



The Liverpool Marriott City Centre is excellently placed for visitors to the City. The Business district, St Gorges Hall, St Johns Shopping Centre, Liverpool One, theatres, Liverpool Museum, Library and The Walker Art Gallery are all within a few hundred yards of the hotel, as are Lime Street Station, and the Mersey Queensway Tunnel.

The Hotel was the focal point of the major Queen Square redevelopment that has transformed this part of the centre Liverpool. Construction began in 1996 and it opened in 1998 as Swallow Hotel, Liverpool. In 2000, following hotel and leisure group Whitbread's acquisition of Swallow, it was renamed the Liverpool Marriott Hotel.

History of Queens Square

Queen Square dates from the second half of the 18th century. It was named after King George 111's Queen, Charlotte. Passing through the top of the square was Tryon Street which linked Hood Street and St Johns Lane. Across the south end ran Roe Street. Passing through the west side of the square was Great Charlotte Street which went from White Chapel in the North, beside the royal court theatre, and on south Elliott Street and Ranelagh Street. The building of Great Charlotte Street in 1796, replacing the roperies that had occupied much of the area, gave an impetus to the residential development of Queens Square. Today's Queens Square lies a little to the west of the original, on the site of which now stands the Marriott hotels circular tower and the north wing.

In 1837 the 85 feet long skeleton of a whale, found dead off Plymouth in 1831, on tour round the country in four large caravans, was brought to Liverpool and exhibited in Queens Square. According to the Liverpool Standard it was visited "by a great number of the most respectable families of the town and neighbourhood who, without exception, declared it to be the most interesting exhibition that they have ever witnessed". The Liverpool Mail noted that within the huge mouth of the Whale it was possible to accommodate "one hundred and fifty two tender juveniles of the infant school at one time".

In 1845 there was a printer, doctor, pork butcher, confectioners, basket maker and linen draper in Queens Square, as well as offices of the District Provident Society and the New Gas and Coke Company. However, most of the premises were occupied by trades to do with the fact this was Liverpool's wholesale vegetable market to which "carts laden with green stuff used to arrive on Fridays ready for Saturdays Market".

By 1904, Queens Square "with exception of the court theatre, and half dozen hotels was devoted to the wholesale disposal of fruit and vegetables". This was beginning to cause problems. Not only was there "the unblushing obstruction of the pavement.... By pyramids of strawberry and cherry filled boxes, towers of tomatoes, and castles of cabbages and cauliflowers", but the centre of the square was occupied by "an ever-varying body of coarse and brutal carters" likely to assail passers-by with

examples of obscene badinage and the latest gutter addition of Liverpool's extensive repertoire of blackguard vocabulary".

Matters improved and the writer in 1931 called Queens Square a beautiful corner of the town to walk through", where in the morning" you would be refreshed by the sight of thronged wagons laden with the odorous wealth of herb, root and blossom. Argosies of the farm".

On the north side of Queen Square was the elegant Georgian house built by William Roe in Hood Street (later Tryon Street). Its site is now lost under that part of the multi story car park that abuts the north wing of the hotel.

In about 1810 the house was converted into a hotel the Stork. The hotel was acquired by the Clancy Family in the 1880's and they owned it for over 90 years. It was substantially modernised and improved in 1948-56, but was eventually closed and demolished at the end of 1976. The Stork was one of a number of hotels in the area, including St Johns hotel in St Johns Lane and the Victoria Hotel on the corner of St Johns Lane and Roes Street.

On the south side of the square, in Roe Street, named after William Roe, was from 1828 to 1881, the Amphitheatre, later the Royal Court Theatre. The Amphitheatre Tavern, one of many pubs in and around the square, was a favourite with artists and thespians. Mrs Stebbing, its landlady for many years, has a box in the theatre which could be entered from the tavern.

Close to roe Street was the old Fall Well, first referred to in 1568, which until the end of the 18th century was the town's main supply of water. In about 1790 when the well was no longer needed for public purposes, Roe had the water piped to his garden where it formed a fountain for many years.

Queens Square market continued to trade after the Second World War, but the area became increasingly neglected and rundown. The Shankland Plan of 1964 included ideas for improvements to Roe Street and Hood Street and proposals for elevated walkways and pedestrian precincts. In the 1970's most of the building in and around the Square development package and conversion into North Western Hall, a student hall of residence for Liverpool John Moore's University.

On the same side of the road is the empire Theatre, first built in 1866. The present building dates from 1923. The theatre was fully refurbished and modernised in 1998, and an annexe, on the site of the legs of Mutton public house, completed in 2002.

