

THE LONDON BOOK

WHERE AND HOW TO TAKE GREAT PICTURES



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Je
BY STEPHEN JE







The London Book
Where and How to Take Great Pictures
by Stephen Je
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Introduction

Who is this book written for?

This book is written for anyone interested in London. In this book, we tour this amazing city and capture some of its magical sites, highlighting some of the techniques behind the photos.

What type of equipment do you need?

You can use any camera or camera phone.

The techniques in this book apply to any type of photography, and emphasize how to create memorable architectural photos. I've included dozens of styles you can try.

About Stephen Je

All photographs and text in this book are by New York-based fine art photographer Stephen Je. Stephen was born in the United States and has lived, walked, and experienced London, Paris, Rome, Barcelona, and Milan.

His photographs represent experience from hundreds of miles of steps, sometimes inches to the left or right, from travel not only worldwide, but to 87 of the top 100 cities in the United States by population.

He can recount one story of seeing a shark while scuba diving the Great Barrier Reef. He has technically piloted a helicopter. He graduated from MIT.

This is his second life – all these stories are true, but he won't display them on his sleeve unless there's doubt that whatever is in a photograph is, for the most part, intentional. The meaning, however, of the photographs is up to you, the reader.

From the Author

Have fun, create, and be kind to strangers please.

If you have questions, my email address is:

thelondonbook@stephen.je

Overview

The chapters in this book are organized so that main attractions are grouped together.

Chapter 1 starts with the instantly-recognizable Westminster Abbey, Big Ben, and Palace of Westminster.

Chapter 2 covers the enormously popular Tower of London castle and the Tower Bridge. While you're there, you can see the ultra-modern architecture of London's City Hall and the Shard.

Chapter 3 highlights Buckingham Palace and its gateways Marble Arch and Constitution Arch.

Chapter 4 details Trafalgar Square, London's historic gathering point. If you are in the area, you may also want to stop by Piccadilly Circus and Oxford Circus, which are the busy shopping districts covered in Chapter 5.

Chapters 6 and 7 cover the City of London financial district. The Victorian style Leadenhall Market resides in the center of London's fantastical new skyscrapers. St. Paul's Cathedral headlines the locale around London's Stock Exchange, while the Barbican Centre represents a dramatic social and architectural experiment.

Chapter 8 is about London's local Knightsbridge and Kensington districts, highlighted by the national institution Royal Albert Hall and the 54m / 176ft tall Albert Memorial.

And Chapter 9 is about the Lambeth, Vauxhall, and Battersea districts in south London including views of the MI6 Building, which is prominently featured in James Bond movies.

Traveling Around London

Getting around London is easy, but driving and parking may cause delays if you are on a schedule. I recommend the subway system, buses, walking, or taxis.

The subway is interchangeably called the Underground or the Tube. It is extensive and easy to use. You can buy an Oyster Card (a debit card for London's public transportation), or use a contactless credit card, Apple Pay or Android Pay to ride it. Just walk up to a station and tap your payment method on a gate. Oyster Cards are available at most Underground stations. The iconic red, double-decker buses also take these payment methods and provide a way to see parts of the city you might not have seen below ground.

Walking is convenient in London. Since cars drive on the left-hand side, you may need to adjust how you look out for traffic. Some streets have painted reminders to look left or right, but it's always a good idea to look both ways. The direction of parked cars is not always the same as the flow of traffic.

London's black cabs are plentiful and roomy. They are expensive by world standards. Contactless credit cards, Apple Pay, and Android Pay work more reliably now, but cash and apps are the easiest ways to pay for a taxi.

The reason I hesitate to recommend Uber is because it was banned as I was writing portions of this book, but I always recommend having a backup plan for transportation. Experience has taught me that allowing twice as much time as needed to get from place to place is frequently rewarded.

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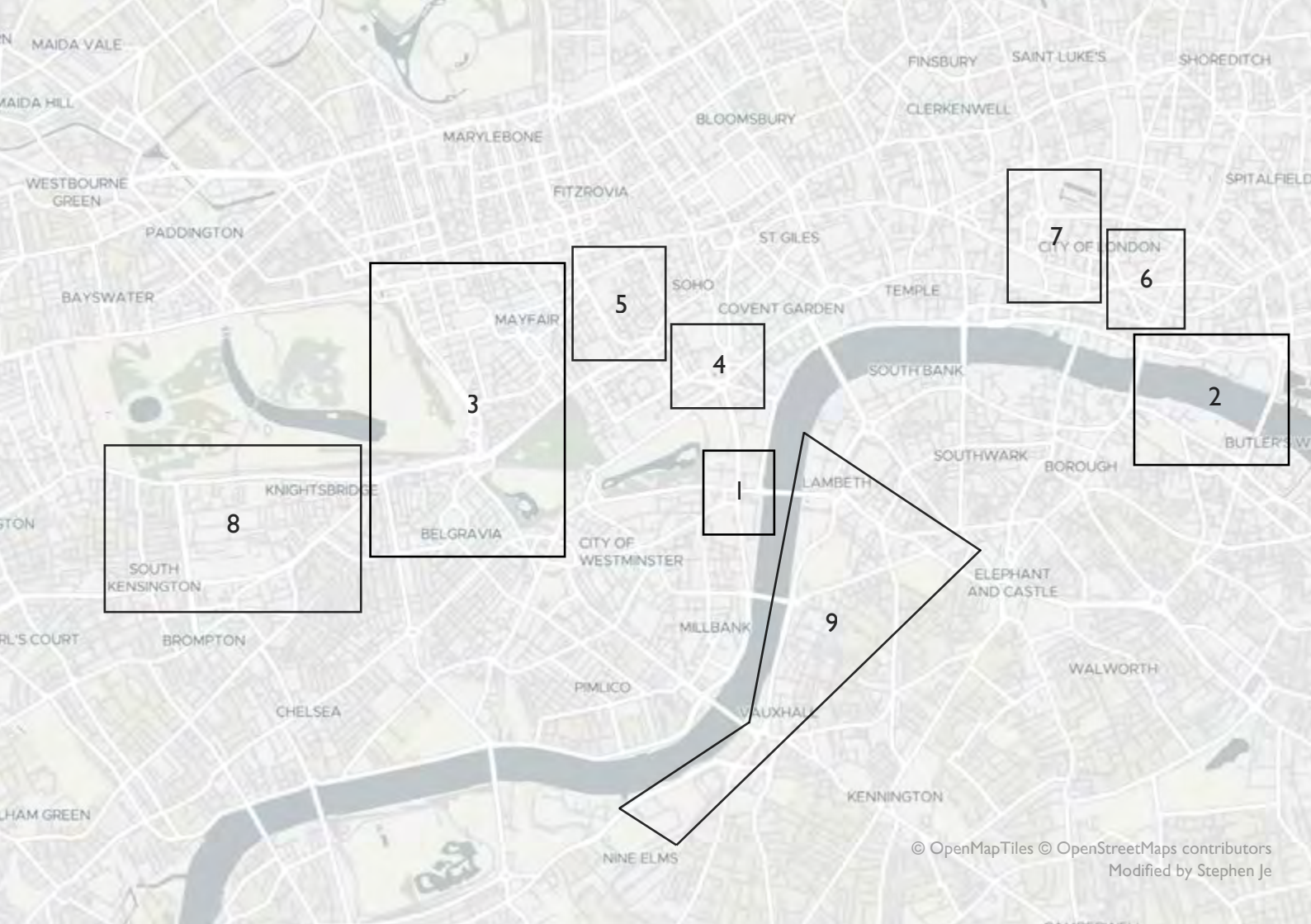
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Map of Greater London

By any standard, London is a very large city, so I've included an overview map. Each box represents one chapter. If you have only a few days in London, I highly recommend starting with Chapters 1, 2, and 3.

- At publication time, the longest trip in this book (from South Kensington Station to Tower Hill Station) took 19 minutes. The official Underground site has an excellent trip planner at <https://tfl.gov.uk/plan-a-journey/>.
- Taxis are a convenient way of traveling individually or in small groups for medium distances. However, a cab ride across the city could easily cost £50 or more, and take much longer if there is traffic.
- London is also an amazing city for walking long distances. The feel and culture of neighborhoods seems to change slightly from block to block. It is possible to walk from chapter to chapter, and the longest distance in this book (from Kensington to Tower Hill) is about 6 miles. There are many shops, grocery stores, and restaurants along the way.
- The long story short is that once you're in London, getting from one place to the next probably won't get in the way of you having a good time. Just remember to budget extra travel time.



Chapter I

Westminster

Westminster Abbey

Parliament

Big Ben

Portcullis House



To The
London Eye

Westminster Station
and Portcullis House

Big Ben

Parliament
Building

Westminster
Abbey

Richard the Lionheart

Victoria Tower

St. Thomas
Hospital

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Modified by Stephen Je

Westminster Abbey

Westminster Abbey is a Gothic masterpiece. It was consecrated in 1065 and the current building was started in 1245.

It has held 16 royal weddings, monarchs are crowned here, and it is where global icons like Charles Darwin, Sir Isaac Newton, Geoffrey Chaucer, and Charles Dickens are buried.

Westminster Abbey is also a UNESCO World Heritage site. I recommend putting this first on your list of places to visit in London. There are several personalities to Westminster Abbey, and they are all very accessible.

The Dragon of Westminster. The east wing of Westminster Abbey, directly across from the Parliament building.



Westminster Abbey's East Wing charms passers by with its whimsical story, part fairy tale castle, part fortress, part forest, and part dragon.

I found this area to be the most challenging due to the lamp posts, but there are convenient places where you can take pictures without them. While I was there, these spots were occupied by friendly protesters. I consider these art photos, so I shot from a different location and removed the lamp posts in Photoshop.

The West Entrance greets guests with its diverse statuettes. It is a popular place to take pictures. There is plenty of room and no need to jockey for a spot. You might have one or two people queued ahead of you if you want to take a photo directly lined up with the center of the entrance.

Westminster Abbey's West Entrance. This is the entrance people associate with the royal family. Statuettes above the west entrance almost look like they're dancing.



