

# LIFE in London

## Politics & Diplomacy Walk

You have heard plenty of people talking about LSE being right at the centre of the UK (and the world's!) political map. Today we can actually see that in practice!

<https://goo.gl/maps/FUGXia2XZCv3pSoKA>





**1 Australia House** Just across the street from our campus is Australia House, the longest continuously occupied diplomatic mission in the United Kingdom, inaugurated in 1918. It's a listed building and, if you ever have a chance to enter, make sure to admire its interiors (if they look familiar, that's because they were used to film the scenes inside Gringotts Wizarding Bank for Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone!).



**2 India House** Right next to Australia House we have another major diplomatic mission – the High Commission of India is located in the aptly named India House. As you walk along Aldwych you can see the 12 emblems of India under the British Raj.



**3 South African High Commission** The windows of South Africa House overlook the beauty that is Trafalgar Square and Charing Cross (the geographical centre of London), while its colonnade on the South side again has Harry Potteresque connotations – JK Rowling worked nearby, and rumour has it that she drew inspiration from those columns to describe the exterior of Gringotts Wizarding Bank



**4 Canada House** Possibly the most impressive of the embassies on today's tour, Canada House was designed by Robert Smirke, the architect of the British Museum. On top of the obvious consular activities, Canada House programme of events also offers exhibitions, lectures, and many delicious banquets.



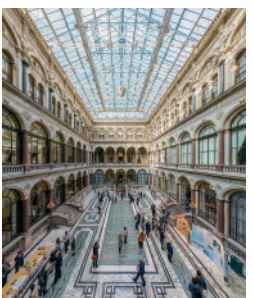
**5 Horse Guards** If you are a fan of horses, you'll probably enjoy walking by Horse Guards. The building is guarded by two mounted cavalry troopers of The Queen's Life Guard who are posted outside from 10am to 4pm daily. The Life Guard change takes place here at 11:00am daily and 10:00am on Sundays.



Across the road you can then see **Banqueting House**, designed in the early 17th century by Inigo Jones and the only surviving part of the Palace of Whitehall. If you look through the windows you'll be able to spot the beautiful panels on its ceiling, painted by Peter Paul Rubens.



**6 (10) Downing Street** While the exterior of Number 10 is not particularly significant from an architectural point of view, the building is the headquarters of the Government of the United Kingdom. Depending on the day, it might be a bit hard to get close to the gate on Whitehall as, regardless of who is Prime Minister, protesters and tourists alike can often be found blocking the passage.



**7 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office** In the 19th century George Gilbert Scott designed the building of the Foreign Office as 'a kind of national palace or drawing room for the nation'. Its decorated rooms were intended to impress foreign dignitaries, and in many instances still achieve the same aim today. Inside, the Durbar Court is at the heart of the building with its amazing glass ceiling.



**8 Palace of Westminster** And now we come to our final stop, the Palace of Westminster. You have surely seen it plenty of times on TV, but take a moment to admire this gothic revival building. Three towers dominate the building, the Victoria Tower at the South-West End, the Central Tower, and the Elizabeth Tower (just remember that Big Ben is not the name of the tower itself, but that of the heaviest of the five bells it houses inside).