

Camden Town Chronology – 3: 1820s – Kings Road

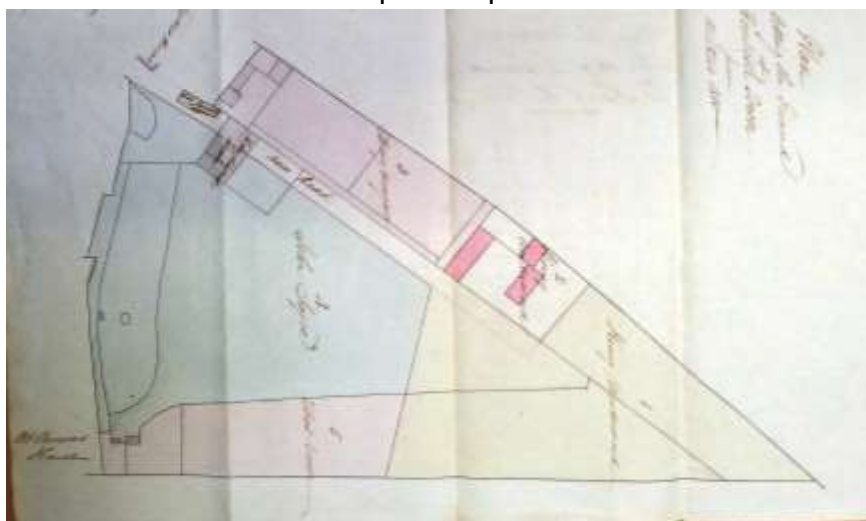
By Cain's Place

At the northern edge of the Camden Town estate, opposite the Castle pub and by the Fleet, Kentish Town had a small area of land that had been built up with marginal industries and accommodation – on the 1804 parish map called Day's Place, (also elsewhere Pain's Place, and on the Kentish Town Road side, Cain's Place).

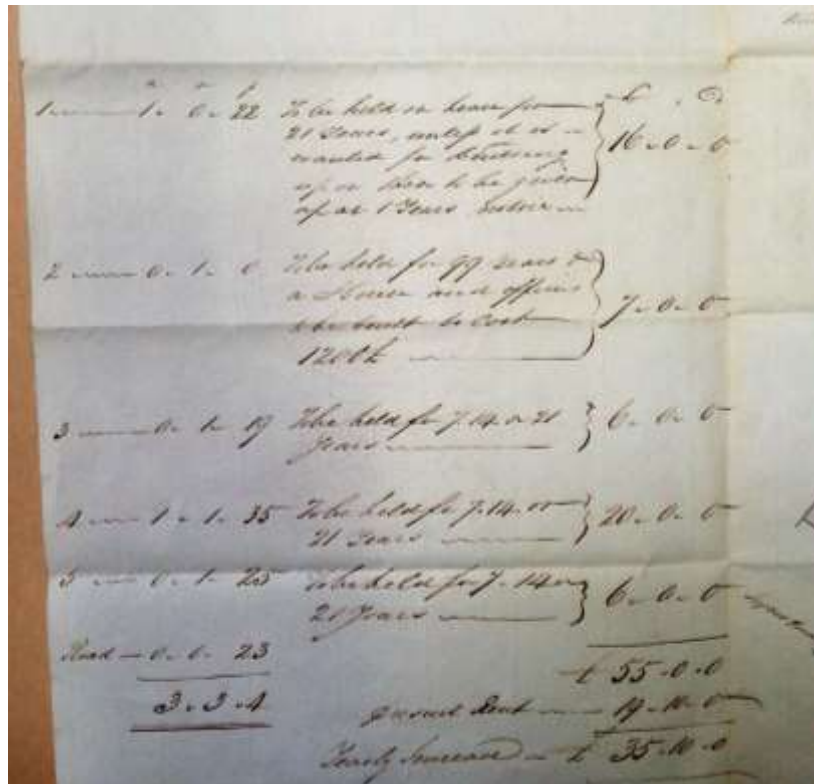
On the Bartholomew estate border, Henry Underwood held an acre of land on a 21 year (farming) lease and took a 99 year building lease for a house and offices. Next to it, Mary Morgan had a small parcel. John Joyce, who had built four houses on the extreme edge, held an acre on a 21 year lease, and next was the house and land of Tobias Brown.



