ARCHITECTURE SUITABLE FOR ST. JAMES’S

An illustrated analysis of the area and its architectural needs
This Study was carried out during 2007, by an Atkins team, led by Peter Heath, Architect and Town Planner, advising the St. James's Conservation Trust. The methodology involved a world-wide survey of experience across Atkins Ltd's offices in 23 countries, reviews of Civic Trust and other award-winning projects, in historic areas of the UK and Europe. This work was assisted by resources from the databases of the London Open House Charity, as well as the City of Westminster, English Heritage, The Civic Trust, The Prince's Foundation and Europa Nostra, among many other organisations and individuals, including architects and developers, currently active in St. James's.
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Boodle’s Club moved to its present address, 28 St. James Street, in 1782. A Grade I listed building, it is an excellent example of historic architecture in St James’s designed by John Crunden 1775-76 with alterations by JP Bapworth 1821-24. The interior of Boodle’s is equally notable.
The heart of St James’s is unique. Built around the Royal Palace, when the Court was the centre of power in England, it still conforms to the 17th Century layout of streets, courtyards and a square. There are ancient clubs, in the same buildings in which they were founded, hundreds of years ago, and specialist shops, owned by the 7th and 8th generations of their founding families. Nowhere in England is there such a concentration of Listed Buildings. Every age has contributed its talents, from Henry VIII’s Palace, to Cesar Ritz’s hotel. Sadly, the last 70 years have been a time of less inspiration.

The St James’s Conservation Trust exists to protect the atmosphere and architecture of this wonderful place. This Study, on architecture suitable for historic St James’s, has been inspired by the idea that a special area calls for special, prescriptive, architectural standards and guidelines. I am told this is a new concept in English town planning. It has been commissioned by the Trust from Mr Peter Heath, of Atkins, and funded by the generosity of a few of the Trust’s most valued sponsors. The Trust is delighted by the support the Study has received from those who were consulted before it reached its final form.

As the Study shows, the defects of recent architecture are:

- height and bulk excessive for the area.
- disregard for the suitability of the design for the area.
- quality of design inadequate to the area.

The Trust is too small to stand in the way of change and, even if we could, we would not wish to. St James’s has changed with the centuries and yet kept its feel. Our hope is to encourage future change to develop without degrading. Only the opinions of others can judge how far this study promotes the right ideas, as we believe. If it does, only courage from the planners can cause them to become the touchstone. Those who alter, or rebuild, have their own purposes. It is the planners who have the duty to promote the public interest.

There are always commercial motives for monolithic redevelopment, but there is no public interest in allowing the further cramming of disproportionately large offices, with their attendant vast increase of daily workers, into the small core of St James’s, a precious jewel created for a less crowded way of life, which they destroy.

The Trust calls on all concerned to rise to the occasion: especially our excellent planning authority, Westminster City Council. If current trends are not improved, St James’s, as it has so long been, will continue slowly to die. The principal value of this Study lies not so much in the novelty of its ideas, nor even in its attempt to introduce them in a form that can be applied in practice, as in the strength of its call to planners absolutely to insist on the necessary standards. The Study shows that what has, in the not too distant past, been allowed to creep over the borders, must be stopped, once and for all.

John Beveridge QC
Chairman, St. James’s Conservation Trust
ARCHITECTURE SUITABLE
FOR ST. JAMES’S

A CHARACTERISTIC ST. JAMES’S SCENE.

This photograph epitomises a ceremonial pageant in the architectural setting of the Palace that is part of the spirit of St. James’s.
ENDORSEMENTS.

*City of Westminster*

“The Council welcomes and shares the Trust’s aspirations to promote the highest standards of design for all new buildings in St James’s, as well as to preserve and enhance the historic character of the area. The document provides a useful stimulus for debate on what constitutes good design, and we look forward to continuing our collaborative approach to securing the very best for this vital and much cherished part of the City.”

*English Heritage*

“English Heritage has long supported the aims and ambitions of the Trust to promote high standards of design and stewardship in all proposals which might affect the outstanding architectural and historic interest of St James’s. Whilst clearly there is an understanding that new development should reinforce the qualities which make St James’s special, we would expect to assess any application referred to us for comment on its own merits informed by appropriate guidance and our own Conservation Principles not just on buildings, but also the public realm which forms an integral part of St James’s. Improvements to the public realm are something which English Heritage takes very seriously indeed, and we are working closely with the Trust on specific projects for the area. We will continue to provide support, advice and guidance on such projects.”
1.0 THE EIGHT KEY PRINCIPLES
ARCHITECTURE SUITABLE FOR ST. JAMES’S

THE EIGHT KEY PRINCIPLES

1.1
The Trust considers that there is no shortage of written guidance available to developers and their professional advisors concerning the challenges of building in historic areas. However this existing guidance is worded in language so general it is not usable and is not being successfully translated, in architectural terms, to meet the local design challenges in historic St. James’s.

1.2
This study seeks to raise the standards of what is acceptable in St. James’s by defining eight principles that should be addressed and setting them in the context of illustrations.

THE EIGHT PRINCIPLES

These eight principles are a synthesis of previously accepted points from the Trust’s 1999 Study. What is novel, is that the Trust wants the most relevant principles (1-6) to be considered mandatory and for them to become binding and robustly applied, using the Trust’s proposed matrix, although principles (5) and (6) are mandatory only in specific circumstances.

It is apparent from the earlier statements of the Trust and those of others, including national guidance organisations, from the Commission for the Built Environment and from the City of Westminster, that all of the Trust’s proposed 8 principles are recognised to be of importance for building in an historic context.

1. Development must not be monolithic
Architecture of excessive bulk, or height, should no longer be allowed. Development should not be monolithic and should respect the grain of historic St. James’s, with its small plot sizes of narrow widths. Amalgamating individual facades to create an image of a monumental building is unlikely to be acceptable.

2. No more excessive height
Building heights should be disciplined by existing neighbouring buildings. They should follow the height of preceding buildings, when lower, unless there are truly exceptional circumstances in which some dramatically valued, collateral purpose can be served.

3. Fit the “Spirit of St. James’s”
At the application stage, sufficient understanding of the St. James’s context must be demonstrated. Designs must illustrate the aspects of architectural form, scale, detail, integrated artistry and craftsmanship, particularly at ground level, to harmonise with the physical context of St. James’s.

4. Responsible modernity
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. Replicating older buildings stylistically is one, but not the only, approach that can demonstrate the necessary design suitability.

5. Retain and adapt the best facades where appropriate
Retention, or adaptation, of existing building facades will generally be welcomed, for buildings of quality. (rarely after the 1940s.) Where this solution is clearly the best, it should be mandatory.

6. Consider replica authentic facades
Authentic, replica facades of important, lost, or disfigured, historic buildings of agreed quality, will normally be acceptable, as will designs employing traditional, classically inspired detailing, in appropriate locations. Such replicas should be adopted in any case in which no alternative solution can be found without causing damage to the architectural setting of the building.

“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.”

St. James’s Conservation Trust 2007
Principles (7) and (8) below, are only to be applied in appropriate cases,

**7. Reject over-intensive uses**
Over-large development, which includes a mix of uses likely to increase local footfall and the risks of nuisance from intensification, should be discouraged. The small scale area of St. James’s would be destroyed by a substantial increase in footfall, as has already occurred in Lower Regent Street Piccadilly and Leicester Square.

**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.

One positive aspect of recent years is the dramatic increase in local residential property demand and values. This means development will still take place in St. James’s, even when developers are not allowed their current market preference for large concentration of retail and office usage.

The Trust emphasises that the eight principles are not new, but using them as a decision-making template is new. The Trust has made the principles a basis for assessment of the suitability of planning applications.

### 1.3 The Matrix of the Principles

The eight new principles are summarised in a matrix, which can be used as a means of assessing proposed new developments in St. James’s. (see pages 36 to 44) The proposals will either:

- (✓) comply
- (✗) not comply
- (−) neutral/not applicable

### 1.4 Other Proposals

There are further proposals (see Section 9, page 82), aimed at raising the design quality debate for new development in historic St. James’s. These proposals include conventional, although controversial, planning initiatives, such as pressure for de-Listing some 20th century buildings, which would not gain planning consent under the existing, or proposed, guidelines and action for St. James’s designation as a new Special Policy Area.

The proposals section includes the following:

- **A)** A new Supplementary Planning Documentation (SPD) for St. James’s, on design quality.
- **B)** Improvements to required documentation for planning applications.
- **C)** New bi-annual seminars, on design quality in St. James’s, using case studies.
- **D)** Earlier involvement opportunities for the Trust, in the negotiations of the design process.
- **E)** Designation of a new St. James’s Special Policy Area, in the Local Development Framework.
- **F)** Review of 20th century Listed Buildings and consideration of applications for de-Listing.
“...London par excellence is bounded on the north by Piccadilly, on the south by Pall Mall, on the east by Haymarket, and on the west by St. James’s Street...”

*Theodore Hook, 1870.*

This is almost the Trust’s Core Area, even today.
2.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1
London’s St. James’s area is a unique historic and architectural asset at the heart of Westminster, which has suffered, and is at risk from, further harmful change. This study, commissioned by the St. James’s Conservation Trust, is part of a range of actions taken by the Trust, and other supporters, to improve the situation.

2.2
In 1999, the St. James’s Conservation Trust (at the time a Society) commissioned a report entitled: “Conserving Historic St. James’s - a Fragile Treasure” which was produced by the Trust’s architect and town planning advisor, Peter Heath. A Patron of the Trust, the Hon Dominic Elliot endorsed the study as follows:

“…this Study is the first element of an initiative aimed at achieving higher standards of protection and enhancement for St. James’s…”

A key element of the document was the theme of ensuring that St. James’s would continue to be used and enjoyed in:

“…preserving our future history…”

based on evidence of an understanding of the historic importance of the area.

