

**FROM THE WEST END NETWORK (WEN)
OXFORD STREET EAST LISTINGS**

The Bloomsbury Association | The Charlotte Street Association | The Covent Garden Area Trust | The Covent Garden Community Association | The Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association | The Marylebone Association | The Seven Dials Trust | The Soho Society

Paper prepared for the WEN by David Bieda (Chairman - The Seven Dials Trust).

Revised 25.07.09 - V5. wp ref: wen\listingsoxfordstreetandtcrV5

PART A - LISTINGS

PROPOSAL TO LIST:-

No. 1 TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD

No.'s 14-16 OXFORD STREET & 2-3 TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD

No. 4 OXFORD STREET (n.b includes the return façade on Tottenham Court Road opposite the Dominion Theatre).



Since submitting the above to EH we understand they assessed the buildings below and we support any recommendations for listing same:-

1 TCR	165563	
4 Oxford St	165421	
Tott Pub	165428	6 Oxford St – EH propose upgrade
Ex Virgin	165420	14-16 Oxford Street + 3 Tottenham Court Road
40-42 Oxford	165422	
35 Oxford St	165423	

**133-135 Oxford St +
53-54 Berwick St
+201 Wardour St 165425
147 Oxford St 165426
35 Oxford St 165423**

We feel these limited listing proposals should be seen in the context of the large number of development proposals for Oxford Street East – see below PART B. PART C sets out a logical approach to Oxford Street East.

The WEN is consortium of the main amenity and related groups in the city centre in Camden and Westminster. We meet periodically to discuss key issues in our city centre and all of the groups are recognised by our local authorities.

INTRODUCTION

Our groups are not pro or anti development and we appraise all proposals carefully taking into account a wide variety of factors. In the case of Oxford Street East and the Oxford Street | Tottenham Court Road area there appears to be a strong lobby from freehold interests and the New West End Company denigrating this area in presumably in favour of redevelopment regardless of the merits of some of the buildings. This has been evident in recent media coverage.

It is our considered opinion that a proper façade analysis, such as those undertaken in Seven Dials and central Covent Garden (sample pages attached in PART 3 – A LOGICAL APPROACH Notes 1 + 2), might demonstrate that many of the late 19c and early 20c buildings make a significant and positive contribution to this part of London’s West End. There are of course a number of development proposals (SEE MAPS & PICS) where the 1960’s and 1970’s buildings do not make such a positive contribution. Both points are demonstrated in the interesting overall picture of Oxford Street East (kindly supplied by Councillor Ian Wilder – WCC West End Ward.

In our view all the buildings below make a positive contribution and each building constitutes a fine example of their respective periods. In both the Seven Dials and the Covent Garden areas economic regeneration has been successful through active conservation of the built heritage and it is our contention that the same applies within these areas.

We are aware of the intense pressure to maximise both freehold values and rentals in these prime streets. However at the end of the day what attracts visitors and shoppers to London’s West End is the variety of the buildings, the historic settings, the overall retail offer, theatres, restaurants, clubs and indeed the great mix of both the physical fabric and the activities on offer.

If Covent Garden had been demolished, as originally proposed in the early 1970’s, to be replaced by a West End Barbican, would it now be one of Europe’s greatest visitor attractions? We doubt it. Did a new British Library need to entail the demolition of much of historic Bloomsbury? No.

At the time these proposals for demolition were only defeated through a long campaign led by our local communities in the interest of a longer term approach, and one which retained what cannot be replaced – our historic built fabric - for the benefit of visitors, workers and residents.

THE CASE FOR LISTINGS (WEN)

No. 1 TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD

Architect Wigg Oliver & Hudson

c. 1890

This is a late Victorian building with orange red brickwork showing art nouveau influence, with a double bay front and surmounted by a splendid central cupola which makes it something of a landmark on the inter-section of Oxford Street and Tottenham Court Road.

It has an oriel fourth floor window, and a beautifully detailed brick-work façade little altered except for the 20th century shopfront. However it still retains its console brackets and historic fascia and pilasters. There is also original fenestration and elaborate ironwork above the bay windows.

The façade appears to be in good condition and it may be that restoration work was carried out in the not too distant past as the cupola is gilded and appears to have been restored.

In our view this building makes an important contribution to the mix of periods which characterises Oxford Street East and this part of Tottenham Court Road, and should be retained.

Simple cleaning and a more sympathetic shop-front could be easily achieved and further enhance its appearance and doubtless its commercial value.

