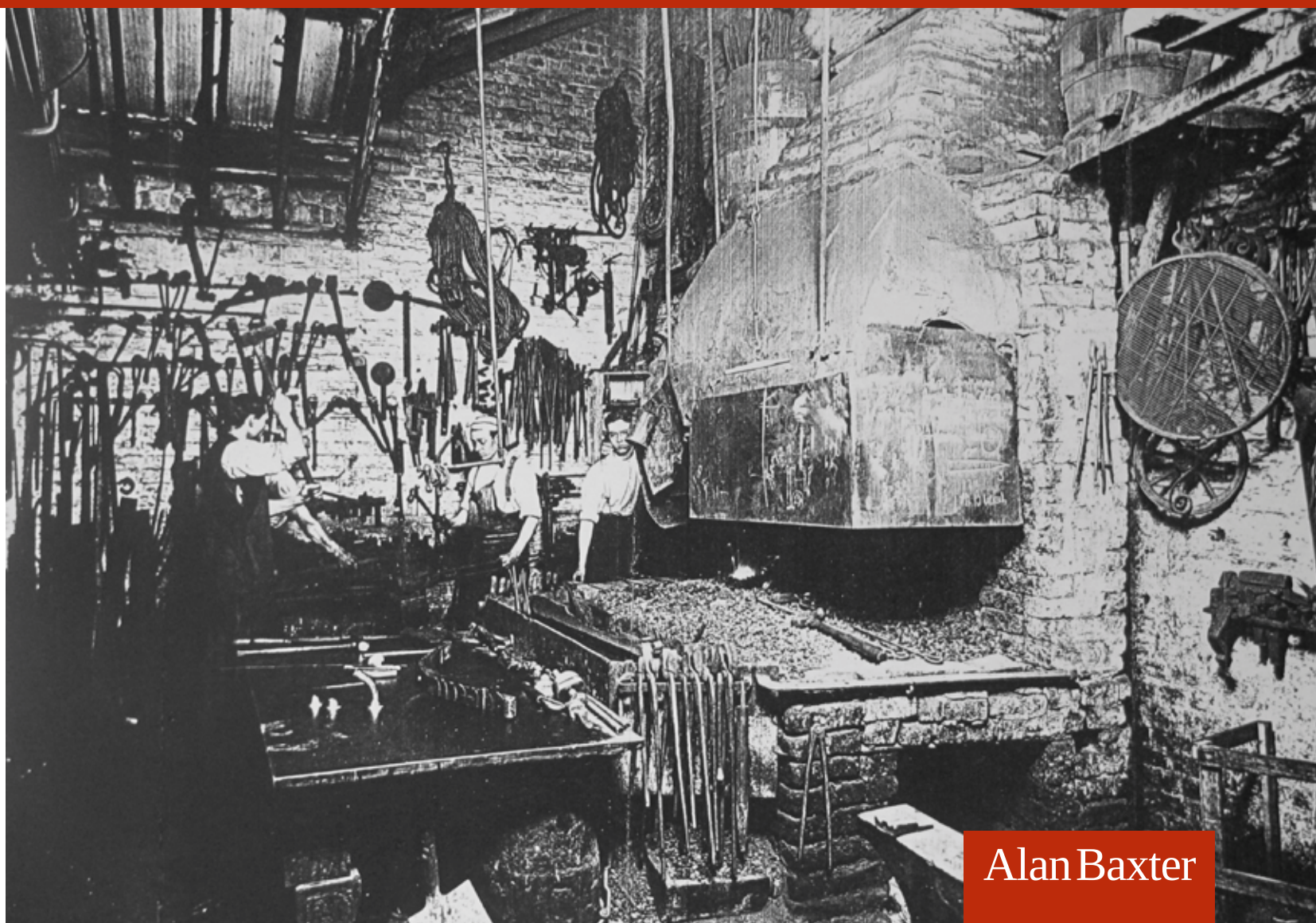


St Giles Circus  
Heritage Statement  
26 Denmark Street and  
22-23 Denmark Place  
Prepared for Consolidated  
Developments Ltd  
December 2015



