

Self-Guided Walk – Harry Potter (walk 1)

The Harry Potter story is famous across the world and a number of locations across the United Kingdom were used as backdrops to scenes in the eight films. Within London there are plenty to look at – some are external places you can view easily, others require a visit inside (with additional cost) and there are others that are linked in another way.

This walk is the first of two that are Harry Potter themed and weaves its way from Westminster Underground to Australia House. The second walk will pick things up at Australia House and take you to Leadenhall Market, before a linking Underground trip will take you from Claremont Place to King's Cross station.

For any pictures, the named locations are blue circles, the walking routes red arrows. All other colour circles and arrows are to help but aren't part of the walk as such. All maps and images are from Google Maps as per their Geo Guidelines. Here's the map of the route.



To start the walk head for Westminster Underground station – it is easily reached as it is on the Circle, District and Jubilee lines. This walk is 2.8 miles/4.5 kms and without any stops should take 58 minutes to walk.

Step 1

Overview – Westminster Underground. In *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, Harry is summoned to the Ministry of Magic for using magic under age outside of Hogwarts. In lieu of a parent he is accompanied by Arthur Weasley and they use the Underground, the older wizard notably confused when trying to tap out at the barriers.

Directions – the ticket barriers are on the way out of the station so after arriving just follow signs for the exit. Once through the barriers head for exit 6. The main exit guide should show this as heading to Downing Street, Horse Guards Parade, Churchill War Rooms and other places.

Your view as you come out is as follows. The Underground exit is the red circle. In this picture you can see the buildings of the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey.



Step 2

Overview – Downing Street. Number 10 is the home of the British Prime Minister and in the context of Harry Potter it features in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* where we discover that the Prime Minister is a direct link to the Minister for Magic. There's even a portal! This features in the first chapter although had been planned for three previous books. It is also where Kingsley Shacklebolt is based when a bodyguard for the Prime Minister.

You can't go inside 10 Downing Street – in fact, you can't even get into the street and will find large black metal railings and armed police guards. But it is a great link between the wizarding world and ours, and it's on the way in any case. Do note that this area can see protesters at different times – this is perfectly normal as they want the Prime Minister to hear them.

Directions – you are going to head away from the places you can see in the last picture. From the Underground exit you need to head along Parliament Street as follows.



Head along Parliament Street, following the above red arrow. The first street on your left is King Charles Street (with three ornate arches at its end). You will then pass the Cenotaph (it's in the middle of the road) that is the memorial to the British and Commonwealth war dead. And Downing Street is the next on the left.



Step 3

Overview – Horse Guards Avenue. You may have already noticed the distinctive stonework of the buildings in Whitehall. Those in this road were used to double for the Ministry of Magic in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part I*, and specifically the staff entrance.

Directions – Just before Downing Street the main route you were following changed name from Parliament Street to Whitehall. Once you have finished at Downing Street just keep going on Whitehall, staying on the left side of the road.

You will come to the entrance to Horseguards Parade – it's nothing to do with Harry Potter but you will find there are guards on duty here. Sometimes they are on foot, sometimes they are on horses. But it's a great photo opportunity and is marked with a red circle. You are looking for the street on the other side of the road (so, that's a right turn off Whitehall) as follows.



As you turn into Horseguards Avenue this will be your view.

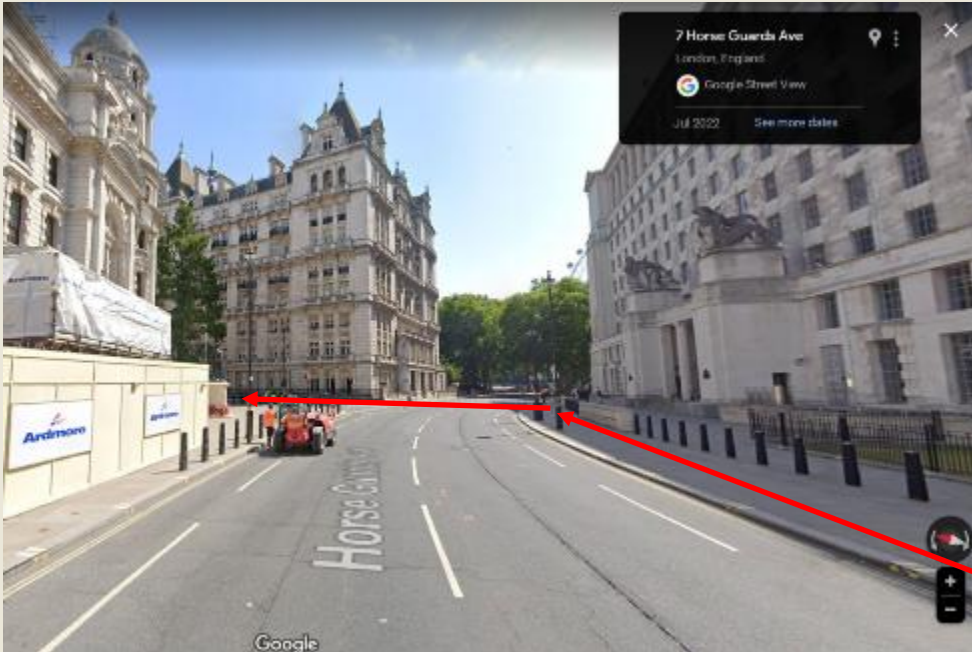


On the left is the original War Office used by Churchill. On the right is the Banqueting House and a little further down, the first big white building, is indeed a Ministry – the Ministry of Defence.

Step 4

Overview – Great Scotland Yard. This area was used for a couple of Ministry of Magic filming locations. The Polyjuice preparations from *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* take place here and it is also where, in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, Harry and Mr. Weasley use a red phone box to enter the Ministry by dialling 62442 to activate the lift.

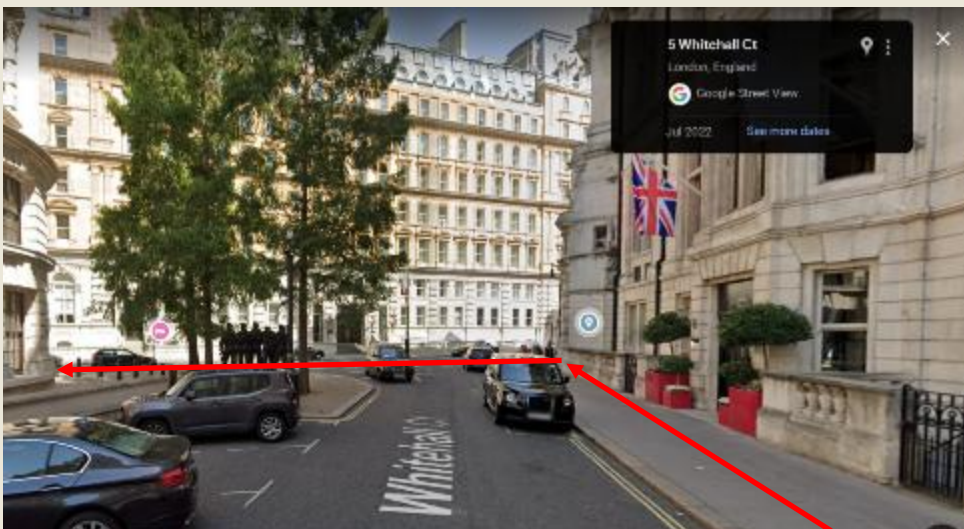
Directions – from the entrance of Horseguards Avenue (step 3) you will be looking for the next left, Whitehall Court. Here's a view a little further along Horseguards Avenue, showing the left turn into Whitehall Court.



