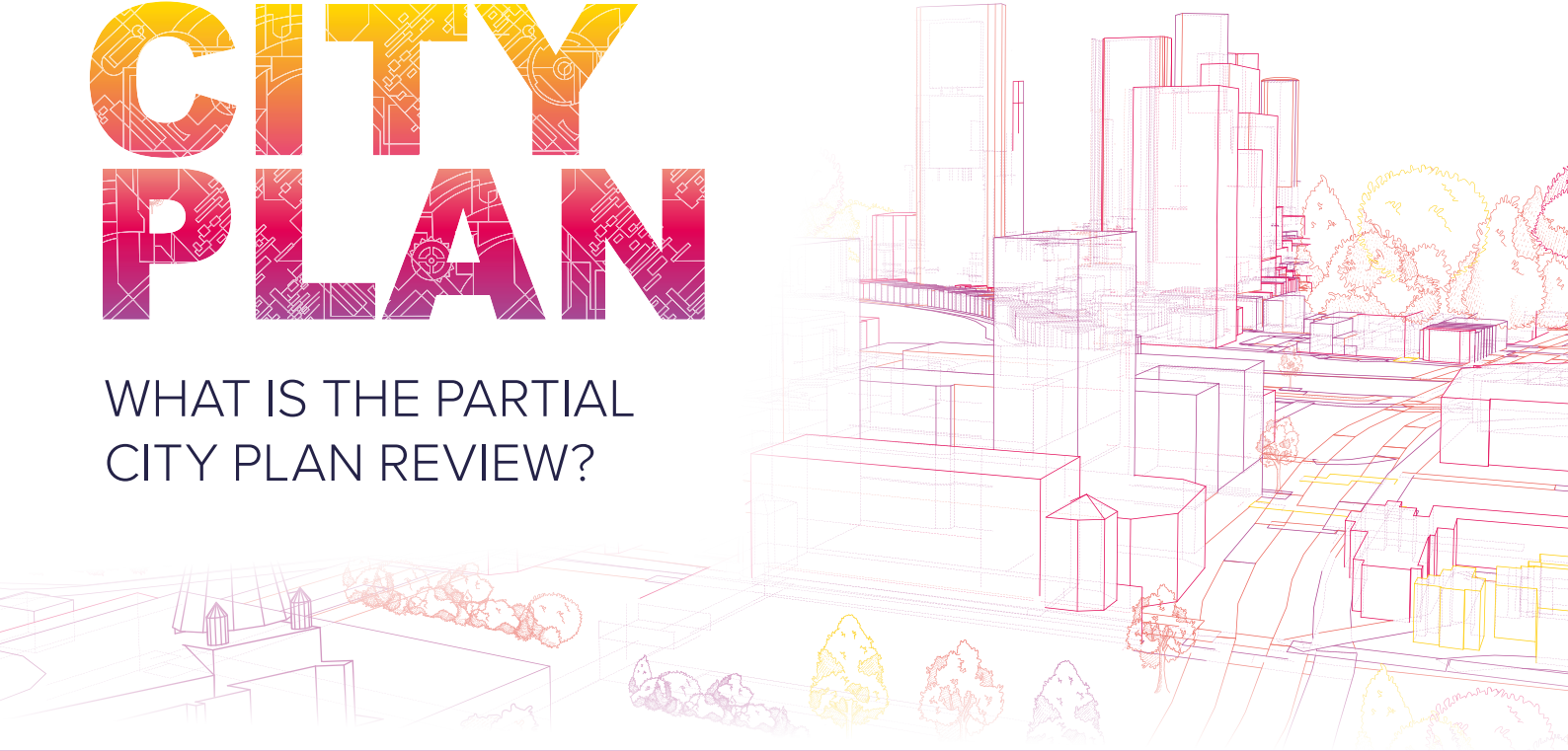
CITY PLAN

WHAT IS THE PARTIAL CITY PLAN REVIEW?