Alan Baxter



# St Giles Circus

# Heritage Statement

# 26 Denmark Street and

# 22-23 Denmark Place

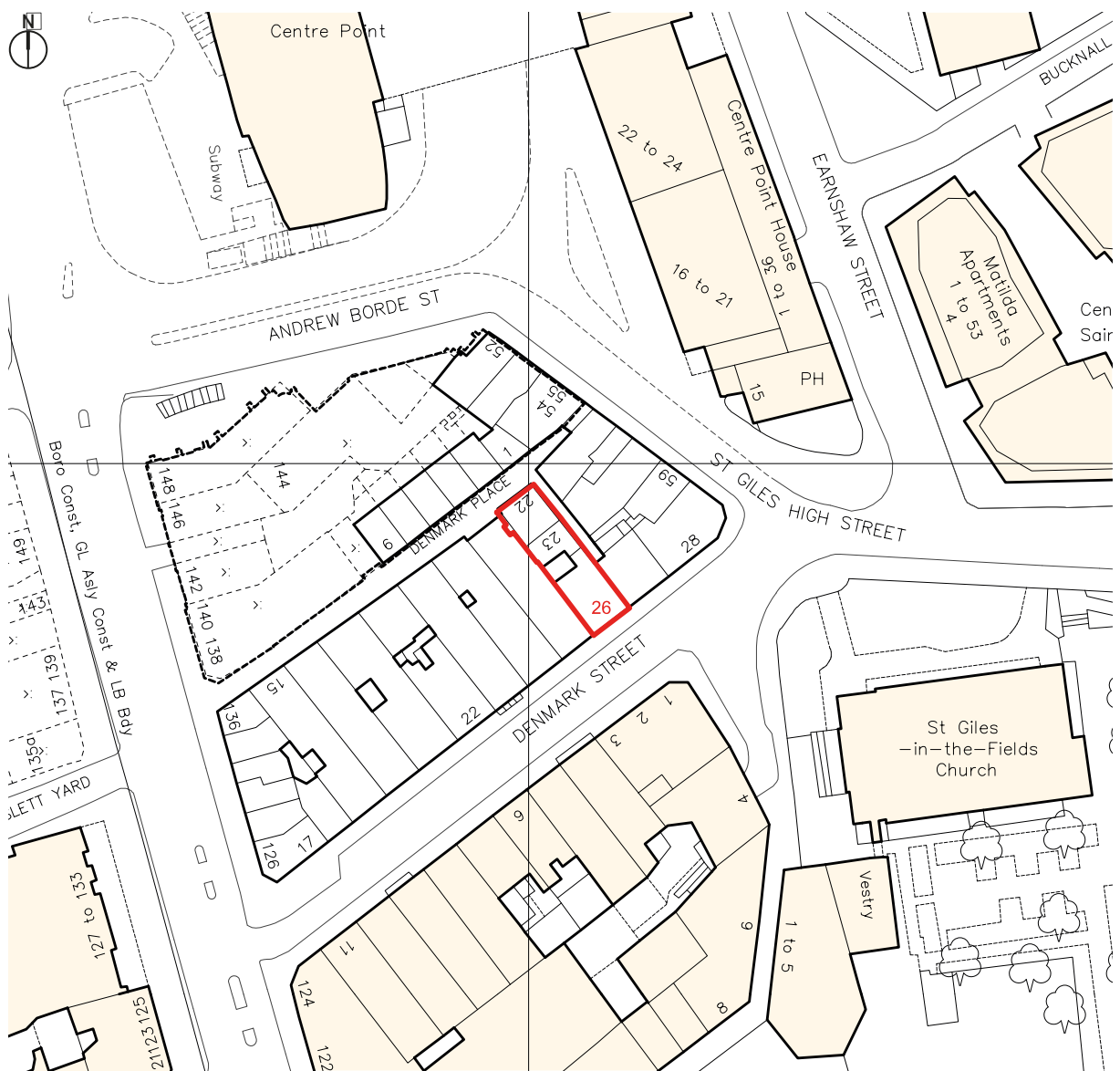
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Site plan

# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Site

The application site comprises three adjoining buildings: No. 26 Denmark Street, No. 22 Denmark Place and No. 23 Denmark Place (also referred to in this report simply as No. 26, No. 22 and No. 23). The entire site is listed at Grade II (see section 1.4 and Appendix 2) and is within the Denmark Street Conservation Area, London Borough of Camden (see map, Appendix 1). No. 26 is on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register due to its poor condition (see Appendix 3).

## 1.2 Project

The main aim of the application scheme is to restore Nos. 26 and 22 inside and out, and to improve their setting by rebuilding No. 23 as a small link structure. The proposals are integrated with the wider St Giles Circus regeneration project, which will include the construction of an auditorium with a basement that undersails No. 22. The application scheme will facilitate the construction of this basement through the support and lifting of No. 22 to a nearby location while the works are ongoing, before it is reinstated and restored.

