

CHAPTER 9

Wigmore Street

Wigmore Street today is something of a racetrack, sucking up the traffic that might otherwise choke car-free Oxford Street, two streets to the south. It runs west to Portman Square, but only the eastern portion is dealt with here: on the south side up to No. 6, and on the north up to No. 92, at the boundaries of the former City of London's Banqueting House Ground and Hope-Edwardes estate (see page ###). Also included are Easley's Mews at the west end, Wigmore Place to the east, and the former Mill Hill Place to the south. Most of the north side belongs to the Howard de Walden Estate, as does the block immediately west of Cavendish Square on the south.

Shown on John Prince's plan (page ###) and named after the Harley family's Herefordshire property Wigmore Castle, Wigmore Street was mostly built up between 1730 and 1760. Eighteenth-century remains are fragmentary and hidden, immured behind façades dating from the extensive rebuilding on the Portland-Howard de Walden estate carried out in 1880-1910.

In execution, the layout was changed from Prince's plan when Welbeck and Wimpole Streets were projected south to Henrietta Place. It was on the south side between these streets that Wigmore Street's development began in 1729. 'As the Market-house encouraged Building on the East end of the Estate, so did the Chapell at the West end,' and by 1738 'considerable progress' had been made.¹ When work ground to a halt two years later the sites from modern-day No. 23, on the eastern corner of Wimpole Street, to No. 47, almost at Marylebone Lane, had been built up (Ill. 9.01). With houses on one side only, the street became known as Wigmore Row, a name that persisted

into the early nineteenth century despite the resumption of building in 1755, on the north side.²

Wigmore Street's frontier character in the early years is suggested by Thomas Smith's comment on the long-detached White Hart, built in 1737 at the corner of Wigmore and Welbeck Streets, as the place for travellers to stop 'for refreshment, and examine their fire-arms, previously to crossing the fields to Lisson Green'.³ When building resumed it was pursued with ever-increasing vigour, so that by 1762 the whole north side between Wigmore Place and Marylebone Lane had been built up.

While Wigmore Street was no Cavendish Square, it had its share of aristocrats, notably Scots and Irish, especially in the larger houses on the north side between Welbeck and Wimpole Streets. The west end, however, petered out in confusion where the Portland estate adjoined the smaller estates of Jacob Hinde and Sir Thomas Edwardes. Lack of forethought meant that plots there had been leased without thought of the street continuing further west. But by 1770, with the development of the Portman estate, the case for a through road was obvious. It took the Vestry and the Westminster Paving Commissioners until 1777 to resolve the matter, and prevent Wigmore Street ending as a stump. Most of the frontages to the new west section, known as Edward or Edwards Street, were then quickly built up.

Houses on the wider, deeper plots on the north side maintained smart occupancy into the first two decades of the nineteenth century: the last to be wholly privately occupied was here, at No. 44 (then 17), home until 1852 to Nodes Dickenson, retired army surgeon.⁴

Musicians were attracted to Wigmore Street from an early date. In the 1730s the organist and composer Thomas Roseingrave and his pupil John Christopher Smith, later Handel's secretary, and the trumpeter and composer Lewis Granom were resident.⁵ The composer and organist Thomas Gladwin lived in a large house on the south side from around 1761, when he was appointed organist to the Oxford Chapel, till his death in 1799.⁶ Robert

Wornum, music publisher and violin-maker, was at No. 42 by 1784, and his son Robert, a piano builder, remained till 1830.⁷

Medical occupation was also established early on. The surgeon William Prujean, associate of Samuel Johnson, was at No. 34 (then 13) from 1760 for several years. In 1789–90 a dispensary ‘for the delivery of poor married and unmarried women’ was in operation briefly at No. 26 (later 66) at the Marylebone Lane corner (page ###).⁸

From the late 1770s there were several linen drapers, but apparel came to dominate, especially millinery (Ill. 9.02). Many houses were occupied by multiple one-person, frequently female, businesses. Dickens gives a vivid sense of the set-up of such houses in *Nicholas Nickleby*, with Kate Nickleby’s apprenticeship to Madame Mantalini, ‘a fashionable milliner and dressmaker’, whose establishment has long been identified as being in Wigmore Street, more specifically as No. 10 (now 16).⁹ The downstairs shop was let to an importer of attar of roses; Madame Mantalini was on the first floor, to which a footman ushered customers from the side door, and where ‘two or three elegant bonnets of the newest fashion’ were displayed at the window.

A reflection of Wigmore Street’s evolution as a smart shopping street, with a particular appeal to women, was the proposal in 1823 by the Portland Estate surveyor Samuel Ware for a shopping arcade. Ware, who had designed Piccadilly’s Burlington Arcade four years earlier, claimed he could let the sixteen shops proposed ‘within a week’, but the scheme foundered, perhaps because of difficulties in assembling the site.¹⁰

Piano builders and retailers proliferated in the nineteenth century in line with the expanding market. Two in the 1830s–40s were William Anderson and Joseph Dore (on the Debenhams site); Thomas Oetzmann, pianoforte builder and music publisher, was at No. 59 (then 32) in 1855–61.¹¹ Wigmore Street later became identified with larger retailers of pianos built elsewhere. John Brinsmead began at No. 18 (then 4) in 1863, manufacturing

there only briefly before establishing works in Kentish Town. Most famously there was Bechstein, at No. 40 from 1889, whose pianos were German-made.

The mid century saw the emergence of businesses combining Wigmore Street shops and showrooms with manufacturing in the side streets, the premises communicating. Typical were the tallow chandler Edward Freeman (No. 16, and 25–26 Welbeck Place); Crace & Son (36–38, and 4–5 Little Welbeck Street); and Benham & Sons (50–54, and later 64–66, and Easley's Mews).

Rebuilding began in the 1840s, earlier than on much of the Portland estate, perhaps reflecting Wigmore Street's intensively commercial character and the smallness of the original houses on its fringes. But most took place between 1880 and 1910.

The twentieth century saw the usual departure of industry even from mews streets, where stables became garages. Benham & Sons' new lease of 1904 for the site of what had been their foundry specifically precluded manufacturing. Wigmore Street, largely retained within the Howard de Walden estate, maintained its status as a street of high-class shops and specialists, becoming known before the Second World War as 'the Harley Street of opticians'. Large-scale redevelopment started with Debenhams on the south side in 1905–7. In the 1950s, Harold Clunn found Wigmore Street still 'a smart shopping thoroughfare' with 'antique dealers, cafés and establishments devoted to the supply of medical and surgical equipment' (Ill. 9.03).¹² While entirely escaping the shabbiness long prevailing in much of post-war central London, Wigmore Street largely resisted the depredations visited on Oxford Street:

somehow it contrives to retain an Edwardian residential air. The shops appear to take their tone from the stately Debenham's... The Rolls and Bentleys glide unctuously along... while the buses appear to be almost touching their caps with embarrassment... The dignified

persona of the place – originally due to its being the shopping preserve of the Cavendish Square grandees – is unmistakably dominant.¹³

Any lingering shabbiness began to be fully expunged from the 1980s. Changes in leisure habits have reduced the piano retailers to Steinway, just off Wigmore Street, and the one-time Bechstein empire to Wigmore Hall. Glimmers of the past, though, survive in the concentration of medical-related businesses – opticians, and chemists, notably the venerable John Bell & Croyden. Upper floors were converted to residential use, as the value of smart flats eclipsed that of small offices. Today's affluent, cosmopolitan residents help sustain a legion of outlets for luxury kitchens, furniture and clothing. Another notable feature has been rebuilding behind retained façades, to provide open office floors with cabling space and centralised services. From the 1980s on, much of Victorian and Edwardian Wigmore Street has been hollowed out and rebuilt. Nos 78–80, 42–48 and 68–74 are all new buildings with a heritage face to the street. With some, as at Nos 64–66, such rebuilding has occurred more than once.

South side

Nos 3–23

The original development here, begun by 1731, consisted of a single house on the Wimpole Street corner, leased by Thomas Madgwick, a lawyer who had dabbled in Castle Street, Princes Street and Margaret Street. A public house early on, it was later a post office. The four houses to the east, built in 1759–61, were leased by William Grantham, an Oxford Street carpenter and builder,

from John Phillips and John Barlow.¹⁴ The larger western pair (later Nos 19 and 21) had canted bays on their south sides overlooking yards running south to the wall of Bingley House.¹⁵

In the early 1760s No. 15 (then 54) was occupied by the spendthrift Sir William Meredith, a political crony of the Rockingham Whig the 2nd Duke of Portland. In No. 19 (then 52) from 1762 was Lady Harriot Campbell, sister of the 3rd Earl of Breadalbane, followed in 1780–1814 by Elizabeth Campbell of Carwhin, mother of the 4th Earl.¹⁶

Development eastwards resumed in 1818 when Thomas Cubitt took a plot behind 17 Cavendish Square, where he built two small gardenless houses.¹⁷ These were typically used by women's clothiers of various kinds. Further east was a yard belonging to 17 Cavendish Square, sometimes numbered 57 Wigmore Street, used for horse-dealing and stabling from the late 1830s, and latterly for garaging.

The garage site was cleared for the building of **Nos 3–9** in 1924 as headquarters of the missionary and publishing organization the Children's Special Service Mission (Ill. 9.04). William A. Pite Son & Fairweather were the architects, Holliday & Greenwood the contractors. The mission, founded in Islington in 1867, was absorbed in the 1960s into the Scripture Union, which remained here until 1993.¹⁸ The steel-framed building, faced in brown brick dressed with Portland stone, is in a respectful neo-Georgian in keeping with the flank of 17 Cavendish Square. The shop units are now typically sleek furniture shops, the upper floors offices.

