



Stantec

**West London Flood Control Structure
Design Charrette Summary**

December 15, 2006

West London Flood Control Structure Design Charrette Summary

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1.0 Design Charrette Invitation / Attendance Summary

INVITED	ATTENDED
Friends of Labatt Park	Stephen Harding, Art Lierman
Blackfriars Neighbourhood Association	Chris Pehlke, Shirley Clement, Jan Delaney, Bruce Dunn
North Talbot Community Association	Gene DiTrolio
Riverforks Community Organization	Kevin Curtis-Norcross
City of London Director of Planning	Rob Panzer
Urban League of London	Jack Groom
London Arts Council	John Nicholson
River Project Art Group	Kevin Bice
London Canoe Club	Simon Tanner
Thames River Heritage Group	Tara Tchir (UTRCA)
City of London Heritage Planner	Unable to attend due to illness
Kiwanis Seniors Centre	Unable to attend
Thames River Anglers Association	No response
Oxford Park Resident's Association	No one available or interested
Downtown Neighbourhood Association	Association is no longer active
Mayor, All Councillors and Controllers	None

1.1 PROJECT TEAM

- **UTRCA** – Rick Goldt
- **City of London Parks Planning** – Andrew Macpherson, David Antonson
- **City of London EESD** – Scott Mathers
- **Stantec** – Robin Campbell, Haley Sadler, John Tyrrell, Dan Weagant, Maureen Zunti

2.0 Group Discussion of Opportunities, Challenges & Needs

(Prior to Group Workshop / Brainstorming Session)

- Consider the view from the Thames River looking up at the wall – it's a big, tall expanse of retaining wall
- Possibly add a pattern or combine materials to create interest in the wall face
- Retain/preserve mature trees and existing vegetation at the top and bottom of the dyke structure
- Concerns relating to the timing replacement of the wall continuation including the transition zone and creating overall continuity
- Impacts of the project to the adjacent neighbourhoods and London
- Is it possible for the 'floodplain' zoning to be removed from the Blackfriars area if the wall is installed at a 250yr. storm height?
- Add curves to the wall profile to 'soften' the overall appearance
- Think of the entire project as a whole and build the wall to last forever
- Consider wildlife that lives in and around the dyke structure – possibly maintain and/or create habitat
- Be aware of the root systems of new vegetation
- At the toe of slope plant and create habitat
- What is the modularity of the retaining wall system? How big is the block?
- Is a natural wall material an option?
- Don't favour the vertical wall option as it is not aesthetically pleasing
- Don't base decision on economics
- The wall option presented is not 'naturalizing' the river and limits access to the river
- Try to emphasize the river and natural environment and minimize focus on the wall
- Phase I is a very visible section and aesthetics should be a primary consideration

3.0 Summary of Individual Group Design Ideas

3.1 WALL

- Build the new structure for the ages
- Limit number of materials used
- Utilize natural materials
- Do not cap wall by overlapping/overhanging top coping layer
- Break up the wall both vertically and horizontally – grades?
- Add interest to the wall
- Important to select a product that is relatively neutral but available long term
- Consider options for wall structure, i.e. bottom half angled and top half vertical
- Use big wall blocks with texture and depth – regular concrete colour
- Possibly add banding in the wall to depict significant flood events and/or elevations
- Add steps / sloped wall sections for wildlife to access the river
- Incorporate planting at the toe of slope

3.2 PATHWAY

- Minimize footprint of pathway, maintain existing width
- Encourage active recreation only on other side of river
- Use ‘grills’ in cantilevered viewports to allow views down to the river
- West of Wharncliffe maintain footpath – do not pave

3.3 LIGHTING AND SITE FURNISHINGS

- Install lighting on the river side of the walkway
- Direct light downwards so it doesn’t affect residences
- Add more benches and trash receptacles
- Improve lighting
- Uplight the wall at night to add interest
- Vandalism concerns
- Don’t need concrete slabs under benches
- Consider more contemporary site furnishings
- Blend lighting with the adjacent land uses – not too bright beside neighbourhoods
- Add sitting areas

3.4 RIVER ACCESS

- Do not add formal docks between Oxford and Queen Street
- Add steps / sloped wall sections for wildlife to access the river
- Enhance access to the river

