

TECHNICAL NOTE

HANOVER SQUARE,
HANOVER SQUARE CABMEN'S SHELTER RELOCATION
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QUALITY MANAGEMENT

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BACKGROUND

Westminster City Council is developing a comprehensive public realm improvement scheme for Hanover Square to integrate Crossrail's Bond Street Station's Eastern Ticket Hall with heritage and new and under construction development schemes, to provide wider pavements and enhanced public spaces with better physical and visual connections between the Square and its surroundings.

Focussed on a core area of Tenterden Street, thru Hanover Square from its junctions with Harewood Place, Princes Street, Hanover Street, St. George's Street and Brook Street, this scheme is being developed in conjunction with local landowners and other key stakeholders and will be linked to neighbouring public realm improvement schemes in Bond Street, Oxford Street and throughout East Mayfair.

Through collaboration with the local community the City Council is seeking to develop a coordinated public realm scheme which balances the needs of each of the Square's varied users.

Produced to aid discussion around potential options for Hanover Square, a Concept Design for Hanover Square was produced by Publica Public realm consultants, working on behalf of the Great Portland Estate (owners and developers of the major development site on the western side of Hanover Square) and Westminster City Council. The Concept Design was agreed by the Hanover Square Project Board – chaired by the City Council with members including Crossrail, Transport for London, the Great Portland Estate, Crown Estate and local developers – last December.

Figure 1: Concept Design for Hanover Square



Working with design, traffic and transport specialists, the City Council is currently tested the feasibility of this concept design, which seeks to: enhance the public spaces within the core project area and help manage traffic movements, whilst increasing the Square's capacity to cope with the increased numbers of pedestrians expected with the opening of Crossrail's new Bond Street station ticket hall in the North-West corner of the Square in December 2018.

The changes necessitated by Crossrail and the changed function of the Square, offer the opportunity for wider public realm improvements to the whole Square and its historic townscape, and as such a comprehensive public realm scheme is being developed.

The function and dynamic patterns of pedestrian and vehicular movement of the Square will be fundamentally altered as a result of the station opening, compared with both the current situation where a large proportion of the Square has been given over to the Crossrail Station worksite, and the pre-Crossrail construction works layout in place until 2010 when the Square was more heavily trafficked with lower levels of pedestrian movement.

An exceptionally high level of pedestrian movement is expected in Hanover Square from the end of 2018. As such, the City Council's emerging public realm scheme for Hanover Square specifically includes proposals to pedestrianise the Western side of Hanover Square to provide additional space for pedestrians both entering the Crossrail station and to orientate themselves as they leave the station and the other new developments nearby.

The Eastern side of Hanover Square is proposed to be opened to 2-way traffic, however with no vehicular access (aside from emergency access) proposed on the Western side of the Square, it will not be possible, safe or practical to re-provide the taxi-refreshment rank facility that existed in that location prior to the Crossrail works, upon completion of their works.

The City Council's proposals include the relocation, and subject to funding also the restoration, of the Grade II Listed Cabmen's Shelter which currently sits at the Northern end of Hanover Square Gardens, immediately outside the Garden's railings, to an alternative site within the Core Hanover Square project area.

There are several reasons why the City Council is looking to relocate the Cabmen's Shelter specifically:

The opening of Crossrail and the proposed part-pedestrianisation of Hanover Square, aligned with the Mayor's ambitions to pedestrianise Oxford Street

immediately to the north of Hanover Square, mean that vehicular access through the Square will likely be fundamentally altered within the next few years.

Access to the North and East sides of Hanover Square could potentially be reserved for servicing only, which would create a problem for taxis seeking to reach the Cabmen's Shelter should it remain in its current position.

Although the Eastern side of the Square would likely be opened to both North and South-bound traffic, future changes to the road network may see the timed-closure of Harewood Place and other onward connectionsⁱ. This would mean that a taxi visiting the North-side of the Square under such an arrangement, would have to turn back and head South in order to leave the area once the traffic restrictions come into force.

Whilst the proposed pedestrianisation will help to minimise potential conflict between pedestrians and vehicular traffic, particularly in the North-West corner of the Square, it will also mean that the pre-2010 taxi refreshment rank, previously located adjacent to Hanover Square gardens and curved around the North-West corner of the Square, could not be reinstated upon completion of the Crossrail and wider public realm works.