Cavendish Court (Nos 11–15) occupies a much deeper plot assembled by Charles Lee of 98–102 Wigmore Street – 'costumier to European Royalty' – from Cubitt's 1818 houses, a stable belonging to 18 Cavendish Square, and the westernmost of the houses built by William Grantham. Lee's building, comprising flats and shops, was designed by J. S. Gibson of Gibson, Skipwith & Gordon and built by James Carmichael of Battersea in 1913.¹⁹

Gibson's frontage is relentlessly vertical, thrusting up to a vertiginous two-storey mansard roof centred with a broken-pedimented gable, an overtly Baroque flourish (Ill. 9.05). The eleven flats each comprised drawing room, dining room, two bedrooms, bathroom, servant's bedroom, kitchen and scullery, those on the top two floors enjoying a roof terrace with 'beautiful views' to Crystal Palace and the Surrey Hills. Advertisements stressed their luxury finish and labour-saving devices including cleaning apparatus supplied by the hydraulic mains in the road, and 'shampoo-fitted taps' in the bathrooms. Over time the first to fourth floors have been adapted to office use; the fifth and sixth floors were converted to four single-floor flats in 2013.²⁰

Nos 17-23 on the corner of Wimpole Street is perhaps the first Marylebone work by F. M. Elgood, here working in 1887-9 with his master Alexander Payne, and Augustus E. Hughes (Ill. 9.06). Their clients were the piano importers William Maxwell and William Whelpdale. It was not a complete rebuilding.²¹ The design exhibits typical Elgood features including varied gables and a full-height corner tourelle. The building's Georgian origins are evident in the rear canted bay at No. 19, the positions of the front stairs at Nos 17 and 19, and in the basement walls. The builders were Kirk & Randall of Woolwich. The whole development was essentially a showroom for Bluthner pianos imported by Maxwell and Whelpdale; the business, founded in 1876, continued trading here until 1946, using the tradenames Bluthner & Co. and latterly Welmar, another of their brands. By 1931 Debenhams had acquired the head lease, making alterations to the designs of J. Raworth Hill, architect. Nos 21 and 23 have now been made into a single shop.²²

Nos 25–37

This block was the first to be built up in Wigmore Street, with houses of varying width, mostly of about 20ft. Five houses from the west corner were built in 1726–9 by Thomas Gladwin, three of them sublet to Samuel Reynolds, bricklayer, and Robert Wanmer, carpenter. Six smaller, two-storey houses, from the east corner, were the work of Thomas Little in 1732–8. In between, two larger houses, built by 1733, were leased to Joshua Holland, carpenter, and Susanna Ordway, a baker's widow. Mill Hill Place or Mews (sometimes Welbeck Place) evolved in conjunction with these developments. The whole of its south side was taken up with stabling associated with the large houses in Henrietta Street, while on the north side small houses were building at the west end from the 1720s. At the east end a stable yard and small cottages were developed by Thomas Little, behind the gardens of his Wigmore Street houses in 1733.²³

Holland's house, occupied by the organist Thomas Gladwin in the 1760s–90s, included a back court and stabling opening from Mill Hill Place, the convenience of which saw it occupied thereafter by a succession of coachbuilders until swallowed up in the 1880s–90s by Debenham & Freebody.²⁴ The corner house, usually numbered in Wimpole Street, was a public house, the Rose, by 1758. The block was subject to typical estate rebuildings in the nineteenth century, much of it by Debenhams (see below).²⁵

No. 25, the only Wigmore Street building between Wimpole and Welbeck Streets not obliterated by Debenhams in 1906–7, was built in 1894 on the site of the Rose as a branch of the London and Joint Stock Bank, the beginning of its rapid expansion from eleven branches in 1893 to three hundred by the time it merged with the Midland Bank in 1918. The architects were R. Creese Harrison & Son.²⁶ Faced in red brick with pinkish terracotta dressings, it has shaped gables and a castellated corner tourelle. The upper floors, originally residential, were adapted as offices by Debenhams, who

acquired the building in 1912 and opened it up to their Wimpole Street premises. The ground floor remained a bank until 2004, becoming an upmarket kitchen-design shop like the rest of the block; it is currently (2016) being adapted as part of the development known as 91 Wimpole Street (see below).²⁷

No. 33 (former Debenham & Freebody building)

The south side of Wigmore Street offers a sudden change in scale and monumentality with the silvery bulk of No. 33, built as headquarters for the drapery business of Debenham & Freebody in 1906–7. Debenhams could trace its Wigmore Street origins to 1778, by which date James Hartshorn (sometime Hartshorn & Dyde) had a haberdasher's and furrier's at what was then No. 44 (Susanna Ordway's house). In 1780 Hartshorn & Dyde announced the completion of their additional warehouses, the 'warmest largest and most compleat in England'.²⁸ The firm was sufficiently prominent to merit a passing reference – 'Hartshorn gauze and Dyde lace' – in the whimsical 'Pantheon Anecdotes' in the *London Magazine* in 1782. The business was acquired in 1790 by William Franks, and on his retirement in 1813 by Thomas Clark, who reopened the shop as 'Locker and Clark' in March that year.²⁹

By 1814 Locker and Clark (Thomas Locker then at 185 Oxford Street) had become 'Clark and Debenham (late Franks)', soliciting custom at 'Cavendish House', 44 Wigmore Street. William Debenham, a Suffolk farmer's son, was 19 when he was taken into partnership by Clark, reputedly for a £500 premium.³⁰

Although Clark and Debenham had opened a Cheltenham branch in 1823, that Debenham was the dominant partner may be inferred from the business's exponential growth after Clark retired in 1837. He took two employees, William Pooley and John Smith, into partnership, opening a new

branch in Harrogate in 1841. In 1851 Pooley and Smith were replaced by Debenham's brother-in-law, Clement Freebody, and son William, the firm becoming Debenham, Son & Freebody.³¹

Debenhams now expanded into the then No. 42, and Nos 2 and 3 Welbeck Street, all rebuilt in 1852. Opportunity for substantial redevelopment came in 1864, after William senior's death, with the acquisition of No. 43 (later 29), a bootmaker's shop. By now Frank Debenham had joined his brother William {junior?} in the business and they reconstructed the three houses into a grand emporium with a handsome stuccoed front (Ill. 9.07). The architect was Christopher Eales.³² The premises now also extended to 4 Welbeck Street, with new departments for lingerie, mantles, millinery and dressmaking, and mourning. Frank and William had sold their interest in the Cheltenham concern in 1877, to focus on Wigmore Street as a store for 'the *crème de la crème* of aristocratic women'.³³

In 1882-3 a four-storey wholesale block was built on the north side of Mill Hill Place. Designed by Thomas Harris, this had a stock brick front originally with three pedimented gables. The Wigmore Street shops were also substantially rebuilt shortly after, probably to Harris's designs. In 1895 Debenhams acquired 90 Wimpole Street, rebuilding it with a brick and terracotta frontage, again to Harris's designs and visually an extension of the corner bank at 25 Wigmore Street then under construction.³⁴ The shop and first floor were used as a restaurant with, in 1895-7, a regular Wednesday devoted to Indian food, run by E. P. Veeraswamy. Although it lasted only a couple of years in Wimpole Street, this was the first Indian restaurant in Britain aimed at a middle-class clientele. Veeraswamy went on to found his eponymous restaurant in Regent Street in 1926.³⁵

Although Frank Debenham remained chairman, his eldest son, Ernest Ridley Debenham, part of the firm since the early 1890s, became increasingly important, as did his friend and colleague the political writer Frederick Scott Oliver, Unionist and advocate of Imperial federation. From 1896 Debenhams

made a series of acquisitions: Nicholay, the Oxford Street furriers; Capper's linens; Maison Hellbronner (making Debenhams sole agent for the Royal School of Needlework); and the antique dealers Howell & James of Regent Street – the latter two businesses reflecting Oliver's interests.³⁶

In 1905 the firm became a limited company, with Oliver and Ernest Debenham as joint managing directors, the shares owned by family and close associates, with subsidiaries in Australia, the United States, Canada, South Africa and Belgium. A public offer was made in 1907 to help pay for a grand reconstruction of the Wigmore Street premises, 'rambling and incoherent' after 90 years of piecemeal development. The architects William Wallace and James G. S. Gibson were chosen to design the new building – Wallace had done work in 1899 for Debenham's uncle Cyrus Daniell at 44–46 Wigmore Street.³⁷ The use of Carrara tiles may have been at Debenham's request, as he was concurrently having a spectacular new house built for himself in Addison Road, Kensington to the designs of Halsey Ricardo, similarly encased in tilework, which he approved of for its easy cleaning. The first portion of the new store, built in 1905–6 to Wallace's designs on the site of 91 and 92 Wimpole Street, was an extension to the 1880s wholesale building. The tilework and general character is an appropriately less grandiose version of the main frontage, with an octagonal oriel at the corner, rising to a tourelle with a cupola, and a balustraded cornice.³⁸

The main part of the building, occupying the whole frontage from the bank to Welbeck Street, was built by George Trollope & Sons and Colls & Sons, then just cementing their partnership, between February 1906 and September 1907. Now Gibson appears to have been the lead partner. The basement, ground and first floors extended the full depth of the site to adjoin the wholesale building (Ill. 9.08). Large showroom spaces were created at the rear, rising to a first-floor gallery lit by cast-glass domes and, over the centres, giant barrel vaults with semicircular windows along their sides. Between these two showroom-galleries was the model gowns department, a square

top-lit space, the only part retained from Harris's improvements of the 1890s. These galleries opened into showrooms or 'salons' overlooking Wigmore Street, one for coats and skirts, one for lingerie. Above were three more floors. On the third floor was a half-panelled ladies' club room, with an adjoining suite of dressing and retiring rooms, open to visitors, 'who may read there the papers and magazines, telephone, write letters, or meet their friends'. On the fourth, above the east showroom, was a restaurant, panelled in mahogany to three-quarter height. Adjoining was a spacious smoking room and gentlemen's cloakroom.³⁹

The frontage was conceived as symmetrical across the whole of the block, but because of the bank there is an extra bay at the west end, devoted originally to a discrete fur shop. A giant arcade runs across the ground and first floor, with plate-glass windows to what were originally single large shops either side of the entrance, their semi-circular tops lighting the first-floor showrooms (Ill. 9.09). Three segmental pediments top three bays set slightly forward with paired giant-order Corinthian columns of grey-green Truro marble forming a vestigial screen to the third and fourth floors. Decoration is mostly channelled 'stone' work to the first floor, applied garlands, and two seated female figures within the central pediment, all executed in Doulton's Carrara Ware. Crowning all is a columned lantern-turret on an octagonal plinth. On Welbeck Street, Gibson gave a less monumental treatment to the frontage up to the 1880s buildings and the corner of Mill Hill Place, setting back the fourth and fifth floors, apart from the staircase tower at the south end, in two ranks of dormers.

