

UNDERSTANDING OF THE SMITHFIELD MARKET AREA

FOREWORD

Cities are complex places, rich in overlaps, history event and futures.
Smithfield is, in our assessment, one of those quintessential places in London, very much on the overlap between the City, the legal quarter and Westminster beyond, and between north and south.

It has a continuously changing past and future.
Key changes coming are Crossrail – we all underestimate the impact of Crossrail.



"The only station from which passengers will be able to access all three networks. Farringdon will become one of Britain's busiest train stations"
Crossrail 2012

More accessibility
= **more people**
= **increased attractiveness** as a play to work and live
= increased **pressure on development**
= **dramatically increased pressure on the fixed public realm space**

7,000 people per hour will use the new system entrance/exit on Long Lane – can the street cope?

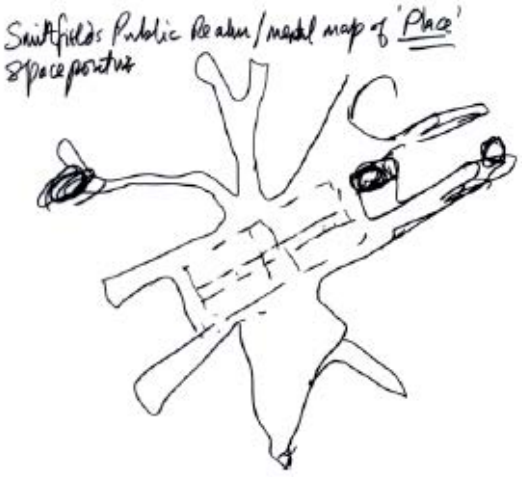


Farringdon Station
will be busier than
Gatwick

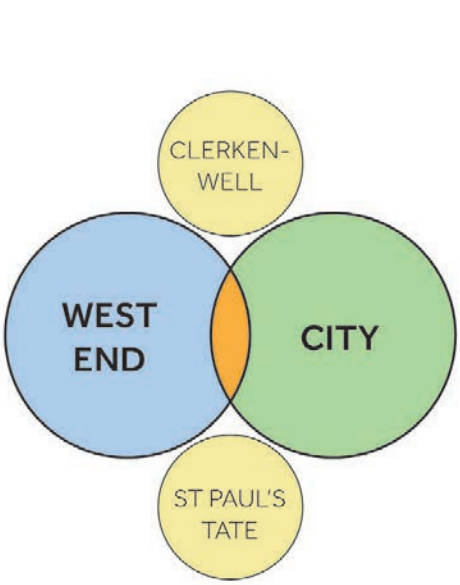
The meat market itself – another key change

Shortly, approaching 400,000 sq. ft of space will become vacant at the heart of Smithfield, and a whole way of life for Smithfield will change when the meat traders leave.

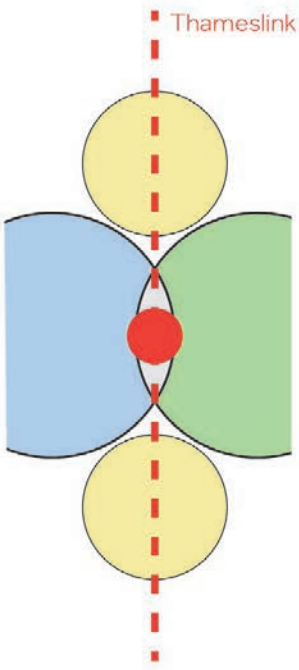
- The richness of its location
- One of the joys of Smithfield is its overlap between many cultures, many ways of being, many ages.
- At its simplest it is the place where poised above the River Fleet valley as it lies at the intersection of the West End and the City.
- With Thameslink, it is already changing and becoming a place of intellectual and cultural exchange.
- With Crossrail, it will literally become the new transport centre of London, as busy as Gatwick Airport.



