



ARCHISTORY

7 Anderson Street, Chelsea

The name Chelsea is derived from the Old English 'Cealc-hyo', meaning 'a landing place for chalk or limestone'. Before 1066 the Manor of Chelsea was held by Wlewen, the mother of Abbott Gervace of Westminster. By 1086 she had been succeeded by Edward of Salisbury, Sheriff of Wiltshire. His estate was assessed in the Domesday Survey at 2 hides, or 240 acres, and valued at £9.

Over the next 400 years Chelsea passed through the hands of many owners, including John Bray of Chiswick and Sir John of Shoreditch. It was conveyed in 1536 to Henry VIII as part of a land exchange, giving the Crown absolute title to Chelsea Manor. The King later granted it to his last wife Catherine Parr in 1544. The Manor was subsequently leased by the Crown for the next two centuries to various aristocrats, among them James Hamilton, 2nd Marquess of Hamilton, who embarked upon substantial building in the area. By 1657 the estate was sold to Charles Cheyne, a Buckinghamshire gentleman. It then passed to Dr. Hans Sloane, who was created a baronet in 1716. When he died the estate passed to Lord Cadogan and much of it remained with his family in the 19th and 20th century.

Small pockets of Chelsea were exchanged or sold off throughout this time. In 1650 Michael Warton, son of Sir Michael Warton the Royalist politician from Beverley in Yorkshire, bought 53 acres of arable land in the area, suitable for growing a rich variety of crops. Chelsea participated in the great expansion of market gardening around London between the 17th and 19th centuries, stimulated by the new demand among the rich for a wide variety of vegetables in their diets. Chelsea gardeners grew corn and vegetables without a fallow, meaning that they did not adhere to the custom of ploughing the land and leaving it unseeded for any period. Instead, they copiously covered the ground with dung and night soil from London, which was very innovative for the time. By 1748 orchards and vegetable gardens covered much of Chelsea.

Sir Michael Warton's sons started to sell off his land towards the end of the 18th century, and a portion of it on the King's Road passed to William Colvill, the celebrated florist. His King's Road Nursery was built in 1793, and it was on this site that number 7 Anderson Street was later built. Stretching from Keppel Terrace to Blacklands Lane, Colvill's Nursery became a household name. Its owner grew a number of new roses including the China Rose. In 1795 the nursery was singled out for the first real display of chrysanthemums in Britain and also for the quality of its highly fashionable exotic plants. Market gardening quickly shrank with the development of Chelsea, but the garden nurseries hung on, as they required less space. From 1830 until 1840 the King's Road Nursery was run by Adams and Durban, until the Colvill Estate sold off the land for development.



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The architect and builder of number 7 Anderson Street was John Blore, the son of the C. H. Blore, *'an experienced builder of many years'*. He received what he himself described as: *'the basis of my practical education'* in his father's workshops and buildings before being articulated to the architect Robert Wallace in 1827. During this time he worked on some of Wallace's best designs, including the Derby Athenaeum, which incorporated Derby's Post Office and Royal Hotel. In 1845 John Blore was appointed surveyor of the Alexander Estate which occupied 370 acres in Kensington, Knightsbridge and Chelsea. He received this post after the death of the previous surveyor Elias George Basevi who was also the architect responsible for Thurloe Square. Blore's buildings in Kensington include Hereford Square, Drayton Terrace and Drayton Grove. In the Colvill Estate in Chelsea he was responsible for Anderson Street, Coulson Street and Lincoln Street, and also a prominent range of buildings on the King's Road itself.

7 Anderson Street was built in 1845, and is a fine example of the Regency or early Victorian style, popular from 1811 to about 1850. The layout of the façade was designed to emulate the classical proportions of the earlier Georgian fashion of architecture, which was inspired in turn by the observations of travellers to Italy and Greece in the 18th century who embarked on 'The Grand Tour' and brought back many influences from the ancient classical world of Greco-Roman architecture. The design is formulaic, with an emphasis on symmetry. It is constructed in yellow London brick stock, laid in a Flemish bond. The sash windows of the first floor are larger than those on the other levels in order to adhere to the classical ratios laid out in much larger houses of the previous period. Unlike their more spacious Georgian forerunners, houses of this type did not have sufficient plot width to allow for the front door to be placed directly under the first floor windows above. In order to distract the eye from the irregularity in the symmetry of the building the entire lower and upper ground floor façade was faced with ashlar stucco and inscribed with blocks of banded rustication, emphasising the horizontal.

