

Conservation
area statement



Seven Dials
(Covent Garden)



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SEVEN DIALS (Covent Garden) *Conservation Area Statement*

The aim of this Statement is to provide a clear indication of the Council’s approach to the preservation and enhancement of the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area.

The Statement is for the use of local residents, community groups, businesses, property owners, architects and developers as an aid to the formulation and design of development proposals and change in the area.

The Statement will be used by the Council in the assessment of all development proposals.

Camden has a duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to designate as conservation areas any “*areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or historic interest of which it is desirable to preserve.*” Designation provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance the special interest of such an area. Designation also introduces a general control over the demolition of unlisted buildings. The Council’s policies and guidance for conservation areas are contained in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). This Statement is part of SPG and gives additional detailed guidance in support of UDP policies.

The Statement describes the character of the area, provides an outline of the key issues and identifies development pressures that are currently a cause of concern. The Statement also sets out the key policy framework relevant to the conservation area and formulates specific guidance for it. It is not the intention of the Statement to contain proposals for the enhancement of the public realm of the area.

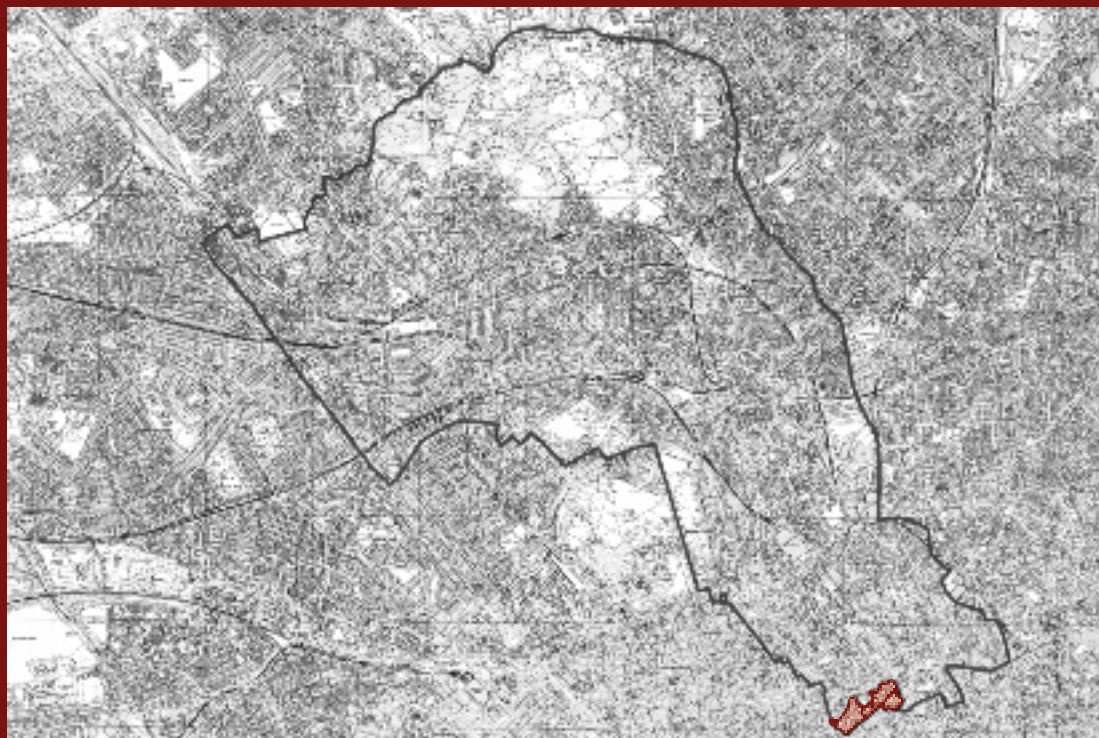
The Seven Dials Monument Charity has produced the Seven Dials Renaissance Report which contains a wide range of proposals for the area. The Handbook is a material consideration in the assessment of development proposals for the Seven Dials Area.

Introduction

This Conservation Area has the imprint of a unique legacy. Vibrant economic activity combined with conservation of the built heritage has created a place that is important to Camden and to London.