3.5 VEGETATION AND LANDSCAPING

- Preserve
- Implement an Urban Tree Management Program
- Manage vegetation – remove invasive species and enhance native vegetation
- Utilize native vegetation for new planting areas
- Minimize impact to existing trees
- Preserve vegetation – Cottonwoods significant
- Incorporate planting at the toe of slope
- Enhance natural elements/habitat
- Limit access to natural area at edge of river opposite Carrothers Ave. – maintain as walking/nature trail
- Use native plantings
- Retain, emphasize and augment natural environment at and near Cavendish
- Plant more native vegetation between Blackfriars and Oxford to create more open and closed views for interest

3.6 BLACKFRIARS NEIGHBOURHOOD

- Preserve the sense of individual/unique residential neighbourhood through Blackfriars area – keep intimate
- Maintain/provide access from all streets, but not necessarily ramped access at all connections
- Don't want significant change – like the area as is
- Proposed 3.0m wide pathway seems excessive through this area
- Replicate or reuse historical elements incl. light bases and railing
- Implement historical interpretive signage – plaques

3.7 LABATT PARK

- At Labatt Park maintain the 'wall of green' with one open vista
- Locate an interpretive signage feature – plaque

3.8 TRANSITION OF OLD WLD TO NEW WLD

- Add a 'lookout' at the end of Rogers Ave. to ease the transition zone – maintain 'lookout' when next section is installed
- Consider cantilevered viewing areas to help with transition

3.9 SIGNAGE

- Implement historical interpretive signage at key locations

3.10 OVERALL / GENERAL COMMENTS

- Create a template for the design 'vocabulary'
- Build the new structure for the ages
- Limit number of materials used
- Vandalism concerns
- Utilize natural materials
- Don't like 'bump-out' idea

4.0 Summary of Comments Received via E-Mail and Fax

Comments Provided by: Nancy Martin and Donna Renn, Ted Halwa, Stephen Harding, Art Lierman, Shirley and John Clement, Kirtley Jarvis and Judy Bryant

- Reflect importance and prominence of the first section to be replaced in the design
- Concerns relating to the timing of replacement of the wall continuation including the transition zone and creating overall continuity
- Inventory of trees should be conducted to identify heritage trees
- Consider planting larger replacement trees to mitigate sudden loss of large trees
- Add garbage receptacles and regular pick up by City
- Keep vehicles off pathway
- Is it necessary to increase the height of the wall?
- Reproduce light posts with historic light bases
- Provide a plaque with historic information about Labatt Park at the break in the cedar hedge
- Create platforms or balconies off pathway for spectators at events – cantilevered
- More benches and space for temporary seating
- Make use of gravel as a choice of material in harmony with the river
- Naturalize banks – Use bioengineering for slope stabilization where possible
- Use cast iron lamp posts, keep with 1930's look for site furnishings
- Create easy access from pathway to river
- Preserve trees (Mulberry) and provide signage to identify those that are significant
- Install interpretive signage and plaques
- Highlight Eldon House, the old courthouse, Blackfriar's Bridge and Labatt Park as heritage features along pathway
- Pathway in itself is a heritage feature that links these areas
- Recognize pathway as a significant environmentally friendly, low cost, clean method of transportation
- Do not use design used at the Fork of the Thames (railings, hard surfaces, gabions, armour stone, paved surfaces, splash pad), keep trail as a restful oasis of quiet
- Select a wall material that looks like large blocks of stone
- Consider a cast iron/wrought iron replica of railing that meets safety codes
- Use shadows as a consideration in selecting a railing material
- Make use of Robert Greene's Saw Edge Roadway style within design
- Will historic artifacts be preserved during construction?
- Consider design in keeping with Forks of the Thames renewal
- Design competition for railing design?
- Make it a Riverside Sculpture project (list St. Peters' Riverside Sculpture Project in Sunderland England) – sculpted railings and lamp posts, raised seating

