

CHAPTER 7

Cavendish Square

Peering over the railings and through the black trees into the garden of the Square, you see a few miserable governesses with wan-faced pupils wandering round and round it, and round the dreary grass-plot in the centre of which rises the statue of Lord Gaunt, who fought at Minden, in a three-tailed wig, and otherwise habited like a Roman Emperor. Gaunt House occupies nearly a side of the Square. The remaining three sides are composed of mansions that have passed away into dowagerism; – tall, dark houses, with window-frames of stone, or picked out of a lighter red. Little light seems to be behind those lean, comfortless casements now: and hospitality to have passed away from those doors as much as the laced lacqueys and link-boys of old times, who used to put out their torches in the blank iron extinguishers that still flank the lamps over the steps. Brass plates have penetrated into the square – Doctors, the Diddlesex Bank Western Branch – the English and European Reunion, &c. – it has a dreary look. . .

Thackeray made little attempt to disguise Cavendish Square in *Vanity Fair* (1847–8). Dreariness could not be further from what had been intended by those who, more than a century earlier, had conceived the square as an enclave of private palaces and patrician grandeur. Nor, another century and more after Thackeray, is it likely to come to mind in what, braced between department stores and doctors' consulting rooms, has become an oasis of smart offices, sleek subterranean parking and occasional lunch-hour sunbathing. But Gaunt Square does capture a good deal of what Cavendish Square has been. Some Augustan-age opulence was certainly achieved, some even survives, though in the nature of London's Georgian wealth it was and is behind doors. Countless peers and MPs have made homes in Cavendish

Square; eminent medical practitioners have been thick on the ground. Rebuildings faced with Portland stone and abetted by sculpture have given the square's faces more architectural life. And public access since the 1970s, once traffic and parking ramps are overcome, has put an end to peering over the railings.

Historical development

Cavendish Square was laid out in 1717–18 at the beginning of the transformation of Harley family lands in Marylebone. It was the lynchpin of the intended estate, and was planned with the precedent of Hanover Square very much in mind, not least for an axis to tie these then remote northern lands to the rest of London. By then little at all had been built anywhere north of Oxford Street. Begun in 1713, Hanover Square was, as its name suggests, a Whig project. Harley ownership of the Marylebone lands made Cavendish Square, by contrast, a Tory initiative, though too much can be and has been made of this dichotomy. What is perhaps more to the point is that after the Treaty of Utrecht London had a buoyant property market. The development of two squares of top-notch houses in such close proximity would not have seemed unreasonably venturesome. William Thomas, the Harley Estate's steward, recalled in the late 1730s that in '1715 or thereabouts' the project was 'set on foot' and the square 'set out & Staked'.¹ This memory cannot be shown to be false but first steps may not in fact have come before 1717. Robert Harley, 1st Earl of Oxford and Earl Mortimer, was imprisoned in 1715 and his son Edward is not known to have had anything like zeal for the land-development project. It was entrusted instead to his uncle and Robert's younger brother, also Edward Harley (1664–1735), a former Auditor of the Imprest, who in 1717 was obliged to retire in order to clear himself of

embezzlement charges. He had the business acumen that the arts-minded nephew lacked.²

In December 1717 this Edward Harley wrote to his namesake nephew to tell him that six peers – Dartmouth, Carnarvon, Harcourt, Bingley, Bathurst and Castleton – were set to build on their estate. All were Tories associated with the Harley administration that ended in 1714 and it can be assumed that they all intended houses on the square. Francis Seale, Thomas's predecessor as steward of the manor, was asked to make a plan for the wider development. By April 1718 Seale had been joined by John Prince, who styled himself a 'master builder' though he is not known to have had any great accomplishments. Both were authorized to negotiate building leases. It was, however, the elder Edward Harley who in June secured the first building agreement for the square, with Lord Carnarvon (soon to become Duke of Chandos), with whom he had in the past collaborated on other speculative initiatives.³ The square's garden was enclosed and word began to spread. It was noted in print in September 1718 that there was 'marked out a very spacious and noble Square, and many streets that are to form avenues to it. This Square, we hear, is to be called Oxford-square'. It was also said that ground that had first sold at 2s 6d per foot was going for 15s.⁴ In October, Charles Johnson, a local bricklayer, agreed for property on the square's south side. He withdrew but a month later Seale and Prince themselves agreed jointly to take the large block of land there between Prince's Street and Holles Street, which they parcelled up and leased as plots to others for the estate's standard term of 99 years.⁵

At this stage there may have been no supervision other than that of the elder Edward Harley with Seale and Prince. It was Prince whose name was attached to the estate layout plan published early in 1719 (see Ill. ## – Prince plan). Produced by way of advertisement, this makes manifest the centrality of what is identified as Cavendish Square, as well as the unusually bold integration (for London) between estates in the extension of a strong north-

south axis from Hanover Square. It is possible that James Gibbs or Charles Bridgeman had a hand in devising this plan; both later provided the estate with design help. But for this there is no known evidence. The name of the square on the plan endured, Cavendish deriving from the 2nd Earl of Oxford's wife, Lady Henrietta Cavendish Holles – though early on there were also references to 'Harley Square' or 'Oxford Square'. Its north side was destined for Lord Chandos. A full-width palatial mansion was intended, a grandiose arrangement for which London had no real parallel – Bloomsbury Square had been laid out in front of rather than with Bedford House. More conventionally, Dr James Newton took a lease of land at the north end of the square's east side, by May 1720 Harcourt had taken the south end, and Kendrick Grantham the intervening frontage. The Duke of Norfolk had signed up for the west side and at midsummer agreements were lined up for leases of all the square's frontages. All seemed set fair, but 'Auditor' Harley now struck an ominous note, telling the Earl: 'The madness of stock-jobbing is inconceivable'.⁶

Looking back from 1738, William Thomas recalled that 'The Demand was so great for Ground for building in 1720, by reason of the real fortunes some got & the Airy ones by others in the South Sea, that it was thought proper to extend the Square further Northward, to make room for such as were to take Ground there'.⁷ New names said then to have been interested in building plots were: Henry Paget, 1st Earl of Uxbridge; Lord Thomas Foley, Robert and Edward Harley's brother-in-law; Charles Caesar, a Jacobite agent; Sir John Blunt, founder of the South Sea Company; Col. Martin Bladen, MP, a colonial administrator; (Sir) Ralph Gore; and Col. Francis Negus, MP. What was afoot was not enlargement of Cavendish Square but a second square to its north, to be called Queen Anne Square, between Queen Anne Street and Marybone (now New Cavendish) Street. Prince drew a new plan but this is no longer extant.

In June 1720, Edward Harley the elder called Cavendish Square his 'present mistress', knowing that the relationship was fragile: 'The demon of stock jobbing is the genius of this place. This fills all hearts, tongues, and thoughts, and nothing is so like Bedlam as the present humour which has seized all parties'. South Sea Company share prices peaked in August when Harley was 'deep engaged' in that venture and 'detained by Cavendish Square'.⁸

When the bubble burst at the end of the year the collapse in South Sea shares ruined banks and individuals, and the decline in the square's prospects was rapid. The two-square scheme had to be abandoned. In January 1721 Harley wrote to the Earl that 'In London now nothing appears but dejection, lamentations and confusion. Many of the first rank are wounded in their estates beyond retrieve ... everyone is grasping at anything that is thought a salve for his own sore'.⁹ Two months later Harley had a 'long conference' with Chandos who, his much reduced circumstances notwithstanding, undertook to begin building immediately if granted more ground. Harcourt too said he would start building, but only if given a freehold. The Earl was advised to acquiesce: 'if it be baulked this spring, I doubt it will not be retrievable ... Were these two matters settled I think all the difficulties of setting the whole ground would be over. This is your Mississippi' - a reference to John Law's Mississippi Company Bubble, which also burst at the end of 1720.¹⁰ The permanent alienation of land from the estate to Harcourt set a precedent that Chandos followed, though not till 1724 when he took the freehold of the land to the north of the square. The Estate's willingness to give up significant chunks of its freehold is perhaps in part explicable as an attempt to spread the responsibility and risk of development. William Thomas, who in 1721 succeeded Seale (since deceased) as steward, persuaded Bingley to move his interest from the abandoned upper square to take much of Cavendish Square's west side in lieu of Norfolk, whose lease was cancelled; two years later Norfolk was arrested as a Jacobite and imprisoned in the

Tower. Bingley, the only other noble to build a great house, was not given a freehold.¹¹

In 1719–21 two modest houses went up south-east of the square in Margaret Street, a single small house was built to its south-west, and other works began in adjoining streets. But it was not till early in 1721, when Harcourt made a start on his house, that the square's margins proper saw any above-ground building activity. Bingley began work on the opposite (west) side a year later. Two houses on the south side had been finished by 1723, but nothing happened on Chandos's north side until 1724. By 1730, when Hanover Square's houses were complete, Cavendish Square was not so advanced. The east side was graced with seven houses and most of the west side with just two – Bingley's mansion to the centre and, to its south, a five-bay house for Francis Shepheard; the site north of Bingley's remained empty. Chandos, his palace abandoned, had built five-bay houses at either end on the north side. Vacant land on the prominent intervening frontage was used as a rubbish dump. The square's south side had twelve generally smaller houses by 1731; last infill here came in 1739–41.

The building agreements of the 1720s enforced plain brick uniformity to the fronts, of which No. 3 is the sole survival. (House numbers in this account are those in use since the nineteenth century; earlier numberings are suppressed to avoid confusion.) Supervision, in so far as there was any from the Estate, came from William Thomas, who assiduously chivvied builders to meet the specified completion dates. Most failed, including John Prince, who nominally oversaw works at Harcourt House in 1722–4 but made little progress there or on his own southern frontage and appears eventually to have abandoned Cavendish Square for Covent Garden whence he had come. To some extent James Gibbs stepped into the breach. Given his known connections with the Harleys, Gibbs may have been engaged already in the planning and drawing up of pro forma building agreements, though this is only surmise. He was certainly deeply involved with Henrietta Street, where

he speculated and built a house for himself (see page ###). That aside, in 1721 he took a lease of No. 34 on the square's south side, and in 1723 was overseeing work on the square at the back of No. 3 for the Harleys; payments from Bingley for his services most likely relate to this house. Around the same time Gibbs specified the breadth of the pavement bordering the square and in 1728 was party to discussions on the layout of the estate's sewers.¹²

Some elevational symmetry on the square's south side – in particular the giant order pilasters either side of Holles Street, astride the north–south axis, on separately leased houses of the late 1720s – suggests a controlling architectural hand that can only have been Gibbs's (see Ills 7.52, 7.53). Inequalities in plot widths constrained this attempt at uniformity. Because of the fragmentary nature of speculative development, architectural unity was generally not attempted in London's early eighteenth-century squares. Colen Campbell's and Edward Shepherd's designs for Grosvenor Square in 1725 and 1728 were interesting comparative exceptions that informed John Wood's Queen Square in Bath – Wood, it should be noted, had worked at Bingley's house and elsewhere in Marylebone. Gibbs's attention returned to Cavendish Square in 1735 with proposals for the Duke of Chandos and in 1741 to value a house for the Harley family. He had ducked in and out to help get the square developed but he was not in any strong sense supervising its architecture. Those who contributed to design here and there, including Edward Shepherd and others of less renown, were not architects but building tradesmen, following the usual pattern for speculative building in London at this period. Indeed, even when the square's west side was completed in the late 1750s, the involvement of an architect, Henry Keene, was only at the behest of the building-trade contractors who were in control of the project.

The unfinished and incoherent state of Cavendish Square drew comment, notably in 1734 in James Ralph's scandalously impudent and widely read *Critical Review*. There were gaps, as mentioned above, and Chandos's own house remained incomplete while Bingley House presented

only a screen wall to the public, without paving in front.¹³ Ralph's polemic included an attack in the name of taste on the Cavendish dynasty's preference for expensive display, and followed Pope in lauding Burlington and, implicitly, denigrating the Duke of Chandos as well as the Harleys. He took his readers to:

*Oxford or Cavendish-square; I am uncertain by which of those names it is most properly distinguish'd, and there we shall see the folly of attempting great things, before we are sure we can accomplish little ones. Here 'tis, the modern plague of building was first stayed, and I think the rude, unfinish'd figure of this project should deter others from a like infatuation. When we see any thing like grandeur or beauty going forward, we are uneasy till 'tis finish'd, but when we see it interrupted, or intirely laid aside, we are not only angry with the disappointment, but the author too: I am morally assur'd that more people are displeas'd at seeing this square lie in its present neglected condition, than are entertain'd with what was meant for elegance or ornament in it.*¹⁴

Exhortations to taste had little impact and Chandos would not have spoken in defence of Cavendish Square. Staying in London in 1741 for medical treatment he complained about the environs: 'every night I am poisoned with the brick kilns and the other abominate smells which infect these parts'.¹⁵

To push the story forward more rapidly, the square's north side might have housed a temple-like academy for the Society of Dilettanti but that was abandoned, as is described in detail below. Completion of the New Road and the activities of brickmakers and suchlike in the building boom that took off in the late 1750s fuelled huge rises in land values. The gap on the west side was plugged, but it was 1770 before temple-fronted pairs of houses had filled the last vacant ground on the north side.

Despite all this, Cavendish Square was from the off in the 1720s an address with cachet. Behind the great-house aristocrats, its first residents

included some new-money men – well-heeled but less prominent MPs, not all of them Tories – as well as financiers and colonial adventurers, notably a scion of and a retiree from the East India Company, Francis Shephard and Governor Robert Adams respectively. The south side was touched by a bit more grace, with some of the sheen of Edward and Henrietta Harley's circle of 'virtuosi': Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, the painter John Wootton, and, outside the circle, the Whig philosopher Anthony Collins. This kind of mix lasted throughout the Georgian period. Eminent court figures arrived – Princess Amelia and Elizabeth Herbert, Countess Pembroke – and there were numerous other female leaseholders and ratepayers, generally titled and not always dowagers, as well as many more aristocratic politicians, MPs and bankers. Society artists who thrived on the south side included George Romney.

There were a few lease-end and other rebuildings of some of the square's lesser houses in the early nineteenth century, and several larger properties were subdivided in the economically difficult 1820s. But Cavendish Square continued to be a safe place for aristocrats – indeed from 1825 it was in what had been Bingley House (by then renamed Harcourt House) that the 4th Duke of Portland chose to reside on his London estate. His son Lord George Bentinck also lived here and eminent politicians continued to dwell in Cavendish Square up to Henry Herbert Asquith, who only moved away in 1920. The bourgeoisie too was well represented, with amply moneyed bankers from Henry Hope in the semi-palatial house that had been Chandos's, to Sir Claude Scott, who opened his bank on the Margaret Street return front of the original Harcourt House. Another banker, Edward Charles Grenfell, resisted changing times to recast No. 4, where he resided from 1922 until 1941, by which time it was the square's last private house.

Something essentially new after 1800 was the strong medical presence. The reassurance of the address reinforced a gradual intensification of private consulting rooms to such a point that by the 1880s Robert Louis Stevenson

could refer to Cavendish Square as 'that citadel of medicine'.¹⁶ There were also more and more institutions, from foreign legations to the Convent of the Holy Child Jesus, which arrived in 1888. Everything and everybody was more or less coloured by the place's high status. Under the gate of the Duke of Portland's Harcourt House was where, around 1850, Henry Mayhew met Billy, 'The "Aristocratic" Crossing-Sweeper', taking refuge from a shower. Billy, who had swept the crossing at the square's south-west corner 'near upon fifty year', thriving on munificent tips from nobles, had been born at No. 3, his mother a charwoman to Lord Bessborough. He took up sweeping the crossing aged 19 to keep his father from the workhouse.¹⁷

A later Lord Bessborough wrote from No. 17 in 1913 that 'the character of the Square is changing - there are very few private residential houses in it even to-day. The Doctors Houses seem now to be getting more than one name on the brass plate. I now have a Fish shop absolutely contiguous to my house'.¹⁸ In 1920 the presence of black Americans visiting the US consulate at No. 17 drew complaint.

Rebuilding was more intense after 1890, spearheaded by several Edwardian contractor-led initiatives. Blocks of luxury flats arrived, most aggressively in the replacement of Harcourt House. Institutions had spread, from temporary use for war tribunals to longer-lasting clubs for Japanese, Spanish and French expatriates and the Voluntary Aid Detachment and (Royal) College of Nursing. Commerce was more controversial. The Howard de Walden Estate's struggle from 1900 to prevent John Lewis from extending his Oxford Street emporium towards Cavendish Square along Holles Street was a harbinger, the First World War a watershed. In the early 1920s the Estate abandoned its policy of restricting the square to residential use, recognizing the rental potential of the City's move westwards. What mattered to the Estate and its elite residents was that if commerce must take place it should do so in premises that looked domestic. Banks were in any case inclined to oblige on this score, and Coutts arrived with a decorous refit of

No. 16 in 1927. John Brinsmead & Sons, Wigmore Street pianomakers, had been similarly co-operative. In 1926 the square was judged less commercial than Hanover Square, though 'tending towards that end'.¹⁹ Overtly commercial rebuildings followed on the square's west side from 1933. With John Lewis's redevelopment on the south side in 1938–9 the game was incontrovertibly up.

That new store was a casualty of Second World War bombing, as was a part of the convent on the north side. Rebuilding there in the early 1950s incorporated Jacob Epstein's *Madonna and Child*, a work as contextually sensitive as obliteration of the rest of the old south side from 1959 was insensitive. Reconfiguration of the square itself for car parking in 1968–70 also fell short of beauty, but it did bring public access to the garden in tow. By then, remaining flats had nearly all become consulting rooms. Office use has predominated since, with some continuing and revived institutional, club and consular presences. The most recent significant redevelopment in 2005–7, Nos 9 and 10 on the north side, was historicist pastiche for corporate offices.

