

Heritage Statement

Christ Apostolic Church Stained Windows

23 Highgate Road, Kentish Town, London



January 2020

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Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Le Lay Architects and is submitted to support the Listed Building Consent application for the repair of two existing stained-glass windows at Christ Apostolic Church, formerly known as St. John the Baptist.

Christ Apostolic Church is a Grade II listed building located in the Kentish Town area and within the London Borough of Camden. The existing church building extended an earlier chapel designed by James Wyatt dating from 1783. The adapted elements following designs by J. H. Hakewill in a gothic revival style were completed in 1845.

The scope of the report is to establish the historical context of the site and of the building and to assess the impact of the proposed works on the significance of the building and its elements.

The study and report were undertaken by Jonathan Goode and Alexandra Niculici of Le Lay Architects in January 2020. Desk-based archival research was carried out by Alexandra Niculici and Karen Averby.

Site description

Location

23 Highgate Road

Kentish Town, London

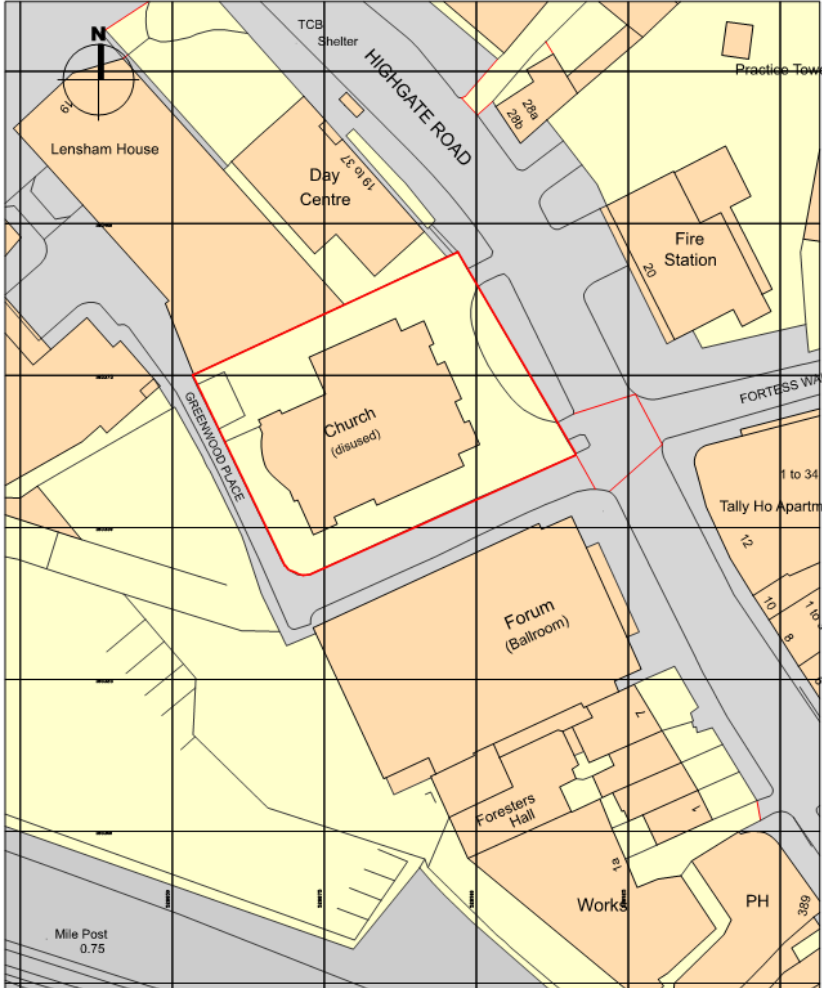


Fig.1 Site location, scale 1:1250. The subject site is marked by a red line
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The site

The site at 23 Highgate Road is occupied by a gothic revival church built in 1845 by JH Hakewill. The site is located just north of Kentish Town Station and in the London Borough of Camden. Access is made via Highgate Road. A small alley marks the boundary of the site to the south and west: Greenwood Place.

