

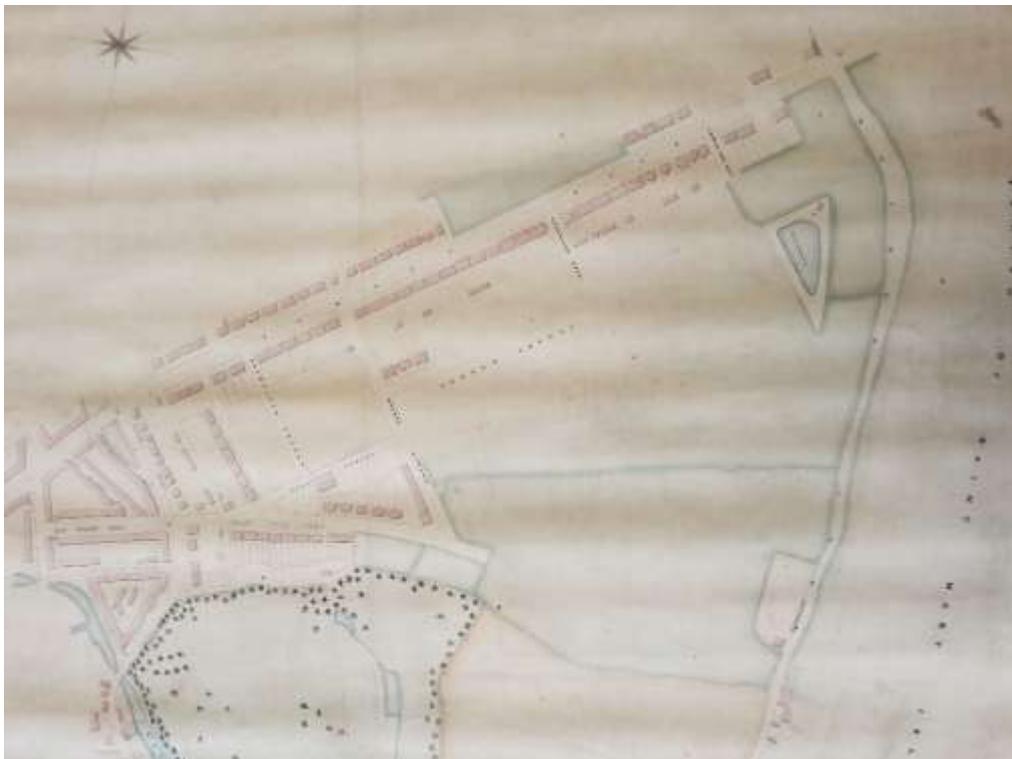
Camden Town Chronology – 5: 1840s - Camden Road north

Camden Road - Continuing Regency architecture

The New Road from Marylebone to Holloway was initiated at the same time as Joseph Kay started as agent. He provides a draft account for his various meetings on behalf of Lord Camden – with Hampstead and Highgate Roads Trustees and Mr Hill, their surveyor; with 'the engineers of Regents Canal Company as to bridge'; about improvement of the 'Back Road' (St Pancras Way); and with 'Mr Dent and Commissioners of Camden Town' in setting out the line of the road.

