

Camden LB Consultation

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England's proposes revised boundaries for Camden wards, including for Camden Town while seeking to maintain electoral variance.

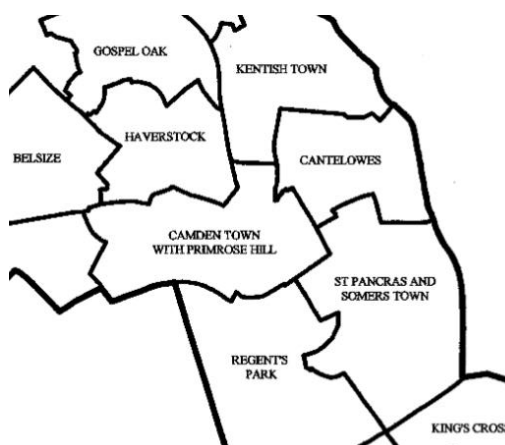
This presentation is late in the consultation but important because of relative lack of responses until now from Camden Town and south Kentish Town residents.

Introduction

Before 2002 there were more wards (26) and councillors (59). The wards boundaries before and after 1999 shown:



1982-2002



2002-2022

In 1999 the boundaries were revised for all the wards as well as many of the names. One beneficial effect was fewer ward boundaries at Britannia Junction (Camden Town Underground station).

Process

LGBCE has undertaken the consultation with transparency through the internet. In 2018, the Commission inquired from the Camden Council, which at present predominantly has Labour councillors. The Council broadly supported the existing boundaries, but other political parties proposed revisions.

The Commission's first draft recommendation changed almost all of the ward boundaries and increased the number of wards, some with only two councillors.

A second draft recommendation in September, however, introduces a new ward for 'Camden Town'. This proposal is unsatisfactory:

- * It prevents Primrose Hill ward having a boundary at Camden High Street
- * It separates Hawley Road from Kentish Town
- * It separates Rochester & Jeffreys from Cantelowes ward
- * It separates Camden Town Underground from much of Camden Town
- * It divides the junction at Camden Road Station across five wards – the same problem as previously at Britannia Junction and more than anywhere else now proposed within the Borough.

History

LB Camden was created in 1965 as the union of Holborn, St Pancras and Hampstead boroughs. The population, which fell to a low of 150000 in the 1980s is now larger again at 220,000. The borough is a place of transition for some younger people (students, migrants, visitors) but also of long-term residence for families and older people. It has a contrasting mix of private and social housing as well as private and public education.

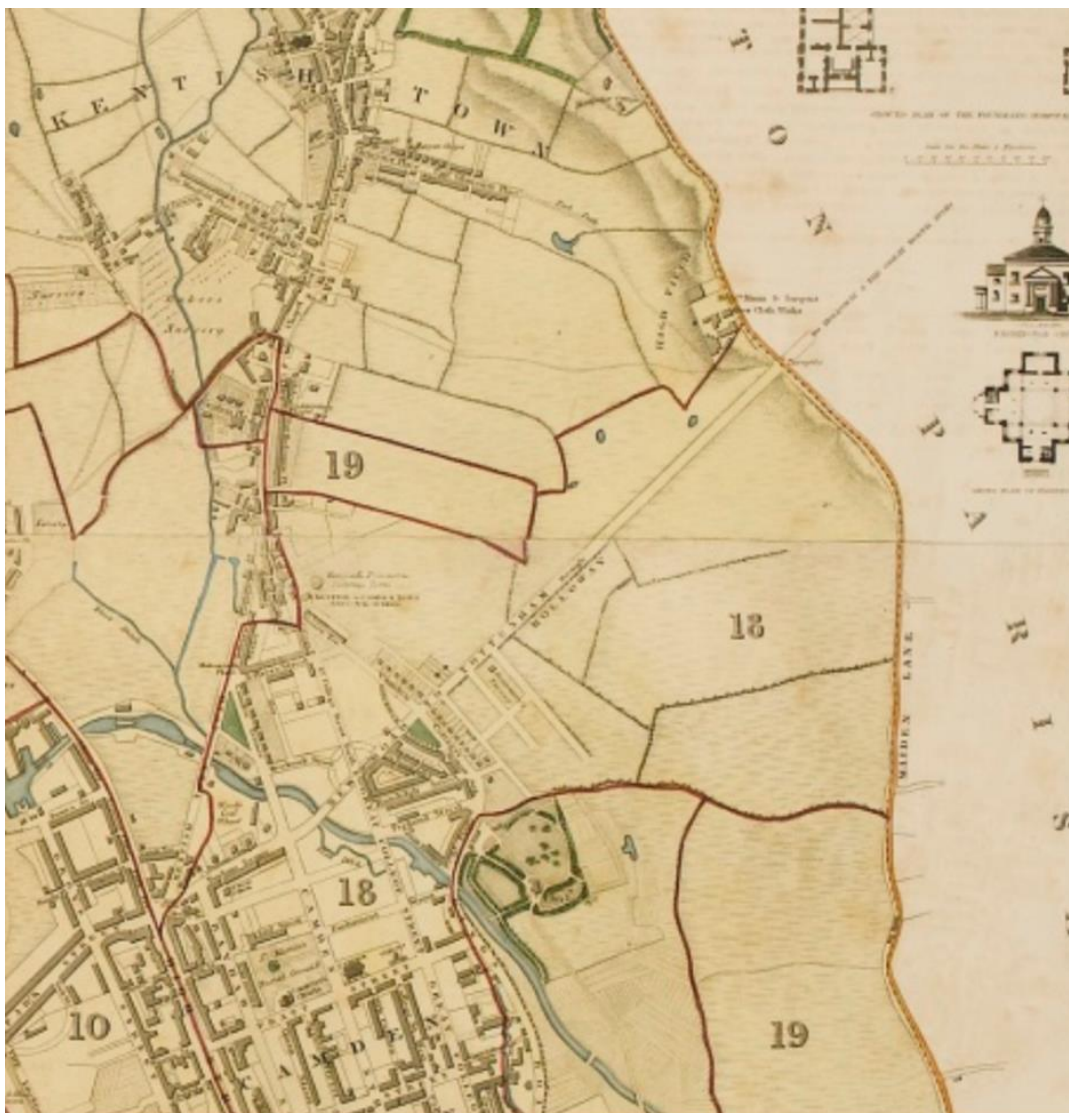
The Domesday Survey of 1086 describes the demesne land of Cantelowes. The manor house stood looked the Fleet River valley beside the road that is now St Pancras Way. The land adjacent to the east belonged was for St Pancras Manor. These boundaries continued into the nineteenth century, as indicated in this map:



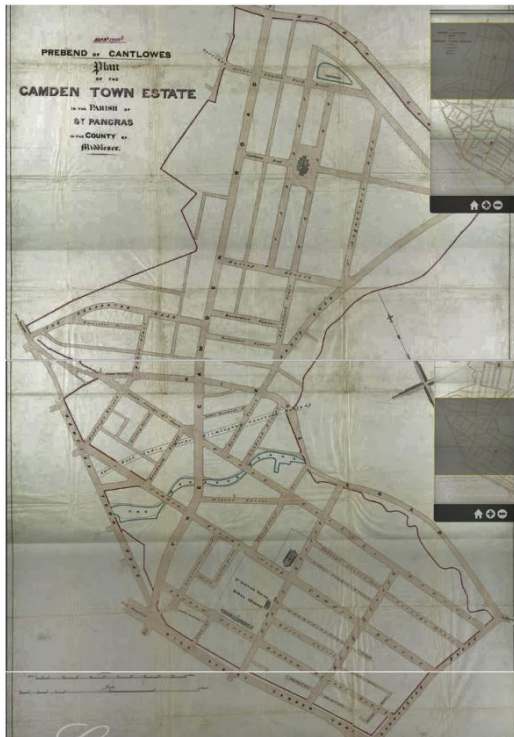
Courtesy, Ecclesiastical Commissioners archive. Cantlowes (yellow) and Pancras (blue) prebendal estates before 1850. On the right, land belonged to St Bartholomew's Hospital and became Kings Cross railway land. On the left (pink), land of Lord Southampton. A tentative North London Railway is in pencil.

Charles Pratt, Lord Camden, inherited the Cantelowes land through his wife Elizabeth Jeffreys. He began building Camden Town in 1790. In 1812, through an Act of Parliament, he shared the ground rents ownership 2/3 and 1/3 with St Paul's Cathedral. The Regent's canal was built in 1820 and the North London Railway in 1850. Much of Lord Camden's land was sold at auction in 1919, while the Church land – mainly social housing – was sold in the 1950s to St Pancras Borough. There is therefore a complex mix of housing, industry and transport across the estate.

The historic development of the Camden Town estate, separately from Kentish Town, is shown in this section of the map of Marylebone vestry of 1833.



Camden Road, linking Marylebone with Holloway, was set out by Act of Parliament from 1825. South and north Camden Town were connected by a grid of roads from Crowndale Road to York Way.



West-East crossings were made first by the Regent's Canal (1820) and later by the North London Railway (1850, widened 1870, when the new main station was built).

The central point became the railway, the station – built showing 'Camden Town Station' on its cornice – and the neighbourhood shopping.



