

# Case Name: Royal Vauxhall Tavern, 372 Kennington Lane, London SE11 5HY

**Case Number: 1424488**

## Background

We have been asked to assess The Royal Vauxhall Tavern for listing.

## Asset(s) under Assessment

Facts about the asset(s) can be found in the Annex(es) to this report.

Annex	List Entry Number	Name	Heritage Category	HE Recommendation
1	1426984	Royal Vauxhall Tavern	Listing	Add to List

## Visits

Date	Visit Type
16 February 2015	Full inspection

## Context

The Royal Vauxhall Tavern, LB Lambeth changed ownership in November 2014 when it was acquired by an international property development company. There is concern over its future and that it will at a minimum no longer operate as a pub. It stands in the Vauxhall Nine Elms Opportunity Area, within one of the country's most intensive development hot spots, where it is designated a locally listed building but is not within a conservation area. It is not subject of a planning application. We have been asked to assess it for its evident significance but also for the threat to its longstanding cultural use.

The Royal Vauxhall Tavern (hereafter RVT) has claims to be the oldest and arguably the most inclusive and most highly valued LGB&T (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) venue in London and possibly in England, with a national and international reputation, built on a tradition of hosting alternative, transgender, drag performances from the early C20. It is considered to be a continuation of the tradition of alternative and bohemian entertainment fostered within Vauxhall Gardens which operated from the Restoration in the 1660s until 1859.

The future of the RVT has provoked a high level of interest on social media and in the press, most recently in the Evening Standard on 26 June and 16 July, in Pink News, and in the level of responses we have received. The majority are in favour of listing and include support from members of the House of Lords including Lord Smith, Members of Parliament, the Mayor's Office, the Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture, London Assembly members and local councillors, prominent members of the world of theatre and entertainment as well as the wider public, and it has an extensive following within the LGB&T community. Those against see listing as a hindrance to future management or an inappropriate means of addressing a commercial issue.

The assessment is timely, fitting in with Historic England's Pride of Place project (launched June 2015) which will explore and celebrate the relationship between LGB&T history and the country's historic buildings and spaces. The project explores the place of LGB&T history as an integral part of our national heritage, and is expected to lead to some new designations, amongst other outcomes.

## Assessment

CONSULTATION

We consulted the applicants; the owner; the pub manager, who until November 2014 was also the owner; their planning consultant; the local authority; the Victorian Society, the Greater London Historic Environment Record, and at his request the Mayor of London's Heritage Adviser.

#### OWNERS' RESPONSE

The owner and manager through their consultant have objected to listing. The response noted that the RVT is rightly locally listed, but given the degree of alteration does not have the special architectural and historic interest that is key to statutory listing. It notes that beyond its location, there is no direct association between the pub and the historic Vauxhall Gardens. It questioned the claim made for its unique role as the epicentre of the LGB&T community and noted the lack of objective evidence in support of this claim.

With reference to the recent launch of HE's Pride of Place project, Immovate (the owner) has expressed concern that HE seems to be endorsing a campaign group supporting the listing of the RVT while simultaneously preparing listing advice regarding the listing request, without any clarity as to the distinction between the LGB&T Heritage Project and the listing process. For instance, the HE page refers to 'our' interactive map. In summary the owner notes that the RVT is not the oldest LGB&T venue; it is not thriving (rather considered to be outdated and does not attract young gay people anymore); and that it has been losing money for the last 10 years. Immovate has also publicly declared on various occasions that they would wish to have an LGB&T venue on that site, however only if change is permitted since the viability of the current RVT operation is not given, and that that viability would be compromised if the building were listed, in their opinion.

#### APPLICANTS' RESPONSES

Both applicants reaffirmed their requests for the building to be listed. The main applicant had prepared extensive material in support of his application that forms the crux of the campaign to save the RVT and is posted on its website. We drew on this information in writing the Consultation Report. We were informed on 19 May 2015 that he had not received the Consultation Report sent by email on 7 May. We consequently issued the documents again extending the consultation period for a further 21 days to 9 June. His response included 30 letters of support, some of which we had received independently. Within it the following points were addressed in detail, with reference to the supporting letters.

