

Open Call for Artists

Art under the bridges at Little Venice

Artist Commission Brief – Briefing Pack

Westminster City Council are seeking an artist or a collective to design and deliver a permanent inspiring public artwork applied on tile to a series of three walls under the bridges of Little Venice at Rembrandt Gardens and Stone Wharf.

City of Westminster

Commission Summary

Westminster City Council are seeking an **artist** or a **collective** to design an inspiring permanent artwork to be applied to three tiled walls under the bridges of Little Venice at Rembrandt Gardens and Stone Wharf. **The budget for the commissioned artist or team is up to £50,000.00 (+ VAT).**

WCC is committed to inclusive commissioning and particularly welcomes interest from artists whose voices are historically underrepresented in the public realm, while ensuring the opportunity is open to all.

Commission objectives:

- Contribute to the broader placemaking project by enhancing the Canalside as a **welcoming** and **inclusive** space.
- Be an exemplary piece of site-specific artwork in the public realm, being of **high artistic quality** and adding to the overall usage and enjoyment of the site.
- Reflects the **unique character** and supports a sense of **pride** in the area. (The artist might choose to respond to local stories, heritage, wildlife etc).
- The work should be engaging and accessible for a wide range of diverse audiences ranging from **local people** and **visitors.**



Client team
Westminster City Council
Culture and Place Shaping with support from Structures team

Design Team
Artist or collective

Wider design team
Architect, technical design support – East Architecture
Lighting design – Studio Dekka
Engineering – Alax Baxter Associates
Principal designer and contractor – FM Conway

Fabrication
Tile manufacturer/ fabricator – *to be procured*

Process

Expressions of Interest

Stage 1. Open Call for Expression of Interest

Please submit a cover letter including the following information :

1. Cover Letter *(1 page max - anything over the page limit will not be evaluated)*
   - I. Artist Bio
   - II. Why is this commission of interest and how does it relate to your creative practice? Reference past work examples where possible.
   - III. How would you approach community engagement as part of this commission? Reference past work examples where possible.
2. Short portfolio of 3-5 past works shared as URLs to work online or in a separate PDF document *(max 20mb)*

Submit via Jagger Platform.

Westminster City Council Culture and Place Shaping team will shortlist Expressions of Interest to three artists/teams who will be invited to continue to Stage 2.

Proposals

Stage 2. Concept proposal by shortlist 3 artists or teams

Each selected artist/team will receive up to **£2,000.00 (+VAT)** to develop a concept proposal, which will be paid at the end of the Stage 2 process. This should include:

- A summary of their site research informing the proposal
- A summary of the concept & approach to artwork development
- Illustrative drawings of the proposal
- x3 elevations – artwork added to scaled elevations for sites A, B, C.
- Programme plan & engagement plan
- Proposed budget and breakdown

Shortlisted artists will be invited to present their proposals to a panel that includes both Westminster City Council staff and also the wider team involved in the scheme.

Commission

Appointed Artist will need to show proof of Professional Indemnity Insurance of at least £1,000,000.00 before the contract is signed.

Stage 3: Appointed artist develops final developed proposal

- Further research and development as required
- Community engagement workshops take place
- Finalise artwork proposal

Stage 4: planning permission

- Provide material for planning application (Architect will lead on this)

Stage 5: mobilisation and fabrication

- Appointed artist to oversee fabrication and respond to any queries from production contractors and architects.

Stage 6: works & launch event

- Install of artwork by production contractors.
- Possible press/ launch activity
- Attendance to Launch event during IWA Canalway Cavalcade 2026

Key dates

A detailed delivery programme will be developed following Kick off meeting.

Stage	Step	Weeks*	Date*
Stage 1	Open Call launch	3 weeks	11th July 2025
	Deadlines for submission (via Jagger platform)		1st August
	Evaluation	1-3 weeks (depending on number of applicants)	
	Shortlisted artists notified		w/c 1st September
Stage 2	Concept proposal development (x3 artists)	4 weeks	September
	Proposal presentation	1 week	w/c 22nd September
	Submission of all Stage 2 requirements	1 week	w/c 29th September
	Commissioned artist appointed and contracted	1 week	w/c 6th October
	Service Contract signed	1 week	
Commission	Kick off meeting, planning permission applied for with concept proposal		w/c 13th October
	Artwork development	8 weeks	
	Visit manufacturer		w/c 3rd Nov
	R&D with tile manufacturer	2 weeks	w/c 3rd Nov
	Artwork signed off for production *following this fabrication & mobilisation 8 weeks Dec – Jan*	1 week	w/c 1st December
	Artwork installed onsite	8 weeks	February-March 2026
	Launch event		Early May 2026



** Dates and number of weeks are indicative only and might be subject to change*

Budget

The budget for the commissioned artist or team is up to £50,000.00 (+VAT).

It must cover:

- All artist fees
- All travel and expenses connected to the commission. eg. client meetings or engagement activity.
- All design costs (post concept design)
- All engagement costs including workshop materials

A separate fabrication/ production budget will be managed by the wider design team.

If there are any additional costs associated with the commission that arise such as site surveys or additional engagement costs (such as space hire for engagement events), this should be flagged to the client at the earliest opportunity and are subject to review and approval by the client.

A fee payment schedule will be agreed with the artist upon the award. This is expected to be drawn down on completion of key project milestones.



