

PEOPLE WANTED

Placemaking in Whitehall
Public Realm Vision and Strategy



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urban
flow
movement people places



Whitehall

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FOREWORD

We are delighted to be publishing 'People Wanted: Whitehall' and to be sharing this vision for the Whitehall area; building on the strategy 'People Wanted' for neighbouring Victoria.

Putting people and their experience at the heart of our public realm strategy is crucial; particularly for this area which is experienced by so many visitors and seen as the historic centre of our global city. Whitehall and its surroundings are some of the most recognised streets in Britain and, arguably, the world. Flanked by the Palace of Westminster and Trafalgar Square, this prominent part of London has been home to the country's most powerful institutions since the 11th Century. From the Cenotaph to Horse Guards Parade, Banqueting House to Downing Street, Whitehall has become a national symbol of history and politics, embodying London's status on the world stage. It is a place where decisions are made and heritage must be respected, but where modernisation is possible.

As renowned as Whitehall is, the public realm does not meet the changing demands of residents, workers or the large numbers of visitors that pass through it each day. The public realm in its current state is not people-centred, often seems focused on transport infrastructure and does not incorporate modern technology to its advantage.

The broad sweep of Whitehall itself acts primarily as a thoroughfare with little to engage pedestrians at street level and limited visible access to St James's Park or the river – these are opportunities missed. The Whitehall area attracts millions of visitors each year and more could be made of the area's incredible history and all too hidden gems. Following extensive stakeholder and partner engagement, as well as a full area analysis, we have worked with BDP and Urban Flow to draw out some of the key long-term opportunities to improve the area, alongside potential catalyst projects which could quickly transform the pedestrian experience. In this document, we explore how projects in Whitehall can be part of a wider conversation around sustainability and play their part in addressing issues such as flooding and congestion – key policy drivers locally and nationally.

We hope you enjoy reading 'People Wanted: Whitehall' and feel as inspired as we do by the opportunities it presents to address some of these issues and further enhance this special place at the heart of our historic global city.

Ruth Duston, OBE, OC
Chief Executive, Victoria, Victoria Westminster, and Whitehall BIDs



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This vision and strategy for the public realm and associated placemaking in the Whitehall Business Improvement District aims to create a vibrant place where all feel welcome to one of the most iconic locations in the United Kingdom.

Placemaking can subtly differentiate Whitehall from its adjacent areas so that people are aware that they are in a distinctive place. Public realm enhancements can aid vitality and growth. This study seeks to use the public realm to encourage positive experiences within Whitehall. It focuses on enhancing the area by introducing more amenity, revealing what is already there, and highlighting its rich history.

Whilst this vision and strategy focuses on the Whitehall BID, neighbouring areas and the distinct places within Whitehall are also considered. Understanding the strategies and our partners' potential projects will allow for alignment and synergies to develop as we strive to implement the vision. Neighbouring BIDs (Victoria BID, Victoria Westminster BID, and the Northbank BID) that, together with the Whitehall BID, form the London Heritage Quarter, are also given due consideration.

The vision and strategy are underpinned by a comprehensive area analysis spanning both physical and physiological aspects. This is comprehensively set out in chapter two. This analysis includes a high-level overview of the socio-economic context, the rich history of the area and how this has shaped the district we see today. Green and blue infrastructure environmental conditions (present and future) are also explored. This research builds a complete picture of the current challenges and opportunities facing Whitehall today, which in turn informs the vision.

A parallel research stream has also analysed the current social trends across four key sectors: Working, Living, Retail, and Movement; the results of this activity are presented in chapter three. This stream uses the trends analysis published in 2020 alongside the vision and strategy for the Victoria and Victoria Westminster BIDs as a start point. It reviews what has changed over the last three years, such as increased remote and hybrid working following the lockdown, and changing retail, living and

movement patterns. Understanding the effect of social trends on the public realm, and specifically the impact of the pandemic on travel, movement and space demands, creates a strong vision which responds to the most relevant factors affecting society today and in the future.

New developments within the Whitehall BID are leading to a diversification of occupation which also requires investigation. The government's 'Levelling Up' agenda may further alter the way in which the public realm is planned and used. Bearing this in mind, the study has reviewed some key projects, including:

- The Raffles development of the Old War Office
- The Project SWAN district heating network project
- Thames Tideway
- The updated CPNI strategy for integrated security
- The Parliament Square Streetscape Project

A main purpose of this document is to provide a structural platform from which we can work with our partners and stakeholders to strengthen Whitehall as a world class destination. To build momentum and provide a catalyst for positive change, this document is supported by the following objectives:

- Promote people as the priority and enhance pedestrian experience through the BID.
- Promote sustainability, climate positive design, and health and wellbeing.
- Present a framework which stakeholders can use to engage with public realm improvements.
- Respond to key challenges and opportunities within the BID as well as key social trends impacting people and places.



- Improve wayfinding through the area with enhanced connections to open green spaces and to the river Thames.
- Promote vibrancy in the public realm which attracts people to the area to work, shop, play, visit, and stay.
- Explore the opportunity to improve green-blue infrastructure and increase biodiversity within the BID.

'People Wanted, Whitehall' is, therefore, also a strategic framework to help guide future public realm investment and interventions. The framework is set out in chapter four and includes a set of design principles shaped by the preceding analysis and research which can be applied across a variety of public realm enhancements of varying scale. The strategic framework also presents a spatial vision, including enhanced east - west connections, improved gateways to the BID and more. It includes four BID-wide strategies, such as improved wayfinding and cohesive lighting.

The strategic section of the document forms chapter five. This chapter outlines the strategic vision, objectives, suggested delivery strategy, and outlines examples of aspirational public realm proposals. It also paves the way for the vision to be used to introduce a range of additional public realm proposals prompted by this report and in keeping with its goals and objectives. The design principles in particular can be used by stakeholders to bring forward any proposals across the area.

A key chapter, chapter six, comprises nine conceptual ideas to illustrate how the vision can be delivered across a range of projects varying in scale and complexity. These are intended to be read as aspirational projects and not complete design proposals. Whilst they address key challenges and opportunities across the area identified in this study, they will each require further development and coordination to determine their feasibility and scope. However, these projects can be used as powerful tools to instigate conversation around the potential for public realm enhancements in Whitehall.

Whilst some of these projects illustrate large strategic opportunities within Whitehall, there are also a range of smaller proposals which could be delivered as 'quick wins', to help build momentum and engage stakeholders to affect positive change which is sensitive to the historic context and character.

The final chapter sets out some suggested next steps to realise the vision and maintain the discourse instigated by this study.



THAMES RIVER TRIPS

i TOURIST INFORMATION

Kew, Richmond & Hampton Court
Thames River Boats

ASS

INTRODUCTION



- KEY:
- Study Boundary
 - Whitehall BID Area
 - Victoria BID Area
 - Victoria Westminster BID Area
 - Northbank BID Area

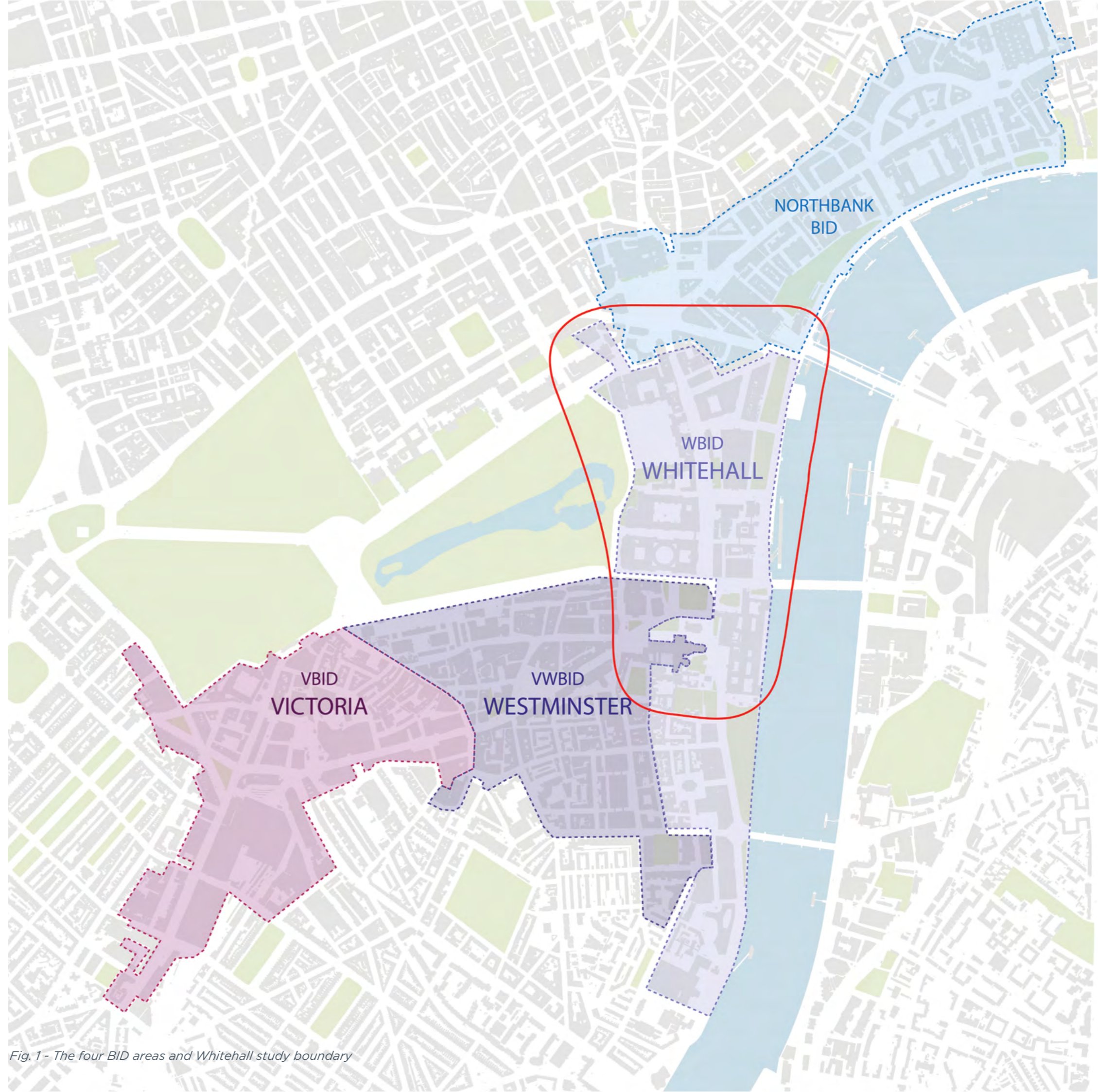


Fig. 1 - The four BID areas and Whitehall study boundary



1.1

INTRODUCTION

Whitehall has an extensive and rich history of Crown and Parliament

Early drawings depict Whitehall as a significant area in the City of Westminster and central London since before the 1500s. York Palace, which predated Whitehall Palace, was located here from as early as 1245. In 1530 Henry VIII appropriated and significantly remodelled the palace which then became known as Whitehall Palace, lending the district its name. The 12th century historian William Fitzstephen described the area as “a continued suburb, mingled with large and beautiful gardens, and orchards belonging to the citizens” (A. Fullarton & Co. 1851. P 206). The palace was home to English monarchs from 1530-1698 and whilst at one time the largest in Europe, it succumbed to a fire in 1698, where nearly all its structures were lost except Inigo Jones’ Banqueting House (built in 1622). Around this time the separation of Crown and state had become important in society. The government wanted distance from the monarch, and the buildings around Whitehall were selected as a fitting place for ministers to work. This has remained in place until the present day.

The heart of government in the United Kingdom

Today, the district is widely recognised as the heart of government in the United Kingdom, where several administrative buildings of the British Government are located. The street at the centre named Whitehall is the key ceremonial route between Trafalgar Square, the Palace of Westminster and Westminster Abbey. The area hosts a collection of landmarks, points of interest, historical and cultural assets, alongside important national institutions such as No. 10 Downing Street, Horse Guards Parade, Churchill War Rooms, the Cenotaph, Banqueting House, and the Cabinet Office. This makes Whitehall the most concentrated area in London for nationally significant buildings, landmarks, and institutions. References to ‘Whitehall’ have become synonymous with government and civil service operations.

An international destination which is dominated by vehicles

For many years now Whitehall has been an international destination which draws numerous tourists from around the globe. Despite this, at present, the main routes through the area have been engineered to give priority to vehicles over pedestrians. While the footpaths are typically relatively wide, there are not sufficient places to pause, sit down or escape from the main pedestrian traffic to admire the many significant landmarks. Pedestrian congestion is particularly problematic around significant sites such as Horse Guards Parade, Westminster Station and Trafalgar Square. In addition to this, there are multiple traffic lanes which makes the main thoroughfare of Whitehall a difficult road to cross. As a location of national significance and as one of the key destinations for visitors to the UK, Whitehall should be a positive, memorable and engaging experience for pedestrians. At present, this is not the case.

Changing social trends have had an effect on Whitehall

Since the beginning of the 21st century the physical and social environment around Whitehall has undergone significant changes. Under the stewardship of the surrounding BIDs, and particularly the Victoria Westminster BID, the areas surrounding Whitehall have been transformed to create a new mixture of commerce, leisure, and residential uses. Whitehall is not exempt from the ebb and flow of social, economic, environmental, and technological changes which impact daily life and the development of cities. The recent Covid-19 pandemic has largely impacted everyday life in the context of working, retail, living and movement of people. It has accelerated recognised social trends which were already influencing urban environments such as hybrid/remote working, increase in e-commerce, and further emphasis on health and wellbeing. Underpinning a lot of these changes has been an increased reliance on technology. All of these factors impacting daily life have in turn affected the public realm and how it is used.

Potential to integrate climate positive design solutions

Alongside the pandemic, climate change is a significant factor. The London Plan Policy G1, Green Infrastructure, sets out that “London’s network of green and open spaces, and green features in the built environment, should be protected and enhanced. Green infrastructure should be planned, designed, and managed in an integrated way to achieve multiple benefits” (Greater London Authority. 2021). Key objectives include adapting to the impacts of climate change, the urban heat-island effect, improving air and water quality, encouraging walking and cycling, supporting landscape and heritage conservation, and enhancing London’s waterways. The design of our public realm and the area of Whitehall has significant and timely potential to ease many of these climate-related challenges by integrating climate-positive design solutions which dualistically generate meaningful and beautiful places for people.

Whitehall, looking forward

As the home to many significant landmarks, buildings, and attractions which draw thousands of international tourists, Whitehall has the potential to leave many visitors with a lasting positive memory of not only Whitehall but London and the wider UK. In more recent years the surrounding area has seen a renewed sense of optimism and vigour, with significant restoration and renewal works planned for the Palace of Westminster and a strategic vision for the revitalisation of the Victoria and Victoria Westminster BID areas. Therefore this is an opportune time to establish a strategic framework to capture this potential and make the public realm improvements which can contribute to the overall experiential quality for those working, visiting, and living in the area.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Whitehall Business Improvement District

The Whitehall Business Improvement District (WBID) was established in 2021 and champions one of the most globally significant locations, both historically and politically. The WBID executive team acts as a steward for the area and their work is largely focused around enhancing and improving the public realm. A key objective and overarching goal for the WBID is positioning the area as a thriving, vibrant destination.

As a key tourist destination featuring historic and cultural political assets, the BID aims to ensure Whitehall remains a world-renowned business and visitor destination by enhancing the experience of working, living, shopping, visiting, and doing business in the area.

This vision and strategy study aligns with the study for Victoria and Westminster BID

In 2019 VBID commissioned BDP and Urban Flow to undertake the task of preparing a public realm vision and strategy document for the Victoria and Westminster, and Victoria BIDs. This study was titled 'People Wanted: Placemaking in Victoria' with a supporting structural trends paper. This development of a public realm vision and strategy document for Whitehall follows a similar structure. Its purpose is to explore how Whitehall's public realm can optimise placemaking, acting as a catalyst to encourage further economic development, investment, and interest in the area.



Fig. 2 - Whitehall looking towards the Cenotaph

1.3 THE PUBLIC REALM VISION

Building on People Wanted Vision for Victoria

The Whitehall Public Realm Vision and Strategy will draw inspiration from BDP’s ‘People Wanted; Placemaking in Victoria: Public Realm Vision and Strategy’ and the ‘People Wanted; Placemaking in Victoria: Changing Structural Trends and Public Realm’ supporting paper created in 2020. These examined the streets and open spaces of the Victoria, and Victoria Westminster BID’s and created a strategy for public realm improvements in the BID area.

A structured approach

‘People Wanted: Placemaking in Victoria’ was structured: introduction, area analysis, which detailed the context of the BID area historically and in the present day, a chapter on the changing context and trends influencing public realm, and strategic opportunities for the area, before advocating a public realm vision and strategy. The strategy led to concept ideas, design exploration and next steps.

A companion piece to People Wanted Victoria

The purpose of this public realm vision and strategy is not to replace the one created for Victoria and Victoria Westminster BIDs, but to sit alongside it as an additional valuable companion piece, focused on the Whitehall BID area.



Fig. 3 - Covers from People Wanted: Placemaking in Victoria documents

1.4 APPROACH

An extended study area

As illustrated in Figure 1, the study boundary examined by this report extends beyond the Whitehall BID boundary. This is to ensure that all the adjacencies which relate to the BID area can be captured, along with any considerations within the BID boundary. Where the study boundary overlaps with any neighbouring BID areas such as Northbank BID, those BID documents take precedence.

Four key stages of developing the vision

This study has four core stages to the development of a comprehensive vision and strategy for the public realm through Whitehall. The study team, in partnership with the BID, has defined these stages as: understanding the place, understanding the changing social context, developing responsive design principles, and a strategic vision for the BID. Proposals for how this vision can be delivered are also illustrated.

Understanding of place tailors the response

Understanding both the physical and physiological dimensions of the spaces and places within the study boundary is key to meeting these needs and challenges and offers opportunities for potential public realm improvements or enhancements. The analysis undertaken in this study follows a similar methodology to the 'People Wanted, Victoria' study with a focus on the Whitehall BID area.

Social trends have an impact on public realm

This study looks to capture current trends such as rapid urbanisation and increasing densities, changes in lifestyle aspirations and technological advancements. These, together with trends associated with the sectors of work, retail, living and transport are analysed and applied to public realm projects. The challenge of distilling a complex range of evolving trends into a cohesive set of required responses is important in order to address the more obvious needs of users and emerging gaps in the provision of public realm.

It should be noted that a separate and more detailed study paper was produced on this topic as a part of the 'People Wanted Victoria' study published in January 2020. The material referenced in this study builds on this, based on shifts and growth during the last three years, and how this may specifically impact the public realm throughout Whitehall. For further information regarding this area of work please refer to the supporting document 'People Wanted; Placemaking in Victoria: Changing Structural Trends and Public Realm'.

Design principles informed by detailed analysis

Changing social trends are further analysed in chapter 3 of this report. In conjunction with the findings from the area analysis, they form a robust set of design principles which explores how Whitehall's public realm can best respond to the shifting social context. These design principles largely form the public realm vision, and can be incorporated into public realm interventions at a range of scales to establish a cohesive identity for the area.

Conceptual projects illustrate how the vision could be delivered

An important aspect of delivering this vision is to articulate the conceptual ideas. Not strictly design proposals, instead these outline studies reflect how the principles could inspire public realm responses at various levels. They have been developed to act as a catalyst for thought and discussion among potential stakeholders about the possibilities presented. They should be seen as a collection of studies to help inform the level of aspiration at an individual project level, but which collectively form and deliver a larger cohesive vision for the public realm in Whitehall. They have been classed into groups of small, medium, and large-scale interventions.

Some of the proposed conceptual ideas for projects are linked to ongoing or potential initiatives in the area which could act as catalysts for change: for example, the creation of a destination at Parliament Square and the improvement of the spaces around it.

As part of the process, the study has been developed with a range of feedback from stakeholder engagement discussions. This has included conversations with:

- TfL (Transport for London)
- Westminster City Council
- Norman Rourke Pryme (Traffic & Transportation)
- The Royal Parks
- Historic England
- Twentieth Century Society
- The Cabinet Office
- Government Property Agency
- CPNI (Security)
- Metropolitan Police
- Ministry of Defence
- UK Parliament, Strategic Estates
- Peter Heath, Design Director Public Realm at Atkins



1.5

REPORT STRUCTURE

Engagement has also taken place with the following recognized amenity societies / groups:

- Victoria Neighbourhood Forum
- The Thorney Island Society (Amenity Society/WCC Consultee)
- Westminster Society (Amenity Society/WCC Consultee)
- Local operators and BID members

Timeframes for implementing vision proposals

In addition, the study also presents possible time scales for the implementation of the strategy. While it focuses upon time scales associated with the conceptual ideas for projects, it also addresses wider next steps for implementing the strategy. This reflects the variety of scales across the spectrum of project ideas while recognising the range of other initiatives currently underway or anticipated to take place within Whitehall. In this context, and for the purposes of the study, the term 'Whitehall' is interpreted as the area within the Whitehall BID boundary.

Any strategic reallocation of traffic routes will require strategic city-level planning, modelling, and consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, and building this consensus will take time. By contrast, the introduction of seating areas or smaller pockets of planting within the network of streets is something that would require less intensive strategic decision-making.

Using example projects to set out timeframes

Therefore, using the illustrative projects as a reference for the level of intervention, these have been grouped into periods to demonstrate how a range of outcomes from the vision and strategy could come to be realised in the short, medium, and long term.

The document structure broadly reflects the order of the approach to the work as outlined in section 1.4. The diagram below (Figure 4) reflects the workflow directions and illustrates how the various influences and components are connected to ensure a logical development of the design principles, example projects, and next steps.

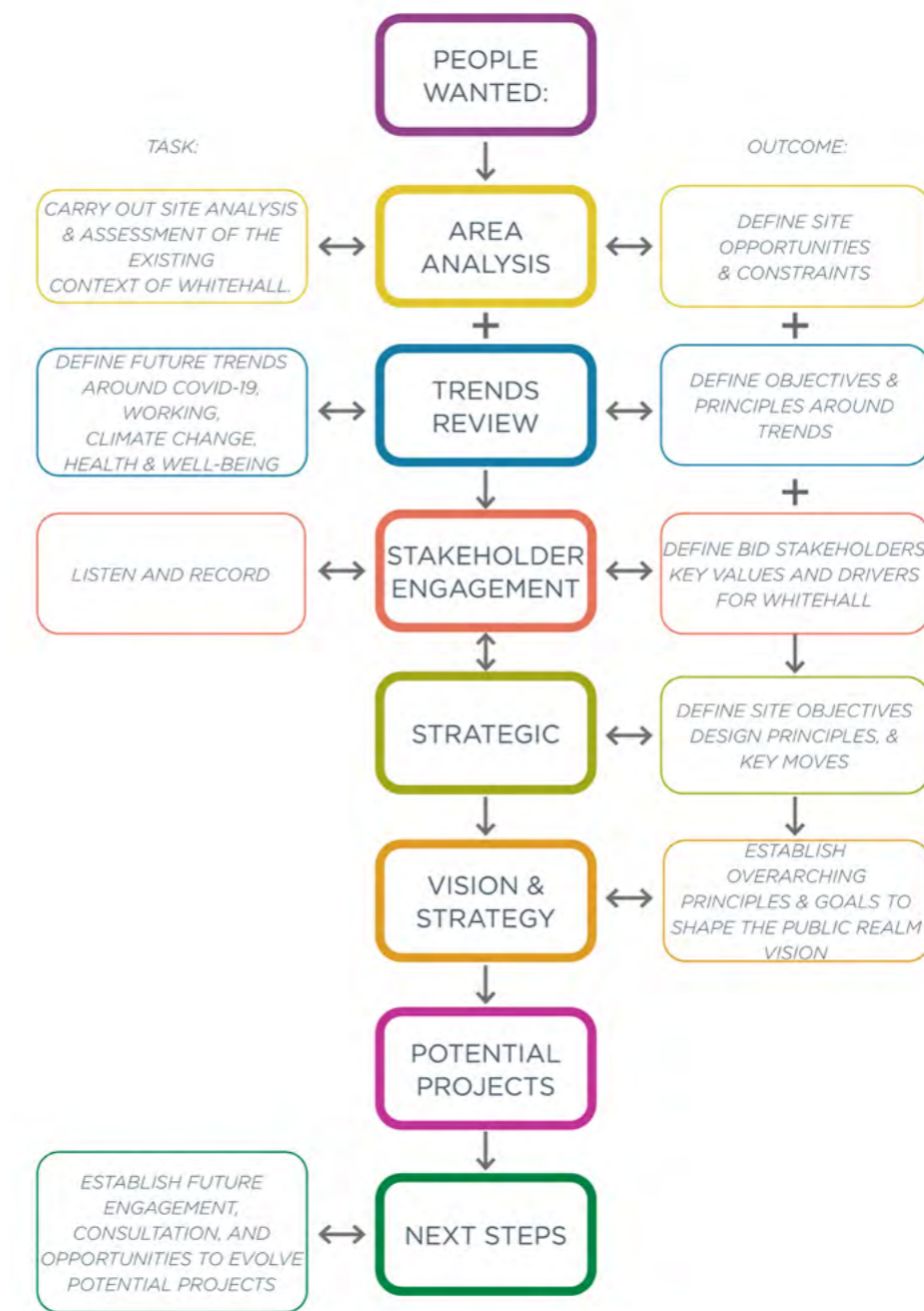


Fig. 4 Report structure



AREA ANALYSIS



2.1

AN ICONIC LONDON LOCATION

A significant London location with a rich history

The area encompassed by the Whitehall BID is a significant location within the capital and the UK. It has a unique rich history representing both royal and government activities and events, both on the streets of Whitehall and within the buildings. The many landmarks, monuments, and points of interest demonstrate the significance of this area throughout history, including the Cenotaph, Horse Guards Parade, Churchill War Rooms, Banqueting House, the location of the beheading of King Charles I, and the memorial to the Women of World War II. Whitehall today is widely recognised as the democratic heart of the United Kingdom and home to many of its government functions. The presence of the monarchy is still felt strongly, especially during major events, as the thoroughfare of Whitehall forms a large part of the ceremonial route.

Home for both the monarchy and the government

Democratic heart of the UK

As Whitehall today is home to much of the government's functions, including No.10 Downing Street and the Cabinet Office, in a democratic society it is also the scene of public protest and activism. As the home of a democratic government, the public realm needs to respond sensitively to every need.

A rigorous area analysis lays the foundation for a comprehensive vision and strategy

The following chapter is a rigorous area analysis looking at the BID area through a number of lenses. The purpose is to develop a strong foundation for the creation of a robust vision and strategy which can tackle the key components affecting the area. The aim of this analysis, carried out through a combination of desktop research, site visits, and listening sessions with key stakeholders, is to gain a greater understanding of the key opportunities and challenges facing the public realm in the area at present and into the future. Through understanding the history of the area, we can see how the public realm has been shaped into what exists today, and the stories that lie beneath. By analysing movement we can understand certain patterns of use that the public realm can respond to, and help foster a positive experience. Similarly, understanding other factors arising from connectivity, environmental conditions, policy context, key destinations, key developments or related projects and more, all help to build a greater picture of the current context for the vision and strategy.








The study boundary, delineated by a red outline in the adjacent diagram, concentrates on the northern section of the Whitehall BID. In order to ensure seamless integration within the broader context of the BID, the study boundary extends beyond its designated boundaries. It is important to note that this study was conducted prior to the re-balloting process in 2023, which resulted in an extension to the BID area. Consequently, the southern portion of the Whitehall BID is excluded from this study.

Wherever the boundary overlaps with adjacent BIDs, proposals from that BID are to take precedence (e.g. Those arising from the 'People Wanted, Victoria' document.)

Key Landmarks:

1. Palace of Westminster
2. Elizabeth Tower (Big Ben)
3. The Cenotaph
4. 10 Downing Street
5. Parliament Square
6. Westminster Pier
7. Trafalgar Square
8. The London Eye
9. Buckingham Palace

KEY:

-  Study Boundary
-  London Underground
-  Network Rail
-  Whitehall BID Area
-  Victoria BID Area
-  Victoria Westminster BID Area
-  Northbank BID Area

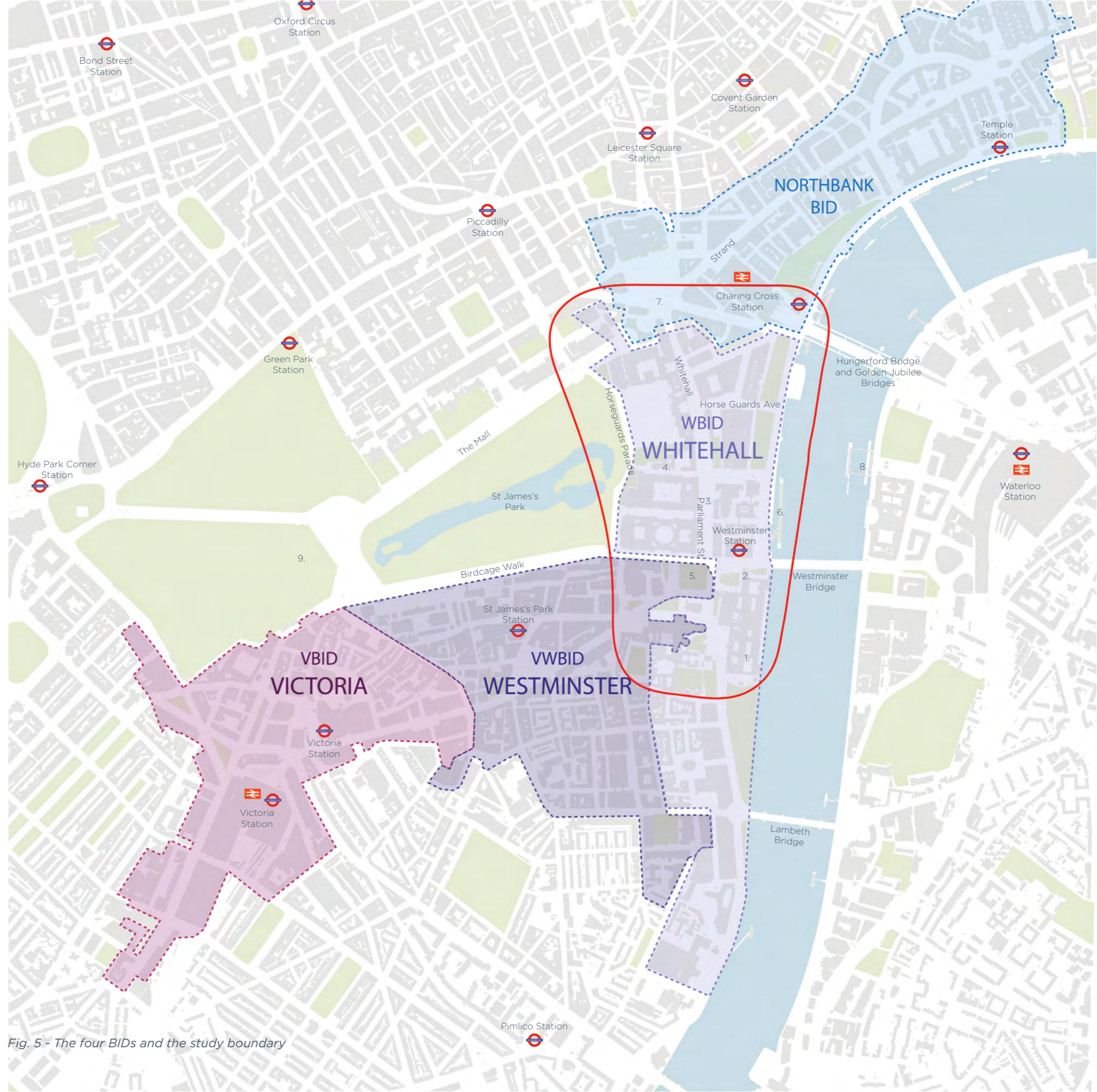


Fig. 5 - The four BIDs and the study boundary

2.2

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

A rich history has created a unique urban landscape

The area of Whitehall has a rich political and cultural history which has shaped the area over centuries. There are many prominent and subtle landmarks such as Banqueting House, a part of the original Whitehall Palace, the Cenotaph, a war memorial to World War I, and Queen Mary's Steps, located behind the Ministry of Defence building which reaches the historical edge of the river Thames.

The following pages highlight several significant points in time which have contributed to the development of the area.



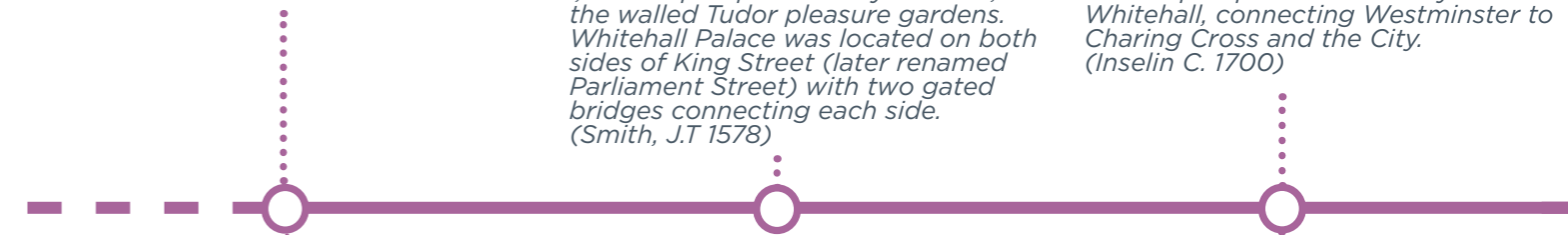
Fig.6 Artistic representation of London's lost rivers. (King, 2018)



Fig. 7 Map of Whitehall, 1578. Drawn during the reign of Elizabeth I, this map depicts 'Priory Garden', the walled Tudor pleasure gardens. Whitehall Palace was located on both sides of King Street (later renamed Parliament Street) with two gated bridges connecting each side. (Smith, J.T 1578)



Fig.8 Map of Whitehall and St James's, 1700. This map depicts the linearity of Whitehall, connecting Westminster to Charing Cross and the City. (Inselin C. 1700)



Pre-1500

Whitehall was a marshy area, often flooded by the river Tyburn which branched from the river Thames. (The Royal Parks, 2019)

Market traders colonized the area, and as a result, there was a high demand for change in the urban fabric. (Walkford, 1878)

1603

St James's Park was established in 1603 and is different from other Royal Parks because of its bird life. It was previously a swampy marshland, but once it was drained and landscaped, King James I kept a collection of animals in the park. This included deer, crocodiles and exotic birds. There were aviaries of exotic birds along what is now called Birdcage Walk, and an area known as 'The Decoy', which was used to lure and catch birds. (The Royal Parks, 2019)

1698

The Whitehall fire of 1698 destroyed Whitehall Palace, which had at a time been the largest palace in Europe. The Banqueting House designed by Inigo Jones in 1622 was one of the few structures to survive the fire. (Historic Royal Palaces, 2022)



Fig. 9 Map of the Royal Palace of Whitehall, 1680. Note the formal layout of the Privy Gardens, the tightly knit dwellings adjacent to the Thames and the emphasis given in depicting Scotland Yard. (Fisher, 1680)

1723 - 1759

Two monumental gateways crossed Whitehall, built in the 1500s to connect the Palace of Whitehall east and west of the thoroughfare. By the 1700s, the gateways were causing an inconvenience due to increased traffic levels. This led to the demolition of the King Street Gate in 1723, and the Holbein Gate in 1759.
(Walter, Thornbury, 1878)



Fig.10 An elevation of the iconic Horse Guards, designed by William Kent. It was built in the 1750s. (London, 1935)



Fig.11 Map of Whitehall, 1775. The layout of Whitehall in relation to its surroundings now resembles more closely what we can see today. (Bowles C. 1777)



Fig.12 Street layout in Whitehall, 1810. (Plan of Westminster Improvements. 1810)

1834

Following a huge fire that destroyed much of the Palace of Westminster in 1834, Sir Charles Barry won a competition to design a new palace. It was completed more than 30 years later.
(UK Parliament).



Fig.13 Site clearance prior to excavation work for Westminster Station c.1866. (Flather H. C1866).

1750

As the population grew, the demand for better river connections became increasingly important. The construction of Westminster Bridge became the catalyst for development in the area.

This new bridge led to more development in the area, where various streets were laid out at the same time. The new Bridge Street leading from Westminster Bridge was continued as Great George Street to St James's Park. Parliament Street was being created and later superseded the previous King Street.
(London, 1951)

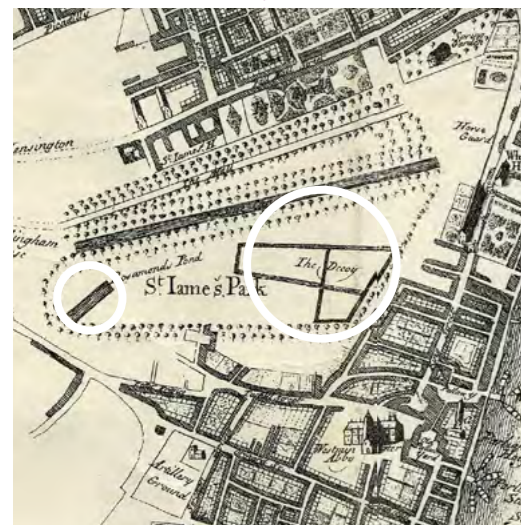


Fig.14 Map of Westminster/Whitehall as of 1720. Highlighted in white (from left to right): Rosamund's Pond, now the site of Buckingham Palace, and The Decoy, now Duck Island. (Parker, S 1720)

1820s

Scotland Yard, formerly known as the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) Office, was originally located in Great Scotland Yard in the north-east of Whitehall. Sir Robert Peel used it as the headquarters when forming the police force in 1829.
(Metropolitan Police, 2013)



Fig.15 Map of Whitehall/Westminster as of 1767. The area highlighted in white demonstrates the location of Priory Gardens, an enclosed green space substantially smaller than the original Tudor pleasure garden.
(Artist unknown, 1767)

1850s

Several private mansions existed in Whitehall, including Montagu House, a French style chateau built on the banks of the Thames by the 5th Duke of Buccleuch. It was demolished in 1950.
(Montagu House, Whitehall, 2019).



Fig.16 Photograph of Parliament Street from Trafalgar Square, 1839. The foreground shows a statue of Charles I and Banqueting House in the distance.
(Museum, no date)

1868

Westminster Underground Station was opened by the District Railway (DR) as part of the company's first section of the 'Inner Circle' route. The first section of the route extended between South Kensington and Westminster Stations, directly connecting the two areas. (Wiki Targeted (Entertainment), no date)



Fig.17 Pockets of open space and areas of tree planting can be seen in this map of Whitehall, 1896. (Director General of the Ordnance Survey Office, Southampton, 1896).

1899

The current appearance of Parliament Street dates from 1899, after a group of houses between Downing Street and Great George Street were destroyed. (Hibbert et al, 2008).

1911

The Old Admiralty Building houses were built when Winston Churchill became First Lord of the Admiralty in October 1911. (Admiralty House | British History Online, no date)



Fig.18 Image of Victoria Embankment Gardens, c. 1928 (Artist unknown, C. 1928)

1870

New Parliament buildings are completed at the Palace of Westminster. (UK Parliament, no date)

1874

From 1865-1870 the northern embankment and sewer was built by Sir Joseph Bazalgette. In 1865 the Victoria Embankment Gardens were created as part of a chain of open spaces along Victoria Embankment. (Victoria Embankment Gardens | Westminster City Council, 2022)



Fig.19 Map of Whitehall and the Palace of Westminster as of 1868. The newly built District line and Westminster Underground Station are visible. (MAPCO, no date)

1919

E. Lutyens designs The Cenotaph, which is erected to coincide with Peace Day in July 1919. (Imperial War Museums, no date)



Fig.20 Map of Whitehall as of 1897. By the turn of the century, Charing Cross was a major transport hub in central London, as indicated by the red square. (Westminster: Tothill Fields and neighbourhood | British History Online, no date)

1930

Whitehall Theatre, now Trafalgar Studios, opens in Whitehall in 1930. (About us, no date)

1940

WWII bomb damage occurred across Whitehall. On 8 October 1940, bombs hit the Paymaster General's Office, the War Office and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (5 Whitehall Place). (Content edited by Community Sites (www.communitysites.co.uk), no date)

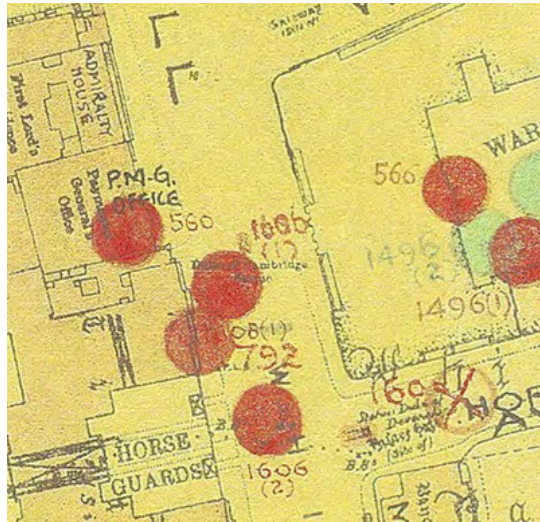


Fig.21 Map of bombings adjacent to Horse Guards in Whitehall, 1940s. (Content edited by Community Sites (www.communitysites.co.uk), no date b)



Fig.22 View of Whitehall from Trafalgar Square, 1950. (Content edited by Community Sites (www.communitysites.co.uk), no date)

1981
The first London Marathon takes place. The Whitehall section of the route led along Victoria Embankment, past the Palace of Westminster and a final stretch along Bird Cage Walk. (History of the London Marathon - Course History - Nr. 2 of 4, no date)

1984
The Churchill War Rooms open to the public (Imperial War Museums, no date)



Fig.23 The 2003 demonstration against the war with Iraq: one of the largest protests to ever occur in the capital. (Dan Lockton, 2003)

2021
The redevelopment of the Royal United Services Institute in Whitehall begins (Redevelopment of RUSI Headquarters Begins, no date)

→ TODAY



Fig.24 Damage to Paymaster General's Office, Whitehall, 8th October 1940. (Content edited by Community Sites (www.communitysites.co.uk), no date c)

1951
The Ministry of Defence building is completed, built on the site of the former Whitehall Palace and separated from Victoria Embankment by green space. (Ministry of Defence Main Building, Horse Guards Avenue, London, UK, no date)



Fig.25 Image of Whitehall, 1963. The carriage way is wide, but there is distinctly less vehicle traffic than the present day. (W. Roger, 1963)

1991
On 7th February 1991, an IRA mortar bomb was fired from a van parked in Whitehall towards No.10 Downing Street, and exploded in the gardens. (History of 10 Downing Street - GOV.UK, no date)

1999
The Jubilee line extension opens, including new platforms at Westminster Underground Station (Matters, no date)



Fig.26 BDP image of the Old War Offices building, at the time of this report, to be opened as a Raffles hotel and residential development in Spring 2023.

2.3

WHITEHALL TODAY

The heart of the UK Government

Whitehall is known as the heart of the UK Government, a politically and culturally significant area, home to a large proportion of the UK's Government offices.

Security should not compromise public realm

The area sees democratic activities such as demonstrations and protests and requires high levels of security, all of which plays a part in shaping the public realm. Nonetheless, security elements should not compromise the quality and beauty of Whitehall's public realm.

A period of growth and change for the BID

Throughout the last ten years, the Victoria BID has helped influence transformation within its own boundaries. When the proposed renewal and restoration programme for the Palace of Westminster begins, Whitehall will see significant change. This is therefore an opportune time to establish a strategic framework which coordinates improvements to the public realm into a cohesive and legible vision to improve the Whitehall experience for those working, visiting and living in the area.

Increased focus on public realm in response to the Covid-19 pandemic

Alongside the recent changing trends in lifestyle, retail, work and leisure, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on businesses, workplaces and the vitality of the area will be important considerations when developing an approach to public realm improvements. Public realm is now under scrutiny, with a particular focus on the benefits that well-considered outdoor space can bring to the recovery process, encouraging a return to the city centre to enjoy London's spaces and buildings. Within these parameters of change, Whitehall can maximise this opportunity to refresh its public realm, highlight its assets and enrich its identity as a local and international destination.

Changing travel behaviour requires a flexible solution

The pandemic has triggered widespread and far-reaching changes in travel behaviour, nationally and locally. The pre-pandemic trends of active travel, micro-mobility and local living have all been accelerated and none more so than remote and hybrid working. Many people have chosen to remain working from home rather than travel for at least part of the working week, a very significant change for the many offices in Whitehall. As with many pandemic impacts, long-term travel behaviour is very uncertain, requiring a flexible approach in response to future needs and demands.

A concentration of historic, cultural and entertainment attractions

The Whitehall BID lies at the heart of the capital, with numerous key attractions including palaces, key buildings, and monuments within the area and only a short distance to other key cultural and entertainment hubs in central London. The proximity of the BID area to the river Thames is significant, given Whitehall's river transport links and future development, such as the Thames Tideway project.

The Whitehall BID's close proximity to some of London's best dining and entertainment is a potential attraction for new businesses, as well as tourists. Furthermore, new development within and surrounding the BID may accommodate changing trends.

WHITEHALL TODAY: CONTEXT

- KEY:
- Study Boundary
 - Whitehall BID Area
 - Victoria BID Area
 - Victoria Westminster BID Area
 - Northbank BID Area
 - London Underground
 - Network Rail

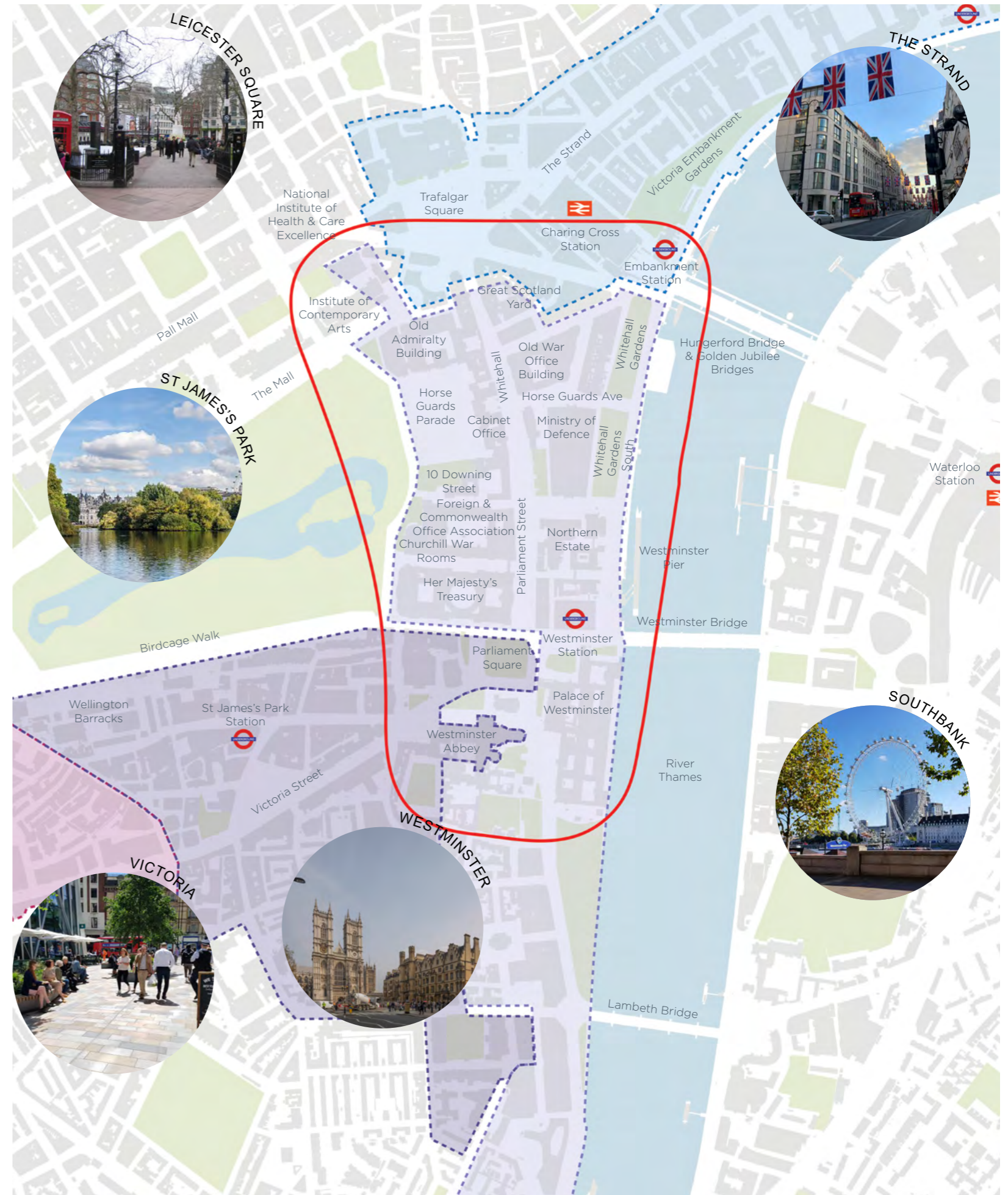


Fig. 27 - Location Context

Key Attractions within the Whitehall BID Boundary



Fig 27. - Westminster Station



Fig 28. - The Palace of Westminster



Fig 29. - Whitehall



Fig 30. - Ministry of Defence



Fig 31. - Whitehall Gardens North



Fig 32. - Whitehall Gardens South

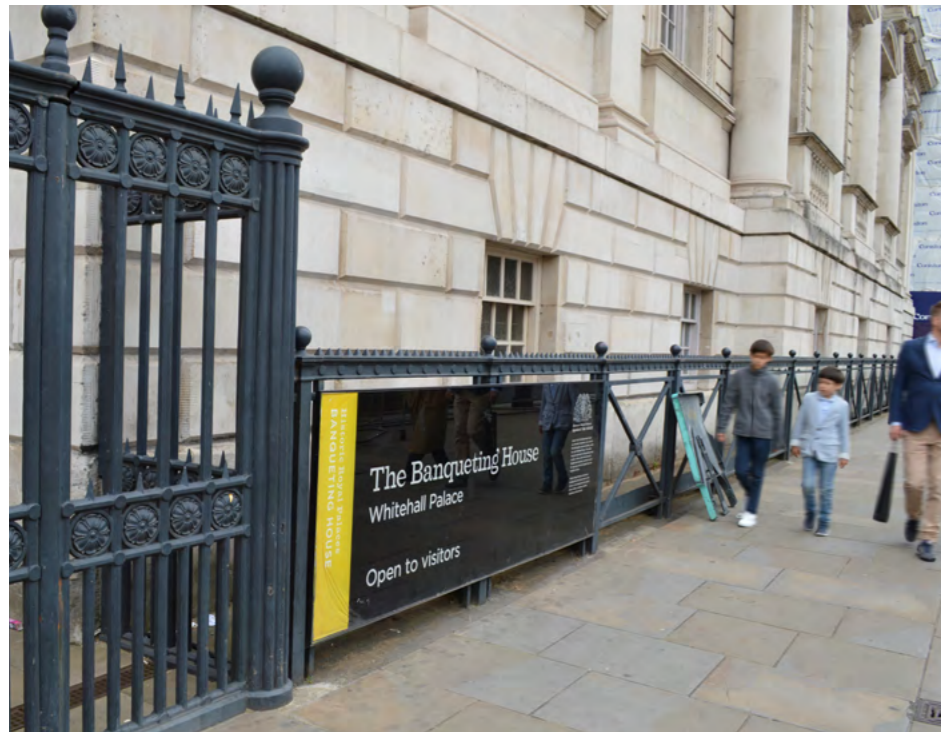


Fig 33. - The Banqueting House



Fig 34. - Downing Street



Fig 35. - Churchill War Rooms



Fig 36. - Horse Guards Parade



Fig 37. - The Cenotaph



Fig 38. - Elizabeth Tower (Big Ben)

Key Attractions in close proximity to the Whitehall BID Boundary



Fig 39. - Trafalgar Square



Fig 40. - Parliament Square

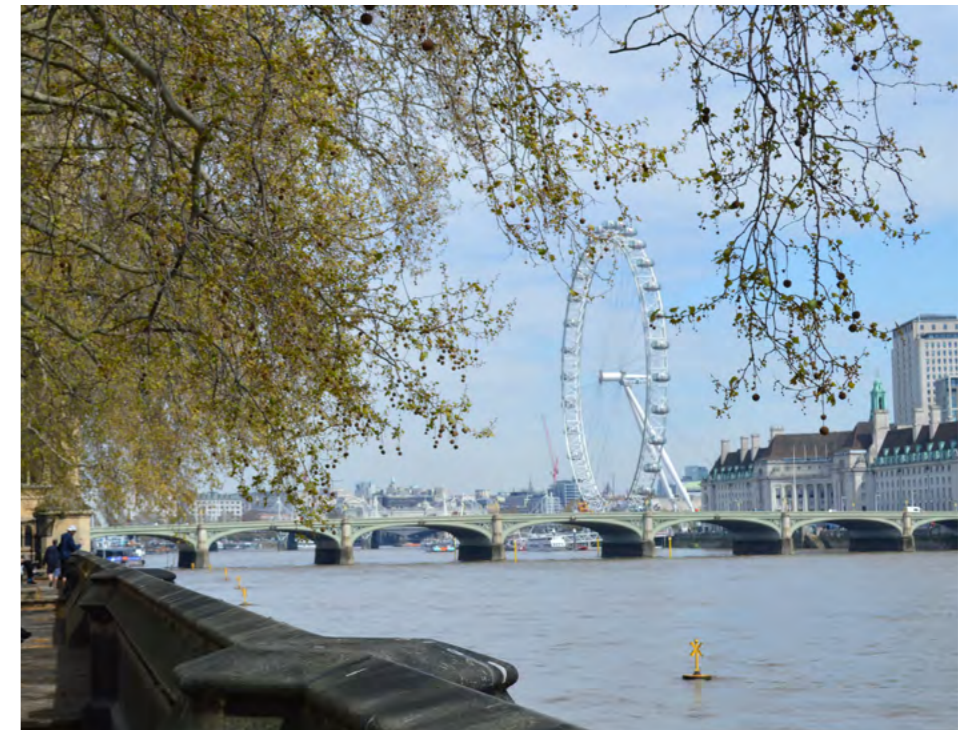


Fig 41. - The River Thames



Fig 42. - Westminster Abbey



Fig 43. - Victoria Tower Gardens



Fig 44. - Sir Winston Churchill Statue



Fig 45. - St James's Park



Fig 46. - St James's Urban Area



Fig 47. - Leicester Square



Fig 48. - Covent Garden



Fig 49. - Buckingham Palace



Fig 50. - Southbank

2.4 POLICY CONTEXT

The political context

Sadiq Khan was re-elected as a Mayor of London in 2021 with a manifesto focused on London's recovery following the pandemic. He highlighted his aspirations to develop better public spaces, safer streets and more pedestrian and cycling-friendly schemes.

In 2022, a new Labour leader and cabinet were elected to Westminster City Council, which pledged to clean and green streets, taking action on air quality, sustainable transport, with a vision for 15-minute neighbourhoods. Their proposals include improvements to biodiversity and a commitment to climate action and environmental justice, with the voluntary sector and educational institutions playing a larger part in green transformation. Labour's plan encourages active travel with an ambition to make Westminster the most walkable borough.

Planning Policy Framework

The main planning policy context is provided by:
National Planning Policy Framework (2021)
The London Plan (2021)
Westminster's City Plan 2019-2040 (2021)
Mayor's Transport Strategy

Ambitious new policies in relation to sustainability, security and heritage

The London Plan 2021 sets out the Mayor's ambition for 'Good Growth', seeking to ensure that the quantum of development required over the planning period is delivered in a way that is environmentally, economically and socially sustainable. This is reflected by the introduction of several key policy changes - including an Urban Greening Factor to quantify requirements for green cover in new developments, a net zero carbon requirement for all development, a firmer approach to prevention of crime and terrorism, and an ambition for a London-wide Heritage Strategy to support the delivery of heritage-led growth. The Westminster City Plan 2019-2040 (WCP) also sets out these key themes, introducing an ambition to reduce 60% of carbon dioxide emissions by 2025; committing to the production of a revised Westminster World Heritage Site Management Plan, and aiming to produce new supplementary planning guidance on heritage and design.

The London Plan locates Whitehall within the Central Activities Zone (CAZ), designated for its unique international, national and London-wide role based on a rich mix of uses including office, cultural, arts, entertainment, night-time economy and tourism. The London Plan identifies a need to enhance the attractiveness and inclusiveness of the CAZ to residents, visitors, and businesses, including through improving public realm and reducing traffic, as demonstrated in this document.

Westminster City Plan 2019-2040 identifies key sites for development in Whitehall

The WCP outlines Westminster's housing supply for the years 2020-35, identifying 'deliverable sites' across the borough for a minimum of 50 net new homes per site. One of the key deliverable sites in south Westminster is the Old War Office, Whitehall. As well as providing new residential development, a hotel and spa will open in 2023, offering new job opportunities and attracting more visitors to the area. Westminster City Council's Site Allocations Plan published in Autumn 2022 outlines detailed policies to better control and guide development on identified sites that can contribute to the city's strategic growth targets for the period 2040.

Planning policy supports a safe, attractive and accessible public realm

London-wide and local policies strongly support a safe, attractive, accessible, and well-designed public realm, which should be well-connected, related to the local and historic context and easy to understand and maintain in line with TfL's 'Healthy Streets' guidance. Development proposals should ensure that the public realm encourages active travel, incorporates green infrastructure, and is engaging for all ages (exploring innovative opportunities such as 'Play Streets'). In addition, Westminster policy emphasises that the public realm should contribute to a network of well-defined frontages and spaces, use high-quality materials, design out crime, and conserve and enhance heritage assets and their settings, including the World Heritage Site, listed buildings, conservation areas and archaeology. These priorities are applicable across London, but are particularly pertinent to Whitehall, due to the opportunity to improve the area's existing context, as discussed in the following sections.

