

From the Thames to Eternity



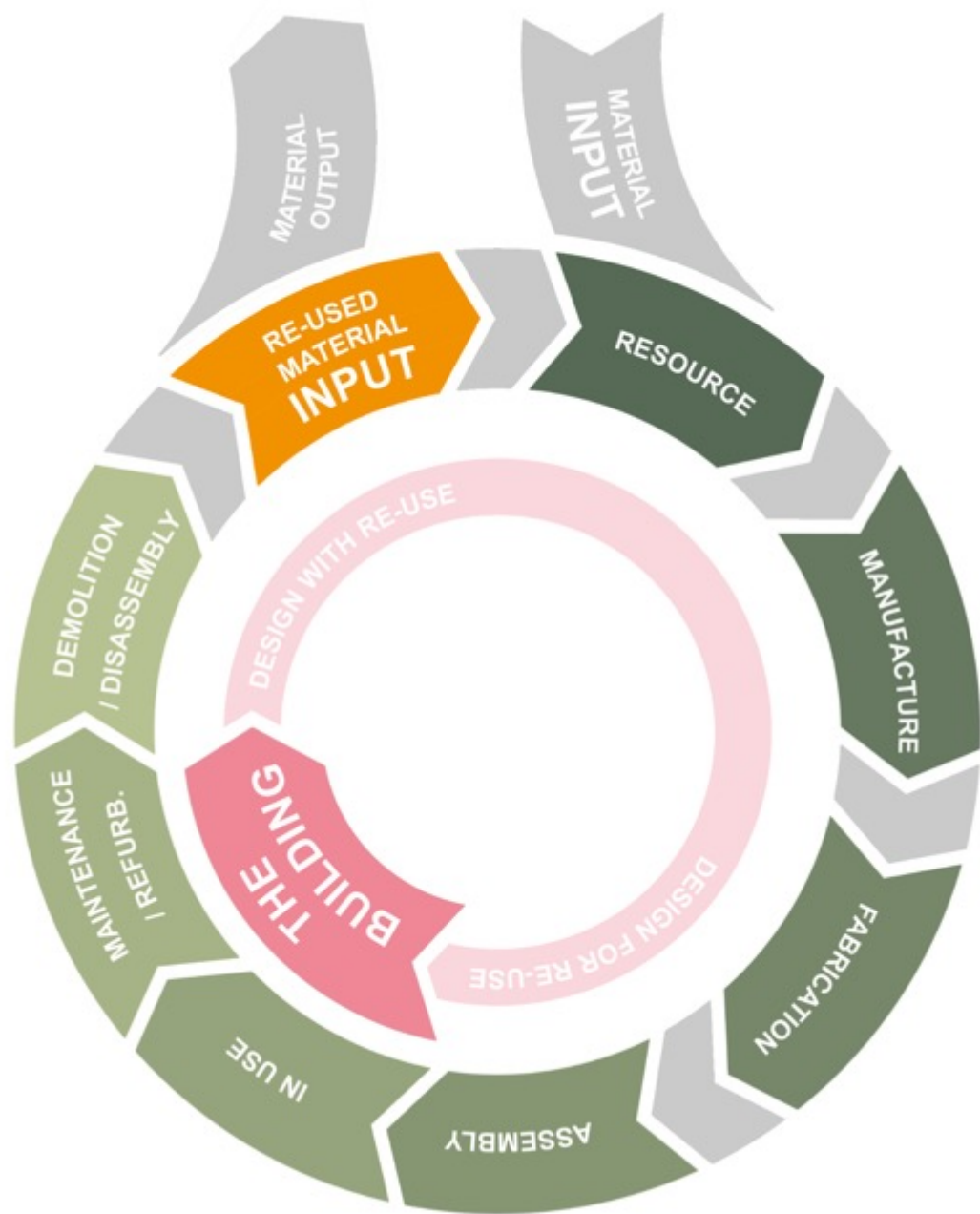
A City of London project designed by
Matthew Barnett Howland, Oliver Wilton
and CSK Architects



