

# Graphic Skills Portal

## Technique Handouts

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### ANALYSING



Creating a  
strategic analysis  
map using Illustrator

**URBAN**  
**GRAPHICS**  
**SKILLS**





## Open a digimap map and make it editable in Illustrator by realising clipping masks

Very often a PDF image (or any kind of vector-based image) is composed of different layers and/or overlapped images. If you want to modify/erase/separate one of those layers, firstly you should unlock it by releasing any clipping mask. To do this:

Once you open a PDF image (or any kind of vector-based image) in Illustrator, you should left-click on the element you want to release (it seems that nothing is selected by this point), such as a text or a line, then right-click on it and press [‘releasing clipping mask’](#).





Once you release the first clipping mask (right-click), then you should deselect (or click on the grey background). When everything is deselected, then you should select with the cursor something on the map that has not been released. Once it is selected, then you right-click on it and again 'release clipping mask'.

If everything is released, by right-clicking you will not find anymore the tool 'release clipping mask'.

PS. you can do this only i) before modifying the image in PSD and ii) if it originally is a PDF image (or any kind of vector-based image).

A step-by-step tutorial is also available in the ***BSP Graphic Skills Portal – Adobe Illustrator handout***

PPS. sometimes you need to '**ungroup**' the image before starting realising clipping masks. To do this, right-click on the image and press 'ungroup', then click on the grey background and, when everything is deselected, start with the 'release clipping mask' process.



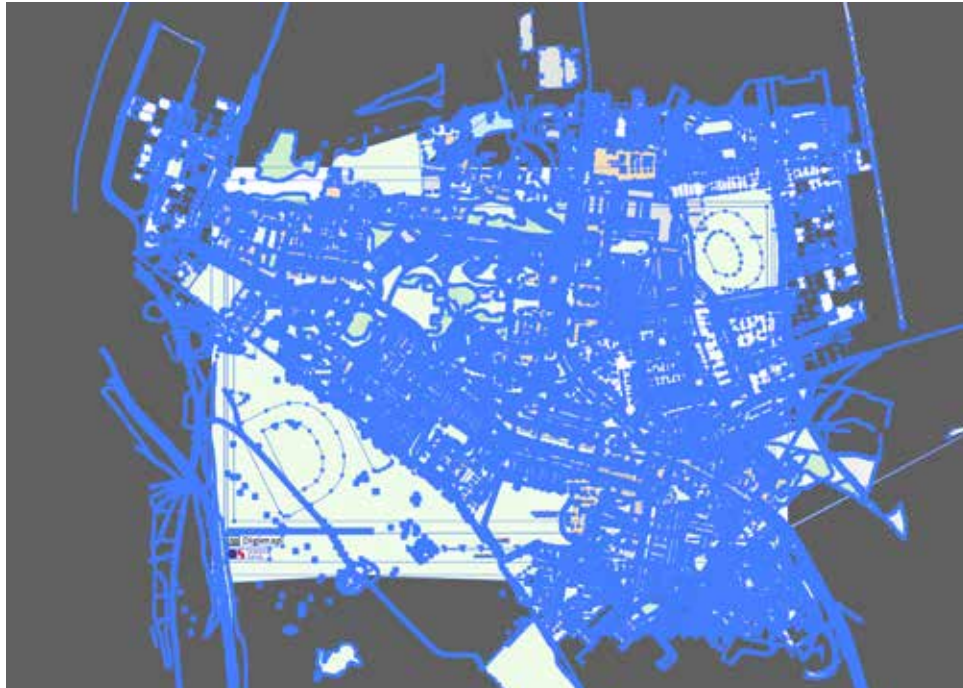
When you are in this situation, it means you still have to realise some clipping mask. You can understand this if:

- The green areas' colour (green) appears only inside the boundary of the frame – it means you should realise the gardens/parks, etc.
- The buildings' colour (orange) appears only inside the boundary of the frame – it means you should realise the building layer.
- The streets' colour (grey) appears only inside the boundary of the frame – it means you should realise the streets/plots, etc. layer.
- Etc.





When everything is realised, you will see that objects are spanned outside of the paper artboard, as well as, you will be able to select everything.





