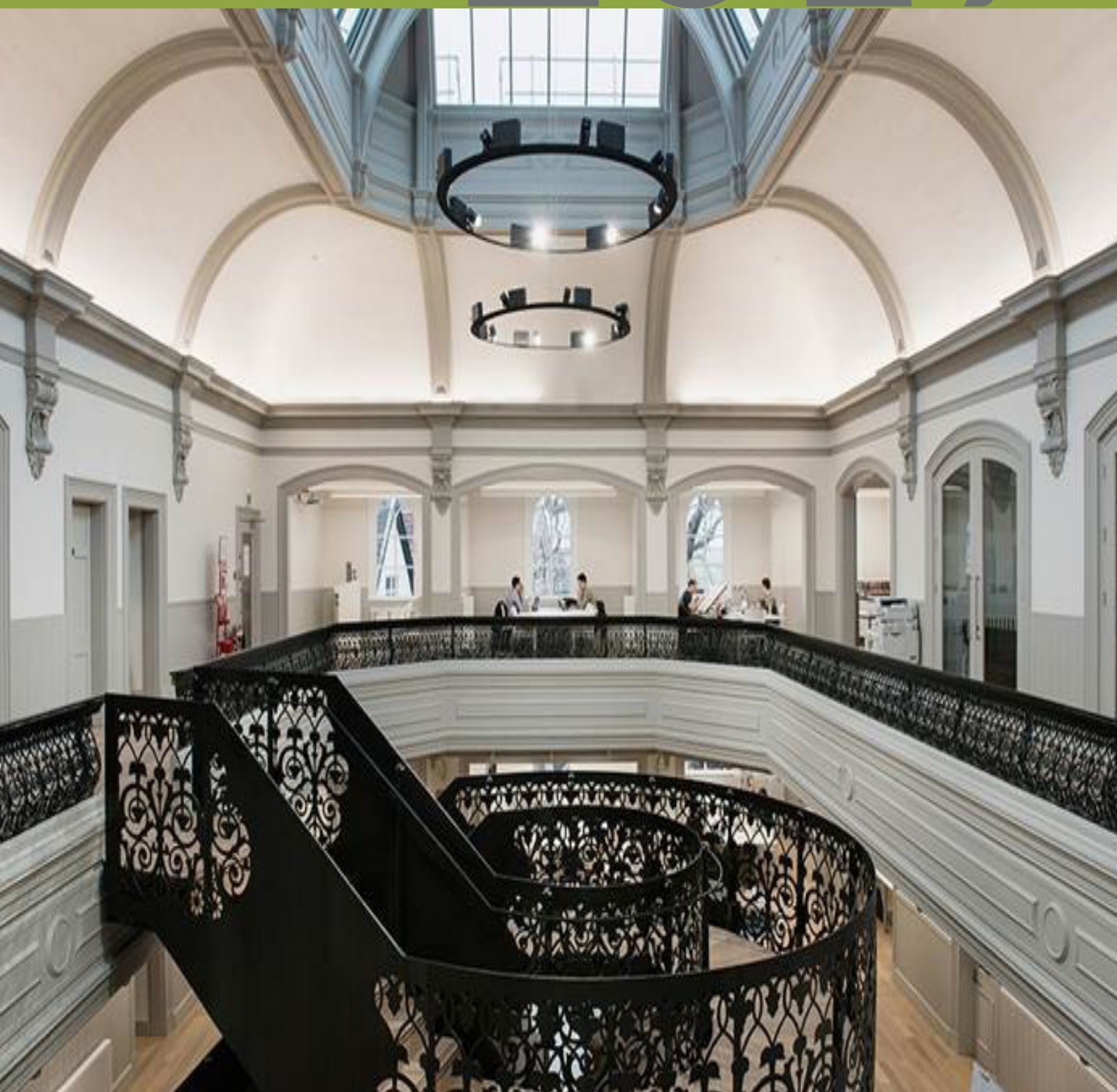


THE NORWICH SOCIETY

Annual Report

2017



Annual Report of the Trustees for 2017

INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR

The Norwich Society has had a busy year, as usual. 2017 saw a new Co-ordinator appointed who has enabled us to introduce a number of new elements to our services. The Design Awards and the London Street commemoration provided high points during the year. Thanks are due to the members of the Executive, the Chairs of the various committees and their members, and to the volunteers who have supported our events programme. Without all that expertise and time commitment the Society could not function. We are also indebted to many sponsors and financial supporters whose support enables us to undertake much more work and to a higher standard than would otherwise be possible.

