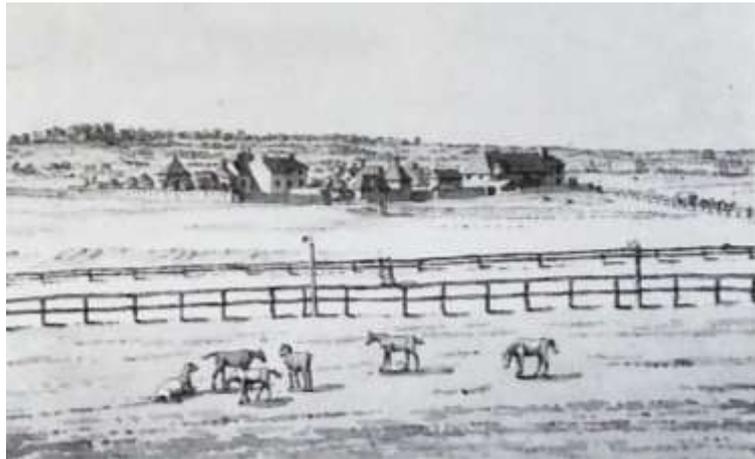


## Building Camden Town – chronology 1: c1790

### Preparing development

In the beginning, there were just fields... In this portion of a drawing by Grimm in 1793<sup>1</sup>, the houses springing up either side of Hampstead Road forming the High Street of the nascent Camden Town can be seen in the mid-distance on the far right of the picture.



Land around London was being developed in the eighteenth century by aristocratic landlords – the largest examples being the Grosvenor estate to the west, now Mayfair, and the Duke of Bedford's estate to the north, that is now Bloomsbury. Lord Southampton and Lord Somers by the 1780s were developing the land north of the New Road (now Marylebone Road / Euston Road). As was customary at the time, Lord Camden gained a private Act of Parliament to build on the Cantlowes land. The Act of 1788 describes the new manor and demesne lands of Cantlowes with full legal flourish:

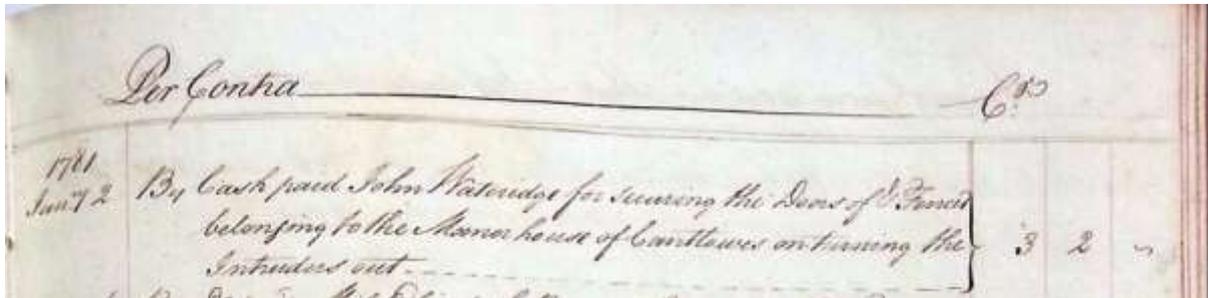
*Kentish Town, in the Parish of Saint Pancras, and all and singular Cellars, Sollars, Houses, Barns, Stables, Granges, Dove Houses, and other Edifices whatsoever thereunto belonging, together with the Yards and Gardens, Orchards, Ponds, Moats, Fishings, and other Commodities, Easements, and Profits to the said Capital Messuage, Mansion Place, and Manor House of Cantlowes, alias Cantlers, alias Kentish Town, belonging or in any wise appertaining: And also all those the Demesne Lands of the said Manor of Cantlowes, alias Cantlers, alias Kentish Town, and all and singular other Lands, Messuages, Tenements, Tofts, Curtilages, Arable Grounds, Meadows, Leafows, Pastures, Feedings, Closes, Coppices, Woods, Underwoods, Groves, Hedgerows, and all other Profits, Commodities and Hereditaments whatsoever, with their Appurtenances, to the said capital Messuage, Scite, and Demesne Lands, of the said Manor of Cantlowes, or to any of them, in anywise belonging or appertaining, then, or at any Time then before, taken, reputed, used, or known as Part or Parcel thereof, situate, lying, and being in the Parish of Saint Pancras*