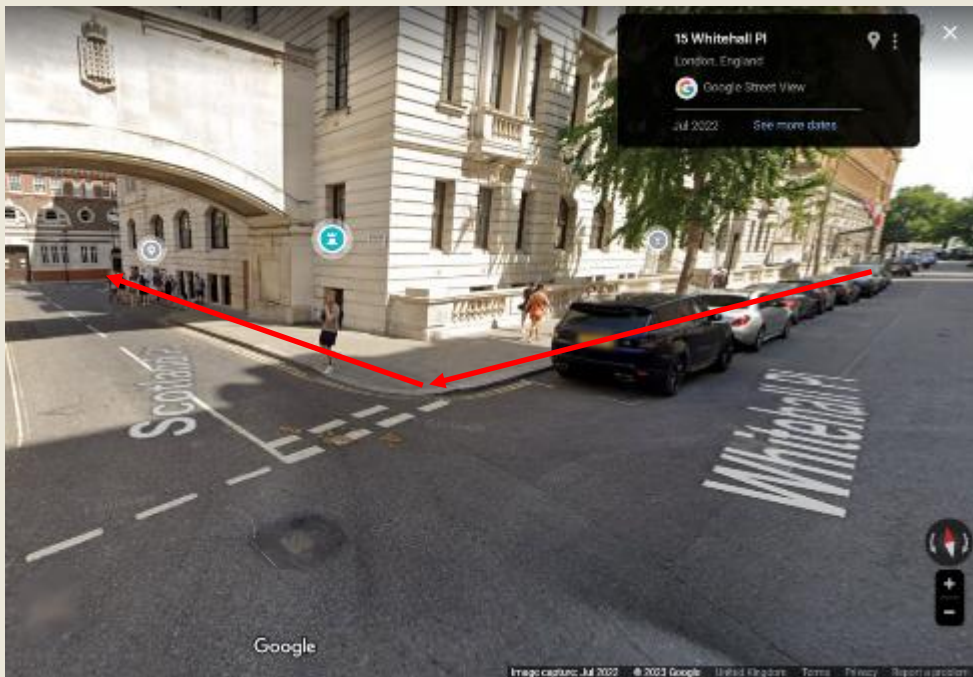
If you had already gone a little further along Horseguards Avenue just turn round and take a right into Whitehall Court instead.

Returning to it being a left turn, on the left side (it's about where the second red arrow ends above) is a statue of a Gurkha soldier, and ahead on Horseguards Avenue you can just see the London Eye above the trees – just a couple of way markers.

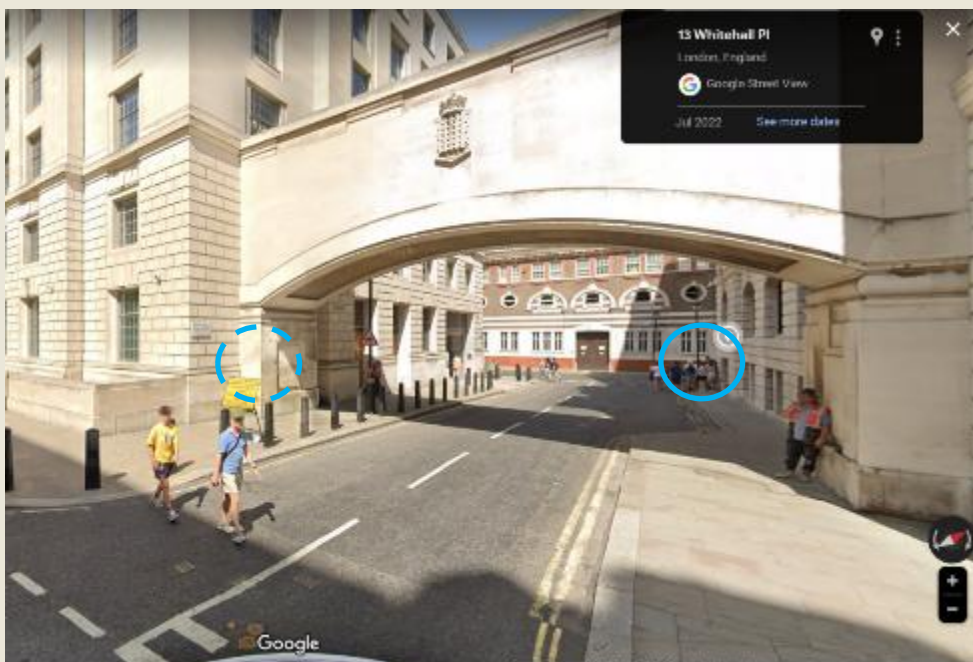
Follow Whitehall Court to its end and then take a left turn onto Whitehall Place. On the left corner is a five-person statue commemorating the Royal Tank Regiment. Here's a view of the turn into Whitehall Place.



You are then looking for the next right, Scotland Place. It is easy to spot due to the walkway over the road as shown below.



The next picture shows Scotland Place from the end, looking down it, so that you can clearly see the location for the Ministry entrance from *Order of the Phoenix* (dashed blue circle).