Location

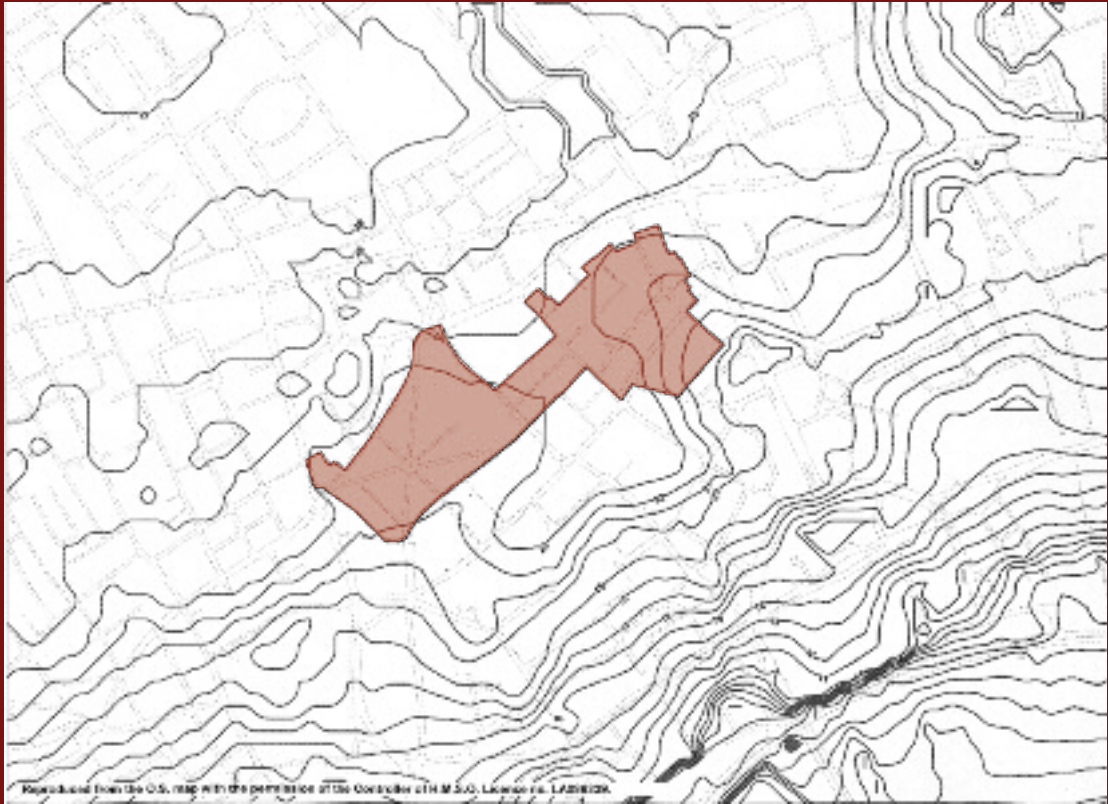


Camden and location of the Conservation Area



Boundary of area and designation date *Westminster Conservation Area*

Location



Topography

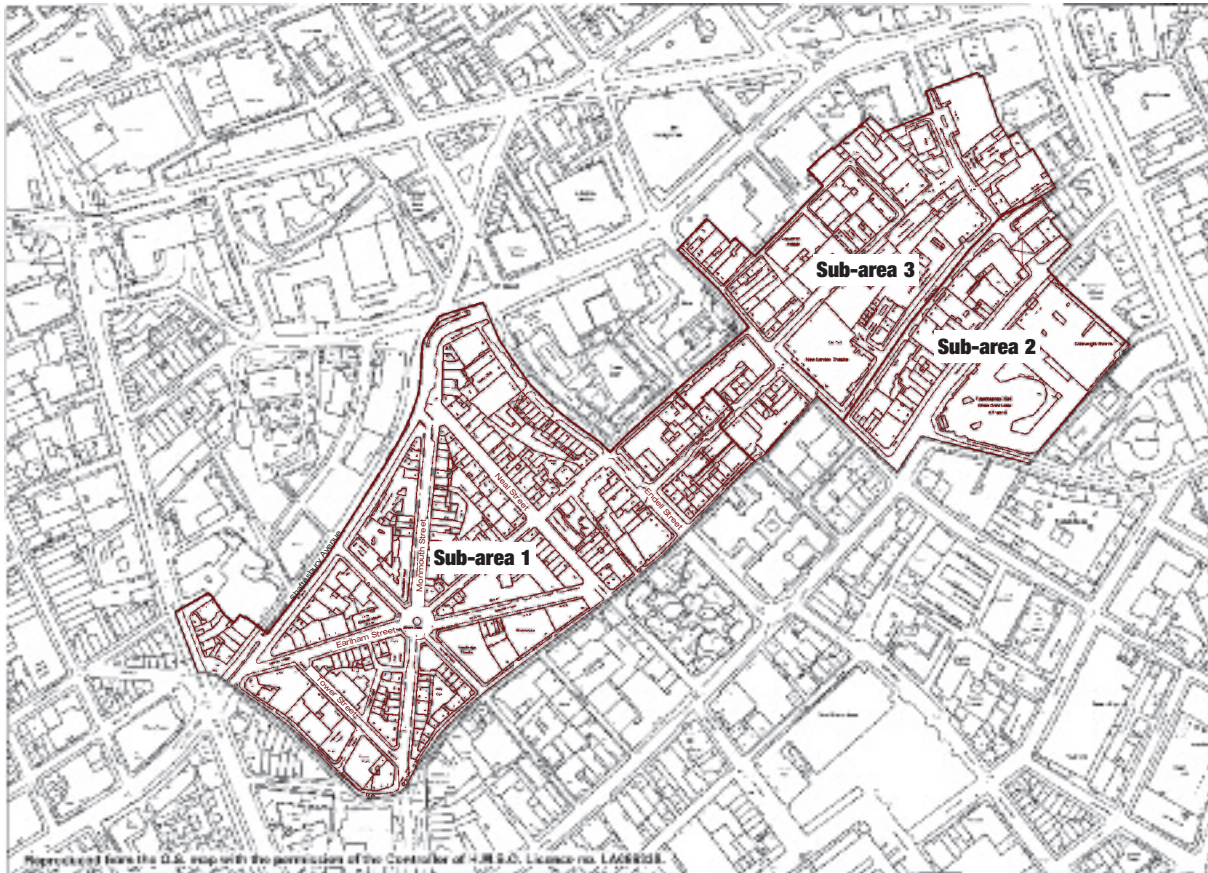


Urban Grain

Location

PLANNING HISTORY

Designation Date: 26.11.1971 and extended 24.07.74, 11.6.91, 2.7.98



Sub-Areas

The Greater London Council (GLC) was the statutory local planning authority for Covent Garden in the 1970s. The Initial Development Plan for Greater London was amended in 1973 to include the designation of Covent Garden as a Comprehensive Development Area to enable the GLC to deal with the consequences of the vacation of the market to Wandsworth. At the same time over 200 buildings were listed in the area and Seven Dials was given 'Outstanding Status' by the Secretary of State. The GLC prepared an Action Area Plan (CGAAP) as a broad basis for the future development of the area (1978) for a ten year period. The document covered both Camden and Westminster. Camden undertook a review of the CGAAP in 1988 that contained interim policies for the area.

The Seven Dials Monument Charity, a recognised local community group, produced the Seven Dials Renaissance Report in 1991, an environmental handbook which aims to improve the appreciation of the unique street plan and achieve a consistent standard of high quality design. The work was funded by the Department of National Heritage. The Council supported the initial report in principle in July 1991. Buildings in Seven Dials have been restored based on the guidance. The revised version was completed in August 1997. The Handbook is an important reference for development proposals in the area. This document was considered and supported in principle by the Development Control Sub-Committee in 1998. It was an award winner in the Environmental Design Awards 98.

The Council also supports local community initiatives and partnerships to promote and implement specific enhancement proposals in accordance with approved planning guidance.