The Study set out a definition of the significance of the core St. James’s area, highlighting its historic and architectural importance and identifying issues not yet fully addressed by the planning system. Guidance and policies with proposed new rules were put forward for:

1. Appropriate new uses to maintain viability.
2. The care and maintenance of buildings.
3. High quality design in new buildings.
4. Traffic management appropriate to the area.
5. Street furnishing improvements.
6. Landscape improvements.

That study led to new policy recognition by the planning and heritage authorities and their focus on St. James’s issues of concern, with some good results (see Section 8, page 76-80).

It was said that:

“...the core area of St. James’s retains a mutually supporting blend of historic layout, mixed specialist uses and buildings whose origins remain relevant to today’s central London activities with examples of interventions from each century that have enriched these unique qualities…”

The present study is a further major element in the initiative aimed at achieving a higher standard of architectural design. It takes the guidance and policy aims further and seeks to persuade planners to have the courage not to compromise.
2.3
The City of Westminster and English Heritage both welcomed the Trust’s contribution to debate and make use of the 1999 Study as guidance in assessing proposed changes in the area. Subsequent action under the City Council’s Planning and Licensing responsibilities has produced improved policies (in the Replacement Unitary Development Plan and the evolving Local Development Framework) and guidance (for Licensing Applications, in Supplementary Planning Guidance for St. James’s and a St. James’s Conservation Area Audit).

2.4
A second report followed in 2003 (“St. James’s - A3 Food and Drink Study”) which dealt with entertainment uses, one of the major issues of continuing concern in the area. It set out a new database of information and recommendations for the City Council, to establish new planning and licensing policies and guidance. It restated the need to protect and enhance the special character of the St. James’s Conservation Area.

This document put forward evidence to show that the risks to the character of St. James’s were as great from harmful uses as they were from architectural design issues. Over-intensive activity levels from developments have led to an expansion of entertainment uses and street footfall that have clearly harmful effects on the character and function of historic St. James’s.

2.5
The Trust began the process of architectural analysis in 1999 with its first Study, but experience has shown that work was not sufficiently empowering to achieve all the improvements required. The work was considered and approved by the City of Westminster at that time, but not all development decisions have subsequently been informed by the application of its recommendations.

The Trust’s 1999 Study included the following specific architectural policy recommendations and guidance approved by Westminster City Council, still relevant as a framework for this current document as :

- **Preserving more existing good architecture -** A presumption against demolition of buildings up to the 1950s with good facades, based on a local Listing policy (now contained in the City Council’s St. James’s Conservation Area Audit), being buildings making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area, although unlisted on their individual merits.

- **Bad buildings identified for development and replacement are also now contained in the City Council’s St. James’s Conservation Area Audit, as buildings making a negative impact on the Conservation Area.**

- **Better new architecture -** Based on examples of the best of historic architecture in St. James’s, designers of contemporary proposals are expected to demonstrate their respect for the existing context, character, height and bulk in new developments. The City Council has produced new guidance on this topic in: “Design matters in Westminster” (2001) which is further considered later in this document in Chapter 7 on page 64.

- **Better façade designs -** Designers of contemporary proposals are expected to demonstrate their respect for historic St. James’s, in the form of any new facades, especially at ground level, both by day and night. The City Council has also produced new guidance on this topic in: “Design matters in Westminster” (2001).

Other specific guidelines were set out by the Trust’s 1999 study as follows :

- Respect historic plot divisions.
- Respect historic frontage alignments.
- Intricacy of detail.
- Low void to solid proportions.
- Minimise impact of ground level openings.
De-List unacceptable contemporary development, as part of Conservation Area Audit procedures and boundary reviews -
This issue has not been addressed in the City Council’s Conservation Area Audit. Applications with robust evidence for de-Listing, can, however, be made to the Department of Culture Media and Sport, for evaluation by English Heritage. The Economist Building is the prime example of a building the Trust wishes to see de-listed, as it is incompatible with St James’s.

Resist new high buildings with limits generally defined by historic neighbours, replacing existing high buildings within lower limits -
This recommendation has been undermined by the removal of the City Council’s original UDP Policy to seek reduction of the heights of existing high buildings, pre-dating the establishment of the protected Strategic Viewing corridors. To the regret of the Trust, this policy is no longer in the RUDP. However, the City Council has adopted Draft Guidance (2000) on the location of new high buildings.

Well-designed roofscapes and rear service areas -
These should minimise plant room, service and utility clutter on view, wherever practical, respecting high and low level historic features and maintaining or restoring frontage continuity.

New facades to respect St. James’s grain and quality -
New, local shop front and ground level design guidance controls are set out in new Supplementary Planning Guidance. The City Council has produced new guidance covering this topic in: “Design matters in Westminster” (2001), which is further considered, later, in this document.

Vehicle service access points, roofscape design and plant rooms, particularly in connection with the needs of modern mechanical plant, are all subjects which are still relatively poorly designed. New and updated, Supplementary Design Guidance should be prepared by the City Council on these topics.

Complete demolition behind the historic façade may be acceptable -
It is usually desirable to maintain the scale of the original rooms on the main floors of the principal facades in order to preserve the appearance and integrity of the building, particularly at night. Moreover, interiors of high quality should be retained.

Plate glass frontages and crude gridded elevations -
Stark modern materials and colours that undermine the historic local distinctiveness of St. James’s should be replaced with a more solid, intricate approach to detailing, especially at ground level.

Existing good City Council policies and design guidance on this topic, particularly for ground level and for shopfronts, is still not being incorporated in recent development proposals. Usually proposals are approved, with conditions for later applications on details. The Trust feels that this is letting designers and developers “off the hook”. It is a system which misses the opportunity for the City Council to insist on a comprehensive, initial design approach. There is a risk that ideas for integrating art and craft, complete with locally relevant and distinctive, St. James’s intricacy, are abandoned or tacked on at this later stage.

53 and 54 Pall Mall.
Trehearne & Norman Architects.
Example of suitable architecture for St. James’s, the facade of No. 54 (above left) was designed in 1890-1 and restored in 1998, as part of the new development of No.53 (above right).
FEATURES IN ST. JAMES’S.

1976. The Drambuie Building.
67 St. James’s Street.
Known locally as the “Bronze Rocket”,
the Trust welcomes the introduction of new ideas. Although this building is interesting,
it does not achieve such a quality as to fit in its sensitive historic context.

1805 Statue of William III.
1726 Established.
18th century.

1882.

1950s Piccadilly Arcade.

2001 Statue of Beau Brummel (1778-1840.)
1720. The Court of St. James’s, in the foreground, showing the newly built West End.

Much of the original scale and grain of the architecture contributes to the current character and importance of the area. The 1670s layout of the area still survives as the basis of the core of St. James’s. Amongst many unique features, it was in 1726 that the St. James’s Square Act was established and became the first of its kind to regulate a London Square.
ST. JAMES’S AS IT HAS EVOLVED.

Key buildings and sites identified in the Trust’s 1999 Study, (mentioned in the text/illustrations), where lower and/or more sensitive redevelopment would be welcomed:

1. Cavendish Hotel
2. Economist Buildings
3. “Bronze Rocket”
4. Army and Navy Club
5. South side of St. James’s Square
6. Stirling Square (site)
7. New Zealand House
ST. JAMES’S SITE ANALYSIS.

KEY
- High and/or bulky buildings, which have seriously undermined the historic scale and grain of the area.
- Recent planning applications for substantial sites.
- Possible public realm improvement projects.

1 Cavendish Hotel
2 Economist Buildings
3 “Bronze Rocket”
4 Army and Navy Club
5 South side of St. James’s Sq.
6 Stirling Square
7 New Zealand House
**ARCHITECTURE SUITABLE FOR ST. JAMES’S**

**SITES WHERE OPPORTUNITIES EXIST TO RE-ESTABLISH SUITABLE ARCHITECTURE.**

- **Inappropriate** features from “Conservation Area Audit- City of Westminster” 2002.

- Facades and in some cases buildings that are **inappropriate** against criteria in terms of architecture, use or are of poor quality and which detract from the historic townscape.

- Facades where the historic building line from the 17th and 18th century have been preserved but the architecture is so changed that it undermines the overall streetscape quality.
Southwest side of St. James’s Square, shows the originally consistent plot widths, details and proportions.

Same elevation shows increased height and bulk, but the intricacy of the historic facade is undermined by the scale, form and material of its flanking 20th century neighbours.

Option B. This theoretical facade design shows contemporary designs which respect the historic building’s proportions of solid wall to door and window openings.

This facade study illustrates alternative designs which highlight traditional symmetry and roofscape. The right hand photograph shows Cleveland House as built. This followed recommendations for proportions of solid wall to openings, roofscape and an emphasis on the entrance, but unfortunately only on the elevation to St. James’s Square.
“Every site will have its own role in the local townscape determined by its location, plot size and orientation. It will be essential to analyse and respect this. While it is understandable that the creator of any new building may wish to enhance its visual prominence, this can be unacceptable, especially if achieved by an intrusive design, too tall for its site, constructed in an alien form, or of strikingly different materials, disturbing the urban grain, harmony and settled character of the area.”

“Design Matters in Westminster” City of Westminster 2001

These existing St. James’s Street elevations show only one strand at the starting point for a developer’s analysis of historic St. James’s. The best designers and developers do undertake comprehensive analysis and support their planning applications with illustrated “Design Statements”, explaining their design process and the suitability of their solutions to the context. Too often, however, the Trust has seen the analysis seeking only to improve on inconsistencies, or old mistakes, with replacement buildings. Past examples of changes in height and bulk, or amalgamation of historic narrow plots, should, in future, be used as a justification for further lowering the character of St. James’s.
BUILDINGS DAMAGING TO THE AREA.
The following pages provide illustrations of aspects of failures (page 22) and successes (page 23-25) over various periods. The examples below, highlight the need for architectural guidance within the core of St. James’s.
1980s CONTEXTUAL MODERN DESIGN.
A largely successful 1980s development.

