

Plans Panel (City Centre)

Thursday, 27th October, 2011

PRESENT: Councillor B Selby in the Chair

Councillors G Driver, S Hamilton,
J McKenna, M Hamilton, C Campbell,
G Latty, A Castle, A Blackburn, M Coulson
and R Grahame

25 Late Items

No formal late items of business were added to the agenda however Panel Members had received an amended version of the report on Central Garden Park Square (minute 30 refers)

26 Declarations of Interest

The following Members declared personal/prejudicial interests for the purpose of Section 81(3) of the Local Government Act 2000 and paragraphs 8 to 12 of the Members Code of Conduct:

Councillor A Castle – Application 11/03424/FU refurbishment proposals for the Merrion Centre and Application 11/03514/LI Central Garden, Park Square – declared a personal interest in both matters as a member of Leeds Civic Trust as the Civic Trust had commented on both applications. (minutes 29 and 30 respectively refer)

Councillors Campbell and Selby – Application 11/03514/LI Central Garden, Park Square – declared personal interests as members of English Heritage. English Heritage had commented on the proposals (minute 30 refers)

Councillor M Hamilton – Pre-Application PREAPP/11/00904 for Student Flats at 20-28 Hyde Terrace, Woodhouse – declared a personal interest as an employee of the University of Leeds, although it was noted that the proposals were for comment only at this stage (minute 32 refers)

27 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jarosz and Nash. The Panel welcomed Councillors Coulson and R Grahame as substitutes.

28 Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the last meeting held 27th September 2011 be agreed as a correct record

(Councillor R Grahame joined the meeting at this point)

29 Application 11/03424/FU - Alterations and extensions, change of use, refurbishment and recladding of car park, new substation, tenant plant area, public realm works and associated facilities to shopping centre, Merrion Centre, Merrion Way, Leeds LS2 8NG

The Chief Planning Officer submitted a report setting out proposals for extensive alteration and refurbishment works, involving change of use, to the north eastern section of the Merrion Centre shopping centre. The Panel had previously viewed early proposals in July 2011 prior to submission of the formal application. Slides, photographs, internal floorplans and architects drawings of the proposals were displayed at the meeting.

(Councillor M Hamilton joined the meeting at this point)

Officers reported the applicant was "TCS Holdings" rather than Town Centre Holdings Ltd as stated within the submitted report. The Panel were provided with a history of the refurbishment works already undertaken including the re-cladding of the Merrion Centre itself and Town Centre House. This next phase would address the car park, Merrion Market area and the Wade Lane/Merrion Street frontages. Officers stated that much of the market floorspace was currently vacant and those units which remained did not have an outward facing street frontage. The applicant recognised the positive impact that the Leeds Arena development would have on footfall through and around the Merrion Centre and proposed the following treatment:

- Introduction of full height glazed frontages to the ground floor uses
- External footpaths to be refurbished with the use of more natural paving closer to the Merrion Centre itself to delineate the building curtilage
- Provision of a new ramped access at the Merrion Street/Wade Lane corner
- Reintroduction of 8 trees to the external edges of the site
- Introduction of a new core with large lift access direct to the car park at the junction with the internal Georgian Arcade and refurbishment of existing lift
- Creation of additional access/egress lane into the car park
- Provision of 28 designated disabled car parking spaces plus electric car charging points and motorcycle parking
- Refurbishment of the concrete cladding to the external façade of the car park. A simple system of aluminium overcladding was proposed to protect the existing concrete façade which incorporated cobbles and was deteriorating. A steel framed "dia-grid" would also be included to add interest.
- Computer generated graphics of the of the car park façade were displayed. The graphics showed a night time view of the car park, indicating the LED lights incorporated into the steel grid overlay

Finally officers reported that negotiations over the final figure for public transport contributions to be included in the Section 106 agreement had not been completed prior to the meeting but that this outstanding matter could be resolved through the delegation process.

Members discussed the following aspects of the application:

Licensed Premises – Members noted that 50% of the floorspace (equating to 3,500 sq m) could be given over to licensed premises and urged caution as there were reported to be a large number of licensed premises around the Merrion Centre. There was some concern that the area could become a hotspot for alcohol fuelled disorder.

