

# Covent Garden Action Area Plan

**Foreword by Alan Greengross, Chairman of the GLC Covent Garden Committee**

The problem of the future of inner city areas is recognised today as one of the most pressing that faces us. Covent Garden thus offers London not merely a unique opportunity but also an overwhelming challenge. Its success will be a testimony to the fact that overall planning can provide, not on the basis of powerful or isolated interest, but for people as a whole. It (and maybe it alone) can unlock the future we seek.

The Action Area Plan we are adopting is an endeavour to strike a balance between our commitment to establish real residential communities in central London and the undisputed role that Covent Garden must play as a vital part of central London as a whole, together with all that means.

In line with current planning practice, therefore, the Plan is a broad and flexible one. Planning must never become an end in itself. The ideal plan provides the means to an end and, as such, must be able to develop as people's needs and reasonable aspirations develop, or as opportunities arise. Planners must never cling slavishly to a concept that has been overtaken by events.

Although successive Councils have worked for almost a decade to get to this stage, the real test can only come when proposals are put before this Council by private or municipal bodies. The Plan was devised and developed at a time of considerable financial restraint, both in the private and public sectors but its implementation will, we trust, span a period of increasing prosperity in both areas. The Council accordingly felt that this Plan, as modified, should be adopted as the Action Area Plan, and, as such, provide the broad basis for the future development of the area.

Circumstances may well arise which necessitate departures or changes to the Plan during its ten year life. Procedures exist to deal with this eventuality, including the opportunity for public examination in certain circumstances. This procedure, however will only be justifiable if acceptable real proposals come before the Council. The time for academic exercises and talking is over: we are, hopefully, entering the period of 'doing'.

Above everything else must be the creation of proper atmosphere and a proper framework to ensure the realisation of the areas possibilities. The final success of the Plan would be judged by its ability to meet the needs of the people of Covent Garden as a community, within a revitalised and essential area which can still play its full and proper role as an important part of central London.



Alan Greengross

**The  
Greater London Council  
(Covent Garden)  
GLC  
Action Area Plan**

**Resolution of Adoption  
Written Statement  
Proposals Map**

**RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION**

**COVENT GARDEN COMMITTEE  
24 JANUARY 1978**

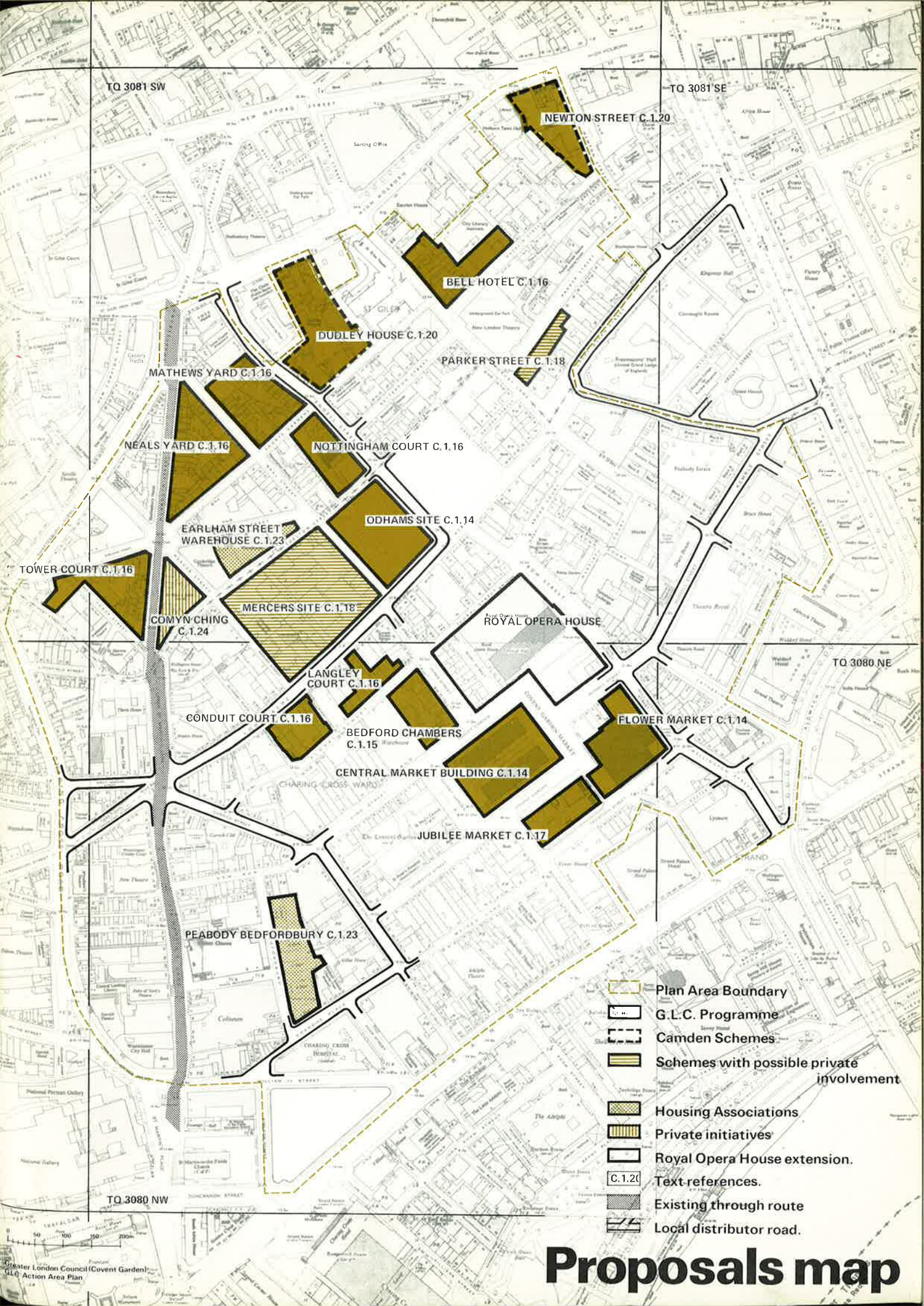
**Covent Garden Local Plan Adoption**

Report (20.1.78) by the Covent Garden Team Leader and  
Director of Legal Services CG 806.

Discussion.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1 That the Greater London Council (Covent Garden) GLC Action Area Plan be adopted;
- 2 That the Greater London Council (Covent Garden) GLC Action Area Plan shall become operative on 25 January 1978;
- 3 That the Director of Legal Services be authorised to take all necessary action in respect of (1) and (2) above; and
- 4 That following the adoption of the Plan, the Secretary of State for the Environment be requested to make an order pursuant to paragraph 6 of Schedule 7 to the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 revoking the provisions of the Initial Development Plan for Greater London inasmuch as they affect the area covered by the adopted Plan as aforementioned.



TQ 3081 SW

TQ 3081 SE

TQ 3080 NW

TQ 3080 NE

NEWTON STREET C.1.20

BELL HOTEL C.1.16

DUDLEY HOUSE C.1.20

PARKER STREET C.1.18

MATHEWS YARD C.1.16

NEALS YARD C.1.16

NOTTINGHAM COURT C.1.16

ODHAMS SITE C.1.14

EARLHAM STREET WAREHOUSE C.1.23

TOWER COURT C.1.16

COMYN-CHING C.1.24

MERCERS SITE C.1.18

ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

LANGLEY COURT C.1.16

CONDUIT COURT C.1.16

BEDFORD CHAMBERS C.1.15

FLOWER MARKET C.1.14

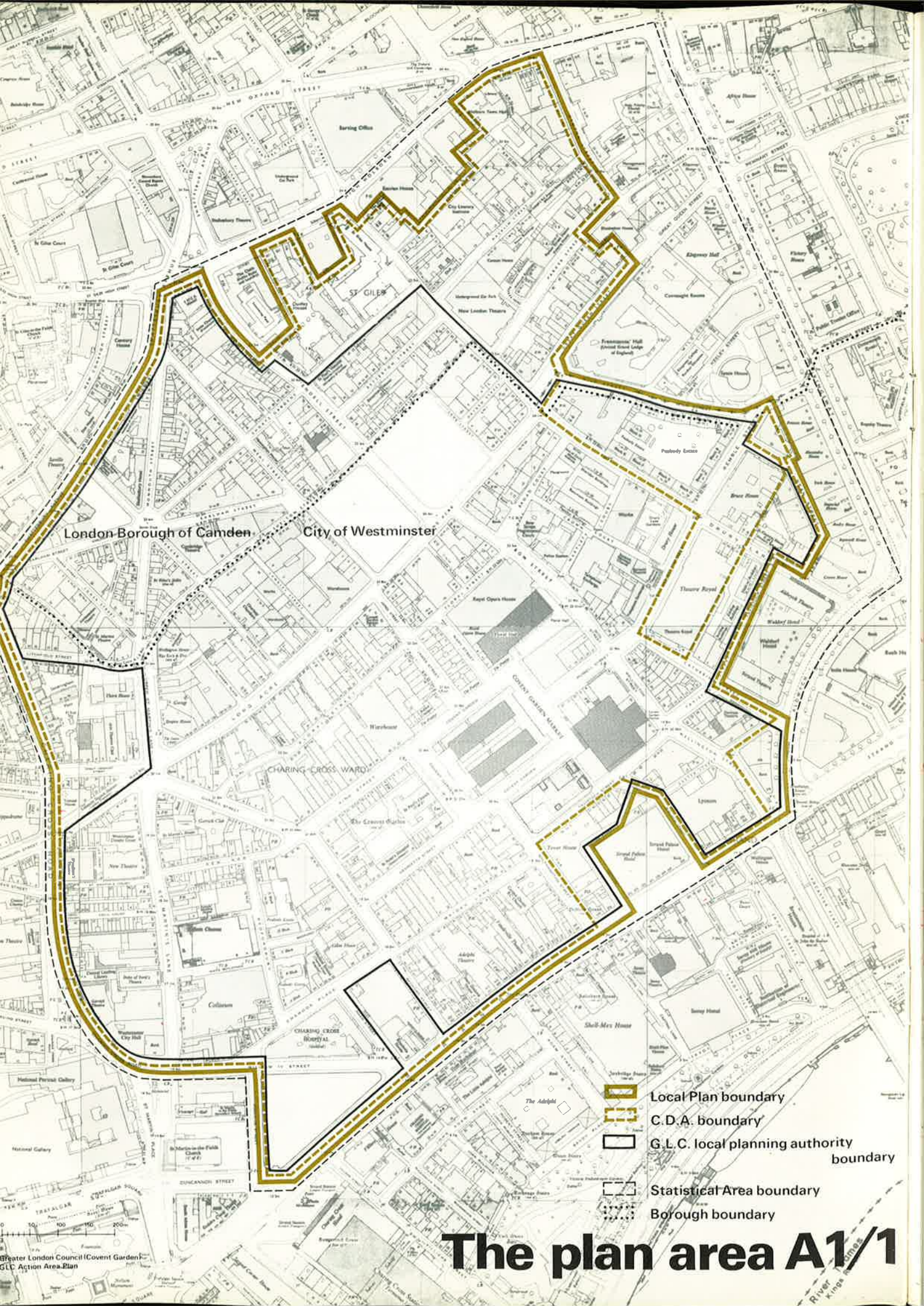
CENTRAL MARKET BUILDING C.1.14

JUBILEE MARKET C.1.17

PEABODY BEDFORDBURY C.1.23

-  Plan Area Boundary
-  G.L.C. Programme
-  Camden Schemes
-  Schemes with possible private involvement
-  Housing Associations
-  Private initiatives
-  Royal Opera House extension.
-  Text references.
-  Existing through route
-  Local distributor road.

# Proposals map








London Borough of Camden

City of Westminster

CHARING-CROSS WARD

CHARING CROSS HOSPITAL

-  Local Plan boundary
-  C.D.A. boundary
-  G.L.C. local planning authority boundary
-  Statistical Area boundary
-  Borough boundary

# The plan area A1/1

# SECTION A

## Introduction

A.1.1 On the submission of the Greater London Council (GLC) and after a Public Inquiry, the Initial Development Plan for Greater London was amended in 1973 by the Secretary of State for the Environment to include the designation of some 36 hectares (96 acres) of Covent Garden as a Comprehensive Development Area (CDA) to enable the local planning authority, the GLC, to deal satisfactorily with the consequences of the vacation of a large area of buildings which occurred following the removal of the market to Nine Elms, Wandsworth. At the same time the Secretary of State asked the Council to prepare an Informal Plan (ref.1) with full public participation to indicate in detail how the proposals would be implemented.

A.1.2 The area of Covent Garden is also included in the Greater London Development Plan (GLDP) (ref.2) as a future action area where comprehensive treatment by development, redevelopment or improvement should be carried out. The GLDP was approved by the Secretary of State on 9 July 1976 and is now the structure plan for Greater London.

A.1.3 The planning considerations of the Covent Garden future action area are described in the GLDP as follows:

*Consequent upon the removal of the Market to Nine Elms, 96 acres of Covent Garden have been approved in principle for comprehensive consideration. After an exercise in public participation the Council will prepare an Informal Plan illustrating how the scale of whatever new development is necessary can best be related to the present character of the area.*

A.1.4 Following the Secretary of State's direction of 8 November 1976 pursuant to paragraph 5(3) of Schedule 1 to the Town and Country Planning (Amendment) Act 1972 the Council has a duty to prepare a Local Plan for the Covent Garden Action Area.

A.1.5 The Secretary of State has indicated that the preparation of a statutory local plan for the area by the Council will dispense with the requirements to prepare the informal plan mentioned above.

A.1.6 The Council considers that the proposals contained in the Covent Garden GLC Action Area Plan (the Plan) conform generally to the GLDP, and that the procedural provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971, (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Plans for Greater London) Regulations 1974 as regards preparation and adoption of the Plan have been complied with.

### The existing development plan

A.1.7 The Statutory Development Plan for London in 1976 is

the GLDP together with the provisions of the IDP. However, when the Plan is statutorily adopted by the Council the Secretary of State may by order revoke the IDP for the area covered by the Plan to the extent that he considers necessary. Upon this revocation, the Development Plan will then be taken as consisting of the GLDP together with the provisions of the Plan.

### Liaison with adjoining local planning authorities

A.1.8 The Plan has been compiled with close and continuous liaison with the two adjoining local planning authorities, the Westminster City Council (Westminster) and the Camden Borough Council (Camden), to ensure that the proposals contained within the Plan are consistent with Borough policies. Also to ensure that in those policy areas where the Boroughs have the executive responsibility, that the Boroughs accept the policy statements for implementation purposes.

As part of the Council's liaison with the Boroughs due regard has been taken of the policies contained within the Central London Planning Conference's (CLPC) Advisory Plan for Central London (APCL).

### Public consultation

A.1.9 In the preparation of the Plan the Council has consulted extensively with local opinion, including the Forum of Representatives (Forum) (see A.4) which was established in 1974 to ensure that all facets of Covent Garden would have a voice in the reshaping of the area.

### The Plan Area (Map A1/1)

A.1.10 The Plan Area has been defined as the combined area of the CDA and the area defined in paragraph 3 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning Authorities in Greater London) Regulations 1965 for which the Council is local planning authority. For statistical purposes a wider area, bounded by the major perimeter roads, has been adopted as being the most appropriate basis for examining social and land use patterns and inter-relationships.

### The Plan Period

A.1.11 The Council consider that a ten year period is appropriate in view of the policies and proposals contained within the Plan. The proposals contained in Section C are capable of implementation within this timescale. The period of the Plan will thus extend for ten years from the date of adoption.

## A.2 Covent Garden Today

### Introduction

A.2.1 The Report of Survey (ref.3) was published in June 1974 to sponsor debate on Covent Garden's needs, assets, problems and opportunities. The six parts of the Report of Survey gave a detailed description of the area and anticipated the direct and indirect effects of the Market move to Nine Elms. Most of the description and comment presented in the Report of Survey remains an accurate assessment of Covent Garden in 1976. There have, however, been changes and as an essential part of the introduction to the Plan policies and proposals, this section highlights those of significance and describes the impact of public and private sector action which is either under way or committed.

### The Market move

A.2.2 A fundamental feature of Covent Garden today and a prime consideration of the Plan is the impact of the Market move at the end of 1974 on buildings, uses and people. Although change is an everyday feature of Central London life rarely is it so sudden or dramatic in any one particular area. Within the period of twenty four hours, the visual and economic character of the central core of Covent Garden changed completely. The market businesses vacated nearly 140,000 sq m (1,500,000 sq ft) of floorspace and the colour, humour, noise, congestion and debris of the wholesale market vanished. In the months immediately following the move, the stillness familiar to the heart of Covent Garden in the afternoon and evening extended over the whole night and day.

A.2.3 The indirect effects of the move were more subtle and less immediate in their impact. Although a few cafes closed with the loss of market custom, the character of others has changed, now seeking to meet the needs of the daytime working population. The working population fell by 4,000 or nearly 10% of the total and this sharp decline had an adverse effect on the viability of some local shops and services. Contrary to popular opinion, less than 5% of the resident population were employed in market activities and the move had little effect on the employment or journey to work of local residents.

A.2.4 One of the longest lasting effects of the market move will be the environmental and locational attractiveness of Covent Garden for other business activities; but also significant will be the effect on those local businesses which benefited from the occupation of surplus market traders accommodation during recent years when the market operations had contracted. The uncertainty which had affected property as regards its use, its condition and hence, its rental value since the Market Authority began to consider relocation in the early 1960's has been widely recognised and is the main factor in explaining why Covent Garden has changed so little in the last decade compared with most parts of Central London. With the environmental improvements and the building works now being carried out by property owners, some increase in rental values can be expected. Whilst such changes could pose difficulties for those businesses where rent and rates are sensitive factors in overall costs, the ability of businesses to adjust to the economic realities of this Central London location should not be underestimated. It is thought that the effect of such changes will be neither widespread nor severe.

### A changing pattern of uses

A.2.5 The wide diversity of uses and activities in Covent Garden is an essential feature of its economic and visual character. Among the variety of activities present in the area are

publishing and bookselling; stamp dealing; businesses serving the theatrical and entertainment industries; Government offices; professional, legal and educational services; and a growing number of art and design activities. Indications are that the mixed use character of the area is being maintained and is becoming even more diverse with the gradual take-up of former market property.

A.2.6 The analysis of planning applications submitted between the market move and Summer 1976 show a predominance for shops and restaurants at street level with light industrial users on the upper floors. There have been many applications for restaurants and wine bars around the Piazza area. New specialised shops have moved into Long Acre, Drury Lane and Wellington Street and new showrooms into Long Acre and Drury Lane. Light and general industrial uses are more widely dispersed and include costumiers, theatre lighting specialists, printers, musical instrument repairers, film editors and photographic trades. Many of these new uses are closely linked to the theatre, publishing and other traditional activities in the area.

### A summary of land uses

A.2.7 For an area such as Covent Garden, where uses and activities are so diverse, the conventional statistical approach in the presentation of land use data is often too coarse-grained to be particularly informative or descriptive of economic character. However, a broad summary of land uses and a comparison of changes over recent years does provide a useful context for the consideration of policies and proposals. For this purpose Table

**Table A.2.1**  
**Covent Garden Land Uses**

Use Occupied	Floorspace		
	1966 (%)	1971* (%)	Sept 1975 (%)
Offices	454 (34)	478 (34)	434 (33)
Shops, Cafes and Pubs	135 (10)	119 (9)	97 (7)
Commerce	170 (13)	128 (9)	52 (4)
Public Buildings and Entertainment	126 (9)	172 (12)	180 (14)
Industry	79 (6)	42 (3)	40 (3)
Hotels	53 (4)	54 (4)	53 (4)
Education	23 (2)	18 (1)	19 (1)
Residential	153 (11)	136 (10)	139 (11)
Other uses (includes Public utilities and Hospitals)	88 (6)	84 (6)	67 (5)
<b>Total Occupied Floorspace</b>	<b>1281 (95)</b>	<b>1231 (88)</b>	<b>1081 (82)</b>
Vacant (includes Buildings under construction)	74 (5)	169 (12)	229 (18)
<b>Total — all uses</b>	<b>1355 (100)</b>	<b>1400 (100)</b>	<b>1310 (100)</b>

Source: 1966 and 1971 Land Use Survey and updated to September 1975 on a change basis.

Notes: Floorspace figures are given in '000 sq m. Percentage distributions of floorspace are shown in brackets.

\*Although dated 1971, amendments have been made to the 1971 land use figures to allow for major changes that had taken place to early 1974.



A.2.1 sets out the volume of floorspace in each broad land use category for 1966, 1971 and 1975 (September). Table A.2.2 compares vacant floorspace in 1971 and 1975 by the major use categories.

**Table A.2.2**  
**Covent Garden Vacant Floorspace**

Use Category	1971	1975 (Sept)
Offices	74	84
Commerce	15	72
Industry	12	7
Other uses (excluding residential)	13	18
Vacant Land and Buildings under Construction	16	22

Source: 1971 Land Use Survey and updated to September 1975 on a change basis.

Floorspace figures are given in '000 sq m.

**N.B. Unless otherwise stated all Land Use Statistics used in the Plan refer to September 1975.**

A.2.8 The substantial decline in occupied commercial and office floorspace between 1971 and 1975 was largely the result of the Market move to Nine Elms. Since, September 1975, the volume of occupied office floorspace is estimated to have increased to nearly 450,000 sq.m. with the occupation of Space House and the gradual take-up of former market property. The total for industrial floorspace in 1975 shows the dramatic decline evident between 1966 and 1971, which has not continued in recent years. The fall in occupied floorspace for 'other uses' is due to the relocation of the Charing Cross Hospital at a new site in Fulham.

A.2.9 The relationship between vacant and occupied floorspace is changing fairly rapidly. Changes evident since September 1975 indicate that the volume of vacant floorspace reached a peak by that date and has subsequently declined by some 30,000 sq.m. to a total of about 200,000 sq.m. by mid-1976. The total for vacant land and buildings under construction is largely accounted for by three major schemes: the Odhams housing development, the MEPC office site in Long Acre and the Coutts Bank development in the Strand.

#### **Significant action since 1974**

A.2.10 In addition to the Market move, there have been a number of other significant changes in the two years since Summer 1974. Important progress has been made both in improving the existing housing stock and in furthering proposals for new dwellings. By the end of 1976, schemes for the modernisation of all local authority dwellings in Covent Garden will be either completed or in progress. The rehabilitation and re-occupation of flats at Stirling and Siddons Buildings (Tavistock Street) is far advanced. Courtyard improvements are proposed for many of the existing housing estates in the area. The Peabody Trust is well advanced in preparing a scheme for the redevelopment of the Bedfordbury estate with new housing and some light industrial space. As a start to the provision of new housing in the area, the first flats to be converted from the smaller ex-Market Authority property now owned by the Council were completed and occupied in 1976. Major schemes for new housing by the Council (Odhams Development) and Camden (Dudley House) are under construction.

A.2.11 As a major contribution to the improvement of the Piazza area, the restoration by the Council of the Central Market Building is well advanced. A major new potential attraction for the area has been achieved by securing the London Transport collection and the Theatre Museum as future occupiers of the Flower Market. Despite difficulties of high cost and building constraints, a number of important private schemes for rehabilitation of former market property are either in progress or proposed. Among the major private proposals, the Haslemere development in Drury Lane is completed and occupied and work is in progress on the important Coutts Bank site.

### **A3 Strategic and Local Context**

A.3.1 The strategic framework for the Plan is provided by the GLDP (ref.2) and where appropriate other relevant and supporting Council policies will be specifically mentioned in the various policy chapters.

#### **Central London context**

A.3.2 The strategy proposed for Central London in Section 7 of the GLDP has the most direct relevance to Covent Garden which lies within the statistical central area as defined by the Registrar General. The main points of this strategy are briefly outlined below.

A.3.3 The GLDP stresses the very great importance of Central London to the nation and of the need to foster certain activities which have a need to be in London and which help to maintain London's position as capital of the nation and one of the world's great cities. These activities include finance, communications, shopping, foreign legations, the theatre, museums and tourism and emphasis is given to the need for these activities to prosper and develop within Central London. New office development is encouraged to locate at certain preferred locations, listed in Section 4, which do not include Covent Garden.

A.3.4 Public transport is considered to be of crucial importance for the movement of workers to and from Central London. The restraint on car use is to be maintained in order to increase the reliance on public transport for serving Central London.

A.3.5 As in the whole of Greater London, the importance of providing dwellings in satisfactory environments at appropriate cost is recognised and multiple-use developments are proposed as providing viable solutions when space for new dwellings is difficult to find. The new accommodation must be appropriate for those who are displaced and in need of housing, and be provided at a density suitable to local circumstances.

A.3.6 The GLDP stresses the importance of safeguarding and enhancing the historic and architectural features of Central London in modernisation and redevelopment schemes as London's essential character is mainly derived from its traditions and inheritance of buildings, scenes and history. New developments at prominent places in Central London concern the whole nation and should be of the highest quality.

A.3.7 Covent Garden contains two of the special factors of character in Central London outlined in paragraph 8.4 of the GLDP Report of Studies, namely, an area of architectural or historic interest around the Central Market area and the indication of the whole area as one of major potential for change.

## The advisory plan for Central London

A.3.8 This plan, prepared by the Central London Boroughs and the GLC through the CLPC (ref.10), is intended to provide a link between the broad strategy of the GLDP and the local plans. It has no statutory context but is intended to assist the member authorities with the process of co-ordination of local plans affecting the Central Area.

A.3.9 The APCL was approved by CLPC and formally referred to the constituent councils on 27 October 1976. Covent Garden is indicated in the APCL as one of the major areas of potential in Central London due in part to its action area status and proximity to Charing Cross Station and Fleet Line interchange. The APCL supplements the GLDP list of appropriate Central London activities to include higher education and research, activities in support of those listed in the GLDP, those dependent on linkages within Central London, those which provide substantial opportunities for local residents (particularly the less skilled), those which contribute to the seed-bed role of Central London and those activities which facilitate the efficient evolution of the Central London economy. Reference is made to specific policies in the following chapters.

### Local context

A.3.10 Both Westminster and Camden Councils are well advanced with the preparation of new local plans for their Boroughs and where current Borough policies have a direct bearing on the Plan, they are incorporated in the policy chapters.

## A4 Development of Plan Objectives

### Introduction

A.4.1 This section traces the evolution of the Plan objectives and the extent of public participation in the plan-making process. The aim throughout the planning process has been to make public participation a reality and the Plan forged from the close involvement of those who live, work or have businesses in Covent Garden. The locally elected Forum has been a vital and constructive element in achieving this aim.

A.4.2 The 'Context' Discussion Paper, published in June 1974, outlined a programme of work and timetable for plan preparation. This paper stated 'There exists no precedent for a programme of this kind in relation to the range of problems and circumstances present in Covent Garden and the degrees of public participation could go considerably further than in previous studies of this kind'. The programme of studies and consultation which has been followed has been responsive throughout to the demands of the public and participatory groups for involvement in plan preparation. For this reason and because there was general agreement at an early stage on the broad direction and aims of the Plan, there have been departures from the programme of work and timetable set out in the 'Context' report.

### 'Full public participation'

A.4.3 The basis to the development of Plan objectives and policies lies in the Secretary of State's decision letter of January 1973 (ref.1) when the designation of Covent Garden as a CDA was confirmed. In this letter the Council was requested to prepare an Informal Plan 'with full public participation'.

A.4.4 Although contacts were already established between individual members of the resident and business communities and the locally based Planning Team, it was felt that the people who live or work in the area should determine how they wished to participate in the new Plan-making process. Following the

Secretary of State's decision, the Council held a series of public meetings at Conway Hall in the summer of 1973. In addition to an open debate on the problems and opportunities present in Covent Garden, the public present at these meetings considered the most effective means of involvement in planning the future of this area. An Interim Working Party was set up to study possible ways of ensuring public involvement and to report their conclusions back to the public.

A.4.5 The Interim Working Party had about 15 members and included residents, workers, local businessmen and representatives from local groups which had taken an active part in opposing the earlier planning proposals for the area. Throughout its existence, the Interim Working Party made every effort to be representative of the whole spectrum of interests present in Covent Garden and co-opted new members to represent a variety of sectional interests on the basis of replies received to questionnaires sent to residential and business addresses in the area.

A.4.6 After many meetings and an investigation of views within the resident and business communities, the Interim Working Party, together with other local people, presented their proposals for the structure and type of participatory body most appropriate for the Covent Garden planning situation. It was decided through public discussion that the establishment of a locally elected Forum would be the most effective means of public involvement in the new planning process. The Council accepted this proposal together with the Interim Working Party's recommendations for annual elections, the basis for the registration of electors and the relative weight of different sectional interests in the composition of Forum membership.

### The Forum of representatives

A.4.7 In June 1974 the first Forum was elected and a second election took place in November 1975. The electorate included residents, workers, students from locally based colleges and owners of businesses and property in the area. In both elections about one-third of those registered exercised their right to vote. The Forum has thirty members representing a wide range of Covent Garden interests: residents — covering local authority, trust and private sector tenants (9 members); businesses — including shops, restaurants and office activities (9 members); services — including theatre, crafts and welfare activities (9 members); and property owners (3 members). The Council has provided the Forum with office accommodation and a grant to meet the cost of secretarial help, publicity, etc.

A.4.8 Since the election in June 1974, the Forum has met in public every three weeks to determine their views on issues vital to the future planning of Covent Garden, to give consideration to problems of immediate concern and to submit their observations on all planning applications. At an early stage, the Forum established two sub-committees, one dealing with policy issues (Policy Group) and a second to consider all planning applications in detail (Planning Filter Committee). Recently, the Forum has also established a number of ad hoc working parties to deal with issues of immediate concern and often outside the planning context, e.g. the present inadequacy of medical services.

A.4.9 The links between the GLC Team based in Covent Garden and the Forum are productive and well established. If requested, Council officers attend most of the Forum meetings to provide information and explanatory detail. The views of the Forum are always reported to the Covent Garden Committee and, in addition, two representatives of the Forum attend Committee meetings to directly state the views of the participatory body.

A.4.10 In December 1973 the Covent Garden Committee issued a statement of broad policy aims and objectives on which the new plan for Covent Garden should be based. These aims and objectives sought to incorporate the views of the public on the broad direction future policies should take.

#### **The six discussion papers**

A.4.11 In an area as complex as Covent Garden with nearly 30,000 daily commuters and 2,800 residents, it would be difficult to assess the priorities that should be accorded to various problems unless they are openly debated within the community to whom such issues are most relevant. To open up this vital debate, the Report of Survey in the form of six Discussion Papers was published in June 1974 (ref.3). This was a significant stage in Plan preparation. The public and Forum response to these Discussion Papers, together with the formal observations of GLC Committees and those of Camden and Westminster, established the broad direction and objectives of the Plan.

A.4.12 A period of intensive public consultation, extending over several months, followed the publication of the six Discussion Papers. In seeking to maximise response to these Papers alternative methods of reaching various sections of the public were used, including shortened summaries, questionnaires and a slide/tape presentation. A considerable number of meetings were held with organisations, local groups, the Covent Garden Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CGCAAC) and various tenants' associations. The Forum devoted considerable time to a very full discussion of the issues raised in the Discussion Papers. In addition the Papers were widely distributed for comment to GLC Committees, Camden and Westminster and other statutory or quasi-statutory bodies.

#### **The response reports**

A.4.13 Two detailed reports were produced giving the response by the Forum, public and others to the Discussion Papers (ref.11). In the response there was little comment on the factual material in the six Papers and little specific disagreement with their perception of issues and opportunities.

A.4.14 A major attitude which prevailed in the response was the emphasis placed on the general concept of conservation, not so much in architectural value as in terms of the general character and charm of Covent Garden. It was clear at an early stage that extensive physical change could be very detrimental to this character. The small scale mixture of uses was another element of Covent Garden which was highly valued. The need to restrain through traffic and the proposals for traffic management were generally accepted at an early stage by the Forum, local groups and individuals responding to this Discussion Paper.

A.4.15 A very generally held priority was the need to increase the resident population significantly and provide more housing for families. The possible areas for Council initiative were identified in the Discussion Paper 'Conservation and Development'. There was little disagreement that the areas identified in this Discussion Paper offered the best opportunities for achieving housing and amenity gains. Although it increasingly became an issue in the later stages of plan preparation, there was initially little in the response expressing concern for local employment and the need to safeguard existing businesses, particularly those of a service or light industrial nature.

#### **Residential Survey 1974**

A.4.16 To supplement the debate on the Discussion Papers and provide current information on housing conditions, a home

interview survey was held in Summer 1974 with residents of Covent Garden. The survey covered aspects of housing conditions, population characteristics, social ties within the community and use of local services, including shops, schools, open space and recreation facilities. Two Committee reports describe the results of this survey in detail (ref.12).

A.4.17 A considerable effort was made by interviewers to meet all Covent Garden residents at their home and in total 80% of the population was contacted and invited to give their views on a variety of issues pertinent to living in Covent Garden. With so many elderly residents, the survey staff were instructed not to pursue the interviews with residents who were unwell or likely to be put to any distress by answering the questionnaire. Completed interviews totalled nearly 1,000 and accounted for 70% of the resident population.

#### **Plan objectives**

A.4.18 The total response to the Discussion Papers, supplemented by interviews with residents in the 1974 Survey, clearly showed there was broad agreement on the direction the Plan should take and the issues it must seek to resolve. The public, Forum and formal response advocated objectives which were broadly complementary and not contradictory. It was the absence of any wide divergence of opinion on the general direction of the Plan that permitted the objectives to be established at the comparatively early stage. In view of this general agreement on objectives it was inappropriate to propose alternative plans reflecting fundamentally different views on the future of Covent Garden.

A.4.19 Following the analysis of total response, the social and economic objectives for the Plan were stated in the report on Courses of Action (ref.13):

- 1 To safeguard the existing residential community and provide for a substantial improvement in housing conditions.
- 2 An increase in the residential population achieved through an increase in the stock of rented accommodation and a greater provision of family accommodation.
- 3 Improvement in local services to meet the needs of the residential and working populations.
- 4 To strengthen the economic character and vitality of Covent Garden by promoting the growth of new and traditional uses appropriate to the area.
- 5 Urgent re-use of buildings and land previously in market use with activities that will give the area a new vitality and focus.

A.4.20 In addition, the response strongly favoured a conservation approach and advocated two broad physical objectives for the Plan:

- 1 Safeguard and improve the existing physical character and fabric of Covent Garden.
- 2 Restrict vehicular traffic and give much more emphasis to pedestrians and access to public transport.

It was agreed that the existing physical fabric of Covent Garden would largely establish the context and constraints for the achievement of planning objectives.

#### **The courses of action**

A.4.21 The next stage in plan preparation was the detailed investigation of the means of achieving the planning objectives. The total response provided a list of more than 120 possible courses of action for inclusion in the Plan (ref.14). These were reported in CG 291 with a statement from the Forum giving their agreement to the list as reflecting the views of people living and working in the area.

A.4.22 For the main part, the courses of action were concerned with the social and economic aims of the Plan. The next stage required these suggested policies to be expressed and tested in physical terms and examined through a programme of technical studies to assess their effectiveness, practicability and impact on the achievement of other Plan objectives.

A.4.23 It was not the intention at the Discussion Paper stage to restrict public debate solely to issues which are the responsibility of a local planning authority and concern land use matters. As a result, the extensive list of courses of action embraced the functions of many different agencies, including the Boroughs in their roles as highway, housing, rating and welfare authorities; Central Government departments; the ILEA and other GLC departments. There was considerable weight of public response to the non-planning issues and concern was expressed by the Forum and others that such issues should be fully explored in conjunction with Plan policies and proposals. For these reasons, consideration of those issues which are the responsibility of other agencies will be presented in a Supplementary Policy Volume to be published after the Local Plan.

#### **Policy studies and response**

A.4.24 In the six months following July 1975, a series of thirteen policy reports (ref.14) were prepared for public discussion and formal observations. These reports assessed the various courses of action suggested by the response and drew conclusions on policies for the Plan.

A.4.25 The consultation process was developed concurrently with the issue of the policy reports. The Forum considered each report in detail and submitted written summaries of their response. In addition, Camden and Westminster and the relevant GLC/ILEA Committees gave formal observations on each policy report.

A.4.26 A wide range of organisations, local groups and individuals were circulated with the policy reports; including all the respondents at the Discussion Paper stage. Among the organisations asked for their views were the Chambers of Commerce, local business associations, professional and trade societies, statutory authorities and welfare agencies. Many local groups were consulted, including tenants' associations, the CGCAAC and the Covent Garden Community Association (CGCA). To promote public debate, a summary leaflet was delivered to residents, businesses, libraries, hostels and local meeting places. There was an on-street distribution of nearly 7,000 leaflets to stimulate response from the working population.

#### **Policy Options Report**

A.4.27 The Policy Options Report (CG 504) was presented to the Covent Garden Committee in March 1976 and was a significant stage in Plan preparation. This report summarised the results of public consultation on the range of policy options suggested for the area and gave revised policy statements recommended for inclusion in the Plan. Where practicable and desirable, these revised policy statements incorporated many of the amendments put forward in the response and, especially, embodied many of the suggestions put forward by the Forum. The decisions taken by the Covent Garden Committee on these policy statements largely determined the form of the Plan and, as amended by the Committee, are set out in the section on 'Policies and Proposals'.

#### **Physical studies and response**

A.4.28 The examination of the physical opportunities to implement the Plan's objectives proceeded concurrently with

the preparation of the policy reports. The early agreement on Plan objectives and the close public involvement in the Plan's evolution enabled the physical studies to start well in advance of the March 1976 decisions.

A.4.29 A report published in July 1975 (ref.28) identified a number of street blocks which offered the best opportunities for Council initiated action to assist in the implementation of agreed Plan objectives. For some of these areas, the preliminary conclusions of feasibility studies were published to sponsor public debate on the principles of redevelopment, partial or infill, or rehabilitation in relation to the specific opportunities and problems present in each street block (ref.29). A subsequent progress report on feasibility studies summarised public comments on the general approach and choice of sites for housing and amenity gains.

A.4.30 Following the publication of CG 493, discussions on the feasibility studies continued with the Policy Group of the Forum, the Executive of the CGCA and the CGCAAC. In addition, numerous private meetings took place with affected owners and occupiers, their agents and architects. Alternative approaches to these sites and recommendations on the preferred options were presented in the detailed Feasibility Studies (ref.30) report published concurrently with the Draft Plan in June 1976 (ref.31).

#### **Conservation policies**

A.4.31 Reflecting the strong emphasis on retaining and improving the existing physical character of the area, conservation policies form a fundamental part of the Plan. The report 'Conservation Policies' (ref.32), published in January 1976, set out the general principles of conservation and dealt in detail with the particular problems and opportunities existing in six sub-areas of Covent Garden. The public comment and formal observations on this paper were reported in CG 514 (ref.33) and the decisions subsequently taken by the Covent Garden Committee formed the basis of the Draft Plan policy section on 'Conservation and Environmental Improvements'.

