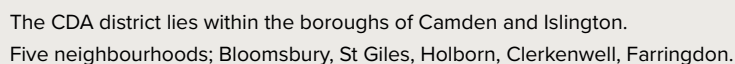


CONNECTING IN PLACE: WHERE IDEAS MEET ACTION

CULTURAL PROSPECTUS



CDA BID Footprint



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Outernet London, St Giles (below right)

Clerkenwell Design Week 2023 (bottom right)



Farringdon Elizabeth line station



Shaftesbury Theatre and Princes Circus public realm scheme, lead by Camden Council with support form CDA, St Giles



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Central Business District Improvement Alliance District

Central District Alliance Business Improvement District (CDA BID) is the collective voice of **over 400 enterprises** with a highly diversified commercial and cultural identity based in **Camden's Bloomsbury, Holborn and St Giles and Islington's Clerkenwell** and Farringdon neighbourhoods that lie between the City of London and the West End (see page 3). Their rich historic legacy and cultural identity gives each one its own unique urban DNA.



Debbie Akehurst

Debbie Akehurst
Chief Executive
Central District Alliance

As a BID, CDA works with a wide range of public, private and third sector partners, operating as a catalyst to transform outcomes locally. Our priorities include welcoming new businesses, sustainability, street security and cleaning, public realm and placemaking, and culture and wellbeing, across our five neighbourhoods.

Culture and the creative industries are social and economic forces with a positive impact on society, boosting wellbeing and connecting people to place in uniquely meaningful ways. They attract and introduce visitors to new ideas, encouraging them to further explore our area and enjoy its assets. Local cultural programmes help to foster valuable investment impacting all fields of business, jobs and training prospects as well as enabling cultural venues to continue their exceptional work.

At a time of great change, CDA has taken a number of steps in recent years to support the futureproofing of the district. This is helping to ensure that people are empowered to discover and experience our cultural heritage assets in new ways.

These ingredients in the success and resilience of the district are closely interrelated. CDA has a committed stake in every one of them, and applies its enabling capacities, networks and resources to help mobilise, season by season, ongoing investment in place, heritage and wider regeneration, and to nurture innovative cultural programming and entrepreneurialism.

This Cultural Prospectus outlines our strategic, progressive civic vision. It expresses the value and impact of our actions to celebrate, raise awareness,

inspire discovery and nurture the amazing array of cultural assets of this unique district of central London.

We highlight the six main ways CDA is an agent of transformation for cultural benefit. In steering and fostering a sustainable, creative and human scale urban environment and business ecosystem.

At the heart of these strategies is the goal of maximising the positive impact of culture, across all forms of artistic activity for the benefit of all. This happens by supporting people and places where cultural activities can flourish and benefit both the creative and wider economy, providing clear advantages to everyone working and living across our neighbourhoods as well as visitors and prospective tenants.

London became the world's first national park city in June 2019. One of the greenest cities of its size, almost 50% green and blue space, it has thousands of parks, garden squares, front gardens, allotments, rivers, canals and ponds. Some of the most prominent and celebrated historic green spaces can be found locally. CDA is proactive in promoting their contribution as civic assets to wellness and the safety, attractiveness and biodiversity of places in the district.

Post pandemic, placemaking and urban regeneration across the district have seen a more dynamic, holistic, user-friendly and sustainable approach being adopted by major public and private stakeholders. CDA plays an important role in partnering in the successful realisation and culture-led programming

of key public spaces in the area. Along with the Cultural Prospectus we have created an online Cultural Guide showcasing the qualities of over 80 outstanding places to visit and enjoy in the area, making it easy to get to know them better and to plan a visit.

CDA remains committed to its mission of creating a thriving and sustainable business and cultural environment that yields sustainable returns for its members and enriches the local community.¹ By working in close partnership with a wide range of stakeholders dedicated to the success of the cultural scene in the district, many of whom are referred to in this document, and joining with others keen to play a role, together we significantly raise our chances of further success. ■

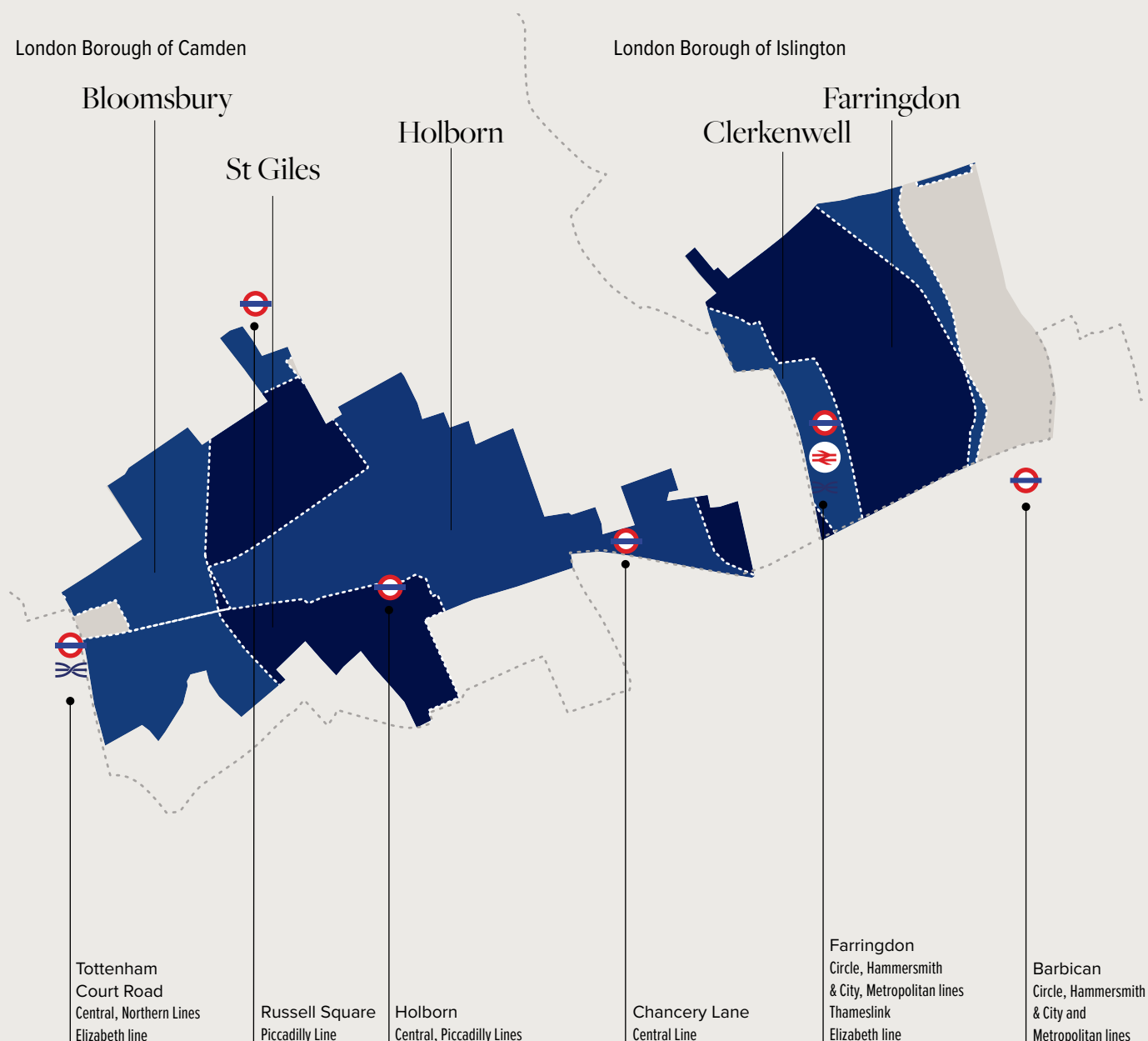
“This Cultural Prospectus outlines our strategic, progressive civic vision. It expresses the value and impact of our actions to celebrate, raise awareness, inspire discovery and nurture the amazing array of cultural assets of this unique district of central London.”

1. Debbie Akehurst, Introduction, Central District Alliance: the BID for Holborn and Clerkenwell, Annual Report 2022-23’.

The five neighbourhoods CDA represents

Five neighbourhoods, two boroughs, one district

The CDA district lies within the boroughs of Camden and Islington.



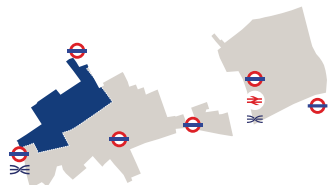
DISTRICT KEY

Neighbourhoods Borough boundary

Each of the five neighbourhoods in CDA's BID footprint: Bloomsbury, St Giles, Holborn, Clerkenwell and Farringdon, possesses a unique character shaped by historic and contemporary changes. Today we enjoy a vibrant mix of exceptional heritage and contemporary buildings, many of them cultural venues of different kinds open to the public, and beautiful green spaces supporting civic life.

The district's array of cultural venues, retailers, restaurants, cafes, bars, pubs and street food caters for workers, residents and visitors coming for leisure and business. Together they provide a host of exceptional options to choose from and enjoy on a daily basis. ■

Snapshot of the district



Bloomsbury

Blue Plaque
commemorating
the novelist Charles
Dickens, 48 Doughty
Street (below)



The British Museum's Great Court designed by Foster and Partners, the largest covered public space in Europe (above right);

Picnic in the Park event staged by CDA, Russell Square (bottom right); Aerial view with Bloomsbury Square Gardens, looking towards the West End (above)

Bloomsbury has thrived for centuries as an immensely culturally and intellectually rich neighbourhood. First referred to in 1086 in the Domesday Book as an area of vineyards with a wood for pigs, it is internationally renowned as the home to the British Museum, and several groundbreaking academic institutions.

These include University College London, the University of London, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the University of Law. A number of American universities have their study centres here. Bloomsbury is also where the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, the British Medical Association, the annual Bloomsbury Festival, leading publishers and a number of fine bookshops can be found.

