

Chapter 1

4–68 Oxford Street

Tottenham Court Road to Perry's Place

This chapter covers the easternmost end of Oxford Street's north side. One of the earliest sections of the street to attract development because of its proximity to St Giles and Soho, it has been liable to intensive commercial pressures over more than three centuries. The laying-out of Hanway Street close behind Oxford Street from about 1720 meant that building plots along this part of the frontage (Nos 4–48) became cramped when redevelopments took place. But by 1900 some sizeable enterprises elbowed room for themselves here, notably the Oxford Music Hall (later the site of a Lyons Corner House) and Frascati's Restaurant. The freeholds along this stretch had become subdivided from an early date. Older features of interest today are few, but include Oxford Street's sole surviving pub, the Flying Horse, and the two faience elevations of the former Oxford Corner House, one facing Oxford Street and the other Tottenham Court Road. Further westwards the frontage as far as Perry's Place (Nos 50–68) was first developed as part of the small Rathbone (later Evelyn) Estate, bisected by Rathbone Place. The hinterland here is covered in Volume 52 of the *Survey of London*.

Joseph Girle and the Castle Inn

The history of concerted building on Oxford Street's north side begins with Joseph Girle, brewer, of Marylebone and Westbourne Green, Paddington. This entrepreneur is first heard of in 1659, acting as a trustee for some land in St Pancras parish, which reached down along the west side of Tottenham Court Road (then Lane) almost as far south as St Giles' Pound at the Oxford Street corner. Girle held this land for Ralph Grey, son of the first Lord Grey of

Warke, a supporter of the Commonwealth. Ralph Grey was son-in-law to Sir Edward Ford, soldier and hydraulics enthusiast, who obtained a royal patent in 1665 for exploiting water supplies in Wapping and Marylebone, and Girle was most likely connected to Ford's circle.¹

By 1666 Girle was the freehold owner of three tracts of land fronting Tyburn Road, as Oxford Street was then usually known. Two of these, Great and Little Conduit Close or Field, lay off Marylebone Lane well to the west and saw no development till the 1760s. The third, which Girle had acquired from Sir John Clerke, baronet, and his wife Philadelphia, was more immediately eligible.² Known as Harp (or Pond) Close, it lay adjacent to St Giles' Pound and the junction of Tyburn Road with the lane leading northwards to Tottenham Court, and was partly in Marylebone, partly in St Pancras parish. The name Harp probably comes from a hostelry on part of the site, to which some land was attached. The southern frontage of Harp Close ran westwards from the junction to just beyond the present line of Rathbone Place. Hanway Place began as an alley or lane near this western boundary leading into the property. In depth Harp Close was irregular. On the east side it stretched a little north of where Hanway Street now debouches into Tottenham Court Road; on its west side it extended further northwards.

On this land Girle set about a development along and just behind the two main frontages. These were in progress in 1672 and perhaps incomplete when he died in 1677.³ Facing the Tottenham Court frontage he built or rebuilt a pub appropriately called the Harp and some few other adjacent houses. Further west, Girle built himself a house on the east side of the alley which became Rathbone Place, and other houses along the Tyburn Road frontage. Behind came stables, barns, slaughterhouses and a brewery, later known as the Star Brewery and approximately at the back of the present 26–30 Oxford Street. The most ambitious building of the group may not have been completed when Girle died, as unlike the above buildings it is not named in his will, though it is shown on the Ogilby & Morgan map of 1681–

2.⁴ That was the Castle Inn, a coaching inn built on a traditional side plan with a long yard and stables behind. It may have taken its name from a small fort sited hereabouts during the hasty fortification of London in 1642–3.⁵

At the time of Girle's death he was also embroiled in the early stages of Soho's development on the other side of Oxford Street. His various leasehold interests there duly passed to his widow and several married daughters. The disposition of his Marylebone freeholds eventually resolved itself as follows. Mary Harman inherited Great Conduit Close, later the Hope-Edwards estate; Hannah Thayer acquired Little Conduit Close along with some of the Harp Close freeholds, which by her daughter's marriage to Jacob Hinde became an outlier of the Hinde estate; Joseph Girle junior, the only surviving son (d. 1708), received the family house, the brewery and the vacant land behind, which were to be developed from 1718 with Hanway Place and Street by his son-in-law, Major John Hanway; while the Harp, the Tottenham Court Road houses and the site of the Castle Inn fell to Elizabeth Allam, who also inherited Girle's house at Westbourne Green. Major Hanway and his son had engineering skills, and were to play an important role in the upgrading of Oxford Street during the mid 1730s. Their own developments northwards from the street are covered in *Survey of London* Volume 52.

The Castle is first recorded by name in a mortgage deed of 1711 where it is explicitly said to be in 'Oxford Street'. A lengthy description mentions various separate buildings including a gateway, a substantial number of chambers, several stables and six coachhouses. In front of it facing the main road was a separate pub, the George, presumably so called in honour of Queen Anne's husband, Prince George of Denmark. Another of the frontage houses came to be occupied by a wheelwright. Following Elizabeth Allam's death in 1718, the family interests in these properties were sold to John Pashley of Harrow, from whom the Castle descended in 1723 to his son of the same name. Another pub hereabouts was also sold freehold in 1723; it is

described as the Horn, but may be identifiable with the George, since changes of pub names were as common then as they are today.⁶

At some point the inn's name certainly changed. Rocque's map shows it as the Blue Boar, perhaps confusing it with an inn of that name in Holborn. By 1755 it was the Boar and Castle, featured in a guide as a departure point for carriers.⁷ With the West End building up fast, it was then approaching its heyday. When the lease was sold in 1780, 60 wagons per week were claimed to depart from the establishment, which had stabling for 65 horses, warehouses, lofts etc., 26 bedrooms and a spacious dining room 'in full trade'.⁸ At the time of its demolition in 1861 the Boar and Castle was recalled as the last London stop before various westbound coaches set out for the country. 'Here West End passengers, who had booked their places at the "Bull and Mouth" in the City, joined the vehicle, and here the coachman and the guard received their last commissions, reckoned their passengers, tightened the straps of the luggage, and prepared for a brisk drive to Hounslow, where the first change of horses took place'.⁹ It is shown on Tallis's street views as the Boar and Castle Hotel, five windows wide, with the entry into the yard under its east end. As the carrying trade declined, it became as much a drinking place with a music licence as an inn.

