



City of Westminster

working for the future of Chinatown



唐人街



# setting the context

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From meadow and military training ground, to a residential and increasingly commercial centre with a sizeable residential population around its fringes, the area of modern day Chinatown has experienced an engaging and ever-changing 500 year history.

The area's first recorded name, as it appears on survey maps of the 1500s, was St. Martin's Field. It is rumoured that the area was used for hunting, and here too one would hear the hunting cry 'Soho'; from which Soho derives its name. In 1666 the Great Fire of London ravaged the city, and tens of thousands of people were made homeless. The areas which we now know as Chinatown and Soho became a prime location for new development. The former was acquired by Lord Gerard and developed by Nicholas Barbon. In 1685 Barbon completed the construction of Gerrard Street (an extra 'r' came into common usage in the nineteenth century). During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries many artists lived in Gerrard Street, but by the mid nineteenth century the area had degenerated into a slum. The affordable rents meant that it was attractive to waves of immigrant communities such as the French Huguenots, Jewish refugees, and eventually the Chinese.

## birth of Chinatown

It was in the 1950s that the first Chinese communities began to settle around Gerrard Street and Soho. They moved from the Limehouse area of London where, since the late 18th century, they had worked as seamen and developed successful laundry businesses. After Limehouse and the Docklands were bombed in the war, many Chinese people, attracted by affordable rents and short leases around Gerrard Street, opened new businesses and ventured into catering. London was becoming more cosmopolitan and Londoners more keen to explore Eastern cuisine. The catering trade proved a great success and more immigrants from Hong Kong,

mainland China, and the countries of East and South East Asia settled and found work in the area. Associated businesses, and sleeping accommodation designed to cater for restaurant workers, also sprang up nearby. Chinatown grew ever more popular with local and international visitors as well as the 60,000 Chinese living in London. The City Council recognised this and in the mid-80s we undertook to redesign Chinatown's public space, pedestrianising Gerrard Street and parts of Newport Place, erecting Chinese Gates, a pagoda and street furniture commensurate with Chinatown's increasing popularity. London's Chinatown is now the largest and most centrally located 'Chinatown' in Europe and one of the largest within any 'western' city.



# foreword

Councillor Simon Milton



Christine Yau



Chu-Ting Tang



London's Chinatown is of great importance to Westminster, London and indeed internationally. This action plan was developed in recognition of that world-wide importance. It has been prepared in partnership with Chinatown's communities, businesses, and landowners, as well as the Police and the other statutory agencies. The action plan was the subject of an extensive public consultation from May 2003, and then adopted by the City Council's Cabinet in September. A snapshot of the results of the consultation can be found on page 20.

The action plan is part of the City Council's Civic Renewal Programme, which is delivering real benefits across all of Westminster in areas such as clean streets, community protection and CCTV. It is this kind of proactive approach that has qualified the City Council as one of the top local authorities in the UK for the second year running in the Government's annual assessment. The work of Civic Renewal in the West End is being backed by comprehensive action plans not only for Chinatown, but for other parts of the West End, including Leicester Square and Covent Garden.

The commitments in all of these action plans must be seen against the background of the current very difficult funding situation. Facing substantial losses in its grant from central Government, the City Council has nevertheless been determined to sustain its dedication to improve the West End. That commitment is substantial, running to several million pounds a year for Chinatown alone in terms of the City Council's wide range of existing services. Now, many additional initiatives have been developed as part of this action plan. The specific actions implemented over the past six months have ranged from promoting Chinatown with car park discounts and helping the Chinese Community Centre to secure sustainable funding, to overhauling the waste collection regime in the area. It is hoped that our clear commitment to coordinate

and develop the other actions set out here will enable further funding to be secured. Without such funding, many actions will not be able to go ahead.

I look forward to working with you to secure the necessary funding and deliver the improvements that will make our vision a reality.

## **Councillor Simon Milton**

Leader of Westminster Council

We welcome the results of the public consultation and the final Chinatown Action Plan. The plan is widely well received and our community wishes to pledge our full support. Despite the difficult financial situation, the Council's courage in pushing ahead with the Chinatown Action Plan with vision and commitment is commendable. The progress made in Chinatown thus far and the ever closer working relationship should also be applauded.

We will continue to work with Westminster City Council for the prosperity of Chinatown and the benefit of our community, proud that the area's unique Chinese character is duly recognised and encouraged.

## **Christine Yau**

Chairman, London Chinese Community Centre

## **Chu-Ting Tang**

President, London Chinatown Chinese Association

倫敦華埠中外聞名，為英國最受歡迎旅遊重點之一。西敏市市政府與其他合作夥伴於二〇〇三年五月就美化華埠作出徵詢，「行動計劃」因應各界人仕所提供的意見作出修訂的最後版本。



## introduction

This document is the final Chinatown Action Plan as adopted by the City of Westminster Council's Cabinet in September 2003. A draft version was subject to a wide public consultation from April 2003. In all, three thousand action plans, translated summaries, and Chinese and English versions of questionnaires were distributed locally as well as to the key organisations around London. Exhibitions were held through Chinatown, a large public meeting was held in the Chinese Community Centre, and many smaller meetings also took place.

London's Chinatown is one of the most central and bustling districts of its kind in Europe. As an important focal point for the UK's Chinese, East Asian, and South East Asian culture and community, and a destination for residents, workers, and visitors to central London, Chinatown has become an integral part of what makes this a *world class* city.

