

## Plans Panel (City Centre)

Thursday, 22nd December, 2011

**PRESENT:** Councillor B Selby in the Chair

Councillors G Driver, J Jarosz, J McKenna,  
E Nash, M Hamilton, C Campbell, G Latty,  
A Castle, A Blackburn and C Macniven

### 44 **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 declared a personal interest in Application 11/03655/FU - Change of use and extensions for restaurant, casino and serviced apartments at Merrion Way) and Application 11/04023/FU (office space and hotel on Whitehall Road) as a member of Leeds Civic Trust. The Civic Trust had commented on the proposals contained within the applications (minutes 47 and 48 refer)

### 45 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor S Hamilton and the Panel welcomed Councillor Macniven as her substitute

### 46 **Minutes**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the last meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2011 be agreed as a correct record

### 47 **Application 11/03655/FU - Change of use of ground floor offices to A3 (Restaurant), extensions to form two A3 units, extension to Casino and construction of 102 Bedroom Serviced Apartments, Merrion Way, Brunswick Terrace and Tower House Street, Leeds**

Plans, architects drawings and photographs of the site were displayed at the meeting along with computer generated graphics showing the development in situ. Plans showing the footprint of the current buildings were displayed for comparison with the proposals. Members had visited the site prior to the meeting.

Officers outlined the proposals which included new active frontages to Brunswick Terrace, ground and first floor extensions to the casino, new shopfronts and recladding of the podium building, construction of a part 6 and part 10 storey serviced apartment building, a new entrance into Tower House and important public realm around the site which is pivotal to the regeneration of the area. The uses would help to reinforce the function of this part of the city centre as a major leisure and visitor centre. Key issues to consider were highlighted as being:

## Buildings

- The resurfacing of the terrace over the basement car park, together with extended public realm to the side (enabled by the infilling of the existing ramp) and rear (enabled by the removal of the surface car park) to improve pedestrian access and the appearance of the area.
- The delivery of a series of meaningful steps in building mass rising towards Tower House.
- The protection and framing of key views of the arena at ground and upper levels.
- The use of a calm monochromatic palette of materials responding to the form of the existing buildings whilst avoiding conflict with the detail of the arena building to the rear.
- The recladding of the base of Tower House to form a positive base to the building.
- The provision of a comprehensive lighting scheme around the development adding additional interest to the building and evening environment.

## Public realm

- Footways around the periphery of the site to be resurfaced with materials consistent with those to be used at the Merrion Centre and the arena.
- Concrete steps outside Tower House to be replaced with granite steps.
- Railings to the front of the podium to be replaced with a clear balustrade to present a more open vista.
- New planting and seating proposals on the terrace and two trees to the front of Tower House as an extension to existing trees to the front of the terrace.

Computer generated graphics showing the development in the street scene were displayed, including night time views showing the lighting scheme which incorporated a crown of uplighters to Tower House and horizontal strip lighting to the podium elevations.

The Panel noted that any development proposals were constrained by the podium building - which would not support any vertical extensions and was leased until 2037. Members commented that any development here should be of the highest quality and discussed the following matters:

- the apart/hotel was intended for stays of up to 90 days
- the single width extension provided rooms facing Brunswick Terrace connected by a single corridor which faced onto Merrion Way
- queried whether there was a need for the apart/hotel element
- Some Members voiced concern that the apart/hotel extension obscured the view of the Arena from the south and expressed the opinion that the iconic design of the Arena should retain views around it.
- The need to reconsider the current siting of the disabled parking bays on Brunswick Terrace as this would be a busy pedestrian route. Officers reported that provision of the disabled parking bays was outside the remit of this developer, however discussions had begun with the Arena developer on their possible removal
- Members had regard to the width and future use of Brunswick Terrace once the proposed tall buildings were developed and queried whether a wind assessment had been undertaken. Officers reported the results of a survey

had found a neutral /slightly positive impact and a proposed condition required measures to mitigate any adverse impact.

(Councillor Jarosz withdrew from the meeting for a short time at this point)

Members generally welcomed the principle of the redevelopment and proposed use of the site but remained concerned about its impact on views of the Arena and commented that although the redevelopment would improve Brunswick Terrace and the existing buildings, the design was uninspiring and presented a missed opportunity.