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Grimm, Looking north to the New Road, 1792, British Library

Yet it was hardly as grand as this. The Survey of Church lands appropriated by Parliament, of 1649, had itemised a full farm house, but a century later the only buildings on the land (apart from the Mother Red Caps inn) evident on maps were the farm barns either side on Kings Road.

On 13 May 1780 Lord Camden's agent, Augustine Greenland, had signed a lease for the land of 'Cantlowes alias Cantlers', with an annual rent of £43.10s. On the inside cover there was written a summary of the Jeffreys family inheritors. There was also a note on the possible value of building in Cantlowes – it states that Lord Southampton was charging between two and three shillings and sixpence per foot of frontage for ground rent at Hampstead Road nearby, although rents closer to the centre of London could be from five to ten shillings.

The accounts of the Cantlowes demesne for 1781 show a payment for 'securing the doors and fences belonging to the manor house of Cantlowes on turning the intruders out'.



### First tenants

The estate accounts show four sub-lessees of the Cantlowes demesne in January 1785.

Lessee	Land	New lease	Area (acres:rods:poles)	Annual rent
William Morgan	Diverse lands with a barn therein	29 Sept 1785	a110:0:14	£288
Thomas Rhodes	Diverse lands	25 Dec 1785	a68:2:0	£163
William Frances	The same & a barn	25 Dec 1785	a27:0:0	£75
David Jones	Mother Red Cap & garden	57 yr from 1789	a2:3:18	£16 1/6
			(= 207 acres)	

At the west edge of the estate stood the Mother Red Cap (also spelled Red Caps) inn beside the junction where there were also the Britannia and the Mother Black Cap public houses. William White held the lease of the Mother Red Cap in 1801, while from 1820 Sophia Young had the lease at £40 a year. John Joyce leased land next to the Mother Red Cap, with a few buildings.



Mother Red Cap, 1780 (LMA: Collage 304951)

The Jeffreys land was farmland, probably pasture with hay and cattle for milk, with Morgan, Frances and Rhodes tenants.

### **Mapping**

Thompson's map of St Pancras borough in 1800 provides extremely detailed evidence on the early phase of Camden Town.

Maps held by the Camden Town estate reveal details on the builders holding contracts for development which accord with the estate register. For the chronology of building, builders are referred to by name with the alphabetic registration (A-Z, Aa-Zz, Aaa-Xxx) at first in **bold:**

<b>A</b>	Hutcheon Richard	<b>P</b>	Wood Edward and
<b>B</b>	Joyce John	<b>Q</b>	William
<b>C</b>	Hickman & Mundy	<b>R</b>	Quinn Samuel
<b>D</b>	Joyce George	<b>S</b>	Quinn Tho' King
<b>E</b>	Saylor Joseph	<b>T</b>	Quinn Samuel
<b>F</b>	Hutcheon Richard	<b>U</b>	Sayer William
<b>G</b>	Joyce George	<b>V</b>	Sayer William
<b>H</b>	Hutcheon Thomas	<b>W</b>	Sayer George the 1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>I</b>	Joyce George	<b>X</b>	Quinn Richard
<b>L</b>	Collard Samuel	<b>Y</b>	Quinn Samuel
<b>M</b>	Collard Samuel	<b>Z</b>	Putford Robert
<b>N</b>	Cutler Charles	<b>Aa</b>	Cumberland John
<b>O</b>	Willy and Thores	<b>Bb</b>	Putford John

