FORMER BOROUGH ARMS PH, PARK ROAD KINGSTON UPON THAMES: ASSESSMENT FOR POTENTIAL DESIGNATION AS A BUILDING OF TOWNSCAPE MERIT

for

ROYAL BOROUGH OF KINGSTON UPON THAMES

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Historic environment policy and practice

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report supplements the report entitled Borough Road, Arthur Road and Princes Road, Kingston Upon Thames: Assessment Of Potential For Heritage Designation, by Drury McPherson Partnership for the Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames, 2015. It has been produced by Michael Copeman. In addition to the sources cited in the initial report, it draws on and to the Council's historic planning and building control plans, leases and other material in the Borough archives and published sources.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The former Borough Arms Public House (now the Pottery Tapas Bar), was identified as a building potentially meriting inclusion on the local list of Buildings of Townscape Merit during the process of evaluating the area around Princes, Borough and Arthur Roads for possible designation as a Local Area of Special Character.

2.2 Buildings of Townscape Merit (or locally listed buildings) are those, which although not of the special architectural or historic interest quality that would justify their inclusion on the statutory list, nonetheless add to the richness of the local built environment and contribute to local distinctiveness. The Council has formulated policies for their protection (CS8 and DM12) and a guidance document Procedure for Designating Buildings of Townscape Merit (BTM), June 2014, which supports the implementation of the Core Strategy policies.

2.3 This report assesses the eligibility of the former Borough Arms against the designation criteria contained in the document, and recommends that the building should be added to the local list as a Building of Townscape Merit.

2.4 Buildings of Townscape Merit in Kingston are designated according to the following criteria:
   1. Any building, not statutorily listed, which can be proved to date from before 1840.
   2. Selected buildings, not statutorily listed, dating from between 1840-1939 of definite quality and character. These are assessed by whether a building comes under one or more of the following categories:
      (a) was included as Grade III\(^1\) on the former statutory list;
      (b) retains a substantial portion of original features;
      (c) has group value;
      (d) has association with well known characters or events;
      (e) displays special value within a certain type or illustrates social, economic or industrial history (e.g. railway stations, schools, almshouses, etc);
      (f) by reason of its appropriateness to the site and inter-relationship with

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\(^1\) The non-statutory listing category abolished in 1970.
other buildings makes a unique contribution to the townscape.

2.5 Post 1939 buildings, not statutorily listed, which are exceptionally good examples of the architectural output of the period and/or are the work of principal architects.

3 HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

3.1 The former pub was built between 1840, the date of the Tithe Map, (from which it is absent) and 1865, when it is shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map. The style of the building suggests that it dates from 1850-65, but its location on the corner of a street that was only just being laid out at the date of the Ordnance Survey, makes a date of c1865 most likely. It is listed in the Phillipson's Directory for 1870, as the Borough Arms. The building as shown in 1865 has a rectangular plan with a small projecting bay to the principal (west) Park Road elevation. The core of the building, on this plan is clearly visible today. The building is of brick, with a slate roof, deep eaves and small-paned timber sash windows. It would originally probably have been quite plain, with similar windows to the ground floor. It is not known for certain whether it was purpose-built as a pub, but its prominent position as a substantial detached building on the corner of the road, its plan which is quite distinct from the terraced and semi-detached houses that were the usual form of development here and the fact that it has a large outbuilding- possibly a stable or coach house adjacent to the main block across a rear courtyard, strongly suggest that it was built as a commercial building and probably, given its history, as a pub.