Summary of applicant's response:

The following aspects of this application warrant further consideration.

1. The historic and continuing significance of the RVT as a site of safety and socialising central to the vitality of the LGB&T community locally, nationally and internationally.
2. The historic and continuing significance of the RVT as a site of campaigning and activism.
3. The historic and continuing significance of the RVT in the life of the wider local, national and international community (beyond the LGB&T community).
4. The historic and continuing significance of the RVT as a site of major cultural importance in the creation of experimental and avant-garde art with significant mainstream influence.
5. The architectural significance of the RVT as a building with iconic status.
6. The architectural significance of the current interior.
7. The increasing rarity and therefore significance of buildings with more than half a century of continuous LGB&T community and cultural use.
8. The urgency of the threat to the RVT.
9. The significance of Historic England setting the precedent of recognising a building for its contribution to England's LGB&T heritage.

The applicant's response presents points of architectural and historic/cultural detail which were not confirmed or set out in the original submission. Those points of particular relevance are summarised here.

With regard to historic and cultural development, the applicant commented that:

- its considerable and unique contribution to the history and culture of performance in England and beyond springs from deep roots and links to music hall, Molly Culture and the Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens.
- the RVT as a gay venue developed in an area with a longstanding reputation for cruising, certainly practised in nearby saunas in the 1920s and '30s.
- it is a gay venue that has existed continuously since the 1950s.

And with regard to the refurbished interior, the applicant commented that:

- it uses the traditional vernacular of small music halls; a raised platform against the internal face of the front facade provides an elevated position to view performances taking place on the stage with a clear standing area in-between.

- it was a move that reflected the transition, laid out in Historic England's own guidance materials, by which the cultural demands initially served by the entertainment facilities of inns and taverns eventually found more sophisticated expression through bespoke theatres, assembly rooms and other halls for concerts, meeting and dancing.
- it represents one of the earliest examples of a public interior space explicitly conceived and built with an LGB&T public in mind.

#### INTERESTED PARTIES' RESPONSES

The Victorian Society supported listing, principally on architectural grounds, describing it as a well-proportioned, handsomely detailed public house, with a striking Italianate facade, and in a prominent position in the streetscape. It questioned the lack of clear evidence as to when the pub became key to the LGB&T community but noted its significance in this role.

The local authority replied but did not give an opinion. The Greater London Historic Environment Record had no additional information on the building. The Mayor's Office is reported to be in favour of listing, which aligns with its policy to support London's pubs as cultural amenities.

In addition to the 30 letters of support that came in as part of the application, HE has received many further direct letters, the majority in support of listing. Correspondents in favour include members of the House of Lords, including Lord Collins of Highbury and Lord Smith, MPs including the MP for Vauxhall (Kate Hoey) and Nick Boles, the Mayor's Office, the Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture, London Assembly Members, local councillors, academics, architects, eminent theatre professionals, writers and members of the LGB&T community. Most cite the physical presence and cultural significance of the pub within both the broader local and LGB&T communities as their principal claim, although its architectural merits form a firm base to their arguments. Comparison has been made with the recent recognition given to the Stonewall Inn, New York by New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.

#### HISTORIC ENGLAND'S RESPONSE

Many of the supporting letters refer to the vital role of the RVT as a community asset, an opinion which is summarised in the letter from the local MP who described it as 'a landmark meeting and socialising place for London's LGB&T + community, and a valued asset for the wider local population.' Listing is intended to provide a means of protection for a building and whilst significance may reside in architectural and historic importance, which will be clearly set out in an associated List entry, listing cannot assess current communal value. Those opposing listing have suggested that listing would damage the economic viability of the building which is not a view we share, as many listed pubs continue to thrive. A listing assessment cannot take into account issues of economic viability of a building, but nor can listing secure the future use of a building's current function, which should also be noted, particularly in light of the strong affection for which many of the supporters hold the venue. In our listing assessment, we do, however, consider factors of special architectural and historic interest and these are addressed in detail in the Discussion that follows.

