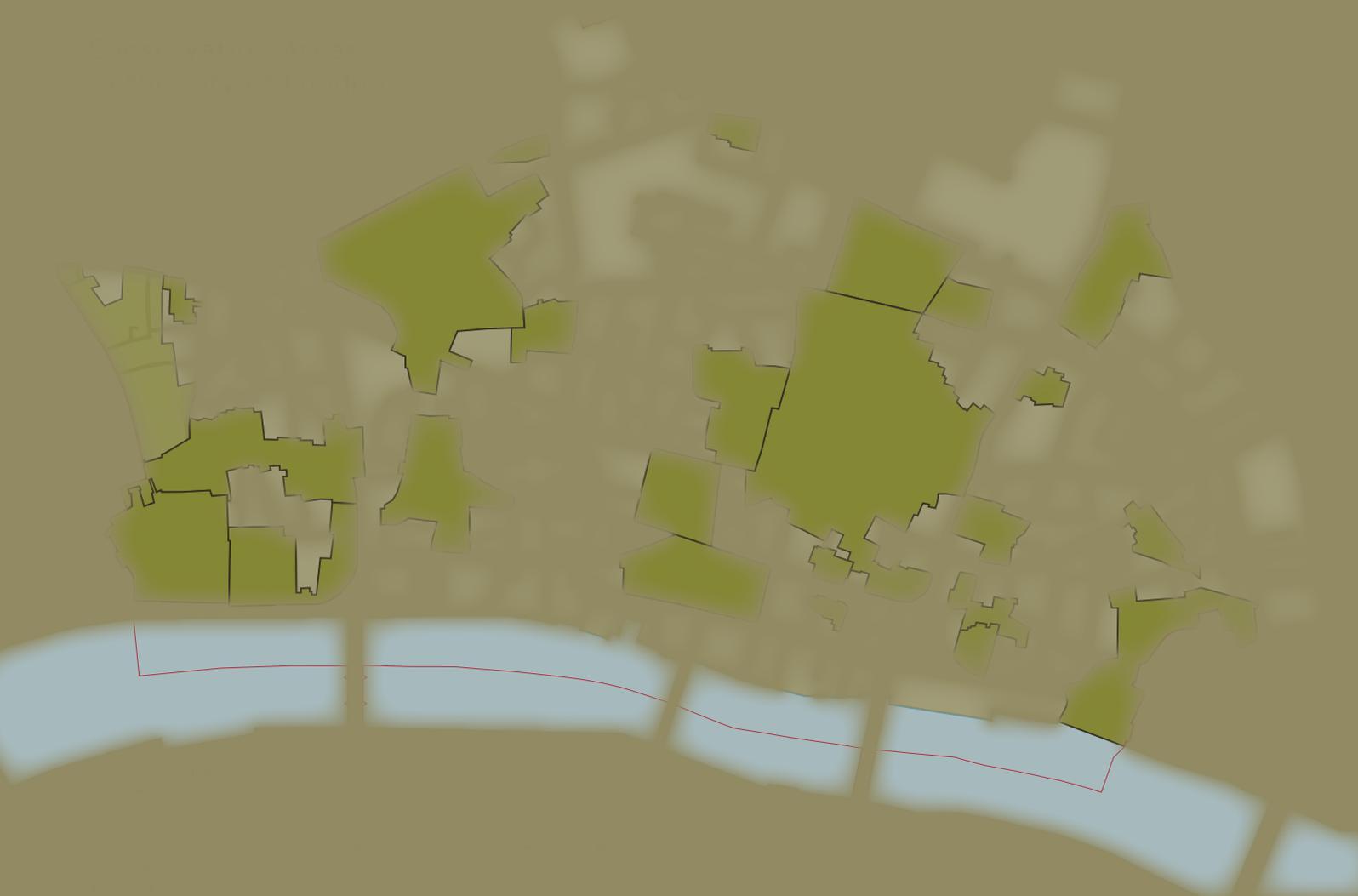


# Conservation Areas in the City of London

A General Introduction to their Character



Department of Planning & Transportation



# Conservation Areas in the City of London

## A General Introduction to their Character



Conservation Areas in the City of London is organised and presented in two complementary parts. This document forms the introduction and background to the character of the City's conservation areas. Principally, it looks at the evolution of the City of London, dealing briefly with its chronological history, and examining the structural arrangement and architectural form of the City. Initially, it identifies the elements which may coalesce and interact to create the character of the urban area. The second part will be in a series, identifying the principal elements from which the particular character and identity of each area are derived. These will be published for all conservation areas.



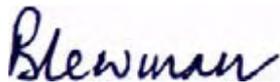
# Chairman's Foreword

The City of London is the original nucleus of the capital and, with a history spanning 2000 years, is the most historic part of London. Alongside the later governmental focus of Westminster, the City of London has remained the mercantile, financial and commercial heart of London and the nation, and now functions as international financial capital. Its unique townscape and character are a result of the evolution of its role, influence and traditions over this period of time. This has created an attractive, varied and dynamic environmental quality which, despite much change and adaptation, is still widely recognised and valued by those who locate and work within or visit the City - both nationally and internationally.

It is important that change is managed in a way which preserves and strengthens the rich, complex, intricate and often subtle character and individuality of the City's conservation areas. This character continues to reflect much of the City's historic origins and evolution. The expression of continuity, despite cyclical and relatively frequent change, is something associated with City institutions and business and their traditions. The agents ( now often international ) of future change in the fabric and character of the City need an awareness of, respect for and sensitivity to the historic and environmental context within which they work.

This is the general introduction and background to the series of individual character summaries for each conservation area in the City, and forms part of a programme of publications on the environmental quality of the City of London. It analyses the nature of the character of the City's conservation areas and identifies those factors central to the quality of the environment of the City.

This series on the conservation areas of the City of London is published by the City at a time of widespread recognition of the value of such information to the understanding of conservation area character - vital for its preservation or enhancement.



Mrs Barbara Newman  
Chairman: Planning and Transportation Committee

December 1994



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The Museum of London.

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# Introduction

National concern with the preservation of the character of areas of architectural or historic interest has arisen in response to the 'excesses' of post-war development and the associated loss of much of importance in the towns and cities of Britain. Following 19th century concern at the lack of protection for individual buildings and monuments the present concept of listed buildings and their protection was introduced primarily by the 1947 Act. The broader concept of areas of special architectural or historic interest was introduced by the Civic Amenities Act 1967, with subsequent planning powers to enable the safeguarding of such special interest. The concept of the conservation area embraces listed buildings and the multiple factors and characteristics relating to the origin and the present form and use of an area.

The statutory definition of a conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Local planning authorities have a duty to pay 'special attention' to these objectives in the framing and the implementation of their planning policies. Government and English Heritage advice enlarges upon this to the extent that national terms of reference will permit.

The character and appearance of conservation areas will vary greatly. Character will be composed of a spectrum of factors which in combination and emphasis will be distinctive to that area - the result of the evolution of that area wrought by the many and varied decisions which have created its present form, given situation and original topography. The intricacy and the richness of such an area will directly, though often subtly, reflect the length, nature and complexity of this evolution. The character therefore, and to an extent the appearance, of any conservation area derives from this process and the current manifestations inherent in its present form. The objective in the preservation or the enhancement of a conservation area is to manage change in such a way as to recognise, safeguard and strengthen this character.

The history of the City of London is one of the most complex and sustained of any settlement in Britain; this is reflected in the majority of the conservation areas. This General Introduction analyses the factors at play in the creation of the character of the City as experienced within its conservation areas. Those principal elements which uniquely combine to create the character and appearance of each conservation area are then identified in the published summary for that area. An appreciation of conservation area character in the City relies upon the background examined here, together with the recognition of the individuality of each conservation area, and that the role of each building within any area in the City will be different.

This General Introduction addresses the character of the City of London and the constituents of conservation area character. An initial section examines briefly the nature of **Conservation Area Character** to explain the role and relevance of the various environmental qualities which coincide to create this character, informed by the particular circumstances of the City of London. The greater proportion of the document deals specifically with **The Character of the City of London and its Conservation Areas** in three subsections - 1. the evolution, and history, of the City, 2. its urban structure, and 3. its architectural form. The publication closes with reference to Conservation Policy and Designations, identifying the sources of national policy and advice, planning policy in the City, and the present conservation areas in the City, followed by Publications, References and Associated Reading.

The object of this published series is to provide the necessary background information for the understanding of the special character of the City's conservation areas in the interests of their sensitive management and control.

# Conservation Area Character

Urban character is derived from the historical evolutionary sequence particular to that area and principally from the combination of and interaction between the area's form and structure, its uses and activity patterns, its architectural fabric, all aspects of its groundscape, roofscape, skyline and setting. Where it arises from the combination of so many factors and influences, usually over a considerable period of time, the appearance and especially the character will be unique to that area and both complex and subtle. The way these characteristics function and interact is central to an understanding of their role in the creation of the particular character of the City of London, and how this is expressed in the individual identity of its conservation areas. The role played by each of the characteristics therefore will vary from area to area; certain characteristics will inevitably be more readily apparent than others. Their respective influences form the basis of the summaries published for each conservation area.

The three dimensional form of the area is subject to, and needs to be understood within, the additional dimension of time. The character perceived will be influenced by the nature and cycle of activities engaged in by the occupants of the area, and both pedestrian and vehicular traffic, on a daily, weekly or sometimes seasonal basis. This will determine the degree and type of street vitality experienced within any given area. Over a longer time scale the activities and users identified with an area will also change

-sometimes radically, with for example the relocation of a particular industry or trade. At the same time, the way the physical form itself is perceived will be conditioned by the time of day, or indeed the time of year.

It is frequently the incremental evolution of an area over time which ensures its unique qualities, complexity and character - its balance between continuity and change. Such is expressed in the age, maturity, condition and patina of its buildings and streetscape - often reflecting the influence of past use and activity, as a form of physical documentation and collective memory of the area.

There is a direct bearing on the degree and nature of change a conservation area can absorb before its essential character is damaged or destroyed. The maintenance of the character and appearance of the area will depend upon the number, extent, form and expression of its new buildings and their capacity to mature and mellow - and thus gradually to integrate with and complement the character of the area.



Bank Junction 1890

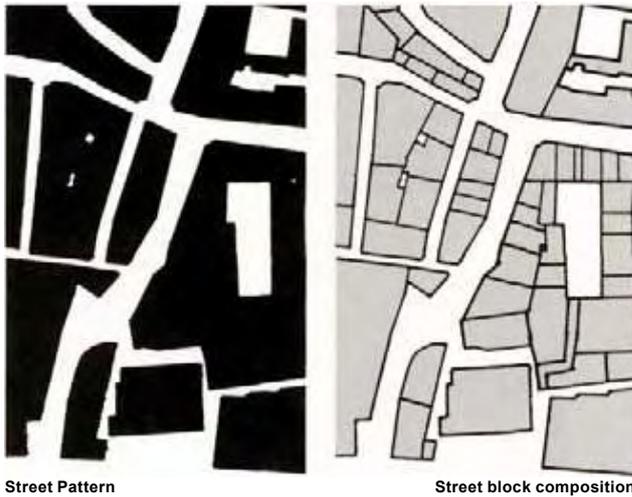
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Bank Junction 1890

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The character or 'genius loci' of any area is perceived and understood using all the human senses: indeed the psychology of a place has been identified as possibly the 'sixth sense'. Where the richness and diversity of activity and the patterns of order or disorder are reduced, an area begins to lose its relevance to some or all of those senses, and consequently both its stimulus and its attraction as a place. The special qualities of any conservation area rely upon the interaction of many characteristics. The principal among them in this context are briefly analysed below.



