

“Sometimes the old ways are the best”

James Bond, Skyfall, 2012, filmed on location in Smithfield Market

Smithfield General Market

Hanging in the balance is one of grandest processions of market buildings in Europe. Directly under threat are the Smithfield General Market buildings, which comprise of three blocks - the General Market, the Annex (formerly the fish market), which is joined to the ‘Red House’ (a cold store) and finally the diminutive lavatory block. These are high quality buildings by a pre-eminent Victorian architect, former City surveyor Horace Jones, built between 1879-1899. They are key buildings in the Smithfield Conservation Area and should be listed. They form part of an enclave of historic buildings unlike any other in the City, retaining a powerful historic and architectural sense of place.



St Bartholomew Fair. The large open ‘smooth field’ of Smithfield has for centuries been a public space where people have shopped, traded and gathered.

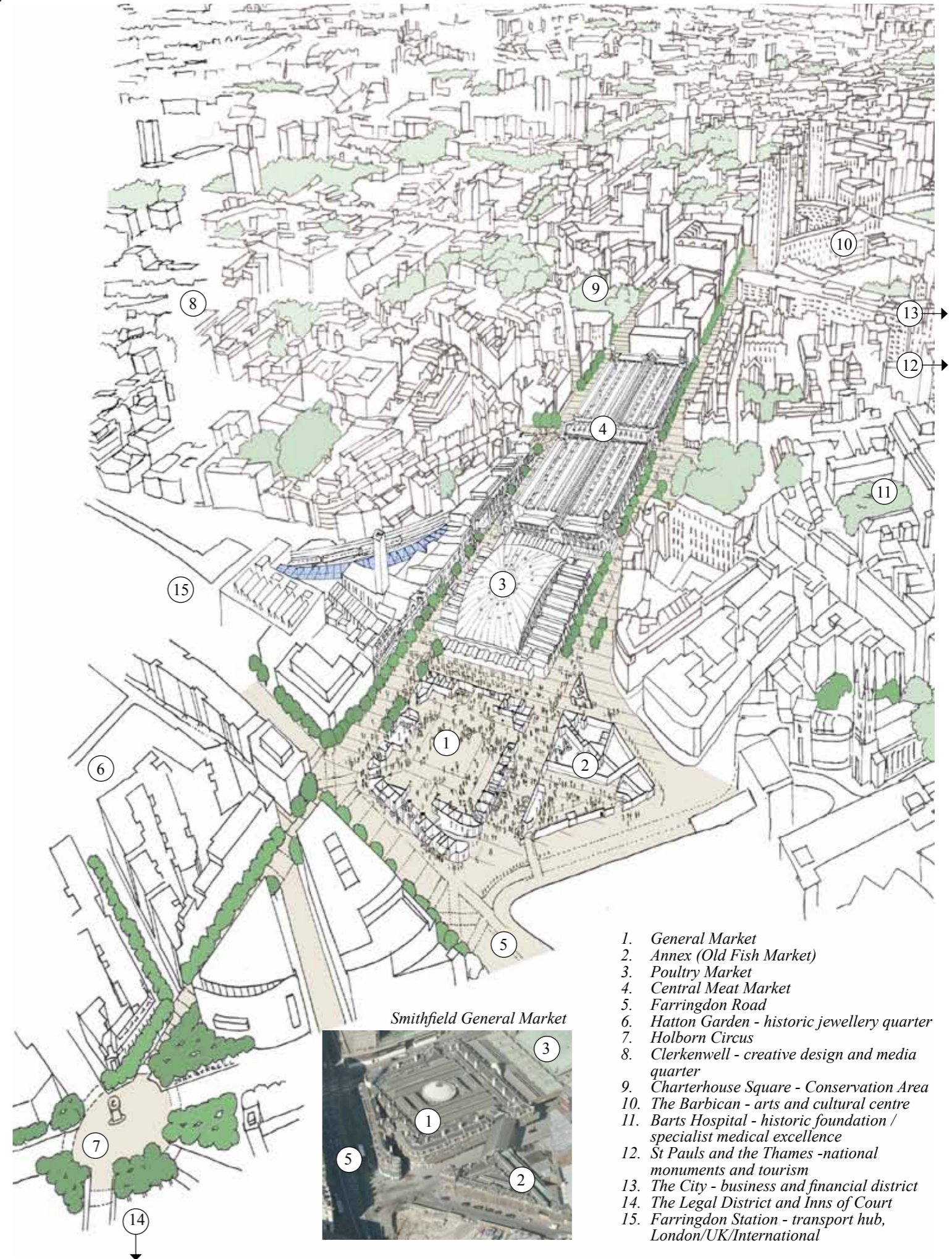
Smithfield is becoming one of London’s major centres. The question of its heritage has never been more important as visitor numbers increase. The site connects the Barbican with Holborn Circus and Fleet Street, while Charterhouse, Hatton Garden, Clerkenwell, Barts and the City all nestle around it. What the City chooses to do with the General Market will set a precedent for the future of the entire market complex. It must be treated as an ensemble, with a complete roofscape rather than broken up piecemeal. Heritage must be at the centre of any new development if it is to serve London and thrive in the long term.