Photo by IWA Canalway Cavalcade

Deliverables – Stage 3

The commissioned artist at will be required to cover the following deliverables from Stage 3 onward under the commission fee:

Development

All research and design development, from concept to technical design:

- Allowance for changes in response to Council feedback (if required) received during bi-weekly client meetings.
- Finalise artwork proposal, specification and adjoining material for WCC Planning Application. This will require to scale technical elevation drawings, showing artwork design on wall elevation, townscape views, and written summary of proposal. (Elevation drawings will be provided by the architect for artwork designs to be added to).
- Agree artwork specification, fabrication and install plans with wider design team, contractors, architect and fabricators

Public Engagement

As part of the appointed artist/ team's engagement plan we anticipate:

- A minimum of 2 creative workshops with local residents and/or groups (identified by WCC officers and the artist). Detailed scheduling to be agreed with Council officers upon appointment.
    - Council officers will lead outreach and participant recruitment to ensure broad participant representation and continuity of communication beyond this phase of engagement.
    - The artist team will lead on the creative planning and delivery of these events.
- The artist team should capture findings and any conceptual and physical output and produce a short public-facing PDF summary.

Artwork

2D artwork supplied as print-ready digital files:

- The work should cover the entire length and height of the walls. The approximate wall area is circa 144 square meters, split across 3 areas.
- To scale technical elevation drawings for the fabricator, showing how artwork is positioned onto the tiles/surface.
- Collaborate with fabricators to ensure colour reproduction, resolution and material compatibility.
- Be available to review/ attend install if required by broader team.

The production and installation of the works will be delivered by our contractor FM Conway, with support from our appointed architects East Architecture.

Promotion

- Develop a short text about the artwork that can be used by WCC and edited to share publicly
- Provide digital images that can be used to represent/ promote the commission on social media, marketing and in press
- Attend launch event and deliver a short talk at the launch opening event likely on 2 May 2026 or after the local election May 2026 (tbc)
- other reasonable asks connected to the launch of the work.

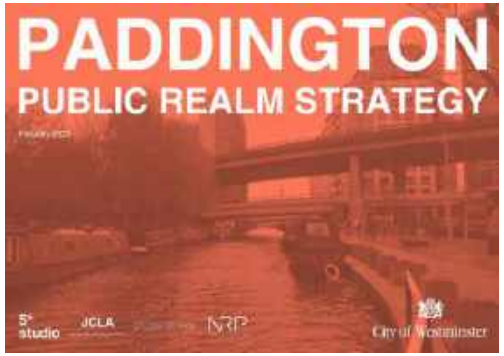
Project Background

This commission is part of the Council's Place Shaping programme for Paddington.

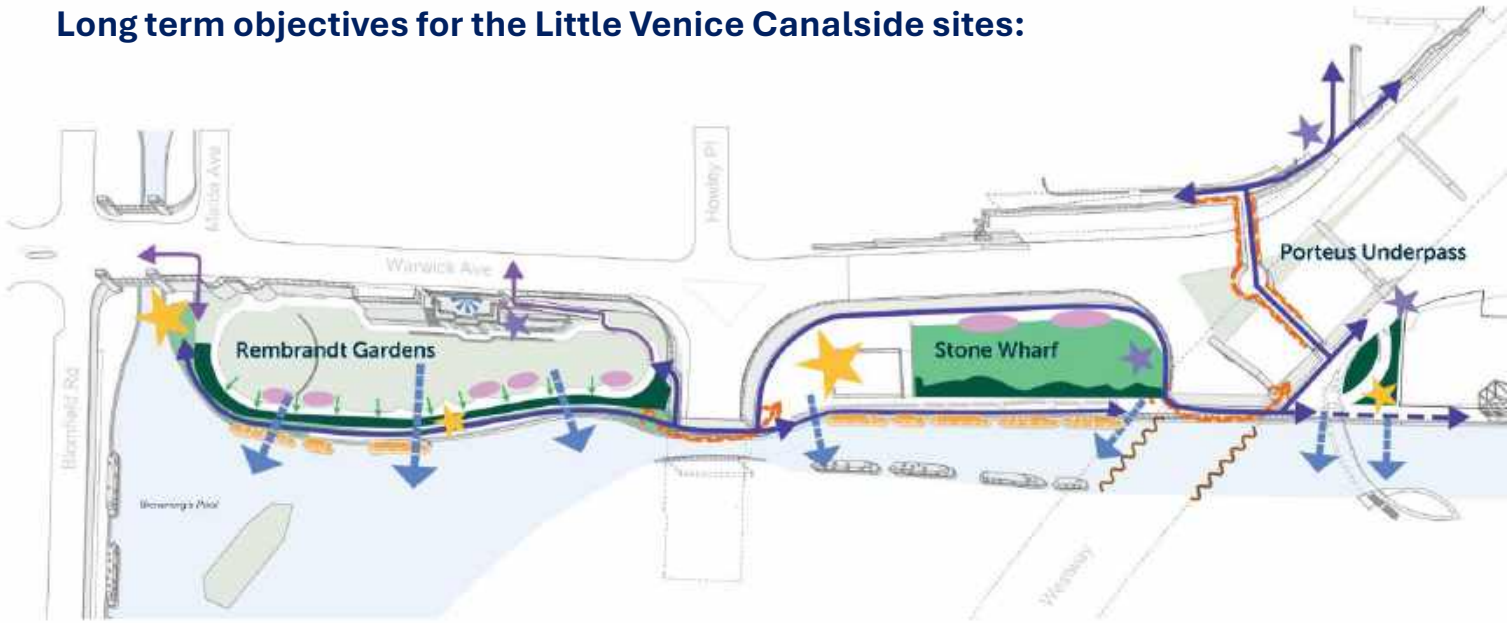
In 2023 the Council published the Paddington Public Realm Strategy addressing the issues of permeability, legibility and sense of place caused by the east-west infrastructure - the Westway, Harrow Road, canal, rail line and outstanding development sites area between Royal Oak Station and Edgware Road.