The largest other single element in the Girle development was the brewery, known later as the Star Brewery. This passed into the freehold ownership of the Hanways but was sold in 1838 if not before. The property then included a frontage at 11 (later 26) Oxford Street with adjacent shops there and at the rear in Hanway Street. The brewery was rebuilt to designs by R. H. (or H. R.) Abraham in 1845 (builder, Jay), incorporating the latest brewing techniques, but the then owners, Draper, Child & Co., sold out in 1847.¹⁰ During the nineteenth century it was approached from Oxford Street through a gate on which 'two implacable ravens mounted guard'.¹¹

Westwards of the Star Brewery up to Hanway Street, the present frontage at 34-48 Oxford Street probably remained vacant until the later

eighteenth century, for the sculptor Joseph Nollekens could remember 'thirteen large and fine walnut trees' standing along the north side of the highway here during his childhood in the 1740s and '50s.¹² They probably belonged to the back gardens of houses in Hanway Street. The sites had been filled in by the time of Horwood's map.

Bozier's Court

Today Tottenham Court Road widens as it approaches St Giles' Circus. Before 1900 the opposite was the case, for a separate narrow island block stuck out at the end of Oxford Street, obstructing the roadway and causing constant hold-ups at one of London's busiest junctions. The block was separated from the main run of Oxford Street by a north-south alley running through to Tottenham Court Road known as Bozier's Court. This cut-through may be identifiable with Hogstye Alley, a name found in deeds c.1700 and compatible with the presence of St Giles' Pound, whose location may be identifiable with that of Bozier's Court. The parish pound had reputedly been moved here from St Giles High Street in 1656, remaining on the site - in Marylebone parish - for just over a hundred years.¹³

This island occupied the easternmost end of the ground along Oxford Street inherited by the Thayers and hence the Hinde family from Joseph Girle. Most of this land had been built upon by 1725, but a piece of waste about 30ft in frontage and 80ft in depth, perhaps that of the old pound, remained empty.¹⁴ After the pound was removed in 1765, it was developed with small tenements by William Boozsher, whence by corruption came the name Bozier's (sometimes Brozier's) Court.¹⁵ The block had just two addresses in Oxford Street, latterly Nos 1A and 2, rather more on the west side of Tottenham Court Road, and a few on the east side of Bozier's Court. The alley acquired some repute in the Victorian period for its bookshops, the pioneer being James Westell, here in about 1841-60. Bozier's Court was 'a sort of eddy

from the constant stream which passes in and out of Oxford Street', recalled one bibliophile, 'and many pleasant hours have been spent in the court by book lovers'.¹⁶

For most Londoners however Bozier's Court meant obstruction. Pleas for the authorities to remove the island are first heard of in 1859. They were renewed in 1875 but fell on deaf ears, as the houses were the responsibility of the Marylebone Vestry, which stood to gain nothing from a street improvement that would benefit only the inhabitants of St Pancras.¹⁷ After the opening of Charing Cross Road in 1887 exacerbated traffic jams at the junction, Bozier's Court was more imminently doomed.

Because of the Marylebone Vestry's inaction, the incoming London County Council took up the cudgels, only to get embroiled in issues of betterment and compensation. With the new tube railways in the offing, the LCC from 1890 tried to persuade either the Central London or the Hampstead, St Pancras and Charing Cross Company to build its Tottenham Court Road station on the north side of Oxford Street and include Bozier's Court in its clearance scheme. Neither company would oblige. So the LCC's Improvements Committee tried another tack, recommending that owners and tenants immediately west of the Bozier's Court block should contribute to the clearance, as they would benefit by acquiring a valuable new frontage to Tottenham Court Road, as indeed the Bakers' development there was to do. This tactic was thrice rejected by the Progressive-dominated Council during the 1892-5 period, on the grounds that the rating burden was already too heavy. But by now the petitions to remove Bozier's Court were coming thick and fast. In March 1896 the LCC voted by a small majority to add the improvement to its annual parliamentary Act for 1897, which required new frontagers to contribute towards the rising cost of the clearance. Bozier's Court was finally removed in 1899-1900, at a cost well above the original estimate, as one lessee raised rents sharply at the last moment, thereby

securing a higher compensation figure which then became the yardstick throughout the improvement.¹⁸

The Flying Horse (formerly the Tottenham), 4–6 Oxford Street, and 1 Tottenham Court Road

In 1793 the leases of the original houses built along the frontage at the eastern extremity of Oxford Street were running out. They were then renewed en bloc by the freeholder, Anne Hinde, for terms of 41 years, in exchange for some repairs and rebuildings. Next west from the corner house with Bozier's Court, these included a small pub with an alley behind called the Flying Horse, a typical name in this vicinity of coaching inns and major thoroughfares.¹⁹ By 1880, when it was renumbered 2 Oxford Street, it was under the control of Meux the brewers.²⁰ Meux's headquarters lay close by in the massive Horse Shoe brewery behind the east side of Tottenham Court Road, in front of which stood the Horse Shoe Tavern, rebuilt to Edward Paraire's designs in 1875.

In 1890 the Horse Shoe and the Flying Horse were taken over from Charles Best by the ebullient Baker Brothers, namely William Henry and Richard Baker. From lowly beginnings the brothers had made a fortune from London pubs and restaurants and recently turned themselves into a limited company, linked with Meux & Co., and with Nicholson & Company, the gin distillers. With the aggrandisement of the neighbouring Oxford Music Hall and the removal of the Bozier's Court island in the offing, the Bakers spotted – or perhaps took over from Best – a golden opportunity for rebuilding a grand new pub, shops and offices on this future corner site.²¹ That also suited the joint freeholders of 4–6 Oxford Street together with the flanking properties along the west side of Bozier's Court. These had been allotted by a recent division of Hinde family property to W. F. H and H. N. G. Hinde, army officers both; the former was keen to raise money on the security of the

scheme. So the Hindes and the Bakers signed an agreement in April 1891 whereby Nos 4–6 and the buildings behind were to be rebuilt by the end of 1893 at a cost of not less than £8,000 in return for a long lease at £1,200 per annum. In fact a sum nearer £13,000 was spent, most of it coming from Meux.²²

As architects the Bakers employed their regular firm, Saville & Martin, who were simultaneously employed across the road on a lavish reconstruction of the Horse Shoe Tavern; the contractors were Kirk & Randall.²³ The resulting building of 1892–3 is a major surviving monument of London's late Victorian pub boom. There were three elements: a new pub at 6 Oxford Street, rechristened the Tottenham; shops at No. 4 at the corner and along the Tottenham Court Road flank, mostly taken by the West End Clothiers Company, whose emblem was prominently displayed over the corner; and workshops and offices above, originally Tottenham Chambers, including space for Baker Brothers. The elevations were in the banded idiom of brick with Portland stone strips and trimmings of terracotta then in vogue, punctuated by arched windows with elaborated heads, and overtopped by a vigorous roof line of gables and chimneys and a tourelle at the corner. The Tottenham had a slightly richer front, with an inset bay and some carving. Only here does the roofline survive, the Tottenham Court Road side having lost its excrescences. The pub is exceptional today for its surviving interior, complete with panelling, mosaics, back-painted mirrors supplied by Jones & Firmin, and paintings personifying the seasons, by Felix De Jong & Company.²⁴ Now the only true pub remaining on Oxford Street, it reverted to the name the Flying Horse in 2014.

