

Lighting Conservation Areas: An illuminating journey

David Bieda, Chairman of the Seven Dials Trust, tells the story of a unique award-winning lighting partnership between the voluntary, statutory and private sectors

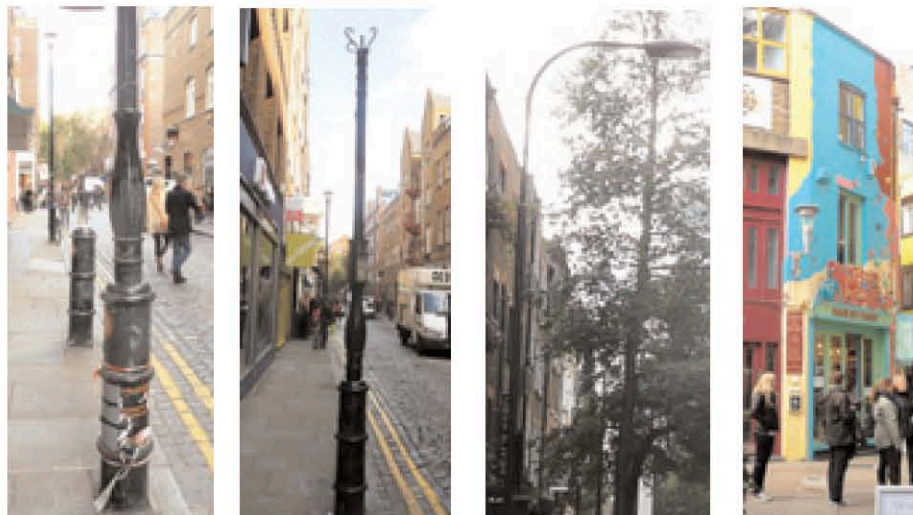
This partnership between the local authorities and the voluntary, sector has brought to the market well designed and long life bespoke products suitable for any conservation area. The Covent Garden Lantern™ and bracket can be seen in on all the streets off Seven Dials in Camden and across the borough border in Westminster in Shelton, Mercer and Langley Street (and Court). They are now planned for Floral, Neal, Tower and West Streets and New Row and are the accepted norm for Covent Garden, and we hope beyond, maybe into your conservation area?

Genesis and Objectives

Some years ago the Seven Dials Trust formed a Lighting Partnership with Camden, Westminster, English Heritage, the Mercers' Company and Shaftesbury PLC. Lighting engineers from both authorities and the Corporation of London brought many years of experience and of problems encountered with existing products. We had to bring Camden and Westminster together with the help of their respective Deputy Leaders to cement the Partnership.

We began by reviewing market offers, all of which were rejected for design and sustainability reasons, and we set ourselves some strict objectives:

1. To overcome the damage caused to lanterns adjacent to the carriageway in narrow streets due to the road camber;
2. To design an historically authentic Windsor style façade and post mounted lantern which had presence in day-time and was effective at night;
3. To reduce carbon emissions and energy needs;
4. To reduce the glare from pot optics and other forms of lighting which tend to 'hide' the historic fabric;
5. To reduce the maintenance costs of local authorities;
6. To create a lantern and form of lighting both for our area and as an exemplar for other inner city conservation areas;
7. To create consistency and remove a plethora of conflicting lanterns and light sources;
8. From the Trust's perspective to obtain royalties for what became our designs.



Above: Damages and a plethora of lantern types

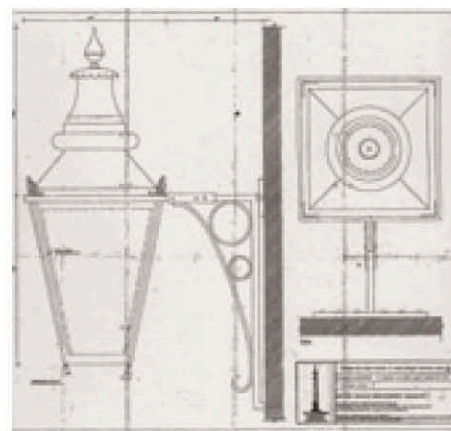
Design Issues | Specifications | Tenders

We were lucky to have Seven Dials Trustee Paul Draper on board as one of the country's experts on perspective and design as you'll see from below. Paul surveyed 1880's gas lanterns in Covent Garden and elsewhere to arrive at an accurate contemporary interpretation of this very traditional design which has been watered down over the years and become a weak pastiche of the originals. The group went on a mini-bus tour of façade lanterns in three London boroughs and the first designs emerged.

Lighting engineers buy off the shelf and the last time Westminster had a bespoke lantern was the Grey Wornham in the 1950's. The specification was arrived at through the unusual process of lighting engineers from Camden Westminster and the Corporation of London listing every fault they had encountered over the years so they could be designed out, creating a long life product. Key issues were: welded parts failing so lanterns had to be chucked; the vexed issue of dirt and insect ingress rendering light sources ineffective; glare; the use of flimsy materials.

