



DECEMBER 2022

## BARBICAN QUARTER ACTION. AN UPDATE

### DO NOT DEMOLISH RETAIN, REUSE, RETROFIT

The quality of the existing buildings on the London Wall West site, the opportunity to create a vibrant destination with alternative and complementary uses, and the 45,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> demolition would create, present an overwhelming case for retention as part of this cultural quarter of the City of London.

This must not be looked at in isolation. The site is within 300 metres of major redevelopments - the new Museum, the Smithfield Market and the Arts Centre. Its future should be part of an overall cultural strategy with an urban plan for the Quarter linking the four sites.

The City is pressing ahead with its plans to demolish the Museum of London and Bastion House and erect two new towers containing over 750,000 square feet of office space with limited cultural and community offerings. It says it has consulted the public and has modified its proposals. These modifications are minimal.

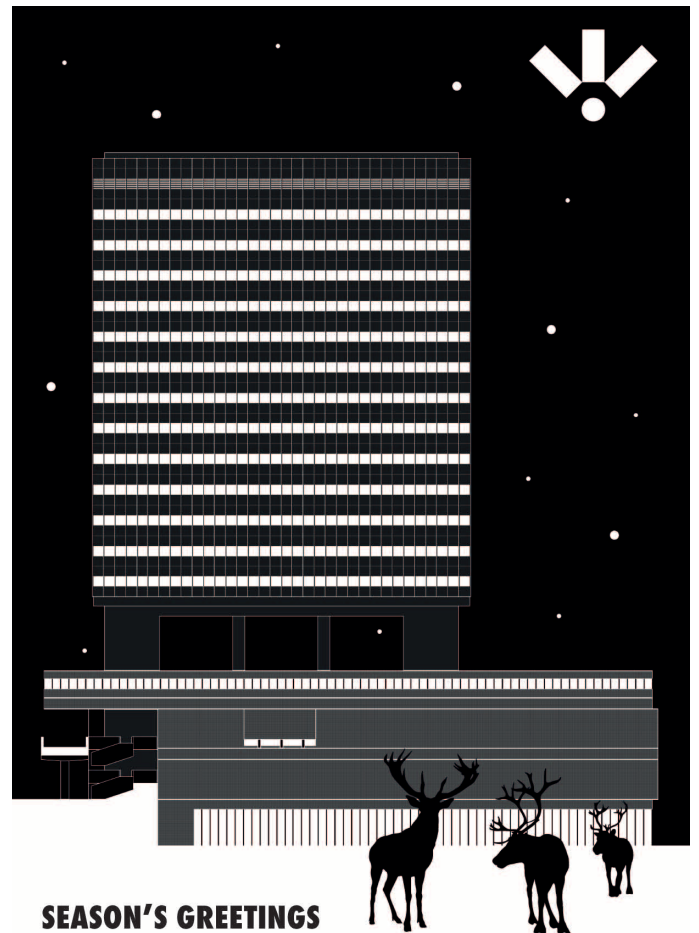
The City refuses to share fully details of these consultations.

They have acknowledged that such information as they have shared - *The Whole Life Carbon Assessment* - is misleading. Our experts go further and say parts of it are wrong. We have requested that the report be withdrawn, corrected and reissued. This has been refused.

We also believe that to support the case for demolition they were selective with their expert advice, which they have, in turn, refused to share.

Hypocrisy? The City continues to pursue policies for the site that contradict its own official proclamations, policies and climate change targets.

At the Court in September Chris Hayward, the Chair of Policy and Resources said, "*When the facts change, I can change*". The facts have, he hasn't yet.



#### SEASON'S GREETINGS

*Museum of London and Bastion house, Powell & Moya  
At risk of demolition in 2023*

Recently Mr Hayward said, *“We must ensure for any new planning application that retrofitting is the first challenge and the first hurdle that must be addressed”*. Earlier he stated that *“we should feel confident that the City can continue to be leaders in creating a more sustainable future”*.

And yet the City has never assessed a retention and retrofit scheme for the current buildings.

Rowan Moore writing in the Observer on 27 November, *The City of London Dreams On* ([www.londonstartshere.co.uk](http://www.londonstartshere.co.uk)) typifies the increasing national and architectural interest in the future of the site and the issues of money and sustainability it raises. He states, *“this is a test case for the argument that old buildings should be kept for the sake of the carbon embedded in their fabric, and to avoid the costs in energy and emissions that go with rebuilding”*.

## NEXT STEPS

The City aims to submit a planning application in March. If that time scale is kept, the City’s obligatory consultation will start in early February.

The Planning Committee is likely to make its decision around the same time as the Lord Mayor will be hosting the Net Zero Delivery Summit with the COP Egyptian Presidency at the Mansion House in May.

We are inviting you to public meeting at St Giles church on 17th January 2023.