The neighbourhood recognised as Chinatown, nestled between Soho to the north and Leicester Square to the south, boasts numerous Chinese, East Asian, and South East Asian restaurants, supermarkets, and specialist services. It is also the home to the Chinese Community Centre and stages significant Chinese cultural events, including the celebration of the Chinese New Year. Over the past decade however, the intensity of catering operations in the area, and the increased popularity of the West End in general, has taken its toll. The proximity to the mega-bars and clubs of Soho and Leicester Square, means that Chinatown streets stay busy late into the night, and as a result can suffer antisocial behaviour and crime. The 80 restaurants in Chinatown, some of which open very late, can seat thousands at any one time, and produce a phenomenal 2,300 tonnes of waste annually. Inappropriate waste practices and the inherent difficulties of managing such a complex and concentrated area can mean that some of this refuse ends up on Chinatown's pavements. Many of the areas worst problems are in Lisle Street, which, against a background of littered pavements and poor lighting, can be dark and uninviting by night.

The pace of central London's night time economy means that many local businesses, which contribute vastly to Chinatown's colourful character, now face a future imperilled by competing mega-bars, clubs and coffee chains with no traditional Chinese attributes. Their financial problems have been exacerbated by unfounded rumours about the SARS virus and by the impact of the Mayor of London's Congestion charge scheme.

The Council has long supported the Chinese Community – for example through our own Chinese Liaison Officer, who is in frequent contact with the diverse Chinese community. The Action Plan itself has been developed in partnership with the London Chinatown Chinese Association, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, the Chinese Community Centre, the Metropolitan Police Service, and Shaftesbury PLC (a major property owner in Chinatown). The backing of key partners and the wider community was evident in the results of the consultation, conducted in May 2003, which showed an overwhelming support for the action plan. We also welcome the support of a new landlord in Chinatown, Rosewheel Ltd, which has purchased holdings within the Newport Sandringham building between Newport Place and Charing Cross Road.

The proposals in this Action Plan are intended to address many of the pressures and concerns facing Chinatown and its community; indeed some of the proposals are already underway or completed. Some of these will rely on the strong support and close cooperation of the key stakeholders, the landlords and the many local businesses. To this end, the City Council is committed to working with this diverse community for the benefit of all those that live and work in Chinatown and the many thousands who visit the area every week. Our success with an Action Plan approach can be witnessed in Leicester Square. The Council initiated and is continuing a close working relationship with the Leicester Square Association, the Piccadilly Circus Partnership, the Metropolitan Police, and many of the businesses around the Square. Over the past year the area has become cleaner, brighter and more pleasant. Lighting has improved, the park is maintained to a high standard, City Guardians – with the help of CCTV – patrol on a 24 hour basis, and crime figures have reduced dramatically, bucking London wide trends. Now, with the evident public support for our approach, we will extend the success of this approach to Chinatown.

## vision



### a distinct area

The consultation revealed much support for our view that Chinatown is an area with a distinct culture, cuisine, and character. Our vision is to foster and celebrate the atmosphere that makes Chinatown special and to ensure that it offers a high quality experience for all who visit, work, and live in the area. We want to recognise that its community and culture are made up of people from various East and South East Asian countries and its cuisine has many varieties to offer from across East Asia. We will work with our partners and Visit London to promote London's Chinatown not only in terms of cuisine, but also as a place to enjoy the fascinating culture of the Orient via tourist literature and by helping Chinatown to develop its web site, linking it to the Council's and other significant web pages. We will aim to make Chinatown a high quality experience which will invite people to come back and encourage repeat business.

There are many physical elements that contribute to the unique character. The simple and attractive domestic-scale Georgian terraces are enhanced by Chinese themed street furniture. While the public realm will be discussed later, the Chinese pagoda in Newport Place deserves special mention. With better maintenance, perhaps some renovation, and a reduction in traffic and parking it could be a prime focus for Chinatown. As part of a review of traffic and parking in Chinatown we will look at how the pagoda area can be brought to life. Some of the suggestions we've had during the consultation include holding public events such as Tai Chi classes, Chinese Chess, Chinese Calligraphy, or even a Chinese Lantern Quiz.

### special character

In encouraging Chinatown's function and character to develop and prosper, we want to support the mainstay of the community – its restaurants, shops and other local businesses. There has been concern, confirmed by responses during the consultation, that the area's identity could be eroded if the bar and club culture of Soho is allowed to progress unchecked into Chinatown. The consultation also raised the suggestion that planning policies do not recognise the special nature of Chinatown. The City Council is resolute in protecting Chinatown as a unique area. We are already using planning and licensing to manage the growth of new entertainment premises in the West End Stress Area, and to protect the local convenience retail, medical and community activities from changes of use. Chinatown is included in the Soho Conservation Area which guides the quality of the local townscape and the extent of any physical changes, helping to maintain its unique character and function. The Council intends to prepare Conservation Area Audits for all of its 53 Conservation Areas, and a priority list was agreed by Committee. We will seek funding to bring forward the review for the Soho Conservation Area Audit, currently to be considered at the end of the 2004/05 programme. We will also explore redesignating Chinatown as its own Conservation Area. In addition, we will produce Supplementary Planning Guidance, outlining ways in which the oriental nature of Chinatown can be maintained and improved and with the backing of this action plan in our policy, we will use our licensing powers to encourage activities with a Chinese, East Asian, or South East Asian Character. In the not too distant future, the planning policy framework is changing. We will consider the subsequent adoption of the Action Plan as part of the new Local Development Framework replacing the UDP – in effect giving Chinatown the future equivalent of to Special Planning Area status.

徵詢期間，各界人仕所提供的意見確定倫敦華埠在文化、飲食、色彩等與別不同的地位。市政府將竭力承諾保留倫敦華埠。



## a clean and safe environment



### cleaner

Many respondents agreed with us that the single biggest issue in the life of Chinatown is its cleanliness. At times, oil on its pavements and rubbish left out for collection at the wrong time can make the place look dirty and unkempt. Fortunately, in terms of cleansing, we have made great progress. We have recently purchased two brand-new cleansing machines, specialised in dealing with the kind of oil and grease on Chinatown's streets, and they have begun operating in the area with visible differences. We deploy a mobile urinal off Lisle Street on Friday and Saturday evenings to minimise street fouling, and will consider other sites in the future. We will further reduce street fouling by looking at ways that the urinals can be sign-posted, by requiring the provision of new public toilets in any new building developments on the south side of Lisle Street (north of Leicester Square), and by running enforcement campaigns against offenders throughout the West End.