Listing description

Grade: II

The building is included in the Historic England Buildings at Risk list as Category C (slow decay)

List Entry Number: 1379013

Date first listed: 10-Jun-1954

Date of most recent amendment: 05-Dec-2008

Statutory Address: CHRIST APOSTOLIC CHURCH (FORMER CHURCH OF ST JOHN), 23, HIGHGATE ROAD

District: Camden (London Borough)

National Grid Reference: TQ 28882 85368

Details

Church. Built on the site of the Kentish Town Chapel by James Wyatt, 1783, of which only the nave walls and the heightened shallow western apse remain. The rest rebuilt and extended 1843-5 by JH Hakewill. Grey brick with carved stone dressings. Slate pitched roofs. EXTERIOR: north and south aisles with galleries (removed 1889), vestry and south porch, east end with twin stone spired towers with louvred Romanesque type belfry openings and lean-to porches decorated with heavy neo-Norman and thirteenth-century ornament. East facade buttressed with window of 3 round-arched lights separated by colonnettes; narrow round-arched window above and roundel in gable which has Lombard type frieze. Behind the porches, gable ends of side aisles with 2-light round-arched windows. INTERIOR: open nave with open timber tie-beam roof. 3 round-headed windows each side. 2 round-headed windows with rose above at apsidal west end. 3 neo-Norman arches separate nave from shallow, flat-ended chancel. Carved oak pulpit, pews with carved ends on choir platform, and nave pews intact. Late C19 alabaster font on stone base with elaborate openwork wooden cover suspended from pulley. Late C18 and early C19 wall monuments on both sides of the nave. Stained glass: mostly of the 1840s, including 'Baptism of Christ and Lazarus' by Wailes, 1845. In former south gallery, stained-glass window by Burne-Jones, 1862, depicting the 'Building of the Temple' in storage at St Benet's, Lupton Street in 1994. Monuments: many minor tablets. John Finch, d.1797, festooned sarcophagus, by Charles Regnant. Sarah Pepys, d.1806, south aisle, mourning woman by an urn. William Minshull, d.1836, with portrait profile by Chantrey. (Survey of London: Vol. XIX, Old St Pancras and Kentish Town: London: 54, 56 & 145-7)

