

# ADEPT President's Awards 2026

Entry form

## Award category

Shaping Places for People

## Project Title

Re-inventing the City alley

## Local authority

City of London

## Partner/s if applicable

City of London / Space Syntax

## Headline summary (150 characters max.)

The City's "Re-inventing the City Alley" transformative initiative delivers new pedestrian routes, forging a more humane, inclusive, resilient City

## Video - please paste links to any video evidence here. (Leave blank if not relevant.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B1-Bvt3TjJk>

## Shaping Places for People: How was this project an innovative response to a significant local challenge? (150 words max.)

The City is growing at unprecedented pace with the working population soon exceeding 700,000. This increase is placing pedestrian congestion pressures on the networks of City pavements and alleys. The City Planning team is therefore negotiating new pedestrian alleys to improve pedestrian permeability across the City to accommodate employment growth.

Future employment forecasting has identified the areas vulnerable to pedestrian congestion through predictive pedestrian modelling. The City's permeable block mapping project grades the City's block in terms of their size and permeability, identifying sites to prioritise new pedestrian routes as development proposals come forward.

The City's Transport Strategy and City Plan policies promotes a walkable, pedestrian priority City with healthy streets and along with pedestrianisation schemes and timed closures on the City's existing street network, the new alleys negotiated through planning permissions are transforming the urban grain of the City into a richer, denser, more connected, inclusive, people-centric urban grain.

## Shaping Places for People: Please give evidence of the quality of outcomes obtained from the project (for example improved/more efficient services, increased inclusivity for residents, futureproofing the service). (150 words max.)

The new pedestrian routes are transformative in social, economic, public-realm, wellbeing and heritage terms, creating quiet short-cuts between busy streets delivering a humane, gentler, inclusive City, easing pedestrian congestion and offering shelter and shade in hot summers and inclement weather, delivering a Climate change resilient City.

The new routes re-introduce the dense urban grain of the old City, re-introducing lost historical alleys such as the Courtyard of the Spread Eagle Inn and provide wayfinding to historical landmarks revealing views of St Pauls and City landmarks which help create a more legible, enriching City that delights. The routes are negotiated to align with new public cultural destinations negotiated by City planners, such as the Vine Street Roman Wall Exhibition.

These pedestrian routes are also negotiated to deliver enhanced access to public squares and parks and also enhance connections to destinations such as Leadenhall Market helping to deliver a 7-day vibrant City

**Shaping Places for People: Please give evidence of the level of collaboration between place and people services (both within the council and with external partners/providers). (150 words max.)**

The initiative resulted from predictive employment growth and pedestrian flow modelling working with Space Syntax and exemplifies proactive predictive planning rather than reactive. The collaboration and robust data research resulted in an accurate holistic overview of future pedestrian flow pressures but also identified opportunities to re-introduce the urban grain of the City.

Colleagues from Transport, Highways, Public Realm, Open Spaces, Urban Design, Heritage, Climate Resilience worked collaboratively to develop the initiative with new public routes negotiated in planning schemes aligned to connected to wider public realm enhancements.

"Re-inventing the City Alley" also was a model of collaboration with not just external pedestrian flow and microclimate consultants and TfL but developers as schemes came forward. The robust evidence base entailed that developers bought in to the vision and considered their sites as a jigsaw piece forming a wider picture rather than a site in isolation. A transformational shift in collaborative thinking.

**Shaping Places for People: Please give evidence of the level of buy-in to the project or its goals from members of the local community, health and social care, and external organisations. (150 words max.)**

Delivering the "Re-inventing the City Alley" is dependent on collaboration and buy-in to the vision from the local community, stakeholders, developers and external parties. The predictive pedestrian modelling research and data undertaken by the City, working with consultants, provided a robust, rigorous evidence base which ensured buy-in and support by not only the developers but also Committees, politicians, Business Improvement Districts and other stakeholders. This not only resulted in forging a supportive coalition but leveraged external investment from developers and the BID's to support the vision's delivery.

The multi-disciplinary collaboration between planners, highways, public realm, sustainability, urban design and heritage, microclimate, inclusivity and access expertise alongside similar expertise commissioned by the developers resulted in a shared vision and a strong coalition ensuring delivery. In addition, the collaboration saw a cultural transformation as developers on adjoining sites worked together with City Planning to deliver the vision in a collaborative, integrated way.

**Shaping Places for People: Please give evidence of the use or consideration of new sources of investment to fund projects. (150 words max.)**

"Re-inventing the City Alley" is an exemplar of the use of private investment to deliver transformative public realm benefits. The new pedestrian routes delivered through planning permissions are funded entirely through the developer's investment at no public costs. Co-ordination and project management costs incurred by the City were recovered from the developer through S106, S278 and CIL obligations.

The future maintenance and repair of the new public routes, including lighting etc which are legally required to be open 24 hours all year are absorbed by the developer. Furthermore, the scale of the developments enabling the delivery of new public routes means substantial multi-million S106, S278 and CIL income which the City uses to fund wider public realm enhancements in the vicinity to create an integrated public / private public realm area-wide transformation. This investment encourages the local Business Improvement Districts to also contribute to public-realm enhancement costs. Exceptional public-private partnership.

**All categories: please add anything else that supports your award entry**

"Re-inventing the City Alley" is a radical transformative initiative to deliver new pedestrian routes through planning permissions, forging a more humane, gentler, culturally enriching, healthier, cleaner, Climate change resistant, 7-day City for all communities, ages and backgrounds.