## 1.3 Report

Alan Baxter Limited was appointed by Consolidated Developments Limited in 2014 to provide strategic conservation and structural engineering advice in relation to the listed buildings that will be repaired and restored as part of the St Giles Circus project. This report summarises our understanding of the history and significance of the site (Chapters 2 and 3) and assesses the heritage impact of the proposals (Chapters 4 and 5).

This report is based on site visits undertaken in 2014-2015 and on a critical review of the sources listed in Chapter 6. Archaeology is covered separately in a report by MOLA. For a heritage appraisal of the wider project, the reader is referred to the Heritage Statement by Turley Associates submitted with the St Giles Circus applications in 2012.

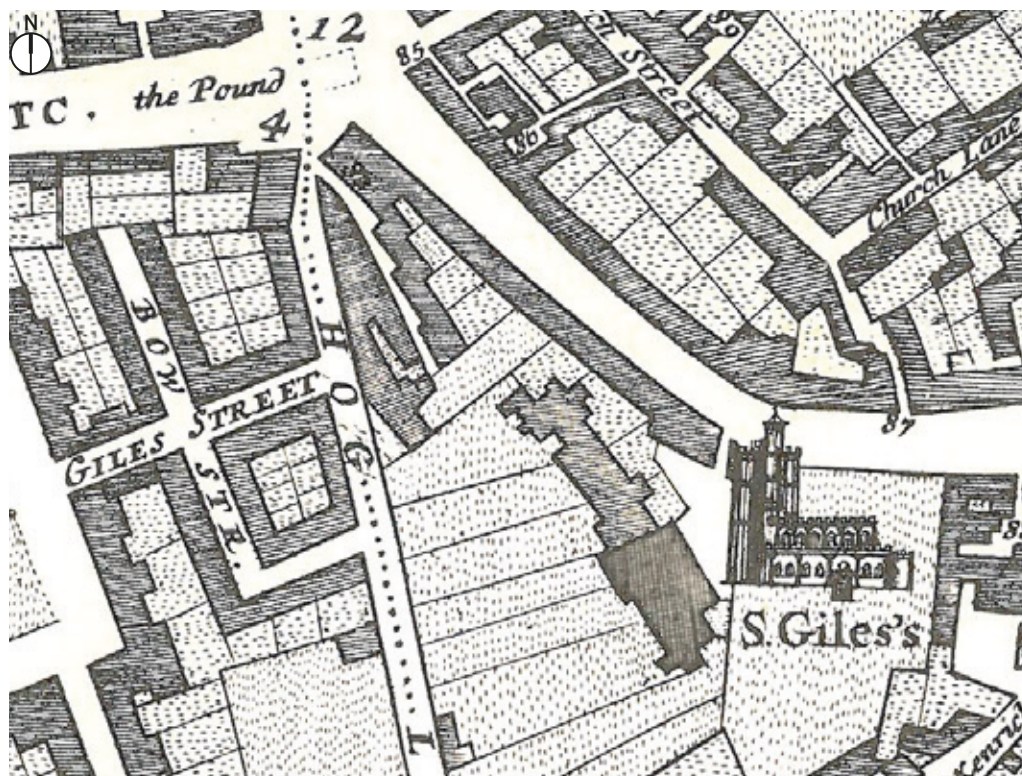
## 1.4 Consultation

The St Giles Circus project has been subject to extensive stakeholder consultation. The present application scheme was discussed on site with Camden Council (Michelle O'Doherty) and Historic England (Mike Dunn) on 19 June 2015 and again at the Camden Planning Department on 7 August 2015 with the same attendees. At the latter meeting, Camden Council and Historic England agreed that all three buildings should be considered as part of the listing of No. 26.