Development must conserve and protect Westminster's heritage

Whitehall is located within the Whitehall Conservation Area, the Tier 1 Archaeological Priority Area, and is home to a large number of listed buildings. The Westminster City Plan highlights Whitehall's location within a 'Monument Saturation Zone' and as such new statues, monuments or memorials should not be included within the public realm unless there is an exceptionally good reason. To further protect the townscape and heritage the London Plan establishes a framework of views that are of strategic importance. There are additional views designated in the Whitehall Conservation Area Audit, where any development must demonstrably enhance their characteristics, composition, and significance and remedy past damage to views where possible.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on travel demand has been widespread, but has also resulted in long-term benefits including a reduction in traffic and an improvement on air quality. The advantages offered by the newly opened Elizabeth Line and the future potential for technology to facilitate on-demand travel, together with cleaner, greener vehicles offer additional prospects for a healthier city.

POLICY CONTEXT

- KEY:
- Study Boundary
 - Archaeological Priority Areas Tier 1
 - Monument Saturation Zone
 - International Centre
 - CAZ Retail Cluster
 - Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
 - World Heritage Site
 - Air Quality Focus areas (2016)
 - London Underground
 - Network Rail

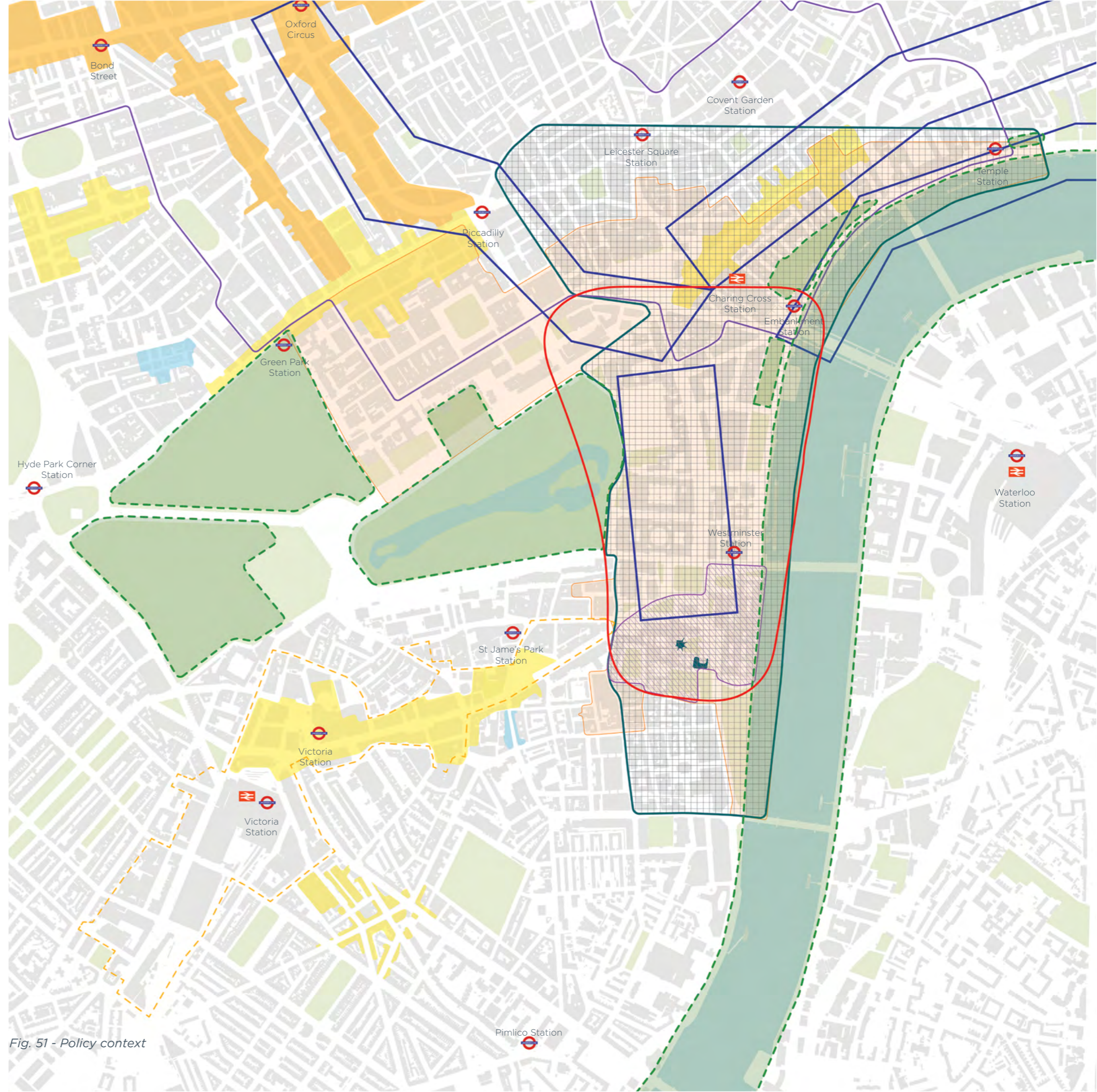


Fig. 51 - Policy context

2.5 CONSERVATION AREAS AND LISTED BUILDINGS

Four conservation areas within the study area

There are 56 conservation areas in the City of Westminster, with four located partially or entirely within the study boundary (as illustrated in Figure 53). The conservation area designation recognises architectural and historic interest and seeks to protect the special character and appearance of these places still present today. While each conservation area has a unique character, they broadly encompass the following:

- Whitehall – an area synonymous with the UK’s most powerful institutions. Whitehall’s buildings and monuments are a national symbol of history and politics.
- Westminster Abbey and Parliament Square – an international tourist destination and seat of democracy, dominated by world-famous landmarks and buildings.
- St James’s – a combination of high-end retail, hospitality and cultural landmarks adjacent to St James’s Park and Green Park.
- Trafalgar Square – a landmark tourist destination centred around the public open space surrounding Nelson’s Column and flanked by internationally renowned art institutions, restaurants and cafes.

Conservation area includes a diversity of architectural styles

The Whitehall Conservation Area covers a high proportion of the BID area. Other conservation areas partially included within the BID boundary indicate the varied character and appearance of the area, which contains a diversity of architectural styles, and a rich palette of high-quality materials and designs. There is a high proportion of Grade I, II* and II listed buildings, ranging from high-profile assets such as the Palace of Westminster and Downing Street to less well-known heritage buildings. All of these contribute to the character of Whitehall and are an integral part of the historic development of the area.

The study area contains several conservation areas, the Westminster World Heritage Site, and a rich collection of designated and undesignated heritage buildings and structures. However, the environment fails to create clear wayfinding connections to reveal their full potential. Through public realm development, opportunities will be explored to enhance Whitehall’s assets and improve connectivity alongside bolder enhancements to less sensitive areas.

UNESCO World Heritage Site within the study boundary

The study area also overlaps with the Palace of Westminster and Westminster Abbey including St Margaret’s Church World Heritage Site (WHS), designated by UNESCO for its ‘Outstanding Universal Value’ as part of the world’s cultural and natural heritage.

Whilst the built environment of Whitehall, therefore, reflects the area’s rich cultural history, the potential change in the future use of Whitehall’s government buildings could also see a changing demographic, which will require the public realm to meeting different user needs.

Opportunity for the public realm to reveal and enhance heritage

The public realm will also play a major part in creating clear connections and improving wayfinding from St James’s Park to the river Thames, better revealing and enhancing Whitehall’s significant heritage assets.



Fig. 52 - Palace of Westminster

CONSERVATION AREAS AND LISTED BUILDINGS CONTEXT

Whitehall's national and global significance

The Whitehall BID contains a high proportion of listed buildings and extends into several Conservation Areas: Westminster Abbey and Parliament Square, Royal Parks, St James's and Trafalgar Square, as well as the Whitehall Conservation Area. The UNESCO World Heritage Site boundary also crosses the BID boundary, reinforcing the area's cultural heritage and global significance.

KEY:

-  Study Boundary
-  London Underground
-  Network Rail
-  Listed Buildings
-  World Heritage Site
-  Conservation Areas
-  1. Westminster Abbey + Parliament Square
-  2. Smith Square
-  3. Millbank
-  4. Royal Parks
-  5. Birdcage Walk
-  6. Haymarket
-  7. Broadway + Christchurch Gardens
-  8. Peabody Estates
-  9. Vincent Square
-  10. Medway Street
-  11. Leicester Square
-  12. Pimlico
-  13. Westminster Cathedral
-  14. Mayfair
-  15. St James's
-  16. Trafalgar Square
-  17. Whitehall
-  18. Savoy
-  19. Adelphi
-  20. Regent Street
-  21. Regency Street
-  22. Covent Garden
-  23. Strand

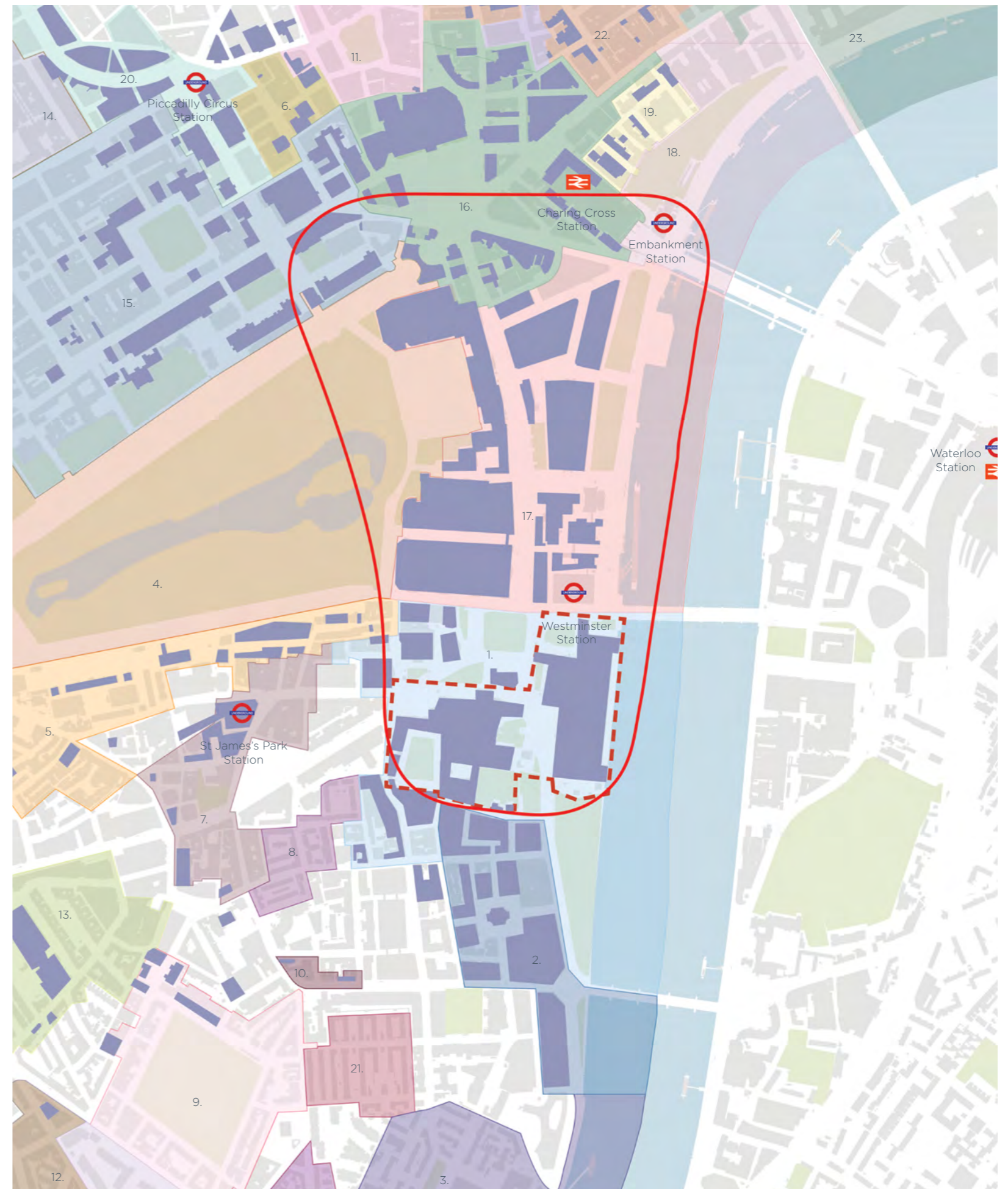


Fig.53 - Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings

2.6 CHARACTER AREAS AND LAND USE

A distinctive character across the area

Whitehall has a distinct identity defined by streets and buildings which have been informed by layers of history, architectural styles and uses over many years. The figures below set out the diverse range of these features throughout the study area which include a range of urban structures, public realm settings, landmarks, heritage assets and prevailing land use.



Fig.54 - 1. Whitehall & Parliament Street

The land use is predominantly government office buildings and historic landmarks.



Fig.55 - 2. Bridge Street

The land use is primarily commercial, retail at ground level, and Northern Estate government offices at upper levels. Westminster Underground Station is also accessed from Bridge Street.



Fig.56 - 3. Palace of Westminster

The Palace of Westminster is the seat of the UK Government, which sits within the boundary of both a conservation area and UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Fig.57 - 4. Downing Street

Downing Street serves as the official London residence of the UK's prime minister and associated government offices.



Fig.58 - 5. Horse Guards Road

Bordering St James's Park and Whitehall's government buildings, Horse Guards Road is characterised by the renowned ceremonial parade ground and the Churchill War Rooms museum.



Fig.59 - 6. Victoria Embankment

This section of Victoria Embankment is flanked by the River Thames and two public parks: Whitehall Gardens North and South. It is also a major thoroughfare for vehicles and cyclists.



Fig.60 - 7. Whitehall Court & Whitehall Place

Government offices and several landmark hotels, with some residential. Great Scotland Yard is also located here.



Fig.61 - 8. 14 - 53 Whitehall

The land use is predominantly hospitality and entertainment, with office space at the upper levels. Several of the buildings are grade listed.



Fig.62 - 9. The Mall

This area of historic significance includes The Mall, leading to Buckingham Palace, and buildings housing art galleries, a bookshop and cafe.

Whitehall predominantly comprises government office buildings, characterised by an impressive, formal layout of streets. However, the area is also home to landmark cultural and heritage assets. Pubs, cafes and high-end hotels create an offering for tourists and local residents. Wide, open spaces characterise the Victoria Embankment to the east and Horse Guards Road to the west. When designing the public realm, quality materials, street furniture, security and lighting all need to be developed into cohesive palettes to complement and enhance the character of each area.

- KEY:
- Study Boundary
 - London Underground
 - Network Rail
 - Whitehall BID boundary
 - 1. Whitehall & Parliament Street
 - 2. Bridge Street
 - 3. Palace of Westminster
 - 4. Downing Street
 - 5. Horse Guards Road
 - 6. Victoria Embankment
 - 7. Whitehall Court & Whitehall Place
 - 8. 14 - 53 Whitehall
 - 9. The Mall

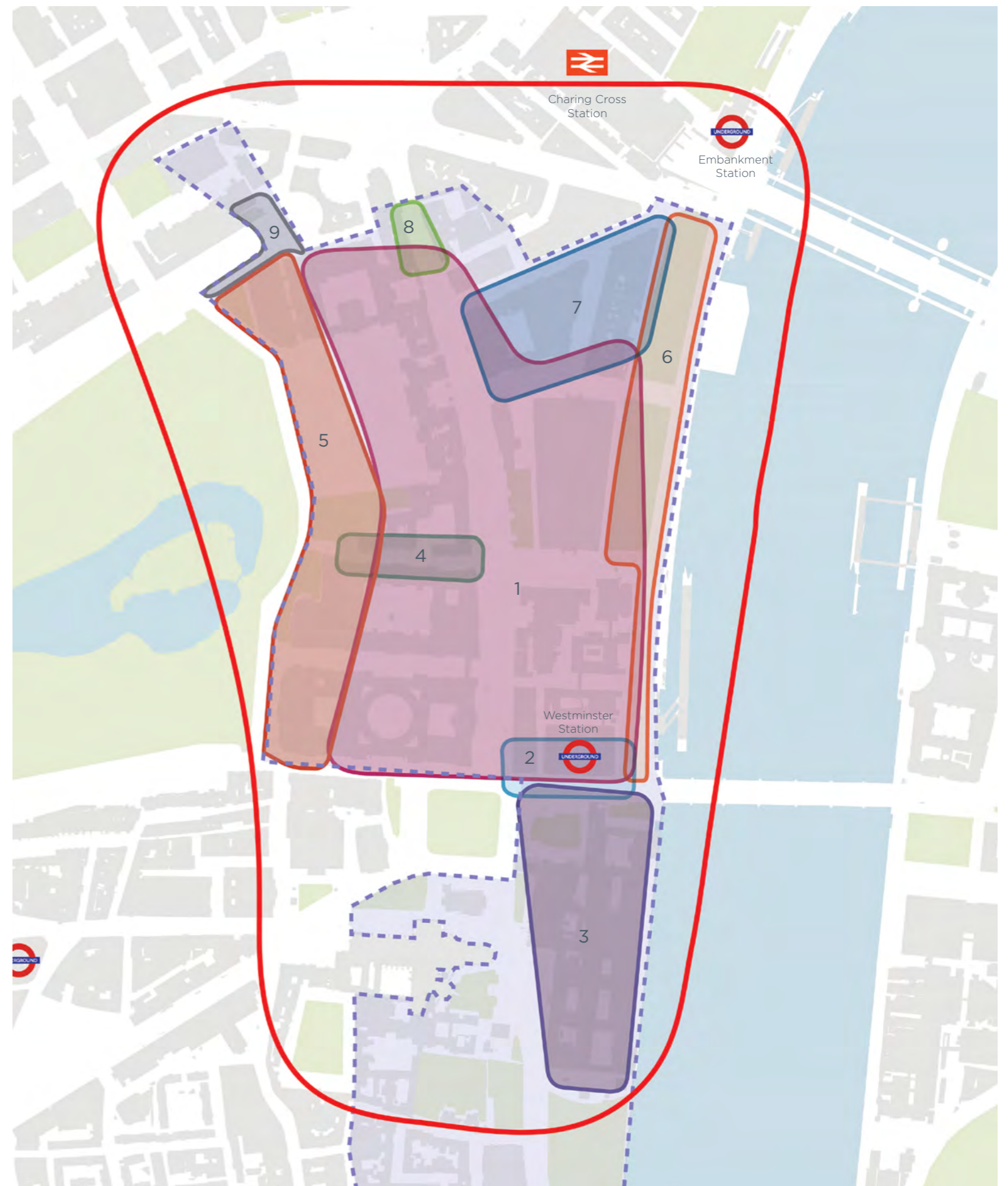


Fig.63 - Character Areas

2.7

STREET LIFE

Active frontages aid urban street

Several upmarket restaurants, hotels and cultural attractions can be found in the side streets surrounding Whitehall. There are two distinct clusters of food and beverage and/or retail ‘destinations’ within the Whitehall BID boundary: the northern end of Whitehall adjacent to Trafalgar Square, and Bridge Street. These areas contain the highest proportion of pubs and cafes in Whitehall, and are either within close proximity of major tourist attractions or transport hubs such as Westminster Station, Embankment Underground Station, and Charing Cross Station.

National, city and local street life could be better connected

The diagram on the adjacent page (Figure 68) identifies a hierarchy of street life ranging across a national, city and local level in Whitehall. The resulting mix of streets and destinations offering food and beverage or shopping opportunities is narrow, and the extent to which visitors explore the area beyond Whitehall and Bridge Street is less certain. Enhanced links between different areas could improve wayfinding and user experience through the wider area. The street life destinations are summarised on the following page.

Navigation is problematic

Many of the buildings along Whitehall are grand in scale with access controls, and restrictions creating a lack of permeability and a confusing environment on a busy street where casual meandering can become difficult, particularly for visitors. The streetscape should aid pedestrian navigation to create a more comfortable street environment for walking and exploring.



Fig. 64 - National/Street Life Environment: Bridge Street



Fig.65 - City/Street Life Environment: The Mall



Fig. 66 - Local/Street Life Environment: Craig's Court



Fig. 67 - Shopping/Retail/Food and Beverage Destinations: Northern Whitehall



STREET LIFE CONTEXT

The challenge of bringing vibrancy to other areas within the Whitehall BID

The diagram adjacent classifies the different street life environments within the Whitehall BID area into three categories: national street life environments, city street life environments, and local street life environments.

Streets which are defined as 'National Street Life Environments' have facilities or attractions which draw both local workers or residents and visitors, due to the concentration of landmarks, restaurants, pubs, or culture and arts facilities.

City Street Life environments are defined as streets which draw pedestrian traffic due to the presence of a landmark, restaurant, pub or cultural facility. These streets may draw more local pedestrians but still attract some visitors.

Local street environments include streets which are generally used by local residents or office workers. They may have fewer facilities to attract visitors but form convenient routes from a to b for regular users.

Within the Whitehall BID boundary, both Whitehall and Bridge Street are considered to be 'national street life' environments due to the high concentration of landmarks, pubs/restaurants, cultural facilities and a transport hub. While there are significant locations and landmarks throughout the BID area, the challenge is to bring vibrancy and atmosphere to the quieter areas where there are fewer restaurants/pubs or cafés, such as the central area of Whitehall.

KEY:

-  Study Boundary
 -  London Underground
 -  Network Rail
 -  National Street Life Environment
 -  City Street Life Environment
 -  Local Street Life Environment
 -  Retail/Food and Beverage/ Entertainment Destinations
- 1 Westminster Station: Major underground station with convenience shops and eateries.
 - 2 Parliament Street: Iconic pub The Red Lion
 - 3 Churchill War Rooms: Popular museum and cafe
 - 4 Whitehall Court: Upmarket restaurants and hotel
 - 5 Upper Whitehall: Collection of pubs, cafes and the Trafalgar Theatre
 - 6 The Mall: Destination of Mall Galleries, book shop and cafe



Fig. 68 - Street Life

2.8 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Open spaces are under-utilised

Whilst Whitehall sits adjacent to some of London's finest parks and green spaces such as St James's Park and Victoria Embankment Gardens, there are only two public open green spaces within the BID boundary. These are Whitehall Gardens North and South, both located along the Victoria Embankment, with a great deal to offer the Whitehall area. Wayfinding, and the connections to these spaces are poor, which leads to them being under-used. Further to this, there is a striking difference in quality between the two spaces. Whitehall Garden North is well maintained with irrigation throughout the summer and a good variety of planting and tree cover. The southern portion of the garden, adjacent to the Ministry of Defence building, has limited planting and tree cover and appears generally less well maintained. The northern portion of the gardens is fenced and gated, controlling access to only during the day.

Perception of hard surfaces and limited green

The public realm of the area feels predominantly hard with large areas of hard paved surfaces. However, there are a number of green spaces within the area that are less prominent from the main routes and some that are gated or privately controlled, creating uncertainty about access and use. This prevents these spaces being used to their full potential and enjoyed by everyone, which limits their contribution to the public realm in Whitehall.

Whilst Parliament Square is prominent and well known, visitors to the area may not realise that other green spaces such as St James's Park, Victoria Tower Gardens, Whitehall Gardens North and South and Victoria Embankment Gardens are just a short walk away.

Opportunity to enhance street tree planting

There are a good number of mature trees within the green spaces of the area and whilst there are zones of significant street trees, along the embankment for example, this could be improved along main circulation routes and help create greener connections between destinations such as Parliament Square, Trafalgar Square, St James's Park and the Thames. These additions would also add additional uplifts of biodiversity and habitat, enhanced public realm character, while reducing urban heat island effects and air pollution. The provision of an immersive green landscape will also support the health and well-being of visitors, workers and residents alike.



Fig.69 - Whitehall Gardens North

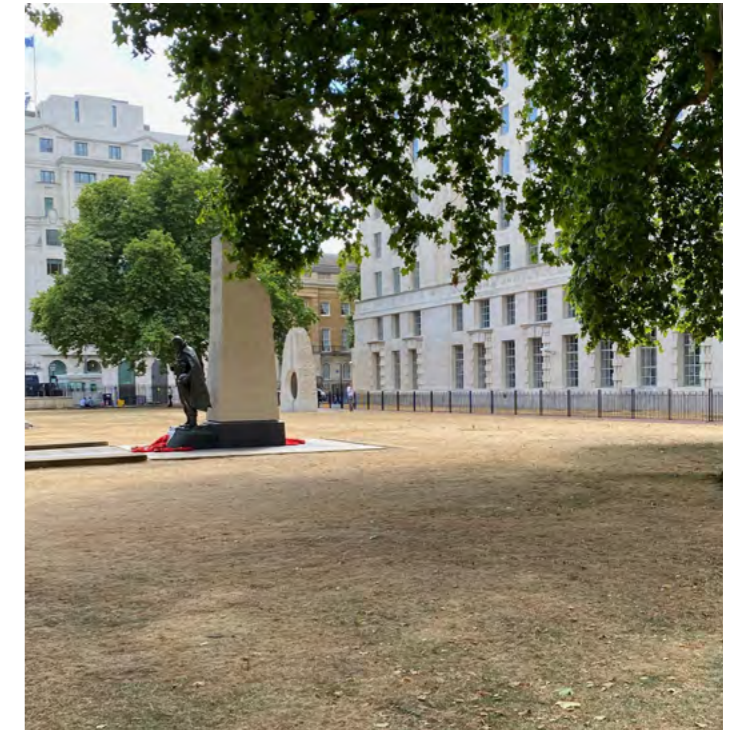


Fig.70 - Whitehall Gardens South



Fig.71 - Parliament Square

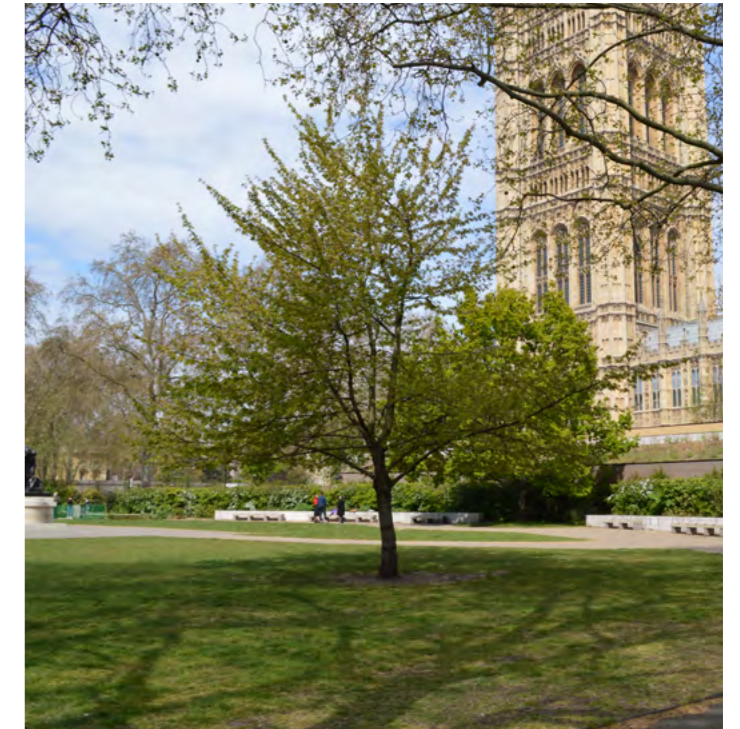


Fig.72 - Victoria Tower Gardens

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE CONTEXT

The two key public green spaces within the Whitehall BID area are Whitehall Gardens North and South. St James's Park is immediately adjacent to the BID boundary. With the Royal Parks developing strategies which potentially include wayfinding linkage through to Green Park, there is an opportunity to coordinate interfaces. The opportunity to link these parks and other pockets of green space across the BID area is explored further in chapters 5 and 6.

Within the Whitehall BID boundary there are limited open green spaces with poor connections. The majority of public realm in Whitehall is open hard spaces. Additional tree and shrub planting where possible will enhance the quality of the public realm and help to improve health and wellbeing, air quality, the heat island effect and biodiversity within the area.










- KEY:
-  Study Boundary
 -  London Underground
 -  Network Rail
 -  Whitehall BID boundary
 -  Private Green Space
 -  Publicly Accessible Green Space
 -  Trees
 -  Registered Gardens (Historic England)
 -  Royal Parks Boundary



Fig. 72 - Green Infrastructure (Historic England, no date)

2.9

GREENING SPATIAL CONTEXT

Comparing different scales of existing green space offers insight on the suitable types of proposed interventions

The scale of public green space within the Whitehall BID and surrounding area is categorised into small, medium and large areas. This enables us to determine the number of green spaces accessible to the public within and adjacent to the BID area, and reveals the connection between the large green spaces (the Royal Parks) and blue space (the Thames), with Whitehall acting as the ‘buffer’ between the two. This recognises the option to link green spaces such as St James’s Park with the river Thames via pedestrian and/or cycle-friendly routes through Whitehall, among other design opportunities.

Whitehall Gardens North and South are comparatively small in relation to St James’s Park. However, they are a much larger green space than the many small-scale parks and gardens in the area such as Christchurch Gardens. They also benefit from a key location overlooking the Thames and are close to significant future developments such as the proposed Thames Tideway visitor platform immediately opposite Whitehall Gardens.

Areas:

1. St James’s Park - 23ha
2. Parliament Square - 0.5ha
3. Whitehall Gardens (nth) - 0.8ha
4. Whitehall Gardens (sth) - 0.8ha
5. Christchurch Gardens - 0.2ha
6. St James’s Square - 0.9ha

KEY:

- Study Boundary
- London Underground
- Network Rail
- Whitehall BID boundary
- Large Public Green Space
- Medium Public Green Space
- Small Public Green Space
- Green Space (other)
- Key spatial comparisons

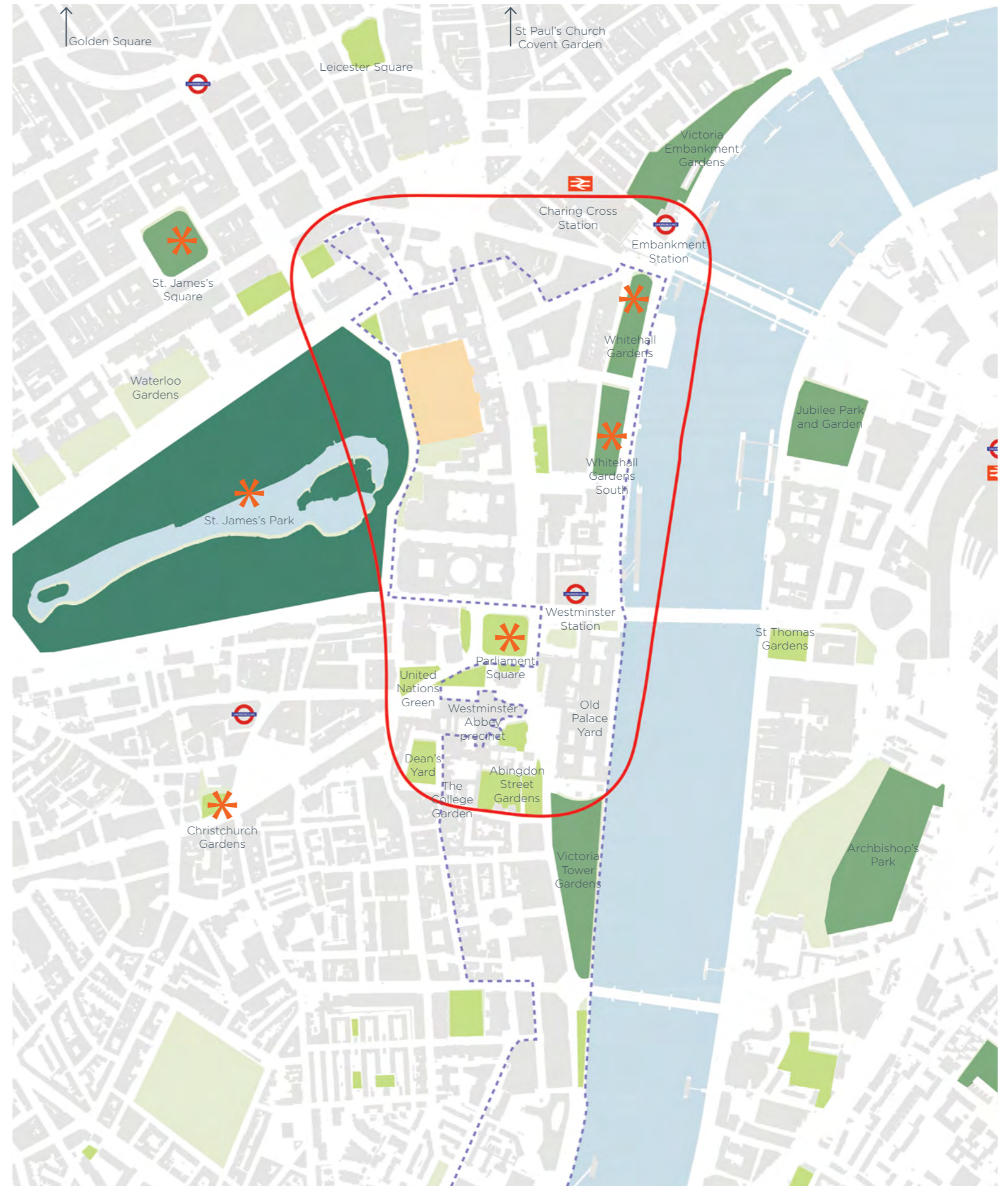


Fig. 73 - Green Spatial Context



Fig. 74 - St James's Park



Fig.75 - Parliament Square



Fig. 76 - Christchurch Gardens



Fig. 77 - Whitehall Gardens (sth)



Fig. 78 - Whitehall Gardens (nth)



Fig. 79 - St James's Square

2.10 ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Air pollution in London impacts human health

London's air pollution is the greatest environmental concern impacting human health (Clean Air Day 2022 - 'Action on reducing London's pollution cannot wait', no date). It is estimated that every year 4000 premature deaths are attributed to air pollution (Mayor of London, 2021). Although there have been measures put in place over the years, such as introducing the London Congestion Charge in 2003, congestion has now reached the pre-congestion charge levels and most Londoners live in areas which exceed the air pollution guidelines as published by the World Health Organisation (Centre for London, 2018). Figure 80 on the corresponding page indicates air pollution levels within the Whitehall area as of May 2022. This shows that air pollution exceeds 'moderate' in places, which corresponds with noticeably congested areas of traffic. Vegetation in key strategic locations can help to reduce air pollution and people's contact with it by creating a barrier between pollutants and people which catches small particles in the leaves (Rouquette, J.R and Holt, A,R, 2017). Research has shown, however, that reducing the volume of combustion engine vehicles is the best way to reduce air pollution (Health consequences of air pollution on populations, 2019). As a significant location in the UK and a key destination for many visitors, Whitehall could lead the way in moving towards carbon zero targets and creating healthier urban environments for people.

Whitehall could lead the way in moving towards carbon zero targets and creating healthier urban environments for people

London is an Urban Heat Island

London's dense urban environment deems the city an 'Urban Heat Island' (UHI). Due to the high concentration of 'hard' features such as buildings, roads, and other infrastructure, together with limited vegetation and green spaces, heat generated from the sun and resulting from energy use becomes trapped in the city, rather than being dispersed and absorbed by vegetation (Heat Island Effect, 2022). This UHI effect causes London to be up to 10 degrees warmer than its surrounding rural areas (Mayor of London, no date). Urban Heat Islands contribute to greater daytime temperatures, reduced night time cooling and higher air pollution levels, while also exacerbating natural heatwaves which cause a risk to human life (Climate Change and Heat Islands, 2022). Figure 81 on the facing page shows that the UHI effect within Whitehall is high, with cooler areas around open green spaces and further from congested roads. Incorporating green roofs and more vegetation in our urban environments positively impacts urban heat island effects, as vegetation can absorb carbon dioxide, thus reducing temperature. (Urban Heat Island | National Geographic Society, no date).

Green spaces and vegetation positively impacts Urban Heat Island effects

London is at greater risk of surface flooding which can impact water quality

Climate change is impacting weather patterns, evidenced by the increase in and intensity of average rainfall (Met Office, 2022). Like many cities, London is at greater risk of surface flooding, exacerbated by a lack of permeable green spaces to absorb rainwater in the urban environment (A changing climate, no date). Surface flooding creates a greater risk of exposing hazardous materials through overflows from below ground services, especially in parts of London with historic infrastructure, and has the potential to impact critical and emergency infrastructure (A changing climate, no date) (London Assembly, 2014). Figure 82 on the corresponding page indicates that a large proportion of the Whitehall BID area lies within 'Flood Zone 3' as identified by the City of Westminster Plan. Flood Zone 3 has the highest probability of flooding therefore Whitehall must be resilient to increased flooding and surface water and make tangible plans to mitigate this threat.

Polluted run off water from roads is harming our rivers

The high quantity of hard space within the Whitehall area means that more runoff water drains into the stormwater network than into open green spaces. This runoff water is often highly polluted as most of it issues from oil spills or wear from tyres collected onto the surface of the road then drained through the network into the River Thames during a rain event (Mayor of London, no date). In the last few decades the treatment of sewage and waste has been improved which has had a positive impact on the health and biodiversity of the River Thames (Aridi, 2021), however, stormwater runoff from our urban environments contains pollutants such as zinc, cadmium and copper which are harmful to river health and biodiversity (Mayor of London, 2019).

Climate change is one of the biggest issues facing urban centres today with the affects of more extreme weather events already being felt. Public realm improvements are well placed to counter these effects and contribute towards healthier, clean, more biologically diverse environments, by introducing strategic greening, reducing vehicle traffic and congestion, encouraging active modes of transport, and introducing sustainable drainage systems such as rain gardens.

Air Pollution

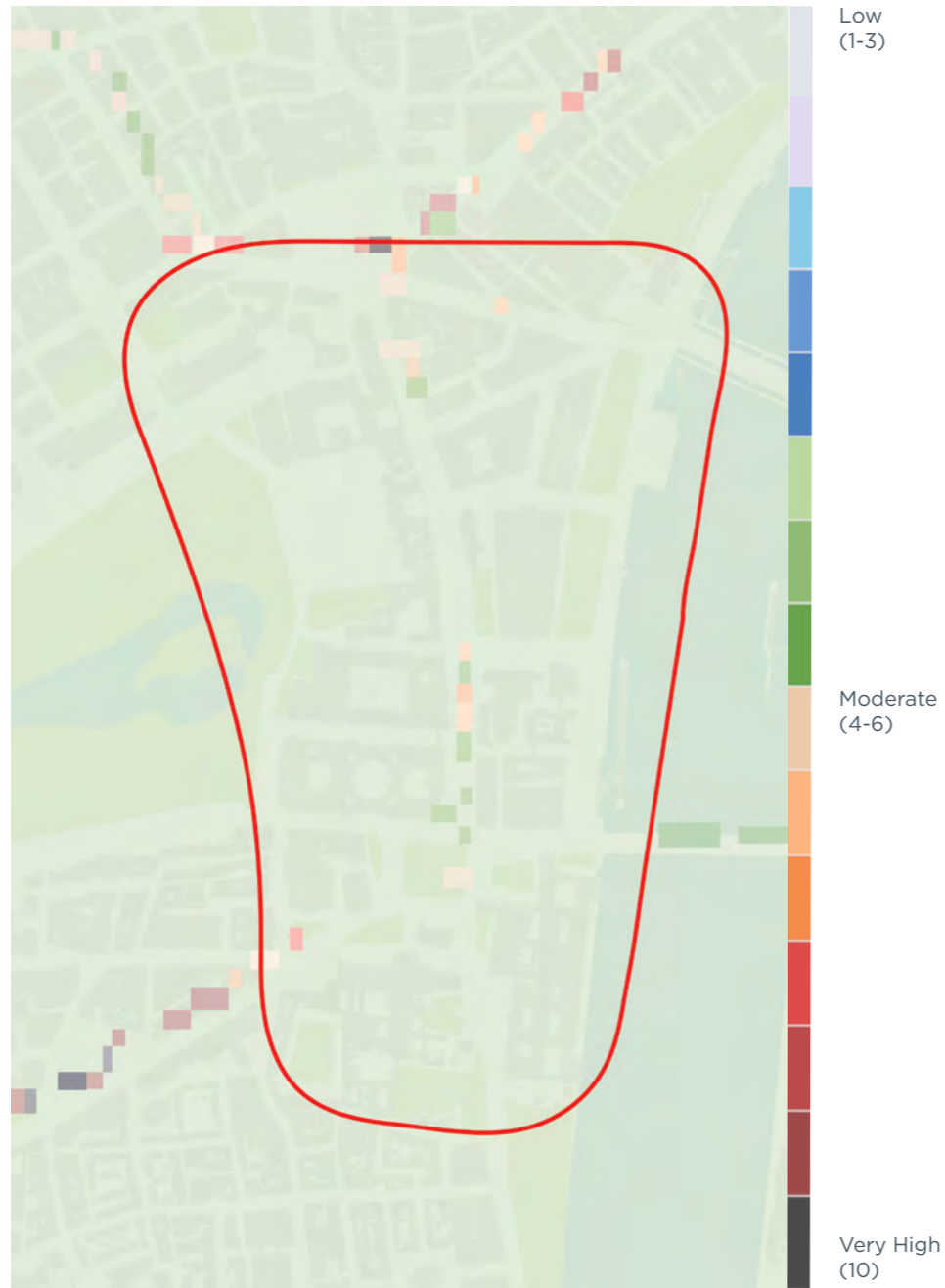


Fig.80 - Air Pollution, May 2022 (Environmental Research Group, Imperial College London, no date)

The following pollutants are included in this map:

- Nitrogen Dioxide (NO²)
- Ozone (O³)
- Particles (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5})

KEY:
 Study Boundary

Urban Heat Island Effect

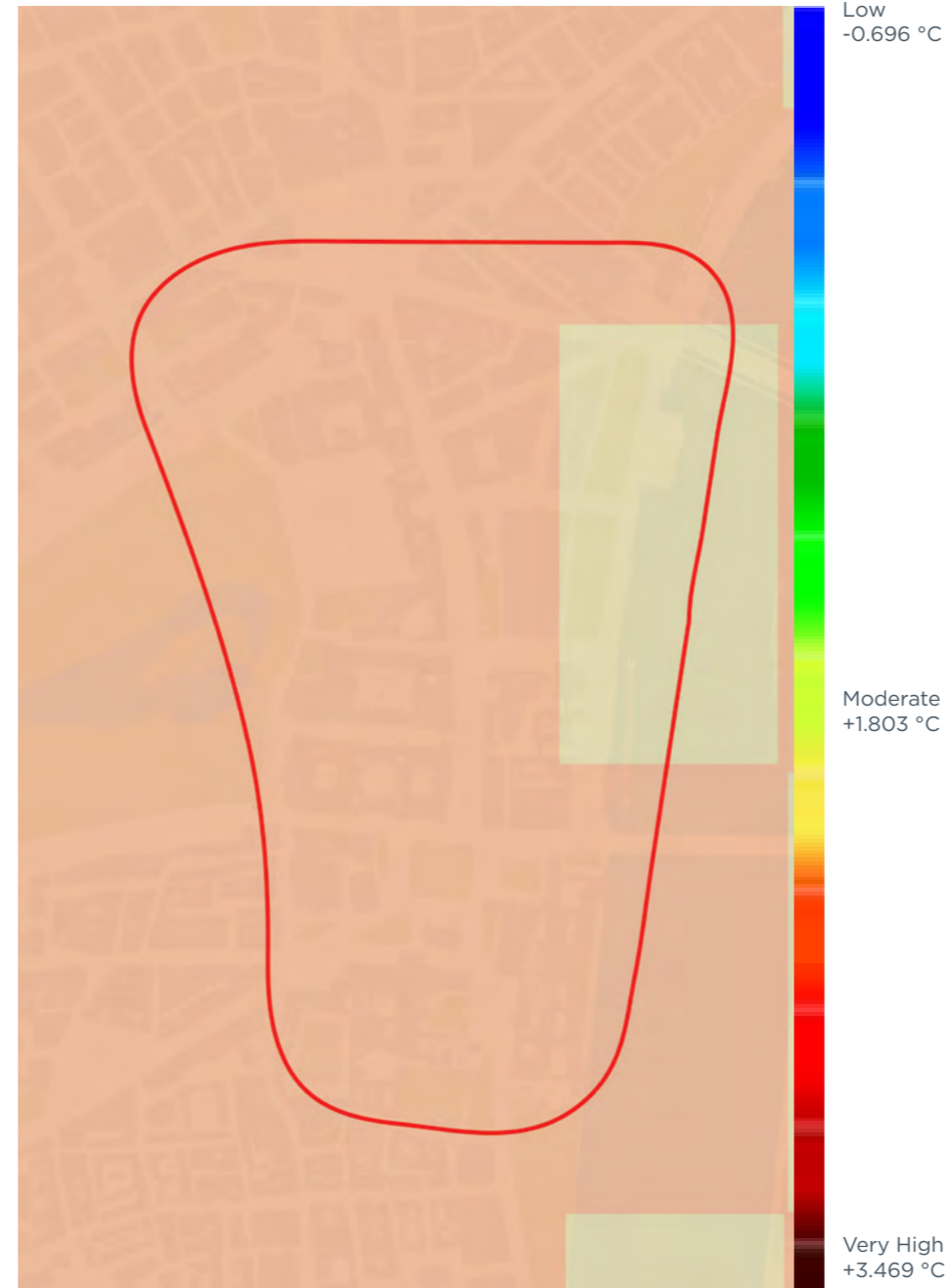


Fig.81 - Urban Heat island Effect ©OpenStreetMap contributors,(Urban Climate Service Center, no date)

KEY:
 Study Boundary

Flooding Impact Risk



Fig.82 - Flooding Impact Risk (City Plan 2019-2040).

KEY:
 Surface Water Flood Risk Hotspots
 Rapid Inundation Flood Zone (1-60 minutes)
 Flood Zone 3
 Study Boundary

2.11 BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

Lost rivers of Whitehall

London has a history of lost rivers and watercourses that once ran through the urban environment, some of which passed through the Whitehall area. In prehistoric times the land around Whitehall would have been marshy and was traversed by the river Tyburn, which connected to the river Thames. Now covered by roads and development, this river can be traced across the study area (shown in figure 86) and offers an opportunity to reveal hidden layers of history which are largely unnoticed in today's urban environment.

The river Tyburn in Whitehall

The river Tyburn historically flowed from Hampstead to Regent's Park and continued through Marylebone. It ran through Buckingham Palace before splitting into two branches, one flowing through Pimlico, and the other along Buckingham Gate before splitting again into two branches to surround the site of Westminster Abbey and Parliament. One of these branches ran through Great College Street (south of the Whitehall BID) whilst the other turns towards King Charles Street and Derby Gate before they both met the Thames. (Burden, 2015).

Whitehall's relationship with the river Thames

Whitehall also sits next to the river Thames, England's longest, and most iconic river. This international emblem attracts tourists and visitors alike to the Whitehall BID area. Pedestrian routes along the river are accessible from many areas within the BID, including the Victoria Embankment, Victoria Embankment Gardens and Whitehall Gardens.

A series of rivers and watercourses once ran through the area. Whilst this historic blue infrastructure now lies underground, it can still be traced across the study area and provides insights into the urban structures we see today.



Fig. 83 - Illustration of the lost rivers of London (King, 2018)

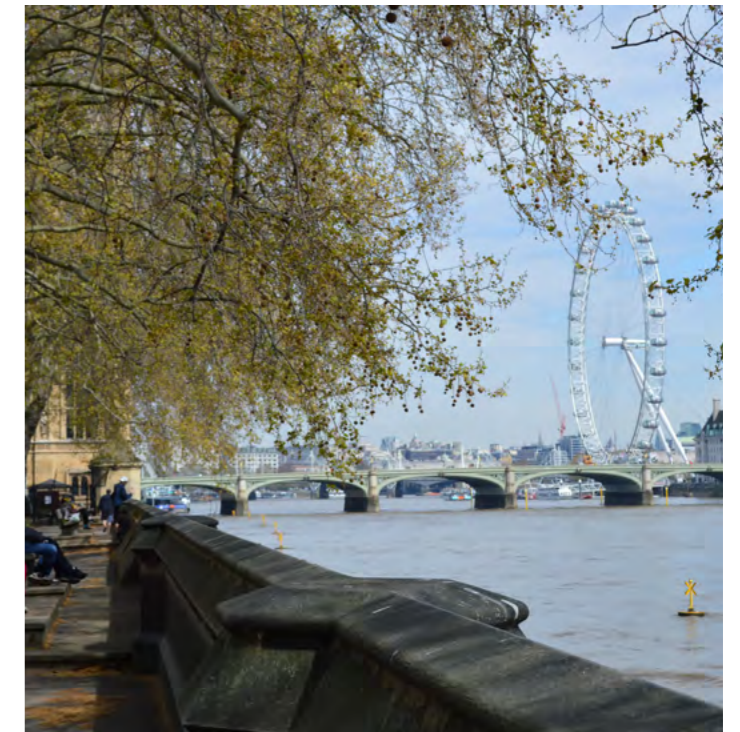


Fig. 84 - View of river Thames, from Victoria Tower Gardens South

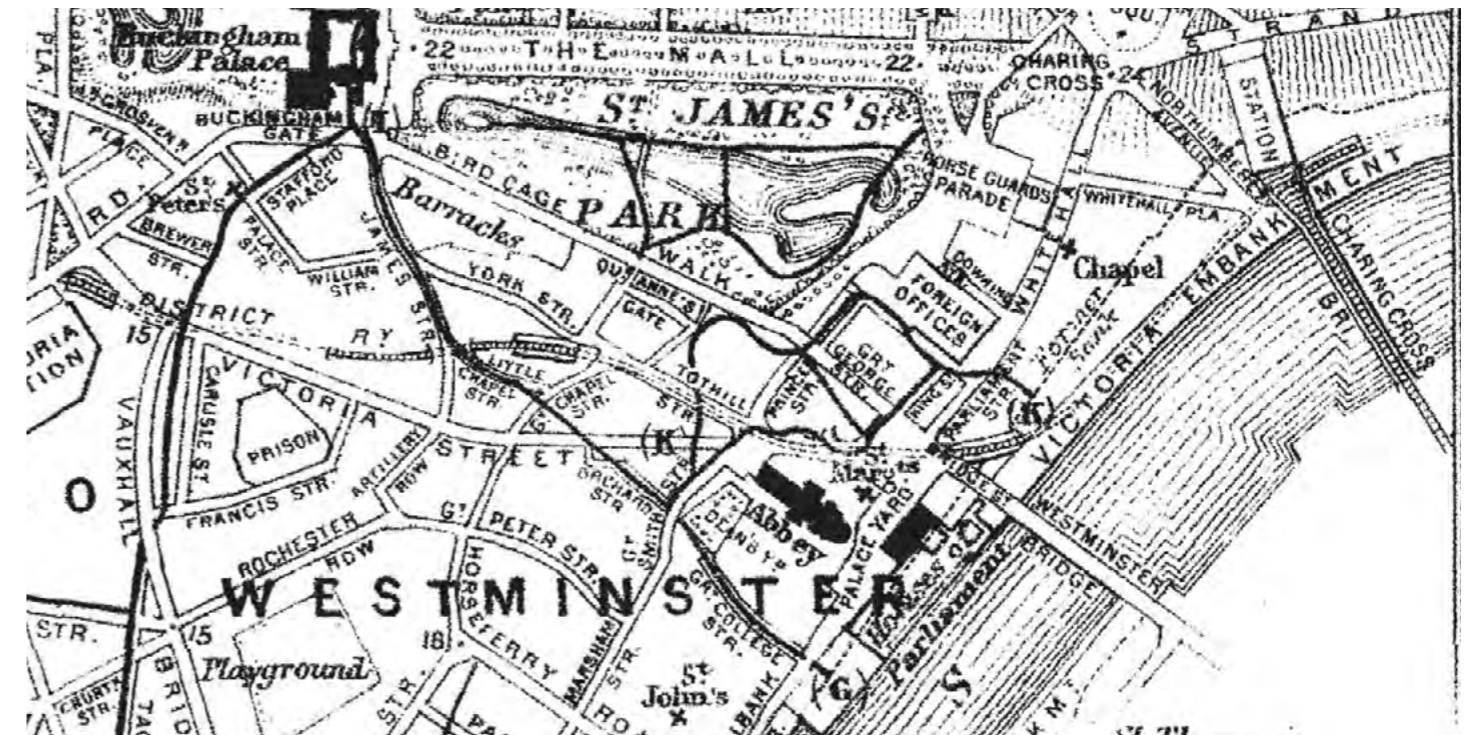






Fig. 85 Map of the Historic river Tyburn, 1890 (Burden, 2015)

BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE CONTEXT

Historically an east-west blue connection within the BID. The river Tyburn created Thorny Island; a place of national significance

At the perimeter of the Whitehall study area the course of the river Tyburn splits into two, with one northern branch flowing below ground until it arrives at the Thames near Whitehall Stairs. The other flows more directly towards the river Thames. Its historical significance lies in the former location of the river's distributaries, which defined the boundary of Thorney Island, where Westminster Abbey and the Palace of Westminster were built.

KEY:

-  Study Boundary
-  Illustrative Position of the river Tyburn
-  Queen Mary's Steps location
-  River Thames and St James's Park Lake

Source: (Burden, 2015)

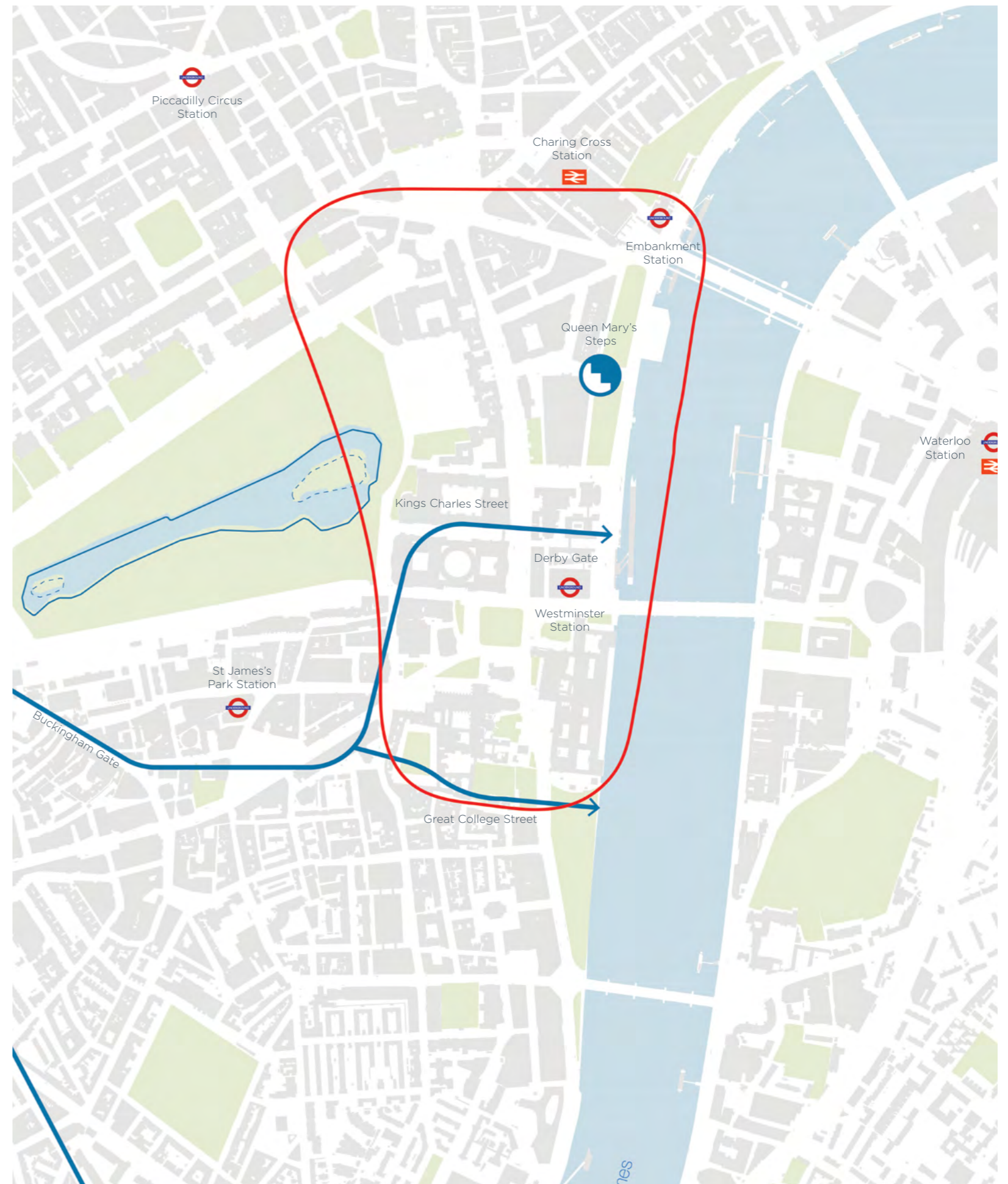


Fig. 86 - Illustrative Location of the River Tyburn

2.12 WALKING AND KEY VISITOR DESTINATIONS

Globally recognised destinations within walking distance

Whitehall has a number of globally recognised landmarks and institutions all within close proximity, with many within a short walking distance from key stations such as Westminster, Embankment and Waterloo (as illustrated on Figure 99).

Destinations within and around the BID area include St James's Park, the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey (a World Heritage Site), the Cenotaph, Horse Guards Parade, the Cabinet Office, Downing Street, the Ministry of Defence, Parliament Square, Trafalgar Square, and many more. These attractions and landmarks generate a number of visitors daily, which places the public realm under pressure to provide a quality experience.

