

# CASE STUDY SUMMARY

## Trafalgar Square

Location: London, United Kingdom

Date: 1996 - 1998

### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

City squares stand as potent symbols within the urban landscape, serving as spaces utilized by the general public for recreational activities and social interactions (Amin, 2008). Notable among these squares is Trafalgar Square in London, designed by Sir Charles Barry in 1840 (London Assembly, 2016). In 1996, the Westminster City Council and the Greater London Authority commissioned a masterplan for the area, aiming to enhance the quality of the public realm. Despite its historical significance, the square was perceived as unpleasant, unsafe, and dominated by vehicular traffic. Initially configured as a traffic roundabout with minimal pedestrian presence, Trafalgar Square underwent redevelopment in 2003.

An intensive observation study of pedestrians in the area was conducted to develop an advanced pedestrian movement model. The analysis of pedestrian activity patterns revealed two primary concerns: a reluctance among Londoners to traverse the central area of Trafalgar Square and a failure of tourists to navigate between Trafalgar Square and Parliament Square. The developed model enabled the diagnosis of issues across the masterplan area and the identification of strategic design solutions. Interventions included the implementation of a substantial new staircase leading into Trafalgar Square, the selective pedestrianization of public spaces, and the re-establishment of a connection between Parliament Square and the broader area.

These interventions yielded substantial improvements, evidenced by a remarkable 250% increase in pedestrian activity; a 900% increase in its use as a pedestrian through-route; and a transformative shift in public perceptions, positioning Trafalgar



Square as a premier destination. Beyond these achievements, the project instigated a comprehensive reallocation of road space, diminishing its allocation to cars in favor of buses, pedestrians, and cyclists. The application of Space Syntax as an evidence-based method demonstrably enhances urban environments and the quality of citizens' lives.

### Trafalgar Square, London Spatial design process



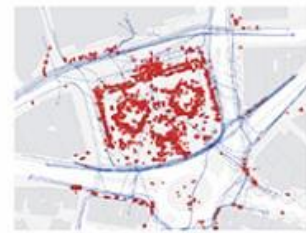
Observe



Explain



Forecast



Deliver



Source: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/made-at-ucl/stories/space-syntax-makes-structure-city-spaces-work-people>

## LINKS

<https://spacesyntax.com/project/trafalgar-square/>

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/made-at-ucl/stories/space-syntax-makes-structure-city-spaces-work-people>

