

6B – KEY AREAS OF CHANGE: BLACKFRIARS



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1. Executive Summary

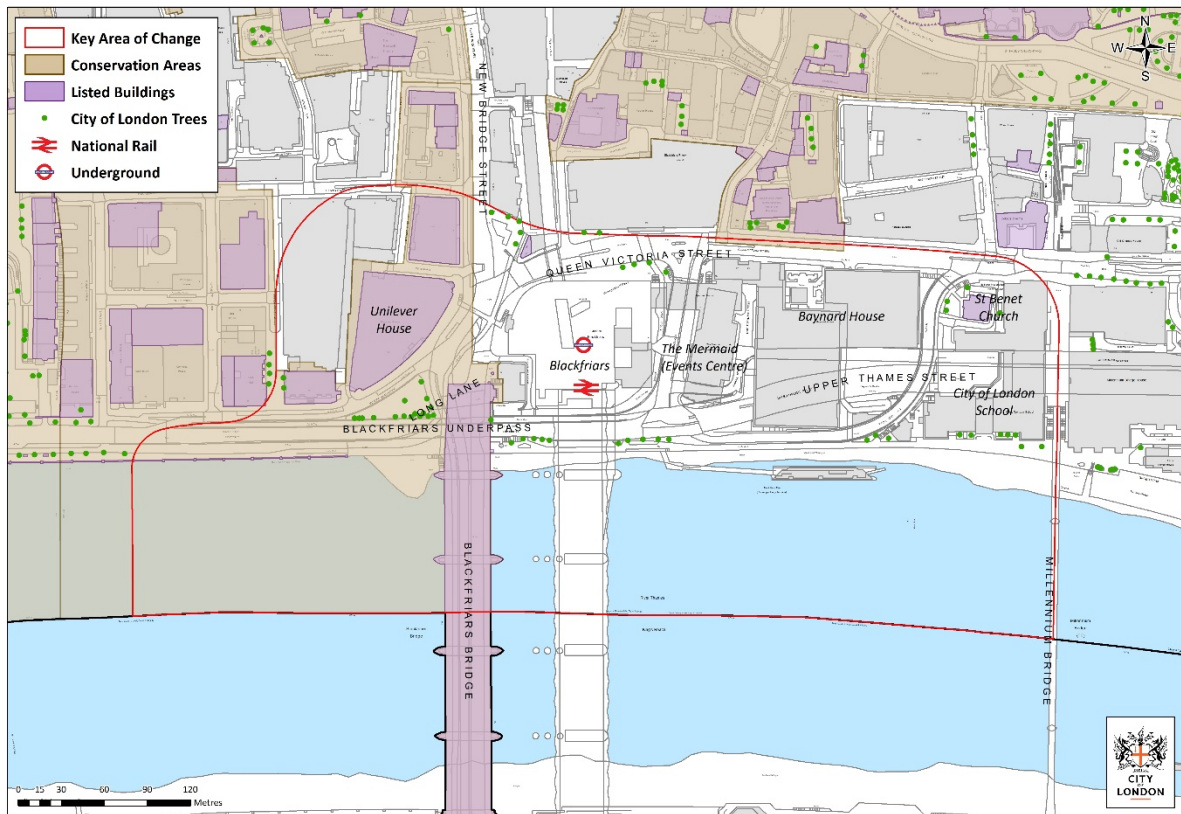
Blackfriars has been identified as one of the seven Key Areas of Change within the Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan 2036, as an area which is set to incur significant change and growth during the plan period. This document does not purport to be exhaustive by including specific detail regarding key buildings and features within the area, and any omission from the text should not be interpreted as an indication of lesser significance. Maps and diagrams, including those utilising an Ordnance Survey base map, are intended to be indicative only and precise boundaries should not be inferred from information presented.

The Blackfriars Key Area of Change is located on the north bank of the River Thames. It is situated east of the legal district of Temple and south west of St Paul's Cathedral. It is a mixed-use area with Blackfriars Station situated in the centre and contains a mix of offices, education, cultural and commercial uses:

- Post war buildings along the river with potential for regeneration and redevelopment
- Blackfriars National Rail and Underground stations
- Blackfriars Millennium Pier along the River Thames
- Transport for London (TfL) Cycle Superhighway
- The Mermaid London events space which contains cultural facilities
- City of London School an independent secondary school for boys
- The Guild Church of St Benet Paul's Wharf
- Riverside Walk including public realm enhancements at Paul's Walk
- Views of St Paul's Cathedral, River Thames and the Southbank
- Thames Tideway Tunnel (west of Blackfriars Bridge) currently under construction will include the first new public open space in London on the River Thames in 150 years at Blackfriars foreshore
- Urban greening and pollution reduction measures along Puddle Dock, Castle Baynard Street, White Lion Hill, Upper Thames Street and the churchyard of St Benet Paul's Wharf
- Vehicular access routes, including Upper Thames Street which is a major through route for transport and other important connections include Victoria Embankment, New Bridge Street, Queen Victoria Street and Blackfriars Bridge

2. Introduction

The name Blackfriars is derived from the black cappa worn by Dominican Friars who relocated their priory from Holborn to the area between the River Thames and Ludgate Hill in 1276. The site is now home to Blackfriars Station. Most of the development within this area is post-war, with buildings of large footprints and little to no active frontages or open space. The Victoria Embankment extends from the north bank of the river west from Blackfriars to Westminster.