Little Venice northern Canalside is one of the first phase of projects to be taken forward. The project aims to improve the routes, connections and spaces along the northern towpath to create a more inclusive, safer and welcoming place.

You can find all project information here:
Have Your Say Today - Paddington Green And Little Venice Canalside - Commonplace



Long term objectives for the Little Venice Canalside sites:



Rembrandt Gardens

- Protect the existing character of Rembrandt Gardens
- Enhance Biodiversity and Greening
- Enhance the relation between Browning's Pool and the Gardens
- Enhance the safety and accessibility of the routes along Canalsides
- Create a new public space at the end of the towpath

Stone Wharf

- Protect the existing character of Stone Wharf
- Enhance the safety and accessibility of the routes along Canalsides
- Enhance Biodiversity and Greening
- Create new opportunities for flexible uses

Porteus Underpass

- Improve the visibility and safety in the underpass
- Enhance the biodiversity and greening around the underpass
- Create wayfinding

The Commission in Wider Project Context



Wider project

The commission is part of the first phase of improvements at Little Venice Canalside. We have developed concept design options for each site which will be incrementally delivered over the next years. During public engagement, residents have highlighted the need to upgrade the space under the two bridges and make them more welcoming.

You can find up to date information and the latest site design options here:

Have Your Say Today - Paddington Green And Little Venice Canalside - Commonplace

Site Information

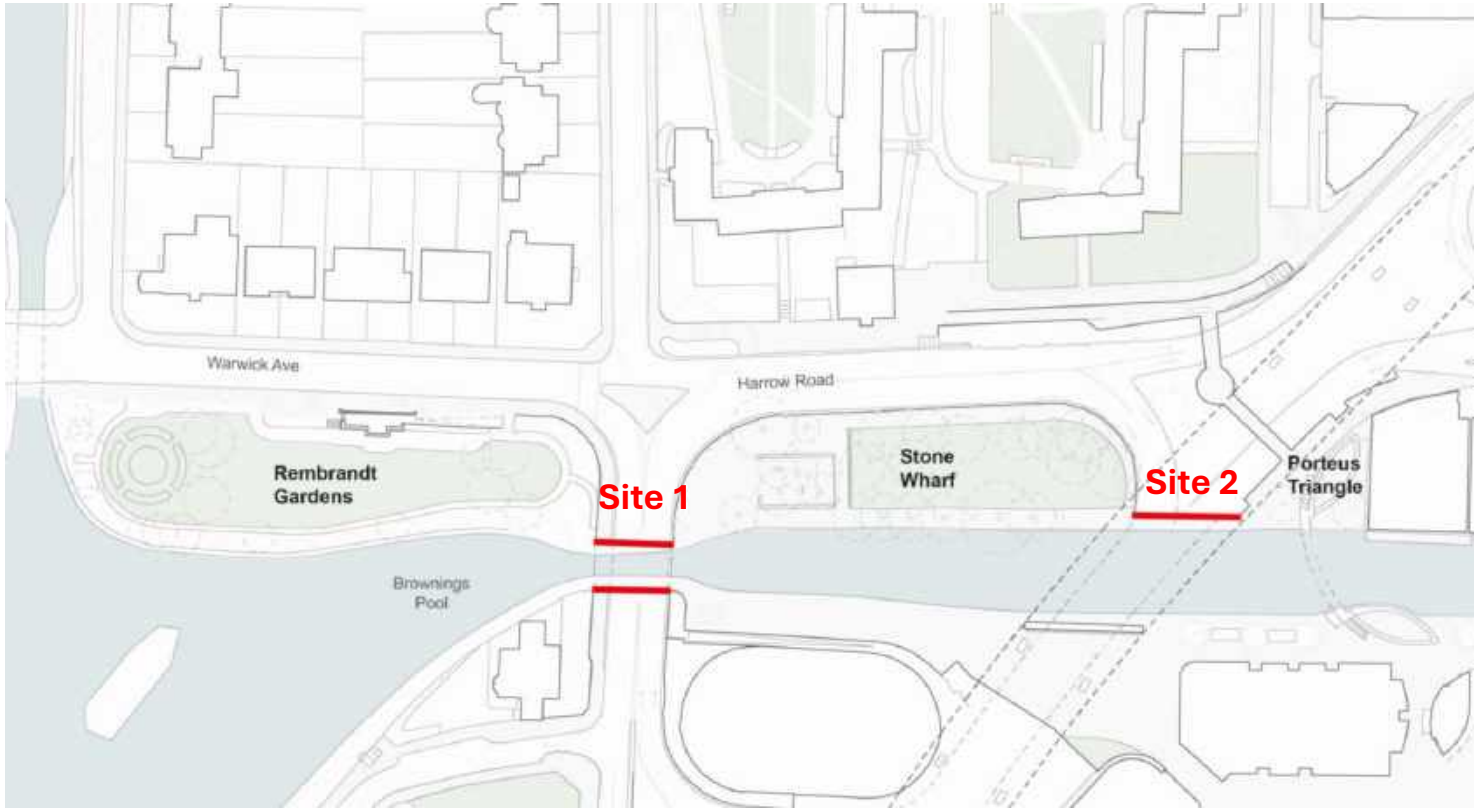
The commission sites are located underneath Harrow Road and Westway, along the Grand Union Canal & Paddington Basin. The sites are in the Maida Vale conservation area.

