

**THE INSTITUTION OF HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION AWARDS 2008  
THE IHT/CENTRE FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE  
SECURITY IN THE PUBLIC REALM AWARD**

**SUBMISSION**

**WHITEHALL STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

**Background**

A major programme of street improvement works is under way in Whitehall; the iconic home of Government, major tourist attraction and critical transport link. The £25M Whitehall Streetscape Improvement Project will transform the area into a safer, better environment for residents, workers and visitors alike.

Following terrorist attacks around the world, government departments located in Whitehall perceived a need to improve physical security, particularly against vehicle bombs and suicide vehicle attacks. To avoid a piecemeal approach to design and implementation, the eleven departments concerned agreed to pool their resources, under Cabinet Office lead, and develop a consolidated security requirement meeting common needs.

Westminster City Council had long planned to improve the Whitehall street scene and provide a better experience for those living, working and visiting the area. Unfortunately, the Council lacked funding necessary to realise its ambitions.

Uniquely, the Cabinet Office and City Council agreed to collaborate on the project to deliver the objectives that both organizations sought. Drawing on the experience of West One, the Council's service provider, this partnership is delivering essential security and street improvements to the highest standards, sensitively and sympathetically.

**Defining the Security Requirement**

Following a period of extensive study and review, departments opted to improve resilience against vehicle attack by enforcing vehicle stand-off using physical barriers. Using TRL's specialist analysis and modelling expertise producing vehicle threat and dynamic assessments tailored specifically to Whitehall area, enabled the team to develop and specify minimum containment criteria for the security measures, forming a baseline for further scheme design. Critically, only barriers with a proven capability to resist vehicle impact would be used.

## **The Wider Design Requirement**

The City Council had long sought to make highway improvements befitting this area of national and international importance. Better use of public space, improved traffic management and easier access for buses, taxis and cycles was needed; together with improved facilities for pedestrians, public safety and tourist needs. Lighting needed to be upgraded and street clutter had to be reduced; all without detriment to traffic flows.

## **Merging the Requirements**

Whitehall is one of the most important and best known streets in the land. It is an area of immense historical importance, a conservation area and home to numerous listed buildings and monuments. Introducing conspicuous security measures in such an area was never going to be an easy process; City Council support was essential. However, the major constructions needed to install security measures offered a route to achieve wider Council aspirations. Working in partnership, both objectives could be achieved.

## **Developing the Design**

A Project Team, combining the expertise of the partner organizations and supported by respected conservation architects Purcell Miller Tritton, streetscape development consultants Atkins Public Realm and other specialists, sought to deliver the best affordable design solution for the area, embracing the security requirement but in a manner sympathetic to the landscape and consistent with local architecture. Building on earlier 'World Squares for All' proposals, the resulting design sees innovative use of widened footways and the introduction of walls, balustrades and traditional bollards as barriers, with best quality materials used throughout. Extensive traffic modelling ensures an effective redevelopment solution.

## **Planning, Research and Consultation**

Extensive planning, research and consultation was undertaken to meet the security, traffic, pedestrian, transportation and cultural needs of Partners and stakeholders. In developing the final design, the Partners effectively combined the complicated and conflicting functional needs of multiple stakeholders, with the aspirations and statutory requirements of the Council, TfL and English Heritage. To achieve a design balancing the needs of all stakeholders, the Partners effectively consulted over 50 organisations, including statutory bodies and local interest groups. Importantly, key stakeholders and the public have been informed of progress through bulletins, information leaflets and public notices.

## **Innovation and Best Value**

Value Engineering solutions to construction obstacles have been achieved through close collaboration with Corus Bi-Steel, developing bespoke variants of their patented temporary anti-terrorist barrier system. A prefabricated Bi-Steel bollard foundation unit, addressing installation and utility diversion issues, and Bi-Steel wall and balustrade cores have been specifically developed to meet project needs. Extensive impact and blast testing of these new products, co-sponsored by the project, CPNI and Corus Bi-Steel, and building upon the existing CPNI research and development programmes, provide assurances of product capabilities and performance; whilst adding to the overall knowledgebase of restraint mechanism behaviours. Although developed to meet a specific need, these new products have wider potential application elsewhere.

The extensive works also afford the opportunity to review, refine and coordinate the needs of public space CCTV operators in the area, optimising and consolidating camera locations and adding to the reduction of unnecessary street furniture.

## **Management, Oversight and Performance**

A comprehensive governance structure oversees project delivery. High-level decision making rests with a Project Board, comprising representation from the Cabinet Office, Council, West One and stakeholders. The Project Team delivers daily management. The project follows Office of Government Commerce best practice guidelines. There is a comprehensive system of reporting, risk management and issue escalation; open book accounting ensures complete visibility of costs and expenditure.

There is a true a spirit of collaboration, frank communication and considerable trust on all sides. Partners share decision making and key supporting documentation. Comprehensive reporting enables the Project Board to effectively measure performance against time, cost and quality. Risk is managed on a daily basis and upwardly reported as necessary. Independent consultants have reviewed routine project management procedures and performance within each partner organization and the project has successfully negotiated the OGC Gateway™ Process.

## **Benefits**

Neither government departments nor the Council could have fully realised their aspirations for Whitehall working independently. The benefits to both organizations are immense. Departments achieve their security ambitions in short order with minimal controversy or adverse reaction. The Council achieves its aspirations to improve and redevelop the area to deliver a world class environment. The user community benefits from a safer and much improved local environment with better use of public space, improved traffic management and better access for buses, taxis and cycles. The entire area is restored with renewed pavement and road surfaces using best quality materials.