Although there has not been a refreshment rank provided immediately adjacent to the Cabmen's Shelter by Crossrail for the duration of their works, the City Council understands that provision of a refreshment rank is a requirement of the Cabmen's Shelter Trust, and is therefore seeking to provide a new refreshment rank within Hanover Square, adjacent to a relocated Shelter, as part of its comprehensive plans for the Square.

The City Council has, since last year, been seeking to find an appropriate and accessible location for both the Cabmen's Shelter and its associated refreshment rank within the Core Hanover Square area.

Current feasibility proposals include the relocation of the existing Cabmen's Shelter to the South side of Hanover Square at its junction with St. George's Street, with the new associated refreshment rank provided in St. George's Street. This location, the City Council considers, offers to optimal solution for the taxi trade, Shelter, and its trader as it offers the maximum amount of refreshment rank space as possible within the constraints of the wider scheme.

Further public taxi ranks are proposed to be provided on the North side of Brook Street, where they are immediately visible from the Crossrail Station Entrance and accessible via a level walking route.

To avoid confusion for pedestrians wishing to hire a taxi, it is considered most appropriate to keep the pick-up and refreshment ranks separate.

2 CONSIDERATIONS

The shelter is considered to be a real asset to Hanover Square and the City Council recognises that its re-location within the new design for Hanover Square is a high priority of the overall improvement scheme.

Alongside the proposed relocation of the Shelter and associated refreshment rank, further complementary changes are proposed to the overall kerb alignment and traffic management arrangements around the Square, including the re-provision of parking and servicing spaces and loading bays, and cycling facilities.

New paving, signage and street lighting is proposed, with further proposals being developed to open up the original north-south views through the Square from St. George's Street and Harewood Place. This would be accompanied, subject to funding, by a new Gardens alignment, with new level access points and re-landscaping.

OPTIONS:

During the early design stages of this project, and following detailed design workshops and early stakeholder engagement with the Cabmen's Shelter Trust, careful consideration has been given and continues to be given to the possible location of the Cabmen's Shelter and associated refreshment rank within Hanover Square.

Options have been considered to:

1. Keep the Shelter where it is.
2. Relocate the Shelter to the South side of Hanover Square, adjacent to Vogue House on the Eastern side of the St. George Street junction with the associated refreshment rank re-provided in St. George Street immediately to the south of the Shelter.
3. Relocate the Shelter to the North-East side of the Square, adjacent to the central Square's maintenance gate, with the associated refreshment rank re-provided on the Eastern side of the Square immediately adjacent to the Gardens.
4. Relocate the Shelter to the North-East side of the Square and re-provide the associated taxi refreshment rank separately in St. George's Street or elsewhere; and

5. Relocate the Shelter to the South side of Hanover Square, within the proposed central island on junction with St. George Street, with the associated refreshment rank provided immediately south of the Shelter either side of a new central strip on St. George Street. This location will require an extension south of the proposed central island. A detailed drawing of this proposal is attached to this document.

These locations are illustrated in purple in Figure 1 below.

Other options have been considered but none have so far proved to be practical and so are not proposed to be taken forward for further consideration.

The City Council understands that the primary function of the Cabmen's shelter is to provide refreshments for taxi drivers, and that the Cabmen's Shelter requires a 10 taxi space refreshment rank to sit next to the Shelter. This need for colocation and the required extent of refreshment rank space, has implications on the possible locations of the Shelter within Hanover Square, as space here is understandably limited.

Additionally the City Council understands that the refreshment rank is required to be located separately from the public taxi (pick-up) rank, which is proposed to be located on the northern side of Brook Street's junction with Hanover Square as this location would provide a clear line of sight and direct level access for patrons exiting the Crossrail Station to the north.

Relocating the refreshment rank to St. George Street offers the opportunity to site it in a position where taxis can make easy onward journeys after using the refreshment rank.

In addition, the City Council understands that the local Church – St. George's Hanover Square, runs a coupon scheme for those in need to be able to purchase food from the Shelter and would welcome the proposed relocation of the Shelter, and certainly would not wish it to be moved further away.

