

No. 1 BEAUFORT STREET  
SW3, ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

*Brief Assessment of the Extant Surviving Fabric of  
Two Studios at the Rear of the Building*

*by*

A. R. Wittrick

Historical Analysis & Research Team  
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**1, Beaufort Street,  
London SW3.**

I visited this site on Tuesday 29th April 1997 and met the current tenant/occupant Patrick Corbett, following a request from CON:L&SE team to assess, informally, the extant surviving fabric in advance of a spot listing application by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

No.1 Beaufort Street is a late 19thC house which may be an enlargement and re-fronting of an earlier single storey building formerly within the curtilage of 91, Cheyne Walk (Belle Vue Lodge). To the rear are two artist studios, the subject of this brief report. The exposed brickwork was examined in some detail to establish its likely origins.

A brief but detailed and creditable account of the evolution of this site has been prepared by the current tenant together with a map regression, which clearly and feasibly indicates alterations to the curtilage since F W Thompson's map of Chelsea of 1836.

It would appear that the larger studio to the rear of the property, whose western wall bounds Lindsey House, was originally constructed as a detached ancillary building to the rear and forming part of the site of Belle Vue House, No.92 Cheyne Walk (formerly Lindsey Row). This house (grade II) was constructed in the year 1771 by John Hatchett, Royal coach builder and it is indeed possible that the current studio may in fact have been erected by Hatchett for use as a coach house or workshop during the same period or shortly after 1771. Documentary sources suggest that the building was converted to an artist's studio in the latter part of the 19thC. The northern wall appears to have been rebuilt during this period to incorporate large window openings. The width of the structure may also have been reduced from the south, explaining the break and step back of the brickwork of the south wall. If this is the case the current roof assembly will also be of this period.

The studio to the east, which retains a small brick cellar, would also appear to be contemporary, although no longer structurally integrated with the rear studio. The external brickwork here has been painted and it is difficult to establish the brick type. Constructional breaks in the brickwork of the south wall suggest alteration/re-planning of this area. A large, blocked opening, spanned by a cambered brick arch, central in the south wall here, 1830mm (6'0") in width and extending to some 3000mm (10'0") in height may have been used as a carriage entrance, although a wider opening would have provided more comfortable access.

Internally, much alteration has occurred including the loss of the former east wall with the joining of the studios to the main house during the early part of this century and the construction of the extant part-glazed roof structure.

Access to this rear building appears to have been provided by the elliptical arched openings, now blocked, that correspond in both back and front walls to the west of 92, Cheyne Walk, where a covered passageway would seem to have originally been constructed.

The bricks used in the construction of the north wall of the rear studio and bounding Beaufort Mansions have exposed faces of 220x65mm, darkened yellow with small voids and occasional pebble inclusions with smooth and slightly creased faces, laid mainly in English bond and typically of the latter part of the 19thC. Below the large central window here a small area of pale purple/orange bricks of similar dimensions appear to be earlier and may

form the remains of the preceding north wall to this structure.

Within the small cellar under the main studio, bricks are exposed on the north wall and form the foundation for the structure above. Their exposed faces measure 215x65mm, pale orange, dense with smooth and slightly creased faces and are laid in a hard lime mortar. The bond is irregular. They would appear to date from the late 18thC and may form the surviving foundation from Hatchett's coach house.

With the possible exception of the west wall of the rear studio, which was not available for inspection, it is unlikely that any of the surviving brickwork on this site belongs to a period earlier than the late 18thC and this is a relatively small amount as discussed above.

Cartographic evidence and other documentary sources would tend to suggest that, prior to this site being developed during the late 18th/early 19th centuries, it formed part of the enclosed front court to the former Beaufort House, demolished during the 18thC. The extant western boundary of the property would appear to be the boundary line of the former front court of the house of Sir Thomas More, but has quite clearly been rebuilt using a later brick.

The degree of interest in this site could only be described as slight. Little of the fabric of what may have been Hatchett's coach house would appear to survive and the plan form has been considerably altered. The conversion to artist studios during the latter part of the 19thC was undertaken during a period when studios were rising up all over west London, constructed for the high Bohemians of that period. Very few studios were built previously and very few built subsequently.

