

## Building Camden Town – 2: 1810s, Canal

Active development on the estate came to halt on Lord Camden's death in 1795. John Jeffreys Pratt, Lord Camden's son, had married Frances Molesworth in 1785. The marriage settlement had placed the Jeffreys estate lands in a trust, which included Molesworth relations as trustees. But without Lord Camden, builders were deterred by the uncertain legal position, and stopped taking on leases.

### *Act of Parliament 1805*

Augustine Greenland, who had been specified by name in the early deeds for the estate, died in 1803. Management of the estate was taken over by the Society firm of Kent, Pearse and Claridge, which later became the partnership of Claridge and Iveson. A new Act of Parliament was made for the estate, to rationalise the legal ownership of the trustees. At the time of the Act, 72 acres were recorded as 'built', yielding an annual rent of £401. A further portion of 14 acres, which included the Veterinary College, gave an annual rent of £318. The Act had a schedule of tenancies by the solicitor Joseph Ward, who had been Greenland's partner.

### *The new Act of 1812*

While the 1805 act lifted the reservation of builders from taking on development, in 1811 prebendary Anthony Hamilton died. Hamilton had also been named in the leases as Trustee.

The Bishop of London, at St Paul's Cathedral, quickly gave the Cantlowes prebend, as well as Hamilton's tenancy at Much Hadham in Hertfordshire, to his own son, Thomas Randolph (who had only recently graduated from his father's old college, Christ Church at Oxford).

The Bishop was ex-officio a Member of the House of Lords, with Lord Camden. He created a substantial revision of the terms for the Cantlowes prebend through a further new Act of Parliament. This changed the ground land tenure from a lease into joint holding – divided between the Pratts receiving two thirds of the ground rents and the prebendary (now Thomas Randolph) one third – and enabling Pratts and prebendary jointly to make leases. This was a major increase in income for the prebendary above the earlier annual £43 10s. rental being paid by the Pratts as leaseholders.

### *St Martin's burial ground*

A further significant development came in 1803 when the parish of St Martin's in the Fields leased a square of land at Camden Town as a supplementary burial ground – their local grounds close to Charing Cross were becoming full. It required by an Act of Parliament and was consecrated in 1805. The rent was £100 per year. The Rev. Anthony Hamilton's appointment as a vicar at St Martin's, as well as being the prebendary of Cantlowes, would have assisted the deal.



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

*Bayham Street, Camden Street*

The acts had due effect. From 1807 leases started again on the Kirkman & Hendy land in Camden Street, College Street and King Street, although quite slowly – just six in that year and only six more by 1811.

From 1806, **George Lever** started to build at the north end of Bayham Street, close to the Mother Red Caps. Lever built a terrace of three-storey houses on the east side (**D**), followed by a second take on the west side (**G**). Lever lived (and died) at 1 Bayham Street, with a builder's yard behind (this is the green arrow below). Charles Dickens lived with his family briefly in the second terrace opposite, at No 16 in 1821 (the blue arrow below).



Early development of Bayham Street (Camden Town Estate map, 1833)



Dickens family house (now demolished)

The Act of 1812 describes that from 1807 **Joseph Taylor (E)** took a lease to build lands 'fronting towards the west on the turnpike road from the public house called Mother Red Cap towards Kentish Town and abutting towards the north'. He 'Should have turned the Vaults in the Front, made the Areas, put up good Portland Stone kirb, with good iron

Palisades, made the fence or garden walls...'<sup>1</sup> The map shows the Kentish Town Road improved up to the end of the terrace (the remaining road was only improved in 1888). These became Jeffreys Terrace, five-storey houses south of Cain's Place.



A smaller development, by **Richard Westcott (F)**, was at the eastern side of the estate, where the new Pratt Street joined the Fleet River, opposite 'copyhold' land next to the Kings Road.



The corner is recorded in a drawing of the Fleet in Crosby Collection, London Metropolitan Archives (p7512602)

<sup>1</sup> Quotations from 53 George 3 cap 49: p.805.



**Thomas Holbrook (H)**, son of the first Camden Town developer, Richard Holbrook, took leases in Bayham Street and York Street, while George Lever also had approval for houses in Camden Street to the north, abutting Jeffreys Street ("these houses to have lead piping"). The 1812 Act also described Camden Mews, 20ft wide, and Brecknock Street 40x130 ft, and a 'triangle of ground and other streets not yet named ... all together for fourth and third grade houses total ground rent £96, to be completed by 1817'.

