

# County Hall Quarter

## Press information

September 2006

### **Pete Waterman creates new agenda for County Hall**

Legendary pop record producer Pete Waterman is heading a company that has acquired a quarter of County Hall, former headquarters of the Greater London Council (GLC), and plans to lease the space to create a media and leisure/entertainment 'village'.

The Grade 2\* listed Edwardian 'Renaissance Baroque' building complex totals over a million square feet, and Waterman's Cadogan Entertainment Investments has about 300,000 sq ft, which was unoccupied since the GLC left in 1986.

The whole County Hall complex was acquired in 1993 by the Japanese company Shirayama, which has let space there for hotels, restaurants, art galleries and the London Aquarium. It's also the home of London's landmark visitor attraction, the London Eye.

Cadogan's space is in the west or 'upstream' building, which has a frontage on Westminster Bridge, as well as the main entrance on Belvedere Road, and stunning views across the Thames to Parliament, Westminster and the Embankment, with a much-used riverside walk along County Hall's 730-ft frontage.

Having acquired its long-term lease, Cadogan has spent over £3.5million on creating better access to all its areas, from ground to sixth floors, with new lifts, wall-climbers, emergency services and renewed common parts and atria, many of which are the originals with lavish use of marble and bronze and the period fittings.

Now, with West End agents Ereira Mendoza, the space is being marketed to companies which will fit Waterman's vision of a vibrant community of like businesses, and businesses which could service the other occupiers. As part of the offer, Cadogan will be flexible about space and terms to help tenants establish themselves.

Thanks to the London Eye and all the restaurants and bars that have been created around County Hall, annual footfall is now approximately 9 million.

Waterman sees his vision for County Hall Quarter, as the space is now known, as a regeneration of a wasted asset, only able to go forward now after Cadogan's enabling investment in the space. English Heritage and Lambeth council support the marketing, and Waterman is working with Jit Chauhan,

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who worked with Shirayama for a number of years prior to joining Cadogan as Managing Director.

“I saw buildings like this in Canada, which might have been demolished, but which were reused, given new life,” said Waterman. “That’s real sustainability.

“What looks like one long rectangular block on the outside is actually a complex of courtyards, open and covered spaces, surprising views, and exuberant features as befitted the building when it was created in the capital of the Empire. It is also a monument to the many fine things the London County Council (LCC) and GLC achieved.”

Jit Chauhan is also confident the space will attract upmarket leisure and entertainment businesses that want to take advantage of what he calls London’s best address. He cites casinos, clubs and luxury urban retreats/spas as perfect incomers: “It would be easy to fill up the space with call centres, but how boring! This space cries out for creative use, by people with vision who can work together and make the place buzz. It’s not ‘serviced offices’; Cadogan is going to be a proactive and supportive landlord,” said Chauhan.

Waterman has already moved his own business into County Hall Quarter, with administration and production studios, after years of operating nearby in Borough. The British Phonographic Industry has also taken space, moving from an expensive prospective rent review in the West End.

## **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

1. County Hall is on a site of some 5 acres that was a sprawl of wharves, factories and timber yards until in 1905 the London County Council decided to acquire it to create their headquarters. An architectural competition was won by Ralph Knott.
2. Knott’s winning proposal was recast in 1911 after the site was cleared and as building work was about to begin. Then work was suspended in 1916 and the parts that could be occupied were requisitioned for war-time government offices. Work restarted in 1919, and King George V opened the building in 1922.
3. A further phase of work, on York Road, took place in 1931-1933 – blocks which are now converted to residential use.
4. Pete Waterman is one of the best known, influential and most successful figures in the pop music industry. He has been involved in writing or producing over two hundred hit songs, including 22 No.1 records. In 1984 he formed Stock Aitken Waterman, the industry’s most successful writers and producers.
5. Occupiers at County Hall include the two hotels Marriot and Premier Travel Inn, with 186 rooms/14 suites and 314 rooms, respectively.
6. Other developments currently being planned locally to County Hall Quarter include Galliard’s redevelopment of the former GLC island site block. To be known as Westminster Bridge Plaza, this will comprise a 900-bed apparthotel, restaurants, retail space, conference hall and gym. Elizabeth House, formerly York House, will be developed as a 1.3m sq ft mixed use complex, featuring three towers, with a retail concourse linking to Waterloo station. Galliard is also planning a further apparthotel on the former Lying-In hospital and 3i site.