The garden, its ornaments and car park

Little was done with the central open space in the early years, though gravel paths and a statue, probably of Queen Anne, were projected (see Ill. ## – Prince plan). The ground, which had at least been levelled by 1726, was enclosed by low brick walls and wooden palisades with iron gates on each side. Although Charles Bridgeman prepared a plan in 1729, there was to be no ornamental planting like that at Grosvenor Square and the area was simply grassed, as at Hanover Square. In 1734 the palisades were repaired with ships' timbers used as spurs to the posts. Leaseholders were obliged to pay £1 per foot frontage to maintain the enclosure and in 1737 a private Act enabled the Earl of Oxford, the younger Edward Harley, to propose improvements in the

manner of those recently made at St James's Square.²⁰ 'Cavendish Square, which for some time has lain in a ruinous Condition, is going to be beautified ... In the Middle an Oval Bason of Water, in the Middle of which is to be erected on a Pedestal, the Statue of her late Majesty Queen Anne, and round the said Bason are to be Grass and Gravel Walks, on the Borders of which several Shrubs are to be planted'. A new perimeter wall and rails were also intended but nothing happened, except perhaps some planting. Crime was a concern and iron railings were again mooted in the 1750s, but still nothing was done.²¹

Another round of criticism came with the publication in 1771 of John Stewart's *Critical Observations*, which said of Cavendish Square that 'the apparent intention here was to excite pastoral ideas in the mind; and this is endeavoured to be effected by cooping up a few frightened sheep within a wooden pailing; which, were it not for their sooty fleeces and meagre carcasses, would be more apt to give the idea of a butcher's pen' (Ill. 7.04).²² This was a satirical allusion to the square's new statue of the Duke of Cumberland (the 'Butcher of Culloden'), though it was indeed to a butcher that the square was hired for grazing. In 1772-3, as part of much wider improvements overseen by the parish through its paving commissioners and their surveyor, George Wyatt, the enclosure was recast as a circle and at last given plain wrought-iron railings, with lamps at intervals within a Portland stone kerb and York stone footways (Ill. 7.03). There was a perimeter path and the grassed area was significantly reduced. Shrubs and saplings had been allowed to grow up by 1800, and by 1820 further entwined paths linked the north and south gates. There were mature trees round the perimeter by the 1850s (Ill. 7.02).²³

The gilt-lead equestrian statue of the Duke of Cumberland had been erected in 1770 at the cost of Lt.-Gen. William Strobe, who had fought under and befriended the Duke, and whose own memorial in Westminster Abbey records him as 'a strenuous assertor of Civil and Religious Liberty'. At the

time, Strode lived in Harley Street, on the north-east corner with Queen Anne Street. The Duke's sister Amelia, who had paid for a lead statue of George III for Berkeley Square in 1766, lived on the north side of Cavendish Square. Strode conceived what was London's first outdoor statue of a soldier in 1769 (see Ill. 7.38), the same year he was alleged to have withheld clothing from his soldiers, for which charge he was tried and acquitted at court-martial in 1772. The statue was by John Cheere, who had made another version of Cumberland for Dublin in 1746. The paunchy figure in modern dress faced north to an exactly contemporary mews between temple fronts on a site that had belonged to the Dilettanti. That the statue faced this way, presenting its rear to those who approach the square along the Hanover Square axis, may reflect where Princess Amelia and Strode lived. It also looked to where General Robert Clerk and the Adam brothers were building (page ###), and the way to Scotland. It was immediately ridiculed on aesthetic grounds; the politics of the gesture appear to have passed without published comment.²⁴ Lacking admirers, the statue fell into dilapidation. In 1868 the 5th Duke of Portland took it down, ostensibly to be recast. It never was, perhaps simply melted down.²⁵ Its Portland stone plinth survived, with Strode's inscribed dedication. By 1916 this had been encircled by a roof on thin columns to create a summerhouse, which lasted into the 1970s. A replica of the lost statue was mounted on the plinth in 2012, made of soap on a steel armature by the Korean artist Meekyoung Shin as *Written in Soap: A Plinth Project* (Ill. 7.05). She anticipated its gradual and scented erosion within a year but its tenure was extended, her commentary on mutable monumentality complicated by endurance and popularity. A replica was installed at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Gwacheon, South Korea, in July 2013.²⁶

The cloaked bronze figure of William George Frederick Cavendish-Scott-Bentinck, better known as Lord George Bentinck (1802–48), faces south on a red-granite pedestal, *sans* horse – though Bentinck was as famed for breeding, racing and betting on horses as for politics, in which he joined

Disraeli leading protectionist opposition to the repeal of the Corn Laws. The 5th Duke of Portland, his older brother, acceded to a proposal of 1849 from Bentinck's close friend, Charles Gordon-Lennox, 5th Duke of Richmond, that Bentinck be commemorated in Cavendish Square, where he had resided in his later years (in Harcourt House). Thomas Campbell was the sculptor and the statue, paid for by public subscription, went up in 1851. Around 1970 it was moved from the south side to the north side of the perimeter path.²⁷

Cavendish Square has recently hosted other sculpture, initially through Westminster City Council's City of Sculpture Festival, timed to build up to London's Olympic Games of 2012. This began in 2011 with *Core Femme*, by Jill Berelowitz, a resin work reminiscent of spinal vertebrae, which was followed in 2012 by *Solo II*, a polished stainless-steel abstract work by Naomi Press. Other works to date are Tim Morgan's bright yellow *Aurora*, laminated steel hoops with a glass-rod infill, installed in 2013, and Andy Elton's marble torso 'My Lady' (2014).²⁸

A gardener's hut was built near the square's south end in 1881, and in 1890 the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association put up a large public drinking fountain in a recess in the railings to centre north. These structures were removed in 1968.²⁹ Five extant stone octagonal Gothic planters on stepped plinths may have been relocated. The garden came to provide a useful exercise ground for the convent school on the square's north side (Ill. 7.06). In 1912 this provoked complaints from residents in the new and expensive Harcourt House flats: 'young girls take entire possession of the enclosure and make so much disturbance by running about, screaming and shouting, that it is impossible for ladies to sit and read'.³⁰ While the gardens remained private, accessible to key-holders only, the school continued to use them for play and sports days till the 1960s. The iron railings of the 1770s were removed in 1942 but they were quickly replaced with wooden pales. The loss of a lunch-time open space was deprecated in *The Times*.³¹

The draw of local shops meant that by 1930 the road perimeter of the square was a 'hugger-mugger' car-park.³² In 1938 it was proposed that motor garages should be built under this and other London squares, to double as air-raid shelters. A form of mechanized parking was even considered. Underground car-parks at West End squares were a cornerstone of Ministry of Transport plans for parking in London announced in 1953, and Bylander & Waddell were asked to prepare a scheme for Cavendish Square. There was opposition and costs seemed prohibitive but, with support from the Howard de Walden Estate, Lex Garages undertook a new investigation of the possibilities at Cavendish Square in 1959. The same firm was involved with London's first sub-square car-park at Finsbury Square, which opened in 1961. Westminster's Park Lane Garage followed a year later.³³

Responsibility for parking passed to local authorities and in 1968 Taylor Woodrow Construction Ltd began work on a new scheme for Westminster Council at Cavendish Square designed by the City Engineer, F. J. Cave. Excavation had to be integrated with the tunnelling for London Underground's new Victoria Line. A doughnut ring with three parking levels provided spaces for 545 cars and the facility was leased to National Car Parks. To avoid digging up the square, the roof of the car-park was first constructed as a foundation, below which the main excavation could take place. But in the event it proved necessary to remove large old trees over the ring, leaving only a few plane trees to the centre. The result was received as a disaster. In the *Architects' Journal*, Sam Lambert concluded that Londoners were 'an anti-clockwise roundabout to the good and one square to the worse'.³⁴ Michael Brown had been brought in belatedly as a landscape architect in 1969. His associates David Singleton and Brian King handled the project and replanted the perimeter with eleven new plane trees. But their work was delayed and plans altered. Their hedge-lined perimeter was reinforced by a low canted wall of blue-brown Lunsford bricks topped by steel barriers. North-east, north-west and south-west entrances replaced those to north, west and south

(see Ill. 7.10). The same brick was used beside vehicle ramps and for bunker-like gardener's huts and transformer and ventilation chambers to the north-west. Resistance from 'frontagers' meant that Westminster could not properly open the square's gardens as a public open space until 1972. Cavendish Square's misfortune galvanized resistance to further such projects elsewhere. Since 2011 the car-park has been run as Q-Park Oxford Street, refurbished in 2012 to offer wider parking spaces, so reducing capacity. At the south-west corner, a new pedestrian lift for the car-park was installed 2014–15, its superstructure taking the form of a glass box with etched designs by Ian Westacott; the architects were Potter & Holmes.³⁵

East side

Nos 1 and 1A: the first Harcourt House

At the south end of this side of Cavendish Square there still stands a substantial portion of the square's first aristocratic town house: the Harcourt House of 1720–4. Simon Harcourt, 1st Viscount Harcourt, was an eminent barrister and parliamentarian and a Tory Lord Chancellor in 1713–14. He was not as wealthy as his standing might suggest but had close links to Robert Harley, with whom he was in contact when Harley was in the Tower in 1717. In that year Harcourt committed himself to build a house on the Harleys' intended square but no apparent progress was made before May 1720, when Harcourt's building agreement was settled, digging for foundations began and tradesmen submitted tenders.³⁶

By this time Thomas Archer had produced a design for the house that was later engraved by John Rocque (Ill. 7.07). Archer, himself a country gentleman and parliamentarian of Harcourt's generation, projected a Giant Ionic order, fairly old-fashioned but with a lively rhythm that reflects his

engagement with Continental baroque, and unusual for its in-turned Ionic volutes. It was not Archer but Edward Wilcox, a veteran carpenter-surveyor probably past his 70th year, who was Harcourt's executant architect in 1720. He was evidently instructed to pare down the design, probably on grounds of cost, entirely abandoning the stylar treatment (Ill. 7.08). It may be relevant that 'poor blind' Harcourt would have seen little difference; he had suffered cataracts since at least 1710.³⁷

There was progress on the ground and a 'Rearing Dinner' was held early in 1721, when Harcourt was busy trying to form a government under the Earl of Sunderland.³⁸ The works encountered setbacks: by mid April, Wilcox was dead; the bricklayer, John Watkins, followed him in July. Francis Smith of Warwick was hastily brought to London to secure contracts with craftsmen and oversee completion of the carcass, in part through Watkins's widow Jane. At this stage Edward Loton (or Lowton) was the principal carpenter, Charles Edwardes the joiner. Smith seemingly altered the intentions for the upper parts of the house, so was perhaps responsible for the centre bay attics. The cellar was vaulted to designs adjusted by Smith in the latter part of 1721 and the carcass was sufficiently built in April 1722 for Harcourt, by then a Viscount, to complete his acquisition of the freehold from the Harleys.³⁹

The project then stagnated for almost two years. John Prince was nominally supervising and carrying out brickwork from August 1722 to April 1724, but progress was slow. Harcourt's second wife died in June 1724. In September he married Elizabeth, née Vernon, the widow of a former friend, Sir John Walter, who had left £1,000 to Harcourt on his death in 1722. The marriage was mocked by Dr William Stratford: 'Never was known such an extravagant change from a penurious wretch, who has all his life before sponged upon others, to a profuse prodigal, and for the sake of a woman nearer 50 than 40, whom he can feel indeed, but has not been able to see for these ten years past'. The Cavendish Square house was 'to be richly furnished

with damasks and velvets brought on purpose from Genoa. And it is said the lady says she will show him what it is to live. I look upon this as a plain crack in his head, and the beginning of the fall of his understanding, if of nothing else'.⁴⁰

Six months later Harcourt was said to be 'coming to inhabit' his unfinished house.⁴¹ George I's cabinet-maker, James Moore, oversaw internal fitting out and decoration from May 1724 to 1726, the year of his death. Moore was a versatile craftsman who had supervised works at Marlborough House and taken over from Vanbrugh at Blenheim as resident surveyor until 1724 (Harcourt, an Oxfordshire neighbour, had once been the Duke of Marlborough's steward). Identified simply as a 'joiner' in Harcourt's accounts, Moore installed stylar Virginia-walnut panelling in the middle back room or parlour (not extant, but Harcourt's surviving interior at Cokethorpe School might be compared), and supplied furniture including chairs. Joseph Pedley, a London mason (not his Warwick namesake who had links to Archer), supplied Portland stone and marble chimneypieces, and 1,200ft of Dutch blue-and-white tiles were ordered in 1725. Some chimneypieces were moulded, and one of marble in the ground-floor entrance hall was valued very highly in 1933 (at £250). All are now lost; those in No. 1 were removed in 1928 and 1950. The 'great' staircase had Portland stone treads and an ornamental stucco ceiling by Carlo Ferdinando Serena. Isaac Mansfield was responsible for other plasterwork. Peter Joseph Migliorucci, an agent in Isleworth, obtained the Genoese damasks, which were patterned with leopards, suns and elephants. Whether or not he could see these, Harcourt did not enjoy the house long. He died in it on 29 July 1727.⁴²

Of three full storeys and originally almost cubic, with grey-stock brick façades, Harcourt House stood on a tall, vaulted basement of kitchens and service rooms lit from areas to west and south. Its almost square plan (72ft 9in by 73ft 6in) broadly adhered to Archer's layout, keeping a large central stair hall, though without a full-depth room (Ill. 7.09). Originally the layout was

regularly divided into smaller squares, three by three. What survives is the southernmost rank of three rooms, including part of the vaulted basement with impost-blocked piers; it was originally Purbeck paved. Raised and fielded panelling with box cornices on the second floor and a tally of the number of windows in 1721 indicate that the western bays of the south elevation were originally blind, including those on the ground floor. The stable block towards the back of the substantial garden (the plot was 226ft 6in deep) was similar in form to that designed by Archer, with stables flanking a central coach house (Ill. 7.07). It survived until the 1930s.⁴³

Harcourt's widow Elizabeth lived at the house until her own death in 1748. She was succeeded by the 1st Viscount's grandson, Simon, 1st Earl Harcourt. He and his son, George Simon, Viscount Newnham, both figures in the Society of Dilettanti, drew on that network to engage James Stuart in 1758 to redecorate the middle back parlour, which had been enlarged with a canted bay. As Stuart's first London commission this was an important early 'Greek' neoclassical work, the round deprecation of which by Lord Delaware was famously relished by Robert Adam and Paul Sandby: 'God Damn my Blood My Lord is this your Grecian Architecture what villainy what absurdity If this be Grecian, Give me Chinese give me Gothick, Any thing is better than this, For Shame My Lord Pull it down & Burn it ... not to expose your own ignorance for it is the most Wretched miserable affair ever was seen by Mortal'.⁴⁴

Earl Harcourt carried out further alterations in 1761-3. This time he was more conservative, employing Stiff Leadbetter, his architect at Nuneham Park since 1756, who was also favoured by the Duke of Portland (see page ##). Leadbetter added a room immediately south-east of the house along Margaret Street. John Bird was the bricklayer, Barnwell Drawwater the mason. New plasterwork in the house by John Bayly included Vitruvian scroll, Corinthian and modillion cornices, some of which survive. Harcourt sold the house in 1772, only to acquire what had hitherto been Bingley House

across Cavendish Square a year later (see below). That house then took his name, causing later confusion as to the identity of his old house, which by then had become No. 1 Cavendish Square. His buyer here was the politician Sir Charles Cocks, later 1st Baron Somers. After his death in 1806 there followed another politician peer, John Cust, 1st Earl Brownlow.⁴⁵

Sir Claude Scott, who had amassed a fortune as a wartime government grain contractor and retired to a baronetcy, bought No. 1 in 1825. The previous year, in a 'scrambling' response to the failure through fraud of the banking house of Marsh, Stracey, Fauntleroy & Graham, Scott, then aged 82, had opened a temporary bank at 26 Holles Street, trading as Sir Claude Scott Bart, Williams & Co. The house on the square was divided in two and remodelled in 1826–7. Sir Jeffry Wyattville was the architect, with George Spencer Smith, bricklayer, Armstrong & Siddon, carpenters, John Seward, mason, and Bernasconi & Son, plasterers. Wyattville proposed twin west entrances to the house, but instead the south part, which Scott adapted as an office and residence for himself, was entered from Margaret Street (Ill. 7.08). A stone staircase was inserted, the house was stuccoed and the iron-founders Cottam & Hallen put up new area railings. The Margaret Street room of the 1760s was doubled in length and rebuilt as a five-bay, single-storey banking hall, with round-headed windows and pilastered end bays, since little altered.⁴⁶

Scott died in 1830, when the five-bay north part of the house (now No. 2) remained empty. His son, Sir Samuel Scott, succeeded in the southern part and the bank took his name in the 1840s. The first-floor stone balcony with its bellied iron railings, once continuous across the façade in front of cut-down windows, was added in 1860 (see Ill. 7.11). The banking hall gained a western porch and in 1873 was extended eastwards along Margaret Street almost as far as the stable block, with Holland & Hannen as Scott & Co.'s builders. Acquisitions and mergers saw the bank become part of Parr's Bank in 1894 and then part of the Westminster Bank. In 1928 entrances were altered, the

banking hall was given its two-bay Doric porch, and the house its present Cavendish Square entrance, vaulted entrance hall and, no doubt, its circle-pattern iron stair balustrading. These alterations were by Wimperis, Simpson and Guthrie, architects, with F. G. Minter Ltd as builders. Bank use has continued, latterly for NatWest. The associated bank-manager's house (No. 1A) passed into commercial use in the mid 1930s with the arrival of Cecile Black, gown manufacturers. It was sold and in 2002 refurbished to plans by Trehearne Architects. The Belgian government acquired the property and opened it in 2003 as Flanders House, a part of the Belgian Embassy representing the Flemish Government.⁴⁷

