

Chapter 1: Westminster's Central Area

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Westminster is both a place where people live and the heart of a thriving world and capital city. These functions are reflected in a distinct pattern of land uses within the city. The central area of Westminster has a mixed range of predominantly non-residential activities whilst the areas to the south and north of this are predominantly residential. Within the central area of Westminster there is also a substantial proportion of housing which the UDP protects and enhances as an important Central London use.

The Central London sub-region in the London Plan

- 1.2 The London Plan considers that some of the most serious issues and opportunities facing London are best addressed at a level that lies somewhere between the boroughs and London as a whole (paragraph 5.1). The London Plan identifies a "flexible" concept of five sub-regions as the best way "to develop the strategic policies in the London Plan and to provide the focus for implementation." The whole of Westminster is in the Central London sub-region (along with Kensington and Chelsea, Camden, Islington, Wandsworth, Lambeth and Southwark). However, the London Plan acknowledges that some issues do not fit exactly within defined boundaries and to this end designates a 'Central Activities Zone' (CAZ) (paragraph 5.8).

Policy 5A.1 in the London Plan sets out the approach to sub-regional development frameworks for each of the five sub-regions, to be developed in collaboration with a range of key stakeholders in each sub-region. They will be consistent with and provide further guidance on the policies and other content of the London Plan (paragraph 5.5).

Policy 5B.1 sets out the Mayor's strategic priorities for the Central London sub-region (see UDP, Part 1, paragraph 1.9). These include:

- (a) to promote and protect the vital mix of culture, government, leisure and commerce together with its historic buildings, housing, open spaces and public realm that are central to London's unique attraction for residents, visitors and business;
- (b) to sustain, enhance and promote the unique scale and mix of activities and settings of the Central Activities Zone which form the core of London's wider offer as a world city and as a capital city;
- (c) to identify capacity to accommodate new job and housing opportunities and appropriate mixed-use development;

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- (d) to maximise the number of additional homes, including affordable housing, by exceeding housing provision targets set in the plan and by securing mixed and balanced communities;
- (e) to promote and intensify retailing, services, employment, leisure and housing in town centres and opportunities for mixed-use development.

The Central Activities Zone in the London Plan

- 1.3 The London Plan states that “the Central Activities Zone is the focus of London’s wider linkages with the rest of the South East, as well as the wider UK and world. Sustaining its role as the core location for international business and finance and as a national transport node is crucial for the wider South-East and for the country.” (paragraph 5.25). It goes on to state that “The Central Activities Zone contains a range of activities such as central government offices, headquarters and embassies, which are unique to the centre of the capital and form distinct quarters. The largest part of London’s financial and business services sector is based in the CAZ, as are the offices of trade, professional bodies, institutions, associations, communications, publishing, advertising and the media. Other uses and activities, such as those associated with tourism, are more concentrated, or on a larger scale than elsewhere in the capital. There is particular concern to secure and enhance the breadth, depth and quality of the offer of London’s two “international shopping centres, centred on Oxford Street and Knightsbridge and to sustain and manage strategic clusters of entertainment activities in line with the broader objectives of the Plan. These activities are at the heart of London’s world city role and should be protected and their appropriate expansion supported.” (paragraphs 5.26 and 5.27).
- 1.4 Paragraph 5.28 of the London Plan states that very often, mixed-use developments are especially valuable in the Central Activities Zone. However, it continues “Large areas of housing or local businesses are less dominant in some parts of CAZ. These nevertheless play a vital part in sustaining the international, national and regional importance of Central London. The intensification of commercial activities should be supported in ways that harmonise with the residential environment within the CAZ.”

Central London outside the Central Activities Zone in the London Plan

- 1.5 Paragraph 5.48 of the London Plan states that “Outside the main growth areas, Central London is characterised by a mix of residential and other activities, which relate better to the local economy and communities than to the national, regional and international roles of activities prevalent in the Central Activities Zone.” It continues “This plan (the London Plan) contains policies to protect and manage these local, smaller scale land uses and activities, recognising the contribution they make to the

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character of Central London and the often acute development pressures they face. Accordingly boroughs should resist large-scale redevelopment in the Central London sub region outside the CAZ, Opportunity Areas, Areas for Intensification, Strategic Employment Locations and town centres." Paragraph 5.20 of the London Plan also states, "There are also vulnerable neighbourhoods, largely just beyond the Central Activities Zone but some within it, which contain long-standing communities and valuable small businesses that could be displaced by outward growth from the CAZ. These should be protected and growth channelled into the areas designated for it." The London Plan also notes that "Despite its overall affluence the (Central London) sub-region contains some of the highest and extensive concentrations of deprivation in the country" and "These must benefit from new opportunities flowing from major growth elsewhere in the sub-region" (paragraph 5.20). The policies in Part 2 of the UDP support and reflect this approach.

- 1.6 The policies in this chapter set out how the City Council has interpreted the London Plan on the definition and location of appropriate Central London Activities in central Westminster and also deal with the provision of mixed uses within commercial schemes.
- 1.7 In line with the London Plan, the UDP therefore maintains a CAZ and Central Activities Zone Frontages. The Plan also identifies special policy areas (SPAs) outside CAZ where it is more appropriate for specific Central London Activities to locate, such as the Paddington Special Policy Area for large-scale commercial development and the Arts, Culture and Education SPA around the Royal Albert Hall and Imperial College. Policies for the Paddington SPA are set out in Chapter 5, 'Policies for North West Westminster' and for other SPAs in the relevant chapters (see Table 1.1).