4/5 Park Place.
A 1980s building designed with an intricacy sensitive to the grain of the area, using forms and details inspired by traditional architecture. The Park Place elevation is in keeping with the bulk and scale of the street, although the rear elevation on Arlington Street does not respect existing building heights (above).
REPLICA.
A recent development proposal of quality adopting, authentic details of the original Ritz Hotel.

The Ritz.
Built in 1908, in its current form (above), and as proposed for extension, showing what will be the new Arlington Street elevation (left).

Visualisation image courtesy: Blair Architects.
MODERN.
A recent development of good design, but rather too large for its context.


White Cube stands in an undistinguished court, which has a traditional scale and feel, but its stark modern style is successful in this context. However, the Trust considers the overall bulk is somewhat excessive against the scale of most of the existing buildings, making the gallery seem too high.
HISTORIC.
The next section is a reminder of some of the ranges of historic architecture from each century in the development of St. James’s.

16th century St. James’s Palace is the inspiration for the 17th and 18th century St. James’s (11th-13th century site origins).
3.0 EXAMPLES OF HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE IN ST. JAMES’S
500 YEARS OF GOOD OR EXCELLENT HISTORIC BUILDINGS IN ST. JAMES’S STREET.

1530’s Palace on site of 11th or 12th century Leper Hospital.

1731-32.

1775-1776.

1778.

1826-1827.

1827.

A walk up historic St. James’s Street is a high quality architectural journey through time, from the 11th century origins of the St. James’s Palace site, to late 20th century adaptations and insertions of variable quality.
500 YEARS OF GOOD OR EXCELLENT HISTORIC BUILDINGS IN ST. JAMES’S STREET.

“... Architecture, as distinguished from mere building, is the decoration of construction ....”

Sir George Gilbert Scott
THE GREAT HOUSES.
Views from Green Park and St. James’s Park show examples of fine buildings in the area.

c.1711-1863.

1740-1755. (above right)

1752-1754.

1833.

1845-1854.

1845-1854.
ENTRANCES.
Entrances must be in keeping with the scale of the building and can be a celebration of architectural components.

1775-1776.

1826-1827.

1827.

1832.

1930s.

1930s.
HISTORIC SHOP FRONTS.
These illustrations show issues concerning the level of architectural intricacy expected in St. James’s.

1690 established.

1790 established.

c.1850 established.

c.1900s neo-classical design.

The modern, glass shopfront on the right, compromises the symmetry of the ground level facade and is not appropriate for St. James’s. The stark, modern interior is intrusively visible from the street. Lobb has also an early 20th century facade, but it has a traditional feel.
THE FEEL OF ST JAMES’S.
The area abounds with instantly recognisable beautiful architecture and rich detailing expressed in multifarious styles.

“... to describe a building as beautiful implies an attraction to the particular way of life this structure is promoting through its roof, door handles, window frames, staircases and furnishings...”

-Alain de Botton
PALL MALL ILLUSTRATIONS OF PAST DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES.
The principal approaches have adopted either replica, bulky modern or contextual design.

1907 view of 17th century Schomberg House before restoration.

45 Pall Mall.
The design is monolithic and the detailing is not carried out with high quality materials, expected within St. James’s.

1999 view of 17th century Schomberg House after restoration adopting authentic, replica details.

53 and 54 Pall Mall.
These two buildings respect narrow plot sizes, height of existing neighbouring buildings and the level of architectural detail required in St. James’s. The Listed Building on the left has been restored and adapted. The building on the right is a good example of contextual design.
4.0 APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLES AND PROPOSED MATRIX
APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLES AND PROPOSED MATRIX.

This section illustrates the St. James’s Conservation Trust’s proposed use of the new matrix, which is a mechanism to encourage the planning authority to enforce key design principles more rigorously. There have been a number of occasions where this has not been the case with conventional letters of objection. The Trust’s approach gives the opportunity for the authority to have greater support to stand by consistent local policies and guidance.

The Trust’s eight principles reinforce, for example, that issues of height, bulk and monolithic design (Principles (1) and (2)) are in future to be considered as absolute matters for policy compliance by the Trust. They turn borough wide policies into those which can apply locally, to a (proposed) St. James’s Special Policy Area (SPA), which has (proposed) St. James’s Design Guidance or Site Briefs, as Supplementary Planning Documentation (SPD).

The buildings in this section are judged by eight criteria with which they either:
( ✓ ) comply
( × ) not comply
( - ) neutral/not applicable

To be judged acceptable for St. James’s, the Trust argues that each building should ideally comply with the first six, and where circumstance are appropriate, principles (7) and (8);
or comply with the majority, possibly with neutral impacts rather than with negative impacts on the area.

Sadly, in the Trust’s view, there is not one example of a building, erected in St. James’s, since the 1940s, which is of sufficient quality to be identified as a model of what is desirable in a contemporary building, in this historic repository of fine, old architecture.
ARCHITECTURE SUITABLE FOR ST. JAMES’S

EXAMPLE: AN ACCEPTABLE 19th CENTURY BUILDING.

No. 5 on the left is subject to proposed adaptations behind the existing facade. The matrix below also reflects the qualities of the existing buildings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judging Criteria</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  Development must not be monolithic</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  No more excessive height</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Fit the “Spirit of St. James’s”</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Responsible modernity</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Retain and adapt the best facades where appropriate</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  Consider replica authentic facades</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  Reject over-intensive uses</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8  Increase the residential community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( ✓ ) comply</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( × ) not comply</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( ~ ) neutral/not applicable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Naval and Military Club.
4 St. James’s Square.
Built: 1862
Despite the clumsy junction of No. 4 and 5, both buildings have complementary architectural detail and are of a suitable scale for St. James’s and so are acceptable.
**EXAMPLE : AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF AN EARLY 19th CENTURY CLUB.**

There are no significant development proposals for this historic building. The matrix below reflects the qualities of the existing building.

<table>
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<td>✅</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Increase the residential community</td>
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( ✓ ) comply  
( ✗ ) not comply  
( ~ ) neutral/not applicable

1832. *The Carlton Club.*  
69 St. James’s Street.  
This building complies with the criteria and would be judged acceptable primarily due to its level of detail in the facade, its respect of neighbouring building heights and the high quality materials, of which it is built.
EXAMPLE: AN UNACCEPTABLE 20th CENTURY DEVELOPMENT ON PALL MALL.

There are no significant development proposals for this 1960s building. The matrix below reflects the desire for redevelopment of this inappropriate building.

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( – ) neutral/not applicable

c. 1960s. 30 - 35 Pall Mall. This is an example of inappropriate architecture in St. James’s due to its overbearing monolithic scale, lack of detailing and the materials used.
EXAMPLE: THE ECONOMIST BUILDING.
This architecture is now considered unsuitable for St. James’s.

There are no significant development proposals for this 1960s building. The matrix below reflects the desire for redevelopment of this inappropriate (although Listed) building.

<table>
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**c.1960s. The Economist Building.**
23 St. James Street.
This building was Listed Grade II as it was originally considered to be a good quality addition to the historic St. James’s area by the important architectural practice of Alison and Peter Smithson. It is surprising how offensive a building can be in this historic context, especially when of excessive height and bulk. Elsewhere and out of context it may be considered a good building.
EXAMPLE: 18th CENTURY CLUB.
An 18th century example of a suitably sophisticated building in St. James’s.

There are no significant development proposals for this 18th century building.
The matrix below reflects the qualities of the existing building.

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( ✓ ) comply
( ✗ ) not comply
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1778. Brooks’s Club.
Corner of Park Place and St. James’s Street.
This Club is an example of the level of architectural sophistication and intricacy against which new development within St. James’s must necessarily stand.
EXAMPLE : 19th CENTURY MANSION.
This is suitable architecturally with a commercial use, which would normally make it unsuitable in St. James’s.

There are no significant development proposals for this 1820s building. The matrix below reflects the desire for less intensive uses of this building.

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</table>

( ✓ ) comply  
( × ) not comply  
( - ) neutral/not applicable

1827. 50 St. James’s Street.
Originally built as a mansion, it is now the casino FIFTY. The high quality building exterior and existing well-managed Casino, with appropriate planning and licensing conditions can be considered a compatible use, although the Trust and City Council’s policy is to welcome restoration to residential use in St. James’s. In this case the loss of interior character, lack of residential use and possible intensification of nuisance activities would lead to a refusal under the proposed new principles. It is of high quality but as this building is lost to residential use, it does not comply with the criteria for St. James’s in the 21st century.
EXAMPLE : 20th CENTURY BANKING HALL.
This building is unacceptable due to the monolithic scale and bulk.

There are no significant development proposals for this 1930s building. The matrix below reflects the past decisions to increase height and bulk, and some inappropriate uses.

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<td>( − ) neutral/not applicable</td>
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</table>
EXAMPLE: A 21st CENTURY BUILDING.
This development has been given planning permission in 2007 and is considered suitable for St. James’s.

1959-60. 5/6 St. James’s Square.
The application to replace this building complied with most of the criteria, for an acceptable new development in St. James’s. When compared with the adjacent buildings, the existing facade was very plain and lacking in the architectural intricacy expected in St. James’s. The replacement building will re-introduce intricate detailing, and proposes aspects of the original 18th century house, such as ground and first floor storey heights.

The matrix below reflects the qualities of the approved proposal.

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(✓) comply  (✗) not comply  (–) neutral/not applicable
5.0 INAPPROPRIATE ARCHITECTURE IN ST. JAMES’S
This section shows illustrations of some of the inappropriate changes and development in historic St. James’s. In many cases, the buildings are of inherently acceptable quality, but are not suitable for the special characteristics of the St. James’s area.

