

Heritage Statement

Kings Cross Methodist Church, London

Proposed demolition and redevelopment to provide replacement church facilities; community facilities; replacement on-site Manse and 11no. residential apartments including the installation of the necessary plant, ventilation and extraction, cycle storage and refuse and waste facilities.



on behalf of West London Mission Circuit of the Methodist Church



November 2015



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1 Introduction and site information

Introduction:

This Heritage Statement has been prepared on behalf of the West London Mission Circuit of the Methodist Church to accompany the current application relating to the 'Demolition and redevelopment to provide replacement church facilities; community facilities; replacement on-site Manse and No. 11 residential apartments including the installation of the necessary plant, ventilation and extraction, cycle storage and refuse and waste facilities.'

The Methodist Centre is not included on the Statutory List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest but it is located within the Kings Cross & St Pancras Conservation Area, and adjoins the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. It has also been referred to as making a "positive contribution" within the former Conservation Area's Audit and is therefore considered to have been positively identified as a heritage asset in the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

This Heritage Statement includes a Significance Assessment which identifies the relative heritage value of the existing buildings on the site, also considers their value in terms of their contribution to the townscape quality of the Conservation Areas. All of this information has been available throughout the design process to help inform the current proposals. In presenting a proportionate assessment of the buildings' significance, the Heritage Statement complies with Paragraph 128 of the NPPF.

The document also includes a Heritage Impact Assessment which meets the requirements of paragraph 129 of the NPPF. Paragraphs 131-134 of the NPPF will also apply with regard to the designated Conservation Area, and Paragraph 135 will apply in the case of the non-designated Methodist Centre.

As with any development proposals affecting listed buildings and conservation areas, the provisions of Sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 will apply in the determination of the application.

The document has been prepared by Chris Surfleet MA MSc PGDipUD IHBC, Director, Heritage & Urban Design and Lucy Denton BA (Hons) MA, Principal Heritage Consultant.

Structure of Significance Assessment:

This document is structured as follows:

Chapter 2 provides a description of the building, its current use and history;

Chapter 3 sets out a summary of relevant national and local heritage policy, including Conservation Area guidance provided by Camden Council;

Chapter 4 provides photographs of the existing building;

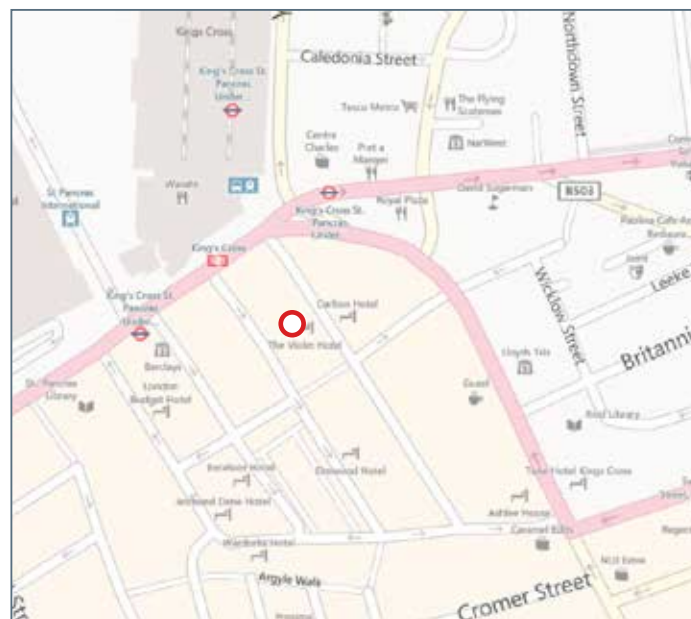
Chapter 5 sets out a map regression, indicating the development of the local area and particularly the chapel site;

Chapter 6 provides a history of the chapel from the available evidence, and **Chapter 7** compares it with similar building types of the period;

Chapter 8 presents a summary of the building's historic fabric as found today, and **Chapter 9** presents a summary of the building's significance; assessment of the existing buildings' significance. **Chapter 10** presents an assessment of townscape significance.

Chapter 11 introduces the proposed development, and **Chapter 12** provides an assessment of the impact of the proposals on the heritage assets.

Chapter 13 summarises the findings of the document.



Site location



2 Description of existing building

Current uses

The existing building currently accommodates a diverse range of uses, including several different congregations serving Mandarin, Cantonese and English-speaking attendees.

The Church also runs or provides accommodation for a wide variety of community projects and users, including:

- A Consultation Desk (Mondays and Tuesdays) for the Chinese community.
- A Gambling Addicts Support Programme for the Chinese Community, funded by Chinese Churches throughout the UK.
- English Classes during the week for the Chinese Community.
- A Winter Night Shelter, providing an overnight shelter in the Crestfield St Meeting Room for 14 overnight guests.
- Support for Sex Workers, providing a drop-in centre and street outreach, performed mainly in the evenings.
- Friday Club, where space is provided for anyone, including the homeless, to join in and receive hospitality.

The Chaplaincy House also provides accommodation for 26 students in reasonably priced rooms. There is an understanding that student residents will involve themselves in various aspects of social work in the community during their stay.

Over the last few years, it has become evident that the existing buildings do not now provide sufficient flexibility to accommodate these diverse, but important, community uses.



Crestfield Street frontage

Description of existing building

The existing building comprises two principal components: the first is the original chapel which was built on the site between 1823 and 1825. This was a typical Methodist Chapel of the period and was one of the first buildings to occupy open land to the south of what is now Euston Road. Whilst the chapel provided for worship, the basement provided school rooms, at one time accommodating up to 400 children.

The chapel was extended in the 1860s to enable the installation of an organ. Organs were not originally permitted in Methodist Churches but, following the Leeds Organ Dispute, the breakaway Wesleyan Association of which the minister of this chapel, Robert Eckett, was a member, were governed more democratically.

The extended chapel was further added to in the early 1950s with the addition of a Mission House fronting Crestfield Street.

As the church's role in the community diversified, the chapel itself was converted to provide flats for students in the 1970s, including the flooring over of the gallery and the insertion of a further floor above. This involved the removal of the front and rear pediments and the entire roof structure.

There has been no significant alteration work to the Methodist Centre since these works of the 1970s.



Birkenhead Street frontage

3 Heritage policy and guidance summary

National policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27th March 2012. The over-arching aim of the policy, expressed in the Ministerial foreword, is that *“our historic environments ... can better be cherished if their spirit of place thrives, rather than withers.”*

In developing strategies for conserving and enhancing the historic environment, the NPPF advises that local planning authorities should take account of:

- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;*
- *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness;*
- *and opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place. (Paragraph 126)*

The NPPF also directs local planning authorities to require an applicant to *“describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting”* and the level of detailed assessment should be *“proportionate to the assets’ importance”* (Paragraph 128).

This gives rise to the need for a Significance Assessment which sets out the relative nature and value of affected heritage assets. It also stresses the importance of proportionality both in the extent to which assessments are carried out and in the recognising the relative merits of the assets.

Planning Authorities should then *“take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal”* (Paragraph 129). This paragraph results in the need for an analysis of the impact of a proposed development on the asset’s relative significance, in the form of a Heritage Impact Assessment.

In relation to harmful impacts or the loss of significance resulting from a development proposal, as is relates to designated heritage assets, Paragraph 133 states the following:

“Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- *the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- *no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- *conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- *the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.” (Paragraph 133)*

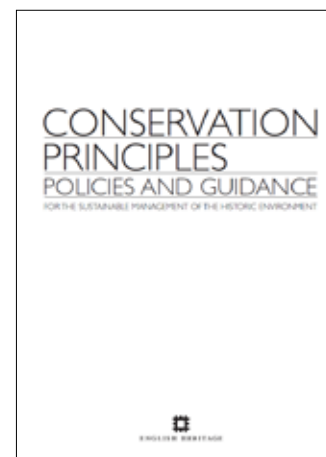
In the case of proposals which would result in “less than substantial harm”, paragraph 134 provides the following:

“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.” (Paragraph 134).

The ‘designated heritage assets’ in this instance are the Kings Cross & St Pancras and Bloomsbury Conservation Areas. Adjoining listed buildings are also designated heritage assets. The Methodist Centre, having been identified as a building making a “positive contribution” to the Conservation Area, is considered as a ‘non-designated heritage asset’.



National Planning Policy Framework 2012



English Heritage Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance 2008

The method for assessment of non-designated heritage assets is very different from that of designated assets. Paragraph 135 requires a Local Planning Authority to make a “balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.”

The consideration of relative harm and relative significance is one of a number of material considerations which may relate to a development proposal, including the delivery of other public benefits. These are all to be considered by the LPA when arriving at the “balanced judgement” regarding non-designated assets.

The purpose of this document is therefore to provide a clear statement of the relative merit of the existing building, so that this assessment can be referred to during the decision-making process and in the context of other benefits which the proposed development may bring.

National Planning Practice Guidance

Further to the publication of the NPPF, the over-arching policies have now been supplemented by further guidance provided in the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), a web-based resource which provides enhanced clarity on the interpretation of policies.

In relation to heritage assets and decision-making, the NPPG provides additional advice in relation to the discussion of ‘harm’ and ‘impact’. In Paragraph 017, the following is stated:

“In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest.”

This is an important clarification of the level of substantial harm in terms of the interpretation of Paragraphs 131-134 of the NPPF, and clearly sets this threshold at a high level - where development would “seriously affect” a “key element” of an asset’s interest.

In making decisions regarding the impact of development proposals on heritage assets, the above paragraph will come to hold particular importance and relevance.

Historic England: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2 (March 2015)

This advice note, “Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment”, sets out clear information to assist all relevant stake holders in implementing historic environment policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the related guidance given in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

“These include; assessing the significance of heritage assets, using appropriate expertise, historic environment records, recording and furthering understanding, neglect and unauthorised works, marketing and design and distinctiveness.”

Historic England: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (March 2015)

This document replaces Historic England’s previous document ‘The Setting of Heritage Assets’ and presents their guidance on managing change within the settings of heritage assets, including archaeological remains and historic buildings, sites, areas and landscapes.

Section 12 (page 7) provides detailed advice on assessing the implications of development proposals and recommends the following broad approach to assessment, undertaken as a series of steps that apply equally to complex or more straightforward cases:

- *“Step 1 - identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;*
- *Step 2 - assess whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s);*
- *Step 3 - assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance;*
- *Step 4 - explore the way maximizing enhancement and avoiding or minimizing harm;*
- *Step 5 - make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.”*

We have applied this methodology in undertaking the assessments within this document.

Local policy:

The relevant local policies are set out in the Camden Core Strategy (Adopted November 2010), as follows:

CS5 – Managing the impact of growth and development

The Council will manage the impact of growth and development in Camden. We will ensure that development meets the full range of objectives of the Core Strategy and other Local Development Framework documents, with particular consideration given to:

d) protecting and enhancing our environment and heritage and the amenity and quality of life of local communities.

The top-level policies of the Core Strategy are supported by the Camden Development Policies 2010-2015

DP24 – Securing high quality design

The Council will require all developments, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, to be of the highest standard of design and will expect developments to consider:

- a) character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings;*
- b) the character and proportions of the existing building, where alterations and extensions are proposed;*
- c) the quality of materials to be used;*
- d) the provision of visually interesting frontages at street level;*
- e) the appropriate location for building services equipment;*
- f) existing natural features, such as topography and trees;*
- g) the provision of appropriate hard and soft landscaping including boundary treatments;*
- h) the provision of appropriate amenity space; and*
- i) accessibility.*

DP25 – Conserving Camden’s heritage

Conservation areas

In order to maintain the character of Camden’s conservation areas, the Council will:

- a) take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans when assessing applications within conservation areas;*
- b) only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area;*
- c) prevent the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area where this harms the character or appearance of the conservation area, unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention;*

d) not permit development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character and appearance of that conservation area; and

e) preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character of a conservation area and which provide a setting for Camden’s architectural heritage.

Listed buildings

To preserve or enhance the borough’s listed buildings, the Council will:

e) prevent the total or substantial demolition of a listed building unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention;

f) only grant consent for a change of use or alterations and extensions to a listed building where it considers this would not cause harm to the special interest of the building; and

g) not permit development that it considers would cause harm to the setting of a listed building.

Archaeology

The Council will protect remains of archaeological importance by ensuring acceptable measures are taken to preserve them and their setting, including physical preservation, where appropriate.

Other heritage assets

The Council will seek to protect other heritage assets including Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest and London Squares.

Kings Cross & St Pancras Conservation Area

The application site is within the Kings Cross & St Pancras Conservation Area and adjoins the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

The Kings Cross & St Pancras Conservation Area was first designated in 1986 but the area around the site was included as part of an enlargement of it in 1991.

A Character Statement for the Area was prepared in 1998 and was superseded by the current document in 2004. The most recent document provides a thorough description and assessment of the character of the Conservation Area, a summary of current issues facing the designated area and also a set of design and policy guidelines. The document also includes an audit of building designations, with refers to statutory designations (such as Listed Buildings) as well as non-statutory designations (such as buildings which make a positive contribution).

In relation to the application site, the Character Statement makes a relatively brief reference as follows:

4.2.104 No. 58a is the King's Cross Methodist Mission. This is of three storeys with a lower ground floor, with a central block of 5 bays and flanking wings, slightly set back. The ground floor has a dominant entrance with four pairs of timber doors, approached by wide stone steps. The front basement area has railings. Some timber sliding sashes remain, but many have been replaced with less sympathetic windows.

In relation to Crestfield Street, the document notes the following:

4.2.105 The buildings on Crestfield Street are inconsistent in terms of height, materials and form, and the road is dominated by the highly decorated return of no. 11 Euston Road, and the two storey, brown brick rear elevation of the Methodist Mission.

As part of the audit of the Conservation Area, the Birkenhead Street frontage of the Methodist Chapel has been identified as making a "positive contribution to the Conservation Area." The implications of such designation are described as follows in the document:

5.4.2 Identification of a building as a positive contributor confers a general presumption in favour of the retention of that building (unless it is proved to meet certain tests: see 'Demolition' in section 7 of this document). Buildings that have been poorly maintained or have had reversible alterations (such as inappropriate painting, roof coverings or additions such as shutters where they are not part of the original part of the property) have been judged to be positive where they otherwise form part of the architectural and historic interest of the area.

Whilst the Birkenhead Street frontage has been identified as making a "positive contribution", the Crestfield Street frontage has not.