## Select similar objects

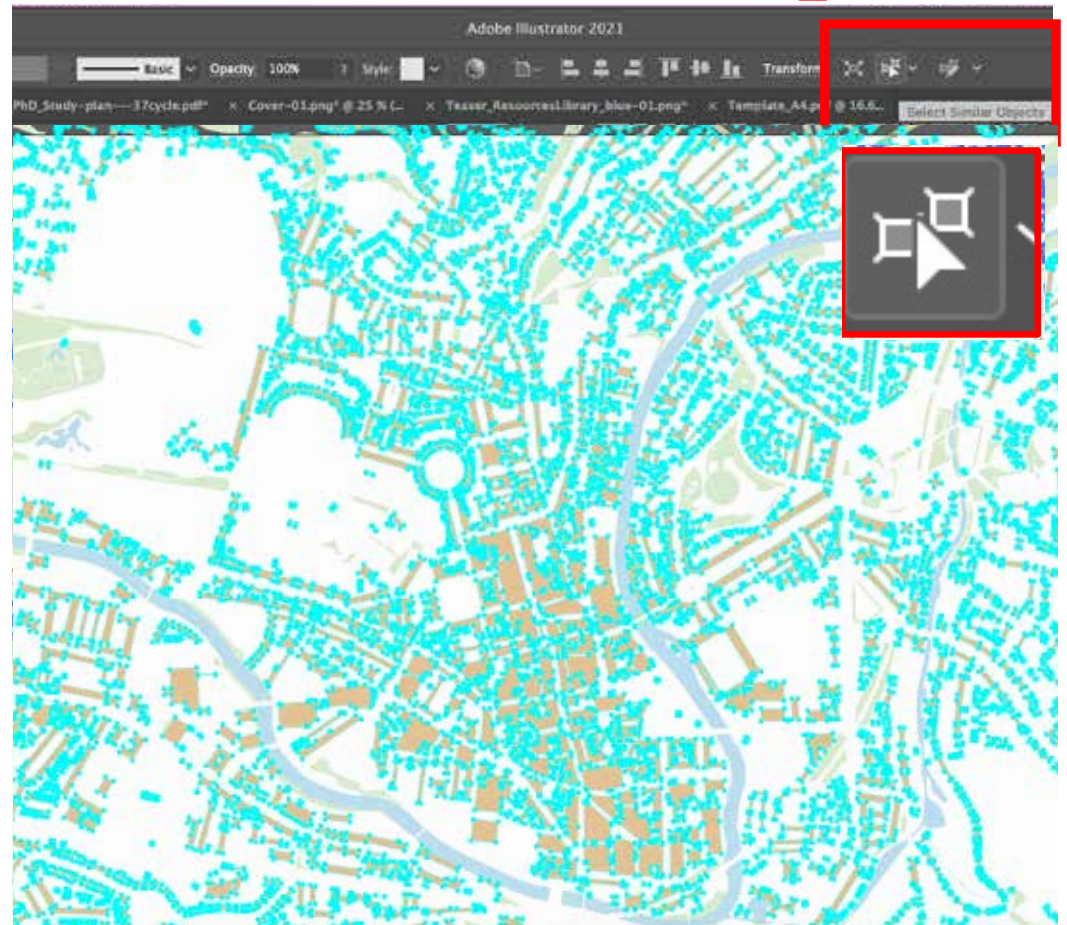
Now, you may want to separate different layers via selecting similar objects:

1. Click once on the fill colour of a building (NB. you can check that the selection is right when the fill colour is orange in the left-side bar).
2. Choose **Window > Select similar objects**, and choose a preset from the **Preset** drop-down menu.

