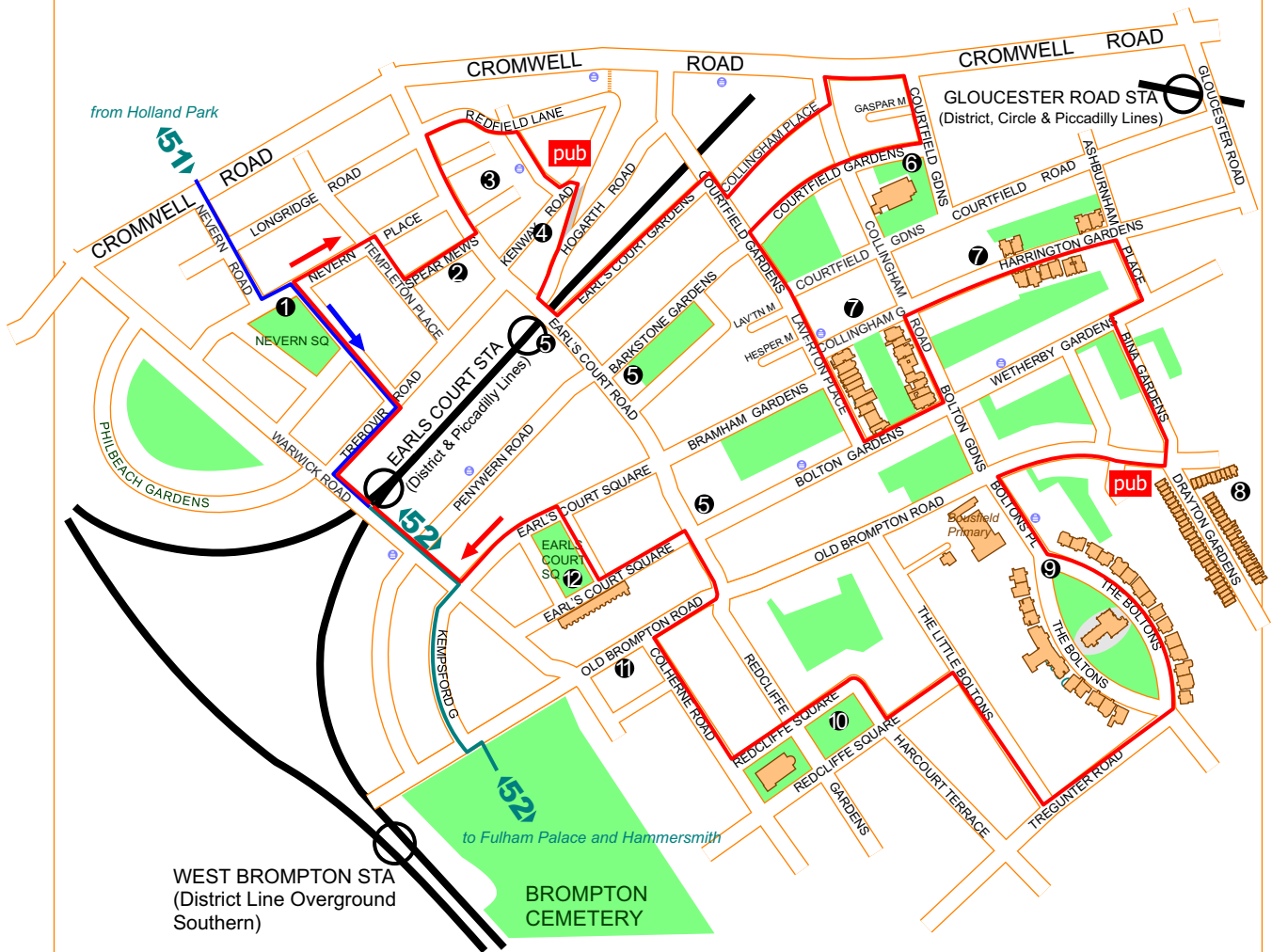


Earls Court walkabout

0.5 kilometres



Pub: The King's Head, Drayton Arms

Many streets have been omitted from this map

— Earl's Court walkabout 4.4 km

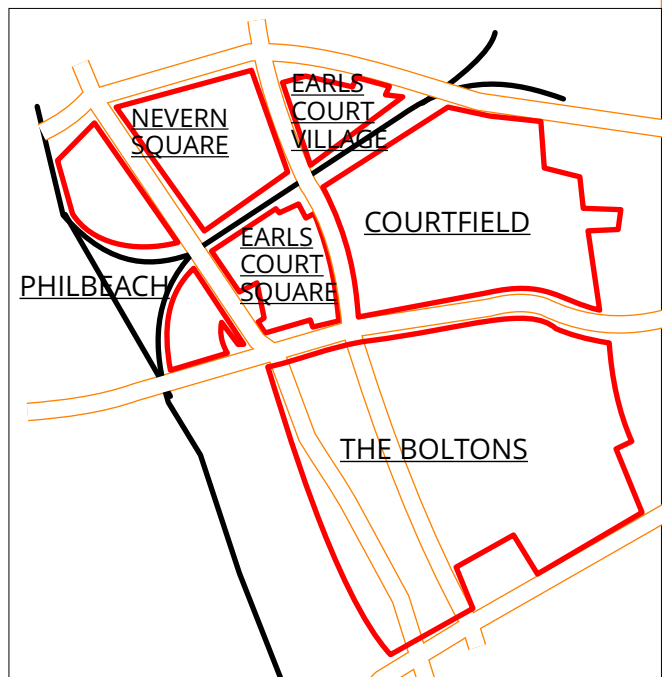
■ listed building

● blue plaque

Conservation Areas

RBKC have carried out a detailed audit of each area, identifying each building, its quality, architecture, materials and the decade in which it was built. Click on the name, right, to download or visit

<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/heritage-and-conservation/conservation-areas-0/conservation-area-appraisals-and-proposal-statements>



Earl's Court

It was south of the Hammersmith Road that the de Veres, as Earls of Oxford, probably held their manor court when they owned Abbots Kensington, Knotting Barns, West Town and Earl's Court. The manor house stood on a site now occupied by Earl's Court Station.

At the time the Edwardes inherited, it was largely undeveloped and known for its market gardens. In 1776 William Edwardes was created Lord Kensington. It was the second Lord Kensington who initiated development.

Kensington Canal

Counter's Creek ran south from Kensal Green past Earl's Court to join the Thames west of Battersea Bridge and ultimately influenced Earl's Court's development.

In 1822 Lord Kensington initiated plans to convert the creek into a canal to bring goods and minerals from the London docks to the Kensington area.

The canal was a financial failure, even when a railway company was floated to link the canal basin to Willesden. But in 1859 that railway was extended southwards to the rail network across the river, to form the West London Railway, by converting the canal to a railway. A success. A short stub of the waterway was left from the Thames and served flour mills and the Imperial Gas Works until 1967.

① Nevern Square

We start our walkabout as an option at the end of walk 51. In 1872, Lord Kensington's surveyor, Martin Stutely laid out a grid of roads south of Cromwell Road. Building commenced with Longridge Road in the Italianate style using stock/gault brick and varying amounts of stucco, mostly completed by 1881.

By then fashion had moved on, so Nevern Square and some houses surrounding it built between 1880 and 1886 were built in a style known as "Domestic Revival", which harks back to the architecture of earlier English and Flemish houses, in red and yellow brick with cut and moulded red brick details, and delicately patterned iron railings and balconies. Despite this outward change in appearance, the houses are of similar size and accommodation with similar shared features such as sash windows, projecting porches, closet wings and roofs hidden behind parapets.

A great merit of the square is its uniformity of style and materials. The private garden is about three-quarters of an acre in size. There are several magnificent old plane trees and four Victorian wrought iron gates flanked by decorative piers.

