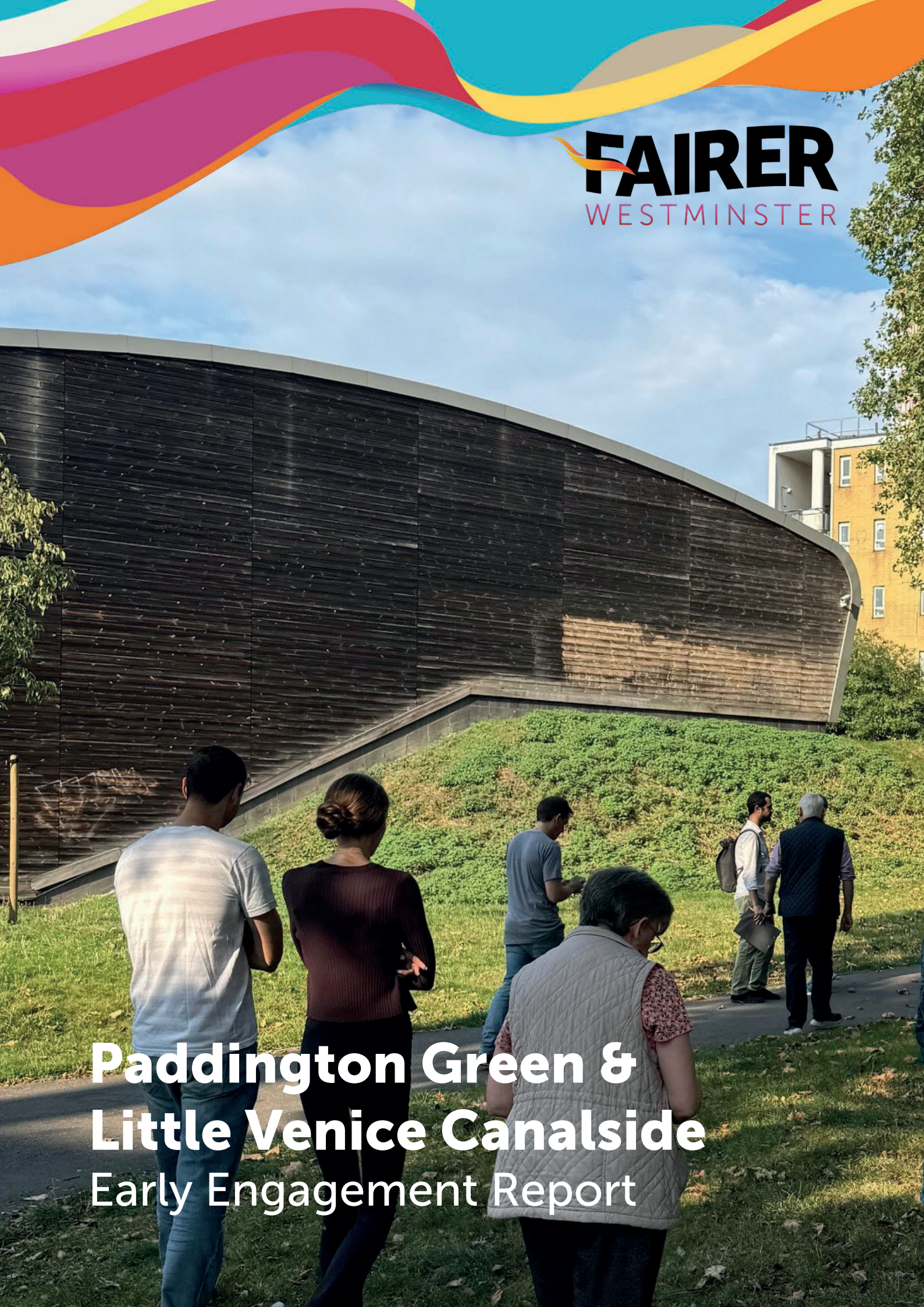
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# Paddington Green & Little Venice Canalside

## Early Engagement Report



# Executive summary

Over September and October 2024, Westminster City Council conducted an early engagement process to gather insights and ensure that the priorities of local people were considered from the outset of the project. Feedback focused on the existing conditions of Paddington Green and Little Venice Canalside, as well as people's views on what should be improved. Through three in-person events and an interactive digital platform, the engagement reached 74 contributors with just under 500 comments, most of whom were local residents or local representatives such as Ward Councillors and Business Improvement Districts.

Key Insights:

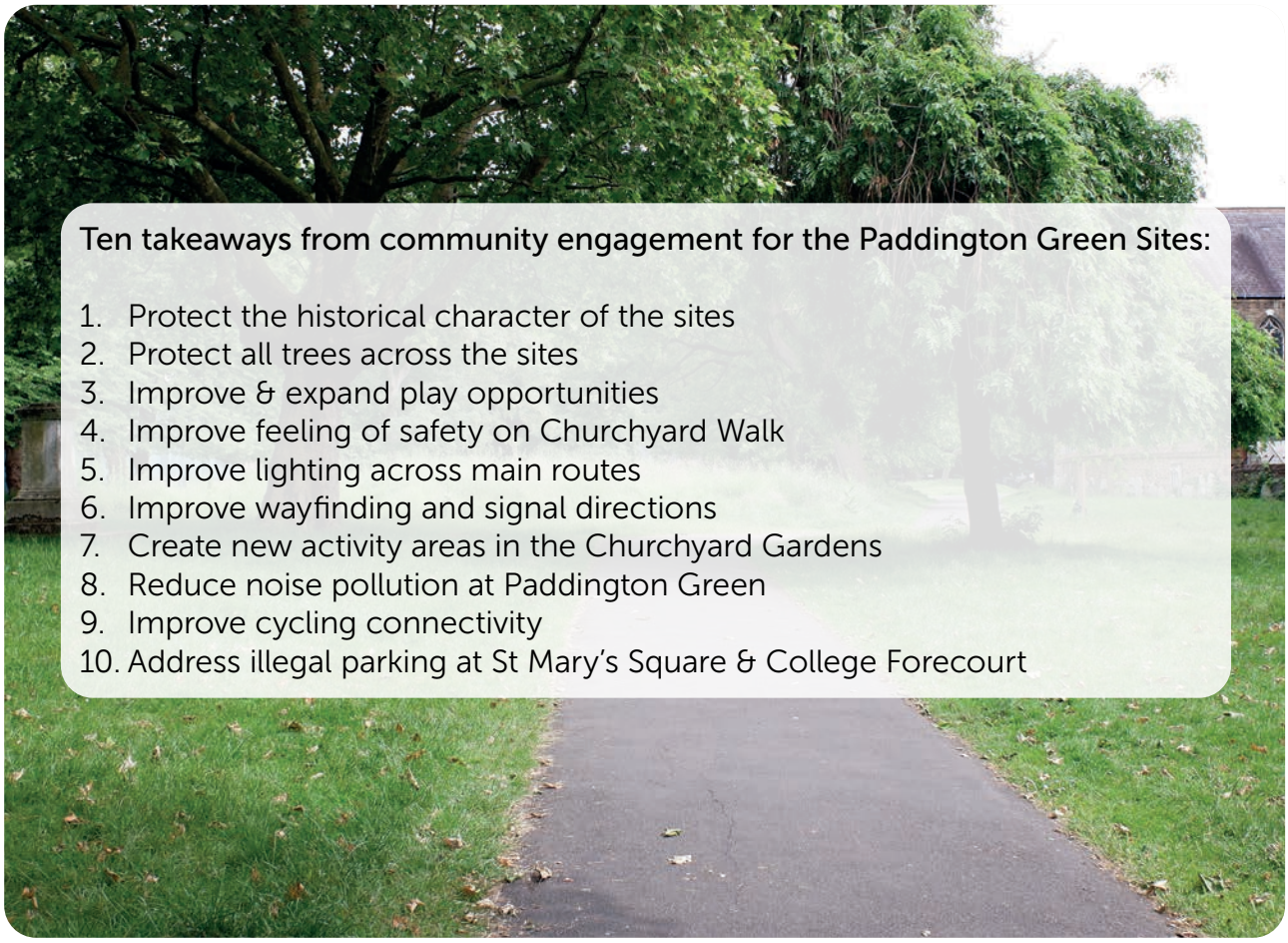
- Accessibility and Connectivity emerged as dominant themes across all sites, with strong calls for smoother, wider, and more continuous routes that are accessible to everyone. Many suggested enhancing the spaces under bridges at Stone Wharf and Rembrandt Gardens to improve visibility, usability, and connections.
- Wayfinding improvements were also highlighted, with a need for consistent and visible signage to help users navigate between these spaces and connect to nearby destinations like Church Street and Warwick Avenue.
- Use and Activation was a significant focus, particularly at Stone Wharf and St. Mary's Churchyard. Residents supported community-oriented features such as play spaces, seating areas, educational installations, and outdoor gym equipment to make the spaces more lively and engaging. However, there was also a desire to preserve quieter areas and protect the tranquil character of the green spaces.
- Lighting and Safety were recurring concerns, particularly in underpasses, along the towpath and Churchyard Walk. Limited or inconsistent lighting was frequently linked to feelings of insecurity, especially at night. Residents suggested brighter and more lighting that would enhance visibility while maintaining the natural and historical character of the spaces.
- Greening was highly valued by residents, who expressed strong support for protecting mature trees and greenery while enhancing biodiversity.
- Waste and Maintenance were highlighted as critical issues. Residents called for improved litter collection, regular maintenance of benches, railings, and pathways, and better management of waste and recycling facilities.
- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) was frequently raised, with poorly lit and neglected areas being associated with feelings of insecurity and occasional misuse.

Through this process, residents emphasized the importance of **balancing improvements with preservation**, ensuring that the calm and tranquil character of Paddington Green and Little Venice is maintained. Protecting the natural and built heritage of these spaces while carefully introducing enhancements was a key priority for many contributors.



**Ten takeaways from community engagement for the Canalside Sites:**

1. Protect Rembrandt Gardens
2. Protect all trees across the sites
3. Improve wayfinding across the sites
4. Promote the area's heritage through storytelling
5. Create a fully accessible route across the site
6. Reduce noise pollution
7. Create new uses and activities at Stone Wharf
8. Improve the lighting and condition of underpasses and under the bridges
9. Improve biodiversity at Stone Wharf
10. Address the dead-end at Rembrandt Gardens



**Ten takeaways from community engagement for the Paddington Green Sites:**

1. Protect the historical character of the sites
2. Protect all trees across the sites
3. Improve & expand play opportunities
4. Improve feeling of safety on Churchyard Walk
5. Improve lighting across main routes
6. Improve wayfinding and signal directions
7. Create new activity areas in the Churchyard Gardens
8. Reduce noise pollution at Paddington Green
9. Improve cycling connectivity
10. Address illegal parking at St Mary's Square & College Forecourt

# Engagement Plan

The project's early engagement sought to ensure that the concerns, aspirations, and priorities of local people were consistently understood and considered throughout the design process, and to provide the design team with an in-depth understanding of the area's use by different groups.

Altogether, the multi-stranded engagement process offered local people formal, informal, analogue, and digital means of participation. The timings and format of the events were planned with inclusivity in mind, to suit a range of personalities, preferences, schedules, caring responsibilities, and access needs. An online presence was also established through a project website, project email address, and interactive map.

The events and project were advertised through:

- 26 email invites to stakeholders, businesses, and representative groups
- 2446 letter-drops to residents around the project site
- 30 posters placed around the project site area
- An interactive digital map was created via Commonplace to allow additional comments from those who couldn't attend in-person events






# Responses

In total, the project's events and digital platforms drew input from 74 participants. The demographic profile and background of the participants was not formally collected for the in-person events, but the vast majority of people who attended introduced themselves as residents of the local area.

A single young resident (child/ teenager) attened the walks. Instead, we organised and attended workshops with Westminster City College where we directly heard the concerns and ideas of students. Information on these workshops can be found at the end of this document.





**Commonplace (online platform)**
**14th of September - 15th of October**
31 respondents
61 comments
47 agreements

**Walk 1 (both sites)**
**21st of September, 14:00-16:00**
12 local residents
3 local representatives

**Walk 2 (Rembrandt Gardens)**
**1st of October, 18:00-19:00**
9 local residents
2 local representatives

**Walk 3 (Paddington Green)**
**9th of October, 18:00-19:00**
13 local residents
4 local representatives

# Data processing

In total, almost 500 comments were recorded on the walks and online platform. At engagement events these were documented by note-takers from across the project team, and have subsequently been typed up, compiled, logged, categorised and reviewed according to the following recurring, key themes:

- Accessibility
- Use/Activation
- Greening
- Maintenance
- Wayfinding
- Lighting
- Safety

These themes/topics and the full list of comments (from across all engagement strands) have been the basis for the findings and quotes detailed in this document.

The comments have been organised under the following headings:

- **Protect:** for comments that do not wish to see a certain site or element of the site changed
- **Enhance:** for comments that expressed that a certain site or element of the site could be improved
- **Create:** for comments that suggest new uses or features