For the purposes of this Statement the Conservation Area is separated into three sub areas; one centred on Seven Dials, the second incorporating the Freemasons Hall/Great Queen Street and the third an area in the north east of the Conservation Area around Macklin Street.

HISTORY



1770 painting

Archaeology The history of settlement in the area can be traced to Roman times when roads led from Londinium, located to the east, along Holborn/Oxford Street to the north and the Strand to the south. Cemeteries were established along these roads in the 1st century. The area bounded by Trafalgar Square to the west, the Strand and the Thames on the south, and Oxford Street-High Holborn on the north has been identified as the site of a Saxon trading settlement known as Lundenwic. Dated between the 7th and 9th century the settlement was over 60 hectares in size. Archaeological excavations since 1984 have revealed important evidence of the town. Lundenwic was abandoned at the end of the 9th century, probably because of its lack of defences, and the old Roman walled city of Londinium was re-occupied.

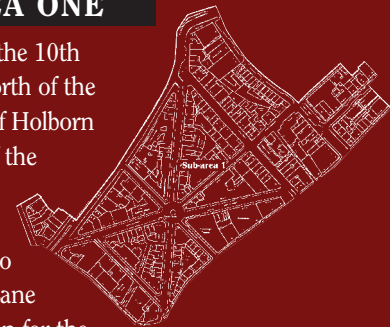
Covent Garden The urbanisation of the area developed after the establishment of Covent Garden in the 1630s. The Piazza was developed by the Earl of Bedford who realised the potential for speculative building and gained a licence from Charles I to build the square. The Piazza was designed by Inigo Jones to form a distinguished Italianate square. The area around the Piazza became increasingly attractive to developers during the 17th century to provide accommodation accessible to the Westminster area.



1658 (Faithorne and Newcourt)

SUB AREA ONE

Seven Dials - By the 10th century the area north of the Strand and south of Holborn had become part of the Westminster Abbey estates. From the 11th century land to the west of Drury Lane was used as a garden for the Abbey while the area around the Seven Dials was owned by The Hospital of St Giles, a leper hospital founded in 1117. In 1537 the land was taken over by Henry VIII and let on a series of leases. The 1658 map shows St Giles Field prior to development.



