

# Strategic Equity Capital plc (SEC.LN)

Q3 2021

October 2021





## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

- The value of the fund and the income from it is not guaranteed and may fall as well as rise.
   As your capital is at risk you may get back less than you originally invested
- Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future performance
- Funds investing in smaller companies may carry a higher degree of risk than funds investing in larger companies. The shares of smaller companies may be less liquid than securities in larger companies
- This fund may experience high volatility due to the composition of the portfolio or the portfolio management techniques used

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**



#### Q3 2021 shareholder update

- Portfolio evolution: higher than normal turnover driven by completion of private equity acquisitions of Equiniti and Proactis. Expect more normalised levels of activity going forward following a period of portfolio evolution since September 2020
- Robust performance (NAV/share -0.2%)¹, modestly behind the FTSE Small Cap index (+2.7%). Total NAV return of 46% since September 2020 despite no exposure to 'macro-recovery' sectors like resources, oil and gas or banks
- Positive portfolio news flow despite backdrop of increasing market volatility and supply side pressures; high quality portfolio remains well positioned to weather short term challenges and deliver long term strategic value creation
- UK Small Cap valuation discount remains attractive despite trajectory over the last 12 months. Positive long-term outlook based on strengthening economic fundamentals
- Core investment strategy remains consistent and focused on delivering long-term shareholder returns and reducing share price discount to NAV. Liberum appointed broker to support discount reduction plan.
- Gresham House supporting fund with 5.4% stake built to date. FY22 and FY24 conditional tender offers announced by Board (see slide 16)

# STRATEGIC EQUITY CAPITAL PLC (SEC)



Application of private equity techniques to small public companies

- Differentiated strategy with highly-concentrated portfolio, deep research focus and engaged approach
- Genuine small cap a structurally overlooked part of the market
- Long term investment horizon, low portfolio turnover with a quality company focus
- Small-cap specialists with significant public and private equity expertise leveraging Gresham House's broader platform and network
- Recent team changes with objective to drive performance and close discount to NAV leveraging track record of Ken Wotton and the Gresham House equities team

Specialist equity fund targeting absolute returns (15% IRR)<sup>1</sup> over the medium term.

Low correlation to market and peers.

Defensive characteristics. Tendency to outperform in weaker markets.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1.</sup> Internal target only, not guaranteed

<sup>2.</sup> Morningstar <a href="http://performance.morningstar.com/funds/cef/ratings-risk.action?t=SEC&region=gbr&culture=en-US&ownerCountry=USA">http://performance.morningstar.com/funds/cef/ratings-risk.action?t=SEC&region=gbr&culture=en-US&ownerCountry=USA</a>

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## **SPECIALISTS IN ALTERNATIVES**



Gresham House is a London Stock Exchange-quoted specialist alternative asset management group (GHE.LN), providing funds, direct investments and tailored investment solutions, including co-investment.

- → Specialists in five areas of alternative investment
- → Growing organically and through acquisition, expanding our shareholder base, and developing our investment pipeline
- → Committed to operating responsibly and sustainably, building long-term value across our portfolio