A fine grain of attractions and destinations

The range of cultural destinations within the surrounding area include the National Gallery, the National Portrait Gallery, the Institute of Contemporary Arts, Southbank to the south of the River Thames, and green spaces such as Green Park, Buckingham Palace Garden and Hyde Park.

Whitehall contains a number of globally recognised landmarks and places of national importance, but improvements to the public realm could further enhance the setting, experience and appreciation of the key buildings and attraction interfaces.



Fig. 87 - Walk along Victoria Embankment



Fig. 88 - St James's Park



Fig. 89 - Houses of Parliament



Fig. 90 - The Cenotaph



Fig. 91 - Westminster Abbey



Fig. 92 - Horse Guards Parade



Fig. 93 - The Red Lion



Fig. 94 - London Eye



Fig. 95 - Westminster Station



Fig. 96 - Buckingham Palace



WALKING & KEY VISITOR DESTINATIONS CONTEXT (WITHIN 15 MINUTES WALK)



Fig. 97 - Queen Elizabeth II Centre



Fig. 98 - The Elizabeth Tower (Big Ben)

Key Destinations

Heritage

- 01a Palace of Westminster
- 02a Westminster Abbey
- 03a St Margaret's Church
- 04a The Supreme Court
- 05a Central Hall Westminster
- 06a Admiralty Arch
- 07a St James's Palace
- 08a Buckingham Palace
- 09a Wellington Barracks
- 10a Westminster Chapel
- 11a Elizabeth Tower (Big Ben)
- 12a Jewel Tower
- 13a The Cloisters
- 14a Lancaster House
- 15a Westminster Cathedral
- 16a Lambeth Palace
- 17a Bluecoat School
- 18a The Grey Coat Hospital

Transport

- 01b Westminster Pier
- 02b Westminster Station
- 03b Embankment Station
- 04b Charing Cross Station
- 05b Leicester Square Station
- 06b St James's Park Station
- 07b Covent Garden Station
- 08b Piccadilly Circus Station

Places of Interest

- 01c The Household Cavalry Museum
- 02c The Queen's Gallery
- 03c The Guards Museum
- 04c Churchill War Rooms
- 05c Channel 4 Television
- 06c Horse Guards Parade
- 07c Banqueting House
- 08c National Gallery
- 09c National Portrait Gallery
- 10c Trafalgar Square
- 11c Mall Galleries
- 12c Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA)
- 13c Benjamin Franklin House museum
- 14c Royal Society of the Arts (RSA)
- 15c Spencer House
- 16c Royal Academy
- 17c Hayward Gallery
- 18c Garden Museum

Government

- 01d Portcullis House
- 02d HMRC & Her Majesty's Treasury
- 03d Foreign & Commonwealth Office
- 04d 10 Downing Street
- 05d Cabinet Office
- 06d Ministry of Defence
- 07d Dept. for International Trade
- 08d Queen Elizabeth II Centre
- 09d Department for Work & Pensions
- 10d Parliamentary Space Committee
- 11d Ministry of Justice
- 12d Clive House, Ministry of Justice
- 13d Westminster City Council
- 14d UK Gov. Investment, ICR Office and Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
- 15d Department for Education
- 16d Home Office
- 17d MHCLG Office
- 18d
- 19d Department for Transport
- 20d European Parliament UK Office
- Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs
- 21d
- 22d MI5
- 23d Royal United Services Institute
- Dover House

Culture & Entertainment

- 01e Tattershall Castle Public House
- 02e The Clermont Hotel
- 03e Lyric Theatre
- 04e Apollo Theatre
- 05e Curzon Victoria Cinema
- 06e St John's Smith Square
- 07e Palace Theatre
- 08e Two Chairmen Public House
- 09e The Albert Public House
- 10e Cafe at Storey's Gate
- 11e The Red Lion pub
- 12e St Stephen's Tavern
- 13e The Clarence pub
- 14e Old Shades pub
- 15e Horse & Guardsman pub
- 16e Walkers of Whitehall pub
- 17e One Twenty One Two restaurant
- 18e Savage Club
- 19e Trafalgar Theatre
- 20e Kit Kat Club, Playhouse Theatre
- 21e Theatre Royal Haymarket
- 22e Her Majesty's Theatre
- 23e The Harold Pinter Theatre
- 24e Garrick Theatre
- 25e London Coliseum
- 26e Adelphi Theatre
- 27e Savoy Theatre
- 28e Vue cinema Piccadilly
- 29e London Aquarium
- 30e London Eye
- 31e IMAX
- 32e Southbank Centre
- 33e Elizabeth Purcell Rooms
- 34e The Ritz Hotel
- 35e Fortnum and Mason
- 36e Prince of Wales Theatre
- 37e Royal Opera House
- 38e Lyceum Theatre
- 39e Somerset House
- 40e The London Studios
- 41e Tate Britain
- 42e BFI Southbank

- KEY:
- Study Boundary
 - London Underground
 - Network Rail
 - Heritage
 - Places of Interest
 - Transport
 - Government
 - Culture & Entertainment
 - Monuments

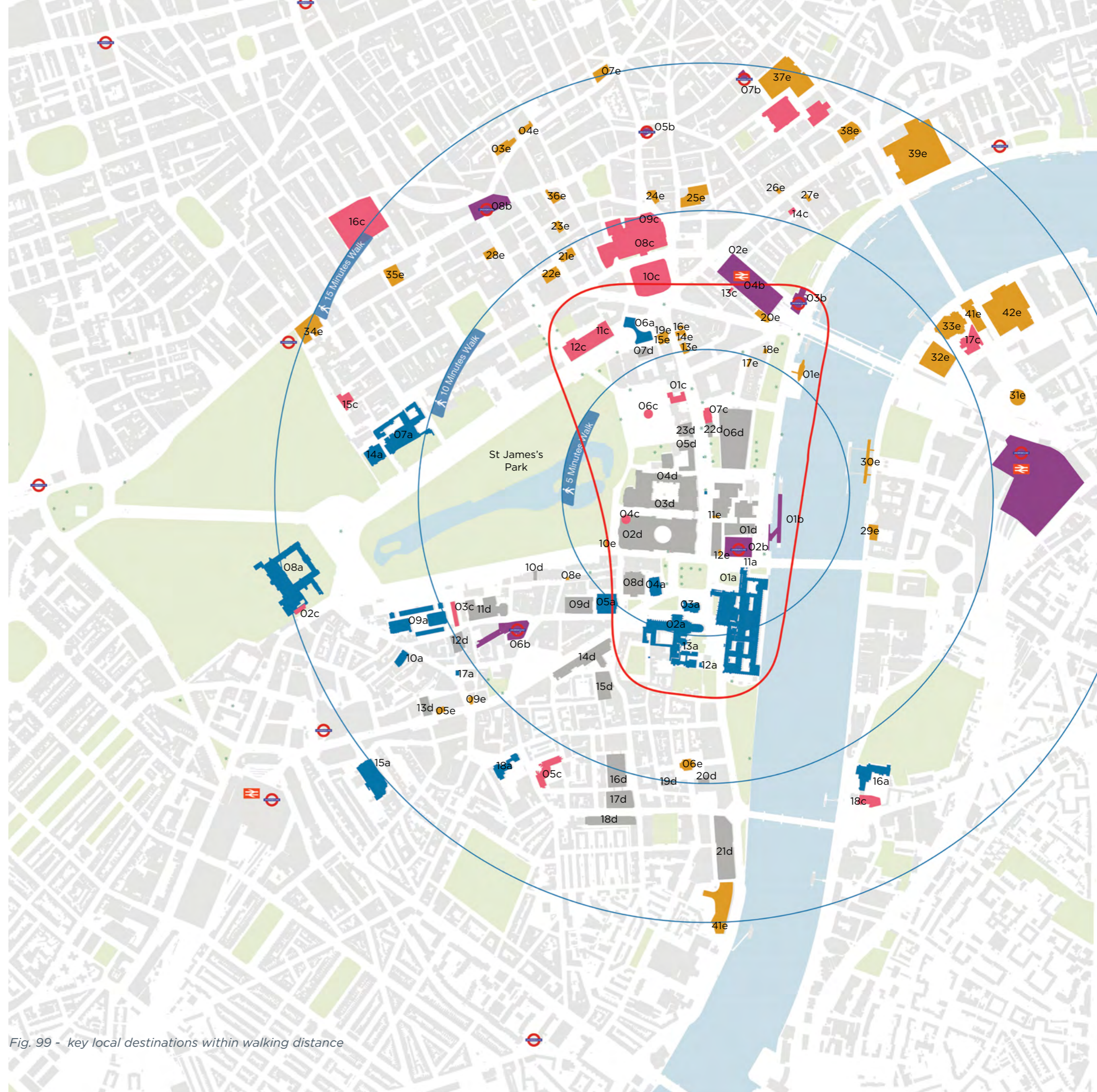


Fig. 99 - key local destinations within walking distance

2.13

PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

A busy pedestrian environment

A key area in London for government functions, and historic, cultural and tourist attractions, Whitehall attracts many pedestrians every day, however the major thoroughfares are seen as places to move through rather than dwell. Pedestrians, commuters and workers intermingle with tourists, all trying to navigate the busy streets, and although the footpaths are wide they are often crowded, especially around pinch points such as Horse Guards Parade and outside Westminster Underground Station. This creates an uncomfortable and disorientating experience for regular users and visitors alike.

Lack of places to pause

Pedestrians typically arrive from Trafalgar Square or Westminster Underground Station and navigate north-south along Whitehall. Both ends are vibrant, with a variety of retail, hospitality, and entertainment as well as open spaces to pause and enjoy (Trafalgar Square or Parliament Square). However the overcrowded pedestrian areas at the centre of Whitehall, coupled with the lack of seating opportunities, unclear wayfinding, and busy traffic do not offer such opportunities for rest and reflection.

Poor east-west connection

In the southern section of the Whitehall BID area there are large blocks of government buildings with private roads and gated access points, contributing to a confusing pedestrian experience, particularly moving west to east between St James's Park and the river Thames. These large blocks also fail to engage with the street on a human scale, discouraging people from lingering. This lack of clear wayfinding means that although within and on the margins of the Whitehall area there are attractive open spaces to enjoy, these are presently under-utilised due to poor connections and signage. Areas such as Whitehall Gardens, the Victoria Embankment Gardens and even St James's Park offer great green amenities for pedestrians but could be much better connected to the centre of Whitehall. Additional street planting within the Whitehall BID area could create links between key green open spaces St James's Park and Whitehall Gardens and the river Thames, supporting wayfinding and aiding biodiversity.

Opportunity to link green spaces

The pedestrian experience is poor and traffic dominates, creating a place where people feel unwelcome and hurried. There are opportunities to connect existing assets together within the public realm.



Fig. 100 - Crowded environment at Westminster Underground Station entrance, Bridge Street



Fig. 101 - Whitehall Gardens: opportunity to attract more visitors



Fig. 102 - Congested footway outside Downing Street



Fig. 103 - Opportunity to attract more visitors along the east-west link from St James's Park to, and along, Victoria Embankment



Fig. 104 - Underutilised pedestrian access along King Charles Street



Fig. 105 - Horse Guards Parade: A key pedestrian access route towards the Thames

2.14 SPATIAL PERMEABILITY

Disjointed connectivity

There are three key thoroughfares running from north to south in Whitehall: Victoria Embankment, Whitehall and Parliament Street, and Horse Guards Road. Access from east to west is more disjointed due to the number of large building blocks and many private streets, which weakens the pedestrian experience and sense of place. The overall experience, particularly for the visitor, is disjointed and confusing. This is further exaggerated by the dense urban fabric, the collective mix of anonymous government buildings, busy roads, and paucity of public spaces.

Large building blocks restrict pedestrian permeability

The urban grain of large building blocks results in a restricted visual experience, lack of physical permeability and severance. The lack of permeability restricts pedestrian movement, inhibiting direct travel towards desired destinations, or free navigation following visual cues, resulting in frustration and less convenient or enjoyable journeys. Figure 110 highlights three different scales of urban building blocks/perimeters within the area.

Imbalance in experience

The main roads and key junctions are crowded, dominated by traffic, with an imbalance of pedestrian footpaths, which creates an uncomfortable and unpleasant experience for users. Conversely, away from the main roads and junctions, the back streets are quiet but lack vibrancy due to the high proportion of office and residential buildings, rather than retail, culture and entertainment outlets.

Whitehall is a formal thoroughfare, with poor connections between green spaces. Movement along key routes is restricted by narrow pavements in some areas, and back streets are underutilised.



Fig. 106 - Pedestrian route linking Whitehall to Victoria Embankment

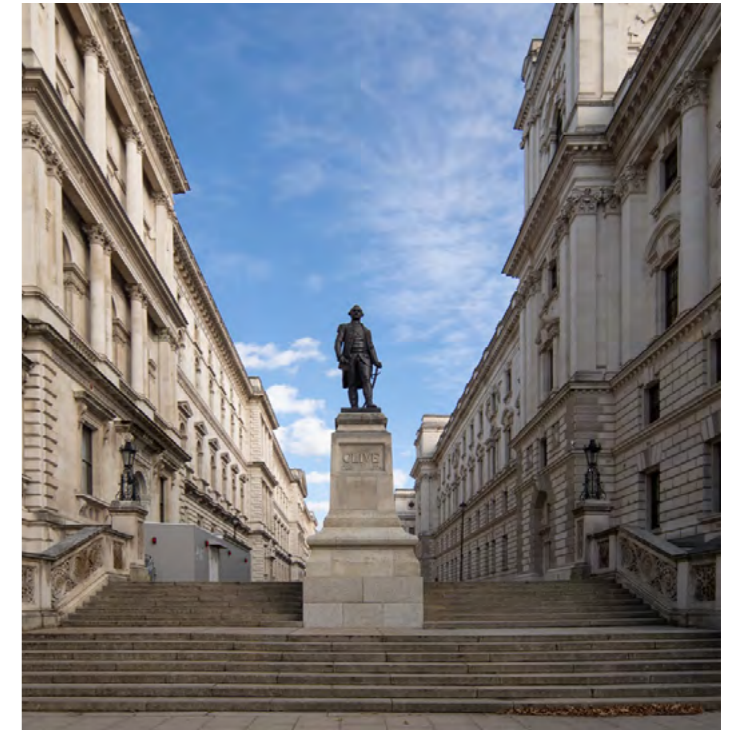


Fig. 107 - Pedestrian route from Horse Guards Road to Whitehall via King Charles Street.



Fig. 108 - Pedestrian access from Horse Guards Road to Whitehall via Horse Guards Parade



Fig. 109 - Whitehall looking south east

SPATIAL CONTEXT

Limited permeability and poor signage mean wayfinding is hindered

Permeability across the Whitehall area is varied. In most places long or secure blocks and few crossing points along Victoria Embankment limit free movement of pedestrians and cyclists along convenient routes, particularly when moving from east to west. This causes a degree of severance, presenting a challenge in creating a strong east-west link. Unclear perception of public or privately accessible routes results in further navigational challenges and offers the opportunity for improved wayfinding and signage.

Three pedestrian routes run from east to west, providing an opportunity for a quiet route linking St James's Park to the Thames. Establishing this route from St James's Park to the Thames via Horse Guards Avenue, flanked by Whitehall Gardens, could also link green and blue space.

The intensity of traffic at Bridge Street to Great George Street, constrained footways and substantial signalised road crossings combine to provide an unwelcoming pedestrian environment.

North-south routes present fewer challenges for pedestrians and cyclists in comparison to east-west routes

North-south movements fare considerably better, from the pleasant surroundings of Horse Guards Road to the west, the generous footways of Whitehall and Parliament Street, and the direct, if less pleasant, riverside walk along Victoria Embankment. The latter offers the option of walking within the gardens with only a slight deviation to the journey required.

Despite its lack of permeability, the most vibrant area of Whitehall is the area surrounding Westminster Underground Station, due to its close proximity to major historic landmarks and other tourist destinations. However, Bridge Street has a relatively limited area of footway as does the junction between Bridge Street and Parliament Street.

- KEY:
- Study Boundary
 - Urban Block
 - London Underground
 - Network Rail
 - Major public vehicle access route
 - Minor public vehicle access route
 - Major public pedestrian access route
 - Minor public pedestrian access route

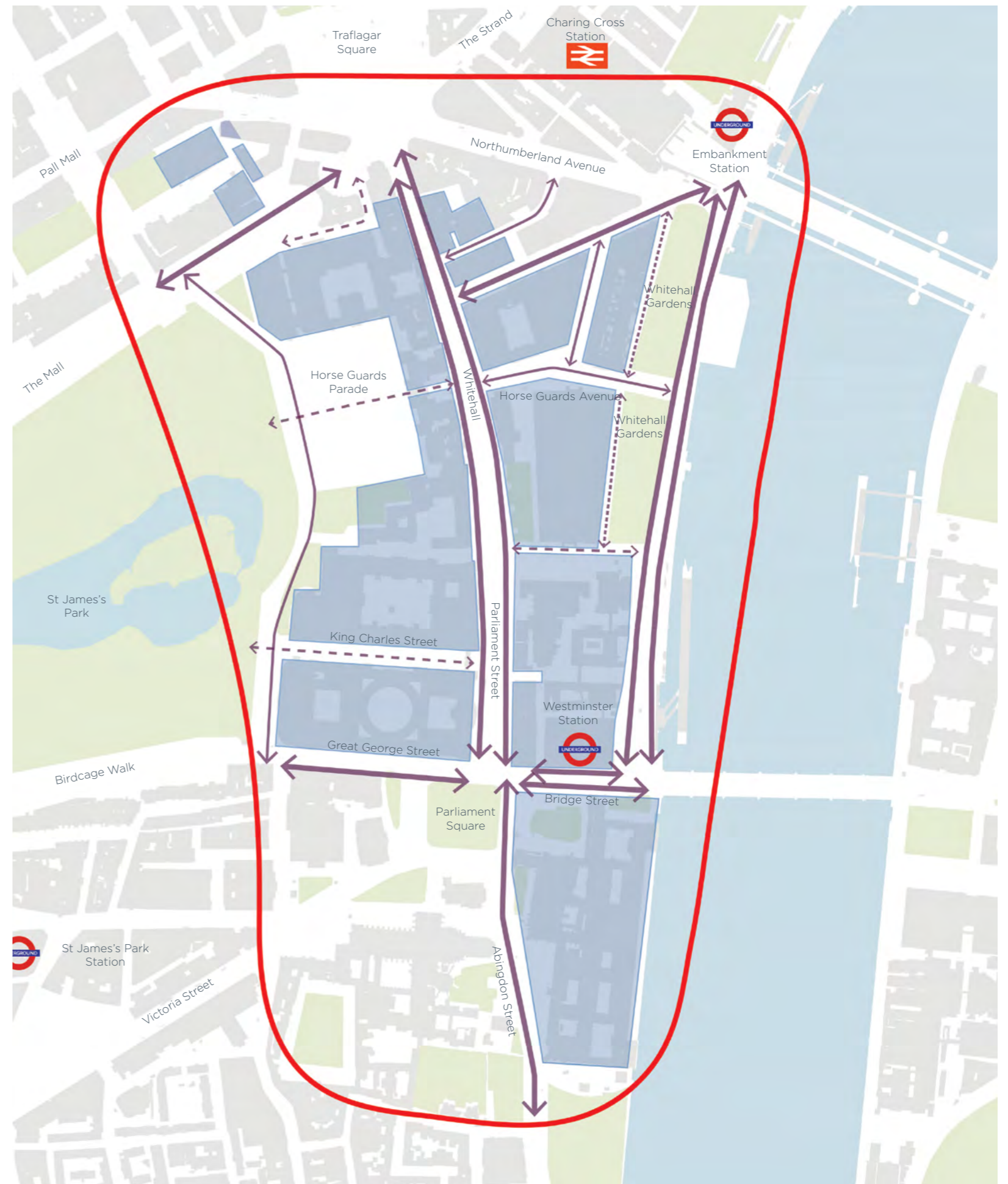


Fig. 110 - Spatial permeability

2.15 ROAD NETWORK

Natural barriers and limited route options

The river Thames to the east and St James's Park to the west are very significant influences upon the road network's general arrangement and the north-south and east-west road links within the area and those surrounding it. The river limits east-west movement options to the east and St James's Park limits north-south movement options to the west.

Strategic north-south traffic routing

The area's road network is characterised by the parallel north-south routes of A3212 Whitehall-Parliament Street and A3211 Victoria Embankment. The latter is part of the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN) and a designated red route, maintaining a significant through traffic role within London's strategic road network. As a red route, no parking, stopping or loading is permitted here.

Whitehall as a mixed-use route











Whitehall-Parliament Street, part of Westminster's Strategic Road Network (WSRN), offers an alternative north-south corridor via Trafalgar Square to the north for more locally based journey origins and destinations. Although it is well trafficked, it is not a major through route compared to the A3211 (Victoria Embankment), with side streets to the south for private 'secure' access only.

East-west traffic through The Royal Parks

The Mall and Birdcage Walk both offer east-west connections, although The Royal Parks who manage them continue to seek to reduce the volume of through traffic in the interests of the park visitor experience. Given their park setting and national heritage context, neither routes are presented as alternatives for through traffic movement.

Note: Road type descriptions indicate traffic management function not place based definitions.

KEY:

-  Study Boundary
-  London Underground
-  Network Rail
-  Transport for London Road Network (TLRN)
-  Westminster Strategic Road Network (WSRN)
-  Distributor Road
-  Local Access Road
-  Private vehicle access
-  Car park entrance
-  Vehicle control points

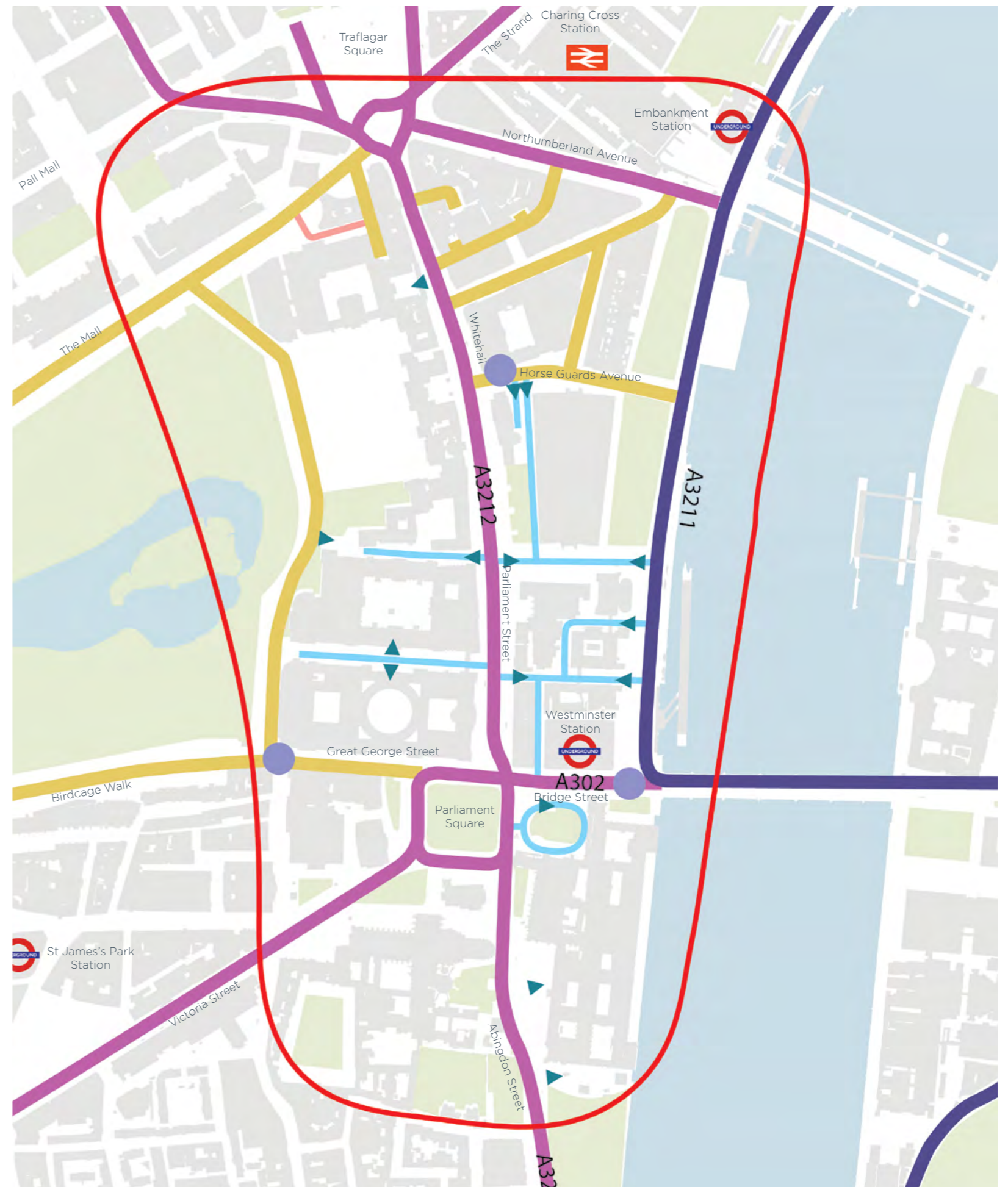


Fig. 111 - Key Roads and Routes

ROAD NETWORK INTENSITY

Movement intensity focus points - Bridge Street, and Whitehall

Bridge Street to the south is the point where several key strategic routes running north to south and east to west converge. Westminster Underground Station and its environs are especially impacted by this road traffic. The high volume of traffic in the Bridge Street vicinity is particularly unfortunate, given the number of visitors to the area.

Similarly, the convergence of five roads at Trafalgar Square to the north makes for an uncomfortable experience for those on foot and cycle, relieved by stepping into the considerable area of public realm centred around Nelson's Column, a similar relief to that offered by Parliament Square.

The impact of traffic flows on Whitehall and Parliament Street are mitigated to a substantial extent by the scale of the street with its multiple lane carriageway, generous footway widths and grand-scale buildings.

A compromised visitor experience

The study area suffers from intense traffic levels along key routes throughout the day and particularly during peak hours. Despite the often-wide carriageways, the attendant noise, air quality and road severance impacts are high and offer a poor-quality environment for walking and cycling. The public realm suffers accordingly, and this is represented by Figure 112 which, in assessing vehicle dominance, blends a high level review of traffic flows, road widths, and site observations made throughout the day/week, to illustrate the most impacted areas.






- KEY:
-  Study Boundary
 -  London Underground
 -  Network Rail
 -  Vehicle Dominance - Very High
 -  Vehicle Dominance - Low



Fig. 112 - Blended assessment of road traffic dominance, taken from site observations

Key routes through Whitehall



Fig. 113 - TfL Red Routes - Whitehall area annotated



Fig. 114 - A 3211 Victoria Embankment, a red route. Cycleway 3 runs parallel to the carriageway.



Fig. 115 - Bridge Street and Parliament Square junction



Fig. 116 - Taxis, tour buses and tourist coaches among other vehicles dominate Victoria Embankment



Fig. 117 - The Mall: pedestrian barriers demonstrate the challenge of providing traffic management for ceremonial events, and creating a positive visitor experience



Fig. 118 - Two way traffic along Whitehall








ROAD NETWORK

Roads on a grand scale with scope for change

The area is dominated by the A3211 (Victoria Embankment) north-south corridor and the east-west A302 Bridge Street - Westminster Bridge. The number of road lanes does not reflect the frequency of use, with the Victoria Embankment Red Route offering just three lanes for much of its length, as road space has been recently reallocated in favour of the strategic cycle route Cycleway 3.

Road space reallocation gaining momentum

The recent Westminster Bridge Scheme has also re-deployed road area as east and westbound segregated cycle lanes, replacing the former cycle lane which used road markings to delineate from vehicle traffic. Westminster Bridge provides bus lanes in either direction, with only two general traffic lanes for most of the length of this important and strategic river crossing. Along with the Victoria Embankment Cycleway 3 scheme, there is established momentum for further road space reallocation in favour of placemaking related interventions.

- KEY:
-  Study Boundary
 -  London Underground
 -  Network Rail
 -  5 Carriageway Lanes
 -  4 Carriageway Lanes
 -  3 Carriageway Lanes
 -  2 Carriageway Lanes

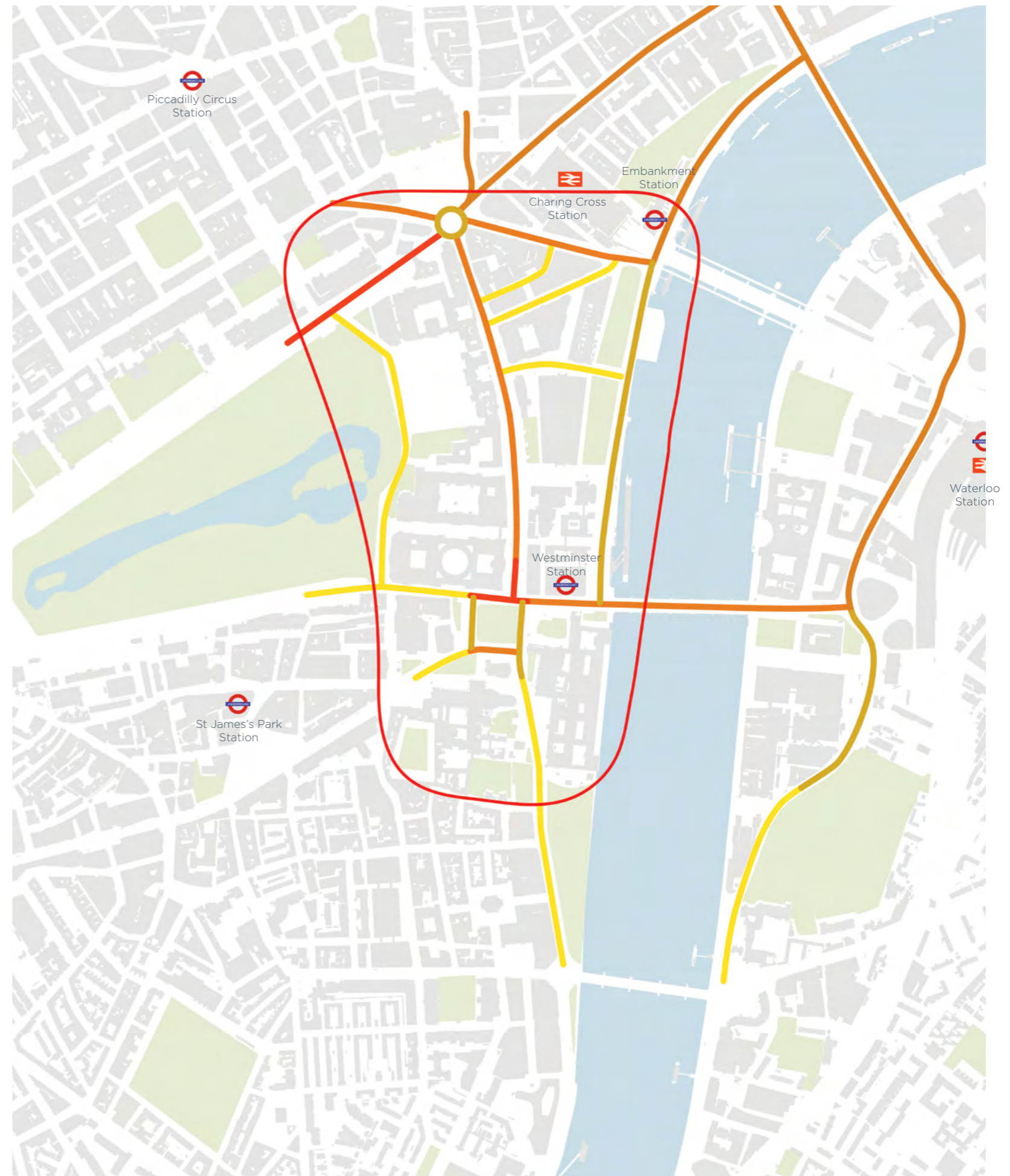


Fig. 119 - Roads and routes through Whitehall categorised by lane numbers.

2.16 ROAD CONDITIONS AND HEALTHY STREETS

Healthy Streets appraisal

Transport for London’s Healthy Streets methodology has been used to assess the condition and quality of Whitehall’s streets. Together with more conventional considerations related to traffic flow, this approach factors in other indicators including health, activity, interest and placemaking, see Figure 120.

The east has scale and openness

The red and orange indicators, on figure 121, to the east of the area reflect the scale and openness of carriageway and footway and how this impacts upon perceived personal safety, shade, shelter, road crossing opportunities, and feelings of relaxation and calm. The A3211 (Victoria Embankment) carries a considerable volume of strategic traffic, contributing to a negative appraisal on criteria including noise and air quality. The parallel option of walking through the parks addresses these attributes to some extent, but for many requires departing from the most direct route.

More generally, the traffic volumes, wide roads, lack of permeability, presence of grand buildings which obscure legibility, along with the security infrastructure, serves to make the environment feel intimidating and unwelcoming for visitors, despite the world famous heritage and architecture.

The poor arrival experience around Westminster Underground Station is particularly notable

The experience to the west is, by contrast, mostly positive, with the absence of through traffic, plentiful green space, pleasant and interesting views; the western side of the BID area offers a high quality visitor experience.

The poor arrival experience around Westminster Underground Station is particularly notable, given that many visitors have their first view of the Houses of Parliament and Elizabeth Tower (Big Ben) from the entrance on Bridge Street. The exit is dark and unwelcoming, leading to a very busy footway and carriageway, with little opportunity to dwell, get bearings, and gaze upon the iconic views. Embankment Station and its environment offers more space to dwell and seek relief from the impact of heavy traffic.

The northern and southern extents of Whitehall/Parliament Street perform poorly in several respects, despite, like Victoria Embankment, offering a generally favourable infrastructure context. However, the appraisal assesses the impacts of traffic volumes and road dominance, building and block scale, which all contribute to a somewhat unwelcoming experience. Sandwiched between these two areas, the section of Whitehall centered around Horse Guards Parade performs considerably better, offering interest, surveillance and relative calm.



Fig. 120 - Healthy Streets Indicators

ROAD CONDITIONS AND HEALTHY STREETS

Whitehall - Parliament Street, and Horse Guards Road perform the best currently.

Figure 121 represents a high-level RAG (red-amber-green) assessment for each of TfL's Healthy Streets indicators, illustrated in Fig. 120. Presently the areas around Trafalgar Square and Parliament Square, two key destinations in the area are performing the worst in providing healthy streets.

The Healthy Streets approach makes the health of people a primary factor in the design and management of public spaces. A healthy and inclusive street encourages the community to use and enjoy it, with places to sit and dwell, as well as encouragement to walk, cycle and use public transport.

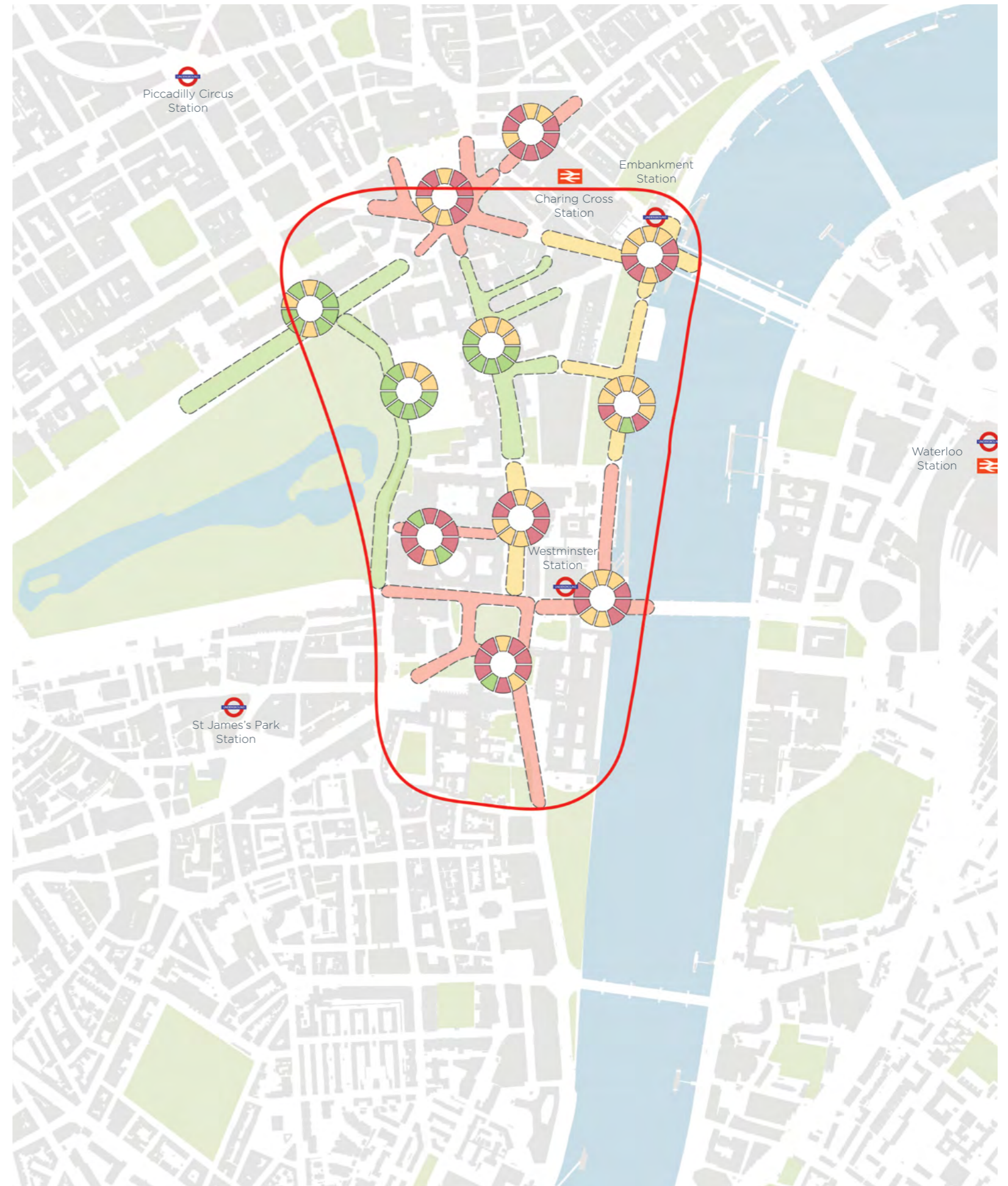
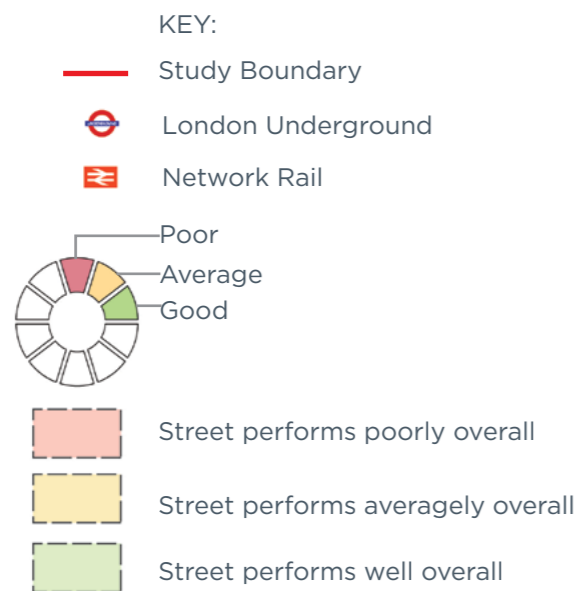


Fig. 121 - Healthy Streets Assessment

2.17

CYCLING CONNECTIONS

Good quality cycle routes in Whitehall

Key cycle routes are located within the Whitehall BID boundary, including the designated Cycleway 3 along Victoria Embankment. Whitehall and The Mall are also popular cycling routes. Horse Guards Road forms part of a potential future cycle quietways network, linking Lambeth to Trafalgar Square and beyond.

Cycleway 3 and Whitehall as important north-south routes

The cycling intensity diagram illustrates frequent use of Cycleway 3, a high capacity segregated facility for medium to long distance journeys. The parallel Whitehall to Parliament Street link, with its generous carriageway and generally less purposeful traffic flow offers a more welcoming cycling environment, if somewhat compromised by traffic volume at Trafalgar Square and Parliament Square/Bridge Street to the north and south respectively.

Horse Guards Avenue provides a very high quality route for cyclists; direct, safe and visually appealing, as is the remainder of the St James's Park 'ring'.

Missing links east-west

The lack of east-west routes results in substantial offline north-south diversions for cyclists needing to make the missing connections. This presents an effective barrier to cycle movement, directing cyclists instead to the intensively trafficked routes centred on Trafalgar Square and Parliament Square. (Issue details - Central London Cycle Grid: Fitzrovia to Pimlico | Westminster City Council, no date).

KEY:

- Study Boundary
- London Underground
- Network Rail
- Cycleway 3
- Cyclist Routes - Well Used
- Cyclist Routes - Least Used
- Designated Cycle Lanes (including bus lanes that cyclists may use)
- Potential Future Cycle Quietways

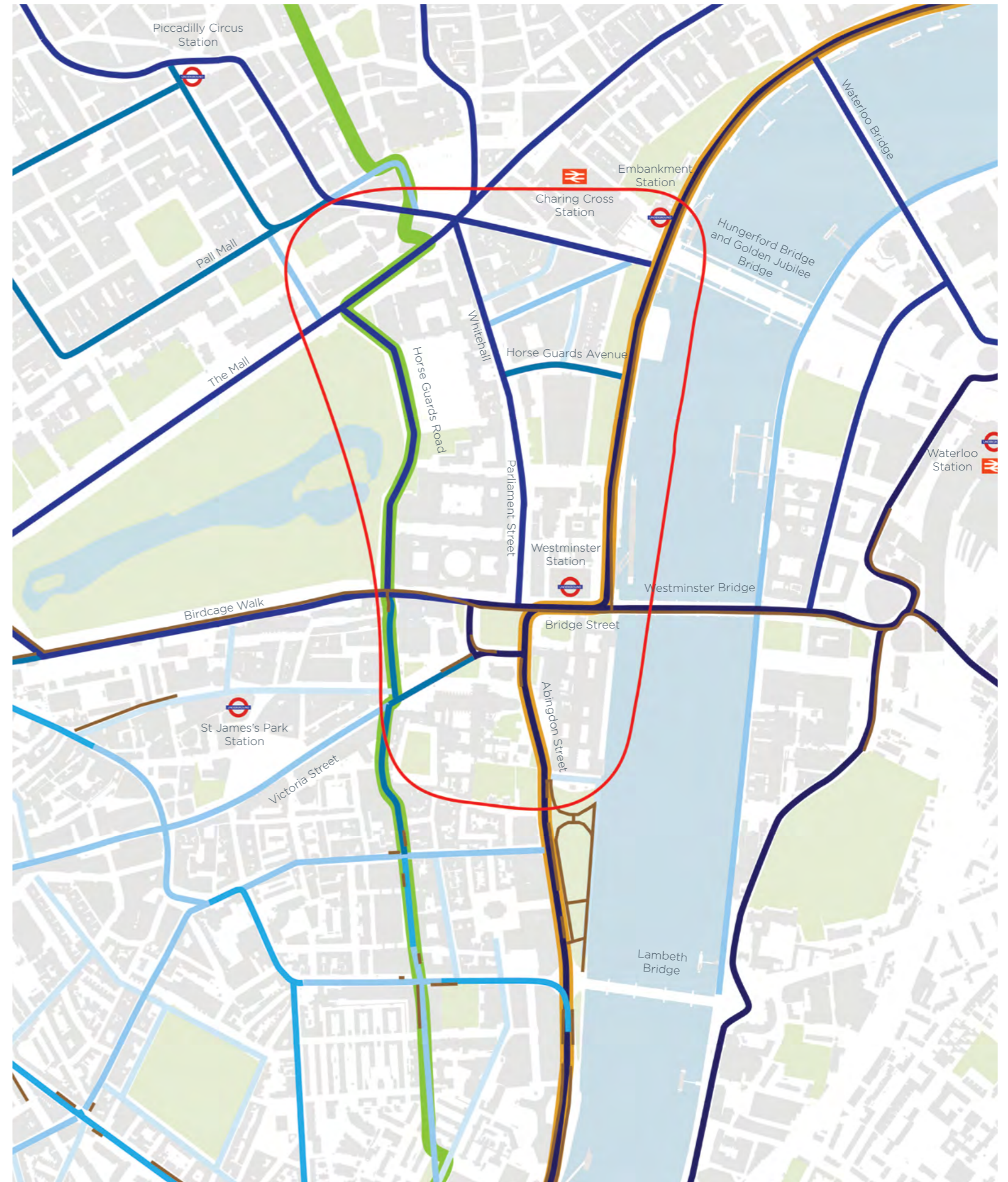


Fig. 122 - Usage of roads in the area by cyclist (Strava heatmap, May 2022)

2.18 CYCLING ENVIRONMENT CONDITION

There is a focus of collisions at road junctions

As shown by Fig 123, the collision record for all pedestrians and cyclists (2016-2019) follows similar patterns:

- A concentration of collisions around the Bridge Street/Westminster Bridge/Victoria Embankment area
- A focus of collisions at road junctions, most notably at Trafalgar Square/Whitehall and Parliament Street/Parliament Square
- Collisions on Whitehall, almost exclusively at the road junctions
- A relatively even spread of collisions along Northumberland Avenue
- Relative safety to the west of the area, though collisions are recorded at Horse Guards Road/The Mall and in the vicinity of King Charles Street

Relative safety to the west of the area

The data for vehicle occupant only collisions, i.e. not involving a pedestrian or cyclist, also reveals an expected pattern, with collisions focussed around Trafalgar Square to the north and Parliament Square, and Bridge Street to the south. In comparison to the pedestrian and cyclist records, there are no recorded collisions on Northumberland Avenue and very few on Whitehall and Victoria Embankment.

Cycling safety can be improved in key locations

The analysis suggests that improving pedestrian and cyclist conditions, particularly at the following locations, would be beneficial:

- Whitehall at the junction with Trafalgar Square
- Whitehall - Parliament Street, various junctions, notably Horse Guards Avenue
- Northumberland Avenue
- Bridge Street - Parliament Square

KEY:

- Study Boundary
- London Underground
- Network Rail
- High Intensity Area
- Congested Areas



Fig. 123 - Collisions, cyclists and pedestrians, 2016-2019, (Bikedata - collisions, traffic counts, cycle theft, cycleability ratings, photos, and more, no date)

2.19 PUBLIC TRANSPORT - BUS

Whitehall is a key bus route

Whitehall is a key route within the central London bus network, with eight bus routes traversing Whitehall and Parliament Street. There are eight bus stops in total along Whitehall and Parliament Street, with a higher concentration close to Westminster Underground Station and the surrounding historical landmarks.

Bus service through Whitehall is a benefit for accessibility and tourism

The presence of buses in the area is notable in several ways. The area benefits from good access, with services serving all of London's key destinations. It is also an important interchange between short and long-distance travel modes. In Whitehall in particular, tourists enjoy seeing the iconic 'Red London Bus'.

The junction between Whitehall, Parliament Square and Bridge Street experiences an intensity of use from multiple bus movements to all compass points. Close to Westminster Station, this area is an important public transport hub. The number of waiting buses can often create a 'bus wall' which obscures sightlines and causes an obstruction for pedestrians wishing to cross the road.

TFL carried out a central London bus review in November 2020 and has subsequently proposed the removal of three of the eight services stopping at Whitehall (numbers 11,12, 24), as well as route changes to two others (numbers 3 and 88). Although the loss of services is regrettable in terms of passenger convenience, the negative impact of bus presence on Whitehall and related roads will be reduced if the proposals come to fruition.

There are eight bus routes along Whitehall, making it a key thoroughfare for journeys into central London, however this can also generate congestion at times as bus queues form a 'wall'.



Fig. 124 - Bus queue, Whitehall



Fig. 125 - Westminster Station



Fig. 126 - Westminster Pier



Fig. 127 - Whitehall

BUS SERVICES

- KEY:
- Study Boundary
 - Bus Service Routes
 - Multiple Bus Crossing Movements and Related Intense Movement Environment
 - Bus Stops
 - Bus Services

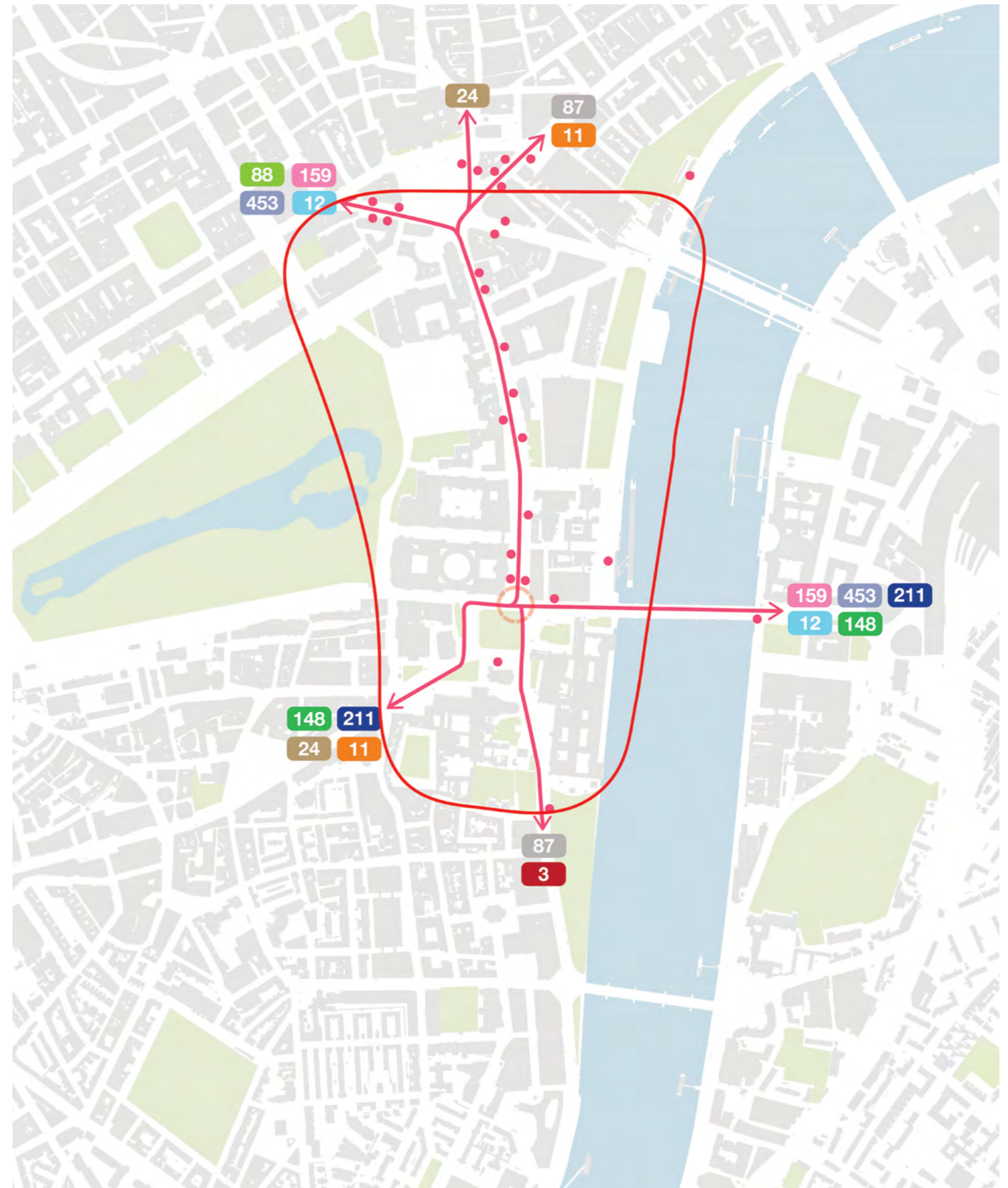


Fig. 128 - Bus Service Routes

2.20

Walkability from major transport hubs makes Whitehall an attractive location for businesses

PUBLIC TRANSPORT - RAIL AND UNDERGROUND

Westminster Underground Station is the only underground station located within the Whitehall BID boundary. As a stop on the District, Circle and Jubilee lines, it is an important travel hub for those living, working and visiting the area. Charing Cross, Waterloo and Victoria rail and underground stations are within walking distance, as are St James's Park and Embankment. This makes Whitehall easily accessible by public transport, a factor in attracting businesses.

Westminster and Embankment Underground Stations suffer from a poor profile, in terms of streetside visibility or ease of finding them. Embankment Station is awkwardly located out of sight at the eastern end of Northumberland Avenue to the rear of the more visible Charing Cross mainline railway station.

The main entrance to Westminster Underground Station on Bridge Street is set back from the street and is dark and unwelcoming, presenting a very poor sense of arrival at this very significant visitor destination. The adjacent streetscape is constricted and busy with pedestrians for most of the day and throughout the seven day week, a situation exacerbated by the close proximity of heavy traffic on Bridge Street.

The Parliament Street (west) entrance to Westminster Underground Station presents a much better visitor experience.

- KEY:
- Study Boundary
 - London Underground
 - Network Rail
 - Westminster River Bus Pier
 - Underground and River Transport Routes
 - Primary Pedestrian Environment
 - Secondary Pedestrian Environment
 - Busy Pedestrian Areas

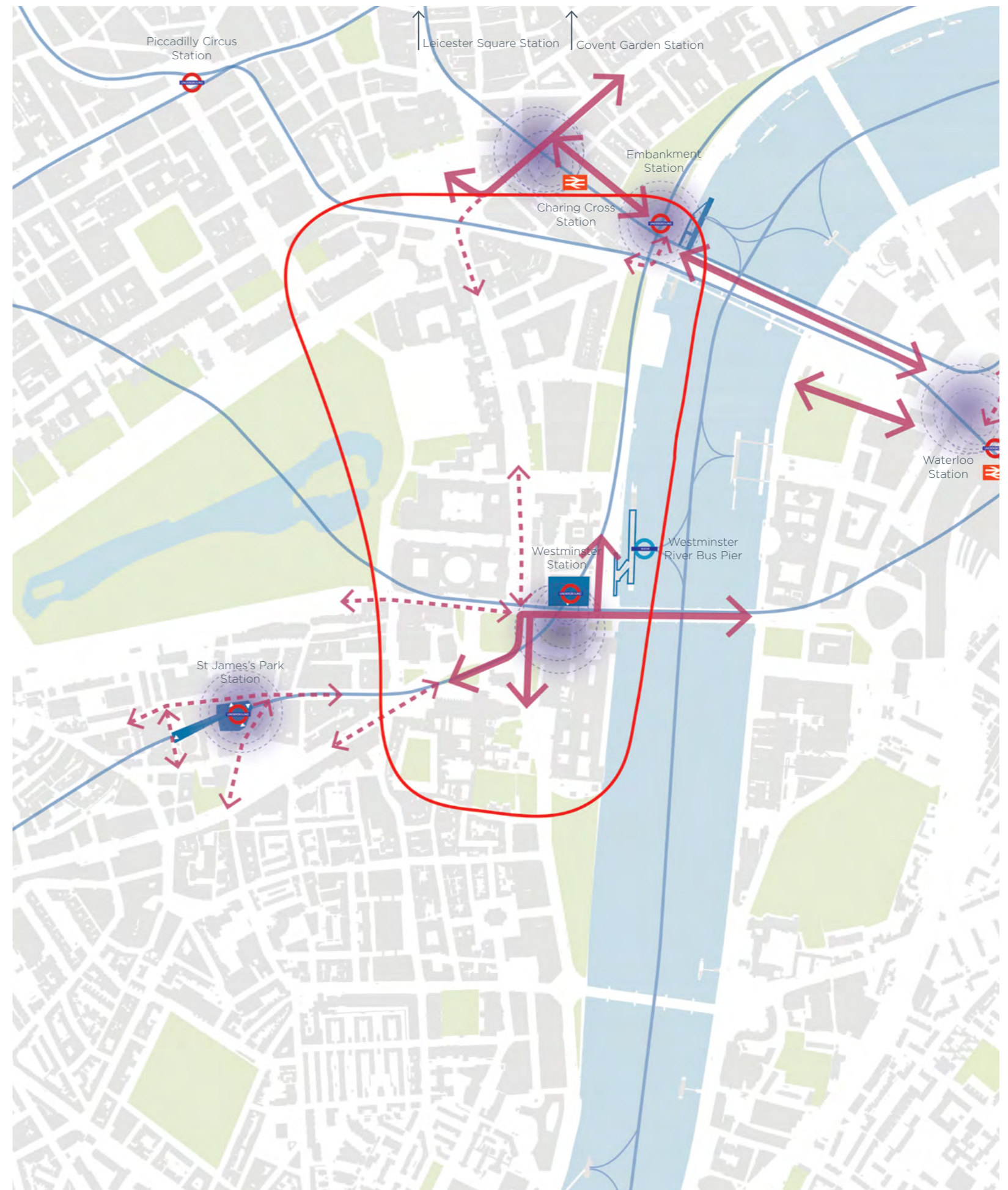


Fig. 129 - Station Locations and Related Station Access Movement

2.21

PUBLIC TRANSPORT - RIVER TRANSPORT






River Bus services are present

A variety of river boat services can be accessed from Westminster Pier, including TFL's licenced River Bus lines RB1, RB2 and RB6 operated by Uber Boat as Thames Clippers. Passengers can use Oyster, contactless payment, or season tickets to travel. The services provide connections between Battersea Power Station and North Greenwich and Putney Green to Canary Wharf Pier. There are also several leisure / tourist focused services, including those offered by City Cruises and Thames River Services.

Easy access from Whitehall but not visible to potential users

The range of river boat services and their convenient access to businesses and leisure is of considerable benefit. However, the visibility of services offered could be much improved.

