# Salisbury Square sets new benchmark with first Square Mile geothermal system and heritage-conscious construction



The Salisbury Square development in central London represents a remarkable example of balancing heritage preservation with cutting-edge innovation in a challenging urban construction setting. Discussed in depth at the 2024 GE Basements and Underground Structures conference, the project’s complexity revolves around constructing a deepened basement within a site comprising the footprints of nine disparate former buildings. Michael O'Hagan, managing director of Keltbray Built Environment, and Stuart Vaughan, director at Wentworth, outlined the intricate collaboration required between contractor, temporary works designer, and main contractor Mace to tackle the site’s varied basement forms and levels while preserving adjacent heritage assets such as a listed building and a historic public house.

These challenges were compounded by the heavily service-laden surrounding roads, with utility lines in undefined locations that demanded meticulous investigation and risk management to ensure the safety and uninterrupted serviceability of existing infrastructure. The project team’s extensive probing, piling, and excavation work exemplifies a meticulous approach to de-risking in a sensitive urban context while maintaining structural and operational integrity.

Beyond the challenging engineering feats lies a strong commitment to sustainability and innovation. In July 2023, the City of London Corporation announced the completion of the first of over 60 geothermal boreholes for the development. This pioneering standalone borehole cooling and heating system is the first of its kind in the Square Mile, contributing significantly to the project’s embodied role in advancing London’s Net Zero 2040 carbon emission targets. This renewable energy initiative aligns with the building’s broader sustainable design philosophy, which includes well-insulated façades, low air permeability, and the incorporation of green roofs.

The development targets a BREEAM Excellent rating, reflecting its adherence to the Mayor’s London Plan concerning carbon emissions and air quality. It also embraces WELL Building Standard principles to prioritize accessibility and inclusivity, underscoring a vision for a healthy, sustainable environment. A key goal is to responsibly reclaim materials from existing buildings on site, further demonstrating a circular approach to construction resource management.

Salisbury Square is as much a civic enhancement as a technical achievement. The 45,785 square metre project is a high-tech justice and policing hub, housing 18 new courtrooms focused on tackling high-level fraud, cybercrime, and economic offenses, alongside a modern headquarters for the City of London Police. The UK government officially marked the start of construction in October 2022, highlighting the development’s importance in reinforcing London's global stature as a centre for business, law, and justice. Designed with a lifespan of at least 125 years, these facilities are intended to support the justice system’s long-term resilience and operational needs.

Renowned Eric Parry Architects lead the design, ensuring the buildings integrate seamlessly within the historic context of the Square Mile while elevating civic life through enhanced accessibility and modern infrastructure. The entire project is set to create approximately 2,500 jobs and bolster the local economy with an additional 400 new positions.