1792 (Horwood)

The distinct layout around the Seven Dials is the legacy of an ambitious building plan devised by Thomas Neale, a speculator and Master of the Mint, at the end of the 17th century. The plan was unique, the only one of the 17th and 18th century developments in the West End which departs from a grid plan. Instead a radiating plan of streets was formed around a small central polygonal circus with a Doric column at the centre surmounted by sundials. The column was removed in 1773 probably by order of the Paving Commissioners to rid the area of the undesirables who congregated around it. The column was

1658

1792



67 Monmouth Street in 1970s

later re-erected on Weybridge Green. A replica of the column was erected in 1989 by the Seven Dials Monument Charity and unveiled by Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands.

West Street and Tower Street on the western side of the Conservation Area were laid out in the early 17th century before the Thomas Neale plan, and had to be incorporated into the radiating street plan.

The Thomas Neale development created domestic terraced buildings, some of which have survived. Even where the original buildings have been demolished the plot width, depth and scale is still apparent. The large triangular blocks that radiate from the Seven Dials column remain a distinctive feature of the area despite 200 years of urban development. Thomas Neale imposed building agreements on the leases he granted which specified the materials and size of the houses to be built. In addition the Act for the rebuilding of the City of London, passed in 1667, had introduced comprehensive building regulations which began to influence the materials, heights and details of buildings. The houses were first occupied by merchants, gentlemen and better off tradesmen.

Compressed into the same streets is the commercial development of the 18th and 19th century, in particular the brewery industry dating from the early 18th century. The Woodyard Brewery was established in 1740 on a site between Long Acre and Shelton Street (now in the City of Westminster). Over the next century the brewery industry expanded and eventually filled the area between Long Acre and Shorts Gardens with large stock brick warehouse buildings linked by high level cast iron bridges causing the demolition of many of the original houses, for example on the south side of Shorts Gardens between Seven Dials and Neal Street. This altered the scale and



character of parts of the area, although the street layout stayed the same. The brewery industry has not functioned in the area for over 80 years, yet most of the brewery buildings have survived.



During the 19th century the character changed as the houses were divided into lodgings. Seven Dials

became notorious for its links with crime and corruption. Charles Dickens son Charles jnr (1834) wrote, *“Nowhere within the reach of the West End of London can such a glimpse of the life of the poorer classes be obtained as on a Saturday evening at the Dials”*.

Towards the end of the 19th century slum clearance and traffic management along the north west edge of Seven Dials by the Metropolitan Board of Works led to Shaftesbury Avenue being created in 1889 through the widening of the original Monmouth Street.

In the early 20th century there was a development of theatres around St Martin’s



1871



Ordnance Survey 1910

1871
1910

History

Lane with St Martins Theatre and Ambassador Theatre being built in West Street in 1913, designed by WRS Sprague. The Cambridge Theatre at Seven Dials was built in 1930 designed by Wimperis, Simpson and Guthrie, with the interior partly by Serge Chermayeff. The Donmar Warehouse is now located in the Thomas Neal development continuing the tradition.

Covent Garden Market During the 19th century Covent Garden's central market became London's main wholesale fruit & vegetable market. The market dominated the area until the 1970s with the majority of buildings in the surrounding area servicing it. Warehouses were used for storage, in Shelton Street, Neal Street, Earlham Street, and merchants occupied office space.

The character of the area changed dramatically following a decision by the Covent Garden Market Authority in 1965 that the market, the largest single activity in the area, would leave in 1973-4. Plans prepared by the GLC for the comprehensive redevelopment of the area were abandoned after intense public opposition, in favour of preserving the physical character and fabric, strengthening the economic character and vitality, and safeguarding the residential community and improving housing conditions. The future was guided by the Covent Garden Action Area Plan 1978 with the GLC itself responsible for developing many of the sites in the area with mixed use schemes.



Neals Yard in 1970s



Neal Street 1970s



Neal Street present

During the past 15 years the residential population has increased in line with the objectives of the Action Area Plan and today there is a substantial residential community in Camden's part of Covent Garden. The first objective of the GLC's Covent Garden Action Area Plan was to safeguard the existing residential community and provide for a substantial improvement in housing conditions and to double the residential population. As a

consequence of the strategy there are a number of new residential developments, which have helped to retain and reinforce the residential community, such as Mathews Yard, Earlham House, Comyn Ching, Seven Dials Court, Neal Street, Shelton Street, Drury Lane and Betterton Street.

SUB AREA TWO

Great Queen Street Great Queen Street was built in the first half of the 17th century begun by the speculator William Newton with the adjacent Lincoln's Inn Fields. Named after James I's Queen, Ann of Denmark it has its origins in a royal private way to James I's favourite residence in Hertfordshire. Great Queen Street

formed a continuation of the north side of Lincoln's Inn Fields until the construction of Kingsway opened in 1905.

