



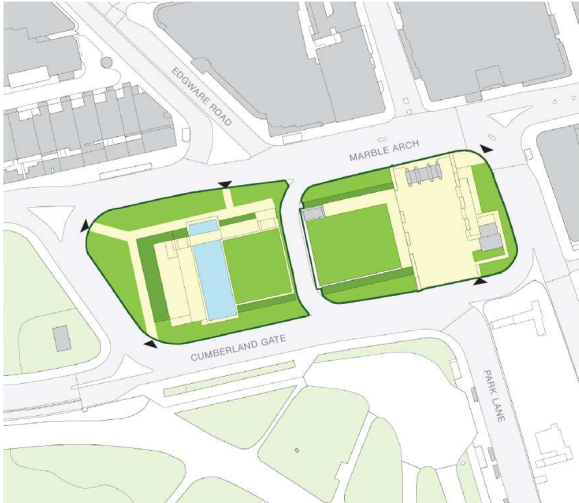
City of Westminster

Marble Arch



Welcome to Marble Arch

This famous site marks the end of Oxford Street and the entrance to Hyde Park, acting as a transition space into Speakers Corner and Hyde Park beyond.



The second more westerly island consists of an even lower grass terrace, water feature and sunken area containing public toilets. The 3 main areas/terraces are linked by a new yorkstone path running along the north end of the site creating a constant level route across the entire space. There is a road limited to busses that cuts through the space and divides the 2 islands.

The piazza space and historic arch are both very well balanced with a 1960's modernist style scheme incorporating a canopy structure above the stairwell access to the underpass that leads to Marble Arch underground station. The canopy links into a wall that screens the traffic to the west at the top of Park Lane and leads into to a raised seating area looking across the piazza space. This wall detail is repeated and echoed elsewhere across the whole site with various raised planters and subtle changes in level. The material chosen for the 1960s scheme was Portland Stone, which references the light appearance of the arch.

It consists of two islands surrounded by a busy gyratory traffic system. The eastern island includes a large plaza piazza space with the iconic historic Grade I listed Marble Arch, the National monument that gives the site its name at one end, and a series of relevant flags along each side of the space. A small flight of steps and line of Portland stone planters mark the western edge of the piazza and lead down from the plaza space to a slightly lower grassed terrace.





Marble Arch was designed by John Nash and was based upon the triumphal Arch of Constantine in Rome. Originally erected and located on The Mall, it was apparently too small for the Royal coaches to comfortably pass through and so was moved to this location in 1851. The 3 terraces described above and the original fountains were installed in the early Sixties when Park Lane was created. Up until June 2009 the fountains had been out of service for over a decade

with the pool sat empty, as part of a public realm improvement project the fountains and pump rooms were recently completely refurbished and reinstated.

Adjacent to the piazza space a similar-sized area of lawn at a slightly lower level provides a soft area for people to sit throughout the summer months. A green oasis in the midst of busy roads. The lawn area is protected from the road to the south due to a large planting bund running along the edge of the space. The bunds are planted with seasonal bedding displays on the sides facing the road so as to provide visual interest at street level. In contrast to the bedding displays the sides of the bunds that face into the space appear as simple grass mounds, creating the impression that the lawn simply sweeps up and flows into the bunds. The eastern lawn is also a site that hosts a changing programme of sculpture for which it is currently hosting a 27ft bronze statue of a horses head by artist N.Fiddian-Green. The recent refurbishment of the site also included new lighting of the arch.

Beyond the Tyburn Way road that divides the 2 islands, the level of the western lawn is slightly lower again, and is also contained and protected by a planting bund along the south side of the space. The bund tapers out as it leads up to the spectacular recently refurbished fountain feature so as to allow views of the fountain from both the lawn and the adjacent road. A series of south facing steps creates a well used sitting area and access from the path to the western lawn. The original axis of the 1960's scheme ends with the path becoming a bridge over the pool and adjacent to the fountains. Behind the pool there is a lower sunken area with access to the sites public toilets. The new main yorkstone path actually runs along the north side of the island around the back of the western lawn and the top of the pool of water, and creates links and connections to the Edgware Road and Bayswater Road.

Historically the site was known as the site of the "Tyburn Tree". The Tyburn tree was a notorious gallows that was erected in 1571, and where executions took place up until the 18th century. There is a memorial plaque set into the ground at the road crossing towards the Edgware Road for those who died at the gallows, many of whom were catholic martyrs, and there are also long-term plans for a larger more appropriate memorial within the marble arch site.