

Why have a formal Garden Plan?

St James's Square Bath Limited was incorporated in 2010 to hold title to the Garden, to manage and maintain it for the benefit of residents and property owners and to promote their communal interests.

Because the makeup of our Board of Directors, of our residents and also of our maintenance contractors will change through time, the purpose of having a Garden Plan is to provide a medium to long-term vision for the garden, around which management decisions can be based.

This is particularly important in dealing with the trees, which are so important in defining the character of the garden and are such a long-term investment.

It may also help the Board to deal with conflicting wishes of residents.

Purpose of the plan

1. Define the responsibilities of the Company / Board
2. Define a vision for the character of the garden
3. Define the general principles for maintaining and monitoring the garden

1. Responsibilities

The Board has specific responsibilities –

1. To schedule, arrange and monitor regular maintenance of the grassed areas
2. To schedule, arrange and monitor regular tree safety inspections and execute any required remedial work, concomitant with Conservation Area status
3. To schedule, arrange and monitor the upkeep of the railings, gates / digital locks and the seating
4. To maintain an inventory of trees in the garden, with a record of work planned and carried out, for future reference
5. To adhere to the rules for procurement defined in the Company Financial Policy - where possible separating the making of professional recommendations from responsibility for carrying them out, and sourcing competitive quotation (though some tree-specific work is only available from a very limited number of suppliers)
6. To keep the garden as safe as possible for its users, maintenance contractors and the general public
7. To encourage garden users to abide by the Garden Rules

The Directors of the Company meet at regular intervals and take joint decisions on running the garden, in accordance with these objectives

2. The character of the garden

The garden is currently within a Conservation Area, which means that any proposed work on trees has to be approved by BANES. There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) in place.

The restrictions imposed by our Conservation Area status, and the relatively low cost of maintaining the garden in its current form, dictate that the plan going forward must be to maintain rather than change the current character of the garden. This is, and should remain as a 'Little Parkland in the City' with the main focus being a small number of large, impressive trees in a green park setting, with a few smaller, shorter-lived trees to provide contrast of either leaf shape/colour or flowers.

As far as possible trees should be left to express their natural growth character with the minimum of intervention, only to either preserve the health of the trees, or on grounds of safety.

Any removal of trees or planting of new trees should involve consultation with Members, unless urgent action is required on grounds of safety.

3. Maintaining and monitoring the garden

1. Tree Care

- A qualified arborist to conduct visual walkaround inspection of all trees in the garden and advise on any action required. To be done at 18month intervals to allow inspections in different seasons (to check for different issues). Also to be carried out after any exceptional weather event where there is cause for concern
- Depending on the results of visual surveys, any decaying trees to be assessed using PICUS tomography and/or resistograph testing on a 3-5 year schedule, interval depending on the visual inspections

2. Grass Cutting

- To be carried out by contractor at appropriate intervals, to be decided on an annual basis

3. Leaf Collection

- To be carried out by contractor at appropriate intervals, to be decided on an annual basis

4. Railings, gate locks and seating

- Condition to be monitored on an ongoing basis, and maintenance/repairs to be carried out as appropriate