#### **The draft plan**

A.4.32 In June 1976, the Covent Garden Committee authorised the Draft Plan and Feasibility Studies report as public consultation documents (ref.34). Two additional reports, one dealing with 'Outstanding Matters' (CG 565) (ref.35) and the second an explanatory paper on education, were made available in July as supplementary policy documents for public comment. A report giving the results of the Parker Street feasibility study was published in August (ref.36). The Draft Plan documents were circulated for formal comment to GLC and ILEA Committees, and Westminster and Camden. In addition to the Forum and the CGCAAC, the package of Draft Plan documents was sent to a wide range of local groups, organisations and individuals. In response to many requests the period of consultation was extended and comments were received for a period of about 10 weeks.

A.4.33 During the consultation period, an exhibition illustrating the various approaches to feasibility sites was held and to give members of the public an opportunity to voice their views direct to Committee members a public meeting was held in early September. Leaflets advertising the exhibition and public meeting were distributed widely throughout Covent Garden. Through a number of private meetings, many groups and individuals took advantage of an invitation to express their views direct to the Chairman of the Covent Garden Committee.

A.4.34 Public response to the Draft Plan proposals was extensive and largely constructive. As anticipated the main emphasis of response was placed on the physical impact of

implementing the Plan's broad social and economic objectives. A major contribution was made by the Forum. In addition to providing detailed recommendations on the Plan's policies and proposals, the Forum produced a document which summarised their comments and recommended priorities for action (ref.37). The CGCA also made a substantial and constructive contribution to the public debate on the Plan by presenting alternative proposals for all the feasibility sites. The CGCA's final comments took the form of an alternative text for the 'Implementation' Section of the Draft Plan (ref.38). An independent research group, Urban and Economic Development (URBED) produced a series of reports examining the effects of the Plan's proposals on small businesses (ref.39). A unique feature of the public response at Draft Plan stage was the establishment of occupants' associations; incorporating residents, workers, and businessmen on each of the feasibility study sites.

A.4.35 The response to the Draft Plan and Feasibility Studies was reported to the Covent Garden Committee in October 1976 (ref.40) when decisions were made on the Plan's policies and proposals. At Draft Plan stage, the response placed greater emphasis on the objectives for the conservation of the physical fabric and retention of the economic character of Covent Garden. The policy issues of target population and the provision of open space were of major concern in the public debate on the Draft Plan. The response placed much greater emphasis on achieving housing gain outside the feasibility sites with opportunities for rehabilitation and conversion for housing use pursued throughout Covent Garden. In particular, priorities for action were advocated for the development of vacant sites and derelict buildings, and the rehabilitation of property in poor condition. In addition, it was firmly stressed that the Seven Dials area should be a priority for housing and environmental improvements within a co-ordinated programme of policies and proposals.

A.4.36 In coming to decisions on amendments to the Draft Plan the Council has taken full account of the response and feels that the public view is reflected in the Plan as approved.

## SECTION B

### Policies and Proposals

#### B.1 Land Use Allocation

B.1.1 The new planning system has moved away from the rigid zoning principle which gave a comprehensive picture of all land use at some date in the future. The 'land use zone' type map is replaced by the proposals map which demonstrates the land use implications of the policies and proposals in the plan. This map only defines those sites or traffic and pedestrian routes which are committed to change of a specified nature and those areas where specific development control policies are to operate.

B.1.2 The Council is keen to retain and promote the mixed use character of the whole of Covent Garden, even within buildings and in those areas where short term action is planned. It considers that a mixed-use approach to development control will provide the best possible way of achieving the Plan's total aims and that the creation of a residential zone within the area would be incompatible with these objectives.

B.1.3 The implementation of development control policies should ensure that the overall balance of uses gives the area the desired function and character. A mixed-use approach has the advantage that every single case is considered on its merits and in its immediate context as local character varies widely from street to street.

B.1.4 The Council intend that this mixed use approach will be interpreted as flexibly as possible in order to respect the delicate relationship between existing activities, to enhance the areas unique and subtle character and to promote the evolution of new activities.

B.1.5 A wide variety of different land uses are considered acceptable and priorities between the major use classes are expressed in the following use chart. Residential flats, light industrial and shop uses are considered the most appropriate uses and the Council considers that the maximum amount of new housing can best be achieved through such a mixed use policy (see B.2).

B.1.6 Within the major use classes, certain activities are considered to be more appropriate than others and these are described in detail in the various policy sections. Generally the Council will favour those activities with close ties to existing businesses in Covent Garden and the Central Area, which provide employment opportunities for local residents and which result in little environmental disturbance through traffic movements generated or by reason of noise, vibration, dirt or smell.

B.1.7 Although the appropriate major uses will be acceptable in principle throughout the plan area, some uses will be more acceptable in certain locations due to the juxtaposition of other uses. The various policy sections indicate how the development control policies will operate in detail but two specific proposals are worthy of note, namely the definition of certain streets as local shopping streets (Map/B7/1) where change of use from retail shops to other uses will be rigidly opposed, and the definition of a theatre and entertainment route between St Martins Lane and the Aldwych, where entertainment uses will be encouraged in order to safeguard residential amenities in the remainder of the area.

B.1.8 This mixed-use approach to the future planning of Covent Garden should be compatible with the objectives of the Central London Advisory Plan and the development control policies currently being formulated for the adjoining areas by the City of Westminster and London Borough of Camden. Both authorities are proposing a similar mixed-use approach with high priority given to residential, light industrial and shopping uses and low priority to offices, hotels and hostels. Although the emphasis on the various uses and methods of implementation will vary between the three authorities, it is not considered that any difficulties will arise.

B.1.9 The Council will monitor continuously the balance of uses over time in order to prevent any particular use becoming dominant and affecting the delicate balance and interplay of uses that has traditionally given Covent Garden its special character. If the Council considers that the priorities attached to the various uses are preventing a good mixture of uses and are precluding certain appropriate uses from expanding or entering the area, it will introduce revised policies.

**In order to retain and promote the mixed use character of the area, a mixed-use policy should be adopted operating the following priorities for the major use classes:**

Residential	
Dwelling houses	B
Flats	A
Hotels	C
Other (hostels etc)	C
Shops	A
Offices	B
Commerce (warehousing showrooms)	B
Public and Civic buildings	B
Places of public worship	C
Light industry	A
General industry	B
Special industry	D

Places of assembly	B
Licensed premises	B
Restaurants and cafes	B

Key to priorities:

- A — Most appropriate
- B — Not inappropriate — but approval will depend upon scale and exact location
- C — Normally inappropriate, but exceptions may be allowed in special circumstances
- D — Inappropriate

## B.2 Standard Controls

B.2.1 Standards for residential density, car parking and open space are given in the appropriate policy chapters. This section gives other particular standards with which development should comply in the interests of good environmental conditions.

### Plot ratio

B.2.2 The value of plot ratios to control building bulk and employment density is more limited in Covent Garden where owners' statutory rights on redevelopment or enlargement have a particularly significant effect. The main objectives for the future development of sites in Covent Garden will be achieved by the stated conservation policies (see B.14) and other planning standards, i.e., daylighting, housing density, car parking (see C.1) supplemented by the detailed planning briefs for areas of initiative (ref.33).

B.2.3 The Council will still have regard to the existing plot ratio as adopted by the former London County Council and subsequently adopted by the City of Westminster and London Borough of Camden, until the review of plot ratio control has been completed by the Council and London Borough Councils (ref.34).

B.2.4 As the plot ratio control is to be reviewed with the Boroughs, a change in existing ratios is inappropriate at this stage.

B.2.5 Where appropriate and in accordance with the GLDP, the plan aims to reduce the density of development to respect the scale and character of Covent Garden.

### Daylight and sunlight

B.2.6 New buildings should have adequate daylight and sunlight and allow sufficient daylight to reach other buildings and sites. The Council will follow the guidance given by the Department of the Environment as set out at present in the publication 'Sunlight and Daylight: Planning Criteria and Design of Buildings' HMSO 1971, whenever possible.

### Noise

B.2.7 The Council will endeavour to restrain the general level of noise in the area for the benefit of those living and working the area. The Council will operate its development control powers in such a way as to avoid increases in ambient noise levels and noise-generating uses will be refused permission in close proximity to residential properties, hospitals, churches and educational establishments. Noise emission will be controlled by the imposition of appropriate conditions on planning permissions in accordance with the principles laid down in the Department of the Environment Circular 10/73 and any future relevant circular.

## Disabled persons

B.2.8 The Council will ensure that within the plan area the needs of the disabled be considered, as generally referred to in appropriate legislation relating to chronically sick and disabled persons and that the design requirements in and around buildings be considered at the planning stage; and that these requirements are brought to the notice of those responsible in both the public and private sectors.

## B.3 Housing

### Introductory statement:

**It will be the main objective to ensure that numerically the residential population is safeguarded and increased and that an environment and the services appropriate to the increased population are created. To this end, we shall ensure that pressures for non-residential uses which are otherwise appropriate to central London do not override this objective.**

**It will be the policy to maximise the amount of accommodation available at low rent through the use of public ownership and ownership by housing associations and similar agencies.**

**The Council will pursue a vigorous policy to ensure that empty residential property is brought back into residential use at the earliest possible moment and will make the fullest use of its powers in doing so.**

### Introduction

B.3.1 Throughout the evolution of the Plan, response from all quarters has overwhelmingly stressed the importance of a 'living' (ref.5) as well as a 'working' character to Covent Garden. It was the widespread agreement on this issue which enabled the priority objective to safeguard and increase the resident population to be established at an early stage in Plan preparation. Support for this objective has not come solely from the Forum of Representatives, local community groups and residents. The response from the Chambers of Commerce, businesses and workers also stressed the social and economic benefits of maintaining a viable residential population at the city centre. In particular, a supply of labour living within easy reach of their place of employment makes an important contribution to the efficient functioning of many Central London activities.

B.3.2 It was also evident from the views expressed by many people and organisations that there is strong, and growing, resistance to any further extension of the sterile 'nine to five' working environment which characterises parts of the city centre. This is a character which is not perceived solely in terms of building form but also in the absence of the life and vitality which an established residential community brings to an area. The 'living' atmosphere of Covent Garden is intensely valued and strengthening this character is widely felt to be a valid and important function for the Plan.

### Strategic and local context

B.3.3 The improvement of housing conditions ranks high in the Council's priorities and it considers that development schemes throughout London should provide as many new dwellings as a good standard of environment will allow. The GLDP regards housing provision for all income groups as a supporting activity for Central London and stresses the importance of providing dwellings in satisfactory environments at costs that Londoners can cope with. The principle of mixed use development is recommended to ease the difficulty of finding space for new dwellings.

B.3.4 The CLPC Advisory Plan highlights the importance of living and working in the central area 'to avoid the social and economic implications of a museum city on the one hand and unbridled economic expansion on the other'. The Advisory Plan considers housing as an appropriate and normal activity for Central London and stresses the importance of an accessible labour supply for the operation of vital central area activities.

B.3.5 Camden and Westminster Councils intend that the housing content of the central area will remain and, wherever possible, increase. The Westminster City Council has no current proposals for new housing in Covent Garden but is preparing a major scheme for the Newport Place site (west side of Charing Cross Road) and intends that the resident population of Soho shall increase. Camden Council has a major housing development proposal for the Dudley House site in Covent Garden and will acquire, by agreement, the housing content of a private development proposed for Newton Street.

#### Existing situation

B.3.6 There are nearly 1,600 dwellings in Covent Garden and of this total about 110 (7%) are currently vacant. Self-contained flats account for nearly 90% of all dwellings and the majority are purpose-built. About 30% of dwellings are local authority (owned by GLC, Camden or Westminster); 25% are owned by the Peabody Trust; over 40% are privately rented and other tenures; and about 1% are owner occupied. An unusual feature is the high proportion of privately rented dwellings which are let unfurnished. About 10% of accommodation is let on a basis tied to employment.

B.3.7 The range of dwelling sizes is very limited with one and two bedroom accommodation accounting for 90% of the total. Occupancy rates are comparatively low for the city centre with an average of 0.8 person per habitable room in Covent Garden and very little incidence of severe overcrowding. Only 2% of dwellings are shared by two or more separate households. There is a marked absence of lifts serving residential accommodation and this is a serious deficiency since over 80% of dwellings are situated at the third floor or higher and much of the housing is in tenement blocks rising to seven or eight stories.

B.3.8 The major local authority housing blocks in Covent Garden have either been modernised or improvements are in progress to a medium-life standard. Thus, the continued existence of these housing blocks is anticipated for the period of the Plan and decisions on whether, ultimately, they should be fully rehabilitated or redeveloped will be taken on an individual basis, as and when conditions dictate. The Peabody Trust has modernised its dwellings at Nottingham Court and Wild Street and has a current proposal to redevelop the Bedfordbury estate (see C.1). Although some limited improvements have taken place or are proposed by the private sector, the majority of privately rented dwellings are still characterised by the absence of basic amenities and a general poor state of repair.

#### Policies and proposals

B.3.9 The policies on housing density and dwelling mix guide the approach for Council initiated action within the areas of opportunity for housing gain. The resultant totals for housing gain on a site by site basis are set out in the 'Implementation' section (see B.4). The section on 'Distribution of Population and Employment' assesses the growth in population which will result from the achievement of housing gain opportunities and the operation of the other housing policies set out below.

#### Housing density

B.3.10 The GLDP states that appropriate densities for new housing developments will vary according to the location and type of the development. The CLPC Advisory Plan considers the measure of housing density in habitable rooms per acre is a relatively crude method of assessing the quality of the residential environment. The level of permissible development should take into account a wider range of environmental factors.

B.3.11 In Covent Garden, there are many examples of existing residential densities in excess of 250 persons per acre (p.p.a.) and some in excess of 300 p.p.a. Despite these densities, very few residents express dissatisfaction with their present accommodation on the grounds of lack of privacy, shortage of external space or noise (ref.12). It is widely accepted and supported by the public response, including that of the Forum of Representatives and tenants' associations, that the achievement of a substantial increase in the resident population will necessitate some pockets of new housing at comparatively high densities. Covent Garden residents, in common with those from other parts of the city centre, have a long tradition of urban living and the concept of density is not significant in their perception of an acceptable 'living' environment. There is no indication that the views of newcomers to Covent Garden differ, in this respect, from those of established residents.

B.3.12 Densities for new developments will, however, be determined by a sympathetic consideration of site conditions (ref.42), the implications for bulk and scale, and the need to provide an environment suitable for the anticipated mix of residents at the highest acceptable density. For rehabilitation and infill schemes, the operation of density controls is largely inappropriate since the number of persons that can be accommodated will be dependent on the layout of the property, the availability of amenities and the need to relate to surrounding properties.

**Wherever possible, substantial new development for housing should aim for the density which a target population of between 5,000 and 6,000 implies. For each individual development, the acceptable density will be determined having full regard to the dwelling mix and cost implications of providing amenities to ensure a satisfactory environment, particularly where a high proportion of family flats is provided.**

**Where properties are rehabilitated for housing gain, the density will be determined largely by their physical form, the constraints of site surroundings and the scale of the environment. In these circumstances and for small site development, the operation of tight density controls will be considered inappropriate and the density will be determined by the objective to maximise housing gain in an acceptable environment.**

#### Dwelling mix

B.3.13 Small dwellings account for a very high proportion of the existing housing stock in Covent Garden. As the table below shows, there is little scope through management policies for local authority housing to accommodate more families in Covent Garden.

B.3.14 The absence of existing or new housing opportunities offering a range of dwelling sizes has limited the scope to retain a family population and contributed to the present imbalance in age and household size. The existence of an ageing population with a disproportionate number of residual single person households has had serious implications for the level and standard of services that can be maintained. In view of the



existing paucity of family accommodation\*, the public response strongly advocated an increase in larger units within the new housing developments to redress the present imbalance in the dwelling mix.

\*The term 'family housing' is used in the Plan to describe accommodation having more than three habitable rooms. This includes accommodation for households with adult children, extended families and adults sharing accommodation.

Habitable rooms*	Existing dwelling mix	
	Local Authority Dwellings	Total Dwellings
	%	%
One room	3	8
Two room	68	48
Three room	22	29
Four room	6	9
Five room +	1	6

N.B. \*For the definition of habitable rooms: a kitchen is only considered as a habitable room if it includes a dining space and the kitchen/dining space is more than 140 sq. ft. or the dining space is divided from the working area by a moveable partition.

B.3.15 A greater proportion of larger dwelling units in new development will give expanding households within Covent Garden the opportunity, hitherto denied to many, of staying in the area as their family circumstances change. In addition, it will provide a choice of accommodation for families choosing or for employment reasons needing to live in the city centre. Although the overall dwelling mix chosen for new developments in Covent Garden includes 50% family accommodation, the mix for individual developments will need to be varied for site and environmental considerations. The density of child population within any single development will be an important factor. For rehabilitation schemes, the dwelling mix will be largely dependent on the layout of the property and the standard of amenities.

**The following dwelling mix should be adopted for new developments in Covent Garden as a whole:**

- 25% 2 room dwellings suitable for old persons, including a proportion of sheltered housing**
- 25% ordinary 2 room (2 person)**
- 35% ordinary 3 room (4 person)**
- 10% ordinary 4 room (5 person)**
- 5% ordinary 5 room (6 person)**

**It must be recognised that on individual sites this dwelling mix is likely to be varied owing to particular environmental and other considerations. A number of dwellings will be suitable for disabled persons.**

**Dwelling mix policies should be applied flexibly to rehabilitation schemes, to take account of the physical form of the building and the site constraints, and to the overall aims of providing a balanced community living in acceptable conditions.**

#### Rehousing guarantees

B.3.16 There was considerable public concern that any Council proposals for redevelopment or rehabilitation might result in existing residents having to move against their wishes to new homes outside Covent Garden. To allay these fears, the Council gave an undertaking at an early stage that any resident affected by GLC development in the area will be rehoused in

Covent Garden, if they so wish. The Plan's development proposals in total will incur very little rehousing liability, the majority one and two person. The programme of development will extend over a number of years and there will be little difficulty in satisfactorily meeting any rehousing liability which may arise. The completion of the Odhams housing development by 1979 will provide rehousing capacity at an early stage.

B.3.17 Co-operation between the three housing authorities in Covent Garden is well-established and reciprocal arrangements will ensure the rehousing guarantee extends to all public sector tenants affected by development proposals. Social ties within Covent Garden are often based on the present housing block, street or small locality. When residents are rehoused to new accommodation in the area, it is vital that lettings policies are operated with sufficient sensitivity to maintain and extend the existing social networks.

**All residents displaced by public development (whether rehabilitation or redevelopment) will be rehoused in Covent Garden, if they so wish.**

**Through reciprocal arrangements and close co-operation between the three housing authorities this rehousing guarantee will operate for all public sector tenants in Covent Garden and ensure new housing opportunities are not restricted to tenants of one authority.**

**Wherever possible, letting and management policies to re-house existing residents in new or rehabilitated housing should operate to safeguard and extend established social networks.**

B.3.18 The possibility of a limited quota for married sons and daughters living with parents in the plan area will be considered.

#### Privately rented housing

B.3.19 Since 40% of Covent Garden's households currently rent from a private landlord, the achievement of a substantial population increase will depend, in part, on the effectiveness of policies to safeguard the privately rented sector. A loss of occupied dwellings, whether through an expansion of commercial uses or an increase in vacant units, would seriously undermine any population gain achieved through public developments for housing.

B.3.20 The GLDP states that planning permission will not normally be given for a change from residential use. In addition, the Council considers that efforts should be made, especially in Central London, to restore property originally built for residential use to that purpose. The CLPC Advisory Plan recommends similar policies to safeguard residential use.

B.3.21 Despite the existence of a policy operating against change of use from housing, there has been over the years a considerable loss of accommodation to commercial uses. To reclaim these dwellings, enforcement action can be taken where a use has commenced without the benefit of planning permission, providing use rights have not been established. However, since much of this loss of residential accommodation took place prior to 1963 the scope for housing gain through enforcement is fairly limited and is estimated to be between 30 and 35 dwellings. There are, however, other benefits in operating a vigorous enforcement programme since the knowledge that such action is being taken may prevent further illegal changes of use from taking place.

B.3.22 There could be an extensive programme to reclaim for housing use properties built for residential purposes but which are lawfully used for other purposes. A programme of negotiation with owners, if resulting in the Council acquiring

the properties, would be very costly and the extent to which such a programme is practicable will depend on the financial priority it receives. Such a policy will also have implications for the achievement of other Plan objectives, notably those for the retention of the mixed use character of the area and the growth of employment.

**It will be the policy to prevent a change of use from housing to other uses and ensure its effectiveness through enforcement action, where possible.**

**Properties built for, or previously used as, housing should be reclaimed for housing through negotiation or legal action.**

**The existing enforcement programme should be intensified.**

B.3.23 Much of the housing accommodation in the privately rented sector is in a poor state of repair and proposals for improvement are to be welcomed. However, the rehabilitation or redevelopment of privately rented housing can restrict the choice and availability of accommodation within the financial reach of existing residents. Although the Council has limited powers in this respect, it will use every available means to ensure private tenants are not disadvantaged by such proposals.

**The Council will encourage proposals for the rehabilitation by the private sector of existing housing, provided these are not to the disadvantage of existing residents. It will, as far as powers permit, ensure that private sector proposals for the redevelopment of existing housing are not detrimental to existing residents and it will expect proposals for redevelopment and rehabilitation which involve displacement of private residential tenants to include proposals for rehousing the displaced tenants in Covent Garden.**

B.3.24 The Council considers an increase in the number of dwelling units is a material change of use which requires planning permission. The policy to ensure the existing proportion of larger dwellings is not reduced by redevelopment or conversion proposals, will safeguard the range of dwelling sizes available within the private sector, although this would be no guarantee that the larger dwellings would be occupied by families. The policy will be operated flexibly and its effect on housing standards, incidence of sharing, etc., carefully monitored.

**It will be normal policy to ensure that for a private scheme, at least the existing proportion of larger dwelling units will be retained within the new development.**

B.3.25 To retain new housing within the financial reach of existing residents and to increase the public stock of dwellings for those in housing need, it may be desirable for the Council to acquire the housing element within private sector mixed use proposals.

**Where appropriate, the Council will acquire the housing content in a private development.**

B.3.26 The GLDP states that subject to the overriding priority of providing dwellings for those in need, the Council's policy throughout London is that housing associations, other agencies and the private sector should all contribute to the housing effort. The participation of other agencies increases the choice and variety of housing and can broaden access to Central London housing opportunities. Although it is unlikely that the contribution from the private sector will be significant, the

involvement of housing associations and co-operatives is likely to be of value in providing a variety of tenure and accommodation. Public response urged the involvement of as many agencies as practicable in achieving housing gain in Covent Garden.

**Every encouragement, consistent with other policies in the plan, will be given to any agency willing to provide residential accommodation in Covent Garden.**

B.3.27 The Covent Garden Community Association has presented a proposal for a major part of Seven Dials to be declared a Housing Action Area. This proposal is currently being examined by the GLC and Camden Council; the latter being responsible in the first instance for any possible declaration. Seven Dials is an area of extremely poor housing conditions, although the incidence of social stress, which must be present for a Housing Action Area to be declared, is comparatively low. The need to afford Seven Dials priority in a housing programme is reflected in the development proposals set out in the Plan.

**Proposal for a housing action area will be further explored and if a housing action area is not possible for seven dials then that area will be given high housing priority.**

B.3.28 As the Council programme for housing gain proceeds there may be limited opportunities for vacant property to be put into short-term housing use. The Council will encourage the use of appropriately temporarily vacant property for short term housing and establish an implementation programme. Such action may be best undertaken by a housing association or co-operative operating with greater flexibility with regard to housing standards.

**The Council will vigorously encourage the use for short-term housing of appropriate temporarily vacant property.**

#### Hostels

B.3.29 There are two permanent hostels for the single homeless in Covent Garden providing accommodation for 1,000 men on a nightly basis (see B.8). The relationship between the home-based community of 2,800 residents and the 1,000 occupants of these two hostels is not always an easy one. Although there is an acute demand for more hostel accommodation in the city centre, it is not considered desirable to increase the provision within Covent Garden. This area already makes a substantial contribution and public response is strongly opposed to any further increase in permanent hostel accommodation. The two existing hostels have recently been modernised and there are no proposals for their future displacement or redevelopment.

**No increase in permanent hostel provision for the single homeless.**

## B.4 Distribution of Population and Employment

### Introduction

B.4.1 The future size and distribution of population and employment determines the level of services and amenities which will be required (ref.37). An essential part of the Plan's policies and proposals is directed to ensure that the future demands of residents and workers are met adequately, whilst taking into account the availability of services and amenities in neighbouring areas. The changing age and family structure of the resident population is a particularly significant factor in establishing the range of services that will be required.

## Central London context

B.4.2 The Central London Advisory Plan aims to retain and attract a varied residential workforce related to the labour needs of Central London. The Advisory Plan also aims to secure the maintenance of sufficient employment opportunities to fulfil regional responsibilities, to extend alternative employment opportunities for the relatively unskilled and to encourage the retention and expansion of those activities which provide unskilled as well as skilled manual employment, particularly manufacturing industry.

### Future residential population

B.4.3 The 'Implementation' section sets out the action for physical change and a major element within this is the public sector programme for housing gain (see C.1). Table B.4.1 sets out the population and housing gains on a site by site basis with a minimum estimate of additional gains from 'non-site' activities and other housing policies. The gains shown for each proposal

**Table B.4.1 Population and housing gains\***

Existing		Population	Dwellings
Population/Dwellings		2,800	1,600
Site		Population Gain	Housing Gain
—	Ex-CGMA (small properties)	50	20
—	Odhams	320	100
—	Bedford Chambers	90	25
	Sub-Total	460	145
24	Newton Street	112	50
—	Dudley House	270	90
	Sub-Total	382	140
4	Nottingham Court	110	38
12	Bell Hotel Site	120	42
60	Mathews Yard	100	35
44	Tower Court	60	22
53	Neals Yard	30	10
	Sub-Total	420	147
—	Conduit/Banbury Court	40	16
—	Jubilee Market	200	80
	Sub-Total	240	96
67	Mercers	190	70
—	Parker Street	60	25
	Sub-Total	250	95
—	Earlham Street Warehouse	70	17
22	Comyn Ching	82	25
—	164 Shafesbury Avenue	50	22
	Sub-Total	202	64
205	Peabody, Bedfordbury	(-10)	(-70)
Area wide activity			
Reclaim/Reoccupation		530 (estimated minimum)	200 (estimated minimum)
Enforcement/Rehab.			
Increase in occupancy			
Private sector initiatives			
Grand Totals		5274	2417

or site are a realistic assessment of the housing likely to be achieved taking into account site and building constraints. In addition to the public sector programme there are a number of quasi-public and private sector schemes and the population gains from these proposals are also shown in this Table.

B.4.4 Table 1 shows that the completion and occupation of the new housing together with additional housing policies (e.g., enforcement, re-occupation of vacant property) will result in a resident population of about 5,300. A notable feature of the future distribution of population is the growing concentration of residential use in the Seven Dials area. Throughout the Plan a range of future population of between 5,300 (Table B.4.1) and 6,000 (maximum of target population range) has been adopted (see B.3).

B.4.5 The household size and age structure of the population will be altered as the opportunities for housing gain are achieved. With an overall dwelling mix for new developments designed to achieve a minimum of 50% family flats the proportion of larger households will increase. From the policies for dwelling mix it is estimated that the proportion of households of 5 persons or more will increase from 1% to about 6%. In contrast, the proportion of one- and two-person households, currently 80% of the total, will fall to about 65%. Table B.4.2 shows the overall age structure of the future resident population. For this Table a greatest possible range in future population has been taken with 5,300 as a minimum estimate towards the end of the Plan period and 6,000 as the maximum. Although the numbers in each age group will increase, the greatest gains are anticipated for the child and young adult populations. Correspondingly, residents aged 65 years and more will form a decreasing proportion of the total population.

**Table B.4.2 Possible effect on age structure of population**

Age Range (years)	Covent Garden Existing Population		Potential Population	
	No.	%	Range	%
Under 15	332	12	900-1000	17
16-19	138	5	310-350	6
20-39	726	26	1430-1600	27
40-59	742	26	1380-1550	26
60-64	215	8	330-400	6
65+	656	23	950-1100	18
Total	2809	100	5300-6000	100

### Employment policy

B.4.6 The GLDP states that the Council's aims in its employment policy for Greater London are to provide favourable conditions for prosperous employment. These aims include, the improvement of the physical aspect of areas where employment takes place, improvement of the access for workers to other facilities in the area where they work and the increase in employment opportunities. Among those factors which the employment policy for any particular area should have regard to are environmental conditions, capacity of the public transport system, improvement in the physical aspect of the area and availability of labour.

B.4.7 The Council has power to affect the future size and type of employment in Covent Garden indirectly through the whole range of Plan Policies and proposals. Although the most noted was the wholesale fruit and vegetable market, the employment

\*Totals for population and housing gain are estimates based on best information available and are subject to detailed revision.

opportunities this provided represented less than 10% of the total for the area. Traditionally, the types of employment associated with Covent Garden are those closely tied to Central London activities and, in particular, those relating to the entertainment industries.

**Table B.4.3**  
**Covent Garden: working population**

Activity	Employment Sept. 1975	% of Total
Offices	18,500	63
Shops	2,980	10
Industry	1,120	4
Entertainment including Theatres	2,240	7
Public Houses	380	1
Public Buildings	480	2
Hotels and Catering	1,080	4
Commerce	720	2
Other Uses (including Hospitals)	2,000	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,500</b>	<b>100</b>

**B.4.8** With a substantial number of vacant premises and a Plan objective to strengthen the economic vitality of the area, the policies seek to provide new and greater employment opportunities in the future. The favourable emphasis of the policies for light industrial uses and those activities serving the entertainment industry will ensure the retention and growth of many traditional forms of employment. The evidence from planning applications and the kinds of new uses being attracted to the area show that Covent Garden's attraction for small businesses serving a variety of Central London activities has increased since the market move. The improvements proposed for the physical fabric of the area will further strengthen this attraction.

**B.4.9** Less than 5% of the resident population were employed in the fruit and vegetable market. The major sources of employment for existing residents are those associated with the theatre and entertainment industry, hotels and catering and a variety of office and service activities. The Plan's policies and the principle of mixed-use development for public sector schemes will ensure that the variety of employment opportunities available to residents is not lessened in the future. In addition, the lettings policy for new housing gives priority to those with employment ties to the central area.

**To increase employment opportunities in accordance with GLDP policies, with particular emphasis on those types of employment traditional to the Covent Garden area, or where needed to provide balanced employment opportunities for the local population.**

#### **Future working population**

**B.4.10** In 1971, the working population of Covent Garden totalled about 34,000. Between 1971 and 1976 there were some major losses of employment for the area, for example, the vacation of the Coutts Bank site in the Strand, the market move to Nine Elms, the relocation of Charing Cross Hospital and the transfer in 1976 of the International Publishing Corporation's activities to King's Reach. These and other changes have resulted in a net loss of 5,000 jobs in the period since 1971 and the employment total in 1976 was estimated to be 29,000.

**Table B.4.4**  
**Employment gains and working population\***

Source of Employment Gains	Area of new non-residential floorspace	Employment Gains on Existing	Working Popula- tion
Existing	—	—	29,000
Schemes proposed or in pipeline	80,000 m <sup>2</sup>	3,200	32,200
Early phase proposals	12,550 m <sup>2</sup>	220	32,420
Late phase proposals	7,550 m <sup>2</sup>	950 <sup>+</sup>	33,370
Estimate of gains from re-occupation of existing vacant property and 'area-wide' activity	—	3,300	36,670

Notes: \*Totals for future employment gains and working population are estimates based on the best information available and are subject to revision.

+includes employment gain from Royal Opera House extension.

**B.4.11** Table 4 sets out estimates for the future size of the working population on a year by year basis rising to a total of nearly 37,000 by 1986. As well as the effect of development proposals by the public and private sectors, these estimates include an allowance for the gradual re-occupation of former market premises and other vacant property.

**B.4.12** It is evident from the new uses attracted to the former market buildings that the intensity of use in employment terms will be greater than for the previous wholesale and storage use. The London Transport Executive envisages no difficulty in meeting the demands of the future working population within the public transport system.

## **B.5 Industry and Commerce**

### **Industry**

#### **Existing situation**

**B.5.1** Since the market moved to Nine Elms an increasing number of small industrial firms have moved into former market property and other vacant premises (ref.7, 23). The majority of new businesses have a light industrial character and are predominantly small, many occupying less than 100 sq.m. employing only 2 or 3 people (ref.40). They are characterised by having strong links with existing Covent Garden activities and other West End activities. The existing activities that have expanded include workshops for the Royal Opera House and English National Opera, theatre support industries, film companies and printing firms.

**B.5.2** The majority of new industrial firms have moved from other parts of the Central Area, especially the Soho/Oxford Street area and there is evidence that these firms are being driven eastwards by increasing rents, rates and end of leases. The

new firms include theatrical support activities such as costumiers, musical instrument repairers, cinema-associated industries, film editing, photographic trades and printers. Comparatively few craftsmen and newly established businesses have moved into the area, in spite of a high degree of interest owing mainly to the high costs of modernising old property, the lack of accommodation suitable for living and working on the same premises and the large floor areas of the former market warehouses.

B.5.3 The new industrial concerns are adding to the diversity of employment opportunities in the area and make a small contribution to local employment by providing work for skilled and semi-skilled workers. New craft industries offer few employment opportunities for local residents.

B.5.4 The size and layout of the existing vacant warehouse accommodation has delayed speedy reoccupation by industrial concerns. However, property owners are beginning to react to the market demand for small premises by subdividing these properties into smaller units. More industrial concerns are joining together to share space within existing buildings.

### Strategic context

B.5.5 The GLDP aims to encourage industrial development in outer London (ref.37) but proposes that a number of inner London locations should continue in industrial use in order to provide for local populations which will still be dependent on such work and to prevent environmental deterioration where industrial land cannot satisfactorily be adapted to other uses. Preferred locations for industry are named but these exclude Covent Garden.

B.5.6 The rapid decline in industrial employment in certain parts of Greater London has led to a recent change in strategic policy (ref.41) from one advocating dispersal and concentration to a policy of promotion and encouragement of industrial activity within London. Assistance to industry will receive priority for expenditure and the Council intends to take positive steps to promote industrial development by the provision of purpose-built flatted factory units, the acquisition and conversion of existing buildings into modernised working units to match the needs of smaller firms and by financial support through concessionary rents and lease-back arrangements. The Council's Industrial Centre will continue to play an active role in promoting industry within Greater London.

B.5.7 The Central London Advisory Plan aims to slow down the rate of decline of manufacturing industry in the Central Area (ref.42) both by making adequate provision for that part of the manufacturing sector which can function most successfully in Central London, and by protecting and preserving all existing manufacturing employment. A more flexible approach towards the reuse of vacant industrial buildings and sites is proposed. Appropriate industrial activities are as described in para. A.3.9.

### Local context

B.5.8 The Camden Borough and Westminster City Councils have current policies to prevent the loss of industrial floorspace and in particular the loss of small workshop space, in order to retain a diversity of employment opportunities.

### Future demand and supply of industrial accommodation

B.5.9 Trends indicate that Covent Garden is strengthening its metropolitan role in the industrial sector. Industries moving into the area have strong links with the Central Area, in particular with the theatre industry, and can justify their need for a central location. This strong demand from small and diverse business activities is expected to continue and it is anticipated

that the controlling factor in these trends will be the availability of existing buildings for conversion, the size of accommodation and the amount of new industrial buildings provided. The demand from craftsmen and other newly established businesses is also expected to continue. There is, however, likely to be an increasing shortage of cheap accommodation for these activities as existing premises are modernised or replaced with new purpose-built accommodation.

B.5.10 In the short term much of the demand will be absorbed within the existing vacant market buildings. In general these are suitable for conversion to industrial use, although the large floor areas of many are incompatible with the current demand for small units of accommodation. Subdivision of the larger buildings into small units would assist reoccupation and there is increased scope for businesses to join together to share premises.

B.5.11 No purpose-built industrial premises have been constructed since the market move, but new industrial floorspace (see C.1) is included in the Bedfordbury redevelopment proposals (1500 sq.m/16,000 sq.ft), the Dudley House development (650 sq.m/7,000 sq.ft) and Comyn Ching (105 sq.m/1,130 sq.ft). The proposed Council development programme will also provide light industrial space within its mixed use proposals (ref.47). The Council, as part of its strategic approach to the problem, is also investigating the availability of sites for flatted factory development to encourage small industrial firms to locate in the area.

B.5.12 The growth of industrial activities will be a major factor in strengthening the economic vitality of the area, by the provision of additional local employment, by supporting and servicing traditional Covent Garden businesses, and by providing beneficial uses for many of the vacant market buildings. Small businesses will be particularly appropriate. Existing industrial accommodation will be protected vigorously. Light industrial activities as specified in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1972 are considered most appropriate activities throughout the area and there is no clear need to concentrate such uses in certain areas. General industrial uses would also be acceptable except in locations adjacent to residential, church, hospital or school premises for reasons of noise, vibration, smell, fumes and traffic generation. Special industrial activities as specified in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1972 would normally be inappropriate but a limited number of industries in this category e.g., glassblowing could be acceptable in the right location provided local amenity is protected by the imposition of appropriate conditions.

**It will be the normal policy to prevent the change of use from industrial floorspace to other uses.**

**It will be the normal policy to favour the growth of light and other appropriate industrial activities. Noise and other disturbance will be vigorously controlled by the imposition and enforcement of conditions in planning consents.**

B.5.13 Certain industrial units contribute to the vitality of the street scene by providing visual interest at street level e.g., the glassblowers and barrow workshop in Neal Street and jewellers, instrument repairers and screen printers elsewhere. Such activities located at street level, and away from the main shopping streets, in appropriate cases re-using vacant shopping premises, will be viewed favourably.

**It will be the normal policy to encourage certain acceptable industrial activities, craft industries for example, to locate at street level in order to provide visual interest.**

B.5.14 There should be sufficient new or rehabilitated industrial accommodation to accommodate the demand for new or expanded businesses but the trends in the supply and demand of industrial floorspace will be monitored regularly. If the supply is insufficient to match the demand, the Council will consider ways of rectifying any shortfall by constructing new floorspace or by acquiring and modernising out-dated industrial and commercial premises to provide industrial units of various sizes to meet the demand. The Council will encourage the private sector to adopt a similar approach.

