CHAPTER 8

South of Cavendish Square

The short streets south of Cavendish Square were first built up in the 1720s–40s as part of the early development of the Cavendish–Harley estate in and around the square. They have been repeatedly recast since, though a few original houses, some by James Gibbs, survived into the 1970s. Only Gibbs's Oxford Chapel (now St Peter's, Vere Street) remains from that early period; today offices and the undistinguished sides and backs of Oxford Street department stores predominate.

St Peter's, Vere Street

The Oxford Chapel, known since 1832 as St Peter's, Vere Street, was built in 1721–4 for the inhabitants of the new streets of houses then growing up around Cavendish Square. With the twentieth-century transformation of the area from residential to commercial, the building has ceased to function as a chapel but it retains a religious use as the home of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity. Tucked away behind Oxford Street, dwarfed by department stores and offices, it is not only overshadowed but overlooked. It is, however, the earliest surviving building from the Cavendish–Harley estate and the sole survivor in anything like its original form of Marylebone's several eighteenth-century proprietary chapels. The plasterwork is among the finest of its date in London.

The inclusion of a chapel on John Prince's plan for the estate, engraved in 1719, indicates that a place of worship was already then intended (see Ill. 8.2). This would prevent undue pressure on the rather distant parish church,

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give anchorage to the new streets, and yield an income. But instead of following Continental practice or London precedents (as at St Paul, Covent Garden, or St James, Piccadilly), the Oxford Chapel was never destined for the main square or a prominent street frontage; it seems the Harleys did not want to sacrifice profitable building plots. Prince's plan shows its intended position south-west of Cavendish Square (the west being the estate's smarter side), thus forming an axis of spiritual and corporeal provision with the market house intended for the east side (for which see pages ###, ###). Rather oddly, the chapel occupies the centre of a street block, overlooked by the backs of houses as if in a stable yard. By June 1720, 'Auditor' Edward Harley, a dominant figure in the estate's early development, had written to his nephew Lord Harley, the future 2nd Earl of Oxford and estate owner, informing him that Prince had drawn a new plan, adding 'I think it very proper that the foundations of the church be laid this year and immediately begun'.[1] The urgency to start work stemmed from the need to attract investors to the estate, where the chapel was to be a key amenity, and became more pressing after the collapse of the South Sea Bubble late in 1720. Builders 'complained of the want of a Market & Chapell', and, in the absence of Lord Harley building a house for himself, at least wanted to see him 'do *something* on his part' before they would commit themselves.[2] In the event the chapel was erected at the north-west corner of the block, at the junction of Vere Street and Henrietta Street (now Place), in a small sacrifice of symmetry that created an irregular piazza on its south and east sides, known as Chapel Place (sometimes Chapel Street).

The Oxford Chapel was paid for by Lord Harley and designed by James Gibbs, the architect member of his cultural coterie. The Harleys had employed Gibbs in the 1710s to extend their house at Wimpole, Cambridgeshire, work that included a chapel. Gibbs had also been responsible for St Mary le Strand (1714–17) and the addition of the steeple and upper tower stages of St Clement Danes (1719). To his annoyance, St Mary le

Strand had been altered during construction. The Oxford chapel offered him a fresh opportunity to realize a complete church design. Surviving building accounts indicate that by early August 1721 several meetings had been held between Auditor Harley, Gibbs and the carpenters Benjamin Timbrell and Thomas Phillips, settling the designs and building contract, the last pair being 'thought the most proper persons to undertake ye executing of it; both on Acco[un]t of their reputation as Carpenters & their Credit with Builders'. A dinner at the end of August marked the laying of foundations; a 'raising Dinner' a year later (for which expensive beef was procured 'by reason of the Disappointment of Venison') indicates completion of the walls.[3] The bricklayer is not identified in the accounts, though there was a small payment in 1725 to Henry Elkins, who was building houses (including Gibbs's own) near by in Henrietta Street as well as being active in Vere Street and Chapel Place. In July 1723 Gibbs met Giuseppe Artari, 'the Stucco-man', and an agreement was made with Giovanni Bagutti, presumably covering both his work and that of Artari. Just two months later Bagutti was paid 'for Stucco and Guilding' and Lord Harley made a special gift to Bagutti's servants. Christopher Shrider had been contracted to supply an organ, William Scafe consulted about a clock, and Richard Phelps about a bell. These were top-notch craftsmen – Shrider had made the organ for the Chapel Royal in Hampton Court (in 1711–12) and Phelps ran the Whitechapel foundry that had produced the great bell for St Paul's Cathedral in 1716. Scafe may have made a clock for the west gallery front; Langley Bradley supplied the steeple clock in 1726. Other requisites were obtained late in 1723 and the chapel was complete by March 1724, when Mary Bajonet was paid for 'cleaning out' and the organ was tested, occasioning another celebratory dinner. It was formally opened on Easter Day (25 March) 1724.[4]