Internally, the building's decorative scheme was unusual but luxurious, with grey and green marble (supplied by J. & H. Patteson) setting the tone in the entrance hall and room above – in the columns framing the staircase, the stair treads, ceiling ribs, floors and walls (ills 9.10-11). The bronze work was by Singers of Frome: balusters, handrails, gallery railings

and the capitals to the columns supporting the vast showrooms and on the frontage.⁴⁰

In an Arts and Crafts twist, the Birmingham Guild of Handicraft supplied bronze 'Debenham and Freebody' panels for the frontage, plafonnier lights in the restaurant and pendant lights on the frontage. In the first floor showrooms, third-floor ladies' club-room and fourth-floor restaurant, the panelled ceilings were elaborately decorated by Ernest Gimson with mouldings in the form of twining foliage, fruits and flowers in his characteristic manner, derived from English examples of the seventeenth-century. On the ground floor there was plasterwork by Gilbert Seale, a more conventional choice.

When the store opened, the manager Frederick Richmond proclaimed it 'the most comfortable shop in the world'. Debenhams bought a 999-year lease on the block for £13,500 in 1912. With the end of the war the company embarked on an ambitious programme of business expansion, taking over Marshall & Snelgrove in 1919 (the same year it acquired Harvey Nichols in Knightsbridge), and with it most of the rest of the block south of Mill Hill Place including the Georgian houses on the north side of Henrietta Place.⁴¹

In 1924 J. S. Gibson & Gordon prepared a reconstruction scheme for the whole of the block bounded by Wigmore, Wimpole and Welbeck Streets and Henrietta Place. That came to nothing but the following year, with the carriage trade now powered by the internal combustion engine, Debenhams took what was then a novel initiative, creating a car park for the store and Marshall & Snelgrove on Oxford Street, to which it had access via a tunnel under Henrietta Place. Mill Hill Place had been closed in 1923 and its south side was cleared as a service yard with space for more than a hundred cars. Customers were able to alert their chauffeurs that they were ready to leave by means of an indicator board.⁴²

Debenhams effectively ceased to be a family concern in 1927. Oliver retired, Ernest Debenham sold his shares, and the company continued under

Frederick Richmond. In 1929 Gibson and Gordon designed an extension to the Mill Hill Place wholesale building, at 93–95 Wimpole Street, with access through to the car park. Built by Trollope & Colls, it is a restrained Portland-stone-faced building with attractively geometrical metal-framed windows of generous proportions (Ill. 9.12, and see also p.###). The lift shaft originally rose two storeys above the building, in anticipation of floors that were never built, marking the onset of the Great Depression.

In the early 1930s the US and Canadian subsidiaries were wound up, and the domestic market continued to be badly affected, export business 'dead'. Architectural fashion changed too, and as early as 1930 some of the marble and bronze columns in the main showrooms were encased in plain plaster.⁴³

Reflecting Debenhams' shift from the luxury to the middle market evident since before the war, in 1962–4 Taylor Woodrow Construction built a plain, seven-storey new headquarters for Debenhams Ltd numbered 1 and 2 Welbeck Street, to the designs of Gibson, Gordon and Montagu. Faced in Portland stone, it had an entrance at its south end with showrooms on the ground floor, offices above. The mid 1960s were a difficult time for retail, and in 1966 there was already talk of consolidating on Oxford Street and redeveloping the Wigmore Street site. That was staved off for some years when in 1968 Adrian Montague & Partners ruined Gibson's barrel-vaulted rear showrooms, and the earlier showroom to the centre, by filling in the gallery, slicing off the barrel vaults and most of the rooflights to insert a second floor. In 1972 Debenhams sought permission to redevelop the whole site bounded by Welbeck, Wigmore and Wimpole Streets and the former Mill Hill Place, for which Richard Seifert & Partners produced a scheme for offices and shops. That was found 'inadequate on architectural and townscape grounds' by the planners and the Gibson building was saved by listing in 1973.⁴⁴

The difficulties of redeveloping the site contributed to Debenhams' decision to rebuild Marshall & Snelgrove in Oxford Street as their flagship store. In 1979 Brent Walker secured planning permission to convert the Wigmore Street building to a hotel, but the deal fell through and in 1981 Debenhams finally sold the premises to London and Leeds Investments, part of Ladbroke, for partial redevelopment as shops, offices and flats. Debenhams retain use of the service yard and subterranean access to the Oxford Street store. In 1983–6 the rear of the Wigmore Street building was replaced by bland new offices, and the west end became Ladbroke Apartments, numbered 3 Welbeck Street, with a service road under the new building and access to basement parking. The architects were the Halpern Partnership. On Wigmore Street, the ground-floor showrooms were divided into individual shops. Surviving original elements include some of the marble work to the entrance hall, staircase and columns, and Gimson's plasterwork on the first and third floors. The offices were let in 1988 to BNP Paribas, an indication of the westward expansion of financial institutions from the City. After they moved to purpose-built headquarters in 1997 the building was sold in 2005 to Lazari Investments. The sale included all the former Debenham properties on Wimpole Street, the 1880s wholesale building and the 1890s bank. At the time of writing (2015) these are undergoing refurbishment to the designs of Forme UK, architects, into a single T-shaped office complex, known as 91 Wimpole Street. Also in progress is a refurbishment of the 1960s headquarters building as offices, with a new double-height entrance and two additional floors (Aukett Fitzroy Robinson, architects).⁴⁵

Nos 39–49

This block west of Welbeck Street was entirely rebuilt in the 1970s. The original development began with four houses built on plots leased by Edward

Smart and Thomas Gladwin in the late 1730s, including Smart's White Hart at the corner. The easternmost house 'lately erected' by Gladwin in 1737 was also long in occupation as wine vaults, then from about 1832 by Charles Croyden, chemist. The north-west corner of the block was not built up until after 1800, probably because of the continued existence of one of the City of London's conduit houses, known as the Breakfasting Conduit, on the Marylebone Lane side.⁴⁶ In the early 1800s a building was erected as the armoury and orderly room of the Royal York St Marylebone Volunteers, founded in 1802. That was replaced with three small two-storey houses with shops in 1817, and these in turn by two four-storey houses (later 47 and 49) in 1843. A grander rebuilding of Nos 45–49 was undertaken in 1905 by James Simpson & Son to the designs of F. M. Elgood, in red brick and Portland stone, as showrooms, offices and flats (Ill. 9.13). Debenhams took over Nos 45–47 in 1924.⁴⁷

All of this block, along with properties in Welbeck Street and Marylebone Lane, were demolished in 1972 for the present Nos 39–49, designed by Richard Seifert & Partners as shops, showrooms, offices and flats. In 1978 the adjoining former police station at 50 Marylebone Lane was rebuilt as part of the same development. In 2002–3 the whole building was largely reconstructed to the designs of Rolfe Judd, architects, for CIT, developers, with the infilling of much of the central lightwell and raising of the mansard roof to accommodate more flats. Difficulties were encountered in keeping shop tenants in place during the works, especially Steinway Hall, which had moved there from George Street, Hanover Square in 1982, and Steinway's piano galleries and practice rooms. Two giant transfer beams were inserted to convey load and sound away from the Steinway shop. Round-the-clock pumping was needed during construction of a new concrete basement slab, recalling Thomas Smith's comments on the marshy nature of the area in the eighteenth century.⁴⁸

Nos 51–65

This block, between Marylebone Lane and St Christopher's Place (formerly Barrett's Court) was built up following the resolution of boundary issues in the 1770s with eight houses, the western five backing on to a mews, King's Buildings, which led from Marylebone Lane to Stratford Mews. From the start there was business occupation, including a haberdasher, a breeches maker, and an upholsterer and auctioneer at 57; the wallpaper manufacturer William Woollams was here from 1819.⁴⁹

Nos 51–61. Shops with residential chambers over, built in 1887–8 to the designs of John Norton by the lessee, Thomas Boyce, builder, for whom Norton had recently designed the corner block opposite, No. 48. This is in a similar eclectic Franco-Tudor vein, with stone rather than terracotta dressings. Occupiers included K. Schall, manufacturer of electro-medical apparatus, at No. 55 in the 1890s. In 1930 Debenhams acquired the building, converting upper floors into workrooms, and in 1997–8 these were redeveloped as flats with an additional storey. The entire ground floor is occupied by Alexander Furnishings, who began in No. 51 in 1960.⁵⁰

No. 63. Rebuilding of 1885 for John Potter, grocer at No. 57, similar in style to his later development at No. 68.⁵¹

No. 65. Rebuilding of 1908–9 by T. H. Kingerlee & Son, to the design of F. M. Elgood (Ill. 9.14). The client was Thomas Way, a butcher whose grandfather had acquired in the early 1800s the business of John Bult, established here around 1782. The premises originally included a yard with vehicle access between Barrett's Court and Stratford Mews. Slaughtering was still taking place on site in 1865. By 1920 the building had become Cecilian House, the London base of the Yorkshire piano-dealer Archibald Ramsden. The rear

extension, rebuilt after war damage, was demolished in the 1980s for the Aldburgh Mews development.⁵²

