

Consultation on Changes to Proposals for Market Redevelopment

May 2025



Covent Garden Market Authority

Response Deadline: Friday 11th July 2025

From the Project Director

As those of you receiving this document will know, we are approaching the final two phases of the long-running redevelopment of New Covent Garden Market, which will see the construction of our third Fruit and Vegetable Market building – otherwise known as Building C – and the Flower Market's permanent accommodation.

We at CGMA are fully focused on delivering a market to service and benefit London and the South East well into the future. We fully recognise the challenges that many within the dynamic and resilient market community have had to overcome during the redevelopment project so far, and we are extremely grateful for the patience, understanding and collaborative spirit that you have shown in helping us get to this point. We remain committed to delivering the best market facility achievable with the available funding and maintaining New Covent Garden Market's status as the premier wholesale flower market in the UK. We now need your input to help us decide what to prioritise in that process.

This consultation is about changes to the basic specification that has already been paid for under CGMA's original agreement with its development partners Vinci and St Modwen. These changes increase the cost and, as an arm's length body of government that is expected to self-fund, there are limits as to how much additional cost CGMA can afford. This document will explain:

- What the proposed design changes are and why we need to consult with you about them now;
- The processes that we have already been through to consult with our tenant businesses in relation to the design changes; and
- The funding limitations that apply.

Details of how to respond to this consultation, how to get more information, and what will happen next are also provided, and there is a separate response form so that you can give your views.

Thank you for your attention. We are working to complete the task of constructing a world-class modern market facility that will be a cornerstone of London and the South East's food and flower supply chain for decades to come, and your valuable and valued input will help us get there.

Tony O'Reilly
Project Director



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1. Introduction

1.1.

Based in Nine Elms since 1974, New Covent Garden Market is London's largest wholesale fresh produce and flower market. The market supplies London's leading restaurants and florists with the highest quality fruit, vegetables, flowers and fresh produce from the UK and around the world. The market is home to nearly 200 businesses with around 2,500 employees. The market is looked after and managed by the Covent Garden Market Authority (CGMA).

1.2.

Redevelopment of the market was agreed in 2013 and construction started in 2015. The redevelopment of the market is a joint venture between developers Vinci and St. Modwen (VSM), under the terms of a development agreement with CGMA. Construction costs for the 500,000 ft² market development are funded by the release of 20 acres of surplus land, with no expense to taxpayers. A basic design – or 'base build specification' – has already been paid for with the release of the surplus land, and this consultation is about changes to that design, which cost extra.

1.3.

Appendix 1 shows what the layout of the market will look like once the redevelopment is complete.

1.4.

Appendix 2 is a plan showing the existing layout of the main market which shows the progress of the redevelopment. There is also an aerial photograph of the site at Appendix 3.

1.5.

The main elements of the market are, and will continue to be:

1.5.1.

The Fruit and Vegetable Market

1.5.2.

The Flower Market



1.5.3.

The Food Exchange (a facility which is a modern three-storey office building providing a total of over 40,000 ft² (3,716 m²) of lettable space)

1.6.

The redevelopment is now approaching the final stages. Building A is now complete and fully occupied, and Building B is two thirds complete and occupied, with the construction of Building B due to be completed in September 2025. This will be followed by the construction of Building C and the Flower Market. The key dates for the remainder of the development are set out below (please bear in mind that these may be subject to change).

Stage of development

Date

Building B –
construction complete

29 September 2025

Building C –
construction commences for first phase

19 January 2026

Flower Market –
construction commences

6 July 2026

Building C –
construction complete for first phase

21 September 2026

Building C –
construction commences for second phase

11 January 2027

Flower Market –
construction complete

7 June 2027

Building C –
construction complete for second phase

23 August 2027



What is this Consultation this about and why are we doing it?

1.7.

The purpose of this consultation is to update tenants and stakeholders on the final plans for Building C and the Flower Market, and to seek views on specific proposals relating to the design of these new buildings.

1.8.

The proposals set out in this consultation have been informed by discussions between CGMA and the Covent Garden Tenants' Association (CGTA), Market Management Committees (often referred to as the 'Statutory Committees'), and the wider tenant community.

What about the developers, VSM?

1.9.