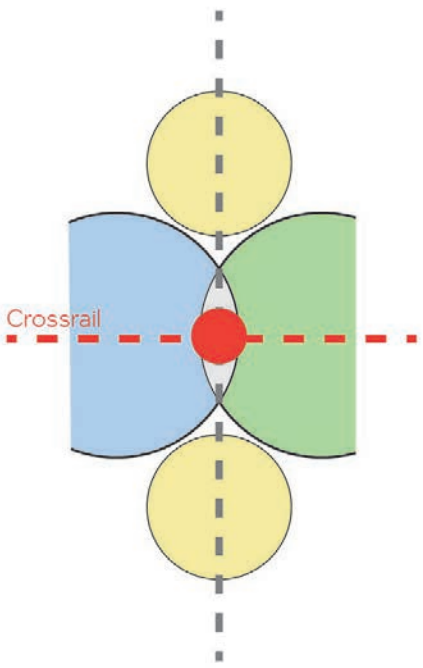
Sir Terry Farrell's initial thoughts



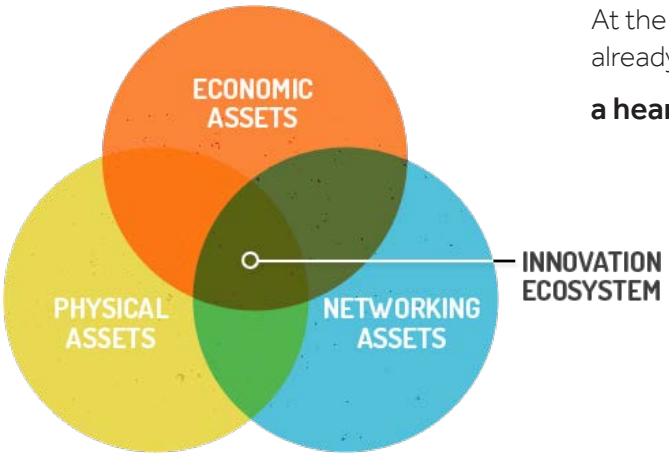
Smithfield is the overlap between many places ...



it is already a place of exchange ...



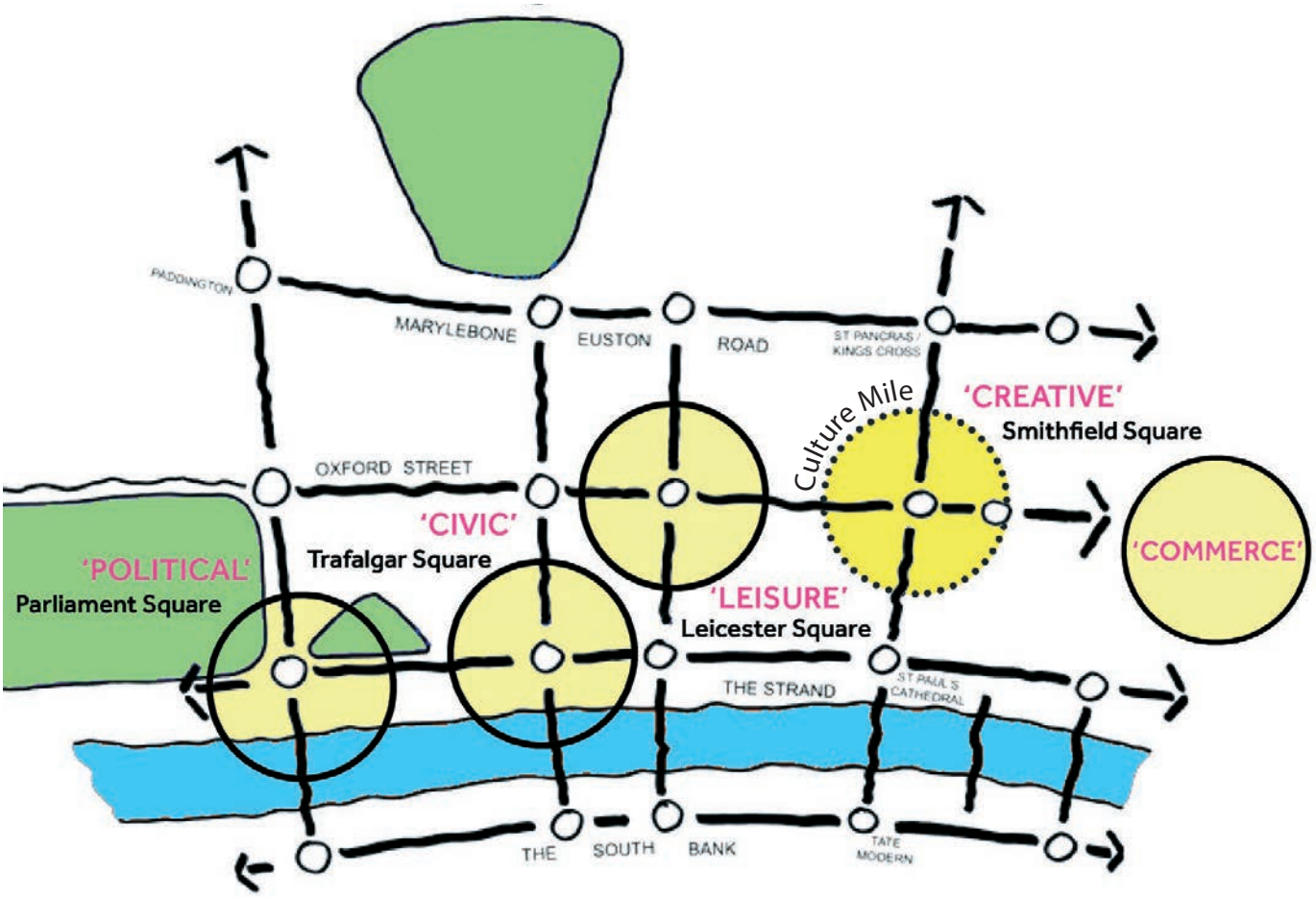
and maybe to become the new centre of London