With regard to the HE website point raised by the owners, the website does not give a preferential view on the building but is a celebration of the LGB&T community as a whole. While HE welcomes public interest in built and cultural heritage, assessment for listing is a distinct, objective process, guided by clear criteria, to provide advice on special architectural and historic interest to the government. That is the purpose of this document.

#### DISCUSSION

By way of architectural summary, the Royal Vauxhall Tavern was built between 1860 and 1862, probably designed by the architect James Edmeston the elder, since it was the first building to be executed in his scheme to redevelop the site of Vauxhall Gardens which had closed in 1859. The interior was refitted in 1896 by the architect RA Lewcock who specialised in pub design.

For our listing assessment, it is assessed against the Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings (DCMS, March 2010) which notes that to be of special historic interest a building must illustrate important aspects of the nation's social, economic, cultural, or military history and/or have close historical associations with nationally important people. There should normally be some quality of interest in the physical fabric of the building itself to justify the statutory protection afforded by listing.

Providing more detail, our selection guide, Commerce and Exchange Buildings (April 2011), notes that after the 1830 Beer Act the number of pubs increased, with the high point of pub building falling in the decades either side of 1900, which coincides with refurbishment of the RVT in the 1890s. Not all pubs were lavishly decked out but most had some fittings which when brought together created the iconic gin palace, such as

mahogany bar counters, shelving, mirrors, partitions, frosted glass windows, signage, decorative tiling, embossed ceilings, occasionally with public rooms upstairs.

Although it was not designed as such, the RVT has provided a venue for performing artists, probably since its inception, certainly from the late C19, and has a particular historic and cultural identity that has evolved from its location next to Vauxhall Gardens. We will therefore consider whether it meets the criteria within the Culture and Entertainment Selection Guide which notes that after 1843, when legislation disposed of the theatres monopoly, more specialist theatres were built and taverns evolved towards song rooms and variety. Events would usually take place in the space provided in the pub rather than in a bespoke hall or room. These are all factors that we will consider.

For clarity, our discussion is divided into two sections: (a) architectural interest and (b) historic interest.

(a) considerations of architectural interest

The criteria concerning the fabric include architectural interest, date, rarity, intactness and historic interest. Constructed in 1860-2, the Royal Vauxhall Tavern was the first building to be put up in Edmeston's redevelopment of the area after Vauxhall Gardens had closed. It now stands in isolation, the later adjoining buildings having been demolished, but it was never intended as part of an ensemble and historic photographs suggest that the adjoining buildings were stylistically unrelated. Although he was not of the first order, Edmeston was nonetheless a capable architect. The prominent curved front presents a proud and imposing façade. It is Italianate in manner, which is typical of the period, but despite the loss of the stacks, the upper floors have an authority in their giant order arcades and terminal pedimented bays that lift it above the repeated rhythm of, for example, the Viaduct Tavern, Newgate Street of the late 1860s or early 1870s (listed Grade II). Window joinery has in some places been replaced but in general reflects the original glazing pattern and articulation of the facade. Ground floor survival of pubs is commonly less secure. Here, two of the pilasters have lost their moulded capitals, some entrances and windows have been replaced or blocked reflecting the altered internal arrangement, and the tiled plinth has been painted recently. Nonetheless the skeleton of the original ground floor arrangement is in place, the windows and entrances, flanked by timber pilasters, remaining legible. In summary, despite some alterations at ground floor, the handsome and well composed arcaded design on a prominent curved corner site renders it an imposing mid Victorian public commercial building.