THE SOCIETY

The Norwich Society helps preserve what is important of Norwich's built heritage and encourages good new design which the Society considers will be the heritage of the future. We encourage people to explore and enjoy Norwich, and shine a spotlight on little-known aspects of Norwich history for enjoyment and education.

The Society is an unincorporated organisation, founded in 1923, and a registered charity (registration number 311118). It is primarily a voluntary organisation with approximately 800 individual and 40 corporate members, but it also employs a contractor to provide administrative and support services. It rents an office in the Assembly House in Norwich.

Furthering the Society's charitable objects

The Society's charitable objects are:

- To encourage high standards of architecture and town planning in Norwich.
- To encourage the preservation, development and improvement of features of general public amenity or historic interest.
- To stimulate public interest in and care for the beauty, history and character of the City and its surroundings.
- To pursue these ends by means of meetings, exhibitions, lectures, publications, and other forms of instruction and publicity, by co-operation with the Local Authorities and other bodies, and promotion of schemes of a charitable nature.

Activities under the last of these are described under each of the earlier three, and more generally elsewhere in the report.

Furthering the Society's Charitable Objects

ENCOURAGING HIGH STANDARDS OF ARCHITECTURE AND TOWN PLANNING

The Society's biennial Design Awards were held once again in 2017.

Winners were:

Sir Bernard Feilden Conservation Architecture Award: Norwich University of the Arts Boardman House

Conservation: St Mary's House (Assembly House)

Civic: Rose-Lane Multi-Storey Car Park

Commercial: Asda South Supermarket, Hall Road

Community: The Enterprise Centre, University of East Anglia

Residential – Grouped: Norwich University of the Arts - Winnalls Yard

Residential – Single: 16 Willow Lane

The Society continued to monitor proposals for new development. Our Planning Appraisal Committee (PAC) met regularly to consider small scale developments. The PAC comments on 65 schemes altogether. Supported 10 schemes, two of which were subsequently refused, and objected to 55 schemes, 18 of which were refused and 5 withdrawn. However, this means just over 30 of the schemes objected to were approved despite objections. Some related to specific issues such as parking or signage, but otherwise they generally fell into 5 categories:

- Homes of multiple occupation
- Materials, eg replacement of timber windows with uPVC, and replacing sash windows with sash-appearance or

casements

- Front extensions, which can destroy the consistency of a street scene
- New-build, especially the height and scale of the proposals
- Design quality, a nebulous but consistent concern of the Committee

The PAC will be talking to the Planning Officers, and City Council Planning Committee members to build a better understanding of our concerns and how these can be taken into better consideration.

The PAC also works jointly with the Strategic Policy and Transport and Conservation and Development Committees on major schemes. Of particular concern in 2017 were the latest proposals for redevelopment of Anglia Square. These involved a 25-storey tower and several other blocks in excess of ten storeys in height, and the Society objected to them as being excessive in scale.

The Strategic Policy and Transport Committee's project to research the reasons why people do, or do not, want to come and work in Norwich resulted in a well-publicised report: Attracting talented people to come to work in Norwich: the challenge, causes and solutions, and identified transport links as the most significant concern. The report resulted in a group of local business and

other organisations taking up the recommendations and working to improve the attractiveness of Norwich as a place to live and work.

The Committee considered various transport issues during the year, including responding to a City Council consultation on opening all the city centre "foot streets" to cyclists, issued just a few weeks after the Society had marked the 50th anniversary of the pedestrianisation of London Street with lectures and a publication. The Society's argument that there should be restrictions on cycling in narrow streets and during the day were not accepted and 2018 will see the replacement of all the existing "foot streets" with 24-hour "pedestrian and cycle zones".

The Committee also led the development of the Society's response to the long-awaited publication of a draft strategy for the River Wensum in the city, which we warmly welcomed.



*Norwich Lanes:
Soon to be opened to cyclists*

ENCOURAGING THE PRESERVATION, DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF FEATURES OF GENERAL PUBLIC AMENITY OR HISTORIC INTEREST

A major project for the Society in 2017 was the acquisition, restoration and display of a Panorama of Norwich by John Moray-Smith. Following painstaking restoration work by Tom Humphrey of the Fairhurst Gallery, the Panorama was put on display in the Forum for a month with accompanying interpretation. It then found a home for six months in St Matthew's Church, Thorpe Hamlet, close to St James' Hill, from which the view is depicted, and the Society is grateful to Revd Patrick Jordan and Bridgid Everitt of St Matthew's for their assistance with housing it.

