

**DONALD INSALL ASSOCIATES**  
**CHARTERED ARCHITECTS**  
**HISTORIC BUILDING & PLANNING CONSULTANTS**  
 19 WEST EATON PLACE  
 LONDON SW1X 8LT  
 TEL 020-7245 9888 FAX 020-7235 4370  
 E-mail [architects@insall-lon.co.uk](mailto:architects@insall-lon.co.uk) Website [www.insall-lon.co.uk](http://www.insall-lon.co.uk)

DVKH/PR/lt.001

Ms Helen Hutton  
 Slaughter & May  
 One Bunhill Row  
 LONDON  
 EC1Y 8YY

EX DIR	HDC	TP	2-3	AD	CLU	AO AK
R.B. K.C.	3 DEC 2004			PLANNING		
N	C	SW	SE	APP	IO	REC
HBS			ARB	FPLN	DES	FEES

By E-mail and Post

20 October 2004

Dear Helen

**PORTOBELLO DOCK: STABLE BLOCK**

I attach a brief description of the stable block which, as instructed, I visited this morning.

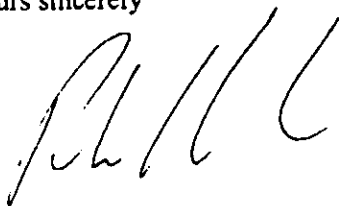
My feeling is that the building is not contemporary with the Dock itself, but probably dates from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. We should verify this in due course by reference to the historic OS maps.

Otherwise the building is of limited architectural quality and, other than its relationship with the Dock structures, has no real significance. It is now barely recognisable as a stables building, as alterations in the 1990s robbed it of any of its internal fittings and finishes and saw major re-modelling externally, which resulted in almost all characteristic structural forms and joinery being replaced with formulaic standard modern patterns.

A lot of the work carried out during this period was of mediocre quality, including re-pointing in hard cement mortars and rendering of large areas of two of the elevations.

My conclusion is that if a better building were proposed to replace it, then the demolition of the stable block could be justified.

Yours sincerely



Peter Riddington  
 for and on behalf of Donald Insall Associates Ltd

Directors: Nicholas V Thompson, BArch (Hons), RIBA (Chairman) Alan Frost, LVO, AA Dipl, RIBA, FICM, MaPS (Deputy Chairman) Donald W Insall, CBE, FSA, RWA, FRIBA, FRTPI, SP Dipl (Hons)  
 Iona Gibson, Dipl Arch, RIBA Jonathan Carey, Dipl Arch, RIBA Mark Wilkinson, BA (Hons), DipArch, RIBA Michael Shippobottom, MA, BACh, RIBA Simon Charrington, FCA, ATII (Company Secretary)  
 Senior Associates: Robert Dunton, BACh, BSc, RIBA Tony Dyson, Dipl Arch, RIBA Anthony Close-Smith, BA (Hons), BACh (Hons) Tony Barton, BA (Hons), DipArch, RIBA Peter Riddington, BSc (Hons), BACh (Hons), RIBA  
 Peter Carey, BA (Arch), DipArch, RIBA John Dangerfield, Dipl Arch, RIBA Matthew Seaborn, BA (Hons), Dip Arch, RIBA, FRSA Geoffrey Brosser, Dip BS, FRICS, MaPS Robert Fraser, Dip Arch, RIBA, IHBC  
 Associates: Maureen O'Connor, BA (Hons), BACh (Hons), RIBA, MaPS Robert Brown, BACh (Hons) Robin Dhar, BA (Hons), DipArch, RIBA, MaPS Helen Hutchinson, BA, BACh, MA, RIBA, IHBC  
 Peter Cooke, BA (Hons), DipArch, RIBA Francis Maude, MA, Dipl Arch, RIBA Gillian Scanlon, BA (Hons), BACh, RIBA Karen Tedeman-Barrett, BA, DipArch, MA (Arch Cons), RIBA Toby Sargeant (Accounts)  
 Consultants: Peter Locke, FSA, RIBA (Cambridge) Carol Thickins, BA (Arch), MA Arch, RIBA Christopher Martindale, FRIBA (Chester)  
 DONALD INSALL ASSOCIATES LTD REGISTERED IN ENGLAND No 1550406 VAT REGD No 240 3358 92 REGISTERED OFFICE 19 WEST EATON PLACE LONDON SW1X 8LT  
 LONDON BATH CAMBRIDGE CANTERBURY CHESTER SHREWSBURY

**PORTOBELLO DOCK: STABLE BLOCK  
DESCRIPTION**  
Donald Insall Associates  
October 2004

EX DIR	HDC	TP	CAC	AD	CLU	AO AK
R.B. K.C.	3 DEC 2004				PLANNING	
N	C	SW	SE	APP	IO	REC
HBS			ARB	EPLN	DES	FEES

Presumably dating from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and not part of the original dock development – this could be checked against the early OS maps – but the site evidence of what appear to be original reinforced concrete lintols at first and some ground floor would suggest this. A simple two storey brick building with a Welsh slate roof, basically in yellow stocks but with blue plinths and quoins and red string courses. Wooden sash windows generally with modern tiled cills. To the east is an extension which has a flat roof. This post-dates the main building and has been largely re-built in modern times – presumably circa 1990. Wooden sash and casement windows, concrete cills.

Otherwise, the building has been heavily altered and re-fitted in the 1990s works, which saw the replacement of all windows and doors and the re-modelling of the ground floor with window/door openings widely re-built on the north elevation.

On the south elevation, alterations at that time also included the re-building of the first floor in part and rendering of the ground floor in part. One original door survives on this elevation.

The east elevation is generally similar to the north elevation at first floor only.

The west elevation was almost entirely rendered in the 1990s work.

Internally, the building is entirely modern with no visible fabric that pre-dates the 1990s work.

The building's conversion/restoration in the 1990s was of a low quality, with hard cementitious mortars and exposed crude concrete lintols, PVC gutters and crudely altered window openings, with cement rendered margins. The building retains little of its stables character and its most interesting feature is the ramped brick path to its west side.

EX DIR	HDC	TP	CAC	AD	CLU	AO AK
R.B. K.C.	3 DEC 2004				PLANNING	
N	C	SW	SE	APP	IO	REC
HBS			ARB	FPLN	DES	FEES



**KENSAL HOUSE AND THE FORMER CORPORATION YARD,  
LONDON W10**

**A SUMMARY OF ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY AND CONTEXT**

for

**DERWENT VALLEY**

by

**DONALD INSALL ASSOCIATES**  
Chartered Architects  
Historic Building & Planning Consultants  
19 West Eaton Place  
London SW1X 8LT

November 2004

# **KENSAL HOUSE AND THE FORMER CORPORATION YARD, LONDON W10**

## **A SUMMARY OF ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY AND CONTEXT**

### **CONTENTS**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

#### **2.0 Methodology**

#### **3.0 Kensal House**

#### **4.0 The Former Corporation Yard Site**

##### **4.1 The Corporation Yard Site in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

##### **4.2 The Corporation Yard Site in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

##### **4.3 The Context of Refuse Yards**

##### **4.4 The Rarity of the Corporation Yard**

#### **5.0 Sources of Information**

##### **5.1 Sources Consulted**

##### **5.2 Bibliography**

#### **6.0 The Plates**

#### **Appendices**

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Kensal House and the former Corporation Yard comprise interesting and very different Victorian buildings. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was no relationship between them, but they now share ownership and have been recently linked by a footbridge. This union occurred when the properties were acquired by Virgin and used together thereafter by the company. The following account, however, looks at the house and the former Corporation Yard individually, and considers their architectural history as separate Victorian sites.

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

This account of the architectural history has been drawn from desk-top research using both primary and secondary sources, available in public repositories. It should be noted that no contacts have been made with individuals or companies connected in the past with the buildings, nor with the English Heritage London historians or the relevant amenity societies, which in this instance are the Victorian Society and possibly the Kensington & Chelsea Community History Group.

A list of sources consulted appears at 5.1 and a bibliography at 5.2.

## 3.0 KENSAL HOUSE

Kensal House is an imposing stuccoed house, built within the Parish of St Luke's Chelsea in an area close to the Grand Junction Canal. The area transferred to Paddington Borough in 1901 and is now within the City of Westminster.

Pevsner's eponymous "Buildings of England (London 3: North West)" states that the first reference to the house is in 1837. A letter held in the Local Studies Collection from a Mrs Pratt, the Chelsea Branch Librarian, to a Mr Bennett of 1981 states that the house is recorded in the 1841 census with a Mr Alfred Haines, who appears to have been a sailor, as occupier. In the 1851 census, the household includes a coachman and a footman. The house appears before 1852 in rate books at a Westbourn(e) Green address, beginning c1835. This suggests it was built c1834/5.

The Victorian form of the house and its lavishly planted garden may be deduced from the 1862/65 OS Map – see plate one. The house seems to have remained a private dwelling until the Edwardian period.

The house is clearly seen on the 1894 OS Map (see plate two), but by now houses have been put up in Church Place.

An article in the Paddington, Kensington & Bayswater Chronicle of 8 July 1911 records that the house had become a School for Tuberculous Children, opened by the Duke of Argyll. This states that "The undertaking is an experiment initiated by the Paddington & Kensington Dispensary for the Prevention of Consumption, with the co-operation of the London County Council. A large private house with an extensive garden by the side of the Grand Junction Canal has been equipped and supplied with

an educational staff by the latter body, the object being to provide instruction out of doors whenever practicable, and always under hygienic conditions, for children who would otherwise be debarred from obtaining regular education ... The mayor moved a vote of thanks ... Dr Dudfield [Chairman of the Dispensary Committee] who responded said that the idea of an open-air school should be adopted for general education and not reserved for sick children." Undated plans from the LCC/GLC Collection held by the National Monuments Record probably show the form of the house at this juncture. A tracing of these plans is plate three. Interestingly a letter in the local studies collection from the librarian to the Secretary of the Metropolitan Railway Surplus Lands Company Ltd states that the house remained in the occupation of a Charles Latta until becoming an open air school in the 1920s, which is, of course, not the case. The librarian goes on to state that the children were evacuated and the house used as an Auxiliary Fire Station during World War Two.

The 1955 OS Map (see plate four) shows the structures which had been put up in the garden, by that date.