The chapel's diminutive scale is one of its most engaging aspects. It is essentially a rectangular grey-brick box incorporating a western ante-chapel, with galleries on three sides reached by stairs either side of the ante-chapel,

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and a chancel lit by a Venetian window (Ills 8.1, 8.4). Originally there were also private entrances at the east end in Chapel Court but these were blocked at an early date. The plainness of the exterior is mitigated by the stone quoins, red-brick window surrounds and chunky stone modillions, continued at the gable ends to give the impression of pediments – all broadly typical of London churches since the Great Fire. The west entrance is approached by steps leading to a Doric tetrastyle portico. This is flanked by doors leading to the stair vestibules, set within frames with arched pediments. The portico's tympanum was originally decorated with a stone coat of arms, apparently those of 'a descendent of Aubrey De Vere, the last Earl of Oxford of that family'.[5] This was removed in 1832 following the chapel's change of name, as also were the ornamental stone vases on the portico and roof shown in Gibbs's elevations, which were reminiscent of his almost contemporary designs for St Martin-in-the-Fields, of 1721–6 (Ill. 8.4). Iron railings around the perimeter lasted until much more recently. As at St Martin's, the bell-tower sits astride, and appears to emerge from, the ridged roof. It has a square lower stage, with clock faces, above which are two delicate, domed octagonal lanterns forming the cupola bell-turret, with a weather-vane on top.

The interior has a richness and beauty in marked contrast to the exterior and it is here that the similarity to St Martin's is strongest, both being heavily indebted to Wren (Ills 8.5–7). John Summerson saw St Peter's as a 'miniature forecast', or 'preliminary model' of the larger church.[6] Arcades of giant Corinthian columns on high pedestals carry the galleries, and divide the elliptical central vault of the five-bay nave from cross-vaults over the aisle bays. There is no continuous entablature to take the thrust from the vaults, but rather dosserets (or impost blocks) above the column capitals – a bold and characteristic Gibbs feature, derived apparently from the Baths of Augustus in Rome. The ceiling of the main vault is graced by Artari and Bagutti's delicate Italian rococo plasterwork. In addition to the box-pews in the nave and the galleries, there were small private galleries with iron fronts on either

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side of the chancel, overlooking the altar. That to the north, which was approached from one of the private entrances in Chapel Court via a withdrawing room, was presumably reserved for the Harleys.

Though modest in scale, the Oxford Chapel provided a handsome and convenient alternative for fashionable marriages to the rather small parish church, both before and after its rebuilding. It was here in 1734 that the Earl of Oxford's daughter, Lady Margaret Harley, married the 2nd Duke of Portland. Gibbs's design seems also to have had considerable architectural impact, for example serving Timbrell as a model for the Grosvenor Chapel in South Audley Street (1730–1), and others for the Berkeley Chapel (*c.*1750) and St Paul's, Halifax, Nova Scotia (1749–50).[7]

In 1817 the Crown bought the Oxford Chapel with the other proprietary chapels in the area from the 4th Duke of Portland, through the Commissioners of Woods, Forests and Land Revenue (see page ###). Repairs and improvements in 1820 were overseen by the Land Revenue surveyors, Thomas Leverton and Thomas Chawner. These included the reinstatement of the (presumably damaged) cupola but were concerned largely with an overhaul of the seating arrangements to raise capacity to around 1,200. As part of this work the hexagonal pulpit was moved from its central position at the east end of the nave into the south-eastern corner, and the gallery fronts were brought forward slightly to make room for an additional row of pews. The present gallery clock was added at this time. Further repairs were overseen by Chawner and his colleague Henry Rhodes from 1829 in preparation for the change in status, which came in 1831–2, when the building was renamed St Peter's as a chapel of ease to the Church of All Souls, Langham Place, and was vested in trust to two Commissioners: the Rector of All Souls and the Chief Commissioner for Woods. The first service under that name seems to have taken place in January 1832, though a new incumbent, the Rev. Edward Scobell, formerly Chaplain at the Marylebone workhouse, was not appointed until the end of the year.[8]

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In 1852, at Scobell's request, a south entrance was formed and the organ rebuilt by William Hill & Sons. Scobell's successor from 1860 until 1869 was the Christian Socialist F. D. Maurice, an influential and controversial theologian; among those who came regularly to hear him preach were Octavia Hill, active in several social-housing experiments from the mid 1860s, and the writers and friends George MacDonald and Lewis Carroll. In the face of a declining congregation, the next major alterations were made in 1881–3, through the energy and influence of the incumbent, the Rev. William Page Roberts, later Dean of Salisbury. These works were funded by the Crown and directed by the architect and illustrator James Kellaway Colling. The box-pews were removed and the nave reseated in a seventeenth-century style in oak (pulpit and lectern included), and the organ was moved from the west gallery to the north side of the chancel.[9]

