

Little Ships' first three development sites

A Report on their Historical Background

JULY 2019

Richard Howell B.A. (Hons.)



**24 Harwood Avenue
WORTHING
West Sussex BN12 6EJ**

01903 709368

richardhowell@tiscali.co.uk

www.richardjhowell.co.uk

INTRODUCTION

The following three sites described in this report have all been identified by the Little Ships organization as potential sites for providing new homes close to the city centre of Brighton.

Each site has its own particular history and played its part in the development of the Brighton we know today. The first site is situated in King Place, an unprepossessing cul-de-sac leading off North Street and today given little attention. Yet right up until the 1950s this was a busy thoroughfare of shops, businesses and houses, before it was swept away during the re-development of the 1960s, and much of the old street was lost under a multi-storey car park.

The second site is the Preston Circus fire station. This stands on the site of a former brewery, and the present fire station was constructed in the 1930s, which included residential accommodation for firemen.

The third site is to the rear of the present police station on the east side of the city. Again this was an area that once thronged with shops and businesses and houses. However, much of the area was deemed to be unhealthy by the 1930s and the properties were bought up by the Council before being demolished and replaced by the present Law Courts and Police Station.

What all these sites have in common is that they were all places where people once lived. Until the end of the 19th Century it was usual for shop owners to live above their shops, bankers and lawyers to live over their offices, and merchants and manufacturers next to their warehouses and workshops.

However, the 20th Century saw the growth of the suburbs and town centres started to become depopulated as people moved away to the new areas, and commuting into town for work became the norm for most people.

One of the benefits of the Little Ships schemes is that, albeit on a small scale, it will place people back in the centre of the City, and help to keep inner urban area alive.

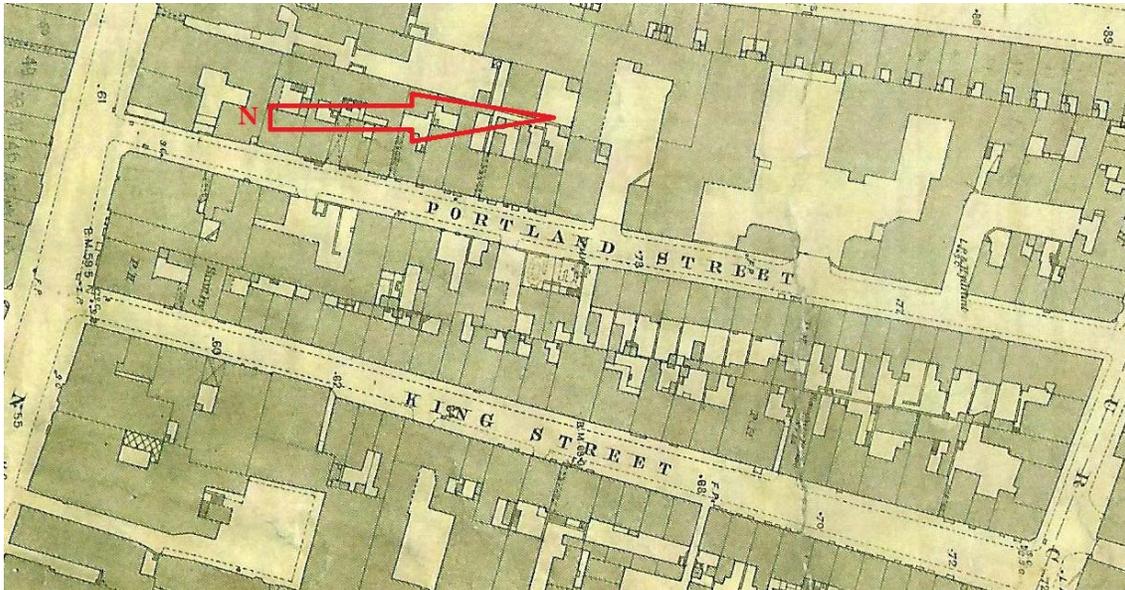
**LAND ON THE NORTH SIDE OF
KING PLACE, BRIGHTON**



King Street Way is a cul-de-sac that runs in a north/south direction off North Street, Brighton. Originally it was a through way known as King Street, which connected North Street with Church Street.