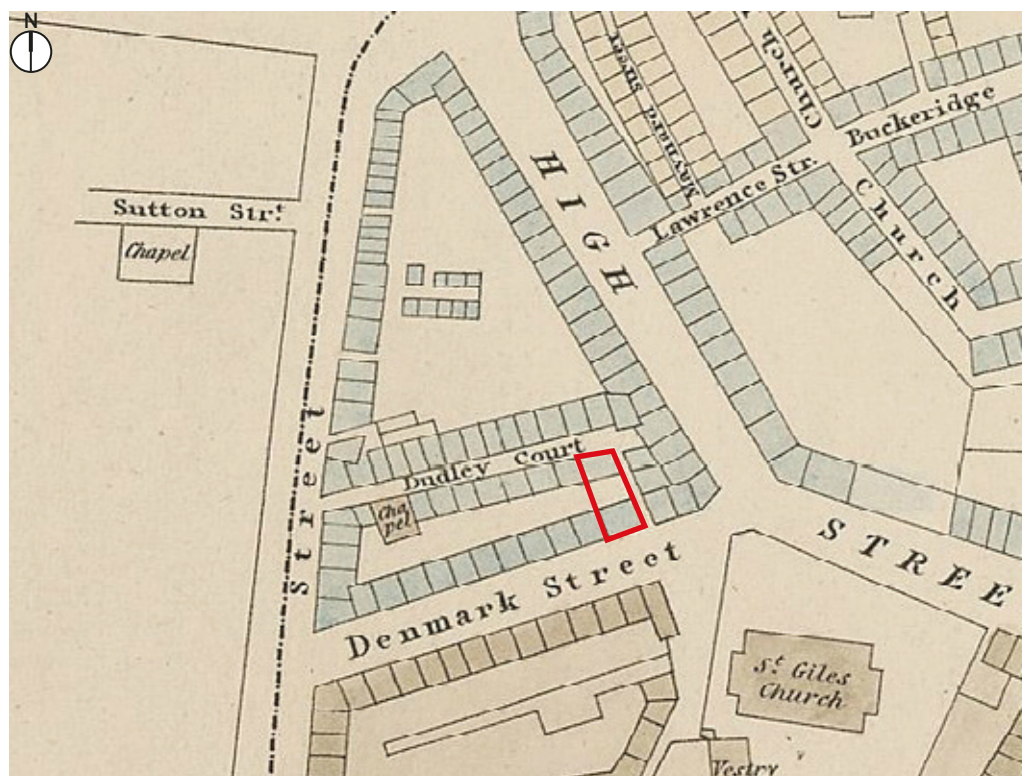


## 2.0 Historical context

### 2.1 Map evolution



1682, Morgan's map, before the creation of Denmark Street



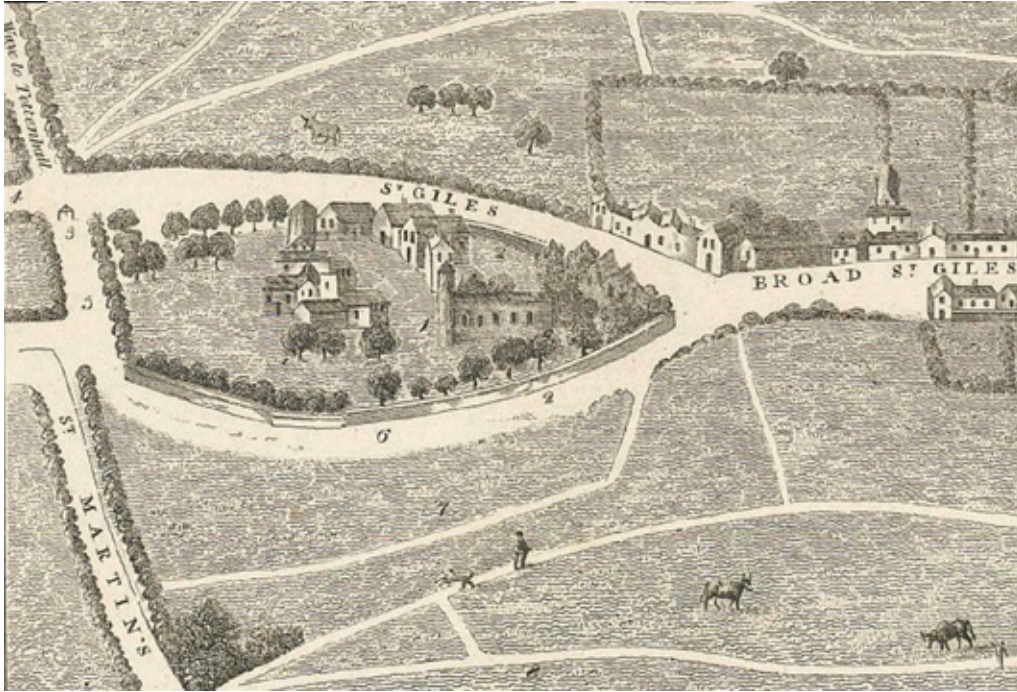
1815, parish map, showing Denmark Street and Denmark Court (now Denmark Place)