Travel Plan - Members were keen to receive information on the targets set for the Travel Plan (TP), its aim, monitoring, the number of staff and penalties. The Panel noted that TCS currently had no TP. The proposed TP included targets set having regard to the results of a snapshot survey of businesses already with a Travel Plan which showed 49% of staff used a car. The aim for TCS would be 39%. Officers had suggested a car share scheme could produce that 10% reduction. The conditions within the S106 required an annual staff survey to be completed in order for car usage to be monitored. The TP required a Steering Group and Working Group to be established whose membership would include an LCC officer. These would meet annually and half yearly respectively.

- One Member suggested that a target of 75% should be established for the completion of the annual survey so that TCS encouraged staff to complete the survey in order to better inform the annual audit. Members also considered the merits of including penalties if the targets were not met. The Panel broadly agreed that the TP should be strengthened and revisited through negotiation

Pedestrian Access – Members were concerned that the well/ escalator access at the north west corner of the Merrion Centre could be seen as a barrier to the Civic Quarter. Members considered whether TCS and the developer of the new Hotel on Cookridge Street could discuss treatment of this access point.

- Commented that all pedestrian pavements around the Centre required treatment, as it was clear that parts of the external routes would be closed during refurbishment works and pedestrians would be using other routes. Members considered connectivity around the site to be a priority as the Centre would be an important link between the Civic Quarter, the Arena and the Eastgate & Harewood Quarter especially as there would be no 24 hour public access through the Centre
- Officers responded that this application included treatment to the pedestrian pathways up to the internal junction with the Georgian Arcade. The scheme for the Arena by a separate developer included works to the pedestrian footpaths from that point to the well/escalator. A further application was anticipated in 2012 from TCS for treatment to the escalator/well area

Mosaic – the removal of the existing mosaic display on the Merrion Way elevation was conditioned. The Panel agreed that the mosaic should be retained and re-installed as a prominent feature within the refurbished building

Wade Lane car park façade – Several Members were unhappy with the industrial appearance of this façade as it faced the Merrion Hotel. The Panel felt the developer should continue to ensure the same build quality and use of high standard materials at this point.

- The Panel noted a suggestion that the use of different coloured panels could improve the appearance, and that the use of LED lights should be extended to this façade

- Officers responded that further discussions were sought with the developer on the car park façade and perhaps the mural could be re-introduced to add visual interest at this point

Cycle storage/parking – Officers confirmed that staff cycle storage would be provided within the service area of the development, customer cycle storage would be provided on the Merrion Way edge

Lighting details – The proposed impact needed to be clearer. The lighting scheme needs to enhance the car park at night time

Landscaping and trees – The Panel was keen to ensure that trees of an appropriate size and maturity were introduced

There was some discussion on how to progress the application, bearing in mind the number of comments the Panel had made. Officers clarified that there would be an opportunity during the delegation process for them to discuss the issues raised regarding the travel plan, quality of materials and lighting display before final approval was given. Members however noted a motion to defer determination for one cycle to allow time for the developer to respond directly to the comments made and following a vote

RESOLVED – Not to accept the officer recommendation to defer determination of the application and delegate final approval to the Chief Planning Officer, but to defer determination of the application for one cycle to allow time for officers to discuss the comments made by the Panel and for the applicant to respond. A further report setting out the responses will be presented to the next meeting for determination.

The Panel however commented that Members welcomed the development and supported the principle of the development but wished to see the above detailed issues addressed

30 Application 11/03514/LI - Retrospective Listed Building Application for removal of a statue and plinth, Central Garden (West End), Park Square, Leeds LS1

Photographs of the bronze statue of Circe previously in-situ in Central Garden were displayed at the meeting. The Area Planning Manager highlighted receipt of an amended report which clarified the listed status of the statue. The comments of English Heritage had now been received which confirmed that no objection was maintained to the application but expressed disappointment that a replacement statue would not now be installed.

