

- 9.33 The eastern section of St Paul’s churchyard still ran along its historic line immediately following the war, but it was re-positioned further east in 1961 establishing the present east boundary of the churchyard. The railings were then extended, first to the tower of St Augustine’s church and then subsequently extended on a new alignment even further to the east and following the line of New Change, which is the form of the current boundary. The south-east corner of the current Cathedral churchyard therefore lies over the former 19th Century buildings that originally stood between St Pauls churchyard and Old Change, originally outside the Wren-period precinct. Effectively, between 1900 and 1961 the churchyard has shifted eastwards in relation to Cathedral markedly increasing the public open space to the East.
- 9.34 In 1956 the London County Council published guidelines in May 1956, entitled ‘High Buildings in London’, in which there was clear encouragement to build tall buildings that were ‘carefully sited and well designed’ and could ‘contribute to the picturesque interest of the London skyline. The 100 ft height restriction was removed the same year with the support of the RFAC. Much taller buildings could now be erected and transformation of the London skyline began in earnest. Between 1937 and 1978 eleven buildings were allowed to infringe The St Paul’s Heights agreement in the range of 2-10ft (0.6m - 3.05m) including Sudbury House and Paternoster Square, very close to the Cathedral and which at 205ft (62.5m) had a severe impact of the view of the dome from the north, including from Parliament Hill, which had previously been one of the finest views outside the City.
- 9.35 In an article in Country Life published in 1977 Patrick McCormack MP questioned the robustness of policy regarding tall buildings then emerging in London stating:
- “As long ago as 1938 the City of London laid down regulations to protect certain views of the Dome from the Thames and in 1965 views from Parliament Hill were similarly protected. Now the cathedral is hemmed in on almost every side”.* Cormack pointed out that although, technically, recent tall buildings (which he defined as over 150ft or 45.7m, around 18 storeys) fulfilled the requirements of the protective regulations, such buildings continued to block views of St Paul’s from other viewpoints – a consistent weakness and the limitation arising from the approach of using a protected view.
- 9.36 Whilst the debate at this time was being conducted with regards to the skyline and the concepts of *views*, the impact was actually upon the *setting* of the cathedral. In light of Wren’s intended visual dominance of St Pauls, which was to be appreciated across the whole of the capital as an ornament for the nation and conveying the unity of Church and State, the subservient scale of buildings within the setting of the Cathedral was an essential requirement in ensuring that it continued to

support and contribute to the symbolic and architectural functions of St Paul's. These new, taller and substantial buildings represented a significant erosion of that dominance and consequently 'harm' (in terms of the NPPF) the significance of the Cathedral. The buildings include Guy's Hospital tower (1974) in Southwark and Euston Tower (1969) to the north west, among several others.

9.37 In the 1970's the construction of the National Westminster Tower in the City represented a significant development in the closer setting of the Cathedral and the concept of a Cluster of tall buildings around the tower was emerging. When completed in 1980 the tower designed by Richard Seifert was the tallest building in the UK and a direct challenge to the historic role that the Cathedral had performed for over two centuries in the context of London. The Nat West Tower was overtaken as the tallest building in the country by One Canada Square in 1990, which was constructed as part of the rejuvenation of London Docklands. The emergence of tall commercial sky scrapers in this location was visually prominent in views west along the river corridor, especially from the bridges over the Thames and also had an impact upon views from elevated ground to the south-east, in Greenwich. With each increase in height, these developments continued the process of reducing the prominence of the Cathedral in its London wide role.

9.38 By the close of the 20th Century the setting of St Paul's had undergone radical change. In particular, the ability to appreciate the cathedral in the London-wide context had become significantly eroded and the impressive scale and geometrical beauty of the design of the dome were being challenged and harmed. The former clearly experienced separation of the cathedral within its churchyard had also been radically altered with the creation of gardens along the south side and relocation of barriers around the more generous space to the east. The increased areas of gardens to the south and east were created in the immediate Post War period to provide a breathing space for the Cathedral and a more open setting; but one which has proved vulnerable to the environmental impacts of increasing traffic.

9.39 Perhaps one of the transformational planning achievements of this period was the substantial rebuilding of almost the entire building stock between the Cathedral and the river Thames (besides Faraday Building). Almost all of these new buildings were constructed with strict observance to the St Paul's Heights, creating a roof landscape and built environment that realised Mervyn McCarty's vision in a manner that could not have been anticipated 50 years before. A major gain to the setting of St Paul's was delivered enabling the connections with the river corridor to be safeguarded.

## The setting of St Paul's: 2000 to the present

### SB8: Summary of key changes to setting 2000 to the present

- Emergence of the City Cluster and very tall buildings in the form of the Heron Tower, 22 Bishopsgate and others.
- Emergence of secondary groups of tall buildings to the east in Broadgate and Finsbury.
- Shard completed 2012 replacing Southwark Towers.
- Reconstruction of Paternoster Square including the re-location of Temple Bar and providing axial framed views from the north.
- New accessible entrance to the north portico of the Cathedral.
- Construction of Millennium Bridge House in foreground setting of the river corridor to the south
- Construction of the Millennium Bridge opens up a formal approach to the south transept.
- New Change constructed to the east with significant new framed views of the Cathedral.