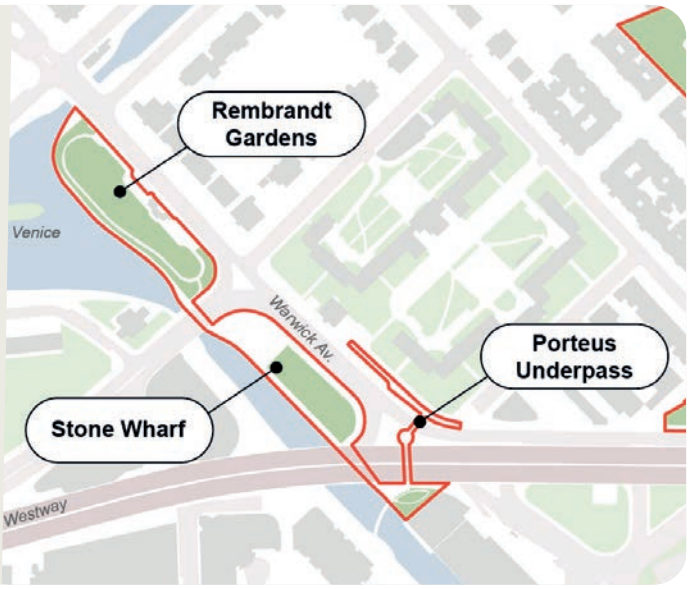
| Location | Feeling | Title | Input | Topic | Design In... | Date/Sou... |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Stone Wharf | Neutral | A public sculpture would be nice on the paved area | Proposal | Use/Activation | Create | 21/09 |
| Stone Wharf | Negative | No reason to come here at the moment- it needs an activity! Playground for example | Proposal | Use/Activation | Create | 21/09 |
| Stone Wharf | Neutral | If activity is added, especially for children, then you have to also consider safety since it is so close to the water | Suggestion | Use/Activation<br>Accessibility | N/A | 21/09 |
| Stone Wharf | Neutral | It would be good to introduce some uses - maybe commercial uses like across the canal? | Proposal | Use/Activation | Create | 21/09 |
| Stone Wharf | Positive | Please do not remove any trees | Comment | Greening | Protect | 21/09 |
| Stone Wharf | Negative | The space is not as well kept as Rembrandt Gardens | Comment | Waste & Mainte... | Enhance | 21/09 |



# Little Venice Canalside

# Summary

Across Little Venice Canalside *(Rembrandt Gardens, Stone Wharf, and Porteus Underpass)* we heard varied comments seeking both the protection of the area's beloved character, as well as suggestions on elements that can be enhanced or created.




## Rembrandt Gardens



Rembrandt Gardens is well enjoyed by local residents who praise it for its natural character and biodiversity. People do not wish to see changes to the green space itself but have identified areas of enhancement, predominantely relating to accessibility such as improving the spaces under the bridges, the towpath and 'dead-end' by Warwick Avenue Bridge. There have also been suggestions to introduce a 24h connection from the canal to Warwick Avenue, alongside better lighting and wayfinding.

## Stone Wharf



Stone Wharf has been highlighted as a locally important site due to its heritage and character. People do wish to see its history being preserved and promoted more, but also seek better accessibility through the site. Under the bridges at both ends of the site could be improved and promote access through and to Rembrandt Gardens. Currently used by the Cavalcade and occasionally by the Floating Classroom, residents consider this site prime for additional uses, including leisure & play, educational, cultural or community activities.

## Porteus Underpass



Porteus Underpass has been described as utilitarian and well designed, with many residents using it regularly. Improved ligting and wayfinding were the main topics for improvements, while the approaches (Porteus Triangle & Venice Walk) have been highlighted as unpleasant and unsafe. Additional greening and lighting in these areas were suggestions that would enhance the user experience.

# Themes

Across the Little Venice Canalside sites, several themes stand out:

- **Accessibility:** The most frequent concern involves making the tow paths more accessible, with residents calling for continuous routes, smoother surfaces, and improved crossings on Warwick Avenue to benefit everyone, especially those with mobility needs.

- **Use/Activation:** Many residents suggest making these areas more lively with added seating, play areas, and social spaces, transforming them into community-friendly destinations.

- **Protection of Heritage and Greenery:** Residents emphasise preserving natural and historic elements. They value features like cobbled paths and mature trees, advocating for sensitive improvements that maintain the character of these areas.

- **Wayfinding:** Improved signage and clearer routes are recurring suggestions, especially to help visitors navigate between areas, understand historical significance, and connect to other parts of the local neighbourhood.

- **Waste & Maintenance:** Regular upkeep is another key theme, with a focus on maintaining clean, well-kept paths, handling litter and lights maintenance.

- **Lighting and Safety:** In certain areas, users find lighting insufficient or unpleasant, which affects both visibility and the overall sense of security. Suggestions often include brighter, more user-friendly lighting to improve the ambiance and make paths feel safer, especially in the evenings.



*Towpath at Rembrandt Gardens is difficult to access*



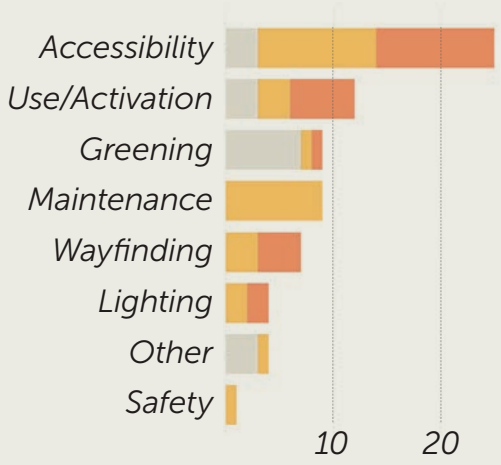
*Provide the infrastructure for more activities to take place at Stone Wharf. Pictured: Floating Classroom workshop*



*The condition of the underpasses needs to be improved*

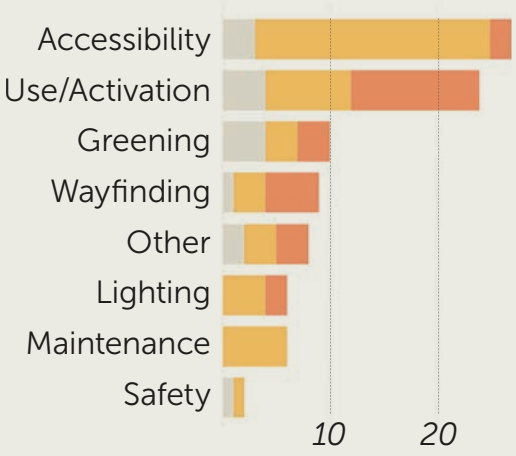
## Rembrandt Gardens [71 comments]

The most common theme is Accessibility, where a nearly equal number of comments have suggested the enhancement or creation of routes. Use/Activation comes second, with a predominance of comments asking for new uses to be created, especially around the tow path dead-end. Greening and Maintenance have a similar number of comments, with the first seeking protection of existing gardens, while the later calls for enhanced cleanliness and surface maintenance.



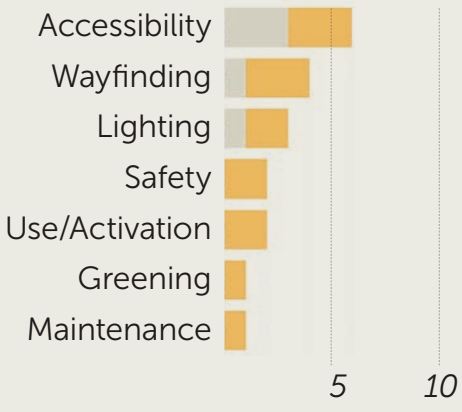

## Stone Wharf [92 comments]

Accessibility is the most common theme, with many comments suggesting improvements to the cobbled towpath for better walkability. Use/Activation feedback suggests to animate the space by new activities such as play and performance. Greening suggestions focus on protecting trees and enhancing biodiversity, while Wayfinding and Lighting comments call for enhanced signage and better lighting, especially under the bridges.




