



# CITY HERITAGE SOCIETY

## ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2019

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I am pleased to let you know that Dorian Crone BA, BArch, Depp, ARIBA, MRTPI, IHBC has agreed to take on the Chairmanship of the City Heritage Society, subject to approval at the AGM. As you may gather from the array of letters after his name, he is eminently qualified to fulfil this post. He is both a qualified architect and Town Planner and specializes in conservation issues. He has worked for 30 years as Historic Buildings and Areas inspector with English Heritage, now Historic England, in which capacity he has advised all London Boroughs including the City of London. His wide experience in this field includes acting as an expert witness as well as sitting on the Design Review Panels for the South West Region, the London Boroughs of Lewisham, Richmond upon Thames, and Wandsworth.

He also has experience as a trustee and chairman of charitable trusts. So, you might say tailor made for the job.

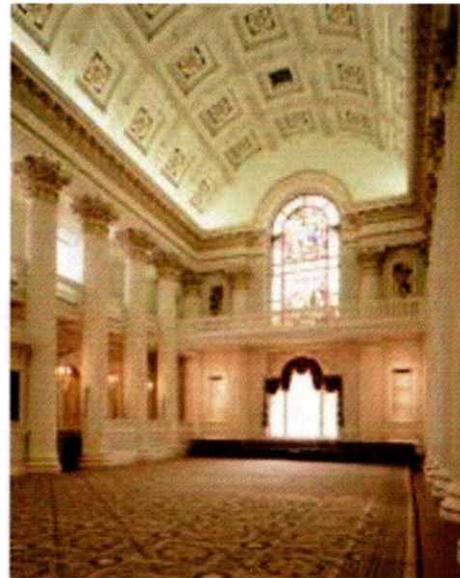
We also intend to propose at the AGM that Desmond FitzPatrick should become President of the Society, a post not filled since the death of Douglas Woodward.

If agreed, I shall become Vice Chairman.

### VISITS

Our first visit of the year in February was to Mansion House where we were privileged to see in addition to the usual Egyptian Hall, the Saloon and reception rooms, the Ballroom. This splendid room with its original gallery is now used for meetings and conferences but was indeed in earlier

times used by the Lord Mayors to hold grand entertainments.



We also were given the chance to see the two State bedrooms. These are quite small but have dramatic fireplaces and in one case a four-poster bed. Unlike state bedrooms in most great houses, these are in use and on the day of our visit the evening wear for a Lord Mayor Locum Tenens, who was to preside over a dinner that evening, was laid out ready for him on the four-poster bed.

In April, thanks to the good offices of our Vice Chairman, Desmond Fitzpatrick who is a member we had a memorable visit to the National Liberal Club on the Embankment. Founded in 1882 by William Gladstone and designed by Sir Alfred Waterhouse, it makes ingenious use of its odd shaped site. Our guide's descriptions were enhanced by Desmond's interpolations regarding the various Liberal prime ministers and MPs whose portraits populate the walls.



The tour finished on the balcony terrace overlooking the Embankment and the Thames which is such a delightful feature of this striking building.

In June we visited the home of Thomas Carlyle and his wife Jane. Carlyle was an historian and philosopher much respected in his own day. He was visited by many of the writers of his era, Dickens, Ruskin and Robert Browning to name but a few.



Built in 1708 the house was never owned by Carlyle who moved in in 1841. It was altered to suit his needs. We are told that these alterations were carried out while he was away leaving Jane to get things done. Today Jane is considered to be one of the great letter writers.

On our visit we were given an introductory talk and then made our way around the house at our own pace. The exhibits were all very well labelled.

In November we visited the Royal Opera House. Our excellent guide took us behind

the scenes. We viewed from above the scene dock which is a technical tour de force. It revolves to allow whole sets to be changed rapidly. The stage can be changed too from a normal stage for operas to a sprung stage for ballet.



We saw some of the rehearsal rooms and visited one of the costume workshops. It was amusing that, amid all this modern technology in the costume workshops there were pairs of ropes hanging from the ceiling all over the room. These were knotted together at intervals which allowed costumes to be hooked on them on their hangers at varying heights, a sort of ad hoc system which works so well that it survives.

### **City Heritage Award 2019**

The City Heritage Award for 2019 was given to the conversion of the former Port of London Authority building in Trinity Square into an hotel, the Four Seasons, and apartments together with the re-ordering Seething Lane Gardens. The original building was designed by Sir Edwin Cooper and reflects in its scale and grandeur the importance of the London Docks in the 1930s when they were at their busiest.

The former central domed area of the building had been destroyed during the War and the space filled with offices. The executive suite and the boardroom and much else were not destroyed. The removal of the post-war offices has allowed the creation of a new reception area under a simplified version of the dome. The executive suite has

been restored and sympathetically converted to form a club and the boardroom, now called the United Nations Room, as a reception was held there at the inaugural meeting to form that organisation, is now a ballroom.



