



CITY HERITAGE SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2014

In December, I retired as Chairman of the Society after five busy and interesting years in office, being the happier to do so because Peter Luscombe had agreed to succeed me and I know that the Society will be in good hands. This, for me, the last Annual Report, provides the opportunity to consider the importance of The City Heritage Award, which, as you will know, is made annually in partnership with the Worshipful Company of Painter-Stainers, to recognise excellence in restoration or conversion of buildings considered important to the architectural or historic heritage of the City. The entries for the Award are judged by a panel of assessors, drawn from the two partners, who study details of the works and visit the sites.

Having organised the Award for five years, I realise better how effective it has been, since its inception in 1978, in creating and sustaining a climate of opinion favourable to building conservation in the City. Anyone who remembers the attitudes of the '60s and early '70s of the last century will appreciate the extent to which that climate of opinion has changed. Records of the Award over 37 years illustrate a range of successful restoration and improvement projects which it has honoured and has thereby shown that such projects are feasible and can be valuable.

The first Award was for the restoration of *31 Newbury Street*, off Bartholomew Close, a small late Georgian terrace house, then in uninviting surroundings which have now been greatly improved by conversion of one-time warehouses and workshops to residential properties and small business premises. The Lord Mayor of that year, Sir Peter Vanneck, unveiled a plaque at that first

Award ceremony and his successors have attended each subsequent award ceremony, so making it a special occasion!

Projects receiving the Award have included both "flagship" restorations, such as the *Fishmongers' Hall* (1982) (below); the *Royal Exchange* (1992); and the unique *Central Markets* (1995), and smaller, valuable restorations such as Rectory House in Lawrence Pountney Hill and the highly successful conversion of a bank in Cornhill to a pub/restaurant in which the impressive aspects of the banking hall and mezzanine have been retained as features.



As an assessor of the Award since 1999, I recall especially that of 2005, for the conversion of the semi-derelict western ward block at St Bartholemew's Hospital for use as a mammary cancer centre; and of 2003 for the conversion of the old Public Record Office building in Chancery Lane (overleaf) to provide a library for King's College London: thus, two impressive buildings of the 18th and 19th century

respectively, have been converted to new and valuable uses, illustrating like so many other Award-winning projects, that buildings no longer needed for one use may be adapted for another.



This statement of the obvious still appears worth making because conversions like these, properly recognised, help to foster climates of opinion favourable to conservation.

The Awards in my five years as Chairman have been interestingly various: that of 2010 was to the Corporation of London for its impressive restoration of the Great Fire Monument, which had been in a poor state, to its present splendour; in 2011, a much smaller project was recognised, being the skilful restoration and return to residential use of three late 18th century terrace houses in New Street, off Bishopsgate.

In the following year, the Award honoured the conversion of former Whitbread Brewery premises at Chiswell Street, long vacant, as a hotel, in which such industrial elements as iron pillars and brick vaulting have become striking features of the restored interior. Forty years ago, they would probably have been removed or, at best covered up as unsightly!

In 2013, the Award recognised the exemplary restoration of No 4 Brabant Court, near Eastcheap, a long-neglected house of 1725: here, the Award recognised the skills of the architect and the craftsmen

and the imagination and courage of the owner in saving a heritage building of great importance to the City.

The Award is an honour for those who receive it but it is also a privilege for the Society and The Worshipful Company of Painter-Stainers to be concerned in something so beneficial to the built heritage of our City.

This is a valedictory note so may I say how much, during my time as Chairman, I have appreciated the support of my fellow committee members, in every aspect of the Society's work including in the organisation of varied and interesting events such as those which follow.

EVENTS

In January members visited Lloyd's Register, recognised internationally over two centuries as an inspector and classifier of shipping and more recently, of much complex onshore plant and installations. These splendid, very late Victorian premises were built when the Arts and Crafts movement met the early 20th century. The richness of the interiors produced that sense of hidden splendours so often experienced by those who explore the City.



In March, members enjoyed a visit to The Royal Courts of Justice in the Strand, a work in the scholarly Gothic of George Edward Street, completed around 1870 (above). An introductory talk, informative and enjoyable, in one of the courtrooms was followed by a

tour of the building. It seemed endless - staircases, corridors and vaulted spaces of this distinguished building which gives a view of Victorian craftsmanship at its best, whether in wood, stone or metal.

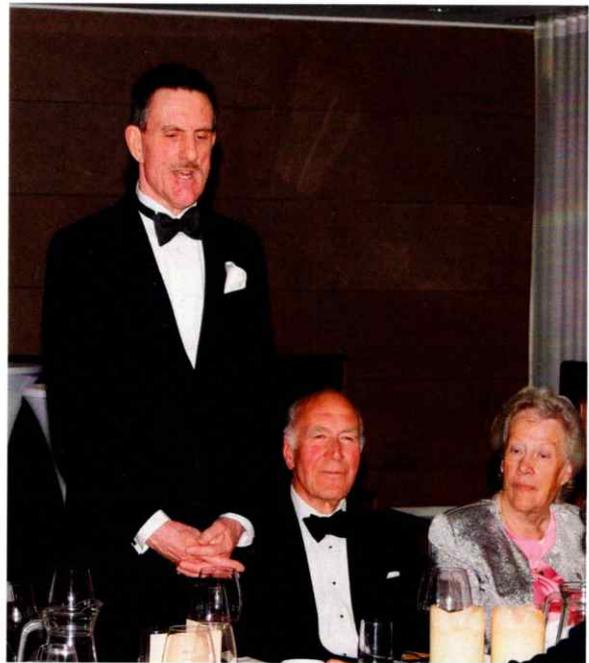
In April a visit was arranged to The Royal College of Physicians near Regent's Park, which received its Royal Charter in 1518. It is concerned with the advance of medical science and is an examining body for higher medical qualifications. Its much-admired 1960s is the work of the late Sir Denys Lasdun, perhaps most famous for the National Theatre on the South Bank.