In the event that proposals for demolition are received for unlisted buildings within Conservation Areas, the following advice applies:

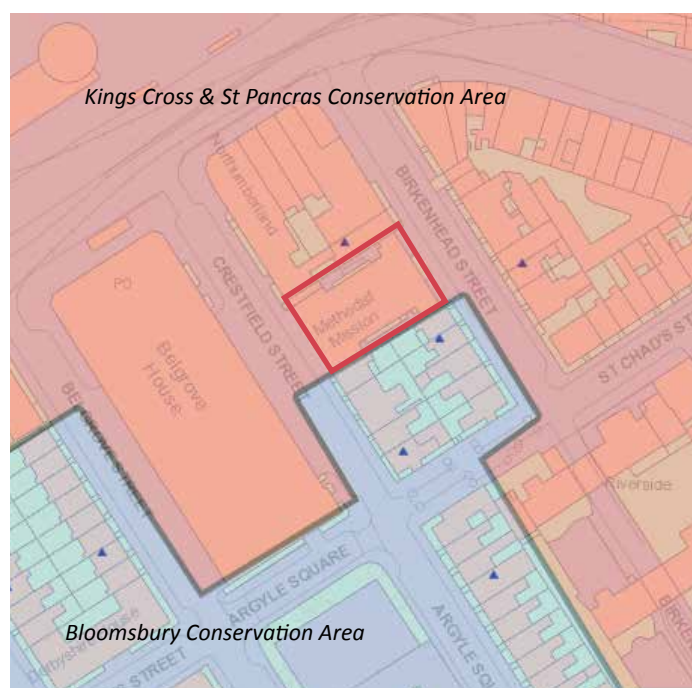
7.8.3 Regarding the demolition of unlisted buildings, UDP policy EN32 states: "The Council will seek the retention of buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area." PPG15 (s. 4.27) states that proposals for the demolition of unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas should be: "assessed against the broad criteria as proposals to demolish listed buildings (s. 3.16-3.19 [of PPG15])."

Although the document refers to PPG15, the policies of the NPPF now apply, and in this regard the positively identified buildings would be considered to be non-designated heritage assets and the test of Paragraph 135 would apply. Impacts on a Conservation Area would be deemed to affect a designated asset and therefore Paragraphs 132-134 would apply.

Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

The existing building also adjoins the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

5.230 The area around Argyle Square was one of the last land parcels to be developed in the 1830s and 1840s having been previously the site of the failed Panharmonium Pleasure Gardens, an over-ambitious and short-lived project from 1830-32. The surrounding streets, however, are likely to have been built earlier, Crestfield Street and Birkenhead Street were laid out from 1825; Argyle Street from 1826 and St Chad's Street from 1827.



Conservation Area boundaries in relation to application site (edged red)

4 Heritage Assets

The heritage assets in proximity to the site are identified below. These include 'designated assets' (those designated by statute; in this case, listed buildings and Conservation Areas) and non-designated assets' (in this case, locally-listed buildings and buildings otherwise identified as possessing a heritage or townscape value).

Designated heritage assets:

NUMBERS 54-58 AND ATTACHED RAILINGS, 54-58, BIRKENHEAD STREET

GV II

Terrace of 5 houses, Nos 54-56 now hotels. c1834-49. Built by W Forrester Bray, restored late C20. Yellow stock brick with later patching. Nos 54 & 55, red brick parapets. No.56 painted. Stucco ground floors to Nos 54-56. Plain stucco 1st floor sill bands. Slated mansard roofs with dormers. Round-arched ground floor openings. No.54, single storey, stucco portico extension on return; round-arched doorway with fluted Doric three-quarter columns carrying cornice-head; fanlight and panelled door. Nos 55-57, architraved doorways with pilaster-jambs carrying cornice-heads with fanlights (No.57 patterned); panelled doors (No.56 C20). No.58, doorway with fluted Doric quarter columns carrying cornice; patterned fanlight and panelled door. Gauged-brick flat arches to recessed sashes; 1st floor in shallow arched recesses. Cast-iron balconies to 1st floor windows. Parapets. INTERIORS: not inspected. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with bud and other finials to areas. (Survey of London: Vol. XXIV, King's Cross Neighbourhood, Parish of St Pancras IV: London: -1952: 109).



Nos 1-5 Crestfield Street

NUMBERS 1-5 AND ATTACHED RAILINGS, 1-5, CRESTFIELD STREET

GV II

5 terraced houses, now hotels and an office. c1840-1. Yellow stock brick; Nos 1-3 rusticated stucco ground floors; Nos 3 & 4, painted ground floors. Nos 2-4, slated mansard roofs with dormers. 4 storeys, Nos 2-4 attics, basements. 2 windows each. Round-arched ground floor openings. 1st floor windows with cast-iron balconies. Parapets. No.1: stucco portico extension on return with pilasters carrying entablature; round-arched doorway with fluted Doric three quarter columns carrying cornice-head; fanlight and panelled door. No.2: doorway with pilaster-jambs carrying cornice-head; fanlight and panelled door. No.3: C20 doorway and door. No.4: converted for use as a window. No.5: gauged brick flat arches to recessed sashes and casements; 1st floor in shallow arched recesses. INTERIORS: not inspected. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings, most with bud finials, to areas. (Survey of London: Vol. XXIV, King's Cross Neighbourhood, Parish of St Pancras IV: London: -1952: 109).



Location plan identifying the site and nearby listed buildings

NUMBERS 1-7 AND ATTACHED RAILINGS, 1-7, BIRKENHEAD STREET

GV II

Terrace of 7 houses. c1827-32. Built by W Forrester Bray, altered. Yellow stock brick, No.1 with stucco ground floor. No.6 painted with rusticated stucco ground floor. Plain stucco 1st floor sill bands. 3 storeys and basements; Nos 1, 5 & 6 with attic dormers. Nos 1 & 7, 3 windows each; Nos 2-6, 2 windows each. Round-arched ground floor openings. Doorways of Nos 1, 2 & 4 with fanlights and panelled doors; doorway of No.3 converted for use as a window. Doorways of Nos 5 & 6 with fluted quarter Doric columns carrying cornice-heads; fanlights (No.6 patterned) and panelled doors. Doorway of No.7 with stucco surround and pilaster-jambs carrying cornice-head and fanlight. No.1 with mews entrance. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sashes; 1st floor in shallow arched recesses (No.1 linked by impost bands). Nos 5 & 7 1st floor windows with cast-iron balconies, No.5 with wrought-iron sign bracket. Parapets. INTERIORS: not inspected. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with mostly bud finials. (Survey of London: Vol. XXIV, King's Cross Neighbourhood, Parish of St Pancras IV: London: -1952: 109).



Nos 1-7 Birkenhead Street

NUMBERS 7-25 AND ATTACHED RAILINGS, 7-25, ARGYLE SQUARE

GV II

Terrace of 19 houses, now mostly small hotels, forming the east side of Argyle Square. 1840-49, altered. Yellow stock brick, Nos 7, 9, 10 and 16-18 painted. Rusticated stucco ground floors, Nos 7, 9, 10, and 16-18. Painted ground floors, Nos 6, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 19-25. 4 storeys and basements. 2 windows each. Architraved, round-arched ground floor openings. Doorways, where unaltered, with pilaster-jambs carrying cornice-heads; patterned fanlights and panelled doors. Entrance to No.7 in single storey stucco extension on left hand return. Nos 7 and 25, square-headed ground floor windows. Gauged brick flat arches to assortment of recessed casements and sashes on upper floors; 1st floors with architraves and cast-iron balconies. Parapets. INTERIORS: not inspected. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with bud finials to areas. (Survey of London: Vol. XXIV, King's Cross Neighbourhood, Parish of St Pancras IV: London: -1952: 105).



59 Birkenhead Street

NUMBER 59 AND ATTACHED RAILINGS, 59, BIRKENHEAD STREET

GV II

Terraced house. c1827-32. Built by W Forrester Bray. Painted brick and stucco ground floor and 1st floor sill band. 3 storeys and basement. 2 windows. Architraved, round-arched ground floor openings. Doorway with fluted Doric quarter columns carrying cornice-head; patterned fanlight and C20 panelled door. Casement ground floor window. Upper storeys with gauged brick flat arches to recessed sashes; 1st floor in shallow arched recesses. Parapet. INTERIOR: not inspected. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with urn finials to areas.



7-25 Argyle Square

5 Site photographs

Birkenhead Street

Birkenhead Street is the historic 'front' of the Methodist Centre and at one time this was clearly the case in the architecture. The simplicity of the original design has been altered to provide a three storey frontage. In common with the adjacent townhouses, the ground floor is raised by half a storey, providing school rooms and ancillary space beneath. The ground floor is occupied by the chapel, with large foyer doors created in the original frontage. The former arched windows of the elevation have been adapted to provide windows to the two upper floors.



Birkenhead Street frontage, looking north. The frame of the original chapel is legible but the building is now almost residential in character.



Although slightly set back from the pavement edge, the existing building forms part of the increasingly varied building styles and informality approaching Kings Cross



The Centre sits midway along Birkenhead Street, and its residential appearance marks its original use.



There are some sections of tuck pointing on the front elevation, where this has not been repointed or altered.



The gauged brick lintels on the remaining basement windows are indicative of the original build quality, although these remaining details are few.



The 1825 datestone has been planted on an altered parapet which used to form part of the front pediment, removed when the roof was taken down to create the top floor flats.

Crestfield Street

The Crestfield Street frontage used to be occupied by the rear of the chapel and the burial ground prior to the erection of the present Mission House in c1951. The existing building is two storeys in height with a frontage which is much wider than the narrow townhouses alongside. The brick access shaft to the top floor flats, added in the 1970s, is visible behind the ridgeline.



The brown brick, two storey height and wide plot is uncommon in an area dominated by narrow speculative housing plots of the 1840s. The existing building reads as something of an 'infill' amongst buildings of a superior quality and detail.



The formality of the terraces which run along Argyle Square and into Crestfield Street is broken by the Mission House. Its gable is not a strong presence but it does bring variety as Kings Cross is approached.



The design of the Mission House, dating between 1951, is a restrained and rather old-fashioned Gothic. The detailing is robust but the overall impression is rather dull in visual terms.



Interior:

The interior of the Methodist Centre is, as a result of the adaptation and conversion, a series of utilitarian spaces which are not remarkable architecturally and do not possess any of the original chapel's features of note. The original chapel space is not recognisable, but it continues to provide a large area for worship. The floors above are tightly converted to form apartments.



The main chapel space provides evidence of the gallery columns, although it is thought that these have been strengthened to provide the floors above. The recess on the far wall would have provided the location of the pulpit and organ above.



The mission hall provides further worship and meeting space



The leaded glazing between the lobby and the chapel is one of the very few remaining features - these are of late 19th century date.

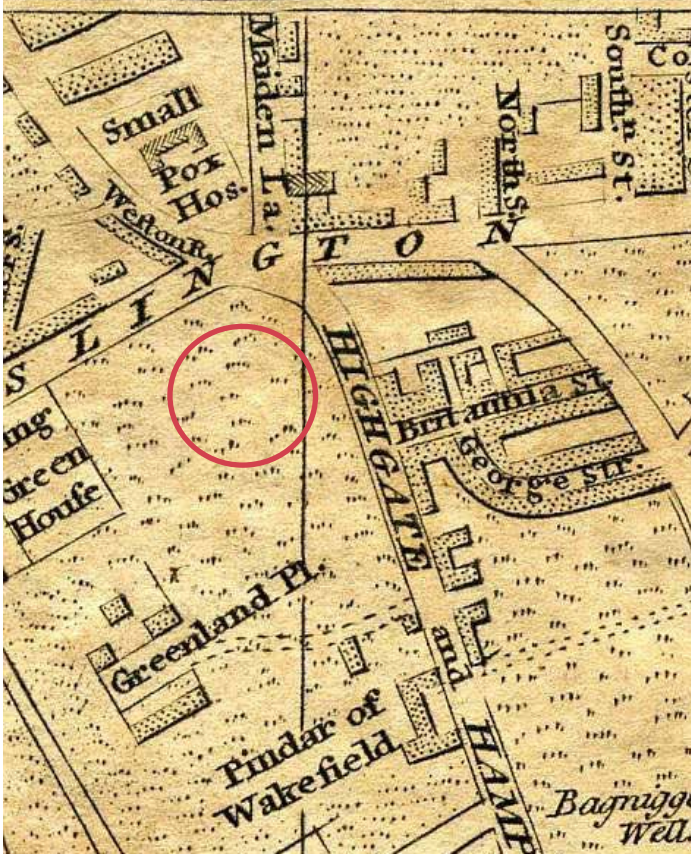


The mission hall contains the most intact features, including the staircase, doors and windows - all of early 1950s date.

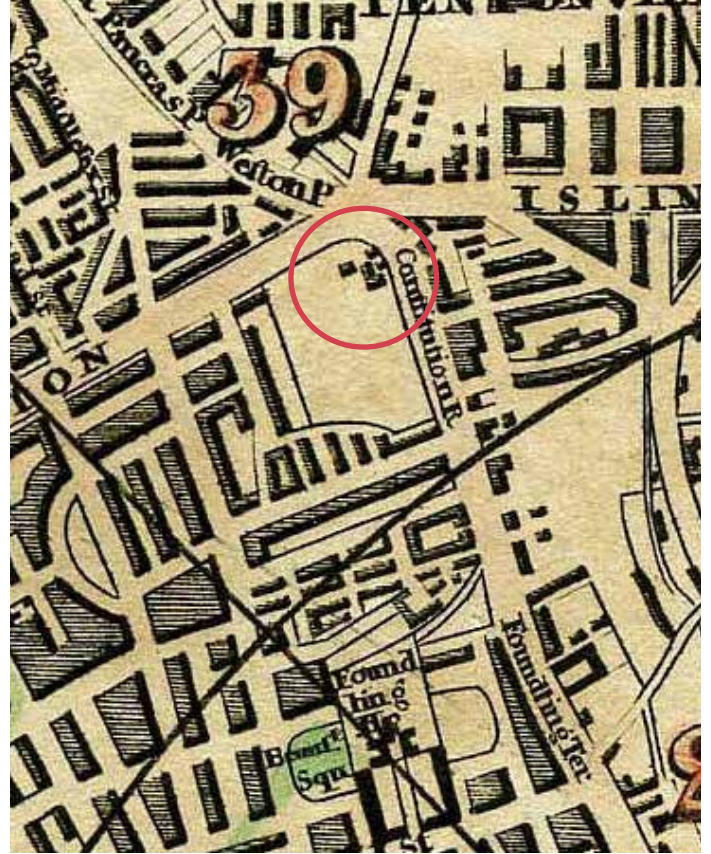
6 Map regression

Map regression:

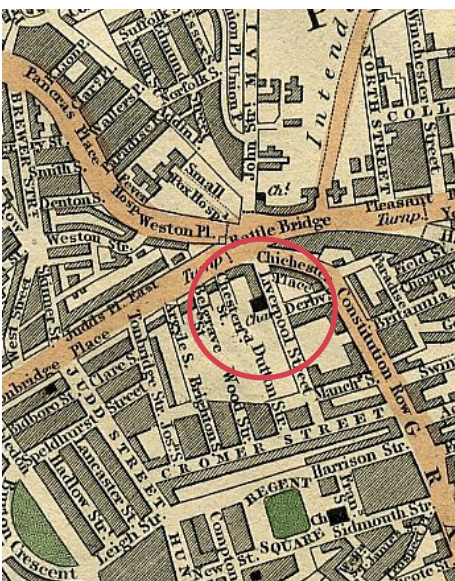
Tracing the history and development of the existing building via the available map sources assists with the dating of the building and its context, and also helps to identify when changes to the building occurred.



