

AKC Essay Competition - Coversheet

- Complete all sections of this form and ensure it is the first page of the document you submit (either copy and paste this page into the front of your work, or begin your work on subsequent pages of this form).
- **DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON YOUR WORK.**
- Pages should be clearly numbered.

Student ID number (e.g. 1712345) NOT your K number	
--	--

Degree Programme (where applicable)	Politics, Philosophy and Law LLB
Department (where applicable)	Law
AKC Year (1, 2 or 3):	3

Essay question number:	1
Essay Title:	If there was a tenth lecture for this AKC series, which building would you choose and why?
Deadline:	23:59, Sunday 26 April 2020
Date Submitted:	Sunday April 26 2020
Word Count (max 1500 words):	1479

DECLARATION BY STUDENT

By submitting this essay, I declare the following:

This assignment is entirely my own work. Quotations from secondary literature are indicated by the use of inverted commas around ALL such quotations AND by reference in the text or notes to the author concerned.

ALL primary and secondary literature used in this piece of work is indicated in the bibliography placed at the end, and dependence upon ANY source used is indicated at the appropriate point in the text.

I confirm that no sources have been used other than those stated.

I understand what is meant by plagiarism, including self-plagiarism.

I understand that plagiarism is a serious academic offence that will result in disciplinary action being taken and may result in my withdrawal from the AKC programme.

I understand that essays which do not include references and a bibliography will not be read.

My word count is accurately stated above and I understand that essays which are more than 10% over the word limit may not be considered by the AKC Steering Committee.

A tenth addition to the series *Inside London: The Life-Story of a City in Nine Buildings* should feature Waterloo station. Its long and rich history in many ways reflects London's evolution, representing continuity through change, British culture, internationalism and the London experience. First this essay will examine Waterloo station's history and how the building came to be what it is today. Second, it will be argued that Waterloo, is a cultural landmark of the city of London due its social and cultural layers of meaning, which shed light on the question what it means to belong in London today.

Throughout London's history, Waterloo been an important transport hub, owing to its large size and capacity. Hosting nearly 100 million passengers per year, Waterloo is the United Kingdom's largest and busiest station.¹ Waterloo station hosts arrivals and departures on 21 platforms to and from the city of London. It brings a great number of people together, from the many daily suburban commuters to the Ascot and Epsom race goers.² The classic 1948 posters of Waterloo station, commissioned for its 100th anniversary, show that it has housed of the London's most important historical moments, such as its rapid economic expansion and the two World Wars.³ In fact, in Waterloo station's Victory Arch, a Grade II listed site, remains engraved the memory of staff members who lost their lives in service during the First World.⁴ Yet another layer of London's history can be found in the retail balcony extension, which took place in response to higher expected demand during the 2012 London Olympic Games.⁵ Waterloo station has become a focal point both for transportation and for London life generally.⁶

Moreover, a second layer of Waterloo station's importance is its vibrant and dynamic character as a building that is both contributing to, and a part of, London's history. The purpose of Waterloo station, which dates back to 1848, was to serve city and country through the trains, and later, with the underground.⁷ Importantly, Waterloo opened London to the continent in the 13 years in which it housed the London terminal of the Eurostar, from 1994 to 2007.⁸ Additionally, Waterloo station has dynamically bounced back after witnessing

¹ "Waterloo Station is Busiest in Britain for 15th Year," Office of Rail and Road, accessed April 26, 2020, <https://orr.gov.uk/news-and-blogs/press-releases/2018/waterloo-station-is-busiest-in-britain-for-15th-year>.

² "The history of London Waterloo Station," Network Rail, accessed April 26, 2020, <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/who-we-are/our-history/iconic-infrastructure/the-history-of-london-waterloo-station>.

³ "Waterloo Station Poster," Age of Revolution – Making the World Over, accessed April 26, 2020, <https://ageofrevolution.org/200-object/waterloo-station-poster/>. Beverley Cole and Richard Durack, *Railway Posters 1923-1947: From the Collection of the National Railway Museum*, (York: Laurence King Publishing, 1992), 91.

⁴ Nigel Watt, "My Favourite History Place," *The Historian*, (Winter 2016/17): 46.

⁵ "Waterloo Station Retail Balcony: Improving England's Busiest Station with New Shopping Space," BAM Construction, accessed April 26, 2020, <https://www.bam.co.uk/how-we-do-it/case-study/waterloo-station-retail-balcony>.

⁶ Nebojša Čamprag, "People Flows Versus Public Spaces – London Waterloo Station," *Contemporary Achievements in Civil Engineering* 21 (April 2017): 750.

⁷ "The history of London Waterloo Station."