Thompson Map 1801



Along Bartholomew estate: 1 and 2 Henry Underwood; 3 Mary Morgan
4. John Joyce – land and houses at north. 5. Tobias Brown



EL14 Tenants and rents for letting ground in Kentish Town, 1810

This plan of 1810, however, did not lead to a 'new road' beside the St Bartholomew's land, and it was not until 1840, when Rochester Road was being laid out, that negotiation (by then only with Morgan) achieved a link across to Kentish Town Road.

Jeffreys - 1

The layout of the new streets accommodated to the main north-west axis of the southern section of the Cantlowes land: Camden Street joined Kentish Town Road acutely at the south end of Kentish Town, while the axis of College Street, following along an existing pathway, met Kings Road. The new Jeffreys Street was built at right-angle catching the ends of these roads. This also allowed drainage for the sewer, leading into the Fleet at Camden Street to College Street – where a triangle of land (now College Gardens) was created beside Kings Road.

The urban buildings of Jeffreys Street were in a different style to the Kentish Town village farm and gentry houses. Jeffreys Terrace and Molesworth Place houses are tall, with long front gardens. In Jeffreys Street the houses were lower, narrower and opened directly onto the pavement. They were built by different builders at different times over fifteen years, and they delight in variations of iron-work, door pilasters and fan lights.

Behind Jeffreys Street in due course was built Priory Street (Brecknock Priory at one time belonged to the Jeffreys family – it has in the twentieth century risen to the status of Cathedral) and the road's original cobbles are still used. The line of the Fleet can be traced by the slowly falling topography. And although the first lease was from 1808, the work was piecemeal, and parts of Jeffreys Street were still being built in the 1820s, while around it new side roads were being created.

From a lease in 1807, **Joseph Taylor (E)** built 12 substantial five-storey houses at the northern edge of the estate, on Kentish Town Road: they were named Jeffreys Terrace – the first time that the origin of the land was acknowledged in names.

Taylor, Joseph	Ground, granted from Michaelmas 1804 - Lands adjoining North on Canes Place, and West on the Kentish Town Road, and South on Jeffreys Street, on which several Houses and Buildings have been erected and built, granted for 99 Years from Michaelmas 1807 to the said Joseph Taylor and other Lessees.	4 0 0	100 0 0
Underwood, Henry		0 3 37	76 10 0

Joseph Taylor was followed by **Samuel Collard (L)** from 1810, according to the 1812 Act:

Collard, Samuel	Lands adjoining West on the Premises granted to Joseph Taylor, and North Side of Jeffreys Street, on which Houses and Buildings are to be built, granted for 99 Years from Christmas 1810; first Four Years at a Peppercorn Rent, and afterwards at £54 a Year	A. R. P.	£ s. d.
	Lands on the East Side of the Road at Camden	1 0 28	Peppercorn.

In December 1811, **George Lever 'the younger' (K)**, son of the George Lever of Bayham Street, took articles for houses in a row on Camden Street called Camden Terrace and a turning inwards called Jeffreys Street. He himself took the first house at No 1 Camden Terrace.

In a letter to Lord Camden of 1815, steward John Iveson writes:

I saw Mr [George] Lever on Saturday night and in selling the bargain for his building he proposes taking much of the front in Camden Street ... The ground in Camden Street I think worth 3/9 to 4sh [per foot frontage]. He is able to build a good house in the centre so as to face the other line to the Kentish Town Road – of these I will send your Lordship the ground plan and the elevations before the buildings are begun.

The Camden Estate leases for 'Camden Terrace' show a palace-like row of first rate houses of five floors



Camden Terrace: George Lever' proposed elevation (not implemented) (LMA: E/CAM/0170)

However, such a palatial terrace was not completed: only three of a terrace were built and thereafter Camden Terrace became paired villas. One of a pair that remains, shown K5 in the estate plan, has an added ironwork veranda and raised side extension.



Completed elevation and plan for villas on Camden Terrace

There were also extra costs: To George Lever for 'lowering the bed of the Fleet to save the expense of raising College Street' - £84; 'moiety of expenses making the sewer north end of Camden Street' - £109; making road in front of Jeffreys Street and Camden Street - £36. And expenses for the Court Dinner of Cantlowes - £17; use of the audit room at Red Caps £1 each half year; and a donation to Kentish Town Free School towards building a school house - £20.

Sam Collard had by 1816-17 Jeffreys Street built the 'north side Eastwards, nos 4-12 corner house exclusive', and by 1820 nos 1-3; then, the west side of College Street north from Jeffreys St.

