

CITY PLAN 2019 – 2040

SPECIAL POLICY AREAS

EVIDENCE TOPIC PAPER

JUNE 2019

Introduction

Westminster contains some of central London's most iconic places. The clustering of uses in certain parts of the city provide agglomeration benefits that support specific industries' long term success, and the world-leading nature of activity in such areas enhances London's global reputation. For these reasons, the council has long sought to protect the nature of land uses in identified Special Policy Areas (SPAs), some of which are also recognised through the Mayor's London Plan.

While some SPA designations date back to the 2007 Unitary Development Plan, more recently the 2016 City Plan used SPA designations to seek the protection of clusters of:

- Tailoring uses in **Savile Row**;
- Medical facilities in **Harley Street**;
- Art galleries, antique traders and niche retail in **Mayfair**;
- Private members clubs, art galleries and niche retail at **St James's**; and
- Institutional uses at **Portland Place**;

Through the 2019 City Plan, the council is proposing to:

- Retain SPAs for Savile Row and Harley Street;
- Merge policies for Mayfair and St James's SPAs (in recognition of the similar policy objectives for each area);
- Remove the SPA designation for Portland Place (in recognition that the area is home to a wide mix of land uses compatible with its designation as part of London's Central Activity Zone); and
- Introduce a new SPA for Soho (in recognition of the unique scale and mix of uses there, including clusters creative industries, specialist retailing, and LGBTQI+ venues).

This topic paper provides supporting evidence to justify the changes to SPAs proposed in the 2019 City Plan.

Savile Row SPA

Savile Row is globally synonymous with premium bespoke tailoring, and the street name itself is a widely recognised international brand. The area is home to many of London's principal and oldest bespoke tailoring houses, and its unique status as a specialist cluster is acknowledged in the London Plan.

A key feature of the area, that makes it distinct from surrounding principal shopping streets, is the inclusion of on-site workrooms, where garments are measured, cut and manufactured by highly skilled personnel. These workrooms are often provided at basement level, where light wells create bright spaces for tailors to work, which are often visible from the street. Retail space is provided at ground floor level, but the combination of retail space and on-site workrooms means units are categorised as sui generis. Such units are particularly prevalent on the east of Savile Row. They are

complemented by retail units on the west of Savile Row that also offer tailoring services, but do not have workrooms on site, and are therefore categorised as A1 retail.

Using GOAD 2019 data and intelligence provided by the Savile Row Bespoke Association¹, Appendix 1 maps uses in the area. This utilises the same boundary as that used in the existing designation in the 2016 City Plan.

Tailoring uses in Savile Row provide an important role in supporting skills development and employment in this specialised area of work. Since 2007, the Savile Row Bespoke Association has completed 83 apprenticeships, and all its members are obliged to employ at least one apprentice. Surveys of Savile Row Bespoke Association members also indicate increasing levels of employment within the trade in recent years, as set out below:

Company	Number of employees (including part-time) in bespoke tailoring 2015	Number of employees (including part-time) in bespoke tailoring 2019
Dege & Skinner	17	21
Henry Poole	24	30
Norton's	10	12
Richard Anderson	35	45
Richard James	2	5
Davies & Sons	12	16
Kilgour	5	10
Huntsman	20	30
Gieves & Hawkes	11	16
Total	136	185

Savile Row remains home to an established cluster of bespoke tailoring uses, which aside from its benefits to London's global appeal, play a growing employment role. Continued policy protection for the area is therefore required to enable established businesses and the industry more widely to continue to thrive. In the absence of this policy protection, there is a danger that the area's unique character is eroded – in particular given its attractiveness to retailers seeking an address close to other principal shopping streets such as Regent Street and Bond Street.

Harley Street SPA

Harley Street is home to a significant cluster of medical uses and has a longstanding global reputation for offering the highest levels of medical care and expertise. Medical uses first began to cluster in the area in the mid-19th century, when doctors would live above ground floor consulting rooms. The medical function then expanded rapidly through the 20th century as doctors chose to travel to work, and entire

¹ A trade association that safeguards bespoke tailoring standards on Savile Row and promotes the areas' international standing

buildings were converted to consulting rooms and let to different clinicians. Today the area is populated by thousands of clinicians, covering just about every specialism. It includes a range of hospitals, clinics and specialists delivering pioneering treatments and using cutting edge technologies, and the area's unique status is recognised in the London Plan.

