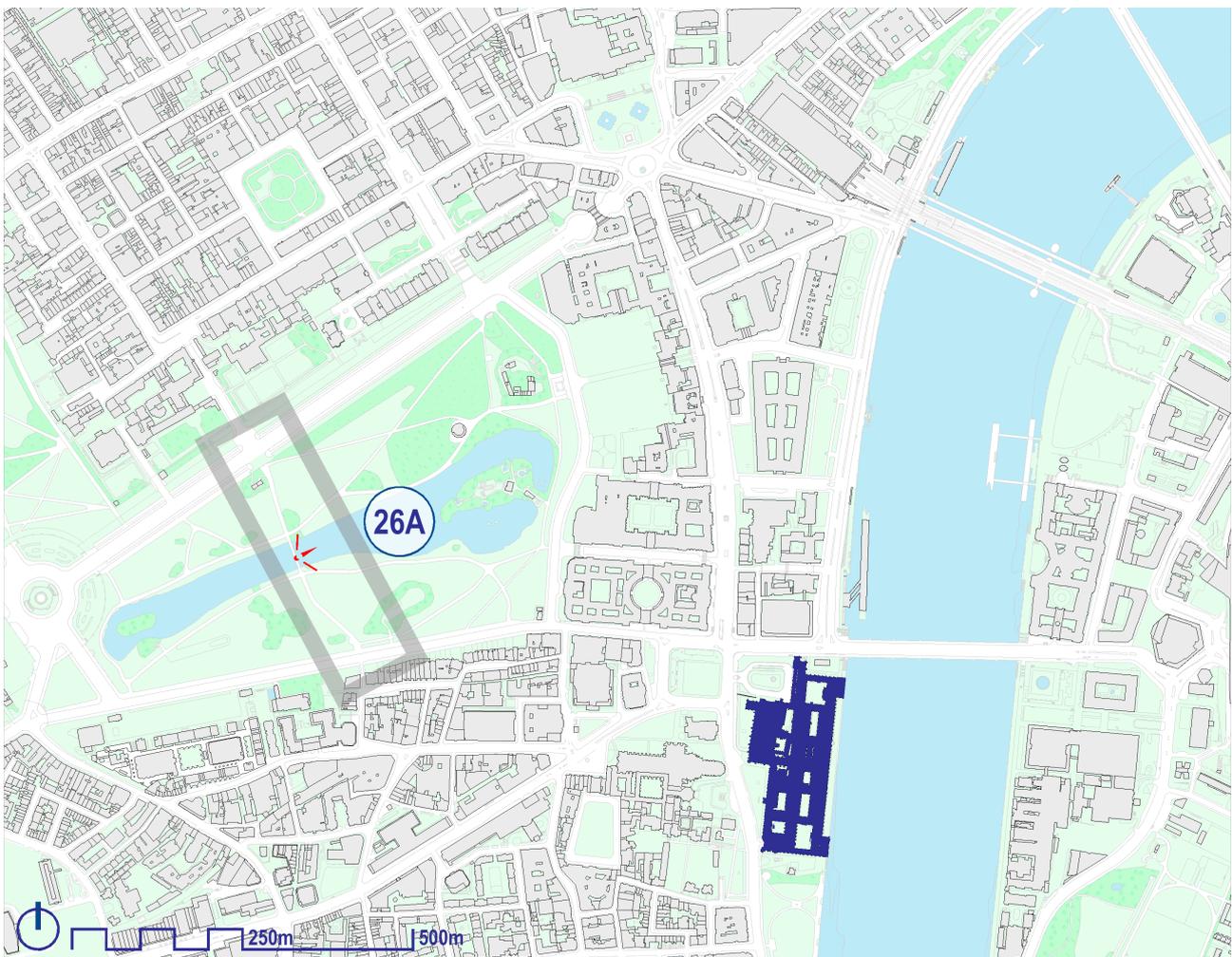
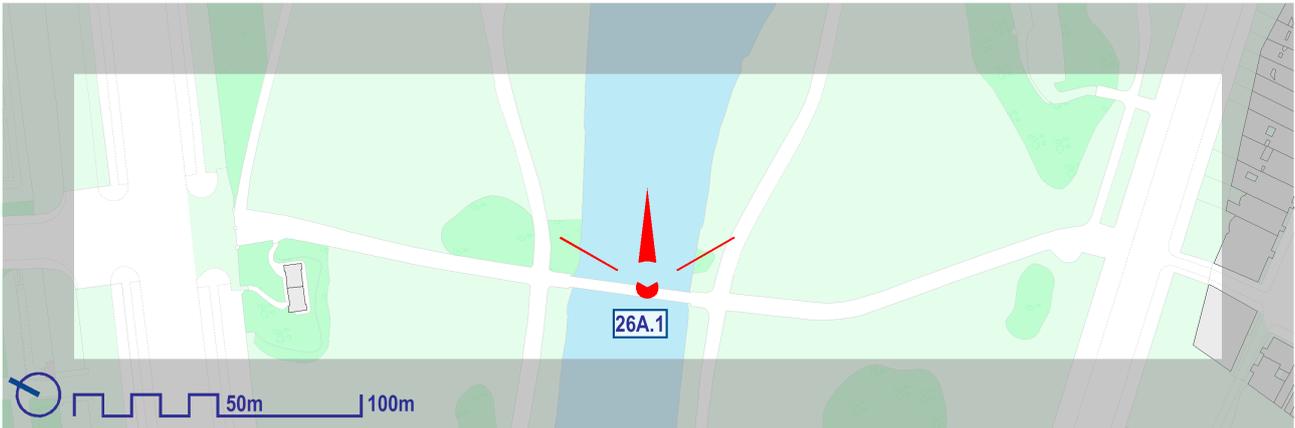


