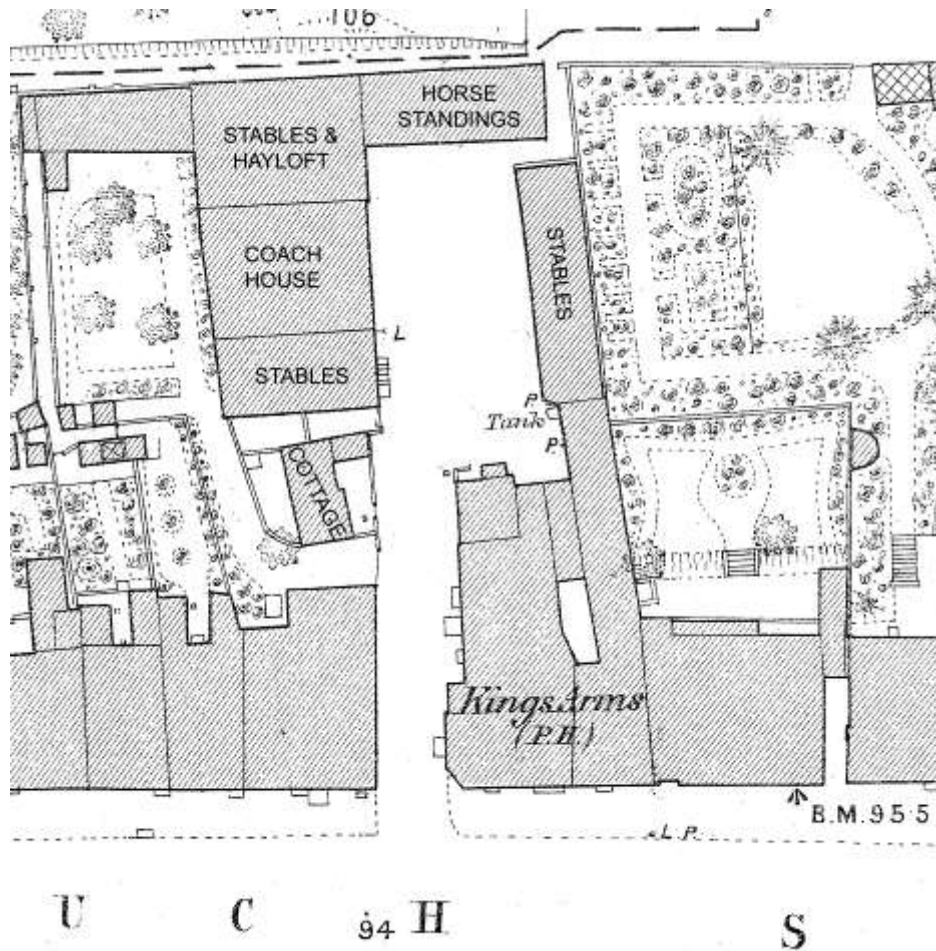


THE KINGS ARMS PUBLIC HOUSE, 61-63 CROUCH STREET, COLCHESTER, ESSEX.

Page | 1



Ordnance Survey of 1876 showing courtyard buildings. Modern annotation in Arial typeface.

## **Report on the historic impact and justification of a design scheme to develop the Kings Arms. 10 04 2008.**

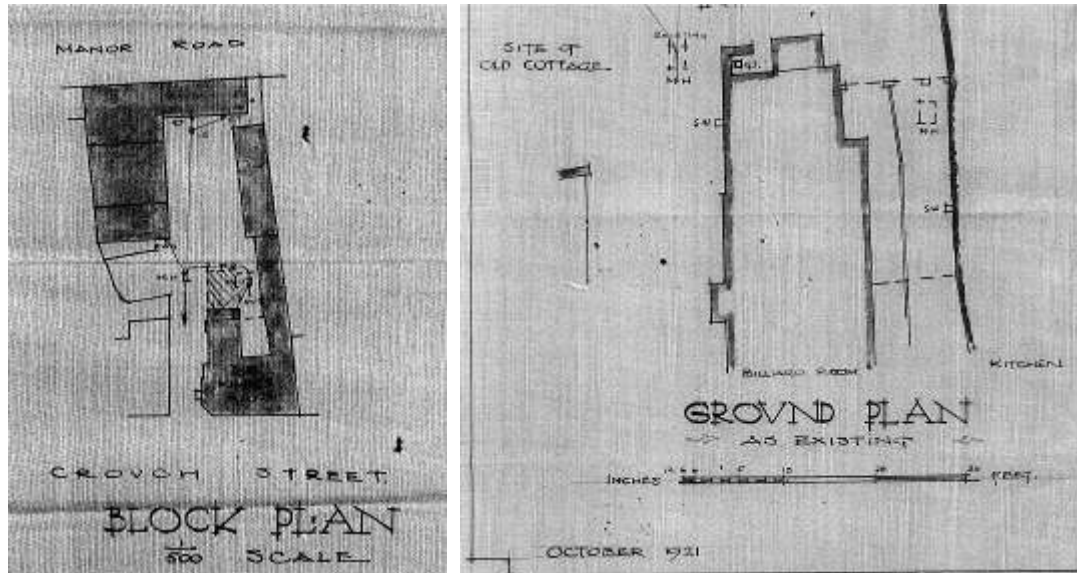
### **Summary**

#### **External**

The Kings Arms was constructed in AD1830 as a coaching inn with a fully equipped coaching yard to house the animals and the vehicles. At that time there were three stable blocks, a Horse Standings and a Coach House. There was also a cottage and yards.