Camden Town has significant historical associations in nineteenth century people including

(born): geologist Catherine Raisin, author Lucy Clifford, mathematician Oliver Heaviside

(resident): educationalist Frances Buss, scientists James de Carle Sowerby and Olaus Henrici, engineers Eugene Birch and Ambrose Fleming, painters William Daniel and Frederick Goodall, politicians Walter Bagehot and James Buckingham, as well as (for short times) authors Rimbaud and Dickens

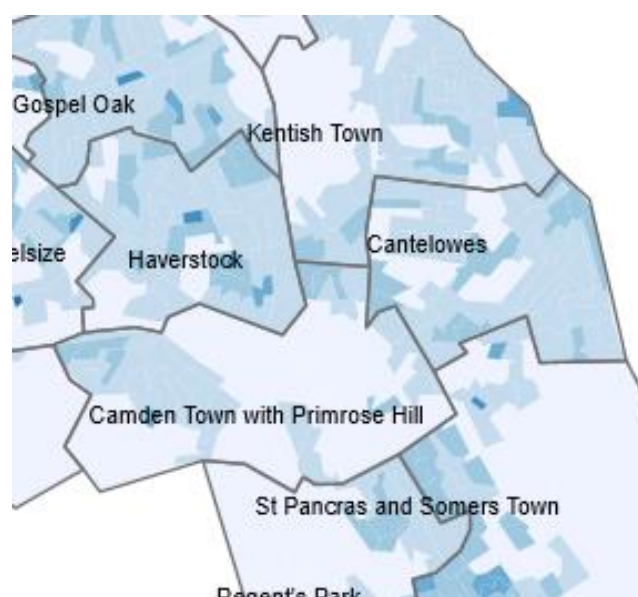
(buried): musician Charles Dibdin

(and contemporary): artists Paula Rego and Anthony Caro; singer Amy Winehouse.

Yet it has also been, and is, the home for many thousands of working people, with families attending national board schools as well as the Jewish Free School and Camden School for Girls and a home for peoples from Ireland, Cyprus and Africa. Camden Town District Management Committee wrote its submission "representing nineteen registered organisations supporting several thousands of residents which covers approximately Regents Park and St Pancras & Somers Town wards". Engravers worked at Dalziel (Bayham Street) and Goodall (College Street) and photographers in Camden Road. There was also Camden Town Literary and Scientific Institute (Sowerby was the secretary) and Camden Hall.