**George Lever** the younger (**K**), George Lever's son, leased the first houses in Jeffreys Street houses in 1816 - 1819, and continued along on the south side. **Samuel Collard** built on the north side (**L**) and then a grander corner terrace (**M**) on the northern corner with Kentish Town Road, which was named Molesworth Place. **Henry Brian (S)** took the west side of Camden Street 1828 and west side of Camden Terrace 1835 & 1838.

### *The Regent's Canal 1815-1820*

The farm tenancies of 'Marybone' Park<sup>2</sup>, Crown-owned land to the west of Camden Town came to an end in 1811. In 1809 the post of Commissioner for the lands was split into three, between John Nash (the Prince's favourite), John Soane and Robert Smirke (later architect of the British Museum).

Thomas Homer had in 1802 proposed developing a canal in London from Paddington in the west to the docks in the east. He revived the project in 1810 and Nash agreed in 1811. Nash himself was a speculator for the eastern, less fashionable area, where digging the canal basin also provided bricks used in Regent's Street.

The route of the canal beyond the Park, however, was delayed by William Agar, who had bought the manor of St Pancras at auction in 2010 for £8000. Over 9 years, Agar (himself a

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<sup>2</sup> John Nash upgraded the name to 'Mary-le-bone' to give it greater cachet.

barrister) made claims against the company which finally gained him £15 000. The route to the south of his estate was preferred by the company, being the flattest, but Agar asked for the route to be taken to the north, which would cost more in the deeper cuttings. The map below shows the initial proposed route around Mr Agar's house, and the next shows the final agreed route



Map of London, Robert Laurie & James Whittle, publishers. British Library, '1809' [c1815? - see proposed line for the canal] detail. Maps Crace Port. 6.211.



Completed route of the Canal (before building of Camden Road)<sup>3</sup>

These different lines had implications for the Camden Town estate where the roads were being set out for building. Indeed, while only two bridges were indicated in 1810 (Kentish Town Road and King's Road), there were two more (Camden Bridge and College Street

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<sup>3</sup> George Thompson (cartographer). A new map of London and its environment, 1823. British Library Maps Crace Port. 6.216

Bridge) built by 1819 as well as the duct needed for the Fleet River (or by this period, termed 'Sewer').

156 The Regent's Canal London's Hidden Waterway		
Kentish Town Lock No 3	Richardson & Want	Jun 1819
Kentish Town Bridge No 8	Richardson & Want	Jun 1819
Camden Bridge No 9 (Camden Street)	Richardson & Want	Jun 1819
College Street Bridge 10 (Royal College Street)	Richardson & Want	Jun 1819
Grays Inn Lane Bridge 11 (St. Pancras Way)	Richardson & Want	Jun 1819
Fleet Ditch Sewer	Richardson & Want	May 1819
Pancras Bridge No 12 (no equivalent today)	Richardson & Want	Nov 1818
Oblique Bridge No 13 (Camley Street)	Richardson & Want	Nov 1818

The Fleet did not contribute to the Canal water, although there was a later proposal for a northwards canal joining at Hampstead Road. Linking the canal through Camden Town was the final connection to the onwards line across Islington and Hackney to the docks. It was opened in August 2020.<sup>4</sup>

### *Wharves*

In 1824 William and Edward Wood took the lease for land south of the Canal between Kentish Town Road and Camden Road (the site in later years of the Aerated Bread Company factory and currently Sainsbury's supermarket). Woods were coal merchants, mentioned in Parliament. Lawfords were tenants between Camden Street and Camden Road. By the King's Road bridge, the canal was called Bangor Wharf – its leaseholder firm traded slates brought by sea from north Wales.

### *St Martin's Almshouses, St Pancras Chapel*

Although Camden Town had a plan of grid roads, it first developed along the boundary roads, with more central areas being dug for their brick earth.

In 1818, St Martin in the Fields gained an Act of Parliament allowing them to build almshouses on their four acres of burial ground at Camden Town.<sup>5, 6</sup> (These replaced almshouses for elderly women built in Crown Street, Soho, in 1695, where the land was to be used for more profitable redevelopment.)