### rubbish collection

We have made significant inroads into the problem of rubbish bags on central London streets. Last autumn we piloted the successful 'Don't Dump' campaign, which restricted the times when refuse bags could be left out and collected. The campaign was conducted in consultation with the neighbourhood's businesses, residents and associations and collection times have been prominently posted in Complex Chinese as well as English. We are further adjusting the collection times in line with feedback received during the campaign, and have re-let our cleansing and refuse collection contract, requiring a high quality of service, more tailored to the needs of the community. We welcome the cooperation of local businesses that have worked with us to vastly reduce refuse bags being left on Chinatown and Soho streets.

It's not all about commercial waste however. As part of our review of the Street Furniture Manual we will consider new bins that can be fixed into place and removed in the case of any special events.

### waste processing

Keeping the area clean is often hindered by inappropriate waste processing and collection practices. Changes in Animal By-products Regulations have made wet food waste collections more expensive and moved many restaurateurs to illegally dispose of such waste in regular refuse bags. The refuse bags and collection trucks were never designed to handle wet waste so it is no wonder much of this waste ends up leaking onto Chinatown's pavements.

In reaction to these problems we conducted a detailed study into waste processing with the assistance of Shaftesbury PLC. The study suggested ways that the collection and storage of waste in the Chinatown area can be improved. One alternative may be to find appropriate collection points that could compact and store waste locally. We will also consider dedicating a collection crew to take waste directly from individual premises, maybe with the help of devices that notify each business of the approaching crew. This waste would then be transported intact out of Chinatown. The need for restaurants to be able to store waste for longer is also recognised and we have engaged with Shaftesbury PLC to audit individual properties with the view of improved containerisation. We are also investigating the option of introducing a waste collection warning system, which would enable collection crews to notify respective premises as a collection truck approaches. This system could prevent rubbish bags ever touching the public highway. Furthermore, by the end of the year, we will install 'drip trays' on our collection vehicles to reduce waste spilling onto the highway.

在徵詢期，意見重點集中於華埠的清潔及安全問題。有見及此，市政府已作出安排減低街道上垃圾的堆積、安裝閉路電視及加強城市守衛的巡察。

In our pursuit of a cleaner, more inviting Chinatown we stress the importance of individual businesses and their staff. We will run an education campaign to make sure all Chinatown businesses know how to dispose of waste appropriately and will work with all relevant parties jointly to ensure wet waste does not end up in the general waste stream and that refuse bags are placed out at the correct times. Further, we will post 'Keeping Westminster Clean' information on dust carts dedicated to Chinatown.

#### **environmental health**

We are committed to ensure the highest standards of environmental health across Westminster. With so many food establishments in Chinatown, the need to maintain high food safety standards is a priority. We will continue to advise, liaise, and seek cooperation of local businesses via regular food safety inspections.

Our proactive inspections also include trading standards, licensing, and pest control and we have introduced a new 24 hour operations team which can be called out any time of day or night to assist businesses and residents with matters of environmental health.

#### **city guardians**

Making sure that the streets are clean and safe for everybody is a huge task for the Council, and one that requires constant attention. As part of our commitment to keep Westminster safe, we have established a Community Protection department with the task of delivering a safe and secure city. In dedicating resources to Chinatown, we are deploying City Guardians in the area to deal with specific Chinatown issues and enhance everyone's experience of Chinatown. Indeed 95 percent of respondents during the consultation welcomed the extension of City Guardians to Chinatown.

In Leicester Square, City Guardians have proved a resounding success in attending to local problems as they arise, and indeed have contributed to its reduced crime rates. City Guardians offer a highly visible, uniformed presence, acting as eyes and ears for the Council and the Police, and actively managing the public space, dealing with anything from lighting faults to graffiti. They will be working side by side with the new Police Community Support Officers while supervising and advising the residents and businesses on rubbish collection, inspecting those areas not part of the CCTV network, and tackling street urination in problem 'wet spot' areas such as Dansey Place, Horse and Dolphin Yard, or Newport Court.

Though much calmer than Soho and Leicester Square in terms of overall crime, Chinatown is part of the Police defined 'hot-box' of crime and requires the special attention that a dedicated team of City Guardians can deliver. With the support of the Police and the Council's enforcement services, the types of problems that the City Guardians would help resolve include illegal traders, drug dealers, and the card sharks, who rip off tourists and locals with their 'three card trick'. Taking on the suggestions of the Metropolitan Police

#### **cctv**

We have shown how serious we are about protecting the community by initiating a new state of the art CCTV scheme in the West End. The scheme involves a mobile CCTV van and 33 fixed cameras throughout the West End with a control centre in Piccadilly Circus. CCTV enables policing resources to be deployed more efficiently by guiding Police directly to a crime or alerting the City Guardians to a public nuisance. It allows the monitoring and targeting of any criminal or anti-social activity and greatly enhances joint Council and Police action. The cameras in Chinatown have already contributed



to some successful operations against illegal cigarette vendors. The absence of such illegal activity will go a long way to making Chinatown a more enjoyable place to visit. With the addition of two more mobile CCTV vans in the summer and the installation of a new police radio in the control room, the scheme should become even more effective. To make the area safer still and to help improve communication, radios will also be available for businesses, allowing them to link in to the City Guardians and the CCTV network.

### **policing**

Of course the local Council cannot and should not replace the Police. Westminster has lobbied hard for more Police on the streets of Central London and we welcome the 100 new Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) based at Charing Cross police division. Their primary role is security, and their patrols regularly take them into Chinatown, where they can be seen in support of regular patrol officers, the sector team and the Chinatown Unit community beat officers. PCSOs will act in support of City Guardians and the Council's enforcement services. Up to six PCSOs will be posted to the police sector team during 2003, to further enhance patrols in the Chinatown and Leicester Square areas, as well as provide a high visibility policing presence and public reassurance.

