SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OVER THE CENTURIES
THE GREAT ESTATES

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24 MARCH 2006 - 15 MAY 2006
NEW LONDON ARCHITECTURE
THE BUILDING CENTRE
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London is an unplanned city. Since the 17th century it has developed largely as a series of estates which have created distinctive areas within the capital, each with its own local plan. It is a city that owes its form to the speculative developer and to the system of leasehold tenure. It is a city that has developed in waves during periods of peace and economic growth; as we enter a period of major development and change in London it is instructive to study the growth and survival of the estates that form a major part of the centre of the capital.

In the 17th century London was the City of London, it was a bustling, tightly packed residential and commercial centre; the King and Government were situated along the River Thames in Westminster. As the century progressed, aristocratic land owners to the west of the City started to develop their land. The Earl of Bedford was the first with Covent Garden, then the Earl of Southampton built Bloomsbury Square and the Earl of St Albans created St James’s Square. This westward shift was much accelerated by the Great Plague of 1665 and the Great Fire of 1666. The demand for accommodation away from the City provided an opportunity for landowners who were keen to improve their fortunes as well as to create an amenable environment around their properties.

The key to their success was the system of leasehold land tenure which was the basis of most of the capital’s residential development. The land owner would let plots to the lessee – a developer or builder – on the basis that the lessee would build at his own expense a house or houses which, at the end of the period of the lease, would become the property of the ground landlord. On the security of this agreement the developer would raise capital from investors to finance the development of the infrastructure. Sometimes these funds would come from the developers. The developer might then also sub-let individual
plots to builders who would undertake the construction. Supervision by the developer and the estate surveyors would ensure the quality of elevations and finish.

This system provided great advantage to the landowner; he could develop his land with little risk or capital outlay, he had an income from the ground rent and at the end of the lease the property reverted to the estate. With most leases fixed at 99 years the estates were able to renew leases at increased rents or to redevelop the land at the end of the period.

Development was sporadic. There was a building boom after the Fire
when Holborn was built over and Soho and St James’s developed. The Treaty of Utrecht 1713 heralded a period of peace that triggered the development of Mayfair and the areas north of Oxford Street. Then the 1760s saw development of the Bedford Estate and the Portman Estate in Marylebone. Then the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 saw a ten year building boom which included Belgravia and Pimlico.

The dominant form of development during this period is the terraced house, whether for aristocrat or artisan. The buildings in grander streets and squares are embellished with classical motifs and arranged in single compositions to imitate palazzi, but the form is remarkably consistent, the mould being broken by the Eyre Estate in the early 19th century with its development of semi detached houses. This was the first suburban development.

Although the ownership and patterns of the historic estates has changed over the years, and the Leasehold Reform Act has had a major impact on residential ownership, the great aristocratic estates of Grosvenor, Cadogan, de Walden, Portman and Bedford as well as the Crown Estate and the City of London still control the lion’s share of central London. The estates’ survival for over three hundred years as active players in the London environment provides useful lessons on current preoccupations about the development and management of our cities. By their very survival they are examples of sustainable environments; they were developed to include a proportion of affordable housing, to absorb a mix of uses and to provide a high quality environment. They are able to take the long term view and to provide a quality of stewardship from which all of London can benefit.
The map shows central London in the 19th century and how it was divided into different estates. The Cadogan, Grosvenor, Portman, Howard de Walden, Crown and City of London estates are shown coloured with the outline of the estates today superimposed.

Map by John Hewitt, taken from Francis Sheppard’s London 1808-1870: The Infernal Wen, 1971

- The Cadogan Estate
- The City of London
- The Crown Estate
- The Grosvenor Estate
- The Howard de Walden Estate
- The Portman Estate

Solid colours - the estates today
Outline colours - 19th century estates
The Cadogan Estate, headed today by Earl Cadogan, has the ancient manor of Chelsea as its core. The origins of the modern estate lie in the 18th century when the manor – originally a rural retreat for the wealthy – was sold to the antiquarian, collector and physician Sir Hans Sloane. In 1712 he bought the manor of Chelsea and began early property development with the builder John Witt – some of these houses are still visible at 1-18 Cheyne Walk, among the best examples of early Georgian building in London.