The character and architecture of Great Queen Street was also shaped by the development of Freemason buildings. In 1774 the Moderns' Grand Lodge (founded in 1717) bought a house on the southern side of Great Queen Street where the original Temple was built in 1775, with the addition of the Freemason's Tavern in 1786. In 1815 two houses were acquired with the aid of Sir John Soane (£500), who later designed additional premises for the Masons that were completed in 1829. In 1863 a new building was erected with designs by S.P Cockerell, son of Professor C.R. Cockerell RA which was completed in 1866. This building became known as "The Connaught Rooms".



1873 Ordnance map



1873

The present Freemasons Hall, which is located at the junction of Wild Street and Great Queen Street, is the central headquarters of English freemasonry. Ashley & Newman completed the building in its present form in 1933.

SUB AREA THREE

Macklin Street Running north to south is Drury Lane, one of the oldest roads in Covent Garden possibly dating back to the Saxon settlement of Lundenwic. On older maps it is known as Via de Aldwych and was a major route from what is now Aldwych to Holborn. The name is taken from Sir William Drury who built a house at the southern end of the road during the reign of Elizabeth I. A White Hart Inn has stood at the corner of Drury Lane and High Holborn since the 15th century. The White Hart became the property of Henry VIII in 1537 when there were probably no buildings surrounding it. Substantial development did not occur until the middle of the 16th century continuing into the early 17th century. Stukeley Street (formerly Goldsmith Street, and before that Coal Yard) was laid out in about 1640. Macklin Street (formerly Lewknors Lane, and later Charles Street) and Parker Street were formed in the early 17th century on the site of Rose Field; pastureland attached to the Rose Inn with a western boundary on Drury Lane. Shelton Street was identified as St. Thomas Street in the Morgan map 1682, and as King Street in 1792. The street ran east of Drury Lane. Present day Shelton Street was named in 1937-38 and lies west of Drury Lane.



During the 19th century housing conditions seriously deteriorated around Macklin Street, as in other parts of central London. In 1886 the medical officer of health for St Giles recommended that the area around Macklin Street and Parker Street should be cleared as the houses were beyond repair and severely overcrowded. The 1884 Royal Commission into housing conditions made the link between health and overcrowded, insanitary living conditions. Clearance was seen as the solution to a very high death rate and the Metropolitan Board of Works agreed a clearance scheme in 1886, known as the Shelton Street Improvement Scheme. In practice the Board had no power to erect housing and when the land was cleared in 1889 it displaced everyone who had lived there.

The latter part of the 19th century saw dramatic changes in the role of local government. In 1889 the London County Council (LCC) was created and under the 1890 Housing of the Working Classes Act was given the duty to prepare schemes for the rearrangement and reconstruction of streets and houses within unhealthy areas. They also had the power to erect lodging houses and dwellings. The newly formed LCC *'saw that by the provision of a model lodging house, a great example would be set, and in 1890 it decided to erect the Parker Street lodging house on one of the sites cleared by the Board'*. (LCC. Housing of the Working Classes in London 1855-1912) The Shelton Street Scheme identified six sites for housing, one of which was reserved by the LCC for the men's lodging house. The remainder were offered for auction. As there was no interest in the sites on the private market the LCC took responsibility for building public housing on all the sites. These sites provided the first public housing in Camden and the first London County Council lodging house. The 1893 Building Regulations limited the height of this type of residential development to five storeys which together with the standards set by the 1890 Housing of the Working Classes Act determined the height and layout and budgets for the new developments.

The LCC created a design team called the 'Housing of the Working Classes Branch' who were responsible for the Boundary estate in Shoreditch, the Millbank estate in Westminster and many others. The team were influenced by the Arts and Craft movement led by William Morris and in particular by the architecture of Philip Webb. In the case of the sites at Macklin Street designs were invited from outside the in-house team. Gibon and Russell designed the Lodging House. All the other LCC buildings - Aldwych, Cotterell, Lindsey, Powis, Wimbledon, were designed by Roland Plumb, another 'outsider'.



LCC Building - Parker House

In 1893 the Parker Street Lodging House was completed for 345 people. In 1896 Aldwych, Cotterell and Lindsey (demolished in the 1960s), Powis and Wimbledon buildings were completed for 284 people. Twenty workshops were also provided. The scheme also widened Parker Street and Macklin Street.



Earlham Street



Earlham Street towards Tower Court



Earlham Street



Endell Street

Character

CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA



The special character of the Conservation Area is found in the range and mix of building types and uses and the street layout. The character is not dominated by one particular period or style of building but rather it is their combination that is of special interest.