The most striking features of this period of refurbishment, though, were several windows and a painted altarpiece by (Sir) Edward Burne-Jones. The tripartite east window came first, in 1881. It depicts Christ with the woman of Samaria at the well, flanked by angels, and was the gift of Lady de Blaquiere in memory of her husband, John, 4th Baron de Blaquiere. Burne-Jones was then commissioned by his friend and patron Dr Charles Radcliffe to design an altarpiece as a memorial to Maurice, whose Christian Socialism had enthused the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Executed in 1882 and installed in the chancel in 1883, the panel was the first of several versions painted by Burne-Jones of *The Morning of the Resurrection*. The redemptive theme was considered a fitting tribute to Maurice's egalitarian theology and also complemented the window above. The altarpiece became a triptych in 1893 when Burne-Jones added flanking panels representing the *Annunciation* in memory of Dr Radcliffe, who died in 1889, though it has been suggested that these were partly the work of assistants.[10] Another Burne-Jones window at the centre of the south aisle gallery, of the 'Entry into Jerusalem', also dates from 1883, and commemorates James Golding Snelgrove, a son of John Snelgrove

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(co-owner of the Marshall & Snelgrove department store on Oxford Street), who died aged sixteen (Ill. 8.8). Below gallery level is a smaller companion window showing the 'Reception of Souls into Paradise' (Ill. 8.9). Burne-Jones noted the job in an account book, laden with mock outrage: 'Large cartoon of Christ entering Jerusalem – for church of SS Marshall & Snellgrove [sic] – another masterpiece charged on so mean a scale of remuneration that I am reluctant to put on record so disgraceful a price – nothing is so injurious to art as these contemptible prices – they keep alive the dishonest tendencies of the time more than can easily be said'.[11]

Burne-Jones later provided one other pair of windows at the church, for the north aisle in 1892. These depict 'Ministering Angels' above the gallery and 'St James and St John healing the lame' below, and were designed in memory of Edith, wife of Colonel W. L. Dalrymple. All the glass in Burne-Jones's windows was made by William Morris's firm – Morris making an exception to his self-imposed prohibition against the use of new glass in old windows, perhaps because he had been friends with Maurice, perhaps because he did not regard this church as 'old'. Another pair of north-side windows, on the theme of Faith, Hope and Charity and dedicated to John Snelgrove, were made following his death in 1903 by Powells, possibly to designs by Henry Holiday.[12]

In 1916–18 an upper storey was inserted in the vestry in the south-east corner and new altar furniture was given by Ernest Debenham in memory of a nephew. In 1930 the building was transferred to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to become the parish church of a new united benefice of St Peter with St Thomas. (This enabled the commissioners to demolish the church of St Thomas in Portman Square and erect a new St Thomas's Church in Hanwell.) Plans of 1939 by Albert Richardson for a minor reordering included the removal from prominence of what the Rev. Reginald Stanley Lound had referred to as Burne-Jones's 'two bad paintings', but this may not have been carried out. The discovery of dry rot in the roof necessitated repairs

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in 1946–7 (overseen by W. Charles Waymouth, architect) and St Peter's became a daughter church of All Souls Langham Place, for which it stood in during post-war rebuilding there. The paintings remained at the altar until 1953, when they were banished to the south-west staircase, allowing the wooden panelling behind to be refurbished. The organ was again rebuilt and moved back to the west gallery in 1963.[13]

When a further outbreak of dry rot made reroofing necessary in 1973, the Reverends John Stott and Michael Baughen of All Souls met some of the cost by putting the Burne-Jones paintings up for sale at Sothebys, where they had already been moved for safekeeping. Stott then oversaw the removal of the pulpit, lectern and choir stalls in 1974 to allow for better use of the church when it once again stood in for All Souls. The floor, the rest of Collings's seating and the original communion rails were lost to more dry rot in 1978. For all this the architect was Robert J. Potter of the Brandt Potter Hare Partnership and successor firms; J. W. Falkner & Sons Ltd were the builders. Further change followed in 1982–3 when the church, little used since 1979 other than for Trinity College of Music rehearsals, was adapted for the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, newly founded by Stott with an educational and training mission, employing the same architect and builders. Timber and glass partitions were inserted under the galleries to make offices and reading rooms, with a lounge to the west. The galleries were converted into a library on the north side, a refectory to the south.[14]

Development from c.*1720*

The streets laid out here in the 1720s followed the grid arrangement of the Cavendish–Harley estate as delineated on John Prince's 1719 plan but with some minor adjustments (Ills 8.2–3). Only Vere Street and Prince's Street diverted from the strictly rectilinear, so as to line up with existing streets

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south of Oxford Street. Stable yards were provided at the heart of the two central blocks of housing on either side of Holles Street – in Red Lion and Phoenix Yards – and also in plots on nearby parts of Marylebone Lane.[15]

In terms of their planning, the houses, though varying in size, generally had standard side-passage plans, with rear staircases, closet wings and some corner fireplaces, though there were variants – especially in Henrietta Street (discussed below). In their appearance, too, they were typical of early Georgian London speculative work in being almost uniformly of plain stock brick, with minimal red rubbed brick and stone dressings (in keeping with the chapel), as specified in building agreements and contracts (see page ##).