KEY:

-  Study Boundary
-  London Underground
-  Network Rail
-  River Bus Piers
-  River Bus Routes

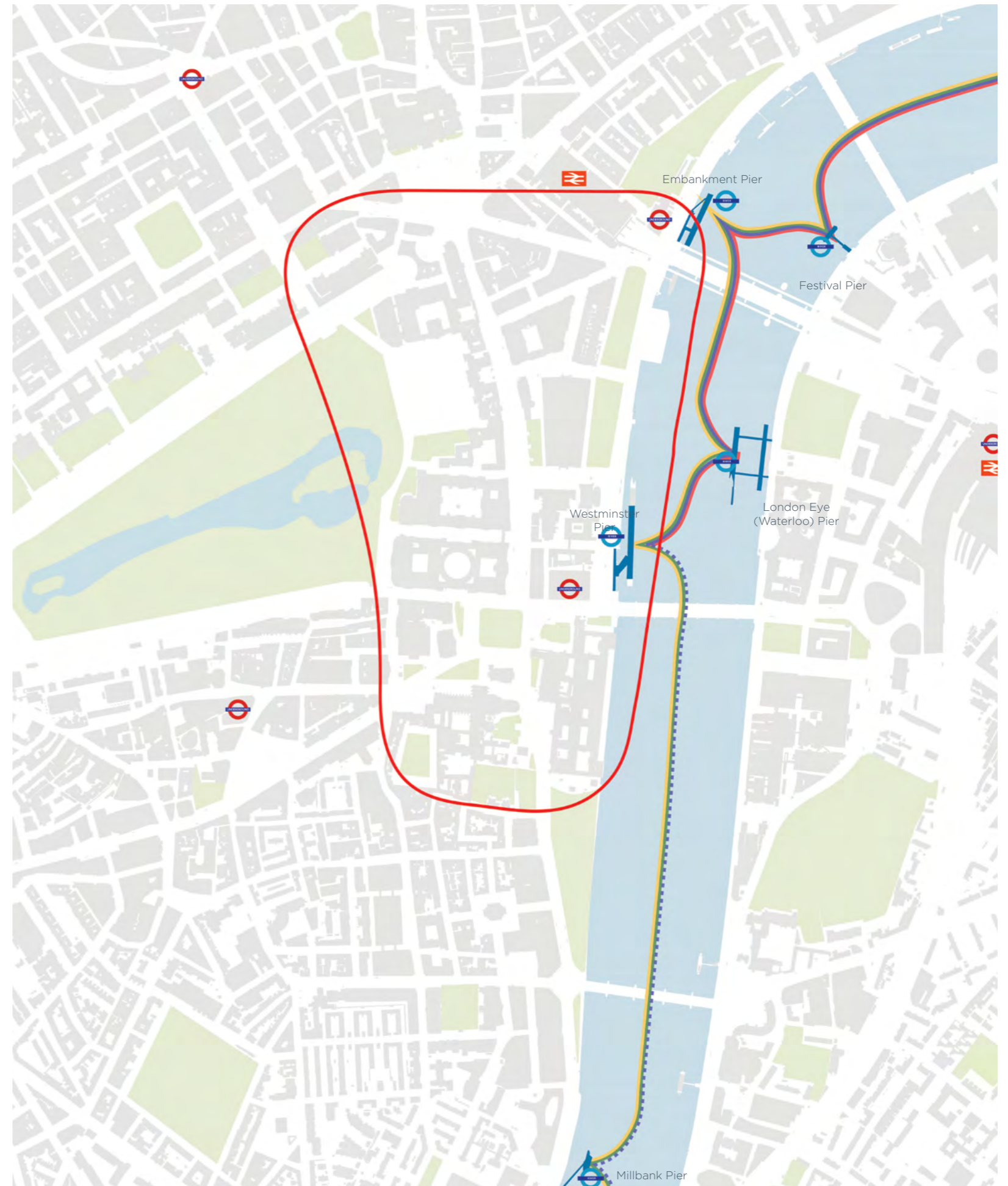


Fig. 130 - River Bus Services near Whitehall

2.22 SPACE TO MOVE, SPACE TO WALK

Restricted public access to many open spaces

The drawings on the right illustrate that although within the Whitehall BID boundary, only 12.95Ha of 19.73Ha of open space is publicly accessible and 5Ha of this is carriageway space (shown in figure 134).

This indicates that throughout the Whitehall BID area a large proportion of the open space is given to vehicles, particularly on the main route between Trafalgar Square and Parliament Square. In addition to this, the large open spaces for pedestrians are located on the edges of the BID area and do not have clear routes of access or wayfinding from the main thoroughfare in Whitehall.

KEY:

--- Whitehall BID boundary

■ Open Space



Fig. 131 - Open Space (Private & Public) = 19.73Ha (197,315.74 m²)



Fig. 132 - Open Space (Public) = 12.95Ha (129,544 m²)

SPACE TO MOVE, SPACE TO WALK

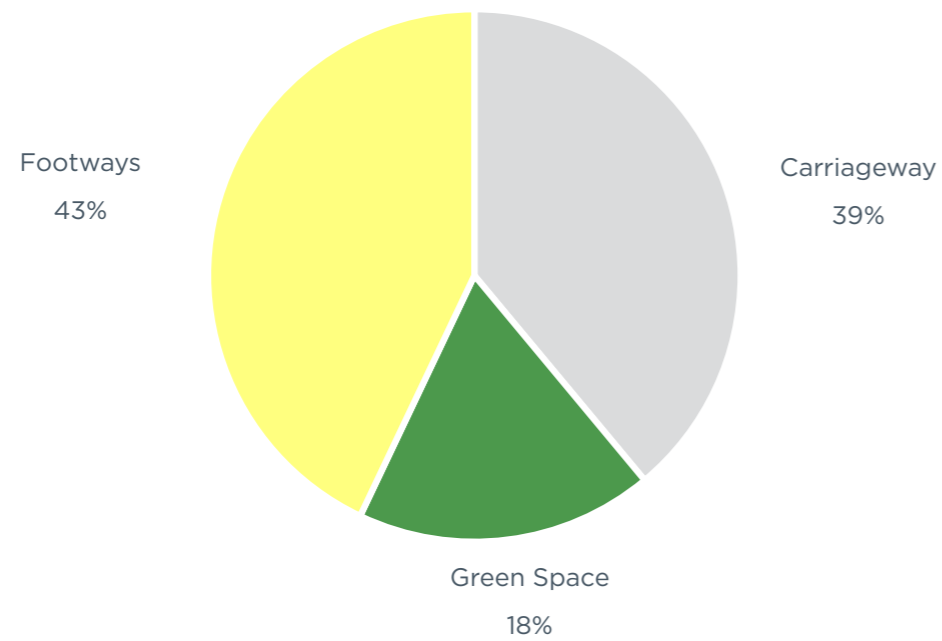


Fig. 133 - Pie chart illustrating the breakdown of Green Space, Carriageway, and footways through the BID area.

- KEY:
- Study Boundary
 - London Underground
 - Network Rail
 - Whitehall BiD Area
 - Existing Carriageway
5.0Ha (50026.85m²)
 - Existing Green Space
2.3Ha (23246.1m²)
 - Existing Footway
5.5Ha (55145m²)



Fig. 134 - Breakdown of space within the BID indicated on plan.

2.23

MOVEMENT, CROSSINGS AND TOURIST HOT SPOTS




Greater visitor pedestrian movement in the west of the BID area

The major tourist hot spots are generally located to the west of the Whitehall BID, therefore visitor pedestrian movement is more intense here.

Fewer iconic attractions to the east of the BID area do not encourage visitors to cross Whitehall; however this may also be due to poor wayfinding or a lack of awareness about the monuments, spaces and activities between Whitehall and the Victoria Embankment.

This reinforces the need to explore opportunities to direct and attract visitors to other 'undiscovered' areas of Whitehall. These 'hidden gems' could contribute additional interest and value to an area already rich in history and culture, as well as encouraging pedestrian movement and so contributing to the wellbeing of visitors, local residents and workers alike.

KEY:

-  Study Boundary
-  High volume visitor pedestrian route
-  Tourist hot spot
- 1. Elizabeth Tower (Big Ben)
- 2. Westminster Abbey
- 3. The Churchill War Rooms
- 4. Downing Street
- 5. Horse Guards Parade
- 6. Trafalgar Square

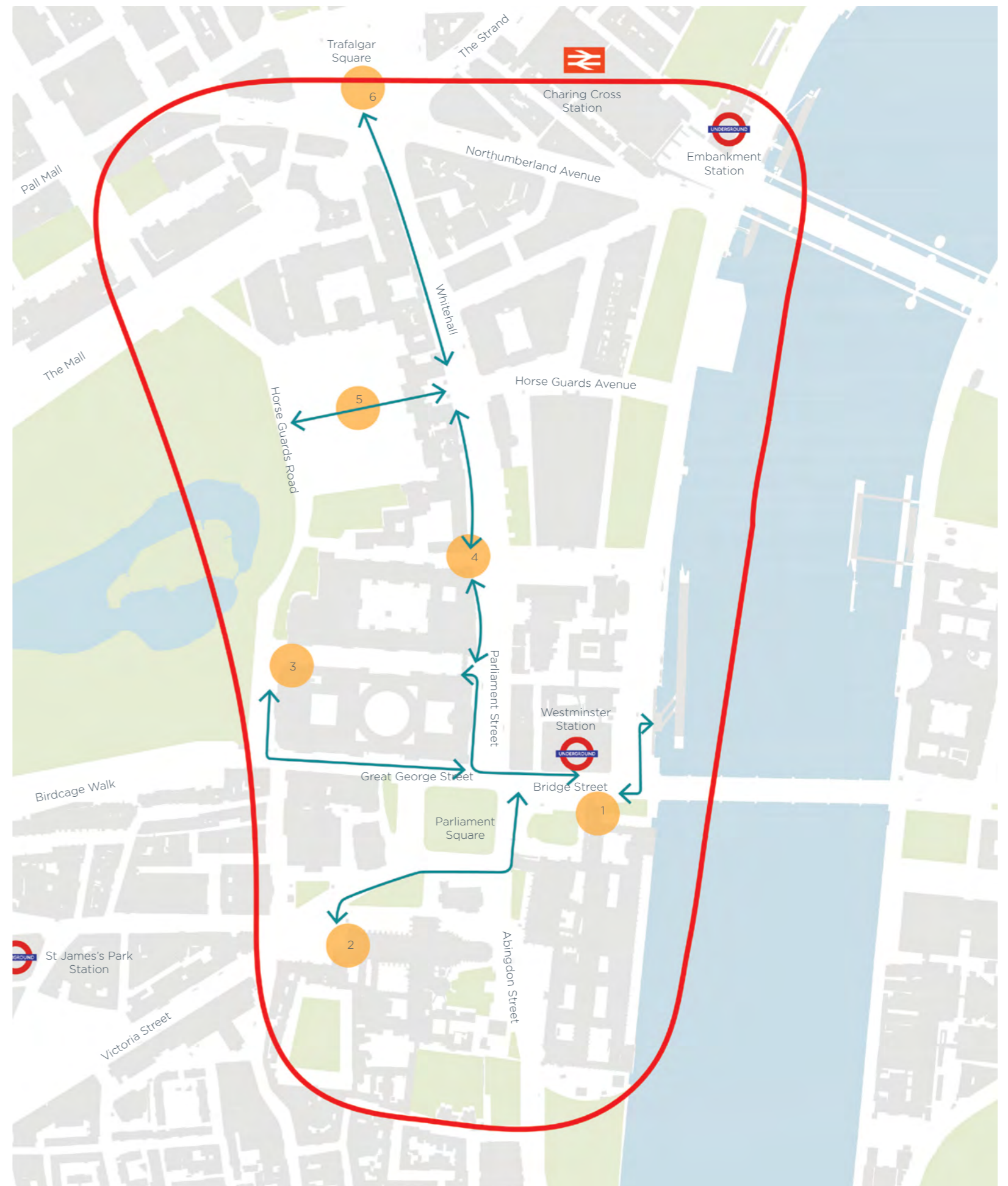


Fig.135 - Major tourist hotspots, pedestrian movement and crossing points, taken from site observations

Pedestrian congestion in Whitehall



Fig. 136 - Crowded environment at Westminster Underground Station entrance, Bridge Street



Fig. 137 - Bridge Street and Parliament Street closed to traffic



Fig. 138 - Pedestrian congestion on Parliament Street



Fig. 139 - Congested footway outside Downing Street



Fig. 140 - Tourists outside Horse Guards



Fig. 141 - Pedestrians in Whitehall

2.24 WHITEHALL IN THE EVENING

Lack of animation in the evening

Whitehall is a busy destination throughout the day, however due to the large presence of government buildings throughout the area there is a lack of animation into the evening. While the area around Trafalgar Square is busy and light with activity from the pubs and theatres, the rest of the BID areas are largely quiet and, in some places, uncomfortably dark.

Dark areas throughout the BID

As illustrated in the adjacent figures there are many areas throughout the BID where street lighting is focused on vehicles or ambient light comes predominantly from vehicle headlights. The street environment between Downing Street and Parliament Square is particularly dark and uninviting. Adjacent areas to the west of Whitehall, such as Horse Guards and King Charles Street, are also particularly uncomfortable, amplified by the lack of lighting from the St James's Park interface. While these are notably sensitive areas historically and culturally, suitable solutions can be applied to increase the light levels and extend the safe, comfortable hours of use.

Current lighting treatment is ad hoc and inconsistent

Lighting treatments throughout the BID area are also largely inconsistent. Some buildings are successfully feature-lit to highlight architectural details, others are washed with different tones and, occasionally, colours. Whilst some pedestrian and vehicle areas are soaked in light, others have none at all. The BID area could benefit from a cohesive lighting strategy that takes a sensitive approach to this historic area.

Monuments through Whitehall deserve better lighting treatment

The monuments throughout Whitehall contribute to the area's sense of place and significance. However key monuments such as the Cenotaph and memorial to the women of World War II lose presence in the evening as they become overshadowed by the light from vehicles. These monuments, amongst others, would benefit from a lighting design which enhances their presence and highlights their importance into the evening.



Fig. 142 - Horse Guards Parade looking West



Fig. 143 - Horse Guards clock tower



Fig. 144 - Western façade of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

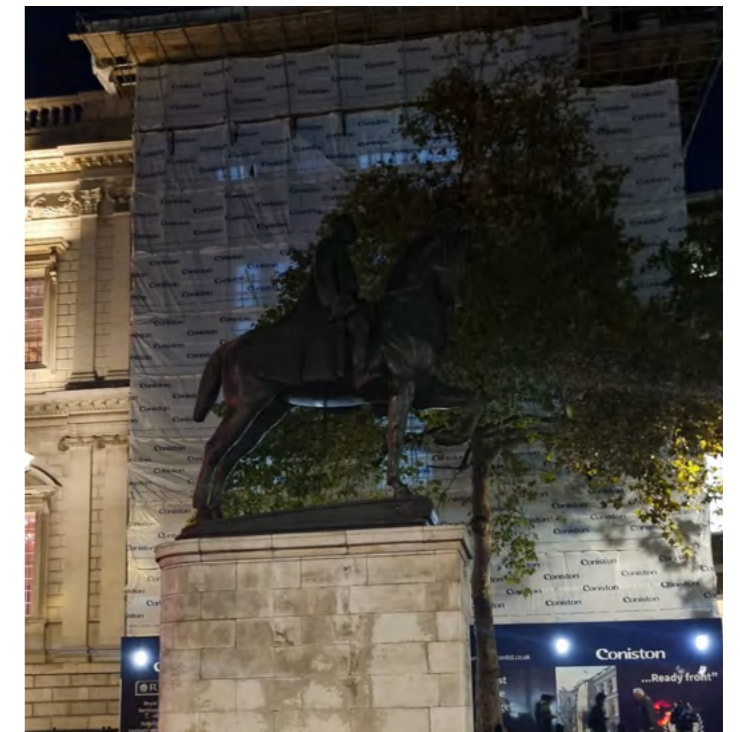


Fig. 145 - Field Marshal Earl Haig Memorial



Fig. 146 - The Cenotaph



Fig. 147 - Whitehall looking south east



Fig. 148 - Victoria Embankment near Westminster Pier



Fig. 149 - King Charles Street



Fig. 150 - Old War Office



Fig. 151 - Whitehall looking north east

2.25 FACILITIES CONTEXT

Poor public convenience facilities in Whitehall

Public convenience and amenities within the Whitehall BID boundary are very poor with very little public seating in the main areas, no drinking fountains and only four public toilets within the study boundary (with only one in the BID boundary itself). For visitors these are not easy to find, and many find the only option is to request to use facilities in nearby cafes, pubs or museums.

Lack of seating and resting opportunities

The lack of seating creates issues for visitors of all abilities and fails to meet United Nations guidance for accessibility; to have a resting option every 100-200m. (*Accessibility Design Manual : 1-Urban Designs : 3-Street Furniture, no date*). Such a significant location as Whitehall should be fully accessible for all.

Need for better wayfinding to facilities

Increasing the number of public convenience facilities in Whitehall would be a significant step towards improving the public realm for all visitors. Wayfinding opportunities could help navigate pedestrians to these core facilities. Figure 152 indicates the number of public facilities together with distances which indicate how far pedestrians must travel to access them.

KEY:

Study Boundary

Distances:

- 1 Parliament Street and Bridge Street junction to Trafalgar Square: 675m
- 2 St James's Park to the Victoria Embankment via Horse Guards Parade and Avenue: 435m
- 3 Whitehall Place: 257m
- 4 St James's Park to Whitehall via King Charles Street: 233m

London Underground

Network Rail

Public toilets

Privately accessible toilets (pubs, cafes, museums)

Drinking Fountains

Seating

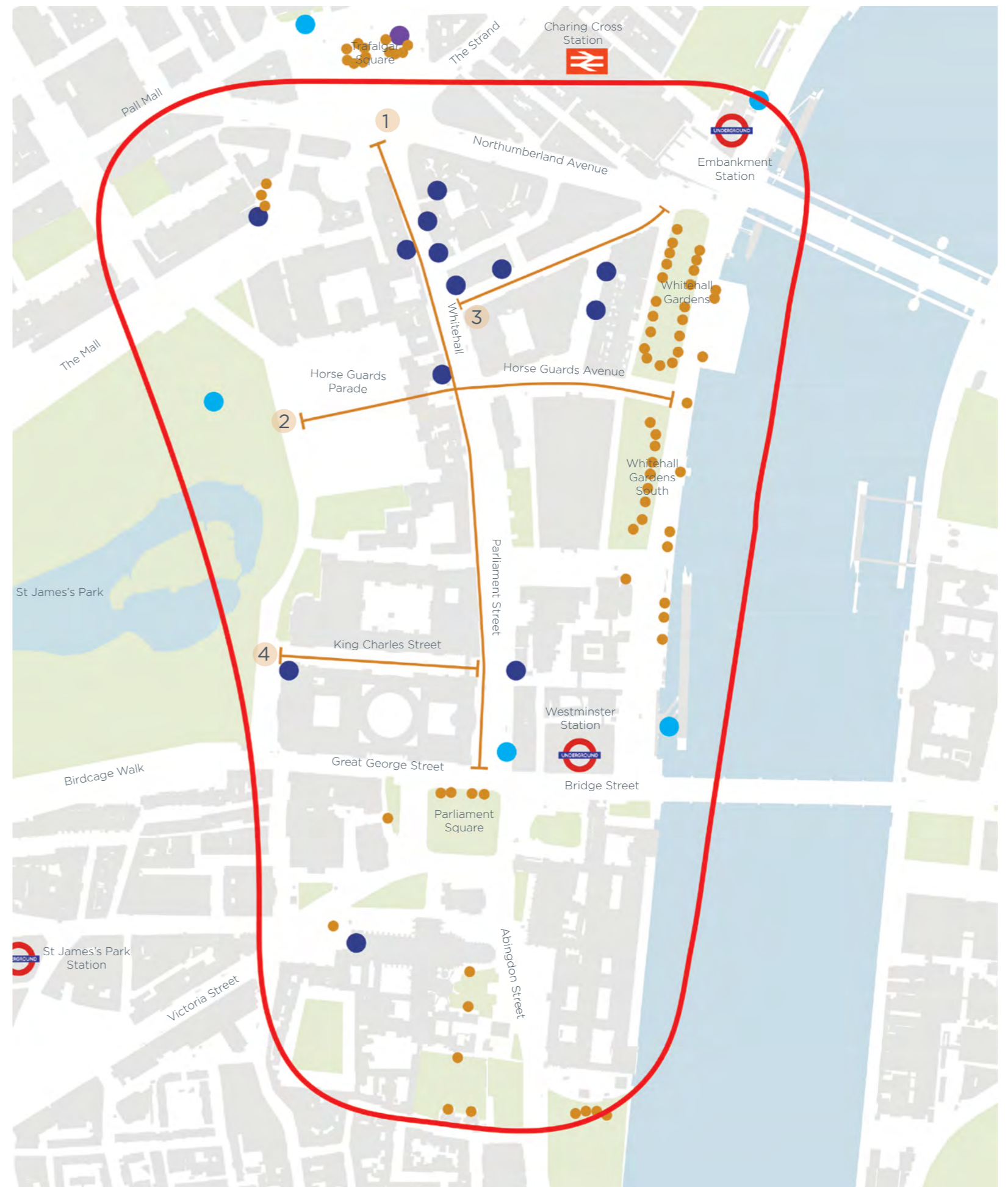


Fig. 152 - Public facilities (Public toilets | Westminster City Council, 2022).

2.26

PLACES TO PAUSE

Many monumental landmarks but no chance to pause and admire

As a key tourist destination, centre for government workers and a pivotal part of the city, Whitehall is incredibly busy with foot traffic all year round. Despite this, there are very few places where pedestrians can comfortably pause for a moment.

There are two major underground stations where pedestrians arrive; Westminster Station, and Charing Cross Station. Both have entrances and exits adjacent to a significant London landmark such as the Elizabeth Tower (Big Ben), and Trafalgar Square, which provides the potential to create an exciting arrival experience and first impression. However at present the footways are overcrowded and there is nowhere to pause and enjoy the iconic views. This is a common theme for a pedestrian navigating the Whitehall BID area. Many pedestrians stop in the thoroughfare to check their phones, take pictures, have a cigarette, or even wait for a bus.

Comfortable resting points are located further from the centre

Most dwell areas for pedestrians within the Whitehall BID area are typically further from the main thoroughfare and unconnected to the significant monuments where people tend to pause.







- KEY:
-  Study Boundary
 -  London Underground
 -  Network Rail
 -  Poor existing opportunities to pause/dwell
 -  Average existing opportunities to pause/dwell
 -  Good existing opportunities to pause/dwell



Fig. 153 - Classification of places to pause or dwell.

2.27

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

A unique context with unique development opportunities and challenges

Home to a large proportion of heritage buildings which house civil servants and core government functions, Whitehall's development profile is unique. In recent years development has introduced other functions into the Whitehall BID area. The most significant indicators of change are the two redevelopments of the Old War Office and Admiralty Arch, the Northern Estate Programme, Project SWAN, Thames Tideway and the Thames Riverfront Project.

New interventions sensitive to the heritage of the site

Old War Office Building and Admiralty Arch redevelopment projects are both transforming these historically significant buildings into high end boutique hotels. The Old War Office building is being refurbished for the Raffles group and The Admiralty Arch for the Hilton Hotels group, bringing luxury residences and new hospitality offerings to Whitehall. Alongside these is 8-10 Great George Street, another heritage location proposed to be converted from government office buildings to a luxury hotel. These three developments indicate a desire for high-end short-term accommodation within this world-renowned destination and will attract visitors and help to activate the area, particularly its evening economy.

Northern Estate and 'Levelling Up' indicates a potential shift of focus

The Northern Estate Programme would have dramatically changed the physical character of some of the Estate and proposed shifting some government services around Whitehall. However the project was controversial and a petition was formed against it for architectural preservation reasons. Furthermore, following the latest 'Levelling Up' campaign from the government these developments are no longer planned to proceed. The debate around the halt to the Northern Estate development has repercussions for the Whitehall BID area. The public response to the treatment of these significant buildings indicates a passion for retaining the historic character and the importance of taking a sensitive approach to any redevelopment within the area. The 'Levelling Up' proposal, which looks at dispersing the civil services within Whitehall, may also bring dramatic change to Whitehall, as the profile of building occupation is likely to change.




Infrastructure developments impacting Whitehall

In conjunction with these developments, there are two major infrastructure projects in the area; firstly the Thames Tideway project currently under construction, and secondly the proposed Project SWAN. Due to their proximity to the BID area and scale of potential impact, these projects are outlined in further detail on the following pages. The diagram on the adjacent page also illustrates the current development context likely to impact the Whitehall BID area.



Fig. 154 - Old War Office, the site of the Raffles hotel and luxury residences development

KEY DEVELOPMENTS CONTEXT

- KEY:
-  Study Boundary
 -  London Underground
 -  Network Rail
 - 1 8-10 Great George Street
 - 2 Parliament Square (Potential)
 - 3 Raffles Hotel and Residential Development, Old War Office Building
 - 4 Thames Tideway project
 - 5 20 Carlton House Terrace
 - 6 Admiralty Arch
 - 7 Norfolk House, St James's Square
 - 8 National Portrait Gallery
 - 9 Westminster House, 7 Millbank
 - 10 St James's Park Station building, 55 Broadway
 - 11 Fielden House
 - 12 21 Dartmouth Street

*Project SWAN is a key development not represented in this diagram (see following pages)

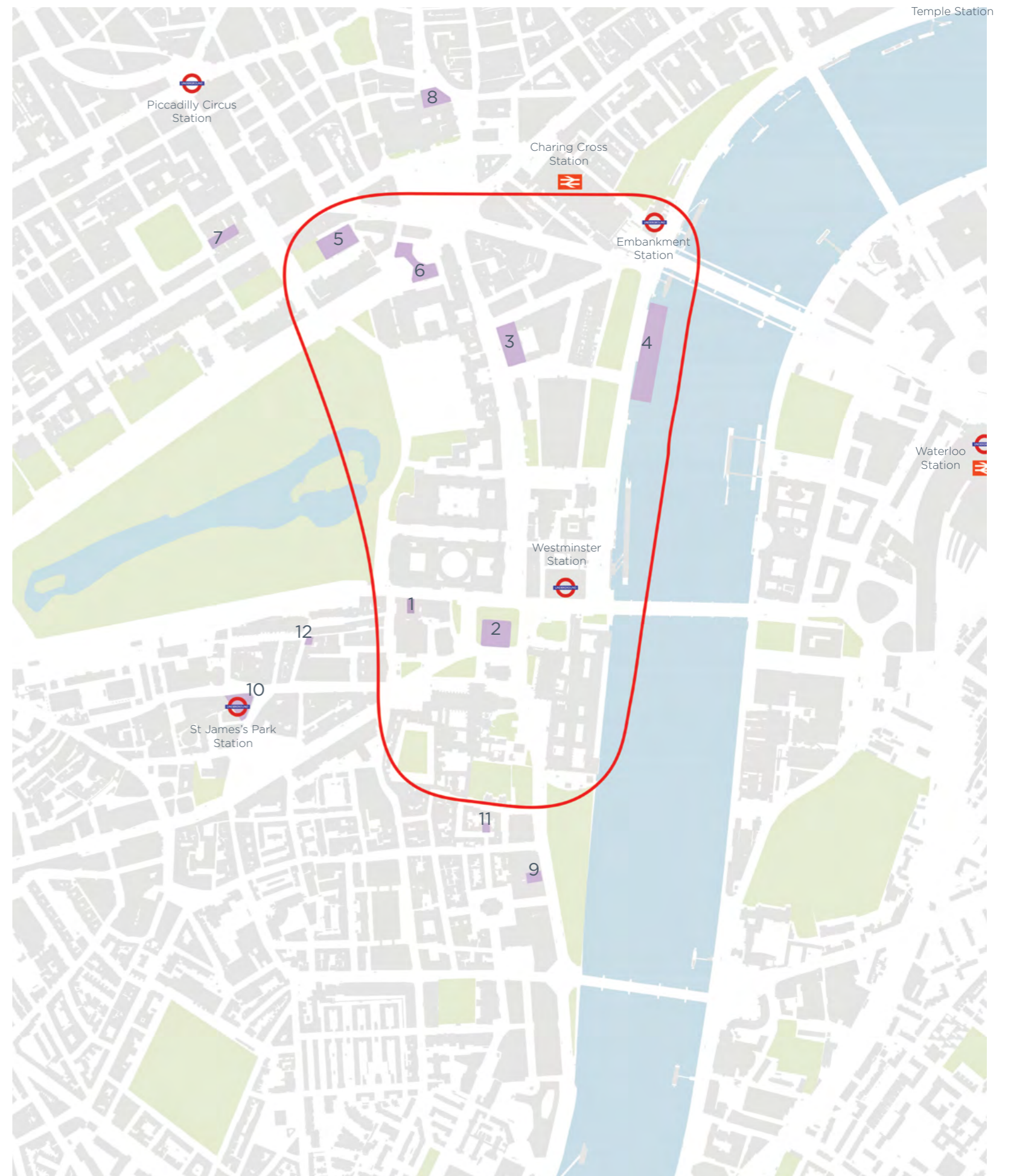


Fig. 155 - Key Developments (New property developments for sale and rent in England, Greater London, London, no date) (Search and comment on planning applications | Westminster City Council, 2022)

2.28 KEY POTENTIAL PROJECTS IN THE LONDON HERITAGE QUARTER

As well as key local developments in the Whitehall area, there are several public realm improvement projects in the context of the Whitehall BID which are important to this vision and strategy. The adjacent diagram sets out these key projects across the London Heritage Quarter. The following page outlines both projects which are within the study boundary.

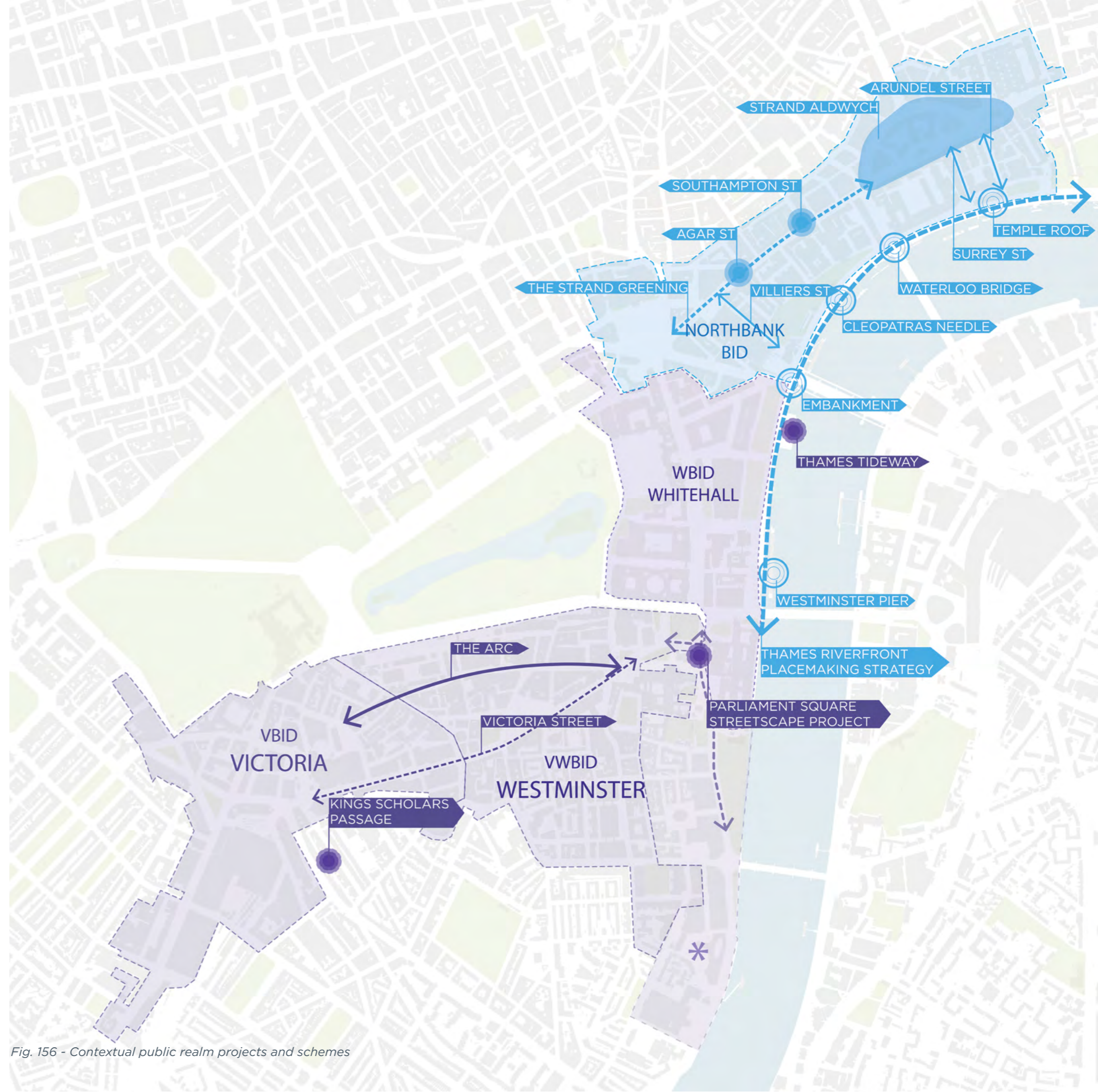


Fig. 156 - Contextual public realm projects and schemes

THAMES TIDEWAY

A major project improving the health of the river Thames

The Thames Tideway project is a major upgrade to the London sewer network which consists of 25km of tunnels and several new public spaces on the edge of the river Thames at key locations. The project will eliminate the current problems with the old sewerage system overflowing into the river during rain events, and claims to future proof the river from this overflow for another 100 years. Sewage is currently the largest pollution issue affecting the health of the Thames, however, with this project due to be completed in 2025, the health and biodiversity of the river will improve dramatically.

New open space on the river within the Whitehall area

Alongside improvements to the health of the river, the project includes three acres of new public space along the length of the river. Relevant to the Whitehall area is the proposed space on the Victoria Embankment, just south of Hungerford Bridge, which will protrude over the river, concealing the sewer infrastructure. Early concept drawings indicate a pergola structure, planting and areas of seating. Importantly the Tideway company boasts that part of this space will be ‘floodable’ at high tides, offering the opportunity to ‘dip your toes’ in the cleaner river Thames.

Opportunity to improve wayfinding and physical connections to Embankment

This project is important for the Whitehall BID area as it offers a new open space where people can connect with the river. Wayfinding connections to the river and Victoria Embankment are currently poor, so this new riverfront public realm offers the opportunity to improve connections between the river Thames and the centre of Whitehall.

An overlapping vision document focusing on the riverfront environment

Two project opportunities relevant to this study

A matched set of aims and opportunities for the riverfront within Whitehall

THAMES RIVERFRONT PLACEMAKING STRATEGY

In parallel with the Tideway project, Hawkins Brown and the Northbank BID have been developing the Thames Riverfront Placemaking Strategy, another vision document regarding the Northbank of the river Thames between Westminster Bridge and Blackfriars Bridge. The vision set out by the strategy is to create “a multi-layered place where every space works hard for people and the environment”.

Like the Whitehall study, this riverfront strategy also identifies key project opportunities to help realise the vision. Two are particularly relevant to the Whitehall BID and public realm study. Firstly, a proposal to enhance the area around Westminster Pier and Westminster Station, to create a better pedestrian promenade experience by improving connections and using a consistent design language, e.g. through lighting treatments. Secondly, to improve the pedestrian environment on the riverside of Embankment and Charing Cross Stations by creating more space for pedestrians and improving air quality by reducing vehicle congestion.

Enhancing the riverfront via the Thames Riverfront Placemaking Strategy is an important project for the Northbank BID. The Whitehall public realm vision team have coordinated with Hawkins Brown and the Northbank BID team to align ambition and realise opportunities on this part of the riverbank.

2.29 PROJECT SWAN

Major infrastructure works could be carried out within the Whitehall BID area

There are benefits to aligning public realm improvement works with a large scale infrastructure project like SWAN

Project SWAN is an infrastructure project proposed by the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to provide a vast district heat network which would extend through the Whitehall BID area. This system will utilise heat from existing infrastructure and directly re-distribute via a system of underground pipes to buildings in the area. The installation of the heat network through the BID can help the district transition to a clean, low carbon economy.






Aligning any proposed public realm improvements with large infrastructure projects such as project SWAN has numerous benefits. Firstly, there are cost benefits to running a single construction project rather than two or more consecutively. Secondly, as the surface is only disturbed once there is less wastage of materials, making for a more sustainable solution. Thirdly, there is less disturbance to the area, and particularly local businesses, if all the works are carried out at once, resulting in a shorter construction period.

Through consultation with the project SWAN team numerous benefits have been recognised by potentially realigning the system to take a more direct route from Trafalgar Square down Whitehall - Parliament Street. For project SWAN these include:

- Potentially avoiding works to The Mall, which is a key strategic route.
- Providing better continuity of connection between the Strand and Millbank networks.
- Potential to improve connectivity to buildings on the east of Whitehall (adjacent to the river) as underground access through Horse Guards may be challenging.
- Offering a shorter route between two main energy sources - the National Gallery and Millbank.

This infrastructure project is aligned with a key objective for the Whitehall Public Realm Vision and Strategy to create a more sustainable urban environment and produces an serendipitous opportunity to align public realm improvements in the BID with major infrastructure works.

KEY:

-  Study Boundary
-  Approximate route of connection
-  Heat Source
-  Extent of initial heat coverage
-  Future potential extensions

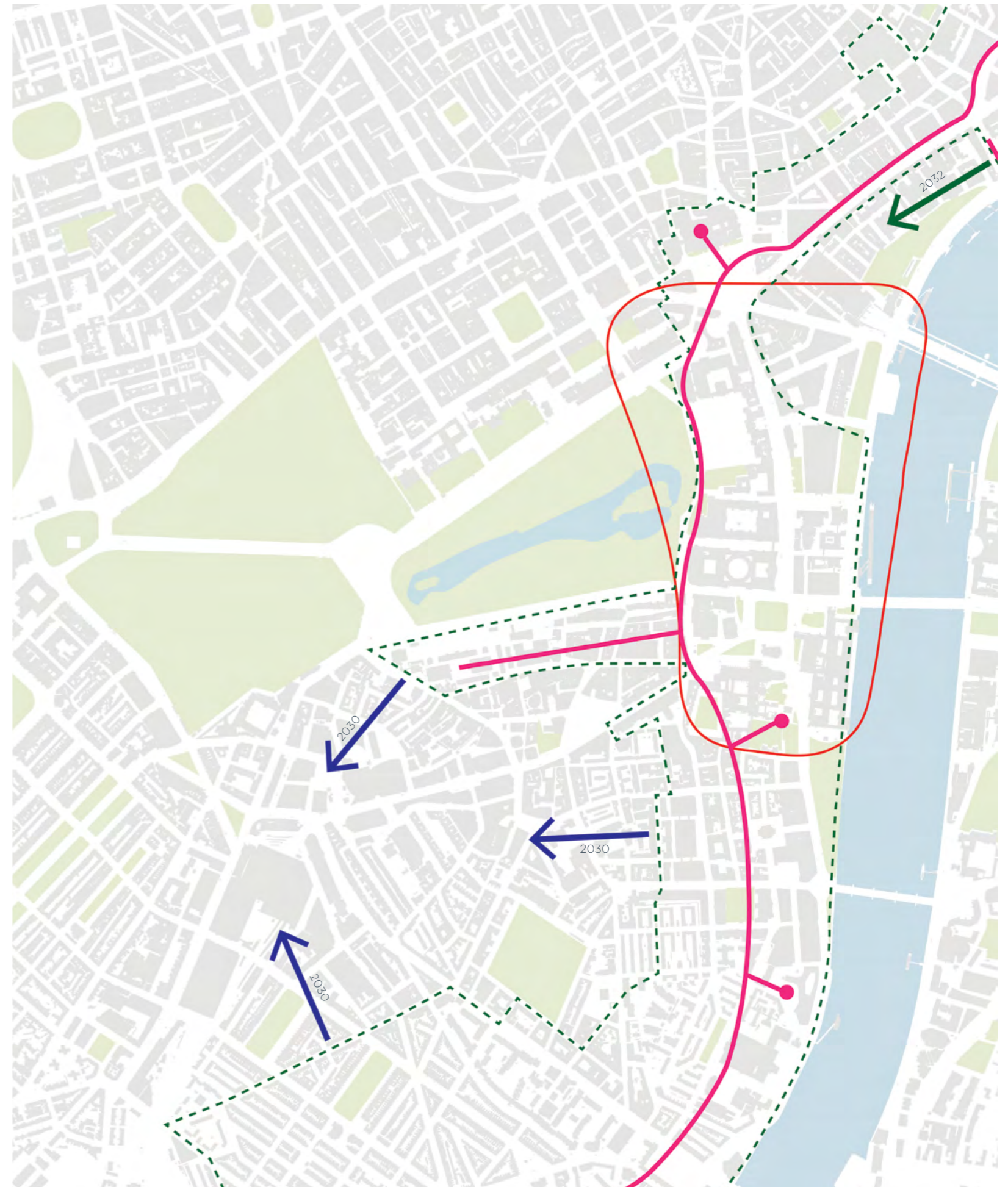


Fig. 157 - Project SWAN approximate route with heat sources identified

2.30 INTEGRATED SECURITY

A key area for security infrastructure

As the political and cultural heart of the UK, the Whitehall BID area faces challenges in providing safe and secure streets and spaces for people to use and enjoy. This is exemplified by the ceremonial events which take place along Whitehall, which are a target for potential acts of terrorism and vandalism.

Security infrastructure already in evidence throughout the BID

Due to modern security threats, considerable attention has been given to developing and introducing security infrastructure within the BID. The presence of this security infrastructure is more dominant around governmental buildings, busy pedestrian areas, and transport interchanges. As Whitehall forms part of the ceremonial route, the BID area needs to remain flexible in order to provide a safe, secure environment during any event that may attract risk.

Potential to update the existing infrastructure

Whilst much of this infrastructure has been installed over the last decade, new technology and approaches to the integration of security infrastructure into the public realm continue to evolve. As projects emerge the BID they will need to consider security infrastructure, and seek to use innovative solutions and latest guidance to ensure it does not detract from the public realm experience. Furthermore, as work/life patterns shift and public transport use changes, there may be a need to reduce or modify some physical security infrastructure or complement it with newer technologies.

CPNI guidance for security infrastructure has been issued

Public realm improvements through the Whitehall BID should consider integrated security measures, and coordinate with relevant bodies. The Centre for Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI) provides outline guidance on how HVM might be integrated into public realm and this will inform any new proposals. In addition to CPNI, proposals should be reviewed by relevant security advisors in MPS, WCC and government.

Westminster Ceremonial Streetscape Project

The newest additions to Whitehall's security infrastructure have been implemented as part of the Ceremonial Streetscape Project. These include HVM barriers and other infrastructure to manage vehicle access during ceremonial events.



Fig . 158 - Bollards along Whitehall



Fig. 159 - Security barriers in Whitehall



Fig. 160 - Combination of bollards and walls along Victoria Embankment



Fig. 161 - Bollards to control vehicle access to King Charles Street

2.31 PARLIAMENT SQUARE

A nationally important space

In the 'People Wanted: Placemaking for Victoria' one of the key projects proposed was 'Westminster's Heart: Parliament Square'.

Parliament Square is adjacent to a World Heritage Site and is an internationally recognised space intrinsically linked to a sense of nationhood. It is a space for events and gatherings to democratically support or oppose national issues and policies of the day. Its importance as a 'place for people' cannot be understated.

Whilst the square is surrounded by many national institutions such as the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey and the Supreme Court, it stands alone from these key buildings. Furthermore, it is not directly accessible from Westminster Underground Station. Proposals for Parliament Square included closing access to vehicles to the south and east to create a pedestrian campus complementary to both the historic architecture and the uses of Parliament. (BDP, 2020).

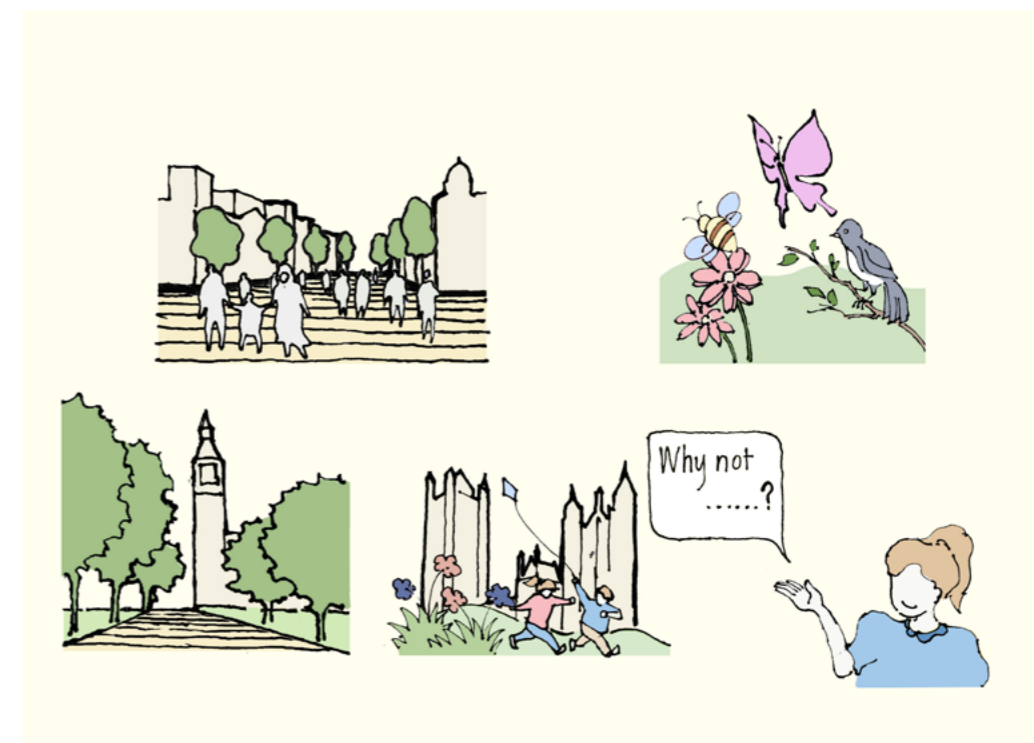
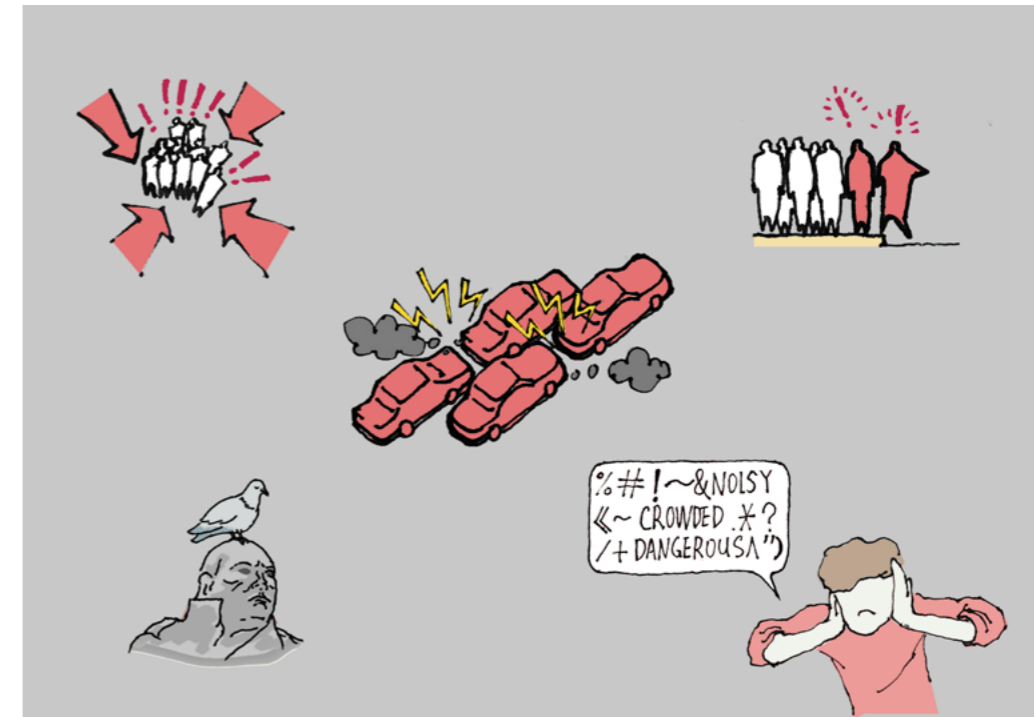


Fig. 162 - Illustrations from the 'People Wanted: Placemaking for Victoria' illustrating key issues and aspirations for Parliament Square





PEOPLE WANTED, VICTORIA PARLIAMENT SQUARE PROPOSAL



Fig. 163 - Excerpt from 'People Wanted' showing proposal for Parliament Square

2.32 MONUMENTAL WHITEHALL

KEY:

-  Study Boundary
-  London Underground
-  Network Rail
-  Monuments

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. The Cenotaph | 28. Viscount Palmerston Statue |
| 2. Boudiccan Rebellion Statue | 29. Benjamin Disraeli Statue |
| 3. Women of World War II Monument | 30. Sir Robert Peel Statue |
| 4. Field Marshal Earl Haig Memorial | 31. Nelson Mandela Statue |
| 5. George Duke of Cambridge Statue | 32. Mahatma Gandhi Statue |
| 6. Equestrian Statue of Charles | 33. Di Francis Bacon Statue |
| 7. Duke of Devonshire Statue | 34. George Canning Statue |
| 8. The Gurkha Statue | 35. Abraham Lincoln Statue |
| 9. Royal Tank Regiment Memorial Statue | 36. Bali Bombings Memorial |
| 10. Sir Joseph Bazalgette Memorial | 37. Robert Clive Memorial |
| 11. James Outram Statue | 38. Earl Mountbatten Statue |
| 12. Henry Bartle Frere Statue | 39. Earl Kitchener Statue |
| 13. William Tyndale Statue | 40. Cadiz Memorial |
| 14. Samuel Plimsoll Statue | 41. Field Marshal Earl Roberts Statue |
| 15. General Charles Gordon Statue | 42. Field Marshal Wolseley Statue |
| 16. Queen Mary's Steps | 43. Ottoman Gun |
| 17. Lord Portal Statue | 44. Guards Memorial |
| 18. Fleet Air Arm Memorial | 45. National Police Memorial |
| 19. Korean War Memorial | 46. Captain James Cook Statue |
| 20. Trenchard Monument | 47. Royal Marines Memorial |
| 21. Iraq and Afghanistan Memorial | 48. Royal Air Force Memorial |
| 22. Chindit Memorial | 49. Royal Naval Division War Memorial |
| 23. Royal Air Force Memorial | 50. Field Marshal The Viscount Slim Statue |
| 24. Sir Winston Churchill Statue | 51. The Viscount Alanbrooke Statue |
| 25. Millicent Garrett Fawcett Statue | 52. Viscount Montgomery Statue |
| 26. David Lloyd George Statue | 53. King Charles I beheading site bust |
| 27. Jan Smuts Statue | 54. Crimea and Indian Mutiny memorial |

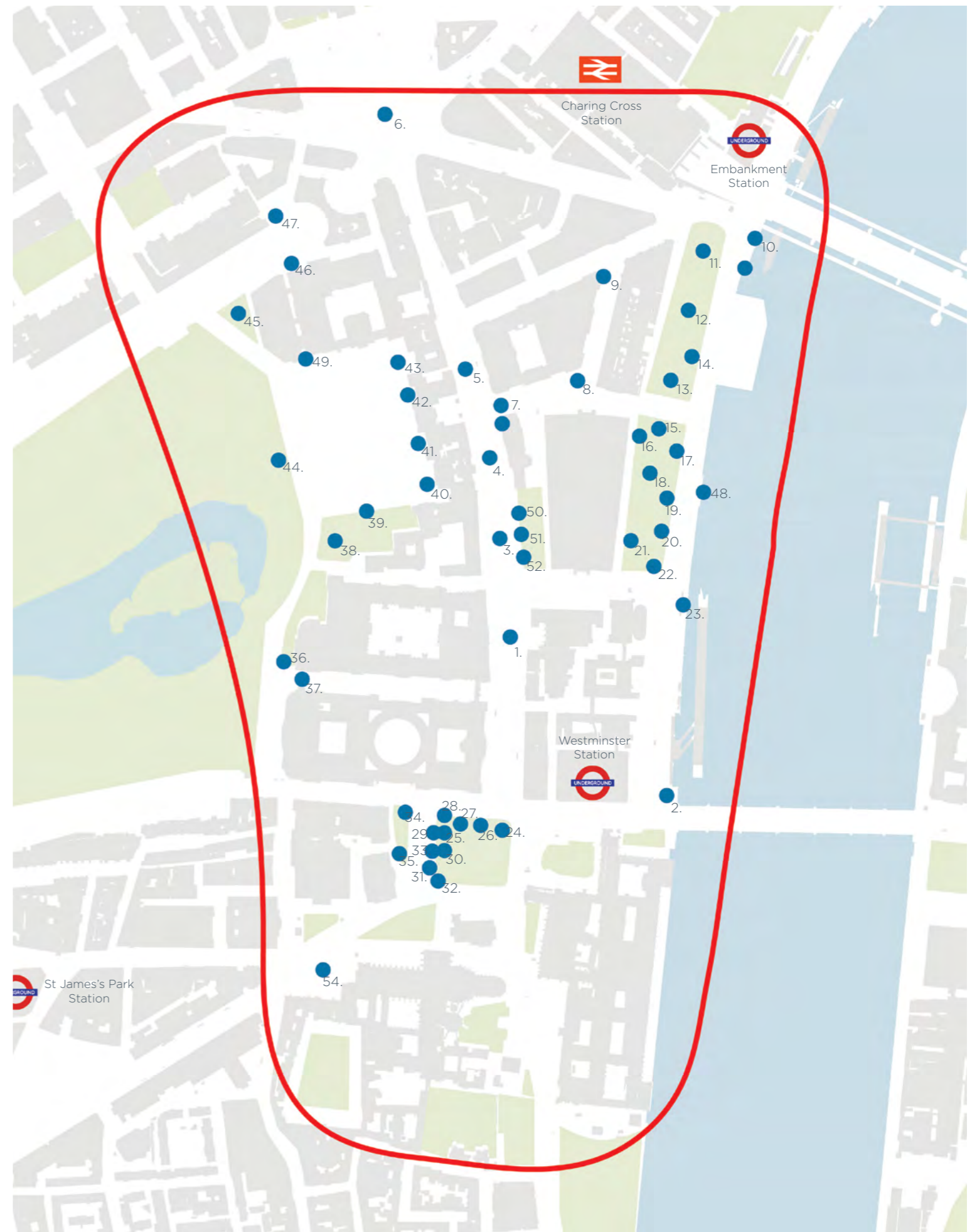


Fig. 164 - Whitehall Monuments

Monuments concentrated within the study area indicate the rich history of the area, and can be explored further.



Fig. 165 - Women of World War II Memorial



Fig. 166 - The Cenotaph



Fig. 167 - Winston Churchill Memorial



Fig. 168 - Monuments in front of the Ministry of Defence building



Fig. 169 - Clive of India Memorial



Fig. 170 - Royal Air Force Memorial

2.33

HIDDEN GEMS

Lesser-known historic fragments contribute to the multi-layered urban fabric of Whitehall

Among the abundance of well-known historic and cultural attractions in Whitehall are several lesser known but fascinating hidden gems. These historic remains, plaques and under-used public spaces contribute to the multi-layered urban fabric of Whitehall today and deserve to be celebrated.

The clock face at Horse Guards has a black mark behind the 2pm symbol that signifies the exact time when Charles I was beheaded, at 2pm on January 30, 1649 (Clocks in Westminster that have stood the test of time, 2018). A small bust of Charles I on the façade of Banqueting House marks the exact location where he was beheaded.

Queen Mary's Steps, one of the few visible remains of Whitehall Palace, can be found in Whitehall Gardens South. The steps were built for Queen Mary in 1691 and led from the palace terrace in front of her apartments to the water's edge so she could board the State Barge. Only discovered in the 1930s during the construction of the Ministry of Defence, (Queen Mary's steps, no date) they reveal how much wider the Thames was in the 1600s.

Whitehall Gardens forms the largest green space within the Whitehall BID boundary, yet remains relatively unknown. Three prominent statues commemorating William Tyndale (1494-1536), Sir Henry Bartle Frere (1815-1885) and General Sir James Outram (1803-63) are located here, surrounded by grass lawns and formal planting. Table tennis and cafe refreshments are available, along with substantial seating.

The River Tyburn, although now below ground and very much a 'hidden' gem, has great historic significance, particularly its impact upon the location of Thorney Island and the subsequent development of the Palace of Westminster.

Trails and walking routes offer a new perspective on the urban environment

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee saw several activities and events throughout June 2022, including the London Heritage Quarter's Platinum Jubilee Corgi Trail. Nineteen colourful sculptures designed by contemporary artists were placed across central London, including 'Emma' the corgi in Whitehall Gardens. The public was encouraged to explore this trail, taking in the different sights and sounds as they moved through the city. Trails and walking routes such as this can offer a new perspective on the surrounding urban environment and should be explored further in proposals for BID.