Historically many leading public figures, including politicians, scientists, artists and writers, have lived in Bloomsbury, including Virginia Woolf, Charles Dickens, Charles Darwin, Mahatma Gandhi, Bob Marley and Catherine Tate. The area has exceptional places to dine and drink, and the striking streetscapes parade a fine array of buildings of diverse architectural styles and several notable churches. Here too are also some of the most beautiful Georgian squares and parks in the whole of London. ■

Snapshot of the district



St Giles



The new Princes Square (LDA landscape design) with Central St Giles Place (masterplan by Orms), designed by Renzo Piano, in the background (top left), and in front of the Shaftesbury Theatre (right); below: St Giles public realm above Tottenham Court Road station, in front of Outernet and Centre Point (left)

St Giles, bordering Bloomsbury, north Covent Garden and Soho to the west, began life in 1101 as an ancient parish encompassing Bloomsbury when Henry I's wife Queen Matilda founded a hospital for lepers there. The church St Giles in the Fields, designed in Palladian style in its third version, dates from 1734, a time when St Giles had become, to put it mildly, a cosmopolitan area. Its history has been described by author Peter Ackroyd² as a place of 'entrance and exit' for those visiting medieval fairs in the city of London, condemned men and women going west to Tyburn, and London's many tourists. Since the 1950s, Denmark Street has been renowned as the centre of the British music industry.

The transformation of the area in recent years to much more of a business and leisure destination has included new contemporary architecture commissions including Central St Giles, designed by architect Renzo Piano, the new Outernet entertainment venue, a new mixed use development next to the Centre Point (built in 1963, and described as the first 'pop art' skyscraper by architect Ernő Goldfinger), and the new landscaped public realm at Princes Circus (see page 21), at the north end of Shaftesbury Avenue, facing the Shaftesbury Theatre, the largest independent theatre in the West End, originally built in 1911.

The opening of the Elizabeth line in 2022 at Tottenham Court Road station has facilitated a big increase in footfall (see page 33). ■

2. Peter Ackroyd, London: The Biography, Chatto & Windus, 2000.

Snapshot of the district



Holborn



Holborn, which connects the City of London, Soho and the West End, has some of the earliest evidence of human activity in the city. By 1249 'Holeburnestreete,' the predecessor of High Holborn and Holborn Viaduct, was formed, and from 1855 the medieval suburb evolved into a commercial neighbourhood of London.

Holborn's characterful mix of legal buildings and office blocks includes the four Inns of Court and the new Dar Group headquarters on High Holborn designed by Perkins and Will.

Staple Inn, a Grade I listed part-Tudor building on the south side of High Holborn, the last surviving Inn of Chancery (above)

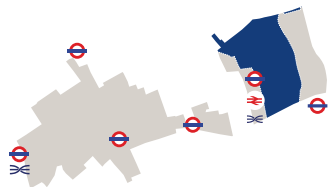
The Royal Fusiliers War Memorial, High Holborn, and Holborn Bars, a Victorian Gothic Revival building designed by Alfred and Paul Waterhouse, 1876-1901 (below)

It is home to the internationally renowned Hatton Garden jewellery quarter, which developed in the early 19th century, and is the largest cluster of its kind in the UK. The area has a wide array of restaurants, bars and cafes, including an eclectic array of boutiques, cafes and retailers on Lamb's Conduit Street and Leather Lane market.

Holborn's cultural and academic reputation is underpinned by the presence of the Sir John Soane's Museum and the London School of Economics campus to the south of the neighbourhood. ■



Snapshot of the district



Clerkenwell



Clerkenwell Green, looking both up Clerkenwell Close to Saint James Church (top)

Sessions Arts Club, Clerkenwell Green, a Grade II-listed former judges' dining room (bottom left)

Clerkenwell Design Week 2023 (bottom right)



Along with Farringdon, Clerkenwell is renowned as a major centre of leading creative industry businesses and startups. As Islington's oldest residential and business district, it is long associated with the print industry and artisanal activities including brewing, gin distilling, clock and watch making, type founding (designing and making wooden or metal typefaces used in printing) and metalworking. It extends from Clerkenwell Green (see page 23) north to the Angel and fringes of King's Cross, and includes Little Italy in the south-west corner, an area with strong Italian connections which go back more than two centuries.

Named after the Clerks' Well, a 12th-century water source that adjoined St Mary's Nunnery (c.1140, a religious order once located off Clerkenwell Green), Clerkenwell at one time had many spas, springs and wells, as well

as a number of monasteries and prisons. The founding of the Metropolitan Borough of Finsbury in 1900 led to exceptional municipal buildings including the Finsbury Health Centre built in 1930 and the Grade II* listed Spa Green Estate (1949), each designed by Berthold Lubetkin and Tecton.

Clerkenwell has been home to Oliver Cromwell, William Hogarth, Vladimir Lenin, and more recently the late architect Zaha Hadid, whose cultural foundation is based on Bowling Green Lane and whose practice is on Goswell Road. The area is also dotted with Georgian architecture, warehouse loft conversions and a range of attractions including cutting edge restaurants and cosy gastropubs, sleek bars and nightclubs, the Cowcross Yard food market, annual Clerkenwell Design Week, the Postal Museum and the Museum of St John and its Cloister Garden. ■

Snapshot of the district



Farringdon



Bordered by Clerkenwell, Holborn, the Barbican area and the City of London, Farringdon is part of London's financial centre, yet has its own multi-layered historical, cosmopolitan character in which old meets new. The area's landmarks include the Romanesque-style church St. Bartholomew the Great, founded in 1123, which has featured in a number of films (including *Four Weddings and A Funeral* and *Shakespeare in Love*), the Charterhouse complex, including a museum, dating from 1341 when a monastery occupied the site, Postman's Park, the Museum of St John and across the road in the City, the Old Bailey.

Smithfield Market (London Central Market), is the largest meat market in the UK. Trading has

Cowcross Yards weekly food market, where historically a cattle market was held (top)

Smithfield Market (below)

taken place here since the 13th century and will continue until 2028 when the site is fully redeveloped as the Museum of London's new home and the heart of the City's Culture Mile.

Farringdon is a well connected hub for startups and businesses scaling up, with design-led workspaces encouraging collaboration. With five London Underground stations a short walk away, the area has benefitted from the opening of the Elizabeth line's Farringdon station and an upgrade to Thameslink rail connections. It is now one of the country's busiest transport hubs with enhanced public realm spaces. The lively local nightlife scene includes chic bars and restaurants, and the long-running Fabric nightclub. ■



CDA'S SIX POINT CULTURAL VISION

CDA's six strategies, listed below, aim to celebrate, raise awareness, inspire discovery and nurture local cultural assets and community arts activities. They steer and foster a sustainable, creative and human scale urban environment and vibrant business ecosystem.

These benefit everyone working and living across the five neighbourhoods and encourage visitors and prospective tenants.

-  1. Supporting and celebrating the district's cultural heritage assets
-  2. Programming free and accessible outdoor cultural events
-  3. Investing in and influencing placemaking of local neighbourhoods
-  4. Partnering for positive change
-  5. Fostering creative business growth and connected networks
-  6. Grant funding local community arts activities

“Camden Council’s Culture Service has a strong relationship with CDA, which plays an important role in strengthening the cultural offer for our communities and neighbourhoods. We look forward to developing our relationship with them to ensure the successful delivery of festivals, markets and activations which bring the business and resident communities together”.

Zerritha Brown FRSA
Head of Culture
Regeneration and Planning
London Borough of Camden

“I’m delighted that CDA’s Cultural Six Points align closely with the themes of the new Imagine Islington Culture Strategy, celebrating cultural assets, shaping local neighbourhoods and developing community arts of all kinds. Clerkenwell and Farringdon are key loci in Islington’s cultural and creative landscape, and there is huge potential for developing vibrant and innovative relationships between businesses, cultural organisations and communities”.³

Segun Lee-French
Head of Cultural Enrichment
Community Engagement and Wellbeing
London Borough of Islington

3. Imagine Islington Culture Strategy, 2024-2030, London Borough of Islington, 2024.

1. Supporting and celebrating the district's cultural heritage assets



Trans-Siberian Marching Band, Store Street, WC1, Bloomsbury Festival, 2023

The district's cultural life stems from its rich mix of festivals, exhibitions, performances, street and garden events and gatherings, pop-ups, talks, workshops, online events, walks and culinary activities bringing communities together.

Encompassing the visual arts, crafts, the performing arts, architecture, multimedia design, film and their relationships with history, science and technology, cultural activities are hosted by a broad range of heritage and contemporary venues – buildings and public spaces, high profile and less well known.

CDA's six point cultural vision

1. Supporting and celebrating the district's cultural heritage assets

As a universal language, infinite in its variety, bringing meaning and a sense of belonging to society, culture encompasses a broad, vibrant mix of activities and practices and modes of participation.

These cover the visual arts, crafts, the performing arts, architecture, multimedia design, film and their historic, modern, scientific and technological intersections. Cultural activities encompass festivals, exhibitions, performances, street and garden events and gatherings, pop-ups, talks, workshops, online events, walks, culinary activities and much more.

“CDA is taking every opportunity to support the rich diversity and resilience of cultural venues in the district and promote their value more widely”.

Culture in the CDA district is richly diverse, with programmes staged across a multitude of spaces in a wide range of modes. These range from formal to informal, a mix of indoor and outdoor activities, in a great variety of venues – buildings and public spaces, high profile and some less well known – including those purpose-built for culture and others such as workplaces and outdoor spaces, to cater for all audiences.

CDA is taking every opportunity to support the rich diversity and resilience of cultural venues in the district and promote their value more widely.

The BID's approach to culture in the district champions its rich and broad identity encompassing the calibre and character of local places as a whole. After all, dynamically resonating with the area's many layers of history and heritage, cultural activities take place both in and between buildings in a variety of characterful outdoor space they serve to animate in new ways.

The fortunes of the many cultural venues of the five neighbourhoods have improved since the pandemic, and new ones have joined the mix. However CDA is taking every opportunity to promote their value and resilience more widely. For example, CDA is keen to help promote the hire of the many venues by businesses, organisations, groups and individuals.

Cultural involvement and impact is a continuous process, and the modes of engagement promoting diversity and accessibility, and scope for further educational and business outreach, networking, and repeat visits are all key issues CDA is committed to nurturing with its partners.

There is wide appreciation for the vivid character and diversity of the culture and creative activities taking place across the district in buildings with a stimulating mix of architectural styles and periods.

Programming culture in public places helps to bring communities together and strengthen local economies through enhanced involvement in and awareness of the activities that are staged.

Together these serve to promote the sustainability of the area and local civic society. These principles for the responsible transformation of cities and their neighbourhoods globally have been formally advocated by UNESCO since 2016.⁴

Created and maintained by thousands of dedicated people working locally – passionate and committed individuals and team members with enquiring minds – the district's place-based cultural identity is an ever evolving asset for the enjoyment of everyone. An asset that, through its collaborative work as facilitator, custodian and ambassador, CDA is proactive in supporting and protecting so that it can reach its full potential. ■

4. Culture session, Habitat III meeting to Shape an Urban Agenda and agree a Declaration, Barcelona, UNESCO, Barcelona, 3-6 April 2016.