In addition, we:

- have experts on standby to scrutinise the environmental impact assessment the City is obliged to provide when submitting its planning application
- shall commission legal advice as necessary
- continue to involve our MP, Nickie Aiken, who has already written to the City making her opposition to the development clear
- are developing a process to identify a strategy for the site and future uses for the retrofitted buildings

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

If you are concerned about the climate and believe that more offices are inappropriate for this part of the City:

- register your support at the website [www.londonstartshere.co.uk](http://www.londonstartshere.co.uk) and encourage your family, friends and neighbours to do so
- Write to your MP, Nickie Aiken at [nickie.aiken.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:nickie.aiken.mp@parliament.uk)
- Contact your Ward councillors to voice your opposition
- Attend City-wide residents’ meetings on 11th January at 12:30 pm and 6:15 pm - this is a chance to make your views known to Chris Hayward.

- And come to St Giles on the 17th of January at 7.00pm
- Meanwhile, we wish you a very happy Christmas and New Year. Thank you for your support past and future.

## Planning News

Sue Cox, Jane Smith, Fred Rodgers and Miranda Quinney are the avid readers who scour planning news and applications for anything which might affect residents on our Estate. It’s a lot of monitoring and reading, so a big vote of thanks from us all, I’m sure!

Every few weeks, Sue sends out a bulletin to your House Group with noteworthy news, and then your House Group will probably disseminate anything of relevance to you.

### **Snips from the latest report from Sue to give you a taste:**

One application on the residential front. This is for a major refurbishment, including the installation of suspended ceilings, in Lauderdale Tower.

### **GOLDEN LANE... SO NEAR BUT YET SO VERY FAR...**

You are all now probably aware that the application to refurbish and extend (massively) 1 Golden Lane was debated at a Planning & Transportation Committee meeting. I say “debated” but that is not really the best word to describe the process. In my opinion, the presentations from the objectors were excellent, as too was Cripplegate Common Councillor Elizabeth King’s presentation. But, as someone on *BarbicanTalk* somewhat cynically and succinctly put it, the “property developers’ lobbying body” yet again won the day. The vote was very close however with 14 in favour and 12 against. Three Barbican residents on the Committee voted against the scheme but two resident members voted in favour – these two votes therefore could well have changed the outcome. But it was not to be.

So yet again residents’ objections have been ignored and many of the City’s own planning policies totally disregarded. Permitting this massively oversized behemoth to be created is surely a disgrace - the overdevelopment of the site’s current footprint and the proposed unnecessary increase in height and mass will cause considerable damage to residential amenity in the form of loss of daylight and sunlight, overshadowing, overlooking and light pollution.

We would remind that core strategic policy DE2 : New Development of the Draft Local Plan 2036 states that *‘The design of all new development must ensure that: The bulk and massing of schemes are appropriate in relation to their surroundings and have due regard to the general scale, height, building lines, character, historic interest and significance, urban grain and materials of the locality and relate well to the character of the area,...’* and that

*‘Development that would adversely affect the character, appearance or amenities of the buildings or area will be resisted’.*

This fell on deaf ears. Frustrating doesn’t even come close...

If interested, the meeting can be viewed on YouTube via the following link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kCaWEVvX\\_6M&ab\\_channel=CityofLondonCorporation](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kCaWEVvX_6M&ab_channel=CityofLondonCorporation)

### **CLIFFORD CHANCE SET TO DOWNSIZE SIGNIFICANTLY FROM CANARY WHARF TO 2 ALDERMANBURY SQUARE**

It has been reported that law firm Clifford Chance is looking to return to the City of London after a decade in Canary Wharf. Property development investment fund Great Portland Estates (GPE) has confirmed that it is in talks with the firm for a pre-letting of one of its largest office developments, 2 Aldermanbury Square. GPE is reported to have spent nearly £270m on the new development as of March, having initially bought the site for £93m 12 years ago, and is expecting “to pull in around £24m in annual rent from the site”. Brokerage Goodbody has given the development an estimated value of £480m.

Those with long memories will recall that Clifford Chance’s HQ was originally at 200 Aldersgate Street, a 434,005 sq ft office building completed in 1991/92. So the firm moved from a 434,005 sq ft building to a 1m sq ft site in Canary Wharf... but is now looking to downsize to a “320,000 sq ft development one-third the size of the original 1m sq ft rented in Canary Wharf...”

**Comment** – if Clifford Chance is doing this, is there not the prospect that other firms will also be seeking to downsize? Is the City of London paying any attention?