## Porteus Underpass [19 comments]

Accessibility is a key concern, with calls to enhance safety and navigation, particularly through better lighting. Wayfinding feedback highlights the need for enhanced signage, and Lighting suggestions focus on making the underpass brighter and more secure. There are also requests to reduce anti-social behavior, along with modest ideas for Greening and activation to make the space feel less isolated.




'Protect' 'Enhance' 'Create'

# Accessibility

## General:

- **24h Access:** Some people have expressed a desire for an accessible 24h route between Stone Wharf and Warwick Avenue. Some residents already use this as their primary route when there is daylight, but have complained about the 'always-changing' opening hours at Rembrandt Gardens.
- **Cyclist and Pedestrian Conflict:** Users express concerns about conflicts with cyclists on narrow towpaths, which impacts pedestrian accessibility.
- **Underpass Quality and Safety:** The poor quality of spaces under the bridges is cited, with issues such lack of lighting and poor quality paving.
- **Connectivity:** Multiple comments propose a more intuitive routes to improve crossing between Maida Vale, Warwick Avenue, and Paddington Basin.
- **Traffic and Crossings:** Some find it difficult to cross nearby roads (especially Warwick Avenue) due to heavy traffic, and there are calls to make pedestrian routes safer.

*"There should be more clarity that pedestrians have priority on shared surfaces"*

*"Traffic calming measures are needed on Warwick Avenue in front of Rembrandt Gardens"*

*"This is a very lovely space but needs better access to Warwick Avenue, particularly after the park closes."*

*"More lights needed on the underpass, been without lights for a while now "*

*"Leave the ramps open 24h - this would reduce current frustration around always changing opening hours"*

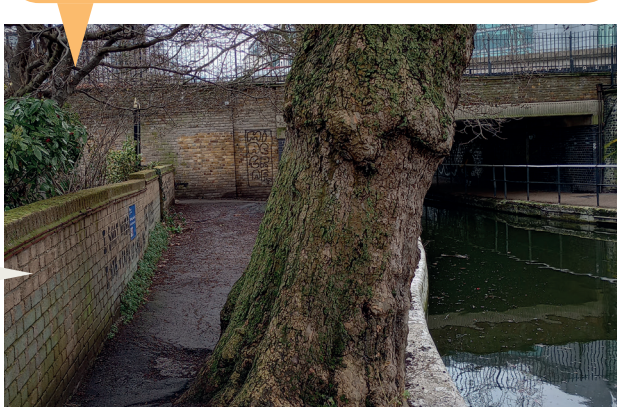


## Rembrandt Gardens

- **Towpath:** Residents mention the towpath as narrow and restricted. While some suggest adding benches and creating a continuous, accessible path along the water, others prefer it being less accessible as it provides a more 'natural' environment.

*"Tow path can be unpaved. Keep the natural feel"*

*"Create a better, continuous, and more intuitive walking connection along the canal."*



## Stone Wharf

- **Cobblestone Towpath:** The cobbled towpath is a common complaint, described as challenging, rough, and inaccessible, especially for those with mobility issues. Suggestions include filling gaps between cobbles or replacing them to create smoother surfaces. There are also comments seeking their protection, highlighting heritage and character.

*"The footpath and walkways are dangerous - they are sloping, bumpy and have terrible light. Needs complete modernisation."*

*"Protect the cobblestones, relay them in an accessible way"*



## Porteus Underpass

- **Lighting and Maintenance:** The lighting is noted as unpleasant, with occasional flooding issues that deter accessibility. Despite these concerns, some users appreciate the underpass design and find the space functional.

*"This space is functionnal and doesn't feel unsafe - it is busy and wide and the space is well lit"*

*"Looks unpleasant, very concrete-heavy. Lack of lighting makes it feel unsafe to travel through in evenings."*



# Use/ Activation

## Rembrandt Gardens

- **Character Preservation:** Most residents do not wish to see any additional uses or activities added to the gardens, suggesting this would take away from the current natural character of the space.

- **'Dead-end':** A number of residents have suggested that the dead-end of the towpath, by Warwick Bridge, should be activated through lighting, art or greenery.

- **Minor additions:** Adding more seating by the water were also popular ideas, as these can improve the space without major infrastructure changes.

*"More benches on towpath, sit by the water, bird wathcing and relax. I come here in the evening because it is secluded."*



*"The space at the north edge of Rembrandt Gardens has no purpose and people use it to dump rubbish"*

## Stone Wharf

- **Community Spaces and Activities:** The majority of residents see Stone Wharf as underutilised and have proposed various ways to animate the area, such as play equipment, educational spaces, and even more commercial uses such as a café. While there is support for thoughtful additions, some residents feel that adding too many commercial or active uses could detract from the area's current atmosphere. Comments here reflect a desire to avoid over-commercialisation and preserve the area's unique and quieter charm.

*" In contrast to other comments, I neither think a cafe nor an outdoor gym would be suitable for this location."*

*"Open space with nice potential, but nothing really going on"*



*"Open Plan pavilion to be rented out by the community, artistic and gallery spaces"*

# Lighting & Safety

Because a large number of comments relate both to Lighting and Safety, we are presenting the findings alongside each other.

## Rembrandt Gardens & Stone Wharf

- **Under the bridges:** The spaces under Harrow Road Bridge and Westway are not well lit and feel unwelcoming. There were suggestions to introduce better lighting and art to soften the appearance.

- **Towpaths:** Residents have raised concerns about the lack of lighting on the towpath and surrounding areas, particularly after dark. Some report feeling uneasy in low-light conditions, with suggestions to improve lighting to create a safer, more inviting environment.

- **Stone Wharf** is frequently described as "dark" and "unwelcoming," particularly under bridges and along the perimeter path. Residents suggest adding lighting to create a safer and more accessible space, especially in the evenings. However, some caution that adding seating alongside lighting might inadvertently attract more anti-social behaviour at night. Light pollution to resident moorers has also been highlighted and needs to be treated with care.

## Porteus Underpass

- **Lighting:** The underpass has been described as poorly lit, with residents noting that the current lighting feels unpleasant and insufficient. Better, more welcoming lighting is seen as crucial to improving the space's overall feel.

*"It feels unsafe when it is dark. We need lighting under the bridges and along the towpath / canalside"*



*"Poor lighting under Harrow Road Bridge - I have frequently seen pedestrians having to use their phone torch light, which is not the best idea considering e-bike crime"*



*"My main concern is that walking around there does not always feel 100% safe - depending on what people hang around in the area, especially away from the walking path around the edges of the green space"*

# Wayfinding

## General

- **Wayfinding Enhancements:** Some residents have suggested adding more wayfinding elements to improve navigation, especially along paths connecting key areas. Better signage would help visitors more easily explore the gardens and surrounding routes.
- **Rembrandt Gardens' Flora:** Residents see an opportunity to incorporate storytelling about the local nature, with signs or displays that educate visitors on the area's flora and natural environment. This is viewed as a way to deepen the appreciation of the gardens' character and enhance the visitor experience.
- **Stone Wharf's Heritage:** Some residents express a desire for signage that highlights the area's historical aspects and uses. Educational displays or storytelling elements are suggested to bring Little Venice Canalside's history to life and make it a more engaging experience for visitors.