CGMA may have the option of retrofitting some of the design changes that are decided on following this consultation. Where any design changes need to be implemented by VSM during the construction process, CGMA will seek their agreement in accordance with the design change procedure in the development agreement.

What is not being consulted on at this stage

1.10.

This consultation is about the physical aspects of Building C and the Flower Market. It is not about lease terms (including rent payable) or the allocation of space. Arrangements for these are already in place for those moving in to Building C, and they will be determined nearer to the relocation date for the Flower Market, with the assistance of the relevant Statutory Committees.



2. Building C

2.1.

In 2020, CGMA ran a consultation on the design of parts of the Fruit and Vegetable Market, including Building C. The key design changes proposed as part of the consultation (summarised in detail in that document) were developed by CGMA and CGTA together, forming part of wider proposals to resolve a legal dispute about the development of the market. They included:

2.1.1.

Moving back the front walls at ground floor level of the unbuilt areas of Buildings A and of Building C to create 9m deep covered vehicle loading areas, with mezzanine areas above;

2.1.2.

The installation of high level sprinklers to Buildings A–C;

2.1.3.

increasing the width of the Buyer's Walk in the unbuilt part of Building B; and

2.1.4.

increasing the depth of the canopy on the unbuilt part of Building B.

2.2.

Following the 2020 consultation, CGMA entered into a settlement agreement with tenants to resolve the legal dispute, agreeing to implement the above changes. The agreement was subject to an £8.1 million affordability cap on design changes, and a requirement to meet with the CGTA to agree a proposed way forward in circumstances where that cap was exceeded. The changes in respect of Buildings A and B have been completed, but the changes for Building C will exceed the affordability cap. Recognising this, CGMA has had meetings with the CGTA in accordance with the agreement. The following key points arose from those meetings.



2.2.1.

CGMA confirmed that:

- a There are two key fire safety design changes that CGMA is committed to implementing in Building C (and have been implemented in Buildings A and B):
 - A fire corridor running down the spine of the building (this design change was agreed with the CGTA prior to the 2020 settlement agreement); and
 - The installation of high-level sprinkler systems (this design change was agreed as part of the 2020 settlement agreement and is now an insurance requirement for all units);
- b CGMA will have to fund any design changes from its own resources, and has yet to secure that funding;
- c The cost of the 9 m covered vehicle loading areas in Building C is estimated at £9m and is therefore beyond CGMA's funding capability regardless of priority.

2.2.2.

CGTA noted that:

- a Some future Building C tenants may be disappointed that the 9 m covered vehicle loading areas are not included, given that they were referred to in the 2020 consultation;
- b The 9 m covered vehicle loading areas in Building A are not being used for the purpose for which they were intended, namely so that tenants could park their vehicles three deep on the hardstanding areas outside their units;
- c The 9 m covered vehicle loading areas are not strictly necessary for effective loading, as several tenants in new units now do this by reversing vehicles up to the doors;
- d Tenants in Building C would benefit from their front wall insulation being upgraded to 100 mm thick white wall façade liner sheet, as



opposed to 50 mm (a post-2020 design change that was implemented for the wholesaler units in Building B on the basis that they required the ability to refrigerate their entire units down to 2 degrees Celsius), and that this should be next in the order of priority after the fire safety changes (there is more on this below);

- e Building C would also benefit from more internal dividing walls than the 7 that have already been paid for under the development agreement, as smaller spaces will be easier to let to bulk horticultural produce businesses.

2.3.

As a result, the proposed final design for Building C now includes the following changes to the original design, subject to obtaining funding:

2.3.1.

The installation of high-level sprinklers and a fire corridor;

2.3.2.

The provision of power supply at a point adjacent to the roller shutter doors to the rear of each unit (which can be accommodated at minimal additional cost).

2.4. A series of CGI images showing the final proposed design of Building C is at Appendix 4, and a cross-section of Building C showing the location of the new fire corridor is at Appendix 5.

Increased insulation of external walls

2.5.