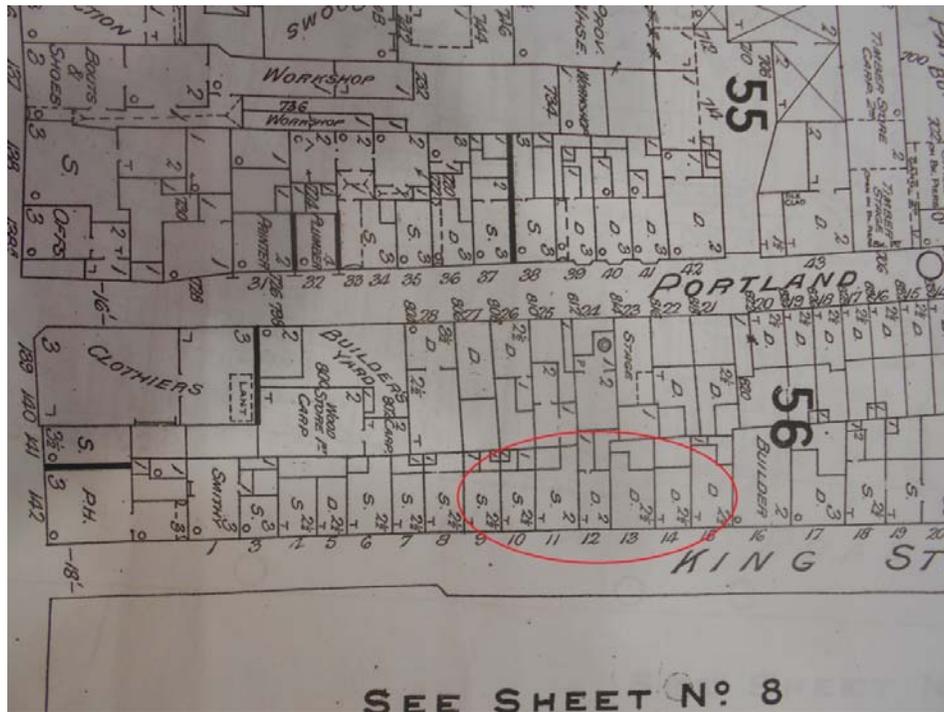
The area was first developed during the late 18th Century and was a mixed street of small artisan dwellings and a variety of shops and businesses.

The 1875 50" Ordnance Survey map of Brighton shows the street as it appeared at that time. Most of the buildings back directly on to the buildings that lie along the south side of Portland Street, which runs parallel to King Street, with no more than a small yard to the rear.



King Street 1875

The 1875 Goad Insurance map of Brighton shows with some detail the type of buildings these were and those buildings that once occupied the vacant site, which appear to correspond to Nos. 9-15, circled red.