The Lord Mayor, Alderman Peter Estlin, accompanied by his wife and his sheriffs and their consorts, unveiled the plaque and presented the certificate to the architects at a ceremony on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

Architects: Aukett Swanke, Garden Design:  
Capita, Client: Reignwood, Contractor:  
Ardmore Contracting Ltd

### **The Assessors for the City Heritage Award 2019:**

Peter Luscombe RIBA

Desmond Fitzpatrick FSA

Andrew Hunter dip Arch RIBA Grad  
DiplCons[AA]  
Dr Jenny Freeman OBE BA[Hons]  
DiplCons[AA] HonsDocArts FRSA

Frank Kellsall MA FSA IHBC

Dorian Crone BA BAarch Dip TP RIBA

### **Annual Dinner**

The Annual dinner was once again held in the Guildhall Club where we received good service and an excellent meal.



Our principal guest was Valerie Owen le Vaillant. She is the current Master of the Worshipful Company of Chartered Architects which company has been most helpful in assisting in the search for my successor as Chairman of this Society. Valerie specialises in Conservation matters and her speech was very apt for this Society and the full text is appended to this report.

### **Carol Service**

On the 19<sup>th</sup> December we once again were made very welcome as we shared in the Annual Parish Carol Service at St Botolph's Without Bishopsgate. A pew was reserved for the Society. The service was enlivened by the singing being led by the choir of Coopers' Company and Coborn School.

## **Planning Application Comments**

We continued to try to monitor all planning Applications to the City and where appropriate to comment on them. The schemes we commented on are listed below with a brief summary:

### *120 Cannon Street*

This was a proposal to modify and extend an existing building and we objected to the proposed double height windows proposed for the new 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> floors. In our view were so large and upset the scale of the rest of the building.

### *74 Coleman Street*

We objected to various aspects of the proposed alterations to this building including the proposal for double storey height dormers as we considered these to be out of scale with the rest of the façade.

### *Sherborne House, 119-121 Cannon Street*

We objected to what was described in the application as "dormer extension" but which we considered to be so large as to constitute a glazed wall which we considered to be detrimental to the building and the conservation area.

### *25 Cannon Street*

We objected to the proposed alterations as we considered that they destroyed the unity and integrity of the design of the existing building.

### *Brewers' Hall Aldermanbury*

We objected to the proposal in its current form to raise a double height mansard on the existing building with double height dormer windows.

### *25 Cloth Fair*

We objected to the location of proposed AC units not only in themselves but because we feared that approval would set a precedent for other buildings in the area.

### *33 Creechurch Lane*

We objected to this proposal because of its effect on the Bevis Marks Synagogue from which it is separated only by a narrow lane.

### *25-26 Lime Street*

We objected to two aspects of these proposals. The first related to the proximity of an additional floor above a retained façade and the other to the treatment of a party wall which will rise above the adjacent building.

### *Pavement outside 118A London Wall*

This relates to a proposed use of a former telephone kiosk. It was proposed to turn this into a retail unit. What it was to sell was not specified but the objections raised to other proposals for new uses for telephone kiosks still applied in that they involve someone staffing the unit which seems impractical and any such use is likely to spill outside the kiosk and be untidy.

### *68 Long Lane*

We did not object in principle to the additional floor but had reservations on the detailing of the alterations.

**Master Architect's Speech for City Heritage Society Annual Dinner  
15<sup>th</sup> October 2019**

**Valerie Owen Le Vaillant OBE**



The Worshipful Company of Chartered Architects (the 'Company') is a modern livery company of the City of London. The overall objective of the Company is to promote the development and advancement of the science, art and practice of architecture in the City of London, the UK and globally. The Company was founded in 1985 and granted livery status in 1988. It ranks 98<sup>th</sup> in the order of precedence for the City of London Livery Companies.

The Company currently has around 250 members, including 175 liverymen. It includes members from many of the leading architectural practices in the UK, widely acknowledged for their design excellence, both nationally and internationally, as well as past and serving RIBA Presidents. Most of its charitable work focuses on promoting architecture and architectural education, including sponsoring and mentoring students and, in the future, apprentices. The Company supports education through awards and prizes as well as through a range of charities related to the City, and so I am delighted to be invited to speak at the City Heritage Society tonight.

Throughout my entire career, I have engaged in heritage work. I was a retained architect to the Marquis of Tavistock and the

Trustees of the Bedford Estate in London, between 1980 and 1989, working on many Grade I and Grade II Listed buildings. Until 2014, I held a Ministerial appointment to the Church Buildings Council, managing a significant portfolio of Listed churches of national significance. I am wholly committed to restoring and improving historic buildings in a sympathetic manner, whilst helping to safeguard their long-term future.

In addition, I am truly multi-disciplinary, being a Chartered Architect, Town Planner, Development Surveyor and Environmentalist and an expert in sustainable development. I have a solid track record in securing beneficial Planning Permissions and delivering successful projects in heritage buildings and conservation areas in east Kent, including Oast houses; barns; medieval Halls and fine historic dwelling houses. I have also worked on numerous Livery Halls including the Drapers' Hall, the Tallow Chandlers' Hall and the Barber Surgeons' Hall in the City of London. Finally, I have worked on many

Listed buildings in the City, such as the 'old' Scottish Provident building in Lombard Street. Heritage is where my heart is!