Although the studios are not listed in their own right, documentary sources suggest, as previously discussed, that they were originally constructed within and formed part of the curtilage of the grade II listed 92, Cheyne Walk and there is therefore a building group value which needs to be addressed. The Borough should consider including the studios within the conservation area.

Sources:

SofL Vol.IV Chelsea Pg31-32.

Corbett P. History of the two studios behind 1 Beaufort Street, Chelsea (unpublished report) 1997.

Hunting P. From Manor House to Museum A history of Chelsea Manor House (in association with The Cadogan Estate) 1995.

Andy Wittrick  
CON:DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S DIVISION  
May 1997.



*Fig.1*  
Greenwood's map of south-west London 1830





*Fig. 2*  
Enlargement of Greenwood's map of south-west London 1830





*Fig.3*

'Belle Vue Lodge', Elementary College, Classical and Mathematical School, Beaufort Street c1835





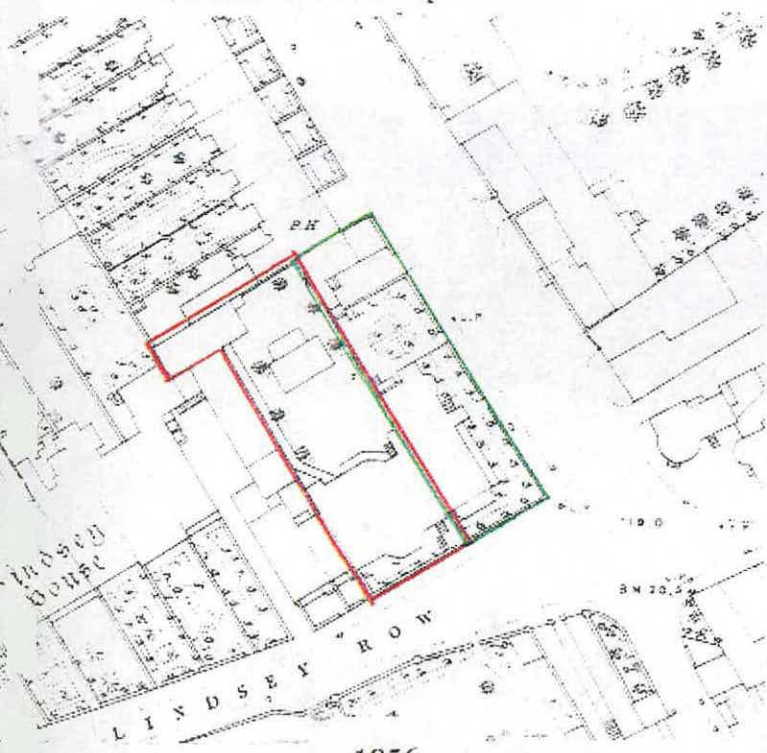




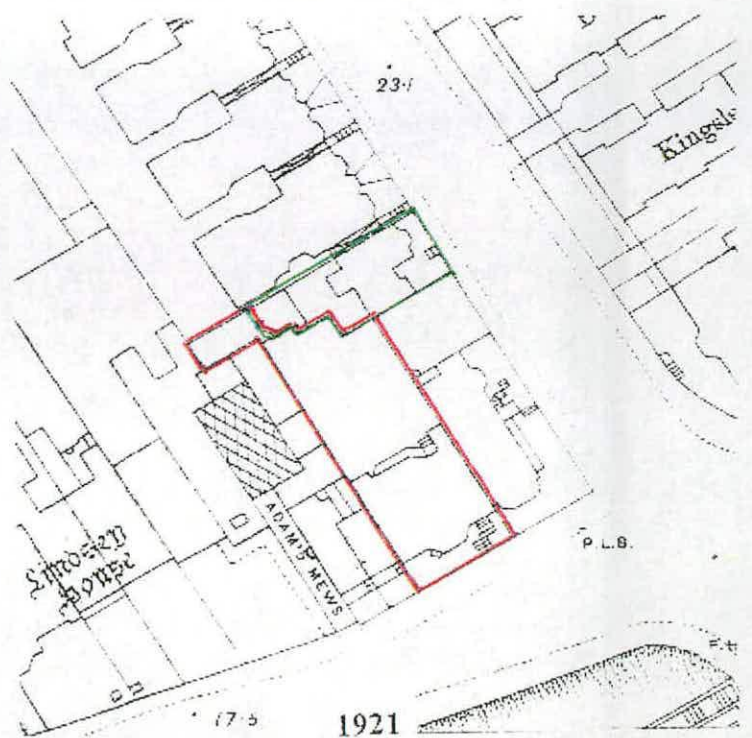
'Chelsea' F.W.Thompson 1836



1917



1856



1921

Fig.5  
Development of the site 1836-1921 using cartographic data



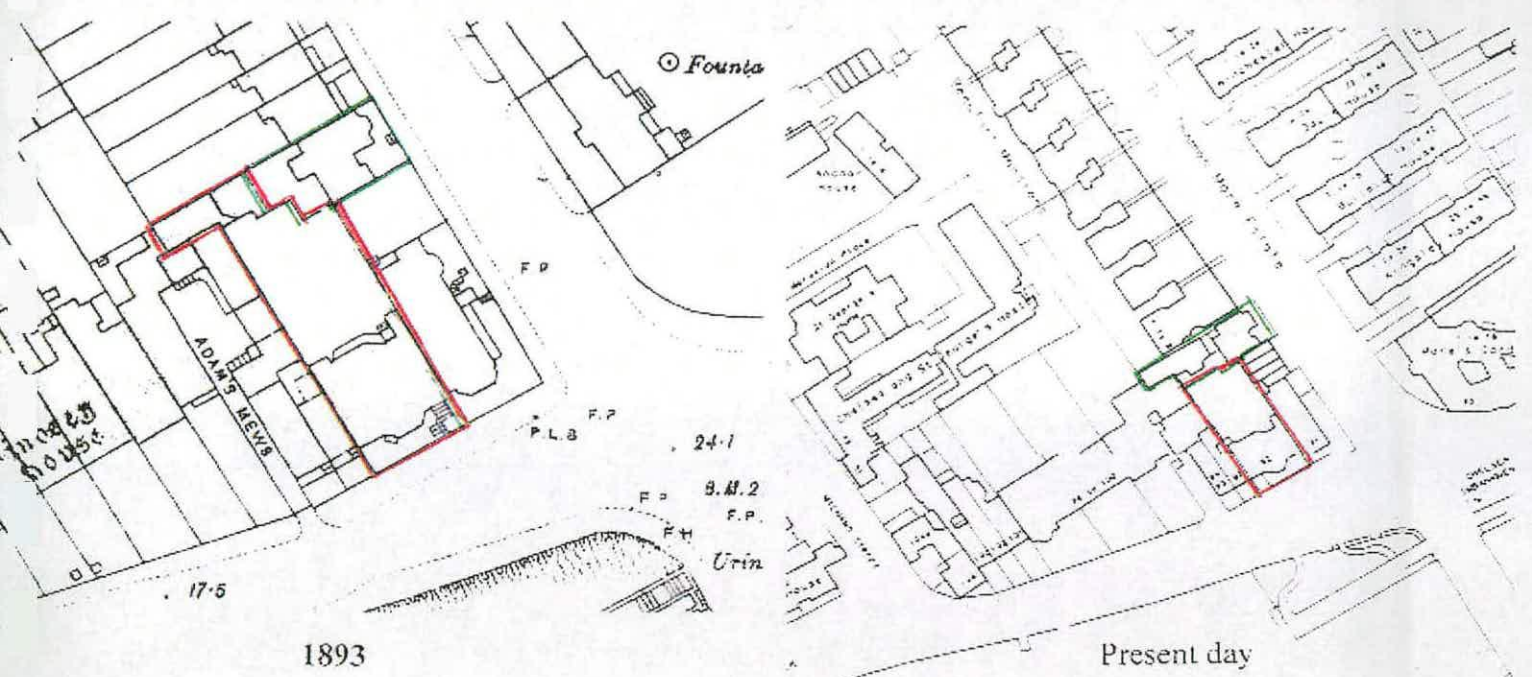


Fig.6  
Development of the site 1893-present day, using cartographic data

## HISTORY OF THE TWO STUDIOS BEHIND 1 BEAUFORT STREET

A plan, *circa* 1772 of the Beaufort House estate, (1 page 2) owned by the Moravian Botherhood up to this date when they were in the process of selling Lindsey House and the majority of their land around it, shows the 'L'-shaped site, now 92 Cheyne Walk, which was Bellevue House, its curtilage and outbuildings built the previous year.

