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17 January 2022

Dear Sir / Madam

**Proposal:**        **Development comprising infilling at ground floor (undercroft) level to Strand and Charing Cross frontages to create additional retail floorspace (Use Class E(a))**

**Location:**       **11 Strand, London, WC2N 5HR**

You will be aware of the ongoing planning application submitted by Hume Planning Consultancy Ltd on behalf of the applicant, Allvest Limited. I provide a Sustainable Design Statement as follows, to be read in conjunction with the supporting Planning Statement and Design and Access Statement already provided to officers.

### **Sustainable Design Statement**

The design rationale has been based around the objectives of Policy 38D, 32B, 36, 39 of the City Plan 2019-2040 which relate to matters of design, urban greening, energy, and heritage.

The proposed development has been articulated to make efficient use of land, incorporating a proportionate extension to the existing retail unit at ground floor level through incursion to the existing undercroft which is currently unsightly, and its spaces not widely used in any meaningful way.

The proposal would provide high quality and inclusive design, layout, and materials in keeping with sustainable design principles. As a proposal, the extension at ground floor (undercroft) level:

- respects and enhances the character or appearance of the surrounding area, particularly in scale, massing, rhythm, and use of materials appropriate to the locality;
- is compatible with neighbouring buildings and spaces and does not lead to unacceptable loss of amenity through overlooking, noise or vibration, light pollution, overshadowing, loss of natural light, or sense of enclosure;
- incorporates provision for disabled access;
- incorporates measures to prevent crime and disorder, promotes public safety and security and the perception of public safety and security; and

- provides safe and satisfactory means of pedestrian access

Policy Spatial Plan 2 identifies that commercial-led development in areas of higher townscape value, sensitive refurbishment and extension of existing buildings can also support growth. It is noted that supporting text identifies at paragraph 2.6 that the majority of commercial growth is anticipated to come through windfall development, as has historically been the case in Westminster. It is relevant that application 10/00438/FULL established an acceptance in principle of the extension of the application site at ground floor and upper ground floor level, to both the Strand and Craven Street frontages, specifically in those cases to bring the building in line with existing columns to create additional retail and office floorspace. The current proposal is firmly rooted in these earlier established principles and would similarly bring the building in line with existing columns on this frontage at this part of the Strand and facing Charing Cross Station.

The appearance of the site is therefore influenced by the context of adjacent development and its own built parameters as existing. In detail, the proposal would introduce:

- an additional 120sqm of GIA gained to the ground floor, resulting in the improvement of internal space in line with Policy 38D.2 of the City Plan. The additional internal area results in one unit which is open and flexible to future proof the appeal for high quality tenants in a highly sustainable location within the CAZ, making most efficient (and continued retail) use of an existing unit in this part of the city;
- a form of development within the under-croft of the existing building, utilising the existing ceiling and columns to form part of the structure resulting in a less impactful construction process by through repurposing existing structure, proportionately minimising the need for extensive construction works beyond this scope;
- a continued design quality and aesthetic where the existing materials at 11 Strand are high-quality and durable. It has been proposed to match these materials that are present in the current building to continue the visual aesthetic and high performance of the building in relative terms. This is particularly salient given the heritage context within which it sits. The design rationale is informed directly by this spatial planning context, with due regard to the site-specific materials palette of 11 Strand;
- alteration to the existing building at 11 Strand which, in line with the City Plan, Section 40.D, respects the character of the building and due to the infill within the under-croft, would not create adverse visual impacts and does not obscure important architectural features;
- an active street frontage by bringing the building out in line with the existing colonnades facing the public street to promote a safe and attractive public realm

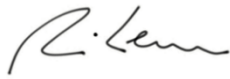
In accordance with supporting text at Paragraph 40.7, it is the case that the extension proposed would integrate successfully with its surroundings. Further consideration of the sustainable design credentials of the proposal are set out in the supporting plans and documents, which should be referred to.

Overall, the proposal represents an opportunity to enhance the quality and functioning of an existing retail unit. The proposal is considered to comply with the relevant policy requirements set out in the adopted development plan for Westminster, and on this basis, it is concluded the scheme should be supported. The proposal constitutes a sustainable development in accordance with national and local policy requirements, which has been designed in line with prevailing government guidance to realise sustainability.

## Summary

In this regard I trust that the above clarification provides sufficient justification to facilitate the prompt validation of this application, in turn allowing for the delivery of this improved retail frontage. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any queries regarding this application.

Kind regards



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