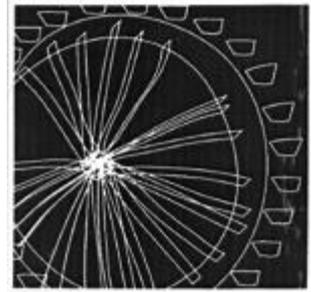




London Branch

Newsletter

Summer 2015



Chairman's Note

In previous newsletters I have mentioned the alarming statistics about the loss of conservation posts across the country. At last, I have some more positive news. The IHBC monitors the number of job advertisements for conservation officers in England. The latest statistics show that there were as many jobs advertised in the first half of this year as in the whole of 2013/14. However, with another round of public spending cuts expected, perhaps we should not be too optimistic.

You may have seen in a recent IHBC Newsblog that the Queen's Birthday Honours List includes the award of an MBE to Rosemarie Macqueen, who was Strategic Director for the Built Environment at Westminster City Council until she retired last year. Rosemarie is a member of the IHBC and as many of you will remember, was Chair of London branch for many years. I have already sent her congratulations on behalf of the branch for this well-deserved honour. I hope that her successors will continue her careful approach to conserving Westminster's heritage.

It was good to see many of you at our Annual Meeting in March with the Heritage of London Trust and English Heritage. We were privileged to have Sir Laurie Magnus the Chairman of English Heritage (as was) in attendance. As well as outlining the functions of the new separate organisations, English Heritage and Historic England, he urged us all to be evangelists for the historic environment. After all, if we don't shout for it, we can't expect others to do it on our behalf. It will be interesting to see if his zeal is shared by Duncan Wilson, Historic England's recently appointed Chief Executive. As part of the afternoon session of the event, John Preston ran a workshop on retrofitting and the Green Deal. I'd be interested in members' feedback, both on the workshop itself and whether it would work as a format for future events.

At our AGM in March I asked for volunteers to join the IHBC's enlarged Council, known as Council+. I'm pleased to welcome Lucie Carayon from The Ancient Monuments Society, who put herself forward. The first Council+ meeting took place on the Sunday after the IHBC Annual School in Norwich. I found it to be lively and stimulating event. It was good to meet enthusiastic members from other branches as well as familiar faces. Thanks to Lucie for taking this on.

David McDonald
London Branch Chairman

HOLT / Historic England / IHBC Event

Wednesday 4th March 2015

On Wednesday 4th March, Westminster City Council kindly hosted the annual joint meeting for the London borough representatives and London amenity societies. Attendees came from the public, private and voluntary sectors allowing for a real mix of perspectives and experience. The range of talks was as varied as the attendees and provided real food for thought regarding the current hot topics for the historic environment in London.

The morning started, as usual, with a detailed introduction to the work of the Heritage of London Trust (HOLT) by its Chairman **Dudley Fishburn**, its new Director **Dr Nicola Stacey** and **Laura Norris**, Director of HOLT Operations (HOLT Ops), who updated attendees on the ongoing works at St George's Chapel in Woolwich. This building is a Grade II listed Victorian chapel and was the regimental chapel of the Royal Regiment of Artillery but was largely destroyed by a bomb in 1944 and left as a ruin. HOLT Ops have taken on the building and is working towards returning it to a community use. This was followed by a presentation by **John Walker**, Operational Director, Development Planning at Westminster City Council who discussed Westminster Council's current approach to development affecting heritage assets, particularly in light of the large number of designated heritage assets in the City and the development pressure it faces from high profile projects such as Crossrail.

The focus then turned to English Heritage in terms of its current work and future plans; as the meeting took place before the English Heritage 'split', there was a rousing speech by the Chairman of English Heritage (now Historic England), **Sir Laurie Magnus**, about the future of Historic England. **Dr Nigel Barker**, English Heritage Planning and Conservation Director, London, Chaired this part of the day and updated on the work of the London office of English Heritage and current cases. **Timothy Jones**, Principal Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas London, introduced attendees to some new initiatives for the soon to be Historic England and which would shortly be consulted on. These included: fast track listing; listing enhancement; extended pre-application advice and screening surveys. **Rebecca Barrett**, Principal Adviser, Heritage at Risk, provided an overview of the wide range of projects the Heritage at Risk team is involved in, particularly including burial grounds. **Veronica Fiorato**, Designation Team Leader, provided examples of the diverse range of buildings which make up the Designation Team's casework and **Rachel McMillan**, Local Engagement Adviser, provided an update on the recently established London Conservation Officers' Group which will be a vital opportunity for Conservation Officers within London to discuss current issues.