### **street drinking**

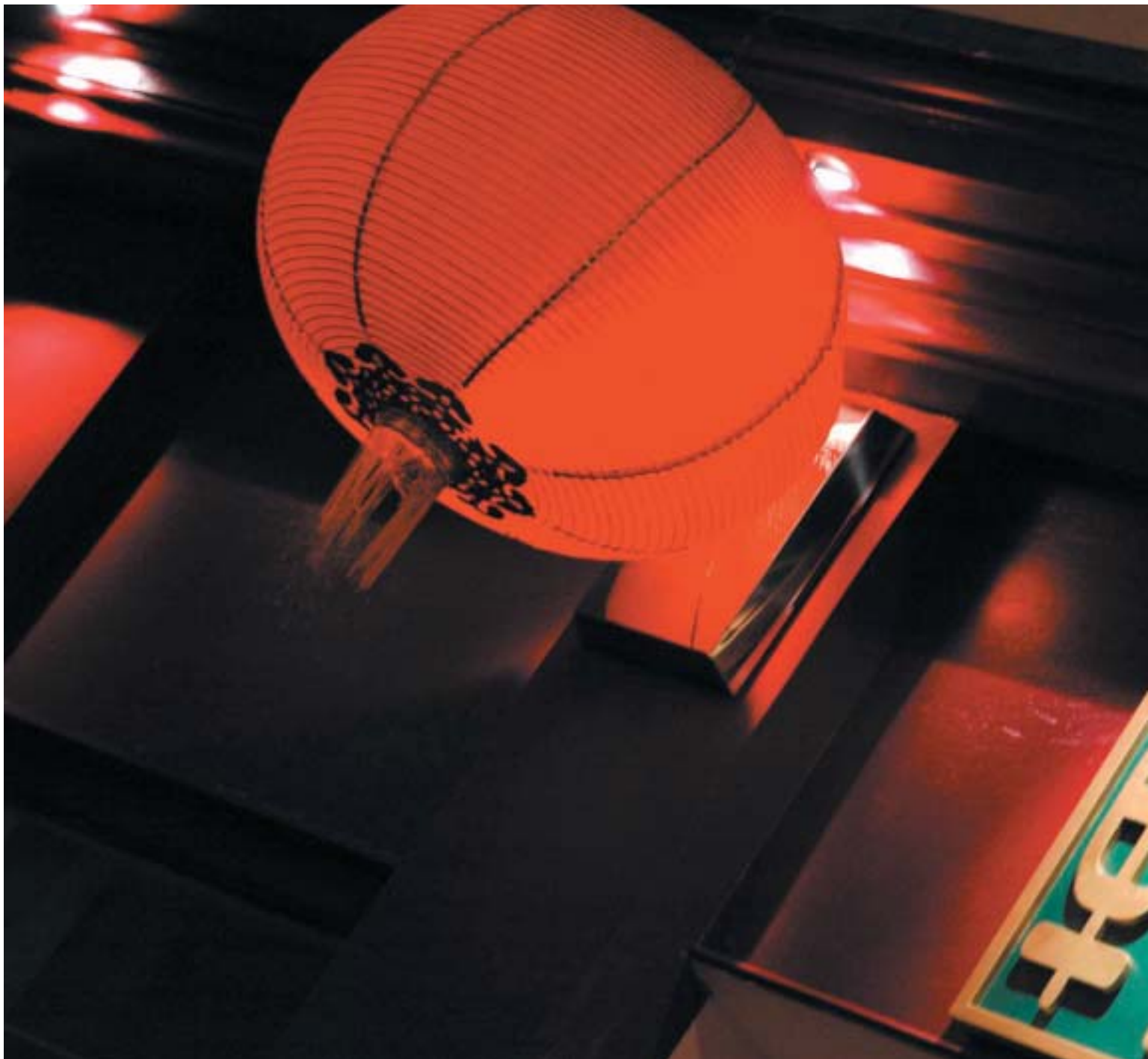
The work of the Police, the City Guardians, and various Council enforcement teams could be aided by introducing a controlled street drinking zone. This measure gives Police the discretionary power to confiscate alcohol from people drinking in the street and has been tested in the Victoria area. The designation of an area allows the Council and the Police to target persistent trouble makers. We will review the existing scheme and investigate bringing forward proposals to extend controlled street drinking to the West End and other parts of Westminster.

### **illegal minicabs**

Protecting the community means making sure that everyone gets home safely. Many workers in Chinatown finish their shifts quite late, after the tube stops running. We have been lobbying for better public transport and are doing what we can to make it safer. Targeting illegal minicabs is a priority for the Council's 'Safer Travel at Night' project which also looks at making bus stops better lit. We have run many joint operations with the Police, Customs & Excise, Immigration, and even the Work and Pensions office to reduce the number of such minicabs. We will take on board comments from the Metropolitan Police Service about creating safer, well lit, CCTV patrolled, routes home. In conjunction with our efforts against illegal minicabs we are piloting the provision of security staffed West End taxi stands. As mentioned below, we will consider one such stand in Chinatown's Little Newport Street.