Central Activities Zone

- 1.8 The plan guides non-residential uses mainly to an area of Central Westminster defined as the CAZ (Map 1.1) where such activities are better related to existing character, infrastructure, transport facilities and environment. The CAZ is an area of mixed uses, many of which contribute directly to London's international, national and regional roles. The CAZ is a well-recognised and long established planning concept. For over two decades the City Council has guided Central London activities to the Zone and at the same time sought to protect and increase housing in Central Westminster.
- 1.9 The CAZ is not homogeneous. It contains a great variety of buildings and mix of uses, which contribute to the diversity of character and function within Central Westminster. It is also home to long-established residential

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communities. The character and function of eight sub-areas within the CAZ is summarised in paragraphs 1.10 to 1.31. The City Council is undertaking a series of conservation area appraisals that will help to define further the character of different parts of the CAZ. (See also Chapter 10: Urban Design and Conservation, Policy DES 9 and Schedule 1). Supplementary Planning Guidance on the CAZ has also been published which sets out further detailed information on the sub-areas.

Sub-areas in the Central Activities Zone

Soho

- 1.10 The area contains a mix of buildings dating from the seventeenth century onwards. The original seventeenth century street plan is still in existence today, albeit with a few minor Victorian intrusions on Shaftesbury Avenue and Charing Cross Road. Small scale seventeenth and eighteenth century houses dominate the inner parts of Soho, which is ringed and cut in half by larger scale Victorian development.
- 1.11 Soho has traditionally been a vibrant and cosmopolitan area. The mixed character of buildings and the chequered history of the area have created a rich mix of uses. This is invigorated by the presence of the theatres in Shaftesbury Avenue, which have encouraged the area's development into a place of entertainment, as well as a place for shops, homes and the media industry. Soho has long been the home of the film industry and has, in recent years, seen an increase in the number of media and advertising related industries locating there. 'Chinatown', the area in and around Gerrard Street and Lisle Street, is the home of London's Chinese community. The internationally renowned shopping facilities on Oxford Street and Regent Street border the area to the north and west.
- 1.12 The area's restaurants are particularly popular with residents and tourists alike. Soho also has long-standing and thriving French, Greek and Italian communities. All have had an influence on the diverse range of restaurants, shops and culture. Tying all these uses together is Soho's long-established residential community. Recent increases in the numbers of cafés, bars, restaurants and clubs, and the lengthening of the evening economy, have brought additional pressures on the area. This has adversely affected the commercial diversity of the area as well as residential amenity.

Covent Garden/Strand

- 1.13 The townscape of the Covent Garden and Strand area is varied. Covent Garden is densely developed; the centre of the area is clearly defined by the nineteenth century central market building and piazza, and by St. Paul's Church. The street pattern dates back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Along the Strand there is a mix of nineteenth and

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twentieth century buildings. The area includes the Courts of Justice in the east, built between 1862 and 1882, Somerset House, built between 1776 and 1801, in the south with its formal layout, and towards the west on Aldwych there are a number of fine churches. South of the Strand, large-scale office, retail and hotel buildings predominate.

- 1.14 Covent Garden is home to the Royal Opera House and the London Coliseum and many important theatres. It has been a major cultural centre for a considerable time and these uses add to the vitality and interest of the area. The area also has a long-standing and increasing residential population. Since the fruit and vegetable market vacated the area in 1974, the significance of the locality as an entertainment area has become even more marked with the introduction of new shops, cafés, restaurants, wine bars and museums. The recent growth in restaurants, bars and cafés, and the lengthening of the evening economy, has brought additional pressures to the area. The area has also become a shopping destination and it is increasingly visited by tourists. The area has also become more attractive to media-related businesses. The Covent Garden Area Trust, supported by the City Council, has published 'Caring for Covent Garden – A Conservation and Management Guide' (2004) which will be a material consideration when considering relevant planning applications.
- 1.15 The Strand largely consists of commercial, educational and administrative buildings and theatres. Legal (Royal Courts of Justice/Middle Temple), and educational functions (Kings College/ the London School of Economics and Political Science) dominate the eastern end of the Strand area. Somerset House has become a more recent focus for arts, cultural and entertainment uses.

St James's

- 1.16 Over half of the area is covered by the royal parks of Green Park and St James's Park. The area also contains the highest concentration of listed buildings and street furniture in England. The streets have remained in original eighteenth century grid pattern. The buildings in most parts of St. James's also generally reflect the architectural style of the eighteenth century.
- 1.17 Leicester Square and Trafalgar Square form focal points in the north of the area. Trafalgar Square is world renowned, with Nelson's Column and fountains included within it. Whitehall was built on a majestic and imposing scale. Adjacent to Whitehall is Parliament Square. At the centre of the profile area is St James's Palace, which was originally the home of royalty and the aristocracy. The townscape is ornate, with the majority of buildings being of classical design, with a heavy use of white stucco, columns and elaborate cornices.

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- 1.18 The character of the area has an atmosphere of grandeur, reflected by the many fine buildings and headquarters of major companies, and it is punctuated by the Royal Parks. The area contains a range of diverse functions. State and Government functions are focused on the royal palaces and Whitehall. Arts, cultural and entertainment uses are concentrated around Leicester Square, Trafalgar Square and the Haymarket. In and around Pall Mall there are a number of 'gentlemen's clubs'. South of Pall Mall and west of Regent Street the function of the area changes to one of administration, with a number of institutional offices and historical monuments. The whole area is what many tourists would describe as 'London'.

Mayfair

- 1.19 The architecture of the Mayfair area is characterised by eighteenth century town houses. All the buildings were built to a high quality, and although in later Victorian and Edwardian periods there was a lot of redevelopment and alteration, Mayfair has never lost its scale and character. Mayfair's development is marked by three clear, spacious grid pattern street plans, marking the areas of the three landowners that had originally owned estates on the land in the eighteenth century, which are joined together with a haphazard array of linking junctions that give good views of the other estates.
- 1.20 The reputation of Mayfair is that of a prestigious location with international recognition. At present, approximately one third of the area is residential, another third office and the last third retail. The retailing is both local - for example, Shepherds Market - and international - Oxford Street and Bond Street. Specialist traditional uses in the area include tailors in and around Savile Row, art galleries on Cork Street and jewellers on Bond Street. The area also contains some of London's most famous hotels on Park Lane. Mayfair has a long established residential community.