The day was sponsored jointly by Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners (NLP) and The Prince's Regeneration Trust. NLP Senior Heritage Consultant, **Grant Lock**, advised that NLP were pleased to be able to support the day, provided attendees with an overview of recent heritage work by NLP across London and reflected that the sector seemed to be growing, including NLP's heritage team with the addition of a new Heritage Consultant, Amy Davidson, who was previously a Conservation Officer at War Memorials Trust.

Following lunch and the chance for attendees to take in the superb views across London from the Mayor's Reception Room, **Ellen Dempster**, Senior Projects Adviser from The Prince's Regeneration Trust set the tone for the afternoon session as she spoke about the updating and republishing of The Green Guide.

The afternoon session was led by the IHBC London Branch and chaired by IHBC London Branch Chairman, **David McDonald**. The environmental theme continued with **John Preston**, Vice-Chair of the IHBC Policy Committee and member of the Sustainable Traditional Buildings Alliance Steering Group, who provided a comprehensive review of energy efficiency and historic buildings. As well as a helpful overview of relevant publications, one of the key points to come out of John's talk was that there needs to be greater understanding of traditional buildings from those making decisions about their energy efficiency. Following John's talk there was a workshop to discuss individual experiences of the practical implementation of energy efficiency improvements and what would help to make this simpler to manage at a local level. This workshop was followed by updates from the IHBC including **Mike Brown**, IHBC Chairman and **Kate Kendall**, IHBC Learning, Education, Training and Standards Liaison Officer who updated about community engagement initiatives.

Following the close of the day, discussions continued informally at the nearby Buckingham Arms. After such a jam-packed and well attended event in 2015 the bar has been set high for 2016.

Amy Davidson
Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners



UDL Event: Heritage Skills: How to Understand Significance, Detail and Architectural Language

On the 2nd June, Urban Design London held a workshop on 'Heritage Skills: How to Understand Significance, Detail and Architectural Language', with talks from experts in the conservation field on some of the key concepts and terms within historic conservation. The event, sponsored by Historic England, was held in the grade I listed London Underground Headquarters at 55 Broadway, St. James's.

Following an introduction from **Edmund Bird, Heritage Advisor for the Greater London Authority and Transport for London**, the first talk on 'Significance – What it is and what it means', was given by **David McDonald, Historic Environment and Urban Design Consultant**. This started with an overview of conservation principles and values, types of heritage assets and definitions of significance. The talk identified important issues, such as how significance is measured and how the assessment of significance relates to current legislation and guidance.

Veronica Fiorato, Designation Team Leader for London and South East at Historic England, spoke about national versus local designation and the basis of the decision making process, highlighting the importance of careful research, inspection and consultation. A number of case studies were used to illustrate the aspects examined when considering a property for designation, with an opportunity for everyone to give their view on what they felt was interesting or special about the buildings covered.

David Garrard, Senior Conservation Officer at the Royal Borough of Greenwich, focussed on architectural periods and details. A brief history of architecture, from the Greco-Roman inheritance to the present day, was outlined and the talk also identified and explained key building features and architectural terms.

The afternoon session began with a group exercise. The party was split into two groups and taken on walking tours of the nearby area, each concentrating on different building types. Our group, led by David McDonald, studied Georgian housing, looking in particular at some examples of Queen Anne architecture. Everyone was given a questionnaire to fill out, identifying factors such as the building date, what makes the building significant and any particular features of interest. Following the site visit, the whole group convened to feedback and discuss what had been learned.

The final talk of the afternoon, given by **David McDonald**, addressed architectural language and vocabulary. David highlighted the principal elements to be included when providing an architectural description of a building. He also spoke about building details, giving examples of materials, roof forms, window types and decorative features.

