

# Report – Guildhall Improvement Committee

## Conclusion of Project

*To be presented on Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> April 2016*

*To the Right Honourable The Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons  
of the City of London in Common Council assembled.*

### **SUMMARY**

By the year 2000 it was increasingly clear that much of the Guildhall Complex was in need of renewal and renovation to make its buildings fit for purpose in the coming decades. The Court of Common Council established the Guildhall Improvement Committee to oversee the Guildhall Improvement Project, a programme of works that was designed to renovate and reconstruct elements of the Complex, and create both a modern working environment for staff and a welcoming institution for members of the public. In May 2015 a final settlement account for works to the North Wing – that was beneficial to the City - was agreed between the City of London Corporation and its project contractor, Lend Lease. The final payment on that account was made in January 2016, drawing the project to a close. Members are therefore asked to discharge the Guildhall Improvement Committee of its duties. The report also summarises main items of work undertaken to the Guildhall Complex during the life of the project.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Members are asked to note the report, including the fact that the settlement for the project has been reached; and in light of the completion of the project, discharge the Guildhall Improvement Committee of its duties.

### **MAIN REPORT**

#### **Background**

1. Over recent years the Guildhall Complex has been subject to major and lengthy refurbishment works referred to as the Guildhall Improvement Project overseen by your Guildhall Improvement Committee. These works involved reconstruction, renovation and renewal of much of the North Wing and its piazza, the Old Library and the former Guildhall Museum (now the Livery Hall), and to a lesser extent the West Wing, including its committee rooms and reception. A booklet detailing the extent of those works was published in 2013 and circulated to Members of the Court at the time. Further copies of this booklet are available from the Town Clerk's Department on request.
2. During the course of the project, your Guildhall Improvement Committee was advised of additional construction costs. These were due to higher than anticipated tender prices for piazza landscaping; glass lifts and the fit-out of lavatories in the Old Library; and additional repairs to the stonework of the Old Library. Throughout the project, expenditure was governed by committee approvals, including an inflation adjustment allowance, which were provided in

October 2004 and April 2006. In April 2008 the Court of Common Council authorised your Guildhall Improvement Committee to approve any additional expenditure on the project that it felt necessary to bring it to a satisfactory conclusion. Committee and Court of Common Council approvals equated to a total of £113.9m during the course of the project and expenditure to date has come in under budget, totalling £112.6m.

3. Since that time project procedures and financial regulations have changed, resulting in there being no formal requirement for the Guildhall Improvement Committee to report back to the Court of Common Council upon the conclusion of the project. However, given the longevity and significance of the project the Committee wishes to provide members with formal notification to that effect, and request that the Committee be discharged.

#### **Current position**

4. In January 2016 the settlement and final payment to Lend Lease for works to the North Wing was approved under urgency procedure by the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Guildhall Improvement Committee. Urgency procedure was utilised to allow the City of London Corporation to honour its obligation to pay all invoices within 30 days of receipt. The final budget for the North Wing project element stood at £74,400,410 (not including fees) and, mindful of the scale and complexity of the project, your Guildhall Improvement Committee considered this sum to represent a satisfactory settlement.
5. This final account payment signals the conclusion of the Guildhall Improvement Project and therefore the Court of Common Council is asked to discharge the Guildhall Improvement Committee of its duties.

#### **Guildhall Improvement Project – Summary of Works**

6. In light of the longevity and significance of the Guildhall Improvement Project, your Guildhall Improvement Committee wishes to provide Members of the Court with a summary of works conducted since the project began in 2002. Much of this detail is available from the aforementioned booklet *The Guildhall Improvement Project* (City of London Corporation: 2013) available from the Town Clerk's Department on request.
7. The Guildhall Improvement Project has been underpinned throughout by the aim to deliver both physical improvements to the Guildhall Complex – making its building more accessible and easier to navigate, more efficient in the way in which they are used, and more sustainable – and through those physical improvements make a statement regarding the type of organisation the City of London Corporation aspires to be: modern, dynamic, open and accessible.
8. This increase in efficiency in the way Guildhall can be utilised as a venue has allowed more events to be held within the Guildhall Complex, often concurrently. In 2004/5 a total of 365 events were held in Guildhall, a number that increased to 482 by the end of the project in 2015/16. Revenue over that same period has increased from £714,000 to £1.9m per annum.