Map 1: Blackfriars Key Areas of Change

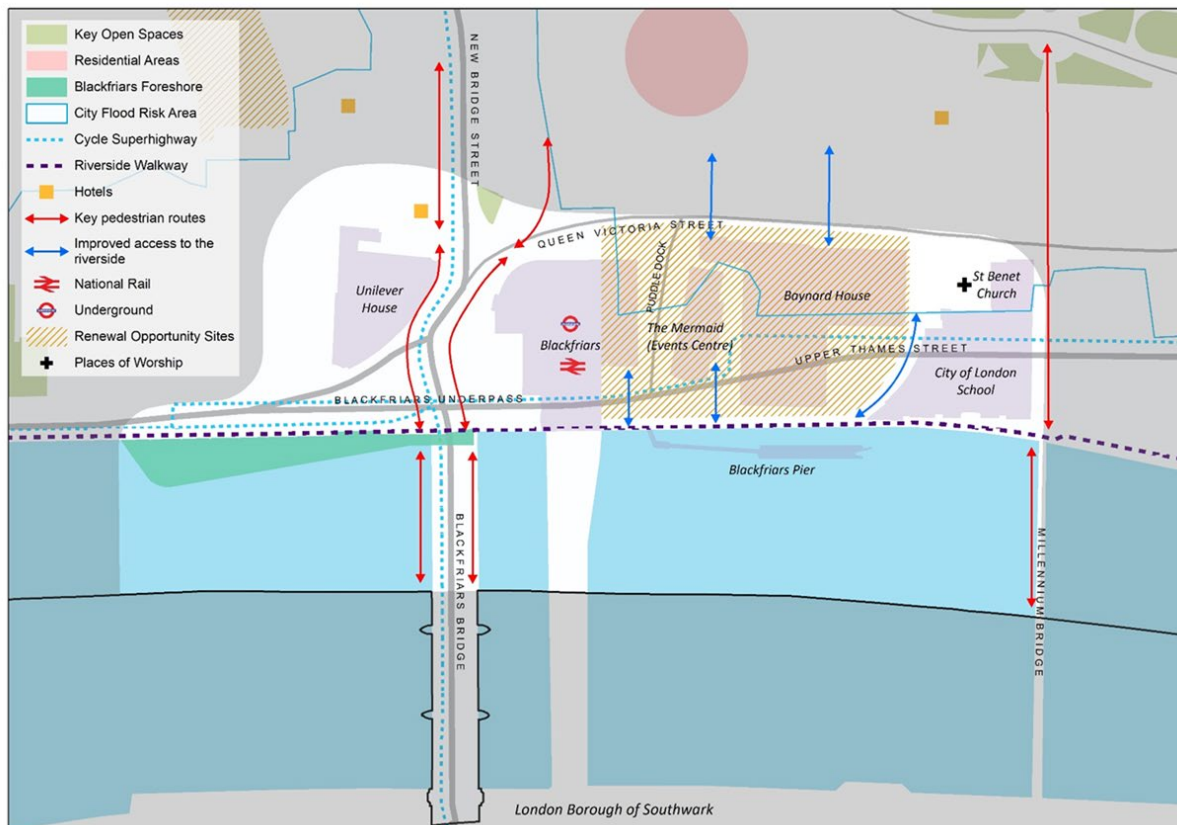
The area is bounded by major through routes which form a barrier to pedestrian movement. The Thames Tideway Tunnel once complete will create a new public space to the west of Blackfriars Bridge. The height of any new buildings is limited by strategic and locally protected views of St Paul's Cathedral.

3. Location and Context

The Blackfriars Key Area of Change is situated in the south-west of the City of London, adjacent to the River Thames, located between the Temples legal district and the Millennium Bridge. It contains a mix of uses as set out in Section One of this paper.

The area is bounded to the north by Queen Victoria Street, the south by the River Thames, the west at Victoria Embankment next to the Blackfriars foreshore and to the east by the City of London School close to the Millennium Bridge. It is bounded by Upper Thames Street to its south-eastern end which connects to the Blackfriars underpass to the southwestern corner of this key area, but also disconnects the area from the rest of the City

Blackfriars Station is a major tube and mainline train station as illustrated in the map below. The two Blackfriars bridges provide important landmarks and connections and this area includes the River Fleet (now used as a sewer). The area contains the two historic sites of Bridewell Palace which was located west of the River Fleet along the River Thames and Baynard’s Castle which was located west of the City of London School and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The River Thames is recognised as a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature.



Map 2: Blackfriars Key Area Diagram

4. Character Analysis of Blackfriars

The Blackfriars area is a mixed-use area, but is dominated by offices with very minor hotel, retail and residential uses. The River Thames remains a working river. The Victoria Embankment stretches along the north of the river, from Blackfriars Bridge in the City to Westminster Bridge in the City of Westminster and provides an important public realm area created along the foreshore.

Notable Buildings

Notable buildings within the area include the Grade II listed office building Unilever House located on New Bridge Street and the Grade II listed The Black Friar Public House on Queen Victoria Street, which was built in 1875, on the site of the former monastic site of the Blackfriars and later remodelled in 1905.

Protected Views

The Key Area of Change lies within the St Paul's Heights policy area, which establishes limits on building heights to protect significant local views of St Paul's Cathedral. The area is crossed by several London Views Management Framework Protected Vistas, which are defined in the London Plan 2021 and protect wider strategic views of St Paul's Cathedral. The area also lies within the Monument Views Policy Area. Further details are set out in Section 5 of this paper.

The river frontage in this area also forms a valuable and distinctive part of the City skyline in views across the river, and from a significant distance along the river to east and west. Blackfriars Bridge offers excellent views of City landmarks, including St Paul's Cathedral and the City waterfront.