His second take (**M**) was a group of 8 houses on the corner of Kentish Town Road and Jeffreys Street, known as Molesworth Place. Molesworth was the family name of the second Lord Camden's wife, (née Frances Molesworth).



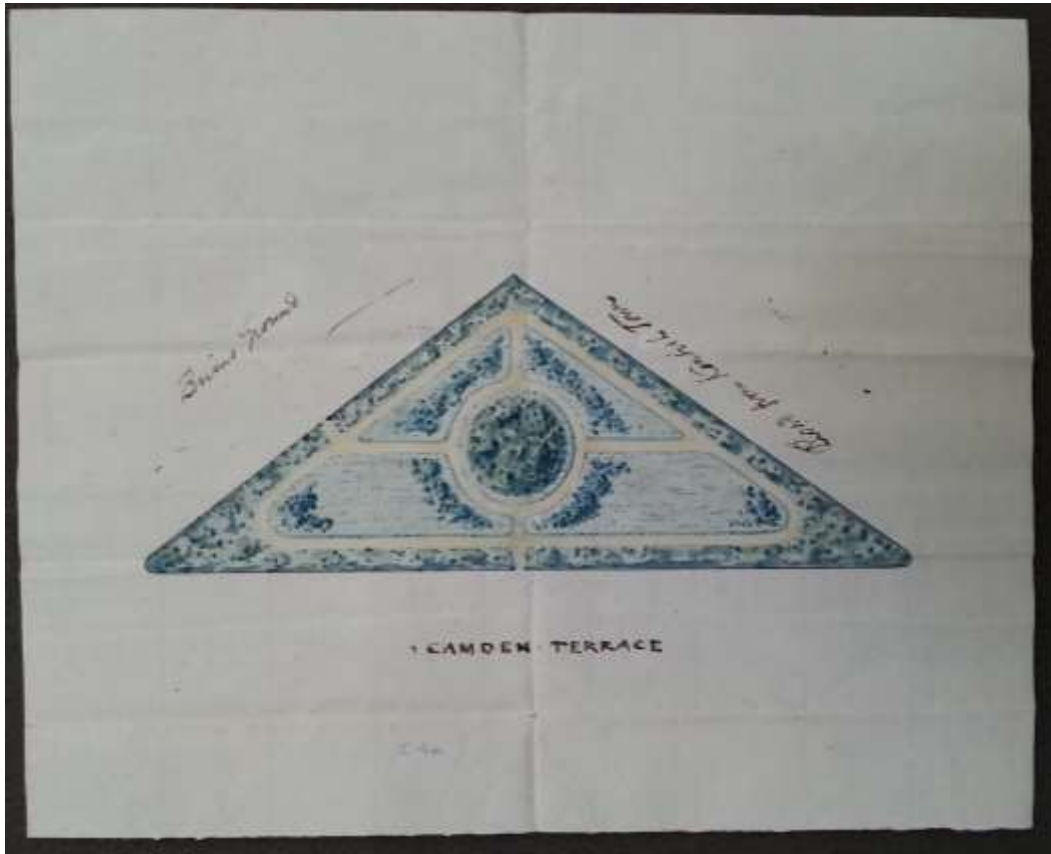
Molesworth Terrace at the junction of Kentish Town Road and Jeffreys Street¹

Henry Brian (R) took on the southern side of College Gardens, creating Camden Terrace West from 1824 at £40 (5 houses @ £8 each) – these became 'Mocca's Cottages'; in 1828, completing nos. 5-8 west side of Camden Terrace; in 1835, with 3 houses 'Camden Terrace and Kentish Town Rd'; and in 1838, Camden St. west side, 4 houses. (See 'Brian's land')

¹ Photograph <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol19/pt2/plate-26>

written on the garden triangle map. On the western side of the Kentish Town Road, in Southampton land, were also paired villa houses.)

In 1 Oct 1826, Joseph Kay sent Lord Camden a Sketch for planting in front of Camden Terrace. His letter says "Lever would do the whole lot for £100 and handed over to the Commissioners. I think on the whole it will not be done under more favourable terms."



Joseph Kay. Sketch of planting for Camden Terrace, correspondence 1 Oct 1826.