Once the design and specs were completed Camden went to tender including Lefebvre SA in France recommended by M. Fretet chief engineer for Paris who I had met by chance. Long stories often need to be shortened! Lefebvre won the tender and brought our V1 proto to London, rejected for various

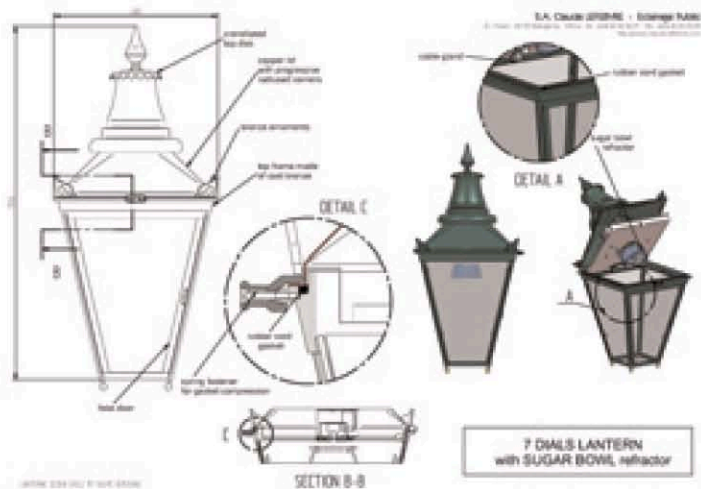
Below: Paul Draper's measured survey of historic gas lanterns by the Lamb & Flag



technical reasons and a successful V2 was then installed in Shelton Street in 2010 where it still sits with no dirt ingress. We went through numerous detailed design options. Lefebvre was then sold to Indal Spain who were then bought by Philips Lighting, causing substantial delays to the project.

The Light Source | Glare | Funding

One key issue was how to mitigate glare, where lighting engineers' views did not concur. John Burke from the Corporation gave a seminal talk promoting the use of the Victorian 'sugar bowl' thus proposing a combination of current and historic technology which was finally accepted when trialled in our V2 in Shelton Street. We chose the Philips 60w Cosmopolis lamp which can



The V3 Lantern English sugar bowl; top the Copy; Above: prototype drawings



Above: Paul Draper and David Bieda (left and 2nd left) in the Lefebvre factory looking at production techniques
Below: Paul Draper's drawing and final cast bronze model for the Acrotaria



be seen in all the current lanterns within sugar bowls, however technology moves on.... The overall cost was £208,000, funded by Camden, Westminster, English Heritage and the St. Giles Fund. We had to obtain wayleaves and some listed building consents.

Attention to Detail and LED

Attention to detail has been the key to our success from design to manufacture and installation so we have met all of our objectives and have now moved on to sell the products, first to the Mercers' Company in Mercers' Walk and shortly to Capital and Counties PLC for Floral Street where they have substantial developments nearing completion. In March 2017 the Trust and Westminster trialled 3 LED units and the Zeta LED is now up in Mercers' Walk and Floral Street will have the Braun gas lookalike. Unusually all the EDF boxes and conduits were painted to match the shopfronts and façades.

How did we go about the project?

Once all the key stakeholders were on board we set up a formal Lighting Group which met regularly over several years with a much larger reference group informed by email newsletters. The positions of the lanterns were arrived at via walkabouts and an 80 page master document with pictures of each façade, lantern positions, supply routes and EDF boxes produced by Fresson Tee and sponsored by Shaftesbury PLC. It can be seen: <http://www.sevendials.com/projects/all-projects/item/35-re-lighting-seven-dials-covent-garden>. Hitherto façade lanterns have not been the norm because of the complexities of obtaining wayleaves, now far easier with new legislation in the 2015 'London Local Authorities and Transport for London Act'.

Results

We now have an elegant and effective 19" Windsor style lantern, either post or façade mounted and soon a 17" version which is now the accepted norm for Covent Garden and embedded within both local authorities. This has encouraged larger freeholders to invest in the products thus augmenting limited local authority funding. We have moved onto LED through on-site testing involving a large group of stakeholders, still retaining the Victorian sugar bowl.

Awards

The project was highly commended in the 2015 Highways Magazine Excellence Awards, the first for a lighting project, and for all involved and the first for a charity. (see page 17). The Covent Garden Lantern™ has created consistency throughout our public realm; at day through the presence of an imposing lantern and at night by lighting suitable for a conservation area (both reasons for the involvement of Historic England).

If you feel they might augment any of your conservation areas do draw them to attention of your lighting officers or ask us for further details.

David Bieda

The Seven Dials Trust

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Seven Dials Trust Award

The Covent Garden Community Lighting Partnership

Historic England citation:

"Seven Dials is one of London's most historic neighbourhoods with a unique character and a strong community. The project shows that it is possible to develop street furniture which is historically accurate, underpins local historic character, and can meet and exceed today's rigorous performance standards. The Trust's dedication to achieving such high standards and to working in partnership has borne exemplary results."

(see David Bieda's article page 8) ■

Highly Commended



City of Westminster



Shaftesbury

The Covent Garden Community Lighting Partnership

Community-led partnership project replacing post-mounted street lighting with bespoke facade-mounted lanterns combining old and new technologies throughout Seven Dials, Covent Garden, and Sundial Pillar lighting.

Judges' comment

"Led entirely by the community this totally collaborative approach shows local cooperation on a new level."

