

Graphic Skills Portal

Technique Handouts

2

VISUALISING



Creating a Concept Plan
using Illustrator

URBAN
GRAPHICS
SKILLS

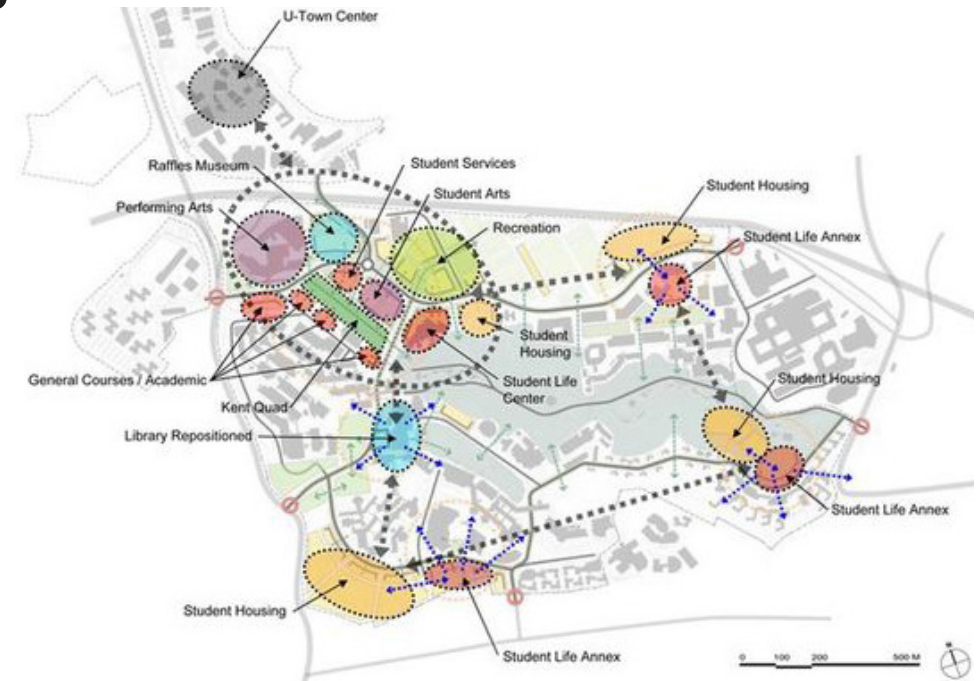
What is a Concept Plan in urban design?

There are several definitions of a Concept Plan (or Concept Design) in urban design.

The Calgary University of Planning defines the Concept Plan as a supporting high-level plan that illustrates the initial long-term vision for development of a neighbourhood, urban block or site.

The Concept Plan is used to:

- evaluate initial design merits connected to the creation of a special sense of place and unique character of the future development,
- evaluate how a development or land use proposal aligns with City policies and demonstrates the principles of a development vision,
- ensure the feasibility of potential future development.



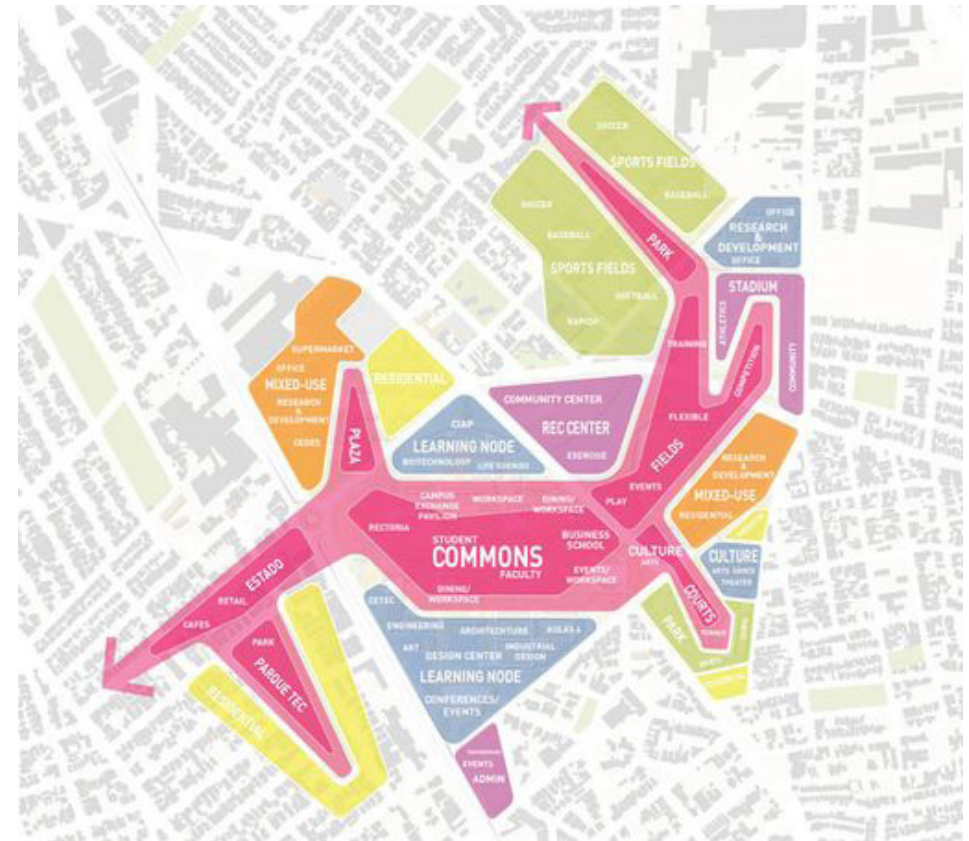
The Auckland Design Manual defines the concept plan as a map showing how the general design principles (form and layout) respond to the opportunities and constraints identified in the context analysis.

This is a drawing that represents the development at a conceptual level, illustrating the main design ideas/principles and factors. For example, the general locations of built form vs. open space, hard edges vs. visually permeable, movement paths and level changes.

The Concept Plan is a useful drawing that quickly captures the key 'moves' and design principles, e.g. building vs. open space; access ways; service areas; key views; benefiting from the sun's path; areas of activity vs. private and quiet spaces etc. It is recommended that the applicant discuss the concept design with council officers at a pre-application meeting.

The Concept Plan should:

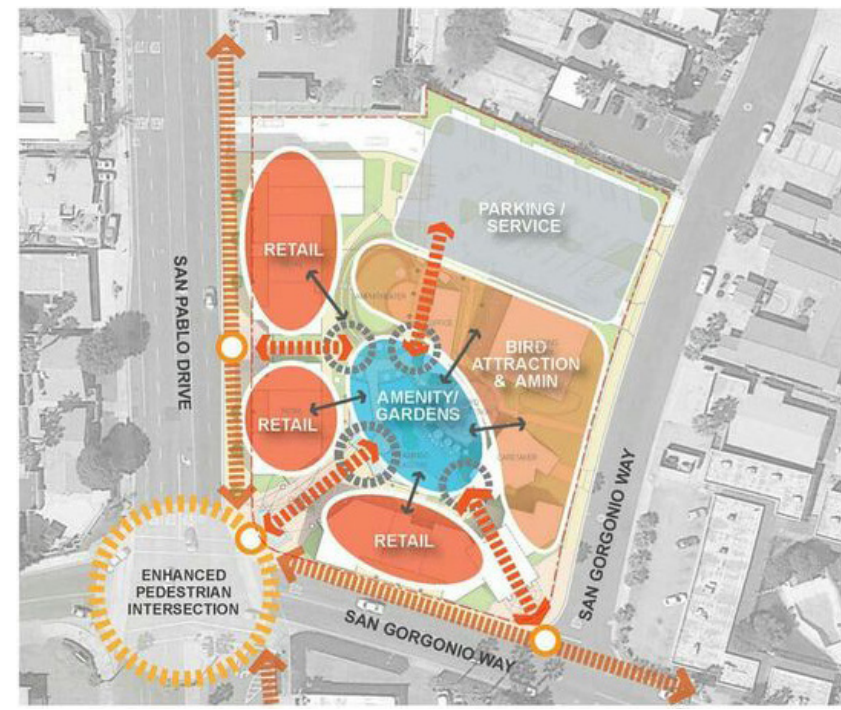
- Show how the analysis of the context led to the chosen design principles
- Show how the design responds to the opportunities & constraints identified previously
- Explain and justify the way the buildings, movement routes and open spaces are set out
- Demonstrate a genuine response to context and not simply justify predetermined design solutions



How to design a Concept Plan?

A Concept Plan could be designed in several ways, starting from a figure-ground map or having a Google map as a background.

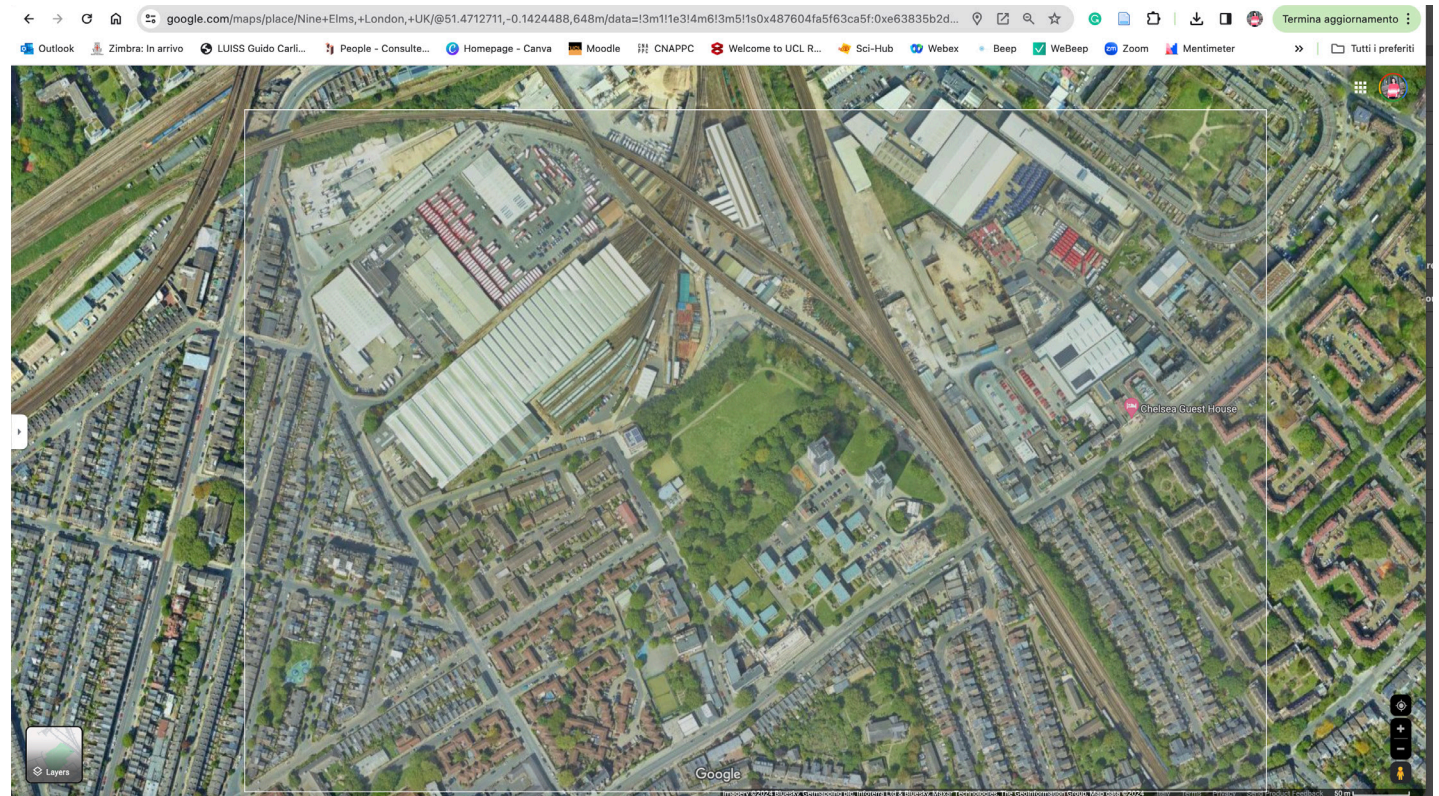
Being more “bubble-type” and arrows or more abstract by predicting future development.



Where to start?

First, we need a high-resolution image of the Google map area we may want as a background.

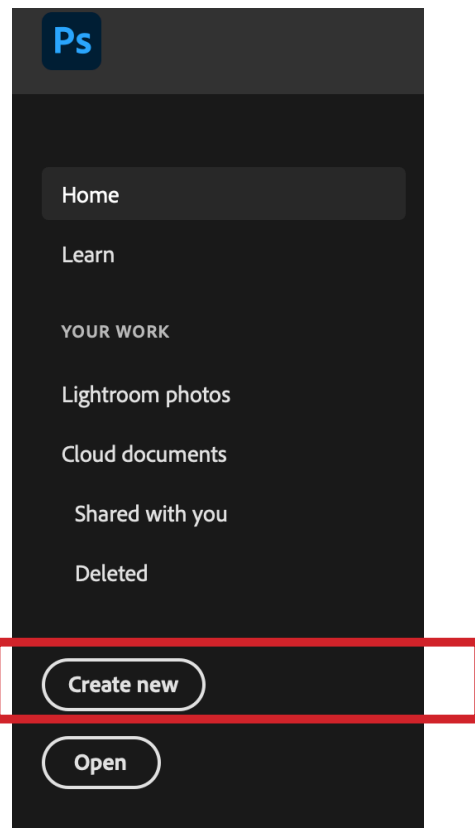
Go on Google Maps and zoom close to the area you need until the image becomes well defined and take a screenshot. You may need to take several screenshots to create an overall high-resolution image.