1



2

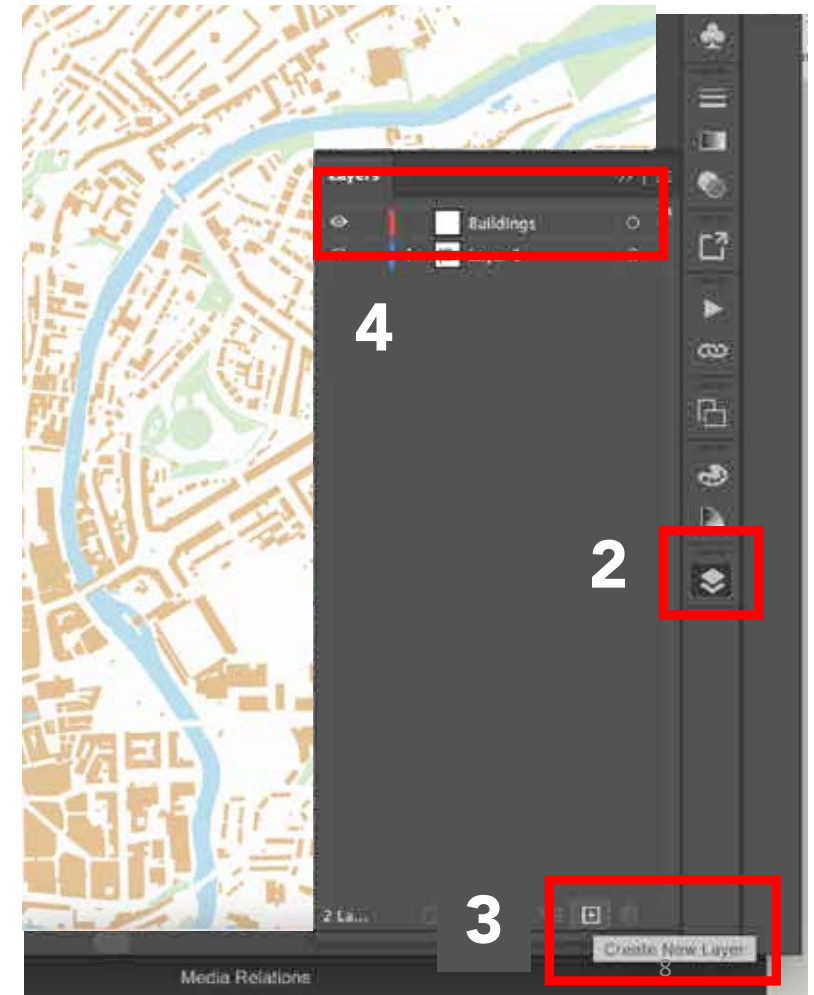




## Create a separate layer

Now, all the buildings are selected. To 'separate' them from the other objects, and move them to a different layer:

1. Edit > Cut
2. Before pasting, go on the right-sidebar > open layers
3. On the bottom, click on '+' to create a new layer
4. Rename it as 'Buildings'



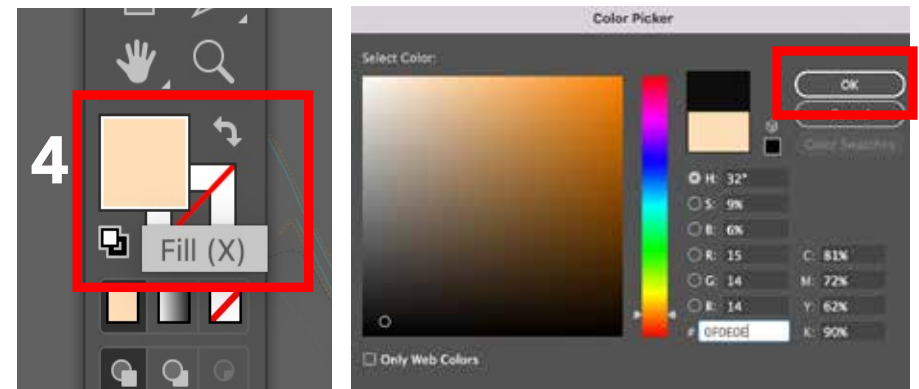
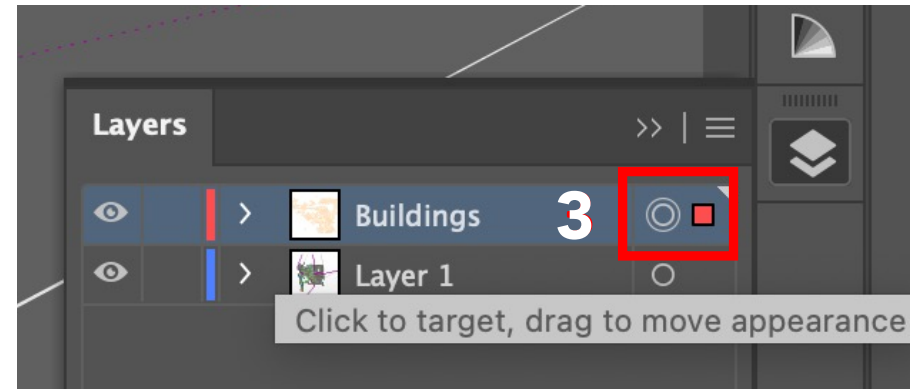




## Create a separate layer

Once you have created the layer 'Building':

1. Select the new layer created
2. Edit > paste in place
3. Now, all the buildings on your map are on a separate layer. To change colour, select all the object on that layer at once by clicking the **small dot** close to the layer's name.
4. Change colours to all the selected buildings by using the left-sidebar: double-click on the fill colour > pick the black colour > ok





