

RECONSTRUCTION
IN THE
CITY OF LONDON

Interim Report to the Improvements and Town Planning Committee
by the Joint Consultants.

March, 1946.

C. H. HOLDEN, Litt. D., F.R.I.B.A., M.T.P.I.
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REPORT—IMPROVEMENTS AND TOWN PLANNING COMMITTEE.

To be presented 17th July, 1946.

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

We, whose names are hereunto subscribed, of your Committee for Improvements and Town Planning have the honour to submit to your Honourable Court the Interim Report of the Consultants appointed under the authority given on the 25th July, 1945, to advise the Corporation in regard to the provisional plan for the re-development of the City, together with the letter of the Minister of Town and Country Planning and all criticisms received, and to report generally thereon.

Immediately upon receipt of the Interim Report, and pending our consideration of the tentative and preliminary proposals therein contained, we deemed it desirable that every Member of the Court should be afforded the earliest opportunity of perusing the Document, and we accordingly instructed the Town Clerk to arrange for the prompt circulation thereof with a request that, pending our Report thereon, the contents should be regarded as in the highest degree confidential, and we trust that our action in this regard meets with the approval of your Honourable Court.

We have duly proceeded in the consideration of the various proposals contained in the Interim Report, and on our instructions Mr. Engineer submitted brief observations thereon, which were discussed with the Consultants. We have had the advantage of the personal attendance of Dr. Holden and Professor Holford at several of our meetings.

It should be emphasised that the Report as presented is preliminary in nature, and concerns itself mainly with questions of broad principle; the tentative proposals set out are capable of amendment, and may well be revised in the light of more detailed enquiries which are now proceeding, and in view of this fact we do not feel that any useful purpose would be served by submitting lengthy criticisms thereof.

We are unanimously of opinion that the Interim Report is one which we can recommend to your Honourable Court for acceptance in principle and as a basis on which may be constructed the Final Report which—if so directed by your Honourable Court—it would be the duty of the Consultants to present in a form suitable for submission to the Minister of Town and Country Planning; we therefore have no hesitation in recommending that Dr. Holden and Professor Holford should be instructed accordingly.

There are, however, certain aspects of the Interim Report on which discussions are proceeding—in certain cases in collaboration with other Committees whose activities are affected thereby—upon which at this stage we do not feel able to submit to your Honourable Court any final recommendations, and we propose to report on certain of these matters at a later date. We are strongly of opinion, however, that the instructions to the Consultants to proceed need not, and should not, be delayed pending a decision on these points.

The major proposals in question may be briefly summarised as follows :—

Billingsgate Market Area (*Vide* Paragraphs 22, 50, 52 and 53).

The future policy in regard to the location where the functions of the Market are to be carried on is receiving the careful consideration of the Special Committee, in consultation with the Billingsgate and Leadenhall Markets Committee and ourselves, and the final decision of your Honourable Court thereon will clearly affect the conclusions of your Consultants on the planning of the Area.

Central Markets and Charterhouse Street (*Vide* Paragraphs 21, 50 and 51).

We are unable at this juncture to concur in the proposal for the construction of a Viaduct in the position indicated in the Report, adjoining the Market Buildings and covering Charterhouse Street itself, and have asked your Central Markets Committee to favour us with their considered judgment on the proposal, after ascertaining, if deemed desirable, the views of the Market tenants thereon.

Mincing Lane Area (*Vide* Paragraph 28).

The road proposals contained in the Report would have the effect of bisecting this important Market area and the Consultants will, at our request, give careful consideration to the question of resiting the projected inner circuit road to obviate the disturbance of the trade which has for so many years been carried on in this area.

Upper Thames Street Viaduct (*Vide* Paragraphs 22, 23 and 24).

We do not find ourselves in sympathy with the proposal for an upper level route over the widened Upper Thames Street, and are of opinion that it would be preferable to plan for this street a width between buildings sufficient to accommodate at ground level all future traffic requirements. Such width will, doubtless, be a matter for ascertainment,

in co-operation with the Ministry of Transport. It may be that 120 feet will be adequate. We have asked the Consultants to furnish us with a model of the treatment they propose.

St. Paul's Cathedral Environs (*Vide* Paragraphs 57/60).

Our desire is to provide the Cathedral with a setting which shall be worthy in every respect. We do not feel that finality in proposals for treatment has yet been achieved, and consider that discussions in this matter should continue.

The River Front (*Vide* Paragraphs 54/56).

We are not convinced of the feasibility of the construction of the proposed high level riverside walk along the greater part of the front from Blackfriars to London Bridge—whilst recognising the amenity which would thus be provided for pedestrians and the architectural significance of terraced treatment rising from the river level. We have, therefore, asked the Consultants to furnish us with detailed diagrams and a model of the treatment they would propose for the riverside wharves and warehouses in order to achieve the project they have in mind.

Generally.

We have requested the Consultants to consider and advise us as to the practicability and desirability of constructing "fly-overs" and/or "under-passes" at certain important traffic junctions with a view to the avoidance of vehicular congestion; also to envisage the widening of King Street at an early date to improve the approach to Guildhall from the South.

We beg to submit as an appendix to our Report, a Letter which at our request, the Consultants have forwarded to us, setting out those matters which, in their view, will require further consideration consequent upon the discussions which have taken place.