In 1737 Sloane expanded the estate by buying Sir Thomas More’s Beaufort House, facing the Thames. On his death in 1753 his estate was divided between his two daughters, Sarah and Elizabeth. Sarah married George Stanley and Elizabeth, Charles Cadogan, who had inherited the title Baron Cadogan on the death of his brother William in 1726. In 1771 Lord Cadogan leased 89 acres of the estate, from Knightsbridge to just south of Sloane Square, to the architect Henry Holland. Holland built a house for himself and undertook a development known as Hans Town. Hans Town was the forerunner of other new towns such as Agar Town, Canning Town and Kentish Town.

From 1800 to 1820 the population of Chelsea increased by 50 per cent. In the early 19th century the estate built Jubilee Place to mark the jubilee of George III. In the 1820s Cadogan Street and Wellington Square (later Chelsea Square) were laid out. Towards the end of the 19th century the area occupied by part of Hans Town was redeveloped, with the new Cadogan Square at its centre. Many buildings of note were constructed on the estate in the 20th century, including 64 and 66 Old Church Street (1936), by the leading Modernists Erich Mendelsohn and Serge Chermayeff, and Walter Gropius and Maxwell Fry, respectively; the Peter Jones department store (1933) by Slater and Moberly; and the Danish Embassy (1972) in Sloane Street, by the Danish architect Arne Jacobsen.
The £2.2 billion Cadogan Estate owns properties spread over much of Chelsea. It includes one million square feet of some of London’s most desirable retail space occupied by international fashion houses like Gucci, Chanel, Armani and Christian Dior as well as the department stores Harvey Nichols and Peter Jones. More recent arrivals include Jimmy Choo, Chloe, Cassandra Goad and Fendi.

But apart from contributing to the glamour of Chelsea’s retail offer, the estate also owns 500,000 square feet of office space, educational and medical accommodation, leisure facilities, 12 hotels, a cinema and a theatre.

However, leasehold enfranchisement, when long lease residential holders are able to extend their lease or buy the freehold, is reducing the estate quite dramatically and will continue to do so for several years. The proceeds of sales are being reinvested on the remaining estate in a number of ways.

These include contributing towards the refurbishment of the historic Holy Trinity Church on Sloane Street and the redevelopment of the Grade II listed Cadogan Hall into a concert venue with seating for 900 people.

Cadogan takes a long term view on retail occupiers that sometimes means turning down the likes of mobile phone operators and coffee shops that would see the streets “cloned” with countless other British high streets. Less lucrative bids from emerging fashion designers and lifestyle retailers are looked on favourably.
A former barracks on the Kings Road has been transformed into mixed-use development surrounding a major public space.

Under Cadogan’s redevelopment of Duke of York Barracks, designed by architect Paul Davis & Partners, the first public square in the centre of London for more than a century has been created. A transparent glass pavilion with external seating forms the centre of the square paved in York stone. The space is further animated by concealed fountains.

The space opens up a route to Sloane Square nearby via new arcade that is animated with changing displays on plasma screens.

The main square comprising 6,000 sqm of public open space is surrounded by redeveloped buildings that provide space for 42 retail units including a 250 sq m anchor store. Retailers to have moved in include Zara, Jigsaw, Ted Baker, Joseph and Agnes B as well as smaller boutiques.

Other features include a retail pavilion with a striking copper roof modelled on a 19th century market hall, redevelopment of the listed Cavalry House into a private Garden House school and 50 flats.

Planning consent for the £120 million scheme on a 4.5 hectare site was received in 1999. Under the agreement, the estate has provided affordable housing at Frederick Court comprising 30 residential units on three floors.

Construction started in 2000 and phase one completed in March 2003. The last phase is due to complete 2007/8.
The Grosvenor family has owned the 300 acres of Mayfair and Belgravia since 1677, when Sir Thomas Grosvenor married Mary Davies, heiress to the Manor of Ebury. The northern part of the Manor, today bounded by Oxford Street, Park Lane, Berkeley Square and Avery Row, took its name from the May Fair – a ‘place of vice and impurities’ held annually until well into the 19th century. The southern part of the manor, bounded by Chelsea, Hyde Park and Buckingham Palace, known as the Five Fields, was a mixture of swamp, pasture, orchards and a few scattered houses.