Anderson Street is part of a larger development of 32 houses built on the same plan. These groups of houses were arranged in the adjacent roads of Coulson Street and Lincoln Street, making up the shape of a capital H in plan. The map of 1891 shows that Anderson Street was originally accessed by steps at the north end, as was Lincoln Street. The streets were all named after local trustees of the Colvill Estate: David Coulson, Stroud Lincoln and John Anderson, who was listed in a lease of 1832 as a 'Brewer' and as a 'Gent' of Greens Row Chelsea'. The first recorded owner of number 7, and also of numbers 1 to 9 Anderson Street, was Richard Angell. Elizabeth Pitt, the unmarried daughter of a 'fundholder', was the first occupant. In 1849 Karl Marx was renting rooms at number 4. His fourth son, Henry, was born there on Guy Fawkes Night resulting in him being nicknamed 'Guido'. By 1865 there was a grocery shop at number 9. In 1870 both numbers 7 and 8 were owned by a widow, Mrs. Skerritt, and number 7 was rented to Harriett Law. Mrs. Skerritt's deceased husband had previously also owned number 12, which was a schoolhouse, and numbers 13 and 14 which were private dwellings. By 1881 the house had been sold to Robert Leveyer and divided into three flats, with a family occupying each floor. The



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ground floor and basement were taken by the owner, a bookbinder, who lived with his wife Elizabeth and their children Robert and Elizabeth; the second floor was occupied by Robert's father John, an ironmonger's assistant and his wife Mary; and the third floor was rented to Thomas Kendle, a butler from Essex, who lived with his wife Elisa and their son Percy. In addition, Robert Leveyer housed two single lodgers: George Watkin, a 'printer's compositor', and a widow, Anne Mason.

The property was sold to Robert Hilman in 1890, and a year later, the house comprised only two separate lodgings. The overcrowded conditions that must have existed previously in the house continued. The top floor was occupied by another butler, Charles Barbour from Cornwall, along with his wife Priscilla and their son Charles; the remaining space was taken by a 'cabman' William Rolfe and his wife Sophie, and their three subtenants: John Chapple a coachman, with his wife Mary, and William Weteras, a grocer.

The next owners of 7 Anderson Street were the Simpson family, who purchased it in 1895. They occupied the whole of the house. The household consisted of George Simpson, a tailor's cutter, and his wife Martha, a dressmaker. They lived with their daughter Violet, a dressmaker's apprentice, and their young son George. The Simpsons also had a lodger and general domestic servant. After her husband's death, Martha remained in the house, and once her children had left, turned it back into a lodging house. She died in 1939, and the property stayed in the hands of her estate, offering accommodation to single women. By 1958 the house was in a state of disrepair and was sold in the early 1960s, but remained unoccupied for three years until 1964. Ann Koehler is recorded as the sole occupant in 1965. Ulric and Marie Barnett bought the house in 1969, and the house received a Grade II listing in 1971. They then sold it on to Aileen and Elizabeth Howarth in 1975, who rented out part of it to Patrick and Elizabeth White during the 'seventies and 'eighties. The property then passed to Michael and Maria Blampied in 1988, who resided in the house until 1994, before renting it out to a series of short-term tenants. Luigi di Flumeri bought number 7 in 2005 and lived in it until it was sold to its current owners Lucy and Neville Smithson in 2010.

The Smithsons have completely redesigned and refurbished the interior of the house from top to bottom. The only period feature remaining when they bought the property was the handrail to the staircase which the local planning authority insisted they retain. This caused their plans to create a glass staircase to be abandoned, and instead they have had a beautiful oak staircase built incorporating the design of the original handrail. Throughout the rest of the house there is an airy, spacious and ultra-modern atmosphere as many original interior walls had been removed. The rooms have been designed to create maximum storage space with cleverly fitted cupboards and shelves throughout. Lucy and Neville continue to enjoy living in the heart of an area steeped in history and charm.