The Hinde brothers put up the ground rents of the completed development for auction in 1898, but in the event the freehold was sold by private treaty next year to Balliol College, Oxford, which retained it till 1972.²⁵ Only in 1901 was the eastern flank opened up to view by the removal of the Bozier's Court island. Since then the corner block (4 Oxford Street) has seen

many vicissitudes; in the second quarter of the twentieth century it was a prominent branch of the tailors Horne Brothers, and sported a shop front installed around 1923 by the fitters Stanley Jones & Co.²⁶

Next north is 1 (originally 1A) Tottenham Court Road, built soon after Tottenham Chambers in 1893–4 and in a likewise lively style but by different architects, Wigg, Oliver & Hudson (Walter Gladding, builder), working for the executors of a James Henderson. It has two multi-storey bays inset within arches, topped by a pretty open timber cupola over a gable. The southern half and back premises housed Malzy's, a billiard and supper room, latterly a fish restaurant, which had been on or near the site since 1875. It was probably much patronized like the Tottenham by habitués of the Oxford Music Hall, whose back entrance came next north. The front shop was originally occupied by a tobacconist.²⁷

Oxford Music Hall

The Oxford Music Hall operated in various guises from the former Boar and Castle site between 1861 and 1926, when it was replaced by a Lyons Corner House. It underwent frequent vicissitudes over its lifetime, including two major fires and several rebuildings.²⁸

The original Oxford was the second music hall promoted by Charles Morton, often called the father of the genre, in other words large Victorian halls of entertainment linked to but physically separate from pubs. Morton's first successful venture was the Canterbury in Westminster Bridge Road, which he rebuilt in 1856. He next planned to break into the West End. Against the obstruction of rivals and puritans he secured a fifty-year lease of the Oxford Street site and the requisite licences in 1860.²⁹ His architects were the prolific Finch Hill & Paraire, who had recently completed Weston's Music Hall, Holborn, and his builders Holland & Hannen. They inserted a west-

facing auditorium of spacious proportions, 94ft long, 44ft wide and 41ft high, with side and back balconies.

The entrance approach was from Oxford Street via an enlarged passage to the right of the Boar and Castle pub and hence to a lobby with a divided staircase lit from a small octagonal dome. Flanking both sides of the auditorium behind pairs of Corinthian columns and balconies ran a promenade, six feet wide, to which was appended a supper room close to the stage on the south side. Instead of a proscenium arch came a short apron stage backed by a shallow apse. The audience in the body of the hall sat laterally at supper tables. There was more enrichment than colour, supplied as to the papier maché plasterwork by White & Parlby, as to the lighting with a central chandelier and gas burners by Weston & Curel. The *Building News* pronounced the Oxford Music Hall 'the finest one of its class'.³⁰ The programmes, promoted by Morton under the guise of the Oxford and Canterbury Hall Company Ltd, mixed music of many kinds. In 1866, for instance, a cantata by Meyerbeer in honour of Schiller's centenary was leavened by comic songs, 'gymnastique', a celebrated jig dancer, 'negro eccentricities', excerpts from Masaniello and 'Los Cambios Aereos Espagnoles'.³¹

The Oxford twice burnt down, on 11 February 1868 and 1 November 1872. Both times a fire probably started in the balcony, fanned into a blaze in the early hours of the morning, burnt out the auditorium and caused the roof to collapse but spared the surrounding spaces. Both restorations appear to have been undertaken by Paraire, working again with Holland & Hannen. The first was largely a reinstatement, but in 1873 the apse gave way to a square end and larger stage, while in the body of the hall the benches were turned to face the stage and an enlarged promenade was squeezed in behind. This time the décor, with reliefs in white contrasting with stencilling and 'choice salmon tints', was designed by Wilhelm Homann, 'the accomplished

decorator of the Mausoleum of the late Prince Consort'; he had worked for Paraire before, at Weston's.³²

After the earlier fire Morton sold the Oxford in 1869 to Morris Robert Syers, a former Liverpool trader who had bounced back after a shady bankruptcy to promote the Strand Music Hall. Syers was involved in one legal case after the next down to his death in 1876. He bequeathed the ownership of the Oxford to his family. Performances and profits continued buoyant under his experienced manager, J. H. Jennings. At this time the seating capacity was about 1,200, but many more were frequently admitted for standing.³³

In 1884–5 the hall came under the scrutiny of the Metropolitan Board of Works' campaign to improve theatre safety. Various changes were enforced, notably improving the emergency exit to Tottenham Court Road via a passage called Donaldson's Court.³⁴ Meanwhile the hall carried on with éclat, featuring around this time such household names as Vesta Tilley, Marie Lloyd, Dan Leno, George Robey and George Chirgwin.³⁵

A chancery judgement precipitated an auction of the lease in 1890. It was bought for £27,000 by an agent representing James Kirk, a publican-speculator related to the Kirk building dynasty of Woolwich and Westminster, who already had some involvement in the site next west. Kirk embarked on some reconstruction, concentrating on the approaches to the hall. But in 1892, with demolition of the Boar and Castle in front under way, he sold out to a syndicate, the New Purchase and Improvement Company. This was an enterprise masterminded by Henry Newton-Smith, a City accountant who saw ways of turning higher profits from the music halls and to that end brought together first the London Pavilion and the Tivoli, then the Oxford. Under Newton-Smith's leadership a fresh public company, the Oxford (Limited), bought the assets for an inflated £70,000 and set about a more lavish reconstruction. Despite rumours that they would employ Frank Matcham, the syndicate stuck with James Kirk's architects, Wylson & Long,

along with Frank Kirk as builder. Under pressure to reopen, the latter executed the job at top speed in 1892–3.³⁶

