

**From:** Inger Lannero [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 16 June 2024 00:24  
**To:** Planning Policy Consultations; Archdeacon London; Chloe Hobbs; Bishop of Islington; Wole Agbaje  
**Subject:** CITY PLAN 2040 -- SQUARE MILE CHURCHES CONTRIBUTION  
**Categories:** CONFIRMED

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THIS IS AN EXTERNAL EMAIL

Dear City of London Development Plans Team,

**RE: CITY PLAN 2040 -- SQUARE MILE CHURCHES CONTRIBUTION**

I am writing to respond to the City 2040 plans as a representative of the Parish of St Mary Woolnoth, St Edmund the King and Martyr and St Clement Eastcheap with St Martin Orgar.

Many of the developments in the City 2040 plans are very welcome, particularly in creating green and more social spaces but to ensure a comprehensive and holistic perspective on the development of the City there seems to be one category of stakeholders which has been underrepresented during consultations, namely the City Churches.

I would like to address some issues related to this and to offer some information on what takes place in the Parish which I represent in and around Bank. We are very grateful for the extension of the deadline until 17 June to do this.

To begin with we will just offer a snapshot of what takes place in our Parish in relation to three of the objectives of the 2040 plans and then I will briefly offer some thoughts on particular elements of the plan:

POLICY SA1: PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE LOCATIONS  
POLICY S14: SPACES & GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE and POLICY HL3: NOISE

About 75% of the public open space in the City is churchyards and at ground level. This means they can be accessed without booking and at whim, and without having to provide identification. **The Parish of St Mary Woolnoth, St Edmund the King and St Clement Eastcheap**, located around Lombard Street, has two churchyards in the Parish. One is **St Martin Orgar**, maintained by the City of London under the Burials Act. It is a beautiful gem with various zones and a stunning tree. The second one is **Fen Court, Fenchurch Street** (The Memorial to Slavery). As one Stephen Liddle writes: *It's a quiet and leafy garden just where you'd least expect to find one. From time to time people in the media say that there needs to be a memorial to slavery in London, seemingly oblivious that there is already this incredible monument with all the heritage around and about which could never be re-created in a tourist hotspot.*

It would be possible for the Parish to rent these gardens exclusively (particularly St Martin Orgar) which would bring in a considerable income and to remove this amenity which makes a huge

difference to the well-being of the City but we are happy not to do this and allow them to remain accessible to the public. This is a small but significant part that Churches in the City play in enhancing the environment.

**POLICY HL5: LOCATION & PROTECTION OF SOCIAL & COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

**The Parish of St Mary Woolnoth, St Edmund the King and St Clement Eastcheap**, located around Lombard Street, keeps St Mary Woolnoth (on Bank Exchange) open to the public Mon-Fri and on Sundays. It is an extraordinary space, beautiful and peaceful, designed by Hawksmore but it also is historically significant – the story of this place is remarkable. An independent coffee shop in the Vestibule of St Mary Woolnoth called *Newton’s Coffee* commemorates John Newton, who some would say had one of the most profound effects on the Nation, as a significant abolitionist and author of ‘Amazing Grace’, a hymn which some call the unofficial national anthem of the USA. The space is heated in the winter, cool in the summer and the coffee is exquisite. People from all walks visit the church throughout the day. Currently there is a D-Day exhibition with World War II paintings and reflections which the public is engaging with. In the mornings, 7-8am the church offers a time for quiet reflection and encounter, providing a ‘third space’ for those working in the City.

Could the plans include some funding for facilities that are already available and not dilute the offering when this is not always necessary?

**STRATEGIC POLICY S2: SAFE & SECURE CITY**  
**STRATEGIC PRIORITY: ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE STRATEGIC POLICY**  
**S6: CULTURE AND VISITORS**

The three Grade-1 listed churches in the Parish are all open on Sundays. There are around 400 people in their twenties who attend services in these three churches over any given weekend. Many tourists (sometimes 20-30 on Sundays) step in during services and are often profoundly moved.

At Christmas companies in the City will often request to hold their Christmas services in these churches. Each year we host several but I know some churches that host up to 20 of these. Our particular Parish also provided a free ‘Gospel Carols’ event on the steps of the Exchange Dec 2023. Many people came to listen and purchase drinks from the Christmas market area in front of the Exchange.