The house was listed Grade II in 1986; for a copy of the listing see appendix one. It was heavily re-modelled and extended by architects Newman Levinson for the Virgin Group c1989. The practice is perhaps best known for its work in the new Billingsgate Market. Consent was given (reference OB/84/20) in January 1985 for extensions to the house. Listed building consent was granted in February 1990 for work to the basement. In 1989 Christopher Watts Associates acting for Virgin had obtained consent to erect a bridge linking the house to the Portobello Dock site. The situation in 1989 was recorded in T Aldous's 'A Prospect of Westminster', where he stated that "Extensions designed by the architects Newman Levinson are under construction. Across the canal in Kensington & Chelsea is the former Portobello Dock and a former Council Depot, all now used by Virgin which is proposing a private footbridge over the canal to link the two sites."

The house is a fine but not remarkable building which has followed a fairly common pattern of private then institutional then corporate use. The majority of other listed structures in its locale relate to Kensal Green Cemetery, the first of the great private cemeteries, which is one of the pre-eminent monuments in the city to the Victorian era.

#### 4.0 THE FORMER CORPORATION YARD SITE

The former Corporation Yard forms arguably the more interesting section of the site in terms of architectural and more particularly social history. It is a rare survival of a dock and adjacent structures used for the disposal of rubbish via the canal in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Utilitarian buildings tend to be interesting survivals because they are relatively rare. The need to change and suit new purposes overpowers ordinary buildings; as an English Heritage guide to London states:-

"Urban industry is unsentimental about its architecture; it has to be to survive."<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> E Harwood A Saint "Exploring England's Heritage: London" 1991 p 221.

Pevsner's "Buildings of England" describes what has survived of the refuse transfer station in this way:

"a picturesque group, evocative of the era of horse drawn dust carts. The carts descended a curved blue brick ramp to a deck across the canal dock to shoot their contents either into barges below or into the low buildings with arched openings between deck and canal."

It should be noted, however, that not all the component elements of the site as it was used as a Victorian refuse transfer yard survive intact. The stable block on the corner of Kensal Road and Ladbroke Grove has been very much reduced and altered and following demolition in the 1980s of part of the stable no longer retains its key relationship to this as a site interesting for the use of horses. Indeed it is very likely that the stables were re-modelled even before the 1980s works, most probably in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when horse drawn dust carts were ceasing to be used.

Information produced by the Kensington & Chelsea Community History Group suggests that horses were a common sight on the streets of North Kensington until the 1930s. It is a regular occurrence for the mews buildings to the grand 19<sup>th</sup> century houses of central London to have been re-modelled in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when stabling was no longer required, so it seems likely that it occurred here too. Enough of the refuse yard survived for it to be listed in November 1984 (see appendix two). The stable block buildings are not detailed within the description, possibly because of an already altered state. It would, however, have been within the curtilage of a listed building and been covered by listed building legislation from this date.

Set out below is what is known of the development of the refuse yard site and then a brief account of the disposal of rubbish in London.

#### **4.1 The Corporation Yard Site in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

The collection of rubbish in Paddington in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is described by the Victoria County History in this way: "Dust and ashes were collected by contractors who were appointed annually from 1824. Rates for watering certain roads were ordered in 1836 and the Grand Junction Canal Co's offer to water all the streets was accepted in 1845. There were separate contracts for watering, cleansing and dust collection in 1856 and 1865. Refuse was collected in 1888 by the Vestry, without the aid of contractors. A parish wharf had long been leased from the canal company on the north side of the basin and Paddington Council's scavenging (later cleansing) department remained there until it was succeeded by Westminster in 1965."<sup>2</sup>

The buildings on the Yard site (now Portobello Dock) are believed to date from the 1880s and included a platform over the canal basin for tipping rubbish onto barges below, which was reached by a sloping ramp. A covered wharf on two storeys was supported on cylindrical iron columns. Stock bricks with blue engineering brick dressings were used. Plate one, the OS Map of 1862/65 does not show the yard, but it is clearly visible in plate two, the OS of 1894/6, when it is referred to as Kensington

Wharf (it should be noted that at this date the stable is considerably larger than what is now left of it).

An evocative illustration of what refuse disposal was like in 1880s Paddington is provided by an engraving by William Ralston published in the "Quiver" in 1883 -- see plate five.

#### 4.2 The Corporation Yard Site in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

The Corporation Yard site continued to handle refuse into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A close examination of the OS Maps of 1915 shown in plate six and the OS Map of 1935 shown in plate seven shows that an extension has been added. This single storey extension survives still. It is quite possible that other work was done internally at this date, but no record has so far been found. No Building Act material pertaining to this survives in the London Metropolitan Archive, for example.

An unreferenced press cutting from 1976 has been found in Kensington & Chelsea Local Studies Collection, which describes the fate of the yard in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. This describes steps by a canal man to revive a neglected area of London. It states that:

"Portabella -- as the new site has been christened -- is on half an acre of what used to be the Kensal depot, where horse-drawn rubbish carts once emptied their loads through hatches into barges on the Grand Union Canal before resting in the nearby stables. During the war, the arches under the dumping hatches were converted into living quarters and used by North Kensington residents as a bomb shelter during the Blitz.

Once the war ended though, much of the depot became outmoded. The arches weren't needed anymore and the horses were soon replaced by motorised transport. The stables fell into disrepair and the canal like most canals in Britain in the 50s and 60s was no longer used, becoming clogged with rubbish and sludge. Happily, things are looking up for the canal and the surrounding buildings mainly due to a 64 year old canal man named Paddy Walker ... Paddy, along with architect Jim Ramsey and Jim's interior designer wife Liz, first became interested in the Kensal site some years ago, when all of it was being used by the Council's cleansing department as a depot for their lorries and dustcarts and was unavailable for any development as a public amenity since the opening of the new depot in Warwick Road, however the Council have agreed to let half of the site be developed as a pleasure centre..."

In the 1980s, after the sale of the yard to Richard Branson's Virgin, the site had a complicated planning history. The key factor in this history is that the yard was listed in 1984, but the stable block was not detailed in the listing, possibly as already surmised because of its extant condition. The condition of the block can be seen indistinctly in sales particulars of the site before the work for Virgin.

In July 1986 Building Design wrote up the proposals for the site which were being made and the impact of the listing. The article states that

"Pinchin & Kellow are a young practice with a growing reputation for thoughtful



sensitive work ... perhaps it comes as no surprise to discover that their modest scheme for the development of Portobello Dock in West London has been frustrated by a succession of problems despite all the good intentions of both client – Richard Branson's Virgin Holdings – and architects. After lengthy consideration beginning in 1984, Pinchin & Kellow came up with a mixed development of offices for Virgin, flats and craft workshops, retaining some existing structures and detailed in an appropriately sensitive spirit in traditional materials. Kensington & Chelsea supported the scheme and planning permission was duly given. Problems began when a 19<sup>th</sup> century horse ramp and deck (in poor condition) were listed by the Greater London Council (now under the control of English Heritage) and their removal was prevented. Further complications have arisen recently with DoE approval of a road widening scheme which would entail the demolition of an existing listed (sic) stable block that was to be retained in Pinchin & Kellow's proposals ..."

Further proposals were made and it is interesting to note that in February 1987 the architectural advisor to the Victorian Society, Mary Miers, wrote to the Director of Planning at Kensington & Chelsea and stated that

"Our Society objected to the previous application which involved the demolition of the ramp, bridge and platform, all of which are an integral part of this well preserved dock, the former Refuse Transfer Depot dating from 1880. We were therefore pleased to receive details of this new application and welcome the proposed retention and restoration of these features. Members of our Building Committee examined the new plans at a recent meeting and their main cause for concern was the treatment of the unlisted building on the corner of Kensal Road and Ladbroke Grove. This three storey building formerly comprising two floors of stables and cart sheds, with a fodder store above is within the Conservation Area and integral aspect of the operation of the site. With its high, stable-like windows and glazed lantern, it has character and is potentially very attractive... We hope you will agree that, although it is not listed, the former stable block is an integral part of the complex and should be refurbished rather than replaced if at all possible."

The application was, though, approved in 1988 and demolition of the three storey element went ahead, leaving only the two storey part and the paved incline to its side. An account of the work that went ahead was given in Building in May 1991. This describes the scheme by architect Christopher Watts for Vanson Development, Virgin's property company in this way:-

"Watts's scheme involved removing the hayloft and stable (the former was already scheduled for demolition under a road widening scheme) building a five storey office block at each end of the site and – the key that opened the door to consent for every other activity – restoring and preserving the old dock with its adjacent vaults topped by an arcade like structure. Also to be retained were the ramp up which the horses pulled their carts of rubbish and the deck over the dock from which the rubbish would then be dropped into the barges below. Watts's idea, which released enough space from the site to justify restoration work, was ingenious. He proposed damming the dock at the point where it vanished beneath the loading deck and using the land which had once been under water as a Virgin conference centre. The adjacent vaults would become offices, the arcaded area above a restaurant, the whole totalling 975m<sup>2</sup> of reclaimed space. This has all been done over the past four years. First one new block

was built on the eastern end of the site (the other will eventually follow) and its course nature perhaps reveals the architect as more at ease when conserving old buildings than when developing the new. His design for a steel bridge which links the Virgin staff with their colleagues in a building on the other side of the canal lacks the grace that such bridges frequently demonstrate ..."

In February 2004 FPD Savill produced a schedule of implemented and unimplemented planning permissions that affect the Corporation Yard, which forms appendix three.

It is important to note that permission was granted for the demolition of (what remains of the altered) stable block in 1990 and re-building of a larger office block. A site inspection was made by Donald Insall Associates in October 2004 and this included as appendix four.

#### 4.3 The Context of Refuse Yards

The Corporation Yard as outlined above has been significantly re-modelled in the late 1980s/1990s. It does, though, have inherent architectural and social interest as a remnant of London's now vanished dependence on horses and on canals. There was also a relationship between refuse and the very stock bricks from which Victorian London was being created. Ralph Turvey in "Economic Growth and Domestic Refuse in London" from "LSE on Social Science: A Centenary Anthology" wrote in 1996 of refuse/dust collection in this way:

"... The term 'refuse' was scarcely used in the nineteenth century; it was called 'dust' because, at the beginning of the period, it consisted mainly of dust and ashes.