B.5.15 Some existing industrial floorspace lies within proposed redevelopment schemes. The Council will ensure that within its own schemes, existing industrial activities are not extinguished, particularly if the activity has close ties to the Central Area. If disturbance is impossible to avoid, the Council will seek to relocate these activities elsewhere in Covent Garden and will, in all cases, incorporate light industrial accommodation in new development. In proposals for private redevelopment the Council will require replacement industrial accommodation containing units of a similar size to those replaced.

**The Council will continue to require the provision of replacement industrial accommodation in any redevelopment scheme.**

**Wherever possible the Council will give preference to re-housing existing businesses (displaced by its own development proposals) in the Council's own premises, subject to usual negotiations on rent.**

B.5.16 The Council considers that the area has a continuing role to play in accommodating craft and newly established industries which are essential to the healthy development of industrial activity in London. It will aim to protect small units of industrial accommodation if necessary provide such space within its own developments.

B.5.17 In determining applications for industrial uses in Covent Garden the Council will have due regard to the following considerations:

- 1 Type of industry
- 2 Linkage with Covent Garden and Central London
- 3 Size
- 4 Noise/smells and fumes/vibrations
- 5 Traffic generation
- 6 Loading and unloading requirements
- 7 Parking requirements
- 8 Hours of operation
- 9 Generation of employment and availability of labour

#### **Warehouse/repositories/discount warehouses**

##### **Existing situation**

B.5.18 Over the last ten years, warehouse space has declined in Central London (ref.44) and there appears to be little current demand for warehouse space in Covent Garden. However, both the Royal Opera House and the English National Opera have taken over old market warehouses for storage purposes and, on a smaller scale, some of the publishing firms in the area have expanded their storage accommodation into ex-market property.

B.5.19 As a result of the market's move a large quantity of warehouse accommodation is now vacant. The occupied warehouses are predominantly used by the remaining wholesale market firms, the publishing trade and by the local theatres and their support activities for theatrical goods and properties.

B.5.20 Currently there are two distribution depots in Covent Garden. One is a retail newsagency supplier and the other is a depot for mobile food stalls.

#### **Strategic and local context**

B.5.21 The GLDP contains no policies for commercial uses as they have not so far raised any serious strategic problem as regards employment (ref.45). The Council intends to keep the position under review and will issue such guidance as may be necessary.

B.5.22 The APCL accepts that Central London is, in most cases, no longer a suitable location for commercial warehousing and storage activity. These activities are normally low intensity users of space, resulting in considerable heavy traffic and provide relatively little employment by comparison with alternative activities. The APCL, therefore, encourages the trend for dispersal of warehousing and storage activities away from Central London. The adjoining boroughs operate policies to discourage the retention of warehouse accommodation for the same reasons.

#### **Future demand**

B.5.23 There is some demand for storage space linked to the theatre, theatre support and publishing industries which needs to be in close proximity to such activities. It is unlikely that there will be any demand for discount premises or storage accommodation with no specific ties to Covent Garden or proposal to construct new warehouse space.

#### **Policies and Proposals**

B.5.24 The movement of warehousing and storage activities out of Covent Garden will continue to be encouraged because the retention of such activities conflicts with the aims to seek improvements to the environment, particularly through traffic restraint.

B.5.25 Warehouses are normally low employment generators. As one of the basic objectives of the plan is to strengthen the economic character and vitality of Covent Garden by promoting the growth of appropriate new and traditional activities, intensification of the employment base will be achieved by accepting alternative appropriate uses for warehousing accommodation.

**It will be the normal policy to permit changes of use from warehouse to other appropriate uses.**

B.5.26 The expansion of warehousing space will only be supported when it provides an essential adjunct to other Covent Garden or Central London uses such as the theatre and publishing. Due to the extent of vacant warehouse accommodation most of this demand can be contained within existing buildings and only in exceptional circumstances will it be necessary to allow changes of use from other uses to storage.

**It will be normal policy to oppose change of use from other uses to storage.**

B.5.27 Discount warehouses and other retail/distribution depots are high traffic generators and would cause considerable loss of amenity and congestion contrary to the plan's objectives.

**It will be the normal policy to exclude discount warehouses and distribution depots including those supplying mobile food stalls.**

#### **Showrooms**

##### **Existing situation**

B.5.28 Although 'showrooms' are not classified in the Use

Classes Order, it is considered that they have a different character from a warehouse as their predominant purpose is the display of goods for sale wholesale, rather than the storage of goods prior to distribution and sale elsewhere.

B.5.29 There has been some demand for street level showroom space in ex-market property and in vacant retail premises, especially in Long Acre and in the Piazza and surrounding streets, but little known demand for showroom space above street level except in conjunction with street level accommodation. About a third of all showroom applications are speculative and characteristically refer to buildings that are being restored to a high standard. From recent experience in Covent Garden and Central London it has been seen that speculative showroom development, particularly above street level, is often a way of creating potential floorspace in order to overcome the Council's office policy. As a result the Council has adopted a policy of only granting personal consents for showrooms and at the present time there is no vacant showroom accommodation in the area.

B.5.30 Some of the named showroom uses taking space in Covent Garden reflect the expansion of existing firms in the area, but the majority have no existing links with Covent Garden although they have stressed the importance of being in a Central London situation in order to attract both national and international trade. Furniture showrooms predominate but others include bricks, video cassettes and office equipment. Many of the new showrooms will be the sole outlet for a British product and so the importance of a Central London outlet is paramount. Some of these firms are moving from other parts of the Central Area, whilst others are new outlets for regional firms.

B.5.31 Although showrooms are helping to open up the area and bring life and interest back to the old market properties they are characteristically low intensity uses and generate less activity and visual interest at street level than retail shops, restaurants and light industrial uses.

B.5.32 The type of showroom activity is important as some showrooms with a popular domestic appeal, for example wallpaper or bathroom fittings or activities with a wide national or international clientele, would generate more activity than some specialist shops and provide useful support to restaurants, pubs and other local businesses.

#### Local context

B.5.33 There are no strategic policies for showroom uses. The Camden Borough Council attempts to restrict their location in defined shopping frontages and primary shopping streets and the Westminster City Council will only allow showroom uses above street level in special circumstances.

#### Future demand

B.5.34 The demand for showroom space is expected to grow. In the short term most of the demand from named showroom uses could be accommodated within existing vacant ex-market premises. It is envisaged that there will continue to be a demand for speculative showroom accommodation in new or modernised premises.

#### Policies and proposals

B.5.35 The Council consider that a limited number of known showroom uses are acceptable in Covent Garden as they will contribute to the mixed use character of the area and help to bring life back to former market properties, and the street frontages in particular. The demand for shops, restaurants and industrial uses is not thought to be sufficient to ensure the reoccupation of all street-level premises by other more vital uses.

B.5.36 Showroom uses are low employment generators and will make a very minor contribution to the employment structure of the area. As they can often afford higher rents than retail, industrial or restaurant uses, a large increase of showroom premises in the area is undesirable as this could lead to increased rental and land values to the detriment of other uses which would make a greater contribution to the Plan's objectives.

**It will be the normal policy to allow a limited number of showroom uses. Where appropriate, conditions will be imposed to ensure the provision of a window display.**

B.5.37 Showroom uses will normally not be allowed in the main shopping street or in the Piazza area due to their low level of activity and visual interest. Concentrations of showrooms in any part of the area are undesirable even in non-primary shopping streets as they normally generate a 'dead frontage' which can affect the trade of a whole street.

**It will be the normal policy to prevent change of use from retail shop and other uses to showroom use in shopping streets.**

B.5.38 Consents will normally be made personal to the applicants to prevent speculative developments which could prejudice the Plan's objectives. Showroom uses above or below street-level may in some cases be considered appropriate.

**It will be normal policy only to grant personal permissions for showroom uses.**

B.5.39 The number and location of showroom uses will be monitored carefully in order to prevent concentrations in particular streets and to prevent a large increase of showroom premises which could hinder the attainment of other Plan objectives.

#### Rehearsal and recording studios

##### Existing situation

B.5.40 Although there are a number of private rehearsal rooms in the area the existing theatres are seriously short of rehearsal accommodation and the four major companies rehearse outside Central London. This situation will be eased when the extension of the Royal Opera House is built as this contains substantial rehearsal facilities for both ballet and opera companies (see C.1).

B.5.41 On a smaller scale, the Dance Centre has recently extended its rehearsal accommodation into an adjoining warehouse and there are various proposals to convert other empty property into rehearsal accommodation for experimental theatre and modern dance groups. There are no recording studios in the area.

##### Strategic and local context

B.5.42 The GLDP aims to foster the live theatre, concert halls and the communication industry and their supporting activities in Central London. Camden and Westminster generally favour the location of such activities, providing that appropriate conditions are imposed to ensure adequate soundproofing.

##### Future demand

B.5.43 The demand for rehearsal space is considerably in excess of the existing supply and each of the major companies in the area would value central rehearsal space in close proximity to the theatres for the convenience of cast and production staff, as would many of the other theatres in the area. There is also an urgent need for orchestral rehearsal facilities in Central London. Demand for smaller premises from individual and small groups is expected to continue.

B.5.44 It is anticipated that there will be some limited demand for recording studios which need to be in close proximity to the major orchestras and opera companies and to radio and television centres. It is unlikely that there will be any demand for purpose-built accommodation for either activity as their low intensity of use and high site requirements make them uneconomic uses in Central London.

### **Policies and proposals**

B.5.45 It is recognised that the continued existence and the expansion of the live theatre in Central London is dependent upon the suitable provision of supporting rehearsal facilities. It is therefore considered that this use is most appropriate to an area providing essential support for the theatre industry and generating activity which will help to support other businesses.

B.5.46 The space requirements of the major companies are very large and the provision of new accommodation on a suitable scale could be incompatible with the conservation objectives of the Plan. The opportunity would seem to exist for the day-time use of other theatres in the area for rehearsal purposes. On a smaller scale, certain of the market buildings would be eminently suitable for adaptation for this purpose.

B.5.47 A Covent Garden location is not thought to be as essential for recording studios as for rehearsal studios which require daily close associations with the parent theatre. Even so such uses would contribute to the Plan's objectives by adding to the diversity and interest of the area and supporting existing businesses. In addition they would provide beneficial new uses for basement areas of former market property, in particular, providing that the buildings are adequately soundproofed. If the demand for rehearsal and recording space remains unsatisfied it may be possible to incorporate such accommodation within the Council's own developments.

**It will be normal policy to allow rehearsal facilities and some recording studios in the area, with due concern for the question of noise and disturbance.**

## **B.6 Offices**

### **Existing situation**

B.6.1 There has been little disruptive large or medium-scale office development in Covent Garden and this is one of the most noticeable aspects of its visual character and provides a striking contrast with other parts of the Central Area (ref.6, 24). It is traditionally an area of small office units, generally in converted eighteenth and nineteenth century commercial buildings and, in 1975, 73% of all offices were under 300 sq.m., employing on average 10 persons.

B.6.2 The office uses cover a wide range of different activities. Many of these are characteristic of the Central Area as a whole but a large number have close links with the traditional Covent Garden activities, the market, theatre and publishing. Others have close ties to major activities on the fringe of the area, for example the Legal Precinct east of Kingsway and the film industry in Soho.

B.6.3 With the removal of many fruit, vegetable and floral distributors to Nine Elms and the International Publishing Corporation's departure to King's Reach, the characteristics of the office activities were less weighted towards market and publishing. However, the new businesses attracted to the area have strong connections with existing Covent Garden and Central Area activities, notably the wholesale stamp business, the Soho-based communications industry and, to a lesser extent, the publishing trade. There has been a small increase in professional offices for solicitors and accountants.

B.6.4 The majority of these new office activities are small-scale, many occupying less than 100 sq.m. of floorspace, reflecting the layout and character of the existing buildings. However, two major proposals the Coutts Bank reconstruction and the MEPC development in Long Acre, will contain some 20,000 sq.m. (over 200,000 sq.ft) of office accommodation, and employ about 800 persons in each development.

### **Strategic context**

B.6.5 In general the GLDP aims to disperse new office development away from Central London but recognises that certain office functions require a central location and must have space for legitimate expansion (ref.45). The GLDP stresses 'that some areas are more suitable for office development than others', in Central London. Accessibility is one of the principal considerations and the vicinities of the major rail termini and other important traffic interchange points have advantages in this respect. The GLDP names preferred office locations, those areas in which the Council believes 'offices can be located with benefit', but the Council considers that none falls within the Covent Garden Plan area.

B.6.6 The GLDP requires the Council to monitor indicators such as employment and activity rates and to develop new policies where difficulties arise. As part of continuous monitoring the Council has and will continue to supplement GLDP office policy concerning the amount and distribution of additional employment between the central and other sectors.

B.6.7 As part of this process the Council is operating a policy of firm restraint in the Central Area, of which Covent Garden is a part. In all cases, special regard will be paid to the environmental and traffic aspects of the proposed developments and to the degree of benefit to the community which they could produce.

B.6.8 The Central London Advisory Plan adopts a more flexible attitude towards office development. It recommends policies designed to allow a limited increase in office floorspace for appropriate Central London activities, their essential supporting activities and office developments essential for the efficient running of industrial activities. Increases in office floorspace should not result in the displacement of appropriate Central London activities.

### **Local context**

B.6.9 The adjoining Boroughs also operate policies to discourage the growth of office floorspace in order to relieve congestion, restrict employment growth and to maintain the mixed-use character and function of their respective parts of the Central Area. Within this overall policy of restraint Westminster Council takes special account of office proposals which provide essential support to traditional West End industries such as the film, theatre and dress-making industries and which provide planning benefits to the community.

B.6.10 The London Borough of Camden similarly considers office developments in the light of any general planning benefits that they provide, with particular emphasis being given to the provision of residential accommodation, and criteria of accessibility is given much importance.

### **Supply of office accommodation**

B.6.11 The amount of occupied and vacant office accommodation in Covent Garden increased from 472,000 sq.m. in 1966 to 518,000 sq.m. in 1975. With the effect of the Market move, occupied floorspace declined over this period from a total of 454,000 sq.m. in 1966 to 429,000 sq.m. by 1975. The recent occupation of Space House, Kingsway, adds a further 20,000 sq.m. to the total of occupied floorspace.



B.6.12 The completion of development schemes under way and those programmed should add a further 76,500 sq.m. of office floorspace in the Plan period (see C.1). It is significant that all current proposals, with the exception of Coutts Bank, are speculative in nature and there appears to be little demand from named office users for new or modernised office accommodation of a medium to large scale. As much of the existing office accommodation in Covent Garden is in unmodernised eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings, it is expected that the demand for replacement office buildings or modernised space including modest increases of office accommodation within the 10% tolerance of the 8th schedule of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 will continue.

B.6.13 Because of the strong conservation objectives for the area and the large number of listed buildings, the rehabilitation trend is expected to predominate. As few of the existing buildings have solely office use rights, most of the new office proposals are expected to form part of a mixed use scheme. Only outside the Conservation Areas are medium to large scale new office development proposals likely to be received as part of comprehensive mixed use redevelopment scheme.

B.6.14 The Conservation objectives for the area have repercussions on the size of office units. The modernisation of office buildings previously in multiple occupation normally results in reorganisation to provide single occupation. This reduction in small units is aggravated further by the rapidly expanding trend for the internal unification of two or more terrace buildings and the replacement of existing office buildings by purpose-built premises. There is a danger that if these trends gain further momentum the loss of small-scale offices will have serious repercussions not only on Covent Garden business activity but on the whole of Central London. Covent Garden provides one of the last major concentrations of small office suites in the Central Area and many of the office uses provide essential supporting services to other Central Area activities.

#### **Vacant office accommodation**

B.6.15 In 1966, 18,000 sq.m. of office floorspace was vacant representing 4% of total office accommodation in Covent Garden. Before the Market move, the total of vacant office floorspace had increased to 74,000 sq.m. (about 8%) and 20,000 sq.m. of this total was in Space House, Kingsway. With the impact of the market move and the changing economic climate, the volume of vacant office accommodation rose to a peak of nearly 84,000 sq.m. by September 1975. Despite the transfer of the International Publishing Corporation's activities in early 1976, when a further 7,500 sq.m. was vacated, the volume of vacant office accommodation has fallen since 1975. This is due to the occupation of Space House and the gradual take-up of former market offices throughout the area.

#### **Temporary office consents**

B.6.16 The temporary office consents, granted in the light of former planning policies for Covent Garden will be reviewed in accordance with policies outlined in subsequent paragraphs.

#### **Demand for office accommodation**

B.6.17 The demand for office accommodation is expected to continue at a slow but steady rate to meet the expansion of existing Covent Garden activities and from those activities that provide an essential support to traditional Covent Garden activities. Pressure from other appropriate Central London activities is also expected to grow in line with present trends as these activities expand or are forced to leave their present locations owing to redevelopment, expiry of temporary office consents and leases or increased rents and rates.

B.6.18 Space standards per worker are also expected to rise, which in turn will lead to increased demand for additional space and for amalgamation of existing buildings. An additional effect will be felt where activities previously non-office in character change through specialisation or new technology to become essentially an office function. For example, changes in printing technology such as computerised typesetting could change the classification of this use from industrial to offices.

B.6.19 The demand is expected to be predominantly small scale with the majority of new users requiring accommodation under 500 sq.m. and most well under 100 sq.m. Demand for medium or large scale office units is expected to be slight. It can be anticipated that the demand will be mainly for older, cheaper accommodation than for new purpose-built accommodation of any size.

B.6.20 In the short term, much of this anticipated demand will be met within existing buildings or in the new or rehabilitated office developments that are scheduled. However, the supply and demand of office accommodation could become increasingly polarised and incompatible if modernisation and redevelopment continues to produce larger expensive office units.

#### **Policies and proposals**

B.6.21 The amount of existing and proposed office floorspace should be sufficient to contain the estimated future demand for office accommodation in the area. There is therefore no reason to relax the Council's office policy for the Central Area. Thus the overall policy will be one of restraint consistent with the Council's strategic aims for the Central Area.

B.6.22 It is essential, however, to ensure that new office developments, replacement offices and the modernisation of existing buildings contain a preponderance of small office units to provide a supply of units which meet the demand and to prevent the creation of large unlettable units which could remain vacant for long periods.

B.6.23 Each case will therefore be assessed on its merits with continuous monitoring of overall decisions with reference to the basic planning aims of the area. The following factors will be taken into account when considering planning applications for office development:

- 1 The type of office activity and its linkage with Covent Garden and the Central Area.
- 2 The degree of benefit to the community office development would produce by way of:
  - (a) provision of residential accommodation in conjunction with the development;
  - (b) provision of specific benefits in the form of buildings, land or other facilities for use of the public;
  - (c) conservation of buildings or places of architectural or historic interest;
  - (d) provision of small office suites;
  - (e) provision of land or buildings for other employment generating uses, for instance, small industrial units.

**It will be the normal policy to control any increase in office floorspace in accordance with office policy contained in GLDP as supplemented from time to time. No special case is seen for Covent Garden as a whole to be treated differently from the rest of the Central Area and each proposal should be treated on its merits.**

**It will be the normal policy, upon consideration of replacement office developments to impose conditions to provide small units.**

## **B.7 Entertainment Uses**

### **Introduction**

B.7.1 Historically Covent Garden was London's entertainment centre and today entertainment activities are the fourth largest user of land (ref.6, 21). The theatres are the most notable entertainment use in Covent Garden and with the exception of the Royal Opera House, most of the entertainment uses are located along or in close proximity to the perimeter roads. About 7% of the working population or over 2,200 people are employed in entertainment activities, and some (for example the Royal Opera House with a staff of about 1,000) are very large sources of employment opportunities.

B.7.2 The significance of Covent Garden as an entertainment area will become even more marked when many of the current proposals are implemented and the Central Market area in particular comes alive with new pavement cafes, shops, restaurants and such major new activities as the London Transport and Theatre Museums.

B.7.3 The Council has accepted a recommendation by the Forum of Representatives that most new entertainment activities be concentrated along an 'entertainment route' (Map B7/1) in order to safeguard the interests of the residential population. The route will effectively link the concentration of theatres in St Martins Lane with the more isolated theatres at the Aldwych and yet avoid the main residential concentrations. It will embrace the Central Market area and surrounding streets where there is the greatest concentration of deserted market buildings, many of which would be ideally suited for a variety of entertainment purposes. Along this route entertainment activities would be acceptable in accordance with the guidelines laid down in the following paragraphs.

### **Strategic and local context**

B.7.4 The GLDP aims to foster those features of Central London, including entertainment and cultural activities, which attract people to London in increasing numbers from all over the world. Concert halls, theatres and cinemas of regional and national importance and their supporting activities are named as appropriate activities in Central London.

B.7.5 Both the adjoining boroughs are committed to policies to protect theatres, cinemas, and other places of public entertainment.

### **Theatres**

B.7.6 Covent Garden provides, with the Piccadilly/Leicester Square area, the heart of London's theatre land. It contains nineteen theatres representing half of London's purpose-built theatres and providing nearly 20,000 seats in total. The Royal Opera House, the Coliseum and the Theatre Royal Drury Lane are large theatres of international reputation and the remainder cover a range of sizes catering for all types of production.

B.7.7 The condition of the existing theatres in the area is generally good as the Council's strict licensing requirements has led to maintenance of high standards. None of the existing theatres is threatened by any proposed redevelopment schemes, but the planned removal of the Royal Shakespeare Company from the Aldwych to the Barbican in 1979 will leave one theatre vacant.

B.7.8 The Council has long operated a policy to protect the theatre in London but is powerless to prevent changes of use within Category XVII of the Use Classes Order which contains theatres, cinemas, music halls and concert halls. The Council considers that amendments should be made to the Use Classes Order to separate these uses and will continue to press for a separate theatre class.

B.7.9 The theatres provide a significant economic base to Covent Garden by providing local employment opportunities, generating a variety of theatre support industries and by the spin-off in trade to pubs, cafes and restaurants in the area. This is quite considerable owing to the high proportion of non-local patronage.

B.7.10 In spite of the concentration of theatres the use is compatible with, and complementary to, the residential and business community. The only conflict appears to be the evening competition for limited on-street parking spaces between residents and theatregoers.

### **Future Demand**

B.7.11 In one respect, the future significance of Covent Garden as a theatre centre is certain to increase (see C.1). The Arts Council has definite proposals to extend the Royal Opera House substantially to include a second auditorium containing 1200 seats, opera and ballet schools, a new foyer, restaurant and public rooms and 2200 sq.m. (23,500 sq.ft.) of administrative offices.

B.7.12 It is unlikely that there will be other proposals for the construction of new theatres in the current economic climate and the conservation objectives for the plan area will preclude large-scale new building throughout the major part of Covent Garden.

B.7.13 A number of entertainment organisations have approached the Council with a view to using vacated market buildings for theatrical purposes and there seems to be the opportunity for limited expansion of theatre activity especially for small auditoria, e.g., theatres 'in the round' with emphasis on more informal entertainment.

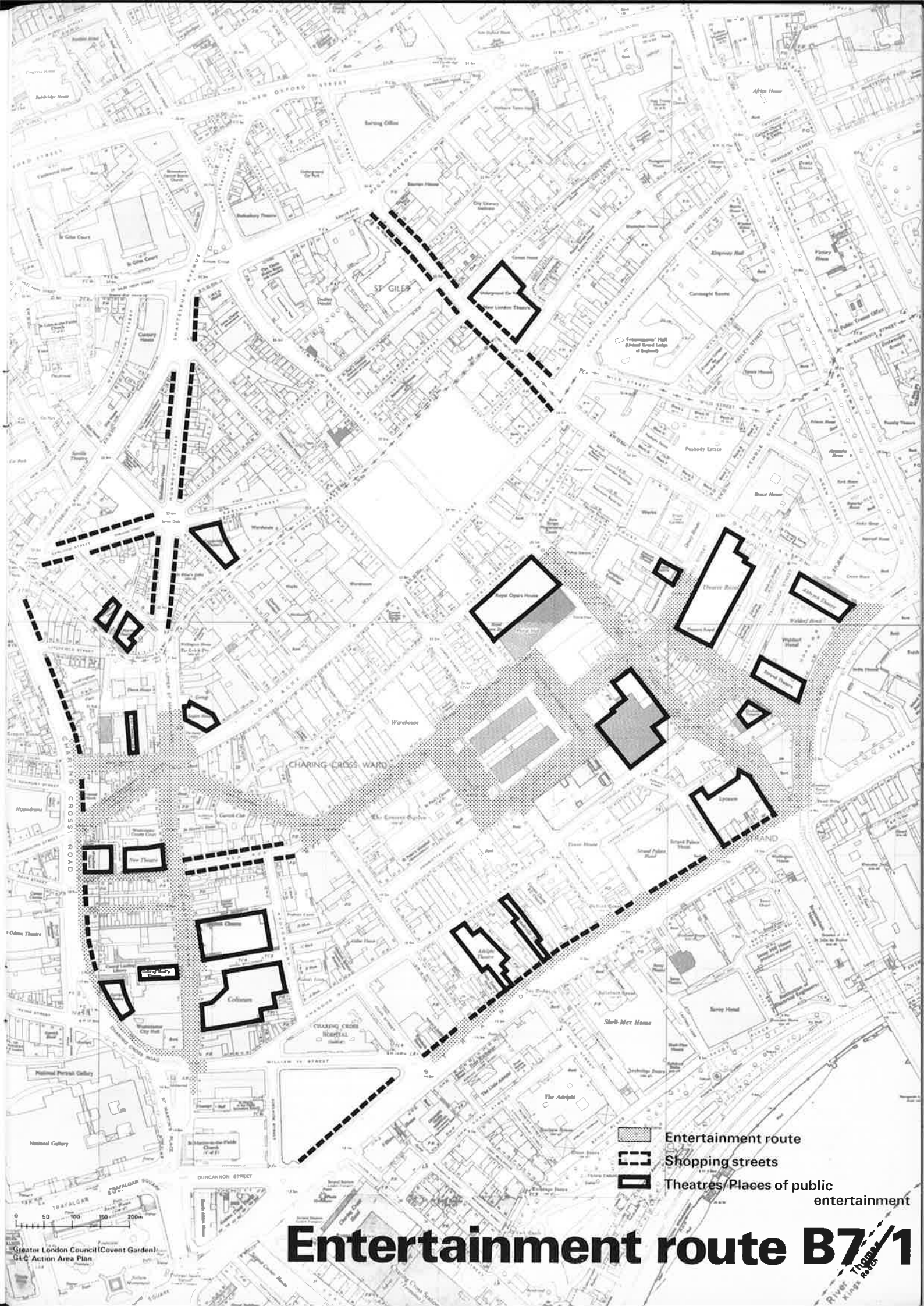
B.7.14 Some of the vacant market buildings provide scope for conversion into small auditoria and use for theatrical purposes will be encouraged, especially on the 'entertainment route' away from the main housing areas.




B.7.15 The listed status of the majority of theatres in the area should ensure their retention as buildings but if the future of the theatre industry is seriously threatened in the next few years, there could be changes of use within Use Class XVII to concert halls, cinemas etc, or to other entertainment uses which the Council will be powerless to resist under present legislation.

### **Policy**

B.7.16 The theatre plays a very major economic role in the area and the Council consider that its continued existence and expansion should be encouraged to enhance the economic vitality of Covent Garden, to increase employment opportunities and to retain and increase the viability of other activities such as theatre support industries, pubs, restaurants and clubs. The economic spin-off effect would have more than local significance in view of the importance of theatres as a tourist attraction and as a means of earning foreign exchange.

B.7.17 The demolition of existing theatres will be strongly resisted and would only be allowed if a replacement live theatre was incorporated in the redevelopment scheme.



-  Entertainment route
-  Shopping streets
-  Theatres/Places of public entertainment

# Entertainment route B7/1

Greater London Council (Covent Garden)  
GLC Action Area Plan

River Thames  
King's Reach

B.7.18 The Council recognizes the importance of the theatre support industries to the economic viability of the theatre and will view favourably the expansion of such activities in the area.

B.7.19 The Council does not consider that the expansion of the theatre will affect the basic policy of increasing the residential population of the area.

#### **Cinemas, music halls and concert halls**

B.7.20 There is one cinema in the Plan area but no music halls or concert halls.

B.7.21 In view of the current trends of cinema closure and subdivision into smaller auditoria, it is unlikely that there will be any demand for new cinema premises in the plan period. However, as with theatres some vacated market premises could be suitable for small cinema clubs and the Council would view with favour any such proposals providing that residential amenities were safeguarded.

B.7.22 Demand for concert facilities also seems unlikely but there has been some interest shown in the re-use of certain of the former market buildings as small, experimental concert halls. The establishment of small concert halls in the area would also help contribute to the Plan's objectives.

B.7.23 The main criteria when considering proposals for extensions of existing theatres, new theatres, cinemas and places of public entertainment would be as follows:

- 1 The effect on amenity and character of the area.
- 2 The effects on road safety and traffic flow.
- 3 That within the Conservation Areas, the essential character of these areas must not be disturbed by the intensity of use or massing of the building bulk.
- 4 That places of public entertainment be sited away from residential properties.
- 5 That the parking capacity of the area would not be overloaded.
- 6 The effect on local employment and availability of labour.

**It will be the normal policy to continue to restrict changes of use from use Class XVII to other uses.**

**It will be the normal policy to permit an increase in floorspace for public entertainment in the area.**

**It will be the normal policy to allow the change of use of former market buildings for acceptable entertainment purposes.**

#### **Public houses**

B.7.24 There are 50 public houses in Covent Garden, well distributed throughout the area and patronised by local residents, workers, visitors to the West End and tourists. The future demand for public houses is difficult to assess but with the growth in the working and resident populations and the number of visitors to the area, there could be a demand for additional premises.

B.7.25 Public houses form an integral part of Covent Garden and provide an important local amenity to residents, workers and visitors and existing premises will continue to be safeguarded.

B.7.26 There is the opportunity to provide new public houses in the Odhams development and in the Central Market Building if in due course a case is made and the Council would view with favour any proposals for new pub premises in redevelopment schemes.

**It will be the normal policy to prevent change of use of public houses to other uses.**

**It would be the normal policy to provide space for new public houses in Council's own developments if required.**

#### **Cafes/Restaurants/Sandwich Bars/Wine Bars**

B.7.27 There are 30 cafes 55 restaurants and 9 sandwich bars in Covent Garden with concentrations along the Strand and adjoining streets, Charing Cross Road, St Martin's Lane, Cranbourn Street and Great Queen Street. The cafes and restaurants vary in price and character ranging from the comparatively cheap, often serving a local and lunchtime trade, to high-priced, West-End style restaurants of international repute.

B.7.28 Since the market move four small cafes have gone out of business but there has been considerable expressed demand for restaurants and wine bars, mainly in the medium-price range. If all the proposals are implemented there will be a major concentration of eating establishments around the Piazza and in the Bow Street/Wellington Street area. The new wine-bars and restaurants are helping to revitalise street frontages, make beneficial use of former market premises and provide a useful service to residents, workers and theatre goers.

B.7.29 Sandwich bars with take-away facilities are an essential facility in areas with sizeable working populations and there has been a growth in demand for this type of quasi-cafe use over the last five years. It is to be expected that the demand will continue to grow as the working population increases and the Council will view proposals for new establishments favourably as they provide a vital service and add to the diversity of activities at street-level.

B.7.30 The strong demand for cafes, restaurants and wine bars is expected to continue as the area gains momentum with new uses moving into the area, the completion of the Central Market Building and the closure of the market square and other streets to traffic which will make them more attractive to pedestrians.

#### **Policy**

B.7.31 The Council will favour the growth of these activities as they will make a significant contribution to the economic vitality of the area, not only in serving local residents and workers and the evening theatre trade, but by creating local employment and by attracting visitors to the area from Britain and overseas.

B.7.32 The Council will welcome the concentration of cafes and restaurants along the entertainment route but in other areas will aim for a diversity of activities at street-level. Change of use of retail shops to restaurants in the local shopping streets will continue to be opposed.

B.7.33 Loss of amenity caused by smell from extract fans, garbage deposited on pavements and the generation of noise late at night will be prevented by imposition of appropriate conditions to the planning consent. Restaurants with late-night opening will only be allowed away from residential properties.

B.7.34 The number of cafes, restaurants, etc., will be carefully monitored and if the Council consider that the number at any one time is having adverse consequences on the amenities of local residents and businesses and is causing a decline in retail trading the policy will be reviewed.

B.7.35 The following principles will be observed in considering planning applications:

- 1 Location away from residential property.
- 2 Location in non-primary shopping streets.
- 3 Visual Intrusion.
- 4 Noise.
- 5 Smell.
- 6 Traffic generation.
- 7 Car parking.
- 8 Availability of labour.

**It will be the normal policy to prevent change of use from retail shop to restaurants, especially in shopping streets.**

**It would be the normal policy to continue to permit new cafes/restaurants/wine bars in the area, especially along a theatre entertainment route between St Martin's Lane and the Aldwych whilst protecting residential amenity by the imposition of planning conditions.**

#### **Night clubs, discos, restaurants and music and dancing licences**

B.7.36 There are eight clubs in the area situated around Great Newport Street, in Neal Street and Henrietta Street. There are no discos and about ten restaurants with music and dancing licences. The new London Theatre operates a cabaret club and the Lyceum Theatre is used as a dance hall several nights each week.

B.7.37 There is a strong demand for restaurants/clubs with music and dancing licences (some with independent discotheques); especially for ground floor and basement premises previously in market use. The tendency has been for these to be concentrated in the Piazza, Russell Street, Wellington Street/Tavistock Street area.

B.7.38 The Council consider that a limited number of clubs and restaurants with music and dancing licences are appropriate in Covent Garden but only along the entertainment route, the periphery roads and away from the main residential concentrations. These activities will not be allowed in other locations as they would have a detrimental effect on residential amenity.

B.7.39 Even along the entertainment route, applications will be carefully considered to assess their likely effect on the amenity and character of the surrounding area and their effect on road safety, traffic flow and parking congestion. The size and type of club will determine the number of people visiting the premises and the likelihood of crowding and disturbance. Hours of operation will have an important effect on the amenity of the area. Applications would not be acceptable near residential property, churches or hospitals.

#### **Policy**

B.7.40 The Council consider that these activities will strengthen the economic vitality of the area by providing local employment, complementing and supporting other entertainment trades and by providing acceptable alternative uses for ex market and other vacant buildings. Discotheques are especially appropriate in basement areas. Small to medium-sized premises, catering for between 50 and 100 people would be less detrimental to the amenities of the surrounding area.

B.7.41 Planning permissions for such uses will normally be personal to applicants, for a limited period of time and subject to specific restrictions on hours of opening to enable the Council to assert control if they subsequently have an adverse effect on the locality. The Council will monitor all such uses continuously and permissions will not be renewed if any activity is having an adverse effect on local amenity. If the Council consider that the number at any one time is having a detrimental effect on the area, the policy will be reviewed.

**It will be the normal policy to allow a limited number of night clubs, discotheques and restaurants with music and dancing licences subject to the rigorous protection of residential amenity including the imposition of conditions relating to noise disturbance, times of opening and refuse collection.**

#### **Amusement centres**

B.7.42 Amusement centres are defined in the Department of the Environment's Development Control Policy notes as buildings used for indoor games, bingo sessions and other amusements as well as pin tables and gaming machines. There is one amusement arcade containing gaming machines on the north side of the Strand. The Lyceum also falls into this category as it is occasionally used for bingo sessions, and beauty contests. The demand for amusement arcades and bingo halls in the West End has contracted over the last few years but there is still a need for indoor games facilities to serve the growing residential and working population.

B.7.43 There is strong local opposition to the expansion of amusement arcades containing gaming machines at street level due to the nuisance they invariably cause by way of noise, vandalism, other undesirable activities and loss of visual amenity but other kinds of amusement centres could be appropriate especially near Charing Cross Station or in areas of mixed commercial development.

**It will be the normal policy to allow certain small amusement centres, other than amusement arcades with machines at street level, on the perimeter of the area but not within the conservation areas. Uses for indoor games, e.g., billiards, snooker, particularly those catering for residents, might also be acceptable.**

#### **Casinos, gaming clubs, massage parlours/saunas, strip clubs**

B.7.44 There is one massage parlour, four sauna establishments including the municipal sauna within the Oasis complex in High Holborn. There are no gaming clubs or strip clubs within the area.

B.7.45 There have been attempts to establish massage parlours and sauna baths on the western fringes of the area in close proximity to Soho and one such application has been refused by the Council. In addition there has been limited demand for gaming clubs premises in the area. In line with trends elsewhere in the West End, it is envisaged that there will be increased demand for all such activities, especially for street-level premises.

#### **Policy**

B.7.46 The response to the public consultation from residents, workers and the business community was unanimous in its opposition to the establishment of such activities in the area because of the over-riding need to safeguard environmental amenities and local services such as shops for an expanding residential working population.

B.7.47 Experience in other parts of the West End, particularly in Soho and Bayswater has shown that such activities are rarely neighbourly uses for residential properties. Gaming clubs normally generate a large amount of traffic and operate extended hours and in Covent Garden would exacerbate the existing evening parking problem. Other activities have an adverse effect on the amenities of local residents and business premises by reason of noise, disturbance and vandalism and cause a serious loss of visual amenity at street level and disruption to retail trading in shopping streets.

B.7.48 The Council considers that these uses are incompatible with the aim of providing an acceptable environment for the increased residential and business community.

**It will be the policy to oppose the location of massage parlours, sauna establishments, strip clubs, casinos and gaming clubs in the area.**

#### **Museums and art galleries**

B.7.49 The GLDP aims to promote the cultural activities in Central London and the adjoining boroughs operate strong policies to protect and encourage the cultural tradition of the central area.

B.7.50 With the exception of the Photographers Gallery in Great Newport Street, there are no museums or public art galleries in the area at present. However, the Council has decided that the National Theatre Museum and the London Transport collection should be housed in the Old Flower Market. The Theatre Museum will be only the second of its kind in the world and should be of national and international significance attracting large numbers of visitors. The London Transport Museum, currently at Syon House, is another major public use, extremely popular especially with school parties and it is estimated that annual attendance should be in the order of 300,000. Both museums will make a significant contribution to the revitalisation of Covent Garden by promoting life and activity in the heart of the Plan area, providing beneficial use of an important historic building and supporting other businesses.

B.7.51 In line with past trends, it is anticipated that there will be limited demand for small museums and galleries in the Plan period.

#### **Policy**

B.7.52 The Council considers that there is scope for other small specialist museums or art galleries in the area as such uses would make suitable alternative uses for many of the vacant buildings on the statutory list of historic buildings and other ex-market buildings.

B.7.53 The Council consider that purpose-built museums and galleries of a medium to large scale would be out of scale and character of the area and would be incompatible to the conservation and other objectives for the plan area.

**It will be the normal policy to allow the development of museums and art galleries of an appropriate scale only after the premises or site is established as unsuitable for industrial or commercial premises or housing.**

#### **Conference centres and exhibition halls**

##### **Existing situation**

B.7.54 The only conference centre in the area at present is the New London Theatre which provides accommodation for 900 delegates during the day in the theatre auditorium. It makes a

useful contribution to London's supply of small conference centres and is usually fully booked in the conference season between September and May.