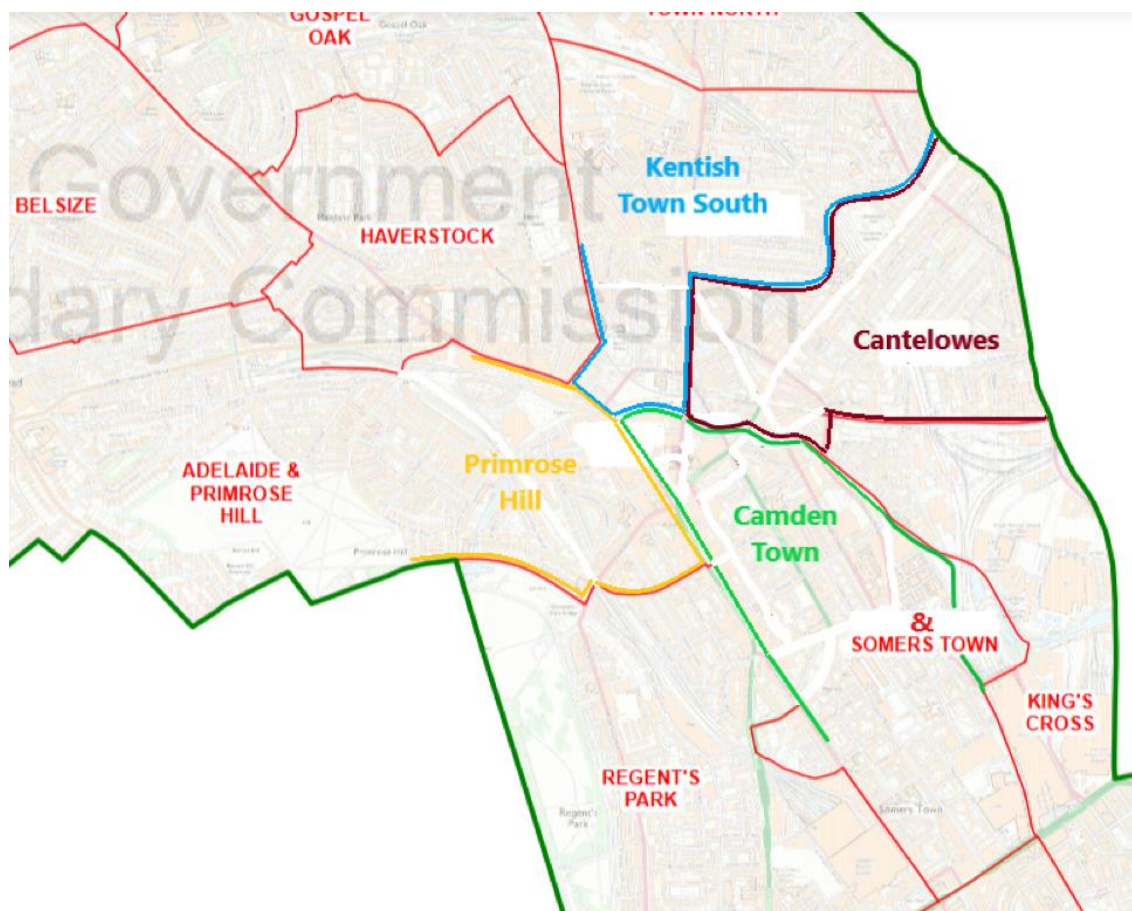
Rationale

Densities. Street maps do not show population densities. London terraces and high-rise residences have many electors while commercial areas have few. The map below shows the low densities of resident population for Camden Lock and Camden Market, thus forming a boundary from the communities north, west and east rather than a defined population itself. By contrast, the squares, crescents and play-areas of Cantlowes ward are for the residents.



Alex Singleton 2011 Census Open Atlas, University of Liverpool (from LB Camden)

Here is a new proposal for wards of central Camden



1. **Primrose Hill.** In their second proposals, the Conservatives recommended separating Primrose Hill and Camden Town ward. The reasons were partly to reduce the electoral size of the ward, and partly because of the unity of Primrose Hill – both community organisations and community severance. On the other hand, the Conservatives provide no evidence on behalf of their 'Camden Town' proposal.

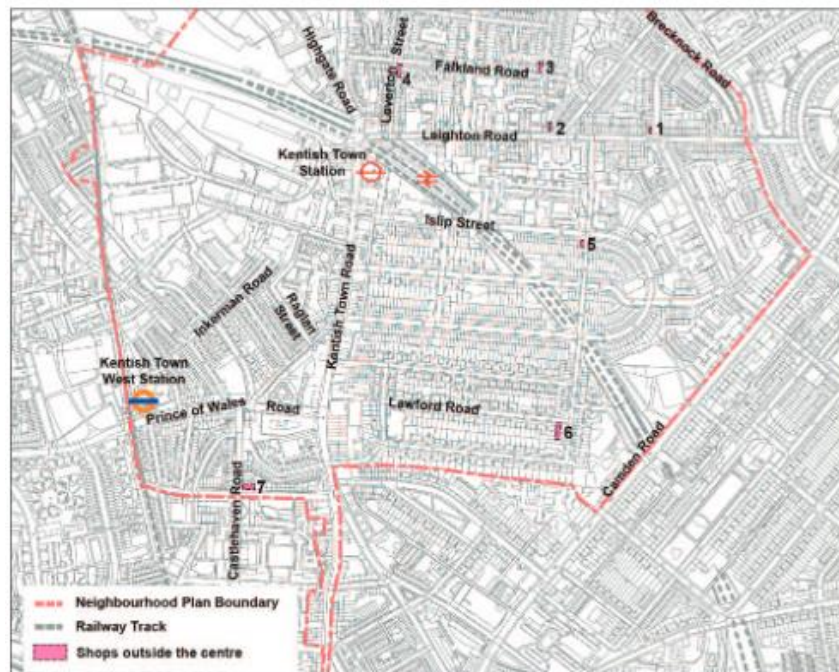
The Liberal Democrats proposed placing the area of Castlehaven in Haverstock ward; but LGBCE disagreed "because of the support for our proposed Kentish Town South ward and the strength of the evidence provided by the Camden Conservatives".

The present Primrose Hill ward councillors have written to the local newspaper to describe significant community links, including shopping and transport, that connect Primrose Hill with Camden Town. There are also cultural links for Gloucester Crescent.

At present Primrose Hill ward includes two polling districts (MB and MC) which have the same name, Castlehaven, and which both vote at The Haven, the community centre under the Overground railway line arches. However, community links across this polling district boundary have not been presented. An electoral ward boundary along Camden High Street and Chalk Farm Road would best meet the interests of Primrose Hill, Haverstock and Kentish Town wards.

2. **South Kentish Town** There has been (unstated) agreement to place the Bartholomew area of Camden Town to the new Kentish Town ward.

Kentish Town was given funding for neighbourhood community development and in 2016 was accepted as Kentish Town Neighbourhood Forum. The boundaries centre on Kentish Town Station and do not extend into Camden Town.



