

Design and Access Statement

St Benet's Church, Lupton Street, Kentish Town

Project: Roof Drainage



St Benet's Church is situated at the top of the hill in a residential area close to the Eleanor Palmer School. The church also enjoys close links with Kentish Town Church of England Primary School. The Church Hall is host to a Nursery. The church is described on its website

Our congregation is made up of a wide range of people from different backgrounds and places, and of all ages. We are particularly blessed by the presence of large numbers of children and have a thriving Sunday School. We are all united by our faith in Christ Jesus, and our desire to make his love known and to serve our community in his name.

Our parish (the area for which our Christian community is responsible, and which it serves) is made up of most of Kentish Town on the northern and eastern side of the Kentish Town Road, and the houses to the north, between Kentish Town tube and Tuffnell Park tube stations.

The geographic area of St Benet's parish is quite small in size, but it takes in a wide range of different sorts of housing, lots of shops and restaurants, a number of schools, and lies on the route of many bus, tube, and rail lines.

St Benet's Church

The present church is the third on the site. Joseph Peacock was commissioned to build the second structure which was a large impressive church in what was then a very run down area. In the end, only his nave was built, but this building was consecrated in 1885. By 1909, Bodley and Garner were employed to create a chancel and sanctuary to complete the building. It has a characteristically lofty ceiling with beautiful stencil work, and black and white marble paving. It was noticed in the 1920s that subsidence under the nave Peacock had built was causing significant structural damage. It appears springs of water under the church had been doing lots of damage to the foundations. By 1927, the nave was condemned as dangerous and pulled down, leaving standing only the sanctuary which Bodley had constructed.

The new nave, built by Cecil Hare onto the surviving Bodley sanctuary was consecrated in 1928. The new nave echoed the proportions of Bodley's earlier chancel, has lots of clear glass, and a barrel roof but it was stylistically backing away from gothic motifs to more Art Deco geometries. To

unify the building Hare built a series of low buildings around the base which form the sacristy porches and chapels. These have low parapets and flat roofs.

Bodley and Hare had contrasting attitudes to drainage.

Bodley enjoyed using visible and elaborate cast iron hopper heads tucked under the eaves. Although lovely these are shallow and impractical to keep clear as they are at high level however being under the eaves they were relatively unexposed.

Hare preferred to hide the means of drainage. Pipes appear through the wall and drop down to hidden gutters and sometimes they reappear above ground level and secretive outlets. The open gutter areas are also frequently inaccessible and the areas where pipes are internalised makes it impossible to keep them clear and sometimes the cast iron corrodes and leaks cause further damage.



Lady of Walsingham Chapel

This roof has a large flat surface and in addition it takes three downpipes discharging from the pitched roof above. It is probable that the roof has a slight sag in the centre and a fault in the asphalt has allowed water to get into the roof and leaks are noticed from time to time.

To remedy this it is proposed to create a central channel to draw water accumulating at this point to an additional outlet (there are only two and the one at the far corner has a history of blockages.) The new central outlet would have a matching hopper-head as the present one at the end which matches those at Bodley's eaves. This would be taken from the north elevation by the Sacristy door. In any case this cannot be seen from anywhere but the Vicar's garden. The replacement would be a new hopper head taken from the J and JW Longbottom castings. See below.

Note this roof has been repaired frequently within the last twenty years and there is a recent patch repair to the centre of the roof (*below right*) so a more radical remedy is required.





West Porches

Both west porches have had past blockages causing damage to the ceiling. The ceiling came down in the north porch this Winter after the roof had been repaired in 2019. It is the complicated route of the outlet pipe that has let the water through. The proposal is to fill up the outlet hole and to revert to a traditional hopper-head outlet detail which allows the possibility to maintain and clean the outlets and with a *fail-safe* advantage that a blocked hopper-head will largely flood outwards.

Other alterations

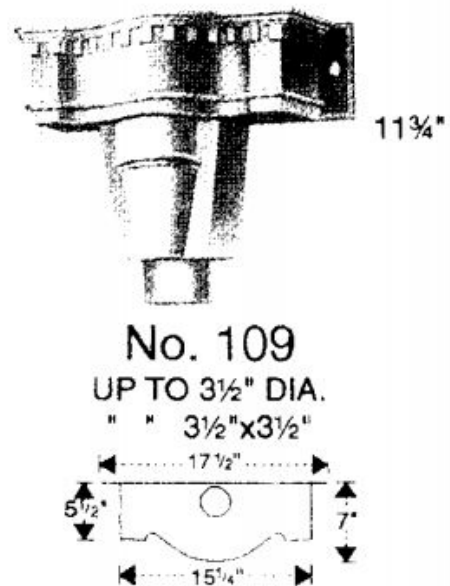
Reinstatement of a cast iron air-brick grille to the outside wall of the Lady Chapel. It is most likely that there was one here before to give ventilation to the suspended timber floor. The fact that there is a gaping hole here offers an unhealthy opportunity to stash things here etc. etc. Restoring a cover to the hole offers safety. The grille is of traditional design and to be painted in white gloss paint to match everything else.

The Porch ceiling will be repaired with additional ventilation to allow the timbers to dry out and avoid the effects of trapped moisture in the structure. The brickwork of the Porch walls can be seen from the street through the gates. They are dirty and stained by previous leaks and it is proposed to clean these and increase the porch lighting to improve the overall effect.





Pipes from the porch flat roofs snake through the ceiling and back out to discharge on one of Hare's 'secret gutters' where they exit to hopper heads.



Sacristy hopper-head. It is proposed to place this on the visible south elevation where it will match the existing hopper-head and replace with the attached design from J and JW Longbottom Foundry.

Listing Statement

Church of St Benet and All Saints: Church. Grade II

List Entry Number: 1379378

Chancel with vestries and south chapel of 1908; nave of 1928; architect Cecil G Hare. Multi-coloured stock brick with stone dressings. Slated roof with south-eastern bellcote. Aisleless 6-bay nave flanked by western single storey porticoes, small north-east chapel, chancel with southern chapel and vestries.

EXTERIOR: tall, narrow west end with projecting central bay having 4-light tracery window flanked by flat buttresses and surmounted by a brick pediment. Double stone sill bands extend around parapets of flanking rectangular porticoes having pointed arch entrances approached by steps. North and south facades with alternate bays projecting and having 3-light buttress flanked windows and pediments similar to west end. Chancel with 2 large traceried lancets to east wall; 2 further lancets to south wall and 1 to the north wall.

INTERIOR: has concrete barrel vault to nave and painted coffered ceiling to chancel with northern organ loft. Walls of painted brick with stone dressings. Nave bays alternately wide and narrow; wide bays have tall 3-light windows under gables cutting into the barrel vault. At ground floor level, continuous round-arched arcaded shallow niches containing cast metal Stations of the Cross in the wide bays and small 2-light windows with early C20 stained glass in the narrow bays. One wide southern bay converted to a pulpit. Fittings include a rood beam and brown-veined marble pedestal font with wrought-iron cover.