



City of Westminster

Cabinet Member Report

Decision Maker:	Cabinet Member for Business, Culture and Heritage
Date:	26 September 2017
Classification:	For General Release
Title:	Commemorative Green Plaque for Gold Brothers' <i>Lord John</i> boutique, at 43 Carnaby Street , W1
Wards Affected:	West End
Key Decision:	No
Financial Summary:	The Green Plaque Scheme depends on sponsorship. Sponsorship has been secured for this plaque
Report of:	Head of City Promotions, Events & Filming

1. Executive Summary

The *Lord John* Boutique was opened in Carnaby Street by the brothers Warren and David Gold in 1963. It was one of the first retail brands in menswear and the shop was instantly a huge success and a major reason why Carnaby Street became world famous. The street continues to be a major Westminster attraction today.

2. Recommendations

That the nomination for a Westminster Commemorative Green Plaque for the Gold Brothers' *Lord John* boutique at 43 Carnaby Street, W1, be approved, subject to sponsorship in full.

3. Reasons for decision

With his brother David, Warren Gold founded the influential national chain *Lord John* in 1963 after having worked on market stalls in east London. Through their foresight and extraordinary vision the Gold brothers revolutionised fashion and

became leading pioneers in the menswear industry. The brothers worked together for more than 50 years until David's death in 2009.

4. Policy Context

The commemorative Green Plaques scheme complements a number of Council strategies: to improve the legibility and understanding of Westminster's heritage and social history; to provide information for Westminster's visitors; to provide imaginative and accessible educational tools to raise awareness and understanding of local areas, particularly for young people; to celebrate the richness and diversity of Westminster's former residents.

5. Background

5.1 Carnaby Street

- 5.1.1 In the 1960's, following John Stephen's success, Carnaby Street became a gold mine for fashion retailers. For a few years in the late 1960's, the combination of a Carnaby Street address and colourful clothes became almost a guarantee of instant, but short term success. Among John Stephen's competitors, only three men managed to achieve a financial success comparable to his. These men were Irvine Sellars who ran *Mates* and the Gold brothers who ran the *Lord John* boutiques.

5.2 Lord John and the Gold Brothers

- 5.2.1 After a successful period of selling suede jackets from their stall on Petticoat Lane, east London, the brothers Warren and David Gold opened their first *Lord John* boutique in Carnaby Street in 1963. From here, in just a few years, they built up the first ever national and international chain of modern fashion menswear outlets.
- 5.2.2 The name of the boutique led to litigation with the crowned "King of Carnaby", John Stephen, but the fashions sold at *Lord John* were always exactly right for the youngsters of the era, which is a startling achievement for a group of brothers who are unknowns in the fashion world even today.
- 5.2.3 Warren Gold (1938-2016) was the showman and marketing genius. He loved the publicity so he became the face of the brand. David (1936-2009) on the other hand, hated having his photo taken because he had a form of facial paralysis but he enjoyed the business perspective so he managed that side of things. It was an equal partnership between the two brothers and was run very much as a family business with their mother and their younger brother Harold working for the company too. With *Lord John*, Warren Gold created the first retail brand in fashion menswear, "*Lord John of Carnaby Street*."

5.2.4 The sixties youth - tired of wearing clothes their fathers and grandfathers might have liked - wanted something new, daring, colourful and different, and *Lord John* did just that. *Lord John* specialised in the “Mod” look. Warren Gold made sure that his designs were always up to date, and followed the trends, which, as far as the male Mod look was concerned, were changing on an almost weekly basis in the mid 1960's. This strategy proved an instant success, and soon the Gold brothers were seen around London driving Rolls-Royces.

5.2.5 In his persona as *Lord John*, Warren Gold was a prominent member of the 60s and 70s London scene alongside his equally famous musical customers, *The Beatles*, *The Rolling Stones*, Tom Jones, *The Kinks*, Donovan, Engelbert Humperdinck, Peter Noone of *Herman's Hermits*, *The Small Faces*, *The Who* and very many others of the day. The shop was so talked about that when Micky Dolenz of *The Monkees* visited Britain in 1967 he fought his way through a crowded Carnaby Street just to buy six suits from the shop.

5.2.6 *Lord John* was right at the forefront of British fashion at a time when British fashion was shaping world trends. The *Lord John* designs were not just the continental-cut men's suits that made the Mods famous, but also “far out” mens' fashions such as brightly coloured shirts, hipsters, ski sweaters, and jackets in suede, corduroy and denim. Another thing *Lord John* was famous for was providing the newest fashion trends almost as soon as they appeared. Thanks to the perfect location on Carnaby Street, *Lord John* was able to provide unusual new items, such as Kaftan jackets, as soon as they were spotted in neighbouring shops.

5.3 Success and the Psychedelic Mural

5.3.1 In 1967, the Gold Brothers commissioned relatively unknown artists David Vaughan, Douglas Binder and Dudley Edwards to paint the famous psychedelic mural over three storeys of the flagship *Lord John* building at 43 Carnaby Street, making it one of the most eye catching, iconic and photographed buildings in London at the time. This, combined with the skilful advertising campaign in the press, only added to the success of the *Lord John* shops. The clothes, the building and the location became interlinked. They were all equally important in making *Lord John* the statement brand it had become.