No. 2

At No. 2, aristocratic occupancy continued into the Victorian and Edwardian periods. Householders then included: Samuel Leo Schuster (whose wife Lady Isabella was the daughter of the 5th Earl of Orkney), the 4th Earl of Wicklow, and James Ludovic Lindsay, 26th Earl of Crawford and 9th Earl of Balcarres. During the First World War the house was given over firstly to Queen Mary's Needlework Guild and War Hospital Supply Depot, then to the Office of Works, and in the 1920s accommodated the Mixed Arbitral Tribunals set up by the Treaty of Versailles to settle international property and compensation disputes arising from the war.⁴⁸

It was clear that the property, the freehold of which had been bought back by the Howard de Walden Estate in 1924, had no future as a home. The Estate assented to commercial redevelopment, while keen to avoid anything looking like a shopfront. The greater part of the 1720s house was demolished to make way in 1933–4 for the first explicitly commercial building on Cavendish Square (Ill. 11, CR 1–8 C Sq). Of steel-framed construction with Portland stone facings, and comprising six storeys and an attic, this block was

designed by Robert Angell and Curtis for the building contractors G. E. Wallis & Son as a speculative venture, expressly for multiple occupation. Early tenants were a mix of rag-trade firms and office users; later occupants included the BBC from the 1950s, whose second computer (an ICT 1500) was installed here in 1963.⁴⁹

Nos 3, 4 and 5

These three substantial brick houses were begun as a single speculative development by Kendrick Grantham via a building agreement of May 1720 (Ill. 7.10, ramp view). Grantham, of Stifford Hall, Essex, known as 'a great Projector', had fallen bankrupt by April 1722; he had not built more than foundations and paved the Oxford Street crossings to Prince's Street and Holles Street.⁵⁰ The site was reassigned to Edward Harley and Grantham's materials acquired via Chancery. In October 1723 James Gibbs was supervising work on the party wall, closet wing and back stairs of the southern house (No. 3), which had the previous month been taken on a 99-year lease by John Neale, a Whig MP, of Allesley Park, Warwickshire. In February 1725 Thomas Milner and George Greaves agreed to finish Nos 4 and 5. Milner was a former salt commissioner and member of the York Buildings Company's committee (page ###). Greaves was a Clerkenwell carpenter and the main developer there with Simon Michell of Red Lion (now Britton) Street from c.1720. Greaves, who in 1720–2 had built a house on the east side of Prince's (now John Prince's) Street, saw to the work and leases were granted in May 1726. All three houses were complete by 1727 but Neale did not move into No. 3 until 1730. Nos 4 and 5 were both first occupied in 1727 by their lessees, respectively James Naish and Walter Plumer, MP. Naish, a financier and a director in 1726–7 of both the London Assurance Corporation and the Royal African Company, and thus closely involved in the slave trade, was an

associate of the Duke of Chandos and Lord Bingley. Plumer was an opposition Whig (though out of the Commons in 1727–30), a wealthy merchant's son who had married Elizabeth Hanbury of Kelmarsh Hall and become an MP in 1719.⁵¹

These three houses still read as a group. Each has a 42ft-wide, four-bay, brown-brick front rising evenly through four full storeys with 'mansard' attics. All originally had deep plots (of 304ft) extending back to Edward Street. The layouts and interiors still have much in common but the later histories and fabric of the buildings are hereafter separately described.

In 1740 the Irish and English peer and politician William Ponsonby, Viscount Duncannon, later the 2nd Earl of Bessborough, acquired the lease of **No. 3**. His family held the house for more than a century – the 3rd Earl was a great collector of art. The 5th Earl, John George Brabazon Ponsonby, inherited in 1847 and said that the 'nuisance' of the nearby Polytechnic on Regent Street might induce him to move.⁵² That he did, and in 1849 the house was taken by Christopher Rice Mansel Talbot, MP, FRS, the industrialist, politician and founder of Port Talbot. His daughter and heir Emily Talbot lived here until her death in 1918. There domestic use stopped. From 1919 to 1942, No. 3 housed the Japanese Society or Association, for whom alterations were made in 1919 by the architect H. Alexander Pelly, including the insertion of a lift behind the main staircase. An outward appearance of domestic use was strictly maintained and expatriate club use continued to 1951 by La Maison de France Ltd. Conversion to offices then followed, tenants including the architects George, Trew & Dunn in the 1960s and the BBC into the 1990s.⁵³

No. 3 is the least altered of the 1720s buildings on Cavendish Square. Its façade is basically as built and as specified in agreements, with red-brick dressings and stone embellishments: a console bracket doorcase, plat bands and cornice. There are early nineteenth-century cast-iron balconettes in front of cut-down first-floor windows. The upper courses of brickwork were repaired in 1890–1, and the area railings replaced in 1959 by the Portman

Structural and Decoration Company. To the rear, stable buildings that were set directly on to Edward Street have been replaced, perhaps in 1847–8.

On plan, No. 3 is revealed as the largest house of the group, unlike Nos 4 and 5 in having a closet wing (Ill. 7.09). That allows for a generous open entrance hall in front of the staircase compartment, where a fine open-well and open-string staircase rises to the second floor and is top lit. It has carved tread-ends, moulded, ramped and wreathed handrails, columnar balusters and newel posts. The secondary staircase is comparatively cramped in the closet wing. In the principal rooms there is much raised and fielded panelling (Ill. 7.12). Later interventions include carved white-marble, mid eighteenth-century chimneypieces and the removal during the Victorian period of the partitions between the main north rooms.⁵⁴

The lease of **No. 4** passed in 1744 to Elizabeth Finch, widow of John Finch, then to Savile Finch MP, and was retained by the family into the nineteenth century. Several short tenancies followed, including that of the 2nd Earl of Orford (resident c.1810–22) and the painter Eliza Whitmarsh (1847–51). For a decade either side of 1860 the house was in use as Chapman’s Hotel. It reverted to single occupation for the 5th Earl and 6th Earl (later Duke) of Fife (1870–89) and the 3rd Earl of Durham (1895–1900), and, along with No. 5, was used by the American YMCA during the First World War. In 1922 Edward Charles Grenfell bought No. 4 with assurances from the Howard de Walden Estate that the square’s other houses would not be converted to shops. Grenfell was a merchant banker, the senior partner at Morgan Grenfell & Co. since 1909, and a crucial figure in the financing of the British Government during the First World War and of subsequent reconstruction in Europe. When he bought the house he was the newly elected Conservative MP for the City of London and, though in his early 50s, a first-time father. His choice of Cavendish Square for his new 11-bedroom home, then flanked by clubs, suggests upper-crust nostalgia. Grenfell stayed at what was the last remaining private house in the square until 1941 when (as Lord St Just) he left, subletting

to a firm of furniture makers, Bath Cabinet Makers & Artcraft Ltd. Office use followed, including for the BBC from 1955 till the late 1980s. In 2013 London's first Embassy of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (East Timor) opened in the first floor here as tenants of Barwa Capital UK, the Qatari owners.⁵⁵

The front of No. 4 was cement-stuccoed in 1847. This displeased Grenfell, for whom money was no object, and the house was wholly refronted as part of more extensive renewals in 1922–3. Grenfell's architect was Sidney Parvin (of the Mayfair decorating firm Turner Lord & Company), working with John Garlick & Son Ltd as builders. Their approach, and presumably their brief, was to create a simulacrum of the 1720s house, keeping forms but renewing fabric.⁵⁶ For the façade, they chose grey Sussex facing bricks with red-brick dressings, and shaped segmental rather than flat window arches, with aprons and a cornice of brick and stone balconettes. A Portland stone Doric porch replaced one that had been added in 1866. New area railings were made by W. A. Baker & Co. of Newport, Monmouthshire. To the rear, a continuous first-floor, iron-fronted balcony was added, in part atop a shallow single-storey canted bay that is probably datable to 1879–80. In 1990–1 the roof was raised and a linked rear annexe added to designs by the architects Bader Miller Davis Partnership.⁵⁷

On plan, Nos 4 and 5 are a mirrored pair with formally identical open-well, open-string staircases of the 1720s. These have barley-twist balusters, Corinthian-column newel posts and pilastered dados. Placed just inside the front doors, they rise only one storey (Ills 7.13, 7.14, staircases). There are similar ornamental plaster ceilings of later dates. Just behind were full-height, spacious secondary staircases, only slightly inferior in quality and themselves grand enough to have carved tread-ends; that at No. 4 was made narrower in 1910 to permit the insertion of a lift, then replaced in 1922–3. Garlick & Son were known for fine woodwork and Grenfell had the back rooms on the first floor knocked together to form a full-width library, lined with carved woodwork, including fluted Ionic columns. An aedicular Corinthian doorcase

from the front room looks contemporary. Ground-floor egg-and-dart fielded panelling has been altered at the doors and the rear bay; chimneypieces are likely to have been introduced. On the second floor there is what looks like early raised and fielded panelling with plainer fireplace surrounds.⁵⁸

Nos 4 and 5 had their main stable blocks set in front of yards and other service buildings that backed on to Edward Street, where they were refaced in the 1820s with a columnar screen for the creation of Regent Street. In 1922–3 Parvin gave the stable block at No. 4 a double pedimented brick elevation to the garden, which was remade as a courtyard.⁵⁹

The Plumer family held on to **No. 5** into the 1830s, principally through William Plumer, MP. In 1838 the Polytechnic Institution was established in this house and in a gallery to the rear (see page ###). No. 5 was occupied by others alongside the Institution, including the Royal Agricultural Society in the 1840s and the College of Dentists of England in the 1860s. Quintin Hogg, an evangelizing merchant, acquired the house with the Polytechnic premises in 1881 and, while founding the Regent Street Polytechnic, adapted No. 5 as his family home from 1885 to 1898. He then sold the house, moving to Cavendish Place. Major Sir Herbert Henry Raphael, MP, kept No. 5 as a dwelling until 1917 when it was adapted for use as the American Officers' Inn, run by the American YMCA. In 1919 the building was sold for use as a Spanish Club, the Casa de España, which it remained through the Franco period and into the 1990s. Nautilus Properties Ltd bought the head lease in 2000 and alterations of 2001–2 carried out by Circa Generis Ltd adapted the club to its present form as 'No5 Cavendish Square' (architect Tim Mullany). It is, its website claims, a 'playground to a sparkling crowd of jetsetters and A-list celebrities'.⁶⁰

At some point in the early nineteenth century, probably 1838, No. 5 was refaced in stock brick with lower-level rusticated stucco and an Ionic porch. In 1885 G. H. and A. Bywaters & Sons raised the attic for Hogg. A full-width cast-iron fronted balcony may date to 1901 when the earlier porch was

semi-enclosed. The upper-storey brickwork was rebuilt again in 1948 following war damage. An LCC blue plaque commemorating Hogg's residence was erected in 1965.⁶¹

The original stable block had a central apse to the garden. It was cleared in 1838 to make way for the Polytechnic Institution, which was linked to the house by a covered passage. A single-storey canted bay at the back of the ground-floor south-east room is said to be an addition of 1914.⁶²

Inside, the open-well, open-string staircase of the 1720s is like that at No. 4 but with more patina (Ill. 7.14); the secondary staircase behind is also less unreconstructed. Room interiors and intercommunications have been much altered. The upper-storey spaces above the largest south-west rooms were originally divided, with separate angled fireplaces. The opening up of the southern first-floor rooms as a full-depth dining room with an Ionic screen may have been part of alterations carried out for Hogg in 1889 by Cubitt & Co. An elegantly fitted second-floor library is perhaps contemporary (Ill. 7.15). The ground-floor back rooms were interlinked in 1954 for the Spanish Club's dining and bar facilities. Among the alterations of 2001–2 were the conversion of the basement to a dance lounge, the widening of the opening between the main ground-floor rooms for a lounge bar, and the introduction of 'period' fireplaces on the first and second floors for dining rooms. The house was converted to offices in 2015.⁶³

Nos 6, 7 and 8

The buildings at these addresses are all of the early twentieth century, replacing nineteenth-century successors to the original early eighteenth-century houses. All three plots were first leased to Dr James Newton of Newington Butts in 1719, along with two more large plots to the rear facing Mortimer Street (the site of 15–19 Cavendish Place), where five houses were to

be built (see page ##). Newton's three comparatively small Cavendish Square houses were up by 1727, though still lacking front pavements. They were apparently difficult to let. No. 7 was first noted as occupied in 1730, Nos 6 and 8 not until 1734. Householders, several of them titled, were all female at No. 6 into the 1760s and at No. 7 into the 1790s.⁶⁴ The frontages were smaller than those further south, with two of about 32ft and one of 36ft at the corner – enough for tightly spaced four- and five-bay façades. These rose through four storeys but were lower than those of Nos 1–5. They had two-room plans with closet wings, No. 6 with a rear-stair plan, Nos 7 and 8 with less ample versions of the plan used at Nos 4 and 5 (Ill. 7.09).⁶⁵

In the late 1780s, the dining room at **No. 6** was enlarged for the landowner and industrialist Sir Herbert Mackworth, Bt, of Gnoll Castle, Glamorgan, by the architect-builder John Johnson Junior and his partners William Horsfall and Joseph Andrews (formerly his father's foreman and clerk). Richard Wade rebuilt the house in 1833–5 with a stock-brick front. The present stone-faced block was built speculatively in 1935–6 for the Cavendish Mortgage Company, via their developer associate Edgar S. Perry, to designs by his usual architects W. A. Lewis & Partners; Perry & Perry were the builders. The lower floors were initially occupied as rag-trade showrooms. Several of the offices above were taken by architects: Robert Cromie, Anthony Chitty, and Samuel & Harding.⁶⁶

The first rebuilding of **No. 7** followed the grant of a new lease to Richard Wade in 1818. A stone portico to match that at No. 6 was added in 1879. In 1908 Frederick John Dove negotiated an 80-year rebuilding lease, undertaking to erect a 'mansion'. This was done through his family firm, Dove Brothers Ltd, but he was probably acting on behalf of Alfred Ridley Bax, FSA, the first occupant of the new house. It was built in 1909–11 to designs by the architect James G. S. Gibson, a vice-president of the RIBA when he took the job.⁶⁷ Bax, a wealthy non-practising barrister, local historian, homoeopath and father of the composer Sir Arnold Bax and writer Clifford Bax. He moved

here from Hampstead and died in 1918. As a domestic building, No. 7 is a rarity in Gibson's work. It has more classical or Beaux-Arts restraint than his usual Baroque-revival manner, perhaps a nod to the context of the square (Ill. 7.17). The Ionic porch and first-floor balcony, though not the Portland stone, also reflect neighbours. The fifth or full-attic storey has another balcony above a boldly projecting cornice. Inside, the house was given fireproof floors and roofs and a mahogany panelled lift. The marble-paved and stone-clad entrance hall was originally embellished with a relief plaque overmantel by Allan G. Wyon, representing the apocalypse. Beyond is a shapely cedar-panelled staircase that sweeps up in curves reminiscent of the stairs in Gibson's contemporary Middlesex Guildhall (Ill. 7.18). It rises to the second floor with intricately patterned, openwork balustrade panels carved by Dove Brothers. To the rear there are shallow bows and a wing that was originally a single storey, for a lantern-lit billiard room. The first-floor layout gave full-width rooms, and there is much panelling and plaster ceiling enrichment. The house originally had twelve bedrooms.

The chemical manufacturers Brunner Mond & Co. had possession of No. 7 from 1920, using it for offices below a first-floor boardroom and upper-storey residential accommodation. They were followed a few years later by furnishing firms. The house, listed in the 1990s, has been variously occupied as offices since the Second World War. A mansard floor was added in 1999–2000.⁶⁸

The corner house that was **No. 8** (including the site of the present 21 Cavendish Place) was rebuilt in 1812 by Thomas Hamlet, the celebrated retail goldsmith and speculator, who lived here until around the time of his bankruptcy in 1834. (Hamlet served as Thackeray's model for 'the great jeweller, Mr. Polonius' in *The Great Hoggarty Diamond* and *Vanity Fair*.) The architect David Mocatta oversaw early Victorian alterations for a later resident, Aaron Asher Goldsmid. From 1922 to 1930 the house was a Governesses Benevolent Institution home, a use permitted by the Howard de

Walden Estate provided the fronts retained their private appearance ‘in every way’.⁶⁹ In 1935 the textile manufacturers Tootal Broadhurst Lee & Co. employed W. A. Lewis & Partners and Perry & Perry (then engaged in rebuilding No. 6) to put forward a scheme for new showrooms and offices at No. 8. Edgar S. Perry presented this as an opportunity to improve ‘the present deadliness’ of the Cavendish Place frontage but the Estate thought the proposed elevations ‘out of harmony’ with the square’s new buildings and requested alternatives from Adams, Holden and Pearson. Lionel G. Pearson prepared sketches and together with Lewis settled the scheme in March 1936. Completed by July 1937, the building was occupied by Tootal Ltd until 1969.⁷⁰

Its brick elevations, faced with false-jointed Portland cement, followed Gibson’s example at No. 7 in having contextual first-floor balconies and a continuous fifth-floor cornice balcony (Ill. 7.19). Otherwise this is much plainer, stripped-back classicism. Pearson introduced the four modest bas-relief panels, conceived as heraldic but executed by W. Aumonier & Sons as depictions of birds representing the four seasons. To the west, inside the Cavendish Place entrance, there rose a fine open-well staircase, in travertine lined with wrought-iron balustrading decorated with drapes, as befitted the client (Ill. 7.20). Reinforced-concrete construction permitted large open floors between a top-lit attic design-studio and a basement garage, for which there was a car hoist.⁷¹

The building was rebuilt as offices behind retained façades in 1990–1 for the leaseholder, Clerical Medical and General, despite widespread opposition from, among others, the Royal Fine Art Commission.⁷²

North side

Cavendish Square's north side is its most stately and prominent, as originally intended, facing the axial approach from the south (Ill. 7.21). But achieving that stateliness took half a century. It was a painfully circuitous meander.