B.7.55 There are no purpose-built exhibition halls in the area although the ground floor of a warehouse in Earlham Street has been converted into a small exhibition hall for the British Crafts Centre and small exhibitions are held periodically in other buildings in the area.

#### **Strategic and local context**

B.7.56 The GLDP aims to encourage the growth of such facilities outside the Central Area but at locations well related to Central London with ready accessibility by roads for exhibits and servicing. Conference centres in particular need to be well served by hotels and public transport with easy access to shops, theatres, restaurants and other attractions.

B.7.57 The adjoining boroughs also favour dispersal of such activities owing to their large site demands and generation of considerable volumes of traffic. The City of Westminster considers that Paddington, Marylebone and Victoria are the only possible sites where such a development might be considered in Westminster.

#### **Future demand**

B.7.58 There has been some interest shown in the re-use of former market premises as exhibition halls but no expressed demand for conference centres in the area. It is unlikely that there will be any proposals to build purpose-built conference and exhibition halls.

#### **Policy**

B.7.59 The Council considers that the area could support a few small exhibition halls and perhaps one medium-sized hall which would provide local employment facilities and have a beneficial effect on other businesses in the area. Small exhibition halls could be located within former market or other vacant premises. Any future demand for small conference centres could be located in the existing theatres by more flexible management policies, but each proposal would be examined carefully to assess the likely volume of traffic generation in order to prevent serious traffic problems particularly on the perimeter roads.

B.7.60 It is not considered appropriate to specify planning parameters for such uses, but all proposals will be considered on their merits with particular regard to their effect on traffic flow, congestion and the parking capacity of the area.

**It will be the normal policy to view with favour the provision of exhibition halls of an appropriate scale, providing that the criteria of traffic generation can be met.**

**It will be the normal policy to consider that the more flexible use of places of public entertainment to provide small conference facilities would be appropriate in certain locations.**

## **B8 Hotels and Tourism**

### **Hotels**

#### **Existing situation (ref. 6, 21)**

B.8.1 There are seven hotels in the area ranging from large hotels of international standing such as the Strand Palace and the Waldorf, to small hotels containing under twenty rooms.

#### **Strategic and local context**

B.8.2 The GLDP favours the location of new hotel development outside the Central Area, but within Central London hotel development must not be allowed to reduce the housing stock or prejudice good local environmental conditions.

B.8.3 The Central London advisory plan gives more emphasis to new hotel development being located in non-residential areas where hotels can contribute directly to the function and character of the locality and stresses the need to protect cheap hotel accommodation and to provide adequate staff accommodation.

B.8.4 The adjoining boroughs operate policies of restricting hotel development in residential areas and of opposing such developments if they would result in a net loss of residential accommodation. Locations with high public transport accessibility are preferred.

#### **Future demand**

B.8.5 The demand for new hotels throughout Central London has declined owing to the discontinuance of the bedspace subsidy in 1974, the substantial increase in bedspaces throughout Central London together with the change in character of tourism and changed economic circumstances. Over-provision is exemplified by the number of vacant hotels, the closure of others and the increase in number of planning applications for change of use to alternative uses.

B.8.6 It is therefore unlikely that there will be any proposals for new hotel construction in the short-term although the London Tourist Board estimates that numbers of overseas visitors to London will continue to increase and that in five years' time there will be a shortage of accommodation in the upper and middle bracket which caters for package tours.

B.8.7 At the lower end of the financial scale, demand for existing premises for conversion into hostels and small informal hotels for young visitors is expected to continue. The 1974 Plan for Tourism (ref. 49) recognised the need to ensure that there is an adequate supply of accommodation at prices which young visitors can afford and forecasts of future demand for hotel accommodation made by the National Economic Development Office show a large expansion in the market for lower-priced accommodation. The new YMCA at Tottenham Court Road will make a small contribution to meet this demand.

#### **Policies and proposals**

B.8.8 There is little evidence to show that Covent Garden has become 'saturated' with hotels, that is to have reached the point at which the level of activity generated by the existing hotels seriously threatens other uses and is detrimental to the residential and business character of the area.

B.8.9 The Council therefore considers that in view of Covent Garden's strategic position in Central London and its close proximity to numerous theatres and other places of attraction,

that there is some limited scope for extending existing hotels, for providing low-priced hotel accommodation and hostel accommodation for young people, but the provision of hotel or hostel accommodation will only be appropriate if the overall aim of providing an increased permanent community is not affected.

B.8.10 A limited increase in hotel accommodation would help to encourage the economic vitality of Covent Garden and would add to the diversity of the area and create activity outside normal working hours. Small hotels and hostels of under, say 30 beds, would be unlikely to have a major impact on the area nor generate coach traffic which would have a disruptive effect on normal traffic flows.

B.8.11 New small hotels and hostels would be appropriate on the periphery of the area, for example, immediately north of the Strand and along the entertainment route to avoid disturbance of local residents. Hotel consents will not be granted if the proposal would result in an increased nuisance to local residents.

B.8.12 Some of the existing buildings in Covent Garden previously in market or other uses might be suitable for adaptation to hotel/hostel use when inappropriate for conversion into residential use. In some instances, conversion to hotel use could enhance and maximise the use of buildings on the statutory list of historic buildings.

B.8.13 Additional large-scale hotel buildings in the area would conflict with the conservation and traffic management objectives of the Plan. Although in some parts of the area, the bulk and character of such developments might accord with the existing buildings, the increasing tendency for large hotels to cater for tour parties could lead to attendant coach handling problems and disruption of traffic flow.

B.8.14 The loss of the small, cheaper hotels will be prevented by stringently controlling proposals for alternative uses. If there is ever a surplus of accommodation, only changes to other residential uses will be allowed.

B.8.15 The Council will consider carefully the effect any new proposal would have on labour availability, as there is an apparent labour shortage in the service sector offering employment opportunities of an unskilled nature at unsocial hours.

B.8.16 The main principles which would be observed in considering proposals for new hotels or hostels are as follows:

- 1 That change of use from housing to hotel/hostel use is unacceptable.
- 2 That the Council will make full use of the additional powers of control provided by the GLC (General Powers) Act 1973 to prevent 'creeping conversion' of residential premises to hotel use.
- 3 That hotel extensions will not be allowed if close to residential concentrations.
- 4 That within conservation areas, the essential character of the area must not be disturbed by the intensity of use or massing of the building.
- 5 That hotel development should incorporate replacement residential premises if any are affected by the proposal.
- 6 That traffic generated by the hotel should not have an adverse environmental effect on the surrounding area or impair the functions of traffic routes within and adjoining the area.
- 7 That the parking capacity of the area should not become overloaded through the hotel proposal.

- 8 That sufficient staff bedspaces be provided.
- 9 That the development shall have due regard to the Council's housing and employment policies.
- 10 The availability of labour.

**It will be the normal policy to allow a limited increase in hotel/hostel accommodation to provide low priced accommodation and accommodation for young visitors. Sensitive conversion of existing buildings for hotel or hostel purposes would be acceptable in those cases where either physical lay-out or financial considerations made these inappropriate for normal housing purposes.**

**It will be the normal policy to prevent large-scale hotel building and major extensions to existing hotels.**

### **Tourism**

B.8.17 Covent Garden has long been an attraction to tourists owing to its proximity to Soho and Leicester Square, the allure of the Royal Opera House, Theatre Royal and the Coliseum, the many restaurants of international reputation, and, in the past, the novelty of an early morning visit to the fruit and vegetable market. Although it does not contain any of London's major tourist attractions it has a unique ambience and has continued to attract visitors who are looking for something unusual away from the main tourist centres, for example, the restoration of the Central Market Building and the Jubilee Market.

### **Strategic context**

B.8.18 The GLDP aims to encourage the growth of tourism as it is a significant contribution to the prosperity of London and the country as a whole. Tourist expenditure is particularly important for the vitality of shopping, entertainment and cultural activities in Central London and the Council will endeavour to ensure that conditions of living and movement for tourists are improved.

B.8.19 The Central London Advisory Plan emphasises that Central London and its facilities is the country's major tourist attraction and proposes that the attractiveness of tourist areas is enhanced through traffic management schemes, the removal of intrusive traffic and the provision of visitor facilities and information.

B.8.20 Many of London's major tourist attractions lie within the City of Westminster and the City aims to support and encourage the tourist industry provided that the amenities of the residential and business community are protected.

### **Future plans**

B.8.21 Many of the Plan's aims will strengthen and extend the entertainment and tourist role of Covent Garden. The Piazza will become the focal point of new activity and interest when the Central Market Building is completed and alive with shops, workshops and restaurants and the major part of the square is closed to traffic and landscaped to provide an attractive sitting-out area. Pavement cafes will spill out into the square from many adjoining buildings giving it a continental atmosphere. The provision of the Royal Opera House extension, the Theatre Museum and the London Transport Museum will attract large numbers of additional visitors to the area.

B.8.22 The policy to encourage compatible entertainment activities along the east-west entertainment route linking the more remote Aldwych theatres with the rest of theatre land and the West End will also add life and colour to this part of the area and attract more visitors in search of pre-theatre dinner venues or post-theatre entertainment.

B.8.23 The Council considers that developments in Covent Garden will help to achieve 'The Plan for Tourism's objective of diversion of pressure from the main tourist attractions'. However, it is imperative that improved facilities for tourists be secondary to the basic aim of providing an increased permanent community with adequate facilities.

B.8.24 Any increase in tourist activity will have a significant impact on the area, so the Council feels that it is essential to restrict the growth of tourist facilities to the 'entertainment route' which is away from the main residential concentrations, where compatible entertainment activities can complement each other and would not conflict with the interests of residents and the business community.

B.8.25 Tourist activities could provide an important source of local employment opportunities but many activities require unskilled labour at unsocial hours, an employment sector where there is currently a shortage of labour. The Council will carefully consider the effect of any new proposal on the availability of labour and applicants will be encouraged to provide staff accommodation on the premises wherever possible.

B.8.26 The Council will monitor carefully the impact of increasing numbers of visitors on the area in order to prevent conflict with other Plan objectives especially the provision of a satisfactory environment for an expanding residential community.



## B9 Shopping

### Introduction

B.9.1 The policies towards shop use in Covent Garden are directed towards achieving three objectives (refs. 5, 6, 18): maintaining adequate local shopping facilities for the working and resident populations; retaining the shopping character of Charing Cross Road and the Strand; and assisting in the re-occupation of former market premises with new uses which will enhance the economic vitality of the area. It is recognised that whilst seeking to achieve these objectives, the dangers of overprovision, particularly of local shops, must be avoided and some concentration of shop uses in appropriate locations is desirable.

### Strategic context

B.9.2 The Council policy as set out in GLDP forecasts that retail turnover in the Central Area will continue to grow although, with greater efficiency in selling, the amount of floorspace is unlikely to increase in the same proportion. Similarly, the APCL recognises the importance of shopping as a Central London activity and stresses the need to expand and improve on this role. In addition, local shopping facilities for workers and residents should be maintained.

### Local context

B.9.3 The Borough of Camden and City of Westminster have policies to safeguard shop use and improve existing shopping facilities meeting local and regional needs. Shops in Soho are well used by Covent Garden residents and workers, and Westminster City Council intends to protect these shops as an essential part of the diverse character of Soho. The City Council also intends to continue protection for retail uses in those parts of the Strand and Charing Cross Road for which it is the local planning authority.

### Existing situation

B.9.4 In September 1975, retail and service shops in Covent Garden account for nearly one-tenth of total floor area and number about 220. The demand for shopping facilities in the area is drawn from many sources: residents, workers, local businesses, tourists and shoppers from Greater London and beyond in search of specialist goods and services. Over the period 1968 to 1975, the total number of retail and service outlets fell by nearly one hundred or a loss of 30%. Only antique and craft shops, booksellers and stationers increased in number since 1968. The greatest decline has been in food shops; a loss of fourteen in seven years to a current total of twenty-four. This comparison masks the changes that have taken place in the range and type of goods sold. For example, in response to the demands of the working population, a number of food shops now concentrate on the sale of lunchtime snacks and there has been a drastic reduction in the range of stock carried to meet the needs of residents.

B.9.5 Since the market move, a considerable number of planning applications have been received for new shop uses in Covent Garden. Most of these applications are for specialist shops and a number have become successfully established in Long Acre and Wellington Street. The Coutts development will replace the shopping frontage along the Strand; the Haslemere development provides additional shop units in Drury Lane; and the Odhams and Dudley House housing developments will include new shop units. A temporary covered market is currently operating from the ground floor of the Jubilee Market on the Piazza and a new street market for Drury Lane is proposed by Camden Council with the Council's support.

## Policies and proposals

### Safeguards for shop use

B.9.6 The policies to safeguard shop uses largely stem from public concern at the general decline in shop units evident over recent years and, in particular, at the erosion of local shopping facilities meeting everyday needs (ref. 50). The loss of local shops, albeit common to many areas, inflicts considerable hardship in a community such as Covent Garden, where a high proportion of existing residents are elderly and less mobile.

B.9.7 The scope and effectiveness of a local authority's powers to direct and control shop use is limited unless it operates through landlord control. For properties it does not own, there is a lack of planning control to prevent change of use from one type of shop to another, e.g., from a food shop to a boutique or stationers. Thus, local shopping facilities can only be protected indirectly by a general policy ensuring shops are not displaced by non-retail uses. The keystone to adequate local shopping facilities is the volume of trade generated by the resident population, supplemented in the case of Covent Garden by the spending of the working population. The Plan policies to increase both resident and working populations will, in the long term, provide the viable trade base for an improvement in the number and range of local shops.

B.9.8 Shop uses are often a determining factor in the character of a locality, providing variety and activity at street level. Competition for space from other uses, many with greater rent paying capacity, could lead to the shopping character of many streets being gradually eroded by the influx of non-retail uses such as showrooms. The subsequent loss of character and activity militates against the aims of the Plan to retain the mixed use nature and vitality of Covent Garden. However, in certain circumstances, industrial activities and restaurants will be allowed in former shop premises.

**It will be the normal policy to safeguard shop and service use.**

### Local shopping streets

B.9.9 The most acute deterioration in shopping facilities has occurred in the local centre of Drury Lane and this decline in the number and choice of shops has adversely affected residents and workers in Covent Garden and those from the Bloomsbury and Holborn areas. Public response strongly advocated the retention and improvement of Drury Lane as the main local centre for the area. The protection of existing shopping supplemented by the introduction of a new street market and the opportunity to provide new shops elsewhere in Drury Lane. The decision to retain Drury Lane as the main local centre has directly affected the choice of distributor roads and the proposals for pedestrian routes linking the main housing areas to the shopping centre (see B.13).

B.9.10 The local shopping streets of Earlham Street, New Row and Monmouth Street provide a very localised service for workers and residents in the north and west of the area. The continuation of the shopping character of these streets is important to maintaining adequate services for the increased population, particularly as the location of these streets is close to the areas of greatest housing gain.

**Drury Lane will be the main local shopping centre. Earlham Street, New Row and Monmouth Street will be encouraged to retain their shopping character and any change of use from shop to non-retail use strongly opposed.**

## **The Strand and Charing Cross Road**

B.9.11 The Strand is a West End shopping street primarily serving the needs of the working population, but with additional trade drawn from the many visitors and tourists based in the area. There are a number of specialist shops concerned with stamp and coin dealing. The influx of non-retail uses into ground floor space is evident of the decline of the Strand as a shopping area. To some extent, the completion of the Coutts Bank development, with replacement shopping along part of the Strand, will redress some of the more recent losses in shop units. The existence of many long established specialist booksellers is an integral part of the character of Charing Cross Road and the adjacent courts. The number and type of shops in Charing Cross Road has changed comparatively little in recent years.

B.9.12 Although it is not envisaged that shopping activities will increase in either the Strand or Charing Cross Road, it is considered important that the existing character of these streets is maintained. The public response from within Covent Garden and the views of the Soho/Strand Working Party on the Westminster Local Plan clearly advocate the retention of shop uses along both these streets.

**It will be the normal policy to maintain the shopping character of the Strand (north) and Charing Cross Road (east) frontages with replacement of existing shopping in any development proposal.**

### **Provision of new shops**

B.9.13 The provision of new shops within Covent Garden is dependent on the volume of trade which will be generated by the resident and non-resident populations. The annual spending power on necessity goods and services of a future resident population of between 5,000 and 6,000 would total between £1.8m and £2.4m at 1975 prices. Assuming the continued loss of part of this expenditure to shops outside the area and that the working population maintains its present level of spending in Covent Garden, a maximum of 10 or 12 additional shops would meet this future demand. The advantages of landlord control to safeguard local shop use suggest that these additional units should be provided within Council development.

B.9.14 The future demands likely to be generated for non-local shopping activities are extremely difficult to assess. The GLDP expects retail trade in Central London to increase with visitors' and tourists' spending accounting for a greater proportion of the total. The extent to which this increased spending will be attracted to Covent Garden depends on the creation of an environment which is beneficial to retailers and attractive to shoppers. The Council is taking the initiative to create such an environment through its physical proposals for the Piazza and Central Market Building. The restored Central Market Building will provide a unique complex of shopping arcades, street cafes, galleries and small workshops to create a highly attractive leisure and entertainment area. There is already evidence from trade and business interest that the Piazza area will act as a magnet attracting a variety of activities, including specialist shopping, to locate in adjacent streets.

**It will be the normal policy to enable shops of varied sizes to be included in Council development, and to encourage the provision of shops in new private development.**

**Streets leading to the Piazza are considered particularly appropriate for uses, including shops, which will provide life and activity at street level. The restored Central Market building will attract a variety of specialist retailers.**

## B10 Recreation, Open Space and Leisure

### Introduction

B.10.1 Proposals to improve opportunities for recreation and leisure are fundamental to the creation of an acceptable environment for residents and workers in Covent Garden (refs. 5, 19). There is a marked paucity of existing facilities in the area with minimal permanent open space and scanty opportunities for children's play and active recreation. The Plan policies aim to rectify the existing deficiency and meet the greater demands for recreation facilities generated by the increased working and resident populations. Since the scope for providing additional open space is constrained by physical and financial considerations, indoor sports and leisure facilities will play a particularly important part in achieving this aim.

### Strategic context

B.10.2 As a guide to the distribution, siting and kind of open space required, the GLDP advocates a hierarchy approach based on accessibility to parks of different sizes and functions and with particular regard to the density of population to be served. On this basis, the Covent Garden area is deficient in a local park of 5 acres although provision of an area of this size would be impractical on cost and environmental grounds. The GLDP stresses the importance of ensuring private open space, especially that in use for recreation, is not lost to other uses without good cause.

### Existing situation

B.10.3 The small gardens behind St Paul's Church and a small play/sitting-out area in Drury Lane is the extent of permanent open space in Covent Garden. There are many parks and gardens within walking distance and some of the largest Central London Parks, offering a variety of amenities, are within reasonable distance, although only by crossing major traffic routes. Local initiative established a temporary Japanese Garden on the Odhams housing site. This garden, covering less than an acre, was extremely successful during its existence and was especially well-used by workers as a lunch-time amenity.

B.10.4 The Oasis Baths in High Holborn is the only permanent indoor sports facility in the area and Camden Council's proposals for the Dudley Housing development will extend the range of facilities offered. A temporary indoor recreation space has been established in the Council's Jubilee Market building and there are youth facilities in the area. In the vicinity, the new Central YMCA complex at Tottenham Court Road contains a range of high quality indoor recreation facilities. Use of these facilities by workers and residents will be welcomed and encouraged though not on a casual basis.

### Future recreation demands

B.10.5 The demands for open space and recreational facilities will be greatly affected by the future age and family structure of the resident population. The greater number of families with young children in the future population will generate demands for a wide range of leisure and recreation amenities; including a local multi-purpose open space providing opportunities for everyday informal recreation. The table below compares the existing age structure with that of the future resident population as a basis for assessing demand for different kinds of recreational facilities.

Age Range (Years)	Covent Garden Existing Population		Covent Garden Potential Population	
	No.	%	Range	%
Under 4 years	93	3	300-350	5
5-15	239	9	600-650	12
16-19	138	5	310-350	6
20-39	726	26	1,430-1,600	27
40-59	742	26	1,380-1,550	26
60-64	215	8	330-400	6
65+	656	23	950-1,100	18
Total	2,809	100	5,300-6,000	100

B.10.6 The most significant increases for future recreation needs will be the growth in the child and young adult populations. Since there is minimal existing play space in Covent Garden and this is a need that can only be met by local provision, there will be an intense demand for a greater number and variety of play facilities in the area. The increases in older children and young adults will also generate new demands for indoor sport, social and leisure facilities. The well-being of a young adult population living in the city centre will be closely related to the availability of social and leisure facilities to which access is independent of income. The elderly are very dependent on local amenity space and their need is primarily for small gardens and sitting-out areas. The demand for this type of provision will increase in line with the greater number of elderly residents in the future population. The provision of a local open space will supplement the opportunities for informal recreation of the young and the elderly.

B.10.7 The future working population will increase to nearly 37,000 on re-occupation of vacant buildings and completion of commercial developments. There is a very severe deficiency of existing recreational facilities to meet the needs of workers in Covent Garden. The daytime working population is usually constrained by a short lunchtime and a 10 to 15 minutes walking time to an open space is usually the maximum workers can travel to a sitting-out area. There is a demand for a centrally located local open space to meet these lunchtime demands. The increased working population will also place further demands on facilities for active recreation, but such amenities must be within easy reach of their place of employment. In particular, the demand for squash courts is likely to increase with the growing interest in this activity.

### Policies and proposals

#### Open space provision

B.10.8 The provision of a local multi-purpose open space, including some facilities for active recreation, will be required to meet the future demands of the resident and working populations. This open space will need to be supplemented by a network of single-purpose gardens and amenity spaces to meet the specific needs of the young for play space and the elderly for quiet sitting-out areas.

B.10.9 An area of public open space of about 3 acres north and south of Long Acre was designated by the Secretary of State in his decision confirming the Covent Garden CDA (see A.1). Public response, including the strong views of the Forum of Representatives, has clearly shown there is little support for a local open space of this scale. Many respondents felt that a large space of three acres would be disruptive to the physical character and scale of Covent Garden and prejudice the priority aim to maximise housing gain.

B.10.10 It is proposed that the overall provision of public open space should be three acres in the form of a network of small gardens and amenity spaces each incorporating particular recreation facilities. Some important amenity gains will be realised in the period 1980-83 and the section on Implementation sets out these proposals on a site by site basis. Map B10/1 shows the future distribution of open space and the pedestrian network designed to promote easy access and maximum use.

B.10.11 Provision will include one small local park of  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre. It is intended to locate this broadly within the area north of Long Acre affected by the proposals for the Mercers' site, but until this can be implemented a temporary small local park should be provided, if possible, on a suitable site elsewhere in Covent Garden. Other open spaces in the network will provide separate facilities for special groups, e.g., the elderly, young children and teenagers. Some covered provision for sports facilities will also be provided.

B.10.12 Local people were involved in the design and creation of the Japanese Garden and a number of smaller open spaces throughout the area. It is considered that the continued close involvement of local people in the provision of open space will be beneficial.

**A total provision of 3 acres of public open space will be provided, part of which will be in the form of a small local park broadly within the area north of Long Acre affected by the development proposals for the Mercers site.**

**Provision of the remainder will be in a network of small open spaces and gardens throughout the area linked by pedestrian routes, and with some specifically designed to meet the recreation needs of the elderly and some designed to provide children's play space/playground (see C.1, B.13).**

**The design and realisation of open spaces will be carried out with the close participation of local people.**

#### **Other amenity spaces**

B.10.13 The Council recognises the importance of improving existing housing conditions and taking every practical opportunity to provide an imaginative variety of amenity spaces. The physical proposals and pedestrian schemes set out in the Plan are designed to achieve maximum gains in environmental improvements. Thus:

**Use of opportunities to provide open space and improve housing conditions through the re-use of space between and behind existing buildings; a rationalisation of space within existing housing estates; the provision of courtyards and footpaths within rehabilitation schemes; and the creation of roof-top open space.**

**The creation of a pedestrian square in the Piazza with the space opportunities fully used for sitting-out and informal recreation.**

**The opportunity will be taken, where possible, to use road space for open space purposes.**

#### **Indoor recreation and leisure**

B.10.14 Demands for indoor recreation space are expected to rise significantly with a greater participation in sport and leisure pursuits by the working population and the changing age structure of the future resident population. An important contribution towards meeting these demands is Camden Council's proposals for the redevelopment of Dudley House which include the extension of the Oasis facilities with a games hall, gymnasium and squash courts. This is a two-stage development, programmed to commence in 1978/9, with the Oasis extension in the second phase.

B.10.15 However, it is not considered that the Oasis extension will meet the full range of needs for indoor recreation space. Public response recommended the provision, at an early stage, of smaller scale indoor facilities; most appropriately provided in association with public open space and through the conversion of existing buildings. The Greater London and South East Sports Council recommend that some additional provision along these lines would be appropriate to supplement the extended Oasis facilities. In addition, the private sector can make an important contribution to meeting demands for leisure and certain recreation facilities through, for example, the provision of squash courts.

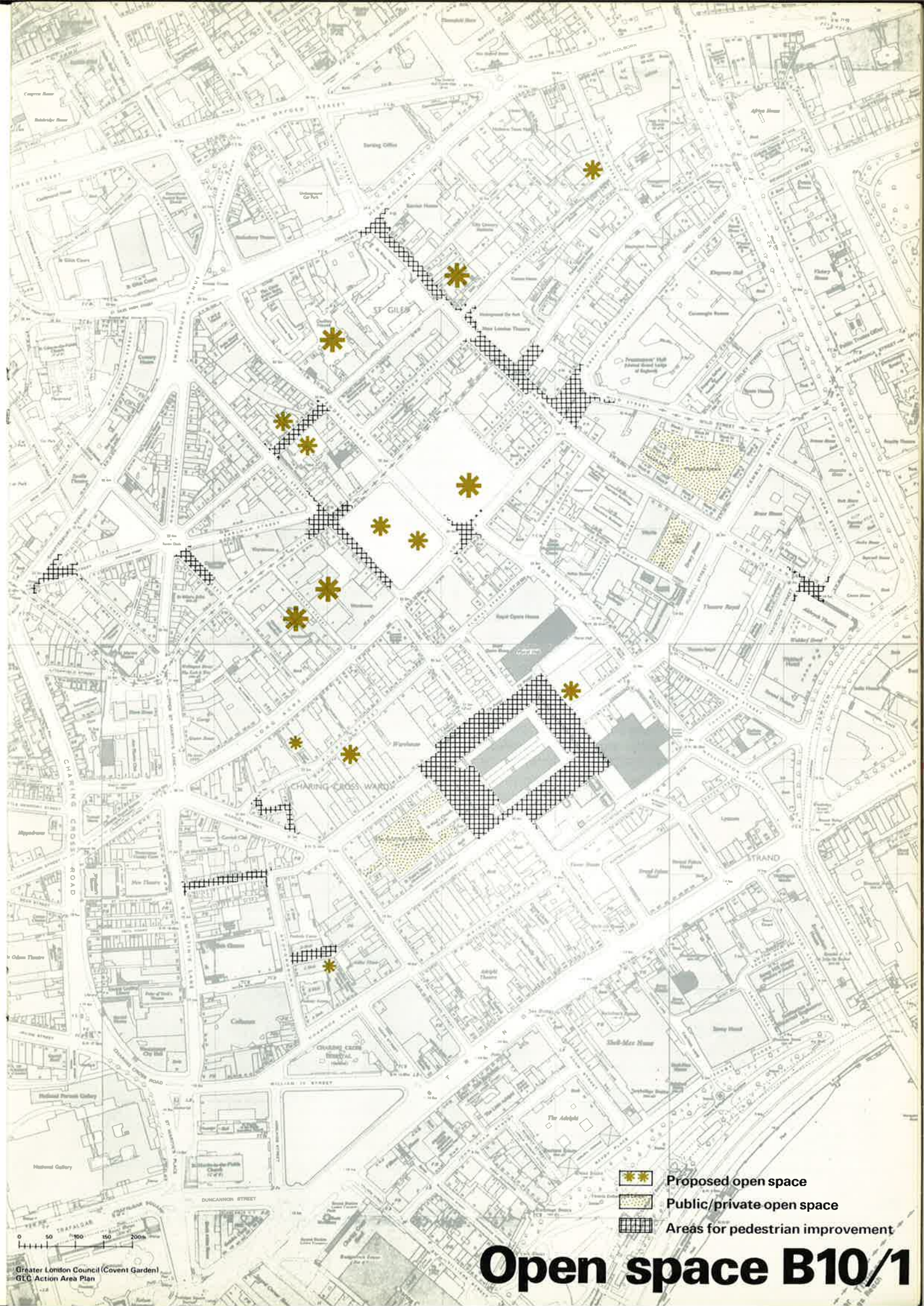
**Support for the early improvement of indoor facilities for recreation and leisure, and the earliest possible extension of the Oasis as part of Camden's Dudley House development.**

**The private sector will be encouraged to make some provision of recreation facilities, for example, squash courts, with access to these facilities for the working and resident populations.**

#### **Temporary uses**

B.10.16 There are many existing examples of the use of temporarily vacant sites for open space and buildings for social and recreational use. The Japanese Garden on the Odhams housing site and the use of the Jubilee Market upper floor for a temporary sports hall are of particular note. It is important at the early stages of the development programme, prior to the achievement of the major gains in open space and amenity provision, to supplement existing facilities by the use of temporarily vacant sites and buildings for recreation and play space for instance the Tin Market site.

**The opportunity should be taken, where possible, to use temporarily vacant sites and unoccupied buildings for recreation purposes.**



-  Proposed open space
-  Public/private open space
-  Areas for pedestrian improvement

# Open space B10/1

## B11 Schools and Education Uses

### Introduction

B.11.1 Responsibility for the education services in Covent Garden lies with the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) (ref. 25). This Authority provides and administers a wide range of education services for Inner London embracing nursery education, primary, secondary and special schools, further and higher education, community education, the careers service, the youth service and adult education. Some facilities are provided by other bodies, including play groups, research and training institutes, independent colleges, language and business schools. The planning function with regard to education is concerned with the allocation of space for new and extensions to existing facilities, and the operation of development control for private sector proposals.

B.11.2 Public response has strongly emphasised the importance of adequate education services for the resident and working populations. The local community consider existing nursery, primary and secondary education facilities insufficient to meet present needs and fear this situation could worsen as the resident population increases. Although it is widely recognised that the full range of education services cannot be located within the Covent Garden area, many local groups and residents strongly advocate that County primary and secondary schools should be more accessible to meet their needs. With a total child school population by 1985 which is unlikely to exceed 850 and 300 under five years of age, combined with pressures on land use, it is not realistic to provide within the area education facilities for all ages and at all levels. However, two primary schools and one of the largest Adult Education Institutes in London exist within Covent Garden and a variety of education provision is available within a radius of approximately one mile.

B.11.3 While both the primary schools are voluntary schools, it would not be possible to establish a county school in addition since resources cannot be devoted to additional school places when an adequate number within a reasonable distance already exist. Pupils whose parents wish them to attend a county school will be able to do so although the journey will be longer. As far as secondary schools are concerned these are necessarily provided to cover wider areas and in this broad area of London the surplus of secondary school places will be considerable by 1985.

### Strategic context

B.11.4 The GLDP states the importance of accessible education facilities for the welfare of the Londoner and his family. Schools serving the resident and working populations are recognised as an appropriate supporting activity for Central London. The Council accepts that many existing sub-standard buildings and sites will need to be improved for schools and community education. In view of the great pressure on land, particularly in inner London, the Council considers that the multiple use of school sites and facilities should be initiated or extended.

B.11.4a The GLDP foresees continued expansion of further education to meet local and regional needs, but in view of the pressure on land, the Council will examine critically all such development proposals. The CLPC Advisory Plan considers higher education and research as appropriate activities for Central London, but shares the concern expressed in the GLDP about proposals involving more land.

## Policies and proposals

### Nursery education facilities

B.11.5 The existing facilities for under-fives in Covent Garden are limited to the nursery class in St Clements Danes primary school and a morning play group held in the Seven Dials social centre. The Forum of Representatives stressed the inadequacy of present facilities, particularly in view of the shortage of children's play space in Covent Garden and the likely growing demands of working parents for play group and nursery facilities near their place of employment. To meet some of this deficiency at an early stage, there is scope to provide play group facilities within the new Odhams and Dudley House housing developments.

B.11.6 On the achievement of housing gain opportunities (see B.4), the potential child population aged under five years could total about 300 (ref. 51). The ILEA recently stated that nursery places should be provided for 80% of 4 year olds and 60% of 3 year olds, and that 25% of these places should be provided in nursery schools. On this basis there could be a demand for about 80-90 nursery places when the maximum residential population is achieved. In addition, consideration must be given to future demands for pre-school facilities which may be generated by the increased working population.

**The ILEA hopes that nursery classes will be included in the primary schools to be rebuilt in the area if the Government allows.**

### Primary education

B.11.7 The two existing primary schools in Covent Garden are church schools with the ILEA responsible for running costs, including teachers' salaries. St Josephs, Macklin Street (Roman Catholic) and St Clements Danes (Church of England) occupy old premises on restricted sites. There is an acute shortage of play facilities within the sites of both schools. Currently, the number of children of primary school age is about 150 and the majority attend these two local primary schools. The nearest County primary school (fully maintained and administered by ILEA) is about a mile from Covent Garden, but since the route to this school crosses many busy main roads it is attended by very few Covent Garden children.

B.11.8 The potential resident population of primary school age will total between 400 and 450 on achievement of all the opportunities for housing gain (see B.4). The ILEA assess primary school provision on the basis of 'planning areas' and the area which includes Covent Garden is bounded by Euston Road in the north, Grays Inn Road in the east, Regent Street in the west and the Thames to the south. After taking into account the improved standards for class size and amenity provision set out in the recent primary school review (ref. 52), the total accommodation at the seven primary schools in the 'planning area' is 1410 based on classes of 30. Currently, there is a surplus of places in the 'planning area' and the ILEA predicts a further decline in pupil numbers of 24% over the next ten years. On this basis, the needs of an additional primary school population in Covent Garden could be met by existing school facilities in the ILEA 'planning area'. With improved standards for class size, the two existing primary schools in Covent Garden have places for 350 pupils and this is approximately the number currently attending. Although there is no scope for increasing the total number of places at these two schools, a greater proportion of places could be made available for local children in response to demand by a redistribution of places at present taken up by children coming from outside the area.

**No provision should be made for a third primary school within Covent Garden.**

B.11.9 The demand for primary school facilities which will follow the provision of more family accommodation in Covent Garden will strengthen the need to retain the two existing schools. However the existing site and building conditions of both schools is very poor and replacement or improvement will be necessary to meet future needs. The extent of listed buildings and the strong emphasis on conservation severely limits the scope for providing sites of sufficient size to replace these schools at current Department of Education and Science standards. There is, therefore, a case for considering smaller site requirements. The scope to improve the existing schools, especially by providing greater play space, is limited by severe site constraints, although the opportunity might arise of obtaining detached play areas but a site on the north side of Macklin Street is being investigated for improving the amenities of St Joseph's School.

**The two existing primary schools within Covent Garden should be retained and their site replacement or improvement requirements should be the subject of continuing discussions with the ILEA.**

#### Secondary education

B.11.10 There is no secondary school within Covent Garden, although within two miles there is a choice of eleven county and nine voluntary schools. Children of secondary school age currently total about 165 and the absence of a local secondary school was a major reason advanced by residents for their dissatisfaction with existing education facilities.

B.11.11 From all phases of housing development, the maximum number of children of secondary school age will total between 350 and 400 in 1985/6 (see B.4). In assessing future secondary school provision, the ILEA predicts a falling demand for places in the surrounding area and takes into account the very severe financial and space constraints on new school building. It is considered that the population increase planned for Covent Garden and the extent of the land requirements for even the smallest secondary school will not justify the provision of a new secondary school. However, in view of the considerable weight of public opinion within Covent Garden and the surrounding areas the scope for improvements to secondary school provision will be further explored (ref. 54).

B.11.12 The ILEA has approved in principle a proposal that Sir William Collins School, a boys' comprehensive school in Camden, should become mixed. The school is about 1½ miles to the north of Covent Garden and transport facilities are good. While the school would draw from other areas, the ILEA sees the reorganised school as fulfilling an important role in relation to the Covent Garden area for which it will be the nearest mixed school. A final decision on the proposal will be made after further discussions with the school.

**Whilst the projected population will not of itself justify a new secondary school and notwithstanding that the opportunities for Covent Garden children will be improved by the proposal to make Sir William Collins School a mixed school, the clear deficiencies in the provision of secondary education for the children of Covent Garden and neighbouring areas, keenly felt by local residents with Camden strongly supporting their views, are recognised. Continuing discussions will take place with ILEA to resolve the long standing grievance.**

#### Adult and further education

B.11.13 Covent Garden lies within the area served by the Central London Adult Education Institute which has its headquarters near Fleet Street. It provides a wide variety of

classes at both the Headquarters and the branches, and from September 1976 onwards will be supporting Arts and Crafts activities in the evenings at Kingsway Hall. The Institute would welcome a permanent base for its Covent Garden activities. The City Literary Institute in Stukeley Street provides an important cultural and education service for Central London workers and residents from Greater London and beyond. This institute has recently opened a centre for the education of the adult deaf in the former Kingsway College in Keeley Street. Although financial constraints mean the City Literary Institute will have no further demands for increased space in the immediate future, at some later date there may be an opportunity to extend certain services. The St Martins School of Art in Charing Cross Road is currently considering relocating part of their facilities in an existing building within Covent Garden.

B.11.14 Facilities for adult and further education perform both regional and local functions. A limited expansion of these activities will be beneficial to Covent Garden; bringing life and activity into the area and possibly leading to the refurbishment of some existing buildings.

**It will be the normal policy to permit the expansion of education uses and, in particular, institutes of further and adult education, of an appropriate scale and mainly in existing buildings subject to the financial situation.**

#### Special schools

B.11.15 There are special schools outside the area providing education for children with various forms of handicap. Children living in Covent Garden are conveyed to and from these schools in school buses. The additional population envisaged is not expected to add significantly to the number of children requiring special education.

#### Statutory youth club

B.11.16 The projected increase in population would justify a statutory youth club. This could well be a joint project with Westminster and Camden Councils for community provision. Shared use of a games hall with access to an outside games area would also be desirable. As with Adult and Further Education the same proviso needs to be made regarding the availability of resources.