No.'s 14-16 OXFORD STREET & 2-3 TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD

Architect FJ Willis (company architect for J Lyons & Co)

1928

This was one of the largest Lyons corner houses and comprises imposing neo baroque classical façades described by Pevsner & Bradley (*London & Westminster – Buildings of England* 2003):-

“Confident white-faience front with giant broken pedimented aedicule... in the private areas fragments of Lyons extravagant marble lined interiors survive designed by Oliver Bernard.”

These two façades are some of the finest 1920's frontages in London's West End and make a significant contribution to the streetscape and as with the above make an important contribution to the mix of periods which characterises Oxford Street East and this part of Tottenham Court Road.

Built on the site of the Oxford Music Hall, FJ Willis also designed:-

- The fine Cumberland Hotel (1933) by Marble Arch;
- The recently listed Regent Palace Hotel (1915) by Piccadilly Circus;
- The Strand Palace Hotel (1930), on the Strand.

All of the above contribute to their respective townscapes with an imposing degree of grandeur.

Oliver Barnard, the interior designer, is highly regarded and his interiors for the grand lobby at the Strand Palace were preserved and exhibited by the Victoria & Albert Museum after they were removed in the 1970's. Today it is likely that this grand lobby would be retained by the hotel operator | freeholder since it would be a great attraction and selling point for the hotel, as one of the finest art deco interiors in London.

**No. 4 OXFORD STREET (n.b includes the return façade on Tottenham Court Road opposite the Dominion Theatre).
Architect Saville & Martin
c. 1890**

Designed by Saville & Martin, along with the Tottenham Public House (No. 6 Oxford Street), which was listed in 1987.

The fact that this is not listed appears to be an anomaly as it is part of the same building, built at the same time and by the same architect, and it shares the same splendid architectural detail as described in the attached Listing description of No. 6 Oxford Street which we have reproduced below.

Saville & Martin designed several other public houses of note in the Cities of London and Westminster, for example:-

- The Punch Tavern 100 Fleet Street (1896 and listed Grade II in 1996);
- 1-3 Finch Lane (c. 1895 and listed Grade II in 1977).

Building Name:	The Tottenham Public House 6	LBS Number:	422457
Parish:	Westminster	Grade:	II
District:	City Of Westminster	Date Listed:	01 December 1987
County:	Greater London	Date of Last Amendment:	01 December 1987
Postcode:	W1N 9FL	Date Delisted:	
		National Grid Reference:	TQ2979281399

Listing Text:

TQ 2981 SE CITY OF WESTMINSTER OXFORD STREET W1
58/201 No 6 (The Tottenham
Public House)

- II

Public House. 1892. Designed by Saville and Martin. Red brick with Portland stone. Dressings and banding; slate, steeply pitched roof. 4 storeys plus 2 storeys to gable. 3 main bays. Free Flemish revival style. Altered plate glass shop front to ground floor, with entrance to right and stone cornice above, supported upon pink granite corner pilasters. First and second floor linked by 2 storey niches to outer bays, with rounded heads, canted bay window to centre with front aligned with plane of wall; stilted segmental arches to first floor, round headed lights, to stone tracery in square headed windows to second floor; central gable feature breaking through into third floor. Third and fourth floors, each with 3 stilted segmental headed windows. Shaped gable to fourth and fifth floors; round headed window to fifth floor. Timber sashes. Fine public house interior to ground floor with pilastered panelling, frieze, moulded cornice, and heavily moulded ceiling with painted roundel; back painted mirrors by Jones and Firmin, encaustic tiles by Millington, Wisdom and Co, and painted panels of the four seasons by Felix de Jong and Co. One of the best surviving public house interiors in the country.

M Ginouards, Victorian Pubs.

Listing NGR: TQ2979281399

Note 1

The Seven Dials Renaissance Study pub. 1992 and 1998

The Seven Dials Trust

The Environmental Study of Central Covent Garden pub. 1997 and 2003

Audited 2000 and 2008

The Covent Garden Area Trust

PART B - PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITES OXFORD STREET EAST



Map is from Westminster City Council's ORB (Oxford | Regent | Bond) Street Action Plan

OXFORD STREET EAST DEVELOPMENT SITES (SEE MAP ABOVE)

As can be seen from above and below there are a large number of development site proposals. Those from Crossrail have statutory approval but the subsequent proposals will be subject to the usual planning regime. Most of these sites date from the 1960's and 1970's and might benefit from re-development though site 3 does include some buildings of merit. It is regrettable that a façade analysis such as those carried out for Seven Dials and Central Covent Garden (see below) is lacking for this key London street.