A visit in June to the Parliamentary Archives was of interest both for the location - in the Victoria Tower of The Palace of Westminster - and character of the records it guards, dating back to the 1400s and including the Death Warrant of King Charles I and early Acts of Parliament literally *enrolled*, being copies on rolls of parchment in half-uncial court hand! From an upper balcony of the Tower, there is a dramatic view of the Sovereign's Entrance, used for the State Opening of Parliament.

In July, there was a delayed but most enjoyable visit to No 4 Brabant Court, near Eastcheap, a characteristic Georgian town house of 1725 which has been restored after a century of commercial use followed by years of vacancy. Fortunately, original panelling, the splendid staircase, with three turned balusters for each step, and other important features survived both heavy usage and later neglect and our members were impressed by both the overall character of the restoration and the meticulous treatment of details.

In September, members enjoyed a walking tour from Farringdon to Bank seeing on the way aspects of the postal service and its history and development - including post boxes, telephone kiosks and *mail-rail*. It was an unusual expose of London's history of everyday things.

The Society's Annual Dinner was held late in October at The South Place Hotel, on the northern edge of the City and we welcomed, as our Guest of Honour, Peter Rees, for twenty nine years Chief Planning Officer of the City of London, and, since his recent retirement, Professor of Places at the Bartlett School of Planning and Architecture within University College London. His after-dinner speech, touching on planning matters, was, as might be expected, memorable and healthily sceptical.



In December, for a fourth successive year, some members joined in the Parish Carol Service at St Botolph Without Bishopsgate, a large 18th century City church which, as in previous years on this occasion, was crowded to the galleries. The musical accompaniment to the singing, provided by schools connected with the parish, was impressive and, with the mulled wine and mince pies served afterwards, made this a good opening to the Christmas season. Do come next year!

THE CITY HERITAGE PAINTER-STAINERS AWARD 2014



On 7th July 2014, we welcomed The Lord Mayor, Alderman Dame Fiona Woolf, who attended to present the 37th City Heritage Award to the Corporation of London for the restoration to its original splendour of the Holborn Viaduct Bridge, the crossing point of the Fleet Valley at Farringdon Street. It was opened in 1869, the most visible aspect of the Holborn Viaduct scheme which created one of the hidden engineering marvels of Victorian London in the form of a level highway, about a thousand yards in length, from Holborn Circus to Newgate Street.

The bridge had suffered over the years, both structurally and in its appearance. Now it has been cleaned, repainted in its original livery, and the gilding renewed on the heraldic griffin figures on the parapets. The four bronze symbolic statues have been repaired and cleaned.

Of the original four lodges, one at each corner of the bridge, those on the south side have survived from the original scheme; that at the north west corner was rebuilt a few years ago. The lodge at the north eastern corner, demolished some years ago, has been rebuilt in facsimile: this renewal

received an award jointly with that for the bridge, being considered an important supporting element, impeccably worked and decorated. Like the original lodge, it carries a statue of Sir Hugh Middleton, the Jacobean entrepreneur of The New River. So the Viaduct Bridge is once again a worthy grand entrance to the City from the north west.

The Assessors for the City Heritage Award 2014 were:

Desmond FitzPatrick, BA, FSA Chairman

Peter Luscombe, FRIBA Deputy Chairman

Andrew Hunter, FRIBA Painter-Stainers

Harry Evans, FRICS Painter-Stainers

Dr Jennifer Freeman, FSA

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

COMMENTS ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Temple Bar House, 23-28 Fleet Street, London, EC4Y 1AA

Change of use to hotel.

67-71 Moorgate & 34 London Wall, London, EC4R 6BH

Change of use to hotel.

Objection due to architectural treatment.

40-46 Cannon Street, 27-28 Garlick Hill & 13-15 Great St Thomas Apostle, London, EC4N 6JJ

Change of use to hotel.

It was noted that the above three applications are for conversion to hotel and this trend needs to be watched so that there is not an over-provision within the City.

**Bevis Marks House, 24 Bevis Marks,
London, EC3A 7JB**

Demolition – Redevelopment as
office/retail.

61 Fleet Street, London, EC4Y 1JU

Conversion of offices into flats.

Minor queries on details.

130 Fenchurch Street, London, EC3M 5DJ

Demolition of existing building and
construction of new building for office and
retail use.

**Creed Court, 3-5 Ludgate Hill, 1-3 Creed
Lane & 11-12 Ludgate Sq., London, EC2M
7EA**

Demolition of the existing building with
retention of the facade to Ludgate Hill to
Hotel & Restaurant use.

Another hotel.

**2 Cloth Court & 55 Long Lane, London,
EC1A 7LS**

Change of use of upper floors from offices
(class B1) to residential (class C3). Change
of use of ground floor from offices (class
B1) to retail (classes A1, A2 & A3).

Seems an appropriate use for the 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).

There have been quite a number of other
applications for this change in use, which
has been a continuing trend from previous
years.

Desmond FitzPatrick

The Society's Executive Committee 2014

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

*Chairman with effect from November 2014

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