



# CITY HERITAGE SOCIETY

## ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2013



This is a good time for those who love and believe in the City of London which seems to be emerging from the serious economic and financial troubles which have marked the last several years with its position as the leader of the world's three great financial centres considerably strengthened. Nevertheless, anyone concerned, as we are with the architectural heritage of the City and its character, including its wonderful pattern of famous streets and of lanes, must feel at times a certain anxiety about some of the results of the City's astonishing success in our own time. All the world which is serious about business wants to do business here and has to be accommodated – and that means tower blocks! Some are tragic, particularly the *Walkie Talkie*, frowning top-heavily over Eastcheap.

By contrast, however, the *Eastern Cluster* (above) is beginning to show, again, how several towers together can be impressive. The old P&O tower at Undershaft is grouped with Leadenhall House (*The Cheesegrater*), nearing completion, while on the other side of St Mary

Axe is Swiss Re building, better known as *The Gherkin*, now becoming a term of affection rather than abuse.

So much of the older City is around them: there is a glimpse of St Helen's Bishopsgate behind the old P&O while close by is St Andrew Undershaft, both splendid late gothic. A little to the south of *The Gherkin* is one of the City's most remarkable 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings: Holland House by Berlage, now nearing the centenary of its completion. Nearby are several good Victorian-Edwardian buildings. Near Holland House is Creechurch Lane, with St Catherine Cree, an array of former warehouses, valuably converted, and other Victorian-Edwardian commercial buildings, in good use. All this might indicate that the City has room for both the towers to accommodate world-class enterprises and for a mix of older structures, both grand Victorian and smaller buildings characteristic of the City street scene. The climate of opinion on conversion is now far more favourable than forty years ago, when our Society was founded!

One of the happier indicators at present is a renewed interest in restoration and re-use of the former long-neglected Midland Bank headquarters in Poultry (below).



It is one of Edwin Lutyens' two great City buildings, the other being 1, Finsbury Circus. However, the re-building proposals known as *Barts Square* remain a cause for concern, both as to size and massing of buildings and effects on the traditional highway and footpath patterns which were formed largely by the area's history as the precinct of the Priory of St Bartholomew and redevelopments in the aftermath of the Priory's dissolution. The Society will watch both of these important, though different schemes.

## COMMENTS ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS

### *Salters' Hall, 4 Fore Street, London, EC2Y 5DE*



*(Current entrance)*

New entrance pavilion

Good scheme that improves the entrance to the Hall and the general aspect from Fore Street.

### *39-53 Cannon Street, 11-14 Bow Lane and Watling Court, London, EC4*

**Mixed use redevelopment:  
Office/Retail uses**

We objected to the proposals as follows:

“While the existing building is not considered to have great architectural merit, it was felt that its replacement should enhance the setting of St Paul's Cathedral and improve the conservation area. The existing building on its Cannon St. facade is expressed as two elements and this device reduces its apparent size and impact on the street. The proposed building is expressed as

one unbroken unit increasing its apparent size and impact on the street and the view along Cannon Street of St Paul's. The present building has three window wide bays divided by paired vertical stone clad features. This helps to break up the facade and, on the Bow Lane elevation, gives some relationship to the former house front widths. The proposed building has no such feature and comprises repetitive rectangular openings with little variation in a flat stone clad facade. This has a regrettable impact on Bow Lane. The short section of the proposed facade in Bow Lane given a slightly different treatment does little to reduce the proposed building's impact on that street.

The existing building has a splayed corner on the Cannon St./Bow Lane junction which echoes the splayed corner of the Victorian building facing it, while the proposed building's Cannon St. and Bow lane facades meet at a sharp angle which not only does not blend as well but emphasizes the greater height of the new building. Vertically, the present building is visually expressed as a two storey base with three storeys above. The proposed building rises unbroken from pavement level resulting in its appearing taller than the existing building. The proposed building with its rectangular openings punched through its stone clad walls with only minor variations in size, seems a poor response to this prominent site. In view of the above we wish to object to the demolition of the existing building and to the proposals for the new building.”

Following our comments modifications were made.

