

DRAFT

!

!

DRAFT

!

!

!

In March 1863 the Marquess agreed that all this property together with most of Hereford Street further west should be rebuilt according to a plan produced by his surveyor, Thomas Cundy II. This part of the plan was the first to be carried out. In exchange for 85-year leases, the five rebuilding tenants chosen by the Estate had to agree to rich elevations by Thomas Cundy III in the Second Empire style, like those he was planning just then for Hereford Gardens and Grosvenor Gardens. There were to be four shops besides the rebuilt Gloucester Coffee House or Hotel next to Park Street. Cundy must have intended that the range should eventually stretch all or most of the way to North Audley Street, for at the corner with Park Street (No. 497) he accentuated the block with a full attic and high pavilion roof, but

!

!

!

Nos 475 and 477 were chronologically the last and the most disciplined of the Chatfeild Clarkes' designs, built by R. Cox in 1887–8 for Anthony

!

!

!

and the style a picturesque and effective Arts and Crafts treatment. Champion & Wilton occupied Nos 457–459, subletting the corner site to a bank. They were the successors to two old-established firms of Oxford Street saddlers. One started out under the name of Matthew Wilson, first in South Molton Street, moved around 1806 to Oxford Street, and became successively Wilson, Wilkinson & Kidd, then Wilkinson, Champion & Frewer and finally (in about 1875) Champion & Wilton. A neighbouring firm of saddlers, Samuel Blackwell, also long-established, was taken over by Champion & Wilton in the 1880s. The business remained here till 1958, when it was ousted by the Grosvenor Estate's second reconstruction and moved round the corner into North Audley Street.¹³

This block was the first portion of the Grosvenor Estate's Oxford Street frontage to undergo post-war redevelopment with new shops and offices. The decision to rebuild predated by some years the Chapman Taylor plan for reconstructing the Grosvenors' whole commercial frontage. Planning started in the 1950s, and after clearance building took place in two phases between 1962 and 1969. The developers were Land Securities, acting in partnership with Taylor Woodrow, and Fitzroy Robinson & Partners were their architects. The western portion at Nos 475–497 came first, with shops in front and a sixteen-storey office tower at the back, in the standard post-war idiom of framed construction and cheap curtain walling. This became the London headquarters of Stewarts & Lloyds, steel tube manufacturers. Further shops and offices followed in the same manner at Nos 453–473.¹⁴

Like many post-war buildings, the Fitzroy Robinson block was short-lived. It was replaced in 2008–12 by another, even more overweening Park House announced in the first instance as a mixed-use scheme by Land Securities working with Hamiltons Architects. The basic design concept was worked out in 2006, and Sir Robert McAlpine started work on the foundations in 2008. Legal challenges to the planning consent then intervened, along with an economic downturn. As a result the project was mothballed by Land

!

!

!

applied to houses east of Park Street.

West of this row came a short stub road down to Hereford Street, and beyond that down to the Park Lane corner a miscellany of stables and back buildings belonging to Camelford and Somerset Houses. There was one exception. On a plot immediately west of the stub road a substantial house with a coach-house and stabling was built, probably by John Phillips, and completed in 1774. Originally numbered in Oxford Street, the house later became 10 Hereford Street, and, after 1870, 12 Hereford Gardens. Lieutenant-General Sir Hildebrand Oakes lived there from 1815 until his death in 1822, to be followed by Sir Hudson Lowe, governor of St Helena during Napoleon's exile. Lowe lived there till 1840, acquiring a new long lease in 1837. Tallis shows the main body of this house as of four tall storeys, with a two-storey wing to the east.¹⁸ In later years it was turned into bachelor chambers and refronted, with extra rooms built over the east wing, so that the final result became a rather grim, uniform front, eight windows wide and four storeys high. The presence of the building had an adverse effect on the letting of the grand new houses built behind in Hereford Gardens after 1864. It was demolished on the expiry of the lease in 1893 and its site added to the existing garden to its east (see below).¹⁹

In 1863, one year before the leases granted under John Phillips's building agreement of 1765 were due to expire, the Marquess of Westminster decided that the Hereford Street area should be rebuilt, in accordance with the plans then being devised by the Cundys for the Oxford Street frontage and its vicinity. Thomas Cundy III's first design was for nine Second-Empire-style houses on the south side of the street and stabling on the north side, the latter replacing the ten shops and houses facing Oxford Street. George Trollope & Sons, the builders who took up the terms in 1866, then asked for modifications. These included the substitution of a garden for the proposed

!

!

!

between the garden ground and Oxford Street. The main purpose of this proposed wall was to reduce the noise of traffic, but the Vestries of St Marylebone and St George's, Hanover Square, objected to its intended height, which was ultimately in 1870 fixed at only 4ft 6in, topped by iron railings.²¹

The grand houses built in Hereford Gardens between 1866 and 1874 enjoyed only a short-lived heyday. By 1916 the Grosvenor Estate was prepared to co-operate in any scheme to buy up the existing leases and use the site for commercial purposes, its attitude now being that 'the character of the neighbourhood has changed and that the time for the retention of residential property in the position of Hereford Gardens has gone by'. The Estate subsequently decided to acquire the whole site including the gardens and to advertise it for building purposes, and between 1925 and 1927 spent substantially in purchasing the outstanding leasehold interests. By agreement with the London County Council and Westminster City Council the roadway of Hereford Gardens was closed and building lines set back, particularly in Oxford Street.²²

The Grosvenor Estate eventually accepted an offer by A. W. Gamage Limited, the department store in Holborn, to take a 99-year lease at an annual rent of £20,000 fororo0.2 (s) r J ET Qq 0.2ehold int80 0 0(1927 s) 0.2 (p) -0.1 'ET 0.08 cm BT 50

!

!

!

Architects. When the building was completed in 1930 Messrs Joseph were described as the architects with Lutyens as consultant. The builders were Higgs & Hill.vey

!

!

!

In 1932–3 a consortium of six insurance companies formed a new company, Hereford House Limited, which purchased a two-hundred-year lease from the Estate for £350,000 at an annual rent of £20,000. The aim was to utilize the store part as a permanent exhibition and trade centre for displaying the products of British industry, and the building re-opened as British Industries House.²⁸ The scheme received a good deal of favourable publicity in its early years but interest waned and in 1938 the building changed hands again.

The non-residential section of Hereford House was then taken by C & A Modes Limited and reverted to its original function as a store. Among alterations undertaken by C & A's architects, Robin, North & Wilsdon (later

!

!

DRAFT

!

!

!

Davis, whose affairs were pressing.³¹

The Pavilion Cinema, Marble Arch, as it was called, stretched through from Marble Arch to North Row. It had a commodious raked auditorium at ground-f099 Q q 0.24 0 0 0.24 129.2756729.27567um at http

!

!