Listing NGR: TQ2888485367

Nearby designations

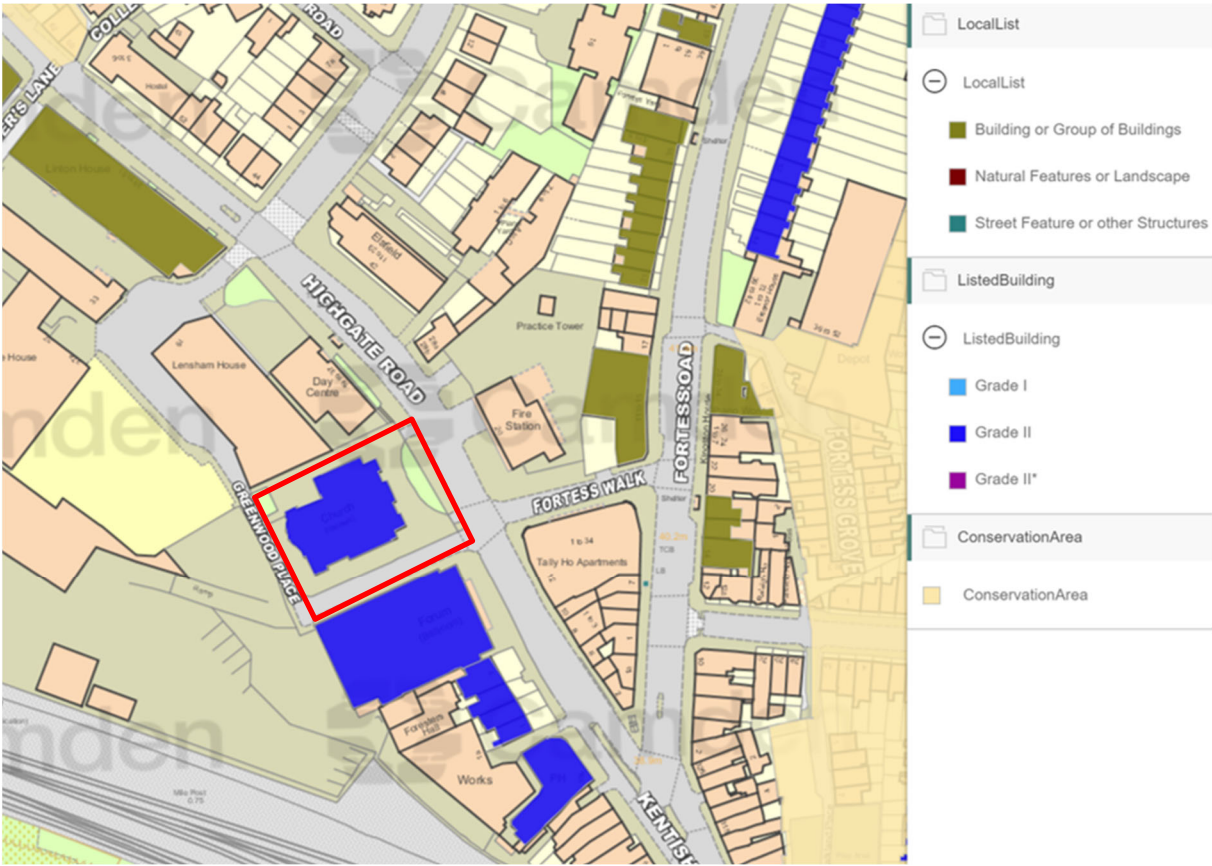


Fig.2 Image showing the nearby designations, Camden Council. The subject site is marked by a red line.

Christ Apostolic Church is located just west of Kentish Town Conservation Area. There are several listed buildings located south of the site. The Grade II listed building The Forum (List UID: 1379018) is located just on the other side of Greenwood Place. Further to the south are the Grade II listed terraces at numbers 1 to 7 Highgate Road (List UID: 1378940).

Historical development of the site and the surrounding area

Kentish Town was a rural settlement developed along the river Fleet and part of the parish of St. Pancras. Located on the road from London to Highgate, it grew and became very popular in the 18th century. The area dramatically changed after the construction of the North London Line in 1845 and the Hampstead Junction Railway in 1860. Many industrial buildings and sheds were built following this and the area became a mix of industrial and residential structures.



Fig.3 A new map of London and its environs from an original survey. Thompson, George,1823



Fig.4 Plan of the hamlet of Kentish Town and its vicinity 1840



Fig. 5 Insurance Plan of London North West District Vol. C: sheet 18-2, Date: 1901

By the beginning of the 20th century the area around the site was fully developed. Kentish Town became a very popular area but also overcrowded. Many of the 19th century industrial buildings decayed. These issues prompted the local authority to demolish some of them and built new flats. Electric trams were introduced around 1908, and the Northern Line was opened in 1907.



Fig.6 Bomb Damage Maps 1939-1945

Even though the site was not damaged during the second World War, the larger area of Kentish Town was. Twenty-one bombs fell here during the Blitz. The area was in need for rebuilding but due low funds this was not possible. Kentish Town became even more overcrowded and started to decline. Only towards the end of the 20th century did the area begin to develop again with new industry moving here and some of the residential buildings being redeveloped.

Church of St. John the Baptist

Formerly called the Church of St. John the Baptist. The chapel was built by James Wyatt in 1783 in a neoclassical style and may have replaced an earlier chapel existing on the site. James Wyatt was one of the most prominent architects in the 18th Century. He held the position of surveyor to Westminster Abbey – where he oversaw restoration work in 1803 and from 1807-13. He was also responsible for restoration work in St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle.

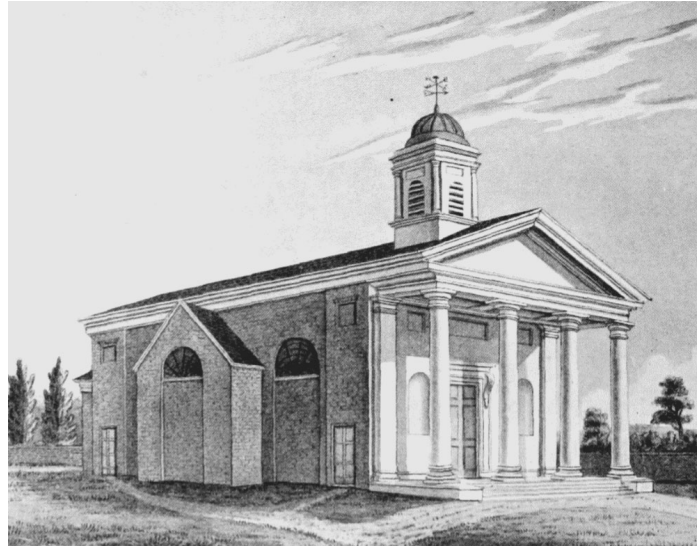


Fig.7 Kentish Town Chapel, c. 1824, British History Online

The chapel was replaced by a larger church designed by J H Hakewill and erected between 1843 – 1845. Most of the chapel nave walls were retained but the rest was rebuilt and extended. The new church was built in a gothic revival style and was much larger than the original chapel. Images of the original plans drawn by Hakewill can be found in the Appendix. For the period of the redevelopment the congregation was housed in a temporary wooden church, likely to have been sited elsewhere in Kentish Town.