The O.S. maps of 1836 (page 4) onwards continue to show this 'L'-shaped format, the foot of the 'L' (inverted) being the building which is now the west half of the East studio and all of the West studio of 1 Beaufort Street,. The still-existing north curtilage wall is the north wall of the present extension of the East studio.

### The Occupiers:-

In 1771, JOHN HATCHETT, coach builder to King George III bought the site and built Bellevue House, 'one of the most beautiful houses in Chelsea'.

Hatchett had his workshop in Long Acre. In 1786 a foreign visitor wrote "*so we went to Hatchett's, the most famous Master Saddler, where over 200 men work under his personal supervision, producing the loveliest masterpieces - just exquisite craftsmanship. The eminent saddler had a Counting House, and a Paymaster. too! I yearned to take a drawing of a coach costing Fifteen Thousand Guineas made especially for the Nabob of Arcot .....or that lovely vehicle for the Empress of Russia .....just to have an idea of their splendour and utter magnificence, and size of that kind of conveyance.*"

It is inconceivable that Hatchett would not have had a coach house built for his own vehicles whilst Bellevue House was being built. The ground floor of the South front of Bellevue house was constructed with two red brick elliptical arches each side of a bay. The west one is a typical coach entrance leading to a covered way at the end of which, in the back (north) wall of the house the red brick arch is repeated. In the south wall of the East studio, precisely in line with those in the house is a similar red brick arch (now bricked up) which must have been the door of the coach house/workshop. The north wall of this room contained three large north facing windows (one now bricked up - O.S. 1856 shows that the P.H. next door had a building against it ) which must have overlooked the public house yard and beyond to the rear gardens of the Georgian terrace which was Beaufort Street.

1771-1806

One must conclude that the building which is now the two studios in question were the King's coach builder's coach house and atelier for this period.



Bellevue House was Hatchett's home for a very short time, if at all - he had a magnificent mansion with an estate of 35 acres in Hammersmith. His factory was in Long Acre so ~~Beaufort~~ <sup>Bellevue</sup> House was conveniently situated half way between home and work; also, more importantly it was in an area of London which contained many great houses, - Lindsey House, Winchester House, Shrewsbury House, Manor House, Gough House, Walpole House etc the owners of which could be shown Hatchett's exquisite carriages in the beautiful private paved garden at the rear of the house. Was Beaufort House to Hatchett's what Conduit Street was to Rolls Royce and Pier House is to Mercedes-Benz (Bradshaw & Webb) today.? We know that Catherine(II), Empress of Russia visited Chelsea in 1773 and made two substantial orders:- 1) an 800 piece dinner service for her palace in St Petersburg from Josiah Wedgwood whose Staffordshire-made porcelain was decorated in his atelier sited where Glebe Place is now, and 2) the '*exquisite vehicle*, from Hatchett's mentioned above.

[ It is not inconceivable that the fine finishing work of applying the painted panels and mother-of-pearl inlay to *particularly* special carriages could have been carried out in the rear atelier of Bellevue House. GIOVANNI-BATTISTA CIPRIANI (1727-1790), a Florentine artist and picture restorer who came to Chelsea in the mid-1750's and was responsible for the painted panels on George III's Coronation Coach may well have worked in the rear studio/workshop for Hatchett's although no evidence, as yet, has been found to substantiate this. Certainly, it is known that Cipriani lived, worked and was buried in Chelsea. ]

1819-1847

Rates records show that CHARLES HATCHETT, F.R.S. (son of the above) lived here for this period. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1797. In 1809 he became a member of the Literary Club and later its treasurer in 1814. He wrote learned treatises and essays on philosophy and chemistry. It may well have been he who divided the coach houser/atelier with a wall and the oblique passage from studio to garden.