Across the road is St Georges Hall, designed in 1839 by 25 year old Harvey Lonsdale Elms. His final plans were agreed in 1841, but he died in 1847 and the building was finished by C.R.Cockerell. It was completed in 1856. Nikolaus pevsner describes it as 'the freest neo- Grecian building in England and one of the finest in the world'. Outside are statues to Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield and Major- General William Earle who was killed in the Sudan in 1885.

Inside, red granite columns round the walls of the Great hall support a mighty tunnel-vault, inspired by Blouet's reconstruction of the baths of Caracalla in Rome, published in 1828. Between the columns are statues of various worthies, including Sir William Brown. The Floor of Minton tiles is only uncovered once or twice a year, to protect it from damage. The Concert room, entirely by Cockerell, is a circular with a curving balcony supported by the figures of maidens. In 2002 work began on 18 million refurbishment of the Hall.

On St Georges Plateau are two equestrian statues to Prince Albert and Queen Victoria, both by Tomas Thorneycroft in 1866 and 1870, four sandstone lions designed by C.R Cockerell (he also did the decorative lamp standards) and in the centre, the Cenotaph by Lionel Budden. It was unveiled on November 11th 1930 by Edward Stanley, 17th Earl of Derby.

North is the 132 feet high Wellington Monument which commemorates his victories in the peninsula War. It was designed by G.A.Lawson and completed in May 1863, although the relief panel of the final battle at Waterloo was only fixed in place in December 1865.

Nearby in the Steble Fountain presented by Lieut. Colonel R.F Steble in 1877 and unveiled by Mayor of Liverpool in 1879. Four Bronze Figures, two male, two female, support a large bowl. Between the fountain and the Wellington Monument are the Standard measures for one foot, two feet and imperial yard at 62 degrees Fahrenheit as verified by the Standards Department of the board of Trade.

This hill was previously known as Shaw's brow. The potteries original here were converted to various other uses, such as soap works, builder yards, and so on. In the 1850's they were all demolished to make way for a fine series of buildings now to be seen. First the Country Sessions House 1884, built to the design of F & G Holme. Above the portico is the coat of arms of Lancashire County Council.

Next is the Walker art gallery, 1874-77 by Sherlock & Vale, paid for by Andrew Barclay Walker, founder of Walker Brewery, in celebration of being elected Major. The statues outside, in Carrara marble, of Michelangelo and Raphael, are by Warrington Wood in 1877. He also did all allegorical statue of Liverpool on the roof over the main entrance. In 2002 the Gallery reopened after completion of a 4.6million refurbishment.

Then came the Picton Reading Room, 1875-79 by Cornelius Sherlock, with its semicircular front with Corinthian columns. It is followed by the William Brown Library and Museum, built 1857-60. Brown gave £40,000 towards the cost of the Library and in his honour the name of the street was changed to William Brown Street, and a statue was commissioned and placed in the great hall of St George's Hall, as already mentioned. He was knighted in 1863. The Library was gutted in the Second World War, and rebuilding only began in 1957, commemorated by a large plaque unveiled by HM the Queen Mother. Finally, on the corner of William Browne Street and Byrom Street, an extension to the museum was built 1896-1902.

On the other side of William Brown is St Johns Gardens, designed by Liverpool Corporation Surveyor Thomas Shelmerdine and officially opened for the enjoyment of the public in perpetuity in June 1904. Previously there stood here the church of St John the Baptist, by T. Lightoller, consecrated in 1784. The last service was held in 1898, and demolition began the following year. 27,000 bodies were buried in the old churchyard.

Near St Georges Hall are statues to William Rathbone 1819-1902. Merchant and Philanthropist and Sir Arthur Bower Firewood, 1836-1898, Liverpool Merchant and ship-owner, both by Sir George Frampton. In the Garden itself it is a statue by Sir Thomas Brock to William Ewart Gladstone, born in Liverpool in 1809, with allegorical figures, panels, cartouches and swags in Bronze. In the centre is a large memorial to The Kings Liverpool Regiment by Sir William Goscombe John, unveiled in 1905 by Field Marshal Sir George White.

There are also statues to Monsignor James Nugent, 1822-1905, 'The Apostle of Temperance, The protector of the Orphan Child. The Consoler of the Prisoner, The Reformer of the Criminal, The Saviour of Fallen Womanhood, and the Friend of all in Poverty and affliction": Alexander Balou. 1824-1886, ship-owner and philanthropist, and Canon T. Major Lester, 1829-1903, a pioneer in founding homes and schools for feeding and education destitute children. Among various other monuments in the Garden is one of the Frenchmen who died in the captivity in Liverpool 1772-1803, whose bodies lie in the old cemetery of St. John the Baptist.

Beside the Garden, in St John's Lane , next to the Liverpool Marriott, can be seen Queens Square, including the Stork Hotel, were demolished, and the cleared area was used as car park, which still stands today.