The extensive public space of Smithfield Market is shown here in green. The General Market replaced the former Farringdon and Fleet public street markets and has the largest proportion of open space of all the market buildings. Wide streets and generous spaces - used by Londoners for generations, Smithfield has always been a public space.

Smithfield Market was recently featured in the new James Bond film, Skyfall, as underground HQ. It is a site closely bound up with London and Britain’s identity. SAVE shows in this report that the General Market is capable of reuse with minimal intervention, and has the potential to be a great new cultural and retail hub for London.

Smithfield connects some of London’s most vibrant areas

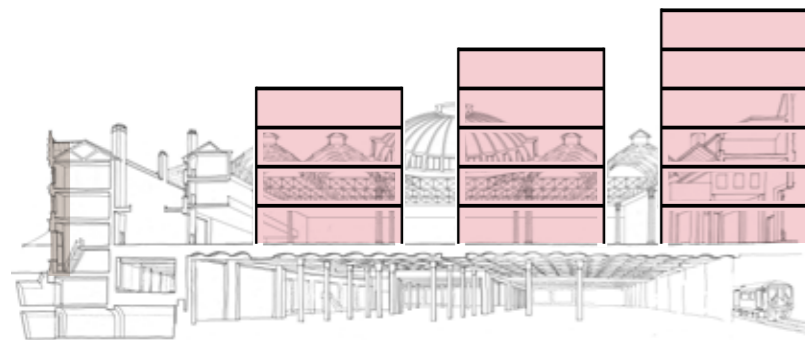


1. General Market
2. Annex (Old Fish Market)
3. Poultry Market
4. Central Meat Market
5. Farringdon Road
6. Hatton Garden - historic jewellery quarter
7. Holborn Circus
8. Clerkenwell - creative design and media quarter
9. Charterhouse Square - Conservation Area
10. The Barbican - arts and cultural centre
11. Barts Hospital - historic foundation / specialist medical excellence
12. St Pauls and the Thames - national monuments and tourism
13. The City - business and financial district
14. The Legal District and Inns of Court
15. Farringdon Station - transport hub, London/UK/International

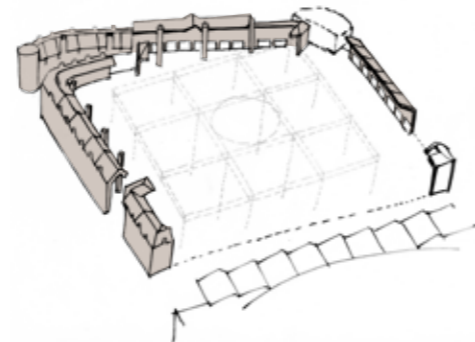
Don't Build Up, Explore Below!

The Magnificent Roofs of Smithfield General Market

The impressive roofs of Smithfield General Market create a beautiful light-filled interior - a fantastic canopy for a thriving new cultural and retail hub.



This diagram illustrates the intrusive nature of the three blocks proposed by Henderson Global Investors that would replace the building's beautiful roof structure. The tallest block is over 20 metres high and would effectively be a wall blocking out the rest of the market ensemble.



This diagram illustrates the almost total destruction of the General Market as proposed by Henderson Global Investors – only the curtilage wall would remain. A network of classic, top lit arcades linking Charterhouse Street and Snow Hill would be lost.

Section drawing of the central part of the General Market showing the beautiful roof structure that pours light down into the spaces below. Our proposal uses what there already is, including the handsome Phoenix columns, with minimal intervention.



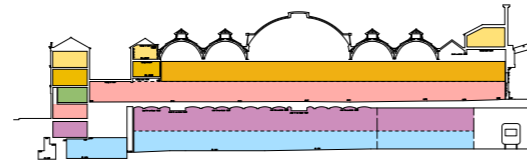
Section through Charterhouse Street, West Smithfield and Snow Hill illustrating the large areas available for use without the addition of intrusive blocks. We propose a phased development, starting with the existing building structure at all levels. The underground spaces are extensive and generous.