1814 The map of 1814 shows the area south of the current Euston Road and Gray's Inn Road, complete un-developed and apparently open land. There is no evidence of speculative housing development although there is a cluster of built form around Britannia Street.

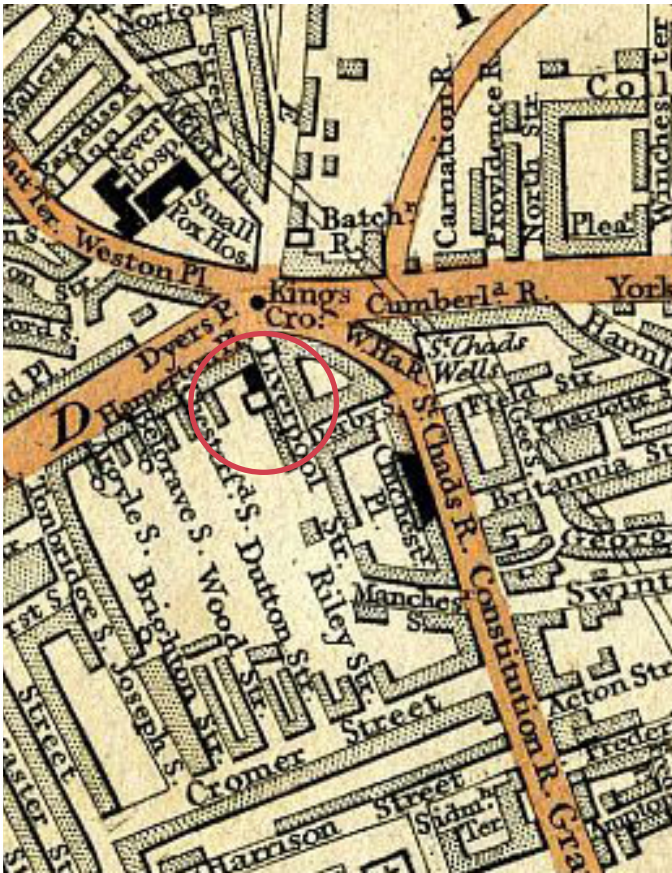


1820 By 1820, there has been a considerable development marching northwards from the city, and the Bloomsbury area is identifiable in ordered terrace blocks - although Argyle Square is not yet formed. There is evidence of some built form in the area of Derby Street (now St Chad's Street) and Liverpool Street (now Birkenhead Street), although neither street is defined as such at this point. It is possible that the rectangle to the west side of this cluster may mark the beginnings of the chapel or a building very close by.



1827 This map clearly marks and labels the chapel in place with Liverpool Street, with the beginnings of Chesterfield Street (now Crestfield Street) to the west. The chapel footprint is noticeably squarer in plan than later map evidence, indicating its original plan-form before extension.

The apparent, continued lack of development of the land around Liverpool Street is due to the ill-fated attempts to create a large entertainment complex with a theatre, galleries, and reading rooms as well as gardens and pleasure grounds. This was known as the Panarmion Project but did not ultimately succeed, it is thought due to the proximity of the site to the Small Pox Hospital (on the site of Kings Cross Station) and the poor housing to the north. The built form adjoining the chapel at this date may have been the Panarmion Theatre, which formed part of this project, but failed after two years.



1837 The 1837 map shows a similar arrangement to 1827, with the Battle Bridge area still not developed fully. The chapel is clearly noted again, this time with the heavier black footprint alongside which was the Royal Clarence Theatre which was re-opened in 1832 to replace the failed Panarmion Theatre.



1868 This map shows a drastic change from those before, notably the existence of housing across the adjacent land, including the formation of Argyle Square and the presence of Kings Cross Station, which appeared in 1852.

The chapel also appears to show significant change, most evidently in the extension of the chapel to the rear from its square plan to an elongated rectangle. This extension took place between 1865 and 1866. It is labelled 'Kings Cross Chapel (W)'. The reference to Wesleyan reflects the changes in the Methodist Church at this time and the growth of different denominations.

The chapel now forms part of a complete block of development, notably the townhouses which have been added to the south.



1874 The map of 1874 is of considerable interest as it not only shows the street layout but also an indication of the internal arrangement of the chapel itself. There are a number of important elements to note:

- the separate access points from Liverpool Street leading to side access into the chapel.
- two internal staircases lead to the gallery above. The extent of the gallery is noted in the plan as being of considerable size.
- the organ and pulpit are marked as being at the west end of the building, with two accesses leading through to vestry and other ancillary spaces behind including a church parlour and deaconess's room.
- external steps are shown on both sides leading down to the basement school-rooms, which are also accessed via the side porches.
- a wall appears to run along the Chesterfield Street frontage, with a central pedestrian gate.

The theatre to the north is also marked, but now known as Kings Cross Theatre.

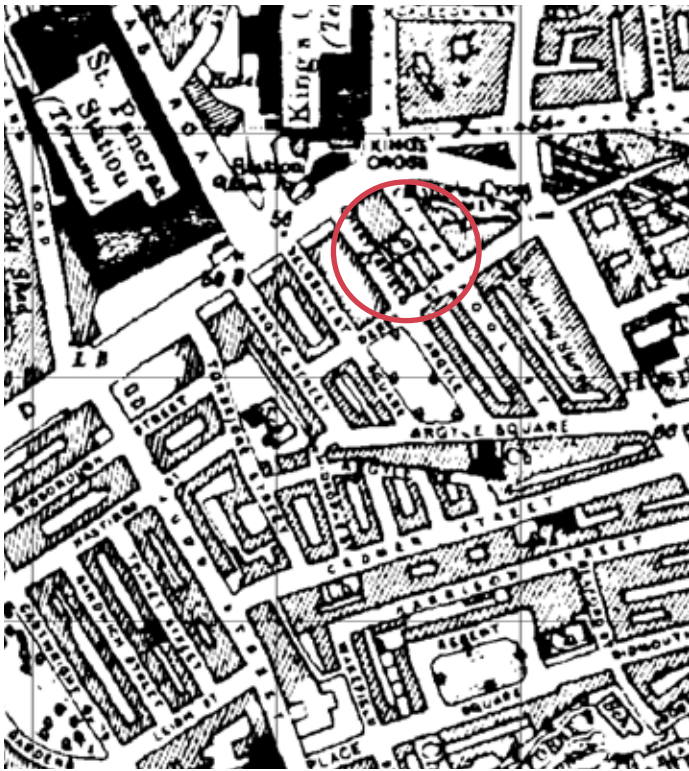


1896 This plan shows little variation in terms of the chapel and its immediate surroundings, however it is notable how the former front gardens at the north end of the block have now been built on, reflecting the levels of activity surrounding Kings Cross.



1922 The 1922 plan provides an interesting level of detail in relation to the chapel, clearly indicating the side porches and accesses to basement level. Also shown are the gallery stairs and pulpit.

The immediate context has also seen a major change in the removal of the block between Chesterfield Street and Belgrave Street, noted in Booth's Map of 1889 as being 'well-to-do'. This turn of fortunes may well have reflected the overcrowding around the Kings Cross area, and the re-development of the entire block to the west for Belgrave House reflects the gradual impact of Kings Cross on the mix of uses in the area.



1949-51 This version of the Ordnance Survey plan is sketchy in its detail but it does appear to show the chapel in its layout prior to the erection of the Mission House. There is an apparent setback from the Crestfield Street frontage and the ancillary areas at the rear of the chapel can be made out.

The construction of the Mission House must have closely followed the survey for this plan.



1953 The 1953 map clearly indicates the further extension of the chapel onto Crestfield Street in the form of the Mission House, constructed over the rear churchyard area since the 1951 plan.

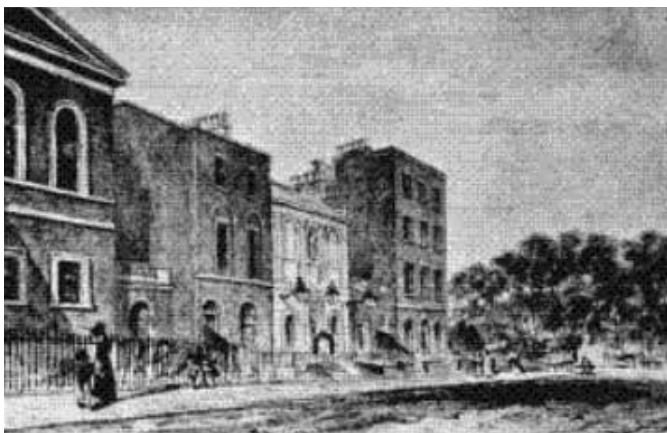
The bomb damage to the east of Argyle Square has now been cleared and the four large high-rise blocks bridging over the previous route of Birkenhead Street, and clearly named as Riverside, Riverfleet, Fleetway and Fleetfield.

7 The Chapel's history

The map-based evidence of the chapel is also supported by a number of additional sources which illustrate its growth from the original 1820s building.

The illustration alongside shows the chapel as it looked in the 1830-40, which appears to have the simplicity of the original build in 1823-5. Notable in this image is the arrangement of the front elevation set out over 5 bays, with a central doric porch. The arched windows at first floor are set well below eaves level, with the pediment expressed strongly above. Within the pediment is the small label-moulded date-stone that has been re-set on the current elevation.

We can only see four bays on the visible side elevation, and this would have reflected the original almost square plan. The frontage to Liverpool Street (as it was then called) has a neatly detailed railing (added in 1830) providing access up narrow steps to the front door and a second access through an arched screen wall to the school in the basement. The basement level windows are visible along the frontage at this date. Gas lighting was added in 1833.



This undated engraving of the west side of Birkenhead Street has the Royal Clarence Hotel in the centre of the image, but also part of the chapel on the left hand side. The chapel appears to have the detailing of the illustration above, although the windows appear to have surrounds rather than the simple brick detailing shown above. The side arched access is visible, as is the front railing. Trees are shown in the current position of Kings Cross station. If the window surrounds have been added, this would suggest a typical cosmetic improvement of c1850.

This photograph shows the Birkenhead Street frontage as altered in 1865-6. There are a number of significant differences from the earlier appearance and demonstrate how extensive the works of the 1860s were. Of particular note are the prominent porte cochere to each side of the main elevation. These gave the building considerable additional presence within the street and a greater sense of grandeur from the original, simple elevation. They also replaced the original, central doorway and brought a re-ordering of the internal circulation, so that the side lobbies fed into the main chapel hall.



We have few images of the interior of the chapel before the conversion in the 1970s, but one illustration from J.J. Graham's book of 1923 shows the pulpit and organ at it would have been after the 1865 extension. The image is described as "the interior until 1896". It is not clear what occurred in 1896 but it is known that the congregation was swelling in numbers and it may be that re-ordering was needed to accommodate additional numbers and a different approach to worship. The image shows how the chapel interior would have looked with the full height pilasters on either side of an organ apse which appears to be semi-circular on plan. The choir would have gathered along the gallery behind the pulpit, with the preacher in front at the lower level. The two galleries can be seen on either side of the image, showing how narrow and intimate the full height space was.

At the time of writing his *Chronicles of a Century of Methodism* of 1923, J.J. Graham noted that the congregation has risen to 1500 at times and that the school room accommodated 200 on a regular basis, "according to the modern ideas of air space", but often twice that number. Describing the many and various skills being taught within the basement, he explains that:

"The shell has become too cramped for its occupant, and it must be altered or the life of the creature must cease"

This opinion appears to have been common at the time and the book seems to have been timed to coincide with potential plans to extend the chapel further. The location of the chapel in the early 20th century was strategic in an area which had evolved dramatically since Booth's map of 1889 identified the area as "well-to-do". Kings Cross was now a mix of transitory visitors and one of the least hospitable parts of the city. Graham describes it as:

"a working class area inhabited by the poorest elements, of the city's crowds, of barrack-like buildings housing the artisans, clerks, railwaymen, and the industrials generally; of better class tenement blocks where friendless, neighbourless people, surrounded by thousands and known by none, live on in a self-contained existence, without the solace of companionship, the stay of friendship, and far away from the touches and tones of Nature, their great mother."

In response to this situation, the chapel needed to adapt to offer services to the community and it was obviously recognised that the current school-room and chapel had its limitations. The book illustrates the vision of 1923 for improvement of the chapel and the construction of an 'Institute'.

Although the proposals appeared advanced at this stage, the economy of the period and the arrival of World War II clearly intervened. The Institute, or Mission House, was not commenced until 1950.

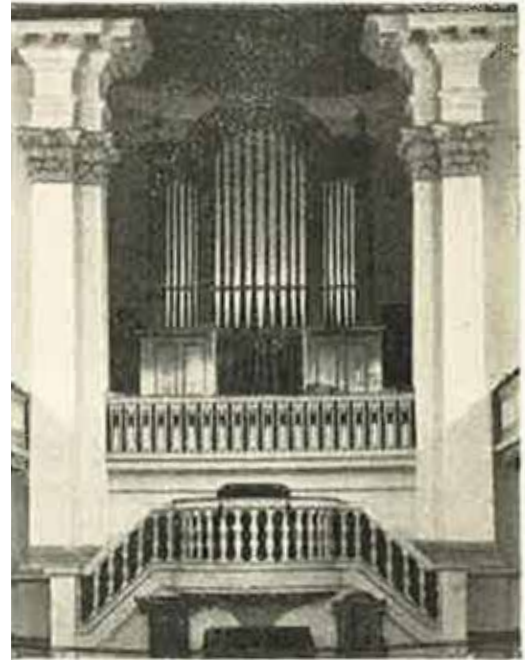


Illustration from J.J. Graham's Chronicles, indicating the organ and pulpit 'until 1896'.