倫敦華埠的外觀非常重要。因此，市政府已著手修鋪街道、改善街燈、修葺涼亭等。市政府更與駐英中國大使館、社團領袖、業主等商討加建華埠新的牌坊。



## the public realm



### more attractive

As part of the pedestrianization of Gerrard Street in the mid eighties the area received a major facelift. Since then, the bustle of Chinatown has been framed by new Chinese gates and bollards, lit by distinctive, red lighting columns, and served by specially designed phone boxes. While improving the management of the area is a priority, many of the physical elements that make this public space appealing are worn and in need of repair or replacement. The scale of improvement is of course constrained by funding, but we are optimistic that our action plan can go a long way to make Chinatown more attractive. With any changes to the physical environment we hope to work even closer with the major landlord, Shaftesbury PLC, the Chinese Embassy, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, and the London Chinatown Chinese Association and others, to pool resources, attend to practical issues and take care of cultural sensibilities. We especially welcome the commitment of the major landlords in Chinatown, Shaftesbury PLC and Rosewheel Ltd. We could also work together to bring forward proposals for improving the appearance of ground level frontages or look to making the blank walls which adorn some large buildings more attractive.

### flower baskets

A great way to make Chinatown attractive could be to have hanging flower baskets decorating its streets. The upkeep of flower baskets on Westminster's commercial streets is funded from private sponsors. A scheme for hanging baskets in Chinatown has been discontinued because the baskets interfered with delivery lorries. The baskets could be repositioned above the pedestrian side of the lampposts where they would cause no obstruction. Should the nature of the lampposts prohibit a new scheme to be put in place, we will look at other horticultural features within Chinatown such as window baskets. With the help of the key stakeholders, we will rally sponsorship again, and add more colour to Chinatown.

### street furniture

While we will examine the use of bespoke street furniture in Chinatown as part of the review of the Street Furniture Design Manual, we are positive about suggestions of restoring existing Chinese Gates and investigating options for new Gates in Little Newport Street or Wardour Street. Another welcome addition or alternative for Wardour Street could be permanent Chinese lanterns or banners. Indeed, much can be achieved by mixing ideas old and new. For example, we will aim to replace the damage prone swivel gates, which open to let vans and lorries in every morning, with hydraulic, 'pop-up', bollards.

### access

There was firm agreement from those consulted that landmark structures, such as the new and improved gates, help signpost Chinatown. Other methods of directing tourists will be investigated and could include well designed Chinese lanterns (especially in Wardour Street), improved signposts and signs that could be incorporated into existing or new buildings on the north terrace of Leicester Square. Another way to signpost Chinatown and help tourists and locals in general could be to have a dedicated underground exit. When Leicester Square tube station was redeveloped in 1933–5 it had several exits. One of these, at No. 45 Charing Cross Road, on the north corner of Little Newport Street, was subsequently closed and replaced by a Bureau de Change. We will raise this issue with London Underground and urge them to conduct a feasibility study for the reopening of this exit. This new facility could be marked specifically for Chinatown and possibly provide a new gateway to the area. Should London Underground agree with this suggestion, it could make getting to Chinatown by public transport a little bit easier and provide an additional exit from the already busy Leicester Square tube station.



### parking

The reliance on lorries and cars for deliveries or transport will always be a feature within central London. Our aim is to find a balance between the need for parking and the provision of a pleasant local environment. We already provide an award winning car park within Chinatown. The car park offers discounts to local theatre goers and we will consider various discount schemes that would favour Chinatown and it's key workers.

To make Chinatown more attractive, and less cluttered with vehicles, we will enforce against illegal parking and continue monitoring problem areas such as Newport Place with the help of our City Guardians. We will also review the current parking spaces and delivery time zones in Chinatown as part of a traffic study mentioned below.

In our efforts against the abuse of parking in central London, the Council was proposing to extend parking control hours for meters and single yellow lines throughout the West End. This was to include Sundays and late weekday evenings. However, the extension of parking restrictions, as was noted during the consultation, would compromise the ability of Chinese families to visit Chinatown on a Sunday for dim sum or send their Children to Chinese Sunday School. As a direct result, the plans to restrict parking in the area have been abandoned.

### lighting

An item of utmost importance within a public space is lighting. Not only is lighting important in creating the atmosphere of a place, it is also an important security measure. We have listened to the local community and agree that there are parts of Chinatown that are in need of better and brighter lights, and Lisle Street especially is a problem (see section on Lisle Street, page 16). With the help of the new City Guardians service, we propose to monitor the existing lights and report any faults on a daily basis. Furthermore, we will conduct

a review of current lighting conditions and install new lighting columns where necessary. A catenary lighting system, which could also be used for flags and banners during Chinese New Year celebrations, may be more appropriate for Chinatown and if so, we will work with all concerned to find the funding to bring this about.

### surfacing

It is natural that an area of such heavy use as Chinatown requires adequate pavement and road surfacing. Every morning dozens of often heavy delivery vehicles access Gerrard Street. The Council's large, waste collection vehicles drive down its length several times a day and the number of pedestrians can peak above 2,500 an hour. Laid out in red paving bricks some 12 years ago, Gerrard Street and Macclesfield Street are in a poor condition today, and no longer befit Chinatown's vitality and significance. Exacerbated by last year's utility works, the bricks come loose regularly and the road is constantly in need of maintenance. To stop utility companies digging up Chinatown at will, we will aim to classify the area as High Duty, which will require utilities to programme works more efficiently. Further, we will work with key stakeholders to secure funding to conduct a major reconstruction of Gerrard Street and Macclesfield Street surfaces and find a paving solution that will withstand the vehicular, pedestrian, and cleansing pressures particular to Chinatown. Whatever material is chosen, it will have to account for the endemic problem of slippery grease deposits.



### **Dansey Place and Horse & Dolphin Yard**

We are positive about new and innovative ways to make the physical environment more attractive. There was relatively low support for introducing small markets in the presently underused and neglected area of Horse & Dolphin Yard and Dansey Place. As a result, we will assess both these spaces carefully and will work with Shaftesbury on various other ways in which these spaces can be improved.

### **theatreland**

People often come to enjoy Chinatown as part of a day out in the West End. Many come to eat in one of Chinatown's restaurants before or after seeing a West End Show. By improving the experience of these theatregoers we will enhance the appeal of Chinatown. The theatres in the immediate vicinity include the Apollo, Lyric, Queens, Gielgud, and Palace. We welcome the Society of London Theatre's support for the Action Plan and will work with these theatres and the Society to improve the appearance and safety of their venues. We will continue to work in close consultation with theatres on the standards of our services in their area, including cleansing, lighting, highways and community protection matters.

