

## Huguenot House Options Consultation Post-Consultation Report and Summary

### Purpose

This document summarises all the consultation the council has undertaken with Huguenot House residents and stakeholders as part of an ongoing options consultation regarding the future of Huguenot House.

### Background

The Huguenot House options consultation has been ongoing since 2017. There was a consultation before this, but Cabinet decided to undertake another consultation in July 2017.

This report summarises activity and feedback from the consultation between July 2017 and November 2020. It also provides a more detailed summary and assessment of activity and feedback from the most recent engagement round between 9 November 2020 and 15 January 2021.

### Executive Summary

Between July 2017 and January 2021, Westminster City Council has been consulting with residents and leaseholders, local stakeholders including neighbouring businesses and business groups, and the wider community about options for the future of Huguenot House.

Throughout several phases of engagement, the feedback has largely remained consistent. The key findings from the consultation are as follows:

- Secure tenants have been reluctant to state a preferred option. There are two secure tenants in the building and neither gave their views on the options presented in 2020-21, although one did speak with a council officer and acknowledge she had read and understood the materials provided. In previous engagement with the council, secure tenants were reluctant to move, and the council offered reassurances about support for tenants to find temporary or permanent alternative housing and the right to return to Huguenot House should a redevelopment option be progressed.
- Resident Leaseholders are strongly opposed to any option which would require them to move, either temporarily or permanently. Many are sceptical of the council's 'right to return' offer and are concerned about the disruption of moving, even if they could return to new homes in a redeveloped building.

There has been a consistent approach by some long-term residents to seek to delay consultation on the options, and shift focus exclusively to ongoing maintenance matters wherever possible. Most recently, this group of residents declined to participate in the consultation in 2020-21. Residents with temporary tenancies were generally also reluctant to offer a view.

In so far as there is a consensus for a single option put forward, which there does not appear to be from the feedback, resident leaseholders generally favour maintenance but dispute the leaseholder charges associated with this and feel the council should have prioritised major works in the building sooner.

- Non-resident leaseholders generally favour the redevelopment options, in part because of the significant leaseholder charges associated with the maintenance or refurbishment options. Several have stated their wish to sell their properties back to the council if they are compensated with offers in line with the council's leaseholder and tenant decant policy.
- Local businesses and stakeholders are overwhelmingly in favour of redeveloping the building, with only a few exceptions (e.g. a representative of the Soho Society supported keeping the building or, if it was to be redeveloped, a strong focus on residential homes to ensure residents could remain). There is a consensus that the building does not contribute to the wider area and redeveloping it could be the start of further improvements to what they see as a neglected and under-performing part of the West End. Influential local groups like the Heart of London Business Association (HOLBA) were unequivocally in favour of redevelopment, notably the new redevelopment option presented in 2020-21, and have offered to support the council with integrating this development approach into a wider place-shaping strategy and maximising its impact on the area should it be progressed.

## Section One: Consultation from July 2017 to November 2020

### ○ 2016-17: Background

Consultation on various options for the future of Huguenot House took place in 2016-17. This formed part of the evidence base for a report made to Cabinet on 10 July 2017. Appended to this report was a summary of responses from residents and other consultees during this consultation, which can be found [here](#)<sup>1</sup>, a schedule of correspondence with residents, and the consultation materials used during public sessions. Council officers considered the responses received from residents in the report, noting support for commercial development in the local area but concerns over the impact such development would have on their homes. These responses formed the basis for further consultation in 2017/18 detailed below.

As outlined in the [minutes](#)<sup>2</sup> of this Cabinet Meeting, the Cabinet noted and considered the feedback on all commercial and residential engagement and informal consultation undertaken so far in relation to the options and noted the opposition to redevelopment from the Huguenot House Residents' Association. They also agreed that Option 4A\* as set out in paragraph 6.3 of the report be the preferred option that best met the council's aspirations for the property, *subject to further formal consultation with all residents and occupiers*.

