



Campaign Fact Book Former Whitechapel Bell Foundry Site Whitechapel, London



Compiled January 2020

Whitechapel Bell Foundry: a matter of national importance

This fact book has been compiled to capture the breadth of the campaign to save the site of the Whitechapel Bell Foundry, which is currently threatened by a proposal for conversion into a boutique hotel. Re-Form Heritage; Factum Foundation; numerous community, heritage and bellringing organisations; and thousands of individuals have contributed to and driven this campaign, which is working to:

- reinstate modern and sustainable foundry activity on the site
- preserve and record heritage skills
- integrate new technologies with traditional foundry techniques
- maintain and build pride in Whitechapel's bell founding heritage

The site of the Whitechapel Bell Foundry is Britain's oldest single-purpose industrial building where for generations bells such as Big Ben, the Liberty Bell, Bow Bells and many of the world's great bells were made. Bells made in Whitechapel have become the voices of nations, marking the world's celebrations and sorrows and representing principles of emancipation, freedom of expression and justice. As such these buildings and the uses that have for centuries gone on within them represent some of the most important intangible cultural heritage and are therefore of international significance.

Once the use of the site as a foundry has gone it has gone forever. The potential impact of this loss has led to considerable concern and opposition being expressed on an unprecedented scale within the local area, nationally and, indeed, internationally.

People from across the local community, London and the world have voiced their strong opposition to the developer's plans and to the hotel use and wish for the foundry use to be retained. Over 20,000 signatures to a petition and 900 objections from across the UK are testament to the cross-boundary interest in this proposal. The many objectors believe strongly that the site of the Whitechapel Bell Foundry should be a place of pilgrimage of global interest and not another boutique hotel of no interest to anyone but its transient clients.

Campaign milestones (reverse chronological order)

17/12/2019

Rory Stewart, candidate for London Mayor, visits Whitechapel Bell Foundry and backs campaign to reinstate bell founding on the site

10/12/2019

Bell casting demonstration event at Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment, UCL directed by Andrew Lacey, a historical casting expert, and Peter Lacey, Technical Director at the Bartlett as part of campaign to reinstate bell founding on the former Whitechapel Bell Foundry site.

6/12/2019

Historic England statement regarding the former Whitechapel Bell Foundry site released <https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/statements/whitechapel-bell-foundry/>

2/12/2019

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (as directed by Secretary of State, Robert Jenrick MP) letter sent to Tower Hamlets Council Development Management to apply holding directive, prohibiting granting of planning consent on Whitechapel Bell Foundry site without specific MHCLG authorisation.

14/11/2019

Meeting of Tower Hamlets Development Committee to consider Raycliff Whitechapel LLP application for change of use and planning consent to convert Whitechapel Bell Foundry site into boutique hotel

9/11/2019

Public rally at Whitechapel Bell Foundry held by supporters of the campaign to reinstate bell founding on the site

9/09/2019

Public meeting held at East London Mosque regarding campaign to reinstate bell founding on former Whitechapel Bell Foundry site

June 2019

Save the Whitechapel Bell Foundry film released

February 2019

Campaign team release *Saved by the Bell: The Resurrection of the Whitechapel Bell Foundry, Supplement to the June 2018 document*

2/01/2019

Raycliff Whitechapel LLP planning consent application (PA/19/00008/A1) for conversion of former Whitechapel Bell Foundry site to boutique hotel validated by Tower Hamlets Council (available via Tower Hamlets planning portal)

June 2018

Campaign team release *Saved by the Bell: The Resurrection of the Whitechapel Bell Foundry*

Resources

Save the Whitechapel Bell Foundry Change.org petition

<https://www.change.org/p/the-east-end-preservation-society-save-the-whitechapel-bell-foundry>

Tower Hamlets Planning Portal

https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/ignl/planning_and_building_control/planning_applications/search_and_comment_planning_applications.aspx

Save the Whitechapel Bell Foundry website, including campaign film

<http://www.savethewhitechapelbellfoundry.com/>

Factum Foundation website

<http://www.factumfoundation.org/>

Re-Form Heritage website (formerly United Kingdom Historic Building Preservation Trust)

<https://re-form.org/>

Saved by the Bell: The Resurrection of the Whitechapel Bell Foundry and *Saved by the Bell: The Resurrection of the Whitechapel Bell Foundry, Supplement to the June 2018 document* can be downloaded from <https://re-form.org/whitechapel/information>

Campaign media coverage (reverse chronological order)

Regular coverage and comment in Charles Saumarez Smith's blog
(<https://charlessaumarezsmith.com/blog/>)

