

The new architecture of central Norwich

PREPARED AND PUBLISHED BY THE NORWICH SOCIETY



'Finding out about Norwich' - a series of map guides.

*This Guide suggests areas [see Map] where recent architecture in Norwich can be looked at: **a.** Around the City Hall and Market area and on to Red Lion Street; **b.** Along the river south of the railway station and across to King Street; **c.** From Fye Bridge to Whitefriars Bridge in the North; **d.** The Cathedral Close. In addition, there is a note on the many new architectural works at the University of East Anglia.*

The City Hall area (a)

Central Norwich has two pre-eminent architectural images - a Cathedral and a major Castle on a mound right in the middle. Both would have been amazing, even overwhelming, new structures to the viewer in the mid 12th century. The map shows the location of those two great buildings within the loop of the River Wensum.

By the 1940s another building had also become visually symbolic and significant: the 1938 City Hall by the architects C.H.James & S.R.Pierce. It stands on the plateau above the ancient marketplace, and, on this plateau, it has been recently accompanied by the Forum building, containing the City Library, **(1)** by Michael Hopkins and Partners.



From the area in front of the Forum can be seen the view through to the Chapelfield shopping centre of 2005 **(2)**. This view is framed by a new office and shops building to the left **(3)** also by Hopkins with some detail work by



Carter Design Group. Although limited in size, it covers the unresolved back of a 1970s shopping block, and plays a crucial and successful role in helping to shape and complete the space (with the church of St Peter Mancroft just to the left).



City Hall overlooks the permanent market, which has had (2005-6) a refurbishment and detail redesign by Michael Innes with LSI Architects. **(4)** The new steel-framed (and highly serviced) stalls have a clever openable system of covers to the pedestrian walkways. From the steps of City Hall, with Alfred Hardiman's splendid lions (of 1938)



you see, to the left, the 15th-century Guildhall. Just behind it is the first in a number of recent schemes that demonstrate the conservation of older buildings and the fitting of new into the historic fabric of the City.

Fitting in new buildings and new uses

Here, in Guildhall Hill, at Labour-In-Vain Yard **(5)**, the windows over the opening are part of a complex insertion of residential units above shop



level, while the old yard within has been emptied of later accretions, a side building refurbished, and the stable block at the back converted to shop and restaurant - so creating an excellent additional public space in the crowded city centre. (By Ross Powlesland.)

As you walk down the hill to Jarrolds department store, you will find, at the back corner **(6)**, their refurbishment of an eighteenth-century building (that had been badly mauled at shop and fascia level) and a new inserted element (both by C & M architects) - the latter mitigating the scale of a high unyielding brick facade down the alley to the right.



Coming back along the lower side of the Market, along Gentleman's Walk, go through the Royal Arcade **(7)**. This was refurbished and refloored in 1991, and demonstrates how careful conservation and reuse has revived one of the City's great architectural gems (by George Skipper 1899). Turning right along The Back of the Inns and then into Red Lion St, enter Orford Yard **(8)** to see the glass-fronted Looses' shop - another modern reworking of a former stables building - sensitively inserted by architects Purcell Miller Tritton in 2001.

From Red Lion St other interesting designs can be walked to: the Abode and Ginger shops at the top of the pedestrianised Timber Hill **(9)**, and the Bus Station **(10)** completely rebuilt on the Surrey Street site (2005 by NPS Consultants for Norfolk County Council) with an accompanying budget hotel (by LSI Architects) to Queen's Road.



From Castle Meadow you can walk around the mound of the Norman Castle keep and its later additions. These have had a major internal refurbishment by Purcell Miller Tritton, and there is a new lift (2001) to



the top of the mound **(11)** from a concept design by Allies & Morrison. From the top you look back, across the line of the defensive ditch, to an area of public gardens. These are in fact new, and cover part of the 1993, mostly underground, Castle Mall shopping complex **(12)** ingeniously configured by Michael Innes of Lambert Scott Innes [and occupying much of what was previously a very active Cattle Market]. See the separate entrances around the edge of the site eg in Back of the Inns, Castle Meadow, Timber Hill, and the car park entrance near the Shire Hall incorporating a reused arch from an earlier Whitefriars Bridge.

Changes along the riverside (b,c)

The disappearance of industry and commerce since the 1950s has been particularly noticeable along the sweep of the River Wensum, with the abandonment of mills, timber yards, warehouses and the end of the river barge traffic. One of the largest areas of subsequent redevelopment in the 1990s has been Riverside, a former industrial area south of the railway station **(13)**, which was based on an original master plan by the architect



Terry Farrell (and carried into effect by Gary Young who had worked with him). There is a frontage of housing along the river, with a parallel route providing more housing and entertainment buildings behind, and shopping off to the right.