The ground level facade contrasts with the neoclassical detailing of a large scale Edwardian building. The scale of the glass frontage lacks the complexity needed in the architecture of St. James’s, although the Lobb’s shop has overcome this through its own identity.
Two 20th Century Buildings.

These buildings are unacceptable in scale, bulk and architectural detailing.

Looking south from St. James’s Square to the Royal Automobile Club, 89 Pall Mall.

The contrast between the suitable architecture and the unsuitable, lies in the bulk and in the facade detailing when comparing the Royal Automobile Club with the building on the left, and the Army and Navy Club on the right.
UNACCEPTABLE.
This building exemplifies the lack of detailing that is unacceptable in St. James’s.
UNACCEPTABLE.
Two 20th century buildings of unacceptable scale, bulk and architectural detailing.

39 Pall Mall.
The monolithic Army and Navy Club (and the building on the right) are undistinguished examples of 1960s design approaches, which also used materials, like concrete, in ways which fell well below the highest standards required.
UNACCEPTABLE.
A 20th century example of good architecture, but unacceptable in historic St. James’s.

20th century. Stirling Square.
Carlton House Terrace.
This is a good example of the work of the important 20th century architect James Stirling. It is a building of good design and high quality materials, but it is, like its predecessor building, too monolithic to sit well in its context, adjacent to John Nash’s Listed Carlton House Terrace.
6.0 EXAMPLES OUTSIDE ST. JAMES’S
21st CENTURY CONTEXTUAL DESIGN.

The following pages show a range of recent buildings, of various styles and dates. All of these examples have clearly demonstrated a design approach where the proposed building and, in some cases, its components, respond to an historic context, without complete replication of traditional forms. They are included as examples of approaches which in principle, could be applied in St. James’s. The following are outstandingly successful examples of placing a contemporary building in a beautiful, historic context.

2003. Paternoster Square. Though this was designed, specifically, for the unique context of St. Paul’s Cathedral, it is included, due to the paucity of good, modern, examples relevant to the context of historic St. James’s.
EXAMPLES OF MODERN DEVELOPMENTS.

The following are examples of modern developments from 1980 to 2005. Although acceptable in their contexts (which are not in St. James’s), they would not sit happily in St. James’s, but which display qualities that could apply to St. James’s context.
1980s CONTEXTUAL DESIGN.
This building is an example of appropriate response to context.

68 Cornhill.
A 1980s example of restrained, post modern, infill design, in the City of London. This building was highlighted by HRH Prince Charles in his book “A Vision For Britain”, as a positive example, meeting his “Ten principles we can build upon”. The Trust regards the building as successful in its context, without being too copyist.
1990s POST MODERN DESIGN.
The National Gallery extension is an excellent example of the juxtaposition of modern and traditional architecture.

The Sainsbury Wing of the National Gallery.
The National Gallery extension uses traditional architectural elements in innovative ways, which allows the building both to blend seamlessly with the existing building and be recognisable as a modern addition. It manages to achieve an acceptable level of harmony, despite only limited decoration.
1990s CONTEXTUAL DESIGN AND RESTORATION.

Covent Garden Extension to Floral Hall, Drury Lane Facade.
1999. Dixon Jones/BDP.
Authentic recreation of the original glazed Floral Hall, used as a link between the original, classical, Royal Opera House main entrance and a bulky contemporary addition on the left.
1980s POST MODERN DESIGN.
This is an example of appropriate modern response to context.

Piccadilly. adjacent to Burlington Arcade.
c.1980s. Rolfe Judd.
The rhythm created by these facades on Piccadilly shows modern design able to fit within the historic context. The weakness of this design is that it is too high, compared with its adjacent, important, historic neighbours: the Burlington Arcade and the Royal Academy of Arts.
21st CENTURY DESIGN.
This Garrick Street building is an excellent and innovative recent example of infill architecture.

8-9 Long Acre (left).
Rear elevation on Garrick Street.
(above)
The quality of this inspired design enables the building to fit into, and contribute positively to, the historic and traditional forms of the streetscape.
THE BURDEN ON PLANNERS.

Any UK planning authority with responsibility for the control of development in an historic area, seeks to balance the needs of the local community and economic vitality, with sensitivity to the special characteristics of its protected heritage. This particularly applies to Westminster City Council, which for some years has been trying to raise architectural standards.

Due to location, St. James’s attracts high levels of development activity, requiring substantial resources to analyse and control proposed changes.

The amount of local guidance available for the St. James’s area has grown over the last decade, but has not included the sort of site specific design briefs, or guidance on local or specialist architectural design topics, such as shopfronts, mansard roofs and stucco, that some historic areas have employed to help improve standards. However the level of regulation and strictly applied rules, under the national planning system is a matter of constant debate and review, often with the principal aim of greater simplicity.

By setting out in this document, a basis for more guidance and stricter application of design-orientated regulations, the Trust does not want to complicate or stop development, but it does seek to help improve the level of certainty about what is suitable and strengthen of the planning authority. Professionally supported local communities, are encouraged to help planning authorities, by identifying local issues and priorities and by participating in all aspects of general planning consultations.

With very limited resources, communicating the Trust’s sophisticated local architectural design priorities is more difficult, and has been expressed in general planning consultations, but has hitherto only been formalised, as part of the preparation of the area’s Conservation Area Audit.

The Trust has considered other approaches in the UK and internationally, which have also sought to improve the design analysis and control of development in historic areas.

One interesting approach adopted by some London local authorities, like Hackney and Bromley, has been the establishment of a “Design Review Panel” or in some places, a “Conservation Advisory Group”. These groups meet regularly and are drawn from local, architectural expertise, outside the planning authority. The terms of reference and resources vary, but usually include the aim of advising on design aspects of development proposals, at pre-application stages, as well as part of normal consultation procedures.

In the Trust’s view the Design Review Panel approach can result in the amorphous expression of opinions, frequently without sufficiently qualified, local advice, and tends to create another level of judgements, rather than firm guidance.

Set out below, is an outline of the highly resourced and regulated central Paris, French system, which has maintained much of the architectural quality and scale of its main boulevards and streets. This approach has some of the benefits of the “Design Review Panel”, as well as with a highly resourced planning authority applying stricter rules.

There are also comparable systems for some of UNESCO’s most important World Heritage sites.
INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLES : BERLIN.
The Reichstag is an example of an historic building with a new extension of modern design. The extension is a modern interpretation of the traditional dome, without being a copy. However, although the architect did not expressly acknowledge the fact (see quotation at foot of page), the extension marries into its settings.

“Wherever appropriate, encouragement will be given to designers to produce distinctive new architecture reflecting its particular townscape role and function.”

Sir Norman Foster

“The transformation of the Reichstag is rooted in four issues: the significance of the Bundestag as a democratic forum; a commitment to public accessibility; a sensitivity to history; and a rigorous environmental agenda. Emphasising values of clarity and transparency, the glazed cupola is a new landmark for Berlin, and a symbol of the vigour of the German democratic process.”

Westminster UDP DES1, DES4(a)

“Restored 1999.
Foster and Partners.”
INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLES : PARIS.
The old and the new can fit but the scale and the quality must be right.

Paris, The Louvre (1564) Courtyard with architect I.M. Pei pyramid entrance (1989). The pyramid entrance is an example of a new, free standing building of excellent architectural merit adjacent to historic 16th century architecture.

“Good architecture is not only about good design, but is also about harmony with the surroundings. Subjective claims concerning either the reputation of individual architects, or the implicit merit of their designs for new buildings in Westminster will be treated with due caution. Such claims cannot be accepted as a valid justification for new buildings standing apart from their context, or for non-compliance with relevant UDP policies, this or any other City Council guidance.”

“Design Matters in Westminster” City of Westminster 2001
THE FRENCH PLANNING SYSTEM.
A brief summary of key elements of controls in historic central Paris:

- Empowers the public sector to intervene directly in development.
- Primary concern with order: planning regulations are highly concerned with aesthetics.
- Continuous street frontages of uniform heights, profiles and materials are architectural expressions of civic order.
- Aesthetic and heritage concerns are now at the centre of urban planning policy which is a socio-economic issue.
- Design and context are material considerations in all planning applications.
- Planning authorities can impose design controls covering form, alignment, height of building, materials and colours used.
- French development control have been effective in protecting areas which have a character worth retaining.
- A level of interpretation and discretion remains in France as there is more than one gatekeeper involved in deciding whether a building is acceptable.

“Modern Architecture in Historic Cities: Policy, planning and building in contemporary France”  
Sebastien Loew 1998.

The British Planning system contains few of these elements and throws a much greater burden on planning officers and Committees to impose demanding standards, which they generally fail to do. This accounts for the fact that the centre of Paris has been developed so much more sensitively than the centre of parts of London. The trust hopes that planners will realise the value that will accrue to the present and future generations, if a halt is called to all inappropriate developments in the core area of St. James’s, especially in the form of excessive height and bulk.