### Form and Structure

The street pattern, including its lanes, alleys, courts, squares and other spaces, establishes the basic form, the design 'infra-structure', of an area and also its physical and functional character. This pattern defines, and in turn is defined by, the street block - traditionally comprising, in most cases, a series of individual buildings, often sharing internal space/s and/or lightwells. The street pattern and street block define the urban framework and grain

characteristic of an area, and frequently represent its gradual historical evolution. The way an area is perceived, used and understood is affected by the various attributes of the street pattern, for example history, longevity, scale, hierarchy, enclosure, alignment, convergence and intersection. The influence of natural topography may explain parts of the current street pattern and may still condition the present architectural form and townscape, and the way it is perceived. The form and structure can be both robust in its ability to endure, yet subtle in quality through the variations of street or building alignment, which may in themselves reflect some past occurrence within the area.

### Uses and Patterns of Activity

Much of an area's essential vitality and consequently its character derives from the range and nature of associated uses and the pattern of activity they generate or attract.



Billingsgate Market 1962 Ken Howard

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Urban evolution and form is a result of formative defensive, commercial, institutional and cultural influences. Evidence of the past and present role of an area may be represented in both its more recent and older buildings. The commercial tradition of mixed uses and the occupation of lower floors, especially ground floor, by uses such as shops, pubs and cafes, contribute to the street vitality and interest, architectural variety and display; the additional character dimensions of noise and smell may accompany certain activities.



The Church of St Mary le Bow in Cheapside, London J. Bowles c1730

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Patterns of activity tend to be of a cyclical nature, on a daily or longer basis, which further contributes to variety.

### Traffic and Transport

The presence of both pedestrian and vehicular traffic establishes and may accentuate or detract from an area's character. The physical form of the area in turn imposes a framework and discipline upon such movement, creating certain associations with and between areas, and also upon their balance of local or through pedestrian use and vehicular traffic. Regular use of the street by both pedestrian and vehicle may be a central aspect of the vitality inherent in the character of many areas. The distinction in level between pavement and carriageway has a particular bearing on the legibility of the street and the sense of security felt by someone on foot.

The geometry of the street, created by the relationship between building height and scale, and the width of footway, kerb and carriageway, is frequently essential to its character and its special sense of place. The kerb and its shadow line will emphasise the alignment and progress of the street and unify the sequence of building frontages. It will also influence and articulate the perceived scale of the street and its sense of relative space or intimacy. The variation and characteristics inherent in traditional paving are also basic to the character and perception of the street.



Cloth Fair c.1890s

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Ludgate Square 1994



College Hill

The historical development of the area may be significantly influenced by the origin, past use and hierarchy of its street network, and for example its situation in relation to major intersections, railway termini or commercial river frontage.

### Built Fabric

Buildings contribute to the character of any area collectively, relatively and individually, and compose and establish the grain of the street block and the scale at which the townscape is perceived. They can be characterised, for example by scale, age, style, materials, composition, modulation, fenestration,



West Smithfield

condition, use and identity; all are qualities which establish both character and appearance. Character may derive from homogeneity or variety, or a combination of the two, in relation to each of these characteristics - highlighting the potential complexity. Within certain common characteristics a varied sequence of buildings can create an effective dynamic and pleasing visual harmony, of streetscape and of roofscape.

Individual buildings of special architectural or historic interest may be representative of the character of their setting, or may markedly depart from it. It is often the combined character of the more modest buildings in which the special identity, interest or vitality of the area resides - which the concept of the conservation area recognises and was devised to safeguard.

### Historical References

The special interest of any area will depend upon a variety of historical reference. While frequently these will be buildings or structures, they may also take the form of early or original street patterns, spaces, alignments, surfacing, trees or other facets of the street scene. Associations with



Temple Bar Memorial

particular historic events or people can add a further realm of interest to both buildings and areas. All contribute to the historical tapestry and are essential to the maintenance of the sense of history, maturity and continuity at the heart of the character of an area.



Temple Bar & Fleet Street T.S. Boys 1842 GUILDHALL LIBRARY

## Archaeological Remains

The history of an area may be readily apparent or concealed, with physical evidence both above and below ground level. Whereas some survivals are known, or anticipated, others may be suspected or occasionally only become evident upon building and excavation works. Historic urban areas are particularly complex where the degree



City Wall at the Crescent

MUSEUM OF LONDON

of rebuilding over time often obscures the sequence of building. The extent to which this older fabric has been re-used is reflected in the effect of past site position and boundaries on present day buildings. In many cases the current or past presence of surviving fabric or the functions of previous centuries may well have provided the foundations, structure, materials, boundaries or alignments for subsequent development. It is not unlikely therefore that much of importance, historically and archaeologically, underlies and has influenced the past expression of an area. (Archaeology and its planning context are the subject of a separate City publication - "Archaeology and Planning in the City of London" published in June 1993).

## Groundscape - Surfaces, Street Furniture, Trees, Planting

Significant to an area's environmental and historic character and individuality are the qualities, range and details of materials and local traditions of paved surfaces. The established use of natural materials contributes characteristics of colour, variegation and texture, together with the capacity for these characteristics to be accentuated and enhanced over time. A complementary relationship with associated building materials is gradually established, reinforcing local identity and cohesion. Areas of historic paving and/or long established street furniture both contribute substantially to the quality of the townscape, and provide the context and direction in which this character can be strengthened. Their role lies in the articulation, composition, detail, interest, and hence the identity of the street scene - and, expressed in materials, forms and patterns traditional to that area, they effectively sustain a valuable and necessary sense of continuity.



Kings Bench Walk

Open space, trees and areas of planting can play a central role in the character of an area. They may be of historic and environmental value in the contribution made to a special sense of place - reflecting its evolution and the degree of enclosure or openness associated with the townscape. Equally, the scarcity of such 'greenery' may also be an essential characteristic. Established trees, planting and associated open space may provide a valuable foil to or relief from otherwise hard urban forms. Simultaneously they represent and foster the spectrum of nature and seasonal variation in the day to day urban experience.

## Lighting

Urban townscape character is different by night. Light fittings, whether fixed to buildings or on their own standards, acquire greater visual importance and create areas /pools of visual prominence. At the same time light emanating from buildings and shopfronts will create its own pattern of focus and interest - highlighting the importance of, for example, the shop window and the quality and sensitivity of advertisements.



Leadenhall Market



Royal Exchange

The floodlighting of buildings or features in the townscape can also radically affect the character of the townscape at night. The intensity, the colour, the tone, the visibility of the fittings used and the way the lighting is employed in relation to architectural form and detail can be central to the success or otherwise of any floodlighting.

Most critical perhaps is the decision on what to floodlight to promote an understanding of, for example, the historic and/or architectural importance of buildings or structures, and whether this might be incompatible with an otherwise 'quiet' local character. A considered and co-ordinated approach is essential. Its indiscriminate and piecemeal use neutralises the potential of floodlighting to reveal or emphasise local or urban character by night.



Bank of England

Two characteristics in particular – **detail** and **materials** – are central to the creation and maintenance of the character of any conservation area. Much interest and meaning reside in architectural detail and the detail associated with the street scene in general. Additionally, as the essential medium for the expression of both buildings and streetscape, the characteristics of the materials used establish much of an area's character and appearance, and help to maintain its individuality. This is the case at any one time and over time.

### **Detail & Materials**

Architecture, throughout its history, has been the medium for the expression of most public art and represents considerable investment in artistic creativity, building and craft skills. This has ranged from the restrained expression and subtle variations evident in the 18th century and early 19th century, to the flamboyance of much of the delight and competition in decoration and sculpture in the Victorian and Edwardian period. Many later 19th and early 20th century buildings are characterised by the use of iconographic and symbolic sculpture for the embellishment of the street facades. Beyond its obvious intrinsic cultural value and contribution, the knowledge and understanding of the craft and artistic skills required are today rare. Furthermore in the recent past the philosophy of design, and the priorities of building and development have been regarded as prohibitive to such architectural expression. The value of such detail is heightened by its relative irreplaceability.

The detail inherent in other facets of the street scene, e.g. in the form and variation in traditional paving, and in the impact and design of street furniture, has considerable value in its contribution to local character and identity. By their nature, such detailed elements and their contribution can be frequently overlooked or disregarded and lost, making their contribution to local identity especially vulnerable.

The physical and visual qualities of building and paving materials, their colour, tone, texture, composition and variation - singularly or in combination - articulate both the individual and collective character of buildings, streets and areas; this character may range from homogeneity to variety. The inherent quality of certain materials to gain in interest and obvious maturity over time, simultaneously expressing their age, is of considerable importance, since the character of any area is usually dependent upon the impressions of maturity and stability created by the age of its buildings.

The architectural use of natural materials has long recognised the scope for the natural variations in the material to enhance, gradually, the visual qualities of the building. Particular stones can accentuate architectural modelling and detail through the manner in which they enhance shadow by their retention and rejection of surface grime. Weathering characteristics, varying with orientation and the material itself, have the capacity to use the design, construction and natural variations of the material to the advantage of the evolving character of an area.

Traditional natural paving materials are sufficiently durable to record gradual wear and thus a sense of their long term use, and their continuity. Natural colour variations are accentuated, and often textural qualities evident, in the reflections created under wet conditions - representing a further enrichment of character.



Lime Street



Lothbury



Lombard Street



Tokenhouse Yard



Cutler's Hall, Warwick Lane



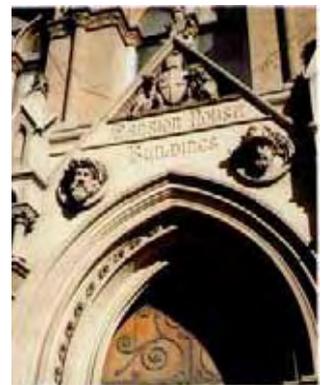
Draper's Hall, Throgmorton Street



Carter Lane



Watermen & Lightermen's Hall



Queen Victoria Street



Cullum Street



Inner Temple Lane



Barnard's Inn

The concept of the conservation area recognises the need to manage change to ensure general continuity of the collective memory, character and appearance of such areas. The physical expression of the streetscene, its skyline, roofscape, and floorscape, combine with the activities and use of an area to create a unique orchestration of local character. Within this tableau each building has a role and the balance of issues to be addressed in proposals will vary accordingly. The characteristics identified here are those which would, where relevant, be taken into consideration in the assessment of development proposals affecting a conservation area.