Wylson & Long had hitherto largely been pub architects. The Oxford was their theatrical début, and they did not muff their chance. Raising the game for this end of Oxford Street, Oswald Wylson devised an all-stone front of which he claimed to be ‘particularly proud’.³⁷ The style was the blowsiest Second Empire, with a polished granite frontispiece at ground level surmounted by a central portico in antis and two crowning pavilion towers terminating a crested roof. The pub in the centre, renamed the Oxford Tavern, was flanked by entrances on both sides. The interior amounted to a total reconstruction within the old envelope, though a new balcony entrance was contrived from Tottenham Court Road. The upshot was an up-to-date theatre, with a proscenium, two tiers of balconies cantilevered out on an iron frame supplied by Dennett & Ingle, a flat roof divided into compartments, luxurious finishings in gold, electric blue and pale pink, plentiful decorative painting by Campbell Smith & Co., and carving by J. McCulloch.³⁸ The seating capacity of the new hall, calculated at 1,047, was actually smaller than before. The stage was deepened in 1895–6, and in front of the two Oxford Street entrances iron street canopies were added in 1897. These were not to the liking of Edwin Sachs, but he was sufficiently impressed by the New Oxford or Oxford Theatre of Varieties, as the hall began now to be dubbed, to admit it to his classic *Modern Opera Houses and Theatres*.³⁹

In 1896–7 the Oxford became a focus for the campaign against the uses of music hall promenades for prostitution spearheaded by the National Vigilance Association, led by Mrs Ormiston Chant and, in relation to the Oxford, by Carina Reed. Mrs Chant wanted to reform rather than close the halls, so she tried to promote high-class musical entertainments at the Oxford on Sundays. These ran up against difficulties with the licence and were discontinued in 1897. By then Matcham had temporarily displaced Wylson & Long as architect, making minor alterations between 1896 and 1900. But by

1901 Wylson & Long were back, adding extra back premises facing Hanway Street, including a new rear entrance and a first-floor saloon.⁴⁰

Like other large London music halls, the Oxford lost coherence during the Edwardian years and began to admit a variety of uses, including sporting events, revues and films, for which a cinematographic chamber was installed in 1907. The ultimate owners remained the syndicate which also ran the London Pavilion and the Tivoli, controlled by George Adney Payne and his son Walter Payne. In August 1917 the rising impresario Charles B. Cochran took on the ailing venue, in order to stage the war-time hit *The Better 'Ole*, for which the box office was transformed into a dug-out and the foyer littered with fake sandbags.⁴¹

Having restored the Oxford's fortunes, Cochran sought to turn it into a theatre suitable for his large-cast entertainments, on the lines of those at Sprague's Ambassadors and St Martin's Theatres. To that end he undertook a reconstruction in 1920-1 at his own expense via a company called Oxford Productions Ltd, in preparation for his revue *The League of Notions*. He meant to spend £25,000, but in his own words 'the times were difficult. There were strikes; we had an accident to the proscenium arch; and it looked as if the whole building might come down. Contractors, too, would not give fixed estimates, and, one way and another, the alterations cost me nearly £80,000'.⁴² The work was mainly entrusted to White Allom & Company, who carried out the internal styling in a half-French, half-Jacobean taste. But Wylson & Long continued to be involved as architects to the Payne syndicate, adding an extra block of dressing rooms along Hanway Street in 1924.⁴³

The reconstructed New Oxford, as the theatre was now definitively called, enjoyed a patchy but lively final few years. Cochran continued putting on shows small and large, including Eleonora Duse's final appearances on the London stage, the first British production of *Six Characters in Search of an Author* by the then unknown Pirandello, and a season of Sacha Guitry. British premieres of films by D. W. Griffith were held here, and Howard Carter gave

his first public lectures about the Tutankhamen tomb discovery. But the debt on the theatre was never paid off, and turned out to be by far Cochran's biggest liability (£98,000) when he was declared bankrupt in 1925.⁴⁴ He settled by passing it to the J. Lyons empire, for which he had recently begun supplying cabaret entertainment at the Trocadero, Leicester Square. In that way the New Oxford became earmarked as the site for a new Lyons corner house, and shut its doors in May 1926.

Lyons Corner House, 14–24 Oxford Street and 3 Tottenham Court Road

These addresses are shared today by a branch of Primark, the low-cost clothing chain, whose store stretches between two handsome classical fronts in white faience. The fronts are all that remain of the Oxford Corner House, built here in 1927–8 to designs by F. J. Wills for J. Lyons & Company on the previous Oxford Music Hall site.

The Lyons company had been founded in 1887 as an offshoot of Salmon & Gluckstein, a family-owned firm of tobacconists in a large way of trade with shops all over Britain.⁴⁵ The new concern was intended to fill perceived gaps in public catering. Aiming at first to supply food at trade exhibitions, it took its name from a cousin of the founding families who had experience of running catering stalls. Soon the partners targeted the growing number of families and women who wished to eat out in style and respectability but at prudent cost. In 1894 the first of a long series of Lyons teashops was opened in Piccadilly. They became the immensely successful staple of the firm. Under the guidance of W. J. Ancell, Lyons' architect between 1896 and 1913, they were among the first British shops to adopt a common high-street house style. Eventually there were no less than ten separate Lyons branches in Oxford Street alone. One such was at No. 10, separated from the Oxford Music Hall only by a branch of Salmon & Gluckstein the tobacconists at No. 12.⁴⁶

The company's early interest in the fuller restaurant trade was spasmodic. In 1896 the partners opened the Trocadero Restaurant, a high-class venture replacing the Trocadero Music Hall, Shaftesbury Avenue. The Throgmorton Restaurant in the City came next, followed by three small cafés in the West End and Holborn. Not until 1909 did Lyons inaugurate the first of their famous, purpose-built corner houses catering for large numbers. That was the Coventry Street Corner House close to the Trocadero at the angle of Rupert Street. Again designed by Ancell, it was clad in the white 'stoneware' or faience then coming into fashion in Britain's smoky cities as a fresher-looking alternative to Victorian red terracotta. Two West End hotels followed, the Strand (Palace) Hotel, and the Regent Palace Hotel. Corner-house-scale restaurants were attached to both. These were establishments boasting several floors of dining space, capable of seating up to 3,000 people and open 24 hours a day. Further west at 362–366 Oxford Street next to Gee's Court the company opened the Maison Lyons during the First World War. This had three floors of restaurants and was once again faced in faience, but entrusted to different architects, Lewis Solomon & Son, following Ancell's death in 1913.