Vision

- The area has the potential for substantial redevelopment or refurbishment of existing post-war buildings to provide new high-quality office and other commercial accommodation within an improved public realm and enhanced pedestrian permeability.
- The new public open space at Blackfriars Bridge foreshore to be created through the Thames Tideway project, will introduce additional greenery to the riverside and provide a new place for relaxation and recreation.
- The riverside walkway will be improved to link with the new open space and provide an attractive pedestrian route between Blackfriars Bridge and Millennium Bridge. New active frontages will be provided along the walkway.
- Public realm improvements will be promoted along Puddle Dock, Castle Baynard Street, White Lion Hill and Upper Thames Street, to reduce pollution and improve air

Blackfriars Key Area of Change

quality. Pedestrian links across Upper Thames Street will be improved to link the riverside to the rest of the City.

- Cultural events, arts and play in public spaces will be encouraged.

Historical Context

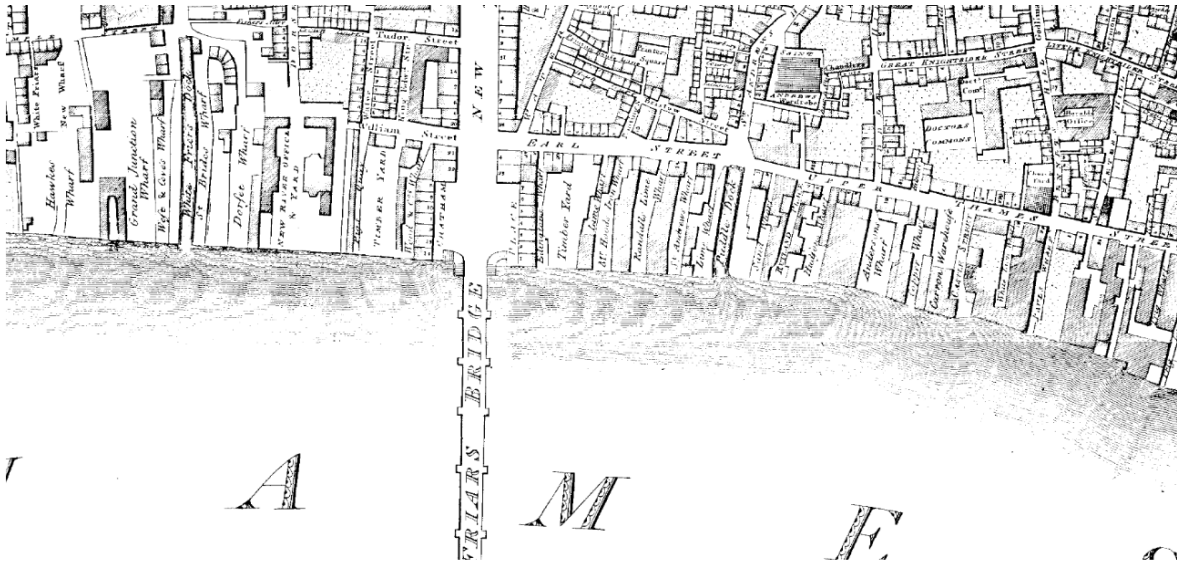
The name 'Blackfriars' was first used in 1317, derived from the black mantles and white robes worn by the Dominican Friars who settled in the area creating a Priory in 1276. King Henry III spent time here helping the order become established and the site included an extensive garden for growing food. Edward I used the site for great occasions of state including meetings of Parliament and the Privy Council. The religious order was destroyed by Henry VIII in 1538 during the dissolution of the monasteries, and the priory did not survive to serve another purpose. The Blackfriars Theatre was constructed in 1596 within the former grounds of the monastery and William Shakespeare had close connections to this site. This playhouse (demolished in 1655) was used during the winter months and the Shakespeare Globe across the River Thames in Southwark was used in the summer.



Map 3 - Ogilby and Morgan (1676-79)

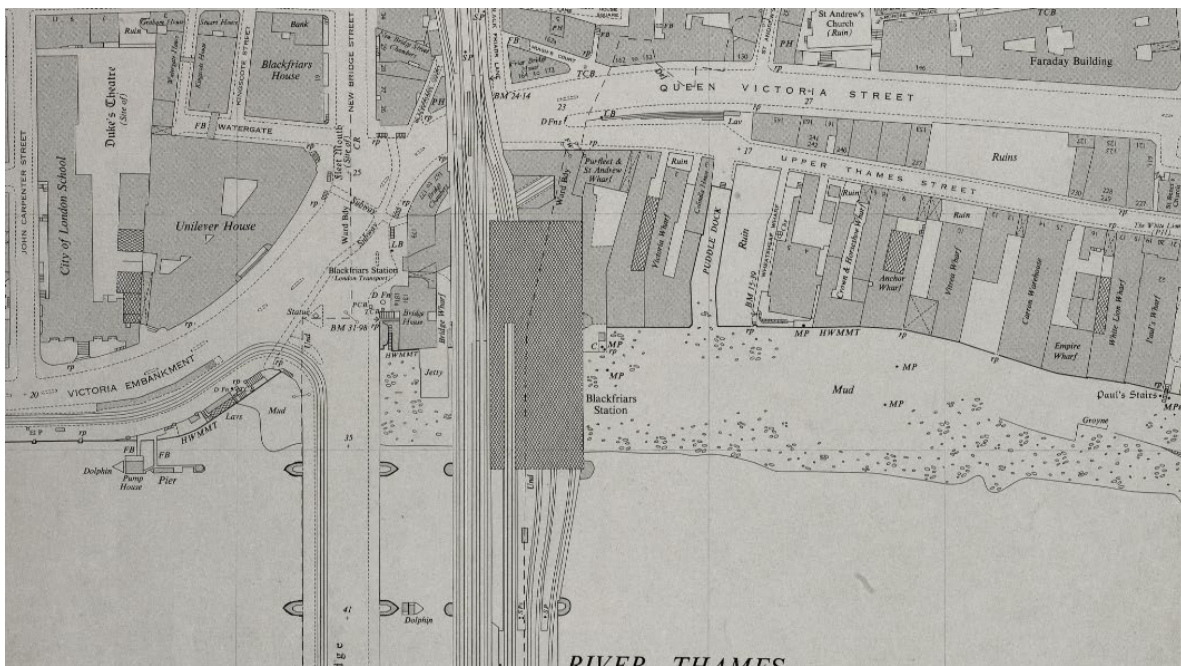
The Blackfriars area was destroyed by the Great Fire of London in 1666 but like most the City eventually was redeveloped. Once major infrastructure project was the construction of Blackfriars Bridge in 1769, financed by funds generated from rent on the houses and shops along London Bridge.