26 Townscape View: St James's Park to Horse Guards Road

- 424 The St James's Park area was originally a marshy water meadow, before being drained to provide a deer park for Henry VIII in the sixteenth century. The current form of the park owes much to Charles II, who ordained a new layout, incorporating The Mall, in the 1660s. The park was remodelled by John Nash in 1827-8 and his layout survives largely intact. St James's Park is maintained to an extremely high standard and the bridge across the lake provides a frequently visited place from which to appreciate views through the Park. The landscape is subtly lit after dark. St James's Park is included on English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest at Grade I.
- 425 There is one Viewing Location at St James' Park 26A, which is situated on the east side of the bridge over the lake.



Viewing Location 26A St James's Park Bridge



N.B for key to symbols refer to image 1



Panorama from Assessment Point 26A.1 St James's Park Bridge – near the centre of the bridge

Description of the View

- 426 The Viewing Location is on the east side of the footbridge across the lake. The bridge was built in 1956-7 to the designs of Eric Bedford of the Ministry of Works. Views vary from either end of the bridge and a near central location has been selected for the single Assessment Point (26A.1) orientated towards Horse Guards Parade.
- 427 The view derives its particular character from the high quality landscaped setting of St James's Park. The foreground and middle ground are dominated by the lake and surrounding mature parkland. The trees and shrubs enclose the view towards a central element of vegetation known as Duck Island at the east end, with each element of the landscape forming a distinct skyline. Buildings are seen in two groups between trees either side of Duck Island, where they each provide a focus to the view. Moving traffic and pedestrians can be glimpsed in several places between or beneath the blocks of vegetation. There is also a fountain to the left of Duck Island that provides a secondary focus to the view.
- 428 The juxtaposition of the landscaped elements in the foreground and middle ground, and the two groups of important civic buildings, including Horse Guards and Whitehall Court to the left, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, as well as the London Eye and the Shell Centre to the right, enable the viewer to appreciate that this is an historic parkland in an important city location. It is essentially a picturesque view dominated by landscape that defines the two distinct groups of buildings, each with different characteristics. The left-hand group includes a skyline of spires and pinnacles, while the right-hand group is one of more strongly geometric forms. The buildings in the view are consistent in their use of Portland stone, with the exception of the London Eye, which stands at 135 metres or 443 feet, is made of steel, is visually permeable and is useful for orientation purposes.