CDA's six point cultural vision

1. Supporting and celebrating the district's cultural heritage assets

CDA's *New* Online Cultural Guide to the district

Central District Alliance's new online Cultural Guide to the district profiles for the first time 85 of the area's cultural venues. The Guide includes those with exceptional and versatile facilities for hire, and a selection of venues on the borders of the district.

Cultural venues and activities are vital elements of an urban neighbourhood's unique identity, enabling its character and diverse spirit to be communicated with and shared by local businesses and their employees, residents and visitors.

The geographic swathe of central London encompassing Bloomsbury, St Giles, Holborn, Farringdon and Clerkenwell is one of the most fascinating and distinct cultural historic environments in the whole of the city. Yet a number of its assets and their dynamic activities and facilities are arguably not sufficiently known about nor appreciated.

In tandem with the Cultural Prospectus, and to promote and build awareness of the District's rich cultural assets, CDA is publishing an online Cultural Guide to the Bloomsbury, St Giles, Holborn, Clerkenwell and Farringdon neighbourhoods, with illustrated profiles of 80 of their cultural venues and places. It also includes details of venues with versatile facilities for hire.

The new Cultural Guide enables a heightened awareness of the connections between local cultural activities and venues and their locations, how to navigate as easily as possible between them, to join them and to meet other enthusiasts of culture.

The Guide aims to provide an essential means for everyone to more easily take part in and experience culture in the district.

In adopting a wide, inclusive definition of culture and cultural stakeholders, CDA is reflecting the broad categories included in the Mayor of London's Cultural Strategy, 'Culture for All Londoners'.⁵ This extends beyond museums, galleries, theatres and other purpose-built performing arts venues and festivals to religious and community centres, restaurants, pubs and clubs and public spaces, workspaces, business centres, academia and bookshops programming cultural activities.

The Guide's broad focus emphasises the value of the variety of cultural locations throughout the area and celebrates the ever-evolving nature of cultural identity and vibrancy they foster.

Entries also showcase CDA's cultural programming of annual events in public green spaces and pedestrianised streets, and the public realm improvement schemes it has financially supported with its local authority partners Camden and Islington (see page 18-23). ■



ACCESS THE
CULTURAL GUIDE
centraldistrictalliance.com

5. 'Culture for all Londoners', Mayor of London's Cultural Strategy, GLA, December 2018.

CDA's six point cultural vision

1. Supporting and celebrating the district's cultural heritage assets



Entertainment venues: Outernet London (top left)

Event spaces: Montague Street Garden (top right)

Galleries/shops: Hello Love (left)

Multi-faith places of worship: St Giles in the Fields (right)

Clubs: Sessions House (bottom left)

Universities/public talk venues: LSE's Marshall Building, designed by Grafton Architects (bottom right)



2. Programming free and accessible outdoor cultural events



Live music at Picnic in the Park, CDA's public event, Russell Square, August 2023

CDA stages free and accessible cultural activities – ranging from Christmas markets, street decorations and festive sing-alongs to village fetes and picnics in the district's squares and public spaces – working closely with a range of partners.

These stimulating and memorable cultural activities complement the regular programmes of venues, indoors and outside, which can be enjoyed across the district throughout the year.

CDA's six point cultural vision

2. Programming free and accessible outdoor cultural events



People visiting, living and working in city centres look forward to and enjoy free to access outdoor cultural events animating streetscapes and parks. Here they can meet friends and colleagues, experience musical performances and other entertainments without pressure to pay a fee or arrive at prescribed times.

CDA programmes and stages free, outdoor cultural events across the District's beautiful historic parks, squares, streets as well as at its newer plazas. In 2023 these included the Village Fete, Picnic in the Park and a Dickensian Christmas market, working with the boroughs of Camden and Islington and local residents' groups.

These annual cultural activities complement the seasonal programmes created by CDA's partners and other bodies across the district throughout the year, indoor and outside, enabling locals and visitors to enjoy stimulating, memorable and accessible experiences in the area. ■

Banners installed by CDA across the district, shown here in Red Lion Square alongside permanent statue of Fenner Brockway, British politician and campaigner, by Ian Walters, mark Pride month (above left)

CDA's street decorations, Christmas 2023 (top)

Village Fete, CDA's event in Bloomsbury Square Gardens, July 2023 (below)

CDA's six point cultural vision

2. Programming free and accessible outdoor cultural events



Dickensian Christmas market staged by CDA with partners, St Giles Square, December 2023



CDA engages with visitors at the Picnic in the Park, Russell Square, August 2023 (left)

Village Fete – Bloomsbury Square Gardens

CDA's Village Fete takes the form of a vibrant two-day celebration of summer, staged in mid-July in the landscaped environment of Bloomsbury Square Gardens. The 2023 programme included live music throughout each day, street food stalls, a magician, competitions and lots of giveaways. Deck chairs were provided so everyone could make the most of the hot weather and relax outside, and lots of giveaways. In 2022, the Village Fete was held in a pedestrianised Southampton Place.

The Village Fete has proven to be an excellent way to allow people to celebrate summer on their doorstep.

Bloomsbury Square Gardens was developed in 1806-7 by celebrated landscape gardener Humphrey Repton, who most appropriately wanted his squares to be places of relaxed play.

Picnic in the Park – Russell Square

In August 2023, CDA held its second Picnic in the Park summer series in Russell Square. Making the most of their lunchbreaks, people listened to the live music and sat back and relaxed on deck chairs. CDA also handed out free picnic blankets, sold its locally harvested honey and engaged with local workers and residents, who were pleased to spend more time in their local park.

Russell Square is one of the largest and most attractive formal garden squares in London. Created in 1800 with lawns, walks and an ornamental fountain, it is a tranquil place for a picnic. Surrounded by striking Victorian, Edwardian and Georgian buildings, the gardens here were designed by Humphrey Repton. They were re-landscaped in 2000-2 by the London Borough of Camden, loosely based on his original scheme, funded by a Heritage Lottery Fund grant and Camden's Urban Parks programme.

Festive Season programme – St Giles Square, Russell Square, Leather Lane and main streets throughout the district

To celebrate the festive season, each year CDA installs 30 foot Christmas trees at Farringdon and Tottenham Court Road and at the Leather Lane/High Holborn junction, along with seasonal lighting and decorations at pedestrian interchanges and junctions. At Russell Square, illuminated Christmas trees and festive gateways are arranged by CDA with partner organisations.

In the winters of 2022 and 2023, CDA kicked off the festive season by programming a classic festive celebration in November (Farringdon station) and December (Tottenham Court Road station). Passers by joining the 2022 gatherings enjoyed a free cup of mulled wine, a mince pie, while a festive choir evoked the spirit of the season by singing everyone's favourite carols.

In 2023, a fun two-day Dickensian Christmas market transformed St Giles Square, funded by CDA in collaboration with Camden Council, Almacantar, Centre Point and others. Honouring the author Charles Dickens, many of whose writings were set in 19th century Bloomsbury (where he lived), Holborn and Farringdon, the market was inspired by 'A Christmas Carol'⁶, his much loved festive novella about redemption and compassion written as a work of social commentary.

6. A Christmas Carol, Charles Dickens, 1843.

CDA's six point cultural vision

2. Programming free and accessible outdoor cultural events



Festive decorations at St Giles Square, December 2023



Live music performance at CDA's Village Fete, Bloomsbury Square Gardens, July 2023

The market created a spectacular atmosphere ideal for photo and 'selfie' opportunities, amidst the surrounding hustle and bustle of contemporary life. Actors dressed as Dickensian characters interacted with the public and entertained them with carols amidst a snowy streetscape with Victorian lamps, traditional garlands and wreaths, Christmas decorations, trees and a reindeer-led sleigh. 11 dressed alpine huts hosted local businesses selling gifts, food and mulled wine.

St Giles Square is a new public space at the junction of Charing Cross Road and New Oxford Street. It lies above Tottenham Court Road station serving the Central line, Elizabeth line and the Charing Cross branch of the Northern line, and has an entrance to the square. With the increased footfall brought by the opening of the Elizabeth line, the Square is well suited to host markets and other pop-up events (see also page 33).

"HELLO LOVE is a social enterprise that supports artists, brands and charities. Our wellness space and contemporary retail environment on Southampton Row changes daily to communicate sustainability and charitable giving at the point of every sale. Central to our ethos is a collaborative spirit and unified view towards working together across sectors to instigate positive social change.

The Dickensian Christmas Market – and more generally the Central District Alliance – offers a great opportunity to work alongside an extended family of likeminded organisations that are ultimately interested in uplifting the community around us. We extend thanks to CDA's team members for helping to create a safe space at the heart of the capital.

Kevin Helton
Founder & Creative Director
HELLO LOVE
(62-64 Southampton Row, WC1B 4AR)

The Hugh Myddelton Primary School Choir entertained audiences with their carol singing at Clerkenwell Green and at the L'Oscar, Bloomsbury and DoubleTree Hilton hotels on four days in December 2023 In the run up to Christmas.

At the Clerkenwell Green event, staged in partnership with Islington Council, the choir sang songs with people living and working close by, including the Rt Hon Emily Thornberry, MP for Islington South and Finsbury and the Shadow Attorney General, and Councillor Ruth Hayes, Clerkenwell ward, Islington Council.

Pride

Pride in London, the UK's largest and most diverse annual Pride event, celebrates the diversity of the LGBTQ+ communities with the colourful Pride in London Parade and free festivity events taking place in Trafalgar Square.

Pride in London's aim is to raise awareness of LGBTQ+ issues and advocate for the freedoms that will enable everyone to live their lives on equal footing. Events such as Pride's Got Talent, the annual Parade and the new Human Rights Forum provide a platform for people to express themselves creatively and celebrate their identity. They are designed to showcase the amazing diversity of the community and enable LGBTQ+ people to be visible and vocal about the progress made, the work still to be done, and the importance of continued advocacy.

CDA marks Pride month each year with banners on lamp columns across the district, and is proud to champion colleagues and contacts who are part of the LGBTQ+ community and to celebrate the anniversary of Pride in London. ■

3. Investing in and influencing placemaking of local neighbourhoods



Clerkenwell Green



Princes Circus at St Giles



Princes Circus at St Giles



Roberts Place, Clerkenwell

People-centred placemaking across the district has enabled more enjoyable, accessible, safer, greener spaces that are easier to navigate by foot and by bike and better connected to surrounding areas. It has also trialled a co-designed shared green space, and enhanced a historic woodland garden.