North side

The north side was not built up until the 1750s, most of it on the initiative of Thomas Huddle, who entered into ambitious building agreements with the Portland Estate that saw him take on all but six plots between Harley Street and Welbeck Street. At the east end the frontage between Harley Street and Harley Mews South, laid out by 1757, was developed in conjunction with 1 and 3 Harley Street. The portion now occupied by Nos 8 and 10 Wigmore Street was built up in 1799–1800. An odd pepperpot house adjoining, No. 1A, was built on the garden end of what was then 87 Harley Street and reabsorbed into that site when it was redeveloped with the block numbered 3 Harley Street. The house was typically occupied by milliners. The small shops adjoining, 1B, 2A and 3A, on the site of the present 8 and 10 Wigmore Street, were built at the same time.⁵³

Nos 8–10. This building was erected in 1896 by the builder George R. Shaw as his own development (Ill. 9.15). Designed by F. M. Elgood at the beginning of his more restrained Wrenaissance phase, it recalls Eden Nesfield's lodges at Kew of thirty years earlier. Shaw himself occupied the shop at No. 8, and the upper floors as living accommodation, letting the other shop to the estate agent and auctioneer J. T. Bedford.⁵⁴

Wigmore Place

Known as Harley Mews South until 1939, this short mews retains its original character of stables and coach-houses behind houses in Harley, Wimpole and Queen Anne Streets (Ills 9.16a-b). Its development followed Thomas Huddle's agreement in 1754 to take ground on the north side of Wigmore Street between Wimpole and Harley Streets, where he originally intended an east-west mews. There was a secondary entrance at the north end from the east, on the site of 27 Harley Street, until about 1850. The carpenter Joseph Winckworth was rated for property in the mews by 1759, but there is no definite evidence of commercial use before about 1815 when Edward Freeman was using Nos 25 and 26 as a candle factory (see below). Most of the houses are late nineteenth century rebuildings, though Nos 7, 14 and 15 may retain older fabric. Architectural treatment varies. No. 24 features naive Aesthetic sgraffito decoration of birds and fishes to cement coving, perhaps from around 1882 when Benham & Sons acquired the lease (Ills 9.17a-b). Several houses retain first-floor loading doors, now converted to windows. Later developments include Nos 17-18, built in 1935-6 as garages and small flats as part of the Lister House development at 11-12 Wimpole Street (page ###). Nos 25 and 26, comprising the Black Cat Garage, were subsumed into the rebuilding of Nos 12-14 Wigmore Street (see below). Rebuildings from the mid-twentieth century show a progression from the merely utilitarian to more aspiring designs in recent years, some with mansards and drop windows mimicking loading doors; while No. 3 has been rebuilt behind its 1960s façade with a lavish basement and ground-floor extension for a sports injury clinic in connection with works at 11 Harley Street.⁵⁵

Nos 12–24

This block formed part of Thomas Huddle's large take of 1758 running up Wimpole Street to Queen Anne Street. First leases were granted to building craftsmen including Joseph Winckworth, carpenter, James Witton, bricklayer, and Richard Hilton, carpenter. The easternmost two houses (Nos 12 and 14), among three or four first leased by Winckworth, were the smallest, and in commercial use early on as a chemist's and a bakery. The most desirable were Nos 4 and 5 (site of 18 and 20), 20ft-wide houses with broad canted bays overlooking their gardens; No 5 was occupied from new by Lionel Tollemache, Viscount Huntingtower, on his marriage in 1760 till in the early 1770s, as 5th Earl of Dysart, he moved to Welbeck Street. Next door at the same time in No. 6 (site of present-day No. 22) was the Duke of Portland's steward Thomas Isatt, succeeded on his death in 1771 by his brother Henry. Notable later occupants include Edward Freeman & Sons, established in 1695, tallow chandlers to Queen Adelaide, at No. 16 (then 3) in 1815–75. In 1841 Freemans rebuilt the house, with a showroom covering the back yard and a basement connection to their Welbeck Place factory. The corner house (No. 24, then 7) was from 1784 to its rebuilding in 1893 occupied by successive makers of clocks and watches: Charles Haley, patentee of chronometers and regulators; James Grohé; H. W. Typke.⁵⁶

Nos 12–14 were rebuilt in 1959–61, along with 25 and 26 Wigmore Place, for Sir Bernard Waley-Cohen and Associates, to the designs of Gordon Jeeves, replacing buildings of the 1870s. The concrete-framed shop and office building has a neo-Georgian facing of brown brick and Portland stone more in keeping with Cavendish Square than the ruddily Victorian Wigmore Street. The original shop tenant was the Hastings and Thanet Building Society which acquired the lease during construction; the society was absorbed into Nationwide, which remains on site.⁵⁷

No 16. Rebuilding of 1895–6 for G. Tansley, ball furnishers, who succeeded Freemans the tallow chandlers as tenants in 1875. The building's frontage is so similar to Nos 18–22 that it resembles an annexe. Clement Clarke, dispensing optician and developer of instruments for ophthalmic opticians, took over the premises in 1917 – the first of more than 100 branches. Trays of glass eyes, 'some, with alarming verisimilitude... a little bloodshot', made for an arresting window display in the 1950s. Boots acquired Clement Clarke Ltd and closed this shop, though the name survives as a brand name of optical instruments.⁵⁸

Nos 18–22 were built by Holloway Brothers in 1892–3 to the designs of Leonard Hunt, as showrooms and offices for the piano manufacturer John Brinsmead & Sons (Ills 9.18-19). The business, founded in 1837, moved to No. 18 (then 4) in 1863 and subsequently expanded into 20 and 22. The works moved from Charlotte Street to Kentish Town in 1870, and by 1893 produced around 3,000 pianos a year. Hunt's building, expensively finished with mahogany panelling and leaded glass, was 'one of the sights of fashionable London'. The ground floor was given over to display space, divided by a hallway with pavement lights illuminating basement showrooms, the upper floor comprising offices and chambers. In 1895 a recital room was added at the back of the basement, seating 130. Lit from two sides with leaded windows, it had mirrored columns and fully-tiled walls. Brinsmeads went out of business in 1922, but was re-established at 17 Cavendish Square in 1924. Lloyds Bank acquired the building, creating a strong-room within the former recital room, and subletting the western shop, which retains a 1928 neo-Georgian bronze shopfront fitted for the opticians Curry & Paxton. The upper floors were converted to flats in 1933.⁵⁹

No. 24 was built for J. T. Bedford, auctioneers and estate agents, to C. H. Worley's jolly Tudorbethan design, with terracotta dressings against striped red and black brickwork. J. T. Bedford moved to No. 10 in 1896, on the death of his business-partner brother.⁶⁰

Nos 26–48 and Wigmore Hall

The original development here was carried out under Thomas Huddle's building agreement of 1754, the houses being completed on time and occupied by 1762. The five middle plots reach 200ft north to the mews street, Welbeck Place (formerly Little Welbeck Street), and were relatively wide at 22–26ft; the outer plots were cut short, allowing for houses to front Welbeck and Wimpole Streets. Builder-lessees here were George Rawlinson, smith; Richard Pollard, John Partridge and William Myles, carpenters; Daniel Foulston, painter; George Robinson, bricklayer; John Johnson and William Lloyd, plasterers; and John Jeffkins, glazier. Huddle himself took a lease of the west half of the block in 1756.⁶¹

From the start, the more desirable middle houses (Nos 32–40, then 11–15) attracted aristocratic tenants. The largest of all, No. 40, was the London home of George Cholmondeley, Viscount Malpas during his time as an MP from 1761 to his death in 1764; John Campbell, 4th Earl of Breadalbane, after he was elected one of the Scottish representative peers in 1784 and took his seat in the Lords; and in 1796–1816 John Dawnay, 5th Viscount Downe. No. 38 was in the occupation of Admiral Thomas Edward Nugent when the garden was sketched in 1810 by John Claude Nattes, then living at 23 Welbeck Street (Ill. 9.20).⁶²

Commercial use gradually crept in from the edges of the block, but the middle houses with rear access were attractive to businesses requiring space. By the early 1840s most of the gardens were wholly or partly built over with

showrooms, warehouses, workshops and counting houses. These houses also suited the bulkier arts as well as crafts – the sculptor Humphrey Hopper was at No. 36 (then 12) in 1814 till his death in 1844, no doubt producing his funerary monuments in the workshop at the bottom of the garden.⁶³

From 1827 the decorator Frederick Crace was based at No. 38 (then 14, Ill. 9.21), described in 1839:

We enter a small shop of a plain and subdued character, then proceed through a passage into a studio. This consists of three compartments thrown into one suite... The first section is in the style of James I, or later Elizabethan, the Central in the Gothic, and the last in that of the Renaissance... The windows are filled with painted glass and the whole has an air of tasteful richness... they communicate rather the idea of a private apartment'.⁶⁴

It was at an 'open house' evening here that Frederick's son John Gregory Crace met an important early patron, the 6th Duke of Devonshire, at whose suggestion upholstery and cabinet-making became part of the business, No. 4 Little Welbeck Street to the rear being acquired as workshops. Craces remained at No. 38 for 70 years. The business was built up by Frederick and J. G. Crace, a partner from 1830, from a precarious situation in the 1820s (George IV was a slow payer over Brighton Pavilion) to a peak of activity in the 1860s–70s, by which time Longleat, Teymouth Castle, Chatsworth and Windsor Castle had all received grand schemes of Crace decoration. J. G. Crace, with his son John Dibblee Crace, expanded into No. 36 (then 13) in the late 1860s, refronting No. 38 in 1883, conservatively by the standards of the contemporary 42–46 (see below), with cement surrounds to the windows. J. D. Crace's retirement from active business saw the closing of the Wigmore Street shops in 1899 and their acquisition by Bechsteins, who soon demolished the

rear showrooms and workshops in Little Welbeck Street to build Bechstein Hall (page ###) and rebuilt the street frontage in 1904-5.⁶⁵