These spaces under the bridges form a soft threshold between three spaces with very different characters:

- **Rembrandt Gardens** is well enjoyed by local residents who praise it for its manicured garden character and biodiversity.
- **Stone Wharf** has been highlighted as a locally important site due to its industrial heritage and character
- **Porteus Triangle** is described as utilitarian, with many residents using it regularly due to it being the main connection point with the areas north of the Westway

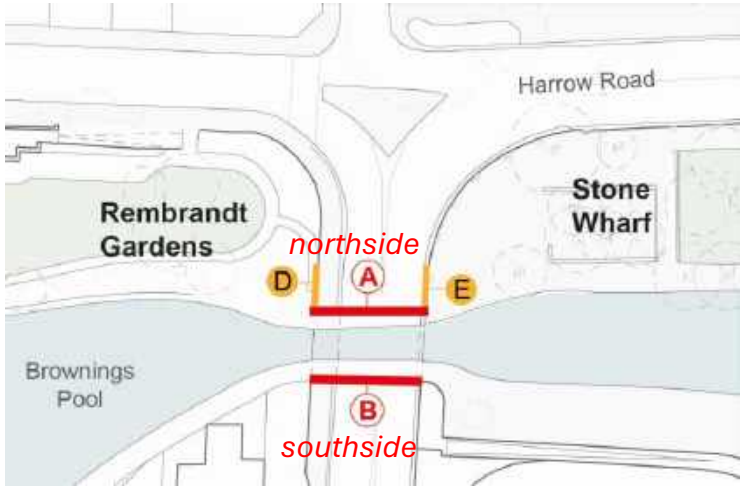
Ownership
Westminster City Council own the bridge and wall structure and the freehold for Rembrandt Gardens. Canal and Rivers Trust own and are responsible for the Canal wall and towpath.

Key local stakeholders:
- Canal & Rivers Trust
- Paddington Waterways and Maida Vale Society
- Residential moorers at Stone Wharf
- The Floating Classroom Barge
- Local residents and schools
- Little Venice Ward Councillors



Area for Public Art Commission

Site 1: Rembrandt Gardens to Stone Wharf

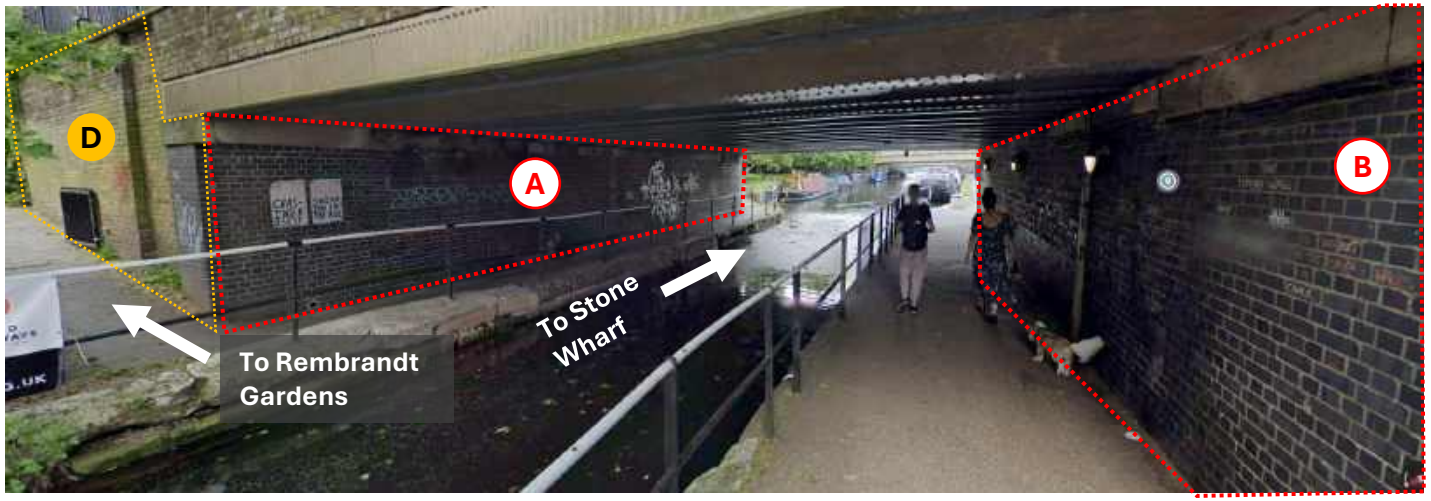


The artwork commission should cover the length and height of the brick wall areas marked as A and B. The drawings below are indicative only – CAD files will be provided to the appointed artist.



