



GENERAL INFORMATION LEAFLET

TRAFALGAR SQUARE Conservation Area

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City of Westminster

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND CITY DEVELOPMENT
DEVELOPMENT PLANNING SERVICES MAY 2004

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Designation: First designated as a Conservation Area in 1969 as part of the larger Government Precinct Conservation Area. Redesignated in 1987 as the Trafalgar Square Conservation Area. Extended in 1990 to include the street block bounded by Orange Street, St Martin's Street and Whitcomb Street, and in 1993 to include the west end of the Strand.

Historical Background: Trafalgar Square was laid-out in the 1820's as a result of John Nash's plans to remodel extensive swathes of the West End. Before the Square was laid out, the area formed the junction of Charing Cross and the Strand (the major link to the City) and included the Great Mews and Crown Stables to the Palace of Whitehall. The design of the Square sought to introduce a formal arrangement of the space; this was only partially achieved because of the gaps in the enclosure of the Square and the massing and relationships between the buildings. The National Gallery (Wilkins, 1832-8) was intended to be a crowning visual focus to the Square. Very few of the other original buildings to the Square survive; on the south side, they were replaced in later Victorian and Edwardian times. The west side includes the Royal College of Physicians (Smirke, 1824-7). On the east side is South Africa House (Sir Herbert Baker, 1935). The layout of the Square was not completed until the mid 19th century; the fountains date from 1845 (though they were modified in the 1930's); the four lions were erected in 1867 along with Nelson's Column (William Railton). St Martin-in-the-Fields (Gibbs, 1722-6) stands on the site of a medieval church and its relationship to Trafalgar Square is entirely the result of Nash's concept.

Listed Buildings: The National Gallery, National Portrait Gallery, Nelson's Column, St Martin-in-the-Fields, Admiralty Arch, and No. 36 Craven Street are listed Grade I. Canada House, the Garrick Theatre, the Coliseum, the Vicarage in St Martin's Lane, Harrington House in Craig's Court, St Eleanors Memorial Cross at Charing Cross and the triangular block incorporating Nos. 430-449 Strand with return to William IV Street and Adelaide Street are all Grade II* listed. There are also a number of Grade II listed buildings including most notably South Africa House, the Duke of York's Theatre, the Playhouse, Charing Cross Hotel, Trafalgar Buildings and Northumberland House.

Key Features: Trafalgar Square is one of the busiest and best known locations in London. It is the junction of major traffic thoroughfares and includes a main line rail terminus; it contains a number of national institutions and international cultural, entertainment and tourist attractions as well as a range of supporting commercial activities. The most important institutional buildings face the Square itself which is virtually entirely surrounded by stone faced facades with ornate decorations. Similarly, grand Regency and Victorian buildings line the main thoroughfares of the Strand, Northumberland Avenue, the top of Whitehall and St Martin's Place. However, the character of the area changes south of the Strand to a much smaller scale and 'domestic' appearance (for example in Craven Street). Here, the terrace of Nos. 25-41 dates from 1730 and comprises buildings of 3 storeys and mansard in brown brick. Some remnants of other smaller scale developments remain, such as the predominantly Victorian buildings in the Courts off St Martin's Lane, in

Chandos Place and in Craig's Court where Harrington House, a brown brick mansion of 1692 survives.

Adjacent Conservation Areas: Trafalgar Square Conservation Area is bounded by Leicester Square and Haymarket Conservation Areas to the north west, Covent Garden Conservation Area to the north, Adelphi and Savoy Conservation Areas to the east, St James's Conservation Area to the west and Whitehall Conservation Area to the south.

Strategic Views: The strategic views both from Parliament Hill to the Palace of Westminster and from Primrose Hill to the Palace of Westminster, cut through the Conservation Area running north to south.

Areas of Special Archaeological Priority: Within the Lundenwic & Thorney Island Area of special archaeological priority.

Article 4 Directions: None.

Regulation 7 Directions: The whole of the Conservation 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.

Design Briefs and Guidelines: None specific for this area.

Spaces protected by the London Squares Act 1931: None.

Registered Historic Parks and Gardens: None.

Contacts:

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