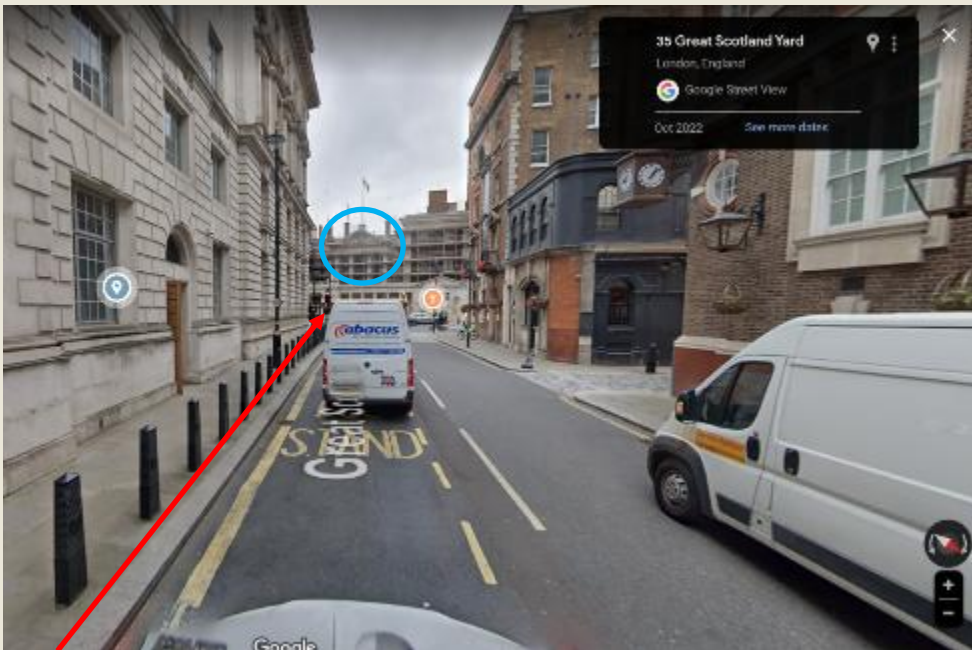


At the end of the short Scotland Place you will arrive at Great Scotland Yard. You need to turn left to continue on the route. Although famous for another Ministry, this time the real one is the Ministry Environment, Food and Agriculture.

However, if you look back to the previous picture you will find where Ron keeps lookout ahead of the Polyjuice taking in *Deathly Hallows* (looking to the right along Great Scotland Yard) – the blue circle.

Once you have finished here you will turn left from Scotland Place onto Great Scotland Yard to rejoin Whitehall at the end.

As you walk towards Whitehall you might notice the building ahead is familiar – whilst the phone box entrance into the Ministry is in Scotland Place the film view you see beyond in the distance is the one you now have whilst walking along Great Scotland Yard. That's as follows, marked by a blue circle. In reality it is Admiralty House.

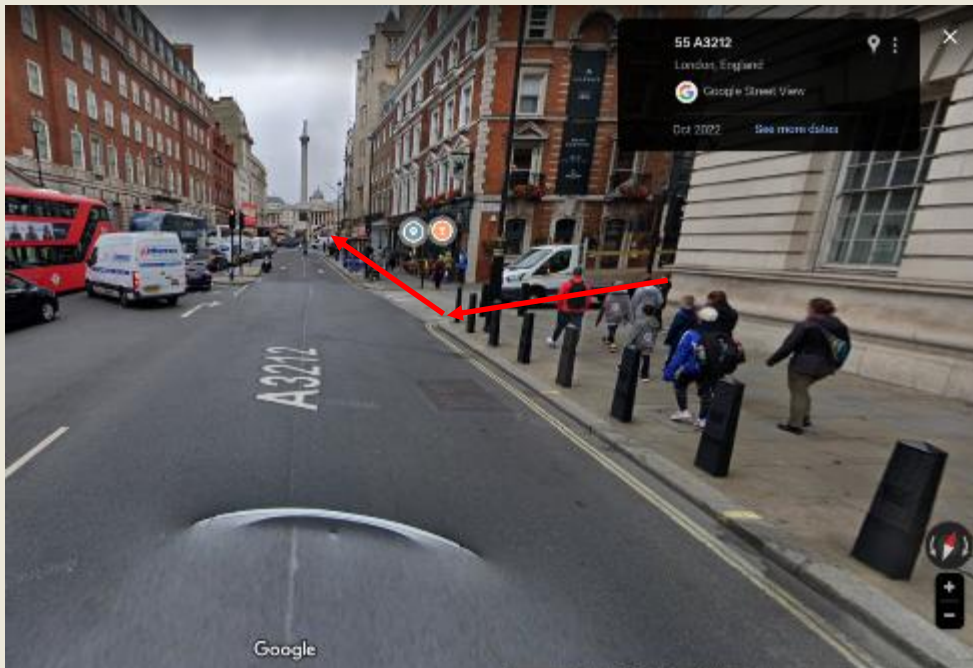


So, it would appear some magic was done in the editing room! Once you get to the end turn right onto Whitehall.

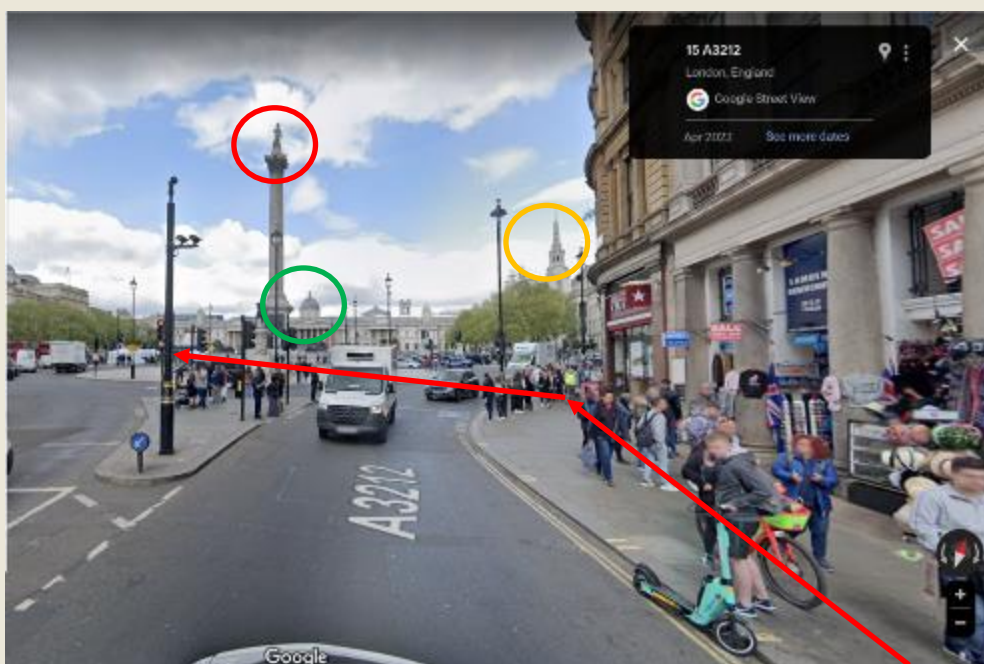
Step 5

Overview— Trafalgar Square. Aside from a glimpse, it's not an overt filming location but it is on our route and does have a place in Potter history. It was in Trafalgar Square that thousands gathered to see the stars as they arrived for the premier of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part Two* on July 7th 2011 before walking an incredibly long red carpet all the way to Leicester Square for screenings at three cinemas at once. It is seen briefly in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* when death eaters fly over London.