South Marylebone

- 1.21 South Marylebone consists of large scale buildings bordering Oxford Street, whilst north of these there is mainly smaller scale Georgian development in the west and Victorian development in the east, the height of which rarely exceeds six floors. The area also contains a number of eighteenth century houses, many of which are listed. The architectural style of the area is mainly as a Victorian form of classicism. South Marylebone's grid-like street pattern reflects this period.
- 1.22 South Marylebone can be divided into two broad areas in terms of character and function. The northern part is characterised by uses that largely serve the local community, reflecting the fact that there is a high percentage of residential properties and that this area is located on the

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edge of the CAZ. The area in and around Harley Street has a concentration of specialist private medical uses. However, in the south there is a greater concentration of retail uses, hotels, educational institutions, fashion-related wholesale showrooms and media-related industries. This mix of uses has made this part of South Marylebone more vibrant and busier. In the eastern part of the area, East Marylebone, this mixed use quality becomes more pronounced with many single buildings often incorporating two or three different uses.

- 1.23 While South Marylebone has a smaller residential population than Soho it is generally a much quieter area with a more residential feel than the area south of Oxford Street. It has fewer night clubs, pubs and restaurants than its neighbouring sub-areas and attracts fewer visitors and tourists.

Victoria

- 1.24 Within the Victoria area, the Broadway and Christchurch Gardens Conservation Area has an array of buildings constructed in different eras and styles. Westminster Cathedral Conservation Area largely consists of turn of the century red-brick buildings, which were designed to blend in with the Cathedral. Westminster Cathedral is designed in a free Byzantine style of red brick and Portland stone. The piazza in front of the Cathedral was a 1970s addition. Elsewhere on Victoria Street, Tothill Street and Petty France modern large scale buildings predominate, many of which are occupied by Government offices.
- 1.25 The railway, underground, bus and coach stations at Victoria provide the gateway for many people arriving in the area. The railway station is the busiest mainline terminus in London, and the Underground station is also the busiest in London. At peak times, over 250 buses per hour serve the bus station and nearby bus stops. The coach station is served by national and international coach services. Many people's perception of the area is formed as they pass through the stations on their way to their destination. There are likely to be major opportunities to improve the stations and local environmental quality during the period covered by this plan. Victoria has also been identified as an area for intensification in the London Plan.
- 1.26 Victoria Street itself, with the station at one end, is otherwise dominated by a mix of office and retail uses. Victoria Street's retail facilities are used by office workers, local residents and visitors to the locality. There are also three theatres in the area. The area around Victoria Rail and Coach Stations has a number of pubs and restaurants serving tourists, visitors and workers and many transient people are attracted to the area.

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Knightsbridge/Belgravia

- 1.27 The architectural form of the area dates back to the nineteenth century. The townscape of Belgravia is uniform and formal and this is evident in the spacious grid patterned streets, leading to large green squares. The prevailing material used to decorate the buildings is stucco. Building heights range from four to six storeys with classical detailing on the fenestration, porches and roofs. Those parts of Knightsbridge, which are not covered by conservation area status, are mainly 1960s office buildings of relatively poor external design.
- 1.28 Knightsbridge contains retail facilities, which are of an international status, hotels, offices and high quality residential property. Belgravia consists of mostly high quality residential property with a number of diplomatic and allied uses.

Millbank

- 1.29 Smith Square conservation area is characterised by a medieval street plan, altered during the eighteenth century. The focal point of this area is the large ornamental Grade I listed St. John's Church and terraced houses and offices, both eighteenth and twentieth century, around the Square, which complement and enhance the classical style of the area. The townscape of the Millbank conservation area consists of the 1902 local authority housing estate in red brick and arts and crafts style blocks of flats and the late Victorian Tate Gallery building, now Tate Britain.
- 1.30 The part of the Westminster Abbey and Parliament Square conservation area in the Millbank area contains the neo-gothic Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey. This area has been designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. Immediately adjoining this area is the Victoria Tower Gardens overlooking the Thames.
- 1.31 The area covered and enclosed by Bridge Street, Abingdon Street, Millbank and Embankment attracts large number of tourists as well as civil servants and office workers because of the presence of Westminster Abbey, the Houses of Parliament and related Government functions. The buildings are large and grandiose. Other parts of the area are largely residential.

Central Activities Zone Frontages

- 1.32 There are also a number of major roads outside the CAZ where Central London Activities have been long established. These CAZ Frontages are also defined on Map 1.1. Appropriate Central London Activities will also be guided to these frontages.

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- 1.33 This chapter sets out policies for the CAZ and the CAZ Frontages in Westminster. The combination of the CAZ and CAZ Frontages comprise Central Westminster unless otherwise specified under other policies in the Plan.
- 1.34 Strategic policies relating to the central area of Westminster are set out in Part 1 of the UDP. These form the framework for the detailed policies in this chapter. Particularly important are policies STRA 1 to STRA 4, which refer to enhancing the attraction of central London and mixed use development. However, there are important links to other strategic policies within the Plan on housing, shopping, transport, tourism, culture and entertainment.

THE CENTRAL ACTIVITIES ZONE (CAZ)

Aim

- 1.35 To protect those activities which contribute to London's World City and Capital City functions within the CAZ and to guide appropriate Central London Activities to the CAZ, to foster London's international, national and regional roles.

