



City of Westminster

# Cabinet Member Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Cabinet Member for the Built Environment
<b>Date:</b>	12 October 2016
<b>Classification:</b>	For General Release
<b>Title:</b>	Commemorative Green Plaque for the Centenary of The Ivy Restaurant , 1 – 5 West Street, WC2
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	St. James's
<b>Key Decision:</b>	The report does not involve the Key Decision
<b>Financial Summary:</b>	The Green Plaque Scheme depends on sponsorship. Sponsorship has been secured for this plaque
<b>Report of:</b>	Director of Policy, Performance and Communications

## 1. Executive Summary

*The Ivy* restaurant has an incredibly long history from its beginnings as an unlicensed café in 1917, to London's great showbiz venue, to the celebrated eating place it is today, - the place to see and to be seen in.

## 2. Recommendations

That the nomination for a Westminster Commemorative Green Plaque for the Centenary of *The Ivy* Restaurant at 1-5 West Street, be approved, subject to sponsorship in full.

## 3. Reasons for decision

In June 2015 *The Ivy* opened its doors to the public once again following a five month closure for a major refurbishment which has seen one of London's most iconic restaurants enter a new chapter, ahead of its centenary celebrations in 2017.

## 4. Policy Context

The commemorative Green Plaques scheme complements a number of Council strategies: to improve the legibility and understanding of Westminster's heritage and social history; to provide information for Westminster's visitors; to provide imaginative and accessible educational tools to raise awareness and understanding of local areas, particularly for young people; to celebrate the richness and diversity of Westminster's former residents.

## 5. Background

### 5.1 The Early Years

5.1.1 The original restaurant was opened by Abel Giandellini in 1917 as a modest unlicensed Italian café in a building on this same site. Soon after its opening Mario Gallati joined Monsieur Abel as his Maitre d' and was instrumental in transforming the premises into the grand restaurant customers would still recognise today.

5.1.2 Legend has it that the name itself originated from a chance remark by the actress Alice Delysia when she heard Giandellini apologise to a customer for the inconvenience caused by building works. When he said it was because of his intention to create a restaurant of the highest class, she interjected saying, "Don't worry, we will always come to see you, we will cling together like the ivy", (a line from a popular song at the time).

5.1.3 The restaurant expanded into its new and current premises in 1929 still run by Giandellini and Gallati. In part due to its proximity to the West End Theatres, its exclusivity and late closing time, the restaurant quickly became a theatrical institution, with Laurence Olivier, Vivien Leigh, Marlene Dietrich, John Gielgud, Lillian Braithwaite, Terence Rattigan, Binkie Beaumont and Noel Coward being regulars at their usual two-seater tables along the walls.

### 5.2 The Post-War Years

5.2.1 In 1945 Mario Gallati continued his successful career when he left *The Ivy* and opened *Le Caprice* in 1947, and another restaurant legend was born.

5.2.2 In 1950 *The Ivy* entered a less glamorous phase when Giandellini sold it to Bernard Walsh and the restaurant became part of his *Wheeler's* group of fish restaurants. Subsequent owners were Joseph Melatini, Lady Grade, and the Forte Organisation, before the premises closed briefly in 1989.

5.2.3 In 1990 the restaurant was bought by Jeremy King and Chris Corbin, who already owned *Le Caprice*. The restaurant was totally renovated to a design by American architect M.J. Long, incorporating specially commissioned works by contemporary artists: Sir Eduardo Paolozzi, Sir Peter Blake, Sir Howard Hodgkin,

Bridget Riley, Allen Jones, Joe Tilson, Patrick Caulfield, Michael Craig-Martin, and Tom Phillips. Under Senior Maitre d' Fernando Peire, the restaurant opened in June 1990 and became a sensation. Restored to its former glory, the restaurant soon re-established itself as London's favourite theatre restaurant.

5.2.4 In 1998 the restaurant was sold to Belgo PLC as part of Caprice Holdings Ltd., and Peire left, while Corbin and King departed two years later to establish their own *Rex* restaurants.

### 5.3 The Ivy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

5.3.1 In 2005 the clothing entrepreneur, Richard Caring, started acquiring a vast restaurant empire. He bought *The Ivy* and the Caprice Holdings Group which included, *Le Caprice*, the fish restaurant *J. Sheekey*, *Scotts* in Mount Street and subsequently opened *34* in Grosvenor Square.

5.3.2 In September 2008 *The Club at The Ivy*, a private members club, was opened on the three floors above the restaurant. With a membership drawn primarily from the creative industries and the arts, it is accessed via a hidden entrance off an adjacent flower shop.

5.3.3 *The Club*, provides a place to work, relax and socialise in the heart of London's West End and includes a piano lounge, dining room open for breakfast, lunch and supper, and a wood-panelled library of books that mirrors the members' interests in art, literature, films, theatre, architecture and design. Other facilities include a film screening room, entertainment space, a private dining room and a cigar-terrace. The Director of *The Club* is Fernando Peire, a former Maitre d' who is widely known from the Channel 5 television series *The Restaurant Inspector*.

