



**Report of the Chief Planning Officer**

***CITY PLANS PANEL***

**Date: 16 APRIL 2015**

**Subject: PRE-APPLICATION Reference PREAPP/15/00032 – Proposal for new secondary school at land on the east side of Black Bull Street, Leeds 10 by the Ruth Gorse Academy.**

**Electoral Wards Affected:**

**City and Hunslet**

Yes

Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

**Specific Implications For:**

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

**RECOMMENDATION: This report is brought to Plans Panel for information. The developer's representatives will be asked to present the emerging scheme to allow Members to consider and comment on the proposals.**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION:**

1.1 This pre-application presentation relates to the proposed major development at Black Bull Street in Leeds City Centre. The initial proposals will be presented to Panel by the Ruth Gorse Academy and their professional team to allow Members to comment on the evolving scheme and raise any issues, prior to the intended submission of a full planning application next month.

1.2 The Ruth Gorse Academy is a Free School sponsored by The GORSE Academies Trust, a not-for-profit charity creating exceptional schools in areas of deprivation within the Leeds city region. The development of the Academy at this site would add to the growing educational cluster in the South Bank with the nearby Leeds City College Printworks Campus and the Leeds College of Building. The Academy is keen to work with both colleges to deliver vocational training to prepare pupils for the workplace and further /higher education. Although the need for additional secondary places is not as imminent as primary need, there will be exponential growth in the secondary sector in Leeds over

the next seven years. Without this free school it is forecasted that there would be a shortfall of approximately 1,250 secondary places in September 2018/19.

## **2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:**

- 2.1 The 1.8ha brownfield site is located to the east of Black Bull Street at the former Yorkshire Chemicals site. The site lies unallocated within the City Centre and within flood risk zone 3. The surrounding area is a mixture of uses including residential, offices, food and drink and retail, at Brewery Wharf, Leeds Dock, Leeds City Office Park and Crown Point Retail Park. The nearest residential to the site is along the eastern side of Chadwick Street at Leeds Dock. A car showroom and workshop lies to the south of the site. The site lies just outside the South Bank Planning Statement area, but could have an important strategic role in linking the city centre core, the railway station and the future City Centre Park to visitor attractions, convenience shops, food and drink, homes and workspace at Leeds Dock.
- 2.2 Nearby listed buildings are the Grade II\* listed Chadwick Lodge, the Grade II listed former Alf Cooke Printworks (now Leeds City College Printworks Campus) and Crown Point Bridge. Unlisted heritage assets in the area include the The Malthouse on Chadwick Street.
- 2.3 The area would be served in the future by the NGT trolleybus system, with the nearest stop located on Chadwick Street directly adjacent to the site.
- 2.4 The conversion of the Grade II listed Alf Cooke Printworks to form a campus for Leeds City College on Hunslet Road has opened and phase two is currently underway. Works on the Leeds College of Building on Black Bull Street are very close to completion and the campus is due to open soon.
- 2.5 The site lies within the designated Aire Valley Leeds Urban Eco-Settlement. The scheme has potential to provide much needed educational facilities for the existing residential community in inner south Leeds and the City Centre, and for the planned new housing provision (over 6500 homes). The scheme also has strong potential to contribute to the place-making of the South Bank, by bringing a long vacant site into active use.

## **3.0 PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 The Ruth Gorse Academy will focus on ensuring that young people currently living in the inner south area of Leeds can have access to a new inspirational secondary academy. It will be a large academy of 1580 students and will mirror in its aspirations, expectations and standards at The Farnley Academy and The Morley Academy. For the next two years The Ruth Gorse Academy will be based on The Morley Academy site (part of the GORSE Academies Trust), acting as a completely separate school with its own core staff, buildings and entrance to the school. These premises opened in September 2014 with an intake of 95 students in year 7, increasing to a total of 285 students in September 2015 for years 7 and 8. Subject to the planning process, from September 2016, the Academy would operate from a new complex on Black Bull Street, with student numbers building from 527 in September 2016 to full capacity in September 2018. When at full capacity, the Academy will include approximately 1580 students and 150 full time and part time staff.
- 3.2 The Academy will comprise a new U-shaped building with a gross area of 11,545 square metres, formed of three elements. These joined buildings would provide

teaching accommodation and support facilities arranged around a south facing courtyard. A three storey glazed and black metal clad building would front the car park, with a three storey red brick and glazed element fronting Black Bull Street. A four storey light grey render building would be set slightly back from the Chadwick Street frontage.