Officers referred to the Unitary Development Plan which earmarked this site where development of this type and scale was encouraged and to previous Panel discussions on the Arena development when Members had supported the suggestion that the Arena would be set in a landscape of tall buildings. Officers concluded that the Arena would remain a focal point, with only the oblique view of the southern Arena elevation partially obscured by the proposals before Panel. Officers outlined the discussions held between the developer and the Design Team to achieve these proposals.

Some Members were concerned over the design of the narrow apart/hotel extension and commented that too much was being proposed for the site. Members considered whether the apart/hotel could be moved eastwards to reveal more of the Arena. The Panel noted a comment that the treatment of the Merrion Way end elevation of the apart/hotel presented an attractive frame and whether a similar treatment would benefit the other elevations of the apart/hotel. Members also noted a comment that a taller build adjacent to Tower House could be acceptable if the apart/hotel extension was lower or moved back.

The Panel noted the officer recommendation to defer and delegate approval to the Chief Planning Officer, however were not minded to do so  
**RESOLVED** – To defer determination of the application for one cycle to allow time for further discussion with the developers on the issues raised by Panel, namely the scale, position and design of the apart/hotel element to the rear of the podium.

**48 Application 11/04023/FU - Part 6 and Part 10 storey mixed use development comprising office space (Class B1) and 130 bed Hotel (Class C1) with basement car parking, Whitehall Road, Leeds LS1**

The Panel considered the report of the Chief Planning Officer on a significant major application containing proposals for a part 6 and 10 storey mixed use development at Whitehall Road, Leeds LS1. The Panel had visited the site prior to the meeting. Site plans, aerial photographs, architects' drawings and slides of the Whitehall Road masterplan – which included this development plot - were displayed at the meeting. 1:20 detailed drawings showing the window apertures and elevational treatment and slides showing the development in the streetscene were also displayed. A palette of the proposed materials was presented for reference.

Officers outlined the planning history of the site and highlighted key features as:

- Site access off Whitehall Road, the hotel from the eastern entrance and office space from western entrance. The hotel reception will incorporate a real-time bus display
- 38 parking spaces provided in the basement car park split between 8 Hotel and 30 office spaces, with car Club and disabled parking bays at ground level to the rear of the building
- Floors 1 – 4 incorporate office accommodation with elevations of light coloured ceramic cladding
- Floors 5 – 9 incorporate hotel accommodation with darker coloured ceramic cladding panels and zinc cladding
- The ground floor to be raised above the floodplain and include glazed curtain walls, with planters and glazed balustrades to the elevated walkway
- Elevations to be treated with ceramic cladding panels

Members commented on the following:

- The route, length and usefulness of the proposed cycle way. Officers clarified the proposed treatment to the carriageway of Whitehall Road as each development within the Whitehall Road masterplan came forward
- The surface treatment and landscaping scheme which some Members felt was too harsh and advocated inclusion of more trees. It was noted that this site was within an urban landscape with limited space for green planting, although located near to the riverside walkway. Officers noted the comment that Whitehall Road would have a high volume of pedestrian footfall and this could be the opportunity to create a tree lined boulevard into the heart of the city. It was noted that development on the other side of the road did incorporate trees along the site boundaries and if this development could be set back in the plot, trees could be incorporated. Officers responded that the masterplan indicated the building line of the plots should follow the line established by the already developed Novotel Hotel near the station, however as each building plot came on line and the highway was realigned, this comment could be considered further.
- Location of the office plant equipment in relation to the hotel accommodation.
- Design of the scheme and the need for the developer to have regard to the design of this development when other plots in the masterplan come forward
- Whether the Environment Agency was satisfied with the proposals for the ground floor level and what measures incorporated to secure the basement level in the event of flood
- The robustness of the Travel Plan. Officers responded that the TP targets had been set having regard to the city centre snapshot of commuter travel which showed 27% using cars, this development therefore had a target of 27% and once that was met, the developers were required to reduce car travel to 20%. Targets had also been set to ensure that employee travel surveys were returned and a TP Steering Group would be established to monitor the targets and manage a fund of £2k per year to implement measures to support the TP
- It was noted that a S106 could encourage but could not insist that a developer employ local people. Members acknowledged that this would depend on the

skills required by the schemes, however they considered whether it would be appropriate to set a target for local young apprentices. Officers responded that further discussions on this suggestion would have to be taken up with LCC Jobs&Skills. The comment that this site was well served by public transport reaching the Middleton, Holbeck and Beeston areas of the city was also noted as information to pass to Jobs & Skills

