



GENERAL INFORMATION LEAFLET

PORTMAN ESTATE Conservation Area

8



City of Westminster

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND CITY DEVELOPMENT
DEVELOPMENT PLANNING SERVICES MAY 2004

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Designation: First designated in 1967 to cover the late 18th and early 19th century residential area developed by the Portman Estate. Extended in 1979 to include parts of Seymour Place and Marylebone Road, and again in 1990 to include Portman Square, part of Oxford Street and the area north of Crawford Street.

Historical Background: The Portman Estate grew up as a westerly extension of the earlier Harley-Cavendish Estate in the wake of the building of the New Road (Marylebone Road) in 1757. Portman Square was laid out in 1764 and the characteristic 18th century grid of streets was extended to the east with Manchester Square (1776), north with Baker Street (completed c. 1800) and west Bryanston and Montagu Squares (completed c. 1820). Today the Conservation Area extends beyond the boundaries of the old estate into the similar adjacent 18th and 19th century streets and squares. The streets in the northern part of the Conservation Area were originally less prestigious than the main thoroughfares and squares and were partly redeveloped in the late 19th century with mansion blocks. In addition in the 20th century there was a frenzy of redevelopment in Portman Square, Oxford Street and Baker Street. Otherwise however, the 18th century fabric of the area has survived largely intact.

Listed Buildings: A very large proportion of the 18th century buildings in the area are listed Grade II. These listed buildings (numbering about 600) are principally located in Bryanston, Montagu and Manchester Squares, Great Cumberland Place, Gloucester Place, Manchester Street, Wyndham Place and York Street.

St Mary's, Wyndham Place, and Home House, 20 Portman Square are Grade I listed buildings.

The Church of the Annunciation, Bryanston Street; the Catholic Church of St James's, Spanish Place; the drinking fountain in the forecourt of the Wallace Gallery; and 21 Portman Square are Grade II* listed buildings.

Key Features: The highly disciplined and formal layout of the Portman Estate is based on a grid pattern spreading north and west from Portman Square, with two sections of the north/south grid being widened to form elongated 'squares'. One of these squares, Bryanston Square, is sited centrally on one of the north/south grid lines (Great Cumberland Place/Wyndham Place) and forms part of a section of townscape based on axial planning in a rather grand manner. In the north the axis is terminated by the fine tower of St Marys Church, Wyndham Place (Sir Robert Smirke, 1812-13) and in the south by Marble Arch (John Nash, 1828).

The formal 18th century planned hierarchy of squares, thoroughfares and side streets is mirrored by a hierarchy in the design of houses, with 'first' and 'second' rate houses on main roads and squares and 'third' rate houses on side streets. In general, these houses are stock brick with modest stucco dressings, but some buildings, for example the corner houses on Montagu and Bryanston Squares, illustrate the emerging early 19th century vogue for a more extravagant use of stucco. On some side streets (eg York Street) there are original Georgian shops, on other

streets (eg Baker Street) houses have been converted to shops on the ground floors. To a large extent these shops serve and reflect the predominantly residential character of the area which has largely survived despite the absence of a late 19th century resurgence of fashionability (see Mayfair and Harley Street) and despite the incursion of offices and hotels, largely in the south of the area.

Adjacent Conservation Areas: Mayfair, Harley Street, Regents Park, Molyneux Street and Bayswater.

Strategic Views: Not affected.

Areas of Special Archaeological Priority: The Tyburn Settlement was located close to the Manchester Square area.

Article 4 Directions: None.

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: No specific guides for this area.

Registered Historic Parks and Gardens: Portman Square (Grade II), Manchester Square (Grade II).

Spaces protected by the London Squares Act 1931: Bryanston Square; Manchester Square; Montagu Square; Portman Square.

Contacts

**Built Environment
Westminster City Council
City Hall, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP
Tel: (020) 7641 2513
PlanningInformation@westminster.gov.uk**