Since 2021 CDA's capital investment has supported five different public realm improvement projects led by Camden and Islington Councils.

CDA's six point cultural vision

3. Investing in and influencing placemaking of local neighbourhoods

“Central District Alliance has made a noticeable impact in the area with its activities and initiatives. They are active in improving the streets and green spaces of Bloomsbury and have hosted events that showcase the area’s assets and foster a sense of community among residents and businesses”.

Simon Elmer
Steward
The Bedford Estates

As a Business Improvement District⁷, Central District Alliance provides significant added value to the sustainability and quality of life across the five neighbourhoods it has governance responsibility for. One reason it can do this is that it has the ability to work across the administrative boundaries of Camden and Islington, the two boroughs in which the district is located.

CDA's programme of capital investment in public realm spaces from 2021 onwards is designed to help deliver people-centred places with holistic benefits, making them easier to navigate by foot or by bicycle, and safer and greener. These placemaking initiatives are improving health and wellbeing and active travel conditions, creating more opportunities to socialise, congregate and

gain access to local facilities, cultural venues and workplaces, businesses and visitors.

Through CDA's commitment to multidisciplinary sustainable placemaking and its resources of clear social value it is nurturing the resilient, human scale quality of local neighbourhoods. This gives people working, residing and visiting a stronger sense of both belonging and wellbeing when they experience them.

A number of new sustainable public realm transformation projects in the district have been realised by the London Boroughs of Camden and Islington, in partnership with CDA. These include Princes Circus, Clerkenwell Green and Roberts Place (see page 21).

CDA has invested in enabling improvements not only to make key parts of the urban realm of the district more accessible, enjoyable and safer but also better connected to surrounding areas. These changes bring out the best of the area's historic and contemporary character.

CDA's guiding public realm spatial strategy promotes the benefits of sustainable green infrastructure through linked projects – Roberts Place, Clerkenwell Green and St John's Garden. These deliver CDA's vision for a green, low pollution walking route from Clerkenwell and Farringdon's neighbourhood centres running from Exmouth Market to Farringdon Station, and foster active travel by enhancing the experience of walking and cycling and improvement of air quality.

Princes Circus (see page 21) is now an oasis of green landscaped pedestrian public space with new street furniture transforming the identity of the northern section of Shaftesbury Avenue, delivered by Camden Council in 2023, with financial support from CDA. In June 2023, the BID installed hanging baskets throughout Bury Place, along the main roads of High Holborn and New Oxford Street. They were also placed in the Hatton Garden BID, with which CDA works in close partnership.

Considered urban design solutions provide better landscaping in pedestrianised settings, with improved seating and lighting to support a civilised and more comfortable public realm. They give greater scope for people to discover places by foot and to enjoy the diverse character and assets of the district. ■

7. Ruth Duston and Ben Rogers have suggested BIDS might alternatively be known as 'BEIDs' – Business and Employer Improvement Districts – or 'CIDs: Community Improvement Districts'. 'Business engagement: BIDs, town centre forums and beyond', in 'Act Local: Empowering London's Neighbourhoods' report, Centre for London, 24 September 2019.

CDA's six point cultural vision

3. Investing in and influencing placemaking of local neighbourhoods

The positive impacts of Healthy Streets in the district

Streets make up 80% of London's public spaces. The Healthy Streets Approach⁸, a system of policies and strategies created by the Mayor of London and Transport for London to give walking and cycling a higher priority, aims to improve the quality of life for everyone in the city, and make an economic contribution to high streets and their businesses. Healthy Streets will be a core part of London's future success, according to the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy⁹.

CDA is proud to play its role in promoting access, dwell time and public realm quality in and to the district, fostering conditions for welcoming and safe places.

The Princes Circus scheme (see page 21), for example, has adapted the existing setting to be more versatile for

Interest in enjoying convivial time in the district's beautiful green spaces, with the health benefits this brings, is also encouraged by CDA through its programming of free cultural activities in Bloomsbury Square Gardens and Russell Square, which can easily be accessed without a car.

In the CDA BID district, Camden Council's Holborn Liveable Neighbourhood project will transform the streets of Holborn to reduce the dominance of traffic, provide safer and more pleasant conditions for walking, enhance connectivity for active travel and public transport, and create a greener neighbourhood with significant amounts of public realm.

The plans implement Healthy Streets improvements supported by the Mayor of London and Transport for London, and build on the success of Camden's West End Project, of which Princes Circus at St Giles is a key part (see page 21). Proposals have the potential to bring multiple benefits to the British Museum, Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital and the Inns of Court as well as to major transport hubs including Holborn and Chancery Lane, and to Bloomsbury Way/High Holborn and Kingsway/Southampton Row.

The West End Streets Steering Group (WEST), run by BusinessLDN, an organisation of private and public sector business leaders, has selected the Holborn Liveable Neighbourhood project as its new public realm project to champion following an open competition.¹⁰

Discussions about the advantages of active travel in central London began decades ago. One of the most recent surveys of their benefits, 'The Pedestrian Pound', a 2018 report by Living Streets, the UK charity for everyday walking, concluded that pedestrianisation can boost footfall and sales in a neighbourhood by up to 30%.¹¹

There is great merit to creating better connected areas, parks and squares through adaptations to the public realm and vehicular routes. This approach adds to the appeal of the district as a place to spend time and explore as well as supporting its economic vibrancy. ■



people's needs, with strategic pedestrianisation, well designed seating, landscaping, planting and lighting, providing more scope and open space for them to enjoy the city at ground level, at a pace they choose.

The adaptations have helped to connect the adjacent areas of Covent Garden and Bloomsbury, formerly divided by main roads, and making them permeable and attractive to spend time in. This reduces the customary dominance of vehicular streets.

8. 'Healthy Streets for London: prioritising walking, cycling and public transport to create a healthy city', Mayor of London and Transport for London, February 2017.

9. Mayor of London, Transport Strategy, 2018; revision, 2022.

10. 'Camden Council's new vision for Holborn championed by local business leaders', Matthew Neville, Bdaily News, 14 December 2023 bdaily.co.uk/articles/2023/12/14/camden-councils-new-vision-for-holborn-championed-by-local-business-leaders

11. 'The Pedestrian Pound: the business case for better streets and places', Living Streets, 2018.

CDA's six point cultural vision

3. Investing in and influencing placemaking of local neighbourhoods

Princes Circus

The Princes Circus public realm scheme is the jewel in the crown and the culminating part of the West End Project, led by Camden Council. The project has delivered some improvements across the West End in the borough of Camden, including Tottenham Court Road, Gower Street, Bloomsbury Street, New Oxford Street, Charing Cross Road and Shaftesbury Avenue.

Successfully delivered and warmly received, Princes Circus removes sections of Bloomsbury Street and Shaftesbury Avenue to create a larger, traffic free public square. It improves pedestrian and cycle safety with widened footways, new crossings and routes, new seating, planting and paving. It provides areas for socialising and congregation and a much better setting for the surrounding buildings. It allows people to get out of their workplaces and spend time outdoors in a more attractive and safe setting.

The iconic Shaftesbury Theatre has also undertaken its own renovation programme. Following the completion of the Princes Circus project, this Grade II* listed building with its ornate terracotta façade dating from 1911 now opens onto a big open public space with a long bench and raised planters. To the north west, another key heritage building is the neo-Italianate Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church built in 1948, where Martin Luther King spoke in 1961 during a visit to London.

The Princes Circus public realm enhancement scheme creates a legible route to follow connecting the British Museum with nearby Covent Garden, creating a strong place character, much greater coherence and ample opportunities to stop and dwell. It feels safer, and the integrated urban design measures implemented discourage anti-social behaviour. ■

Princes Circus at St Giles
(below and right)



“Princes Circus now sits perfectly as an improved and inviting pedestrian route between Covent Garden and the British Museum and is a great example of what partnership working can achieve for residents and businesses. My particular thanks go to the Central District Alliance Business Improvement District who provided £1.5m towards the construction of the space. Their contribution alongside funding from Camden Council, Transport for London and other partners have allowed us to create a tranquil space for people in the heart of the city”.

Adam Harrison

Cabinet Member for a Sustainable Camden
Councillor, Bloomsbury ward
Deputy Leader, London Borough of Camden

“The Shaftesbury Theatre is proudly one of the flagship cultural organisations in the CDA district. The shared ambitions of sustainability, destination modelling, business solutions, public realm and placemaking are paramount as they harness the area’s rich historic legacy and dynamic cultural identity to make the area unique. CDA’s engagement to create a civic and built environment that serves the local communities, businesses, residents and visitors of all ages and backgrounds is second to none and essential in making the district the best in London”.

James Williams

Chief Executive
The Shaftesbury Theatre
(210 Shaftesbury Avenue, WC2H 8DP)

CDA's six point cultural vision

3. Investing in and influencing placemaking of local neighbourhoods

Roberts Place

CDA has partnered on the realisation of a temporary community parklet project instigated by Islington Council's Green Infrastructure and Highways teams. Islington and CDA are committed to increasing green space in the borough, and to supporting more resilient and sociable shared spaces for everyone.

The Roberts Place pocket park project at the north end of Clerkenwell Close promotes nature-based, climate adaptation solutions for sustainable neighbourhoods. To date there have been few community-led greening and planting plans in the borough, and this project tests how best to create urban greening co-designed and maintained by local residents.

Roberts Place, a small dead-end road located between Exmouth Market and Farringdon, is one of 300 in the borough whose feasibility as sustainable public spaces is undergoing preliminary evaluation by Islington Council. Close to Roberts Place is the residential Clerkenwell Estate, one of six built by Peabody in the late 19th century in London to create better, more affordable homes.

Central to this innovative pilot project is an ongoing collaboration with the local tenants' and residents' group by social enterprise Yes Make who created murals on the walls of the steps at the northern end of the Place. They also facilitated the co-design of the space with group members, who in dialogue suggested different parklet ideas which were then tested out.



Food and shrub planters, Roberts Place parklet

The scheme includes seating made from reclaimed wood and planters which catch rainwater. The creation of the space has given Islington Council 'proof of concept' for co-designed local shared green spaces, enabling further demonstrator projects on the ground in other parts of the borough.

The advantage of this location is that no traffic needed to be diverted, and tenants and residents living in the Estate could play a creative role as stewards. The scheme was showcased in the London Festival of Architecture and at the EcoCity World Summit, Barbican, June 2023 (see page 26). ■

Red Lion Street

Central District Alliance and Camden Council delivered plans (initiated in 2022) to improve the public realm quality and permeability for residents, workers and visitors of the north-south routes in Holborn, Red Lion Street, Dane Street and Bedford Row. This area is known for its collection of local independent restaurants, cafes and pubs.