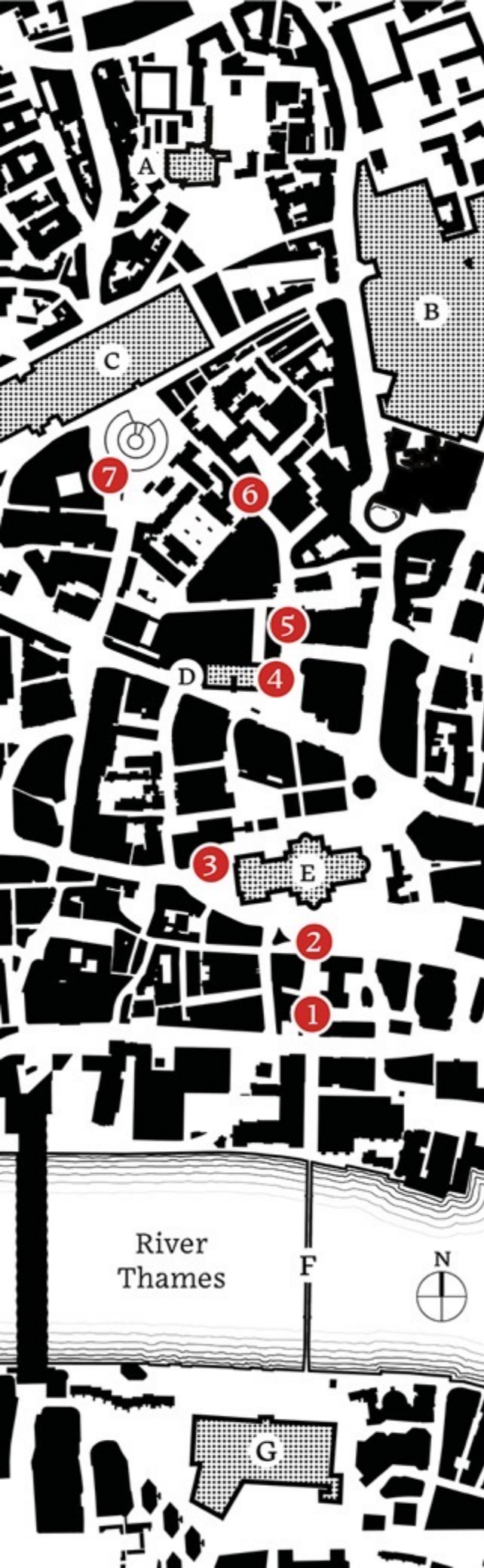
From the Thames to Eternity is a temporary stone re-use project utilising 58 granite stones removed from Joseph Bazalgette's C19th Thames river wall at Victoria Embankment.



London has no native stones and the project enables these historic stones to be kept here ready for their next use. In the process it also encourages Londoners and visitors to spend time in public spaces within the City of London.



The project seeks to provoke public discussion about material lifespan, circularity and cultural heritage. The aim is to retain London's resources within London, in order to reduce imported materials, and to enrich our inhabitation of the city.



The stones are placed on seven sites across the City, from the River Thames up to Smithfield Market.