改善華埠不能忽略社會及文化上的需要。市政府已分別改善圖書館的服務及支持農曆新年慶祝。徵詢意見反映各界人士對華人社區中心服務的重要性；同時，市政府亦就建立華埠文藝廊作出構思。



## celebrating Chinatown



### **cultural policy**

The backbone of Chinatown is its unique culture. It is this Chinese, East Asian, and South East Asian identity that we want to encourage and celebrate; the bustle of a Sunday morning when families make their way for Dim Sum; or the excitement experienced when watching lion dancers at Chinese New Year.

### **special events**

There are already three major events that take place in Chinatown. The Moon festival, 'Bathing of Buddha' festival, and the Chinese New Year all inject life into Chinatown. Last year an audience of 120 million viewed London's Chinese New Year celebrations on television. In exploring Chinatown's potential however, with the financial help of the local landlords, we will aim to develop the area around the pagoda into a small events space. Also we aim to negotiate a Chinese film festival or Chinese films in Leicester Square.

### **community**

Revitalising Chinatown is most of all about people. It is about the social fabric made up of those that work, visit and live in the area. Social issues affecting the community include a changing demographic of more young and mainland Chinese arriving to work in Chinatown as well as an ageing population seeking support and stability.

Over many years we have been providing a Chinese Community Liaison Officer, David Tan. This officer is a vital link for all Chinese people wishing to find out about the Council's services, and we will continue to support the community and its needs with this important resource.

It is also through encouraging organisations such as the Chinese Community Centre that we can attend to some of the social issues in Chinatown. The Centre offers facilities for social, health, educational, recreational, and cultural activities. Despite a reduced overall grants budget,

we will continue to support this important Centre with annual funding for social as well as educational, cultural and arts projects while encouraging an output oriented programme. Over and above that, we will explore with the Centre ways in which its funding basis can be made more secure.

Sadly the lease over the Chinese Community Centre's premises is due to expire in 2008. Their current premises are subject to a planning restriction safeguarding the community use and this should be reflected in any future rent reviews. If the community centre were to be displaced, we would hope to help them find new accommodation by engaging local property owners. Indeed, in the draft planning brief for the Swiss Centre, on the corner of Lisle and Wardour Street, we have included a requirement for a local community use.

### **Chinese art space**

The Chinese Cultural Centre and other such organisations, which foster professional Chinese performances and exhibitions, are also in need of a regular space. We have had many responses on the idea of a cultural and arts venue for Chinatown. Not all views were in favour of combining a commercially viable art and culture venue with the social functions of a community centre. We will work with various cultural and arts organisations, including the Arts Council of England, to come up with the best solution for such a space.

### **library**

Many Chinese people already benefit from the Westminster Chinese Library, which is based at nearby Charing Cross Library – located on the edge of Chinatown. Recently, we have expanded the provision at the library, which – with the help of four Chinese-speaking staff – is an important resource for the community. We will also explore combining any future community centre with the Chinese Library.

# lisle street



## special consideration

While Lisle Street will benefit from many of the proposals already mentioned, we believe it deserves special consideration.

## house-keeping

In the immediate future, many 'house keeping' issues need to be addressed. Better lighting, along with the City Guardians and the new CCTV scheme, will go a long way to make Lisle Street free of drug dealers and illegal traders. The City Guardians already monitor and report the Street's faulty lighting and new lighting will be installed in Lisle Street and Leicester Place by the end of the year. In instances where lights belong to certain properties, such as the emergency exits of cinemas, we will endeavour to convince the occupiers to keep these switched on throughout the night. In order to make Lisle Street cleaner, we are running a campaign against dumped rubbish bags and initiated regular graffiti clearing, and a mobile urinal has been positioned nearby.

## back walls

Our work in Leicester Square could lead to proposals being brought forward for the buildings which back onto Lisle Street. If this should happen, we would seek to open up what are now 'dead' frontages, to get away from the sense that now exists of Lisle Street as a 'back street'. Alternatively, should these properties remain as they are, then we would be keen to work with the building owners, the Chinese Community Centre, and the Chinese Cultural Centre to redecorate the bleak back walls, replacing this graffiti prone space with Chinese paintings, mosaics, or lighting panels that provide interesting public art as well as casting light on the street. We welcome discussions with the respective property owners about the removal or replacement of unattractive elements attached to their buildings,

particularly grim back entrances. In some cases, we will advise the property owners on how to create more attractive, safer and better lit fire exits, to discourage anti-social uses, and help light up the street.

## traffic

Opening up Lisle Street in the long term and making it a worthy part of Chinatown, could involve limiting the amount of traffic and parking, widening the footways and installing Chinese Gates at its entry points. The London Chinatown Chinese Association has suggested that Lisle Street's through-traffic could be redirected. Though such a major reduction in traffic may prove difficult, we will commission a feasibility study of these options.

## transport gateway

Lisle Street could be Chinatown's gateway street from the busy areas of Leicester Square and Covent Garden. To make their journey home safer, we will investigate the option of regularising the minicab pickup in Little Newport Street and, within the wider 'Safer Travel at Night' project, consider making it a security staffed black cab stand. The proposed re-opened tube exit in Little Newport Street, combined with a more attractive Lisle Street would mean that visitors would instantly identify Lisle Street as a worthy part of Chinatown.