Thanks to the assistance of Jo Foster-Murdoch and colleagues in the Norfolk Library and Information Service, a temporary home was offered for the Panorama in the Heritage Centre in the Forum, and we were delighted to have an official unveiling just after the year-end. The Society published a guide to Moray-Smith's work, written by Paul Burall, who also prepared a talk for Heritage Open Days.

The Society's Walls Project came to fruition in 2017, with the publication of a leaflet, together with five walks downloadable from the Society's website. Designed for use on a mobile phone, each of which take the user out from the city centre to a section of wall along a route following various places of interest. The publication of the leaflet and trails was the Society's contribution to the Flintspiration weekend organised

by the Norwich Historic Churches Trust.

The Society was delighted that at the end of 2017 removal started of the scaffolding around Howard House, the condition of which had long been a cause of concern, following its restoration as part of the St Mary's Wharf development.

The Society remains concerned about the condition of other historic buildings in Norwich, and has continued to attend meetings of the Heritage at Risk group and to nominate directors to the Norwich Preservation Trust. The Society was also pleased to be consulted on plans for the redevelopment of the Norwich Castle Keep.

The Society continued to appoint

one of the Mousehold Heath Conservators. During the year work started on a new 10-year management plan for the Heath, with public consultation due to take place during 2018.



Mousehold Heath



The Moray-Smith Panorama - Available to view in the Norfolk Heritage Centre, Millenium Library, The Forum

STIMULATING PUBLIC INTEREST IN AND CARE FOR THE BEAUTY, HISTORY AND CHARACTER OF THE CITY AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

The Society's Civic Environment Committee completed its project looking at some of the small green spaces in the city centre. A report was published, finding that their condition was very mixed. A follow-up survey was undertaken, and the City Council asked to take particular action on ten sites.

The Committee has also monitored the implementation of the policy adopted by the City Council in September 2017 on A-boards. So far as the Committee can ascertain the only action the Council has so far managed to take is to notify businesses of the policy: there is no evidence of any enforcement action having been taken. The Committee has also questioned whether the Council has interpreted the law correctly in reaching the conclusion – contrary to the government's interpretation of the law - that there is no requirement for A-boards on the highway to be given specific approval both as advertisements and as structures on the highway.

The Committee decided during the year to undertake a study of public clocks and sundials. Having ascertained that there was no existing list, the Committee undertook a survey, with an initial expectation that there might be around 20 clocks. At the end of the year more than 50 had been identified, and plans were being prepared for a publication and other dissemination of the information. Removal of the scaffolding on Howard House,

previously mentioned, also showed that the sundial there had been beautifully restored.

The Society's events for the public included a new programme of talks for historians. Intended to be less formal than the Society's public lectures. The talks were well supported, and the Society is grateful to Michael Blackwell and Ann Farrant for agreeing to take on the organisation of the programme in 2018.

Three public lectures were held in 2017. David Bussey's talk on the Royal Arcade was so popular that a repeat had to be organised. A new departure was a talk by our former Administrator, John Litster, on the history of Norwich City's football grounds which attracted 85 attendees, several of which were attracted by our new practice of advertising via Facebook. The 50th anniversary of the pedestrianisation of London Street was commemorated with a symposium organised in partnership with Norwich University of the Arts and which was attended by 130 people.

The Society was pleased to support the Heritage Open Days programme by a walk in the Cathedral Quarter led by Jonathan Hooton, and talks in the Forum on the French Quarter, the Walls and Moray-Smith attended by over 300 people.

The programme of events for members continued, with a greater



Clock outside Abbotts on Exchange Street

emphasis on use of volunteers to undertake stewarding. The Society is grateful to all those who undertook this role. There were 18 walks or site visits to look at features of the history and character of Norwich, attended by 357 members and member guests. There were 6 visits to historic buildings outside the city, attended by 177 members and guests. Online booking for these and other events was introduced by our new Coordinator.

There were three breakfast meetings for our corporate members during 2017-18, and the Society is grateful to Pat Middleton for organising them. They were held at the Sainsbury Centre at the University of East Anglia, the Maddermarket Theatre and the Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell.

