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**City of London Corporation**  
**Chancery Lane Conservation Area**  
**Draft Character Summary and Management Strategy**  
**Supplementary Planning Document**



Staple Inn, High Holborn

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## Introduction

The present urban form and character of the City of London has evolved over many centuries and reflects numerous influences and interventions: the character and sense of place is hence unique to that area, contributing at the same time to the wider character of London.

This character summary and management strategy provides an understanding of the significance of the conservation area by identifying and analysing its principal characteristics. It does not include specific detail about every building and feature within the area, and any omission from the text should not be interpreted as an indication of lesser significance. The character summary and management strategy has been prepared in line with the Historic England document *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (2011).

Chancery Lane conservation area incorporates the former Dyers Buildings conservation area. The original Chancery Lane character summary was adopted in 2004, while that for Dyers Buildings was adopted in 1999. This document combines and updates both documents in the form of a character summary and added management strategy. It was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to the City of London Corporation's Local Plan on [date TBC]. It should be read in conjunction with the Local Plan and other guidance, including *Conservation Areas in the City of London, A General Introduction to their Character* (1994) which has more information on the history and character of the City.



Barnard's Inn Hall

## Character summary

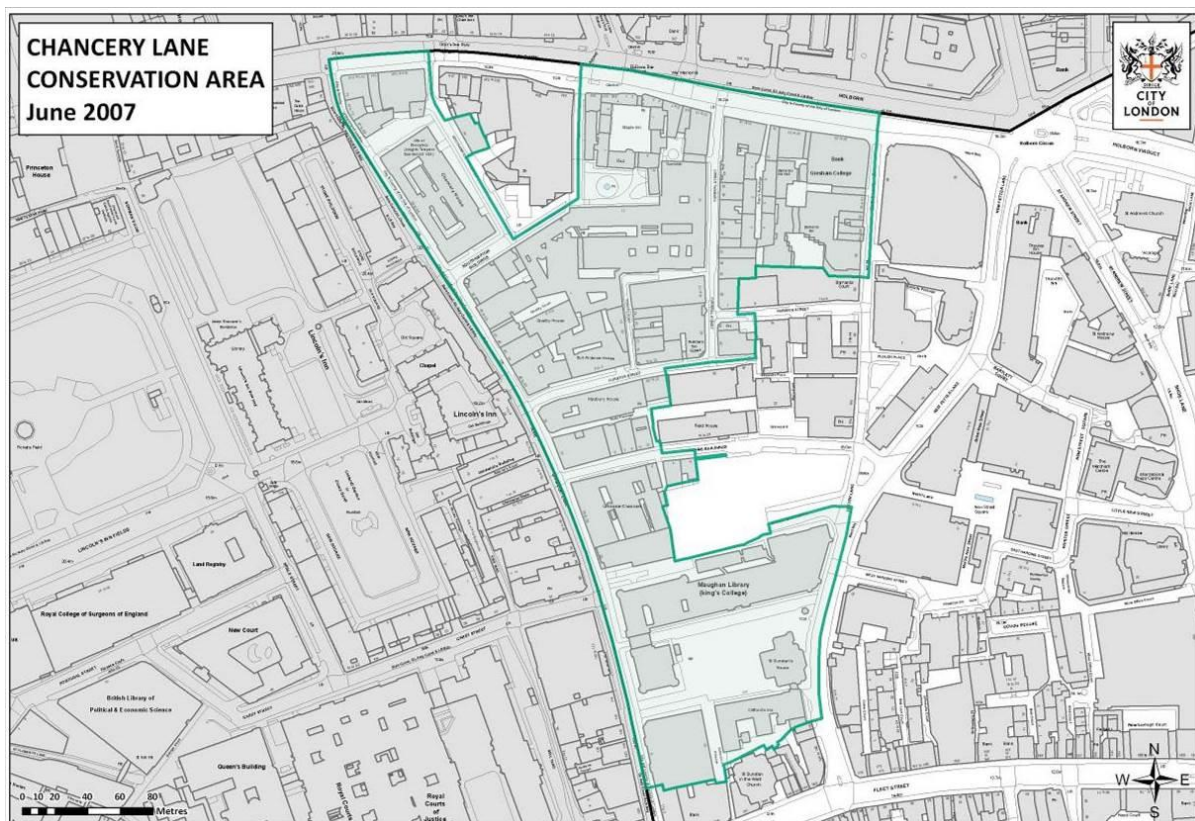
### 1. Location and context

Chancery Lane Conservation Area is located between Holborn, Fleet Street, Chancery Lane and Fetter Lane. It is located in the Ward of Farringdon Without and covers an area of 6.6 hectares.

#### Boundary

To the west the boundary is defined by Chancery Lane and to the north by High Holborn and Holborn, both discussed below. The southern boundary meets part of the Fleet Street conservation area. Here, the octagonal body of St Dunstan-in-the-West and diminutive Hen and Chickens Court contrast against the later, larger buildings immediately to the north within the Chancery Lane conservation area.

The eastern boundary is more complex, illustrating how the wider locality has been rebuilt following damage by WW2 bombing. It incorporates parts of Fetter Lane at the upper and lower edges but towards the middle is drawn inwards around individual plots. Originally this boundary was more regular, but during the 2007 boundary review some areas around Rolls Buildings, Breams Buildings and Cursitor Street were excluded as their scale and form was judged to be uncharacteristic of the wider conservation area. There are no proposals to amend the conservation area (CA) boundary.



Conservation area boundary map

## City boundary

It is one of the westernmost conservation areas in the City of London, and its northern and eastern boundaries correspond with the City's boundaries. Two-thirds of the western boundary is shared with the London Borough of Camden, which also borders to the north; the remainder of the western boundary is with the City of Westminster. In both cases, the non-City townscape provides an important setting for the buildings within the conservation area, and vice-versa.

To the north, Alfred Waterhouse's Prudential Assurance building (No. 138-142 Holborn) shares client, architect and (partly) materiality with Nos. 5-10 Holborn, Staple Inn and Staple Inn Buildings, and therefore forms a group with them. The nearby Royal Fusiliers war memorial and group of street furniture along this boundary further enhance the setting of the buildings in this part of the conservation area.

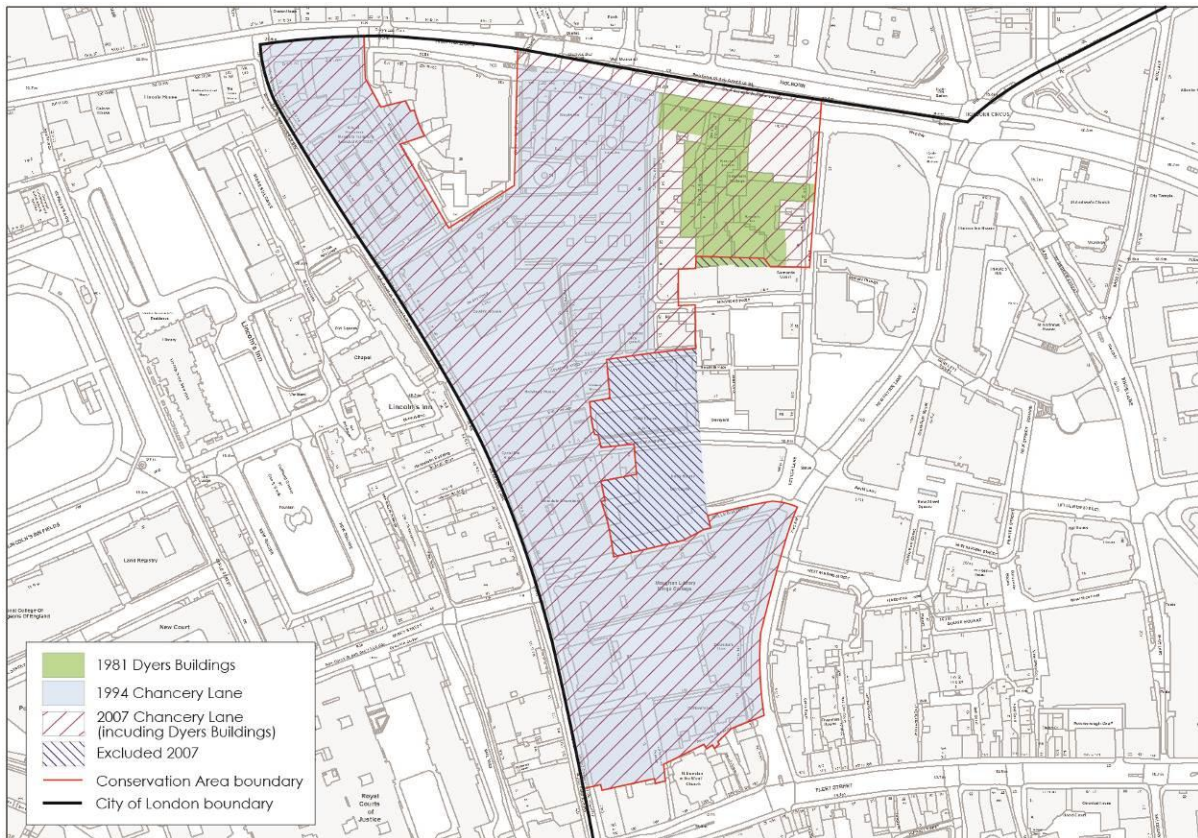


Left: Detail of Sterling House (No. 19 Holborn) showing the reflected tower of the Prudential Assurance building (LB Camden). Right: View of Lincoln's Inn buildings (LB Camden) from Southampton Buildings

To the west, there is a long sequence of historic frontages along the side of Chancery Lane within the London Borough of Camden and City of Westminster that form an important setting of the buildings within the City of London. Among them are the buildings of Lincoln's Inn, the Law Society and Ede & Ravenscroft, all of which have evident associations with the legal and institutional character of the area.



## 2. Designation history



1 April 1994

The Chancery Lane CA was designated in 1994 following local authority boundary changes. As a result of these alterations, parts of conservation areas previously in the City of Westminster and London Borough of Camden were transferred to the City of London Corporation (the 'Corporation'). An extension to the east was also included.

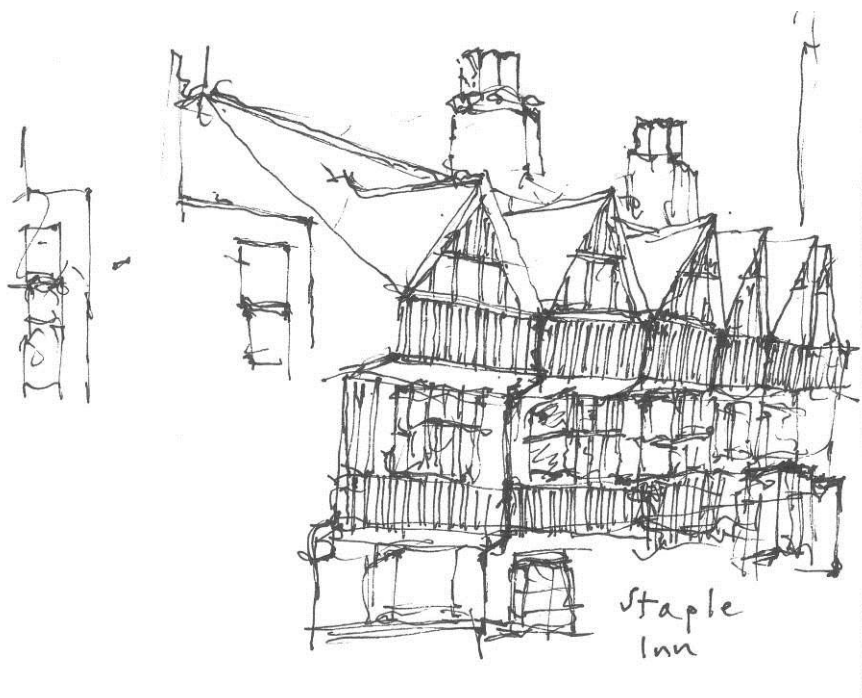
14 June 2007

The Dyer's Buildings CA (designated 1981) was amalgamated with the Chancery Lane CA. The latter's eastern boundary was redrawn to its present form to include the junction of Holborn and Fetter Lane (to 86 Fetter Lane), No. 1 Norwich Street, the Castle public house and the former Jewish Chronicle building (No. 25 Furnival Street), the western half of Cursitor Street, the Rolls Passage and the western half of Bream's Buildings, and the former Public Records office site and the buildings of Clifford's Inn.