⁸ Ibid.

some of the most difficult times in the city's history, such as bombing during the Second World War.⁹ Like London, Waterloo station survived the challenge and was born anew. As with the city itself, Waterloo station never ceases trying to improve, push the boundaries and look to the future, as revealed by the most recent extension due for completion in 2021.¹⁰ Waterloo station has invigorated the formerly run-down South Bank of the River Thames and 'transformed' it into one of the most sought-after and lively commercial centres in London.¹¹

Waterloo station effortlessly represents a microcosm of London, reflecting both its rich culture full of many layers of human meaning as well as its current challenges. The commuters hosted by Waterloo station mimic the non-stop heartbeat of the city, reflecting the sometimes chaotic and overwhelming character of London life. In many ways, Waterloo station brings Londoners together every single day as a transport and retail hub. Importantly, however, a close look at Waterloo station's people reveals a great deal about the divisions and difficulties that pervade our city. Commuters travelling long distances early each morning and late each evening shed light onto London's challenges of affordability and extortionately high living costs. Waterloo provides a prism through which the growing inequality and social problems which characterise London, such as the homelessness crisis, can be seen. Near the historic Victory Arch, are people sleeping rough traversed quickly by young, ambitious white-collar workers running through the station to catch the next train.¹² Although inequality and social malady exist, they are woven into the fabric of the city alongside many of the most hopeful and unifying aspects of London, such inclusivity for disabled people.¹³ Like London, Waterloo is a space evoking nostalgia and community, deeply diverse and accepting as well as sometimes relentless and faceless and blind to the human anguish at its doorstep.

Therefore, its hidden complexities reveal that Waterloo station is full of layers of human meaning. As with so much of London, Waterloo station's history as a building reveals it to be a palimpsest, continually building, erasing and creating new layers of meaning on the same starting point. It is at once very international, but also distinctively British, honouring brands such as M&S, LUSH, Accessorize, WHSmith and Oliver Bonas.

⁹ "London Rail Depot Hit, Nazis Assert; Bombing of Waterloo Station and Great Fires All Over City Are Stressed in Claims Hastings Gets Strafing Dungeness Camp Under Fire -- Convoys Reported Broken Up-Midlands Attacked," *The New York Times*, October 13, 1940, 47.

¹⁰ "Five new platforms for Waterloo Station as Old Eurostar Terminal Reopens," *Rail Technology Magazine*, December 11, 2018, <http://www.railtechnologymagazine.com/Civils-and-stations/Page-8/five-new-platforms-for-waterloo-station-as-old-eurostar-terminal-reopens->. "New Pictures Show That Waterloo Station Is About To Change Completely," Laura Reynolds, accessed April 26, 2020, <https://londonist.com/london/news/waterloo-station-will-soon-look-like>.

¹¹ Helen Santer, "Cross-borough Business Improvement Districts: Waterloo's Attempt to Become the First Town Centre BID to Cross a Local Authority Boundary," *Local Economy* 23, no.1 (February 2008): 82.

¹² "Homeless and Waterloo Station," London Assembly, Mayor of London, accessed April 26, 2020, <https://www.london.gov.uk/questions/2017/3330>. Kit Buchan, "Gimme Shelter: Stories from London's Homeless," *The Guardian*, March 6, 2016,

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/mar/06/homelessness-rough-sleepers-interviews-westminster-london>.

¹³ "U-turn on Silencing Announcement Tannoy at Waterloo Station," Transportforall, accessed April 26, 2020, <https://www.transportforall.org.uk/news/u-turn-on-silencing-announcement-tannoy-at-waterloo-station>.

Within the chaos of people-centred London, walking along its large concourse, one can find peace. Waterloo station is characterised, like the essence of the London experience, by the interweaving of moments of tranquillity, wonder and romance within the intense pressure, repetitiveness and structure of daily life. One of the most culturally significant examples is the traditional meeting point "under its clock at Waterloo", whereby lovers typically walk towards each other to meet in the middle of station.¹⁴ Its ability to bring people together and inscribe layers of meaning into their experiences, has inspired the creation of various artistic works such as its regular inclusion in the *Punch* magazine and one British film, earning it a place in London's popular culture.¹⁵ The Kinks' track 'Waterloo Sunset', inspired by the station and its place in London's modern culture, is widely regarded as one of the best songs of the 20th century.¹⁶ Like many of the most enduring and culturally rich buildings of London, which featured on this AKC lecture series, Waterloo has both embraced and resisted change, negotiating its distinctive identity as a part of London. Waterloo station connects us as Londoners both to one another as well to the previous generations and events that form the history of our city, collective experiences and sense of belonging.

