

HISTORICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

There is a long history of human occupation on the site of Lincoln's Inn Fields running from pre-history, Roman and Saxon times, into the medieval period and through to the present day.

Lincoln's Inn Fields (one of the four "Inns of Court" for legal education) is first mentioned in the writing of Fortescue in the latter half of the fifteenth century. Whilst formal origins are obscure, the "Black Book" which commenced in 1423, details the accounts and business of Lincoln's Inn as one of four Inns of Court. Lincoln's Inn is understood to be first of the established Inns of Court and is believed to have been in existence for a century and a half prior to Fortescue's writing. The earliest title deeds for the inn date from 1535.¹

"Lincoln's Inn Fields public square developed between 1629-38 from three fields: Cup Field to the east, Purse Field to the west, and Fickett's Field to the south".²

The original buildings enclosing the square were largely completed between 1630 and 1660. The oldest surviving building fronting on the square is "Lindsey House" built in 1640-1, the rest of the buildings having been subsequently rebuilt.

As the intention is to develop completely within the existing volume of the buildings presently on site (with only minor foundations or excavation below the existing slab levels) the opportunity to extend the archaeological record of Lincoln's Inn Fields as part of this development will be severely limited. We have advised English Heritage of our original proposals, which did not disturb any ground underlying the existing floor slab, and they have confirmed that as long as there is no excavation below the existing slabs they will not recommend that archaeological issues be considered as part of a planning application.³

We have subsequently advised them of the limited excavation currently proposed which would require two localized excavations to form new lift pits. We have sent them drawings, which illustrate the proposed works for their record and comment

¹ "Old and New London: Volume 3", Walter Thornbury, published 1878

² www.camden.gov.uk "History of Camden's Parks" accessed 20/09/2009

³ Email reply from Kim Stabler, Archaeology Advisor, GLASS, City and North Team, London Region English Heritage, email 14/9/2009.

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It is doubtful that there would be any archeology surviving in context but there may be artifacts within disturbed soil/building excavation spoil between the rear of 40-42 Kingsway and 63 Lincoln's Inn Fields. We have suggested that they might want to have a watching brief to cover any excavations below the existing concrete or any new lift pits required and they have confirmed that a watching brief would be desirable.

The architectural history of the square, represented by the existent buildings on site, commences in the mid seventeenth century with the Lindsey House, number 59 to 60 Lincoln's Inn Fields, on the west side of the square being the earliest surviving building and the single remaining house of that period. The house is attributed to Inigo Jones, however this has not been confirmed.

The eastern side of the square is bounded by Newman's Row and is largely open space with Lincoln's Inn occupying the southeast corner of the square and rising to six storeys plus the attendant tower and chimney stacks. The south side of the square is dominated, in visual terms by the Royal College of Surgeons dating from 1835 and was erected under the supervision of Sir Charles Barry. Running from east to west on the south side, the buildings gather height from six storeys and climbing to eight and nine storeys culminating in ten storeys with a penthouse on the western end. The western most building is an office build of brick with ribbon windows and is of recent construction circa 1990.

The northern side of the square is commonly between four to six storeys and is generally residential in appearance. Most of the buildings are listed. They are in a mixture of brick and Portland stone, ranging in dates from the early 1700's to the late 20th century. Close to the centre of the north side of the square is the Sir John Soane Museum. The building is in a peculiar semi gothic style in Portland stone, which clearly distinguishes it from the rest of the buildings in the street. As well as being the most interesting building on the street elevation it is also the tallest rising to six storeys.

On the western side of the square are five listed buildings. Describing the buildings running from north to south: the first building is Newcastle House, which is a listed building with the interior having been heavily reworked by Sir Edwin Lutyens. The principal floor is raised half a storey above pavement level with a piano nobile first floor, second floor and two storey high slated roof. The whole rising to approximately six storeys in height. The building is generally of red brick with stone

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featured coursing and window framing particularly on the central pedimented bay. The next two buildings, both listed, are four storey and residential in appearance. The first building is in Portland stone and the second in painted render. The fourth building along the elevation is the odd one out being very much an office in additional eight storey of plan set back behind a stone balustrading. Although also of dressed Portland stone the elevation is conspicuously not residential in appearance.

The next building is 61-62 Lincoln's Inn Fields. This elevation is a mild mannered dressed Portland stone elevation with a rusticated ground floor and a heavy cornice dividing the third and fourth floors. The four storeys of stone are topped with a two storey of mansard roof. 61-62 Lincoln's Inn Fields then steps back to a further two storey elevation which is just out of vertical and dressed to appear as if it is a slated mansard roof with faux dormer windows. Above this a red brick band caps the top of these two storeys, with an aluminum louvered plan room with sloping sides capping off the whole of the building bringing the total height to ground plus eight storeys above.

The two similar buildings to the south of 61-62 Lincoln's Inn Fields are the other listed buildings in the street, the first being Lindsey House and the second being a copy dating from 1730 reflecting the style of Lindsey House. Both of these are four storeys with a base of rusticated stone, two floors of render and stone (Lindsey House) or stone in a super order of Ionian pilasters topped by a cornice and with pedimented dormers within the single storey mansard roof.

The two final buildings on the west side of the square are both of eight storeys in height. Both are dressed Portland stone over six storeys with the sixth storey divided from the fifth by a heavy cornice, and are capped by two storeys of steeply raked mansard roof (approximately 80°) with dormer windows on both floors.

As a collection, the buildings are a variety of styles and periods ranging from 1750 to faux 1900's and generally of a residential appearance with the above noted exceptions.

The buildings are a variety of heights along the elevation, however, there are two common visual lines established for the primary elevation of the buildings. One is at four storeys, the other of six/seven stories. The four storey line starts with Newcastle House, at the north end, and continuing on through the two adjoining buildings at four storeys high. Skipping over the anomaly of 63 Lincoln's Inn Fields (the visual line is re-established with 61-62 Lincoln's Inn Fields and continues

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on through Lindsey House and the adjoining property at the four storey height.

Finally, at the south end the two buildings, with their six principal storeys in Portland stone, pick up the line set by the "Venetian" building. This establishes the higher six/seven storey line of the terrace.

The buildings are a range of materials and finishes illustrating various periods of development. Although all based on classical details and with symmetrical facades they are not particularly harmonious, however they do not present a discordant street elevation

The overall effect of the terrace, as an expression of the built history of the square, is spoiled by the utilitarian rear elevation of the buildings on Kingsway rising up above the buildings on Lincoln's Inn Fields.