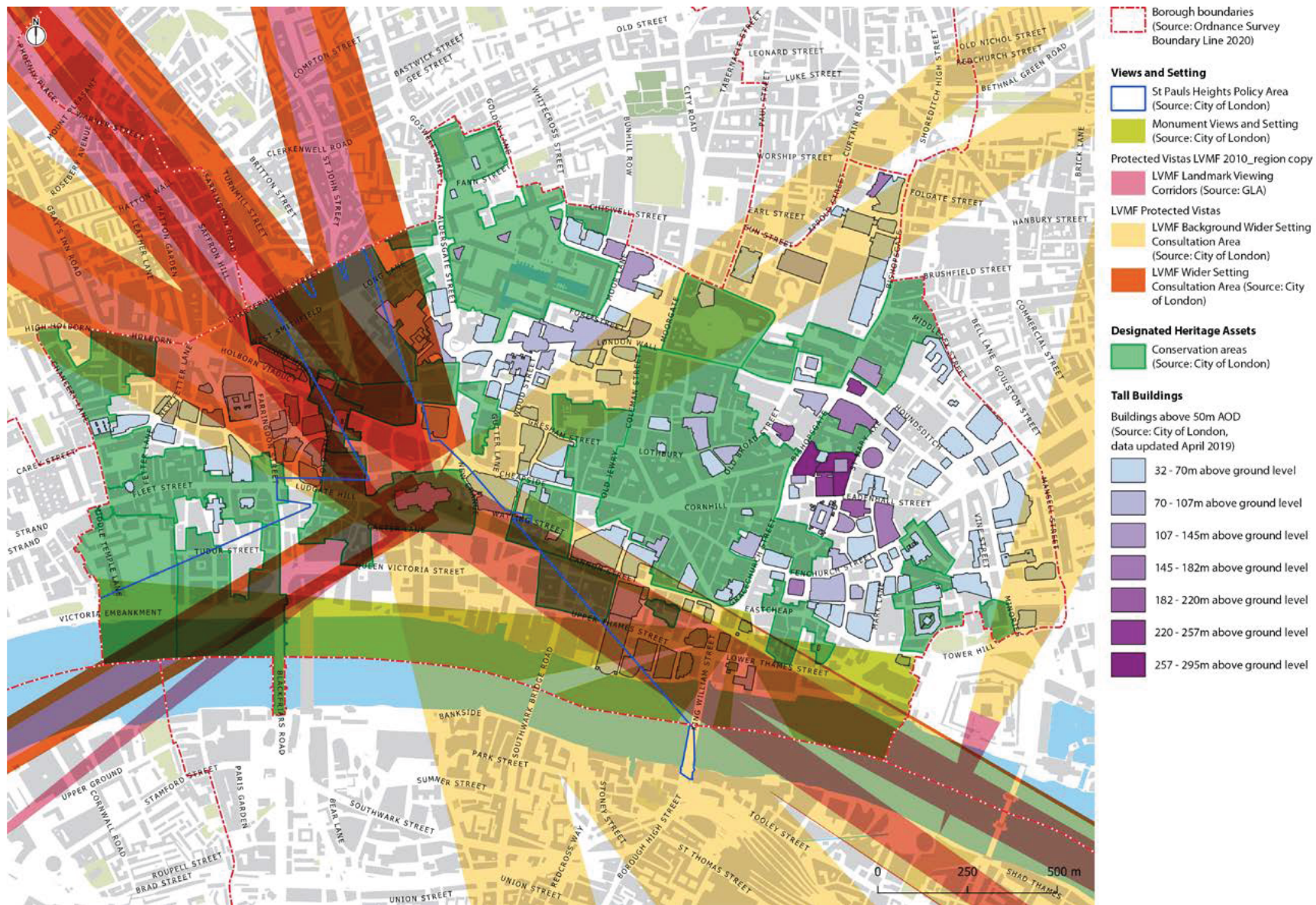


predict the impact of change. But what began as tools are now increasingly regarded and used as a substitute for understanding and consideration of the full impact of development upon the setting of St Pauls and its exceptional heritage significance.