#### **Strategic Equity**





Private Equity





Forestry





Housing

£1.4bn £3.3bn

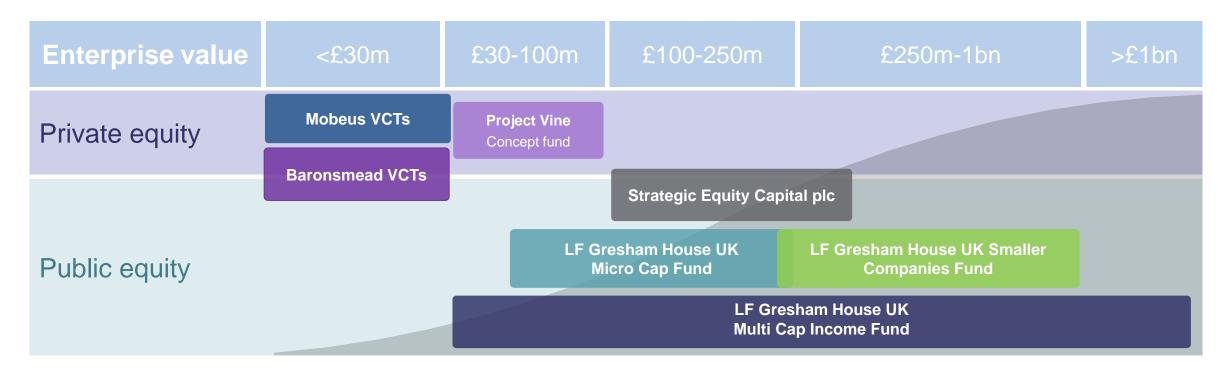
#### £4.7bn1

# Gresham House Specialist asset management

## FUND STRATEGIES SPANNING BUSINESS LIFECYCLE

A suite of private and public equity products with the capability to support a company throughout its lifecycle.

- Public Equity offers investors exposure to UK smaller public companies through a long term investment philosophy, using private equity techniques and thorough due diligence
- Private Equity offers investment opportunities in early-stage and lower mid-market private companies over a long-term investment horizon through both listed and unlisted fund structures



# WELL-INVESTED SPECIALIST SMALL COMPANY INVESTMENT PLATFORM



#### Public Equity team



Ken Wotton Managing Director, Public Equity



Brendan Gulston **Investment Director** 



Adam Khanbhai Investment Director



Laurence Hulse Associate Director





Amber Stone-Brown Cassie Herlihy Investment Manager Investment Manager

## Powerful network

#### **Investment Committee**



Anthony Dalwood Chairman



Ken Wotton



Graham Bird



Tom Teichman



Bruce Carnegie-Brown

## Private Equity team



Bevan Duncan Managing Director, Strategic Equity



Clive Austin MD - Private Equity Portfolio



**Trevor Hope** CIO - Private Equity

With the completion of the acquisition Mobeus VCT business we now have a combined team of 12 investment professionals working on new investments and six investment professionals focused on portfolio management.

#### **Operating Partners**



Hazel Cameron Head of Portfolio Talent



**Tamer Ozmen** Technology & Investment Partner

#### Resource platform



▶ ● \ Portfolio talent



Data analytics

Deal

execution



Powerful network

Operating Partners



Research/ analysis



Finance and **Operations** 



## PORTFOLIO EVOLUTION



Significant progress in evolving portfolio over the last twelve months; high activity in Q3 due to take outs

Q4 2020 to Q3 2021

£66.4m purchases (£14.0m in Q3) 30% Closing NAV (6% Closing NAV - Q3)

Average Market Cap: £327m (£446m - Q3)

New investments

Q3 2021

RIVER AND MERCANTILE

**NEXUS** 



**Existing holdings** 









Q4 2020 to Q3 2021

£60.8m sales (£19.2m in Q3)

40% Opening NAV (13% Opening NAV - Q3) Average Market Cap: £608m (£493m - Q3)

#### Exited holdings

	IRR
EQUINITI	8%
Harworth	18%
proactis	-20%

Q4 2020 to Q2 2021



idox









BROOKS MACDONALD

XPS Pensions







4 imprint.	22%
ERGCMED	72%
Numis	2%
<b>■</b> JTC	40%
_Strix_	48%

Not investment recommendations.

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Source: Gresham House, as at 30 September 2021

## **PORTFOLIO & PIPELINE THEMES**





# Healthcare and pharmaceutical services

- Trend to outsource noncore service provision / support
- Increasing role for technology-led solutions



#### **Pensions and savings**

- Increasing complexity of requirements and regulations
- Ageing population; increasing need for investment solutions



## Regulation and compliance

- Growing regulatory burden across all white collar sectors
- Need for accurate, auditable, and cost effective solutions; often technology-led



#### Digitisation and data

- Al and 'Big Data' increasingly entering real world applications
- Opportunity to drive NPD and monetise underappreciated data assets



# High-quality cyclical / Covid recovery

- Niche, high IP, with underappreciated recovery potential
- Positioned to take share as economic activity resumes



#### Sustainability / Energy Transition

- Products or services with positive ESG outcomes
- Must fulfil other investment criteria also, i.e. profitable, cash generative