St Paul's in its setting viewed from Waterloo Bridge 2023 Note the ability to see the dome and towers against clear sky but the visually prominent form of the city cluster (picture credit: copyright Historic England)

## SB8 cont.

### Impact upon key elements of setting and their contribution to significance

#### **Skyspace:**

- Secondary group of tall buildings around Broadgate and Finsbury Avenue eroding clear sky space around the dome reducing visual prominence of the Cathedral and appreciation of its architectural scale and composition.
- City Cluster curating concentration of tall buildings and maintaining sky space with the cathedral sustains visual prominence of the dome.
- Construction of the Shard 2009-2012 and tall buildings to the south of the Cathedral erode the skyspace and visually compete with the dome for attention. In some views from the north the Shard emerges directly behind the dome disrupting its silhouette.

#### **River corridor:**

- Secondary group of tall buildings around Finsbury visually attached to the drum and dome of the Cathedral as experienced from the SW in the river corridor challenging both the intended visual prominence of the Cathedral but also the clarity of the geometry of the dome, integral to the intended role of the Cathedral as an “ornament” to the city.
- Construction of Millennium Bridge House exceeding the St Paul’s heights limitations erodes the consistency of the

townscape to the south of the Cathedral which is historically significant as a result of this policy. It also obscures key architectural elements including the south pediment and associated statues, the carved decoration as well as the entablature and balustrade of the Cathedral as experienced from the river setting along the South Bank and from the Millennium Bridge diminishing its architectural effect.

- The construction of the Shard as the tallest building in London competes with St Pauls in views from the east.

#### **Churchyard/close setting:**

- The new Accessible entrance enhances the ability to experience the architecture and understand the historic significance of the cathedral for a greater number of visitors.
- Reconfiguration of Paternoster Square provides a colonnaded elevation to the churchyard and new connections to public spaces immediately to the north, enhancing the visual dominance of the Cathedral in its immediate setting and an ability to appreciate its architecture.
- New Change constructed with roof terrace providing views to the cathedral and framed views at ground level.
- New office development to the east (25 Cannon Street) with small garden containing a pool providing reflections of the cathedral; a very popular visitor spot.

- 9.40 The first two decades of the 21st century has seen the most perceptible change in the setting of the Cathedral in the form of the Eastern “Cluster”. The last decades of the 20th century had witnessed the beginnings of the emergence of tall commercial development, with Tower 42 (formerly the Nat West Tower 199 metres) constructed in 1981. The replacement Lloyds Insurance building by Richard Rogers followed in 1986, before the replacement of the bomb-damaged Baltic Exchange by 30 St Mary Axe (The Gherkin) which was completed in 2004.
- 9.41 The conscious decision to identify a geographical area within the City of London with the potential to accommodate tall buildings led to the creation of the “cluster” and was a means of attempting to mitigate and manage the potential impact of this type of development upon the settings of highly significant heritage assets including the Tower of London and St Paul’s. The form of the cluster has been the subject of some proactive curation by the corporation of the city of London, which identified an apex at 22 Bishopsgate (249 metres) around which other individually designed tall buildings would be located. These include 122 Leadenhall Street (238 metres); 40 Leadenhall Street (170 metres) and the outlier 20 Fenchurch Street. The relatively recent consent for 1 Undershaft establishes a new apex for the cluster at 304.9 metres.



St Pauls from Waterloo Bridge S end with the new Finsbury Towers developments appearing behind the NW tower and infilling sky space between the western towers and the dome. The reflective materials draw further attention and distract from the Cathedral

- 9.42 The relationship between the Cluster and the Cathedral is of particular relevance between Hungerford and Blackfriars Bridges, where the CoL Protected Views SPD recognises the importance of a clear skyline gap which should be retained, with taller buildings stepping up from this point. The relationship between Cathedral and Cluster is most acute on Waterloo Bridge and Hungerford Bridge (north end). The Processional Route to the Cathedral from Westminster is of significant influence for tall building development within the cluster. For example, it aligns loosely with Leadenhall Street and the need to retain clear sky space around the dome and western towers is clearly seen to inform in the profile of 122 Leadenhall Street.
- 9.43 To the immediate south the most radical change in the setting of the Cathedral has been the construction of the Millennium Bridge. This has, in a short life, become an iconic London view. It is a traditional vista composition comprising a broad panorama of coherent low-lying townscape anchored on a central axis terminating on the south transept of the Cathedral. It is one of the best places to view Wren's masterpiece in its wider setting amongst his complementary 'spire-scape' of spires and steeples which punctuate and relieve the (on the whole) low contiguous horizon line. This has been diminished by ad-hoc tall buildings of less distinguished architectural form around London Wall/Broadgate.
- 9.44 In the very recent past a secondary group of tall buildings has begun to emerge to the north-west of the Cathedral, centred along Finsbury Avenue, including Finsbury Tower (c 109 metres). In combination with development to the south west of the Cathedral around New Bridge Street and the Unilever building the ability to appreciate and understand the relationship between the dome and towers has been significantly eroded.



