

**Architecture Old and New in the Heart of the City  
Wednesday 24 July 2019, London EC4 - EC3**

Walk Leader: Benedict O'Looney

After a break of a couple of years, the UK Chapter's traditional Summer Walk, has been reinstated and this year the route took us, slowly, from Queen Victoria Street, round the Mansion House, the Royal Exchange and finally to Leadenhall Market.



Led by the ever-enthusiastic and highly knowledgeable Benedict O'Looney, on not quite the hottest day of the year, a group of members and friends (happy to welcome Conor McGill from the US) met up outside the fantastic Bloomberg building on the corner of Queen Victoria Street and Queen Street. We were ready to learn how historic London still lives under our feet.



Showing us part of Horwood's 1819 map of London, Benedict explained how the City, then composed largely of small houses with occasional civic buildings, had been cleared out in two generations and transformed into the City we see today. The Roman streetscape was obliterated by the Saxons - who built houses over the roads as providing a better foundation - but architectural digs have since discovered many key sites of e.g. the Forum, the central marketplace. Leadenhall was a mediaeval granary - storing grain for the population in times of unrest, while Milk Street, Bread Street and Poultry were markets for other essentials. Roman London was built across two hills - Ludgate (site of a roman temple and now St Paul's) to the west and Cornhill to the east (site of the Forum and now the Bank) - tradition continues.

Standing as we were on the corner of Queen Street and Queen Victoria Street, we could see Wren churches dating from the 1660s, the mediaeval Guildhall with its hammer beam central roof and porch by George

Dance the younger, and HSBC's 60 Victoria Street designed by Peter Foggo in 1995 with its 'hi-tech envelope' and verdigris, patinated bronze cladding. Beside us ran a fountain designed to recall the Walbrook river now pushed underground, and behind us, beneath the award-winning Bloomberg building, lay the Roman temple of Mithraeus.

So, off down Bloomberg Avenue past buzzing wine bars, to Cannon Street and Cannon Place - another Peter Foggo design - and then back up Walbrook to the Mansion House designed by George Dance the Elder, St Stephen Walbrook remodelled by Wren, and the seventeenth century Dutch-influenced Walbrook Club. Facing this small group, across Poultry, two massive early twentieth century buildings, both originally banks, one by 'the mighty Lutyens' now The Ned a luxury hotel, the other, home to NatWest, by Sir Edwin Cooper, also the designer of the PLA building at 10 Trinity Square.

Next off along St Swithin's Lane to look at Rothschild's building and admire the glazed white bricks on the back of another building aimed 'to draw light down into a courtyard and be cleaner' than brick before retracing our steps back to Lombard Street, originally home to Italian bankers, and the church of St Mary Woolnoth with its 'baroque powerfully banded rustication' by Nicholas Hawksmoor, a protege of Wren.

Then to the Royal Exchange with its memorial to the dead of two world wars, and to admire Sir John Soane's classic wall - all that remains of his Bank of England extensively remodelled by Sir Herbert Baker in the 1920s and 30s. The Royal Exchange is the third on the site. Originally conceived by Sir Thomas Gresham in the 16th century after the Antwerp model, it was destroyed in the Fire of 1666 and its replacement designed by City surveyor Edward Jarman opened in 1669. The current one, rebuilt after a further fire in 1838, designed by Sir Edward Tite the 'impressive classical interior' features the three orders of columns - Doric, Ionic and Corinthian.





Through Finch Lane, back onto Cornhill and a view of Richard Rogers' Lloyds building with its groundbreaking external service columns before finally turning down Gracechurch Street to look at Leadenhall Market, this one dating from the 1880s designed by Sir Horace Jones the Corporation architect, inspired by the Galleria in Milan and, like Smithfield, built of timber and cast iron. It is, Benedict pointed out, at the top of Cornhill, on a cross-roads and almost exactly the centre of Roman London.



This fascinating short walk through the centre of the City's history took us nearly two hours as Benedict provided an almost constant stream of information and anecdote - far too much to be included here. We ended our stroll, courtesy of Peter Mardle and Cundall, at the Crosse Keys, once the hq of the Hong Kong

and Shanghai Banking Corporation, designed by W Campbell Jones which opened for business in 1913. Now a Wetherspoon pub, it is named after a famous coaching in which stood nearby. A great end to a fascinating evening.

A Sutherland  
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