## Setting the background of your map

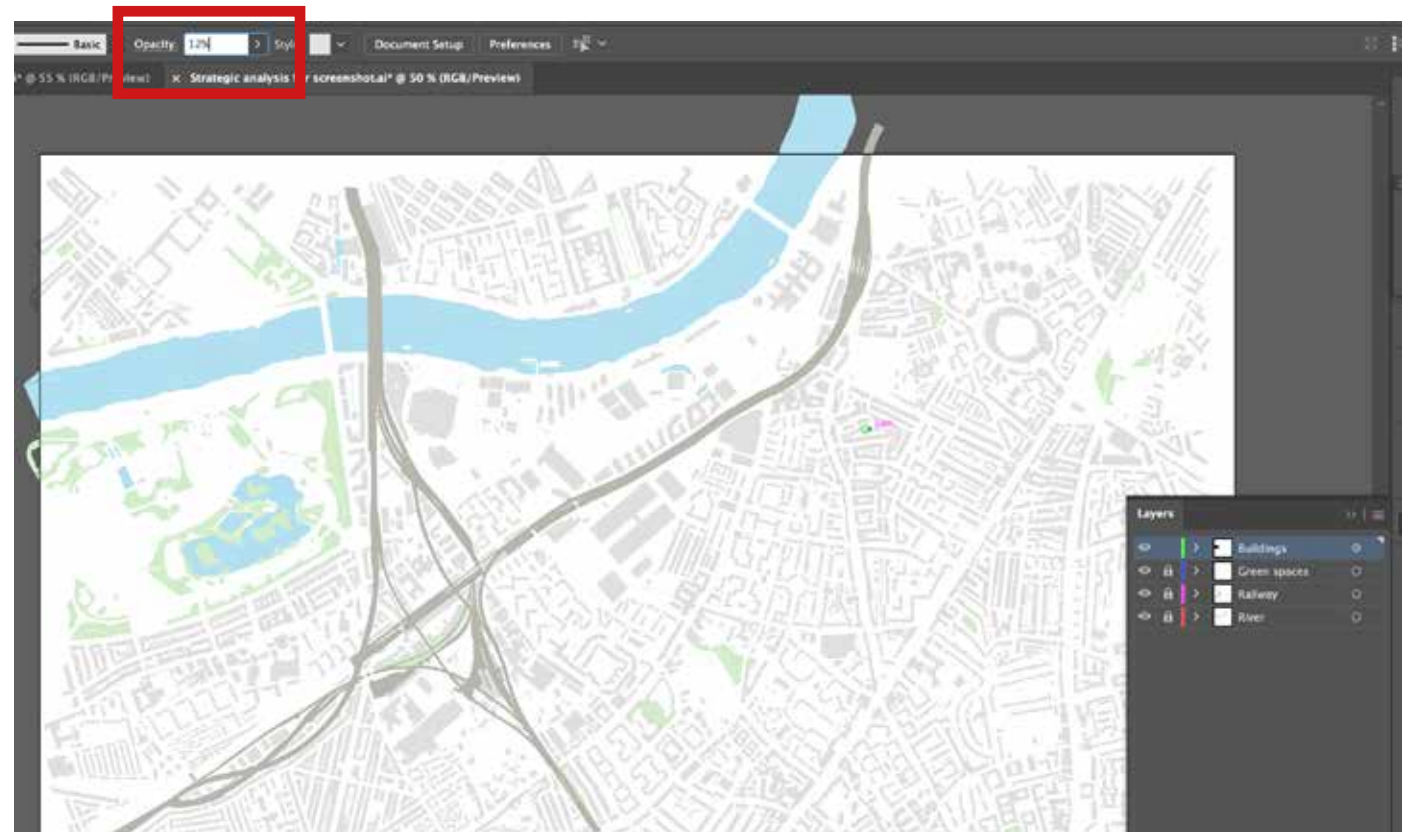
All the buildings are now black. You can clear up the other layers by keeping only those essentials (green spaces, buildings, water).





## Setting the background of your map

Adjust layers and on the layer 'Buildings' add opacity up to 12% (see image)









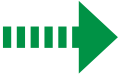




## Setting the legend and key elements you may want to show

Now, you should identify different key elements that you may want to show in your map. Those mainly relate to the opportunities and weaknesses of the existing situation that may represent key elements for the development of the masterplan.

The elements generally added in strategic maps are:

1. **Site boundary** that define the boundary of the analysed area.
2. **Connecting links**
3. **Other paths** which could be pedestrian, vehicle, or other specific ones.
4. **Iconic landmarks**
5. **Barriers** to the accessibility or visibility.
6. **Principal transport nodes**
7. **District and local centres**

Note: many other elements can be added, this may depend on the purpose / framework of your map.