- 3.7 This is where this study hopes to contribute. The impact of development upon the setting of a heritage asset is distinct from identification of impact upon townscape or a designated view, and one which carries with it statutory duties. However, until now there has been little assessment and explanation of the contribution that setting makes to the heritage significance of the Cathedral, and of the contribution that setting also makes to our ability to appreciate that significance. In other words, what matters and why. For example, the list description, unchanged since designation on the 4th January 1950, runs to a mere 105 words. The weakness of this evidence base is of particular importance because of the rate and quantum of development that has occurred within the setting of the Cathedral in the last few decades, and especially in the last twenty years.
- 3.8 Therefore, to assist developers, plan makers and decision makers, this study aims to fill some of these gaps by the provision of a detailed evidence base and assessment of the contribution that setting makes to the exceptional significance of St Paul's.





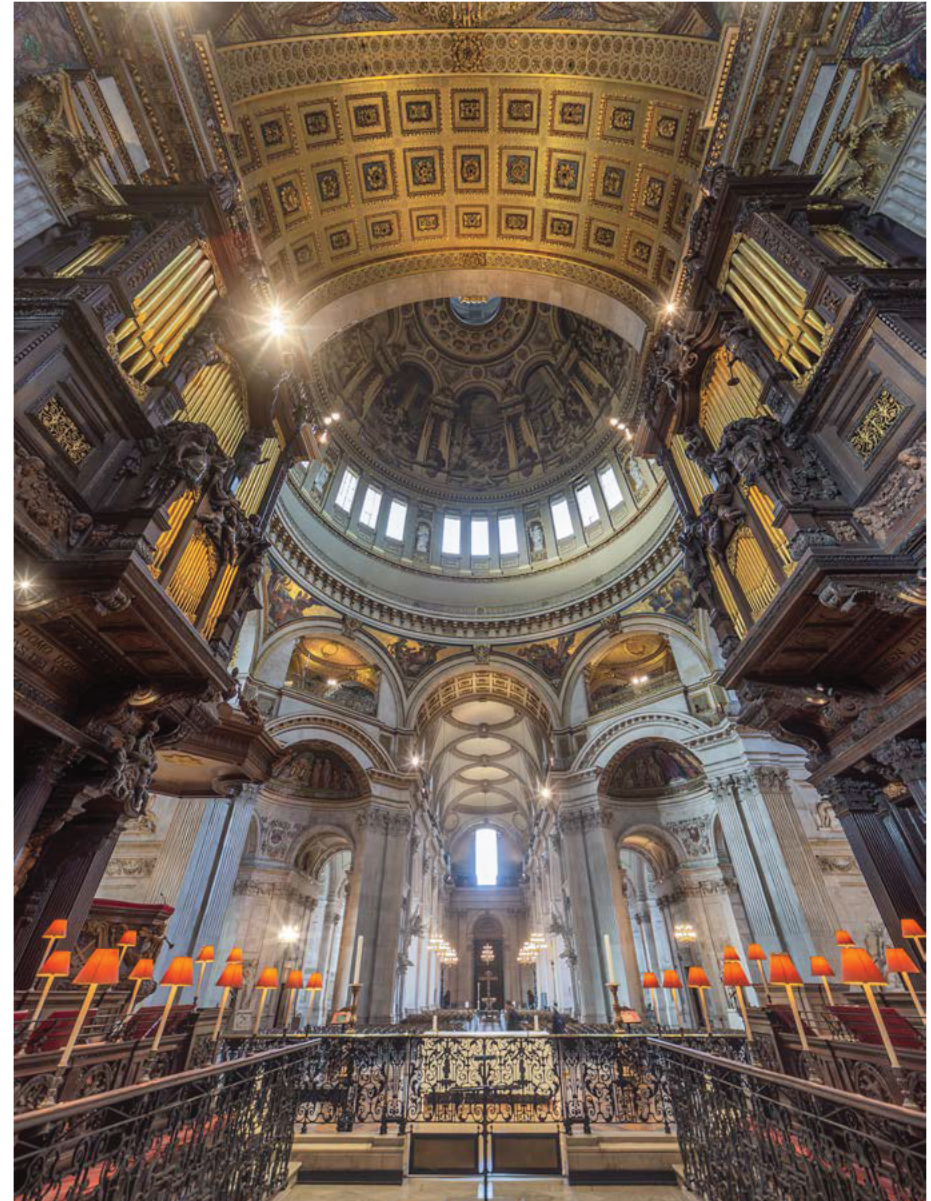
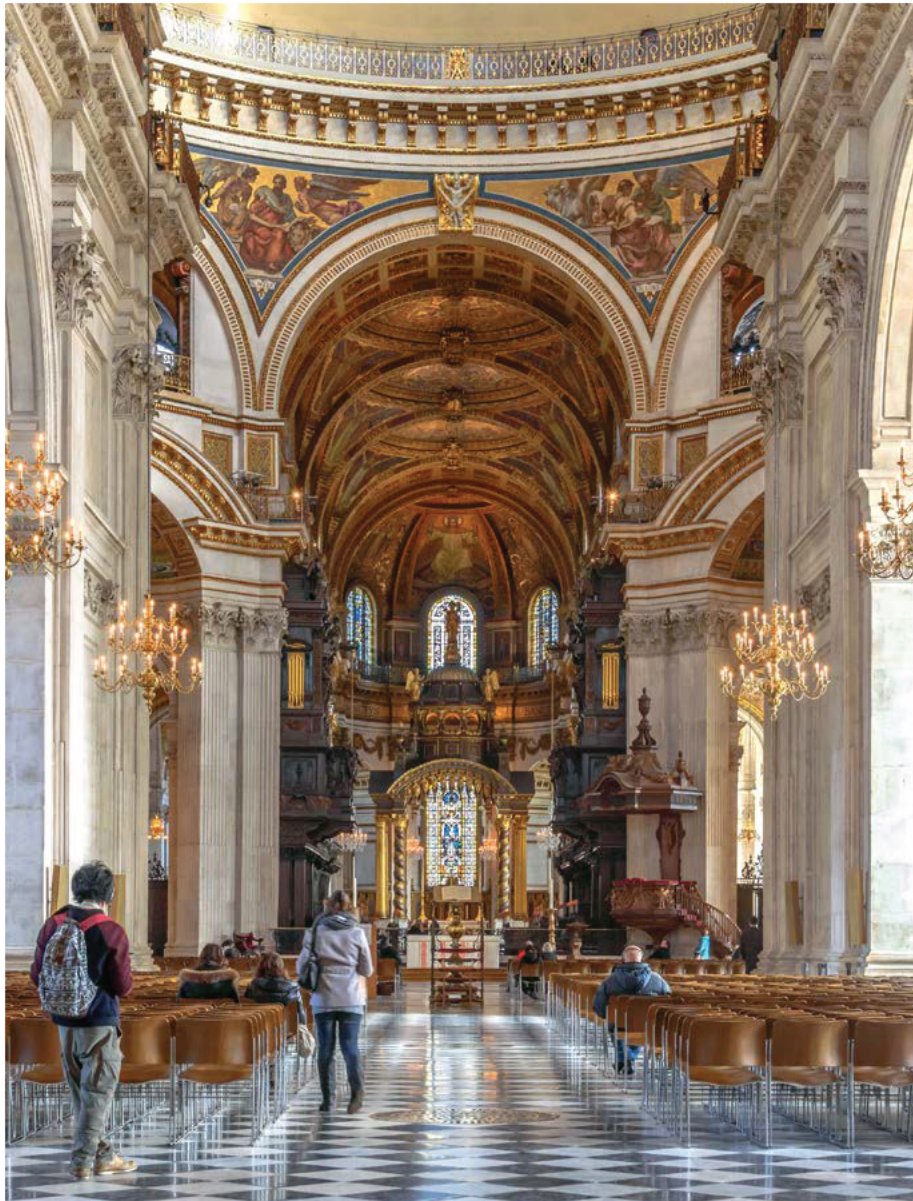
Views and setting policy areas in the City of London, together with conservation areas mapped against tall buildings. Note the relationship between these and the distribution of very tall buildings.