Towards the southern end of the development the Novi Sad river bridge provides an attractive structural form **(14)** and a further pedestrian link back to the city centre. Beyond are the Swimming Pool (2003 by The Charter Partnership) and a residential complex across Carrow Road.

On the opposite edge of the river, the former Paper Mill and Read's Mill sites are being redesigned for residential use incorporating some of the older commercial structures. Back towards the centre of the City, the ground slopes up to the historic route of King Street, with merchants' houses and sites backing down to the river. Coming up Mountergate towards King Street, past the remaining wall of the former Boulton & Paul's works (and picking up its industrial flavour and context), there is a new development, Nether Conesford, 2005 by Andy Gibbs of Art Architecture **(15)**. This combines a cafe, with art gallery over and studio offices above. A gateway access





on Mountergate leads to the upper level courtyard and through to converted buildings facing on to King Street. Along the street, by the same designer, is the King's Centre (16); this provides a varied new façade and an important repair to the urban fabric on this historic route into central Norwich.

Further up the river (almost at the top of the Wensum loop, and N of the Cathedral) the residential theme for re-use of the river banks is providing some interesting architectural responses. The tone was set in 1975 by one of the best of recent housing developments: Friars



Quay (17), comprising 40 terrace house units (by David Luckhurst and Ray Thompson of Feilden & Mawson) on a former timber yard site off Colegate. At the West end of this site, back across St George's Bridge, new housing at 24-34 St George's Street (18) (by Anglia Design Associates) now completes the continuity of the street scene.

From the historic Fye Bridge, looking in the other direction from Friars Quay, you can see the Quayside infill development (19) (by Chaplin &



Farrant, 2005) with a strong new scale established in the houses - and maintained as they step up towards Palace Street. Further along the river on the Fishergate side, a river edge terrace (20) (by Tiger Hill architects, 2004) has the plan arranged to have living rooms at high level - so capturing the splendid

views back to the Cathedral. At Whitefriars Bridge, a new office building (21) (by LSI Architects) is inserted next to the 1839 Yarn Mill - described by the architectural writer Ian Nairn as 'the noblest of all English Industrial Revolution Mills'. Across the river from the Yarn Mill is the extensive



complex comprising Magistrates' Courts (1985 by Frank Tucker, County Architect) and the separate Crown and County Courts (1988 by PSA).

The Cathedral Close (d)

From Whitefriars Bridge there is a fine view back to the Cathedral spire. In the Cathedral Close is the most highly publicised of modern buildings

to be placed in a historic setting in Norwich: the Refectory (22) added in



2004 to the south side of the cloister on the site of its medieval precursor (by Michael Hopkins and Partners). The junction, with a build up of new stonework and the historic remains at the 'Dark Entry' corner, exposes the splendid timber structure that allows the whole roof to float free of the historic flint-faced inner wall and leave the archaeology undisturbed.

University of East Anglia

The UEA site at Earlham, although outside central Norwich, is within the City's administrative area. It contains many excellent and important modern works of architecture by leading designers. Outstanding are Denys Lasdun's ziggurat residential buildings of the 1960s for the then new University. Now listed Grade 2* (emphasising their long-term significance), they formed part of Lasdun's masterplan which provided the catalyst for some of Norwich's best new architecture as the University has expanded.

There are now designs at the UEA by Norman Foster (The Sainsbury Centre and its expansion); John Miller (The Queen's and Elizabeth Fry buildings); Rick Mather (Constable Terrace, Nelson Court); and Bernard Feilden - whose contribution was to complete Lasdun's teaching wall, create a significant central 'town square', and establish the all important 'Broad' as a lake in the landscape.

More recent additions include: the curved forms of the student residential development (2004-5 by LSI Architects) that completes the horizontal line of the University in the landscape; the energy-efficient and energy self-sufficient Zuckerman Institute for Connective Environmental Research (2004 by RMJM Architects); and the expansion of Lasdun's library (2005 by Shephard Epstein Hunter).

Preparation of this pamphlet has been coordinated by the Planning Appraisal Committee of the Norwich Society.
Photographs and text by Jeremy Taylor.
Publication grant from the Paul Bassham Trust
Printing by Saxon Print Group.
Norwich, 2006.

THE NORWICH SOCIETY

The City is a wonderful place to live and work, with enormous vitality and great prospects. The Society has worked for over 80 years to heighten public awareness of Norwich's remarkable architectural heritage, and to ensure design quality in new developments. The Society's Aims are:

To encourage high standards of architecture and town planning in Norwich.