*"We should have more signage both for visitors and for local residents"*

*"What is the coat of arms on Warwick Bridge? Historical facts should be promoted more."*



*"Huge history - like Coal Drops Yard - what they have done there is really nice; needs good lighting and local people graffiti's "*



# Greening

## Rembrandt Gardens

- **Preservation:** Residents appreciate the mature trees, natural feel, and existing greenery in Rembrandt Gardens, which contribute to its peaceful atmosphere. There is an almost unanimous call to preserve these elements. Some residents have mentioned that selective trimming can open up some views towards the canal.

*"Please do not remove any trees!"*



## Stone Wharf

- **Additional Planting and Green Barriers:** Suggestions include adding more trees and greenery, possibly screening the area from busy roads with tree or green barriers. Residents believe these enhancements could soften the environment, mitigate noise, and improve the natural atmosphere of the Wharf.

- **Enhanced biodiversity:** Some residents find Stone Wharf less appealing from a natural perspective, in comparison to Rembrandt Gardens. They would like to see more diverse planting on the green space as well as around the boundary wall.

*"Add additional planting in front of the wall, including a diverse selection of climbing plants such as wisteria, climbing hydrangea, honeysuckle, etc. "*





*"Missing some plants, we need more things growing here to make it pretty; too much of a concrete corner for now."*

## Porteus Underpass

- **Additional greening:** Some residents suggest adding more plants and greenery around the underpass entrances to brighten up the area.

# Maintenance

## General

- **Litter and Cleanliness:** Residents frequently mention the need for more regular litter collection along the towpath, expressing concerns that the area is often less maintained than the rest. Some describe the canalside as neglected, with litter accumulating and impacting the space's appeal.
- **Bins:** Suggestions include adding more bins along the path to encourage proper waste disposal.
- **Restroom Maintenance:** Specific issues were raised about the maintenance of public toilets at Rembrandt Gardens, with some noting that they're not consistently clean or available, impacting the convenience for visitors.
- **Tree and Plant Care:** In addition to waste-related issues, some residents emphasize the need for maintenance of natural elements, such as trees and plants, to ensure the area's greenery remains healthy and well-kept.
- **Lighting Under Bridges:** A recurring issue highlighted by residents is the lack of functioning lights under bridges in these areas. Broken or insufficient lighting makes these spaces feel darker and potentially unsafe, especially at night. Many residents feel that fixing and maintaining these lights would improve both visibility and the overall safety of the areas.

*"Lovely walk on the Grand Union Canal towpath but a few of the lights from the ground keep flashing"*



*"Canals are becoming a dump with litter, no one want to use them for leisure. Install bins on the canal towpath close to benches."*

*"This dead end on the canal footpath is a dumping ground"*

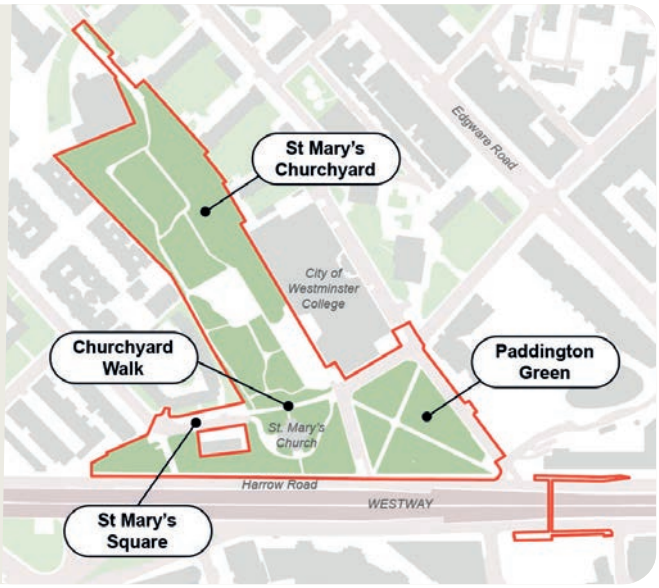




# Paddington Green

# Summary

Across the Paddington Green sites *(St Mary's Churchyard, Churchyard Walk, St Mary's Square and Paddington Green)* we heard varied comments seeking both the enhancement of the area's safety and creation of new uses and activities, as well as a desire for the heritage and natural character of the area to be protected.






## St. Mary's Churchyard

St Mary's Churchyard is valued for its natural environment and historical character but has been described as not providing much in terms of activities. There were suggestions that the edges of the park and area surrounding the sports centre could be enhanced with better planting, while new uses such as an accessible playground, water features and outdoor gym equipment can maximise its potential.



## Churchyard Walk

Churchyard Walk has been identified as a challenging space due to its enclosed feeling and disrepair with residents wishing to enhance its role as a key route while addressing issues such as narrow pathways, broken railings, and insufficient lighting. Suggestions include widening the path and incorporating playful treatments to create a more engaging and safer environment.



## St. Mary's Square

St Mary's Square is a functional space that could be enhanced with better management of parking and clearer signage to signal it as a dead-end for vehicular traffic. Residents also propose creating opportunities for play, such as a "play street" during times of reduced vehicular activity, making the square more inviting for families.



## Paddington Green

Paddington Green is appreciated for its green character, but some see the planting as "unimaginative" and describe the noise from Harrow Road as dominating. Comments seek biodiversity enhancements and additional activities such as chess tables, ping pong tables, and better seating arrangements. Some residents also suggested a better use of the World War II bunker and its promotion as a historical asset.

# Themes

Across the Paddington Green sites, several themes stand out:

- **Accessibility:** Improving connectivity and the condition of pathways is a recurring priority, with calls for smoother surfaces, widened paths, and better links between sites.

- **Use/Activation:** There's strong interest in creating new activities and uses, such as play spaces, community hang out spots, and informal leisure features like ping pong tables, outdoor gyms, and picnic areas.

- **Lighting and Safety:** Insufficient lighting is a frequent concern, with residents suggesting brighter and more fixtures to improve safety and visibility. Balancing brighter lighting with the natural and historical character of the spaces has also been mentioned.

- **Greening:** While existing greenery is valued, there are calls to enhance planting diversity, improve landscaping in underutilized areas and noise-blocking vegetation near traffic-heavy edges.

- **Wayfinding:** Clearer and more consistent signage is needed to guide visitors between sites and highlight key features, such as historical elements and pathways. Improved wayfinding would also support the integration of these spaces into the wider area.

- **Waste & Maintenance:** Regular upkeep is a priority, with comments focusing on addressing litter, maintaining pathways, and ensuring features like benches and railings are kept in good condition.