	Site boundary
	Connecting links
	Riverside path (Blue Route)
	Nine Elms (Red Route)
	Linear Park (Green Route)
	Iconic landmarks
	Barriers
	Principal transport nodes
	District and local centres

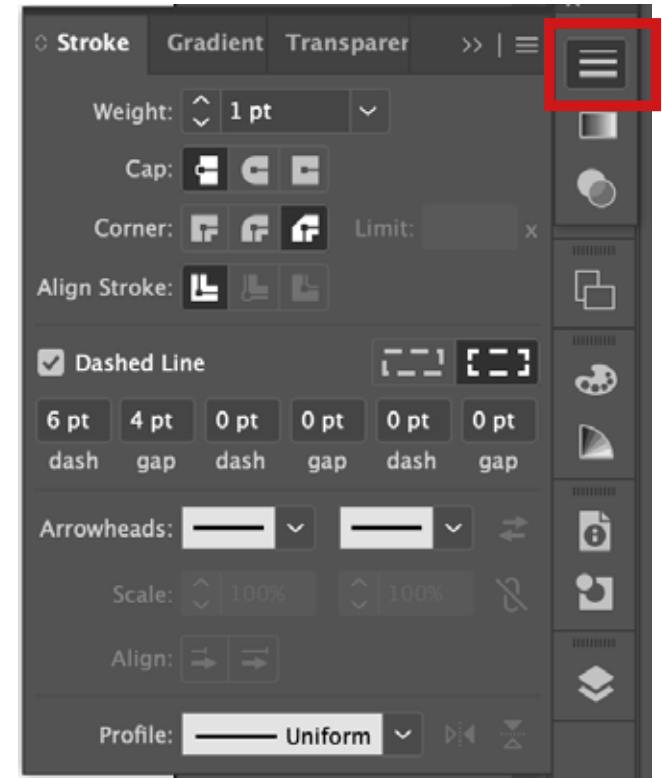


## Setting the legend and key elements you may want to show



Site boundary

Use the **STROKE PANEL** to adjust stroke weight and dashed line

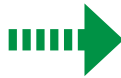




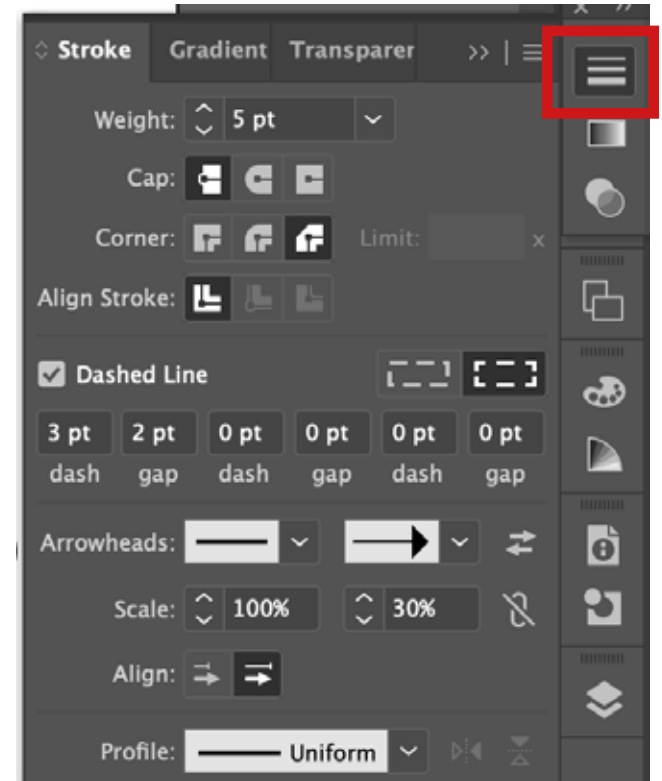
## Setting the legend and key elements you may want to show



For links and paths, use the **STROKE PANEL** to adjust stroke weight, arrowheads and dashed line