② Spear Mews

In early 1874 Lord Kensington apparently made

an agreement with the builder Thomas Grange to develop the frontage of Earl's Court Road between Longridge Road and the Metropolitan District Railway tracks, together with a substantial part of the hinterland stretching westwards from Earl's Court Road. Grange laid out Spear Mews in 1875–6

③ Child's Street and Child's Place

Around 1820 a wax-bleacher's establishment was set up by a Samuel Childs and Charles Freeman, between what are now Child's Street and Child's Place, to serve their retail wax-chandler's business off Leicester Square. The Childs family would partly rebuild this area as its freeholders in the 1850s. The wax-bleaching business came to an end about 1852 and by 1857 Samuel Childs was a gentleman, at Sunbury. The end of this factory permitted the first noticeable and surviving building work since the early years of the century, when the small cul-de-sac giving access to the wax-bleacher's was redeveloped from 1854 onwards as Child's Street. They were occupied predominantly by working-class tenants, without servants. The listed Prince of Teck pub was built for the Child family in 1868.

④ Original 'Village'

Originally there was just the farm house and Manor House and a couple of large houses in the midst of a large expanse of farmland and productive market gardens. On the west side of Earls Court Road (where the station is now) lived the farmer, Hutchins, in the manor house, the last remnants of which were removed in 1878. Down the road on the other side, where Barkstone Gardens is now, was Earls Court House in its own large gardens [demolished 1886]; further down by Bolton Gardens was Earls Court Lodge.

Thomas Smith bought Pound Field in 1797 and began building about 1803–5. He had nine small houses built in Earl's Court Road north of today's Kenway Road (his 'New Buildings'), other small cottages squeezed into 'North Row' and 'South Row' (now represented by 16–30 and the larger 32–36 (even) Kenway Road and 6–16 Hogarth Place. There was also a public house, the King's Head, constructed between the junction of these two footways, and nineteen smallish terrace houses erected nearby. The current pub building dates from the 1930s.

The Village blacksmith lived in what is now 21 Kenway Road. The forge, dated 1720, was still intact until a few years ago.

The Italianate terraces built along Hogarth Road, Knaresborough Place and Cromwell Road were built in the 1870s, after the railway arrived in 1869.

⑤ James and Robert Gunter; development

James Gunter, a successful Berkeley Square confectioner, had bought Earl's Court Lodge with extensive cultivated land (located at the present junction of Earl's Court Road and Bolton Gardens) and its land in 1797, and by 1806 had bought from Smith the southern part of Pound field where Hogarth Road and the railway now are situated. Gunter went on to buy most of the land east of Earls Court Road, originally used for farming and market gardens, and south of Old Brompton Road, and became a successful market gardener.

James died in 1819 and his son Robert, a wealthy Breconshire landowner, inherited the estate and added to it. He lived in the Lodge until 1857 when he moved north to Wetherby. The first large scale residential development began in 1852 at Earl's Court Gardens, and the posher Boltons, from where it spread west and north with tall terraces and semi-detached villas in the fashionable Italianate style, popular at that time, with gault brick and varying amounts of stucco. Houses were clustered around large private communal gardens to make up for the lack of back gardens. Mews were important throughout this period of development with a total of 9 being constructed in the area, accounting for one quarter of the total number of houses built.

His surveyors for most of the developments

were George and Henry Godwin.

By the 1880's, styles had changed and red or polychrome brick became fashionable, designed by independent architects.

⑥ Courtfield Gardens

The construction of Courtfield Gardens on a large, open meadow, began with St. Jude's Church, designed by George and Henry Godwin (spire added 1879) and Courtfield Gardens, around the church, began in 1873 with the south terrace and houses flanking Collingham Road, followed by the western and northern terraces. Building continued around the square until in 1881 the eastern terrace was completed in a noticeably more modern style.

⑦ By 1880 the fashion had moved on with the erection of mansion blocks and red brick terraces. The large individualistic houses of Ernest George and Harold Peto in Collingham Gardens and Harrington Gardens hold a special place in the history of the London house. These two small developments represent the extreme point of late-Victorian architectural individualism. They elaborated a rich and novel domestic architecture by grafting motifs from the old urban dwellings of northern Europe upon the stock of the plainer Queen Anne style. No bolder or better-preserved examples of this short-lived style remain than these.