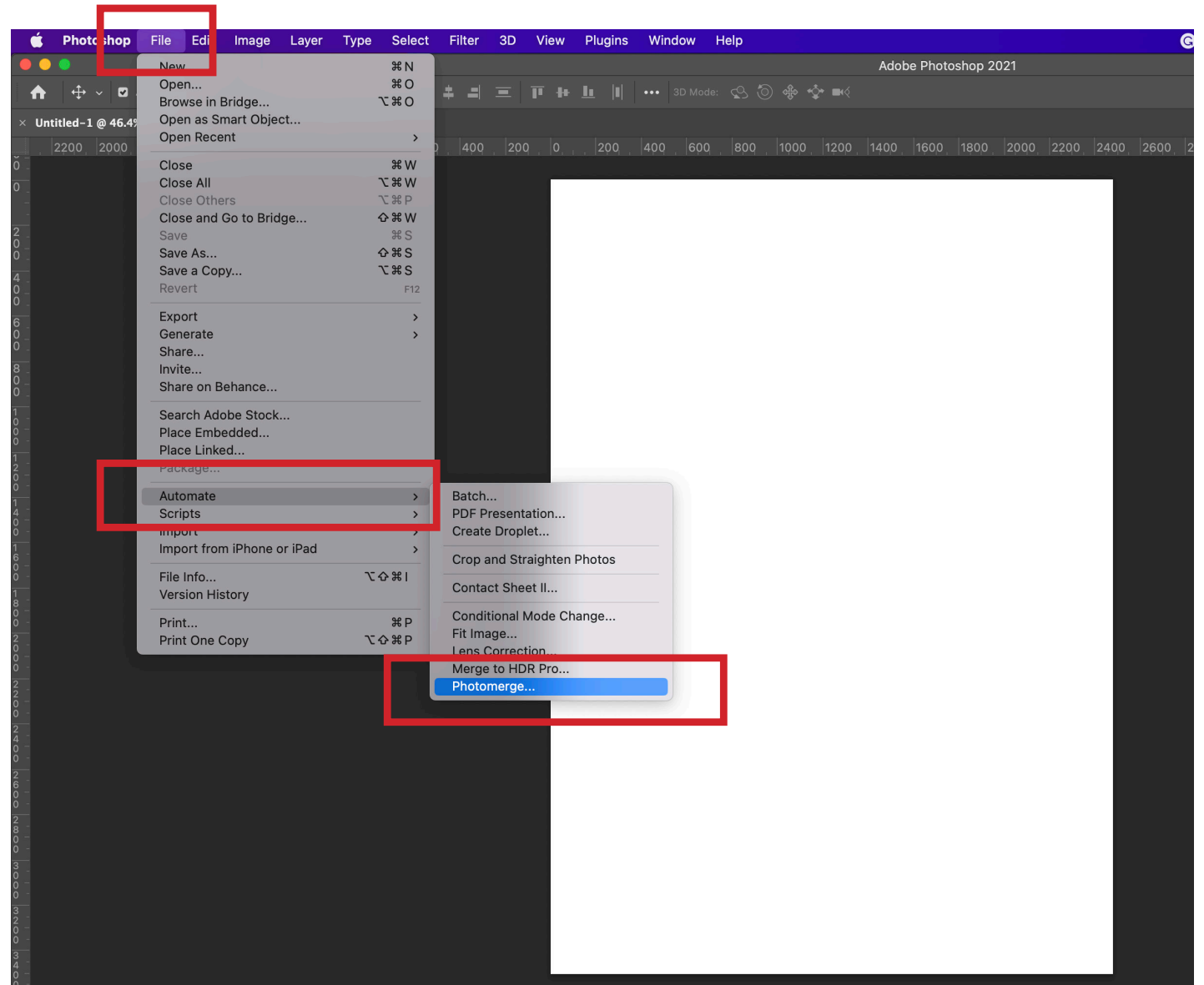
Once you have several screenshots saved on your desktop...



open **Adobe Photoshop** > **Create New** > choose any type of paper size

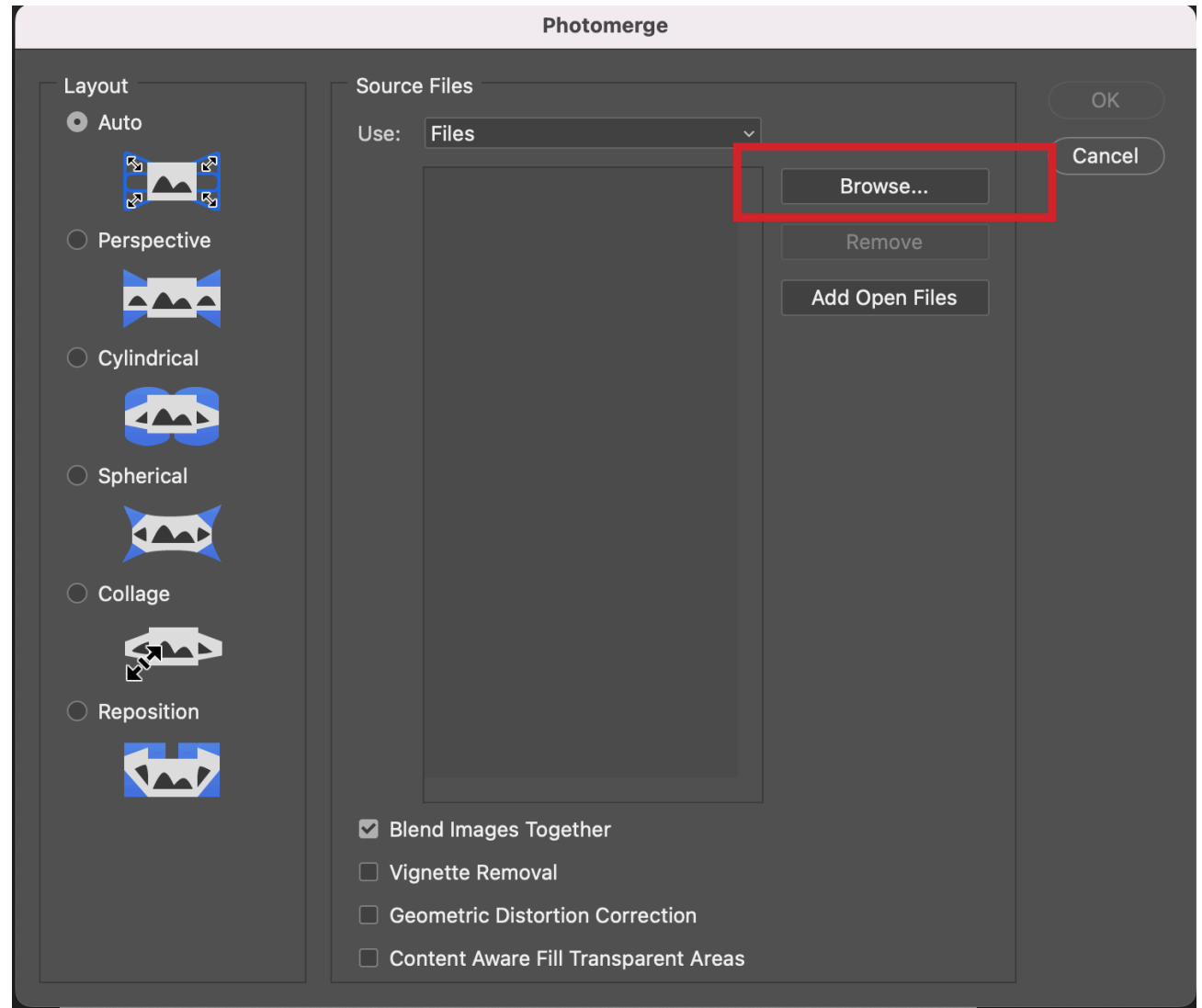


File > Automate > Photomerge



Now, a window will appear: Select 'Browse' to select all the screenshots you want to merge, then press OK.