Among the eminent men Edward Harley believed ready to commit to building in Marylebone in December 1717 was James Brydges, the Earl of Carnarvon, a man of immense, oft-said 'princely' wealth, built up through speculative opportunities offered by his position as paymaster of the armed forces from 1705 to 1713. The first agreement of any kind relating to Cavendish Square was with Brydges, who in June 1718 undertook to complete a building by 1720 for a 99-year lease. It can be deduced that this agreement, subsequently abandoned, referred to land on the square's north side.⁷³

The Florentine architect Alessandro Galilei, then in London, wrote in January 1719 that he had prepared drawings for a 'palazzo' for Brydges, most likely for Cavendish Square. John Prince's published plan for the Harley estate of that year shows a broad mansion across the square's north side, set well back behind a forecourt, with gardens to the rear oddly broken up by east-west streets (see Ill. ## - Prince plan). Brydges, now made Duke of Chandos, was building walls around his grounds in July 1719 but he was unwilling to begin work on the house unless the ground rent was reduced and the plans for roads altered. Galilei returned to Italy in August. Then, in January 1720, Chandos bought the Duke of Ormonde's house in St James's Square, renaming it Chandos House.⁷⁴

Chandos had not forsaken Cavendish Square. He continued to press Harley for terms, reaching a further agreement in May, and John Price, now his surveyor, published his own sumptuous elevation for an eleven-bay mansion in 'Mary Bone Fields' (Ill. 7.22). No townhouse, this was a reprise of James Gibbs's country house for Chandos, Cannons in Stanmore, where Price was engaged in 1720-1.⁷⁵ Confusion arose in the summer of 1720 when stock-market exuberance led the Harleys to toy with the possibility of a second

square north of Queen Anne Street. Price reported on the implications and, chagrined, Chandos sought clarification that if his take was thus pushed 850ft further north, it would still extend for 950ft without interruption by roads, reaffirming, perhaps disingenuously, that otherwise building work would be further delayed. Agreement was reached but Harley was obliged to suggest that Chandos look into acquiring Crown land further north.⁷⁶

Then came the crash. By October, Chandos had lost nearly £700,000 on the stock market. The Estate's plans reverted to a single square and in February 1721 Chandos was reconsidering the 'house I had thoughts of building'. He wrote to Lord Harcourt requesting him to ask Edward Wilcox, then working on Harcourt's house, to look over the plans for his house, to 'reduce them into a less expensive compass'. In March, in a lengthy interview with the elder Edward Harley, Chandos reiterated that he would begin building immediately if he could have more ground to the north. At this point Wilcox died.⁷⁷

Eighteen months later, in September 1722, Chandos was entrenched in financial difficulties and had changed his position. Prevailed upon by William Thomas not to abandon Cavendish Square, he was now considering building more than one house and laying out a street, presumably to run north-south, so giving up on the private grounds, though not necessarily the unobstructed view. His surveyor at this point was Thomas Fort, who was working at Cannons, but responsibility for completion there soon passed to Edward Shepherd, a plasterer as yet little experienced as a builder or architect but recommended to Chandos by Lord Bingley, for whom he appears to have been working on the square's west side. In July 1723 Chandos asked Shepherd to go over the lands north of Cavendish Square with a view to securing an agreement whereby the Harleys would retain the western half of what had been envisaged as Chandos's. Shepherd was evidently also at work on designs for what was still intended as a single 'Great House'. Chandos, an

inveterate interferer in building projects, asked him about 'the last Plan of the House you drew for me, in which I have made considerable alterations'.⁷⁸

Preparations for building work then began in earnest and, on Harcourt's recommendation, Chandos intended to employ Prince for brickwork. That did not transpire – perhaps Prince was otherwise committed (he stopped working for Harcourt in April 1724). It was only in that month that the land transaction was finally sealed with the release of a large freehold to Chandos, comprising the whole north side of the square along with narrower plots north of Queen Anne Street, for which there was now an agreed plan for a new grid of streets (see page ##). The deeds committed Chandos to a single mansion house, the foundations of which were to be laid by September, the roof covered in two years later.⁷⁹

In August 1724, Shepherd was paid for work on two houses; the change of plan adumbrated two years earlier had won out. Retention of the whole Cavendish Square frontage permitted these houses to be placed well apart, at either end. By December they were 'half carried up already'.⁸⁰ Chandos seems to have intended one for himself but the evidence is ambivalent (as his intentions may have been), the saleability of his house in St James's Square being one factor. The other house may always have been destined for letting, or perhaps for Chandos's eldest son John, now the Earl of Carnarvon and aged 21 in 1724 – in the 1760s Thomas Foley believed Chandos built the houses for his two sons. Shepherd saw them covered in by November 1725, as a pair 'exactly alike' (Ill. 7.21).⁸¹ Their separate histories are given below (see Nos 9 and 16 Cavendish Square). The path to completion was still not smooth. On one hand Chandos was diverted by the Marylebone Basin water-supply project (page ##), on another he claimed to have lost £110,000 through the Royal African Company, to the ventures of which, mining as well as the slave trade, he devoted much time and energy. Even so, wainscot wood was ordered from Virginia, and in May 1726 Shepherd was directed 'to finish the houses he hath built for me in Cavendish Square'.

Unpaid, Shepherd, who by this time was well established elsewhere as a builder, had stopped work and there was a falling out. Then, in April 1727, the Earl of Carnarvon died.⁸²

Nos 9 and 10

The first building at the east end of the square's north side was one of the houses put up by the Duke of Chandos in 1724–7. With its western counterpart (No. 16), it was built to designs by Edward Shepherd (Ills 7.21, 7.23). This 'mansion' was one of the square's more substantial houses, with three good rooms and closets on each of its five floors, two staircases, a garden, a separate large wash-house and laundry, and three coach-houses with stabling for ten to twelve horses, all enclosed by a brick wall on a plot 82ft wide and 195ft deep. There were some difficulties concerning the stables, which had been built in 1726 facing Chandos Street, breaking a standard covenant – to protect the value of opposing frontages, stables were required to face back roads or mews, not main streets. This was remedied by means of a south-facing range with a central pediment over a large entrance arch (see 11–12 Chandos Street, page ###).

There had been ambiguity as to whether the house was to be let or retained in the family, as Chandos's plans kept changing. It was put up for sale for £4,000 in 1728 but in the absence of a buyer was within the year made part of the marriage settlement for Chandos's surviving son, Henry Brydges, Lord Carnarvon, and Lady Mary Bruce, daughter of Charles, Viscount Bruce (later 4th Earl of Elgin). Then, in 1730, Chandos received an offer for the house and so the settlement was altered, Chandos reassuring Lord Bruce that 'Cavendish Square is not so well liked as to render it easy to meet with tenants for so large a house'. A sale of the freehold for £3,400 was agreed and

completed in 1731. The buyer was Governor Robert Adams who was not, Chandos admitted, 'a very steady man'.⁸³

From the 1680s until 1729, Adams had been in charge of the East India Company's trading stations at Calicut and Tellicherry on the north Malabar coast (now Kozhikode and Thalassery in Kerala). He had loaned company funds to the Zamorin of Calicut and other 'princes' to fight the Dutch. He also ran a private trade in opium, sending it inland on empty pepper boats, and had once killed a tiger that attacked him. Of the loaned money, over £6,000 could not be recovered so Adams was obliged to sign bonds for its recovery. He fled to England from where, at around the same time that he undertook to buy Chandos's house, he cleared himself of the liability. Substantial sums were remitted to him from India and he evidently settled into a well-appointed retirement. By the time he died in 1738 he had completed the house's interior and added a plain single-storey, three-bay range on its west side. His nephew Robert Orme, a future historian of India, was brought up in the house. Three 'black' servants, Edward, Antonio and Abigail, who had come from India with Adams, were perhaps also briefly resident. They were already keen to return home in February 1730, when Adams sought passage for them through the Company, but this was not granted until January 1731.⁸⁴

In 1741 this house was taken by James Hamilton, 7th Earl of Abercorn. Ownership passed, via the marriage of Robert Adams's daughter Elizabeth to Col. Bennet Noel, to the Noel family, Earls of Gainsborough, with whom it remained until 1872. Sir Gerard Noel decamped to Chandos Street in 1814 (page ###), leaving the premises free for use as a club, probably the short-lived Cavendish Club. In the early 1830s Charles Lennox, 5th Duke of Richmond, was a tenant, and there was a bank here in 1836–8. Then, in 1838–9, Charles Middleton, Baron Barham, employed the architect George Valentine to overhaul the house for his own occupation, work that included stucco embellishments to the façade. The house also served as an embassy: for

the Spanish in the late 1840s and the Brazilians around 1860, finishing up as the Japanese Legation until 1892.⁸⁵

By then the property had been sold on to Thomas Boyce, a speculative builder. After a small exchange of back land with the Medical Society of London, Boyce cleared the site and built a block of mansion flats. Erected in 1892–4, with red-brick and Portland stone elevations and fireproof floors, this was designed by an ad hoc partnership between Lewis Solomon and E. Carrington Arnold. The flats were ‘on a somewhat more elaborate scale than those in most other situations’ – some had eight or nine bedrooms. Of fourteen occupants recorded in 1899 three were dentists, two doctors. There was also a politician: Albert Yorke, 6th Earl of Hardwicke. Only three private residents remained in the late 1930s and after the war the block became entirely commercial, housing numerous offices and surgeries.⁸⁶

A scheme of 1990 to replace the flats with an office block of loosely classical post-modern designs by D. Y. Davies & Associates was opposed by the Royal Fine Art Commission. The RFAC maintained that redevelopment was an opportunity to restore symmetry to the north side of the square by building a replica of the house at the opposite corner, adjoining Harley Street – what had been the identical pair to Chandos’s original building on this site, though now much altered and extended (see Nos 15 and 16). The Commission’s Chairman, Lord St John of Fawsley, opined: ‘This is one of the best examples we have seen of the need for pastiche’. The project was dropped but redevelopment as just such a mirroring pastiche did proceed in 2005–7 when the present building was erected by the Freshwater Group, with Rolfe Judd as project architects. Interiors were fitted out for occupation as the UK headquarters of Chevron, the American energy corporation.⁸⁷

Nos 11-14

The open ground at the centre of Cavendish Square's north side was flanked by houses from 1725 when the Duke of Chandos called it 'the best situation in the square'.⁸⁸ Behind lay the watery expanse of the Marylebone Basin and a prospect across fields. A year later, Chandos foresaw a 'row' of great houses facing the square and a mews street running east-west halfway between it and Queen Anne Street - that may explain why the view was not respected. Pressed by inhabitants, William Thomas urged Chandos in 1727 to move 'a Laystall or Dunghill' from between the square and the basin. A year later Chandos sent John Wood, who wanted to show 'what the Bath stone would do in town', a plan of a single house for the middle of the square's north side, to be built for himself when his St James's Square house was sold, but this was not pursued. In 1735, Chandos had an anonymous builder interested in buying the central frontage as far back as Queen Anne Street (a plot 140ft by 430ft), but again nothing happened. So things stood for another decade.⁸⁹

In 1747 the Society of Dilettanti - that 'dining club for dissolute Grand Tourists' founded in 1732 - paid Chandos's son just £400 for the vexed 140ft of central frontage, with ground running 230ft halfway back towards Queen Anne Street.⁹⁰ The Dilettanti had decided in 1742 to build themselves a house for meetings and their collection of paintings, and it was to this end that the Cavendish Square property was acquired through a committee led by Sir Francis Dashwood that included William Ponsonby, Viscount Duncannon, who had a house on the east side of the square (now No. 3), as did Simon, 1st Earl Harcourt, the society's first president. In 1748-9 the ground was levelled, trees were planted, and boundary walls built. Major, later Colonel George Gray, the society's secretary and treasurer, designed a classically articulated and stone-dressed front screen. It had a central carriage entrance and was described in 1761 as 'a handsome wall and gates ... which serve to preserve the uniformity of the square'.⁹¹

Early in 1749, Robert Dingley presented his fellow Dilettanti with a plan for the formation of an academy. This was well received and Dashwood initiated a subscription fund for a building at Cavendish Square, plans for which were invited from members. By May the fund stood at £287 10s. Proposals from Dashwood, Dingley and Knapton went forward in 1751 and Dingley's scheme was best liked. John Vardy also submitted a drawing at this point, but there is no evidence that it found favour.⁹²

In 1752 the Dilettanti decided that an Antique building should be copied – an important neo-classical commitment – but another year passed before the model was chosen. It was the Temple of (Rome and) Augustus at Pola in Istria (now Pula in Croatia), known from James Stuart and Nicholas Revett's record of 1750. This Augustan building stands on a podium with steps up to a tetrastyle Corinthian porch with a blind circle in its pediment. A plan and elevation for Cavendish Square were to be prepared 'forthwith' in April 1753, and Dashwood, Dingley, Col. Gray and John Howe gained authority to take the project forward. William Barlow began digging foundations in May and was paid by Dashwood, who was later reimbursed by the Society for the costs of digging 'the Foundation of the Temple of Pola'.⁹³

Two undated and unsigned drawings at West Wycombe Park, Dashwood's country seat, appear to illustrate progress to this point (Ills 7.24, 7.25). A plan shows the whole Cavendish Square site, with a 'Grand Council Room' at its centre raised on a high podium (for a kitchen). This stands behind a 'Great Coach Yard' and a 'Grand Stair Case' in a double flight. The temple-like room is set within a 'Terras of Communication' straddled by tetrastyle porches front and back. To the rear, stairs lead to a formal garden. Flanking the front terrace are outer pavilions for an 'Academy for Architecture' to the west and an 'Academy for Painting and Sculpture' to the east. Dingley's idea of 1749 had been incorporated into ambitions for the site, but flaps in the drawing illustrate alternatives – either lodgings for a cook and

porter (west) and 'Receptacles for Modells' or casts of statues (east) under the academies, or removal of the academy blocks and their substitution with single-storey lodges in the site's outer corners. A substantial drop in ground level of around 12–13ft (in what is now Dean's Mews) occurs towards the back of the site. It seems the building's foundations were fully dug out, but further back than is indicated on this plan. A drawing of 1803 shows the sunken site with two massive piers, difficult to explain except as parts of a substructure of 1753.⁹⁴

The other drawing at West Wycombe shows an elevation with an Ionic portico, the proportions of which relate well to the Grand Council Room of the plan. With minimal fenestration and no front entrance, it is perhaps an earlier variant. The order and the festooned open oculus reflect Mereworth Castle more than the Temple of Pola. The West Wycombe drawings have been convincingly attributed to Maurice-Louis Jolivet, who was, it seems, the draughtsman for the scheme devised by Dingley, Dashwood and Gray. There was also an architectural model. In July 1753, Dashwood wrote to Gray: 'My Model was advanced as far as the Capitals, and my rascally French architect is run off'.⁹⁵ Another related design confirms that the Society did intend its premises to be an academy. Stephen Riou sent a sketch design of a 'Building for an Academy of Painting Sculpture and Architecture' to England from Istanbul in December 1753.⁹⁶

The project also advanced with the purchase of Portland stone through Thomas Adye, a stone carver. About enough for one elevation of the Grand Council Room (88 tons in 111 blocks) had arrived in London by July 1753. John Devall, the eminent mason, was paid for wharfage and it went to Cavendish Square. Twenty-nine cylindrical column pieces (52 tons) stayed in Portland until September 1754 when they were shipped along with further blocks. This second consignment may not have advanced beyond Devall's wharf. At this point things began to unravel. Adye had to negotiate liability for more stone ordered but no longer wanted in April 1755. He paid up,

bringing the Society's total outlay on Portland stone to £221 6s 8½d. It is not clear that the third consignment was shipped at all.⁹⁷

The Dilettanti had been approached by a committee of painters, statuaries and architects in January 1755. This group, probably galvanized by the work at Cavendish Square, asked the Dilettanti to support a plan for a different 'royal' academy of arts in an existing building. Cautiously positive, the Dilettanti responded in May, asserting a claim to equal standing and the presidency. That helped scupper the alliance as the practitioners did not want to be controlled by amateur gentlemen. But their dalliance with the Dilettanti had helped kill off the Cavendish Square academy. The ease with which the Dilettanti gave up on building was probably also due to other mundane causes. The subscription fund had been reduced to £89 11s 8d (nowhere near enough for the project in hand); the value of the Society's property had risen dramatically; and, in September 1754, George Mercer had taken the ground north of the Society's site facing Queen Anne Street for house-building. That the academy's garden would be overlooked would not have been welcome, however unsurprising.⁹⁸

Early in 1756 the Dilettanti asked Dashwood and Gray to sell the Cavendish Square property. George Shakespear offered £1,800 for the ground and more for the stone subject to valuation. A master carpenter, Shakespear was a sometime partner of John Phillips, who was about to begin building a pair of houses on Cavendish Square's west side (see Nos 17 and 18). Shakespear was spurned as the ground was valued at £2,200 and no other buyers came forward for a time. The stone, however, was sold. In March 1757 Col. Gray received £221 6s 8d (a halfpenny short of what had been paid out) from John Spencer, who was then building Spencer House, one of London's grandest mansions. There can be little doubt that the stone was wanted for and used at Spencer House, where since 1755 Gray had been supervising designs by Vardy, with Devall as mason. The west or Green Park elevation there probably incorporates the columns that had been intended for

Cavendish Square. Its ocular pediment further reflects the abandoned academy scheme.⁹⁹ It was not until 1759 that the sale of the development plot was secured. The purchaser for £1,800 was George Forster Tufnell of Chichester, perhaps stimulated by a recent inheritance of £3,000 from his father, Samuel Tufnell, MP, of Langleys, Essex, a wealthy politician who had died in 1758 shortly after George's first marriage was dissolved.¹⁰⁰ George Forster Tufnell was an MP from 1761, remarried in 1767 and became a father in 1769.