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WEST LONDON FLOOD CONTROL STRUCTURE DESIGN CHARRETTE SUMMARY

- Of the 4 proposals “solution A” is the most ugly. The vertical wall is intimidating to look at and dangerous to boaters
- The Thames status as a Heritage River has not been given much consideration.
- The proposal does not promote habitat enhancement. This should be a key element
- UTRCA concerns about endangered species were dismissed by Stantec’s engineer
- The proposal does not facilitate access to the river from the walkway. This also makes rescue of people from the river is difficult
- The process has been seriously flawed by not having wide participation from the public or on going discussion in the media. The Creative City approach has not been applied in this process
- The proposal appears to have been chosen on cost (cheapest) and as the easiest to implement from the engineering perspective.
- I felt the charrette avoided dealing with the big picture: how the embankment would appear from Harris Park or from a vantage point on the Queens Ave. bridge
- The consultant did not present any concept drawings that show how solution “A” or the other proposals would actually look as part of the landscape. They had several months to prepare them

5.0 Group Comments on Next Steps

- Organize comments/notes/results of this meeting and circulate to all participants
- Continue consultation with stakeholders
- Bring the proposed MasterPlan back to this group for review and comment prior to submitting to City Council
- Bring photos and brochures for possible wall options to stakeholders for their review and input
- Bring 3D view of the new WLD and old WLD wall including transition area to the stakeholders for their review and input
- Emphasize common themes including:
 - No manicured spaces
 - Maintaining existing pathway width

6.0 Workshop/Brainstorming Session - Group 1

Group Members: Art Lierman, Jack Groom, Kevin Curtis-Norcross, Rob Panzer and Maureen Zunti

LIGHTING

- Light should be directed downwards
- Consider reducing number of light standards
- Consider uplighting on wall to focus on specific features
- Don't have too much light shining down on river (for wildlife reasons)

WALL

- Wall should have texture and variation – consider colour or banding variation to show historical flooding events, or have sections of wall protrude a little more (e.g. – 6") to depict flood events
- Wall module should be large for scale of overall dyke and should offer relief and shadow play
- Important to select a product that is relatively neutral but available long term
- Consider some tiered areas / sloped sections (see sketch) to help wildlife access to and from the river and/or for pockets to plant vegetation/shrubbery

LABATT PARK

- Retain treed backdrop along the path adjacent to Labatt Park – need to “reinvigorate” cedar hedge along Labatt Park
- If replacement of cedar hedge is necessary, they should continue to be evergreens
- Keep a small opening to view Labatt Park as currently exists, with a small lookout/”pausing moment” on inside (Labatt Park side) of path for people to take a look inside
- Don't make gap in hedge any bigger
- Locate an interpretive feature / plaque beside gap to inform people about history of park

RIVER ACCESS

- Retain access to River near Blackfriars Bridge – improve it slightly, but don't formalize it too much – path should continue to be gravel / mulch, not paved
- Add interpretive signage along access to river to educate about natural environment, river, native vegetation
- Should have ”understated, natural access to river, but a little more awareness of access to river”
- Access point to river should have a structure to restrict cyclists from using it
- Should also have an access to river between Queens and Wharnccliffe – should also be more of a naturalized access

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT / VEGETATION

- Retain vegetation along river near Blackfriars Bridge and augment with larger native specimens along pathway
- Toe structure should incorporate plantings such as grasses, willows, shrubbery that can withstand flooding, but will provide additional wildlife habitat
- Increase naturalization between Queens and Wharncliffe
- Cavendish is a “gem” – should be left natural – phase asphalt path to a more natural path surface as you get to Cavendish Park
- Build on the natural amenities along the path

ACCESS TO NEIGHBOURHOOD

- Access is required from all streets to pathway system, but pick and choose most appropriate / logical points where mobility access is most suitable
- Don't need ramps at every street connection