7 Smithfield Rotunda Garden

6 St Bartholomew's Hospital

5 King Edward Street

4 Christ Church Greyfriars

3 St Paul's Cathedral

2 Carter Lane Gardens

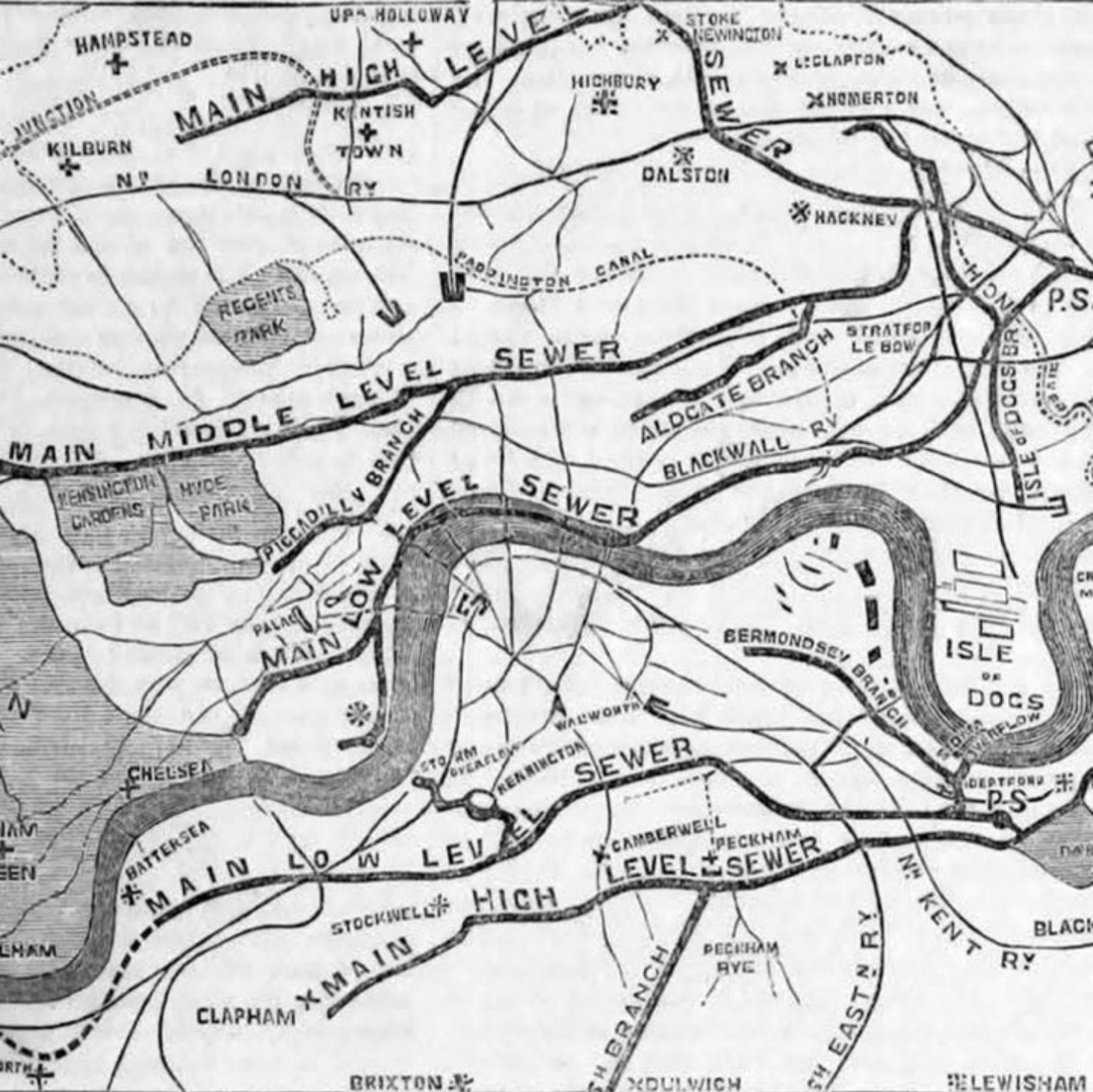
1 Sermon Lane

The following pages address the past, present and proposed future of the stones, showing their cycling in London.



THE "SILENT HIGHWAY" - MAN.
"Your MONEY or your LIFE!"