One of the less discussed aspects of change to setting has been a shift in the material colours and tones in the City, from red-browns to blue-grays, especially in higher buildings. This is illustrated here in the view east from the Stone Gallery in c.2003 and 2024 (picture credit: top - copyright Chris Redgrave; bottom - copyright Historic England).



Building heights in the City in 1938 (illustrated by number of storeys). Note also plot sizes



For an illustrative comparison, building heights in 2020 using LIDAR data coloured to approximate storey heights. Note also the change in plot sizes.





## 10.0 Contribution of the current setting

### 10.1 Historic England GPA 3 (Second Edition) The Setting of Heritage Assets

*All heritage assets have significance, some of which have particular significance and are designated. The contribution made by their setting to their significance also varies. Although many settings may be enhanced by development, not all settings have the same capacity to accommodate change without harm to the significance of the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate it. This capacity may vary between designated assets of the same grade or of the same type or according to the nature of the change. It can also depend on the location of the asset: an elevated or overlooked location; a riverbank, coastal or island location; or a location within an extensive tract of flat land may increase the sensitivity of the setting (ie the capacity of the setting to accommodate change without harm to the heritage asset's significance) or of views of the asset.*

### 10.2 This section of the Review addresses Step Two of the Guidance which is to:

*Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated*

### 10.3 As recommended, this assessment addresses the key attributes of the heritage asset itself which have been set out in Section 4 above. The assessment is then organised broadly into the categories of physical contributions: intangible contributions, environmental contributions and then visual contributions or views.

### 10.4 The current setting of St Pauls can be most conveniently considered in terms of its

1. *London wide setting*, where the silhouette and form of the upper features, principally the dome and towers can be appreciated.

2. *The intermediate setting* which are generally those areas to the south and west although to the north the area around Farringdon also provides opportunities to experience St Paul's. In these locations, including

the river corridor to the south, the articulation of the dome and towers can be understood in addition to their silhouette. From the south bank the overall form of the Cathedral at upper level, from apse to west front, can be appreciated as part of the kinetic experience of the river corridor and the orientation and aspect of the building is most clearly appreciated.

3. *The close setting* of the cathedral which comprises St Pauls churchyard, its western boundary at the top of Ludgate Hill, the southern boundary along Carter Lane, the eastern boundary along New Change and the north Newgate Street. In these areas the formal architectural qualities of the design can be best appreciated, including the volumes and surface articulation, the decorative carving and details in addition to the dome and towers.

4. In addition, extending across the intermediate setting and terminating at the closer setting are the approaches to the Cathedral. These comprise the “ProceSSIONal” route along Fleet Street and Ludgate Hill to the west, the approach along Cannon Street and Cheapside to the East and the approach over the Millennium Bridge from the south bank. The definition of the ‘ProceSSIONal way’ – the combined approach along Fleet Street and Ludgate Hill is a helpful term to capture both the historical and experiential significance of this semi-formal urban composition. Latterly there is increasing awareness of the value of the long vista and approach of Canon Street from London Bridge, in which the Southwest Tower and

later the South Transept of the Cathedral play a dominant place in the composition. These approaches are a kinetic experience that reveal the Cathedral in a series of often unfolding views enabling appreciation of individual elements of its composition. These can be framed by adjacent buildings or seen in oblique glimpses, with the full composition of the building only being revealed as the close setting is reached.

## 1: The physical surroundings of St Paul's in its wider setting

### SB9: Summary of the positive contributions of the physical surroundings in the wider setting

- The elevated topography of the London bowl which contributes to and provides opportunities to experience the Cathedral in its intended symbolic and architectural roles.
  - The ability to appreciate and understand the historic functional/ceremonial relationships with the City of Westminster.
  - The ability to understand and appreciate the architectural relationships between the Cathedral and the hugely significant legacy of Wren's work at Greenwich.
  - The ability to appreciate the strategic landmark role of the three sites: St Paul's, Palace of Westminster and Greenwich.
  - The ability to approach the Cathedral from the east and west along the river as was usual historically.
- the twin city origins of London.
  - Where the horizon comprises the wooded ridges of the London bowl and the Cathedral dome breaks the horizon, the silhouette is particularly powerful and illustrates best the intended dominance of the building as an ornament to the city.
  - Elevated views from other heritage assets within the wider setting allow the dome and towers to be seen against clear sky.

#### What can be appreciated in terms of architecture of St Paul's and other assets

##### **Skyspace:**

- The silhouette and forms of the major architectural elements of the Cathedral, principally the dome and towers. These are set within a complex skyline that has evolved over centuries but the elevated topography also allows the Cathedral to be seen in relation to the Victoria and Elizabeth towers of the Palace of Westminster to the west, illustrating

##### **River corridor:**

- The sweep of the river can be appreciated from high ground to the south-east with the dome framed by or within a group of taller structures.