At the overlap of these three, Smithfield already has the assets to become

a hearth for innovation and creativity

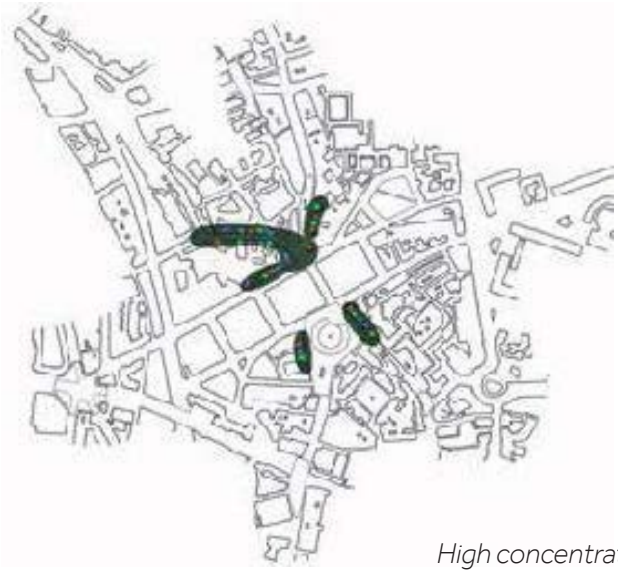
We should acknowledge and recognise the coming importance and value to London of Smithfield. Could a new Smithfield Square become one of the great squares of London?



Smithfield's place in London - it's public realm to host a new creative square?

Smithfield Farringdon is a place of extensive and diverse activity throughout the day and night. Much of the activity that has been attracted to the area is creative, cultural and recreational in nature. The area has:

- c. 200 firms of architects
- 4 architectural magazines
- 2 art publications
- 7 arts based consultants
- 8 design consultants
- 4 furniture consultants
- 3 galleries
- 2 draftsmen / illustrators
- 1 landscape architect
- 8 marketing consultants
- 1 model maker
- 2 publishers



High concentration of night-time activity in the area

It's a complex place – a place to respect, reinforce and re-invent

Smithfield is **one of London's most treasured urban villages.** With a rich urban history dating from Roman times, it represents a fascinating picture of London's growth and emergence as a true 'world city'. Its vibrance and diversity are part of what makes London special.