儷人街 (Lisle Street) 在華埠的發展非常重要，市政府將就行車及行人通道之燈光及戲院外牆處理問題作出安排，務使儷人街相映華埠特色。



華埠行動計劃的成功需賴各方的商議及合作，市政府除派出城市守衛作日常的巡視及與各方面的接觸外，西敏市市政府專責華埠的部門主任均出席每月社區會議，滙報「行動計劃」的進展。

雖然徵詢期已過，但市政府亦樂意聆聽各界人仕所提出的寶貴意見。



# management



## **better managed**

In delivering a cleaner, safer and a more attractive Chinatown, it needs to be more adequately managed. We have formed a multi-disciplinary 'West End Group' of Council officers to ensure interdepartmental involvement in the Civic Renewal of the West End.

The City Guardians will play a critical role in managing the public space day to day, in tandem with the existing environmental service. Operating from a base at Moor Street, on the edge of Chinatown, they have an on-the-ground presence and deal face-to-face with businesses and residents to resolve problems as they arise.

With support from the Cross River Partnership, using the London Development Agency's Single Regeneration Budget, we have established a small team of officers that actively pursues strategic and operational issues on an area basis. Regular meetings take place with the London Chinatown Chinese Association, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, the Chinese Community Centre, Shaftesbury PLC and the Police. To guide work on this Action Plan and encourage active discussion of Chinatown issues, we will seek to develop a round-table steering group with all these organisations. Such a forum will review progress of the Action Plan, where every one of the actions will be checked against its timetable. We will also maintain close working relations with the Chinese Embassy. Meanwhile, a Chinese Community Liaison officer is on hand to improve dialogue between the Council and the local community; and an officer at City Hall is provided as a contact for all matters to do with Chinatown's Civic Renewal.

While this document considers actions timetabled over the next three years, we are giving sustainable management careful thought. There are several areas in Westminster where the City Council has been exploring partnership structures such as Business Improvement Districts, which with the help of landlords, occupiers, and the local community could provide an area with services and improvements on top of what the Local Authority provides. We will gauge interest and explore the potential for various sustainable partnership arrangements in Chinatown.

Our involvement in Chinatown will mean keeping in constant touch with other local organisations, for example, the Soho Society and Leicester Square Association, trade bodies like the Restaurant Association, and London wide stakeholders such as the Greater London Authority.

# the consultation results

During the public consultation in 2003 three thousand action plans, translated summaries, and Chinese and English versions of questionnaires were distributed. Exhibitions were held through Chinatown, a large public meeting was held in the Chinese Community Centre, and many smaller meetings also took place. There were over 400 responses, and the result shows overwhelming support for the approach in the Chinatown Action Plan. Below is a snapshot of the responses.

| Consultation issue       |     | Consultation response (%)  |
|--------------------------|-----|--|
| 1 Vision                 | 94% | of respondents supported the proposal that Chinatown be promoted as an area with a distinct culture, cuisine and character |
|                          | 6%  | disagreed with this proposal   |
|                          | 0%  | did not know   |
| 2 Pagoda Area            | 92% | supported the proposal to revitalise the pagoda area   |
|                          | 7%  | were against this proposal   |
|                          | 1%  | did not know   |
| 3 Street Refuse          | 94% | were in favour of tightening up on refuse being left out in the street   |
|                          | 5%  | felt refuse collection did not need the extra attention  |
|                          | 1%  | did not know   |
| 4 Wet Waste              | 96% | were in favour of the Action Plan proposals to stop 'wet waste'  |
|                          | 3%  | disagreed with such proposals  |
|                          | 1%  | did not know   |
| 5 City Guardians         | 95% | supported the extension of the City Guardian programme   |
|                          | 4%  | were against more city guardians   |
|                          | 1%  | did not know   |
| 6 Street Drinking        | 93% | were in support of discretionary restrictions on street drinking in the area   |
|                          | 6%  | were against the restrictions  |
|                          | 1%  | did not know   |
| 7 Taxi Stand             | 88% | would like to see a security staffed taxi stand, in or near Chinatown  |
|                          | 9%  | were against a security staffed stand  |
|                          | 3%  | did not know   |
| 8 Land Mark Structures   | 90% | supported the proposal for new landmark structures in Chinatown; i.e. Chinese Gates  |
|                          | 9%  | did not want such new structures in the area   |
|                          | 1%  | did not know   |
| 9 Underground Exit       | 92% | supported the idea of a dedicated Chinatown / London Underground exit  |
|                          | 8%  | were against the idea of a Chinatown underground exit  |
|                          | 1%  | did not know   |
| 10 Market                | 55% | were in favour of a market area in Horse & Dolphin Yard or Dansey Place*   |
|                          | 42% | were against a market in these two areas   |
|                          | 2%  | did not know   |
| 11 Theatres              | 91% | supported the idea that the City Council should involve Shaftesbury Avenue Theatres as part of the Action Plan             |
|                          | 8%  | disagreed with such a proposal   |
|                          | 1%  | did not know   |
| 12 Events                | 95% | were in favour of encouraging more Chinese events in Leicester Square  |
|                          | 4%  | were against the idea of more such events in the Square  |
|                          | 1%  | did not know   |
| 13 Community and Culture | 96% | supported work with developers for the benefit of a Chinese community centre and a Chinese cultural centre                 |
|                          | 3%  | were against this proposal   |
|                          | 1%  | did not know   |
| 14 Lisle Street          | 91% | supported a range of specific proposals for Lisle Street   |
|                          | 7%  | were against such proposals  |
|                          | 2%  | did not know   |

\*Responses were qualified to indicate that these areas should be redeveloped before a well managed market area is considered.