GENERAL

- Retain the sequence of open and closed views along the pathway, as currently exists between Queens and Blackfriars
- Viewpoints along path should be on outside (river side) of trail, except for beside Labatt Park where they should be inside (beside Labatt Park / viewing gap in hedge) to maximize views and vistas and enhance safety
- Between Oxford and Blackfriars, could pull the path slightly away from the edge of the dyke and add some native plantings to help create more open and closed views for interest as it is currently quite open
- Create safe pedestrian/cyclist ‘loops’/connections across Wharncliffe to other side of river, preferably under the bridge
- Install signs identifying various walking loops, with distances, landmarks, points of interest
- Place water fountains along the pathway
- Need some viewing areas / seating areas – consider cantilevered sections at top of wall for seating / viewing – would also assist with transition between old and new wall sections
- Consider a grille / grid for surface of cantilevered viewpoints rather than concrete, so can stand and look down right over top of river and to minimize concrete
- The railing is a critical element
- Pathway has its own unique personality – need to retain its character and continuity, but also needs to integrate with other parts of path system – consider using one element (e.g. – lights, railing, materials, street furnishings) the same as exists on path system across river along the new dyke section to provide cohesiveness
- Don't ‘over design’ or make area something it is not (i.e. – trying to curve wall, path, etc. too much) – focus on simplicity, quality and emphasis on natural environment.

7.0 Workshop/Brainstorming Session - Group 2

Group Members: Kevin Bice, Gene D'Trolio, Shirley Clement, Rick Goldt and Haley Sadler

(all comments relate to the Blackfriars area)

- Preserve the sense of individual/unique residential neighbourhood through Blackfriars area – keep intimate
- Minimize footprint of pathway, maintain existing width
- Minimize hard surfaces i.e. don't need concrete slabs under benches
- Transition point a major concern – important to look at all possibilities to make the transition smooth and look attractive
- Improve lighting, but don't over light near residences
- Preserve existing vegetation and natural look - Cottonwoods significant
- Replace any trees removed – use native species
- Implement an Urban Tree Management Program
- Manage all vegetation – remove invasive species and enhance native vegetation
- Maintain natural area at edge of river opposite Carrothers Ave. as walking/nature trail
- Add more benches and trash receptacles – vandal resistant
- Implement discrete historical interpretive signage at major connections
- Encourage active recreation on East Side of river and more passive on West side
- Don't like 'bump-out' idea
- Do not add formal docks between Oxford and Queen Street
- Consider options for wall structure, i.e. replacement wall has bottom half angled and top half vertical
- View from Blackfriar's residences to the river is important
- Maintain/provide access from all streets, but not necessarily ramped access at all connections
- Implement ramps at connections that are as natural and discrete as possible
- Consider allowing residents to maintain plant material at connection points
- Incorporate colour and texture into the wall – something distinctive to create interest
- Sloped structure makes the wall more visible

8.0 Workshop/Brainstorming Session - Group 3

Group Members: Chris Pehlke, Jan Delaney, John Nicholson, Simon Tanner, Tara Tchir, John Tyrrell and Dan Weagant

- Different stretches of the study area demand different approaches
- What is needed is an approach/visual treatment
- Natural materials
- Lighting on River side of pathway – breaks up railing
- Keep it simple : Do it well
- Interpret/apply building code – be as flexible as possible (railing)
- Can wall be visually broken up, and how?
 - Split the wall in two?
 - Transition path by slope
 - Set a template for the design ‘vocabulary’
 - Build for the ages
 - Limit the materials
 - Use natural materials for the wall if possible
 - Do not change stretch of path from Wharnccliffe Rd. to Cavendish Park
- Do not ‘cap’ wall with overlapping/overhanging ledge

9.0 Workshop/Brainstorming Session - Group 4

Group Members: Bruce Dunn, Stephen Harding (left early), David Antonsen, Scott Mathers and Robin Campbell

(all comments relate to the Blackfriars area)

- 'The Blackfriars section of pathway is a unique and wonderful entity that should be maintained and preserved'
- Don't want significant change – like the area as is
- Possibly add phone/call boxes into the lamp bases – is a good safety feature but shouldn't be a focal point
- Remember that Blackfriars is a residential community
- Path should be accessible to everyone – maintain access to path from all streets, but not all need ramps, possible just two
- Don't overdo a theme and make the pathway 'hokey'
- Proposed 3.0m wide pathway seems excessive from Oxford to Queens Ave.
- Minimize path width to save as much vegetation as possible
- Blackfriars is an important historical community – preserve a significant amount of what's there
- Use the existing character of the area and maintain/enhance it
- Like general thoughts presented on Concept 1
- Would like to maintain/reuse existing railing – don't like aluminum railing at the Forks of the Thames
- Vandalism and destruction of amenities is a concern
- How does the City plan to discourage graffiti on the wall?
- Plant toe of slope if possible – what will survive?
- Is it possible to add vines to the wall to soften the overall appearance and deter graffiti?
- Like the old lamp bases – possibly replicate or reuse
- If not being reused find a creative/artistic use for existing elements
- Wall build-out should continue from the starting point and not be undertaken in miscellaneous pieces/sections
- There are different areas or sections of pathway in the overall study area – the same treatment may not apply to all, but restoration, naturalization and focus on historical elements is important to the Blackfriars community
- Implement historical interpretive signage that is in keeping with the character/theme of the neighbourhood – like the blue and bronze heritage building plaques