Directions – You will have turned right onto Whitehall and Trafalgar is at the end of the road, directly ahead. That turn onto Whitehall will look as follows.



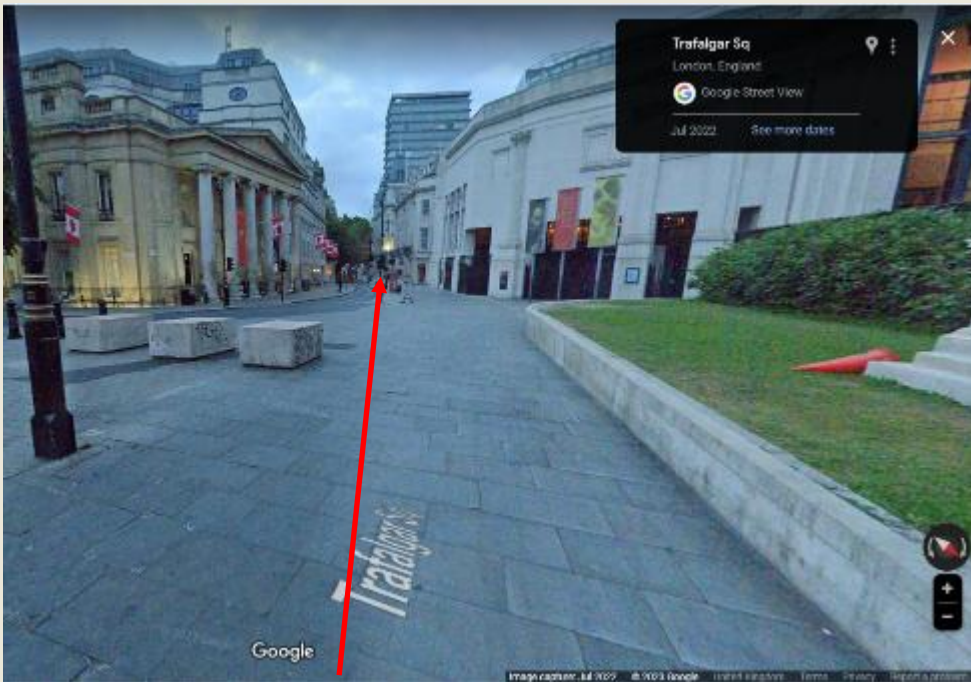
Here's a closer view at the top of Whitehall – we are going to continue towards the top left-hand corner so consider that when crossing over to the square. You can see Nelson's Column (red circle) in the following picture as well as the dome of the National Gallery (green circle) and spire of St. Martin in the Fields church (orange circle).



Step 6

Overview – Piccadilly Circus and Shaftesbury Avenue. After the attack on the wedding during *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* the trio apparate and appear at the top of Shaftesbury Avenue where it meets Piccadilly Circus, a livelier location in the film than the Tottenham Court Road one of the book. Whilst more of a sight in darkness, with all its lights, it's still a great place to visit in the day time.

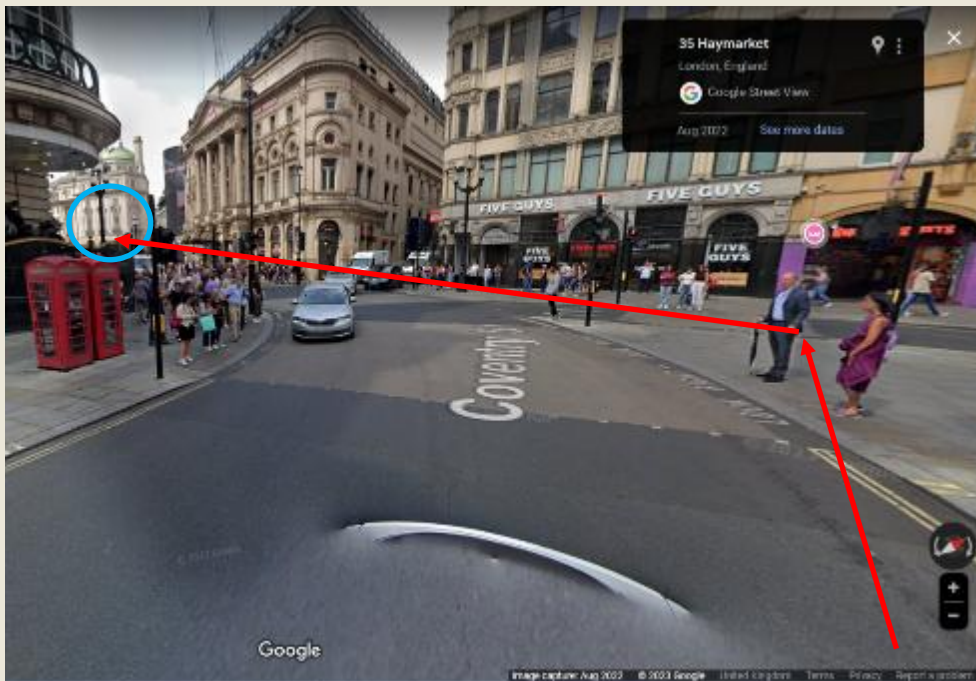
Directions – Head for the top left hand corner of Trafalgar Square. In the following picture you would have Nelson's Column to your left, the gallery dome to your right, and the church will be behind you. You need to head straight into Pall Mall. Look out for the red and white flags on Canada House on the left of the route.



Ignore the first two roads on the right (Whitcomb Street and Suffolk Street) and take the next one, Haymarket. That is as follows.



When you get to the end of Haymarket your view will be as follows.