### *9 -13 Aldgate High Street, London, EC3N 1AH*

**Demolition – Redevelopment as  
Hotel/Restaurant**

Elegant design and respects St. Botolph-without-Bishopsgate.

***Land Bounded By Charterhouse Street,  
Lindsey Street, Long Lane And Hayne Street,  
London, EC1***

**Five storey building over new Farringdon East Station in Smithfield – Office and Retail use.**

The proposals are imposing and appear to dominate the area with the massing and bulk of the proposed building compromising the setting of the market. It is over dominant in scale, and the overall shape and volume of the scheme needs to be reconsidered.

It is a basic rectangular block at a very prominent site within Smithfield and is a key element in the streetscapes of Long Lane and Charterhouse Street. It is out of scale within this historic part of the City and is a missed opportunity for such an important site.

Although it incorporates Farringdon East Crossrail Station at the lower levels, the upper sections could have been viewed as an opportunity for a more diverse character, rather than just extruding the floor plate upwards. It does not appear to respond to its context in the Smithfield area.

Our main concern is the setting of the Smithfield Market building and the apparent lack of any relationship to this historic element of this area in the City.

These proposals do need to be looked at again

We therefore object to the proposal as submitted and hope that a more considered and sympathetic design can be developed.

***111 Cannon Street, London, EC4N 5AR***

**Demolition of existing upper building and refurbishment of ground and basement and addition of 6 floors. Repositioning of the London Stone facing Cannon Street.**

Reasonable replacement building which is definitely an improvement on the existing building. This also allows a much better setting for the London Stone.

***River Plate House, 7 - 11 Finsbury Circus,  
London, EC2M 7EA***

**Demolition of the existing building with retention of the ground floor facade to South Place to facilitate an amendment to application dated 10th May 2013 (App No 12/00812/CAC) involving dismantling and reconstruction of the South Place facade from first to fifth floors and construction of a nine storey development.**

Satisfactory with little change from existing building.

***11 Bream's Buildings, London, EC4A 1DT***

**Change of use from offices (Class B1) to residential (Class C3).**

Seems an appropriate use for the 1890's building. Yet it is more residential and this should be assessed carefully within the context of where residential use should be permitted within the City (Policy)

***1 Bow Churchyard, London, EC4M 9DQ***

**Refurbishment of the existing office (Class B1) building including enlargement of existing office accommodation at 5th floor level, creation of new office accommodation at 6th floor level, facade recladding and internal alterations, enhanced office reception, changes of use at basement and ground floor levels to provide for retail (Classes A1, A3 or A4, 631sq.m) use floor space.**

The proposed "refurbishment" of the existing 1960/70s building is an extensive remodelling of the existing structure. The scale of the works proposed is considerable and fundamentally changes the existing building both in style and character, especially with the additional storey and terrace above. The character proposed is that of many recent new additions throughout the City, adding to the general homogeneity that is creeping through parts of the City.

Its relationship to St. Mary-le-Bow is unclear from the material submitted and we are fearful

that it will adversely affect the Church. In particular, the Churchyard itself as this is a key open space in the City. It may well compete with the Church and further studies and explanation are necessary to assess the impact of the proposals. Although the Church is referred to in the documentation, hardly any drawings or illustrations show the Church in relation to the proposals, which is concerning.

As currently proposed, we object to the application and look forward to seeing further studies and/or revised proposals.

### THE CITY HERITAGE PAINTER-STAINERS AWARD 2013



*Photo reproduced by kind permission of  
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The assessors for the Award, drawn from the Society and the Worshipful Company of Painter Stainers, our partners in the Award, as well as other organisations, visited and examined several schemes and agreed, unanimously, that the Award for 2013 should be made in

recognition of *No. 4, Brabant Court*, off Philpot Lane, Eastcheap. This is an impressive early 18<sup>th</sup> century dwelling house, a building type of which, fortunately, a number survive in the City. It has been restored to residential use after a long period of commercial occupation or disuse. Fortunately many original interior features survived, including panelling in the main rooms and the staircase, with three turned baluster to each tread, and its original mahogany handrail. The restoration of this original work and the matching of replacement work where necessary was carried out to a high standard.