- 3.3 The scheme would provide two external dining areas, a growing area with fruit trees, an external urban games and performance area, a 100m running track, a formal hard surfaced playing pitch, and three Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs)
- 3.4 The scheme includes 30 car parking spaces for staff and visitors, 20 staff cycle spaces, 8 motorcycle spaces, and a mini-bus parking space. 33 cycle parking spaces are proposed for pupils.
- 3.5 The frontage to Black Bull Street would feature 9 new trees. The boundary treatment to the car park area to the north would be a 1.2m high paladin fence.
- 3.6 The normal school day is 08:25 – 14:45, with pre-school breakfast clubs and extracurricular activities commencing from 07:20. A number of after school enrichment activities means most students will remain on site until at least 16.30, with activities concluding at 21:00.
- 3.7 The pupil intake at The Ruth Gorse Academy will, in large part, come from areas of the southern part of Leeds such as:
- Beeston Hill
  - Beeston
  - Belle Isle
  - Cross Green
  - Holbeck
  - Hunslet
  - Middleton
  - Stourton

#### **4.0 HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS AND PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 Officers have had two formal pre-application meetings with the Ruth Gorse Academy's professional team in early 2015.
- 4.2 City and Hunslet Ward Members were consulted by email on 24 March 2014 regarding this new pre-application. Any comments will be updated to Panel verbally.
- 4.3 Detailed discussions with the Council regarding this site have taken place since mid-2005 following the closure and subsequent demolition of Yorkshire Chemicals. This led to the submission of an outline planning application in 2006 (ref. 06/04601/OT), which was approved at Plans Panel (City Centre) in 2008, and subsequently granted permission in 2009 for a multi-level mixed use development comprising predominantly residential (678 flats and 43 townhouses), with office, hotel, leisure, retail, car showroom, community uses, public space and car parking. This permission expired in July 2012.

#### **5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES**

##### **5.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) came into force in March 2012 and represents the government's commitment to sustainable development, through its intention to make the planning system more streamlined, localised and less restrictive. It aims to do this by reducing regulatory burdens and by placing sustainability at the heart of development process. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied, only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so.

The NPPF identifies 12 core planning principles (para 17) which include that planning should:

- Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver homes...
- Seek high quality design and a good standard of amenity for existing and future occupants.
- Encourage the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings.
- Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- Actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling.

Planning should proactively support sustainable economic development and seek to secure high quality design. It encourages the effective use of land and achieves standards of amenity for all existing and future occupiers of land and buildings. One of the core principles is the reuse of land that has previously been developed.

On 6 March 2014 the Government launched the National Planning Practice Guidance, which brought together most national planning guidance and circulars under one web-based resource.

Paragraph 72 attaches great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools and advises the following:

- The Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:
  - Give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools; and
  - Work with schools promoters to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.

In assessing school developments the decision maker must also be mindful of a policy statement issued jointly by the Secretary of State for Education and the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on the 15th August 2011. This sets out the Government's commitment to support the development of state-funded schools and their delivery through the planning system. It states that the Government is firmly committed to ensuring there is sufficient provision to meet growing demand for state-funded school places, increasing choice and opportunity in state-funded education and raising educational standards. It goes on to say that the Government believes that the planning system should operate in a positive manner when dealing with proposals for the creation, expansion and alteration of

state-funded schools, and that the following principles should apply with immediate effect:

- i) There should be a presumption in favour of the development of state-funded schools, as expressed in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- ii) Local authorities should give full and thorough consideration to the importance of enabling the development of state-funded schools in their planning decisions. The Secretary of State will attach significant weight to the need to establish and develop state-funded schools when determining applications and appeals that come before him for decision.

## **5.2 Development Plan**

5.2.1 The Leeds Core Strategy was adopted by the Council on 12th November 2014. This now forms the development plan for Leeds together with the Natural Resources & Waste Plan and saved policies from the UDP. A number of former UDP saved policies have been superseded by Core Strategy policies and have been deleted as a result of its adoption. Appendix 1 of the Core Strategy provides a full list of 'deleted' UDPR policies and policies that continue to be 'saved' (including most land use allocations). Relevant Saved Policies would include

GP5 all relevant planning considerations

BD2 new buildings

T7A cycle parking

T7B motorcycle parking

T24 Car parking provision

LD1 landscaping

5.2.2 Relevant Core Strategy Policies include:

Spatial Policy 3 sets out the role of Leeds City Centre, including the comprehensive planning of redevelopment and re-use of vacant and under-used sites and buildings for mixed use development and new areas of public space. It also states that new development shall enhance streets and create a network of open and greenspaces to make the City Centre more attractive, family friendly and easier for people to use, and in consolidating and enhancing sense of place

Spatial Policy 4 identifies the Aire Valley Leeds as a Regeneration Priority Programme Area. Priority will be given to developments that include housing quality, affordability and choice, improve access to employment and skills development, enhance green infrastructure and greenspace, upgrade the local business environment and improve local facilities and services.

