

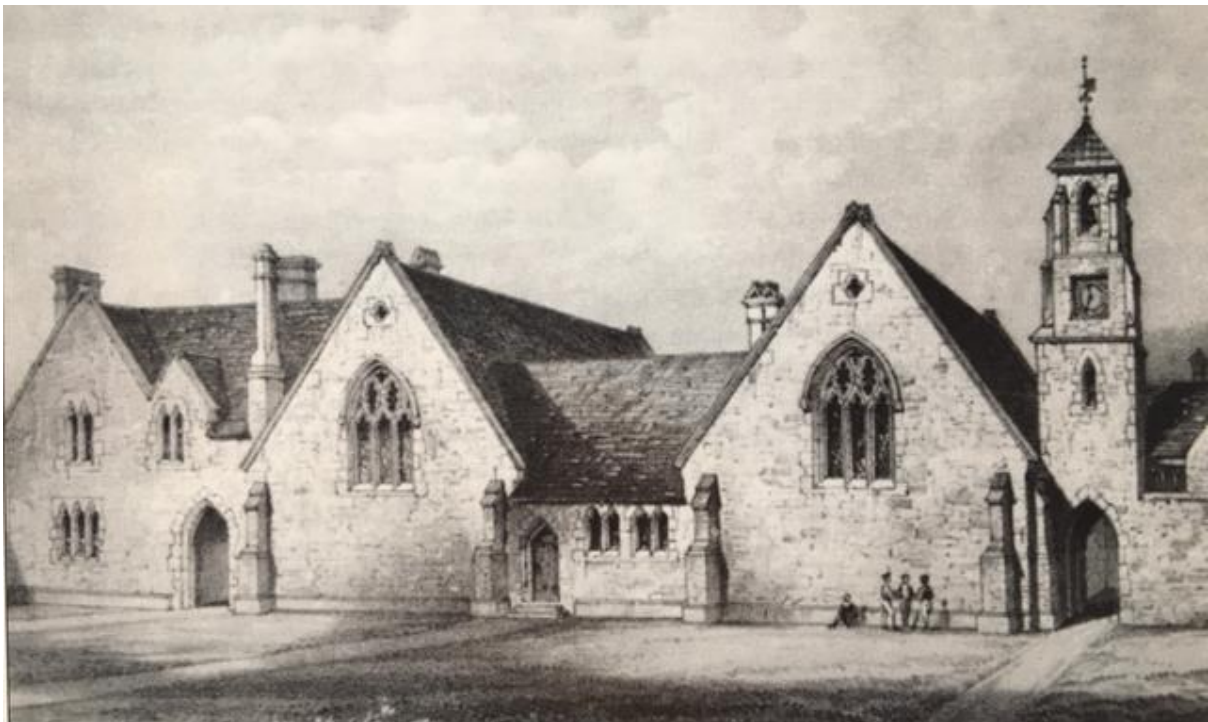
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Lithograph by Anthony Salvin of The National & Industrial Schools Highgate c.1850.

St. Michael's Church of England Primary School
North Road Highgate London Borough of Haringey

*A Heritage Appraisal of the Building and its Heritage Significance and
the Proposals possible Impact on the Special Interest of the Building.*

February 2024

1 Purpose of the Appraisal

1.01 This appraisal seeks to describe the heritage significance of St Michal's School both in historic and architectural terms. The proposals will be reviewed in terms of their potential impact on heritage significance in the context of local and national heritage policy and good conservation practise.

2 Designations

2.01 St Michael's School is listed Grade II as being of special architectural or historic interest. The listing description states:

II

1852 by Anthony Salvin, in Gothic style. Five irregular bays under gables of different sizes, the fourth set back. Stock brick with stone dressings; high pitched tiled roof. Some windows paired lancets with cusped ogee head. Others of reticulated tracery of C14 type and in the set back bay, three grouped lancets. Pointed arched door openings. Obtrusive modern window in second bay from right. Listed for historic interest as an important step forward in primary educational planning, involving greater Government spending and the provision of a far wider range of facilities than hitherto.

3 The Building History & Heritage Significance

3.01 St Michal's School is a building of both architectural and historic interest. It was designed by the noted architect Anthony Salvin (1799-1881). Salvin had a large successful practice and was a pioneer of the Gothic Revival, being noted for his scholarly knowledge of medieval buildings and especially his ability at working with the Tudor Gothic idiom.

3.02 For this early period of his life, Anthony Salvin led a happy rural life at Finchley, close by to Highgate. He leased Elm House in East End in 1833 and greatly enlarged it for his extended family, renaming the grander house Elmhurst. By 1850, his practice had expanded greatly and he took offices in London, convenient via the horse omnibus for the rural commuter. He was well placed to secure the commission to build St Michael's School as he lived at nearby Finchley

where he designed the Gothic Revival Holy Trinity church East Finchley (1845) as well as the Finchley National School (1847)

3.03 He designed many restorations of castles, country houses and churches as well as designing new houses and churches throughout the country. He was much in demand as a leading light in the early Gothic Revival movement. Salvin designed a number of schools in his ubiquitous Tudor Gothic style, including St Michael's Highgate:

School Buildings Designed by Anthony Salvin

1829 Village School Ashcombe Devon (Tudor stone)

1844 Infant School Bangor Co. Down (demolished)

1847 National School Finchley

1850 National School Highgate (Tudor brick and stone dressings)

1853 Limpsfield Surrey Village School (Tudor red brick and ragstone)

1859 Flixton Village School Suffolk (brick Tudor)

3.04 These educational buildings were early examples of attempts to provide mass elementary education. The buildings were simply and economically designed and built. Their simplicity and modest architecture belie their heritage importance as the precursors of later mass state educational provision.