**WEST LONDON FLOOD CONTROL STRUCTURE
DESIGN CHARRETTE SUMMARY**

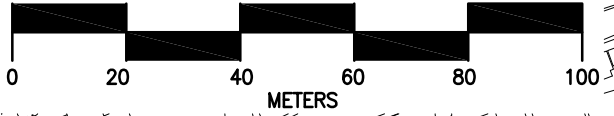
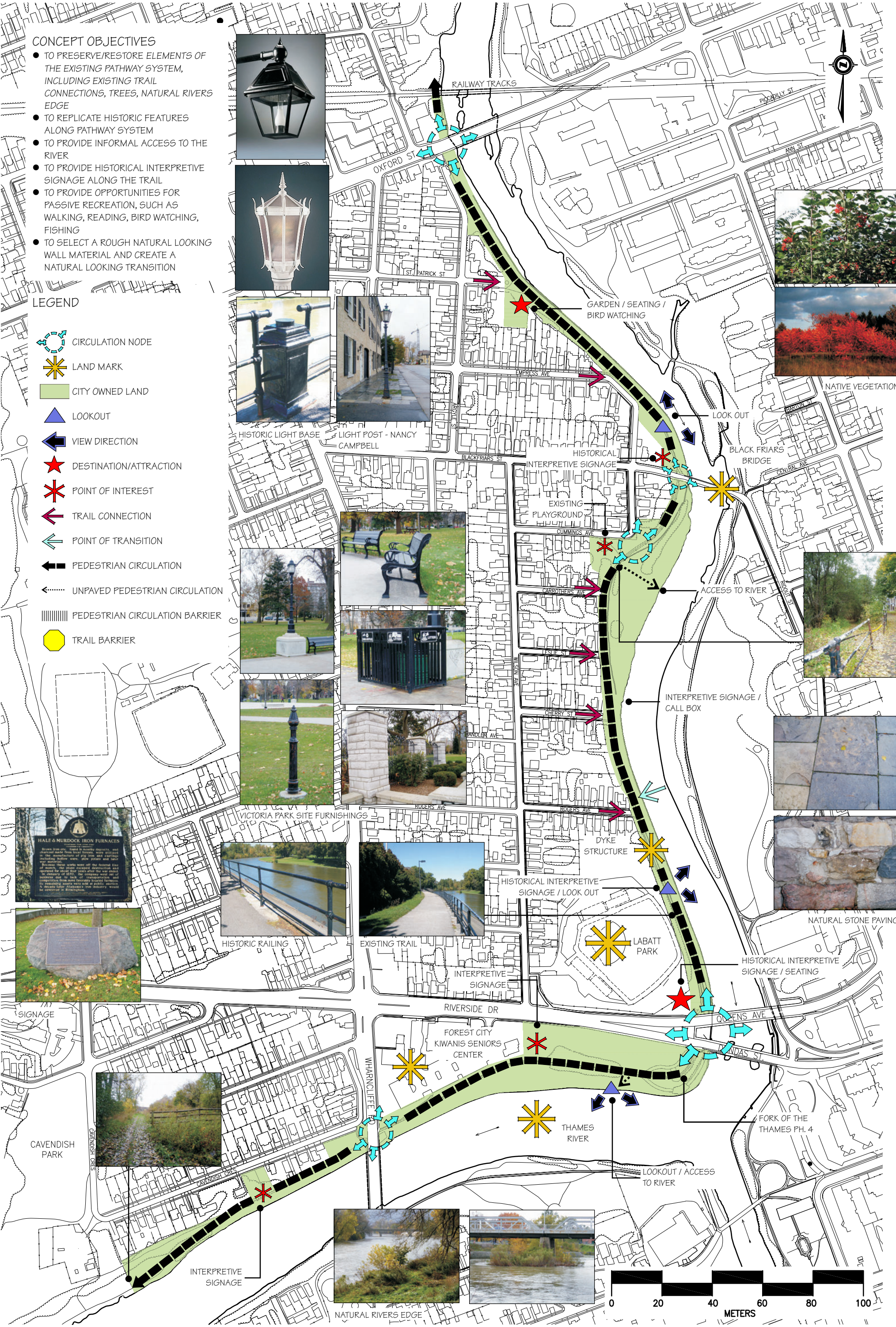
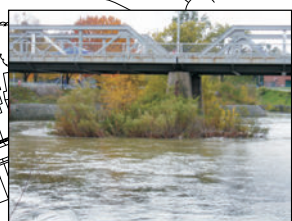
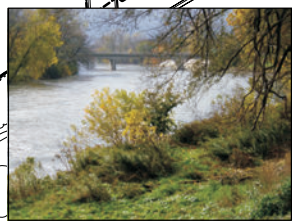
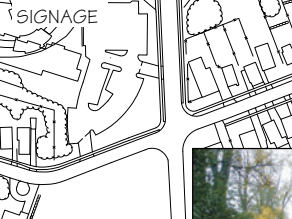
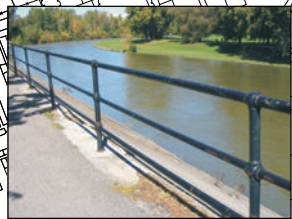
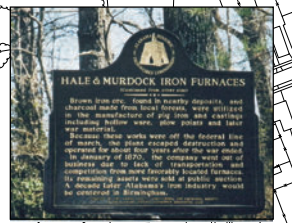
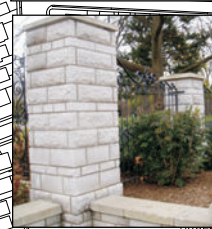
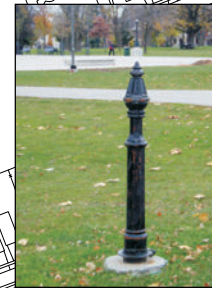
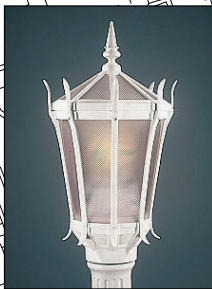
- Have signage identify historical features and events – maintain the signage so that it is not a vandalized eye-sore
- Don't like standard City of London signs (eg. Harris Park made of weathering steel)
- Don't make this section of the path the same as the Forks of the Thames – this is a neighbourhood with homes directly adjacent to the pathway, it is important to protect the quality of life for the Blackfriars residents
- Encourage passive recreation on this section of pathway
- At Labatt Park the cedar hedge is part of the overall character
- No 'bump-outs' along the dyke – not in keeping with the tone of the neighbourhood
- Regular consultation with the neighbourhood is imperative during the design process