Spatial Policy 5 sets out the broad principles for development in the Aire Valley Regeneration Priority Programme Area including targets for housing (6,500 units) and employment land (250 ha) specific to the area.

Spatial Policy 8 states that training/skills and job creation initiatives would be supported by planning agreements linked to the implementation of appropriate developments given planning permission.

Spatial Policy 11 Transport Investment Priorities – includes a priority related to improved facilities for pedestrians to promote safety and accessibility, particularly connectivity between the edges of the City Centre and the City Centre itself.

Policies CC2 and CC3: Improving connectivity between the north and south parts of the City Centre and neighbouring communities – provide and improve routes connecting the City Centre with adjoining neighbourhoods to improve access and make walking and cycling easier.

Policy G5 Within the City Centre sites over 0.5ha shall deliver 20% of site area as public open space.

Policy G9 Biodiversity improvements

Policies EN1 & EN2. Policy set targets for CO2 reduction and sustainable design & construction, including BREEAM Excellent and at least 10% low or zero carbon energy production on-site.

Policies EN4 District Heating. The design of the scheme presents an alternative low carbon energy source.

Policy EN5 – flood risk. A flood risk assessment and sequential test would be required as the site lies in Flood Zone 3.

Policy P10 requires new development to be based on a thorough contextual analysis to provide good design appropriate to its scale and function, delivering high quality innovative design and enhancing existing landscapes and spaces.

Policy P12 states that landscapes will be conserved and enhanced.

Policies T1 and T2 identify transport management and accessibility requirements for new development.

### 5.3 **Natural Resources & Waste Plan**

The Natural Resources and Waste Development Plan Document (Local Plan) is part of the Local Development Framework. The plan sets out where land is needed to enable the City to manage resources, like minerals, energy, waste and water over the next 15 years, and identifies specific actions which will help use natural resources in a more efficient way. Policies regarding flood risk, drainage, air quality, trees, and land contamination are relevant to this proposal. The site is within the Minerals Safeguarding Area for Coal (Minerals 3)

### 5.4 **Emerging Aire Valley Area Action Plan**

The site is located within the Aire Valley Leeds Regeneration Programme Area for which an Area Action Plan is being prepared. This will form part of the development plan when adopted and make allocations within the area (replacing or renewing existing UDP land use allocations). It has limited weight in decision making currently but signals the Council's aspirations and priorities for the future development of the area.

### 5.5 **Relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance includes:**

SPD Street Design Guide

SPD Travel Plans

SPD Building for Tomorrow Today: Sustainable Design and Construction

SPG City Centre Urban Design Strategy

## **South Bank Planning Statement**

The site lies adjacent to the area covered by the South Bank Planning Statement (see attached Plan 1 South Bank Urban Design Principles). A key principle for the South Bank is that new enhanced landscaped connections would be formed across the wider South Bank area, eventually linking Holbeck Urban Village and the City Centre Core (including the railway station and central bus stops west of the bus station) to Leeds Dock via the City Centre Park. All new developments on sites adjacent to Crown Point Road, Black Bull Street and Hunslet Road/Lane would need to deliver the continuation of landscaped pedestrian and cycle routes across the wider area, and the necessary pedestrian connectivity improvements such as crossings to major roads like Crown Point Road and Black Bull Street, other upgraded crossing points, increased pavement widths and lane reductions, in order to make new development acceptable. This proposal has the potential to contribute towards a coordinated series of key pedestrian connectivity improvements as identified in the adopted South Bank Planning Statement. This would start from the City Centre core, via the Riverside and Bridge End, through the former Tetley Brewery site via a re-opened Hunslet Road (which has been secured via a Section 106 agreement attached to the Carlsberg temporary car park permission ref. 11/05031/FU – this route would also be retained as a link in the future City Centre Park in any permanent redevelopment), across Crown Point Road via the currently under construction pedestrian crossing, then across Black Bull Street, linking to retail, leisure, food and drink facilities at Leeds Dock.