Tufnell's Cavendish Square ground remained empty until 1768. He was evidently not rash, biding his time on what had been a problem site – perhaps his remarriage brought new funds. Another catalyst for building may have been the financier-developer John Elwes, who bought the freehold of the property from Tufnell in 1769. The building of four houses in two semi-detached pairs, begun in 1768, was completed in 1770 (Ill. 7.26). The project remained Tufnell's but to carry it forward he may have used Elwes's network, otherwise widely active in Marylebone. A sheet of accounts by Elwes's agent, Conquest Jones, includes a reference of 1770 to finishing 'the Butch houses' (possibly meaning cut-up or divided), along with a large payment of £300 to the bricklayer Edward Gray and another to John Bastard, a mason. Bastard lived locally, on Suffolk (now Nassau) Street in a house leased from Elwes while he was engaged on building the Middlesex Hospital, and worked and invested extensively on the Portland estate in the 1760s, sometimes through Elwes. In 1769 he was linked with the carpenter William Lister on Harley and Queen Anne Streets. When Bastard died in 1778 his 'close friend' Balthazar Burman, a Lincoln's Inn lawyer and witness to Tufnell and Elwes's transaction in 1769, was an executor of his will. Bastard sometimes styled himself an architect and was the architect-mason for Sir Francis Dashwood's columnar mausoleum of 1764–5 at West Wycombe.¹⁰¹

The form taken by Tufnell's speculation is curious. He had been slow to build, but when he did it was expensively, with stone façades and applied

orders. What John Summerson called ‘magnificent Corinthian porticos’, as if for palazzi, albeit oddly subjoined, disguise mere semi-detached pairs of houses.¹⁰² The use of stone is contemporary with that around the corner at Chandos House, a coincidence that only shows the two pairs as comparatively old-fashioned and over-the-top. Tufnell’s houses were praised by John Stewart in 1771 as ‘fine examples’ of ‘unity of order enriched with ornament, in fair and high polished materials’, but their grandeur was effectively mocked by his title-page illustration (see Ill. 7.04).¹⁰³ A decade later the houses were judged ‘beautiful, when singly considered, [but] exceedingly deficient, when we attempt to guess at the intention of the builder. Their exact resemblance tempts the beholder to conclude, that they were meant as parts of some structure hereafter to be raised; and yet every circumstance about them shews, that they can never, with the least propriety, be made part of any regular or stately edifice’.¹⁰⁴

This is acute, although ‘herebefore’ is perhaps more accurate than ‘hereafter’. The author evidently did not know how closely the elevations reflected what the Dilettanti had intended for the site. The scale of the Corinthian porticoes is analogous to that of the Temple of Pola and the ocular pediments with palm ornament replicate that at Spencer House. There is a possibility, mooted by Summerson when the sale to Spencer was not known, that some stone bought for the Dilettanti was after all used at Cavendish Square, perhaps never having moved. Spencer House aside, the likelihood of that is diminished by complaints from St Marylebone Vestry about stone being cut in the square. It is anyway insufficient explanation for the formal echo.¹⁰⁵ Whether through Bastard, Dashwood or other channels, it is evident that Tufnell wanted or was persuaded to hark back to the neo-classical temple front that had been designed for the academy of the Dilettanti.

The houses are more conventional when considered on plan (Ill. 7.27). The pretence of the fronts was maintained with single, central entrances, but these in fact led only to the entrance halls and stairwells of the two outermost

houses. These had relatively standard side-passage plans, though with the addition of secondary stairs and canted closet wings to the rear. The two inner houses were entered from the intervening passage, where the brick elevations originally had Doric porches under slightly projecting three-bay pediments; these were removed in the 1950s. Such entrance positions dictated central-stair layouts. The rear rooms on the first floor had timber-framed canted bays, resting on slim iron supports. All the houses were given top-lit cantilevered stone staircases with moulded soffits, open strings and wrought-iron balustrades of identical detailing. Otherwise the interiors were smart but unspectacular, more in keeping with the plans than the façades. There has been much renewal; of the original joinery, cornices, chimneypieces and ceiling plasterwork little survives.

By leaving a gap between the pairs of houses, Tufnell was respecting the Hanover Square to Holles Street axis and, more pragmatically, the gateway in the screen wall of 1748–9. The central passage led to a stable yard (now Dean's Mews), the houses having small back yards and no gardens. The approach and perimeter were graced by arcaded and stone-dressed walls, the inner parts of which were revetments to the excavation of 1753. These swept round in quadrants, as is still the case to the west. After 1770 there was a turning circle and open ground in front of stable and coach-house buildings. Early views suggest that the place quickly became scruffy.¹⁰⁶

Finding occupants for these unusual and no doubt expensive properties was evidently difficult; at least one of the inner houses had long empty periods in the 1770s. The first occupants of the outer houses were Stephen Fox-Strangways, 1st Earl of Ilchester, MP, and one-time lover of Lord Hervey, to the east (No. 11), and Sir James Langham, yet to become an MP, whose Northamptonshire family kept No. 14 till about 1824. The latter house then went to Charles William Bury, 1st Earl of Charleville, whose widow, Dowager Countess Catherine Maria Bury, a society hostess, continued there to 1851. Tufnell himself took the inner west house (No. 13). His Cavendish

Square freehold passed in 1809 to his grandson Henry Tufnell, MP for Devonport, who lived here from c.1835 and under whom the development of the Tufnell Park estate began. A Mrs Margaret Tufnell who had lived in the house in the 1820s was probably Henry's aunt, née Uliana Ivanova Margaret Fowell. Dr Henry Monro, one of a leading dynasty of physicians specializing in the treatment of insanity, and a founder of the House of Charity (now the House of St Barnabas-in-Soho), lived at No. 13 in the 1850s–70s.¹⁰⁷

The first-floor windows may always have had iron balconettes; if not they were uniformly cut down for such before 1800. The still extant lampstands, perhaps of the 1770s, were then in place on the area railings (Ills 7.21, ??). In the 1950s the balconies were judged to be alterations, and on that account removed. Significant but superficial internal interventions in the early-to-mid nineteenth century, from which joinery and chimneypieces remain, included alterations in No. 14 in 1852 by William Cubitt.¹⁰⁸

The Society of the Holy Child Jesus, a Roman Catholic institution, moved to and took the freehold of No. 11 in 1888–9, added No. 12 in 1891, and then No. 13 in 1898. Its community of nuns ran the premises as a fee-paying school, from which they went out to teach the poor in other schools. The census of 1901 recorded an Irish Mother Superior (Aloysius Ryan), an assistant, 22 teachers, 18 servants, 6 boarding teacher-training students and 31 boarding pupils – every one, needless to say, female (see Ill. 06). Nos 11 and 12 were knocked together in 1891 and linked to No. 13 at basement level in 1899. The convent's architect was W. W. Gwyther and its builder for these and other works in the 1890s was Charles Joseph Hinsley, a brother of Cardinal Arthur Hinsley. The ground-floor rooms at No. 11 were used as a chapel until 1906–7 when Robert Russell, a local builder, put up a small Gothic basilica on a north–south alignment at the back of the stable-yard behind No. 11. A small addition of the 1890s behind No. 12 was joined in 1912 by a three-storey range for schoolrooms, bedrooms and an assembly hall, to designs by the architect Albert Dawkins. Further development followed in 1932 with the erection

behind the mews passage and No. 13 of a three-storey neo-Georgian residential and teaching block. Ernest W. Banfield was its architect and F. & H. F. Higgs its builders.¹⁰⁹

The houses suffered war damage and residential use of No. 14 ceased, though not necessarily in that order. From 1948, No. 14 was used by the Jockey Club.¹¹⁰ No. 12 had been bombed out and needed thorough remaking internally around a new concrete frame; outside, shrapnel marks remain. The convent's rebuilding project of 1949–53 was overseen by Louis Osman, a young, imaginative and historically acute architect who had worked in Sir Albert Richardson's office. Norman & Son were the builders. Much new work was also done inside Nos 11 and 13, with careful and precise replacement, for example of the staircases – conscientious conservation by the standards of the time (Ills 7.28, 7.28b). Indeed, Osman is said to have persuaded the nuns against building anew. In planning the project, he proposed a bridge to link the upper storeys of Nos 12 and 13 across the Dean's Mews passage, envisaging a large Madonna statue, initially sketched as of stone, and fixed to float above the arch and terminate the vista from Hanover Square that he thought might one day be freed of trees (Ills 7.29, 7.30). The bridge, faced in Portland stone and with carved Corinthian capitals, on a reinforced-concrete frame, was built in 1949–50. For the statue Osman ignored the nuns' plans to employ a Catholic sculptor and in 1951 turned to Jacob Epstein, who jumped at the opportunity without any certainty of payment and made a *Madonna and Child* maquette. The statue was to be cast in lead taken from the convent's bombed roofs, but even so the nuns said they could not afford it, also fearing a scandal if they employed a non-Catholic, however famous. Osman threatened to resign and the nuns came round, Epstein agreeing to accept their advice: 'I don't know whether theologically or aesthetically. Short of baptism I don't mind listening to them'.¹¹¹ A delegation of nuns visited his studio and Epstein modelled the Madonna's clothing on their habits. They asked that the Madonna's face, modelled from Epstein's wife, Kathleen, be

given a less agonized and more resigned expression. To meet this request, Epstein modelled the 'pinched and private-looking face' of Marcella Barzetti, an Italian pianist Kathleen had met in a Wigmore Street piano shop.¹¹² The nuns were impressed by the design and Epstein's humility. But in early 1952 the convent had yet to put up any money and Epstein thought they felt the whole thing had been forced on them by Osman, whom Epstein judged 'a very conceited fool who imagines I am working to his orders'. The convent later contributed £500 and Sir Kenneth Clark helped secure another £500 from the Arts Council; public subscription raised more, though not much, leading Epstein to conclude that he had 'made a gift to the Holy Roman Church'.¹¹³

The casting of the figures in three tons of lead was by C. A. Gaskin of the Art Bronze Foundry, and a bronze armature was designed jointly by Osman and S. D. A. Saunders, of Stoner and Saunders, cast-lead experts. The copper-gilt haloes were made by W. Pairpoint & Sons under the direction of silversmith Philip Popham. The work was unveiled by R. A. Butler, Chancellor of the Exchequer, on 14 May 1953. Epstein thought the 'ceremony seemed to reach back to the days of the Renaissance when the appearance of a new religious work was the occasion for public rejoicing; *The Times* commented on the 'marked incongruity between the sedate and static edifice and the way in which the sculpture is applied to it', and concluded that 'It is perhaps the most successful of all Mr Epstein's essays in monumental sculpture'.¹¹⁴ Epstein himself thought highly of the work and it has come to be one of London's best-known and well-regarded public sculptures. In a postscript to the episode, four bronze doorknobs were subsequently made for the convent. First designed by Osman, whose later career was as a goldsmith, these were adorned with vivacious cherubs' heads modelled by Epstein. They were removed in the 1990s. Another set was cast for Coventry Cathedral.¹¹⁵

In the 1960s No. 14 underwent substantial rebuilding. Despite a Building Preservation Order, the property developers Collingwood Group Ltd and their architects W. H. Saunders & Son removed the staircase in 1966.

Reinstatement was enforced after a public inquiry in what was seen as a test of the teeth of conservation legislation. However, the cause suffered further in 1969 when panelling and chimneypieces were stripped and the rear parts of the house were given a concrete frame and new back wall; Moore Simpson & Partners were the architects. For a time the Iranian Pars Bank occupied the building, which was refurbished again in 1993–4 for another bank.¹¹⁶

The convent, relaunched as the Cavendish Square Training College, replaced its Edwardian chapel in 1959–60 with another on the same site that included lecture rooms. In 1969 the college gave way to a Jesuit institution, Heythrop College, which moved here from Oxfordshire to form a constituent college of the University of London, bringing Catholic teaching into its Faculty of Theology. Heythrop College moved out in 1993.

The King's Fund, a health charity, then purchased Nos 11–13 to gain itself an integrated headquarters in the vicinity of other healthcare institutions. The convent's rear additions were largely rebuilt in 1994–5 to designs by Derek Latham & Company. The buildings of 1912 and 1960 were cleared, and the surviving block of 1932, now raised, was enfolded by a bulky red-brick faced block to fill the area between Dean's Mews and Queen Anne Mews, with a conservatory inserted into the remaining space behind No. 11. In Dean's Mews a new main entrance with a stone Doric portico was placed on the central axis. Further works of 2008–9 by Panter Hudspith, architects, provided conference facilities with an auditorium (the Burdett Theatre) and a landscaped garden.¹¹⁷

Nos 15 and 16 (with 2–4 Harley Street)

For all that the Duke of Chandos suffered a comedown from his first palatial schemes and the gap at the centre of the early square's principal side generated criticism, he did build a house on the square for himself that was a

residence of some grandeur. More remarkably, given the early demolition of Cannons and the failure and short life of a number of his other building ventures, this house, built in 1724–35, is in some part still standing, a link little noted thanks to serial alterations that have left it divided into separate properties and looking most unlike a single building. The original house, garden and outbuildings occupied the sites of 15 and 16 Cavendish Square and 2–14 Harley Street, a plot of 82ft by 230ft.

The carcass of the house was built in 1724–5 under, and presumably to designs by, Edward Shepherd (see pages ##, ##, above). Some internal work may have followed. Payments up to 1729 for work at this and the twin house to the east (No. 9) were to: John Barnes, bricklayer; Edward Loton, carpenter; Christopher Cass, mason; John Shepherd (Edward's brother), plasterer; Jean Montigny, ironworker; Morris Stevens, painter; James Dryhurst, carver; and the stuccoists Francesco Leone Serena and Giuseppe Artari. John Wood was consulted about finishing the western house in 1728 but, with Chandos's circumstances and intentions changing, it stood incomplete into the 1730s.¹¹⁸

Chandos still entertained thoughts of selling in 1731 when a rear stable block was going up under the supervision of the surveyor George Walker. But in October he wrote: 'my present thought being rather to fit it up for myself and sell the house in St James's Square furniture and all which will bring me in a very considerable sum of money and as I propose being but little in Town for the future the other house will be fully sufficient for that purpose'.¹¹⁹

Ever promiscuous if, by his standards, impecunious, Chandos next considered employing Roger Morris before returning to Shepherd for an estimate for further works. By May 1733 the house was finished and habitable: 'as strong and well-built as any in town; four good rooms with a dressing room and closet on a floor; a large garden with stables and coach houses at the end of it, with chambers over them for servants'.¹²⁰ It was lent to Henry Perrott, husband of Chandos's niece, while a sale was once again

explored. No buyer emerged and late in 1734 Chandos definitively decided to move in himself.

Benjamin Timbrell bought Chandos's St James's Square house for redevelopment and in January 1735 began to oversee alterations at Cavendish Square. These evidently involved a reorientation to move the entrance to Harley Street, possibly with a portico – there was one there in 1770. Other works included recasting the great central staircase. Apparently laid out on imperial lines, this gained iron railings (possibly reused from Cannons) and expensive painted decoration, with architectural components by Gaetano Brunetti and 'statues' and other figures on canvas by Jacopo Amigoni. Mark Anthony Hauduroy gilded the ceiling in the Duke's dressing room under Brunetti's eye and Timbrell added a two-storey service wing to the north. Chandos, whose wife Lady Cassandra died in July, grew anxious to have workmen out in time to move into the house in February 1736. But he jibbed at Timbrell's tripling of charges, and while Brunetti and the others were finishing up wrote to James Gibbs with a plan for a 26ft-wide addition on the east side of the house, to mirror one built on Governor Adams's house – an enlargement first considered in 1731. Chandos intended an antechamber, receiving room and bedroom for himself (above a basement), with mahogany panelling, ornamental plaster ceilings and tapestries. But Gibbs's estimate of £1,500 amazed him and the project was dropped. There was further tinkering with service rooms through an anonymous Oxford builder, works which may have included a heavily quoined single-storey wall facing the square on the site of No. 15, perhaps no more than a screen (see Ills 7.03, 7.21).¹²¹

There are no known views of this house prior to subsequent alterations, but Malton's representations indicate that it was at first just like No. 9, with a stone centrepiece to the square that had a carved 'festoon of flowers' above the first-floor pediment.¹²² Otherwise plain brick walls were fringed by quoining and a strong cornice. Some early brickwork does survive at second-floor level on the largely rebuilt front wall, in the south bay of the

return elevation, and perhaps in the front wall of 4 Harley Street. From Harley Street access would have led directly to the great staircase, situated between rooms to north and south and in front of a larger full-width room or rooms to the east (Ill. 7.31).