3.05 ST MICHAEL'S & THE BIRTH OF PUBLIC SECTOR EDUCATION

In the 19th century, there were various attempts to provide elementary education for working class poor. Earlier, charitable church village schools and "Dame Schools" sometimes provided a rudimentary education.

3.06 The Church of England took the lead due to fears that the Godless poor would be lost to the established religion. Ragged Schools were a charitable Anglican initiative that sought to provide basic elementary education, together with religious instruction.

3.07 The widespread problem of destitute or miscreant orphan children prompted a more organised response with National or Industrial Schools, a scheme by the Church of England to offer elementary education, vocational training and religious

instruction. This was through the agency of the National Society for Promoting Religious Education, founded in 1811 and state aided from 1833.

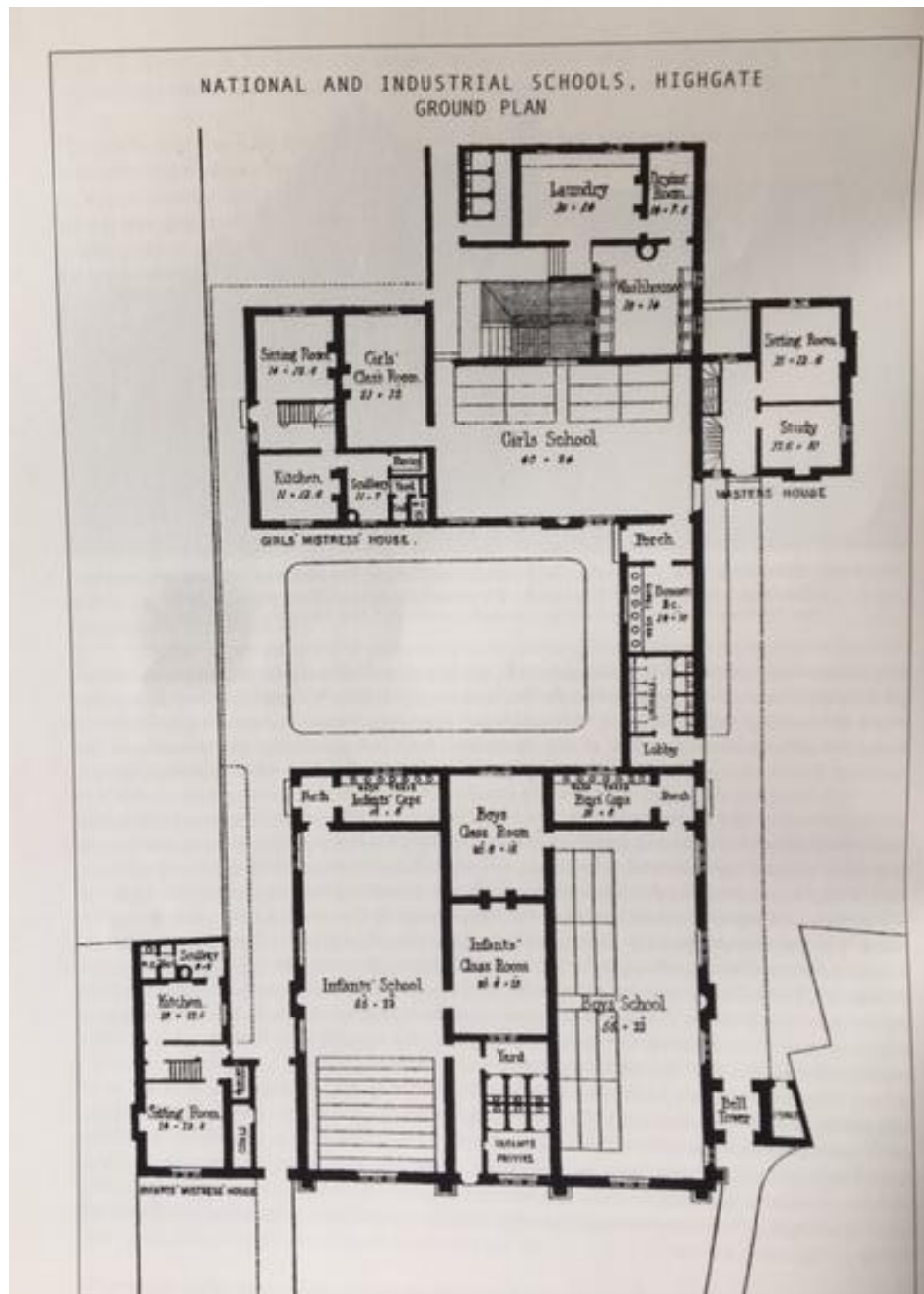
3.08 Highgate National school was considered inadequate so that after 1840 it was resolved to build a new larger school on the North Road site.