*Churchyard Walk is narrow and has poor end to end visibility*



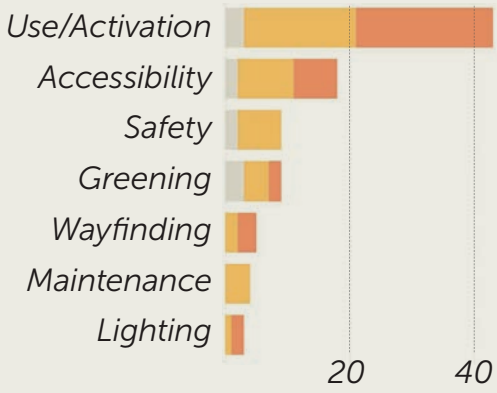
*There is a desire to see more active uses in the park*



*The Churchyard edges should be improved*

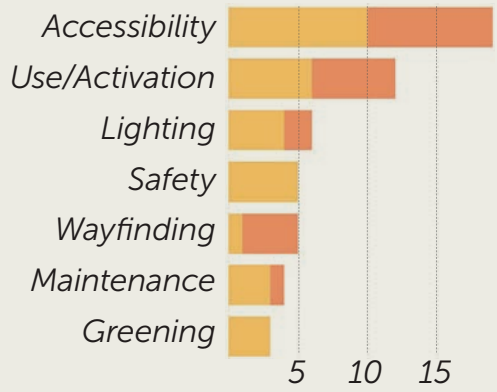
## St. Mary's Churchyard [99 comments]

The most discussed theme for St. Mary's Churchyard is Use/Activation, with a focus on creating new activities like play and community uses. Accessibility highlights better connectivity and maintained pathways, while ASB emphasizes safety improvements. Greening calls for protecting features like the wildflower meadow and enhancing biodiversity, with other themes noting the need for clearer signage, cleanliness and lighting in the area.



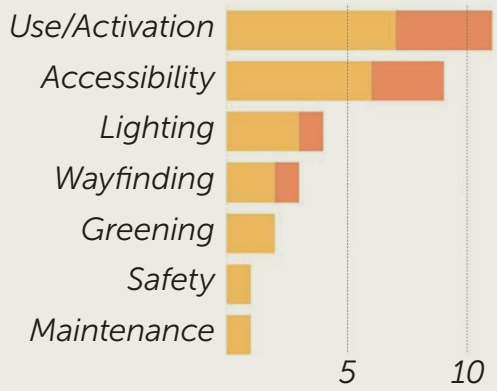

## Churchyard Walk & St. Mary's Square [58 comments]

For Churchyard Walk and St Mary's Square, comments often overlapped. Accessibility was the main focus, with calls for widened pathways and improved connectivity. Use/Activation suggested playful and community features, while Lighting and ASB highlighted safety improvements. Other themes, like Wayfinding, noted the need for clearer signage, with fewer comments on Waste & Maintenance and Greening.




## Paddington Green [38 comments]

For Paddington Green, Use/Activation received the most feedback, with residents focusing on creating activity areas in the park. Accessibility was the second most common theme, emphasizing improved pathways. Lighting highlighted the need for brighter and more reliable fixtures, while Wayfinding suggested clearer signage to navigate the area. Less frequent comments on Greening, ASB, and Waste & Maintenance called for biodiversity enhancements, improved safety, and better upkeep.




'Protect' 'Enhance' 'Create'

# Accessibility

## St. Mary's Churchyard:

- **Limited Access Points:** Residents highlight concerns about the limited number of entry points to the park, which can make the space feel isolated and harder to use. There are requests to open side entrances to improve accessibility and connectivity.
- **Concerns About Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)**: While some residents want better access via side entrances, others worry this could increase ASB, particularly during evening hours or in less visible areas.
- **Broken Pathways:** Some residents highlighted the need for a solution for areas where tree roots have come above ground and caused the tarmac to break or be uneven.

*"Feeling unsafe because you can only access/exit the park at the north and south"*



*"Do not put additional access from estate into the park. The estate is becoming run down and additional footfall will encourage more loitering and unsocial behaviour. "*

## Churchyard Walk

- **Existing Conflicts:** Residents suggest widening Churchyard Walk to address conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists, which stem from the pathway being too narrow for shared use.
- **Railings & Barriers:** Feedback highlights that railings along Churchyard Walk make the space feel restrictive and unwelcoming, with some residents suggesting they are removed or redesigned. It has also been highlighted that the barriers make it difficult for parents with prams to go through.
- **Cycle Route:** Some residents propose expanding Churchyard Walk and having it include the cycle route, instead of the current layout via Harrow Road.

*"Remove or reduce the railings and create well lit and nicely landscaped pathways and cycle routes"*



*"Church walk is not good for women with prams - everyone gets blocked"*

## St. Mary's Square

- **Integration with Churchyard Walk and Cycle Route:** Residents suggest that St Mary's Square should be better integrated with Churchyard Walk and also form part of the wider cycle network. This has been seen as making the square more accessible for cyclists and improve overall connectivity. Others disagree with this integration, quoting past conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and scooters.

- **Parking and Vehicle Turnaround:** Parking demand is noted to be inconsistent, with heavy use during nursery drop-off times and Sunday church services. Residents also mention issues with cars turning in the space, requesting clearer signage for the dead-end and a design that facilitates 180-degree vehicle turns without disrupting pedestrians.

*"St. Mary's Square and Church Walk should be wider - an avenue all the way through with lighting and wayfinding"*



*"Cycleway should go through here; not realistic to expect cyclists to go around"*

## Paddington Green

- **Pathway Maintenance:** Comments emphasize the importance of maintaining paths to ensure consistent accessibility, particularly for individuals with mobility challenges.

- **Pedestrian-Car Conflicts:** Several residents have highlighted the conflicts between pedestrians and cars around Paddington Green, especially in front of the College.

- **Dangerous Crossing:** The crossing on the south eastern corner of Paddington Green has been highlighted as dangerous. Residents suggest creating a new, better crossing.

*"There are often collisions between cars parking around the college and pedestrians"*



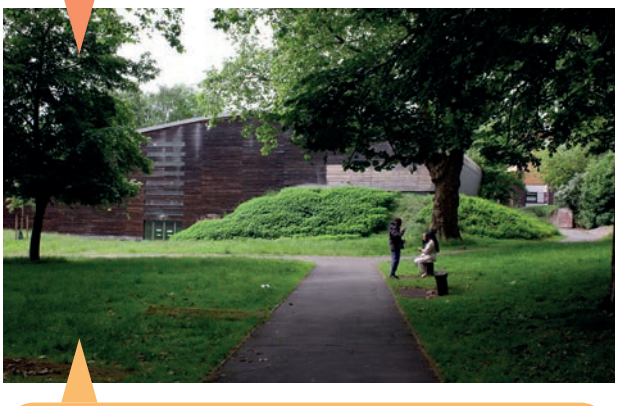
*"Parking compliance is a widespread issue here"*

# Use/ Activation

## St. Mary's Churchyard:

- **Significant Potential:** Residents highlighted the Churchyard as a great space with untapped potential, noting that its current lack of activities limits its appeal.
- **Play Features:** Residents support the ambition to introduce an accessible playground and informal play features such as natural climbing structures or small-scale adventure spaces for children.
- **Outdoor gym equipment:** Multiple residents have mentioned the importance of accessible gym equipment and raise concerns over its removal from Church Street, suggesting it is installed here.
- **Teenager Space:** The existing playground is well used but due to its proximity to the student forecourt, there can be conflicts between user groups. There were some suggestions to have a more dedicated area for teenagers, with suitable equipment.
- **Activities and Leisure Spaces:** Residents proposed introducing picnic areas and spaces for informal leisure activities like yoga or small community gatherings. These elements could attract a wider range of users while maintaining the park's peaceful atmosphere.
- **Mindfulness of Proximity to Residents:** Any new uses or features must consider the proximity to St Mary's Mansions, particularly on the western side of the park. Residents emphasized the importance of ensuring that new activities do not generate excessive noise.