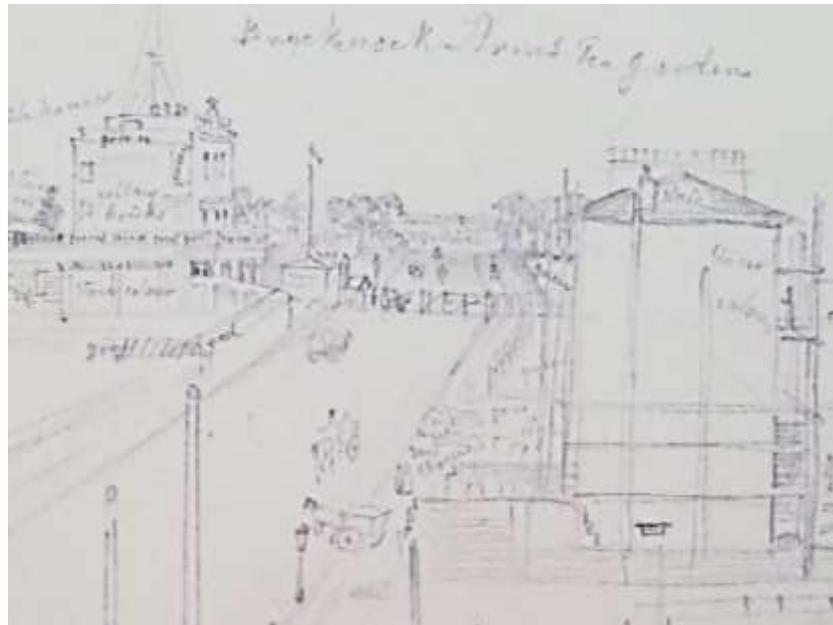
Development of Camden Road was progressed. In a letter to the new Lord Camden, 27 July 1840, Kay identifies that the ground rents already for Camden Road as £640 and the expected rest would be £270. Kay says that, in the lower part of Camden Road, conversion to shops much requested and reasonable. Paving commission happy that Lord Camden's boundary is indicated in kerb stones (27 May 44).

Camden Road became the first axis of development northwards, before the squares either side were set out.



Camden Road 1840s (LMA: HCFS/PR/24)

George Scharf, who drew London workmen in pencil and was later the Director of the National Portrait Gallery, came to Camden Road.



George Scharf: view of Camden Road and Brecknock Arms tollgate (detail)¹



This oil painting in the London Metropolitan Archives (Collage 14398) is entitled 'Laying monster tubes from the New River: workmen lay water pipes in Camden Road', said to be

¹ George Scharf (1820-1895) made many detailed drawings of London, particularly working men, and later became the first Director of the National Portrait Gallery.

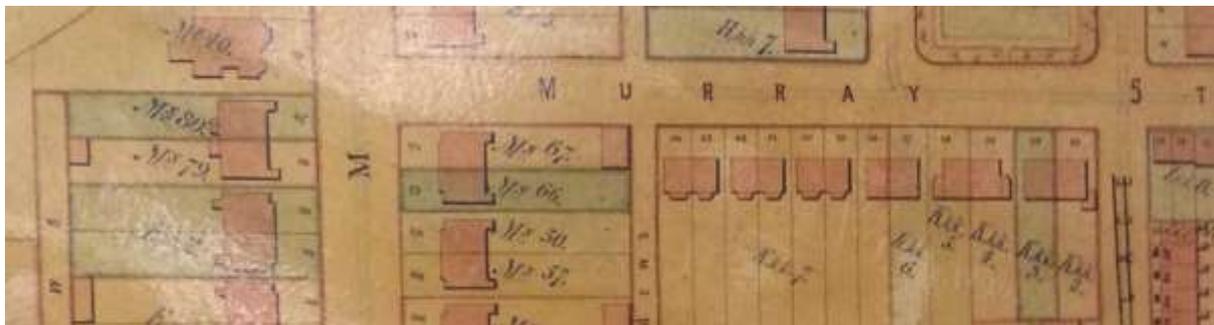
by James Pine (1800-1870), arrived in the Guildhall Art Gallery in 1994. The tall corner building mainly matches the (then) Brecknock Arms; the north west sunlight would make it only a June picture:

James Stones (LI) in 1841, took a lease in Camden Road north of Torriano for £52, building eight houses (now 201-215 Camden Road) as villas. He was the publican at the Brecknock Arms. Joseph Kay writes (29 Feb 1844) 'Mr Stones has disposed of his interest in Brecknock Arms and instead built on adjoining land', but also that 'proceedings have been suspended'.

Skinner, Borsley & Haynes (Ff) from 1839 paid £86 for leases on 14 houses in Camden Road, which were built by 1843, and in 1840 paid £84 for a further 13 houses, completed by 1846; these were listed each as '2 houses' at £12 the pair. The houses were on south-east side of Camden Road above Murray Street: however, they suffered from building of the Midland Railway.