29/12/2019

London Review of Books, *Ghostly Steeples*
<https://www.lrb.co.uk/blog/2019/december/ghostly-steeples>

25/12/2019

Financial Times, *Battle over Britain's historic bell foundry far from over*,
<https://www.ft.com/content/a0e45906-21bd-11ea-92da-f0c92e957a96>

21/12/2019

The Architects' Journal, *Weekend roundup: There'll be no human warehouses on our watch...plus Rory Stewart weighs in on bell foundry row*
<https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/opinion/weekend-roundup-therell-be-no-human-warehouses-on-our-watch/10045776.article>

20/12/2019

Love Wapping, *'Let the Whitechapel Foundry bells ring forth!' urges London Mayoral candidate Rory Stewart*
<http://lovewapping.org/2019/12/let-the-whitechapel-foundry-bells-ring-forth-urges-london-mayoral-candidate-rory-stewart/>

19/12/2019

Spitalfields Life, *Rory Stewart Declares His Support To Save The Whitechapel Bell Foundry*
<https://spitalfieldslife.com/2019/12/19/rory-stewart-declares-his-support-to-save-the-whitechapel-bell-foundry/>

18/12/2019

The Architects' Journal, *Rory Stewart joins fight against 'unimaginative' Whitechapel bell foundry plans*
<https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/rory-stewart-joins-fight-against-unimaginative-whitechapel-bell-foundry-plans/10045769.article>

16/12/2019

The Art Newspaper, *'A catastrophe for the system of protecting historic buildings': the saga of London's Whitechapel Bell Foundry*
<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/comment/the-whitechapel-bell-foundry>

12/12/2019

Spitalfields Life, *Casting a Bell at Here East*
<https://spitalfieldslife.com/2019/12/12/casting-a-bell-at-here-east/>

9/12/2019

The Architects' Journal, *Government halts 31/44 Architects' contentious Whitechapel Bell Foundry plans*
<https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/government-halts-31/44-architects-contentious-whitechapel-bell-foundry-plans/10045578.article>

9/12/2019

BBC Radio 4, Front Row, Whitechapel Bell Foundry feature (starts at 10:37)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000c4xg>

6/12/2019

BBC London News (TV), 08.30

(online footage not available)

5/12/2019

Daily Mail, *Government steps in to stop US developers turning the 450-year-old Whitechapel Bell Foundry where Big Ben and the Liberty Bell were forged into a boutique hotel*

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7759339/Government-steps-stop-developers-taking-Whitechapel-Bell-Foundry.html>

4/12/2019

East London Lines, *'Boutique hotel' scheme to replace Whitechapel Bell Foundry is halted by Secretary of State*

<https://www.eastlondonadvertiser.co.uk/news/politics/whitechapel-bell-foundry-scheme-1-6409487>

4/12/2019

Evening Standard, *The Londoner: Big Ben foundry wins a reprieve*

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/londoners-diary/the-londoner-big-ben-foundry-wins-a-reprieve-a4304406.html>

22/11/2019

Church Times, *Anger at council plan to convert ancient bell foundry into boutique hotel*

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2019/22-november/news/uk/anger-at-council-plan-to-convert-ancient-bell-foundry-into-boutique-hotel>

19/11/2019

The Telegraph, *Disgraceful plan for Whitechapel Bell Foundry is another nail in the coffin for the East End's heritage*

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/europe/united-kingdom/england/london/articles/whitechapel-bell-foundry-hotel/>

18/11/2019

The Architects' Journal, *31/44 Architects wins approval for contentious Whitechapel Bell Foundry revamp*

<https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/31/44-architects-wins-approval-for-contentious-whitechapel-bell-foundry-revamp/10045263.article>

16/11/2019

The Times, *Bell tolls for 450-year-old foundry*

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/bell-tolls-for-450-year-old-foundry-3sw5m96jq#>

15/11/2019

Evening Standard, *'Cultural vandalism': Critics hit out after controversial plans to redevelop Whitechapel Bell Foundry get green light*

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/cultural-vandalism-critics-hit-out-after-controversial-plans-to-redevelop-whitechapel-bell-foundry-a4287926.html>

15/11/2019

Spitalfields Life, *The Fate of the Whitechapel Bell Foundry*

<https://spitalfieldslife.com/2019/11/15/the-fate-of-the-whitechapel-bell-foundry/>

15/11/2019

The Docklands and East London Advertiser, *Whitechapel Bell Foundry: hotel plans approved*

<https://www.eastlondonadvertiser.co.uk/news/protest-as-bell-foundry-hotel-plans-approved-1-6377969>

