



The St. James's Conservation Trust

Edition 29

A Review of 2025



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN ANDREW LOVE

Featured in this edition



**PAST AND PRESENT
FROM PICCADILLY
TO PALL MALL**



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AND QUEEN ELIZABETH II
MEMORIAL**



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ENGAGEMENT REPORT**



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11-12 ST. JAMES'S SQUARE**



**IN PICTURES: THE
SUMMER GARDEN
PARTY 2025**

Good news is always welcome

I am delighted to announce that the Trust has appointed two new Trustees. This is timely, as our long-serving Trustee, Christopher Fenwick, has decided to stand down. We all thank him for his ideas and energy on behalf of the Trust.

We are pleased to welcome Catherine Murphy, Club Secretary at The Athenaeum in Waterloo Place (founded 1824), and Anthea Peers, President of Christie's Auction House (established 1766) at 8 King Street. Their local knowledge will greatly benefit the Trust's aims.

Buildings in progress

Development has seen major progress on a number of exciting projects across St. James's. In this Review we showcase some of these with photographic examples of yesterday's sites alongside the buildings and settings that have replaced them (pages 4-5).

There are many large schemes, including proposals for 11-12 St. James's Square (pages 14-15), 103-105 Jermyn Street, and Phase II of the London Library improvements. Equally important are smaller heritage enhancements, which will be delivered in phases for St. James's Church. The first phase has begun with the reinstatement of the Christopher Wren south doorway, facing the axis view down Duke of York Street.

Many of these investments will help to maintain the economic mix of uses and the long-term viability of our historic area.

Of course, the largest sites – where full demolition takes place from below ground upwards to make way for new buildings – can cause long periods of local disturbance. The demolition and construction works at the former French Railways House and Dunhill Building have led to temporary road and footway closures, scaffolding, hoardings and complex arrangements for deliveries.

The replacement, a much higher single building block, comprises commercial offices, with retail uses at ground level on all three sides.

Repairs, updating and retrofitting of parts of existing high-quality buildings are also complex projects, but they are welcome. As I know well from my own involvement in the continuing Ritz Hotel improvement works, such projects – often involving partial demolition and high-quality crafted extensions – can take several years and may also have temporary negative visual impacts.

Requests for early consultations

Many of the proposed building projects and their mix of uses have benefited from positive consultation with the Trust. Our comments and ideas regarding quality materials and appropriate scale, among others, aim to help developers and their designers maintain the high standard and context of St. James's. These projects receive the support of the Trust.



Christopher Wren's
reinstated doorway at
St. James's Church

The Trust's objections

In applications for town planning, licensing, advertisements and highways pavement licences, the impact of new buildings, and any uses that generate nuisance to neighbours, can lead to objections from the Trust.

Examples include cigar shops, such as the recent C.Gars, which permits smoking on a narrow frontage footway at Ryder Street/ 23a St. James's Street, and a proposal at 26 St. James's Square (consented with conditions), negotiated to ensure there would be no footway tables and chairs for smoking.

Pirana at 6-7 St. James's Street is a recent example of a "vibe dining" restaurant which has sought alfresco tables and chairs through a pavement licence, likely to generate noise and smoking disturbance.

"The Ritz has been able to extend their beautiful Edwardian hotel, replacing the 1970s brick office block at 21 Arlington Street"



The not-so-good e-bike news

St. James's footways are often made more dangerous by dockless e-bike operators. The lack of clear Parliamentary legislation and regulation remains a concern. Consultations by the Trust with the City of Westminster's Highways team, the e-bike operators and Transport for London have included updated objection reports, prepared by Trustee, Martin Low, former Head of Westminster Highways.

The continuing breaches of the operators' own contract requirements – and the behaviour of many bike users – still blight the safety of the public realm and the setting of the entire St James's Conservation Area.

Blue Ball Yard kiosk removed

The Trust raised concerns about Berties kiosk in Blue Ball Yard with our St James's Ward Councillors, Tim Mitchell and Mark Shearer, prompting Westminster's enforcement team to

investigate the kiosk's permissions. It has now been removed.