'The road very busy before C[amd]en Terrace. It is very desirable to bring the matters relative to Bryan to some point and that the houses he has so far built to be inhabited. It is also very desirable [-?Seabrooke?-] build – Lord C is ready to pay him what he proposed.'

Camden Gardens however suffered from being in the pathway of the East and West India and Birmingham Railway. The concerns of local residents with the Vestry is described by Miller:

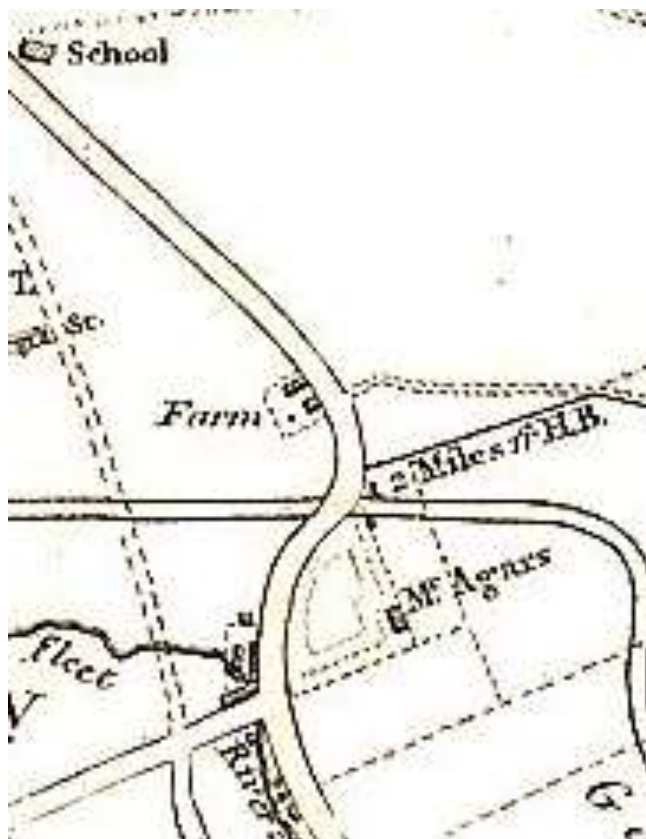
Road was formed, but as early as the year 1811, Mr. Lever obtained from the Marquis of Camden a large piece of land at the Kentish Town Road end of the line of Camden-street, on which he erected the houses now known as Camden Terrace East, and Moccas Cottages on the opposite side, the triangular space between being enclosed by iron railings, and laid out and planted as an ornamental pleasure garden for the sole use of the inhabitants, each house being proportionately rated for that purpose. In 1827, the leaseholder and builder, Mr. George Lever, conveyed to the parochial authorities the trust for its continuance, they levying a garden rate for its support. The trust was performed until the year 1846, when the North London Railway cut through the garden, "each house receiving compensation, and the parish authorities £100, to reinstate the garden that had been damaged by the railway works." Nothing was done for five years, and the ground was let by the vestry to a market gardener, with the consent of the inhabitants, they having the privilege of admission as heretofore. "The gardener cut down the trees, bushes, hedges, &c., leaving but two solitary trees as sad mementoes of the garden's former beauty," and in 1864 he had notice to quit. When, in 1866, the Railway Company widened their line, the "Vestry, without consulting the inhabitants in any way, sold the company 210 square yards for the absurd sum of £75. They built on 254 yards; this was pointed out to the Vestry, but no action was taken. In 1868 the Vestry sold 400 square yards for £140, and exchanged 84 more for a piece at King's Cross; these sales being effected entirely without the knowledge of the inhabitants. Thus the parish authorities had received on account of the Camden Terrace Enclosure £545, and expended Nil."

The facts above quoted were ascertained and reported upon, in 1872, by a committee of the inhabitants particularly interested, who, by incessant agitation of their claim upon the Vestry to restore to the rightful guardians the piece of land that for twenty-six years had been the eyesore of the neighbourhood, "succeeded in adding considerably to its respectability and to the comfort of the inhabitants." The Vestry refunded the money they had received, and the railway company pulled down the ugly blocking of two of the arches; but only by the persistent unwearied action of those whose rights had been overridden by a "powerful and irresponsible body" were the Vestry impelled not only to prevent various nuisances being continued, but to restore to the residents their undoubted right to the "Camden Garden" for their own pleasure and recreation, and for the general improvement of the neighbourhood. The gardens were laid out and formally re-opened on Saturday, 1st June 1872,²

² Miller, St Pancras Past and Present (1874), p254

King's Road - Cantlowes manor house site

The next new area for development was on Kings Road next to William Agar's estate where the road made a double turn. The buildings were designated a 'farm' in Laurie & Whittle's 1809 map.