Chandos spent little time at Cavendish Square and complained about its environs. After his death the house was sold at auction in 1747 to Col. (later Lt.-Gen.) Sir Richard Lyttelton, MP, recently married to the widow of the 1st Duke of Bridgewater. In 1762 Lyttelton sold up and the property was granted, through the joint offices of William Ponsonby, 2nd Earl of Bessborough (of 3 Cavendish Square) and William Wildman Barrington, Secretary at War (of 20 Cavendish Square), to Princess Amelia, George II's second daughter, who had lived at St James's Palace until her father's death in 1760.¹²³

James Hope, the 3rd Earl of Hopetoun, bought the house at auction in early 1787 when it was said: 'Of all the ill-furnished houses – perhaps that of the late Princess Amelia was the worst. With the exception of one large glass, it was much of the same sort as might have been expected at a plain Esquire's in the country'.¹²⁴ Hope oversaw substantial improvements in 1787–8 for which Robert Adam was the architect, maintaining long-standing family and Caledonian links. A preliminary sketch plan labelled 'Cavendish Square' for a plot of appropriate dimensions suggests that Adam started by proposing a complete rebuilding on grandiose lines, with semi-circular passages between central and outer blocks facing Harley Street – a layout reminiscent of that of Harewood House. But this cannot have been seriously entertained. A more worked-up drawing intended simpler enlargement behind a show front to Harley Street with a central arch flanked by twin pediments over giant-order Corinthian columns or pilasters. What did happen was even less ambitious, though not insubstantial, making a large house larger. Much of the Harley Street façade was rebuilt for a northward relocation of the entrance with a tetrastyle stone face – a deep prostyle Roman Doric porch, since removed,

under a pedimented Ionic aedicule in antis framing windows that had been part of the giant-order design (Ills 7.31, 7.32). A guilloche band above originally continued further south. The works also involved a significant enlargement of the building's north wing (now 4 Harley Street), raising it to a full three storeys. This was done with plain brown brick, which is still visible front and back; it is puzzling that the elevation was not unified. In addition, a full-height eastern block was added, set well back behind the earlier screen on the site of the present 15 Cavendish Square. Chandos's staircase was replaced on an open-well pattern at some stage prior to the 1820s, possibly at this time. Further, at or before this point the stable block to the north was rebuilt on a larger footing.¹²⁵

Now 'fitted up in a stile of very superior taste and elegance' (of which scant trace survives), the house entered its late-Georgian pomp as a place of not-to-be-missed routs and fine art.¹²⁶ Its next owner and occupant from 1795 was a distant cousin of Hopetoun's, the American-born, Amsterdam-based and fabulously wealthy Henry Hope, Europe's pre-eminent merchant banker who, fleeing the French, came to London in 1794, a move that in itself marked a shift in the world's capital markets. With him at Cavendish Square were: his niece Anne; her husband and Hope's protégé, John Williams Hope; their children; and Hope's collections of 372 pictures and countless other objets d'art – Poussins facing the front door; a Titian, two Veroneses and several Van Dycks in the front drawing room; Benjamin West's portrait of Hope and family at the head of the dining room. He continued avidly to collect in London's art market and entertained magnificently (Thomas Hope, a cousin's son, was near by at Duchess Street from 1799 – see page ###). Despite returning to Amsterdam in 1802, Hope kept the house until his death in 1811. John Williams inherited and the last of Hope's picture collection, as well as furniture and fittings, were sold in the house in 1816. Among the buyers was George Watson Taylor, MP, son of a West Indies planter, heir to a Jamaican fortune through marriage, and defender of Caribbean vested interests in

Parliament. On his way to building a great collection of pictures and furniture of his own, and advised, as Hope had been, by William Segulier, he bought the house in 1817 and had it expensively redecorated. But his remittances from the Caribbean failed. He had to sell up in 1823–4, first pictures, then furniture, and finally the house itself.¹²⁷

Thomas Hardwick handled the auction of the property in June 1824. Single occupancy was probably no longer tenable and so he parcelled the site into lots for redevelopment. The resulting division separated the capital mansion at No. 16 (now 16 Cavendish Square and 2 Harley Street) from its back or north wing, which became 1 Harley Street (renumbered as 4 in the 1860s, see Ill. 7.31). Also, ground was hived off for new houses: on the 26ft-wide plot that held the eastern addition; on the site of 15 Cavendish Square; and in five more 25ft or 26ft-wide plots to the north, carved out of the gardens and stables, with mews access to the rear (now 6–14 Harley Street). New cast-iron area railings with an X-pattern band were added; these survive along with a contemporary iron lampstand at 4 Harley Street.¹²⁸ The main building at No. 16 was altered in 1825–7 in a conversion perhaps designed and overseen by Hardwick, possibly with his son Philip, who succeeded to his father's practice when he died in 1829. An elegant, single-storey, cantilevered stone open-well staircase was placed in the north-east corner of the main house, with a full-height back stair adjoining to the south. Removal of the Hope family's spacious open-well staircase permitted a huge dining room to the south-west (Ill. 7.31). The first occupant here was William Carr Beresford, hero of the Peninsular campaign and one-time ruler of Portugal, from where he returned for the last time in 1827. Embarking on a political career at home, Viscount Beresford was appointed Master-General of the Ordnance in 1828. In 1832 he married his cousin and childhood sweetheart Louisa Beresford, the hugely wealthy widow of Thomas Hope.¹²⁹

Relatively minor conversion works at 1 Harley Street (now No. 4), included a new entrance in a wide, arched opening to a hall that led through

to an existing open-well staircase (Ill. 7.31). This house was sold in 1825 to Dr Henry Herbert Southey, younger brother of the poet Robert. He lived here from 1828 to 1865 as physician to the Middlesex Hospital, physician-in-ordinary to George IV, a metropolitan lunacy commissioner, and a lord chancellor's medical visitor in lunacy.¹³⁰

The easterly plot to the square was assigned to William Phillips in 1825 with plans, perhaps by Hardwick, to build in front of the existing fabric to form a house. This scheme was amended and instead the new house, No. 15, was built by Richard Herbert in 1826–9 (see Ill. 7.31). Its handsome façade is analogous to that of 6–14 Harley Street, though subtly different to respect its neighbours on the square. Inside, the top-lit staircase is swept around niched quadrant curves. The first occupant was Sir Robert Frankland-Russell, MP, who was succeeded by the Dean of Durham in the 1860s.¹³¹

Beresford died in 1854 and his widow sold up to John Fane, the 11th Earl of Westmorland, another former soldier, by then a retired diplomat. In 1863 his widow sold the house to William Henry Forman, the last scion of an eminent family of iron merchants, and the property was further divided as 16 Cavendish Square and what soon became 2 Harley Street in works overseen by John Gregory Crace. For the southern part (No. 16), an entrance with a Doric portico was formed in the central bay to Cavendish Square and a full attic storey and mansard added above the cornice. Lower-level stucco rustication and upper-storey architraves were applied (as survive at No. 2), and also perhaps a guilloche band as on Harley Street. On Harley Street, Adam's porch was removed and another Doric portico added for a new entrance, a bay further south. The large dining room was divided to give each house an entrance hall, with a new top-lit staircase to No. 16 (Ill. 7.31). On the first floor at No. 2, the room behind the Ionic-framed windows retains Corinthian pilasters and an anthemion-and-palmette enriched plaster ceiling that are likely to be of this phase. The Cavendish Square house was occupied by Dr Andrew Clark from 1867 to his death in 1893. Physician to the London

Hospital and to W. E. Gladstone, Clark used the premises as a consulting room for what was said to be the largest London practice of its day. He was known for his tolerance of hypochondria. The last private resident of 16 Cavendish Square from around 1900 was Edward Berman, a German button importer.¹³²

William Anderson, eminent both as an anatomist and a connoisseur of Japanese art, lived at 2 Harley Street in the 1890s, adding a conservatory. No. 4 was given its present external appearance in 1906 by Col. Charles Stonham, another multivalent surgeon, possibly better known as an ornithologist, who practised from this address from around 1892 until his death. He applied lower-storey channelled stuccowork with a canted oriel and upper-storey architraves, and added an attic storey.¹³³

Sir Jonathan Hutchinson, the leading specialist of his day in ophthalmology, dermatology and venereology, and also eminent as a neurologist, lived at No. 15 from 1874 to 1907, next door to Clark, his more famous London Hospital colleague. The GLC erected a blue plaque to commemorate Hutchinson's residence in 1981. This house was briefly in 1910–12 an interim headquarters for the Royal Society of Medicine. It then saw a long period of use for the Jockey Club. The front entrance took its present Beaux Arts form in 1913 when Charles Thomas Weatherby, the Club Secretary, had the building altered by the architect A. J. Healey. The Club spread to No. 14 from 1948, then in 1969 No. 15 became MacCorquodale House, for printers of that name, and its ground-floor spaces were opened up. Other office uses have followed.¹³⁴

In 1926–7 the corner property at 16 Cavendish Square and 2 Harley Street was reunified as a branch of Coutts & Co.'s bank, to plans by F. C. R. Palmer, surveyor to the National Provincial Bank (with which Coutts & Co. had merged in 1920); John Greenwood Ltd were the builders. Carried out in a Palladian neo-Georgian style, these works removed the embellishments and porches of the 1860s and part of Adam's band, and gave the lower storey its

present heavily-rusticated stone face, with balustrading below the first-floor windows. The ground-floor interior was opened up under steel beams and a decorative ceiling as a banking hall with associated offices. The lower staircase flights of the 1860s were removed and the earlier back stairs were replaced with lifts (Ill. 7.31). Service rooms in the basement were reconstructed as a strong room. The 1820s staircase still survived behind an entrance hall. Under a top-floor flat the upper storeys catered for various uses, firstly as the American Passport Office, later as medical consulting rooms, and after the war by clothing merchants before being taken over by the bank. Latterly they have again housed medical practices. The banking hall was altered when a mezzanine was inserted in 1958–9.¹³⁵

In 2009, Nos 16 Cavendish Square and 2 Harley Street were sold to Linda Harley, founder of the women's shoe and clothing retailers L.K. Bennett, which had its head office at 3 Cavendish Square. The bank closed in 2012 and within a year plans by Squire & Partners had been accepted for the conversion of its hall and basement to a restaurant. The creation of 'les 110 de Taillevent', a branch of a noted Parisian restaurant, was completed in 2015 (Ill. 7.31). Present occupants of 4 Harley Street include the London Eye Hospital.¹³⁶

West Side

Bingley (later Harcourt) House was central and dominant on the square's west side from 1725. By the end of that decade it had been joined by a lesser yet still substantial house to the south, now No. 20. Two northerly plots (Nos 17 and 18) stayed empty until the late 1750s.

Nos 17 and 18

In 1750 John Phillips took a lease of a large piece of empty ground of 72ft frontage at the north end of Cavendish Square's west side, extending back 280ft along Wigmore Street. Phillips was a Brook Street carpenter-builder and heir to his uncle Thomas Phillips, who from 1722 had been involved in the development of the Harley estate in partnership with Benjamin Timbrell. By 1754, when concerted building along Wigmore Street was beginning, Phillips held the still empty land in partnership with John Barlow, one of a fecund bricklaying family most active, like Phillips, around Hanover Square and in Mayfair. Their Marylebone property was divided into house plots in January 1756. William Lloyd of Bloomsbury took a northern corner plot with 38ft and 180ft frontages to Cavendish Square and Wigmore Street respectively. A more southerly, 34ft-wide parcel went to Thomas Bridges, of St James's, Westminster. This was made deep enough at 190ft to allow a dogleg behind Lloyd's ground for an access passage from Wigmore Street, over which Phillips and Barlow retained the building rights; they also kept the remaining 90ft of Wigmore Street frontage further west. In March 1756 Phillips and Barlow, who were set to build the houses, engaged Henry Keene, the young possessor of Westminster Abbey's surveyorships, as architect to supply designs a cut above the usual, for two houses to face the square as a 'uniform and continued building'.¹³⁷

This was complete by 1759. Thomas Bridges paid £3,284 16s 5d for the building of the better-documented southern house (No. 18), of which he was the first occupant. Barlow had died and the bricklaying was completed by John Pratt, who worked alongside Thomas Gayfere, mason, Thomas Hefford, plasterer, Thomas Dryhurst, carver, Benjamin and Thomas Carter, statuary (for the three best chimneypieces), William Cobbett, glazier, William Chapman, plumber, and Jeremiah Hutchins, painter – these eight men all figured with Keene in a conversation piece painted by Robert Pyle in 1760.

The smart, six-bay brown-brick façade was not entirely uniform (Ills 7.03, 7.33). Only the northern house, No. 17, had stone window architraves, saving Bridges £56. The Gothick first-floor balconettes at No. 18, set neatly above a plat band for full-height windows, may be original – if so, an early instance of such treatment. A higher plat band at No. 17 indicates that the first-floor windows there were cut down by the 1790s. No. 18 was given a black-and-white paved and groin-vaulted entrance hall, marble and Portland stone chimneypieces, and an open-well ‘Chinese’ staircase that remains much as described when made: ‘cove on top with ornament and frame round the skylight ... stucco’d walls ... portland steps etc. ... mahogany handrail ... plain iron work’ (Ill. 7.35).¹³⁸ This house also retains finely wrought rococo ceiling ornament (including birds and roundels depicting episodes from *La Fontaine’s Fables*), door joinery, and decorative wall panels of a type also found at No. 17 (Ill. ??). In terms of planning, No. 17 had an unusual layout, since altered, with a canted bay on the Wigmore Street return; No. 18 was more conventional (Ill. 7.34).

The lease of **No. 17** had been assigned in 1759 to Thomas Grosvenor, MP for Chester from 1755 and the brother of Sir Richard (later 1st Earl) Grosvenor, with Phillips and Thomas Walley Partington, the Grosvenor family solicitor, as witnesses. Given the connections between Phillips and the Grosvenor Estate, as well as a mortgage in 1758 via Elisha Biscoe, another Grosvenor–Partington associate, it seems likely that the house was built expressly for Grosvenor, with Lloyd acting merely as an intermediary. Grosvenor held the house until his death in 1795.¹³⁹

A successor, Sir James Stevenson Blackwood, Baron Dufferin and Claneboye, MP, gave up the back 35ft of the plot in 1813 for the building of two houses on Wigmore Street (on the site of the present Nos 7 and 9) and rebuilt the stable and coach-house block.¹⁴⁰ The bay window to Wigmore Street was removed in 1838 when the back part of the house was rebuilt and extended for the short-lived Borough of St Marylebone Bank (formerly at No.

9), a casualty of mismanagement in 1841. The reconfiguration of the lower flights of the stairs with an Ionic screen and wrought-iron balustrading, and the remaking of the front entrance with a new balcony above, may also be works of this time. An eminent surgeon, Thomas Copeland, was here from 1842 to his death in 1855. One of the several MPs to succeed him was (Sir) John Walrond Walrond, who in 1873 gave the attic to Wigmore Street its present brick facing. Later occupants included Edwards Pierrepont, the American attorney chosen by US President Ulysses S. Grant as Minister to Great Britain, who took the house as his residence during his term in office in 1876–7, and was known for his lavish entertaining. It was to No. 17 that General Grant and his wife came to stay between 31 May and 4 July 1877, during a widely publicized trip to England as part of their world tour, the first ever such visit by a US president. The last private resident from around 1891 was Edward Ponsonby, Viscount Duncannon, later 8th Earl of Bessborough, whose tenure here was a return to Cavendish Square for his family.¹⁴¹

Bessborough resisted attempts by the developer Charles Lee in the 1910s to acquire the house for conversion to flats but after his death in 1920 Lee did secure a lease, now with office use in mind, and erected shops on Wigmore Street in place of the stable block (see 3–9 Wigmore Street, page ###). In 1923–4 the house was taken by the piano-makers John Brinsmead & Sons Ltd, previously across Wigmore Street, and an ostentatious refurbishment ensued. The architects T. P. Bennett & Hossack oversaw the Adamesque stucco embellishment of the Wigmore Street elevation with a new entrance, shop-front and upper-storey architraves to match those to Cavendish Square. Gilbert Bayes was the sculptor responsible for lower-storey reliefs of classically draped standing figures representing (from east to west) Science, Music and Art, and a panel depicting an orchestra of eleven naked child musicians (Ill. 7.37). These received gushing encomiums – ‘a delightful conceit’, ‘a captivating piece of work’, and an eight-page spread in

the *Architects' Journal*.¹⁴² Internally the conversion for showrooms with twelve upper-storey studios for practising and teaching (and later recording) included a lift. L. H. & R. Roberts were the builders. More Adamesque decoration including painted panels was introduced on the first floor by Mary Edis and the plasterwork specialists Jacksons. Lord Howard de Walden thought the conversion a happy counter to the tide of change, approving of shops made to look like a private house.¹⁴³

While Brinsmead continued in residence below, the London Hospitals School of Speech Therapy was founded upstairs in 1942. Victor Stiebel, a haute-couture firm, took the building in 1957–8 and removed chimneypieces. Michael Inchbald Design recast the interior once more in 1963–5 for Wolsey Ltd, hosiery makers, and in 1969 Rimmel Ltd, cosmetics makers, painted some of the front wall brickwork black, without the Estate's authority. This firm stayed until 1997. Railings were then put up on Wigmore Street.¹⁴⁴

At **No. 18** Captain (later Admiral) George Darby became the householder in 1774 when he married Thomas Bridges's widow Ann. In 1828 occupancy passed to Dr Alexander Philip Wilson Philip, a physician and physiologist, who lived and practised here until 1843. He was followed by another naval officer, Sir James Hawkins Whitshed. Then Sir George Burrows, who was to become Queen Victoria's physician, had the house from 1850 until his death in 1887. A new lease in 1850 may have been the occasion for the application of lower-storey rusticated stucco, a standard condition of lease renewals at this period, along with the heavy upper-storey architraves. Yet another eminent physician, Sir Stephen Mackenzie, had the house in the 1890s, followed by a surgeon, Sir James Dundas-Grant, through the Edwardian decade. Then came Sir Francis Laking, the royal physician, and Sir Ronald Ross, who had established in 1897 that mosquitoes transmit malaria, and won a Nobel Prize in 1902. He lived here in 1913–16, a residence commemorated by a GLC blue plaque.¹⁴⁵

The house was adapted as the American Consulate in 1917, Robert Peet Skinner, the USA's consul-general in London, taking the best (first-floor front) room for his office. Mainly dedicated to issuing visas and passports, with seamen specially directed to the basement, the consulate obliged ordinary people to frequent Cavendish Square. This soon drew complaint. In 1920 the Howard de Walden Estate had to field the allegation that the American presence had 'seriously deteriorated the peaceful and high class residential locality and the residents are very disturbed by turning the Square into a Labour Bureau for Blacks'.¹⁴⁶ A firm of opticians, Theodore Hamblin Ltd, took the property in 1937 as an extension to their nearby Wigmore Street premises, for which they had already built on land behind the consulate in 1926-7. Further works to the rear adapted the former stable block and created links through the basement, where air-raid shelters were formed. The ground floor of No. 18 became a contact-lens centre – a first, run by Dr Josef Dallos, a Hungarian immigrant and an innovator in the development of contact lenses. This presence, which continued till 1964, is commemorated by a City of Westminster plaque. The short-lived National Union Bank followed and then the Saudi Arabian Embassy took a lease in 1982. Adaptation for a Saudi trade mission included an extension to the rear, overseen by the Thomas Saunders Partnership. Further refurbishment and refitting followed in 2004 and 2008.¹⁴⁷

Bingley (later Harcourt) House (demolished)

The biggest of the early houses on Cavendish Square was Bingley House, built by Robert Benson, Baron Bingley, in 1722-5. Later known as Harcourt House from its association after 1773 with Lord Harcourt, it occupied the site now filled by the Edwardian block of that name at Nos 19 and 19A.