POLICY CENT 1: THE CENTRAL ACTIVITIES ZONE

- (A) Planning permission will not be granted for development that results in the loss of Central London Activities within the Central Activities Zone where these activities contribute to its character and function.**
- (B) Development for Central London Activities within the Central Activities Zone will be encouraged where appropriate to the character and function of particular areas within the Central Activities Zone.**
- (C) Existing Central London Activities of national or international importance outside Central Westminster will be protected and supported where these do not harm residential amenity or local environmental quality.**
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Policy application

- 1.36 The boundary of the Central Activities Zone is shown on Map 1.1 and the Proposals Map. Table 1.1 lists non-residential activities regarded as appropriate for Central London and the approach generally taken in Westminster's UDP towards them. This is based on the former RPG 3 and the London Plan but expanded to include examples of such uses which are characteristic of Central Westminster, such as the London clubs of St James's. The London Plan, in paragraph 5.26, describes the range and types of activities which are characteristic of the CAZ. Policy CENT 1 (A) will also generally apply to CAZ frontages (see also policy CENT 2).
- 1.37 The plan gives priority and protection to those activities that make a significant contribution to the special role of Central London or sustain the identity, character and function of the localities and communities within the CAZ.
- 1.38 The City Council regards the CAZ as being the area of Westminster where such activities should primarily be located. However, large-scale commercial development may also be appropriate in the Paddington Special Policy Area.
- 1.39 Within the CAZ there are distinctive concentrations and clusters of particular mixed-use activities. These include those relating to the State and Government focussing on the royal palaces, Houses of Parliament and Whitehall; arts, culture and entertainment uses within Soho and Covent Garden and higher educational uses relating to King's College and the London School of Economics and Political Science in the Strand and Aldwych area. Paragraphs 1.10 to 1.31 of the plan describe in greater detail the variation in character and function within different areas of the CAZ. The City Council will consider the contribution made by particular Central London Activities to specific areas of the CAZ in terms of their character and function when assessing planning applications involving such uses. Uses should be consistent with the City Council's policies on entertainment uses, TACE 8 to 13 in Chapter 8: Tourism, Arts, Culture and Entertainment. All proposals must also consider sustainable design principles: see Chapter 9 'Environment, policy ENV 1 and chapter 10 'Urban Design and Conservation', policy DES 1.
- 1.40 The mixed-use nature of the CAZ will be reinforced when major increases in commercial developments are proposed within the CAZ: see policy CENT 3. Uses that support Central London Activities and local service uses will also be protected in the CAZ where appropriate: see policy CENT 4.
- 1.41 Under policy CENT 1(C), planning permission which would result in the loss of Central London Activities which are of national or international

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importance that are located outside Central Westminster will not be granted where such activities do not harm residential amenity or local environmental quality. Similarly proposals which consolidate such existing activities are likely to be favourably considered unless these would harm residential amenity or local environmental quality.

Reasons

- 1.42 The City Council recognises the need to protect and foster those activities that enable Westminster to make a major contribution to London's World City and Capital City functions. The City Council realises the importance of these activities and that they depend heavily on people, often senior executives, being able to meet face to face. Advances in technology may reduce the number of people who need to travel to the centre of the City on a daily basis but Central London Activities will still generally require people to meet.
- 1.43 The designation of the CAZ is intended to help protect Central London Activities and enable growth of Central London Activities in a specific area of Westminster. Location in the CAZ allows them to take advantage of the existing range of supporting activities and services, which have evolved within the area and contribute to its growth and prosperity. The designation of the CAZ will help foster the continued development of the character and function of Central Westminster and its international, national and regional roles. It will also protect the residential areas outside the Zone from erosion by intensive and intrusive commercial and other activity.
- 1.44 The CAZ is a well-recognised and long established planning concept. The City Council has sought to protect the CAZ and specifically to protect and expand residential use in the CAZ. As well as providing a means of controlling the location of office development, the CAZ has performed the function of being an area where Central London Activities are protected and encouraged. These activities - including hotels, internationally important shops, restaurants, cinemas, theatres, clubs, casinos, pubs and night-clubs - require a central London location, with good public transport and linkages to other uses and activities. By definition, these activities are almost always bound to have amenity effects that would not be acceptable in the predominantly residential areas outside the CAZ. Balancing the objectives of catering for those activities that require a central London location, whilst protecting residential areas from increased commercial activity – such as offices or, increasingly, entertainment uses - is the key to land use planning in the City. This has become more acute as the residential population in the CAZ has grown, while deregulation and very significant lifestyle changes have led to increased demands for leisure and entertainment uses and increased late-night activity, with associated behavioural and public safety problems.

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- 1.45 The CAZ was determined by comparing the proportion of central London activities to other uses. It contains the vast majority of Central London Activities, (as defined by the former RPG 3), located in Westminster and a very significant portion of central London's business sector. This zone is well served by public transport, which in turn supports the many economic activities within it. The boundary of the CAZ, as shown on the Proposals Map and Map 1.1, has been delineated with regard to both the existing pattern of land use and the need to protect the areas of predominantly residential use and character adjoining it. The boundary of the CAZ has been revised to reflect significant land use change in areas close to the boundary over the last ten years. The boundary of the CAZ and the CAZ frontages in the UDP are consistent with the indicative boundary of the CAZ as shown on Map 5B.2 in the London Plan.
- 1.46 The CAZ is tightly ringed by areas which are almost wholly residential in character, most of which are also of great environmental quality. This accommodation in the very heart of London is particularly valuable for those people who derive their livelihood from activities based in central London or who continually use them. In addition to the City Council's commitment to building sustainable residential communities, well established and accepted planning principles, such as the protection of residential uses and their amenity, preclude the expansion of Central London Activities into these residential areas.
- 1.47 Whilst the plan seeks to guide central London activities to the CAZ, it is recognised that there are certain existing Central London Activities located outside Central Westminster which are of such sufficient national and international importance that they should be protected and supported. Such activities include Lord's Cricket Ground, London Zoo and certain private hospitals and educational facilities including the London Business School: see also policies SOC 1 and SOC 5. Policy TACE 7 also gives protection and support to the Central London Activities clustered around the Royal Albert Hall and Imperial College that form the Arts, Culture and Education Special Policy Area, which is also located outside central Westminster.

THE CENTRAL ACTIVITIES ZONE FRONTAGES

Aim

- 1.48 To allow appropriate Central London Activities to locate on the CAZ Frontages whilst protecting residential amenity and enabling corresponding growth in residential accommodation and local services.