Using January 2019 Business Rates data, Appendix 2 maps the current clustering of different medical uses in the area. The boundary shown remains as defined through its designation as a SPA in the 2016 City Plan.

Harley Street SPA clearly continues to be characterised by the clustering of the medical profession, providing health services to patients and forming an important employment role. Its unique character and function therefore merits ongoing policy protection. Given its locational advantages, failure to do so could result in pressure for residential and commercial development that reduces the availability of leading health services and undermines London's economic diversity.

Mayfair and St James's SPAs

The UK has the 2nd largest art and antiques market worldwide, with a 21% share of all global art and antique sales by value². Mayfair and St James's are the historic centre of this industry in the UK. Together they are home to several commercial art galleries, antique traders, world famous auction houses such as Christies and Sotheby's, and the Royal Academy of Arts. They also host other specialist art services such as framing, restoration, and research, alongside luxury retail. This clustering of uses contributes to a character that is distinct from high street type shopping elsewhere in the wider West End, and supports a number of small businesses employing specialist and highly skilled workers. The nature of activity provides a major draw for international visitors and investors.

Appendices 3 and 4 map the land uses in Mayfair and St James's respectively, using GOAD 2019 data, and the existing SPA boundaries from the 2016 City Plan. As art galleries and antique space can be classified as either A1 retail or D1 non-residential institutions (depending on if the primary function is for the display of goods for sale or as public viewing galleries), these uses have been separated from wider A1 and D1 uses.

Data shows both SPAs provide important clusters of art galleries and antique space. These uses make a significant contribution to the character of each SPA, making them distinct from the main shopping districts of the wider West End. They therefore merit continued policy protection to avoid the dilution of their special character through development pressure for other commercial development that is supported elsewhere in the wider West End, such as retail and leisure uses including food and drink establishments.

² The British Art Market 2017: An Economic Survey

While the policy approach to each area in the new City Plan is broadly similar, and the two areas are immediately adjacent one another, the boundaries for each have been deliberately kept separate, consistent with the 2016 City Plan. This is to ensure that policy does not inadvertently result in the dilution of the character of either area – by allowing the loss of floorspace used for art trading or antique dealing from one area to be mitigated through re-provision in the other.

Soho SPA

Soho contains a wide variety of uses at a unique scale and grain that contribute to its special character. These uses include A1 retail, A3 restaurants and cafes, A4 drinking establishments, B1 offices, C1 hotels, C3 residential uses, and cultural and leisure uses (D1 and D2) – as shown in the GOAD 2019 land use data presented in Appendix 5.

The area is home to a wide variety of food, drink and entertainment uses including those offering live music and those catering to the LGBTQI+ community. There are also a variety of other cultural uses such as art galleries, theatres and religious institutions. Several hotels in the area provide accommodation for visitors' overnight stays, while there is also a significant residential population, with over 1,500 separate dwellings.

Soho's commercial uses tend to operate from small floorplate units, attracting a variety of independent and small businesses. The dominance of small floorplate units through much of the area is clearly visible in the land use map in Appendix 5. Within the commercial uses in the area, there are several clusters of specialist uses including the film industry (based around Wardour Street), fashion (Carnaby Street), theatres (Shaftesbury Avenue), and LGBTQI+ (focussed around Old Compton Street). These clusters and the small-scale units they operate from contribute to the area's unique character.