Carl Bechstein had taken over No. 40 in 1890, and had built a large concert hall and expanded into Nos 32-38, together with 2-4 and 8-11 Little Welbeck Street by the time the firm's property was confiscated during the First World War. Debenhams acquired all these properties in 1916, building a tunnel under the road to their headquarters opposite. In 1951 Prudential Assurance bought the leasehold interests of Debenhams and others in 26-46 Wigmore Street, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9 Welbeck Way and 85-87 Wimpole Street. In the mid 1970s the Prudential pressed the Howard de Walden Estate to allow wholesale redevelopment of the block; this was declined, though they have since undertaken extensive, more selective rebuilding (see below).⁶⁶

No. 26. Rebuilding of 1890-1 by Shillitoe & Sons for the tenant Joseph A. Beardmore. The rather restless design by Frank Loughborough Pearson includes a corner oriel, square and segmental oriels and shaped gables (Ills 9.22-23). White paint has long obscured the brickwork and light brown terracotta ornament. Called Queen Anne Mansions, it originally comprised high-class residential chambers with a service lift, electric lighting, telephone, messenger service, 'exceptional cuisine and attendance'. It was soon made into offices. The shop's first tenants were Kemmler & Co., piano manufacturers, there into the 1920s; the whole building is currently occupied as showrooms and offices by Tarisio, specialist auctioneers of stringed instruments.⁶⁷

Nos 28-30 (Norfolk Mansions). This was erected in 1890 by the builder Thomas Boyce on his own account, probably to the designs of John Norton, who worked for him elsewhere (Ill. 9.24).⁶⁸ The vaguely Tudorbethan frontage, more glass than wall, is near-symmetrical with two ranks of canted oriels, shaped gables and towering chimneys. The basement and ground

floors occupy the entire 80ft depth of the site, and the back extension of No. 28 rises the full five storeys, with large canted bays facing west.

Norfolk Mansions was run as a residential hotel by William Ebenezer Collison (who had run Somerset Mansions at 6 Welbeck Street and 48 Wigmore Street, also built by Boyce). The hotel (which soon expanded to take in Nos 32–34 and parts of 36 as well) included a dining saloon (open to the public, offering ‘recherché cuisine’), a drawing room and a smoking room. A substantial square staircase in the centre led up to the suites of rooms. Alterations in 1902 by A. H. Kersey, architect, created separate shops on the ground floor, but the upper floors continued as a mix of service flats and chambers until 1940. A resident from 1902 to the mid 1920s was the couturier Ada Nettleship, widow of the painter John Trivett Nettleship and mother-in-law of Augustus John.⁶⁹

The shop at No. 28 was occupied from 1929 by Gordon Russell Ltd as their London showroom, until their move to No. 40 in 1935. The upper floors were converted to office use in 1945. Three floors were occupied by the memory-training organization the Pelman Institute till 1963.⁷⁰

Nos 32–34. The building is an amalgamation of a Georgian house with a late Victorian rebuilding (Ill. 9.25). The house, No. 34, was built in 1755–6 by Richard Pollard, carpenter, as part of Thomas Huddle’s development. As well as a good deal of the façade, original egg and dart mouldings to the window frames and embrasure panelling survive on the first floor. In 1876 the builders Bywaters erected a ‘handsome’ top-lit showroom, 125ft-long, for a new occupant, Vincent Robinson, oriental-carpet dealer, whose father had introduced Indian matting to Britain in 1824. This survives in truncated form.⁷¹

No. 32 was occupied from 1808 by the linen draper Joseph Christian. After Joseph Christian junior’s early death in 1821, the business was taken over by his son John Scales Christian, becoming Christian & Rathbone in 1840;

John's younger brother, the architect Ewan Christian, lived here for some years. Christian & Rathbone closed in 1884, their stock being acquired by Debenham & Freebody. The following year Vincent Robinson & Co. Ltd took over and rebuilt No. 32, adding a double-width showroom at the back, which has a part-glazed hammerbeam roof. No. 34 was altered and the front adapted as part of a unified elevation. Alexander Payne was the architect, J. M. Macey & Sons were the builders, and Mr Frampton of Peckham (probably James Frampton, father of George James Frampton) carved the Gothic tracery to the showroom roof and screens at either end (since lost).⁷²

Robinsons stayed in the shop at No. 34 into the early 1930s, after its sale successively to Bechsteins and Debenhams, using 6 Welbeck Street to the rear as workshops. The upper parts of Nos 32–34 were used as tuition studios by Bechsteins and later by Wigmore Hall and Piano Galleries Ltd, a subsidiary of Debenhams. Dr Stanley Dodd at 88 Wimpole Street, for one, found the day 'rendered hideous by the vocal contortions' of the students.⁷³

From the 1940s to the 1980s Wedgwood were in occupation of most of Nos 32–34 with fellow potter Susie Cooper in No. 32 in the 1980s.⁷⁴ The shop at 32–34 is now Margaret Howell Ltd, design-oriented clothing and furnishing shop, who use 6 Little Welbeck Street as offices, with the upper parts of No. 32 connected to 28–30 as offices with shared stairs and lifts.

Nos 36–40. The terracotta frontage here forms the centrepiece to an ambitious building programme begun in 1889 by the piano-maker Bechstein, including Wigmore Hall behind. In the 1890s Bechsteins were producing 3,000 pianos yearly, rising to 5,000 in the following decade, Britain absorbing half this output. The first part to be rebuilt was No. 40, as showrooms and London headquarters. Carl Bechstein, son of the founder, and production director of the Berlin piano business, had been in charge of the London branch since 1876 when the first premises opened in Rathbone Place. Eight years later Bechsteins moved to a larger, more prominent site in Oxford Street.⁷⁵

At No. 40 there had been for more than half a century the large open warehouses of David Davies, coachbuilder, running back to a workshop at 3 Little Welbeck Street. Their building followed a disastrous fire in 1834. Davies, who moved here from Albany Street in 1828, was an enterprising coach designer, and built railway carriages, 'which rather resembled refined cigar boxes', for the Great Western Railway in the early 1840s. In 1873 the railway basket and luggage manufacturers H. J. Cave & Sons, holders of a royal warrant from the Princess of Wales, moved here from Nos 74–78; substantial alterations were made for them here and at Little Welbeck Street behind, by the architect Robert H. Burden.⁷⁶

The work for Bechsteins at No. 40, following Cave & Sons' relocation to No. 32, was carried out in 1889–90 by Mark Patrick & Son to the designs of T. E. Collcutt. The main house was rebuilt, with showrooms behind to a depth of 90ft; beyond this a top-lit showroom and adjoining practice-room in Little Welbeck Street built for Cave & Sons were allowed to remain.⁷⁷ The Wigmore Street frontage is typical of Collcutt's work of the period. Like his contemporary Royal English Opera House (Palace Theatre), it is faced with Doulton's terracotta (here a single pinkish-buff shade), and has arcades of round-headed windows and subtle variations in storey height and type and width of window. Moulded decoration is most profuse towards the top of the building, which rises to an elaborate gable capped by a segmental pediment.

The ground floor was taken up by a single, deep showroom, its centre portion top-lit. Above was another full-depth showroom with a two-storey flat above for the manager, Max Lindlar.⁷⁸ In his panelled former sitting room, modelled corbel figures over a mahogany column between each window bay were originally complemented with a frieze in low relief, lost by the 1960s. The shopfront, more prettily French, with small-scale moulded decoration, lasted only until the 1904–5 rebuilding of Nos 36–38 Wigmore Street for Bechsteins, following completion of Bechstein Hall. Carl Bechstein's brother Edwin was now in charge, and the work was designed not by Collcutt but

Walter Cave, architect of the Aeolian Hall in 1903–4 and unconnected with H. J. Cave & Sons. His broader, plainer façade, with matching terracotta cladding and a central gable, harmonizes with but does not attempt to emulate Collcutt's building. The ground-floor frontage was designed as a single entity in channelled Portland stone, with pedimented Gibbsian doorways: one to the new building, decorated with the royal arms carved by William Silver Frith, the other to Wigmore Hall behind, with a new iron and glass canopy replacing one put up in 1902 (Ills 9.26-27). The ground and first floors of the new building provided showroom and office space with tuition rooms above. The ground-floor showrooms had full-height mahogany panelling, screens and arcading around the square rear staircase, inlaid with ebony and satinwood, and Pavonazza marble pilasters by Farmer & Brindley. Metalwork, including fire grates and screen lunettes ornamented with circles and slim turned 'balusters', was by William Bainbridge Reynolds. Cave opened the first floor of the new building into No. 40, creating a handsome showroom suite with white-painted panelling and pilasters, deeply panelled ceilings and plaster decoration of musical instruments by Frith. At the same time Nos 2 and 3 Little Welbeck Street were rebuilt to Cave's designs by E. Lawrance & Sons to create additional showroom space and a tuning room at the back of No. 40, a top-lit first-floor showroom, and offices behind.⁷⁹

Bechsteins, although they returned to London in the 1920s, lost their property here in 1916 to Debenhams, who continued the business on similar lines. In 1935 the ground floor of No. 40, and the rear first floor above at 2–3 Little Welbeck Street were let to the furniture manufacturers Gordon Russell Ltd of Broadway, Worcestershire, formerly at 28 Wigmore Street. The showroom was remodelled for them in up-to-the-minute Modernist fashion by Geoffrey Jellicoe and his assistant Richard Wilson. Designed for low cost in view of the short lease, this involved stripping out the interior and replacing the stone frontage with a plate-glass shopfront beneath the company name in blue-neon sans serif lettering (Ill. 9.28). The showroom featured sliding

lightweight screens projecting from the walls in its central section, top-lit by opalescent glass discs. With the Broadway factory turned over to war work, the Wigmore Street showroom closed in 1940, to be replaced by the Red Cross and St John Book Campaign, run by the Times Book Club at No. 42, reselling books donated for paper salvage.⁸⁰ Everything behind the main frontage of No. 40 was demolished for the rebuilding of 42–48 Wigmore Street and 2–3 Welbeck Street in the 1990s, when a lumpen simulacrum of Colcutt’s original shopfront was installed. Mansard floors were added to Nos 36–38 and the rear of No. 40 as part of the late 1990s redevelopment of 42–46 Wigmore Street described below.

