



A Toolkit for  
Pollinator-Friendly  
Street Frontages



"Many small actions, taken together, can create greener, more welcoming streets."

One planter, one hanging basket, or one shared idea is enough to begin. When repeated across a street, these simple gestures can add up to places that feel cared for, calmer, and more inviting for people and for nature.



## HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This is a simple, flexible guide to inspire greening in your local area.

This toolkit is designed to help you take action quickly and confidently - whether you're adding a single planter or wanting to coordinate greening with neighbours.

### 1 Why it matters



Understand the value of greening

### 2 What works for you



Choose an approach that fits your space

### 3 How to do it



Plan, design, and install with confidence

### 4 Support & next steps



Check permissions and where to find help



## THINK POLLINATOR PATHWAYS

**Pollinator pathways are connected pockets of planting and nature that allow bees, butterflies and other insects to thrive and move safely through urban areas.**

Pollinators are essential to healthy cities, yet many species are declining due to habitat loss. Incidental street greening offers a highly visible and practical way for businesses to help reverse this trend and create environments where people and nature can thrive.

When pollinator-friendly planting is repeated across multiple areas, individual planters and window boxes become stepping stones, forming green routes through the London Heritage Quarter, supporting nature whilst enhancing the street environment for all.



For more information on London Heritage Quarter initiatives visit our Pollinator Pathway webpage.



Jen Jakobsen, Founder of The Onion Garden, Victoria

## HOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE

**Greening your frontage can be a simple, low-risk way to improve the look and feel of the street while supporting local nature.**

Done well, greening supports pollinators, improves street quality, and enhances business perception. Greenery isn't decoration alone, it's a practical tool that shapes how

people experience a place, often within seconds of arrival. Together we can create more welcoming streets across the London Heritage Quarter that:

### SUPPORT POLLINATORS



...by providing food and habitat through connected planting

### IMPROVE STREET QUALITY



...by softening the space with colour and seasonal interest

### ENHANCE BUSINESS PERCEPTION



...by signalling care, quality and a welcoming nature

# Before you start



## GREENING PRINCIPLES

High quality streetfront greening should work for *everyone*: customers, staff, passers-by, and people with different access needs. Thoughtful choices through design and materiality can ensure greenery enhances the street without creating any barriers.

These principals can be used as a starting point to guide your greening project. You don't need to apply every principle at once; start with what suits your space and build over time.

### 1 Start with greenery



Planting delivers immediate visual impact and, with a wide range of species and sizes, **can be adapted to suit most frontages**. It can be used to **define entrances and seating areas, soften edges**, and highlight windows, helping to create welcoming and legible spaces.

### 2 Enhance what you have



Look to **use existing structures**, such as window ledges, lamp posts, railings, and other everyday elements as opportunities for greening. Greening should be multifunctional, making use of what is already in place to support planting, hanging, or growing, while **avoiding unnecessary additions** or visual clutter.

### 3 Accessibility comes first



Greening must never reduce clear pedestrian routes or block sightlines to **ensure a clear and accessible environment** for all. Keep it simple. A limited palette and fewer considered elements can feel intentional and avoid any risk of street clutter.

### 4 Plan for care



Low-maintenance planting that's **consistently looked after** always outperforms ambitious schemes that are hard to sustain.

## HOW TO GREEN YOUR STREETFRONT

"The most effective schemes often begin with *one clear, visible intervention* that fits the space and is easy to maintain. If it feels manageable and looks intentional, it's the right place to start."



## HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

### 1 Get inspired



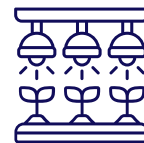
Look at examples that suit your size and budget

### 2 Check permissions



Understand what needs approval

### 3 Plan your design



Choose planting, lighting, layout

### 4 Source plants & materials



Local suppliers or DIY

### 5 Install



Keep access clear and safe

### 6 Maintain



Light but regular upkeep

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT GREENING APPROACH

There is no single way to green a street front. What works best depends on space, context and how the street is used.