**Planning can be looked at from numerous levels. Nationally and at a strategic level, I would say it is a huge success –**

Imagine you are taking off in a plane from an airport in an Asian city; look out the window and all you are likely to see is a mass of uncontrolled development, with urban sprawl linking one settlement to another without any respect for culture, the environment or historic settlement boundaries.

But when you fly over London and elsewhere in England, you can literally see the positive influence of the Planning system laid out before you. The settlements are clearly identified and protected; the green belt is visible, defining land-uses and maintaining our beautiful countryside and way of life, despite huge development pressure from London, the world city, and elsewhere.

In fact, Britain is more crowded than India and China. England is the most crowded country in Europe and the fourth most crowded in the world as our population soars relentlessly towards the 70 million mark, which is an increase in population equivalent to 10 more "Birmingham".

1. A league table which reveals the pressure of population growth on dwindling resources puts Singapore in the number one spot followed by Israel and Kuwait. The UK as a whole is 17th in the list of 130 countries and this, coupled with the huge pressure on environmental resources, means land planning was probably never more important. How do we square the fact that we need to building 250,000 more houses each year and yet, for example, we have lower rainfall per head than those

living in the Sahara. What a conundrum!

2. I believe the NPPF is a tour-de-force. Yes, it champions the notion of a 5-year housing land supply, but in a positive way. High quality design in new development (paragraph 124) is promoted. Importantly, it recognises (paragraph 127) that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping, and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. The Framework acknowledges the importance of heritage assets, including archaeological remains. The NPPF also identifies the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage as important considerations in all areas. The NPPF says that when 'considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation'. NPPF (194) states that "any harm to, or loss of, ....a designated heritage asset (from its alteration, or destruction **or from development within its setting**) should require clear and convincing justification.'

**What goes wrong at local level – within streetscapes and districts?**

In the City, there is the overriding and compelling need to maintain the Square Mile as the best and most competitive place to deliver financial services anywhere in the world. It is the driver of London, the world city and, since financial and professional services make up around 70% of the GDP, it is also the driver of the UK economy. Financial services alone contributed £132 Bn to the economy in 2018.

In the 1980s Canary Wharf set out to build 12 m/ft<sup>2</sup> office space; the Caesar Pelli tower at 800 ft tall dominated the skyline and was just 2.5 miles east of the City of London – the world's pre-eminent international financial centre. Plans were swiftly approved by the LDDC and branded 'Wall Street on Water'. The City's competitive response was a radical, pro-development overhaul of local planning in the mid-1980s. Three decades of growth have redefined the urban landscape in London and transformed it into *the* pre-eminent global city. Now, reigning over London, the Shard is its tallest building, dwarfing earlier icons such as the historic Tower Bridge. More than 70 skyscrapers are under construction, promising to re-define the cityscape even further.

Since the creation of the new GLA around 15 years ago, the Mayor of London has produced the London Plan, again a strategic document which seeks to cluster tall buildings in key areas of intensive development, and these inevitably include the City of London and Canary Wharf. Sometimes, it seems to me, key policies can produce perverse incentives. One of these is the St Paul's Heights Policy which, while protecting views of St Paul's, has resulted in contorted buildings which do not represent good design, and seem to have sparked a desire to create individualistic designs which are often discordant and incongruous features in an otherwise harmonious streetscape – they are out of context!

As a result of this, the role of the City Heritage Society is ever more important and worthwhile, because the City of London is the ancient core from which the rest of London developed. It is governed by the oldest local authority in the country, with origins pre-dating Parliament. Our mighty City, London, has been a centre for settlement, trade, commerce and ceremony since the Roman period, producing a unique historic environment of exceptional richness

and importance. The City's history is easily seen in its townscape, contributing significantly to its commercial and cultural vibrancy.

Inevitably, the City's unique history has resulted in a high number of designated heritage assets – over 600 List buildings; 29 Conservation areas; 48 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and 4 historic parks and gardens. Typical examples of these include Listed Wren churches such as St Mary-le-Bow and the Guildhall; historic areas such as Fleet Street or Bank junction; scheduled archaeological remains such as the Roman and medieval walls and registered gardens such as the Inner and Middle Temples. The City forms part of the Tower of London World Heritage Sites local setting. Against this heritage backdrop, and in the face of at least 70 more new tall towers coming forward in London, the role of the City Heritage Society was never more important as it assesses new planning applications as it seeks to safeguard and embrace the City's historic environment whilst promoting the highest standards of contextual innovative designs.

Earlier I said 'Heritage is where my heart is', so I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your work in protecting both our past *and* our future and would like you to join me in raising your glasses in a toast to '*Peter Luscombe and the City Heritage Society.*'

**The Society's Executive Committee 2019**

Peter Luscombe RIBA

Chairman

Desmond FitzPatrick FSA

Vice Chairman

Antony Croot

Hon. Treasurer

Patrick Burke

Membership Secretary

Anthony Hemy RIBA

Planning Report & Webmaster

D Sanya Juliuson

Dorian Crone RIBA (co-opted)

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