On other matters, our Advisor Peter Heath and Councillor Tim Mitchell were invited to a Royal meeting at Buckingham Palace regarding the sadly disputed phases of gas lighting replacement with electric-source LEDs. The discussions focused on the historic Grade I setting of St James's Palace, with its many Regency and Victorian wall-mounted and column lanterns. Repairs to original lanterns and columns were welcomed.

The Trust's proposal to retain at least six original gas light sources to the Palace frontages remains under discussion.

Votes for the Neighbourhood Plan

The long journey led by the Forum, steered by the Trust's Roger Sharpley, is nearing the final stage: the referendum for planning adoption. A strong voting turnout is expected in 2026 from

residents, businesses and supporters of historic St. James's.

The benefits are many, including stronger protections for quality planning and improvements to the public realm, supported by agreed Community Infrastructure Levy funding. Every vote is vital to achieve adoption of the Plan, so please spread the word and encourage voters to register and help deliver a strong turnout for the referendum.

Summer Garden Party in the Square

The local community and St. James's business organisations gathered for a sunny evening event on 26 June 2025. It marked 25 years of the Trust and the 300th anniversary of the Royal Act establishing the St. James's Garden Square Trust (see page 16 for pictures).

Paul Aspell and Virginia Chichester, as always, worked hard, and I am sure they look forward to the next event in 2027.

Letters to the editor

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

Send your letters to The Trust Architect/Planner, Civic Design Partnership Ltd.,

Peter Heath RIBA MRTPI, Director,

Dove Barn, The Street, Blo Norton, IP22 2JB

Tel : 07803 260 700 Email : peterheath1815@gmail.com

stjamestrust.org.uk

Past and Present from Piccadilly to Pall Mall

A comparison between Victorian black and white photographs from the 1896 album *Round London*, and contemporary images, reveal the many changes in settings across St. James's main highways. The contemporary images illustrate the new scale and bulk of replacement buildings, with a variety of high quality materials and construction design. They also capture some of the enduring style and grandeur which characterises this important area.



Wilson & Co's 19th century photograph of Waterloo Place with the 1861 Guard's Memorial by John Bell (left), before being joined in 1915 by statues of Florence Nightingale and Sidney Herbert (right). The buildings on both sides of the street have been replaced in an Edwardian style stone-faced façades and with height added on both sides.



A late 19th century photograph by Frith & Co (left), taken from the bottom of St. James's Street shows the site of 66-68 Pall Mall, which was The Junior Naval and Military Club between 1870 and 1879. Members included Napoléon III and his son, Louis Napoléon Prince Imperial. The building was demolished in the 1920s to make way for Edwin Lutyens' 67 Pall Mall (right).



This 19th century photograph by Valentine & Sons shows the site of the 1846-1856 Carlton Club (left), home to the men whose "vast sums... put the whole force of the Conservative Party in motion." Its ornate design by the Smirke brothers was complete in 1856. It was bombed in 1940 and is now home to 100 Pall Mall offices.



The left photograph, by Bedford Lemure & Co, shows Walsingham House on Piccadilly. Described as "a monstrous pile", it was built in 1888 and housed a suite of rooms for the owner Lord Walsingham, the Isthmian Club for "gentlemen interested in rowing, cricket and other sports," and the offices of *The Daily Telegraph* on the ground floor. It was demolished in 1906 to make way for The Ritz Hotel (right).



Alfred Ellis's photograph on the left shows the St. James's Theatre in King Street, which opened in 1835. It is one of the smallest theatres in London but has seen the likes of Oscar Wilde, Lawrence Olivier and Vivienne Leigh on its stage. The Regency style building was demolished in 1957 and replaced with a modern office block.