#### Other education uses

B.11.17 In this context, the education uses refer to schools, institutes and centres which are not the responsibility of the ILEA; although some of these activities may be in receipt of grant aid from the Authority. The other education uses currently located in Covent Garden include the International Film School, Street Aid, the Dance Centre, language and business schools, the Africa Centre and Centre for Environmental Studies. There is evidence from planning applications of strong interest from education uses wishing to move into the area.

B.11.18 An expansion of other education uses will assist in strengthening the economic vitality of Covent Garden and obtain new uses for some former market buildings.

**It will be the normal policy to permit an increase in floorspace for other education uses of an appropriate scale.**

**It will be the normal policy to favour a change of use of some former Market buildings for education purposes.**

## B 12 Social, Welfare and Community Uses

### Introduction

B.12.1 The Council has limited executive responsibility for the provision and administration of social, welfare and community services (ref. 5). However, the Plan policies to increase the resident population and provide more family accommodation will have considerable effect on future demands for all these services. The successful integration into the existing community of a new population with a greater emphasis on families with children will be largely dependent on the availability of social and community services to meet their combined needs. The importance of these services to the resident population and the need to improve on the existing provision was stressed many times by the Forum of Representatives and other local groups. However, many of the issues which were raised through public consultation are of a management nature and are more appropriately dealt with in the Supplementary Policy Volume.

### Existing situation

B.12.2 There is a multiplicity of agencies providing social, welfare and community services in Covent Garden (ref. 26). The Boroughs of Camden and Westminster are responsible for providing a wide range of supportive services, either directly or in conjunction with voluntary agencies. A number of local groups operate community-based activities including a well-attended social centre and a food 'co-op' to assist the elderly. The many voluntary agencies effective in the area provide children's play and youth facilities, welfare services for the elderly and assist in providing food, shelter and care for the single homeless. There are two Area Health Authorities responsible for Covent Garden; one extending over Camden and Islington and the other Authority covering Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea.

B.12.3 The main criticism voiced by residents and local groups about the availability of services relates to the multiplicity of responsible authorities and supervisory offices; none of which are located in the Covent Garden vicinity. In addition, the agencies involved are not always able to provide the extent of services required; due chiefly to the shortage of staff and funds. This is especially true for the home help service in Central London which cannot easily compete for staff with the catering and domestic trades.

B.12.4 Public consultation highlighted the following deficiencies in the provision as existing in 1976:

- 1 Despite the fact that one in three of residents is of pensionable age, there is no luncheon club or day centre for the elderly located in Covent Garden.
- 2 There are no residential homes for the elderly within Covent Garden nor within the rest of the West End and Camden south of the Euston Road.
- 3 The play group at the Kingsway Centre was discontinued in early 1976 and there is a general shortage of comparable child care facilities to serve both the working and resident populations.
- 4 There is little scope within existing housing blocks for the provision of tenants' clubrooms or estate halls. Tenants' associations often find considerable difficulty in securing adequate accommodation for their meetings and social activities.
- 5 The Kingsway Centre operates a well-attended day centre for the homeless and this facility will be lost when this organisation vacates its present premises.

6 There is very considerable local concern at the inadequacy of health and medical services. There are no general practitioners' surgeries in Covent Garden with the nearest in Soho and Bloomsbury. The nearest clinic facilities are in Marshall Street, Soho.

### Future demands for social, welfare and community services

B.12.5 The Plan policies to increase the resident population substantially (see B.4) with resultant changes in household size and age structure will require additional and, in part, different services to meet future welfare, social and community needs. The groups in the population which place greatest demands on these services are the elderly and the very young. In Covent Garden, the numbers in both these age groups will increase as the opportunities for housing gain are realised.

	Existing Population	Potential Population
Under 5 years	93	300-350
60-65 years	215	330-400
Over 65 years	656	950-1100

The increase in the very young and the elderly populations will reinforce the present deficiencies in social and welfare services. About one-third of the future population will live in the Camden part of Covent Garden; the comparable proportion in 1976 was about 30%. There will be greater demands for child care and play group facilities and to meet the needs of the elderly a day centre should be located within Covent Garden.

B.12.6 The Plan policies will result in a substantial growth in the number of young people resident in Covent Garden. This increased population will make greater, and to some extent new, demands on social and recreation facilities. An important element in establishing a satisfactory environment for families in Central London is the provision of facilities for young people where access is not restricted by income.

	Existing Population	Potential Population
5-15 years	239	600-650
16-19 years	138	310-350

In addition to the resident population, the changing character of the working population may well place greater demands on social facilities and opportunities for active recreation (see B.10).

B.12.7 A dwelling mix in new developments designed to provide a substantial proportion of larger flats will lead to a growth in the number of families housed in the area. The demand for supportive care services for people in temporary difficulties may correspondingly increase. There is often an additional call on social and welfare services when a substantial quantity of new housing is provided. Many of these demands are usually short-term reflecting the initial difficulties of adjusting to a new home and environment. The provision of community facilities at an early stage can provide the opportunity for the development of important links between the established residential community and the 'newcomers' to the area. The introduction of a substantial number of newcomers to Covent Garden, albeit a gradual process, will have an impact on the existing residential community. Opportunities to develop and strengthen social ties will be of benefit to all residents. This re-emphasises the need to continue to provide space for an active social centre and facilities for tenants' associations.



B.12.8 Additional demands will be placed on the medical and health services by the growth in the resident population and especially by the greater numbers of families, young children and the elderly. The future population growth reaffirms the need to locate some health services within the Covent Garden area. The working population may also make greater demands for occupational health care.

#### **Policies and proposals**

B.12.9 Most of the executive responsibility for meeting the demands outlined in the previous section rests with the Boroughs of Camden and Westminster and the Area Health Authorities. The Council has limited responsibility for the provision of clubrooms and other small scale facilities for use by tenants on GLC housing estates.

B.12.10 In Covent Garden, the Council's role is primarily one of providing space within its own developments should the executive authority seek to locate social, welfare or community services within the area. Opportunities exist for providing additional facilities within the Odhams' housing development and subsequent sites for Council initiative. The private sector will also be encouraged to provide space for social and recreational activities which will benefit the working and resident populations. Both Westminster and Camden recognise the need to improve services within the Covent Garden area, and in the case of Camden Council intend to provide facilities for the elderly and a play group within the Dudley House development. In 1976, the Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea Area Health Authority is considering the improvement of health services for the area, including the provision of a health centre serving Soho and Covent Garden.

**If considered appropriate by the responsible authority or agency, space will be, or continue to be, provided in Council development for, and encouraged in private development, for:**

- 1 Old people's day centre**
- 2 Doctor's surgery, dentist's surgery and other health facilities**
- 3 Social and community facilities, including a social centre and some tenants' clubrooms**
- 4 Social and recreation facilities for young people**

## B13 Traffic and Pedestrian Circulation

### Background

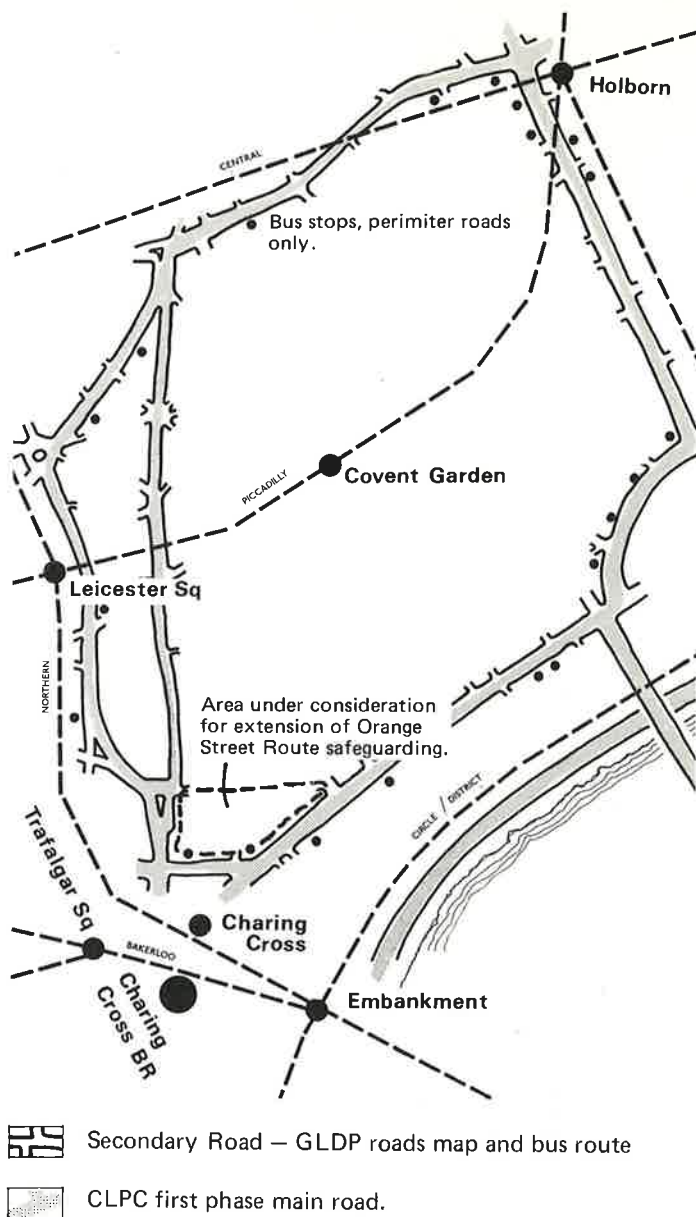
B.13.1 Covent Garden has a network of streets carrying both local traffic and through traffic and is completely surrounded by main traffic routes (refs. 9, 17). The most heavily trafficked of the through routes is Monmouth Street/St Martin's Lane which carries about 1,100 vehicles per hour through the working day. This route supplements Charing Cross Road by accommodating southbound traffic from Gower Street to Trafalgar Square. The other through routes, Endell Street, Drury Lane, Long Acre, Bedford Street, Maiden Lane all carry much less traffic averaging between 250 and 500 vehicles per hour during the working day (ref. 54). Other streets are very lightly trafficked and only carry flows of about 100 vehicles per hour.

B.13.2 There are at present no major daytime vehicular traffic generators, such as conference and exhibition centres or hotels, within Covent Garden and none are proposed within this plan. Further the supply of car parking will be much lower than the average for Central London which will restrain the total traffic generated by the area (see section B.15). Thus it is considered that no increase in roadspace will be required to accommodate local traffic and that the policies for change set out in the succeeding paragraphs **should be furthered using only the existing street network with management measures applied to retain flexibility.**

### Strategic context

B.13.3 The Greater London Development Plan roads policy requires local plans to use traffic management to improve the environment by forcing roads to act in their respective roles within the roads hierarchy. As appropriate to local plans, secondary roads (see map B13/1) should provide for short and medium distance traffic and main bus routes, and also distribute traffic to and around, but not within environmental areas. Local roads should provide for local traffic, access to buildings and secondary roads both for vehicles and pedestrians, traffic having no need for access in the locality should be restricted.

B.13.4 Central London Planning Conference accepts this aim towards a more clearly defined hierarchy of roads and wishes to see the benefits of future vehicular traffic restraint exploited by improvements for buses and essential vehicles as first priority, pedestrians and cyclists as second, and the environment as third priority. It regards movement on foot as an important means of personal travel within central London and recommends that greater priority than at present be given to the pedestrian in environmental areas. Through movement for cycles should be maintained and improvements made where possible leading towards a comprehensive and direct network of cycle routes as possible. It also recommends that environmental management schemes be introduced, experimentally and incrementally to reduce and eventually remove from local roads, traffic which has no origin or destination in the immediate locality whilst retaining mobility and access and making positive improvements to the living and working environment.



### B13/1 Context

#### Local context (Map B13/1)

B.13.5 Covent Garden in relation to this policy is an environmental area composed of a network of roads which are all local roads and bounded on all sides by the secondary roads: Charing Cross Road, Strand, Kingsway, High Holborn and Shaftesbury Avenue. It is not proposed to widen any of these secondary roads and the only major change being considered is in the Trafalgar Square area.

B.13.6 The Council is considering the possibility of safeguarding a route on the west of Covent Garden linking Orange Street to the Strand in order to facilitate the pedestrianisation of the west and north sides of Trafalgar Square. The extension of this new route eastwards to the Strand would of necessity pass through the south-west corner of the Plan area. No decision has yet been taken by the Transport Committee on whether the route should be extended or the alignment of such a route, but on 15 March 1977, the Committee agreed that the Council has no intention to construct a route through the Plan area within the period of the Plan.

### Through traffic routes (Map B13/2)

B.13.7 All the roads within this secondary network will be managed as local roads with the exception of the Monmouth Street/St Martin's Lane route. It is expected that insufficient restraint will be achieved within the plan period to make possible the diversion of the large volume of traffic using this route on to the secondary roads. This is borne out by the work of the Central London Planning Conference. However, if such a diversion is made possible schemes will be implemented to take full advantage of the environmental benefits to both Seven Dials and the entertainment area of St Martin's Lane.

B.13.8 The function of local roads is to provide accessibility for both pedestrians and local vehicular traffic within the area hence it will be a policy that:

**All through traffic should be removed from that part of Covent Garden east of Monmouth Street/St Martin's Lane and schemes should be designed to take full advantage of the removal of through traffic from Monmouth Street/St Martin's Lane, if this becomes possible.**

### Distributor roads (Map B13/3)

B.13.9 The streets in the area to the east of Monmouth Street/St Martin's Lane will perform several functions. Principally they must provide access between the secondary roads and buildings in Covent Garden for both vehicles (including bicycles) and pedestrians. They must provide the loading and unloading space required by businesses with no off street facilities, parking spaces for visitors at 2 hour parking meters and residents' car parking spaces. Opportunities should also be taken where possible to use road space for open space purposes and to improve the environment and safety within these streets. Overriding all these functions must be the safeguarding of routes for emergency service vehicles and access to pipes and mains by the statutory undertakers.

B.13.10 Not all streets in Covent Garden can provide access directly from the secondary network and it is necessary for some to act as local distributor roads to service the streets in the heart of the area. The choice of roads to be used as local distributor roads must be based on several factors.

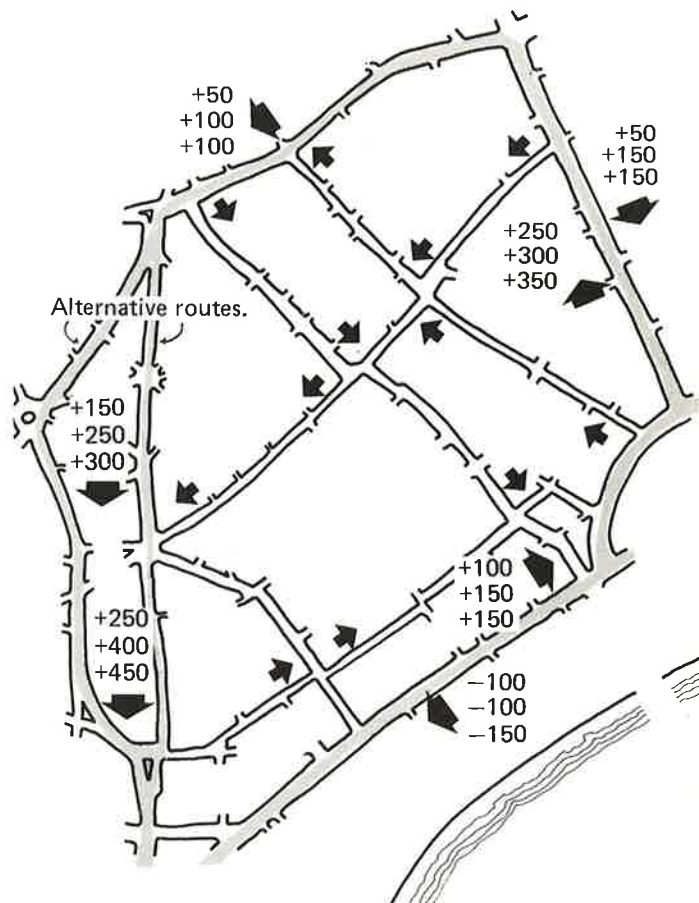
B.13.11 Firstly they should be of a reasonable width since although traffic capacity will not be critical they should provide efficient access and good manoeuvrability. They will also be pedestrian routes and the conflicts between the interests of pedestrians and servicing vehicles would be greater on narrow streets, of which there are many in Covent Garden. Further they should be wide enough to absorb much of the meter parking to reduce the impact of visitors' cars on the area.


B.13.12 Secondly local distributor roads should be as close as possible to existing off-street servicing and parking areas, again to minimise the effects of this traffic on the area as a whole, and to new development where servicing directly from them can be arranged.

B.13.13 Thirdly they should not be shopping streets such as Drury Lane or other areas where it is desirable to give pedestrians priority such as the Covent Garden Market Square.

B.13.14 Finally the local distributor roads should be chosen so that they will not be attractive to through traffic and it is proposed that they should be in the form of loops from the secondary network to ensure this.

B.13.15 The distributor system described below will not meet all these criteria perfectly. The street network was not laid out for such a system and neither was it designed to deter through



 Main road network

 Existing through traffic route.

Effect of displacing through traffic on perimeter roads ('74 flows)

+000 a.m. peak Veh/Hr.

+000  midday Veh/Hr.

+000  p.m. peak Veh/Hr.

### B13/2 Through Traffic

traffic. It is inevitable that problem areas will occur. It is not possible to remove the through-traffic routes within Covent Garden and improve the environment for the pedestrian without causing some inconvenience to vehicular traffic. However, the system will be implemented by traffic management measures and the experimental nature of this method allows the flexibility for easy change where problems do occur or where improvements only become obvious during the system's operation.

B.13.16 On the western side of the area there are few alternatives in the choice of distributor loops within the criteria set out above (ref. 17). Two loops are proposed. The northern one will serve a large part of the plan area and is made up of Long Acre (Upper St Martin's Lane to Endell Street) and Endell Street (Long Acre to Princes Circus). These are by far the widest streets in this part of the area and follow the principal line of development proposed in this plan. To the south it is considered

that there is only one possible loop without using part of the Covent Garden Market Square. This is made up of Garrick Street, Bedford Street (King Street to Chandos Place), Chandos Place and William IV Street (Chandos Place to St Martin's Lane).

B.13.17 On the eastern side of the area there are more alternatives for distributor roads in physical terms since many of the streets are similar in width and the development opportunities few. Thus the choice has been made on the final two criteria referred to previously. Of the physically suitable streets the whole of Drury Lane is excluded because of St Clement Dane's School in the south, the housing flanking the central section and the shopping in the north. Long Acre and Bow Street are excluded to provide a relatively uninterrupted pedestrian route north-south right through Covent Garden. Thus two loops are proposed made up of Great Queen Street and Wild Street and Kemble Street, Russell Street (Drury Lane to Bow Street) and Wellington Street. It will then be a policy that:

**The roads shown by stipple on Map B13/3 should be used as local distributor roads for service traffic so as to minimise the effect of this traffic on the area as a whole, but nevertheless recognising the access needs of shops and businesses in the area.**

#### Zones (Map B13/3 and 4)

B.13.18 The zones between these distributor roads are where the greatest environmental and pedestrian improvements will be made. There will be a minimum of traffic within these zones providing opportunities for pavement widenings, safer pedestrian crossing facilities, pedestrian priority and pedestrian only areas, small open spaces and planting where appropriate. However, nearly all streets in Covent Garden contain small businesses and shops to whom regular servicing by vehicles is vital and, although the diversion of through traffic will necessarily reduce the number of routes into and across the area, access to these premises must be retained. Thus:

**Roads other than distributor loops should give maximum possible space to pedestrians consistent with parking policy, but without interrupting the flow of goods to shops and businesses and to establishments with special requirements, such as the Royal Opera House.**

B.13.19 In areas of development the problems of servicing buildings can be reduced in the detailed design of buildings. By providing off-street servicing within the developments which have access from the distributor roads it may be possible to give more space to pedestrians on the other sides of the blocks and indeed in some cases to provide pedestrian only streets. The Odhams housing site can be serviced entirely from Endell Street with no need for vehicles to use Neal Street; if the west side of Neal Street could be serviced similarly from Long Acre, then it could become a pedestrian only street.

**New development will be designed to relate vehicular servicing to local distributor roads so as to maximise potential for pedestrian areas. However, the absorbing of streets into development sites will be allowed only where gains in open space or housing is achieved. No existing pedestrian rights of way should be lost.**

B.13.20 The options for improvements within the zones are numerous and often dependent on very detailed considerations. Each scheme will need to be discussed in detail not only with local groups and street frontagers but with the Metropolitan Police, Fire Brigade, Ambulance Service, Borough Councils, all the statutory undertakers and motoring, taxi, pedestrian and cycle groups.

B.13.21 However, there are areas where the potential for pedestrian, environmental or safety improvements is recognised and will form the basis of consideration of detailed schemes; they are listed below:

Earlham Street (West) — possible closure at junction with Shaftesbury Avenue.

Upper St Martin's Lane — traffic management to allow widening and planting of eastern pavement and improved pedestrian crossings on all arms of junction at southern end.

St Martin's Lane — pavement widening and improved crossing facilities.

Shorts Gardens (Mathews Yard) — pedestrian/open space in connection with areas of change to north and south.

Shelton Street — re-arrangement of traffic flow to improve safety at Neal Street and Endell Street. Progressive development of pedestrian area/open space at Neal Street junction in connection with areas of change.

Long Acre — improved junction arrangement and sight lines at Bow Street for safer pedestrian crossing and vehicular conflicts, possible closure between Endell Street and Bow Street.

Covent Garden Market Square — pedestrian only 'Piazza' and environmental improvements to streets leading in (see 'Physical proposals') including pedestrian crossing at King Street/Bedford Street.

Drury Lane (North) — possible pedestrian priority scheme to help revitalise shopping street and possibly establish street market.

Drury Lane (South) — improve crossing facilities outside school; possible street closure.

Great Queen Street — possible pedestrian/open space at west end.

Bedford Court — possible increase in pedestrian space involving removal of on-street parking.

Rose Street (South) — possible pedestrian priority street.

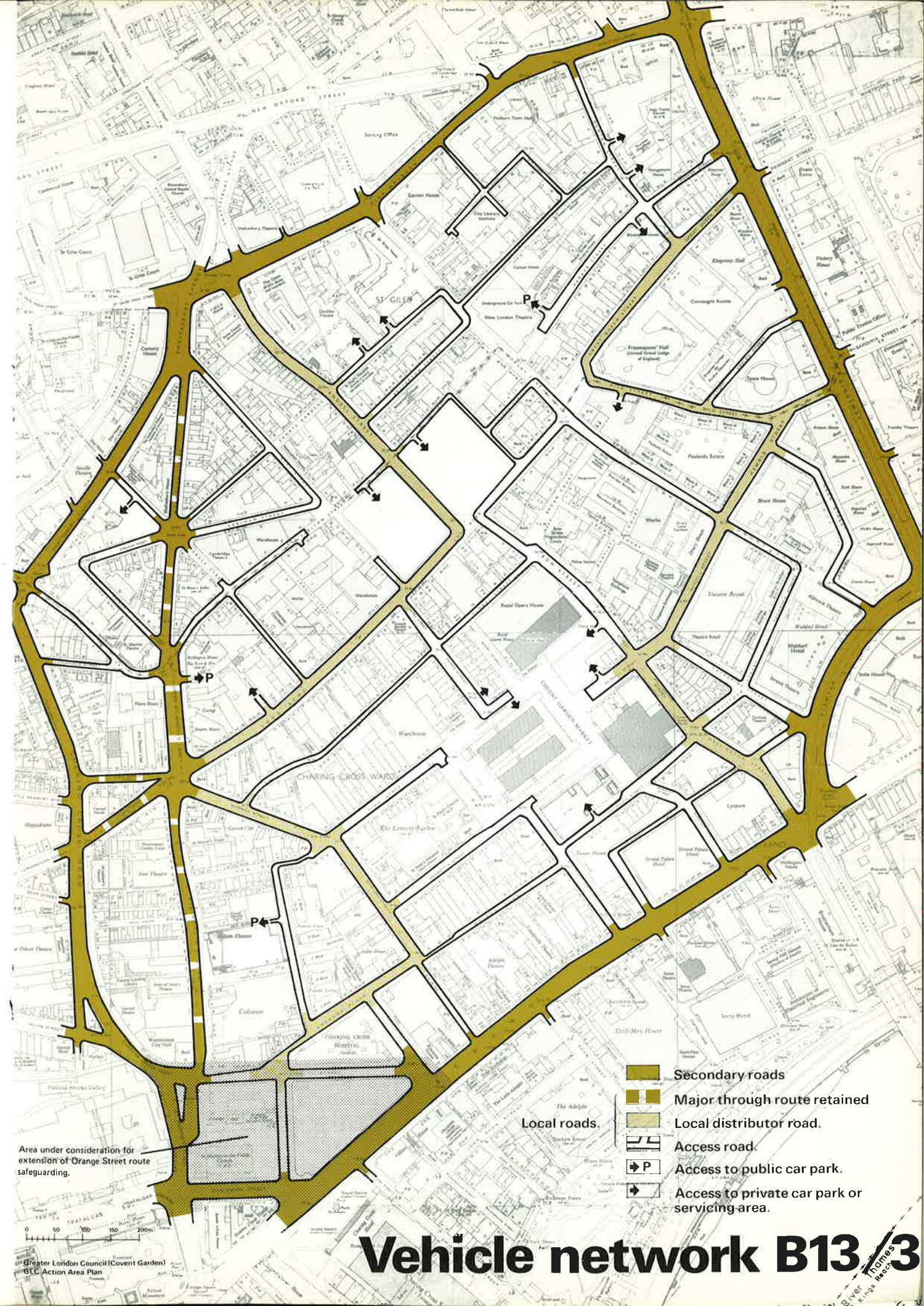
Mercer Street (Seven Dials to Shelton Street) — pedestrian/open space in connection with provision of housing on west side of street.

B.13.22 The areas around the theatres at the Aldwych and the Royal Opera House will require special consideration. Although the traffic generated within Covent Garden during the working day will be small, in the evening a high degree of accessibility is required for the cars of theatregoers and for other entertainments. Thus:

**Traffic management schemes will be designed to mitigate evening entertainment traffic problems.**

#### Pedestrian routes (Map B13/4)

B.13.23 The network of streets within Covent Garden which forms the greater part of the pedestrian network, are supplemented by many footpaths of varying sizes from the narrow Bull Inn Court to the aptly named Broad Court. Thus while it is a policy of this plan to improve the existing streets for pedestrians it will also be a policy to increase the number of footpaths through the area.



Area under consideration for extension of Orange Street route safeguarding.

- Secondary roads
- Major through route retained
- Local distributor road.
- Access road.
- P Access to public car park.
- P Access to private car park or servicing area.

0 50 100 150 200m  
 Greater London Council (Covent Garden)  
 GLC Action Area Plan

# Vehicle network B13

River Thames  
 Kings Reach

B.13.24 One of the most important areas in which to achieve such routes is between the central section of the Strand and the Seven Dials area. Footpaths already exist through several of the blocks on this line but are unattractive to pedestrians except for local access because of the lack of continuity. It is proposed that new footpaths are safeguarded to secure this complete pedestrian route from the Strand through the Covent Garden Conservation Area including St Paul's Churchyard to the Seven Dials Conservation area.

B.13.25 Another area in which new pedestrian routes will be provided is between the new housing areas on Long Acre and Endell Street to the Drury Lane local shopping street. A footpath will also be provided through the Royal Opera House extension to link the pedestrian 'Piazza' with the Martlett Court, Broad Court footpaths.

B.13.26 One of the most important pedestrian links is at present under construction in the form of a subway from Charing Cross Station into the south-west corner of the area. The subway gives access to the north side of the Strand, Adelaide Street and William IV Street through the Coutts Bank development. The William IV Street route will be continued to provide a link to the southern end of Bedfordbury, though the decision as to whether it should be a surface or subway route cannot be taken until the outcome of the Orange Street route extension studies are known.

**New developments will provide more small scale footpaths.**

#### **Pedal cycles**

B.13.27 Little work has been done to date on the detailed demands for cycle movement within Central London and an overall strategy for cycle facilities in this area has yet to be decided. The Greater London Council is still at the experimental stage with measures to help cyclists though it feels in general terms that cyclists should be routed wherever possible on the local road system to reduce the conflicts with vehicles.

B.13.28 Although the volumes of traffic within Covent Garden are unlikely to cause problems to cyclists the traffic management proposals for the reduction of through routes probably would restrict cycle movement. It is therefore proposed that:

**Wherever possible, through routes should be retained for cyclists either by providing special facilities on existing routes or, where this is not possible or desirable, providing alternative routes. Pedestrian schemes should exclude cycles from vehicle restriction wherever this is possible.**

#### **Disabled persons**

B.13.29 Pedestrian schemes such as those proposed within this plan can cause problems for disabled passengers and car drivers who need to have very close accessibility to buildings and public places. In particular large areas of pedestrianisation such as the Covent Garden Market Square could discourage disabled visitors. Measures to assist them must of necessity be part of detailed design (see C.1). The Market Square for instance will have disabled persons parking bays close to the Central Market Building and the legacy of ramps will assist greatly. Features such as these should be included in all pedestrian schemes.

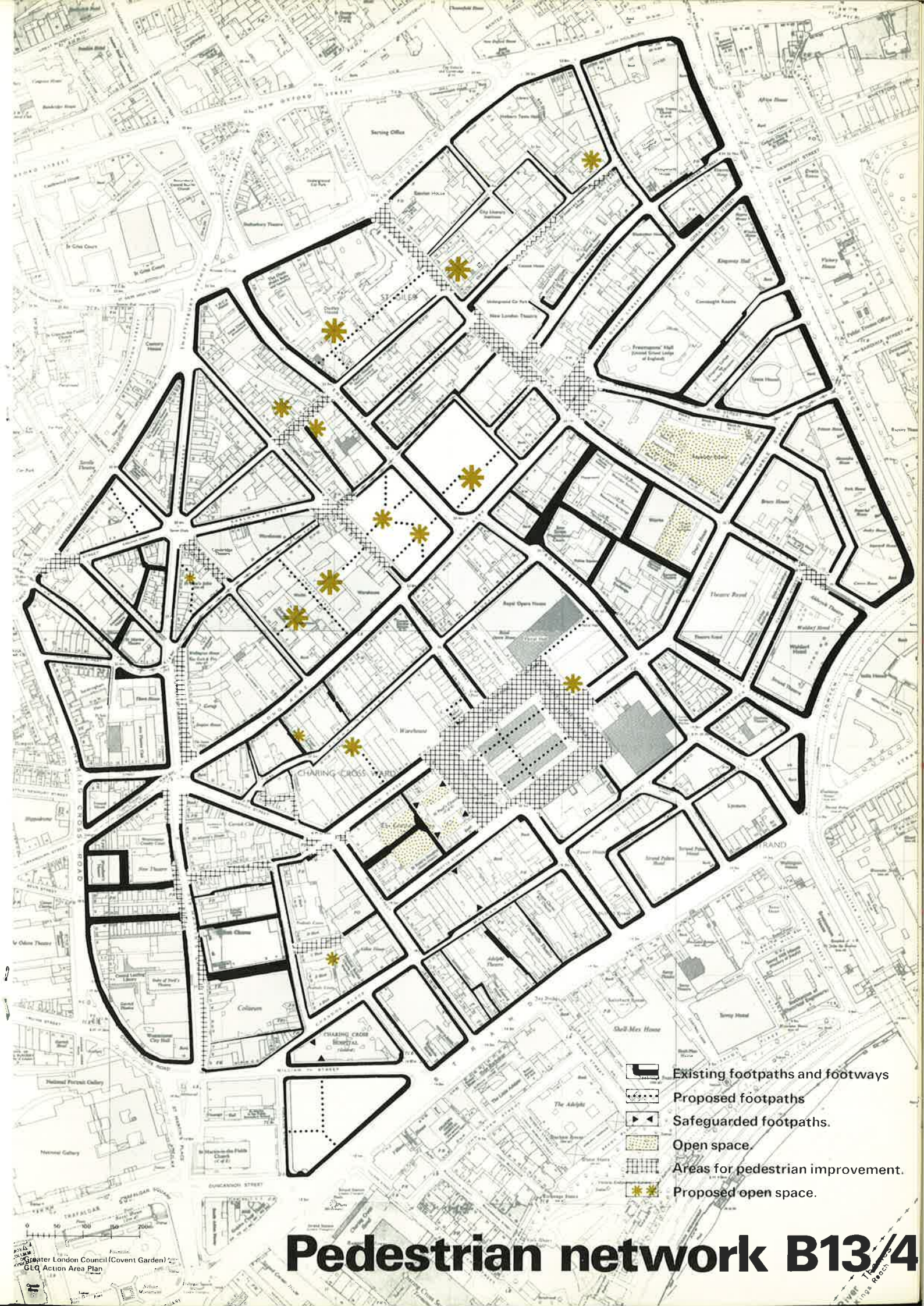
**Provision will be made for disabled drivers and passengers who require access to public buildings and open areas.**



#### **Implementation**

B.13.30 The broad aim of this part of the Covent Garden Local Plan is to exploit the progressive restraint of road traffic within Central London, to divert through traffic on to the secondary road system and in so doing to improve the environment within the area. The implementation of the traffic management schemes to make this possible are then linked closely to the results of the traffic restraint programme. The schemes are further linked to the phasing of developments since these will provide many of the opportunities for pedestrian areas.

B.13.31 Proposals will be implemented on a piecemeal basis and many will be experimental in the first instance depending as they do on the traffic conditions which prevail at that time. Each scheme will aim towards the system described earlier in the section though each will be the subject of detailed consultation. Such consultation is required in law for all 'permanent' traffic measures (ref. 59).

**Implementation will be phased as allowed by strategic policies for traffic restraint, but schemes requiring no further restraint will be implemented as soon as possible.**



-  Existing footpaths and footways
-  Proposed footpaths
-  Safeguarded footpaths.
-  Open space.
-  Areas for pedestrian improvement.
-  Proposed open space.

# Pedestrian network B13/4

## **B14 Conservation Policies**

B.14.1 In the public consultation leading to the definition of objectives for the Covent Garden Plan (refs. 9, 31), one of the greatest areas of consensus view concerned the need to adopt a primarily conservation approach in the revitalisation of the area. This implies that the present physical fabric will determine the opportunities for change and, to a great extent, the future form of the area. The Plan's aims will be achieved mainly by the re-use and improvement of the present buildings and environment. Development, where it occurs, will need to respect the present scale, street pattern and character, and contribute to the general improvement of the area. Thereafter, it is the existing building stock which will determine the scope for action. The internal and external arrangements of the buildings, their construction and general condition, and their practicability and financial viability for conversion will all be constraints on the range of possible new uses. Policy reports dealing with the social and economic aims of the Plan have assessed the possible courses of action in the light of these physical constraints.

### **The Conservation Areas (Map B14/1)**

B.14.2 At the time of the Secretary of State's decision in January 1973 a Covent Garden Conservation Area was in existence and an Advisory Committee had been established to advise the Covent Garden Committee on matters relating to the Conservation Area. As a result of two items contained in the decision: (1) the deletion of the Strand Relief Road and (2) the listing of a large number of buildings throughout the CDA, it became possible to consider an enlargement of the existing Conservation Area. The issue of an extension to the Conservation Area was the first major task undertaken by the Advisory Committee. Proposed new boundaries were discussed with officers of the Covent Garden Team and the Council's Historic Buildings Division and by May 1974 a new Conservation Area was agreed. The new areas were in two parts. Firstly an extension to the existing Conservation Area which covered the whole of the block south of Henrietta Street down to and including the Strand frontage between Bedford Street and Southampton Street, together with part of the west side of Bedford Street. This extension included the three alley courts which link Maiden Lane with the Strand and also the five groups of listed buildings to the south side of Henrietta Street. A further extension to the south included the block containing the Flower Market and the two blocks which house the Duchess Theatre and the Lyceum Theatre. This extension also brought in a further section of the Strand frontage between Burleigh Street and Wellington Street.

B.14.3 The second area of extension was in the form of an island conservation area centred on Seven Dials. The character of this area is quite different from the main Conservation Area and includes a large number of three and four storey buildings of domestic scale, some of considerable age, and many retaining elements of the original buildings. The dominant street pattern of Seven Dials forms the basis of this area. The new Conservation Areas were declared and advertised on 24 July 1974. Both Conservation Areas are designated as of 'outstanding' Status. Further extensions to the existing Conservation Areas are being considered, following a suggestion from the Department of the Environment, to include the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane and parts of St Martin's Lane and Chandos Place.

B.14.4 Two other existing conservation areas adjoin Covent Garden, and include parts of the periphery of the area. The Government precinct Conservation Area takes in Trafalgar Square, and with it the lower end of St Martin's Lane, including the Coliseum, the Coutts Bank triangle and the former Charing Cross Hospital. At the eastern end of the area, the Strand Conservation Area includes the Aldwych and parts of the Kingsway frontage.

### **Strategic context**

B.14.5 Covent Garden contains two of the special factors of character in Central London outlined in paragraph 8.4 of the GLDP report of studies, namely an area of architectural or historic interest around the Central Market area and the indication of potential for change. The GLDP regards the conservation and enhancement of London's urban landscape as of great importance and the Council is determined, while modernising and developing Central London, to safeguard its historic and architectural features and give them an even worthier setting than at present.

### **The Central London context**

B.14.6 The APCL aims to strike an appropriate balance between its aim to improve the physical environment and its aim to foster capital city functions. Priority will be given to the maintenance of the vitality of a living and working centre in the formulation of environmental improvement proposals.

### **Conservation policies**

B.14.7 The major part of this section deals with the particular physical problems and opportunities existing in various parts of Covent Garden. A level of detail has been adopted which is appropriate to a local plan, although in the implementation of the proposals the task of creating and sustaining the impetus to improve, and co-ordinating changes will involve work of a most detailed and laborious nature. There are however, three broad areas of conservation policy to be stated on an area-wide basis, before dealing with the sub-area opportunities, recommendations and initiatives.

### **Redevelopment**

B.14.8 Such new buildings as are necessary or desirable within the Conservation Area must be in scale and character with their surroundings, and be constructed of such materials as to be compatible with the general quality of adjacent buildings. The height and bulk of building will be most critical, and nowhere will they be allowed to intrude. Excessive bulk of buildings on sites will be resisted. Sensitivity of design will be of the utmost importance, and they should harmonise with the traditional atmosphere of Covent Garden.

### **Plot ratio**

B.14.9 The issue of plot ratio is dealt with under Planning standards (see B.2).

