

## 1 Triton Square & St Anne's London NW1: effect on St Mary Magdalene Church

- 1 The purpose of this note is to respond to comments made by Historic England in its consultation response to an application to Camden Council seeking full planning permission for the extension and refurbishment of the 1 Triton Square office building and the redevelopment of St Anne's Church for residential use along with works to the public realm. Historic England wrote to the London Borough of Camden on 20 February 2017 (HE ref P00553838).
- 2 KMHeritage prepared a Heritage Statement that supported the planning application<sup>1</sup>. This document was drafted specifically in relation to the effect of the St Anne's residential development on the heritage significance of the Grade II\* Church of St Mary Magdalene.
- 3 The report observed that 'while St Anne's Church is an unremarkable example of post-war church building, of no architectural or historical significance, St Mary Magdalene is a leading example of 19<sup>th</sup> century church design in the non-classical revivalist tradition, associated with notable designers and Anglo-Catholicism'.
- 4 The report said of St Mary Magdalene:

*St Mary Magdalene, as a listed building, has, by definition, special architectural and historic interest. This lies in its Pugin-influenced design, externally and internally, and its extensive historical associations, detailed above. The building clearly possesses significant internal decoration and stained glass. The church is a very good example of 19<sup>th</sup> century Gothic revival church design, whose significance is further enhanced by its association with notable individuals connected with architecture and the High Church Anglo-Catholic movement.*

*The stained glass at St Mary Magdalene is not of uniform, special interest. At the eastern end of the church facing Laxton Place, the window to the chancel is clearly of most importance, whereas that to the southern aisle is much later (1931) and that to the northern aisle is described as being manufactured by Clayton and Bell but no artist is associated with its design. Other stained glass in the church has no visual relationship with Laxton Place or St Anne's Church; that in the southern aisle is set very close against the boundary to the former school site.*

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Triton Square & St Anne's London NW1 - St Anne's residential development: heritage statement, KMHeritage, October 2016

- 5 The report then assessed the effect of the proposed development on the stained glass of St Mary Magdalene. Our assessment was as follows:

*The stained glass in St Mary Magdalene has, as has been shown earlier, undoubted significance. However that significance varies, and the most important piece of stained glass is that designed under the influence of AWN Pugin for the eastern wall of the chancel. That is not to say that other stained glass in the church is not important, but there is a hierarchy in that importance.*

*The only meaningful potential effect on the stained glass of St Mary Magdalene from the proposed development of the St Anne's site would be on the stained glass window at the eastern end of the southern aisle. This window dates from 1931 and is of much less heritage significance than the earlier main eastern window of the chancel that was designed by Pugin. Though the St Anne's development proposes greater height, it very obviously does not completely reduce the light through the 1931 glass. The more significant window - to the chancel – is located opposite the terrace of houses to the north of the St Anne's site and thus will continue to enjoy a substantial amount of natural daylight from the east. The window to the north aisle will not be materially affected by the proposed development, as it is set back from Laxton Place.*

*While the proposed scheme may marginally reduce the amount of light reaching the stained glass window to the southern aisle of the church facing Laxton Place, it will not do so by such an amount that the stained glass will no longer be appreciable or such that its significance is substantially harmed or lost. The glass will continue to be capable of appreciation and enjoyment, and will continue to play its part in the overall significance of the church.*

*The stained glass windows at St Mary Magdalene do not fundamentally require a situation where no building can be present in their vicinity for them to be appreciated – this is never a requirement for stained glass to be appreciated. There are many instances, such as in City churches, where stained glass is present in walls with other large buildings immediately adjacent, but where the significance of the glass remains appreciable. Sufficient light from the east will continue to pass through the window to the southern aisle to allow it to be appreciated and its significance to be understood and enjoyed. The proposed scheme therefore does not cause any significant harm to the heritage significance of the stained glass windows.*

- 6 Our report concluded that:

*The relationship between the St Anne's site and St Mary Magdalene is indirect and oblique; the St Anne's site overlaps only the southern aisle of St Mary Magdalene in*