The 1856 O.S. plan shows no change (but see above re. the third window in the studio)

1871-1886

The next notable to live in the house was the artist/poet WILLIAM BELL SCOTT (1811-1890) who moved in in 1871. Amongst his friends were the artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the poet Swinburne. He was connected with the South Kensington Museum (V & A museum) where he was employed in decoration and as an examiner in art schools until 1885. He published numerous designs for books and wrote extensively on Art and Poetry.

1886-1891

For a short period JOHN MARSHALL, F.R.S. then took the house. He was professor of Anatomy at the Royal Academy. He died here in 1891.



The site of the 18/19th century house which became 1 Beaufort Street was originally within the curtilage of Bellevue Lodge (91 Cheyne Walk) but was annexed between 1856 and 1891. The house was enlarged and raised by two stories and the present frontage added by 1893, before the construction of Beaufort Mansions. The 1893 O.S. plan shows that the enlarged house had been given part of the Bellevue House garden together with what is now the East studio, a division apparently having been made with the West studio, which the O.S. plan of 1921 shows was still in the Bellevue House curtilage.

#### OCCUPIERS OF THE EAST STUDIO:-

1891-1893

GEORGE SAUL, sculptor

1893-1909

Miss HADSLEY GOSSLIN, artist

1913-1953

NEWBURY ABBOTT TRENT, sculptor, who modelled from life Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin who visited the studio on a number of occasions. Famous sitters also included Winston Churchill, Randall Davidson the then Archbishop of Canterbury and Gerald and later Daphne Du Maurier.

During this period but after 1921, this studio was extended eastwards by some 20ft and fitted with its predominantly glass roof.

1953-1966

STANLEY GRIMM, R.O.I., R.P., artist, descendant of the Brothers Grimm, painted portraits - that of Granville Barker the playwright hangs in the Royal Court Theatre. Among his patrons were Nancy Lady Astor, Lord Avon & Sir Winston Churchill (again!).

1974-1980

JOHN BIGNELL - the famous Chelsea photographer, publisher of 'Chelsea Seen' and his autobiography 'John Bignell, Chelsea Photographer'.

1974 - present day

PATRICK CORBETT, picture restorer who, as well as cleaning numerous 16th & 17th century Dutch masters over the last 23 years, was commissioned to restore, appropriately for the area, The Nostell Priory group portrait 'Thomas More and Family' by Hans Holbein the Younger, a copy of which was unveiled recently in Chelsea Town Hall.



OCCUPIERS OF THE WEST STUDIO (after William Bell Scott and John Marshall)

1921-1953

NEWBURY ABBOTT TRENT (see above) who sublet to

IAN CAMPBELL-GRAY, artist

PRUNELLA CLOUGH, eminent artist of industrial and urban subjects tending later in her career to abstraction, influenced by Miro and de Calder. Her retrospective exhibition was at the Whitechapel Gallery and there are examples of her work in the Tate Gallery.

1961-1977

GEORGE LEACH, R.O.I., artist and portraitist. Member of the Royal Institute of Oil Painters, he executed numerous portraits including that of Sir Winston Churchill (again!!). He also painted many views of Chelsea, particularly of the river and Cheyne Walk area.

1961-1997

STELLA LEACH (wife of the above) - artist and illustrator who specialised in botanical drawings for, amongst others, the Chelsea Physic Garden. She began her career as an artist's agent and ended it painting flower pieces. She sub-let to:-

1987-present day

PATRICK CORBETT (see above) who, in this studio, carried out the restoration of, amongst others, George Stubbs's masterpiece 'Wistlejacket' now hanging in the National Gallery. This year-long onerous but rewarding task was recorded in a T.V. film by Tom Guttridge.



*Fig. 7*  
No.1 Beaufort Street 1997





*Fig.8*  
Rear elevation to 1 Beaufort Street, from rear studio roof 1997





*Fig.8*  
Roof arrangement to rear studio 1997