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THREE PIGEONS

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THE SMITHFIELD MARKET CAST-IRON COLONNADE - BATCH 1

a set of Victorian industrial columns from the famous London meat market,
RESERVED,

each column, square section with inset rounded corners, knopped with a capital spreading to an octagonal top and raised on a substantial squared foot-plate with integral swept bracing, the top with fixing points for a matrix of girders, QUANTITY: Batch One... 18 Columns (36 columns in total selling in two batches of 18 - see separate entry for Batch 2)

DIMENSIONS: 386cm (152") High, 406cm (159^{3/4}") At Highest, 69cm (27^{1/4}") Wide, 69cm (27^{1/4}") Deep

STOCK CODE: 46374



HISTORY

Smithfield Market needs little introduction to any Londoner – tucked on the northern edge of the City of London it has been the hub of the meat trade for centuries. For many years the one-way system took you through the middle of the building as your drove from Holborn through to Finsbury Square. The columns are iconic – they divided each bay, between them hung that

day's carcasses, and they held aloft the offices in which the traders recorded their sales.

The City of London Corporation formally established a cattle market on the site under Royal Charter in 1638 but the trade in cattle had been centred there for centuries prior to that. Established outside of the City Walls – London soon encompassed it. This however was no hindrance to the drovers still bringing live herds into the market – they were inclined to stampede their cattle on occasion as they progressed through the succession of High Streets en route, apparently giving rise to the phrase “Bull in a china shop”. With droving and slaughter ongoing at scale in the centre of London it was to become a pretty grim location. Charles Dickens describes it in “Oliver Twist”:

The ground was covered nearly ankle deep with filth and mire; a thick steam perpetually rising from the reeking bodies of the cattle ... the unwashed, unshaven, squalid and dirty figures constantly running to and fro, and bursting in and out of the throng, rendering it a stunning and bewildering scene, which quite confounded the senses”.

In 1855 the live market was moved to Islington and Horace Jones was engaged to build a replacement: the Central London Meat Market – complete with its own link to the underground railway. This was to be a far more orderly and hygienic facility – extended on numerous occasions over ensuing decades with cavernous storage underground as refrigeration technology radically extended the radius from within which meat could be sourced – by Edwardian times Argentinian meat could be imported to Smithfields.

These columns have been salvaged from the cavernous “General Market” currently being re-developed as the Museum of London’s new home.

LASSCO have salvaged 36 of these columns in total. This is half of them:18 laid nose to tail comprises a full load in a 45’ articulated truck).