*a north-south direction. Views of the two sites together, in each other's backdrop, are difficult to obtain.*

*While greater height is proposed by the new development for the St Anne's site, this will not necessarily cause any significant effect on the setting of St Mary Magdalene or its stained glass. The offset of height in the proposed scheme to a position furthest from the church allows the remaining lower part of the development to relate well across Laxton Place.*

*For the reasons given above, we conclude that the proposed scheme for St Anne's will, at the very least, preserve the setting of St Mary Magdalene. In our view, the scheme goes beyond this - it will enhance the setting of the listed church with a high quality development that replaces a mundane and generic post-war church building with a new housing that achieves an exemplary standard of architectural design.*

- 7 We further concluded that the proposed scheme for St Anne's 'does not lead to "substantial" harm or any meaningful level of "less than substantial" harm to St Mary Magdalene as a listed building', and that it therefore complied with the law, and national and local policies and guidance for heritage assets.
- 8 In its consultation response letter, Historic England suggests that 'it is extremely likely that significant overshadowing to the church would occur'.
- 9 GIA has undertaken additional work to assess the daylight and sunlight impact to St Mary Magdalene Church. This work focussed on the issue of the sunlight and daylight reaching the main eastern window of the chancel.
- 10 When assessed against the primary daylight methodology, the Vertical Sky Component (VSC), this window demonstrates total BRE compliance. This is also true of the secondary daylighting assessment, the No Sky Line (NSL): the church is fully compliant with the BRE guidelines. GIA say:

*Both the VSC and NSL analysis demonstrates that the daylight reaching the main eastern stained-glass window serving St Mary Magdalene Church will not be unduly compromised by the proposed developments. In planning terms, specifically in relation to the BRE Guidelines which inform the planning process for daylight, this window is fully compliant with both of the key daylight assessment criteria.*

- 11 In addition, GIA have prepared a Sun Path Diagram. It demonstrates that:

*There is a narrow window in time between the hours of 8am and 10am on 21st March [Spring Solstice] in which the proposed St Anne's development will reduce the level of sunlight reaching the eastern stained-glass window. During all other hours of the day on 21st March, the sunlight reaching the eastern stained-glass*

*window will not be affected by the proposed St Anne's development. On the Winter and Summer Solstice, the proposed St Anne's development will have no perceivable effect on the levels of sunlight reaching the eastern stained-glass window of the Church.*

- 12 This work confirms KMHeritage assumption in its Heritage Statement that there will not be a meaningful or significant effect on the main chancel window by Pugin from the proposed St Anne's development. The GIA work confirms our contention that this window 'will continue to enjoy a substantial amount of natural daylight from the east.' It makes clear that the assumption by Historic England that 'significant overshadowing to the church would occur' is not correct.
- 13 The proper balance of assessment, therefore, should be as follows. We have pointed out that it is not essential for the stained glass in an urban church to have no development in its immediate context in order for its significance to be appreciated. As we point out, there are many instances, such as in City churches, where stained glass is present in walls with other large buildings immediately adjacent, but where the significance of the glass remains appreciable. This is normal and natural.
- 14 In any event, and as the GIA work shows, the diminution in the amount of light reaching the Pugin window is small – the effect of the development on the stained glass is minor. To require the proposed development to have no effect whatsoever on the window would be unreasonable and would compromise delivery of the public benefits of the proposed scheme. As it stands, the balance of what is proposed against the effect on the significance of the window is sensible and reasonable, given the low level of the effect caused.
- 15 Even if the sun path diagram is looked at as a representation of 'sky blocked out by the proposed development', it is clear that the St Anne's development represents a relatively small inclusion into that sky space. There will be an effect, but, again, that effect will be relatively small.
- 16 It is therefore reasonable to conclude, as we did in our Heritage Statement supporting the proposed development, that the proposed scheme for St Anne's will, on balance, preserve the setting of St Mary Magdalene and its eastern Pugin window (thus satisfying S.66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990), and that the proposed development will not lead to 'substantial' harm or any meaningful level of 'less than substantial' harm to St Mary Magdalene.

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