2.1 COVENT GARDEN

2.1.1 For the purposes of this Supplementary Planning Guidance, Covent Garden is defined as the area to the north of the Strand between Leicester Square to the west, and Aldwych to the east. The area covers approximately 30 hectares and is located within both the Central Activities Zone and the West End Stress Area.

2.1.2 Covent Garden has long been regarded as one of London’s key shopping and entertainment destinations. In addition to a diverse range of nearly 330 shops and over 215 entertainment premises, the area is also famous for its plethora of theatres, street entertainers and lively atmosphere. Covent Garden also contains a well-established residential community.

2.1.3 This combination of land uses within a historic built environment has created the special character that exists within Covent Garden. However, it is also recognised that the effect of this concentration of uses, and especially entertainment uses, varies greatly across the area. By dividing Covent Garden into sub-areas, this has enabled the city council to take a more detailed, local approach to its guidance for entertainment uses.

2.1.4 Based on a detailed analysis of the differing characters of areas, Covent Garden has been divided into the following sub-areas:

St Martin’s Lane
Long Acre
Drury Lane
Central Covent Garden
Chandos Place

2.1.5 Each of these sub-areas has been analysed with regard to character and function, the scale of entertainment uses and amenity/local environmental quality. Guidance to support the Replacement UDP Policies TACE 8-10 outlines the city council’s approach to new entertainment uses, extensions to entertainment uses and where relevant, hours of operation of for new uses.

2.1.6 The city council also adopted a Covent Garden Action Plan in Spring 2004. Produced in partnership with the Metropolitan Police, businesses and the local community, this set out the intention to address pressures affecting the area, including the imbalance between pedestrians and traffic, street maintenance, anti-social activities and street safety.
2.2 ST MARTIN’S LANE

SUB-AREA PROFILE

2.2.1 This sub-area lies on the western edge of Covent Garden, with Charing Cross Road forming its western boundary. The main street in the area is St Martin’s Lane, running north-south. This is linked to Charing Cross Road and Bedfordbury, which also run north to south by various narrow streets, including Cranbourn Street and by pedestrian routes, such as Cecil Court and Goodwin’s Court, or partially pedestrianised streets, such as New Row (see Figure 1).

CHARACTER AND FUNCTION

Townscape

2.2.2 St Martin’s Lane is a long-established north-south route through the area, pre-dating Charing Cross Road. By the seventeenth century it was already largely built-up, mainly with housing on its west side, and shops and houses on the east, with several narrow passageways leading through from the Lane to parallel streets. Some seventeenth century buildings remain. During the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth much of the smaller scale development was replaced by larger buildings, including several large theatres.

2.2.3 The area is now of mixed architectural character, with most buildings having between four and seven storeys, many having a mix of uses. Many of the smaller sites have been completely built over with two,
three or more storeys. Orion House, an office building dating from 1960, but refurbished in the 1990s, with fifteen storeys facing Upper St Martin’s Lane, is the tallest building in the area. A total of forty-three buildings are listed, including six Grade II*: the baroque Coliseum ‘theatre de luxe’, at the southern end of St Martin’s Lane, is an important landmark building and home to the English National Opera. Many unlisted buildings in the area have merit and make an important contribution to the street scene. About two-thirds of the area is covered by conservation area designations.

2.2.4 St Martin’s Lane and the area to the east is included in the city council’s Covent Garden Action Plan, adopted in Spring 2004. Within the St Martin’s Lane area, the Plan outlines the intention to tackle street drinking, rough sleeping, and begging, and to improve pedestrian routes around St Martin’s Circus.

2.2.5 The sub-area is also covered by the city council’s Theatreland Initiative, which began in March 2005 and is aimed at developing a programme of improved streetscape and profile for London’s ‘Theatreland’. Specifically within St Martin’s Lane, this will involve new street lighting, with a particular emphasis on the front facades of theatres.

Land Use

2.2.6 According to the 1990 Land Use survey, offices, with almost 40% of the floorspace, were the largest land use within the area: these were generally located above the ground floor in mixed use buildings with retailing, or restaurant and café uses on the lower floors. 21% of the floorspace in the sub-area comprised of ‘public buildings’ including theatres, educational uses, and religious uses1.

2.2.7 Figure 2 shows the current pattern of uses at ground floor level, which differs considerably from ‘all floors’ data. The sub-area is dominated by retail and entertainment uses that together comprise 80% of all ground floor premises2.

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1 WCC Land Use Survey
2 GOAD Retail Survey 2005
2.2.8 Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of ground floor uses in this sub-area. There are almost a hundred retail units in the area, located mainly along Charing Cross Road, Cecil Court, and New Row. It is also evident that there is a particular concentration of entertainment uses around St Martin’s Circus: many of these uses have links with the theatre, such as the Garrick Club in Garrick Street. Theatres and large office uses are located mainly in the south of the sub-area: in terms of ground level floorspace these two uses occupy a third of all ground floor floorspace within the sub area. The sub-area also contains a ‘boutique’ style hotel, the St Martin’s Lane Hotel, located on St Martin’s Lane in the south of the area.

2.2.9 Residential uses occupy about 16% of the total floorspace within the sub-area, with the 2003 electoral register identifying nearly 450 voters living in the area\(^\text{3}\). There are over 500 residential units located within the sub-area\(^\text{4}\). As with offices, these are generally on the upper floors of buildings that have retail, restaurant and café uses on the lower floors. There are particular concentrations of residential uses in the lower part of St Martin’s Lane and at Sandringham Flats fronting Charing Cross Road. On the south side of Litchfield Street, housing uses are evident at the ground floor, which is unusual for this part of central London.

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\(^{3}\) Electoral Register 2003
\(^{4}\) WCC 1990 Land Use Survey and WCC Residential Pipeline Survey 2005
Specialist clusters

2.2.10 The area contains six major theatres such as the London Coliseum, and is identified as part of the West End’s ‘Theatreland’. The area is also noted for its antiquarian bookshops located along Cecil Court and Charing Cross Road. The sub-area also includes shops specialising in maps, stamps and other printed materials.