Henrietta Street (Henrietta Place since 1938) took its name from the Cavendish Holles heiress Lady Harley, from 1724 Countess of Oxford. Running east–west from the bottom of Cavendish Square to Marylebone Lane, it had some of the best-appointed houses on the estate. Mostly erected in the 1720s and early 1730s, they faced and flanked the chapel and locally were inferior only to the finest mansions on the square. All now demolished, they have been well served by historians, John Summerson and Gordon Balderston having accounted for most particulars. Furthermore, a sumptuous room from the street is preserved and interpreted in the Victoria & Albert Museum.[16]

William Thomas, Edward Harley's steward, played an important role in pushing on development in Henrietta Street in the 1720s and 30s. As Gordon Balderston has shown, Thomas, who lived in Henrietta Street, was well connected; as well as being Harley's employee he was also part of his artistic circle, appearing in the portraitist Gawen Hamilton's *Conversation of Virtuosis that usually meet at the Kings Armes, New Bond Street*, of 1735 (now in the National Portrait Gallery). He was also steadfast in his devotion to the Cavendish–Harley Estate.[17] As Thomas himself wrote, once the Oxford

Chapel was completed, it was his own commitment to engage in what turned out to be a handsome development at the west end of Henrietta Street, on its south side, that pulled the street up and the estate westwards: 'his Officious Zeal pushed him on to improve at a far greater expence than in prudence he ought to have engaged in, which [ground] lay Dead for many years and still turns to little Account. However this induced Mr Gibbs & others to build on the other side'.[18]

This refers to an agreement of around 1723 that Thomas made with the Harleys to take land and build houses on the south side, at Nos 15–19. James Gibbs is known to have prepared designs that year for Thomas for the westernmost site in this terrace, which was to have had a house of 25ft frontage erected by the bricklayer Henry Elkins.[19] But, as Thomas admitted, instead his land 'lay Dead', the only house completed on this south side in the 1720s being beyond his 'take' at No. 20, on the east corner, built by Elkins in 1725–7. Leases of a similar date in Vere Street and Chapel Court that allowed an unusually generous seven years for the completion of building reflect a slowdown in activity on the estate at this time. In the event, Thomas did not erect the whole row: as he himself explained in 1737 in the 'Memorial' he wrote on the estate, he took the land offered to him by Lord and Lady Oxford 'at a moderate Ground-Rent', constructed three wide-fronted houses himself (Nos 15–17) and let the rest of the ground to Thomas Phillips and Benjamin Timbrell, who proceeded to build a house each (Nos 18 and 19 respectively). Thomas, or an architect working on his behalf (perhaps Gibbs), took care in planning this development, which was carried out around 1730–2. Two of his houses (Nos 15 and 16) came with coach-houses incorporated on the ground floor, facing Henrietta Street, even though this flouted his own building covenants (see page ##); others had access to stables and more mews facilities further down Marylebone Lane, and all had shared access to a horse pond, pump and 'terras' (perhaps a raised walkway or platform) specially built by Thomas on the west side of the Lane.[20] The arrival of the new (3rd) Earl of

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Oxford at No. 16 in 1741 brought a considerable upgrading of that house and apparently also of its neighbours (Ill. 8.12). At No. 16 the ground-floor coach-houses were removed and a roomy entrance hall installed in their place, with a grand semi-circular staircase behind; these and stone keystones and other dressings to the façade strongly suggest the hand of Gibbs, the Oxfords' architect, who was then living on the opposite side of the street (see below). No. 15 also had its ground-floor coach-houses removed, probably for a large front dining room. Nos 17 and 18, too, had unusually grand front staircase halls and generous second stairs, in a manner similar to contemporary houses on Cavendish Square, and were almost identical in plan. The whole row survived until the 1970s. Further east, the local speculator William Long built up the remainder of this side of the street from 1739 with more modest houses at Nos 23–25 and around the corner on Cavendish Street.[21]