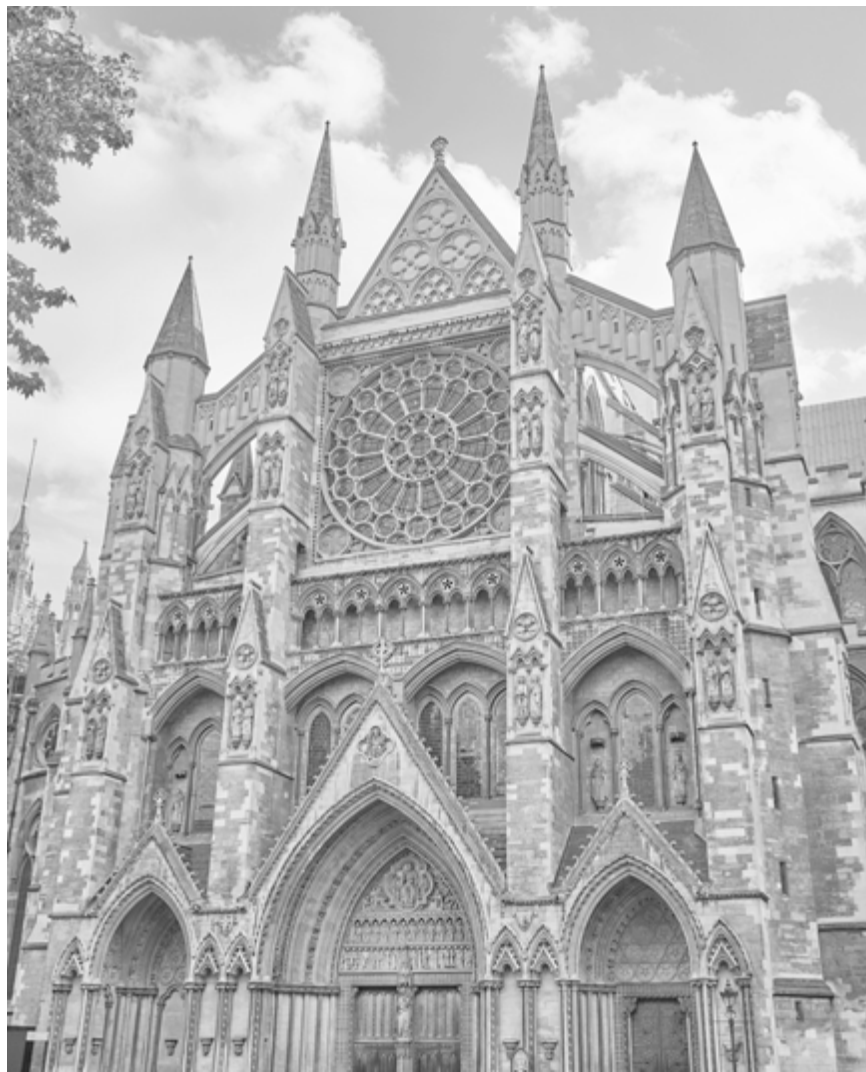


The North Entrance is highlighted by its gigantic circular rose window. I shot this side first because it has striking detail and is reminiscent of medieval castles. It extends some of the design patterns of that period's Gothic cathedrals.

Because Westminster Abbey is hundreds of years old, there are places where it is slightly off-level from the horizon. This is normal for buildings of this period.

For the most part, I believe the key to a great photo of Westminster Abbey is for your colors to either look natural or capture the artistic effect you aim for. Artistic effect often includes black-and-white. I often take many color photos on different days and change some of them to monochrome later. That way, I have a set of full-color images in my library to start.

North Transept in Monochrome. Glowing clouds bring an impression of fairy tale medieval castles.





North Transept Window. The stonework of the north window creates a floral pattern.

Photography Tips for Westminster Abbey

Westminster Abbey can be joyous, it can be haunting, it can be surreal. It is a beautiful medieval spectacle. The most important tip is to enjoy what you see. This will show up in your photos.

It's important not to worry too much about the weather. Westminster Abbey photographs nicely even if the light isn't perfect.

It is also a place that will reward practice and patience. If you have a steady hand you can capture a lot of detail.

Westminster Abbey is simply a great place to start a new hobby, learn a new skill, or simply enjoy one of the pinnacles of Gothic architecture.

Parliament

Officially known as The Palace of Westminster, the Parliament building has been in existence since 1016. The current building was started in 1835. It replaces the one razed after a chimney fire went out of control, starting what was known as The Great Fire of 1834 and the destruction of the former palace.

The current Gothic palace is now the home to the United Kingdom's national government. It is a UNESCO World Heritage site.

March to Victoria Tower. Richard the Lionheart marches to Victoria Tower. The tower itself measures almost 120m / 400ft to the top of the flagpole.





Richard Cœur de Lion. The statue of Richard the Lionheart shows the king in triumphant return. Tales of his heroism and courage are depicted in the epic legends of Robin Hood and Ivanhoe.

Victoria Tower in Monochrome (left). A dramatic representation from its archway.

Parliament (right). Photographers can use weather and texture to create both detail and dramatic effect. This photo is meant to recall paintbrush strokes and a seafaring culture. The towers of Westminster Abbey can be seen just above the trees on the left.





The Palace of Westminster was damaged during World War II, and when it was restored, a stained glass memorial window was built to commemorate citizens, members of Parliament, and police who died during the war's air raids. Today it is also a peaceful reminder of service and the greatest potential that a strong commitment to ethical governance can bring.

Richard the Lionheart's March. Richard the Lionheart leads his people and Parliament.



Big Ben

One of the world's most recognizable icons, Big Ben is actually a bell known as the Great Bell. It is housed within Parliament's Clock Tower.

There are five bells inside this tower (now known as Elizabeth Tower) and Big Ben is the largest. It weighs about the same as seven average cars and is 2.2m / 7.2ft high by 2.7m / 8.9ft wide.

The perfect spot to shoot a classic photo of Big Ben is right across from it along the River Thames. Once you walk across Westminster Bridge, take the stairs down towards the river and you'll have plenty of room for an impressive shot.

There is a terrace above this vantage point which is open to the public. It is accessible if you walk further away from the river and into the St. Thomas Hospital complex. The reason I don't recommend it is because the branches from several trees block the open sky.

Buses and trucks are visible from the Westminster Bridge. Red London buses can add fantastic color contrast. I happened to choose black-and-white for this photo to highlight the textures.

The shape of the Union Jack flag (to the right, on the Portcullis House) adds another element to photos. I try not to get too caught up in getting a particular shape for a flag, because the symbolism is different for everyone, but your camera's burst mode is very helpful for being able to pick and choose.

Elizabeth Tower is undergoing preservation and restoration activities so it is currently dressed in a fireworks-shaped, Japanese-style pagoda. This scaffolding is quite impressive on its own.

Parliament and Big Ben. An instantly-recognizable view of London. Every shot will be different because of the flag on the Portcullis Building and cars on the Westminster Bridge.



Palace of Westminster's Architectural Influence

London's architecture often influences buildings worldwide. The Parliament building is no exception. For example, this set of buildings in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA is modeled after Victoria Tower.



PPG Place. Completed in 1984, it is a set of six buildings, strongly influenced by The Palace of Westminster.

Photography Tips for The Palace of Westminster and Big Ben

Parliament has strong lines and photos taken from different angles can create different dramatic effects. Try different vantage points – even a few steps to the right or left can change your photo entirely.

London photographs well in any weather. You can create dramatic photos by changing their white balance (the tone of the colors in your photo). Many camera phones, and all DSLRs, let you do this. It helps match the colors your eye sees with what the camera captures. I prefer to do this.

I also recommend apps like Lightroom Mobile, and software like Lightroom CC, Photoshop, or Capture One Pro. They let you change the white balance and other color settings easily after your shoot. If you make sure your pictures aren't too dark or too light when you take them, you'll have a great base to start with and an easier time in post-processing.

Portcullis House

Just above Westminster Station, the Portcullis House is the main office building for many members of the UK Parliament. It first opened in 2001 and has the silhouette of an ironclad ship.

Portcullis House. The London Eye is in the background.



Chapter 2

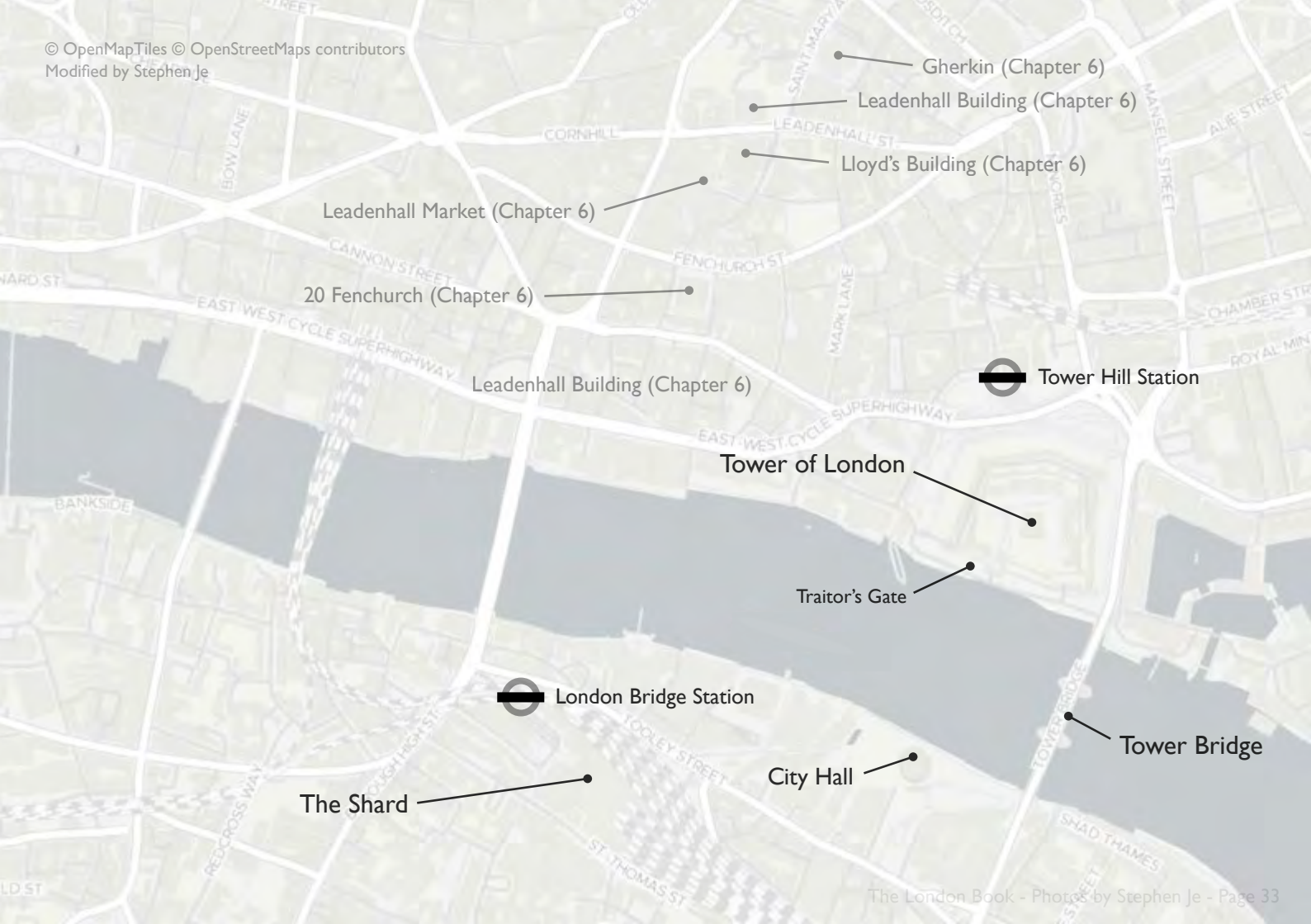
Tower of London

Tower of London

Tower Bridge

The Shard

City Hall



Gherkin (Chapter 6)

Leadenhall Building (Chapter 6)

Lloyd's Building (Chapter 6)

Leadenhall Market (Chapter 6)

20 Fenchurch (Chapter 6)

Leadenhall Building (Chapter 6)

Tower Hill Station

Tower of London

Traitor's Gate

London Bridge Station

The Shard

City Hall

Tower Bridge

Tower of London

The Tower of London is Great Britain's most famous castle and houses the Crown Jewels. Established in 1066 by William the Conqueror, it has served as a keep, fortress, and prison. And until about 1310, it was the tallest building in London.