Scale of Entertainment Uses

2.2.11 There are almost 80 entertainment uses in the area of which nearly half are restaurants, many of which are of international standing. The sub-area has experienced an increase in the number of entertainment uses of nearly 7% since 1998, whilst the proportion of ground floor entertainment floorspace has increased by 14%. Entertainment uses currently occupy just over half of the active ground floor frontage in the area.

2.2.12 The area has 9 music and dance licences and 5 night café licenses. As illustrated in Figure 5 most music and dance premises are located along St Martin’s Lane, whilst the smaller night café premises are situated around the St Martins junction.

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5 GOAD Retail Survey 2005 and 1998
6 WCC Frontage Survey 2005
7 GOAD Retail Survey 2005
2.2.13 Whilst the average capacity is large, at over 706 persons, it is clear that most of the music and dance licences relate to theatres rather than entertainment uses as defined for the purposes of this guidance. The average capacity figure is also skewed by the vast London Coliseum, which has licensed capacity of nearly 2,500 persons. By contrast, the night café licensed premises are much smaller with an average capacity of 11 persons, but a later average terminal hour of 3.30am\(^8\).

**Music and dance licensed premises**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establishment</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 establishments (3133 persons) close at 12am</td>
<td>6358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 establishments (1160) close at 1 am</td>
<td>3225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 establishment (195) closes at 2am</td>
<td>2065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 establishments (1570) close at 3 am</td>
<td>1870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 establishment (300) closes at 4am</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Night café licensed premises**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establishment</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 establishment (12 persons) closes at 1am</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 establishments (36) closes at 4am</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 establishment (6) closes at 5am</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2.14 It must be noted that these figures only relate to premises with a music and dance licence, and night café licence, rather than all entertainment licences, and so represent the minimum potential capacity of persons. Pubs and restaurants have not generally had capacity limits.

\(^8\) WCC Licensing Department 2002

*Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance for Entertainment Uses*

*July 2006*
AMENITY/LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Anti-social behaviour, Crime and Noise

2.2.15 Observations carried out in 2002 indicate that night-time levels of anti-social behaviour are ‘low’, except for incidents in or near St Martin’s junction. The city council has recognised that drinking in the street mainly outside public houses can also be a nuisance, because of noise disturbance to people living nearby, and because of obstruction to passers by. In the twelve-month period to 31 March 2004, the police were called to 222 disorder incidents in the area, of which almost 100 were classified as disturbances in public places.

2.2.16 In 2004 the city council dealt with 150 noise complaints in the area, of which nearly half were complaints about noise produced by commercial activity.

Traffic

2.2.17 Night-time counts conducted in 2002 indicate that the sub-area has medium to low levels of night-time traffic. Count points on St Martin’s Lane and Garrick Street recorded medium counts of traffic volume between 10pm and 12pm, which fell in subsequent hours. Upper St Martin’s Lane recorded lower levels of traffic volume between 10pm and 12am.

Pedestrian flow

2.2.18 The narrow footways can become very congested when people enter or leave theatre performances, but pedestrian movement in this area is generally on a lesser scale than elsewhere in Covent Garden or Soho. A day-time count in Upper St Martin’s Lane gave a figure of 4,500 in a six-hour period on a Saturday in 2001.

2.2.19 Night-time counts indicate less pedestrian movement than during the day, although the pedestrian count increases southwards along Upper St Martins Lane and St Martin’s Lane. Figure 6 below illustrates the location of the count points that were used during the night-time pedestrian flow count. In the six hours from 10pm and 4am on a Friday in 2002, Upper St Martin’s Lane returned a count of just under 2,000 persons, compared to 2,750 further south on St Martin’s Lane.

2.2.20 Observations indicate that east-west routes through the sub-area contain the highest levels of pedestrian movement as people move between Leicester Square and Covent Garden. Such movement is prevalent along Cranbourn Street as people access Leicester Square tube station, as well as Garrick Street. The night-time pedestrian count along Garrick Street recorded 4,900 persons, far higher than other count points within the sub-area. However, all night-time count points experienced a rapid fall in the number of pedestrians after 12pm.

9 PMRS 2002 Night-time Pedestrian Flowcount
10 Metropolitan Police Computer Aided Despatch (CAD) data: April 2004 – March 2005
11 WCC Noise Complaints 2004
12 PMRS 2002 Night-time Pedestrian Flowcount
SUMMARY

2.2.21 When dealing with applications in the St Martin’s Lane sub-area, the following issues will be considered:

Character and Function

2.2.22 This is an area where, as a whole, ground floor uses are diverse. Within this, there are concentrations of specialist shops which contribute to its character. Although it could be argued that entertainment uses may conform to the existing character and function of this area, any increase in entertainment use would have a cumulative adverse impact on the existing balance of uses.

Amenity/Local Environmental Quality

2.2.23 Further entertainment uses, particularly those operating late at night, would be likely to conflict with the amenity of residents living in the area. Residential use is the predominant use of parts of the sub-area including Sandringham Flats, the southern part of St Martin’s Lane, and New Row.

2.2.24 This area is located between the major concentrations of entertainment uses in Covent Garden and the southern part of Soho and Leicester Square. With one or two exceptions, it has few large entertainment venues that operate late at night. Despite this the sub-area has among the highest densities of entertainment uses in Central Westminster.
Policy Guidance

2.2.25 Because of the cumulative adverse impact on both the character and function, residential amenity/local environmental quality of this sub-area, no new entertainment uses will be permitted. No permissions will be granted that intensify entertainment uses, for example a change of use from a restaurant to a bar.

2.2.26 In relation to existing lawful entertainment uses, if planning applications are submitted for a change in the nature of the use, alterations or extensions to the premises or for variations to existing conditions, permission will only be granted where the Council is satisfied that it will result in a significant overall reduction in the impact of the use on residential amenity, the environmental quality and character and function of the locality— for example through the imposition of new or varied conditions to control the nature or operation of the activity.
2.3 LONG ACRE

SUB-AREA PROFILE

2.3.1 This sub-area is located to the north of the Covent Garden piazza, between the Royal Opera House and the City of Westminster boundary with Camden. Long Acre passes north-east to south-west through the area (see Figure 1).