Householders deposited their dust, together with peelings and sweepings in their 'dustbins' or 'dustholes' (which were fixed receptacles) for collection. When it needed to be taken away, a card bearing a large letter D, on sale in most stationers, was displayed or a chalked D was scrawled on a window. The dustmen descended into the area, and shovelled the dust into a wicker basket which they carried to their carts, mounting a ladder leant against the side to discharge it. A cartload was thus the measure used, gradually superseded by the ton as weighing of loads at the dust yard became more common. A load typically weighed somewhat less than one and a quarter tons, but weight varied a good deal. One reason was changes in the composition of refuse, another was differences in the size of cart and a third was differences in the way the men were paid. When Paddington shifted to paying its dustmen 2/6d a ton instead of 2/- a load, the weight of the average load rose considerably.

In Mayhew's time [a 19<sup>th</sup> century writer on the poor], only one Vestry did the work of collection itself; the rest put it out to contract, and Mayhew estimated that there were some ninety contractors in the Metropolitan Police District. The dustmen, scavengers (street cleaners) and nightmen were to some extent the same, but whereas the same contractor and the same men both removed the dust and cleansed the streets in many parishes, collection of night soil from cesspits was a separate operation, being privately contracted for by landlords.

Dusting by contract had its disadvantages. As Mayhew wrote of the contractors men, the collectors are in the habit of getting beer money in lieu thereof, at nearly all the houses from which they remove the dust, the public being thus in a manner compelled to make up the rate of wages, which should be paid by the employer, so that what is given to benefit the men really goes to the master, who invariably reduces the wages to the precise amount of the perquisites obtained... how can we wonder that they make it a rule when they receive neither beer nor money from a house to make as great a mess as possible the next time they come, scattering the dust and cinders about in such a manner, that, sooner than have any trouble with them, people mostly given them what they look for. The Chelsea Surveyor made the same points in 1886, a contractor can and does take into consideration the fees his men obtain, and he pays them accordingly, but a public body does not pay its men a few coppers for a day's work, and leave them to make it up with tips... The system of tips is the curse of local effort. It demoralises men, it causes them to act dishonestly in removing rubbish that ought to be otherwise disposed of, and it inflicts a great hardship on the poor.

Local authorities were sensitive not only to ratepayers' demands to have rates kept low, but also to their complaints about the service provided by the contractors, known as 'applications' to have dust removed. The Islington Medical Officer of Health was referring to them when, in 1897, he wrote 'I cannot but express my decided opinion that in every respect, and especially as regards the almost fabulous number of applications, the Contractors exhibited a total disregard of the obligations involved in their contracts, which were, during the period most obviously, and even scandalously disregarded. One would think that the utmost bounds of the consciences of these contractors must have been reached in contemplation of the provoking and persistent negligence they were displaying towards the inhabitants'.

An example of bother with contractors was the experience of Westminster District Board, which agreed in 1868 to pay a Mr O'Connor £420 for removing the dust. Within a month there were complaints of large accumulations of dust, but Mr O'Connor blamed this on his predecessor (who had tendered £500 for renewal of his contract). With many dustbins full to overflowing, the Board hired four carts temporarily to assist Mr O'Connor. But the complaints persisted, so carts were again hired, but this time Mr O'Connor was to be charged with their cost. A month later, the Board's foreman reported that 'in his opinion, Mr O'Connor was incapable of carrying out his contract, that he understood he had to remove from his present premises within a month, that he had taken a field close by, but there was no stabling or house on the land, and that he had heard today that O'Connor was in Horsemonger Lane Gaol for debt'. A week later he was still in prison and temporary hire was again necessary. Soon after, a tender for £595 from another contractor was accepted, renewed a year later for £845.

For all these reasons, more and more of the work of dusting (and scavenging) was gradually taken over by the Vestries and District Boards. They accepted that better service might cost more, in particular because of the abolition of tipping, and, in one case, for social reasons. This was in Clerkenwell, where the system of paying a contractor for sifting the dust was ended 'mainly with the view of ameliorating the position of the women who do the sifting, and securing to them payment in money instead of part money and part small coals.

By 1876, two Vestries, three District Boards and the City all did their own collection, which, in all cases, 'gave satisfaction', but of twenty-three of the other authorities which responded to questions from Paddington, only eight reported that the contract system 'gives satisfaction'. Paddington then inaugurated its own dusting department and sent a circular to all householders asking them not to tip the dustmen the usual penny a basketful. Certainly the authorities did not wish to tip the contractors' men themselves, for when, in Westminster in 1872, these men requested 'a contribution towards their Bean Feast', it was regretted that it was 'not in their power to comply with this request'!

Trade refuse, which was distinguished from domestic refuse, was a constant source of trouble. Shopkeepers swept refuse, garbage and decayed vegetable matter onto the street to be swept up by the scavengers, leading some Vestries to remove trade refuse and shop sweepings for a charge. Others required shopkeepers to remove their own refuse, in effect forcing them to use contractors. When dust contractors were employed, their men were inclined to obtain tips by collecting trade refuse as well as house dust. After 1891, the authorities were legally required to remove trade refuse if requested, or to arrange for a contractor to do so.

When Vestries and District Boards took over the collection of house dust, they started to report how many loads of dust they had collected. The distinction between trade and house refuse was never clear. Thus although their statistics cited below either relate to house dust alone, or to parishes where it was of small importance, the fact is that much of the so-called 'house dust' included some refuse from shops, offices, restaurants and so on...

The sailing barges that brought bricks to London from Kent and Essex brickfields took 'rough dust' (unsorted refuse) or sorted dust and cinders back on their return journeys, and from at least 1875, stock bricks were made from London refuse in Middlesex, Sussex and Buckinghamshire as well. The brickyards paid for it, so refuse had a market value. Early in the century, the brickyards were ready to pay a price exceeding collection and transport costs, so that, for the contractors, refuse was an economic good, not an economic bad. By Mayhew's time the price of bricks and the price of dust had fallen. 'Not many years ago' he wrote 'it was the practice for the various master dustmen to send in their tenders to the vestry, on a certain day appointed for the purpose, offering to pay a considerable sum yearly to the parish authorities for liberty to collect the dust from the several houses. "There was an immense demand for the article, and the contractors were unable to furnish a sufficient supply from London; ships were frequently freighted with it from other parts, ... Of late years, however, the demand has fallen off greatly, while the supply has been progressively increasing, owing to the extension of the Metropolis, so that the contractors 'now stipulate to receive a certain sum for the removal of it'. Some idea may be formed of the change which has taken place in this business from the fact that the 'parish of Shadwell, which formerly received the sum of £450 per annum for liberty to collect the dust, now pays the contractor the sum of £240 per annum for its removal'.

Much refuse was also sent unsorted to the brickfields, in which case it was allowed to lie for a year, so that the vegetable matter could rot away, before being sifted and graded. The prices paid by the brickmakers for ash and breeze fluctuated markedly

with the building cycle, their supply being completely insensitive to their prices, so that when building activity fell, these prices fell sharply and there was a rise in the net cost to the Vestry (or in the amounts tendered by contractors for collecting and disposing of refuse). Westminster was paid £350 by its contractor in 1867, but had to pay £595 in 1868, £845 in 1869 and £1,385 in 1870. Similarly, although St Pancras was paid by the contractors in the three years 1865-67, thereafter it was the contractors who were paid, the amount falling during the building boom of the late seventies. When prices fell, Vestries might abandon sifting, instead of paying for the removal of the unsorted dust, as with Islington in 1887-9 and Paddington in 1892, where it was noted that a contributory cause to the low price was 'the extended introduction of wire-cut and red bricks which do not contain ashes or breeze'...

London refuse was thus used for growth as well as resulting from it..."<sup>3</sup>

Sally Child in her article "The Horse in the City" writes of the staggering number of horses employed in the work of removing rubbish. She writes that

"The 1,300,000 cart loads of refuse removed from the streets of London in 1893 was the work of the 1,500 horses belonging to the Vestries and District Board of Works. Some of these horses weighted over 18 cwt, bought at around six years old from farmers and dealers for about £75. Not every horse was suitable as these horses had to back as readily as advance..."<sup>4</sup>

#### **4.4 The Rarity of the Corporation Yard**

The architecture of working life, as previously stated, is prone to change and less likely to survive than domestic institutional or civic building. The yard's listing reflects its specialness as a survival of a vanished but important feature of London life. This survival has not been uniform throughout the site, though, and the stable block is particularly changed. An indication of the overall importance of the site is given, though, by the fact that in October 2004 the National Monuments Record checked their database of listed buildings in England and found it to be the only site where the description states it to be a refuse transfer depot. Two other refuse depots were listed. They are a pair of shelters at Churchill Gardens in Westminster built in 1950 (not strictly a depot, it may be surmised) and Garchey refuse station, part of Park Hill, Sheffield, again from the 1950s.

### **5.0 SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

#### **5.1 Sources Consulted**

The following repositories have been consulted:

Westminster City Archive  
Westminster Planning Department  
Kensington & Chelsea Local Studies Collection

<sup>3</sup> R Turvey "Economic Growth & Domestic Refuse in London" LSE on Social Science: A Centenary Anthology 1996 available online.

<sup>4</sup> S Child "The Horse in the City" in Victorian Society Annual 1996 p11.

Kensington & Chelsea Planning Department  
The London Library  
The Guildhall Library  
The National Monuments Record  
The London Metropolitan Archive  
The RIBA Library  
The Mary Evans Picture Library.

## **5.2 Bibliography**

The Victorian Society Annual 1996  
LSE on Social Science: A Centenary Anthology 1996  
E Harwood A Saint "Exploring England's Heritage: London" 1991  
Victoria County History: A History of the County of Middlesex Volume IX 1989  
N Pevsner and B Cherry "The Buildings of England: London 3 North West" 1991

## 6.0 THE PLATES

## Plate List

1. Ordnance survey map drawn 1862-65. © Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited 2004.
2. Ordnance survey map drawn 1894-96. © Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited 2004.
3. Tracing after plan of Kensal House from the LCC/GLC Collection undated.
4. Ordnance survey map drawn 1955. © Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited 2004.
5. "Sifting Dust: Paddington" by kind permission of Mary Evans Picture Library.
6. Ordnance survey map drawn 1915. © Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited 2004.
7. Ordnance survey map drawn 1935. © Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited 2004.