Elsewhere Ancell was succeeded as Lyons' main architect by his assistant, F. J. Wills. Trained at the Regent Street Polytechnic, Wills was to divide his entire career between working for Lyons and adding to the Polytechnic's buildings. His office was at Evelyn House, 62 Oxford Street, which also contained the offices of the Lyons hotel administrators. His first jobs consisted in finishing and enlarging the Coventry Street, Strand and Regent Palace sites. All acquired extensions between 1913 and 1925 faced in a version of Lyons' trademark white faience called Burmantofts Marmo, procured from the Leeds Fireclay Company. Wills's strengths were planning and elevating the buildings. His style was as robust as Ancell's but more academic, and his Coventry Street interiors looked staid and somewhat dated.

As explained above, the Oxford Music Hall property came into the Lyons empire as a way of rescuing C. B. Cochran from bankruptcy in 1925. The prime mover appears to have been Major Montague Gluckstein, who was among the younger generation of Lyons directors and had brought Cochran in to spruce up the Trocadero with cabaret entertainment.⁴⁷ Since the circumscribed site precluded another hotel, Wills squeezed in three storeys of restaurants, one above the other, the lowest in a deep basement. Further catering space came at second-floor level, while shops faced both roads. Towards Tottenham Court Road the company was able to acquire two extra plots north of the previously narrow entrance on that side, so creating a three-bay front on similar but less festive lines to its five-bay counterpart facing Oxford Street. At the back was a plain brick frontage towards Hanway Street.

The new building, of steel-framed construction sitting on piled foundations, went up between July 1926 and May 1928. Lyons & Company's in-house Construction and Engineering Department erected it; Reade, Jackson & Parry supplied the engineering skills and Dorman, Long & Company the frame. The modelling for the rich classical details of the two faience elevations was by the sculptor L. F. Roslyn, who also worked for Wills on the Regent Street Polytechnic's Little Titchfield Street building, while the gilt Louis XV-style metalwork of the shopfronts was by Cashmore Art Workers. The flair and colourfulness of the external detail – for instance, the bright blue metalwork of the lanterns hung from the fronts – hinted at influence from the 1925 Paris Arts Décoratifs Exhibition.⁴⁸

In the interiors of the Oxford Corner House the impact of Art Deco hit home. They were entrusted to Oliver Bernard, who had made his name as a theatre designer, then transferred his talents to more permanent decorative schemes during the 1920s, notably for the British Empire Exhibition. According to J. M. Richards (briefly his assistant), Bernard had a genius 'for designing interiors that would give people of every kind a sense of being pampered and an awareness of luxury, without making them feel self-

consciously out of their normal habitat'.⁴⁹ That was the fresh effect Montague Gluckstein and the other Lyons directors were seeking, so Bernard came in as their well-paid consultant for the Strand Palace, Regent Palace and Oxford Street interiors.

The Oxford Corner House appears to have been the first occasion when Bernard was working for the company *de novo*, and so could create a complete scheme for a new building. Its total loss is the more regrettable. With the Lyons ethic of sleek cleanliness in mind, Bernard's concept depended on combining lavish marblework and diffused electric lighting. Breaking up the main restaurant spaces came hefty marbled columns interrupted at two-thirds height by petalled glass diffusers casting light upwards on to white-plastered mushroom heads set between two levels of flat ceiling. Meanwhile round the restaurant walls from top to bottom ran theatre-set-style landscape scenes, created not from mosaic or paintwork but variegated marble slabs, some of large size. The work involved a new technique of cutting and fixing thin slices of marble, allegedly invented by Bernard. On the first floor 'water, rocks, snow-clad mountains, cascades, etc.' were depicted, while on the ground floor below in the Niagara Café came 'a panorama of waterfall scenery with representations of forests torn by blizzards, etc.'⁵⁰ This amusing but costly conceit was created by Bernard in collaboration with the Liverpool-based firm of John Stubbs & Sons, using twenty different kinds of marbles, and procured 'many visits to the Continent' for the designer. A critic in *Building* would have preferred fresco paintings: 'It may be admitted that you cannot put a hose over a fresco, but neither need it be anticipated that this particular form of cleansing will frequently be applied to the walls of the restaurants at the new Lyons'.⁵¹ Similar lighting effects were repeated in the shop areas, where the floors, walls and counters were cut up into hectic patterns, splintered or swooping, to which old-style cake and confectionery stands offered a gay contrast. The

main vestibule and staircase, reached from Tottenham Court Road, were equally spiky, clad in veined marble with angular openings.

The Oxford Corner House was successful and warmly received (Howard Robertson found the improvement over previous corner houses 'as enormous as it is significant in its promise').⁵² It had just one successor, the second Maison Lyons of 1933, attached to the Cumberland Hotel at the other end of Oxford Street, where Bernard was once again involved. But the corner houses depended on intensive staffing and could not survive the social jolt of the Second World War. A systematic subdivision of the large spaces, started in 1955, failed to restore them to their former levels of prestige and prosperity. In the 1960s the Oxford Corner House closed and was sold on long lease to the Mecca Organization, which converted the basement into a cinema and the first floor into a club, reached by a new main staircase. The ground floor became a large retail outlet, from 1979 the Virgin Record Store, later extended to the first floor and known as the Virgin Megastore, with the aim of making the shop look less linear and 'like a library', more like a club lounge.⁵³ An investigation in 1991, when there was a threat of total rebuilding, showed that little more than a few staircase elements of Bernard's décor survived these changes.⁵⁴

The upper parts of Wills's two faience frontages survive well and are listed, but the shop fronts have been destroyed; their absence naturally affects the look and balance of the whole. The Primark store currently in possession has extended massively into neighbouring Oxford Street buildings, and operates on four floors connected by escalators.

Frascati's Restaurant, 26–32 Oxford Street

Once among the West End's most famous restaurants, Frascati's operated in spacious premises behind 26–32 Oxford Street between 1892 and 1954.