The news was covered in several newspapers, including *CityAM*, the link to which is: <https://www.cityam.com/city-calls-clifford-chance-looks-to-trade-canary-wharf-for-the-square-mile/>

There have been a number of interesting articles published recently and I thought that I would share a few with you:

### **CRUMBLING COMMERCIAL PROPERTY VALUATIONS AND SALES SIGNAL LOOMING SLUMP**

The biggest deal to go through in recent months was Landsec’s sale of Deutsche Bank’s new City of London office, 21 Moorfields. Late last year, Landsec was privately approached by a potential investor willing to pay about £1bn, according to people with knowledge of the offer. Landsec instead opted for a public sales process and last month settled for almost 20 per cent less, agreeing a £809mn deal with Australian developer Lendlease. The full article can be viewed via the following link:

<https://www.ft.com/content/19b115b0-893b-4962-847d-6b33daf99e74>

### **OFFICE WORKERS EMBRACE HYBRID WORKING AS POST-PANDEMIC NORM**

<https://www.ft.com/content/91899837-0fc7-4fe8-9581-60517d85399b>

## **Housekeeping**

On 4 October 2022 the Court of Common Council considered an apparently dull as ditch water proposal to establish a Planning Applications Sub-Committee under the Planning and Transportation Committee. The sub-committee would determine all planning and listed building consent applications not already delegated to officers. Membership of the PTC and sub-committee would be the same, and sub-committee membership could only be amended by the Court. The proposal would avoid the administrative burden of having to form ad hoc committees and could be implemented immediately. There was also a suggestion that this separation improved situations in which the Corporation was determining its own planning applications, although quite why is hard to fathom. The main proposal was bound to go through, but the resident representatives made a stand over an ancillary proposal that: “any further updating of the Planning Protocol be delegated to the Planning and Transportation Committee.”

The Planning Protocol may sound like the title of a Cold War thriller, but is another somewhat dull document, which happens to contain provisions which are vital to the fair and objective resolution of planning applications. In light of the formation of a PTC sub-committee, its terms needed updating and future updating needed to be catered for. The question was: who should have the authority to update it? Previously, it had been within the remit of the Policy and Resources Committee. The proposal before the Court was that the updating should be delegated to the PTC itself on the basis that the Protocol largely deals with “housekeeping”.

The Protocol addresses how the PTC exercises its functions. The Protocol’s introduction states that it is central to the preservation of “public trust in the integrity and fairness of the planning system”. Residents may be permitted a hollow laugh at this point. Nevertheless, gritty matters are addressed, including: the basis on which contact may be made with applicants and objectors pre-Committee consideration; gifts and hospitality; site visits; briefings on major applications; conflicts of interest; the content of reports by officers; decisions contrary to officer advice; the right to and the basis on which a person may address the committee. Alderwoman Sue Pearson, seconded by Alderman Christopher Makin, pushed to debate the proposed delegation and eventually forced a

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division, which was, of course, lost.

In order to brand the proposals as unimportant, “housekeeping” was the word used both by the Corporation’s officers in the written report, and by the Chair of the PTC, Shравan Jashvantrai Joshi, in his oral remarks. As we all know, housekeeping is women’s work and therefore automatically unimportant. This use of language

went unchallenged by the opponents of the proposal, but it sums up the dismissive attitude of the Corporation and of the business representatives at the Court to rules and processes which are indeed vital to public, and especially resident trust in the integrity and fairness of the planning system. Time will tell how the PTC will use its new ability to order its own governance.

**Heather Thomas**

## ASB in the Barbican – update

By the time you read this the ASB Reporter will have been running for 18 months and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those Barbican residents who have taken the time to fill in the website and report on asb incidents happening across the estate.

Using the information you have provided we have entered into discussion with Corporation Members and Officers with the intention of adopting measures which will help reduce the level of anti-social behaviour.

As an initial outcome, a Task/Finish Joint Action Group has been formed and had its inaugural meeting on Monday 5th December. The group consists of City of London Police Officers; Barbican Estate Management; other Corporation Officers; the Chair of the Barbican Residential Committee and myself.

Please continue to use the ASB Reporter thereby

recording asb activity across the estate and adding to the evidence already collected to help with our mission to adopt additional measures aimed at reducing the level of asb activity in the future.

I would also like to remind everyone that the ASB Reporter is not a live action mechanism – it is purely a means of gathering evidence. Therefore if you witness an asb incident please record this on the ASB Reporter website BUT if action is also required then please call the appropriate contact be they the City of London Police; Barbican Estate Management; City Noise Team etc.. If it is the City of London Police that you call you should be provided with a reference/case number – please include this number in the “action taken” section of the ASB Reporter.

Finally, may I wish you and yours a very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**David Bradshaw**

## LEASE EXTENSIONS

### Need More Information?

Barbican Life are planning a series of meetings (some in person, and some on Zoom) with solicitors in the coming months. Let us know if you are interested and we’ll send you invites.

Email: [barblifeedit@gmail.com](mailto:barblifeedit@gmail.com)

If you have questions and don’t enjoy Zoom or email, please contact us and we’ll share what we know to get you started. Phone: 078 42 23 52 68 or drop in a note with your contact details to 15 Defoe House and we’ll call you back.

Search on the Barbican Talk website for “SHARE YOUR LEASE EXTENSION EXPERIENCE” and see what other folks have done.

Check back regularly on [barbicanlife.com/lease-extension](http://barbicanlife.com/lease-extension) and we’ll also add important information up there as it comes up.

