



Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II
1926-2022

The St. James's Conservation Trust

A Review of 2022

Edition 26

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN ANDREW LOVE



Featured in this edition

3	A SHARED TRIBUTE
4	SPENCER HOUSE
6	ROOF TERRACE AUDIT
8	PLANNING, LICENSING & HIGHWAYS
9	CHECKLIST FOR NEW BUSINESSES
10	ROS MORGAN, CEO OF HOLBA
12	WESLEY KERR INTERVIEW
14	NEWS UPDATES : NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN & SUMMER GARDEN PARTY
15	2022 IN PICTURES

Courtesy of Rafael Serrano Quevedo and Prime Investors Capital



View of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee State Coach – procession from Admiralty Arch

We also remember the events in June 2022 which we include in this picture review. This featured superbly managed pageantry in St James's, with flypasts, music and dance, street feasting and beacon lighting. Visitors to the St. James's historic area adjacent The Mall and the Royal Parks witnessed the spectacular celebrations and partying.

The slow passing of the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic, however still has had impacts on the recovery of the St James's residential and business communities, as it has all over London and the rest of the UK. The St. James's Conservation Trust continues to monitor the planning, licensing and highways applications in the historic area,

welcoming renewed commercial activity in terms of plans for appropriate new developments. My own responsibilities for The Ritz Hotel extension and sensitive high-quality improvements have at last been progressing. Other important locations such as No 1 St James's Square, where the repurposed development of the former BP offices aims to retain the structure and improve its look, whilst addressing the carbon footprint and viability of the building. The early engagement at pre-application stage with the Trust was most helpful and may lead to our advice prompting beneficial design and planning changes.

A disappointing example of early engagement has been the lack of response to the Trust's concerns on some public highway changes. These have included comments and objections provided on the inappropriate E-Scooter bays on St. James's Street, and the monitoring process which continues. The more recently proposed expansion on some existing footways of conventional cycle stands, new utilities with an oversized cabinet on Piccadilly's footway are ongoing concerns. Changes to historically important original gas lighting, although reconsidered by the Council, now has only a minor compromise solution to retain some authentic examples.

There are positive proposals by a partnership which has been led by the Heart of London Business Alliance (HOLBA) for improvements to a safer "Green Park Gateway" area, inviting the Trust to have a design role. The changes of Prime Ministers and also control of Westminster City Council, to Labour, should not change the shared local and political views on the importance of our local heritage and public realm quality, supported by the three continuing St. James's Ward Councillors and

no doubt the new administration. A reminder of just some of the historic assets of St. James's featured in this issue includes views of Spencer House, an outstanding Palladian example of craftsmanship, improvement proposals to St. James's Church and Churchyard and a new interview with journalist and Royal Parks Board Member Wesley Kerr. The Trust continues to add important data to changes occurring across St. James's, both positive improvements in landscape, townscape and architecture old and new, but also potentially negative changes to the residential and commercial amenity of our

unique place of historic character and dignity. The latest example is a new Atkins report on : "Rooftop Height Increases and Roof Terraces": a growing trend. The aim to add value to commercial premises and health and well-being of business occupiers and residential properties is laudable, but can also be intrusive to neighbours, without quality design standards, management and control of behaviours. Funding and communicating these special studies, reports and activities is sadly harder with understandably reduced voluntary funding and donations to our Charity, over the recent pandemic years, and remains a

constant concern. In rounding up this outline summary of the Trust's activities, achievements, news and views, I must again thank all our Trustees, administrative support, professional advisors and our donors that maintain our work which has had Royal support and counsel from St. James's Palace in the past and by so doing, has helped in protecting our Fragile Treasure that is St. James's.

St. James's and all my Trustees express our condolences to the Royal Family and couple these sentiments with the historic continuity cry : "God Save the King, Charles III."

A SHARED TRIBUTE FROM THE ST. JAMES'S CONSERVATION TRUST AND OUR MEMBER FOR PARLIAMENT NICKIE AIKEN MP CITIES OF LONDON AND WESTMINSTER

I am sure that the whole of the Cities of London and Westminster will join me in expressing our deep grief at the news of the passing of Her Majesty The Queen.



The Two Cities has such rich links to Her Majesty's reign, from her birth in Bruton Street in Mayfair to her funeral, which will be held in Westminster Abbey.

