

FAO John Broderick  
JPB Architects

23rd October 2023

Ref: Joo4681

Dear John

**Ref: No. 9 St. Katherine's Precinct, NW1 4AH**

I write with respect to the above and to discuss proposals for the installation of an internal boiler and associated flue at the site.

In accordance with best practice and for the purposes of fully understanding both relevant heritage assets and potential implications arising from the implementation of those proposals at hand (specifically, in accordance with *paragraph 194* of the *NPPF*), the account below first concerns the site, its environs and constraints before addressing special historic and/or architectural interest and then turning to a discussion of the proposals themselves.

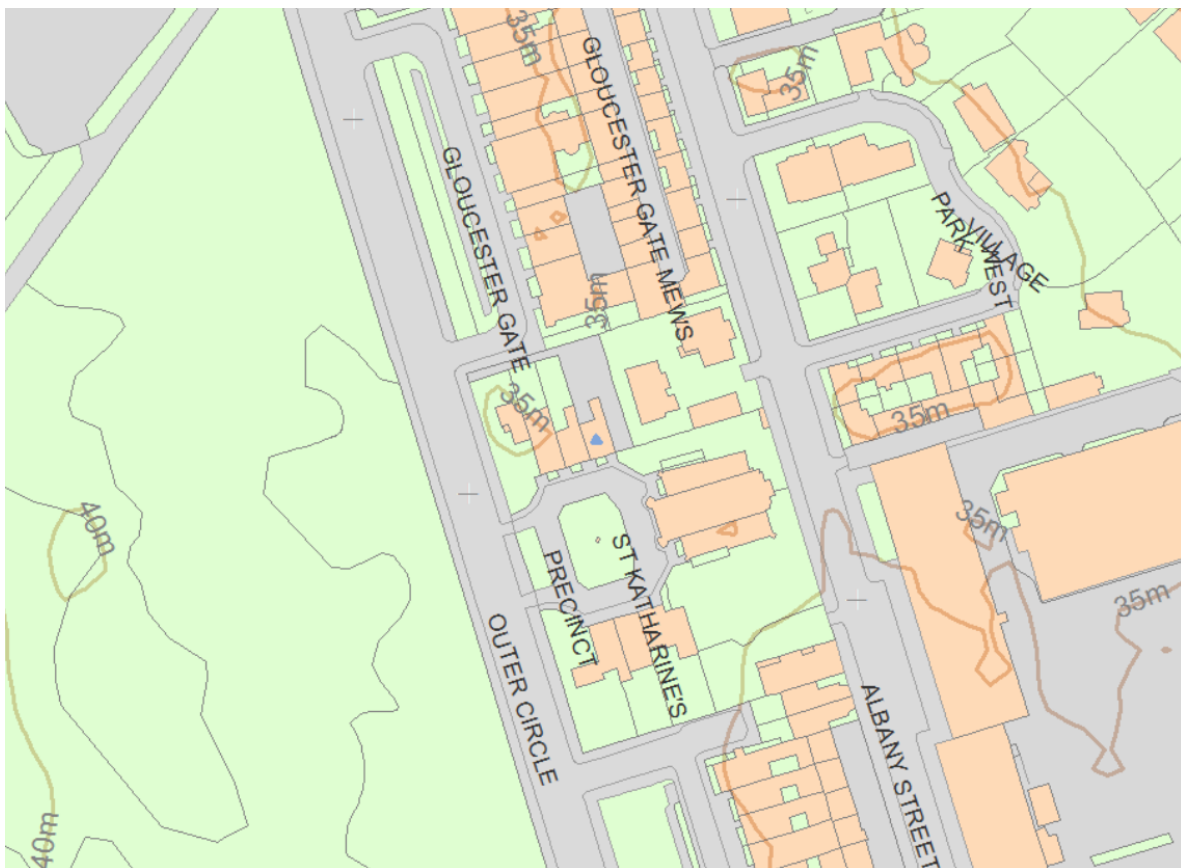


**St. Katherine's Precinct from the Outer Circle (Google)**

**Site**

As you are aware, the site comprises merely one aspect of the wider Grade II\* listed Nos. 1-3 & 6-9 (and attached railings) St. Katherine's Precinct. In brief, the list description for this heritage asset (designated 14<sup>th</sup> May 1974) may be summarised as follows:

'Domestic collegiate buildings of the Royal Hospital of St Katharine, now private dwellings. 1828-1828. By Ambrose Poynter. Grey brick with stone dressings. Symmetrical composition comprising 2 similar blocks (Nos 1-3 & 6-8) linked to The Danish Church, The Pastor's House and St Katharine's Hall (qqv) by an arcaded screen wall. EXTERIOR: each block of 3 storeys and attics. No.9 in the form of a porter's lodge, fronting the Park and attached to No.8. Main blocks with 3 windows; Nos 1 & 8 with canted oriel windows and sculptured coats of arms on returns facing the Park. Four-centred arched doorways with fanlights and panelled doors. 3-light sash windows with stone architraves and mullions; 1st floor with hoodmoulds. Stone 1st floor sill string. Similar string above 2nd floor windows; stone-capped parapet forming gables to attics with 2-light windows. Slated roof with tall moulded brick Tudor style chimneys appearing between the gables. No.9, L-shaped lodge. Grey brick with stone dressings. Slated pitched roofs with stepped brick eaves. 3-light windows with stone architraves and mullions on gable ends. Porch in angle with pointed arches and round arch on columns. To right, a brick chimney-stack rising from the ground floor beyond the roof line, with stone pedimented sculptured coat of arms at eaves level. Stone string following line of gable on ends. INTERIORS: not inspected. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings to Nos 6-9 areas. (Survey of London: Vol. XIX, Old St Pancras and Kentish Town, St Pancras II: London: - 1938: 101-115).'



**The Listed Building (Historic England)**

The application site is also located within *Regent's Park Conservation Area*, first designated in 1969 prior to further boundary revisions and/or extensions in 1972, 1985 and 2011, and for

which the current appraisal was adopted in 2011. St. Katherine’s Church but not St. Katherine’s Precinct is remarked upon at several junctures in the appraisal. From p.5 of this document, the designation’s *Definition of Special Character* may in brief be summarised as follows:

*'The Regent’s Park Conservation Area covers the eastern segment of John Nash’s early 19th century Regent’s Park development. It is a small part of a greater scheme that extends to the west into the City of Westminster, and comprises a unique planned composition of landscape and buildings, at once classical and picturesque.*

*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.*



**Regent’s Park Conservation Area (London Borough of Camden & Westminster)**

The special interest and/or significance of the site (and its recognition as such by means of its designation as a listed building and as part of a conservation area; even as merely one part of a much wider or overriding whole, (in both instances)), is not therefore contested.

## Historic & Architectural Interest

St. Katherine's was originally founded in 1147 by Queen Matilda, wife of King Stephen and comprised a religious community and hospital. This was originally located close by the Tower of London and extended to around 11 acres, effectively comprising a modest village to the east of the City walls. Given its links to merchants and craftsmen outside the City, this therefore thrived without the City's guild restrictions. It was also a royal foundation and was not therefore dissolved in the sixteenth century but re-established as a Protestant house. Due to its peripheral location, this was nevertheless dominated by slums and a demographic closely associated with the docks.

The late eighteenth century saw component buildings suffer extreme disrepair, but without any appreciable address. In 1818, Sir Herbert Taylor was given the title of Master of the Foundation by Queen Charlotte, and upon appointment, demolished those structures deemed to be beyond repair, subsequently selling their materials. He then proceeded to transfer the site and foundation to Regent's Park, the Crown granting a site that spanned the Outer Circle of the newly laid out park. Here, on the east side of Regent's Park, the chapel, school and associated houses were sited to abut the north end of James Thomson's Cumberland Terrace and set around a D-plan garden.

The development was required to be of a high status by the King and Chancellor, who attributed considerable sums towards the project (initial costs were identified as £72,300 and only eventually reduced to a final build cost of £47,139) and sought '*great liberality in the Building*', which should exhibit '*a certain degree of Beauty and such ornaments as may distinguish it from the Common Class*'. Ambrose Poynter, a pupil of John Nash, was appointed architect (potentially his first commission) and in line with his other later works (which focused upon Pointed or Early English styling) a Gothic ethos was adopted in contrast to the more predominant Neo-Classical ethos of its surroundings. John Summerson identifies this as one of the early '*good*' neo-Gothic buildings to be built in London and to be potentially influenced by A.W.N. Pugin's 1821 *Specimens of Gothic Architecture*.

The houses' west ends were supplemented with modest single-storey buildings, which served to frame the yard in the manner of gatehouses, whilst the houses themselves comprised straightforward rectangular blocks with single rear extensions. Constructed for couples of rank, their plans are typical for the terraced houses in the period. These therefore included three rooms at ground floor and either two or three rooms across upper floors, with modest attics. These are likely to have corresponded to dining rooms and parlours at ground floor, a large and small living room at first floor, principal bedrooms at second floor and servants' quarters in the attic. Each of the terraced houses had matching elevations with ground floor exhibiting a single window and arched door; a continuous stone string (through second floor fenestration) and an attic storey endowed with a small gable window, returning once to the east and west. The south ends of side walls had rectangular chimney stacks surmounted with Tudor-styled chimneys. The arms of King

George IV were located to the right of the oriel window (corresponding with the arms of Eleanor of Provence adjacent). In July 1928, the Gentleman's Magazine wrote:

*'There is but little of a collegiate character about the present buildings, which are more remarkable as being something between a hospital and a palace... The Houses of the Brothers and Sisters are built in the Domestic style of architecture of the sixteenth century, of brick, with stone dressings, and here the architect has succeeded more happily than in the ecclesiastical portion of the pile; -the two windows in the ends of the structure, the gable over the attic windows, and the picturesque chimney flues, give an air of originality to the houses, which upon the whole, are pleasing specimens of a class of modern buildings which excusably departs from the strictest adherence to authorities, insomuch as an architect must necessarily unite in a dwelling house modern convenience with picturesque effect'.*