Our main purpose is to **ensure that its identity** - defined by its Victorian architectural character, streets, places and activity patterns - is respected and reinforced rather than ignored. The Public Realm proposal needs to **develop a strategic rather than piecemeal approach** for Smithfield's future, involving collaboration by the local authorities, other statutory bodies, business current and future, residents and all stakeholders.

And it's for this reason that we have assembled an equally rich team of consultants to respect reinforce and re-invent that identity, whether for the final physical public realm or for the 'soft bits'; the human life and events actually bring it to life 365 days a year.



STRATEGIC CONTEXT

HEALTHY STREETS

HERITAGE & CHARACTER

SUSTAINABILITY

SECURITY

PUBLIC REALM DESIGN

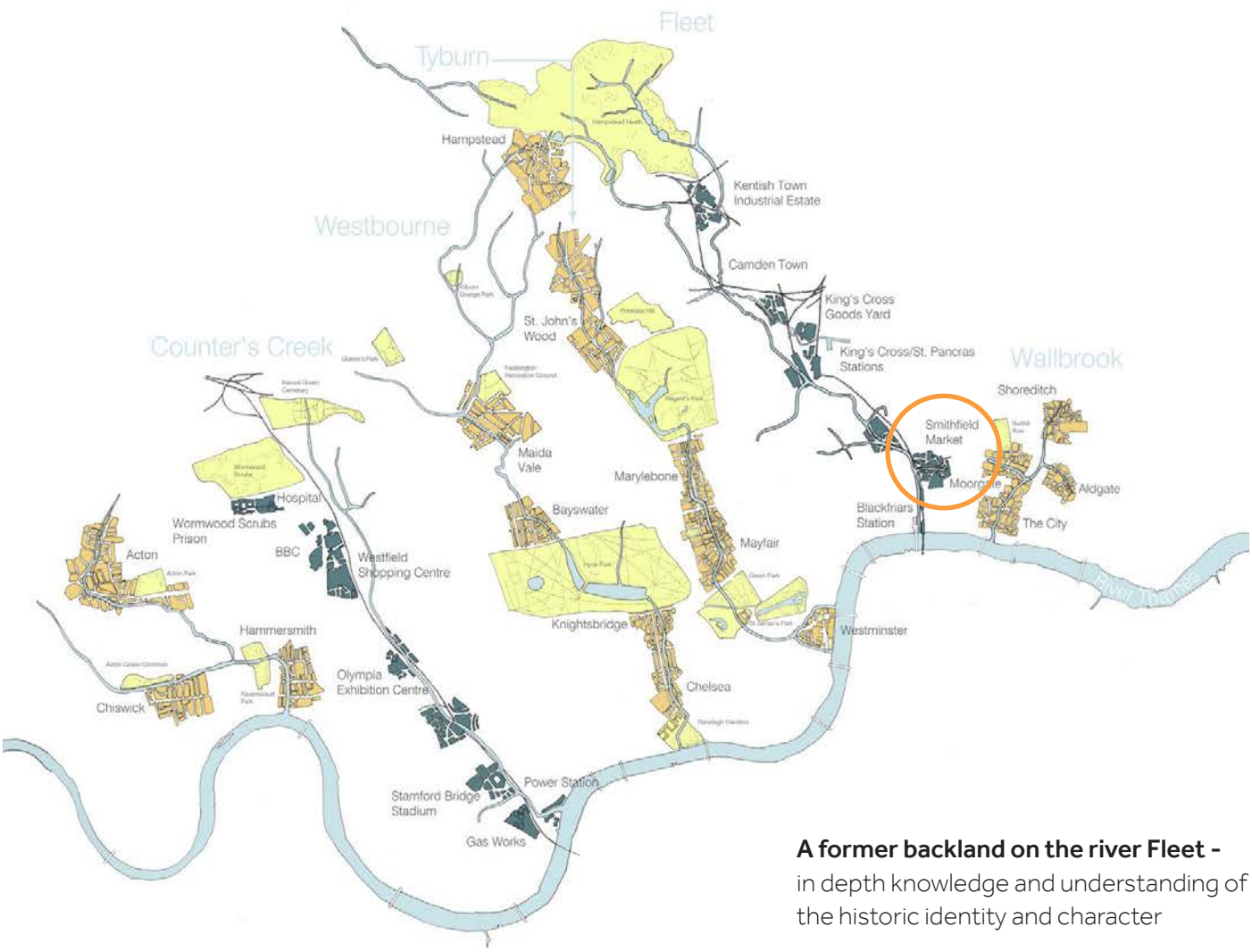
TRANSPORT

CULTURAL PLACEMAKING

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

PROPERTY USES

UNDERSTANDING THE SHAPE OF THE PLACE



A former backland on the river Fleet - in depth knowledge and understanding of the historic identity and character



sitting on the river Fleet valley

a place for gathering and manifestations

an intersection of many routes