The next section shows where the Trust has identified some of the current gaps in the key existing design policy and guidance applied to St. James’s historic area and the local emphasis, that the Trust argues are still essential.
7.0 REVIEW OF EXISTING GUIDANCE AND POLICY
The following table summaries and highlights the architectural design principles recommended in the documents of Westminster City Council’s (WCC): “Design matters in Westminster” and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE): “Building in Context”, with which the Trust wholeheartedly agrees, and outlines how to apply them to St James’s. These matters are further discussed in more detail in the following section (see page 68, para. 7.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design Principles</th>
<th>DESIGN MATTERS IN WESTMINSTER-WCC</th>
<th>BUILDING IN CONTEXT- CABE</th>
<th>ST. JAMES’S CONSERVATION TRUST’S KEY POINTS OF LOCAL EMPHASIS (underlined)</th>
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</table>
| General Guidance  | • Appropriate to the character of the locality.  
• In scale with surroundings.  
• Pay respect to important features. | A successful project will  
• Sit happily in the pattern of existing development and routes through and around it.  
• Respect the scale neighbouring buildings. | • The Trust expects to see that all proposals have used local historical research, in developing their new architecture. The Trust’s own research is considered a good starting point for understanding the character of the area. For example, the Trust has agreed definitions (see page 8, para. 1.2 Principle 3 and page 12, para. 2.2) of existing local character and development priorities, which are amplifications of the City Council’s own, similar “Conservation Area Audit” definitions. |
| Wider Setting     | • Protect ‘strategic views’ and view corridors. | • Relate well to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land.  
• Respect important views. | • The Trust wants increased priority given to protecting, and restoring, the local views produced by traditional street proportions in St. James’s. The Trust does not agree that existing policies and local guidance sufficiently emphasise street proportions, as developments of increasing height and bulk, have reached unacceptable levels. |
| Local Distinctiveness | • Distinct quarter, St. James’s – requires pragmatic and sensitive design response.  
• To emulate the scale, architectural character and materials of neighbouring buildings.  
• Employing traditional materials and methods for construction.  
• New buildings which promotes strong contrast tends to dilute the distinctiveness. | • Relate well to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land.  
• In a diverse context a contemporary building may be less visually intrusive than one making a failed attempt to follow historic precedents. | • The Trust supports architectural diversity, which is part of the existing local distinctiveness of St. James’s, but only within stricter limits on heights and bulk. Design approaches should include contemporary buildings, restored buildings and successful interpretations of historic precedents, but no style should seek merely to create strong contrasts. The Trust considers that an increased emphasis on locally distinctive design of components, as well as the fit of the whole building, would help designers to focus more on the existing assets of St. James’s. |
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| **Local Context** | • Subjective claims cannot be accepted as a valid justification for new buildings standing apart from their context.  
• WCC will reject any assertions of ‘non conforming’ buildings provides as valid precedent. | • Successful architecture can be produced by following historic precedents closely, by adapting them or by contrasting with them. | • The Trust can currently only cite a few good examples, of new build developments in the last 50 years, that meet the existing and the Trust’s, proposed guidance, on local context in various styles.  
• 4/5 Park Place/Arlington Street (see page 23) is a successful 1980s example of a pastiche of contemporary styles and details which brings intricacy to many components such as railings and bay windows.  
• The new White Cube Gallery in Mason’s Yard (see page 25) is a unique example of a contemporary, free-standing development, on a site-type, which cannot be used as a precedent.  
• The east wing of the 17th century Schomberg House (1956 - 58), is an excellent example of a recreated, authentic replica, previously disfigured by damage and alterations.  
• The 18th century 22 King Street is one of a number of examples, where new contemporary development, is unseen behind a retained and restored, building or facade.  
• 7/8 St. James’s Square (see page 78) recently consented proposals, include a large development, combining contemporary, contextual and restoration styles and elements, with limited success in reducing some of the site’s bulky 1950s buildings. |
| **The Site** | • To analyse and respect the local townscape by its location, plot size and orientation.  
• Always to consider the design of the existing building.  
• Prominent sites, ie: a visual focal points, corners and intersections, or which form part of the backdrop to an open space will require particular attention.  
• To access the contribution made by each building individually as well as a whole. | | • The Trust has identified two principal site types in the historic grid, which are seeing an increasing number of development proposals. The Trust recommends that elevational design guidance should now recognise them, as locally distinctive to St. James’s and produce new, drawn information or design briefs establishing new constraints and approaches :  
• Infill sites with a single principal elevation, set in varied street frontages, where generally narrow plot widths are the key characteristic. Important examples of the risks of poor design, include sites on Pall Mall (see page 34), King Street and St. James’s Street.  
• End of terrace, or street corner sites where there may be up to three principal, new or adapted elevations, although often including amalgamations of the original, lost narrow plot divisions. Important examples include corners of St. James’s Square/Duke of York Street (see page 78) and Jermyn Street/Duke Street (see page 79). |
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<td><strong>Building Function &amp; Expression</strong></td>
<td>• Encouraging distinctive new architecture reflecting its particular role and function, to create more expressive and interesting architecture.</td>
<td>• Good design does not stop at the front door, but extends into public area beyond the building.</td>
<td>• The Trust also wants architecture that is distinctive in expressing its function, and in many components, for example drawing inspiration from St. James’s unique blend of historic uses and place associations. The Trust has had to persuade recent developers of the need to celebrate, rather than conceal, even architectural components of functional importance, such as building entrances (see also Westminster’s existing Elevational Design guidance below).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elevation Design</strong></td>
<td>• To attain an enduring quality and to contribute to the long-established impression of permanence and stability. • Elevation design will require particular care. • To establish visual connection and close physical relationships with adjoining buildings. • To respond to the rhythms, articulation, fenestration pattern, proportions and specific features, such as windows and doors, on neighbouring buildings. • Entrances or service bays should be carefully considered to mitigate their potential adverse visual impact. • Roof structures are expected to establish visual relationship with adjoining buildings, and in proportion to the façade below. • It should be possible to vary the size of windows to create modulation and articulation to a façade and introduce greater complexity and variety. • Entrances can be celebrated as a focal point for the façade and visual interest at street level. • Mechanical plant should be concentrated at basement level, however scenic potential of roof plant structures should be exploited to assist the creation of imaginative roofscapes.</td>
<td>• Create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of the setting.</td>
<td>• The Trust supports all the existing elevational design guidance and regrets, that recent examples (see page 53) are rarely rising to the challenge of these constraints. Particular regular examples, include a failure to produce imaginative, or sometimes even compliant solutions, for simple components such as: - Sensitive responses to fenestration details, even if rhythms and proportions are sympathetic. - Roof structures in proportion to the façade below in terms of height and bulk. - Visual interest at street level (see also below Material, Art, Craft &amp; Decoration) and entrances celebrated as a focal point. - Imaginative roofscapes and concealed mechanical plant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Principles</td>
<td>DESIGN MATTERS IN WESTMINSTER-WCC</td>
<td>BUILDING IN CONTEXT- CABE</td>
<td>ST. JAMES’S CONSERVATION TRUST’S KEY POINTS OF LOCAL EMPHASIS (underlined)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building Construction &amp; Expression</td>
<td>• In certain instance, it is desirable to use the snapped headers in order to provide an appropriate visual load-bearing expression and solidity to external walls.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• The Trust supports this technical guidance and acknowledges in many cases it has been adopted, without damage to the character of historic St. James’s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability &amp; Accessibility</td>
<td>• Accessible new buildings that are welcoming beneficial to all groups of users are important. Design should not only comply with current requirements, but also anticipate further advances.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• The Trust supports this technical guidance. Disabled Access to existing buildings is a highly complex and constrained problem, which will benefit from monitoring and promoting good practice case studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material, Art, Craft &amp; Decoration</td>
<td>• There has been a discernible hierarchy expressed through selection of facing materials, new buildings should acknowledge this as a desirable character. • Selection of materials should be influenced by the local context. • To ensure buildings are well detailed to provide enduring quality. • Public art should be conceived as an integral part of the building.</td>
<td>• Use materials and building methods which are as high in quality as those used in existing buildings. • Sensitivity to context and use of traditional materials are not incompatible with contemporary architecture.</td>
<td>• The Trust confirms that, generally, high quality materials are used in St. James’s, in accordance with the guidance, except at ground or roof levels and secondary elevations. At ground level, there is still too much use of unrelieved plate glass and standard framing details, against the City Council’s own excellent shopfront guidance. The Trust feels that it is also at ground level where St. James’s has traditionally excelled in examples of integrated art, craft and decoration. This should be the focus for the application of the City Council’s art strategy for architecture, but, sadly, there are few recent examples and most have had no discernable local relevance. At roof level, there is still insufficient attention to the concealment of mechanical plant and air conditioning installations. The Trust feels that updated guidance is overdue on the topic of air conditioning issues.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.1 LESSONS FROM “DESIGN MATTERS IN WESTMINSTER”
Supplementary Planning Guidance on the Creation of Good City Architecture

The applicable principles and guidance for St. James’s have been analysed in the tabular format in the previous section (see page 64-67), to identify clearly the issues about the design approach and expectations. The following are further relevant comments on paragraphs from the above document.

General Guidance

“Westminster City Council recognises its duty to ensure any new development is appropriate to the character of the locality; is in scale with its surroundings and pays due respect to any features of…”

The Trust welcomes these sentiments, although noting that the character of the area needs to be precisely defined in words, as the Trust has put forward, integrating, also, those defined “...features of acknowledged importance…”

“The Trust recognises that, generally, recent developments have been prepared by teams with award-winning professional credentials and skills, but those skills are not yet being directed with sufficient rigour to respond to the special characteristics of St. James’s.

“...The City Council will continue to actively encourage new buildings of an exemplary architectural standard... [and] more [so] than just acceptable. The crucial question is [it] good enough to approve?”

“...every one of these new additions makes a significantly greater contribution to the ambience and visual quality of the locality than the building they replace…”

The Trust fully endorses the policy views above and makes the point in the new General Principle that: “...merely improving on sites where past mistakes have been built…” (see page 8)

Design Principles Wider Setting

“...The City Council will continue to scrutinise any new development proposals in relation to these [strategic views relating to the Palace of Westminster and St. Paul’s cathedral] important planning considerations where they may be likely to have an impact [on views]…”

The Trust endorses the need for the scrutiny of views affected by development and in particular the impact of increases in bulk and height on the generally narrow and low rise streetscape of historic St. James’s.

Local Distinctiveness

“...Westminster has an underlying and subtle local distinctiveness...largely derived from its symbolic national role as seat of central government and... for financial, commercial and cultural activity. This is reflected by the architectural distinction, composition and outstanding quality of its many internationally famous areas and buildings.”