Map of London, Robert Laurie & James Whittle, publishers. British Library, '1809' detail. Maps Crace Port. 6.211.

This is believed to be the site of Cantlowes Manor. An 'archaeological evaluation' by the Museum of London Archaeological Service (MOLA) in 1991, at the time of renovation of the building at the corner of St Pancras Way and Baynes Street revealed a hearth 'probably of thirteenth to fifteenth century date' in foundations³.

The house's position on the road, viewing southwest to overlook the Fleet, above St Pancras Church, could also have been determined by the spring line: springs were recorded in the basements of houses in both Jeffreys Street and Camden Road in the twentieth century. There are also ponds along either side of Kings Road.

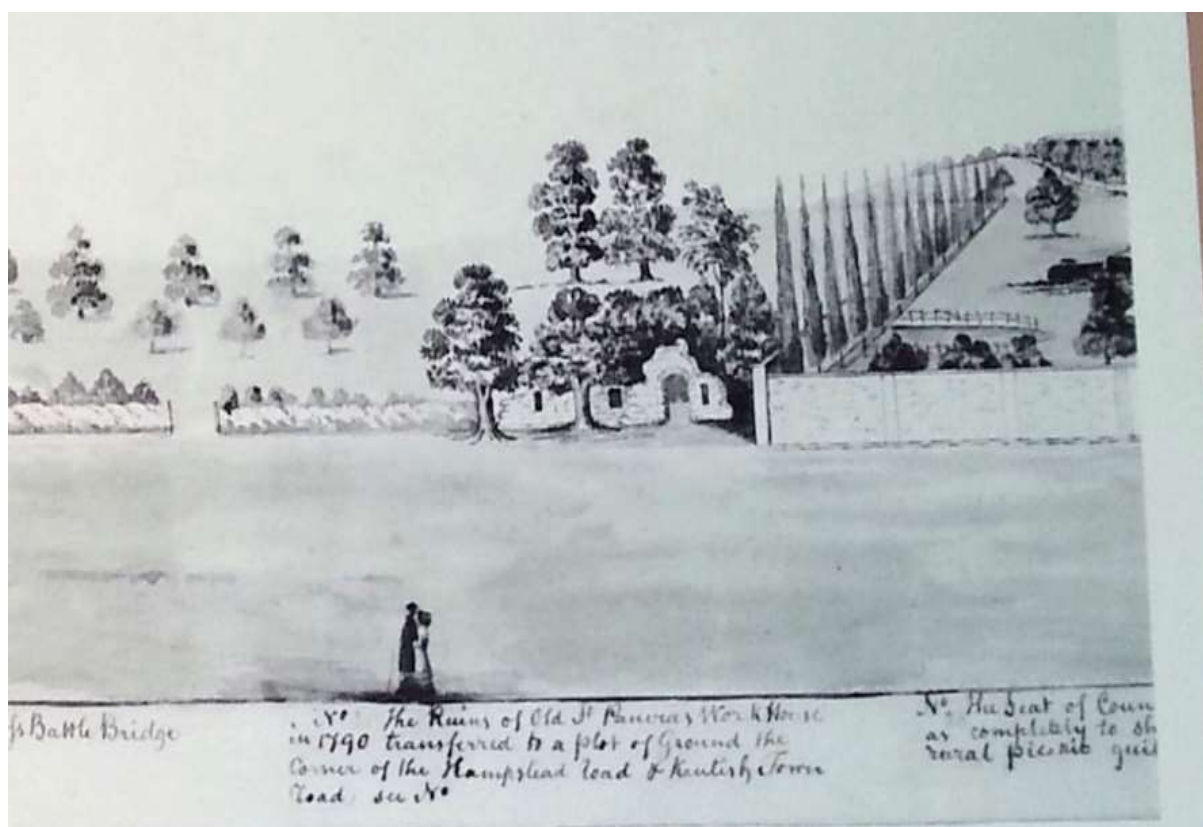
A further aspect of this corner is that, on the opposite side of the road, the first St Pancras Workhouse had been built:

³ <https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/library/browse/details.xhtml?recordId=1068151&recordType=GreyLit>



Roque map of 1750 showing 'Pancras Workhouse'

The 'ruins' of the workhouse, on the east side of St Pancras Way, are also shown in the panorama by James King.