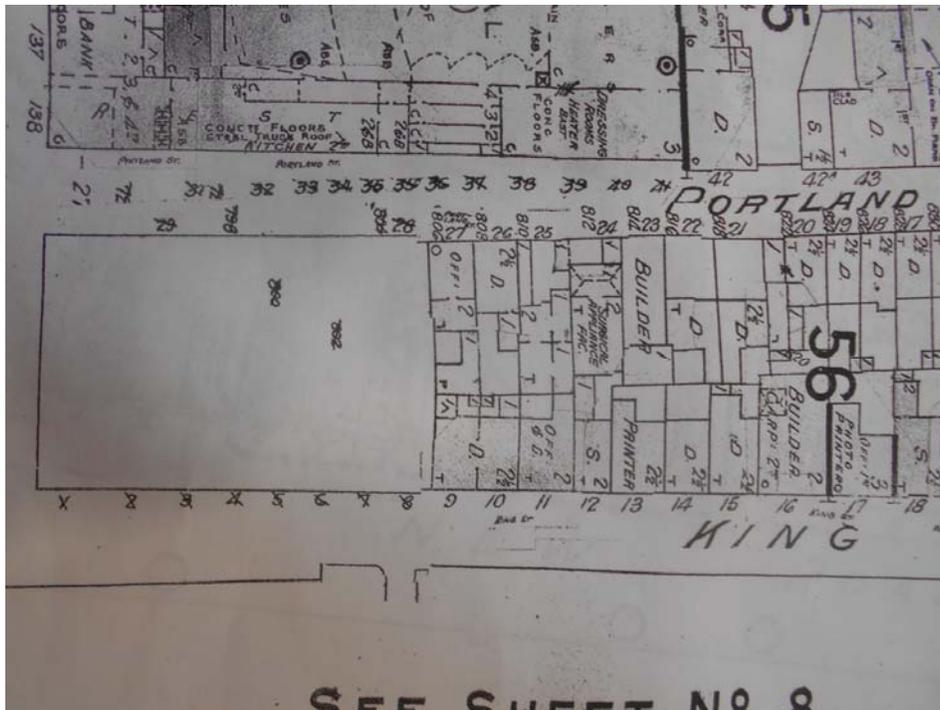


1875 Goads Insurance Map – Nos. 9-15 King Street circled red

The 1900 Pike's Directory of Brighton shows that the occupants of these buildings were as follows:

- No. 9 Reuter, A – Jeweller
- No. 10 Muggeridge, Thomas – Sweet shop
- No. 11 Buddle, Alf
- No. 13 Lemon, Jas.
- No. 14 Perry, Mrs. Eliza
- No. 15 Illman, T - Dairyman

The area began to change in the late 1930s when then buildings at the west end of the street, leading on to North Street (Nos. 1-8) were demolished along with those at the back of them in Portland Street, and replaced with what was then the Sun Alliance offices (later Barclays Bank).



1946 Goad's Map showing the Sun Alliance Building at the west end of the street

The 1954 Kelly's Directory for Brighton shows the occupants of Nos. 9-15 were:

- Nos. 9 & 10 James Barnes and Sons – Builders
- No. 11 Lewis & Richardson – Radio & T.V. Electrical Engineers
- No. 12 Stenning, R – Grocers
- No. 13 Ferguson, Lawrence – Bookbinder
- No. 14 Butler, F
- No. 15 Wickenden, F – Cafe

A photograph of the street taken in mid-1950s shows it as it appeared at that time

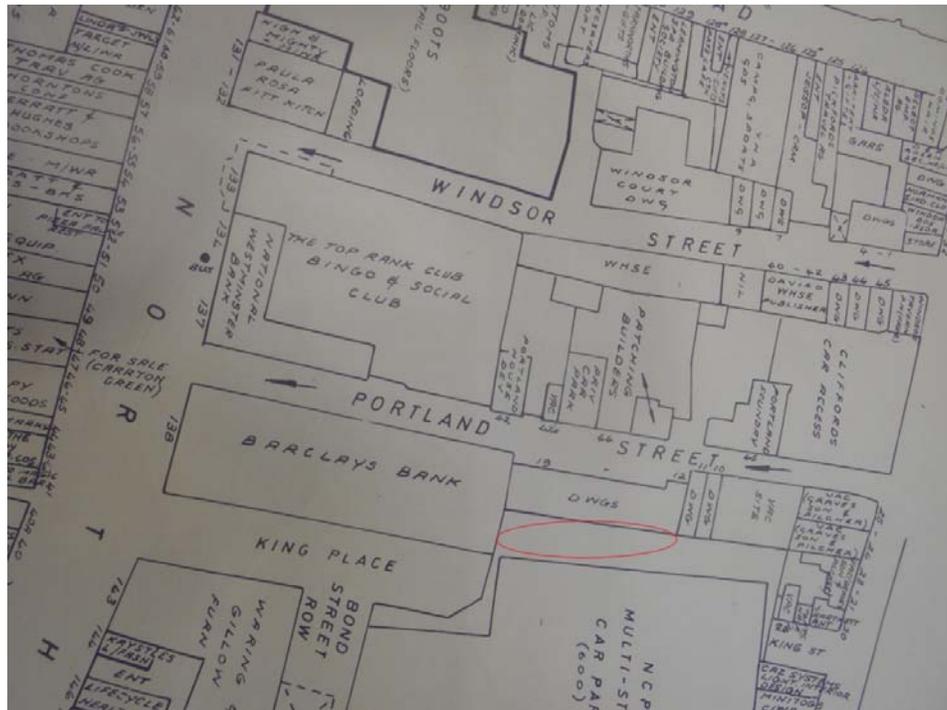


King Street (looking towards Church Street) 1955 – James Gray Collection

The old buildings that comprised Nos. 9-15 all appear to have been demolished by 1960 as none of them are listed in the Kelly's Directory of that date.

The area was completely transformed in the early 1960s with the construction of a multi-storey car park, much of which was built over most of the eastern end of King Street, resulting in the demolition of nearly all the old buildings along the street.