### 3. Summary of character

The characteristics which contribute to the special interest of the Chancery Lane Conservation Area can be summarised as follows:

- An exceptional span of building ages and styles, resulting in a townscape of arresting contrasts
- Significant historic associations with the legal profession, with origins as a centre for medieval legal administration
- The collegiate surroundings of Staple Inn and Barnard's Inn, which incorporate rare secular medieval survivals
- A historic association with educational establishments that has persisted to the present time (e.g. the Inns of Court, Birkbeck College, King's College London)
- The site of the Knights Templars' first precinct and church in London (at Southampton Buildings)
- A well-preserved and easily legible historic street network
- Monumental 19th century Victorian public buildings in a range of styles
- One important early act of conservation (Staple Inn north range) and several buildings of varying periods associated with a single company's patronage (Prudential Assurance Co.)
- Well-considered 21st century insertions into a historic context



Chancery Lane's medieval survivals are a fundamental part of its character; 16th century Staple Inn (sketched above) was an important early conservation project

## 4. Historical development

### Early history

Chancery Lane dates from the 12th Century when it was formed across the Knights Templars' land, whose church and house were founded here in 1144. The road runs north from Fleet Street on a gradually inclining westerly curve and eventually joins High Holborn. The City's natural topography is still perceptible here and there remains a clear drop in levels to the south and east towards Fleet Street and Ludgate Circus, where the land falls away from Holborn to the valleys of Thames and Fleet.

Lying to the west of the walled Roman town, comparatively little is known of the area during this period. Present day Holborn follows the line of the main east-west road, which exited at Newgate and led to Silchester and Gloucester. Roman activity in the area was limited to farming, gravel quarrying and burials, which used cemeteries along main routes outside towns, commensurate with the Roman directive for burying the dead outside the town boundary.

During the Saxon period, the walled town appears to have been mostly abandoned, with the main settlement becoming 'Lundenwic' to the west in the present day area of Aldwych and the Strand. The northern part of the area, at Holborn, eventually became one of the earliest of the City suburbs with many gardens, orchards and large houses established by the 12th century. Large religious and secular out-of-town houses and Inns were built in the area.

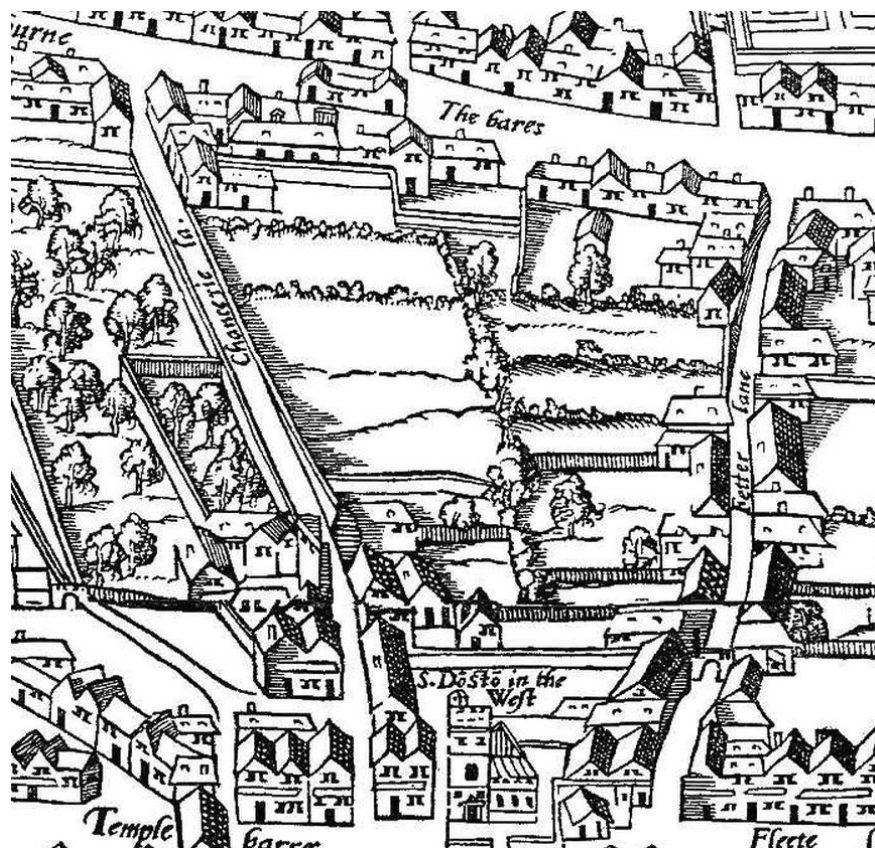
By 1144 the Knights Templar were established in Holborn, on a site to the northern end of what was to become Chancery Lane. Recent archaeological work has located the first Knights' Templar church at the junction of Southampton Buildings and High Holborn. The nave was of the same circular design as the existing Temple church south of Fleet Street, modelled ultimately on the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. In 1185 the Order of the Knights Templar consecrated their 'New Temple' in a new location on land granted to them between Fleet Street and the Thames. Upon the removal of the Knights Templar to the south of Fleet Street, their property was acquired by the Bishop of Lincoln in 1162.

The site of Staple Inn originally comprised two adjacent properties and its name, originally Stapledhalle, may be derived from the Old English 'staple' meaning post, possibly indicating that the Inn hall at that time was aisled. Chancery Lane gradually became more developed with further institutions and their extensive gardens lining both sides of the street, whilst the northern end continued to be dominated by the Bishop of Lincoln's Inn and gardens throughout the medieval period.

By 1270 the Bishop of Chichester's Inn and its extensive gardens were located on Chancery Lane. A house for converted Jews was situated on the east side and the lane was known by 1278 as 'Converslane'. The expulsion of the Jews from England in 1291 and the subsequent decline in the number of Jewish converts resulted in Edward III granting the house to the Keeper of the Rolls of Chancery in 1377, a powerful administrative body whose wide-ranging remit included verbal contracts, matters of land law and matters of trusts. The name of the street subsequently

changed to 'Chaucer Lane' and this house later became the site of the Public Records Office.

Significant stimulus to local development resulted from a papal decree in 1207 forbidding clergy from teaching common law, followed by a 1234 decree by Henry III that closed the schools of law in the City. This led to the formation of the Inns of Chancery, the medieval and later inns or colleges of lawyers, which grew up along the Strand and Holborn stimulated by its proximity to Westminster. The reason for being called Inns of Chancery is not fully understood but is believed to be linked to the initial function of training and housing chancery clerks who prepared writs for the King's Court, differing from the Inns of Court as they could not call men to the Bar.

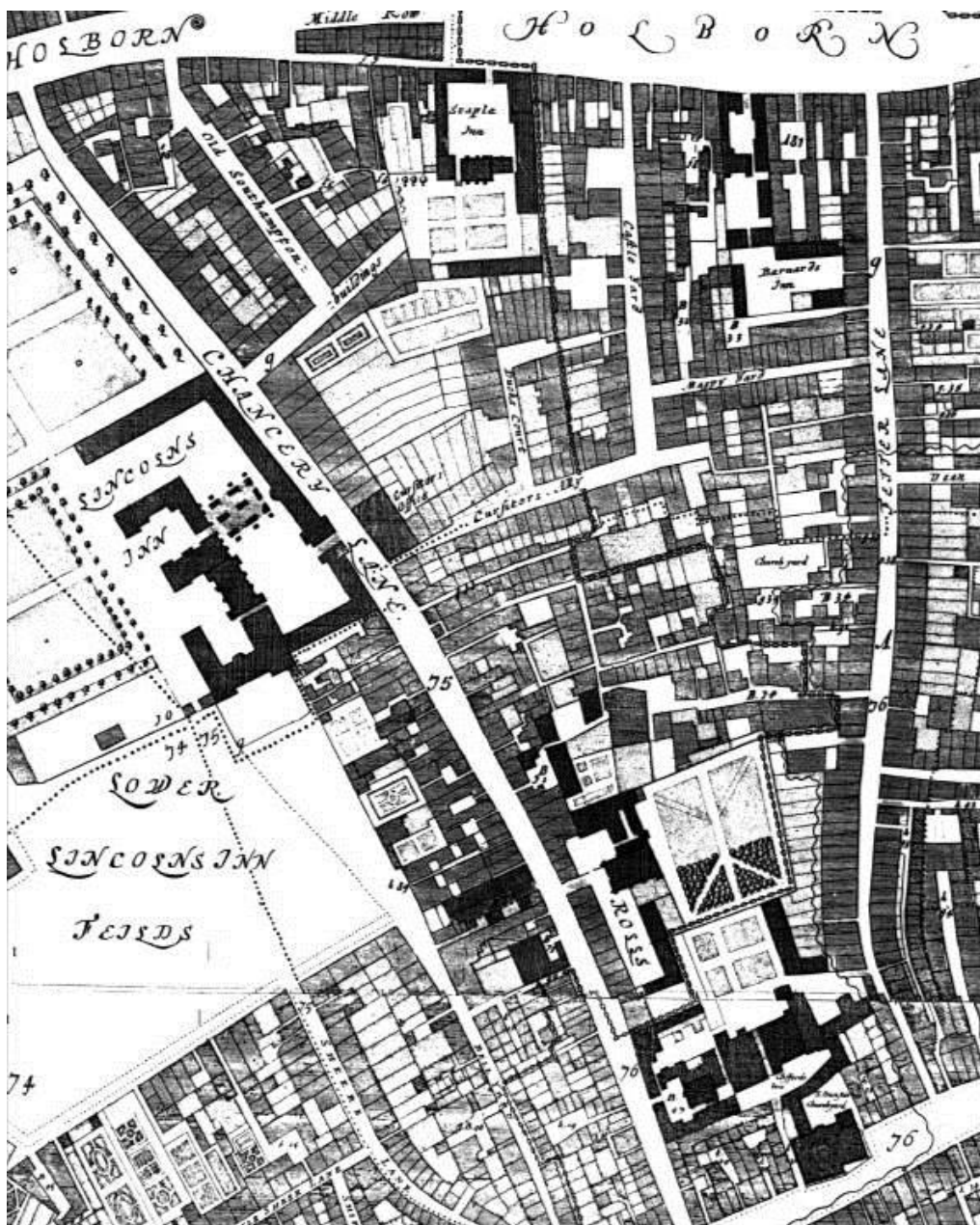


'Agas' map, c.1570

The site of Barnard's Inn, consisting of two large separate plots, including a sizable garden (220ft long west to east), was fronted by seven shops on Fetter Lane. Later known as 'the greate garden of Barnard's Inn formerly called Whitooke's Meade', it was purchased in 1331-2 by Thomas de Lincoln. Fetter Lane, originally Faytor or Faiter Lane and afterwards Fewterers Lane, may be derived from the Old French for lawyer, but was used by Chaucer to describe the impostors and beggars who frequented the lane. In 1422 the properties were bought by John Mackworth, Dean of Lincoln and Chancellor to Henry V and by 1435 the Inn was leased to Lionel Barnard who established it as a school of law. The Inn survived for over 450 years until its dissolution, known both as Mackworth's Inn and Barnard's Inn. Ownership passed on Mackworth's death to the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln Cathedral.

## Sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

By the early 16th century, the northern end of the area was still verdant, dominated by the gardens and orchards associated with residences and institutions. The land fronting Holborn was more developed, with Staple Inn being established in its current form, including the existing Hall, by 1529. The Templar hall and chapel remained in place, albeit altered, and varied in ownership until the 17th century, when they were developed by the Earl of Southampton and named Southampton Buildings. The southern end of the street was the focus of most development. The Rolls of Chancery, with its chapel of 1617 by Inigo Jones, Serjeant's Inn and Clifford's Inn were to dominate the land between Chancery Lane and Fetter Lane, with smaller houses and tenements fronting the streets. Archaeological work has revealed the potential remains under 22 Chancery Lane of Symonds Inn, established in the 17th century and mentioned by Dickens.



Ogilby & Morgan, 1676

As the area grew in wealth, the tradesmen's houses, tenements, shops and markets increasingly hemmed in the large institutions. It was such ever increasing density of development that enabled the spread of the Great Fire of London (1666) (the 'Fire') to take hold. In spite of this, the western edge of the Fire was the southern part of Fetter Lane. Damage was limited to those buildings facing the street and the major houses and institutions in the Chancery Lane area remained untouched.

The first incarnation of Dyers' Buildings dates from the mid 16th century, when in 1551 almshouses were built by the Dyers' Company using the bequest of a Mr. Henry West. Known originally as White's Alley, the court was connected into the network of passages and alleyways that characterised much of 16th and 17th century London, and which can still be seen in other areas of the City today. The complex of buildings and the alleyway were to become known as Dyers' Buildings from the 17th century, after the City Livery Company that retained ownership of the property until 1966.

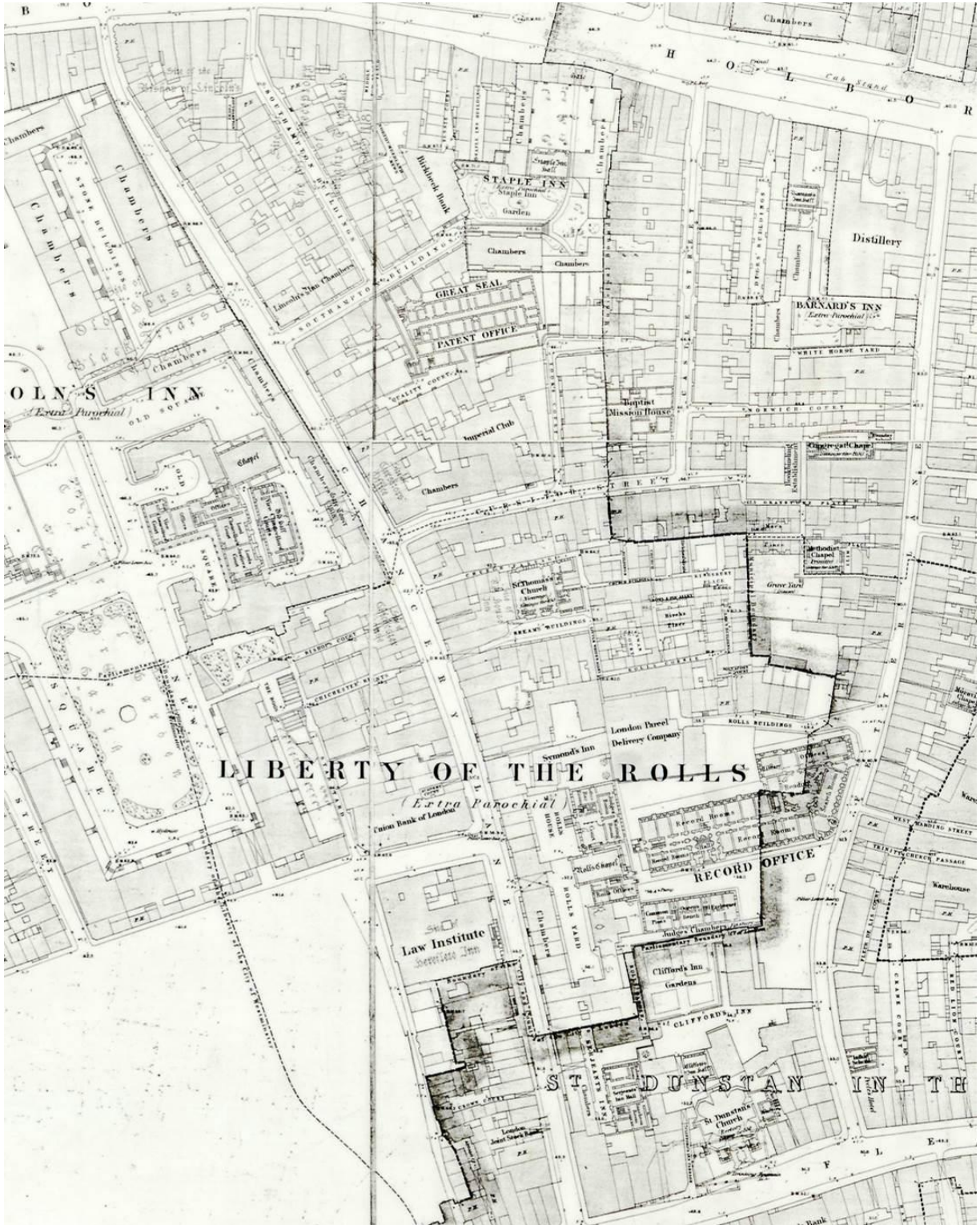
### **Eighteenth and nineteenth centuries**

The steady rise of the legal profession contributed greatly to the continued prosperity and status of the area, and to the quality of much of the surviving fabric on both sides of the lane. The collegiate character of the surviving inns is particularly significant. As part of the expansion of the legal and administrative dominance of the area, Rolls House was redesigned in 1774 by Colen Campbell in the then fashionable Palladian style. The street frontages between Holborn and Fleet Street were by this time occupied by tenements, shops and taverns giving the area an increasingly urban character. The lanes between these private spaces gradually became the largely surviving network of courts and alleys characteristic of the conservation area.

Typically Georgian mixed use residential and commercial premises are reflected in 18th century chambers at 14-16 Tooks Court. These show a pattern of development that was common up until the later 19th century in Cursitor Street, Furnival Street (Castle Yard) and Southampton Buildings. Staple Inn was redeveloped in the 18th century with handsome brick built chambers replacing the medieval tenements on three sides of the quadrangle.

The 19th century did not bring to the area the civic improvements and significant changes to street patterns that evolved in much of the rest of the City. Here, major development resulted from the demise of the Inns of Chancery during the 19th century. This eventually led to the demolition of Serjeant's Inn (1909) and Clifford's Inn (1934), with the exception of the passageway from Fleet Street to the former gatehouse. Staple Inn survived, though part was sold in 1884 to the Patent Office. Prudential Assurance Company acquired the remaining part of the building in 1886, and saved and restored the building removing the 18th century plaster to reveal its 16th century timber and lathe elevation to Holborn.

The only significant alteration in street pattern was the introduction of Breems Buildings in 1882 when it was widened and cut through to Fetter Lane. The London Mechanics' Institution, forerunner of Birkbeck College, was headquartered at Southampton Buildings in 1825 before moving to Breems Buildings in 1884.



1875 O/S map

The Public Records Office was constructed in stages between 1851 and 1896 to a design by Sir James Pennethorne. It employed an imposing and non-ecclesiastical gothic style and required the demolition of both Rolls House and the 13th century Rolls Chapel. The monuments from the medieval Rolls Chapel were retained, and the Renaissance monument by Pietro Torrigiano (circa 1517) to commemorate Dr. Yonge, Master of The Rolls during the reign of Henry VIII, is of particular note.

This was the next significant gothic revival building erected after the construction of the Houses of Parliament. For a hundred years, until its relocation in 1997, the site provided the home for previously scattered public papers and government records which dated back to the Norman Conquest. It was successfully adapted to provide the main library and information centre for King's College London.

The Patent Office in Southampton Buildings is less prominent in the townscape than the Public Record Office but occupies a site equal to it in size. The Patent Office Library of 1899-1902 is 32.5 metres long, with two tiers of steel-framed galleries on cast-iron columns and is particularly fine. The Library is top-lit and provides an impressive core space for this complex of buildings. The building has long frontages to Furnival Street and Southampton Buildings, described under section 6: Character Analysis. Part of the site was damaged in 1944, when a German rocket landed in the gardens of Staple Inn. This repaired part of the complex has recently been developed as part of a major refurbishment following the relocation of the Patent Office to other premises.

The extant form of Dyers' Buildings was built as one development by John Wimble from 1871 to 1878. The development enclosed the alleyway to the south to form a secluded enclave off Holborn. The premises were built originally as workshops and offices for the artisans and service industries needed to support the increasingly commercial functions of the Victorian City.

Unlike the other legal Inns, the company of Barnard's Inn leased their land and had to pay an increasing levy at the end of each 40 year lease. The restriction on expansion and the increasing cost appears to have contributed to the demise of Barnard's Inn as a legal establishment in 1888. The Inn fell into a state of disrepair and was acquired by the Mercers' Company. By 1892 the Mercers' School had outgrown its premises in College Hill and, limited in the availability of large enough sites, decided to move to Barnard's Inn. The committee of the Mercers' Company recommended the removal of several of the brick built chambers, including the buildings fronting onto Holborn, to make way for a new school building designed by Chatfield Clarke.

In 1898, agreement was reached with the owners of the adjacent distillery, then operated by James Buchanan, whereby the playground space was enlarged on two sides at the expense of an increase in height of the new distillery buildings. The school itself was extended marginally in the 1930s, at which time the 15th century hall, in use as the dining room but in a poor state of repair, was substantially renovated.

### **Twentieth and twenty-first centuries**

Staple Inn suffered significant bomb damage during WW2 and much of what is seen today is the result of scholarly post-war restoration. Despite the damage caused to both Staple Inn and the Patent Office, the wider area survived relatively unscathed.

Post-war reorganisation of the education system meant that the Mercers' School was unable to expand sufficiently to meet required standards and it closed in 1959. The old School buildings were then let and subdivided as office accommodation and restaurant facilities, with vehicular access from Norwich Street providing parking



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space in the playground. The three large plane trees which occupied the courtyard of the Inn and later the School playground were removed.

The former Public Records Office was converted into the Maughan Library between 2001-3 for King's College London, an important new educational facility within the City.

Holborn was well known from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century for its distilleries; Langdale's Distillery was burned in 1780 by the Gordon rioters. In the conflagration several of the Inn's chambers were destroyed. It was considered fortuitous that the whole Inn did not disappear in the violent blaze, which was fed by the liquor from the distillers' vats. The last distillery on the site was owned by James Buchanan for the manufacture of whisky and operated from the late 1890s to 1954.

Another hostelry, the White Horse Public House at No.90 Fetter Lane, adjoined Barnard's Inn on the south side across White Horse Yard, standing on the corner of Fetter Lane and Norwich Court, later Norwich Street, from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The White Horse was a substantial coaching inn, from which coaches set out for Oxford and the West Country. The White Horse Public House comprised several forms over the years; its last Victorian incarnation was demolished as part of the 1992 Barnard's Court redevelopment, which substantially redeveloped Barnard's Inn and the surrounding buildings.