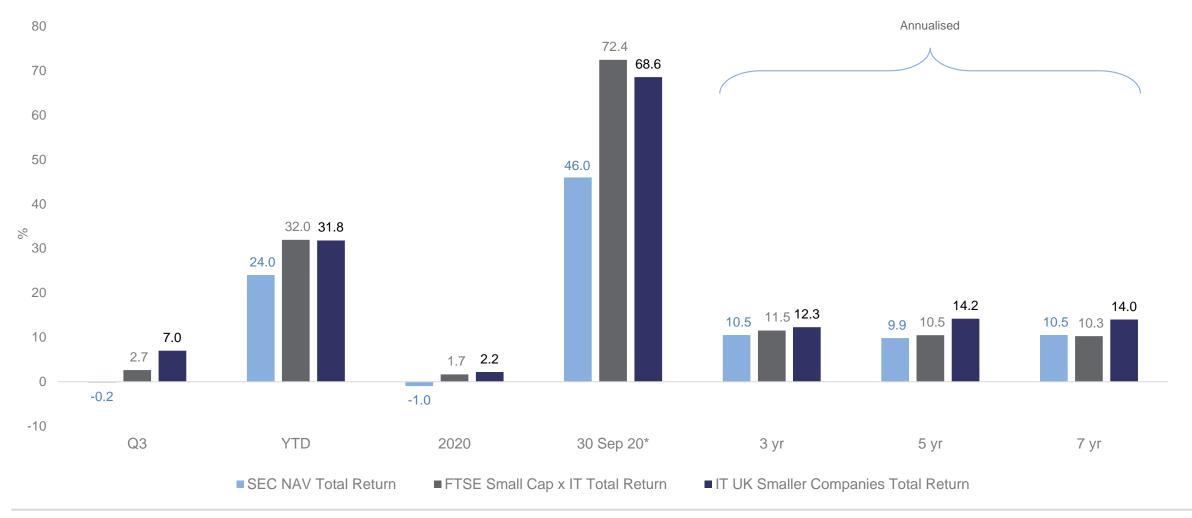
### Pipeline opportunities and recent investments

- Continue to focus on long term structural themes
- Differentiated B2B 'winners' facing short term headwinds
- Selective market leading niche consumer businesses
- ESG considerations applied

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## PERFORMANCE SUMMARY





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<sup>1.</sup> Comparator index FTSE Small Cap ex Investment Trusts Total Return

<sup>2.</sup> On a total return basis

<sup>\*</sup> Lead Manager change





	ive attribution	Negative attribution			
Company	% pts	Comment	Company	Comment	
BM BROOKS MACDONALD Financial Services: Wealth Management	+0.7	<ul> <li>Improving net flows and investment performance drive AuM to record £16.5bn and profit margins to 25%+</li> <li>Note significant recent M&amp;A in the wealth management space</li> </ul>	HOSTELWORLD  MEET THE WORLD  Travel / Software: Online Hostel Booking Platform	-1.1	<ul> <li>Trading remains heavily impacted by global travel restrictions</li> <li>Operationally, business has made significant progress and is well poised to capitalise when restrictions ease</li> </ul>
XPS Pensions  Business Services: Pension  Consultancy	+0.6	<ul> <li>Rerating following robust FY results in June; 6% organic growth in 2020</li> <li>Won multiple awards at the UK Professional Pensions Awards</li> </ul>	INSPIRED PLC  Business Services: Energy & ESG Services	-0.7	<ul> <li>In line interim results; recovery in energy usage continues</li> <li>Short term new business headwind from exceptional energy market environment</li> </ul>
Consumer Leisure: Ten Pin Bowling	+0.5	<ul> <li>Upgrades on back of strong trading on back of reopening; 20%+ LFL sales growth vs 2019</li> <li>Well capitalised; resumption of site roll out and M&amp;A expected</li> </ul>	Hyve B2B Media: Exhbitions	-0.6	<ul> <li>Trading statement reflected improving end market conditions with 18 in person events running between April and June</li> <li>Subsequently three 'top ten' exhibitions ran in September with strong domestic demand; crossborder demand limited</li> </ul>

Attribution estimates based on Bloomberg Portfolio Analytics as at 30 September 2021, Bloomberg, company reports

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Not investment recommendations.

## **ESG FOCUS: PUBLIC EQUITY**



As long-term investors with a focus on small and micro-cap companies in the UK equity market, we are active stock pickers applying a private equity approach to quoted equities.

Gresham House offers a range of investments including open-ended equity funds, listed strategic public equity investment trusts and limited partnership vehicles.