CHARACTER AND FUNCTION

Townscape

2.3.2 Long Acre itself was laid out as a road in the early seventeenth century. It formed the boundary between the Bedford Estate, which owned Covent Garden itself, and the landholdings of the Mercers’ Company to the north. Much of Long Acre originally comprised houses standing in their own grounds: the gardens on the south side continued through to Floral Street which was a narrow mews. From 1660 onwards parts of the area became a specialised location for cabinet-making and coach-building, an activity which continued in some premises until the 1950s. Printing and publishing became important from the late nineteenth century onwards. Much of the commercial property away from the main street itself has been associated with printing, and with warehousing connected with the former vegetable market. In many instances these substantial buildings, some between three and six storeys in height, have been converted into offices and workshops, many of them now
occupied by businesses involved with design, advertising and marketing, and entertainment.

2.3.3 Many of the buildings facing directly on to Long Acre have been further redeveloped during the last hundred years, so that it is now largely a shopping street, specialising in clothing, with many premises having offices on the upper three or four floors. In two cases redevelopment was extended in the 1970s to cover the whole of a street block, one a ten-storey office scheme, the second mainly housing and small-scale retailing. Several narrow alleys link Long Acre with the ‘mews’ at Floral Street, which is partly pedestrianised, with buildings on a lesser physical scale.

2.3.4 The Long Acre area contains sixteen listed buildings, all Grade II. Most of the area falls within the extension to the Covent Garden conservation area designated by the city council in 1987.

2.3.5 The sub-area forms part of the area covered by the city council’s Covent Garden Action Plan. This Plan proposes a number of public realm improvements, including the installation of additional wall mounted street lighting, and expansion of CCTV system.

Land use

2.3.6 Although the area is dominated by retail uses, the 1990 Land Use Survey indicates that offices, in a range of sizes and types, were the principal land use in the area over all floors and accounted for some 49% of the floorspace. On Long Acre and Floral Street, shops were an important ground floor land use, extending into upper floors or semi-basements in places: they occupied almost 11% of the total floorspace in the area.

2.3.7 As shown in Figure 2, retail use currently dominates at ground floor level, and comprises 72% of all ground floor premises, whilst in comparison, offices take up just 13%. This represents the highest concentration of retail uses in comparison to the other sub areas. The ‘other uses’ comprise a mix of uses including dwellings, and educational and leisure uses.

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1 WCC 1990 Land Use Survey
2 GOAD Retail Survey 2005
2.3.8 Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of ground floor uses in this sub-area. Retail uses dominate the sub-area, but especially along the Long Acre, Floral Street and Neal Street frontages, with smaller retail units along Langley Court. These shopping streets specialise in clothing and other ‘style’-related comparison goods – shops selling comparison goods comprise over 75% of all shops within the sub-area. Shopping also extends north along Neal and Endell Streets [part of Camden], and south towards the Covent Garden market buildings. A recent shopping check of the area gave the Covent Garden centre as a whole ‘a high overall score for attractions’. The eastern section of Long Acre is less dominated by retail, and contains a large office development at 90 Long Acre. Other ground floor office premises are located mainly away from the key retail frontages, such as Langley Street, Mercer Street and Slingsby Place.
2.3.9 There are 239 residential units in the area, which account for 15% of the total floorspace. Figure 4 illustrates residential density in relation to entertainment uses. The larger concentrations of housing are located in the Odhams Walk development (105 residential units) and above shops and commercial premises towards the western half of the area. The sub-area also contains 319 persons on the electoral register.

Specialist Clusters

2.3.10 In addition to the concentration of clothing and fashion stores, the sub-area also contains offices and workshops, many of which are occupied by businesses involved in design, advertising and marketing.

Scale of Entertainment Uses

2.3.11 The area contains eight entertainment uses, mostly public houses or restaurants or cafés in shop-type units, located on the periphery of the sub-area away from the main retail frontages (see Figure 4). These entertainment uses represent 6% of all ground floor premises and just 4% of all ground floor floorspace.

2.3.12 There is only one premise with a music and dance licence, located on Langley Street (see Figure 5 below), with a capacity of 500 people and licensed until 1am. The sub-area contains no premises with a night café licence.

2.3.13 It must be noted that the above information only relate to premises with a music and dance licence, and night café licence, rather than all.

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3 WCC 1990 Land Use Surveys and WCC Residential Pipeline Survey 2005
4 Electoral Register 2003
5 GOAD Retail Survey 2005
6 WCC Frontage Survey 2005
7 GOAD Retail Survey 2005
8 WCC Licensing Department 2002
entertainment licences, and so represent the minimum potential capacity of persons.

AMENITY/LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Anti-social behaviour, Crime and Noise

2.3.14 Night-time observations carried out in Long Acre and Floral Street in 2002 generally recorded low levels of anti-social behaviour. At the western end of Long Acre, close to St Martin’s Lane, observers reported minicab touts and incidents of drunkenness after pubs and clubs had closed. Street cleaning is undertaken at night in this area and this activity, in its turn, can generate noise affecting local amenity.

2.3.15 In the twelve-month period to 31 March 2005, there were 33 incidents in the area where the police were called out, 17 involving disturbances in public places. In 2004 as a whole there were 83 noise complaints to the city council within the sub-area, from a wide variety of causes.

Traffic Flows

2.3.16 Night-time traffic counts undertaken in 2002 indicate that the highest levels of traffic occur along the western section of Long Acre, although Long Acre experienced generally moderate levels of traffic. Peak flow occurred along Long Acre between the hours of 11pm and 12am. By contrast, Floral Street experienced low levels of traffic throughout the night-time survey period.