FAIRER WESTMINSTER

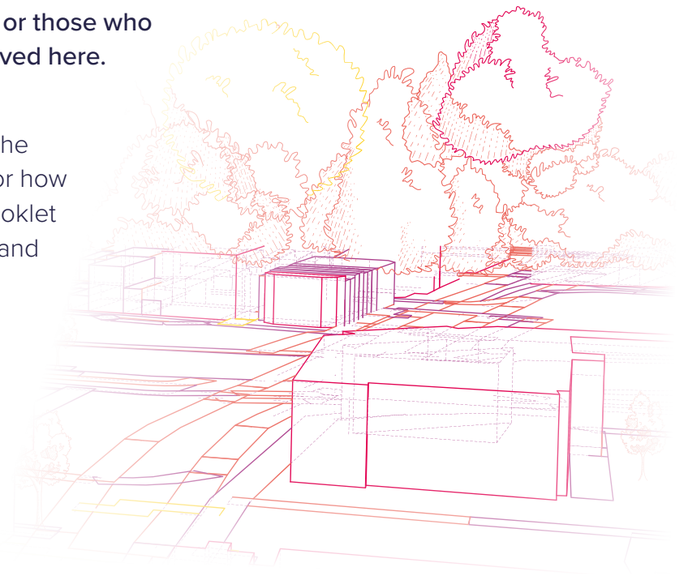
City of Westminster

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOKLET AND WHO IS THE AUDIENCE?

This booklet is for everyone in Westminster or those who are interested in how development is approved here.

It gives a simple overview of what the City of Westminster is doing as part of its review of the City Plan. The City Plan is like a set of rules for how development is done in Westminster. The booklet explains why we are reviewing the City Plan and what specific changes we are making.

Anyone in Westminster's community, like residents, workers, visitors, businesses, and community organisations, can use this booklet to understand the role of the City Plan and the changes we are proposing.



CONTENTS

What is the City Plan? 4

What policy areas does the partial review focus on? 6

How did we get here? 7

Revised Affordable Housing Policy 10

New Retrofit First Policy 12

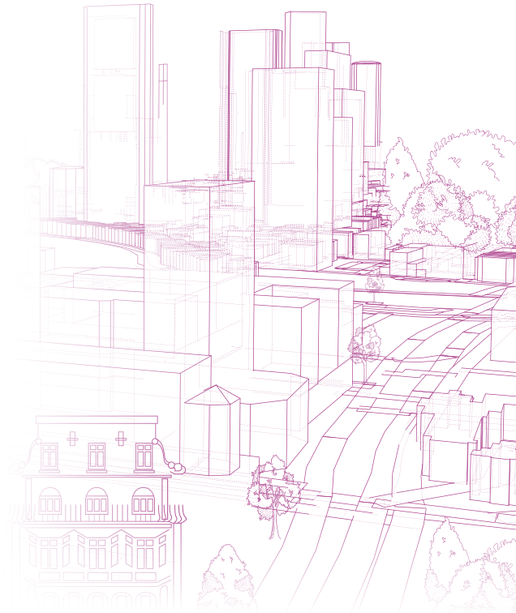
New Site Allocations 13

Site Maps 14

- Land Adjacent to Royal Oak Station 14
- Westbourne Park Bus Garage 16
- St Mary's Hospital 18
- Grosvenor Sidings 20

Have Your Say 22

What's Next? 23



WHAT IS THE CITY PLAN?

Legislation requires that each local planning authority have a Local Plan and in Westminster, it's called the City Plan. Even though it's called something different, it serves the same purpose.

The City Plan sets out the Council's vision for the environment, which includes both the built and natural environment and all the things that occur in between it. It looks to guide development and covers things like housing, infrastructure, businesses, open spaces and more.