At Red Lion Street, historically the setting of a market, the improvements support pedestrians with wider pavements and cyclists with a new dedicated 30m zone and a through-traffic restriction. Bedford Row is also improved with a pavement extension, restricted motor traffic movements, new benches, planting and cycle stands.

These measures foster a better interplay between the public realm and the local retail experience of the area, which is now a more pleasant place to travel through, meet and spend time in. ■

CDA's six point cultural vision

3. Investing in and influencing placemaking of local neighbourhoods

Clerkenwell Green

Clerkenwell Green is one of Islington's oldest public spaces, and the first built structures there date back to the 12th century.

The Green has a strong history as a centre of radicalism, associated with globally noted figures such as

John Stuart Mill, William Morris, Vladimir Lenin and Thomas Paine. Public meetings were held by the Chartists and May Day parades used to begin here.

The Green also features in Charles Dickens' 1839 novel *Oliver Twist*. Amongst the crowds at its busy market, Fagin and the Artful Dodger



introduce Oliver to pickpocketing on their behalf, and Saffron Hill, close by, is where Fagin had his den. Today, Clerkenwell Green has been transformed into a greener, more welcoming environment and identifiable neighbourhood centre, an Islington Council scheme made possible in part by financial support from CDA.

The upgrades to the space make the area quieter, easier and safer for people to walk, cycle, use buggies

and wheelchairs to get about. They also enhance the setting of the area's historic buildings.

CDA contributed to the sustainable urban drainage elements via rain gardens, porous paving and new planting. Some new trees have been planted and more space created resulting from the removal of car parking bays. A key to the success of the Clerkenwell Green scheme has been the quality of the community engagement undertaken. ■

St John's Garden

Islington Council, Friends of St John's Garden and CDA are collaborating to deliver a landscape scheme enhancing St John's Garden on Benjamin Street, five minutes from Farringdon Station. The small park in what is a dense urban area is regarded as a little oasis of calm in the city.

The scheme helps the Garden to become a more welcoming place to relax and socialise, and enhances the historic woodland character of the garden, while delivering on Islington and Camden Council's Parks for Health Strategy¹² which highlights four key priorities to guide future investment.

These include increasing physical activity and mental health and wellbeing, through access to green space with richer planting, wildlife/ biodiversity and amenities to achieve a designated status as Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SNC); reducing social isolation and health inequalities, through



support for green space amenities and programming, prioritised in areas of need. The Garden was used as a burial ground in the early 1700s until 1853, when it was closed, after which it became neglected, and encroached on by local industrial workshops and a gin distillery. In 1885 it was laid out as an ornamental public garden, with trees, flower beds and a dovecote, designed by the landscape gardener J. Forsyth Johnson.

Green spaces became increasingly vital as London densified from the 1880s, and this remains the case

today as residents and workers in a bustling urban environment rely on a local green oasis for respite, relaxation and play. The St John's Garden scheme is widely admired for fostering community-led health and wellbeing programmes.

The project, delivered in phases, aims to be responsive to history, and has involved engagement with local stakeholders such as the Order of St John, addressing questions including through storytelling-led planting, for example. ■

12. Camden and Islington Parks for Health Strategy 2022-2030.

4. Partnering for positive change



AI & digital technologies – CDA Business Breakfast, Bounce Clerkenwell, Sept 2023 (top left and right)



London Festival of Architecture 2023, 'Walking the City – an archi-crawl'



Collaborating on ESG in 2023 – Business Breakfast, The Shaftesbury Theatre, 2023

CDA plays a diverse role as a strategic partner, with multiple cultural and community benefits. These include capital investment to improve the public realm, building active engagement in culture, and fostering exchange on the sustainable development of businesses.

CDA partners with diverse stakeholders across the public, private and third sectors and the wider community.

“The support of CDA has been immensely helpful to Bloomsbury Festival over the last three years. It links us with the wider business community and keeps us abreast of the bigger cultural and creative conversations about the area, as well as providing very practical support and funding for festival activities. But what stands out is the team who enable a very friendly and helpful partnership which we value greatly”

Rosemary Richards
Festival Director
Bloomsbury Festival

CDA's six point cultural vision

4. Partnering for positive change

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) were initiated in the UK in the early 2000s, and there are now 65 in central London alone and 300 nationally. A growing number of them have evolved to become powerful allies for culture.

In this role, “BIDs have helped to generate funding, broker useful partnerships and improve local areas”, wrote the authors of ‘Improving Places, Culture and Business Improvement Districts: Thriving Partnerships’, a 2017 report commissioned by the Arts Council and the Mayor of London.¹³

As strategic partners to public sector bodies including local authorities, Transport for London and the GLA, BIDs provide vital added value in neighbourhoods across the city, helping to empower them by supporting positive changes locally, advocating for business communities, and lobbying on issues affecting their members.

CDA consistently tries to foster strategic partnerships with a diverse range of stakeholders across the public, private and third sectors and the wider community. This is vital to support and advance targeted cultural activities and to maximise their benefits in the district and beyond for a range of projects:

- By partnering with local businesses staging leading cultural events, including working with local people as ambassadors and volunteers, CDA helps build active engagement in culture, fostering valuable new opportunities for wider awareness, socialising and building skills of lifelong value. Collaboration with cultural organisations in the district enables all parties to promote civic pride, boost the economy, develop placemaking, branding and legibility and to address local challenges together.

“Local challenges require local solutions – and partnerships that reflect those unique situations”.

– Improving Places, Culture and Business Improvement Districts – Thriving Partnerships, Mayor of London, Arts Council of England with King’s College London, 2017.¹⁴

- Through CDA’s partnerships with local councils Camden and Islington on major public realm improvement projects, its investment is being targeted where it is most needed and makes the biggest difference to the area (See 3. Investing in and influencing placemaking of local neighbourhoods for details).
- Well conceived community programming with a range of activities to capture social benefits is central to CDA’s engagement activities as part of its multi-stakeholder public realm projects.

This enables projects such as St John’s Garden in the borough of Islington, for example, to extend successfully from project initiation to delivery.

- CDA stages breakfast meetings where business representatives locally gather to discuss themes of mutual interest in significant venues. Recent topics have included AI and digital technologies and collaborating on ESG – Environmental, Social and Governance factors – to assess the sustainable development of businesses.

Artificial Intelligence & digital technologies – Business Breakfast

AI has the potential to shape a more sustainable and efficient business culture. It opens the door to countless new opportunities, while pinpointing the importance of upskilling workforces to manage and take advantage of emerging technologies

AI is playing a transformative role in arts and culture, in the way artists create works, and in museums, galleries and entertainment venues, for example, at Outernet London (see page 35), where it is fostering co-created and immersive visitor experiences. The Sloane Lab project, a collaboration between the British Museum, Natural History Museum and the British Library, is researching the role of AI and related digital tools to help broaden the public’s digital interaction with the UK’s national collections.

The CDA Business Breakfast held at Bounce, Farringdon, in Sept 2023, chaired by Alexander Jan, Chair of CDA, with concluding remarks by Debbie Akehurst, CDA’s CEO, featured keynote speaker Anil Doshi, Assistant Professor, UCL School of Management, focussed on AI and its opportunities.

The panel line up also included Will Durden, Founding Director, Momentum Transport Consultancy and Jasbir Sondhi, Vice President of Capital City College Group. Underlining one way in which digital technologies enhance business operations, Dylan O’Reilly, Sales Director at ARHT joined the panel as a hologram live from ARHT’s Capture Studio in Hammersmith, and those present were able to fully engage with him as if he was really there!

Collaborating on ESG in 2023 – Business Breakfast

At The Shaftesbury Theatre’s new event space, The 1911, CDA presented the environmental and social projects it has delivered in the past year. The audience heard how CDA can assist businesses on achieving their ESG goals, including opportunities for involvement with CDA’s various education, training and social value programmes and initiatives.

Speakers including Cllr Santiago Bell-Bradford, Executive Member for Inclusive Economy and Jobs at Islington Council, and Pru Ashby, Head of Sustainability at London & Partners, discussed pan-London and borough perspectives on achieving progress with ESG goals while serving the local community.

13. November 2017.

14. Ibid.

CDA's six point cultural vision

4. Partnering for positive change

The panel, chaired by Alexander Jan, included Sefinat Otaru, Project Manager, Cross River Partnership, Kurt Hintz, Executive Principal, Capital City College Group and Mark Shearer, CEO, ActionFunder. Highlighted the work CDA's partners are doing in the capital as catalysts for sustainable leadership, collaboration and partnership.

All participants were given a tour of The Shaftesbury Theatre by Chief Executive James Williams, who explained the renovations and sustainability measures recently undertaken at the theatre.

Some of the cultural bodies CDA partners with:

Bloomsbury Festival

The Bloomsbury Festival, inaugurated in 2006, illuminates Bloomsbury's rich tapestry of academic, cultural, and diverse community life making it a beacon of creativity and innovation in arts, culture and science. Celebrated every October, this vibrant event spans ten days, featuring over 130 activities including music, theatre, exhibitions and workshops across various venues, inspired by themes that change annually. It fosters unique collaborations between artists, scientists, academics and the community, underpinned by support from institutions including the CDA. The 2023 festival, themed 'Grow,' offered a diverse programme highlighting Bloomsbury's enduring legacy as a cradle of pioneering ideas and cultural richness.

London Festival of Architecture

The London Festival of Architecture (LFA), established in 2004, is a city-wide celebration of architectural innovation, held every June to foster discussion, showcase new ideas, and promote emerging talent within the capital's built environment sector. The 2023 festival theme, 'In Common', emphasized sustainable urban living, community involvement, and the development of greener, more resilient spaces. Clerkenwell and Holborn were spotlighted for their architectural significance and contributions to public realm enhancements, reflecting LFA's commitment to reimagining city spaces for active citizenship and sustainable development. Partnerships with local councils and private sectors highlighted projects aimed at revitalizing public spaces, such as Clerkenwell Green and Roberts Place, enhancing the city's landscape through collaborative design and community engagement. Celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2024, LFA continues to inspire a reimagined future for London's urban environment.