We have furnished the Special Committee with a copy of our Report in order that that Committee may, coincident with its presentation to your Honourable Court, submit such observations thereon as they may deem advisable.

All which we submit to the judgment of your Honourable Court.

Dated this 14th day of June, 1946.

(Signed)

H. W. KEITH CALDER.	F. TIDBURY BEER.
C. ERNEST LINK.	CLAUD W. DENNIS.
ALFRED H. TEUTEN.	GEORGE H. WILKINSON.
E. S. UNDERWOOD.	G. AYLWEN.
W. H. GUNTON.	CHAS. CROSSINGHAM.
ERNEST BATES.	W. J. TAYLOR.
W. H. WHITBREAD.	ALAN F. G. STANHAM.
H. E. SIER.	R. MELDRUM.
A. R. COOK.	BANISTER FLETCHER.
H. S. SYRETT.	JOHN BATTY.

APPENDIX

To—

THE WORSHIPFUL THE IMPROVEMENTS AND TOWN PLANNING COMMITTEE.

RECONSTRUCTION IN THE CITY OF LONDON.

Covering Letter by the Joint Consultants. June, 1946.

GENTLEMEN,

In March of this year we submitted to you an Interim Report setting out the framework of a scheme of reconstruction, and we summarised in paragraph 75 of that Report, the main proposals on which it was based.

Discussions followed, in the course of which you asked Mr. Engineer for his observations. As a result of these discussions and of further consideration on our part, we made certain amendments to the proposals and undertook to investigate others—in consultation, where necessary, with Committees of the Corporation or with outside bodies—before reporting on them in detail. In addition, we set out some further observations in a Note which we described as an appendix to the Interim Report. Those proposals in the Report and its appendix which affected the layout of the main streets in the City were illustrated by means of a transparent plan (referred to as Diagram IV). This transparency can be read when superimposed on any of the coloured plans that appeared in your published Report of 1944, and most conveniently on Drawing Number 3A.

You have now asked us to preface our Interim Report by a brief Covering Letter, before sending on the documents to the Court of Common Council ; and you have asked us also to refer to the main amendments and to the questions for further consideration which have already been agreed with you.

In the category of amendments or additions we should wish to include :—

(i) An alternative route for the section of the inner distributive circuit between Eastcheap and Crutched Friars, which was originally shown on our Diagram II as cutting across Mark and Mincing Lanes ;

(ii) A further widening of Thames Street beyond the dimensions referred to in paragraphs 22–24, with the object of eliminating the necessity for an upper-level road from Tower Hill, along Thames Street and turning into Queen Victoria Street, as originally suggested. This amendment, however, would not make the construction of a viaduct impracticable if, after all, it is required at a later date ;

(iii) A widening of King Street, if and when this is needed in conjunction with the reconstruction of Guildhall and its approaches.

For further consideration we wish to list the following items, as being the more important ones on which discussions are now proceeding :—

(iv) The location of Billingsgate Fish Market, and its future development, having regard in particular to the proposed widening of Lower Thames Street ;

(v) The proposed line of the Special Route from Holborn Circus to Aldersgate, which aims at separating general traffic from market traffic in this area.

(Both these questions have been referred to the respective Market Committees of the Corporation, with whom we are now in consultation.)

(vi) The possibility of fly-over crossings, or other methods of grade separation at busy traffic junctions. The feasibility of such a feature at Southwark Bridgehead is indicated on Diagram IV. We have already studied other crossings, such as Ludgate Circus, with the same end in view ; and we shall consider improved junctions at, for example, Aldersgate, Moorgate, Bishopsgate and Aldgate. We shall be to a great extent dependent, however, on the co-operation of the police and traffic authorities, including the Ministry of Transport.

(vii) The extent of, and the detailed provisions for public pedestrian access to the river front between Blackfriars and London Bridges. Drawings will be prepared later to illustrate the possibilities of a scheme for a public right of way as part of the re-development of the warehouses ;

(viii) The provision of a combined bus station and forecourt to Liverpool Street and Broad Street Stations. More detailed proposals for this await a recommendation from the Railway (London Plan) Committee on the policy that should govern the rebuilding of Liverpool Street Station.

We understand that approval is to be sought for the broad framework of proposals now before you, as a preliminary to the preparation of a plan under the Town and Country Planning Acts, and as a matter of principle and policy at this stage, rather than of detail. We should like to add that a great deal of work and much consultation will be necessary before a plan can be adopted as a basis for actual building operations, and that meanwhile the effect of other proposals—for example those of the London County Council—may entail some modifications. Moreover, the plan will need to be illustrated and presented to the public in such a way that its visual effects, as well as its underlying structure, may be readily understood.

At this stage our Interim Report, as it now stands, will indicate to those who are directly concerned in the reconstruction of the City the salient features of a scheme which we believe to be feasible. Your Committee will also be aware that, pending an expression of opinion by the Court on the proposals as a whole, we are closely considering the procedure by which they could be carried into effect.

We have the honour to remain, Gentlemen,

Yours very truly,

(Signed) CHARLES HOLDEN.

C. H. HOLDEN, Litt.D., F.R.I.B.A., M.T.P.I.

(Signed) WILLIAM HOLFORD.

W. G. HOLFORD, M.A., A.R.I.B.A., M.T.P.I.

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