### ○ 2017-18: Consultation Events

In July 2017, the council decided to consult on options that link to the aspirations set out in the City for All policy. Appendix 1 was prepared in 2020 and summarises feedback received at consultation events from July 2017 to October 2018, whilst setting out officer's response to this feedback.

Between 2017 and 2018, residents and stakeholders were consulted on options ranging from refurbishment to full redevelopment. At residents' request, a new option to retain and extend the existing building was put forward as an additional option, during this consultation period.

There were six consultation events and workshops held with stakeholders, which offered them the opportunity to give feedback on all the proposed options. If a resident could not make the events, the project team offered to hold one-to-one meetings to discuss the options.

Feedback from residents illustrated that the previous consultation information provided to stakeholders might have been too complex to understand without professional advice. Therefore, the council transformed the September and October 2018 consultation events into workshops to make the engagement more accessible and constructive. After the October event, a further six-week period was given to stakeholders to offer feedback or organise one-to-one meetings.

This consultation activity is summarised later in this report. A report prepared by the Communications and Engagement Officer at the time that summarises this consultation can be found in Appendix 2.

### ○ 2018-20: Reflection and Ongoing Engagement

Since October 2018, the council have taken some time to consider the options put forward to ensure the options are the best they can be and to consider all building occupiers' aspirations, including residents, as expressed during the previous consultation.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://committees.westminster.gov.uk/documents/s23156/Appendix%20C%20-%20Public%20Exhibition%20Response%20Summary.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://committees.westminster.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=8003>

While the consultation has remained open since October 2018, a new project team was convened in August 2019 to continue the ongoing process of reviewing existing feedback and plan additional consultation. There were no proactive consultation events during this time, but the council team monitored all incoming feedback and correspondence.

The focus of engagement with Huguenot House residents between August 2019 and October 2020 was on the appointment of their new management company, Aston Rose (appointed 1 October 2019), which included residents in the assessment and selection. In this period, the council concentrated on introducing Aston Rose and picking up outstanding maintenance issues which have been a point of discord with residents for many years. Consequently, the team held four drop-in sessions in the Huguenot House foyer, with maintenance a stated priority for discussion. These drop-in sessions aimed to make introductions and answer any questions regarding Aston Rose's appointment.

Most of the feedback received during 2019 and the bulk of 2020 was focused on building maintenance, rather than the options consultation. One leaseholder was in close contact with the council in this period regarding the potential sale of their home, notably regarding when 'market plus'<sup>3</sup> offers may be available.

In addition to the four drop-in sessions, the council began to send out regular letters to all tenants and leaseholders of Huguenot House from August 2019, informing residents on actions that are being taken on maintenance issues and any updates on the consultation. These letters stated clearly that the consultation was still open and identified ways stakeholders could give feedback. The council has sent four such letters, in: August, October and December 2019, and July 2020 (Appendix 3).

Between October 2018 and October 2020, there was not any specific feedback on the ongoing options consultation. The Huguenot House Residents Association (HHRA) was in regular contact with various council departments on matters relating to building maintenance and the makeup of the project team but did not offer further comment on the options presented in 2017-18.

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<sup>3</sup> Offers that exceed market value by 7.5%.

○ **Summary of Engagement Activity from July 2017 to November 2020**

Table 1 shows the consultation activity which has happened during each month during the period from 2017 to November 2020, after the Cabinet decision to pursue Option 4a\* as its preferred option.

<b>Month</b>	<b>Consultation Engagement Activity</b>
November 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial phase of consultation – engagement meeting (27th)</li> <li>• Initial phase of consultation – engagement meeting (28th)</li> </ul>
January 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rehousing offer in the event of a redevelopment option – consultation meeting (31st)</li> </ul>
March 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Options appraisal and into the ITLA – consultation meeting (28th)</li> </ul>
June 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Options appraisal workshop and commencement of formal consultation – consultation meeting (20th)</li> </ul>
October 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Options appraisal workshop and commencement of formal consultation – consultation meeting (1st)</li> </ul>
October 2018 – September 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During this period no consultation events were held, however the Huguenot House email inbox was monitored for feedback</li> </ul>
October 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement drop-in session (1st)</li> <li>• Engagement drop-in session (4th)</li> <li>• Monthly update letter to residents</li> <li>• Responding to resident and stakeholder queries</li> </ul>
November 2019 – December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement drop-in session (6th Nov)</li> <li>• Engagement drop-in session (7th Nov)</li> <li>• Update letter to residents</li> <li>• Responding to resident and stakeholder queries</li> </ul>
January 2020 – November 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responding to resident and stakeholder queries</li> </ul>