Today, the Tower of London is one of London's most popular attractions. People regularly queue up to tour the inside and its side of the waterfront is often filled with people enjoying the view of the River Thames.

The south bank of the river, across from the Tower, is a great place to take photos. It's further away, but you'll be able to capture the entire Tower of London complex, including Traitor's Gate.

Profile of the Tower of London. A view from the south bank of the River Thames.



Traitor's Gate. To the left of the main building is Traitor's Gate, where Elizabeth I was delivered for her imprisonment. Her words upon entry: "Here lands as true a subject, being prisoner, as ever landed at these stairs." The outer archway was bricked over during the 1800s because of the rising of the River Thames. Here the inner archway is pictured.





Tower of London at Sunset. The Shard is seen in the background.



Tower of London Stonework. Brick reliefs adorn the Tower of London's battlements. Could they be seen as inspiration for the design of the Tower Bridge? Imagine this structure with the style of one of Queen Victoria's favorites, Balmoral Castle in Scotland.

A black and white photograph of the Tower of London, showing several stone towers with conical roofs and weather vanes. A semi-transparent dark grey rectangle is overlaid in the center, containing text. The background shows the intricate masonry and architecture of the historic castle.

Photography Tips for the Tower of London

The Tower of London is a castle that has four distinct sides, each with a slightly different personality, so you have many compositions to choose from.

I believe in photos having strong primary subjects, and with its history and masonry, The Tower of London is no exception. I often add context and artistic tension to outdoor photos using a secondary subject.

In this chapter's photos, I've chosen The Shard, Traitor's Gate, and a large sky. Other options could include 20 Fenchurch and the modern architecture north of the Tower of London.

Tower Bridge

Tower Bridge opened in 1894 and is a symbol of the Victorian era. You can capture its splendor from many angles, including both the north and south banks of the River Thames.

About 40,000 people cross the bridge everyday by foot, bicycle, and vehicle, and the bridge itself is a great place to photograph the city.

There is a different bridge across from it called the London Bridge, which is a main thoroughfare and walkway. It is also a great place where you can photograph the Tower Bridge.

Tower Bridge. A black-and-white rendition.







Tower Bridge in Color. A busy day as shot from the London Bridge.







Tower Bridge Adornments. The Tower Bridge is ornately decorated with historic themes.

Photography Tips for the Tower Bridge

There are many ways to take photos of the Tower Bridge. Wide angle shots that include the entire span may require you to change locations. These locations may be several city blocks from each other so planning can help you choose where you want to go first.

Google Maps and Google Earth are convenient ways to preview your locations. I use these frequently to get to know an area before arriving.

Time of day often determines the type of light available for photographs. I sometimes use apps like The Photographers Ephemeris to see where the sun or moon will be.

The Shard

The Shard is the tallest skyscraper in Western Europe. It is made with 11,000 panes of glass, stretching over 600,000 square feet (56,000 square meters).

Considering the size of the building, people are also amazed by how little visual space it occupies, especially when up close. From some angles it looks like a tipi and from others a volcano. Its architectural impression in the South London skyline is unmistakable and its character changes when day turns to night.

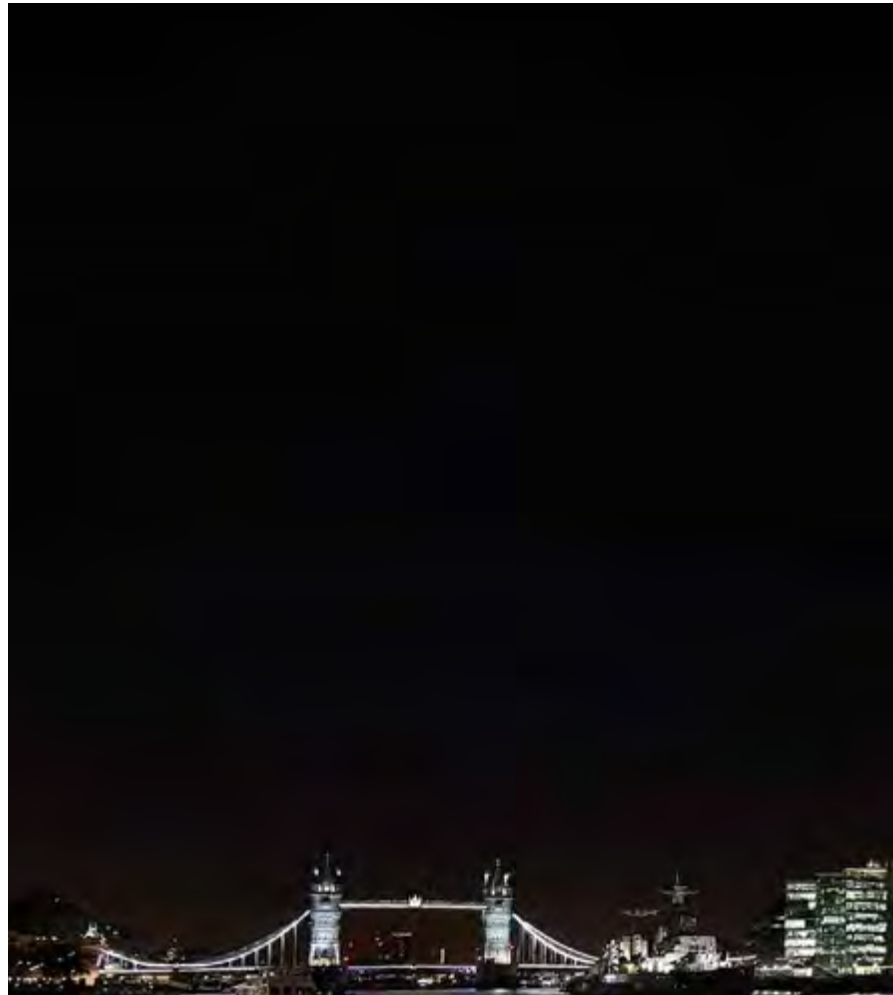
There are many good places to photograph The Shard and these boil down to personal preference, but you can get the most dramatic skylines from the north side of the River Thames. The Tower of London is a good starting place.

Sky and The Shard. London's City Hall is in silhouette to the far left.





London at Night. The Tower Bridge, ship HMS Belfast, and The Shard light up the London riverfront.





The Shard in Blue. The Shard looks different from every angle. The photo on the far left was taken from south of City Hall, and the one on the near left was taken from the Millennium Bridge.



London Riverfront. This photo, shot from London Bridge, was taken using a 10x neutral density filter (colloquially known as a “big stopper”), 30-second exposure, and a tripod.







The Shard from Tower Bridge. Glass architecture on the bank of South London along the River Thames.

Photography Tips for The Shard

In general, cityscapes look better when the horizon is level and natural. The Shard is angular, so it isn't always obvious where level ground is.

Camera phones and DSLRs often have a “grid” feature that can help your composition, and many DSLRs have spirit levels to tell you how the ground is oriented. Keeping the ground level is often the difference between a good and great photo. You can also rotate a photo later using software or an app.

In general, for crisp night photos and long exposure photos (for example, the photo where the sky is in motion and the water is smooth), you will need a tripod. Both types of photos use the same technical concepts. You'll need to place the camera on a tripod, set it to manual mode, and choose a longer shutter speed.

City Hall

London's City Hall sits just across the River Thames from the Tower of London. If you have a zoom lens, you can take some wonderful pictures from this location.

City Hall is a unique building in its own right. The architecture firm that designed it calls the building's shape a "geometrically modified sphere." It is almost like the body of a bee.

From many angles, it can be quite mischievous with an appearance like the Cheshire Cat from Alice in Wonderland, or the distinct shape of a motorcycle helmet from others.

City Hall. As seen from the Tower of London.



Chapter 3

Buckingham Palace

Buckingham Palace
Victoria Memorial
Constitution Arch
Marble Arch



Marble Arch

MAYFAIR

SOHO

COVENT GARDEN

Piccadilly Square (Chapter 7)

Trafalgar Square (Chapter 7)

Buckingham Palace

Victoria Memorial

Hyde Park Corner Station

Constitution Arch

Westminster Station

Harrod's (Chapter 9)

BELGRAVIA

Westminster Abbey (Chapter I)

Parliament (Chapter I)

Victoria Station

VICTORIA

CITY OF
WESTMINSTER

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Buckingham Palace

Originally begun as Buckingham House in 1710, Buckingham Palace was continually expanded over the centuries. The building you see today was completed in 1913.

People gather in front of the gates to look at the Palace and watch the change of the Queen's Guard, but there is plenty of room to take photographs, especially from in front of the Victoria Memorial and along the north and east sides of the road leading to the Palace.

Buckingham Palace Union Jack. The symbol of the United Kingdom flies over the palace.







The Victoria Memorial

Queen Victoria, of the Victorian Era, reigned over the United Kingdom from 1837 to 1901. She and her husband Albert, Prince Consort, helped advance technology, art, and culture worldwide, and brought prestige back to the British crown.

The Victoria Memorial and Buckingham Palace. The eastern face of The Victoria Memorial and Buckingham Palace, as shot from near St. James's Park.









Photography Tips for Buckingham Palace

Buckingham Palace has beautiful gold adornments, particularly around the Royal Coat of Arms. Having good color contrast will bring out the details in both the building and the adornments. You can do this in-camera or in post-processing.

DSLR cameras and some camera phone apps have a histogram, a chart of how much color your photo has.

Your goal is to take photos that fill the histogram as far up and as wide as possible, without parts of the chart running outside the box. Running outside the box is called clipping.

There is no detail in parts of the photo that are clipped. Since detail is very difficult to recreate, it is usually better to leave parts of the histogram unfilled than it is to clip your photo.





Marble Arch

Marble Arch was originally the entrance to Buckingham Palace and is based on the Arch of Constantine in Rome. Marble Arch was moved to Hyde Park as part of a three-month project for the Great Exhibition of 1851.