## **6.0 KEY ISSUES**

Members are asked to consider the following matters in particular:

### **6.1 Principle of a new school in this location**

It is considered that the principle of the proposed use is appropriate to the vision for the regeneration of the South Bank and the Aire Valley, and would be acceptable in the context of the NPPF and the Core Strategy, subject to the consideration of detailed matters. It is considered that the provision of a secondary school at this site would act as a catalyst for the regeneration of the surrounding area, and encourage family housing provision in the City Centre and Aire Valley urban eco-settlement. The vision for this part of the City Centre is for a mixed use environment with no dominant single land use. This is to encourage a range of residential, business and community activities that create activity at different times of the day and all year round. Recent developments in the area include new further education facilities for Leeds City College and Leeds College of Building, but taking account of the wider mix of land uses and available development sites in the area it is considered that a further educational use on this site would not have an adverse impact on the emerging character of the area.

#### **6.1.1 Do Members agree that the proposed use of the site would be appropriate in principle?**

### **6.2 Building form and architectural treatment**

The South Bank will form an extension of the City Centre core, with a broad mix of uses and facilities, making an attractive, well connected 'place' for 21st Century Leeds. The provision of a secondary school is an important facility which would assist in meeting these aims, however the integration of such a use in a City Centre environment needs careful consideration in place-making and shaping. The surrounding area features a range of modern commercial and residential buildings such as large scale 8 storey modern buildings at Leeds Dock and Brewery Wharf, and lower scale uses such as warehouse, car showrooms and light industry. It also features listed and unlisted industrial heritage assets such as Chadwick Lodge, the former Alf Cooke Printworks, and the Malthouse on Chadwick Street. In ranging

between three and four storeys, with a mixture of red-brick, glazing, and metal cladding, it is considered that overall the scheme features appropriate form, massing, architectural treatment and materials. However, Officers still have concern regarding the treatment of the block to Chadwick Street which is in render. The experience of previous developments in Leeds City Centre is that rendered finishes do not weather well without regular maintenance and repainting, and could potentially undermine the Council's aspiration for a high quality regeneration of the area.

#### **6.2.1 Do Members agree that the form, massing, architectural treatment and materials would be appropriate to the regeneration aspirations for the area?**

In considering how the Academy would integrate into a City Centre street context, the treatment of the site boundaries is particularly important. The building edge forming a boundary to Black Bull Street, including street tree planting is considered appropriate in an emerging City Centre context. However, the boundary treatment to the south of the site is proposed to be a 2.1m high paladin mesh fence, as is the boundary treatment to the proposed NGT land. Also the existing high brick wall to Chadwick Street is proposed to be retained. Notwithstanding the security and safeguarding concerns that the school may have, it is considered that the form and height of these boundary treatments need to be reconsidered so that they are more suitable for a City Centre environment.

#### **6.2.2 What are Members views on the proposed boundary treatment?**

#### **6.3 Pedestrian connectivity**

The Academy states that the site boundary must be secure for safeguarding reasons, and therefore given the level of accommodation provided, a public route through the site to link from the proposed new crossing on Black Bull Street to Leeds Dock cannot be achieved. The Academy has stated that they would offset this lack of pedestrian connection with community use of facilities, which would help integrate the school into the community. Whilst this is welcomed as a community facility, it would not meet the place-making and connectivity aspirations of the South Bank Planning Statement, and the requirements of Core Strategy Policies P10, SP3, CC2 and CC3. It is considered that the creation of a large impermeable development without taking the opportunity to provide and continue the emerging network of pedestrian connections east to west through the South Bank would potentially undermine the successful regeneration of this area.

#### **6.3.1 Do Members agree that it is necessary to secure a pedestrian and cycle connection through the site in order to enhance pedestrian connectivity between the South Bank and the rest of the City Centre?**

#### **6.4 Highways and transportation**

Highway issues remain to be resolved. Discussions with Highways Officers are on-going regarding the location of vehicular accesses, the amount and allocation of surface car parking, transport assessment, travel plan measures for staff and students, servicing and deliveries, bus pick-up and drop-off and the exact delivery of a new pedestrian crossing.

It is considered that developments need to deliver necessary infrastructure such as pedestrian crossing points, increased pavement widths and lane reductions, in order to make new development acceptable in relation to their impact. These matters remain to be resolved with the school.