### **Rehabilitation**

B.14.10 As with redevelopment, rehabilitation schemes will be required to respect the scale, character and appearance of their surroundings. Extensions or additions to buildings should be in compatible materials, and to designs which are in sympathy with the existing building. All steps under present legislation will be taken to control the situation where owners of adjacent properties seek to unify the building behind existing facades, in order to maximise space, improve management or proclaim the extent of their ownership. Serious problems have already



# Bloomsbury Conservation Area

# Seven Dials Conservation Area

# Covent Garden Conservation Area

# Strand Conservation Area

# Government Precinct Conservation Area

Proposed extension to Covent Garden Conservation Area



# Conservation area boundaries B14/1

RIVER  
KING'S BENCH

occurred in Covent Garden where party walls on upper floors have been removed to create open floorspace. The resulting effect, particularly when lighting is in use is most unattractive; the facades, sometimes of different design, remain only as a screen masking a new building. In other cases new fascias have been erected at street level to mask the existing elevations, and to perform a unifying function. When carried out in streets of narrow frontage buildings with a predominantly vertical emphasis, this treatment is most disruptive. A further loss in conservation terms which frequently occurs as a result of unification is the break up of small units of accommodation in favour of a large single occupation. The enforcement of legislation pertaining to the serious decay and demolition of listed buildings and buildings in a conservation area will be pursued.

#### **Shopfronts, signs, street furniture and environmental improvements**

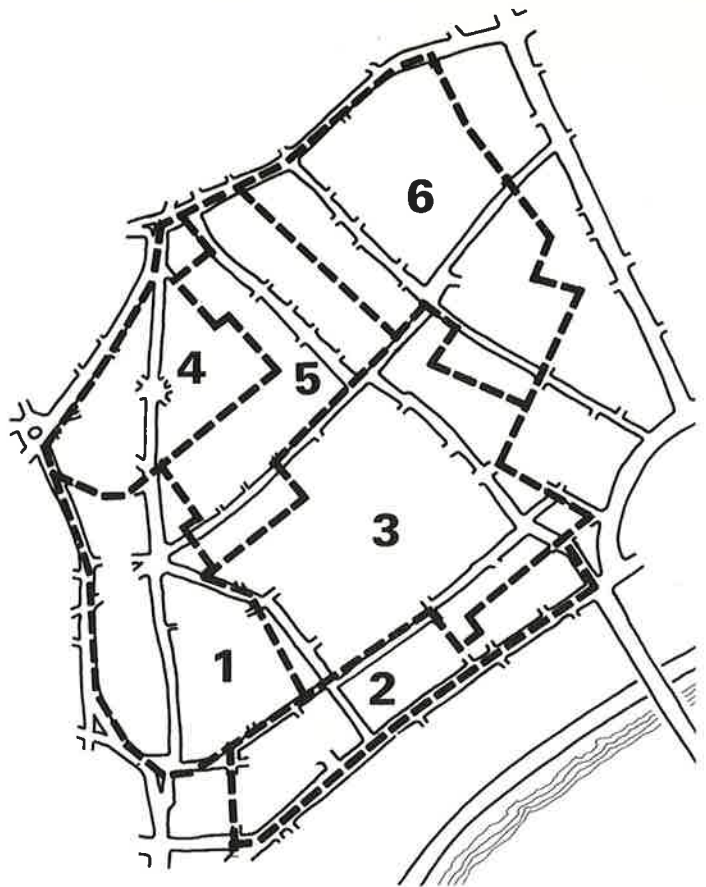
B.14.11 Shopfronts and their associated signs and fascias are a most important factor in Covent Garden, where so many streets contain a proportion of shop, restaurant or quasi-shop activity. A considerable variety of treatments already exists in the area, but three main categories can be defined.

- 1 Buildings where the shopfront is unrelated in design terms to the remainder of the building, but is acceptable in visual terms as part of a major shopping street. In these areas good general design suitability for purpose and quality of materials will be of prime importance.
- 2 Streets where the shopping frontage was designed as an entity, and individual shopfronts are subservient to the overall design. It is rare for these to survive in their entirety, but notable examples exist in Covent Garden, and here occupants should be encouraged to adhere to a co-ordinated redecoration policy to enhance the original conception.
- 3 Isolated shopfronts where the front is seen as an integral part of the design of the building as a whole. In these cases new shopfronts should normally respect the scale, character and materials of the buildings of which it forms part.

B.14.12 Signs and fascias — Banks, headquarters buildings, etc., often erect fascias to establish their presence through a 'house style'. Policy in these cases will be to examine each case on its merits although it is unlikely that large illuminated signs will be considered appropriate in the Conservation Area. Crude, brash or out-of-scale lettering will be resisted.

B.14.13 Traffic signs and street furniture — The introduction of further signs and street furniture should be minimised, although some are unavoidable where pedestrianisation schemes are implemented. Existing street furniture could be grouped more attractively and incorporated in overall design improvements. Items should match existing as far as practicable, i.e., bollards, lamp posts, railings, etc. Many of these items are however covered by traffic and other standardising regulations, or are the responsibility of statutory undertakers — the Post Office, etc.

B.14.14 Minor environmental improvements — Tree planting, landscaping, extended pavements, etc. Where appropriate these measures will be undertaken to improve the environment generally, and to enhance existing spaces. Extended pavements, where appropriate and available through traffic management schemes, will be planted and be provided, if possible, with seating. Where appropriate, trees will be subject to preservation orders.



**B 14/2 Conservation Sub Area Key Map**

#### **Initiatives and responsibilities**

B.14.15 Four main agencies will be involved in Conservation action in Covent Garden.

##### **GLC:**

B.14.16 As a major landowner the Greater London Council will pursue conservation policies through property management and rehabilitation schemes. Action has already been taken to this end on the Central Market Building, Flower Market and minor properties acquired from the Covent Garden Market Authority. Further early action will involve works to Bedford Chambers and the Market Square. As a traffic authority, the GLC will be responsible for all traffic management schemes involved in a conservation programme. As planning authority, the GLC will also play a major part in relation to listed building restoration and planning applications and the day-to-day co-ordination of proposals. Any road closures under the Planning Acts would also be the responsibility of the GLC.

##### **City of Westminster: London Borough of Camden:**

B.14.17 The Boroughs are highway authorities for their respective parts of Covent Garden, and as such would be responsible for improvement works to roads and pavements, street lighting and street furniture.

##### **Private owners:**

B.14.18 Individual building owners and leaseholders where appropriate would be responsible for building restorations, cleaning and painting. In some cases such work might qualify for grants from local and central Government funds.

### Voluntary organisations:

B.14.19 The Covent Garden Conservation Area Advisory Committee has agreed to take the initiative to encourage owners to undertake a co-ordinated improvement programme in the area. Celebrations of the Queen's Jubilee in 1977 are likely to include a focussing of interest on conservation projects of this kind, with possible financial assistance for suitable proposals from the Jubilee Committee. The Civic Trust is advising and assisting in the liaison required with owners and authorities.

B.14.20 For the purpose of detailed study, the Covent Garden area has been divided into 6 sub-areas and each sub-area is considered under standard headings. The sub-areas have been chosen for the similarity of their general scale, character, orientation and their possible future. Map B14/2 shows the boundaries of the six sub-areas.

### Sub Area One

**Charing Cross Road, Litchfield Street, Shelton Street, Slingsby Place, Rose Street, Garrick Street, Chandos Place**

#### General character, size and scale

B.14.21 This is an area of predominantly 4-6 storey buildings of metropolitan character mostly dating from the late 19th and early 20th century with some survivors of earlier times in New Row and Goodwins Court. The fabric is in good condition for its age and well suited to its present function.

B.14.22 The character and activity of the area derive from its proximity to the West End, Leicester Square and Trafalgar Square, and entertainment uses are widespread. For this reason the area has been almost unaffected by the move of the market.

B.14.23 Most of the area to the south of Cranbourn Street falls within a Conservation Area.

#### Groups

B.14.24 The southern part of this area contains the following distinguished groups of buildings which are indicated on Map B14/3:

- 1 The whole of the south side of Garrick Street.
- 2 The section of the west side of St Martin's Lane from Cecil Court to Cranbourn Street.
- 3 The two pedestrian shopping streets Cecil Court and St Martin's Court.
- 4 New Row and Goodwins Court which are the earliest surviving group in the area, dating from 1690.
- 5 The Garrick Theatre, Cavell House and the National Westminster Bank Building at the southern end of Charing Cross Road and St Martin's Lane. This group is particularly important as it forms the backdrop to Trafalgar Square when viewed from the south side of the Square.

B.14.25 To the north of Cranbourn Street the coherence of the area is lost; this is due to the intrusion of large scale buildings and the disruption of street level frontages.

#### Listed buildings

B.14.26 This area is rich in Listed Buildings of considerable interest, the most important being the following:

Five theatres: The Garrick, The Duke of Yorks, The Alberty, Wyndhams and the Coliseum. All were built between 1892 and 1904.

The Garrick Club built in 1860 is a dignified Italianate building which dominates Garrick Street. It is flanked on either side by two smaller buildings with well-modelled facades.

There are many smaller listed buildings in New Row and Goodwin's Court which are remnants of the earliest development of the area in the mid-17th Century and before.

#### Disruptive elements

B.14.27 There are two main disruptive elements in the area:

- 1 The group of new buildings in Upper St Martin's Lane, Empire House, the Sussex Public House, Wellington House and Thorn House, which do not relate in scale and character to the remainder of the area.
- 2 The hub of the six roads at the western end of Long Acre results in a clash between pedestrians and vehicular traffic which effectively cuts the area in two on an east/west axis.

## Environmental improvements

B.14.28 There is scope for environmental improvements in a number of places.

**Mays Court** New paving possibly with a raised seating area, space for restaurants to spill out over the pavement and landscaped street furniture.

**St Martin's Court** New paving and rearranged street furniture particularly between the two theatres, a co-ordinated redecoration scheme for the ground floor shop frontages.

**Cecil Court** A co-ordinated redecoration scheme.

**Long Acre/St Martin's Lane Junction** The re-arrangement of traffic movements to shorten pedestrian crossing distances and possibly increase periods for crossing.

**St Martin's Lane** Widening of the pavements, planting, control of pavement advertising, improved crossing facilities particularly at New Row.

**Upper St Martin's Lane** Greatly increased eastern pavement width with tree planting to continue 'corridor' effect of Monmouth Street through to St Martin's Lane.

**Garrick Street** Widening of the pavements on the north side with planting and seating.



## Problems and opportunities

B.14.29 At present the principal pressure for change, is the desire of some to create office space at the expense of other users.

## Recommended policies and objectives

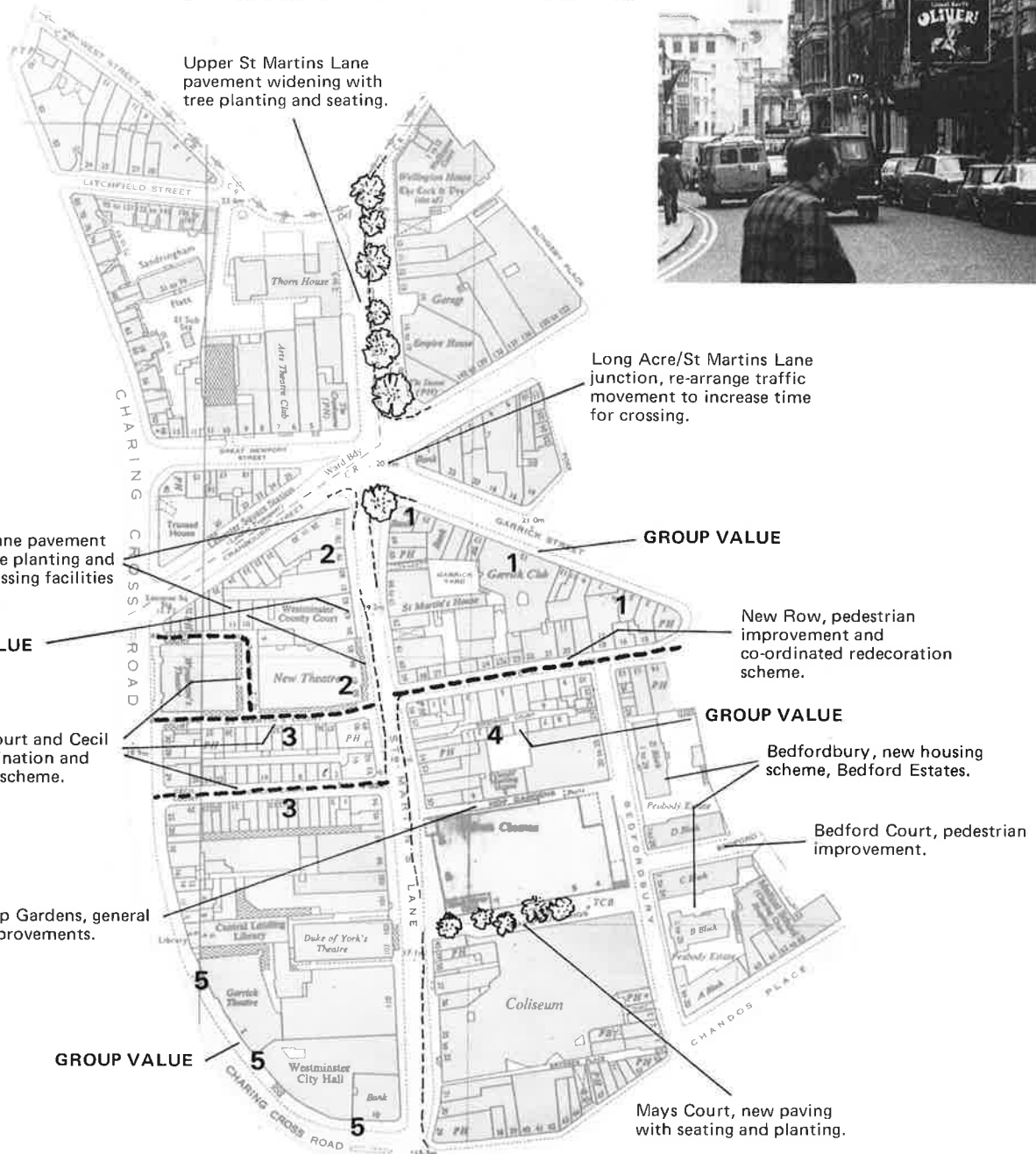
B.14.30 The objectives will be to retain and reinforce the existing scale and character, the mixed uses and entertainment activity in the area and to safeguard and increase the residential population.




B.14.31 Most of the area is within a conservation area and in those parts conservation area policy will be strictly enforced.

## Initiatives

B.14.32 The environmental improvements set out above could be implemented with the assistance of the Westminster City Council and owners and tenants of the buildings involved.





Proposed tree planting   
 Proposed routes through   
 Proposed pavement widening 

# Sub Area 1 B14/3

## Sub Area Two

**Strand, Adelaide Street, Chandos Place, Maiden Lane, Exeter Street, Wellington Street**

### General character, size and scale

B.14.33 Most of the sub-area falls within the Covent Garden Conservation Area. It is composed of large buildings of five to eight storeys dating from the mid-18th to the early 20th Century. The larger buildings house typically large scale west end use including three theatres, a department store, a large hotel and the headquarters of a major bank.

B.14.34 The orientation of the area is towards the Strand and Trafalgar Square and in common with sub-area 1 it has been little affected by the market move.

### Groups

B.14.35 The most important group of buildings are those forming the western end of the Strand frontage, they include the Coutts Bank Nash facades, and Agar wing of Charing Cross Hospital. The Coutts Bank triangle is at present being redeveloped with the Nash facades retained and restored. These groups are indicated by Map B14/4:

- 1 Coutts Bank.
- 2 Agar wing Charing Cross Hospital.
- 3 Rhodesia House.

### Listed buildings

B.14.36 There are several prominent listed buildings including the Nash terraces of the Coutts Bank triangle, the Agar wing of Charing Cross Hospital by Decimus Burton, the Vaudeville and Lyceum Theatres, Rhodesia House and several smaller buildings in Maiden Lane.

### Disruptive elements

B.14.37 There are no major disruptive elements in the area although there are some unsatisfactory areas. Exeter Street in particular provides an unattractive street character as it is the service area for the Strand Palace Hotel and Lyceum Theatre. There are also some crude and brash treatments to street level frontages in the Strand.

### Environmental improvements

B.14.38 Environmental improvements at street level will be aimed at improving facilities for pedestrians on the north side of the Strand by reducing the traffic coming in and out of the area at certain junctions and providing where possible a continuous footway. The closure of these side entry routes to vehicles would also improve the efficiency of the Strand as a principal traffic route.

### Problems and opportunities

B.14.39 The future of the vacated Charing Cross Hospital: If the listed Agar Street wing is retained there remains the question of the remainder of the building. This site has significance in urban design terms since it offers the opportunity for a major new large building which will have a considerable impact on the surrounding area.

B.14.40 With the abandonment of the Waterloo Bridge northern approach scheme powers, the long term future of the Lyceum can be positively considered. A considerable portion of the upper parts is disused and the service areas in particular are inconvenient and inefficient. The building is listed and has many fine architectural features worthy of preservation in any rehabilitation scheme.

B.14.41 Apart from actual buildings there is potential for the improvement of the three courts which provide pedestrian routes from the Strand to Maiden Lane. These could be improved as part of any new development or rehabilitation schemes to provide pleasant semi enclosed spaces with trees and landscaping. These courts form an essential part of the proposed north-south pedestrian system throughout the area.

### Recommended policies and objectives

B.14.42 The objective will be to retain the existing balance of uses and to reinforce the shopping and entertainment element of the streets where possible. The scale and character of the area will be retained in any new development and the environment of the existing buildings and spaces will be improved. It is unlikely that a significant increase in residential accommodation could be achieved in this area, although gains will be encouraged where appropriate.

B.14.43 As most of this area is within a conservation area planning applications will be subject to careful scrutiny by the Conservation Area Advisory Committees in addition to the normal development control procedures.

B.14.44 A general preference for rehabilitation rather than complete redevelopment will be fostered and the scale and size of developments will be required to be in keeping with that which exists at the present time.

### Initiatives

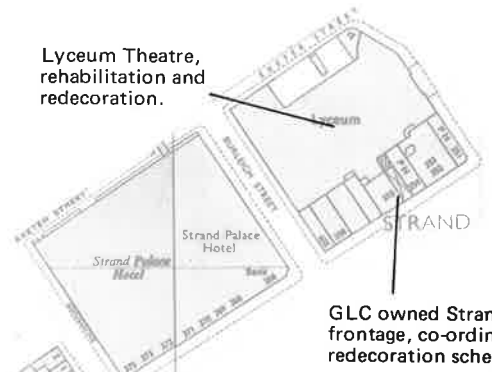
B.14.45 The Council will as soon as is practicable carry out the restoration and repainting of its own properties fronting the Strand and will ensure a secure and appropriate modernisation for the Lyceum Theatre.

B.14.46 By advice and guidance to applicants for planning permission ensure a sensitive rehabilitation and redevelopment of the area.



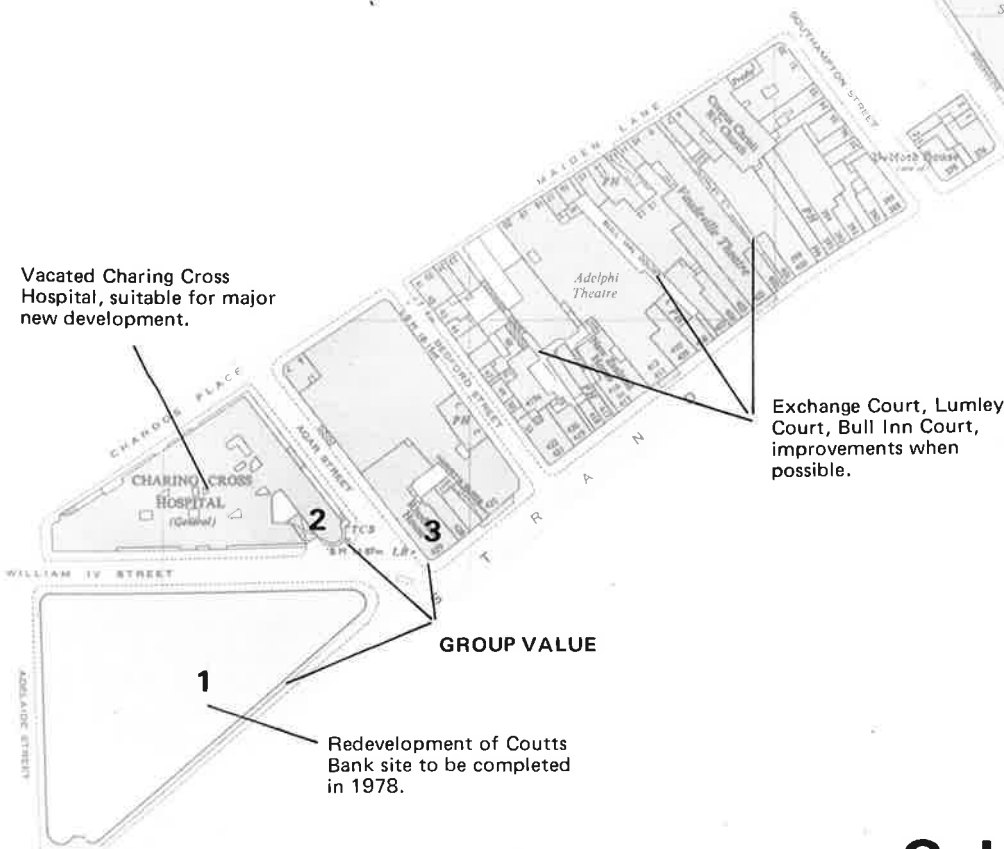


Lyceum Theatre, rehabilitation and redecoration.



GLC owned Strand frontage, co-ordinated redecoration scheme.

Vacated Charing Cross Hospital, suitable for major new development.



Exchange Court, Lumley Court, Bull Inn Court, improvements when possible.

Redevelopment of Coutts Bank site to be completed in 1978.

# Sub Area 2 B14/4

## Sub Area Three

**Bedford Street, Garrick Street, Floral Street, Long Acre, Bow Street, Catherine Street, Maiden Lane**

### General character, size and scale

B.14.47 Most of this sub-area falls within the Covent Garden Conservation Area and it contains the heart of the old Covent Garden. It is the part most affected by the move of the market with so many buildings formerly used for market activities. Most buildings are of four or five storeys. The fabric dates from the 18th and 19th Century but the general air is one of a Victorian commercial area. This is particularly true of Henrietta Street, Maiden Lane and King Street.

B.14.48 The Covent Garden Piazza, a set piece of town planning built during the 1630's to the designs of Inigo Jones, was the first Square or Piazza based on the Italian model to be built in England. It was a remarkable innovation to seventeenth century Londoners and set the style for similar layouts throughout the then fashionable areas of London.

### Groups

B.14.49 This entire area is of great architectural and historic interest and contains the following outstanding groups of buildings indicated on Map B14/5:

- 1 The north side of King Street from No. 26 to the junction with James Street.
- 2 The west side of Bedford Street from the GPO building to the junction with Chandos Place.
- 3 The south side of Henrietta Street from No.2-No. 16.
- 4 The Central Market Building, St Pauls Church, the Flower Market.
- 5 The Royal Opera House and the Floral Hall.
- 6 Bow Street Magistrates Court and Police Station and the north side of Broad Court.
- 7 Tavistock Street between Wellington Street and Catherine Street.

### Listed buildings

B.14.50 The most important listed buildings within Covent Garden are in this area. Two buildings are included in Grade I of the Statutory list and are the Royal Opera House designed by E. M. Barry in 1858 and St Pauls Church built in 1633 by Inigo Jones.

B.14.51 Other notable Grade II listed buildings are 43 King Street by Thos. Archer built in 1717; Bedford Chambers by Clutton built in 1879; The Flower Market by William Rogers built in 1872; The Central Market by Charles Fowler commenced in 1830; Bow Street Magistrates Court and Police Station by Sir John Taylor built in 1880; No. 13 Burleigh Street, a small Victorian vicarage by W. Butterfield built in 1860. Some of these buildings are in need of repairs and restoration but most are in very good condition considering their age.

### Disruptive elements

B.14.52 The main disruptive element is the incomplete appearance of the Piazza itself. This was caused firstly by the creation of Mart Street which spoils the continuity of the northern facades, secondly by the insightly eastern part known as the Tin Market and thirdly by the lack of an enclosing facade between Southampton Street and the Flower Market. The existing Jubilee Market does little to enhance the feeling of a Piazza and provides no satisfactory delineation at Street level.

B.14.53 The Tin Market area to the south of the Floral Hall, causes a serious loss of visual amenity in this area. Other minor detractions are the many street frontages to vacant buildings which attract fly posting and other defacements.

### Environmental improvements

B.14.54 The most significant improvement within the sub-area will be the provision of a pedestrian priority area within the Market Square. It is hoped that eventually the whole of the Square will be pedestrianised with the exception of two servicing areas to serve the Central Market Building and possibly a short length of roadway between Southampton Street and Henrietta Street. The scheme will need to be phased in order to accommodate the various changes to the buildings within the Square, Central Market Building, Jubilee Market, Opera House and Flower Market. The first stage will be the complete pedestrianisation of the south-west arm outside St Paul's Church followed by the closure of the south-east and north-east sides.

B.14.55 Further potential for pedestrian improvements exist at the King Street/Bedford Street/Garrick Street junction which is at present a particularly difficult crossing for pedestrians. In addition, pedestrian improvements could be carried out in Rose Street south of Floral Street.



B.14.56 The streets leading to the Piazza, particularly James Street, could support widened pavements and in some cases tree planting.

B.14.57 Planting and landscaping will be considered where appropriate. In the areas like King Street and the Piazza there is a danger that owing to the scale of the buildings that planting could look insignificant unless large trees are used. These in their turn bring problems of root control and loss of light to adjoining buildings.

### Problems and opportunities

B.14.58 This area offers opportunity for both rehabilitation and some redevelopment. The many buildings vacated by the market offer immense opportunities for imaginative rehabilitation for new uses. Other now redundant buildings of lower quality can provide sites for redevelopment. In many parts of the area rehabilitation is already taking place and new uses are moving in to the empty buildings. There is the opportunity to improve pedestrian links through the area when extensive rehabilitation is involved.





Bedford Chambers, cleaning and restoration.

Pedestrian improvement to Rose Street, south of Floral Street.

**GROUP VALUE**

CHARING CROSS WARD

The Covent Garden

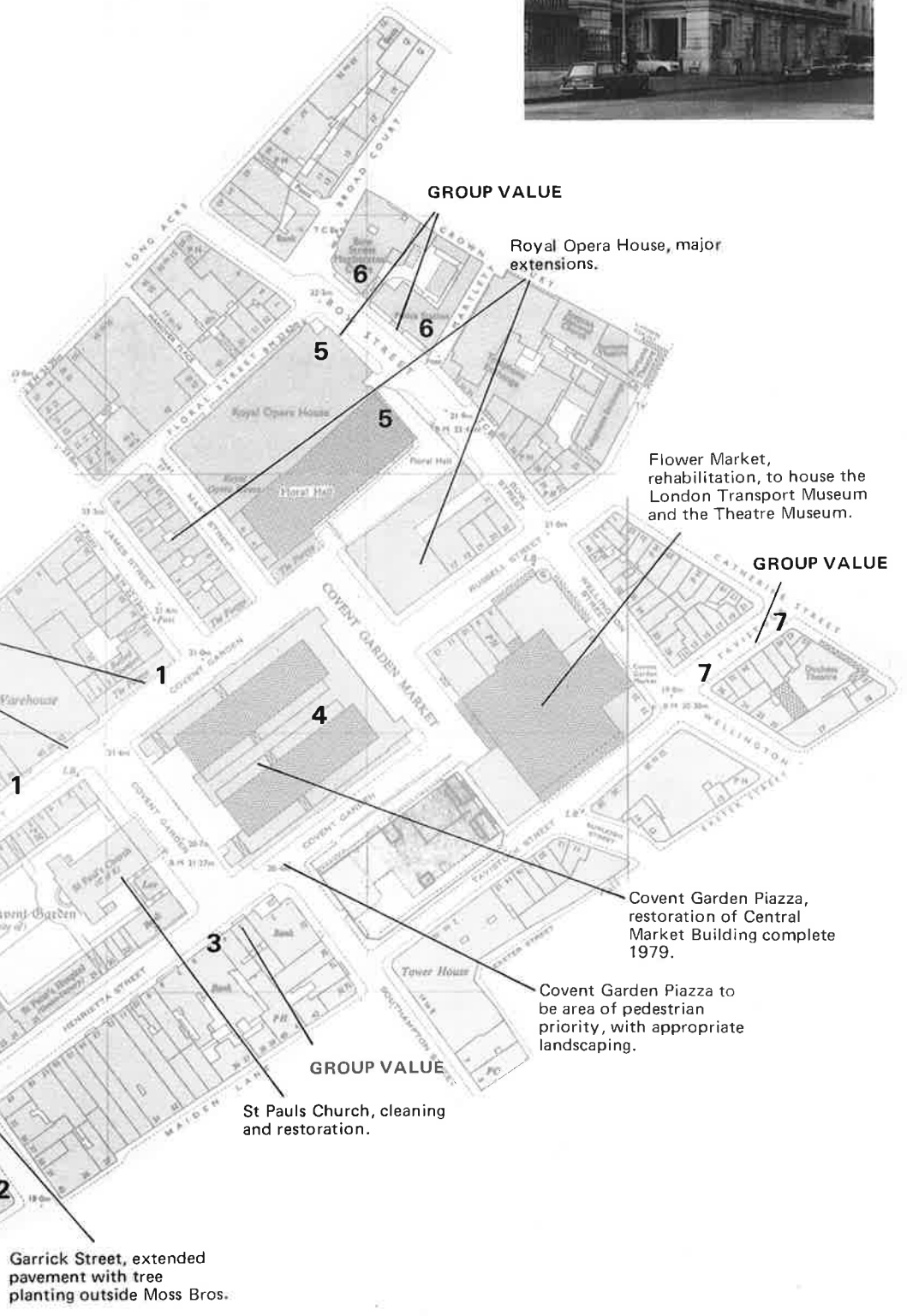
St Pauls Church

Alton House

Garrick Street

St Pauls Church, cleaning and restoration.

Garrick Street, extended pavement with tree planting outside Moss Bros.



**GROUP VALUE**

Royal Opera House, major extensions.

Flower Market, rehabilitation, to house the London Transport Museum and the Theatre Museum.

**GROUP VALUE**

Covent Garden Piazza, restoration of Central Market Building complete 1979.

Covent Garden Piazza to be area of pedestrian priority, with appropriate landscaping.

**GROUP VALUE**

B.14.59 There are extensive proposals for physical change in this area, involving both conversion of existing buildings, and two major new projects. The Council, which in 1974 acquired a large landholding in the Piazza area with its purchase of the majority of the Covent Garden Market Authority's properties, is taking the lead in the revitalisation of the Piazza.

B.14.60 The Council has extensive proposals for action in this area, which include the restoration of the Central Market Building, started in 1975, the establishment of an important Museum complex in the Flower Market and the redevelopment of the extremely important Jubilee Market site after 1981. The other major proposal in this area is the extension of the Royal Opera House. All these proposals are fully described in the 'Physical proposals' section of the Plan.

#### **Recommended policies and objectives**

B.14.61 The main objective is to secure the sensitive restoration and rehabilitation of the area with particular attention to the Piazza and its immediate surroundings.

B.14.62 In addition, the Council aims to establish a wide variety of uses and to ensure the reoccupation of the many market buildings with varied and appropriate new uses to ensure the revitalisation of the area.

B.14.63 The whole area falls within the Covent Garden conservation area and the conservation policies will be strictly applied to applications for permanent alterations or new buildings. Where development has a limited life, as in the case of sites where redevelopment is proposed, e.g., Mart Street, the Jubilee Market, less stringent requirements as to quality and performance of materials will be applied although a high standard of design will still be required.

B.14.64 The policy will be to encourage wherever possible the retention of the existing fabric whether the building is listed or not.

#### **Initiatives**

B.14.65 The local authorities will be implementing traffic management proposals aimed at the pedestrianisation of the Piazza and parts of the adjoining streets.

B.14.66 Landscaping and tree planting will be incorporated in the above scheme.

B.14.67 By advice and guidance to applicants for planning permission to ensure a sensitive rehabilitation and redevelopment of the area.

B.14.68 The Council will ensure reoccupation of the former market buildings in its ownership with a variety of mixed uses. The Council is encouraging the temporary occupation of short-life vacant property.

B.14.69 The Council will, as soon as is practicable, carry out cleaning and repainting of its own properties surrounding the Piazza.

B.14.70 The Council will endeavour to obtain the co-operation of owners and tenants in a co-ordinated redecoration scheme for the Conservation Area.

#### **Sub Area Four**

**Litchfield Street, Shaftesbury Avenue, Endell Street, Neal Street, Nottingham Court, Shelton Street**

#### **General character, size and scale**

B.14.71 This area in common with sub-area 3 is centred upon a set piece of town planning, the Seven Dials road pattern designed in 1693 by Sir Thomas Neale and consisting of a radiating pattern of streets centred upon the Seven Dials itself. This unusual layout results in large triangular blocks of development which give the area its unique character. Most of the buildings are early 19th Century and domestic in character, but there are several remnants of the original 17th Century structure. The Shaftesbury Avenue frontage relates more in scale to Charing Cross Road and Cambridge Circus than to the Seven Dials area. The whole of this area falls within the Seven Dials Conservation Area which is designated as of outstanding status.

#### **Groups**

B.14.72 The following groups are of special value and are indicated on Map B14/6:

- 1 The triangle bounded by Monmouth Street, Shelton Street and Mercer Street.
- 2 The St Martin's and Ambassadors Theatre and the row of small houses in Tower Court.
- 3 The St Giles School and the Swiss Church in Endell Street.
- 4 The buildings fronting Seven Dials (excluding the garage).
- 5 The warehouses flanking Earlham Street.
- 6 The southern end of Neal Street at the junction with Earlham and Shelton Street.

#### **Listed buildings**

B.14.73 The list of buildings in this area includes:

St Giles Church School  
The Swiss Church  
The St Martin's and Ambassadors Theatres  
The school building in Tower Street  
The Shelton Street, Mercer Street, Monmouth Street triangle  
Some smaller scattered buildings in Neal, Monmouth, Shelton and Earlham Streets.

#### **Disruptive elements**

B.14.74 The most disruptive elements in this area are:

- 1 the vehicular traffic in Monmouth street;
- 2 the garage at the Monmouth Street/Earlham Street intersection;
- 3 several vacant sites;
- 4 the general run-down condition of most of the buildings.

B.14.75 The principal problem is the general dilapidated condition of many of the buildings notably in Monmouth Street, Shelton Street and Neal Street.

B.14.76 The garage at the Earlham Street/Monmouth Street junction produces an untidy, unsatisfactory and dangerous intersection. It effectively destroys the potential character of the hub of the radiating streets.

B.14.77 The advertisement hoardings in Monmouth Street and Earlham Street.



GROUP VALUE

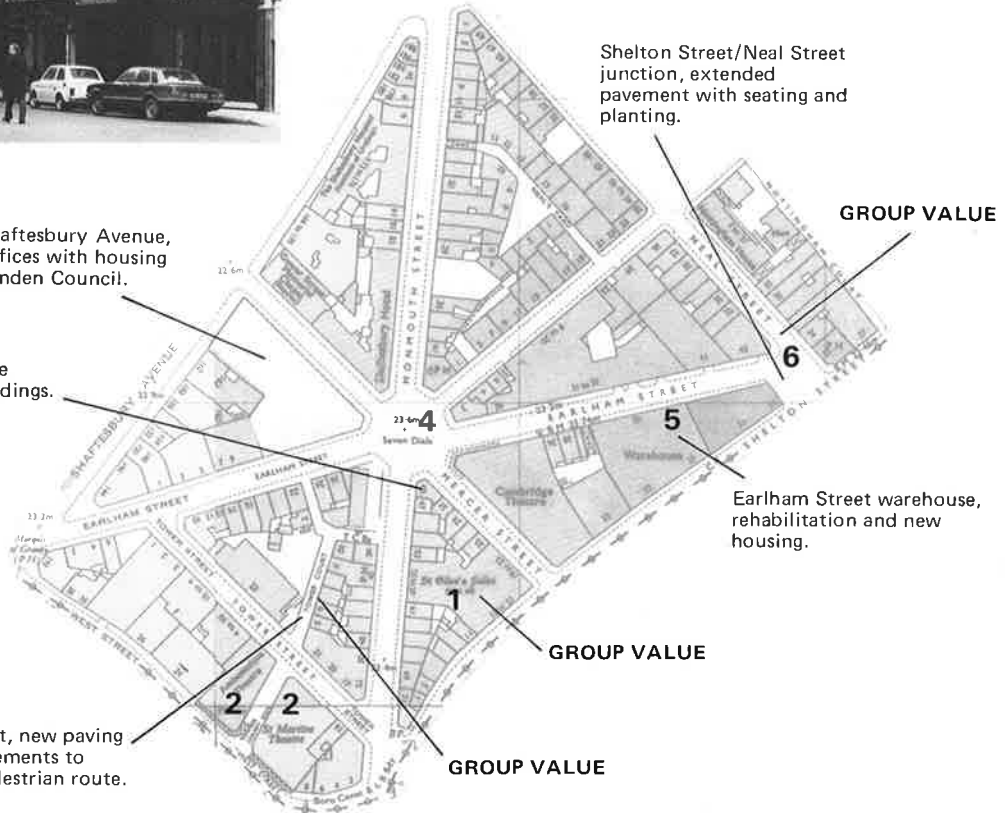
164 Shaftesbury Avenue, new offices with housing for Camden Council.

Seven Dials, remove advertisement hoardings.

Tower Court, new paving and improvements to enhance pedestrian route.

Shelton Street/Neal Street junction, extended pavement with seating and planting.

Earlham Street warehouse, rehabilitation and new housing.



# Sub Area 4 B14/6

## Environmental improvements

B.14.78 There are several opportunities for environmental improvements.

- 1 Extend pavements at the junction of Shelton Street, Neal Street and Earlham Street outside the 'Crown and Anchor' Public House by redirecting traffic and by paving the extra space thus gained to provide seating and tree planting.
- 2 Improve the paving to Tower Court and enhance it as a pedestrian route.
- 3 Remove advertisement hoardings from buildings on Seven Dials and Earlham Street.
- 4 Encourage the cleaning of the warehouses and other buildings.

## Problems and opportunities

B.14.79 This is an area where the problems outweigh the opportunities. The principle difficulties stem from the age, size and condition of a large number of the buildings some of which are listed. These buildings require complete rehabilitation from foundations to roof which will be very costly and yet when completed they will offer little return to justify such an outlay.

B.14.80 In the case of the large warehouses and specialist buildings there is less of a problem as these are large enough to be adapted for a number of new uses.

B.14.81 The Tower Court site and the Neals Yard site are included in the Council programme for action dealt with in the section on 'Physical Proposals'.