Today, Marble Arch sits on the edge of the bustling Oxford Street shopping district.



Marble Arch. I wanted to convey how busy it is, without including cars in the photo.

Constitution Arch

Just west of Buckingham Palace on Constitution Hill is the Wellington Arch (Constitution Arch) dedicated to Britain's victories over Napoleon I. It was originally built to be a grand entrance to the center of London and is adorned by the largest bronze statue in Europe, The Quadriga.

The Quadriga. The Goddess Nike escorts her young charge to victory.



Visitors can climb the arch for a view of the area and the surrounding war memorials including the Commonwealth Memorial Gates, Machine Gun Corps Memorial, Royal Artillery Memorial, Australian War Memorial, and New Zealand War Memorial.

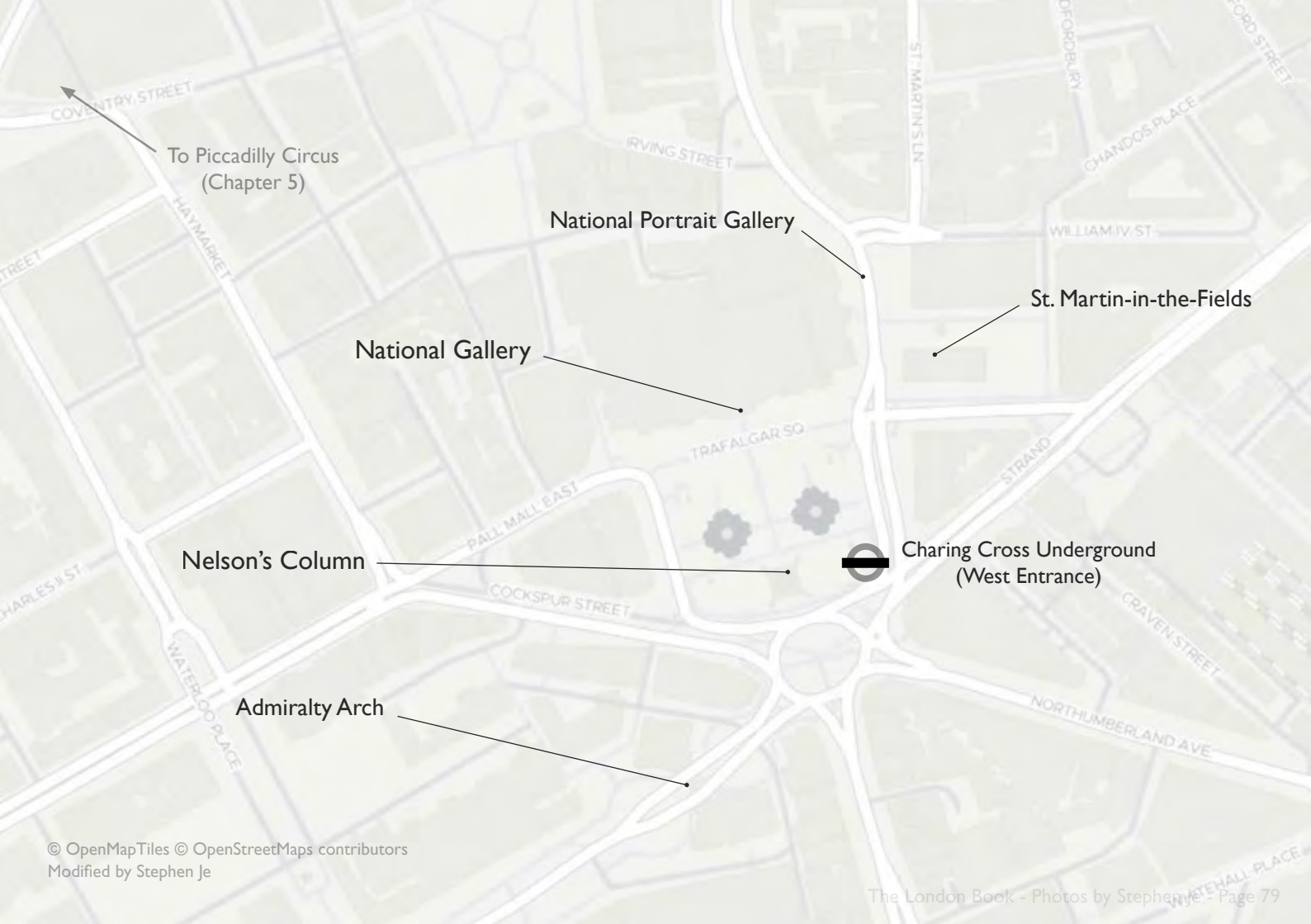
Constitution Arch. The Quadriga, terrace, and Corinthian columns highlight Constitution Arch.



Chapter 4

Trafalgar Square

The National Gallery
Admiralty Arch
National Portrait Gallery
St. Martin-in-the-Fields
Nelson's Column



To Piccadilly Circus
(Chapter 5)

National Portrait Gallery

St. Martin-in-the-Fields

National Gallery

Nelson's Column

Charing Cross Underground
(West Entrance)

Admiralty Arch

The National Gallery

The National Gallery museum houses and displays the art collection owned by the United Kingdom. The current Neoclassical style building was opened in 1838 so that the public, at the time described as both the “rich and poor”, could enjoy works that would previously have required travel of great distances to see.

The location in Trafalgar Square was originally chosen because it was easily-accessible by both people riding their carriages from the west and those walking from the east.

Today, the National Gallery is still one of the centerpieces of Trafalgar Square. The building itself was redesigned in 1876 to include its iconic dome.

The entry facade belies the Gallery’s size. According to the National Gallery, their current building has enough floor area to hold 2,000 of London’s famous double-decker buses.

The National Gallery. One of the centerpieces of Trafalgar Square.



Admiralty Arch

Admiralty Arch was conceived as a memorial to the late Queen Victoria by her son Edward. Its inscription reads “In the tenth year of King Edward VII, to Queen Victoria, from most grateful citizens, 1910.”

The arch itself is as Baroque as it is Victorian. In addition to its ceremonial function, it has since served as the office space for the command of the Royal Navy, as well as the residence to Winston Churchill. It is even rumored that Ian Fleming developed the character James Bond here.

There are many angles from which to photograph Admiralty Arch, including islands between the main thoroughfare that runs beneath it, and ample pedestrian walkways.

Admiralty Arch. The gateway from Trafalgar Square to Buckingham Palace.



ANNO: DECIMO: EDWARDI: SEPTIMI: REGIS:
VICTORIAE: REGINAE: CIVIS: GRATISSIMI: MDCCCX:

National Portrait Gallery

The National Portrait Gallery was the world's first portrait gallery when it opened in 1856. It houses paintings, prints, drawings, and busts of famous and historic Britons. It sits toward the northeast corner of Trafalgar Square.

National Portrait Gallery. Portraits of famous and historic people from the United Kingdom.



St. Martin-in-the-Fields

St. Martin-in-the-Fields is an Anglican church first opened in 1726. The site itself dates back to 1222 when it was the site of a dispute between The Abbot of Westminster and The Archbishop of Canterbury over who had authority over the church. While much of the historical record has been lost, St. Martin-in-the-Fields carries its name because it was literally amidst fields at the time.

St. Martin-in-the-Fields. Famous Anglican church in the northeast corner of Trafalgar Square.



From Trafalgar Square at Night. The National Gallery and Nelson's Column with St. Martin-in-the-Fields highlighted in the center.



Nelson's Column

Admiral Horatio Nelson was in command of the British Royal Navy when it defeated the combined French and Spanish fleets off the coast of Spain, west of Cape Trafalgar. The victory was complete and decisive. In the battle between 27 British ships and 33 French and Spanish, Nelson's fleet sunk 19 ships and lost none.

During the battle, Nelson was mortally wounded by a sharpshooter from an enemy ship. He is commemorated with a large single column because of the unorthodox tactics he used to break the enemy column, splitting his fleet into two and sending them directly into the broadest part of the enemy's line of fire. It is believed that the victory permanently eliminated Napoleon's ability to invade England.

You will need to account for its scale when photographing this monument to British naval superiority. It is about the height of half a football field at 51.5m / 169 ft.



Photography Tips for Trafalgar Square

Trafalgar Square is a historic gathering point and is well-suited to black and white photos. The key to a strong monochrome photo is choosing where you want the light and dark parts of your photo to be.

Light parts of your photo add texture and detail, while the darker parts create depth and artistic tension. You can create this type of contrast by using natural light, shadows, clouds, weather, and other aspects of the environment.

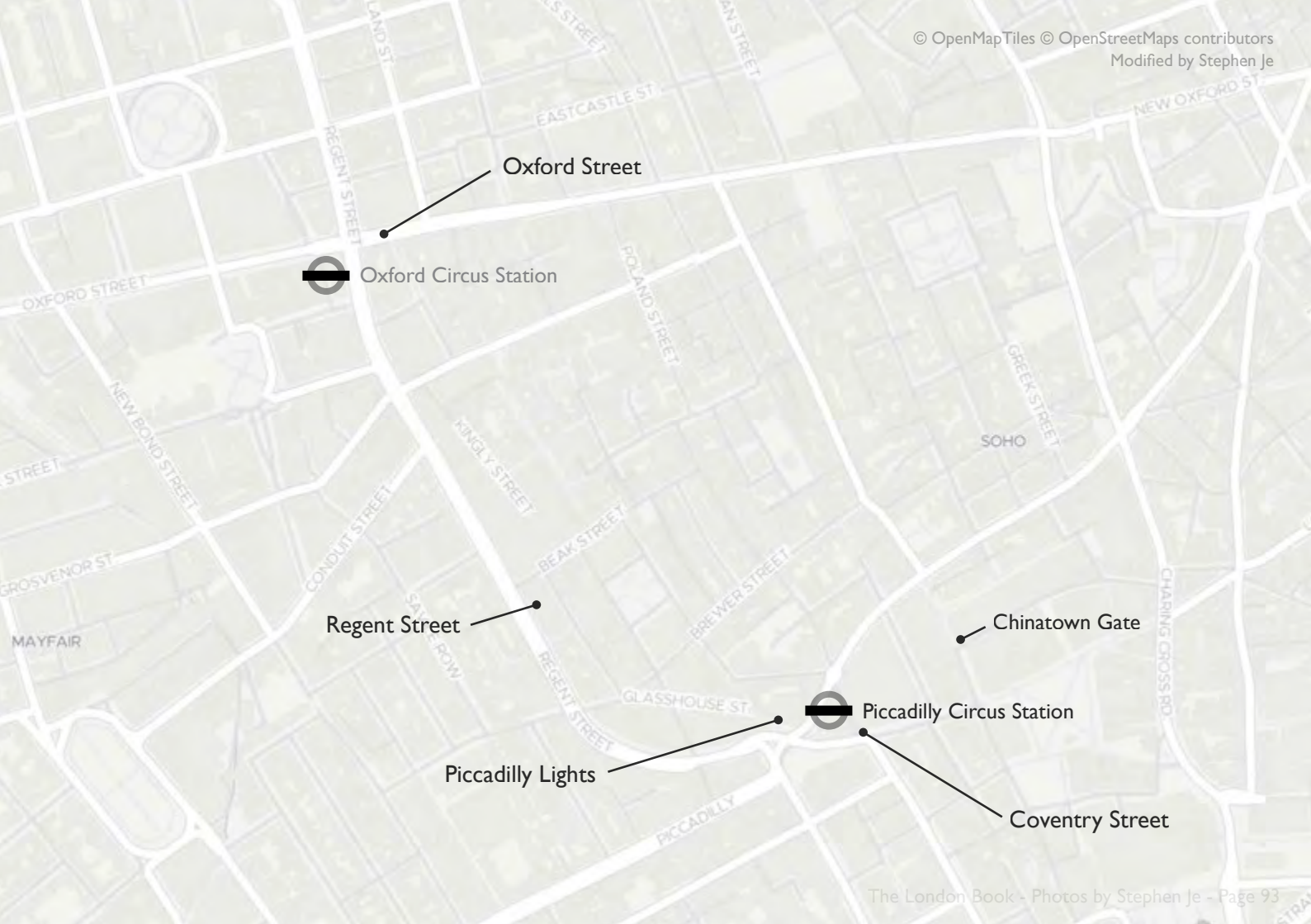
Nelson's Column. Admiral Lord Nelson looks over Trafalgar Square.