“...The individual identity and localised cohesiveness [of St. James] is often created and reinforced by common building type or use, a specific style or period, or grouping of buildings of similar scale or materials, with shared architectural motifs... a pragmatic and sensitive design response to a varied set of site conditions will be required...from those intending to build in areas with distinctive local character.”

The Trust agrees and is seeking in this Study to identify with illustrations and therefore greater certainty, the architectural elements of the distinctiveness of St. James’s.
Local Context

“Good architecture is not only about good design but is also about harmony with surroundings.”

The wording of the Trust’s proposed new Principle (3) (see page 8) emphasises the importance for St. James’s of the need for harmony with surroundings at ground level as well as the right means to achieve harmony in good architecture overall, by demonstrating the use of integrated artistry and craftsmanship.

“Two fundamental questions … is the design bad in itself … [and] whether it would be harmful on a particular site, out of scale … obtrusive in local views…” “…new buildings will be expected to reinforce particular sense of place rather than diluting or diminishing it.”

“…essential to ensure that [new buildings] are well integrated with the established character of the surrounding townscape.”

The Trust feels that the current guidance gives too much scope for applications to be assessed on their general merits, offsetting benefits against major breaches of the issues of local context, identified in guidance and policy. Increases in height, bulk and monolithic designs are bad design approaches for historic St. James’s, where they are out of scale, obtrusive on local views and dilute and diminish the established character of the surrounding townscape, and cannot be allowed just because a proposed scheme is, in other respects, commendable.

The Site

“Every site will have its role in the local townscape determined by its location, plot size and orientation.”

“New buildings may be prominent where they form part of the backdrop to an open space, square, garden or park.”

“Some sites form … part of a series where each building is similar to the preceding one.”

“Some locations will present an opportunity to create new architecture of greater presence than existing structure, in order to enhance overall appearance of the group and surrounding area.”

The Trust wants to emphasise that potential development sites in historic St. James’s are limited in configuration to those within existing continuous street frontages, with one principal elevation and, less commonly, to end of terrace sites, which may have 1, 2 or 3 principal elevations. Due to the constraints imposed by the number of Listed Buildings, harmony, rather than prominence, should therefore, be the general rule. The Trust considers that most recent applications have failed in achieving overall harmony and in meeting the challenge of creating new architecture to enhance the area.

Building Function & Expression

“Wherever appropriate, encouragement will be given to designers to produce distinctive new architecture reflecting its particular townscape role and function.”

The Trust believes that the special qualities of intricacy, depth and grain in St James’s are expressions of its past and, by good design responses, can be part of a sustainable and economic future.

Roofs

“In a narrow street building bulk effectively disappears when viewed from ground level…”

“In more exposed positions, it will be essential to ensure that the roof structure is in proportion to the façade…”

“Many new buildings exhibit a top heavy appearance …[which] will normally be unacceptable.”

“…where rooflines … are a prominent feature in the local context … any new design will be expected to make an equal response.”

The Trusts feels that the increasing building bulk in recent proposals in St. James’s is breaching the existing guidance for roofs as well as the impact on the local context. The Trust’s proposed two new Principles: (1) and (2) (see page 8) reflect this concern and make clear that future proposals for increasing height should result in refusal.
Elevational Design

“…architects to create notable buildings which form a valuable part of its unique architectural legacy.”

“…the City Council will assess development proposals “in the round.”

“…infill development…establishment of visual connections and close physical relationships with adjoining buildings will normally be essential.”

“It will always be important to respond creatively to rhythms, articulation, fenestration pattern, proportions and specific features on neighbouring buildings.”

“The scale and height of the ground storey of a building is often a key element in an urban area.”

The Trust considers that the review of recent elevational design proposals and the assembly of the illustrative examples in this document, clearly demonstrate that the elevations of undeniably notable buildings of the past are not being matched by those of the present. Too much reliance seems to be placed by planners and designers only on the use of high quality materials, rather than their imaginative and appropriate design responses to neighbouring buildings. The Trust has consistently identified the suitability for historic St. James’s of intricate design solutions, both for elevations and components, whether adopting stylistically modern or traditional forms.

Elevational Hierarchy

“Entrances to buildings can properly be celebrated as providing a focal point for the façade and visual interest for passers by at street level…should be expressed in a proportionate way, related to the overall design.”

“In certain locations there is a distinct rhythm of entrances…should be respected by a new building.”

The Trust entirely endorses the existing guidance, drawing attention to the opportunities for celebrating building entrances, but notes that virtually none of the recent major applications have taken up the challenge, and not been held account to by the council for not doing so.

Building Construction & Expression

“…subtle complexity and richness of street facades…the resulting depth and grain contributes greatly to the special quality of Westminster’s streets…”

“…designs should ensure that new buildings will be sustainable in the future.”

The Trust agrees that complexity and also the special qualities of intricacy, depth and grain in St. James’s streets are expressions of its past and, by good design responses, can be part of a sustainable and economic future.

7.2 LESSONS FROM WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (UDP)

“Chapter 10: Urban Design and Conservation

Policy Des 1: Principles of Urban Design and Conservation

(A) Development should [maintain]:
4) the character, urban grain, scale and hierarchy of existing buildings.
5) the spaces between them.
6) the character, scale and pattern of historic squares, streets, lanes, mews and passageways.

Policy Applications

10.13 c) promote and reinforce local distinctiveness

10.16 b) by preserving and creating those features which contribute to local distinctiveness to encourage a carefully fostered continuity between new and old

10.20 The highest standards of architectural design and detailing are necessary to create new areas of townscape character and interest and the City Council expects that the highest standards of design and detailing will be employed in extensive new developments.
Policy Des 4: Infill Development

Infill development will be permitted as long as its design has regard to the prevailing character and quality of the surrounding townscape, particularly in Conservation Areas [and] areas of character…or reflects the following urban design characteristics…

B) prevailing overall heights, storey heights and massing of adjacent buildings

F) distinctive forms or architectural detailing prevalent in the local area.

10.46

Within areas of high quality varied townscape, developments should be integrated in their surroundings. This will be achieved through appropriate choices of scale, form and materials that reflect the type and quality of the existing townscape. Good modern design may be acceptable for infill developments.”

The Trust considers nearly all the existing City of Westminster’s planning policy wording to be appropriate to the terms of current Listed Building, Conservation and Design protections for the borough. However the Trust considers that the local application of policy to St. James’s design qualities is still too variable, even with the support of other planning documents, such as the “St. James’s Conservation Area Audit” and “Design Matters in Westminster”.

7.3 LESSONS FROM “BUILDING IN CONTEXT: NEW DEVELOPMENT IN HISTORIC AREAS” English Heritage and CABE

The Need for Advice

“...In response to the perception that too much urban fabric of value was being lost, planning policy has developed in a way which has identified areas of architectural and historic interest and established special protection for them. In the present context it is enough to say that the law provides that development in such areas must preserve or enhance their character.”

“...On one hand are those who believe that new development should simply ‘reflect its own time’ and that if it does this it is absolved from the need to defer or pay heed to its setting in any way...On the other hand there are those who believe that what is important is to preserve the character of the Conservation Areas at all costs…”

The Trust is aware that many organisations, including most notably, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) with English Heritage are continuously developing guidance and training, including case study site visits to exemplar projects. The quoted sections of guidance and CABE’s appraisal of lessons learnt, set out below, suggest that there would be value for the Trust and the City Council to approach CABE and English Heritage and carry out case studies on recent applications in St. James’s.

The Right Approach

“The belief underlying [CABE’s publication] is that the right approach is to be found in examining the context for any proposed development in great detail and relating the new building to its surroundings through an informed character appraisal.”

A successful project will:

- Relate well to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land.
- Sit happily in the pattern of existing development and routes through and around it.
- Respect important views.
- Respect the scale of neighbouring buildings.
- Use materials and building methods which are as high in quality as those used in existing buildings.
- Create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of the setting.

The best buildings arise from a creative dialogue between the planning authority, the client, the architect and other key professionals involved.

The Trust notes that the creative dialogue sought by CABE and English Heritage, should, in future, include the community affected, and where relevant their representative amenity societies and their expertise.
7.4
LESSONS FROM C Abe CASE STUDIES

“If all the parties, including the planning authority and the architect, are involved in discussions as a scheme develops then even a highly sensitive site can be uncontroversial when it comes to obtaining planning permission; if the authority demands full compliance with the required standards.”

“The case studies show that a modern building can be less visually intrusive than a reproduction one, and that the constraints on site and the need to meet requirements of the brief when it is difficult to do so, can act as generators of excellence.”

“It is possible to design a modern office building which sits comfortably within a domestic-scaled context, but which also makes its mark. It demonstrates that traditional materials used in a new way can relate a building to its historic surroundings and that a difficult site can generate interesting architecture.”

“It is possible to combine sensitivity and due deference to historic surroundings with confident expression of individuality and a modern identity.”

Traditional materials and methods can be used in modern ways.

A difficult site can provide the solutions to design problems.

“It is possible to use traditional materials in conjunction with modern ones in order to create a building which is at once contextual and modern and of high architectural quality....an enlightened attitude on the part of the planning department, coupled with willingness to compromise on the part of architects and their clients, can achieve permission for a challenging scheme on a highly sensitive historic site.”

“It is possible to extend an historic building in a way that respects it and at the same time makes a contemporary architectural statement.”

Specific CABE conclusions

The best buildings result from a creative dialogue between the architect, client, local planning authority and others; pre-application discussions are essential.

The local planning authority and other consultees can insist on good architecture and help to achieve it.

Difficult sites should generate good architecture, and are not an excuse for not achieving it.

With skill and care, it is possible to accommodate large modern uses within the grain of historic settings.

High environmental standards can help generate good architecture.

Sensitivity to context and the use of traditional materials are not incompatible with contemporary architecture.

