

## HERITAGE, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Christ Church, Albany Street, NW1

Emergency Fall Arrest Netting Installation

Rev 01 · April 2023



## Revision History

Rev	Description	Author	Reviewer	Date
00	Issued for Listed Building Consent	JRM	SK	10.02.2021
01	Updated for renewal of LBC	JRM	SK	17.03.2023

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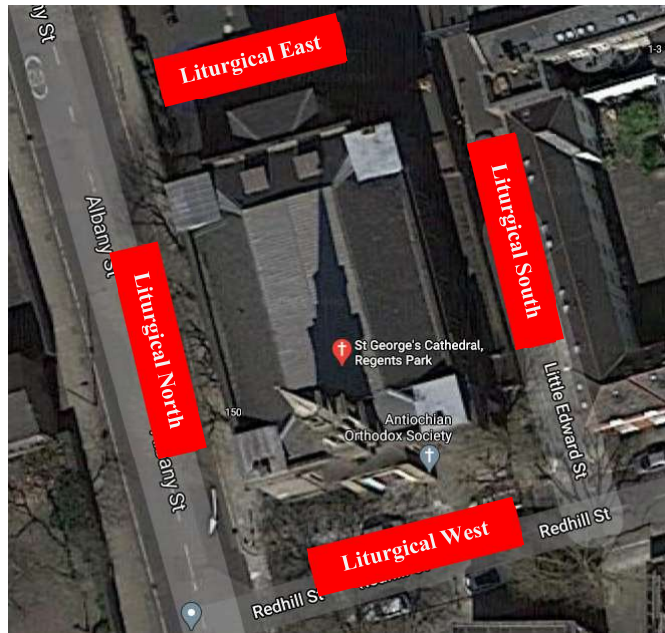
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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This heritage design and access statement has been prepared by Roger Mears Architects as supporting documentation to accompany the application for the proposals at Christ Church, 1-3 Redhill Street, London NW1 4BG in the London Borough of Camden. This statement has been prepared by John Raphael Miminis BArch MSc.UD MSc.CHB and reviewed by Sarah Khan RIBA SCA AABC MA GradDiplCons (AA)Dist MFPWS
- 1.2 The proposals have been prepared on behalf of the London Diocesan Fund who have owned the site from circa. 1836.
- 1.3 The church tenant from 1989 was the Antiochian Orthodox Church of Great Britain as St George's Cathedral. Since February 2023 the building has been vacant apart from Live-in Guardians residing in the Vestry. Please note that owing to their long tenancy much council and archival information including Conservation Area Assessments will still reference to 'St George's Cathedral'.
- 1.4 This report has been prepared by following guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Planning Practice Guidance "Conserving and enhancing the historic environment", BS: 7913, Historic England's Good Practice in Planning Advice Notes 1, 2 and 3 and Historic England's Advice Notes 1 – 8, with regard to the heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals to carry out alterations to the Church.
- 1.5 This is to inform development works for the building, to ensure that any works or commissions are consistent with, and appropriate for, the fabric and values of the site. This statement should be read in conjunction with the proposed drawings and other statements which accompany the formal Listed Building Consent application submission.
- 1.6 It should be noted that works in 2021 proceeded as emergency work to the church by way of early notification as stipulated under Section 9 Part 3(d) of the Planning(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 was issued to the London Borough of Camden by email dated 08.02.2021.
- 1.7 This statement is to support a new Listed Building Consent application further to existing consent to the installation of fall arrest netting ref. 2021/0628/L.
- 1.8 Condition 3 permits only a time-limited installation of the netting up to May 2023. In this period of approx. 2 years, the tenant church attempted no remedial works to the netted areas.
- 1.9 Since February 2023, the tenant church – the Antiochian Orthodox parish of St George's – has vacated the premises and the building has returned to the full control of the Diocese of London.
- 1.10 In the meantime, works to survey the building have taken place to inform a robust sequence of repair works.
- 1.11 The fall arrest netting must remain in place for a longer period of time and therefore a renewed application for Listed Building Consent is being submitted.
- 1.12 Elevation references throughout this relate to the liturgical directions of Christ Church which are different to cardinal directions. The following diagram may assist