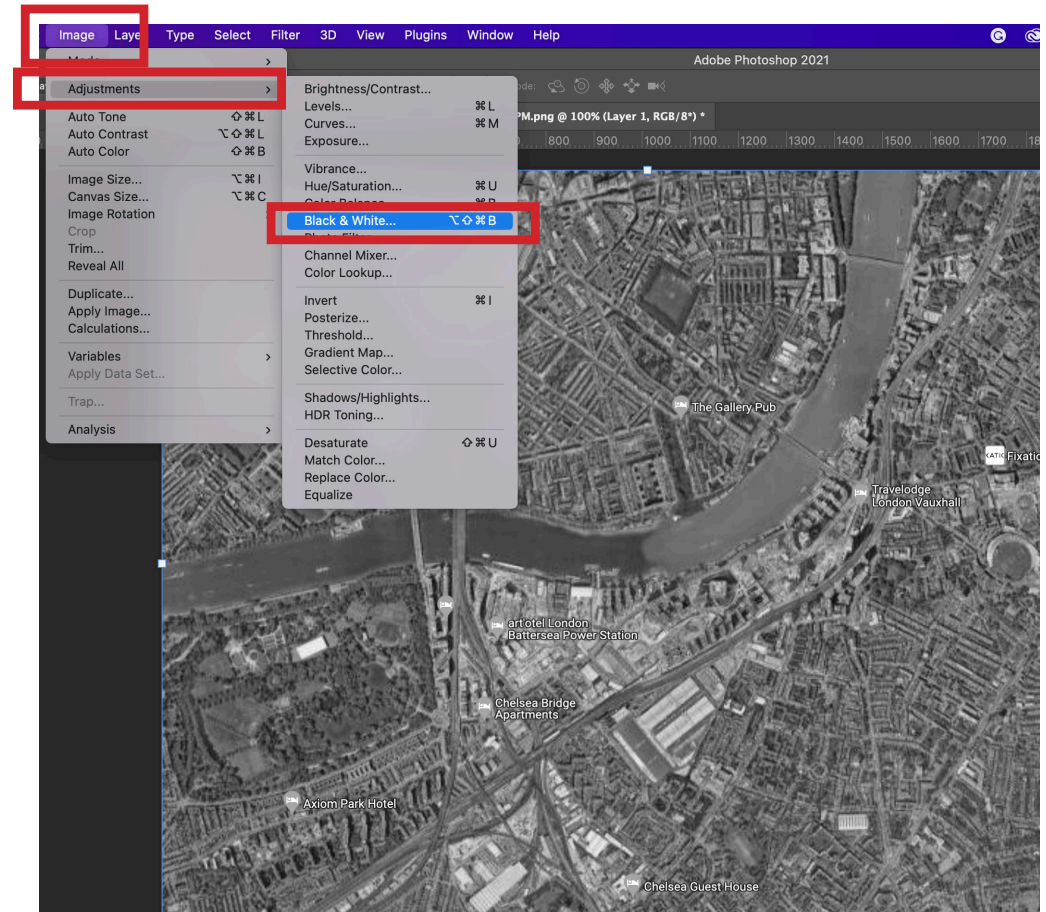
Following those steps will speed up the merging process as Photoshop will do everything by itself.



It may happen that you will need to repeat the process by adding other screenshots or need to modify the photomerge created by Photoshop.



Once you are satisfied with a full image, go to **Image > Adjustments > Black and White**



Now you have your background image that can be saved as a JPEG from Adobe Photoshop and drag and drop into **Adobe Illustrator**.

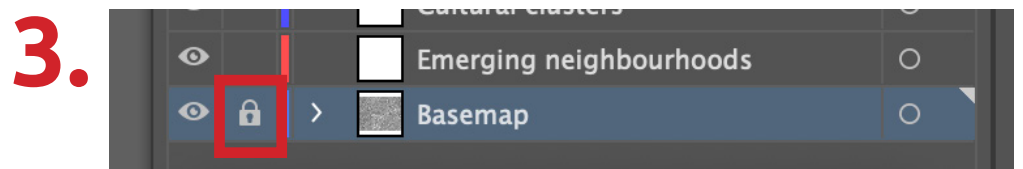
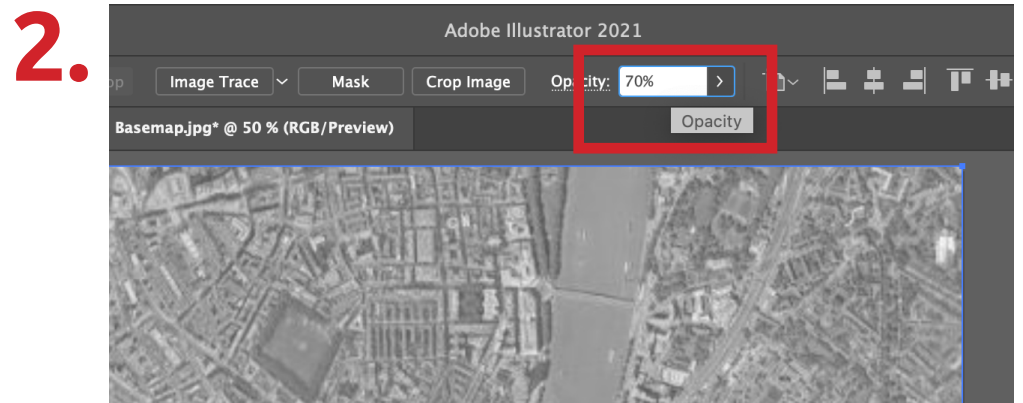
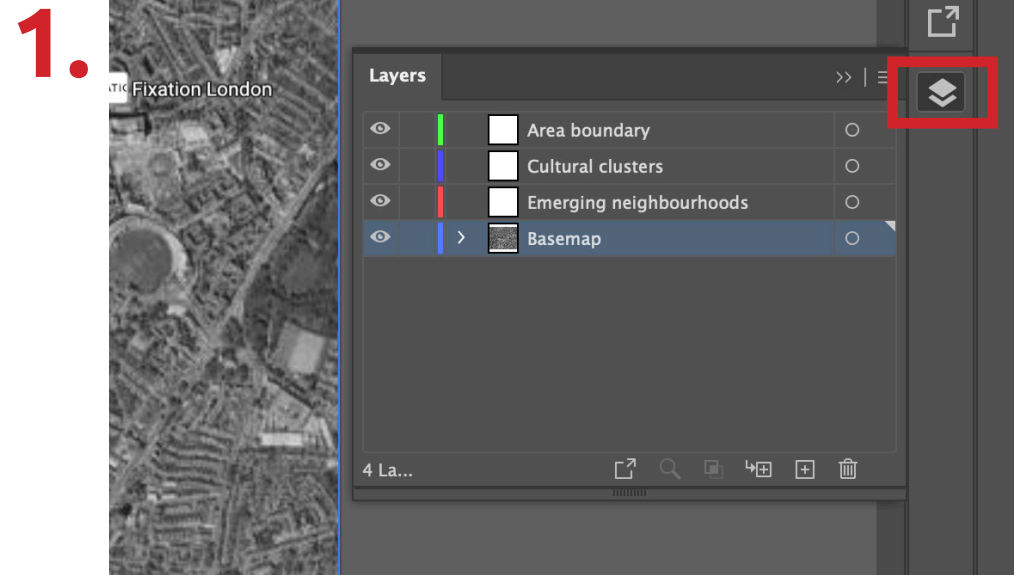


First thing, organise layers **(1)**.