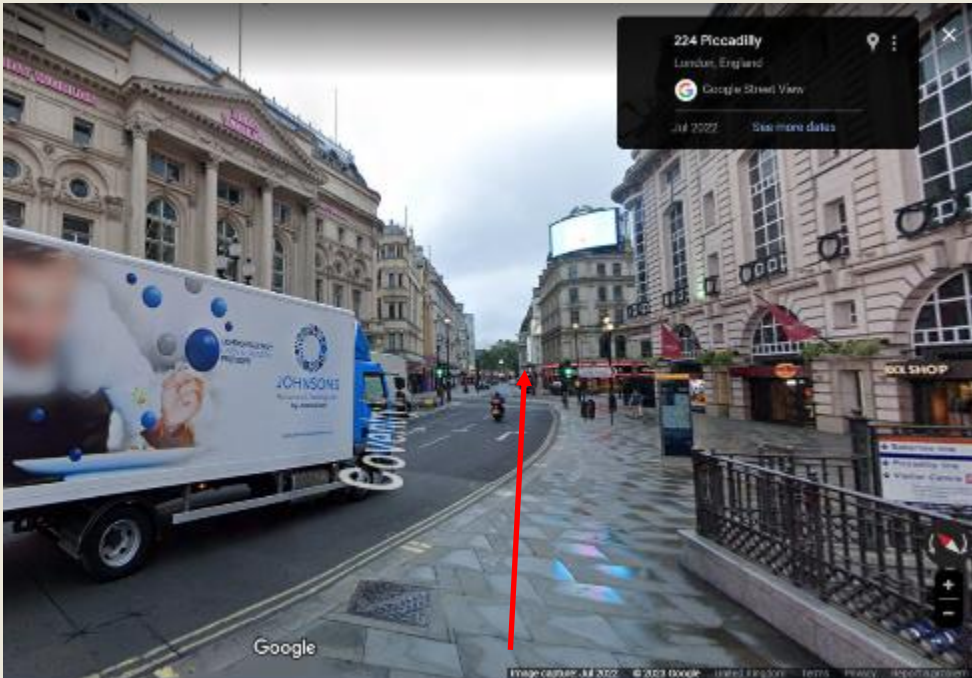


Once you have finished there come back to the top of Haymarket, as you will be heading along Coventry Street.

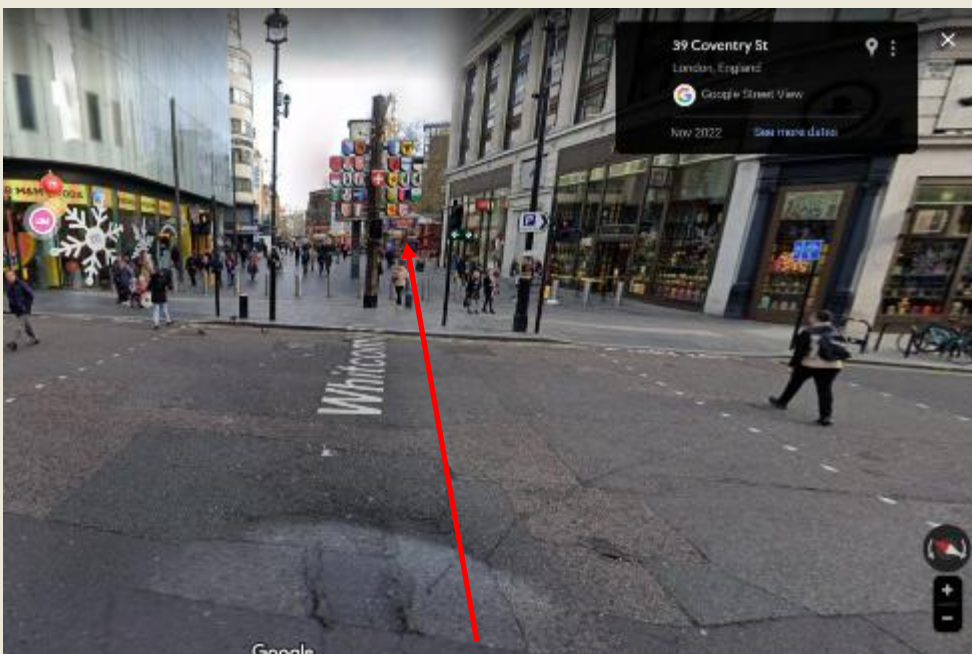
Step 7

Overview - Cecil Court. This street is a pedestrian route that is full of antiquarian map and book shops. It is suspected that this was the inspiration for Diagon Alley, the shops nearly all Victorian frontages. One shop is called *The Witch Ball*, and another, *Watkins*, claims to be London's oldest bookshop specialising in the occult. You might also see some Gringott's bank notes in a shop window.

Directions – We will pick these up from Piccadilly Circus. First, head back towards Haymarket – this takes you onto Coventry Street. When you get to the top of Haymarket just keep going. The high level screen is a good way marker – it's up above an Angus Steakhouse that is on the corner of Haymarket.

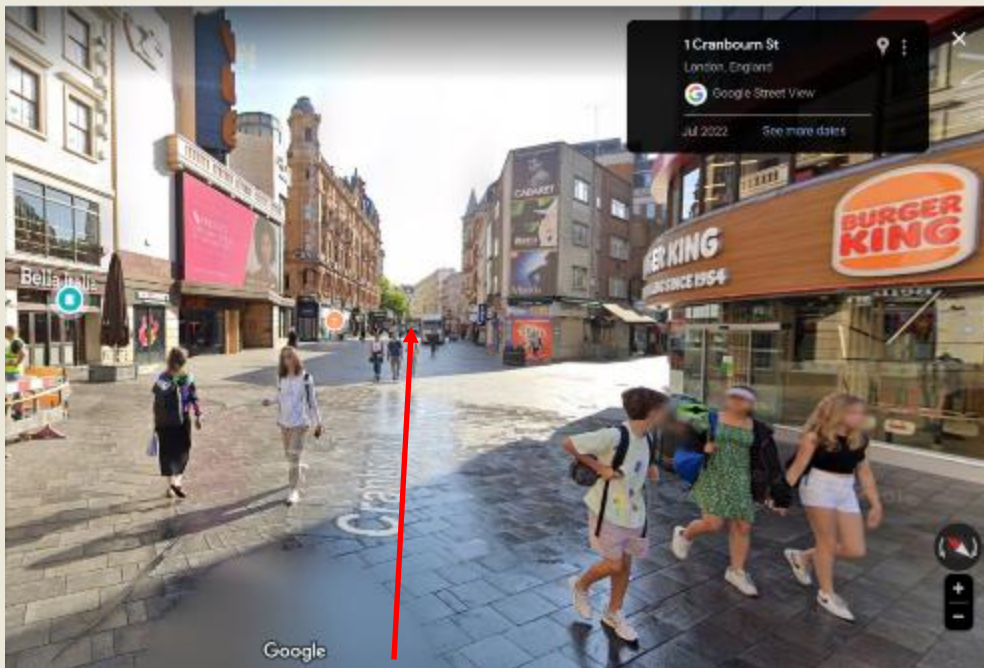


You will pass streets on the right and left then come to the end of Coventry Street where it meets Whitcomb Street. Just keep going straight into a pedestrian area.