Fig. 8 Temporary wooden Church in Kentish Town, 1844, Lambeth Archives.

Hakewill retained the access to the church through the east, but re-arranged the interior and moved the altar from the west to the east, between the two newly created entrance porches. The new church was built in grey bricks with stone dressing and had its roof covered with slate tiles.



Fig. 9 Kentish Town, St. John the Baptist by J.H Hakewill, Architect, 1845

Internally, the plan is that of an open nave with shorter side aisle to the north and south. A timber boarded ceiling with tie beams covered the space and galleries were built in the lateral aisles and to the rear.

The existing stained-glass dates mostly from the redevelopment of the church in the 1840s. Most of them, including 'Baptism of Christ and Lazarus' are by William Wailes. The stained-glass window located in the south gallery is by Burne-Jones and dates 1862.

The building was not damaged by bombs during the Second World War and still retains many original features from the 1845 alterations and enlargement.

In 1993 the church has become redundant. After being vacant for a while, the church is now in use by the Christ Apostolic Church.



Fig. 10 Kentish Town, St. John the Baptist interior by J.H Hakewill, Architect, 1845

William Wailes

William Wailes was one of the largest manufacturers of stained glass in England through the 19th Century. Wailes started his stained-glass making business from the back of his grocery shop in Newcastle, in the early 1830s and by 1840 he had moved his workshop in a dedicated space.

His studio was very prolific, and examples of his work can be found all over the UK and even abroad, in some of the most important religious buildings – Ely and Gloucester Cathedrals are just two such examples. His work is generally characterized as being very bright and colourful.

Ronald Torbet groups Wailes' work in his book 'The Wonderful Windows of William Wailes 1808-81' into four different categories:

1. The 1840s, the early years of his business, which were dominated by the partnership with Welby Pugin. The windows manufactured during this period were very elaborate and used rich and intense colours, mostly reds, as these were preferred by Pugin. Wailes however developed a preference for the use of cobalt blues and after the partnership with Pugin dissolved in 1845, more sober and less colourful design of stained glass started to be produced in Wailes workshop. The east window at Gloucester Cathedral is an example of this period.
2. The 1850s saw the introduction of new colours and techniques. In 1853 Wailes used flint glass for the first-time rather than buff glass in St. Mary's Church in Bushbury, Wolverhampton. Flint glass was produced in sheet and was thinner, allowing more light to get inside the space. Flint glass was later used for the Great West window at Gloucester Cathedral and St. Edmundsbury Cathedral. The colours used were still very vibrant but new shades of blue and greens were introduced.
3. The 1860s represents the peak period for Wailes business. The work that came out of Wailes workshop was very varied in style, but they all use his characteristic cobalt blue.
4. The 1870s-1880s is characterized by the use of less vibrant colour and a change in the style, which has become now more pictorial. The glass used was not stained anymore but painted or coloured.

William Wailes died in 1881 but the business continued to manufacture glass under the management of his son-in-law, Thomas Strang and later of his son, William Wailes Strang from 1899 to 1914, who changed the company name to the Wailes and Strang studio. The early 1880s also marked a decline in the industry of stained glass and his workshop never again reached the peak it knew during the time of William Wailes.

The Stained-Glass Windows at Christ Apostolic Church

This report accompanies a Listed Building Control application for the removal, repair and reinstatement of two of the stained windows by William Wailes: The south nave wall west and south nave wall central windows (see plan below for location).