9 PMRS 2002 Night-time Pedestrian Flowcount
10 Metropolitan Police Computer Aided Despatch (CAD) data: April 2004 – March 2005
11 WCC Noise Complaints 2004
Pedestrian Flows

2.3.17 Long Acre carries significant levels of pedestrian movement during the day, with 14,000 persons recorded at two sites west from the tube station during a six-hour period. Floral Street west from its junction with James Street recorded 6,000 during the same time whilst 28,000 persons were counted along the pedestrianised section of Neal Street. Flows appear to be much lower at night with 2,700 persons recorded in a six-hour period (10pm – 4am) at the same positions in Long Acre on a Friday in 2002 (see Figure 5). Along the western section of Long Acre peak pedestrian flows occurred between 11pm and 12am before dropping quite considerably in the following hours. Like Long Acre, Floral Street has much lower pedestrian levels at night, recording under 500 persons during the survey period. The heaviest night-time flows occurred just outside the sub area, on James Street adjacent to Covent Garden Underground station, which experienced nearly 15,000 persons\textsuperscript{12}.

SUMMARY

2.3.18 When dealing with applications in the Long Acre sub-area, the following issues will be considered:

Character and Function

2.3.19 This is an area of Central London with significant commercial functions. Many of the buildings along Long Acre and Floral Street are occupied by office uses associated with design, public relations and the media, and with ground floor retailing particularly for clothing. There are also significant numbers of offices and workshops away from the main

\textsuperscript{12} PMRS 2002 Night-time Pedestrian Flowcount

\textit{Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance for Entertainment Uses}

July 2006
Amenity/Local Environmental Quality

2.3.20 At night most of streets in this area are quieter than during the day. This area has 239 residential units. Any new entertainment premises involving the generation of noise have the potential to harm residential amenity and local environmental quality. Residential use is the predominant use in Odhams Walk and at the western end of Long Acre.

Policy Guidance

2.3.21 Because of the adverse impact on both the character and function of the area and potential detrimental impact on residential amenity/local environmental quality of this sub-area, no new entertainment uses will be permitted. No permissions will be granted that intensify entertainment uses, for example a change of use from a restaurant to a bar.

2.3.22 In relation to existing lawful entertainment uses, if planning applications are submitted for a change in the nature of the use, alterations or extensions to the premises or for variations to existing conditions, permission will only be granted where the Council is satisfied that it will result in a significant overall reduction in the impact of the use on residential amenity, the environmental quality and character and function of the locality– for example through the imposition of new or varied conditions to control the nature or operation of the activity.
2.4 DRURY LANE

SUB-AREA PROFILE

2.4.1 This sub-area is located on the east side of Covent Garden, centred on the southern section of Drury Lane. It encompasses most of the street blocks between Bow Street and Wild Street, and the whole of the blocks between Drury Lane and Kean Street. It also covers three blocks of flats on the west-side of Tavistock Street (see Figure 1).

CHARACTER AND FUNCTION

Townscape

2.4.2 Drury Lane itself is a long established route running from north-west to south-east across the area: most of the land associated was occupied by housing and small scale commerce during the seventeenth century. Much of the current development however, was carried out in the latter part of the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century. During this period, much of the sub-standard housing located off alleys and courtyards was replaced by assembling larger parcels of land which were developed mainly for housing or various public purposes. These included the magistrates' court and police station (now vacant) and telephone exchange (now partly converted into Design Council offices) in Bow Street. Kean Street was established when Kingsway was constructed, just to the east, in 1900.
2.4.3 Away from Bow Street, much of the development comprises high density housing of four main types. These include industrial dwellings built in the 1880s, much of it improved in recent years, and ‘model’ housing, now partly in commercial use along Broad Court. The remainder derives from the improvement of the former hostel in Russell Street, and from the conversion of former commercial and industrial buildings into apartments. Most of this development is of buildings four to six storeys in height, some with internal courtyards. The street block between Drury Lane and Bow Street is crossed by footways and includes two small open spaces, one created from a burial ground.

2.4.4 The area contains six Grade II listed buildings including Bow Street magistrate’s court and police station (1879-80), and Artisans’ dwellings (1897) at 11-19 (odd) Broad Court and 42-43 Drury Lane. About one-third of the area, that alongside Broad Court, lies within the Covent Garden conservation area, designated in 1971.

2.4.5 The Drury Lane sub-area also forms part of the city council’s Covent Garden Action Plan, adopted in Spring 2004. Within the Drury Lane sub-area, the Plan outlines the intention to review street lighting, particularly on Broad and Crown Courts, reduce the level of street clutter, and to protect the residential amenity of the area. This area is part of ‘Theatreland’ and is included in the Theatreland Initiative.

Land use

2.4.6 According to the 1990 Land Use Survey, the principal land use in the sub-area was residential. At the time of the survey this accounted for almost 30% of the floorspace in the area, but this has continued to rise through the conversion of buildings from other uses. Other significant uses in the area are offices, educational establishments and religious uses\(^1\).

2.4.7 As shown by Figure 2, office uses, including public agencies and utilities, represent the largest current use at ground floor level. A relatively small number of buildings have commercial uses on their ground floors (see Figure 3), but in much of the area whole buildings, including their ground floors, are in housing use\(^2\).

\(^1\) WCC 1990 Land Use Survey
\(^2\) GOAD Retail Survey 2005
2.4.8 Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of ground floor uses within the sub-area. Although residential uses are not shown (not forming part of the GOAD Retail Survey), large-scale residential areas, such as the Peabody Estate located on Drury Lane and Kemble Street can clearly be identified. It is also evident that office uses, including public agencies, are located in the western part of the sub-area around Bow Street and Broad Court, whilst uses to the east off Kean Street are more mixed. The sub-area also contains a hotel located on Broad Court in the west of the area.

2.4.9 A significant number of homes are situated on the Peabody Estate located between Wild Street and Drury Lane, and the Sheridan, Beaumont and Fletcher Buildings off Martlett Court (see Figure 4). In
total, there are 518 residential units\(^3\) in the sub-area and over 500 people on the electoral register\(^4\).