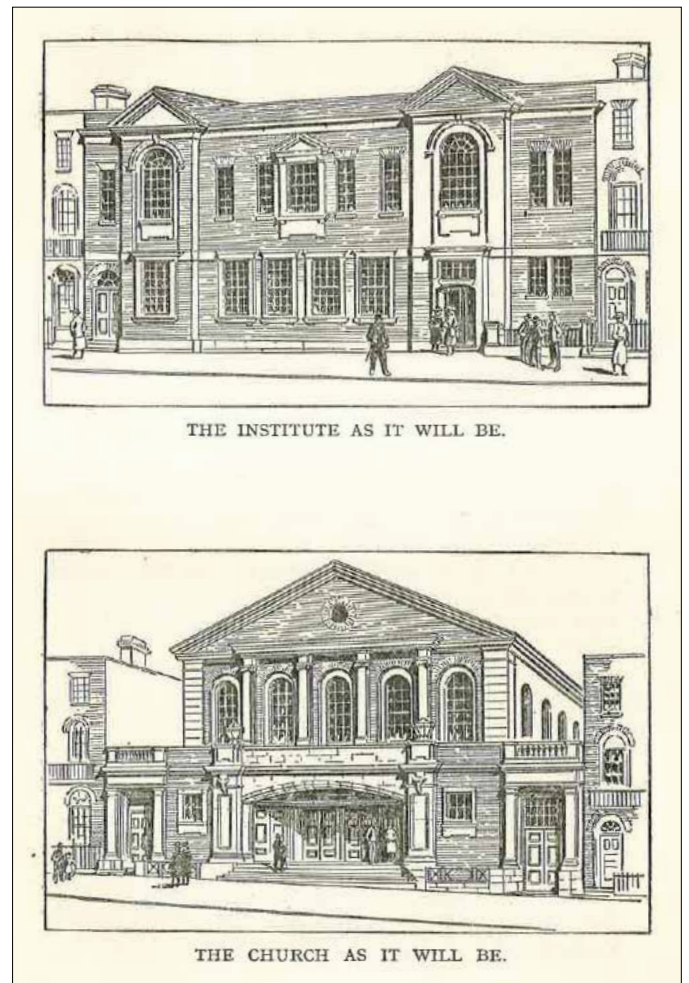


Illustration from J.J. Graham's Chronicles, showing the vision for the chapel and Institute as planned in 1923 but not implemented



The adjoining aerial photograph evidently dates from the post WWII period as the large site to the south of St Chad's Street has been cleared and is ready for re-development following bomb damage. The new flats were on place in this site by 1953 and the aerial photographs over London were generally taken between 1947 and 1953. The date of this image is likely to be c 1950/1.

Of particular note is the presence of the original pitched roof over the chapel, clearly spanning the large internal space. The original parapet fronting Birkenhead Street is clearly visible, and partially so onto Crestfield Street.

It is also evident that the Mission House fronting Crestfield Street was in place at this date, but probably only just completed in c 1950. Also noticeable are the re-positioned steps leading to a central door on the Birkenhead Street frontage.



The adjoining image illustrates Birkenhead Street in c1970. The Methodist Chapel is behind the scaffolding on the left-hand side of the street and it is not possible to determine any detail beyond this. The presence of the scaffolding, in conjunction with the evidence of the picture below, suggests that this work may have been related to the implementation of the application of 1967 for the addition of the top storey to provide residential accommodation for German Methodist Students.



The Crestfield Street photograph, also of c1970, indicates the presence of scaffold across part of the elevation and an access level across the roof of the frontage building indicating work being undertaken to the rear. This would also seem to indicate the works associated with the conversion of the chapel and the addition of the top floor.

7 Building type

In order to understand and make assessments of the Kings Cross Methodist Chapel, it is helpful to consider its position amongst other examples of the same building type. The following are comparable chapels constructed at a similar time and following similar principles.



Brunswick Methodist Church, Leeds

The Brunswick Methodist Church was built in 1824–5 to the designs of Joseph Botham.

The magnificent galleried interior with its grand organ was still splendidly maintained in the early 1960s, but the church was closed soon after and badly vandalised. Though SAVE campaigned for its retention, permission to demolish was given after a public inquiry in 1980. It has now been demolished.

The installation of the organ in the Leeds church in 1827 caused many disturbances throughout the Methodist community as many believed that choirs should be unaccompanied to maintain purity. The organ had been installed as the preference of a minority and this caused a split in the church and the creation of the Protestant Methodists or Wesleyan Association in 1836.

The Leeds Organ Dispute caused much debate, mainly academic, as to the governance of the Methodist Church. One of the main protagonists of this debate was Robert Eckett, a minister of the Kings Cross Methodist Chapel, who believed in democracy. His role in the dispute led to him being expelled from the Church, whereupon he joined the Wesleyans in 1839.

The Leeds church was grander in its design and finish than the Kings Cross Chapel, but it shares the essentially cuboid form with generous gallery seating. The organ and pulpit is set within the curved plan-form of the Leeds chapel but creates a focus at two storeys within the chapel space.



Brunswick Methodist Chapel, Stockton-on-Tees

The chapel at Stockton -on-Tees bears significant similarities with the original Kings Cross chapel, not only in the date of its construction, 1823, but also in the design. Like Kings Cross, it is based on a plan-form of 5 bays across the frontage and 4 bays to the side, creating an almost square footprint. Adornment is limited to the pediments, arched windows and string courses, bringing a simple elegance to the building. Two doorways originally led to each side of the chapel, matched it is assumed by two gallery stairs. The label moulded datestone is identical to Kings Cross.

Internally, it is almost certain that the detailing is similar to that which would have existed at Kings Cross prior to the alterations. The layout of the gallery is similar to the evidence we have from the 1874 map.

Although in a deteriorating condition, this chapel is a very good, intact example of the type of Chapels being constructed around the country at this date and warrants its statutory listing in Grade II*.



19.1.51 Brunswick Methodist Chapel, Stockton on tees

GV II*

1823 by the Hull architect W Sherwood who designed the Brunswick Chapel, Newcastle to which it bears marked resemblance. Built of brick. 2 storeys. 5 windows to Dovecot Street, 4 windows to side. Single storey, slightly later narthex with portico. Band over ground floor continues across portico and is returned at sides. Stone parapet bands and cope, also returned. The front is ramped up to cornice and parapet, central 3 bays break forward slightly and are crowned by a pediment containing a panel inscribed "Methodist Chapel 1823"; 3 panels below. Square leads in windows which are round headed and recessed in a brick surround. The narthex projects, 4 round headed openings of a pilastered portico and a pediment over central 2 openings; panelled floor; side doors have cornice and blocking course. The side elevations, to Brunswick and William Street, break forward slightly over 2 central bays. The rear gable end is also ramped up to crowning cornice, parapet and pediment. Railings to side elevations. 2 storey 1 window annex to William Street - glazing bar sash window 1st floor with cambered head and cill band. Round headed doorway with panelled doors. Listing NGR: NZ4434018970





Brunswick Methodist Chapel, Newcastle

As noted in the list description for the Stockton-on-Tees chapel, the Newcastle example was designed by the same architect, W Sherwood.

This building is slightly earlier in date, 1820, but shares very similar design principles. The frontage is 5 bays wide, but with a 6 bay return, making it slightly longer in footprint. All other external details are very similar.

The interior of this chapel has been converted and includes the flooring over of the upper gallery to create a first floor workshop space. The arched windows and ceiling detail are typical of this period.

Although of similar date to the Stockton-on-Tees chapel, the conversion works have reduced the internal quality of the building, and it is therefore listed in Grade II.



16/135 and 20/135 Brunswick Methodist Chapel, Newcastle

G.V. II

Methodist chapel. Dated 1820 in pediment. Brick with ashlar dressings; Welsh slate roof with stone gable copings. 2-storey, 5-bay pedimented east front, the right bay obscured by buildings. Steps up to Tuscan porch with prominent cornice which contains steps up to central 6-panelled double door, with radiating glazing bars to fanlight. Round-headed windows, most with stone sills, in arched recesses have sill band to upper windows. Eaves level band; 3 rectangular stone surrounds to ventilators, the central blind, in projecting bays under pediment; pediment continuous with cornice partly over side bays with ramped coping to meet it. Plainer door and windows in 6-bay left return to Northumberland Court, the last 3 bays pedimented. Interior: ground floor extensively altered c.1983 and first floor inserted; upper part; now chapel, has panelled gallery and pews; plaster walls and delicate stucco ceiling decoration; Corinthian pilasters frame west apse containing wide panelled pulpit. Listing NGR: NZ2482764497





Brunswick Methodist Chapel, Macclesfield

The chapel at Macclesfield is another example which demonstrates the principles of design and layout being followed in the 1820s. This chapel is of exactly the same date as the original Kings Cross Chapel and follows the same 5 bay frontage with central pediment and arched windows. Differences include the 7 bay return, creating a significantly larger interior and three entrance doors under the doric porch.

Although converted to offices, the majority of the internal features remain and the Grade II* listing reflects this level of integrity.

SJ9172SE CHAPEL STREET 886-1/8/37 (North side) 17/03/77 Brunswick House (former Brunswick Methodist Church) (Formerly Listed as: CHAPEL STREET (North side) Brunswick Methodist Church)

*GV II**

Methodist church, converted for use as offices. 1823, with later C19 additions and C20 alterations. Brick with slate roof. High 2 storeys, 5-window range with 3 central bays advanced and pedimented. Projecting entrance porch articulated by Doric pilasters between 3 doors, the central door in bowed porch. 6-panelled doors with fanlights. Upper storey articulated by pilasters to form arcade of round-arched windows with radial glazing, the central window having a stressed stone architrave. 'Wesleyan Methodist Chapel' inscribed on a stone in the pediment. Moulded cornice continues across the 7-bay return to Lord Street. 5-bay northern return, with pediment over advanced central bays. Round-arched windows with red brick dressings and continuous stone sills. Radial glazing. INTERIOR has a gallery supported on fluted cast-iron Doric columns with gallery front in form of Doric entablature. Coffered ceiling. Wooden pews. Organ and pulpit of c1860.

8 Building fabric

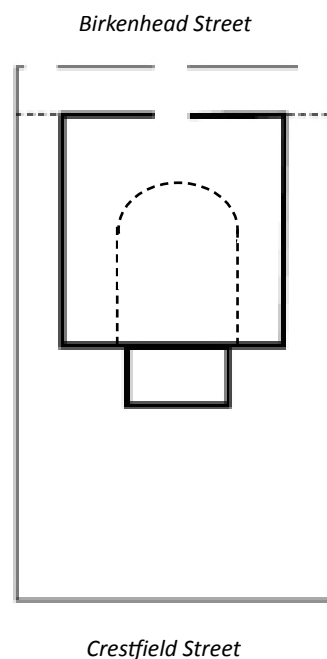
In order to simplify the chronology of the building and its various alterations, the following diagrams provide a summary of the stages in the existing building's gradual extension and conversion.

1823-1865

The original chapel was based on the almost-square plan form, relatively isolated in open land when built. Although the existing building probably had a gallery (like the Stockton-on-Tees example), the indication on the diagram is conjectural as there is no remaining evidence to be certain of the design.

The school rooms in the basement were accessed from either side of the front entrance.

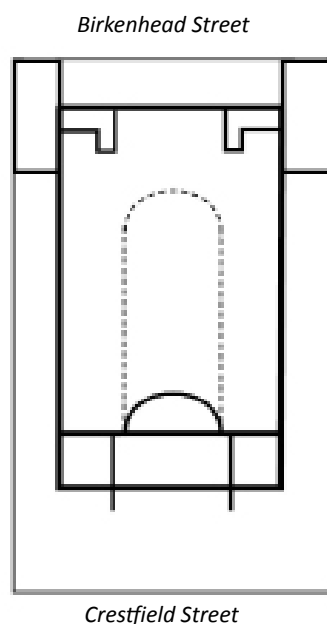
A vestry was located in a single storey building at the rear of the chapel, but there was no direct doorway connection into the chapel at this date.



1866-1949

In terms of major alterations to the building, the largest single intervention was the addition of two bays to the west end of the original chapel, removing the vestry and extending the worshipping space to include an organ. This phase of works was undertaken between 1865 and 1866, and appears to have included the extension of the balcony to either side of the pulpit. At the same time, vestry and other ancillary space was created at the west end of the chapel, and the two porte cochere were created on either side of the frontage, presumably to cater for the increased size of the congregation.

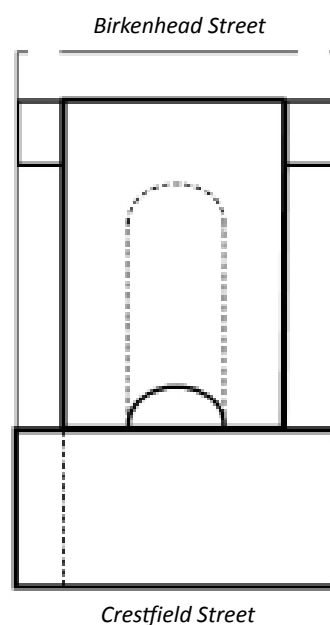
Although this is not confirmed by map evidence, it appears from the building fabric that the side accesses and porches may have been altered and extended upwards to improve access to the galleries in the mid 1880s. This would initially have extended to first floor only - the top floor of these links was added in the 1970s when the conversion work took place.



1950-1970

The major alteration of this period was the addition of the Mission House on the west end of the chapel. With its own access from Crestfield Street, the Mission House provided a further 'diversification' of the chapel's use and was also likely to have been required as an upgrade to the accommodation in the basement.

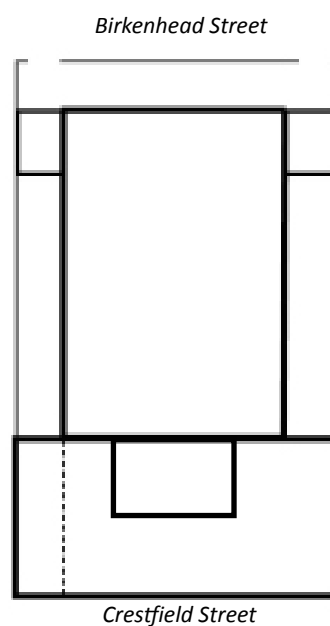
The evidence suggests that the chapel space was retained as before, not being altered until the implementation of works to provide student accommodation, as approved in 1967.

