

**Case Name:** The Black Cap, Camden COI

**Case Number:** 1447154

**Background**

Historic England has been asked to assess the former Black Cap for a Certificate of Immunity from Listing under our Enhanced Advisory Service.

**Asset(s) under Assessment**

Facts about the asset(s) can be found in the Annex(es) to this report.

Annex	Name	Heritage Category
1	The Black Cap	Listing

**Visits**

Date	Visit Type
08 June 2017	Full inspection

**Annex 1**

The factual details are being assessed as the basis for a proposed Certificate of Immunity from listing.

**Factual Details**

**Name: The Black Cap**

**Location**

The Black Cap, 171 Camden High Street, London, London, NW1 7JY

County	District	District Type	Parish
Greater London Authority	Camden	London Borough	Non Civil Parish

**History**

An inn known as the Mother Black Cap stood on the site now occupied by Camden Underground Station before becoming the site of the parish workhouse from 1778 to 1809. A pub of the same name was then established on the current site, 171 Camden High Street (historically numbered as 91 Camden High Street). In 1889 the building was essentially rebuilt in its current form, occupying a larger footprint than the previous pub, replacing part of a row cottages or outbuildings at the rear, and with its prominent facade, which is captured in a photograph from the early C20. By 1916 it had acquired a narrow rear extension, replacing the remaining cottages. Judging from the internal fixtures and fittings it acquired a first floor bar in the mid-C20 while map evidence records that by 1952 it had been extended at the rear to provide a larger ground floor bar, and later, performance space.

During the 1950s the bar had a significant Irish following and was known for its live music. In the early 1960s the pub was re-branded as the New Black Cap, and since late 1965 has had strong LGBT associations, becoming a well-known cabaret and drag venue, before homosexuality was legitimised in 1967.

Regular performers on the London circuit included Phil Starr and HH Regina Fong and the drag act, Mrs Shufflewick, the upper bar being named after the artiste, Rex Jamieson after his death in 1983.

The pub continued as a leading London LGBT venue until its closure in 2015.

**Details**

Public House, 1889 on the site of a late C18 or early C19 pub.

**MATERIALS:** a red brick facade with stock brick flanks, with terracotta, stone and cast stone dressings, tile hanging at the rear and asbestos tile roofs; pine fixtures and fittings.

**PLAN:** laid out on three storeys and attics, with a beer cellar beneath the front range, and a single-storey rear extension. The ground floor is taken up by a single bar behind a full-width entrance lobby from which stairs rise to the first floor bar. Stairs at the rear rise to accommodation, and recently kitchens, on the upper floors. The first floor bar is also reached by a side entrance.

**EXTERIOR:** the ground floor frontage is set between pilasters with foliate bosses and capitals with a crowned figure head resembling a medieval king. The entrance, to the left, has pilasters with similar capitals and paired, part-glazed, panelled doors; the single window has wide margin lights and a central band of smaller lights, with shaped glazing bars in the outer lights and in the central light above. The fascia and stallriser are later C20. The first and second

floors are set within a tall, rubbed brick arch, between flush panels with dragooned capitals, treated as pilasters, and surmounted by a dramatic stepped gable with deep moulded cornices. The first floor has a canted bay window with a moulded transom and metal-framed casements or fixed lights with plain glazing, beneath a balustrade with vase balusters, some of which are missing. The second floor has a flush, six-light mullion and transom window, with square section mouldings, and similar lights, beneath a tympanum of terracotta panels in the form of rosettes. The brick arch has a lion's head keystone supporting a tall moulded bracket which in turn supports a bust of Mother Black Cap, set on a semicircular plinth which projects from the cornice, and is set forward from the gabled pediment at the apex of the roof.

To the left is a tall external chimney stack. The rear wing is slightly lower, with the rear wall gable wall clad in banded tiled hanging and has a flush timber casement window. The outer passage to the left (south) of the building is clad in cream glazed tiles, with a foliate frieze and moulded cornice. Windows on the side elevation are a mix of single, and two over two pane horned sashes.

INTERIOR: the main entrance leads through paired part-glazed doors to the stair lobby. Stairs, with a closed string, turned balusters and simple moulded rail cut across the window. Double doors with moulded panels with small inset upper lights open onto the ground floor bar. The bar extends along the north wall of the original late C19 building. The bar front has matchboard panelling and a predominantly marble top, with a small section in timber to the west. The bar back has robust bulbous pilasters, pedimented bays at either end and a mirrored back. The south wall of the bar has later shelves, for drinks, set into panelled linings. The western extension is fitted out as a stage.

The first floor bar area, latterly known as the Jamieson bar, has a deep moulded cornice and boxed in beams which suggest that the former upper floor rooms have been opened up. Principal, front windows on this floor and above retain their original window plates, catches and latches but have lost leaded glazing that is inferred from the early C20 photograph. There is blocked chimneybreast. The bar is set towards the rear of the space and has a fielded panelled front and a bar back with simplified fluted pilasters. A small stage has been created in the late C20 at the back of the bar area.

Stairs, probably late C19, from the first to second floor have turned newels and balusters. The principal room at the front of the building has been subdivided, the cornice continuing across all three rooms, and has a simple timber mantelpiece. Side and rear windows have deep moulded architraves, some with panelled vertical shutter boxes. The attic floor front room has an ornate, mid to later C19, round-arched cast iron fireplace surround. The roof structure of a machine-cut side-purlin roof is exposed in the rear room which has a simple, probably early C20, fireplace surround.

## **Selected Sources**

**Map****National Grid Reference:** TQ2889483786

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The above map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. For a copy of the full scale map, please see the attached PDF – 1448361\_1.pdf.