Chapter 5

Piccadilly Circus

Oxford Circus

Regent Street
Coventry Street
Piccadilly Lights
Chinatown Gate
Oxford Street



Oxford Street

Oxford Circus Station

Regent Street

Chinatown Gate

Piccadilly Lights

Piccadilly Circus Station

Coventry Street

Regent Street

Piccadilly's Regent Street shopping district hosts a series of themes each year. This has included participating in London's Lumiere light festival, installing bonsai trees for Chinese New Year, closing the road to cars for the Summer Streets festival, and creating spectacular Christmas lights displays.

Regent Street at Night. The high-end shopping district is in constant motion.







Spirit of Christmas. Hand-sculpted spirits fly over Regent Street in one of London's largest Christmas light displays.







Coventry Street

Coventry Street is one of the main entryways into Piccadilly Circus. It is chaotic during both day and night with the motion of people, cars, and buses.

20 Seconds in Piccadilly. Timed exposure shot in the heart of Piccadilly Circus.





Piccadilly Lights

The display at Piccadilly Lights attracts a youthful crowd, and the screen in Piccadilly Circus is the largest in Europe. This strikingly beautiful, brightly-colored billboard, in constant motion, often combines commercialism and aspiration.

Advertising, by its very nature, talks towards people to reach a desired goal. It is sometimes artistic and often quite beautiful. When done in a genuine and tasteful way, it can be inspiring. And if products provide clear, tangible benefits without grand social costs, advertising can do good within its purpose and intent. Many brands focus only on status or sexual tension. Is there more to the product?

Art is different. It gives people the ability to express, think, and feel for themselves. It gives people a platform to take mental risks, whether they create worlds, words, or simply patterns of expression. It has responsibility that accompanies its purpose and its completion is the definition of freedom.

Night in Piccadilly Circus. A black and white photograph of the Piccadilly Lights.

SAMSUNG

L'ORÉAL
PARIS
X
BALMAIN
PARIS

HUNTER
ORIGINAL



HYUNDAI

Coca-Cola

ebay

GAP

Chinatown Gate

Standing guard at the entrance to London's Chinatown is the Chinatown Gate. It was handcrafted in Beijing and installed in 2015. Draped in traditional Chinese colors, the gate is adorned by dragon boats, and strikes an intimidating pose over Wardour Street.

This area is generally busy with pedestrians and there is car traffic in the area, but because of the contoured shape of the boats, the gate photographs well from many angles.

Chinatown Gate. Its silhouette forms the Chinese (and Kanji) symbol for "West".



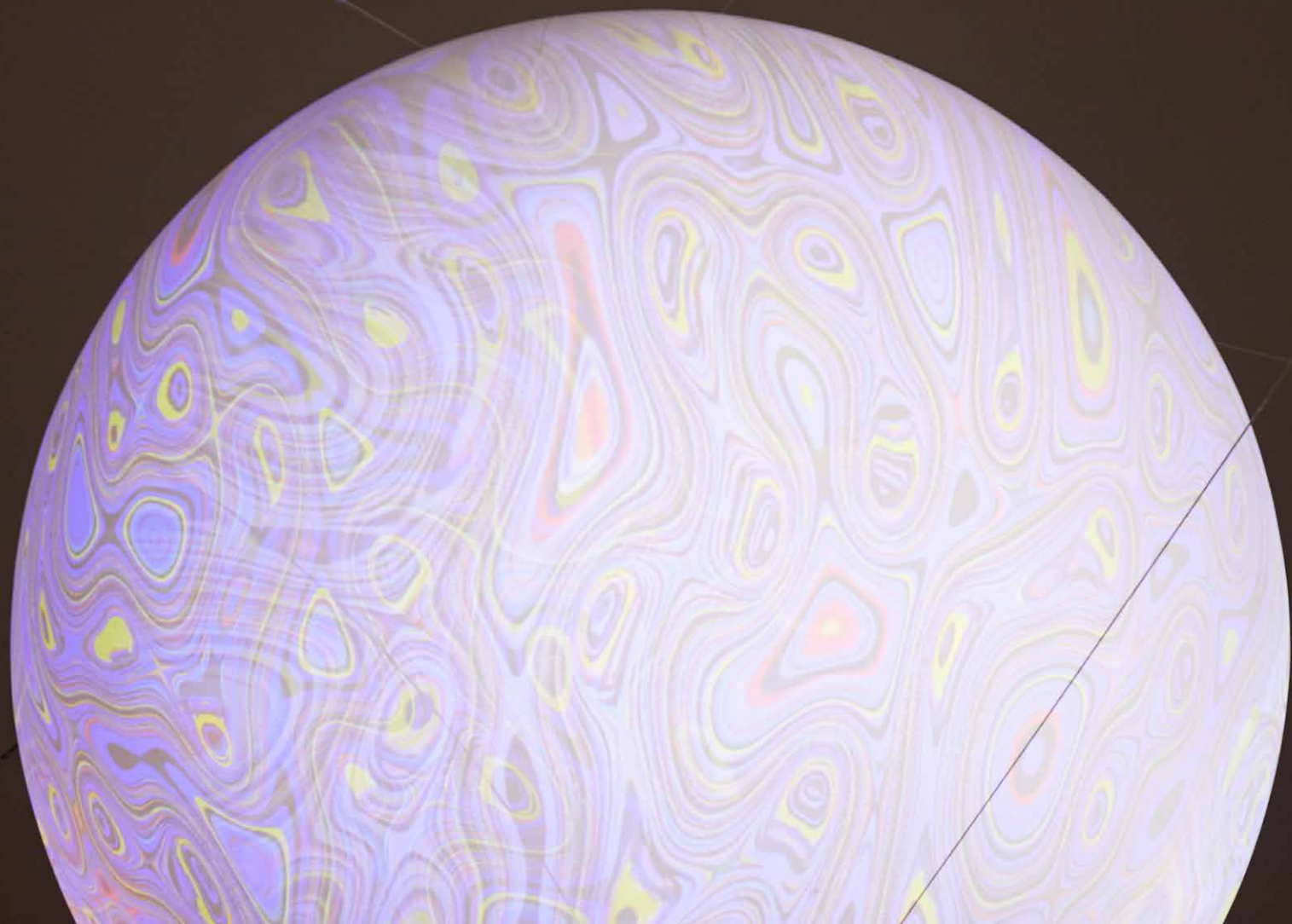
Oxford Street

London is rebuilding this West End neighborhood's reputation as a prime retail area with many new stores planned. It takes a different mindset to walk through Oxford Street and Oxford Circus Station than it does Regent Street.

Nonetheless, there are slices of London here that afford people the opportunity to learn more about daily life in this global city. London is a collection of cultures learning to live and work together, and a walk through Oxford Street, spanning the distance to Marble Arch, can be an enriching journey on its own.

Oxford Circus During Lumiere. An almost lollipop-colored globe over Oxford Street during the Lumiere festival. Light projectors create dazzling color patterns and effects.





Lumiere Globe in Oxford Circus. The colors of the globe change during the evening.

Photography Tips for Piccadilly Circus and Oxford Circus

Even when there isn't a festival or Christmas lights, Piccadilly Circus and Oxford Street are places that reward good low-light photography techniques.

You may need to manually focus, or fine tune your auto-focus, so that lights appear crisp and sharp, without a halo.

A steady hand or tripod will allow you to lengthen your shutter speed and capture more detail without blur. It is also very helpful to use a wide aperture lens (in the range of $f/4.0$ or lower). Lower numbers take in more light at the same shutter speeds. In lieu of this, you can increase your ISO, which sets how sensitive your camera is to light. Increasing your camera's sensitivity is the same as letting in more light at the same shutter speed, except that it adds more and more noise (similar to static on a television) to your photos. The goal is to combine all three – shutter speed, aperture, and ISO – for the artistic effect you wish to create.