Our public equity philosophy revolves around taking a hands-on approach to engaging with investee company stakeholders, including management, shareholders, customers and suppliers, in order to capitalise on market inefficiencies and identify value creation and recovery opportunities.

4.8 years

weighted average holding period as at 31 December 2020

Gresham House is a proud signatory to the following member organisations:











#### **ESG** implementation

#### 1 Initial assessment

Investment one pager

 ESG Framework used to agree factors requiring further due diligence

### 04 Holding period

Shareholder responsibilities

Active stewardship



#### 02 Due diligence

Research

- Meetings with management
- ESG tool used to assess materiality of ESG factors



#### 03 Investment appraisal

Final investment report

- Detailed risk mitigation requirements
- Engagement focus identified

#### Awarded top ratings by the PRI





## **ESG IN ACTION**





#### Case study

Changing the way businesses purchase and use energy

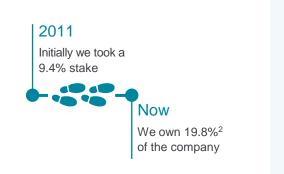
#### The business

Inspired plc is a leading UK corporate energy services and procurement specialist. They are energy management experts and work with corporate energy consumers to optimise their energy costs.

The company provides three key services:

We invested in the company when it first listed in 2011 but worked with the management team before this point on areas such as Board composition and management incentives prior to IPO.¹ Since 2011 we have regularly engaged with the management team on various projects, most notably:

- 1. Business strategy
- 2. Raising capital for expansion
- 3. Board composition and planning







Delivers energy, water and sustainability assurance and optimisation services, so Corporate Businesses can manage their costs better, reduce their carbon efficiently and meet their net zero targets.



Delivers technology and software solutions that underpin the services provided by Inspired PLC and makes them available to third parties.

- 1. Initial Public Offering
- 2. Holding across all Gresham House funds as at 30 September 2021





### Portfolio vs Small Cap Index

- High quality companies trading at discount to historic valuation range and precedent M&A
- Higher growth with lower gearing and higher margins than the index
- Targeting profit recovery & accelerating earnings growth
- Accelerated cash generation/de-gearing
- Opportunity for rating expansion
- Catalysts for de-risking

	F	Portfolio weighted avg. metrics vs. index Based	on next financial year (i.e. FY22)
		SEC Top Ten <sup>1</sup>	FTSE Small Cap
uo	Price to Earnings	14.3x	9.8x
Valuation	EV: Sales	2.4x	1.0x
Val	EV: EBITDA	10.0x	6.5x
Quality	Net debt: EBITDA	0.9x	2.0x
Que	EBITDA Margin %	23.7%	15.8%
wth	EBITDA Growth	9.5%	12.6%
Growth	Sales Growth	7.5%	7.7%

<sup>1.</sup> Weighted average of top ten portfolio holdings, representing c.72% of NAV

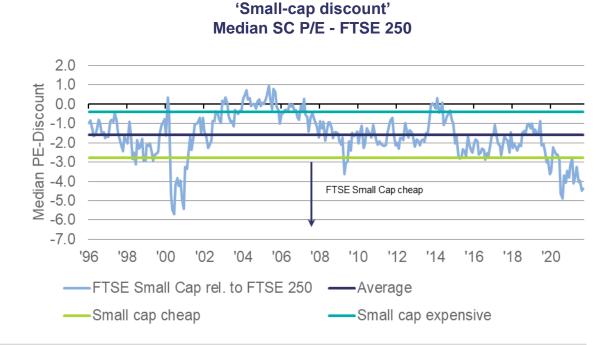
## **UK SMALL-CAP DISCOUNT**



### Valuation discount opportunity

- Small caps are trading at multi-year discounts relative to larger companies
- We believe this is owing to concerns over liquidity, perceived risk, and a reduction in resources devoted to this area
  of the market. This provides a distinct opportunity for our strategy





Sources: Liberum, Datastream 31 August 2021 (Left); Liberum, Datastream, 1 September 2021 (Right)

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Capital at risk.

