



Views of the Orford Yard Premises from plans drawn up in 1901

History of the Orford Yard Site

The Norwich Trade Directory of 1886 shows that William Spinks ran a livery stable on this site, apparently owned by Messrs. Bullard and Sons, the brewers.

In 1901 plans for John Pollock's new veterinary premises were drawn up by Edward Boardman and Son, Architects.

The initials 'JP' could once be seen, along with the words 'forge', 'shoeing', 'livery' and 'stable', around the top of the archway into the yard.

The site was cleared of the old buildings in 1902 and the premises, much as you see them today, were built.

In 1911 Harry Percy Standley MRCVS., took over the practice and by 1952 John McLintock MRCVS., Thomas Francis Tunning MRCVS., and James Phillips MRCVS., were in residence. By 1962 the practice went under the name of 'McLintock and Partners'.

The practice moved in 1963 to Chapelfield, to be replaced at Orford Yard, by Hatch and Hatch, solicitors, who were, in turn, replaced by Norwich City Markets Division in 1967. (Norwich and Nottingham are the only two places in the country to have a clerk to the Market. The Norwich Office dates from the 15th. Century)

The ground floor of the building at the top end of the yard was eventually converted to a restaurant, named Morello's later 'Orfords' and then 'Des Ami', and at that time still contained the original horse stalls. It also housed the operating room with blocks and pulleys for lifting the animals.

There is a concrete ribbed ramp in the right hand corner of the yard, now partly hidden by a metal staircase, which, until 2001, was still covered in 'Coconut matting, which was used for leading the horses up to the reinforced concrete first floor.



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This part of the premises was used for some time as a Dance Studio. Looking up under the overhang, you will see a trap door and above this, the pulleys and gearing, for lifting hay and provisions into the stables, still exist.

The blacksmith used the building on the left of the yard. Later used as an art studio and framing shop.

The whole building was granted Part II listed Status in the 90's.

The Restaurant, Dance Studio and Framing Shop were all closed in September 98 their businesses located to other areas of the city.

August 2001 saw the latest change in use, when Loose's opened a Cookshop and Giftware retail outlet on the site and covered part of the yard with a glass atrium.

There has been a Cafe in the present location since the 1970's. It was Mr Hugh Fenns' daughter Gail who spotted an empty office building on the site, owned by the city council and thought she would like to open a café on the site. This was in the late 70s. She approached her then boss, the owner of Zacs, where she worked, and he agreed. So they opened a French style café, Gail was in charge and it was called La Metropolitan.

We have a pencil drawing of the outside of the café dated 1980, so you can see what it looked like in those days. You can see from this that the premises, as seen from the outside, have changed little over the years. The place was much smaller then and the kitchen was at the top, not where it is now which was part of John Olivers, the hairdressers. The café was very popular with French students from the college and from this connection Gail went to Pau in France

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and visited a restaurant there called La Gourmandine. She was offered a job there and took it, so leaving La Metropolitan and the history continues

In the early 1980's a Persian called Hadi Sadaat next took possession and renamed the Café, Morello's during his ownership Morello's became, for a time, a 'Vegetarian' restaurant

The cafe was closed for a time in the late 80's and then in 1991 was completely refurbished, and 'Cafe Morello' re-opened under new owners, Linda and Bryan Preece. In October 1998 Pam and Steven Halstead joined them to form a four way partnership which lasted until July 2004 when Linda and Bryan decided to take well earned retirement.

Steven and Pam now continue as sole owners and their daughter Amy was the manageress for 5 years but in August 09 she went on Maternity leave and now has a healthy little girl called Lily to keep her busy. We try to maintain a friendly family style restaurant where our customers can escape from the bustle of everyday city life. A place, central, but just slightly removed from the main street, so as to create a relaxed atmosphere. In the summer we put tables outside so our customers can enjoy a fresh cup of coffee or other refreshment while basking in the sun and watching the less fortunate rush by in the busy thoroughfare outside! Or for the more cautious there are always shady spots where you can study and enjoy the flowers and plants which adorn the area.

Thankyou for visiting us. (If you enjoyed the experience, we hope you will tell your friends and come back)

Visit our web site at www.cafemorello.com for

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