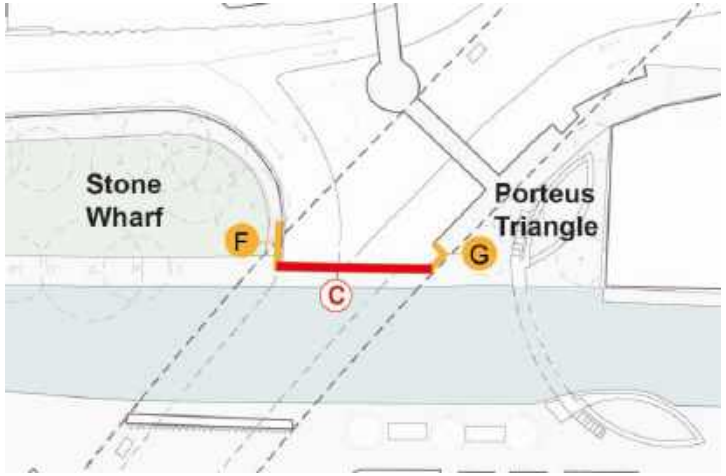
Outside of this commission

- D will be directional wayfinding via location signs
- E will be metal letter sign saying 'Stone Wharf'

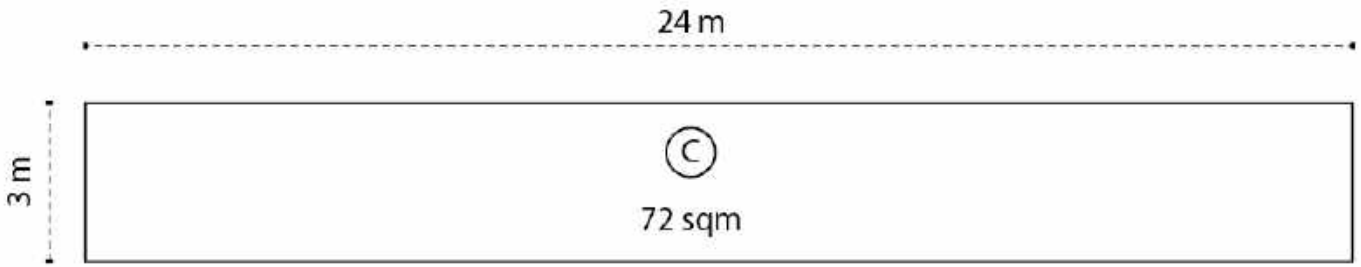




Site 2: Stone Wharf to Porteus Triangle



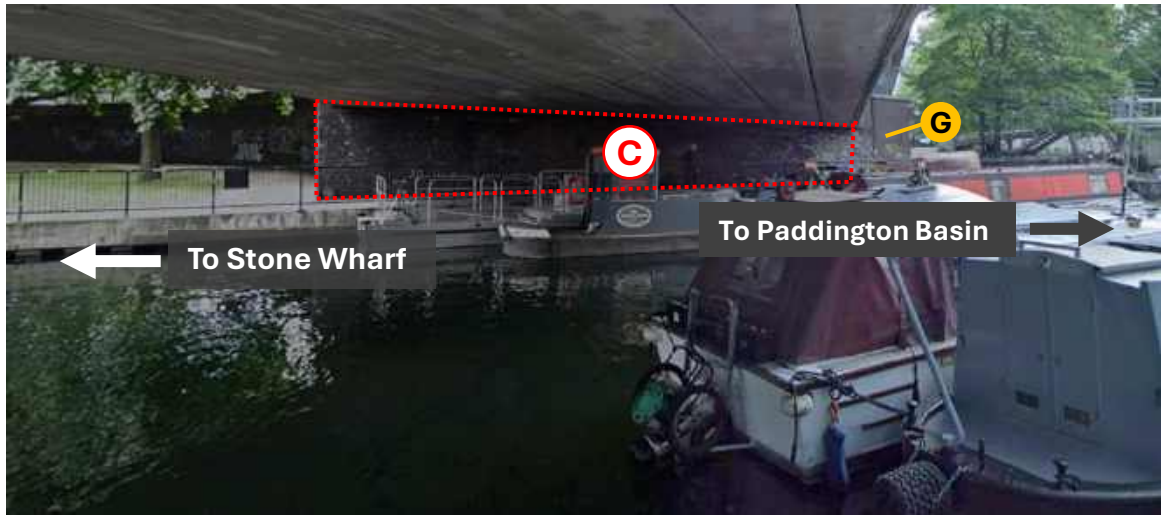
The artwork commission should cover the length and height of the brick wall areas marked below as C.
The drawings below are indicative only – CAD files will be provided to the appointed artist.

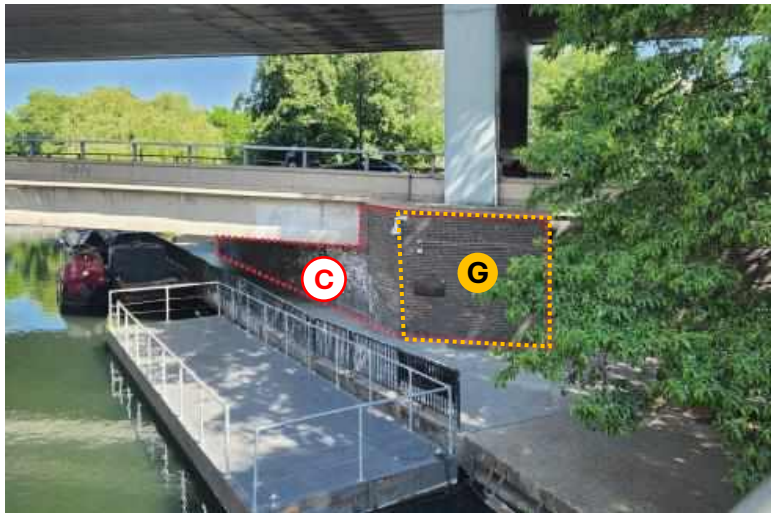


Outside of this commission

- F local storytelling and/ or history panel
- G will be directional wayfinding via location signs







Further enquiries / FAQs

Do you have details of broader scheme?
https://www.westminster.gov.uk/north-paddington-programme/projects/north-paddington-canalside-programme?