The level of alteration is a factor to consider. In 1896 the pub interior was refurbished by R A Lewcock, an architect who specialised in pubs, who was responsible for installing what became an iconic horseshoe-shaped bar which was used - often provocatively - as a stage. However, the bar area was completely redesigned in the early 1980s and aside from the columns which support the curved stairwell above, and thereby determined the ground floor arrangement, the pub thus has lost most of its original or later C19/earlier C20 ground floor plan and fixtures, which are normally an important consideration for listing pubs of this period. Only the inner architraves of the side doors appear to survive. There is no vestige of the curved bar. The ground floor interior is therefore much altered. The upper floors survive better, although the first floor plan which included the principal function room(s) has been altered and the rooms depleted architecturally. Since there was no room for more than a tight straight stair from ground to first floor, the grand staircase rises from first to second floors only, providing a foyer to the main rooms. There is therefore some interest internally at upper levels.

There have been suggestions of a fabric connection with the Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens formerly on the site through claims that the cast iron columns may have come from the gardens when it closed. Sales accounts record that cast iron columns were sold at auction after the pleasure gardens closed, and it is logical to consider that the six cast iron columns supporting the stair well may have been acquired at the time and to compare them with contemporary drawings of the Gardens by George Scharf and others. However, in as much as these illustrations, which were intended as social commentaries, can be taken as architecturally accurate, they do not appear to represent the columns in the pub, which appear to be typical of the period in which it was built rather than of the earlier C19. The claim is therefore inconclusive.

In summary, architecturally the mid Victorian pub has interest externally for its handsome curved façade. Internally it has been much altered and its early use as a performance and meeting space is no longer manifest in the historic fabric of the building. Whilst the removal of the historic fixtures and fittings improved the usable space, giving the pub and all it stood for a modern interpretation and future as a performance space, the internal refurbishment of the early 1980s is not of architectural interest.

(b) consideration of historic interest

Appraisal of community or communal value is beyond the scope of listing, but the building's historic and cultural history, as the Principles of Selection note, is a consideration.

There is considerable interest in the strong cultural associations which the pub holds. The RVT is a key LGB&T venue and symbol of the gay community, now with a national and international reputation. It has claims to be the oldest and perhaps most inclusive LGB&T venue in the country, and given the recent closure of other venues such as Madame Jojo's, Soho (City of Westminster) and the Black Cap (Camden) it now stands out as one of the longest running LGB&T venues in the capital. By the early to mid-C20 the pub had gained a reputation as an important drag and cabaret venue, maintaining the tradition of bohemian and 'Molly Culture' (the C18 name for homosexual culture, the name derived from the houses in which gay and cross-dressing men would meet) which had been characteristic of the area and particularly of Vauxhall Gardens since its inception in the 1660s. Given the need for discretion at the time, it is difficult to give precise dates, but from the early 1950s the pub was recognised as a meeting place for the gay community. Certainly after 1967 it was overtly so, becoming a flagship for the gay community and a site of resistance to homophobia during the HIV/AIDS crisis in the 1980s. The website <http://www.rvt.community/>, albeit at the core of the movement to save the pub and therefore treated cautiously as part of our assessment, provides sufficient objective information to reflect the enduring cultural history of the building. Most recently it appeared in the film *Pride* (2014), bringing it to a wider audience. The building therefore possesses strong historic interest for its association with C20 LGB&T cultural history.

There is inherent historic interest in the longstanding use of the building as an alternative performance space, which, the level of support for listing suggests, is now established in the cultural identity of the area. Like many theatres and clubs it has a long pedigree of artists and performers whose careers were formed there, and who hold it in great affection, and has a particular following of supporters, both gay and straight, from the performance and theatre world and wider public.

In Soho the cultural identity of the area is long-established and arguably stronger than in Vauxhall. In the recent assessment of Madame Jojo's which occupies part of the post-war building housing Raymond Revuebar, we concluded that whilst Raymond's clubs made a significant mark on Soho's cultural life in the early 1960s, this is not permanently captured in the existing fabric which, like the bar fittings at the RVT, was introduced in the 1980s. We acknowledged the significance of Madame Jojo's and indeed the past eminence of the building as a whole as a venue, but designation was not an appropriate means of capturing its cultural significance and it was consequently not recommended for listing. Unlike Madame Jojo's however, where the sole interest resided in its cultural association, the RVT is an impressive Victorian commercial building and has a much longer history as a building with LGB&T associations.