In 1720 Sir Richard Grosvenor, eldest son of Thomas and Mary, took the decision to develop what we now know as Mayfair into a fashionable residential area. Thomas Barlow, appointed by Sir Richard as Estate Surveyor, drew up a plan consisting of a grid of wide, straight streets with Grosvenor Square in the centre, surrounded by mansions.

The Mayfair estate was completed in the 1780s, though much rebuilding was carried out in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Few of the original buildings remain, the oldest being the northern half of Bourdon House in Davies Street, but throughout the years, Thomas Barlow’s street layout has remained virtually unchanged.

The housing boom at the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the conversion of nearby Buckingham House into a palace for George IV in 1826 were the catalysts for the development of the ‘Five Fields’ as one of the most fashionable residential areas of central London.

Belgravia was largely the vision of the then head of the Grosvenor family, Robert, 1st Marquess. Working to his vision, Thomas Cundy and Thomas Cubitt oversaw the development of Belgravia into the classic Regency style of square, streets and crescents aligned to overlook private gardens surrounded by unified palazzo facades. The exception to this was Belgrave Square, which was designed by George Basevi, a former pupil of Soane.

Cubitt revolutionised the building industry. The key to the success of Belgravia was his exceptional standards in land drainage, sewerage, planting and paving as much as that of building construction.
The original layout of Mayfair and Belgravia included a full range of uses. These were mixed use locations where people who lived and worked in the area had everything they needed on their doorstep. After more than three centuries this position has not changed.

Grosvenor are looking at different residential and commercial leasing arrangements which, together with its development programme, will provide high quality space of different sizes and for different markets, that will deliver continued economic improvement to the area.

Grosvenor has diversified nationally and internationally, employing local market knowledge and consulting with local people on proposals for the areas in which they live and work. Current UK projects include a 42 acre mixed-use city centre regeneration scheme in Liverpool, a 30 acre mixed use town centre in Preston and a 35 acre town centre in Crawley.

Today, Grosvenor is an international property group, with operating companies in Britain and Ireland, the Americas, Continental Europe and the Australia Asia Pacific region. It has interests in 17 countries around the world and an international fund management business which operates across all these markets.

With total assets under management of £9.1bn, Grosvenor’s portfolio embraces residential, retail and commercial properties, mixed-use developments, business and science-parks.
Belgrave House was jointly developed by Grosvenor and JER Properties. It provides 275,000 sq ft of offices right across the road from Victoria Station and represents the shift in perception of Victoria as an accepted location for higher quality office accommodation.

The building is designed by Squire and Partners and was built on the site of the former Belgrave House, the headquarters of BP. The new steel frame building is clad in a mix of Portland stone, limestone and glass. At 110m long the building boasts one of the largest floorplates in London; its 5.2 metre high revolving doors at the entrance are the tallest in Europe.

The facade has a strong contemporary design based on a classical sense of order. The floor to ceiling glazing and internal atria provide high levels of natural light in the office space. The flexible floorplates allow it to accommodate different types and sizes of occupier.

An illuminated artwork by artist Martin McGinn has been installed in the reception area. The piece imitates a series of overlapping fluorescent tubes positioned to create the impression of receding perspective looking down a long corridor.
By 1708 the village of Marylebone (taking its name from the parish church of St. Mary and the nearby Tyburn stream – hence St. Mary by the Bourne) comprised a few houses along the High Street with open fields beyond. In that year the estate was acquired by John Holles, Duke of Newcastle, and three years later passed to his daughter, Henrietta, wife of Edward Harley, 2nd Earl of Oxford.

The earl and countess commissioned the architect John Prince to draw up a plan for the estate in 1719, with Cavendish Square as the focal point and a grid system of streets to the north, east and west. The earl employed the most fashionable architects of the day, including James Gibbs, who designed the Oxford Chapel, now St Peter’s, Vere Street, and the ‘Oxford Market’ near Great Portland Street.

On the death of Edward Harley, the estate passed to his daughter, Margaret Cavendish Harley, who had married the 2nd Duke of Portland. The Portlands continued the northward expansion of the estate, including Harley Street, Portland Place and Wimpole Street. Robert and James Adam were responsible for the overall design and layout of Chandos House, Mansfield Street and Portland Place.

