

Covent Garden, Westminster

This particular entertainment zone as we know it began in 1631 as the first experiment in London of formal town planning. The plan, by Inigo Jones, inspired by the Italian Renaissance and the architecture of Palladio, included the creation of the first public square in the country for the Duke of Bedford. The piazza and surrounding formal grid of streets were revolutionary to Londoners, who were used to haphazard arrangements of winding streets, alleyways and courtyards.

It is a historic treasure, comprising the Piazza, the market buildings, its tributary streets and alleyways. The character of the piazza is derived from the unique historic layout of the market and the adjoining streets. The central piazza is pedestrianised, enlivened by alfresco dining and street performance. It contains cultural treasures such as the London Transport museum which opens late and the Royal Opera House. It is bordered by the Strand and Aldwych, Holborn, Leicester Square and Trafalgar Square.

Covent Garden has a low and reducing level of crime compared to the large number of visitors - there are over 850,000 visitors to the Central Market area per week, The CivicWatch/ Safer Neighbourhoods framework provides a co-ordinated information sharing, intelligence-led tasking and problem solving process to tackle crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime.

The Assessors and Panel were impressed by particular strengths, including:

- » The efficient and well-resourced enforcement regime
- » The 24 hour cleansing and the overall cleanliness of the streets
- » Westminster's Civic Watch programme

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