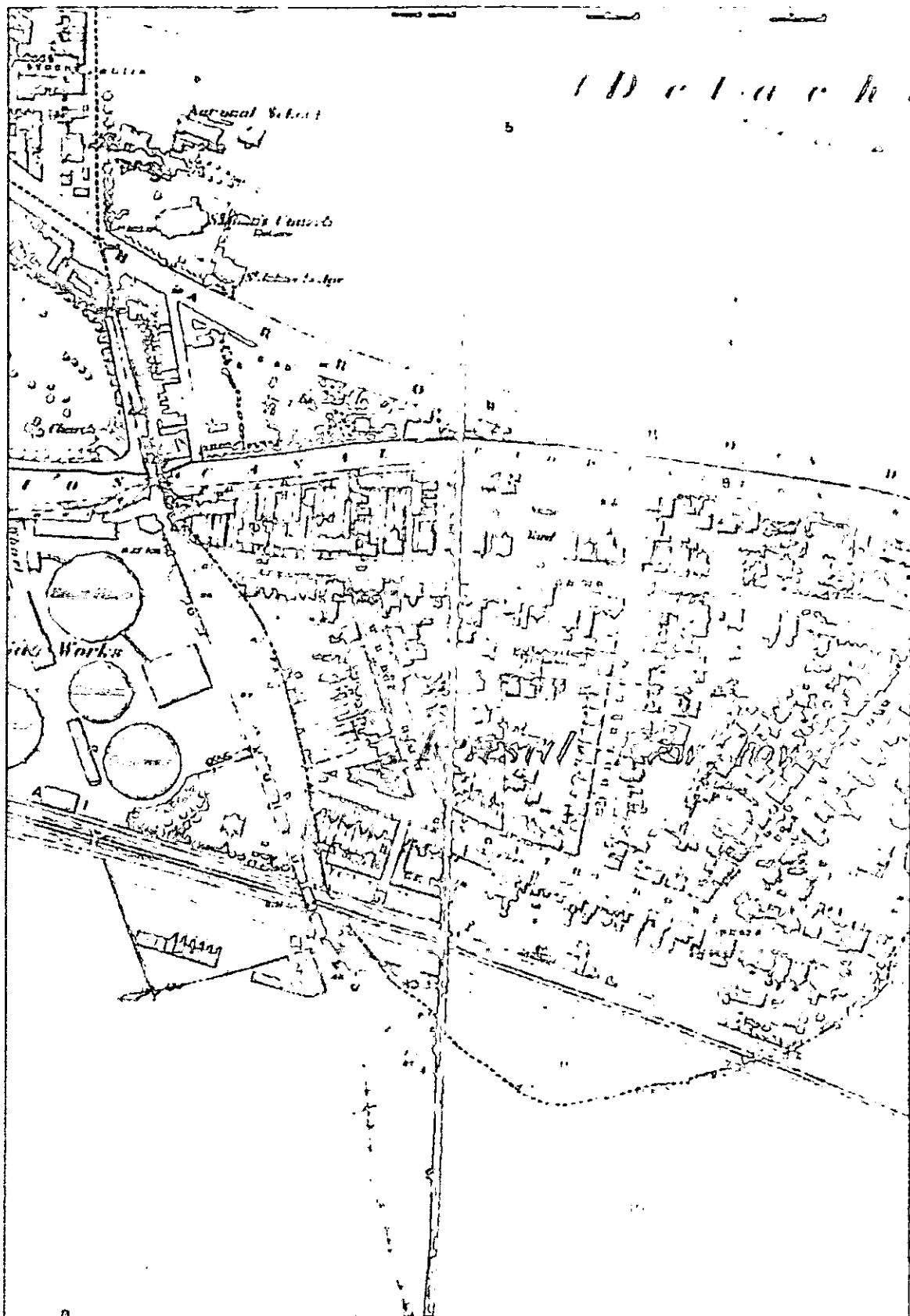


Plate 1. Ordnance Survey map drawn 1862-65. © Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited 2004.

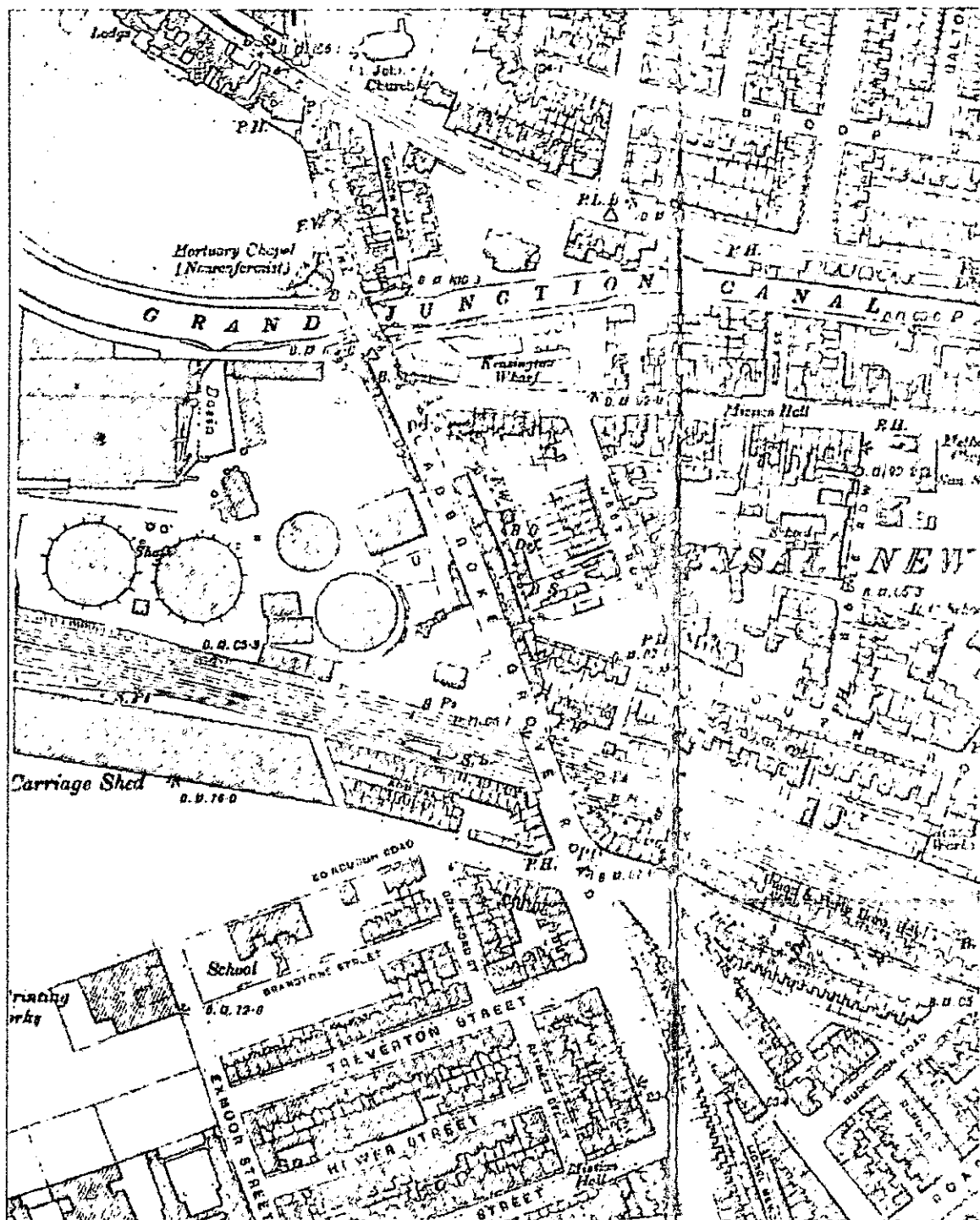
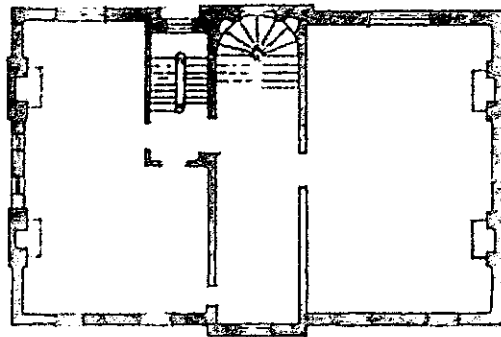
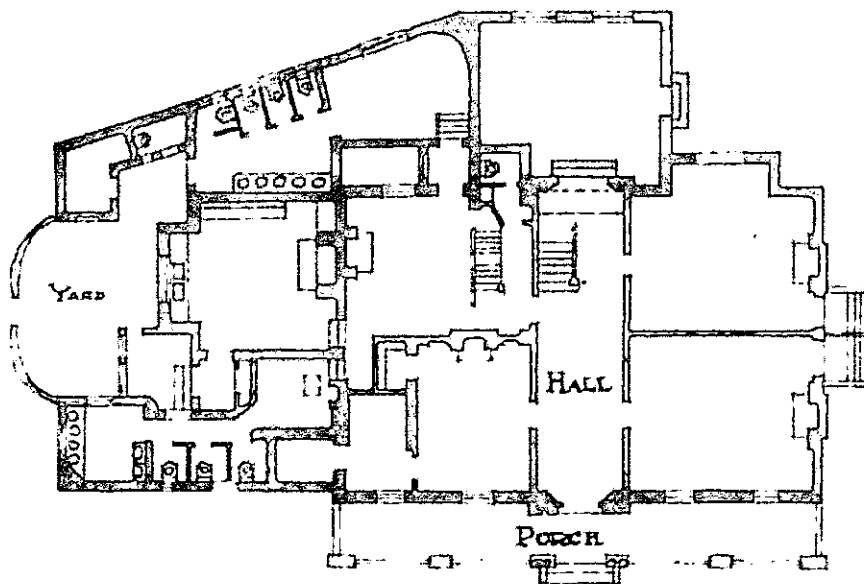


Plate 2. Ordnance Survey map drawn 1894-96. © Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited 2004.

KENSAL MOVIE MARROW ROAD



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



GROUND PLAN

Scale of 1" = 5' 0"

Plate 3. Tracing after plan of Kensal House from the LCC/GLC collection undated.