Frascati's had a chequered early history. It emerged from plans to redevelop

the former Star Brewery. By 1887 the brewery had been acquired by a speculating mine owner, R. B. Lavery, on whose behalf a builder, J. Evans, applied to erect shops and offices at Nos 26–28. Briefly that scheme was superseded by a plan for a music-hall-type ‘theatre and opera house’, for which the theatrical manager and entrepreneur Andrew Melville was to act with Lavery as sponsor. Designs for this so-called New Oxford Street Theatre came from the Birmingham architects Essex & Nicol, with whom Melville had been working in the Midlands. Two versions were sent in to the Metropolitan Board of Works in quick succession during the summer of 1887. The first included a show front in Franco-Flemish style towards Oxford Street and a three-tiered, east-facing auditorium behind with a refreshment room and promenade serving each floor. The revised version, incorporating better exits and more up-to-date iron construction for the roof and cantilevered balconies, won approval. But Melville must have backed out, for nothing more is heard of the theatre.⁵⁵

In about 1888–9 the front block at 26–32 Oxford Street was erected in carcase. This severe, four-storey brick building was probably the work of the City-based architect J. Lewis Holmes, once more representing Lavery. It included generous entrances in the centre and east position, reserved for whatever would be built behind. In 1889 Holmes brought forward plans for a grand café to fill the back space, with Henry McDowell, an art dealer and entrepreneur of New Bond Street, as the prospective tenant. The project was spatially ambitious, involving an iron and glass structure behind the existing block of Oxford Street shops, centred upon an octagonal dome 40ft in diameter and overlooked by deep galleries, to which there was separate staircase access. Though the design was somewhat crude and old-fashioned, it seems to have been largely built, and a music licence was obtained for the prospective Frascati Winter Garden. But when McDowell asked in March 1890 to extend the licence to selling alcohol, the London County Council, by then the pertinent authority, declined, pointing out that the original licence

had been granted on condition that the building was not to be a music hall or casino with a bar attached. The refusal led to McDowell's withdrawal, leaving the structure untenanted.⁵⁶

A more exotic taker now came to the fore in the person of A. W. Krasnapolsky, a Dutch businessman of Ukrainian descent. Krasnapolsky had risen to fame by creating a fashionable café and winter garden in the heart of Amsterdam, enhanced by electric lighting. Drawn to London and the Frascati's site, he commissioned elaborate alterations from the well-known Dutch architect Jan Springer. These were in the planning stage by the end of 1890, and in hand during the summer of 1891, when it was reported that Dutch carpenters were on site despite a lock-out in the London building trades. Representing Springer in London was his assistant Willem Kromhout, later an architect of greater distinction than Springer; a third designer of note, Alban Chambon, a Belgian who had previously contributed to various London theatre interiors, was also involved. Under the hands of these collaborators the structure was fitted out and enriched in a florid Renaissance taste. The Krasnapolsky Restaurant, now so called, was inaugurated by the Dutch ambassador, Count de Bylandt, at the end of November. It was advertised for its winter garden, billiard tables and lager beers; a painting of the young Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands by Hubert Vos held pride of place. Besides the winter garden behind, it took in most of the front block at 26–32 Oxford Street.⁵⁷

But Krasnapolsky had miscalculated. Too much money was spent (according to one source £100,000) and too little arrived from Holland. Within six months the restaurant was in trouble and the creditors were closing in. The business was sold in the summer of 1892 to the proprietors of the Holborn Restaurant for £70,000, who reinstated the name of Frascati's. The enterprise now began to flourish at last.⁵⁸

The Holborn Restaurant stood formerly on the south side of High Holborn, about half a mile east of Frascati's. Founded in 1874, it flourished

under the management of Thomas Hamp as a large-scale establishment for the professional classes. In the mid 1880s the hotelier Frederick Gordon bought the Holborn and doubled it in size.⁵⁹ Hamp remained in charge, and probably initiated the acquisition of Frascati's. At any rate a company under his name was responsible for minor decorative alterations early in 1893.⁶⁰ These were limited, the essential arrangements and décor having been created by the Krasnapolsky designers. The facilities at this stage consisted of two large billiard rooms in the Oxford Street basement, a buffet and marble-lined grill room on the ground floor above, and the large domed winter garden behind. To one side was an elliptical alcove, perhaps for the orchestra, and on the other a kitchen. Two ample curving stairs led up to balcony level, where the Alpha Saloon occupied half of the front. Above again were an opulent Banqueting Hall and the earliest of what was to be a series of masonic rooms. But the winter garden was the space everyone remembered. 'There are gold and silver everywhere', noted the restaurant critic Col. Newnham-Davis:

The pillars which support the balcony, and from that spring up again to the roof, are gilt, and have silver angels at their capitals. There are gilt rails to the balcony, which runs, as in a circus, round the great octagonal building; the alcoves that stretch back seem to be all gold and mirrors and electric light. What is not gold or shining glass is either light buff or delicate grey, and electric globes in profusion, palms, bronze statuettes and a great dome of green glass and gilding all go to make a gorgeous setting.⁶¹

Like the Holborn, Frascati's earned its way by hosting private dinners for clubs, companies and associations. If its fare was not of the highest class, it was remembered for the élan of its central space and for the pleasures of dining there to the accompaniment of a string orchestra, not yet usual in 1890s London. An early aficionado remarked,

Frascati's really does supply a perfectly innocent and a rational plan of recreation to a class of persons ... who never enter ordinary so called Music Halls. It provides an orchestra solely, without songs or any scenic attractions, and hence is

the one place of entertainment in this immense city of its kind ... There are many who like myself dine at clubs or elsewhere, and like to saunter in afterwards to smoke a cigar and hear some pleasant music.⁶²

The various minor changes made to Frascati's during the mid 1890s were probably designed by T. E. Collcutt. Fashionable just then in the West End on the strength of his Imperial Institute, his extensions to the Savoy Hotel and his opera house at Cambridge Circus, Collcutt was a neighbour to the Hamp family in Bloomsbury Square, and in 1894 was commissioned to aggrandize the Holborn Restaurant with the King's Hall. He also designed an iron and glass canopy for the Frascati's entrance at 32 Oxford Street, but it was refused permission by the LCC. In 1895 Frederick Gordon gave up his controlling interest in the two establishments, which were reorganized as a public company, Holborn and Frascati Ltd. Hamp stayed on at the Holborn, but a new manager, J. W. Morrell, took over at Frascati's. Morrell had ideas of his own, so the canopy finally erected in 1896 may not have been Collcutt's.⁶³

Instead, Morrell chose to employ C. H. Worley to undertake a series of additions at Frascati's from 1899 onwards. In particular the restaurant was enlarged with extra rooms and services along the south side of Hanway Street, where Worley supplied a run of two and three-storey fronts in his idiosyncratic style. At ground level the winter garden restaurant was extended on both sides, with the York and Connaught Rooms at first-floor level and new masonic temples a further floor higher. Worley lived only to see the western masonic room built, for he died in 1906, to be succeeded by Reginald Blomfield, who next year designed a small elliptical domed room on the eastern end of the Hanway Street front, and altered the Oxford Street basement. The builders Godson & Sons undertook most of these jobs. The total capacity of Frascati's at this stage was about 1,500.⁶⁴