Wigmore Hall. Tucked away behind the street frontage of Nos 36–38 lies the small but sumptuous Wigmore Hall, built in 1900–01 as Bechstein Hall for Carl Bechstein & Sons, whose showrooms were by then at No. 40 (Ills 9.29-31). The new hall became the centrepiece of a diverse music business that by 1914 occupied more than a dozen buildings in Wigmore and Welbeck Streets and Welbeck Way (then Little Welbeck Street).⁸¹

Carl Bechstein, son of the firm’s founder and production director of the Berlin piano business, had been in charge of the London branch for nearly a quarter of century when Bechstein Hall opened. The decision to build a concert hall reflected growth in demand for pianos generally and in particular Bechstein’s luxurious instruments, ‘preferred by most pianists outside America’. It also met an increasing public appetite for a chamber concert counterpart to the comfortable accommodation offered by the 2,500-seat Queen’s Hall, opened in 1893 (page ###), and the rough and ready St James’s Hall in Piccadilly. It was a contrast, too, to the compact piano manufacturers’ concert rooms such as the Brinsmead Hall at 18–22 Wigmore Street (page ###) and the Salle Erard, both of 1894, in Great Marlborough Street; Erard’s needed substantial alterations to secure full public-performance licensing by

the London County Council, and Brinsmead Hall was always restricted to private concerts. Steinway Hall in Lower Seymour Place, adapted in 1875 from the Quebec Institute, was perhaps the nearest rival, with 400 seats.⁸²

As at No. 40, the architect was T. E. Collcutt. The original building agreement of 1899 with the Portland Estate was for rebuilding of the whole of J. D. Crace's former premises at Nos 36–38, with the hall to occupy the site of their former workshops, yard and sheds. It was agreed that the street elevation should harmonize with No. 40 in design and use of terracotta. But in the event the frontage of 36–38 was not rebuilt until 1904–6, perhaps because parts of No. 36 were in use by the Norfolk Mansions hotel at Nos 28–34, whose owner objected to the proposed hall as it 'would be detrimental, if not ruinous, to his business if concerts were held', and did not relinquish his lease until 1902. A condition of the rebuilding was that the walls should be double-skinned with insulating material between, and that further slag-wool sound-proofing was to be provided in the roof.⁸³

Collcutt submitted designs in August 1899, approved that October. The hall, set back from the frontage buildings, was reached by a 55ft passageway through No. 36. This opened into a small lobby and box office aligned with an open area separating it from the back of the showrooms at Nos 36–38. The lobby opened into a foyer across the back of the hall, from which a staircase rose round two sides (with WCs beneath) to a small balcony overlooking the foyer and giving on to a shallow 90-seat gallery. The hall was a simple 'shoebox' of 74ft by 40ft, 32ft high, with a shallow barrel-vault ceiling and central skylights. At the north end, the raised platform was partly enclosed in a semi-circular niche or apse under a half-dome, with a pair of curved doors, that on the right giving access up to two artistes' rooms (in the back building on the site of 4 and 5 Little Welbeck Street). Another pair of doors flanking the apse at auditorium level led down to emergency and artistes' exits into Little Welbeck Street. Below the artistes' rooms was a store (later garage) and above them were two more floors comprising a showroom for upright pianos and

workshops. To satisfy licensing requirements these floors were separated from those lower floors by a concrete floor and were accessible only from the back of the main Bechstein showrooms running through to Little Welbeck Street from 40 Wigmore Street. The Little Welbeck Street façade, the hall's only outer face, was of red brick with stone dressings and inscribed 'Wigmore Hall'.⁸⁴

Collcutt's original drawings of the stage wall indicate a scheme of panelling, presumably in mahogany as in the dado and gallery wall, and overdoors matching those on the two stage doors, with Ionic pilasters flanking the stage 'apse'. The cross-section suggests an unadventurous blind arcade and pilasters. By the time the builder, John Bentley of Waltham Abbey, began work in May 1900 the specified finish was both richer and simpler. The change followed the recent death of the firm's founder, Carl Bechstein senior, and coincided with Edwin Bechstein's taking over from his brother in London. The entrance passage and foyer was paved in black and white marble and featured, along with the staircase and balcony, dados of Numidian marble with red Verona marble edging. In the hall was an uneasy mix of mahogany dado and panelling with red marble pilasters. On the stage wall the marble was carried up in flat, unmoulded planes with giant stripped-Mannerist keystones flanked by carved plaques over the exit doors, and a semi-circle of quasi-Gibbsian marble voussoirs around the apse (a feature also used in the foyer arch).⁸⁵

Collcutt had used the same configuration of Gibbsian arches and flat marble planes at the P. & O. Pavilion at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1900.⁸⁶ His collaborators there and on other commissions, Frank Lynn Jenkins and Gerald Moira, were responsible for the most arresting feature inside the hall, the painted cast-plaster frieze decorating the stage wall and the half-dome over the apse. The central allegorical scene, representing the 'striving of humanity after the Great Voice of nature', is in a lush, *fin-de-siècle* manner. The Soul of Music, a scantily clad hieratic male figure, has hands raised

around a ball of fire, symbolizing the Genius of Harmony, which casts its rays through a tangle of thorns below to mankind, represented by (left) a musician and (right) a composer, urged on respectively by Cupid and Psyche. The twin figures on the friezes either side of the apse chant the music generated by this process, seen on a twisting scroll.

Lynn Jenkins described the collaborative working method, developed since the mid-1890s, whereby Moira produced, from an agreed design, a full-size cartoon in charcoal and chalk on brown paper. From this Jenkins traced directly on to prepared clay, which he modelled in shallow relief, stressing the ‘importance of the variety of texture’ for the reception of colour. Casts were then taken, in refined plaster of Paris reinforced with tow for lightness and strength. Moira was responsible for painting the casts, using first a layer of powder colour that became a part of the surface, some metal leaf, especially non-tarnishing aluminium, oil colour and a final dull-gloss spirit glaze to protect against the smoky London atmosphere. Reinforced by wooden strips, they were conjoined and fixed in place with a ventilation gap behind.⁸⁷

The aim of Collcutt’s undecorated planes of marble combined with the murals was ‘a quiet effect of restful luxury... obtained by the skilful distribution of large and harmonious masses of decoration contrasted with extreme simplicity’.⁸⁸ The scheme also contributed, if unintentionally, to the much-admired acoustic, an ‘elusive balance between clarity and reverberation... lacking in so many halls’ and stemming from the minimal diffusing elements on the walls coupled with the focussing effect of the curved surfaces of ceiling and apse.⁸⁹

With the opening concert on 31 May 1901 the hall was acclaimed as ‘unquestionably the handsomest in London’. The heating and ventilation system, ‘identical to that favoured by the great London hospitals’, was especially commended, allowing audiences to ‘listen to the finest harmonies in a state of perfect immunity of all unhygienic elements’. The building was lit throughout by electricity; the wall lights – two-light brackets in the foyer, five-

branch brackets in the hall, presumably designed by Collcutt – had a touch of Art Nouveau élan similar to those in the Lloyd’s building.⁹⁰

Walter Cave, who had been designing piano cases for Bechsteins since the 1890s, took over as architect at Bechstein Hall in 1904, dealing with various minor works – an extension to the platform, with central conductor’s pulpit; an iron stair connecting box office and basement; rearrangement of the seating in 1905 into one wide central block and two narrow side blocks, easing access.⁹¹

Bechstein Hall contributed to the extension of the London concert season and had by 1910 its own small orchestra. The First World War, however, spelled disaster for Bechsteins. By this time the business had leased 32–34 (sublet to other businesses) and 36–40 Wigmore Street, together with 2–12 Little Welbeck Street (comprising a warehouse and factory, designed by Cave), and 9 Welbeck Street (also by Cave, and sublet; page ###). On the outbreak of war in August 1914 Edwin Bechstein and his manager left the business in the hands of the deputy manager Winchester Berridge, who was that month appointed receiver by the government. Despite opposition from the British piano trade in the person of the editor of *The Piano Maker*, and the President of the British Piano Manufacturers’ Association, Bechstein Hall’s licence was renewed by the LCC. In 1915, after a relentless campaign against Bechsteins, the Board of Trade eventually declined to extend Berridge’s licence further and the LCC also declined to renew the hall’s licence. In November 1916 the London Bechstein business was auctioned, all the leases, the piano-tuning business, hall and stock of pianos (valued in 1914 at £60,000 alone) being sold for £56,500 to Debenhams, whose grand new headquarters stood opposite. Bechstein Hall reopened as Wigmore Hall on 16 January 1917, ironically with a Beethoven concert.⁹²

Despite his spirited defence of Bechsteins, Berridge stayed on as manager under Debenhams, with such success that neighbours were moved to complain to the Howard de Walden Estate about the noise from the

thriving Wigmore Studios. Ada Nettleship at 28 Wigmore Street found this ‘quite unbearable’, with up to four lessons going on at once and ‘all the windows open... my doctor says I shall soon be in an asylum’.⁹³