Plate 4. Ordnance Survey map drawn 1955. © Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited 2004.



Plate 5. "Sifting Dust: Paddington" by kind permission of Mary Evans Picture Library.

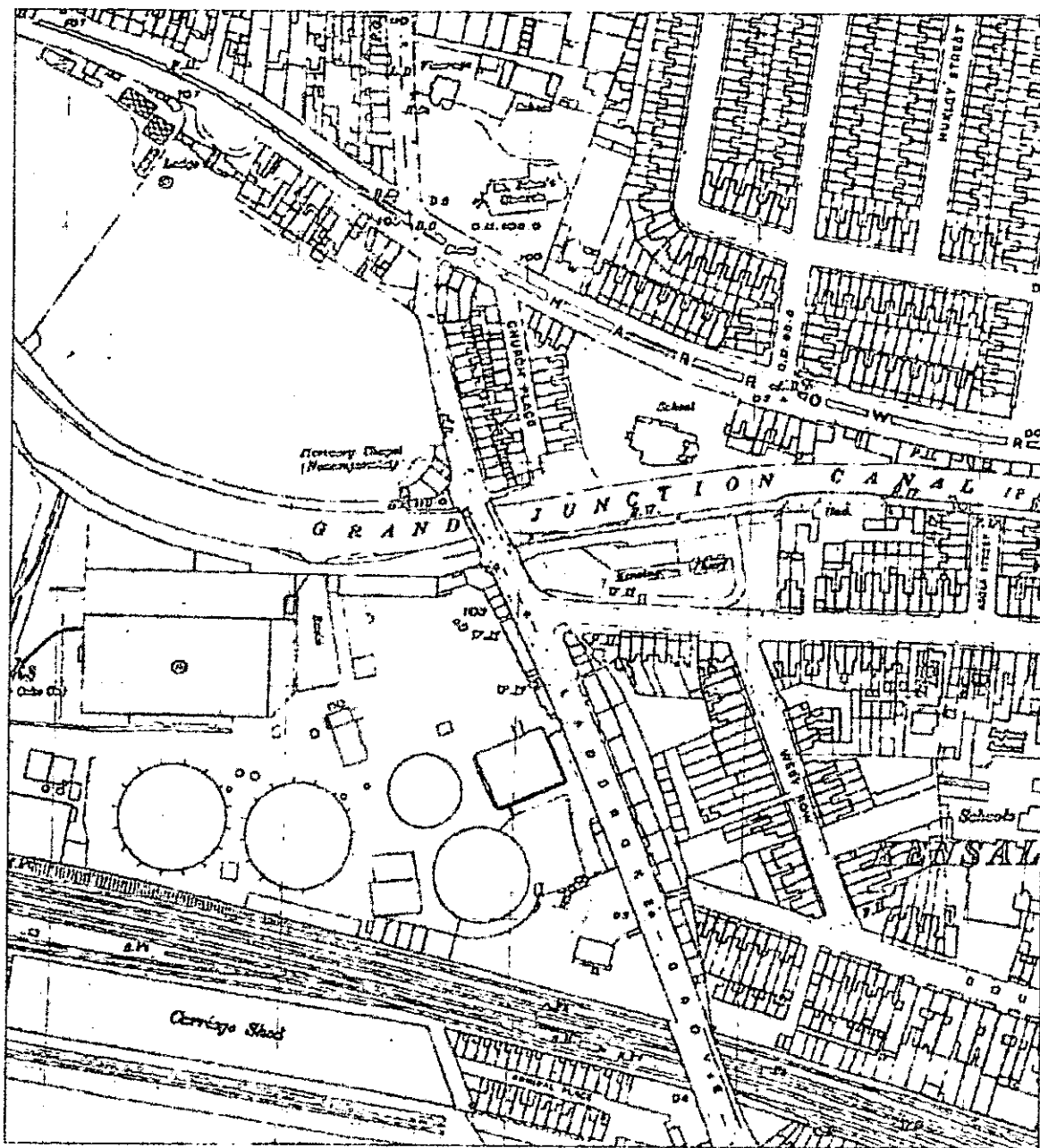


Plate 6. Ordnance Survey map drawn 1915. © Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited 2004.

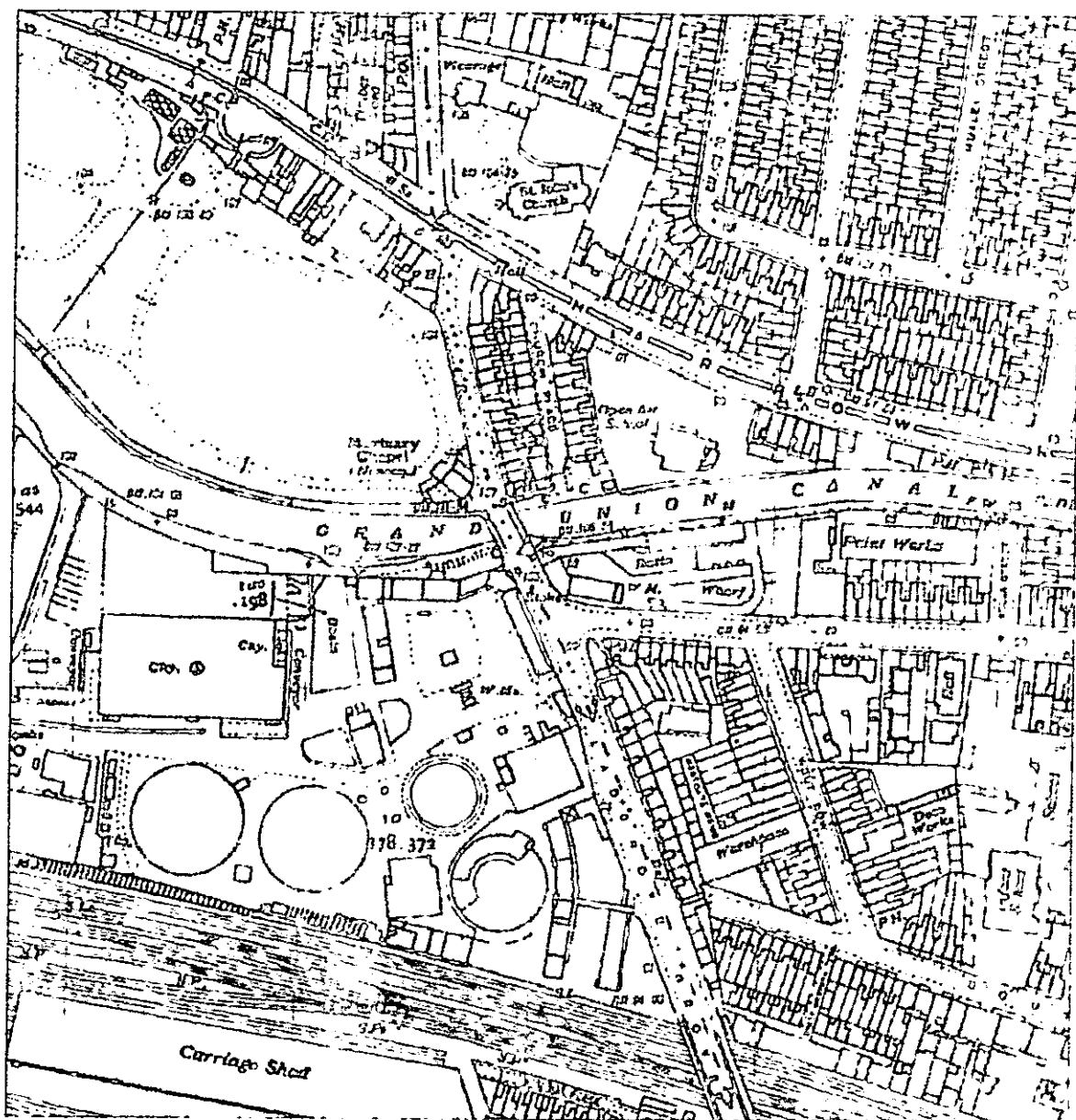


Plate 7. Ordnance Survey map drawn 1935. © Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited 2004.

## APPENDICES



## Appendix List

1. Kensal House Listing Description
2. Corporation Yard Listing Description
3. Planning history of Corporation Yard/Portobello Dock prepared by FPD Savills.
4. A site description prepared by Donald Insall Associates for the Stable Block, October 2004.

Appendix 1

TQ 2482 NW  
26/1  
1.5.86

CITY OF WESTMINSTER

HARROW ROAD W10  
(south side)

Kensal House  
II

GV

House, now in office use. c.1840-50. Stucco. Welsh slate roof. 3 storeys and basement, 5 bays. 2 storey, 2-bay extension to left. Rusticated quoins. Centre bay projects slightly and contains Corinthian porch with paired columns. Sash windows in architraves with pediments on consoles and pulvinated friezes to 1st floor. Floor bands, with guilloche moulding to 2nd floor. Heavy bracketed cornice. Glazed turret room on roof.

Listing NGR: TQ2396582411

## Appendix 2

TQ 2382 SE  
5/4

KENSAL ROAD W10

Corporation Yard  
(formerly Paddington  
Vestry Refuse Transfer  
Depot)

II

Former Refuse Transfer Depot. Circa 1880. Ramp, covered wharf and bridge. Stock brick with blue engineering brick dressings. Metal joists. Shed a 2 storey structure, the upper covered by 7 transverse pitched roofs, supported on cylindrical iron columns providing covered wharf for delivery of rubbish from barges below. Brick arcading to walls and to lower storey. Massive metal joists supporting bridging across wharf with heavy circular section iron balustrade. Ramp and bridge with granite sets to road surface. Further bridge to west. Bull-nosed stable pavoirs to road side and canal edging.