##### **Churchyard or close setting:**

- The churchyard cannot be appreciated and seen from the wider setting because of the scale of intervening development.

10.5 The site of the Cathedral in the heart of the capital is in a part of London which has the greatest time depth in terms of history and archaeology. Westminster to the west and Southwark to the south are, with the City of London the three historic settlements formed in the earliest phases of the history of the capital. The change to the wider setting of the Cathedral(s) has been dramatic and extensive with once separate settlements around these historic centres being subsumed by the physical growth of London. Equally dramatic in terms of experience of the wider setting of the Cathedral has been the very recent (relatively) change to the financial centre of the City of London and the creation of the Eastern Cluster. The visual presence of the cluster as experienced in large areas of the wider setting of the Cathedral has undermined a key role of St Paul's by challenging its intended dominance in a London-wide context. An additional impact has been caused by The Shard to the south, particularly with regard to visual prominence of the dome of the Cathedral and the ability to appreciate its' geometry and silhouette.

### **Topography**

10.6 The topography of London makes a major contribution to the significance of the Cathedral and also the ability to appreciate that significance. The bowl in which London sits provides high points and elevated areas around its edge from which the design, layout and three-dimensional form of the Cathedral could be appreciated. The position



Looking ESE from the Stone Gallery towards the high ground to the SE of London around Shooter's Hill in Greenwich; note the gilded finial of The Monument to the centre left of the middle ground. The turrets of the White Tower can also be discerned further away in the background (picture credit: copyright Historic England)

of St Paul's adjacent to what was for centuries the only crossing point of the river and elevated above it, relied on that local topography in part for its dominance. The earliest wooden London Bridge was constructed from the river terrace on the north bank of the Thames to the sandbanks that offered access to the south side of the river and it also had a harbour at its northern end. On rising ground at Ludgate Hill and Cornhill, Londinium developed and this topography was central to its later development.

- 10.7 The physical surroundings and relative position of the Cathedral to the hills of north and south London originally provided both a green foreground and backdrop in which the capital was appreciated. Within this setting the Cathedral was the dominant structure and its relationship with the Thames, the other major topographical feature of the capital was also apparent. The perceived scale of the Cathedral and the impression of its architecture was increased where it broke the skyline formed by the hills. This contribution is integral to an understanding of the significance of the Cathedral(s) and an appreciation of what it (they) meant to convey. Elements of this contribution can still be read through the urban form today where building heights are consistent and follow the landscape. The LVMF has, for example identified a number of views from Parliament Hill and Kenwood, but if you look out from the Stone Gallery of the Cathedral the higher ground around the London basin can be clearly experienced to the south and east, including Shooter's Hill and Blackheath.

### **The Thames**

- 10.8 The physical relationship between St Pauls and the river is another distinctive element within the setting of the Cathedral and one which makes a positive contribution both to significance and the ability to appreciate that significance. The prospects afforded by the river corridor have long been appreciated and enjoyed. The role of the river as a major transport link, carrying significant trade as well as private travellers also facilitated the widest views of the Cathedral from within the heart of London. The river and the wharves along its north bank were the means of transporting and delivering the Portland stone for the construction of the Cathedral itself. The opportunities for understanding the Cathedral and its intended dominance remain particularly strong along the river corridor, and the experience of the relationship between the river and the Cathedral have been enhanced by the creation of new crossings throughout its history. The river effectively forms the historic southern boundary of the City of London and is one of the reasons for the choice of viewpoints for representations of the Cathedral and the wider capital for travellers and visitors over the centuries.



The river corridor looking NE towards St Paul's from Coin Street Community Pier

### The sky

- 10.9 The sky space and, originally, expansive sky setting of St Paul's made the strongest contribution to understanding the geometry underlying its design. Detailed analysis of Wren's writings reveals the extent to which he understood and considered both the geometry of the dome but also the optics of the building as a whole. The counterpoint of the simplified profile and detail in the Dome and the exuberant design embellishment of the Western Towers was a deliberate contrivance of what he described as 'perspectiva'. Wren was interested in and understood how the building would be experienced and how the form of his dome as opposed to a steeple or tower, would add to the visual presence and primary role of his building in the London wide context. This understanding also informed the contemporary development by Wren and others of the City Churches whose towers came to define the skyline in combination with the Cathedral. His architectural approach was based upon ensuring the Cathedral formed the dominant point of the London skyline as a symbol of the unity of Church, Crown and State, but it was also seen in combination with the towers and steeples of the City Churches and the more substantial silhouette of The Monument. The role of clear sky space is therefore central to the significance and ability to appreciate the significance of these heritage assets both individually and in their various combinations.



10.10 It is the relationship of topography and sky space that enables the geometry of the dome to be expressed across the city as Wren intended. The careful consideration of shape and the considered use of the curve is best seen against clear sky without distraction and the changing form and silhouette of the towers is also best seen against clear sky. When originally designed, the statues were intended to be seen against clear sky to emphasize their silhouette and enable their architectural function to be expressed. Clear sky makes the strongest contribution to the architectural interest of the Cathedral and therefore reduction in sky space by obstruction or distraction, or otherwise confining this element of the setting consequently erodes its contribution to significance and ability to appreciate significance.