**Specialist Clusters**

2.4.10 With the exception of the public agencies and utilities that occupy most of the buildings between Crown Court and Drury Lane, the sub-area contains few specialist clusters.

**Scale of Entertainment Uses**

2.4.11 The area has four entertainment uses, none having music and dance or night café licences\(^5\). Three of these entertainment uses are located in the north west of the sub-area close to the Drury Lane-Great Queen Street junction (see Figure 3). These entertainment uses comprise 11% of all ground floor uses\(^6\).

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\(^3\) WCC 1990 Land Use Survey and WCC Residential Pipeline Survey 2005  
\(^4\) Electoral Register 2003  
\(^5\) GOAD Retail Survey 2005  
\(^6\) WCC Frontage Survey 2005
AMENITY/LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Anti-social behaviour, crime and noise

2.4.12 By West End standards, much of this area is generally quiet during the day and at night. The police were called to 35 disorder incidents in the area in a twelve-month period to 31 March 2005, of which 14 were disturbances in public places\(^7\). In 2004, the city council dealt with seventy noise complaints within the area; the largest category, in relation to domestic noise, accounted for two-thirds of these\(^8\).

Traffic

2.4.13 The sub-area has only limited through traffic, although observations suggest that Drury Lane is the main thoroughfare and contains the highest level of traffic. All the streets are subject to parking controls, but there is some provision for residents’ parking. Part of the internal courtyard in the Wild Street estate is used for residents’ parking and, unusually for central London, some non-residential uses have off-street servicing areas.

Pedestrian Flows

2.4.14 As the sub-area has only a few shop and entertainment uses, pedestrian counts have not been carried out in the area, either during the day or at night.

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\(^7\) Metropolitan Police Computer Aided Despatch (CAD) data: April 2004 – March 2005
\(^8\) WCC Noise Complaints 2004
SUMMARY

2.4.15 When dealing with applications in the Drury Lane sub-area, the following issues will be considered:

Character and Function

2.4.16 Almost all the streets in the sub-area are quiet locations by the standards of surrounding areas, and have a significant residential element. New entertainment uses would be unlikely to conform to the generally quiet aspect of the character of this area.

Amenity/Local Environmental Quality

2.4.17 Much of this area is predominantly residential in nature, with over 500 residential units. Entertainment uses involving the generation of noise have the potential to harm residential amenity in almost every street within this area. The addition of any new entertainment uses in this sub-area may have a particularly detrimental impact on local environmental quality by increasing this activity in an area, which is relatively quiet by West End standards.

Policy Guidance

2.4.18 Because of the adverse impact on both the character and function, and potential impact on residential amenity/local environmental quality of this sub-area, no new entertainment uses will be permitted. No permissions will be granted that intensify entertainment uses, for example a change of use from a restaurant to a bar.

2.4.19 In relation to existing lawful entertainment uses, if planning applications are submitted for a change in the nature of the use, alterations or
extensions to the premises or for variations to existing conditions, permission will only be granted where the Council is satisfied that it will result in a significant overall reduction in the impact of the use on residential amenity, the environmental quality and character and function of the locality— for example through the imposition of new or varied conditions to control the nature or operation of the activity.
2.5 CENTRAL COVENT GARDEN

SUB-AREA PROFILE

2.5.1 This sub-area centres on Covent Garden’s historic market buildings and piazza. It comprises almost all the area bounded by Long Acre and Floral Street, Drury Lane, Aldwych, the Strand, and Bedford Street (see Figure 1).

CHARACTER AND FUNCTION

Townscape

2.5.2 The area derives much of its character from the grid of streets which were laid out as a new suburb by the Bedford Estate in the seventeenth century. At its centre, this grid had a large open square surrounded by arcaded houses: the housing no longer remains, but the classical church on the west side of the square, a Grade I listed building, has survived, along with its burial ground, now a secluded open space. The southern half of the area was laid out to a slightly different pattern after the demolition of Bedford House on the north side of the Strand in 1706. A fruit and vegetable market operated in the square from about 1640, gradually expanding as London grew so that, by the nineteenth century its activities had spread into surrounding streets, despite the unsuitability of the location and poor access. Buildings to accommodate the market were built in the square itself and nearby.
2.5.3 Playhouses were built in the locality after the restoration of the monarchy. Although premises have been rebuilt or replaced, theatre has continued to be well represented, providing entertainment from music hall to opera. In turn, theatres have been and continue to be linked with other forms of entertainment, including restaurants and public houses. Two nineteenth century landmark buildings, the Royal Opera House, now reconstructed, and the Theatre Royal are listed Grade I.

2.5.4 Commerce became an important element in the area in the eighteenth century, with many houses having shops or other uses on their ground floors. Many of the original buildings have been replaced by premises more capable of accommodating shops and eating houses on the ground floors and offices or residential uses above them. In much of the sub-area, buildings typically have five or six storeys, occasionally seven. Along the Strand and Aldwych frontages larger scale redevelopments were undertaken during the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century, producing in places buildings of eight or nine storeys, including two large hotels.

2.5.5 In 1974, the Covent Garden Market Authority moved the fruit, vegetable and flower market to Battersea. Before that, in 1973, plans for the comprehensive redevelopment of parts of the area, which had been drawn up in anticipation of the market’s removal, were abandoned when over two hundred buildings were listed. Later plans for the area were very largely conservation-based. These included, in the late 1970s, the restoration and conversion of the main market building into specialty shops, stalls and restaurants, and the use of the flower market as a museum. These works and the pedestrianising of streets close by, in effect created a new shopping destination in Central London of particular interest to tourists. Street performances attract significant numbers of spectators. Many of the ground floor spaces in buildings previously occupied by uses connected with the market were taken up by shops and restaurants. In turn these made the area a more attractive location for offices and for housing.

2.5.6 The greater part of the area falls within the Covent Garden Conservation Area, designated in 1971 and later extended. Two street blocks on the Strand frontage are in the Strand Conservation Area. The area has eighty listed buildings.