In spite of Thomas's delay, James Gibbs and Charles Bridgeman soon followed his lead and by 1725 both had agreed to build on Henrietta Street's north side. Gibbs's home was at No. 5, on the north-east corner with Wimpole Street, which he built for himself in 1731–2. He died here in 1754 and the house was demolished in 1843, unrecorded. The other houses with which Gibbs had a definite connection were Nos 9–11, a speculative group that he designed and built in 1727–32 (Ills 8.10, 8.11). They varied considerably in appearance. Nos 9 and 10 were each four bays wide and had stone cornices. No. 10 had rusticated pilasters framing its façade, which later gained canted oriel windows. Inside was an unusual closed-string, semi-circular plan staircase. No. 11, the smallest of the row, had perhaps the richest interior. Prior to demolition of the whole terrace in 1956, it was the first-floor front room of this house that was taken down for installation in the Victoria & Albert Museum's period rooms (Ills 8.13, 14). Many of its features tally with those presented in Gibbs's *Book of Architecture* of 1728. Bridgeman, the landscape gardener and another of Edward Harley's circle of virtuosi, was the developer of No. 8, which he intended as his own house but died in 1738

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before he was able to take up residence. Gibbs was probably also involved here; characteristic features included keystones, sill corbels and a stone Ionic porch (see Ill. 8.10). The staircase had Ionic newel posts and there was a good ornamental plaster ceiling in the first-floor front room. As to the other houses on this side of Henrietta Street, the lessees of Nos 6 and 7 from 1726 were, respectively, Walter Lee, mason, and Isaac Mansfield, plasterer. No. 12, leased to William Thornton from 1725, was a wide house, with rusticated pilasters as at No. 10. No. 13 was taken in 1726 by the plasterer William Wilton, who was perhaps responsible for the unusual stucco rustication, keystones and upper-storey horizontal bands. Wilton also built Nos 3 and 4 in 1731–4.[22]

Leading south from Henrietta Street either side of the Oxford Chapel were **Vere Street** and **Chapel Street** or Court (now Chapel Place), both dating largely from the 1720s. The wider Vere Street took its name from the Harley family's links with the De Veres, earlier Earls of Oxford. Its east side was built up principally by the bricklayers Joel Johnson and William Barlow. On the west side the carpenters Benjamin Timbrell and Thomas Phillips were again involved, as were several bricklayers (Charles Johnson, John Newton and Henry Elkins) and a plasterer (William Coucher). Also prominent as a developer here was Brigadier-General William Steuart, whose take included a large wedge of land behind most of the west side frontage, as well as three street-front plots for houses; he also built houses in Marylebone Lane (page ###). After Steuart's death in 1736 his widow Mary, sister to the 1st Earl Grandison, continued to live in one of the Vere Street houses, which she bequeathed to her niece, Mary Pitt, youngest sister of William Pitt (the elder). She also left money to the estate steward William Thomas and his wife Mary, suggesting that the Steuarts had links with the Harley circle. Chapel Street was much narrower, and at its south end, where it debouched into Oxford Street, was little more than a passage.[23]

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Next came **Cavendish Street** (now Old Cavendish Street to differentiate it from the later name New Cavendish Street further north). This was lined with somewhat more modest early Georgian houses, twenty-eight all told including two pubs: the Red Lion at No. 5 (rebuilt 1879), to the north of Red Lion Yard on the east side, and the Crown at No. 12A (rebuilt 1885–6) on the west. The row of houses adjoining Henrietta Street on the east side were part of the corner take developed after 1739 by William Long.

Holles Street formed a major part of the important axis between Hanover Square and Cavendish Square. It takes its name from the Lady Henrietta Cavendish Holles, who married Edward Harley in 1713 having inherited the Marylebone properties of her father the 1st Duke of Newcastle. Fully built up in the 1720s with twenty-seven houses, uninterrupted by any mews, Holles Street had somewhat larger and more regular buildings than the other streets running north from Oxford Street and was thus a more desirable address (Ill. 8.15). Early advertisements for houses emphasised its 'advantageous' situation near the chapel, with views of both Hanover and Cavendish Squares.[24] The east side was part of a large tract leased in 1718 to Francis Seale, William Thomas's predecessor as steward, and John Prince, that included the adjoining parts of Cavendish Square and the west side of Princes Street. This property was parcelled off in 1720–1 and builders here included Francis Tredgold, carpenter, Thomas Abbott, joiner, and Joel Johnson, bricklayer. Johnson was also involved on the west side, as were several other local tradesmen, e.g. Robert Wanmer, carpenter, and Benjamin Palmer, gardener.[25]

Finally, towards the east end of the grid and running at a slight angle away from it was **Princes Street**. This was renamed John Prince's Street in 1953, after the master builder who prepared the layout plan for the estate. First rated in 1723, the street was wholly built up in that decade with twenty-six

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houses. The west side was part of the ground leased to Prince and Seale and sublet for development in 1720–1. The east side was begun at around the same time but not completed at its north end before 1728. Developer-builders here included the carpenters Robert Brown(e) and George Greaves, and brickmaker Abbott Newell; Joel Johnson and John Ibbitson (or Ibbotson), bricklayers; and Robert Hearne, joiner. Nearly all the houses contained shops by 1800. There were two public houses: the Phoenix, south of the entrance to Phoenix Yard on the street's west side, and the King's Head, at the north end on the east side.

