Lawyers and jewels make Holborn shine

The third in our series looking at how different areas are handling recession

ANALYSIS

ROSAMUND URWIN

BULLION might seem an unlikely bedfellow for the Bar. But they are neighbours in Holborn and Temple or "Midtown" as London's dwindling band of estate agents would have i , since the area lies between the West :nd and the City. As the recession bites, ocal tradesmen fear that lawyers may anguish and that sales of gold, silver and diamonds may slide.

Temple has long been the legal heartland of London, home to the Royal Courts of Justice, the Law Society and the four Inns: Lincoln's, Gray's, Inner Temple and Middle Temple, to one of which every barrister in England and Wales must belong. Its cobbled streets, locked at night and with boards listing each chamber's barristers — Tony Blair's name still appears — give it the otherworldly feel of an Oxbridge college.

Much has been written about the slew of solicitors' sackings, but how are these secretive Inns faring? "The Bar is not in a bubble where it is unaffected by recession," says Charles Hale, a member of the Bar Council and of Chambers 4

TAKING LONDON'S PULSE

HOLBORN & TEMPLE

VITAL STATISTICS

- Office rents, grade A (per sq ft) 2000: £47.50; 2007: £62.50; Now: £45.00
- Retail, High Holborn (per sq ft) 2003: £150 ; 2007: £180; Now: £180
- Two bedroom flat: 2000: £413,000;

ex Lentati

A Dickensian gem

TEDDY Shattock, above, is managing director of Aldridge Jewellers on Chancery Lane. He learnt his craft in nearby Hatton Garden. Five years ago he bought the 19th century shop which was home to Symond's Inn, where Charles Dickens worked as a junior law clerk and which featured in Bleak House. Shattock, 64, says: "Business is OK. We're old-fashioned so we do everything — engagement rings, repairs, valuations — and sell antique as well as modern, which is helping. Our main customers are barristers, judges and executives in the legal business and they are still coming in. Barristers are big spenders, particularly when they get a good fee. We also get a lot of surgeons as the Royal College of Surgeons is not far. We're getting a little boost from the Pound being weak, but the area is off the beaten track so we don't get too many tourists. Hatton Garden is now almost completely shops, whereas before there were workshops. The number of people learning the old skills of the jewellery trade has