**POLICY CENT 2: THE CENTRAL ACTIVITIES ZONE
FRONTAGES**

(A) Central London Activities will be permitted on the defined Central Activities Zone Frontages where:

(1) appropriate to the character and function of the frontage

(2) such uses do not give rise to adverse effects on residential amenity in the locality.

(B) Such developments will be required to provide a mix of uses in accordance with Policy CENT 3.

Policy application

1.49 The CAZ Frontages are indicated on Map 1.1 and the Proposals Map. They are:

Baker Street	south of Marylebone Road even numbers 16-136 odd numbers 1-133
Brompton Road	between Montpelier Street and Lancelot Place even numbers 78-130
Edgware Road	south of Westway east side of Edgware Road – Even numbers 32-272 west side of Edgware Road – Odd numbers 7- 225, including the Hilton London Metropole Hotel and west side of the road between the Bayswater Road junction and number 7 Edgware Road.
Marylebone Road	east of Edgware Road
Vauxhall Bridge Road	between Gillingham Street/Francis Street and Rochester Row/Warwick Way east side of Vauxhall Bridge Road from the junction with Rochester Row to the junction with Francis Street.

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west side between the junction with Gillingham Street and the junction with Warwick Way

Portland Place

east side between Duchess Street and Park Crescent

west side between Duchess Street and number 81 Portland Place, all odd numbers between 1-81.

- 1.50 Table 1.1 indicates the Central London Activities that might be acceptable in principle on the Central Activities Zone Frontages.
- 1.51 Such activities and uses may include offices, hotels, restaurants, cafés, bars and casinos. Whilst many of the CAZ Frontages have a commercial nature, they are located in areas dominated by housing. The rear of the street blocks that lie on these frontages are frequently of a smaller scale and contain housing. Proposals must be in keeping with the character and function of the frontage on which they are proposed including, for example, the institutional aspect of Portland Place. Proposals must accord with relevant shopping policies: see Chapter 7: Shopping and Services, policies SS 3, SS 4 and SS 5. Existing residential amenity must also be protected.

Reasons

- 1.52 The City Council recognises that outside the CAZ there are some major roads on which Central London Activities have been long established. The frontages along these roads, however, do include residential accommodation and uses that serve the local resident population: see Table 1.2 and policy SS 6. On these defined CAZ Frontages such a combination of uses will continue to be acceptable in new development.

MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT IN CENTRAL WESTMINSTER

Aim

- 1.53 To enhance the character and diversity of Central Westminster through the promotion of mixed use developments incorporating housing where appropriate and practical.

POLICY CENT 3: MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT IN CENTRAL WESTMINSTER

- (A) Where appropriate and practical, when increases in commercial floorspace are proposed, the provision of self-contained residential accommodation with separate access, where physically possible, will be required. The residential accommodation should comprise an amount of floorspace equivalent to the increase in commercial floorspace in the CAZ and within the defined CAZ Frontages.**
 - (B) Where it is clearly not practical to provide residential accommodation on site, the City Council will seek the provision of the required residential accommodation on another site in the vicinity (see also policy COM 3).**
 - (C) Where it is clearly not appropriate or not practical to provide residential accommodation on site under (A) above or clearly not practical to provide it off-site under (B) above, other uses which contribute to the character and function of that part of the CAZ or the CAZ Frontage should be provided as part of the same development.**
 - (D) Where housing has not been achieved under (A) or (B) or appropriate alternative uses provided under (C) above an appropriate financial contribution to the City Council's affordable housing fund (see also policy H 4) is likely to be sought.**
 - (E) In all cases the City Council will expect appropriate planning obligations and benefits to be provided as set out in policy STRA 7.**
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Policy application

General principles

- 1.54 Policy STRA 4, in Part 1 of the plan, provides a clear strategic context for Policy CENT 3. Under policy STRA 4 it is the City Council's aim to maintain and enhance the mix of uses in Central Westminster. Most commonly it will be the development of office space that will provide the opportunity for securing additional mixed uses and residential accommodation: see policy COM 2 in Chapter 2: Commerce (Offices, Industry and Showrooms) which deals with developments that involve increases in office floorspace and sets out a similar approach on mixed use to policy CENT 3. Policy CENT 3 applies to developments that involve a gross increase in commercial floorspace - other than office floorspace: see Glossary for definitions of 'gross floorspace' and 'commercial'.
- 1.55 The aim of policy CENT 3 is to promote mixed use development incorporating housing where appropriate and practical. This will contribute to the mix of uses on sites and will provide more housing in the city centre in accordance with the objectives of PPG 3. Where it is not possible to provide housing, then the Council will require the provision of other appropriate uses, either in additional floorspace or new uses, which contribute to the character and function of localities within the CAZ. If it is not possible to provide housing or other appropriate uses the City Council will expect appropriate payments to use towards the funding of affordable housing.
- 1.56 Policy CENT 3 sets out a clear hierarchy that indicates the priority the City Council attaches to the provision of housing in achieving mixed use commercial schemes in Central Westminster. It will be for applicants to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the City Council that it is not appropriate or practical to provide housing within the development site before the City Council will consider the appropriateness of alternative uses instead of the housing required under the policy. Applicants should also demonstrate to the satisfaction of the City Council that consideration has been given to the provision of the required housing on another site in the vicinity of the development site, if this is a practical option.

Housing as the priority use as part of mixed use

- 1.57 The City Council affords the highest priority to building sustainable residential communities throughout Westminster. Therefore, where appropriate and practical, when increases in gross floorspace are proposed in office developments (see policy COM 2) or commercial developments within Central Westminster, the provision of housing equivalent to the increase in commercial floorspace inside the CAZ and on the CAZ Frontages will be required.