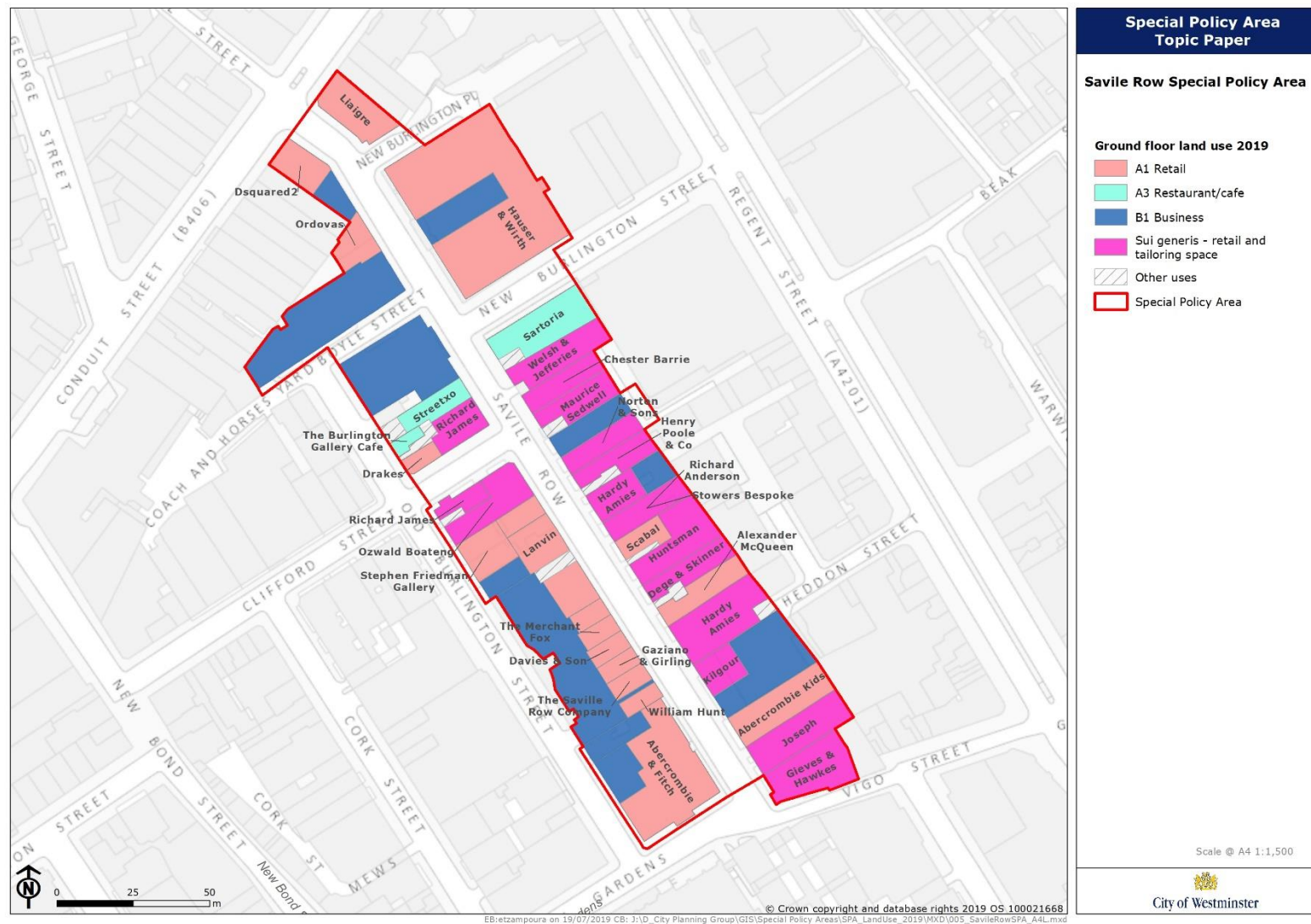
The mix of uses present, the small-scale nature of the individual units and the fine urban grain, all within a tightly bounded area gives Soho a unique character as a place to live, work and visit. The Soho Special Policy Area seeks to protect this character by retaining these features and ensuring that new development compliments the area rather than eroding its special nature.

