

# Waterloo: Southbank

**A**  
Spatial accessibility  
model of London's  
South Bank showing  
poorly used  
routes in blue,  
London, 2000

**B**  
South Bank Centre, as  
proposed showing  
highly connected, new  
routes in orange and  
yellow, indicating high  
levels of natural  
surveillance,  
London, 2000



A



B

## The problem

London's South Bank hosts some of the world's premier cultural facilities and has long been frequented by many kinds of people: local residents, workers, tourists and commuters, as well as music, theatre and museum goers. Despite all these elements, however, it had never achieved the urban buzz expected of it. We were hired by the South Bank Centre management to help diagnose and treat the problem.

## Our contribution

We were able to trace the problem primarily to the area's circulation system. Our evidence showed that the spatial layout of the area directed different groups of people onto different routes. This left many spaces empty for much of the time because several groups of people were present only at certain times of day. Underused spaces were colonised by anti-social individuals or groups who deterred further use. The result was a spiral of decline in which there were relatively few locations where commercial, retail or catering outlets were viable.

Our recommendations largely focused on integrating the various user groups by providing new direct routes between Waterloo International Station, the Hungerford Bridge and the Riverwalk. We also sited new attractors in integrated locations, to take advantage of passing flows and added two new significant public spaces to act as attractors and orientation points.

## The outcome

Our recommendations have reversed the downward spiral. Many of the spaces in the South Bank Centre now feature a mix of different user groups as well as successful new catering and retail establishments.