The current City Plan was adopted in April 2021 and contains policies covering the following:

- Spatial Strategies (which is identifying key priorities for specific locations, often called Opportunity or Renewal Areas);
- Housing Policies (such as policies on housing delivery, affordable housing, housing for specific groups and quality of housing development);
- Economy and Employment Policies (such as policies that support growth in the number of jobs in the city, where commercial land uses should be directed, and what uses are suitable in our town centres and high streets;
- Connection Policies (that is, policies that deal with transport, mobility and infrastructure);
- Environmental Policies (such as policies that seek to improve air quality, green infrastructure, reduce flood risk and secure energy and waste management); and
- Design and Heritage Policies (i.e. design principles for all development, how Westminster's heritage will be conserved, guidance on building height and the public realm).

The City Plan is a key part of what is known as the Council's 'Development Plan'. The 'Development Plan' is a hierarchy of planning documents which inform the assessment of planning applications.



WHAT POLICY AREAS DOES THE PARTIAL REVIEW FOCUS ON?

We're currently looking at our City Plan to make sure it meets the changing needs of our communities and aligns with the council's Fairer Westminster strategy. We want Westminster to be a great place for everyone, and that means our development plan needs to adapt.

Since we adopted the City Plan in 2021, we've published a new strategy for the city – Fairer Westminster –and to ensure the City Plan is delivering on the commitments within that strategy, there are three policy areas in the adopted plan that need our immediate attention. These are:

Affordable Housing

We want to make sure there are more homes that people can afford.
So, we're looking to ensure that more genuinely affordable homes are developed.



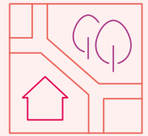
Retrofitting

We care about the environment and are committed to net-zero, so we're focusing on ways to make the entire development cycle more sustainable. We're putting in place new guidance to ensure updating (retrofitting) buildings is the first option looked at for development before considering demolition and rebuilding.



Site Allocations

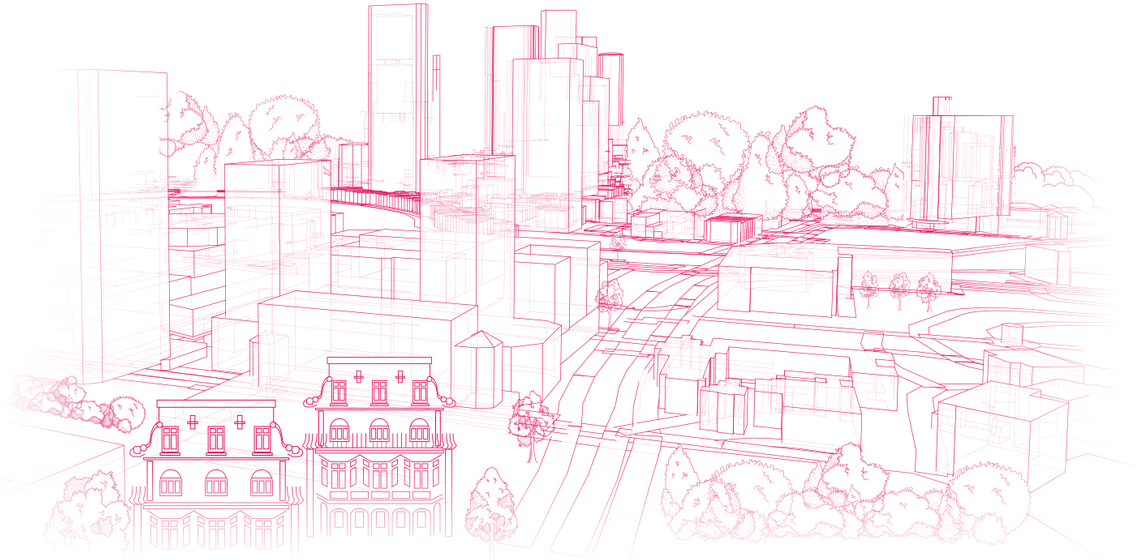
There are some sites in the city that are underutilised and have struggled to come forward for development given their complexities, and we want to change that. We're looking to implement policies that will unlock the development potential of these sites and see them contribute towards our vision for Westminster.