Fig. 171 - Horse Guards Clock Tower



Fig. 172 - Queen Mary's Steps



Fig. 173 - Location of the beheading of Charles I

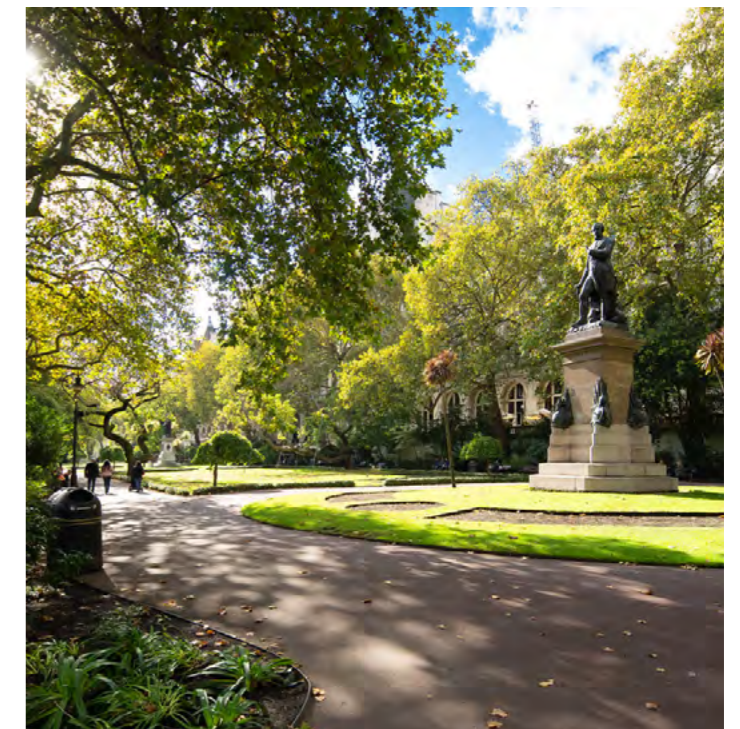





Fig. 174 - Whitehall Gardens North

HIDDEN GEMS

KEY:

-  Study Boundary
-  London Underground
-  Network Rail
- 1.** Queen Mary's Steps
Revealing the historic edge of the River Thames and Whitehall Palace
- 2.** Horse Guards Clock Tower
See the black spot marked out in memory of King Charles I, who was beheaded nearby at 2pm
- 3.** Banqueting House
The only remaining part of the historic Whitehall Palace and the location of the beheading of King Charles I
- 4.** The Royal Horse Guards Hotel
The original home of Sir Mansfield Cummings, the first chief of the secret service and the inspiration behind the original 'M' in the James Bond series
- 5.** The Historic Route of the River Tyburn
- 6.** Footprints of the Palace
The approximate location of the footprint of the historic Whitehall Palace which gave the area its name
- 7.** Churchill's Balcony
The balcony where Sir Winston Churchill gave his victory address to the crowds gathered on Whitehall on the 8th May 1945 to announce victory in Europe
- 8.** Remnants of Henry VIII's recreation area and old Tudor tennis court
Commonly referred to as the 'cockpit'
- 9.** The Silver Cross Pub
A historic pub dating back to the 1670s which had previously been granted a brothel license by King Charles II and is said to be haunted

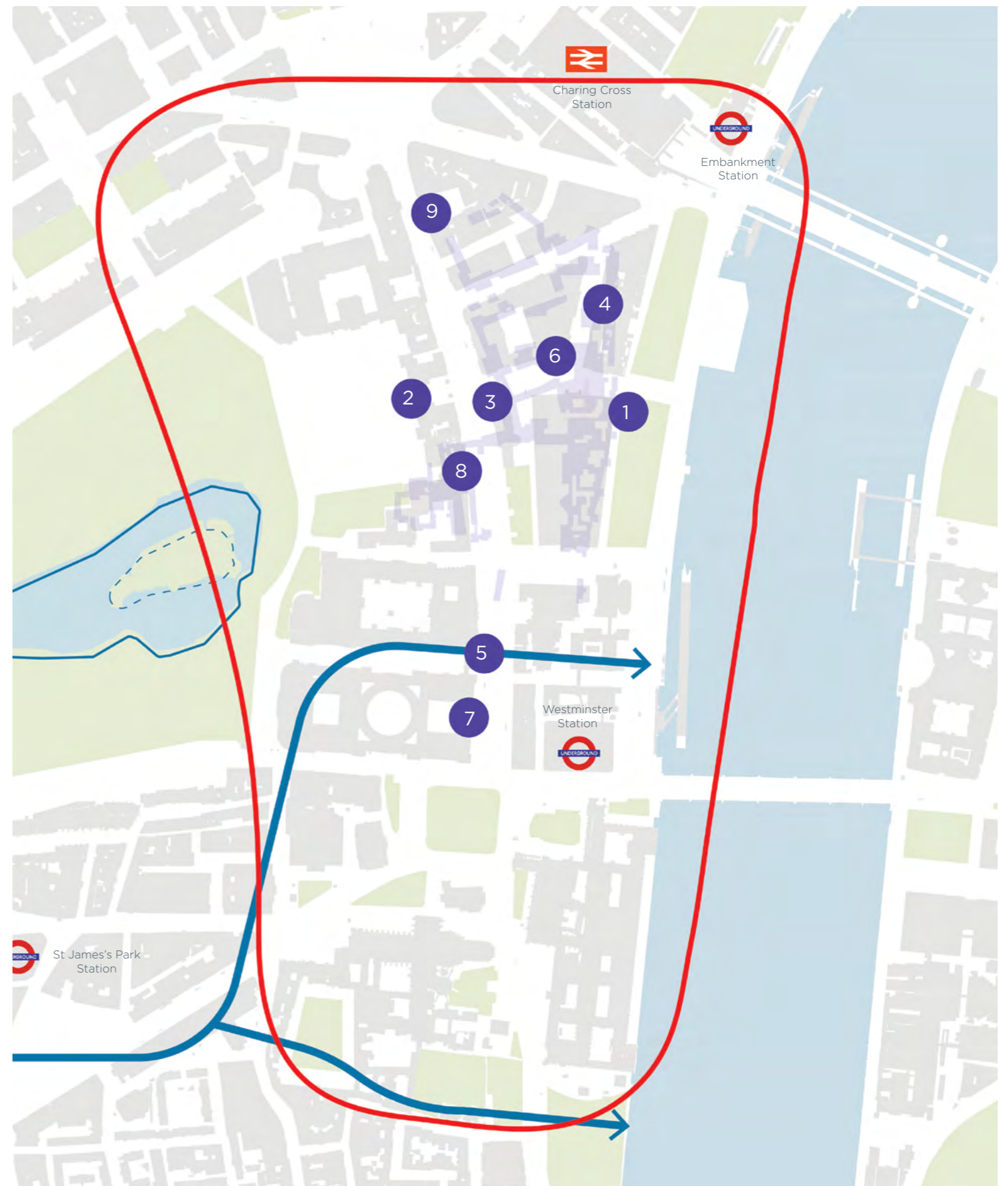
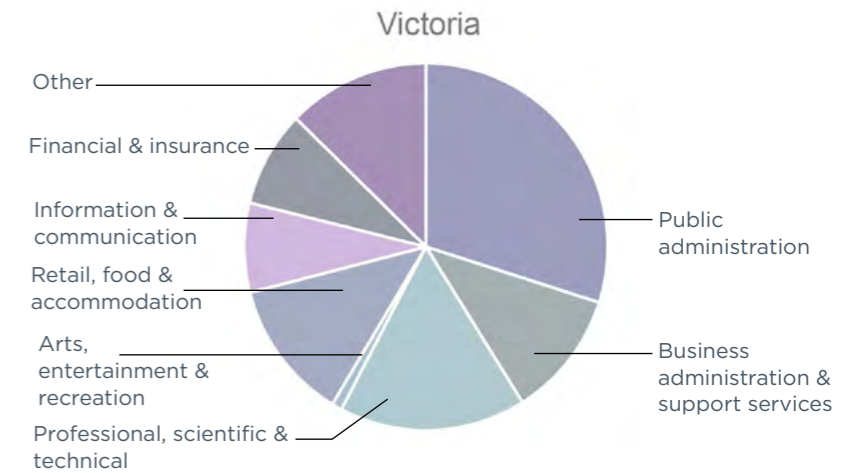
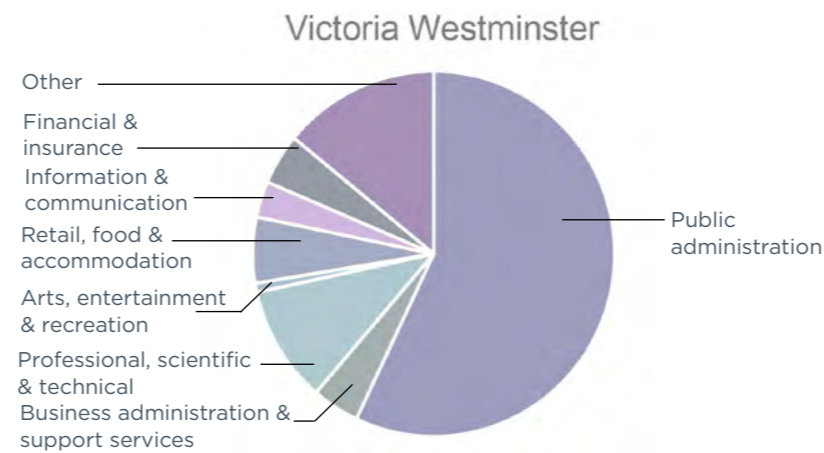
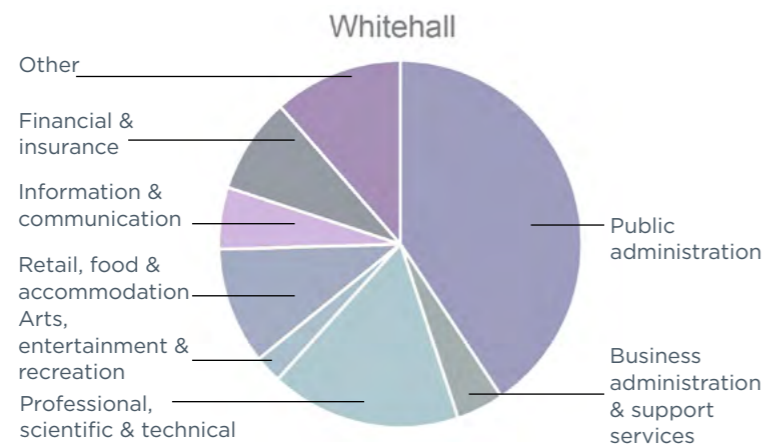


Fig. 175 - Hidden Gems

2.34 SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT: Working

The following pages present the socio-economic context and profile of the Whitehall BID in the context of the London Heritage Quarter. These statistics are obtained from the Volterra Partners South Westminster BIDs Vibrancy Report published in March 2022. However, it must be acknowledged that the statistics refer specifically to the BID areas and not the study areas outlined earlier in this report.

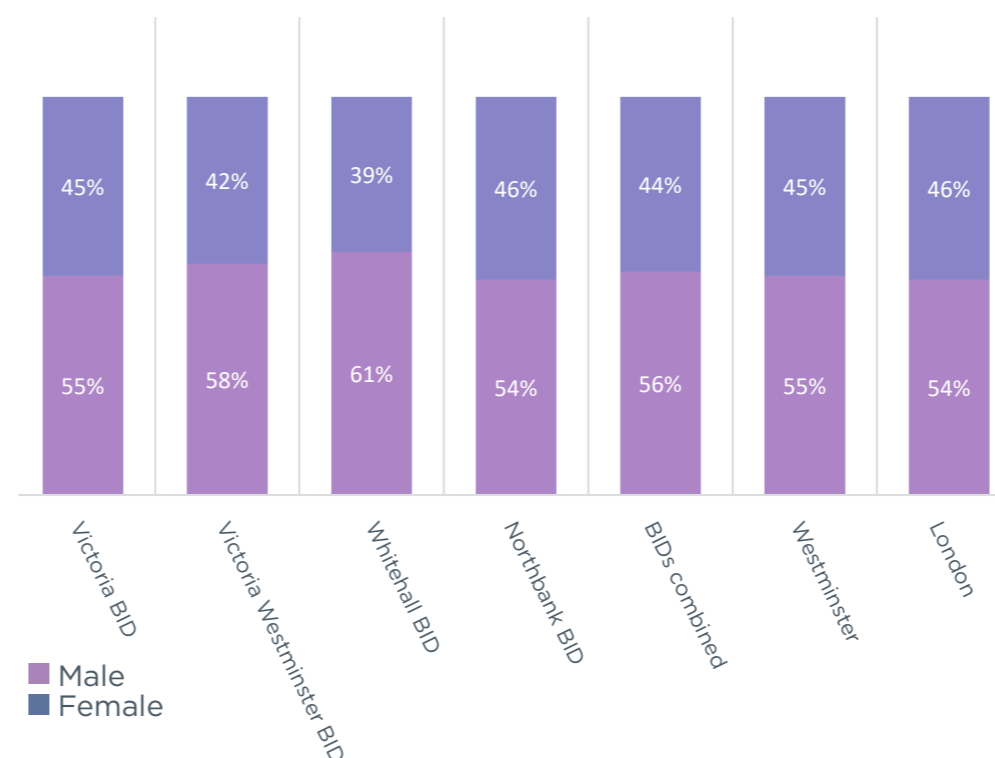
Employment by sector in 2020



Total employment by BIDs in 2020

| Area | Total Employment 2020 |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| VBID | 47,500 |
| VWBID | 59,800 |
| Whitehall | 26,500 |
| Northbank | 41,900 |
| BIDs combined | 175,700 |
| Westminster | 726,000 |
| London | 5,264,000 |

Total employment by gender across the BIDs in 2020



Total employment 2020, male % female %

| Area | Males % | Females % |
|---------------|---------|-----------|
| VBID | 55% | 45% |
| VWBID | 58% | 42% |
| Whitehall | 61% | 39% |
| Northbank | 54% | 46% |
| BIDs combined | 56% | 44% |
| Westminster | 55% | 45% |
| London | 54% | 46% |



Whitehall, Victoria, Victoria Westminster and Northbank BIDs combined produce £17.4bn in economic activity



As of 2020, Whitehall is estimated to support 26,500 workers, with growth in employment from 2011-20 at 15%



SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT: Working

The Volterra Report focuses on the socio-economic context of working in Whitehall in further detail:

- In comparison to Victoria Westminster, a number of governmental departments in Whitehall results in the public administration sector dominating employment, making up 45% of 26,500 workers in the BID. However, since the Volterra Report was published in March 2022 the Levelling Up papers have confirmed that many civil servants will relocate, thereby impacting the future working demographic in Whitehall.
- Whitehall contains a significant provision of office floorspace totalling 129,000m2, constituting more than 3% of total office space in Westminster.

10 - Year growth rate of sectors within the

| Area | Night-time | | Tourism | | Creative | |
|---------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| | Employment (2020) | Growth (2010-20) | Employment (2020) | Growth (2010-20) | Employment (2020) | Growth (2010-20) |
| VBID | 2,300 | 2% | 3,460 | -2% | 2,180 | -42% |
| VWBID | 1,460 | 11% | 1,500 | -22% | 1,430 | 42% |
| Whitehall | 1,240 | 2% | 1,370 | -4% | 990 | -30% |
| Northbank | 6,250 | -2% | 8,110 | 0% | 6,800 | 4% |
| BIDs combined | 11,240 | 1% | 14,450 | -4% | 11,400 | -16% |
| Westminster | 107,000 | 34% | 104,000 | 8% | 87,500 | 2% |

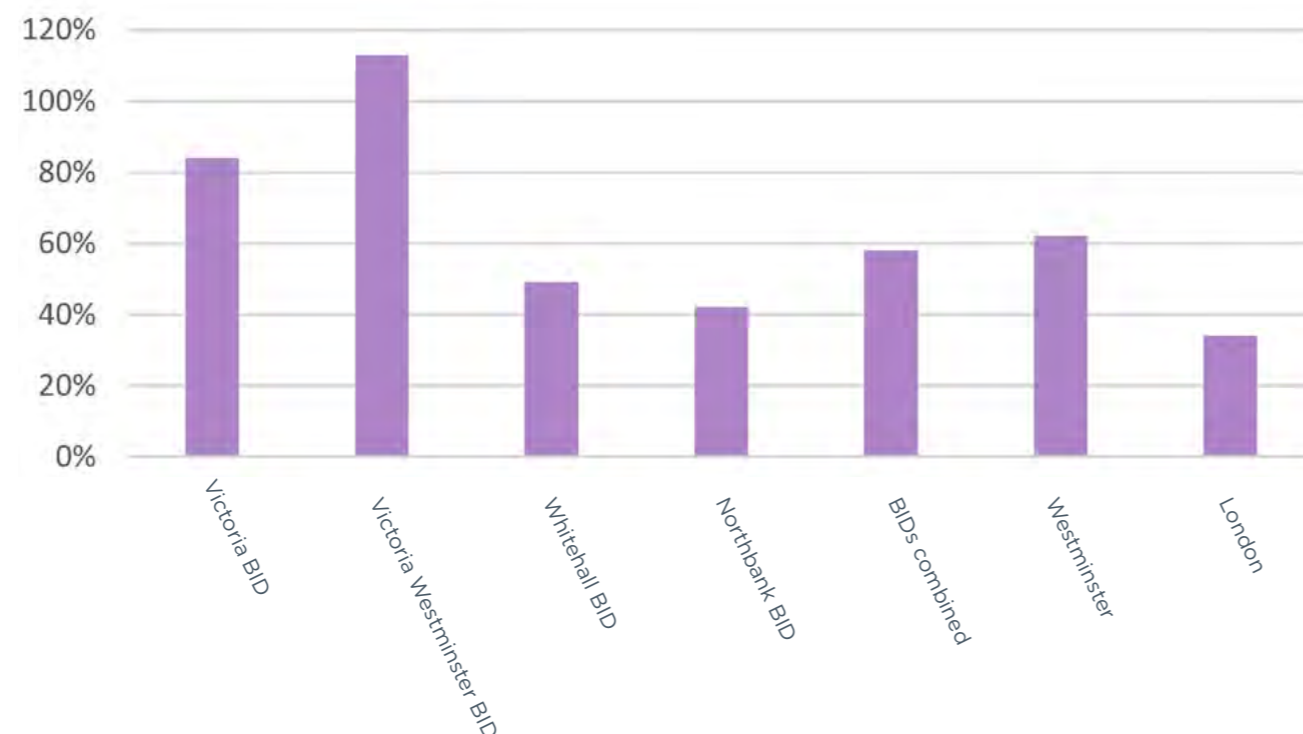
Source: ONS, 2021. Business Register and Employment Survey

Business Rate Payments, 2021

| Area | Estimated business rates paid (2021) | Business rate retained by Westminster (2021) |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| VBID | £134m | £41m |
| VWBID | £84m | £25m |
| Whitehall | £22m | £7m |
| Northbank | £134m | £40m |
| BIDs combined | £377m | £113m |

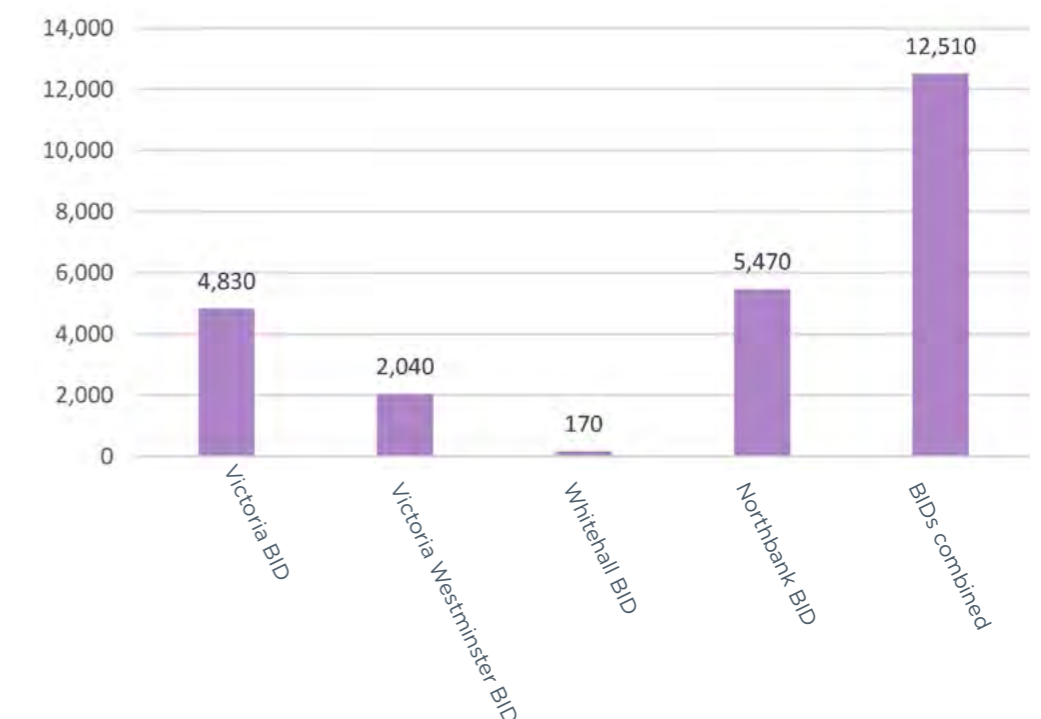
Source: VOA, 2021, Non domestic rating summary valuations; VOA, 2021, National non-domestic rates collected in England 2021 to 2022: local authority data.

GVA and Growth by area (2009 - 2019)



Source: Volterra estimates using ONS, 2021. Business Register and Employment Survey and ONS, GVA by MSOA

Count of Businesses, 2020



Source: ONS, 2021, Business birth to death ratio



SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT: Living

In 2020, an estimated 620 residents were living in Whitehall, a residential density of less than 15% of that across the whole of Westminster. Key statistics around this include:

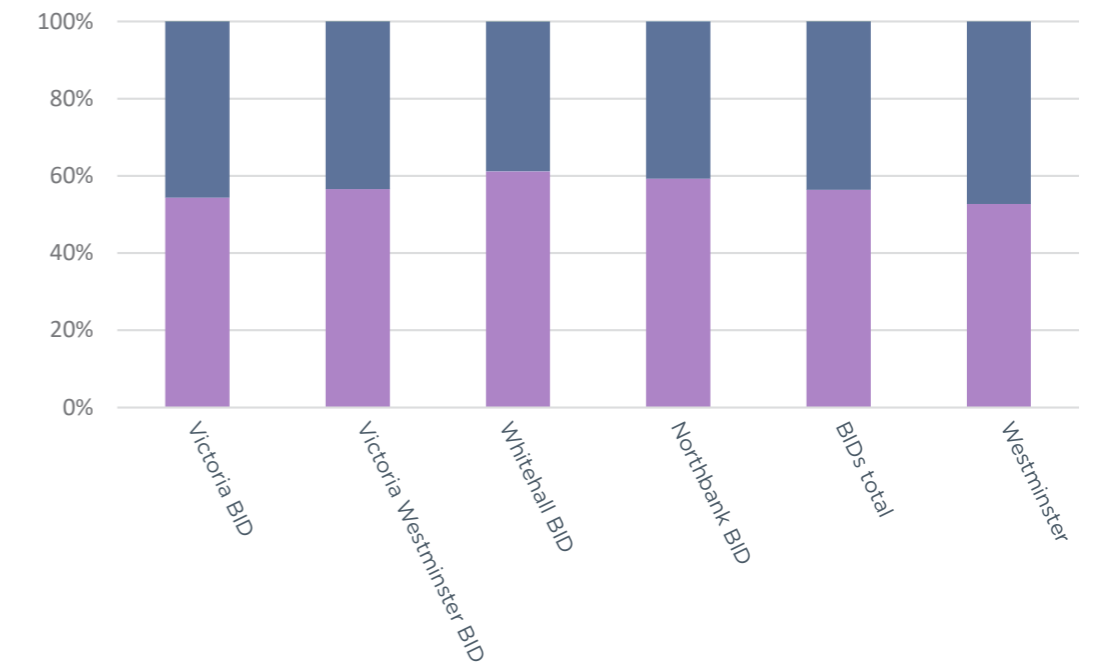
- Growth in total residents 2011-2022: 23%
- Residential population: 12% aged 0-15, 27% 16-24, 37% 25-49, 13% 50-64, 11% 65+
- Whitehall is consistently amongst the least deprived of the BID areas, including under the domains for income, health and barriers to housing and services

Residents split by gender, by BID, 2020

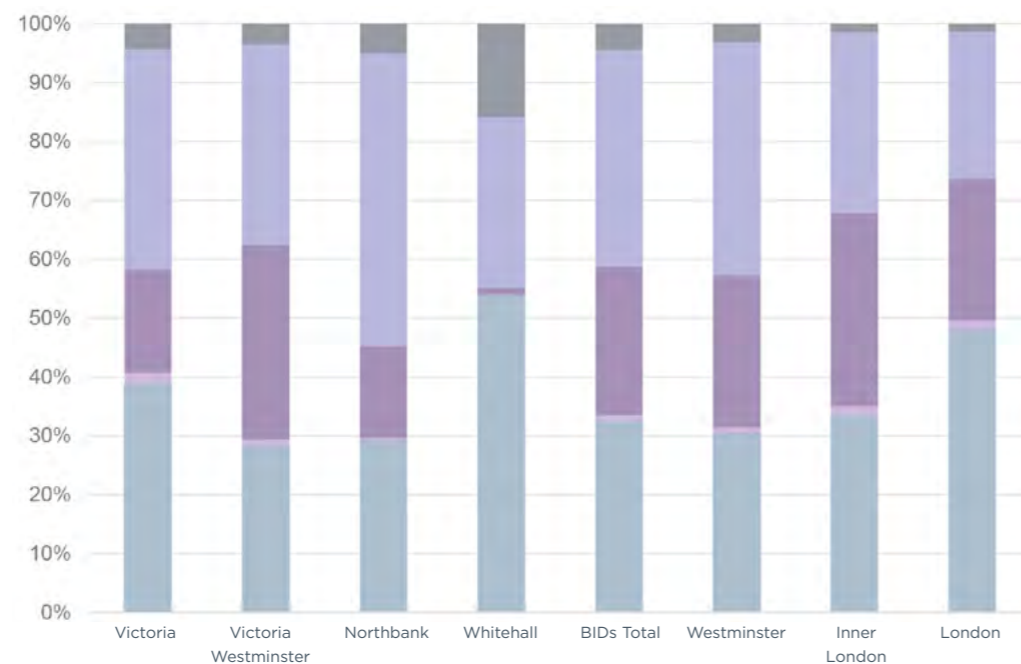
| Area | Males | | Females | | Total Residents 2020 | Growth in total residents 2011-2020 (%) |
|---------------|---------|-----|---------|-----|----------------------|---|
| | Number | % | Number | % | | |
| VBID | 1,670 | 54% | 1,400 | 46% | 3,100 | 21% |
| VWBID | 3,180 | 57% | 2,440 | 43% | 5,600 | 29% |
| Whitehall | 380 | 61% | 240 | 39% | 620 | 23% |
| Northbank | 540 | 59% | 370 | 41% | 910 | -10% |
| BIDs combined | 5,780 | 56% | 4,460 | 44% | 10,200 | 22% |
| Westminster | 142,300 | 53% | 127,600 | 47% | 269,800 | 16% |

Source: ONS, 2020, mid-year population estimates. NB: Volterra estimated. See South Westminster BIDs Vibrancy Report 2022 Appendix A for methodology

Residents split by gender, by BID, 2020
 ■ Male ■ Female



Residential housing tenure type as a proportion of households



Source: ONS, 2011, census KS402EW

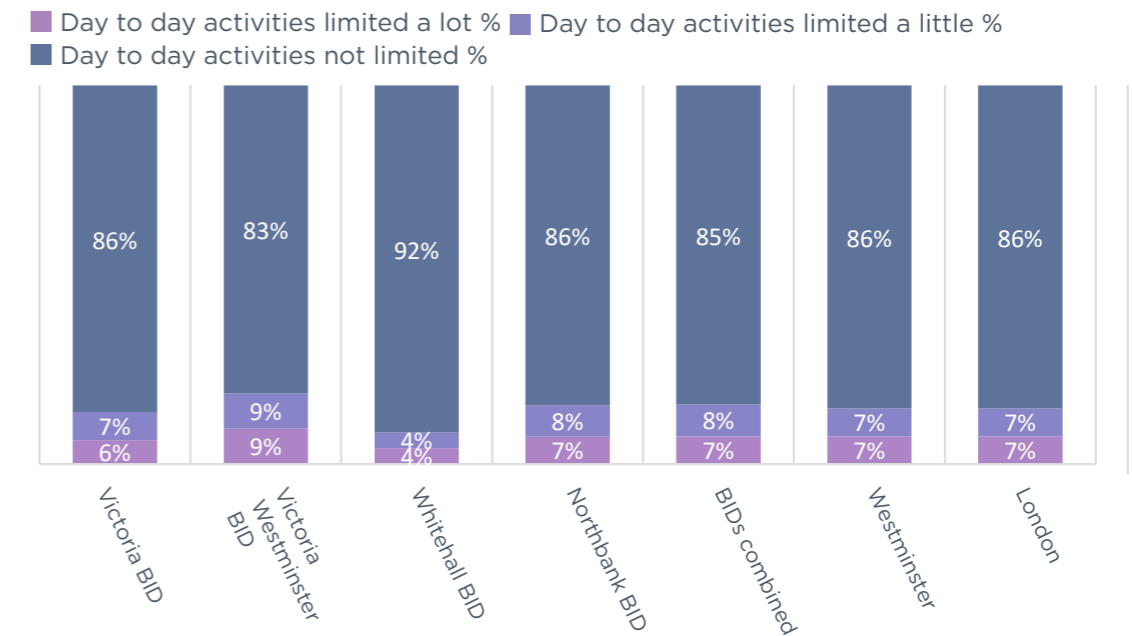


SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT: Living

Resident population with long-term health problems

| Area | Day-to-day activities limited a lot (%) | Day-to-day activities limited a little (%) | Day-to-day activities not limited (%) |
|---------------|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| VBID | 6% | 7% | 86% |
| VWBID | 9% | 9% | 83% |
| Whitehall | 4% | 4% | 92% |
| Northbank | 7% | 8% | 86% |
| BIDs combined | 7% | 8% | 85% |
| Westminster | 7% | 7% | 86% |
| London | 7% | 7% | 86% |

Resident population with long-term health problems



Residential population by age, 2020

| Area | Age 0 to 15 | Age 16 to 24 | Age 25 to 49 | Age 50 to 64 | Age 65+ |
|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------|
| VBID | 15% | 15% | 41% | 17% | 11% |
| VWBID | 13% | 10% | 43% | 21% | 13% |
| Whitehall | 12% | 27% | 37% | 13% | 11% |
| Northbank | 7% | 7% | 47% | 25% | 13% |
| BIDs combined | 13% | 12% | 42% | 20% | 13% |

Source: ONS, 2020, mid-year population estimates. NB: Volterra estimated. See South Westminster BIDs Vibrancy Report 2022 Appendix A for methodology

Source: The National Census, 2011, Census Tables KS301EW - Health and Provision of Unpaid Care. NB: Figures may not sum due to rounding

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT: Living

Resident population self-reported general health, 2011

| Area | Very good health (%) | Good health (%) | Fair health (%) | Badhealth (%) | Very bad health (%) |
|---------------|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------------|
| VBID | 55% | 30% | 10% | 4% | 1% |
| VWBID | 48% | 32% | 13% | 5% | 2% |
| Whitehall | 62% | 29% | 7% | 2% | 1% |
| Northbank | 52% | 31% | 11% | 4% | 1% |
| BIDs combined | 53% | 31% | 11% | 4% | 1% |
| Westminster | 54% | 30% | 10% | 4% | 1% |
| London | 50% | 33% | 11% | 4% | 1% |

Source: The National Census, 2011, Census Tables QS302EW - Health and Provision of Unpaid Care.
NB: Figures may not sum due to rounding.

Green space provision, 2021

There is a total of 217 hectares of green space within half a mile of the BIDs, with St James's Park largely contributing to the provision of green space for workers, residents and visitors to the BIDs.

| Typology | Area within 1/2 mile of 4x BIDs (ha) | Area within Westminster |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Public Park or Garden | 198 | 454 |
| Other Sports Facility | 6.80 | 6.80 |
| Play Space | 1.40 | 3.80 |
| Cemetery | 0.30 | 0 |
| Religious Grounds | 4.80 | 4.50 |
| Tennis Court | 7.20 | 2.80 |
| Playing Field | 5.20 | 14.50 |
| Other green space | 0 | 0.70 |
| Total | 217 | 487 |

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT: Visiting

The four BIDs are home to iconic monuments, buildings and parks of national and international importance. They attract millions of visitors every year, an estimated 12 million in 2019, before significantly reducing as a result of the pandemic.

Number of Hotels

| Area | Total hotels | Total Rooms | 5* | 4* | 2* and 3.5* |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|-----|-----|-------------|
| BIDs combined | 22 | 4,400 | 45% | 45% | 10% |

Source: South Westminster BID Vibrancy Report 2022, Volterra Partners, March 2022 (Draft Report for WBID)

Estimated Visitor Accommodation and Overnight Visitor Numbers

| Area | Total Serviced Accommodation Rooms | Total Non-Serviced Accommodation Listings | Estimated Annual Visitor Nights |
|---------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| VBID | 1,600 | 40 | 922,000 |
| VWBID | 680 | 70 | 247,000 |
| Whitehall | 280 | 10 | 654,000 |
| Northbank | 1,800 | 120 | 654,000 |
| BIDs combined | 4,400 | 130 | 1,538,000 |

Source: Volterra Calculations based on data from Hotel.com and Airbnb.com, December 2021

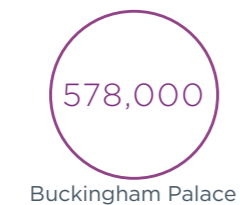
Visitors in 2019



Visitors in 2020



Visitors in 2019/2020



Key Visitor Attractions

There are five visitor attractions across the four BID areas that attract over one million visitors annually, prior to Covid-19: Buckingham Palace, The Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, Churchill War Rooms (Imperial War Museums) and Trafalgar Square. The Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, Churchill War Rooms and Trafalgar Square are all located within the Whitehall BID boundary, and Buckingham Palace is within walking distance.

Buckingham Palace

Visitor entries into Buckingham Palace totalled 578,000 in 2019/20. However, admissions in 2020 decreased substantially as a result of the pandemic and consequently the 2020 Summer Opening of Buckingham Palace was cancelled.

Houses of Parliament and Elizabeth Tower (Big Ben)

Approximately 1.1 million visitors were recorded at the Houses of Parliament in 2019, 114,000 of which were from educational establishments. The number of visitors dropped to 203,000 in 2020, greatly affecting the income generated by visitor engagement activities such as retail and tours. Income fell from £4.5 million in 2019-2020 to £500,000 in 2020-2021.

Westminster Abbey

Westminster Abbey is a world renowned religious building located within the boundary of a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In 2019 the Abbey attracted a total of 1.6 million visitors, but this number fell to 220,000 in 2020.

Trafalgar Square

Trafalgar Square contains the National Gallery, National Portrait Gallery and St Martin-in-the-Fields, three very popular attractions in London. Visitor numbers to the square are not available, however in 2019 the National Gallery attracted a total of 6 million visitors, making it the third most popular tourist attraction in London. In 2020 the number decreased to 1.2 million.

Churchill War Rooms (Imperial War Museums)

The Imperial War Museums are considered to be the world's leading collection of war museums, and includes Churchill War Rooms in Whitehall. Visitor numbers in 2019 were reported to be 1.1 million, falling

Source: South Westminster BID Vibrancy Report 2022, Volterra Partners, March 2022 (Draft Report for WBID)

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT: Summary

The previous pages set out a demographic analysis of the BID area between 2011-2021, presenting information which is useful for proposing key moves for the public realm and decisions for the BID. This information, particularly when read in conjunction with the changing social trends analysed in the following chapter, can give a profile on the likely social changes to occur in the BID which has allowed the public realm vision to best respond to issues and opportunities affecting this area specifically. The following chapter also begins to set out how public realm can respond to these social changes.



Fig. 176 People Walking in Whitehall

2.35 KEY FINDINGS CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR WHITEHALL

Building the foundation for a public realm vision

This chapter collates the knowledge gathered through extensive desktop research, site walkovers and stakeholder listening sessions, with the aim of establishing the foundation for the development of a robust and authentic public realm vision and strategy which is uniquely responsive to the Whitehall area.

Opportunities

The analysis phase has identified key challenges and opportunities which should be considered when proposing public realm improvements through the BID.

- This internationally recognised place which attracts thousands of visitors annually could represent the nation.
- Rich layers of history throughout the area could be made more accessible and engaging.
- The most concentrated number of monuments and landmarks in the city.
- Well established high footfall offers an opportunity to encourage people to dwell in the area for longer, spending money and positively contributing to the BID.
- Proximity to open green spaces within the BID and on its adjacencies could be better connected.
- Close proximity to a diverse range of cultural offerings attracts people to neighbouring areas.
- A period of change for Whitehall with key development bringing further diverse offerings.

Challenges to address

- High levels of footfall in the area leads to pedestrian congestion, particularly around key destinations such as Horse Guards and at the intersection of Parliament and Bridge Streets.
- Poor permeability through the area, mainly due to the presence of secure government facilities and big block style architecture with impenetrable façades.
- Poor direct and indirect wayfinding makes the area difficult to navigate, causing many significant places to go undiscovered and opportunities to engage with the area missed.
- As home to the government, with a rich cultural history and many local and international tourist attractions, the public realm needs to synergise with security infrastructure to ensure the area is safe and accessible for all while continuing to offer an engaging and welcoming experience.
- The BID area currently lacks a sense of place in the public realm. i.e. 'you don't know you're in Whitehall when you're in Whitehall'.
- Key arrival points are often congested, uncomfortable to navigate and the public realm often poor.
- Vehicle congestion at certain locations within the BID contributes to bad air quality and noise pollution throughout the area.
- The City of Westminster Plan identifies the area as a flood risk during heavy rain events, therefore the public realm needs to be sufficiently resilient to address this.
- Currently there is a stark lack of amenities throughout large areas of the BID, including public facilities, seating areas or places to pause and rest.
- The public realm must be flexible to respond to the range of events in Whitehall, from ceremonial events to political demonstrations.



CHANGING CONTEXT



3.1 INTRODUCTION

Changing trends in the last 3 years

This chapter explores current social trends across four key sectors: People + Working, Retail, Living and Movement. The analysis of these trends builds on the ‘Changing Structural Trends’ paper written for Victoria and Westminster BIDs as a part of the ‘People Wanted Place making in Victoria Study’, published in January 2020. The next chapter builds upon that research, examining what has changed in the three years since publication. Most notably during this period, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a major impact on all aspects of life and, while information is still developing, early analysis suggests some shifts are here to stay. Alongside the pandemic, other trends have continued to accelerate, such as climate change awareness, a greater interest in health and wellbeing, and most recently the cost-of-living crisis. As with the ‘People Wanted, Victoria’ study, this report looks at these shifting trends with a particular focus on how they could impact the public realm and how the public realm can best respond.

Updating this trends research across these four key areas ensures that the vision and strategy document for Whitehall is best placed to engage with the latest issues and opportunities impacting the public realm. This, ensures that public realm improvements for the BID contribute to maintaining Whitehall’s status as a world-class destination both at present and long into the future.

Social trends shape how built environments evolve, grow and develop over time. An awareness of these trends informs the creation of better, more engaging and long-lasting public spaces centred around human experience and needs.



Fig. 177 - Cover + extract from the trends paper produced as apart of ‘People Wanted, Victoria’

3.2 KEY FINDINGS ACROSS ALL SECTORS

Long lasting impacts of Covid-19?

The Covid-19 pandemic was a significant international event which has dramatically impacted people’s daily lives in the last three years. Limiting social interaction changed the way cities were used and, in some cases, physical changes were made to public spaces to facilitate social distancing, with additional street space reclaimed for pedestrians. As life gradually returns to a ‘new normal’ there have been some key social trends which research suggests will be longer lasting.

Acceleration of existing trends

While initially the pandemic made a dramatic impact on society, the evolving social trends align with those identified in the ‘Changing Structural Trends Paper’, published in early 2020, before the onset of Covid-19. This has highlighted that the last three years have, in fact, accelerated existing social trends rather than bringing new ones forward. The most prominent of these has been a large uptake in remote and hybrid working, together with increased demand for deliveries and servicing.

Increased dependency on technology

Further reliance on technology is a growing trend that affects all four key sectors. This is affecting the way we work, by using applications such as Zoom or Teams to communicate, to the way we move (Uber, City Mapper etc.) and even the way wearable technology allows us to monitor all aspects of health and wellbeing (e.g. smart watches).

Emphasis on health and wellbeing, and climate change action on the rise

Health and wellbeing is another major trend which has accelerated in the last three years. Greater importance is placed on a good work-life balance and more concern given to equal access to open green spaces with clean air. This trend goes hand in hand with an increased awareness and engagement with climate change, as understanding how planet health can impact on human health grows. This has led to increased activism around climate change from the public, which permeates decisions made across multiple sectors.



Fig. 178 - ‘Work anywhere - Work anytime’

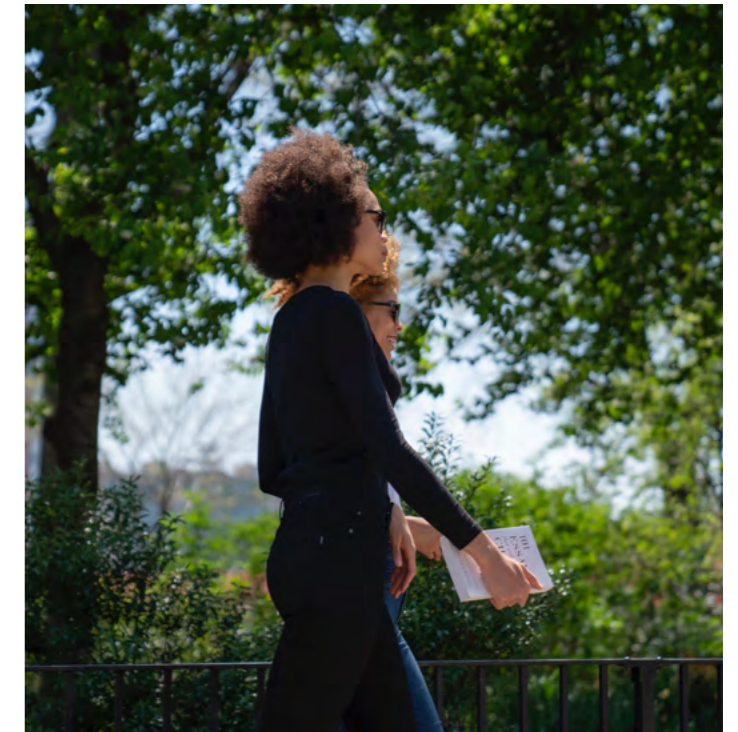


Fig. 179 - Connection to open green spaces increasingly important



Fig. 180 - Increased use of technology and focus on health and wellbeing



Fig. 181 Increased awareness of climate change

3.3 PEOPLE + WORKING KEY FINDINGS

Increased reliance on technology and remote working

The trend towards further reliance on technology and remote working has been drastically accelerated by the pandemic, which showed that remote working can be effective without the loss of productivity (British BIDs, 2020). This permeation of technology has freed people from their desks and encourages a ‘work anywhere work anytime’ culture (Shaping the Future of Cities, no date). This large shift in the way we work and impacts all other sectors.

Blurring of work-life balance

During the last three years, with an increase in remote and hybrid working, employers are increasingly aware that creating an engaging, high amenity workplace which inspires creativity and collaboration helps to attract and retain talented people (Shaping the Future of Cities, no date). With fewer people travelling to the office day every day physical workplaces have become more focused on developing a sense of community, enhancing learning and culture, and reaffirming the brand and values of the company. This shift illustrates both the employees’ and employers’ desire to blur the balance between work life and social life which impacts the physical setting of workplaces. This may, for example, encourage more demand for break out collaborative spaces and a reduction of single desks. Large companies such as Lloyds, Aviva, and Three Telecoms have already reduced their office footprint in response to this change and this, in turn, will have a greater impact on the city and public realm spaces should this trend continue. (KPMG, 2021).

Health and wellbeing focus

The Deloitte’s ‘Gen Z and Millennial’ survey found over half of millennials and Gen Zs agree that employers have become more focused on workplace wellbeing and mental health since the beginning of the pandemic (Deloitte, 2022). This shows that employers increasingly understand the benefit of supporting their employees, promoting workplace wellbeing, and encouraging a better work life balance. Studies show the benefits of workplaces which offer access to fresh air, daylight and outdoor work environments on physical health and wellbeing and their importance in attracting more high performing people (Shaping the Future of Cities, no date).

Animation and evening economy are key attractors

Another effect of the rise of hybrid and remote working is that going into the office is now a chance to connect, either at work or potentially in the city after work, so workplaces that offer nearby amenity and evening animation are more attractive to employees.

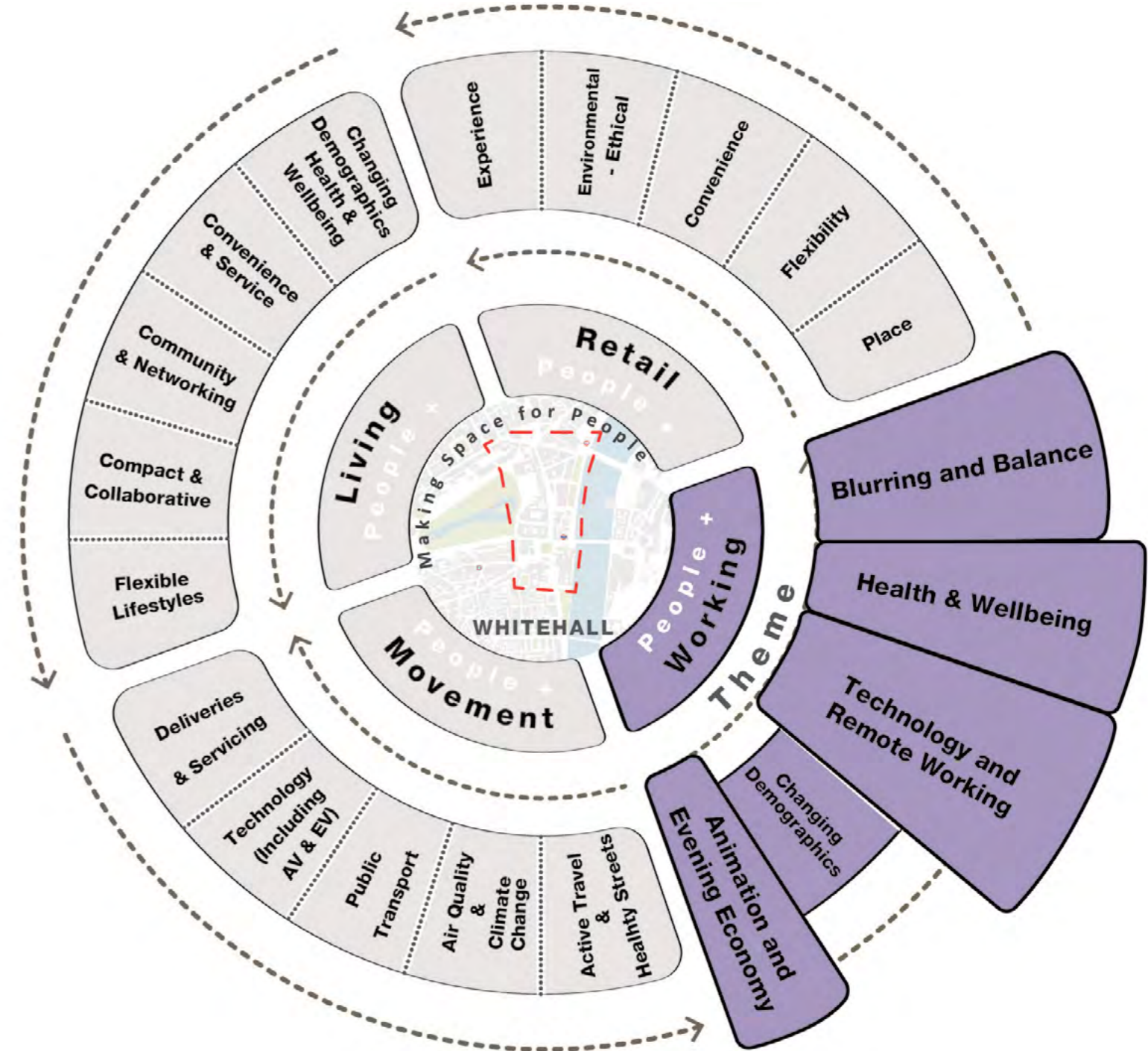


Fig. 182 - People + Working Key Trends

3.4 PEOPLE + RETAIL KEY FINDINGS

Experience vs convenience

While e-commerce was gaining popularity pre-pandemic, subsequent lockdowns accelerated this as more people embraced it for their retail and entertainment needs, through online events, or ordering gourmet food for home delivery (The Business of Cities, 2020). This resulted in an increasingly turbulent time for the high street, as many people still choose to do much of their shopping online. Retail environments must provide an experience which outperforms the convenience of online shopping, and the public realm interface can play an important role to help attract people back into city centres to support business. (Shaping the Future of Cities, no date).

Flexible places that can respond to changing trends

Following the economic repercussions of the pandemic and the current cost of living crisis, high streets increasingly need to be flexible places that can respond to regular changing uses and offer people a range of different experiences. The high street must attract people and encourage them to stay and spend money in local businesses. Weekend ridership has risen however, indicating that more people are visiting the city during the weekend.

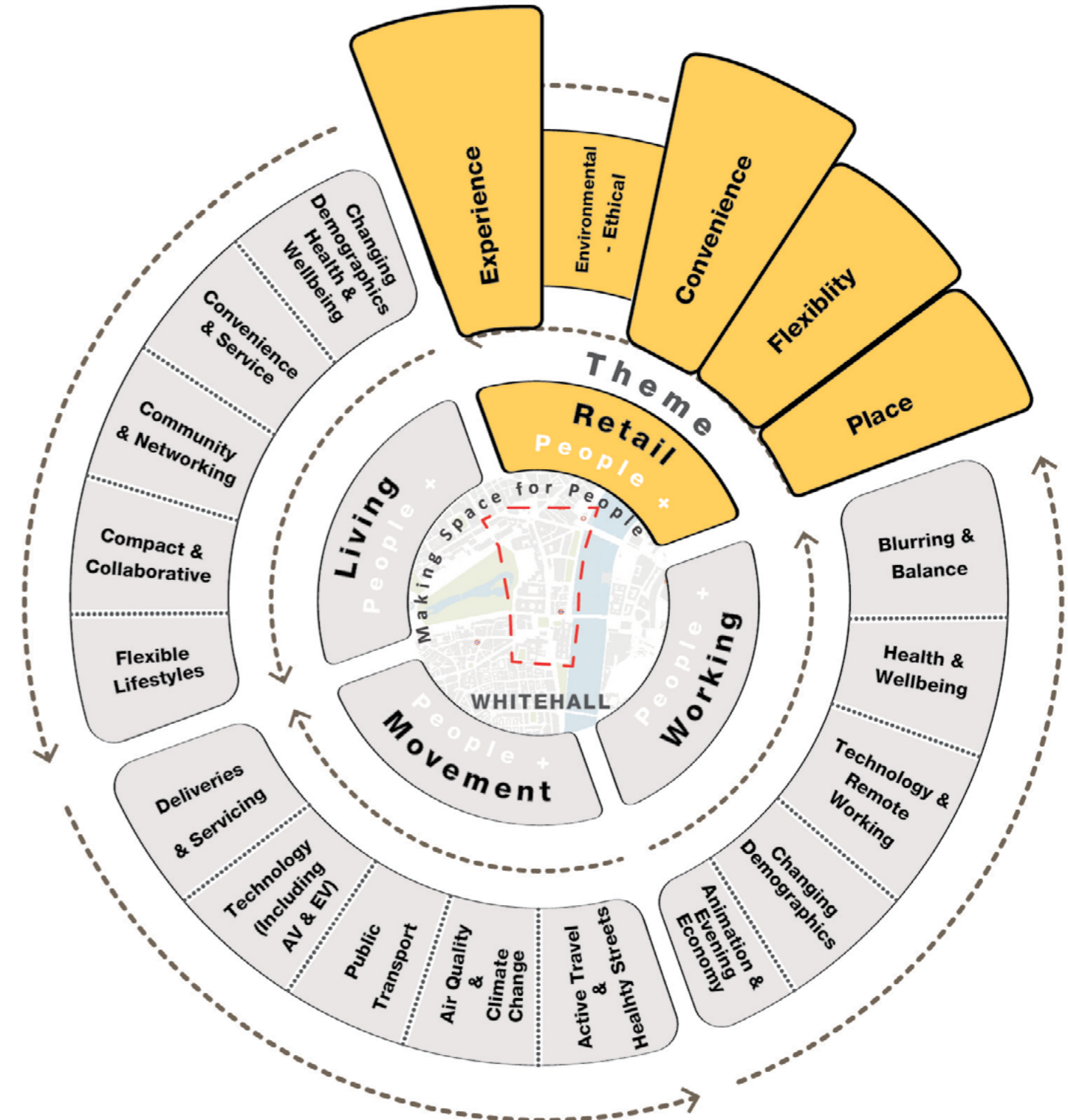


Fig. 183 - People + Retail Key Trends

The high street has been hit hard by the effects of the pandemic and ongoing economic pressures continue to negatively affect retail and hospitality. The public realm can support these businesses by creating attractive destinations which encourage people to dwell.

3.5 PEOPLE + LIVING KEY FINDINGS

Health and wellbeing awareness has increased

The importance of physical and mental health and wellbeing has increased in public awareness over the last three years as people have gained a greater understanding of how the environment can affect their health and wellbeing. Throughout the pandemic, as many struggled with heightened anxiety and stress, connection with open green spaces became increasingly valuable. (Pouso et al., 2020). This increase in awareness is emphasised by documents such as Labour’s ‘Plan for a Fairer Westminster’, which outlines goals to create cleaner greener environments which support active modes of transport and better connection to open space. Another initiative released by the World Health Organisation in 2020 championed ‘Healthy Cities’ which it identified as: “One that puts health, social wellbeing, equity and sustainable development at the centre of local policies, strategies and programmes, based on core values of the right to health and wellbeing,” (World Health Organisation, 2020).

Climate change impacts on health and wellbeing

During the pandemic we gained a better understanding how planet health impacts human health (The Business of Cities, 2020). This has led to a heightened engagement with climate change issues as people become increasingly aware of these impacts on society. Traffic congestion and air pollution are common issues in our urban environments, therefore supporting active modes of transport and increasing greening can help to create healthier urban environments (The Business of Cities, 2020).

Community and camaraderie

Whilst throughout the pandemic social interaction was largely discouraged, Greg Clark (a highly regarded urbanist professor) suggests that this has, in fact, led to greater social camaraderie as people got to know their neighbours, or engaged more with their local community groups (The Business of Cities, 2020).

Uptake in flexible lifestyles

The uptake in remote and hybrid working models is giving people greater flexibility to decide when, where and how they work which is in turn creating greater flexibility in other aspects of life such as travel, exercise, and socialising. Additionally, more millennials and Gen Zs are not only looking for flexibility where they work but also have increased interest in flexible hours and reduced working weeks (Deloitte, 2022).

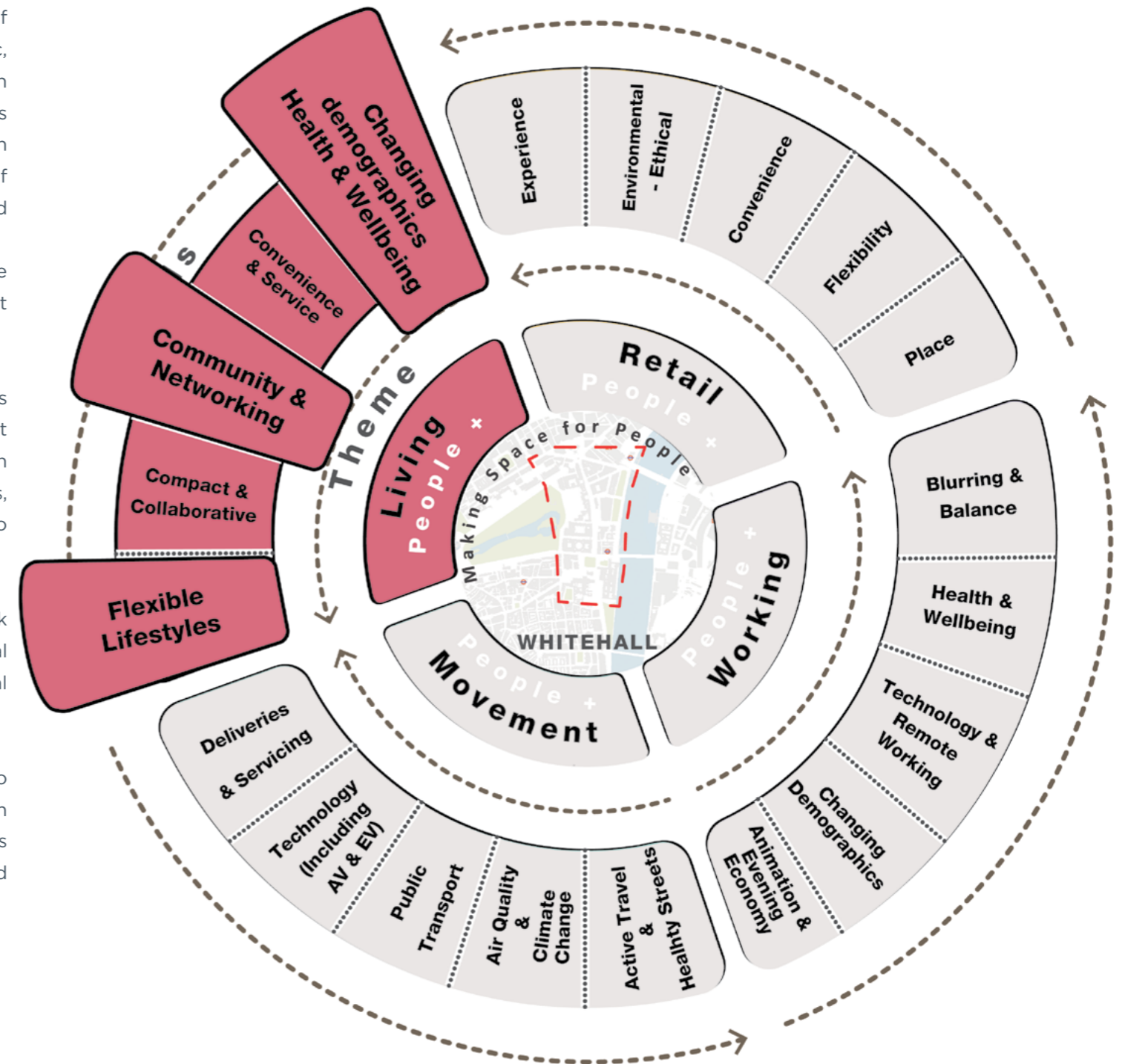


Fig. 184 - People + Living Key Trends

3.6 PEOPLE + MOVEMENT KEY FINDINGS

Movement and travel is returning

Over the last three years movement and travel was dramatically affected, however, early data has shown that while pre-pandemic travel is not yet at the same level (across bus, underground and overground services in London) it is again on the rise and is nearing those levels. The trends around movement are yet to be fully determined, although we can make assumptions by looking at other social trends such as flexible working arrangements.