○ **Summary of Feedback from 2017-2020**

Appendix 1 summarises consultation feedback which has been considered at a series of meetings of the new project team. This informed the new Multi-Disciplinary Consultancy Team’s work when they were appointed in summer 2020.

Feedback in this period was largely from residents of Huguenot House, rather than the wider community, and can be summarised as follows:

- Comments received have not been positive towards many of the options, with residents broadly in favour of refurbishment but only if this means they can remain in occupation. A petition from the self-formed group called the Huguenot House Resident Association (HHRA) and signed by 23 residents summarised these points in 2016.

- Residents have repeatedly raised their belief that the maintenance of Huguenot House has been neglected over many years, with the HHRA claiming this was a deliberate action on the part of the council to enable redevelopment of Huguenot House. The focus of work since 2019 has been to progress outstanding maintenance issues to ensure the building is safe and reassure residents.
- Many residents expressed their opposition to redevelopment as an option during the 2017-18 consultation events on the basis of disruption, loss of their homes, scepticism over the right to return, and a belief that the building remains fit for purpose, with cosmetic maintenance to windows, lifts and interiors.
- Other concerns were raised around loss of parking, daylight/sunlight implications and traffic management. However, the predominant view of residents at these meetings was that they wish to remain in place and would oppose any development scheme regardless of design.
- There were some individuals who acknowledged that the building is neither architecturally exceptional nor fit for purpose (residentially or commercially) but these were in the minority.
- It is worth noting that a number of leaseholders have sold their properties to the council over the past few years and other parties have recently engaged with the council to discuss terms for a sale of their homes.
- Residents stated that they wanted to work with the council to create a scheme that benefits all.
- Residents asked for the range of options to be extended to include option which retains and extends the existing building. This has been acted upon and is known as the option to retain and extend the existing building (or the 2004 Podium Scheme).
- The request from residents that additional assessment criteria be included resulted in *'disruption for residents'* and *'minimise resident disruption and facilitate the preservation of local communities'* being added to the assessment criteria for each of the options.
- Residents requested involvement in the appointment of a new building management company which was accepted and acted upon by the council. Aston Rose was appointed on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 and a five-year planned maintenance programme has been agreed to ensure essential works are undertaken as soon as possible in order of priority.
- The council recognises the objections from residents noted above and the disruption that would be caused by redevelopment and has made the following offers to residents in order to mitigate hardship in the event a redevelopment option is progressed, such as;
  - A right to return for resident leaseholders and secure council tenants (extended to residents despite Huguenot House not being within a designated Housing Regeneration Area and therefore not subject the council's Right to Return policy).
  - Suitable temporary housing.
  - Compensation payments.

## Section Two: Options Consultation from 9 November 2020 to 15 January 2021

### ○ Background

In July 2020 the Cabinet Member responsible for regeneration made the decision that a further round of consultation with refreshed options, reviewed in light of socio-economic, policy and regulatory changes since 2018, and a further new option, would be pursued.

In preparation for this further consultation, a new multi-disciplinary team was appointed and undertook a full assessment of all existing options, ensuring they were refreshed to meet current Regulations and council policy, and develop a new redevelopment option informed by new commercial and market research.

A consultation approach was then agreed with the responsible Cabinet Member which set out a strategy for a new round of Section 105 compliant consultation to run for nine weeks in November 2020 – January 2021. In light of the Covid-19 pandemic and reflecting the council's new approach to public consultation developed and delivered in the summer of 2020 with excellent results in terms of levels of engagement, the consultation was designed to be a digital-led engagement with activity focused on online events and materials shared by post, email and via an online consultation hub.

