



MEETING THE EVOLVING NEEDS OF THE CITY



INTRODUCING

33 CREECHURCH LANE

Updated January 2019

INTRODUCTION

The UK is the world's largest exporter of financial services, and the City of London is its nerve centre. Core to the City's success are a large number of thriving Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). These businesses are attracted by the prestige, dynamism, and the opportunities it has on offer.

Change is nothing new to the City of London. While embracing its rich history, the City has remained relevant by balancing this with looking to the future.

Today, this future is driven by globalisation and technology. Place matters in doing business. The right location is critical to building and enhancing relationships essential for trade in the knowledge economy (City of London et al, 2018). Alongside this, workers, residents and visitors are attracted by healthy and environmentally sustainable work spaces and the buzz associated with active public realms, restaurants, shops and cafés.

There is a real need to supply high quality office accommodation that specifically meets the needs of SMEs across all sectors as a platform for the City's future growth.



Our ambition

Our ambition at 33 Creechurch Lane is to do just that – create world class office space designed for multi sector SMEs in the heart of London's financial district.

This document sets out our response to the policy landscape which charts and shapes the evolving nature of the City.

RESPONDING TO THE PAST

¹ The *Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987* (as amended) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories known as 'Use Classes'. B1 refers to **B1 Business – Offices** (other than those that fall within A2 Financial and Professional Services), research and development of products and processes, light industry appropriate in a residential area.

Thirty-three Creechurch Lane is located in a densely built area which has evolved over time within a medieval streetscape. The open spaces of Mitre Square and Creechurch Lane can be traced back to the open court and cloister of Holy Trinity Priory dating from the High Medieval period circa 1150. The priory was dissolved in 1532 when it was given back to Henry VIII and the buildings and lands gifted or sold off. While the buildings were gradually demolished or converted, in the 1620s, the former occupants asked to be provided with a new church. St James' Church was subsequently built.

Shortly afterwards, the nature of the area again changed with an influx of a large Jewish population. In 1698 the Bevis Marks Synagogue was founded and remains the oldest Synagogue in Great Britain.

In the mid twentieth century, the surrounding area was largely shaped and redeveloped due to bomb damage during the blitz. While retaining its medieval street layout, the growth of the financial sector, coupled with revisions in planning laws, altered its architecture and transformed the skyline. This was driven by a growing demand for office space. Further changes were made as a result of the 1992 Baltic Exchange and the 1993 Bishopsgate bombings.

Over time, the plot sizes have been adapted to larger and taller, predominantly commercial, buildings to accommodate the growth of services on offer. Characteristic of the area is the preservation of buildings with historical prominence and importance, while promoting the introduction of high quality design and architecture with public realm, active frontages and permeability as reflected in key documents such as the City of London *Local Plan* (2015b).

Creechurch Lane has been part of the City's dynamic evolution.



Thirty-three Creechurch Lane is currently occupied by a 1970s office building. The site sits within the City of London's Eastern Cluster, a collection of tall buildings centred around 22 Bishopsgate.

Built in 1978, the building is comprised of a basement, ground and four upper floors of B1¹ office space. It originally included a public access wine bar which was subsequently converted into office space in 2004.

The building underwent a comprehensive interior refurbishment in 2014. Although it was given an aesthetic overhaul, this was not intended as a long term solution and does not overcome the building's practical inadequacies. The existing ground floor has little interaction with the street and the general layout has an inflexible floorplan.

The materials on the face of the building are outdated, with its clad in a red tone polished stone with vertically rising brown tinted square windows and infill panels. It adds little to the character of the wider area.

This building is no longer fit for purpose.

EMBRACING THE FUTURE



² Note that the next stage of the *Local Plan and Issues, City Plan 2036* is the preparation of a full draft version. It is expected to be published for a 12 week consultation period starting June 2018

THE CHANGING NEEDS OF BUSINESS



One of the City's greatest strengths is its business ecology which is why SMEs continue to place a high value on a City location. This is supported by both the prestige of being located in this area which helps attract the best of the workforce, as well as on a practical front of having easy access to good transport links (City of London et al, 2016, 2018).

Over 98% of businesses in the City are SMEs. Fifty-two percent of the City's occupiers are in units of less than 500 sq m. But the number of units this size is shrinking which makes it increasingly difficult for the City to meet the needs of this vital sector. This is despite the dynamic nature of SMEs with many existing businesses, and around 800 to a 1,000 new start-ups being formed each year (City of London et al, 2016).