Officers reported that the statue had been removed following the grant of permission in 2007. At that time LCC Museums & Galleries intended to replace Circe with a bronze statue of Mercury. However since then, the cost of bronze and the insurance and measures necessary to protect such a valuable asset had increased dramatically. Circe was now refurbished and displayed within the City Museum. Members had visited the Museum prior to the meeting. The key issue to consider was the impact of the application on the setting of Park Square.

It was reported that the Circe statue and plinth had been introduced to Park Square in 1951, although the statue had not been designed for external display. Photographs of two statues suggested as suitable replacements by the Victorian Society and Leeds Civic Trust were displayed but Members did not support these. Officers reported that the Arts Council was not prepared to lend a sculpture or any public art for that location. Members noted the difficulty in securing a replacement for the Square and supported the application to regularise the existing situation

RESOLVED – That the application be approved in principle and be referred to the Secretary of State for consideration, with final determination delegated to the Chief Planning Officer should the Secretary of State pass the application back to the Local Planning Authority for determination

(The Panel took a short break at this point)

31 Pre-Application Presentation - PREAPP11/00613 - Proposed Hotel at junction of Portland Way and Calverley Street, Leeds LS1

The Panel received a presentation on pre-application proposals for a hotel development at the junction of Portland Way and Calverley Street. Members were familiar with the site as it lay adjacent to the Civic Hall and this presentation would afford them the opportunity to comment on and ask questions about the proposals prior to a formal application being submitted. It was noted that no formal decision would be made at this meeting. Plans and photographs of the site were displayed at the meeting. Members were aware that this site had formed part of the wider masterplan proposals for Downing Developments student housing proposals to the north-west of the site which had been presented to the Panel in February 2011, but that the site was now in separate ownership of this applicant

(Councillor A Blackburn re-joined the meeting)

The Panel welcomed Mr M Haydeck (representing the developer) and Mr J Grainger (Carey-Jones, architect) who provided the following general information:

- The developer regarded this as a prominent site at the edge of the Civic Quarter and the proposals referenced the high quality materials used throughout the Civic Quarter
- The hotel design was sympathetic to its surroundings and reflected the style and character of buildings within the immediate vicinity. The rounded edge treatment proposed to the Calverley Street/Portland Way junction echoed the Brotherton Wing and former Nurses Home on Calverley Street
- Two protected trees lay within the development line, but the developer intended to mitigate their loss with new planting
- The rising levels up Portland Way provided a stepped design, with the upper floors set back from the frontage
- The design included wide window settings, a limestone clad base plinth with metal rainscreen system on top. The use of limestone was intended to provide the hotel with a relationship to the Civic Hall. Stone Banding to the floors expressed the horizontality of the building

- The intended uses were
 - Ground floor - reception area, small gym, conference facilities with breakout room and the hotel entrance
 - Lower ground floor – an A3 unit which would be complimentary to the hotel use and local staff
 - Upper floors to be hotel suites

Members went onto make the following comments:

- Welcomed the design and proposed materials which referenced the existing buildings within the Civic Quarter and Leeds General Infirmary. The quality of the materials should be just as high to the north-western side of the building
- Expressed some concern over the proximity between the hotel building and those proposed through the redevelopment of the Downing site and felt that the hotel could be over dominant in its impact
- The application should detail the sustainability measures included within the proposals, particularly in respect of the possible use of renewable energy
- Further detail of the vehicular access and taxi/private hire/private car drop-off and pickup points was required. Members considered Portland Way to be a very busy traffic point and were keen to ensure that there should be no obstruction to the highway by vehicles making short stops. They noted the proposed lay-by to the Hotel Entrance on Portland Way would accommodate six car lengths, but that it was also opposite the Civic Hall courtyard car park entrance
 - officers responded that service access was proposed from Calverley Street if two hackney carriage rank spaces could be relocated to Portland Way. Sufficient space was provided within the Portland Way lay by for five vehicles. No car parking was proposed for the hotel, however the Rose Bowl and The Light car parks were nearby (with the latter operating 24 hours)
- Considered the impact of noise from emergency service vehicles attending the hospital and want to ensure that an environmental impact assessment is undertaken to address any noise issues
- Considered the appearance of the plant located on the hotel roof which appeared to be within a fenced area. Members considered whether the plant box could be deleted and the plant simply moved into the building. It was noted that a noise survey had been undertaken which required the rooms to be air conditioned; as such external plant would be required and the developer had tried to alleviate its appearance through screening. Mr Grainger further explained that the building would appear as 4 storeys from street level with the plant set back and surrounded by a lighter colour screen
- Expressed some concern over the loss of the trees, although noted that as the development plot was quite narrow, the majority of the trees seen on the site visit lay outside the plot
- Members welcomed the design of the Calverley Street/Portland Way curved elevation although urged that care should be taken firstly to ensure this appeared as a true curve in its built form and secondly to avoid compromise on the quality of the material for the internal pillars supporting the glazed curve. A comment was made that poorer quality materials or darker coloured internal pillars could be detrimental to the external appearance of the curve