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3 ANALYSIS

The following table outlines what the City Council perceives at this time to be the advantages and disadvantages of each of the possible relocation options:

Existing Location: On the North side of the square Shelter remains is its current location	
Advantages	Disadvantages
Shelter and rank would be visible from the Crossrail Station entrance.	There would be no access for drivers leaving the taxi refreshment rank positioned on the east side of the Square, directly into to the proposed Brook Street taxi pick-up rank.
Shelter may pick up passing non-taxi trade from the Crossrail station.	Once the Crossrail station opens the site where the Shelter is currently located will be at a busy junction with high numbers of pedestrians entering and exiting the Station, which would have safety implications and could result in conflicts between pedestrians and taxis. Reproviding the refreshment rank in its current location would not be possible.
The listed structure of the Shelter would not be disturbed.	There would be insufficient space to locate the Cabmen's shelter on the footway at the north side of the Square, which would cause a severe pinch point for pedestrian moving through the square to and from Princes Street and the Station/Harewood Place.
	The Shelter would create a significant obstacle to pedestrians entering and exiting the Gardens through the proposed new gates at the Northern end of the Gardens.
	It would not be possible for taxis to queue directly next to the shelter, as the carriageway at this point is not wide enough for vehicles to pass heading north onto Harewood Place. This would mean that taxis would have to rank at some distance away from the shelter along the east side of the square or elsewhere away from the Shelter, thus not satisfy the need for taxi shelter and rank.
	There would be insufficient space to provide a new refreshment rank of sufficient length

	to satisfy the Cabmen's Shelter Trust's requirements.
	If Harewood Place was to close to vehicle traffic in the future, this area would become a cul-de-sac with no through route for taxis. With the proposed highways alignment and possible future timed closure of Harewood Place and part pedestrianisation of Tenterden Street and existing closure of the eastern end of Princes Street, this location would result in difficulties in taxis turning to travel south if parked facing northbound.
	The proposed northbound location of the refreshment rank would require taxi drivers to exit their vehicles onto the live carriageway to access the Cabmen Shelter, creating a dangerous conflict point between traffic and taxi drivers. Current traffic levels show there is a high level of traffic through this section of the Square.
Location 1 North east side of the Square, adjacent to the Square's maintenance gate	
Advantages	Disadvantages
This location is in close proximity to the current Cabmen's Shelter site.	With the proposed highways alignment and possible future timed closure of Harewood Place and part pedestrianisation of Tenterden Street and existing closure of the eastern end of Princes Street, this location would result in difficulties in taxis turning to travel south if parked facing northbound.
This option does offer the potential for the Shelter to act as an architectural feature at the east side of Hanover Square.	If Harewood Place was to close to vehicle traffic in the future, this area would become a cul-de-sac with no through route for taxis.
	Relocating the Shelter here is likely to result in confusion for Crossrail patrons as the refreshment rank will be opposite the station exit however these taxis will be unauthorised to collect members of the public.
	There may be objections from local stakeholders and residents to this proposed moved.
	The footway along the East side of the Square is the narrowest section in the overall proposed scheme. As such there would be potential conflict between users of the

	refreshment rank and pedestrians using this footway adjacent to the Gardens.
	Removal of cycle stands to accommodate a refreshment rank here could cause a significant reduction in amenity for cyclists in the area and there could be potential conflict with cycle parking on the East side of Square where it to remain.
	There would also be conflict with the proposed Westminster City Council maintenance gate into Hanover Square Gardens and refuse collection vehicles using that site entrance at the north east of the Gardens.
	There would be no direct access to the proposed Brook Street taxi rank for taxis leaving a refreshment rank on the East side of Hanover Square.
	There would be 10m less space available on Hanover Square East for the associated taxi refreshment rank than there could be on St. George Street, which may necessitate a reduction in rank spaces.
Location 2 : On the South side of the Square	
Advantages	Disadvantages
The location would offer direct access to the Cabmen Shelter for taxis arriving from Brook Street, Hanover Street and from St. George Street.	There may be objections from local stakeholders and residents to this proposed moved.
Circa 50m of space could potentially be made available for the taxi refreshment rank on St. George Street, immediately adjacent to the Cabmen's Shelter itself.	There would be no access for drivers leaving the taxi refreshment rank, directly into to the proposed Brook Street taxi pick-up rank as they would be leaving in a southerly direction.
This location offers the potential to create a build-out in the footway to accommodate the Shelter and have an area for drivers to rest nearby.	This would impact on the local business frontages and may lead to objections from other local stakeholders.
This location offers hard landscaped areas of footway close by with public benches where customers could sit.	The proposed southbound location of the refreshment rank would require taxi drivers exit their vehicles onto the live carriageway to access the Cabmen Shelter, creating a dangerous conflict point between traffic and taxi drivers.
The Cabmen's Shelter in this location	If electric vehicle charging points are installed

