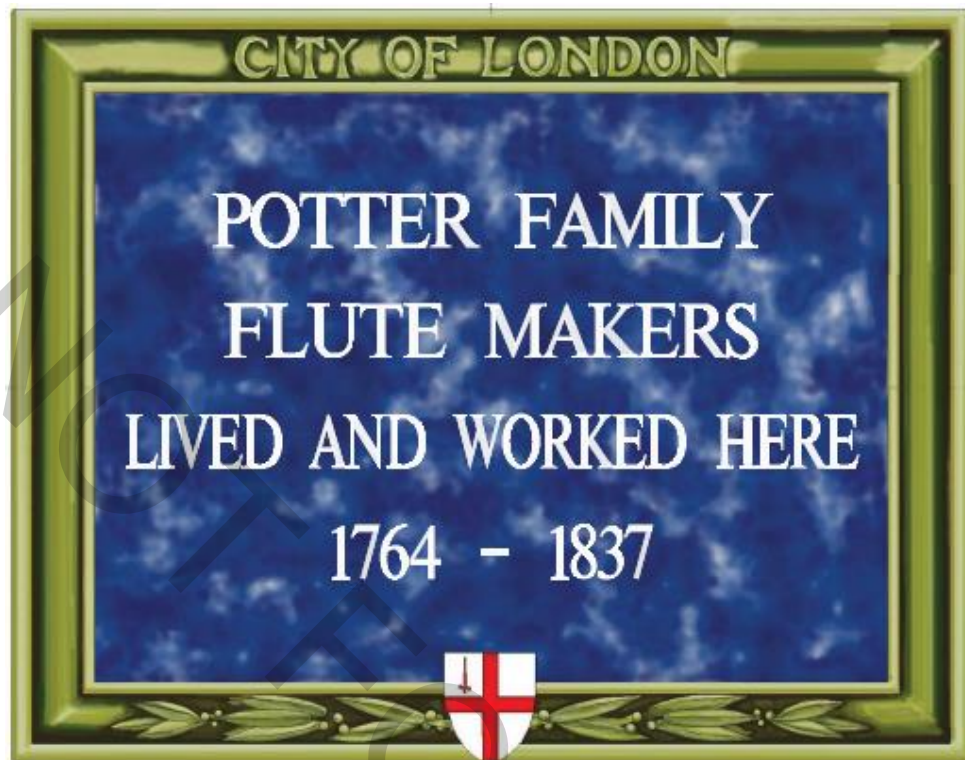
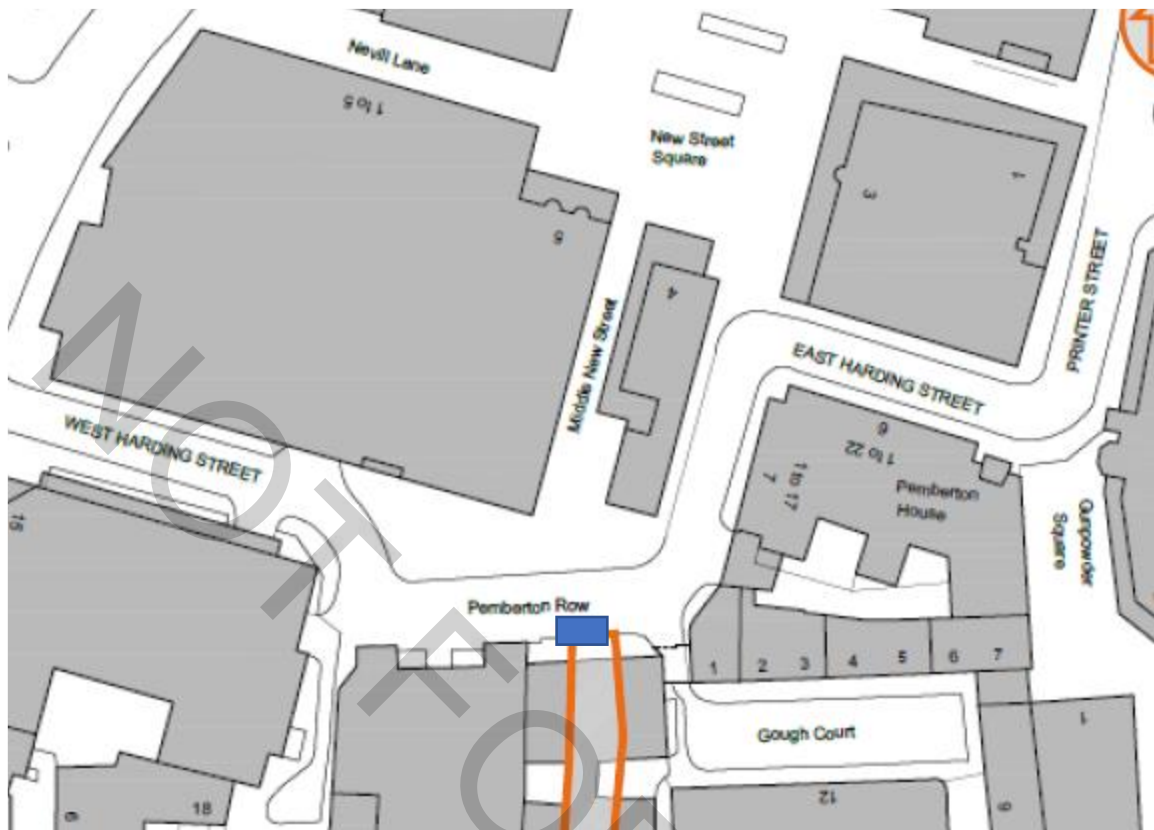