- Future slide presentation should incorporate all the street furniture and highways signals at the Portland Way/Calverley Street junction to provide a more realistic representation of the streetscene

In conclusion Mr Grainger confirmed the developers' intention to use the same high quality materials on all the hotel elevations. Furthermore, the design was intended to be on a grand scale and hold a relationship with the tall buildings adjacent to it. Consideration had been given to setting the building down however this would result in a greater height discrepancy at the elevation next to the university building

RESOLVED – To thank the representatives for their presentation and to note the comments made

32 Pre-Application Presentation - PREAPP/11/00904 - Formation of Student Flats (Approximately 100 beds) at 20-28 Hyde Terrace, Woodhouse, Leeds LS2 9LN

The Panel received a presentation on pre-application proposals for a student flats development at 20-28 Hyde Terrace, Woodhouse. Members had visited the site prior to the meeting and this presentation would afford them the opportunity to comment on and ask questions on the proposals prior to a formal application being submitted. It was noted that no formal decision would be made at this meeting. Plans and photographs of the site were displayed at the meeting.

Mr A Watts, Walker Morris, attended the meeting on behalf of the applicants to present the scheme as follows:

- Proposed retention and conversion of the main terraced building would include retention of the external façade and internal original features, and remove the flat roofed dormers which will be replaced with pitched roofs
- Demolition of the three storey porta-cabin units added to the rear elevation in the 1970s.
- New, modern east and west wings would be erected using red brick, grey slate and copper cladding where required to reflect the existing main building
- 2/3 bedroom flats were proposed within the main building with 8 cluster flats in the new wings which would provide a total of 98 bedspaces
- Primary windows were intended to the front elevations with secondary use windows to the rear
- A courtyard space would be created to the rear
- The scheme was intended to be car free, with a drop-off point and possible designated disabled car parking space on the north eastern access road.
- The site was previously occupied by the University in an area of mixed commercial uses and existing student accommodation and was outside the area of housing mix.
- The applicants had discussed the proposals with the LCC Conservation and Planning Officers and now sought feedback from the Panel prior to formal public consultation with local Councillors and the community

Members commented that the development proposals should have regard to the listed status of the buildings to the north of the site and went onto discuss the following aspects of the proposals at this stage:

Main Building

- Welcomed the sympathetic approach but were keen to ensure the retention of internal original fixtures such as fireplaces and staircases
- Suggested the rear flat roof dormer should also be removed
- Due to the depth of the main building, care should be taken to ensure that the basement accommodation in particular provided sufficient light
- Noted the front elevation depicted 5 separate house entrances and whether this feature would be retained
- Suggested the render to the gable end should be removed
- Commented on the stained glass window and whether its retention would be beneficial to the main building
- The removal of the Portacabins could reveal new features to the stonework on the rear elevation
- The mullioned window to the rear should be examined and retained
- The chimneys should be retained as these were a feature in the locality
- Suggested that the white render/timber to the eaves of the front elevation should be reviewed as part of the proposals

New build

- Noted that elements of the main building were reflected in the drawings for the wings but required further detail on the design and dimensions of the new wings, the cluster flats
- Required detail of the relationship of the wings with the main building

Car Parking

- Noted that no car parking is proposed and commented that there was a lot of on-street parking generated by students in the immediate locality

Mr Watts responded to the comments and explained the client was a student based landlord who recognised the need for this mix of student flats.