The Two Cities were the vessel from which Her Majesty ruled, advised and steered our nation. Indeed, it is our home to so many of the physical monuments of her reign. There is Buckingham Palace, of course, which has become the epicentre of the nation's grief. There is the Mall, the national stage for the pomp and ceremony that binds us to our past and our future. It has seen coronation processions, the daily routes of the Queen's Guard, and the celebrations we saw back in the summer for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. There are St James's Palace and Clarence House, where the Queen spent much of her youth and raised her young family before she took the throne in 1952, and of course there are Westminster Abbey and St Paul's Cathedral. The former was so pivotal in her life, from her marriage to her

coronation and now, sadly, her funeral. The latter played an integral role in marking her extraordinary reign, especially with the services celebrating her silver, golden and diamond jubilees and, only a few months ago, her platinum jubilee.

When thinking about the Queen, I think of her role as the Head of State. For me, one of her everlasting legacies will be how she brought together the Commonwealth nations, growing their union from eight countries to 56 collective nations together under her stewardship. I often think how unappreciated Her Majesty's skills in diplomacy were. Just think about what our world looked like at the beginning of her reign, and what it is now. By sheer force of character, she healed a deeply fractured world post-empire. She fostered a family of nations that bore no resemblance to the empire of the past and that was instead built on the values of friendship, freedom and peace. Like everyone else, when we

heard the news of the late Queen's passing, it hit us personally, because she had been such a constant throughout our lives and we have all shared in the celebrations of her life.

As Head of the Commonwealth, Head of the Armed Forces and patron to hundreds of charities, groups and organisations including British Red Cross, Friends of the Elderly, Girlguiding, Royal Society for Blind Children, and Royal Society of Portrait Painters, all based in the Two Cities, she empowered everyone she met to make a real difference and to have an impact on their community.

It is comforting to me that she placed such a premium on our future generations, especially now, as we look to the next generation of the Crown in King Charles III.

As a new chapter in our history begins, the Cities of London and Westminster now prepare for another landmark in the Crown's passage through history and the coronation of King Charles III in Westminster Abbey.

For that, I say God bless the Queen and long live the King.

Letters to the editor

The Trustees would welcome letters or emails, with comments or ideas from readers concerning the history, architecture, commerce and social life of St. James's, for inclusion in future Newsletters.

Send your letters to The Trust Architect/Planner, care of Atkins Ltd.
Peter Heath RIBA MRTPI, Design Director, Nova North, 3rd Floor,
 11 Bressenden Place, London SW1E 5BY
Tel: 07803 260 700 **Email:** peter.heath@atkinsglobal.com
www.stjamestrust.london

SPENCER HOUSE : ST. JAMES'S PALLADIAN CRAFTSMANSHIP

"...I know not in England, a more beautiful piece of architecture." – Arthur Young (1741-1820) a prolific English writer on agriculture, politics, economics and his travels.

Spencer House, at 27, St. James's Place, was built between 1756 and completed by 1766 and remains as the one of the best examples of a complete and restored London Palladian Mansion and garden overlooking The Green Park. St. James's Place itself was laid out in 1685-6 and by 1695 had 11 residents but the site of Spencer House however had a grim beginning in 1755. Henry Bromley, 1st Baron Montfort, an extravagant spender, had intended to build a single house by the architect John Vardy, who had completed William Kent's Horse Guards. "...Having fallen into financial difficulties, he [Henry Bromley] committed suicide on New Year's Day; after reading over his will three times with his lawyer, he sealed it and shot himself through the head..." (Survey of London).



Spencer House in 1763. Engraving by T. Miller courtesy of Westminster City Council Archive.

The architect John Vardy was commissioned by the First Earl John Spencer (heir to Sarah Duchess of Marlborough) to design the external elevations and ground floor rooms and building commenced soon after the Earl's marriage to Georgiana Poyntz in 1755. The externals progressed over the next 2 years but the interiors by James ('Athenaeum') Stuart and Robert Adam was to extend the project significantly for its precision in Greek Taste decorations, paintings and architectural details of the first floor, for another 8 years. Other later architects made alterations and improvements for the 2nd Earl Spencer, such as Henry Holland (architect also of Brooks's Club) and Phillip Hardwick in the 1840s. After 1927 Spencer House was no longer a private residence. The rescue and restoration, for events and public paid tours of its 14 State Rooms by RIT Capital Partners plc in 1982 (with a 125-year lease), has ensured its survival and viability, as a museum, art gallery and formal events in entertaining rooms of magnificent quality. The Trust hopes that the illustrations of The Palm Room and Great Room give an enticing indication of just two of the splendid 14 rooms, photographed by the Trust's professional advisor on one of the guided tours.

Tours information 020 7514 1958 | **email** tours@spenserhouse.co.uk



The Palm Room on the Ground Floor, the architectural climax of John Vardy's design, with the alcove focal point of the white marble Medici Venus, made in 1765 (the original first century Hellenistic is in the Uffizi).



Left above : The Palm Room west niche with classical sculpture, framed with gilded palm tree columns, a symbol of marital fertility and a close 18th century belief of the connection between architecture and nature. Right above : View of the façade from The Queen's Walk, The Green Park.