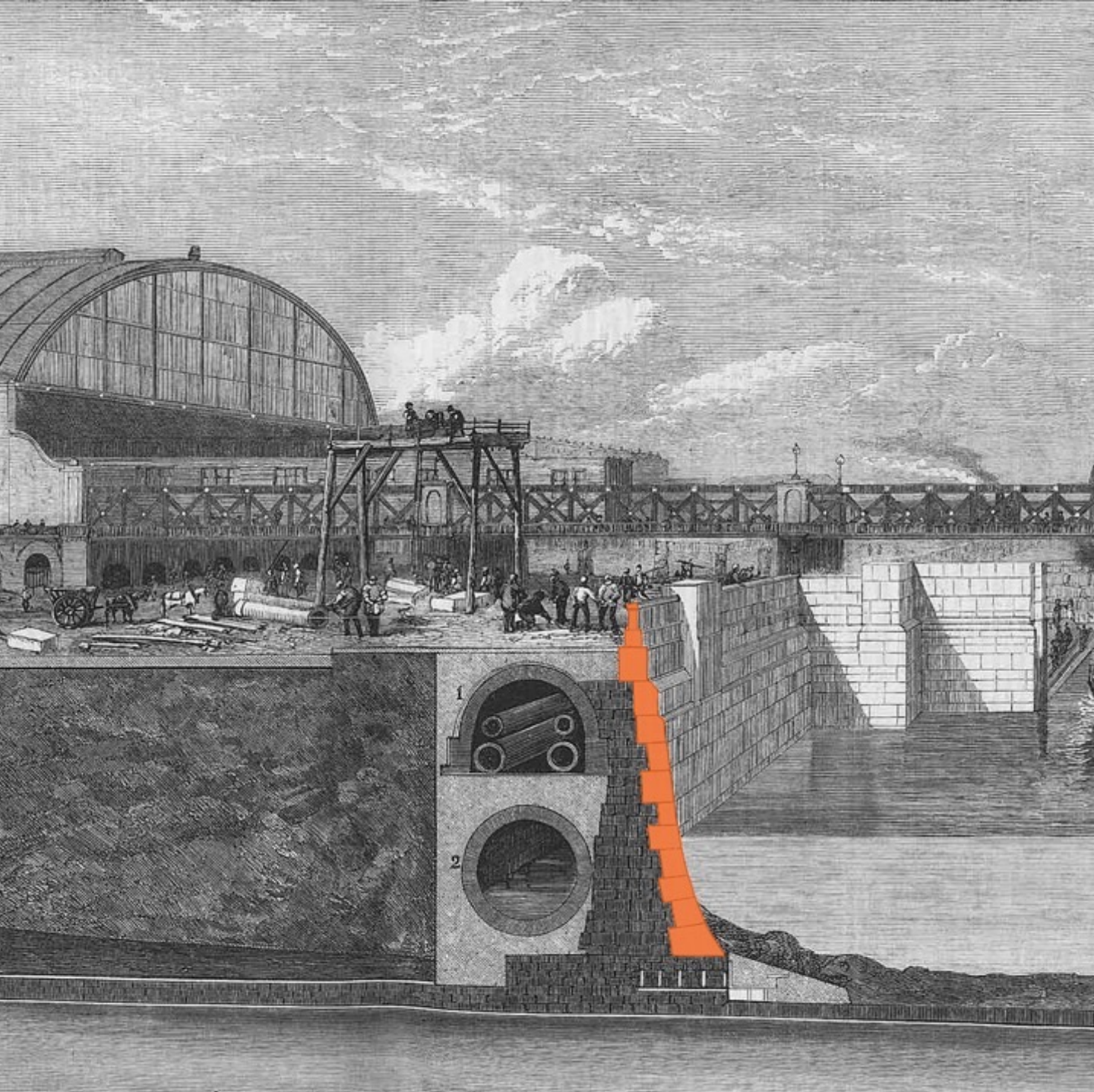
The story of these granite stones starts with the Great Stink in 1858. Untreated sewage and industrial effluent flowing straight into the Thames was causing disease and, by the summer, a truly unbearable smell. This problem had been building for some time.



Parliament took action and accepted Joseph Bazalgette's proposal for a London sewer system that moved the effluent east to outfalls outside of London. This was a huge project that included over 1,000 miles of sewers.



As a part of the works, three stretches of embankment were built on the Thames to accommodate the Low Level Sewer.



The embankment river wall was built from many thousands of granite stones, sourced from quarries across the UK, mainly in Scotland and Cornwall.



The whole project was completed in 1875. The resultant embankment is part of the iconography of modern London. Today the population has grown greatly and the sewers are unable to cope with the increased demand.



The Thames Tideway Super Sewer is now being constructed beneath the Thames, to increase the system capacity. A few sections of river wall are being removed to enable the connection of the old sewer to the new.



Our stones come from the Victoria Embankment, gifted to the project by Westminster City Council, assisted by Tideway. They are large stones, mostly weighing around one tonne each.



With large stones such as this, there is a sense of a constant cycle of exchange between stone and building. This reciprocal relationship can be seen at historic sites such as Delphi in Greece.



We took the decision not to cut the stones into smaller sizes. This may have made the next use easier, but it would reduce the potential of the stones to fulfil a broad range of further uses in future. Granite is particularly durable and these stones could last for thousands of years and contribute to dozens of buildings and structures over this time.



The stones have been cleaned in order to make them safe for public use. However, care has been taken to display all aspects of their history – the geological character of the raw stone, the mortar that held them together as an embankment wall, and the tide marks from the Thames.



They are distributed across seven sites in the City and simply rest on the ground, with some supported on reclaimed oak frames, and no foundations. So, it will be easy to return the sites to their former states when the stones are removed.



The aim is to provoke discussion about reuse, material lifespan and cultural heritage, at a time when stone can make a significant contribution to a more sustainable built environment.



And at the same time the stones act as seating and allow passers-by to take a minute to rest, catch breath and enjoy the views.



After this project the stones are proposed to be re-used in the permanent King Edward Square public realm project. The opportunity to use the stones for this long-term use came about as a direct result of our temporary re-use project.



They will form a stepped line, running across the site.

From The Thames to Eternity is a meanwhile use for these stones, enriching the City, retaining the stones for their next use, and encouraging public discussion about circularity in London.

With thanks to Tideway, CED Stone, Tenon, Westminster City Council, FM Conway and St Paul's Cathedral.

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