True North



## 2.0 Setting & History

- 2.1 Christ Church (formerly St. George's Cathedral) is located at the junction of Albany Street and Redhill Street North West London within the Borough of Camden. The main entrance to the church is on Redhill Street with other secondary routes onto Albany Street and Little Edward Street on the liturgical south elevation.
- 2.2 The church is the work of architect James Pennethorne in 1837. The exterior is largely unchanged. Internal alterations to suit a High Church style are dated 1839-43 by R.C. Carpenter and 1849-85 by William Butterfield.
- 2.3 The church is listed at Grade II\*.
- 2.4 The Regent's Park Conservation Area appraisal dated July 2011 confirms the church was added to the Heritage at Risk register later that same year due to its deteriorating condition. It has remained on the register to this day.
- 2.5 The church was first consecrated as an Anglican place of worship known as Christ Church. From 1989 until February 2023 the building was leased to the Antiochian Orthodox Church of Great Britain and the church was known as St George's Cathedral.
- 2.6 The church is designed in a neo-Grecian classical idiom. The church is described in detail within the Regent's Park Conservation Area appraisal (July 2011); "*The entrance is marked by two giant pilasters with a diminutive pediment. Above this rises a simple tower, with brick base, colonnade, clock and spire. On the west side facing Albany Street are two tall secondary doors; the north and south elevations have tall arched windows. The interior was embellished in the High Church style in the 1840s, and further interior alterations were made in 1868 by William Butterfield. The axis of the nave is parallel to Albany Street with the entrance to the south on Redhill Street.*"

- 2.7 *The church successfully marks the corner site, and makes sense of the bend in Albany Street. The spire has a townscape importance in the wider area, particularly when viewed from Chester Place and along the length of Albany Street, as well as the glimpse view from the northern arm of Redhill Street.*



*Fig. 1 Interior looking east (showing Anglican arrangement)*

### **3.0 Description & Conservation Area Appraisal**

- 3.1 The statutory definition of a conservation area is an “area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. Conservation areas are normally centred on listed buildings and pleasant groups of other buildings, open space, or an historic street pattern. A town space or features of archaeological interest may also contribute to the special character of an area. It is, however, the character of an area, rather than individual buildings, that such a designation seeks to preserve or enhance.
- 3.2 The most recent legislation dealing with conservation areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990 (Sections 69 to 78). Guidance to the legislation is given in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published by the Department of Communities and Local Government in February 2019.
- 3.3 Planning legislation requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. In doing this the emphasis will be on control rather than prevention, to allow the area to remain alive and prosperous but at the same time to ensure that any new development accords with its special architectural and visual qualities.
- 3.4 The Regent’s Park Conservation Areas was designated on 1 July 1969. The west portion of the Park lies within the City of Westminster and the east portion within the London Borough of Camden.
- 3.5 The area has been extended twice in the past; on 1 October 1971 the boundary was extended north up to the Delancey Street junction and on 1 November 1985, the boundary was extended eastward and included the church and presbytery of St Mary Magdalene, Albany Street, portions of Red hill Street, Christ Church and Christchurch School.

- 3.6 The Regent's Park Conservation Area includes east portion of the early 19<sup>th</sup> C development by John Nash. The entire development is considered a unique planned composition of classical buildings set within a picturesque landscape.
- 3.7 As stated within the Conservation Area Appraisal (July 2011) "*The significance of the Regent's Park area is of national and international importance. The comprehensive masterplanning of the park, terraces, villas and the (largely redeveloped, but still appreciable in plan form) working market and service area served by canal to the east was on an unprecedented scale of urban design in London. The integration of all elements of a living area, from aristocrat to worker, from decorative to utilitarian, in a single coherent scheme were exhibited here.*"
- 3.8 There is an architectural hierarchy visible across the Conservation Area; development nearest the park is tall, grand and uniformly stuccoed and decorated with rich and ornate detailing. Buildings behind this are lower mews-type development and in stock brick
- 3.9 Beyond the mews is the development along Albany Street with buildings of various ages and appearance but generally terraced house typology. The 2 Churches in this area, including Christ Church respond to their setback location away from the more prestigious park edge and are therefore placed in a lower architectural hierarchy using humble materials, understated features and simplicity of plan form.
- 3.10 The Regents Park Conservation Area is divided into character zones. Christ Church is located within the Redhill Street Character Zone.
- 3.11 As stated within the Conservation Area Appraisal (July 2011) "*Redhill Street is a loop that runs off the east side of Albany Street. St George's Cathedral is the principal building in this group. By Sir James Pennethorne and dating to 1836 it is of grey stock brick with stucco and stone dressings in a neo-Grecian style. Its rectangular form faces onto Redhill Street and presents an attractive, yet austere elevation onto Albany Street. A former School house sits on the eastern arm, alongside an attractive late 19th century red brick light industrial building, now in residential use. A modern low rise primary school, and modern mews housing sit on the east and northern arms.*"
- 3.12 *York Stone paving exists on the southern arm of Redhill Street, and granite setts on the eastern arm, providing a high quality traditional street setting to the historic buildings here."*