Social character and notable residents

From the beginning these streets had many eminent residents. The more impressive Henrietta Street houses attracted the biggest concentration of aristocrats, MPs and government officials. Morgan Vane, younger son of the 2nd Baron Barnard and Comptroller of the Stamp Office, was resident at No. 7 in the early 1730s and was succeeded there by the Irish peer George Evans, 1st Baron Carberry. Lady Bingley, newly widowed, moved in 1731 from her late husband's great mansion in Cavendish Square to No. 9; William Bromley junior, MP, whose father had been speaker of the House of Commons and a secretary of state under Robert Harley, was at No. 10 in 1735–7; and Baptist Noel, 4th Earl of Gainsborough, was the first occupant of No. 11 from around 1732. Edward Harley, the 2nd Earl of Oxford's cousin, lived at No. 12 from *c.*1735 until 1741 when he succeeded as 3rd Earl and moved across the road to No. 16. Other early occupants on the south side included Sir James Campbell, Lord Glenorchy (later 3rd Earl of Breadalbane) at No. 17 in the 1730s, and Thomas Lumley-Saunderson, 3rd Earl of Scarbrough, treasurer to the Prince of Wales, at No. 18 in the 1730s and 40s. Later residents included Anne Wellesley, Countess of Mornington, the Duke of Wellington's mother, who

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was at No. 3 for many years until her death in 1831. Holles Street, too, attracted polite society. George Legge, Viscount Lewisham, son and heir of the Earl of Dartmouth was living there when he died in 1732. Mary, Duchess of Northumberland also had a house in Holles Street in the 1730s, as did Lady St John, widow of Sir Andrew St John, Lord Bolingroke's brother. Also, in 1831, Hortense de Beauharnais, Queen of Holland, stepdaughter and sister-in-law of Napoleon Bonaparte, resided in Holles Street with her son Prince Louis-Napoléon (later Emperor Napoleon III of France) during a brief sojourn in London.[26]

The area was favoured by prominent painters, sculptors, architects, writers and other artists, including (in addition to Gibbs and Bridgeman) further members of Edward Harley's circle of 'virtuosi'. For instance, in Vere Street from 1725 until his death in 1770 lived the sculptor Michael Rysbrack at what became No. 3 on the street's east side – a broad-fronted house that had been built by Timbrell and Phillips with a back yard that housed Rysbrack's workshop. Another was the painter and illustrator John Vanderbank, one of the first residents of Holles Street in the 1720s. The bricklayer and builder Joel Johnson lived in this street in the 1720s, where his son, the eminent woodcarver Thomas Johnson, was born in 1723; so did the architect James Paine, from 1750. Later Holles Street residents included the surveyor William Mudge, from 1808, and the engineer and politician Davies Gilbert, whose house at No. 6 was attacked during the Corn Bill riots of 1815.[27]

It was in Holles Street in January 1788 that the poet George, Lord Byron was born, his mother Catherine having returned from Paris to rented rooms there a month earlier. These have been identified variously as No. 16, which stood on the west side of the street, near its north end, or via a supposed renumbering as No. 24, eight doors further south, a house rebuilt in 1852. It was at the latter address that the Society of Arts commemorated Byron in 1866–7 with the first of its round blue plaques. There had been no renumbering, and there is in any case no evidence for the number. The plaque

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disappeared when the house was demolished in 1889 for the building of John Lewis's new Oxford Street store. Disdaining attempts at a replacement which made Byron look like 'an effeminate Adonis', Lewis, whose letterhead had long featured the poet's portrait, commissioned a bronze half-length profile from the sculptor John Edward Taylerson for the completed building. Unveiled in 1900, it was set within a Portland-stone aedicule 'as near as possible to the spot, on the second floor, where Byron was born'. The memorial was destroyed by bombing in 1940. In 1960 Tom Painter designed a modest bronze portrait plaque for a pier on the rebuilt department store; it was replaced in 2012 by Westminster Council with a plaque that misquotes the poet: 'Always laugh when you can it is a cheap medicine'.[28]

Some other notable residents of the area include:

William Adams. Orthopaedic surgeon. No. 5 Henrietta Street, 1853–96

Cosmo Alexander. Portraitist and Jacobite. Lived from 1754–*c.*1760 in James Gibbs's former home at 5 Henrietta Street, which Gibbs bequeathed to him with all its furniture and contents, including marble busts of Gibbs and Alexander Pope by Rysbrack.[29]

Frederick Scott Archer. Sculptor and photographer; inventor of the wet collodion process. Had a studio at his house in Henrietta Street, 1837–*c.*1850s

Sir George Dallas, 1st Bt. Political writer. No. 18 Henrietta Street, *c.*1810–33