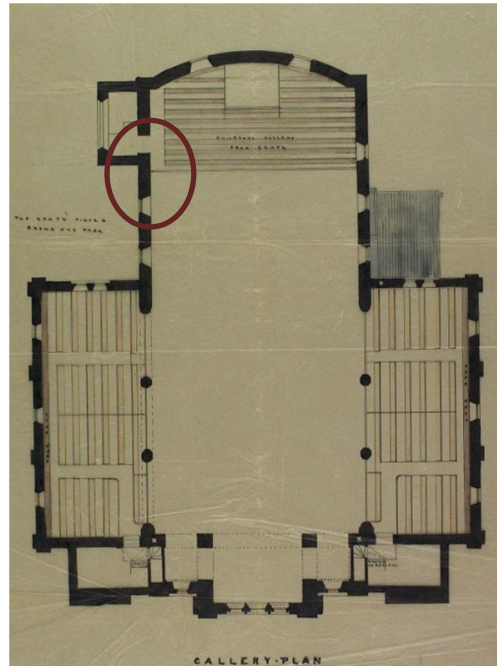


Fig.11

The two windows use the typical rich and vibrant colours for which William Wailes was known. While the west window is more decorative in design, the central one depicts biblical scenes. The windows are in very poor conditions and not structurally sound. Sections of leaded glass panel are missing from both.

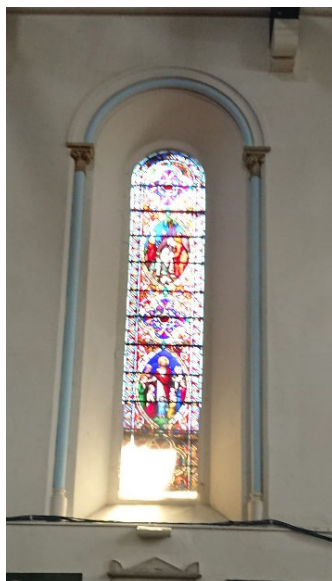


Fig. 12

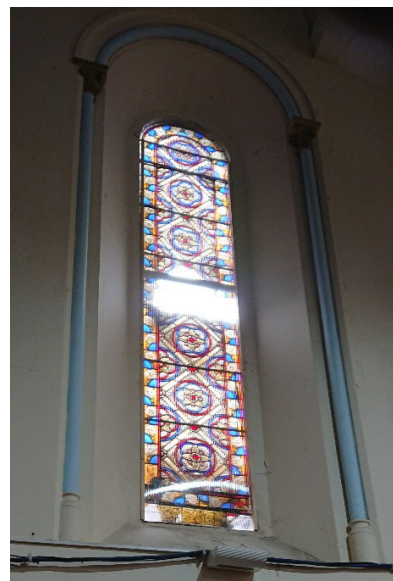


Fig. 13

Assessment of Significance

Christ Apostolic Church Kentish Town (formerly the Church of St. John the Baptist) has not had significant alteration since 1845 and therefore still retains many original and therefore historically significant features, such as the existing west and central stained-glass windows on the south nave wall by William Wailes.

The windows retain most of their original fabric and design and despite being in poor condition have had few repairs. They reflect tastes at first half of the 19th century architectural for the gothic revival movement. This period saw the erection of many churches, all having stained glass installed to them. The colours of stained glass were very rich and intense, and they often depicted biblical themes. Initially, there was also a resurrection of medieval stained-glass manufacturing techniques to use pot-metal glass. Pot-metal glass is created by mixing metal oxides into molten glass in a pot and creates very vibrant colours.

William Wailes was one of the leading stained-glass manufacturers of the 19th century. The stained-glass windows manufactured in his workshop during the 1840s helped develop the 'trend' and used rich and intense colours, very often also depicting a biblical story. The windows at Christ Apostolic Church are a typical example of his work during the 1840s.

It is therefore considered that the stained-glass windows hold medium significance.

Proposal and impact on historic fabric

The proposal is for a like-for-like repair of the two windows. This will allow for both their structural integrity and the design intent to be regained. Due to their poor condition, it is proposed that they are removed from the site and repaired in a dedicated workshop by a team of stained-glass specialist. The windows will then be reinstated in their original position. For a detailed description of the proposed work refer to 'Condition Report on Christ Apostolic Church (Formerly St John the Baptist) Kentish Town South Aisle Windows' by Ark Stained Glass & Leaded Lights Limited, also submitted as part of this application.

The impact of the proposed works on the significance of the window and of the church is beneficial, as it helps retain and conserve significant historic fabric that otherwise could be soon lost.

