

## KING STREET

Nos. 67-101 King Street and Nos. 11a-14 Manor Street

The ground on which these houses were built was agricultural land until 1808. It was part of a close which, early enclosed and known as Butt Close, remained an enclave in the Nunnery lands just outside the walls of Jesus College until 1550 when the Master and Fellows, pursuing the policy of exchange and consolidation of their property which had been begun by Prioress Letitia in the early 13th century, succeeded in rounding off their estate by exchanging for the close several small outlying strips in the fields of Whitwell, Coton, Grantchester and Cambridge.

In 1801 Butt Close was in lease to Thomas Bond who had sublet it in small plots. Two of his undertenants occupied houses on the close. By 1806 when the lease had been assigned to Thomas Clayton, there were three cottages, each assessed at £5 per annum. (Pearce. Memorabilia, p. 132). The lease having expired in 1808 the College on the advice of the survivor of their London property, Mr Ponder, decided to break up the close into building plots. Two thirds of the depth from north to south was to be allowed for the plots fronting on Jesus Lane and one third of the depth to the houses on Walls Lane, as King Street was then known. The College offered the site at 3s. per foot of frontage on Walls Lane. The depth of the plots varied considerably because Butt Close was an irregular rectangle.

The first plot to be taken up in 1808 was the most westerly, its western boundary being the wall of the Manor House garden which ran roughly along the line of the present Manor Street, though that road was not laid out by the College until 1835. The lessee was William Press, a chimney sweep who had a contract to sweep the college chimneys. He invested his profits in working class properties in Cambridge. At first he lived in one of the two larger houses already existing on his portion of Butt Close and installed his father in another of them. The third building was a wash house then used as a tenement. The site of these buildings can be seen from Williams Custance's Plan of Cambridge 1798 (Old Plans of Cambridge 1574-1798. J. Willis Clark and Arthur Gray.) to have been an L-shaped area on the site of No. 11a Manor Street projecting over part of the present Manor Street. The wash house was probably on the site of No. 67 King Street as this plot continued to be covered only by workshops or stabling down to the middle of the 19th century. The houses on this site may have been of some age, as buildings with the same ground plan are shown on Loggan's Survey of 1688 (see Willis Clark and Gray up supra), but they do not remain standing. The house at present on the corner of Manor Street and King Street (No. 11a Manor Street) is the former Harp Tavern, the first ground plan of which is contemporary with a lease of 1855, which lease was a renewal of an earlier lease dated 1843 in which it is described as newly built.

With regard to the remaining houses in King Street built on Butt Close I cannot find any exact dates for their construction. As William Press took up 76 feet of the frontage in Walls Lane, Nos. 69 and 71 must have been built on his land. Of these No. 69 has been demolished and rebuilt at least twice. A 99 year lease of it was granted by the College in 1896 in consideration for considerable reconstruction, and it has since been largely rebuilt by Messrs Holliman. No. 71 would therefore appear to be the only house on the site leased in 1808 by William Press which could have been built by him and its present appearance (1965) bears this out.

The next portion of the Butt Close site in Walls Lane to be developed was the easternmost portion of it, that bounded on the east by the present Belmont Place, then a footpath on Cambridge common. This portion was taken up by James Pretlove. It had a frontage on Walls Lane (King Street) of 40 feet and Pretlove built a row of five houses (Nos. 93-101 King Street during or soon after 1808. These houses had been demolished before 1914, when the site was offered for sale. The College had in the past ten years refused several offers

from developers, one from a firm in London who wished to erect a Bioscope Theatre. A College Meeting had firmly turned down the said offer and also one to use the land for a Territorial Hall and in the event the site remained vacant until 1921. The freehold was then sold and subsequently repurchased in 1962.

As to the remaining properties Nos. 73-91 King Street; in 1813 William Hustler, Bursar, states (in Memorabilia, p. 132) that the site of these houses had not yet been taken on lease but was in the occupation of various tenants at will. In 1815 (Memorabilia p. 606) it is stated that the whole ground fronting Walls Lane is now let to 9 lessees; Press has two portions, on separate leases, and the rest, including Pretlove's portion, is divided up amongst seven other lessees. It is impossible to find out the date when any of the existing houses was built and how far any of them corresponds with the houses shown in Baker's Map of 1830, when that end of King Street is shown completely built up. The two houses Nos. 73 and 75 stand on a site let in 1815 to the trustees of Whisken's Charity and they look as if they might have built at that date, so also do another two pairs of houses Nos. 77-79 and Nos. 81-83 the earliest date of the lease of these sites being 1812. No. 91 has undergone a lot of changes, the site having been sold by the College for a school and then repurchased.

The houses on the opposite side of King Street, that is to say Nos. 70-88 backing on Christ's Pieces, were under construction in 1790 when the College asked Counsel's Opinion whether they could stop the building on the grounds that it was encroaching on the highway. Walls Lane at this point had been 40 feet wide and Cambridge Corporation had sold about 20 feet on the south side of it to a developer who was building a row of houses whose privies were to drain into the wide ditch separating Walls Lane from Christ's Pieces which at that time belonged to Jesus College. Jesus was only concerned with the houses which backed on to their own property, but it seems that Nos. 60-68, which back on to the garden of Christ's, may well have built on the roadway at the same period as there is no sign of buildings in this position on Loggan's map (1688). The Corporation at this time was busy making money by the sale of the verges on the highways.

The only portion of the Butt Close site I have not mentioned is the site of Nos. 12, 13 and 14 Manor Street. These must have been built between 1835, when the street was laid out by Jesus College and 1841, when the new lease of the Harp Tavern was granted, for they stand on ground hitherto included in Press's lease and thereafter they are included in the lease of No. 67 King Street which stands on the vacant ground behind the Harp.

#### Other properties in King Street

The site of Wray's Almshouses, now demolished, was an ancient property of the Nunnery.

Nos. 33, 35 and 37 King Street were bought by the College in 1964 and the first conveyance amongst the deeds is dated 1848. There is no description of the property.

For Nos. 45-55 King Street, now demolished, there seem to be no title deeds.

Nos. 57, 59, 61 and 63 King Street were bought by the College in 1937. The first conveyance is dated 1834 and describes them as being three houses. These houses have now been demolished. As the property included all the buildings as far as the west side of Manor Street the houses must have been rebuilt or subdivided between 1834 and 1965.