Conclusion

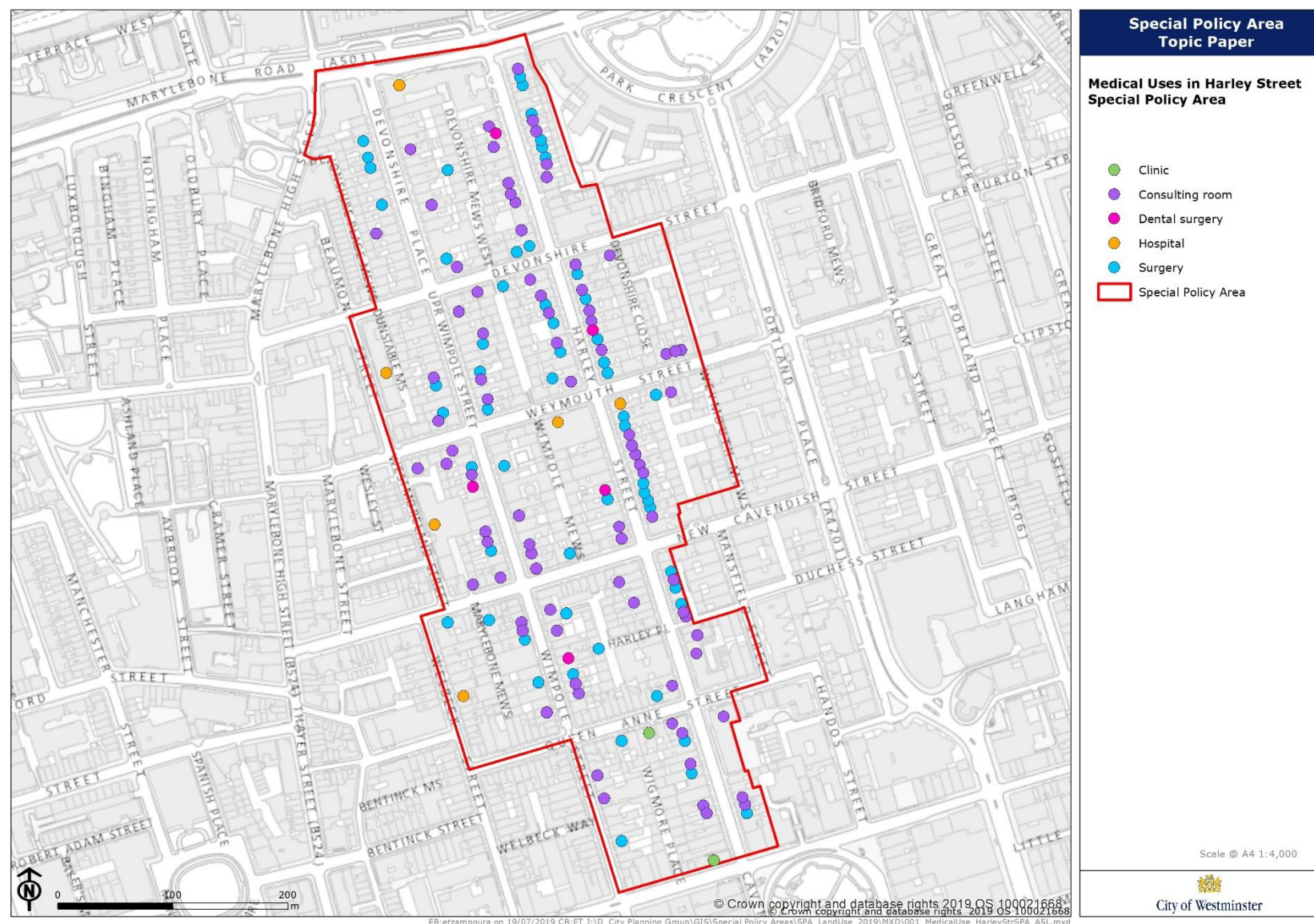
As can be seen from this topic paper, parts of Westminster clearly provide unique clusters or a unique mix of uses that make a positive contribution to central London's global appeal and its economic diversity. The nature of uses in these areas, many of which are international leaders in their respective markets, is as important to their character as the built heritage that design and conservation policies seek to protect. It is therefore vital that planning policy helps ensure these areas can continue to flourish by supporting their sustainable growth, whilst protecting the identified special features that makes these areas so distinct from other parts of central London.