Conclusion

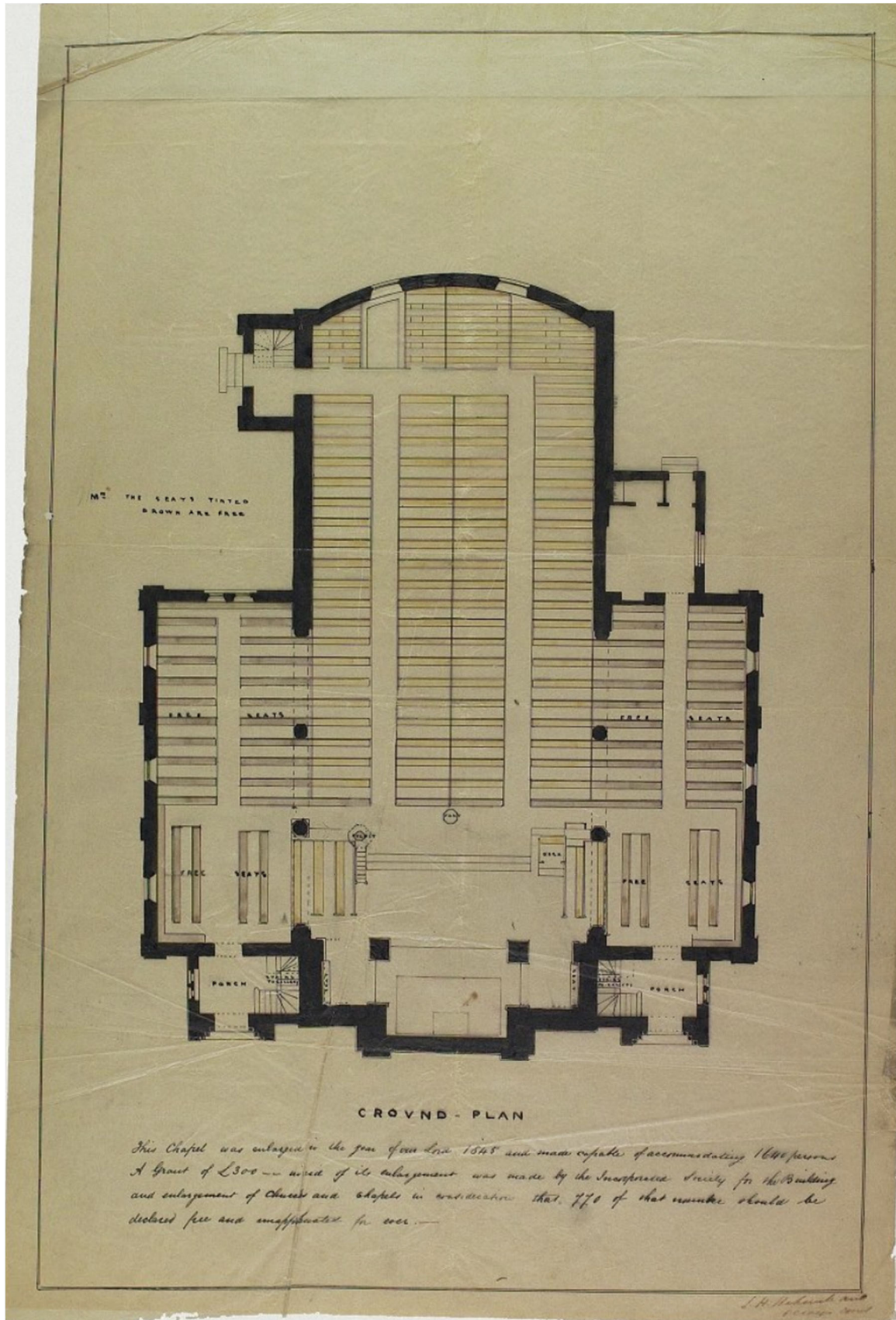
Christ Apostolic Church, formerly known as St. John the Baptist is a Grade II listed building located in Kentish Town, in the Borough of Camden, north London. The existing church building dates from 1845 and follows designs by J. H. Hakewill. The rear part of the nave retains the former walls of a smaller chapel by James Wyatt, dating from 1783.