Chapter 6

City of London - Part I

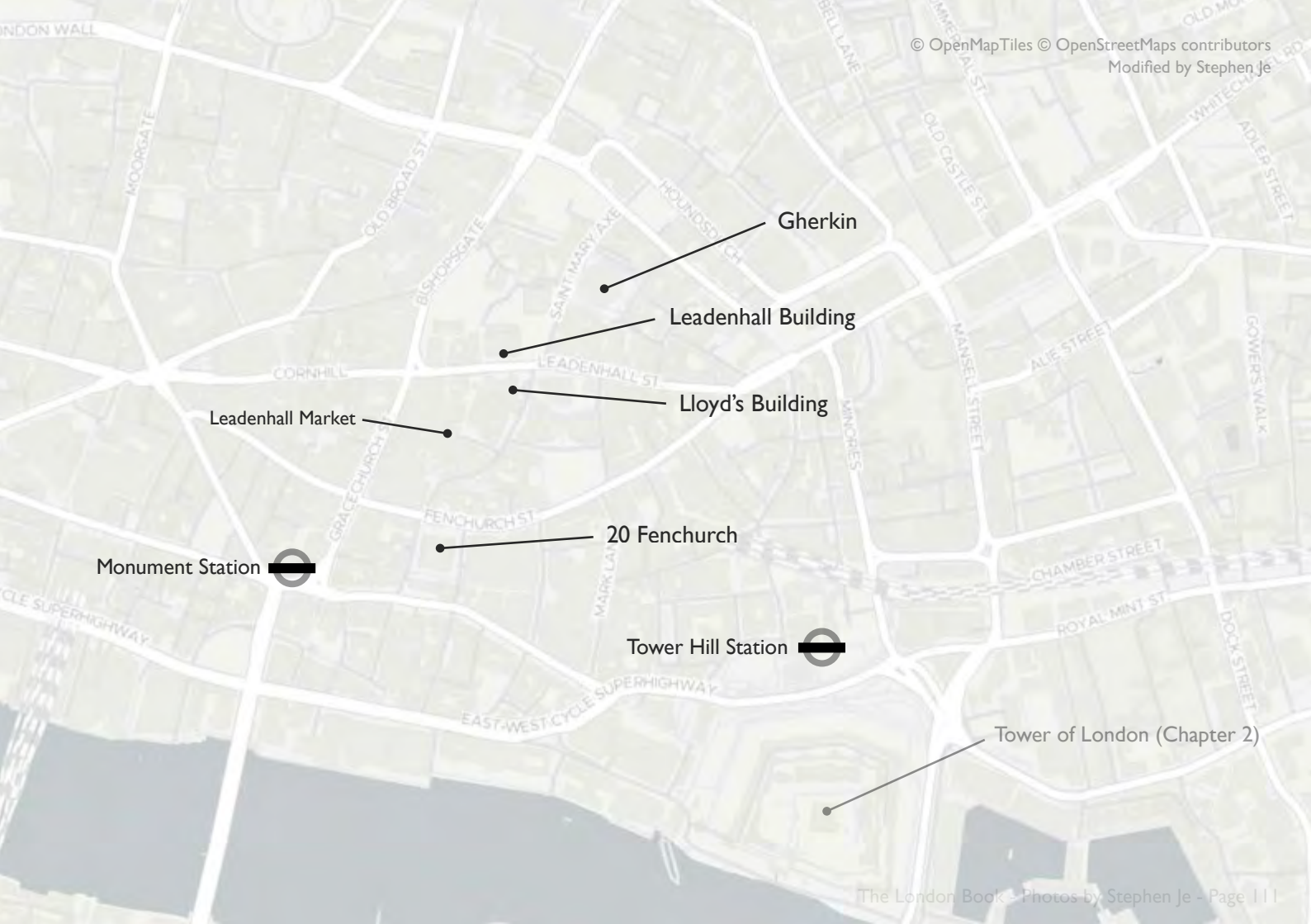
Leadenhall Market

20 Fenchurch

Lloyd's Building

Leadenhall Building

Gherkin



Gherkin

Leadenhall Building

Lloyd's Building

Leadenhall Market

20 Fenchurch

Monument Station

Tower Hill Station

Tower of London (Chapter 2)

Leadenhall Market

The historic Leadenhall Market was first opened in the 14th century and was featured in the Harry Potter films as Diagon Alley. Today, it is a Victorian style shopping center with restaurants, pubs, and stores for many tastes.

Leadenhall Market is hidden in the alleyways of the City of London financial district and retains its old-world charm.

The Eagle of Leadenhall Market. Stone carvings greet visitors and patrons to this central market in the City of London district.



20 Fenchurch

Completed in 2014, the 20 Fenchurch building is a distinctly ultra-modern take on skyscrapers. It eschews the normal conventions of rectangularity, opting instead for slight tapers and shaven curves that create its distinctive edge lines.

In a city full of distinctive buildings, 20 Fenchurch is easy to spot. It steals the scene in any photo where it is included even if it isn't the main subject.

Profiles of 20 Fenchurch. With a mix of Victorian-style architecture and on its own.





Marks & Spencer. The London shopping staple is on the left, with 20 Fenchurch in the background.



60 Gracechurch. Use of contours in modern London office buildings.

Lloyd's Building

This industrial-style building houses the Lloyd's of London insurance company. It was completed in 1986.

Architects whimsically describe this style as “bowellist,” or inside-out, because architectural components needed for the building to function are displayed on the outside, as part of the facade.

It has been used as a film location in over a dozen movies including Guardians of the Galaxy.

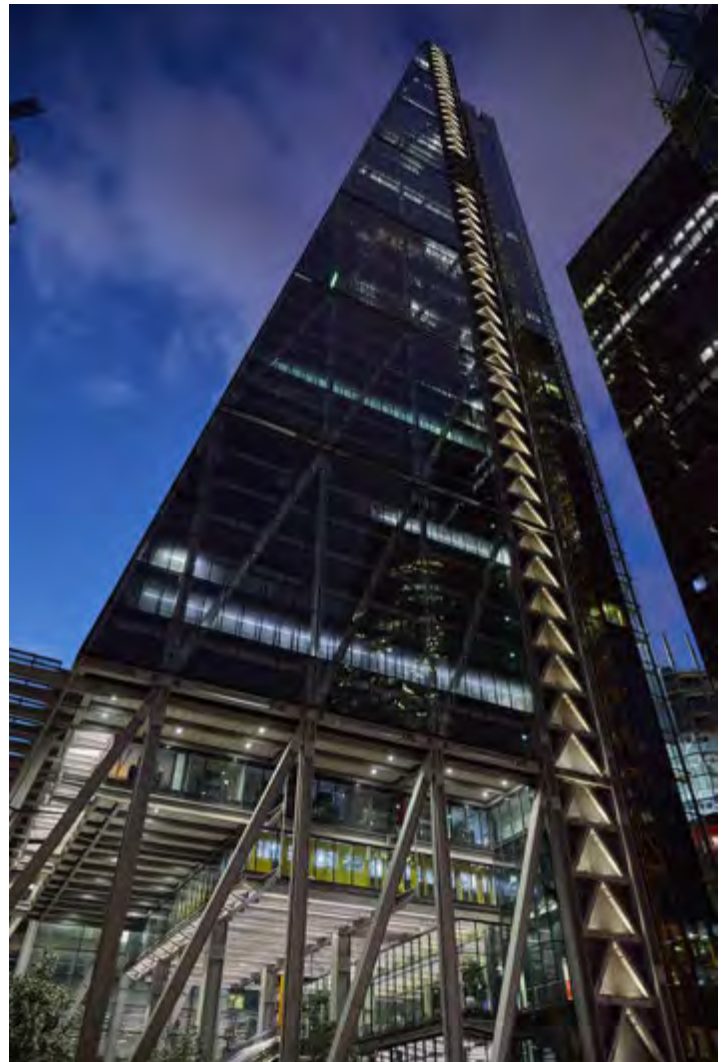
Lloyd's Building. This inside-out structure has been frequently used as a film location.



Leadenhall Building

In addition to the completion of 20 Fenchurch, 2014 also saw the completion of the Leadenhall Building, inaugurated by the Duke of Cambridge and Prince Harry the next year. Its wedge form tapers to provide a more open view across the City of London financial district, towards landmarks like St. Paul's Cathedral and the Palace of Westminster.

Leadenhall Building Profiles. As viewed from the west during the day and the east during late evening.



Leadenhall Skyline. The Leadenhall Building, The Scalpel (unfinished), and The Gherkin.



Gherkin

Opened in 2004, 30 St. Mary Axe, more well-known as the Gherkin, makes an ever-evolving statement. Instantly recognizable, it can be considered a precursor in the rapid construction of buildings shaping the new London skyline.

The glass panels on 30 St. Mary Axe create unique patterns given different cloud patterns and times of day. For now, the building is easily photographed from many areas in London.

With new construction daily and new buildings being designed, the 40-story Gherkin, intentionally or not, may be less visible in the next decades. Still, as a forerunner in the evolution of this world-class city, the Gherkin, as artwork, continues a bold tradition of British design and craftsmanship.

The Gherkin at Dusk. As photographed from in front of the Lloyd's Building, with a film grain effect using high ISO.



The Gherkin. As photographed from the Tower of London.



Gherkin Skyline. The Gherkin
in the City of London district.



Photography Tips for the City of London District

I believe that when photographing architecture lines are as important as colors. Lines show people what part of the photo or artwork they should be looking at. In some cases, they even tell a whole story. In general, I try to include lines that draw the viewer through the entire scene, so they can experience as much of what I see as possible. Often, these lines are meant to convey a sense of motion.

I also believe editing is part of the creative process. To me, this means removing or de-emphasizing parts of a scene that aren't part of the vision. It leads to a photo that creates more impact.

With this in mind, I like to capture a larger image than needed and edit portions out; this is called cropping a photo. A flexible approach like this gives photos an additional margin when they are used in framing or print. Apps and software let you crop photos easily. An experiment to try is making a copy of your favorite photos, choosing your favorite parts, then removing everything else. After some practice, you will develop a sense of personal style.