Appendices

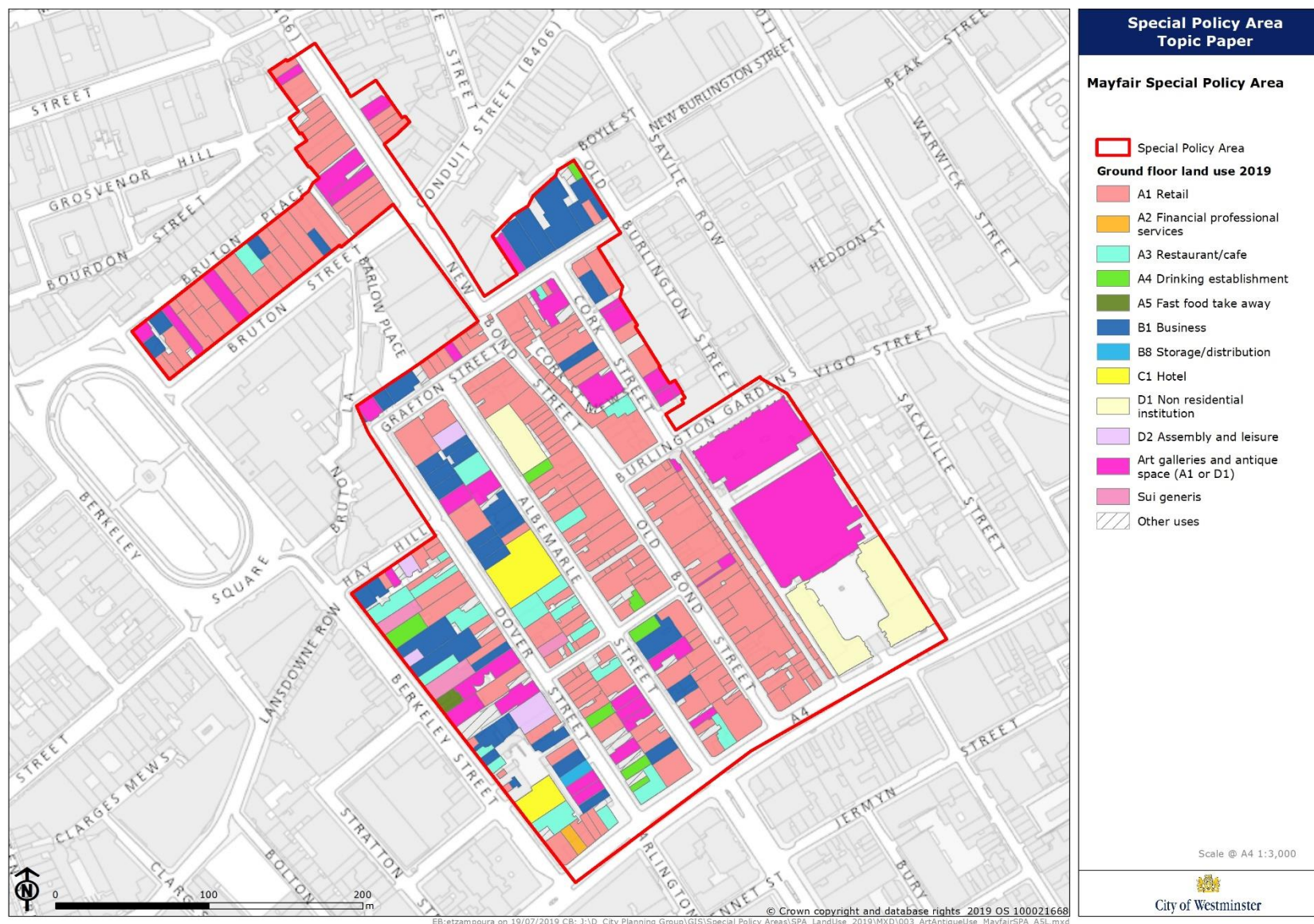
Appendix 1: Savile Row SPA



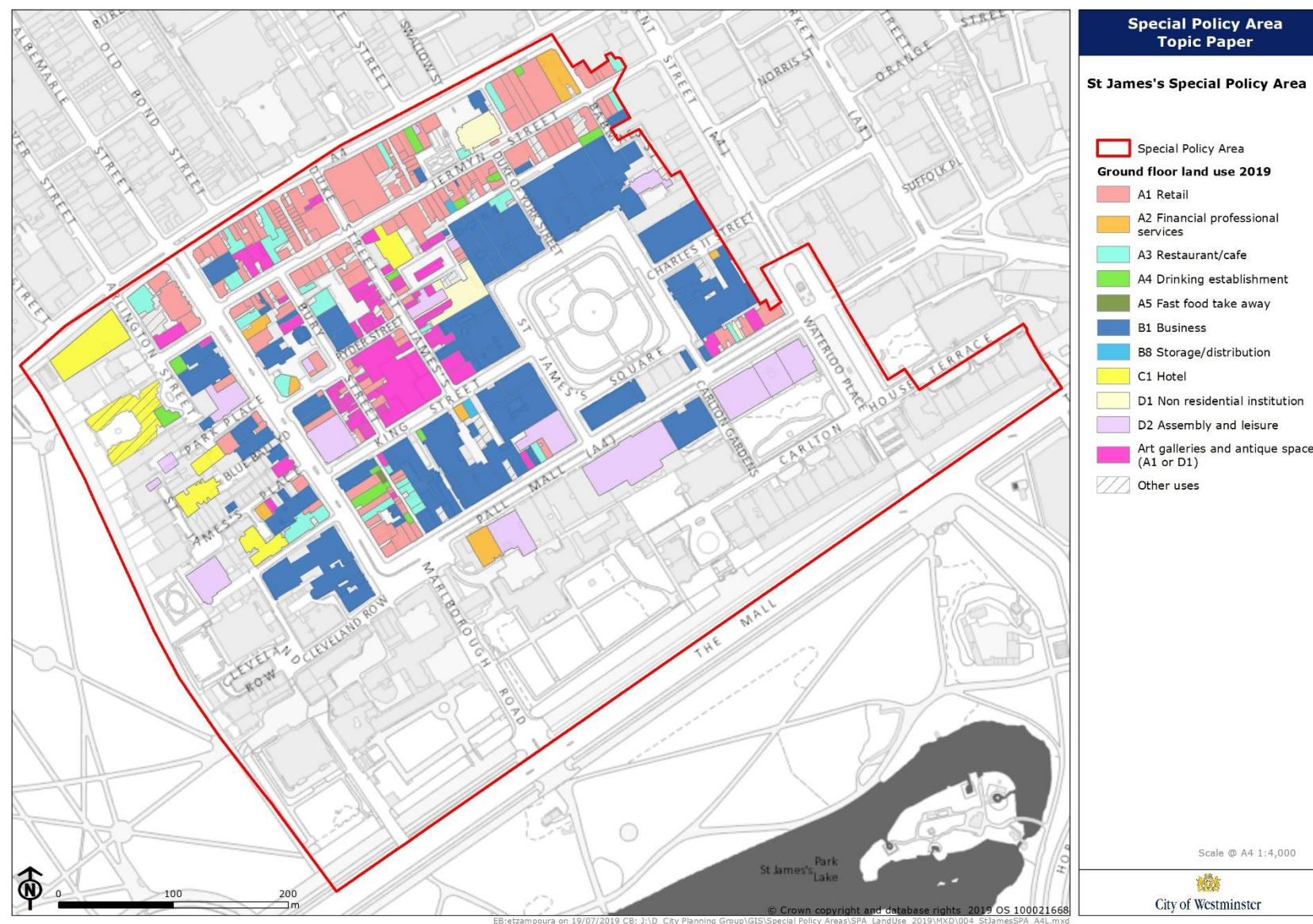