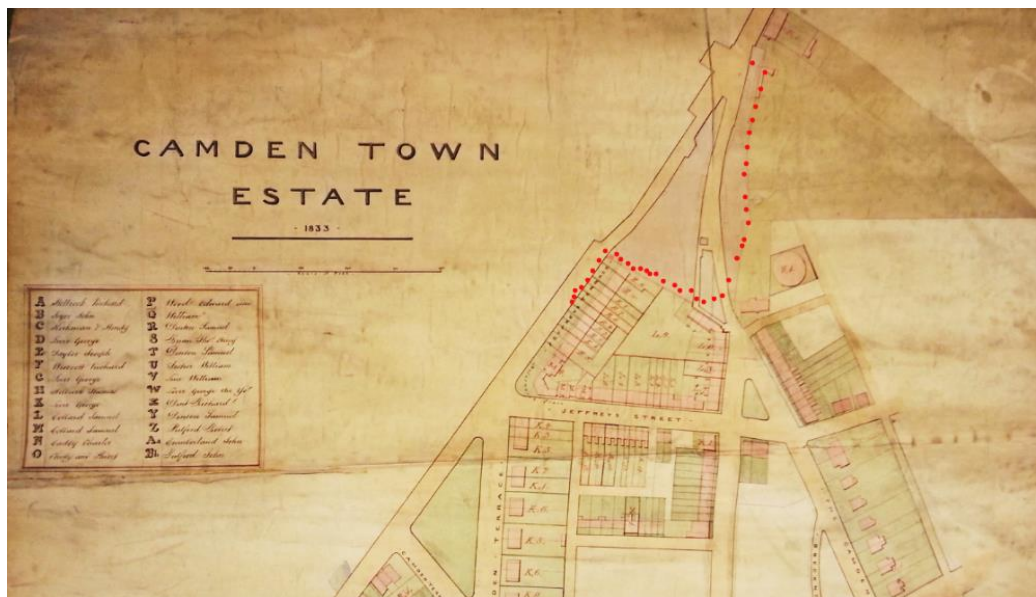
Camden Town Underground station, which opened in 1911, lies at an apex between the roads to Hampstead and Kentish Town; underneath the Northern line splits into two lines. (From 1785 to 1815 this site was St Pancras workhouse.) There are proposals to redevelop create a second exit for the station in Buck Street, building on the former school site; but these have not progressed. The station has a double role, for commuters in morning and evening and for tourist visitors during the day. Entry is from the east side and the exit west, to the tourist market and to the Zoo. On Sundays, the footfall is so great that visitors must walk to Chalk Farm or Mornington Crescent stations to return to the Underground.

The land between Regent's Canal and the station, once Camden Town cricket pitch, includes a community-oriented church and Open University offices. On the east side, Sainsbury's (this part not Listed) is proposed for development. The short stretch of Kentish Town Road, with two music clubs, is one of the most needy parts of the neighbourhood.

The new buildings at Hawley Wharf lie either side of the railway. There will be a shopping market, offices, flats and a top-floor balconied restaurant. The rebuilt Hawley primary school and the residential blocks face north onto the Clarence Way estate, thus part of south Kentish Town.

The road to Kentish town runs across the Fleet River and under the 1850 railway bridge. Camden Gardens reserved for communal residents use in the 1820s: the houses facing Kentish Town Road were some of the earliest of the Camden Town estate.

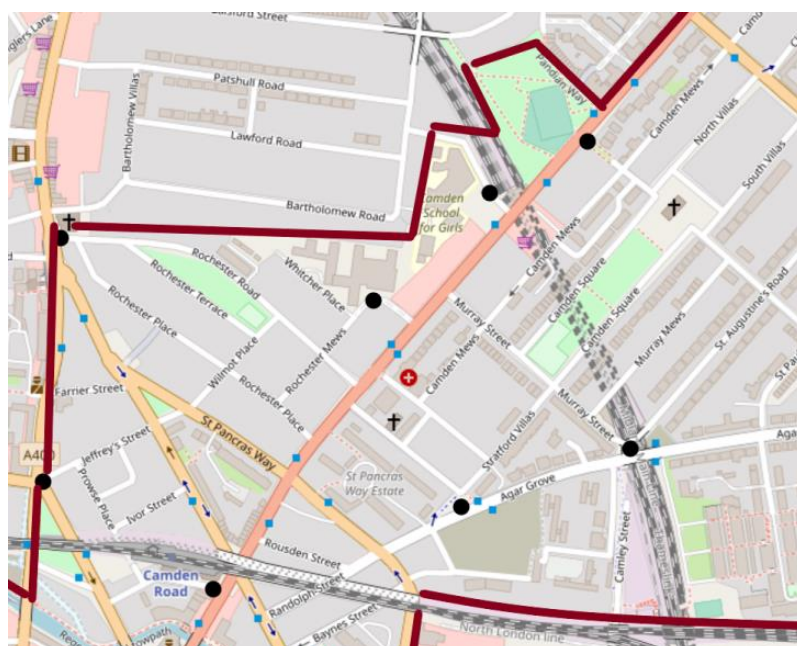
Royal College Street meets Kentish Town Road at a small triangle of land north of Farrier Street that used to be Kentish Town. This could be a small deviation for the ward boundary to include the housing facing from St Pancras Way.