Fleet Street





# The Character of the City of London and its Conservation Areas

The conservation areas in the City of London identify parts of the City where the combined special historic and architectural interest are most in evidence. The City of London is the historic nucleus of both the nation's capital and one of the world's premier cities. Its evolution over 2000 years has imbued the area with unique historic, structural and architectural qualities.

## The Evolution and History of the City of London

The discovery of scattered and isolated bronze age and iron age finds supports the view that the first organised settlement of London was the Roman town c. AD 40-50. The navigable river and its lowest convenient crossing point adjacent to well-drained land provided the incentive to found the substantial and 'permanent' settlement of Londinium. Early development occupied the two areas of high ground, Cornhill and Ludgate Hill, overlooking the tidal river valleys of the Walbrook and the Fleet. Substantial expansion of the late 1st century and early 2nd century seems to have coincided with the emergence of Londinium as a major centre for European trade and commerce.

Early public buildings of this period included the Basilica-forum in the vicinity of Cornhill, at the focus of the network of streets north of the crossing point of the river. Bishopsgate, Lombard Street, Watling Street, Cheapside and Newgate Street, are among the streets of Roman origin. Other buildings include a probable palace, a fort at Cripplegate, the recently discovered amphitheatre in the vicinity of Guildhall, and several temples. Public and private bath complexes have been identified on the springline near the river, e.g. at Huggin Hill and at Billingsgate. The timber waterfront generally followed the line of Upper and Lower Thames Street, though incremental land reclamation has been identified; the pier of a wooden bridge has been excavated at the foot of Fish Street Hill.

Of primary significance to the subsequent form of the City was the construction of the City wall and ditch from the early 2nd century, though it was only in the late 3rd century that the river wall was begun. The wall, with later Norman and medieval extension and alteration, was to form the



Part of the 1st and 2nd century Roman basilica on the site of Leadenhall Market 1882 Henry Hodge GUILDHALL LIBRARY



boundaries of the City until its gradual removal in the 18th century. With its gateways it established the basis of the later street pattern and was directly responsible for the concentrated and close-knit grain of the City of London. Beyond the City wall, development proceeded along the dual axes of Newgate Street /Holborn and Ludgate/Fleet Street. Areas outside the City wall were also extensively used for Roman cemeteries. There appears to have been a gradual decline in prosperity from the later 3rd century, though Roman administration continued until 410.

The **Saxon** settlement of Ludenwic, was centred upon the area of the Aldwych and Strand. Reflecting early Saxon tradition, the walled town seems to have been largely abandoned in favour of more open settlement. Some settlement may have continued within the walls. Many of the City churches date from this period, however, and the first cathedral of St. Paul's was founded in 604 on the site of a Roman temple; it was to be rebuilt twice before the construction of the great Norman cathedral in the 12th century. The walled city was effectively re-colonised by Alfred the Great only in the later 9th century, in the face of Viking incursion; the wall was repaired and the defensive ditch may have been recut.



Saxon doorway, Church of All Hallows, Barking by the Tower. Possibly 8th or 9th century, incorporating Roman tile

Subsequently the growth in commercial prosperity and influence of the City of London, despite fluctuations, was uninterrupted. Economic activity was river-borne and centred upon the public harbours of Queenhithe, Dowgate and Billingsgate. Original Roman quays were extended both along and into the river; while reclaimed sections of waterfront were to mark later property boundaries and lanes. Evidence suggests that the two series of north-south streets running from the river to the great markets of Westcheap (Cheapside) and Eastcheap date from the 9th and 10th centuries.

The later Saxon period was one of widespread trade and commercial prosperity, creating the basis of the essential City street pattern as it is now recognised. Numerous churches were founded within and outside the walled City. In the mid-11th century Edward the Confessor built a royal palace alongside his abbey church of St. Peter at Westminster. The distinct roles of the City of London and Westminster thus emerged - commerce and trade in London and monarchy and government at Westminster.

The 11th century saw the **Norman** period consolidate these respective roles. The wall was rebuilt and reinforced, with the construction of the Tower to the east and Montfichet's Tower and Castle Baynard in the west. Strong links between the •Norman Church and State were manifest in the various religious orders which created substantial precincts in and around the City in the 12th and 13th centuries. In the case of two of these, St. Helen's Bishopsgate and St. Bartholomew the Great, much original fabric from the church has survived. Elsewhere their presence is reflected in later boundaries, alignments, tenures and placenames. Notable was the Dominican order who were granted the site to the east of the Fleet, occupied by the Norman castles of Baynard and Montfichet - Blackfriars. The King encouraged the building of a new section Wall around the priory with a turret commanding the Fleet and the Thames.

The great gothic Cathedral of St. Paul's was commenced following the destruction of the 3rd Saxon cathedral by fire in 1087.

The government of the City took shape in the 11th and 12th centuries. The administrative unit of the Ward, their boundaries largely dating from this time, elected representatives to the Court of Aldermen and the Court of Common Council. City Livery Companies, emerged from the craft guilds and charitable foundations, with widespread powers to promote and regulate trades. A royal presence within the administrative area of the City entered its final phase with the building of a new Castle Baynard by Henry VII in 1487 and the construction of Bridewell Palace by Henry VIII, 1515-23. Bridewell remained in occasional royal use until given to the City in 1552. Baynard Castle, much used by Henry VIII, hosted the coronation of later monarchs and survived until all but one tower was destroyed in the Great Fire.



Temple Church

The western suburbs between London and Westminster, saw considerable growth in association with the functions of the City and the royal and religious focus to the west. The area of Holborn and Fleet Street/Strand to the river was dominated by substantial houses or palaces of those associated with the Church and the State; it increasingly became the centre for legal services. The Wall, which was repaired and/or extended in the 14th and 15th centuries, was still defensible and elsewhere marked a clear division between London and the countryside. A new gateway was created at Moorgate in 1415 to give immediate access to the 'Moor' upon the decision to lay it out for cultivation.

London's population would seem to have risen to something of a peak shortly after 1300, estimated at between 40,000 and 50,000. Following plague in the mid-14th century evidence suggests that population levels did not recover until later in the 16th century; though it is considered that growth may have concentrated particularly in the western suburbs during this period. The City in the later Middle Ages was still a place where large and small gardens helped to provide for its nutritional needs. By 1605, however, following a period of major economic expansion, the City's population had risen to c. 190,000; London in its entirety at this time totalled c. 225,000. The accompanying demand for space, satisfied partly by the lands of the monasteries after Dissolution and the occupation of gardens and open spaces, helped to create the concentrated, fine grain and intricate form and character of the City of London. There are few buildings surviving from this period, though the re-use of original stone foundations and basements was common.

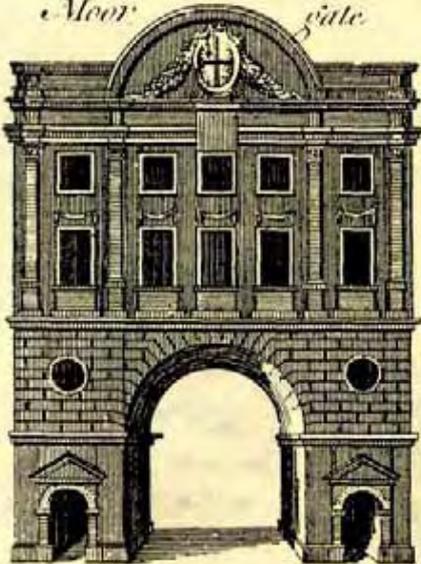


St Paul's Cathedral & The City c.1520  
H.W. Brewer 1895

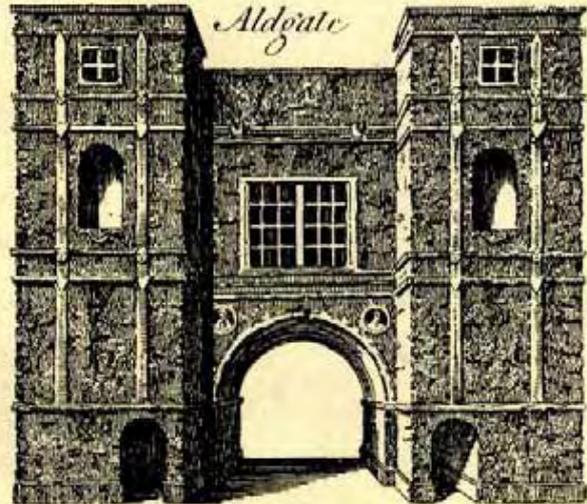
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*The CITY GATES as they appeared*

*Moor gate*



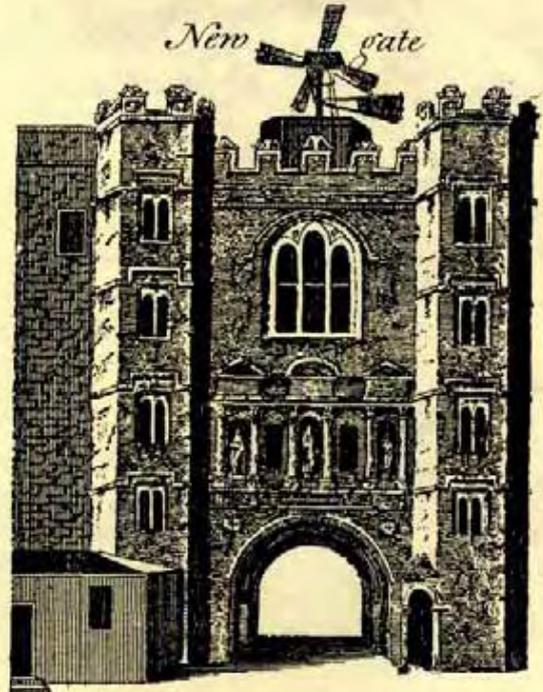
*Aldgate*



*London Gate*



*New gate*



*before they were pulled down.*

*Bishops gate*



*Cripplegate*



*Aldersgate*



*Bridge gate*



*Engraved for Harrison's History of London, 1732.*



City of London Fire Damage Leake 1666

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By the time of the **Great Fire** London had suffered periodic plague and, despite several unsuccessful attempts to control the quantity and quality of development in the City, the timber-framed fabric was over-developed and under-maintained; building collapse and fires were relatively common. The Fire in



Wren's plan for rebuilding the City 1666

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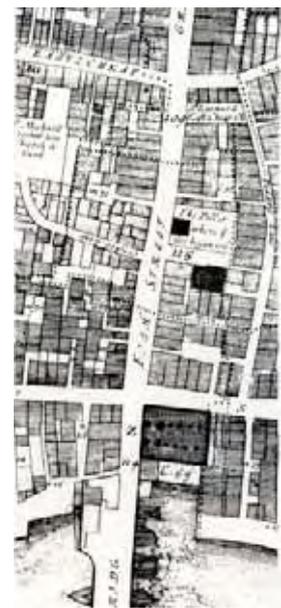
1666 destroyed 400 acres inside and 63 acres outside the City Wall. The Great Plague of 1665 and the subsequent Fire were to mark a fundamental change in the character and use of the City. In many respects boundaries and tenures were rapidly reinstated and the detailed Ogilby and Morgan plans of 1676 are relatively illustrative of the City before and after the Fire. The opportunity was taken to propose and, in many cases, realise a series of improvements across the City.

