



An Old Design

Beck's design quickly gained popularity after being introduced to the public in January 1933. Harry Beck realised that for underground travel, the exact geographical locations of stations above ground were irrelevant. What mattered was showing the sequence of stations within the underground system. He created a simplified, diagrammatic map with lines running vertically, horizontally, or at 45° angles—a style known as octolinear due to the eight possible directions from each point.

Over the next three decades, Beck produced four major versions of the map. His first design (1933–1938) is undoubtedly the best, balancing a geographical inner circle with more abstract representations on the outskirts. His fourth and final design (1954–1959) pushed abstraction to an extreme, even in the central area, losing the balance between clarity and accuracy.

In 1960, Harold Hutchinson, the Underground's publicity officer, took over the design. However, his map was poorly balanced and lasted only three years. On the positive side, he introduced interchange symbols, allowing multiple lines to pass through a single circle—a symbol still in use today.

In 1964, Paul Garbutt “rescued the design,” bringing in his own vision. He centred the map around horizontal and vertical axes—using the Central and Northern lines respectively—employing straight lines throughout, and depicted the Circle line as a “thermos flask.”

Over the past few decades, additional lines—such as the Jubilee and Elizabeth lines—and new features like the trams, and fare zones have been layered onto Garbutt's framework. Although various designers, from Tim Demuth in 1988 to Jon Hunter in 2016, have made updates, these changes were implemented without a new, unified vision for the network. As a result, the map has become visually cluttered and increasingly difficult to read.

Find out more at:
easytubemap.com/octolinear

A New Map

Arcangelo's map has been redrawn in the classic octolinear style, distinctively employing a predetermined grid to reinforce symmetry and enhance readability. As a tribute to the pioneering works of Harry Beck and Paul Garbutt, who crafted their iconic maps with simple tools, the initial draft was created using colouring pens and paper in 2022.

The diagram of lines is structured around the traditional main features of the Underground network. The Circle Line is depicted with an enlarged and stylised geographical shape, echoing Beck's first design. The horizontal (Central Line) and vertical (Northern Line) axes feature straight lines reminiscent of Garbutt's design. New supplementary axes, such as the Elizabeth Line and Thameslink, are depicted with innovative straight configurations. These four axes are vital routes for navigating London, requiring clear representation, especially in the central sections. Positioned at the very centre of the map, the visual landmark of the West End "cross shield" of lines provides immediate orientation.

Additional information, such as rail stations, accessibility, and fare zones, is presented in a manner that is not visually intrusive. Nevertheless, the map includes all information displayed on the current TfL Tube Map, along with additional details such as the Riverbus service, peak services of the Elizabeth Line, and more than 30 additional walking links, promoting their use.

Arcangelo's diagram of lines has undergone regular revisions since the completion of the first digital map (MFNS01) in July 2023. The map has been produced in various versions, including the Easy-To-Read, Legacy, Rush Hour, Respelled, Phonemic, and Typography.

This seventh version, named Centenary, depicts the network as it might appear in the 2030s, about 100 years after Beck's original map, assuming all planned and proposed extensions are realised.

Find out more at:
easytubemap.com/map



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OF THE LONDON UNDERGROUND

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Old Oak Common Station

A new Elizabeth line station is under construction between Paddington and Acton Main Line. Built above the HS2 (High Speed 2) platforms, it will provide seamless transfers between local and high-speed services. The station is expected to open sometime in the early 2030s, depending on HS2 construction progress.

Find out more at: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Oak_Common_railway_station

Hythe Road Station

This proposed station on the Mildmay Overground line, between Willesden Junction and Kensington Olympia, aims to complement the planned Old Oak Common station, alongside the West London Orbital.

Find out more at: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hythe_Road_railway_station

Thames Wharf Station

A new DLR station was proposed as part of a housing development linked to the opening of the Silvertown Tunnel, but funding was paused in 2021.

Find out more at: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thames_Wharf_DLR_station#cite_note-14

DLR Extension

A potential extension of the DLR Beckton branch to Beckton Riverside and Thamesmead is under consideration, with construction possibly starting in 2028 and opening to passengers in the early 2030s.

Find out more at: tfl.gov.uk/corporate/about-tfl/how-we-work/planning-for-the-future/dlr-extension?cid=dlr-extension

Bakerloo Extension

An extension of the line from Elephant & Castle to Lewisham, including new stations at Old Kent Road and Burgess Park, was selected and safeguarded in 2021. Construction will require secured funding to proceed.

Find out more at: tfl.gov.uk/corporate/about-tfl/how-we-work/planning-for-the-future/bakerloo-line-extension

West London Orbital

The service would use existing, underused rail lines, including the Dudding Hill line — which is currently used for freight services only — and add new stations and upgrades at existing ones. If funding is secured, services could begin in the early 2030s.

Find out more at: tfl.gov.uk/corporate/about-tfl/how-we-work/planning-for-the-future/west-london-orbital

Crossrail 2

This ambitious project would create a new, high-capacity underground railway linking South West London to North East London, featuring a long tunnel between Wimbledon and Tottenham Hale, before connecting to existing rail lines. New stations will be constructed, including one at Euston St Pancras, with underground passages linking to Euston and St Pancras, resulting in a massive Euston-St Pancras-King's Cross station complex. The route was safeguarded in 2015, with two options for the route via Wood Green or Turnpike Lane to New Southgate. However, the project was paused in 2020.

Find out more at: crossrail2.co.uk

