

CITY HERITAGE SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2009

ANOTHER MOMENTOUS YEAR FOR THE CITY - AND FOR HERITAGE

2009 was the year that the City rallied from the devastating world financial crisis of 2007-8; responded - to some extent - to the call for a more sustainable environment, the stock market rose by 22%, and rents in the City began to stabilise.

Meanwhile, the restoration of the exterior of St. Paul's has been completed, and stands as a white and gold gleaming monument at the Ludgate entrance to the City, seen from the River Thames, from the south bank and from many distant viewpoints, stunning the visitor, and probably looking as good as it did when first built. The sensitive restoration of the Monument has similarly been completed and this gold and white column rises above and appears between many a lesser more modern building reminding us that there is still hope for heritage in the City!

The general public have continued to criticise bankers in general for the behaviour of 'Fred the Shred' and others, and unfortunately do not recognise the dedication, tough and long working conditions of many in the City who give their all to maintain our reputation as the leading Financial Centre of the world, contributing vast sums of money to the economy throughout the country.

Within City Heritage we are very glad to see that 'Heritage Tourism' has now become an important secondary industry in the country and as Boris Johnson has stated is 'one of London's success stories and translates direct into jobs and income for Londoners'. London has been quoted as being the No. 1 destination in the world and boosts the economy by £8 billion annually. Visitor numbers to St. Paul's have increased, and routes are being enhanced across the Millennium Bridge to the Museum of London and Barbican, to new hotels throughout the City, past the new retail outlets in Cheapside, to the Bank of England and through to the Monument. The City Planning Department contributes positively to this expanding activity, something we warmly support.

Just over a year ago, at our annual dinner, Mark Field, MP for the City of London and Westminster South, said that he thought that City Heritage Society would 'offer a historical perspective and a guiding hand as we weather the economic storms ahead'. This we have tried to do, steadfastly resisting over-development of City sites, opposing the destruction of historic buildings, medieval courts and alleyways, insisting on the highest quality restoration and adaptation of listed buildings and the retention of the historic character and appearance of conservation areas.

Your President, Douglas Woodward, has many times predicted that we do not need so many new sky-scrapers in the City - if any at all! Now, many of them have gone 'on hold', and Peter Rees the City Planning Officer himself has realistically informed us that 'it could be a generation before another tall building planning application is received' by the City planning department. However, within 2010 we shall see the culmination of the granting of planning permissions over the past five years - on applications where we had

often given negative or cautious comments, particularly 'the cluster' at the eastern end of the City where the Heron Tower now rises high up on the skyline, the bulky eleven storey building by Rem Koolhaas for the Rothschilds at New Court, St. Swithins' Lane, and the even more bulky retail extravaganza in New Change, next to St. Paul's. Whether all this new office and retail space will be taken up is questionable. What is important is that any new building should be sustainable, of the very highest quality and much more adaptable for change. It has become more expensive for existing buildings to be pulled down, and it is high time the current practice of buildings put up for twenty or thirty years only and then rebuilt, should end.

The restoration and enhancement of existing buildings and existing spaces, streets, courts and alleys is therefore even more important. We welcome a renewed respect and appreciation for heritage within the City.

During the year there have been less planning applications, but among those that have received permission, from modernised historic headquarters buildings to the re-use of a Bank headquarters' building as an excellent 'Oyster Bar', the City has no equal. Many Wren City churches have themselves been restored and renewed to be used as meeting places and for concerts as well as for religious services.

A more detailed appraisal of our comments on planning permissions follows.

COMMENTS ON OTHER PLANNING PERMISSIONS

76-78 FENCHURCH STREET: Proposals were re-submitted after CHS recommended Portland Stone rather than granite for this 'monolith'. Foster redesigned original proposals which were subsequently granted planning permission. A major triumph for CHS.

SEAL HOUSE: A revised scheme was granted planning permission which took account of the views from the Monument, but gave the scheme some very curious angles next to Fishmongers' Hall.

50-70 ST. MARY AXE: 'The Ham'. CHS objected, but permission granted, in spite of 'alien' shape.

5, CHEAPSIDE: A modified, revised proposal for this rather 'glitzy' aggressive proposal which would replace the octagonal building at the end of Cheapside, affecting the setting of St. Paul's and the St. Paul's Conservation Area was eventually granted planning permission.