Our goal is to create a Fairer Westminster that's lively, healthy, and sustainable for everyone, and these changes are part of making that happen.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

- **April 2021:** We officially adopted the current City Plan.
- **October – November 2022:** We started a ‘Regulation 18 consultation.’ This means we asked for early input on the direction of the City Plan’s partial review. We wanted to know what people thought we should reconsider in the key policy areas we’d identified needed to be reviewed, and why.
- **Throughout 2023:** We carefully studied the feedback from the consultation and gathered more evidence to help us make decisions. We worked on creating the basic principles for our policies.
- **October 2023 – January 2024:** We talked informally with our communities and other important groups to get their thoughts on how the policies were shaping up.
- **February 2024:** We finalised the draft policies following completion of our evidence base and informal stakeholder feedback.
- **March – April 2024:** We are now doing another consultation, called ‘Regulation 19.’ This time, we are sharing our draft policies for six weeks and asking people to tell us if they think the new or revised policies work well, are strong, and follow the law. We want to make sure we get it right with everyone’s input.

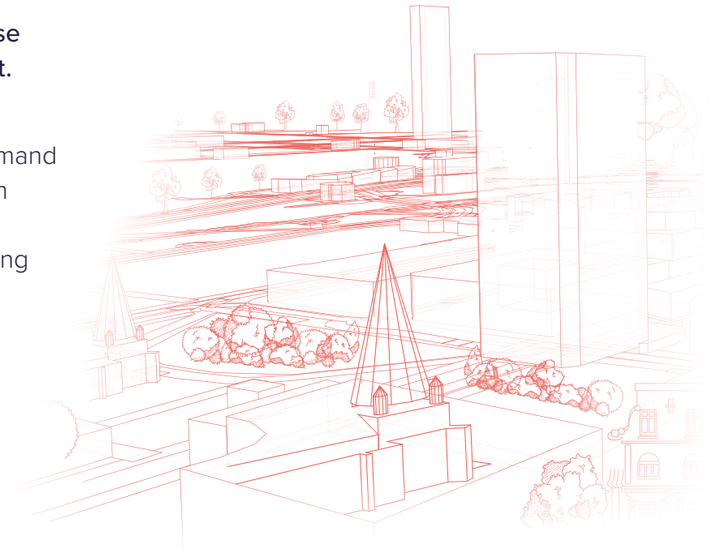


REVISED AFFORDABLE HOUSING POLICY

Affordable housing is homes that are sold or rented at prices suitable for those whose needs are not met by the market.

The need for affordable housing in Westminster arises from a significant demand for homes, driven by factors such as high land values, a limited supply of homes, competing uses and challenges in building new homes in a dense environment.

Our goal is to strengthen our adopted affordable housing policy to make sure more genuinely affordable homes are available for those who need them the most.



There are two types of affordable housing – **social housing** and **intermediate housing**.

Social housing: This is housing for people who struggle to find suitable homes at below-market rates that they can afford. The council or non-profit providers usually offer this type of housing and housing is allocated based on eligibility.

Intermediate housing: This is for people who may not qualify for social housing but still can't afford to buy or rent a home in the open market. It is usually provided in Westminster as intermediate rent. Intermediate rent costs more than social housing, but less than a private market home in the area it is located.

Currently, our policy strives for a distribution of 60% intermediate housing and 40% social housing. We are now proposing to change this, aiming for 70% social housing and 30% intermediate housing. This new split is in line with council's evidence that shows a very acute need for social housing. It also acknowledges that even a discount of market rent is likely to be expensive for many of Westminster's residents.

Additionally, we are exploring the option of introducing a requirement for small development sites to make a contribution to affordable housing. Currently only developments providing more than 10 homes, more than 1,000 sqm of residential floorspace or with an area greater than 0.5 hectares are required to provide a proportion of homes as affordable. We want to change that to ensure all residential developments in the city make a fair contribution.