⑧ Drayton Gardens

North and south of Old Brompton Road was the



Day estate. In 1845 Day leased the southern ground to two speculators, Joseph Dunning and William Ward, requiring them to construct a new road down the middle of the site and build fifty-seven houses within seven years. Local architect John Blore provided the layout and designed all the houses in 1846. He grouped them into three terraces of unequal length, each basically symmetrical, consisting mainly of three-storey houses over basements with one or more four-storey houses as a centrepiece. Executed in stock brick with copious stucco dressings, Blore's designs are in an orthodox late-Georgian manner, although the dressings of the doorcases, seem distinctively Victorian; those in Old Brompton Road having console brackets supporting the straight hood-moulds, and those in Drayton Grove Doric pillared porches. Drayton Terrace is the grandest.

⑨ The Boltons

This area is believed to have been named after William Bolton (or Boulton) who bought the land in 1795 and twelve years later sold it on to the Gunter, who developed it somewhat later. The centrepiece of the Gunter estate, The Boltons is their finest development. Designed by George Godwin junior and built in 1849-60 as pairs of large houses around a rare 'vesica pisces' shape formed by the arrangement of houses in facing crescents. The land in the centre of the crescents was donated by Gunter and was intended to be a 'plantation', bisected in the middle by a church. The great character of this highly stuccoed set piece relies on the symmetry and balance of each pair of villas and their matching details and finishes.

As the development moved westward to Redcliffe Gardens, Gault brick and tall terraces became more in evidence, as in their other developments north of Old Brompton Road. Bousfield Primary: 1954-56 by Chamberlin, Powell and Bon. Glass curtain walling with obscured panels in blue, yellow and green. Dark brown brick and some white glazed brick.

⑩ Redcliffe Square

Redcliffe Square, 1869-76, is an undiluted example of one version of the Godwins' mixed 'style'. Like it or loathe it.

Each group of gault brick terraced houses around the square follows the same distinctive design. At ground floor level each house displays projecting open porches with distinctive polished red granite columns topped with stuccoed fern capitals. Horizontally the groups are divided by a continuous decorative railing at first floor and a string course linking the window lintels at second floor. Plain one-over-one paned sash windows follow the usual hierarchy of decreasing size after the principal

first floor French windows. The groups are finished majestically with a highly distinctive French Renaissance style roof line. A further matching design relates to the first floor balconies and the small railings used on windowsills to retain window boxes.

This square was given to the Borough for free in 1949, providing its character was maintained.

⑪ Troubadour, Colherne

The Troubadour was established in 1954; it is one of the oldest and last remaining nightclubs and coffee houses of its era in London. It still offers live music seven days a week. It has featured musicians such as Martin Carthy, Sandy Denny, Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Charlie Watts.

Meanwhile, the pub on the corner, The Coleherne Arms, began life in 1866. After a period with drag shows it became a gay pub in the mid-fifties. Originally it was segregated into two bars, one for the straight crowd and one for the gay community at a time when homosexuality was illegal. The Coleherne was known internationally as a leather bar by 1965. Earl's Court became an enclave for the gay community known as 'The Court' with various clubs and bars, now all closed.

In 2008 The Coleherne was sold and reopened as the Pembroke.

Other nicknames have from time to time been given to Earl's Court Road according to the type of people using it, from Danzig Corridor (Poles) to Kangaroo Valley (Antipodeans)

⑫ Earls Court Square

This land was originally occupied by Rich Terrace and Rich Lodge and its extensive grounds, used as a market garden.

The Rich family, Earls of Warwick and Holland were owners the estate.

The greatest development activity in the area took place in the 1870s, with roads being laid out and terrace houses built in Penywern Road, Warwick Road and the northern, eastern and western sides of Earl's Court Square as well as Farnell Mews and the linked pairs of semi-detached houses along Earl's Court Road. The larger houses proved less popular at this time and a significant number still remained unoccupied up until the 1890s. This resulted in a noticeable shift in the types of houses being built, with the emphasis now being placed on smaller units such as the red brick terraced houses and mansion flats at 30-52 Earl's Court Square and the ten mansion block developments built to the south end of the Square and the north side of Old Brompton Road between 1888 and 1896 respectively. A detailed description of development is given at <https://ecsra.co.uk/history/history-2/>