located just outside the city's wall - in the urban fringe

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE



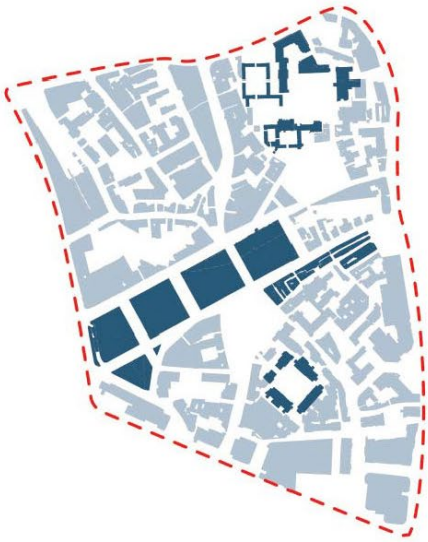
Medieval Smithfield - outside the city's wall, on the river Fleet valley



18th century development - organic urban fabric surrounding central marketplace



20th century development - introduction of the Victorian building re-shaping the built environment



Planned versus unplanned development - Cloth Fair is said to be the earliest example of planned development in London

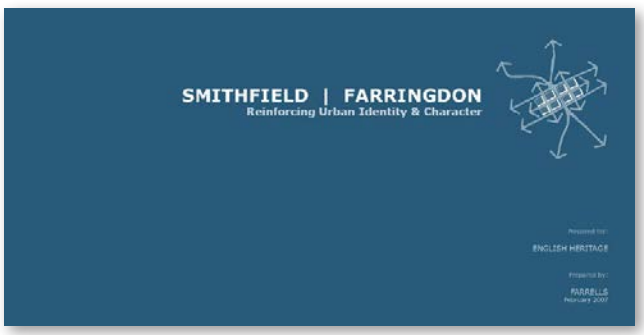


Layering development from different eras in Smithfield - and the resultant complexity



Contrast of an entirely planned environment - area around Portland Place

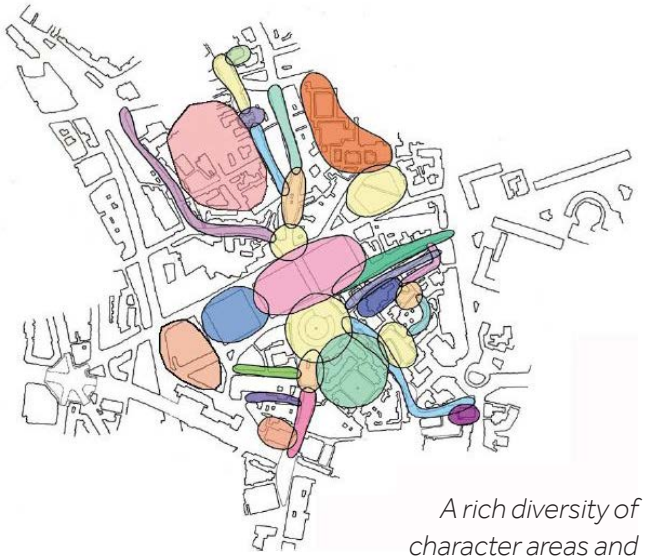
The area sits within a conservation area dominated by the market building, an extensive low-rise hall with corner finial buildings, in strong contact with the surrounding buildings, taller on narrower plot width and vertical proportion. There are very significant older historic buildings (The Church of St Bartholomew the Great and the St. Baths Hospital), with overall predominantly Victorian character of the area and materials such as brick and terracotta.