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- 1.58 In assessing whether the residential requirement is appropriate or practical and in assessing the proportion of residential floorspace that will be required the following will be taken into account:
- a) the size and nature of the development
 - b) the physical constraints of the site and buildings
 - c) the relationship of the site to adjoining properties
 - d) the character and function of the locality
- 1.59 Residential accommodation will not be sought where the proposed gross increase in non-office commercial space is less than 200 sq m, unless it is clearly practical for such provision to be made. It is also likely to be more appropriate and practical to provide additional residential accommodation in schemes involving complete redevelopment or major demolition and on sites where separate access to the residential units can be provided.

Off-site residential provision through policy COM 3 (relocation of uses)

- 1.60 Where it is not practical to provide the residential accommodation on site, the City Council will accept the required housing accommodation on an alternative site in the vicinity of the development site: see policy COM 3 on relocation of uses. Any such proposals must comply with the criteria set out under policy COM 3. It is recognised that this mechanism is only likely to be readily achievable in the case of landowners with large property portfolios within Central Westminster. A higher quality and quantity of residential accommodation may also be achievable when the mechanism of swaps of land use is applied in appropriate cases through policy COM 3.

Alternative uses where residential use is not provided

- 1.61 Where the provision of residential use is not appropriate or practical, either on site or off-site, the following are examples of new or additional uses that may be considered to offset the residential requirement:
- a) retail accommodation where its introduction would benefit the area: see policy SS 3
 - b) studios or light industrial accommodation in the Creative Industries Special Policy Area: see policy COM 9
 - c) social and community facilities: see policies SOC 1 and SOC 6
 - d) sport, leisure, arts, cultural and entertainment uses: see policies TACE 5, TACE 8, TACE 9, TACE 10 and SOC 7.
- 1.62 With the exception of Class A3, A4 and A5 and D2 uses, with a history of causing harm to residential amenity or local environmental quality, existing uses appropriate to the CAZ and to the character and function of

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the area, should be replaced on redevelopment. Only additional floorspace in existing uses and/or new uses will be regarded as offsetting the requirement for residential accommodation.

- 1.63 Where alternative uses are accepted instead of residential use such uses will not then generate a further requirement under policy CENT 3 for on-site or off-site residential provision.
- 1.64 Each case will be considered within its immediate context as local character varies from street to street. This approach will best respect the delicate relationship between existing activities and promote the evolution of new activities; provide housing and enhance the unique and subtle character of parts of Central Westminster. Generally, the City Council will favour those uses with close ties to existing activities in central London and those which contribute to the character of the locality and demonstrate no adverse effects on amenity or the environment.
- 1.65 In major redevelopment's, involving entire street blocks for example, the City Council will support the introduction of new uses. New uses should be compatible with nearby residential accommodation. The City Council, in considering the appropriateness of uses, will also take into account the summaries of character and function of particular parts of the CAZ as set out in Chapter 1: Westminster's Central Area, paras 1.10 to 1.31, and its supplementary planning guidance, Central Activities Zone: Area Profiles, published in 2001. The City Council is also undertaking a series of conservation area appraisals, which will help to define further the character of conservation areas. These will also be taken into account in assessing the appropriateness of particular uses.

Affordable Housing

- 1.66 In appropriate circumstances, where on-site or off site residential provision or appropriate alternative uses cannot be achieved, the City Council will seek a contribution to its affordable housing fund for the provision of affordable housing instead: see also policy H4.
- 1.67 Policy H4 sets out the formula for financial contributions for occasions when it is appropriate for housing developments to make a financial contribution. This is based on the Housing Corporation's TCI value for land for a 75 sq m unit (currently £134,000) multiplied by 43% of the number of units on the site.
- 1.68 In association with commercial developments, the City Council will expect a sum based on the increase in floorspace, divided by 75 sqm (to convert the figure to a unit basis) and then multiplied by 43% to approximate to

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the number of affordable housing units normally required in an off-site arrangement. The formula is therefore:

$$\frac{\text{Increase in floorspace}}{75\text{sqm}} \times \frac{43}{100} \times \text{unit sum of } \underline{\underline{\pounds 134,000}}$$

Where the development is within one of the high value areas defined in Map 3.7 – Belgravia, Knightsbridge, Mayfair and St James's, then the amount will be increased by a third.

Example

Where an increase of 1000 sqm is proposed, the City Council will expect an amount in the region of:

$$\frac{1000}{75} \times \frac{43}{100} \times \pounds 134,000 = \pounds 768,000$$

If the development is located on one of the high value areas, then the amount expected will be increased by a third to give £1,000,000.

Planning Obligations and Benefits

- 1.69 Policy STRA 7 in Part 1 of the plan actively seeks planning obligations and related planning benefits in all types of appropriate developments. The City Council considers that single or mixed use commercial developments involving significant (greater than 200 sq m) increases in floorspace should provide appropriate planning obligations and benefits as set out in Policy STRA 7. Paragraph 61, in Part 1, gives examples of the types of planning benefits that might be sought and further advice will be given in the City Council's emerging supplementary planning guidance on Planning Obligations.

Reasons

- 1.70 National planning policy guidance recognises that mixed-use development can help create vitality and diversity and reduce the need to travel and that it can be more sustainable than single use development. PPG 1 also stated that local authorities should include policies in plans to 'promote and retain mixed uses, particularly in town centres, in other areas highly accessible by means of transport other than the private car and in areas of major new development. In Sustainable Communities - Delivering through Planning (2002) the Government has reinforced its commitment to sustainable development, to "deliver in a sustainable way key Government objectives" and to "create and sustain mixed and inclusive communities" (paragraph 3).