Thereafter only minor adjustments have been made to Wigmore Hall, mostly involving improved ventilation and lavatory provision, e.g. by J. S. Gibson & Gordon in 1919: concerts being ‘of very short duration, only about two hours at a time... we think that four urinals is rather in excess of the number necessary’. In 1925 maple flooring replaced the original oak in the hall, and by the late 1930s the giant keystone effect over the stage exit doors had been replaced with plain red Verona marble.⁹⁴

The rise of radio broadcasting and a London-based recording industry fuelled a taste for serious music in an increasingly well-informed concert-going public, reflected in a diverse repertoire at Wednesday evening concerts at Wigmore Hall, augmented in the 1930s and during the war by the new music of Britten, Tippett and Lennox Berkeley. While Queen’s Hall succumbed to incendiary bombs, Wigmore Hall survived more or less unscathed, and came under Arts Council management. It was however looking dowdy. In 1947 new seating by H. Lazarus & Son Ltd was fitted, and new lighting, designed by the architect Paul Boissevain (a partner in the lighting firm Merchant Adventurers Ltd) replaced Collcutt’s wall brackets in the main hall. The heating system was replaced and in 1952–3 Leonard Menasseh, Boissevain’s fellow teacher at the Architectural Association, oversaw further alterations, mostly to the lavatories.⁹⁵

A further renaissance in Wigmore Hall’s fortunes came under the directorship of William Lyne from 1966 to 2003. The hall passed to the City of Westminster Council and subsequently to a charitable trust. Improvements in 1991–2 included the development of the basement with the Bechstein Room bar and a restaurant at the front beneath the shop at Nos 36–38, in a quasi-William Morris style with green-painted panelling, to the designs of Martin Pawley.⁹⁶

The basement areas were redesigned as part of further renovations in 2004 that also saw a new staircase connecting the rear of the hall and the former piano showrooms overlooking Welbeck Way, now used as offices. Seating, heating and recording facilities were upgraded and replicas of Collcutt's original wall sconces replaced the 1940s lights in the hall.⁹⁷

Nos 42–48. Today the 1880s buildings here and at 5–6 Welbeck Street are merely retained frontages for a rebuilding of 1997–2000, designed for Minerva plc (in which Prudential Assurance held a major interest) to the designs of EPR, architects. The development extends to a new building office building at 2–3 Welbeck Way with access to parking beneath the Wigmore Street building. Kvaerner, Trollope & Colls was the main contractor.⁹⁸ The rear of Nos 42–48 and the Welbeck Way building are neo-Georgian in manner, in buff brick with red brick window heads.

The china and glass merchants Daniell & Palmer opened their warehouse at No. 46 in 1824, and by the early 1840s Daniell, then in partnership with his sons Alfred B. and Richard, had built over the gardens with a showroom, itself rebuilt in 1858–9. In 1862 Alfred's daughter Eliza married William Debenham, and in 1883–4 his sons recast the premises together with Nos 42 and 44, previously occupied by John Foster, artificial florist and plumassier. Existing showrooms at the rear were retained. The architects were Ernest George & Peto, who in 1876 had produced a pioneering design for the chinaman Thomas Goode at 17–19 South Audley Street.⁹⁹

The resulting building, Wigmore Street's first in the Queen Anne style, is more northern Renaissance in character than Goode's, executed in red brick thickly banded with terracotta (Ill. 9.32). The contractors were Wall Brothers of Kentish Town. Debenham & Freebody may have had a stake in the firm already. They were named as 'owner' when alterations were made in 1897, and two years later further alterations were made to the designs of William

Wallace, future architect of Debenhams' headquarters (page ###), by which time A. B. Daniell & Sons also had premises in New Bond Street.¹⁰⁰

A. B. Daniell & Sons Ltd secured a 999-year lease of the building in 1914 and in 1917, following the death of A. B. Daniell's last surviving son, Cyrus, the building was sold to Marshall & Snelgrove, merged with Debenhams in 1919. From 1922 No. 42 was occupied by The Times Book Club and Bookshop, 'the largest bookshop in the world'. The club, a scheme by which *Times* subscribers could borrow books and buy them at discount, began in 1905 at 93 New Bond Street. By the time it moved to Wigmore Street membership was no longer restricted to subscribers. In 1924 the galleried showrooms to the rear of 42 and 46 were filled in and a new library with a grand Venetian window, and new floor above, built to the rear of No. 42 to the designs of James Naylor. In 1949 a utilitarian shopfront was installed at Nos 40–46, obliterating all but the centre door and flanking windows of George & Peto's shopfront at 42–46. The book club left Wigmore Street in 1962 when it amalgamated with Harrods Library. The Times Bookshop continued at 42–46 with a new antiquarian department, attracting attention with exhibitions favouring arcana and witchcraft, but it merged with Truslove & Hanson and in 1969 moved to their premises in Sloane Street.¹⁰¹ The 1990s rebuilding included a new, simplified version of George & Peto's shopfront, with glazed period-style canopies at the entrance to the upper floors.

The corner building No. 48 is described under 5 Welbeck Street on page ###.

Nos 50–66A

Most of this block was originally built up on a small scale under Abraham Easley, an ostler, who in 1759 took over Francis Hodgson's 1750 lease of the site, extending north to the back of plots along what was to become Bentinck

Street. Easley assigned the south-east corner to James Fisher, a carpenter, who built a wide, shallow house with two double-height canted bays, adjoining which were two large houses, later numbered 52 and 54; all three houses had occupants of high social standing into the 1820s, including Sir John Rous, later 1st Earl of Stradbroke, at No. 20 in the early 1780s. At the corner with Welbeck Street (No. 50, then 19), the Bishop of Chichester kept up the social tone into the 1820s.¹⁰²

Behind the houses were laid out **Easley's Mews**, entered through the Cock and Lion public house at what became No. 62, and the narrower Roan Horse Yard. From the start, livery stabling, coachbuilding and farriery gave these a commercial, semi-industrial character.¹⁰³

Between 1824 and the 1960s the major presence in this whole block was John Benham & Sons, ironwork manufacturers. John Lee Benham worked for his father, Avery Benham, a Reading ironmaster who moved to London in 1791, running a foundry at Blackfriars Road, but struck out on his own in 1817, initially at 1 Edward Street (site of 78 Wigmore Street). He took over the former Bishop of Chichester's house in 1825, turning the basement into a factory for baths and stoves, the ground floor into showrooms, and lived upstairs. In 1840–1 he fitted out the technologically advanced kitchens of the Reform Club in Pall Mall, to Alexis Soyer's specifications, all the manufacturing being done in the basement works.¹⁰⁴

No. 52 was acquired in 1842, and in 1857 Benham's sons began a major expansion. In 1861 the young Norman Shaw was employed to design a new gallery at the back of the houses, and at the 1862 International Exhibition they displayed architectural metalwork designed by him, albeit this line of work was not pursued further. Also in 1862, Benhams acquired No. 54, unifying the frontage of the three houses with stucco, sash windows and a balustrade (Ill.9.33). By 1865 Nos 58–65 Welbeck Street had been annexed, and showrooms built over their gardens, while the houses themselves were let to medical practitioners. Expansion continued in 1869 when Benham took over

Nos 64–66 and Roan Horse Yard to the rear. In 1871–2 Higgs of South Lambeth built showrooms behind these houses, and covered the northern half of the yard with a factory, all to Norman Shaw’s designs. The factory, reinforced with steelwork for heavy manufacturing, comprised a top-lit, galleried space of double height over a basement. In 1875–80 further extensive showrooms and workshops were built behind 54 Wigmore Street and either side of Easley’s Mews and in Roan Horse Yard. Finally Nos 64–66 were rebuilt with an additional storey.¹⁰⁵

Benhams now entered into large-scale manufacture, ill-suited to the West End, of products such as boilers and calorifiers, resulting in losses every year after 1885 when the business-minded James Benham died. This no doubt prompted the sale of 50–54 Wigmore Street and 58–65 Welbeck Street, plus the built-up hinterland, back to the Howard de Walden Estate in 1904, in return for consolidation of the leases on 64–66 Wigmore Street and the property behind, as well as the west side of Easley’s Mews. Manufacturing, forbidden by the Estate as a condition of the new lease, moved to Battersea in 1906 and then to a larger site in Wandsworth in 1913. To provide access to the back premises, No. 78 Marylebone Lane was acquired, and rebuilt with a vehicle entrance. Thereafter Benhams continued to use 64–66 Wigmore Street as showroom and offices, closing off the old cartway and subletting the 1870s factory building and 78 Marylebone Lane (page ###). An oak shopfront with Tuscan columns was added in 1919 across 64–66 and 66A at the corner of Marylebone Lane. Following damage in the Second World War, the factory building was reroofed and reincorporated into Benham’s premises. Benhams continued to be family-run until 1960 when a series of mergers and takeovers began, but remained at 64–66 Wigmore Street under the name Benham & Sons until redevelopment in 1982 (see below).¹⁰⁶

Nos 50–54 comprise the Wigmore Street frontage of Welbeck House (page ###), which swallowed up the eastern half of Benham & Sons’ premises

including the east side of Easley's Mews and all their Welbeck Street houses. This frontage includes the shop of John Bell & Croyden, one of the formerly numerous pharmacies in Wigmore Street. Charles Croyden, manufacturing chemist, set up at No. 45 Wigmore Street in 1832, handing the business over around 1886 to F. W. Hyde and J. H. Cartwright who continued as Croyden & Co., which merged c.1903 with John Bell & Co. of Oxford Street, and after a brief sojourn at No. 55 moved to No. 50 in 1908.¹⁰⁷