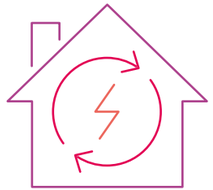
NEW RETROFIT FIRST POLICY

Westminster as a Local Authority is one of the largest greenhouse gas emitters in the UK. This fact, amongst many other factors, led Westminster to declare a climate emergency in 2019 and set ourselves the target of becoming a net zero city by 2040.

The built environment accounts for 90% of CO2 emissions in Westminster, as opposed to 40% across the UK. Furthermore, the demolition and redevelopment of buildings in Westminster is associated with a large amount of currently unregulated carbon emissions.

We are therefore seeking to contribute to tackling this issue by introducing a new policy that calls on developers to explore opportunities to refurbish, update and remodel existing buildings, to improve their performance, make them more energy efficient, and adapt them to a changing climate. This is called ‘retrofitting’.

The policy seeks to encourage developers to fully consider different options for retrofitting a building, before they consider their demolition to build brand new ones. The policy doesn’t look to ban demolition entirely, but to ensure it only occurs where it will deliver significant public benefits, or in certain other evidence based cases. Where new buildings are constructed, we will look to set a limit on the amount of carbon emissions associated with their construction.



NEW SITE ALLOCATIONS

Site Allocations are a tool used to help bring underutilised sites forward for development. These tools work alongside our existing City Plan policies and add more site specific guidance to help steer good development.

Site Allocations give specific guidance on what we expect the land allocated to be used for (like homes, shops, or community spaces), where buildings are best sited, and other details about the site, like which heritage buildings or views are important to conserve, create new green space or opportunities for new access routes.

Site Allocations are needed because they have the potential to resolve complex constraints on the sites and unlock development. These constraints may be dealing with surrounding heritage, environmental impacts, transport and access to and from the site, and amenity.

By pro-actively setting guidelines for these sites early on we can steer good development and provide more homes, more places for businesses, and better infrastructure. We have identified four Site Allocations for which we have drafted policies for each: Land Adjacent to Royal Oak Station, Westbourne Park Bus Garage, St Mary's Hospital and Grosvenor Sidings.