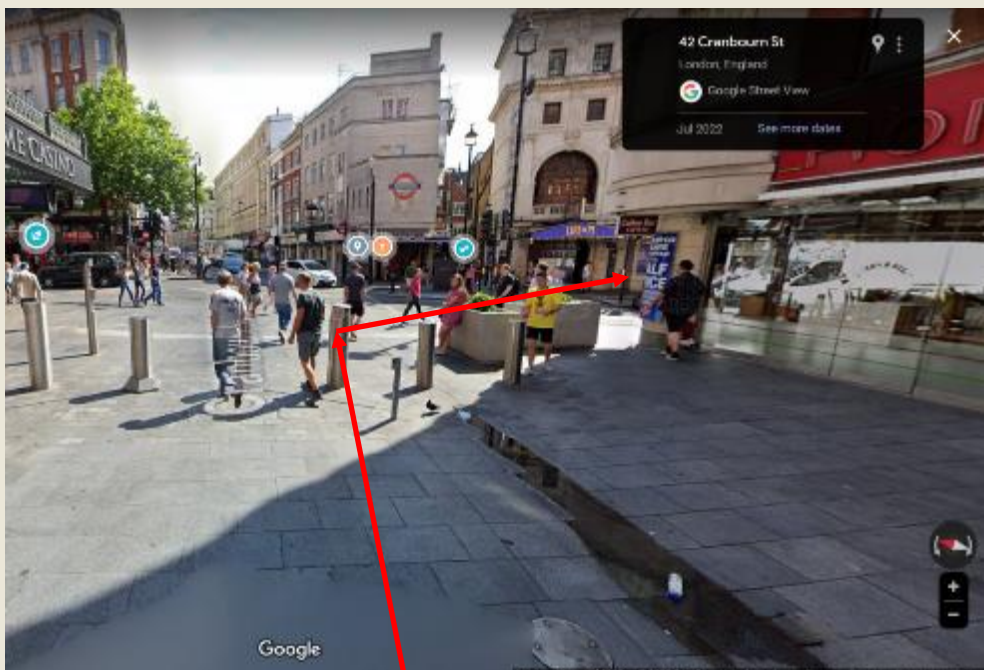


This route now becomes the north side of Leicester Square and as you progress you will find a statue of Harry Potter opposite the old Empire Theatre (between Bugs Bunny and Indiana Jones!).

At the corner of the square just keep going straight onto Cranbourn Street.



After a short distance you will arrive at Charing Cross Road. Turn right onto Charing Cross Road.



Just as you make the right turn you will pass the Wyndham theatre. There's a narrow passage to the left, just after the theatre – don't take that one but do take the next, Cecil Court. Lipman and Sons and Street Burger are at the top of it.



Just follow it to the end.

(and a little aside – whilst not that long an appearance each time, Charing Cross Road appears three times in the films. Harry and Hagrid walk along part of it in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, the Knight Bus runs along part of it during *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, and Ministry cars use it during *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*.)

Step 8

Overview – Goodwin’s Court. It’s speculation but this is another road that may have inspired Diagon Alley – and whilst it doesn’t have the actual shops of Cecil Court it certainly has a few quirks and wonky buildings.

Directions – At the end of Cecil Court you will come to St. Martin’s Lane. You need to cross over and turn left, then take the very next passage on the right. It’s a very small opening and is between Fernandos and Koshari Street. If you get to Mr. Fogg’s Tavern you have gone too far. The entrance is the blue circle.



Step 9

Overview – Palace Theatre. This isn't a film location but rather the home of *The Cursed Child*, the play that needs to be seen in two parts that charts the escapades of the next generation at Hogwarts.

Directions – We think it's best to come out of Goodwin's Court the way you came in as it gives a different perspective to the same passage. So, once you have got to the end, turn round and head back to St. Martin's Lane. Turn right.



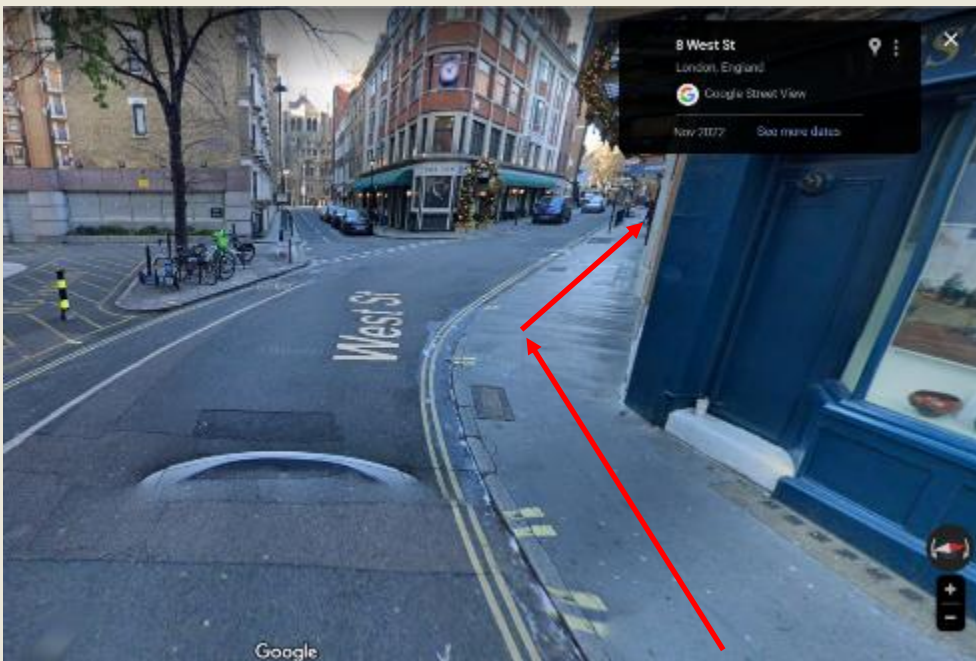
You will come to a large junction with five roads coming off it and just need to keep straight. It will change names to upper St. Martin's Lane.



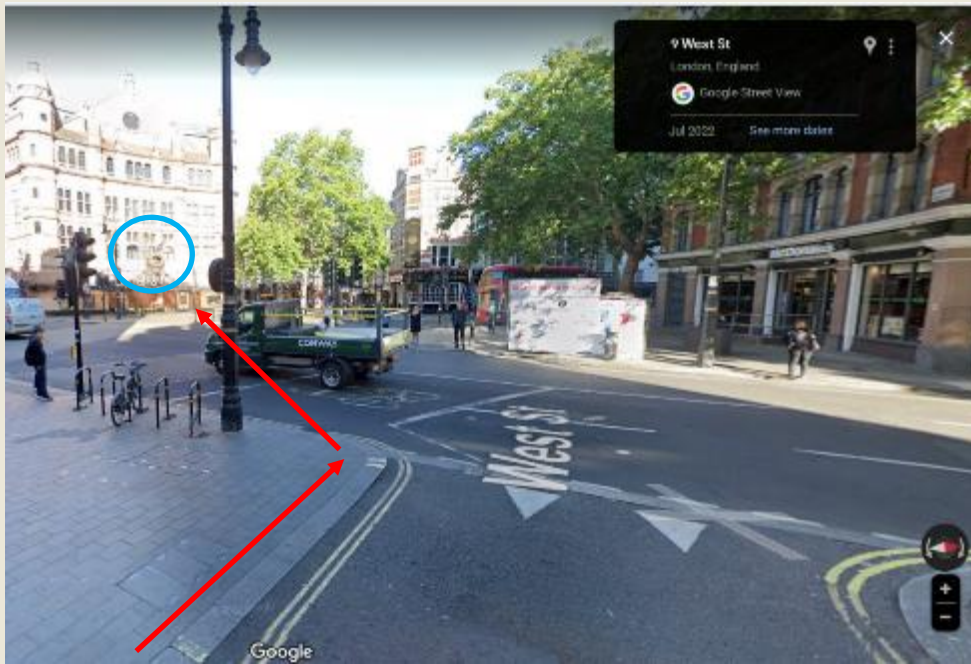
You will then be looking for the next left, West Street. You'll find the Equity Guild House on the corner.