The residents and commercial occupiers of Huguenot House were agreed to be the central audience for this consultation. However, a stakeholder database (Appendix 4) was also developed to ensure local business, groups and other stakeholders would also receive materials and be invited to engage with the council during this final part of the options consultation.

### ○ Consultation Criteria

Since 2018, the council has refreshed its City for All objectives and therefore used the following refreshed assessment criteria for this final round of consultation, which differ slightly from the original criteria. The inclusion of a criteria to 'minimise disruption for existing residents' is the result of requests from residents during the 2018 consultation events.

Taking advice from the council's legal department, council officers clearly communicated the reasons for the changed criteria in all consultation materials and at webinars. The changes are not substantive and largely reflect a new commitment to sustainability in line with the council's new City for All strategy.

<b>City for All Criteria</b>	<b>Site Specific Criteria</b>
Provide a mix of homes across all tenures including affordable provision	Ensure that homes meet modern standards
Deliver a carbon efficient strategy that is environmentally sustainable	Modernise leisure, commercial facilities and homes
Create new, local employment opportunities	Develop a financially viable option which takes into account the duty of the council to deliver value for money
Improve the quality of the built environment and enable the development of a smart city	Facilitate the improvement of the quality of the public realm and reduce anti-social behaviour
Preserve and enhance local communities	Minimise disruption for existing residents as much as possible

- **Promoting the consultation**

In the first week of the consultation, the engagement team sent out the following promotional materials:

- Consultation booklets (Appendix 5) summarising the options with a cover letter to all residents of Huguenot House
- Letters directing key stakeholders to the newly launched [Huguenot House consultation website](#)<sup>4</sup>
- An e-newsletter circulated to all residents and stakeholders for whom the council had email data

There was a delay, caused by the communications agency responsible for distributing the materials, which meant that residents only received their consultation packs in the middle of the first week. For this reason, the council agreed to extend the consultation by one week – to Friday 15 January 2021 – to ensure residents had enough time to consider the materials and respond. This decision was communicated to residents by email and letter, updated on the consultation website and reiterated to those who the team spoke with on the phone.

Throughout the consultation period, the team sent regular e-newsletters and letters to remind residents and stakeholders about the options consultation and the ways to engage. All promotional correspondence is summarised below (all available to read in full in Appendix 6).

DATE	COLLATERAL	CONTENT	AUDIENCE
09.11.20	Letter	Announcing continuation of options consultation and enclosing copy of new consultation booklet and feedback form	Residents
09.11.20	Letter	Announcing continuation of options consultation and launch of new consultation website	Stakeholders
10.11.20	E-Newsletter	Continuation of options consultation launched	Residents Stakeholders
18.11.20	E-Newsletter	Join a Huguenot House webinar	Residents Stakeholders
20.11.20	E-Newsletter	Consultation dates extended	Residents Stakeholders
23.11.20	E-Newsletter	Reminder to join a Huguenot House webinar	Residents Stakeholders
25.11.20	Email	Join this afternoon's webinar	Stakeholders Residents who expressed an interest in attending
25.11.20	Flyer	How to give feedback during the consultation	Residents Stakeholders
30.11.20	E-Newsletter	Last chance to join a Huguenot House webinar	Residents Stakeholders
21.12.20	E-Newsletter	Huguenot House webinars published online to watch	Residents Stakeholders

<sup>4</sup> [westminster.gov.uk/huguenot-house](http://westminster.gov.uk/huguenot-house)

04.01.21	Letter	Huguenot House consultation ends soon. Feedback form enclosed.	Residents
04.01.21	E-Newsletter	Huguenot House consultation ends soon	Residents Stakeholders
13.01.21	E-Newsletter	Huguenot House consultation ends soon	Residents Stakeholders
13.01.21	Email	Reminder to provide feedback	HOLBA members
15.01.21	Email	Reminder to provide feedback	HOLBA members

○ **Engagement with Huguenot House residents**

Considering Covid-19, the council took a digital-first approach to consultation, using methods that would ensure the team could engage with people from a distance. This new approach has proved to be successful in increasing participation in the council's consultations over the last year and is now Westminster's established process for engaging the community in this type of consultation.