Most buildings appear to spring from the footway without physical front boundaries or basement areas. In this tightly contained streetscape, changes of road width, building form and land-use give dramatic character variation, narrow alleys and hidden yards provide unforeseen interest and the few open spaces provide relief and a chance to pause and take stock of one's surroundings. Apart from Seven Dials there are no formal open spaces but some significant informal spaces occur in the form of yards and street junctions.

Planting on the front of buildings was a traditional means of providing vegetation that is still popular and provides a welcome foil to the hard materials of this densely developed area.

SUB AREA ONE



Earlham Street is predominately four storey with the scale and plot sizes of the original Seven Dials although it was almost entirely rebuilt in the 1880s as part of the Woodyard Brewery. There is still evidence of the high level cast iron bridges, which connected the brewery buildings across the street. A few 18th and early 19th century terraced buildings remain, in particular the section on the south side Nos.14-26. The Cambridge Theatre, a 1930s building designed by Wimperis, Simpson and Guthrie with interiors by Serge Chermayeff, forms a corner building at Seven Dials. The simple classical design provides an interesting contrast to the 18th and 19th century corner buildings whilst having some affinity with warehouse buildings. The Art Deco design was later echoed in Ibis House, designed by Terry Farrell, another corner building at the junction of Monmouth Street and Mercer Street. Between Shaftesbury Avenue and Seven Dials there are a number of new shopfronts on the north side on buildings previously in office use that have been converted successfully to retail and residential use. An exception to the distinctive quality of Seven Dials is Earlham House, a 1970s development designed by Richard Seifert. It has a particularly damaging impact at street level on Mercer Street at the entrance to the basement car park.

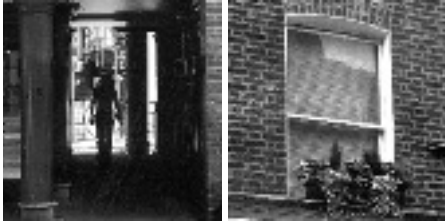


Between Seven Dials and Neal Street the streetscape is notable for the reinstatement of original paving materials plus Victorian gas lantern style streetlights and Seven Dials bollards as the first stage of the Renaissance project. Between Seven Dials and Shaftesbury Avenue a market, which has traded since at least the 19th century, occupies one side of the street.

Endell Street has an interesting architectural diversity, with many distinctive buildings. The street was constructed in its present form in 1846 as part of plans drawn up by Pennethorne (successor to Nash) for improvements to London. As a result it is wider than most Seven Dials streets with a number of mid Victorian medium scale commercial buildings: the former St Giles National School built in 1859 and designed by E.M. Barry - the words National School are still on the brickwork. This gothic revival building has polychrome brick and stone dressings; next to the Hostel are two buildings designed by George Vulliamy, No.81 (1854) Italianate four storey building with stucco frontage and rusticated quoins and No.79 (1854) the London Swiss Church, another Italianate building with a symmetrical facade of three bays in rusticated stucco. No.61 is a listed building that was in use as a timber yard for the last 100 years, in red brick with stucco dressings. A new housing development has been built at the rear of the building on



the site of the former yard that contained the timber shed. On the west side are good examples of late 18th century (altered mid-19th century) four storey and basement houses with a regular rhythm and plot width (Nos.51-59). These buildings are in stucco with first floor pedimented windows and a stone cornice at third floor level. The shops have wooden shopfronts with pilasters carrying a fascia entablature surmounted by dentil cornice. A mixed-use development proposal for St Paul's Hospital on the corner with Betterton Street has been agreed. (April 2000)



Monmouth Street runs north to south through Seven Dials. It retains some 17th century; Nos.14,16,18,21,27,61-63, and 18th century buildings; Nos.35,37,39, 42-50, 53-55, 57-59, 65-71. At the southern end is the Comyn Ching Triangle. The site was owned by Comyn Ching & Co (est.1723) an entirely British architectural ironmongers who retained a showroom at Nos.15-21 Shelton Street until July 1995. The 'triangle' which is bounded by Mercer Street, Shelton Street and Monmouth Street is a good example of the changing character and vitality of

Covent Garden. The 1980s development placed Terry Farrell designed corner buildings adjacent to restored Grade II listed 17th century buildings and created a mix of residential, retail and office use. The Shelton Street frontage has a particularly good restoration of 19th century shopfronts. A public courtyard was created at the centre of the triangle, an important urban space for the area. The scheme demonstrates how modern design can successfully integrate with the historic environment. The yard has a restrained, semi-formal air with crisp Yorkstone paving, wall top benches and ornamental trees in iron grilles. This contrasts strongly with Neal's Yard.