## 2.2 Early History of Denmark Street

Denmark Street did not exist until the 1680s, but parts of the site were developed much earlier as part of the Hospital of St Giles, the remains of which were cleared to make way for the street. The Hospital of St Giles was built as a leper colony in the early twelfth century on marshy land and occupied a sprawling complex of buildings and gardens. The precise layout of these buildings is unclear, but the 'Master's House' is known to have stood to the west of St Giles in the Fields church in the vicinity of Denmark Street. The present church (1733; Grade I) occupies the site of the medieval hospital chapel.



Artist's impression of the Hospital of St Giles around 1570, based on the Agas Map (from Parton's History of St Giles, 1822)



## 2.3 The seventeenth-century houses of Denmark Street

Denmark Street is remarkable for its rare seventeenth-century houses, dating from the creation of the street in the 1680s. They are Nos. 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 20, 26 and 27 (all Grade II). The fact that eight seventeenth-century houses survive in close proximity to each other appears to be unparalleled in the context of Central London (there are two other clusters with four houses each: Newport Court, Soho and Wardrobe Place, City of London).

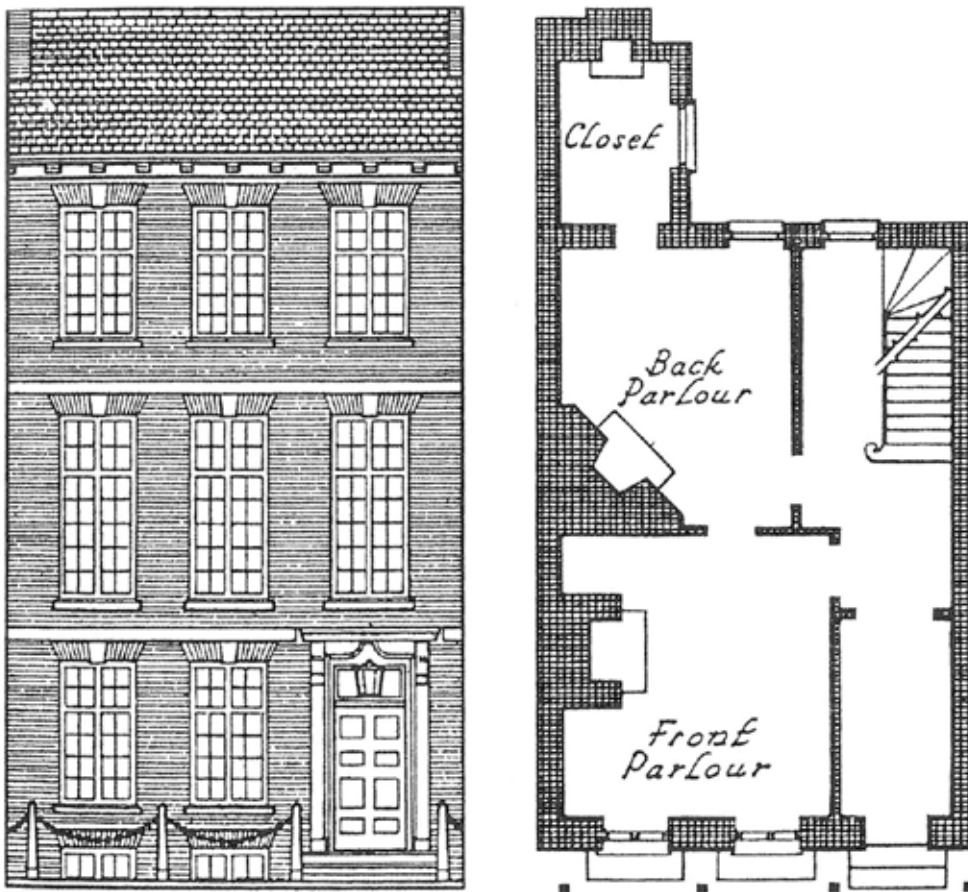
Denmark Street was begun c. 1686, at which date the developers Samuel Fortrey and Jacques Wiseman petitioned to build a sewer that would lead from the new houses into Hog Lane (now Charing Cross Road). They are believed to have been completed c. 1689, in which year Samuel Fortrey died. In 1720 Denmark Street was described as 'a fair, broad street, with good houses, well inhabited by gentry' (Stype, 1720).