(Councillor Jarsoz withdrew from the meeting for a short time at this point)

- Impact of implementation of the Whitehall Road masterplan on city centre parking, Members noted that some undeveloped plots were used for car parking in the interim, and as each plot came forward for development, those spaces would be lost. Members commented that a management plan should be devised to ensure car parking is retained on Whitehall Road. The local ward Councillor highlighted the fact that local residents experienced problems with on street parking already near their homes and sought clarification on what off-peak parking measures could be implemented in the locality. It was agreed that this information should be supplied directly, but was not within the remit of this development

**RESOLVED** – To defer and delegate approval of the application to the Chief Planning Officer, subject to consideration of the Panel’s comments where appropriate and subject to the specified conditions (and any others which he might consider appropriate), and following the completion of a Section 106 Agreement to cover the following matters:

- Contribution to public transport improvements in accordance with SPD5 prior to first occupation £97 496
- Car club space and trial provision prior to first occupation £2500
- Public access around the site
- Travel plan implementation and monitoring fee prior to first occupation £4750
- Employment and training opportunities for local people.
- Management fee payable within one month of commencement of development £1500

In the circumstances where the Section 106 Agreement has not been completed within 3 months of the resolution to grant planning permission the final determination of the application shall be delegated to the Chief Planning Officer.

#### **49 Pre-Application Presentation - PRE APP 11/ 00276 - Proposed Hotel development at D Car Park, Portland Crescent, Cookridge Street and Woodhouse Lane, Leeds**

The Panel received a presentation on pre-application proposals for the development of a hotel on the former council owned D Car Park which is bounded by Portland Crescent, Cookridge Street and Woodhouse Lane. Members were familiar with the site which was opposite the Civic Hall and were aware of a previous application for a hotel development on the same site. 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.

The Panel welcomed Mr J Suckley on behalf of the developer who outlined the design changes proposed to meet the requirements of the hotel operator now secured by the developer. Plans, architects drawings and aerial photographs of the site were displayed at the meeting. Slides showing computer generated graphics of the scheme approved in 2009 were shown for comparison with the 2011 scheme and photo montages showing both proposals in situ were displayed which provided views to and across the development from several vantage points.

Mr Suckley outlined the main changes to the scheme and reported that a full application would be submitted in January 2012 with commencement of works on site anticipated in May 2012. Members picked out the following key elements for particular attention to discuss with Mr Suckley:

- relocation of the Hotel entrance and impact on the siting of the taxi pick up/drop off point.
- impact of the glazing to the 13<sup>th</sup> floor and the lift shaft to add relief to the elevations. Members expressed concern over the loss of windows to the south elevation which overlooked Millennium Square as the design of this façade had been the focus of much discussion in 2009.
- design of the Woodhouse Lane elevation
- one Member suggested that glazing to all the elevations would be welcome as this would present an elegant façade which would reflect the historic buildings in the vicinity and echo the design of the Rose Bowl
- impact on the setting of the Civic Hall and views of the Civic Hall from the east
- the inclusion of the bar at the 13<sup>th</sup> floor was specific to the hotel operators business model

(Councillor Hamilton left the meeting at this point)

Officers reported that the site plan included in the officer report was incorrect as required amendment to delete the Academy and bar buildings from within the red line development boundary

Members remained supportive of the principle of a hotel development on this site and had no concerns over the increase in height or the inclusion of a bar but expressed reservations over the deletion of the windows to the southern elevation which they suggested now presented a blank façade to Millennium Square

To sum up, the Panel would wish to see the following matters addressed:

- detail on the relocation of the hotel entrance and impact on the drop off/pick up point
  - concerns regarding the southern elevation and loss of fenestration
- RESOLVED** – To thank Mr Suckley for his presentation and to note the contents of the presentation and the comments of the Panel

(Councillor Jarosz left the meeting at this point)

**50 Pre-Application Presentation - PRE APP 11/ 00899 - Proposals for Residential use at the former Yorkshire Chemicals site, Black Bull Street, Leeds**

The Panel received a presentation on pre-application proposals for residential use at the former Yorkshire Chemicals site, Black Bull Street, Leeds. 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 along with architects drawings of the proposals.