*"Outdoor gym equipment is much needed here, but away from the flats to manage noise"*



*"St Mary's Churchyard is not much used by locals but has the potential to be turned into a great space with a sports & leisure theme"*

*"More seating more benches so you can have group lunches - benches with back rest please!"*



*"We use this playground almost every day! Lots of children come here after school. The equipment doesn't look like much but actually it's surprisingly good value! Some upgrade and expansion would be great, though."*

## St. Mary's Square & Churchyard Walk

- **Playfulness:** Residents suggested widening the space and incorporating playful treatments. Ideas include painting running tracks or hopscotch patterns on the ground and adding playful landscaping elements to make the area more engaging. Some residents also suggested using St. Mary's Square for play, with ideas such as creating a "play street" during times of reduced vehicular traffic to make the space more child-friendly and lively.

*"Close it off to cars and do something there like play or exercise equipment"*




*"Playing games in the evening here and in the Churchyard would be nice"*

## Paddington Green

- **Activity Spaces:** Residents proposed adding activity-focused features such as chess tables, ping pong tables, or similar installations to encourage active use of the space by diverse age groups.
- **Gathering Spaces:** Feedback emphasized the need for better seating arrangements and picnic areas to make Paddington Green a more inviting place for small gatherings and community interaction.
- **Bunker:** Residents seek better use of the WW2 bunker and its promotion as a historical asset.

*"It needs more benches. The existing ones are always occupied signifying that more are needed. "*





*"What about making the shelter a feature to attract day time visitors to Paddington Green? Could this be a focal point, a cafe, or at least a coffee cart? "*

# Greening

There were limited comments about greening at St Mary's Square and Churchyard Walk. The general sentiment is that all trees should be protected, and greening enhancements are welcomed in these areas.

## St. Mary's Churchyard

- **Appreciation for the Natural Environment:** Residents value the natural environment of the park, with specific praise for the wildflower meadow. However, they also note that the edges of the park could be improved.
- **Water Features:** Suggestions include introducing water features to add character and create a more engaging and relaxing atmosphere within the park.
- **Mound by the Sports Centre:** Residents suggest that the mound by the Sports Centre could be made more attractive and functional with better landscaping or creative design interventions.

## Paddington Green

- **Enhanced Biodiversity:** Residents describe the current planting as "unimaginative" and express a desire for more diverse and visually appealing vegetation.
- **Planting to Block Traffic Noise:** There is a call for more planting along the southern edge of Paddington Green, particularly to create a natural barrier against noise from Harrow Road. This would improve the experience for visitors and make the area more tranquil.

*"The wildflower meadow patches on St Mary's Churchyard are an absolute blessing and well-managed with low frequency mowing at the right times of the year. Please keep it up!"*



*"Some of the areas on the outskirts of the park could be made more interesting, perhaps with some hedges, bushes, or similar."*

*"Increase planting towards Harrow Road to block some of the noise"*



*"There is rather unimaginative planting in the Green. Just these bushes and sparse beds"*

# Wayfinding

## General

- **Improved East-West Connectivity:** Residents highlight the need for better East-West connectivity, specifically from Little Venice Canalside to Church Street via Churchyard Walk. Suggestions include visible and coherent signage throughout to guide both pedestrians and cyclists effectively.
- **Cycle Route Wayfinding:** There are calls to improve wayfinding for the cycle network, ensuring clear and consistent signage to direct cyclists along safe and efficient routes.
- **Highlighting Historical Aspects:** The historical significance of the area, including tombs, statues, and other features, is seen as underutilised. Residents propose installing informational signage to bring these historical elements to the forefront, enhancing the cultural experience of the area.
- **St Mary's Square Dead-End Signage:** Feedback includes a request to better signal that St Mary's Square is a dead end for vehicular traffic. Clearer signage would help reduce confusion and ensure the space is designed to accommodate vehicle turnaround safely and effectively.




*"Poor connectivity between Canalside to Church Street. Wayfinding should be improved, so the main route is via Paddington Green and not by Harrow Rd"*

*"There should be more information about all the gravestones and the history of this area."*



# Maintenance

## St.Mary's Churchyard & Paddington Green

- **Slippery Leaves:** Residents mentioned that the accumulation of leaves, particularly when wet, creates slippery surfaces that pose risks to pedestrians, especially during autumn and winter.
- **Bench Maintenance:** Residents report that benches in Paddington Green are often moved out of place, and there are calls to fix these securely. There are also requests to install additional benches to meet the demand for seating.
- **Litter behind temporary fence:** Residents highlighted the need for the area behind the temporary fence to be maintained more often or, for the fence to be removed.



*"In this area the park perimeter seems in a very bad shape. A half-toppled construction fence leads into what looks like industrial wasteland with a lot of rubbish."*

## Churchyard Walk

- **Broken Railings:** Residents note that railings along Churchyard Walk are broken, which allows people to access the space at night, raising concerns about safety and misuse.
- **Lighting at dusk:** There were comments seeking the lights be turned on earlier because the area can be very dark at dusk.



*"The railings are broken and people use the park at night, walking their dogs, but also for anti-social behaviour"*

## St. Mary's Square

- **Bin Solutions:** Residents request a better system for managing bins in the square, as the current arrangement is seen as inadequate and detracts from the area's appearance.

# Lighting

## General

Lighting has often come up when discussing the Paddington Green sites, especially in relation to how it influences the feeling of safety. We are grouping these comments, as many of them repeat across all sites.

- **Inadequate Lighting:** Residents consistently mention that lighting across the sites is insufficient, contributing to feelings of insecurity, particularly during evening hours. Improvements in brightness are seen as essential for making these spaces safer and more accessible.
- **Lights at dusk:** Some people have mentioned that the lights do not turn on early enough which leaves some of the tree-shaded areas particularly dark at dusk.
- **Lighting Repairs and Maintenance:** Existing lighting fixtures are often described as unreliable, with residents highlighting the need for consistent maintenance to ensure proper functionality. A particular area where this was noticed on the walks was the Church grounds.
- **Strategic Placement:** Comments suggest that additional lighting should be strategically placed, focusing on poorly lit pathways, secluded areas, and key features such as statues.
- **Illuminating the Church:** Some residents call for better lighting of the church façade to highlight its architectural beauty and historical significance, while also improving the sense of security in the surrounding area.