Clerkenwell Design Week

Clerkenwell Design Week, inaugurated in 2009, has evolved into the UK's premier free design festival, attracting over 37,000 attendees in 2023, marking its highest participation rate. Celebrated in Clerkenwell, a district renowned for its creative and architectural excellence, the festival showcases over 600 events, including showroom displays, curated exhibitions, and various installations. Highlights from the 2023 festival encompassed a diverse range of venues like the Crypt on the Green and the Museum of the Order of St John, featuring contributions from over 160 local showrooms and brands such as Fritz Hansen and Carl Hansen & Søn. The Clerkenwell Design Trail further encouraged exploration and engagement with the area's rich design heritage through workshops, talks, and product showcases, underlining Clerkenwell's status as a focal point for innovation in design and architecture.

Theatre for Every Child campaign – CDA, The Shaftesbury Theatre and Hugh Myddelton Primary School

The Theatre for Every Child campaign, a collaboration between CDA, The Shaftesbury Theatre, and Hugh Myddelton Primary School in Clerkenwell, aims to ensure every child in the UK has the chance to attend a theatre performance before finishing school. This initiative, led by The Society of London Theatre and UK Theatre, focuses on exposing children and young people to the enriching experience of live performances, advocating the belief that access to the country's premier theatre experiences is a fundamental right for all children. Hugh Myddelton Primary School, located in Islington—one of London's most densely populated and economically challenged boroughs—supports this campaign, aligning with its commitment to providing outstanding education and enriching cultural experiences to its students.

Phoenix Theatre

CDA is in early-stage discussions with the Phoenix Theatre on Charing Cross Road in the West End (borough of Camden) about delivering workshops for young people from minority ethnic communities. Experience of participating in the workshops will inspire and spark interest in becoming part of a potential future workforce in the world of theatre and performance. The project aims to help address skill shortages that exist within these sectors. ■

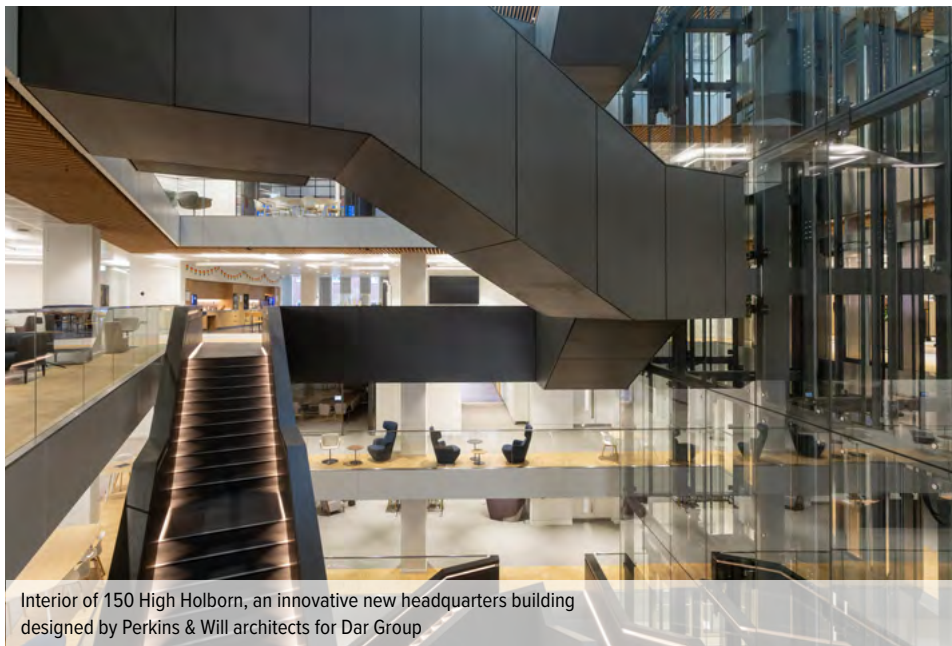
5. Fostering creative business growth and connected networks across sectors



Exploring the building's design



'Living Lab' tour of the building led by Perkins & Will



Interior of 150 High Holborn, an innovative new headquarters building designed by Perkins & Will architects for Dar Group



'Greening the Public Realm' presentation at Princes Circus, hosted by CDA, Camden Council with Idverde and LDA

CDA is an advocate for the social value of culture and the creative industries and their benefits to the district's whole business ecosystem.

'Living Lab' and 'Greening the Public Realm' were two of a number of events CDA partnered on with the London Festival of Architecture in 2023 showcasing new innovative sustainable multidisciplinary design in the district.

CDA's six point cultural vision

5. Fostering creative business growth and connected networks across sectors

Fostering creative and responsible business growth and connected networks across sectors is a vital means to futureproof the sustainable quality of life of the CDA district. It lends more across-the-board resilience during challenging times to all its businesses, employees, visitor and the wider environment.

“London’s world-leading arts and creative industries contribute £58bn to the wider UK economy every year, creating countless jobs and providing unique opportunities for artists and cultural workers”.

Sadiq Khan,
Mayor of London¹⁵

Particularly now during a time of acute change, the full value to society of the creative industries in the UK needs to be more widely appreciated. CDA promotes stronger recognition of the sector’s role in the thriving of the district.

In 2021, there were 795,000 people employed in the creative industries in London across a wide range of occupation classifications, according to the Office for National Statistics, compared with 462,000 in 2010.¹⁶ Many of the organisations they work for continue to recover from the pandemic. They provide extensive social value to audiences, local, national and global.

The creative industries are known to boost London’s economy by £58bn with an estimated £40bn spent within their supply chain – boosting a wide range of other sectors, according to the ‘Creative Supply Chains’ study (2019) commissioned by City Hall.¹⁷

CDA is a strong proponent of a vibrant interdependency between all businesses in the local ecosystem, and of finding opportunities to promote mutually rewarding relationships.

These support training and skills development opportunities for individuals, mentoring, investment, philanthropy and patronage, health and wellbeing, including the sense of meaning and belonging which stem from culture’s innate language of creativity. ■

“For the UK arts sector to continue to thrive, all individuals and organisations involved should recognise its dynamics as an ecosystem and look for opportunities to strengthen the connections upon which its health depends”.

McKinsey & Company

‘The arts in the UK: Seeing the big picture’
report, November 2023.¹⁸

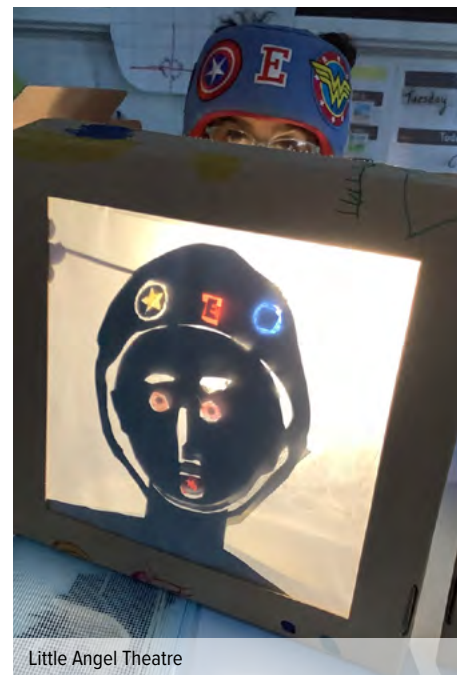
15. Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London, London Borough of Culture Prospectus 2023, GLA, 2023.

16. ‘Jobs in the creative economy in London and in other regions of the UK, 2010–2021’, Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2021. Total jobs in the non-creative industries in London, 2021: 4,582,000.

17. ‘The Creative Supply Chains Study’, part of the Cultural Infrastructure Plan, Mayor of London, GLA, 2019.

18. ‘The arts in the UK: Seeing the big picture. A perspective on how to gauge and sustain the UK arts sector’s full impact’, McKinsey & Company, November 2023.

6. Grant funding local community arts activities



CDA is committed to Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) goals as a means to help create a sustainable, inclusive and well-governed district. Support for arts and culture is an essential part of this.

Engagement with arts and culture promotes the health and wellbeing of communities. The Holborn Community Association's art programme focuses on arts activities for children and young people, outreach and wellbeing, The Little Angel Theatre, puppetry for children to develop their social interaction and communication skills, and Be the Band creates music-making opportunities for all.

CDA's six point cultural vision

6. Grant funding local community arts activities

Action Funder grants

Through CDA's annual Action Funder grants, the BID supports grassroots charities and non-profit organisations in the local community. In 2023 ten grants were made. Six of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals for People, for Planet (SDG) adopted by all UN Member States in 2015¹⁹ are used to guide awards, covering mental health & wellbeing, poverty and homelessness, education & employment, physical health, food action and arts & culture:

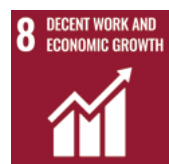
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages.



SDG 4: Quality Education – ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.



SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth – promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.



SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities – make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.



SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.



SDG 17: Partnership for the Goals – strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

The recipients of the 2023 CDA Action Funder grants for community projects including art and culture are:

The Remix Dance project - community cohesion and young people's development through dance is a free community street dance programme in Camden delivering weekly street dance classes and performance opportunities to local children from the Regents Park Estate and neighbouring areas.

The scheme has involved over 500 local children, young people and families from over 25 different cultural backgrounds, many of whom do not otherwise socialise together outside of the school environment.

The Little Angel Theatre in Islington has used puppetry to create and share inspiring stories – igniting the imaginations of the youngest minds – since opening its doors in 1961. CDA's Action Funder grant enabled the theatre company to run an after-school puppet club.

The children attending will learn creative expression through puppetry and develop their social interaction and communication skills, teamwork and confidence. The Little Angel Theatre's participant demographic is children from income deprived households, 50% of them eligible for free school meals and 40% with English as an additional language.

Be the Band is a social enterprise that creates group music-making opportunities for all. It works in a variety of settings, with a strong emphasis on supporting children and adults with special educational needs and disabilities, ranging from one-off taster days to multi-week programmes building to a final performance. Be the Band provides all the equipment necessary for young people to practice.

Be the Band was founded because young people are at times deprived of access to the arts and music education. Music participation can have a huge impact on the outcome of young people's lives, with people who play musical instruments demonstrably achieving better results at school, and demonstrating improved social skills, better focus and concentration than their peers, all of which lead to better life outcomes.

The Be the Band project aims to break down the barriers stopping people from becoming musicians by enabling young people to play familiar songs in a band setting.

19. The Sustainable Development Goals are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere. The 17 Goals were adopted by all UN Member States in 2015, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which set out a 15-year plan to achieve the Goals.