## 4.0 Significance

- 4.1 Christ Church, of 1837 by James Pennethorne with further work of 1839-43 by R.C. Carpenter and internal decorations of 1849-85 by William Butterfield, is listed at Grade II\* for the following principal reasons:
- 4.2 Architectural interest:
- rectangular plan in neo-Grecian style of grey stock brick with render and stone dressings.
  - Main entrance has a shallow portico with pilasters and deep entablature with projecting cornice running the perimeter of the building. Repeating roundels in matching material within frieze of various motifs of dove, "IHS" and a triangle.
  - Large architraved and trapezoidal doorways with timber panelled doors with overlights.

- Above main entrance a 3-stage tower; brick, and stucco at the lower 2 stages with stone columns and top stage octagonal spire in stone likely partly rebuilt at some point.
- North and South facades (liturgical) each with 5 tall round arched windows flanked by brick pilasters carrying entablature.
- East facade rendered (likely cement) with projecting rectangular sanctuary with 20thC cross.
- Interior nave is galleried with original stalls and pews retained. Some pews and timber stairs for pulpit from ground floor relocated to gallery. Stone pulpit remains.
- Modern Orthodox iconostasis in carved olivewood is later addition.

#### 4.3 Artistic interest:

- Stained glass to 6 total round arched windows (3 on north and 3 on south (liturgical) facades. Glass by Clayton and Bell with a window depicting The Sermon on the Mount on the south elevation designed by DG Rossetti in 1864.
- Copy of Raphael's Transfiguration by Thomas Brigstocke was purchased as an altarpiece.
- Sanctuary walls in gold and patterned mosaic tiles framed by polychrome marble dressings and floor in patterned polychrome marble tiles.

#### 4.4 Group value:

- Part of an important cluster of listed buildings defining the character of the outlying area beyond Regents Park
- Part of a group of 3 churches within the conservation area and within close proximity of each other (St Mary Magdalene, and St Katherine's Danish Church)
- The church and spires of St Katherine's Danish Church and Christ Church are a positive impact to the area punctuating the street line and enhancing long local views as well as glimpse views of the spires.

4.5 The proposed changes respond to the failing and poor condition of render to on brick positioned at high level and which is has now reached the end of its life. In due course and not part of this application the surface render, brickwork and pointing will require repair and/or replacement on a like-for-like basis.

4.6 Single storey extension on east facade in brick noteworthy for small stained glass window and exposed roof trusses in the current Church offices which require further research.

## 5.0 Planning Background

5.1 Many listed buildings can sustain some sensitive alterations or extensions to accommodate continuing or new uses, but they vary greatly in how much they can be changed without harming their special architectural or historic interest. Policies relating to listed buildings are available in the local plan and there's detailed guidance in the government's National Planning Policy Framework.

Relevant Planning Policies

5.2 CAMDEN LOCAL PLAN - ADOPTED 2017



- Policy C3 Cultural and Leisure Facilities  
Protection of cultural and leisure facilities: The Council will seek to protect cultural and leisure facilities and manage the impact of adjoining uses where this is likely to impact their continued operation.
- Policy D2 Heritage  
The Council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens and locally listed heritage assets.

### 5.3 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- Policy 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

### 5.4 THE LONDON PLAN (Adopted 2016)

- Policy 7.8 Heritage Assets and Archaeology

### 5.5 THE LONDON PLAN (Intend to Publish - December 2019 version)

- Policy HC1 Heritage conservation and growth

### 5.6 FACULTY

As the works were first installed whilst the church was a decommissioned Anglican Church and it continues to remain as such Faculty Consent is not applicable at this time.

## 6.0 Design Statement

6.1 The works undertaken in 2021 were urgent works to address the risk of failing render from falling off parts of the building at high level and creating a health and safety risk as well as a risk to life at ground level.

6.2 No changes are proposed to the existing netting installation at time of this submission.

6.3 Once implemented, the works enabled the reopening of the public footpaths which had been temporarily closed to safeguard pedestrians.