The value of the City's financial services sectors and related professional services is in its breadth and depth of expertise. With this, the history and established critical mass of successful businesses, including many SMEs, is a large part of the City's ongoing attraction. It affords both the opportunity to develop and build client relationships and attract the necessary

highly skilled and mobile workforce (City of London et al, 2018). Underlying this is the need for investment in world class infrastructure and the creation of healthy environments for workers, residents and visitors (City and Westminster Property Associations, 2018).

The City of London Corporation (2017) is looking to how the Square Mile can be better positioned to provide a welcoming and cosmopolitan area where big business, SMEs and start-ups can successfully work side by side. This is also reflected in the Mayor of London's *The London Plan (2017g)* which is under consultation – the case being made that large-scale commercial development should consider a range of sizes of business units, including for SMEs. Relevant here is the technology and digital sector which supports the growth and evolution of all sectors of the economy.

While the cost of office space is clearly a critical factor in meeting their needs, so too is the understanding of the importance of collaborative working environments (City of London et al, 2018). Alongside this are changing ways of doing business including a growth in agile working and the increasing trend for these businesses to require serviced offices and co-working spaces (City of London, 2016c²).

Our response

- 19 Storey office building 9,674 m² (104,102sq ft) flexible office space for occupation by a number of Small/Medium Enterprises.
- Double height entrance area to the commercial reception to welcome visitors.
- The typical floorplan has been designed to be open, flexible space that could be broken down into more secluded areas
- External private terrace garden for all office floors providing a breakout space. Terraces designed to make the shape of the building more fluid while also providing solar shading on the south elevation, preventing overheating and reducing the cooling load. The shape of the terrace also helps mitigate the micro-climate impact at the base of the building.
- High standards of accessibility, satisfying the requirements of the Building Regulations and the Equality Act 2010 to provide access for both able and less able-bodied people.



THE EASTERN CLUSTER

A new building able to contribute positively to the city's future.



The site sits within The City of London's Eastern Cluster; a collection of tall buildings which is centred around the site 22 Bishopsgate. Moving out from this central high-point, the buildings reduce in height. It is constrained on all sides by public highways and surrounding buildings.

The Eastern Cluster of buildings is identified in the City of London's *Local Plan* (2015b) under Core Strategic Policy 7. The focus is on ensuring this Cluster can accommodate growth in office space and employment while balancing this with the accommodation of tall buildings, transport, the public realm and security, in addition to spreading the benefits to the surrounding areas in the City.

Underpinning this are a number of core principles including sustainable design, conservation of heritage assets and their settings, and protected views.

This is a real opportunity to design a landmark building which includes office spaces that will be high quality, flexible, unique, and include a high level of technology provision. This will be enhanced by an outward looking façade, the inclusion of living walls, and improvements to the immediate public surrounds. The overall design has been crafted to blend in with the existing skyline. These elements combined will address the needs and expectations of a new building able to contribute positively to the city's future.

THE DIVERSE NATURE OF THE CITY

There is a growing drive to encourage the City to be seen as a place for working, and for living and visiting. By diversifying what's on offer, there is the potential to contribute to the City's economy and rich historical and modern character – this being a priority for the City of London itself (2015b).



around the globe where there's a need to respond to flexible work patterns and provide a vibrant street level environment that allows work to spill out into public space, cafés and restaurants. There is a real desire for the City to be seen as a vibrant place to do business and somewhere that promotes a diverse culture.

To do this well requires active frontages and a diverse retail offer that supports the needs of independent micro businesses and SMEs. Coupled with this retail offer is the need to support a 24/7 economy (City of London et al, 2017).

The night-time economy is a key attraction to worker and visitors in the City. However, the general view is there is little on offer outside Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm. The City of London's approach (2015b; 2016c) aims to strike a balance between vibrant and well-managed night-time uses while minimising the impact on residents.

For London as a whole, there is a strong view that commercial activity provides a range of opportunities for businesses to contribute to the diversity of town centres and communities (Mayor of London 2017g). The priority is a successful, competitive and diverse retail offer that supports sustainable access to services and goods for all Londoners. In addition, the Mayor of London recognises that the night-time economy is a vital part of London's offer as a 21st century global city and aims to make London a global leader on this front (Mayor of London, 2017a, 2017b, 2017e, 2017f).