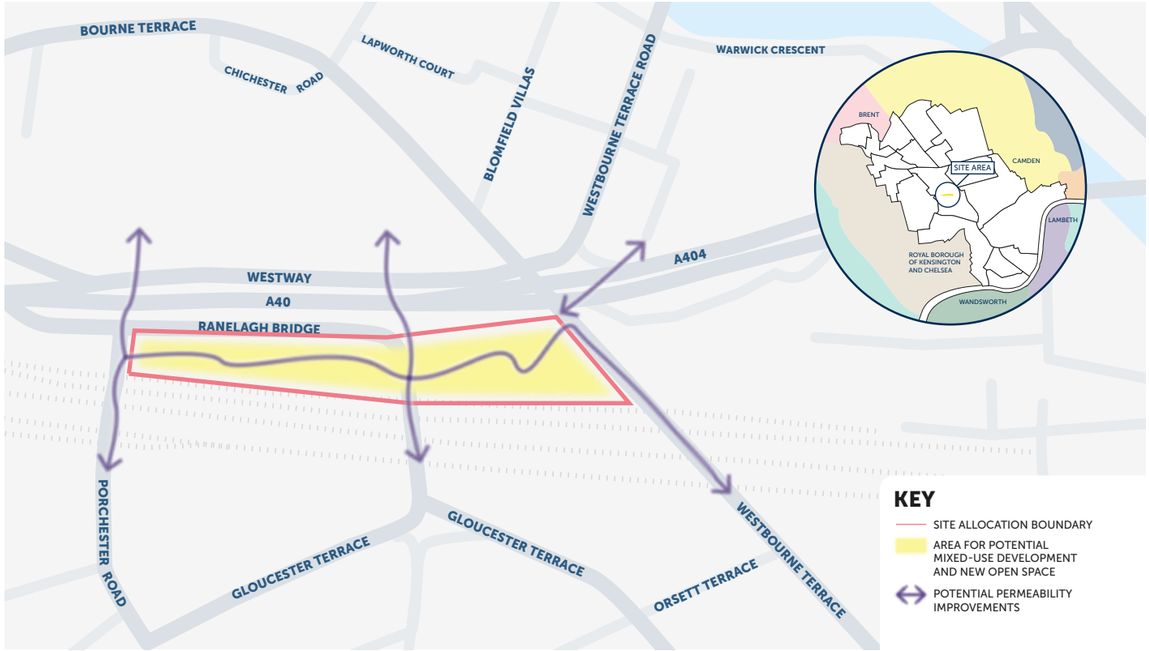
LAND ADJACENT TO ROYAL OAK STATION

What's there now?

The site is in between Royal Oak station and the Westway. It was previously used by Transport for London to help with the construction of the Elizabeth Line but is currently disused and contains low quality and poorly maintained greenery.

Our vision

Development on the site should deliver high-quality and sustainable built form, an enhanced and high-quality station access and approach and improved permeability for pedestrians through the site, with a range of commercial uses and mixed uses. Commercial uses at the site should reflect the needs and aspirations for the local area, providing for a range and mix of flexible workspaces, potentially including light industrial, logistics, or other offices.



WESTBOURNE PARK BUS GARAGE

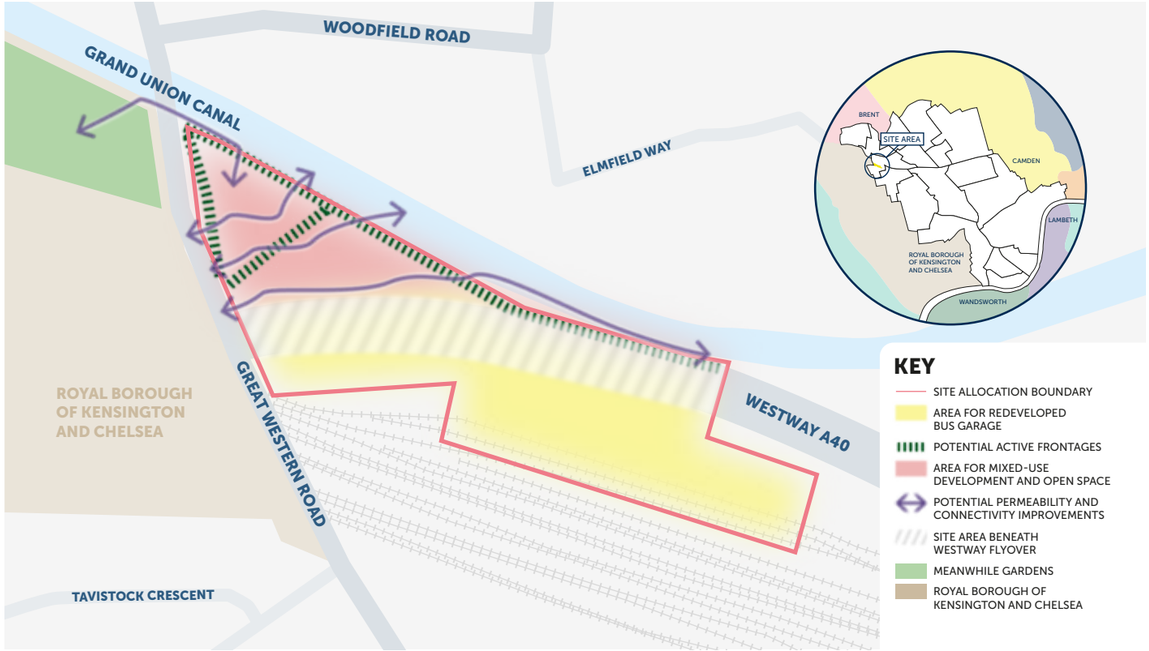
What's there now?

The site is in between Westbourne Park station and the Grand Union Canal, with the Westway flyover running through the middle. The site is currently used as a bus garage, staff car park and associated offices.