To stimulate public interest in and care for the beauty, history and character of the City and its surroundings.

To encourage the preservation, development and improvement of features of general public amenity or historic interest.

To pursue these ends by means of meetings, exhibitions, lectures, publications, other forms of instruction and publicity, by co-operation with the local authorities and other bodies, and the promotion of schemes of a charitable nature.

For more information and membership details contact:

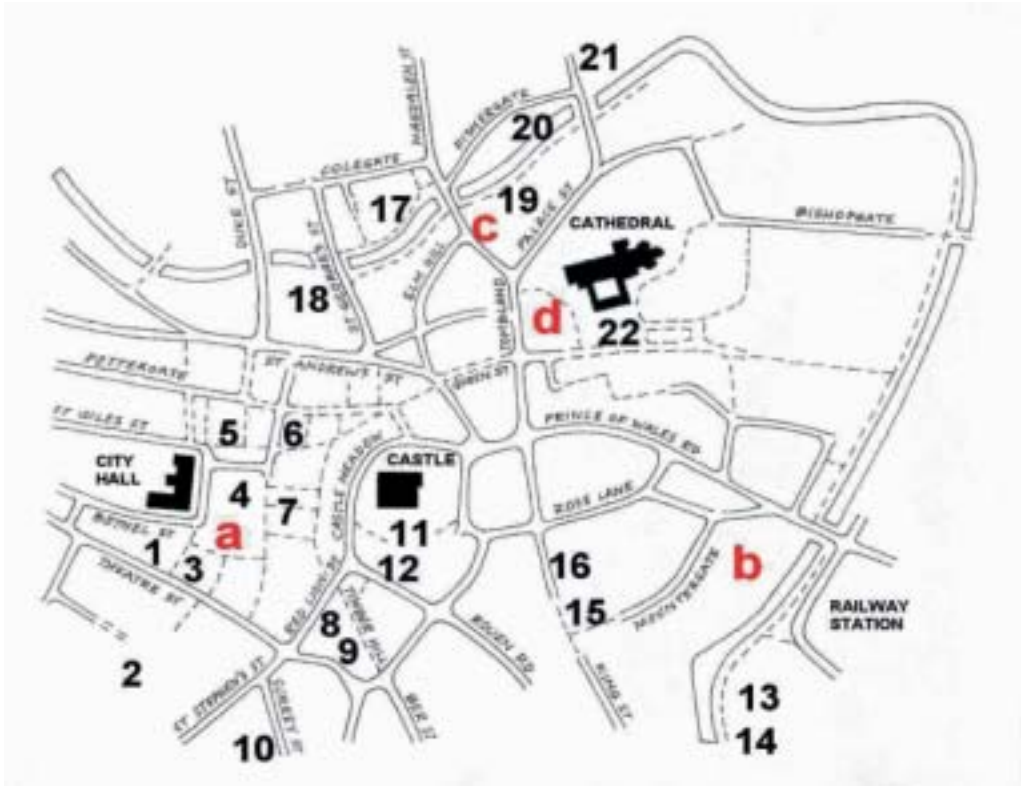
**The Administrator, The Norwich Society, The Assembly House,
Theatre Street, Norwich NR2 1RQ.**

Telephone 01603 765606.

E-mail: enquiries@thenorwichsociety.co.uk

Website [http:// www.thenorwichsociety.co.uk](http://www.thenorwichsociety.co.uk)

Registered Charity No. 311118



Key:

- 1 Forum
- 2 Chapelfield
- 3 Millennium Offices
- 4 Market
- 5 Labour-in-Vain Yard *
- 6 Jarrold shop
- 7 Royal Arcade *
- 8 Orford Yard *
- 9 Timber Hill (Ginger shop*)
- 10 Bus Station
- 11 Lift to Castle
- 12 Castle Mall shopping complex
- 13 Riverside
- 14 Novi Sad bridge
- 15 Nether Conesford *
- 16 King's Centre *
- 17 Friars Quay
- 18 24-34 St George's Street
- 19 Quayside
- 20 Fishergate: St Edmunds Wharf
- 21 Whitefriars Bridge
- 22 Cathedral Refectory *

Walks noted in text: a City Hall area
b Riverside, King Street area c River from Fye Bridge d Cathedral Close

Front Cover illustration:
 Nether Conesford, 2005 (15).
 By Andy Gibbs of Art Architecture.

[* Commended in Norwich Society Awards scheme]