In 1879, when the 5th duke died, the estate passed to his sister, Lucy Bentinck, widow of the 6th Baron Howard de Walden. The Portland Estate then became known as the Howard de Walden Estate. As well as the large and fashionable houses of Harley Street, the estate developed model buildings for the working class in Moxon Street. In 1750 a Charity School was opened in the High Street and a Ragged School had been founded nearby in Grotto Passage in 1846. In this period doctors began moving into Harley Street, a trend given further impetus when the Medical Society of London moved to Chandos Street in 1872 and the Royal Society of Medicine to Wimpole Street in 1912.

Between the wars a portion of the estate was sold off to the shipping magnate Sir John Ellerman, and areas to the north of Marylebone were sold to fund investment abroad.
The estate owned by the de Walden family today, extending to approximately 100 acres, is bounded by Wigmore Street to the south, the Marylebone Road to the north, Marylebone High Street to the west and Hallam Street to the east. It boasts one of the most attractive and thriving high streets in London following a 10 year programme to upgrade Marylebone High Street.

In parallel with creating a more village-like atmosphere at the heart of the estate by attracting the right mix of retailers, the estate has also invested millions of pounds in refurbishing its residential properties to boost the amount of high quality properties for rent in its portfolio. Although the Estate is in a conservation area, constant renewal and refurbishment provides improved accommodation across the spectrum of uses, including the complete refurbishment of the Grade I Robert Adam-designed Chandos House, now occupied by the Royal Society of Medicine. The estate has also developed new residential and commercial schemes including the Marylebone Exchange residential scheme off Marylebone High Street and numerous office and medical projects.

As well as housing around 1,400 doctors, surgeons and dentists the estate includes some of the world’s most advanced medical facilities at the London Clinic, the King Edward VII Hospital and the Harley Street Clinic.

The estate also provides the headquarters for many institutions such as the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Royal Academy of Music plus many Embassies in and around Portland Place.
Marylebone High Street shows what can be achieved when a landlord takes a firm hand on the retail mix and has a vision of the sort of environment they wish to create.

The result – after more than 10 years of planning, negotiations with incoming tenants and many public meetings with the local community – is a vibrant urban village marked by a selection of small independent traders which was voted London’s favourite street by Radio 4 listeners.

The estate sought out some of London’s best small independent food shops such as Patricia Michelson’s La Fromagerie and Timothy Wilson’s Ginger Pig and persuaded them to open shops in the street. HDWE’s thinking was to select retailers that create the right mix of shops to ensure the visitor gets the highest level of choice, diversity and personal service. In addition the introduction of a thriving Farmers Market, now Central London’s largest, has greatly added to the vibrancy of the area.

At the outset of the High Street project, two major retailers were introduced to provide the initial anchors for the overall scheme – food retailer Waitrose and designer Terence Conran. The Waitrose store in the middle of the High Street is an example of how such a retailer can be subtly introduced into an historic street by careful design, while the Conran store and restaurant at the northern end of the street is an attractive new build behind a retained façade. These two retailers provided much of the foundation to kick start the project and to underpin the successful street it is today.

The physical environment of the street was further enhanced with new stone paving, trees and street lighting and an ever increasing number of residential tenants living on the High Street above the shops. The Estate refurbishes over 80 properties a year thus constantly improving the quality of accommodation and the atmosphere of Marylebone.
In 1532 Sir William Portman, Lord Chief Justice to Henry VIII, originally from Orchard Portman in Somerset, leased the manor of Lileston (Lisson). He bought the freehold in 1554, and ownership of the land has descended through his family.

Until the mid-18th century most of the land was used for farming, but building on the estate expanded rapidly from the 1750s onwards. William Baker leased land from the family to lay out Orchard and Portman Streets. As in the case of other London estates, development took off after the end of the Seven Years’ War in 1763. Henry William Portman was responsible for the layout of a large part of the estate, centred on Portman Square; building began on the west side in 1764.