Our vision

Our vision for the Westbourne Park Bus Garage site is the delivery of a high-quality sustainable development that includes new homes, shops, workspaces and community space alongside better open space and connections to the canal. This will help to contribute to the objectives of the North West Economic Development Area as an area for residential growth, increased employment opportunities and for a greener and more walkable public realm.

Our vision will be achieved through the redevelopment and upgrade of the bus garage that meets current and future sustainable transport and staff needs. Any land that is no longer needed for the bus garage can be used for new development. Overall, the redeveloped site will celebrate the area's industrial history and unique location by the Grand Union Canal.



ST MARY'S HOSPITAL

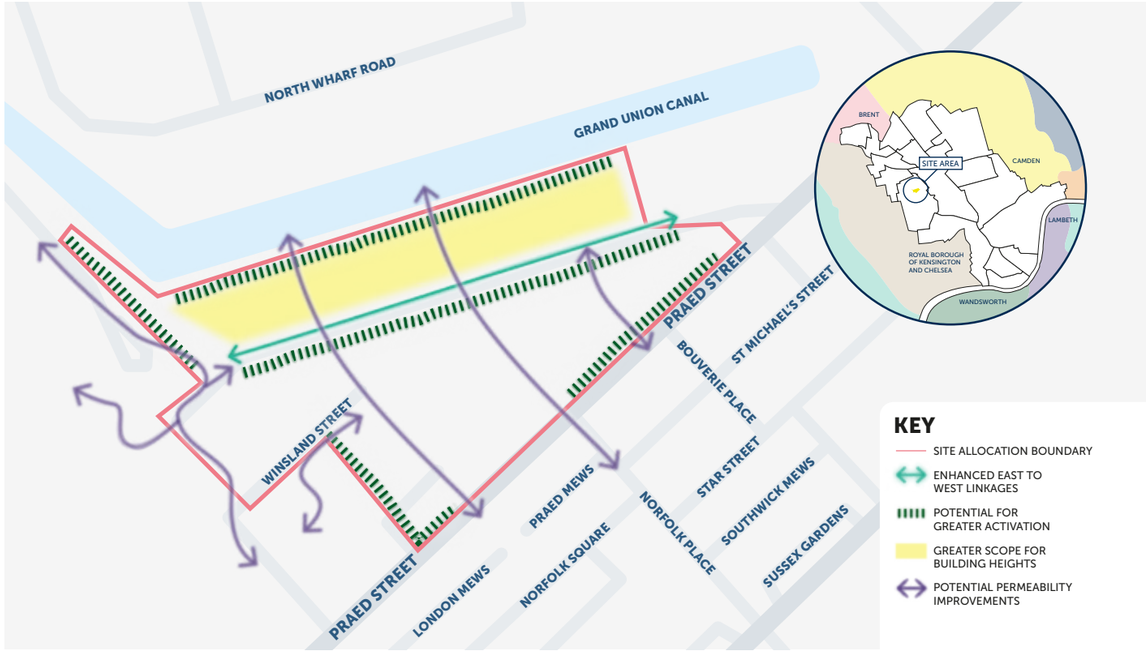
What's there now?

The site is next to Paddington Station and fronts both the Paddington Basin and Praed Street, with South Wharf Road running through the middle. The majority of the uses on the site relate to St Mary's Hospital, which is one of the largest trauma centres and Accident & Emergency departments in London.

Our vision

Our vision for St Mary's Hospital is the delivery of a high-quality sustainable redevelopment that contributes to the objectives of the Paddington Opportunity Area as an area for commercial-led growth and improved healthcare provision.

Development will include the delivery of a new state of the art hospital that meets modern healthcare needs, alongside commercial growth that supports new high value jobs, a significantly enhanced public realm, and complementary uses such as health research and laboratory spaces, new shops and community spaces.