**1970-current**

The current condition of the building follows the decision to subdivide the main chapel space to provide two additional floors. As a result of the alterations, there is no evidence of the gallery and virtually no other evidence of internal features or fittings through the original 'shell' of the chapel.

In addition to the plan-form changes, the creation of the additional floor above the first floor gallery has resulted in the formation of new windows across the front elevation to Birkenhead Street, altering and replacing the original arched openings, and also an increase in the height of the flank wall on the north elevation to accommodate the increased height requirement.

In addition, an access shaft has been created to provide stair access to the top floors through the roof of the 1950s Mission House. The top level of the staircases on the Birkenhead Street frontage was also added at this time.



Building fabric:

The following details within the fabric provide evidence to support the findings of the research and the map assessments.

These two images show the straight joint at which the original 1825 chapel was extended by 2 bays in 1865-66 to increase capacity and provide a location for the organ. This was clearly an extensive alteration to the original building, although the dealing carries through into the new work very well and was presumably overseen by Robert Eckett, the minister and owner of the building company who more than likely carried out the extension work.

The extension provided an additional 2 bays, but also resulted in the loss of the original vestry at the rear of the original building.



The image below illustrates the rear of the northern link and the northern flank wall of the original chapel. The difference between the brickwork colour is stark, although this is not so evident on the front elevation where the older brickwork has been cleaned, presumably during the 1970s alterations, when the top floors of the two links were also added.



Below is one of the very few remaining historic windows in the chapel - the remainder have been altered to modern pivot types. The window is a 6 pane design with horns, and forms part of the 1865 extension.



A series of brick retaining arches run along the north elevation, supporting the lightwells. Ground level on the south side is lower and this arrangement was not required.





This view looks northwards from St Chad's Street towards the south flank of the chapel but also shows what remains of the pediment on the western face of the extended chapel towards Crestfield Street. This has been truncated as part of the 1970s alterations. The section of pediment, on both sides of the access tower, dates from the 1865-6 extension.



This timber infill panel appears to be re-used in this location but is of a simple detailing which is likely to date from the 19th century and may have been used in a similar fashion on the original gallery stairs.



The steps from ground floor to basement level provided access to the school rooms and date from the original build period, 1823-5.



The toilets for the school rooms are located at basement level. The urinal is an early 20th century addition to the earlier cubicle arrangement.

9 Significance Assessment

The significance of the existing building is greatly affected by the extent of alteration to it. As a result, where some buildings might retain a tangible historic core or definable elements of appreciable value, the Kings Cross Methodist Chapel has seen a number of phases of alteration and conversion which have gradually eroded its historic and architectural interest. Again, whilst some buildings express their evolution through alteration and extension, the extent of the works to the original chapel and its later extension have been thorough and highly damaging to those 'layers' of evidence.

In terms of the original 1823-25 chapel, there is very little evidence remaining which has not been altered. In essence, only three external walls remain of this original build phase: the front to Birkenhead Street and the two flank walls. The rear wall was taken out to facilitate the 1865 extension. Of the walls that remain, the front elevation has been significantly altered to form the wide foyer entrance, to insert the second floor of windows and to remove the pediment. The former pitched roof behind has also been removed, as have the original steps, basement windows and side arcade. On the flank walls, the arched windows have either been infilled or truncated to form the top floor apartments. As a result, there is very little which conveys the character of the original chapel other than some elements of brickwork between the altered openings. Internally, there is almost nothing which is identifiable from the period, other than, potentially, the simply detailed, re-used infill panel within the stairwell. The gallery, pulpit, organ and other fittings have all been removed.

In terms of historic significance, whilst there is some evidence provided by maps and commentary, the evidence provided by the fabric is very limited. In our opinion, this represents a generally LOW level of significance with some acknowledgment of a MODERATE significance in the partial shell of the 1825 chapel.

The basement level is contemporary with the 1820s phase but, again, the extent of alteration is considerable. The interior bears no sign of the original use or arrangement of this space and it has very little historic significance as a result. It has a LOW significance.

The 1865-6 extension to the rear of the original chapel is now adjoined by the 1950s Mission House and there is little evidence of this element other than the north and south walls, and the partial pediment at roof level. The remainder

is concealed externally and altered at roof level. The current stage area may have run through two storeys to house the pulpit and organ, though there is no evidence remaining and the areas adjoining have been altered to enable the access shaft. This section of the building has a LOW level of significance.

The link elements on the Birkenhead Street frontage were added some time after 1865, and most likely in the 1870s to provide improved access to the first floor gallery. These replaced the attractive porte cochere of the 1865 works and they have been altered with a flat-roofed top floor to provide access to the second floor flats.

The whole top floor of the chapel is now formed by flat-roofed apartments, rising above the original eaves level and entirely replacing the original pitched roof over both the 1820s and 1860 chapel. In addition, these works which were carried out in the 1970s resulted in the removal of the top section of the pediment onto Birkenhead Street and its replacement with a flat parapet, below which a datestone of 1825 is rather meanly set.

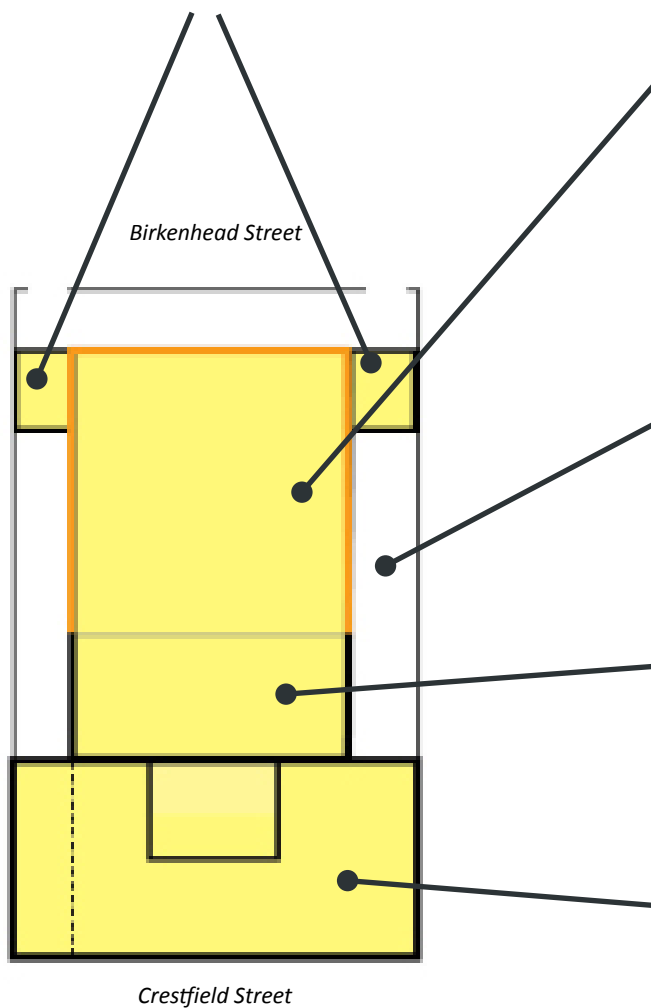
The 1950s Mission House extension was built over what remained of the churchyard, removing the 1865 vestry and forming a frontage onto Crestfield Street where previously there was none. The new building backed onto the rear of the chapel but provided connections through to it. Its design is modest and traditional in design for its date. It has a limited streetscene presence but some attractiveness in the partly crenellated gable element. It has a LOW level of significance.

Overall, whilst the building provides some evidence of its constituent phases, it is effectively an exercise in partial 'facadism' as far as the original chapel is concerned - and even then the facade has been greatly adapted to provide for the alternative uses. There are no single elements which survive in an intact form, and the original simple arrangement of the chapel is no longer evident. In the context of other equivalent examples of the type, some of which were referred to in the previous section, the building holds little historical or architectural evidence in what remains.

The summary in terms of historical and architectural value is therefore to conclude a **low** level of significance.

Side wings

The side wings started life as screen walls to each side of the original chapel. These appear to have been demolished and replaced with the porte cochere of the 1865 extensions. These were also removed to make way for new stair access to the first floor in the 1880s(?) and then a further floor added to provide access to the apartments above in the 1970s.



Original 1823-5 chapel

The first chapel on the site and originally isolated in the open ground of Battle Bridge. Clearly following Methodist precedents for design and layout, the original plan-form was 5 bays wide and 4 bays deep to give an almost square plan. Access was taken from a central door onto Birkenhead Street and single storey vestry was provided at the rear. This was removed as part of the 1865 work.

Basement

The basement extends under the original 1825 chapel, and then appears to have been partially extended under the 1865 work.

1865-66 chapel extension

Chapel extension to increase capacity and to provide organ

1950 Mission House

Built over former burial ground, and the vestry of the 1865-66 extension.

- None
- Low
- Moderate
- Good
- High

The diagram prepared by Dexter Moren Associates provides a quantitative summary of the degree of originality in the Birkenhead Street frontage versus alteration. It shows that approximately 74% of the existing frontage to Birkenhead Street is the result of alteration and extension and that only 26% of fabric which was original to the 1825 chapel remains intact. Although this numeric summary captures the extent of the fabric adaptation, it does not represent a qualitative assessment, which is considered under the heading of architectural significance, below. Nevertheless, it does provide a summary of the extent of adaptation of the building's principal elevation.



Birkenhead Street existing elevation. Altered, lost or additional areas to original shown in red (Dexter Moren Associates)

COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT

The following archival research has been undertaken to set the King's Cross Methodist Centre in a wider context of chapels within the city, including those local to it. It identifies that numerous, higher quality examples of the Methodist Chapel type exist and have received recognition through statutory listing - usually, however, where the building's origins are still well evident. Also, it notes examples of chapel rebuilding which have occurred and the improvement which high quality replacements can bring to townscape.

Methodist Churches in London

Although John Wesley initiated the movement in the 18th century, the preponderance of listed Methodist churches in England are Grade II designated and are late 19th to early 20th century in date, a pattern to which those in London generally conform, including the exemplary Hinde Street Methodist Church in Marylebone of 1881-1887 (complete with Minister's House in the same style) by James Weir; and the London Drama Centre, formerly a church of circa 1871. The numerous Central Halls constructed between circa 1890 and 1945 and which provided entertainment to the working classes (and therefore abstinence from alcohol) are much diminished in number, having been destroyed by bombing during the Second World War, or demolished as a result of dwindling congregations.

At the recording of the 1851 Census, there were 'one hundred and fifty four Methodist places of worship in the London Registration District' which, by 1903, had increased to over three hundred. It is suggested, however, that in excess of eight thousand Methodist churches and chapels have been closed in the last seventy five years, many of which have been converted to residential use.

Several extant examples characterise this spate of Methodist church building, a revitalisation of its initial late 18th century foundation, among which is that at Acton Hill of 1907 by architects, Gordon & Gordon, the Calvary Church at Lambeth by George and Reginald Baines, and the Methodist Church at Merton of 1914, a manifestation of the robust, modern Byzantine by Withers and Meredith. Each of these – and their counterparts – displays architectural finesse in their contemporary interpretations of the Perpendicular, the Italianate, the Arts and Crafts Gothic Style, and the classical English Baroque. Each is listed; most have been little altered. Several are on the Buildings at Risk Register, including two in Greater London, one of which is James Carr's exceptional Grade II* listed Church of St James on Clerkenwell Close, 'built for a Methodist congregation', but suffering 'slow decay' for which 'no solution [has been] agreed'¹. The other is its furthest chronological complement, the Calvary Charismatic Baptist Church (former Trinity Methodist Church, originally

constructed as Congregational Church) built in the 1950s 'as part of the live architectural exhibition of the 1951 Festival of Britain by Cecil Handisyde and D. Rogers Stark'², also afflicted by deterioration – structural and otherwise – despite its status as an 'early example of an English non-conformist church in a Modern idiom'³. Some of the Sunday School rooms were converted to student accommodation in the mid-1970s.

King's Cross Methodist Centre

Within the vicinity of the King's Cross Methodist Centre are four other active churches: the exceptional Grade I listed Wesley's Chapel ('the Mother Church of World Methodism'⁴), the Grade II* Methodist Central Hall at Westminster, and those at Camden Town, and Hinde Street. John Wesley's Methodist chapel in London – West Street Chapel, north of Leicester Square – where he first preached in 1751, is now disused. Compared to these, the King's Cross Methodist Centre, although of some social historical interest and especially in regard to its connections to Hinde Street, is nevertheless of reduced architectural integrity, hence is unlisted, but its early initial construction date of 1823-1825 marks it out as an exception to the inner London trend, and what 'remains' of its five bay façade conforms to the architectural model of symmetry and austerity of embellishment. Note that Methodist churches are rarely ornamented with spires, even though the Revd Frederick Jobson had advocated the Gothic style in the mid-19th century; among those several examples is the red-brick interpretation of East Finchley Methodist Church. Simple and Classical design was, however, the prevalent architectural form of the early Methodist churches precisely because the function of these buildings was considered the most important aspect: unnecessary ornamentation was unacceptable. The spoken word was the central part of the Methodist service. That the congregation of King's Cross had been established by 1807 (and which then numbered fifty seven⁵) at the Wesleyan Trinity Chapel located at the south end of Maiden Lane (the modern York Way) is significant: these were the parishioners who instigated the building of the new church at Battle Bridge where they moved in circa 1825 – and did so in the early architectural style which had evolved out of function and purpose, and not frivolity.

1 - Historic England, Heritage at Risk Register, List Entry Number: 1207786

2 - Historic England, Heritage at Risk Register, List Entry Number: 1376625

3 - Historic England, List Entry Number: 1376625

4 - Historic England, List Entry Number: 1195538

5 - Baggs, A.P., Bolton, Diane K., & Croot, Patricia E.C., Islington: Protestant Non-conformity, in A History of the County of Middlesex, Volume 8, 1985, pp101-115

6 - Baggs, A.P., Bolton, Diane K., & Croot, Patricia E.C., Islington: Protestant Non-conformity, in A History of the County of Middlesex, Volume 8, 1985, pp101-115

A compilation⁶ of all historic Methodist chapels and churches in the Kings Cross area reveals a considerable number, most of which exemplify the typical evolution of mid to late 19th century rebuilding and relocation, sale to another religious denomination, consolidation of existing congregations, and often demolition. Among the 'lost' ecclesiastical sites are the chapels at Hornsey Road, described as a 'small, nearly square building of old Methodist type, opened 1821', rebuilt on an 'enlarged site in 1858' to seat seven hundred, but which closed in 1940 and was demolished in 1960. A chapel at Liverpool Road, first constructed in 1825 and opened by John Wesley, closed in 1929 and was demolished to make way for the Royal Agricultural Hall. A chapel and school on the north side of Charlotte, later Carnegie Street, near Caledonian Road was built by the Wesleyan Methodist Association in 1841. Known as the King's Cross Mission by 1927, it was destroyed by a land mine in 1941 and its worshipers transferred to the King's Cross Methodist Centre by 1960.