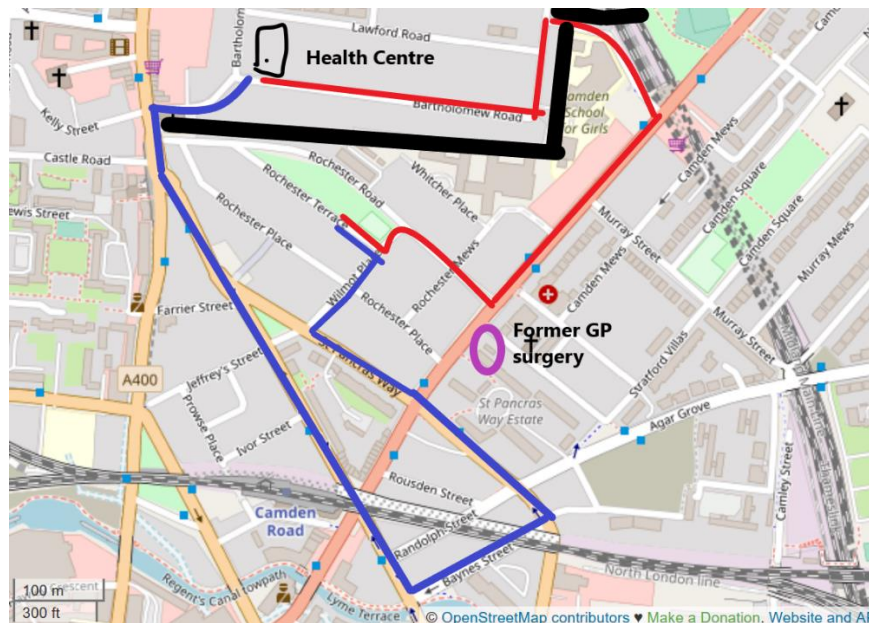
Opposite, the former (Northern Line) South Kentish Town Underground station was closed a century ago.

3. **Cantlowes** The Conservative Party first recommended "a single ward electing three councillors called 'Camden Road'". Their map (with Camden Town in capitals) included Clarence Way estate (west of Kentish Town Road), Rochester & Jeffreys, Camden Road station and Elm Village all within the ward, and a boundary along the Regent's Canal.

Much local knowledge is needed to use a vehicle (although cycles and pedestrians have freer reign.) Here are road closures (black dots):



Here is a map showing journeys needed from Rochester Terrace to the Health Centre in Bartholomew Road – compared with a surgery on Camden Road that was closed, against public will, by its private-capital owners.



Three 'squares' - Camden Gardens, College Gardens and Rochester Terrace Gardens – set out on Lord Camden's land by the estate architect Joseph Kay provide a unity between the grid roads. They complement two crescents on Camden Road and the two larger squares on the east side of Camden Road.

There are three playgrounds around the St Pancras Way / Camden Road junction, at Rochester Terrace Gardens, Agar Grove estate, Bernard Shaw Court and one at Murray Street, with the larger sports centre facilities at Canteloves Gardens. Rochester Terrace Gardens, Rochester Square and Camden Square each have residents associations and St Pancras Way / Bernard Shaw House have tenants associations. A community hall at the centre of St Pancras Way estate could be used more, while larger meetings – and polling – is at the Irish Centre in Murray Street.

Camden New Town history association includes Rochester and Jeffreys. Jeffreys has a local association that confirmed the 2016 bicentenary of the street in the Camden Town. The three conservation areas – Camden Broadway, Jeffreys and Rochester – have collaborated on shared issues, including the development of the site at 79 Camden Road, Twyman House (Camden Road) and Hawley Wharf.

Camden Road itself has been considered as the northwest boundary for Canteloves. Yet a road map hides the significance of the original boundary behind, following the former field lines. From Rochester Road it passes behind the UCL student residences and Camden School for Girls, crosses the railway line to include Cantlowes Gardens (all without houses), and then runs Camden Road to the Brecknock Arms – still celebrating the Camden estate – at the top of the hill.