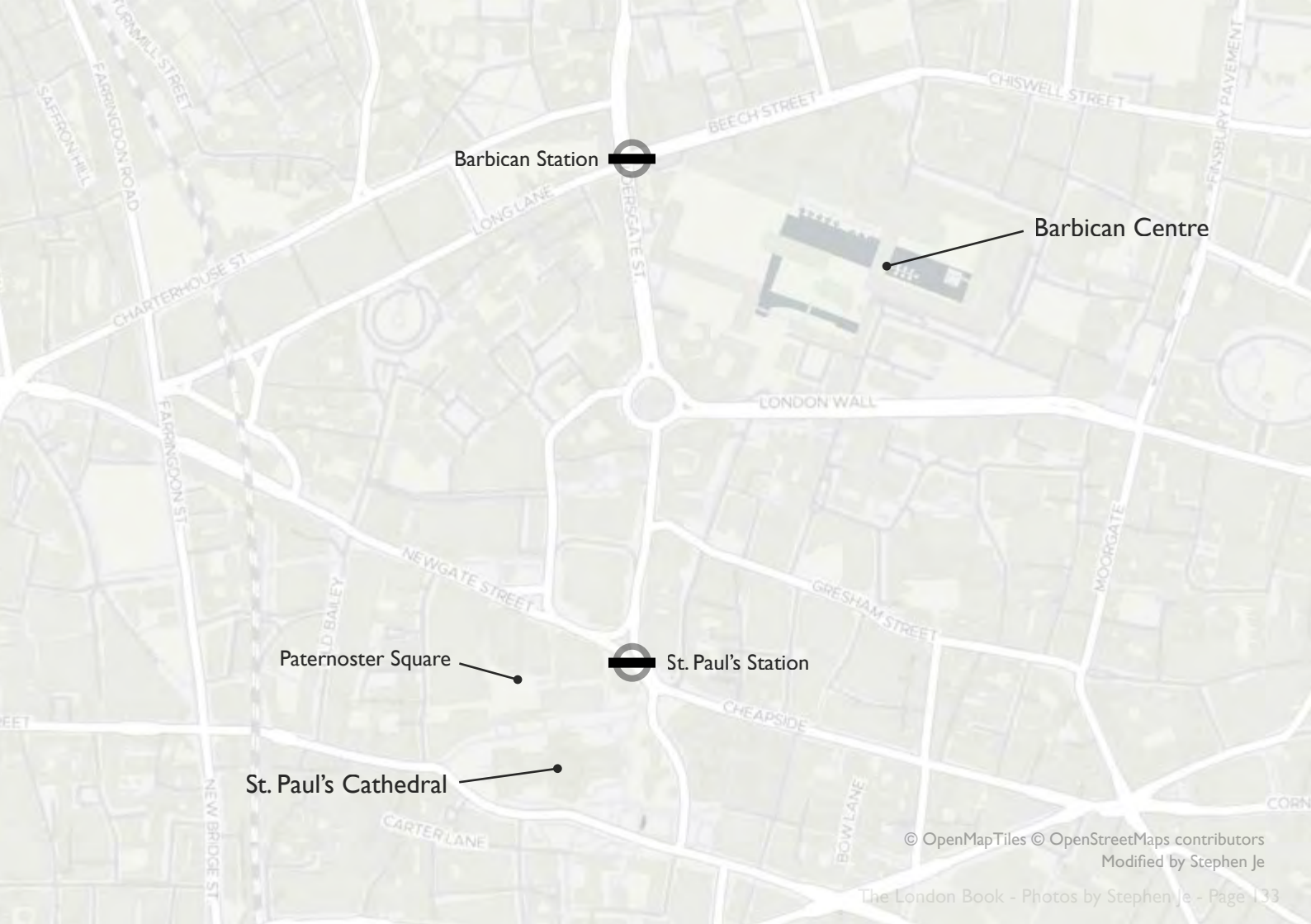




Chapter 7

City of London - Part II

St. Paul's Cathedral
Paternoster Square
Barbican Centre



Barbican Station

Barbican Centre

Paternoster Square

St. Paul's Station

St. Paul's Cathedral

St. Paul's Cathedral

This site has been home to a cathedral dedicated to St. Paul since the year 604. Over hundreds of years, several cathedrals were built and destroyed. The original was burned by fire in 675, and its replacement was destroyed by Vikings in 962. A new cathedral was then started by the Normans after a fire in 1087. Work on this replacement cathedral was halted in 1136 due to fire. It was consecrated in 1240.

In 1561, lightning struck the cathedral and its damage was never repaired. Then in 1666, the Great Fire of London destroyed the remaining building. Construction on the new cathedral, the one seen today, began in 1675 and was completed in 1711.

Designed by Christopher Wren, St. Paul's has been used as an inspiration for other buildings around the world, including the United States Capitol Building in Washington, D.C.

The south face of the cathedral displays the great dome, now familiar to much of the world. The west face is a more traditional entryway for a cathedral and has a combined Baroque and Neoclassical style.

The Great Dome. Architect Christopher Wren's work inspired others worldwide.



St. Paul's West Face. A statue of Queen Anne guards the front entrance.



Paternoster Square

The original Paternoster Row was destroyed by bombardment during WWII. The area was rebuilt and repurposed several times, with its latest rebuild starting in 1996.

Today's Paternoster Square was opened in 2003 and reflects the contemporary architecture of the period. It is home to the London Stock Exchange. The Paternoster Square Column is the most recognizable landmark in the area, and stands 23m / 75ft.

Paternoster Square Column. Atop the column is a copper urn lit with flame.



Barbican Centre

With its latest building added in 1982, Barbican Centre is a social and architectural experiment. It describes itself as an arts and learning center and houses the London Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Shakespeare Company.

On paper, it is a classic high-density, mixed-use residential complex, a place where people can work, live, and shop. It has a library, and its construction surrounded both a Medieval church that survived WWII and a school.

No matter how one might feel about the concept, the architecture of Barbican Centre is certainly controversial, and there are many unlit corners. There are dark areas where, perhaps by design, even as a healthy male, I found it unsettling. The Brutalist movement was at its peak between the 1950s and early 1970s, and the Barbican Centre is an active monument to this architectural style.

This large complex has surprisingly few entrances. In general, I recommend entering by Beech Street when walking or using the Underground. A taxi driver may decide to take you to Silk Street, which is the main entrance. If you decide to visit, please be courteous, as the Barbican Centre is also a residential area home to about 4,000 people.

Barbican Estate. An example of the many residences in the Barbican Centre. Buildings in this complex are managed by the City of London Corporation.



At the Barbican. Mixed-use developments like the Barbican combine residential and commercial uses into one complex. Barbican incorporates Brutalist architecture.





Barbican Hall. Classic Brutalist combined with functional geometry.

Chapter 8

Kensington and Knightsbridge

Royal Albert Hall

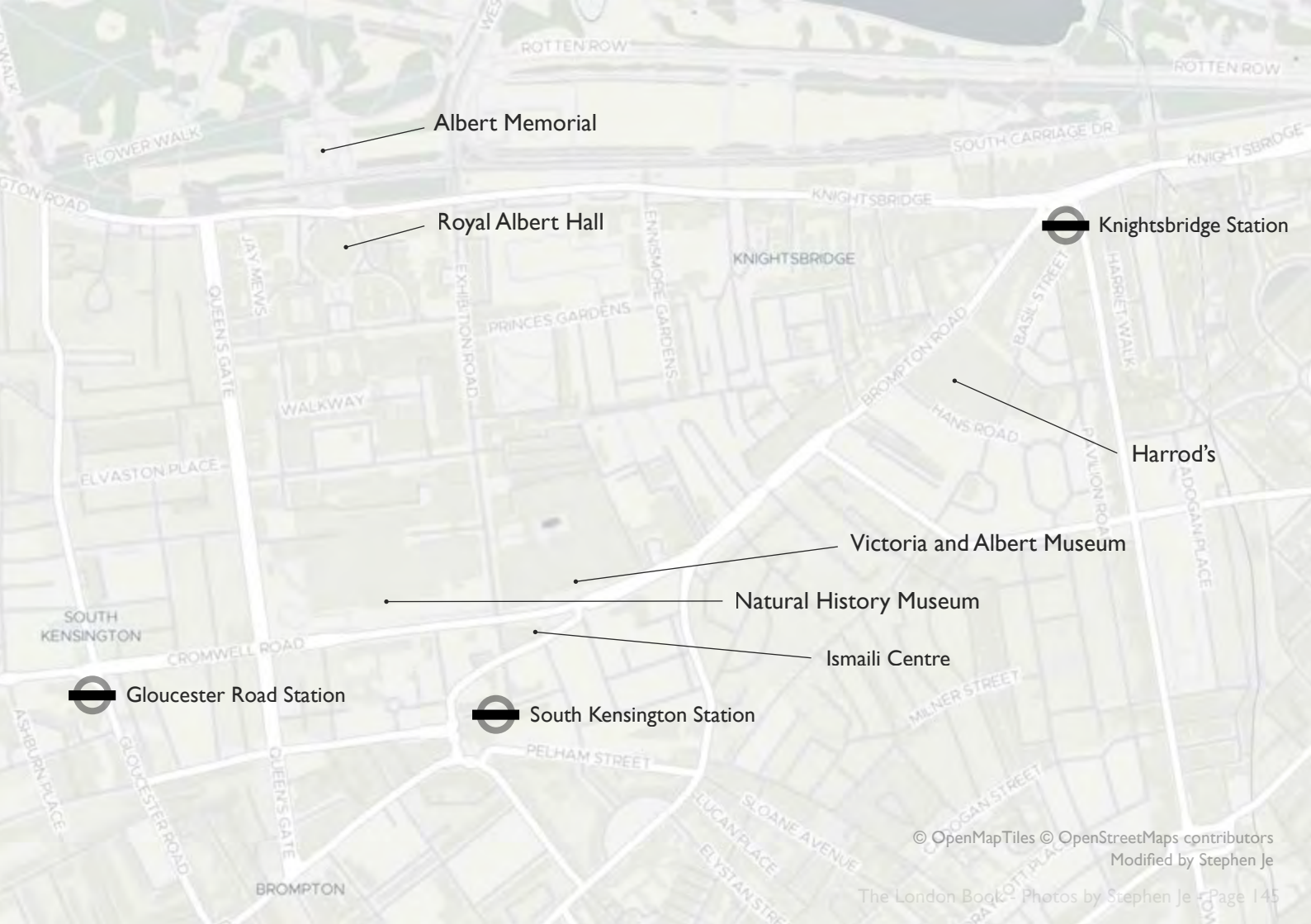
Albert Memorial

Victoria and Albert Museum

Natural History Museum

Ismaili Center

Harrod's



Albert Memorial

Royal Albert Hall

Knightsbridge Station

Harrod's

Victoria and Albert Museum

Natural History Museum

Ismaili Centre

Gloucester Road Station

South Kensington Station

Royal Albert Hall

Opened in 1871, people have gathered in this national institution to see entertainers such as Jimi Hendrix, Frank Sinatra, The Who, and The Beatles. In more recent years, it has hosted Adele, Coldplay, and Jay Z.

It is currently under renovation until 2021.

Royal Albert Hall from the East. Royal Albert Hall is the anchor piece of a quiet part of Kensington, just south of Hyde Park.



Albert Memorial

The Albert Memorial is dedicated to Albert, Prince Consort, and husband to Queen Victoria. It was recently restored in 2013, with a full bronzework cleaning and new marble elements.

Prince Albert's achievements advanced Great Britain forward in the arts, technology, and policy. He was instrumental in organizing the Great Exhibition of 1851, served as President of the Society for the Extinction of Slavery, and was an advocate of ending child labor.

He founded what was to become the Imperial College, funded the South Kensington Museum complex, and helped prevent a war with the United States.

The memorial itself is highly-photogenic and quite tall at 54m / 177ft. Each of its four faces is intricately detailed, specifically honoring Albert's interest in the arts.

Albert Memorial from the East. Prince Albert sits underneath a pagoda that spans the tree tops. New York City's St. Patrick's Cathedral has a ciborium that inspired my photos of The Albert Memorial.



Albert Memorial Details.

The photo on the right is an excerpt, or crop, of the photo on the previous page. It was taken with a wide-angle lens.

The photo on the next page was taken with a telephoto lens from about the same distance. Telephoto lenses are good at getting close to photo subjects from a distance.





Victoria and Albert Museum

Affectionately known as the V&A, the Victoria and Albert Museum bills itself as “the world’s leading museum of art and design.” It was founded in 1852 and has over 4 million items in its collection.

The facade of the main entrance includes a set of detailed stone reliefs as well as a sculpture of Prince Albert. The museum itself is a large complex, which is also accessible from a courtyard to the west, on Exhibition Road. Both entrances are quite photogenic.

Victoria and Albert Main Entrance. The inscription reads, “The excellence of every art must consist in the complete accomplishment of its purpose”.