2.5.7 The Central Covent Garden sub-area is included in the city council’s Covent Garden Action Plan, adopted in Spring 2004. The Action Plan outlines a number of proposed actions for the area. These include the promotion of surrounding underground stations to ease congestion outside Covent Garden Underground station, the enforcement against cycling and rickshaws on pedestrianised areas, clear enforceable busking guidelines, and improved lighting levels.

Land Use

2.5.8 According to the 1990 Land Use Survey, office uses, in a wide range of unit sizes, occupied nearly half of all premises and were the largest
occupier of floor space in the area, with nearly 40% of the total. Many of these businesses were involved in finance and insurance, but among older activities, entertainment management and publishing were still represented. The great majority of office uses were on upper floors. In addition over 20% of all floorspace within the sub-area was categorised as ‘public buildings’\(^1\). This includes the Royal Opera House, the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, and seven other theatres, several hotels and the transport and theatre museums in the old flower market. Shops and services and entertainment uses accounted for a further 16% of floorspace, over all floors, although in terms of the number of premises, retail uses were second only to office uses.

2.5.9 Figure 2 shows the current pattern of uses at ground floor level, which differs greatly from ‘all-floors’ land use data. At ground floor level, nearly 80% of premises are currently occupied by either retail or entertainment uses\(^2\). The health check carried out for the city council in 2002 reported that the Covent Garden area as a whole had ‘all the facilities one would expect to find in a West End shopping area’ and that the prime rental level was the highest of all the areas in the Central Activities Zone (CAZ) in the City. The representation of national multiple retailers has increased in recent years, and the area now has less of the unconventional aspect than it had in the 1980s.

2.5.10 As shown in Figure 3 both retail and entertainment uses are located throughout the sub-area. Entertainment uses are strongly represented along Henrietta Street/Maiden Lane to the south west, as well as the Wellington Street/Catherine Street block to the east. In addition to the Central Market, where a number of smaller, more niche retail units are located, retail uses are dominant along James Street. The northern part of this area, adjoining its boundary with the Long Acre, has a strong representation of clothing shops. There are several specialist outdoor equipment shops in and around Southampton Street. Larger single uses such as theatres, the museum, and two hotels (including the Strand Palace Hotel and the Waldorf Hotel) are located mainly in the east of the sub-area.

\(^1\) WCC 1990 Land Use Survey
\(^2\) GOAD Retail Survey 2005
2.5.11 A well established residential community exists in the Covent Garden sub-area. Housing accounts for about 6 per cent of the floorspace in the area. There are now about 270 residential units\(^3\) (and 188 people on the electoral register\(^4\)) widely scattered throughout the area, mostly on the upper floors of buildings with commercial uses on the lower floors. The greatest density of housing is located off Long Acre to the north, and street blocks to the south and east of the Central Market.

\(^3\) WCC 1990 Land Use Survey and WCC Residential Pipeline Survey 2005  
\(^4\) Electoral Register 2003
Specialist Clusters

2.5.12 Covent Garden is one of London’s key shopping and entertainment destinations, famous for its street entertainers and lively atmosphere as well as for its theatres, bars and restaurants. Covent Garden has long been regarded as a centre for small businesses, where small shop units continue to allow both contemporary and traditional niche retail and businesses to exist.

Scale of Entertainment Uses

2.5.13 There are approximately 120 entertainment uses with the Covent Garden sub-area, ranging in size from small public houses to large restaurants of international standing. The majority of entertainment uses are restaurants and cafes (63% of all entertainment uses). Entertainment uses occupy nearly 50% of all active frontages within the area, 36% of all ground floor premises and 21% of all ground level floorspace.

2.5.14 As illustrated in Figure 5 below, there are eighteen premises in the sub-area which have music and dance licenses, although there are no premises with a night café licence. These premises contain a total capacity of nearly 6300 people, and have an average terminal hour of 1.30am, although seven establishments close at 3am or later. Not all of the premises with a music and dance licence are ‘entertainment’ uses as defined by this guidance. Some of the major theatres within the sub-area possess a music and dance licence.

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5 GOAD Retail Survey 2005
6 WCC Frontage Survey 2005
7 WCC Licensing Department 2002
Music and dance licensed premises

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establishment</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 establishments (281 persons) close at 11pm</td>
<td>6287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 establishment (611) closes at 11.30pm</td>
<td>6006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 establishment (100) closes at 12am</td>
<td>5395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 establishments (1680) close at 1am</td>
<td>5295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 establishment (190) closes at 2am</td>
<td>3615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 establishments (1075) close at 3am</td>
<td>3425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 establishment (1800) closes at 4am</td>
<td>2350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 establishments (550) close at 6am</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5.15 It must be noted that these figures only relate to premises with a music and dance licence rather than all entertainment licences, and so represent the minimum potential capacity of persons. Pubs and restaurants have not generally had capacity limits.

AMENITY/LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Anti-social behaviour, Crime and Noise

2.5.16 The police were called to 303 incidents in the sub-area in the twelve months to 31 March 2005: of these, 115 involved disturbances in public places. Anti-social behaviour was recorded as being at a 'medium' level in 2002 in the piazza, as well as the streets immediately off it, including James, King, Henrietta and Southampton Streets. The activities reported include screaming and shouting, begging, fighting, men urinating in the street, and minicab drivers touting. Several instances of drinking in the street outside public houses, which can be a nuisance, were also noted. In the Strand, observers reported vandalism. The council has recognised that the narrow pedestrian courts off the Strand are another location for anti-social behaviour and crime.

2.5.17 In 2004, the city council dealt with 262 noise complaints within the area. The largest category, street noise, accounted for almost two-thirds of these. The locations generating most complaints were the Piazza square itself, James Street and King Street.

