ALEC FORSHAW COMMENTS ON APPROVAL OF DETAIL APPLICATION 2023/3016/P

WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AT GOSH CCC

0I continue to be concerned about the lack of recognition of the early eighteenth-century houses that stood on the site prior to the construction of the existing post-war building. Three of the finest of these very grand houses, Nos 40, 42 and 44 Great Ormond Street, were demolished in 1938, following a failed campaign by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in 1936. Although some fabric was salvaged, including ornate wrought-iron front railings which went to the Victoria and Albert Museum and a handsome timber entrance porch which was relocated to Great James Street, the rest of the houses were demolished and provided the substructure for the existing buildings.

The remaining 18th century houses comprising Nos 28-38 (even) Great Ormond Street were demolished in the 1960s for the second phase of post-war development.

It is correctly stated that the basement of the existing 1950s building is only 2.0 metres below street level. The basements of the 18th century houses were undoubtedly deeper. It is quite possible therefore that footings, truncated basement walls, debris and other historic fabric survives immediately beneath the existing basement slab of the 1950s and 60s buildings. There may also features such as cess pits or drains.

I therefore strongly contest the Archaeological Survival Plan (Figure 2) which suggests that the site has “No Archaeological Potential (Basemented)”.

I am concerned that, according to Paragraph 6.2 of the Written Scheme, no archaeological monitoring will take place during demolition including removal of the existing basement slab. In my opinion archaeologist should be invited onto the site when and while the existing basement slab is being removed. This will provide the opportunity for assessing what may or may not remain immediately below the slab.

21st August 2023

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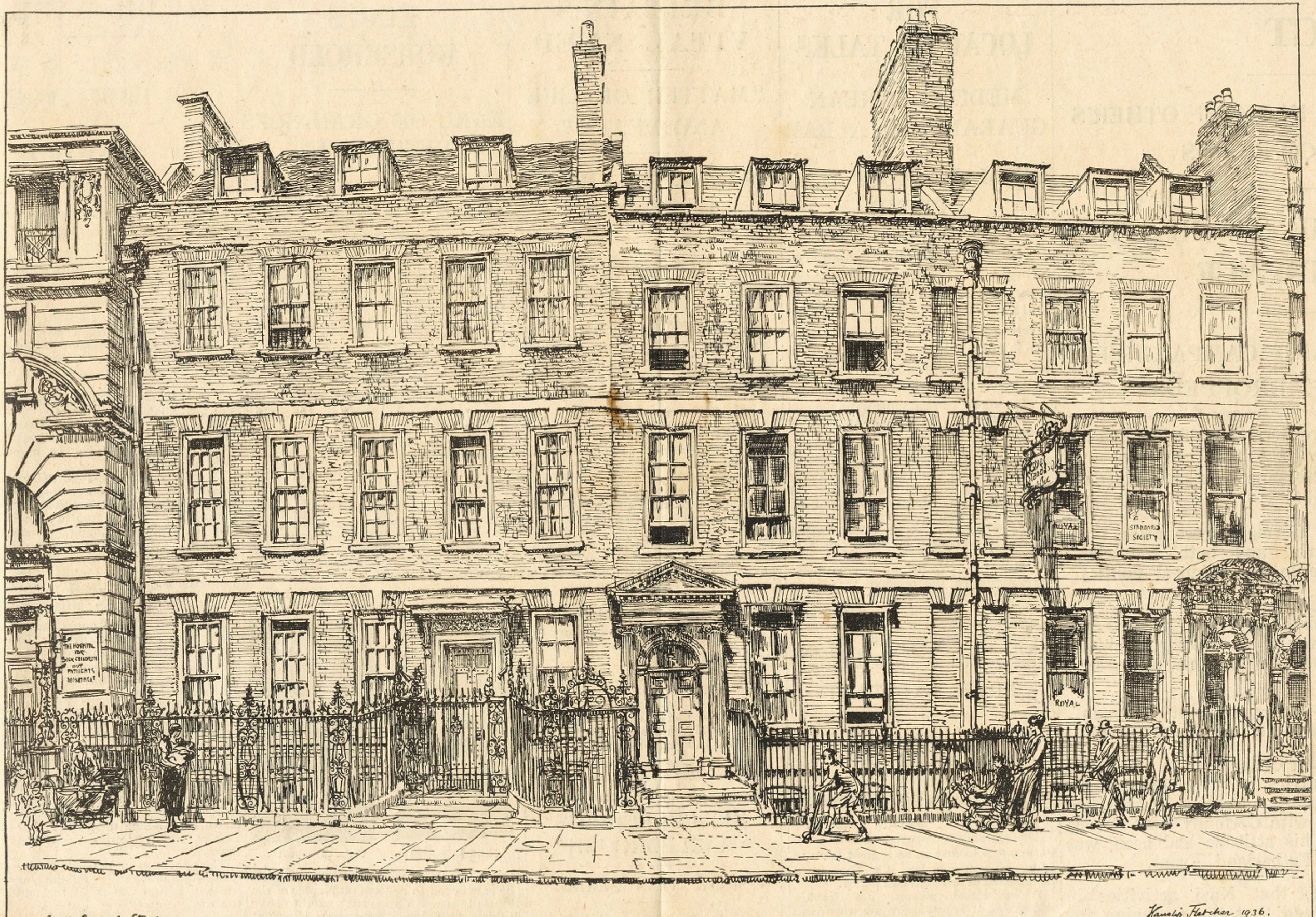

Great Ormond Street.

Harold Fletcher 1936.