## Recommended policies and objectives

B.14.82 The objective is to bring about a revitalisation of the area with a balance of new, mixed uses for the existing buildings. To improve the environment generally and to retain the scale and character of the area. In addition to prevent the eastwards expansion of certain entertainment activities from the West End.

B.14.83 The entire area falls within the Seven Dials Conservation Area and Conservation Area policies will normally prevail.

B.14.84 An imaginative and flexible policy regarding changes of use in order to secure rehabilitation of the more neglected buildings and to obtain an interesting mixture of uses in the area and to ensure maximum use of available accommodation.

B.14.85 Continue to investigate the possibility of reducing traffic in Monmouth Street by traffic management schemes.

B.14.86 Attempt to secure the removal of the garage at Seven Dials within the Tower Court housing proposals.

B.14.87 To increase residential accommodation wherever possible and appropriate.

## Initiatives

B.14.88 Implement traffic management and environmental improvements along the lines suggested above.

B.14.89 Rehabilitation of the Council's Earlham Street warehouse to provide mixed, commercial and light industrial uses and new residential accommodation.

B.14.90 Give advice and guidance to applicants to ensure a sensitive rehabilitation and redevelopment of the area.

B.14.91 The Council will promote cleaning and redecoration schemes.

## Sub Area Five

**Shelton Street, Nottingham Court, Shorts Gardens, Neal Street, Endell Street, High Holborn, Arne Street, Long Acre, James Street, Floral Street, Rose Street, Slingsby Place**

### General character, size and scale

B.14.92 This is an area mixed in scale and character which is effectively split into two parts by the large vacant sites which until 1972 housed the Odhams Press buildings. The area to the north of Shelton Street is dominated by the large developments fronting High Holborn and by Dudley House, a former workhouse subsequently used as a supplies depot. The buildings fronting Endell Street, Betterton Street and Neal Street are smaller and more domestic in character. Most of these buildings are 19th Century.

B.14.93 In the area to the south of Shelton Street there is a concentration of buildings which once housed market activities. This area includes much of the Long Acre frontage and is characterised by narrow streets and many large warehouses in Neal Street, Langley Street and Shelton Street whose scale is reminiscent of similar buildings in the docklands area of Wapping or Rotherhithe and are unique in Central London.



### Groups

B.14.94 There are two groups of interest in this area as indicated on Map B14/7:

- 1 The listed Victorian warehouses in Neal Street, Shelton Street and Langley Street.
- 2 The Terrace on the west side of Endell Street between No. 48 and 69 and on the east side between No. 14 and 24.

### Listed buildings

B.14.95 There are few listed buildings in this area but those that are, are unusual. The large early warehouses in Neal Street, Shelton Street and Langley Street are unique in this part of London as is No. 22 Endell Street, a Gothic Revival building which originally housed a glass works. Dudley House is to be demolished by the Camden Borough Council to provide a large housing development.

### Disruptive elements

B.14.96 The car parks at No. 70 Neal Street and in Nottingham Court produce an unsatisfactory environment. The group of single-storey buildings flanking Mathews Yard and some empty buildings in Floral Street also detract from the visual amenity of this area.

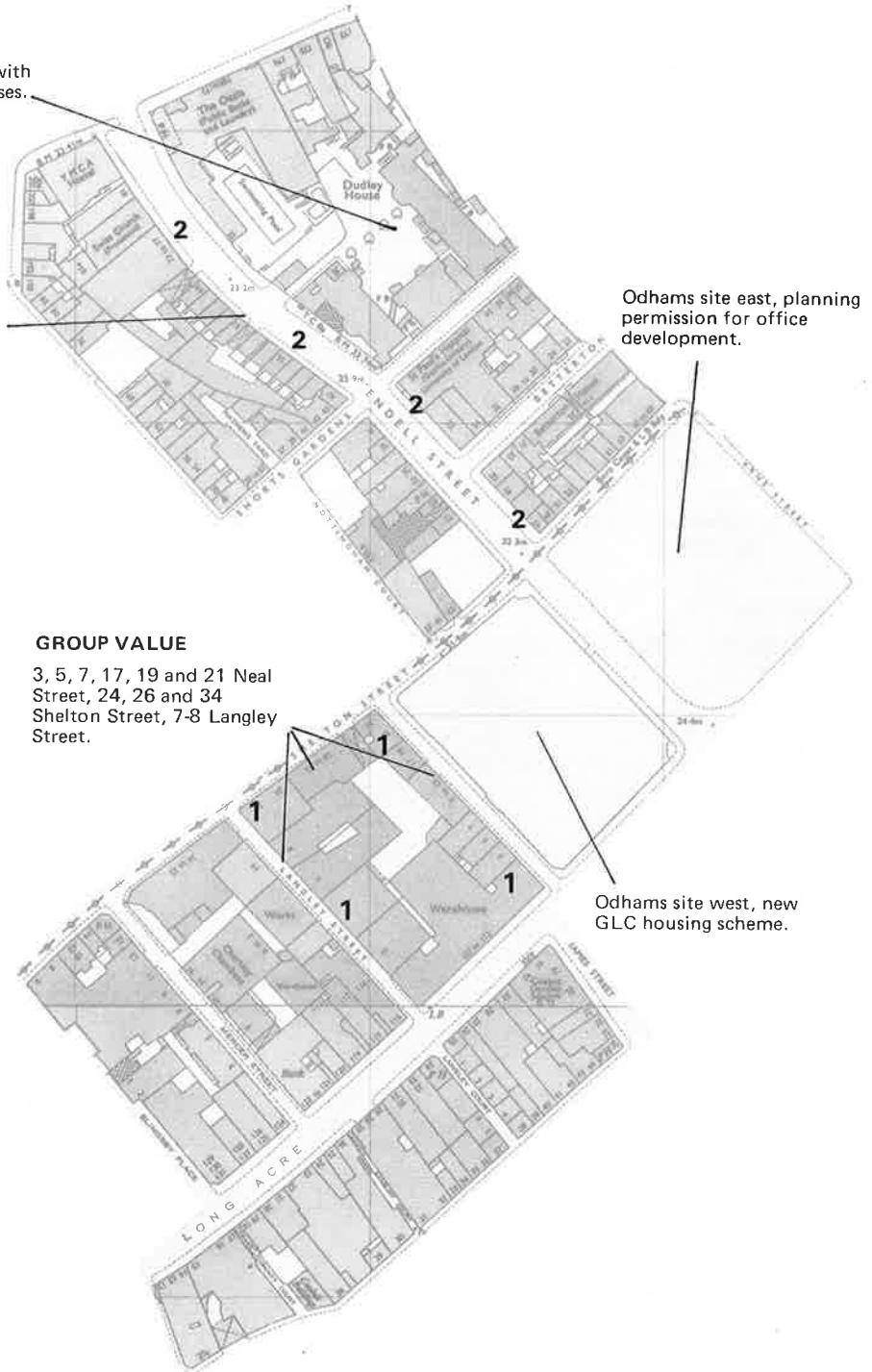
### Environmental improvements

B.14.97 Improvements within this sub-area will result from schemes forming part of the Council's development programme.



Dudley House to be demolished to provide housing development with amenities and mixed uses.

GROUP VALUE



GROUP VALUE

3, 5, 7, 17, 19 and 21 Neal Street, 24, 26 and 34 Shelton Street, 7-8 Langley Street.

Odham's site west, new GLC housing scheme.



**Sub Area 5 B14/7**

New vehicle access points from the proposed local distributor roads (Long Acre and Endell Street) will allow the side roads to become pedestrian areas. The variety of pedestrian routes through the area could possibly be increased within these blocks.

#### Problems and opportunities

B.14.98 There are at present two major developments approved for the two vacant sites which once housed the Odhams Press buildings. On the eastern site permission has been granted for a large office complex while on the western site a GLC Housing scheme to provide 102 houses and space for light industrial and other uses.

B.14.99 This area is where the major opportunity exists for a large increase in residential accommodation. It is where major change will occur as a result of both Council proposals and private sector rehabilitation and development schemes.

#### Recommended policies and objectives

B.14.100 Most of this area lies outside the Conservation Areas and provides an opportunity for rehabilitation, selective demolition and new development to achieve the primary objectives of increasing residential accommodation and providing a new public open space and other amenities.

B.14.101 An open space of between ½-¾ acre is proposed and the opportunity exists to create a network of smaller spaces throughout the area as rehabilitation and redevelopment schemes permit.

B.14.102 The improvement of traffic movement and the extension of pedestrian facilities.

B.14.103 The existing character and scale of the area will be retained and respected as far as possible on redevelopment. The materials used and the appearance of new buildings will be judged on the merits of the design rather than being assessed against any preconceived criteria.

#### Initiatives

B.14.104 The Council has acquired a number of properties in this area and is assembling additional sites in order to promote a programme of mixed use schemes including extensive residential gain by both rehabilitation and infill development. Camden Borough Council have approved proposals for the redevelopment of Dudley House for a major housing gain, with extended recreation facilities for the Oasis.

B.14.105 The Council will encourage the temporary occupation of vacant property affected by longer-term proposals.

B.14.106 The local authorities will be implementing a traffic management scheme at the Shelton Street/Earlham Street/Neal Street junction to reduce through traffic and improve pedestrian facilities.

## Sub Area Six

**High Holborn, Newton Street, Wild Court, Wild Street, Kemble Street, Crown Court, Broad Court, Long Acre**

#### General character, size and scale

B.14.107 This sub-area, centred upon Drury Lane, consists of mainly large scale buildings and contains more recent development than any other of the sub-areas. There is a considerable amount of housing and the two historic thoroughfares of Great Queen Street and Drury Lane both contain buildings of the mid-18th Century. There is great variety of environment ranging from the small residential buildings in Macklin Street and Great Queen Street to the larger-scale new development of Haslemere and the New London Theatre. The Freemasons Hall, the largest single building in the area dominates Great Queen Street and its massive scale gives this street a unique character. There is also residential accommodation of all kinds including a hostel in Parker Street and a small hotel in Broad Court and two large housing complexes in the Winter Gardens House and Wild Street, Peabody development.

B.14.108 The northern part of Drury Lane forms an important local shopping street.

B.14.109 Like St Martin's Lane in the west of Covent Garden, Drury Lane and Great Queen Street carry a heavy volume of through traffic.

#### Groups

B.14.110 Several valuable groups of buildings add to the character of this area, these are indicated on Map B14/8:

1 The north side of Great Queen Street affords a variety of scale, size and character which contrasts well with the monolithic character of the Freemasons Hall.

2 The block forming the west side of Drury Lane at the junction with Long Acre forms an interesting group of great character.

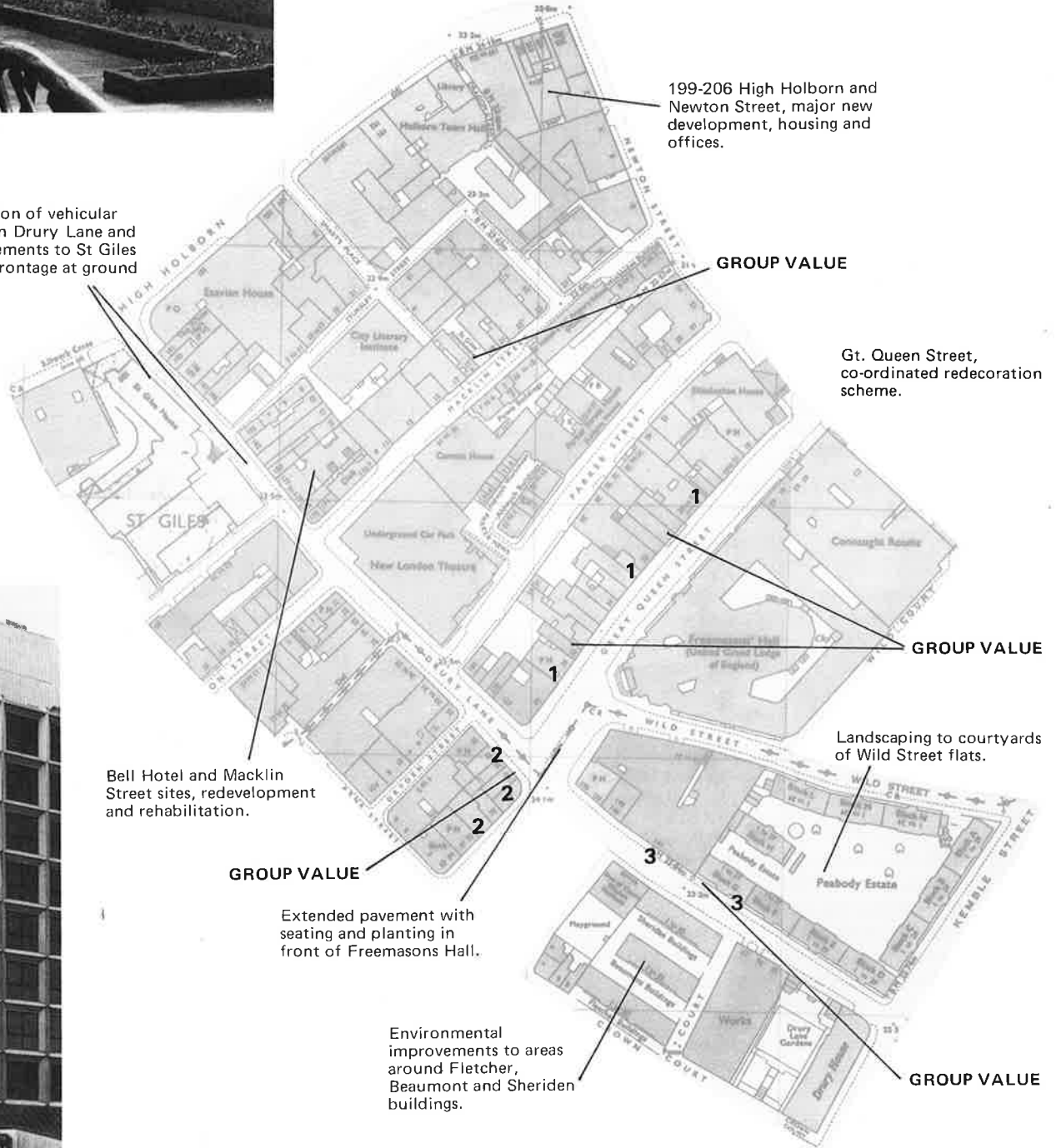
3 No. 141 Drury Lane (Nathans) and Wild Street flats whilst being similar in scale provide great contrast of design and modelling.





Reduction of vehicular traffic in Drury Lane and improvements to St Giles House frontage at ground level.

199-206 High Holborn and Newton Street, major new development, housing and offices.



GROUP VALUE

Gt. Queen Street, co-ordinated redecoration scheme.

GROUP VALUE

Landscaping to courtyards of Wild Street flats.

Bell Hotel and Macklin Street sites, redevelopment and rehabilitation.

GROUP VALUE

Extended pavement with seating and planting in front of Freemasons Hall.

Environmental improvements to areas around Fletcher, Beaumont and Sheriden buildings.

GROUP VALUE



### Listed buildings

B.14.111 There are few listed buildings in this area. The most interesting are the early houses in Drury Lane and Great Queen Street. Other than these only Holborn Town Hall and the Victorian almshouses in Macklin Street are worthy of note.

### Disruptive elements

B.14.112 The burnt-out shell of the Bell Hotel, the south side of Parker Street, the LEB sub-station in Betterton Street and the GPO Distribution Centre in Drury Lane detract from the visual amenity of this area.

### Environmental improvements

B.14.113 There is an excellent opportunity to improve the large space in front of the Freemasons Hall by extending the pavements and providing seating, planting and an advertising unit which could incorporate the existing news vendor stall.

B.14.114 The large courtyard to Wild Street flats is capable of great improvement. A large central area could be raised and planted, storage, parking and other facilities being provided underground.

B.14.115 The playground in Broad Court could be linked to the spaces around Fletcher, Beaumont and Sheridan Buildings and the area opened up and landscaped.

B.14.116 A major environmental improvement to the area would be the removal of through traffic from Drury Lane. Consideration is being given at present to a first stage reduction in this traffic by pedestrianising part of Drury Lane around Parker Street between the peak traffic hours for a street market. This closure should whenever possible be extended to provide a full-time pedestrian priority area around this local shopping centre.

### Problems and opportunities

B.14.117 There exists pressure for change particularly in the north around Smarts Place, Stukely Street and Macklin Street, an area containing some obsolete and unattractive buildings. In the area south of Great Queen Street little change is expected.

B.14.118 There are two vacant sites in the area. No. 160 Drury Lane is suitable for infill to match existing street elevations. The car park on Parker Street could be developed in isolation or form part of a larger development in Parker Street.

### Recommended policies and objectives

B.14.119 The objective in this area is to increase the housing element and to retain and reinforce the shopping facilities. The mixed use character will be retained and shopping facilities in Drury Lane promoted.

B.14.120 the area to the east of Drury Lane is already one of large scale buildings and uses and on redevelopment a similar scale would be recommended. This could be accepted in an ascending scale: from Great Queen Street at the smaller end to the area north of Macklin Street, which could be large in scale, relating more to the High Holborn frontages.

### Initiatives

B.14.121 The local authorities will be implementing traffic proposals to allow the area in front of the Freemasons Hall to be landscaped and improved for pedestrian use.

B.14.122 The Council is undertaking improvements to the areas around Fletcher, Sheridan and Beaumont Buildings and in Crown Court.

B.14.123 It is proposed to reduce or remove traffic from parts of Drury Lane.

B.14.124 The Council and Camden Borough Council are promoting shopping facilities in Drury Lane, including a street market.

B.14.125 The Council is preparing a part rehabilitation, part development scheme for the Bell Hotel site to provide shops, housing and other mixed uses.



## **B15 Parking**

### **Background**

B.15.1 Parking controls are a key element in the GLC's strategy for restraining the use of cars in Central London and their application to Covent Garden is the basis for the proposals and policies within this section of the Local Plan.

B.15.2 The existing supply of both public and private car parking is much lower than the average for Central London (ref. 27) and therefore the in-built restraint on car usage that much greater to start with. To offset this the area is very well served by public transport with 6 underground stations in, or close to the edge of, the area giving access to 7 of London's 9 tube lines, a variety of bus routes on all perimeter roads and the main line station at Charing Cross.

B.15.3 There are three public car parks providing 730 spaces in the area which is equivalent to about 60% of the average Central London existing rate of provision (based on non-residential floor areas) and 840 private non-residential spaces which is equivalent to about 33% of this average rate of provision. Much of this non-residential parking, 62% of the public and 72% of the private, is in the eastern half of the area.

B.15.4 There is little private residential parking with 60 spaces confined to the Peabody Estates at Wild Street and Bedfordbury. Existing car ownership within the area is 18.5% of households (approximately 270 existing households) compared with 27.5% for Central London as a whole.

B.15.5 Covent Garden and the whole of the surrounding central area is covered by controlled parking zones. The on-street facilities for cars in the area are restricted to 447 two hour metered parking spaces and 25 residents car parking (respark) spaces. All of the residents spaces are in the Camden Borough Council part of the area. Westminster City Council are at present introducing respark into the southern part of the area. This scheme will reduce the number of metered spaces to 326 and increase the number of respark bays to 146.

### **Strategic context**

B.15.6 The strategic policy for the restraint of car usage by parking will be effected broadly by four areas of control.

- 1 Control of on-street parking,
- 2 Control of public off-street parking,
- 3 Application of parking standards for new development,
- 4 Reduction where necessary of private non-residential (PNR) spaces, when powers are obtained.

The application of these controls to Covent Garden are dealt with below under separate heads since they form the basis of the parking policy for the area.

### **On-street parking**

B.15.7 Controls of on-street parking are already in force within Covent Garden and the only major change in its structure foreseen is the introduction of residents' parking facilities described above. However, controlled parking, as well as providing restraint, seeks to assist traffic to flow safely, improve the environment, make deliveries to buildings easy, increase pedestrian safety and provide a balance between different types of parking. Thus various minor changes will need to be made at various stages of implementing this plan.

B.15.8 The siting of parking spaces will need to be revised to reflect the traffic management measures and servicing demands of new buildings. There will probably be a slight reduction in

available parking spaces due to the implementation of pedestrian schemes though the provision of off-street loading facilities in new developments could free roadscape for the replacement of some of these meters or respark bays.

B.15.9 The increase in population will also increase the demand for residents' parking bays which may require the conversion of some meter spaces. This meter/respark split is kept under review by the Borough Councils in all respark areas.

**The controlled parking scheme proposed for introduction in 1976/77 will be retained in so far as it is consistent with the aims of creating a network of linked open spaces for pedestrian use.**

**Parking restrictions for loading areas and traffic management purposes as well as the proportion of resident and metered parking will be kept under review.**

### **Public off-street parking**

B.15.10 The controls of public off-street parking within strategic policy relate to both the number of spaces provided and the use of those spaces. The existing public car parks within Covent Garden will be retained but it is considered that no increase in public off-street car parking should be provided for the land use proposals within this plan. The GLC is however proposing to control the use of the public car parks within this part of Central London using the powers available to it under the Transport (London) Act 1969. This will ensure that their operation is conducted in accordance with the requirements of traffic restraint as determined in the development of detailed restraint policies. In brief the controls will apply a charging structure within the car parks which will discourage long-term commuter parking but not the essential commercial user who requires short stay parking between business trips. They could also provide reserved spaces for residential and disabled users.

**Normally no provision will be made for the construction of further public off-street parking.**

**The existing public car parks will be retained: their use will be monitored and steps taken to discourage use by commuters and encourage availability for local commercial users and residents in so far as powers permit.**

### **Non-residential parking standards**

B.15.11 The standards of provision of car parking in new development applied in Covent Garden will be those set out in the GLDP. These are in summary:

For office and shop development the normal maximum provision will be one space per (1,100 sq m) 12,000 sq ft of floor space. For industrial and commercial development and other land uses, e.g., the Royal Opera House each case will be determined on its own merits, taking into account the need to discourage car commuting whilst providing for some car business trips, the size of any fleet of lorries or cars required for operational purposes and needing to be on the premises, night shift working and the proximity of public car parks.

In addition to any car parking provision developers will be required to make adequate provision for loading and unloading goods within the curtilage of the site to be developed.

**The supply of private on-street parking in new development should be in line with strategic parking policy.**

### **Residential parking standards**

**B.15.12** In this congested area of Central London with its excellent public transport facilities there can be little expectation of increasing residential parking facilities in line with the projected increase in population at the present time. However the supply of residents' parking both on and off-street will be subject to a continuing review as the plan's housing objectives are realised.

Although the normal maximum residential standard is one off-street space per dwelling, strategic policy suggests that a lower provision should be made where car ownership surveys show this to be justified and particularly in Central London. Car ownership in Covent Garden is very low, around 18% of households (ref. 12) and therefore a very small provision would be justified. However supplying even a relatively small number of spaces is restricted by both space and costs within Covent Garden.

**B.15.13** Much of the new housing will be provided by the public sector and hence subject to financial control by Central Government. In its circular on Housing: Needs and Action 1975 the Department of the Environment considered 'that in the present economic circumstances attention must be directed to making economies in provision for cars in local authority housing schemes'.

**B.15.14** Parking on open hardstanding is probably the cheapest way of providing off-street space, but, with the limited areas for development this would necessarily be at the expense of amenity open spaces. The provision of underground parking solely for the use of residents has been shown to be prohibitively expensive on the Odhams site where the costs were in the region of 50% above the Government yardstick. Further difficulties arise on rehabilitation and small infill sites used for housing purposes where provision of off-street parking is simply not possible within the site.

**B.15.15** Thus, although parking provision should be made according to strategic policy wherever possible within housing developments, it is nevertheless recognised that it cannot be achieved on all sites and that an eventual shortfall in provision for the area as a whole is inevitable.

### **Private non-residential parking**

**B.15.16** The Greater London Council and the Department of the Environment are at present considering ways of reducing the amount of private non-residential parking within Central London (ref. 10). It is not possible to estimate accurately what the effects of such controls would be in the area until a preferred method is chosen and details specified. The controls under consideration will require new legislation. They would not be applied to small sites or to that proportion of private non-residential parking in larger sites making up the normal maximum standard of one space per 1,100 sq m.

### **Cycle parking**

**B.15.17** The demand for the provision of cycle parking within Covent Garden is unknown and it is considered that the only way of assessing this is to provide a cycle stand in one part of the area. From the use made of this facility the extension of cycle parking for the whole area will be decided.

## B16 Monitoring

B.16.1 It is the intention to monitor and review future trends continuously in order to assess the effectiveness of policies and proposals in achieving the Plan's aims and objectives. It will be important to identify, at an early stage, any areas where there is a disparity between the trends and Plan objectives and those policies that may need to be revised to take account of changing circumstances.

B.16.2 Through the monitoring process particular regard will be paid to the following:

1 **Land use allocation:** Diversity of uses and degree of mix throughout the area.

2 **Housing:** Relationship of dwelling mix on individual sites to the specified overall dwelling mix for Covent Garden.

Policy to retain larger dwelling units in privately rented sector – effect on housing standards, incidence of sharing, etc.

Policy to bring empty accommodation into use and resist unauthorised change to non-residential use – monitor effectiveness.

3 **Employment:** Availability of local employment opportunities for residents. Diversity of employment base.

4 **Offices:** Volume of vacant floorspace.

Size of office units/availability of small office suites/nature of demand for office accommodation.

5 **Industry:** Scale of demand. Availability of suitable accommodation. Effects on local amenity.

6 **Showrooms:** Number and location.

7 **Entertainment uses:** Number and location. Effects on local amenity. Labour availability.

8 **Hotels:** Scale of demand. Occupancy rates. Effects on locality.

9 **Shopping:** Supply of local shopping facilities. Number of non-retail uses in shopping streets.

10 **Education:** Primary and Secondary School provision in relation to residential population and facilities in surrounding area.

11 **Traffic management:** Effects of experimental schemes on local interests, public transport and perimeter roads.

B.16.3 The monitoring process will take account of the consequences of any amendments to the GLDP and the borough plans that could affect the direction and implementation of the Local Plan.

## SECTION C

### Implementation

#### C1 Physical Proposals

##### General introduction

C.1.1 Action proposed in the Plan which will result in physical change is described under three main categories — 'Public Sector', 'Quasi-public' and 'Private Sector'. These relate to the agencies involved in the implementation of individual schemes, but it is inevitable that, due to the essentially social nature of the adopted aims and objectives of the Plan, a most significant part will be played by the public and quasi-public sectors. The Plan specifies only those schemes which have already been identified as practicable for Council action, or for which firm proposals have been made by Camden or by named housing associations or for which schemes have been submitted by other agencies in the form of planning applications. It is, however, fully recognised, and is integral to the Plan, that many of the possibilities of housing gain will occur outside the specified schemes, either through rehabilitation or reconstruction on small sites, or through the inclusion of housing as a part of (usually) small developments.

C.1.2 Action to promote physical change and improvement in the area will be taken in three main directions by the Council in its capacities as both a Planning and Housing Authority.

**The Council will pursue estate management policies designed to further the aims of the Plan. This will include the leasing of GLC-owned properties for new uses, conversion work to existing buildings, for instance for housing purposes, and the establishment of major new attractions for the area in the former market halls.**

**The Council will carry out a programme of site and property acquisition, rehabilitation and redevelopment to provide the bulk of new housing proposed in the Plan, together with non-residential space for activities which will strengthen and increase the area's employment base, including relocation and traditional Covent Garden uses.**

**The Council will use all available means to further the aims of the Plan outside sites specifically identified in the Plan for GLC involvement. In order to take advantage of all practical opportunities which occur within the area, action will extend to acquisition, conversion and rehabilitation of suitable existing buildings. This will include the improvement of**

**existing dwellings as well as the provision of additional residential accommodation. Encouragement will be given to other agencies prepared to contribute to the objectives of the Plan.**

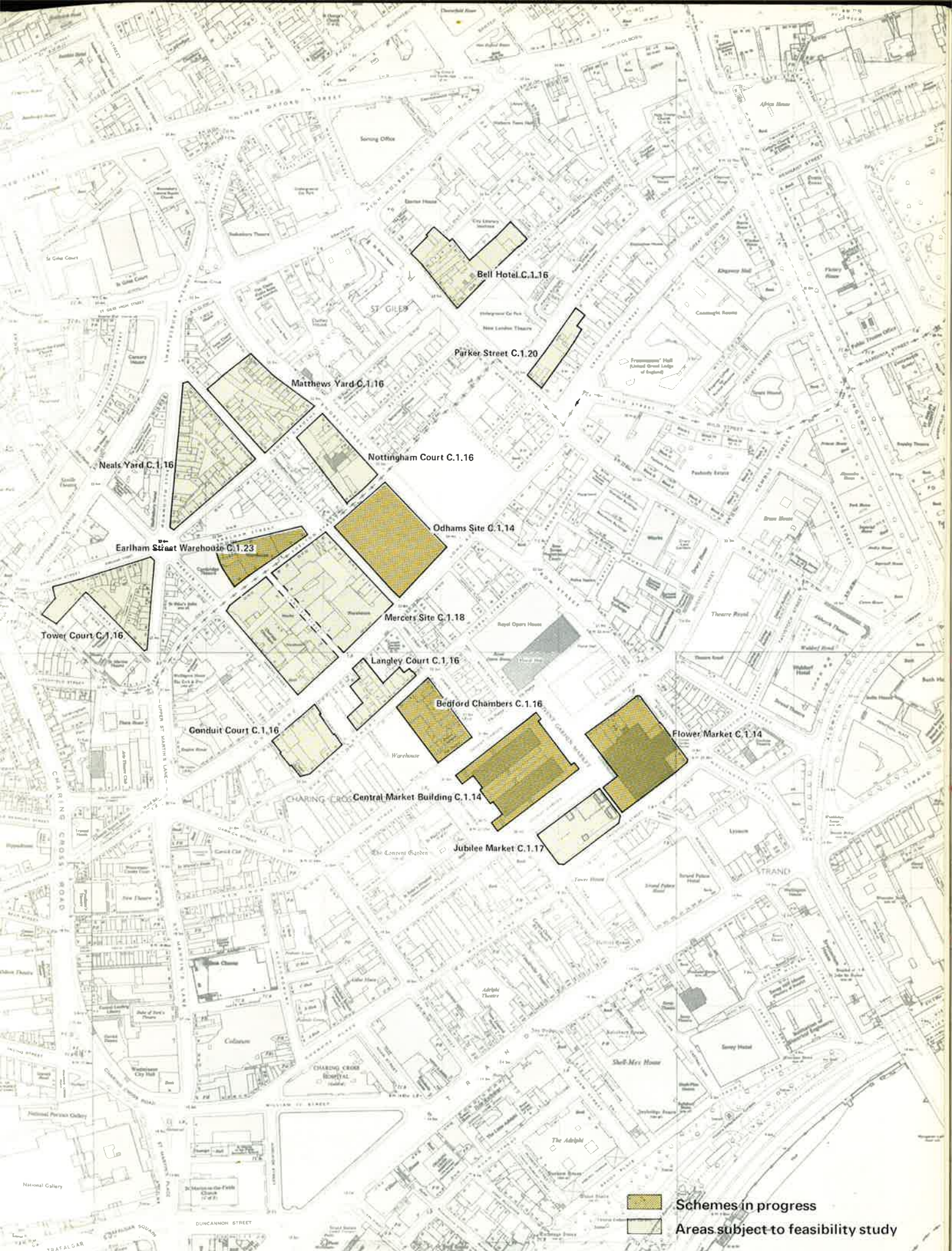
C.1.3 Whilst the Plan is primarily concerned to initiate and guide physical change towards the achievement of the agreed objectives, certain actions and decisions have already been taken by the GLC, based on the broad consensus of view which emerged from an early stage in consultations with the public in Covent Garden. The generally expressed concern to revitalise the area as soon as possible after the removal of the market and the need to grasp early opportunities for new housing led the Covent Garden Committee to put in hand restoration schemes for a number of ex-market buildings, approved one major new housing development, improve its stock of existing Council dwellings, and pursue a selective process of site assembly by agreement, in areas where an early opportunity for housing development can be seen. The decision to establish two new museum projects of national importance in the Flower Market building was also made. These decisions, taken within the framework of an emerging participatory planning process, and wholly compatible with its objectives and other proposals, are included for completeness, and form an integral part of the Plan.

C.1.4 Action by Camden is expected to take the form of the additional provision of new housing units on sites owned by that Council and where agreements have been reached with private owners, the provision of a street market, and improved recreation facilities at the Oasis.

C.1.5 Action by Westminster is likely to be concerned with the works associated with the traffic management and pedestrian improvement schemes in the Plan and the layout and maintenance of proposed open space.

C.1.6 It is anticipated that Central Government will directly and indirectly be involved in the proposals included in the Plan which are of national significance — the Royal Opera House extension and the Theatre Museum.

C.1.7 Housing Associations and the Peabody Trust are responsible for additional housing proposals in the Plan. Two firm projects are included, but there is additional scope for action by Housing Associations, particularly in the short term temporary rehabilitation field and in acquiring and rehabilitating, for permanent use, individual properties outside the areas programmed for Council action.



Schemes in progress  
 Areas subject to feasibility study

0 50 100 150 200m  
 Greater London Council (Covent Garden)  
 GLC Action Area Plan

# Areas of opportunity C1/1

C.1.8 The economic situation and uncertainties over national legislation has considerably reduced the scale of private sector interest and investment in the area. The current predominant interest in rehabilitation of existing buildings either individually or in groups is expected to continue to absorb the majority of private initiative in Covent Garden and will be subject to the development control, historic buildings and conservation policies embodied in the Plan as a whole. It is difficult to predict the degree to which private investment in rehabilitation will take place, but over the whole area considerable scope does exist for action of this kind. Over the period of the Plan therefore, widespread private initiatives are expected albeit in the form of a large number of projects which are individually too small to be included on the Proposals Map, or described in detail. Certain major private sector schemes, at present under construction or about to start, will have a very major impact on the character of the area. These are recognised by the Plan studies, but are not included as proposals.

## Public Sector

### GLC development programme

C.1.9 As a result of public discussion based on site by site survey material published in 1974, the areas offering an opportunity for the Council to pursue the Plan's objectives, particularly housing and social provisions, have been identified. In broad terms two categories exist.

Some site blocks display a concentration of conditions, such as vacant sites, empty and dilapidated property, etc., which indicate an opportunity for improvement and development. These have been the subject of feasibility studies, and intense public debate to determine the appropriate action to be taken. In most cases this has resulted in a programmed proposal of sufficient significance to warrant a specific reference in the Plan, and inclusion on the Proposals Map. These sites are indicated on Map C1/1.

Throughout the area, however, the same physical conditions exist in individual and small groups of property. Whilst action is anticipated from all agencies involved, the public sector, and the GLC in particular, will have a major role to play. The policy statement C.1.2 refers to the GLC's intention to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by conversion and rehabilitation of such buildings. Individually, however, these opportunities are small, and are likely to change in extent and conditions during the Plan period. A general policy approach has therefore been adopted, allowances having been made in the appropriate sections of the Plan, particularly regarding the necessary financial provisions, and in the estimates of housing gain.

C.1.10 The programme for Council action is based on three main considerations.

Firstly, a degree of priority based on the results of an extensive series of feasibility studies has been assigned to individual sites. This takes into account cost effectiveness in the provision of housing environmental and employment gain, and the presence of vacant sites or buildings.

Secondly, the ownership pattern of sites has been a major factor. Sites already wholly or partially owned by the Council have been included in the earlier stage, except where clear indications of the need to seek compulsory acquisition powers mean that a reasonable assumption can be made as to when possession of the sites will allow construction work to commence.

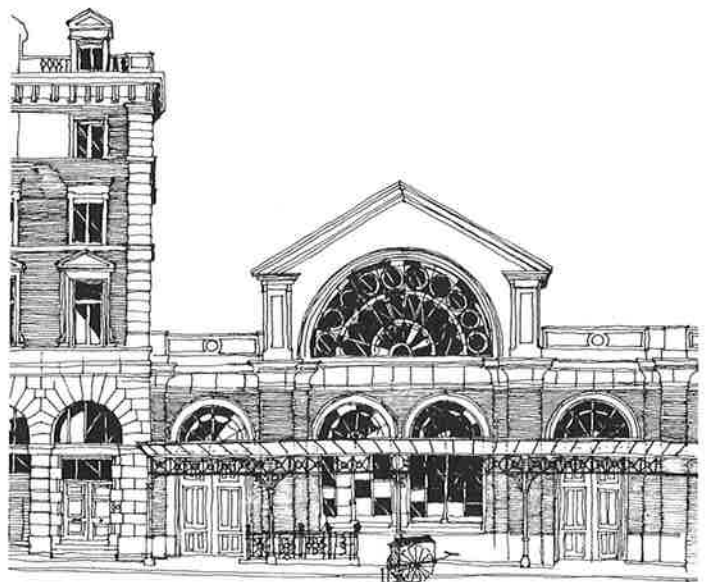
Thirdly, the present capital provision for the Covent Garden Committee, for which estimates for the period 1976-81 are available, have been taken as a realistic guide as to the

importance in financial terms accorded to Covent Garden by the Council as a whole. Whilst the programme does not entirely correspond with the present capital provision, the degree to which it diverges in individual years is considered to be within reasonable limits at this stage of the planning process. The assumption has also been made that capital for housing development will be available to match Covent Garden Committee expenditure on mixed use schemes.

C.1.11 In the case of sites not already owned by the Council, the programme envisages the acquisition of sites and properties, leading to the assembly of whole or part street blocks.

C.1.12 In all cases, with the exception of the Central Market and Flower Market project, the proposals contain the maximum housing gain considered compatible with the character of the immediate area, a good residential environment, and financial considerations. All schemes are for mixed uses, but with different proportions of non-residential space in each case, with a consequentially different character and flavour, according to uses proposed. Where possible amenity open space, play space, sitting out areas have been incorporated, integrated with new and improved existing pedestrian routes.

C.1.13 The non-residential space in each scheme is included to continue and strengthen the essential mixed use character of the area, fulfill a layout function in enabling housing accommodation in some cases to be sited at upper levels where acceptable daylighting and sunlighting conditions can be achieved, and in order to minimise the land costs assigned to the residential content of the scheme. Another major function of the non-residential space will be to provide accommodation suitable for relocating local business and other activities displaced by later development proposals. In this sense, the Council's proposals may be seen in terms of a rolling programme, using the extensive non-residential content of the Odhams housing scheme in Long Acre as its basic reservoir of new space, built in this case without loss of existing accommodation.