#### **Relationship with other heritage assets**

10.11 In the wider setting the relationship of the Cathedral with other heritage assets is appreciated largely in terms of their skyline presence. The river connections from Greenwich to the east enable the dome and towers to be appreciated in the context of Wren's other great works at Greenwich Hospital. The architectural formalities shared by the two sites adds to their respective significance. Appreciation of the Cathedral from the wider setting to the north enables it to be appreciated in combination with the Palace of Westminster and therefore the relationship between the twin cities of Westminster and London to be understood. These experiences also enable a greater understanding and appreciation of the contribution made by the processional route to the significance of the Cathedral which forms part of its approaches and to which Wren's western portico and vestibule respond. Both of these latter groups of heritage assets are inscribed World Heritage Sites and it is only in the widest setting of the Cathedral that the relationship of the three sites as Strategic Landmarks can be appreciated.

## 2: The physical surroundings of St Paul's intermediate setting

### SB10: Summary of the positive contributions of the physical surroundings in the intermediate setting

- The topography around and elevated position of the Cathedral explain the siting of St Paul's embedded in the heart of the City which is a key element of both architectural and historic interest.
- The rising ground to the west emphasises the scale and intended dominance of the Cathedral.
- The river below to the south provides an open corridor extending for considerable distances east and west enabling an appreciation of the aspect of St Paul's and illustrating its' contribution to historic interest.
- The lower topography to the south enables an understanding of the overall architectural form of the Cathedral at upper levels from apse to west front and not just discrete elements.
- The approaches along the river and over the river include significant areas of open sky space that contribute directly to the visual prominence and the intended architectural effect of the design.
- Greater use of the river has enhanced appreciation of the Cathedral.
- Intervisibility with the City Churches and The Monument enhance significance.



St Paul's from the South Bank by Tate Modern and the Millenium Bridge providing an elevated pedestrian route across the river and aligned on the south transept of the Cathedral  
Photograph by the author 2023.

## SB10 cont.

### What can be appreciated in terms of architecture

#### **Skyspace:**

- On the skyline it is principally the towers and dome of the Cathedral. The articulation and massing of the towers can be understood in greater detail, and the rhythm of solid to void in the peristyle is now particularly prominent. The statuary along the entablature of the Cathedral can be appreciated and from certain areas, when against clear sky, silhouettes can be powerful.
- In the area of the St Paul's Heights policy generally the entablature of the Cathedral can still be seen in combination with the drum, dome and towers, although this too is being eroded.
- The south-west tower of the Cathedral is the most visually prominent element of the building in large areas of the intermediate setting to the east. The dome and tower are visually dominant and form the focal point of views to the Cathedral from the east, although they have to compete with increasingly scaled commercial development.

#### **River corridor:**

- The river corridor provides the ability to appreciate in greater detail the upper sections of the Cathedral below the cornice.

- In the angled views from west the form of the Cathedral appears more compact.
- From the north it is the dome and drum which can be seen but with only limited ability to appreciate their articulation.
- In the kinetic experience walking along the South Bank of the river the three-dimensional composition of the Cathedral changes and the visual weight of the western towers also changes; in particular the pattern of the voids and ability to see through them.
- Certain aspects enable the outline of the statuary to be appreciated against clear sky.
- In these areas of the intermediate setting the role of the Cathedral as an historic landmark, recognisable and an ornament to the city is most clearly appreciated and expressed.

#### **Churchyard or close setting:**

- There are segments of the churchyard or close setting that can be experienced from the intermediate setting. These are mainly along the approaches to the building.
- The eastern end of the churchyard can be seen from Cannon Street and Cheapside but is appreciated as an element of an urban landscape set within a busy road network.

## SB10 cont.

- The upper section of the apse, the drum and dome can be seen in a complex skyline comprising other, taller structures.
- On the western approach along Fleet Street the upper section of the west elevation and the drum and dome are variously revealed and obscured and also framed, by modern commercial development.
- A framed view of the south transept and the open space in front is provided from the south bank across the Millennium Bridge and high-level views from Tate Modern include sections of the Churchyard.

## Impact of past change on the contribution made by setting to significance

- Changes to the setting including the creation of the Thames Path and Queens Walk to the south bank and the construction of the Millennium Bridge have enhanced the ability to appreciate the Cathedral, including the south transept.
- The creation of the Millennium bridge has provided a popular and exciting approach that links the Cathedral with the historic highway of the river, the realisation of an ambition that had been set out in the early years of the 19th century.
- Commercial development along Cannon Street is generally consistent in height and scale, although pressure to increase scale in recent years has increased visual distraction and reduced the prominence of the Cathedral.
- Developments in the sky space behind the Cathedral from the southern, river setting has eroded its visual prominence. Recent development to the north-west competes with the dome of the Cathedral, and in some parts of the setting appear to be visually eroding the geometric clarity of its form and intended effect.