6.4 In 2021, the consultant structural engineer Conisbee attended site and viewed the failing render first-hand. The emergency temporary works and their location are documented in the drawings accompanying this application and were implemented in 2021.

6.5 The works were carried out under the following specification:

#### 6.5.1 Materials:

Netting to be Huck 45mm Mesh Fall Arrest Net with Debris Overlay & Border Rope (PRODUCT ID: 1903D-045)

[https://www.huck-net.co.uk/safety-Nets/bespoke-fall-arrest-nets\\_15636/45mm-mesh-fall-arrest-net-with-debris-overlay-border-rope\\_1903D-045](https://www.huck-net.co.uk/safety-Nets/bespoke-fall-arrest-nets_15636/45mm-mesh-fall-arrest-net-with-debris-overlay-border-rope_1903D-045)

Netting is black.

#### 6.5.2 Installation:

Strapped tight and secured to brickwork with Excalibur m8 screwbolts m8 eyb 06 / 050 at max 500mm centres. Dry fix into pre-drilled holes located centrally through bricks to manufacturer recommendations. Wherever

possible fixings will be avoided in favour of gathering the netting tightly and crimping the netting onto itself.

**6.5.3 Scope/Extent of Installation:**

1. Cornice: To fully cover the projecting rendered cornice along the north and west (liturgical) elevations.
2. Tower: To fully cover the middle section of the tower directly below the stone spire to include clocks, cornice and rendered piers, walls and sky-facing elements
3. Tower To fully cover the lower section of the tower as base of the existing columns to include cornice and sky-facing elements.

- 6.6 The fall arrest netting and required fixings are restricted to the areas where the existing render was found in poor condition and with a high risk of falling to the footpath below. Areas of the tower which are of acceptable condition where there is no danger of falling render were not included in these proposals.
- 6.7 Similarly, where the high-level cornice to the main building was of acceptable condition these areas were not included in these proposals. Wherever possible fixings were avoided in favour of gathering the netting tightly and crimping the netting onto itself.
- 6.8 It should be noted that the nature of the work is temporary. The rendered cornice and render to tower require permanent repair and those works are expected to be captured in a future application which will also include the removal of the fall arrest netting.
- 6.9 When originally installed in February 2021 the installation proceeded without Council consent. However, we had provided prior notice to London Borough of Camden / Mr. Alan Wito with our urgent request to carry out the work under Section 9 Part 3 of the Planning(Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Our early notification of our intentions accompanies this application for reference.
- 6.10 Listed Building Consent for the netting works was granted with conditions in May 2021 ref. 2021/0628/L.
- 6.11 Since installation the tenant church attempted no remedial works to the netted areas.
- 6.12 The tenant church has vacated the premises since February 2023 and the building has returned to the full control of the Diocese of London.
- 6.13 Works to survey the building have taken place including photographic records and measured surveys. Additional surveys will follow including a ceiling plaster tap test to fully understand the condition of the plasterwork and to devise remedial repairs.
- 6.14 Therefore the fall arrest netting must remain in place whilst the future of the site is determined.

## **7.0 Heritage Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 The installation of new fall arrest netting to the main tower and north and east façade cornices was part of emergency works to the historic external render of the Church which is, overall in poor condition. The extent of the new netting was limited to those areas where pieces of render were at risk from delaminating from the surface and falling to ground level which represented a health and safety risk as well as a risk to life.
- 7.2 The nature of the proposed work is temporary and the rendered cornice and render to tower require permanent repair and those works are expected to be captured in a future application which will also include the removal of the fall arrest netting.

- 7.3 The installation included anchor fixings through the render and into stable brickwork. The number of fixings was kept to a minimum and wherever netting could be bound tightly and crimping onto itself.
- 7.4 Black netting was used to lessen the visual impact.
- 7.5 The installation of the netting mitigates against the threat of falling debris and allows the ground level area to be open to pedestrians. A sequence of repairs must be mobilised before any netting can be removed.
- 7.6 The impact of our proposals on the historical character of the building for the past 2 years has been minimal.

## **8.0 Amenity Space**

- 8.1 There is minimal existing external amenity space on the site of the church. The works are all at very high level and have not impact existing amenity.

## **9.0 Access Statement**

- 9.1 As noted in 7.5 above, the installation of the netting mitigates against the threat of falling debris and allows the ground level area to be open to pedestrians. A sequence of repairs must be mobilised before any netting can be removed. Otherwise barriers across the ground level area would need to prevent access and use of a large area of public footpath.