3.09 Following the Industrial Schools Act 1857, a magistrate could direct that a juvenile vagrant be sent to an Industrial School to learn a trade to provide employment opportunities as well as religious instruction for their moral welfare. Boys could be trained in gardening, farming, tailoring or shoemaking skills. Girls could study housework, laundry work, knitting or sewing which could help them enter domestic service.

3.10 St Michael's Industrial School was built in 1851 by the celebrated builder George Myers, Augustus Pugin's favourite builder and well versed in the Gothic style. Over 300 local people contributed funding to the project. St Michael's was an early example of the Industrial School model and in this rural location concentrating on farm skills. The complex of buildings is carefully planned and very complete, despite numerous changes as educational needs have evolved.



St Michael's National School - 1st Edition O.S map 1870



Anthony Selvin's plan for St Michael's National School 1851

4 The Proposals

4.01 The proposals are fully described in the architect's drawings and Design & Access Statement. They can briefly be summarised:

4.02 EXTERNAL PROPOSALS

On the main east elevation with its five gables, it is proposed to form two new entrances at ground floor, one at the south end (to a new school office and reception) and one at the north end (a new classroom entrance). The new entrances would be detailed to match the original Gothic design of the building.

The existing external playground and yard area directly in front of the east elevation would be re-ordered to provide safe playground space. A clear fenced route to the new school office would be provided and car movement isolated from other playground or pedestrian access areas.

The existing entrance on the south elevation to the junior year's classroom will have a ramped access suitable for disabled access.

4.03 INTERNAL

Internally, the infant's provision would be two classrooms defined by a lightweight partition while the nursery would have an open classroom with a low partition at the entrance end for cloaks. Set in a central zone between the infants and nursery accommodation would be W C. provision, a kitchenette and storage.

5 Heritage Policy Context

5.01 The primary legislation controlling change to the historic environment is the Planning (Historic Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This act requires that any proposal to demolish a listed building or to carry out works that would affect its special architectural or historic interest must first obtain listed building consent from the local planning authority.

5.02 The Government's policy regarding the management of change in the historic environment is given in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Proposals affecting heritage assets.

189 In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential of the proposal on their significance.....

196 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, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

5.03 Historic England has published policy guidance on decision-taking in the historic environment, which emphasises that an informed, balanced judgement must be made regarding proposals. Some proposals are harmful and others may have little or no impact on the key significance of an asset;

Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment

The assessment of significance as part of the application process

7 Heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Being able to properly assess the nature extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting early in the process is very important to an applicant in order to conceive of a design a successful development.....

8 Understanding the nature of the significance...

9 Understanding the extent of that significance...

10 Understanding the level of significance...

5.04 The London Borough of Haringey has a policy in the Local Development Plan (DM9) aimed at recognising and protecting listed buildings in line with national policy.

6 Assessment

6.01 The assessment of the proposed changes to St Michael's School must be seen in the context of the existing changes that have already occurred over the years to meet evolving educational needs. The school is not a static monument but a very successful educational institution that must carefully monitor and implement change to continue its work in a positive manner to meet educational demands. This cycle of change and renewal must respect heritage significance in plan form and fabric.

6.02 The historic architecture by the important 19th century architect Anthony Salvin is simple, unpretentious and relatively informal in its design. This is typical of the change brought by the early Gothic Revival, where classical symmetry was replaced by a more organic approach to space planning and architectural treatment.

6.03 The most obvious proposed external change is the provision of the two new ground floor entrances on the east elevation. As the Design and Access Statement with the scheme drawings demonstrate, this proposal is generated by the need to update the School's access, organisation, efficient working and regularity compliance. It is therefore of crucial importance to the School's educational development. The proposal is clearly a visible change to the building and its original appearance.

6.04 However, the new doorways are sensitively located in each case below the original first floor windows and are detailed to match the original work. The impact on heritage fabric significance is minimal and even if it should be considered as "of less than substantial harm" to significance, the NPPF tells us that such harm should be "weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use."

6.05 The use of this historic building as a school is clearly the original and optimum use. If the educational use became untenable, it is likely that residential conversion would be an alternative proposal which would inevitably involve "substantial harm" to the building and its internal plan and setting as well as the loss of an original use of heritage significance.

6.06 The internal alterations to the classrooms retain the internal spaces closely to the original openness while meeting current educational needs. The proposed lightweight partitions are low impact on the heritage fabric and easily reversible.

6.07 The provision of a ramped access on the south entrance is a welcome addition for disabled access and is carefully designed.

6.08 The external reordering clearly would improve the use, safety, and readability of site access. It would also represent an environmental enhancement, providing better playground management and exclusion of vehicles from some areas.

7 Conclusion

7.01 These proposals will meet the current educational needs and demands for organisational improvements necessary for a continuing successful future for the School. The proposals conform to the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the NPPF, Historic England policy advice and the heritage policies of the London Borough of Haringey.