NETWORKING

It is important for the Norwich Society to work with other organisations with complementary interests in order to further our joint aims and raise awareness of the Norwich Society's activities. The Chair represented the Society at the monthly Dean's Breakfast at Norwich Cathedral. These are attended by a wide range of public service directors and business leaders. The Chair also attended the quarterly meetings of the newly formed Norwich Heritage Alliance. This seeks to fill the gap left by the demise of Norwich HEART by bringing together representatives of all the main heritage organisations in Norwich to encourage complementarity and joint working. The Society has also been invited to participate in discussions by the Churches Preservation Trust on how they can build on the success of Flintspiration to raise awareness of Norwich medieval church heritage and encourage improved standards of conservation.

The Society is a member of Civic Voice, which represents all civic societies. Mary Ash, a member of the Society's Executive Committee, was appointed to the Board of Civic Voice in 2017.

MEMBERSHIP

At the end of the year the Society had 809 individual members (794 in 2016), and 41 Corporate and Group members (45 in 2016). Members received during the year an Annual Review for 2016 and two printed newsletters. Those who provided the Society with an e-mail address also received monthly electronic newsletters.

A membership survey was carried out in July 2017 to determine what members valued about the Norwich Society and the extent to which they got involved in the events programme. Approximately 20% of the membership responded, which is considered a good response rate, with some very useful feedback which is outlined in the Five Year Forward Plan available on the Society's website.

The Norwich Society now communicates with its members and the public in a wide range of ways from paper newsletters to Facebook. In order to bring consistency and professional design quality to our communications and publications we commissioned a design refresh from Norwich University of the Arts. This proved to be a very constructive project which has ensured that the Society can communicate its ideas clearly and in a cost-effective way by ensuring that we can produce material more effectively in-house where feasible and to a consistently high standard.

EXTERNAL SUPPORT

The Society is grateful to the following for their support by way of grants, sponsorship or support in kind:

Walls leaflet - Purcell; Churches Preservation Trust; Heritage Lottery Fund

Design Awards - Hansells; Hussey Knights

London Street anniversary lecture and publication - Norwich University of the Arts, Barratt & Cooke; Cozens-Hardy; Winsor Bishop; Bowhill & Elliott

Moray-Smith Panorama restoration, display and publication; The John Jarrold Trust; Paul Bassham Charitable Trust; Norwich Heritage Fund; Fairhurst Gallery and Workshop; St Mary's Works; Norwich Puppet Theatre; St Matthews Church; The Forum; Norfolk Heritage Library

Attracting talented people to come and work in Norwich research project - Architekton; Larking-Gowen; Loveday & Partners; Naked Element; Tax Assist Group

GOVERNANCE

The Society is governed by a constitution, last revised in April 2017 when the Society created a new officer role of Secretary and a new Finance and Administration Committee to support the governance role of the Executive Committee (EC) members as trustees of the charity. The constitution provides for the management of the Society to be in the hands of an Executive Committee, who are also the Trustees. The Executive Committee consists of four Officers (Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary), and up to nine other members.

The changes made during the year were linked to a change in the role for our contracted support following the resignation of the Society's Administrator, John Litster. The role was changed to concentrate more on administration, and the Society was pleased to recruit to the new role of Co-ordinator Rachael Cochrane, who started work in May, and who rapidly got to grips with the administration of the busy summer events programme.

As well as the new Finance and Administration Committee the Society also created a Publicity and Events Committee.

During the year the Society developed a Forward Plan for the next five years. After consultation with members and external stakeholders this was adopted in December, together with an action plan for 2018. The Society also updated its Risk Register and investigated a possible change in status from unincorporated association to Charitable Incorporated Organisation, with further consideration to be given in 2018.

The Society relies heavily on the work of its volunteers, and is grateful to all those who served on committees or helped in other ways during the course of the year.

Executive Committee members during the year were:

Kate Anetts (Treasurer)	Barry Howell (from September)
Mary Ash	Alan Metters (Vice-Chair to April)
Jon Boon	David Taylor
Paul Burall (member to April, Vice-Chair from April)	John Trevelyan (Secretary from April)
Deborah Bourassa	Vanessa Trevelyan (member to April, Chair from April)
Penny Clarke (to April)	Paul Watson (from April)
Jonathan Hooton (Chair to April)	Helga Williams (to April)

FINANCE

The Society's income in 2017 was a total of £41,636 with the main sources being membership and donations/legacies. Expenditure was a total of £39,458 with the main sources being staff costs and office rent. This led to a surplus of £2,177, and a balance at the end of the year of £105,163.

OFFICE FACILITIES

Work has also been undertaken to bring the Society's activities within the confines of our leased premises. A major rationalisation of paperwork was initiated combined with digitisation of records, publications and photographs so that information is more readily available for reference and research.



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