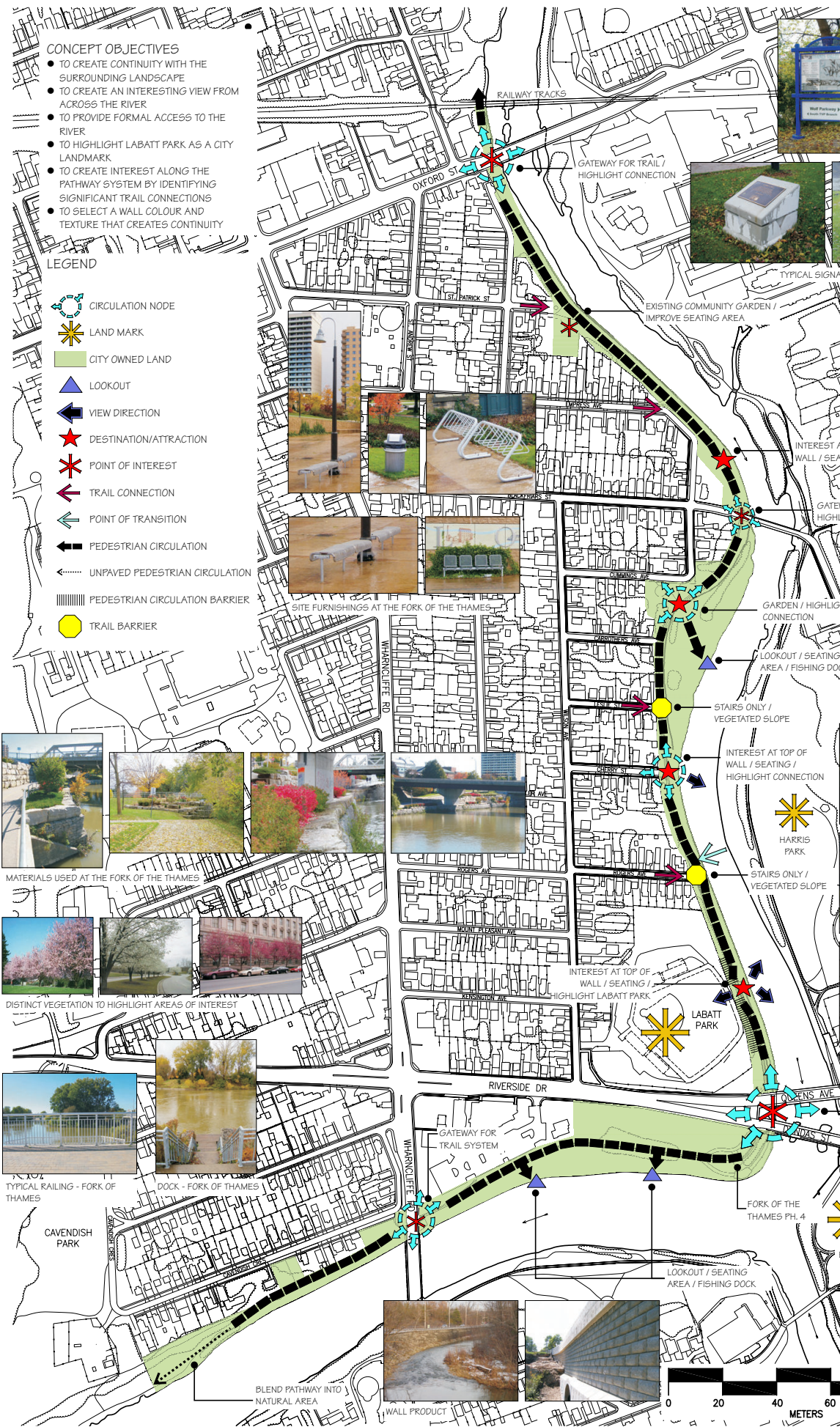
CONCEPT OBJECTIVES

- TO PRESERVE/RESTORE ELEMENTS OF THE EXISTING PATHWAY SYSTEM, INCLUDING EXISTING TRAIL CONNECTIONS, TREES, NATURAL RIVERS EDGE
- TO REPLICATE HISTORIC FEATURES ALONG PATHWAY SYSTEM
- TO PROVIDE INFORMAL ACCESS TO THE RIVER
- TO PROVIDE HISTORICAL INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE ALONG THE TRAIL
- TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PASSIVE RECREATION, SUCH AS WALKING, READING, BIRD WATCHING, FISHING
- TO SELECT A ROUGH NATURAL LOOKING WALL MATERIAL AND CREATE A NATURAL LOOKING TRANSITION

LEGEND

- CIRCULATION NODE
- LAND MARK
- CITY OWNED LAND
- LOOKOUT
- VIEW DIRECTION
- DESTINATION/ATTRACTION
- POINT OF INTEREST
- TRAIL CONNECTION
- POINT OF TRANSITION
- PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION
- UNPAVED PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION
- PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION BARRIER
- TRAIL BARRIER





West London Dyke Flood Control Structure Design Charette

Concept 2 - November 2006



West London Dyke Flood Control Structure Design Charette
 Concept 3 - November 2006