Report prepared by Farrells for English Heritage, on the identity of the area

PROPERTY DEVELOPMENTS

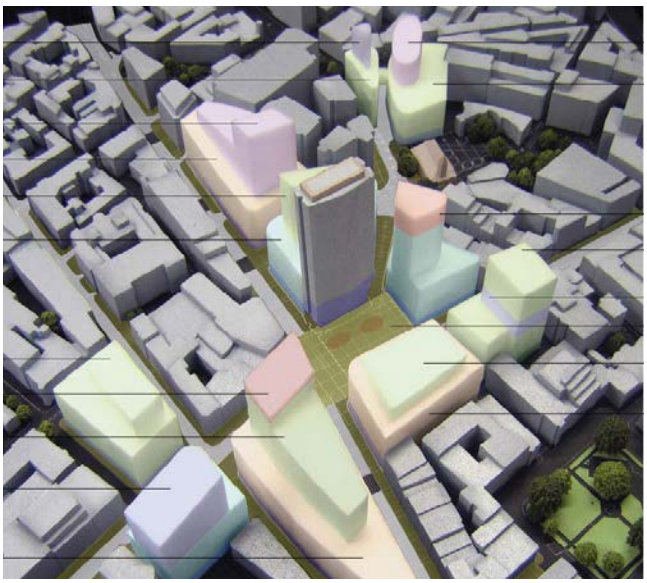
Smithfield is already a vibrant and diverse space, with different activities occupying the place during the day; market operations throughout the morning, thriving office place during the day with limited activities during the afternoon. There is an enormous potential for this to change, by the arrival of MoL and the Crossrail interchange, as well as the market redevelopment which could make a positive contribution to existing uses and to reinforce the character of the area.



A rich diversity of character areas and enclaves

An enormous urban and architectural diversity - in one of the few places in London where evidence of development from different centuries can readily be appreciated in one place

The opening of Crossrail will significantly improve access to the Farringdon area and make it a key hub with significant numbers of people passing through. This will provide the opportunity for it to become a major destination. During the peak hour there could be 20,000 passengers per hour entering and exiting Farringdon Station. Around 7,000 of these are expected to use the new entrance on Long Lane which will provide a new gateway to the area. The public realm will need to respond to the significant new pedestrian volumes with appropriate street design that prioritises pedestrians.



We always start the process with a plan of plans, to understand the ongoing development of the place



Finding the balance between the historic setting and new developments

The Secretary of State ruled in July 2014 that "the Western Market Buildings are an integral part of the group of market buildings that is a key characteristic of the Smithfield Conservation Area." He goes on to say that, "it is important that they are repaired and put into a beneficial use."
The relocation of the London Museum to the western market, the new concert hall, the Barbican centre, the Charterhouse will be a vibrant campus of cultural assets in the area and the public realm needs to "market" them together as a destination and link through to the other major cultural assets like St Paul's and Tate modern.

There are several major developers working in the area. Bart's Square is a new urban quarter in the heart of the city with high quality apartments, offices and retail. We know the key actors well and will engage with them at an early stage to establish their views on the wider public realm enhancements in the study area.

The area has a genuine mix of residential, office/ workspaces and leisure / cultural facilities and is a highly attractive area to live, work and play. The public realm masterplan needs to build and highlight the creativity of the area, whilst also encouraging a 24/7 environment.