VICTORIA AND
ALBERT MUSEUM

V&A
MUSEUM
LONDON
FREE
ENTRY

V&A Exhibition Road Quarter. This renovated section of the Victoria and Albert Museum was opened to the public in 2017.



Natural History Museum

Completed in 1881, the Natural History Museum could be seen as a classic Romanesque superstructure with Victorian Gothic elements. The building shares elements with traditional Gothic cathedrals, particularly the arch over the main entry and the dual towers that flank it.

The museum itself is home to fossils, skeletons, and models of animals, from the age of dinosaurs to the modern day.

The building is easily-accessible and is on the same street as the V&A Museum. It has many small design details that make it interesting to look at as you walk from one end to the other.

Natural History Museum. The main entrance has the silhouette of a traditional cathedral that has been “modernized” through Romanesque revival.



Ismaili Centre

The Ismaili Centre was opened in 1985 as a cultural and social meeting place for Ismaili Muslims. Margaret Thatcher and the Ismaili spiritual leader, the Aga Khan were in attendance.

The building itself is an interesting contrast to the Victoria and Albert Museum directly across the street and the Natural History Museum nearby. The museums are traditionally Victorian, with “modernized” Gothic elements, and the Ismaili Centre building has many Asian influences.

Ismaili Centre. The building stands out and blends in next to homes in Kensington.



Harrod's

Harrod's department store is a London institution. Filled to the brim with people during Christmas, it is an entire luxury shopping mall all to itself, and has a food hall extensive enough to be compared with the most impressive offerings in tourist-centered cities like Las Vegas.

Photographing Harrod's is both easy and challenging. The building itself sits on a narrow street. But the reward is a delightfully irreverent view on high-end retail, which stands in contrast with the nature of high-end sales. It is a fun building to photograph.

Harrod's in the Evening. The contours of the building are lit like a Christmas tree.



Harrod's Front Face. The view from Cromwell Road.



Chapter 9

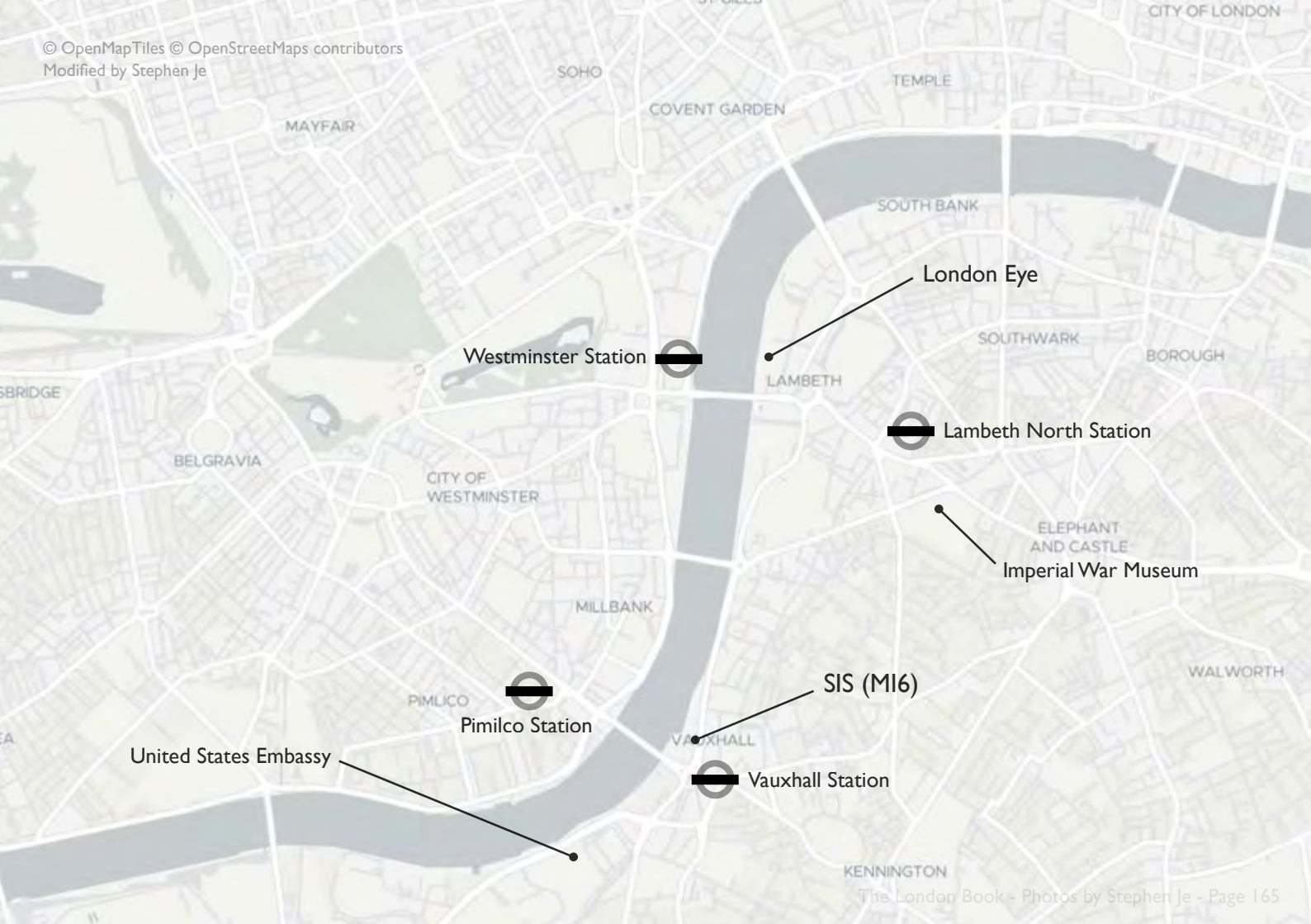
Lambeth, Vauxhall, and Battersea

London Eye

United States Embassy

International War Museum

SIS (MI6)



Westminster Station

London Eye

Lambeth North Station

Imperial War Museum

SIS (MI6)

Vauxhall Station

Pimlico Station

United States Embassy

London Eye

The London Eye is the fourth-largest Ferris wheel in the world and stands 135m / 443 ft tall. One can interpret its shape as a reminder to the UK Ministry of Defence, just across from it along the River Thames, to stay vigilant.

Since the London Eye is quite large, it can be easily photographed from many areas of London, including Westminster, which is across the River Thames.

The London Eye. Opened in 2000 to celebrate the new millennium.



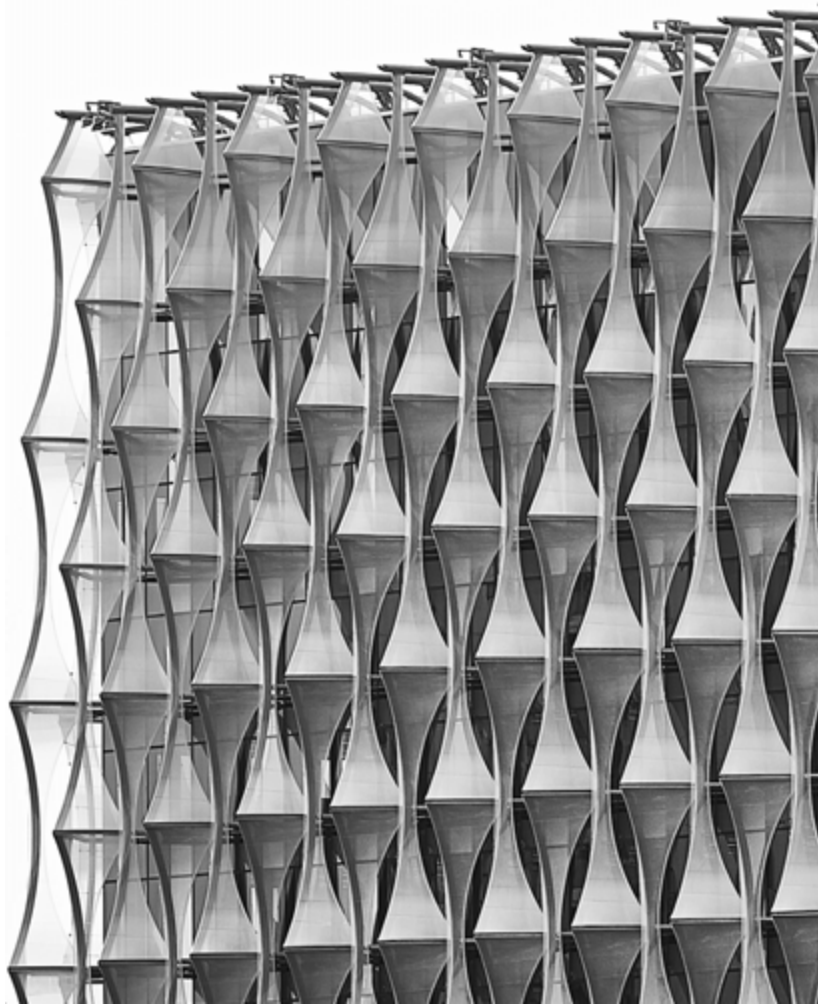
United States Embassy

The New London Embassy (NLE) in the Nine Elms district of London replaces the former building in the Mayfair district. This modernized building is a secure, environmentally-friendly take on modern construction.

It is designed to be carbon negative, meaning it removes more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere than it creates. The southern facades are covered by “sails” that reduce the amount of energy needed to cool the building. It also has a rainwater collection system that is used to irrigate gardens within the building.

The building itself is in a relatively out-of-the-way part of London. The goal is to grow the economy in the area around the embassy.

The New United States Embassy. Sails adorn the building and keep it shaded from the sun.





Imperial War Museum

The Imperial War Museum (IWM) in London opened in 1936, and is home to artifacts and re-creations from wars that England has fought.

The building itself was a hospital, originally built in 1828, and the 15-inch (barrel size) guns that adorn the front entrance are from the Royal Navy ships that fought in WWII. The left gun is from the HMS Ramillies, and the right was mounted on the HMS Resolution before being moved to the HMS Roberts.

Imperial War Museum London. The sign on the left says "Change Your Life".



SIS (MI6)

Prominently featured in the James Bond films, the SIS building is home to the United Kingdom's Secret Intelligence Service, also known as MI6. It is a stunning emerald gem in many ways.

The side of the building along the Albert Embankment is secured. As a courtesy, I recommend not photographing there.

Instead, there are many great places to photograph the SIS building from both the Vauxhall Bridge and Millbank, which is across the River Thames. All of these spots have views of SIS that are instantly recognizable from the movies.

Her Majesty's Secret Service. The headquarters building from the James Bond movies.





London is unique in the world. It's modern, whimsical, and medieval — all at the same time. Professional photographer Stephen Je shows you where and how to take the best photos of this global icon.

See dozens of full color and stunning black and white photos of London's most popular locations and learn techniques for taking pictures of them. This book also includes simple maps so you'll be able to visit these sites quickly and easily.



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