West Street will curve to the right almost immediately – keep going along it with The Ivy on the left.



At the end of West Street, you will be on Cambridge Circus and will see the theatre over to the left.

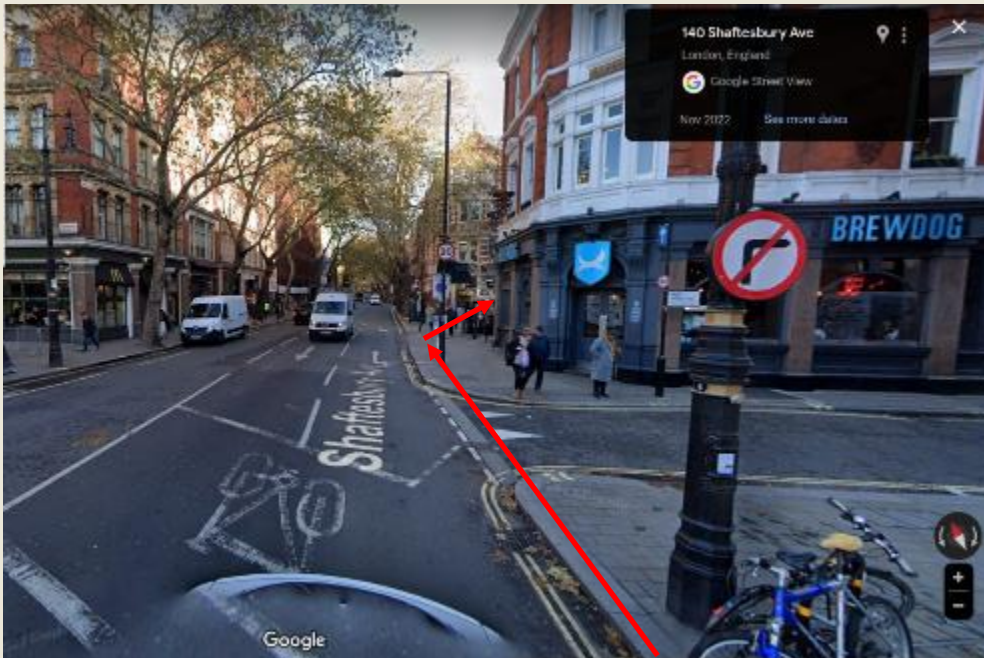


Once you have done just come back to the top of West Street.

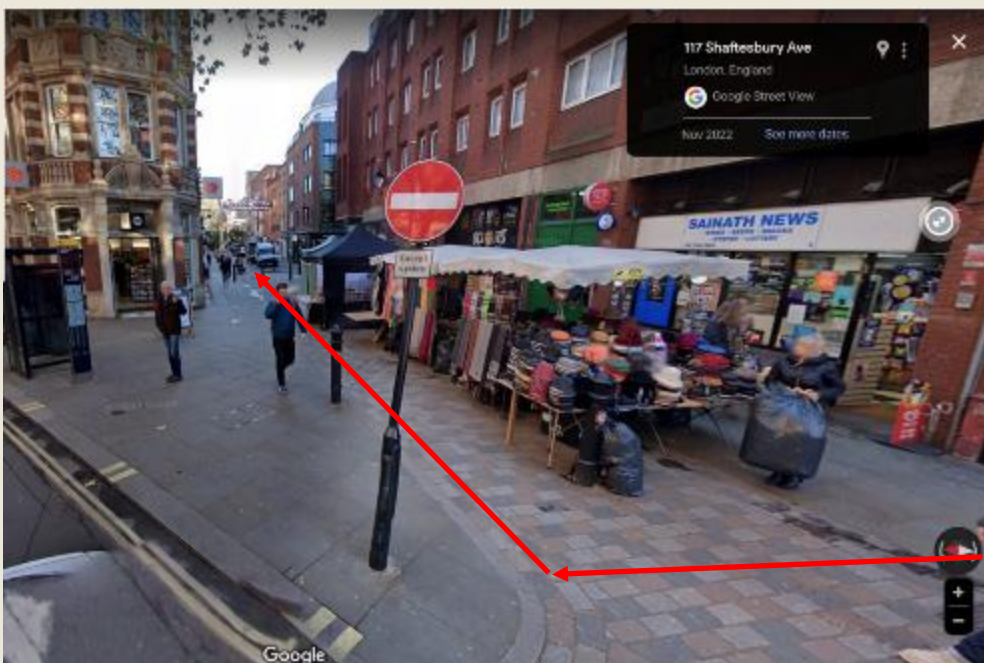
Step 10

Overview – Australia House. Sadly, the best you can really do here is look through the windows – as this is Gringott’s Bank. As a building it is quite interesting – it’s the longest continuously occupied diplomatic mission in the United Kingdom. In addition, the marble used was shipped from Australia!