**Mock-up of proposed blue plaque**



**Proposed location for the new plaque on 5 Pemberton Row:**





Location Plan of 5 Pemberton Row

## 3.0 POTTER FAMILY

### Richard Potter (1726-1806)

- 3.1. Richard Potter was born in Mitchem and came from a horticultural background. After serving his apprenticeship, he founded his own musical instrument business in 1745 at Green Dragon Court, Foster Lane, Cheapside. In 1764 Richard moved his business to 5 Pemberton Row and around 1786 the business was moved to 5 Johnson's Court whilst 5 Pemberton Row was retained as a family home.
- 3.2. Richard significantly contributed to the improvement of the German flute through his 1785 patent which in effect remade the English '*German flute*'. In his patent, he is described as of Pemberton Row (Gough Square) in the City of London. His patent related to the following features, which he did not invent but rather incorporated these features on the flute.
- A narrow bore head which facilitates the high end of the range;
  - A metal tuning slide which increases the tuning range of the instrument, supplanting the need for several corps de rechange to cover the range of pitch likely to be encountered;
  - Metal valves (pewter plugs in current language) seating in metal tubes which replace the flat leather flap keys sealing onto wood in use prior to this time
  - A foot register which enables the low end of the flute to be tuned;
  - A set of consistently marked calibrations on the tuning slide barrel, the foot register and the stopper indicator which assists the player to optimise the settings of all three tuning elements.
- 3.3. In summary, Richard's innovations was the use of a metal tuning-slide with an attractive outer tube of wood, a slide or '*register*' at the extreme end of the foot joint, and a screw-cork in the head joint with a projecting, graduating ivory pin. When these were made to correspond, the instrument was in tune. The addition of about 5cm to the length to produce  $c\sharp'$  and  $cb'$  at the lower end of the range with one or two foot keys. The construction method of the flute's keys was adapted by the closing being effected by rounded valves of soft metal instead of the usual leather. The holes were lined with metal tubes and the keys closed on the countersunk outer ends.

- 3.4. London Turners dominated the production of woodwind instruments and Richard Potter was Master Turner 1782/3.
- 3.5. Richard's flute which was highly influential at the time and favoured by Mozart. These instruments were very expensive and much sought-after at this time which led to copies of the patented instrument being produced.
- 3.6. The earliest extant flute with a foot key is by Richard Potter and dates from 1776. This flute is in the Chicago Historical Society collection, and once belonged to a bandsman in Cornwallis's army at Yorktown.