Although radical plans for a new formal layout of the City by Wren and his contemporaries were rejected, the subsequent Rebuilding Acts required that all new construction, to include party walls, was to be in brick or stone. Wherever possible buildings were constructed to earlier plot and plan form, but allowance was made for the widening of many streets, and a corresponding building height specified.



Riverside scene with St Paul's Cathedral c.1750 Roger Withington 1977

BANK OF ENGLAND



Ogilby and Morgan 1676

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A hierarchy of four authorised house types was related to four main street widths, with restraint on external design for the 'ornament of the City' an objective. While the 'tightly-knit' grain of the City and its street pattern were reinstated, the former varied, timber-framed, gabled street facade and roofline were replaced with a much more uniform streetscape - principally in brick, with some use of stone for more important buildings.



Entrance to Fleet River Follower of Samuel Scott C18

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The Acts provided for the creation of new markets, re-siting of some public buildings, the paving of streets and specific improvements. These included the creation of the processional route of King Street and Queen Street between the Guildhall and the river; to the west the Fleet Canal, occupying the current Farringdon and New Bridge Streets, was constructed as a commercial avenue to local distributors. Although some



City Panorama J. Bowles C1750

RCHME

improvements to the riverfront were achieved, the grand scheme for a Thames Quay was not realised.

Of the utmost importance to the lasting character of the City was Wren's contribution to the skyline: the many imaginatively conceived steeples are the realisation of his ideas for the City in their third dimension. Of the 87 churches destroyed or severely damaged, Wren and his assistants designed and rebuilt 51 of them, together with St. Paul's, and in so doing created one of the most highly regarded and widely recognised skylines in 18th and 19th century Europe. It is now understood that Wren not only conformed closely to the confined medieval church sites and plans, but frequently incorporated original foundations and fabric.



Devonshire Square Sutton Nicholls 1753 GUILDHALL LIBRARY

The great Rebuilding provided both major economic and population stimulus for London, and economic stimulus for London, Britain and overseas, to meet the demands for the expertise, labour and materials. London, by 1700, had a population estimated at 575,000-600,000 (10% of the nation's total) and was the largest city in western Europe. Much of this expansion was accommodated by the rapid development of the West End from the late 17th century.

While the West End developed as the fashionable residential, entertainment and shopping area, the more wealthy began to move to more spacious, better appointed accommodation outside the City. Generally however, the Georgian City of London was still essentially one of concentrated diversity, with residential and commercial activity in the same building. Many people lived over their premises, with rich and poor in close proximity. The contrast with the aristocratic and socially stratified West End was marked.



Circus 1913

ENGLISH HERITAGE

Georgian development in the City of London was widespread but incremental and largely conformed to the informal character of the street pattern. In contrast with the West End there were few developments of any formality. Building on the pre-Georgian development of Devonshire Square by Nicholas Barbon in 1678-1708, George Dance the Younger and the Adam brothers designed several more formal developments between 1768 and 1815. These included the Crescent, Circus and America Square, Finsbury Circus and Frederick's Place.

Architectural fashion and the various Building Acts of the 18th century combined to create a distinctive and relatively cohesive urban fabric. In most respects the City closely reflected the medieval scale and the expression of the multiplicity of business and residential interests and ownerships re-established after the Fire. Several substantial purpose-built banking, exchange and company buildings were established however, heralding the future form of the development of the City.



Bank of England Rotunda when used as the Stock Exchange  
Thomas Rowlandson c1790

BANK OF ENGLAND



East India Company  
1648 building, Leadenhall Street  
GUILDHALL LIBRARY



East India House C18 T.H. Shepherd 1817

GUILDHALL LIBRARY

The quality of the streets was improved through comprehensive paving. The opening of Westminster Bridge in 1749 directly challenged the monopoly of London Bridge, prompting the clearance of the latter's buildings and its widening. The first Blackfriars Bridge, designed by Robert Mylne, was opened in 1769, together with its new approach along Farringdon Street and New Bridge Street, built over the line of the Fleet Canal. The 18th century also saw the incremental removal of the City Wall and subsequently the Gateways. The Bishopsgate section of the Wall was the first to be removed in 1707, with Newgate the last gateway to be demolished in 1777, at the time of the construction of Dance's Newgate Prison.



Old London Bridge in 1745  
Joseph Josiah Dodd 1846

GUILDHALL ART GALLERY



London Bridge from Pepper Alley Stairs  
Herbert Pugh mid C18

BANK OF ENGLAND

The 19th century saw dramatic changes in the form and fabric of the City of London. As the capital expanded at an unprecedented rate the City was transformed into a specialist office and commercial centre, displacing many of its less economically competitive activities. The resident population of the City in 1801 was 128,000, within a London total of one million.



Guildhall Banquet, to the Prince Regent, the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia, June 18th 1814 Luke Clennell GUILDHALL ART GALLERY

Between 1831 and 1891 residents of the City had fallen from 125,000 to 30,000. Development for commercial premises replaced about 80% of the City's buildings between 1855 and 1905.

The Victorian period saw the arrival of the railways and their respective bridges, viaducts and hotels in the City, with Minories and Fenchurch Street in 1840-2, Blackfriars in 1864 through to Liverpool Street Station, occupying 10 acres, in 1874. They were responsible for major physical

change and the displacement of much residential and commercial activity. The first sections of underground Metropolitan and District Railways were opened in 1863 and 1869, and the first deep level underground in 1890. By 1901 the City had a daily working population of c.400,000, served primarily by the railway system.



King William Street Later C19

GUILDHALL ART GALLERY

The construction of the lines and stations was accompanied by considerable development, and both the creation and improvement of roadways. In addition to the new railway stations and bridges the City waterfront saw the replacement of Blackfriars Bridge and London Bridge, and the new Southwark and Tower Bridges. Despite the increasing focus of much shipping in the new dockyards downstream, the City riverfront was still almost entirely devoted to the business of maritime trade, transport and the storage of goods. Substantial warehousing occupied most of the frontage, specialising in particular goods and/or sources.

Throughout the Victorian period the City was directly and indirectly responsible for a range of major works and improvements. These included

provision for education and the creation of several commodity, wholesale and retail market buildings. Many of these improvements and buildings are integral to the character and identity of many parts of the City. Leadenhall Market, for example, adds significantly to the everyday quality of life in the City, through the vitality inherent in its combination of fresh produce and other shops, with places to eat, within a setting of characteristic Victorian architectural celebration. A series of major street improvements were undertaken from the early 19th century. Between 1829 and 1835 Moorgate and King William Street were formed to link the centre and the north of the City with the new London Bridge, situated to the west of the original. Cannon Street was widened and extended westwards to St. Pauls. To improve the always congested routes to Westminster, Victoria Embankment was created and linked to Bank along the new Queen Victoria Street. In the 1860s Blackfriars Bridge was replaced, New Bridge Street and Farringdon Street widened in association with the construction of Holborn Viaduct over the valley of the Fleet, with new sections of street linking the new Holborn Circus and Ludgate Circus. Wholesale redevelopment was linked with the opportunity to widen many streets, such as Fleet Street, Ludgate Hill, Gresham Street and Eastcheap. Two significant sites in the City were laid out afresh. An orthogonal grid of streets was set out between the new Embankment and Tudor Street, across the site of the old City gas works, to accommodate the expanding newspaper and printing industries. While at West Smithfield, the Central Meat Market was developed, complete with its own underground rail connection and spiral ramp for wagon access. Throgmorton Avenue and Lloyds Avenue were constructed. To the east, Minories was developed in association with the building of Tower Bridge. Electric street lighting replaced gas lighting across the City in 1887.



The Holborn Valley Viaduct, from St. Sepulchre's Church J. Watkins 1860's

GUILDHALL ART GALLERY



West Smithfield c1900

RCHME

Victorian improvements were superimposed upon, and also integrated with, the City's existing street pattern. New and widened streets, remodelled junctions and characteristically Victorian triangular sites were formed at the intersections of old and new thoroughfares, creating not merely the opportunity for new commercial building frontage, but a challenge to Victorian architectural imagination and ingenuity. The character inherent in the City street pattern was acknowledged and complemented by these dramatic interventions, carried out with a strong sense of civic pride and awareness.

The Victorian rebuilding of the City made more intensive use of the street block. At the same time as the floorspace increased by c.50%, the new headquarters and speculative office buildings had accommodation that was much more intensively used than hitherto.



South Sea House, Threadneedle Street 1900

RCHME



British Linen Bank,  
Threadneedle Street 1903

RCHME

Though the scale of development had changed, the new Victorian buildings rarely exceeded 4-5 floors, or occupied more than one, two or three medieval plot widths. A perceptible but limited increase in building scale was reflected in the nature of improvements to the existing street pattern. Architectural exuberance replaced quiet Georgian dignity, but the City retained its close-knit and intimate urban grain and character.

Stylistically there are good examples of the variety of Victorian architectural expression: the 'palaces' of commerce tended to favour interpretations of the classical style. The commercial wealth and national prestige of the Victorian and Edwardian period were reflected in the competitive architectural enrichment of the City, expressed in the range and quality of style, embellishment and materials - used to impressive townscape effect. Later Victorian eclectic architecture gave way to an Edwardian reaction favouring Baroque-inspired robust classical style, accompanied by an identifiable increase in building scale in some instances. By the end of the 19th century the purpose-designed specialist building type had almost completely replaced the mixed- use premises of the Georgian period. Notable amongst these specialist premises was the range of traditional City functions, represented by the wholesale provisions markets and the variety of stock and commodity exchanges.

Almost one fifth of the buildings in the City were replaced between 1905 and 1939. The inter-

war period saw a continuation and consolidation of Victorian and particularly Edwardian trends in development. Prompted by a greater degree of site amalgamation, the relaxation of the Building Acts relating to the permissible height of buildings and the constructional flexibility associated with the use of the steel frame, the City townscape acquired many substantial, stone-clad buildings - the majority being quieter essays in the classical tradition. A new building scale,



London Wall Buildings (1906)



Threadneedle Street (1927)

enabled by the change in building regulations, was heralded in the 1930's by Unilever House and Faraday House, and gave rise to concern about a radical alteration to the City skyline.

The individual and combined contributions of these buildings to the character of many of the conservation areas in the City are of major significance. There were few examples in the City at the time of design in the new 'modern' idiom. The increase in building scale intensified the perceived density and sense of enclosure of the tight and intricate City street pattern. A substantial increase in the office floorspace of the period took the daily working population of 400,000 in 1901 to c.500,000 by 1939 - served principally by an improved and expanded underground system.