## 5. Spatial analysis

### Layout and plan form

Holborn, Chancery Lane, Fleet Street and Fetter Lane form a distinctive shape, reminiscent of a pistol holster, which can be recognised on the Agas map of 1561. Within this shape the main routes have retained their 17th century configuration; Southampton Buildings, Furnival Street, Cursitor Street, Took's Court and others are all as they appear (sometimes renamed, or slightly widened) on Ogilby and Morgan's map of 1676.

The northern portion of the conservation area has greater intricacy, with small, surviving historic courts such as Quality Court and Took's Court and narrow streets like Rolls Passage juxtaposed with broader routes like Holborn. Historic open spaces associated with Staple and Barnard's Inns offer further variation, although the configuration of the latter has changed over time. The tightness of the street pattern can be seen in the relationship between building lines and pavement. Many buildings meet the back edge of pavement and others clearly define the boundary with railings. This strong definition, particularly at street corners, has resulted in a regular built form of defined blocks.

The jaggedness of the eastern conservation area boundary indicates the bomb damage suffered by the area during World War Two and the post war rebuilding that followed. 20th century redevelopment took place elsewhere in the area, and generally maintains the clarity of the street pattern. The southern part of the conservation area is characterised by larger buildings and open spaces, reflecting the great level of redevelopment historically (particularly the 19th century) at this location.

### Building plots

Mirroring the survival of the street pattern, there are a greater number of narrow plots to the north, formed originally in the medieval period. Many of these were amalgamated to form larger building sites in the 19th and 20th centuries. Those that do survive, particularly along Furnival Street and Took's Court, are of great value in demonstrating medieval methods of land development.

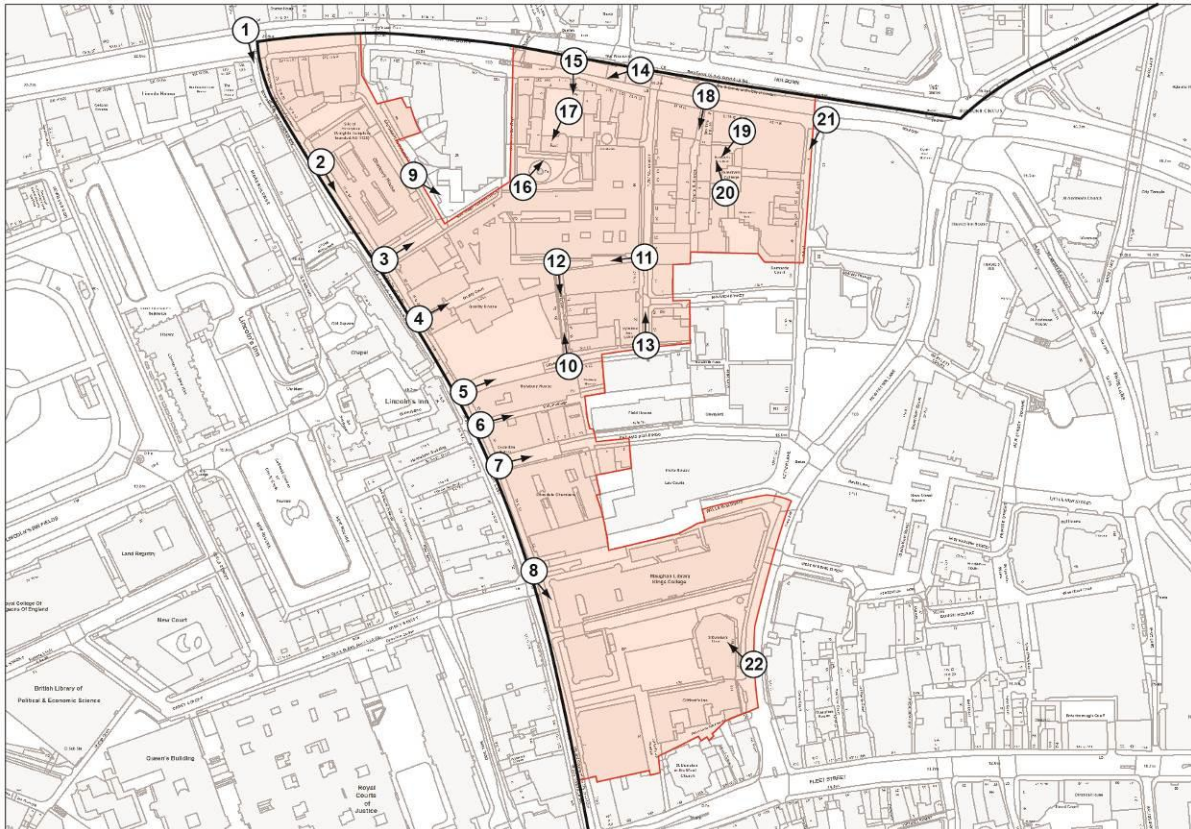
To the south, the buildings of Clifford's and Sergeant's Inns (now demolished) have larger plots, as did the Rolls buildings north of them; larger plot sizes continue to characterise this part of the conservation area, a good example being the Maughan Library.

### Building heights

Building heights are driven by the predominantly commercial and institutional uses within the conservation area, generally averaging between five and eight storeys. The buildings generally respect the scale of the area, with roof extensions appropriately recessed back from the parapet line. Lower heights are intermingled with the larger buildings, generally focused in areas of greater survival like Took's Court and Barnard's Inn. These offer a domestic scale to contrast with larger buildings such as the London Silver Vaults and Lonsdale Chambers.

## Views and vistas

Broad, open views are limited in the conservation area to the buildings along Holborn and the open space around the former Public Records office. Otherwise, views are between, or along, a finer urban grain. Views are typically kinetic and informal, unfolding as the viewer traverses a series of spaces with subtle shifts in scale.



Distant and local views make a strong contribution to the character of the conservation area.

1. View of the opening of Chancery Lane from High Holborn
2. View south along Chancery Lane from outside No. 53-64
3. View of Staple Inn gardens from Chancery Lane
4. View into Quality Court from Chancery Lane
5. View along northern side of Cursitor Street from Chancery Lane
6. View along Rolls Passage from Chancery Lane
7. View of Breams Buildings from Chancery Lane
8. View of the west frontage of the former Public Records Office from Chancery Lane
9. View of former Patent Office from Southampton Buildings
10. View into Took's Court from Cursitor Street
11. View into Took's Court from Furnival Street
12. View out of Took's Court towards Cursitor Street
13. View north along Furnival Street from Cursitor Street
14. View of Staple Inn north range from Holborn
15. View into Staple Inn quadrangle from Holborn

16. View of Staple Inn Hall from entrance to garden
17. View of Staple Inn Hall from Holborn entrance
18. View into Dyers Buildings from Holborn
19. View of Barnard's Inn Hall from tiled Holborn entrance
20. View of Barnard's Inn Hall from south-west corner of courtyard
21. View of Nos. 78-86 Fetter Lane from Holborn
22. View of Dunstan's Court and the former Public Records office from outside  
No. 5-11 Fetter Lane

## 6. Character analysis

### Chancery Lane



View from north



Maughan Library arch



No. 33 Chancery Lane

Chancery Lane was built over open fields in the 12th century. There is a slight bend as it runs south, and both carriageway and footway are narrower than those of High Holborn. Only the east side lies within the City; the west side of the street is part of the London Borough of Camden and the City of Westminster (see section 1: City boundary). This side is well served with historic frontages in a variety of materials, notably the diapered brickwork and stone details of Lincoln's Inn to the north. The street retains its enduring association with the legal profession, and is a conduit between the northern and southern Inns of Court.

The corner of Chancery Lane and Holborn (No. 311-313 High Holborn) is a Victorian commercial building with Greek revival details and a giant cornice. Its stone frontage segues well into that of No. 70-72 Chancery Lane, former safety deposit vaults with numerous window openings characterised by deep reveals and classical detailing, creating a strong sense of rhythm. The building steps down a storey to the south.

Deep window reveals are also found at No. 56-64 is the London Silver Vaults, a long 23 bay composition by Richardson and Houfe in a stripped classical style. A long, low central section allows an expanse of clear sky to be read between seven storey flanking wings. Together with well-judged, austere detailing, this modelling averts a monolithic effect. By contrast, No. 50-52 is wholly executed in dark brown brick and would be monolithic were it not for the satisfactory relationship between the solid parts of the structure and the regular window slots. The building sits uncomfortably on an open 'loggia' at ground floor.

No. 48-49 is a modern building of appropriate scale with neighbouring buildings, and its contemporary style offers a contrast with the predominantly traditional materiality elsewhere on the street. The glazing (not wholly appropriate for this location) reflects the opposite buildings of Lincoln's Inn, whose Tudor stylings are echoed in the detailing of No. 46-47. This has a brick and stone frontage with mullioned windows

and an arched passage decorated with ironmongery that provides access to Quality Court. It has a steeply pitched new roof extension.

**Quality Court** is a roughly rectangular space that appears on Rocque's map of 1745. Entered through a passageway lined with red and white tiles, the Court tapers towards the eastern end, where there is a single storey classical stone frontage with dentil cornice and triangular pediment. Recessed from this is a two-storey yellow brick frontage, the combination having a pleasing modesty of scale. Lining the south side is a long, classical frontage in grey and red brick with an elaborate stone door surround and giant cornice. Unusually grand for a court, its modelling and detailing avoid an overbearing effect. The northern side is partly taken up with a utilitarian modern frontage and partly with a traditional red brick elevation that sympathises with the buildings previously described. The Court is paved in York stone and is enhanced by square cast iron planters.

No. 40 Chancery Lane is a new development occupying a large site bounded by Cursitor Street and Took's Court. The frontage to Chancery Lane has thick stone piers and deep window reveals, somewhat overly scaled on a street where these elements are generally on a smaller scale. Nevertheless, the frontage has strong rhythm and the materials and scale are consistent with other buildings in the conservation area. Halsbury House (No. 35) is currently undergoing re-cladding and roof extension with similar modern stone grid facades.

No. 33 has a French Gothic frontage with blue brick bands and stonework details. The combination of materials and details is an effective foil to the similar combination, in a different style, at Lincoln's Inn. Large, gabled dormers add rhythm and interest at roof level. Lonsdale Chambers (No. 24-32) is currently undergoing redevelopment behind a retained façade. No. 22 is a well-modelled contemporary ensemble of stone and glass with regular window openings and a prominent glazed corner element. The stone facades are well modelled and understated in detailing, contrasting well with the more detailed neighbouring building described below. A Victorian wall divides the two.

The former Public Records Office (now the King's College Maughan Library) was constructed in stages between 1851-96 to designs by Sir James Pennethorne. Recessed from the street behind gates and railings, with a commanding symmetrical frontage, central tower and flanking octagonal turrets, it is a landmark building in the conservation area. Its new use as an educational facility varies the area's demographic. The deeply recessed windows give the stone piers between them an insistent, rhythmic verticality, and the well-judged relationship between solid and void is an appropriate reference point for new buildings. The building's relatively austere lower levels are crowned with a highly decorative roofline of finials, turrets and enriched stonework, an ensemble of great interest. It is a very individual interpretation of the Gothic style that contrasts pleasingly with Classical architecture on the opposite side of the street, The garden setting of the building is described under **Fetter Lane**, below.

No. 5 was designed by AC Blomfield in a Baroque style. The building is of a respectable scale with an angled entrance tower and chimneystacks that can be clearly read against the skyline. The giant stone details, particularly the consoles

carrying a broken pediment over the entrance, relate well to the Gothic mass of the Maughan Library.