Delivery services are increasing

When the 'People Wanted Victoria' study was written there was already a dramatic rise in e-commerce and food or grocery delivery services such as UberEats or Zapp which was accelerated further during the pandemic. This increase impacts kerbside needs, with more space required by short term single occupancy vehicles, small trucks, cars, e-scooters and cycles. Consequently, the urban environment needs to carefully consider how to avoid congestion and negative impacts on the street, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.

Air quality and climate change

As highlighted in the People + Living section, over the last three years increasing concern around air quality and climate change has accelerated with more people using their local green spaces for leisure and valuing their local parks and open spaces.

Active travel and healthy streets

Hand in hand with air quality and climate change, active travel can positively contribute to health and wellbeing and work towards achieving net zero carbon goals. This trend towards more active modes of transport, both for leisure and commuting, continues to grow.

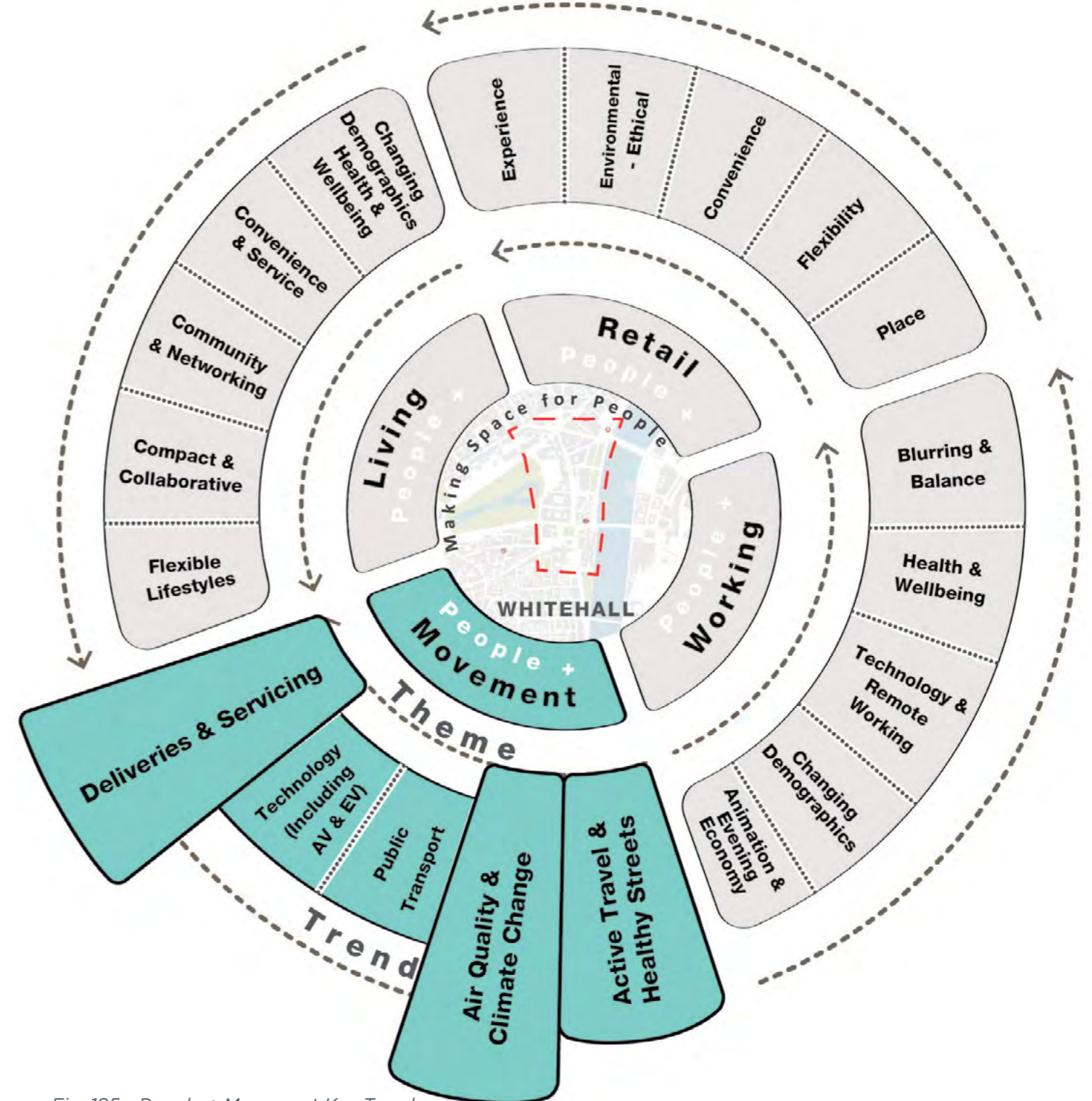


Fig. 185 - People + Movement Key Trends

Encouraging active modes of transport, better connection to nature/open green spaces, and improving air quality are all aspects public realm improvements can support, positively contributing to the climate as well as people's health and wellbeing.

3.7

SUMMARY FINDINGS

Impacts of Covid-19 pandemic

While in the short term the Covid-19 pandemic's impact across all sectors of people's lives has been analysed in detail, the long-term social impacts are still relatively undocumented. Research to mid-2022 suggests that trends identified in the 2020 'Changing Structural Trends Paper' in the way we work, shop, live, and move were already existing but have been accelerated by the pandemic. This includes more hybrid and remote ways of working, increased concern around health, wellbeing and climate change, an uplift in e-commerce modes of shopping, and an increase in demand for servicing and deliveries.

Hybrid working uptake affecting multiple aspects.

Hybrid and remote working models have led to a 'work anywhere, work anytime' culture. This trend has impacted many other aspects such as transport patterns, with less people commuting daily, to retail on the high street due to reduced inner-city footfall, and impacts on society's health and wellbeing due to a more flexible lifestyle. This reduction in footfall impacts the public realm. However, there has also been an increase in leisure-based travel, including visiting the city at the weekend to connect and collaborate with others. The 'work anywhere work anytime' culture presents new opportunities and potential challenges for the public realm to address; spaces will have to work harder to create destinations which attract people to the area and encourage them to stay.

Awareness of health and wellbeing connected to climate change

Interest and concern with health and wellbeing has increased with a further focus also on how this is impacted by the effects of climate change. Access to clean air and connection with nature has been recognised as positively contributing to better health and wellbeing. The public realm is well placed to support this by enhancing urban environments with better green blue infrastructure and areas which encourage active modes of transport.

Increased reliance on technology

During the last three years the permeation of technology through all four sectors (People + Working, Retail, Living and Movement) has accelerated further. With increased flexible working patterns and the use of applications to aid navigation or deliveries and servicing, digital connectivity within the public realm is becoming increasingly relevant. Whether providing a connection for people to work, take a self-guided tour, or use augmented reality, the public realm should help, where possible, to facilitate this.

Deliveries and servicing increase

The growth of e-commerce means the demand for efficient deliveries and servicing has also increased. This has an effect on kerbside demands which must be carefully managed to ensure no negative impacts on the public realm, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.

Social trends implications in Whitehall

While this chapter has reviewed social trends in the public realm generally, with a focus on living working, retail and movement, the Whitehall area has a unique character and programme. This must be considered when examining these social trends and their implications on public space. There are some other emerging trends specific to this area which should also be considered in the vision for the public realm.

New offerings in the BID

In the coming years, the Whitehall BID area will see the opening of at least two new luxury hotels which will each bring new living, food and beverage options. These hospitality offerings will require servicing and potentially attract people to the BID area for a variety of reasons. Due to the large proportion of government estate Whitehall's evening economy is limited. These hotels will bring a more diverse offering as well as creating a more active area into the evening. The public realm will support this progression and consider integrated lighting and safety strategies.

Levelling up to change Whitehall demographic

The government's levelling up agenda has the potential to bring further change. This strategy sets out to improve economic dynamism and innovation to help drive growth throughout the entire country. The strategy includes funding to support better internet connectivity throughout the regions, improvements to public transport connections, the regeneration of local high streets to revitalise towns, and more (Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2AD). Crucially for Whitehall the agenda also proposes moving some government functions and civil servants out of the area. Whilst Whitehall has always been dominated by government offices, this levelling up strategy could offer office spaces within Whitehall for different occupants. Therefore, several trends which have been identified (particularly around People + Working) may become more relevant within Whitehall, and understanding the role the public realm can play in accommodating these changes will contribute to a more resilient and prosperous BID area.

Climate change activism

As awareness of the climate crisis grows, so too does related activism. Whitehall is seen as the democratic heart of the United Kingdom, home to No. 10 Downing Street and many other government functions, and acts as the platform for many to express their views through demonstration. This increased activism around climate change also provides an opportunity for Whitehall to demonstrate best practice in its public realm, to act as an exemplar to the nation.

Whitehall as an climate positive design exemplar

In recent times climate positive initiatives and designs have been incorporated into policy and planning across a range of scales, from government level to small businesses, and the public realm increasingly needs to support these. As an iconic location in London, and representing the UK internationally, the Whitehall area is well placed to lead as a climate positive urban environment in a historically sensitive and culturally significant place.

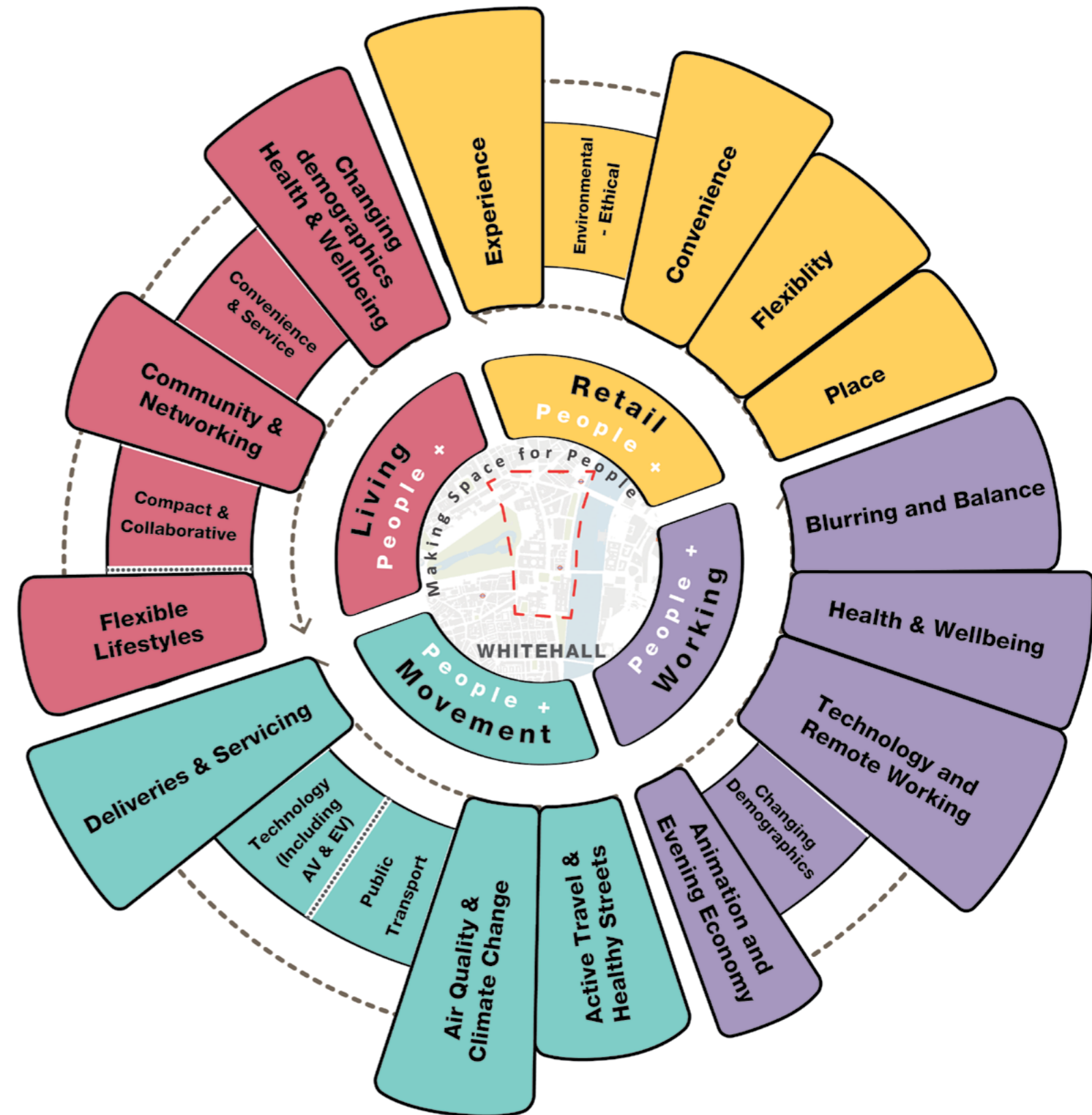


Fig. 186 - Key trends that have accelerated since the original study are shown extended.



Westminster Pier

COUNTY HALL

STRATEGIC RESPONSE



4.1

INTRODUCTION

A significant London location without complementary public realm

Whitehall has a rich history of monarchy and government, its setting is unique and attracts many domestic and international visitors ever year. Whilst the monarchy is still very present, Whitehall is widely identified as the democratic heart of the UK with many buildings used for government functions. It is regularly presented across the world during major events, such as the coronation of King Charles III, and presents a picture of London and the wider United Kingdom. Whilst the significance of this area is clearly represented through the architecture, monuments and landmarks, the surrounding public realm is largely inadequate.

A changing time for Whitehall

Whitehall is currently undergoing changes which impact on the public realm. A number of key developments will bring more diversity of occupation to the BID area, such as Raffles Hotel and Residences in the Old War Office building and the Hilton Hotel at Admiralty Arch. Both will bring high end hotel and residences to the BID as well as new food and beverage offerings which have the potential to entice more visitors to the BID for different reasons and at different times of day and night. The 'Levelling Up' scheme presented by the government in 2022 proposes to move a portion of government services out of Whitehall, and London, which creates the opportunity to change the demographic using the government buildings. Lastly, climate change research gathered indicates that the Whitehall BID area has poor air quality, is at heightened risk of flooding in a significant rain event and suffers the effects of urban heat island.

An appropriate time to create a public realm vision and strategy

These changes affect Whitehall directly and have the potential to alter the public realm, bringing new challenges and opportunities to the area. Creating a public realm vision and strategy presents a coordinated approach to engage with these new challenges and realise the opportunities. A vision package backed by research and analysis helps to prevent ad-hoc development, ensuring projects tabled within the BID can contribute towards a greater goal, setting the scene for the significant revitalisation of the public realm through the area.

Methodology

This chapter sets out the strategic response based on the research gained through chapters two and three. Chapter two looked comprehensively at the site through multiple lenses and extracted the key opportunities and challenges facing Whitehall today. Chapter three presented research on social trends more holistically, and derived key trends which are impacting urban environments to ensure this strategy is well placed to respond to these challenges.

Development of design principles that inform public realm interventions

The research gained from this first phase of the project has resulted in the formulation of eight key design principles which have been developed to inform any future development or intervention that may occur in the public realm. Whilst it is unlikely that a single project will be able to achieve all the principles alone, a series of projects which collectively cover all the principles will result in a great improvement to the public realm through the BID and help the area achieve its potential.

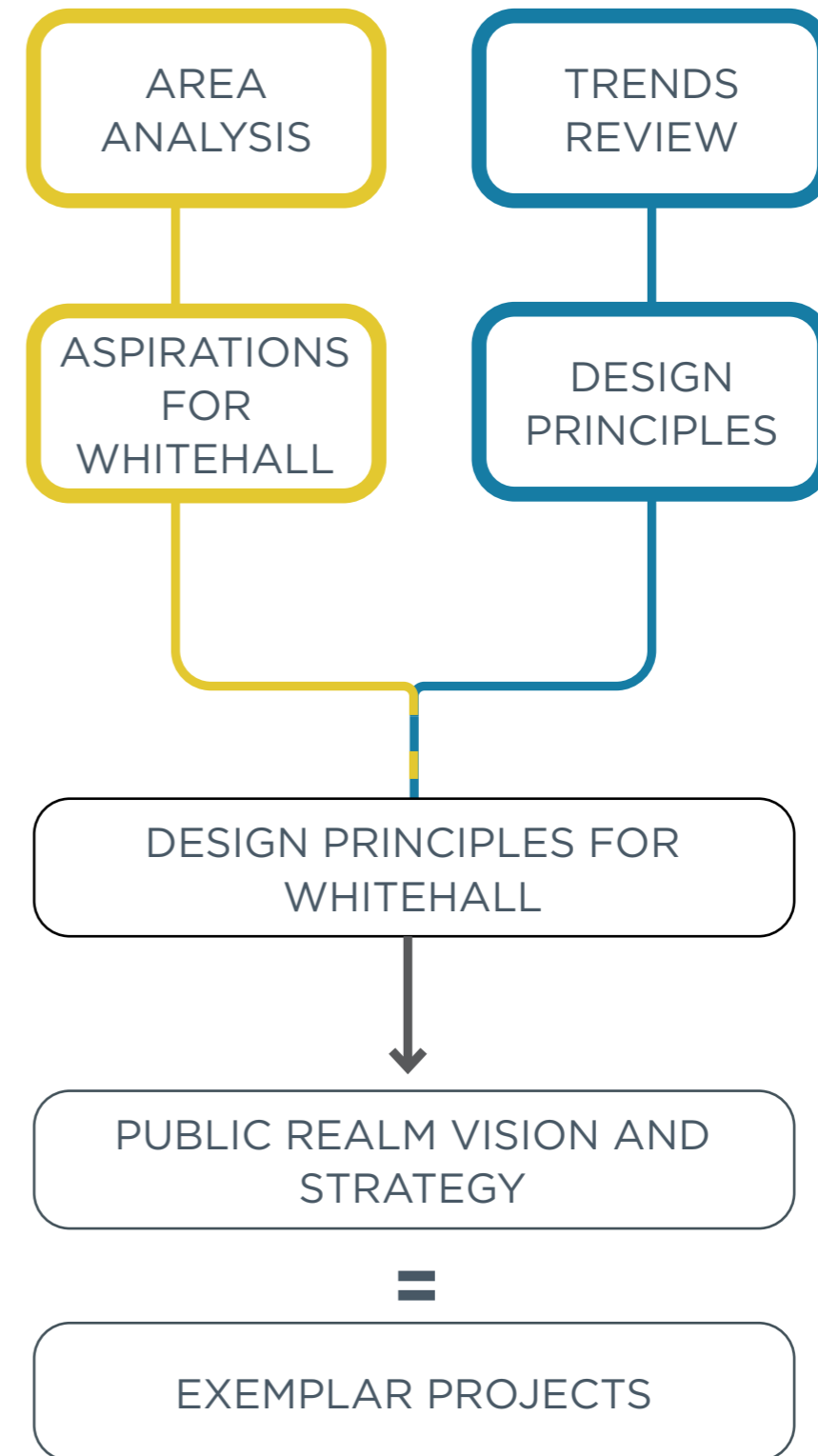


Fig. 187 - Diagram illustrating methodology

4.2

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

MEMORABLE

We want people to know they are in Whitehall and for it to leave a long-lasting positive memory.

- A strong sense of place
- Celebrate the unique setting and architecture
- Focus on pedestrian experience
- A network of valued streets and spaces

DIVERSITY OF APPEAL

We want to offer people a wide range of engaging experiences throughout Whitehall, generating many different reasons for people to return. Places should prioritise people and encourage them to stay in the area.

- A place for people
- Offer a wide variety of rich experiences
- Welcome all ages, abilities, and backgrounds
- Create attractive business locations
- Fixed and flexible spaces
- Foster vibrancy and animation

INVITING AND SAFE

We want all people to feel welcome and safe in this internationally recognised area.

- Inclusive spaces
- Accessible design
- Security conscious
- Safe throughout the day and night

RESILIENT

We want to ensure the area will stand the test of time and protect the rich history into the future. We want Whitehall to represent a forward thinking public realm sensitive to its context.

- Responsive to current and future trends
- Flexible spaces
- Provide a range of facilities and stimulus
- Climate positive design

GREEN

We want to provide an urban environment that integrates nature, allowing people to connect to their environment. We want Whitehall to support biodiversity and be a climate positive city environment.

- Climate positive design
- Promote clean area
- Allow connection to nature
- Promotes and enhances existing green infrastructure

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We want to create a place where people can positively engage with their surroundings, a place that promotes health and wellbeing.

- More connection to green spaces
- Promote active lifestyles
- Create legible and safe environments

LAYERS OF RICHNESS

We want to encourage people to engage with the rich historic and cultural offerings in Whitehall by making them more legible and accessible within the public realm.

- Reveal hidden gems
- Promote exploration in the area
- Create engaging spaces
- Represent the past, present and future

CONNECTED

We want Whitehall to be a well-connected area which is easy and enjoyable to explore.

- Easy walking and cycling connections
- Clear and legible wayfinding
- Improve connections to the river Thames and St James's Park
- A more intuitive and permeable place
- Digital connectivity
- Connect people to Whitehall's identity



These design principles reflect the public realm ambition for Whitehall and aim to set guiding principles which can be applied across public realm improvement projects of a variety of scales.



Fig. 188 - Whitehall design principles



4.3

VISION

A public realm vision for Whitehall

Our vision for the public realm through the Whitehall BID area is titled 'People Wanted: Placemaking in Whitehall'. We want to improve greening, amenity, safety, and pedestrian friendly infrastructure, but also reveal its history, architecture and promote its unique sense of place, as well as present opportunities for positive development.

Delivering the design principles

Building on the design principles, the adjacent masterplan vision will provide a diverse appeal through a wide range and scale of memorable public realm spaces and experiences. These will be inviting and safe, sensitively integrating security infrastructure where required, and working with the best emerging strategies to reduce or remove unsightly additions where possible.

Components of an achievable vision

Public realm interventions will contribute to a more resilient Whitehall by creating streets and spaces that can accommodate future change, climatic or social. Greening will not only provide animation and seasonal interest but will also enhance biodiversity. The BID will be connected in the broadest sense, through varied and intuitive routes, seamlessly overlaying technology to enhance the user experience. Woven into these streets and spaces will be areas of interest which reveal hidden history. These interventions will generate excitement or invite moments of respite, contributing to improved health and wellbeing for those who visit, work, or live within the BID area.

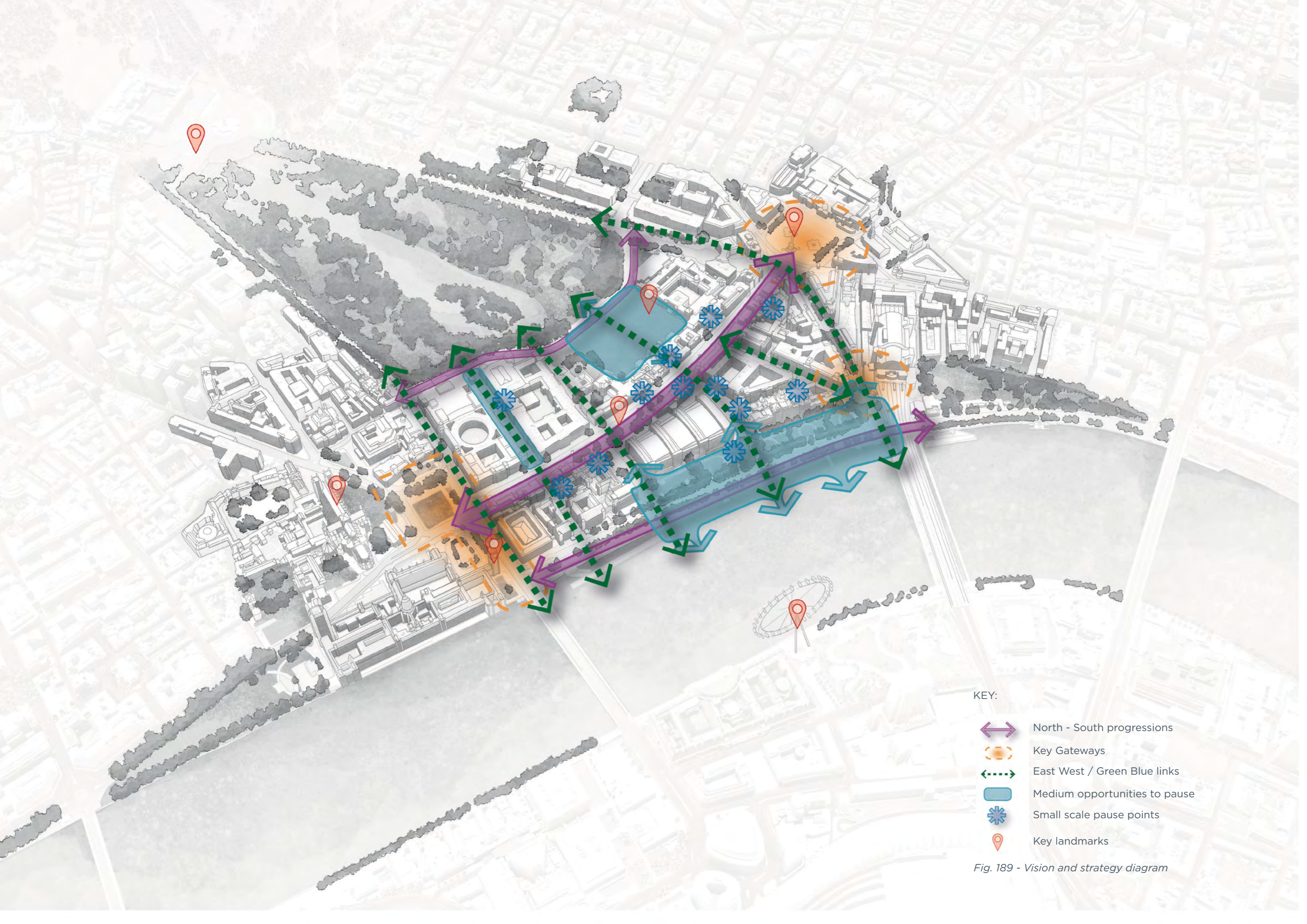
This vision is separated into three key public realm components including gateways, progressions, and pauses as detailed below, which help to structure a deliverable placemaking vision:

Progressions and gateways

- Gateways, such as Whitehall or Trafalgar Square, are an essential element of the public realm experience.; a first and last impression of the BID area. Therefore gateways and their enhancement form an important part of this vision.
- Progressions are the hierarchy of streets and connecting spaces within the BID that are focal areas for people movement.
- Strong, well established routes north-south along St James's Park, the Embankment, and along Whitehall/ Parliament Street, could be more fluid and comfortable with fewer vehicular obstructions.
- Connections east to west are poor, with many passing through Whitehall unaware of their proximity to St James's Park or the river Thames. These strategic routes should be strengthened and enhanced, and coordinated with the public realm and across the private estates.
- Pauses are key spaces throughout the BID which could attract and encourage people to dwell. These should be at a range of scales and suitable for use throughout the seasons, with different characteristics to add to the diversity of Whitehall.
- The site-wide strategies have been developed to help unify the BID with a coordinated approach to materials, furniture, greening, wayfinding, and lighting. They work in conjunction to address the key issues and challenges found throughout the BID following analysis.

Pauses

Site wide strategies



KEY:

-  North - South progressions
-  Key Gateways
-  East West / Green Blue links
-  Medium opportunities to pause
-  Small scale pause points
-  Key landmarks

Fig. 189 - Vision and strategy diagram

4.3.1 SITE WIDE STRATEGIES: LEGIBLE WAYFINDING

Existing situation

Wayfinding is lacking across the Whitehall BID area with many visitors unaware of their proximity to key places, such as St James’s Park and the river Thames. As a major tourist attractor wayfinding should be improved to help navigation.

Key challenges

There are several key challenges to improving wayfinding, including:

- There is a broad range of existing uncoordinated signage and guidance that is often poorly placed to guide or inform people.
- There are several wayfinding systems in place that overlap within the BID area, including WCC signage, Legible London posts and Royal Parks signage. Each may perform as a standalone suite of wayfinding but they often provide competing or disparate information, potentially impairing rather than aiding wayfinding.

Opportunities

Wayfinding is an important objective for all projects within the BID area. A site-wide wayfinding strategy can guide and manage this. It could be a standalone study to assess existing wayfinding and develop a Whitehall-specific strategy that contributes to the BID’s identity and, in addition to signage, may employ intuitive cues, such as the placement of planting and lighting, potentially with digital technology to support. This study could include:

- An analysis of user experience along the routes to gain an understanding of how people plan their trips, experience the journey, and how current wayfinding systems assist. This could then be compared with international, national or local guidance on wayfinding.
- A review of the nature and location of signage in coordination with The Royal Parks , WCC, Parliament and government offices to find synergies and coordinate/interconnect where relevant.

Design principles



The Whitehall design principles that a coordinated Wayfinding Strategy will achieve are:

Connected: As a core requirement, wayfinding should help connect people to the site and guide visitors through it.

Memorable: The wayfinding should be memorable, clear and intuitive, aiding not only movement and awareness, but also contributing to the identity of Whitehall.

Inviting and Safe: By imparting clear guidance, wayfinding should help make people feel welcome and safe.

Layers of Richness: In coordination with other projects, wayfinding should assist with revealing the deep layers of rich history across the site.

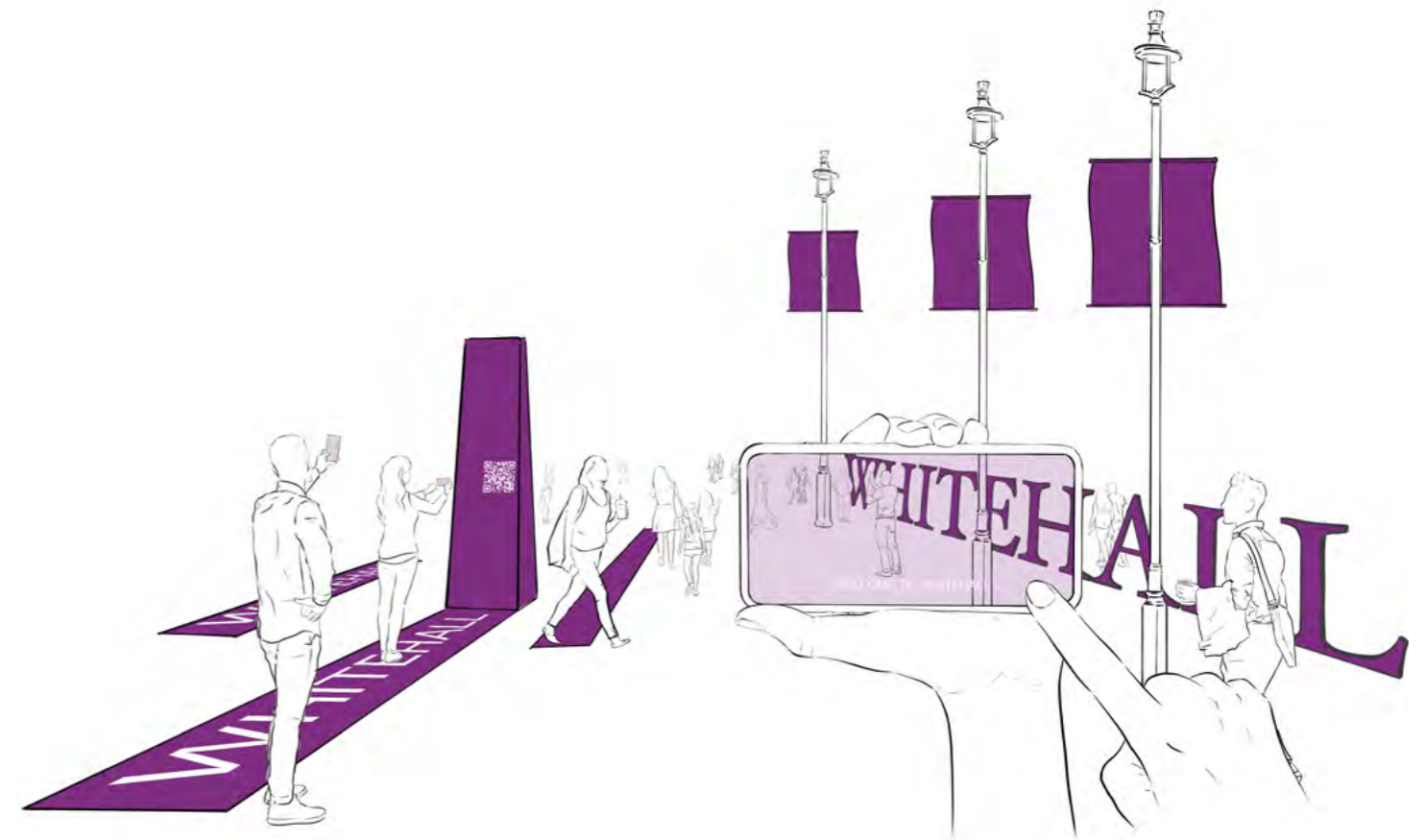


Fig. 190 - Wayfinding strategies

4.3.2 SITE WIDE STRATEGIES: COHESIVE LIGHTING

Existing situation

At present the treatment of street lighting throughout Whitehall is inconsistent. Some areas have a uniform pattern of streetlights of a similar style, others are darker and less inviting. Despite the wealth of historic buildings there is very little feature lighting to highlight these beautiful architectural assets, assist with wayfinding and add night time animation and interest.

Key challenges

There are several key challenges to improving lighting, including:

- There is a broad range of contemporary and historic lighting columns and fixtures.
- Some lighting may require wayleaves or agreements to append or light key facades, particularly with regard to residential properties.
- Security considerations, particularly in relation to government buildings.
- Approvals for historic and listed buildings from WCC, HE, or other statutory bodies.
- A number of vacant buildings appear as dark spots in the evening.

Opportunities

Lighting, and improving Whitehall’s night economy and experience is a very important aspect of the BID and should form a key objective for all projects delivered within the area. Analysis makes it clear that there is an opportunity to develop a coordinated lighting strategy for the Whitehall BID which brings consistency to the area as well as creating safer places in the evening.

Beyond providing functional lighting this strategy should consider:

- The opportunity to use smart energy efficient lighting.
- Providing safe and secure streets and spaces, this may include feature, facade and monument lighting to contribute to overall light levels.
- Delivering an adaptable lighting strategy that can set the mood in the afternoon, evenings and across the seasons, especially through winter.
- Coordination with MPS, fire service and various governmental and parliament services to provide for emergencies and events.
- Coordinating with the area’s wayfinding strategy.
- Coordinating with various landowners/occupiers across the BID to light vacant buildings.

Design principles



The Whitehall design principles that a cohesive lighting strategy would achieve are:

- **Inviting and Safe:** Good quality lighting will make people feel welcome and safe.
- **Memorable:** An enhanced night time experience will be much more memorable.
- **Layers of Richness:** Lighting can add additional layers of richness, subtly highlighting landmarks and architecture.
- **Connected:** Lighting can aid intuitive wayfinding and should be carefully coordinated with a wayfinding strategy for the BID.

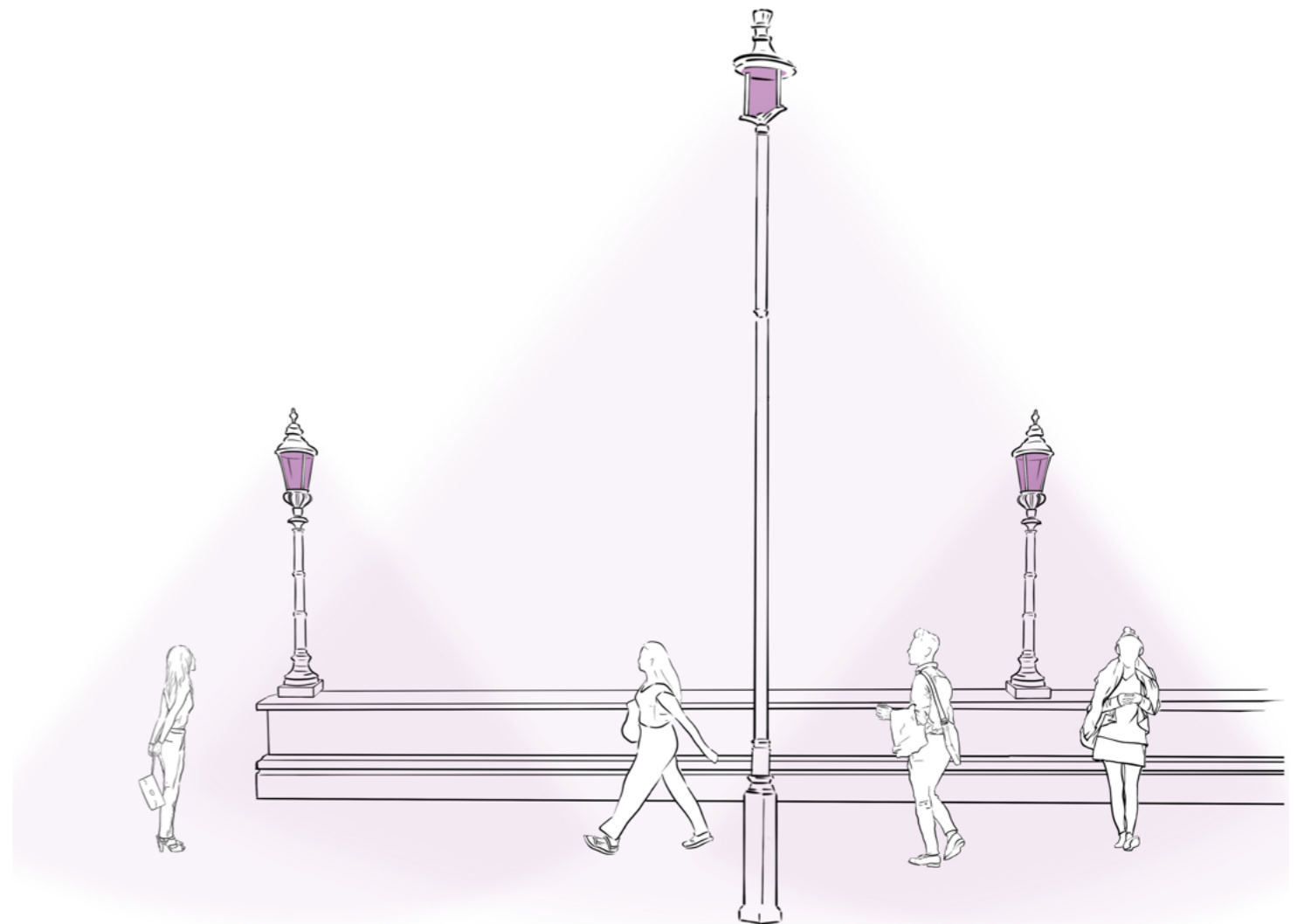


Fig. 191 - Cohesive lighting

4.3.3 SITE WIDE STRATEGIES: GREEN BLUE LINKS

Existing situation

There are particularly strong links north and south through the BID, such as Whitehall and Embankment, but poor connections east to west. Whilst there are significant natural resources to the periphery in St James’s Park and northern Whitehall Gardens, there is a lack of green and issues with flooding throughout the Whitehall area.

Key challenges

There are several key challenges to improving green-blue links and infrastructure, these include:

- Coordinating green-blue infrastructure across the BID area, various land ownership boundaries, and also with the neighbouring Royal Parks.
- Green-blue infrastructure requires maintenance.
- Overcoming resistance to introducing greening close to a historically significant area.
- Possibility of ground obstructions that could impact on the placement of trees/ planting, soakaways and/or connections to ‘grey’ (traditional) drainage infrastructure.

Opportunities

As has been demonstrated in several key cities around the world, green blue infrastructure can not only enhance the human experience, but greatly aid with flood mitigation, whilst reducing lifetime cost and wear on grey infrastructure. Within Whitehall there is an opportunity to assess the existing green assets through the BID and work closely with key landowners, WCC, and The Royal Parks to develop a coordinated strategy to implement greening across the BID. This strategy can be used for proposed projects from a variety of stakeholders to ensure a coordinated approach to implementing green blue infrastructure within the BID. This would lead to several key benefits, including:

- Improving biodiversity and climate resilience within the BID, serving as an exemplar for the greening of public realm nationally.
- Enhancing the identity of Whitehall by delivering a coordinated approach which contributes to the BID’s sense of place.
- Improving physical connections for pedestrians through the BID, with enhanced wayfinding.

Design principles



The Whitehall design principles most important to the Green Blue Links strategy are:

- **Green:** Generally uplifting green, and associated blue, infrastructure, to create corridors from Green Park through to the river Thames.
- **Resilient:** Greatly assist resilience to flooding and climate change, passively cooling and reducing pollution.
- **Health and Wellbeing:** Improves mental health and wellbeing, particularly in urban environments.
- **Connected:** Establishing links will be beneficial for wildlife and habitat and will also enhance pedestrian movement through the area.

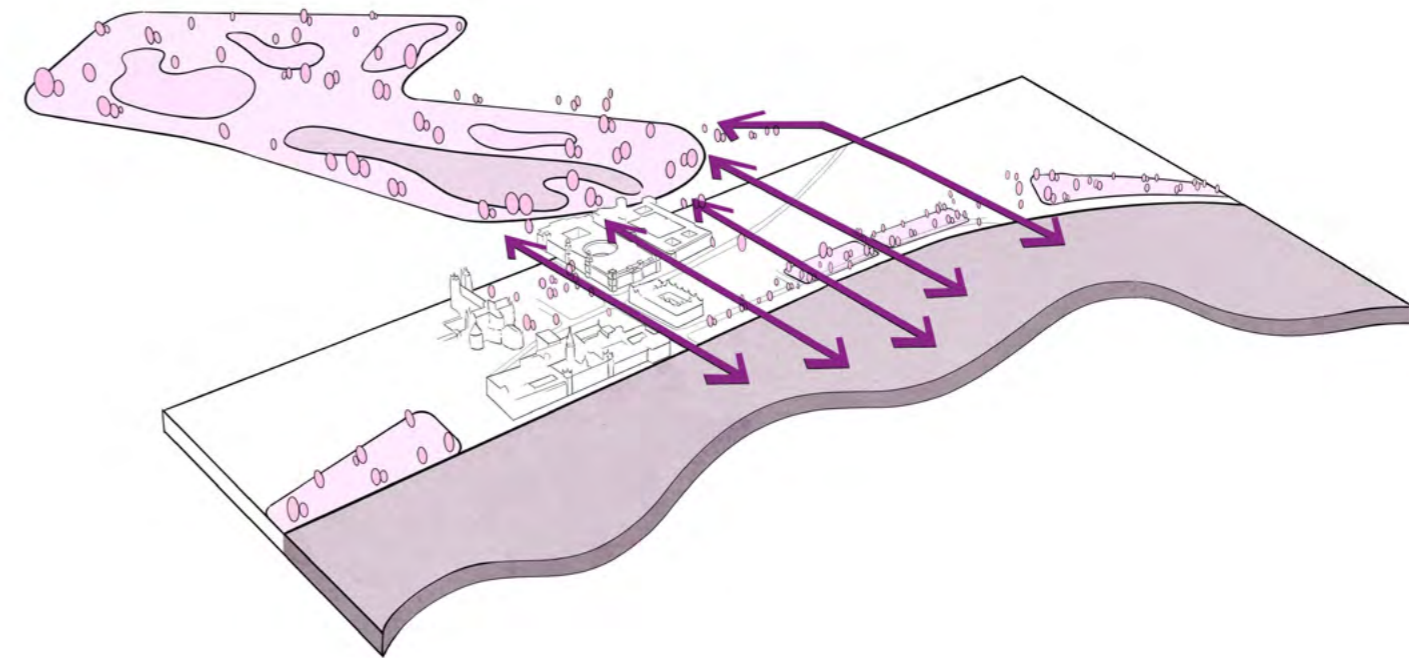


Fig. 192 Green Blue Links

4.3.4 SITE WIDE STRATEGIES: COORDINATED MATERIALS & FURNITURE

Existing situation

Throughout the BID some areas have high quality materials sympathetic to the historic context and significance of the area, but overall, the public realm materiality is inconsistent and does not reflect Whitehall as a world class destination. There are limited seating opportunities or bins for refuse, and the parameters of the Whitehall BID area are unclear.

Key challenges

There are several key challenges to improving materials and furniture, including:

- Standard WCC guidance only permits a limited palette so special permissions will be required to deviate from this.
- Historic and listed buildings require approvals from WCC, HE or other statutory bodies.
- The lack of seating and bins are driven in part by security considerations and issues of rough sleeping within the area.
- Materials and furniture vary within different areas of ownership.

Opportunities

Projects under development within the Whitehall BID area should be underpinned with a site-wide materials and furniture strategy to ensure they are coordinated. This could be a standalone study to assess existing materials and furniture prior to establishing clear guidance on a palette that will contribute to Whitehall's identity. This guidance should:

- Provide strategic guidance on the placement of new furniture (seating /bins etc, including consideration for outdoor dining).
- Advise when and where non-WCC standard materials can be introduced to provide unique points of interest, in association with new projects.
- Clearly set out strategies for assisting wayfinding within the BID area.
- Consider carbon, robustness/longevity of materials/furniture and life time maintenance costs.

Design principles



The Whitehall design principles that a cohesive Materials and Furniture Strategy achieve are:

- **Memorable:** The materials and furniture palette should be complementary to the historic context and add to the identity of Whitehall.
- **Resilience:** It should be both robust and timeless, requiring minimal maintenance.
- **Layers of Richness:** In coordination with other strategies and projects, materials and furniture should add layers of richness and interest.
- **Connected:** Materials and furniture can assist with intuitive wayfinding and should be carefully coordinated with the wayfinding strategy.

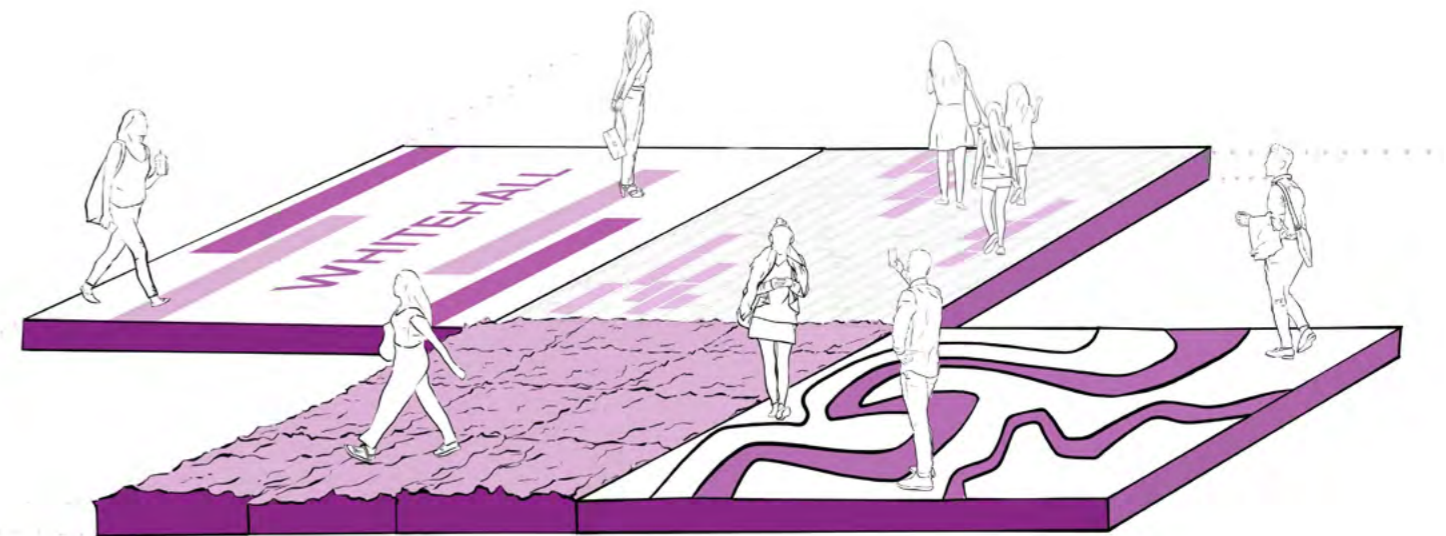
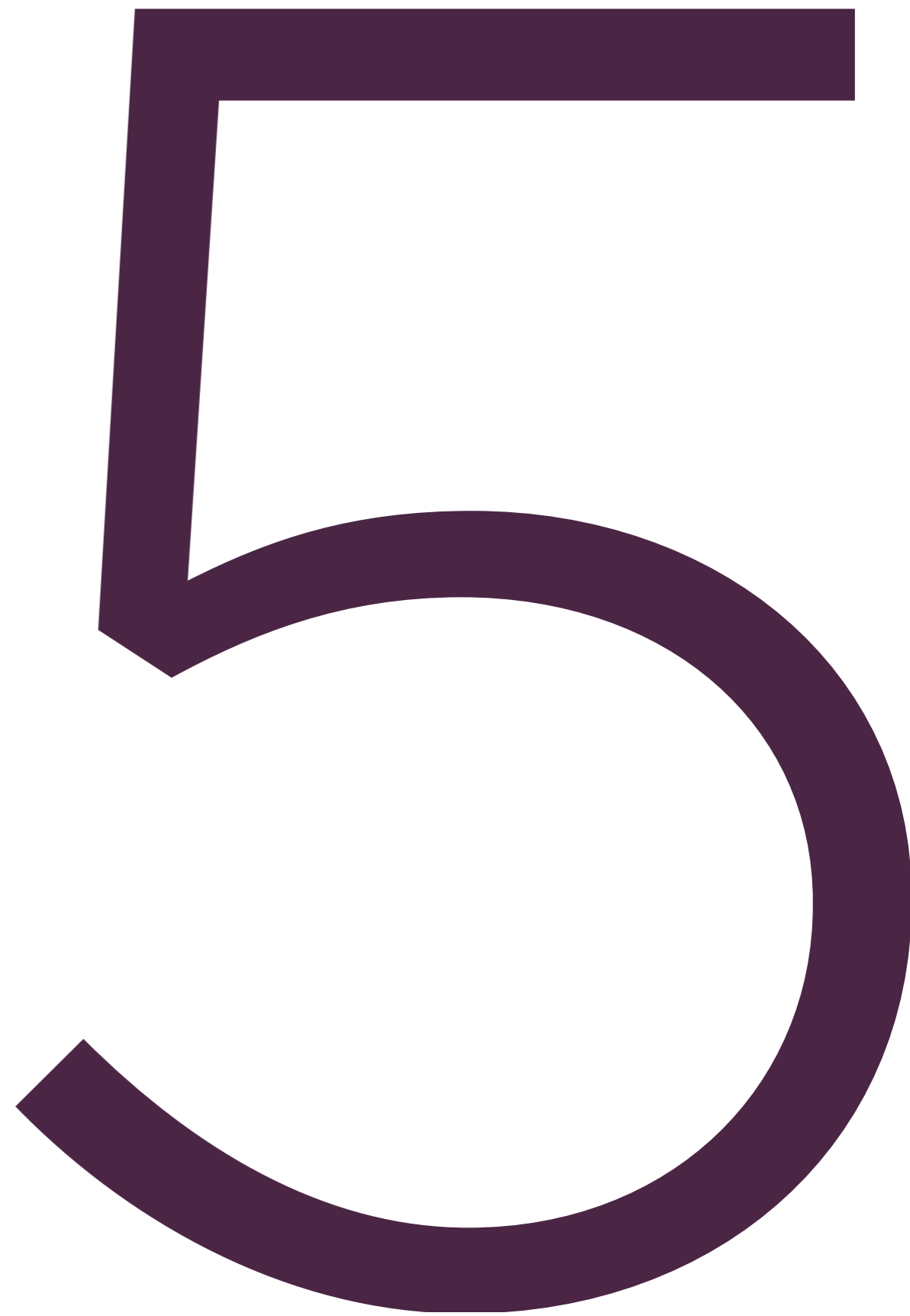


Fig. 193 High quality materials palette



DELIVERING THE VISION



5.1

INTRODUCTION

An aspirational vision for Whitehall

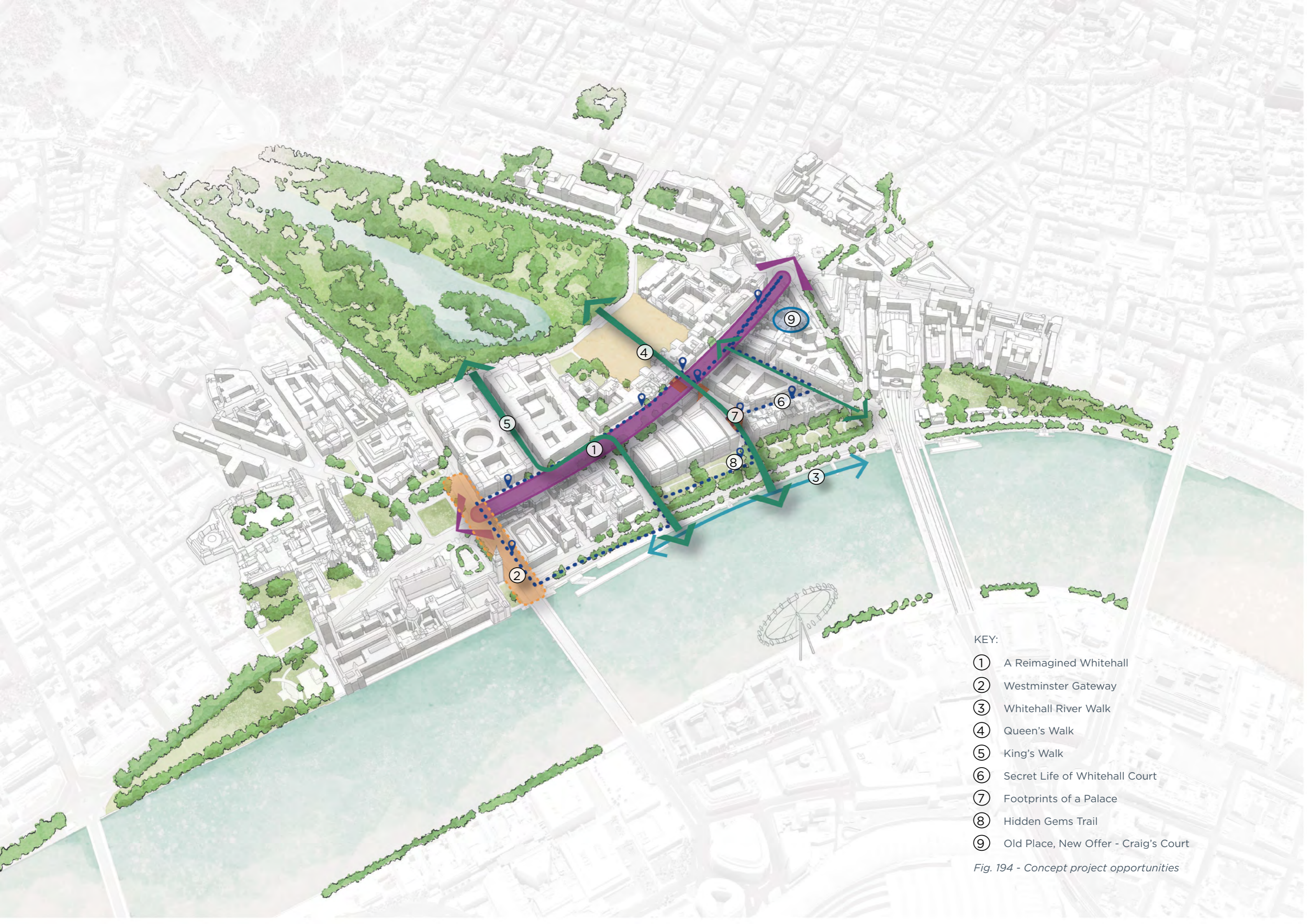
Building on the site-wide strategies for Whitehall set out in the previous chapter, this chapter outlines the strategic vision, objectives, suggested delivery strategy, and examples of the aspirational public realm proposals.

The vision for Whitehall's public realm is titled 'People Wanted: Placemaking in Whitehall'. The strategy focuses on firstly, providing a vision for more amenity, greening, accessibility, and safety, and secondly, revealing the history, culture, stories, and landmarks that may not be widely familiar through public realm interventions. The potential of this vision is illustrated by developing a series of aspirational hypothetical projects, that demonstrate the capacity for change this area has. The project areas chosen to reflect the vision strategy are shown opposite and detailed in the following chapters.

Whilst this vision sets out a strategy with aspirational project examples, it is recognised that this is a complex area with much significance and many layers which all need further careful consideration and coordination for future public realm enhancement projects. As previously stated, this study has assessed the site and its opportunities/constraints at a high level and advise further engagement and coordination is necessary to realise these projects. This would include further investigation into, and coordination on:

- Security requirements
- Allowance for ceremonial events
- Traffic patterns through and around the area
- Potential of the Levelling Up agenda and how this could transform the business profile in Whitehall
- Potential changes to public realm services such as a reduction in bus services or a change to capacity of riverboat services and piers

The following chapters further detail public realm projects with greatest potential for positive transformation, complementary to current and future uses. The delivery of these, or similar projects over time will, when viewed collectively, realise the vision.