About 1810 other large squares on the estate – Bryanston and Montagu – were laid out by the estate’s architect, James Thompson Parkinson. The area remained largely residential, attracting the prosperous middle class who wanted to live near the city centre. There were also mews for tradesmen, and, north of Marylebone Road, workers’ cottages built in the 1820s. A market was also established in Church Street in 1830. Development of houses north of the Marylebone Road continued after 1815, around Dorset Square, and to the north west, in Lisson Green, workers’ cottages were built from 1820 to 1840.

Towards the end of the 19th century the Great Central Railway Company bought up part of the Lisson Green area to build Marylebone station and hotel.

After World War II, to pay for death duties, the family had to sell its estates in the West Country, then the northern part of the London estate in 1951 and the area around Crawford Street the following year. In the later 1950s and 1960s the estate collaborated with the developer Max Rayne to redevelop the frontage of Oxford Street and Baker Street, as well as the south and west sides of Portman Square.
In recent years the estate has developed a more dynamic approach to actively manage its 650 plus properties. Since the 10th Viscount Portman inherited the estate in 1999, new trustees and a new management team have been brought in with a brief to reclaim leases, invest in the building stock and oversee new development.

Under this approach, the estate is halfway through a five year £80 million programme to repair and refurbish properties on the estate.

The estate seized the opportunity to upgrade the properties when many long term residential leases fell in at the same time. There are now some 500 residential flats being rented out by the estate; a figure that is rising by around one fifth each year.

The estate management team is developing new services for its expanding base of tenants. Services under development include cleaning, decorating and provision of internet connections.

Major new commercial schemes are also in train to capitalise on the increasing attraction of the area north of Oxford Street as a business district.

These include major mixed-use schemes such as The York Building, in partnership with British Land, and 55 Baker Street.

The needs of the local community are also being catered for under the Portman Village scheme to build 50 small shop units for small independent food sellers and boutiques.

Portman has invested in the public realm on the estate following a study by consultant Arup. The lower part of Seymour Place has been redesigned with new York stone paving and road space around Portman Square has been reclaimed for the pedestrian. Old Quebec Street, which acts as the gateway to the estate from Oxford Street, will be transformed into a pedestrian street.
The scheme, developed with London and Regional Properties Ltd and designed by Make Architects, is to refurbish and upgrade the former Marks & Spencer head office which occupies a 138 metre stretch of Baker Street. The completed project will include 61,735 sq m of office accommodation, three storey town houses, leisure and retail facilities and a new covered public space.

The transformation of the building is dramatically expressed by the three glass infills or ‘masks’ which will span the voids between the existing blocks to create a unified but dynamically modulated new facade for the building. Angular and gently convex in form, the masks situated at either end of the facade will act as double-skinned glazing for the new floor space between the existing blocks, reducing solar gain and noise transmission from the street.

These faceted sculptural forms offer a counterpoint to the relatively plain stone facades of the retained blocks of accommodation, reinvigorating the street frontage and creating a new identity and focus for both the development and Baker Street.

At the rear of the building, a new development of twenty-three homes will complete the mews housing of Rodmarten Street for the first time, while screening service entrances and acting as a buffer between residential properties opposite and the significantly larger commercial building.
The City of London property holdings are divided into three portfolios: the City’s Estate (also known as City’s Cash), the Bridge House Estates and the City Fund.

The City’s Estate comprises land and property either acquired under Royal Charter through the Royal Contract of 1628, or bequeathed to the City by wealthy former City dignitaries and citizens. Most of the properties are situated in the City, West End, Bloomsbury and Islington. Two significant holdings are the Conduit Mead Estate and the Tottenham Court Road Estate in London’s West End.

The Conduit Mead Estate originally comprised the whole of New Bond Street, Brook Street, Conduit Street, Grafton Street and South Molton Street. The City acquired it in the 1620s, when Charles I granted it a number of royal estates in repayment of loans. Known as the ‘Royal Contract’ Estates, these were sold off before the end of the 17th century, with the exception of the 27 acres of Conduit Mead which provided the water supply from the Tyburn to the City. Over the ensuing years much of the Estate has been sold although the City still retains a substantial freehold ownership.