Ours is just one of many parishes, but these churches enhance the social glue in the City which builds strength and durability in not only the individual but also within the wider community. Meaningful connections are of course a significant part of people's wellbeing and therefore also their productivity.

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**1.1.1 The priorities have been informed by stakeholders.**

The general feeling between churches in the City is that the 2040 plan seems not to have considered the churches as a key stakeholder and resulted in the lack of a wider consultation with this category of stakeholders, some of which have been in the City for sometimes up to 1000 years. Our anecdotal experience is that churches very much play a key part in the wellbeing of the City, judging by the number of people who tour, attend services, reflect & pray in them during the weekdays and weekends. Our response to the 2040 plans hopes to provide a perspective on the

nature of what the Churches provide, based on the example of three Grade 1 listed churches around the Bank Exchange, along Lombard Street.

**3.2.0 An inclusive environment is one that recognises that everyone benefits from improved accessibility including disabled people, older people, families with children, carers, people with temporary medical conditions or impaired mobility and non-disabled people. The built environment needs to be safe, accessible and convenient to improve the quality of life for all City users. Despite progress in building a more accessible City, some people still experience considerable barriers to living independent and dignified lives as a result of the way the built environment is designed, built and managed.**

To make the most of the opportunity create a genuine caring community in the City, which would much enhance people's wellbeing, it would be helpful if the 2040 plans could include a solution of how to enable listed buildings to become even more accessible for people in the City, particularly those with disabilities. These historic buildings are more than meets the eye -- the communities in them minister to people's spiritual and mental health needs. In the case of the Parish by Bank which I represent, we have a community of 400+ twenty year olds, mainly from minority backgrounds, many of who work in the City or nearby, but it is a shame when people have to be turned away because these ancient buildings are often not accessible for wheelchair users.

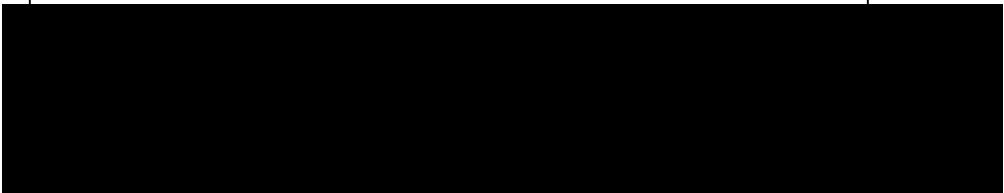
**3.6.2 Where existing social and community facilities are to be relocated, the replacement facilities should be within the City. However, for services that serve a wider catchment area, relocation outside the City, but within a reasonable distance, may be acceptable. There may be advantages in locating organisations together within multi-functional community buildings to maximise the efficient use of resources. Places of worship have the potential to accommodate a range of activities on their premises which can help improve community cohesion. Relocated facilities must be available to communities at a cost/rent equivalent to that charged prior to redevelopment. New facilities provided should similarly provide space at a cost/rent that is affordable to the communities being served.**

How and when were the consultations with Places of worship held regarding them accommodating social and community facilities that are not being replaced within the City? It sounds like the plans possibly include the aim to relegate some non-profit making social and community facilities to Places of Worship (and in so doing effectively changing the original purpose/function of Places of Worship)? Or if this is not a serious part of the plan, then is it merely feigning fulfilling particular parts of the 'Health, inclusion and Safety' policy? It is perfectly clear that the emphasis of the 2040 plans is businesses with an additional 1,200,000m2 of office space being created but one cannot help but feel that perhaps some lip service is paid to 'Health, inclusion and safety', as it seems that these priorities all come with caveats.

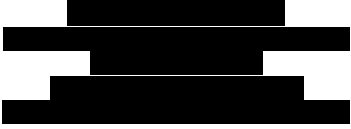
This touches upon just a few elements of the 2040 plan but I hope this plays a part in dispelling the common belief that the churches in the City are rarely open and when open cater to a few elite individuals. I genuinely believe that Churches should play a more significant part of the plans into the future for the wellbeing of the City, where churches are not dwarfed and overshadowed by business highrises -- neither in the physical sphere nor within the 2040 priorities.

Many thanks,

Inger Lannero



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