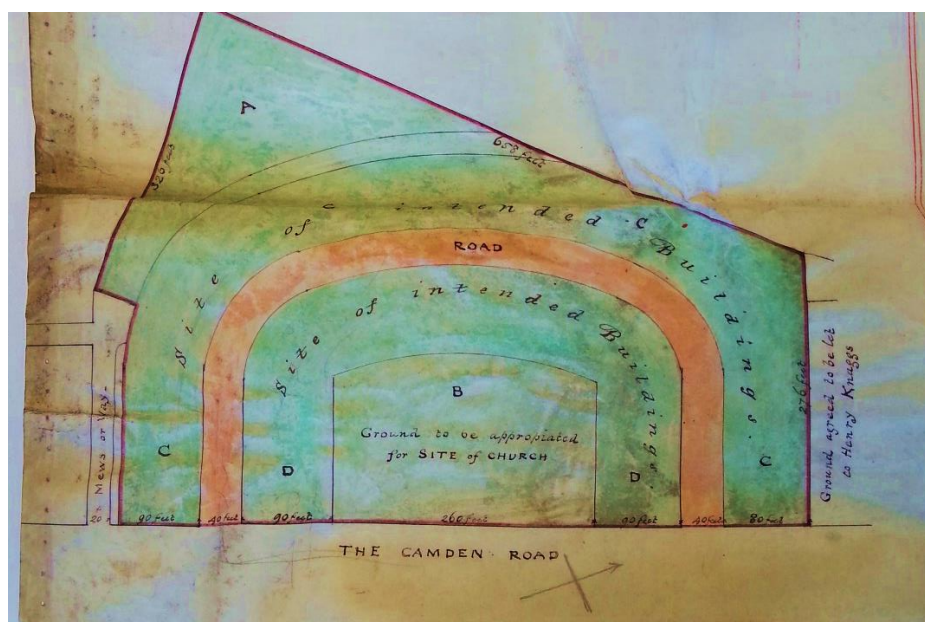


Cantlowes, Camden Square or Camden Road?

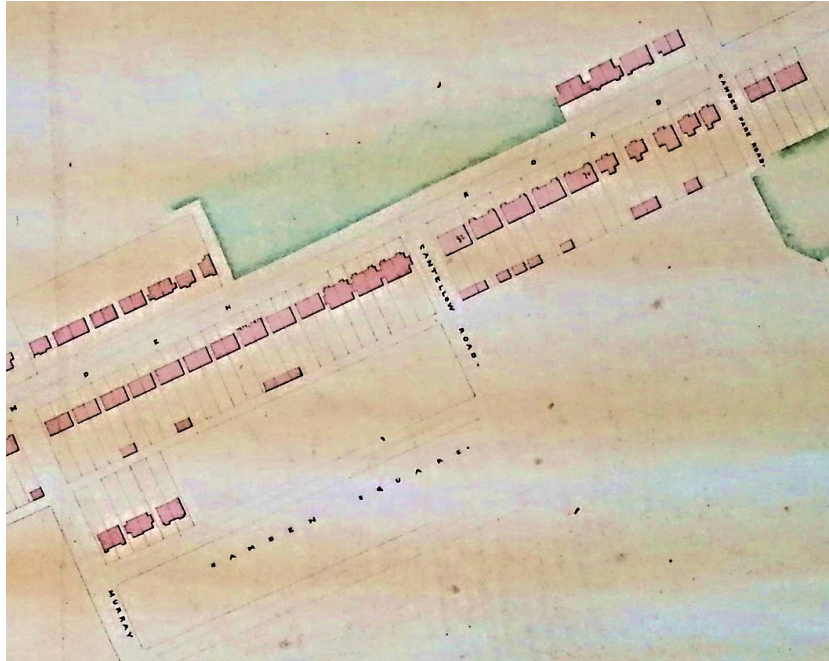
One representation has proposed that the name 'Cantelowes' is poorly recognised. Camden Road and Camden Square are suggested alternatives for the ward.

The full lands of Cantlowes, which stretched up to Highgate, passed into lay ownership but the 220 acres around Cantlowes manor were retained by St Paul's Cathedral as the stipend for a non-resident canon ('prebendary'). This prebend land was developed by Lord Camden.

In the 1840s, as spacious villas were built along Camden Road, an open space remained on the west side, intended for a new church.



After building delays, the church site was moved across to Camden Square, but Cantlowes Road runs across to Agar Grove. (The extra 'e' may have been part of 1850s London street re-naming. A plan of 1840s, below, uses Cantellow.) Several roads, including St Augustine's and Prebend Street, and the new church, St Paul's (war-damaged and then dismantled in the 1950s), were named for the Cathedral.



Volume 24 of *The Survey of London*, for St Pancras, includes a photograph of 'Cantlowes House', a terrace on the north side of Crowndale Road from the 1830s which was pulled down to make way for the Working Men's College (now Camden – not St Pancras – College, 'the oldest surviving adult education college in Europe'). Cantelowes (however spelled) is thus well-named for this area.

East-west

There is agreement to redrawing the south-eastern boundary of Cantlowes ward along the North London Railway line, near the original border of the St Pancras estate. St Thomas' church was built for this area in Wrotham Road, but was demolished after the war: its parish extended westwards to Rochester Road and its organ was built at the Rochester Place factory of 'father' Henry Wallis, of Rochester Terrace.

The corner of St Pancras Way, under the railway bridges, appears unloved, with its decaying billboards on the Camden Garden Centre. Yet this was once Cantlowes manor house (where a Mediaeval hearth has been identified); and England's last fatal duel is remembered by the Colonel Fawcett pub, once the Camden Arms, one of the earliest to be built in Camden Town.