### Fetter Lane



St Dunstan's Court



Northern end of Fetter Lane

The street dates from the 13th century and forms the eastern boundary to the conservation area; like Chancery Lane, it links Holborn with Fleet Street. As a result of considerable bomb damage and road widening, its buildings are largely post-war.

No. 138 has a grid façade with deep window reveals executed in three kinds of stone: granite and sandstone with marbling around the entrance. A benign frontage, its materials and detailing are consistent with buildings elsewhere in the conservation area. A sign bearing the inscription 'Cliffords Inn' on the neighbouring building commemorates the Inn of Court that once stood here.

St Dunstan's Court (No. 133-137) is a successful new development within the setting of the Maughan Library, echoing that building's use of yellow stone and deep window reveals separated by strongly vertical stone piers. The material and colour palette of the building is understated in this sensitive historic context. The Fetter Lane frontage is enhanced by railings, planting, a historic lodge building and K2 telephone box. To the rear, the building frames a large green space overlooked by the Maughan Library. It is enhanced by a number of historic street finishes, including granite setts and York stone, and the overall effect is of a collegiate environment in which old and new work is successfully juxtaposed.

The conservation area boundary is then drawn along Rolls Buildings and the north-east corner of the Maughan Library. It resumes at No. 86 Fetter Lane, which forms part of the development at Barnard's Inn by the Mercers' Company. Although dating from the early nineties, the frontage to Fetter Lane has the welcome character of a Victorian warehouse. The arrangement of large, shallow-arched window openings between circular terracotta columns is well detailed with bronze spandrel panels and offset against red brick. The traditional effect this creates is somewhat undermined by a plain, contemporary ground floor treatment.

Nos. 82-84 comprises three traditional brick elevations with timber sash windows and rubbed brick arches (cambered and flat). No. 82 is enhanced by the survival of its

traditional shopfront and chimneystacks, while No. 84 is affected by an unwieldy double-storey mansard roof extension. The latter is set slightly forward of the others' building line, which gives a rhythm among the frontages. The buildings form a group that read as evocative survivals of a once common 19th century building type.

Dated 1902, No. 78-81 is a surviving frontage from the former Buchanan distillery, a characteristic work of Treadwell & Martin, Edwardian architects who produced similarly idiosyncratic compositions elsewhere in London. The Bath stone complements the traditional materials previously described, but the exuberant design is in strong contrast to the modesty of those frontages. The chamfered uprights piercing the giant, imposing gable give a vertical emphasis, and the frontage is distinctively crowned by male caryatids bearing a shell.

In contrast to the narrow frontages at No. 78-84, the flank wall of the HSBC bank (see **Holborn**) occupies a long plot up to the junction with Holborn. The subsidiary nature of this elevation is well-expressed by the recessing of the upper storeys, so that they avoid competing with the more delicate neighbouring buildings. Plain detailing, including a rusticated ground floor with giant keystones, provides a foil to the exuberance of No. 78-81.

### **Breams Buildings/Rolls Passage**



Breams Buildings, North side (detail0

The street originated as a small close in the 18th century, and was enlarged and joined with Fetter Lane in 1882. The flank wall of No. 33 Chancery Lane commences Bream's Buildings in the French Gothic style. No.5 is an arresting confection of green and white glazed brick, and prominent Queen Anne oriel windows below a pargeted cornice capped with discreet dormer windows. The polychromatic brickwork complements that of No. 33 Chancery Lane, and the building is an interesting inflection of Victorian eclecticism. Nos. 7-9 and 11 – 13 share differing



arrangements of red brick, stone dressings and gabled rooflines, echoing the Gothic architecture of No. 33 Chancery Lane on a more modest scale.

The boundary of the conservation area then turns left into **Rolls Passage**, a narrow route known by the 18th century as 'White's Alley', its current name derived from the 'Rolls' located on the site of the former Public Records Office. The north side of the passage is taken up with the flank of 35 Chancery Lane (undergoing refurbishment), while the south side is formed of predominantly low-rise buildings in traditional materials that read as rear adjuncts to Breams Buildings. The low scale here is welcome relief from the larger buildings elsewhere on the street.

### **Cursitor Street**

Cursitors were appointed to collect writs for the Court of Chancery, a role first created in the 16th century by Sir Nicholas Bacon (father to Sir Francis Bacon). By the 17th century their office stood on the present site of No. 40 Chancery Lane, Cursitor Street being known at this time as 'Cursitors Alley'. The northern part of the street to Took's Court is taken up by the flank elevation of No. 40 Chancery Lane, described more fully in the section for that street. The stone piers are more closely spaced together on this elevation than on the main elevation, and create a greater sense of rhythm. The 19th century buildings on the corner of Cursitor Street and Took's Court have been retained and incorporated into the development. The warm red brick and classical detailing of No. 9-13 offer a traditional contrast with the new frontage.

## Took's Court



Entrance from Furnival Street



Nos. 14-16

The Court appears on Ogilby and Morgan's map of 1676 in its current form as 'Ducks Court'; it had acquired its current name by 1799, when it appeared on Horwood's map of that date. It has a valuable intactness, the result of its intimate scale, historic frontages and surviving historic plan form. The Court is enhanced by its traditional road form, the central carriageway being laid with granite setts and flanked by raised footways paved with York stone and edged with granite kerbs. Iron streetlamps add further value.

The northern part of the Court is formed by the long elevation of Finlayson House and the flank elevation of No. 10 Furnival Street (see below), predominantly yellow brick and stone elevations of a pleasing consistency. The north-west corner has a low-cut wall to give views of glazed brick elevations beyond. The west side of the Court is a continuous run of understated traditional brick frontages, incorporating a number of features including stone sills and pediments, brick arches with keystones and decorative ironmongery.

On the east side, Nos. 14-16 were constructed c.1720 and refronted early in the 19th century; the frontages are of a traditional domestic scale with brick window arches (round and flat) and well-preserved doorcases, railings and other original features. Nos. 14 & 15 have unusual red brick pilasters with angled volutes; above No. 15 is a remnant of red brick dentil cornice that originally ran across both frontages. No. 17-18 is a similarly traditional pair of frontages with a long traditional-style shopfront. Overall, the court appears valuably complete and seems to capture something of the atmosphere of 18th and 19th century London.

## Furnival Street



The Castle public house



Former Patent Office



East side

Until the late 19th century, the street was known as Castle Street, a name surviving at the public house at the southern end. Its present name references Furnival's Inn, an Inn of Chancery established on the north side of Holborn by 1402 and demolished in 1818. Of periods ranging from the 17th century to the 20th, the street's frontages are unified by the dominant use of brick and enlivened with a variety of details.

### East side

No. 25 Furnival Street was formerly the offices of the Jewish Chronicle, with large stone mullioned window openings at first and second floor level for compositing. The building is well-proportioned in traditional materials, although it has unsympathetic plant at roof level. Dated 1901, the Castle public house (No. 26) is a prominent corner building or predominantly red brick with stone dressings and a traditional public house frontage at ground floor. Its palette of traditional materials and surviving original features, including chimneystacks at roof level, make it a distinctive building in the conservation area. Both buildings are currently subject to a consented redevelopment scheme retaining the public house.

No. 27 is a red brick and stone building with prominent stone spandrels to the upper level windows and understated string courses. The well-modelled corner bay is undermined by a poor quality semi-circular glass canopy over the door. It was constructed c.1900 as the premises of a stationers' company. A modern building, No. 30-31 perpetuates the brick theme with prominent piers to give a vertical emphasis separating openings with deep reveals, modelling that averts a monolithic effect. By contrast, Nos. 32 & 33 are traditionally proportioned late 17th century houses, with surviving historic features including doorcases, fanlights and railings. They offer a domestic scale that contrasts nicely with the predominantly commercial buildings on the street.

No. 35 is vaguely reminiscent of a Victorian warehouse, of yellow brick with red brick and stone detailing. Although the façade is rather flat in appearance, the materials are sympathetic to other buildings on the street. No. 36-37 has projecting rectangular 'bays' in brick with flat arches to the window openings; both buildings offer 20th century executions of traditional forms. No. 39 is the entrance building to former deep-level air raid shelters. The surviving iron crane, plain brick elevation and

large ventilation grille offer a strikingly industrial aesthetic to the street, contrasting particularly with the refined architecture of No. 10 opposite. No. 40-41 is dominated by a large bow front, set in red brick with dogtooth detailing over a stone-clad ground floor. The flank elevation of No. 14-18 Holborn is austere classical and recessed towards the rear of the building.

### **West side**

Printers Inn Court (No. 20) is a large brick development on a former print works with deeply recessed ground floor openings and alternating bands of yellow and red brick. The somewhat flat façade to Furnival Street is framed by large bays of glazed green metal, striking elements that offset the traditional materiality elsewhere on the street. Finlayson House (No. 15-17) was constructed in 2003 in yellow brick with stone dressings and prominent lead dormers. It relates well visually to neighbouring No. 10, with which it shares a similar materiality. The building is well-modelled and steps down a storey to the rear where it meets Took's Court. The semi-circular mullions give rhythm to the frontage and overall the building is well-considered for its site.

The majority of the west side of Furnival Street is dominated by the long frontage of No. 10, built as the Patent Office and Library between 1890 – 1912 by the Office of Works' architect Sir John Taylor, with a library designed by Sir James Pennethorne (see **Chancery Lane**). The style is neo-Elizabethan, the materials chiefly yellow brick with Portland stone dressings, and the building is recessed behind a long run of decorative iron railings. Its length makes it the focal point of the street, and the quality of detailing and modelling is enough to avoid potential monotony. Despite its location on a subsidiary street, the frontage conveys the grandeur typical of an Edwardian public building. The flank elevation of No. 10-12 Holborn appropriately steps down several storeys where it meets its neighbour.

## High Holborn, Holborn & Dyers Buildings



Staple Inn & Staple Inn Buildings



Holborn from Holborn Circus

Nos. 311-314 High Holborn are a group of three narrow-fronted Victorian commercial frontages with a pleasing assortment of classical detailing, notably the giant cornice and pilasters at No. 311. Such frontages were once common in the City and are now few in number along High Holborn; they form important juxtapositions with larger modern offices on the street. No. 314 varies the style with a large glazed opening at first floor level with timber mullions and transom. No. 315-318 is an early 20th century neo-Tudor composition, whose gables and pilasters are reminiscent of the former Patent Office on Funnival Street (see above). The building is nicely proportioned and of a respectable scale, if a little restrained in detailing.

Approximately between Nos. 319 and 335 a small block of buildings known as 'Middle Row' encroached on part of the highway. Considered an inconvenient obstruction, the block was demolished in 1868. Much of the site opposite is now occupied by Holborn Gate, a modern development located outside the conservation area but creating a dynamic setting for buildings neighbouring it.

Staple Inn Buildings (No. 335) was built in 1903 to designs by Alfred Waterhouse, who also designed the Prudential Insurance building on the north side of High Holborn (LB Camden) and is associated with the conservation of Staple Inn. The building's red brick and terracotta language is redolent of the larger Prudential building on the north side, while its rooftop gable echoes those of the arresting half-timbered range of Staple Inn. Originally built in 1586, with alterations in 1887 and conservation work in 1936-8, the range is an extremely characterful survival whose materials and crookedness (caused by settling timbers) offer a superb contrast with the stone right-angles of other buildings on the street. Its low-rise scale means that all its elements are visible and easily understood. There is a wealth of interest present in the

multitude of jettying, gables, oriel windows, projecting bays, traditional shopfronts, and passage to the Staple Inn courtyard. The range has considerable evocative power, and ranks as one of the most important such survivals in the City. It forms a group with the obelisk crowned with a City dragon, lamp standards and Royal Fusiliers World War One memorial opposite.