Listing NGR: TQ2398582367

### Appendix 3

# FPDSavills

INTERNATIONAL PROPERTY CONSULTANTS

## PLANNING HISTORY: CORPORATION YARD/PORTOBELLO DOCK, 328 KENSAL ROAD

### IMPLEMENTED PERMISSIONS:

Decision Date	App. Type & No.	App. Details	Notes
3 <sup>rd</sup> Aug 1989	Full Planning Permission TP/88/2569	Erection of a pedestrian footbridge across the Grand Union Canal between Kensal House.	-
3 <sup>rd</sup> Aug 1989	Listed Building Consent TP/88/2735	Erection of a pedestrian footbridge across the Grand Union Canal between Kensal House.	-
15 <sup>th</sup> Jan 1988	Full Planning Permission TP/87/0038	Erection of offices, and alterations to the existing buildings.	Restoration of dockside arcade, ramp, dock, bridges and the provision of public access to towpath. Site plans show plans for all current buildings on-site including dock/terrace over dock and workshop space under ramp/bridge. N.B. Subject to a Section 52 agreement superseded by the Section 52 Agreement for Planning Permission TP/88/2570 below.
15 <sup>th</sup> Jan 1988	Listed Building Consent TP/87/0039	Erection of offices, and alterations to the existing buildings.	Restoration of dockside arcade, ramp, dock, bridges and the provision of public access to towpath. Site plans show plans for all current buildings on-site including dock/terrace over dock and workshop space under ramp/bridge.

### UNIMPLEMENTED AND EXPIRED PERMISSIONS (EXCLUDING MINOR ALTERATIONS AND TEMPORARY STRUCTURES):

Decision Date	App. Type & No.	App. Details	Outcome
6 <sup>th</sup> April 1990	Full Planning Permission TP/88/2570	Erection of offices.	Approved - N.B. Subject to Section 52 Agreement. The Section 52 required upon the grant of planning permission the provision of a public right of way across the site to be kept open during specific hours.
6 <sup>th</sup> April 1990	Listed Building Consent TP/88/2733	Demolition of the existing stable block and the erection of offices.	Approved

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> October 2003

Page 4

# FPDSavills

INTERNATIONAL PROPERTY CONSULTANTS

2 <sup>nd</sup> Aug 1989	Full Planning Permission TP/88/2568	Elevational alterations and enclosures to provide additional office and restaurant floorspace.	Approved
2 <sup>nd</sup> Aug 1989	Listed Building Consent TP/88/2734	Elevational alterations and enclosures to provide additional office and restaurant floorspace.	Approved
20 <sup>th</sup> Feb 1986	Full Planning Permission TP/85/2214	Change of use for a limited period of the existing club/restaurant to offices (Boath Club).	Approved
30 <sup>th</sup> Jan 1986	Full Planning Permission TP/86/0019	Demolition of existing structures and erection of a four-storey office building, car parking, craft workshops and 20 residential flats.	Refused
19 <sup>th</sup> Apr 1985	Full Planning Permission TP/85/0031	Erection of offices, market workshops & 20 flats, with ancillary parking provision and a pavement crossover.	Refused
6 <sup>th</sup> Aug 1984	Full Planning Permission TP/84/1080	Use for a limited period, of the upper deck as an open market on weekends and bank holidays.	Approved
25 <sup>th</sup> Apr 1979	Full Planning Permission TP/79/0142	Construction of 8 craft workshops and use of the site as a pleasure boat base, restaurant, security flat and admin. office and puppet theatre workshop and rehearsal studio.	Approved
25 <sup>th</sup> Nov 1977	Full Planning Permission TP/77/0909	Change of use of the ground floor to storage washing and messing facilities and the 1 <sup>st</sup> floor to offices incorporating minor elevations in connection with the use as a local authority depot.	Approved
14 <sup>th</sup> Sep 1976	Full Planning Permission TP/76/0741	Use of parts of Kensal Depot as a pleasure boat base.	Approved



## Appendix 4

**PORTOBELLO DOCK: STABLE BLOCK**  
**DESCRIPTION**  
**Donald Insall Associates**

So re-modelled in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to be barely recognisable as part of the original dock development, the site evidence of reinforced concrete lintols at first and some ground floor would suggest that the building was heavily re-modelled in the early/mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. A simple two storey brick building with a Welsh slate roof, basically in yellow stocks but with blue plinths and quoins and red string courses. Wooden sash windows generally with modern tiled cills. To the east is an extension which has a flat roof. This post-dates the main building and has been largely re-built in modern times – presumably circa 1990. Wooden sash and casement windows, concrete cills.

Otherwise, the building has been heavily altered and re-fitted in the 1990s works, which saw the replacement of all windows and doors and the re-modelling of the ground floor with window/door openings widely re-built on the north elevation.

On the south elevation, alterations at that time also included the re-building of the first floor in part and rendering of the ground floor in part. One original door survives on this elevation.

The east elevation is generally similar to the north elevation at first floor only.

The west elevation was almost entirely rendered in the 1990s work.

Internally, the building is entirely modern with no visible fabric that pre-dates the 1990s work.

The building's conversion/restoration in the 1990s was of a low quality, with hard cementitious mortars and exposed crude concrete lintols, PVC gutters and crudely altered window openings, with cement rendered margins. The building retains little of its stables character and its most interesting feature is the ramped brick path to its west side.

(AP)

**DONALD INSALL ASSOCIATES**  
 CHARTERED ARCHITECTS  
 HISTORIC BUILDING & PLANNING CONSULTANTS  
 19 WEST EATON PLACE  
 LONDON SW1X 8LT  
 TEL 020-7245 9888 FAX 020-7235 4370  
 E-mail architects@insall-lon.co.uk Website www.insall-lon.co.uk

DVKH/PR/lt.001

Ms Helen Hutton  
 Slaughter & May  
 One Bunhill Row  
 LONDON  
 EC1Y 8YY

EX DIR	HDC	TP	CAC	AD	CLU	AO AK
R.B.	3 DEC 2004			PLANNING		
K.C.						
(N)	C	S.W	SE	APP	IO	REC
HBS			ARE	FPLN	REX	FEEF

(13)

By E-mail and Post

20 October 2004

Dear Helen

**PORTOBELLO DOCK: STABLE BLOCK**

I attach a brief description of the stable block which, as instructed, I visited this morning.

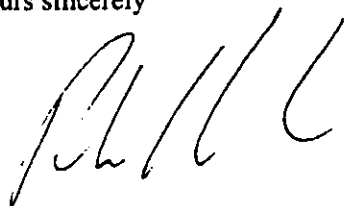
My feeling is that the building is not contemporary with the Dock itself, but probably dates from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. We should verify this in due course by reference to the historic OS maps.

Otherwise the building is of limited architectural quality and, other than its relationship with the Dock structures, has no real significance. It is now barely recognisable as a stables building, as alterations in the 1990s robbed it of any of its internal fittings and finishes and saw major re-modelling externally, which resulted in almost all characteristic structural forms and joinery being replaced with formulaic standard modern patterns.

A lot of the work carried out during this period was of mediocre quality, including re-pointing in hard cement mortars and rendering of large areas of two of the elevations.

My conclusion is that if a better building were proposed to replace it, then the demolition of the stable block could be justified.

Yours sincerely



Peter Riddington  
 for and on behalf of Donald Insall Associates Ltd

## **PORTOBELLO DOCK: STABLE BLOCK**

### **DESCRIPTION**

**Donald Insall Associates**

**October 2004**

Presumably dating from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and not part of the original dock development – this could be checked against the early OS maps – but the site evidence of what appear to be original reinforced concrete lintols at first and some ground floor would suggest this. A simple two storey brick building with a Welsh slate roof, basically in yellow stocks but with blue plinths and quoins and red string courses. Wooden sash windows generally with modern tiled cills. To the east is an extension which has a flat roof. This post-dates the main building and has been largely re-built in modern times – presumably circa 1990. Wooden sash and casement windows, concrete cills.

Otherwise, the building has been heavily altered and re-fitted in the 1990s works, which saw the replacement of all windows and doors and the re-modelling of the ground floor with window/door openings widely re-built on the north elevation.

On the south elevation, alterations at that time also included the re-building of the first floor in part and rendering of the ground floor in part. One original door survives on this elevation.

The east elevation is generally similar to the north elevation at first floor only.

The west elevation was almost entirely rendered in the 1990s work.

Internally, the building is entirely modern with no visible fabric that pre-dates the 1990s work.

The building's conversion/restoration in the 1990s was of a low quality, with hard cementitious mortars and exposed crude concrete lintols, PVC gutters and crudely altered window openings, with cement rendered margins. The building retains little of its stables character and its most interesting feature is the ramped brick path to its west side.

① PC + LB ② AP.

Our Ref: MPS/v/2390/3.0

21

19/10 October 14, 2004

Andrew Patterson  
Planning Department  
Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea  
The Town Hall  
Hornton Street  
London W8 7NX

EX DIR	HDC	TP	CAC	AD	CLU	AO AK
R.B. K.C.	18 OCT 2004				PLANNING	
N	C	S.W	SE	APP	IO	REC
HBS			ARB	FPLN	DES	FEES

(p)

Dear Andrew

Re: Portobello Dock

Further to our meeting on Monday, 11/10/04, we have reduced the height of the upper storeys and we enclose a set of visuals that show the improvement to the bulk and skyline of the proposed building.

We have put the new proposal alongside the one we gave you on Monday so that the visual improvement is clear.

Could you please show this to David MacDonald and if you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Michael Stiff  
Stiff + Trevillion Architects

Enc.

Cc: R. Hillebron - Slaughter & May (+ enc.)

# SLAUGHTER AND MAY

One Bunhill Row  
London EC1Y 8YY  
T +44 (0)20 7600 1200  
F +44 (0)20 7090 5000

EX DIR	HDC	TP	3-3	AD	CLU	AO AK
R.B. K.C.	3 DEC 2004			PLANNING		
N	C	SW	SE	APP	IO	REC
HBS			ARB	FPLN	DES	FEES

## URGENT BY COURIER

2 December 2004

Andrew Patterson,  
Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea,  
The Town Hall,  
Hornton Street,  
London,  
W8 7NX.

Your reference  
DPS/DCN/PP/04/01615  
Our reference  
DJB/NDFG/RLH  
Direct line  
020 7090 4027

Dear Mr. Patterson,

### Application for Planning Permission at Portobello Dock Kensal Road, London, W10 5BZ

In advance of the meeting at site at 12 noon tomorrow 3 December I enclose two copies of a letter written by Peter Riddington of Donald Insall Associates together with the Donald Insall Associates Historic Buildings Report. You will note that the Report was commissioned by my client to deal with the whole of the site owned by them but there are specific references in it to the former stable block which is proposed should be now demolished and this is also the subject of the letter written by Peter Riddington who is an Historic Buildings Specialist.