Fleet Street in the 1930's GUILDHALL ART GALLERY  
Artist unknown

Despite the improvements achieved by many buildings in the inter-war period, the quality of office services and the working environment came to be regarded, post-war, as sub-standard. This conclusion was reached in comparison with, and acted as a spur to, radical post-war philosophies in alternative architectural and planning forms - in the pursuit of higher standards of light, air and efficiency.

The post-war City faced a degree of rebuilding following war-time destruction likened to that of 1666. There was a conviction that this opportunity to replan the City should not be lost. Early plans for the City were sufficiently radical to contemplate its imminent total rebuilding.



Cannon Street 1934 RCHME



War Damage

GUILDHALL ART GALLERY



Cheapside 1920's

RCHME



St Mary le Bow, Cheapside, looking south from Honey Lane Market 1942

ENGLISH HERITAGE

The vision generally shared by architects, planners and politicians of the immediate post-war period was enabled by new planning powers designed to facilitate comprehensive rebuilding. A series of comprehensive development areas, centred on the most damaged quarters of the City, were identified as the first priority - and were to be replanned on completely new principles of the substantial and simplified orthogonal block. Surviving buildings were to be removed where their presence would impede such progress.

Equally radical proposals for an improved street pattern, including the creation of several major new streets, widespread widening lines and separate high level pedestrian walkways were approved, and provision was made when redevelopment opportunity arose; many of these widening lines were later to be abandoned. Development of a precinctual form and scale transformed several areas of the City. The density of comprehensive development was, however, generally balanced by substantial provision for public space. Prime functional considerations of light, air, vehicular servicing and pedestrian segregation and safety, were manifest architecturally in a variety of prescribed simple geometric building configurations, on the scale of the entire street block/s. The form of much of the development is considered to be essentially anti-urban in the manner in which it ignored the street pattern or the enclosure provided by the frontage and merged private service area with public street. The Modern anonymity of the office block became an 'acceptable and indeed pleasurable' objective in itself. Pevsner in 1962 doubted the need for 'a display of individuality' in the office building, comparing it favourably with 'the anonymity of Georgian housing'.

Despite a careful recognition of the character of the City in the early post-war plans it was felt that the retention of a limited number of the more historic buildings would be sufficient character reference. A number of earlier post-war developments, however, recognised the City traditions and continued a classical theme in Portland stone and brick, e.g.



Barbican and London Wall proposals  
1956 James Paul (artist)



London Wall 1964

Lloyds and the Bank of England building, New Change. In many cases, where they departed from this theme, they maintained the use of traditional materials. The “excellent principle” of the slab, and the podium and tower forms of development upstaged this more characteristic arrangement. In what Pevsner later described as “the Americanisation of the English townscape”, the office tower, inspired by New York and Chicago, was seen in 1957 as the necessary “20th century substitute for Wren’s steeples.”

Post-war development tended to submerge the identity of the non-office uses within the expression of the office building, bringing an anonymity and sterility to the ground floor street frontage. The impression of anonymity was compounded by the prevailing architectural canon which required strict avoidance of any form of ‘eccentricity’, embellishment or decoration, in favour of mechanically repetitive pattern. Initial post-war use of brick and Portland stone was increasingly replaced by a vogue for flush glass and metal curtain walling and then polished granite, engendering impressions of transience and/or alien reflective facades.

Particular quarters of the City were strongly identified with specific trades or industries before the war. Despite the provision for the continuation of this in post-war plans the displacement of trades through war damage and the changing nature of many of the trades or industries themselves prompted substantial relocation outside the City. Alongside this, the decline of the importance of the City riverside in London’s maritime trade, combined with the form of new development to create the impression of an anonymous mono-cultural office identity in many parts of the City.



Fenchurch Street 1954-7



Gracechurch Street  
1964-8

RICHARD SEIFERT

There has been a more recent widespread recognition of the shortcomings of the earlier post-war period and the rejection of many of these principles in favour of more characteristic forms of development which address the pre-war street pattern more closely and use more traditional materials. However, the late 1980's saw the construction of a number of large scale introverted developments with their focus on the internal atrium.

Though the City's conservation areas are less representative of large scale post 1945 development, there are examples within or adjacent to them which emphasise the contrast between the traditional and characteristic forms of the City and later-adopted alternatives. Many of the City's conservation area boundaries are tightly and abruptly defined by the contrasting scale and forms of development of this period.

The City of London has been characterised by phases of considerable renewal of its fabric. Despite an under-representation of earlier buildings, until the post-war period the character of the City could be said to have been enriched in many ways by this process. Generally it has evolved, building incrementally within and upon a perceptible continuity of scale, architectural language and materials - rather than ignoring and departing from it, as it sought to do in the initial post-war decades.

## Urban Structure

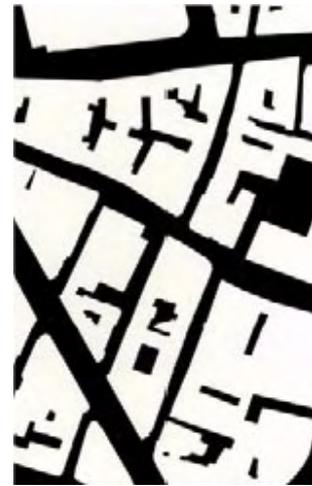
The growth and evolution of the City of London establish its identity and create the characteristics which are central to the particular spirit of place experienced in the conservation areas across the City. The special character of the conservation area depends upon both these factors and the extent to which they inform proposals for future change.

The pattern of streets, lanes, courts, alleys and associated urban spaces has been identified as principally Saxon and Medieval, with earlier Roman origins and influences, albeit with 19th century and post-war accretions. It represents the influence of the original natural topography of the City and the pattern of linkages in social, economic and defence activity since the foundation of the settlement. In the City of London this reflects the importance of the bridge, links to the west (and north) and the powerful influence of the river as the source of economic being.

The street pattern and the City Wall have established and maintained the essential close-knit urban grain and density of the City. The blocks, defined by the principal streets, are subdivided by the network of alleys and courts, and many enclose further 'hidden' spaces. Despite the pattern of principal east – west routes served by the series of north - south lanes linking these with the waterfront, the street pattern is essentially 'organic' and informal in character; quite unlike many of its buildings. In combination with the concentration of the buildings, the hierarchy of streets and spaces create a strong sense of enclosure, while their often subtle, sinuous alignments engender a changing, sequential experience of the streetscene and the architecture of the City.

Within this pattern are the more formally conceived urban forms of George Dance the Younger in the later 18th and early 19th centuries. The Crescent, laid out in association with the Circus and America Square, was the first use of the crescent form in London. Completed contemporaneously with the Royal Crescent in Bath, the Crescent, together with the later Finsbury Circus and many unrealised Dance designs elsewhere in London, established the popularity of this very British concept in 18th and 19th century urban design.

In contrast to many post-war 'improvements', Victorian additions to the City street pattern and much of the resulting development are now



Street pattern



Wardrobe Place



Crescent, Circus, Square.  
Richard Horwood



Crescent, Circus, Square  
'Rhinebeck' Panorama c1810

GUILDHALL LIBRARY



Holborn Viaduct & Smithfield

generally recognised as an enrichment of both this pattern and the townscape. Qualities of dignity and grandeur and a strong sense of civic pride were axiomatic in the major Victorian additions and improvements. The street pattern is unique both to the City, and to specific areas within it; particular periods or patterns may dominate and emphasise the individuality of the immediate character.

Open spaces in the City are mainly of considerable antiquity, the majority originating as churchyards or burial grounds. As a reference to present or more often past churches, they are of historic and archaeological importance, as well as of townscape, amenity and ecological significance. They are generally of the small, tightly enclosed and 'hidden backwater'



Smithfield, Giltspur St, Central Criminal Court

character. This is emphasised by the nature of their enclosure, provided frequently by the rear or less important building facades. Additionally there are examples of the remains of war-damaged former churches which are now laid out as public gardens. The collegiate atmosphere of the Temples, and formally conceived spaces such as Devonshire Square and Finsbury Circus provide the principal contrasts, and a very individual sense of place.

The majority of the City's open spaces record aspects of the functions and associations of their area in the past. The openness of both Smithfield and Old Bailey for example reflect their earlier market activities. The churchyards, as well as the churches, provided space and location for early business, market and social interaction.

The principal exception to the traditional form of City open or urban space are the spaces residual to the planning and architecture of the post-war period. In such examples the longstanding sense of enclosure in the City was seen to be in direct conflict with the new architectural and planning principles. Rejection of the idea of the street created a situation where the pavement introduced, not buildings, but service areas, which interposed between the street and often substantial slab block. Here the spaces tended to be utilitarian, private, alien and both disruptive of the street pattern and destructive of street enclosure. The height

and bulk of post-war development was, however, frequently balanced by the creation of new public open space, in compensation for the scale of building - thus conditioning the density of development.

The street block and associated building scale of the City varies considerably as a reflection of the street pattern and the evolution of associated development. The perimeter form of block is intensely developed and tends to comprise a series of buildings. Building scale itself can still be identified as an average five storeys above ground level, though buildings in the central area tend to be higher than in the peripheral areas. The expression of medieval plot width remains a key characteristic in many areas of the City: in for example Fleet Street and Eastcheap it is evident through the scale, proportion and variety of the later buildings. In larger scale development in the Victorian and Edwardian period a reflection of the original plot widths may be articulated in the design of the street facade. In certain areas of the City, particularly e.g. south of Ludgate Hill and around Smithfield, the street block is still well articulated in the varied roofscape created by the design of many smaller scale buildings. The scale of the buildings is frequently expressed through design variation or modulation, the range of materials and/or a vigorous, often competitive architectural treatment of the upper storeys, creating a varied, often exuberant roofline: the Fleet Street, Bishopsgate and Whitefriars areas contain effective examples.



Fleet Street



Bishopsgate



Ludgate Hill

The City, despite sequential and often widespread renewal, draws much reference and influence from its more historic structures. The present fabric of the City is established upon and in association with structures and remains of earlier periods of its long history. Its present form is frequently the result not of one, but of many thousands of decisions throughout its history - creating a rich and complex tapestry of past and present meaning. The Walls of the City, whether they are exposed, incorporated into later architectural fabric, or existing below ground level, document its history. The gateways, identified by original streets, exist in name above ground, and in many instances in reality below ground. The sequence of earlier waterfronts, which has been confirmed through



City Wall & the Crescent



Bow Lane

a series of excavations of the Roman, Saxon and Medieval quays, underlies a substantial area of the City some distance back from the present river edge. This sense of history therefore is always there; sometimes explicit, but at the same time, and more often, implicit.