To ensure the consultation was inclusive, especially noting the age profile of some residents in Huguenot House, the team blended digital engagement methods with engagement via phone and post. The council also offered to:

1. Provide internet-enabled tablets or devices to those who may not have access to them, as well as support in setting these up.
2. Help residents to set up Zoom accounts and talk them through the process prior to webinars or meetings.
3. Meet via phone if preferred by the resident.
4. Share materials via post, including written feedback forms.

People could interact with the proposals and speak to the team in the following ways throughout the consultation:

- **Online:** residents could browse the options, view an animated introduction video, and fill out an online comment form at [westminster.gov.uk/huguenot-house](https://westminster.gov.uk/huguenot-house)
- **Webinars:** residents could register for one of three webinars, held on Zoom at the following times. In addition, these were [uploaded to the website](#)<sup>5</sup> for residents and stakeholders to watch back if they were not able to attend, alongside an FAQ document summarising the council's responses to the questions asked during the consultation.
  - Thursday 19 November, 1-2PM
  - Wednesday 25 November, 6-7PM
  - Tuesday 1 December, 10-11AM
- **Email:** the [huguenothouse@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:huguenothouse@westminster.gov.uk) inbox was monitored for comments, questions, and webinar registrations throughout the consultation period and continues to be monitored now.
- **Post:** feedback forms were provided to residents who received booklets, and they could send their feedback to:

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbgtlr5vehcdGnBeBmsfcDNGDUKOnwG-p>, linked on [westminster.gov.uk/huguenot-house-have-your-say](https://westminster.gov.uk/huguenot-house-have-your-say)

- Huguenot House Consultation, 17th Floor, 64 Victoria Street, Westminster City Hall, London, SW1E 6QP
- **Phone:** a phone line was set up at 020 7641 1502. People could call to set up one-to-one meetings, leave feedback, request a booklet, or ask questions about the proposals. The team also proactively called residents and near neighbours for whom the council had phone numbers to ensure they had received their materials and offer the opportunity to discuss the options with the project team.
- **One-to-one meetings:** Residents and stakeholders were encouraged to set up personal meetings via Zoom or Microsoft Teams to discuss their concerns and questions with the project team.

- **Stakeholder Engagement**

Over the course of the consultation, the project team engaged with several key stakeholders and groups.

DATE	ENGAGEMENT	STAKEHOLDER	SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS
30.11.20	Phone Calls	Local businesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Kanada-Ya</i></li> <li>- <i>Kyodo News</i></li> <li>- <i>Rothman Pantall &amp; Co</i></li> <li>- <i>iTouch UK Ltd</i></li> <li>- <i>Hong Kong Tourism Board</i></li> <li>- <i>Broadcasters' Audience Research Board Ltd</i></li> <li>- <i>Peoplesound.Com Ltd</i></li> <li>- <i>Response Advertising International Ltd</i></li> <li>- <i>Minerva</i></li> <li>- <i>The Harold Pinter Theatre</i></li> </ul>	Messages left reminding organisations to engage with the consultation. All were also sent a letter directing them to the consultation website.
8.12.20	Meeting	Heart of London Business Association (HOLBA) – in addition to HOLBA committee members, attendees included representatives from <i>National Gallery, Old Park Lane Management, Motcomb, Odeon and the Ambassadors Theatre Group (ATG)</i>	Appendix 7 – Minutes of meeting
16.12.20	Meeting	Soho Society Planning Committee Chair	Appendix 7 – Minutes of meeting
11.01.21-12.01.21	Correspondence	Odeon Cinema	Appendix 12 - Questions received and answered via email
12.01.21	Meeting	HOLBA follow up meeting - in addition to HOLBA committee members, attendees included representatives from <i>ATG, Edwardian Hotels, Criterion Theatres, Old Park Lane</i>	Appendix 7 – Minutes of meeting

		<i>Management, The Ritz, National Gallery, Gascoyne Holdings, JD Wetherspoons and Comedy Store</i>	
15.01.21	Meeting	Edwardian Hotels	Appendix 7 – Minutes of meeting

○ **Summary of feedback**

The table below summarises the engagement over the course of the consultation, with both residents and stakeholders.

