

Felgate, Gavin

From: Priest [REDACTED]
Sent: 04 June 2024 13:36
To: Planning Policy Consultations
Cc: Archdeacon London
Subject: 2040 City Plan
Attachments: AHLWCityPlan.docx

Categories: CONFIRMED

THIS IS AN EXTERNAL EMAIL

Attached is a letter from All Hallows on the Wall in response to the consultation on the 2040 City Plan.

Many thanks for your consideration.

Rev Paul Gismondi
Priest in Charge

All Hallows-on-the-Wall



Development Plans Team,
Environment Department,
City of London Corporation,
Guildhall,
PO Box 270
London
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Re; 2040 City Plan – Shaping the Future City

4 June 2024

Gentlemen,

I am the Priest in Charge of All Hallows on the Wall and am writing to make representations regarding the 2040 City Plan. My comments should be read in conjunction with the overall comments from the London Deanery which you should receive separately.

All Hallows on the Wall is a Guild Church which is currently used by XLP, a charity focussed on disadvantaged young people across nine boroughs of London, as their headquarters. It is also used by City Gates Churches, an Evangelical Church which boasts a large congregation from the wider metropolitan area representing a variety of social, economic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds. Above all, the Church is a place of Anglican worship, with roots dating to the Middle Ages. It has been bombed twice (during WWII and in 1993), but it has survived and flourished due to the ongoing commitment--financial and otherwise—of many individuals and organisations over the years.

We are just about to embark on a major project to re-imagine, restore, and renovate the Grade I listed building to support these activities and to make it available for an even wider group of users, fit for the 21st century. We will be targeting cultural, educational, and social activities which will cater for residents, visitors, and City workers, and we hope these activities will draw in people from “Beyond the Wall”. Pastorally and liturgically, we will seek to cater to the needs of the nighttime and weekend economy, with special regard for those whose needs are not being met elsewhere. The rebuilding plans will also address sustainability and accessibility

Having read your very impressive and detailed Plan, may I first congratulate you on the scope and boldness of your vision. We are proud to be a part of the fabric of the City and look to do what we can to support you, in partnership with all stakeholders. We are located in the Liverpool Street ‘Key Area

of Change' mentioned in the Plan, so we will be interested in how the plans for this area develop. Our comments below are meant to address the question of "soundness" and to complement what is being proposed. We have included the various headings in the Plan to which they relate.

POLICY S1: HEALTHY AND INCLUSIVE CITY

We believe that we provide a safe and inclusive environment, and our aspiration is to ensure that the building is open to the public seven days a week, including the hours outside the normal 9-5 working day, partly to reflect changing work habits, and partly for those who arrive early and leave late-- people like the cleaners and other "unseen" workers who help the City run.

At All Hallows, the work of XLP and City Gates is, as mentioned above, geared towards ever increasing inclusivity. The staff and the young people they help represent a different dimension of engagement. Our renovation plans will enable us to better host a wide variety of events and activities designed to encourage people to spend more time in the City. At the same time, we aim to create a space to address for the needs of homeless over the winter months, a group who do not seem to be mentioned in the Plan. We hope that the City will support our vision, structurally and financially.

We would expect that the plan acknowledges this aspect of the contribution we make, and, more importantly, outline how the proposals will allow us to enhance and deepen what we already do.

POLICY HL3: NOISE

As the Church is located on the busy thoroughfare, which is London Wall, noise is a constant issue. Without trying to impede the smooth flow of traffic, we wonder what consideration has been given to calming the noise here, for example by increasing the pedestrian space.

As part of our refurbishment, we will be restoring our Chrich bells, a joyful nose.

POLICY SA1: PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE LOCATIONS

As mentioned above, we will be working to increase the physical accessibility of our premises. We note that there are existing grants available for an access audit, but we hope that the Plan will also include funding schemes for access to what is essentially a 'free of charge' space which is open to all.

POLICY S14: SPACES & GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

We are happy to open the churchyard of All Hallows on the Wall to the public and are grateful for the care of the garden provided by the City of London Corporation. We can confirm that the space is used by large numbers of people on a regular basis. It is also, unfortunately, used by those sleeping rough in the evenings. Hence, our desire to provide a safe space for some of these individuals within the building, at least during the coldest part of winter. But we think the Plan needs to address this problem of homelessness more directly, putting forward concrete proposals in a coherent way.

Whilst we applaud the growing use of bicycles and e-bikes, we have had a continuing problem with these being left on the pavement outside our premises, often blocking the entrance and fire escape. The electric bikes are heavy and difficult to move. This affects us disproportionately as the pavement around the Church is quite narrow. Fortunately, the Corporation has worked with us to address the problem, but the results have varied day by day. The plan should rethink the location and monitoring of parking for all types of cycles, creating spaces most suited to them.

POLICY HL5: LOCATION & PROTECTION OF SOCIAL & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

We are a social and community facility. Although we are, at heart, a place of worship, we welcome everyone. Our aim is to have the Church used as much as possible. As our ability to advertise what we have (and will have) is limited, the Plan might consider strategies and mechanisms to match those seeking facilities with those of us who have them.

STRATEGIC POLICY S2: SAFE & SECURE CITY

We believe that opening the church more fully (including early morning and evenings) will contribute to the safety and security of the City by providing a safe and welcoming space at these times. In parallel, it will be crucial that a visible, consistent police presence be maintained outside normal working hours, especially at night, and that there are clearly defined protocols for dealing with anti-social behaviour.

We have an ongoing issue with an abandoned newsstand blocking one of our fire exits. Whilst we are pursuing this with the relevant individuals at the City of London Corporation, it is, to us, an example of how safety risks can fail to be properly appreciated. A commitment in the Plan to be vigilant in monitoring and addressing these risks in a timely manner would be welcome.

STRATEGIC POLICY S6: CULTURE AND VISITORS

As part of the redevelopment of two local office blocks, these are the beginnings of a plan to create a sort of “cultural hub” in our immediate neighbourhood which would incorporate the Dutch Church and the public spaces in those new buildings. This will amplify the variety and number of cultural activities on offer. The Plan might specifically champion this type of initiative and offer financial and other incentives to ensure that they succeed.

STRATEGIC POLICY S1: HEALTH, INCLUSION & SAFETY

For most of the day, we are a quiet place where people can rest and recharge without having to pay to go into a coffee shop or a restaurant. We can offer something as simple as an accessible loo. Of course, we strive to be available to provide pastoral care for those who need it, for example, when facing a bereavement, or illness, or loss of employment. These services are provided ‘on-call’ and obviously free of charge, but they can be immensely valuable, especially when individuals are faced with challenges far from home. The plan might acknowledge what we do, and again, provide suggestions on how we can work with stakeholders to fund and reinforce the support we provide.

STRATEGIC POLICY S4: OFFICES

Our Church is an architectural gem. As noted above, there are plans to redevelop two office blocks in our immediate vicinity. We will, of course, comment on the plans during the relevant consultation period, but we would hope that the Plan specifically notes that assessing and addressing the interplay between these kinds of towers and the inherited architectural landscape will be paramount. We note the controversy surrounding the development at Bevis Marks and see that as an example to be avoided. We would also expect that developers engage early with the Church and the Diocese in formulating their plans, and to be creative and generous on the social and financial commitments they make to us as part of the approval process.

Thank you for inviting our views on the Plan. If there is anything practical, we can be doing, or if you require any further information from All Hallows on the Wall, please do be in touch.

Yours faithfully,

Paul Gismondi

Reverend Paul Gismondi