



GENERAL INFORMATION LEAFLET

MAYFAIR Conservation Area

11



City of Westminster

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND CITY DEVELOPMENT
DEVELOPMENT PLANNING SERVICES MAY 2004

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Designation: First designated in 1969, extended in 1974 to include areas to the south and east of Berkeley Square and east of Savile Row, extended again in 1979 to include the area from the north end of South Molton Street to North Audley Street and small extensions on Park Lane, and extended in 1990 to include small areas on Park Lane and Oxford Street.

Historical Background: Mayfair derives its name from a fair held in May in fields around the site of today's Shepherd Market. In the 1660s three large mansions, including Burlington House (now the Royal Academy) were erected on the north side of Piccadilly. These were followed by smaller scale high quality, speculative residential development. Early development was slow and piecemeal, but the pace and scale quickened from the second decade of the 18th century. Clifford Street, New Bond Street and Conduit Street were developed from 1717 and the first houses in Hanover Square were completed in the same year.

An Act was passed in 1710 permitting leases for building on the Grosvenor Estate and the development of Grosvenor Square was well underway by 1725. Berkeley Square and its surrounding streets were in different ownership and had been laid out in 1675. However, development in this area did not get properly underway until the mid 1730s. By the time that Rocque's map was published in 1745 most of the Grosvenor Estate had been built over, but a large area of land remained vacant to the west of Berkeley Square. There was also an open ground for the market in Shepherd Market and Devonshire House (now demolished) retained its pleasure ground running back to Berkeley Square.

By the 1780s, however, with the exception of the grounds of Devonshire House, Mayfair was almost completely built up. Some houses survive from this first phase of development, but many were redeveloped as their original 99 year leases expired.

On the Grosvenor Estate redevelopment took place early in three phases. In the mid-19th century houses were reclad or redeveloped in the stuccoed Italianate style. From the 1870s the Queen Anne and later Renaissance and Arts and Crafts styles took over. Finally, in the years after the First World War, neo-Georgian became the dominant style. This general pattern of development is mirrored throughout the Mayfair Conservation Area. A limited amount of redevelopment in the Modern style took place after the Second World War (eg. the Time and Life Building on New Bond Street), but it is notable that the neo-Georgian facades of Grosvenor Square were not completed until the 1960s.

Listed Buildings: There are almost 700 listed buildings in the Mayfair Conservation Area. Of these, 44 are listed Grade II* and 14 are listed Grade I.

Key Features: The detailed street plan of Mayfair is dictated largely by the pattern of land ownership. There are three distinct areas of typical 18th century grid-iron layout: the first based on and around Grosvenor Square and Hanover Square, the second based on Berkeley Square and the third based on the line of the east end of Piccadilly. Overlaid on this are the roads based on the Tyburn and Conduit Mead rivers (South Molton Street, Avery Row, Conduit Street, Bruton Lane, Curzon Street and White Horse Street). The informality of these streets and the haphazard junctions between the three major grid-irons, generate a great deal of interest in the townscape.

Imposed upon this street plan is a rich cocktail of high quality buildings. The area is dominated by fashionable town-houses (and their mews) reflecting the history of English domestic architecture from the early 18th to the early 20th century. In some terraces houses from the 1880s jostle with those from the 1780s. Other terraces date almost entirely from the period of the first build or from late 19th century redevelopment. These high quality terraces create the essential background character of the area.

Against this background, the character of Mayfair changes from street to street. Mount Street, South Audley Street and Shepherd Market are important local and specialist shopping areas. Bond Street and Oxford Street are international shopping streets, Cork Street is dominated by galleries and Savile Row is famous for its tailors. On a larger scale, the area east of Bond Street is generally more commercial than the area to the west and the borders of Mayfair are more commercial than its heart.

Despite this predominantly, commercial use, the domestic scale of the area has largely survived. Large blocks of flats, hotels and offices have largely been confined to Park Lane, Piccadilly, Berkeley Square and Hanover Square. Some of these date from the late 19th and early 20th century and are of a high quality. Others could beneficially, be redeveloped.

Adjacent Conservation Areas: Mayfair is bounded to the west and south by the Royal Parks and St James's Conservation Areas, to the north by the Portman Estate, Stratford Place and Harley Street Conservation Areas and to the east by the Regent Street Conservation Area.

Strategic Views: Not affected.

Areas of Special Archaeological Priority: The Tyburn Settlement area of special archaeological priority extends 100m south of Oxford Street from Binney Street to Woodstock Street.

Regulation 7 Directions: The whole area is affected by the requirement that any advertisement for the sale or letting of land (including estate agents' boards, advertising, shops, houses, flats or Offices) must be given consent by the City Council as local planning authority. Displaying an advertisement without having first obtained consent is a criminal offence.

Planning Briefs and Design Guidelines: 'Bond Street. A Guide to Shopfronts and Advertisements' (1992).

Spaces protected by the London Squares Act 1931: None

Registered Historic Parks and Gardens: Grosvenor Square and Berkeley Square.

Contacts

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