The uses and activity patterns of the City today represent its specialist focus upon commerce and finance, with national and international dimensions. Particular areas were created by or in association with specific functions or industries, eg. the press and printing, wholesale markets, the fur trade. The differentiation now may be manifest more in a division between retail and catering ground floor presence and frontage, with office accommodation above. It remains a strong tradition across much of the City, adding considerably to the attraction, interest and street vitality in many areas. Particular areas like Smithfield and Bishopsgate are specially noted for their mixed use character, including in some cases residential. Several parts of the City have in the past been associated with hospitals whose functions and sites help to explain present form or character: St. Bartholomew's Hospital, as one of London's most historic institutions, maintains a focal role in Smithfield. Dispersed shops, pubs, restaurants and wine bars contribute a traditional and essential quality of the City's character, and have long provided a central role in City business activity.



St Andrews Hill

Despite its office identity, the diversity of the functions and activities within the City remain one of its characteristics - of considerable importance, yet constantly under pressure. In more recent substantial developments the atrium has internalised the public focus of the office building - at times to the detriment of the vitality and interest of the street.



Swilling Down, Billingsgate Market GUILDHALL LIBRARY  
Trevor Chamberlain c1971



Old Stocks Market c1730  
Joseph Van Aken

BANK OF ENGLAND

The longstanding role of the City is as the centre of market activity, from trade, finance, currency and futures, to retail and wholesale activity. Earlier street markets in the City explain the past role, current name and form of many streets, and have established the identity of different areas. The main harbours at Queenhithe and Billingsgate also supported open markets. Marketing progressed from ship-side, quayside and churchyards to the City's open markets, while coffee houses and hostelries provided other business and service functions. Street market activity became more established, gradually enclosed and replaced by shop premises eventually - for reasons of congestion. Areas previously associated with these markets, such as Cheapside/Poultry, Eastcheap and part of Farringdon Street (Fleet Market), still support a concentration of retail activity. As well as market derived identities many other sectors of the City have strong associations with specific crafts, trades or functions - both past and present. The obvious manifestations of such influences today, however, vary considerably.



A View of Cheapside in the City of London 1823  
W. Duryer & T.M. Baynes  
GUILDHALL LIBRARY

Despite Victorian and post-war provision for traffic a large part of the street network of the City, is intricate and primarily pedestrian in character. The tradition of the concentrated City business network, fostered by the pattern of streets, lanes, courts and alleys, has relied upon proximity and personal contact. The vast majority of the working population arrives and leaves daily by public transport, and mobility during the day is generally on foot. Principal stations serving the City engender major daily arrival and departure flows. The



Leadenhall Market

The postwar philosophy of the accommodation of the private vehicle has wrought many changes at variance with the essential character of the City. Though the character of the conservation areas varies considerably in relation to the role and impact of traffic, the latter tends to be of secondary importance to the fabric of these areas. The density of buildings, the confined width of many streets, and the correspondingly abrupt and tight corners in the City are both a fundamental aspect of the essential character and a natural framework for the control of traffic flow, speed, capacity and non-essential use. The urban street identity inherent in the differentiation of pavement and carriageway is of considerable importance, where simple kerb height and change in material effectively demarcate use, priority and security, while the kerb line may play a vital role in the expression of the alignment of the street.



Barnard's Inn

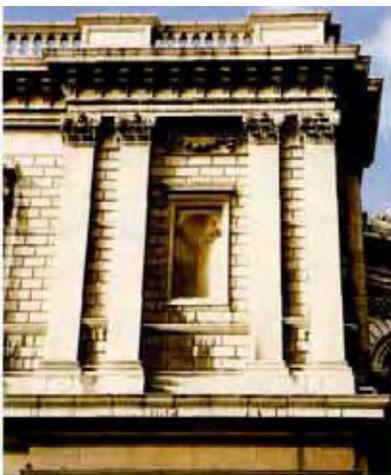
Contrasts may be stark within the conservation areas themselves, with for example the bustle of Fleet Street adjacent to the tranquility and intimacy of its network of lanes to the north. Comparison of the conservation areas may be just as dramatic, with the relative sense of sanctuary of the Temple and Finsbury Circus, set against the concentrated activity of the Bank and Leadenhall areas. Character is derived from both.

The City has become characterised by the use of particular building materials. These play a major role in creating or accentuating the identity of specific parts of the City, and indeed the City as a whole. The Pre-Fire City made use of Kentish ragstone and Reigate stone for churches and other buildings of note. Decorative



St Helen's Church, Great St Helens

use was made of Purbeck limestone or 'marble', eg. Temple Church. The Roman City Walls were built of Kentish ragstone with periodic courses of red tiles. Though Roman brickwork was also in use, the majority of buildings and structures above ground level were constructed in timber until the Fire: buildings were required by law to rest upon stone basements and/or foundations. Massive oak timbers were used for wharves and harbours in the Roman, Saxon and Medieval periods. Building stone was in short supply and expensive in London, and under Norman influence Caen stone was imported for works to the Tower and London Bridge, as well as Westminster Abbey and some major houses. Timber framing lent itself to extension and modification to the point where the complexity and proximity of the buildings were instrumental in the devastation wrought by the Fire.



St Paul's Cathedral

Post-Fire, the Acts in 1667 and 1670 for the Rebuilding of the City of London required that it be rebuilt in brick or stone and laid down the standards for construction. Stone was again reserved for the more prestigious buildings. Portland stone, introduced to London by Inigo Jones, was used by Christopher Wren for his City church designs and construction, and became the prestige material for building in London -especially in the City of London. As an ideal workable and durable medium for the expression of classical architecture and its fine detail, Portland stone has retained its status, favour and associations with the business institutions of the City through to the present day. Readily transported by sea, post-Fire demand for the material

effectively established the industry and transformed the Isle of Portland.

More modest Stuart and Georgian buildings were built in increasingly fashionable brick. Local London clays were generally used, with more distant but accessible (by river) sources of more refined clay and brick for special projects and details. Colour preference initially for red, changed to a combination of red and yellow, later to just yellow stock, and then to stock embellished with stone or stucco. Stucco, fashionable from the late Georgian to early Victorian period, is now relatively uncommon in the City. The 1830's Robert Smirke terrace on Moorgate and Hardwicke's City Club are good and rare examples.



Moorgate



Eastcheap

The mid 19th century Victorian architectural philosophies, partly in reaction to external restraint in Georgian design, found exuberant expression through the polychromatic and polytextural combination of materials. Cheap transport delivered a palette of materials from across the country and overseas. While Portland stone continued to meet the solid and dignified image required by the houses of finance and commerce in the City core, areas beyond were redeveloped with a rich spectrum of materials, of varied colour and texture. Materials ranged from red brick, often used in conjunction with Bath stone, through stock and gault brick, and back to red brick together with terracotta, faience, tiling and various stones, including a wide range of granites and marbles. Fleet Street, Eastcheap and Whitefriars furnish many examples, and consequently a townscape rich in terms of architectural colour and texture. Portland again was strongly favoured for later Edwardian 'baroque'. The early 20th century, with the increasing use of concrete and steel frames, saw these materials used in a less structural manner. Institutions and their architects, however, maintained and developed the classical tradition both to the needs of the 20th century City and to the discipline and possibilities established by the new building technologies.

Architectural display and the palette of more expensive materials were used to maximum public effect on the most public frontage/s. The design and materials frequently employed for the more enclosed and more intimate facades demonstrated not



Victoria Embankment



King William Street



Poultry & Cheapside

only economy of use but also a recognition of the differing character and hierarchy of the streets and spaces enclosed by the building. The predominance of plainer or light-reflective brickwork for the lesser facades of City buildings is a common characteristic.

Earlier inter-war architecture generally maintained the tradition of the use of Portland stone. Faience also became a popular material for the architectural styles of the 1920's and 1930's - a few examples of which still exist in the City; Ibex House, Minories, being a notable example. A rare instance of the early use of glass curtain-walling, in contrast to the City's affiliation to classical stone developments, exists in the Daily Express, Fleet Street. The early post-war shortage of building materials was met by the widespread use of brick. As resources became available there was again a recognition of the importance of Portland stone to the City's image and character -often elevating, lightening and endowing quality upon otherwise plain, substantial and potentially oppressive buildings. Particular sectors of the City, such as King William Street, Queen Victoria Street, Cheapside, Poultry and the vicinity of Bank, are strongly characterised by their use of Portland stone, in buildings of pre- and post-war age.



Lovat Lane

Curtain walling and an extensive use of polished granite cladding, principally in the 1960's and 1970's, contrast harshly with the City traditions and, with their smooth, reflective facades, make little individual or collective contribution to conservation area character. Where more sympathetic materials have been used in post-war developments, too often their arrangement and detailing has failed to recognise the full potential of the material and/or the limitations of the methods of construction.

Traditional paving materials for carriageway and footway in the City since the 19th century have been York stone, with granite kerbs and setts. They replaced earlier traditions of Kentish rag, stone cobbles and gravel and the durable Purbeck limestone for both paving slab and sett, and later trials of timber setts. Purbeck, shipped by sea from the coastal quarries near Swanage, was the principal paving

material in the City prior to York stone, and was being specified by name in the City by 1737. Care and attention was paid not merely to the efficiency and durability of these materials but also to their visual and decorative effect, in the thought given to the colouration, the pattern and the jointing employed. Examples of Purbeck paving in the Temples indicate the visual effect (and economy) sought in laying the stone in distinct courses of varied width. In general the now ubiquitous asphalt has been in use since the 19th century.



New Street



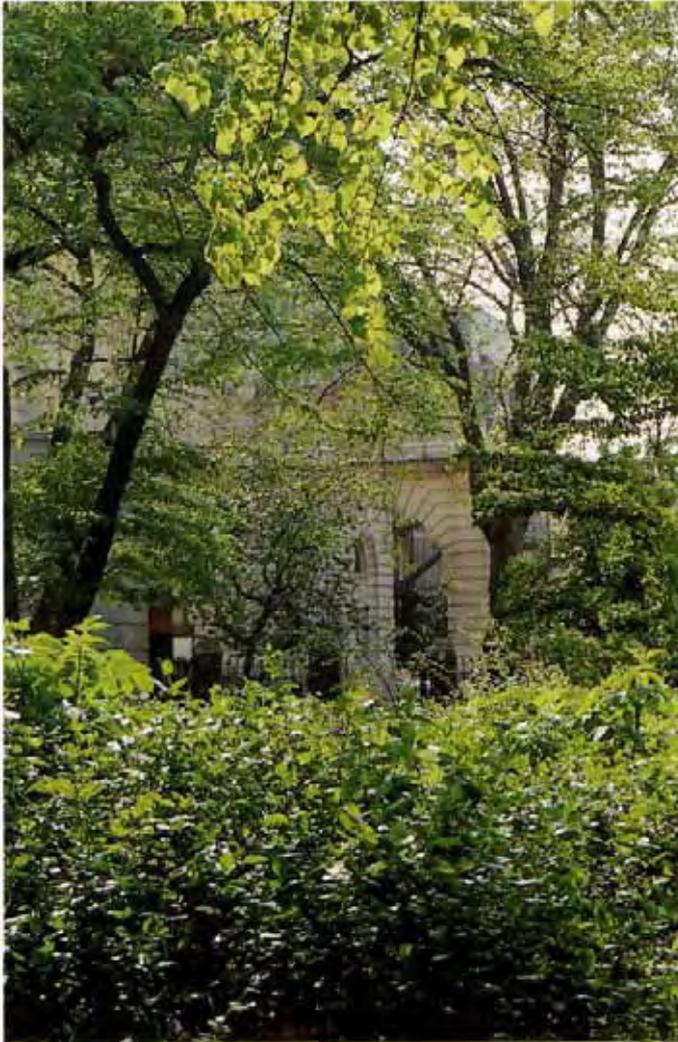
West Smithfield

Street paving in the City was first coordinated by the post-Fire rebuilding Acts and attendant regulations governing detailed specification, with administration through Commissioners of Sewers appointed by the City. By the early 18th century they had established paving standards cited as good practice in the builders manuals of the period.