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NB FULL SIZE PICS ARE AVAILABLE

OXFORD STREET EAST BUILDINGS ASSESSED BY EH
Nb does not include a pic of the Tottenham pub' already listed.

OXFORD STREET EAST – NORTH SIDE



14-16 Oxford St.



1 Tottenham Ct Rd



1 TCR + 2-3 TCR



40-42 Oxford Street

OXFORD STREET EAST – SOUTH SIDE



35 Oxford Street



133-135 Oxford St + Wardour St

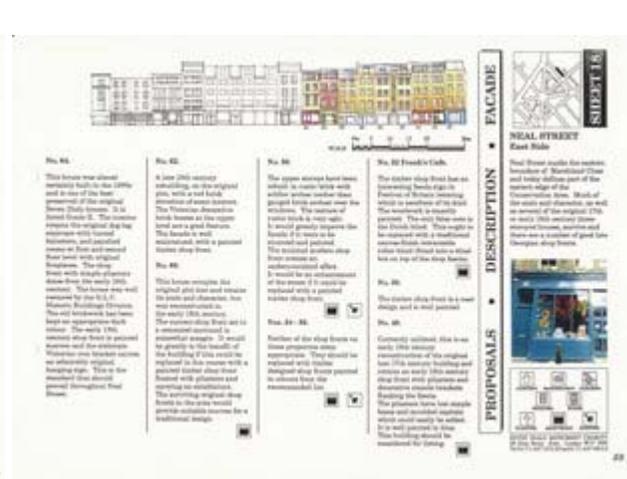
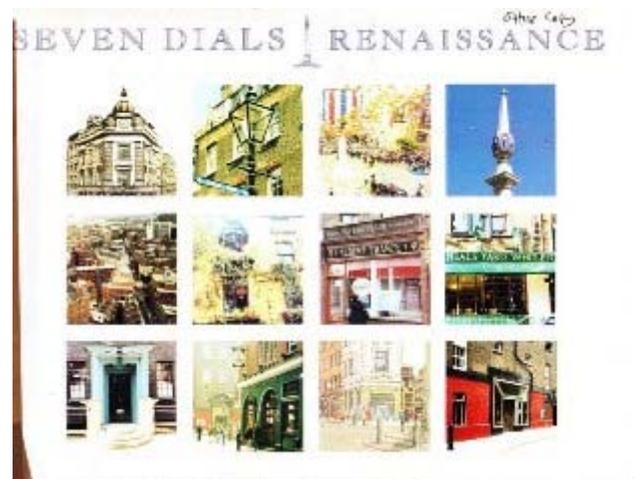


147 Oxford Street

NB FULL SIZE PICS ARE AVAILABLE

PART C – A LOGICAL APPROACH TO ENHANCING A KEY LONDON STREET

A façade analysis along the lines of those undertaken by the Seven Dials and Covent Garden Area Trusts would be the best approach as such work sets each building within the overall context and makes appropriate recommendations based upon neutral consultancy. It can also include recommendations for lighting, greening, and public realm improvements so as to encourage S106 contributions towards an overall vision for improvement as has happened in Seven Dials, Central Covent Garden, China Town and WCC Covent Garden Action Area 3. WCC's ORB (Oxford, Regent, Bond Street) Action Plan does this but not with the same detail.



Open the Oxford Street debate

□ DAME Judith Mayhew Jonas, the new chair of the New West End Company (NWECC) quotes the support of West End groups for Westminster's Oxford, Regent and Bond Street Plan (ORB) in her letter in response to that from our ward councillors the week before, and refers to the consultation which preceded ORB (All change in Oxford Street, October 24).

We were all in broad support of ORB, but the issue goes beyond that plan to the disturbing statements made by Dame Judith about the eastern end of Oxford Street in the recent double page spread in the Evening Standard, which differ from that plan.

If the NWECC does not support that agreed plan they should clarify this.

She made three points, all of which appear to indicate an agenda driven by the major freeholders for demolition well beyond that required by Crossrail, and which are at variance with her comments

about "organic growth" last week when she referred to Carnaby and Regent streets and Marylebone High Street.

In the Evening Standard she advocated "much larger retail units with bigger footplates", bemoaned the fact that rentals are 50 per cent lower at the eastern end of Oxford Street with many narrow frontages, and she said "these narrow shops... are exactly what we don't want".

This "vision" is the standard one promoted throughout the UK for large retail units, almost always with the same brands as one finds everywhere else and with the same anodyne buildings.

It would involve the demolition of many of the fine late 19th and early 20th-century façades (whether narrow or not) which give east Oxford Street its eclectic flavour and are a key part of the West End's character.