KEY:

- ① A Reimagined Whitehall
- ② Westminster Gateway
- ③ Whitehall River Walk
- ④ Queen's Walk
- ⑤ King's Walk
- ⑥ Secret Life of Whitehall Court
- ⑦ Footprints of a Palace
- ⑧ Hidden Gems Trail
- ⑨ Old Place, New Offer - Craig's Court

Fig. 194 - Concept project opportunities

5.2 PROJECT RESPONSE TO PRINCIPLES

Design principles have shaped project examples

This diagram presents the eight key design principles which inform the public realm development in Whitehall. They will drive positive change while responding to the needs of all people.

Each of the potential projects represent strengths in certain areas of the design principles. They have been selected to reflect how spread of diverse projects can collectively achieve all of the design principles proposed in this strategy. The focus of each of the potential projects is shown on the opposite page, and demonstrates how a range of projects with different focuses can contribute to the delivery of a cohesive overall vision.



Fig. 195 Whitehall design principles



A Reimagined Whitehall

- Memorable
- Diversity of Appeal
- Inviting and Safe
- Resilient

Westminster Gateway

- Connected
- Memorable
- Inviting and Safe
- Resilient

River Walk

- Inviting and Safe
- Resilient
- Green
- Health and Wellbeing

Queen's Walk

- Connected
- Memorable
- Layers of Richness
- Green

King Charles Walk

- Connected
- Diversity of Appeal
- Green
- Health and Wellbeing

Greening Whitehall Place

- Memorable
- Resilient
- Layers of Richness
- Connected

Footprints of a Palace

- Layers of Richness
- Connected
- Memorable
- Diversity of Appeal

Hidden Gems Trail

- Layers of Richness
- Connected
- Memorable
- Diversity of Appeal

Old Place, New Offer

- Memorable
- Green
- Health and Wellbeing
- Layers of Richness

Fig. 196 Diagram illustrating which design principles relate to each project

5.3 CREATING A PEDESTRIAN CAMPUS

A rich area for exploration on foot

Although the Whitehall BID area is particularly rich in historical and cultural assets which are explored by thousands of visitors every year, it is also home to several key vehicle routes, some of which suffer considerable congestion. This detracts from the pedestrian experience, creates barriers to movement and gives the perception that this is a place for vehicles rather than people.

Creating a pedestrian campus

Through the implementation of a range of projects covering the 9 overarching design principles, set out in the previous page, there is potential to establish a pedestrian campus which creates better connections for people exploring the Whitehall area. This creation of a 'pedestrian campus' aims to neither remove vehicles nor obstruct through traffic from the BID area, but to rationalise key spaces to create a more pedestrian friendly and accessible campus for people to explore.

A key factor in creating this campus is to improve connections between Parliament Square and its surrounding landmarks to Parliament Street/Whitehall and dispel the impression of Bridge Street being a barrier to pedestrian movement.

Rationalising carriageway space and providing more space for pedestrians will change the perception of Whitehall from being a place for vehicles to a place for people, elevating the public realm to reflect the significance of the area.

Changing perceptions of Whitehall to a place for people






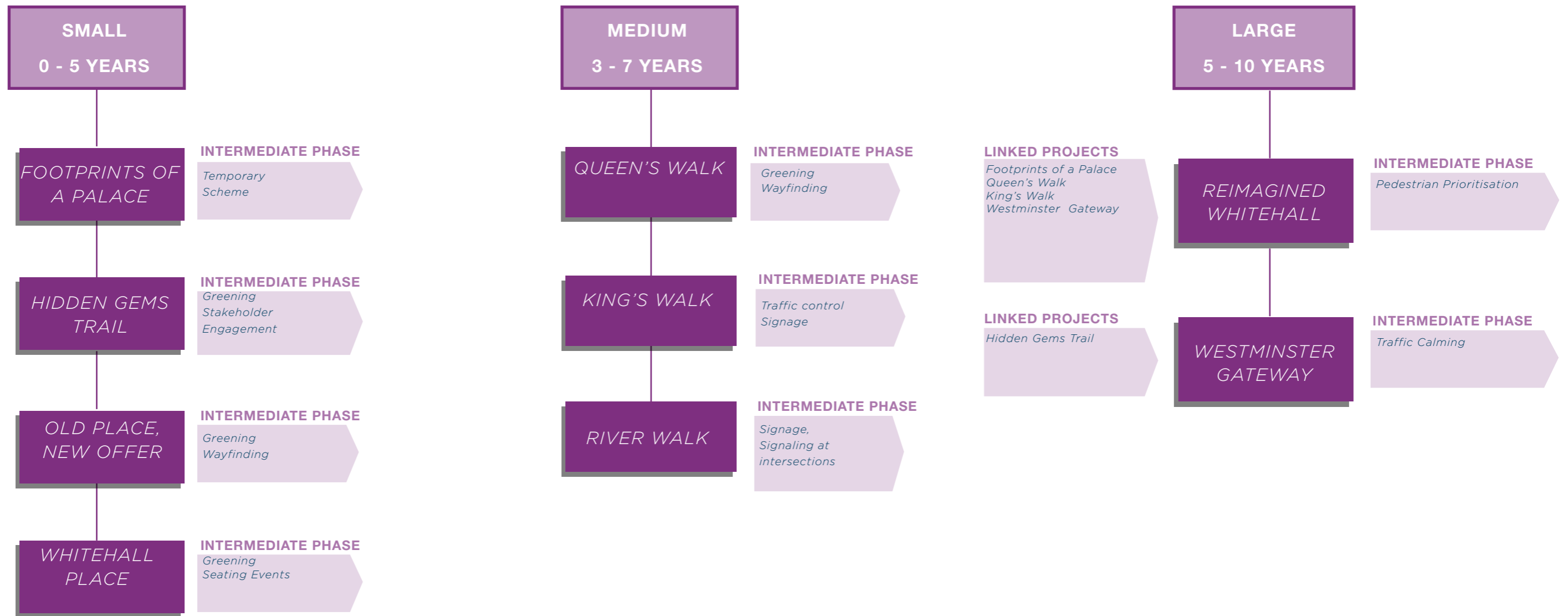
- KEY:
-  Improved pedestrian connection across Bridge Street
 -  Retained vehicle routes as present
 -  Retained vehicle routes with re-rationalised carriageway widths
 -  Parliament Square Streetscape Project by others
 -  Area of pedestrian campus



Fig. 197 - Pedestrian campus diagram

5.4 STRATEGIC DELIVERY



The potential projects within this vision have been grouped into categories that will add to the strategic approach to delivery.

Small projects would be considered projects that have smaller timeframes to implement, due to their size, complexity or limited stakeholder considerations that may make these projects more immediate, quick win projects.

Medium term projects will require more coordination across a wider range of stakeholders and typically involve more complex construction methods or have larger impacts on surrounding environment.

The largest projects will involve substantial engagement, coordination and stakeholder buy in. They may overlap with wider strategic objectives in the area and will require the highest degree of funding and investment.

It is intended that this classification of projects will aid decision makers to plan a pipeline of work that spans the range of

5.5 CONCEPT IDEAS

Guided by the vision for Whitehall, its strategic objectives and design principles, we have suggested a range of project examples to realise this placemaking vision. These projects individually and collectively would contribute to transformative public realm change in Whitehall.

The projects, presented in the following chapter, should not be read as final design proposals but rather present a potential for public realm improvement through the BID. Importantly, they offer a starting point for dialogue across the range of stakeholders which can help to realise the vision and bring key projects forward.

To maximise the opportunity to deliver this vision the project examples are presented across a range of scales by physical size, budget, and delivery timescales, thereby allowing for some 'quick win' catalyst projects to build momentum towards bigger, more aspirational change within Whitehall.

It is important to clarify that these projects do not constitute the final and complete list needed to deliver this vision. While they would result in critical change, other opportunities may arise within the area which would also contribute to the delivery of this vision. Therefore, this document acts as a guide to other proposals for public realm projects within the BID area.

5.6 TIMEFRAME

These initial concept ideas will require further investigation, coordination, and consultation with key stakeholders.

As illustrated in the adjacent graphic, the projects have been divided into three categories by scale: small (0-5 years), medium (3-7 years), and large (5-10 years). These timeframes highlight the speed in which certain projects can be delivered to bring rapid change to the area as a catalyst for further aspirational moves. Whilst the larger aspirational moves will take time, work to set the foundation for smaller projects can begin sooner.

Through ongoing public realm placemaking investment, small interventions can contribute to the strength of Whitehall's sense of place and as a key destination within London; evolving, adapting and transforming over time.

5.7 PLACEKEEPING

While public realm interventions contribute to placemaking, this alone does not lead to successful place-keeping. Placemaking governance is not singular and instead requires ongoing investment in the area, whether through events planning, marketing, or physical maintenance to keep spaces clean and tidy. Projects which are flexible and easy to maintain ensure place-keeping resilience and longevity.

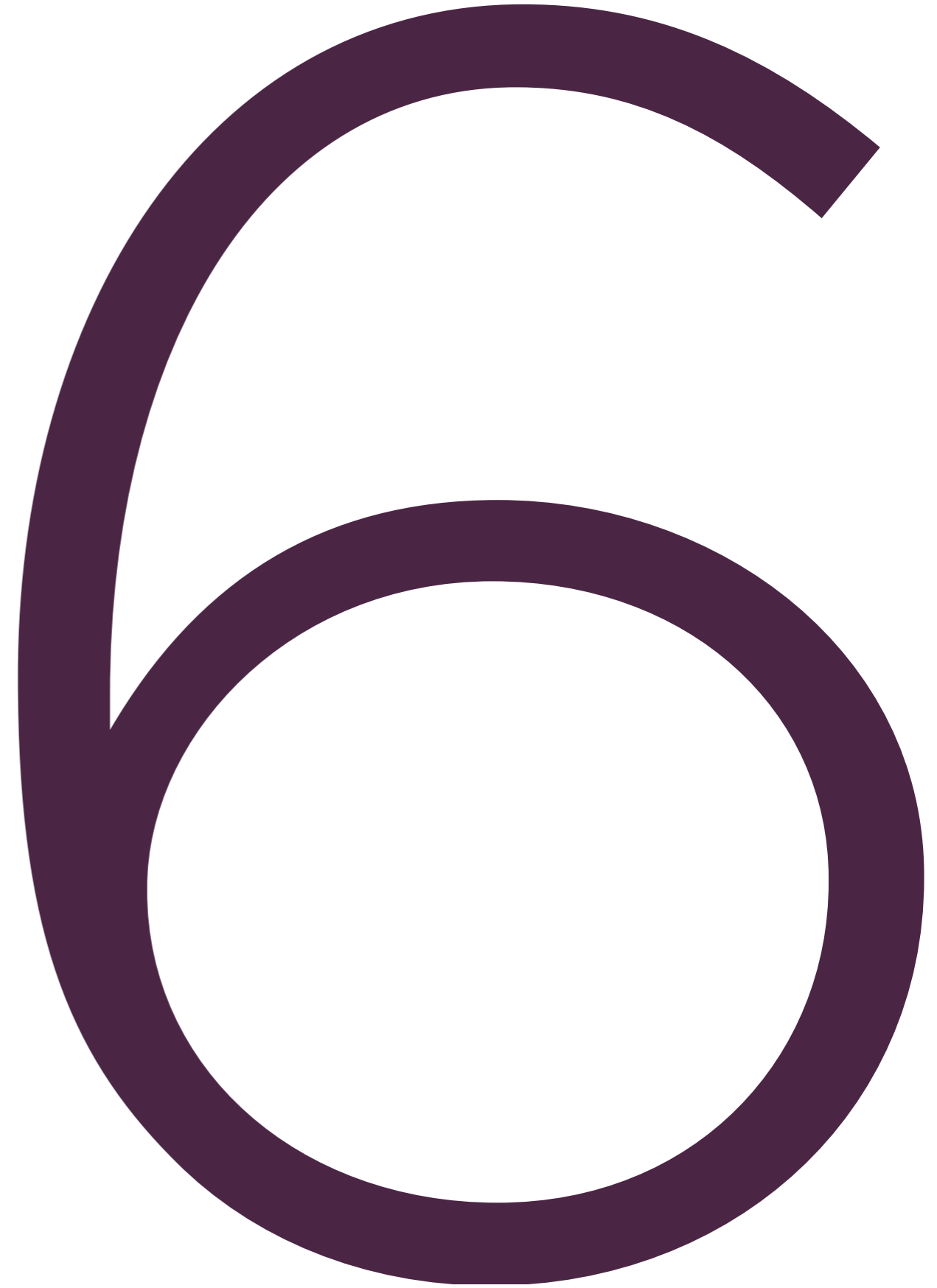


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CONCEPT IDEAS

PROJECT ASPIRATIONS TO REALISE THE VISION



6.0 CONCEPT PROJECTS FOR 'PEOPLE WANTED, WHITEHALL'

How the vision may be delivered

Whilst the previous chapters of this study set out a detailed analysis of the study area and a vision and strategy for delivering substantial public realm improvements through the BID this following chapter illustrates how, through a series of exemplar projects, this vision can be delivered.

The following nine projects have been selected to show how the design principles can be applied to public realm proposals across a range of scales, from large schematic interventions to small quick-win solutions. They are not intended to be read as full and complete design proposals but rather represent how the vision can be realised to generate wide-scale public realm enhancements throughout Whitehall.

LARGE

- 1 A REIMAGINED WHITEHALL
- 2 WESTMINSTER GATEWAY

MEDIUM

- 3 RIVER WALK
- 4 QUEEN'S WALK
- 5 KING'S WALK

SMALL

- 6 FOOTPRINTS OF A PALACE
- 7 HIDDEN GEMS TRAIL
- 8 OLD PLACE, NEW OFFER
- 9 WHITEHALL PLACE



Fig. 198 - Illustrative view of concept projects

1

WHITEHALL

Existing Situation

The public realm along the length of Whitehall and Parliament Street is dominated by traffic, resulting in busy and overcrowded pedestrian footways which are difficult to navigate and have a negative impact on the visitor experience.

Key challenges

Key considerations to be addressed by the public realm along Whitehall are:

- Overcrowded pedestrian footpaths especially near key destinations such as Horse Guards.
- Relatively constant traffic flow and regular 'bus walls' make it difficult for pedestrians to cross the street, contributing to the perception that this is a place for vehicles rather than people.
- Vehicle congestion, particularly around the intersection with Bridge Street, contributes to poor air quality and noise pollution throughout the area.
- There are very limited opportunities to sit and rest along the length of Whitehall and Parliament Street. The distance between seating is currently much lower than the recommended 100m stated by the World Health Organisation.
- As a key arrival destination in London and the UK the public realm should make a more positive first impression.
- Poor wayfinding, both direct and indirect, is insufficient to aid navigation of the area.



Fig. 199 - Whitehall outside Horse Guards

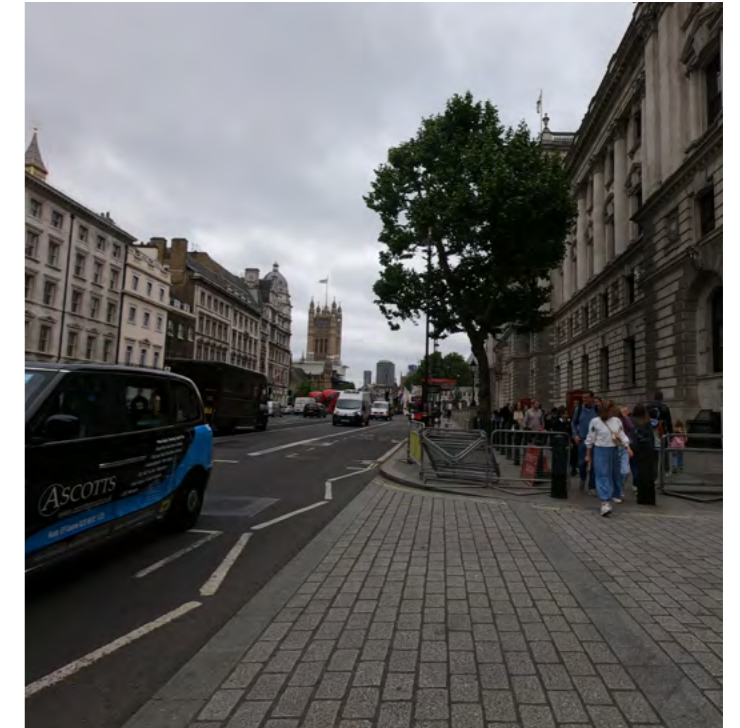


Fig. 200 - Whitehall at King Charles Street



Fig. 201 - Whitehall looking north east

Opportunities

- To improve connections east-west through indirect and direct markers.
- To raise the quality of the public realm to meet the standard of the special architecture and monuments.
- To encourage public engagement with the rich layers of history and culture.
- To promote climate positive design.
- To incorporate security infrastructure which adds to, not detracts from, the pedestrian experience.
- To integrate with Project SWAN which proposes upgraded infrastructure through the BID.

Whitehall is an internationally recognised location, with daily visitors enjoying the rich cultural and historical landmarks. Presently the public realm does not reflect this special sense of place.

Design Principles

The Whitehall design principles which are most important to the reimagined Whitehall proposal are:

- **Memorable:** The street should be a positive memorable experience for tourists and locals alike.
- **Diversity of Appeal:** The street should offer a range of engaging experiences for people.
- **Inviting and safe:** Whitehall must be a safe place and inclusive for all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. The public realm needs to synergise with adequate security infrastructure.
- **Resilient:** The street should stand the test of time and function through a range of scenarios, including ceremonial events and protest demonstrations.



Fig. 202 - Buildings along Whitehall looking south east

...Introducing A REIMAGINED WHITEHALL

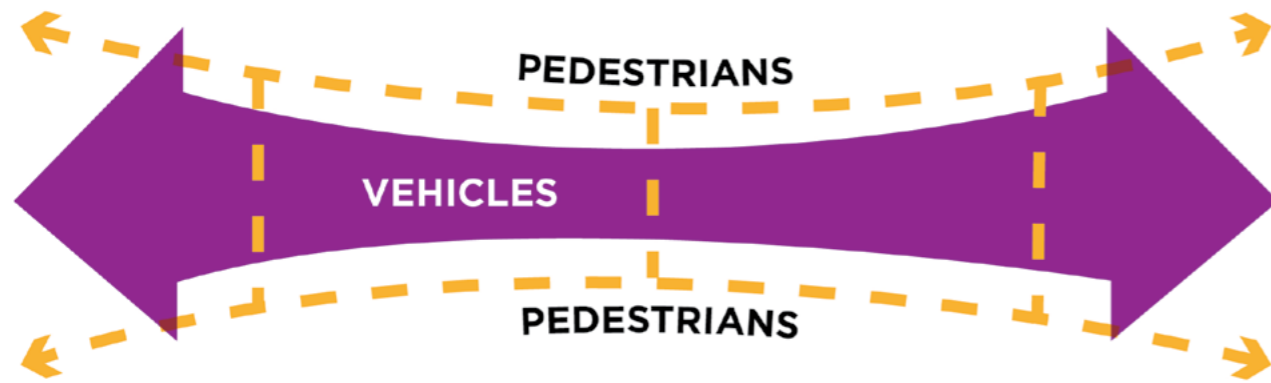


Fig. 203 - Current perception of Whitehall

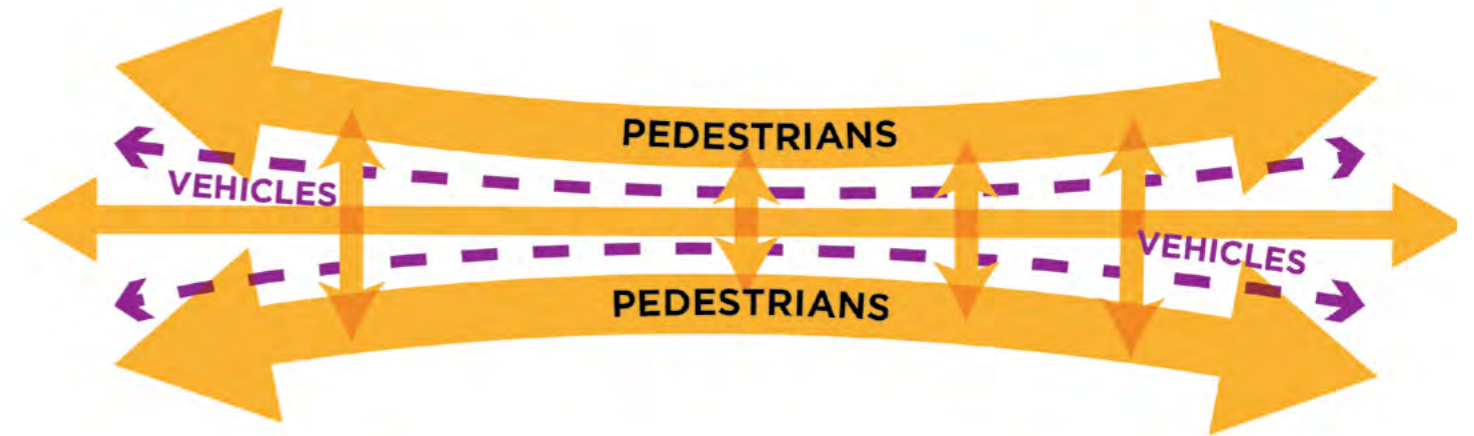


Fig. 204 - Proposed reallocation of priority



Fig. 205 - The proposal intends to give expression to the monuments through Whitehall and create a new heart around the Cenotaph which better reflects its significance

...Introducing A REIMAGINED WHITEHALL

Presently the street has a large expanse of tarmac which supports the perception that vehicles have priority and makes pedestrian navigation difficult. By narrowing vehicle lanes and creating a pedestrian-friendly median strip which responds to the zone of monuments down the central spine of the street, the perception of Whitehall shifts from a place designed for vehicles and traffic management to a place of significance for people, which vehicles also use. This can be achieved without reducing traffic capacity in Whitehall but by slowing traffic down.

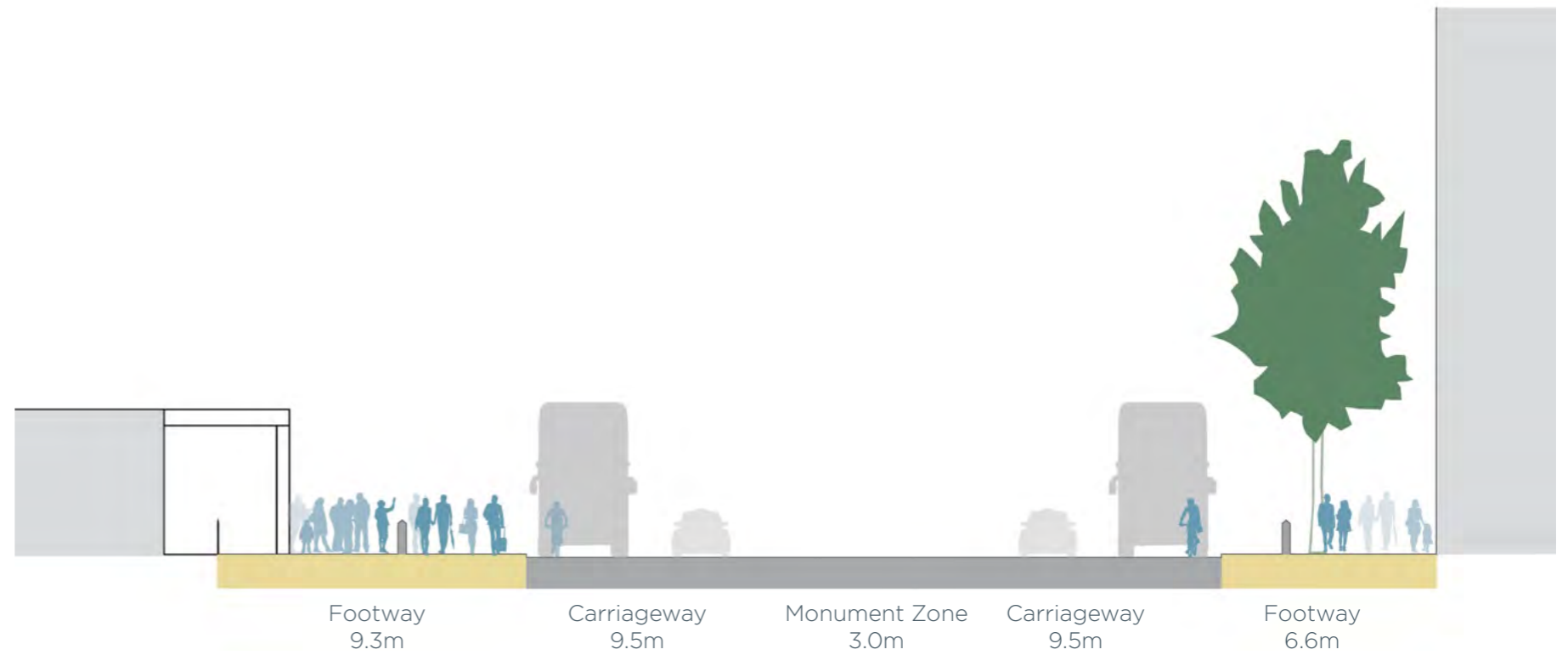


Fig. 206 - Existing section through Whitehall taken at Dover House

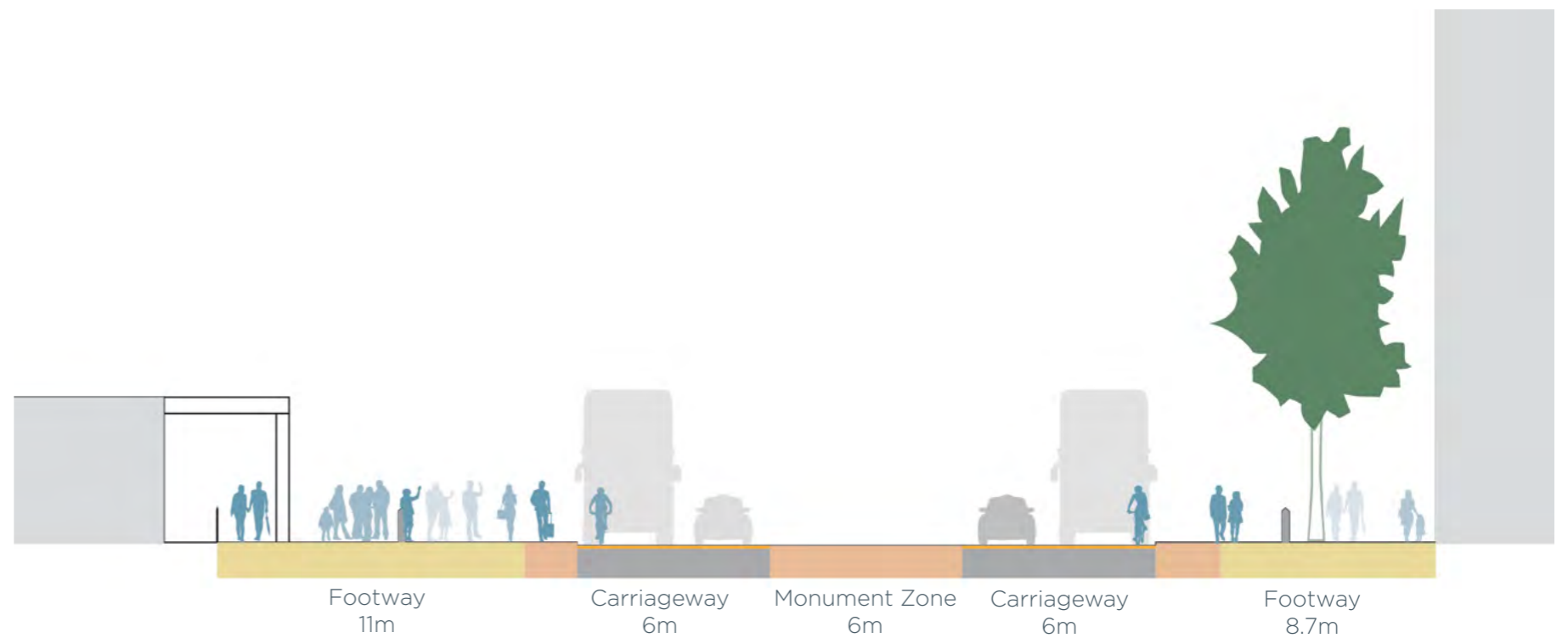


Fig. 207 - Proposed section through Whitehall taken at Dover House

...Introducing A REIMAGINED WHITEHALL

The Cenotaph is the most significant monument in Whitehall and, arguably, London. Originally instated (first as a temporary structure) in 1919, the simple structure represents an empty tomb as a memorial to all soldiers lost at war. Annual memorial services are held at there on Remembrance Day and wreaths laid to pay respect to those who were lost through both World Wars and all subsequent conflicts (English Heritage, no date).

This nationally significant monument is set at the centre of a four-lane road. Whilst this was originally intended, to make it accessible to all in everyday life, the context of Whitehall and vehicle use throughout central London has shifted. The expanse of tarmac now detracts from its accessibility. Raising the public realm around the Cenotaph will encourage people to get closer, experience its effect, and pay their respects on foot. Making the monument more accessible and slowing down vehicles moving around it will create a more respectful and appropriate setting.

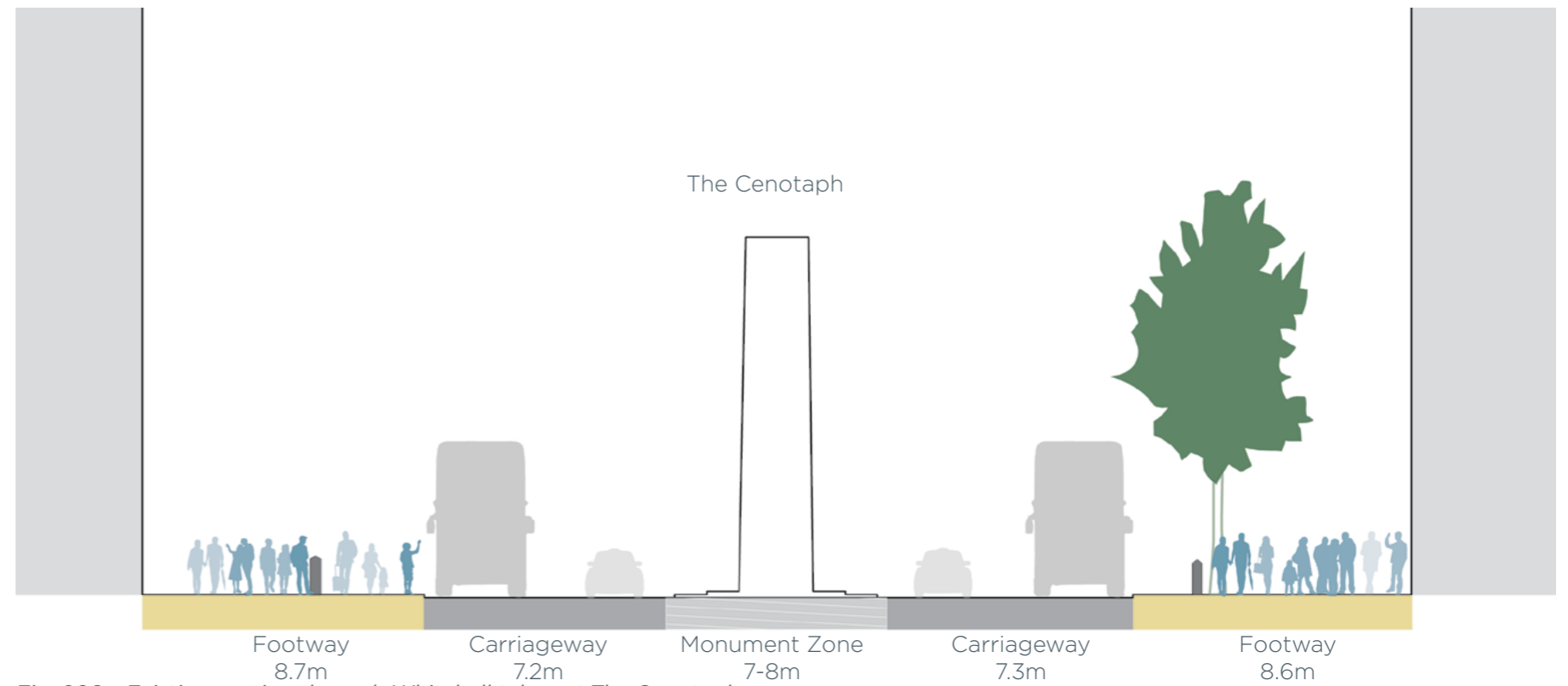


Fig. 208 - Existing section through Whitehall taken at The Cenotaph

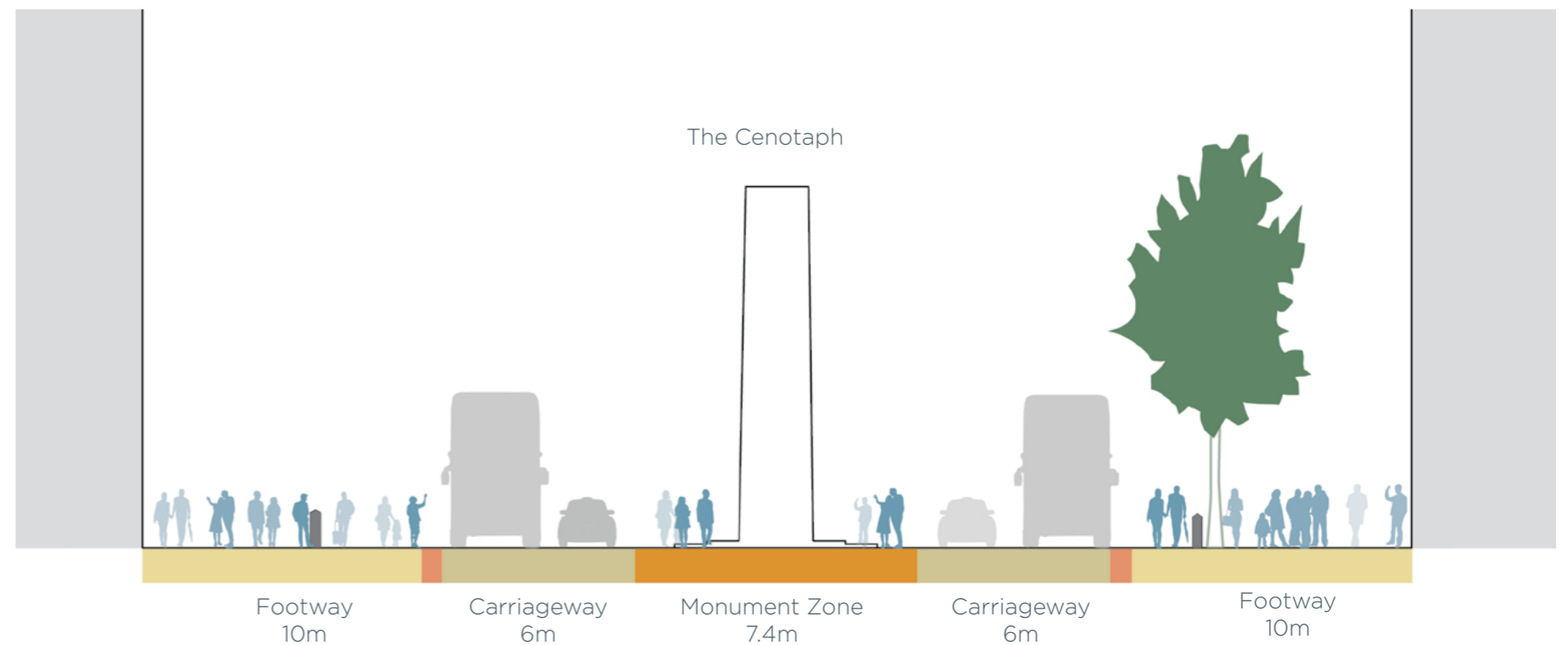


Fig. 209 - Proposed section through Whitehall taken at The Cenotaph

...Introducing A REIMAGINED WHITEHALL



Fig. 210 - Current view of Whitehall at the Cenotaph



Fig. 211 - Illustrative view of Whitehall showing enhanced public realm around the Cenotaph.

2

WESTMINSTER GATEWAY

A first arrival point

Westminster Station and Westminster Bridge form one of the most popular arrival points into the Whitehall BID area. However, at present the arrival experience is poor, with traffic congestion and overcrowded footways.

Key challenges

Key factors to address in enhancing the public realm experience are:

- Extreme pedestrian congestion at the entrance to Westminster Underground Station.
- Poor direct and indirect wayfinding creates a confusing sense of arrival for many visitors to the area.
- Traffic congestion on Bridge Street contributes to high levels of air pollution and noise pollution.
- Poor public realm offering for people arriving at Whitehall, with little or no amenity in terms of places to sit, wayfinding signage and public restroom facilities.
- Busy vehicular intersection between Bridge Street and Parliament Street poses a risk for pedestrians and cyclists. Timed crossings become overcrowded and uncomfortable between signals.
- Currently Bridge Street acts as a barrier to pedestrians between the World Heritage Site and central Whitehall (towards Horse Guards and Banqueting House).



Fig. 212 - Bridge Street looking towards the Elizabeth Tower



Fig. 213 - Parliament Square



Fig. 214 - Outside Westminster Station



Fig. 215 - Footway outside Westminster Station

Opportunities

- Create a positively memorable arrival experience to Whitehall, and potentially London.
- Create a safer, more comfortable pedestrian environment outside Westminster Station and at the intersection of Parliament and Bridge Street.
- Create a better connection between Parliament Square and Whitehall with improved signage, intuitive wayfinding and accessibility for all.
- Improve engagement with the key monuments and landmarks in and around Parliament Square.
- Make Parliament Square a more usable public realm space to encourage people to dwell.
- Improve the air quality at its worst point in the BID by reducing traffic congestion around Parliament Square and Bridge Street.
- Engage with potential Parliament Square pedestrianisation as tabled in the ‘People Wanted’ public realm study for Victoria to enhance connections between the World Heritage Site and Parliament Square.

As a significant arrival point to Whitehall and, for many visitors, their first experience of London, Westminster Station and the area in front of the Elizabeth Tower (Big Ben) should be positive and memorable.

Design Principles

The Whitehall design principles most important to the Westminster Gateway project are:

- **Connected** – As a gateway to Whitehall there should be exemplar connectivity to other areas with active legible movement encouraged. As a key transport connection and arrival point it could also benefit from offering better digital connectivity.
- **Memorable** – As a key arrival point to Whitehall, the space should be a positive memorable experience for both visitors and regular users.
- **Inviting and Safe** – Security infrastructure must be integrated into the public realm to ensure it is a safe space welcoming to all.
- **Resilient** – The site must be resilient to both climate change and to cope in a range of different scenarios from ceremonial events, political demonstrations and everyday functions.



Fig. 216 - Bridge Street

....Introducing A NEW ARRIVAL EXPERIENCE

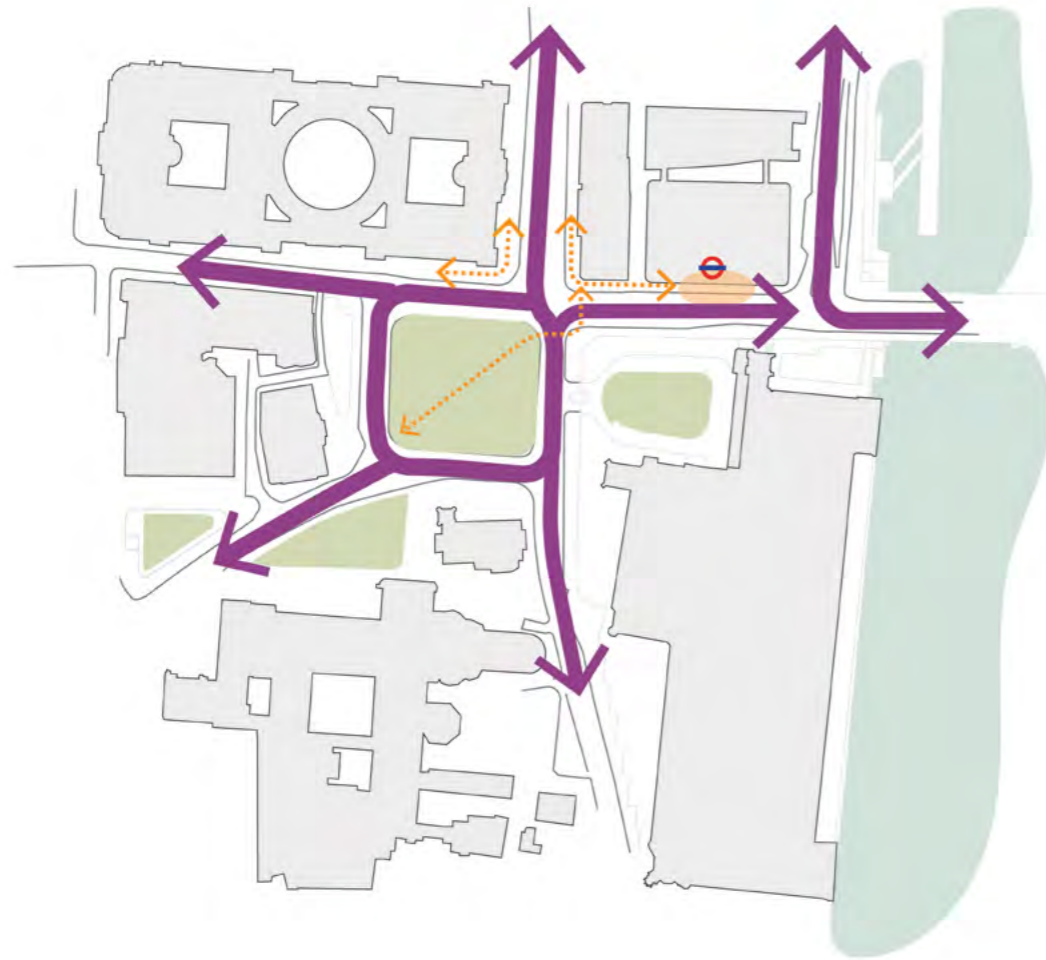


Fig. 217 - Currently vehicle dominated



Fig. 218 - A pedestrian campus, people focused, better connected

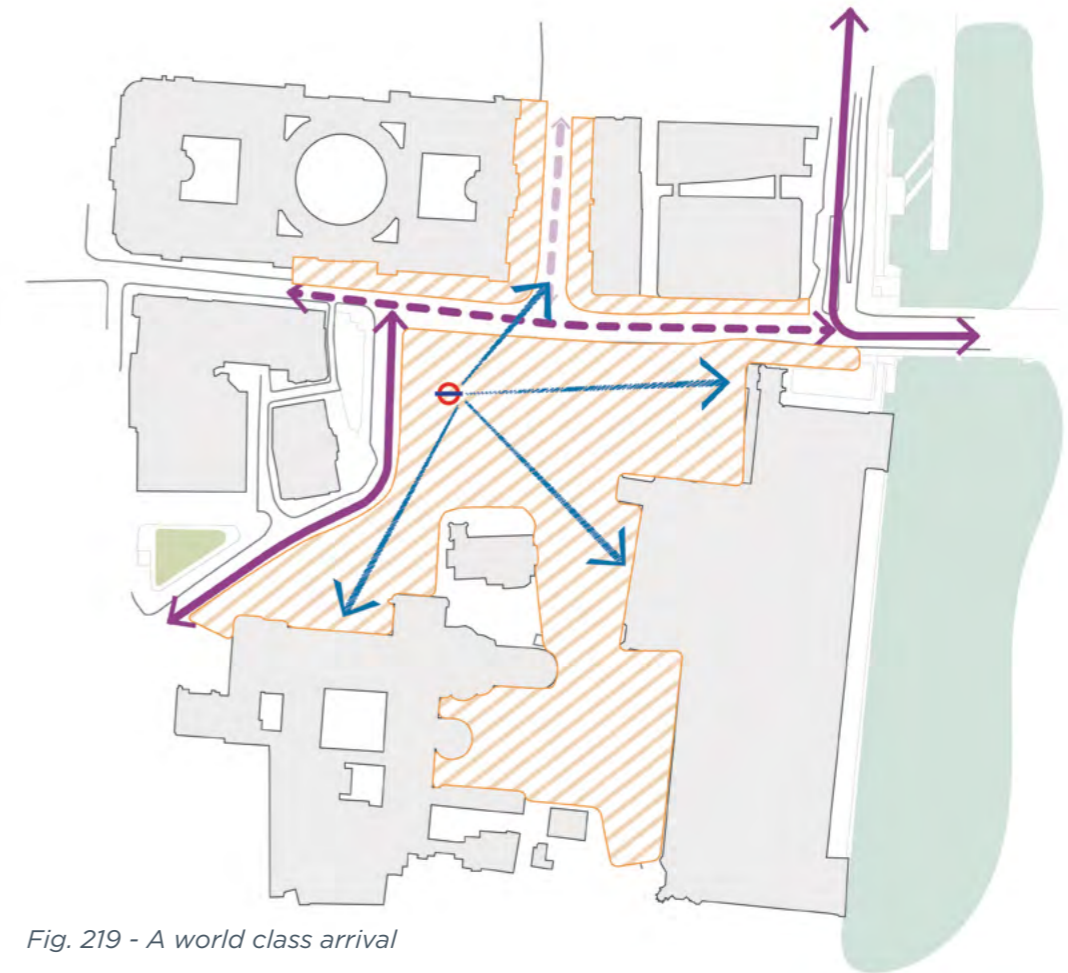


Fig. 219 - A world class arrival

...Introducing A NEW ARRIVAL EXPERIENCE

Currently the footway outside Westminster Station on Bridge Street is overcrowded. As a major arrival destination for visitors to Whitehall it creates a negative first impression as people crowd the entrance to photograph Big Ben. Redistributing space within the carriageway by a slight reduction in lane widths, reduction of the median, and moving the cycling inside the bollard line, reclaims a significant amount of footway outside the station, making it a much more comfortable and safe arrival point.

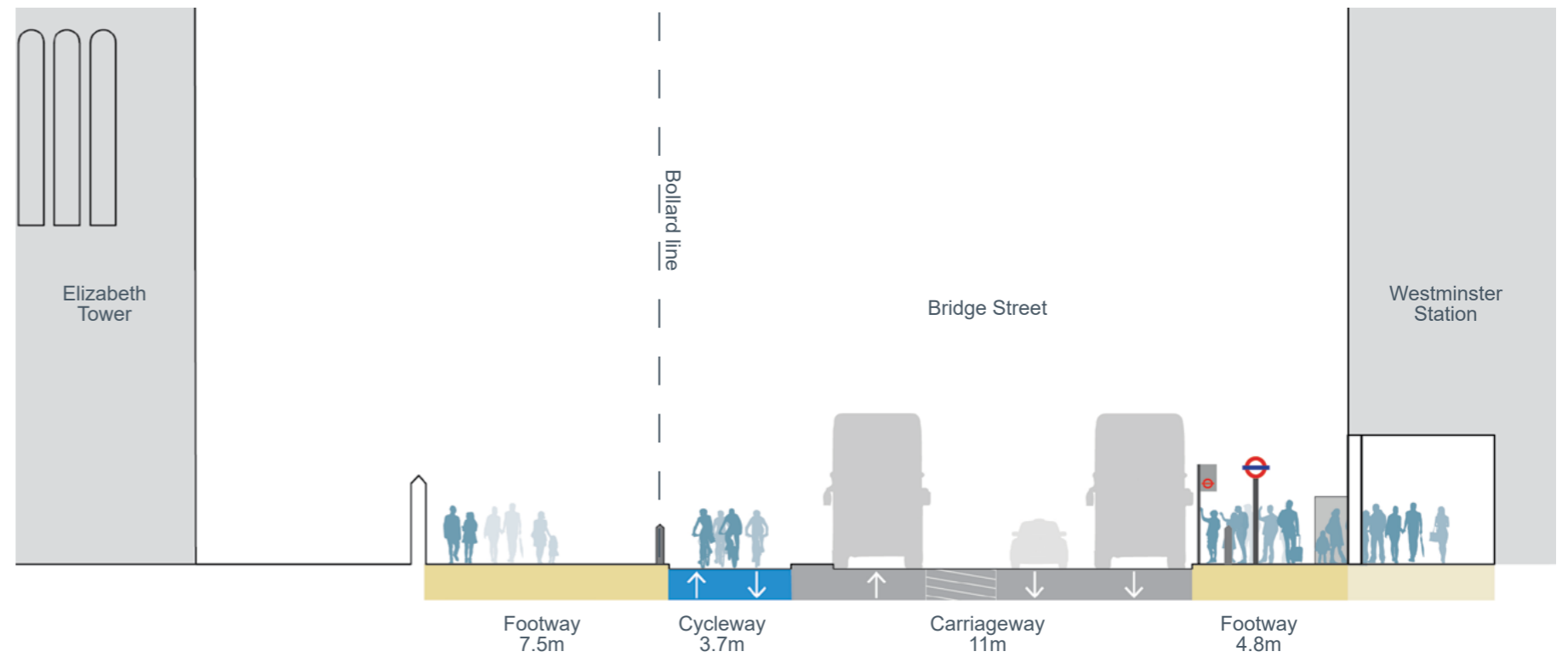


Fig. 220 - Existing section through Bridge Street taken at the Elizabeth Tower (Big Ben)

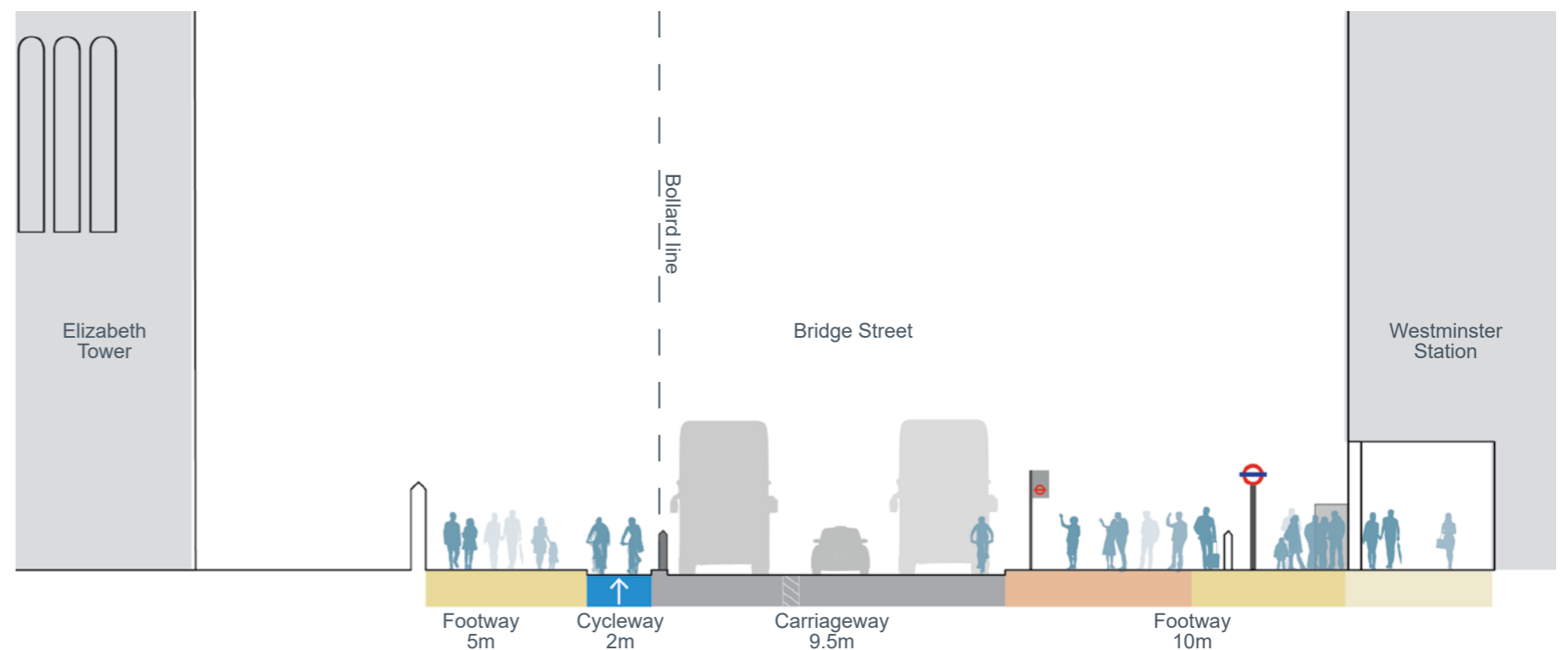


Fig. 221 - Proposed section through Bridge Street taken at the Elizabeth Tower (Big Ben)

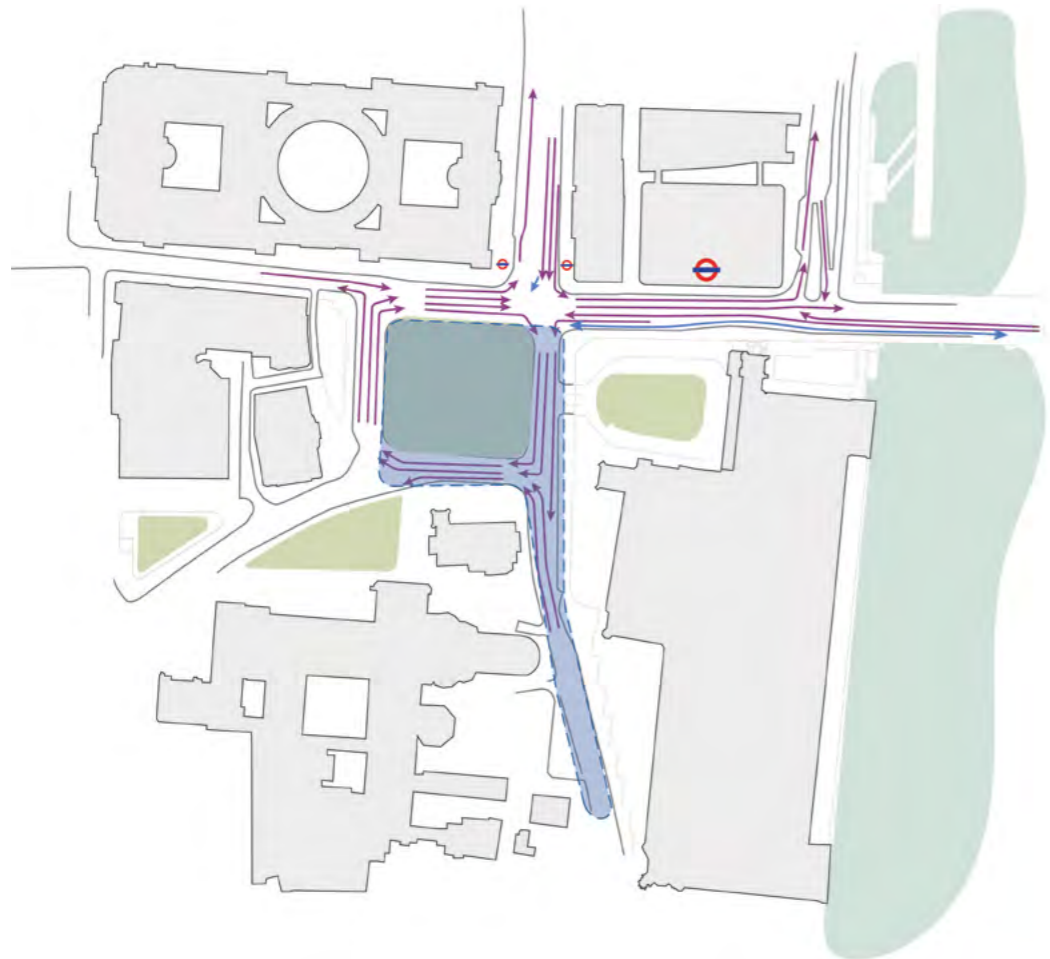


Fig. 222 - Current - Vehicle and cycle movements

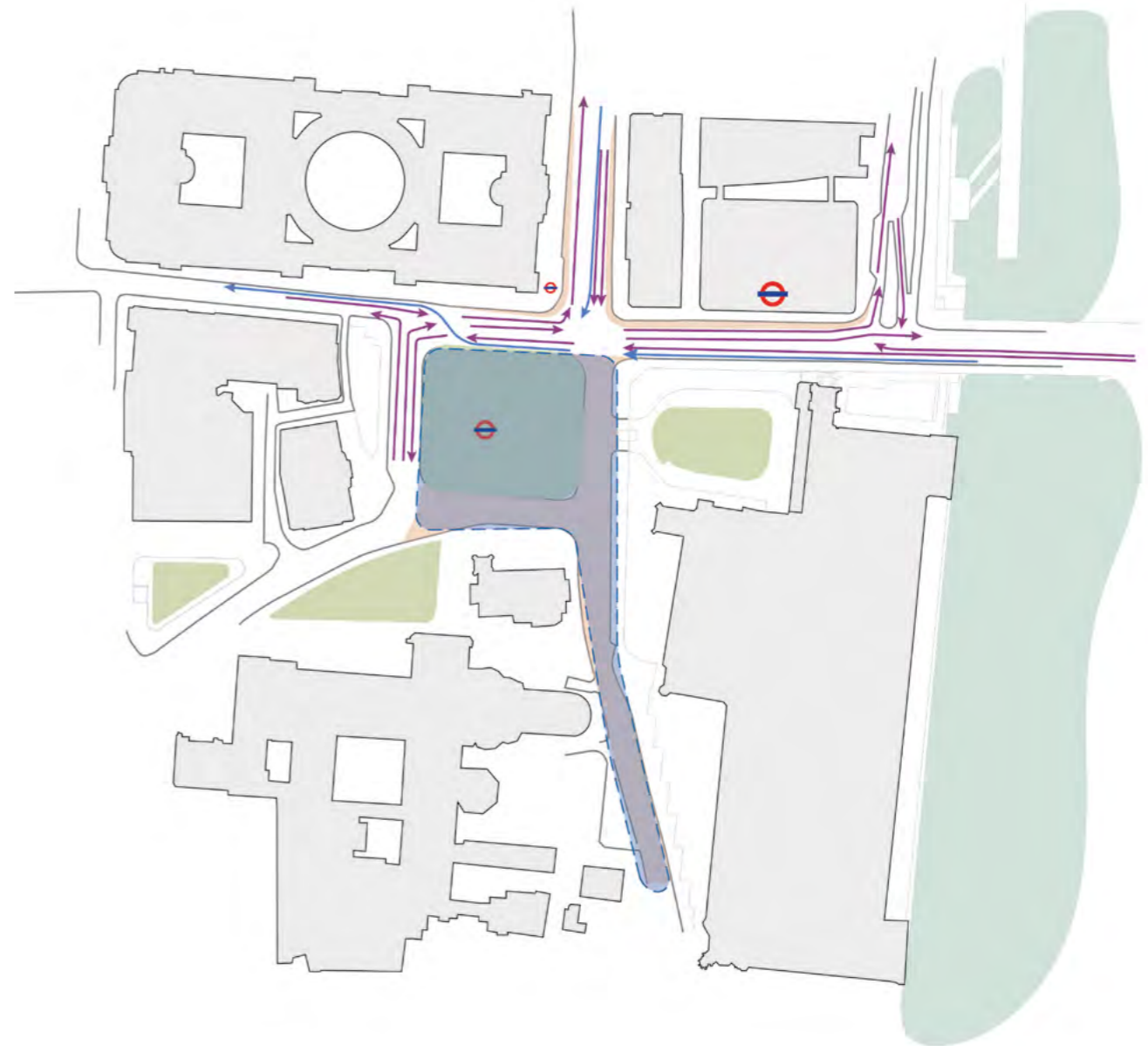


Fig. 224 - Preferred proposal - Vehicle, cycle movements and pedestrian gains

These proposals are based on the premise of the previous public realm strategy for Parliament Square put forward in the 'People Wanted Public Realm Vision and Strategy for Victoria'.