Neal Street Many of the properties retain the original 17th century plan form but had their facades re-constructed in the early 19th century and panelling replaced. Their narrow width give a character and rhythm to the street. The original terraced houses on Neal Street are four storeys and basement in yellow stock brick with red brick arches and date from the late 18th century to the early 19th century; Nos.27-37,61,64,78,80, are listed Grade II. During the 19th century shops were introduced at ground floor level and warehouses built. Many 19th century timber shopfronts can still be found along the street. Typically these shopfronts display classical proportions with pilasters supporting entablature and a projecting cornice. Generally shops have retained the single property width resulting in numerous small shops with a lively combination of shopfronts both modern and traditional.



The prevailing scale of the street is broken at the south eastern junction of Neal Street and Shorts Gardens by Nottingham House a neo-Georgian block of flats designed in 1925. The original five storey block and the rear

yard and mission hall were converted in 1997/8 into a mixed use development with shops at ground floor level, an additional floor of flats and a new mission hall. The development improved the street scene, particularly to Nottingham Court. Designed by the Peabody Design Group the scheme received a Civic Trust Award 2000.

At the rear of Neal Street, Shorts Gardens, Monmouth Street is Neal's Yard; a courtyard area that has developed into a wholefood and complementary medicine centre which also serves as a well used small public open space. At the junction of Neal Street, Earlham Street and Shelton Street the street widens to form a broad paved area in front of the Seven Dials Warehouse.

Shaftesbury Avenue and the north east corner of Cambridge Circus were formed by the Metropolitan Board of Works in the 1880s by widening the existing street. Shaftesbury Avenue then became an important central London Avenue, with a distinctive scale of buildings and use of materials, dominated by red brick and the use of terracotta.



Monmouth Street



Shelton Street



Neal Street



Nottingham House

Character



Shaftesbury Avenue

The street and the plot widths are generally wider than the rest of the Conservation Area and the buildings are generally higher. London Plane trees were planted to line the Avenue, which have become a distinctive feature of the street. Shaftesbury Avenue's character makes it a natural boundary to the Conservation Area, with three distinct spaces along its length. Cambridge Circus, though marred by the road layout and traffic is the grandest in terms of layout and scale. The Monmouth Street/Neal Street junction, with its widened footways forms a lesser and informal space. Outside the Conservation Area at the northern end is Princes Circus, currently a fragmented and traffic dominated space that contributes little to the area but its plane trees.

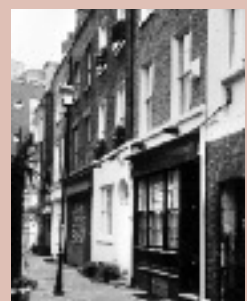
Shelton Street is dominated by the former Woodyard Brewery buildings which line both sides of this narrow street. Evidence of the high level linking iron bridges remain on some of the buildings. The historic remains of ironwork form part of the distinctive industrial character of this part of the Conservation Area. At the junction with Neal Street and Earlham Street is the Seven Dials Warehouse, which has iron hoists and hoist doors remaining. The building was converted to a mix of uses following a GLC permission in 1974, however a recent fire has destroyed much of the interior and proposals for it are expected (April 2000).



Short's Gardens has predominantly 19th century commercial buildings. The original buildings on the south side were demolished for the Brewery stables in the 1880s and the north side has mostly warehouses, four and five storeys high.

The triangle bounded by Short's Gardens, Earlham Street and Neal Street was converted in 1992 to a shopping development known as Thomas Neal's. Entrances to the shops are mostly located internally to maintain the appearance of the original warehouse ground floor windows. The whole block is listed Grade II.

Tower Court is a pleasant narrow pedestrianised street lying between Tower Street and Earlham Street, smaller in scale and height than the surrounding streets with a terrace of attractive late 18th century three storey houses. Grilles to their semi-basement windows form a distinctive part of the streetscape. The rear of the Two Brewers Public House forms part of the terrace with a contrasting glazed brick at ground floor level. An unusual element is that the west side of the street is formed by railings on a brick wall with the openness and greenery of a garden beyond. This is the rear of the Old Board School.



Tower Street is dominated by warehouse buildings and the old Board School (listed Grade II). The 19th century school is yellow stock brick with red brick and stone dressings and has been converted into offices. Nos.4-10 was built in 1878 and is a four storey brick building with rendered string courses and tripartite sash windows.

Townscape Forming the centre is the Seven Dials Pillar Sundial, seen from each entrance to the Dials. The character surrounding the column is derived from the street layout, the scale of buildings, plot sizes and the uses. Surrounding the circus at Seven Dials are seven distinctive corner buildings that terminate the radiating streets. From the column there are long vistas along narrow streets that are lined with tightly built terraces and warehouses. The close proximity of industrial buildings with domestic terraces creates the special quality of the Conservation Area.