Literary heights

A visit to The London Library

This famous St. James's Square literary institution was founded in 1841 by the author Thomas Carlyle, initially at 45 Pall Mall with 13,000 volumes, before moving to its current site in 1845. The Library now has exciting plans to improve the building and add a rooftop terrace. Phillip Marshall, director of the London Library kindly arranged a first-time visit for Peter Heath, Advisor to the St. James's Conservation Trust, to see what they have planned.

The London Library's history is a story of literary ambition, architectural ingenuity, and resilience. Over nearly two centuries, it has grown into one of the world's great independent lending libraries, shaped by influential writers, visionary librarians, and an ever-expanding collection. A key early figure in the Library's public life was Alfred Lord Tennyson, appointed President in 1855. He served until 1892, helping to establish the Library's cultural authority and reputation as a serious home for scholarship and creativity. In 1879, the Library strengthened its long-term security by purchasing the freehold, ensuring stability at its home in St James's Square.

The Library's transformation accelerated under Charles Hagberg Wright, appointed Librarian in 1893 and later knighted in 1934. Wright brought order and ambition to a growing institution, cataloguing a collection of 200,000 volumes and overseeing major remodelling. Between 1896 and 1898, the Library's façade and building were entirely reconstructed, using one of the first steel frames in London. This redevelopment introduced the famous grille-floored bookstacks, a distinctive feature that remains central to the Library's character.

In the early 20th century, the Library's survival depended not only on its buildings but also on the loyalty of its members. In 1906, novelist E.M. Forster was granted Life Membership, which he held for 64 years. His support proved so significant that he is credited with helping to save the Library from bankruptcy. Meanwhile, the collection



Top: View of Mason's Yard out of a porthole window. Left: Phillip Marshall, director of the London Library with the chair of the buildings committee, Dr Stephanie Hall, discussing plans for the new rooftop terrace. Bottom left: Inside the stacks showing the 2014 award winning improvements by Haworth Tomkins. Bottom: Proposed New Room for presentations.



continued to grow rapidly. In 1921, the building was extended by seven new floors to accommodate a further 200,000 books, with glass floors and steel frames shipped from America. Further building works between 1932 and 1934 expanded the stacks again, bringing the total to around 450,000 volumes.

The Library endured one of its greatest challenges during the Second World War. In 1944,



Proposed improvements by architects, Haworth Tomkins. Top: The sixth-floor meeting space and reading room looking out over a rooftop terrace designed by the landscape architect Todd Longstaffe-Gowan.

Left: A cross section drawing highlighting the improved spaces and a new accessible lift from basement level to the top floors and roof terrace.

The mid-20th century also reinforced the Library's literary prestige. In 1952, poet and publisher T.S. Eliot became President, serving until his death in 1965. His leadership symbolised the Library's continuing importance as a haven for writers and thinkers, bridging the Victorian era and the modern age.

From the late 20th century onward, the Library invested heavily in preservation and access. In 1995, a new building wing was completed with special environmental controls, designed to protect the 30,000 rarest volumes. Expansion continued in 2004 with the purchase of Duchess House, increasing the building's capacity by 30%. A series of refurbishments followed, including work completed in 2010, and a major upgrade of the historic Reading Room in 2013, alongside new working spaces. The architectural success of these improvements was recognised in 2014, when Haworth Tomkins won RIBA Design Awards for the Library refurbishment.

By 2015, the Library's holdings had reached almost 1,000,000 titles, covering 2,000 subjects in 55 languages. The collection ranges from books dating back to 1500, to modern publications, alongside 2,000 bound periodicals

running from 1699 to the present day. The Library celebrated its 175th anniversary in 2016 with a five-day literary festival in St James's Square, and in 2018 it expanded its public events programme, creating new opportunities for non-members to access the Library.

Support for writers remains central to its mission. In 2019, the Library introduced an annual scheme awarding up to 40 unpublished writers a year's membership. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it adapted quickly, providing a postal loan service for borrowing books. In 2021, it marked its 180th anniversary with an online literary festival.

