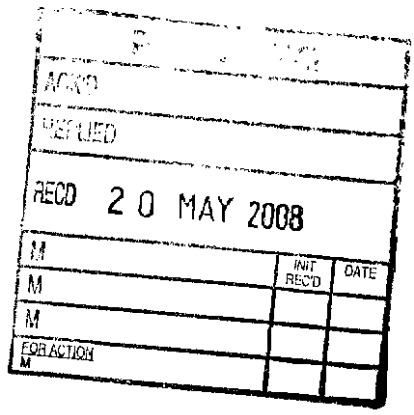
111 PICCADILLY

OFFICE ENTRANCE & RECEPTION REFURBISHMENT



SUPPORTING STATEMENT

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Halliday Meecham

Prepared by S.Baker.
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1.0 Issues raised by British Waterways

The original reception proposals were submitted to British Waterways as part of the planning process. Several issues were raised by British Waterways with regards to developing the reception scheme. These constitute an array of barriers, which significantly contribute towards Bruntwood's inability to continue with the scheme. The following were the issues raised:

Reducing head room in canal towpath with structural beam:
The main structural beam supporting the new lowered floor slab would have spanned across the towpath running beneath the building. British Waterways were not happy with the resulting reduced headroom. In their opinion an unsafe environment in the basin was intensified, with the area being dark and creating further areas for people to hide away and carry out activities which British Waterways do not want the basin to be associated with. Research into alternative engineering solutions to bring the line of the beam away from the towpath proved unsuccessful, as the beam would not support the necessary areas if it was brought forward, and would also significantly reduce the amount of new reception area level with the external pavement.

Requirement to spend circa £100k on redeveloping the canal:
British Waterways required Bruntwood to contribute significantly to redeveloping the canal area before supporting the reception proposals. This contribution would include new lighting, CCTV, and most significantly the creation of a new entrance to the basin off Ducie Street, involving the breaking out the perimeter wall to the 111 Piccadilly car park and casting a new staircase down into the canal. Other requirements were to create portholes in the car park deck to allow natural light into the canal. This equated to approximately 13% of Bruntwood's original budget, a significant amount of money. This was also without the commitment from British Waterways to make their own contribution, or achieve the backing from other parties to help develop an area, which requires substantial investment, and not just that of Bruntwood.

To bring the new reception proposals down to canal level and create glass fronted meeting rooms/ cafes fronting onto the canal:
It was suggested that the basement accommodation better exploited. Although the investment may have improved the canal area directly beneath 111 Piccadilly, there was still no commitment from British Waterways that there would be investment further along the canal and no guarantees that the unsociable behavior which currently takes place would stop. This would mean that the cafes/meeting rooms would be open to vandalism, and people who work/visit this area would be put at risk. This substantial Bruntwood investment would also see no return, as there would be a very low chance of letting any meeting rooms whilst the unsociable activities were taking place in the canal area. These facilities would present a negative image, which Bruntwood do not wish to portray to our customers after years of building a reputation for excellent customer service.

Health and Safety issue of demolition of the reception floor slab:
The original proposals required the complete removal of the reception floor slab to create the new lower level floor, requiring canal closure. This would ensure that any materials falling into the canal would not impose any health and safety risk to those utilising the canal area. Unfortunately British Waterways would not allow Bruntwood to obtain a canal closure as they would lose valuable revenue. British Waterways also insisted on 12 months notice to obtain a canal closure, which would have had an impact on the programme start and completion date. This in turn would have an impact on Bruntwood's valuations of the building and proposed rental increases, as the completion date had been factored into the feasibility studies and appraisals.

2.0 Demonstration of the high quality of the proposals

At present the external fabric of the reception in particular the area on the corner of London Road and Ducie Street is in a poor condition, with localised areas of the concrete beginning to break away and the paint finish to the corner planters flaking and fading. Generally the whole of the external fabric to the reception area is dated, inclusive of the glazing that now stands out due to this area not being replaced during the recent main tower window replacement scheme. The entrance to the building is not easy to identify due to the substantial planter sitting adjacent to the stairs on the corner of Ducie Street and London Road, with many people struggling to locate the entrance when visiting the building.

The revised reception proposals will significantly enhance 111 Piccadilly's presence at street level whilst contributing to improving the aesthetics in an area, which is undergoing substantial redevelopment. The finishes we are to use will be of the highest quality with the majority of materials consisting of natural stones and structural planar glass systems. These materials are hard wearing and will compliment the not just 111, but also the surrounding buildings in the area.

Removal of the planters along with the improvements we wish to make to the public footpath will create a much improved, prominent entrance, with the staircase to the reception being visible from London Rd and the Piccadilly concourse.

The two street images that accompany this statement illustrate the quality of the proposed development.

3.0 Positive benefits of disabled access

Those requiring disabled access into the building currently have to walk up Ducie Street along Dale Street and into the car park at the back of the building. The new proposals will incorporate a disabled platform lift on Ducie Street, which will offer access through the same entrance as every other person visiting the building, negating the need to inconveniently travel around the back of the building through the car park.

Level access from the car park is maintained, with all users now being able to directly reach the main entrance.

The new platform lift will aesthetically fit in with the finishes to the new reception scheme, with its enclosure being clad in stone, and the automated door to the lift being glass.

4.0 Financial Justification

The previous reception scheme required a significant amount of structural alterations, in particular the lowering of the floor level down to the pavement.
Although a generous budget of £750,000 for the whole scheme is available, the cost of the structural work alone reached £500,000. The overall cost of the previous scheme would have resulted in costs of circa £1.5 million, substantially exceeding Bruntwood's budget.

Appraisals were carried out on a £1.5 million investment. Unfortunately a high enough rental increase would not be achieved to justify this. To proceed with the £1.5 million scheme Bruntwood would have being making a substantial financial loss on a scheme.

It is still Bruntwood's intension to add value to the building, and to deliver a high quality scheme with significantly enhanced presence at street level as well as tackling the issue the building has with DDA access. However, there is still a need for the proposals to be delivered within or as close to the original realistic budget of £750,000