Blackfriars Key Area of Change



Map 4 - Horwood (1799)

Due to structural problems the bridge was rebuilt in 1869 and spans the width of the Thames with five shallow cast iron segmental arches. Along the centre run slender original lamp standards, valuable survivals of their kind.



Map 5 – Ordnance Survey (1951)

In 1864, Chatham and Dover Railway Company opened Blackfriars Station on Ludgate Hill, the station then moved to its present site by the river in 1886. Many structures and warehouse to the east of Blackfriars Station sustained bomb damage during the Second

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World War, and one of these sites was converted into the Mermaid Theatre in the late 1950s but is now used for conferences and events.

Until its renovation in 2009-12, Blackfriars Station was known as one of the least attractive railway terminuses in London. During this renovation, developers introduced mainline platforms which stretched the full width of the Thames, along with a glass-fronted ticket hall on the corner of Queen Victoria Street and New Bridge Street and an additional entrance on the southside of the river. The railway bridge is the first in London to span the entire length of the River Thames and is the world's largest solar-powered bridge with nearly 4,500 photovoltaic panels.

Transport Infrastructure & Buildings

The layout of the transport infrastructure and buildings developed in three predominant phases:

- 1) **Mid-1800s transport infrastructure:** Development of:
 - Blackfriars Bridge (**Picture 1**);
 - Blackfriars Station, and associated railway bridge, and
 - The Victoria Embankment, which sets out the route between Westminster Bridge to the west and Blackfriars Bridge, including the underground railway alignment.



Picture 1: Blackfriars Bridge

Blackfriars Key Area of Change

- 2) **Late 19th to early 20th century developments:** At Victoria Embankment, including listed buildings at the former City of London School (1881-82) Sion Hall (1886) and Unilever House (1930-32, **Picture 2**).



Picture 2: Unilever House

- 3) **1960s:** Extension of the Victoria Embankment, and construction of the Blackfriars Underpass, merging with the realigned Upper Thames Street, east of Blackfriars Station. Office accommodation (e.g. Baynard House, 135 Queen Victoria Street – **Picture 3**) was developed at Puddle Dock and integrated with Blackfriars Station. Other land uses include The Mermaid events centre (originally a theatre).

Blackfriars Key Area of Change



Picture 3: Baynard House

5. Policy Context and Analysis

Policy Context

Key Areas of Change policies in the Proposed Submission Draft City Plan 2036 are aimed at providing a policy framework for each key area in the Plan.

The aim is to inform development in the area taking into consideration the policy, spatial, and land use context. This section should be read in conjunction with the Proposed Submission Draft City Plan, City Corporation Public Realm Enhancement Strategies, Supplementary Planning Documents and National and London planning guidance.

Proposed Submission Draft City Plan 2036

The Key Areas of Change have evolved through the consultation process from the Issues and Options stage to the draft Local Plan stage where they are identified as specific areas of growth. Further refinements were made following consultation on the draft Local Plan. Key policies in the Proposed Submission Draft City Plan 2036 are:

Strategic Policy S18 (Blackfriars) sets out the enhancements to the character and amenities of the Blackfriars Key Area of Change subject to the criteria within the policy which includes promoting redevelopment or refurbishment of existing post-war buildings to provide new high-quality office and commercial accommodation; implementing the Thames Tideway Tunnel project and enhancing pedestrian permeability and accessibility; and encouraging cultural events, arts and play in public spaces; improving the quality of the public realm and identifying opportunities for urban greening and pollution reduction measures.

- **Policy S3 Housing:** protect existing housing and amenity and provide additional housing in the City concentrated in or near identified residential areas
- **Policy S4 Offices:** facilitates significant growth in office development of the highest quality to meet projected economic and employment growth whilst protecting existing office space and encouraging appropriate flexible affordable space for small and growing businesses
- **Policy S5 Retail:** Encouraging the provision of active frontages to improve vitality and viability.
- **Policy S9 Vehicular Transport and Servicing:** Designing and managing streets in accordance with the City of London street hierarchy. Promoting further improvements to public transport capacity and step free access at mainline and underground stations and river piers.