Placing a ward boundary between Cantlowes and Camden Town to run along the Regent's Canal has logic. The canal is an open public greenway which can be readily walked. The boundary retains together the neighbourhood shops on all four sides of the intersection at Camden Road Station, which have been endangered by artificial planning boundaries on

Royal College Street; it enables Cantlowes ward transport gyratory, for the lateral 46 and 214 bus routes; and it is inclusive for Cantelowes residents whose main transport directions are Camden Road and Agar Grove.

4. **Camden Town**

St Pancras Way (King's Road until its 1936 renaming) is a very old road running north to Hampstead and Highgate beside the Fleet (on firmer ground, less likely to flood). The lands of St Pancras had a very different history to that of Camden Town. Barrister William Agar rebuilt the manor as Elm Lodge (now Elm Village estate) and fought a rewarding battle for the route of the Regent's Canal on his land. But there was also low-quality housing, the gas works and then came the railway goods yards.

High blocks of flats have now been built unremittingly on the former low industrial workshops on canal bank. In development style they look towards Kings Cross, but their access is from St Pancras Way. Elm Village, built in 1980s Prince Charles' community style, is deliberately secluded, its cars slipping in and out of the main road of St Pancras Way. Elm Village residents have engaged with the Kings Cross lands development: although isolated by the railway cutting, they are on the north side of the canal, adjacent to, if not connected to, the new towers south along Camley Street. But the Kings Cross developments are isolated. As examples – no effort has been given to try to improve the canal footway westwards; and Camley Street is a vehicle dead-end to the north.



St Pancras hospital is sited on a one-way road system behind the Royal Veterinary College at the southern corner of Camden Town. St Pancras church is opposite Somers Town. However, if the whole of southern Camden Town (Crowndale Road to Regent's Canal) is united in one ward and the land eastwards becomes Kings Cross, there appears little reason to retain the title 'St Pancras' now.

Crowndale Road is a boundary (a very old connecting road, 'Fig Lane'), as Somers Town roads are blocked against through traffic. Both Somers Town and Camden Town have strong community associations with good premises, housing associations and schools which serve their communities separately. The grounds for joining Camden Town and Somers Town in one ward have not been clearly made but perhaps it will depend on electoral equality.

There is strong community and historical logic for the western ward boundary of Camden Town to be the High Street, not at Bayham Street. The house on the west side of Bayham street where Dickens lived for a short time two centuries ago was demolished one century ago, yet the house of George Lever, who built these houses, still stands next to the St Martin's alms houses. Bayham Street is predominantly residential, not retail: a boundary there is a perception only of the one-way gyratory.

The southwest corner's Camden Palace theatre continues as an entertainment venue, in contrast to the Bedford Theatre on the west side, which closed. Mornington Crescent Underground station opens opposite the 18th-century site of the Southampton Arms. Oakley Square was the Bedford estate, not Camden estate. And Walter Sickert lived in Mornington Crescent, not in Camden Town.

Camden High Street has equal access from the west side wards, of Regent's Park and Primrose Hill. The High Street, which was mostly the first part of Camden Town to be built, runs up to the World's End pub.



Camden Town High Street 1880 at Greenland Place.

Camden Town is not the commercial area of Lock and Market, nor the isolated St Pancras Church and hospital, nor the Morning Crescent of Walter Sickert but a definable community within the streets, crescents and squares set out for Lord Camden.

In relation to LGBCE criteria of electoral equity, this proposal would not change the number of wards and would allow balanced ward populations. Temporary closure of LB Camden's data advisory services because of the national elections have made it impossible to confirm the population impacts of these proposals. LGBCE offers limited data only at polling district level. Drawing from this and recognising the objective of equity for electorates, the likely impacts are estimated:

- The proposed South Kentish Town ward would remain approximately population neutral. (Maintaining Rochester & Jeffreys in Cantelowes ward is balanced by adding Hawley and Castlehaven.)
- The existing Cantelowes ward would be approximately neutral. (Losing Bartholomew, retaining Rochester & Jeffreys and adding Agar estate. This may allow continuing with three councillors.)
- Primrose Hill ward would maintain its population at Gloucester Crescent to the High Street while losing Castlehaven and Hawley to South Kentish Town. The Chalk Farm /Morrisons land is alternatively adjacent to Haverstock.
- Regents Park ward would have a marginal population loss between the High Street and Bayham Street boundary.
- Camden Town ward would lose Castlehaven / Hawley population and the Chalk Farm / Morrisons land. It would gain at the sides of the High Street and St Pancras Way to Crowndale Road.
- Camden Town ward could join Somers Town as one ward or these could remain separate wards if Somers Town stayed with Kings Cross.