We very carefully consider listing for historic significance and only cases with strong or enduring claims will merit designation. A parallel can be drawn with the Grade II listed Brixton Markets, LB Lambeth. Although architecturally modest, the 1920s market buildings formed the commercial and social heart of the extensive Afro-Caribbean community that settled in Brixton after WWII. The List entry notes that the successful adoption of the markets is the clearest architectural manifestation of the major wave of immigration that had such an important impact on the cultural and social landscape of post-war Britain, and is thus a site with considerable historical resonance. Similarly, Mendips in Liverpool, the childhood home of John Lennon, and the nearby 20 Forthlin Road, the more architecturally modest home of Paul McCartney, are listed primarily for their historic interest as the Beatles' practice venue during their formative years. A further example is Millicent Fawcett Hall in Westminster, the home of intensive campaigning and education for women's equality. In addition to these examples, on the NHLE there are other modest buildings that have come to possess significance for the way they bear witness to remarkable cultural phenomena or movements in our national history. The historic interest criterion means that this significance should be recognised through listing where appropriate.

We have looked with great care at the considerable weight of material presented as evidence for and against listing. There are, of course, many hundreds of LGB&T venues across the country and it is important to address the issue of selectivity and stress the requirement for special interest in recommending this building for listing. Furthermore, gay heritage is inevitably quite intangible and due to the relatively recent legalisation of homosexuality, historic buildings with recorded or physically defined associations with gay history will not be numerous. This is part of the reason for Historic England's separate (although related) *Pride of Place* project. What is, in part, special about the RVT is that there is clear Victorian architectural interest in the building. Although it would probably not meet the criteria for listing on architectural grounds alone due to ground floor alterations, it is a dignified and well-designed public house with a very strong façade. We readily acknowledge that the late Victorian pub fittings have largely been lost, but the exuberant structural columns and the space remains as through its decades of extravagant enjoyment. While we propose to exclude the very recent fabric modifications this does not diminish the fact that the interior is recognisable as the renowned LGB&T venue (there are original fittings at upper levels). Additionally, it has historic interest for its geographical association with the now-lost Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens that immediately preceded it on the

same and adjacent site. While the connection is not a direct in terms of re-used fabric, as far as we can tell, the continuation of this venue of delight and enjoyment on the site of one of the best known historic places of pleasure in the country is a poignant one (the two centuries of pleasure at VPG were recently chronicled in the vast book by David E Coke and Alan Borg). And lastly, Historic England is alive to the need to respect new, emerging histories in the historic environment, those of ethnicity, of faith, of gender and of sexual orientation. Notwithstanding its current communal value, which is beyond the scope of designation to determine, the RVT stands out nationally for its longstanding historic role as a symbol of tolerance and alternative entertainment and as a cultural hub of high significance to the LGB&T community. Where a case can be made for special architectural and historic interest, as is here in combination, listing must be recommended.

In recommending the extent of designation, we have considered whether powers of exclusion under s.1 (5A) of the 1990 Act are appropriate and consider that they are, which is clear in the proposed List entry. While the late C20 internal remodelling reflects changes in use associated with growing confidence within the LGB&T community at the time, this fabric is not of intrinsic architectural interest in its own right and has been excluded from the listing.

#### CONCLUSION

The Royal Vauxhall Tavern, 1860-2 probably by the architect James Edmeston the elder, refitted in 1896 and again in the early 1980s, meets the criteria of special architectural, historic and cultural interest and is recommended for listing at Grade II.