Good design should extend into the public areas beyond the building.

High-density housing does not necessarily involve building high or disrupting the urban grain.

Successful architecture can be produced either by following historic precedents closely, by adapting them or by contrasting with them.

In a diverse context a contemporary building may be less visually intrusive than one making a failed attempt to follow historic precedents.

Appraising a proposal the CABE way

How does the proposed building relate to its specific site?

Is there a positive and imaginative response to any problems and constraints?

How does the proposal relate to the wider setting?

Are the street pattern and grain of surroundings respected?

Will the result enhance or damage the quality of the townscape?

How is the density of the proposal related to that of the existing and neighbouring uses?

Has the impact of the building in close views been assessed?
Does the building respect the scale and rhythm of its neighbours?

How do the materials used relate to the surrounding buildings?

What contribution does the proposal make to the public realm?

In the wider setting, has the impact of the building in views and vistas been considered?

Does it form an harmonious group or composition with existing buildings or features in the landscape?

The Trust is concerned that the CABE appraisal methodology may rely too heavily on the personalities and experience of those appraising, particularly if they are influenced by professionals with a range of subjective views on architectural styles, rather than by the community affected. The Trust considers that the proposed new, Eight Principles of ranked and scored criteria in this report, would be less ambiguous for decision-making.

“…all new buildings will normally be expected to emulate the scale, architectural character and materials of neighbouring buildings.”

“…to achieve new architecture of distinction, which has integrity and is entirely complementary to the locality and neighbouring buildings.”

“…localised character and distinctiveness to which the City Council attaches great importance.”

The Trust agrees with these statements and the proposed new principles reinforce this guidance, which has so far failed to produce agreed “new architecture of distinction.”

The Trust supports the recent decision to approve a new wing for the historic Ritz Hotel facing Arlington Street, based on the unfulfilled, original design intentions. It is an important example of the use of authentic designs, forms, materials and integral artistic elements and traditional craft skills, following the model of the main Piccadilly frontage building.

7.5

LESSONS FROM
“A VISION OF BRITAIN.
A PERSONAL VIEW OF
ARCHITECTURE”

HRH the Prince of Wales

This 1980s book set out ten principles and the Trust agrees with these:

- The place. “New buildings can be intrusive or they can be designed and sited so that they fit in.”

The Trust is also seeking buildings that fit in under the proposed Principle (4) to be: “…assessed on its quality and suitability…” and (5) and (6): “…in terms of retained or replica facades, where appropriate.” (see page 8)

- Hierarchy. “There are two kinds of hierarchy: one is the size of the buildings in relation to their public importance. The other is the relative significance of the different elements which make up a building.”

The Trust’s proposed Principles (see page 8) including (1) aimed at development which: “…should respect the grain of historic St. James’s…” and (2) which seeks limits on building heights and (3) which highlights for St. James’s, the significance of: “…integrated artistry or craftsmanship, particularly at ground level…”
- **Scale.** “Buildings must respect the scale of the buildings around them.”

  The Trust fully endorses this view in the proposed Principles (1), (2) (see page 8).

- **Harmony.** “Impact of new buildings can be softened by an acceptance of the existing street rhythms and plot sizes.”

  The Trust fully endorses this view in the proposed Principle (1).

- **Enclosure.** “…cohesion, continuity and enclosure produce a kind of magic and a recognisable community of neighbours.”

  The Trust has defined both the special character of the core of the Conservation Area, which is a unique 17th century street grid, focused on a railed garden square, as one which: “…retains a mutually supporting blend of historic layout, mixed specialist uses and buildings whose origins remain relevant to today’s central London activities with examples of interventions from each century that have enriched these unique qualities…” and in the proposed Principle (3) (see page 8) “Fit the spirit of St. James’s”.

- **Materials.** “To enable new buildings to look as though they belong, and thereby enhance the natural surroundings, each district should have a detailed inventory of its local building materials and the way in which they are used.”

  The Trust supported the preparation of the City of Westminster’s Conservation Area Audit, which included documenting its local building materials, as part of the inventory of its distinctiveness and in proposed General Principle (see page 8) should: “…aim for excellence and beauty, matching exemplars from the past…”

- **Decoration.** “Beauty is made by the unique partnership of hand, brain and eye.”

  The Trust has sought to document existing features of St. James’s, emphasising those of historic beauty, in order to inform and inspire future designers, as stated in proposed Principle (3) (see page 8).

- **Art.** “Architects and artists should be betrothed at an early stage in any major public project.”

  The Trust supports with the proposed Principle (3), the City Council’s existing positive policy approach to integrating art within new developments, although not at the expense of breaches of all the other relevant proposed new Principles.

- **Signs and Lights.** “The decline of the elegant shop front with good lettering and its replacement by standard plastic signs is much to be regretted.”

  The Trust entirely endorses this support for detailed components of new buildings, to match substantial parts of the existing street level qualities of historic St. James’s and as expressed in proposed Principle (3) with applicants demonstrating harmony with: “…integrated artistry or craftsmanship, particularly at ground level…”

- **Community.** “People should be involved willingly from the beginning in the improvements of their own surroundings.”

  The Trust was formed as an active focus for the views of the local St. James’s community and wishes to be engaged even more closely, earlier in development proposals with the City Council’s own planning advisors as well as developers and their professional teams. In proposed new Principle (8) (see page 9) the Trust seeks also to: “…increase the residential community…”
8.0 RECENT APPLICATION EXAMPLES
There have been seven major applications for development of sites across St. James’s in 2006/7. In each case, the Trust has been consulted by the City Council and, in many instances, by early referrals, as well as by the developers, all as part of new good practice, arising from the recommendation’s in the Trust’s 1999 Study.

These consultations have led to a series of negotiations with developers and their designers. These discussions have ultimately been backed up, by citing the relevant City of Westminster Listed Building and/or Conservation Area and Design Policies and guidance, as well as the Trust’s local interpretation of their application.

Robust objections by the Trust have achieved significant successes in modifying unacceptable aspects of some designs, as well as defeating some applications where changes were not made.

The underlined sites below each have 2 or 3 principal elevations on large end of street corner sites. The Trust feels that the adoption of the proposed matrix and eight newly stated principles, would have helped all parties to save time in abortive redesigns, and the final approved schemes would have been significantly better than those actually achieved.

The recent proposals* have been by some good architects, and in most cases, thoughtful developers.

1. Windsor House : St. James’s Street/Bennett Street/Arlington Street.
architect : Hamilton Associates
developer : City and West End
Approved at second attempt after design objections and revisions.
(Currently the subject of a fresh application.)

2. 7/8 St. James’s Square/Duke of York Street/Apple Tree Yard.
architect : Eric Parry
developer : City and West End
Approved at second attempt after design objections and revisions.
(Currently the subject of a fresh application.)

3. 5/6 St. James’s Square/Apple Tree Yard/Babmaes Street.
architect : Dixon Jones / GMW
planner: Cushman Wakefield
Modified at high level, on the St. James’s Square elevation, following the Trust’s views and approved with the Trust’s support, although some detailed design observations to be included in conditions not yet incorporated.

architect : Make Architects
developer : Henderson Global
Minor modifications at ground level and to adjacent public highways achieved in negotiations. Approved against design objections by the Trust on breach of policies on height and bulk among a range of issues.

5. Ritz Extension on Arlington Street.
architects : Blair Architects
Approved with the support of the Trust, as a high quality replica, of the original architects’ intentions.

6. 88 St. James’s Street.
Approved use change and adaptation of Norman Shaw Listed Building to a new private members’ leisure and health club, overruling objections by the Trust on the breach of policy, against loss of residential uses.

7. 98/99/100 Jermyn Street/Duke Street/Apple Tree Yard.
architects : Gibberd.
Approved on 20th December 2007, supported by the Trust, following negotiations and with detailed observations on design matters for conditions.

(*) Further visual material on recent application proposals can be viewed, by arrangement with: Westminster City Council’s Planning One Stop Services, City Hall, 64 Victoria Street SW1E 6QP.
5/6 ST JAMES’S SQUARE - ACCEPTABLE.

This proposal includes a very substantial redevelopment, with elements of adaptation to the existing Listed Building behind the façade of No. 6 St. James's Square. A new "contextual design" replacement façade to No. 5 St. James's Square fronts the modern office development around an exciting, but private atrium arrangement. The new development is extensive with calm, modern elevations to the lesser streets, significantly improving the poor quality of the existing buildings.

The City of Westminster's perspective
The project was recommended for conditional consent following detailed design considerations on all aspects of the proposals.

The St. James's Conservation Trust perspective
The Trust felt able to give qualified support to the proposals, primarily on the basis of the limited impact on the most important replacement façade of No. 5 St. James's Square and the overall benefits of the proposals. Specific comments were made during the consultations with the project team which were embodied in the final application and conditional approvals, which are summarised as:

- The development was substantial in plan extent, but with limited angles for viewing new facades from the core historic area, the result is not monolithic.
- Existing building heights and bulk have been generally respected.
- The harmony with the spirit of St. James's, in form, scale, detail, integrated artistry and craftsmanship had been carefully considered for the principal elevation.
- The scope for modern insertions has been carefully considered, with no replication of an older building, even on the principal St. James's Square façade.
- Retention of the best (Listed) façade of No. 5 together with a contextual solution for the replacement façade of No. 6 St. James's Square is considered suitable for this site.
- The level of intensification of the commercial use is unlikely to change significantly from the existing buildings.
- The Trust hoped that a new residential element could form part of the proposals, but accepted that the existing building did not include this use, and that therefore, there was no loss of residential in the area overall.
- The Trust helped negotiate for improved conditions on the form of detailing of the new stone façade at the balustrade and roof level, as well as for details including fenestration, railings and the entrances.
7/8 ST. JAMES’S SQUARE/DUKE OF YORK STREET.