Originally the Duke of Norfolk was to have had the west side of the square but, after the upheavals of 1720, William Thomas persuaded Bingley to

take the site in exchange for other ground 'upon which he shew'd no inclination to build for want of Neighbours, as was pretended' – perhaps referring to the site further north where a second square had been mooted ('Queen Anne Square'). Unlike his neighbours Harcourt and Chandos, Bingley was not offered the freehold but a 99-year lease, issued in June 1722 but backdated to 1721. This gave him a huge plot with a 143ft 6in frontage and a depth of 300ft running back to where Wimpole Street was intended. Building work was essentially complete by 1725.¹⁴⁸

Bingley, the son of a Yorkshire attorney, was primarily a politician, acting as Harley's Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1711–13. He was also his own architect at his country house, Bramham Park in Yorkshire. In opposition in the 1720s, he may well have had the time and inclination to design his town house. He did, however, make some interesting payments: to 'Gibbs' in 1723, and to Edward Shepherd and John Wood from 1722. Further, in 1727 Shepherd was witness to an agreement affecting the south side of the house (where there was a 'Venetian Window'). The payment of 10 guineas to what must be James Gibbs is enough to represent the supply of a drawing perhaps, but not protracted engagement. Shepherd, a plasterer by origin, is first recorded acting as a surveyor as a result of a referral from Bingley to the Duke of Chandos in July 1723, which suggests that he may already have carried out such duties for Bingley. Wood, a joiner and just 18 years old in 1722, was another Bingley protégé. To judge from other payments, Edward Loton was probably Bingley's carpenter, and Alexander Routhead and George Mercer (another young man making his earliest recorded appearance in 1723) his masons.¹⁴⁹

The likeliest scenario is that Bingley designed his own house with help from Gibbs, employing Shepherd to supervise. However design responsibility is apportioned, the result was curious (Ills 7.38–7.40). Bingley was a cosmopolitan man and Bramham Park was similarly *sui generis*, if with more repose in its architectural massing. Edward Harley, the 2nd Earl of Oxford,

was indirectly and privately acid about Bingley House in 1725, saying of Bramham that it was ‘no compliment to the architecture of it, to say that it makes a better appearance on the outside than that of his Lordship’s in Cavendish Square’.¹⁵⁰ James Ralph was also struck, and no less rude in his published remarks in defence of Burlingtonian classicism, calling Bingley House ‘one of the most singular pieces of architecture about town; in my opinion ’tis rather like a convent than the residence of a man of quality, and seems more a copy of some of *Poussin’s* landscape-ornaments, than a design to imitate any of the genuine beauties of building’.¹⁵¹ Such criticisms stemmed largely from the house’s unusually forbidding and obscure situation, being almost entirely hidden from view by a high, austere brick wall facing the square, with an imposing stone Doric entrance. Its main façade had a certain old-fashioned dignity, with a large central pediment, Ionic doorcase, and flanking curved screen walls that linked to service buildings either side of a large entrance forecourt – all of which gave it the air of a Parisian *hôtel particulier* (see Ills 7.02, 7.38). The garden front, which faced a large parterre, was flatter, with another central pediment; a mezzanine unsettled its proportions. Apart from the addition of an attic storey, little was later altered. Its richly decorated interior survived till the end, with carved and moulded cornices and ‘fine old chimneypieces’. Carlo Ferdinando Serena, who had been employed by Lord Harcourt across the square (see above), worked for Bingley in 1727–8 and so may have been responsible for stucco ceilings; others were said to be painted *en grisaille*.¹⁵²

Bingley died in the house in 1731. Later that year his only legitimate child, Harriet, married George Fox, an MP who acquired the freehold in 1733–5. He became George Fox Lane in 1751 and Baron Bingley in 1762. The first matter of substance in his will was a direction to his executors to sell Bingley House, which had again been disparaged in print in 1771, as presenting ‘the

same gloomy exterior as Burlington house, with this advantage, that its interior is correspondent in every respect'.¹⁵³

The house was thus acquired in 1773 by the 1st Earl Harcourt, who moved across Cavendish Square from his house on the east side to this much larger building. A brother, the 2nd Earl, held the house to his death in 1809, his widow remaining until she died in 1826. From this period the name Harcourt stuck to what had previously been Bingley House.¹⁵⁴

William Henry Cavendish-Bentinck, the 4th Duke of Portland, acquired the house in 1825 through a lease from the 3rd Earl Harcourt and an enabling Act of Parliament; against the oft-repeated story that the house was won at cards is the fact that there was a covenant to spend £10,000 on repairs and improvement. Harcourt House thus became Portland's own residence on his West End estate. Among various alterations designed and overseen for the Duke by Samuel Ware, his estate surveyor, was a tall stable block at the back of the garden, along Wimpole Street, presumably intended to keep horses out of the forecourt (Ill. 7.41). Work by Thomas Cundy the Younger in the 1840s may have included the attic storey.¹⁵⁵ Concealed and old-fashioned, Harcourt House served as a model for Gaunt House in *Vanity Fair*:

All I have ever seen of it is the vast wall in front, with the rustic columns at the great gate, through which an old porter peers sometimes with a fat and gloomy red face – and over the wall the garret and bed-room windows, and the chimneys, out of which there seldom comes any smoke now.

The 5th Duke, William John Cavendish-Scott-Bentinck, known as Lord John Bentinck, was an unmarried and isolated recluse, obsessive about privacy, who died in the house in 1879. In 1862 he put up vast iron and fluted ground-glass screens north and south of the garden, 80ft tall by 200ft long (see Ill. 7.41), and excavated an underground service tunnel to link house and stables, works overseen by George Legg, architect. The last leaseholder and

resident was Gavin Campbell, 7th Earl of Breadalbane (Marquess from 1885). The 'gloomy mansion', occupied by Alma Graham, the Marchioness, and 22 servants at the Census of 1901, was sold by Sir William Harcourt in 1904 and demolished in 1906.¹⁵⁶

Nos 19 and 19A (the present Harcourt House)

Harcourt House was bought for redevelopment in 1904 by a syndicate comprising Sir Thomas Devereux Pile, a recent Lord Mayor of Dublin, Frederick Samuel Lucey, an accountant, and Daniel Thomas Nops, an estate agent. They formed Harcourt Estates Ltd, sub-letting to Robert and Thomas Mickel, the leading Glasgow building contractors who were then beginning to operate in London from Great Portland Street. They took the whole frontage (but just 112ft in depth) for private dwellings, following the precedent already established on Cavendish Square at No. 9. Mickel & Co. put up what were called 'flats de luxe' and 'maisonettes'. The first plans had been devised by Robert Worley but others by Gilbert & Constanduros were approved in 1906. The development was complete by 1909 and comprised two adjacent but discrete blocks, with separate central entrances, which together retained the name Harcourt House (Ill. 7.42). A fireproof, possibly steel-framed structure, it is faced in Portland stone to the front and white glazed brick to the rear. On the main façade a cornice insinuates a more contextually sensitive height but fails to obscure an overbearing presence that was little improvement on the low blankness of its predecessor. Each porticoed entrance leads to a marble-lined staircase (and lift) that rises through five storeys and two attics – which was the maximum permitted in the lease. The original accommodation was for 29 roomy flats. Mezzanines to the rear gave the 'maisonettes' double floors of bedrooms (Ill. 7.43). At first the block was wholly residential, and, with rents of up to £1000 a year, aimed at the rich. Among the first tenants were:

Sir Thomas Henry Brooke-Hitching, a recent mayor of St Marylebone; Sir Charles Edward Heley Chadwyck-Healey, whose father had established *The Engineer*; David Guedalla, an almond broker; and Sir Gerald Hemmington Ryan, President of the Institute of Actuaries. By 1921 three flats housed medical practices; by 1938, when the first dentist arrived, there were nine. After the war most of the block had been given over to consulting rooms. The society osteopath Stephen Ward, later the scapegoat of the Profumo affair, practised at Flat 1 from 1947 to 1952. By this time office use had also arrived. One of the last few remaining private residents in the 1960s was the television entrepreneur Lew Grade; all had gone by 1972.¹⁵⁷

At the time of writing (2016) a scheme is pending for rebuilding all but the carcass of Harcourt House to form a medical centre and flats, with a new rear elevation and an extra storey.¹⁵⁸

Nos 20–21 and 1–1A Henrietta Place (Royal College of Nursing)

Outward appearance belies the fact that there is a substantial house of the late 1720s at **No. 20**. It is enclosed within a shell of the early 1930s, designed by Sir Edwin Cooper as part of the extensive redevelopment of the larger corner site as premises dedicated to the nursing profession.

While Bingley House was building in the early 1720s, the site to its south appears to have remained unclaimed, certainly undeveloped. An agreement was entered into with Thomas Milner but in September 1726 William Thomas reproached him for delay. Thomas and Bingley were promised that Milner's builder, George Greaves, the Clerkenwell carpenter then finishing Nos 4 and 5 across the square, would begin building a house in the spring. In July 1727 Greaves bought 400 square yards of brick earth at Cotterell's Close, near the Pindar of Wakefield on the Gray's Inn Road, to make place bricks. The seller, Daniel Harrison, a cow-keeper, agreed to make

300,000 bricks within six months, to be of the same kind and quality as bricks made on the Harley estate by Abbott Newell. A month later, a Harley lease of the Cavendish Square site was given directly to Greaves and backdated to March 1726. He quickly mortgaged his interest through James Naish, the financier, at No. 4. The house that was to become No. 20 was probably complete by October 1729 when it was leased to Francis Shephard, who was resident by 1730. Shephard, whose country house was at Exning, Suffolk, was a former MP who had moved from the Whigs to the Harleyite Tories, and a wine trader and East India merchant in the steps of his father Samuel, also an MP, who had been Robert Harley's financier and Deputy Governor of the South Sea Company from 1713. When he died in 1719, Samuel left a fortune to Francis, his eldest son. Those who worked with Greaves to build the house remain anonymous but it should be noted that Andrews Jelfe, the masonry contractor, worked for Shephard at Exning in 1734–5, and that James Gibbs was stationed just around the corner on Henrietta Street.¹⁵⁹

The plot was big, with a 50ft frontage and 193ft in depth. Of three storeys and plain brick, the house that Greaves built was similar to those he had completed at Nos 4 and 5 but even bigger with a five-bay front (Ills 7.38, 7.44). This permitted a central entrance, but what emerged was an unusual layout in an almost square plan (see Ill. 7.48). The house's finest feature, a painted staircase which is among the best of its kind in London, is oddly situated in the south-east corner. The great expense of such a finish may have obliged Shephard to avoid the open-well entrance-hall form deployed at Nos 4 and 5 in favour of a dog-leg stair walled off from the entrance hall. This meant orienting the stair to rise from back to front, forcing a landing against the front wall and so causing irregular fenestration.¹⁶⁰ The townhouse aesthetic was evidently internal. The main staircase walls display two large architectural *capricci*, attributed by Edward Croft-Murray to John Devoto, principal scene painter at the Drury Lane Theatre at the time (Ills 7.45, 7.46). That to the south is designed to be seen from below, that to the north from

above. There are also trophies and *grisaille* figures of the Arts on the landing and of Music below the southern *capriccio*, these more in the style of James Thornhill. The ceiling, in contrast, is painted in the manner of William Kent, with gilded hatching and *grisaille* caryatids supporting a *trompe-l'oeil* dome. These paintings have been thrice restored, in 1921–2 (see below), by Michael Gibbon through the Pilgrim Trust in 1955, and by Alec Cobbe through the Historic Buildings Council in 1981.¹⁶¹ The staircase itself has Portland stone treads and wrought-iron balustrading, with a handrail and dado panelling of mahogany. The entrance and stair hall panelling has unusual Gibbsian fish-tail panels above over-door pediments.

The next most impressive space in the house, to the north-west on the ground floor, is a fully pilastered room (Ill. 7.47). The quality of this room and the fact that its Ionic pilasters are sunk at the corners also hint at involvement on the part of Gibbs. The room has an imposing marble chimneypiece with a swagged frieze which bears a medusa-like mask, of a type with plaits tied under her chin that was widespread in the 1730s. However, flanking eagle-headed terms suggest that the piece may be datable to the 1750s (double-headed eagles featured in the coat of arms of Viscount Barrington, a later occupant). Two other good chimneypieces in the back rooms on the first floor may also date from either decade; one has a swagged mask that probably derives from a design by Kent. There are other heterogeneous chimneypieces of the 1720s, some of marble, some no doubt moved. Outside the house, a plain brick rear wall overlooked a large garden. The rearmost 68ft of the plot extended south to Henrietta Street around a corner house (see No. 21). Here stood a pedimented two-storey kitchen block, with lower stable and coach-house ranges beyond (see Ill. 7.44).¹⁶²

When Francis Shephard died in 1739 his brother Samuel, himself a Tory MP for Cambridgeshire, inherited the house and more than £100,000. His close associate Henry Bromley, 1st Baron Montfort, another Cambridgeshire MP and a Barbados plantation owner, followed and

committed suicide here in 1755. Thereafter the property was acquired by William Wildman Barrington, 2nd Viscount Barrington. A great politician-administrator, Barrington became secretary at war in 1755, an appointment that significantly boosted his finances, and his Cavendish Square house became known as a place for parties. He died there in 1793.¹⁶³

Shute Barrington, Bishop of Durham, inherited from his brother and in 1812 took a new long lease. He too died in the house, which stayed in the Barrington family until 1888. Cement or stucco embellishments on the front may be datable to 1860, when a balconied porch was added (see Ill. 7.44); the householder then was William Keppel Barrington, 6th Viscount Barrington. A small greenhouse 'vinery' was formed just behind the house, possibly in 1888 when John Gregory Crace oversaw certain works.¹⁶⁴

Sir Charles Tennant bought the property in 1894 as a wedding present for his daughter Margot and her husband H. H. Asquith. The couple lived here with their children and servants before and after Asquith's term as Prime Minister in 1908-16. Margot Asquith was a political hostess with a reputation for extravagance. On departing for 10 Downing Street she noted: 'All the colour, furniture, grates, curtains, and every chair, table, and rug in Cavendish Square I had chosen myself'. This precedes the disarming admission that 'It is a constant source of surprise to people of moderate means to observe how little a big fortune contributes to Beauty'.¹⁶⁵

Immediately in 1894 Gillows had been employed to remove the partition between the first-floor rear rooms to form a ballroom (Ill. 7.46b). After their wartime return, with their income much diminished, the Asquiths were obliged to sell in 1920, marketing the property as suitable for 'a nobleman, embassy or family of distinction'. At the suggestion of the St Marylebone Society the LCC fixed a blue plaque in 1951 to commemorate this residence.¹⁶⁶

The smaller corner house to the south, formerly 1 Henrietta Street then **No. 21** in Cavendish Square, was also built in the later 1720s. A building agreement of 1724 with Sir Samuel Daniel, a Cheshire landowner, was

transmuted into a lease to William Hulton of Chester in 1730, by which time the house had been finished, though its coach-houses on Henrietta Street had yet to be built. Despite a 25ft, three-bay front to the square, the house was originally entered from Henrietta Street, facing which a canted bay was probably an early addition (Ill. 44). Hulton also took a Henrietta Street house-plot further west, beyond Shepheard's stables.¹⁶⁷

In 1746 this corner property passed to Sir William Duckenfield Daniel, Sir Samuel's great-nephew and heir to his Cheshire estates. Politicians and others passed through across the next century. The architect Philip Hardwick took the house in 1850, moving from Russell Square to a district with which his father and grandfather (both Thomas) had had strong connections. William Cubitt & Co. added a Doric porch and vestibule for a new entrance facing the square, presumably to Hardwick's designs. Stucco facing may have been contemporary. But Hardwick had become an invalid and his practice was handled by his son Philip Charles Hardwick, who stayed at No. 21 until 1874, when he sold the lease to William Hilliard Dunster, a solicitor with premises in Henrietta Street. The lease soon passed to (Sir) Edwin Henry Galsworthy (uncle of the novelist), an eminent actuary and for many years chairman of the Metropolitan Asylums Board, for whom a conservatory was added in 1875.¹⁶⁸