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- **Policy S10 Active Travel and Healthy Streets:** Prioritising walking and cycling and the delivery of healthy streets.
- **Policy S11 Historic Environment:** The City's heritage assets, their significance and settings will be positively managed.
- **Policy S12 Tall Buildings:** Setting criteria for the development of tall buildings over 75m above ordnance datum (AOD) in height.
- **Policy S13 Protected Views:** Protecting and enhancing significant views of St. Paul's Cathedral through the St Paul's Heights policy and implementation of the London Views Management Framework (LVMF).
- **Policy S14 Open Spaces and Green Infrastructure:** Retention and enhancement of habitats within SINCs including the River Thames.
- **Policy S15 Climate Resilience and Flood Risk:** Development must avoid placing people or essential infrastructure at increased risk from river, surface water, sewer or groundwater flooding. The Key Area of Change lies within the City's Flood Risk Area.
- **Policy S17 Thames Policy Area:** The unique character of the City's riverside, and its uses for transport and recreation, will be enhanced by several measures.
- **Policy CR2 Flood Risk:** requires all development within the City Flood Risk Area to be accompanied by a site-specific flood risk assessment demonstrating that the site is suitable for the intended use.

Spatial Designations for Blackfriars Key Area of Change

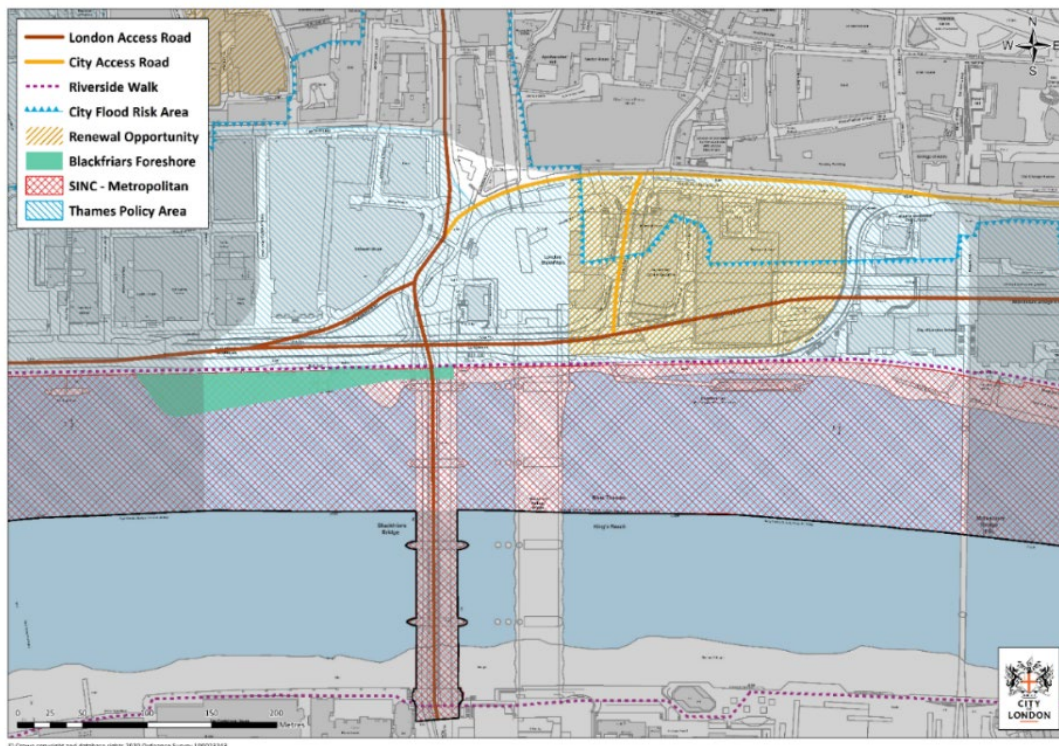
This section provides an overview of land use within the Blackfriars Key Area of Change and assesses how the City of London strategic spatial designations affect it. The maps below illustrate the spatial designations of the Key Area of Change.

The land use and spatial policy-related issues cover:

- London Access streets
- City Access streets
- Riverside Walk
- Conservation Areas
- Listed buildings
- LVMF Protected vistas
- St. Paul's Heights