**For any information on the issues raised in this Action Plan or other Chinatown matters please contact:**

The West End Team on 020 7641 2261 or David Tan on 020 7641 7287

## timetable of actions

Set out below is a timetable for action, based upon the proposals in this action plan.

| Period   | Action   |
|--|--|
| <b>Actions already underway</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Enforce against the dumping of rubbish with the 'Don't Dump' campaign</li> <li>&gt; Post waste collection information in Chinese</li> <li>&gt; Re-let cleansing and refuse collection contract</li> <li>&gt; Conduct detailed study with Shaftesbury plc, investigating waste processing</li> <li>&gt; Introduce two new cleansing machines to deal with pavement grease</li> <li>&gt; Audit individual properties to seek improved containerisation</li> <li>&gt; Deploy a mobile urinals off Lisle Street on the weekends</li> <li>&gt; Double the collection of Chinese material at Charing Cross library</li> <li>&gt; Upgrade Chinese internet services at Charing Cross library</li> <li>&gt; Encourage Chinese authors to exhibit and do book signings at the Charing Cross Library</li> <li>&gt; Ensure there are Chinese speaking staff available at the Charing Cross library</li> <li>&gt; Protect local convenience retail, medical and community activities from change of use</li> <li>&gt; Establish a multidisciplinary group of officers ensuring progress of West End work</li> <li>&gt; Ensure regular health and safety inspections</li> <li>&gt; Lobby for more Police in central London</li> <li>&gt; Coordinated programme of fly-posting and graffiti removal in Lisle Street</li> <li>&gt; Deploy new City Guardians scheme specialised in dealing with Chinatown issues</li> <li>&gt; Develop City Guardian monitoring system for antisocial, criminal, and street management issues</li> <li>&gt; Bring into operation the CCTV scheme</li> <li>&gt; Enforce against illegal parking</li> <li>&gt; Mount joint operations against illegal traders</li> <li>&gt; Mount joint operations against drug dealers</li> <li>&gt; Mount joint operations against card sharks</li> <li>&gt; Ensure the regular repair of existing lights</li> <li>&gt; Target Lisle Street's illegal waste dumping as part of the 'Don't Dump' campaign</li> <li>&gt; Continually clear Lisle Street of clutter</li> <li>&gt; Recognise Chinatown's importance within the Council's wider Cultural Policy</li> <li>&gt; Keep funding the social, educational, and arts elements of the Chinese Community Centre under an output oriented process</li> <li>&gt; Investigate promoting Chinatown with car-park discounts</li> <li>&gt; Monthly round table with key organisations</li> <li>&gt; Key point of contact for community and stake-holding organisations</li> <li>&gt; Use planning and licensing powers to encourage venues of Chinatown character</li> <li>&gt; Run waste processing education scheme</li> <li>&gt; Purchase 2 new mobile CCTV vans</li> <li>&gt; Extending radio link to connect the new City Guardians with Police, enforcement officers, and CCTV control room</li> <li>&gt; Review the Chinese element within the Street Furniture Manual</li> <li>&gt; Support links and development of the Chinatown web site</li> <li>&gt; Investigate introduction of scheme for the control of street drinking</li> <li>&gt; Explore the options to revitalise Dansey Place and Horse &amp; Dolphin Yard</li> <li>&gt; Adjust collection times</li> <li>&gt; Introduce a special waste collection team</li> <li>&gt; Improve the lighting, cleanliness, and general street care of local theatres</li> <li>&gt; Review lighting in Lisle Street with view of installing new lights</li> <li>&gt; Install 'drip trays' on cleansing vehicles to reduce spillage</li> <li>&gt; Extending wardens radio link to include local businesses</li> <li>&gt; Clear clutter from the back walls of cinemas</li> <li>&gt; Investigate the introduction of a warning mechanism for approaching waste collection vehicles</li> <li>&gt; Review lighting levels and bring forward proposals for new lights</li> <li>&gt; Coordinate the activity of utility companies by designating the area as High Duty</li> <li>&gt; Consider options for waste collection points</li> <li>&gt; Look at allowing high quality, red lanterns as a permanent feature</li> <li>&gt; Investigate provision of a licensed cab stand in Lisle Street / Little Newport Street</li> </ul> |
| <b>Jan–Mar 04</b>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Commission feasibility study of different traffic and pedestrian options for Lisle Street, Little Newport Street and Newport Place</li> <li>&gt; Investigate how urinals can be better sign-posted</li> <li>&gt; Review Chinatown car-park pricing structure</li> <li>&gt; Review parking along Lisle Street</li> <li>&gt; Reinforce Chinatown's special identity in tourist literature by working with LTB</li> <li>&gt; Produce a Supplementary Planning Guidance which encourages specific Chinese themes for planning applications</li> <li>&gt; Investigate making the funding scheme for the Chinese Community Centre more secure</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Apr–Jun 04</b>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Work with key stakeholders to initiate a scheme of improving the appearance of frontages</li> <li>&gt; Redecorate the back walls of cinemas (as well as the wall of fire-station in Newport Place)</li> <li>&gt; Improve signposts and signs toward Chinatown</li> <li>&gt; Install hydraulic bollards</li> <li>&gt; Encourage a Leicester Square Chinese Cinema festival</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Jul–Sep 04</b>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Renovate or install new Chinese Gates with the cooperation of the Chinese Embassy</li> <li>&gt; Reintroduce a flower basket scheme</li> <li>&gt; Develop the pagoda area and explore its potential for small scale events</li> <li>&gt; Commission an update the Soho Conservation Area planning guide</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Oct–Dec 04</b>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Reinforce identity of pagoda</li> <li>&gt; Encourage touring Chinese artists to perform in the proposed pagoda performance space</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Timetable subject to further discussion</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Investigate options for a long term partnership arrangement</li> <li>&gt; Urge LUL to conduct feasibility study of reopening of underground exit in Little Newport Street</li> <li>&gt; Resurface Gerrard Street with suitable materials</li> <li>&gt; Help the Chinese Community Centre relocate to new, bigger premises</li> <li>&gt; Work with local land developers, the Community Centre, and the Cultural Centre to provide space for community use, public exhibitions, and performances</li> <li>&gt; Explore the redevelopment of 'dead' frontages on the south side of Lisle Street</li> <li>&gt; Provide public toilet facilities in new building developments</li> </ul>   |