Camden Estate map 1834

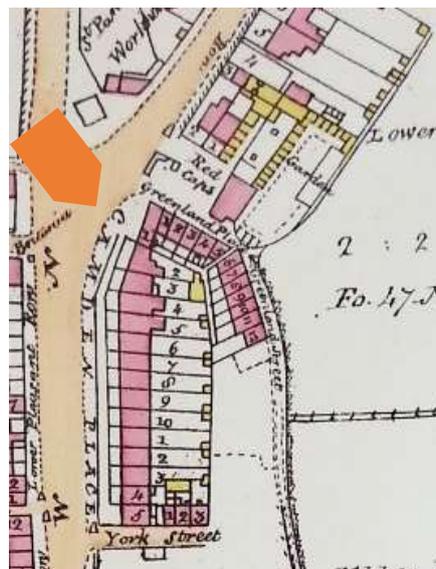
## First development

In 1790 **Richard Holbrook (A)** took the first option for the field south of the Mother Red Cap for an annual rent of £70. The terrace row, named Camden Place (the same name as Lord Camden's house in Kent, which he had chosen for his title) was built down the Hampstead Road, later to become the High Street.



Camden High Street before 1888<sup>2</sup>

The painting of the High Street is annotated 'demolished 1888', ie at the end of the original 99-year lease, and shows the form and some of the original houses of Camden Place and Greenland Place. The viewpoint is shown by the arrow on Thompson's 1801 map. Opposite the 'Red Caps' is Greenland Place, then becoming Greenland Street – which is the footpath across the fields directly towards St Pancras church. (Augustine Greenland was Lord Camden's solicitor and the first land agent.)



Thompson Map of St Pancras 1801, detail at Camden Place

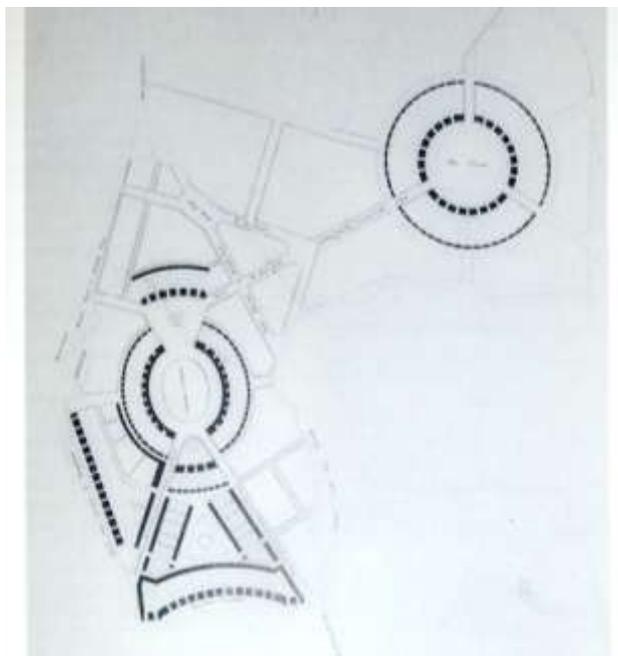
<sup>2</sup> London Metropolitan Archive online picture gallery 'Collage' – record 19125, catalogued as 'High Street, St Pancras'. The pencil writing beneath states 'demolished 1888'.

A second, small, development on Lord Camden's land was made by John Joyce (**B**). He built just four houses on the Kentish Town Road at the junction with Kings Road (the site, a century later, for St Barnabas Church), for a rent of £10. It is possible these had some form of social tenancy function – in the tax records of 1803, Joyce paid a tax for 'inmates x 2 – 5/- for each'.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, they might be related to a group of 8 houses sold in 1808 'at the entrance of Kentish Town by George Robertson, Keeper of the Private Hospital for Imune [sic] People'. In the sale particulars it had 'forty good feather beds, Pembroke tables and Japanned chairs – a superior establishment for sale by auction at the Mother Red Caps'.<sup>4</sup>

### *Changing politics*

The early 1790s was a period of rapidly changing politics, both in attitudes to the French Revolution, with the arrival of refugees in London, and the weakening political position of William Pitt, whose family were close to the Pratts. Yet it was a time of continued building in London – both Lord Southampton and Lord Somers were actively developing their estates near to the New Road, as well Lord Bedford and the Foundling estate.