'Contract between Committee of the vestry of St Martin in the Fields for building a row of almshouses at Camden Town and John Tomling, Chads Place, Grays Inn Lane, builder: To build the 5 centre houses of an intended row of 9 houses according to specifications prepared by Henry Hake Seward. (City of London: WBA 1103/10/1)

Further alms houses were later built in Rousden Street.

<sup>4</sup> Alan Faulkner, *The Regent's Canal: London's hidden waterway* Burton-on-Trent, Waterways World, 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Private Act (8 May 1818) 58 George III, c. 2

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol24/pt4/pp134-139#h3-0003>

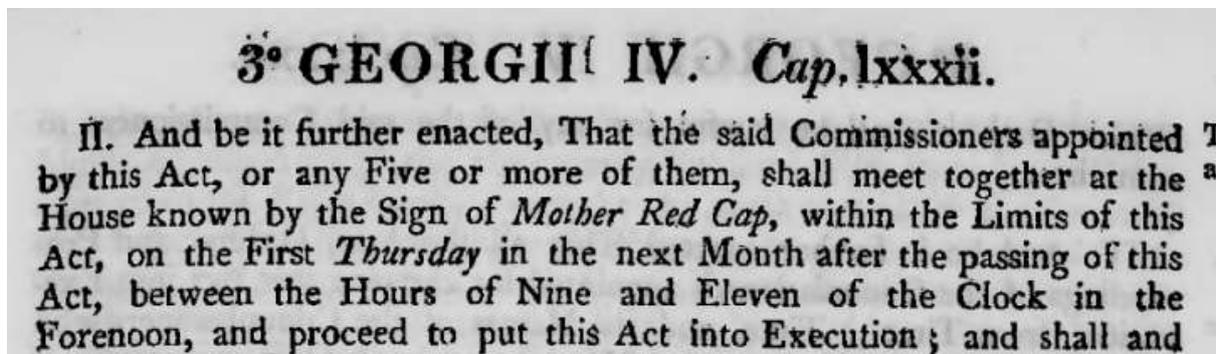
### *Camden Chapel – All Saints Church<sup>7</sup>*

The Church authorities gained an Act of Parliament in 1816 to build a new church and a chapel for St Pancras. First named among the supporters was George Dance. The site was not defined in the Act, but became for the parish church a site at the corner of Euston Square. The chapel was not in Somers Town, but to the north of Fig Lane in Camden Town. The architects were the father-and-son partnership, both called William Inwood.

The chapel stands on the corner of the east side of Camden Street and north side of Pratt Street. It is described in the Survey of London, and became a parish church, of All Saints, in the 1850s.

### *Camden Town Paving Commissioners*

1822 saw an Act of Parliament creating Commissioners of Paving for Camden Town.



The Commissioners were required to hold or have interests in property within the 220 acres defined (the same boundaries as the demesne of Cantlowes). Their names include several by that time, or to be, engaged in building Camden Town, including Cadby, Collard, Dent, Denton, Dietrichson, Fisher, the Holbrooks, Jeffreys, Jones, the Levers, Roberts and Wood.

Commissioners Names. of the same, That the Reverend *James Moore D.D.*, *John Adams*, *Henry Lawrence Brochard*, *William Bundy*, *William Bishop*, *Samuel Barker*, *Launcelot Burton*, *Thomas Good*, *Samuel Collard*, *Charles Cadby*, *William Casson*, *William Dyke*, *Richard Dent*, *Christian Dietrichson*, *Samuel Denton*, *James Early*, *Joseph Early*, *James Ensol*, *Fisher*, *Charles Gell*, *James Bocoock Holbrook*, *Thomas Holbrook*, *Richard Jeffreys*, *John Jones*, *Joseph Jackson*, *Peter Keir*, *James Karr*, *James Knox*, *Stephen Keene*, *George Lever*, *George Lever junior*, *William Lund*, *Benjamin Lewis*, *Samuel Millington*, *Alexander Mason*, *Joseph Munyard*, *Edmund Marks*, *John Mortimer*, *George Neele*, *Joseph Pitts*, *James Prendergast*, *William Roberts*, *Henry Robert Rogers*, *Robert Robert*, *Richard Rhodes*, *Gideon Slous*, *Joseph Salisbury*, *Edward Stones*, *Richard Stanford*, *Charles William Snow*, *Jeremiah Stockdale*, *Benjamin Turney*, *Joseph Talbot*, *Thomas Wallis*, *Thomas Wilson*, *Richard Welchman*, *Daniel Willsben*, *Gervase Wheeler*, *Edward Wood*, *John Warren*, *William Yockney*, the Rev. *Edward Chaplin*, and the Rev. *John Hobson*, shall be, and they are hereby appointed Commissioners for putting and carrying this Act into Execution.