South side of Denmark Street showing Nos. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 (painted white). The windows and parapets are not original

The construction of terrace houses in brick instead of timber was encouraged by the London Building Act of 1667. The speculatively built London houses of this period shared certain common characteristics, including projecting string courses between storeys. The houses would also have had casement windows set flush with the façade. The roofs would have been covered in clay tiles and would have terminated in a timber eaves cornice that projected from the façade. Inside, nearly all rooms would have been panelled.

The houses on Denmark Street have evolved in slightly different ways but with some common themes. They have each had their timber eaves cornice removed, dormers inserted and their front wall extended up as a parapet; these alterations are typical of those made in the London area after the 1707 Fire Prevention Act. All of the flush casement windows have been replaced, mostly with sash windows that are recessed back from the brickwork, as became typical after the 1709 London Building Act. Inside, much of the panelling in the houses has been removed, especially from Nos. 20 and 26. The best-preserved interiors are within Nos.6 and 7.



Typical house c. 1670-1700, with casement windows and eaves cornice, as illustrated in Summerson, 2003

## 2.4 Denmark Place

The history of Denmark Place is not well recorded. It was created along with Denmark Street in the 1680s but it is not clear when it became built up. It may have begun simply as an access route. There were buildings on both sides by 1815, as shown on an engraved parish map (see 2.1). Whether those on the south side ever functioned as mews (i.e. stable) buildings for houses in Denmark Street is unclear. On the north side, Nos. 1-3 were originally part of a longer terrace of early nineteenth-century appearance, but the surviving portion has been heavily altered both inside and out.



Denmark Place in 2014, with No. 22 on the left and Nos. 1-3 on the far right



## 2.5 An industrial enclave

During the nineteenth century much of Central London became industrialised and the Denmark Street area developed into a centre of manufacturing, with a particular emphasis on metalwork. This is clearly illustrated by the Goad fire insurance map of 1888, which records uses such as 'silver caster' (19 Denmark Place) and 'sword cutler' (5 Denmark Street).

These industrial activities took place not only in the original houses, which were adapted as necessary, but also in small workshops built at the rear of the plots. Surviving examples include Nos. 16 and 22 Denmark Place and the buildings at the rear of Nos. 5-7 Denmark Street.



Former silversmith's workshop, rear of No. 6 Denmark Street





## 2.6 The musical history of Denmark Street

In the early twentieth century Denmark Street was re-born as a centre of music publishing. The budding songwriter Lawrence Wright (1888-1964) established a sheet music business in the basement of No. 8 in 1911 (he later founded Melody Maker magazine in 1926, at No. 19). By the late 1930s there were several similar businesses in the vicinity, as illustrated by the 1938 Goad map. Denmark Street acquired the nickname 'Tin Pan Alley' after the equivalent street in New York City.

The commercial potential of Denmark Street was noted by the developer Walter Fryer, who bought up and rebuilt several of the old houses as modern commercial premises. He retained the original plot widths but introduced a new, modern aesthetic characterised by giant stone pilasters framing large plate glass windows (Nos. 4, 8, 19, 21, 23, 24 and 25). Many of the surviving seventeenth-century houses were adapted further for commercial uses, e.g. by opening out the interiors, with consequent loss of historic fabric.