Traffic

2.5.18 Covent Garden itself has relatively little through traffic. Most vehicle movement comprises of vans serving premises or cars taking passengers to businesses within the area. Surrounding streets such as Bedford Street and Southampton Street are busier. Night-time counts conducted in 2002 indicate that Bedford Street and junctions with King Street and Henrietta Street have high levels of traffic volume between 11 and 12pm, but falls to low levels in subsequent hours. However these locations experienced a rise in night-time traffic volume to 'medium' levels at 2pm.

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8 Metropolitan Police Computer Aided Despatch (CAD) data: April 2004 – March 2005
9 PMRS 2002 Night-time Pedestrian Flowcount
10 WCC Noise Complaint 2004
Pedestrian Flows

2.5.19 The Covent Garden sub-area is heavily used during the day by tourists, shoppers and office workers and at night by tourists, theatregoers and, to a lesser extent, shoppers. Much of the sub-area is pedestrianised – especially Covent Garden itself – with alfresco dining, street performances, busking and illegal street trading taking place.

2.5.20 One of the busiest areas is James Street, which connects the Covent Garden underground station to the piazza – many visitors use the underground station as a meeting point. Day-time pedestrian counts carried out in the summer of 2001 in the busiest street, James Street near the tube station, recorded 22,000 people in a six-hour period on a Friday and over 30,000 on a Saturday, although slightly lower counts were recorded in September 2004. Night-time counts at a similar location recorded nearly 15,000 pedestrians in a six-hour period 10am to 4pm on a Friday in July 2002.

2.5.21 Within Covent Garden itself the highest levels of pedestrian flows were recorded in 2004 on the northern side of the Piazza between James Street and King Street, with significantly lower levels on the south side of the market. Similarly, in terms of outdoor seating and levels of ‘occupancy’, the western side of the market experienced the highest levels whilst the southern side was the least attractive. Artists performances on the western side were seen to attract large numbers of spectators, sometimes as many as 200. It was also noted that there was high demand for seating not linked to any restaurant services. Many people used curbstones on the sides of Covent Garden for casual seating.

2.5.22 In other locations within the sub-area, movements are rather lower with Saturday six-hour day-time counts of 9,300 in King Street, 7,400 in Russell Street and 4,500 in Henrietta Street, all just off the piazza. Night-time six-hour counts in these streets in 2002 gave returns of 7,700, 7,500 and 5,900 respectively. On the north side of the Strand, day-time six-hour pedestrian counts reported about 8,000 pedestrians in 2001, and 2,600 over a similar period at night in 2002.
SUMMARY

2.5.23 When dealing with applications for entertainment uses in the Central Covent Garden sub-area, the following issues will be considered:

Character and function

2.5.24 The special characteristics of Covent Garden are recognised by the city council. The sub-area’s special qualities derive in part from the variety of its land uses at ground floor level. These uses include shopping, some of it specialist or niche in nature; eating and drinking places; theatres, the opera house and other entertainment facilities; churches and commerce. Above ground floor, the area has a significant presence of office, residential and hotel uses.

Amenity/Local Environmental Quality

2.5.25 There is a well established residential community with 280 residential premises in this area. Parts of the sub-area have a high density of premises in entertainment uses and high levels of complaints about noise and police call-outs to criminal behaviour. Most forms of new entertainment uses, particularly night clubs, pubs and bars, are likely to add to the general level of night-time street noise and anti-social behaviour throughout this area and conflict with night-time residential amenity.

Policy Guidance

2.5.26 In most instances, new entertainment uses in Central Covent Garden are likely to have a cumulative adverse impact on both the character and function, residential amenity/local environmental quality of this sub-area, and will not therefore be permitted. Similarly proposals which
intensify an entertainment use, such as changing the use of a restaurant to a bar will adversely affect character and function and residential amenity/local environmental quality and will not therefore be permitted.

2.5.27 However, there are some limited circumstances where character and function and residential amenity/local environmental quality may not be harmed. The city council may therefore be prepared to approve proposals for small and medium sized restaurants, in the market building and premises facing onto the piazza, where it is satisfied that the provisions of TACE 8-10 and all other RUDP policy requirements are met. Consideration will also be given to the guidance outlined in the emerging draft document 'Tables and Chairs in the Covent Garden Piazza Supplementary Planning Guidance', which states that the overall mix of uses within the market should not become dominated by non-retail uses.

2.5.28 In exceptional circumstances where small or medium sized restaurants are considered to be acceptable using the above criteria, the city council will impose planning conditions that no customers will be allowed on the premises after 12.30am the following morning on Mondays to Thursdays and after 1am on the following morning on Fridays and Saturdays and midnight on Sundays (except Sundays immediately preceding Bank Holidays when customers will be allowed to remain on the premises until 1am on the following morning). An earlier closing time may be sought where there are residential premises in the immediate proximity.

2.5.29 In relation to existing lawful entertainment uses, if planning applications are submitted for a change in the nature of the use, alterations or extensions to the premises or for variations to existing conditions, permission will only be granted where the council is satisfied that it will result in a significant overall reduction in the impact of the use on residential amenity, the environmental quality and character or function of the locality – for example through the imposition of new or varied conditions to control the nature or operation of the activity.
2.6 CHANDOS PLACE

SUB-AREA PROFILE

2.6.1 This sub-area comprises four street blocks located to the south-west of Covent Garden (see Figure 1). The main street crossing the area is Chandos Place which passes east-west through the sub-area. To the south is the Strand.

CHARACTER AND FUNCTION

Townscape

2.6.2 The greater part of this area once formed part of the Bedford Estate, which also controlled the ‘core’ of Covent Garden to the east. Much of it was in housing use by the middle of the seventeenth century, some of it occupied by the titled classes. The area underwent major transformation during the nineteenth century when several sizeable commercial buildings, mostly with five to seven storeys were constructed: in addition, industrial dwellings, now largely replaced, were erected in its south-west corner. The construction of the Charing Cross Hospital in the 1820s as part of Nash’s West Strand Improvements involved the clearance of an area of poor housing. In the area as a whole, however, a number of smaller buildings have remained from before the nineteenth century, so that the effect is now of an area having a mix of architectural styles.