The Panel welcomed Mr R Maxwell and Ms H Smith to the meeting to present the pre-application proposals. They reported that an illustrative masterplan for the development was being established having regard to LCC policies and guidance and the commercial/industrial and residential uses around the site. Aerial photographs were displayed along with slides showing the South Bank Plan. The following key issues were highlighted for consideration:

- The site was split by Black Bull Street and two pedestrian crossing points would be installed to link the two sites with some landscaping incorporated to the roadside
  - 3 parts of the site were identified as suitable for taller buildings of 3 to 7 storeys, fronting Hunslet Road and at the end of Cudbear Street
  - Each site would include a central communal space
  - Hard and soft landscaping to be maintained, incorporating plants and shrubs which would thrive in this formerly industrial location, the reserved matters stage would require a landscape architect
  - The residential homes were a modern interpretation of a Georgian theme with proposed mews style integral garaging and parking
- Western site
- Parking courts located to the rear of residences and shared car parking for the apartments. The use of the parking spaces would be monitored
  - House elevations faced Black Bull Street
  - Some homes with gardens, some utilise terrace gardens over car ports and some homes with flat roofs to accommodate communal space
- Eastern site
- the central community space would be part gated for use by residents
  - north eastern corner would be left as open greenspace to accommodate NGT route

The Panel commented on the following issues:

- concern that streets could be dominated at ground level by garages, entrance doors and blank frontages. This aspect was not supported at the Yarn Street development.
- lack of open space large enough for outdoor play for children
- the principle of family home development was welcomed but there was concern over the provision of amenities – such as schools, healthcare

- concern that this would be a remote development and further consideration should be given to the dynamics of the future community and how it will relate to the city centre, amenities and support networks necessary for family life
- the view that every household should have its own car park space
- the view that every home should have its own garden space which would encourage maintenance, rather than use of a communal space which could become unused and uncared for in time
- the view that the layout of the scheme and house design was regimental
- concern that the homes provided maisonette dwellings with communal staircases which have proved problematic elsewhere
- welcomed the inclusion of pedestrian links between the sites and provision of crossings to Black Bull Street, noting that these would provide traffic calming, but commented that traffic stop/starting also brought problems of noise and engine fumes and there was concern over the impact these issues would have on those homes proposed to face onto Black Bull Street
- the proximity of the homes facing Black Bull Street to the highway and the perceived narrowness of the pavement

Members noted the response that the development of family homes opened a wider debate on education, healthcare and families in a city centre setting and noted the following responses:

- the balance of consideration of public space and private space in an urban setting when considering provision of playspace
- the regimented design would benefit dual aspect houses, which incorporated larger windows at the higher levels to allow more natural light into living spaces.
- the east/west orientation would afford the homes natural light all day
- the detailing would have a positive impact on the perceived regimental approach to the house design, bearing in mind that these were indicative illustrations presented to show what could be achieved on the site
- confirmed every home had its own designated car parking space with additional car parking spaces delineated for visitor parking throughout the site
- the comment about management of shared spaces was noted and a management plan would be devised
- the eastern site had sufficient space to pull homes facing Black Bull Street back from the highway, but there was insufficient space on the western site to do so. Further consideration of how to fit the requirements for communal space, car parking, homes and acceptable pavement width would be needed
- a ground floor community facility could be incorporated into the proposed commercial element on the eastern site, adjacent to the car dealership

(Councillors M Hamilton and G Latty left the meeting at this point)

To conclude, Members also highlighted those issues they would require further details on as being:

- Provision of education and the impact of the possible numbers of children in this site on local schools. Members were requested general information on the numbers of children in an area that would trigger the requirement for a new school development



- The design of the pedestrian links, some of which appeared as “cut throughs/ginnels” and their treatment to ensure pedestrian safety
- The design, safety and suitability of roof gardens for families with children
- The level of affordable housing
- The possibility for local employment and skills in the development of the site
- Consideration of future status of Black Bull Street since the opening of the new link road and whether some traffic could be diverted away from the site.

**RESOLVED** - To thank Mr Maxwell and Ms Smith for their presentation and that the contents of the proposals and the comments made by Panel be noted

**51 Date and time of next meeting**

**RESOLVED** – To note the date and time of the next meeting as Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2012 at 1.30 pm