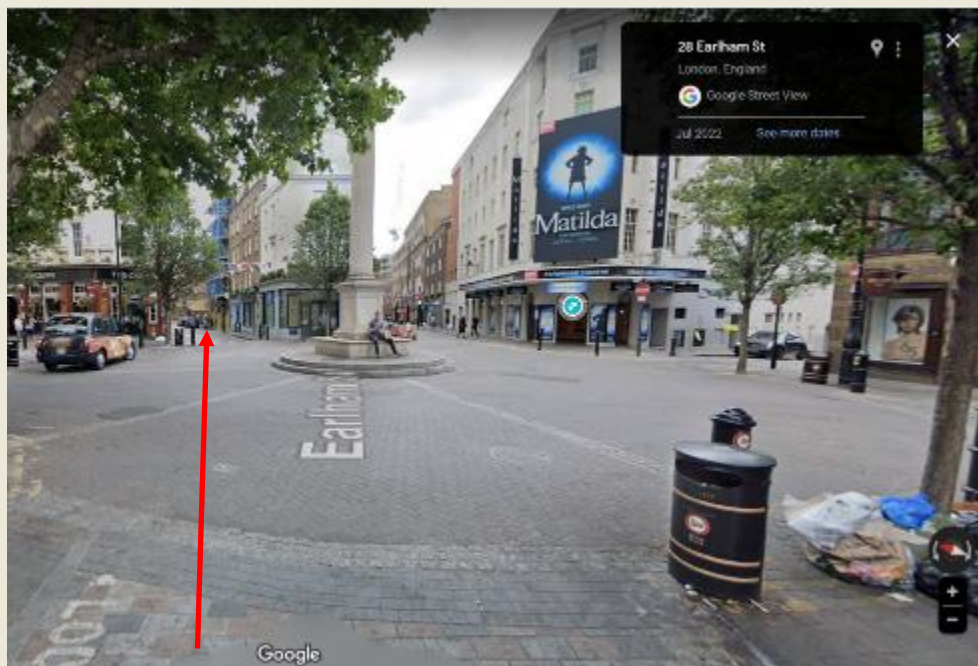
Directions – After coming back to the end of West Stret head onto Shaftesbury Avenue then take an immediate right onto Earlam Street.



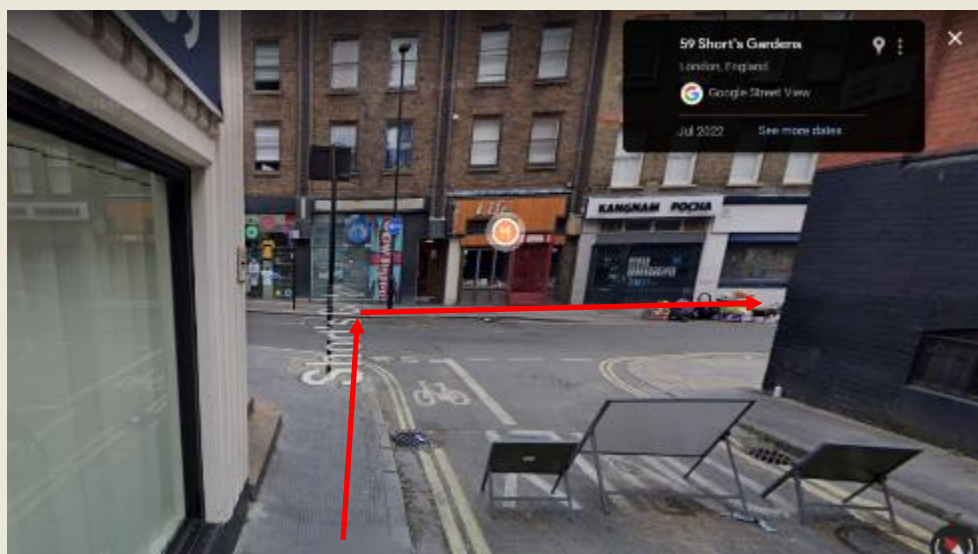
Here’s the view down Earlam Street and it is initially pedestrianised.



Ignore a road on your right (Tower Street) and carry on. You will then reach Seven Dials – a junction with seven exits. If the one you have used is one, you need number four, Short's Gardens.

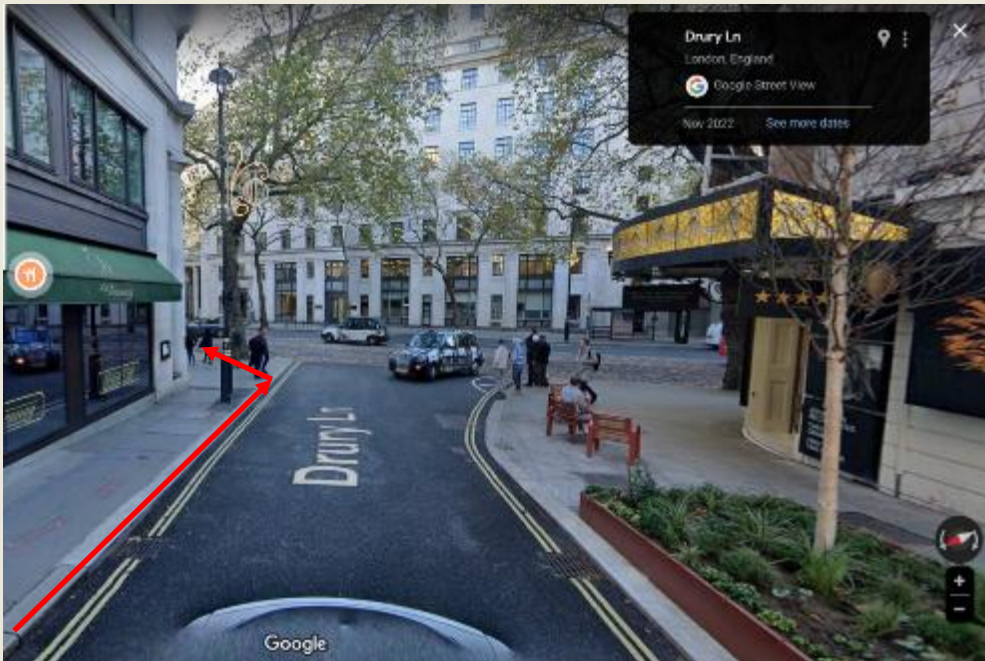


The route crosses Neal Street then Endell Street and then comes to an end at Drury Lane. Turn right. There is a Travel Lodge on your left at this junction.



You are going the length of Drury Lane so will pass or cross Betterton Street, Parker Street, Long Acre, Great Queen Street, Russell Street and others.

At the end of Drury Lane turn left onto Aldwych. The Aldwych theatre will be on the right, The Delaunay on the left.



There's a road to the right – Melbourne Place - and Australia House starts after that. Keep going round to the front for the entrance.



That's the end of the walk – if you are finishing at Australia House you can head to Temple Underground station where you will find the Circle and District lines. Or you could continue with our Harry Potter (walk 2) – it starts at Temple Underground station and will come past Australia House.

To get to Temple Underground station you need to cross Strand and take Arundel Street.



When you get to the end of Arundel Street you will see an Underground sign directly ahead of you – cross Temple Place (the road in front of you) and you will find the entrance to the station.



You might need tickets for the Warner brothers/Harry Potter Studios or may prefer to do a guided tour of Harry Potter sights in London. For either, there are some links below.

Harry Potter Studio tour from London



Magical London Harry Potter walking tour



The most complete and exclusive Harry Potter tour