In a letter from Kay in 1841, Cumberland and Triggs 'decline to agree' on the corner of College Street and Camden Road, and Triggs also doesn't take up east side of College Street. (Kay letter 19th Nov 1841). From 1843, **Jonathan Triggs (Xx)** took on the 'new road south of Camden Road', i.e. Lyme Street.

William Rogers built three half villas on the south corner of Camden Road / Murray Street and two opposite (**Ms 50, 66 67, 79, 80**) 1843 and 1848, and 12 on south side of Murray Street by 1853.



Many of earlier buildings at the south of the road were individual, as 'miscellaneous' leases – There were 35 in the period 1837-1843.

Victor Bellman, whose primary business was plaster sculpture in Buckingham Street by Buckingham Palace, took four plots, listed as Misc **40, 46, 49** and **72**.

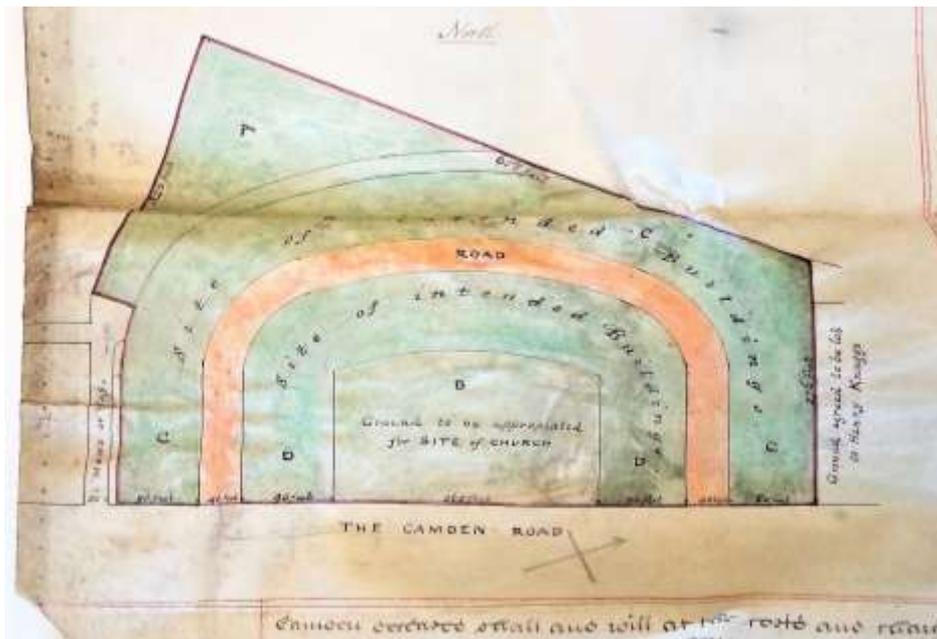
Misc 40 was a particularly unusual large single house in Gothic style. It was subsequently the home in 1860s of Lord Lorford, in the later part of a scandalous life²

² <http://www.camdennewtown.info/Camden%20New%20Town/Camden%20Rd/CamdenRd.html>; image in LMA Collage 106623.