Other relatively early Methodist buildings include the Woolwich Methodist Church, located at the periphery of the Capital, which dates to 1816 – although it is architecturally distinguished as a traditional two-storey, five-bay edifice which is relatively unchanged and, as a result of this and its aesthetic merit, was designated Grade II status in June 1973. It retains equivalent features which King's Cross Methodist Centre has lost, including its pediment with blank round window. The King's Cross Methodist Centre is, therefore, relatively unusual in its plainness (although it lost considerable architectural detailing as a result of extension and alteration), and represents deviation – by default – from the extant archetype.

Conversion, Demolition and New Methodist Churches

The conversion of existing Methodist churches and chapels to residential use is a well-known phenomenon; their demolition is also acknowledged, although sometimes to controversial end. The decline in congregation is usually the precipitating factor, or the degeneration of the building as at Gospel Oak which was demolished in 1970 and replaced in 1971 with a modern structure. The Mill Lane Primitive Church, relocated to Mill Lane, West Hampstead in 1886, was demolished in the late 1970s.

There are several examples of the rebuilding or augmenting of extant Methodist churches, usually those on historic sites on which several edifices have been built and replaced. The Rivercourt Methodist Church at Hammersmith, a neo-Gothic edifice built in the 1870s and a 'significant building in the Hammersmith landscape', was suffering structural decline in the 1980s: the architect J. Alan Bristow had to find a 'creative solution' for this 'complex Victorian structure' given that 'the interior was a vast, draughty, under-used space... Should the building be replaced, renovated, modified...'⁷.

The result was the retention of the historic structure, which was adapted to allow for greater engagement with various community groups, the development of rooms, including a sanctuary and lounge – and all accomplished on very tight funding.

The Methodist Church on Fulham Broadway, demolished and replaced in 1971, was rebuilt again to designs by PMP Architects, in a style which would 'reflect traditional Methodist values' and, as such, the modern architecture presented 'a glazed wall



The new Methodist Church at Fulham Broadway



Sunfields Methodist Church, 2009

7 - Rivercourt Methodist Church, Hammersmith, Church Building, July-August, 1998, pp62-64

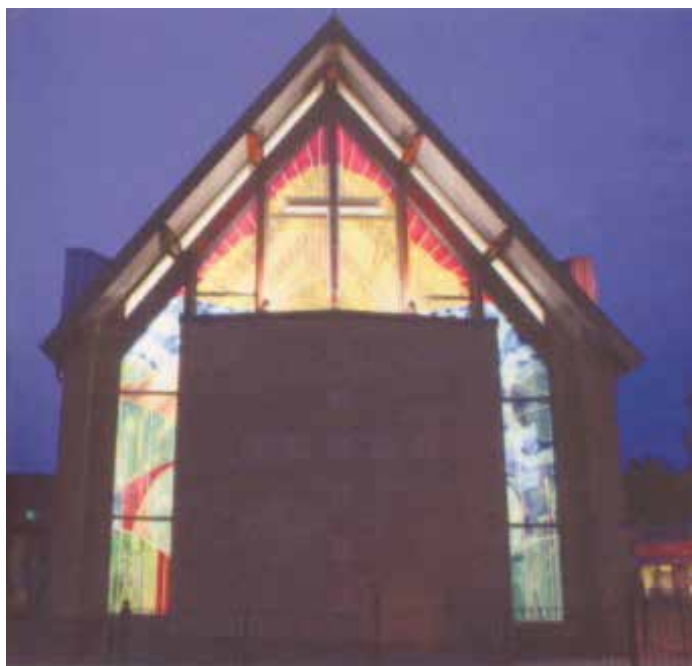
8 - Price, Derek, Two Centuries of Worship: New Methodist Church at Fulham Broadway, PMP Architects, Church Building, No. 86, March 2004, pp28-31

9 - Price, Derek, Two Centuries of Worship: New Methodist Church at Fulham Broadway, PMP Architects, Church Building, No. 86, March 2004, pp28-31

10 - Wright, Paul, Sunfields Methodist Church, Church Building, No. 119, September-October 2009, pp8-13

to the main road... framed by a stand-alone timber portico⁸. The Trustees of the Church wished to build a new church which would 'promote inclusiveness, [be] welcoming, embracing and open to all'⁹ and the result is a manifestation of those principles. The 'unique glass front wall allows passers-by to view the open vista of the church': this is not a building which is so austere that it prohibits interaction with its own community, but one which on plan looks as though it is encouraging people to step within.

Sunfields Methodist Church, the 'first new church building to be built in Greenwich this century... [and which] opened on the 27th June 2009'¹⁰ is a building which 'cannot fail to be noticed' and 'is clearly recognisable as a church'. The architects' intention of creating a structure of longevity and sustainability was explained by Alan Wright as expressed in its impressive proportions and design, thus 'assisting the ministers and trustees to extend the legacy created by those who first had the vision to build a place of worship on this site.'¹¹ That first building here was a plain structure, constructed in 1869 in brick, then extended in 1902 with a memorial church. Bomb damage which occurred in 1944 led to the rebuilding of the church when then reopened in 1956, although only a decade later the church trustees 'found the various buildings too costly to maintain and decided to replace them all with a new church and six family houses'¹². The first design for the church was refused on the grounds that it was too modern; a more traditional approach was required in layout



Sunfields Methodist Church: stained glass window

11 - Wright, Paul, Sunfields Methodist Church, Church Building, No. 119, September-October 2009, pp8-13

12 - Wright, Paul, Sunfields Methodist Church, Church Building, No. 119, September-October 2009, pp8-13

and form: 'the overhanging roof, deep mullions to the windows and the cross provide a rich layering to the west elevation which is also enhanced by the modern stained glass window'.

The Methodist Church at Clapham, a modern building of circa 1961 (again in turn replacing another which was bomb damaged), was recently augmented with a new single storey glazed extension by Saville Jones Architects in 2011, 'opening up the whole of the church to the street scene, allowing people to see in and thereby to break down physical and religious barriers'. A similar improvement has occurred at Finsbury Park Methodist Church, a building of 1961 which replaced an earlier Victorian edifice to the side of the extant structure: prior to design additions made by CPL Chartered Architects in 2011 (completion of construction), the edifice did not 'project its function as a Christian Church', but now has improved and more welcoming access (again, through the use of glazing; the old heavy timber doors were replaced) with the creation of a tower housing platform lift and fire escape.

The findings of the comparative study are therefore that numerous higher quality examples of the Methodist Chapel type exist and have received recognition through statutory listing. Also, it has been relevant to note the examples of rebuilding which have occurred and the high quality of replacements which have emerged.



Finsbury Park Methodist Church – with new entrance

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

In townscape assessment terms, it is appropriate to consider the positive and negative aspects of the existing Methodist Centre building so as to make an overall judgement of its merit.

The positive architectural aspects of the extant building are relatively few. Although a different building type than the predominant residential terraces to each side, it is not clearly distinguishable from them as a result of the 'domestication' which has occurred at first and second floors. The creation of two floors of residential use within the original, solid-looking chapel elevation has resulted in a building which is overtly domestic in appearance – however, its transformation to residential use has not been complete and, as a result, it has an awkward and compromised character: not quite a residential building and not quite a chapel. Essentially, it is a poor conversion of the original building and appears so in townscape terms.

The set-back from the pavement edge and the raised ground floor are two characteristics that might normally distinguish this building type from its neighbours; however, the adjacent terraces are also set back behind railings and raised up by 5-6 steps. As a result, the effectiveness of this arrangement is diminished.

In scale terms, the remaining elevation has a comparable parapet height with its residential neighbours. Originally, the pediment would have emphasised the building's height but this has been lost and replaced with a poorly-detailed raised central parapet.

In addition, the original, taller proportions of the storeys and larger wall:window ratio have been lost as a result of the adaptation to residential use. This greater area of solid would have distinguished the building type as a different building type within the townscape and would have increased levels of variety (sometimes to positive effect). However, this visual variation is not discernible as a result of the changes to the elevation which have occurred.

In form terms, the former chapel adopts a wider frontage than the narrow plots of the terraces adjoining. This results in a break in the rhythm of the predominant vertical emphasis of the terraces which can either be regarded as a positive or negative feature. In my opinion, had the chapel maintained its architectural character more intact then the benefit of the wider frontage would have created a positive focus and visual contrast within the street; however, as a result of its compromised, semi-domestic character, the effectiveness of the frontage is weakened considerably – to the point where the function of the building is not readily apparent in the townscape and its architecture is neither arresting, landmarking nor of high quality.



The Birkenhead Street frontage is a poor residential conversion of the former chapel

In terms of architectural detailing, there has been a deterioration in the quality of the detailing both of the remaining original elements and of the newer work. Of the remaining brickwork from early 19th century date, there is some evidence of the fine tuck-pointing remaining but much of this has been re-pointed. The result has been to depress the appearance of the brickwork by widening the joints, concealing the brick arises and, where cement-based mortar has been used, introducing a dominant grey coloration to the joints which reduces the prominence of the yellow brick.



Original lime tuck-pointing has been replaced by large areas of cement-based repointing. The quality and consistency of the pointing overall is poor.

The principal elevation, formerly the well-proportioned 5-bay design, has been disfigured by the formation of the upper storey into two, with a consequential repositioning of floor levels and creation of new fenestration serving both. In itself, this alteration has entirely altered the character of the original building. However, in addition, the detailing of the work carried out has further reduced the architectural quality of the building. The squat windows sit within render panels which confuse the composition, and the detailing of the centre-pivot, large pane windows is both poor and inconsistent with the quality of the surrounding built form. The cubic, rectilinear character of the original building is further confused by the widening of the entrance doors at ground floor level and the insertion of the curved glazing above them.

Consideration also needs to be given to the townscape value at pedestrian level. Whilst in original form, the building's landscaped forecourt was accessible and approachable, set behind low level railings which did not conceal the building behind, the current situation is harmful to the pedestrian experience of the street. The high and continuous railings create quite a hostile edge to the pavement and also restrict the ability to appreciate the building – particularly in oblique views.



Oblique views across frontage are limited by tall security fencing



The boundary fencing is too tall to be railings, and the area behind is hard-surfaced and used, in part, for bin storage.

Applying the relevant methodology for 'value' assessment of heritage assets, as shown on the table below, we consider that the Birkenhead Street building retains architectural significance at the level of **low**.

This is due to it being a non-designated asset of local importance, and is consistent with the assessment of its relative merit.

Overall, the Birkenhead Street elevation has become a combination of elements resulting from the extensive adaptation of the building from its original form and use. Architecturally, the building holds very limited, if any, merit.

Value	Examples
High	<p>World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments of exceptional quality, or assets of acknowledged international importance or can contribute to international research objectives.</p> <p>Grade I Listed Buildings and built heritage of exceptional quality. May include some Grade II* listed buildings.</p> <p>Grade I Registered Parks and Gardens and historic landscapes and townscapes of international sensitivity, or extremely well preserved historic landscapes and townscapes with exceptional coherence, integrity, time-depth, or other critical factor(s).</p>
Good	<p>Scheduled Monuments, or assets of national quality and importance or that can contribute to national research objectives.</p> <p>Grade II* and Grade II Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas with very strong character and integrity, other built heritage that can be shown to have exceptional qualities in their fabric or historical association.</p> <p>Grade II* and II Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and historic landscapes and townscapes of outstanding interest, quality and importance, or well preserved and exhibiting considerable coherence, integrity time-depth or other critical factor(s).</p>
Medium	<p>Designated or undesignated assets of regional quality and importance that contribute to regional research objectives.</p> <p>Locally Listed Buildings, other Conservation Areas, historic buildings that can be shown to have good qualities in their fabric or historical association.</p> <p>Designated or undesignated special historic landscapes and townscapes with reasonable coherence, integrity, time-depth or other critical factor(s).</p> <p>Assets that form an important resource within the community, for educational or recreational purposes.</p>
Low	<p>Undesignated assets of local importance.</p> <p>Assets compromised by poor preservation and/or poor survival of contextual associations but with potential to contribute to local research objectives.</p> <p>Historic (unlisted) buildings of modest quality in their fabric or historical association.</p> <p>Historic landscapes and townscapes with limited sensitivity or whose sensitivity is limited by poor preservation, historic integrity and/or poor survival of contextual associations.</p> <p>Assets that form a resource within the community with occasional utilisation for educational or recreational purposes.</p>
Very Low	<p>Assets with very little surviving archaeological or cultural heritage interest.</p> <p>Buildings of very little architectural or historic note, or those that have been significantly altered.</p> <p>Landscapes and townscapes that are badly fragmented and/or the contextual associations are severely compromised, or that have little historic interest.</p>
Negligible/ None	<p>Assets with no surviving cultural heritage interest.</p> <p>Buildings of no architectural or historical note.</p> <p>Landscapes and townscapes with no surviving legibility and/or contextual associations, or with no historic interest.</p>

Heritage asset assessment table - adapted from DoT (1995) Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Environmental Assessment (Volume 11, Section 3, Part 2; Cultural Heritage).

10 Townscape significance

The townscape significance of the existing building has been considered in terms of the two streets within which it is visible. It is the Birkenhead Street frontage in which the existing building has been identified as making a “positive contribution”.

Crestfield Street

The Crestfield Street frontage has not been specifically identified within the Council’s Conservation Area Audit, although the description of the street does suggest that it is “dominated” by the Mission House frontage.

In our opinion, this description over-emphasizes the contribution of the existing building within the street. Whilst we accept that the building makes a contribution due to its position in the mid-point of the relatively short street and the focus provided by the central gable, we consider that its visual interest lies principally in contributing to the mix of building types, styles and materials which mark the transition from the uniform terracing of Bloomsbury into the Kings Cross area. The Mission House is a pleasant building but it is not architecturally refined or well detailed; in fact, it is a rather dated and traditional design for the 1950s.

In a context of streets dominated by three storey terraces, the Mission House is an unusual 2 storey element and is finished in a brown brick which is also somewhat at odds with the prevalent character. Rather than being a positive contrast, it is a modest streetscene element. The rising access shaft behind the frontage is not a positive feature of the extended building.