The stable block itself is not specifically referred to in the listing and was considered appropriate for demolition in 1990 shortly after the listing had taken place. There had been no factual changes since that time and consequently we consider that demolition is still justified.

However, we have referred back to PPG15 with regard to the particular issues that should be addressed in order to justify this position. These seem to us to be as follows:-

1. The importance of the building, its intrinsic architectural and historic interest and rarity in both national and local terms.
2. The particular physical features of the building (which may include its design, plan, materials or location).
3. The buildings setting and its contribution to the local scene.
4. The extent to which the proposed works would bring substantial benefits for the community, in particular by contributing to the economic regeneration of the area or the enhancement of its environment (including other listed buildings).

TN Clark  
R Slater  
TA Kinnerley  
DJ Beales  
JEF Rushworth  
MGC Nicholson  
SM Edge  
NPG Boardman  
IW Goldie  
M Hughes  
CW James  
EA Codrington  
RMG Goulding  
ARF Hall  
AJR Newhouse

GES Seligman  
PFJ Bennett  
St JA Flaherty  
RM Fox  
DT Frank  
CFI Saul  
CJ Saunders  
RJ Thomhill  
CJ Ains  
RNS Grandison  
GP White  
NJ Archer  
AG Balfour  
CM Horton

EA Barrett  
PP Chappatte  
RJN Cripps  
P Jolliffe  
CD Randell  
WSM Robinson  
RV Carson  
SL Edwards  
JM Featherby  
F Murphy  
PM Oirney  
PH Stacey  
CWY Underhill  
OA Wareham  
RJ Clark

SJ Cooke  
PLR Deckers  
DL Finkler  
CW Harvey-Kelly  
A-A Maggjar  
SJ Phillips  
JD Rice  
MA Whelton  
MD Bennett  
RD de Carle  
SP Hall  
WJ Sibree  
RC Stern  
JR Triggs  
EGL Wyld

A Beare  
JD Boyce  
MEM Mattrell  
KI Hodgson  
N von Bismarck  
PWH Brien  
JM Fern  
AN Hyman  
AC Johnson  
EF Keeble  
KR Davis  
SR Galbraith  
NDF Gray  
MS Hutchinson  
SRB Powell

AG Ryde  
JAD Marks  
SD Wama-kula-surya  
DA Wittmann  
TS Boxell  
SJ Luder  
AJ McClean  
JC Twentyman  
GN Eaborn  
CG Earles  
HK Griffiths  
STM Lee  
P-P Bruneau  
AC Cleaver  
EJD Holden

KM Hughes  
G Iversen  
DR Johnson  
RE Levitt  
S Middlemiss  
RA Swallow  
DCR Waterfield  
DJ Bicknell  
CS Cameron  
CA Connolly  
PJ Cronin  
BJ-PF Louveaux  
MS Rowe  
MST Leung  
R Doughty

E Michael  
RR Ogle  
SL Paterson  
PC Snell  
HL Davies  
JC Putnis  
RA Sumroy  
GP Brown  
JC Cotton  
RJ Tumill  
WNC Watson

All the partners in the  
firm are solicitors except  
A-A Maggjar and P-P Bruneau  
who are Avocats à la Cour  
d'Appel de Paris.

Regulated by the Law Society

Document number  
LT043360058

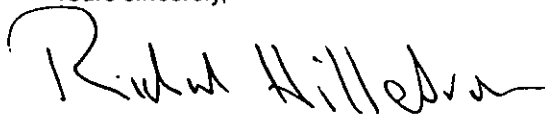
5. The condition of the building, the cost of repairing and maintaining it in relation to its importance and to the value derived from its continued use.
6. The adequacy of efforts made to retain the building and in use.
7. The merits of alternative proposals for the site.

We consider that each of the above issues has been dealt with in the enclosed Report and covering letter save for the merits of the proposed works. The proposed replacement building would bring substantial benefits for the community in terms of regeneration of this important employment site. The replacement building would be an enhancement to the area and would bring substantial benefits by the increase in employment which would flow from it. Consequently both in design terms and in use terms demolition of the existing stable block and its replacement by the proposed scheme is justified.

The letter and report from Donald Insall Associates also justify demolition on the basis of the above issues. In particular we draw your attention to the extracts from the Report and letter attached.

Unfortunately Peter Riddington is not available to attend the meeting on Friday. However should you have any concerns about the justification for demolition we can arrange for a discussion to take place between him and your Conservation Officer.

Yours sincerely,



R.L. Hillebron  
richard.hillebron@slaughterandmay.com

13 FEB 2004

Pevsner's "Buildings of England" describes what has survived of the refuse transfer station in this way:

"a picturesque group, evocative of the era of horse drawn dust carts. The carts descended a curved blue brick ramp to a deck across the canal dock to shoot their contents either into barges below or into the low buildings with arched openings between deck and canal."

It should be noted, however, that not all the component elements of the site as it was used as a Victorian refuse transfer yard survive intact. The stable block on the corner of Kensal Road and Ladbroke Grove has been very much reduced and altered and following demolition in the 1980s of part of the stable no longer retains its key relationship to this as a site interesting for the use of horses. Indeed it is very likely that the stables were re-modelled even before the 1980s works, most probably in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when horse drawn dust carts were ceasing to be used.

Information produced by the Kensington & Chelsea Community History Group suggests that horses were a common sight on the streets of North Kensington until the 1930s. It is a regular occurrence for the mews buildings to the grand 19<sup>th</sup> century houses of central London to have been re-modelled in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when stabling was no longer required, so it seems likely that it occurred here too. Enough of the refuse yard survived for it to be listed in November 1984 (see appendix two).

The stable block buildings are not detailed within the description, possibly because of an already altered state. It would, however, have been within the curtilage of a listed building and been covered by listed building legislation from this date.

Set out below is what is known of the development of the refuse yard site and then a brief account of the disposal of rubbish in London.

#### 4.1 The Corporation Yard Site in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

The collection of rubbish in Paddington in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is described by the Victoria County History in this way: "Dust and ashes were collected by contractors who were appointed annually from 1824. Rates for watering certain roads were ordered in 1836 and the Grand Junction Canal Co's offer to water all the streets was accepted in 1845. There were separate contracts for watering, cleansing and dust collection in 1856 and 1865. Refuse was collected in 1888 by the Vestry, without the aid of contractors. A parish wharf had long been leased from the canal company on the north side of the basin and Paddington Council's scavenging (later cleansing) department remained there until it was succeeded by Westminster in 1965."<sup>2</sup>

The buildings on the Yard site (now Portobello Dock) are believed to date from the 1880s and included a platform over the canal basin for tipping rubbish onto barges below, which was reached by a sloping ramp. A covered wharf on two storeys was supported on cylindrical iron columns. Stock bricks with blue engineering brick dressings were used. Plate one, the OS Map of 1862/65 does not show the yard, but it is clearly visible in plate two, the OS of 1894/6, when it is referred to as Kensington



Wharf (it should be noted that at this date the stable is considerably larger than what is now left of it).

An evocative illustration of what refuse disposal was like in 1880s Paddington is provided by an engraving by William Ralston published in the "Quiver" in 1883 – see plate five.

#### 4.2 The Corporation Yard Site in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

The Corporation Yard site continued to handle refuse into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A close examination of the OS Maps of 1915 shown in plate six and the OS Map of 1935 shown in plate seven shows that an extension has been added. This single storey extension survives still. It is quite possible that other work was done internally at this date, but no record has so far been found. No Building Act material pertaining to this survives in the London Metropolitan Archive, for example.

An unreferenced press cutting from 1976 has been found in Kensington & Chelsea Local Studies Collection, which describes the fate of the yard in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. This describes steps by a canal man to revive a neglected area of London. It states that:

"Portabella – as the new site has been christened – is on half an acre of what used to be the Kensal depot, where horse-drawn rubbish carts once emptied their loads through hatches into barges on the Grand Union Canal before resting in the nearby stables. During the war, the arches under the dumping hatches were converted into living quarters and used by North Kensington residents as a bomb shelter during the Blitz.

Once the war ended though, much of the depot became outmoded. The arches weren't needed anymore and the horses were soon replaced by motorised transport. The stables fell into disrepair and the canal like most canals in Britain in the 50s and 60s was no longer used, becoming clogged with rubbish and sludge. Happily, things are looking up for the canal and the surrounding buildings mainly due to a 64 year old canal man named Paddy Walker ... Paddy, along with architect Jim Ramsey and Jim's interior designer wife Liz, first became interested in the Kensal site some years ago, when all of it was being used by the Council's cleansing department as a depot for their lorries and dustcarts and was unavailable for any development as a public amenity since the opening of the new depot in Warwick Road, however the Council have agreed to let half of the site be developed as a pleasure centre..."

In the 1980s, after the sale of the yard to Richard Branson's Virgin, the site had a complicated planning history. The key factor in this history is that the yard was listed in 1984, but the stable block was not detailed in the listing, possibly as already surmised because of its extant condition. The condition of the block can be seen indistinctly in sales particulars of the site before the work for Virgin.

In July 1986 Building Design wrote up the proposals for the site which were being made and the impact of the listing. The article states that

"Pinchin & Kellow are a young practice with a growing reputation for thoughtful

sensitive work ... perhaps it comes as no surprise to discover that their modest scheme for the development of Portobello Dock in West London has been frustrated by a succession of problems despite all the good intentions of both client – Richard Branson's Virgin Holdings – and architects. After lengthy consideration beginning in 1984, Pinchin & Kellow came up with a mixed development of offices for Virgin, flats and craft workshops, retaining some existing structures and detailed in an appropriately sensitive spirit in traditional materials. Kensington & Chelsea supported the scheme and planning permission was duly given. Problems began when a 19<sup>th</sup> century horse ramp and deck (in poor condition) were listed by the Greater London Council (now under the control of English Heritage) and their removal was prevented.

Further complications have arisen recently with DoE approval of a road widening scheme which would entail the demolition of an existing listed (sic) stable block that was to be retained in Pinchin & Kellow's proposals ..."