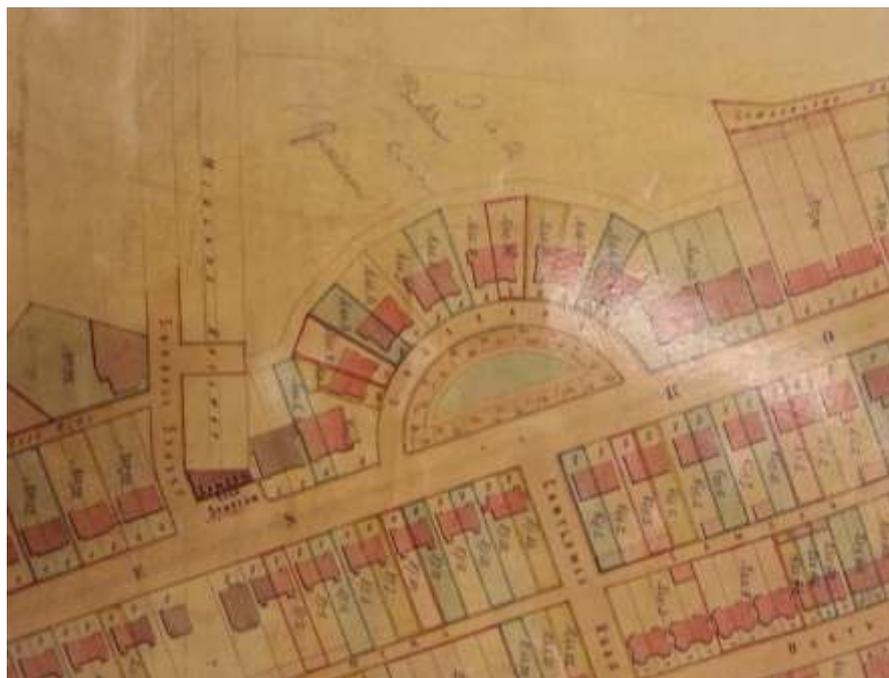


Another crescent was proposed by Kay at the northern end of Camden Road, fitting into a field where the western boundary of the Camden land was irregular, the result of the previous field hedges. This had a mixed history as the possible site for a church. In 1840, the idea was agreed, although needing discussion on the costs, means of enclosure and sewage with the Camden Town Commissioners. **Thomas Lancefield (Kk)**, who was then also working in Regents Park Road, offered the full crescent scheme at 4s a foot for the straight frontage, while Tibbets & Co want to build two blocks either side the ground, set back and in a straight line. By September 1840, Lancefield "agreed to give £160 per annum for the site of the crescent ground with ample space for the site of the church". Lancefield's proposal was accepted. But there was delay and by 1844, Kay had had to proceed 'to extremity' against Lancefield. Kay had considered him 'respectable' partly because of his existing developments both in Regents Park Road and nearby in Islington. But his withdrawal '... can only be accounted for by his practices [elsewhere] being found untrustworthy in more recent activity 'in a neighbouring estate north east of Camden Road' (29 Feb 1844).

The site was transferred to Mssrs P **Pearse & Guerrier (Aaa)**, who made an agreement in 1844, for £160. As with the border at Rochester Road, there was no agreement for roads from the Camden Town estate into Kentish Town. The initial plan had a crescent, with houses either side and enclosing site for a church; to the south was a 'mews or way' leading into a back service road. The crescent was centred on Cantlowes Road to the east.



E/CAM/0571-0577 Deeds Camden Crescent (showing site for intended church) 1840-1856



However, the design depended on the church, and funds for the church were slow in coming. Only in 1848 was a practicable sum reached, and by that time the proposed site had moved to Camden Square. The crescent scheme changed into a single row of villas with a road and with an ornamental garden; the southern mews road was retained – it was needed for the villas on Camden Road and the ground behind. Pearse and Guerrier built Camden Crescent nos 1-15 by 1853, nos 16-20 by 1856 and one house called 'Crescent House'. (Three houses were subsequently lost to the Midland Railway.) These were superior,

individualistic gothic villas, a style the builders had developed successfully for Regents Terrace near the Park.

The land behind the crescent bordering on the Kentish Town land remained undeveloped: and indeed, the ownership was unclear at the end of the century when the inheritors of Pearse and Guerrier lived in France.

Opposite, **James Hall (Pp)** had two options – for £52 where he built eight houses in four-storey terrace pairs and then for £65 where he built a pair and then five single houses. These were substantial double-fronted buildings (only one remains).

There was from 1850 at No 202, **North London Collegiate School**, in a large house, but this was in the path taken by the Midland Railway. The school was rebuilt on the west side of Camden Road, along the new Sandall road that connected with Kentish Town.