would become a more visible Heritage feature within the Square, as it becomes observable from St George Street, the entrance of Brook Street and Hanover Street.	at this refreshment rank location they may cause obstructions to pedestrian flow lines and also create additional street clutter on a busy pedestrian route.
The Shelter could become a positive architectural feature at the southeast corner of Hanover Square facing a major east-west pedestrian desire line between New Bond Street and Regent Street and setting off this handsome listed structure.	
This location would provide the necessary clarity for Crossrail users between the taxi pick-up rank (outside station on the North side of Brook Street) and the taxi refreshment rank with its taxis facing in a Southerly direction along St. George's Street.	
The Shelter would be visible to taxi drivers in the proposed taxi pick up rank on Brook Street.	
This location would also allow taxis to use the St. George Street alignment to turn north or south, avoiding unnecessary detours.	
The Shelter may benefit from additional non-taxi driver customers from within the Square and surrounding streets and pedestrian flows between Regent Street and Bond Street.	
The Shelter may benefit from being located in close proximity to St. George's Church Hanover Square, which already runs a coupon scheme which allows the disadvantaged to purchase food from the Shelter.	
Location 3: South side of the Square, on the central pedestrian island which would be extended southwards.	
Advantages	Disadvantages
The location would offer direct access to the Cabmen Shelter for taxis arriving from Brook Street, Hanover Street and from St. George Street.	
The Shelter would be visible to taxi drivers	Potential queues on the public side of the

in the proposed taxi pick up rank on Brook Street.	Shelter (north side) may back up into the proposed pedestrian route across the island, and therefore cause congestion.
This option no longer requires a build out on the east side of St. George Street for the Shelter's location as in location 2, thus providing more kerbside parking space. This will also create a more symmetrical design between the east and west side of the junction with St. George Street.	The location of the Shelter may impact on the view of the William Pitt Statue, if travelling northbound on St. George Street. This would only be when standing on the proposed central strip which it not foreseen to be used by pedestrians.
The Shelter may benefit from additional non-taxi driver customers from within the Square and surrounding streets as pedestrian flows between Regent Street and Bond Street.	This option provides for one less shared bay parking space in the overall scheme as a consequence of extending the St George Street island south. However there is additional space for motor cycle parking.
The Shelter may benefit from being located in close proximity to St. George Church Hanover Square, which already runs a coupon scheme which allows the disadvantaged to purchase food from the Shelter.	
This area would increase the size of the pedestrian island and create a safe environment for pedestrians to approach the shelter, as well as a space for taxi drivers to rest nearby.	
This location allows for taxis to approach from both north and south directions, and park on either side of the central island.	
This option allows taxis to park either side of the central island, and therefore whether they park northbound or southbound drivers will exit their vehicle onto the safety of the central island.	
The Shelter could become a positive architectural feature on the south of Hanover Square facing a major east-west pedestrian desire line between New Bond Street and Regent Street.	

<p>The wide tapered central reserve provides space to install electric charging points next to the refreshment rank, away from main pedestrian desire lines and flows.</p>	
<p>This location eases concerns raised by stakeholders in recent public consultation events while still providing a prominent location within Hanover Square.</p>	
<p>This location allows for 10 taxi rank bays to be located adjacent to the Cabmen's Shelter, provide simple access for cab drivers.</p>	

