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THE BEDFORD ESTATES

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Dear Jagdish

**MEDIA WALL PROPOSED AT ST GILES HOTEL, BEDFORD AVENUE WC1
PLANNING APPLICATION 2015/3210/A**

The Bedford Estates objects to planning permission 2015/3210/A. The proposed illuminated media wall is extremely overbearing and would have a severely detrimental impact on the local area. This proposal would be particularly harmful to Tottenham Court Road, Bedford Avenue and Great Russell Street, the former taking on the main frontage and the latter two streets the side returns of this substantial media wall. Furthermore we believe its negative impact would extend beyond this immediate area to the character of the whole Bloomsbury Conservation area.

The St Giles Hotel is located in an area which is heavily congested in terms of advertising, buildings and people. This media wall is unduly dominant and would only act to congest the area further. The West End Project has aims which include: firstly a strategy to ease congestion by providing for two way access for buses and cyclists and secondly to provide safer routes for pedestrians and cyclists. This planning proposal is incompatible with this strategy as pedestrians, cyclists and drivers would be forced to view the media wall up close, where it would act as a hazardous distraction to drivers and cyclists. The completion of Crossrail will lead to a further increase in pedestrian traffic.

The proposed dimensions of the media wall are somewhat worrying. In the planning application these are stated at 6 metres in height by 39.8 metres in width, although in the planning submission the measurements quoted are 6 metres by 33 metres. This size of sign is more suitable to a shopping centre environment. It is certainly not suitable for a Central London location adjacent to a Conservation area which includes many buildings of historic importance and a large number of residents who live in the immediate area.

We make reference to the following policies which support our view:

- DD12 states 'that the development of shopping, services, food drink...does not cause harm to the character, function, vitality and viability of a centre, the local area or the amenity of neighbours'. We believe that the development of a large illuminated media wall would result in increased anti-social behaviour. The area would be brightened due to the light pollution which would lead to increased activity from loiterers and litterers. The Council states that it will not grant planning permission for development that it considers would cause harm to the character, quality and attractiveness of a centre. In our view granting this planning permission would have an adverse impact on all three of these areas.
- DD16 states that the 'Council will seek to ensure that development is properly integrated with the transport network and is supported by adequate walking, cycling and public transport links.' This proposal does not directly affect transport links, but it does have an implication for transport given cyclists, drivers and pedestrians would all be adversely affected. The media wall would act as a distraction and therefore a safety risk for these parties.

- DD17 provides for development that '*should make suitable provision for pedestrians, cyclists and public transports*'. This policy makes reference to having convenient, safe and well-cycled routes. The media wall would result in distractions and an unsafe environment for cyclists, it therefore is incongruous with this policy.
- DD24 relates to improving and protecting the environment and quality of life. This sets out that all developments will consider the '*character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings*.' This proposal is not in line with the historical character of Bloomsbury. Furthermore it will provide light pollution and have a direct adverse impact upon the quality of life of the local residents.
- DP25 in relation to Conserving Camden's Heritage states that the Council will '*only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area*.' The proposed media wall would be adjacent to the Bloomsbury Conservation area and would, in our opinion, have a negative, cluttering effect on the area.
- DP26 refers to the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours, stating that '*The Council will protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours*'. This includes considering '*sunlight, daylight and artificial light levels*.' This application would lead to increased light pollution which will likely result in increased crime in the area. It will have undoubtedly have a negative impact on the occupiers of the area.
- Camden Planning Guidance (CPG1) on advertisements, signs and hoardings state that, '*the most satisfactory advertisements are those which take into account: the character and design of the property; the appearance of the surroundings; and the external fabric of the building*.' In our view the media wall contravenes this guidance given it would not respect the architectural features of the host building nor the character of the surrounding area. Furthermore the illumination would not be sympathetic to the building on which it is located.

In summary, we vehemently oppose the proposed media wall due to its overbearing size and nature. We believe that having a media wall in an already hectic and cluttered area will negatively impact the environment. Crossrail and the West End Project are endeavouring to improve the area, whereas this media wall would do quite the reverse. It is completely inappropriate for the streetscape.

Yours sincerely,



Kirstyn Bailey
Commercial Surveyor