CULTURE MILE LOOK AND FEEL STRATEGY



We would add to the existing richness of the area - expanding the aims of the 'Culture Spine'

Understanding the Culture Mile

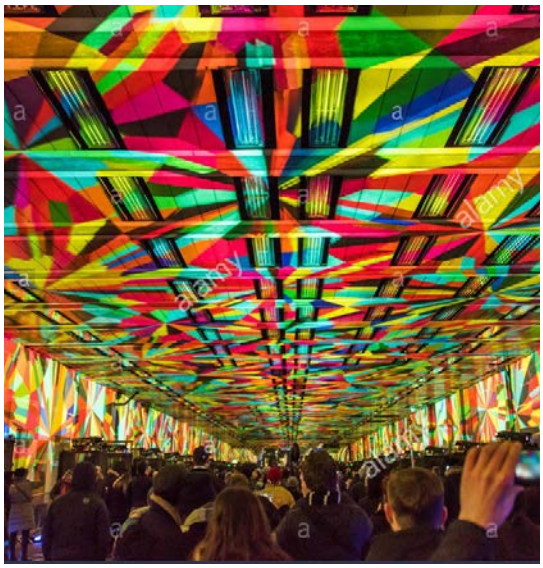
The Culture Mile aims to create a vibrant cultural area in the north-west corner of the City over the next 10 to 15 years. The scheme offers outdoor programming and events seven days a week. A new public realm space at Smithfield will create a welcoming and lively space and a great new asset to the Culture Mile, which connects with other venues in the area.

and the Lighting Strategy

The public realm design strategy places emphasis on the lighting strategy to create both a visual connection with other destinations within the cultural mile, as well as ensuring it is a well lit and safe place. The City of London Lighting Strategy is integral to a number of overall strategic changes taking place within the public realm in the City of London. It has also been subject to a guided process, including briefing, consultation and a series of 'night-walks', and is the only lighting strategy within London, setting a new benchmark.

The City of London Lighting Strategy forms the basis of our design strategy, since the vision is very realistic and similar to our thinking. Some of the key principles of the strategy, which also makes specific reference to the Culture Mile include:

- Introduce a playful approach to connect the cultural institutions and particularly the Barbican
- Celebrate the Heritage and history of the area: yey landmarks and memorials such as Smithfield Market and the William Wallace Memorial should be lit in a sympathetic manner to enhance their presence after dark.
- New developments such as the Museum of London provide opportunities to become beacons after dark.
- 'Light objects' to be introduced throughout the area to create unique identity and allow for moments of interaction.
- The introduction of temporary event lighting, therefore a flexible infrastructure to facilitate event lighting and temporary installations should be introduced.



Temporary light installation by the Barbican in Beech Street tunnel

MOVEMENT & CITY TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The City of London have implemented a new Transport Strategy and Smithfield will be an exemplar of the ethos of this Strategy by ambitious applying the Healthy Streets Approach. Transformation is expected at Smithfield meaning a significant growth in people working, visiting and travelling through the area that need to be accommodated safely in a finite space. The transport strategy encourages more efficient and effective use of street space such as timing restrictions for motor vehicles and in Smithfield, where the patterns of street activity change through they day, such restrictions can prioritise streets for people to walk during the day while enabling servicing in the early morning and at night.

Healthy Streets

The primary proposal of the City of London Transport Strategy is to embed the Healthy Streets Approach in transport planning and delivery. This means the Healthy Streets Approach must serve as the framework for all projects in the City and Smithfield is no exception. The Healthy Streets Approach was developed by Lucy Saunders (member of our team), which identifies 10 Healthy Streets Indicators. These can be seen as the essential ingredients for public spaces to improve people's health as well as to make urban places socially and economically vibrant and environmentally sustainable.

The starting point for our assessment of Smithfield is therefore to consider its existing and potential performance against the 10 Healthy Streets Indicators and our primary objective is to maximise the Healthy Streets benefits of this project within the context and constraints of the site.



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MAKING OUR STREETS GREAT PLACES FOR PEOPLE TO WALK, CYCLE AND SPEND TIME IN