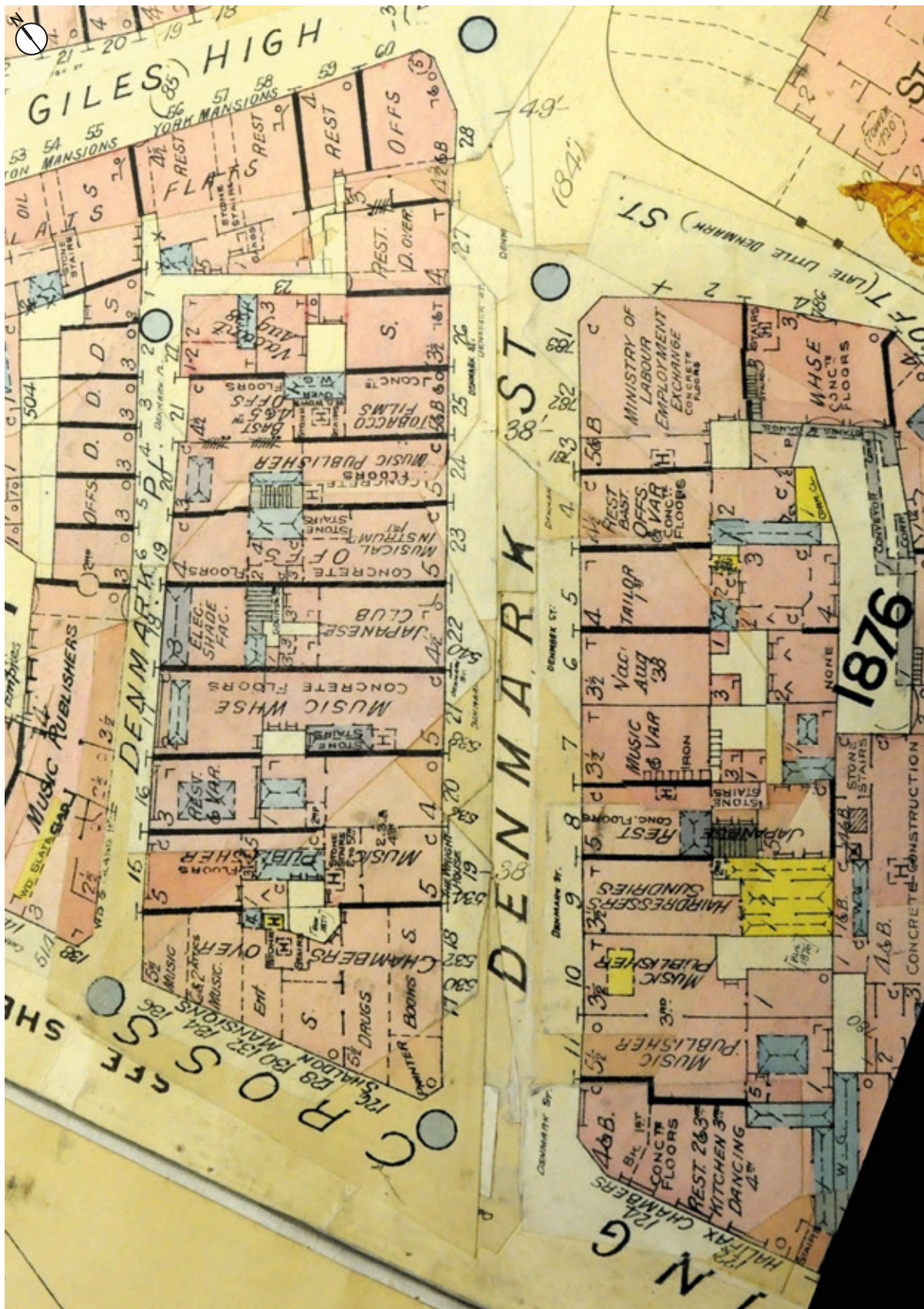
After the Second World War, changes in the music business saw Denmark Street diversify gradually into artist management, recording and rehearsal facilities and instrument repair and sales. It is perhaps this Post-war period which gives Denmark Street its greatest claims to fame. Some of the better known associations are listed here:

- The *New Musical Express* (now NME) magazine was founded at No. 5 in 1952
- Peter Maurice Music at No. 21 received regular visits from its artists who included the singers Petula Clark (b. 1932), Tommy Steele (b. 1936) and Adam Faith (1940-2003) and the songwriter Lionel Bart (1930-1999)
- The Rolling Stones recorded their first album in the basement of No. 4 (Regent Sounds) in 1964
- Also in 1964, Mills Music at No. 20 employed Elton John (b. 1947) as an office boy and in 1965 Mr Mills auditioned the singer Paul Simon (b. 1941), who was turned down.
- During the mid Sixties, David Bowie (b. 1947) frequented La Gioconda café at No. 9, where he is said to have recruited his first band, The Lower Third.
- In 1975 the Sex Pistols lived in the outbuilding at the rear of No. 6 and left graffiti which survives to this day



Denmark Street, 1965, showing Margot and the Marvettes outside two of the leading publishers: Lawrence Wright Music Co. and Mills Music