#### REASONS FOR DESIGNATION DECISION

The Royal Vauxhall Tavern, 1860-2 probably by the architect James Edmeston the elder, refitted in 1896 and again in the early 1980s, is recommended for listing for the following principal reasons:

- \* Historic interest: the building has historic and cultural significance as one of the best known and longstanding LGB&T venues in the capital, a role it has played particularly in the second half of the C20. It has become an enduring symbol of the confidence of the gay community in London for which it possesses strong historic interest above many other similar venues nationally;
- \* Architectural interest: it also possesses architectural interest in the handsome and well-designed mid Victorian curved facade, with a parade of arcades terminating in pedimented bays, which has a strong architectural presence despite alterations at ground floor level;
- \* Historic associations: built on the site of the England's best known place of pleasure for more than two centuries, Vauxhall Gardens; and this building's specifically acknowledged association, since the late C19/early C20, with alternative culture and performance;
- \* Interior interest: the structural decorative cast iron columns survive although the later 1980s fittings are excluded from the listing; there are original fixtures at the upper floors.

#### Countersigning comments:

Agreed. We have very carefully considered RVT's claims to interest and are recommending it for listing for its combined special architectural and historic interest, the latter being of particular note in this instance as an important LGB&T venue nationally.

V. Fiorato, 17th July 2015

#### Further Comments:

Agreed. This case has had much careful thought. On the one hand, the Royal Vauxhall Tavern is a handsomely-designed Victorian public house, with its curved arcaded facade. It has suffered alterations at ground floor level, but these do not detract from its imposing facade overall. On the other hand, it has strong claims to being one of the most historically significant LGB&T venues in the capital, evocatively continuing the tradition of the now lost Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens on the same site. For this combined special architectural and historic interest, it merits listing at Grade II.

Emily Gee  
20 July 2015



**Annex 1****List Entry****List Entry Summary**

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

**Name:** Royal Vauxhall Tavern

**List Entry Number:** 1426984

**Location**

Royal Vauxhall Tavern, 372 Kennington Lane, London, SE11 5HY

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County	District	District Type	Parish
Greater London Authority	Lambeth	London Borough	Non Civil Parish

**National Park:** Not applicable to this List entry.

**Grade:** II

**Date first listed:**

**Date of most recent amendment:**

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**Legacy System Information**

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

**Legacy System:** Not applicable to this List entry.

**Legacy Number:** Not applicable to this List entry.

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**Asset Groupings**

This List entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

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**List Entry Description****Summary of Building**

The Royal Vauxhall Tavern, 1860-2 probably by the architect James Edmeston the elder, refitted in 1896 and again in the early 1980s, a noted performance space and LGB&T venue.

**Reasons for Designation**

The Royal Vauxhall Tavern, 1860-2 probably by the architect James Edmeston the elder, refitted in 1896 and again in the early 1980s, is listed for the following principal reasons:



\* Historic interest: the building has historic and cultural significance as one of the best known and longstanding LGB&T venues in the capital, a role it has played particularly in the second half of the C20. It has become an enduring symbol of the confidence of the gay community in London for which it possesses strong historic interest above many other similar venues nationally;

\* Architectural interest: it also possesses architectural interest in the handsome and well-designed mid Victorian curved facade, with a parade of arcades terminating in pedimented bays, which has a strong architectural presence despite alterations at ground floor level;

\* Historic associations: built on the site of the England's best known place of pleasure for more than two centuries, Vauxhall Gardens; and this building's specifically acknowledged association, since the late C19/early C20, with alternative culture and performance;

\* Interior interest: the structural decorative cast iron columns survive although the later 1980s fittings are excluded from the listing; there are original fixtures at the upper floors.

## History

The Royal Vauxhall Tavern was built between 1860 and 1862, probably by the architect James Edmeston senior, since it was the first building to be constructed in his scheme to redevelop the site of Vauxhall Gardens, the pleasure gardens which had closed in 1859. In 1889 the Royal Vauxhall Tavern was bought by the publicans Poole and Venner who in 1896 employed the architect R A Lewcock to refurbish the interior; his scheme included the installation of a long curving bar that followed the line of the internal structural columns, and for many years provided a stage and performance space for drag artists. In the 1970s the local streets, which had been laid out by Edmeston on the footprint of Vauxhall Gardens, were demolished, leaving the Royal Vauxhall Tavern standing alone, while the ground behind was landscaped to form New Spring Gardens.