## WHEN GROUND SPACE IS LIMITED

### Greening without touching the pavement

On busy streets, greening often works best above ground level. Window-height planting, railing-mounted planters or lightweight vertical systems can soften a frontage without building's rhythm for example, being centred on windows or

repeated at regular intervals - to create a calm, considered appearance. On historic or listed buildings, permanent fixings may not be permitted, so lighter, reversible approaches are often more appropriate.

Typical interventions include:

#### HANGING BASKETS



#### RAILING-MOUNTED PLANTERS



#### LIGHTWEIGHT VERTICAL SYSTEMS



"When space is tight, it's not about adding more — it's about working more carefully with what's already there."

## FRAMING FRONTAGES

### Planting that guides movement and highlights entrances

Where space allows, planting can make arrival spaces clearer, more welcoming and intuitive. A pair of planters framing an entrance, or planting defining the edge of seating areas, helps guide movement intuitively and clearly define uses along

the street. Fewer, well-proportioned containers tend to feel more deliberate than many small ones. Often planters can be moveable, and layouts can be tested and refined over time.

Typical interventions include:

#### FRAMING ENTRANCES



Matched planters framing an entrance

#### DEFINING AREAS



Planters defining the edge of outdoor seating

#### SOFTENING STREET EDGES



Low planting at corners to soften street edges without blocking views

## Mildreds Victoria Restaurant | Victoria Street

### What Was Introduced

- Large-format, moveable planters were installed to frame the main entrance
- Layered planting provides structure, texture, and year-round interest
- Greenery softens the edge of a busy street environment while maintaining clear pedestrian movement

### Maintenance

Plant maintenance is managed internally by the venue's management team.

### Design Priorities

- Selecting species suited to the street's light and exposure conditions
- Maximising visual impact from the pavement
- Ensuring durability and ease of upkeep

### Supplier

Finchley Nurseries

### Budget Range

£8,000–£10,000



## THE BENEFITS OF A SHARED APPROACH

### Small interventions, coordinated across a space

Some spaces, side streets, passages, and overlooked corners are experienced as a whole rather than as individual frontages. In these locations, greening can be most effective when communities and businesses act together. Repeated elements, modest in scale but consistent in placement, can significantly impact how a space feels, without permanent change.

Typical interventions include:

#### SHARED PLANTERS



...placed at regular intervals along a passage

#### SMALL PLANTING POCKETS



...in underused corners

#### TEMPORARY GREENING PILOTS



...to test ideas before committing

### Funding Shared Community greening initiatives

Community greening is often funded through small, shared budgets and support may be available through LHQ initiatives, council grants, local funds, and contributions from businesses or partners. As funding is often *time-limited*, early coordination and a clear proposal are key. The London Heritage Quarter can advise on funding options and next steps.

## King's Scholars Passage

### Community Greening

King's Scholars Passage is a pedestrian route within the London Heritage Quarter, used daily by workers, residents, and visitors. The space connects historic buildings and sits within a sensitive heritage setting.

#### Frontage Type

Shared passageway and building frontages

#### What Was Done

A community-led greening initiative introduced a series of moveable planters along the passage. The planting focused on hardy, low-maintenance species, with an emphasis on seasonal interest and pollinator-friendly plants. All elements were temporary and reversible, requiring no permanent alterations to the buildings or paving.

#### Why It Worked

- The use of moveable planters avoided the need for permanent permissions
- Greening softened the space without competing with historic architecture
- Utilising existing structures – railing planting

#### Maintenance Level

Low | Regular watering and occasional seasonal refresh, managed collaboratively by a gardening group which adds to community ownership and care over the space.



## LOCAL GREENING CHAMPION: THE ONION GARDEN

**The Onion Garden is a not-for-profit, green community hub in the heart of Westminster for humans and nature to share and enjoy.**

Rooted in community, creativity, and sustainability, the project demonstrates that greening is not only about appearance: it's about participation, learning, and stewardship.