The City of London Surveyor, George Dance, a good friend of the Pratt family, proposed a grand scheme for development in 1790. He had several schemes for massive redevelopment of London at this period, including a double London bridge and the circus at St George's in Southwark. His scheme for Camden Town used 'circuses' – houses set in large circles, with linking roads, that had otherwise only been used for urban development in Bath.



Engraved drawing by George Dance for Camden Town, 1789 <sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> LMA: MR/PLT/4264, St Pancras Parish, North Division: Land tax assessment, 1803.

<sup>4</sup> *The Times* Friday, 23 Oct 1801:4.

<sup>5</sup> Jill Lever. *Catalogue of the drawings of George Dance the Younger (1741-1825) and of George Dance the Elder (1695-1768): from the collection of Sir John Soane's Museum*. Oxford, Azimuth

### **Kirkman and Hendy (C) – first large lease**

Dance's scheme was not taken up: it was too grand, and expensive. Instead a contract was made with a partnership of two developers - Joseph Kirkman (a brewer and 'mortgagor', who lived at 7 Gower Street)<sup>6</sup> and Alexander Hendy, a builder, who were already active on Lord Southampton's estate. Their contract was substantial – a first lease in 1790 of 60 acres for £628 and followed in 1791 for a further 30 acres for £318.

The plan drawn in the lease, however, was minimal. The circumference included the southern section of the Cantlowes demesne up to the King's Road and excluded, on the west side, the land of Camden Place already leased to Holbrook. Internally, there would be three 'down' roads, north to south, and two cross roads:



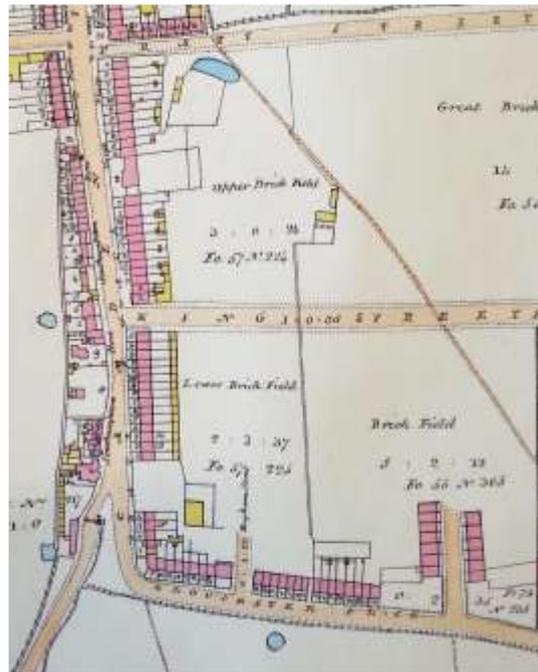
In due course, the cross roads became the more substantial Pratt Street and King Street, and at the southwest corner, opposite the Southampton Arms, a terrace along the road Fig

---

Editions, c2003: scheme 38. Lever observes "about 400 plots are marked though there is space for many more on the other streets shown on the plan".

<sup>6</sup> Kirkman had an address at 7 Gower Street - *Times* Wednesday 17 July 1793:4.

Lane was named Gloucester Place and later Crowndale Road. Thompson's map, of 1801, shows 'brick fields' – a profitable business before building.



When Kirkman and Hendy took their option for 99 acres, the first thirty acres were to be built within three years with expenditure of at least £50,000 and expected yearly ground rent of £628. The Figure shows agent Augustine Greenland's calculation of the expected incomes for land rent, amounting to £187.18.8¾.

can make is the following

The two main tracts of the Grains of which Paper was given at a valuation of 1700 each together <sup>a. R. P.</sup> 3. 3. 12 which at £25 per acre amounts to 60 Annua

(05. 15. 7¼)

The third main tract of which Paper was given at a valuation of 1700 - 1. 8. 00 at £27. 10 } 54. 13. 1½

The crop tract which is to be allowed contains about 1. 2. 0 and will amount } 37. 10 - to per Annua

Per Annua £ 187. 18. 8¾

The Agents at present are mostly out of town, but I have been with their collector who says they are ready to sign any Paper which may be desired concerning

