

# Architectural mini guide



Liverpool Street



As a city centre station with a predominant usage by commuters it is sometimes difficult to see this as a truly international station but, its connections with Europe via Harwich to the seaports of the North Sea and the Baltic Sea should not be forgotten: nor should the express connections to the relatively recent Stansted Airport and onward to all corners of the globe.

## 3. The War memorial

The large marble war memorial commemorates those members of the Great Eastern Railway who lost their lives in the First World War.

This was rebuilt following relocation from the former Booking Hall. It incorporates two other memorials: one erected 22 July 1922 and dedicated to Field Marshall Sir Henry Wilson, Ulster MP, who was assassinated on his own doorstep by two members of the Irish Republican Army after returning home from opening the War Memorial; the other memorial commemorates the heroic Great Eastern Railway marine officer, Captain Fryatt, who was executed by the Germans in 1916. The roundel in the entablature is that of the Great Eastern Railway which contains the coats of arms of the major places originally served by that company.

Above the war memorial are to be found the carved words 'Great Eastern Railway'. These were removed from the gable of Harwich House which was demolished during the station rebuilding.

A further memorial, dedicated to the men of Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire who died in the First World War is located on the adjacent wall.

The right hand tower incorporates carved cartouches, lettered GER, which were derived from the 1894 station screen to Bishopsgate.



## 4. The Bishopsgate entrance

The architectural vocabulary of this area is similar to the Liverpool Street entrance, particularly in respect of the brick towers and the use of replicated Portland Stone piers to demark the space.

As with the Liverpool Street entrance, the right hand tower incorporates carved cartouches, lettered GER, which were derived from the 1894 station screen to Bishopsgate. Also in the right hand tower is to be seen a stone door set relocated from the demolished Harwich House.



## 5. The Great Eastern Hotel

The hotel, opened in May 1884, was designed by Charles Barry and his son Charles Edward. Charles Barry was the son of the Charles Barry who designed the Houses of Parliament. For some time it was the only hotel in the City of London. It was extended in 1901 to designs by Colonel Robert Edis. This extension was known as the Abercorn Rooms and entered from Bishopsgate.

Of architectural interest is the heavy rococo plasterwork of the Hamilton Rooms, named after Lord Claud Hamilton who was Chairman of the GER from 1893 to 1923.

The hotel now forms a separate building to the station and is privately run by Sir Terence Conran.

## 6. Exchange Square

Although, strictly speaking an element of Broadgate, Exchange Square provides a superb, and possibly unique opportunity to view into the train shed from the 'country' end. This facility, together with the other entrance areas of the station serves to emphasise how well a major transport interchange can integrate into the urban fabric operationally and architecturally.

In respect of station architecture, of interest here is the decorative valence. This had been removed from the station during the 1970's but was reinstated as part of the rebuilding works in 1991. The pattern is a faithful replica of the original station.

The view into the station clearly illustrates the structure remaining from the original station. This is denoted by the brown and cream paintwork on the steelwork and the use of fibre glass roof sheeting that was installed during the 1970's.

## Further reading

The recent history of the station and the story of its rebuilding is fully described in Nick Derbyshire's 'Liverpool Street – A Station for the Twenty-First Century' published by Granta Editions.

For further information on the station and associated Broadgate redevelopment as a whole, refer to 'Broadgate and Liverpool Street Station' by Penelope Hunting, published by Rosehaugh Stanhope Developments plc.

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The western shed (as remaining) was opened in 1874. The station was built by Messrs Lucas Brothers who were also involved in the construction of Kings Cross. The roofing itself was designed and constructed by the Fairburn Engineering Company who also supplied the roof for the Royal Albert Hall.

During 1985-1991 the station was much altered to designs by British Rail's 'in-house' Architecture and Design Department headed up by Nick Derbyshire who now runs his own practice in Spitalfields. Instrumental in tailoring the station to modern requirements was the creation of a new concourse running across the heads of the re-aligned platforms. To facilitate this, a new transept was created which incorporated new entrances to Liverpool Street itself, Bishopsgate and a new bus terminus to the western end of the concourse.

The cast iron structures are particularly fine and it is particularly rewarding to note that the acanthus leaves capitals, removed in the 1950's, have, with assistance from the Railway Heritage Trust, been fully reinstated.

The brickwork generally is of Suffolk origin with Bath stone dressings.

So well does the new work sit with the old that it is very difficult at first glance to distinguish between the two areas of work, although one of the clues lies in the fact that the station shed roof that is still painted brown and cream, as opposed to the blue and cream of the later work, is indeed the original station structure: this can be identified from vantage points near the northernmost 'transept'. Indeed it is very difficult to remember what the original station looked like and how extremely difficult it was to use because of its complex configuration. Whilst being admired by the likes of John Betjemen, he had to concede that it was not the best station operationally.

This mini guide takes you on a tour of the station and points out the more interesting features that have accrued over the station's 125-year history.

There is a lot to see within the station and also within the surrounding, related development. This does not pretend to be a thorough guide but merely to whet the appetite.

## 1. The train shed

Liverpool Street originally comprised two distinct shed areas known as the Eastern train shed and the Western train shed. During essential redevelopment between 1985-1991 the Eastern shed was demolished and the Western shed was re-configured albeit with much of the original remaining. The original station occupied a site of approximately 10 acres and was partially built on the former Bethlem Hospital site. Other landowners from whom the site was compulsorily purchased included the Corporation Of London and City Livery companies. All in all about 3,000 parishioners of St Botolph-without-Bishopsgate were made homeless in the construction of the station. The GER tried to ameliorate the situation by offering displaced persons cheaper fares on trains serving the station from nearby suburbs.

The original station was designed by consultant engineer to the Great Eastern Railway, Edward Wilson, who in turn was assisted by W. N. Ashbee after 1875. Ashbee also designed the fine station at Norwich and the Royal station for Sandringham at Wolferton.

The eastern extension of the station which was completed in 1894 was designed by John Wilson, nephew of, and clerk to Edward Wilson. In this, he was also ably assisted by W. N. Ashbee.



## 2. The Liverpool Street entrance

All architectural work visible from Liverpool Street is contemporary with the 1980's rebuilding, including No. 50 Liverpool Street, the ground floor of which is now occupied by McDonald's restaurant.

The pedestrian forecourt is surrounded by railings and Portland stone piers. The design of the stone piers is based on the original piers located in that area of the station which had been installed in 1875. One of these original piers remains and is to be seen on the pavement adjacent to No. 50 Liverpool Street. The railings are taken from a pattern of a gate found on the Bishopsgate side of the station.



## Introduction

Welcome to Liverpool Street station, one of Britain's busiest main line terminals and heart of the commercially redeveloped Broadgate area.

The station has undergone major changes and whilst dating from 1875 was substantially altered during the late 1980's coincidental with the Broadgate major property development which helped fund the works. Its rich history, however is still evident in its form, materials, fixtures and fittings.

The station, incidentally, takes its name from the street it is located on which in turn was built and named, during its construction in 1829, after Lord Liverpool, Great Britain's Prime Minister from 1812 to 1827.

What most station users and visitors do not realise when walking through the station is that the larger part of it is new. The new works also include No 50 Liverpool Street and the twin towered entrance areas.