There is an intimate atmosphere added to by the small incidental spaces found at junctions and in courtyards. This area includes many new developments which complement the historic architecture of Covent Garden; The Comyn Ching Triangle; the Thomas Neal conversion of warehouses at Shorts Garden/Earlham Street incorporates a complex of shops/cafes with offices and residential on the upper floors; Mathews Yard on Shorts Gardens is a mixed use development of residential, shops and workshops by the GLC, Nottingham House adapted into retail and residential. These are successful because of their design, in particular their scale, height and materials but in addition the uses are appropriate.



In an area of narrow streets open spaces provide unexpected and important contrasts and an opportunity to view the townscape. The most significant are; views towards and from Seven Dials; this included the view west along Earlham Street that frames the distinctive, red brick turreted corner of the Palace Theatre at Cambridge Circus and the view north along Mercer Street to the Post Office Tower. The views towards the open space at the northern end of Neal Street, the open space at the corner of Neal Street, Earlham Street and Shelton Street, views along Shaftesbury Avenue towards Cambridge Circus and Princes Circus, views into Neal's Yard.

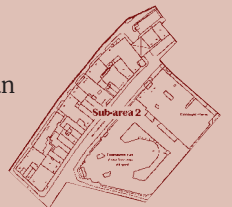
Negative features Not all recent development has enhanced the character and appearance of the area; such as Earlham House on Mercer Street/Shaftesbury Avenue/Earlham Street designed by Richard Seifert. Fielding Court at Seven Dials is also considered out of scale and unsympathetic in design to the character of the Conservation Area, in particular the materials and detailing.

SUB AREA TWO

Great Queen Street is located between two distinct areas and is influenced by both. To the east is Kingsway, an Edwardian development, which has higher buildings some with multi-dormered storeys. To the west is Covent



Garden with its generally lower and smaller scale buildings. There is a mix of offices, pubs, shops and restaurants. Great Queen Street has a number of listed buildings within it, including six early 18th century houses at Nos.27,28,29 and Nos.33,34,35 of three storeys, basement and dormers. All the houses have similar characteristics of red brick, heavy wooden eaves, cornices and pilaster orders rising from the first floor level to the cornice. The street has great importance in the development of street design. Sir John





Summerson in 'Georgian London' says that it 'put an end to gabled individualism, and provided a discipline for London's streets which was accepted for more than two hundred years'. In the 18th century it was known as the 'first regular street in London'. The front basement areas and railings are unusual in the Conservation Area.

The Freemasons Hall is a prominent steel frame construction faced with Portland stone. The Hall fits into an irregular polygonal site and was built as a memorial to Freemasons killed in World War I. It dominates the view eastwards along Long Acre and is widely considered to be an over development of the site by virtue of its scale and bulk in relation to its surroundings.



Townscape Great Queen Street is made distinct by the generous width of the western end of the street set out in 17th century. The street combines the domestic scale of the 17th century terraced buildings on the north side of the street and the later buildings by the Freemasons on the south side; the Freemasons Hall and the New Connaught Rooms.

Views Along Great Queen Street, from Kingsway and from Drury Lane.

Negative features At the junction with Newton Street is a 1960s office development, part 12 storeys and part six, which makes no positive contribution as it is out of scale and character. At the eastern end of Parker Street is another office block, Nos.43-49, with blue tinted glass which also fails to contribute to the Conservation Area.

SUB AREA THREE

Drury Lane Predominantly four storey terraced buildings, originally domestic, now with shops at ground floor level. There is a 1980s GLC mixed use development at the corner of Stukeley Street and Drury Lane of five storeys with residential, retail and workshops, which replaced an 1880s block. Some noteworthy 19th century buildings at Nos.181,182,183.

Macklin Street has an interesting variety of buildings. The street layout creates contrast, narrowing at St Joseph's RC Primary School to the width of the original street prior to realignment in the 1890s. The street is pedestrianised from Newton Street to Stukeley Street. At the western end is Wimbledon House, an LCC building designed

by Roland Plumb, two storeys with lancet and bulls eye windows, scrolled gables and high chimney stacks. The street then narrows at St Joseph's RC Primary School, a three storey building in two tone brick, with a brick apron under the windows and projecting keystones on the arches. The street widens at Powis Buildings, an LCC building designed by Rowland Plumb similar to Wimbledon House in style but four storeys. No.24 is the Mortuary, now converted to offices, a two storey mid-19th century building in red brick with stone dressings, cornice and strings in the Gothic style. No.23 is of historic interest, built in 1851 for Thomas Grieve and Son as painting rooms for theatrical scenery, they initiated the system of free lance painters working in their own premises rather than within theatres. It is a large three storey stucco-fronted building with central loading doors on the upper floors. No.17a is the St Giles Almshouses, a quadrangle of four almshouses founded in



Drury Lane