Your Lordship has not yet honoured me with Your Commands in the Propriety of the form of the Instrument I send You

By December 1792, there were 63 leases with a total rent of £327; this rose to 70 leases by July 1795 at £382: but then building stopped. In the difficult circumstances of the war with post-revolutionary France, Kirkman and Hendy failed to find tenants to pay their ground rents and became bankrupt. Greenland advised Lord Camden that the assignees for the bankruptcy were 'all men of property', and he advised that it was better to leave the situation open, rather than closing the offer:

"Indeed, it has always been my idea that your Lordship could not consistently with prudence refuse to grant leases to them of houses as they became ready, without there remaining a considerable risk of not having your ground rent secured which is a principal object. For even if your Lordship could strictly have refused such leases until £200 per annum had been secured by the buildings erected, it must inevitably have stopt the concerns sooner, for the builders could not go on without money and money could not be obtained without leases."

Kirkman and Hendy, according to fire insurance records, continued in business into the 1800s. By 1821 the back rents on their lease were paid off (partly through inflation), the annual ground rent of £946 was achieved. Building continued thereafter into the 1840s with peppercorn ground rents. Some of the buildings are now Grade II listed, eg nos 6-22 and 75-85 Royal College Street.<sup>7</sup>

### ***Veterinary College***

An early benefit for the Camden Town estate was leasing land at the south east corner, by the River Fleet, as a veterinary college.



New map of London with its environs. Robert Laurie, James Whittle, London, 1809.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1130407>

<sup>8</sup> British Library online gallery. Crace Collection 87961.

<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/crace/l/007000000000006u00199000.html>

Granville Penn, a Hampshire landowner, and Charles Benoit Vial de St. Bel, who had made veterinary studies in Lyon, proposed a veterinary school in London. A committee was established in 1789 and negotiated to set up the Veterinary College (later Royal) on Lord Camden's land by the Fleet at St Pancras Church. There was Incorporation by an Act of Parliament in 1798 – with a splendid coat of arms:



A description in 1795 wrote,

... The theatre is completed, and an infirmary capable of containing 50 horses; but it is intended to enlarge it so as to contain 300. There is a house for the Professor, who reads lectures on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays, from 11 to 12, on the structure, œconomy, and diseases of the horse, and other domestic animals... Seventeen [pupils] are now attending... The subscription to the infirmary is 20 guineas for life, or two guineas per annum, either of which entitles the subscriber to send any number of horses, if there is room for them in the infirmary; otherwise they have advice gratis, and medicines at a cheap rate from the college.<sup>9</sup>



The Veterinary College, beside the Fleet. Engraving by Cook [c.1800],<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/london-environs/vol3/pp342-382#p179> Daniel Lysons, 'Pancras', in *The Environs of London: Volume 3, County of Middlesex* (London, 1795), pp. 342-382. British History Online <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/london-environs/vol3/pp342-382> [accessed 20 January 2017].

<sup>10</sup> V0013655: Wellcome Library, London)



Richard Percival. St Pancras illustrations. British Library Shelfmark Crach.1.Tab.4.b.3.

### *Northern fields*

The land of the Cantlowes demesne originally gave meadows for hay and pasture for cows. There were three farms, the largest to the north centred on buildings of the original Cantlowes manor house. In the Act of Parliament of 1812, the land is described as 'Homestead'.



'Homestead'

These fields, and the 'upper and lower barn fields', ie all the land down to the Fleet, were leased for 21 years from 1807 to William Francis:

Francis, William	-	A Parcel of Land called
Francis, William	-	Lands called Upper and Lower Barn Field, held at Will
Francis, William	-	Messuage, Building and Lands, called the Homestead, Cowlayer, Bowling-Green Field, Hall Field, Seven Acres, Six Acres, Nine Acres, Upper and Lower Hall Fields, Twenty Acres, and Landlay's Field, on Lease for 21 Years from Michaelmas 1807
Jones, John	-	Fields called Home Meadow, on Lease for 7 Years