Further proposals were made and it is interesting to note that in February 1987 the architectural advisor to the Victorian Society, Mary Miers, wrote to the Director of Planning at Kensington & Chelsea and stated that

"Our Society objected to the previous application which involved the demolition of the ramp, bridge and platform, all of which are an integral part of this well preserved dock, the former Refuse Transfer Depot dating from 1880. We were therefore pleased to receive details of this new application and welcome the proposed retention and restoration of these features. Members of our Building Committee examined the new plans at a recent meeting and their main cause for concern was the treatment of the unlisted building on the corner of Kensal Road and Ladbroke Grove. This three storey building formerly comprising two floors of stables and cart sheds, with a fodder store above is within the Conservation Area and integral aspect of the operation of the site. With its high, stable-like windows and glazed lantern, it has character and is potentially very attractive... We hope you will agree that, although it is not listed, the former stable block is an integral part of the complex and should be refurbished rather than replaced if at all possible."

The application was, though, approved in 1988 and demolition of the three storey element went ahead, leaving only the two storey part and the paved incline to its side. An account of the work that went ahead was given in Building in May 1991. This describes the scheme by architect Christopher Watts for Vanson Development, Virgin's property company in this way:-

"Watts's scheme involved removing the hayloft and stable (the former was already scheduled for demolition under a road widening scheme) building a five storey office block at each end of the site and – the key that opened the door to consent for every other activity – restoring and preserving the old dock with its adjacent vaults topped by an arcade like structure. Also to be retained were the ramp up which the horses pulled their carts of rubbish and the deck over the dock from which the rubbish would then be dropped into the barges below. Watts's idea, which released enough space from the site to justify restoration work, was ingenious. He proposed damming the dock at the point where it vanished beneath the loading deck and using the land which had once been under water as a Virgin conference centre. The adjacent vaults would become offices, the arcaded area above a restaurant, the whole totalling 975m<sup>2</sup> of reclaimed space. This has all been done over the past four years. First one new block

was built on the eastern end of the site (the other will eventually follow) and its course nature perhaps reveals the architect as more at ease when conserving old buildings than when developing the new. His design for a steel bridge which links the Virgin staff with their colleagues in a building on the other side of the canal lacks the grace that such bridges frequently demonstrate ..."

In February 2004 FPD Savill produced a schedule of implemented and unimplemented planning permissions that affect the Corporation Yard, which forms appendix three.

It is important to note that permission was granted for the demolition of (what remains of the altered) stable block in 1990 and re-building of a larger office block. A site inspection was made by Donald Insall Associates in October 2004 and this included as appendix four.

#### 4.3 The Context of Refuse Yards

The Corporation Yard as outlined above has been significantly re-modelled in the late 1980s/1990s. It does, though, have inherent architectural and social interest as a remnant of London's now vanished dependence on horses and on canals. There was also a relationship between refuse and the very stock bricks from which Victorian London was being created. Ralph Turvey in "Economic Growth and Domestic Refuse in London" from "LSE on Social Science: A Centenary Anthology" wrote in 1996 of refuse/dust collection in this way:

"... The term 'refuse' was scarcely used in the nineteenth century; it was called 'dust' because, at the beginning of the period, it consisted mainly of dust and ashes.

Householders deposited their dust, together with peelings and sweepings in their 'dustbins' or 'dustholes' (which were fixed receptacles) for collection. When it needed to be taken away, a card bearing a large letter D, on sale in most stationers, was displayed or a chalked D was scrawled on a window. The dustmen descended into the area, and shovelled the dust into a wicker basket which they carried to their carts, mounting a ladder leant against the side to discharge it. A cartload was thus the measure used, gradually superseded by the ton as weighing of loads at the dust yard became more common. A load typically weighed somewhat less than one and a quarter tons, but weight varied a good deal. One reason was changes in the composition of refuse, another was differences in the size of cart and a third was differences in the way the men were paid. When Paddington shifted to paying its dustmen 2/6d a ton instead of 2/- a load, the weight of the average load rose considerably.

In Mayhew's time [a 19<sup>th</sup> century writer on the poor], only one Vestry did the work of collection itself; the rest put it out to contract, and Mayhew estimated that there were some ninety contractors in the Metropolitan Police District. The dustmen, scavengers (street cleaners) and nightmen were to some extent the same, but whereas the same contractor and the same men both removed the dust and cleansed the streets in many parishes, collection of night soil from cesspits was a separate operation, being privately contracted for by landlords.

with the building cycle, their supply being completely insensitive to their prices, so that when building activity fell, these prices fell sharply and there was a rise in the net cost to the Vestry (or in the amounts tendered by contractors for collecting and disposing of refuse). Westminster was paid £350 by its contractor in 1867, but had to pay £595 in 1868, £845 in 1869 and £1,385 in 1870. Similarly, although St Pancras was paid by the contractors in the three years 1865-67, thereafter it was the contractors who were paid, the amount falling during the building boom of the late seventies. When prices fell, Vestries might abandon sifting, instead of paying for the removal of the unsorted dust, as with Islington in 1887-9 and Paddington in 1892, where it was noted that a contributory cause to the low price was 'the extended introduction of wire-cut and red bricks which do not contain ashes or breeze'...

London refuse was thus used for growth as well as resulting from it..."<sup>3</sup>

Sally Child in her article "The Horse in the City" writes of the staggering number of horses employed in the work of removing rubbish. She writes that

"The 1,300,000 cart loads of refuse removed from the streets of London in 1893 was the work of the 1,500 horses belonging to the Vestries and District Board of Works. Some of these horses weighted over 18 cwt, bought at around six years old from farmers and dealers for about £75. Not every horse was suitable as these horses had to back as readily as advance..."<sup>4</sup>

#### 4.4 The Rarity of the Corporation Yard

The architecture of working life, as previously stated, is prone to change and less likely to survive than domestic institutional or civic building. The yard's listing reflects its specialness as a survival of a vanished but important feature of London life. This survival has not been uniform throughout the site, though, and the stable block is particularly changed. An indication of the overall importance of the site is given, though, by the fact that in October 2004 the National Monuments Record checked their database of listed buildings in England and found it to be the only site where the description states it to be a refuse transfer depot. Two other refuse depots were listed. They are a pair of shelters at Churchill Gardens in Westminster built in 1950 (not strictly a depot, it may be surmised) and Garchey refuse station, part of Park Hill, Sheffield, again from the 1950s.

### 5.0 SOURCES OF INFORMATION

#### 5.1 Sources Consulted

The following repositories have been consulted:

Westminster City Archive  
Westminster Planning Department  
Kensington & Chelsea Local Studies Collection

<sup>3</sup> R Turvey "Economic Growth & Domestic Refuse in London" LSE on Social Science: A Centenary Anthology 1996 available online.

<sup>4</sup> S Child "The Horse in the City" in Victorian Society Annual 1996 p11.

**PORTOBELLO DOCK: STABLE BLOCK**  
**DESCRIPTION**  
**Donald Insall Associates**

So re-modelled in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to be barely recognisable as part of the original dock development, the site evidence of reinforced concrete lintols at first and some ground floor would suggest that the building was heavily re-modelled in the early/mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. A simple two storey brick building with a Welsh slate roof, basically in yellow stocks but with blue plinths and quoins and red string courses. Wooden sash windows generally with modern tiled cills. To the east is an extension which has a flat roof. This post-dates the main building and has been largely re-built in modern times – presumably circa 1990. Wooden sash and casement windows, concrete cills.

Otherwise, the building has been heavily altered and re-fitted in the 1990s works, which saw the replacement of all windows and doors and the re-modelling of the ground floor with window/door openings widely re-built on the north elevation.

On the south elevation, alterations at that time also included the re-building of the first floor in part and rendering of the ground floor in part. One original door survives on this elevation.

The east elevation is generally similar to the north elevation at first floor only.

The west elevation was almost entirely rendered in the 1990s work.

Internally, the building is entirely modern with no visible fabric that pre-dates the 1990s work.

The building's conversion/restoration in the 1990s was of a low quality, with hard cementitious mortars and exposed crude concrete lintols, PVC gutters and crudely altered window openings, with cement rendered margins. The building retains little of its stables character and its most interesting feature is the ramped brick path to its west side.

E-mail [architects@insall-lon.co.uk](mailto:architects@insall-lon.co.uk) Website [www.insall-lon.co.uk](http://www.insall-lon.co.uk)

**Ms Helen Hutton  
Slaughter & May  
One Bunhill Row  
LONDON  
EC1Y 8YY**

20 October 2004

## PORTOBELLO DOCK: STABLE BLOCK

My feeling is that the building is not contemporary with the Dock itself, but probably dates from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. We should verify this in due course by reference to the historic OS maps.

A lot of the work carried out during this period was of mediocre quality, including re-pointing in hard cement mortars and rendering of large areas of two of the elevations.

Yours sincerely

**Peter Riddington**  
for and on behalf of Donald Insall Associates Ltd

DONALD INSALL ASSOCIATES LTD REGISTERED IN ENGLAND No 1550406 VAT REGD No 240 3358 92. REGISTERED OFFICE: 19 WEST EATON PLACE LONDON SW1X 8LT  
LONDON BATH CAMBRIDGE CANTERBURY CHESTER SHREWSBURY

## **PORTOBELLO DOCK: STABLE BLOCK DESCRIPTION**

**Donald Insall Associates  
October 2004**

Presumably dating from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and not part of the original dock development – this could be checked against the early OS maps – but the site evidence of what appear to be original reinforced concrete lintols at first and some ground floor would suggest this. A simple two storey brick building with a Welsh slate roof, basically in yellow stocks but with blue plinths and quoins and red string courses. Wooden sash windows generally with modern tiled cills. To the east is an extension which has a flat roof. This post-dates the main building and has been largely re-built in modern times – presumably circa 1990. Wooden sash and casement windows, concrete cills.

Otherwise, the building has been heavily altered and re-fitted in the 1990s works, which saw the replacement of all windows and doors and the re-modelling of the ground floor with window/door openings widely re-built on the north elevation.

On the south elevation, alterations at that time also included the re-building of the first floor in part and rendering of the ground floor in part. One original door survives on this elevation.

The east elevation is generally similar to the north elevation at first floor only.

The west elevation was almost entirely rendered in the 1990s work.

Internally, the building is entirely modern with no visible fabric that pre-dates the 1990s work.

The building's conversion/restoration in the 1990s was of a low quality, with hard cementitious mortars and exposed crude concrete lintols, PVC gutters and crudely altered window openings, with cement rendered margins. The building retains little of its stables character and its most interesting feature is the ramped brick path to its west side.