5.3.4 In January 2015 *The Ivy* closed for refurbishment. Richard Caring (owner of Caprice Holdings) commissioned Martin Brudnizki Design Studio (the firm that had worked on many big, lush restaurants: *Scott's*, *Dean Street Townhouse*, etc) to re-think the restaurant and bring it firmly into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. While *The Ivy* was shut, new branches were opened, including *The Ivy Café Marylebone* and *The Ivy Market Grill* off Covent Garden.

5.3.5 Following the closure, most of the restaurant's surplus fixtures and fittings were sold for charity (Child Bereavement UK) at Sotheby's, for surprising prices. Bridget Riley's Ivy painting, estimated at £120,000-£180,000 realising £413,000, for example, while even the sign to the Ladies, estimated at £100-£150, made £7,500.

5.3.6 The Ivy restaurant and private room re-opened in June 2015. The restaurant's iconic features such as the harlequin stained glass windows, green leather banquettes, oak fittings, mirrors, gentle lighting and remarkable collection of contemporary British art

(plus a few more including a Damien Hurst) were all incorporated, but offsetting them is a sumptuous new central dining bar in the middle of the restaurant emulating the triangular site as a whole, a larger entrance showcasing the original Eduardo Paolozzi installation, more booths, banquettes and corner tables and completely redesigned toilets. Reminiscent of the past but apt for the 21st century, the refurbishment pulls off the feat of seeming at once completely familiar and yet thoroughly renewed.

5.3.7 For the opening Chef Gary Lee created a balanced seasonal menu, still featuring Ivy classics, but accounting for today's tastes, incorporating more Asian dishes, salads and vegetables, and the advent of a "sea and shells" section. Director Fernando Peire continues to lead a strong and experienced team to deliver the same excellent service for which *The Ivy* has become well known over the years.

## **5.4 Accolades**

5.4.1 A recipe book written by restaurant critic A. A. Gill and titled *The Ivy: The Restaurant and its Recipes* was published in 1997.

The Ivy was the inspiration for the restaurant of the same name in Los Angeles, though not connected.

In 2000 the restaurant was awarded the Moët & Chandon London Restaurant Award for Excellence.

According to the late actor Donald Sinden in his Sky Arts television documentary series "Great West End Theatres", *The Ivy* became so famous as a haunt of theatrical-celebrities that in the 1943 revue *Sweet and Low* (which ran for almost six years at the neighbouring Ambassadors Theatre) there was a satirical sketch included, updated regularly, entitled *Poison Ivy*, where the show's star Hermione Gingold "would exchange wicked and salacious celebrity gossip".

## **6. Financial Implications**

The cost of the plaque, its installation and Green Plaque Scheme administration costs will be borne by the sponsors, Caprice Holdings. There is no cost to Westminster City Council.

## **7. Legal Implications**

The property is not listed, therefore a Listed Building Consent application is not required.

## **8. Consultation**

The owners of 1-5 West Street, Caprice Holdings, who are also the sponsors, support the nomination. Ward Members have been consulted and no objections have been raised.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact: Kim Patterson**

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1**

Location plan of 1-5 West Street, WC2 at 1:1250 scale

### **Appendix 2**

Photo Montage showing proposed location of The Ivy Restaurant plaque at 1-5 West Street.

### **Appendix 3**

Wording and layout of proposed The Ivy Restaurant Plaque

For completion by the **Cabinet Member** for the Built Environment

**Declaration of Interest**

I have <no interest to declare / to declare an interest> in respect of this report

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: **Councillor Robert Davis MBE DL**

State nature of interest if any .....

.....  
*(N.B: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter)*

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled

**Commemorative Green Plaque for the Centenary of The Ivy Restaurant, 1-5 West Street, WC2**

Signed .....

Cabinet Member for the Built Environment

Date .....

If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment: .....  
.....  
.....

If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Strategic Director Finance and Performance and, if there are resources implications, the Strategic Director of Resources (or their representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.

Note to Cabinet Member: Your decision will now be published and copied to the Members of the relevant Policy & Scrutiny Committee. If the decision falls within the criteria for call-in, it will not be implemented until five working days have elapsed from publication to allow the Policy and Scrutiny Committee to decide whether it wishes to call the matter in.

## Appendix A

### Other Implications

#### 1. Resources Implications

1.1 There are no resources implications arising from this report

#### 2. Business Plan Implications

2.1 There are no Business Plan implications arising from this report

#### 3. Risk Management Implications

3.1 There are no risk management implications arising from this report

#### 4. Health and Wellbeing Impact Assessment including Health and Safety Implications

4.1 There are no health and safety and wellbeing issues arising from this report

#### 5. Crime and Disorder Implications

5.1 There are no crime and disorder issues arising from this report

#### 6. Impact on the Environment

6.1 There are no environmental issues arising from this report

#### 7. Equalities Implications

7.1 There are no equality issues arising from this report

#### 8. Staffing Implications

8.1 There are no staffing issues arising from this report

#### 9. Human Rights Implications

9.1 There are no issues relating to responsibilities under the Human Rights Act 1998 arising from this report

## **10. Energy Measure Implications**

10.1 There are no energy measure issues arising from this report

## **11. Communications Implications**

11.1 Should this report be approved and an unveiling ceremony arranged the Council's press section will be informed

Note to report authors: If there are particularly significant implications in any of the above categories these should be moved to the main body of the report.