to compare the building against both national and building-type specific listing criteria, to understand how far it may meet these criteria with a view to understanding whether the Black Cap could be a candidate for listing. From this further assessment, it has been established robustly that the Black Cap cannot be considered to hold a degree of special architectural or historical importance to warrant listing at a national level.

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# 7. REFERENCES

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