

Category: Traffic and Public Transport

Project: London Surface Diagram

What was the challenge?

To develop a universal mapping system that integrates London's public transport systems within the M25 area which can be customised for specific purposes or seen as a whole.

The design of the famous Beck tube map from 90 years ago has not kept pace with the complexity of London and it is not graphically capable of integrating other transport modes. TfL now makes Beck style bus diagrams, limited by colour. London's 700 routes cannot, even locally, overlay the tube line colours.

The challenge has been to reflect London at the surface instead of below ground which otherwise is distorted by linear diagrams for individual modes.

What was the solution?

To identify all the important and local centres and places including stations showing the transport connections between neighbouring nodes with non-conflicting visual language.

In graphic theory terms, nodes are linked by arcs. Arcs are train lines or bus lines which are identified and marketed by different operators or companies. In effect, the nodes are 'gateways' to city activities and with transport connections and interchanges that offers a 'post modern' view of city life.

The distinction is not that one is better than the other. We need both for different applications and reasons to understand London.

What was the effect?

London as a destination is above ground and the economy works by using the above ground infrastructure. Streets, landmarks and local identity are critical to generating a sense of surface geography.

The distribution of these centres is more organic than portrayed by lines on a Tube or rail diagram.

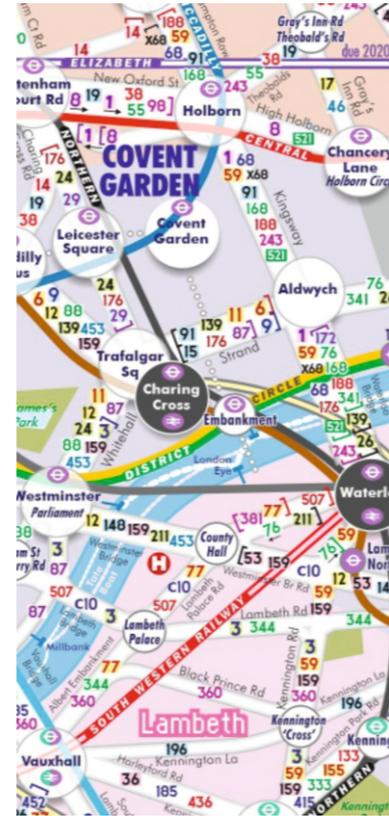
This nodal city concept challenges established mapping with a new alternative and realistic representation of London that has universal application in most large multi-centered cities. Cities are complex.

When re-surfacing from below ground or leaving ground level transport, a traveller's spatial knowledge of the surrounding area can be limited. It doesn't give the best 'mental map' of an area and, indeed, in any big city particularly when judging walking distances and proximity of other transport options.

Quickmap has extracted the central area and adjacent areas in the design and publication of its own London all-on-one and London bus products.

The development of the concept continues with the prospect of incorporating real time information and animation and the ability to separate levels of information for different purposes.

London Surface Diagram is a bird's eye view of the Capital with fine local grain offered by print, web or hand-drawn maps.



above: close up of vertical slice through central London

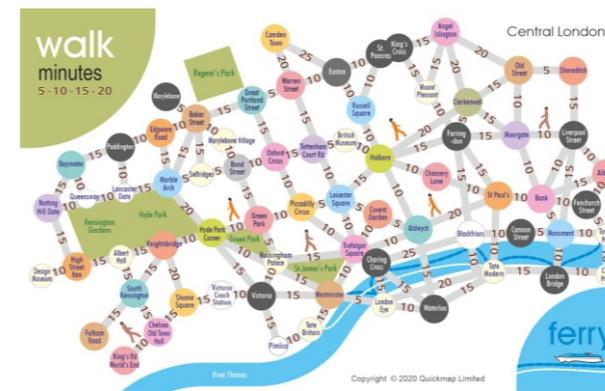


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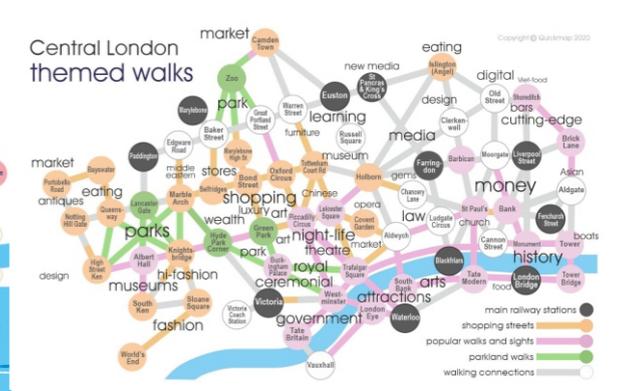


above: wide area map covering part of north London

<https://www.quickmap.com/files/IIID-Quickmap-download-page.htm>



above: examples of the application of London Surface Diagram



below: London Underground diagram and London Surface diagram at every Tube station entrance?