Fig. 223 - Proposed option 1 - Vehicle and cycle movements

...Introducing A NEW ARRIVAL EXPERIENCE

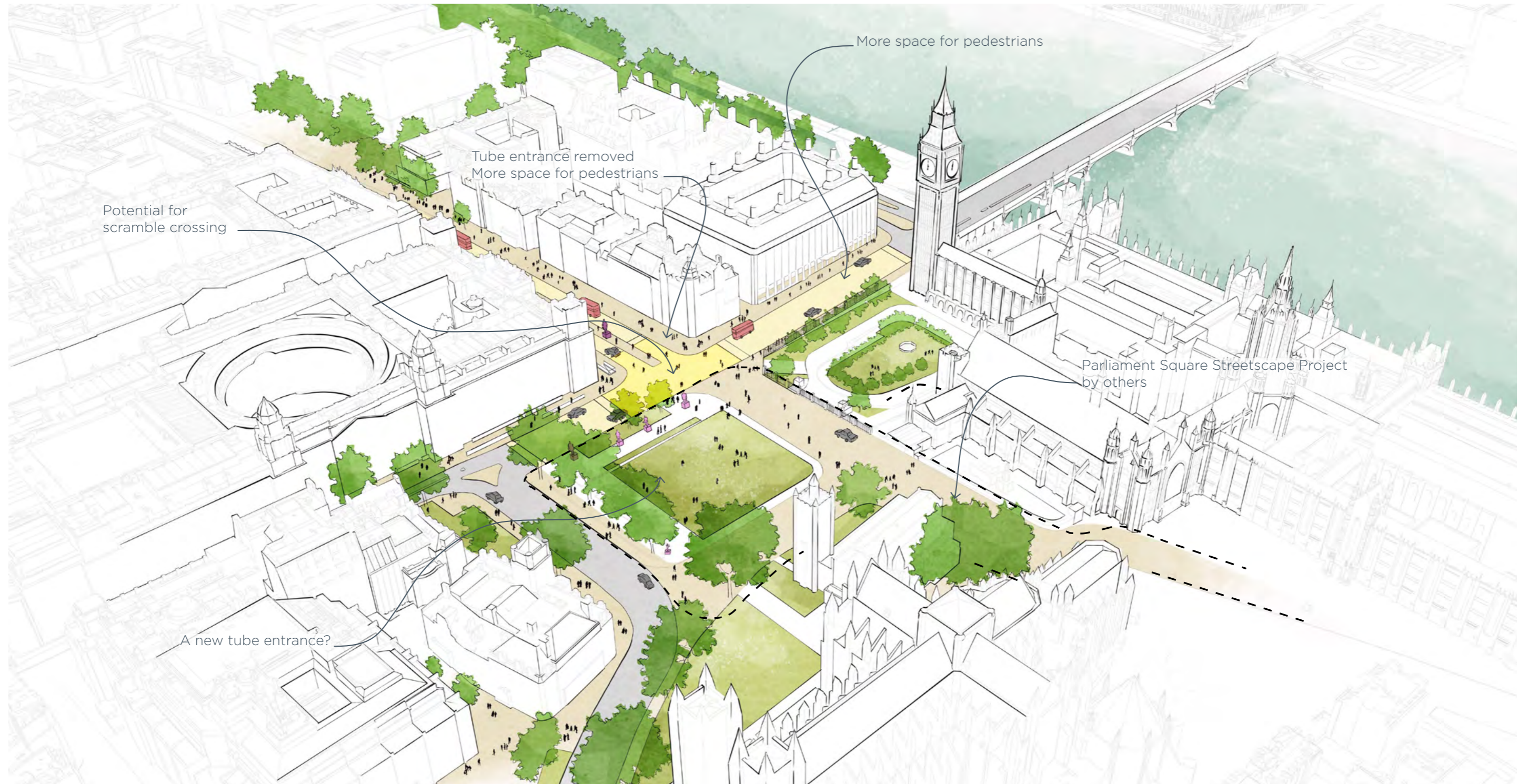


Fig. 225 - Illustrative view showing a design proposal for Bridge Street and Parliament Square area

3

VICTORIA EMBANKMENT: A NEW RIVERFRONT EXPERIENCE

**A rundown
riverfront
environment**

The current riverbank environment between Hungerford Bridge and Westminster Bridge offers a great opportunity for the public realm in the Whitehall area. However the riverfront promenade has become run down and dilapidated, failing to attract people to this part of the Thames, and lacking connections from Whitehall. There are rich offerings in the area between the front of the buildings and the edge of the river such as Queen Mary's Steps, green open spaces, and a wide pedestrian promenade, but there are also large challenges impacting the pedestrian experience, such as the red route, which runs along Victoria Embankment (A3211). While essentially an arterial route, the A3211 severs the river from other areas within Whitehall such as Whitehall Gardens.

Key challenges

Key challenges to be considered for future public realm enhancements are:

- Poor wayfinding to the riverfront from Whitehall, and largely unnoticed proximity to the river throughout much of the BID area.
- Dilapidated riverfront promenade with poor drainage and subsidence in the paving and the steps.
- Poor lighting along the promenade - although there is a lighting infrastructure it is not successfully contributing to the riverfront environment in the evening.
- Coaches parking along the Victoria Embankment as tourists explore the area create a further wall and disconnect pedestrians from the river.
- Whitehall Gardens North and South are either walled or fenced off, further disrupting the connection between these open green spaces and the riverfront.
- As a largely impermeable area, the riverfront suffers from poor drainage and untreated run off water from the urban environment.



Fig. 227 - Victoria Embankment



Fig. 228 - Whitehall Gardens South



Fig. 229 - The riverfront promenade

Opportunities

- A wide pedestrian promenade along the riverfront offers an existing area for public realm improvements without needing to alter the road.
- Thames Tideway is introducing a new public realm space to the Victoria Embankment near Hungerford Bridge which will attract more people to this area and create the opportunity for better connections along the embankment and an improved pedestrian environment along the promenade.
- There are many hidden gems and monuments throughout this area such as Queen Mary’s Steps, and the Royal Air Force memorial.
- The Victoria Embankment is home to large London Plane trees which are of significant scale and contribute positively to the air quality through this heavily trafficked key red route.
- The introduction of sustainable drainage systems to create a ‘sponge’ area to retain water in heavy rain events will make the red route more resilient and positively contribute to climate change goals.
- The current level change along points of the promenade separating the busy road from the pedestrian riverfront offers an opportunity to create a more relaxing promenade space for pedestrians.
- Projects such as Thames Tideway and the Riverfront Placemaking Strategy provide an opportunity to create a new riverfront experience by connecting a revitalised Westminster Pier with adjacent public realm.

Design principles



The Whitehall design principles which are seen as most important to the Embankment environment area:

- **Inviting and Safe** – It is important that the embankment area is welcoming, accessible, and safe for all to use and enjoy.
- **Resilient** – The riverfront should be a flexible space which is responsive to different events and functions as well as being resilient to the impacts of climate change.
- **Green** – As a river edge environment the public realm should contribute to climate positive design solutions, supporting better air quality, water quality, and better habitat and biodiversity.
- **Health and Wellbeing** – Encourage active modes of transport and connection to nature.

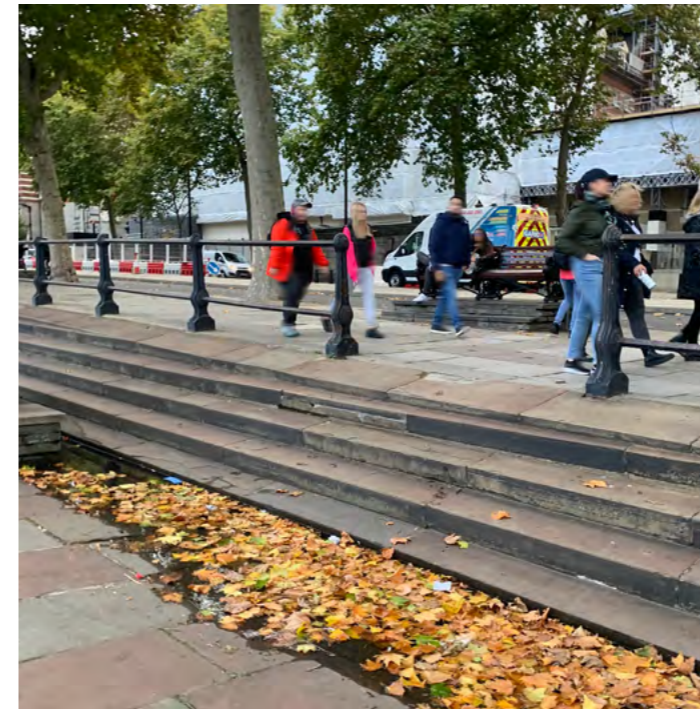


Fig. 230 - Drainage issues along the promenade



Fig. 231 - Level change along the promenade



Fig. 232 - Whitehall Gardens North

....Introducing WHITEHALL'S RIVER WALK



Fig. 232 - Creating better connections between central Whitehall and the river and establishing a more permeable pedestrian riverbank environment



Fig. 233 - Supporting biodiversity, habitat and water run off management within the riverside environment

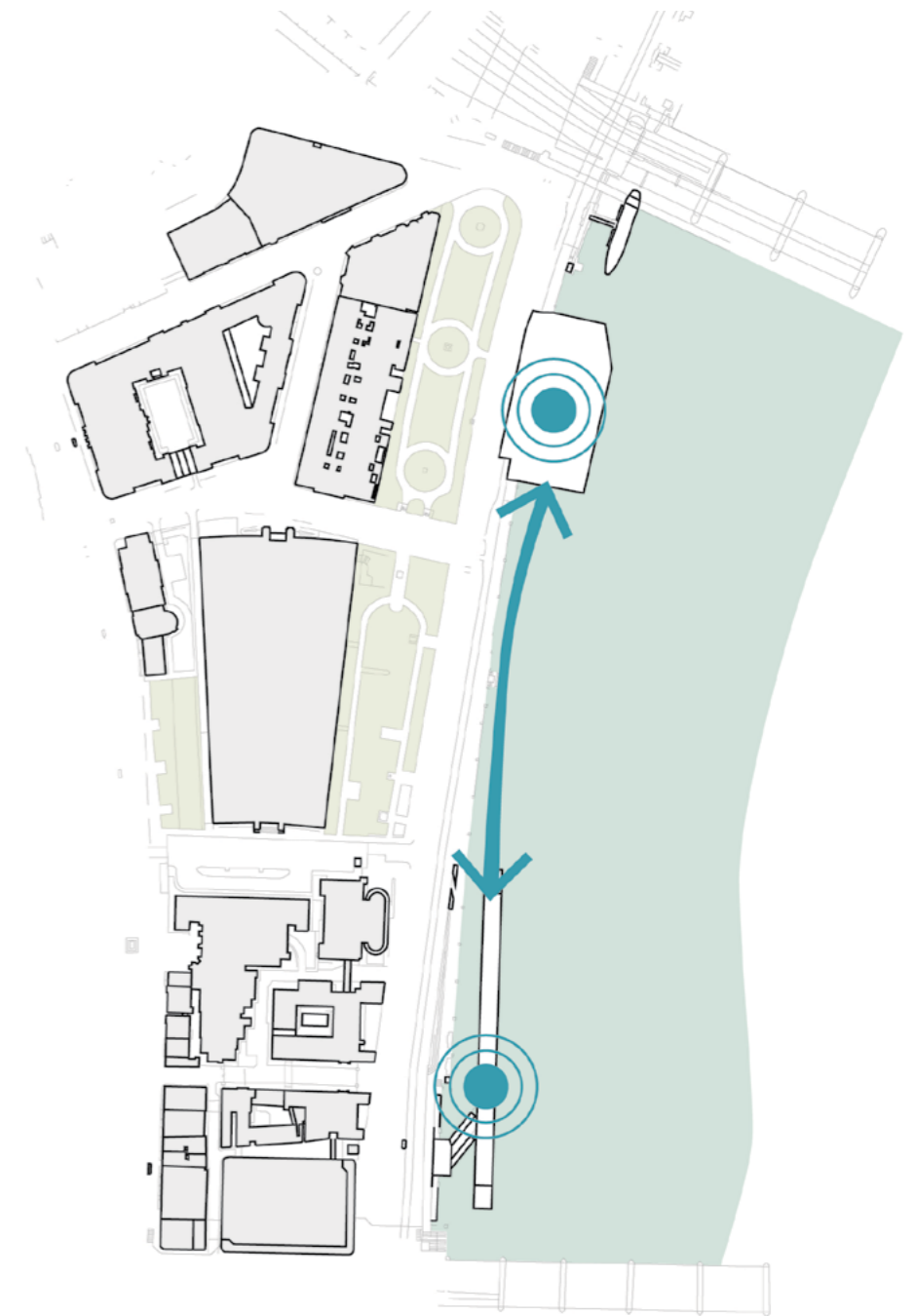


Fig. 234 - Creating a new riverfront connection between Westminster Pier and the new Thames Tideway space

...Introducing WHITEHALL'S RIVER WALK



Fig. 235 - Illustrative sketch showing concepts for Victoria Embankment with a new riverfront connection

4

HORSE GUARDS - VICTORIA EMBANKMENT

Improve the east-west link across Whitehall and establish a royal link

Key challenges to the public realm through this route

There is an opportunity to establish better east - west and green - blue connections across Whitehall between St James's Park and the Embankment through Horse Guards Parade and Horse Guards Avenue. This route offers many associated royal landmarks and monuments such as Horse Guards Parade and Queen Mary's steps in Whitehall Gardens South, revealing layers of history across Whitehall and supporting ecological links between the two green spaces.

Horse Guards Parade:

- As the site is used for military ceremonies throughout the year introducing public realm amenities and wayfinding signage or similar is difficult.
- The current materiality of Horse Guards Parade results in drainage issues and ponding.
- The buildings which face the space have impermeable façades which prevent activation at the edges of the area.
- Due to the proximity to No. 10 Downing Street and other key government offices, public realm changes would need to carefully consider security implications.
- Currently the site is well used in the evening as a through connection between Horse Guards Road and Whitehall, however it is poorly lit and uncomfortable.

Horse Guards Avenue:

- Establishing the connection from Horse Guards Parade to Horse Guards Avenue and onto the riverbank is challenging due to the intersection with Whitehall as a wide expanse of tarmac with multiple lanes of traffic.
- There are limited building pedestrian interfaces along Horse Guards Avenue to activate.

Victoria Embankment:

- As with Whitehall, the Victoria Embankment as a busy red route and yet another pedestrian barrier along this east - west connection.

Key opportunities

Horse Guards Parade:

- Horse Guards Parade has great cultural and historical significance, and as a large open space offers an opportunity to introduce subtle wayfinding to enhance the through connection to the river Thames.
- Sensitive feature lighting could be introduced to the historic façades that border the site, with further potential to activate the space into the evening using feature lighting.



Fig. 236 - Horse Guards Parade

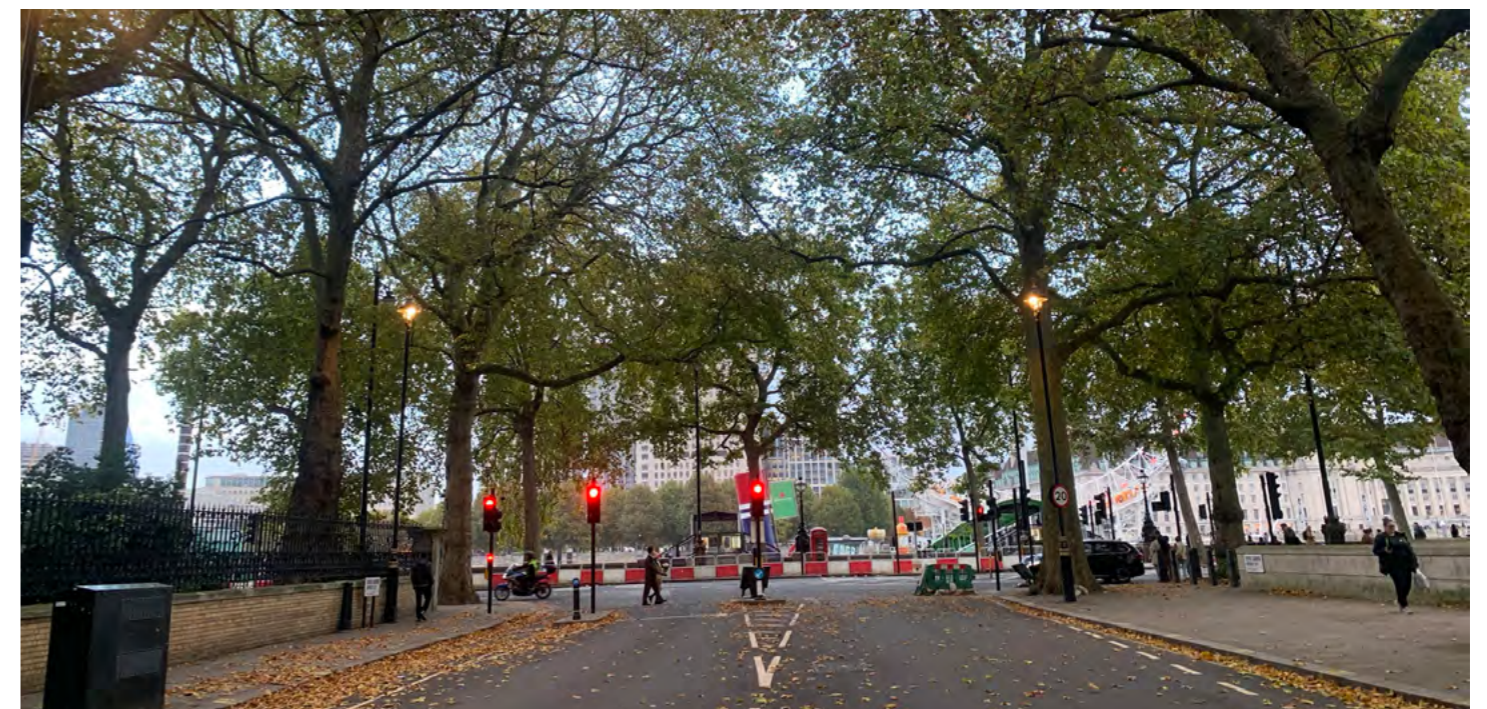


Fig. 237 - Horse Guards Avenue looking towards the river

Horse Guards Avenue:

- The Raffles development of the Old War Office will bring new food and beverage offerings to the corner of Whitehall and Horse Guards Avenue with the further potential to activate these building frontages.
- More street tree planting along Horse Guards Avenue could further establish the green blue link, support ecological connections from St James’s Park and the river, and improve connection from the riverfront environment into Whitehall.
- Revealing the historic footprint of Whitehall Palace on Horse Guards Avenue will further communicate the royal history of this area.
- Improve connections between Whitehall Gardens North and South across Horse Guards Avenue.
- Creating the ‘Queen’s Walk’ route from Buckingham Palace all the way to the river offers the opportunity to extract more historic narratives from the site, supported by wayfinding in the public realm and potentially augmented reality.
- At present Horse Guards Avenue has low levels of traffic and wide spaces between buildings, offering the opportunity to introduce further amenity through seating and planting; creating a space off the main thoroughfare where people can pause and connect with some of the lesser-known monuments in this area, such as the original house of Sir Mansfield Cumming, or Queen Mary’s Steps.

Design principles



The Whitehall design principles most relevant to the Queen’s Walk proposal are:

- **Connected** - To enhance connections across the site east - west, offering people better access to the nearby open green spaces and the river. Additionally connecting people to the rich layers of culture and history in the area by identifying and promoting hidden gems.
- **Green** - To better establish green connections east - west, support biodiversity and habitat creation throughout the area.
- **Layers of Richness** - Reveal existing layers of rich history.
- **Memorable** - Creating further opportunities to explore the area contributes to an overall positively memorable experience of Whitehall.



Fig. 238 - Route of the Queen’s Walk

...Introducing THE QUEEN'S WALK



Fig. 239 - Horse Guards Parade



Fig. 240 - Illustrative view of Horse Guards Parade showing the potential to use an interactive map to enhance wayfinding and reveal layers of history throughout the BID.

...Introducing THE QUEEN'S WALK



Fig. 241 - Horse Guards Parade



Fig. 242 - Illustrative view depicting how the Queen's Walk could be illuminated at night to assist with wayfinding, safety and comfort into the evening.

5

KING CHARLES STREET - RICHMOND TERRACE

Establishing a secondary east - west connection through Whitehall

In harmony with the Queen's Walk project is a secondary proposed east - west route which enhances the pedestrian link through King Charles Street to Richmond Terrace and onto the Embankment at the southern end of Whitehall Gardens. Establishing this second link creates further green connections to support ecology and biodiversity through the BID. This royally connected link provides another route to explore the area and further hidden gems from Buckingham Palace to the river Thames and beyond, connecting with Queen's Walk to complete a royal loop.

Key challenges

There are several key challenges to address in public realm enhancements along this route which include:

- The existing pedestrian connection from the Embankment through Richmond Terrace is not widely known or advertised due to the large dominance of railings around the Ministry of Defence building.
- This east - west connection cannot run straight across the BID area due to the Northern Estate. However an artistic installation, or ecological corridors and planting could signal the route to the river beyond the estate.
- Level change between Horse Guards Road and King Charles Street creates a barrier to accessibility.
- King Charles Street and Richmond Terrace are both identified in the Surface Flood Risk Hotspot and Flood Zone 3 in the Westminster City Plan, therefore the resilience of these streets and spaces requires consideration during adverse weather events.
- The currently unwelcoming pedestrian connection through Richmond Terrace could be re-imagined as a unique connection through Whitehall.

Opportunities

- Further establish a green finger along King Charles Street which introduces sustainable drainage infrastructure to increase the resilience of the area in rain events.
- Better advertise the Richmond Terrace pedestrian link between Whitehall and the Embankment through wayfinding mechanisms.
- Create a new loop walk which invites exploration of Whitehall from a different viewpoint.
- Improve pedestrian connection and experience along Richmond Terrace by enhancing amenity (planting, lighting animation etc).



Fig. 243 - View through the King Charles Street Arch



Fig. 244 - View west along King Charles Street



Fig. 245 - Pedestrian route along Richmond Terrace, adjacent to the Ministry of Defence building

- Enhance the historic façades along King Charles Street with sensitive feature lighting installations.
- Reveal the historic route of the river Tyburn through imaginative wayfinding interventions.

Design principles



The key Whitehall design principles relevant to the King's Walk project are:

- **Green** – This east - west connection should promote green-blue links and contribute to increased biodiversity and resilience in the BID.
- **Connected** – The pedestrian link should not only connect the area, but should also connect people with the hidden histories along the route and to the green spaces.
- **Diversity of Appeal** – This route through Whitehall will bring a new offer to the area and connecting the royal loop invites a different experience through the BID.
- **Health and Wellbeing** – This project can help to promote active modes of transport through the BID, better connection to green spaces, nature and improved air quality in the area.



Fig. 246 - Route of the King's Walk

....Introducing THE KING'S WALK

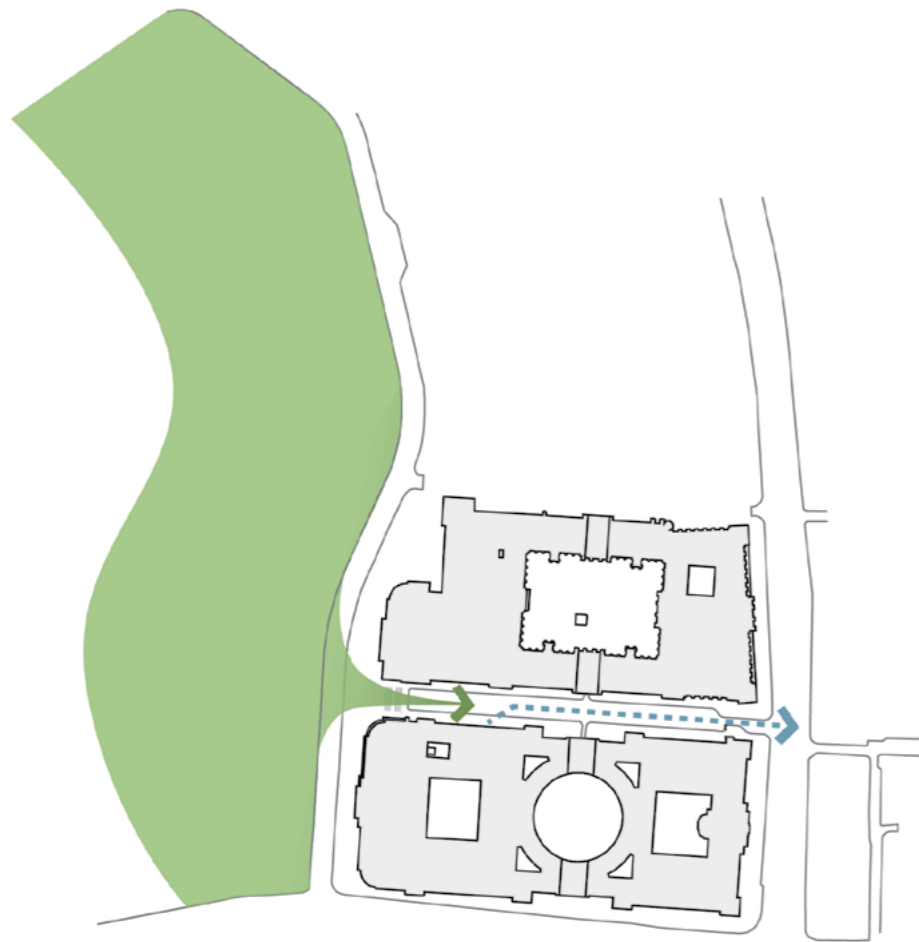


Fig. 247 - Creating a green finger from St James's Park and reflecting the historic route of the river Tyburn

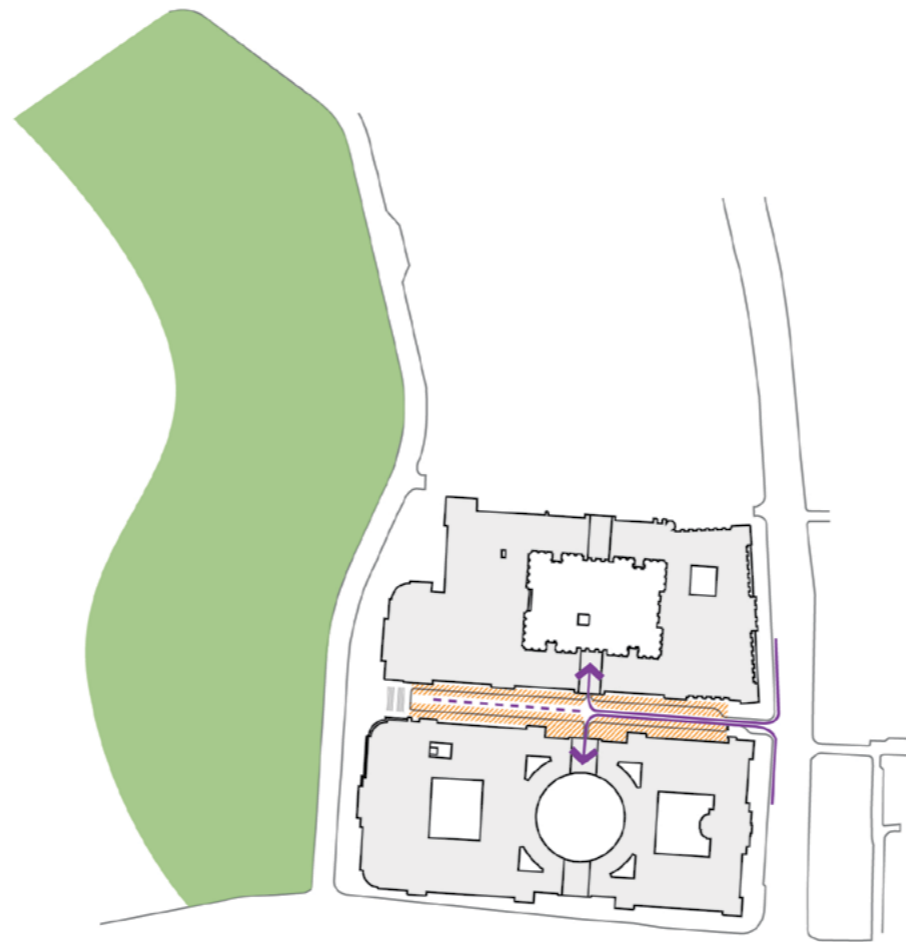


Fig. 248 - Expanding pedestrian footways while still allowing for controlled vehicle access

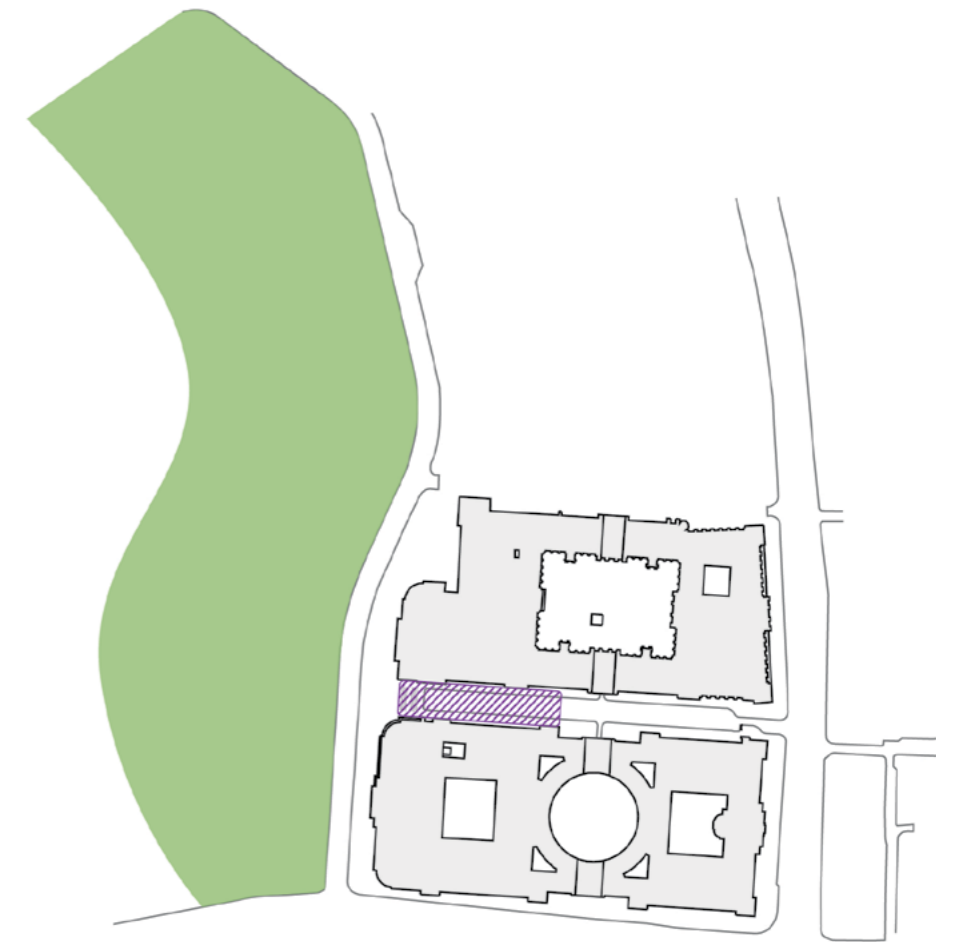


Fig. 249 - Creating a shared space at the eastern end of the street with priority for pedestrians while still allowing access where required for servicing needs etc.

...Introducing THE KING'S WALK



Fig. 250 - View east along King Charles Street



Fig. 251 - Illustrative view of the King's Walk looking east along King Charles Street

6

FOOTPRINTS OF A PALACE

Representing the history of Whitehall

Historically, Whitehall Palace sat within the north-eastern area of the BID and was home to English monarchs until 1622 when it was destroyed by fire. The façade of the palace was constructed with Portland Stone, which gave the Whitehall area its name. Although a very different layout to the traditional urban form which we see through Whitehall today, this sprawling palace had an interesting footprint which can be represented in some of the north-eastern streets of the BID area.

Design principles



In revealing the historic footprint of the palace, the key relevant design principles are:

- **Layers of Richness** – Expressing a rich piece of history in the area.
- **Connected** – Connecting people to the history and stories of the site and creating points for potential new pedestrian connections (crossings).
- **Memorable** – Creating more layers for people to engage with will give a long-lasting memorable impression of the Whitehall area.
- **Diversity of Appeal** – The design for revealing the footprints of a palace offers an accessible new engaging experience.



Fig. 252 - Whitehall Court, where footprints of the palace could be represented



Fig. 253 - Whitehall Palace, where footprints of the palace could be represented



Fig. 254 - Whitehall Place corner, where footprints of the palace could be represented



Fig. 255 - Whitehall, outside Banqueting House, where footprints of the palace could be represented

...Introducing FOOTPRINTS OF A PALACE



Fig. 256 - Illustrative sketch indicating the approximate location of the Whitehall Palace footprint

7

HIDDEN GEMS TRAIL

A new way to discover Whitehall

The vision for a ‘Hidden Gems Trail’ through Whitehall reveals and makes accessible the rich layers of history across the site. While there are many well-known monuments and landmarks throughout the BID area there are many smaller details with much potential to be revealed. Creating a ‘Hidden Gems Trail’ would offer a different way to explore Whitehall with routes off the main thoroughfare.

Design principles

The Whitehall design principles most relevant to the Hidden Gems Trail are:

- **Layers of Richness** - Express the elements of hidden history to invite engagement with the richness of culture and history throughout the Whitehall BID.
- **Connected** - Connecting places throughout Whitehall away from the main thoroughfare, while encouraging interaction with these elements of hidden history through a different and accessible medium.
- **Memorable** - Contributing to a more memorable experience of Whitehall.
- **Diversity of Appeal** - Creating further diverse offerings throughout Whitehall to appeal to visitors and locals alike.

Hidden Gems to be revealed:

1. Winston Churchill’s balcony
2. The historic route of the river Tyburn
3. Remnants of Henry VIII’s recreation area
4. Horse Guards Clock Tower
5. Banqueting House
6. Silver Cross Pub
7. The house of the original ‘M’
8. Footprints of the historic palace
9. Queen Mary’s Steps



Fig. 257 - Route of the Hidden Gems Trail

...Introducing HIDDEN GEMS



Fig. 258 - Queen Mary's Steps

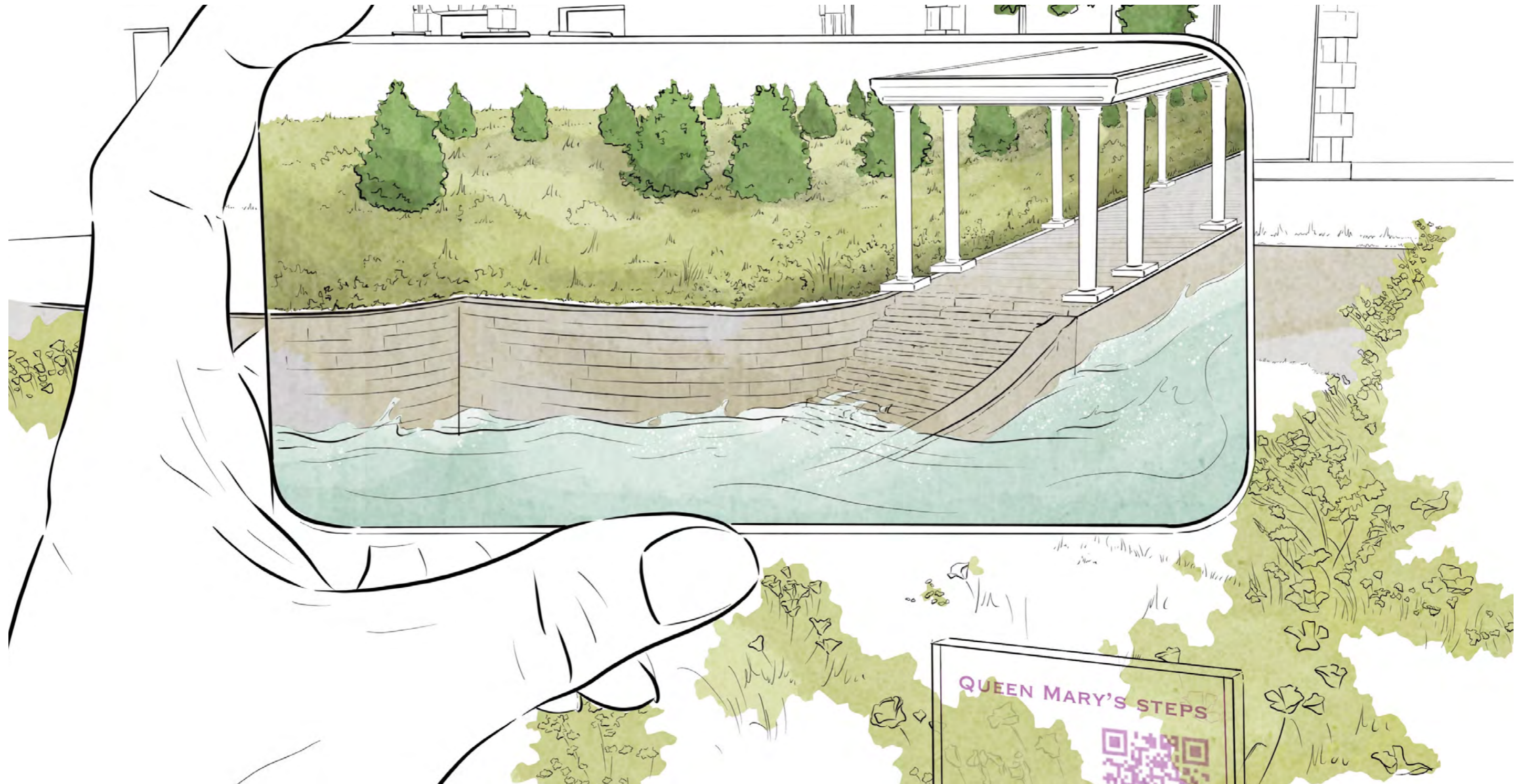


Fig. 259 - Illustrative sketch of how the history of Queen Mary's Steps could be revealed through the use of augmented reality and digital overlays using smart

8

OLD PLACE, NEW OFFER

Old Place New Offer

A key finding from the first phase of this study was the lack of amenity in the public realm throughout the BID. Largely due to the historic nature of the area and its core government function, there is a lack of public facilities, seating, wayfinding, planting, hospitality offerings and other basic facilities such as bins and drinking fountains. This 'Old Place, New Offer' proposal focuses on bringing new offerings to Whitehall and introducing some of these key amenities in areas off the main thoroughfare. The areas marked in the adjacent graphic are well located to create spaces to pause, and may act as trial areas for introducing further amenities.

Key challenges

Key challenges of the 'Old Place, New Offer' proposals are:

- Bringing traditional amenity to the area which is sensitive to the historical context and the function of these spaces.
- Admiralty House courtyard is currently used as a car park and is not accessible to the public, however this is a significant historic site with a lot of potential to create a place to pause off the main thoroughfare of Whitehall.
- Many of these areas have servicing requirements and security concerns which would need to be coordinated with any public realm interventions.

Opportunities

Key opportunities across the site are:

- Through the Levelling Up agenda the functions of some of the surrounding buildings may change and potentially introduce greater diversity to the area.
- Low traffic areas could present meaningful positive design solutions.
- The introduction of amenity infrastructure such as seating, bins and drinking facilities to the area on a trial basis.
- New offerings attract people to Whitehall and encourage them to stay.
- Meaningful public realm interventions to historic spaces could create unique public spaces.



Fig. 260 - Potential locations for 'Old Place, New Offer' projects

Craig's Court

For the purposes of this study Craig's Court has been selected to illustrate the aspirational potential of these sites for implementing 'Old Place, New Offer'. Craig's Court is an opportune test site as it has an existing hospitality offer which already attracts people to the area.



Fig. 261 - King Charles Street



Fig. 262 - Derby Gate

Design principles



Resilient - Introducing more amenity to these spaces contributes to a more flexible and resilient BID area.

Diversity of Appeal - Creating more places to dwell and more amenities will attract people to the area.

Inviting and Safe - As these spaces are off the main thoroughfare and near significant sites, they should be safe and inviting for people throughout the day and night.

Memorable - A new offering will contribute to people's memorable experience of Whitehall.



Fig. 263 - Craig's Court

....Introducing THE MOST SUSTAINABLE COURT IN WESTMINSTER

Craig's Court is one of the few remaining quiet cul-de-sacs in Westminster. Originally laid out by Joseph Craig in the 1690s, the court houses grade II listed building Harrington House which was constructed in 1702 (Mirror, 2015). Today the court is flanked by residents, hotel rooms, two busy pubs and a few offices. The street is predominantly used for servicing and patrons regularly spill out from the pubs in the evening. The neighbouring residents have recently introduced three new street trees, indicating a desire to 'green' the space.

The design intent is to introduce greening and sustainable infrastructure, creating a courtyard which is pleasant to look at, improves resilience and biodiversity and offers a different experience of Whitehall. By planting a historic Ash tree and giving it sufficient soil space to grow to maturity, this courtyard can become a tranquil space which also acts as buffer against street noise. Controlling the canopy height will allow for continued servicing requirements for vehicles which can access the narrow alley. This simple design move can also make a significant contribution to the resilience of the area by collecting a lot of rainwater in a storm event. In creating the most sustainable and tranquil court in Westminster, the aim is to reduce anti-social behaviour and enhance the resident and visitor experience.

Craig's Court can act as a testing ground for working collaboratively with local residents and key stakeholders to deliver new amenities which are sensitive to the context of Whitehall.

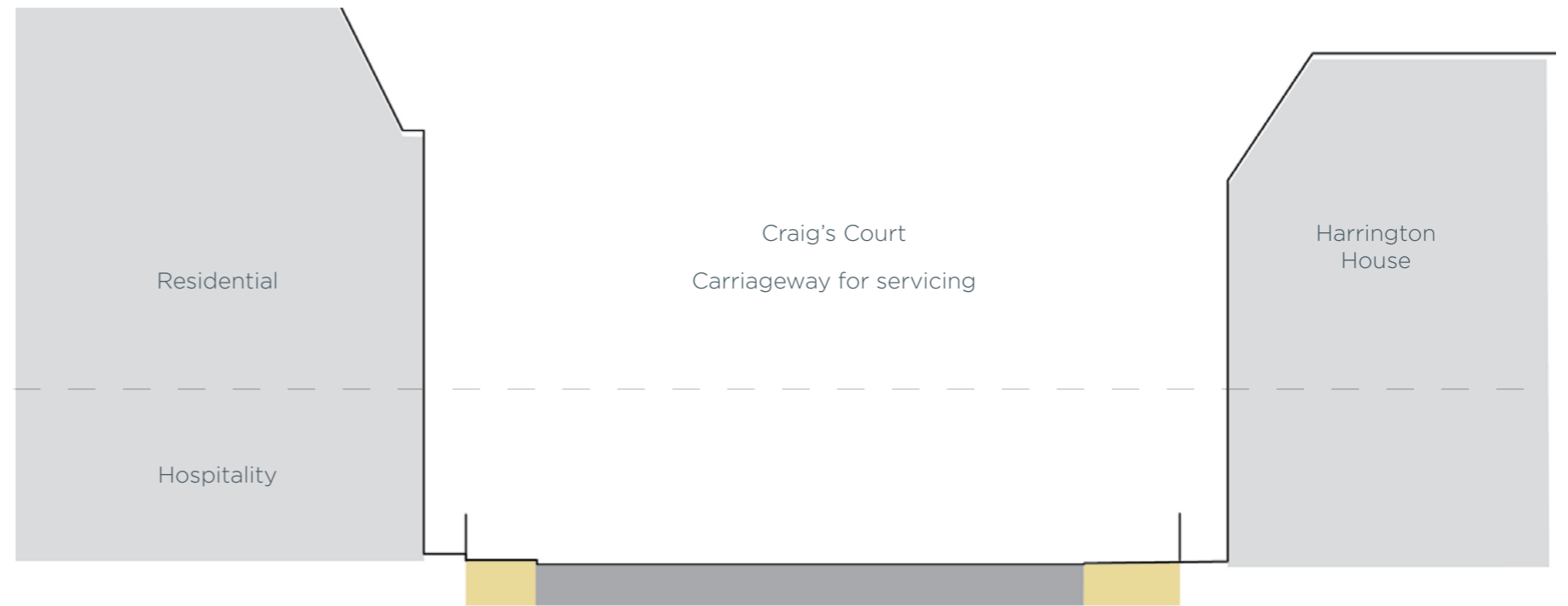


Fig. 264 - Existing section of Craig's Court indicating hard surface arrangement

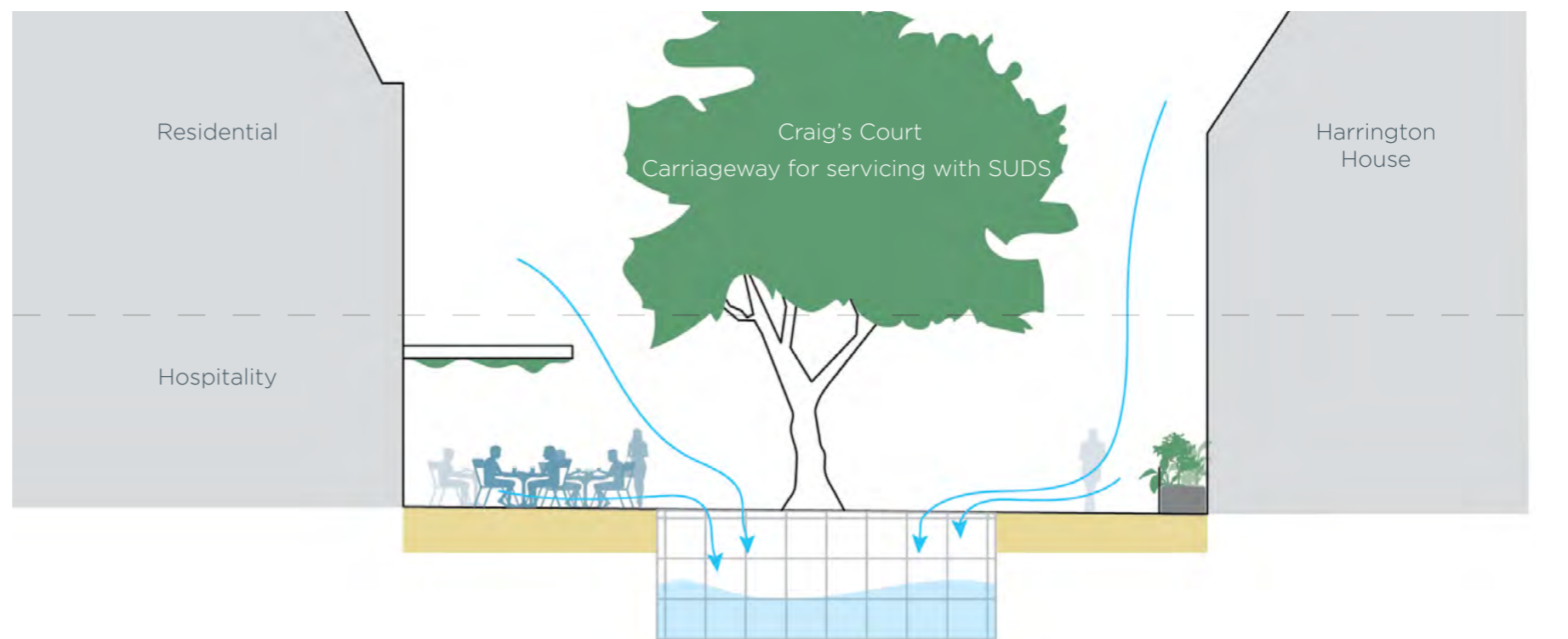


Fig. 265 - Proposed section of Craig's Court indicating sustainable drainage system and a significantly sized tree

...Introducing THE MOST SUSTAINABLE COURT IN WESTMINSTER



Fig. 266 - Craig's Court



Fig. 267 - Illustrative sketch view of Craig's Court showing greening with potential for seating

9

GREENING WHITEHALL PLACE

Whitehall Place is a secondary front door to Whitehall

Whitehall Place is a quiet street connecting Northumberland Avenue, Embankment Station and Victoria Embankment to central Whitehall. The street has several high-end hotels and residences which could benefit from having an enhanced 'front door'. This quiet street offers another example for delivering a green-blue climate positive design and improve east - west connections.

Key challenges

- The intersection between Northumberland Avenue and Whitehall Place is busy, with no formalised opportunity for pedestrians to cross, despite being a key route through to Embankment Station and a connection to the pedestrian bridge over the Thames.
- The pedestrian area at the entrance to Whitehall Gardens North is cluttered with cycle hire infrastructure and rubbish bins which does not encourage access to the gardens from this location.
- Drainage issues outside the entrance to Whitehall Gardens North creates ponding and rubbish build up.

Opportunities

- Introducing sustainable drainage systems along the length of Whitehall Place introduces greening and releases pressure on the stormwater network, making the street and vicinity more resilient in weather events.
- A better 'front door' to the Whitehall BID area would enhance the arrival experience for people exiting Embankment Station.
- Whitehall Place has been laid over the historic palace so offers the opportunity to reveal and express the footprint through streetscape enhancements.
- The project could align and synergise with the Thames Riverfront Placemaking Strategy proposals for this area.

Design principles



The design principles with particular relevance to the project along Whitehall Place are:

- **Green** - Creating a green link between the river and central Whitehall.
- **Resilience** - Introducing sustainable drainage systems to make this street and section of Whitehall more resilient in adverse weather events.
- **Health and Wellbeing** - Supporting healthy lifestyles improving connection to open green spaces such as Whitehall Gardens North, and introducing further greening to contribute to cleaner air in the area.
- **Layers of richness** - Reveal the historic footprint of the palace and promote exploration throughout Whitehall to discover the 'hidden gems'.



Fig.268 - View of the entrance to Whitehall Gardens North



Fig. 269 - Flooding issues on the corner of Whitehall Place and Northumberland Avenue



Fig. 270 - View from the corner of Northumberland Avenue and Whitehall Place looking west

...Introducing A GREEN WHITEHALL PLACE

- ① Introduction of a sustainable drainage system to alleviate surface flooding in the area
- ② Potential to relocate existing cycle hire parking to a location with better access from Embankment Station
- ③ Potential location for a new pedestrian crossing to create safer pedestrian connection between Whitehall and Embankment Station



Fig. 271 - Whitehall Place



Fig. 272 - Illustrative view of Whitehall Place looking west towards Whitehall showing potential new sustainable drainage systems



NEXT STEPS



7.0

NEXT STEPS

This report presents a convincing vision and strategy to bring significant public realm improvement to the Whitehall BID area. This vision has been informed by a comprehensive analysis of the site and social trends, with a focus on their influence in the public realm.

The core of this vision is to enhance the public realm throughout Whitehall to better reflect the historical and cultural significance of this area, not only to London but the wider United Kingdom, to ensure that Whitehall remains an iconic destination in the capital city.

Although this vision commissioned by the Whitehall BID does not have statutory or legal standing, it is well placed to encourage dialogue between the relevant stakeholders, including Westminster City Council, Transport for London and The Royal Parks, to generate meaningful conversation around the shared goal of public realm enhancements in the area. Stakeholders working together towards achieving a shared vision prevent ad-hoc development and greatly contribute to the success of placemaking initiatives and ongoing place-keeping.

The potential projects set out in this document should not be seen as the final proposals or as final or absolute steps to delivering this vision. While these projects have been well considered and result from comprehensive analysis, they are indicative of options to deliver the vision. They illustrate how each of the design principles can be applied individually, and as an assemblage, to help contribute to meaningful change within the BID.

All projects will require further investigative work to determine their feasibility and potential before undertaking a full design process with additional consultation, coordination, and design development.

A principal function of this vision and strategy is to present a range of projects over a

variety of scales, some of which can be delivered as 'quick wins' whilst others will require further ongoing investment towards substantial change. This would result in longer timeframes to allow for meaningful coordination and development.

The next steps recommended to deliver this vision and ensure momentum are:

- Launching and promoting the 'People Wanted, Whitehall' vision and strategy document across various stakeholder groups to encourage ongoing conversation and step up momentum.
- Continue open engagement with relevant stakeholders such as Westminster City Council, Transport for London and key residents.
- Continue to collaborate with other teams working in the area such as Project SWAN, to identify potential opportunities for synergies between projects.
- Consider undertaking more detailed studies throughout Whitehall regarding:
 - o Wayfinding
 - o Lighting
 - o Materiality use
 - o Sustainable drainage systems and opportunities for increased greening
- Explore emerging strategies tabled by other agencies, such as the Royal Parks strategy for St James's Park, to ensure coordinated activity and integration between areas. This should also be considered for the Northbank, the river Thames and Victoria/Westminster.
- Prepare an initial programme for delivery of 'quick win' initiatives to encourage momentum and ensure the vision and strategy remains relevant.
- Review the current issues around environmental conditions throughout the BID in more detail and explore opportunities to introduce infrastructure to improve environmental resilience and air quality.
- Prepare a strategic funding strategy to deliver meaningful public realm projects in the BID.



APPENDIX





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Chapter three figures

Figure 178 Image by the Coherent Team and available on Unsplash

Figure 179 Image by Thought catlaog and available on Unsplash

Figure 180 Image by Blocks Fletcher and available on Unsplash

Figure 181 Image by Mike Baumeister and available on Unsplash

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GLOSSARY

| | | | |
|----------------------------|--|--------|--------------------------|
| 'The Applicant' | Corporate Officer of the House of Commons | 'WBID' | Whitehall BID |
| 'BID' | Business improvement district | 'WHS' | World Heritage Site |
| 'Big Ben' | 'Elizabeth Tower (Big Ben)' | 'Zol' | Zone of Influence |
| 'CAZ' | Central Activities Zone | 'ZVI' | Zone of Visual Influence |
| 'COVID-19' | Coronavirus disease 2019, (SARS-CoV-2 virus) | | |
| 'Draft WCP' | Draft Westminster City Plan | | |
| 'EA' | Environment Agency | | |
| 'EIA' | Environmental Impact Assessment | | |
| 'Existing Use' | The existing lawful use of the Northern Estate is sui generis. | | |
| 'GLA' | Greater London Authority | | |
| 'GLAAS' | Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service | | |
| 'HE' | Historic England | | |
| 'HoC' | House of Commons | | |
| 'HoL' | House of Lords | | |
| 'LBC' | Listed Building Consent | | |
| 'LUL' | London Underground Limited | | |
| 'LVMF' | London View Management Framework | | |
| 'NEP' | Northern Estate Programme | | |
| 'NBID' | Northbank BID | | |
| 'Pre-Pandemic' | Prior to the COVID-19 Global Pandemic | | |
| 'PoW' | Palace of Westminster | | |
| 'Proposed Development' | The applications will be applied for the description of development, which forms the 'Proposed Development'. Exact description of development to be confirmed. | | |
| 'Proposed Use' | The proposed use of all new floorspace will be sui generis. | | |
| 'Parliamentary Estate' | Parliament of the United Kingdom, comprising the Palace of Westminster the Northern Estate, and other Parliamentary landholdings. | | |
| 'PSD' | Parliamentary Security Department | | |
| 'PSE' | Parliamentary Strategic Estates | | |
| 'QEII Conference Centre' | Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre | | |
| 'R&R' | Restoration and Renewal | | |
| 'The Northern Estate Site' | The Parliamentary Northern Estate | | |
| 'UK' | United Kingdom | | |
| 'WCC' | Westminster City Council | | |
| 'WCP' | Westminster City Plan | | |