## PRIVATE EQUITY OUTLOOK



Private Equity has built up over \$1.6tn 'dry powder'

This is starting to be deployed in UK listed equities

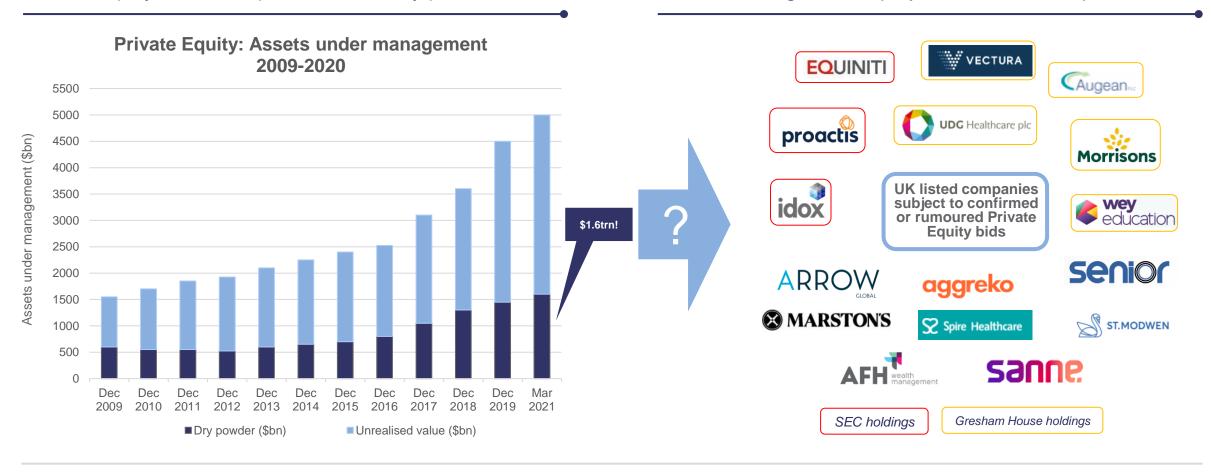


Chart sources: Pregin Pro, Q1 2021

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## **DISCOUNT REDUCTION PLAN**



Narrowing the share price discount to NAV is a key strategic priority to be achieved over time through a package of measures.

- Appointment of Ken Wotton as Lead Fund Manager, and focus on leveraging the wider Gresham House platform and capability to support SEC
- Emphasise proprietary "Strategic Public Equity" process differentiation in marketing and PR initiatives
- abrdn plc promotion agreement to provide substantial resources in support of the marketing and distribution of the Trust
- Improved shareholder engagement and investor relations activity with Liberum Capital appointed as new corporate broker
- Gresham House supporting SEC with balance sheet; 5.4% stake built over 2021
- Contingent tender offers announced by Board:
  - June 2022: 10% tender at 3% discount to NAV if average discount wider than 8% over preceding year
  - June 2024: 15% tender at 3% discount to NAV if 3-year total return lags the FTSE Small Cap Index

Source: Gresham House

## **CONCLUSION & OUTLOOK**



- Covid-19 vaccine driven recovery has been rapid but second order impacts likely to drive periodic market volatility due
  to the ongoing uncertainty
- Macroeconomic environment increasing supply side challenges and inflationary pressures; considerable uncertainty beyond 2021 as fiscal and monetary stimulus unwinds. Long term fundamentals remain supportive
- UK small and micro-cap valuations are attractive focus on fundamentals and corporate liquidity
- Opportunity the current environment offers good potential to unearth attractive long term investment opportunities
- Focus our investment strategy is focused on finding quality niche companies that are well positioned to grow despite economic uncertainty
- Engagement our 'Strategic Public Equity' constructive engagement approach can support companies to deliver shareholder value
- Rigour and discipline we have a structured and disciplined process designed to insulate us from macro and external
  factors that might affect companies' performance