*"Light level is ok but the lights come on late"*



*"Lighting creates a sombre effect - we need different types of lighting."*



*"It would be nice to have the Church lit at night. This would brighen up the area and make it feel more civic."*

# Safety

Most residents describe the area as feeling unsafe, especially after dark. The current drug dealing and terrible murders in the past few years are a testament to this ongoing challenge. While there was a general understanding that some of these issues cannot be resolved solely through design, residents want to see spatial interventions that can deter this behaviour, with lighting, CCTV and clearer sight lines being the most common suggestions.

*"I want to see a greater police presence, CCTV, better means of communication between users and local authorities "*

## St Mary's Churchyard Gardens

- **Access and Visibility Issues:** Limited access points to the gardens make them feel isolated and less secure. There are mixed opinions about opening side entrances, as some believe this would improve access and visibility, while others worry it could increase opportunities for anti-social behaviour.

- **Teenager dominance:** Residents have highlighted that they often feel intimidated by the large numbers of teenagers, especially around the playground. Suggestions for dealing with this include the addition of uses that cater to broader user-groups.



*"Feeling unsafe because you can only access/exit the park at the north and south"*



*"We need more uses in the park so it increases footfall and is not only used by teenagers. I sometimes feel intimidated"*

## Churchyard Walk & St Mary's Square

- **Lighting and Safety Concerns:** Insufficient lighting and visibility exacerbate concerns about potential anti-social behaviour in the area.
- **Restricted Accessibility:** Broken railings, the chicanes and narrow path increases a sense of vulnerability for pedestrians, particularly at night.
- **Hidden spots:** Both entrances to Churchyard Walk are blank corners, creating areas where people could hide. This, alongside the lack end-to-end visibility (due to the curvature of the path) makes the area feel unsafe. Residents at Fleming Court highlighted that the area against the Churchyard wall is often used by people consuming drugs.
- **CCTV:** Residents have called for additional CCTV to be installed, especially on Churchyard Walk.

*Churchyard Walk doesn't feel safe, I feel trapped.*



*Lighting is not great for a single woman especially at night. Fences aren't great either, I don't think you need them.*

## Paddington Green

- **Drug dealing:** The area in front of the College is used by drug dealers in the evening, with cars and mopeds often parked there.
- **Anti-Social Behaviour:** Concerns were raised about specific instances of anti-social behaviour in the area, with calls for more active monitoring.



*"A long time spot for drug dealers supplying local college students often with music constantly played have made this path a no go section of this cherished green"*



# Focussed Engagement & Additional Research

# Workshop with students from City of Westminster College

Westminster City College and its students are important stakeholders and users of the Paddington Green sites. We strongly believe that younger voices should inform our design approach, but found it challenging to reach them via the walks series and online interactive map.

To ensure this diversity of opinion, we organised a creative workshop facilitated by students from University of Westminster. The college students got a chance to observe the site through the lens of safety and conceptualise a series of spatial interventions that respond to their needs and ambitions for the space. Some of the comments and suggestions include:

- Create a wider Churchyard Walk with ample lighting
- Relocate playground so it is not so close to the area where students smoke
- Make existing playground into a space for teenagers - different seating arrangements with some sports facilities
- Create an exhibition space for college students and external artists
- Create more events that include the students and wider community such as movie nights, music and art
- Introduce food trucks - students currently go to Edgware Road for their lunch.
- Create diverse seating arrangements in Paddington Green and St. Mary's Churchyard (more intimate group seating, face to face, circles, etc).
- Add a map of the area both for visitors and new students.
- Most students were unaware about the Sports Centre and suggested to add signage on the southern facade.
- Introduce more uses in St. Mary's Churchyard. Many students said they have never crossed the park but instead stay close to the College as there is little for them to do elsewhere.
- Remove blind corners which can make the area feel unsafe in the evening
- Some students have suggesting introducing additional access points





# **Community Safety Meeting:** City of Westminster College & Citizens UK

The Students Union at Westminster City College, in partnership with Citizens UK, have organised a Community Safety Meeting to discuss the impact of safety on their everyday life, how it impacts their learning and explore areas around the College that could be improved. The meeting included statements from students, as well as group activities that aimed to answer the following questions: "Why is safety important to you?" and "How can we improve safety around the College?".




The following points have come up:

- There is a need to install more lights in poorly lit areas to improve safety around the college.
- Clearly identified and accessible safe spaces should be created for students to feel secure.
- Barriers to education caused by safety issues should be addressed, with a focus on promoting inclusivity across gender, race, age, and other demographic factors.
- Increasing the number of CCTV cameras on campus is essential to improving security.
- Security staff need to balance being friendly with having a strong authoritative presence to ensure approachability while maintaining safety.
- Parking facilities need to be reviewed to address the many concerns raised by participants.
- Although students feel safer inside the college compared to before, continued efforts are needed to build on these improvements.

# **Women's Safety Audit:** Paddington, Westminster

Commissioned by Transport for London (TfL) and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime
(MOPAC), the Women's Safety Audit Pilot Project aims to better understand how to engage with and capture the lived experience of women, girls and gender diverse people in London.

We Made That have led a series of Women's Safety Audits across 5 locations in London, including Paddington Green. These audits have involved women who are representative of London's diverse communities to work together to inform decisions on public space design, planning, and management.

The feedback includes:

Infrastructure and Maintenance
Lack of lighting, toilets, seating and shelter as well as cleanliness and upkeep were mentioned as intrinsically linked to the feeling of safety and neglect across the audit area.

Nature and Green Space
Green space and nature were linked to a feeling of calm and a release of tension. Green space was also mentioned for attracting diverse groups of people and families, which added a layer of natural surveillance and comfort.

Traffic, Road Safety and Noise
Main roads, such as the A5, that run through the area were noted as particular hot spots of unsafety due to the prioritisation of road traffic over pedestrians. This had implications on the way the space is navigated and the anxiety it produced.

Legibility, Wayfinding and Layout
Poor layouts of streets and footpaths, lack of wayfinding and legibility were noted as particularly poor. Visibility and physical barriers were mentioned as causing issues around safety and feeling trapped.

Busyness and Activity
Busyness was mostly a positive in areas such as the station, flyover and in green spaces. However, this did change depending on the area, sometimes busyness caused feelings of anxiety, whereas places like Church Street Market felt unsafe when not filled with activity on non-market days.







# Next Steps

# Next Steps

Building on the feedback gathered during the engagement process, we are now progressing with the development of design proposals. The insights and priorities shared by local residents and stakeholders have been instrumental in shaping our approach, ensuring that the proposals address community aspirations while balancing practical considerations.

Alongside this, we have undertaken a series of technical surveys and studies. These will help identify both additional opportunities for improvement and any limitations that need to be factored into the design process.

In March, we will enter the RIBA Stage 2 consultation phase. During this stage, residents will have the opportunity to review and respond to the proposed designs through a variety of channels. These will include a public exhibition, community events, and an online survey. This continued dialogue will be essential in refining the proposals and ensuring they align with local needs and expectations.