The black and white image should be at the bottom in the list as a background > select it > add opacity **(2)**

And then you can lock it **(3)**.

Now, let's start working on each layer.

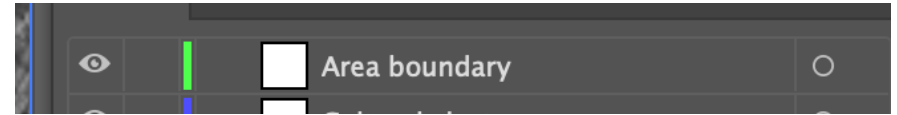


AREA BOUNDARY:

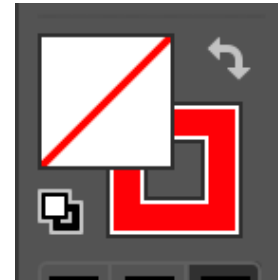
On the dedicated layer (1) set the red color for the stroke (2) and use the **Pen tool** to trace the area boundary (3).

Then, you can open the **Stroke panel** (4) to adjust weight and the dashed line.

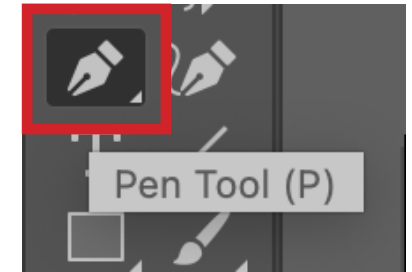
1.



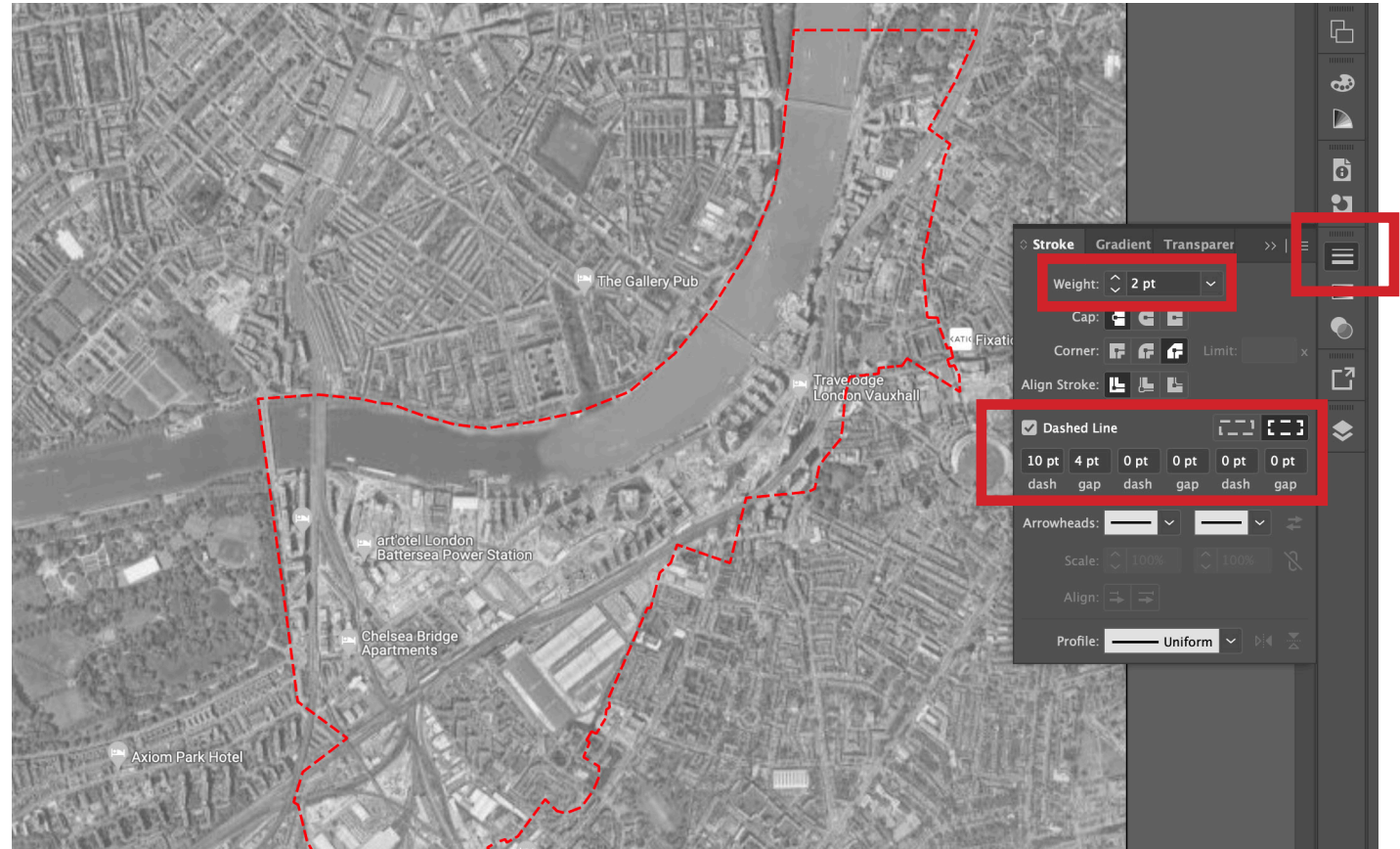
2.



3.



4.

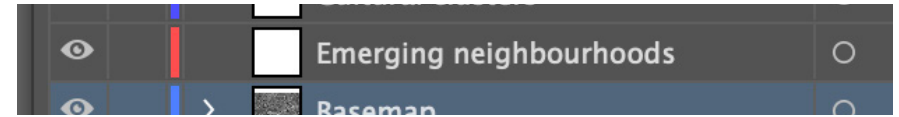


EMERGING NEIGHBOURHOOD:

On the dedicated layer (1) set different fill colours for creating some “bubbles” (2) corresponding to the emerging neighbourhoods, and use the **Curvature tool** to trace each bubble (3).



1.



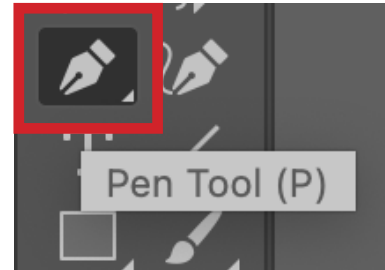
2.



3.



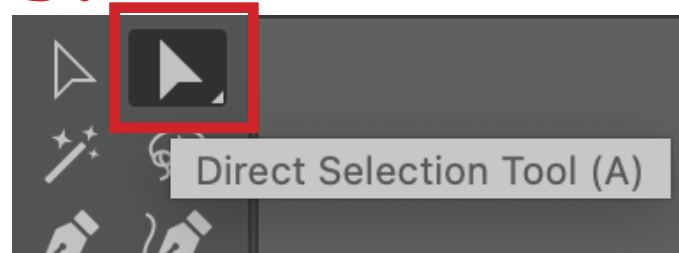
NOTE. You can obtain the same result by using the **Pen Tool**: Created the shape **(a)**, Deselect by clicking on the gray background of Illustrator, then select by taking the **Direct Selection Tool (b)**. Now some small dots appeared to each corner **(c)**. Take one of those and drag toward the centre of the shape – the shape will rounded **(d)**.



a.



b.