The Royal Vauxhall Tavern, or RVT as it is commonly known, is a key LGB&T venue and symbol of the gay community, with a national and international reputation. From the later C19 the pub was recognised as an important drag and cabaret venue, building on the reputation for Bohemian and alternative entertainment which had been characteristic of the area, and particularly of Vauxhall Gardens since its inception in the 1660s. Many well-known drag artists have started their career or performed at the RVT.

Given the need for discretion at the time, it is difficult to give a precise date, but seemingly from the early 1950s the RVT came to be recognised as a major LGB&T venue. Certainly by the 1960s it was overtly so, providing a meeting place and entertainment platform, and a flagship for the gay community, and it was a site of resistance to homophobia during the HIV/AIDS crisis in the 1980s. The website <http://www.rvt.community/> provides a detailed history of the building and its cultural significance.

Thriving in this role, in the early 1980s the pub was refurbished internally. Previously laid out with three smaller bar areas, internal partitions and the iconic curved bar were removed to provide a single open space served by a smaller bar against the southern wall and a larger stage, built against the rear wall of the building. Seating was built-in against the outer curved wall and in place of the horseshoe bar, island tables were created round each of the internal columns.

After Vauxhall Gardens closed, items, including 'about sixty-one iron columns', were sold at auction. It has been suggested that the six structural piers that support the first floor stair well and a further six used externally on the building may have been acquired from the Gardens. Illustrations of Vauxhall Gardens, including the frontispiece of the 1778 edition of the *Vocal* magazine, an engraving from the *Lady's* magazine of 1799 and a drawing by the artist and social commentator George Scharf of 1827 show buildings with columnar arcades but, never intended as precise architectural drawings, none appear to provide clear certainty that these correspond with the RVT columns and piers.

## Details

Public house, 1860-2 probably by James Edmeston, remodelled internally in 1896 by R A Lewcock for the publicans Poole and Venner and again in the 1980s.

**MATERIALS:** stock brick with stucco dressings. Pitched, presumably slate, roofs are hidden behind the parapet and rear extensions.

**PLAN:** the building comprises pitched roofed wings in three storeys behind a curved street frontage. The pub has a single bar space, originally laid out as three separate bars, each entered from the street. To the right, a separate entrance gives access to the upper floors, which were formerly laid out as accommodation and probably a first floor function room on the street frontage.

EXTERIOR: the street frontage is in six bays, the upper floors articulated by giant order pilasters supporting pediments in the outer bays and in the inner bays a round-arched arcade above the second floor. The outer bays have rusticated pilasters framing a full-height recessed panel, within which is a pedimented first floor window with scrolled brackets, while the upper floor window has a shallow stilted arch with stucco rendered capitals and keystone. The inner bays have round-arched windows, on the first floor with moulded impost bands within each bay, and on the upper floor with a narrow cill band and moulded brackets. Most windows are horned sashes.

On the ground floor three entrances, of which the central doorway is now blocked, are flanked by engaged, fluted, timber columns on square bases, of which four retain their Corinthian capitals. Between the entrances are moulded panels; above all are overlights, of which the least altered are glazed with a central lozenge panel. The entrance to the right (south) to the upper floors has a later C20 architrave\*. The plinth below the ground floor windows is faced in ox blood coloured tiles with darker flush panels, but has been painted in 2015. The fascia is later C20\*.

INTERIOR: arranged in an arc and supporting the curved stairwell above are six cast iron cylindrical columns with Composite capitals. The bases are enclosed by C20 cladding\*. Entrance doors have moulded architraves. Otherwise the bar area is a single space, remodelled and fitted out in the 1980s. This 1980s fit out\* is of not of special interest.

