2.[4] That was the Castle Inn, a coaching inn built on a traditional side plan with a long yard and stables behind. It may have taken its name from a small fort sited hereabouts during the hasty fortification of London in 1642–3.[5]

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

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

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

The Oxford twice burnt down, on 11 February 1868 and 1 November 1872. Both times a fire probably started in the balcony, fanned into a blaze in the early hours of the morning, burnt out the auditorium and caused the roof to collapse but spared the surrounding spaces. Both restorations appear to have been undertaken by Paraire, working again with Holland & Hannen. The first was largely a reinstatement, but in 1873 the apse gave way to a

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

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

In 1884–5 the hall came under the scrutiny of the Metropolitan Board of Works' campaign to improve theatre safety. Various changes were

along with Frank Kirk as builder. Under pressure to reopen, the latter executed the job at top speed in 1892–3.[36]

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

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

his first public lectures about the Tutenkhamen tomb discovery. But the debt on the theatre was never paid off, and turned out to be by far Cochran's biggest liability (£98,000) when he was declared bankrupt in 1925.[44] He settled by passing it to the J. Lyons empire, for which he had recently begun supplying cabaret entertainment at the Trocadero, Leicester Square. In that way the New Oxford became earmarked as the site for a new Lyons corner house, and shut its doors in May 1926.

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

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

The Lyons company had been founded in 1887 as an offshoot of Salmon & Gluckstein, a family-owned firm of tobacconists in a large way of

the former Star Brewery. By 1887 the brewery had been acquired by a speculating mine owner, R. B. Lavery, on whose behalf a builder, J. Evans, applied to erect shops and offices at Nos 26–28. Briefly that scheme was superseded by a plan for a music-hall-type ‘theatre and opera house’, for which the theatrical manager and entrepreneur Andrew Melville was to act with Lavery as sponsor. Designs for this so-called New Oxford Street Theatre came from the Birmingham architects Essex & Nicol, with whom Melville had been working in the Midlands. Two versions were sent in to the Metropolitan Board of Works in quick succession during the summer of 1887. The first included a show front in Franco-Flemish style towards Oxford Street and a three-tiered, east-facing auditorium behind with a refreshment room and promenade serving each floor. The revised version, incorporating better exits and more up-to-date iron construction for the roof and cantilevered balconies,

under the management of Thomas Hamp as a large-scale establishment for the professional classes. In the mid 1880s the hotelier Frederick Gordon bought the Holborn and doubled it in size.[59] Hamp remained in charge, and probably initiated the acquisition of Frascati's. At any rate a company under his name was responsible for minor decorative alterations early in 1893.[60] These were limited, the essential arrangements and décor having been created by the Krasnapolsky designers. The facilities at this stage consisted of two large billiard rooms in the Oxford Street basement, a buffet and marble-lined grill room on the ground floor above, and the large domed winter garden behind. To one side was an elliptical alcove, perhaps for the orchestra, and on the other a kitchen. Two ample curving stairs led up to balcony level, where the Alpha Saloon occupied half of the front. Above again were an opulent Banqueting Hall and the earliest of what was to be a series of masonic rooms. But the winter garden was the space everyone remembered. 'There are gold and silver everywhere', noted the restaurant critic Col. Newnham-Davis:

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

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

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

the late 1890s and became his partner in 1906. After Collcutt's retirement Hamp updated Frascati's in an effort at Empire style. The York Room came first (1920–1). Recasting the interiors facing Oxford Street followed in 1927, when Hamp created a spacious new foyer and pepped up the dour brick frontage with gilt metalwork, electric lighting and a glass valance over the entrance. Godson & Sons were once again the builders for this work, with decorative panels by Eleanor Abbey and plaster relief panels by Percy Bentham.[65] Collcutt & Hamp added a small extra building to expand the service accommodation of Frascati's on the north side of Hanway Street, at No. 18, in 1925.[66]

Though the restaurant was re-equipped after the Second World War, once again under Collcutt & Hamp, it closed in 1954.[67] The Land Securities Investment Trust bought the premises and hired Fitzroy Robinson & Hubert H. Bull, architects, to adapt them to a mixture of commercial uses. The conversion took place mainly in 1957. The front building at 26–32 Oxford Street was reclad with a modern front and divided between shops on the ground floor and a language school above. The great domed space behind survived in carcase, concealed from sight. Floored over and shorn of all ornament, its upper level became open to the upper

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

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

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

No. 48 at the corner with Hanway Place probably dates from 1903, to judge from a plaque on the lower return front. It is in a gawky brick style with stone dressings and a central bay window on the upper storeys. It appears to have at first been occupied by the clothing trade. Alterations were made to the building in 1912–13.

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

The frontage was soon commercialized. In 1784, when the numbering ran east-west from 22 to 29, a directory shows a mix of tradesmen operating here: a goldsmith and jeweller, a grocer and tea-dealer (on the site of or in front of Thomas Rathbone's former house), and then west of Rathbone Place a linen draper, an upholsterer and a chinaman. The chinaman at the former No. 27, Thomas Baldwin, carried on until his death in 1814, naming as his chief executor a better-known Oxford Street chinaman, John Mortlock, suggesting a connection between the businesses.[75] At No. 25 between 1797 and 1803 were

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

The early death in 1894 of Henry Gaisford Gotto, from the second generation of owners, who slipped and fell while walking down Fitzjohn's Avenue, Hampstead, seems to have curtailed Parkins & Gotto's expansion. In the Edwardian period they sold their Oxford Street and Rathbone Place site, by then Nos 54–62, and downsized to No. 96 further west, finally ending up at No. 167.[81]

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

At all events this was a straightforward Edwardian project of ground-floor shops and suites of offices to let on the upper storeys, exceptional only for the expense and quality of its external architecture. The plan was deep and incorporated a small central light court.[82] The structure is in part steel-framed, using steel supplied by Archibald D. Dawnay. The elevations, attributable to Holden, show all his talent for conferring weight and plasticity on Portland stone fronts with only implied reference to the classical orders. Distinguishing touches are the treatment of the first floor along Oxford Street as a French-style semi-circular mezzanine, and the skilful piling-up of the two attic storeys. There are elegant iron balconies, supplied by the Birmingham Guild, to the second-floor windows above these arches, and even after countless changes of shop front the delicate detail of the frames and of the marble surround to the original office entrance at No. 62 can still be savoured.[83] Some internal alterations were undertaken in 1934–5 by George Hubbard & Son, architects, in connection with the expansion of Fleming's Restaurant next door at No. 68.[84]

West of Evelyn House comes Nos 64–66, a shallow stone-faced building with a central bay, designed in a lively, late Queen Anne style by E. Keynes Purchase and built by H. & E. Lea in 1905–6.[85]

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

When the business first arrived at No. 68 around 1903, it took only the ground floor and basement of premises probably built by the Capital and Counties Bank about thirty years before, in sober mid-Victorian brickwork with stucco dressings and a good crowning entablature. The restaurant shared the premises with other users, including S. B. Bolas, the architectural photographers. The firm of Thonet, the famous furniture makers, had then just moved their London office across to 43 Oxford Street.[87] Flemings soon added a branch at No. 307 further west, and then in 1911–12 TJ w0,2 TJ w0,e moohe res. 307 r

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