

City Plan 2040

Barbara Harris [Redacted]

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To: Planning Policy Consultations <PlanningPolicyConsultations@cityoflondon.gov.uk>

Cc: Archdeacon London [Redacted]

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THIS IS AN EXTERNAL EMAIL



Rev'd Paul Kennedy

[Redacted signature block]

Head of City Plan 2040
Development Plans Team
Environment Department
City of London Corporation
Guildhall
PO Box 270
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Dear Sirs,

We are St. Vedast alias Foster of Foster Lane, EC2V 6HH. There has been a church on this site since 1170 and the Rectory is adjacent to the church with our rector and his family residing there. The church is a Grade I listed building, rebuilt by Christopher Wren after the Great Fire and restored after being completely burnt out in the Blitz under the direction of a Parochial Church Council that included the Poet Laureate John Betjamen. The organ is by Noel Mander, a master organ builder.

The United benefice includes thirteen former parishes where the churches themselves are no longer extant with the exception of St. Anne and St Agnes, Gresham Street but there are many churchyards remaining

providing green spaces in the heart of the City for the benefit of City residents, workers and tourists seeking a calm space.

The church is open daily from Monday to Friday from 8am to 4pm with a lunchtime service and every Sunday. The courtyard is open every day from early morning until dusk or later. Other daytime and evening services take place on a regular basis and both the church and hall are available for use by various groups including choirs and for secular and non-secular meetings.

We are concerned that the City plan as currently proposed seems not to reflect the very great contribution made by the City’s numerous places of worship to the wellbeing of the City. The Cathedral of St Paul seems at risk from being overshadowed by yet more tall buildings as does the, unique to the City, synagogue at Bevis Marks. Changes to the London skyline will change the views of the City from various bridges obscuring many ecclesiastical building both large and small.

The many spires and tower of the 50 plus Wren churches in the City and other places of worship are increasingly being dwarfed by new buildings. There are 36 churches within the Square Mile all of which predate most of the existing buildings and will remain standing to enhance and preserve the historic environment much appreciated by those who live and work in the City and by the many visitors well after many current buildings have gone.

In addition to the buildings themselves standing as a very visible statement of the heritage of the area, the churches also provide not only ministry to those of faith and those with none but also provide quiet space for reflection or just time away from the stresses of modern life. They provide support for the voiceless and dispossessed including the homeless. Our Rector, Fr Paul Kennedy (currently on sabbatical), works closely with the Corporation in this respect. The City churches assist the City Police in supporting those found to be in despair and indeed, the Samaritans started in the crypt of St. Stephen Walbrook. Such pioneering work continues in many ways.

In addition to providing places of sanctuary, solace and rest, St Vedast and other churches attract visitors who then patronise local businesses thus assisting the local economy. We set out below some of the comments of the Diocese of London who will be responding on behalf of the Anglican churches in the City showing specifically how their comments apply to St Vedast.

| General Comment | How this relates to St Vedast, Foster Lane |
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| Workability and Wellbeing of the City | |

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| <p>About 75% of the public open space in the City is churchyard and it is at ground level. This means it can be accessed without booking and at whim, and without having to provide identification. In the Fleet Street BID there is no open space which is not churchyard. This means that if somebody is upset or depressed or just needs to breathe they can step into one of the churchyards. Under the Burials Act they are managed in partnership with the City Gardens team, but theoretically it would be possible for the churches to close the church yards and rent them exclusively which would bring in a considerable income but remove this amenity which makes a huge difference to the well-being of the City.</p> | <p>Between them St Vedast’s linked parishes account for five of the open spaces managed by City Gardens for the benefit of the public. Additionally St Vedast’s self-maintained courtyard provides a secluded space for peace and contemplation. It has regularly won garden awards.</p> |
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POLICY HL5: LOCATION & PROTECTION OF SOCIAL & COMMUNITY FACILITIES
 Agree overall. 5. fund the facilities that are already available and not dilute the offering when it is not necessary

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| <p>The churches themselves provide “sanctuary in the City” offering headspace indoors. They</p> | <p>The church is open all day weekdays and on Sunday mornings. It is well visited by those</p> |
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| are used as warm places during the winter and as cool spaces during the increasingly hot summers. | seeking “sanctuary” as well as by tourists and visitors. |
| The churches provide “third space”, neither in the office nor in the meeting room. | Services are held each weekday and on Sunday. The church is open daily and available to anyone wishing to use it either for worship or as a quiet place. |
| STRATEGIC POLICY S1: HEALTH, INCLUSION & SAFETY | |
| STRATEGIC POLICY S6: CULTURE & VISITORS | |
| Social contribution | |
| In addition to the partnership over the homelessness assessment centre at Snow Hill and the temporary assessment centres at Bishopsgate, the churches host hundreds of meetings of Twelve Step Groups of all kinds, make contributions to food banks and other charitable activities, have developed social enterprises, (For instance Clean for Good) and serve hidden communities specifically through the work at Holy Sepulchre Newgate and Saint Katharine Cree. There is a work of support counselling pastoral care and chaplaincy via the churches to hundreds of individuals in workplaces. | St Vedast hosts five Twelve Step Group meetings each week. It also offers inexpensive meeting space for local groups such as yoga and choirs to the benefit of City workers. |
| Convening | |
| The City Churches convene and work with other faith communities in the public square working with the London Resilience Forum leading for example the humanitarian assistance group for Fishmonger's Hall attack. As you know I was for twelve years the Faith and Belief lead for the LRF working alongside John Barradel who was LA Lead. In that role within the Covid SCG my team was instrumental in the delivery of the Mortuary Hubs, the Funeral Standards for London, the multi faith chaplaincy teams and breaking down barriers for the vaccination programme. | St Vedast offers space to Muslim workers for Friday Prayers as part of our collaboration with other faith groups. |
| STRATEGIC POLICY S6: CULTURE & VISITORS | |
| Culture | |
| We assess that there are more free to access, non worship cultural events, mainly music, but also including art exhibitions, plays and performances, talks and lectures, than in the Barbican and the South Bank put together in any given year. | St Vedast has an active bell ringing team, whose regular performances attract the attention of many visitors and add a special aspect to the City’s cultural offering. The church has a fine organ and is regularly used for concerts. |
| Education | |
| The only Primary school in the City is a Church of England school. The London | St Vedast’s chapel of ease St Anne and St Agnes is let to the musical charity Voces8. |

diocesan Board for Schools is the largest single education provider in London.

They hold regular workshops in choral singing to school groups from The City and surrounding boroughs.

We very much hope that our concerns about the plan as presently drafted will be considered and that the final plan will allow the many churches in the City to continue their work both in ministry and being a rich part of the life of residents, workers and visitors.

The heritage of the City churches is unique in many ways attracting people to their services from all over London and beyond. The churches contribute not only to the heritage of the City but to the environment through churchyards and the St Vedast courtyard, economically by supporting businesses and their staff, culturally as many church buildings are home to concerts and recitals and offer widespread social and wellbeing benefits on a daily basis.

Yours faithfully,

Rev'd Robert Pfeiffer – Curate

Barbara Harris – Churchwarden

James Olley - Churchwarden

Fr Paul Kennedy is on sabbatical and is at present on an humanitarian mission to Ukraine