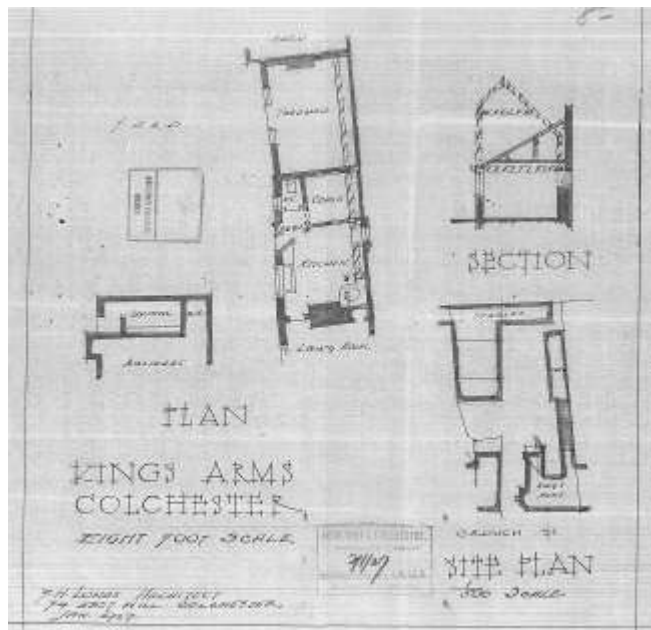
Only two of the original buildings remain – the Stables/Hayloft and the Horse Standings and these have been repaired and conserved albeit with some late C20th alterations. The cottage was demolished before 1896 as it is not shown on the Second Edition OS map of that year. The other buildings however remained in use

until 1979 when the western Stables and Coach House, which are remembered as timber-framed buildings, were removed. At this time the Stables/Hayloft was repaired and for the first time was visible from Crouch Street.



Plan of the Kings Arms made in 1921 by PH Lomax, architect.

In 1921 the rear of the Kings Arms was significantly altered when a large part of the western range was removed to make way for new toilets. A timber annexe that created a covered court to the rear of the building was also demolished. Up until then there was an open lightwell between the arms of the building.



Plan of the Kings Arms made in 1927 by PH Lomax showing a reduction in height of the Kitchen Range.



The eastern range was two storeys up until 1926 when it was reduced in height and re-roofed as the Kitchen Range it is today. The eastern stables became an open sided shed and closed garage. As a result of these changes the rear of the Kings Arms is entirely C20th.

### **Internal**

Of the original AD1830 build there is very little remaining internally due to subsequent alterations and refits. On the ground floor only the stick baluster Residential Staircase is original and this is damaged.

Of the other period features, including an ornate doorcase, fireplace, built-in ornate cupboard and early skirting boards – these are all in the upper rooms of the main building and are not to be affected. The entire suspended timber floor over the extensive cellars as well as the stairs down are all late C20th.

### **Historic impact and justification assessment of the Greene King proposed design scheme.**

The proposed scheme seeks to incorporate the current Kitchen Range, Lobby and the Open Shelter into the new extension of the premises. The original rooflines are to be maintained with the exception of that over the Kitchen Range which is to be changed to a flat roof. The present lightweight softwood roof structure was put in place in 1926 and as such has little historic value. The new flat roof has already been granted Planning and Listed Buildings consent and is designed as a drainage solution for the new pitched roofs.

It is proposed to insert a Victorian style roof light into the present Lobby and this would be in keeping with the areas previous function as a lightwell for the two arms of the building. The Lobby is entirely late C20th in its construction.

The current Men's Toilets are to be removed. These are also later C20th and rather unattractive by modern standards. The new extension will incorporate the space of the Toilets and also occupy an area that was once populated historically until 1921 by another brick extension and a timber shelter. In effect the new design follows the old functionality of the building at a C21st scale by providing toilet facilities and improved accommodation.

There is a further extension to house a new Catering Kitchen which makes use of half of the Open Shelter. At present this late C20th building is effectively redundant and used as a shelter.

The new External Dining Shelter is not physically connected in any way to the historic fabric of the Kings Arms and planning consent has already been granted for it. Care has been taken to construct it from materials that directly echo those of the nearby buildings. The open sides of the structure allow the Stables/Hayloft and the Horse



Standings to still be seen from Crouch Street and it must be remembered that the former was never designed to be seen and was not historically visible until 1979.

The traditional designs of the new development, incorporating the same natural materials of brick, timber and grey slate and following not only the architectural features but the former uses of the earlier buildings, assure that the new exteriors are sympathetic to, and have empathy with, the existing buildings.

Page | 4

In the main building the scheme seeks to redivide the space into separate areas perhaps invoking some of the original layout of the building. The only period feature to be affected is the Residential Staircase. While a period feature it is not of great architectural or historical merit. It is a prefabricated system in that each floor has a separate structure rather than the handrail and balusters running through as in a bespoke piece of joinery. If dismantled the upper floor sections would remain intact.

The cellars stairs are entirely late C20th and of no merit. The original stairs were in stone and these are long gone. As all the current suspended timber floor is very modern there would be no disruption to the historic fabric should a new staircase be made down to the cellars.

#### **Summary.**

In the very recent past the Kings Arms has been heavily remodelled and refitted. The proposed development scheme will have little impact on the historic fabric of the Kings Arms. Most of the elements to be removed or altered are late C20th and of little or no historic interest.

The only original feature to be affected is the Residential Staircase and this is a low quality, prefabricated feature which was never really meant to be displayed. Because it is sectional in design, the ground floor section can be removed without affecting the upper floors.

Barry Hillman-Crouch. 10 04 2008.

#### **References.**

Hillman-Crouch. B. THE KINGS ARMS PUBLIC HOUSE, 61-63 CROUCH STREET, COLCHESTER, ESSEX. Report on a historic fabric survey made on 31 March 2008.