Traditional street furniture of specific character adds considerably to the quality of the environment in many areas of the City. These include a longstanding range of designs of cast iron bollards, together with seating, horse troughs and drinking fountains - some of ornate design. Earlier designs of public and police call boxes make their own contribution to the street scene. Street lamps, standards and railings of a decorative character, either free-standing or in direct association with buildings, add further visual punctuation and a focus of detailed interest. As well as



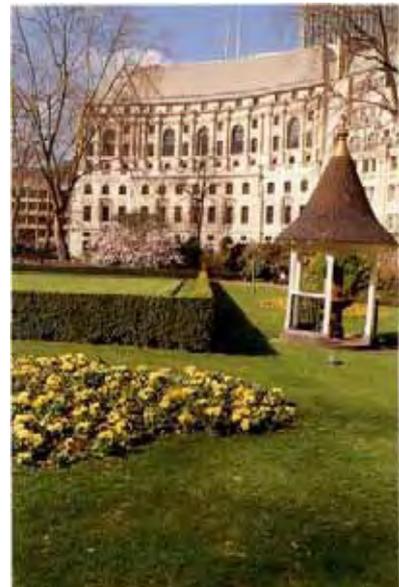
Trinity House & The Port of London Authority Building



Postman's Park



Churchyard, St Mary at Hill



Finsbury Circus

being attractive in themselves and in combination, historic traditional paving and street furniture effectively reinforce a sense of stability and continuity in various parts of the City. Many of these structures are considered to be of sufficient importance to be listed in their own right.

Trees and established planting, while often being relatively isolated in situation, both identify and complement the City's characteristic open spaces and churchyards. In certain instances, such as Bow Churchyard, an individual tree may act as local landmark, identify a particular location, provide an effective foil to the urban townscape and impart an additional spirit of place. Elsewhere, in areas such as the Temples / Embankment, Postman's Park and St. Paul's Churchyard, character derives from the combined impact of several trees. Finsbury Circus garden was laid out after 1815 to the designs of George Dance. Although partially remodelled in the early 20th century, the structure of the rest of the design survives much as it was in Dance's time, and the garden is on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. Open spaces, planting and trees throughout the City create a 'natural' habitat for a variety of fauna, while providing a source of visual, botanical, arboricultural and seasonal interest.

## Architectural Form

The architectural fabric of the City in particular creates much of the special spirit of place associated with each conservation area and their streets. Buildings create the individual three dimensional component in the composition and are the prime source of detail within the townscape - and hence the source of meaning, visual interest and delight. A series of related architectural qualities help to create the detailed identity and interest of each conservation area in the City.

The City's role and identity are intimately bound up in the quality and character of its architecture: one of the City's major assets, creating much of the special quality of its environment, and as such its attraction to national and international business. The architecture is a cultural asset in its own right, encompassing some of the best works of many notable architects. While the present architecture is mainly representative of the latter stages of the City's history, it reflects earlier periods and influences in the evolution of the City, as well as the creative development of the architectural vocabulary itself. In many respects, it represents, in tangible form, the concentration of history, prestige, influence and wealth of the City - in both a national and an international sense. The strength and stability of the City as a business centre is heralded by and reflected in the dignity and image of its architecture; consequently much sought by overseas banking. The City's 'original' fabric, is a finite resource, encouraging business location within buildings and an environment considered both attractive and unique.

The design of the pre-war buildings of the City, particularly those of the Victorian and Edwardian period, possess qualities of legibility/readability in the expression of the past and current use of the building, or parts of the building. Given that they are largely purpose-built and self-contained office and commercial buildings they also tend to be a particularly adaptable building form and layout for current self-contained business accommodation.



Former City of London School for Boys, Victoria Embankment



Bishopsgate



Angel Street



Lloyd's Avenue



Newgate Street  
Surveyors approval plan No. 1049 1875  
CITY OF LONDON RECORDS OFFICE

alterations and repairs - which create, to a varying degree, impressions of longevity, reliability, stability, steadfastness and in the area itself, continuity. This was eloquently expressed by the eminent early 20th century architect Arthur J. Davis (Mewes & Davis):



Threadneedle Street Mewes & Davis 1927

The identification of the building with its purpose and use was often emphasised by symbolic or allegorical sculpture, carving and embellishment. The practice both establishes the identity of the building and contributes effectively to that of its setting. The collective townscape effect of such buildings concentrates this legibility, meaning and richness to create a combined identity frequently much greater than the sum of its parts. The loss of a group of buildings to a single, large-scale, simplified alternative effectively erases these qualities, to the detriment of local character and identity. The architectural treatment of respective parts of the building, particularly the expression of ground floor shop frontage, contributes considerably to the interest, quality and character of the City streetscene -affecting the way building and streetscene are perceived and used.

Central to identity, legibility and character is the age of the building. Age may be perceived through such characteristics as scale, style, materials, patina,

“The designing of an important building in the heart of the City is a task somewhat different to that elsewhere. The City of London possesses a character and atmosphere which are peculiar to itself, entirely different from that of the remainder of the Metropolis. Here every site is hallowed and is peopled by ghosts of its former inhabitants. To many of its buildings are attached associations of surpassing architectural interest. After the Great Fire, when Christopher Wren conceived his great Masterpiece, when he and his contemporaries dotted the City with their delightful Renaissance spires and domes, they imprinted the stamp of their genius on the neighbourhood and gave it a character which even today dominates and colours its architecture. We architects who, in modern times, have been entrusted with the designing of buildings under the shadow of Wren’s great dome, should remember our manners and conform in some measure to the standards that have been set by our famous predecessors. Here is no field for startling originality, nor for wandering through the untrodden paths of architectural experiment.”

Arthur J. Davis 1931

Despite substantial destruction and rebuilding, the last 1000 years of the City's history can still be traced through surviving buildings in areas such as Smithfield. Each conservation area encapsulates its own sections of the City's history, with the age of its form and fabric representing the sequence of events unique to that area.



West sSmithfield

The essential building scale characteristic of the City, which was reinstated and to an extent reduced after the Great Fire, remained relatively constant into the Victorian era. Victorian development tended to augment rather than radically alter this building scale. A more discernible increase in scale was characteristic of the Edwardian and, more particularly, of the inter-war years.



New Bridge Street / Fleet Street  
July 1873

GUILDHALL LIBRARY



Ludgate Circus

Much pre-war development has, however, acknowledged the previous scale in its architectural articulation, where the expression of the design has varied the plane of the facade, the materials and/or detail to create and reintroduce some variation and vertical emphasis. Frequently this has been integral to the architectural grammar and linked with a recognition of the importance of the variation of the roofline or parapet to accentuate this articulation and reflection of scale in the design - both in terms of the building and the street facade.

Across several areas of the City, such as Ludgate Hill and Smithfield, and with many individual buildings, the roofscape is still an important expression of the form, scale, variety and character. Where the medieval plot widths have been increased only marginally, the street facade has tended to retain its vigour, interest and vitality. There are many instances of the effective use of the proportion, modelling and detail, and/or variation in material to reduce the perceived scale of a larger building.



Bishopsgate



The Royal Exchange J. Malton 1781

GUARDIAN INSURANCE



The Royal Exchange, Bank of England and Cornhill 1849  
Engraved by T.A. Prior from a drawing by A.L. Thomas

GUARDIAN INSURANCE

Power, wealth and prestige has ensured the City of London a central role in the development of commercial architectural style in Britain. The City can be seen as both unique and influential in the development of commercial architectural style - primarily within the classical tradition. Although many buildings of architectural significance have been lost, their replacements in the past, as in for example the Churches and the Royal Exchange, have frequently risen to the importance of the function, site and situation, with architecture of considerable intricacy, innovation and sensitivity. The latter half of the City's history can still be traced in examples from its architectural development, while its earlier history is still represented by its street pattern, monuments and other historic remains. While much altered or restored examples of pre-Fire buildings are present, the post-Fire

rebuilding has left the City with its most memorable legacy. Wren's churches and cathedral, and their stylistic ingenuity and variety, readily surpass any other single achievement in the creation of the identity of the City: a character and skyline which has long been recognised and appreciated internationally. Locally the individual churches establish the sense of place associated with many of the conservation areas, and provide a focus for innumerable and memorable local and longer distance views.



The Tower, The City and The Legal Quays 1804 William Daniell

GUILDHALL LIBRARY



Mansion House, Lombard Street & Cornhill

GUILDHALL ART GALLERY



Cheapside in 1831  
William Turner de Lond

GUILDHALL ART GALLERY

The simple restraint inherent in the style of the majority of the City's late 17th century and Georgian buildings effectively retains some sense of both the domestic scale and mixed use domestic character of the pre-Victorian City. They represent the post-Fire period when architecture was strongly influenced by building legislation and a relatively universal philosophy of design, which, despite the individual expression of each building, created a townscape of unsurpassed homogeneity. The City's surviving fabric from the perio'd is now, however, extremely limited.

The sense of civic pride, and the objective of 'the ornament of the City', evident particularly in the post-fire and Georgian period (and in for example the construction of the Mansion House), became a central principle of more exuberant Victorian improvement and development; when an innate appreciation of civic design and grand gesture influenced the siting and design of the architecture. Victorian awareness of, and the cultural importance attached to, matters historic and religious was manifest in a widespread, flamboyant, reaction against Georgian style, through the exploratory but frequently scholarly and inventive revival of a range of styles - drawing upon hitherto unavailable studies of the architecture of the ancient world and the northern Christian tradition.