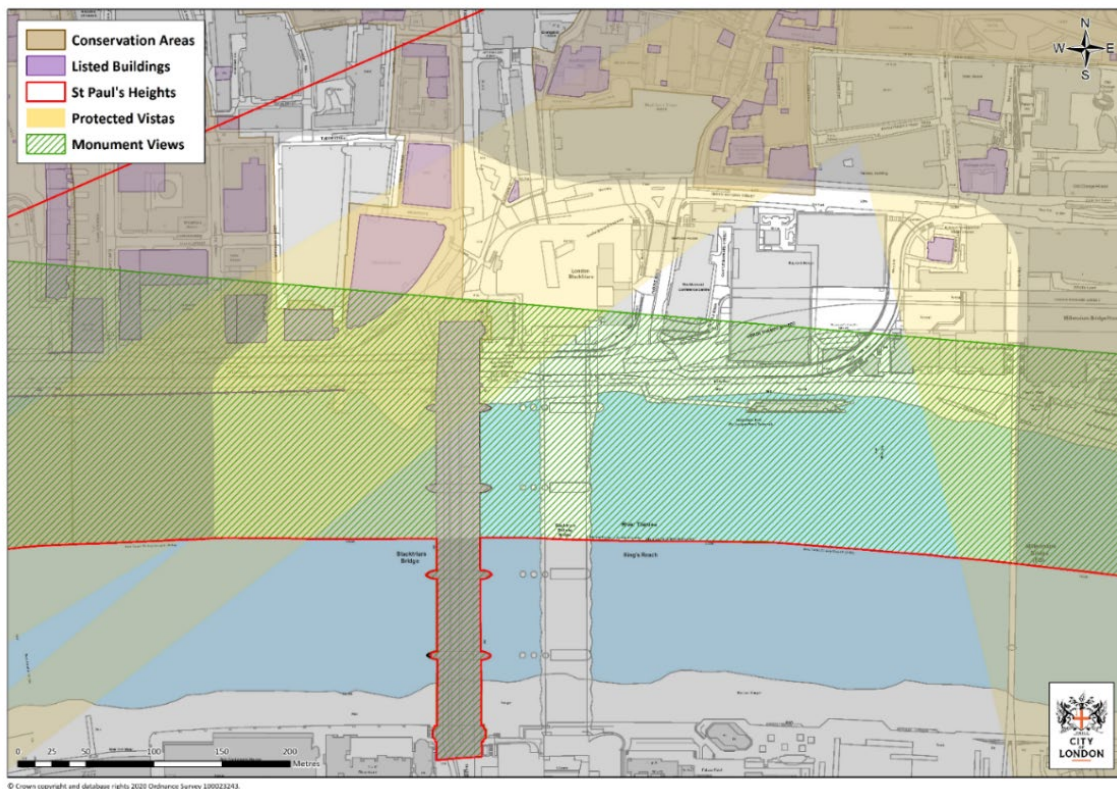
Blackfriars Key Area of Change

- Monument Views
- Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)
- City Flood Risk Area
- Thames Policy Area
- Thames Tideway Tunnel Safeguarding Area
- Renewal opportunity sites
- Blackfriars foreshore public realm
- Key pedestrian routes
- Public open spaces
- Large office buildings at Victoria Embankment
- Medium office buildings towards the east



Map 6: Spatial Designations for the Blackfriars Key Area of Change Part 1

Blackfriars Key Area of Change



Map 7: Spatial Designations for the Blackfriars Key Area of Change Part 2

Transport Infrastructure

This Key Area of Change is very well connected with very good access to public transport links with a PTAL rating of above 6. Key transport infrastructure in the vicinity includes:

- The Riverside Walk
- City Thameslink station, within the City of London
- Embankment and Temple Underground stations, within the City of Westminster
- A major transport interchange at Waterloo Station, within the London Borough of Lambeth.
- The [Transport for London \(TfL\) Cycle Superhighway](#)

Blackfriars Station provides connections to the Thameslink route and London Underground, with direct access to major London transport interchanges, including King's Cross, St. Pancras, Victoria, and the forthcoming Elizabeth Line interchange at Farringdon. Passenger numbers comprised of:

- 10.8 million passengers arriving or departing on National Rail services during the 2017/18 period¹; this was consistent with statistics for the 2015/16 and 2016/17 periods, and

¹ At time of writing, no statistics were available for the 2018/19 period.

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- 14.8 million passengers arriving or departing on Underground services during 2017²; passenger numbers showed an overall net increase from 9.3 million during the period 2012-2017, following temporary closure between 2009 and 2011.

Blackfriars Pier³ provides access to riverboat services along the River Thames.

Baynard House **Car Park** is located on Queen Victoria Street.

The **cycle superhighway** providing cycling routes segregated from motorised traffic, located on two routes through the Blackfriars Key Area of Change:

- Victoria Embankment and Castle Baynard Street, and
- New Bridge Street and Blackfriars Bridge.

Vehicular Transport and Servicing

The Proposed Submission Draft City Plan 2036 defines London Access Streets and City Access Streets. Victoria Embankment, New Bridge Street and Blackfriars Bridge are London Access Streets. Queen Victoria Street and Puddle Dock are City Access Streets.

Active Travel and Healthy Streets

The City of London's Transport Strategy (published May 2019) sets out proposals to enhance walking and cycling facilities.

The Riverside Walk extends through the Blackfriars Key Area of Change and is subject to the City of London's Riverside Walk Enhancement Strategy; a key issue is improving accessibility.

The street layout in the Blackfriars Key Area of Change creates barriers to pedestrians. The City Plan 2036 Proposed Submission Draft identifies key pedestrian routes, including:

- New Bridge Street;
- Blackfriars Bridge;
- St. Andrew's Hill;
- Wardrobe Terrace;
- Routes connecting Upper Thames Street to the Riverside Walk;
- Peter's Hill, and
- Millennium Bridge

² At time of writing, no statistics were available for 2018 or 2019.

³ No information is available regarding passenger numbers.

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Historic Environment

Conservation Areas represent areas that are of particular architectural and historic importance; the City of London has published Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) for most Conservation Areas. Whitefriars Conservation Area is located within the Blackfriars Key Area of Change (west of London Blackfriars Station). The Whitefriars Conservation Area SPD sets out further information on the history of the Blackfriars Key Area of Change (. The St Paul's Cathedral Conservation Area is located to the north of the Blackfriars Key Area of Change.

The Guild Church of St. Benet Paul's Wharf, Benet's Hill is a Grade I listed building. Other listed buildings in the Blackfriars Key Area of Change include a cluster of buildings at Victoria Embankment, including Unilever House, and Blackfriars Bridge. The Blackfriars Key Area of Change is located in close proximity to clusters of listed buildings at New Bridge Street and Blackfriars Lane, and just north of this Key Area of Change, at Queen Victoria Street and St. Andrew's Hill.

Baynard's Castle, located in the east of the area, is a scheduled ancient monument.

Protected Views

Protected views in the Blackfriars Key Area of Change comprise of views set out in the Mayor's [London View Management Framework \(LVMF\) Supplementary Planning Guidance \(SPG\)](#) and local views of the St Paul's Heights and the Monument Views. Protecting and enhancing significant local views of St. Paul's Cathedral and the Monument.