CDA's six point cultural vision

6. Grant funding local community arts activities



'From Top to Toe: the Growing Body' UCL Centre for Medical Image Computing at the Discovery Hub, Holborn Library, Bloomsbury Festival, October 2023

Promoting health and wellbeing through culture

The connections forged between arts and cultural organisations, their enabling partners and programmes and the wellbeing of communities who use and visit them, are highly influential in improving emotional and mental wellbeing.

Part of the psychological boosts afforded by cultural experiences stem from the pleasure people take in developing new skills and interacting with others in ways that stimulate shared insights, debate and further creative pursuits. Furthermore, they nurture curiosity, engender a sense of fulfilment, improve self-confidence, and support improved educational outcomes through acquired 'creative habits of mind' – being imaginative, inquisitive, persistent, collaborative and disciplined.²⁰

Taking part in cultural activities entails stepping out of personal comfort zones. It helps to break down perceived barriers, and facilitate fresh discoveries, allowing people to see things differently, including the areas and communities in which they live, work or are visiting – and more keenly perceive potentials for change and improvement.

A major local ongoing research initiative by Bloomsbury-based University College London's Division of Biosciences and its Arts and Sciences programme on this topic is one of the biggest studies in the UK to date designed to systematically investigate the links between arts and culture organisations and the wellbeing of the communities who visit and use them.²¹

To advance good practice, under Professor Helen Chatterjee's direction, 12 regionally distributed funded research projects are investigating how cultural, natural and community assets can be used to improve mental and physical health outcomes in communities affected by inequalities. This scenario applies to the boroughs of Camden and Islington, whose communities each face the challenges of a widened gap between the richest and poorest residents.

The UCL research informs the outreach and practice of cultural bodies including museums and government policy through the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Arts, Health and Wellbeing. ■

20. 'Teaching for creativity using the five creative habits of mind at primary and secondary', discussing the Arts Council of England's Creativity Collaboratives networks pilot, 2021-24, testing teaching approaches and curriculum development, Ruth Brown, Ryan Longstaff, Nia Richards, Impact Journal, 9 May 2023.

21. Professor Helen Chatterjee, 'Building the evidence base for culture, nature and community-based approaches to health and wellbeing', UCL, UCL Division of Biosciences and UCL Arts & Sciences programme, 2022, ongoing.

Supporting visitor growth

The district is seeing a welcome upturn in visitors and its cultural venues are benefitting.



The CDA district has been experiencing a welcome increase since last year in visitors coming to stay for business and leisure and to experience its many varied cultural venues, following the dramatic fall off in numbers during the pandemic. This is in line with the picture across the capital city, with the latest figures from RSM Hotel Tracker showing occupancy rates in London hotels up from 76.7 per cent to 80.4 per cent in June 2023.²²

Furthermore, the reputation of London's culture and the arts sectors is a key motivation behind the return of international tourists to visit the capital city, while the



Tottenham Court Road station entrance on St Giles Square (top left)

Public realm approach to Farringdon underground station (top right)

cultural offer of the UK as a whole is a draw for 73% of respondents to a survey undertaken in 80 countries²³.

London was ranked first out of 48 cities in the 2023 Global Power City Index (GPCI, an annual evaluation since 2008). GPCI's multidimensional rankings assess six urban functions: economy, research & development, cultural interaction (in which London was ranked 1st place), liveability, environment and accessibility.²⁴

Since early 2022, there has been a rise of 152% in attendances at London's visitor attractions, including a 209% rise in visits to the British Museum.

Across the UK, museums and galleries have seen the strongest growth of all types of visitor attraction types, with an overall increase of 158% in footfall, while heritage and cathedral sites have seen a 55% overall rise, according to the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA)²⁵.

The period of recovery across the wider arts and culture sector is proving to be a slow process, however. During lockdown, it experienced the second-largest reduction in monthly GVA (Gross Value Added), according to the 2023 report, 'The arts in the UK: Seeing the big picture', which states that "while audience levels have picked up, revenues haven't, as organisations cannot bring prices into line with rising costs. Arts organisations, funders, and policymakers all face difficult prioritisation choices when budgets are tight".²⁶

This scenario makes close collaboration and partnership across the whole culture and arts business ecosystem all the more important. CDA is determined to maintain its influence in forging common goals to support higher levels of visitor attendances and community participation. ■

22. 'London tourism 'roaring back' amid visitor surge', Noah Vickers and Jonathan Prynn, Evening Standard, 1 August 2023.

23. McKinsey analysis of the dataset for travel trends, Office for National Statistics, 2022, May 2023, cited in 'The arts in the UK: Seeing the big picture. A perspective on how to gauge and sustain the UK arts sector's full impact', McKinsey & Company, November 2023.

24. 'Global Power City Index 2023, Institute of Urban Strategies, Mori Memorial Foundation, December 2023, referenced by McKinsey, op cit.

25. Visits made in 2022 to Visitor Attractions in Membership with ALVA, ALVA, 2023.

26. 'The arts in the UK: Seeing the big picture. A perspective on how to gauge and sustain the UK arts sector's full impact', McKinsey & Company, November 2023.

The impact of the Elizabeth line

The faster journey times of the Elizabeth line have hugely improved mobility and connectivity between London's neighbourhoods, supporting local economies and the quality of life of millions of people.

The launch of the Elizabeth line, a new kind of railway not experienced before in London, in May 2022, after over 10 years' engineering and construction work and resilient public-private sector partnership, has enabled a huge rise in travelling public. The line has also brought major benefits to the CDA district.

Connecting 41 stations from Essex to Heathrow Airport, the line is now one of the UK's busiest railways and its most popular, accounting for one in six of all rail journeys made in the UK²⁷, with around 600,000 daily journeys on most weekdays – more than 3.5 million people a week – using the service, well above the two million forecast.²⁸ Journeys are made more accessible to all, including through step-free access from street to platform.

Now available for use seven days a week, the Elizabeth line has “provided a massive boost to London's businesses this year, crucial after the pandemic. This is helping us to continue building a better London for everyone – a city that is fairer, greener and more prosperous for all”, said the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, in winter 2022.²⁹ It brought people to central London's cultural attractions, shops, bars and restaurants, on which thousands of jobs and the capital's economy depends.

With their fast trains and spacious, coolly designed stations, the line has dramatically improved accessibility to central London. For example, in 20 minutes, Elizabeth line passengers can now travel from Abbey Wood (in South East London) to Farringdon, a journey that would have previously taken 39 minutes.³⁰

One of the transformational impacts has been improved mobility and connectivity between central London neighbourhoods, thanks to the much faster journey times on the line. The CDA area is ‘bookended’ to the

east and west by two of the new Elizabeth line stations. Tottenham Court Road was recently described by Andy Lord, Transport for London (TfL) Commissioner, as ‘one of the top five most used stations on the TfL network’. Farringdon station has seen a rise of 6% in workplace commuters, and is used by 280,000 people per day (Underground and Elizabeth line), an increase of 100,000 per day due to the new service.³¹

Tottenham Court Road

The coming of the Tottenham Court Road and Bond Street stations have helped to catalyse the emergence of the West End business district extending from Mayfair/ St James's to Tottenham Court Road to the east, and Paddington to the west. New best-in-class mixed use sustainable workspace schemes and urban design are key elements of the vibrant walkable areas emerging from investments in the local built environment.

Of the 41 Elizabeth line stations, 10 are bold new designs, designed by nine different international architecture studios, and Tottenham Court Road, designed by Hawkins/Brown, was the first station building to open in 2017. Its main entrance on Charing Cross Road includes an artwork by Daniel Buren, and an office and housing development above incorporating Soho Place, the West End's first new theatre for over 50 years, and an entrance on Dean Street in Soho.

Soho Place, Derwent London's £300 million regeneration project at the eastern end of Oxford Street in collaboration with Westminster City Council and Transport for London (TfL), with office and retail space, has been built above Tottenham Court Road's Tube and Elizabeth line rail interchange.

The scheme includes a new pedestrian public square,

27. Office for Road and Rail, March 2023.

28. City A.M., 24 May 2023.

29. Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London, ‘Businesses celebrate impact of Elizabeth line after six months in service’, Transport for London, 21 November 2022.

30. Ibid.

31. Transport for London, Elizabeth line Passenger Usage Insight, 25 July 2023.

The impact of the Elizabeth line

which features the art installation ‘Geology Rebuilt’ by ceramics artist Fernando Casasempere. Soho Place, the new-build theatre has also been created here on Charing Cross Road, with a 602-seat auditorium, rehearsal room, actors’ Green Room, bar, restaurant, terrace and large digital front-of-house screen on the street façade.

Some twelve museums and galleries have opened within a mile of central London Elizabeth line stations.³²

Farringdon’s new Elizabeth line station links with the upgraded Thameslink and the Metropolitan, the first ever London Underground line in an expanded transport hub.

The two Elizabeth line entrances at Farringdon are designed by Aedas, with jewellery patterned walls referencing Hatton Garden. The Barbican entrance recalls the Brutalist architecture of the Barbican estate in the City of London close to Farringdon.

Underlining the dynamic synergy locally between new transport infrastructure and business workspace culture, in 2023 a seven storey flexible workspace block, Bloom Clerkenwell, integrated with the Farringdon West station, with adaptable ground floor retail areas and landscaped roof terraces, was completed. It was designed to be a focal point for the area, one of London’s fastest growing business districts, a growing technology and media hub.

The Elizabeth line’s improved connectivity, faster travel times, reliability and more comfortable commuter experience have registered high customer satisfaction and encouraged a growth in central London employment. IWG, the workspace operator, recorded a 23% increase in the number of visits to offices along nine Elizabeth line stops since May 2022.

Some 70% of the Elizabeth line was funded by London and its businesses via the Mayoral CIL, council tax and fares. Charles Begley, Chief Executive of London Property Alliance, called the package “an example of how imaginative funding models can unlock vast infrastructure improvements and economic growth. It also took considerable leadership, vision and private and public sector collaboration to ensure its success”.³³

This rise in travel to and from the district has spurred development of pioneering office-led mixed-use development near stations, growth in jobs and has supported local businesses, including its many cultural venues. With a number of them and businesses more widely in the area still in recovery since the pandemic, the Elizabeth line has had a positive impact on dwell time locally, and enabled people to more comfortably extend their visiting times. ■



“As well as helping people to reach their destinations easier and quicker, the additional footfall this generates not only has a significant impact on London’s economy, but to the quality of lives of millions of people. The Elizabeth line is bringing more of us together to collaborate in our workplaces, to socialise in restaurants and bars, make new connections and to enjoy a show in the West End”.³⁴

Howard Smith
Director
Elizabeth line



Tottenham Court Road Elizabeth line platform (above top)

Transport for London choir performs at Farringdon station opening, 2022 (above)

32. ‘The Crossrail Effect: How the Elizabeth line is transforming the capital’, London Property Alliance (WPA & CPA), 2023.