A new chapter began in 2022, when Helena Bonham Carter became the Library's first female President. Today, the Library continues to evolve, with Haworth Tomkins appointed again to lead further space improvements, including plans for a new roof terrace and lift to all floors.

From Victorian reconstruction to wartime recovery, and from historic stacks to modern conservation spaces, the London Library's history remains one of growth, survival, and enduring commitment to readers and writers alike.

• The Trust supports this development

Keeping the Beat

Peter Heath asks Tim Lalic, owner of The Scotch Club, about the venue's enduring spirit in Mason's Yard, St. James's.

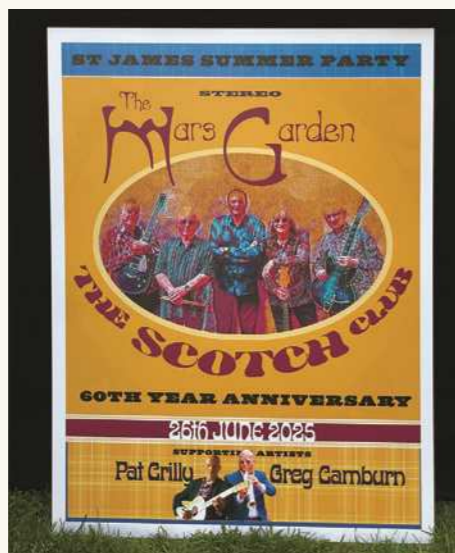
Hidden below street level in Mason's Yard, The Scotch Club has long been one of St. James's most resonant cultural spaces. From its heyday in the 1960s to its present incarnation, the basement venue has remained a place where music, creativity and community collide. Since 2010, that legacy has been carefully stewarded by owner Tim Lalic, whose passion for both heritage and new talent has ensured that The Scotch continues to punch far above its modest size.

Lalic's route to St. James's was an international one. Born in Croatia, educated in England and a graduate of Oxford University, he was searching for a site in London when he came across The Scotch Club, then operating under a very different guise. What drew him in was not what the venue had become, but what it had been. "I was intrigued by the history of The Scotch, and how incredible the history was," he recalls, pointing to the roll-call of artists who once played there.

In the mid-1960s, The Scotch was one of London's most important live music rooms. Jimi Hendrix was given early opportunities to perform there, supported by management who arranged for record labels to hear him. "They were kind of blown away by his talent, and he got a signing at Scotch," Lalic says. Alongside Hendrix came the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Eric Clapton, Rod Stewart, Stevie Wonder, the Who and many more. It was a club where musicians gathered, experimented and were discovered.

When Lalic and his partners bought the venue, their aim was to reinstate that heritage rather than trade on it nostalgically. The Scotch would once again be a platform – not just for established names, but for emerging artists

Top: Interior of The Scotch Club in 2025
Right: Olivia Bates' painting of Jimi Hendrix, "The Scotch Club of St. James and its Celebrities," is an homage to the club's legendary 1960s. The painting was exhibited at the Trust's Summer Garden Party in June 2025. Also at the Garden Party, the sixties-inspired band, The Mars Garden played courtesy of the Scotch Club (below).



who needed an intimate space to develop. "It was a perfect place to kind of grow," he says, describing a space that could host talent who were not yet ready to fill larger venues.

Part of the attraction was the building itself. Despite the challenges of being a basement venue surrounded by offices and galleries, Lalic

speaks almost reverently of the space. "It's also a beautiful building and has beautiful acoustic sounds," he says. "I believe there's a spirit in a building that just kind of brings this new talent and culture together." Significant investment went into refurbishing and soundproofing the club, redesigning it to modern standards while reconnecting it to the feel of the 1960s.

Today, The Scotch has a capacity of around 150 people – large enough for a band, small enough to preserve the immediacy that made it famous. That intimacy has led to moments that have already entered the club's modern folklore. One such evening came when Ed Sheeran, at a moment of exhaustion in his career, turned up unannounced. He performed not from the stage but from the floor, surrounded by the audience. "It was just an incredible feedback that he was given," Lalic remembers. "We hosted that moment when he kind of decided to continue in music." For Lalic, it demonstrated "the spirit and the energy of the space, how vibrant, and how it's set up for this kind of music."