Appendix 2: Harley Street SPA



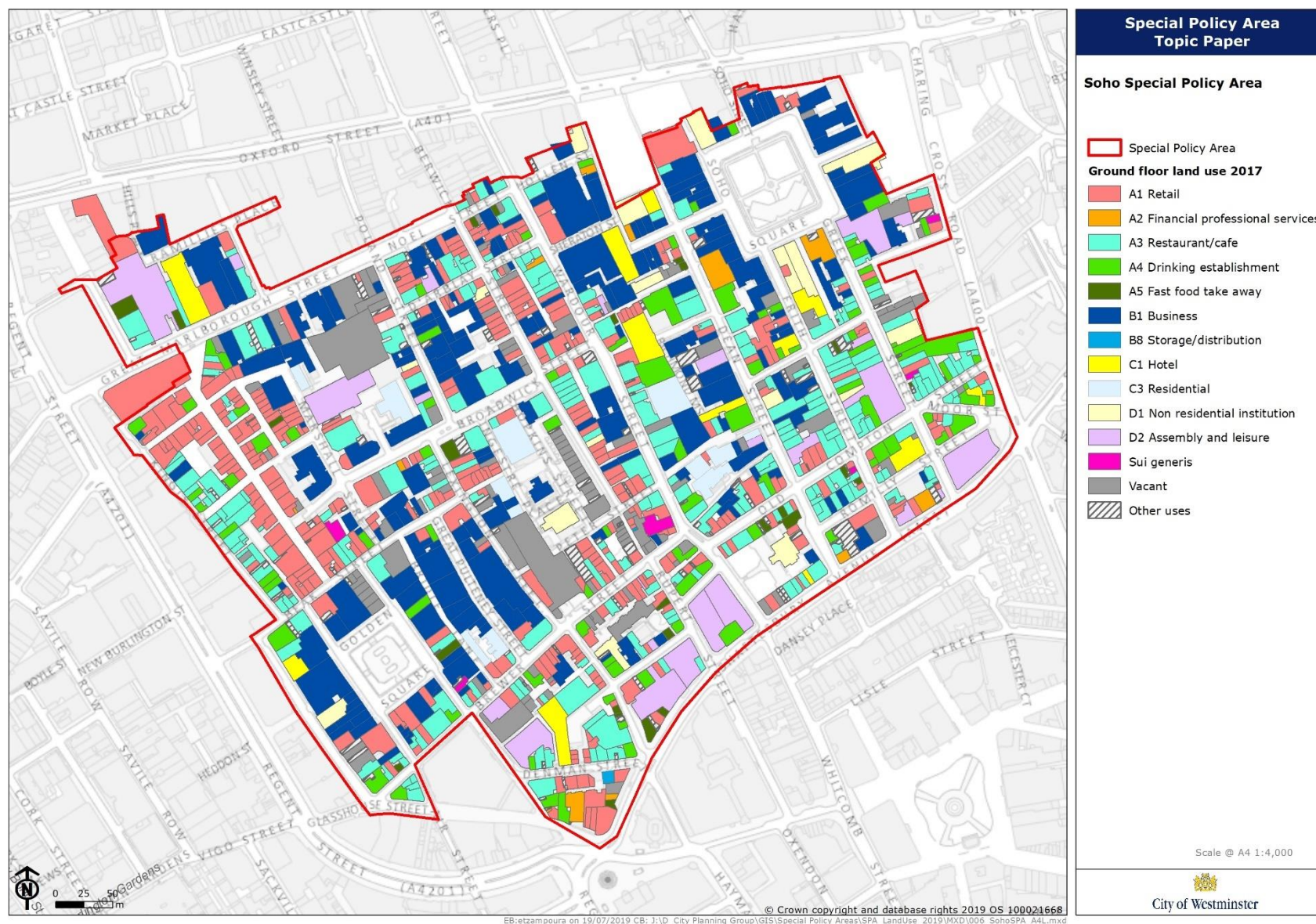
Appendix 3: Mayfair SPA



Appendix 4: St James's SPA



Appendix 5: Soho SPA



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City of Westminster