Due to its role in signalling the mix of uses towards Kings Cross, we consider its contribution to the streetscene to have a **low** value.



Existing frontage to Crestfield Street

Birkenhead Street

The Birkenhead Street frontage has been identified within the Council's Conservation Area Audit as making a "positive contribution" to the Conservation Area.

We consider that this assessment derives from the building's scale and impact within the streetscene rather than any architectural merit. As has been discussed within this document, this frontage has been drastically altered from its original, elegant arrangement into something which appears to be a hybrid between ecclesiastical and residential use. If anything, the residential character comes through most strongly due to the removal of the pediment and the alteration of the arched windows into rendered panels with square pivot windows in them. The large ground floor opening has also changed the emphasis of the building into an elevation which is more awkward than attractive.

One of the features of the Kings Cross area is how the activities and attractions of the transport hub brought new uses and building types into the streets. The chapel provides some evidence of this adaptation but the level of its contribution to the streetscene is limited by the extent of its alteration and modernisation.

In our opinion, whilst the chapel in its original (1825) or extended (1865) guise would have warranted a good level of streetscene value, we consider that the remaining structure holds a much-reduced townscape significance. This significance level is identified on the following page.



Existing frontage to Birkenhead Street

In order to provide a qualitative assessment of the existing townscape, we have applied the criteria based on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) methodology. In the context of the subject site whose contribution is at a very local level, we have assessed the townscape quality of Birkenhead Street only.

Applying the methodology for townscape assessment, below, we consider that the townscape quality of Birkenhead Street is at a medium level. The street contains some consistent, historic elements of a moderate standard, but there are also elements which detract from its overall quality and integrity. Of these detractors, the high-rise building which closes the south side of St Chad’s Street is one, and Zenith House on the corner of Birkenhead Street and St Chad’s Street is another.

Classification of sensitivity description	
Very high	<i>Areas that exhibit exceptionally positive character with highly valued features that combine to give an experience of unity, richness, harmony and sense of place. Few detracting or incongruous elements. Highly sensitive to new elements.</i>
High	<i>Visually coherent groups of well-designed / well-proportioned buildings, well related to streets, spaces and landscape elements, highly distinctive sense of place established over time, may be protected by heritage designation (e.g. conservation area or listing). Few detracting elements.</i>
Medium	<i>Relatively coherent grouping of buildings reasonably well-related to the public realm to create a good although not exceptional sense of place (may include locally listed buildings) - occasional buildings and spaces may lack quality and cohesion.</i>
Low	<i>Largely undistinguished area lacking sense of place and identity, poor spatial definition and generally limited visual interest. Area of emerging character as a result of large scale new development.</i>
Negligible/nil	<i>Poor quality environment lacks cohesive form and structure significant potential for enhancement and very little or no visual interest. Area in a state of development or change in character.</i>

Based on Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (April 2013) (Ref 1-1) produced jointly by the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (IEMA) and the Landscape Institute;

In contrast with the Council’s assessment within the Conservation Area Audit, the former Chapel could, in some respects, be considered a detracting element within a street which is lined with high quality 18th century townhouses which otherwise characterise the local area and exude a refined, architectural quality. Any objective assessment of townscape quality must identify the adapted appearance of the Chapel as architecturally weak within such a context and visually jarring within the street. Although it may once have possessed a much greater visual quality and prominence in the street, the combination of adapted and added elements has resulted in a significant reduction in this role. The poor quality of these adaptations has also reduced the contribution which this building makes to the townscape at a detailed level.

We are not of the view that the building in its current condition contributes positively to the Conservation Area and would suggest that, in fact, its identification within the Statement might relate more to the reasonable recognition of its former *historic* significance than its residual townscape and visual values.

Our qualitative assessment is that the building is a pale reflection of its former townscape and architectural qualities. Whilst it once undoubtedly possessed some of the simple elements which characterise the Methodist chapel type, it now looks like a poorly converted building. It is therefore difficult to assign it more townscape value than its current appearance allows.

In our assessment, therefore, the existing building’s contribution to townscape is **low/medium**. This summary is the result of its much-adapted appearance, the poor quality of the adaptations which have taken place and its current modest role within the townscape, both in the medium range and short range views available.

11 Proposed scheme

The proposed scheme involves the demolition of the existing buildings on the site in order to deliver a re-development which provides replacement church facilities, community facilities, a replacement on-site Manse and 11 residential apartments.

The new facilities are provided within a building which is 5 storeys in height within Crestfield Street and 3.5 storeys in Birkenhead Street. A basement level is also provided.

The building is designed in the form of two 'blocks', one fronting Crestfield Street, the other fronting Birkenhead Street. Lightwells are provided between the two blocks in order to provide natural light and ventilation.

The accommodation is provided as follows:

Basement level: Meetings rooms, charity rooms, offices, and cycle storage;

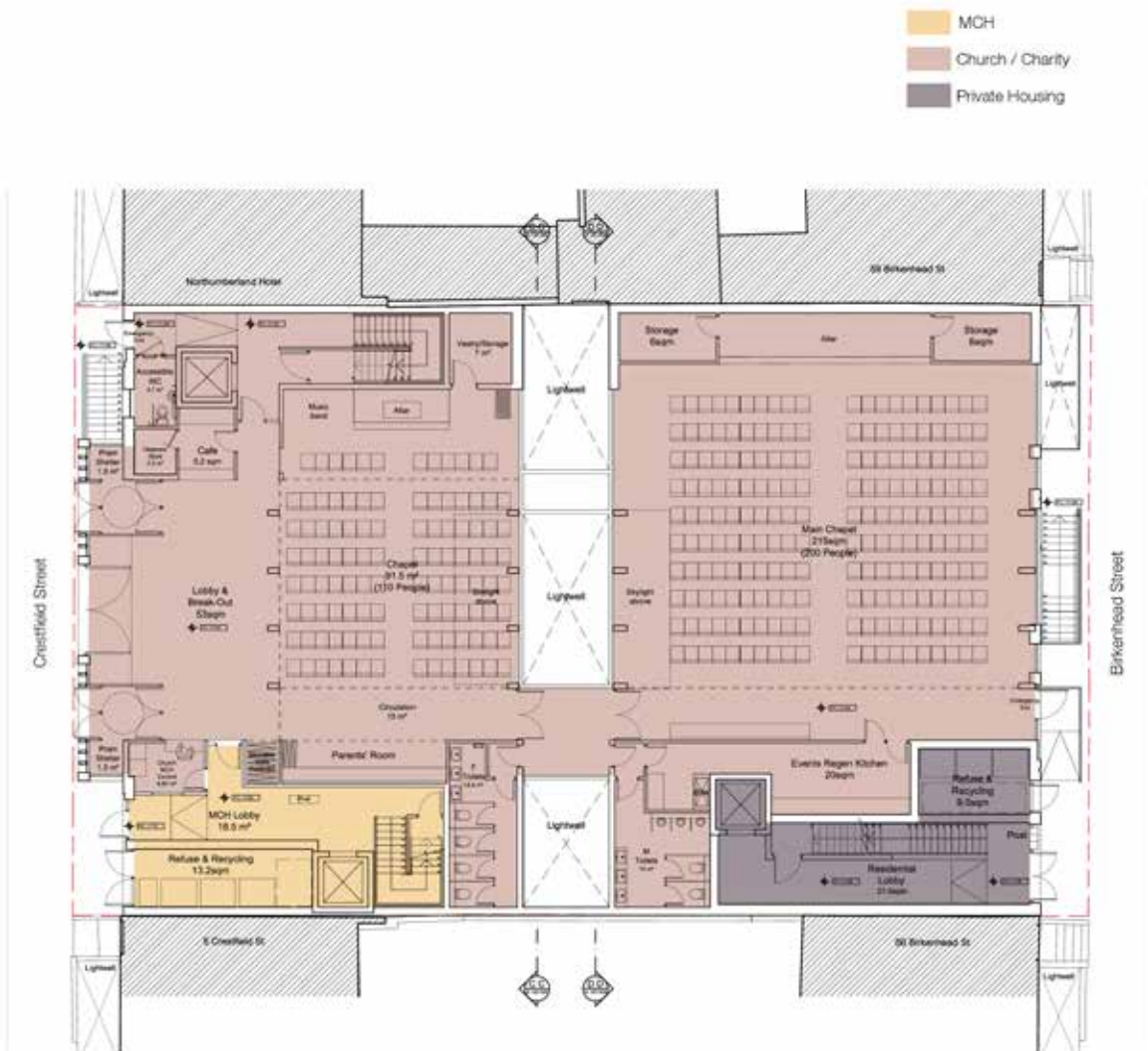
Ground floor: Lobby and break-out area, small chapel, main chapel, refuse and recycling and residential access;

First floor: Meeting room, warden's office and flat, residential apartments (Birkenhead Street);

Second floor: Quiet room, prayer room, bedrooms, residential apartments (Birkenhead Street);

Third floor: Library and study, bedrooms, residential apartments (Birkenhead Street);

Fourth floor: Communal kitchen, dining room, bedrooms.



Proposed ground floor plan (Dexter Moren Associates)

The Crestfield Street frontage comprises three parts. The two outer elements are designed in London Stock brick and, at three storeys, reflect the pattern of adjoining buildings.

The central element achieves a strong vertical emphasis, which was encouraged through the pre-application discussions, in order to announce the function of the building. As well as providing this expression of the use, the frontage will also act as a local landmark within Crestfield Street, but also in oblique views from Kings Cross station. These elements of the design would be constructed in pre-cast concrete, with copper inserts and glazing behind.



The Birkenhead Street frontage is designed to read as four townhouses, constructed in London Stock brick in order to match with the prevalent character. The ground floors are expressed below the string course, in common with the adjoining properties. Above ground floor, the two main storeys repeat the taller proportions of the piano nobile of the adjoining terraces, with balconettes expressing the principal rooms. The proposed parapet height is consistent with the adjoining buildings, and the mansard roof also repeats the existing heights and profile.



12 Impact Assessment

The assessment of impact on heritage assets is provided with regard to Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and the NPPF paragraphs 131-135.

The following sections identify the effects of the proposed development on the heritage assets, designated and non-designated.

Demolition of non-designated heritage asset:

The demolition of the existing Chapel buildings would represent the “loss” of a non-designated asset in the terms of the NPPF Paragraph 135. Any such loss should be assessed as a ‘balanced judgement’ in terms of the significance of the asset, and in the context of other relevant planning considerations.

As has been established through this document, the existing building has been much altered and its significance, as a result, has been diminished.

In another, comparable circumstance where the loss of a non-designated heritage asset has been involved (PINs reference APP/P1940/A/14/2217333), the Inspector for the Secretary of State determined that:

“Overall, although the proposed demolition would result in the loss of a non designated heritage asset, the significance of that asset has been seriously degraded over time and there is a clear and convincing justification for the loss of the building. The original late nineteenth century buildings have suffered unsympathetic external and internal alterations over the years, as is accepted by the Council, and the balance is strongly in favour of the proposed scheme.”

In upholding this particular appeal in favour of re-development, the Inspector also took into account the extent of works to the interior of the building which had eroded its character and also the extent to which local historical interest might contribute to the assessment of significance. In this instance, the significance was also at the level of low/medium.

This example demonstrates that the balancing exercise is capable of determining in favour of the loss of non-designated assets where the significance of the asset is at a lower level and where the benefits arising from the proposal outweigh that loss or harm.

It is our view that the circumstances with the existing chapel are very similar to the case quoted above: the existing building, though once possessing a higher level of architectural and historic significance, has been devalued by the extent of alteration and adaptation. Its loss may therefore be considered acceptable in the context of a scheme which provides a number of benefits, including those of architectural and townscape quality.

In our opinion, the proposed scheme clearly achieves these objectives. Not only does the re-development provide greatly improved facilities for worship and gathering, but it also presents townscape improvements to both Birkenhead Street and Crestfield Street. In the case of the former, the scheme provides a frontage which re-affirms the predominantly residential character of this street, replacing the rather ambiguous part-ecclesiastical/part-residential chapel frontage with an infill which restore the consistency of building line, parapet and ridge heights, and the rhythm of bays. Without mimicking the adjoining townhouses, the scheme accentuates the positive qualities of the surrounding townscape.

On the Crestfield Street elevation, the scheme replaces the rather understated existing frontage with a bold architectural statement which positively expresses the building’s purpose and its aspirations as a focus for community use.

In considering the loss of the non-designated heritage asset in the context of the merits and benefits of the proposed re-development, the balance is strongly in favour of the proposed scheme.

Impact on setting of listed buildings:

The listed buildings potentially affected by the proposed development are:

- 1-5 Crestfield Street - Grade II
- 1-7 Birkenhead Street - Grade II
- 54-58 Birkenhead Street - Grade II
- 59 Birkenhead Street - Grade II

Apart from direct adjacency to adjoining properties, the proposed development will not have direct physical impact on the listed buildings by way of alteration. In terms of direct impact, the proposals will therefore result in **no harm**.

Any impacts arising will be in the form of impact on the setting of the listed buildings, and the impact assessment therefore needs to take in account the nature, level and extent of those impacts on not the setting itself but the *contribution which the setting makes* to the significance of the listed building/s. As Historic England clearly states, setting itself is not a heritage designation, so it is important to determine how a proposed development might impact on the way in which a setting contributes to the value of an asset. This is an important distinction, and affects, for example, assessments of whether in fact ‘change’ in setting necessarily represents ‘harm’.

Section 4 has identified the heritage assets and their relative significance, including the contribution to significance by setting. This is the baseline for assessment of the proposed re-development and its effects.

Taking the two streets separately, the removal and replacement of the existing chapel building will incur some degree of change to the street and to the setting of the assets. In terms of assessing whether such change fails to preserve the setting of the listed buildings, further detailed assessment and explanation is required.

It has been established in Section 4 of this report that the significance of the assets in Birkenhead Street lies principally in their historic and architectural merit, as buildings of a particularly building type constructed within the period 1820s to 1840s. Birkenhead Street was first laid out in the 1820s (then called Liverpool Street), and the original Methodist Chapel was one of its first occupants. Subsequently, the street has evolved to its current condition, including rebuilds of properties and alterations to accommodate alternative uses. The street, therefore, has undergone change during its lifetime and a change which has mirrored the evolution of this part of the city. The significance of the listed buildings (listed in 1974) has not been diminished by the changes which have occurred in the local area. Where the formality of Argyle Square might not so readily accommodate townscape adaptation, a feature of Birkenhead Street is its 'transitional' role between fully ordered townscape (such as in Argyle Square) and the mixes of land uses and building types servicing the Kings Cross area. Birkenhead Street therefore possesses a capacity for change without this change necessarily representing harm to the setting of heritage assets.