The 1982 Goad's Map shows the changes that had taken place, with the virtual disappearance of King Street and the loss of most of the buildings in the adjacent Portland Street.



1982 Goad's Map showing the multi-storey car park built over most of King Street

(Site of former buildings circled red)

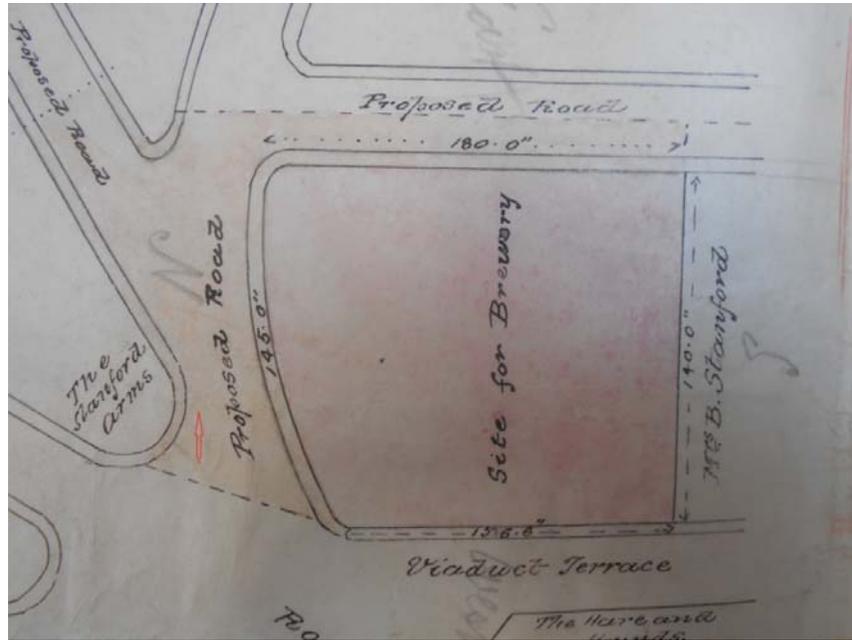
Today King Place is just a remnant of what was a busy and bustling street before re-development took place during the 1950s and 60s.

PRESTON CIRCUS FIRE STATION



Preston Circus Fire Station stands at the junction of the A23 and A270 about one mile north of Brighton seafront.

It stands on land that was sold in 1873 by the trustees of William Stanford, deceased, to Mr. H. Longhurst, who constructed the Longhurst Brewery on the site.