2.6.3 The area fronting Bedford Street falls within the Covent Garden Conservation Area first designated in 1971. The street block occupied
by the police station on Agar Street is in the Trafalgar Square conservation area. The sub-area contains 10 listed buildings, of which one is Grade II* (Zimbabwe House, 429 Strand).

2.6.4 The Chandos Place sub-area is included in the city council’s Covent Garden Action Plan, adopted in Spring 2004. Within the Chandos Place area, the Plan outlines the intention to establish a programme of ‘street scene’ improvements, including lighting, paving and signage.

Land use

2.6.5 According to the 1990 Land Use Survey, the principal land use in the sub-area is offices which accounted for 56% of all floorspace. The largest single use in the sub-area is Charing Cross Police Station in the former ‘Nash’ hospital building. Other significant land uses recorded in the survey were residential uses (18% of all floorspace) and ‘public buildings’ (12%)\(^1\). This last category included the embassy at Zimbabwe House, and recording studios and film studios on Bedfordbury.

2.6.6 Figure 2 shows the current pattern of uses at ground floor level, by number of premises. Office and retail uses comprise 70% of all ground floor premises, although office uses take up 67% of all ground level floorspace (compared to 10% for retail)\(^2\).

2.6.7 As illustrated in Figure 3 below, the sub-area is dominated by office uses at ground floor level. Most entertainment uses are located close to the Chandos Place/Bedford Street junction. Retail uses are located on the periphery of the sub-area, facing Bedfordbury to the north, and the Strand to the south.

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\(^1\) WCC 1990 Land Use Survey
\(^2\) GOAD Retail Survey 2005
2.6.8 The sub-area contains nearly 80 residential units\(^3\), whilst there are over 100 residents on the electoral register\(^4\), mostly in Bedfordbury and Bedford Court.

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\(^3\) WCC 1990 Land Use Survey and WCC Residential Pipeline Survey 2005
\(^4\) Electoral Register 2003
Specialist Clusters

2.6.9 This sub-area is mainly noted as the former location of the Charing Cross Hospital. It also contains a number of multi-media companies along Bedfordbury, including post-production and filming facilities.

Scale of Entertainment Uses

2.6.10 Entertainment uses within the sub-area are limited in number, occupying 18% of ground level floorspace and just under a quarter of the active frontages\(^5\). The area contains 6 entertainment premises\(^6\) made up almost entirely of bars and pubs, concentrated in the eastern section of Chandos Place.

2.6.11 As shown in Figure 5 below, only one property operated with a music and dance licence, located on Chandos Place with a capacity of 600 persons and a terminal hour of 12.30am\(^7\).

2.6.12 It must be noted that these figures only relate to premises with a music and dance licence, and night café licence, rather than all entertainment licences, and so represent the minimum potential capacity of persons. Pubs and restaurants have not generally had capacity limits.

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\(^5\) WCC Frontage Survey 2005  
\(^6\) GOAD Retail Survey 2005  
\(^7\) WCC Licensing Department 2002
AMENITY/LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Anti-social behaviour, crime and noise
2.6.13 The police were called to 25 disorder incidents in the sub-area in the twelve months to 31 March 2005. Observations undertaken in 2002 reported generally low levels of anti-social behaviour. The city council received thirteen noise complaints from this sub-area in 2004. By the standards of the West End these are relatively low levels.

Traffic
2.6.14 Vehicle access from Agar Street to the Strand has been closed for traffic management reasons. The sub-area as a whole has only limited through traffic, but the narrow section of Bedford Street, at its southern end, can become congested during the day with traffic queuing to get into The Strand. Night-time traffic counts undertaken in 2002 indicate medium levels of traffic volume along the Strand, and low levels along William IV Street.

Pedestrian flows
2.6.15 By central Westminster standards, footways in this area are quiet and are only rarely congested. Day-time pedestrian counts recorded 2,200 in a six-hour period in William IV Street, and 12,900 on the wide footway outside 426-427 Strand in July 2002. Night-time pedestrian counts gave a return of 1,800 in a six-hour period from 10pm to 4am in William IV Street on a Friday in July 2002, and a count of 4,500 outside the Adelphi Theatre just east of this area on the north side of the Strand. The highest levels of recorded pedestrian flow occurred along Bedford Street to the east, as people accessed central Covent Garden, although only the footway of the western side of the road is located within the Chandos Place sub-area.

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8 PMRS 2002 Day-time Pedestrian Flowcount
9 PMRS 2002 Night-time Pedestrian Flowcount
SUMMARY

2.6.16 When dealing with applications in the Chandos Place sub-area, the following issues will be considered:

Character and function

2.6.17 The sub-area is dominated by office uses. Relatively few uses fall within the broad definition of entertainment. Additional entertainment uses would therefore not conform to the areas current character and function.

Amenity/Local Environmental Quality

2.6.18 Although there are only six entertainment premises in this sub-area these are mainly in bar and pub use. This type of entertainment use is particularly associated with anti-social behaviour. In Agar Street, Bedford Street and William IV Street, there are few residential uses. Additional entertainment uses here may not directly conflict with night time residential amenity, although they may contribute to the general level of night-time street noise, and possible street crime and anti-social behaviour in this sub-area as a whole. Entertainment uses in Bedfordbury and Bedford Court would be likely to conflict with the predominantly residential use of those areas.

Policy Guidance

2.6.19 Because of the adverse impact on both the character and function, residential amenity/local environmental quality of this sub-area, no new entertainment uses will be permitted. No permissions will be granted that intensify entertainment uses, for example a change of use from a restaurant to a bar.
2.6.20 In relation to existing lawful entertainment uses, if planning applications are submitted for a change in the nature of the use, alterations or extensions to the premises or for variations to existing conditions, permission will only be granted where the Council is satisfied that it will result in a significant overall reduction in the impact of the use on residential amenity, the environmental quality and character and function of the locality— for example through the imposition of new or varied conditions to control the nature or operation of the activity.