The Tottenham Court Road Estate was acquired in 1574 in an exchange of lands with Sir Nicholas Bacon, who wished to gain ownership of land in Lincoln’s Inn Fields, then in the City’s possession. The City’s Estate also includes 10,000 acres of open space, including Epping Forest and Burnham Beeches, as well as three public schools and the markets at Smithfield, Billingsgate and Leadenhall.

The income from the Bridge House Estate is used to maintain the four road bridges across the Thames – London, Southwark, Blackfriars and Tower Bridge. In 2002 the Millennium Bridge was added to this group. The surplus funds are used to assist charitable organisations throughout Greater London.
Today the City Fund Estate yields £30 million annually. 82 properties worth £656.9 million provide an income for the City of London as the local authority for the Square Mile. The City’s Estate earns £40 million annually from 134 properties worth £707 million. The majority of the income from the properties pays for the mayoralty, the hospitality afforded to visiting Heads of State on behalf of Her Majesty’s Government and for the upkeep of the Guildhall, the Mansion House and Smithfield, Billingsgate and Leadenhall markets. Revenue is also reserved for the upkeep of the City of London Boys School, the City of London Girls School and the City of London Freemans School. The remainder is used to maintain the many open spaces earlier referred to.

The Bridge House Estate receives £19.2 million revenue from 68 properties worth £392 million. After paying for the maintenance of the five London bridges, the surplus of around £16 million a year is given to good causes in Greater London aimed at the young and elderly, together with transport related charities.

In recent times, the City has overseen successful redevelopments of its properties including Spitalfields Market, in partnership with developer Hammerson, and Sedley Place in Oxford Street.

Future schemes include the redevelopment of parts of Smithfield Market and the acquisition of property on the fringes of the City such as in Islington, Hackney and Tower Hamlets, to encourage small and medium sized enterprises.
The City of London owns a number of commercial properties fronting Tottenham Court Road and has a long term policy to enhance its retail property along this busy shopping destination.

As part of this strategy, the City has received planning permission for a major redevelopment of a block fronting 227-233 Tottenham Court Road, 24 Store Street and 10-12 South Crescent with an end value of some £52 million. The existing building will be refurbished and two floors will be added. The new storeys will include a glazed loft space under a timber framed curved roof that will offer panoramic views across London.

The scheme, initially designed by architects Hamilton Associates for planning consent, will create nearly 7,000 sq m of commercial space including retail uses on the basement and ground floor and office space on the upper floors.

As part of its planning consent, the City will also develop 11 private residential flats above small retail units at nearby 19-21A Store Street. It is hoped that works on the new development will start on site at the end of 2006 with the project due to complete in 2008.

The scheme will add to an earlier redevelopment by the City at 209-226 Tottenham Court Road, part of which is now used as the UK headquarters of Paperchase and also by the contemporary furniture seller Purves & Purves.
Part of The Crown Estate in London, and its origins lie in the plans for development drawn up for the Prince Regent by the builder-architect John Nash in the early 19th century.

Nash’s first plans for the development of the ‘New Street’, as it was then known, were put forward in 1810, and included a central section curving to the east between Oxford Street and Piccadilly, known as The Quadrant, to avoid the fashionable St James’s Square area.

The building of Regent Street was completed in 1826. The Quadrant was to incorporate ‘shops appropriated to articles of fashion and taste’, and was the world’s first purpose-built street dedicated to retailing.

Towards the end of the 19th century the initial building leases were expiring and the estate decided to initiate a rebuilding scheme that would give the street greater visual uniformity and meet modern retail requirements. The Quadrant was rebuilt following the designs of Aston Webb, Ernest Newton and Sir Reginald Blomfield. Nothing now remains of Nash’s original buildings between Oxford Circus and Piccadilly Circus, and the only Nash building that survives is All Souls Church.
The Crown Estate holdings in London are a mixture of offices, homes, shops, restaurants, historic buildings, hotels and traditional clubs.

The 460 properties on Regent’s Park comprising classical terraces and villas, designed by John Nash and Decimus Burton among others, are considered by many to be the “jewel in the crown” of The Crown Estate.

The 880 residential units at Regents Park include affordable rented homes enabling people working in essential public services in the centre of London to live near their work. The Estate presides over 1,300 affordable homes altogether with other sites at Millbank, Victoria Park and Lee Green.