For iconic landmarks, use the **FILL/STROKE PANEL**



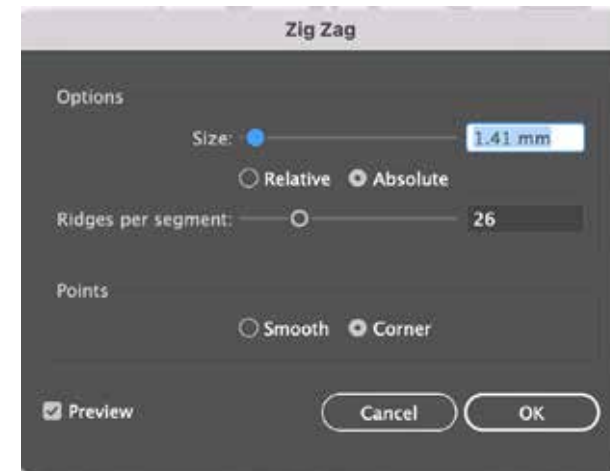
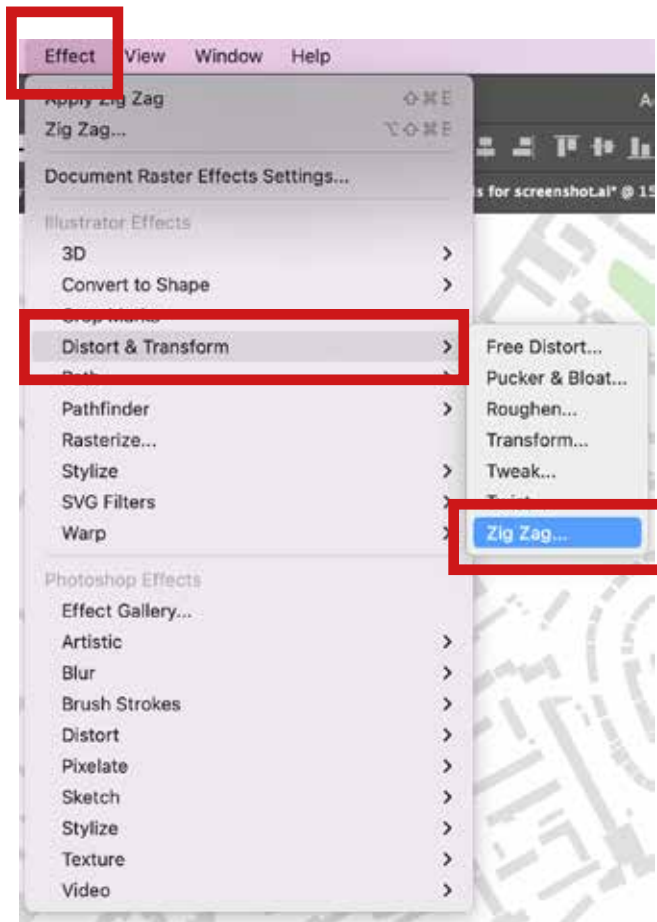


## Setting the legend and key elements you may want to show



Barriers Use the **LINE TOOL** and create a straight line.

Go to EFFECT > Distort & Transform > Zig Zag





## Setting the legend and key elements you may want to show

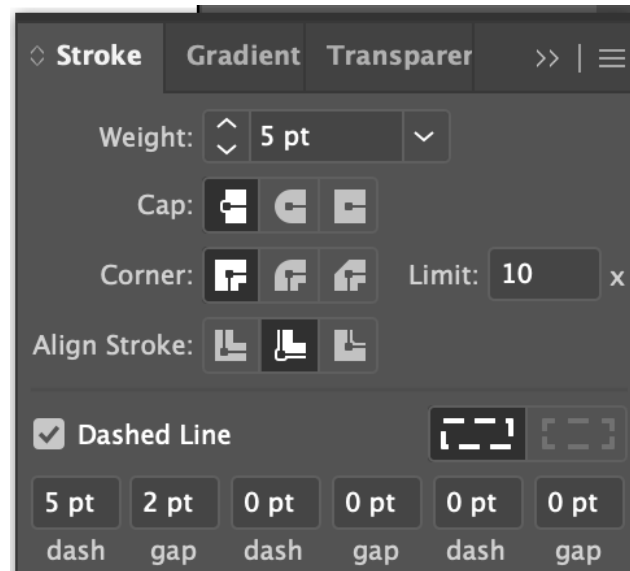


Principal transport nodes



District and local centres

Use the **ELLIPSE TOOL (L)** to create circles and then adjust using the **STROKE PANEL**.