27-35 POULTRY: We welcomed the change of use to hotel for this former Midland Bank, fine Lutyens-designed headquarters building which was granted planning permission, but sadly the scheme has been put on hold because of the adverse financial situation.

34 LIME STREET: re-clad in Jura stone. CHS approved, and planning permission was granted.

20 FENCHURCH STREET: CHS reiterated previous comments of this scheme being too-heavy at 38 storeys high, especially on the southern elevation, but scheme was granted planning permission.

ROMAN HOUSE: A welcome enhancement and extension of original building: granted planning permission.

8-10 MOORGATE: We had consistently commented that this scheme was a gross over-development of the site and that there would be a loss of historic frontages in Telegraph Street and Tokenhouse Yard and the character and appearance of these historic enclaves would be harmed. After the project was turned down at planning committee Julian Harrap, the historic buildings architect, was asked to revise the scheme. It is now a much more acceptable scheme than the original, but our original objections still apply.

10 TRINITY SQUARE: Our comments were taken on board and concerns regarding the drop-off areas were noted. This is an imaginative change of use from PLA headquarters building to a six star hotel, with sensitive development of the core of the building.

'WALKIE TALKIE' BUILDING: This was granted planning permission having been 'called in' by the Secretary of State. Alterations to the top floors of the building and roof garden were also subsequently approved. However, development has been delayed in the current economic climate, and the feeling is that it may not be built at all. There are welcome plans to landscape the site temporarily.

44 MOORFIELDS: Proposed Red Cross Museum. Disappointingly poor plans for this site. Imaginative idea but poor treatment of the interior emphasises dark and harsh environment. Little improvement to current unattractive building. Revisions to scheme by architect underway.

14 CORNHILL: Our adverse comments with concerns about the restoration proposals and quality of the materials to be used, and subsequent visit to this magnificent former Lloyds Banking HQ building, resulted in a revised submission and planning permission being granted for the City branch of Green's Oyster Bar.

THE ROYAL EXCHANGE: Excellent refurbishment and good quality of detailing of this dignified scheme which appears to be respectful of this important listed building.

BEVIS MARKS: Demolition of existing building to be replaced by ten and fifteen storey buildings with basement and retail at ground. Adjacent to Bevis Marks synagogue, development would not harm the fabric of any historic buildings, but in views down St. Mary Axe looking north-east the proposal would tower above the Baltic Exchange by at least four storeys, this height aggravated by a roofed garden structure on top.

MIDDLESEX STREET: Part redevelopment of the existing estate. We approved this 'ingenious scheme' to improve and enhance the appearance and quality of the community facilities and amenities for the residents without increasing the height or fundamentally altering the character of the estate.

1-2 SERJEANT'S INN: Revised proposals for change of use and extension of the east wing and roof. CHS had no objection to the change of use, but proposed development appeared piece-meal and out of character with existing building and harmful to this part of the Fleet Street Conservation Area.

St. KATHARINE CREE CHURCH: We welcomed the news that restoration of the church and bells in the bell tower has now been completed.

St. GILES CRIPPLEGATE: Proposal to create labyrinth pattern turned down. Planning Officer, Peter Rees had strongly recommended approval. We had commented that the proposal might harm the character and appearance of the area in the Barbican when viewed from the flats above.

St. LAWRENCE JEWRY MEMORIAL: CHS welcomed this £584,000 scheme to reinstate the 1886 fountain, but advised care on the siting in relation to surrounding buildings near St. Paul's.

2-3 AND 5 PHILPOT LANE: We welcomed change of use to an hotel, quite acceptable amid surrounding office blocks, sensitively developed with heritage buildings conserved.

MERMAID HOUSE, PUDDLE DOCK: Proposal for a 27,000sqm. hotel, likened to the 'Gherkin' on its side to replace the former Mermaid Theatre, latterly a conference centre. Would remove the only cultural asset on the north side of the Thames. CHS suggested that some cultural element could be added back into the proposals, beneficial to this part of this part of the City now that the whole area is to be enhanced:

100 CHEAPSIDE: Planning permission was granted for this Portland stone and glass eight storey building, but still too high in views down King Street to Guildhall.