As a developer, The Crown Estate aims to get the best returns on its properties. Recent schemes include hotel developments in St James’s such as the Trafalgar and Sofitel St James, the reinvention of the public records office in Chancery Lane into a library for Kings College London and modern office space at Atlantic House and Fleet Place House near Holborn Viaduct.

The Crown Estate’s £5 billion portfolio made profits of £184 million last year which went directly to the Treasury.
More than 1 million square feet of retail space and office space for 10,000 people lie along this historic street in the heart of London. The Crown Estate has recognised the massive potential of Regent Street and, just as it did a hundred years ago, is rejuvenating the area so that it meets contemporary demand.

The street has, once again, largely come back under the control of The Crown Estate after many long ground leases, typically of 80 or 100 years, expired at the same time. This gave The Crown Estate a “once in a lifetime” opportunity to improve the buildings and raise the quality of the retailers trading there. An integral part of the project is the re-branding of Regent Street as a place where the visitor experiences “quality, heritage, style and success” and “where time is always well spent”.

The major redevelopment of 229-247 Regent Street led to Apple taking the retail space for its flagship UK store. Apple is also among the tenants in the 120,000 square feet of modern office space above. The second major scheme at 185-191 Regent Street opens this month and includes a new HQ for The Crown Estate itself as well as space for the German retailer Gerry Weber.

Redevelopment of 132-154 is due to complete this Spring providing 75,000 sq ft of office space and 35,000 sq ft of retail space. Redevelopment allows the old fashioned partitioned floors to be transformed into the sort of large floor plates required by office users today.

More developments will follow in the next few years under a long term strategy to give the 2km of street frontage a more coherent feel and ensure that it remains commercially successful in an increasingly competitive market place for retailing.

Following The Crown Estate’s £500 million investment the capital value of Regent Street has more than doubled from £450 million to £1.1 billion with revenue rising from £20.5 million to £46.5 million.
Modern London comprises many different types of estates, each with their distinctive character which frequently remains intact despite changes in the law regarding leasehold tenure. The leasehold reform acts of 1967, 1993, 1996 and 2002, that allowed owners of leases to purchase their freehold interest, had a major impact on the residential estates.

The survival of London estates provides lesson for contemporary developers. The current strategy of developing brownfield sites has resulted in the creation of large scale modern, mixed use estates which are coherently managed – thus the developers of locations like Broadgate, Canary Wharf, Paddington and, in the future, King’s Cross, Stratford City and Bishopsgate Goodsyard, are the inheritors of the mantles of Richard Grosvenor, Edward Harley and Henry Portman. On the following pages we look at a selection of London estates.

Trinity Church Square on the Newington Trust Estate. Photograph by Barry Herman
In 1733, Lord Wootton sold land in St John’s Wood to Henry Samuel Eyre, a London merchant. In 1794 an ‘ideal’ plan of the estate was drawn up showing a crescent and circus of detached and semi-detached houses. This was in distinct contrast to the terraced developments of the time. The subsequent development of the estate which was carried out in the 1820s was described by Sir John Summerson in his book Georgian London as “a revolution of striking significance and far-reaching effect.” which led the way to the garden city and suburban developments of the late 19th and 20th centuries. The estate is still in the hands of the Eyre family.

Greenwood’s Map, 1831, showing the Eyre Estate and the shift from streets and squares to detached and semi-detached villas.

Courtesy of Guildhall Library © City of London
The Commission was established in 1850 under the Chairmanship of Prince Albert, to organise and stage the Great Exhibition of 1851.

Following the success of the exhibition, The Royal Commission set out “to increase the means of industrial education and extend the influence of science and art upon productive industry”. To this end it purchased 87 acres of land in South Kensington and helped establish its three great museums, the Royal Albert Hall and institutions of learning, including Imperial College and the Royal Colleges of Art and Music.

When this undertaking was complete, there remained sufficient funds for the Royal Commission to set up, in 1891, an educational trust to perpetuate its aims. It supports pure research in science and engineering, applied research in industry, industrial design and other projects.