Is this commission open to international applicants?
We anticipate the shortlisted artists will be London/ UK based due to the need to travel to the site for meetings and local engagement.

Is there flexibility on timelines?
No, unfortunately for this commission there is little flexibility because the artist commission aligns with the broader improvement works in the local area.

How do I apply
Send us an expression of interest that includes some examples of your past work. See full details in the briefing pack.

Is this open to all artists/ creatives
We are open to EOIs from all artists and creatives, however we will shortlist artists based on specific criteria around past work and experience engaging local communities. See full selection criteria in the full briefing pack.

Why does the artwork need to be printed on tiles?
The design team anticipates that this will be the most practical and feasible format for the work given the location. We welcome alternative ideas however they would need to be agreed with the rest of the design team including architects and production partners.

Do you have site plans and elevations?
Yes, see information supplied in the briefing pack. Accurate elevations will be provided to the commissioned artist by the architects.

What local community engagement are you seeking?
We anticipate that this will be led by the artist responding to local themes, histories or contexts. It could be local residents who live on/along the canal, young people or other groups from the broader area. It will be led by the artist practice and concept for the work however this is important for the broader project and will be a key criteria in shortlisting artists.

Will this involve planning permission?
Yes, this will require planning permission but that process will be led by other contractors, the artist will just need to supply relevant imagery and detail to support that application

Could the three surfaces be by different artists/ be different artworks?
We are open to different approaches to connecting the three wall surfaces. We would like the commission and spaces to feel considered and like they are linked in some way but are open to them either being one artwork or more of a series.