<b>Method</b>	<b>Reach</b>
<b>Webinars</b> ( <i>attendees</i> )	3
<b>1-1 Zoom meetings</b> ( <i>residents</i> )	2
<b>Stakeholder meetings</b> ( <i>attendees at four meetings</i> )	27
<b>Phone</b> ( <i>residents</i> )	13 (of 27*) (48% hit rate)
<b>Phone</b> ( <i>businesses</i> )	10 (of 21) (47% hit rate)
<b>Text Message(s)</b>	1
<b>Email Queries**</b>	9 (2 residents, 7 stakeholders)
<b>Letter Queries</b>	6 (5 residents, 1 stakeholder)
<b>E-newsletter open rate</b> ( <i>averaged across 7 campaigns</i> )	49%
<b>Online feedback forms</b>	3
<b>Paper feedback forms</b>	1
<b>Video views</b>	91 (introduction animation) 54 (webinars)
<b>Web traffic – unique page views</b> ( <i>of all pages on consultation hub</i> )	456
<b>TOTAL</b> ( <i>excl. page and video views and e-newsletter reach</i> )	74

\*Broken down as: 5 absentee leaseholders, 11 resident leaseholders, 11 tenants (8 private). There are 6 voids.

\*\* Number of individuals or organisations who contacted us during the consultation. Some sent several emails throughout the period, but these are counted as one query. All correspondence can be found in Appendices 11 (residents) and 12 (stakeholders).

- **Analysis of feedback**

### Resident Feedback

Although the Honorary Secretary of the Huguenot House Residents Association (HHRA) made it clear in their later dated 15 November 2020 (Appendix 8) that they did not intend to engage with the consultation and asserted that residents would not engage with the council and intended to not participate in the consultation, the team did manage to have meaningful conversations with several residents.

The team spoke with thirteen residents and non-resident leaseholders over the course of the consultation, amounting to around 48% of Huguenot House households, in addition to two one-to-one Zoom meetings and ongoing correspondence with residents and the HHRA.

Whilst webinars were poorly attended, in part because of the stated non-participation by the HHRA Honorary Secretary and some other residents, these were watched back more than 50 times when posted to the website. These videos were promoted via email to the residents and stakeholders. This indicates a strong level of interest in the consultation amongst the community. In addition, the consultation website achieved over 450 unique page views during the consultation period, and the open rate across all email campaigns was high at 49%, both indicating a high level of community interest.

Feedback from phone calls, completed forms, correspondence and meetings is summarised below. A full summary of phone calls and one-to-one meetings with residents can be found in Appendix 9.

- **Feedback forms:** of the four completed feedback forms (Appendix 10), one was from a resident of Huguenot House and two were from non-resident leaseholders. The fourth was from a business stakeholder (see next sections).

Of these, a tenant was opposed to all options that required them to move and favoured maintenance on the grounds it was the least disruptive. One non-resident leaseholder expressed support for redevelopment options (both 4A\* and the new option) and opposed the other options on the grounds of high leaseholder charges. The other stated their preference via their stated representative (who completed the form on their behalf) for the new redevelopment option which they marked as 'very satisfied' or the option 4A\* which they marked as 'fairly satisfied'.

- **Correspondence from residents and/or leaseholders:** The HHRA has declined to engage with the consultation on grounds that the Honorary Secretary does not consider it appropriate to conduct the consultation whilst a complaint against the council is outstanding with the Housing Ombudsman.<sup>6</sup> Despite this, they have sent three letters to the council during the consultation. There is no evidence that the HHRA speaks on behalf of all residents or leaseholders and the council therefore continued to engage with residents individually during the consultation. Several residents, including tenants, non-resident and resident leaseholders, have also engaged via email, phone and post.