By working with simple materials, accessible growing methods, and shared responsibility, The Onion Garden makes greening feel approachable and inclusive, even for people with no prior experience of gardening.

It is even more special given its unlikely location and very urban and challenging surroundings, it highlights the level of greening that can be achieved in containers only.

**"Nature connects us;  
we all smile in the  
same language."**

**Jens Jakobsen,  
Founder of The Onion**



Photo credit:  
Anthony Dawton



## PERMISSIONS AT A GLANCE

Most shopfront greening improvements can be made *without formal permission*, particularly when they are *temporary, moveable, and do not obstruct the pavement*.



### You usually do NOT need permission for:

- Moveable planters placed directly outside your frontage within your own Premise
- Internal planting
- Window-level greening or displays
- Cleaning, decluttering, and repainting



### You MAY need permission for:

- Tables, chairs, or planters placed on the public pavement
- New or altered signage
- Awnings or fixed structures
- Changes to listed buildings or heritage façades

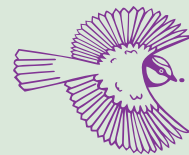
### Important:

Always check who manages your street, Westminster City Council or Transport for London, as this affects the approval process.

Within the London Heritage Quarter, streets are managed by *different authorities*:

- **Westminster City Council (WCC)** manages most local streets and pavements
- **Transport for London (TfL)** manages major roads known as **Red Routes**

If your business is on a Red Route, permissions for pavement use and some shopfront elements are handled by **TfL**, not the Council.



## PAVEMENT LICENSE ESSENTIALS

You may need a pavement license if you plan to place *tables, chairs, or planters on the public pavement* outside your business. Whether you apply to **WCC** or **TfL** depends on who manages the street.

### 1 Who can apply

Pubs, Restaurants, Bars, Cafés, Snack bars, Coffee shops, Ice cream parlours

Your business must:

- Be next to the pavement/highway where you want seating
- Use the space for customers to eat or drink (not just general use)
- Be a properly operating premises (with any required licences, especially if serving alcohol)

### 2 What you'll need

- Site plan showing furniture layout
- Details of tables, chairs, barriers, umbrellas
- £5m public liability insurance
- Clear pedestrian route (minimum 2m)

### 3 Fees

- New application: £500
  - Renewal (no changes): £350
  - Licenses typically last **3–6 months**
- \* Fees mentioned are indicative and may vary

### Key things to keep in mind

- Pedestrian movement and accessibility must always be maintained
- Licenses are usually *time-limited* and may need renewal
- Items should not block entrances, sightlines, or emergency access
- Heritage settings may require additional consideration

**Note:** Always refer to guidance available directly from WCC or TfL

Search for Westminster City Councils guidance on applying for a pavement licence for further information and contact details.

<https://www.westminster.gov.uk/licensing/licensing/apply-pavement-licence>

# PLANNING YOUR DESIGN

## 5 steps for successful greening:

### 1 Check your spot



Stand outside your frontage and answer these **three questions**:

- Is the area mostly *sun* or *shade*?
- Is it *exposed to wind* or sheltered?
- How much clear space must remain for people to pass?

**Tip:**

If space is tight, you may want to think vertical. If you have room at ground level, planters could work.

### 2 Choose one approach



Pick **one option** to start with. You can always add more later.

- Hanging baskets or window-level greening
- Planters at entrances or seating edges
- Shared or larger-scale planting nearby

**Decision:**

Choose the option that fits your space without blocking access.

### 3 Select suitable containers



Containers affect both appearance and safety.

**Use:**

- Stable, well-weighted pots
- Containers with drainage holes
- Good-quality compost
- Water-retaining liners if available

**Tip:**

If a pot feels light or unstable, it's not suitable for the street.

### 4 Place and install



Position planting before filling it, and step back to check how it reads.