### Richard Huddleston Potter (1755-1821)

- 3.7. Richard eldest son, Richard Huddleston Potter was apprenticed to his father but became piano teacher. He also played flute and violin and was an accomplished concert musician. From 1782 until his death in 1821, Richard was organist at St Bride's Church in Fleet Street.
- 3.8. Richard was also one of the 30 original members of the Philharmonic Society in 1813 and played viola in its orchestra.
- 3.9. Richard youngest son, George William Killest Potter (1798-1871) followed the family into The Turner's Company and held the position of Master Turner on three occasions – 1850, 1859 and 1869. He was also a lawyer managing the day to day running of the Old Bailey and until his death in 1871. George was also Clerk to the Worshipful Company of Coachmakers.
- 3.10. Richard's fifth child was Philip Cipriani Hambley Potter (1792-1871) a leading composer and pianist of his day. He was the most famous of the Potter family and he met Beethoven, produced many orchestral works, including twelve symphonies, and famously performed the English premiers of Beethoven's 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Piano Concertos.

## William Henry Potter (1760-1848)

- 3.11. William was the second son of Richard and like his brother he was apprenticed to his father and joined the firm which was listed as Potter and Son in 1801.
- 3.12. In 1805 William became Master of the Turner's Company and following the death of his father in 1806, Henry continued the business, relocating it from 5 Johnson's Court to 5 Pemberton Row in 1817.
- 3.13. In 1808, Henry was granted a patent for a device for the flute keys which produced an effect called the '*glide*', which enjoyed only temporary popularity. In general, William continued to manufacture flutes in the style began by his father.
- 3.14. William retired in 1837 and moved to Bromley, the contents of the property auctioned off with over 200 examples of their work on offer.

## Chronology of the Potter's

- 1726 Richard Potter senior born in Mitcham, Surrey.
- 1745 Potter's flute making business is established in Green Dragon Lane.
- 1755 Richard Huddleston Potter born in London.
- 1760 William Henry Potter born.
- 1764 Potter's business moves to No. 5 Pemberton Row and is the earliest known occupant of the premises.
- 1776 Richard Potter's first extant flute with a foot key is produced.
- 1782 Richard Senior becomes Master of The Turners Company.
- 1783 Richard Junior married Charlotte Baumgarten, daughter of the bassoonist Samuel Christian Baumgarten.
- 1785 Potter's English German Flute is patented. Richard Huddleston Potter becomes organist at St. Brides Church, Fleet Street
- 1786 Potter's flute making business moves to no. 5 Johnson's Court with the family home remaining at Pemberton Row.

- 1792 Philip Cipriani Hambley Potter is born, known as Cipriani.
- 1801 Company listed as Potter and Son as William Henry joins the firm.
- 1806 Richard Potter senior dies and is buried in Mitcham.
- 1808 William granted a patent for a device for the flute keys which produced an effect called the 'glide'.
- 1813 Richard Huddleston becomes one of the original members of The Philharmonic Society.
- 1816 Cipriani has two works commissioned by The Philharmonic Society and makes his debut performance on piano.
- 1817 Cipriani Potter travels to Vienna to meet Beethoven. The business relocates back to 5 Pemberton Row.
- 1821 Richard Huddleston Potter dies.
- 1822 Cipriani Potter made first teacher for the male division of the Academy of Music.
- 1827 Cipriani Potter becomes director of orchestral practice at the Academy of Music.
- 1832 Cipriani Potter becomes principal of the Academy of Music.
- 1834 Cipriani Potter becomes a founding member of the Society of British Musicians.
- 1837 William retires to Bromley, Kent.
- 1848 William Henry Potter dies in Bromley, Kent.
- 1849 Cipriani Potter becomes a member of The Bach Society.
- 1854 Cipriani Potter becomes musical director of The Madrigal Society.
- 1871 Cipriani Potter dies.



## 4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1. The flutes made by the Potters' had an international reputation for quality without any form of advertisement but were also widely copied, these copies as known as '*bastard Potters*'.
- 4.2. In 1806, in Calcutta, India, Potter patent instruments were being offered for sale as part of a consignment on the ship *Sovereign* and they also influenced the design of flutes in Vienna at the end of the eighteenth century. The reputation of the Potters' craftsmanship was strong throughout Britain, too. Mr. Erskine, a music shop proprietor of York, took out an advertisement in the *York Herald* of 1804 to proclaim his purchase of Potter flutes.
- 4.3. The significance of the developments of the instrument created by the Potter's still resonate today and early examples can still be found in museums across the world including the Victoria and Albert Museum.
- 4.4. In conclusion, this document has provided a narrative on the Potter family and the contribution they made to 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century music through the improvement of the flute and the contribution they made by holding important positions of office. It is for these reasons that 5 Pemberton Row should be considered for a blue plaque.