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<sup>6</sup> This complaint was progressed through the council's stage one and stage two process, before being taken to the Local Government Ombudsman who passed it on to the Housing Ombudsman on the grounds that they did not feel it was under their jurisdiction. It covers numerous historical complaints and full details are available upon request.

Any resident who requested not to be contacted again was not contacted further, and some residents have not provided their phone numbers to the council so could not be contacted via telephone. All residents and non-resident leaseholders were sent copies of the consultation booklet and information on how to engage if they wished to.

The residents who have written to the council are generally not in favour of any option which would require them to move and have raised matters outside the scope of this consultation (e.g. the outstanding service charges and ongoing maintenance matters) more frequently than expressing a preference for an option. In so far as there is general support for any option across this correspondence, it is for maintenance. The leaseholder costs associated with refurbishment or any option that includes refurbishment, estimated at between £25,000 and £40,000, were also raised as a concern by resident and non-resident leaseholders alike.

On the other hand, non-resident leaseholders generally expressed their openness to redevelopment, their concerns over the leaseholder charges that the maintenance, refurbishment and partial redevelopment options would entail and a willingness to discuss selling their homes if 'market plus' offers are made available.

- **Phone conversations and online meetings with residents:** Of the phone conversations and Zoom meetings held with residents and non-resident leaseholders, *two actively stated opposition to any redevelopment options* on the grounds that they did not wish to move from their homes and preferred whichever option would allow them to remain in their homes (maintenance).

*Four refused to engage further with the council*, either hanging up or requesting not to be contacted again and stating opposition to the consultation taking place, and *five were neutral or would not provide feedback* for a variety of reasons (e.g. poor health, family circumstances or, as short term renters, they were not interested in the long term plans for the building).

*Two were in favour of the two redevelopment options*, both non-resident leaseholders who stated an interest in selling their properties to the council if 'market plus' offers were made. They were also against maintenance and refurbishment on the grounds that the estimated costs to leaseholders were too high.

### Stakeholder Feedback

The council also held useful workshops with local stakeholders, including the local Business Innovation District, Heart of London Business Association (HOLBA), with whom the team met twice to ensure a wide variety of their membership could engage with the council, the Edwardian Hotels Group who operate the neighbouring hotel, and a representative of the Soho Society.

In addition, the team engaged via email, phone and post with local businesses (see stakeholder database in Appendix 4), including QParks, PopHub and Odeon who are current commercial tenants of the building, and local groups. It was difficult to reach many neighbouring businesses as many were closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic and may not have received the council's letters, emails or phone calls. However, several were represented at the meetings with HOLBA and all were invited to attend webinars or engage online.

The team also received two emails from neighbouring businesses – the first stating an interest in being kept informed about disruption (especially road closures) whichever option is progressed and the second favouring redevelopment but unhappy with the uses (particularly the casino) put forward in the new redevelopment option. The latter also stated that they felt the regeneration of the area was ‘key’ and wanted to see ‘quality retail’ and better shop frontages to activate the street.

Current tenants Odeon and PopHub engaged with the team but did not express any preference over which option should be progressed. Both remain open to future engagement with the council. The Odeon engaged with the council largely around the inclusion of a cinema in any proposed development option. They requested to be kept informed but did not wish to engage further at this stage.

HOLBA and its members were overwhelmingly in favour of redeveloping the site of Huguenot House. Some members expressed concerns over the inclusion of a hotel and casino in the new development option, and preferred the proposals in Option 4A\*, whilst others were happier with the mix of uses proposed in the new redevelopment option after hearing a presentation from Gerald Eve summarising the market and commercial research which underpinned it. All were unanimously in favour of redevelopment and eager to be further engaged on the details of a redevelopment scheme if this is selected as the preferred way forward. After the two workshops, the Chair of HOLBA confirmed their support for redevelopment, and their preference for the new redevelopment option in a formal letter to the council (Appendix 12). A member of HOLBA also completed an online feedback form to this effect.