The day finished off with a tour of the late 1920s building at 55 Broadway, designed by architect Charles Holden. The building still retains original features, including some original fireplaces and white marble drinking fountains. We ended with a climb to the top of the building, which affords some brilliant views out over Westminster and beyond.



Hannah Walker
Assistant Heritage Consultant, Turley

Historic England: A new era of paid-for fast-track services?



Historic England

On the 1st April Historic England, the new public body to look after England's historic environment, was established and just before entering purdah in the run-up to the General Election ideas for new initiatives aimed at bringing more clarity and certainty to heritage control and designation systems were announced. The proposals are trailed under the banner of “Enhanced Advisory Services” and comprise four key aspects which subject to public consultation will launch in July 2015:

Fast-track listing – noting that applications for listing assessment take an average of 23 weeks before a recommendation is made to Government and those seeking certificates of immunity from listing up a year to determine, a paid-for fast-track service is proposed. Here, recommendations on “straightforward” cases will be sent to Government within 12 weeks and those that are more “complex” or “contentious” within a guaranteed deadline agreed with the applicant. The cost is envisaged to be between £3,000 and £8,000 per case.

Listing enhancement – given that 85% of England’s 376,000 listed building entries were written before 2004 with many over 40 years old, often brief and not identifying the reasons for listing, a paid-for service will offer the opportunity to upgrade a list entry to modern standards for a fee of between £3,000 and £6,000.

Extended pre-application advice – noting the value of such advice in the planning process a new service is proposed, where extended or ongoing advice from Historic England can be secured for fees of between £300 and £3,500, oddly only beyond an initial 15 hours of free advice.

Screening service – a new survey service where Historic England will at request visually screen an area to determine potential heritage assets which may or may not be eligible for listing allowing land owners to gauge the risk of proceeding with development proposals. Likely charge for a “small screening survey” is £8,000.

Notably, existing free services will remain where they currently exist and cases involving sites on a published Heritage at Risk Register or that involve national security will be exempt from cost recovery charges.

The principle of any proposals which seek to bring a greater degree of certainty and timeliness to heritage designation and control services is welcomed. However, the blanket approach to recovering the costs of the required additional resource may be contentious. For example no distinction is made between private domestic owners of listed buildings and commercial owners and developers in the suggested fee structure. If a differentiation were made, charging for all pre-application advice to commercial interests, if provided in a timely manner, would seem more sensible than an arbitrary first 15 hours free.

It is also notable in the case of faster tracked listing and certificate of immunity from listing cases that the paid-for services do not give any assurance regarding the subsequent timescales for Government to actually make the subsequent decisions.

Roger Mascal
Head of Heritage, Turley



LONDON BRANCH COMMITTEE

Chairman: David McDonald

davidmcdonald378@btinternet.com

Tel. 020 8881 6724

Treasurer: John Webb

Jwebb@wandsworth.gov.uk

Tel. 020 8871 6645

Branch Secretary & Representative on Council: Sheila Stones

Sheila.Stones@HistoricEngland.org.uk

Tel. 01223 582716

Events: Christine White

Christine.white@enfield.gov.uk

Tel. 020 8379 3852

Membership: Kate Jefferson

katejefferson@gmail.com

Application Mentor: Jon Finney

j.finney2@ntlworld.com

Newsletter Editor: Jenny Tonkins

Jenny.tonkins@turley.co.uk

Publicity Coordinator : David Andrews

dandrews@wandsworth.gov.uk

Upcoming Events:

London Branch Day Conference: Setting the Scene

The London Branch Day Conference is being held on **Thursday 8th October** at the Royal College of Physicians. This year, the theme will be on identifying and conserving historic landscapes. More details and booking information are available on the conference website:

<http://ihbc.org.uk/settingscene/index.html>

This newsletter is by IHBC members for the IHBC London branch.

The information in its articles are the views of the authors and not necessarily the view of the IHBC.

For the next edition please forward submissions to

Jenny.tonkins@turley.co.uk

Please send all text as Microsoft Word documents with images as jpegs.