

since it answers every mechanized need; but if the lessons of other cities apply, food will become more standardized and expensive. And the process of sterilization that moved the market is now a very real threat to the historic Covent Garden area.

No planner can explain why this part of London became one of the most magnetic mixes of history, culture and commerce anywhere in the world. When the porters and barrows left in the morning, dancers, models and filmmakers came for the day, and theater and opera-goers followed in the evening. Behind the handsome façades of 18th- and 19th-century streets are offices, studios and workshops that happily combine business and the arts.

This is clearly no place for London's blandly repellant variety of homogenized hotels and office blocks. Fortunately, an appalling renewal scheme proposed in the interest of "more profitable land uses" and "cleaning things up" died of delay and community protest. The task now is to find the right new uses for the abandoned market buildings which form the area's heart.

No one will know for a while whether cabbages and flowers were an essential part of a remarkable urban equation. But everyone knows that London has lost a very special place.

Farewell, Covent Garden

They've taken the market out of London's Covent Garden market; after 15 years of controversial planning it has been moved to new, efficient facilities on a site across the river with about as much charm as an airfield. There is no opera and no St. Paul's, but there are functional modern warehouses 400 yards long.

The new complex will probably work as a market,