9. **West Wing Entrance, West Wing Upper Floors and Coach House.** By the year 2000 it was clear that the West Wing, completed in 1974 to the designs of Sir Giles Gilbert Scott and his son Richard, was in need of general refurbishment, including new heating, lighting, furnishing and decoration. The first element of the Guildhall Improvement Project to begin in 2002 was work to the West Wing reception, designed to provide a new and more visible entrance, with an extended glazed lobby with associated waiting area and meeting room, with discreet security features.
10. Work on the upper floors of the West Wing was completed by 2005 in advance of the main contract for the North Wing, to allow office space in the West Wing to be utilised by officers whilst work was carried out in the North Wing. Work included installation of open plan working spaces for staff, modernised committee rooms and improved accommodation and dining facilities for Members.
11. Each year the Lord Mayor's State Coach is now moved from its display area at the Museum of London to Guildhall, in preparation for its use as part of the Lord Mayor's Show. Prior to 2002 the Coach was stored at Whitbread's brewery in Chiswell Street but following the brewery's sale, alternative accommodation was required. The Guildhall Improvement Project provided an opportunity to modify the southernmost archway of the West Wing to provide a secure glazed area where the Coach can be viewed by the public ahead of the annual Lord Mayor's Show.
12. **Old Library and Guildhall Museum (Livery Hall).** The Old Library and, in its basement, Guildhall Museum were built between 1868-72 by the City Architect Horace Jones. The whole structure is Grade II\* listed and in a conservation area. The main library was moved to the West Wing in 1974, with the Old Library, former Librarian's Office and Print Room becoming events spaces or, in the case of the Librarian's Office, the Chief Commoner's Parlour. The Guildhall Improvement Project carried out repairs to the Old Library roof, replaced roof lighting, and cleaned, repointed and replaced stonework on the building exterior. The interior of the Old Library was redecorated, new carpets laid, and improved public address (PA) systems installed to create an enhanced events space.
13. The late Guildhall Museum was located in what is now the Livery Hall up until the outbreak of the Second World War. Its contents were subsequently moved to safety away from enemy bombing and never returned, later being transferred to the Museum of London. Instead in the post-war period the space came to be used for storage and service ducts for the wider Guildhall Complex. The Guildhall Improvement Project oversaw reinstating this area as an events space to complement the Old Library. Its services were upgraded, a new kitchen and servery constructed, and associated lifts, cloakrooms and entrances installed. The space was renamed the Livery Hall to reinforce the City of London Corporation's connection with the Livery, and to re-establish the link with a former Livery Hall that was situated in the North Wing. The Livery Hall opened in 2008.