The Chair of the Soho Society’s Planning Committee was not in favour of the new redevelopment option but willing to consider option 4A\* on the grounds that it is a residential-led scheme. Initially they was in favour of refurbishment or partial redevelopment but over the course of the meeting, expressed more openness to the 4A\* option, stating that their preference was for more homes in central London rather than commercial uses such as a hotel or casino.

In a meeting, a representative of the Edwardian Hotels Group expressed their preference for the new redevelopment option. They stressed the need for a high-quality building to reflect the local area but asked that the design ensure the ground floor is activated, perhaps with a retail offer. They also noted their support for parking to be provided as part of a new development, citing wider concerns over reduced parking in central London. Overall, they felt a hotel usage was appropriate for the area and expressed support for the new redevelopment option, feeling it was an opportunity to revitalise the area.

The consensus amongst businesses and stakeholders that the building needed to be redeveloped and that such a project could have far-reaching benefits for the wider area was strong. With the exception of a representative of the Soho Society, all were unequivocally in favour of redevelopment, mostly favouring the new option or something similar, and were eager to be involved with and consulted on further design work should this option be progressed.

- **Conclusion**

The options consultation for the future of Huguenot House has been ongoing for some time. In light of this and taking account of the long history of opposition and disengagement from some of the resident leaseholders in the building, it was to be expected that residents might be harder to engage in this final round of consultation. From the very beginning of the renewed consultation, the Honorary Secretary of the HHRA was clear that they would not participate in the consultation.

However, despite this history and the stated opposition to further consultation by the Honorary Secretary of the HHRA, the council's team were able to speak with around half of resident leaseholders, tenants and non-resident leaseholders. A mix of views were expressed, with a general trend of non-resident leaseholders favouring the two redevelopment options, private tenants being generally disengaged, and resident leaseholders and secure tenants either favouring maintenance or refusing to engage or state a preference.

Concerns raised in 2020-21 were similar to those expressed in 2017-18; namely, residents were understandably worried about losing their homes and having to move, whether for a short time or permanently, and feel the building's maintenance has not been prioritised sufficiently by the council to date. Should any redevelopment option be progressed, it is clear that there will need to be a significant effort made to build trust with the residents and work with them to find suitable rehousing offers and support. In the event of maintenance or refurbishment being preferred, there will also be significant work required to deliver this in partnership with the residents.

Non-resident leaseholders who engaged with the council generally appear to favour redevelopment and were concerned about the leaseholder charges associated with refurbishment and the partial redevelopment options.

Stakeholders unanimously recognised the need for Huguenot House to change, seeing it as not in a good state of repair and adding little to the area in terms of architectural value and place-shaping. Though there was not a consensus over the development option they preferred, important local groups in the West End such as HOLBA and a representative of the Soho Society were open to further engagement around a development scheme on this site. Should a redevelopment option be decided as the preferred way forward, there would be strong potential for co-creation with leading business and expert groups in the area, building on their useful feedback and enthusiasm for improving this historic part of the West End of London.

During this consultation, no preferred option has emerged from the community feedback. There is a mix of views to be considered alongside the wider assessment of the options when deciding the preferred way forward.

## Appendices

Appendices are available on request. These are summarised below.

<b>Appendix Number</b>	<b>Document(s) Included</b>
1	Feedback from 2017-2018 and how officers have responded to it.
2	Consultation summary, prepared at the time (2017-18)
3	Resident Update Letters from WCC (2019-2020)
4	Consultation stakeholder database (2020-21)
5	Consultation booklet (2020-21)
6	All outgoing promotional correspondence in 2020-21 consultation ( <i>as set out in table on page 5</i> )
7	All minutes from stakeholder meetings (2020-21)
8	All correspondence with HHRA (2020-21)
9	Summary of all phone and zoom meetings with residents (2020-21)
10	All feedback forms (2020-21)
11	All correspondence via letter or email with residents (2020-21)
12	All formal correspondence via letter or email with stakeholders (2020-21)