Source: Gresham House



# MORNINGSTAR SMALL CAP INVESTMENT TRUST OVERLAP ANALYSIS



	ASL	BRSC	THRG	GHS	HSL	IPU	JMI	MINI	MTU	OIT	SLS	SEC
Aberforth Smaller Companies Ord (ASL)	100%	11%	10%	0%	28%	14%	20%	2%	0%	2%	3%	3%
BlackRock Smaller Companies Ord (BRSC)	6%	100%	64%	0%	37%	29%	38%	4%	25%	2%	35%	4%
BlackRock Throgmorton Trust plc (THRG)	3%	60%	100%	0%	36%	22%	32%	0%	28%	0%	35%	3%
Gresham House Strategic plc (GHS)	6%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	34%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Henderson Smaller Companies Ord (HSL)	16%	40%	48%	0%	100%	36%	31%	0%	15%	5%	25%	5%
Invesco Perpetual UK Smaller Ord (IPU)	14%	38%	38%	0%	51%	100%	26%	1%	18%	8%	33%	5%
JP Morgan Smaller Companies Ord (JMI)	13%	50%	54%	1%	37%	31%	100%	3%	13%	0%	36%	3%
Miton UK Microcap (MINI)	1%	11%	0%	1%	0%	1%	8%	100%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Montanaro UK Smaller Companies Ord (MTU)	0%	62%	69%	0%	27%	34%	24%	2%	100%	4%	50%	2%
Odyssean Investment Trust Ord (OIT)	6%	23%	12%	0%	42%	40%	0%	0%	12%	100%	0%	15%
Standard Life UK Smaller Co. Ord (SLS)	1%	61%	67%	0%	40%	39%	41%	0%	42%	0%	100%	2%
Strategic Equity Capital plc (SEC)	21%	27%	27%	0%	39%	39%	8%	0%	16%	24%	8%	100%

#### A differentiated approach with limited overlap with other smaller company investment trusts.



As at 30 June 2021 - using latest reporting available from Morningstar (some funds could be reported to earlier than 30 June 2021) Source: Winterflood

# Gresham House Specialist asset management

# STRATEGY PUBLIC EQUITY VS. PRIVATE EQUITY

A hybrid model that provides many of the benefits of private equity with greater liquidity and lower leverage

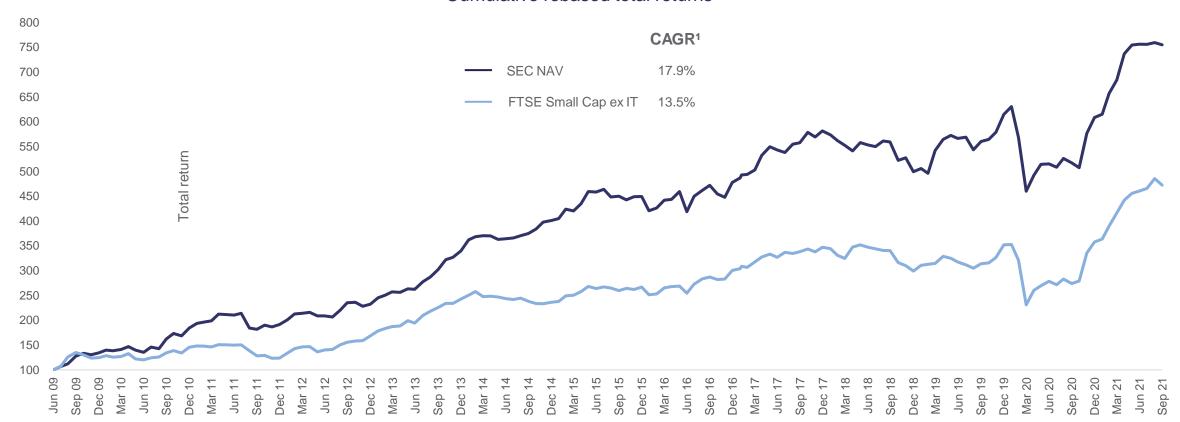
	Typical Public Equity Strategic Public Equity		Private Equity	
Underlying liquidity			0	
Due diligence	0			
Correlation to equity markets			0	
Conviction / concentration	50+ holdings	c.20 holdings	10-15 holdings	
Influence / control	Limited	Significant minority stake Controlling stake		
Engagement	Limited	Proactive engagement	Active ownership	
Leverage	Low tolerance	Low to moderate	Potentially High	
Target returns	Index outperformance	15% absolute return target (ungeared)	20-25% absolute return target (geared)	
		High N	ledium O Low	

Source: Gresham House





#### Cumulative rebased total returns



Strong cumulative performance since process improvements in June 2009. No use of gearing or derivatives.