**Check:**

- Entrances and routes are fully clear
- Planting frames the frontage, not blocks it
- Everything looks intentional and tidy

**Tip:**

If it feels cluttered, pare back the approach.

### 5 Plan for care



Greening only works if it is looked after.

**Agree now:**

- Who waters and when
- How often plants are checked
- When seasonal refreshes will happen

**Tip:**

If regular care isn't realistic, think about reducing the size of the scheme to one you can manage.



## GREENING IN PRACTICE: WHAT TO CONSIDER

### Before choosing plants, take a moment to understand the conditions around your frontage:

- **Light levels:** full sun, partial shade, or shade
- **Wind exposure:** sheltered or exposed locations
- **Road pollution:** choose hardy, resilient species
- **Containers & soil:** ensure adequate depth and drainage

Choose hardy, pollinator-friendly species that look good across the seasons

### Watering & Maintenance Tips

- Water in the morning or evening to reduce evaporation
- Use self-watering containers if time is limited
- Refresh seasonal planting 3–4 times per year

## GREENING THAT ALWAYS STAYS IN PLACE

### The foundation: greenery that always stays put.

#### Evergreen Mix

Always green.  
Always tidy.

Creates a consistent base that looks good in every season.

**Use for:** window planters, doorway pots, railings.

**Examples:** Lavender, Hebe, Skimmia Pittosporum, Hardy grasses (Carex)



#### Statement Plants

Instant atmosphere and screening.  
Larger pots with bold planting soften hard edges and make entrances feel welcoming.

**Use for:** restaurant terraces, hotel entrances, wider pavements.

**Examples:** Olive trees, Bay trees, Multi-stem Amelanchier, Bamboo (clumping varieties only)



#### Trees & Shrubs

Long-term impact.

Anchors your frontage and builds character.

Even one tree-sized planter can transform a street.

**Examples:** Amelanchier, Photinia Osmanthus, Small ornamental cherry



### The year with seasonal flowering

Seasonal planting keeps your frontage fresh and engaging.

#### Spring

Fresh colour after winter.

Bright planting signals new energy and draws attention.



#### Summer

Full colour and movement.

Long-flowering plants attract pollinators and extend dwell time.



#### Late Summer

Soft, textured planting that works in evening light.



#### Winter

Structure and evergreen strength.

No empty pots.  
No dead corners.



## WHERE TO FIND HELP

You don't need specialist knowledge to green your frontage. Many improvements can be delivered using off-the-shelf products and light-touch advice.

### The London Heritage Quarter can help you:

- Understand what's appropriate for your location
- Identify suppliers or partners
- Explore shared greening or pilot projects
- Navigate permissions and funding routes

### Plants & Planters

- **Local nurseries and garden centres**  
Suitable for small to medium planters, seasonal planting, and pollinator-friendly species.
- **Specialist urban greening suppliers**  
Useful for larger planters, coordinated schemes, or advice on planting for exposed or high-footfall locations.
- **Plant selection guidance**



The Royal Horticultural Society's *Perfect for Pollinators* plant list is a helpful reference when choosing hardy, nectar-rich plants suited to urban environments. More information can be found on the RHS webpage available here.

### Design and Installation Advice

For more complex frontages or heritage-sensitive settings, light-touch professional advice can help ensure proposals are appropriate and long-lasting. You may need advice from:

- *Urban greening and planting specialists*
- *Exterior or shopfront designers*
- *Heritage or conservation consultants* (where buildings are listed or in sensitive locations)

**If you're unsure where to begin, a short conversation can often unlock a clear, workable next step.**

### Get in contact

[pollinatorpathways@london-hq.co.uk](mailto:pollinatorpathways@london-hq.co.uk)





LONDON HERITAGE QUARTER

VICTORIA DISTRICT

THE NORTHBANK DISTRICT

VICTORIA WESTMINSTER DISTRICT

WHITEHALL DISTRICT