

Queens Square Environmental Improvement Scheme

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What's happening?

Queens Square has become tired and outdated and is in need of regeneration. Work includes new high quality paving, new and improved lighting, new seating, new street furniture, new planting and a central focal point including an attractive plaza and decorative water feature.

2. How much does it cost?

The scheme costs £3.2m and is jointly funded by Crawley Borough Council, West Sussex County Council and the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership.

3. Why are you doing this?

Queens Square is certainly past its best and is in need of a facelift in order to support the continued success of Crawley's town centre. The improvements will transform the Square into a high quality, distinctive, adaptable and enjoyable public space. This, in turn, will encourage neighbouring landowners and businesses to invest more in the area, acting as a catalyst for wider regeneration.

4. When will work finish?

Work was completed on 3 October 2017. A formal opening ceremony was marked with a family fun day in the new square on 7 October 2017.

5. What's happening with the bandstand?

The bandstand has been carefully removed and placed in storage awaiting restoration. Once this is complete it will be relocated to a new home in the Memorial Gardens.

6. Will everything remain open in Queens Square?

Yes. The council, with its construction partners Blakedown Landscapes, carefully pre-planned all aspects of the project in great detail to keep disruption to a minimum. Heras fencing, although obscuring a view of the shops, is completely necessary for safety and storage purposes. But, this fencing has been used as an opportunity to advertise all outlets in Queens Square & Queensway and remind shoppers that the area is open for business.

7. Where have all the trees gone?

Unfortunately we were unable to save the majority of the trees in Queens Square as they were encased in concrete and removing them would have caused irreversible

damage to the roots; this was confirmed through an arboriculture survey carried out in 2015 and tree removal was in accordance with approved plans.

Fortunately we were able to save one tree, which was planted to commemorate a visit from HM The Queen in 2006, as it was not encased in concrete. The tree was replanted in Memorial Gardens in December 2016.

8. Are there any trees in the new design?

Yes, a new, high quality, sustainable planting scheme has been specifically designed for the new environment. It increases the number of trees to seven and includes a mix of shrubs and perennials which provide interest, colour and texture throughout the year.

There are seven new Ginkgo Biloba trees in the square and these have been specially selected for their architectural form, attractiveness and resilience. There is also a historical link between Crawley and this particular species of tree: *in 1970, a Ginkgo Tree was planted in Tilgate Park by the restaurant to remember those who died in Hiroshima after the atom bombs were dropped on Japan in 1945. Only the Ginkgo Tree survived at the epicentre of the blast. There is a small plaque at the foot of the tree at Tilgate Park. The Peace Garden in the Park was built soon after and Crawley then became a Nuclear-Free Zone (this information was provided by Mr R Symonds).*

9. What's happening to the old paving slabs?

The majority of the old slabs and paving materials will be recycled into ballast for building. Some slabs were kept aside to repair any damage caused to paving outside the Queens Square area during construction – although every care was taken to avoid this.

10. Will there be cycle parking in Queens Square?

No. It has been decided not to include cycle racks in the new Queens Square. This was a result of findings from the extensive consultation carried out during 2014-15 where people felt that cycling (and other 'fast' modes of transport such as skateboarding) should be discouraged in what is a very busy, pedestrianised part of the town centre. Instead, cyclists are encouraged to leave their cycles on racks at the edge of the town centre (e.g. Queensway, The Broadway, The Boulevard) and proceed through the main pedestrian routes on foot.

This decision was further supported by evidence of numerous complaints received by the town centre manager and Sussex Police from members of the public who felt unsafe due to cyclists passing through the square.

Future regeneration plans in other parts of the town centre will ensure that sufficient cycle parking is provided, in the right locations and in accordance with designated

cycle routes The Council is also developing a sustainable travel plan for the town centre, including cycle paths and storage facilities.

11. Will the water in the fountains be recycled and is it safe?

The water fountain is capable of storing approx. 8000ltrs of water for its operation. This water is recirculated and treated to reduce and save on water consumption. It is anticipated that some water will be lost due to evaporation and in general use due to wind and splashing. The system has a recirculation rate of every 15mins and is treated via a sand filter, automatic water sterilisation system, PH control system, then the filtered treated water is subjected to UV sterilization. The system has been designed to all H&S regulations as well as the recommendations of PWTAG (Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group).

12. What happens if someone puts detergent into the fountains?

The fountain will be maintained on a regular basis and if any foam is apparent this can be quickly dissolved using an anti-foaming agent such as 'Acti Anti-Foam'.

13. What happens if one of the utility companies needs to carry out repairs underground?

In June 2015, during the planning process, Crawley BC contacted all of the utility companies likely to be affected by the scheme (Thames Water, Southern Water, UK Power Networks, British Telecom, Southern Gas Networks and Virgin Media) to notify them of the scheme and invite them to discuss any opportunities to accommodate planned works of their own in the area. The Council has kept these companies informed of progress throughout the construction phase. Any reactive or emergency repairs will be carried out in the normal way and the paving reinstated.

14. What are the thin metal pieces in between the granite planters for?

They are anti-skateboarding fins and are a permanent and purposeful design feature of the new Queens Square scheme. Based on feedback received during the comprehensive consultation programme, the final design included anti-skateboarding measures to act as a deterrent for both skateboarders and cyclists. The fins are made from stainless steel and the corners have been rounded off in order to create a safe edge. Due to the curved nature of the granite seating, traditional fins cannot be used as they rely on a 90deg corner to be effective, hence why we have bespoke fins made for the seating.

15. What's happening to the new signs in Queens Square?

Two of the new wayfinding monoliths have been installed in Queens Square (one outside New Look and the other outside Admiral Amusements). Glass panels containing information about forthcoming events in the town centre will be installed in the new few weeks (November 2017). These will eventually be replaced with

permanent new wayfinding information, including a map and directional signage to welcome and guide people around the town centre.

16. When will the fountains be switched on and off?

The fountains will be on every day from 8.00am to 7.00pm. There is a six minute special animation sequence which takes place on the hour, every hour. In between the sequences, the fountains will be on at a low level.

The lights within the fountain are switched on between 4.00pm-7.00pm daily.

At 8.00am the fountains will begin softly and at a low level, rising gradually over time to the 2 metre height. There will be no unexpected surprises for visitors and shoppers.

To avoid the fountain water freezing, the fountain will automatically switch off when the outside temperature in the square falls below 5°C. The fountain will also automatically switch off in high winds.

The square has been specifically designed as a flexible, adaptable space so whenever special events are taking place in the central area, the fountains will be switched off.

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