To conclude, if there was a tenth lecture for this AKC series, it has been argued that it should feature Waterloo station because of its ability to unite people, and in doing so, enabling us to reflect on the continually building history of London, from our point of view in space and time. First, a historical tour of the building was given, showing that Waterloo deserves a place at the very heart of London's history, having begun as a small station in the Victorian era, endured two world wars and witnessed the 2012 London Olympics. Second, Waterloo station has both physically and culturally inscribed many layers of meaning into London, in particular ones that evoke nostalgia for how London life used to be as well as a sense of togetherness in how life in London is now. Traversing Waterloo station, and a few moments' reflection, one cannot help but experience the feelings that this place evokes because Waterloo is not merely a building, but a living part of London's history and identity. It is a true palimpsest of human meaning – economic, artistic, social and cultural, that would therefore fit perfect into a lecture series about London's life-story told through ten buildings.

¹⁴ Julian Le Vay and Benedict Le Vay, *Britain from the Rails: Including the Nation's Best-Kept-Secret Railways*. (Bradt Travel Guides, 2014), 201.

¹⁵ John Christopher, *Waterloo Station Through Time* (Amberley Publishing, 2015), 16, 29.

¹⁶ "Ray Davies - How a Lonely Londoner Created One of the Great Sixties Songs," *Independent*, August 26, 2011, <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/features/ray-davies-how-a-lonely-londoner-created-one-of-the-great-sixties-songs-2343826.html>.

Bibliography

- Age of Revolution – Making the World Over. “Waterloo Station Poster.” Accessed April 26, 2020, <https://ageofrevolution.org/200-object/waterloo-station-poster/>.
- BAM Construction. “Waterloo Station Retail Balcony: Improving England’s Busiest Station with New Shopping Space.” Accessed April 26, 2020. <https://www.bam.co.uk/how-we-do-it/case-study/waterloo-station-retail-balcony>.
- Buchan, Kit “Gimme Shelter: Stories from London’s Homeless.” *The Guardian*, March 6, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/mar/06/homelessness-rough-sleepers-interviews-westminster-london>.
- Christopher, John. *Waterloo Station Through Time*. Amberley Publishing, 2015.
- Cole, Beverley and Durack, Richard. *Railway Posters 1923-1947: From the Collection of the National Railway Museum*. York: Laurence King Publishing, 1992.
- “Five new platforms for Waterloo Station as Old Eurostar Terminal Reopens.” *Rail Technology Magazine*, December 11, 2018. <http://www.railtechnologymagazine.com/Civils-and-stations/Page-8/five-new-platforms-for-waterloo-station-as-old-eurostar-terminal-reopens->.
- Laura Reynolds. “New Pictures Show That Waterloo Station Is About To Change Completely.” Accessed April 26, 2020. <https://londonist.com/london/news/waterloo-station-will-soon-look-like>.
- Le Vay, Julian and Le Vay, Benedict. *Britain from the Rails: Including the Nation's Best-Kept-Secret Railways*. Bradt Travel Guides, 2014.
- “London Rail Depot Hit, Nazis Assert; Bombing of Waterloo Station and Great Fires All Over City Are Stressed in Claims Hastings Gets Strafing Dungeness Camp Under Fire -- Convoys Reported Broken Up-Midlands Attacked.” *The New York Times*, October 13, 1940.
- Mayor of London. “Homeless and Waterloo Station.” London Assembly. Accessed April 26, 2020. <https://www.london.gov.uk/questions/2017/3330>.
- Network Rail. “The history of London Waterloo Station.” Accessed April 26, 2020. <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/who-we-are/our-history/iconic-infrastructure/the-history-of-london-waterloo-station>.
- Transportforall: “U-turn on Silencing Announcement Tannoy at Waterloo Station.” Accessed April 26, 2020, <https://www.transportforall.org.uk/news/u-turn-on-silencing-announcement-tannoy-at-waterloo-station>.
- Santer, Henter. “Cross-borough Business Improvement Districts: Waterloo’s Attempt to Become the First Town Centre BID to Cross a Local Authority Boundary.” *Local Economy* 23, no.1 (February 2008): 81–85.
- Office of Rail and Road. “Waterloo Station is Busiest in Britain for 15th Year.” Accessed April 26, 2020. <https://orr.gov.uk/news-and-blogs/press-releases/2018/waterloo-station-is-busiest-in-britain-for-15th-year>.
- “Ray Davies - How a Lonely Londoner Created One of the Great Sixties Songs.” *Independent*, August 26, 2011. <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/features/ray-davies-how-a-lonely-londoner-created-one-of-the-great-sixties-songs-2343826.html>.
- Watt, Nigel. “My Favourite History Place.” *The Historian*, (Winter 2016/17): 45–47.
- Čamprag, Nebojša. “People Flows Versus Public Spaces – London Waterloo Station.” *Contemporary Achievements in Civil Engineering* 21 (April 2017): 749–56.