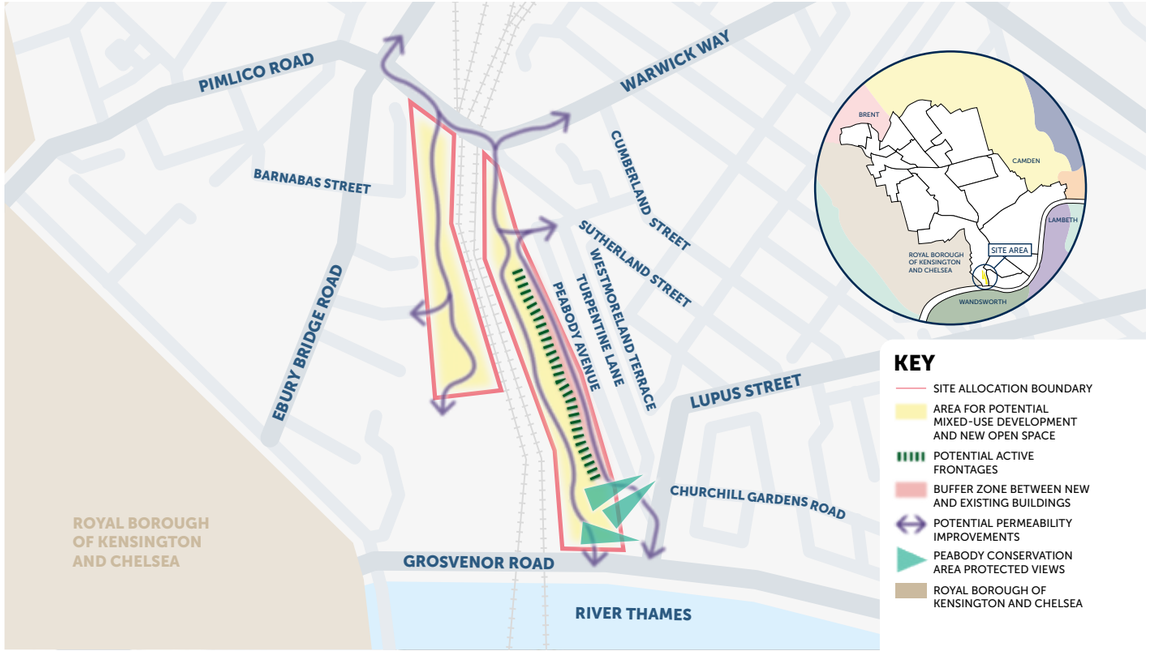
GROSVENOR SIDINGS

What's there now?

The site is at the very south of the city, resting between Victoria Station. Most of the site is currently used as a railway sidings and depot for trains with the western site currently occupied by the British Transport Police Building.

Our vision

Our vision for Grosvenor Sidings is the delivery of a high-quality sustainable development with a mix of uses including new homes, shops, community spaces, open space and play space. Development will respect and respond to the site's context, history and character, and integrate sensitively with the surrounding neighbourhood, enhancing the local environment, whilst also creating a distinctive identity and sense of place that connects with the wider Victoria area.



HAVE YOUR SAY

This consultation process is important because it allows you to provide valuable input and helps us ensure that the City Plan is robust, so that when it does come into effect it is easily understood by all users.

You can contribute by visiting the consultation webpage here: cityplanpartialreview.commonplace.is

This consultation is running from 14 March to 25 April 2024.

NEED MORE HELP?

Contact us on:

Planning Policy Team, Westminster City Council

Email: planningpolicy@westminster.gov.uk

WHAT'S NEXT?

Once the consultation finishes, the council will review each comment and consider whether tweaks need to be made to the draft policy.

Once each comment has been considered, the revised City Plan will be submitted to an 'Inspector', who on behalf of central government, provides an independent review of the proposed changes and will, through a public examination, ask the council detailed questions, to provide more detail or make amendments to some of the policies. Anyone who has responded to the current consultation will be able to take part in this next stage of the process.

We expect to submit the revised City Plan to the inspector later this year.