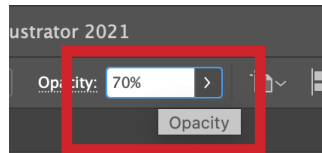
c.



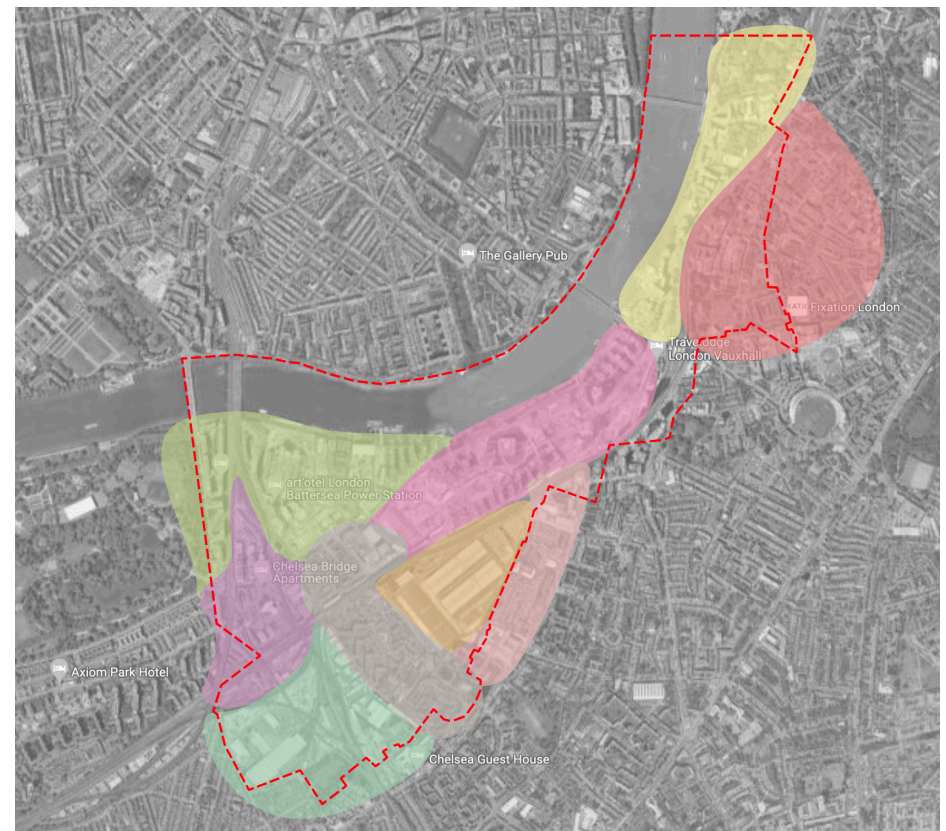
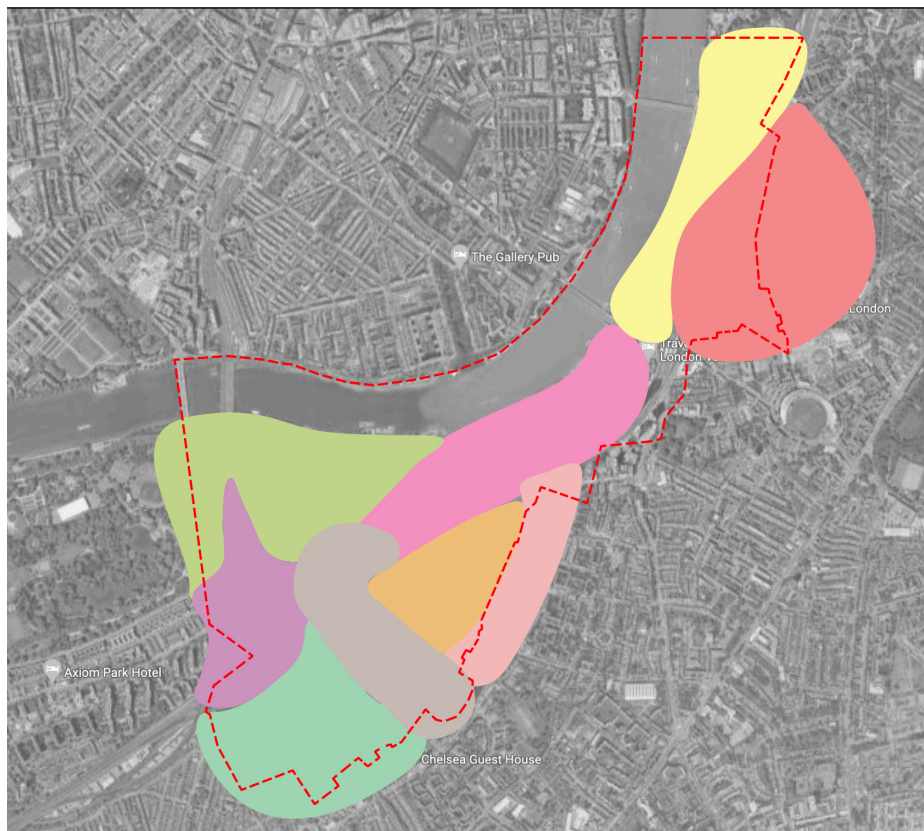
d.



Once you are satisfied with the shape, you can add opacity to it.



Repeat the process as many times as you need.



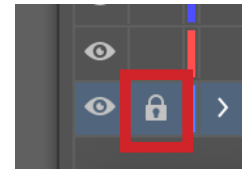
CULTURAL CLUSTERS:

First, you can lock all the other layers for convenience (1).

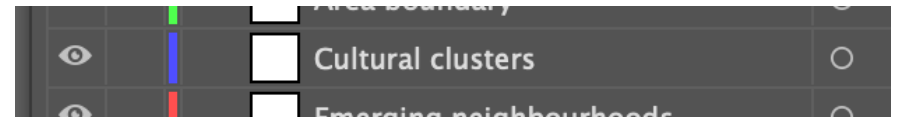
On the dedicated layer (2) set a dark colour for the fill (3) and use the **Pen tool** to create the shape of the chosen landmark (4).

Now, reverse fill and stroke using the same colour (5) and create a circle around the landmark (6). Open the **Stroke panel** and adjust weight and dashed line (7).

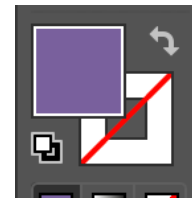
1.



2.



3.



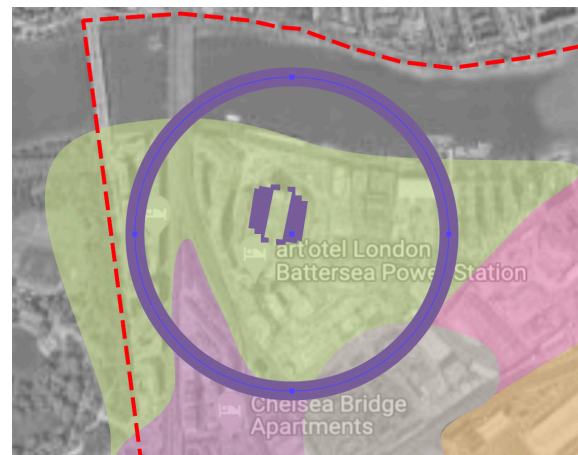
4.