3.2 The 1897 Ordnance Survey map shows that the building had been extended slightly on its west, south and east sides. This alteration is consistent with the addition of the decorative glazed "pub" frontage that survives today, and the WCs to the rear south-east corner. The frontage has classically derived elements such as the cornice, and fluted pilasters with unconventional almost distorted brackets instead of capitals and glazing bars in a Venetian pattern (i.e. of three lights with a central arch, as well as fine red-glazed tiling below the cill level. This eclectic use of classical detail is typical of its date and in grander public buildings is sometimes called the "Northern Renaissance" style, but here it is very much su generis: late-Victorian "pub architecture", which reached its exuberant architectural height at the end of the 19th century. An application for permission for works under the buildings regulations was submitted to Kingston Borough Council in 1887. The pub window frontage also reinforces the landmark value of the building on its corner site by creating two highly visible "front" elevations, to the east and south, in place of the original (west) front and (south) side.

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2 RB Kingston upon Thames Local History Collection Deposited Building Plans no. 40707
The 1913 Ordnance Survey suggest that minor additions had been made to the outbuilding, but the structure of the main building appears to have been little altered during the 20th century. At some point the brickwork of the pub has been painted. It is currently an "avocado" shade of green. This has had an unfortunate effect on the appearance of the building, but the underlying fabric remains largely intact. The building now operates as a restaurant rather than a traditional public house, but its architectural or historic value remain largely intact and it could easily be returned to use as a pub.

4 ASSESSMENT

4.1 The criteria that apply to the former Borough Arms are 2(b); 2(c); 2(e) and 2(f). The building was not included on the old grade III list, which was selective with regard to 19th century architecture. It would not have been considered for listing prior to 1970.

4.2 Criterion 2(b)
The building retains most of its original external features and the pub-front windows added c1897 adds to the interest of the original building, emphasising its specific use. Although it could be difficult (but not impossible) to remove the paint from the brick-work, it would be easy to enhance the appearance of the building in the streetscape by repainting it in a quieter and more sympathetic colour.

4.3 Criterion 2(c)
The pub is a key element of the group of residential and commercial buildings that surround it. The much altered shops to its north on Park Road and the residential streets to the east (the proposed Local Area of Special Character (LASC): Princes, Borough and Arthur Roads) date from the same period of c1860-1890 and together they make up a typical outer suburban development of this date. The pub was often a focal point in such developments, for example, occupying a prominent and highly visible location such as a corner site on a main road, as here. Several houses in the immediate area are of similar date and architectural style to the pub and appear on the 1865 Ordnance Survey, but the three pairs of houses to its north (occupied by tradespeople and probably shops in 1870) to its north on Park Road (numbers 22-32) area are so altered as to barely be recognisable as such. The pair at 16 Park Road, also altered and subsumed by Park Works, still has a slate roof with eaves and sash windows, like the pub. However almost the of the LASC was built within 30 or so years of the pub, and shares (or originally shared) the same scale of building, and palette of materials, principally yellow London stock brick and Welsh slate.

3 Phillipson’s Directory of Kingston upon Thames, 1870, RBKT Local History Collection.
4.4 Criterion 2(e)
Whilst it is not exceptional, the building is a good example of its type - a plain mid-century building enhanced by its decorative pub-frontage of 1897, and is of greater interest because it is a relatively unaltered when so many similar pubs have been demolished, or converted into new uses at the expense of the features that distinguish them as serving their particular purpose.

4.5 Criterion 2(f)
The pub occupies a prominent site and marks the social centre of the small sub-neighbourhood of which it is a part. It has been designed to make the most of its corner site. Thus it has considerable visual importance in the streetscape, which reflects its historic role in the community.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 The former Borough Arms meets most of the Council's designation criteria for Buildings of Townscape merit. It has both visual quality in the streetscape and considerable local historic interest. Pubs are almost by definition, places with strong community associations, and they are also, as a building type, at risk. Many thousands of pubs have shut in the past decade and a substantial number of these have been demolished. The former Borough Arms is a good and relatively early example of the type, and is a prominent feature in the streetscape of Park Road. Its late Victorian pub frontage is of notably high quality, and intact. For the reasons set out above it merits consideration for inclusion on the local list of Buildings of Townscape Merit.
Figure 1: Location plan