5.3.2 At a very early age Warren had discovered that he had a particular interest in and flair for fashion. These factors, combined with his innate design skills, the influence of his father's menswear retail experience and an instilled philosophy of always providing good value, good service and quality merchandise, injected originality and personality into the somewhat stale menswear industry.

5.3.3 The brothers not only took *Lord John* to all the major cities in the UK, but also to Europe and to the USA. Warren, his *Lord John* shops and his ever changing innovative designs were rarely out of the fashion pages of the newspapers and

magazines. Both leading manufacturers and retailers from around the world would come to Carnaby Street just to try to emulate the *Lord John* look in their own ranges and stores.

- 5.3.4 By the end of the sixties, the Gold brothers had expanded to eight boutiques. This included a large five-floor shop on Oxford Street, London. There were eighteen franchises in Macy's stores in America and more shops in continental Europe. By the seventies they had expanded to 30 shops and had 122 internationally.

5.4 The 1970's

- 5.4.1 By the early seventies the big three boutiques of John Stephens, *Lord John* and Irving Sellars were losing their popularity. Both Gold and Sellars ended up selling their businesses, once they stopped being profitable. The *Lord John* chain was eventually acquired by the manufacturing and retailing group Raybeck. In the mid-1980s Raybeck sold the chain to Next, which converted the stores to its own fascia.
- 5.4.4 After the sale to Next, Warren Gold remained in the clothing business through his Goldrange clothing factory outlet in Golders Green. A mainstream menswear store, it mirrored a similar store in Petticoat Lane which had been run by his brother David, both becoming early modern pioneers of the discount factory shop. Warren was famous for his enthusiasm for being out on the shop floor and with his son Jamie now at the helm, it remains a family business with a long tradition in tailoring and menswear retailing, staffed with experienced and well versed individuals.

5.5 Accolades

- 5.5.1 The Gold Brothers started in the rag trade at the very bottom and eventually Warren's trendsetting coat and jacket designs grew to depict the changing face of British dress. So much so that he was endorsed by the Victoria & Albert museum which holds one of his *Lord John* prototypes in its permanent fashion collection.
- 5.5.2 The *Lord John* prominence was further recognised by the invitation to Warren Gold to turn on the Carnaby Street Christmas lights with Faye Dunaway, an event he classed as one of his greatest achievements.

6. Financial Implications

The cost of the plaque, its installation, maintenance and Green Plaque Scheme administration costs will be borne by the sponsor, Lauren Gold, daughter of the late Warren Gold. There is no cost to Westminster City Council.

7. Legal Implications

The property is not listed; therefore a Listed Building Consent application is not required.

8. Consultation

The owners of 43 Carnaby Street, Shaftesbury, support the nomination. Ward Members have been consulted and no objections have been raised.

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact: Daniella Bonfanti

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Location plan of 43 Carnaby Street, W1 at 1:1250 scale.

Appendix 2

Photo Montage showing proposed location of Gold Brothers Lord John boutique Green Plaque at 43 Carnaby Street, W1.

Appendix 3

Wording and layout of proposed Gold Brothers Lord John boutique Green Plaque

For completion by the **Cabinet Member for Business, Culture and Heritage**

Declaration of Interest

I have <no interest to declare / to declare an interest> in respect of this report

Signed: _____ Date: _____

NAME: **Councillor Robert Davis MBE DL**

State nature of interest if any

.....
(N.B: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter)

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled

Commemorative Green Plaque for the Gold Brothers Lord John boutique, at 43 Carnaby Street , W1.

Signed

Cabinet Member for Business, Culture and Heritage

Date

If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment:
.....
.....

If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Strategic Director Finance and Performance and, if there are resources implications, the Strategic Director of Resources (or their representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.

Note to Cabinet Member: Your decision will now be published and copied to the Members of the relevant Policy & Scrutiny Committee. If the decision falls within the criteria for call-in, it will not be implemented until five working days have elapsed from publication to allow the Policy and Scrutiny Committee to decide whether it wishes to call the matter in.

Other Implications

1. Resources Implications

1.1 There are no resources implications arising from this report

2. Business Plan Implications

2.1 There are no Business Plan implications arising from this report

3. Risk Management Implications

3.1 There are no risk management implications arising from this report

4. Health and Wellbeing Impact Assessment including Health and Safety Implications

4.1 There are no health and safety and wellbeing issues arising from this report

5. Crime and Disorder Implications

5.1 There are no crime and disorder issues arising from this report

6. Impact on the Environment

6.1 There are no environmental issues arising from this report

7. Equalities Implications

7.1 There are no equality issues arising from this report

8. Staffing Implications

8.1 There are no staffing issues arising from this report

9. Human Rights Implications

9.1 There are no issues relating to responsibilities under the Human Rights Act 1998 arising from this report

10. Energy Measure Implications

10.1 There are no energy measure issues arising from this report

11. Communications Implications

11.1 Should this report be approved and an unveiling ceremony arranged the Council's Communications Team section will be informed.