

Development Plans Team
Environment Department
City of London Corporation
Guildhall PO Box 270
London EC2P 2EJ

12th June 2024


Dear Sir/Madam,

2040 City Plan – Shaping the Future City

I was born and brought up in London and since 1986 have worked in the City. My earliest memories of the City involve climbing the Monument, playing on the 'beach' at low tide and several visits to St James Garlickhythe which stick in the memory more than my first visit to St Paul's whenever that was. At that time St James' had a connection with Highgate. It has since evolved and, as well as being the chaplaincy to several livery companies, now has a Sunday service and a nationally recognised specialism in promoting the usage of the Book of Common Prayer. Other City churches have augmented their local ministries by providing spaces for other denominations including those from more vulnerable parts of society.

I am churchwarden of St Magnus the Martyr which is unusual in being mentioned in the City Plan by name albeit *en passant*. Like almost all City churches it has an history extending much further back than the present Grade 1 listed building by Sir Christopher Wren to Roman times. Amongst many more beautiful things it incorporates a fragment of the original wooden Roman wharf. The church is on a well beaten tourist route between London Bridge and the Tower of London, a stone's throw from the Monument with many visitors attracted by the well known model of London Bridge. Two world 'firsts' are the original if much altered organ which was the first ever to use a swell box and the final resting place of sometime Rector, Myles Coverdale, the first person to translate the Bible into English and whose psalms remain the best known in the English speaking world. The church is open almost every day providing a quiet space for both the permanent and transient community most dramatically as a initial refuge for scores of people and the emergency services following the double murder in Fishmongers' Hall. The church also has a public courtyard garden which is maintained by the City Corporation but benefits from being kept spic and span by the church in contrast to Fish Street Hill and the subways at Monument where the detritus left by rough sleepers seems omnipresent.

First and foremost the church is a place of worship. It was the first in the City to offer lunchtime services and continues to do this most days. It has a well attended Sunday service with a professional choir and has a national (and international) reputation for its advanced liturgy as it has been since the 1920s. The church is also the church for the Plumbers' Company and the Fishmongers' Company.



Situated as it is a few metres from the Monument and in the Pool of London zone, St Magnus is well placed to be a beneficiary of the London City Plan but its contribution to a vibrant and varied urban environment is worth rehearsing. My concern is that this is incidental as the contribution City churches make individually and as a group is almost completely ignored in the Plan. This runs against both the spirit and the letter of the required conformity with the National Planning Framework which in addition to conserving and enhancing the historic environment and consider 'the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation...[and] the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring'. The Plan as it stands is at best highly selective in its compliance with this requirement and an inadequate counterbalance to the 'primary business function' outlined in the Plan.

The character of the City skyline both pre and post the Great Fire of London celebrated in countless paintings, engravings and photographs over the centuries is of a sea of spires and towers sailing above the surrounding buildings and dominated by the substantial rock of St Paul's. This has been compromised particularly since the 1980s but is still what makes the City's skyline so distinctive. Whereas the skylines of Paris, Oxford, Prague etc. are celebrated and curated the Plan has no provision for the preservation let alone the enhancement of the historic skyline envisaging a city of soulless glossy high rise buildings as to be found in Dubai, Shanghai or Canary Wharf. The fact that tall buildings and heritage assets are included in the same section of the Plan is perhaps an admission of the fundamental transition envisaged to a 'Manhattan on Thames'.

Most of the City is now covered by Conservation Areas where a lot of planning resource has been spent beneficially over the decades. These, without fail mention churches and other heritage assets falling within their curtilage. Cumulatively these Conservation Areas make up the City as a whole. The Plan proposes moving away from this approach with a focus on four 'cornerstone' areas and some areas of key change. The idea of protecting *quartiers* of distinctive heritage, social and cultural character is no longer being prioritised let alone promoted. This is detrimental not only to the City but to London as a whole. The harm that the expanded cluster of tall buildings to the setting of St Paul's will badly compromise the historic view from places such as the South Bank which currently is so majestic and makes London such a unique world City.

Yours faithfully,



E.N.W. Hagger



cc The Archdeacon of London