John Dalrymple. Ophthalmologist and medical author. No. 6 Holles Street, early 1840s

Caesar Henry Hawkins. Surgeon and writer. Vere Street, 1823–5

William Armfield Hobday. Portraitist. No. 9 Holles Street, *c.*1800–4

Anne Hunter. Poet and songwriter, wife of John Hunter, surgeon and anatomist. Died at home in Holles Street, 1821

Archibald Menzies, naval surgeon, botanist and naturalist. No. 6 Chapel Place, 1802–26

Henrietta Boyle O'Neill. Poet and patron of the arts. London house in Henrietta Street, *c.*1791–2

Sir James Paget, 1st Bt. Surgeon, writer and pathologist; President, Royal College of Surgeons of England; Surgeon to Queen Victoria. No. 24 Henrietta Street, 1851–8

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George Rolleston. Physician, physiologist and archaeologist; first Linacre Professor of Anatomy and Physiology at Oxford University. Consulting rooms at 13 Henrietta Street, 1857

(Sir) Charles Scudamore. Physician, writer on mineral waters and gout. Practised in Holles Street, *c*.1814–20

Robert William Sievier, engraver, sculptor and inventor. Studio at 12A Henrietta Street, 1836–*c*.1847, later used by the sculptor **William Theed** the younger, *c*.1850–80

Edward Askew Sothern. Comic actor, renowned as Lord Dundreary in Tom Taylor's *Our American Cousin*. Died at home, No. 1 Vere Street, 1881

Lady Catherine Stepney. Novelist and society hostess. Died at home, No. 8 Henrietta Street, 1845

Thomas Hawkes Tanner. Physician, medical writer, co-founder of the Obstetrical Society of London. No. 9 Henrietta Street, 1850s–60s

Sir Thomas Watson, 1st Bt. Physician and writer; Physician-in-Ordinary to Queen Victoria. No. 16 Henrietta Street, 1840s–82

Charles James Blasius Williams. Professor of Medicine at University College London, co-founder of the Brompton Hospital; Physician-Extraordinary to Queen Victoria. No. 7 Holles Street, 1839–51

Sir William James Erasmus Wilson. Surgeon, writer and dermatologist. No. 17 Henrietta Street, from 1850

Trade and redevelopment

Commercial presence in what was primarily a residential district began to increase from around 1800 under the dominating influence of Oxford Street. Thomas Singer had a feather and artificial flower business at 3 Princes Street, on its east side near the Oxford Street end, which was continued after his death around 1794 by his widow Elizabeth, assisted by her sons Samuel Weller Singer, literary scholar, and George John Singer, inventor and electrical researcher. George built a large room behind the shop where in the early 1800s he gave demonstration lectures on electricity; this was taken in

1822 and cleared for the formation of Regent Street. The carver, decorator and furniture-maker Edward Foxall inherited his father Martin Foxhall's shop in Old Cavendish Street in 1797, and two years later commissioned a design for an elegant new shopfront, with a rakishly shallow pediment and delicately coloured glass, from his friend and sometime employer John Soane (Ill. 8.16). Thomas Boosey & Co., music publishers, had premises in Holles Street from 1816 until they removed to Regent Street in 1874, and the bibliographer John Martin also ran a bookshop there from 1815. Other publishers and booksellers in the district included Edward Bull, also in Holles Street from the late 1820s until his death in 1843, and R. H. Porter, whose natural-history bookshop opened in 1875 at 18 Princes Street. John Manton, the gunmaker, was in business from 1834 in Holles Street, which by the 1840s had become almost entirely lined with shops and hotels. One of the area's earliest hotels was Ibbotson's on Vere Street, formed in the 1780s by John Ibbotson from Rysbrack's former house and studio at No. 3 and the adjoining property at No. 4; it remained until 1847 when it was succeeded on the same site by the Oriental Hotel. Another hotel, John Morris's, 'late Fladong's', had opened by 1805 on the east side of Chapel Place, near its south end.[30]

A spate of rebuildings in the mid-to-late nineteenth century and again in Edwardian times transformed the area into an offshoot of Oxford Street, setting the scene for the large-scale commercial redevelopments of the later twentieth century. In 1859–60 the site of 3–4 Vere Street was redeveloped for the first Western District Post Office, running back to Chapel Place, where it was enlarged in the 1870s to take in the whole west side. It later moved to a new building in Wimpole Street, prompting further reconstruction here.[31] John Princes, Holles and Old Cavendish Streets all saw piecemeal rebuilding in the period up to the First World War, largely as shops and showrooms, including several of note, all now demolished: Godfrey Giles & Co.'s richly pinnacled wallpaper shop at 18–19 Old Cavendish Street (1893–4); the offices and showroom of John Soper, a window-blind manufacturer, alongside at 20