The suggested upgrade to the front wall insulation – 100 mm thick white wall façade liner sheet, as opposed to 50 mm – was not included in the base build specifications of Buildings A or B, because the base build output specifications required chilling to 4 degrees Celsius, which can be achieved with 50 mm thick front wall insulation. CGTA considers that including it will improve the insulation performance of the units thereby increasing energy efficiency and making it possible for the units to be chilled down to 2 degrees Celsius. CGMA understands this may be of particular benefit to wholesaler tenants who wish to chill their entire unit and maximise racking space.

2.6.

This proposed change may not benefit all potential tenants of Building C equally. Those who tend to keep the doors at the front of their units open during trading hours would derive limited benefit from additional insulation. The same would apply to those catering and distribution businesses that prefer to have ambient areas near the front of their units.

2.7.

As noted above, there is currently no funding available to make this change. However, CGMA are keen to understand whether the insulated front walls should be given the next highest priority after the high-level sprinklers and fire corridor, or a different design change should be prioritised ahead of the front wall insulation, should funding become available.



3. The Flower Market

3.1.

The Flower Market is currently located in a temporary building and is due to move into its permanent accommodation in late 2027. The new Flower Market will be located on the ground floor of the Food Exchange Building. A plan showing the proposed final design of the Flower Market is at Appendix 6.

3.2.

Since 2022, CGMA has been engaging with Flower Market tenants – individually and via the Flower Market’s Statutory Committee – regarding the future location and configuration of the Flower Market. The consensus from this process has been that the ground floor of the Food Exchange remains the best available location. Whilst Building C was also considered, the available space (c. 35,000 ft²) would be insufficient to accommodate the Flower Market’s requirements bearing in mind that the current, interim Flower Market Building measures 50,000 ft² (with a further 10,000 ft² at first floor level) and the available space on the Ground Floor of the Food Exchange will measure approximately 50,000 ft².

3.3.

Flower Market tenants have raised a number of suggested changes to the design. CGMA is now consulting on the suggestions received from tenants, which are outlined below.

3.4.

Changes to the design of the Flower Market will be funded from £1million of funding which has been earmarked for Flower Market specification enhancements, including reasonable contributions to existing tenants’ costs of fitting out their new units.



3.5.

Allowing for a reasonable amount of fit-out contributions, each of the suggestions described below is individually considered potentially affordable and technically achievable, however, it will not be affordable to implement all the suggested changes. Therefore, the purpose of this consultation is to understand the priorities of the wider tenant community to enable CGMA to determine which suggestions should be subject to detailed costing and feasibility assessments. CGMA also welcomes any further suggestions or comments on the final design of the Flower Market.

External doors

3.6.

As can be seen from the Flower Market plan at Appendix 6, the proposed layout incorporates units around the perimeter of an extended Food Exchange building, as well as units in the middle of the building. Some tenants have proposed that each perimeter unit in the Flower Market should have an external door enabling direct access to external hardstanding areas and the car park, at ground floor level.

Goods lifts

3.7.

The goods lifts on the existing plans are similar to those used in the interim Flower Market. Tenants have raised concerns regarding the size and quality of these lifts and their inability to accommodate certain trollies, such as Dutch or Danish style flower trollies. Tenants have proposed the size and load rating of the lifts is increased accordingly. Significantly increasing the size of the lift shafts may, however, have costly structural implications.



Cooling systems

3.8.

Some tenants have suggested their units would benefit from the installation of an enhanced cooling system which would enable zoned cooling that can be adjusted for individual units (or rows of units). CGMA understands this would be of particular benefit to tenants who stock foliage and some plants and sundries.

Reducing the waste compounds

3.9.

Some tenants have suggested that the waste compound area (the triangular area located next to the HGV dock levellers and shown shaded grey in Appendix 6) could be repurposed as a trolley park. CGMA has considered the operational implications of this and does not believe that there will be any material adverse impact associated with removing the waste compound area.

Location of vehicle ramp

3.10.

CGMA have considered a proposal to move the vehicle ramp from its existing proposed position (as marked with red text 'Existing Ramp Position' in Appendix 6) to the opposite side of the building (as marked with red text 'Proposed New Ramp Position' in Appendix 6). The purpose of this proposed design change is to allow easier loading access for customers and deliveries, to provide greater flexibility in the loading bay area for better storage, and to provide space for selling Christmas trees. Initial feedback from developers indicates this change may not be technically feasible due to the turning circle required for HGV lorries. If this is considered a key priority for tenants, CGMA will seek more detailed advice on feasibility.