The exterior work was also praiseworthy. Sash windows of a design based on older windows surviving on the lightwell elevation have replaced the plate glass windows inserted in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The segmental pedimented door-case, with Doric Order enrichments, has been well restored. The façade brickwork has been cleaned back to its original colour and the modern replacement brickwork of the parapet has been matched. Cement pointing has been replaced with traditional lime mortar.

The decision to confer the City Heritage Award for 2013 on 4 Brabant Court was intended to recognise it as a commendably example of how such a restoration should be carried out.

On 1<sup>st</sup> July, the Lord Mayor, Alderman Roger Gifford, accompanied by The Lady Mayoress, attended to unveil the plaque marking the award. They were met by the Chairman, and the Master Painter-Stainer, Alderman Gordon Haynes, Deputy Ken Ayres representing the Chief Commoner, Deputy Michael Welbank. Chairman of Planning and Transportation, Mr John Corless, and others, At the reception following the unveiling, the Chairman, introducing the Lord Mayor, expressed satisfaction that the City, the world's greatest financial centre, could accommodate and make good use of a house like No 4 Brabant Court, now restored to useful life. The Lord Mayor replied and presented a certificate to the architect of the scheme, Damian D'Arcy. The hospitality of John Corless, the head of Marlin Apartments, owners of the house, made this in every way a memorable occasion!

### The Assessors for 2013 were:

Desmond FitzPatrick BA, FSA Chairman

Peter Luscombe RIBA Deputy Chairman  
Andrew Hunter RIBA Painter-Stainers  
Company

Matthew Saunders MBE, MA, FSA Ancient  
Monuments Society

Peter Rees RIBA City Planning Officer

Douglas Woodward CBE, President of the  
Society, attended for the discussions.

### EVENTS



In April, members of the Society visited the recently refurbished Charles Dickens Museum at 48 Doughty Street (above) his last remaining London home, well-furnished and displaying books, manuscripts and personal possessions. Here he wrote *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby*.

In May a well-attended seminar discussed the tendency for smaller office accommodation in

the City to be converted to residential accommodation. Speakers included Graham Brough of The Centre for Business and Economic Research, Peter Bill, Property Correspondent of the *London Evening Standard* and Peter Rees, the City's Chief Planning Officer.



A visit took place in July to the William Morris Gallery (above) housed in his birthplace at Walthamstow, containing a collection which includes exhibits of his work in so many fields of the applied arts. William Morris's many activities included the foundation of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings at a time when such protection was sorely needed. The visit was greatly enjoyed by members.

In September, members enjoyed a tour of the Hall of the Worshipful Company of Tallow Chandlers, which has been on the same site since the 1400s and is an excellent example of a post Great Fire rebuilding.



The tour included its unique Court Room, its Dining Hall, damaged in the Blitz but expertly restored and its Parlour, a perfect interior with ornamented panelling and a ceiling of the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.

In November, the Society again held its Annual Dinner at the Montcalm Hotel in Chiswell Street, which received the City Heritage Award for 2012. The Guest of Honour, Lord Hankey, formerly President of The International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) proposed the toast to the Society and gave a review of conservation, actual and planned, in the Sub Continent, particularly Bangladesh.

Christmas was celebrated for a third successive year by the attendance of a number of members who enjoyed reserved seats at the annual carol service of St Botolph Without Bishopsgate. This splendid 18<sup>th</sup> century church as crowded and the singing, with splendid musical accompaniment, was memorable. The mince pies and mulled wine were also greatly appreciated.

Forthcoming events will include a visit to No. 4 Brabant Court, the City Heritage Award winner for 2013.

These events and the other activities of the Society have involved the efforts of some and the support of many. May I thank the Committee for their hard work and the members for their continued and enthusiastic interest in the Society's programme.

Desmond FitzPatrick, Chairman

**The Society's Executive Committee 2013**

C. Douglas Woodward CBE	President
Desmond FitzPatrick BA FSA	Chairman
Peter Luscombe RIBA	Deputy Chairman
Marina Nicholson	Hon. Secretary
Patrick Burke	Membership Secretary
Les Breadmore	Hon. Treasurer
Anthony Hemy RIBS	Planning Applications & Webmaster

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