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- 1.71 The City Council's planning obligations policy is set out in Part 1 of the UDP under policy STRA 7 which is consistent with national policy guidance in Circular 05/2005. As part of the wider review of the planning system, undertaken by the Government, proposals have been put forward to reform and improve the planning obligations system.
- 1.72 The London Plan (June 2004) (referring to PPG1 and PPG3) states, at paragraph 3.124, "National planning policy strongly supports measures to extend mixed-use development. London's economic growth depends heavily on an efficient labour market and this in turn requires adequate housing provision to sustain it. Lack of housing, especially affordable housing, is already one of the key issues facing London employers. Thus, as a general principle, strategically important employment generating development will be expected to contain a range of other uses, which shall include housing". The London Plan policy on mixed-use development (3B.4) states that "Within the Central Activities Zone and the Opportunity Areas, wherever increases in office floorspace are proposed they should provide for a mix of uses including housing, unless such a mix would demonstrably conflict with other policies in this plan. Sub-Regional Development Frameworks will give further guidance on the relevant proportions of housing and other uses to be sought".
- 1.73 The City Council wishes to ensure that whenever appropriate opportunities arise from commercial development (either single use commercial or mixed-use commercial developments) the overall balance of uses will enhance the character and function of that part of the CAZ or CAZ Frontages. In line with PPG 3 the City Council will require residential accommodation, including affordable housing, to be provided where this is appropriate and practical. This will help to ensure that there continues to be a distinctive mix of uses in the CAZ and on the CAZ Frontages and increase the amount of residential accommodation - including affordable housing - in the centre of the City thus reducing the need to travel.
- 1.74 New housing in the heart of the City offers unique access to the widest range of employment, leisure and other facilities. These can be reached on foot or by very short journeys on public transport. Much of the CAZ has already been developed for commercial use but the development of new or additional commercial floorspace can provide opportunities to create new homes and provide other uses.

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- 1.75 Within the CAZ there is a mix of activities which contribute to the character and function of the Zone. Several of these activities have developed strong linkages within particular areas, so that specific parts of Westminster have become associated with particular activities. These areas have their own distinctive characteristics, which derive from the variety of building types and the mix of activities both within the area and within individual buildings. On average, each building within the CAZ contains two uses and three separate users; even when taking into account buildings in a single use. In some areas, such as Soho and East Marylebone, the average is higher. In many cases, traditional buildings whose architectural quality may in itself contribute to local character, provide suitable accommodation for activities, often small scale, which make a valuable contribution to the character and function of central London. This character is derived from the combination of activities and the buildings, which they occupy. (See also Chapter 10: Urban Design and Conservation).
- 1.76 Conservation areas cover most of the CAZ. The character of the conservation areas derives from the quality of their buildings and from the character and function of their uses. The uses and activities are often important contributory factors to an area's character; sometimes they create that character through their long historical and functional relationships. For instance, the tailors in and around Savile Row, the art galleries in Cork Street and jewellers on Bond Street are examples of such traditional activities: the media crafts in Soho and Covent Garden are examples of more modern ones. This variety of character within Central Westminster is one of the many reasons for Westminster's enduring attraction to visitors and businesses.
- 1.77 In a densely built up urban area such as Westminster, largely developed before land use planning controls, the development or adaptation of buildings in commercial use offer the most frequent opportunity to increase the housing stock and maintain or enhance the mixed use character of the CAZ. The City Council believes that the promotion of mixed use developments can contribute significantly towards achieving the Plan's aims.
- 1.78 Commercial development generates employment. There is a need to provide housing at affordable levels to house those working in Westminster in offices, shops, hotels and other forms of commercial development. If such housing can be provided in or near Westminster this has general sustainability benefits and can help add to the mixture of uses and the development of sustainable residential communities.

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- 1.79 The contribution for affordable housing is sought as it is likely that the development of new commercial floorspace will generally create new jobs. In most cases, these are unlikely to be at salary levels where new employees will be able to afford to live in Westminster or elsewhere in Central London and probably even in much of London. The development will therefore give rise to the need for affordable housing for these workers and the City Council will expect a financial contribution for its affordable housing fund which could assist the development of affordable housing for key workers. Therefore, in appropriate circumstances, where on site or off site residential provision or appropriate alternative uses cannot be achieved, the City Council will expect contributions to its affordable housing fund. (See also policy H4).

CENTRAL LONDON SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES

Aim

- 1.80 To protect essential uses supporting Central London Activities and local service uses in Central Westminster for those living, working or visiting the area.

POLICY CENT 4: CENTRAL LONDON SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES

Planning permission will not be granted for development which results in the loss of uses supporting Central London Activities or the loss of local service uses, within the Central Activities Zone or on the CAZ Frontages, where such uses contribute to the character and function of these areas

- 1.81 Central London Activities are dependent upon a wide range of supporting activities. These linking activities are vital to the functioning of central London and its economy because they provide services or facilities in proximity to Central London Activities. The Plan therefore aims to protect them, although the City Council will allow the replacement of one supporting activity with another where the proposed activity enhances the character of the CAZ or the CAZ Frontages. Not all these supporting activities are located within the CAZ nor are they uses which identify the extent of the CAZ although they can be appropriately within it. An illustrative list of examples of Central London supporting activities is set out in Table 1.2.

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- 1.82 The CAZ and the CAZ Frontages contain the same essential local services that exist in any town. Residents use these services as well as those who work in the centre. The replacement of a local service activity by another may be appropriate, subject to other policies in the Plan. Examples of local services are listed in Table 1.2 and include commercial activities not included in Policy SOC 1. Policy SS 5 in Chapter 7 refers to development affecting local shops in the CAZ and on the CAZ Frontages.

WESTMINSTER'S CENTRAL AREA: APPROPRIATE NON-RESIDENTIAL ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

- 1.83 Table 2.1 in former RPG 3 lists non-residential activities, considered particularly appropriate for Central London. The London Plan does not include a similar table. However paragraph 5.26 of the London Plan describes the range and types of activities which are characteristic of the CAZ. The London Plan, in paragraph 5.28, also recognises that housing and local businesses play a vital role in sustaining the international, national and regional importance of Central London and that the "intensification of commercial activities should be supported in ways that harmonise with the residential environment within the Zone".
- 1.84 Table 1.1 below shows how such activities will be guided in the UDP and translates the requirements of the London Plan into the central Westminster context. Examples of activities that are particularly appropriate to Westminster are indicated in the table in *italics*. It also indicates the appropriateness of such uses in principle within the CAZ and on the CAZ frontages.
- 1.85 A number of Central London activities in Westminster lie outside the main concentrations of such uses in the defined CAZ. Most are within the CAZ, are on the CAZ frontages or are protected through the designation of other Special Policy Areas as indicated below. Some uses are located throughout Westminster.