The Development of Queens Square

It was in 1991 that Neptune Developments, a Liverpool based company partly owned by Amey Construction, first presented their ideas for the comprehensive development of the area bounded by St Johns Lane, Roe Street, Hood Street and Whitechapel , with Queens Square as its heart. Plans included a luxury hotel, a multi story car park, and a leisure development of cafes, restaurants and bars.

In February 1995 the Queen Square Group, an association of organisation involved in the development of Queens Square, was launched by Robin Squire. It consisted of Liverpool City Challenge, Government Challenge Fund, Liverpool City Council, English Partnerships, Liverpool John Moore's University, and National Museums & Galleries on Merseyside, Neptune Developments, Land Securities, Liverpool City Centre partnership, Mersey travel and Royal Court Theatre.

As well as the area immediately around Queens Square other major capital schemes in the overall package included an extended retail complex in Williamson square total re-vamp of the square itself, new modern facilities in Roe Street , the conversion of the former Midlands goods Depot in Crosshall street into the National Museums and Galleries Conservation Centre, the conversion of Victoria Exchange(the old Liverpool Daily Post and Echo headquarters) into offices, the refurbishment of the Royal Court Theatre and the refurbishment of the North Western Hotel in Lime Street to provide student accommodation.

However the focal point for the massive £90 million project, the largest urban development in Britain, was a new luxury 4-str hotel to be built, in Queen Square.

The Swallow Hotel Liverpool

From about 1993 Swallow Hotels Ltd, then a division of Sunderland based brewing and hotels group Vaux Group PLC, had been advising Neptune on all aspects of the design, equipment and aesthetics of the proposed hotel. A new company was formed, Neptune Swallow Hotel Ltd, and exchange for a management contract to run the new hotel on its completion, Swallow agreed to purchase 50% of its equity.

Following the decision on January 19th 1996 to grant the £90 million Queen Square Development European Objective One funding, the go ahead was given to build a new 4 star 146 bedroom hotel. The total cost of the hotel was £14.7 million of this, Neptune Developments and Swallow Hotels funded 38.9 million, with another £2.9 million from each English Partnerships and Objective One.

Site Preparation works for the hotel got under way in early November 1996. The official start on the 4th December was attended by Frank Prendergast, Leader of Liverpool City Council, and Ged Fitzgerald, Director of Liverpool City Challenge, leader of the Queens Group. By March 1997 the whole Queen Square development, including the hotel, was taking shape. The Hotel consisted of a large circular tower from which extended two wings on the north-west and north –east sides. A further two story extension projected south-west from the tower. A car park with 513 spaces was constructed on the north side of the hotel.

In October 1997 Peter Rigby, who had been Swallow since 1981, was named as the new hotels General Manager. Four months before the hotel was due to open £850,000 of bookings was secured. The soft opening of the property was on August 7th, with the hotel opening of the property fully for business on August 24th 1998. The hotel was officially opened on October 30th by Deputy Prime Minister the Rt.Hon, John Prescott, MP, who unveiled a plaque marking the occasion.

In its first three months of operation the Swallow hotel, Liverpool exceeded profit expectations by 35%, and provided a major boost for local employment creating over 100 new full and part time jobs. The hotel won the Hotel of the Year Award in 1999 at The Mersey Tourism Awards.

Liverpool Marriott Hotel City Centre

In January 2000 Whitbread PLC, holders of Marriott Franchise in Britain, acquired the Swallow Group, as it had then become, for £578 million , and thus became the owners of the Swallow Hotel , Liverpool. On July 31st 2000 the hotel was named the Liverpool Marriott Hotel City Centre. Whitbread also acquired full ownership of the Neptune Swallow Hotel Ltd.

The traditional Marriott Key Ceremony at which the key is symbolically disposed to mark the fact that the hotel is always open took place on august 8th 2000. Guests include Liverpool Lord Major Eddie Clein and Everton Chairman Sir Phillip Carter. Special Guests of honour were Louise and Patrick Melia who had the Swallow Hotels First official guests two years earlier. They released a balloon carrying a special golden key one of 1,000 balloons carrng arrange of prizes.

In 2001 the Lord Majors and Lady Mayoress of Liverpool, Councillor and Mrs Eddie Clein officially opened the hotels restaurant for its associates, named 'The Scouse House', On March 29th, International Scouse Day. Scouse, a meat and vegetable stew, is often on the menu.

The Hotel won the creative sales promotion of the Year Award at the Mersey Tourism Awards 2001 with the launch of its new ground floor café bar concept Vivacity 'A taste of City Life', in November 2001.

A Guide to Places of interest within a Few minutes Walk of the Hotel.