In sum, the Salisbury Square development is a flagship example of urban regeneration where heritage meets innovation. It embodies a multi-faceted strategy encompassing engineering ingenuity, sustainability leadership, and civic responsibility, promising a transformative impact on the City of London’s justice and policing landscape for generations to come.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.geplus.co.uk/events/watch-salisbury-square-development-balancing-heritage-and-innovation-16-06-2025/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.geplus.co.uk/events/watch-salisbury-square-development-balancing-heritage-and-innovation-16-06-2025/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://news.cityoflondon.gov.uk/first-geothermal-borehole-completed-on-innovative-salisbury-square-development--the-first-square-mile-scheme-to-use-a-standalone-borehole-cooling-and-heating-system/), [[3]](https://salisburysquaredevelopment.co.uk/the-proposal/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://salisburysquaredevelopment.co.uk/the-proposal/), [[2]](https://news.cityoflondon.gov.uk/first-geothermal-borehole-completed-on-innovative-salisbury-square-development--the-first-square-mile-scheme-to-use-a-standalone-borehole-cooling-and-heating-system/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[4]](https://news.cityoflondon.gov.uk/construction-begins-on-high-tech-city-justice-and-policing-hub), [[5]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/construction-begins-on-brand-new-flagship-london-court-in-the-square-mile), [[7]](https://news.cityoflondon.gov.uk/city-of-londons-new-justice-quarter-gets-the-go-ahead/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[6]](https://www.ericparryarchitects.co.uk/projects/salisbury-square-development/), [[7]](https://news.cityoflondon.gov.uk/city-of-londons-new-justice-quarter-gets-the-go-ahead/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.geplus.co.uk/events/watch-salisbury-square-development-balancing-heritage-and-innovation-16-06-2025/), [[2]](https://news.cityoflondon.gov.uk/first-geothermal-borehole-completed-on-innovative-salisbury-square-development--the-first-square-mile-scheme-to-use-a-standalone-borehole-cooling-and-heating-system/), [[3]](https://salisburysquaredevelopment.co.uk/the-proposal/), [[4]](https://news.cityoflondon.gov.uk/construction-begins-on-high-tech-city-justice-and-policing-hub), [[5]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/construction-begins-on-brand-new-flagship-london-court-in-the-square-mile), [[6]](https://www.ericparryarchitects.co.uk/projects/salisbury-square-development/), [[7]](https://news.cityoflondon.gov.uk/city-of-londons-new-justice-quarter-gets-the-go-ahead/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.geplus.co.uk/events/watch-salisbury-square-development-balancing-heritage-and-innovation-16-06-2025/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://news.cityoflondon.gov.uk/first-geothermal-borehole-completed-on-innovative-salisbury-square-development--the-first-square-mile-scheme-to-use-a-standalone-borehole-cooling-and-heating-system/> - In July 2023, the City of London Corporation announced the completion of the first of over 60 geothermal boreholes for the Salisbury Square Development. This marks the first standalone borehole cooling and heating system in the Square Mile, aiming to reduce carbon emissions and support the Net Zero 2040 target. The development includes a flagship facility for HMCTS and a new headquarters for the City of London Police, enhancing the City's justice system and business environment.
3. <https://salisburysquaredevelopment.co.uk/the-proposal/> - The Salisbury Square Development aims to create a sustainable and healthy environment by incorporating energy-efficient designs, such as well-insulated façades and low air permeability. The project plans to reclaim materials from existing buildings, incorporate green roofs, and adhere to WELL Building Standard principles to ensure accessibility and inclusivity. Targeting a BREEAM rating of Excellent, the development aligns with the Mayor’s London Plan on carbon emissions and air quality.
4. <https://news.cityoflondon.gov.uk/construction-begins-on-high-tech-city-justice-and-policing-hub> - In October 2022, the City of London Corporation, Ministry of Justice, and City of London Police celebrated the start of construction on a 45,785 sqm civic scheme to enhance the justice system's capacity to combat fraud. The development includes 18 courtrooms and a new police headquarters, aiming to strengthen the City's position as a global centre for business, law, and justice.
5. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/construction-begins-on-brand-new-flagship-london-court-in-the-square-mile> - The UK government announced in October 2022 the commencement of construction on a state-of-the-art combined court in the heart of London’s legal centre as part of the Salisbury Square development. The new court will house 18 hearing rooms, focusing on high-level fraud, cyber, and economic crime, and is designed to last at least 125 years, supporting the UK's reputation as a global destination for business and investment.
6. <https://www.ericparryarchitects.co.uk/projects/salisbury-square-development/> - Eric Parry Architects have been commissioned to design the Salisbury Square Development, which includes a new 18-courtroom legal facility and a modern police headquarters. The project focuses on sustainability and longevity, with buildings designed to last at least 125 years. The development aims to integrate modern facilities with the historic context of the Square Mile, enhancing civic life and accessibility.
7. <https://news.cityoflondon.gov.uk/city-of-londons-new-justice-quarter-gets-the-go-ahead/> - In April 2021, the City of London Corporation received approval for the Salisbury Square Development, a new civic hub housing a flagship courts building and a new police headquarters. Designed to last at least 125 years, the development aims to strengthen the City's position as a global centre for business, law, and justice, creating 2,500 jobs and supporting 400 new positions.