The 1851 Royal Commission continues this work to this day, both managing its freehold estate and awarding over £1m a year in research fellowships, design studentships and other grants.
LLOYD BAKER ESTATE

The estate lies between Amwell Road and Kings Cross Road on land once owned by the Knights Hospitallers from whom it passed in the 17th century to Dr William Lloyd, Bishop of St Asaph’s. In 1775 his granddaughter married the Rev William Baker who from 1819, with his son Thomas Lloyd Baker, developed the steep land with a circus, square and terraces designed by John and William Joseph Booth. The characteristic semi-detached, two-storey brick villas with shared pediments are some of the most elegant examples of small scale 19th century housing development. The estate remained in the family until the death of Miss Olive Lloyd Baker in 1975 when half of the property was sold to Islington Council.
The Corporation of Trinity House acquired what is now the Newington (Trust) Estate in Borough in 1661. The current Estate comprises the whole of Trinity Church Square and Merrick Square, together with substantial parts of Trinity Street, Cole Street, Swan Street and Falmouth Road. Trinity Church Square was built between 1824 and 1832 by William Chadwick. Although originally constructed as individual houses, much of the square has been converted laterally into flats across two or three house widths.

The safety of shipping, and the wellbeing of seafarers, have been the Corporation’s prime concerns since Trinity House was granted a Charter by Henry VIII in 1514. The Newington Estate is the largest investment for the Trinity House Charities whose objectives include the provision of new almshouses and pensions to retired pilots and other needy mariners.
HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB

The suburb was founded in 1907 by the philanthropist Henrietta Barnett. Along with her husband, Canon Samuel Barnett, she had established a number of charitable and educational institutions, including Toynbee Hall in Whitechapel. When the extension of the Underground railway north to Golders Green was planned, Mrs Barnett organised the purchase of 80 acres of land to form an extension to Hampstead Heath. The idea of a garden suburb as a pleasant and healthy place for people of all walks of life to live in grew out of the Heath extension. The suburb was planned by Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker, who had designed Letchworth Garden City in 1903. Other architects, in particular Sir Edwin Lutyens, designed houses and flats.

The Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust is the estate management company for the area and was established in 1968 to help conserve and preserve the Suburb. Freeholders are subject to a Scheme of Management passed by the High Court in 1974, while in the case of most leaseholders the Trust is the ground landlord. Residents are required to get the prior approval of the Trust before altering the external appearance of their properties. Consent is also required for significant changes to gardens, erection of garden sheds and felling or pruning of trees.
The Peabody Trust was founded in 1862 by the American financier, diplomat and philanthropist George Peabody. He provided £500,000 for the construction of housing for ‘the artisan and labouring poor’ of London. Its first development was in Commercial Street, Spitalfields, opened in 1864. Today, the trust, a charity and community regeneration agency, is one of London’s largest and oldest housing associations. It now owns or manages over 19,000 properties across 30 London boroughs, housing nearly 50,000 people. More recently the Trust has also been involved in the construction of high-quality housing for sale, shared ownership or affordable rent. Among these is the BedZED project in Sutton, a mixed-use development incorporating innovative approaches to environmental sustainability.
Broadgate is an example of a modern estate under one ownership where the buildings and the spaces between are managed by the owner. The British Land Company has owned Broadgate since the early 90s and the estate is meticulously managed by the company’s subsidiary Broadgate Estates which now offers their services to other estates around London. The public spaces recently underwent major refurbishment to retain the contemporary image of the development. The Broadgate model, where the land owner controls the public spaces, is one that is followed by other office estates such as More London and Chiswick Park, however the growing number of mixed use developments will mean such spaces will be taken over by the local authority.
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Managing director: Nick McKeogh
Researchers: Sarah Yates & Damian Arnold
NLA coordinator: Sharon Huston
Design: Manha
Production: Martin Page
Printing: James Pool
Exhibition build: Sun Display

Special thanks to:
The Cadogan Estate
The City of London
The Crown Estate
The Grosvenor Estate
The Howard de Walden Estate
The Portman Estate
Cambridge University Land Society

Front cover: The distinctive Regency architecture of the Grosvenor Estate in Belgravia (photo Barry Herman)

Inside front cover: Brick architecture typifies later developments on the Cadogan Estate (photo Barry Herman)

Back cover: Marylebone High Street, part of the Howard de Walden Estate (photo Richard Leeney)

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