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Table 1.1 Appropriate non-residential activities for central Westminster (see policies CENT 1 to CENT 3)

Examples of activities particularly appropriate to Westminster shown in *italics*

Central London Activity	Appropriate in CAZ/CAZ frontages	Other UDP Special Policy Area Designation	Comments
Those connected with the State and Government: <i>Royal Palaces, Parliament, Government Departments, Law Courts</i>	✓	✗	
Diplomatic representations including Embassies, High Commissions and Agencies	✓	✗	Particularly concentrated in Mayfair, Belgravia and Portland Place
National and International headquarters and associated offices connected with finance and business: <i>Headquarters of clearing banks, overseas banks, merchant banks, venture capital companies, insurance companies</i>	✓	✓	Paddington SPA (see chapter 5)
National and international headquarters and associated offices connected with trade: Export and import merchants, centres of specialised trades	✓	✓	Paddington SPA (see chapter 5)
Professional bodies, institutions and associations: Headquarters of institutes or associations and offices for regional and nation-wide practices	✓	✓	Portland Place SPA. (See policy COM 6)/Paddington SPA (see chapter 5)
Facilities and establishments connected with the communications, publishing, advertising, media and cultural sectors of regional, national and international importance: internet, e-commerce companies	✓	✓	Creative Industries SPA (see policies COM 8 and COM 9)/ Paddington SPA (see chapter 5)

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Central London Activity	Appropriate in CAZ/CAZ frontages	Other UDP Special Policy Area Designation	Comments
Shopping, including specialist retail outlets of regional, national and international importance: <i>Department Stores, specialist shops, flagship stores, auction rooms</i>	✓	✓	Prime Frontages and Shopping centre hierarchy policies (see policies SS 4 – SS 11)/ Paddington SPA (see chapter 5)
Centres of excellence for higher education and research: <i>Universities, specialist colleges</i>	✓	✓	Arts, Culture, Education SPA (see policy TACE 7)
Medical establishments of regional, national and international importance	✓	✓	Also found in the north-west and south east of the City, Harley St SPA (see policies SOC 1 and SOC 5) and Paddington SPA (see chapter 5)
Legal and professional services: <i>Magistrates Courts</i>	✓	✗	Paddington SPA (see chapter 5)
Arts, culture and entertainment uses, including museums, art galleries, libraries, theatres, concert halls, clubs and cinemas of regional, national and international importance: London Clubs of St James's, casinos	✓	✓	Arts, Culture, Education SPA. (See policy TACE 7)/Paddington SPA (see chapter 5). West End, Edgware Road and Queensway/Bayswater Stress Areas (see policies TACE 8 to 10)
Specialist industrial activities associated with other central London activities, including clothing, fashion trades, media, printing and retail services: Wholesale showrooms of regional national and international importance	✓	✓	Creative Industries SPA (see policies COM 8 and COM 9), East Marylebone SPA (see policy COM 12)
Churches and other religious centres and places of assembly of regional, national and international importance	✓	✗	

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Central London Activity	Appropriate in CAZ/ CAZ frontages	Other UDP Special Policy Area Designation	Comments
Tourism facilities including hotels and conference centres	✓	✓	Paddington SPA (see chapter 5)
Transport facilities particularly for public transport of regional, national and international importance: <i>mainline rail and other stations/interchanges</i>	✓	✗	Paddington SPA (see chapter 5); Marylebone mainline station outside CAZ
Activities supporting the use and enjoyment of the River Thames	✓	✓	Thames SPA (see chapter 11)
Other uses providing essential support services and facilities for people living, working and visiting central London	✓	✗	Generally appropriate throughout Westminster. Several UDP chapters relevant (see Table 1.2)

1.87 Table 1.2 indicates those uses, which provide essential support services and facilities for people living, working and visiting Central London and local service uses which are predominantly used by local residents. Chapter 6 'Social and Community Facilities' and Chapter 7 'Shopping and Services' contain more detailed lists of these local services uses and more specific policies relating to these uses.

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**Table 1.2 Central London Supporting Uses and Local Services
(see Policy CENT 4)**

	Examples of Use																										
Creative Industries	Appropriate in the Creative Industries SPA, including film and recording studios																										
Housing	Appropriate throughout the City																										
Services supporting employment activities	Banks, Post offices, shops restaurants, cafés, employment agencies, childcare facilities, photocopying shops, courier offices																										
Entertainment	Ticket agencies, rehearsal and theatre training spaces, public houses, restaurants and clubs																										
Transport	Tube, bus and rail stations, bus and river transport facilities, provision for taxis, mail sorting and collection, essential parking and servicing of premises																										
Local services	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Local government</td> <td>Local shops and restaurants</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Local banking</td> <td>Local health clubs and sports facilities</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Local places of worship</td> <td>Local health facilities</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other religious centres</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pubs</td> <td>Leisure facilities and open space for leisure</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Local press</td> <td>Local education facilities</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Advice centres</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Schools</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Community facilities</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fire, ambulance and police stations</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Magistrates Courts</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Libraries</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Local entertainment facilities</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Local government	Local shops and restaurants	Local banking	Local health clubs and sports facilities	Local places of worship	Local health facilities	Other religious centres		Pubs	Leisure facilities and open space for leisure	Local press	Local education facilities	Advice centres		Schools		Community facilities		Fire, ambulance and police stations		Magistrates Courts		Libraries		Local entertainment facilities	
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