Music has remained central, but The Scotch has also become a wider cultural venue. Fashion



Tim Lalic relaunched the club as The Scotch of St. James in January 2012. Today it is a fashionable nightclub and live music venue frequented by the rich and famous



Charlie Foxx, Paul McCartney and Stevie Wonder at The Scotch on 3 February 1966, after a 15-year-old Stevie performed at the club



Mason's Yard was a cultural magnet in the 'swinging sixties', as this mural by mORGANICO in Mason's Yard of Yoko Ono celebrates. It shows the 'Yes/Ceiling Painting', which Ono was exhibiting at Indica Gallery when she first met John Lennon in 1966, reportedly followed by an evening at The Scotch Club.

shows, charity gigs and after-parties have all found a home there, including an event celebrating fashion designer Mia Prada's award success in 2018. The club has regularly supported youth music charities and hosted events that extend beyond the night-time economy.

Crucially, The Scotch is embedded in the life of St. James's itself. Lalic is not only a business owner but also a local resident, drawn to the area by its architecture and distinctive character. He speaks warmly of the role of the St. James's Conservation Trust in preserving that character and sees the club as part of that shared responsibility. The Scotch has provided bands for the Trust's Summer Garden Party in



Tucked in the corner of Mason's Yard The Scotch Club shares the building with the offices for The White Cube Gallery, Jack Bells Art Gallery and Hamish Dewar, which is an art restoration business.

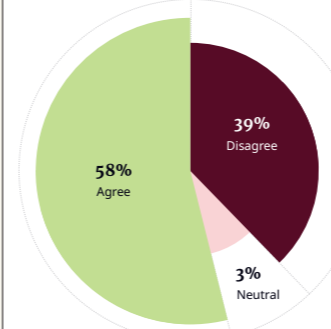
heritage is not static. Its history matters precisely because it continues to evolve, offering new generations the same opportunity to be heard that Hendrix and his contemporaries once found in a basement in Mason's Yard. In Tim Lalic's hands, The Scotch remains what it has always been at its best: a small room with a big influence, keeping the beat of St. James's alive.

Street improvements?



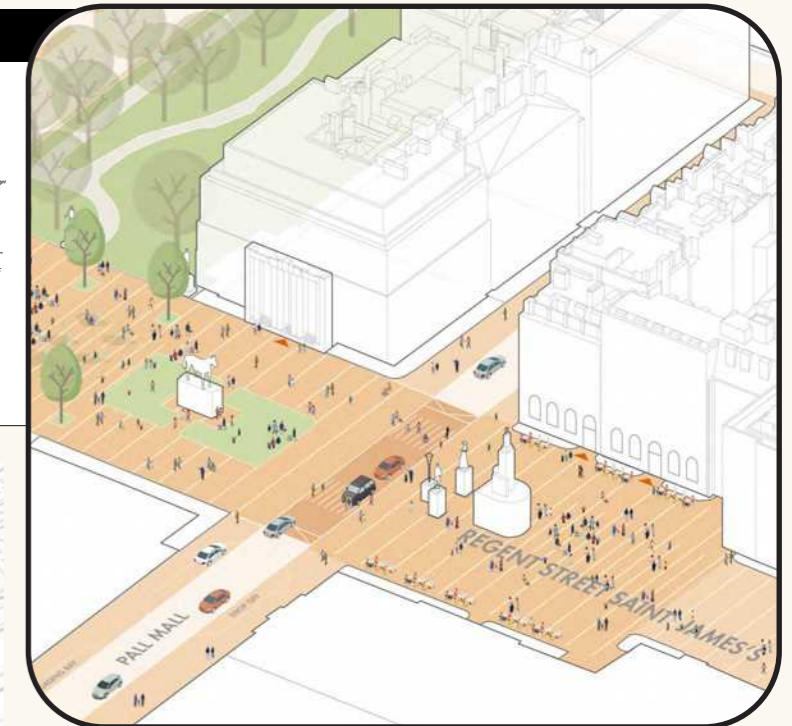
The Crown Estate and City of Westminster's Engagement Report, *Future of Regent Street, Haymarket and Piccadilly Circus* was published in November 2025. Here Peter Heath, who has represented the Trust on the project's advisory panel, draws attention to the segments of the report that highlight the changes that will impact The Trust's areas of interest, namely, Regent Street, St. James's, Piccadilly Circus, Haymarket, Charles II Street and Waterloo Place.