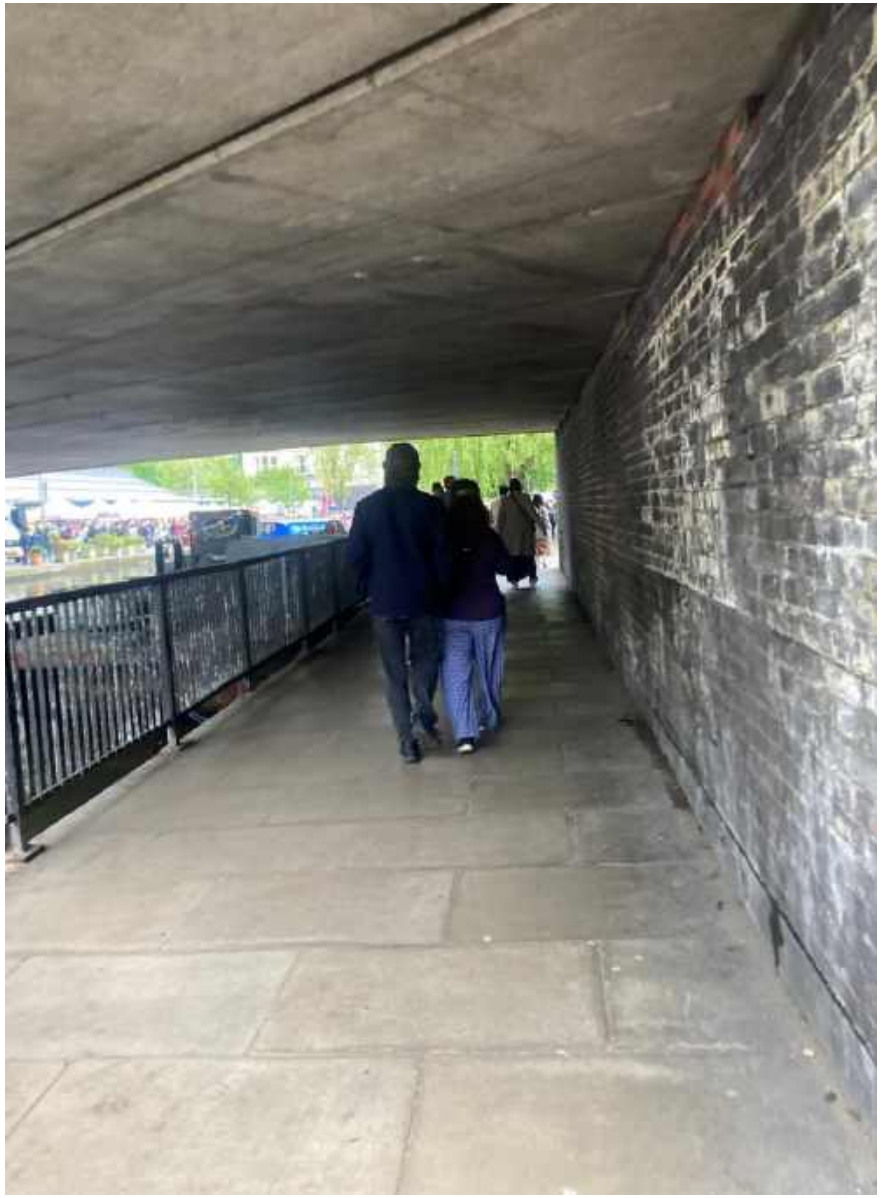


Appendix
AREA BACKGROUND

Current Site Photos

SITE 2: Bridge between Stone Wharf - Porteus





View looking west to Stone Wharf from Site 2

Current Site Photos

STONE WHARF



View looking east to Site 2 from Stone Wharf



View looking east from Stone Wharf



View looking east towards Site 2 from Stone Wharf

Current Site Photos

STONE WHARF



View looking west at Site 1 from Stone Wharf



View looking south at Site 1 from Stone Wharf



Stone Wharf at Cavalcade. View looking east

Current Site Photos

SITE 2: Bridge between Rembrandt Gardens – Stone Wharf



View looking west from Site 1 to Browning's Pool



View looking east from Site 2



View looking south toward Browning's Pool from entrance to site 2

Current Site Photos

BROWNING'S POOL AT LITTLE VENICE



View looking north-west

Bowning's Pool at Cavalcade
photos from The Times





Current Site Photos

REMBRANDT GARDENS



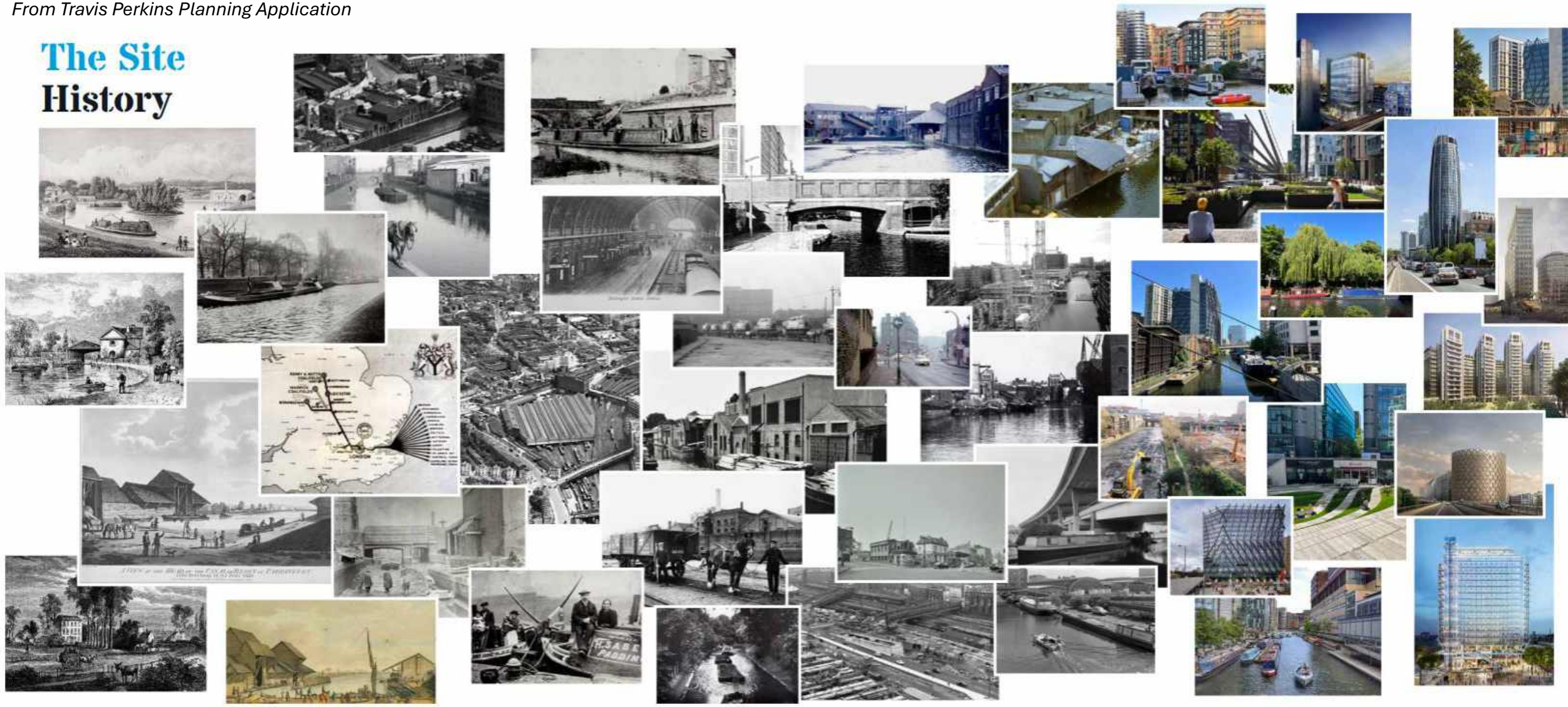




Views looking east

From Travis Perkins Planning Application

The Site
History



	1700s	1801	1828	1839	1869	1887	1920s	1960s	1970	1988	1998	2008	Present day	Future
PADDINGTON BASIN	Paddington is a village	Grand Union Canal is extended to Paddington & first wharf structures built	Further wharf structures extend along canal	Brunel's Bishops Road Canal Bridge is completed	Railway and suburban villas begin being constructed	Paddington is a significant goods interchange	The busy working canal	Competition from the railways results in decline of canals, and Paddington Basin falls into disrepair	The Westway is constructed	Paddington designated as special policy area	Heathrow express opens. Development of Sheldon Square	Farrell's Masterplan is implemented	Crossrail opens	
BALTIC WHARF	The site is set within farm land		Large structures and open yards are visible on the site		Coal wharf and timber yard occupy the site	Timber merchants begin to occupy part of the site, later becoming Sandell Perkins	Large warehouse occupies part of the site. The brick facade that remains today was constructed between	Large warehouse demolished and Travis Perkins office building constructed	The site is severed from the townscape to the north and east	Covered yard buildings constructed		Canal-side facades of industrial sheds are over-clad with		

History

Paddington Green, Stone Wharf and Rembrandt Gardens are each tied to the history of the Grand Junction Canal; a project that connected Paddington to Birmingham for trasnportation and goods at the start of the 19th century.