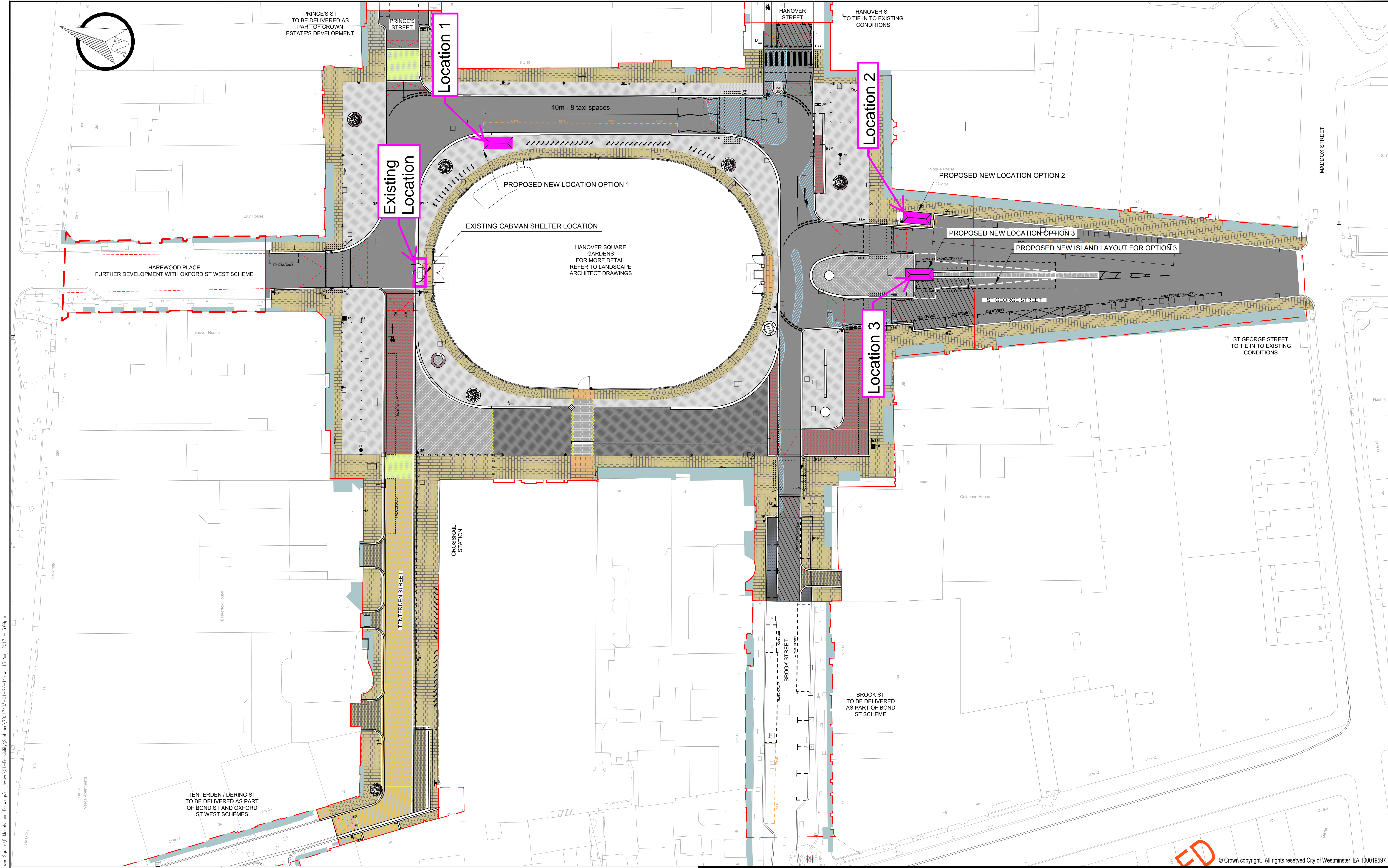
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4 CONCLUSIONS

As outlined above, retention of the Cabmen's Shelter in its existing location is not practical with the opening of the Crossrail Station and other associated development schemes. Alternative locations have been and continue to be considered by the City Council however the proposed locations identified above provide a mix of advantages and disadvantages which would impact the overall success of the comprehensive public realm scheme.

The relocation of the Cabmen's Shelter to the South side of Hanover Square remains the City Council's preferred option. Following further design review and discussions with stakeholders and public consultation events, relocating the shelter to the central island on St. George's Street has emerged as the most viable location. This will be subject to further design review in line with the rest of the wider scheme for Hanover Square.

ⁱ This currently sits outside of the Hanover Square project's scope



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