The following views are within this area:

- **St Paul's Heights Policy Area** - The St. Paul's Heights grid sets out the local views of St Paul's Cathedral; in the Blackfriars Key Area of Change, the St. Paul's Heights grid protects views of the Cathedral from the South Bank of the River Thames (Picture 4). This policy sets a key factor in evaluating building heights in the Blackfriars Key Area of Change.
- **Monument Views** (Watermark Place/Mondial House to Victoria Embankment)

London Views Management Framework (LVMF) Protected Vistas:

- 1 (Alexandra Palace - Background Wider Setting Consultation Area)
- 23 (King Henry's Mound – Landmark Viewing Corridor)
- 25 (Westminster Pier -Landmark Viewing Corridor)
- 29 and 30 (King Henry's Mound - Wider Setting Consultation Area)

Thus, careful consideration regarding building heights is required for evaluation of potential redevelopment in the Blackfriars Key Area of Change.



Picture 4: View of St. Paul's Cathedral across the Blackfriars Key Area of Change

Climate Resilience and Flood Risk

This Key Area of Change is within the City Flood Risk Area. The Proposed Submission Draft City Plan 2036 requires that all development must avoid placing people or essential infrastructure at increased risk from river, surface water, sewer or groundwater flooding. All development in this key area must be accompanied by a site-specific flood risk assessment demonstrating that:

- The site is suitable for the intended use, in accordance with the Sequential and Exception tests and with Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority advice.
- The development will be safe for occupants and visitors and will not compromise the safety of other premises or increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.
- Safe access and egress routes are identified.
- Flood resistance and resilience have been designed into the proposal.

Thames Policy Area

The City of London adopted the Thames Strategy SPD in 2015. The Blackfriars Key Area of Change is within the Thames Policy Area, which is subject to Proposed Submission Draft City Plan 2036 Strategic Policy S17.

Blackfriars Key Area of Change

Renewal Opportunity Sites

Renewal opportunity sites have been identified in this area, as opportunities for substantial redevelopment or refurbishment. Sites identified are largely existing post-war buildings, where redevelopment or refurbishment would provide opportunities to improve the architectural quality and sense of place and improve the road network and public realm.

Blackfriars Foreshore

The Blackfriars Foreshore, at Victoria Embankment, is subject to works associated with the Thames Tideway Tunnel project, which will provide a 25km sewer underneath the river. This is projected for completion during the 2023/24 period and will enhance the public realm by creating a new public open space (0.48 hectares, or 4,800m²) at Victoria Embankment, which will provide a venue for outdoor events and public artwork.

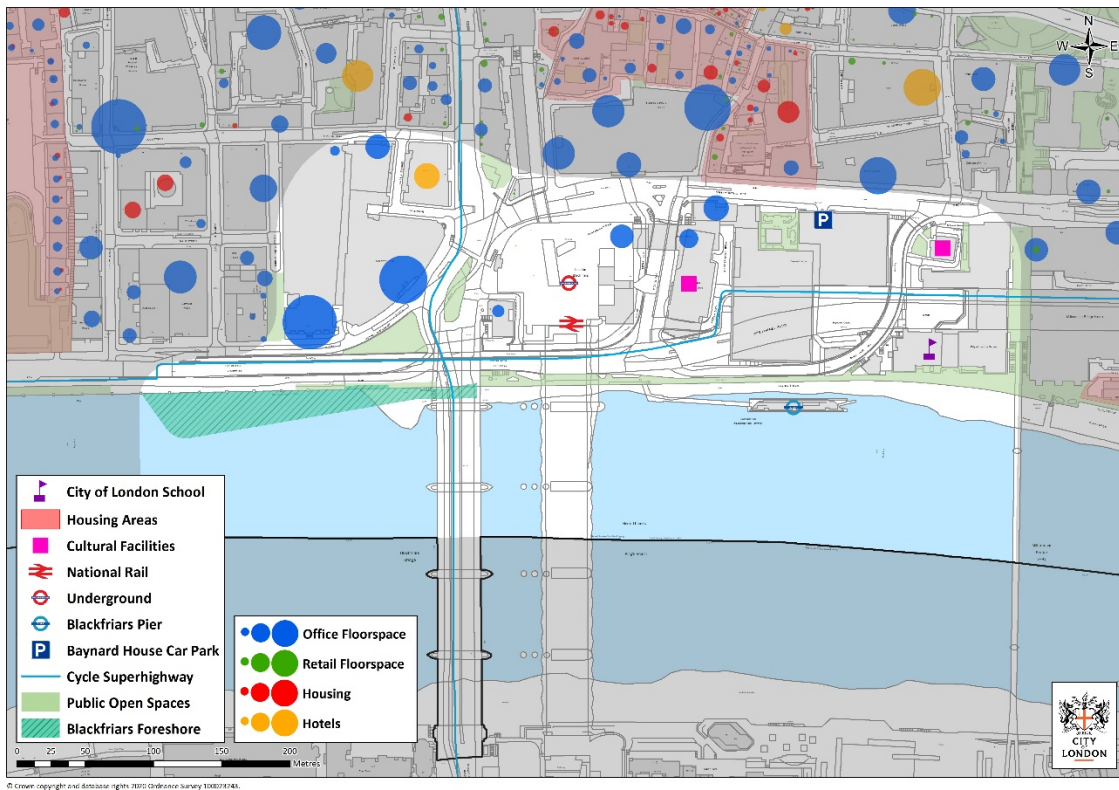
Offices

There is 126,300m² of office floorspace in the Blackfriars Key Area of Change, amounting to 1.4% of the total for the City of London.