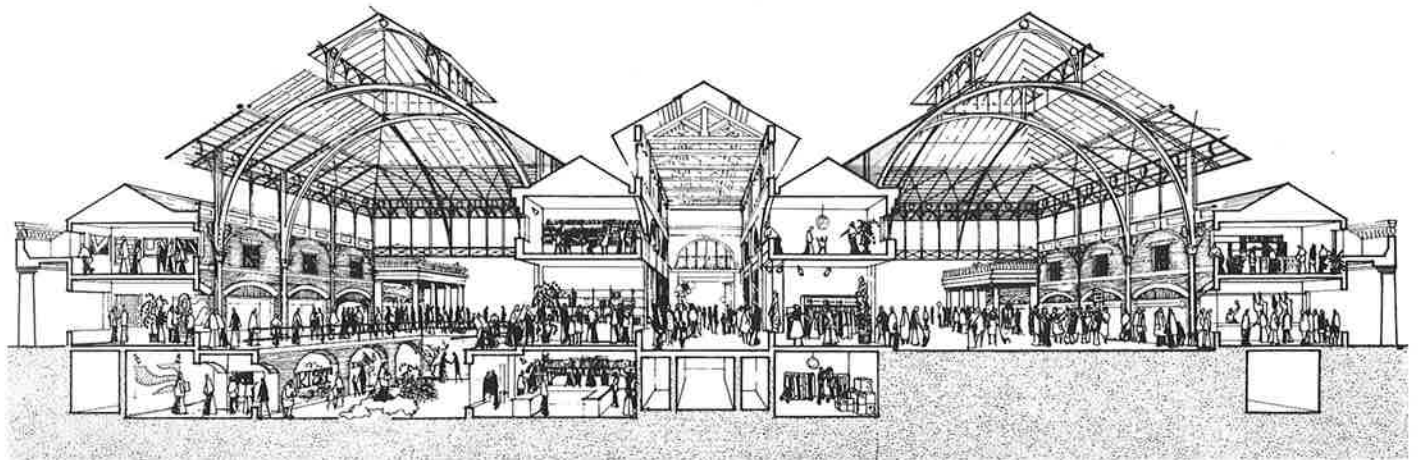


C.1.14 Schemes under construction or due to start 1976-77.

**Central Market Building** — 0.7952 hectares/1.965 acres gross

A scheme for restoration commenced in 1975, and is expected to be completed in 1979. The building will be converted into small shops, galleries and workshops, with studios at first floor level. Extensions for shop and gallery use will be created at basement level, whilst the main covered halls will be a totally new amenity for London, with the character of the galleries of Milan and Brussels and providing space for pavement cafes. The Central Market is conceived as the principal attraction for the Piazza area.

Area of non-residential space — approximately 5,000 sq m.



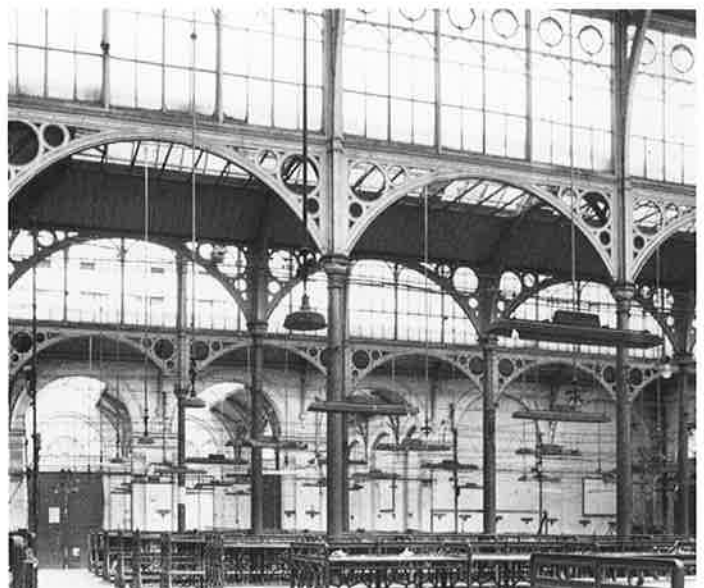
**Flower Market Building** — 0.5666 hectares/1.400 acres gross

**London Transport Museum**

The ground floor of this building will be used by London Transport to exhibit their transport relics, at present housed at Syon Park. The London Transport Museum, which it is hoped will open in 1978 will attract a very wide range of visitors, ranging from school parties to foreign tourists, and provide a major new attraction bringing life and activity to the Piazza area.

**Theatre Museum**

A second museum — the national theatre collection will be housed in the basement and Wellington Street corner of the Flower Market. The relics at present at the Victoria and Albert Museum and other important collections will be brought together into Covent Garden, a most appropriate location in view of the traditional role in theatrical history, and will be opened to the public in 1979. It is expected to attract a very great degree of interest from Britain and abroad, representing the major museum in this country devoted entirely to theatre and opera.



### Small ex-CGMA properties

A number of small terrace buildings were acquired with the rest of the Covent Garden Market properties. Schemes for rehabilitation and conversion for housing purposes at the upper floors, with shops or commercial uses at ground level have been approved. One, No. 28 Wellington Street, is now completed; work on the others is expected to be completed by 1978.

Housing gain — about 50 persons

Area of non-residential space — approximately 1,000 sq m.



### Odham Housing scheme — 0.6194 hectares/1.5305 acres gross

This scheme represents the first major housing gain to be achieved in Covent Garden. The site largely vacant since the war was made available to the Council by agreement with the freeholders, MEPC Ltd, and a mixed use development providing 102 new homes and non-residential space was approved by the Covent Garden and Housing Development Committees in 1975. Construction will commence in 1977 and completion is expected in 1979. The non-residential space will provide a major opportunity to offer relocation facilities to businesses affected by later development proposals, as well as providing accommodation for a wide range of appropriate business activities.

Housing gain — about 320 persons.

Area of non-residential space — approximately 5,000 sq m.

C.1.15 Sites already owned by the Council, decision already taken on form of action to be taken — work expected to commence 1978 — completion 1981-2.





**Bedford Chambers Block** – 0.3092 hectares/0.764 acres gross

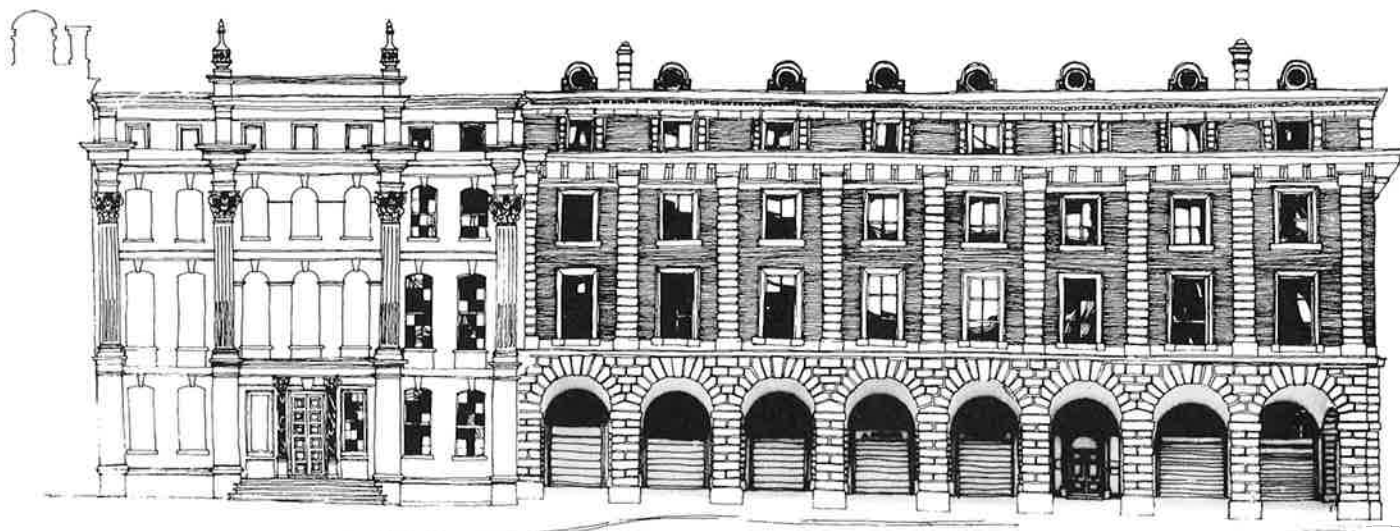
A scheme for rehabilitation and conversion of this block was approved in January 1976. Most of the block, including Bedford Chambers was acquired from the Covent Garden Market Authority in 1974, the remainder has been bought since by agreement. The proposal is to retain Bedford Chambers in office use, converting the James Street terrace properties for housing use, incorporating studios or workshops at ground floor level. A new building in Floral Street will include further housing and offices. Cubitts Yard will form the entrance to an internal courtyard giving access to the residential units, whilst additional space in Cubitts Buildings will be converted for residential purposes.

Housing gain – about 90 persons.

Area of non-residential space – about 5,500 sq m.

C.1.16 Sites for early action – probable start of works 1977-9. Completion 1983-4.

Work is intended to proceed in parallel on the following group of sites, the precise programming of parts of the schemes depending on the acquisition timescale, availability of capital in each year, and the priorities afforded to each individual proposal.

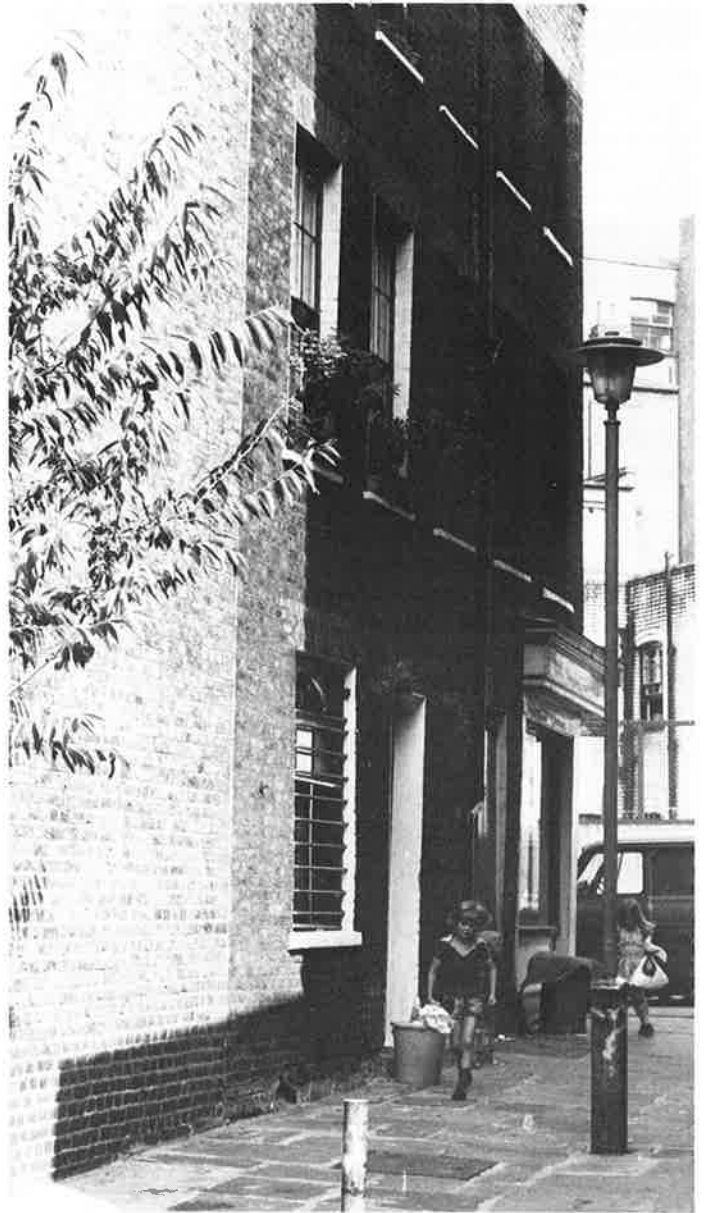


**Nottingham Court Site** – 0.2877 hectares/0.711 acres gross

Vacant sites to be redeveloped for primarily housing use, respecting the scale and character of the adjoining buildings. New floors for housing use to be added to 41 Endell Street, and existing properties where suitable to be converted and rehabilitated for housing over commercial uses. A small open space linked to Nottingham Court and Mathews Yard can be provided to serve existing as well as new housing.

Housing gain – about 110 persons.

Area of new non-residential space – up to 900 sq m.



**Mathews Yard Site** — 0.4803 hectares/1.187 acres gross

Rehabilitation and conversion of the existing frontage terraces with infill development in Neal Street and Shorts Gardens is proposed. New buildings will respect the scale of the surrounding streets, and be in character with the existing frontages. A new open space entered from Shorts Gardens and linked to Nottingham Court will be provided.

Housing gain — about 100 persons  
 Area of new non-residential space — up to 1,900 sq m.

**Neals Yard Site** — 0.6960 hectares/1.72 acres gross

A scheme of infill development for three vacant sites, plus the rehabilitation of suitable buildings elsewhere in the block is proposed. The site forms a major part of the Seven Dials Conservation Area, and contains an important group of listed buildings. New development will respect the scale and character of the existing buildings. Action will be taken to bring into use existing empty properties, create new housing through conversion where practicable and improve sub-standard dwellings.

Housing gain in new buildings — about 30 persons.  
 Area of new non-residential space — up to 1,300 sq m.

**Tower Court Site** — 0.473 hectares/1.17 acres gross

Early redevelopment concentrated on the sites of Nos. 1, 2 and 3 Tower Street and 8 Earlham Street, for housing over non-residential accommodation. Within the Tower Court site, development confined to replacement of the disruptive petrol filling station with a building including housing on upper floors, intended to improve the character of Seven Dials. Elsewhere in the block, housing gain through rehabilitation and conversion where appropriate, and improvements to existing poor housing conditions carried out. The existing pedestrian area within the block to be environmentally improved.

Housing gain in new buildings — about 60 persons.  
 Area of new non-residential space — up to 1,200 sq m.

**Bell Hotel Site — Drury Lane — 0.3683 hectares/0.91 acres gross**

This site centres on the Council-owned Bell Hotel site, and contains opportunities for both rehabilitation and redevelopment. A scheme is being developed in co-operation with a sub-committee of the Forum, and the CGCA, including the maximum housing gain. Initially development will commence on the Bell Hotel site and vacant site in Stukeley Street. No. 180 and other suitable properties in the Drury Lane frontage will be rehabilitated. Later phases will include redevelopment and rehabilitation, as appropriate, for the Macklin Street frontage buildings. New development will respect the scale and character of the existing buildings and streets. The maximum number of new shop units will be provided to strengthen Drury Lane's traditional local shopping centre role.

Housing gain — about 120 persons.

Area of non-residential space — up to 3,750 sq m.

**Conduit Court Site — 0.2307 hectares/0.57 acres gross**

Redevelop or rehabilitate suitable buildings in Long Acre, Floral Street, Banbury and Conduit Courts to include provision for housing and associated amenity space, whilst maintaining or expanding employment opportunities.

**Langley Court Site — 0.0859 hectares/0.21 acres gross**

Redevelop or rehabilitate vacant buildings in Long Acre and Floral Street for housing on the upper floors.

**C.1.17 Sites to be developed after 1981**

**Jubilee Market — 0.416 hectares/1.03 acres gross**

The site is bounded by Tavistock Street, Southampton Street, Covent Garden Square and the Flower Market. This is a most important site, enclosing the south side of the Covent Garden Piazza. Redevelopment is proposed for public or semi-public uses at ground floor level, commercial and office space on the lower floors with housing above. The building would be in scale with the Piazza surroundings, particularly Bedford Chambers and the Flower Market, and will use a sympathetic range of materials. A new pedestrian arcade will be created for the south side of the Square.

Housing gain — about 200 persons.

Area of new non-residential space — about 6,500 sq m.

**C.1.18 Sites in GLC programme, but likely to involve significant private initiative.**

**Mercers Site — Long Acre — 1.1857 hectares/2.93 acres gross**

A scheme of rehabilitation, selective demolition and redevelopment is proposed. In general terms listed buildings will be retained, together with all existing housing. Redevelopment around Brewery Yard will permit its extension to form a local open space of  $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$  acre. On the western side of Langley Street a smaller open space will be provided, with housing on the Mercer Street and Shelton Street frontages. All practicable opportunities to convert existing buildings for housing use on upper floors will be pursued. Links at ground level will be formed through the Neal Street, Shelton Street and Langley Street frontages to allow access to the new open spaces from surrounding streets and the new Odhams development.

Housing gain — about 190 persons.

Area of new non-residential space — approximately 2,750 sq m.

Open space provision — 0.5-0.75 acres.

**Parker Street Site — 0.193 hectares/2.95 acres gross**

The opportunity exists on the vacant Parker Street site for a significant housing gain. Development of the site is proposed, incorporating commercial uses on the lower floors, with residential units above. The present unsatisfactory elevation to Drury Lane will be improved, and the scheme will incorporate shop units to strengthen this traditional local shopping centre.

Housing gain — about 60 persons.

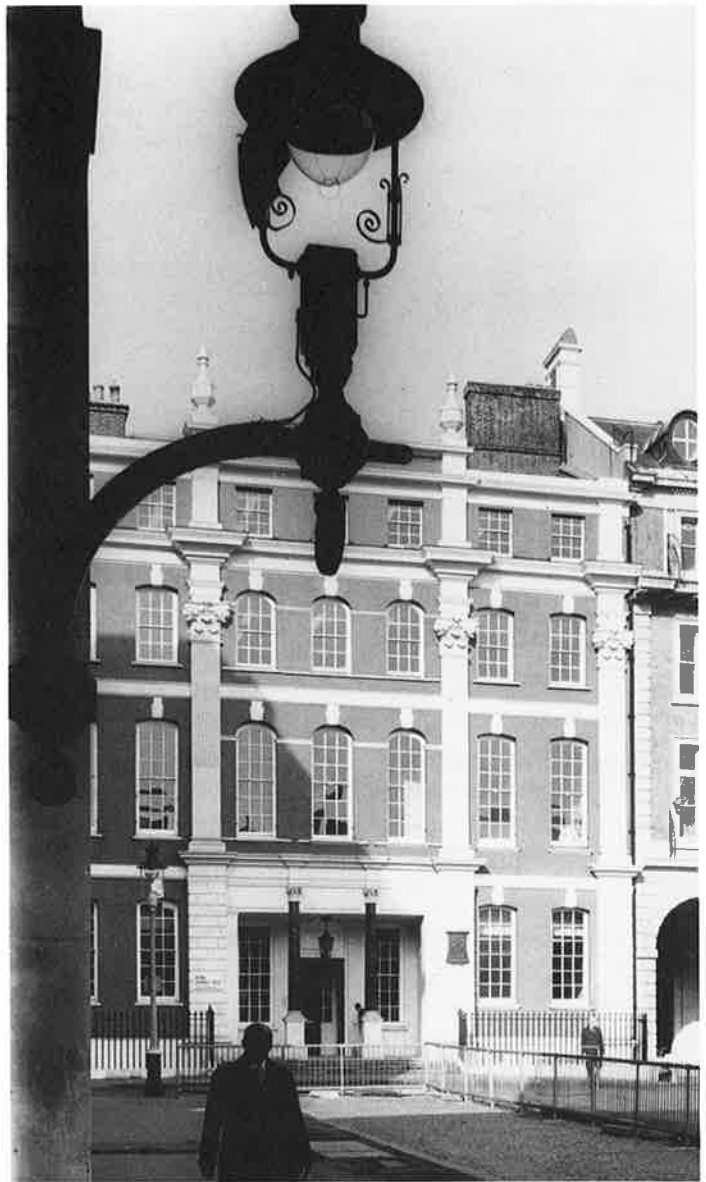
Area of new non-residential space — up to 1,300 sq m.



### C.1.19 Proposals for Covent Garden Piazza area

Many of the Council's policies regarding the fostering of traditional, and the establishment of new uses make specific reference to the Piazza area. It represents the culmination of the entertainment 'route' (paragraph B.7.3) upon which most new entertainment activities will be concentrated. The future unique role of the Piazza in shopping terms is recognised in the shopping policies for the area (B.9.14). Shops are seen as a major attraction for the Piazza area which will bring back colour, life and activity. Throughout the day the Piazza will take its place in the range of open spaces available for residents and workers recreation (B.10.13). Its use as a pedestrian square, where people can sit outside, will create a quite unique amenity for London as a whole. The Piazza should also provide London with a new late night entertainment square. In selecting tenants for its property around the square, in the planning of new developments, and in the consideration of planning applications, uses which generate a lively environment by day and night will be encouraged as will uses which provide services to the locality. Activities reproducing unsuitable and unacceptable West End characteristics will be excluded.

In area the restored Piazza will be little short of Trafalgar Square, but will contain a number of spaces of differing environmental character. Opposite St Paul's Church, will be a new pedestrian square enclosed by the Church, a restored early 18th Century mansion (43 King Street) and the Henrietta Street terrace and to the east the main halls and central avenue of the Central Market Building will extend the space, with protection from the weather, into a complex of shopping arcades, street cafes and galleries. Cross routes will link the north and south side colonnades and allow free pedestrian passage through the Central Market Building. At its east end the Market building will provide yet another colonnade, facing a wide cobbled pedestrian space and providing space for flower stalls and other traditional activities. On the north side the existing Bedford Chambers



arcade will be extended by that proposed for the Opera House extension to give a continuous covered walk. New development proposed for the Jubilee Market site will create an arcade for the first time on the south side of the Piazza, backed by activities to complement the life and colour of the restored Central Market Building. At the south-eastern corner of the square a complex of two new museums — the London Transport collection and the National Theatre Museum will attract tourists, visitors and school parties, giving around-the-year activity to the Piazza area, and strengthening the attraction provided by the Central Market.



In two places traffic will be allowed to enter the Piazza for servicing purposes and to give access for disabled persons — a loading bay will be provided off James Street, whilst Henrietta Street and Southampton Street will be linked to avoid the need for an extensive vehicle turning space. The majority of the square can thus be repaved, retaining the layout of access ramps to the Central Market Building as a framework for restored granite and York stone paving. With the two exceptions for servicing, the square will be all-day pedestrian-only use.

The Covent Garden Piazza in the near future will have a character entirely unique for London. It will be a sympathetic blend of restored historic buildings, put to new attractive and colourful uses, and new development providing housing, commercial space and new public amenities. By 1980, with the exception of the Royal Opera House extension the total Piazza scheme should be substantially complete, and provide a lively, active and colourful heart for the area.



### C.1.20 Schemes proposed by Camden

**Dudley House Development** — 0.66 hectares/1.64 acres gross  
(Programmed 1978-9)

Redevelopment of the former workhouse site in High Holborn is proposed, including 90 residential units, old people's sheltered housing, community facilities, a tenants' hall, small shops, open space, doctor's surgery, replacement laundry and slipper baths and a branch public library. Extensions to the recreation facilities of the existing Oasis include a games hall, 3 squash courts and gymnasium. The proposals are in two phases, starting with the major housing blocks, to be followed by the Oasis extensions, office block and library.

Housing gain — about 270 persons.

Area of non-residential space — up to 7,000 sq m.

**Newton Street** — 0.24 hectares/0.60 acres gross  
(Programmed 1977-9)

Camden has also approved the development of a site in High Holborn and Newton Street, for office and housing use. Agreement has been reached with the developer for Camden to take over the residential content of this scheme, which includes a 14 storey tower. The housing units to be provided are predominantly small and intended for old persons.

Housing gain — about 112 persons.

Area of new non-residential space — about 6,000 sq m.

### **Drury Lane Street Market**

An additional proposal by Camden is for the establishment of a street market in Drury Lane and Parker Street. This scheme should assist the rejuvenation of the Drury Lane local shopping centre. Trading is expected to commence in 1977.

### **Involvement of Westminster**

C.1.21 Apart from their involvement as highway authority in schemes for road and pedestrian improvement it is anticipated that Westminster will play a part in the laying out and maintenance of the proposed open spaces. The GLC's powers to provide open spaces of this size are limited, and Westminster has in the past indicated that it would be prepared to take on the responsibility for open space, following acquisition by the GLC, and transfer at nil cost to the City. Although this project is not yet included in any financial programme, this liability is not likely to arise until 1979-85.

### C.1.22 Other Public Sector proposals

**Royal Opera House Extension** — 0.6879 hectares/1.7 acres gross  
(Not programmed)

The proposal, probably the most significant single project in the area is for extensions to the west and south of the existing building. On the move of the market the opportunity arose to safeguard the site required for this extension and in early 1975 the Government purchased the adjoining land westwards as far as Russell Street, the Piazza and Bow Street.

It is the intention that the development be undertaken in phases. The extension of the backstage facilities to James Street will be the first part of the project to be undertaken and it is anticipated that this could be completed by 1981.

The Opera House's overall scheme includes in addition to a major extension to the stage area, accommodation for the Royal Ballet School, the London Opera Centre and administrative offices and for a new raised flytower facilitating productions and giving better sight lines from the amphitheatre.

As only part of the proposed extension will be undertaken during the Plan period, it is important that each phase is acceptable as an entity and that the remainder of the site be given sympathetic treatment and used appropriately on an interim basis. As a matter of urgency proposals for using part of the site as open space in the short term should be brought forward.

### C.1.23 Proposals by Housing Associations and Trusts

Two specific initiatives by a Housing Association and the Peabody Trust are proposed.

**Bedordbury Estate — Bedfordbury** — 0.40 hectares/0.98 acres gross  
(Programmed 1977-9)

The Peabody Trust have planning approval for the redevelopment of their Bedfordbury Estate. After extensive investigations they have come to the conclusion that rehabilitation of these blocks, due to their siting and layout cannot be justified, and demolition is the preferable course of action. The plan proposes 76 residential units with shopping and light industrial space at ground floor level. Amenity space including a ball kicking area is incorporated at street and podium levels within the scheme. A significant increase in family accommodation over the existing dwelling mix is proposed — up to 50% of the total population. There is a loss of single person units on redevelopment. Owing to the present high density on the site, a net loss of dwelling units is inevitable, but due to lower occupancy in recent years, the total population figure should not significantly differ from existing.

Total proposed population — 196.

Area of non-residential space — about 1,500 sq m.





**Earlham Street Warehouse — 0.2610 hectares/0.645 acres gross**

The Council has agreed to lease the upper floors of this Council-owned building which also houses the Covent Garden Community Centre, to the Society for Co-operative Dwellings. It is proposed to convert the fifth floor for residential purposes, and add a new sixth floor over much of the building.

A total of 17 new maisonettes are proposed which included a provision of large units for young persons sharing accommodation. Construction work is expected to commence in 1977. The backing of the Housing Corporation to this scheme has been obtained. This would indicate that there is scope for other schemes of this kind in the area, if conditions comparable with Earlham Street can be shown to exist.

Population gain — about 70 persons.

**Other Housing Association involvement**

Generally in the conservation areas there is likely to be scope for the further involvement of Housing Associations, particularly on small projects or individual sites not forming part of the Council's proposed development programme. In particular the improvement of the quality of existing housing units at present disused or lacking in facilities offers scope for agencies prepared to undertake very small individual properties. Many further initiatives from this sector can be expected in the Plan period, including suggestions for short term usage of properties scheduled for development.





#### C.1.24 Proposals for Private Sector initiatives

**Comyn Ching Triangle – Seven Dials – 0.16 hectares/0.40 acres gross**

This site comprises one third of the important Seven Dials Street layout, and is occupied by the freeholders for their wholesale architectural ironmonger business.

The buildings, although almost all listed, are in very poor condition, and their restoration, whilst highly desirable in order to reclaim the character of the Seven Dials Conservation Area, will be extremely costly. After extensive discussions with the Council, a planning application has been approved for a phased rehabilitation scheme involving the retention of most buildings with new buildings to the Mercer Street/Shelton Street corner and at Seven Dials. A new internal courtyard would be created within the triangle, with pedestrian routes linking Monmouth Street and Shelton Street.

The owners existing business would be sited below the internal courtyard at basement level and in a new building on the Mercer Street/Shelton Street corner. The existing terrace buildings along Shelton Street and Monmouth Street will be rehabilitated to provide shop and workshop accommodation at street level with offices and residential accommodation above. The new and converted buildings in Mercer Street will contain residential units only. A total of 32 dwellings will be provided. An increase in office floorspace of 650 sq m is proposed. No firm programming is suggested for the scheme, but it is anticipated that work would be completed during the Plan period.

Housing gain – about 82 persons.

Total population – about 100 persons.

Area of non-residential space – about 4,250 sq m.



There is a further number of private sector firm proposals: all are for the rehabilitation and improvement of existing buildings.

The most notable involves the street block bounded by Maiden Lane, Henrietta Street, Bedford Street and Southampton Street, where a number of properties are proposed for rehabilitation with roof extensions by groups. The other significant group of proposals involve properties in King Street – No. 35 (including provision for housing gain), No. 41, No. 43 (a most important early 18th Century mansion) and buildings on the south side.



## C2 Financial Resources

C.2.1 In the next ten years considerable investment by the private and public sectors in Covent Garden is proposed. Expenditure under the planning programme has already reached £9.1m. Decisions already taken and projects in hand have committed £5.44m to the area in the first five years of the Plan. These proposals are made in a time of national economic crisis, with constraints laid on the public sector, and a very considerably diminished incentive for private investment. In their forward planning of capital allocation for planning programme the GLC were obliged to take a decision as to the priority to be given to Covent Garden, before estimates of the level of capital investment required in the Plan were fully available. This has enabled a realistic rather than optimistic view to be taken of what it is practical to achieve in the Plan period. A major criterion in the assembly of a Council initiated development and conservation programme has been a strong indication of priority in a total London context. Covent Garden is in many ways a special case. The Plan has overwhelming social objectives. It is an extremely historic area, with a far greater than normal proportion of listed buildings, many in very poor repair; land values in the West End, of which Covent Garden is an integral part, are very high. The Market move occurring at the same time as a slump in the property market, has created a vacuum, the solution to which must be right in national as well as local terms, and where a strictly commercial view is inappropriate. The aim, therefore, in deciding on the form of the Plan and the level of financial support has been primarily realism. The programme of Council initiated action is intended to be achievable broadly within the priority already established for the area. In the event of further capital allocation being possible to this project, some improvement in the timescale would be possible, with a shorter overall programme. Due to the problems of compulsory acquisition timescales, however, little improvement is likely in the earlier years. Special factors related to the possible early acquisition of sites on favourable terms, or by arrangement with owners could also result in an earlier achievement of population targets and major environmental improvements.

### Capital resources available

C.2.2 For the action proposed in Covent Garden, financial investment in six main agencies will be involved. In the following table, estimates for each are provided.

### GLC – Planning Programme

C.2.3 The Council, under its planning programme will be responsible for the acquisition of sites and buildings, and for the rehabilitation and development of the non-residential accommodation proposed. Whilst the Plan refers specifically to certain sites, buildings and projects, under general policies the Council will seek to achieve the aims of the Plan through acquisition, conversion and rehabilitation wherever suitable conditions are shown to exist.

### GLC – Housing Programme

C.2.4 The Council, under its housing programme will bear responsibility for the residential content of mixed use schemes in the Council development programme. This could comprise new building or conversion works, or a combination of both. Rehabilitation would at present be subject to the allocation made by the Government (under section 105, part IX of the Housing Act 1974) for such work, and would be in competition with other probably less expensive rehabilitation schemes elsewhere in London. Similarly all proposals for expenditure of the Housing Development budget in Covent Garden would be viewed against the overall Council programme, and compared with housing schemes in other parts of London.

### Boroughs

C.2.5 Camden as a housing authority has proposals within the Covent Garden area, which would be considered by that Council's Housing Committee in relation to Camden's overall housing programme and budget.

C.2.6 Westminster would be involved in the layout of the proposed local open spaces, and subsequent maintenance, following acquisition by the GLC.

C.2.7 Both Boroughs would have a part to play in the environmental improvement of the area, both in terms of the practical implementations of schemes, and the administration of those aspects of development and other controls which form an integral part of the Plan. These would have minor implications only in the revenue field.

### Housing Associations and Societies

C.2.8 The opportunity exists within Covent Garden for the involvement of Housing Associations and Societies. These will range from the Peabody Trust to societies providing improved dwellings in short life premises. There may be a number of buildings in the area where Housing Association rehabilitation is more appropriate than Council involvement. For all these an estimate has been made for the Plan period, in addition to known likely investment in schemes at present being considered.

### Government and Quasi-Government

C.2.9 The investment of funds from Central Government is anticipated with regard to two major projects, The Royal Opera House extension and the Theatre Museum.

### London Transport

C.2.10 Investment from LTE is expected only in relation to the Transport Museum proposal.

### Private Sector

C.2.11 With the exception of two large development schemes and some minor proposals at present under construction or due to start, private investment in Covent Garden is in line with current trends elsewhere confined to protecting existing investments, and the rehabilitation and improvement of existing buildings. Spread over the area, the total investment in this field will be very considerable, but individually, projects are likely to be small in scale. In most cases work can be expected where office use rights exist; the opportunity is being taken to up grade the quality of space, and thereby the rental income. In certain cases complete gutting of the building has taken place to enable acceptable standards to be reached, involving investment

on almost the scale of a new building. A number of proposals have been submitted as planning applications; on the basis of these, an estimate on the likely level of private sector interest in the continued rehabilitation of existing buildings has been prepared. Some investment has taken place with the provision of new restaurants, wine bars and other new uses for the ex-market buildings. Private investment is also anticipated to continue in this direction, with an additional input in the case of tenants' works to buildings being relet by the Council, e.g., the Central Market Building.

Table of possible capital expenditure by all Agencies during Plan period	
GLC Planning Programme proposed	£15.0 m
GLC Housing Programme (including land acquisition)	£10-12.0 m
Borough Councils	£4.0 m
*Government Agencies	£3.5 m
Other Public Agencies	£7.7 m
Private Sector	£25.4 m

\*Includes only Phase 1 of Royal Opera House Extension.

### Conclusion

C.2.12 The level of expenditure proposed and predicted for the next ten years in Covent Garden is broadly in line with the capital estimates and projections for the Covent Garden Committee until 1981, allowing for the present economic situation. In general terms, the financial commitments for other agencies are based on realistic estimates but it must be understood that wide variations may occur. Certain figures for individual projects are based on costed schemes, but in relation to the majority of the private sector investment, a view based on previous experience of the degree to which rehabilitation will take place has had to be assumed.

# APPENDIX 1

## References

**Note:** Reports to Committees of the Greater London Council are indicated by the Committee reference letters before the report number. The reference letters are:

CG — Covent Garden Committee  
SPB — Strategic Policy Board  
P — Planning Committee  
T — Transport Committee  
PT — Joint Report

1 Letter to GLC accompanying the Secretary of State's decision on Comprehensive Development Area: Covent Garden dated 15 January 1973. Discussion Paper No 5 (see 8 below). Published GLC June 1974.

2 Greater London Development Plan. Approved by the Secretary of State for the Environment on 9 July 1976.

3 Covent Garden Local Plan Report of Survey Discussion Papers Nos 1-6 — Covent Garden Team GLC June 1974 comprising:

4 No 1 Context — general planning framework.

5 No 2 Living in Covent Garden — issues affecting the resident community.

6 No 3 Working in Covent Garden — issues affecting the working community.

7 No 4 Finance and Resources — general financial framework.

8 No 5 Conservation and Development — opportunities for conservation and new development.

9 No 6 Roads: Traffic and Transport Management — proposals for traffic management and pedestrianisation.

10 Central London Planning Conference, Advisory Plan for Central London (APCL) Policy Document and Technical Document. Approved 27 October 1976, published CLPC January 1977.

11 Reports on response to Discussion papers: comprising:  
CG 235 — Reports of Survey and Discussion Papers  
November 1974

CG 267 — Further response to Discussion Papers January 1975

12 Reports giving results of 1974 Residential Survey comprising:

CG 253 — Preliminary results of 1974 Residential Survey —  
November 1974

CG 354 — Covent Garden Residential Survey — July 1975

13 CG 291 — Courses of Action — February 1975

14 Local Plan Policy Reports — comprising.

15 CG 352 — Land Use Zoning — July 1975

16 CG 353 — Housing: Policies and Potential — July 1975

17 CG 365 — Traffic and Pedestrian Circulation — September 1975

18 CG 366 — Shopping Policies — September 1975

19 CG 367 — Policies for Recreation and Open Space —  
September 1975

20 CG 401 — Policy towards Large Scale Uses — October 1975

21 CG 402 — Policies for Entertainment Uses and Hotels —  
October 1975

22 CG 403 — Policies towards Industrial and Commercial Uses  
— October 1975

23 CG 404 — Working Population and Future Employment  
Opportunities — October 1975

24 CG 423 — Policies towards Office Use — November 1975

25 CG 439 — Education Uses and Schools — November 1975

26 CG 440 — Provision of Social, Welfare and Community  
Services — November 1975

27 CG 449 — Car Parking Policy — January 1976

28 CG 355 — Conservation and Development — July 1975

29 CG 493 — Feasibility Studies progress report — March 1976

30 CG 552 — Covent Garden Local Plan. Feasibility Studies —  
June 1976

31 CG 556 — Covent Garden Draft Plan — June 1976

32 CG 450 — Conservation Policies — January 1976

33 CG 514 and CG 523 — Public Response to the  
Conservation Policies Report — April 1976

34 CG 565 — Outstanding Matters — July 1976

35 Explanatory Paper on Education prepared by ILEA —  
August 1976

36 CG 591 — Parker Street Feasibility Study — August 1976

37 'Less Planning More Happening' publication of Covent  
Garden Forum of Representatives — October 1976

38 'Keep the Elephants Out of the Garden' publication of  
Covent Garden Community Association — October 1976

39 'Ensuring a Future for small enterprises in Covent Garden'  
publication of Urban and Economic Development Group —  
October 1976.

- 40 CG 615 – Covent Garden Draft Local Plan – Response – October 1976.
- 41 GLDP Section 12 – Standard Controls
- 42 CG 540 – Housing Density in Covent Garden – May 1976
- 43 Supplementary Policy Volume to Local Plan.
- 44 Definitions of Use: Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1972 and Town and Country Planning General Development Orders 1973 to 1976.
- 45 GLDP Section 4 – Employment
- 46 SPB 54 – Industrial Employment – March 1976
- 47 P 1238 – Industrial Employment – March 1976
- 48 P 721 – Office Policy
- 49 Tourism in London – a plan for management – GLC – 1974
- 50 CG 329 – Provision of Local Shopping Facilities in Covent Garden – May 1975
- 51 ILEA 658 – Expansion of Nursery Education Programme – October 1975
- 52 ILEA 268 – Review of Primary School Provision – May 1975
- 53 Westminster City Council Working Party minutes and public response to Camden's Plan meetings for south of Euston Road.
- 54 Discussion Paper No 6 (ref. 9) Figure 3.
- 55 TP 1589 – Cycling – October 1975 and TP 1904 – Balham Traffic Management and Environmental Experiment – March 1976.
- 56 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1967 (section 6 and 9) and Town and Country Planning Act 1971 (section 209 and 212).

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