Nos. 7-12 Holborn are part of the same building, a large stone-faced office block with regular square window openings set in deep reveals. Faint echoes of Staple Inn's gables can be seen in the pointed ground floor openings. This building provides a suitably neutral foil to the highly detailed timbering of its neighbour, stepping down in height towards their party wall. No. 14-18 is an early 20th century building in an austere classical design, with a well-judged roof form. Opposite, the highway is enlivened by the decorative ironwork providing access to former public lavatories, located in the central reservation.

A narrow, lanterned passageway provides access to **Dyers Buildings**, a paved close of offices completed in 1887 to designs by John Wimble. The plan form is redolent of a 17th century court, the name taken from the Dyers' Company alms-houses that were located here until 1771. The buildings have stuccoed ground floors with brick elevations above enlivened with terracotta detailing. No. 2, a house of 1840, predates the development. There is a dramatic juxtaposition between the narrow, uniform court and expansive, varied Holborn beyond. A sensitively designed roof extension scheme was recently approved for the buildings.

Sterling House (No. 19 Holborn) has a narrow, handsome 19th century frontage severely compromised by the insertion of unsympathetic 20th century elements. A surviving decorative pilaster on the left-hand side of the frontage demonstrates what was lost. Access to Barnard's Inn (see below) is provided through Halton House (No. 20-23), of red brick and yellow stone with decorative iron balconies and pilasters that give a strong vertical emphasis. A similar effect is found at No. 24-30, whose giant pilasters and cornice somewhat overwhelm those of Halton House. Its corner bay to Fetter Lane is circular, and crowned with a distinctive copper turret. Opposite on Holborn are two K6 telephone boxes, adding variety to the street scene.

### **Barnard's Inn**

Barnard's Inn is a precious enclave comprising a series of small, informal courtyards, a legacy of the Inn's legal and educational past. These are entered from Holborn through a passageway lined with glazed cream and green tiles, reminiscent of an Underground station. A scheduled ancient monument, the small 15th century hall is constructed from ragstone with timber framing, later refronted with stock brick. The timber roof is tiled and crowned with the original octagonal lantern with trefoil headed openings and an ogee top, a rare survival in London. Huddled against the Hall are similarly diminutive 18th and 19th century buildings of brick with stone dressings which, sympathetic in their traditional forms and features, read clearly as later stages of historic development.

The paved spaces visible today are the descendants of the Inn's original courtyards and quadrangle and have a quiet, introspective character. Dramatically small in scale and considerably evocative, the Inn is bounded on all sides by taller

development that serves to emphasise its intimacy. To the south is Barnard's Court, a redevelopment of 1988-92 of the former Mercers' School site. Its northern edge, facing the Hall, incorporated salvaged parts of the Mercers' School, of a Jacobean idiom in red brick and stone. The modern interventions are executed in sympathetic materials of a stripped classical character. A link can be traced from this redevelopment through the Mercers' acquisition of Barnard's Inn to the Inn itself; the ensemble of old and new buildings has contextual value in this respect.

## Staple Inn



View of Staple Inn Hall

Staple Inn is the other great collegiate establishment within the conservation area. Unlike Barnard Inn's fortuitous survival, much of the buildings at Staple Inn suffered WW2 bomb damage and were rebuilt, like those at the Inner and Middle Temples, by Edwin Maufe in the 1950s. The form of the Inn is more regular, comprising a quadrangle with a southerly passageway leading to a larger, roughly rectangular garden. The north, west and east elevations of the quad (the latter largely escaping bomb damage and 18th century in date) are of red brick with sash windows and tiled dormers above. The south side is mostly taken up with the hall, a brick building with buttresses, mullion and transom windows and a slated, sloping roof with square tower and cupola. There are intriguing spiked railings arranged between the buttresses. The half-timbered north range of the Inn is described under the section on **Holborn**.

The quadrangle is notable for its historic groundscape, a combination of Purbeck paving, York stone paving and cobbles, rare survivals in the City. Two Purbeck paths are particularly striking: one leads diagonally from the Holborn entrance to the Hall door, the other marks a linear route from the entrance to the garden passageway, both reminiscent of similar arrangements at the Inner Temple. A drainage channel extends from the pump located on the northern side. The quadrangle is enhanced by the presence of five trees, whose roots may have caused the attractive undulation of the surface. On the other side of the south range is a large garden with trees and formal planting, framed with decorative ironmongery and to the south by a range of the former Patent Office (see Southampton Buildings).



Staple Inn garden

### Southampton Buildings

Named from the Earl of Southampton's house, located here until the mid-17th century, when it was redeveloped into tenements. The L-shaped street is mostly lined with the rear frontages of buildings described under **Chancery Lane** and **High Holborn**. No. 44 has a stripped classical frontage of brick with stone dressings, traditional in appearance, though its shallow window reveals give the frontage a flat appearance. By contrast, the rear elevation of the London Silver Vaults (see Chancery Lane) is a well-modelled combination of stone and brick with well-defined piers between deep window reveals, giving depth to the composition.

No. 25 is part of the former Patent Office and is a pleasing composition in a neo-Elizabethan style similar to the frontage on Furnival Street. It has prominent gables at roof level intermingled with dormers and chimneystacks to create an evocative roofscape. Part of the range was recently rebuilt to a contextual design. The remainder is the dark brick flank elevation of No. 50-52 Chancery Lane. The small spur leading from Southampton Buildings towards Staple Inn garden is due to be pedestrianised and landscaped under a forthcoming Environmental Enhancement scheme. This will enhance the settings of the surrounding buildings and the Staple Inn garden gates and walls.



## 7. Land uses and related activity

Historic uses of all types continue to be represented, with the Inns of Court, chartered institutes, libraries, the London Silver Vaults, public houses and restaurants all making notable contributions to the life of the area. Smaller buildings of all periods continue to contribute to its cohesion and vitality by providing accommodation for a variety of smaller occupiers, including a successful retail element.

The major institutions and Inns continue to dominate and, as the Patent Office complex and Maughan Library absorb their new uses, continue to make a positive contribution to the City's unique qualities. The Maughan Library is particularly notable for re-introducing an educational use to Chancery Lane, fitting for an area once home to a number of Inns of Court and establishments like Birkbeck College.

## 8. Architectural character

### Architects, styles and influences

Intense pockets of historic architecture (e.g. Took's Court, Rolls Passage, Barnard's Inn) pepper the conservation area, between which are sequences of frontages representing a number of tastes and periods. No one aesthetic defines Chancery Lane and its environs: institutional and commercial buildings alike are expressed in divergent styles, from the post-modern to the high Gothic, from the Beaux Arts to the Dutch Art-Deco.

Barnard's Inn and the front range of Staple Inn are significant pre-fire survivals that offer architectural forms rarely found elsewhere in the City or indeed in central London. Juxtaposed against post-war buildings, the sheer divergence in scale and style magnifies their effect. Staple Inn's seasoned timbers are a vivid contrast to their modern, orthogonal surroundings.

The area has associations with a number of notable architects. Sir James Pennethorne was a pupil of John Nash who went on to design buildings for the Government. His Maughan Library design is a very individual interpretation of the Gothic style. A.C. Blomfield, a prominent Victorian architect, was responsible for No. 5 Chancery Lane. No. 78-81 Fetter Lane is a typically unorthodox work from Treadwell and Martin, who designed similar buildings throughout the West End. Their work here was executed for Buchanan's Distillery, once a prominent industry in the area.

Alfred Waterhouse designed the Prudential headquarters on the north side of Holborn in terracotta Gothic, and Staple Inn Buildings in a similar manner. Additionally, he was responsible for conservation work to the timber range of Staple Inn. These projects were commissioned by the Prudential Assurance Company; the three buildings are closely-grouped examples of a particular client-architect relationship. The company's patronage in the locality can be further observed in the work of the Prudential Assurance Architect's Department: No. 30-31 Funnell Street, built 1982-5, and No. 9 Holborn, built in 1972-5, which steps respectfully down towards Staple Inn.

Domestic brick frontages can be found at Took's Court, No. 32-33 Furnival Street and No. 82-84 Fetter Lane, survivals of a once common building type that act as foils to their larger, commercial neighbours.

The variations and subtleties in modelling of building elevations are critical in providing vibrancy and animation to the street. Deep reveals to windows and doors provide relief to the elevations. The facades tend to have a predominately vertical emphasis with secondary horizontal elements. They are also characterised by a strong ground floor treatment, substantial in scale, expressed in a different material or detail to the upper floors. A number of buildings use stone at ground floor level to provide this differentiation.

With some exceptions, post-World War II redevelopments have generally respected the scale and street pattern and integrate well into the grain of the area. In the main, these developments make a positive contribution to its vitality and cohesion although in some cases the choice of uncharacteristic materials (such as expanses of glazing) strikes a discordant note. A good example of a successful insertion into a sensitive historic context is Dunstan's Court, whose materials and design are mildly redolent of the neighbouring Maughan Library, and are complementary in tone.

### **Building ages**

Buildings in the conservation area age from the 15th century to the 21st, a range that is unusually broad in the City. Barnard's Inn is an exceptional survivor, on record from 1422, with original medieval woodwork. The Hall and Staple Inn are evocative examples of architecture widespread in the City before the Great Fire of London (1666). 18th century building is to be found at No. 32-33 Furnival Street and No.14-16 Took's Court. Grander 19th century buildings are exemplified by the former Public Records and Patents offices, while typical commercial architecture of that century survives at Dyers Buildings, the corner of Chancery Lane and High Holborn. Large Edwardian offices survive at No. 5 Chancery Lane and No. 315-318 High Holborn. Post-war and later 20th century buildings are common in the conservation area: the London Silver Vaults, Printer's Inn Court (No. 20 Furnival Street) and Barnard's Court are larger examples, while No. 50-52 Chancery Lane and No. 30-31 Furnival Street are typical of the 1970s/80s. 21st century buildings include Dunstan's Court and Finlayson House.

## 9. Local details



Gable end of No. 78-81 Fetter Lane



Royal Fusiliers WW1 memorial, Holborn

### Public and architectural sculpture

The conservation area contains good examples of public sculpture, such as the soldier on the Royal Fusiliers World War One memorial at Holborn. There is an interesting symbolism in the way the soldier faces Westminster, and the statue of Prince Albert at Holborn Circus further down the street faces the City. Sculpted dragons on stone plinths nearby indicate the City boundary.

Instances of sculpture can be seen on individual buildings. The summit of the Treadwell & Martin design at No. 78-81 Fetter Lane is particularly fine, as are the gargoyles and other carvings adorning the Maughan Library. The Barnard's Court development reuses sculptural reliefs from the former Mercers' school, providing a bridge between its modernity and the antiquity of Barnard's Inn to the north.

### Signage and shopfronts

Shopfronts along Holborn are in the main appropriately understated. The north range of Staple Inn has well preserved historic shopfronts with surviving stallriser, glass and glazing bar arrangements. Fascia displays are of a traditional appearance, with modern displays successfully integrated through the use of understated colours and lettering. Further down Holborn, discordancy is created by the wholly glazed section of ground floor frontage at 14-18 Holborn, which forms an uncomfortable contrast with the traditional public house frontage that occupies the other part of the ground floor.

Fetter Lane has a number of surviving traditional shopfronts, such as at No. 82. No. 84 has a partly understated ground floor shopfront with the remainder taken up by an obviously modern insertion that sits uneasily below a traditional brick elevation.