The largest office buildings are located at 60 Victoria Embankment and Unilever House, Victoria Embankment which is a nine-storey building. The area also includes a cluster of medium-sized office buildings, including Mermaid House, 2 Puddle Dock and Baynard House, 135 Queen Victoria Street.

There are no office schemes in the development pipeline at the Blackfriars Key Area of Change.

Blackfriars Key Area of Change



Map 8: Land Use at the Blackfriars Key Area of Change (as at 31st March 2020)

Current Land use	Existing floorspace / units	Projected floorspace / units in the pipeline	Percentage of the City of London
Offices	126,300 sq. m	N/A	1.4%
Retail	150 sq. m	N/A	1%
Housing	0 units	N/A	0%
Hotels	212 rooms	N/A	3.4%

Table 1 – Blackfriars Key land Use Statistics as of 31 March 2020

The land use map above illustrates the concentration of the types of land use in the key area. It suggests that majority of the land use is primarily office and cultural facilities. However, there are cultural and office use overlapping onto the primary residential areas. The size of the circle represents the proportion of types of uses.

Retail

There is just 150m² of retail floorspace in the Blackfriars Key Area of Change across five units, amounting to less than 1% of the total for the City of London. These are primarily small shop units, ancillary to Blackfriars Station; there is one historic public house The Blackfriar, close to Blackfriars Station. New Bridge Street, located just outside of the Key

Blackfriars Key Area of Change

Area of Change, contains several retail units. There are no retail schemes in the development pipeline in the Blackfriars Key Area of Change.

Housing

There are no housing units in the Blackfriars Key Area of Change or any housing schemes in the development pipeline. Nearby housing provision includes residential clusters at Temples, Carter Lane and Queenhithe.

Hotels

One hotel is located within the Blackfriars Key Area of Change at Blackfriars House, 19 New Bridge Street (Crowne Plaza) which contains 212 hotel rooms. This is only 3.4% of the total for the City of London but there are three hotels located nearby, to the north of this key area at 1-2 Dorset Rise (Premier Inn), 36 Carter Lane (City of London Youth Hostel) and 10 Godliman Street (The Grange St. Paul's).

Education

The City of London School is located in the eastern part of the Blackfriars Key Area of Change close to Millennium Bridge.

Health Facilities

There are no health facilities within the Blackfriars Key Area of Change.

Cultural Facilities

Cultural facilities in this key area include The Guild Church of St. Benet Paul's Wharf and The Mermaid events centre at Puddle Dock. The St. Bride's Theatre at Bride Lane is located near to this key area. The Blackfriars Key Area of Change is located a short distance across the River Thames from the Tate Modern art gallery and Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, all located within the London Borough of Southwark.

Leisure

Several restaurants and public houses that open until 10pm or later, primarily on weekdays, are located on New Bridge Street close to this key area.

Tall Buildings

The document 'Tall Buildings in the City of London' sets out an analysis of tall buildings in the City, in terms of spatial distribution of the existing tall buildings and the development pipeline. This includes an analysis of the spatial distribution, taking into consideration the protected views and heritage assets, including conservation areas and listed buildings.

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The City of London has set out a policy framework for tall buildings since the 1986 Local Plan which identified areas inappropriate for, and sensitive to, tall buildings developments. The inappropriate areas are based upon the strategic views policies of the London Plan 2021, local views policies of the St Paul's Heights and Monuments Views, plus consideration of the heritage assets of Conservation Areas, historic parks and gardens, scheduled ancient monuments and listed buildings.

The Blackfriars Key Area of Change is inappropriate for new tall buildings as it is within the St Paul's Heights Policy Area and is restricted by other views protection policies; it is also within the Thames Policy Area. There are no tall buildings within the Blackfriars Key Area of Change.

Two tall buildings are located to the north of the Blackfriars Key Area of Change. St Paul's Cathedral on Ludgate Hill and Peterborough Court, 133 Fleet Street, which is located within the Fleet Street and Ludgate Key Area of Change.

Public Open Space and Green Infrastructure

The River Thames is designated as a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation. The primary open space is the Riverside Walk, situated along the River Thames frontage. Other public open spaces are also located at John Carpenter Street, New Bridge Street, Baynard House and the Guild Church of St. Benet Paul's Wharf.

There is currently 7,600m² of public open space in this key area which comprises 3% of the total for the City of London and 5,300 m² of public open space under construction. The vast majority of this public open space can be found along the Riverside Walk with smaller public open spaces at New Bridge Street, Baynard House and St. Benet Paul's Wharf Churchyard.

A new public open space is projected for completion at Blackfriars Foreshore, during the 2023/24 period through the Thames Tideway Tunnel project. This open space, and the reopening of a section of the Riverside Walk at Victoria Embankment, will create 5,300m² of public open space.

The Blackfriars Key Area of Change is located near to the Temple Gardens, open spaces adjacent to St. Paul's Cathedral, Victoria Embankment Gardens (City of Westminster), and a large public open space at the Tate Gallery (London Borough of Southwark).

6. Conclusion

The Proposed Submission Draft City Plan 2036 Key Areas of Change set out area-based policies and proposals relating to the Blackfriars Key Area of Change together with the overarching policy for the whole City's riverside. Although Blackfriars is the smallest Key Area of Change in the City it is envisaged this area will undergo significant change and development over the plan period.

Information

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Queries regarding spatial designations can be made to: localplan@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Queries regarding land use data can be made to: pln-moninfo@cityoflondon.gov.uk

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