The Great Room was intended for receptions (and continues this tradition today), balls and as a picture gallery and was referred to by Arthur Young as the "Saloon". The photo shows detail of one of the four bronzed plaster medallions (north end ceiling cove), supported by panthers, depicting Apollo.



The Palm Room coffered ceiling of the shallow domed ceiling of the south alcove.

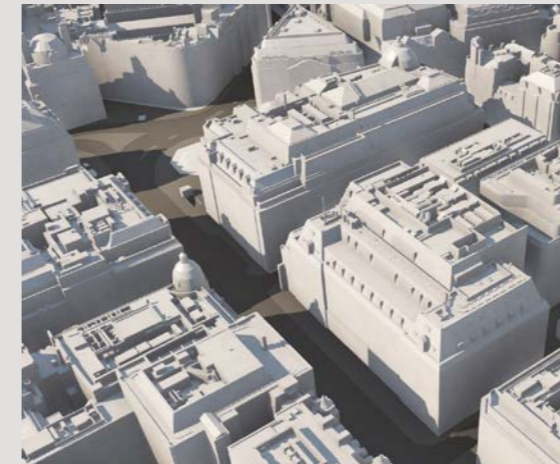
LAUNCH OF SPECIAL REPORT FOR THE ST. JAMES'S CONSERVATION TRUST

AN AUDIT OF ROOF TERRACE ISSUES IN ST. JAMES'S 2022



7.0 Summary and recommendations

- 7.1 This audit is not exhaustive but has identified at least 55 rooftop terraces of all types by desk research, map, street level observations and planning applications. Many of the 55 roof terraces/balconies are relatively small and were intended for rooftop access and inspection, in 20th century developments or adaptations for services, such as lift overruns, air conditioning plant and other utilities, on historic buildings of various ages, mostly of Victorian, Edwardian or 20th century developments. These were generally in place before the establishment of the St. James's Conservation Trust in 1998/9 and the various reports of the Trust that aim to assist and support the Westminster Planning Guidance and policies on quality and amenity issues.
- 7.2 Recently implemented in the last decade or proposed developments (at the time of writing, there are approximately 21 examples of concern) which are increasingly including



A 3D model view tool (courtesy of VU City) of Regent Street, St. James's, showing the extent of roof terraces.

- IN SUMMARY**
- Improved consultation and communication tools for applicants, stakeholders and City Council decision makers that show clearly via 3D analysis the overlooking, proximity and scale of any rooftop changes and improvements that may impact on local amenity.
 - Consultees need a consistent 3D presentation model tool to appreciate these matters (such as VuCity or other digital tools available to applicants) which demonstrate view lines to and from rooftops with any proposed changes.
 - The size of rooftop terrace and balconies should not be excessive and capacity of those allowed access, whether residents/visitors or office workers and visitors should be controlled by floor area.
 - Soft and hard landscape and all new roof terrace features and furnishings, such as canopies/umbrellas/awnings and any external lighting, must be shown clearly as part of any consideration and consent. The proportion of standing/seating and dining space to any hard and soft landscape areas must be identified as part of the proposed manageable capacity of use. This is both a health and safety, licensing issue as well as planning issues to have coordinated information and management arrangements and conditions that are (regularly) enforceable and monitored.
 - The management of these rooftops by owner/occupiers is very important and should be a new part of applications for consent. In particular hours of use and nature of uses matter (yoga, fitness training, event parties, food and drink café uses at lunch or other times etc.) and whether residential or commercial rooftops and balconies must be identified, considered and agreed with local stakeholders' and neighbour consultations, before final applications for approval can be consented.

Following new and growing trends in development, which seek to add value to existing or new buildings have led to multiple planning applications in St. James's.

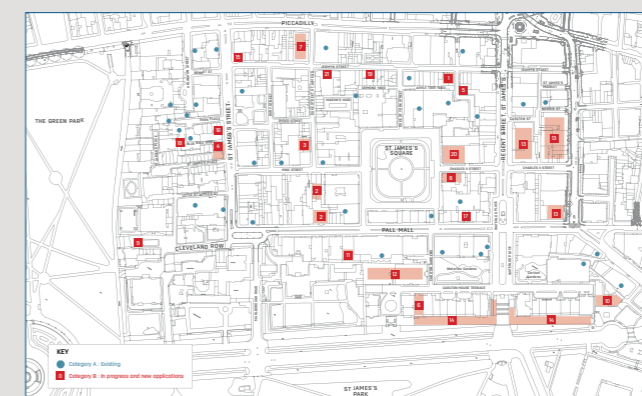
Two design solutions are of concern to the St. James's Conservation Trust : Major developments which add height to existing or new developments and make use of the setting back of the increased accommodation, to create external roof terraces for commercial or residential users. The other roof terrace design approaches are mainly aimed at making a new recreational space with landscape and setting for occupiers, replacing some or all of the existing services equipment on large flat roof. This new report is an update on the Trust's past Report : "Rooftop Architecture", and also provides best practice recommendations that height and bulk increases, overlooking, daylighting issues and poor management of antisocial activities, on existing and new buildings, are all against the Trust's Design Guide Principles ("Architecture Suitable for St. James's").