**6.4.1 Do Members have any comments on the highway and transportation issues?**

**6.5 Planning obligations**

The proposal would not be subject to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) because it is a publicly funded project. Adopted policies are likely to result in the following necessary Section 106 matters:

- Provision of new public route(s) through the site
- Specific travel plan measures contributions
- Travel plan monitoring fee
- Cooperation with local jobs and skills initiatives

**6.5.1 Do Members have any comments to make about this range of likely Section 106 contributions?**

**Background Papers:**

South Bank Planning Statement

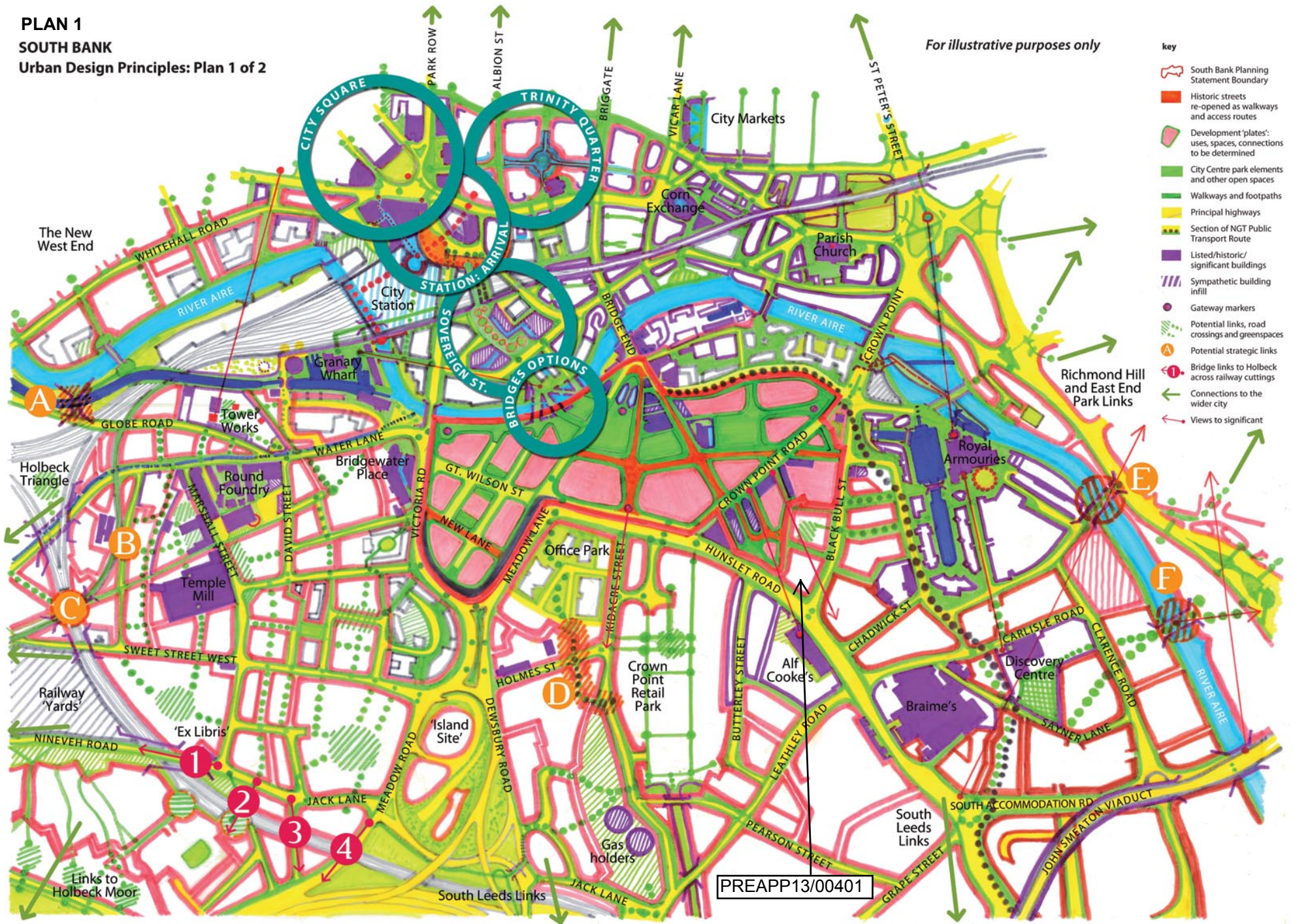
**Appendix 1 – Plan 1 South Bank Urban Design Principles**