Regent Street St. James's: to be traffic free

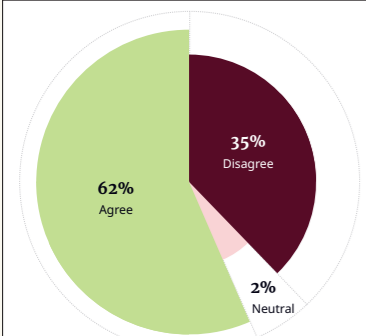


Respondents were asked "Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposals to change Regent Street St James's to be traffic-free, with timed access restrictions for servicing and delivery vehicles, to create more space for people?"

Along with the cycle lane proposals for Regent Street from All Souls Church to Piccadilly Circus, proposals for Regent Street St James's to be traffic-free has the highest level of disagreement (39% of respondents). Local residents were more likely to disagree (52%) than agree, alongside taxi drivers (99%) and men (36%).

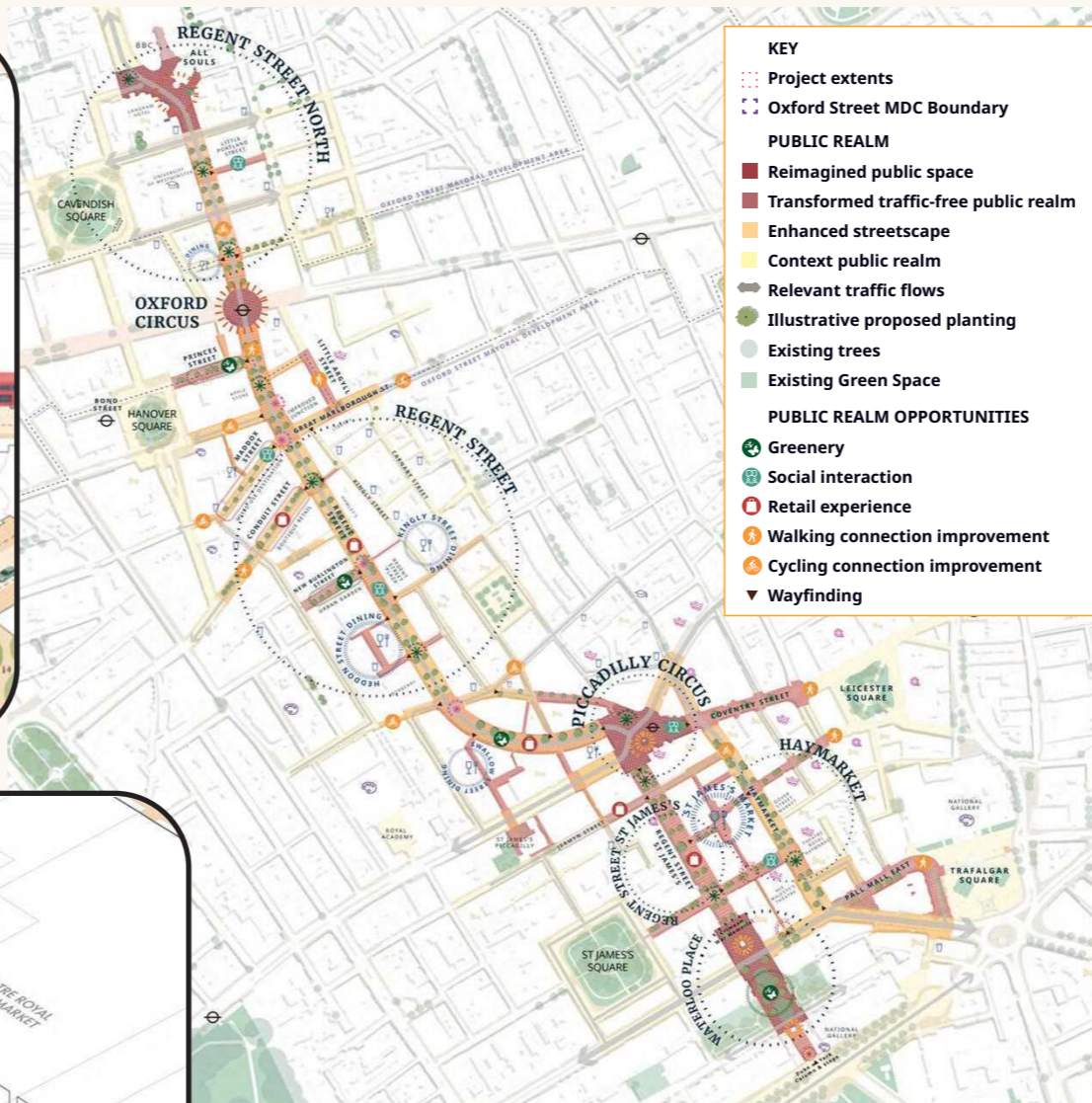


Piccadilly Circus: more space for pedestrians

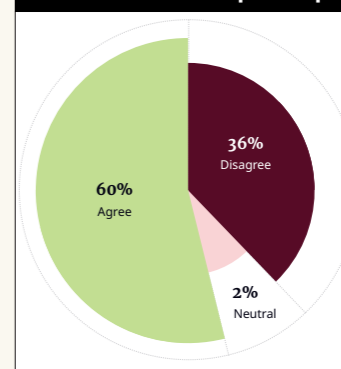


Respondents were asked "Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposals to change public space on Piccadilly Circus to create more space for pedestrians by simplifying and improving the traffic movements?"

Respondents were most positive about the proposals for Piccadilly Circus, with 62% agreeing with them. Those most likely to agree with the proposals were cyclists (86%), younger respondents aged 16 to 34 (84%), Londoners (78%) and visitors (78%).



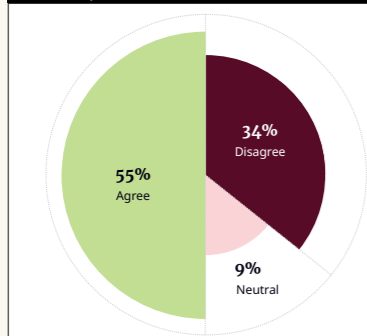
Waterloo Place: new public space



Respondents were asked "Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposals to change Waterloo Place to be a new public space for events and greening, with timed access restrictions for servicing and delivery vehicles?"

60% agreed with the proposals for Waterloo Place, with cyclists being the most likely to agree (87%).

Haymarket: one-way traffic to two-way traffic



Respondents were asked "Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposals to change Haymarket from one-way vehicle traffic to two-way vehicle traffic to increase public space across the area?"

Whilst proposals for Haymarket had the lowest level of agreement (55% of respondents), they also had the lowest level of disagreement (34% of respondents). These proposals had the highest level of respondents indicating they feel neutral about these proposed changes (9% of respondents). Local residents were split on the proposals for Haymarket, with 46% agreeing and 41% disagreeing.