All our reports can be accessed online at www.stjamestrust.london

6.0 Outline map and audit of sites

Establishments in the St James's Conservation area of interest with roof terraces		
Category A : Existing / consented		No. of sites
APPROX. TOTAL EXISTING SITES (at time of publication) :		34
Category B : Approx. sites in pre-planning stage, planning stage or in progress		No. of sites
APPROX. TOTAL PRE-PLANNING, PLANNED OR IN PROGRESS SITES (at time of publication updated in 2022 to 25) :		25
SITE NO.	DEVELOPMENT LOCATIONS	COMMENTS
1	Eagle House, 108-110 Jermyn Street, London, SW1Y 6EE	Recent modest roof terrace proposals.
2	44-47 Pall Mall, London, SW1Y 5JG Times Place, 45 Pall Mall, London, SW1Y 5JG 21 Cleveland Place, London, SW1Y 6RL 8-9 Rose and Crown Yard, London, SW1Y 6RE	Increased height of existing commercial building including roof terrace and balconies with low impact from street level.
3	47-48 Duke Street St James's, London, SW1 6QT	Proposed large hard and soft landscape roof terrace for office workers' health and wellbeing. Objections to structures led to modifications.
4	64-65 St James's Street, London, SW1A 1NF	Objections to proposed increase in height accepted. Roof terrace proposal retained.
5	James House, 1 Babmaes Street, London, SW1Y 6HF	Recent modest roof terrace proposals.
6	1 Carlton House Terrace, London, SW1Y 5AF	Recent modest roof terrace proposals in a screened, middle location.
7	180 Piccadilly, London, W1J 9HF 48-50 Jermyn Street, London, W1J 9BA	Trust and neighbour objections overruled for increase height, bulk and roof terraces.
8	33 St James's Square, London, SW1Y 4LB	Recent modest roof terrace proposals.
9	Selwyn House, Stable Yard Road, London, SW1A 1BD	Completed recent modest roof terrace proposals over existing garages.
10	10 Spring Gardens, London, SW1A 2BN	Refurbished commercial offices with roof-top green roof proposals.
11	83 Pall Mall, London, SW1Y 5ES	Recent modest roof terrace expanded proposals on Royal Automobile Club.
12	5-7 Carlton Gardens, London, SW1A 5AD	Recent modest roof terrace modifications on existing commercial building.
13	St James's Market, London, SW1 : phases 1, 2, 3 sites	Possible future
14	Carlton House Terraces, London SW1Y 5CG : phases 1, 2 sites	Possible future
15	36 St James's Street, London, SW1A 1JD	Modified
16	63 St James's Street, London, SW1A 1LY	Refused
17	Crusader House, 14 Pall Mall, London, SW1Y 6LU	Withdrawn
18	Stafford Hotel, 16-17 St James's Place, London, SW1A 1NJ	In progress
19	91 Jermyn Street, London, SW1Y 6ST	In progress
20	1 St James's Square, London, SW1Y 4PD	In progress
21	Cavendish Hotel, 80-81 Jermyn Street, London, SW1Y 6JF	Possible future
APPROX. GRAND TOTAL :		

6.0 Outline map and audit of sites



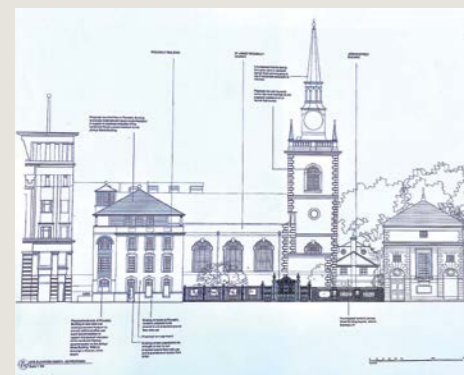
PLANNING, LICENSING & HIGHWAYS UPDATES

2022 has continued the trend of many planning applications, highways consultations and licensing conditions for commercial premises. In reviewing the majority of consultations they relate to either minor physical changes and standard procedures for licensing renewals, conditions and variations in hours, which the Trust does not always need to respond to, in detail or with objections. This year as usual, has still focused our attention to a few more significant major planning or highways applications of concern summarised as below.