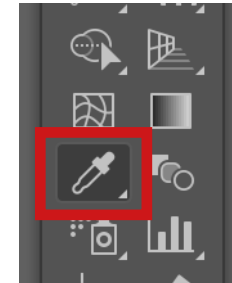






## Produce your map

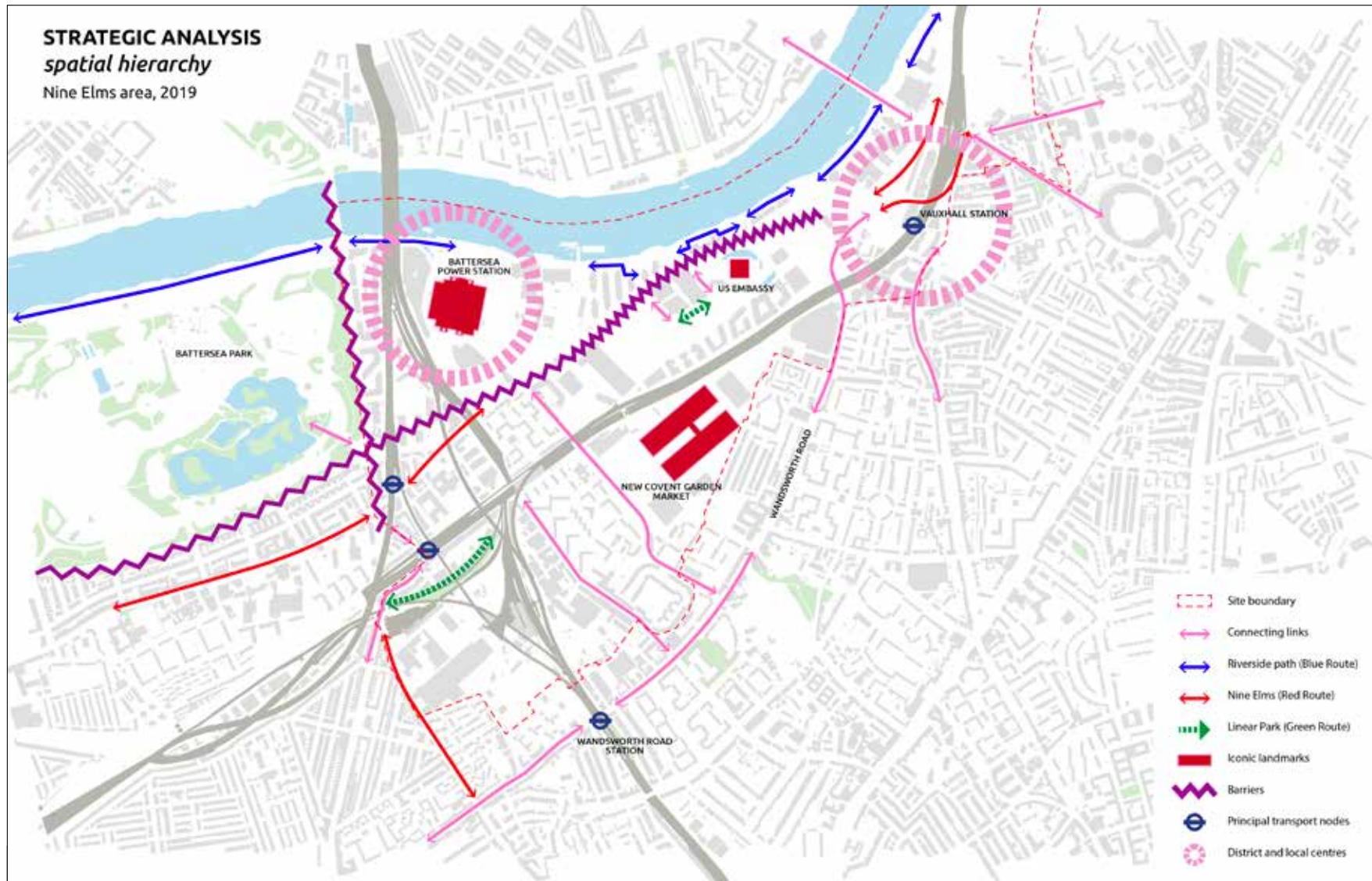
Now that the legend is defined, you can proceed by adding the identified elements to the map. You can start tracing elements on the map, and then use the **Eyedropper tool** to assign properties from the legend.





## Finalise your analysis for details

Lastly, you can adjust your analysis by adding a title, scale bar, text, etc.

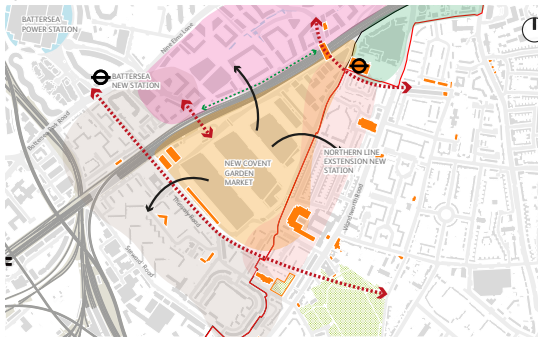




This was just an example on how you can produce a strategic analysis, but you can explore more complex ways and styles for it. *Note, hand-drawings are also common techniques for strategic maps.* Here some examples:

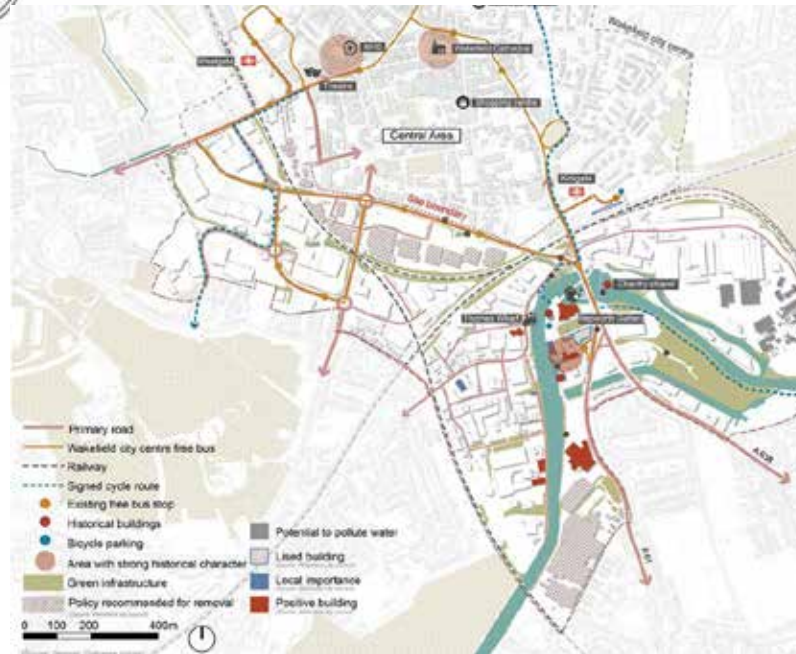


Evans, R., (2021) Strategic Urban Design. Retrieved from <https://www.udg.org.uk/publications/articles/strategic-urban-design>

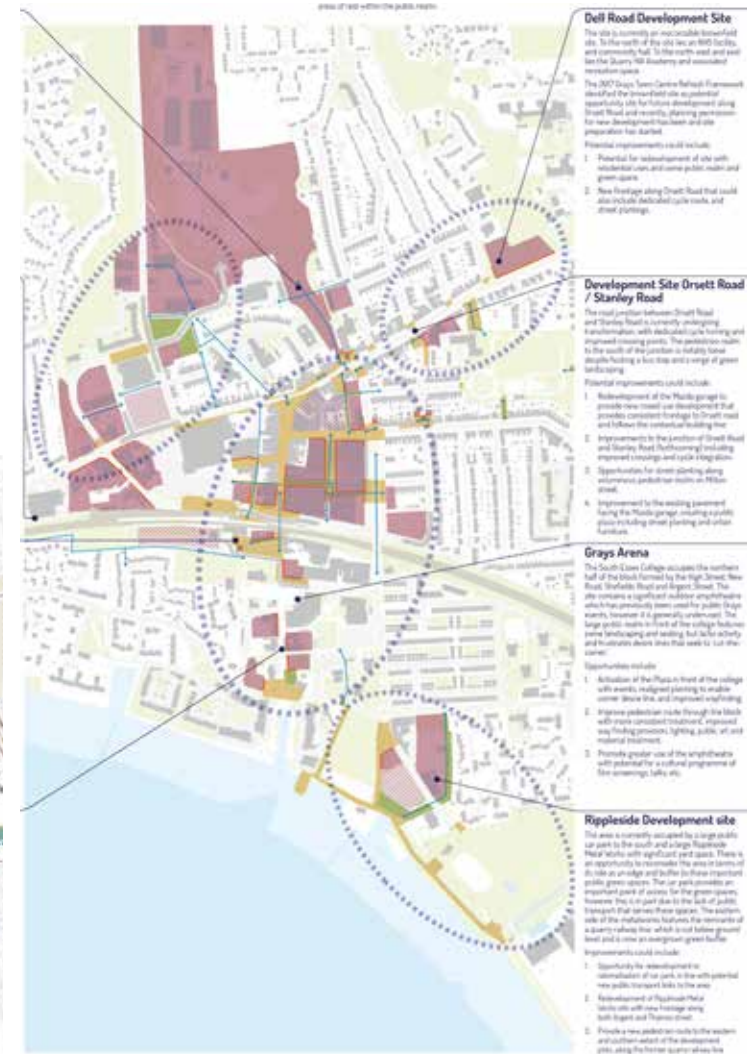


- Future underground station
- Existing train stations
- Existing underground station
- Gateway from Wandsworth
- Existing links
- Potential green link
- Strategic action to "bring the neighbourhood out"
- Disconnections

Nine Elms Placemaking Framework, AR Urbanism, 2018



URBAN BROWNFIELD AND WATERFRONT REGENERATION by Jiayu Zhu



Grays Town Centre, AR Urbanism, 2019



**THE BARTLETT**