All were complete by late 1828 although Poynter was asked to undertake amendments for the scheme as early as 1829. These included the removal of middle partitions from the Brothers' houses, enlarging dining rooms and opening up the drawing rooms. In both the Brothers' and Sisters' houses, Poynter was asked to alter 'the patterns of stoves' and fit the kitchens with new stoves, whilst raising garden walls and creating new doorways out of each of the gardens. Otherwise, the buildings were noted to be beset with issues including weak ground and foundations, and a more generally bad construction, which, by 1833 had incurred an additional £15,000 in repairs. By 1849, the houses had also been enlarged, with extensions being given all of the terraced properties and lodges. In 1914, the hospital was returned to the east end (with the subsequently demolished Master's house fulfilling this role) and the houses became private residences. In the 1990s, the properties were refurbished to add bathrooms, shelving and panelling, whilst doorways were widened and a conservatory added.

Again, given this account, both the special historic and architectural interest of the application site is as such demonstrable and unarguable, and its recognition by means of its designation as a listed building and as part of a conservation area may be seen to be wholly justified.

## Proposals

Proposals are modest and comprise the installation of a boiler and associated flue for the purposes of rendering the property more habitable with respect to contemporary living standards. This has the obvious benefit of maintaining long-term committed ownership and therefore the likely avoidance of a more frequent turnover of occupant, along with the commensurate need to effect more regular, potentially harmful change at the property, which, in turn and cumulatively, is likely to effect the more considerable loss and/or erosion of historic fabric and therefore special interest at the site.

Internally, the boiler would obviously be set within a kitchen cabinet comprising a carousel cupboard, which, when considered against a background of existing fixtures and fittings common to contemporary kitchens, would be more than adequately assimilated into the

building's interior. However, it is also necessary to install an associated flue, which of necessity, will be run through the building envelope to project from the property's external elevation. This has however been carefully considered in terms of both siting and form in order to minimise any impact as far as practicably possible.

Whilst from a functional or practical perspective, little may be done to mask the form and function of the flue or avoid breaking through the wall, to render this feature as obscure as possible in wider views of the building, this is not only sited to project from the rear elevation at a relatively low level, but furthermore, is to be set within the return of the rear elevation and chimney breast projecting from this façade. The dimensions of the flue are also modest and, again, this does not therefore project beyond the profile of the chimney breast, thus rendering this feature as obscure as practicably possible.

It is therefore acknowledged that, whilst the boiler itself and the manner of its accommodation in the kitchen is relatively non-controversial, the flue comprises a contemporary intervention that – whilst a necessary intervention with respect to the property meeting contemporary living standards – results in some degree of impact upon the listed host, both physically and visually. However, it is to be emphasised that said impact is minimal in effect and therefore marginal with respect to the degree to which this may be interpreted as affecting the special interest of the listed building.

As such, whilst there is some removal of historic fabric, this is minimal and the resulting void, entirely obscure. The associated flue and the dimensions of this are also modest, whilst the feature is sited in such a manner that any resulting prominence is also minimised as far as practicably possible (both in terms of views of the listed building in its own right and in terms of views across this part of the conservation area), where this is located to project from the rear elevation, and in the return of this and the chimney breast, beyond which, the flue would not project.

As such, whilst it is accepted that some, minimal degree of harm would occur to the listed building and conservation area, principally by means of the nominal loss of historic combined with the introduction of what is a patently contemporary feature, this impact is considered so marginal as to be negligible in effect, and therefore that the *special interest* of the listed building would not be unduly *affected* (s.7, *Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act, 1990* (the Act)). Therefore, on balance, the listed building and conservation area are understood to be fundamentally *preserved* (s.16 & s.66, the Act) and their longevity and long term *preservation*, consequently encouraged.

Given that a minimal degree of harm would occur, it is however necessary to recognise that the siting and/or location of the boiler and flue have been considered to the extent that *great weight has been given the asset's conservation* (as per *para. 199, NPPF*). Further to this, it is still more necessary to recognise that said harm is definitively *less than substantial*, whilst *public benefits* would in turn occur with respect to not merely the long term

committed use of the listed building, but more importantly, the enablement of its *optimum viable use* and therefore more general longevity (as per *para. 202, NPPF*).

By these means, proposals can also be seen to explicitly accord with relevant policy contained in *Westminster's City Plan (2019-40)* i.e. *Policy 39 Westminster's Heritage*, again *preserving the special interest* of the listed building. For these reasons, the principle of development is not considered to be at odds with the significance of either the application site or its wider locale, and as such, it is considered that proposals should be looked upon favourably by the local planning authority.

I trust this is of assistance, but should you have any questions or wish to discuss any aspect then do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



**Mark Sanderson BA (Hons), PG Cert., MA, IHBC**  
**Heritage Director**

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