Ruins of workhouse shown in King's panorama approx. 1790

The first Workhouse was moved in 1787 to a site on Lord Southampton's land at the junction of Hampstead Road and Kentish Town Road. Then in 1809 it moved to its final, third, site next to St Pancras Church, where the Vestry and St Pancras Hospital were subsequently also built. It was therefore always on the periphery of the Camden Town estate.

The first building along the King's Road was one of the 'Miscellaneous' leases, in 1816 (at £7 ground rent), with Lord Kenyon as lead, for the National School: sited at the very northern edge of the estate, it would have served both Camden Town and Kentish Town.



Map showing National School and Camden Cottages

Chitty & Shires (O) had leases on the 'east side of the turnpike road leading from Grays Inn lane to Kentish Town'— these probably became the first group of Camden Cottages (subsequently 90-96 Kings Road) the section of road north of Camden Road. (They were shown without any lessee on both the First and Second estate maps.)

Along with the laying out of Camden Road, on the southern side 1822-28 saw several double villa houses by individual builders (James Eringham, John Legg, William Bradwell, Stephen Cadby, George Duncan, John Weeks, William Bashall and George Dunn⁴). These buildings together were called Camden Cottages would have formed a significant presence either side for the view up Camden Road.

Randolph Street

Then in 1824, for £150, **Samuel Denton (R)** took on creating complete blocks streets, as Randolph Street and Prebend Street, with St Paul's Terrace on Kings Road and Canal Terrace – this last overlooking the new Canal.

⁴ Miscellaneous leases various within 3-16

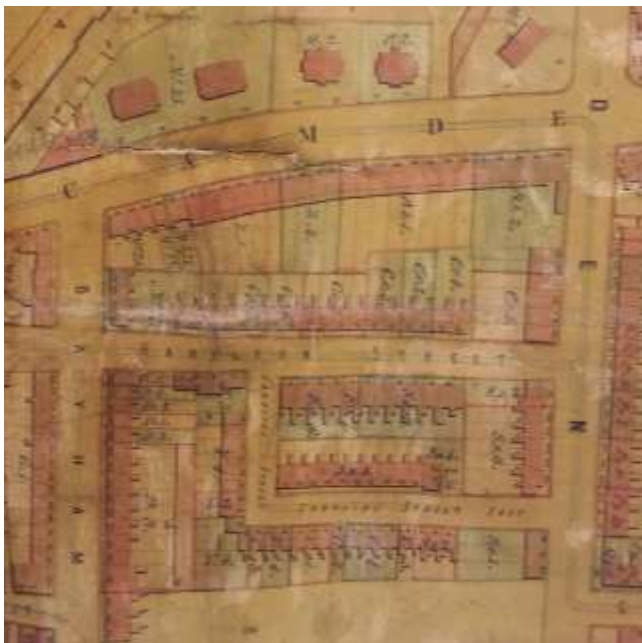


From 1825 Denton was joined by **William Line (V)**, who took an option for £180 to build on the new road with terraces called Brecknock Place, Brecknock Terrace and Brecknock Crescent – ornamental gardens between the two. One of the early buildings was the Lord Camden pub in Randolph Street. The terraces were mainly completed by 1829 although there was in-filling for peppercorn rents into the 1840s.

Yet, just as Kirkman and Hendy had found difficulties twenty years previously, both of the builders were overextended financially. Bankrupt in 1826, Line transferred ownership to Thomas Greenwood and continued building through to complete the ground rent value by 1832. And as a sign of changed power, the name of the side road that Line had introduced, and named after himself, was changed from Line Street to Little Randolph Street. On this east side of the estate, names for the Church were in the ascendency, with St Paul's terrace on Kings Road: there were later also built St Paul's Road, St Paul's Crescent and St Augustine's Road, all at the north-east side of the Estate.

