THE
EARLY HISTORY
OF
PICCADILLY
LEICESTER SQUARE
SOHO
ROQUER'S MAP OF 1753
THE
EARLY HISTORY
OF
PICCADILLY
LEICESTER SQUARE
& SOHO
& THEIR NEIGHBOURHOOD
BASED ON
A PLAN DRAWN IN 1585 AND PUBLISHED
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P R E F A C E

The primary purpose of this book is to give an account of a Plan drawn in 1585, a full-scale reproduction of which was recently published by the London Topographical Society. When I was asked by the Council of the Society to prepare such an account, I found soon that it would be imperfect unless the history was carried on far enough to bring out the relation of the Plan to the future streets. Thus the book fell naturally into two parts. The first deals with the history of the Land before the Houses, and the circumstances under which the Plan was made. The second and longer part is concerned with the Building of the Streets, that is with tracing the process by which within a little over 100 years after the Plan was drawn the whole area came to be covered with streets and houses. To have carried the history beyond that point would have involved a much larger undertaking and would not have been strictly relevant to the Plan. Nevertheless it has not seemed impertinent to give some brief account of the principal buildings that were originally erected, and to mark the subsequent changes in the streets.

The chief sources of original material are to be found in the Record Office, and more particularly in the documents relating to the lawsuit about Gelding’s Close, which are printed in the Appendix. In addition there is much that is of value in the State Papers for the seventeenth century (the printed Calendars are not unnaturally inadequate for the present purpose), and in the Parliamentary Surveys made in 1650–52; of these last one is given in the Appendix and the others are quoted freely in the text. Further material has been derived from the records at the Guildhall, the Ratebooks and Churchwardens’ Accounts of St Martin-in-the-Fields, and for the early history from the Muniments of Westminster Abbey. Where original sources have been used references are given.

Of printed sources Mr J. V. Kitto’s Churchwardens Accounts
of St Martin-in-the-Fields, 1525–1603, is valuable for the period which it covers. For the seventeenth century Strafford’s Letters (particularly those written by George Garrard) and the Diaries of Evelyn and Pepys are often of service. At the close Hatton’s New View of London and Strype’s edition of Stow’s Survey are valuable, especially for their descriptions of recently built streets; these descriptions are interesting as showing the original character of the buildings, and I have therefore made a point of quoting them freely; for these two works it has not seemed necessary to multiply precise references which can be easily traced. It must, however, be remembered that the compilation of such a work as Hatton’s New View and still more of Strype’s Survey was of necessity spread over a prolonged period. Consequently statements are sometimes found in both works which manifestly relate to an earlier time than the date of publication. Where this could be shown attention has been called to the fact. But probably in some other instances also statements occur which should be dated earlier than the years of publication in 1708 and 1720.

Amongst modern books, in addition to London Past and Present, the most important are H. B. Wheatley’s Round About Piccadilly (1870); Mr Arthur Dasent’s History of St James’s Square (1895) and Piccadilly (1920); E. F. Rimbault’s Soho and its Associations (1895); Mr John McMaster’s History of St Martin-in-the-Fields (1916); and The Parish of St Giles-in-the-Fields published by the Survey Committee of the London County Council in 1912–14. To all of these I am in a greater or less degree indebted. But I have not as a rule thought it needful to give references for information derived from these works, and still less to particularize points on which in the light of new material correction has been requisite.

In addition to records and books a comparative study of the maps of London from Agas to Rocque has furnished much valuable guidance. For the better understanding of these maps a more detailed description has been given in the Appendix.
PREFACE

My special thanks are due to the City Lands Committee for permission to consult the documents relating to the Conduit Estate in the Comptroller’s Office at the Guildhall. I have also to thank Mr A. H. Thomas, the Records Clerk at the Guildhall, the officers at the Westminster City Hall, the Rev. H. F. Westlake, custodian of Westminster Abbey, and Mr C. T. Clay, librarian to the House of Lords, for their courteous assistance when consulting the records in their charge.

The Society is indebted to Mr J. V. Kitto for calling their attention to the Plan of 1585. A photographic facsimile on a reduced scale is given at the end of this book; those who desire further information should refer to the full-scale reproduction published by the London Topographical Society. The overprint showing the relation of the existing streets to the Plan of 1585 has been prepared by Mr T. O. Thistle, A.R.I.B.A., whom I desire to thank for the pains and care which he bestowed on this work.

C. L. KINGSFORD

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The Plan of 1585, with an overprint showing its relation to the modern streets
available for download from www.cambridge.org/9781107626546

Note. Shepherd’s drawings are in the Crace Collection, and Tomkins’ drawing in Crowle’s Pennant, both in the Print-Room at the British Museum.