# PLAN 1

## SOUTH BANK

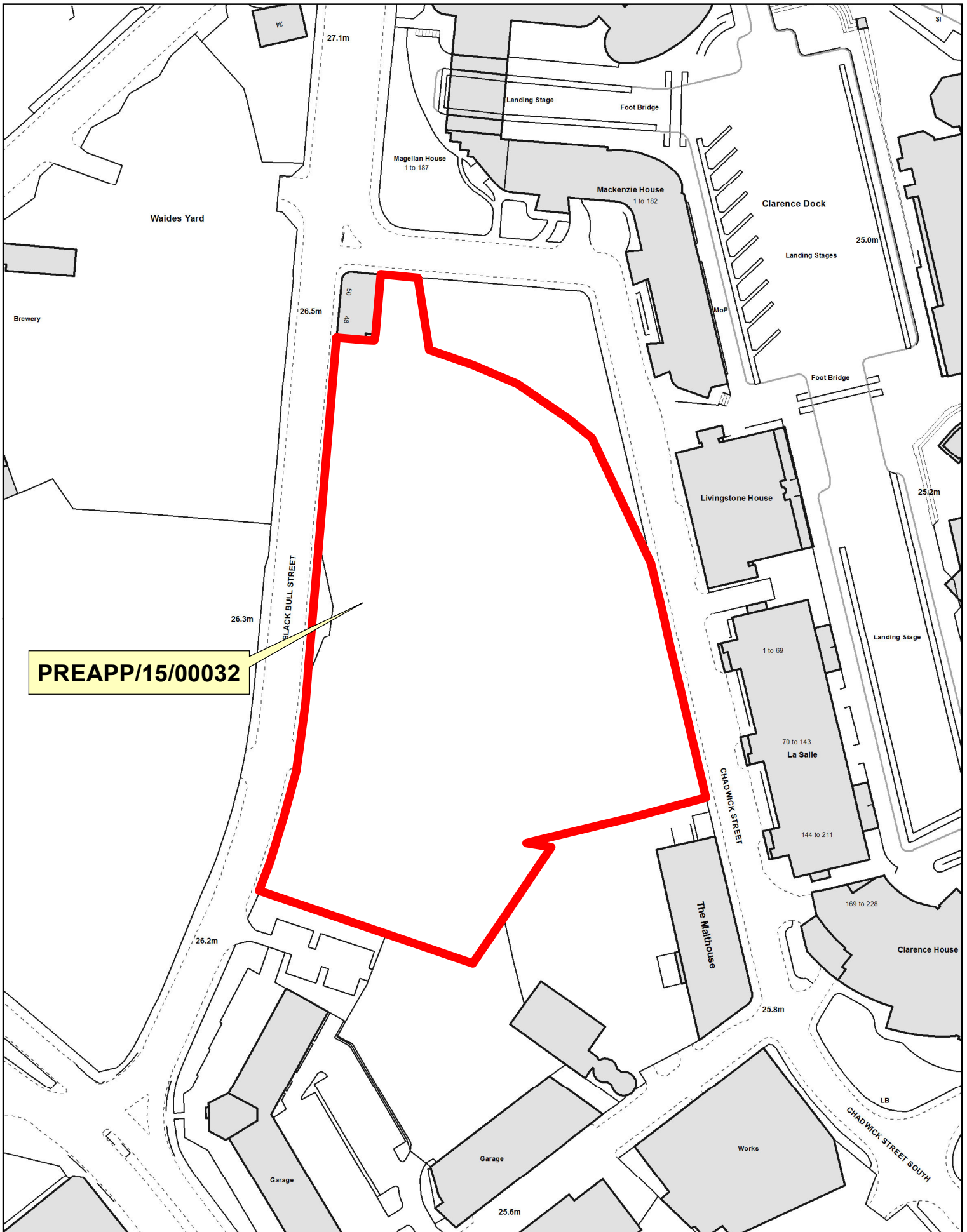
### Urban Design Principles: Plan 1 of 2

For illustrative purposes only



- key**
- South Bank Planning Statement Boundary
  - Historic streets re-opened as walkways and access routes
  - Development 'plates': uses, spaces, connections to be determined
  - City Centre park elements and other open spaces
  - Walkways and footpaths
  - Principal highways
  - Section of NGT Public Transport Route
  - Listed/historic/significant buildings
  - Sympathetic building infill
  - Gateway markers
  - Potential links, road crossings and greenspaces
  - Potential strategic links
  - Bridge links to Holbeck across railway cuttings
  - Connections to the wider city
  - Views to significant

PREAPP13/00401



**PREAPP/15/00032**

# CITY PLANS PANEL