Later residents were medical: Dr Charles Brodie Sewell in the 1880s; Edmund Distin Maddick, surgeon and cinema pioneer, in 1892–4; Sir William Arbuthnot Lane, surgeon and health campaigner, from 1894 until around 1930. The house was acquired in 1931 by Annie Pearson, Viscountess Cowdray, for the College of Nursing and demolished on a rebuilding lease.¹⁶⁹

Previously, in 1920, at the suggestion, it is said, of Rachael Cox-Davies, matron of the Royal Free Hospital, Lady Cowdray had bought 20 Cavendish Square as a clubhouse for nurses. Permission was granted for rebuilding along Henrietta Street to form a headquarters building for the College of Nursing, which had been established in 1916 in an office on Vere Street as a

response to wartime exigencies, to support and advance the nursing profession. She and her husband, Weetman Dickinson Pearson, 1st Viscount Cowdray, a construction and oil entrepreneur, funded a phased campaign of redevelopment. (Sir) Edwin Cooper was the architect throughout. He immediately prepared plans for the Henrietta Street building, on the westernmost stables site, but the first projects carried out in 1921–2 were alterations in the house and a separate dining room for what was launched as The Nation's Nurses and Professional Women's Club (soon known as the Cowdray Club). Works in the house included the insertion of a lift and the rebuilding of the north staircase, with niches where windows in the north wall had overlooked the Bingley House forecourt (Ill. 7.48, plan). The first-floor corridor was given ribbed groin vaulting, the corridor above an apsidal south end. Remodelling of the upper-storey interiors, mainly as bedrooms, included convincingly neo-Georgian panelling. This much was carried out by John Greenwood Ltd. John Mowlem Ltd built the dining room on the former garden. This handsome oak-panelled room (latterly used as a council room) has Corinthian pilasters and columnar screens, a low domical lantern ceiling and spandrel medallions with relief busts of Florence Nightingale, Edith Cavell and the Cowdrays (Ill. 7.49). A two-bay corridor linked it to the back of the house.¹⁷⁰

Viscountess Cowdray laid the foundation stone for the Henrietta Street College of Nursing block in June 1922. Built by Mowlems, it replaced stable and coach-house buildings; the old pedimented kitchen still stood (Ills 7.48, 7.50). It was completed in 1925 and formally opened as the Cowdray Hall by Queen Mary in May 1926 when the College of Nursing already had 25,000 members. It may be significant that the five-bay Portland stone front, what is now the west part of a larger building, was slightly stepped up in height from J. J. Joass's Royal Society of Medicine next door. Yet, it was remarked at the time by Hugh B. Philpott: 'The façade in Henrietta Street is not likely to attract general attention, however much it may appeal to the discriminating. It is

urbane and unprovocative, as is all architecture in this manner. Like a well-dressed gentleman in a crowd, it escapes notice through those very qualities – good taste and unobtrusiveness – which are most to be commended'.¹⁷¹ The row of brightly-painted jalousies (or shutters) beneath the upper balcony, originally green, now blue, supply a transgressive touch – the gentleman's loud cravat, to extend a metaphor that had been picked up from Arthur Trystan Edwards's *Good and Bad Manners in Architecture* (1924). Inside, a panelled and vaulted octagonal entrance lobby led via a corridor lined in Italian marble to an entrance hall with an open ellipse in its ceiling (Ill. 7.48). Beyond, and on an east–west axis with the dining room, was the Nurses' Memorial and Lecture Hall (latterly the Cowdray Hall). This has a coffered ceiling and stained glass by Dudley Forsyth – three wreaths holding figures representing Faith, Fortitude and Love. Carved woodwork by George Haughton included a cartouche with the Cowdray arms. There were offices, meeting rooms and a library in front and on the first floor, second-floor teaching rooms, and upper-storey nurses' quarters to supplement those in the club. A glazed pergola to link the club and college across the roof of the dining room was an early addition.¹⁷²

The last rebuilding phase had to wait until 1932–4 and followed the acquisition by Lady Cowdray of 21 Cavendish Square. Clearance there and of the old kitchen permitted a tripling in the length of the college's building along Henrietta Street. With Mowlems again the contractors, Cooper cleverly, characteristically and rather monolithically maintained symmetry in a 15-bay front. In tandem he refaced and, through the ingenious introduction of bridging structural steelwork, heightened the eighteenth-century clubhouse (Ill. 7.49). The considerable additional space gained was mainly devoted to offices and more bedrooms. On the ground floor the new corner reception or meeting room, dedicated to the memory of Viscountess Cowdray, was expensively fitted out with panelling embellished with carved drops, again by Haughton, and a neo-Grec plaster ceiling. This has become the Sarah Swift

Room, after a founder of the college and its president in 1926. Income from letting was part of the expansion plan and the block soon came to accommodate the Spanish Consulate-General and several Central American consulates among other office users.¹⁷³

A generation later the now Royal College of Nursing considered moving away from Cavendish Square. In 1974 a developer, Peter Davidson of Interland Estates, put up sixty per cent of the money needed for the College to persuade the Cowdray Club to surrender its lease, anticipating a sale of the whole block. The Club moved out and merged with the Naval and Military Club, but a scheme for offices and flats that involved rebuilding on Henrietta Place was abandoned. Staying put, the RCN refurbished its premises in 1979–83, employing Clifford Culpin & Partners as architects and Walter Lawrence & Sons as contractors. Circulation in Cooper's building had become a problem, so lifts were inserted and staircases rebuilt. The library was given considerably more space along Henrietta Place. Relocation was again considered from the late 1980s then spurned, and various further improvement schemes were prepared. Further works of 2000–1, designed by EPR Architects and carried out by Try Construction, included a glass-fronted corridor addition on the north side of the middle bays of the Henrietta Place range and the insertion of a glass lift and a spiral staircase in the library. Once again in 2006 the sale of the building was mooted then suppressed. Another round of works in 2012–13, under Bisset Adams Architects and the contractors Overbury, saw the library opened up to include a public heritage centre with retail and museum elements.¹⁷⁴

South Side

Facing Cavendish Square from the south are the backs of some of Oxford Street's mid twentieth-century commercial buildings. These will be covered in the forthcoming Oxford Street volume. What follows here are short accounts of the preceding buildings, all now demolished, running from west to east (Ills 7.52, 7.53).

Nos 22 to 27

Two comparatively narrow three-bay, four-storey houses, both laid out with central-staircase plans, were conceived as fronting Henrietta Street beyond the west end of the square's south side. The more easterly, later known as **No. 22**, went up strikingly early, in 1719–21, before anything was complete on the square. The developer was William Long, a Marylebone man with experience of similar speculation on the Bedford estate in Covent Garden; he passed the lease on to Thomas Devereux, a joiner from St Giles. The house stood on its own for twenty years, with a coach-house and stables to the rear on Red Lion Yard (later Cavendish Buildings). It was demolished around 1938 for the rebuilding of John Lewis.¹⁷⁵ Long then took a lease of a large plot adjoining to the west in 1739 for the building by 1741 of eleven houses, nine facing Old Cavendish Street, two to Henrietta Street, the eastern of which eventually came to be numbered as **22A** on Cavendish Square. That house may have been extensively rebuilt in the late eighteenth century and was given stucco embellishments in the nineteenth. It came down around 1970 for replacement by a three-storey brick-faced extension to John Lewis.¹⁷⁶

No. 23, a house of 1739–41, was also built under a lease to William Long. With a four-bay front and four full storeys it was equivalent in scale to the houses at Nos 3–5, and like Nos 4 and 5 had an open-well staircase in its entrance hall. Its first occupant was Henry Scudamore, 3rd Duke of Beaufort. This was probably the property referred to as 'the house next Lady

Montagues' in a letter of 1741 from James Gibbs, advising Edward Harley (shortly to become the 3rd Earl of Oxford) not to buy because of the vendor, presumably Long – 'his Character is so bad' – and because 'the rooms are so small'. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and her husband Sir Edward Wortley Montagu, formerly the ambassador to Constantinople, were connected with several properties on this side of the square. After their return to England in 1718 they took a house together in the Covent Garden piazza (and another in Twickenham) but Lady Mary, who was a close friend of Lady Henrietta Cavendish-Holles, Countess of Oxford, was also making use of a house in Cavendish Square from c.1723 (see Nos 24 & 25, and No. 33, below). After their separation, Sir Edward held this house from 1746 until his death in 1761, though it is unlikely that he spent much time here. The elderly Elizabeth Herbert, Dowager Countess of Pembroke, had the house from about 1800, but had to rebuild it after it was burned out 1801; she remained until the late 1820s. Though evidence is lacking, Soane's involvement is possible as she had employed him elsewhere and the façade and interior were loosely Greek Revival and faintly Soane-ian in character; but this may have been due to later remodelling around 1830 for William Duncombe, MP. The painter Charles C. Seton lived here in 1889–94 and the building remained a private house until the 1930s.¹⁷⁷

Nos 24 and 25. This 60ft frontage was developed in 1724–6 with a large house for Maurice Hunt, a wealthy young man. He died in 1730, leaving his £40–60,000 estate to his Scottish tutor, William Morehead, who married Hunt's widow, Alice, in 1731. Morehead thus also inherited Hunt's estate in Little Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, but appears not to have lived in his Cavendish Square house. He may have parlayed his good fortune, possibly through association with James Gibbs (who left Morehead £400 in his will), to take the adjoining and newly completed corner house (see Nos 26 and 27, below) and give way here to Edward and Lady Montagu, who had Hunt's house from 1731 to 1743.¹⁷⁸ It would thus have been with this house in mind

that Lady Mary wrote to John Hervey: 'This meek Epistle comes to tell/On Monday I in Town shall dwell,/Where if you please to condescend/In Candish Square to see your Freind/I shall disclose to you alone/Such thoughts as n'ere were thought upon'.¹⁷⁹ She eloped to the Continent in 1739 after years of difficult family life. A successor in the house from 1747 to his death in 1752 was the swashbuckling vice-admiral Sir Peter Warren, a hero of the Siege of Louisbourg and the Battle of Cape Finisterre. The building was odd, its west part laid out as if a conventional three-bay, closet-wing house, its wider east part perhaps rebuilt around 1770 for Thomas, 3rd Earl of Macclesfield, with a central open-well stair and a four-bay façade on a more forward line. It was converted into two houses in the 1820s. No. 24 was used by the John Lewis Partnership as its chairman's office, prior to its demolition in the 1930s.¹⁸⁰

The western Holles Street corner plot at **Nos 26–27** was developed through a lease of 1725 to the bricklayer Joel Johnson. The property was repeatedly mortgaged and the house may not have been complete until 1731. Despite its 65ft seven-bay frontage to the square it was only 38ft deep and, by dint of its corner position, lacked a garden or mews buildings. Always entered from Holles Street, its large open-well stair lay to the south, leaving views of the square open. The elevations were distinctively articulated with giant-order angle pilasters and strong stone cornices over the second storey. It was occupied by William Morehead from 1733 until his death in the house in 1766, with intervals during which he evidently made way for peers (Lord Harcourt in 1736, Lord Darnley in 1742–4).¹⁸¹ The house was divided in the 1820s and the west part (No. 26) was to be associated with several painters, notably Philip Westcott (resident 1855–61) and Henry George Crayon Fanner (1871–82). A Barclay's bank was at No. 27 from 1894 when a portico to Holles Street and a mansard attic were added, to designs by W. Henry White. The building became Imperial House insurance offices during the 1920s.¹⁸²

These properties accommodated many medical practitioners in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (see list at end). Indeed residents of the south side of the square were nearly all physicians, surgeons and dentists by 1890, most of them connected in some way with University College, London. In the 1920s commerce began to move in, and 23–27 Cavendish Square were demolished around 1938 to make way for a new and larger John Lewis department store. The Howard de Walden Estate gave up its freehold of the block in 1958.¹⁸³

Nos 28 to 37

The entire block between Holles Street and Princes (now John Prince's) Street south to Oxford Street was granted as one in 1718, in a 99-year building lease running from March 1719, to Francis Seale, the Harley Estate's steward, and John Prince, the 'master builder' then acting as surveyor. Under this head lease the Cavendish Square frontage was parcelled off, much of it to Joel Johnson. Mostly built up in the late 1720s, the houses generally had three-bay fronts and conventional rear-staircase layouts with closet wings.¹⁸⁴

No. 28 was a comparatively small and shallow house that originally faced the square. From 1788 to 1808 it was occupied by Mather Brown, the successful American portraitist. **No. 29**, built by Johnson, was no deeper but was double-fronted, with a five-bay façade. These properties were united by James Marshall Thompson in the 1820s and turned into a hotel. A two-storey bay and a Holles Street entrance portico were added in 1883. In recognition of the nursing and welfare services of voluntary aid detachments during the First World War, the hotel was acquired and converted to be the VAD Ladies' Club Ltd, here from 1920 to 1958.¹⁸⁵

Nos 30 and 31 were a more or less mirrored pair. The first resident of No. 31, from c.1730 to 1761, was John Wootton, the landscape and sporting

artist of Edward Harley's circle and dedicated patronage. In 1881 it was the residence of (Sir) Squire and (Lady) Mary Effie Bancroft, actors and theatre managers. A shaped gable was added in 1884 for Thomas Read, a dental surgeon.¹⁸⁶ The first house at **No. 32** was probably built by Joel Johnson in the early 1720s, before its neighbours. Its first occupant from 1725, one of the square's earliest, was Anthony Collins, a wealthy free-thinking philosopher (also a Whig), who died here in 1729. His widow sold the house in 1737 to another controversialist, Arthur Ashley Sykes, who held it until his death in 1756. Thereafter a string of artists lived here: Francis Cotes, the portrait painter, in 1763–70, who spent a 'very large sum' on improvements, including a picture gallery and painting room, and a 'pupil's room' at the end of the garden; George Romney, who also built a studio extension over the garden, later described as a 'suite of galleries', from 1775 to 1798; and Sir Martin Archer Shee, another portraitist, from 1799 to 1850. The house was rebuilt in 1904–5 to designs by W. Henry White for W. A. Poole and leased to Wilhelm Baron von Stumm, a German diplomat. Behind a Portland stone front a carved rococo chimneypiece from the earlier house was reused. Nos 30 and 32 were the premises of British Ropes Ltd in the 1920s.¹⁸⁷

The first houses at **Nos 33–36** were slightly larger. No. 33, probably built by John Prince around 1720, was assigned in 1725 to Lady Elizabeth Pierrepont, a young widow and apparently a relation of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Lady Montagu appears to have been resident here by 1723, when she began addressing letters from 'Cavendish Square', until around 1727. No. 33 was refronted, possibly in 1873, in an early Domestic Revival manner with a shaped gable.¹⁸⁸ No. 34 was equally early, built by William Lloyd, a bricklayer of St Margaret, Westminster, and up by 1721 when the lease was assigned to James Gibbs. It appears to have survived into the 1950s. Nos 35 and 36 were rebuilt as houses in 1907–9 for the contractors Higgs & Hill; Claude W. Ferrier, recently articulated in Aston Webb's office and the only son of Dr David Ferrier, a pioneering Scottish psychologist long-established next

door at No. 34, was their architect. No. 36 was first leased to Dr Charles Montagu Handfield-Jones, physician to St Mary's Hospital, Paddington.¹⁸⁹

No. 37, on the Prince's Street corner plot, was a three-bay house leased in 1734 to Francis Nicholson, a stone merchant of Scotland Yard. It gained a Greek Revival porch and stucco embellishments in the early nineteenth century.¹⁹⁰

Nos 28–37 were demolished in 1958–9 following their sale to the Land Securities Investment Trust for redevelopment. Their replacements, built in 1959–61 by Taylor Woodrow Construction to designs by T. P. Bennett & Son, included a public house at No. 28, the John Princes Street corner, called the Phoenix, its name commemorating Phoenix Yard, the mews that had been built behind Cavendish Square in the middle of the block taken by Seale and Prince in 1718; and a National Bank at No. 37, the Holles Street corner. The rest of the block is dominated by tall office buildings set back behind a three-storey frontage, notably a tall tower in the centre which is aligned north-south and entered from a lobby now numbered as 33 Cavendish Square.¹⁹¹

Cavendish Square, south side: eminent medical residents ¹⁹²

Matthew Baillie, anatomist and physician. *No. 33, c.1820–23*

Sir James Risdon Bennett, physician. *No. 22, 1881–91*

Sir David Ferrier, neurologist. *No. 34, 1880s–1920s*

Sir Stephen Love Hammick, Bt, surgeon. *No. 36, 1829–1850s*

Francis Harris, physician. *No. 24, 1860s–85*

Christopher Heath, surgeon. *No. 36, 1870s–1905*

Sir Victor Alexander Haden Horsley, physiologist and surgeon. *No. 25, 1890s–1916*

Stephen Luke, physician. *No. 36, 1815–29*

Edward Dillon Mapother, surgeon and dermatologist. *No. 32, 1887–c.1904*

Sir Alexander Morison, physician and alienist. *No. 26, 1830s–50s*

John William Ogle, physician. *No. 30, c.1880–98*

Richard Quain, anatomist and surgeon. *No. 32*, 1850–87

Charles Bland Radcliffe, physician. *No. 25*, 1860s–89

George Robert Rowe, surgeon and physician. *No. 33*, 1848–61

Alexander Shaw, surgeon. *No. 22A*, 1850s–60s

Edmund Symes-Thompson, physician. *No. 33*, 1878–1906

Sir John Tomes, dental surgeon. *No. 37*, 1850s–95

Sir George Leman Tuthill, physician. *No. 24*, 1820s–35

Forbes Benignus Winslow, physician; specialist on insanity, *No. 23* 1850s–74