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## **Blue plaques**

Throughout the City, the City Corporation's Blue Plaque scheme adds interest to the street scene: plaques are reminders of the City's history. The following significant site in the Conservation Area is commemorated by a Blue Plaque:

No. 5 Chancery Lane – Site of Old Serjeants' Inn, 1415 -1910

See [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/blueplaques](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/blueplaques).

## 10. Building materials

The predominant facing material of the area is brick, with numerous shades used on a variety of buildings of differing dates and sizes. For instance, Took's Court and Dyers Buildings are enclaves of traditional light brown and yellow stock bricks, while later buildings like 50-52 Chancery Lane employ a darker shade of brown brick. Polychromatic brickwork is to be found at Bream's Buildings, echoing that used at Lincoln's Inn. Staple Inn Buildings varies the palette by incorporating red terracotta into a red brick frontage.

Stone is limited to larger institutions and more recent developments, examples being the dressings of the former Mercers' School at Barnard's Court, the Maughan Library, and the new development at 40 Chancery Lane. However, lower-status buildings such as Nos.11-13 Bream's Buildings and the Castle public house have stone dressings, while the former Patent Office combines both stone and brick. Most of the frontages along Holborn incorporate stone, the notable exception being the timber frontage of Staple Inn, an individual survivor of an earlier tradition.

## 11. Open spaces and trees

Enclosed by buildings, the gardens on both sides of Chancery Lane make a significant and contrasting contribution to the character and quality of the area. The landscaped gardens of the Maughan Library and Staple Inn are particularly prominent, the latter offering precious serenity very close to the prominent arterial route of Holborn. London Plane trees achieve dramatic presence in the townscape, particularly at Fetter Lane. Those in the Staple Inn quadrangle are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. The Inn's garden to the south contains a number of trees that greatly enhance the amenity of the area, including an Indian Bean tree (*catalpa bignonioides*) uncommon in the City.

The two privately owned spaces that make up the Dyers' Buildings and Barnard's Inn, have their own distinct character, but share an intimate atmosphere, which is in marked contrast to the busy thoroughfare of Holborn. As noiseless, introspective, areas, set apart from the bustle of much of the City, they still maintain today a quality that has defined these areas since their creation.

## 12. Public realm

Visually strong kerbs highlight the pavements and where York Stone paving is used it enhances the character and quality of the conservation area. The pavements provide definition and focus by drawing the eye in views and helping to relate the scale of the street to the buildings. In many places the three-dimensional relationship between carriageway and pavements survives, maintaining depth in the street scene and making a distinct contribution to the historic character of the streets and courts.



Took's Court, kerb detail

A good example is Took's Court, where granite used for carriageway and kerbs and York stone for pavements enhances the settings of the historic buildings. Historic surface finishes make a strong contribution to Staple Inn, where a rich ensemble of Purbeck paving, cobbles and York stone survives in the courtyard.

Whilst traditional kerbs provide a strong sense of character in certain areas, other locations can benefit from a raised carriageway, creating a 'flush' surface while simultaneously retaining the kerb line to indicate the historic configuration. Cursitor Street and Breems Buildings have already received this treatment, which will be deployed in the forthcoming pedestrianisation of the eastern spur of Southampton Buildings. Best suited to areas where historic surfaces have been lost or where there is a predominantly pedestrian use, the approach can result in improved access and the enhancement of unattractive or defective road surfaces.

Completed and planned public realm environmental enhancement projects are identified in the Management Strategy below.

### **13. Cultural associations**

As a centre for the profession since the medieval period, Chancery Lane has always held a strongly legal and educational bearing, manifested in the quality of the surviving historic buildings and ongoing patterns of use within the area.

The lane and its environs figure heavily in Charles Dickens' novels, particularly *Bleak House*, where Took's Court provided the setting for Mr Snagsby's residence Cook's Court. Pip and Herbert Pocket (*Great Expectations*) had chambers at Barnard's Inn; the former's first impression of the Inn was '*the dingiest collection of shabby buildings ever squeezed together in a rank corner*' (chapter 21).

The area around Holborn is strongly associated with the Prudential Life Assurance Company, who commissioned a number of new buildings and conservation work to historic buildings.

The Maughan Library is used extensively as a filming location, and has appeared in films such as *The Imitation Game* and *Johnny English* (both 2003).

## Management strategy

The management strategy sets out the position regarding the wider policies and guidance concerning the conservation and enhancement of Chancery Lane Conservation Area. Future development schemes and enhancement projects will need to take account of these policies in relation to the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area, as detailed in the above character summary.

Documents produced by the Corporation are available on the website [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk).

## 14. Planning policy

### National policy

The Civic Amenities Act 1967 gave local authorities the power to designate conservation areas, and these powers are now contained in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The Act (section 69 (1) (a)) defines a conservation area as '*...an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*'. Section 71 (1) of the Act requires the local planning authority to "*...formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are Conservation Areas.*" See [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk).

The Government's planning policies are contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which came into force on 27 March 2012. Historic environment policies are detailed in chapter 12 which sets out the requirements for local authorities and applicants in relation to the conservation of heritage assets, including conservation areas. See [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk). The Department for Communities and Local Government have published Planning Practice Guidance for the NPPF, of which the section 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' is particularly relevant. See <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>.

NPPF historic environment policies are supported by Historic Environment Good Practice Advice notes 1-3, produced by Historic England. See <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/>.

### London-wide policy

The London Plan (2015) forms part of the statutory development plan for the Corporation and needs to be taken into account when considering development within the Conservation Area. Key policies to consider are: policies 7.8 Heritage assets and archaeology and 7.9 Heritage-led regeneration. See [www.london.gov.uk/thelondonplan](http://www.london.gov.uk/thelondonplan).

### City of London Corporation policy

Planning policy for the City of London is contained within the Local Plan, which was adopted in January 2015. See [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk) for more information. Development proposals within the Chancery Lane Conservation Area have to be considered in the context of the policies of the Local Plan. Within this framework, particular account will need to be taken of Core Strategic Policies CS10 'Design',



CS12 'Historic Environment', CS13 'Protected Views', CS19 'Open Spaces and Recreation', CS20 'Retailing', and CS21 'Housing'.

In addition to policy CS10 Design, special attention should also be paid to Local Plan policy DM10.6 Advertisements. This policy seeks to encourage a high standard of design and a restrained amount of advertising, in keeping with the character of the City, and to resist excessive or obtrusive advertising, inappropriate illuminated signs and the display of advertisements above ground level. Other key policies in the Local Plan are: DM12.1 'Managing change affecting all heritage assets and spaces'; DM12.2 'Development in conservation areas', DM12.3 'Listed Buildings' and DM10.5 'Shopfronts'.

In addition to CS10 Design in the Core Strategy, special attention should also be paid to the Draft Local Plan policy DM10.6 Advertisements. This policy seeks to encourage a high standard of design and a restrained amount of advertising, in keeping with the character of the City, and to resist excessive or obtrusive advertising, inappropriate illuminated signs and the display of advertisements above ground level. See also clauses 3.10.32 to 3.10.36 for further details.

### **Protected views**

The London Plan and the Local Plan seek to protect strategic views which are defined within the London Plan's SPG – the London View Management Framework (LVMF). In the Chancery Lane conservation area, the following Protected Vistas need to be considered:

- 4A.1: Primrose Hill summit looking towards St Paul's Cathedral (the north-eastern part of the conservation area is covered by the landmark viewing corridor and wider setting consultation area – right foreground). The consultation threshold plane falls from 55.0m AOD to 54.4m AOD as it crosses the conservation area.
- 5A.2: Greenwich Park: the General Wolfe statue (NE) to St Paul's Cathedral (the background wider setting consultation area covers the northern part of the conservation area). The consultation threshold plane rises from 52.4m AOD to 52.6m AOD as it crosses the conservation area.
- 6A.1: Blackheath Point (orientation board) to St Paul's Cathedral (the north-eastern tip of the conservation area is covered by the background wider setting consultation area). The consultation threshold plane rises from 52.5m AOD to 52.7 AOD as it crosses the conservation area.

Relevant LVMF River Prospects to the Chancery Lane CA include:

- River Prospect 11A: London Bridge (upstream)
- River Prospect 12A: Southwark Bridge (upstream)
- River Prospect 14A: Blackfriars Bridge (upstream)

Further detail can be found in the LVMF SPG - see [www.london.gov.uk](http://www.london.gov.uk).

This character summary identifies a number of distant and local views that contribute to the character of the conservation area (see section 5. Spatial analysis: views and vistas). Proposals will be assessed for their potential effect on these and

other views of significant individual buildings, townscapes or skylines. The City of London Protected Views SPD (2012) offers further guidance on protected views.

### **Sustainability and climate change**

The Corporation is committed to being at the forefront of action in response to climate change and other sustainability challenges that face high density urban environments. In adapting to meet these challenges, it is important that sustainable development is sensitive to the historic environment. In particular, areas will need to be resilient to warmer wetter winters, hotter drier summers and more frequent extreme weather events.

Issues specifically relevant to Chancery Lane Conservation Area include:

- Staple Inn garden and that of the former Public Records office contribute to the biodiversity of the conservation area.
- In order to minimise the risks of flooding elsewhere in the City, new development schemes will be expected to make use of appropriate rainwater attenuation measures such as the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and green roofs.
- The City is an air quality management area for fine particulates and oxides of nitrogen. It is therefore essential that development does not exacerbate existing air quality issues, particularly around sites of particular vulnerability.

The Local Plan policy CS15 provides guidance on sustainable development and climate change and policy CS18 on SuDS. The City has also produced a *Climate Change Adaptation Strategy* (revised and updated January 2010).

## **15. Environmental enhancement**

Developed in collaboration with the London Borough of Camden and Westminster City Council, the Chancery Lane Area Enhancement Scheme (2009) sets out a number of enhancement projects to individual streets around the conservation area. Recent improvements were made to Chancery Lane and Cursitor Street as part of the Chancery Lane area enhancement scheme as part of this.

Forthcoming schemes include new material treatments and landscaping to Southampton Buildings, Cursitor Street and Breems Buildings, projects that will improve the pedestrian environment and the settings of the conservation area's buildings. More information can be found on the Environmental Enhancement web pages.

The work is underpinned by the City Street Scene Manual (2005), which will be superseded by a City Public Realm SPD in 2016. This is being prepared to promote high quality design and set the highest standards for every element that contributes to our experience of the City's streets. There are ten overarching aims that support all interventions in the City's public realm:

- An increasingly higher standard of design quality;
- Understanding context and character;

- Simpler and less cluttered streets and spaces;
- Better coordination and more consistency;
- Protecting heritage and ensuring continuity;
- More sustainable streets and spaces;
- Supporting and encouraging good health, well-being and healthy lifestyles;
- Making an exception for exceptional streets and spaces;
- Better connected and more accessible streets and spaces;
- Releasing the potential of streets and spaces to support commerce, culture and art.

These principles, along with detailed guidance, and history and evolution of streets and spaces in the City are set out in detail in the SPD.

## 16. Transport

Much work has already been done on reducing motor vehicle traffic in the City, including in and around Chancery Lane.

- The Mayor's congestion charging zone scheme has significantly reduced motor vehicle traffic in Central London;
- The Mayor's low emission zone scheme has further reduced numbers of the most-polluting heavy vehicles across London;
- In adopting its Local Plan the City Corporation has refined its highway hierarchy to further reduce the adverse impacts of motor vehicle traffic, including on the valued character of the City's conservation areas, and will continue to reduce the impact of traffic management infrastructure.

Further details about transport proposals, including the City of London Cycle Parking Strategy, and Rail Strategy are available on the website. See [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk)

## 17. Management of open spaces and trees

Trees, churchyards, gardens and other green spaces make a strong contribution to the character and appearance of the Chancery Lane conservation area, and will be enhanced, where appropriate, when opportunities arise.