The City is growing at unprecedented pace with employment growth delivered through major new developments. The working population of the City currently stands at over 670,000 and will soon exceed 700,000. This increase is placing pedestrian congestion pressures on the networks of City pavements and alleys. The City Planning team is therefore focussed on negotiating new pedestrian alleys to improve pedestrian permeability across the City to accommodate employment growth.

The City's Transport Strategy and City Plan policies promotes a walkable, pedestrian priority City with healthy streets and along with pedestrianisation schemes and timed closures on the City's existing street network, the new alleys negotiated through planning permissions are transforming the urban grain of the City into a richer, denser, more connected urban grain.

In particular, future employment forecasting has identified the areas which will experience pedestrian congestion which in turn informed ground-breaking predictive pedestrian modelling by the City which informs the layout of development schemes, especially in the City Cluster. The City's permeable block mapping project grades the City's block in terms of their size and permeability, identifying sites to prioritise new pedestrian routes as development proposals come forward.

Up until the late Nineteenth Century, the City of London was characterised by a tight urban grain of alleys, lanes and courts, many dating back to medieval times. As the City was redeveloped with large commercial buildings in the Twentieth Century many of these alleys were lost resulting in a City of coarser urban grain with larger blocks and less permeability.

Over the last 10 years the City has been focussed on re-introducing and re-inventing these alleys to re-create the capillaries of pedestrian movement in the City through planning permissions. This is delivering a rapid transformation as a more walkable City that delights and surprises and re-introducing the rich historical urban grain of the City. 11 new routes have been granted permission in 2025 adding to this rapid transformation creating a more people-centric, healthier, gentler, more walkable City.

The new pedestrian routes are critical pedestrian connectors to mainline and underground stations and are therefore an integrated part of the transport infrastructure of the City. The new routes ensure ease of access to mainline stations such as Liverpool Street Station which is the UK's busiest at 115 million annual passengers, forecast to rise to over 150 million by 2040 (Heathrow airport is 80 million) and schemes around its approaches have delivered new pedestrian routes such as 1 Broadgate (complete 2025) and 55 Old Broad Street, 55 Bishopsgate and 99 Bishopsgate (consented 2025). These new routes therefore form a vital part of the City's connectivity and permeability. Other new pedestrian routes are negotiated to align to Elisabeth Line stations such as 101 Moorgate, 21 Moorfields and 2 Aldermanbury (all completed and opened in 2025) as well as other stations such as Cannon Street .

This submission is specifically focussed on the 11 new pedestrian routes delivered through planning permissions in 2025 as well as those pedestrian routes, granted previously in previous years which have been completed in 2025. These offer the most up to date achievements and build on a 10-year transformation in the City in re-inventing the City alleys and re-introducing new pedestrian routes

In 2025, planning permission was granted for new pedestrian routes within the following schemes; 99 Bishopsgate, 55 Bishopsgate, 55 Old Broad Street, 63 St Mary Axe, 75 London Wall, 85 Gracechurch Street, 130 Fenchurch Street, 70 Gracechurch Street, Custom House, 30 Minories and St Brides Passage, New Bridge Street

Completed and opened pedestrian routes in 2025 include, Frederick's Place, 1 Broadgate, 2 Aldermanbury, 101 Moorgate, 21 Moorfields and others such as 65 Fleet Street, 120 Fleet Street, Salisbury Square, 75 London Wall and 50 Fenchurch Street are currently being implemented on site.

The new pedestrian routes delivered through planning permissions create short-cuts between busy streets such as Nun Court, Fredericks Place, 100 Bishopsgate and 70 Gracechurch Street, 99 Bishopsgate, 3 St Mary Axe and 85 Gracechurch Street granted in 2025. The planning permissions re-introduce lost historical alleys such as the Courtyard of the Spread Eagle coaching Inn as part of 85 Gracechurch Street). Many of the new alleys are negotiated to reveal new wayfinding views of landmarks such as St Pauls, St Brides Church and St Ethelburga church and create new routes to new public exhibitions, delivering new

cultural infrastructure negotiated by City planners, such as the Vine Street Roman Wall Exhibition, the Whitefriars Monastery Exhibition (65 Fleet Street), the Roman Forum and Basilica Exhibition (85 Gracechurch Street) and the Lamb's Crypts and Roman Bath House exhibition in 50 Fenchurch Street.

These pedestrian routes deliver enhanced access to public squares and parks such as 50 Fenchurch Street, 1 Broadgate, 2 Finsbury Avenue, Salisbury Square, 81 Newgate, 60 Aldgate, 100 Fetter Lane and Thavies Inn. They also enhance connections to destinations such as Leadenhall Market (85 Gracechurch Street and 70 Gracechurch Street, both granted in 2025)

The new alleys create quiet routes away from main streets and vehicular flows such as the new network of integrated pedestrian routes as part of the 55 Bishopsgate, 55 Old Broad Street and 99 Bishopsgate developments, (an achievement of integrated pedestrian route infrastructure) as well as 85 Gracechurch Street, 63 St Mary Axe, all granted permission in 2025.

Through negotiating new pedestrian routes and alleys in planning permissions over recent years, City Planning is rapidly transforming the urban grain, connectivity and pedestrian movement of the City. This is creating a more walkable, connected, gentler, more humane City, a transport infrastructural physical and environmental transformation for City workers, residents, visitors of all ages and backgrounds. This initiative is transformational in delivering a more welcoming, inclusive, healthier, gentler, more humane City, improving pedestrian and wheeling permeability and accessibility for all, irrespective of disability. It exemplifies the power, reach and impact of planning to re-invent the City, creating an enriching and healthy City benefitting all communities and all backgrounds with a large number of new pedestrian routes granted permission in 2025.