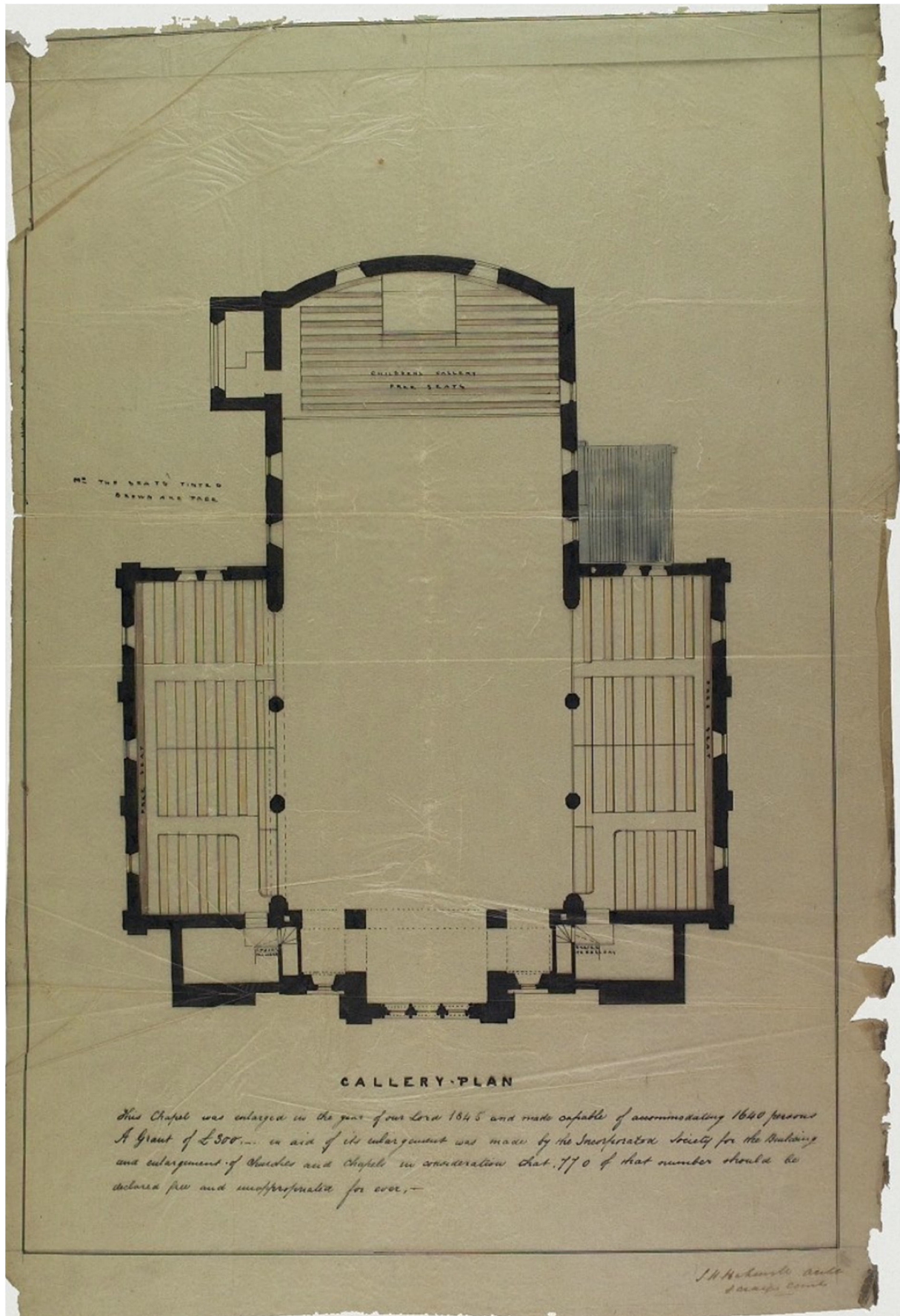
The existing west and central stained-glass windows on the south nave wall are manufactured by William Wailes and date from the enlargement of the church in 1845. The windows present a series of structural and fabric issues and need urgent repair to retain their integrity and to conserve their original fabric.

The proposal is for the windows to be repaired in a like for like manner off site and reinstated in their original position. The proposed works will have a beneficial impact on the significance of the church.

Appendix

St. John the Baptist plans by J.H Hakewill, 1845





BE THE SEATS TINTED
BROWN AND TALL

CHILDREN'S GALLERY
PARK SEATS

PARK SEATS

PARK SEATS

CALLERY PLAN

This Chapel was enlarged in the year of our Lord 1845 and made capable of accommodating 1640 persons
A Grant of £500. in aid of its enlargement was made by the Incorporated Society for the Building
and enlargement of Churches and Chapels in consideration that 770 of that number should be
declared free and unappropriated for ever.

J. H. Hawksley and
Associates Architects