An impressive closed string stair built against a curved inner wall, with turned newels and moulded balusters, rises from first to second floors. The principal room on the first floor, perhaps formerly a function room, has been subdivided and within it most of the internal joinery has been replaced. Elsewhere upper floors have moulded door and window architraves and doors of four panels. A number of upper floor rooms have round-arched cast iron fireplaces and grates with integral trivets or pot stands.

\* Pursuant to s.1 (5A) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act') it is declared that these aforementioned features are not of special architectural or historic interest.

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## **Selected Sources**

### **Books and journals**

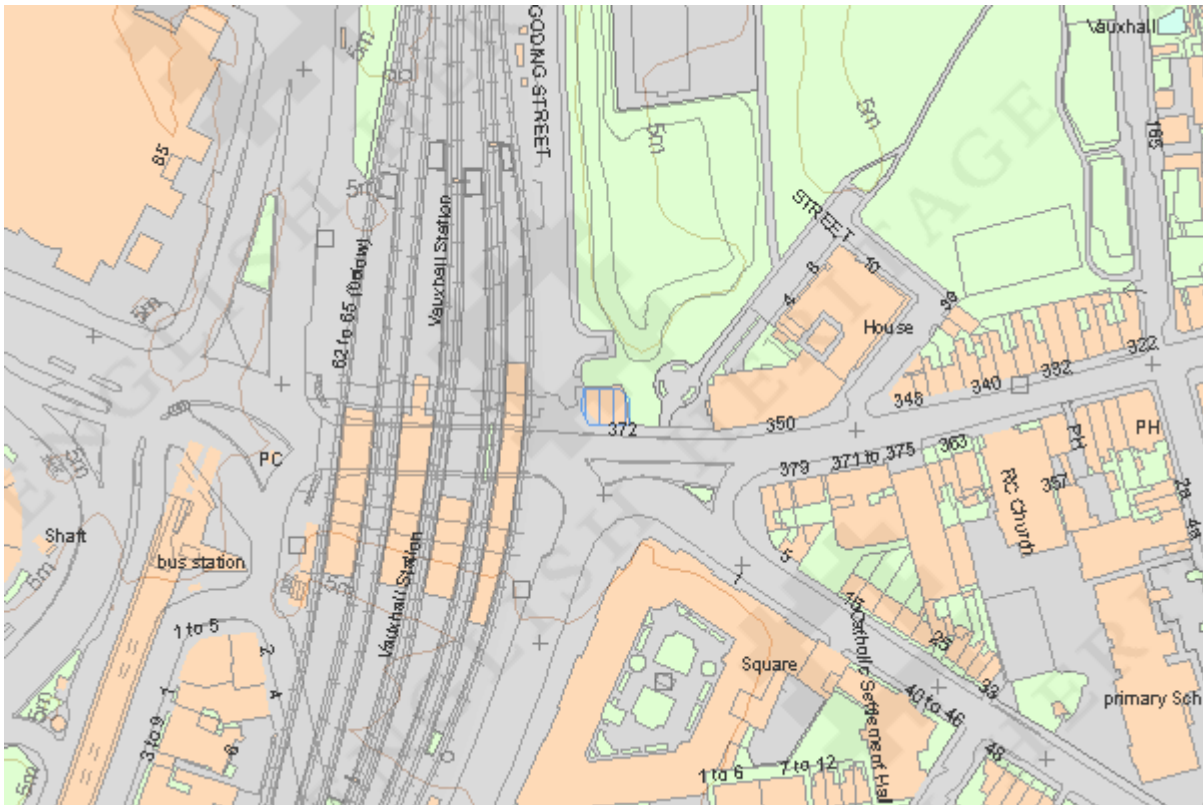
Borg, Alan , Coke, David , Vauxhall Gardens, A History, (Yale Press (2011))

### **Websites**

The Future of the Royal Vauxhall Tavern, accessed 29 June 2015 from <http://www.rvt.community/>

**Map**

**National Grid Reference:** TQ3050078049



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The above map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. For a copy of the full scale map, please see the attached PDF - 1426984\_1.pdf