Additionally:

- the main building accommodated the 2/3 bedroom flat conversion well, the size of these flats was determined by the internal layout and allowed for the retention of the layout, staircases and the 5 door entranceways to the front elevations
- the stone mullioned window would be discussed with the Conservation Officer and the rear flat roof dormer appeared to add no merit to the main building and removal could be considered
- removal of the render to the gable end was supported
- the scheme was intended to be car free and all tenants would be made aware of this in their tenancy agreement

The Panel considered the key issues set out in the report for them to comment on and generally supported the principle for the re-use of the building for student accommodation as Members felt this site was close to the university which should lead to a reduction in the need for cars. Members commented that redevelopment of the building for general market flats would create greater pressure on car parking in local streets but also acknowledged

that some residents would feel the area was already saturated with student accommodation. Members also appeared generally happy with the sympathetic approach to the design of the new build wings and accepted the proposed treatment of the dormer windows. Finally, the Panel requested more detail on the proposals to ensure a car free scheme

RESOLVED – To thank Mr Watts for his presentation and to note the comments made

33 Update on the South Bank, Sovereign Street and Lower Kirkgate Planning Statements

The Chief Planning Officer submitted three recently adopted Planning Statements relating to areas of special interest in the City. The Conservation Officers attended the meeting and the Panel discussed each Statement in turn as follows:

Lower Kirkgate:

- Noted that the council had successfully passed Stage 1 of a Heritage Lottery Bid to secure £1.6m in total for works to the area of which £0.5m would be dedicated to the restoration of the White Cloth Hall.
- Discussions with the main landowner had been maintained throughout the development of the Statement

Members noted that White Cloth Hall was owned by the main landowner and expressed their continued dissatisfaction that the building had been in disrepair for a long time and had subsequently partially collapsed. Members recalled that a letter had been sent on behalf of the Panel expressing the council's concerns some years ago and went onto consider what measures, if any, could be taken if the landowner failed to progress works to the remains of the building. Officers responded that two-thirds of the original White Cloth Hall survived, including the west wing constructed in the 1750's. City Fusion, the landowners, were currently undertaking costly surveying works and had responded positively to requests for emergency repairs to be undertaken. The Panel requested that a report be brought to the next meeting setting out the options being considered for the reconstruction of White Cloth Hall and indicating the timescales for progress.

South Bank

- Statement arose from the discussions held between the council and the owners of the three main sites relating to a substantial part of the southern edge of the city centre and the Council's aspirations for a city centre park
- A permeable route from the city centre to the south was proposed through provision of a park. A new pedestrian access would be opened through the vacant Tetley Brewery site providing a direct link with Leeds Bridge and Hunslet Road and that there would be improved eastward pedestrian access via Yarn Street to the Pennine Trail and Woodlesford
- Members commented that the motorways and busy dual carriage ways which surrounded the site could be seen as a barrier, but noted that future developments adjacent to Clarence Dock would provide pedestrian improvements which would link the separate sites within South Bank

Sovereign Street

- Statement arose following the failure of the previous development proposals in 2008 and the need to remarket the site and discussions are ongoing with developers regarding Plots A and B identified in the Statement
- The Statement includes aspirations to provide a greenspace which would link via a footbridge to the proposed city centre park to the south of the river. It also identifies the potential to provide a route underneath the railway line to the north

RESOLVED –

- a) To note the contents of the Sovereign Street, South Bank and Lower Kirkgate Planning Statements
- b) To note that a further report setting out the options being considered for the reconstruction of White Cloth Hall and indicating the timescales for progress will be presented to the next meeting for information

34 Date and time of next meeting

RESOLVED – To note the date and time of the next meeting as Thursday 24th November 2011 at 1.30pm