119-121 BISHOPSGATE: We commented strongly that this would be over-development of the site, loss of public open space, and that the proposed red 'tower' would harm the slender, elegant tower and pinnacle of St. Botolph's Bishopsgate.

CYCLE RACKS: Most - rather ugly -sites have received planning permission and will be in place next year.

RESPONSE TO PLANNING MATTERS, PAPERS AND LETTERS SUBMITTED IN 2009

2009 has been such an important year in planning and heritage terms that several papers and letters have been submitted during the year in response to new changes and challenges.

I and other members of the Committee have attended seminars and consultations concerning the Core Strategy of the LDF, and the Transport and Sustainability Forum.

President and Chairman have responded to Mayor, Boris Johnson's Plan for the City. Your President has written a paper on 'The City's Burgeoning Hotels', your Chairman has written about 'The Rise of Heritage Tourism in the City closing, and submitted comments on the new proposed Planning Bill, and on strategic plans for the Core Strategy of the LDF.

THE CITY HERITAGE AWARD 2009

In its 31st year the City Heritage Award for outstanding excellence in building conservation was presented in June by the Lord Mayor, with Lady Mayoress and Sheriffs in attendance, to No. 1 Finsbury Circus, or as we used to call it 'Britannic House'.

The Award, made by our Society in partnership with the Worshipful Company of Painter-Stainers was made in recognition of the transformation of the core of this building from single to multiple occupancy overlooking Finsbury Circus, with lifts to each of its nine grand floors within a re-designed glazed atrium, whilst

retaining and restoring the excellence in architecture of the Lutyens grand staircase, entrance hall and central parts of the building. The Assessors concluded that the award goes this year to an outstanding entry both for the high quality of the renewal of the building and for conservation.

1, FINSBURY CIRCUS

Owners: Hermes Real Estate and The Property Merchant Group
Architects: Gaunt Francis Architects
Contractor: ISG Interiors

Assessors: 2009

Desmond Fitzpatrick BA FSA (Deputy Chairman)
Lady Freeman BA FSA Dip Cons (AA) PhD
Annie Hampson BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI
A.F. Shannon ARIBA AADipl
R.C. Houghton RIBA FCI Arb Dip Arch
Anne Thomas BA MA FRSA (Chairman)
Also present for some of the meeting, Richard Martin, Master of the Worshipful Company of Painter-Stainers, and Douglas Woodward, President of City Heritage Society.

EVENTS

OLD BAILEY, January and May, 2009
The first visit to the Old Bailey was so interesting and so popular that it was over-subscribed, and we paid a second visit in May. From visiting Court No. 1, where we were reminded of well-known cases that had been judged there, to the death cells below - now no longer in use! - we were regaled with stories about the history of the Old Bailey and noteworthy trials. We also saw the Dining Room where Sheriffs lunch daily with Judges. The guide was excellent, and we all came away with greater knowledge of this fascinating building.

'WE NEED MORE FRONT DOORS!' February, 2009 Seminar held at The Gallery, Cowcross Street, with Sir Richard MacCormac, Sir Terry Farrell, Simon Bee of English Heritage and Richard Saxon, Chairman of the City Architecture Forum. Our Executive Committee members put their shoulder to the wheel and served wine and excellent tit-bits to a large assembly of City Heritage, City Architecture Forum members and to other invited members from the City. The four speakers were superb - and to some extent provocative - and the discussion afterwards was animated. One can access part of the evening's presentation on line <http://urbannous.org.uk/urbandesigngroup>

PEWTERERS' HALL April, 2009
We gathered in April for our Annual General Meeting - with an excellent turn-out of members on a stormy night! As new chairman, I was greatly encouraged by the support of our Executive Committee - and by members, who seemed to have enjoyed the events held during the year.

WAX CHANDLERS' HALL May, 2009
I am told that the guide, Mr. Percival, gave an excellent talk about the history of the Wax Chandlers and about current activities, and members also enjoyed plentiful glasses of wine during the evening.

THE ROYAL INSTITUTION June, 2009
Well-attended by members, in spite of tube strikes and difficult journeys, members found the Royal Institution most interesting, and the building itself of significant historic interest.