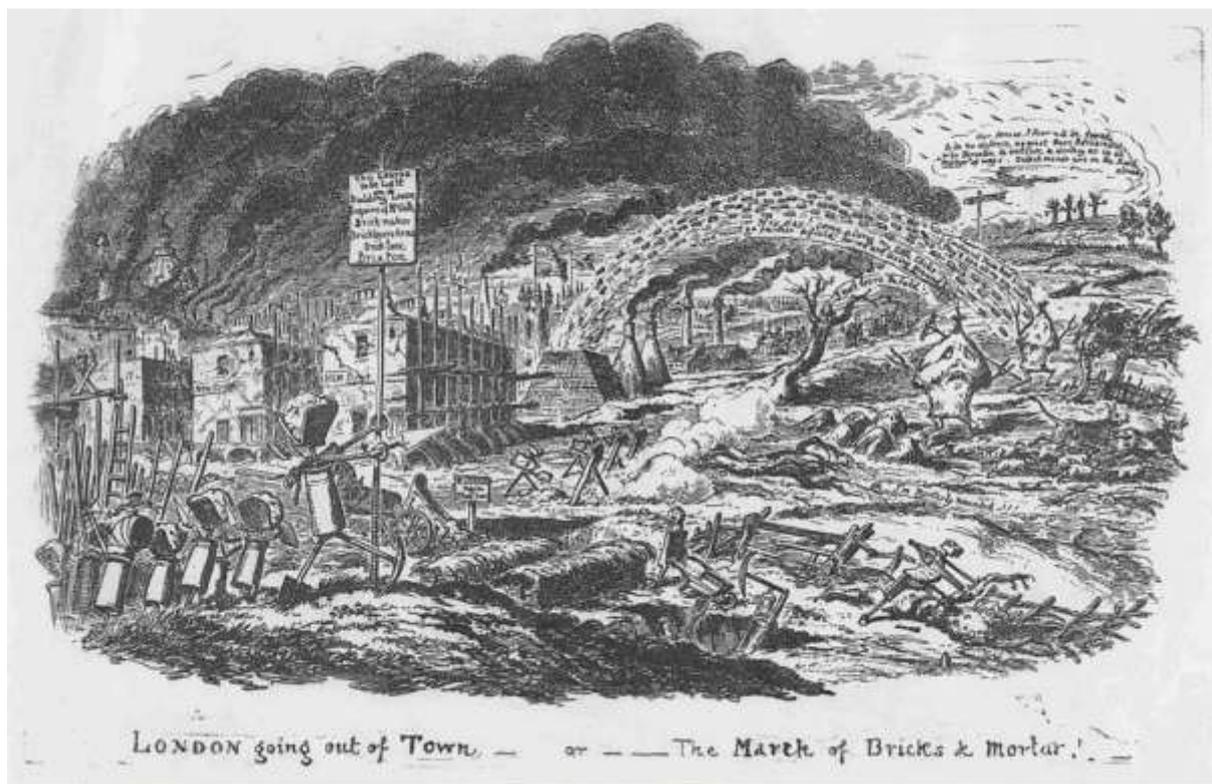
<sup>7</sup> 56 Geo 3 c39. An Act for building a new Parish Church and a Parochial Chapel in the Parish of Saint Pancras, 31 May 1816.

## ***Kirkman and Hendy - 2***

Development of the 'Kirkman & Hendy' land continued sporadically through until 1860. In 1813 (the defeat of Napoleon) there was a spike of leases taken for 40 houses, with building delaying again until 15 houses in 1819. The original bankruptcy had displaced the ground rents onto a diversity of investors who had no primary objective of land development. There would be difficulty in engaging owners in the collective needs for building the roads and sewers.

A second factor may have been use of the land for brick-making. Walpole's letter of 1790 mentions that the land was already being turned for its clay. The Thompson map shows the lower fields as 'brick fields': this land was leased to Rhodes family, who had developed a specialised interest in brick-making also in Islington and Hackney. (Nash also made bricks from the earth moved for the Cumberland Basin of the Regent's Canal.)