▲ Photo of existing building

1 St. James's Square – pre-application and responses. This major existing building is proposed for repurposing retaining the majority of the existing structure and expanding the floorspace and quality internally and at high level, with a new approach to the extensive external facades. The Trust's comments about the extent of floorspace and the façade designs have only partly been addressed and a formal objection may be required.



◀ Proposed Piccadilly elevation of St. James's Church



▲ **The Ritz** – the long awaited Ritz extension is progressing and the main entrance remains welcoming

▶ **Ryder Court** – pre-application with a positive discussion on the issues of the proposals and in particular the landscape approach to the large flat roof was useful in terms of the applicants' limitations and management of the new facility, with measures to prevent nuisance and antisocial behaviours, in line with the Trust's recommendations of Rooftop Terraces in its recent Audit report.

Utilities Infrastructure proposed Cabinet on Piccadilly – The Trust lodged objections on the basis that the footway space on Piccadilly is needed for pedestrian numbers and that this street clutter should not be sited in such a busy place.

St. James's Church – positive pre-application discussion has led to long awaited formal applications for phased funding for implementation of a wide range of improved accommodation, repairs and Churchyard landscape improvements and facilities. The Trust has been a supporter of the importance of the heritage of the Church and site and welcomes the proposals subject to details and conditions on any consents.



▶ **Regent Street** – Consultations on the extension of temporary traffic order to sustain the footway widening along the street in temporary materials following the pandemic have also sought ideas for any permanent scheme. The Trust has local experience of the Regent Street, St. James's section down to Waterloo Place, where there are issues of boy racers, pedestrian, vehicle and road safety concerns as well as congestion at peak times. Ideas and actions have helped in part at Waterloo Place where illegal activity on the pedestrian spines has now been reduced. Further footway, carriageway and road crossing provisions in the future permanent scheme should be designed with a better balance for all highway users.



Temporary footway widening and planters



A WELCOME CHECK LIST FOR NEW BUSINESSES

The Trust has set out a helpful outline checklist to encourage successful planning and other applications for approvals :

Small business operations rather than large commercial, high capacity buildings are preferred but all scales should be of high quality. These uses and developments may include offices, shops, cultural uses with services, goods and displays at street levels, relevant to maintaining and improving the existing and past variety and dignity of historic St. James's.

The Trust's Report, 2008 : "Architecture Suitable for St. James's" available via the Trust's website is a useful checklist which businesses should respond to and demonstrate their understanding of the area and its spirit. **These are eight principles or judging criteria as the below headlines that aim to address the Trust's major concerns as :**

- 1. Development must not be monolithic**
- 2. No more excessive height**
Building heights should be disciplined and follow the height of preceding buildings, when lower, unless there are truly exceptional circumstances.
- 3. Fit the "Spirit of St. James's"**
- 4. Responsible modernity**
In the right locations, in St. James's new development and modernity is welcomed in historic St. James's, but it must be considered a privilege to be undertaken responsibly and be assessed on its quality and suitability.
- 5. Retain and adapt the best facades where appropriate**
- 6. Consider replica authentic facades**
The development in its overall effect should achieve a harmony and quality that does not detract from the finest architecture in St. James's. Development in historic St. James's should aim for excellence and beauty, matching in quality exemplars from the past, rather than merely improving on sites where past mistakes have been built.
- 7. Reject over-intensive uses**
- 8. Increase the residential community**
Where appropriate, the Trust seeks the increase of the residential community and its supporting mix of uses. These types of uses should be encouraged, rather than increased commercial, or entertainment developments on appropriate sites.

IN CONVERSATION WITH ROS MORGAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF HEART OF LONDON BUSINESS ALLIANCE



Heart of London is a business improvement district (BID). What exactly is this and what benefits do Heart of London bring to the area?

Heart of London Business Alliance is a not-for-profit, commercially minded, membership organisation representing over 600 businesses and property owners across the areas of Piccadilly, Haymarket, Leicester Square and St Martin's Lane, including the northern part of historic St James's, forming a Business Improvement District.

We are the only Business Improvement District with a fully inclusive membership, representing property owners, office occupiers, retailers, restaurants, galleries, theatres, private clubs, and hotels.

Our overall purpose is to protect and promote the commercial and cultural well-being of London's West End, on behalf of our members, cementing its position as the greatest city in the world to live, work, visit, trade and invest. Each district within the Heart of London area plays a critical part in this endeavour. We manage and maintain the different areas of the West End according to their character and need.

Since 2012, we have been operational in Jermyn Street and the north part of St James's, working closely with members and tailoring our services to this distinct area, aiming to respect and cherish the heritage. And this year, following requests from businesses and the wider community, we hope to expand further south into St James's.