## Topography

10.12 The main topographical feature of the intermediate setting and approaches to the Cathedral is its' elevation. The approach from the west ascending Ludgate Hill which curves as it rises and gradually reveals the Cathedral, emphasises its scale and mass. The elevation in relation to the river is less pronounced and appreciated, not least because of the elevated route taken by many visitors across the Millenium Bridge. The river corridor and generally flat south bank provides an open aspect in which the form of the Cathedral is instantly recognisable. The later embankment of the river to the north side provides a consistent baseline above which the land rises, with development broadly appreciated as a series of "steps" obscuring the body of the Cathedral and above which the steeples and towers of the City Churches can sometimes be appreciated. This topography is particularly evident immediately to the south of the Cathedral in the area governed by the St Paul's Heights policy although the stepped arrangement of development is not as apparent in views directly opposite from the South Bank because of the redevelopment to that height limitation in buildings fronting the river.



St Paul's from Queen's Walk looking north and revealing the impact of the St Paul's Heights policy in preserving the ability to see the extent of the body of the Cathedral below the peristyle, dome and towers. Photograph by the author 2023

## The river

- 10.13 The river itself makes a major contribution to the setting of St Paul's both in terms of providing a corridor which emphasises its visual prominence but also one which allows the Cathedral to be appreciated in combinations with other heritage assets. The river is now once again a major transport route after a significant period in which it was not used as a recreational resource because of environmental conditions. The network of river piers facilitates commuting and also the numerous leisure craft providing river tours for visitors. St Paul's is a major attraction on this route which extends downstream as far as the Greenwich barrier.
- 10.14 The Cathedral has always been separated from the river by development. That development was always subservient, although increasing in scale and height through the 18th and 19th centuries. Unilever House and the Faraday building in the early 20th centuries demonstrated the significant impact that increased height could have upon the visual prominence of the Cathedral, which was exacerbated by the monolithic massing of both buildings. The development along the north side of the Thames between Somerset House and Blackfriars is still generally subservient and integrated into substantial tree cover that provides a significant soft green foreground in river prospects from the west.



The Dome and towers of St Paul's in the river prospects looking east (downstream) from Waterloo Bridge with the substantial soft green foreground providing a foil to the city beyond. Photograph by the author 2023

10.15 This area of the intermediate setting provides the best experience of the Cathedral embedded in the capital which is why the overwhelming majority of the artistic representations of the building were located along its banks. The dome and towers of the Cathedral are experienced against clear sky at the northern end of Waterloo Bridge with the Eastern cluster in the City of London a distinct entity to the right in its setting. Moving south across the bridge the sky space around the cathedral expands and the visual prominence of the dome increases in response. Additional skyline features such as the steeple of St Brides, St Mary- le-Bow, St Magnus and the dome of the Old Bailey also become visible in an echo of the historic relationship depicted in the many historic views of London's skyline. The visual presence of the Cathedral on the skyline changes as one progresses along the south bank and its prominence is dependent upon the perceived extent of clear sky space around the towers, the dome and peristyle. Its impact as a building rather than isolated architectural elements is at its greatest between Blackfriars and London bridges.

10.16 Between Waterloo and London Bridges is the policy area for the St Paul's Heights which has had a noticeable impact on the form, definition and grain of foreground development in the setting of the Cathedral when viewed from the south. In the views from the Thames bridges, south bank and points to the west and east, the Heights protect views of the dome, western towers



St Paul's from the south bank looking north to Millennium House under construction and now obscuring the view of the entablature or main body of the Cathedral. Photograph by the author 2023

and, in order to retain a sense of the entire length of the Cathedral, the main entablature. The area of the Heights also extends laterally beyond the Cathedral to ensure that buildings do not crowd its setting on the skyline. In recent years the limitations of the policy have come under sustained pressure with some, limited, breaches of the height. Although limited in extent the impact is more significant which is demonstrated by the recently constructed Millennium Bridge House development that will, when completed obstruct the view of the entablature of the Cathedral and thus causes harm to an ability to appreciate its architectural significance.

10.17 A particularly strong contribution made by the setting in the river corridor are the fortuitous combinations of the Cathedral with later development. These combinations illustrate the historic significance of St Paul's and its influence on subsequent change in the City of London. Examples include the Cathedral in relation to Blackfriars Bridge, Tate Modern and Cannon Street Station, which both provide new places from which to experience the Cathedral and frame St Paul's in certain views.



The dome of St Paul's framed by the towers of Cannon Bridge Station from London Bridge. The towers of the station were inspired and influenced by Wren's City Church towers including those at St Benet and St Mary Abchurch both of which are located nearby. Photograph by the author 2023.



10.18 In the intermediate setting to the east the general consistency of modern commercial development along Cannon Street leads the eye to the Cathedral. An unfortunate consequence of departing from the consistency of height along the north side of Cannon Street is that development then obstructs the dome of the Cathedral as can be seen by the addition of the penthouse space at 31 Cannon Street at its junction with Bread Street and from further east.