In addition, it has been noted that the existing chapel frontage onto Birkenhead Street does not possess architectural quality which supports the townscape as a whole. It appears odd and ambiguous, and the classical elegance it once possessed has been heavily adapted. Whilst there may be a degree of interest deriving from curiosity, the building's appearance does not benefit the townscape's overall architectural quality or integrity. Added to this, the treatment of the frontage yard area conveys a hostile appearance.

Therefore, in our assessment, Birkenhead Street does have capacity for change without harm to the setting of the assets, and replacement of the existing building with a building which enhances the townscape's quality as a whole would represent a benefit to setting.

In this context, it is considered that the setting of the listed buildings in Birkenhead Street would be preserved as a result of the proposed development. There will be some change resulting from the demolition of the existing building, but the replacement development introduces a building which is both compatible and harmonious with its context - and, without copying the historic buildings, adopts a character which supports their townscape values.

The impact of the proposed development on the setting of the listed buildings at 1-7 Birkenhead Street, 54-58 Birkenhead Street and 59 Birkenhead Street is to bring a more consistent character to the street, in a manner which supports their character - rather than challenging it, distracting from it or otherwise reducing their significance. The proposed building will be a good neighbour in visual terms and, in those terms, a benefit to their setting over the existing situation.

The approach to the scheme adopted in Crestfield Street reflects the advantages to the use of the building resulting from the re-orientation of its main entrance from the west, rather than from Birkenhead Street. As a wider, more accessible and utilised route, Crestfield Street also offers more opportunities for expressing the architecture of the proposed facility within the townscape.

The adjoining listed buildings are the terraced properties at 1-5 Crestfield Street, a group constructed in circa 1840 and part of the speculative residential development of the area.

The existing Crestfield Street chapel frontage marks the mid-point in the urban block but its horizontality, break in the parapet line and modest architecture are a weakness in the existing townscape setting. Replacing the existing building therefore offers the opportunity to improve the setting of the listed buildings and to provide a building which celebrates its function within this urban context.

The proposed Crestfield Street frontage has therefore been designed to perform an enhanced townscape role, which it achieves by increased height and increased drama in the architecture. Therefore, where the proposed Birkenhead Street frontage provides a calmer response to a context which is more overtly residential in character, the Crestfield Street frontage seeks to positively add to the townscape's existing variety. However, the townscape benefit is achieved whilst also being respectful to the adjoining listed buildings by means of a staged increase in height and also by a staged adaptation of the elevations so that there is a clear visual transition between the consistent lines of the *piano nobile* and parapets of the townhouses and the expression of the chapel's glazed entrance.

There will be change to the townscape in Crestfield Street as a result of the development. The existing variety can accommodate this change for the most part and the proposal to accentuate the entrance is a honest approach to the design of the building type. However, alongside positive townscape benefits, there will be a degree of distraction to Nos 1-5 Crestfield Street, at the level of **low adverse**.

Impact on character and appearance of Conservation Area:

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 refers to the need for “*special attention*” to be paid to the “*desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance*” of Conservation Areas. Assessment of impact or harm is also set out in the NPPF paragraphs 131-135. Paragraph 137 also refers to the potential for new development to “*better reveal*” the significance of Conservation Areas.

The application site is located within the Kings Cross & St Pancras Conservation Area, but also sites adjacent to boundary of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. In many ways, the boundary line is an artificial one as it subdivides a development block, however, its particular alignment does acknowledge the presence of the terraces at Nos 1-5 Crestfield Street and 1-7 Birkenhead Street as being associated with the Georgian planning of the Bloomsbury area as separate from the increased variety of the Kings Cross area - and this is an important distinction within this transitional area of townscape.

1-7 Birkenhead Street occupy a position on the northern edge of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The remainder of the street is included within the Kings Cross & St Pancras Conservation Area. Nevertheless, the street as a whole shares a predominance of residential character, typified by a largely consistent parapet height, string course, rhythm of bays and materials. As has been explained earlier, the existing chapel frontage is something of a contrast to this, having been altered to such an extent that its original character and detailing has been lost and replaced with an elevation which does not complement the refined architecture of its neighbours. With this in mind, it is not the case that the principle of removing the existing building automatically implies harm to the Conservation Area, but that its replacement could, in fact, enhance character and appearance.

The proposed development has been approached to reinstate the distinctive characteristics of the street, by reinforcing the parapet height, strong course alignment, rhythm and materials. In so doing, it will enhance the appreciation of the street’s qualities and remove a detracting element. The effect on the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area will be to remove an element whose recognition as making a ‘positive contribution’ is not justified by either its architectural quality or simply by its introduction of variety to an otherwise consistent street in an area of townscape where consistency is recognised as a positive attribute (such as in Argyle Square, and referred to in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area para 5.230 as “homogeneity”).

In our assessment, the proposed development offers to enhance the streetscene by adopting characteristics which are complementary to this part of both the King’s Cross & St Pancras and the Bloomsbury Conservation Areas. Special attention has been paid throughout the design process to identify those characteristics which contribute to the areas’ special character and to ensure that the new building will represent a positive addition to the streetscene.

The impact of the proposed development within Crestfield Street also involves the loss of the existing building and introduces a differing relationship and presence within the street. The Council’s King’s Cross & St Pancras Conservation Area Audit notes in paragraph 4.2.105 that “*The buildings on Crestfield Street are inconsistent in terms of height, materials and form*”. This statement is an accurate reflection of the variety within this street.

The Crestfield Street frontage is not identified in the Audit as making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and the proposed scheme has been approached to ensure that i) its removal does not result in harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas and ii) that a replacement building achieves a benefit to the townscape and an enhancement of its character and appearance.

As noted above, the characteristic of the street is not as defined as Birkenhead Street and the capacity for change within it is therefore greater, within acceptable limits. The re-orientation of the proposed facility has been achieved in recognition of this fact, and therefore to achieve streetscene which is appropriate for its context.

The proposed Crestfield Street frontage, as described in the previous pages in terms of its effect on the setting of listed buildings, is designed to achieve an appropriate definition of the mid-point in the development block, creating a landmark within the townscape but also overtly describing the building’s function. The new building will therefore be legible as a place of worship and its openness will engage with the townscape in a positive way. At the same time, the design is aware of its context and the need for relationships with the existing streetscene to avoid being abrupt. As a result, the composition to Birkenhead Street ‘grows’ from the scale and pattern of its neighbouring buildings so that the tall central focus is flanked by elements which reinforce the existing parapet lines of the street. The taller elements behind the frontage are recessed so that they are visually subservient to the principal elevations.

In assessing the measure of change and impact, the comparative study within this document shows how the design of new facilities can offer the potential to introduce strong and positive

architectural elements into existing streetscene. The capacity for change within this street and the vibrant context of Kings Cross is considerable, and the proposed accentuation of the new frontage to Crestfield Street would represent a new and exciting addition to the local townscape in a way which explains the land use transition and illustrates it overtly in architecture. The existing situation is perhaps the opposite of this approach.

In our opinion, therefore, the proposed development has identified the townscape opportunities at an early stage in the design process. The re-orientation of the plan-form recognises the potential for improving and ‘healing’ the townscape in Birkenhead Street, and the opportunity to enhance the townscape in Crestfield. - whilst also providing benefits for the use of the building in the wider community.

The proposed development does involve demolition, but the removal of existing buildings is accompanied by a new development which brings positive impact to both streetscenes where it appears. In our assessment of the urban context and quality, removal of the existing Birkenhead Street frontage is not an unacceptable proposal in view of its adapted and compromised appearance. Replacement of it in a form which reinforces the character of the street, but in a modern idiom, represents an appropriate response to the Conservation Area. It preserves what makes the Conservation Area significant, and enhances it by accentuating its identity.

The replacement of the Crestfield Street frontage does not involve the loss of the building considered to make a positive contribution, but it delivers one which will. The design approach has been approached very carefully to express the building type and achieve a local landmarking role whilst also respecting its context.

In our opinion, the proposed development will result in a positive impact on the character and appearance of the King’s Cross & St Pancras and Bloomsbury Conservation Areas.

Impact Assessment summary table:

Heritage asset	Significance level	Impact on heritage asset/s
Designated assets		
1-5 Crestfield Street - Grade II	GOOD	LOW ADVERSE
1-7 Birkenhead Street - Grade II	GOOD	NIL
54-58 Birkenhead Street - Grade II	GOOD	NIL
59 Birkenhead Street - Grade II	GOOD	NIL
Kings Cross & St Pancras Conservation Area	GOOD	MINOR POSITIVE
Bloomsbury Conservation Area	GOOD	MINOR POSITIVE
Non-designated assets		
58a Birkenhead Street (Methodist Church)	LOW	MAJOR

13 Summary

In summary, the existing Kings Cross Methodist Centre has its roots in a Georgian chapel of typical size and design of the period, built by a successful local builder who was also a minister of the chapel.

On the edge of fashionable Bloomsbury and the fast-changing Kings Cross area, the first chapel of 1825 was extended in 1865 to increase capacity and to provide an organ to support worship. Further development occurred in the post-war period to create the Mission House on the Crestfield Street frontage (c1950) and the adaptation of the facilities which created apartments via extensive conversion and alteration of the chapel itself in the 1970s.

As a result of these adaptations, the internal character of the chapel is unrecognisable. Similarly, whilst parts of the brickwork facade and two flank walls of the original chapel remain, its original classical charm has been heavily adapted to suit the change of use. The extent of this adaptation of the elevation leaves an elevation which possesses none of the elegance of the original proportions, and little of the original detailing, except perhaps for the string courses and cornice. Although it has some visual curiosity, it is not the attractive building it once was. There are no external features of architectural merit.

Historically, there remains some evidence of the original phases of build, but these are partial and incomplete. The outer shells of the 1825 and 1865 work remain but the internals appear to have been removed to facilitate the alterations. There are no internal features of merit.

The original chapel is therefore much altered from its original condition and has a **low level of** significance.

The Crestfield Street Mission House is a mediocre building, built to a reasonable standard of design and quality and making a **low** level contribution to the streetscene.

As part of the current proposals, the existing buildings on the site would be demolished. The application proposes to replace the existing buildings with a new chapel and meeting facilities, and apartments. The new chapel would be accessed via Crestfield Street, and the residential via Birkenhead Street.

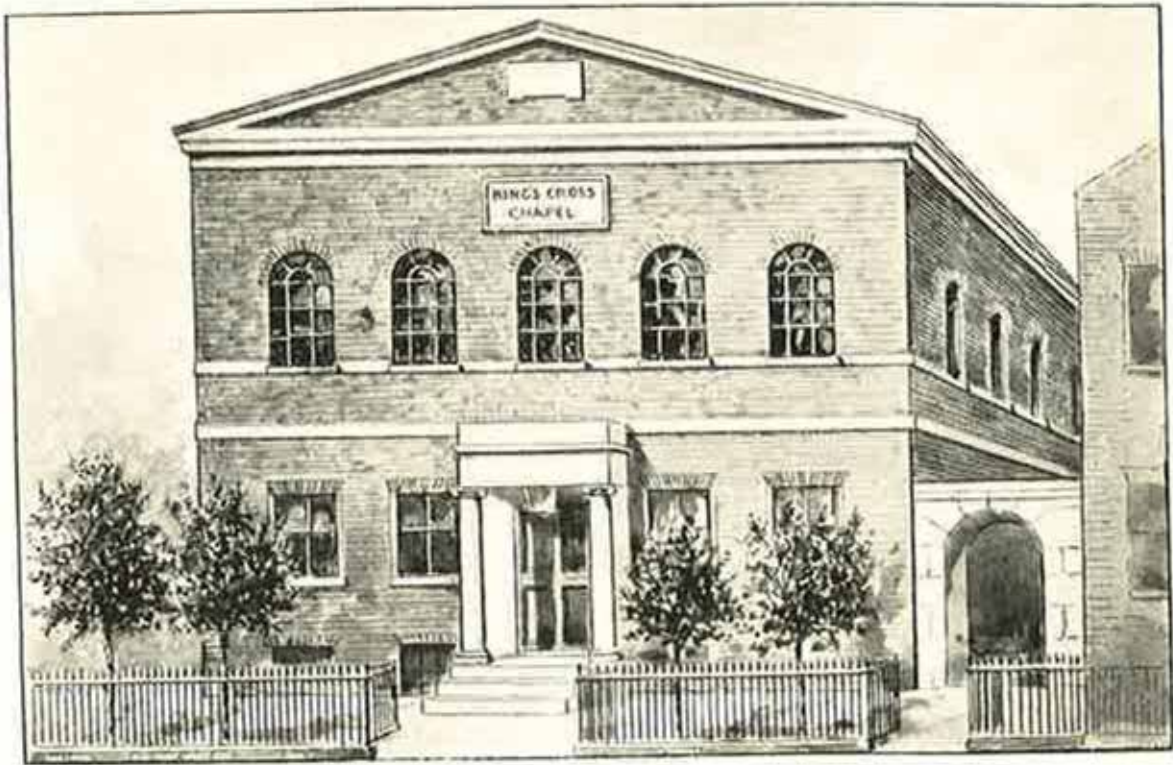
The research undertaken within this document has fed into the design process. The Heritage Statement makes an assessment of the impact of the proposals on both designated and non-designated assets.

Our conclusion is that, whilst the scheme results in the loss of a non-designated heritage asset (the Methodist Church), the building has been so adapted internally and externally as to retain low levels of merit. In particular, its external appearance has been compromised by the heavy conversion to residential use. We consider that the residual levels of significance in the building are low, and appropriate record could be made of the remaining structure prior to demolition.

In terms of the replacement development, the Heritage Statement has explained how the scheme has evolved in response to townscape character, thereby switching the orientation of the building to locate residential development in Birkenhead Street and a more legible principal entrance in Crestfield Street. The design of the building has taken fully into account the nearby and adjacent listed buildings and the effect on the Kings Cross & St Pancras and Bloomsbury Conservation Areas.

The proposal preserves the setting of the listed buildings and enhances the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas. As such, the development complies with Sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

In addition, the benefits to townscape achieved by the proposed development alone also outweigh the loss of the non-designated heritage asset in the context of Paragraph 135 of the NPPF - and the planning balance should recognise the public benefits arising from the delivery of the new church facilities and accommodation on the site.



The original chapel frontage c1825



Existing, adapted frontage to Birkenhead Street