The City of London Open Space Strategy SPD (2015) details the existing open spaces of the City, future spaces to be provided and how these could be delivered. The City of London Biodiversity Action Plan 2010-2015 (2010) outlines the importance of

the City's urban green spaces, which in Chancery Lane includes the Maughan Library and Staple Inn gardens. In addition, the City Corporation has published a Habitat Action Plan (HAP) for Urban Green Spaces, Churchyards and Cemeteries, and for Built Structures.

The City of London Tree Strategy SPD (2012) sets out a strategy for the protection, maintenance and increase in privately owned trees and City Corporation owned and managed trees within the City of London. Part one constitutes the SPD, while part two provides supporting information. The location of trees or the potential loss of trees in the townscape may have an impact on the setting and views of heritage assets. It is important that this issue is considered and that significant harm is not caused to the setting of heritage assets.

Trees in the conservation area are protected under section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). Anyone proposing to carry out works to a tree in a conservation area must give six weeks' notice to the local planning authority of their intention to do so prior to undertaking such works.

Three plane trees in Staple Inn courtyard are subject to a Tree Preservation Order. For more information, visit the Trees section on the City of London website.

<http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/environment-and-planning/planning/heritage-and-design/Pages/tree-strategy.aspx>

## 18. Archaeology

The City is the historic centre of London and has a rich history, with monuments and archaeological remains surviving from all periods. Its historic landscape has shaped and influenced the modern townscape. There has been almost continuous occupation of the City from the initial Roman settlement and there is also evidence of earlier occupation. Physical evidence of the development of the City is contained in the visible and buried monuments and archaeological remains. The history of settlement has led to the build-up and development of a very complex, and in some areas, deep archaeological sequence. Later building development and basement construction has eroded the archaeological evidence, and in some areas remains have been lost with no record or an incomplete record on only part of a site.

Due to the complex layering of remains above and below ground, the entire City is considered to have archaeological potential unless it can be demonstrated that archaeological remains have been lost, due to basement construction or other ground works.

Where developments are proposed which involve new groundworks, a historic environment assessment, including an assessment of the archaeological potential and impact of the proposals, will be required as part of the planning application. Where significant remains survive, consideration will be given to amendments to the proposals to ensure that disturbance to archaeological remains is minimised or reduced. The Corporation will indicate the potential of a site, its relative importance and the likely impact to a developer at an early stage, so that appropriate assessment and design development can be undertaken. Developers should refer to

*Planning Advice Note 3: Archaeology in the City of London, and Conservation Areas in the City of London: A General Introduction to their Character*, for further information. See [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk).

There is high archaeological potential in the Chancery Lane Conservation Area, including:

- Roman remains, including burials under the north-east part of the conservation area
- Remains of the first Templar church, located near the junction of Chancery Lane and High Holborn
- Remains of the Rolls chapel and associated buildings
- Remains of buildings associated with Inns of Court such as Clifford's Inn and Serjeant's Inn to the south of the conservation area

## **19. Enforcement**

Breaches of planning control are investigated in accordance with the City of London Enforcement Charter (updated June 2008, currently under revision). This sets out the manner and timescales in which breaches will be investigated, and is available on the Corporation's website. See [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk).

## **20. Condition of the conservation area**

The buildings, open spaces and public realm of Chancery Lane Conservation Area are generally in good condition and maintained to a high standard. The adaption, upgrading, repair, conservation, or redevelopment of buildings is managed to have a minimum effect on neighbouring buildings, the highway and the amenity of the area.

Potential pressures in the Conservation Area have been identified as new development and utilities replacement works, although these do not threaten its character. The condition of the Conservation Area is judged to have improved in recent years, and is expected to further improve in coming years.

Planning applications will be judged against the local, regional and national policies and guidance identified above, and the loss of buildings and features that contribute to the character of the area will be resisted accordingly.

## Further Reading and references

Bradley, Simon, and Pevsner, Nikolaus, *The Buildings of England, London 1: The City of London* (1997).

<http://www.buildingconservation.com>. Information resources for conservation, restoration and repairs, including specialist services and products, skills training and links to the industry's key organisations.

Dyson, Tony, *The Medieval London Waterfront: Annual Archaeology Lecture, Museum of London* (1989).

Several of the documents listed below were published by English Heritage, an organisation that has now changed its name to **Historic England**. Otherwise the reference is as below. <http://www.historicengland.org.uk>

English Heritage, *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (2008).

English Heritage, *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (2011).

English Heritage, *Seeing the History in the View* (2011).

English Heritage, *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (2011).

English Heritage guidance for property owners - <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/your-property>. This section offers advice on maintenance, energy efficiency and permissions and consents needed to make changes.

English Heritage climate change guidance and resources - <http://www.climatechangeandyourhome.org.uk/live>.

English Heritage, The National Heritage List for England - <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england>.

Freeman, Jennifer (editor) *Save the City: a Conservation Study of the City of London* (1979).

Heritage Gateway provides access to extensive information on England's historic sites and buildings, including images of listed buildings. It allows cross-searching almost 60 resources. <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway>.

Huelin, Gordon, *Vanished Churches of the City of London* (1996).

Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) in association with the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings: *A Stitch in Time: Maintaining Your Property Makes Good Sense and Saves Money*. Advice on maintaining buildings. A PDF can be downloaded free of charge. <http://www.ihbc.org.uk/publications>

London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre - administered by the Museum of London.

Museum of London, *Post-war Archaeology in the City of London, 1946-68: A Guide to Records of Excavations by Prof W F Grimes held by the Museum of London* (Archaeological Gazetteer).

Museum of London Archaeology Service (MOLAS) 22 Chancery Lane London EC4; *archaeological impact assessment* MOLAS 2004

Museum of London Archaeology Service (MOLAS) Lonsdale Chambers 24-32 Chancery Lane London WC2; *an archaeological evaluation report* MOLAS 2007

Schofield, John, with Maloney, Cath (eds) *Archaeology in the City of London: A Guide to Records of Excavations by the Museum of London and its Predecessors*, Museum of London (1998).

Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB). SPAB offers a wide range of training courses on period buildings for the conservation professional and non-professional - <http://www.spab.org.uk/education-training>. SPAB aims to help owners of old buildings by providing training, technical advice and publications – <http://www.spab.org.uk/homeowners>. For free building conservation advice, telephone the SPAB technical advice line on 0207 456 0916 (Monday to Friday, 9.30 am to 12.30 pm). Books, technical pamphlets and information sheets are available to purchase online.

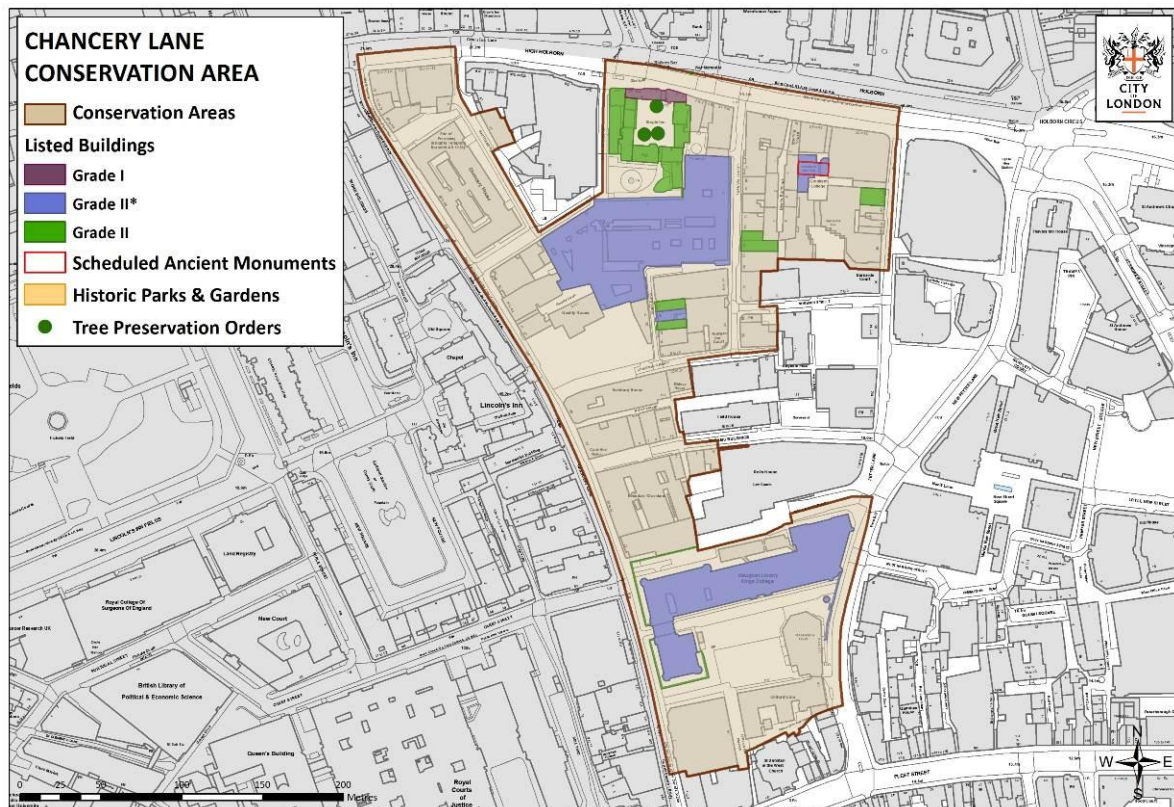
Stephens Curl, James, *Encyclopaedia of Architectural Terms* (1992).

Strype, John, *A Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster* (1720).

## Appendix

### Designated heritage assets

Information correct as of [date of adoption TBC] Please consult the Corporation's website for up to date information. See [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/plans](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/plans).



#### Scheduled Ancient Monuments

There is one Scheduled Ancient Monument in the Chancery Lane Conservation Area, which is also grade II\* listed:

Barnard's Inn Hall

#### Listed Buildings

Street	Number/name	Grade of listing
Chancery Lane	Public Record Office	II*
	Walls, railings and lamps fronting the Public Record Office	II
Fetter Lane	K2 telephone kiosk, opposite No. 15	II
	78-81	II
Furnival Street	32 and 33	II
High Holborn	335 and 336 Staple Inn Buildings north and south and attached railings	II
	337 and 338	II*



	Obelisk marking City boundary on south side of road	II
Holborn	Mercer's School Hall and buildings adjoining, Barnard's Inn	II*
	Barnard's Inn Hall	Scheduled Ancient Monument
Holborn Bars	1-4	I
Staple Inn	Hall and attached railings	II
	The Institute of Actuaries and attached railings, 1, 2 and 3	II
	4, 5 and 6 and attached pump	I
	7 and 8	II
	9 and 10	II
Staple Inn Court	Lamppost	II
	Cobbled setts	II
Southampton Buildings and Furnival Street	Patent Office Library and attached railings, 25 Southampton Buildings and 10 Furnival Street	II*
Took's Court	14	II
	15	II*
	16	II

### Tree Preservation Orders

Three plane trees in Staple Inn

## Contacts

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Website: [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/lma](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/lma)



The City of London Corporation is the local planning authority for the financial and commercial heart of Britain, the City of London. It is committed to maintaining and enhancing the status of the business city as one of the world's three leading financial centres, through the policies it pursues and the high standard of services it provides. Its responsibilities extend far beyond the City boundaries and it provides a host of additional facilities for the benefit of the nation. These range from the Central Criminal Court, the Old Bailey, to the famous Barbican Arts Centre and open spaces such as Epping Forest and Hampstead Heath.

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