With this, there is a trend towards establishing high quality public realms on large sites and active uses and frontages at ground floor levels of new developments which can be utilised, as appropriate, for these purposes. For the City of London (2015b), this can be particularly beneficial where it enhances vitality and interest which is an essential element of the character of many areas in the Square Mile.

Indeed, the projected growth in employment and population suggests a likelihood of a continued demand for complementary land uses and activities (City of London, 2016c). This will be supported by the Mayor of London's ambition to be the world's leading 'Smart City' (2017d) in using electronic data in a way that supports the efficient management of London's assets and resources.

Business ecology is only one of a number of factors that will retain existing and attract new SMEs (City of London et al, 2017). Important here is the increasing importance of place for high-skilled workers from



Our response

- Active ground floor uses with a café and a retail unit.
- Full height glazing to connect the building with the existing and proposed public realm.
- Main office entrance located adjacent to the new public square and opposite the main entrance to One Creechurch Place to help intensify the activity in this area and promote the use of the square.
- Solid elements of the façade arranged along Heneage Lane to reinforce the intimate historic lane feel.
- The slender form of the building and high quality glass facade make a positive contribution to the local architecture context.
- Material palette chosen to match the emerging architectural language of the Eastern Cluster.
- Colour scheme chosen to contrast with the predominantly blue, green and grey shades of the city and to give the development a unique identity.

PROMOTING HEALTH AND BIODIVERSITY IN THE CITY

Across London in recent years there has been a dramatic increase in the installation of green roofs and other infrastructure such as green walls. This and an increasing policy focus on the environment is promoting the positive drive towards green streets and buildings, and the recognition of the importance of design to meet multiple health and environmental objectives (Mayor of London, 2017g).

While this is certainly a positive direction of travel, there do remain challenges for the City of London. In terms of open spaces, while there are over 350 of them including gardens, parks, churchyards, plazas and highways, about 80% are smaller in area than 0.2 hectares. The significance and value of these spaces is only increasing as the City's population and visitor numbers increase (City of London, 2015c).

Historically, these spaces have been managed for their amenity value and public enjoyment. Today, there is a clear recognition of the importance of these spaces and the wider urban environment not just for their amenity value and public enjoyment, but also their importance in, and the expectation of, promoting healthy lifestyles, reducing pollution and supporting biodiversity.



Why is this important?

On promoting healthy lifestyles, there is clear evidence that local environments are critical for shaping physical and mental health outcomes by encouraging physical exercise, reducing stress and improving overall well-being. But for workers and residents in the City, the lack of green and community spaces, and space to exercise, are an issue and one that came up repeatedly in the development of the City of London's *Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy* (2016b).

In thinking through the future needs of the City, there is a clear view that spatial planning policy that includes green space can have a real role in promoting healthy lifestyles, reduce stress, prevent illness and promote social inclusion by providing spaces to socialise. Within buildings, an increasing focus on well-being and stress reduction might encourage a rethink of interiors to provide breakout green areas

for contemplation and recharging (City of London et al, 2015).

Directly linked to supporting positive health outcomes is reducing air and noise pollution given the detrimental effects they can have on health. The inclusion of green space and planting can help reduce this through capturing pollution particulates and modifying the sound pathway. In addition, effective water drainage is important to ensure the natural and built environment is adaptable to a range of climate conditions.

Over the last decade, there has been an increasing recognition of the importance of promoting biodiversity. The *Biodiversity Action Plan* (City of London 2016a) provides a strategic focus for decision makers with a clear focus on protecting, promoting and enhancing the environment. It also supports the vision and strategic objectives of the City of London *Local Plan* (2015b).

Our response

- Cycle store (providing 146 spaces in line with Draft London Plan standards) located on the mezzanine floor designed to be visible from the public realm and promote cycling. This will also include bike repair facilities, dedicated shower on every office level and lockers and bike changing facilities on every floor.
- Car free development capitalising on excellent public transport links.
- Individual green walls for each office terrace. The green wall areas are located along segments of the façade on each balcony and cover an area of 318m² (13.4 m² per floor)
- Building form and orientation which responds to climatic conditions, prevailing winds, daylight and sunlight considerations and building efficiency.
- Brown roof designed to deliver multiple benefits including improved drainage, reducing heat-island effect and reduced energy consumption.



Further reading

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