St Paul's from Cannon Street to the east at the junction with Queen Victoria Street. The bronze clad penthouse element on 31 Cannon Street in the foreground collides with and obscures part of the important silhouette and form of the dome of the Cathedral. Photograph by the author 2023 (picture credit: copyright Historic England).

10.19 From the north part of the intermediate setting the Cathedral is largely obscured in terms of skyline because of the grain of development and topography. The notable exception is within the London Borough of Islington. On Turnmill Street the dome and peristyle can be appreciated against clear sky and further west on Farringdon Lane the western towers of the Cathedral can be appreciated. The clearest skyline presence of St Paul's is that gained from Vine Bridge where the dome, drum and peristyle are seen against clear sky above the arches of Farringdon Station. The skyline presence of the dome and ability to appreciate its geometry is affected by the intrusions into the sky space including The Shard. The visual prominence and dominance of the Cathedral is reduced as the Shard has supplanted St Paul's as the focal point of the skyline.

### **Relationship with other heritage assets**

#### *Architectural and historic: the City Churches*

10.20 The relationship with the city churches is experienced very differently from ground level within the setting of the Cathedral, as opposed to being in the Stone Gallery of the Cathedral itself. At ground level the dome and towers of St Paul's either individually or collectively are appreciated with only glimpsed views of the towers and steeples of adjacent churches which are generally set against the busy skyline. The experience of the relationship between the assets is, as a consequence, often only partial.



The dome of St Paul's framed by the towers of Cannon Bridge Station from London Bridge. The towers of the station were inspired and influenced by Wren's City Church towers including those at St Benet and St Mary Abchurch both of which are located nearby. Photograph by the author 2023.

### 3: The physical contributions to St Paul's significance in the close or immediate setting

#### SB11: Summary of the positive contribution of the physical surroundings in the close setting

- An area of great historic significance which has been a centre of Christian worship for over a Millennium and encompasses streets, buildings and spaces spanning a similar period enhancing an understanding of the historic significance of St Paul's.
- An area of great architectural significance, including one of the largest concentrations in the City of London of Grade I, Grade II\* and Grade II listed buildings, as well as numerous non-designated buildings of high architectural quality from different periods enhancing an understanding of the architectural and historic significance of St Paul's and its enduring influence.
- An area of internationally important archaeology relating to the adoption of Christianity in Britain, and including the City's largest intact area and depth of archaeological deposits remaining of the medieval and Roman city.
- An area which attracts community events and public gatherings, particularly at the Cathedral and its churchyard.
- Green spaces to the south and east including the Festival Gardens.

- Spaces immediately to the south and east of the Cathedral within the railings providing areas to sit and rest.
- The western area adjacent to the steps allows for congregation/meeting point and photography by visitors.

#### What can be appreciated in terms of architecture

##### **Skyspace:**

- The sky space within St Pauls Churchyard is generally clear of distraction providing the optimum conditions for appreciation of the dome, towers and statuary of the Cathedral. From the narrow medieval lanes to the south and newer routes created from the north the sky is framed by development.

##### **River corridor:**

- There are opportunities to appreciate the topography sloping down towards the river from the south side of the setting with views to St Benet's Paul's wharf enabling an understanding of how the Cathedral was constructed. The northern end of the approach from the river across the bridge reveals the topography and provides good opportunities to appreciate the south portico, transept and dome.

### ***Close setting:***

- The open southern section of the churchyard provides some of the best opportunities to experience and understand the design of the Cathedral, both the surface decoration, classical articulation and the bold massing. The towers and statues can be seen in close detail.
- The western porticoes can be experienced as the architectural arrival point of the Cathedral elevated and approached up the great stair. The churchyard allows a complete circuit of the Cathedral which can be experienced in combination with buildings of all periods and their details and architectural cross references can be appreciated and understood.
- The sheer scale and mass of Cathedral dominates and is appreciated as towering above.
- The smaller details of sculptural and carved decoration can be appreciated and the craftsmanship understood because of the ability to approach the Cathedral in close proximity along the south and eastern elevations.
- The sense of separation from the busyness of the setting particularly that to the south when in the churchyard spaces to the east of the Cathedral.
- The close setting allows the bells of the Cathedral to

be heard, sometimes in combination with those of the contemporary City Churches.