This site is at the time of writing, (for the second time in 2007/8), the subject of a current planning application, this time for conversion solely to residential use, within the adapted existing buildings, which are currently substantially in mixed office use. The Trust negotiated significant improvements for a previous application, which involved substantial demolition of all except the Listed No. 7 St. James's Square and a major replacement office building. The Trust was unable to support the previous application due to issues of design quality and height and bulk of the modern design for Duke of York Street. This view was echoed in the decision by the City Council's Committee which sought a special condition on the approval requiring a redesigned treatment. The Trust was still unable to support the revised approach, but the proposals were nonetheless approved.

City of Westminster perspective
The project was recommended for conditional consent following detailed design considerations on all aspects of the proposals.

The St. James's Conservation Trust perspective
The Trust felt that all parties considered that the poor quality of the existing building, and a desire for a replacement, even if marginally better, was the primary framework for the debate, offsetting some important design and policy issues to do with monolithic development and height and bulk. The Trust negotiated for and supported many of the appropriate features of the original large new office development proposals, which are summarised as:

- The approach to reducing the potential of a monolithic character.
- The reduction in the height and bulk of the new top floor facing St. James's Square (No. 8).
- The principal St. James's Square elevations respected the need for appropriate form, scale, detail, integrated artistry and craftsmanship.
- The Trust did not feel that the modern elevations on Duke of York Street met the design challenges.
- Authentic details in the adaptation of No. 7 and aspects of the materials approach to No. 8 St. James's Square were considered appropriate.
- The level of intensification of the commercial use was not a significant change from the existing buildings, due to the incorporation of some residential use.
One recent development has illustrated many of the complex balance of architectural design issues and processes that affect the historic St. James's area. The existing buildings occupied by Dunhill's, facing Jermyn Street and Duke Street, St. James's, and French Railways House, fronting Piccadilly, had been identified in the Trust's 1999 appraisal, as of poor or inappropriate architectural quality, suitable for redevelopment.

A responsible developer and high quality professional team were briefed to evaluate viable design options for improving these dated, unattractive buildings. Proposals for a high quality, replacement building were subsequently the subject of presentations and discussions with the Trust, as part of the pre and post planning application consultations. The Trust welcomed these opportunities to be involved in the proposals and make comments, which helped in making a considered formal response to the City of Westminster as planning authority.

The project received conditional consent after officers and councillors assessed the balance of issues of planning policy and consultation comments, but allowed a substantial increase in height and bulk.

**Developer's view of the project**

The commercial advantages of refurbishing or adapting the existing buildings were considered marginal in early appraisals and the opportunity to create an outstanding new building was considered the most desirable approach.

**Key features of the design included:**

- high quality materials.
- mixed uses including new residential.
- integrated public art and architectural design.
- high quality ground level treatments of animated frontages
- an architectural celebration of a new entrance on Duke Street.
- 21st century design approach based on traditional excellence in roof forms and detailing.
- building organised to meet complex sloping levels and existing variations in plan and neighbouring building heights.
DUNHILL / FRENCH RAILWAYS HOUSE.

Westminster City Council perspective
The City Council’s Planning Committee report, 2 August 2007 recommending conditional permission which was granted, identified the following key elements of the proposals:

■ The existing buildings only made a marginal or minor contribution to the Conservation Area.
■ The replacement building could increase the bulk and height.
■ The rhythm of vertical bays reflects a grain and scale more appropriate in the street scene.
■ The design delivers an architectural composition of high quality that will sit comfortably in the established townscape and includes an exemplary public art contribution.
■ The level of detail and visual interest will enhance the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area, views from adjoining areas and the setting of the adjacent and nearby Listed Buildings.

The St. James’s Conservation Trust perspective
The Trust had encouraged the applicants in consultations to reduce the building’s excessive height, bulk (amounting to an increase in floorspace of approximately, 34%) and monolithic appearance. Although objecting to the gross over-development, the Trust did welcome aspects of the proposals:

■ The containment of plant within the roof space.
■ The attractive curve of the roof line.
■ The proposed treatment of the public highways adjacent the development.
■ The exterior artwork which is in the tradition of some of the better buildings in the area.
9.0 PROPOSALS
9.1
The sources of this study, in the order of priority they are given by the statutory planning system includes:

- Planning Policy and Guidance (PPGs) – relevant guidance notes that set national parameters for development affecting design and historic areas and issues.
- The City of Westminster’s Replacement Unitary Development Plan - (RUDD) setting local policy and interpretation in combination with supporting detailed documentation.
- English Heritage Guidance – comprising a range of documents relating to topics in historic areas.
- Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) – providing national, non-statutory guidance on development appropriate for sensitive sites and areas.
- Numerous academic studies, campaigns and books on the subject of “suitable” or “beautiful” architecture and appropriate solutions in historic contexts – notably including HRH Prince Charles book “A vision for Britain”.

9.2
The Trust has proposed new guidance supported by illustrations which is tailored to the specific issues of historic St. James’s and is summarised below:

(A) New approved Supplementary Planning Documentation

“Architecture Suitable for St. James’s”
The St. James’s Conservation Trust seeks the City of Westminster’s support for putting forward this Study as the basis for new, formally approved Supplementary Planning Documentation. During the period of consultation, review and formal endorsement the Trust seeks the City Council’s confirmation (by adoption as a SPD) that it will use the current Study as a material consideration in assessing applications.

The St. James’s SPD:
“Architecture Suitable for St. James’s” will explain and illustrate the following topics:

- A definition of the Character of St. James’s.
- Appropriate height and bulk of developments.
- Suitable architectural façade approaches.

(B) Improvements to required documentation for applications

The minimum requirements for supporting applications for changes, (as set out in the City of Westminster’s RUDD), should be cross-referenced to new, illustrated, Supplementary Planning Documentation, formally approved for St. James’s.

This would set a new requirement to show how the development responds to local guidance information under the following headings from the SPD:

- The key characteristics and physical elements of the definition of the “Character of St. James’s”.
- Height, bulk, form, materials, scale, art and craft integration, townscape harmony.

(C) New bi-annual seminars using case studies

The Trust would welcome the opportunity to help in organising bi-annual seminar based on Case Studies (in the manner of existing CABE and English Heritage, as well as London Open House programmes of design education).
Such new seminars for the City of Westminster and English Heritage, Development Control and Conservation and Design officers (and possibly Councillors) would ensure that:

- the existing definitions of the special character of St. James’s could be made clearer, by representatives of the St. James’s community.
- recent applications and developments could be the basis of case studies analysis to inform decision-making.
- briefing new staff or Councillors would add to consistency in decision making.

(D) Earlier involvement in design proposals

The Trust notes that most existing guidance endorses the need for early consultations on development, which includes professionals and members of communities affected. The Trust’s representatives are regularly consulted, but often too late in the design process to have a significant chance of changing inappropriate designs.

Where practical, earlier consultation is therefore, to be welcomed, and can help avoid some of the architectural mistakes identified by the Trust in this report. It is not something which can easily be formalised, beyond the existing good practice that the Trust has experienced with consultations to date.

(E) St. James’s Special Policy Area status

The Trust wishes to renew its formal request for consideration by the City of Westminster for Special Policy Area Status under the process of developing the new Local Development Framework documentation.

(F) De-Listing applications

The Trust considers it is now time to review some of the 20th century Listed Buildings and seek consideration for their removal from the statutory List of buildings and structures considered of architectural or historical importance. The Trust feels that this action would endorse the change in standards sought by the Trust and would expand the debate on the design issues for this historic area which have been raised in this document.

“The Trust’s view is that, in future, local authority planners considering applications for the historic core of St James’s, should, in the application of planning policy, seek to help maximise the quality of the design, not the developers’ need for profitability. When in doubt, planning committees should say “no” to applications, as the needs of the area are acute and the public interest in preserving what remains of the heritage of St James’s outweighs other factors.”

John Beveridge QC
Chairman, St. James’s Conservation Trust
New Zealand House, although an important Listed Building of the 1960s, it is an example of the type of development completely unsuited to the setting of St. James’s in terms of scale, materials and use.

The Trust considers this building is a candidate for de-Listing on the grounds of excessive height and impact on strategic and local views.
LISTED TALL BUILDING IN ST. JAMES’S.

1960s. The Economist Building.
23 St. James’s Street.
The Economist Building and Plaza is wholly inappropriate to St. James’s, as is demonstrated by its situation next door to Boodle’s Club (see page 2) and opposite Brooks’s Club (see page 33).
The Trust intends to continue to raise the debate about design quality and historic context, by considering a review of the area’s 20th century Listed Buildings that breach current design guidance for historic areas. This would include the application for de-Listing of high, bulky or insensitive developments affecting the character of St. James’s.
ST. JAMES’S PALACE.

SUMMARY.

THE EIGHT PRINCIPLES

1. Development must not be monolithic
2. No more excessive height
3. Fit the “Spirit of St. James’s”
4. Responsible modernity
5. Retain and adapt the best facades where appropriate
6. Consider replica authentic facades
7. Reject over-intensive uses
8. Increase the residential community

OTHER PROPOSALS

(A) New approved Supplementary Planning Documentation
(B) Improvements to required documentation for applications
(C) New bi-annual seminars using case studies
(D) Earlier involvement in design proposals
(E) St. James’s Special Policy Area status
(F) De-Listing applications
10.0 REFERENCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
REFERENCES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

The following list of sources, organisations and individuals who have assisted the Trust in the preparation of this and previous reports, is included as a reference and a continuing means of helping to inform those who are considering changes in St. James’s.

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- City of Westminster.
- St James’s Conservation Trust.
- London Open House Charity.
- English Heritage - London Region.
- Cushman Wakefield - Planning.
- GMW - Architects.
- Dixon Jones Architects.
- Colin Philp - Photographer.
- Rebecca Cotton - Photographer.
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