The *Future of Regent Street, Haymarket and Piccadilly Circus* project is a collaborative initiative between The Crown Estate and Westminster City Council aiming to create a greener, safer and more accessible public realm. Following their 2025 public engagement, 60% of respondents surveyed supported plans to improve the pedestrian experience. The next stage will involve detailed design presentations, contact with Transport For London in October 2026 and funding to be agreed. Implementation of the project is set to start in 2029 if the plans are approved. The current consultation has now closed but sign up to receive further updates for further consultations at: futureofregentstreet.commonplace.is



Conditions Squared

The two most important aspects to consider when a neighbouring site is redeveloped are design quality and construction disturbance – and both will shape how this proposal behind 11-12 St. James's Square is ultimately judged.

There are many benefits to be gained from the redesign, the quality of materials, and the repurposing of the highly visible modern core behind 11–12 St. James's Square. These works do not negatively impact the Square's historic frontages, restored heritage interiors, lighting, or the entrance steps, which will be enhanced through improved accessibility. The new lightwell and green garden areas will provide increased daylight and stronger connections between the front and rear buildings, further improving accessibility, alongside a new lift integrated within the existing front entrance steps.

The reduced height and bulk of the proposed building appear to improve views of some neighbouring façades in St. James's Square, Mason's Yard and Ormond Yard, as well as the distant outlines of the church setting.

The most negative impacts, however, will arise from the construction works and their effect on business and residential properties along Mason's Yard and Ormond Yard. Disturbance to local neighbours is likely to be significant and may form the basis of planning objections.

The planning conditions of any consented scheme must therefore address construction impacts clearly and provide a defined timescale for disturbance, supported by transparent explanations. For a site of this scale, this issue should be of primary concern to all interested parties.

The only realistic means of mitigating impacts on local residents will be through a well-considered Construction Management Plan. This should include regular consultation updates on the nature and timing of crane deliveries and their siting; noise controls associated with scaffolding; dust management and clean-up measures; safety hoardings at ground and high levels; and robust access and security arrangements.

A clear start-and-end timeline setting out the phases of works through to completion will also be essential. The project is likely to extend until 2028/29, with large vehicles requiring managed access points for deliveries. While these measures can be controlled, they may nonetheless result in localised, long-term disruption to highways on all sides of this complex site.



South elevation showing the Foster+Partners' proposed redesign for the rear modern block including a garden courtyard. Mason's Yard is to the left and Ormond Yard behind.



Proposed cross-sectional view showing the new multi-level walkways connecting the modern block with the historic townhouse at no 11.



Proposed roof terrace garden (left) and internal view (right) looking out to the terrace and the rear façade of the historic section of the property.



IN PICTURES

The Summer Garden Party in St. James's Square marked the 300th year of the St. James's Garden Square Trust and 25 years of The St. James's Conservation Trust



Andrew Love, chairman of the St. James's Conservation Trust



Alex Bray, chairman of the St. James's Square Trust and secretary of the East India Club



Westminster residents, Anthony and Jean Levy



John Beveridge QC, Patron of The St. James's Conservation Trust



Anton Manganaro, head chef at BAFTA 195 Piccadilly with delicious treats



Clio Georgiadis (left), director of hospitality at estiatorio Milos - the venue celebrated their 10-year anniversary in November 2025



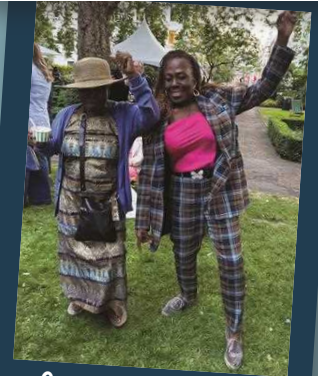
Ros Morgan, chief executive, HOLBA and Dr Jennifer van Schoor, director, Civic Design Partnership Limited



The Gelato Kitchen offering their amazing fior di latte with truffle, parmesan and olive oil



Virginia Chichester, deputy chair of The St. James's Conservation Trust (right), with the Trust's advisor, Peter Heath and secretary to the Trustees, Mary Duffy



Guests swing to the sixties beat performed by The Mars Garden

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

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

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