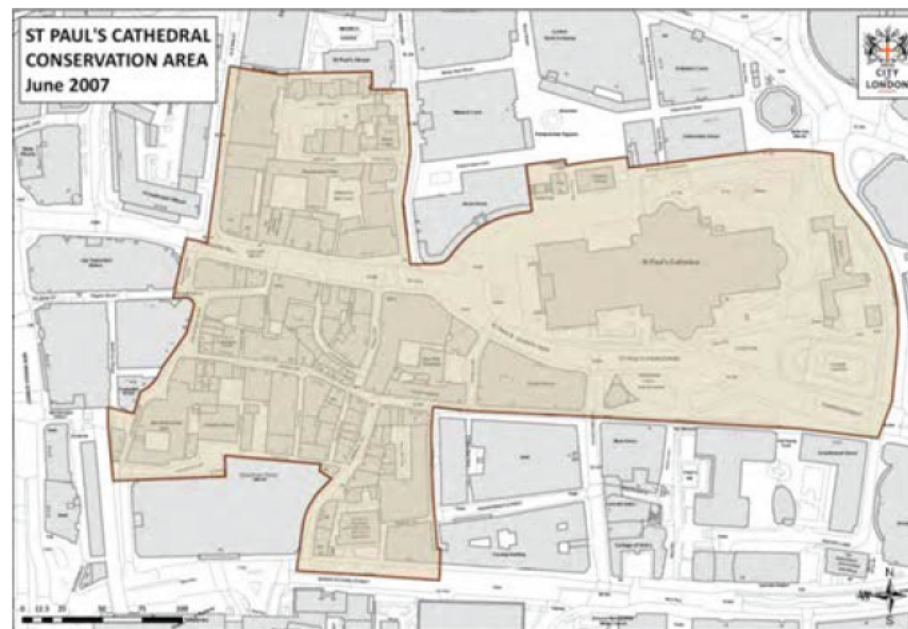
- Moving around the close setting amplifies the understanding and appreciation of those buildings which have important functional and historical relationships with the Cathedral including The Deanery, Chapter House, St Augustine's Tower and St Paul's School.

### **Impact of past change to setting and its contribution to significance**

- The Paternoster Square development has created positive new routes through to the Cathedral creating framed views and glimpses of the Cathedral, enhancing an appreciation and ability to understand its architecture.
- The relocation of Temple Bar providing a new connection between Paternoster Square and the churchyard enhances an ability to understand the architecture of the Cathedral but also its history.
- Paternoster Square is a successful urban space, used and enjoyed with a program of events providing good views of the dome, drum and towers of the Cathedral.
- The new entrance ramp at the north transept provides greater accessibility to both the architecture and history of the Cathedral.

10.21 The basic topography of the immediate setting of St Paul's is of land sloping away to the west and south, which can still be experienced, and the Cathedral and its close setting are physically as well as symbolically at its summit. The natural slope of the ground south of Ludgate Hill towards the Thames significantly contributes to the character of many streets, particularly south of Carter Lane, with buildings stepping down along each street. Where streets such as St Andrew's Hill and Addle Hill slope to the south, the roofline becomes particularly visible when viewed from the north, adjacent to the location of the churchyard, with dormers chimneys and roof extensions taking an additional prominence. The intricate grain and skyline contrasts with the scale and space of the Cathedral in close proximity.

10.22 The most recent previous formal assessment of the close setting of the Cathedral is contained in the St Paul's Cathedral Conservation Area Character Summary and Management SPD produced by the Corporation of the City of London in March 2013. The summary characteristics of the area identified in the appraisal includes its great historic significance as a centre of Christian worship for almost 1400 years and an area with a large concentration of listed buildings in addition to many non-designated heritage assets. The archaeological importance of the area is also identified as being of international significance in relation to the adoption of Christianity in Britain as well as containing, in terms of extent and



Conservation Area boundary Map taken from the Conservation Area Character Summary and Management SPD © Corporation of the City of London

depth, the largest area of deposits within the Corporation of the City of London relating to its medieval and Roman predecessors.

10.23 The setting described in 2012 was an area where the urban grain varied from tightly knit historic streets and alleys to open spaces around St Paul's Cathedral and churchyard; it is also one that was characterised by predominantly masonry buildings with traditional proportions and materials and which has a public realm which is enriched by a wealth of materials, features, monuments, public sculpture, signs, plaques, statuary, and other structures. The current setting has retained many of these characteristics.

*The current experience of the churchyard progressing west along the south and east along the north side*

10.24 To the south-west of the Cathedral two buildings of c.1900 follow the gentle curve of the street, with Portland stone facades embellished by features that subtly reference some of Wren's architectural motifs. No. 4 is well-proportioned and richly ornamented with a corner dome and classical detailing, while Nos. 5-14 (Condor House), the former Pawson and Leafs warehouse, has a wealth of surface detail to its imposing façade. The general form and scale of the buildings are echoed by the Paternoster Square development to the north which similarly curves so that the west end of the close setting is embraced within the two "arms" of later development.



Juxon House, part of the Paternoster Square development that frames the northern side of the western end of the churchyard. The road has been pedestrianised and covered with setts and trees planted in a formal arrangement. The scale, materiality and height of the building responds well to the earlier, 19th century commercial buildings that enclose the south side of the churchyard opposite. (see below)

10.25 These also frame the space at the western end of the churchyard which is a busy pedestrian area used as a through route but also a gathering place for visitors. The visitors mingle often forming queues up the western steps to the ticket pavilion and checkpoint controlling access to the Cathedral. In summer the steps are also used as seating. The atmosphere is bustling and often lively.