The classic 'March of Bricks and Mortar' by Cruickshank is set beside the Fleet River, with the building and brick-making of Camden Town on the west bank and the diminishing fields of St Pancras on the east bank: the distant signpost, pointing up the stream, is to 'Hampstead'.



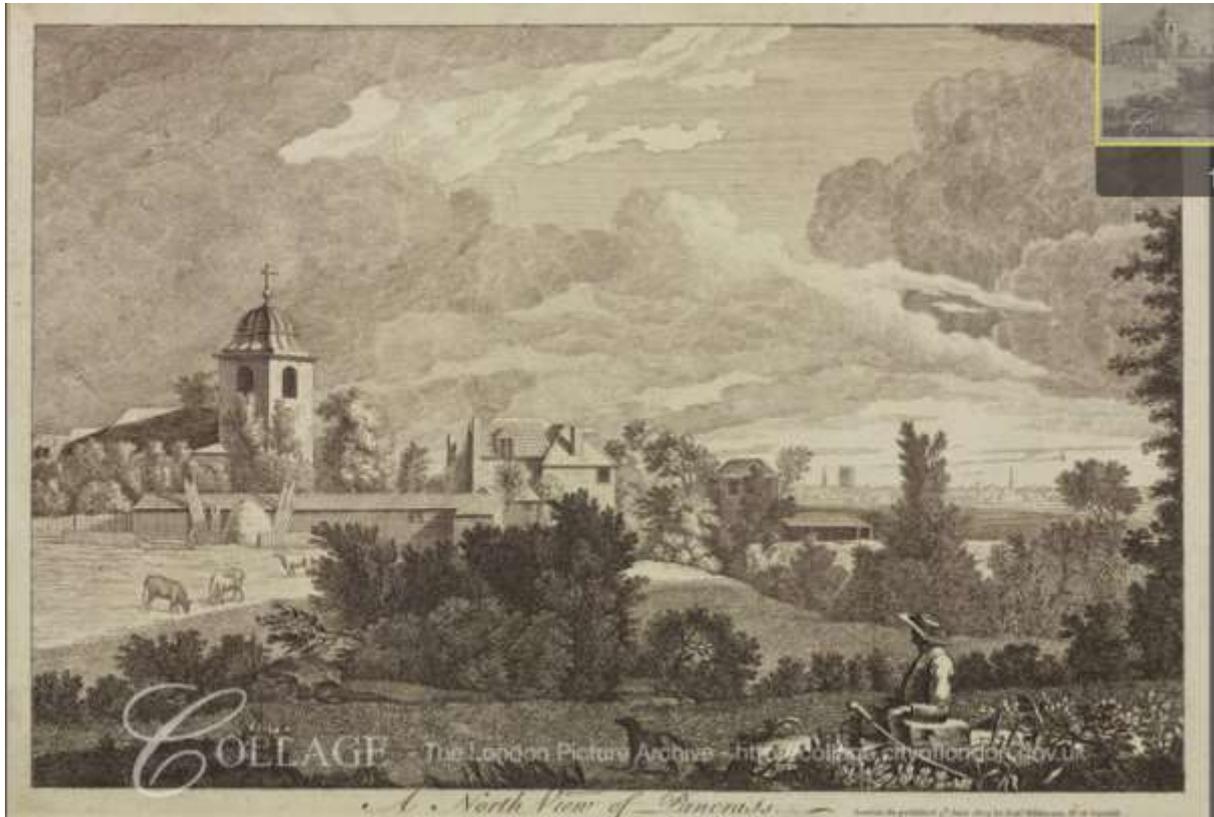


This view from south to north St Pancras Road up the Fleet is also shown in a painting – the Fleet in the foreground, the houses on the right being on the hill of St Pancras, the Elephant and Castle inn on the left side and William Agar’s Elm Lodge in the distance.



T Nugent. St Pancras near the Elephant and Castle (watercolour). Collage 17838, London Metropolitan Archive, 1817

There is an equivalent view looking southwards – St Pancras church on the hill beside the houses, the Fleet Valley to the right, Westminster in the distance and farmland in the foreground.



Robert Wilkinson. A north view of Pancras (engraving). Collage 17020, London Metropolitan Archives, 1805.