1938 map produced by the Goad company for fire insurance purposes

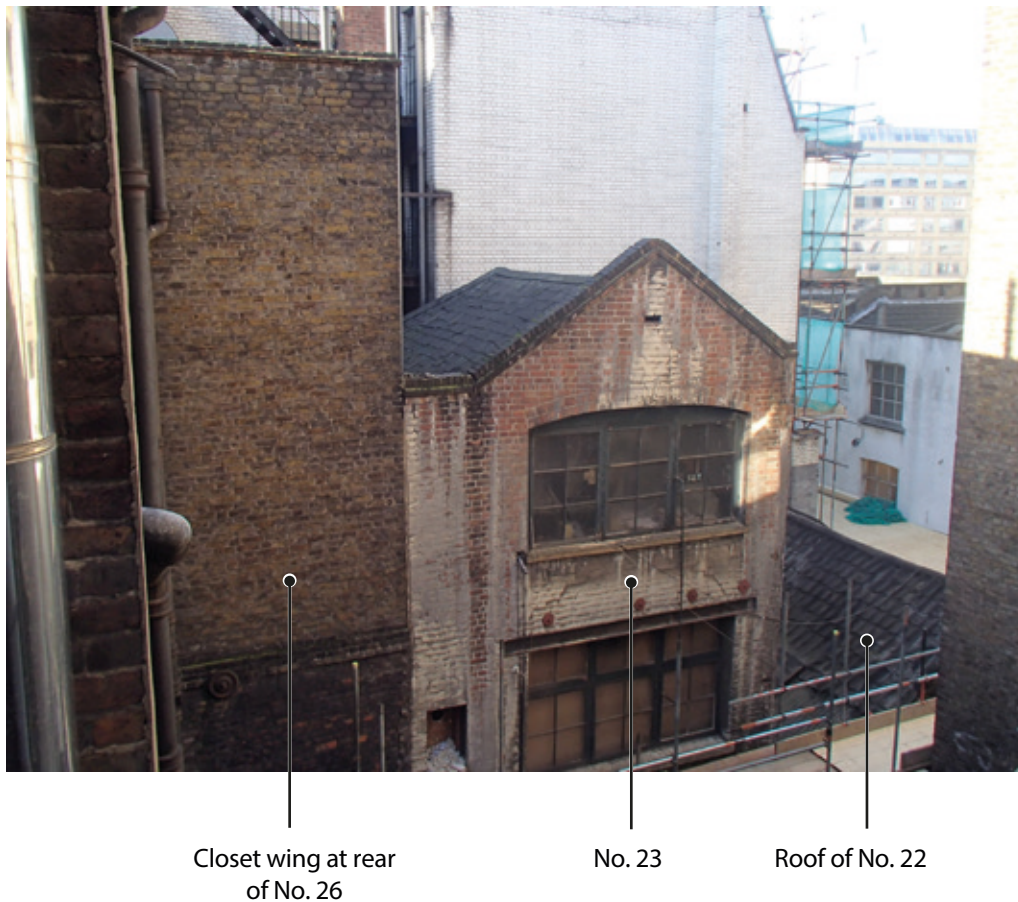
## 2.7 History of the site

This section should be read in conjunction with the annotated plans in Chapter 3.

The application site comprises three buildings which are linked internally at ground floor level:

- No. 26 Denmark Street (c. 1686-89)
- No. 22 Denmark Place (early to mid nineteenth century)
- No. 23 Denmark Place (c. 1908)

The three buildings appear to have operated independently of each other until the second half of the twentieth century, when they became linked internally. Until 2015, this complex of buildings accommodated the Twelve Bar music venue, with flats in the upper floors of No. 26.





## No. 26 Denmark Street

No. 26 Denmark Street appears to be one of the original houses to survive from the construction of the street in the 1680s. The façade differs from the other 1680s houses in its brick type and detailing, e.g. it has crude segmental arches instead of flat heads to the window openings. However, the surviving elements of the staircase are similar to the 1680s staircases in the other buildings on the street. It therefore seems that the façade has been rebuilt, perhaps during the nineteenth century. The flush casement windows have been inserted since the house was photographed in 1951, at which date there were sash windows (Historic England Archive). The rear windows are smaller and almost square in shape, except for that on the lower landing, which has been enlarged.

Other alterations include the removal of the spine walls at basement and ground floor level. The front wall has been replaced by a timber shopfront at ground floor; there was a 'Printers' here in 1888 (see Goad map). The chimney breast in the front room at ground floor appears to have been removed, and brackets have been inserted to support the chimney breasts above.

Despite a long history of alteration, a substantial amount of historic panelling survives at second floor level. It is simply detailed and may date partly from the construction of the house in the 1680s. An especially rare feature preserved in the rear room is the suite of built-in cupboards adjacent to the fireplace.



No. 26 Denmark Street



No. 27 Denmark Street