At present there is a small first floor mezzanine level that could be extended in a second phase, ensuring that it does not impinge on the natural light brought in through the central dome and roofs. The basement provides space for exhibitions, fashion shows and clothes manufacturing, with good connections to Farringdon Station.

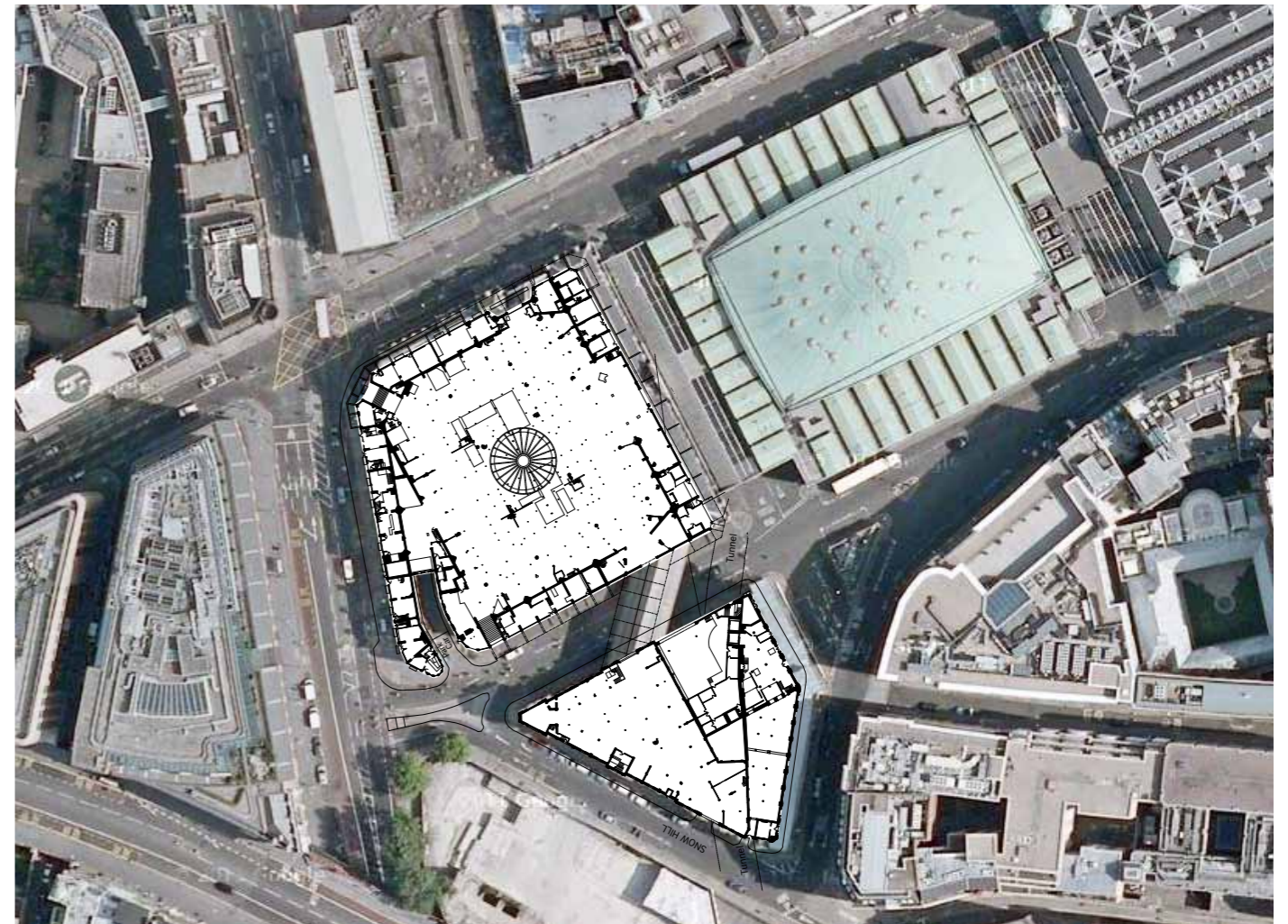
Multiple Uses Under One Roof

UK Fashion Hub in Smithfield General Market

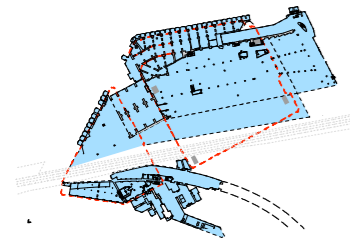
UK Fashion Hub, one of the main bidders for the Olympic Media Park, backs this conservation-led scheme. They believe that the General Market is the ideal venue for their activities, that encompass training, manufacturing, display and retail. From their website: “The UK Fashion Hub unites design and manufacture: making connections and forging alliances between these sectors will strengthen the UK fashion industry and provide lasting economic growth.” (<http://ukfashionhub.com/our-vision/>)



Section showing location of floors



Street level plan - the wide open spaces of the General Market. Nine street entrances and over twenty individual shops.