RESVRGAM

## 4.0 The heritage significance of St Paul's Cathedral

- 4.1 St Paul's Cathedral was built in 1676-1711, although the design had evolved from first proposals in 1670. It was erected as a symbol of the resurgence of London following the Great Fire and marked the transition in English cathedral building from the Gothic of the Middle Ages to the Classical architecture of the post-Reformation age of the Renaissance. Throughout its life the Cathedral has played, and continues to play, a central role in the lives of both the nation and the capital.
- 4.2 Sir Christopher Wren, appointed Surveyor in 1672, is regarded as one of England's greatest architects and scientists, and St Paul's is his masterpiece, a building of international architectural importance. In his design, Wren drew on models of early Christian buildings in the Middle East and knowledge of Renaissance and Baroque churches in Europe. This architectural style was a revelation but also a cause of controversy, because it was novel for an English cathedral. The outstanding geometry and structural achievements that underpin the distinctive drum and dome and the iconic silhouette of the dome and west towers have become internationally recognised.
- 4.3 Through such physical, spiritual and historical prominence, the silhouette of the Cathedral has become embedded in the consciousness of London and the country as a powerful symbol of identity and belonging.
- Architectural significance**
- 4.4 The architectural significance of the building, which is regarded as the pre-eminent ecclesiastical structure in the Baroque style in England, is amplified by the outstanding collection of sculptural decoration on its exterior. It is further enhanced by the associations, architecturally, visually, culturally and intellectually, with Wren's other great achievements in London, particularly the Royal Hospitals at Chelsea and Greenwich, The Monument and the City Churches, whose spires provided a delicate, almost romantic counterpoint to the might of the Cathedral on the skyline of London for over 280 years.



The nave and crossing of St Paul's (picture credit: St Paul's Cathedral)

## Historical significance

- 4.5 The historic significance of the Cathedral is central to its status and importance and has been from the time of its first inception. Maintaining the long-established tradition of Christian worship on an elevated site in the City of London, the Cathedral also symbolised the rebirth of the capital, signalling its place as one of the great European cities. The intended symbolism of the building as a representation of the union of Church and Crown was achieved through its position, scale and ornament. It was historically intended to be the principal building in London and one to which the nation could turn in times of celebration and crisis.
- 4.6 Those moments of crisis and celebration include the attacks on the fabric of the building by those recognising its symbolic importance and who sought to undermine and diminish it. These included the Suffragettes in the early 20th Century and most infamously, the Luftwaffe during World War II. The commemorative and celebratory roles of the Cathedral include providing the resting place for national heroes including Nelson and Wellington, as well as being the venue for Royal celebrations and services of thanksgiving. The processional route from the City of Westminster, along which monarchs progressed to be formally greeted and admitted into the City of London at the west door of the Cathedral, is an outstanding element of the setting with origins dating back to the time of old St Paul's and beyond.

## Cultural significance

- 4.7 The cultural significance of the Cathedral is wide ranging and includes the role it played in debates and discussions about the Post-War reconstruction of the city and as the venue for the launch of the Festival of Britain which signalled a determination to create a new future for the Country. In popular culture, the fame, symbolism and iconic form of the Cathedral has seen it appear in numerous works of literature, film, television, advertising and the visual and performing arts. Through these many depictions, such as Mary Poppins and the Thames TV logo, and as perhaps the most famous image of British defiance in World War II, millions of people have come to feel that they know the building even if they had never visited it. This “virtual” knowledge and recognition extends internationally, and the silhouette of the dome and towers continues to be used in advertising material by the likes of Transport for London and Visit London, who list it second amongst the best buildings for architecture in the capital. Such recognition contributes to the wide appeal of St Paul's to visitors, over a million of whom visited the Cathedral in 2022.

## Further analysis

- 4.8 Chapter 8 (p.36) explores the history and significance of the Cathedral in more detail. Sections 8.11-8.14 helpfully break down the components of the Cathedral's significance as bullet points.



St Pauls and its relationship to topography and the processional route