Landmarks include:

Whitehall Court (II*)
Horse Guards (I)
The Foreign Office (I)
The London Eye

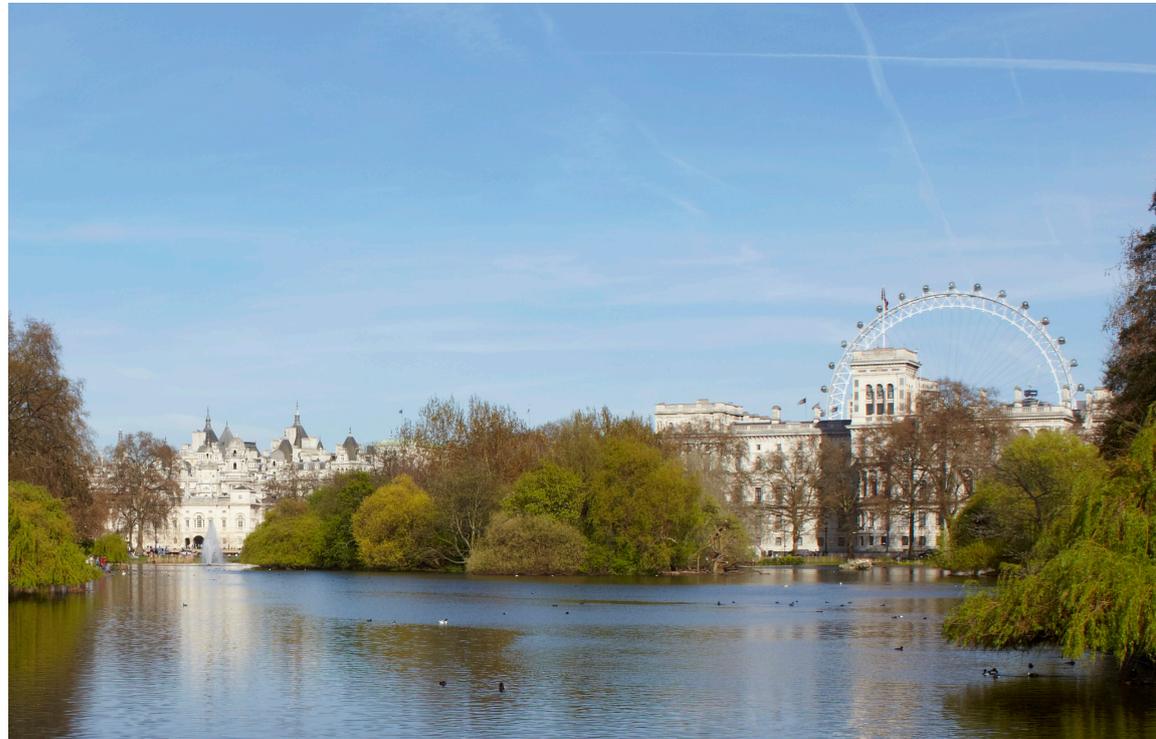
Also in the views:

Shell Centre tower

429 The view is enjoyed from every part of the bridge, although a special axis exists from its southern end towards Horse Guards, when in line with the fountain. The views are equally well enjoyed in daylight and when artificially illuminated at night. Within the two groups of buildings, no single building commands a focus; rather, the two groups work together as a layering of architectural detailing against the skyline. The rooftop of Whitehall Court rises behind Horse Guards to the left of centre. The clear skyline above Duck Island separates the two groups and maintains the dominance of landscape. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is seen to the right of centre. The Shell Tower and London Eye are seen on the margins of the view and are of a larger scale.



View from Assessment Point 26A.1 St James's Park Bridge – near the centre of the bridge (4m south of the centre of the bridge). 529529.4E 179798.8N. Camera height 4.67m AOD. Aiming at Horseguards (Central spire). Bearing 61.9°, distance 0.6km.



Visual Management Guidance

Foreground and Middle Ground

430 No development is expected in the foreground. The middle ground landscape needs to be managed to maintain its dominance in the view.

Background

- 431 Development in the background of this view should be of a scale, mass or form that does not dominate, overpower or compete with either of the existing two groups of built form or the landscape elements between and either side of them. The way it is lit should not detract from night-time views. Any building proposals that will be visible in the background should relate to one or the other of the existing groups and must be of exceptional design quality, in particular with regard to their roofline, materials, shape and silhouette. New buildings should appear as part of the existing groups of buildings; buildings that appear above the central part of Duck Island would damage the viewer's ability to see these groups of buildings in conjunction with the landscaped foreground and should be refused.

Management of the Viewing Location

- 432 The location should continue to be well managed.