SUMMER VISIT TO THE FAN MUSEUM, GREENWICH, July, 2009
On a fine, sunny day - some members took the boat down the Thames to Greenwich. Unknown to many members, even those living in Greenwich, we were in for a surprise, Director and Founder of the Museum, Helene Alexander gave us a personal



Tim Lineham (Hermes Real Estate), Miss Delva Patman (Escort to Sheriff Gillon), James Bowdidge (The Property Merchant Group), Mrs. Anne Thomas (Chairman, City Heritage Society), Richard Martin (Master of the Worshipful Company of Painter-Stainers), The Lord Mayor, Ian Luder; The Lady Mayoress, Mrs Luder; Sheriff Roger Gifford, Sheriff George Gillon.

guided tour of the Museum, and of her own treasures including intricately designed and gilded fans made for members of the Court and royalty. Some later fans were made by Impressionist painters including Sickert. This great wealth of knowledge about fans was followed by a most delectable cream tea in the Orangery! (If you didn't come, do pay a visit whenever you can!)

1, FINSBURY CIRCUS, - BRITANNIC HOUSE August, 2009
Another event which members were keen to attend. This restored Lutyens building, with entrance hall and grand staircase and many marbled interiors, is well worth a visit. Beyond and behind the retained Lutyens frontage, is a glazed modern atrium, with six central glass-fronted lifts which glide upwards to integral office spaces on all nine office floors. A fine building, winner of our Annual Award for 2009.

In September many members visited heritage buildings in the City on Open House weekend. Some made suggestions of visits to some of the buildings next year. Others also attended the Gresham Lectures, which Dr. Simon Thurley as the Gresham Visiting Professor, is currently giving.

ANNUAL DINNER AT THE GUILDHALL CLUB, October, 2009
We invited Dr. Simon Thurley to be our guest speaker. Desmond Fitzpatrick, Deputy Chairman, welcomed the guests in a moving speech in which he said that heritage and all that City Heritage stood for was much more in the public eye now that it had been

when City Heritage was founded by our President, Douglas Woodward in the 1970's. Dr. Thurley then gave a brilliant speech about his philosophy for heritage, encouraging us in our constant promotion of heritage throughout the City.

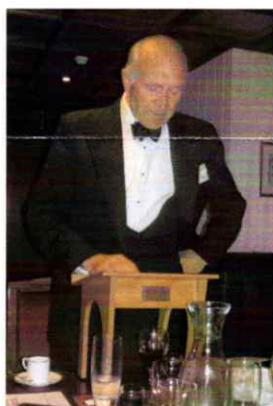
CAROL SERVICE AT ST. MARY ALDERMARY: Once again we visited the fan-vaulted 'Wren' church at the invitation of Rev. John Mothersole, for the annual Carol Service conducted by Alderman Andrew Parmley, joining in our favourite carols and enjoying welcome refreshments.

Our first event of 2010 is a visit to the Bank of England on 26th January, guided by Deputy Chairman, Desmond Fitzpatrick, who has recently been honoured as a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, and our second event will be a visit to the Building Centre in Store Street, with a talk by the Curator, Peter Murray about recent additions to the built environment of the City.

The Annual General Meeting will be held in March and we look forward to seeing you for this annual event in our calendar. May I take this opportunity of thanking you for your support, and sending you our very best wishes for the New Year.

Anne Thomas, Chairman

The Vanished Coaching Inns of the City of London" by C.D. Woodward, was published in 2009



Desmond Fitzpatrick
Deputy Chairman CHS



Mrs. Christine Cohen
Chairman Planning Committee

Dr. Simon Thurley
Chief Executive EH



Mrs. Anne Thomas
Chairman CHS

James Thomas
Exec. Committee CHS

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Planning Dept.

The Society's Executive Committee, 2009

C. Douglas Woodward, CBE

President

Anne Thomas, BA MA (Urban Design) FRSA

Chairman

Desmond Fitzpatrick BA FSA

Deputy Chairman

Patrick Burke

Membership Secretary

Mary Hemy, BA

Hon. Secretary (to Nov 2009)

Marina Nicholson

Hon. Secretary (from Nov. 2009)

Les Breadmore

Hon. Treasurer

Anthony Hemy, RIBA

James R.G. Thomas BA Arch Dip TP FRIBA FRTPI