The Grand Junction Canal provided a link from the Grand Union Canal by water to West London and the Paddington Basin became a centre for small businesses which set up premises and large warehouses beside this short stretch of water. Around Paddington Basin were built wharves and warehouses dealing mostly with bricks, clay, coal, hay, cattle and vegetables.

Interestingly, and perhaps significantly for its future, the 'L'-shape of Paddington Basin and the triangular Browning's Pool (orginally known as Paddington Broadwater) offered a spatially rich and distinctive environment that provided a sense of destination and facilitated transaction and interaction. Even with today's patterns of use, this sense of arrival, vista, conviviality and the potential for social interchange remains.

Although Paddington has experienced extraordinary change in the last 200 years- with the coming of the waterways in 1805 and the construction of a large railway terminus in 1838-something remains, at least in part, of its origins in a country village on the edge of London's West End.

The small village became an industrial area which continued up to the time of the Second World War. As transport systems changed and most of the goods were being moved by ever larger lorries, road systems emerged around Paddington providing an almost surreal scale in juxtaposition with existing buildings and green spaces. Yet the detail, richness and spatial diversity of much of the area remains defiantly intimate, peaceful and picturesque.





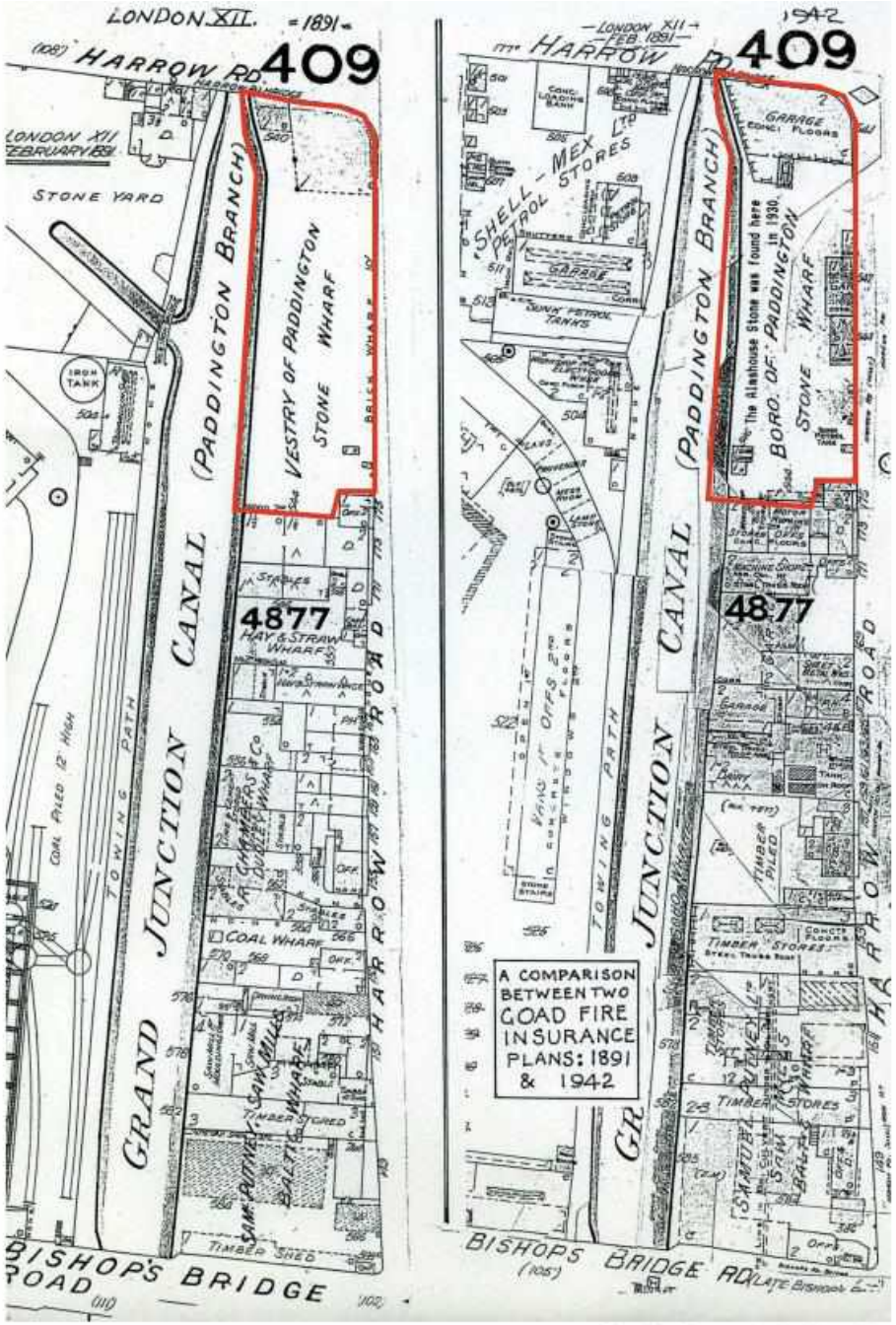
Paddington in 1872



The Grand Union Canal at the junction by Ernest Haslehust c.1920



Junction of the Regent's Canal at Paddington. Engraved by S. Lacey from a drawing by Thomas Hosmer Shepherd 1828



Stone Wharf insurance plan in 1891 and 1942



View past 'Rats Island' * towards the site of Rembrandt Gardens;, before boats were moored around Brownings Pool. Photo from the 1960's (London Canals - London Waterways History)





Warwick Avenue Bridge with temporary footbridge in the 1970's