Can you tell us a bit more about the services that Heart of London provides?

Every day of the week, our environmental cleansing team keep the streets clean, from graffiti removal to pavement hot-washing. Our 365 days a year public-realm security team responds to on-street disruptions and street crime issues as well as providing rapid response assistance to businesses. We promote the West End internationally to

attract new investment into the area. We also promote the art and cultural offer to domestic and international tourists alike. We protect the historic architecture and character of the St James's area, while making the public realm greener and safer for all. We speak with local, regional and national government to prioritise the issues that matter most to our members. We supply the latest data and insights on the area's performance. Our services are really far-reaching!

You work closely with the St James's Conservation Trust, the St James's Neighbourhood Forum and Westminster City Council. How do the services you provide differ?

As a membership organisation, our work must add value to our members. For 20 years, the role of Heart of London has been as a custodian of the West End. We bring leadership, investment and good growth to the area and empower communities to build a place they are proud of.



Existing view of congestion at Green Park underground station

In recognition of the draft St James's Neighbourhood Plan for 2022-2040, Westminster's City Plan 2019-2040 and the London Plan adopted by the Mayor of London, Heart of London's business plans and strategic work bring all these together with a shared vision for the area.

As the dedicated Business Improvement District for an expanded St James's area, we will also continue to work alongside key partners such as the St James's Conservation Trust, The Crown Estate, St James's Neighbourhood Forum and Westminster City Council to deliver beyond the statutory services provided, which we believe is not enough if the area is to meet its full potential. We will promote high standards of planning and architecture in the area; secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of local features of historic and public interest; maintain the area's traditional character and integrity; and inform the public of St James's unique historical and architectural heritage. We can also accelerate investment with an additional £15m BID levy fund along with a dedicated delivery team.

What are the key priorities at the moment for Heart of London?

We learnt from the pandemic that you can't have a national economic recovery without the recovery of the cultural sector. We worked hard to lobby for and secured a £1.75 billion support package for the arts and culture sector from the government, but we're still not out of the woods.

We published a Cultural Heart of London Strategy, which provides a toolkit to enable the delivery of major new cultural innovations. For instance, we have been working successfully with Mayfair Art Weekend on the West End Gallery Hop! for the past two years, bringing new audiences to the independent, commercial galleries throughout the West End, including St. James's.



Proposed visualisation of The Green Park Gateway improvements

We are also on the steering committee for the St James's Neighbourhood Forum, inputting into the Neighbourhood Plan. Its adoption and delivery are a key priority for us, as are developing opportunities for partnership investment in the plan.

What are the key projects that you are working on in the St James's area?

Our Placemaking Strategy, which includes over 40 potential projects (including approximately 14 in the St James's area), with five immediate priority projects, that are all designed to preserve and enhance the unique character of the central London area.

We are working with the St James's Conservation Trust and property owners on our £ 20 million "Piccadilly and Green Park Gateway" scheme. DSDHA studio have designed a package of sensitive public realm improvements for the current unwelcoming environment as one emerges from Green Park station onto Piccadilly. Our vision is to provide a safe and accessible setting befitting of a globally renowned destination while respecting the historic character of the area.

The plans involve decluttering street furniture and relocating the Big Bus Tours bus stop

and kiosk to allow for more space and improve views of Piccadilly. Footways and carriageways will be improved with uniform York stone and a coherent lighting scheme.

These proposals have been sensitively designed with input from the Trust and other local stakeholders to ensure that they complement and enhance the character and beauty of St James's. Collaborative design with the community underlines our approach to improving the public realm, ensuring the experience and knowledge of local residents and businesses influence design proposals.

WESLEY KERR

A WALK AND TALK AROUND ST JAMES'S WITH THE TRUST'S ADVISOR, PETER HEATH

I was privileged to meet, on a sunny autumn day with the delightful and affable Wesley Kerr OBE, (in 2015 for services to heritage). Sadly, it was not long after HM The Queen's State Funeral, during which he had important broadcast roles for CBS (US) ITV, Sky, the BBC and others. Truly he is a man of many interests and careers. From working as a journalist across 40 countries, including in the 1990s as Court and then Royal Correspondent at BBC News amongst his many broadcasting roles. His passion for the promotion and involvement in enhancement projects and maintenance of parks, gardens and watercourses involved a seven-year Chairmanship of the Heritage Lottery Fund's London Committee. His cv is remarkable and his knowledge is encyclopaedic. He is the longest serving Board Member and Trustee of London's magnificent Royal Parks, since 2017 a charity and Vice President of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association. As he reflects: "...Looking back I see a continuous thread: Journalism and broadcasting is contemporary history, the Royal Parks are our living history."