It will (intentionally) drive up rental levels to the benefit of a small number of major

freeholders and not to the benefit of the wider public as consumers.

It will also involve the floorplates being taken backwards into Soho in the south and Fitzrovia in the north.

This is an archaic vision and we argue instead for the refurbishment of the many fine existing façades, the retention of those "unacceptable" narrow shops for smaller, more specialist uses paying (horror of horrors) less than the expensive end of Oxford Street, and proper investment in public realm improvements, not primarily dependent upon the city council obtaining funding via planning agreements.

Let's work with the existing physical fabric and make it attractive as redevelopments in Covent Garden, Seven Dials, Carnaby and Gerrard streets and Marylebone High Street.

Marylebone has an eclectic mix because there are many narrow-frontage sites unsuitable for chain stores.

Do past statements by

politicians that tens of millions of pounds will be needed via planning agreements from the private sector for public realm improvements mean that the city council is supporting the dame's "vision"?

This would turn the planning system on its head since planning matters should be dealt with on their merits and not on a possible financial outcome.

It also raises the delicate issue of whether councillors involved in such discussions would be eligible to consider related planning applications.

We welcome Dame Judith's call for a debate, but let's have it out in the open and not behind closed doors.

We believe that our elected city council should lead on these complex issues, and do so in openly so as to encourage legitimate debate.

Bloomsbury Association, Covent Garden Community Association, Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association, Marylebone Association, Mayfair Action Group, Seven Dials Trust, Soho Society

Don't demolish Oxford Street

WHEN the great and the good get parachuted into the West End, the results can be depressing. Dame Judith Mayhew-Jonas appears to be advocating wholesale demolition of large swathes of Oxford Street East reminiscent of proposals to demolish Covent Garden and Bloomsbury, seen off at the time by the long-standing communities who live there.

She advocates "much larger retail units with bigger floor plates" and bemoans the fact rentals are 50 per cent lower than the rest of the street, with many narrow frontages. Indeed, she says that "these narrow shops ... are exactly the sort we don't want".

Her "vision" will reduce consumer choice by increasing rents and prices, ensure the further replication of the same brands and reduce the possibility of smaller, more cutting edge retail. It would surely involve the demolition of the many fine late Victorian and early 20th-century façades, turning Oxford Street into a version of Victoria Street.

There is an alternative, cheaper "vision" — the restoration of the best façades and infill elsewhere, accompanied by public realm improvements, as Shaftesbury PLC has done in Chinatown, Carnaby Street and Seven Dials: all full of interesting "narrow shops".

D Bieda, Seven Dials Trust
5 Lane, Covent Garden Area Trust

Evening Standard

Government of the people by the property business

□ A FEW years ago a small group of major West End property owners, some with holdings in the historic east end of Oxford Street, sat down and drew up a plan which was breathtaking in its scope and anti-democratic effects.

The basic idea was to take over the governance of Oxford Street, Regent Street and Bond Street and the surrounding streets, a vast area of the West End which was democratically the province of Westminster City Council.

They commissioned a report from the firm of architects who designed the O2 Centre in Finchley Road.

The report claimed the pavements were too crowded; that taxis and cars should be removed from Oxford Street;

that there were hundreds of people arriving in the West End and not knowing where they were or how to get where they wanted to go; that some 10,000 more people arrived in the West End each day than left it.

The report introduced as the main item the redevelopment of the historic east end of Oxford Street.

The New West End Company (NWEC) complains about what they say is the poor state of historic east Oxford Street.

They complain about souvenir shops and other small shops that they don't like.

But there are souvenir shops in the west end of Oxford Street and endless lines of mobile phone stores but the west end of Oxford Street has

none of the gorgeous old buildings of historic interest that the east end of Oxford Street has.

If you read the comments of Dame Judith Mayhew-Jonas, the newly appointed chair of the NWEC in the October 6 Evening Standard, you would be forgiven for thinking that she and her organisation run Oxford Street.

Well, let us make it crystal clear to her that there is a city council and there are local councillors for Oxford Street.

Fortunately local residents and architectural groups are taking steps to protect the historic part of Oxford Street namely its gorgeous, vibrant and eclectic east end.

The Evening Standard article points out that rents in the

historic east end of Oxford Street are 50 per cent less than rents on the west side.

Curious that the country's most successful retailer, Sir Philip Green, has some of his best stores in east Oxford Street.

This is government of the people by the property business for the property business.

It is the unacceptable face of the property business.

Help us and local residents fight this injustice.

Email us at our addresses below.

CLLR IAN WILDER
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