Samuel Denton (**T**) also took on a larger contract, for £440, in 1826 for what was first called Earl Street and later Caroline (and now Carol) Street, within the Kirkman and Hendy land. But he also, like William Line, became overextended. Joseph Kay writes: "Mr Denton being unable to perform this contract to its full extent, it was found absolutely necessary in 1829

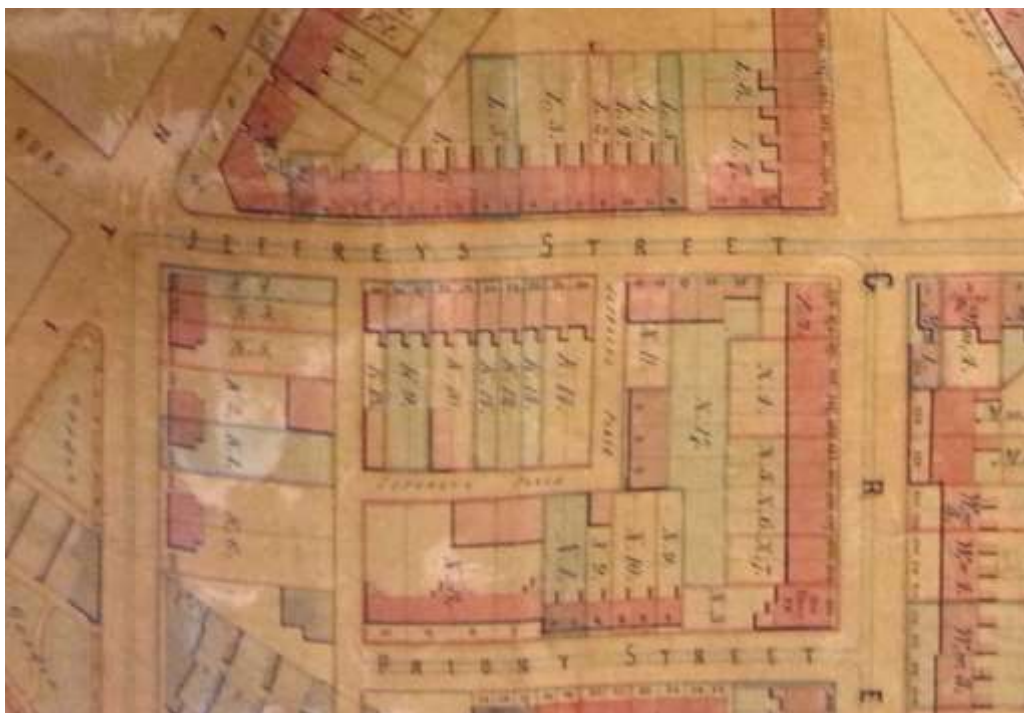
to relieve him from a part of the order to enable him to effect the remainder. A new small contract was agreed with Mr Hardwicke the Surveyor (of Russell Square)."



And further, Samuel Denton in 1829 took leases for £174 at Georgiana Street. But again, "Mr Denton being totally unable to perform his contract, all ground was surrendered in 1836."

Hamilton Street was originally called Greenland Street. George Lever's two rows of houses at the top of Bayham Street had in the 1820s formed the junction with Greenland Place; Greenland Street is shown on the 1833 First Estate map, but it is called Hamilton Street in the estate records. (The shows teasing confusion of alliances: Greenland was Lord Camden's agent and solicitor until 1803; Hamilton was the prebendary landlord until 1812.)

On the west side of Camden Road, **Richard Dent (X)** had a more measured approach. He took on a ground rent in 1826 of £130 and built slowly, from 1832 to 1845, a total of 53 houses (across the bed of the Fleet) between College Street, Jeffreys Street, Prioxy Street and Brecknock Street. (Dent's professional business was as a surveyor and map-maker, rather than developer.)



In a letter to Lord Camden of 8 Sept 1828, Joseph Kay wrote that Dent has under-contractors and it was fair for them to remove surplus ground to which the builder is fairly entitled. Moreover, Kay did not think Lord Camden could impose a fixed number of houses for a lease – 'I think every effort should be made to render the leases as little offensive as possible' ... 'This has been found to be so desirable on other large estates near London ... it has been the practice to settle a form (under a Conveyancer) with minimum words and one stamp.'

In contrast with Line and Denton, Dent did not go bankrupt. But the later 1820s was evidently a difficult time. On 9 April 1829 Richard Dent wrote to Lord Camden recommending that Camden should make loans to builders, who are otherwise short of cash to pay labourers. 'the amount to be invariably repaid before a lease is granted...' 'a builder in this case can go on with confidence'.. 'a builder would more strictly consult your surveyor in the progress, as his advancement would depend on the goodness of the works...' (he would, it seems, therefore have worked with Joseph Kay).