15/11/2019

East London Lines, *Not saved by the bell: Whitechapel Bell Foundry plan approved despite anger*

<https://www.eastlondonlines.co.uk/2019/11/not-saved-by-the-bell-whitechapel-bell-foundry-to-be-transformed/>

15/11/2019

BBC News, *Whitechapel Big Ben bell foundry hotel plan approved*

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-50430425>

15/11/2019

The Philadelphia Inquirer, *The foundry that cast the Liberty Bell is one step closer to becoming a luxury hotel*

<https://www.inquirer.com/news/liberty-bell-whitechapel-bell-foundry-london-philadelphia-20191115.html>

14/11/2019

LBC News, *'Heritage vandalism' plans to redevelop Whitechapel Bell Foundry approved*

<https://www.lbcnews.co.uk/uk-news/heritage-vandalism-plans-to-redevelop-whitechapel/>

14/11/2019

Evening Standard, *Whitechapel Bell Foundry given green light*

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/controversial-plan-to-redevelop-whitechapel-bell-foundry-given-green-light-a4287736.html>

14/11/2019

Boutique Hotelier, *Locals in a ding dong over hotel plan for historic bell foundry*

<https://www.boutiquehotelier.com/locals-in-a-ding-dong-over-hotel-plan-for-historic-bell-foundry/>

13-15/11/2019

News aggregator content via Press Association to Shropshire Star, Express and Star etc.

<https://www.expressandstar.com/news/uk-news/2019/11/14/anger-as-controversial-plans-to-redevelop-former-bell-foundry-get-green-light/> and <https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/uk-news/2019/11/13/opponents-brand-redevelopment-plan-for-historic-bell-foundry-a-travesty/>

13/11/2019

Evening Standard, *The Londoner: Time running out for Big Ben foundry*

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/londoners-diary/the-londoner-time-running-out-for-big-ben-foundry-a4286166.html>

13/11/2019

Spitalfields Life, *An Old Whitechapel Bell*

<https://spitalfieldslife.com/2019/11/13/an-old-whitechapel-bell-x/>

9/11/2019

BBC London News, *Whitechapel Bell Foundry fightback against US developers* (UK)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjF28oKR73w&feature=youtu.be>

1-14/11/2019

Private Eye no 1508, page 21, Historic England and Whitechapel Bell Foundry feature (not available online)

23/10/2019

East London Lines, *Whitechapel Bell Foundry owner hits back at anti-redevelopment campaign*

<https://www.eastlondonlines.co.uk/2019/10/whitechapel-bell-foundry-owner-hits-back-at-anti-redevelopment-campaign/>

19/09/2019

Apollo, *The Whitechapel Bell Foundry should be a working factory, not a boutique hotel*

<https://www.apollo-magazine.com/the-whitechapel-bell-foundry-should-be-a-working-factory-not-a-boutique-hotel/>

10/09/2019

The Docklands and East London Advertiser, *Rallying call to save Whitechapel Bell Foundry as preservation campaign hots up*

<https://www.eastlondonadvertiser.co.uk/news/politics/whitechapel-bell-foundry-campaign-meeting-1-6261739>

4/09/2019

Billy Penn, Max Marin, *Developers are trying to turn the Liberty Bell foundry into a hotel*

<https://billypenn.com/2019/09/04/londoners-battle-developers-to-save-the-liberty-bell-foundry/>

1/09/2019

The Observer, *It tolls for thee: £5m needed to save Britain's last working bell foundry*

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2019/aug/31/loughborough-whitechapel-last-bell-foundry-lottery-bid>

31/08/2019

The Guardian Online and The Observer Online, *It tolls for thee: £5m needed to save Britain's last working bell foundry*

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2019/aug/31/loughborough-whitechapel-last-bell-foundry-lottery-bid>

16/08/2019

BBC Radio London, Whitechapel Bell Foundry feature

(<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p07j72c1> / starts 1:18, but not currently available)

10/08/2019

The Architects' Journal, *31/44 Architects defends plans for Whitechapel Bell Foundry scheme*

<https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/31/44-architects-defends-plans-for-whitechapel-bell-foundry-scheme/10034093.article?search=https%3a%2f%2fwww.architectsjournal.co.uk%2fsearcharticles%3fqsearch%3d1%26keywords%3dWhitechapel+bell+foundry>

5/8/2019

Daily Mail/Mail Online, *What a ding-dong! Foundry that forged Big Ben and America's Liberty Bell is being turned into a boutique hotel... and locals aren't taking it quietly*

http://www.factum-arte.com/resources/files/fa/press/daily_mail_august_5_whitechapel_bell_foundry.pdf