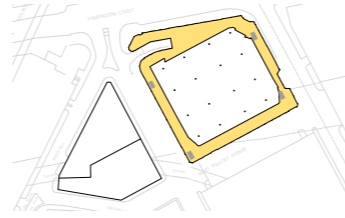
Basement: Multi-Use
 Manufacturing
 Gallery
 Fashion shows
 Venue
 Even / promotion space
 Club / dance
 Restaurants
 Conference / lectures



Ground / Street Level
 General retail
 Gallery
 Bars / cafes / restaurants
 Small offices
 Access to basement



First Level
 Retail
 Small offices
 Meeting rooms / ancillary office



Attic Level
 Small offices
 Studios
 Hotel



The large underground spaces have the potential to provide ideal venues for fashion shows, galleries and lecture halls. The project can be phased so that the building can be used immediately following basic repairs, and then the basement inhabited and the first floor utilized.

At present there is a small first floor mezzanine level that could be extended in a second phase, ensuring that it does not impinge on the natural light brought in through the central dome and roofs.

Don't Take the Guts Out of Smithfield!

Victorian covered markets with their lofty iron and glass roofs have long been popular landmarks in cities all over Europe. Yet, for the last five decades they have been an increasingly vanishing breed.

The biggest scar on Paris's reputation as the world's most beautiful capital was the futile destruction of Victor Baltard's unrivalled market buildings at Les Halles, carried out in 1971 by an obstinate government against passionate opposition from Parisians.

In London, let it never be forgotten, the Greater London Council's grand plan was to bulldoze a six-lane highway, parallel with the Strand, through the middle of Covent Garden destroying all the market halls.

Thirty years ago the City Corporation was set on the demolition of old Billingsgate Fish Market on the Thames, also designed by Sir Horace Jones. SAVE fought these proposals and produced an alternative scheme with Chrysalis Architects supported by the Richard Rogers Partnership. Today, old Billingsgate Market, so similar architecturally to Smithfield General Market, flourishes as an events venue and served as the Maison de France during the London Olympics.

The challenge SAVE now lays down to the City Corporation and Henderson Global Investments is this: do not join the ranks of the villains who have destroyed so much of historic London including the Victorian Coal Exchange.

SAVE fought and won the public inquiry into the previous proposals to demolish the General Market, standing shoulder to shoulder with English Heritage. Now English Heritage, remarkably, appear to be ready to sacrifice Horace Jones' interiors in the General Market, allowing them to be stripped of their impressive Phoenix columns and glass and timber roofs.

English Heritage appears willing to accept the developer's claim that the conservation deficit is such that it is necessary to gut the whole market building leaving only three facades (not the fourth, which will be destroyed), and small sections of roofs and dormers without their lively chimneys.

For SAVE, the architect John Burrell has prepared this visionary alternative. Eric Reynolds and Ian Lerner, two longstanding champions of Smithfield Market, and key witnesses in the 2008 Public Inquiry, both emphasise that retail space brings higher rentals than offices. The empty and grim offices on Farringdon Road are proof that the area does not need more of them. In addition, Hendersons Global Investors are planning to construct a 9-storey office block opposite the General Market, making their plans for this historic site greed as well as madness.

The Smithfield quarter, like Covent Garden before it, has come to life thanks to natural regeneration as small businesses have colonised every vacated premise in the streets around the market buildings. This is creating one of central London's liveliest districts, full of both traditional character and new life. Fashion Hub UK has come forward as an enlightened company, ready to back a conservation-led scheme.

Wake up City planners and Aldermen! Smithfield Market ranks as one of London's chief public spaces that should be serving the city and its visitors, as the capital's newest hub.

Marcus Binney, President, SAVE Britain's Heritage



A strong vision for the General Market by English Heritage created in 2008. This photo-shopped image shows how it could be regenerated, with no intervention into the original fabric of the building.

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SAVE has been campaigning for historic buildings since its formation in 1975 by a group of architects, journalists and planners. SAVE is a strong, independent voice in conservation, free to respond rapidly to emergencies and to speak out loud for the historic environment.