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(Bulman & Dear, architects, 1907–9); a strongly designed shop and showroom with flats above at 16–17 Princes Street, for the court milliner Annie Down, featuring stone-mullioned windows and carved figures crouching over the entrances in the manner of Beresford Pite (M. Maberly Smith, architect, with carving by Michael Murphy of Battersea, 1900–3); and F. M. Elgood's stone-fronted showrooms for the blousemakers Vivian Porter & Co. Ltd at 9–10 Holles Street (1914). In 1888 the architect Octavius Hansard oversaw the rebuilding of Nos 12 and 13 Holles Street for the solicitors Underwood & Co., long based at No. 13. The whole west side of Holles Street (Nos 16–28) was redeveloped from the late 1880s by the draper John Lewis, and was the chief battleground in his long-running campaign against the Howard de Walden Estate (see page ###).[32]

The pressure for commercial rebuilding after the Second World War left little hope for the remaining Georgian terraces. In any case, as John Summerson said of the houses designed by Gibbs in Henrietta Place shortly before their demolition in 1956, as an architectural group they had 'little to recommend them in their latter state', their ground floors 'raked out for shops', and having suffered from 'Victorian increments of one sort or another'.[33]

The area today

As to the present fabric, excluding Oxford Street there is little of note other than the Royal College of Nursing and Royal Society of Medicine on the north side of Henrietta Place; these are discussed elsewhere, under Cavendish Square and Wimpole Street respectively. Beyond Wimpole Street, **Henrietta House** (8 Henrietta Place) is a bulky Postmodernist office block of 1990–2, by Building Design Partnership for Lynton plc (see Ill. 13.##); the whimsical stone frieze, representing the history of architecture, is by Keir Smith. It

replaced offices built in the early 1960s for British Cellophane on the site of the old houses at 8–13 Henrietta Place.[34]

3–4 Vere Street and 1 Chapel Place. By the time of its move to Wimpole Street around 1910, the Western District Post Office at 3–4 Vere Street had expanded into most of the block south of the church, bounded by Chapel Place and Vere Street, with the exception of three old houses at the north-west corner (Nos 5–7). The street-front properties at Nos 3–4 were rebuilt for the developer James Boyton in 1911–12 in their present form, with a giant order Ionic stone façade, to designs by Lionel Barrett; for many years a bank, they now accommodate a restaurant on the ground floor and the Brazilian consulate above. The remainder of the post office site was redeveloped for Debenhams in 1921–5, in plain Italianate stone to the north, facing the church (now Chapel Place North), utilitarian brick to the east, facing the passage (Chapel Place East). To these a modern showroom building was added at the corner in the 1980s (by BDP, known at first as 5-7 Vere Street, now 1 Chapel Place). The whole run was remodelled in 2011–12.[35]

11–12 Old Cavendish Street (Medway House) is an undemonstrative stone-faced showroom and offices of 1922–3, built for G. E. Wallis & Sons to designs by Robert Angell. It was reconstructed internally for John Lewis in 1970.[36]

The east side of **John Prince's Street** has largely survived the encroachment of the Oxford Street stores. Nos 3–4, towards its south end, are showrooms and shops of 1911–12 designed for Henry Herbert Poole by W. Henry White. Their curtain-wall construction and Portland stone-faced Beaux Arts elevation anticipated redevelopments on Oxford Street and Upper Regent Street (Ill. 8.18).[37] Poole was also involved in the rebuilding of Nos 5–7 in 1887–9 as shops and offices but these were demolished around 1960 with adjoining properties on Great Castle Street for a six-storey office block, erected in 1963–4

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for the Food Information Centre.[38] A similar tale attaches to Nos 7A–10, on the north side of Great Castle Street, where after the war the second-generation Victorian buildings were demolished for a commercial speculation of 1956–7 by Wates Ltd, now known as Allan House. A curving corner block, in concrete and brick, it was designed by Peter Braddock (of the architects T., P. H. & E. Braddock) with Kenneth W. Bland of Wates, and was originally known as Sandoz House after its first tenants, a Swiss pharmaceuticals firm (Ill. 8.17). The ground floor is now the Old Explorer, a 1990s 'Traditional Pub'.[39] Nos 11–14 is a red-brick block of mansion flats and shops, extending around the corner into Margaret Street, built in 1890–1 as York Mansions to designs by Augustus E. Hughes. Benjamin Baker, the civil engineer of Forth Bridge fame, was an early resident. In 1928 the Margaret Street shops and some upstairs rooms were taken by the wholesale fashion knitwear house Rose & Blairman, for whom an eye-catching Art Deco staircase and showrooms were installed. Since then No. 14 has been known as Dorville House, after one of the firm's trade names. The architect C. J. Morreau added a new balustrade in 1934. In 1953 Elizabeth II's coronation gown was given its final touches here.[40]

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