20/06/2019

Spitalfields Life, *A Film about the Whitechapel Bell Foundry*

<https://spitalfieldslife.com/2019/06/20/a-film-about-the-whitechapel-bell-foundry/>

24/03/2019

Spitalfields Life, *Four Centuries at Whitechapel Bell Foundry*

<https://spitalfieldslife.com/2019/03/24/four-centuries-at-whitechapel-bell-foundry/>

17/03/2019

Spitalfields Life, Dorothy Rendell at Whitechapel Bell Foundry

<https://spitalfieldslife.com/2019/03/17/dorothy-rendell-at-whitechapel-bell-foundry/>

10/03/2019

Spitalfields Life, Pearl Binder at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry

<https://spitalfieldslife.com/2019/03/10/pearl-binder-at-the-whitechapel-bell-foundry/>

3/03/2019

The Guardian and The Observer, *Ringling the changes at the Whitechapel bell foundry*

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/mar/03/whitechapel-bell-foundry-plans-royal-college-of-pathologists>

24/02/2019

Spitalfields Life, John Claridge at Whitechapel Bell Foundry

<https://spitalfieldslife.com/2019/02/24/john-claridge-at-whitechapel-bell-foundry-x/>

11/02/2019

BBC News, *Campaigners call for Whitechapel Bell Foundry to re-open*

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-47184501>

11/02/2019

The Docklands and East London Advertiser, *Campaign launched to stop Whitechapel Bell Foundry being turned into a hotel*

<https://www.eastlondonadvertiser.co.uk/news/heritage/united-kingdom-historic-building-preservation-trust-in-bid-to-restore-bell-foundry-1-5886657>

6/02/2019

The Architects' Journal, *31/44 Architects submits plans for contentious Whitechapel Bell Foundry scheme*

<https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/31/44-architects-submits-plans-for-contentious-whitechapel-bell-foundry-scheme/10039736.article?search=https%3a%2f%2fwww.architectsjournal.co.uk%2fsearcharticles%3fqsearch%3d1%26keywords%3dWhitechapel+bell+foundry>

5/08/2018

The Telegraph, *Charity founded by Prince Charles in ding dong over maker of Big Ben's bells*

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/08/05/charity-founded-prince-charles-ding-dong-maker-big-bens-bells/>

3/08/2018

Financial Times, *The battle for Whitechapel Bell Foundry*

<https://www.ft.com/content/fb9d4f78-9579-11e8-b747-fb1e803ee64e>

21/7/2018

The Guardian, *Bell factory that made Big Ben opens to public for one night only*

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/jul/21/bell-factory-that-made-big-ben-opens-to-public-for-one-night-only>

16/07/2018

The Docklands and East London Advertiser, *Charity hopes to buy back historic Whitechapel Bell Foundry from developers*

<https://www.eastlondonadvertiser.co.uk/news/heritage/charity-plans-to-save-whitechapel-bell-foundry-from-hotel-plans-1-5600745>

6/07/2018

Church Times, *Whitechapel Bell Foundry may be bought back from developers and reopened by royal charity*

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2018/6-july/news/uk/whitechapel-bell-foundry-may-bought-back-from-developers-and-reopened-by-royal-charity>

21/06/2018

Spitalfields Life, *Hope for the Whitechapel Bell Foundry*

<https://spitalfieldslife.com/2018/06/21/hope-for-the-whitechapel-bell-foundry/>

5/1/2017

Apollo, *What will become of Whitechapel Bell Foundry?*

<https://www.apollo-magazine.com/will-become-whitechapel-bell-foundry/>

24/12/2016

The Economist, *The Whitechapel Bell Foundry: A curfew tolls...*

<https://www.economist.com/obituary/2016/12/24/a-curfew-tolls>

2/12/2016

Spitalfields Life, *So Long, Whitechapel Bell Foundry*

<https://spitalfieldslife.com/2016/12/02/so-long-whitechapel-bell-foundry/>

2/12/2016

The Guardian, *Whitechapel Bell Foundry to ring in new era as owner sells site*

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/dec/02/whitechapel-bell-foundry-to-ring-in-new-era-as-owner-sells-site>

2/12/2016

The Guardian, *Whitechapel Bell Foundry: end of an era – in pictures*

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/gallery/2016/dec/02/whitechapel-bell-foundry-big-ben-liberty-bell>

2/12/2016

The Telegraph, *Bell tolls for world's oldest foundry - which made Big Ben and the Liberty Bell - despite attempts to keep business afloat with Downton effect*

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/12/02/britains-oldest-bell-foundry-cast-big-ben-close/>