14. **East Ambulatory and South Ambulatory Staircase.** The Guildhall Improvement Project set about creating a step-free link to the Old Library, Livery Hall and Crypts. This involved the demolition of a series of 20<sup>th</sup> century extensions and the construction of a two-level ambulatory passing the east end of the Great Hall. The ambulatory's top-lit design allows more daylight into the Old Library and Livery Hall, and opens up views of the east wall of the Great Hall. The existing South Ambulatory staircase is a reconstructed narrower staircase that has allowed the installation of a glazed lift to permit step-free access to the Print Room and Old Library.
15. **West and North Ambulatories.** The South ambulatory constructed in the 1970s provided a covered route for visitors accessing the Great Hall at its western end, via a short flight of steps. The Guildhall Improvement Project demolished these steps to provide instead a gentle ramp with an associated glazed roof that opened up a vista of the Great Hall's west frontage. Fire resistant screens were installed in the North ambulatory to create an accessible circular route around the whole exterior of the Great Hall.
16. **Basinghall Street Entrance.** The current Basinghall Street entrance formed the original main entrance for the former Guildhall Library and Guildhall Museum. For many years it had been sealed off and unused and the space turned over to the City's Road Safety Centre. Under the Guildhall Improvement Project this entrance has now been restored, and its stonework cleaned. Its staircase is decorated with three seventeenth century figures from the former Guildhall Chapel. The Basinghall Street entrance makes it possible to hold multiple corporate events within the Guildhall Complex with each set of guests using separate entrances.
17. **North Wing and Piazza.** The North Wing and its piazza were the main focus of the Guildhall Improvement Project. The North Wing (formerly the North Block) was constructed in 1955-58 to a 1930s design by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott. By 2000 it was clear that the building and its interior were in need of modernisation. The building was segregated from its neighbouring piazza on a raised platform, accessible only by steps and with no central entrance. The interior of the building contained small and impractical offices approached by dark, narrow central corridors. Overall, space was not used efficiently and was not welcoming to either staff or visitors.
18. Works to the North Wing began in 2006. To improve access the adjoining piazza was lowered, and new central doors inserted into the building's frontage. The two upper floors of the building were removed and a new sixth floor constructed with a glazed central section flanked by brick – this floor provides new office accommodation. The seventh floor is set back to further reduce its visibility from ground level and houses plant.
19. One aim of the refurbishment of the North Block was to create more desk space without extending the building upwards thus increasing its bulk and height, or downwards thus disturbing archaeology. To solve this, the south elevation of the North Block overlooking the Great Hall was removed, and a glass façade installed two metres further south than the former south elevation. The extra

space provided for sixty extra desks. The glass façade also incorporates three glass lifts and provides for excellent views of the Courtyard Garden and the north elevation of the Great Hall. The Courtyard Garden was formerly cluttered with several items of plant which are now located on the roof of the North Wing.

20. **The Courtyard Garden and Lady Mayoress's Corridor.** The installation of a Courtyard Garden with associated planting, seating and water features was further complemented by the demolition of the former Press Gallery Corridor leading into the Great Hall. The Press Gallery is now accessed across a roof area laid out with paving, gravel and sedum. The Lady Mayoress's Corridor has been retained and overall work to this area has led to hugely improved views of the Great Hall.
21. **North Wing Reception Area and Ground Floor.** The glazed south elevation of the North Wing provides a transparent entrance lobby with daylight entering from both sides. Overall the reception area has been designed with public use in mind, with its meeting rooms accessible without the need to enter the secure area of the Guildhall Complex. A dedicated reception for members of the public enquiring about planning applications or for contractors working on the City's highways has been installed. A dedicated reception for all other business provides a central facility to direct visitors to their required part of the complex – formerly, each department had its own reception desk which often led to confusion and to unauthorised persons travelling between different floors of the former North Block.
22. **North Wing Offices.** As has been noted, one of the drivers underpinning the Guildhall Improvement Project was the desire to create modern office space for City Corporation staff. Internal brick and block walls, lift shafts, services and flooring were removed. Small ill-lit offices were replaced with open plan working spaces that shared common services. The new layout also permitted the lower ground floor to be used for a modernised restaurant (The Gild) and a gym studio and changing rooms. The Chamberlain's Court Room was moved to more accessible rooms on the ground floor.
23. **North Wing Basement and Boilers.** One crucial element of the project was the replacement of the boilers in the sub-basement. The original boilers dated from the 1950s and were at the end of their useful life. Three new Cochran Clansman industrial boilers capable of providing 9 megawatts of heat were craned into position during works to the outside piazza. The new boilers provide back-up capacity to the Citigen Combined Heat and Power system at Smithfield and a secure independent supply to both Guildhall and Wood Street Police Station. They also have the ability to supply the Barbican Centre and Smithfield Market.

### **Conclusion**

24. The Guildhall Improvement Project has been a longstanding programme of refurbishment and renovation to the Guildhall Complex to ensure its buildings are fit for purpose in the coming decades. The project has now been concluded and the Court of Common Council is asked to discharge the Guildhall Improvement Committee of its duties.

All of which we submit to the judgement of this Honourable Court.

DATED this 5th day of April 2016.

SIGNED on behalf of the Committee.

**Sir Michael Snyder**  
Chairman, Guildhall Improvement Committee