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Queen's Park Canalside Mural Engagement Report

February 2026

City of Westminster

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Thank you

Thank you to all who contributed to and were involved in the planning and delivery of the Queen's Park Canalside mural. A special thank you to the students at Queen's Park Primary School and those who attended the Queen's Park Library drop-in for sharing their thoughts and ideas to create an artwork that would celebrate local people and place.

Left: Reference sheets and drawings from the children's workshop at Queen's Park Primary School, June 2025

Keep in touch

If you would like to find out more about the North Paddington Canalside programme and Queen's Park Canalside project, please visit: **https://npcanalsidestrategy.commonplace.is**

You can also contact the Council team at: **npcanalside@westminster.gov.uk**

Introduction

This report captures the community engagement work delivered as part of the creation of a large-scale public mural on Queen's Park Canalside, a green space alongside Harrow Road in North Paddington.

The Queen's Park Canalside mural project is a permanent piece of public art, funded by Westminster City Council. The work was initiated in response to public engagement feedback that highlighted a strong community aspiration for more public art in the area.

The aim of the project was to collaboratively shape the design of a new large-scale public artwork, inspired by and reflecting the unique cultural and environmental heritage of Queen's Park and surrounding neighbourhoods.

The engagement process took place through hands-on creative sessions and an open dialogue with local people to embed community voice in the design.

In summer 2025, Westminster City Council appointed artist Freddie Denton to facilitate a series of engagement sessions for the mural.

The creative workshop was held at Queen's Park Primary School, working closely with a Year 6 class. A second session at Queen's Park Library invited local residents to share their thoughts and associations with the area. These conversations throughout June 2025 helped gather community memories, hopes, and priorities for the public space.

Both sessions directly informed the design and layout of the final mural, which includes original drawings by participants embedded into the fabric of the artwork itself.

The work placed a strong focus on creativity, specific details about the site, and community voice, while supporting skill-building and imagination through accessible, hands-on activities.

Key project outcomes

- Meaningful participation from local school children through creative workshops that used play, observation and discussion to shape the design of a public mural.
- Hands-on drawing and craft sessions encouraged children to explore local flora and fauna through image-making, helping foster a sense of connection to nature and place.
- Open dialogue with local residents, gathering personal reflections and stories about the area to inform the mural's themes and ensure the artwork reflects local perspectives.

Left: Reference sheets and drawings from the children's workshop at Queen's Park Primary School, June 2025

Children’s workshops at Queen’s Park Primary School

Workshop content

In the workshops with Queen’s Park Primary School in June 2025, children explored how local flora and fauna could influence a mural, using a mix of drawing exercises, printed worksheets and hands-on leaf printing with ink. These activities encouraged observation, imagination, and a deeper connection to the site. Each student was then invited to consolidate their ideas by sketching a mural design using templates that matched the final wall dimensions, effectively ‘designing their own mural’.

Ahead of the mural workshops, artist Freddie Denton developed a series of illustrated reference sheets to support the children’s design process and encourage close observation of their local environment. These materials highlighted the unique ecology of Queen’s Park Canalside and were used as visual prompts during the sessions.

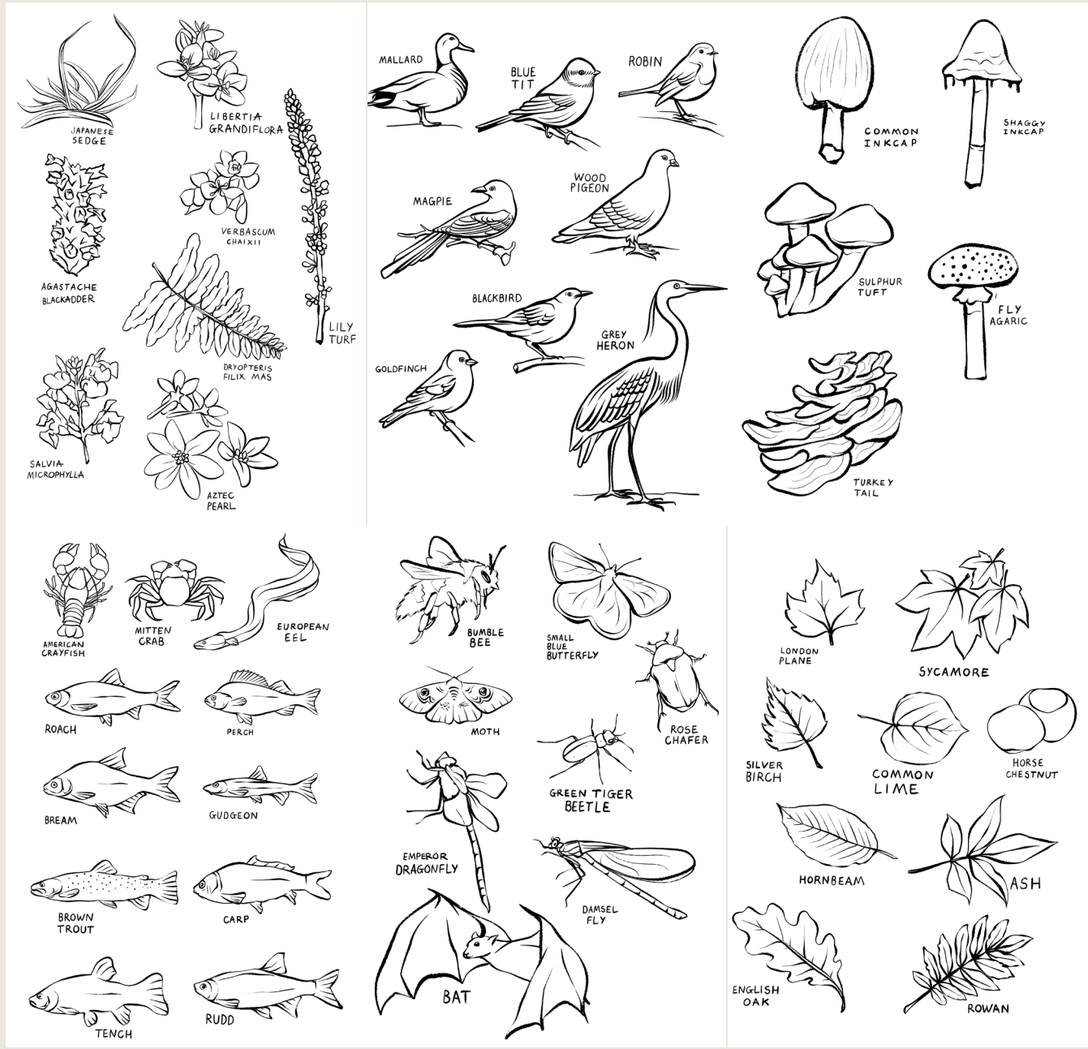
The sheets featured hand-drawn studies of flora and fauna found in the surrounding area, including:

- A page of leaves from local trees and plants
- A selection of birds commonly seen in the park
- Fish and water creatures that inhabit the nearby canal
- Examples of mushrooms and fungi
- A variety of local flowers
- Drawings of insects, including pollinators like bees and butterflies

In addition to these visual references, a page of prompted words was included to introduce the idea of using typography and text as part of mural design. Children were encouraged to think about how words can carry meaning and intention in public artwork — whether through names, messages, or expressive lettering. This helped open up a conversation around communication, visibility and the power of language in shaping shared space.

Workshop outcomes

- Growing confidence in drawing and mark-making across the entire class, including neurodivergent participants, with children visibly gaining assurance in expressing their ideas visually.
- Tactile and sensory engagement played a key role, with activities like leaf printing helping children connect physically and imaginatively with their local environment.
- A strong sense of connection and ownership emerged as pupils engaged with the idea that their contributions could become part of a permanent public artwork.
- Creative enthusiasm was evident throughout the sessions, with children approaching their mural designs with curiosity, playfulness, and a genuine sense of pride.



Above: Examples of drawing sheets produced for the children’s workshop to provide inspiration, June 2025



Above: Examples of drawings and mark-making produced by the children during the workshop session at Queen's Park Primary School, June 2025



Above: Examples of drawings and mark-making produced by the children during the workshop session at Queen's Park Primary School, June 2025

Drop-in session at Queen's Park Library

Workshop content

An informal afternoon drop-in session was held at Queen's Park Library in June 2025, inviting local residents to share their thoughts and aspirations for the mural. Participants were encouraged to take part in open conversation and complete a short questionnaire designed to gather reflections on the local area.

Workshop outcomes

A few key themes emerged from these discussions and were directly incorporated into the final artwork:

- A Victorian-inspired aesthetic, drawing on nearby architectural details and heritage.
- The inclusion of "W10", the area's postcode, as a subtle act of placemaking and local pride.

This session helped:

- Ground the mural in its immediate context.
- Ensure the design resonates with the identity and history of Queen's Park.
- Explore themes surrounding the importance of the local nature and canalside setting.

Impact and outcomes

Community ownership
Participants had the opportunity to contribute to a permanent public mural, leaving their mark through creative drawing exercises. This fostered a sense of pride, visibility and shared ownership over the final piece.

Environmental education
The sessions introduced children to the plants and wildlife of Queen's Park Canalside, encouraging curiosity and awareness of the local ecosystem through observation and image-making.

Upskilling local people
Many participants gained confidence in mark-making, colour, and composition by designing their own artworks. Some engaged with creative tools and processes for the first time.

Cultural heritage and place identity
Design elements drew on references to the local canal, nearby architecture and natural surroundings. Stories and ideas shared during the engagement sessions were embedded directly into the final mural.

Enhanced community connections
The project helped strengthen relationships between local institutions, artists, educators and residents, building a foundation for future creative and collaborative work in the area.

Long-term impact
The final mural helped create a lasting bond with the local residents and will be present for many years to come. Both the mural and wider improvements to the site will improve quality of life for those living in the area.

Final artwork

The artwork includes local plant and bird life identified by the children during the workshops. These natural elements stood out in their drawings and conversations, so they became a key part of the final composition.

Layered into the background of the mural are large-scale overlapping line drawings made by the children, scanned and incorporated directly into the design. These mark-makings ensure that their input is permanently represented in the piece and help root the mural in genuine community participation.

The colour palette combines natural tones with more bold and vibrant colours, influenced by the children's own selections and preferences during the sessions.

The final mural design features the phrase 'Ebb & Flow', chosen to reflect the canalside location, the movement of water and the changing flow of community life and seasons in the area. The phrase emerged from engagement sessions with local children, where many contributed thoughtful words and phrases around change, connection and nature.

The mural also incorporates a Victorian inspired aesthetic, drawn from the surrounding architecture and local heritage. This direction resonated strongly with participants in the library drop-in session, who expressed pride in these historic visual cues.

Residents also spoke about the boundaries of Queen's Park feeling somewhat undefined, an area without a clear visual cue that says 'you're here'. Rather than formal signage, they described a lack of anything that actively celebrates the neighbourhood's identity. In this context, the inclusion of 'W10' was seen as a subtle but meaningful gesture of placemaking, signalling pride in Queen's Park and giving the area a clearer sense of self.





Above: Final digital mural design highlighting elements taken from the public engagement sessions and local context

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