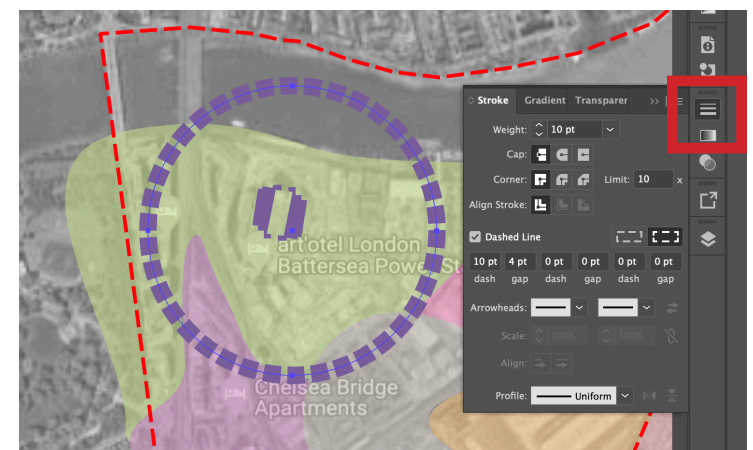
5.



6.

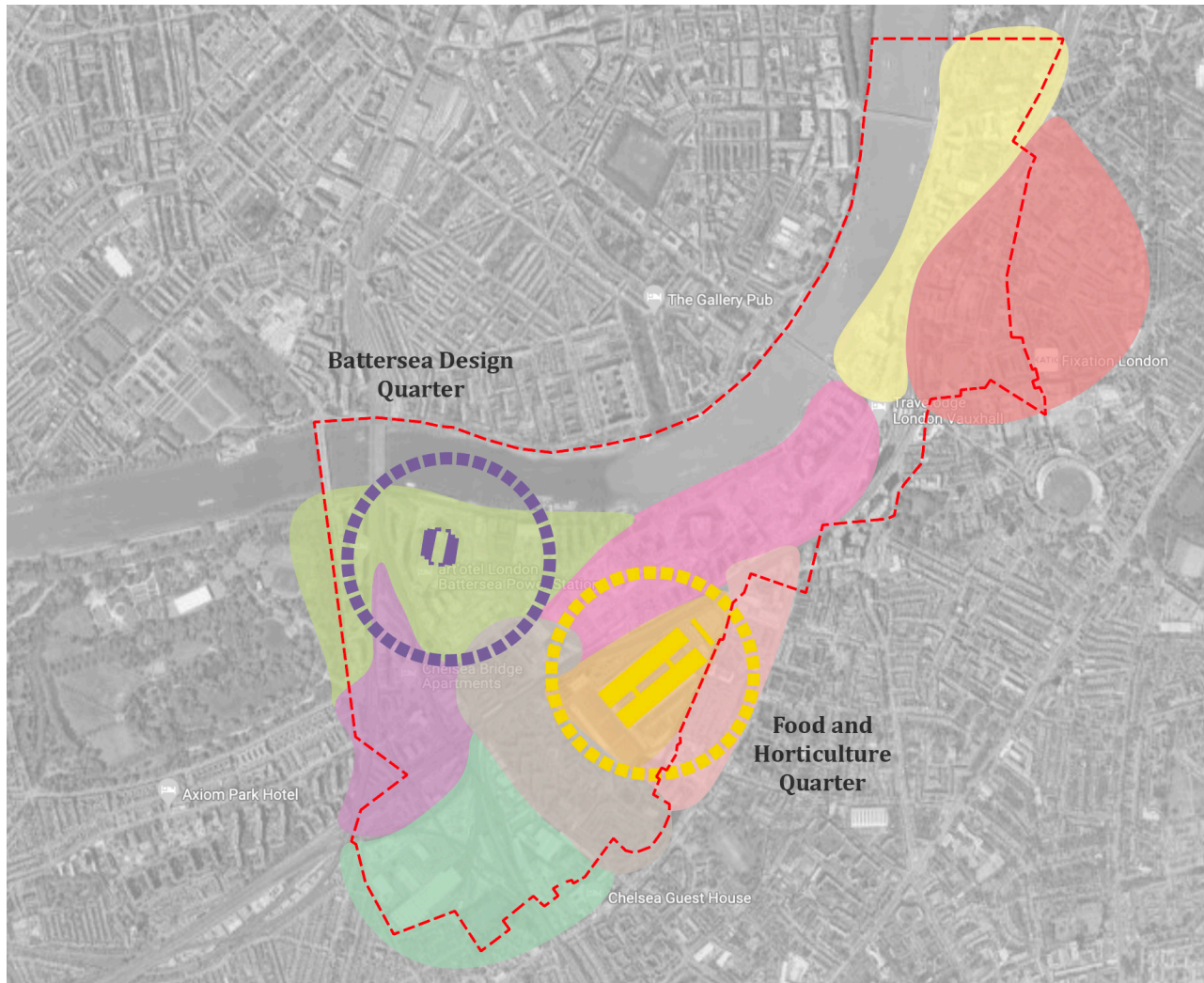


7.



CULTURAL CLUSTERS:

Use the **Text tool** to add some labels.

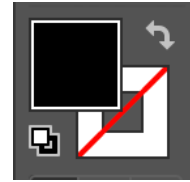


CULTURAL CLUSTERS:

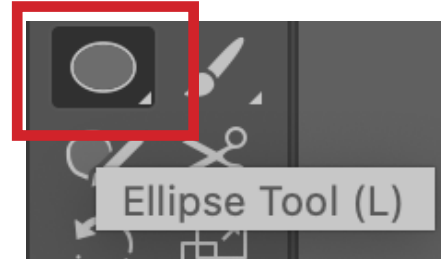
Set a dark colour for the fill (1) and use the **Ellipse tool (2)** to create some small dots that indicate some art spots (3).

Now, reverse fill and stroke using the same colour and create some lines that connect the dots. Open the **Stroke panel** and adjust weight and dashed line (4). Add text and labels.

1.



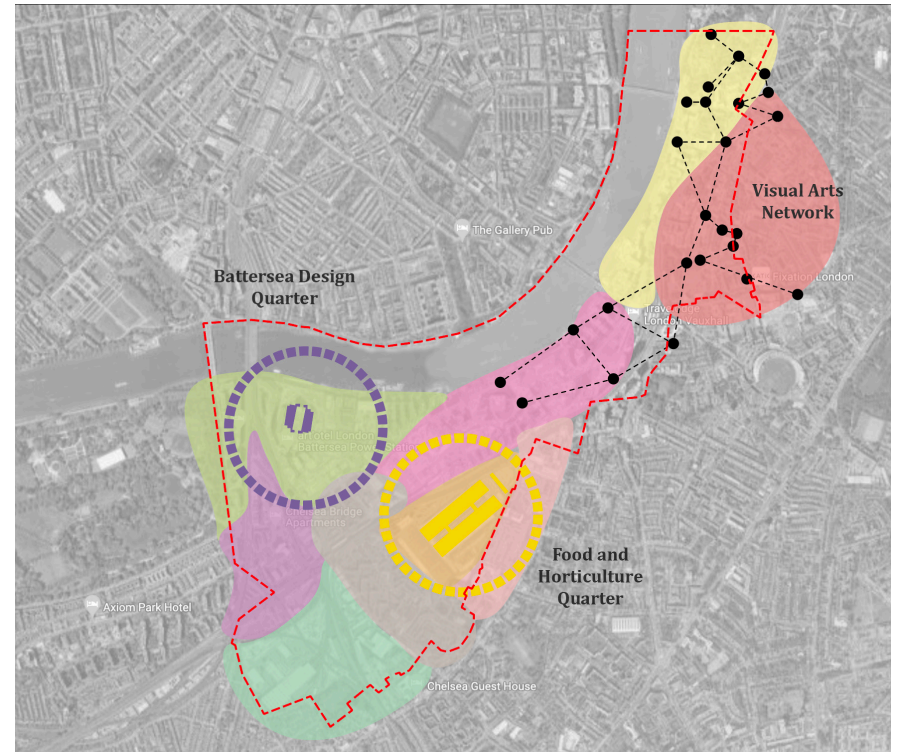
2.