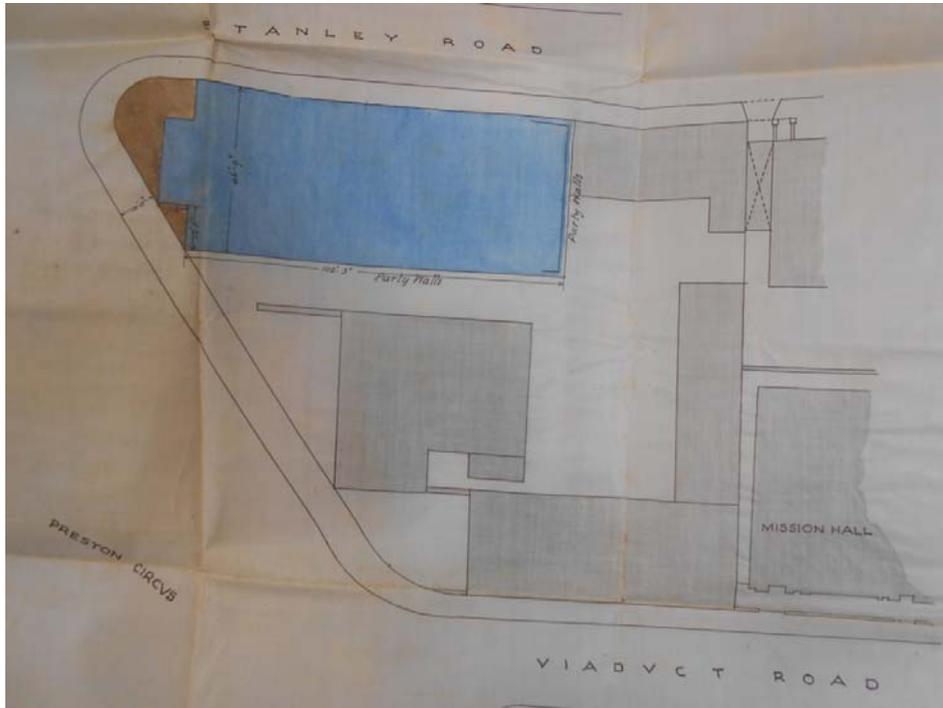


Extract from 1873 Deed of Sale

The site was acquired by Brighton Corporation in 1901 who demolished the old brewery to allow tram lines to be laid on a curve between Beaconsfield Road and Viaduct Road.

In 1910 the former malt house that stood on the site was leased to a Mr Frank Wyatt and his wife for the construction of an Electric Theatre (now the Duke of York Cinema).

The remainder of the site was used by the Council as the Head Quarters of the Police Fire Brigade, the Weights & Measures Department and a Police recreation room.



Extract from 1910 lease showing cinema site (shaded blue) and other buildings

A full-time, fully trained Brighton Borough Fire Brigade was established at Preston Circus in 1921, but by the 1930s the buildings on the site were deemed to be inadequate. In 1935 the Council approved plans for a new station on the site.



The old fire station (Duke of York cinema to rear) 1930s (James Gray Collection)

The present building is constructed from brick and Portland stone and was opened in 1938 , to designs by the architect, Graeme Hight.

The ground floor comprised the main appliance rooms, the watch room and repair bays.

The first floor comprised administration offices, a lecture room, a recreation room, a mess room, a parade room and sleeping cubicles.

The second floor comprised residential flats for firemen.

In 2009 the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service revealed that it wanted to sell the station, because it was outdated and expensive to maintain.

LAND TO REAR OF BRIGHTON POLICE STATION



Looking west down Carlton Hill with John Street to left

The site is situated on rising ground to the rear of the Brighton Police Station and fronts on to Carlton Hill. It lies about 200 metres back from the east side of The Steyne, with William Street immediately to the east, and John Street to the west.

The Ordnance Survey maps bisect the site, but they show that a road called Henry Street once ran between William Street and John Street.



1898 Map showing William Street and Henry Street (part of present day site circled re)



1875 Map showing John Street and northern end of Henry Street (part of present day site circled red)

Carlton Hill is a steeply rising road that once ran through one of the poorest areas of Brighton. Most of the land was owned by Dr. Benjamin Scutt and between 1804 and 1808 he sold it for housing and concentrated on building nearby Carlton Terrace.

By the early 20th Century the area had become Brighton's worst slum, where overcrowding, crime and disease were rife.

The area acquired national notoriety in the 1930s when Percy Charles Anderson, who lived in Lennox Place, just off Carlton Hill was accused of murdering his girl friend, Edith Constance Drew-Bear. He was a 21 year old car mechanic, and in November 1934 he shot and killed Edith, a 21 year old cinema usherette, on East Brighton Golf Course, near Roedean, and dumped her body in a water tank.

Edith's brother told the police about her association with Anderson, and when they searched his house, they discovered bullets which matched those found in Edith's body. He was charged with murder, and found guilty following a trial at Lewes Court, in March 1935. He was hanged at Wandsworth prison in April 1935.



Houses off Carlton Hill c. 1935 (James Gray Collection)

In January 1931 the Council declared the area to be a 'Clearance Area' and 'Unhealthy'. They commenced a programme of compulsory purchase and began to clear the whole area.

The 1931 Kelly's Directory shows that the buildings that were situated in Carlton Hill between John Street and William Street were:

No. 84 Public House – Mrs. Lydia West
No. 85 Ball, Thomas – Fried Fish Shop
No. 86 Gillam, George
No. 87 Wyndham, William
Nos. 88 & 89 Rowland Bros., Engineers

Henry Street

No. 90 Stevens, Charles – Beer Retailer
No. 91 Corder, Edward – Shop Keeper
No. 92 Maynard, William

The street directories show that by 1949 all the properties that were situated between John Street and Henry Street had gone (Nos. 84-89) although the Nos. 90-92 still remained.

However, the remaining properties were all gone by the middle of the 1950s, and the whole site that lay between Carlton Hill, Edward Street, William Street and John Street was cleared to make way for the new law courts and police station, which opened in the mid-1960s.