Chart source: Bloomberg, Juniper Partners as at 30 September 2021, net of charges

Notes: Data rebased to SEC start NAV June 2009





Company and % of NAV	Investment thesis	Company and % of NAV	Investment thesis
10.9% Healthcare	<ul> <li>A niche market leader in the UK teleradiology sector which is acyclical and is growing rapidly driven by increasing healthcare requirements and a structural shortage of radiologists</li> <li>Above market organic growth and underappreciated cash generation characteristics</li> </ul>	LSL Property Services plc 6.1% Property	<ul> <li>Leading provider of services to the UK residential property sector with activities spanning mortgage broking, surveying and real estate agencies</li> <li>Significant opportunity to reallocate capital to the Financial Services division which is strategically valuable, high growth and underappreciated by the market</li> </ul>
xps Pensions 9.4% Business services	<ul> <li>Leading 'challenger' brand in the pensions administration and advice market with organic market share opportunity following industry consolidation</li> <li>Highly defensive - high degree of revenue visibility and largely non-discretionary, regulation driven client activity</li> <li>Below market rating despite favourable cash flow characteristics</li> </ul>	BM BROOKS MACDONALD 6.0% Financials	<ul> <li>UK focused wealth management platform; structural growth given continuing transition to self-investment</li> <li>Opportunity to leverage operational investments to grow margin and continue strong cash flow generation</li> <li>A consolidating market; opportunity for Brooks as both predator and prey</li> </ul>
CLINIGEN 9.4% Healthcare	<ul> <li>Leading positions in unlicensed medicines and territories without access to healthcare</li> <li>High barriers to entry built through M&amp;A and organic investment</li> <li>Attractive growth and cash flow potential</li> <li>Significant potential medium-term upside</li> </ul>	TYMAN PLC 5.9% Industrials	<ul> <li>Market leader in residential and commercial window and door manufacturing</li> <li>Multiple self-help opportunities under new management to improve ROCE; degearing should drive a re-rating</li> </ul>
7.5% Software	<ul> <li>International provider of student administration software with market leading positions in the UK, Australia and NZ</li> <li>Strong defensive characteristics with high visibility of earnings</li> <li>Transition to cloud-based platform</li> </ul>	INSPIRED PLC  5.6%  Business Services	<ul> <li>UK B2B corporate energy services and procurement specialist.</li> <li>Strong ESG credentials</li> <li>Leading playing in fragmented industry; significant opportunity to gain market share through client wins, proposition extension and M&amp;A</li> </ul>
Wilmington plc 6.6%  Media	<ul> <li>International provider of B2B data and training in the compliance, insurance, financial and healthcare sectors</li> <li>New Chair, CEO and CFO incentivised to re-focus the business and deliver a return to organic growth</li> </ul>	FINTEL  4.9%  Business Services	<ul> <li>Leading UK provider of technology enabled regulatory solutions and services to IFAs, financial institutions and other intermediaries</li> <li>Strategically valuable technology platform with opportunity to drive material growth in revenues and margins through supporting customers' digitisation journeys</li> </ul>

As at 30 September 2021

1. Top 10 holdings representing c.72% of NAV



## **FUND OVERVIEW**

Strategic Equity Capita	Strategic Equity Capital plc				
Shares in issue <sup>1</sup>	63,296,844				
Governance	London Stock Exchange listed, UK domiciled investment trust, independent Board				
Corporate broker	Liberum Capital				
Discount control	Authorisation to purchase 14.99% of own shares for cancellation or to be held in treasury Contingent tender offers announced:  June 2022: 10% tender at 3% discount to NAV if average discount wider than 8% over preceding year  June 2024: 15% tender at 3% discount to NAV if 3-year total return lags the FTSE Small Cap Index				
Continuation vote	Annual				
Gearing	Up to 25% of net assets. At present, the policy is 'no gearing'				
Fees	<ul> <li>Management fee of 0.75% of the Company's NAV</li> <li>Performance fee of 10% above rolling three year FTSE Small Cap (ex IT) total return + 2% p.a., subject to high watermark</li> </ul>				
Investment policy	Typically 15-25 holdings. Up to 20% NAV unlisted (not utilised currently)				
Net Asset Value <sup>1</sup>	£221.2m				
Market Cap <sup>1</sup>	£191.8m				
Discount to NAV <sup>1</sup>	13.3%				

<sup>1.</sup> As at 30 September 2021

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