3.



4.



The final results will be a map with several layers and strategic scenarios for future developments.



NOTE. You can create the same map by using a figure ground map designed from Digimap, instead of a Google Map screenshot as a background. Also, this map could be unbundled into two separate maps.

Figure 5.2.1 Emerging Neighbourhoods and Focal Points– NTS

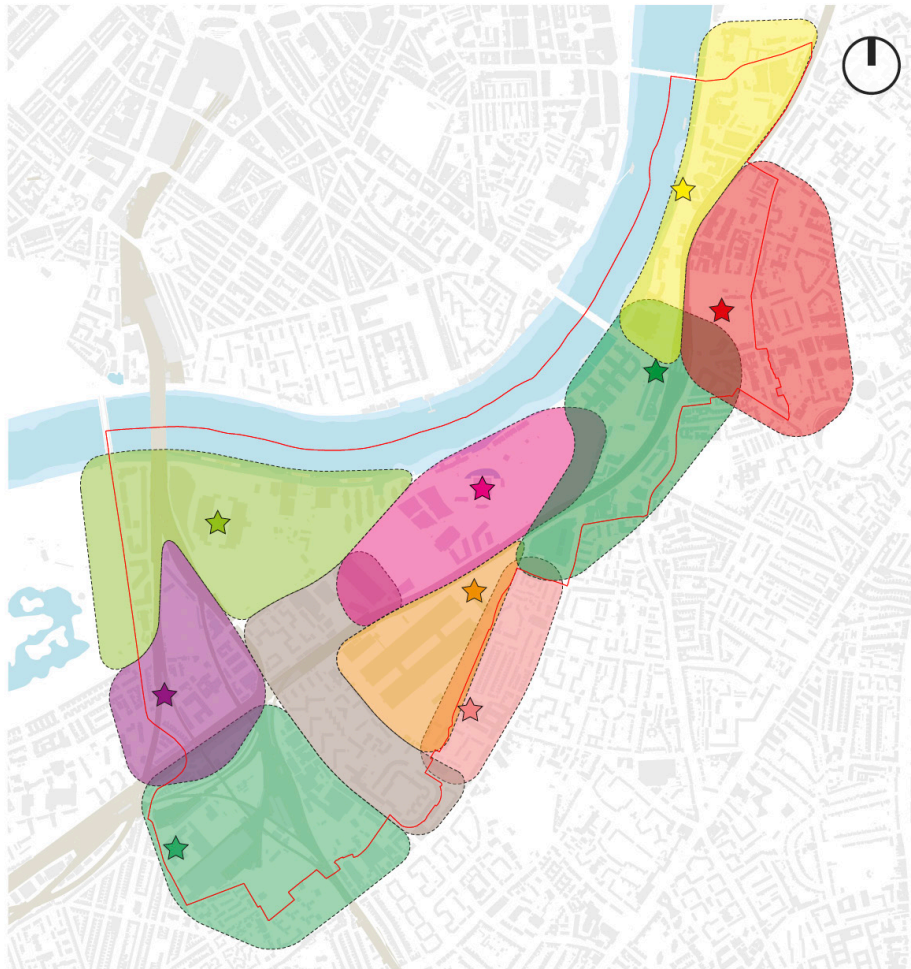
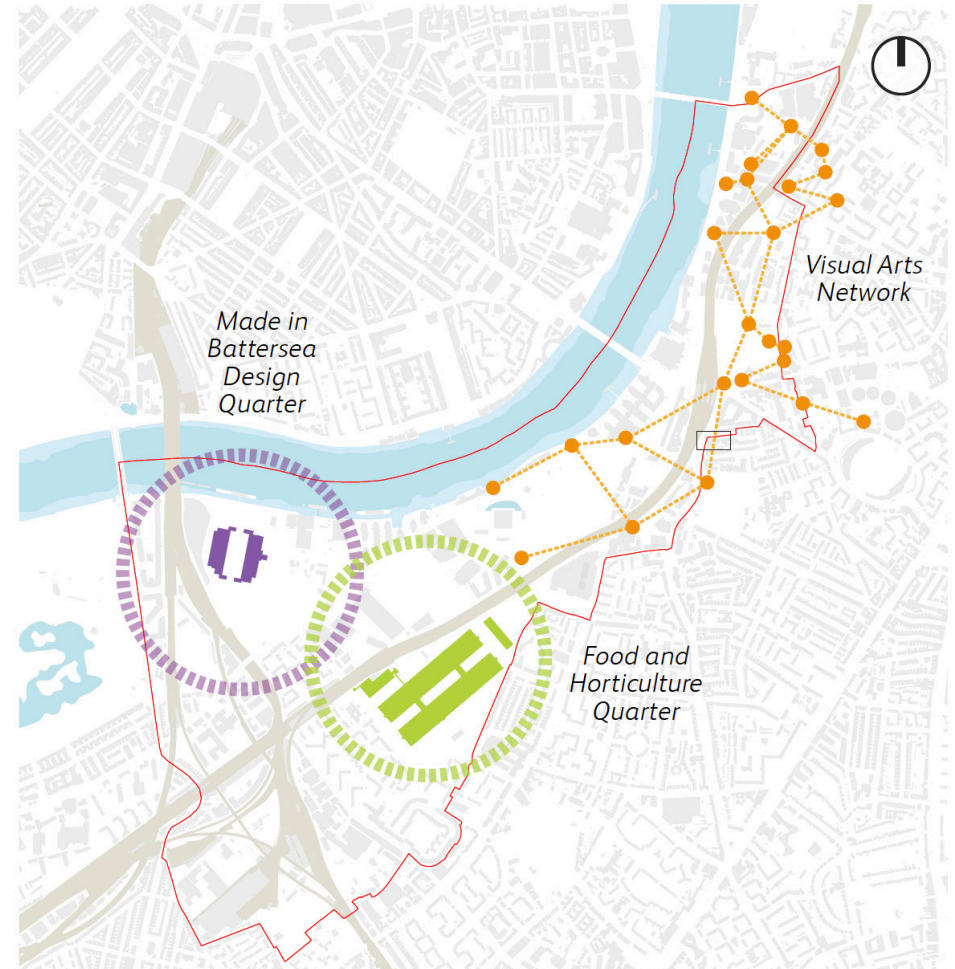


Figure 5.2.2 Emerging Cultural Clusters – NTS





THE BARTLETT