33. Charles Begley, Chief Executive, London Property Alliance, Introduction, ‘The Crossrail Effect: How the Elizabeth line is transforming the capital’, London Property Alliance (WPA & CPA), 2023.

34. Howard Smith, Foreword, ‘The Crossrail Effect: How the Elizabeth line is transforming the capital’, London Property Alliance (WPA & CPA), 2023.



The Now Building
at Outernet London,
St Giles Square (left)

Entrance from Denmark
Street to the Now
Building at Outernet
London (Below)



Outernet London

CDA's new online Cultural Guide includes Outernet London among its 85 cultural venues in the district, which has quickly become a leading visitor attraction.

'One of the most exciting innovations in London' is how Dylan Jones, Editor in Chief of the Evening Standard described Outernet. This new high tech entertainment venue, over four storeys, is proving to be a transformative addition to the local cultural milieu at the heart of the mixed use St Giles scheme.³⁵

According to Outernet, 6.25 million people have visited the attraction in its first year to interact with impressive LED screens displaying immersive art and cultural programming daily and enjoy its facilities, making it the leading UK visitor attraction, according to the Association the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions.³⁶

Outernet London is a pioneering example of the creative application of digital technologies in public space transforming audience reach. "Think of it as London's answer to New York's Times Square, boasting three times as much screen area as Piccadilly Circus, and right in the spot where Soho meets the shiny new Elizabeth line bringing visitors pouring into central London', wrote an Evening Standard reporter.³⁷

The facilities at Outernet London includes three performance venues and exhibition space, Chateau Denmark, a boutique hotel and hospitality offers, and a public atrium with 23,000 square feet of giant screens wrapping around The Now Building, its centrepiece. This open space hosts live events alongside live performance bars such as The Lower Third. There are also plans for a recording studio for students at the BRIT school.

The St Giles Outernet mixed-use scheme reinvents Denmark Street – 'Tin Pan Alley' – famous since the 1950s for its music shops, publishers and recording studios where musical luminaries such as David Bowie, the Rolling Stones and the Sex Pistols worked on their hits. ■

35. 'Look up! How our iconic front page is due to be broadcast across London's version of Times Square', Katie Strick, Evening Standard, 20 July 2023.

36. 'Outernet now London's most visited tourist attraction', Tracey Boles, The Times, 7 December 2023.

[thetimes.co.uk/article/outernet-now-londons-most-visited-tourist-attraction-77rwqqzv3](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/outernet-now-londons-most-visited-tourist-attraction-77rwqqzv3)

37. 'Look up! How our iconic front page is due to be broadcast across London's version of Times Square', Katie Strick, Evening Standard, 20 July 2023.

Conclusions

Culture and the creative industries play a leading role in the quality of life experienced in the district. As a Business Improvement District, CDA is proactive in supporting their vibrancy and resilience to benefit all who live or work locally, and visit the area.

The wealth of cultural initiatives realised through CDA's partnership in the district highlighted in this Cultural Prospectus emphasises the multiple ways in which the BID continues to be proactive in enabling meaningful collaborations of the highest calibre supporting local quality of life and business prosperity.

Culture and the creative industries play a critical role in the wider ecosystem of businesses and social initiatives across the whole of London fostering synergies impacting the sustainability of the capital city. Always evolving, they are an integral part of the identities of the neighbourhoods of Bloomsbury, St Giles, Holborn, Clerkenwell and Farringdon, bringing significant benefits.

That said, there remains considerable scope – and the need – to scale up and support worthwhile creative activities to meet growing needs.

In today's complex world, intelligent partnership is the best way the cultural scene of the district can continue to go from strength to strength, enriching and nurturing the supportive foundations of community life locally, benefitting everyone working and living here or visiting.

CDA's activities aim to encourage existing as well as prospective business tenants to recognise the advantages of basing themselves locally, and in turn supporting employee retention and recruitment.

This Cultural Prospectus is designed to raise awareness of what CDA has achieved in the fields of culture, cultural heritage and the creative industries, and who is involved. At the same time it aims to give readers insight into the array of projects, programmes and collaboration taking place as well. We hope it encourages you to play an active role in developing future possibilities to further support the cultural life of the CDA district. ■



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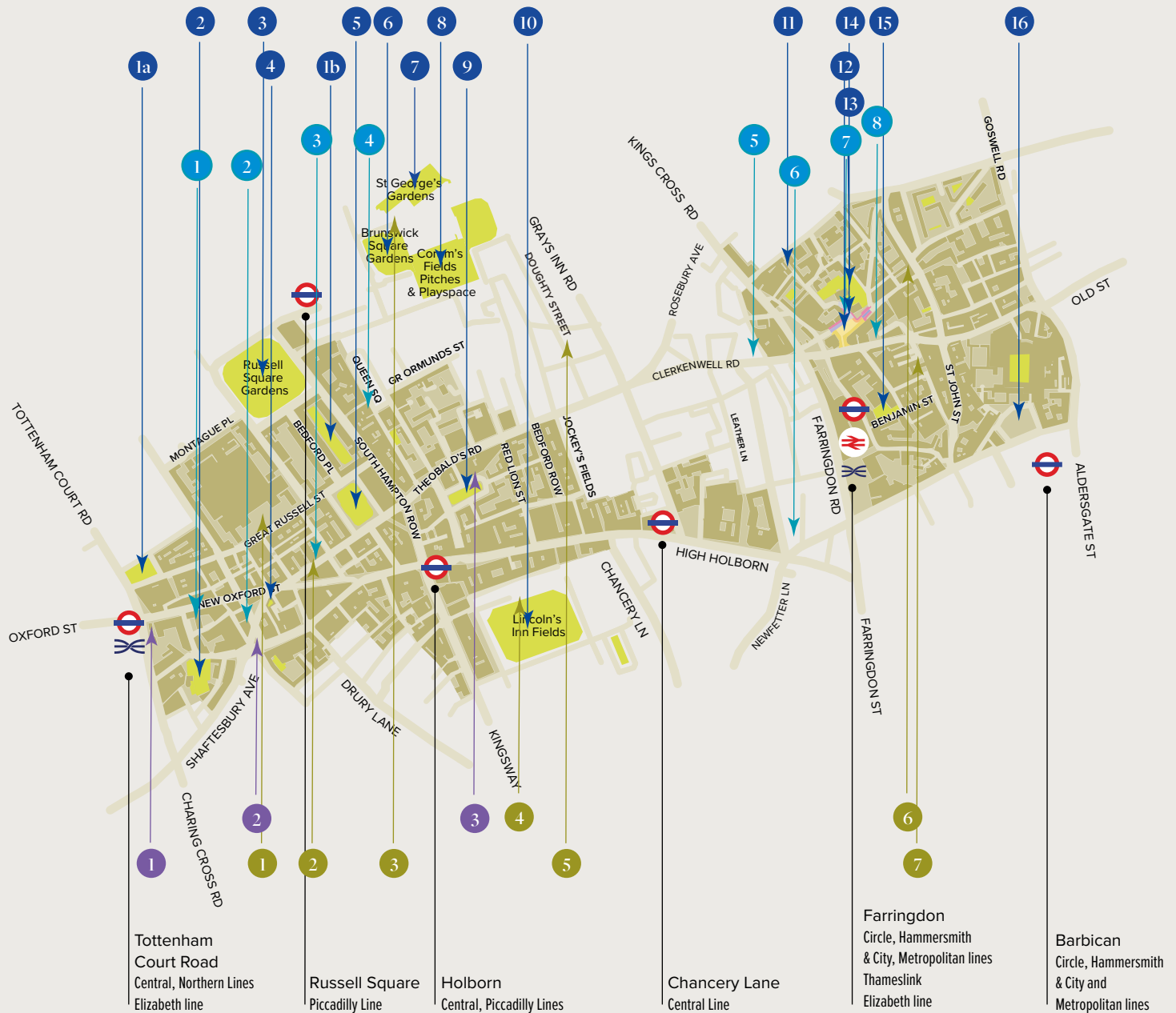
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Cultural Guide

A selection of some of the venues included

GREEN SPACES/PUBLIC REALM

- 1a Bedford Square Garden
- 1a Montague Street Garden
- 2 Phoenix Garden
- 3 Russell Square Gardens
- 4 Princes Circus
- 5 Bloomsbury Square Gardens
- 6 Brunswick Square Gardens
- 7 St George's Gardens
- 8 Coram's Fields Pitches & playspace
- 9 Red Lion Square Garden
- 10 Lincoln's Inn Fields
- 11 Spa Fields
- 12 Robert's Place
- 13 Clerkenwell Green
- 14 Saint John's Gardens
- 15 St James's Church Garden
- 16 The Charterhouse

MULTI-FAITH PLACES OF WORSHIP

- 1 St Giles in the Field
- 2 Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church
- 3 St George's Church Bloomsbury
- 4 St George the Martyr
- 5 St Peter's Italian Catholic Church
- 6 St. Etheldreda's RC Church
- 7 St James Church, Clerkenwell
- 8 St Johns Priory Church

MUSEUMS

- 1 British Museum
- 2 Museum of Comedy
- 3 The Foundling Museum
- 4 Sir John Soanes Museum
- 5 Charles Dickens Museum
- 6 Islington Museum
- 7 Museum of the Order of St John

THEATRES, CONCERT HALLS & ENTERTAINMENT VENUES

- 1 Outernet London
- 2 Shaftesbury Theatre
- 3 Conway Hall

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

PARTNER WITH CDA

Anyone wishing to discuss with Central District Alliance a partnership they have in mind to enable cultural alliances and programming of benefit to the district is strongly encouraged to get in touch.

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CHECK OUT CDA'S CULTURAL GUIDE

centraldistrictalliance.com



PROPOSE A CULTURAL VENUE IN THE DISTRICT

If you would like to propose a cultural venue in the district you run and/or enjoy attending for the next update of CDA's online Cultural Guide, please contact info@centraldistrictalliance.com with details.

APPLY FOR A CDA ACTION FUNDER GRANT

CDA's annual Action Funder grants support grassroots charities and non-profit organisations in the local community. See page X for further details. To obtain details of how to apply, contact: info@centraldistrictalliance.com

SUBSCRIBE TO THE CDA NEWSLETTER

Keep up with all the news and events within the district by subscribing to the CDA newsletter: centraldistrictalliance.com



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