As we walked together from the Duke of York's Column, where he checked my history dates of its construction and at what cost (£25,000 met largely by stopping one day's pay from every soldier in the army), through the area's streets and green square, where he was delighted to see and name for me, the wide varieties of well-managed plants and trees. At the square's gate, a young lady in her catering outfit from the East India Club approached him, thanking him for his views in wonderful documentaries.

Onward we walked into St. James's Park, past St. James's Palace and Friary Court which prompted him to tell me that he was one of the first to say God Save the King as Charles III and The Queen Consort made their first appearance outside.

His pride in The Royal Parks is as clear when he commented that: "...both the upbeat Platinum Jubilee and the valedictory funeral processions could not have occurred without the great backdrop of The Royal Parks. Both were tributes to HM and of the best of Britishness and a chance to look back and forward..."

From his time as an history graduate from Trinity College, Cambridge, he's stated that the past is an ever-present guide to the future and great institutions like the monarchy, embody wider values and influence society.

Wesley's focus on his experience of this year's Ceremonial State events demonstrate as he pointed out: "...just how sensational the Royal Parks are as a leafy, both formal and naturalistic setting to any ceremonial and also how excellent the staff and contractors are at helping to organise huge national events."

This level of sustained quality of the Royal Parks is in line with The St. James's Conservation Trust's charitable objectives and worth recalling that the vast majority of the costs of conserving and looking after these amazing places must be raised by charity... and all need public support.

"...Looking back I see a continuous thread: Journalism and broadcasting is contemporary history, the Royal Parks are our living history."

Privileged to cover the Trooping of the Colour for a CBC TV (Canada) live special from above Canada Gate, Wesley Kerr amidst the world's media, he was able to see some of our beloved Queen's very last public appearances. "On the balcony that day and two weeks before, I saw her very happy at the Chelsea Flower Show in her buggy..." Wesley, of course, is also a Royal Horticultural Society Council Member.

His list of achievements is a long one as is his list of favourite places in historic St. James's.

I was pleased that he has been a regular and supportive customer of most the much-loved specialist restaurants, shops, auction houses and clubs of our St. James's with a great fondness for Fortnum & Mason's many offerings.

His journalistic experience was demonstrated to me throughout our walk and talks, not least by his follow-ups, which generously included an email list of Royal Parks data he felt was very important that I get right from my notes. A true professional and London Treasure – so, readers, do please absorb these amazing 2022 Royal Parks facts:

- In St. James's Park and The Green Park there are 2,047 trees providing 46% tree cover, of which only 1.4% are Oak trees, a Black Mulberry commemoration James I and an ancient fig, one of the biggest in Britain. 40% of trees are Planes, one planted by Nelson Mandela on his 1996 visit together with HM the Queen was a moment in history that gives Wesley great pride.
- Carbon storage of the parks is 3,600 tonnes and Carbon sequestration is 52 tonnes.





Looking back to the FIRST : 2016 TRUST SUMMER GARDEN PARTY, which with the help of Peter Heath's Atkins Team, advisors for the St. James's Conservation Trust and the display of the 2015 Neighbourhood Plan Forum Designation Consultations.

NEWS UPDATES

Return of the St. James's Summer Garden Party

KEEP THE DATE : 28 JUNE 2023.

Pre-pandemic The St. James's Conservation Trust, together with the St. James's Square Trust (300th anniversary in 2025 of the St. James's Square 1725-26 Act), have had three successful "Summer In The Square fundraisers". These events are hosted in partnership with local businesses, landowners and supporters who provide refreshments, entertainments and displays. This year's event will be on 28 June. Watch out for more details and tickets on The Trust website (www.stjamestrust.org.uk/summer-garden-party-2023). This will also be another opportunity for the community and visitors to get updates on the achievements of the Trusts and changes of interest or concern in the area. The St. James's Final Draft Neighbourhood Plan will also be displayed, from its inception to near completion, outlining the important planning and development status with the City of Westminster.

ST. JAMES'S NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

A WORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN ROGER SHARPLEY



Good progress was made on the Plan in 2022. The Draft was updated to take account of planning and physical changes in the Neighbourhood area, followed by an informal public engagement process to ascertain the views of residents, commercial occupiers and visitors to St James's. The results of this process have now been incorporated into a final Draft of the Plan and the formal Regulation 14 Public Engagement process regarding the Draft will commence in the spring of 2023.

The aim of the Neighbourhood Plan is to give residents, office occupiers, retailers, restaurateurs and all other stakeholders in the area a voice in the planning process, and to involve them in future of St James's over the next 20 years. Anyone can join the Neighbourhood Forum and express their opinions, and everyone with an interest in St James's should do so.