The guide for guests begins in Queens Square, which cab be reached from the entrance door to the left of Reception. It then continues in an anti-clockwise direction around the hotel.

The Rose garden in the square, created in 1998, is a tribute to the memory of Diane Princess of Wales (1961-97), as the plaque explains. Nearby is a sculpture in Hollington sandstone by Nicholas Pope. It was moved here in 1998 after originally being commissioned for the international Garden Festival held in Liverpool in 1984. Beside it s

circular plaque in the pavement marks a time capsule buried in 1998 to commemorate the centenary of the city's Education offices in Sir Thomas Street.

Turn left toward the bus station. To the left can be seen the red brick façade of the Royal Court Theatre. The History of this stage began in 1826 with the opening of Cooke's Olympic Circus. In 1828 it was taken over by the famous Ducrow who staged spectacular equestrian shows at what he named The Amphitheatre. This was demolished in 1881, and the Royal Court Theatre built to replace it. This was burnt out in 1933, demolished in 1937, to be succeeded by the present structure which opened in October 1938.

Immediately to the right of the Royal Court, Great Charlotte used to lead to the adjoining St John Fish Markets, one for Retail, one for Wholesale. These were first opened for public use in 1837. The road and pavement was often filled with ' a mixed mass oyster shells, smashed fish, seaweed and cods heads', and pedestrians were besieged by " numbers of shoeless maidens whose vocabulary is enriched by a supplementary lexicon and lurid expletives used freely and extravagantly".

Opposite the fish Market in Great Charlotte street was St Johns Market, which first opened in 1822 and specialised in fruit, meat and provisions. It was an impressive building. "On entering the interior the spectator is amazed at the immense size of the Structure, its loftiness, lightness and airiness", Compared with this "Westminster Hall is a moderate sized Room".

The St John's Markets was demolished in 1964. On the site was built the St John Centre "Liverpool's Biggest Shopping experience" (until Liverpool One). The was constructed in 1969, on three levels in the 1970's the shopping malls became fully enclosed. A major refurbishment took place in 1988-89 when it was created in its present form, on two levels. Many other improvements have subsequently been made.

Go past the circular Queen Square Centre building down a short street to Williamson Square. This was built by the Williamson Family in about 1700 on the edge of a marsh. One side of the square is occupied by the Liverpool Play house, built in 1865 as the Star Music Hall. The interior was remodelled in 1912-13. The streets leading off the Square all bear the names of old families in the town, the Dawson's, Richmond's, Tarlatons, and Houghton ect.

Turn up the latter, and a few yards takes you to the foot of St Johns beacon, which is 450 feet high. It was completed in 1970 and was originally designed to act as a chimney to disperse fumes from boilers of the St John's Centre, although it has not served this purpose since a heating system was installed in 1989. It was built to withstand wind of up to 150 miles per hour, and able too sway two feet in any direction. A revolving restaurant , 378 feet above sea level, which could rotate every 20, 40 or 60minutes, enjoyed panoramic views from Pennines to Snowdonia and far out to sea. The Beacon was officially opened by HM The Queen on June 24th 1971. The closure of the restaurant marked the end of public access to the structure which now serves as home to Radio City 96.7FM.

Continue round the outside of the St Johns Centre and cross Lime Street, previously Limekiln Lane, taking its name from the lime- Kilns there in the 18th century, to Lime Street Station. Inside are two great curving train sheds. That on the left was begun in 1867, and then had the largest span in the world. The almost identical extension on the right dates from 1874-79. From the end of the platforms can be seen the famous cuttings and tunnels leading up and out of the station to Edge Hill and so often photographed in the days of steam.

The building of the Mersey Tunnel, the worlds largest under water tunnel at the time, resulted in the demolition of all the buildings in the area bounded by Old Hay market, Manchester Street and Dale Street. Work Began in December 1925. The engineers were Sir Basil Mott and J.A. Brodie. It was opened on July 18th 1934 by King George V. At the side of the entrance to the tunnel are bronze statue of the King, and Queen Mary, both by Sir W. Goscombe John. They were unveiled by HRH Prince George, then Duke of Kent, in July 1939, though were not then in their present position. In July 1994 the statue were rededicated by HRH the Duke of Kent to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of the Queensway Tunnel.

To the left of the tunnel entrance Victoria Street as formed 1867-68. Imperial Buildings on the sharp angled corner of Whitechapel and Victoria Street, once a bank, dates from 1879. Note Abbey Buildings, then Carlisle Buildings and Jerome buildings with seven griffin like figures; then Crowne Buildings of 1886. These are just a handful of Liverpool's rich heritage of Victorian architecture.

Liverpool is a truly magnificent and exciting City.....

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