The building also housed the London branch of Boroughs Wellcome and the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum, founded by the American pharmaceuticals magnate Henry S. Wellcome. He devoted a great deal of his wealth to a wide-ranging collection intended to illustrate globally the history of man's drive to self-preservation. The museum, opened in May 1914, occupied the ground and basement floors at the west end of the building (extending behind Nos 56-60) and was numbered 54A. On the ground floor were spaces devoted to primitive medicine, anatomy and alchemy, plus galleries of portraiture and statuary (Ill. 9.34). After reorganisation in 1926, the museum expanded into the basement, with reconstructions of Lister's operating theatre and several chemists' shops of various dates, including John Bell's and an apothecary's of 1623. It closed in 1932, moving to the new Wellcome Foundation building in Euston Road, though much was dispersed later, some to the Science Museum. The former museum rooms were incorporated into John Bell & Croyden's premises in 1934.¹⁰⁸

Nos 56-60. This austere brick block is a rebuilding of 1880, designed by Edward Gershom Colman for James Thomas Bostock Ives, whose father Edmund had worked since 1850 as cabinetmaker and upholsterer in workshops behind with access from Easley's Mews (Ill. 9.35). J. T. B. Ives soon emigrated to the United States where he enjoyed some reputation as a geologist. From 1890 to 1902 the upper floors were the work rooms of the couturier and theatrical costumier Ada Nettleship – her family, including her

ailing husband, the animal painter and Browning expert John Trivett Nettleship, being confined to the attic. An extra storey obliterated the original shaped gable in the 1970s. The upper parts were used as offices before conversion to flats in 1997.¹⁰⁹

No. 62, which incorporates the entrance to Easley's Mews, has been licensed premises, known on and off as the Cock & Lion, since 1772. The present building, designed by Frederick Warburton Stent, dates from 1879.¹¹⁰

64-66A. At the time of writing (2015) this is an empty site, following the demolition of red brick offices built in 1982-3 to the designs of Hildebrand & Glicker. These had replaced all but the façades of the previous buildings including the rear premises of Benham & Sons. The forthcoming replacement, known as 66 Wigmore Street, has been designed for the Howard de Walden Estate by ESA, architects.¹¹¹

Nos 68-82

This was the last part of Wigmore Street to be developed. The island site between Marylebone Lane and John's Court (site of 68-74), originally leased to Francis Hodgson in 1750, had come into Abraham Easley's hands by the 1760s.¹¹² Because Wigmore Street in its original iteration ended at Marylebone Lane, it seems likely that Hodgson's holding included the adjoining ground to the south abutting the City of London's ground where Stratford Place was built. Trade cards show the ostler Easley running a dairy 'at the sign of the Ass & Foal, Marylebone Lane', the business eventually being removed by his grandson-in-law Thomas Edwards to the New Road, opposite Fitzroy Square, by 1781.¹¹³ Easley's premises occupied the frontage to Marylebone Lane with a large house in the middle flanked by secondary buildings. By 1800 the

northern outbuilding at the tip of the island site had been replaced by another house.

Thomas Smith states that Easley had built across the line of Wigmore Street but it seems more likely the land had just been staked with development in mind, and he eventually sold the required portion in early 1777. This new Wigmore Street frontage was however empty till 1795 after which several small shops were built.¹¹⁴

Nos 68–74, and 11–17 Marylebone Lane. These comprise a new building behind retained façades (Ill. 9.36). Small shops at 15 and 17–19 Marylebone Lane (page ###) were demolished as part of the development, carried out by the Howard de Walden Estate in 2010–12.¹¹⁵

No. 68 was a rebuilding of 1898 for John Potter, wholesale grocer, who also rebuilt Nos 23, 49 and 63 Wigmore Street. The red-brick building, in the Queen Anne style, was designed by Augustus E. Hughes. The arched shop fronts with pink granite piers either side of the corner entrance were originally open, for the fishmongers' shop run by Potter's sons.¹¹⁶

Nos 70–74 (previously 70–76) were first rebuilt in 1847 as a joint enterprise by John Town Richardson, greengrocer, and Henry Woollams of the wallpaper manufacturers William Woollams & Sons. The site underwent a second rebuilding in 1907–8 by E. Lawrance & Sons to the designs of F. M. Elgood, replacing four houses with three (70, 72 and 74). It was one of several developments on the Howard de Walden estate, mostly in Wimpole Street, by Samuel Lithgow MP, solicitor. The Wigmore Street frontage was entirely faced in Portland stone with full-width quasi-Venetian windows to the first floor, with two floors of leaded casements. The Marylebone Lane front was in red brick and Portland stone dressings, and had a curious recessed square bay to the first to third floors, its purpose perhaps to bring more light to the staircase of No. 70.¹¹⁷

The premises were designed for single or multiple occupation, and the first occupant of the whole building was the Buyers' Association, a company intended to popularize American-style mail-order shopping, which offered to supply everything from groceries to cars. Its *éminence grise* was the millionaire grocer and yachtsman Sir Thomas Lipton, a close associate of Edward VII, and it appears that the Buyers' Association may have been set up to give occupation and income to the Hon. George Keppel, whose wife Alice was the King's mistress. Certainly the Buyers' Association was wound up shortly after Edward's death.¹¹⁸

The new building, replacing all but the façades of Nos 68–74, and 11–13 Marylebone Lane, was designed by ESA, architects. The floor plates of the entire building are open, with stairs and lifts grouped to the rear of No. 74 which serves as reception to offices above. The entirely new northern part is lower, a gesture to the smaller scale of the previous buildings. Since rebuilding the ground floor of Nos 68–72 and Nos 11–13 Marylebone Lane has been occupied as a shop, exhibition space and café for the huntergather fashion label, while the ground floor of the new building at the apex of the site is a wine bar.¹¹⁹

Jason Court

Only the narrowness of Jason Court recalls the ragged, liminal character of its late eighteenth-century origins. Called John's Court until 1895, it marked the boundary between the Portland and Hope-Edwardes estates, on the line of the Ay Brook. Most of the west side is taken up with a long, low shop building of 1961–2, part of the towering Mandeville Hotel extension (page ###). Nothing remains of the cottages erected here between 1777 and 1792, or their replacements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹²⁰

The east side remained vacant till after 1800; even then, apart from a butcher's shop at the south end, most of the first wave of development comprised outbuildings of houses in Marylebone Lane. Like so many courts this was impoverished and insalubrious. There were 62 residents in 1841, 55 in 1861. The east side retained its quality of low-rise architectural affectlessness until the recent rebuilding of 68–74 Wigmore Street in 2010–12, designed to entice pedestrians along Jason Court towards the shopping in St Christopher's Place.¹²¹

Nos 76–92

Wigmore Street's development westward of Jason Court will be discussed in a future volume. Nos 78–92 (there is no 84 or 86) were until 1868 numbered 1–6 in Edward or Edwards Street, the new street on the Hope-Edwardes estate pushed across the estate boundary from 1777. Occupation here reflected the generality of Wigmore Street with residential gentility giving way to commerce. No. 5 (site of 90 Wigmore Street) was home, briefly, in 1792, to Catherine, Lady Abdy, widow of Sir Anthony Abdy, Bt. She was succeeded there by the aged literary barrister Charles Nalson Cole till his death in 1804. John Lee Benham started his iron-founding business at No. 1 (site of 78) in 1817. From about 1841 the same house was the shop of Benjamin Cave, toyman, turner and basketmaker, whose widow Harriet and their sons took over the business in 1853, expanding into the shops on the other side of John's Court (site of 74). From the mid-1880s the related business of Ernest Gems, who claimed his father had introduced wicker furniture into England, was in No. 78 until demolition in 1906 (Ill. 9.37).¹²²

Nos 76–80. The present office building with frontages to Wigmore Street and Jason Court is a rebuilding of 1982–3, retaining the Jacobethan-style frontage

of the previous corner building, No. 78, built in 1906–7 to the designs of Treadwell & Martin by George Rainger Shaw, builder, as his own speculation (Ill. 9.38). The front is continued in the same style up to No. 80, where the old front is also preserved. This is in the same style as Mandeville Place adjoining, and was probably built in the late 1870s following legal action by the shopkeeper there, William Twinberrow, a pharmaceutical chemist, against the builders of Mandeville Place for deprivation of light and air (page ###). The 1980s development, Osprey House, was by Interland Estates, a subsidiary of the Heron Corporation.¹²³

Nos 82 and 88, on opposite corners, were built as shops as part of the Mandeville Place development of 1875–7 (page ###).

Nos 90–92. This imposing building was put up in 1882 by William Downs of Walworth, builder, for Walter Lazenby, to the designs of William Ward Lee, architect. Combining a smart shop with chambers over, it was an early example of a building type that went up in this area in prodigious numbers over the next 30 years. Lazenby's family had been on the site since 1780. The seeds for what became a major business were sown in 1793, when his great grandmother was given the recipe for her publican brother's fish sauce (a pungent mix of anchovies, walnuts, mushrooms and vinegar), as a means of livelihood following her husband's early death. The business prospered under successive Lazenbys and manufacture moved to the Borough by 1869, the Marylebone side of the business being that of grocers and wine merchants. After rebuilding the Wigmore Street premises, Walter Lazenby incorporated E. Lazenby & Son as a limited company in 1895, and died in 1910 a multi-millionaire at current values. In 1919 E. Lazenby & Son Ltd was taken over by Crosse & Blackwell, now owned by Nestlé which continues to manufacture Lazenby sauce under the Maggi label.¹²⁴

The rebuilding created a large double shop with a basement extending underneath part of Duke's Mews. On the ground floor, a Portland stone arcade comprised a double shopfront with a central door, and at the side a grand entrance to the flats above comprising Wigmore Mansion. The upper floors, red brick with stone dressings, have two floors of giant mullioned and transomed windows, then on the third floor three canted bays recessed behind an open colonnade, a novel feature. The accommodation in the flats suggests a degree of aspiration, with high ceilings, much decorative plasterwork, marble fireplaces and a servant's bedroom. Occupants in 1891 included the American singer and journalist Hope Glenn.¹²⁵