After the First World War the Collcutt firm returned to Frascati's. Stanley Hamp, one of Thomas Hamp's sons, had been articled to Collcutt in

the late 1890s and became his partner in 1906. After Collcutt's retirement Hamp updated Frascati's in an effort at Empire style. The York Room came first (1920–1). Recasting the interiors facing Oxford Street followed in 1927, when Hamp created a spacious new foyer and pepped up the dour brick frontage with gilt metalwork, electric lighting and a glass valance over the entrance. Godson & Sons were once again the builders for this work, with decorative panels by Eleanor Abbey and plaster relief panels by Percy Bentham.⁶⁵ Collcutt & Hamp added a small extra building to expand the service accommodation of Frascati's on the north side of Hanway Street, at No. 18, in 1925.⁶⁶

Though the restaurant was re-equipped after the Second World War, once again under Collcutt & Hamp, it closed in 1954.⁶⁷ The Land Securities Investment Trust bought the premises and hired Fitzroy Robinson & Hubert H. Bull, architects, to adapt them to a mixture of commercial uses. The conversion took place mainly in 1957. The front building at 26–32 Oxford Street was reclad with a modern front and divided between shops on the ground floor and a language school above. The great domed space behind survived in carcase, concealed from sight. Floored over and shorn of all ornament, its upper level became an open-space banking hall for Lloyd's Bank in 1983, numbered as 32 Oxford Street.⁶⁸ The whole premises, back and front, were finally demolished in 2013, so that no trace of Frascati's now remains.

Existing buildings, 8–48 Oxford Street

The street frontage between Tottenham Court Road and Hanway Place is dominated today by a massive commercial development which has expunged the last traces of small shops and large entertainment venues hitherto typical of this range, while leaving a few old frontage elevations. The project, planned and carried out in stages between 2008 and 2017 and christened

Oriana Oxford Street, was a joint venture between Land Securities, already the owner of the former Frascati's site, and another large developer, Frogmore Real Estates. The architects were ESA, hitherto the Elsworth Sykes Partnership but later purchased by Capita Symonds, the property arm of the professional outsourcing company. The development was carried out with the general assent of Westminster City Council which upheld it as a major contribution to the regeneration of Oxford Street.

With the exception of Nos 8–12 and 44 Oxford Street, the developers had between them acquired title to the whole block by 2008. They commissioned studies on the value of the existing buildings, notably a series of reports by the consultant Richard Coleman, who advised that only the listed Tottenham (now Flying Horse) pub and adjacent corner block at 4–6 Oxford Street and a few façades further west, notably Nos 34–36, 40–42 and 48 at the corner with Hanway Place were worth retaining. These recommendations were accepted by the Council.

The first phase covered the eastern part of the block, and was carried out in 2011–12. It involved gutting the former Lyons Corner House facing Oxford Street and Tottenham Court Road and adding to it a new building by ESA at 18–24 Oxford Street to form a Primark outlet with retailing on five levels. Once complete that was followed from 2013 by the rebuilding of 26–48 Oxford Street, with a further new commercial building by ESA at Nos 26–32 in the same idiom as Nos 18–24, and a mixture of shops and flats at the western end of the development. Here some of the fronts were retained, the new elevations towards Hanway Street and Place being finished largely in brick.⁶⁹

The remnants of previous buildings left by this development west of the Flying Horse are as follows (omitting the façade of the former Oxford Corner House at Nos 14–24):

Nos 8–12 make up a heterogeneous group of three narrow buildings. No. 8 has a good robust brick front with crowning gablet in the Waterhouse-Romanesque manner, perhaps of c.1880. It was No. 3 before that date, and seems to have originally been occupied by tailors or clothiers. No. 10 next west has a stone façade of c.1910 tricked out with a little ornament which may conceal an earlier core. Before then it was a branch post office. No. 12, with a stucco front, is a lowly building of uncertain date.⁷⁰

Nos 34–36 has a sweeping stone front with dashes of ornament in the idiom of Treadwell & Martin, but it is by other architects, Metcalf & Greig, and old-fashioned for its date, 1911–12. It was known initially as Central House.⁷¹

Nos 40–42 were built as stone-fronted offices in an orthodox taste for their date, 1923, to designs by R. H. Kerr & Sons; the builders were Townsend & Pearson. The ground floor was altered in 1930 for the National Provincial Bank by Palmer & Holden, who inserted a dignified frontispiece with fluted columns; this has since been mutilated.⁷²

No. 48 at the corner with Hanway Place probably dates from 1903, to judge from a plaque on the lower return front. It is in a gawky brick style with stone dressings and a central bay window on the upper storeys. It appears to have at first been occupied by the clothing trade. Alterations were made to the building in 1912–13.⁷³

50–68 Oxford Street

The short stretch of frontage between Hanway Street and Perry's Place covers the southern end of a three and a half acre piece of ground first built up under the carpenter-surveyor Thomas Rathbone from about 1716. Rathbone had probably bought this freehold in 1690 from the heirs of Joseph Girle, and after

a long delay set about the development of Rathbone Place, the substantial street which bisects the frontage between Nos 52 and 54. Rathbone committed himself to this fairly high-status development by building a house for himself at the western entrance to Rathbone Place and an equivalent for his son, Dr John Rathbone, at the eastern entrance.⁷⁴ Both houses were probably set back behind front gardens and entered from Rathbone Place. The only surviving trace of the first fabric along the main road is a panel announcing 'Rathbones Place in Oxford Street 1718', prominently refixed on the corner of No. 52.

The frontage was soon commercialized. In 1784, when the numbering ran east-west from 22 to 29, a directory shows a mix of tradesmen operating here: a goldsmith and jeweller, a grocer and tea-dealer (on the site of or in front of Thomas Rathbone's former house), and then west of Rathbone Place a linen draper, an upholsterer and a chinaman. The chinaman at the former No. 27, Thomas Baldwin, carried on until his death in 1814, naming as his chief executor a better-known Oxford Street chinaman, John Mortlock, suggesting a connection between the businesses.⁷⁵ At No. 25 between 1797 and 1803 were the shawl specialists Foster & Brown, trading from the sign of the New Balloon, in reference to Lunardi's exploits.⁷⁶ By Tallis's time there were two linen drapers and a bonnet warehouse in this western stretch.