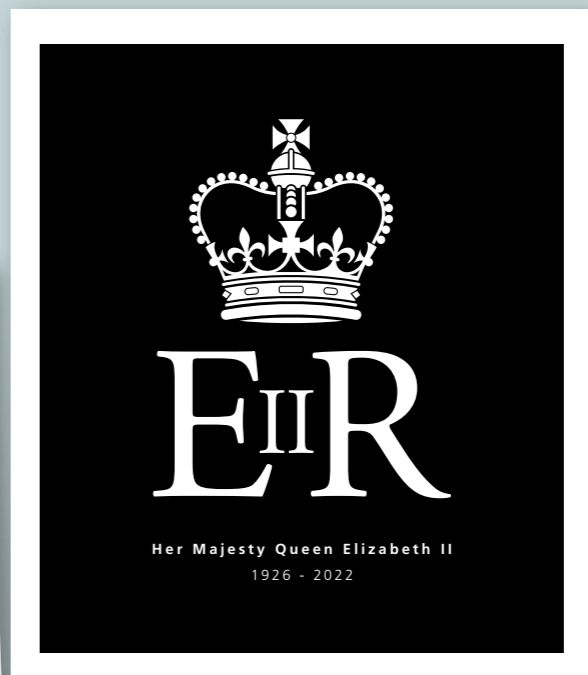
For further information and to join the Forum, please visit the website: www.stjamesforum.org

ST JAMES'S 2022 IN PICTURES

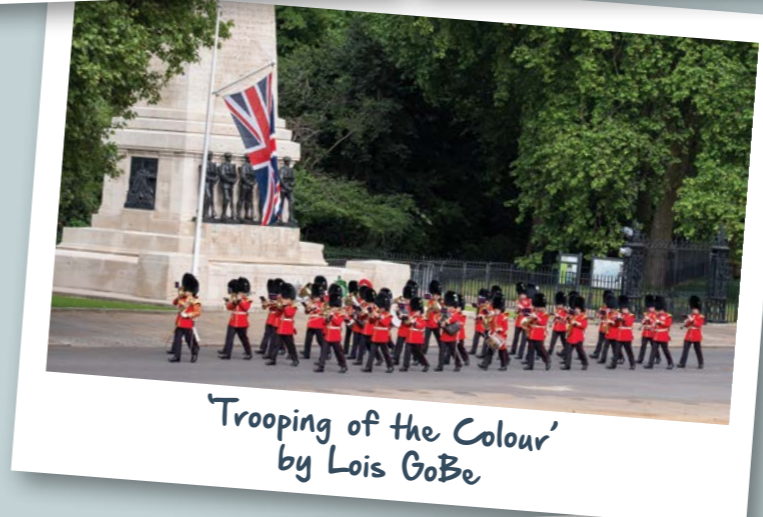
...a year of celebration and sad tidings



'Platinum Jubilee party' by Diana Vucane



'Platinum Jubilee' by Loredana Sangiuliano



'Trooping of the Colour' by Lois GoBe



'Platinum Jubilee flypast' by Nigel J. Harris



'Fortnum & Mason, Christmas lights' by Peter Heath



'Crown of HM QEII at the State Funeral' by Lwsi Cox

Shutterstock

Dawn of a new era



Screenshots from BBC coverage

God save our gracious King Charles III

Please consider making a Legacy in favour of the St. James's Conservation Trust, which would materially ensure the future of our important work of historic protection and enhancement.

Cheque donations or legacies should be made out to:
The St. James's Conservation Trust Ltd and sent to:
FJM Accountancy Limited, 23 Shackleton Court, 2 Maritime Quay, London E14 3QF
For the attention of F. J. McDowell Esq Email: frank@fjmaccountancy.co.uk

President: Earl of Snowdon
Patrons: Baroness Hooper CMG | Lady Olga Maitland | John Beveridge QC
Trustees: Andrew M. Love FCA (Chairman) | Virginia Chichester (Deputy Chairman) | Jeremy Vaughan
Nicholas J. Turner | Kate Hobhouse | Carole Whittall | John Bodie OBE | Dounia Nadar
Roger Sharpley MA FRICS | Molly Borthwick | Martin Low | Miles Wade CBE | Grant Ashton | Christopher Fenwick MBE

BANKERS: ADAM & COMPANY PLC ACCOUNTANTS & REGISTERED OFFICE: F J MCDOWELL ESQ,
FJM ACCOUNTANCY LIMITED, 23 SHACKLETON COURT, 2 MARITIME QUAY, LONDON E14 3QF
REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 1079166 REGISTERED IN ENGLAND NO: 3886503

For more information contact, the Trust's Architect / Planner / Administrator
Peter Heath RIBA MRTPI at peter.heath@atkinglobal.com

www.stjamestrust.london