3.II.

CGMA are keen to understand views on each of the suggestions above and to understand which, if any, are considered priorities. CGMA will also consider any alternative suggestions, including not making any changes at all. Following the consultation, any priority changes will be subject to detailed affordability and feasibility assessments. CGMA may proceed with one or more of the changes outlined above, may proceed with a change which has not yet been considered, or may make no changes to the design.



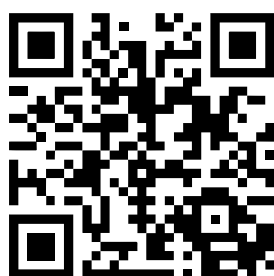
4. How to respond to this consultation and when

4.1.

You are invited to respond to the consultation questions in one of two ways:

4.1.1. Online form

Click on the link in the email, or scan the QR code below or via one of the posters positioned around the Market, and complete the online response form. Your responses will be logged automatically.



4.1.2. Post or delivery

We will be happy to provide a hard copy version of the form or a Microsoft Word version that you can print out and return to the following address: Consultations, Covent Garden Market Authority, New Covent Garden Market, London SW8 5EL.

4.2.

Please note that CGMA will only consider responses that are received in one of the above ways.

4.3.

The closing date for responses to this consultation is Friday 11th July 2025. CGMA may not take into consideration any responses received after then.

4.4.

If you need any assistance in completing the response form or would like to request a hard copy or Microsoft Word version, please contact consultation@cgma.co.uk or by phone on 020 7720 2211.



5. Who is being consulted?

5.1.

This document is being sent to:

- 5.1.1. All existing market tenants
- 5.1.2. Market customers: including all those customers with vehicle tags
- 5.1.3. Members of the Market Advisory Committee (Flowers)
- 5.1.4. Members of the Market Advisory Committee (Fruit and Vegetables)
- 5.1.5. Members of the Workers' Advisory Committee
- 5.1.6. Members of the Traffic Committee
- 5.1.7. The CGTA
- 5.1.8. DEFRA.

5.2.

Meetings of the Market Advisory Committee (Fruit and Vegetables) and the Market Advisory Committee (Flowers) will be held during the consultation period to discuss the proposals.

5.3.

Those who work at the market will be able to consider the proposals at the walk in sessions (see below) as well as discuss them with their representatives on the two market advisory committees.



6. Consultation walk-in events

6.1.

In addition to meetings with key stakeholders, CGMA is hosting two walk-in sessions. The first will be held on Wednesday 18th June 2025 in Buyers' Walk between 1–2 am. The second will be held on Tuesday 24th June 2025 in the Flower Market's Garden Café between 5.30–6.30 am.

7. Availability of copies

7.1.

If you would like to receive a hard copy of this consultation paper then please:

7.1.1.

Email consultation@cgma.co.uk, or

7.1.2.

Write to Consultations, Covent Garden Market Authority, New Covent Garden Market, London SW8 5EL, or

7.1.3.

Phone 020 7720 2211.

7.2.

Please indicate if you would like a large print version.



8. Next steps

8.1.

After the consultation period has ended, a report on the responses will be compiled and the CGMA Board will consider it and make a formal decision as to whether to further explore all or some of the proposals described in this document, or none at all. The report on the consultation will be published on the CGMA website, as will the Board's conclusions.

8.2.

If the decision is that some or all of the proposals should be explored further:

8.2.1.

Some of them would require the approval of the Developers. CGMA would use its reasonable endeavours to obtain that approval.

8.2.2.

In respect of the proposed changes to Building C, funding is not yet available, and limited funding is available to implement changes to the Flower Market. All proposals are subject to funding availability.

8.2.3.

Depending on the outcome of the consultation, further detailed design work and studies may have to be undertaken, including the completion of logistics studies. If this proves to be the case CGMA will discuss the details as they emerge with CGTA and its consultants, and seek the further advice of the Statutory Committees as appropriate.

Covent Garden Market Authority

Date: Thursday 29th May 2025

Privacy Notice:

Please see the CGMA's Privacy Policy at this link, and in particular the reference to consultees:

<https://newcoventgardenmarket.com/privacy-notice>