Temple Gardens



Cannon Street



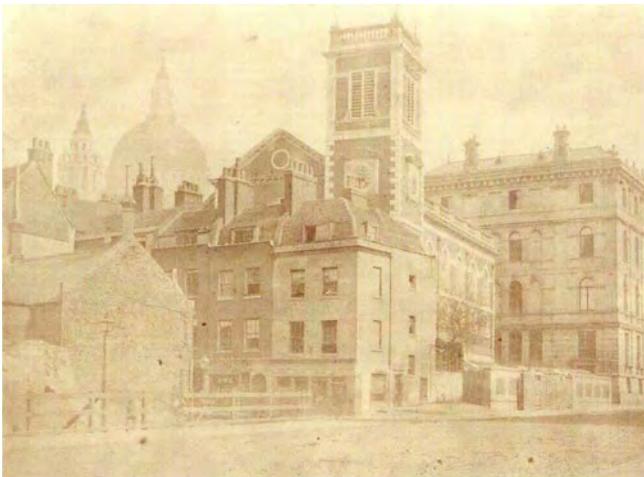
Eastcheap



Cornhill

Within the increasingly hybrid functions of the City, a wide spectrum of Victorian stylistic development is represented, both as purpose-built and speculative premises. The stylistic expression of areas of the City varies considerably according to their function and when they were built, or rebuilt. The mid-Victorian period laid out the new Queen Victoria Street with office buildings expressed in a rich variety of classical and gothic. Fleet Street, for example, was widened and substantially redeveloped from the late 19th century onwards, where rebuilding on individual plots encompassed this rich spectrum of Victorian and Edwardian styles, particularly the then fashionable Flemish/Dutch influence.

Throughout much of the City's history classical architecture has been regarded as the most appropriate expression of the

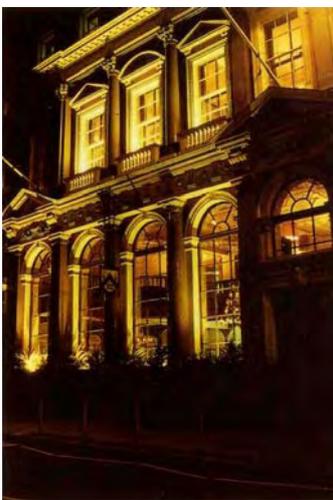


St Andrew by the Wardrobe & Queen Victoria Street c1870s

RCHME



St Andrew by the Wardrobe & Queen Victoria Street 1994



Cornhill

strength, solidity, commercial power and importance - the identity - of City business, particularly banking, finance and its administration and insurance; the Italian Renaissance and Baroque have provided most inspiration. The classical tradition, exemplified perhaps in the inter-war years by Edwin Lutyens's Britannic House, Finsbury Circus and Midland Bank, Poultry, endured much longer in the City than elsewhere. It was only really seriously challenged by the increasing adoption of international modernism as the universal 'stylistic' expression, post-war.

Architectural ornament, decoration and sculpture, essentially a product of the style, origins, ownership and use of the building, add considerably to the townscape character of the City in many

conservation areas. Outstanding in the spectrum of City buildings are those designed for owner occupation, where much has been invested in the ornament and richness of the design in the architectural expression of business image. Such buildings are complemented by the competitive architectural display of the more speculative office chambers of the later 19th and early 20th centuries. Much of the character of many of the conservation areas relies upon the age, scale, proportion, materials and in particular architectural modelling, ornament and decorative detail of the buildings.

The wholesale philosophical rejection in post-war years of architectural ornament and embellishment, at the same time as established grammar and language, has replaced a sculptural architectural aesthetic

with a functional and mechanical alternative. Sculptural ornament and decoration, no longer integral to the architecture, have become an applied or freestanding afterthought embellishing building facade or, more often, nearby space.

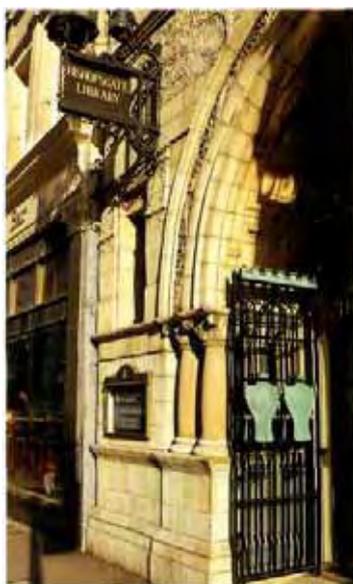
The architectural philosophies of the Victorian and Edwardian period, with their delight in modelling, exuberance and ornament, endow areas of the City with an architectural identity rich in visual delight and symbolic meaning. The investment in artistic, sculptural and craft skills, often expressed in a rich palette of materials from many sources, make such buildings and their contribution practicably irreplaceable.



Ludgate Hill



Victoria Embankment & Temple Avenue



Bishopsgate Institute



Fetter Lane



Moorgate



Royal Exchange Buildings

Other architectural styles of the 19th century, from Gothic Revival, Flemish and Dutch, to many individual eclectic compositions, frequently using many colours and textures of materials, create a rich and often varied townscape character in many areas.

Aspects of the economic, social, cultural and architectural history of the City are also recorded in the range and variety of freestanding monuments, sculpture and fountains, of both traditional and modern conception. Associations with City places, events or people help to reinforce aspects of the sense of place and continuity, where other reference may be absent or less apparent. They are also an artistic legacy in their own right. In the expression of local character they potentially combine association with place with a focus of visual, cultural and spiritual interest.



St Bartholomew's Hospital

# Conservation Policy and Designations

The legislation for planning control in conservation areas is principally enshrined in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended by the National Heritage Act 1983). Planning Policy Guidance Note 15, 'Planning and the Historic Environment' (recently replacing Circular 8/87) and Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 'Archaeology and Planning' and the associated Regulations provide the further background.

City planning policies for the City of London are drafted in the light of national policy and guidance. Planning policies are incorporated within the City of London Unitary Development Plan adopted in 1994. The City has taken into account guidance published by the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission (English Heritage) and the London Planning Advisory Committee in the preparation of this document.

The initial series of conservation areas in the City of London was designated in 1971, with additional areas and extensions added in 1974, 1976 and 1980. In 1980/81 a full survey and review were carried out by the City and a total of 21 extended and/or new conservation areas were designated at December 1981; with accompanying Interim Conservation Area Policies being adopted in May 1982. In 1981 and 1986 the Greater London Council designated extensions to two areas and in 1990 the City designated one extension. A further review of the City's conservation areas was carried out by the City in May 1991. Following the boundary changes in April 1994 the City, as 'successor authority', became responsible for sections of conservation area from the City of Westminster and the Boroughs of Camden, Islington and Tower Hamlets. These areas were reviewed, with subsequent amalgamation and/or extension, to rationalize boundaries and to recognise the settings of important buildings, in July 1994 - creating three new conservation areas in the City. Previous Borough plan policies will operate until the revision of the City of London Unitary Development Plan.

In the application of planning policy in the City's conservation areas, the City seeks to manage change commensurate with the objectives of the preservation and/or enhancement of the character and appearance of these areas. There is recognition of the need to accommodate change and new development, yet also the requirement to retain buildings and spaces where their loss or their replacement would be injurious to the character or appearance of that area. As part of this process, applications within conservation areas are the subject of additional consultations with various advisory bodies.

The City of London, in reaching decisions on planning applications within conservation areas, is guided by the information contained in both the General Introduction and the individual summary of area character published for each conservation area, in relation to planning policy. Applicants with proposals within a conservation area should consequently be aware of this information in framing their proposals. The weight given to particular aspects of an area's character will vary with the area and also with the site or building in question, and applicants are therefore advised to consult The Department of Planning & Transportation of the City of London at the earliest stage in the consideration of their proposals.

The fascinating historical sequence of events in the City of London has created many complexities and subtleties manifest in or underlying the present activities, fabric and townscape. It is essential that these aspects of the character and appearance of the City are understood in order that this character be preserved and/or enhanced in the City's conservation areas. At the same time it is perhaps inevitable that the present information available will be incomplete, in that new facts will emerge from further research. This general introduction to the character of the City's conservation areas provides a summary of background information common to the appreciation of the character of the individual areas. In doing so it enables a relatively succinct approach to the identification of the character of each area, centring on their key characteristics. The understanding of the way these may function, their potential importance, and other factors of possible relevance are examined in this general introduction. It is central to the analysis of each conservation area, although, within each area, the role and importance of individual elements and buildings will vary.

# Publications, References and Associated Reading

## **Legislation, Circulars and Guidance Notes**

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990: (includes table of derivations of the provisions of the 1990 Act from earlier legislation).

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended by the National Heritage Act 1983)

Circular 8/87. Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas - Policy and Procedures  
1987 DoE Planning Policy Guidance: 'General Policy and Principles' PPG 1 1992

DoE and DNH Planning Policy Guidance: 'Planning and the Historic Environment'  
PPG 15 1994

DoE Planning Policy Guidance: 'Archaeology and Planning' PPG16 1990

English Heritage 'Conservation Areas Practice. English Heritage guidance on the management of conservation areas' 1993

English Heritage 'Street Improvements in Historic Areas' Guidance Note 1993

## **Planning Policy for the City of London**

The City of London Unitary Development Plan 1994

As a result of the boundary changes which came into effect on 1st April 1994, several areas were transferred to the City of London from neighbouring Boroughs. Until such time as the City of London Unitary Development Plan is extended to cover these areas, the City will operate the policies of the relevant Boroughs' Plans applying to them as at 1st April 1994.

## **Associated Reading**

City of London 'Archaeology and Planning in the City of London' 1993

City of London 'Continuity and Change. Building in the City of London 1834-1984' 1984

Lobel, M.D. (Ed) 'The British Atlas of Historic Towns. Volume III. The City of London, From Prehistoric Times to c.1520' 1989

London Topographical Society 'Good and Proper Materials. The Fabric of London since the Great Fire' 1989

The London Topographical Society publishes a range of books, maps, plans and views of London, many of particular interest in connection with the history, form and fabric of the City of London. London Topographical Society, Bishopsgate Institute Reference Library, 230 Bishopsgate, London EC2M 4QH

Marsden, P. 'Roman London' 1983

The Museum of London publish a range of material on the archaeology and the history of London

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Summerson, J. 'Georgian London' 1988

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Vince, A. 'Saxon London. An Archaeological Investigation' 1990

The Royal Town Planning Institute 'The Character of Conservation Areas' 1993

(The Supporting Information includes a catalogue of 'British conservation and planning legislation' and a compilation of useful 'References' on conservation area theory and practice.)

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Pevsner, N. 'London I. The Cities of London and Westminster' 1957, 1962

The City of London is the local authority for the financial and commercial heart of Britain, the City of London. It is committed to maintaining and enhancing the status of the Business City as one of the world's three leading financial centres through the policies it pursues and the high standard of services it provides. Its responsibilities extend far beyond the City boundaries and it provides a host of additional facilities for the benefit of the nation. These range from the Central Criminal Court, The Old Bailey, to the famous Barbican Arts Centre and open spaces such as Epping Forest and Hampstead Heath.

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Further Information and assistance:

The Department of Planning & Transportation City of London  
P.O. Box 270 Guildhall London EC2P 2EJ Tel: 0207 332 1716

*[www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/plans](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/plans)*

Produced under the direction of:

**Peter Wynne Rees B.Sc, BArch, BTP, RIBA, FRTPI, FRSA.**  
**The City Planning Officer**  
**City of London**  
**P.O. Box 270 Guildhall**  
**London EC2P 2EJ**

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