Between Hanway Street and Rathbone Place there are only two addresses, currently Nos 50 and 52, both unpretentious buildings slopped in cream paint. No. 50 housed a jeweller's shop (W. B. Fase & Co.) from about 1870 to 1920 but suffered bomb damage and was rebuilt soon after the Second World War as a restaurant and snack bar.⁷⁷ The larger No. 52 dates from 1864, when it was probably rebuilt for the London Joint Stock Bank, with flats on the upper floors later known as Thackeray Mansions; here Arnold Bennett's estranged wife Marguerite had a flat in the early 1920s. It has undergone many alterations, latterly for the Midland Bank which maintained a branch here until the 1970s.⁷⁸

West of Rathbone Place, the scale of shop increased with the arrival of Parkins & Gotto, stationers. This firm, established by William Parkins and Henry Jenkin Gotto in Hanway Street during the 1840s, had by 1851 expanded to take in the corner house, 25 Oxford Street, whence they regularly advertised the plethora of goods and gifts to be had from their British Stationery Warehouse. 'An endless variety of article to suit every taste and pocket' was their boast.⁷⁹ Plated knickknacks came to feature strongly in the Parkins & Gotto repertoire. Under their regular architect, Silvester C. Capes, a series of connections and reconstructions took place between 1862 and 1884, when the business covered four addresses in Oxford Street and six in Rathbone Place. Something of a rabbit warren, the premises included one large galleried space, a 'country department' (i.e. mail order) on the second floor, and a small dormitory, probably for men, on the fourth.⁸⁰

The early death in 1894 of Henry Gaisford Gotto, from the second generation of owners, who slipped and fell while walking down Fitzjohn's Avenue, Hampstead, seems to have curtailed Parkins & Gotto's expansion. In the Edwardian period they sold their Oxford Street and Rathbone Place site, by then Nos 54–62, and downsized to No. 96 further west, finally ending up at No. 167.⁸¹ In that generation some of the Gotto money seems to have helped keep afloat Basil Gotto, a sculptor best known for his effigy of a giant caribou, erected on five First World War battlefield sites to commemorate the sacrifices of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment.

The successor to Parkins & Gotto's premises, Evelyn House, numbered 54–62 Oxford Street and 51–58 Rathbone Place, is a building of some distinction and a sorely needed asset in this section of the street. Built in 1909–10 to designs by H. Percy Adams & Charles Holden, it is a rare example of a speculative project involving this well-known architectural partnership. The client was John Benjamin Wells, owner of the building firm Prestige & Co., who may have known Adams and Holden from a previous development and brought them in to front this handsome venture on a prominent West End

site. Alternatively the architects may have been imposed on Wells by J. H. C. Evelyn, freeholder of the land hereabouts in direct descent from the Rathbones; hence the name Evelyn House.

At all events this was a straightforward Edwardian project of ground-floor shops and suites of offices to let on the upper storeys, exceptional only for the expense and quality of its external architecture. The plan was deep and incorporated a small central light court.⁸² The structure is in part steel-framed, using steel supplied by Archibald D. Dawnay. The elevations, attributable to Holden, show all his talent for conferring weight and plasticity on Portland stone fronts with only implied reference to the classical orders. Distinguishing touches are the treatment of the first floor along Oxford Street as a French-style semi-circular mezzanine, and the skilful piling-up of the two attic storeys. There are elegant iron balconies, supplied by the Birmingham Guild, to the second-floor windows above these arches, and even after countless changes of shop front the delicate detail of the frames and of the marble surround to the original office entrance at No. 62 can still be savoured.⁸³ Some internal alterations were undertaken in 1934–5 by George Hubbard & Son, architects, in connection with the expansion of Fleming's Restaurant next door at No. 68.⁸⁴

West of Evelyn House comes Nos 64–66, a shallow stone-faced building with a central bay, designed in a lively, late Queen Anne style by E. Keynes Purchase and built by H. & E. Lea in 1905–6.⁸⁵

At the Perry's Place corner is No. 68, now a plain 1950s five-storey front in artificial stone, the outcome of cheap rebuilding after war damage. The chief interest of its predecessor was its unusually well documented use by the two-branch Oxford Street catering business of James Fleming between about 1903 and 1941. Fleming was a Scot from Dunbartonshire who did well enough to buy a country house near Bognor.⁸⁶ Though he and his son Lindsay Fleming were collectors and bibliophiles, Fleming's Restaurants were functional, middle-brow venues.

When the business first arrived at No. 68 around 1903, it took only the ground floor and basement of premises probably built by the Capital and Counties Bank about thirty years before, in sober mid-Victorian brickwork with stucco dressings and a good crowning entablature. The restaurant shared the premises with other users, including S. B. Bolas, the architectural photographers. The firm of Thonet, the famous furniture makers, had then just moved their London office across to 43 Oxford Street.⁸⁷ Flemings soon added a branch at No. 307 further west, and then in 1911–12 took over the rest of No. 68. Their architect, W. Tillott Barlow, converted and extended the premises; his plans show diners packed into three separate rooms on each of three levels, basement, ground and first, while stores, preparation rooms and kitchens were confined to the top two floors.⁸⁸ The fare served was plain and British; Flemings had no alcohol licence, at least till the 1930s, but live music could be heard every evening, from a pianist and/or vocalist and a pair of string players poked into some corner. Photographs of the rooms, probably of the 1930s, attest to sobriety.⁸⁹

Flemings cannot have been a pleasurable place to work in. A set of address books has been preserved giving the names and addresses of staff, mostly young and female. The turn-over of washers-up, waitresses and counter clerks was high, and brief, brutal comments about them abound: 'rude to customers'; 'always late and staying away'; 'stayed out all night'; 'not suitable'; 'useless'; 'disobedient'; 'quarrelling'; 'always ill'; 'discontented'; 'dismissed – think a certain condition'.⁹⁰ The wages for beginners in 1938 were a pound a week plus food. But Flemings was undoubtedly successful. In 1930 the dead Barlow's former partners George Hubbard & Sons undertook a substantial extension at the back behind Evelyn House, giving the restaurant a back entry from Rathbone Place. A further expansion planned by Hood & Huggins, architects, in 1938, with a flashy new shop front by Courtney Pope, would have brought the total seating up to over 1,000, but it is not certain this was implemented.⁹¹ At all events bombing put paid to the front of the

premises and badly damaged the back. The branch at No. 307 survived into the 1950s, when Flemings became solely a property company. The rebuilding of No. 68 in about 1957 seems to have been under the auspices of the surveyors Waite & Waite.⁹²

Under plans designed by Hopkins Architects on behalf of Derwent Valley Property Development Ltd, otherwise Derwent London, and approved by Westminster Council in 2017, Nos 64–66 and 68 are to be replaced by a new building and annexed to Evelyn House, which is to be gutted, raised in height at the back as part of the same development and renamed Holden House. The plans were strongly opposed by local societies and heritage groups, but permission to redevelop was confirmed by Westminster in June 2018.⁹³