



Report of the Chief Planning Officer

CITY PLANS PANEL

15th OCTOBER 2015

PRE-APPLICATION PRESENTATION OF THE PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE AND EXTENSION OF CENTENARY HOUSE, NORTH STREET, LEEDS, TO FORM 79 RESIDENTIAL APARTMENTS AND AN A4 DRINKING ESTABLISHMENT (PREAPP/15/00600)

Electoral Wards Affected:

City and Hunslet

Yes

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

RECOMMENDATION: This report is brought to Plans Panel for information. The Developer will present the details of the scheme to allow Members to consider and comment on the proposals at this stage.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This presentation is intended to inform Members of the emerging proposals for Centenary House, a vacant grade II listed building situated on North Street, immediately beyond the Inner Ring Road. It is intended that the interior of the building is reconfigured, with extensions at roof level and to the west side, to form 79 residential units, together with a bar in part of the building fronting North Street.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2.1 Centenary House was originally constructed as the Leeds Public Dispensary in 1904. It was subsequently used for many years by groups including Leeds Society for Deaf and Blind People. It has been largely vacant for 3 years. The curved, eastern, end of the building fronts North Street. This element of the building is 4 storey, plus roof accommodation. This part of the building is most architecturally ornate both externally and internally. Levels rise from North Street towards the Inner Ring Road such that the range to the west, whilst maintaining a largely consistent eaves height, reduces to 2 and 3 storeys above ground level. The southern

elevation, facing the city centre, utilises the same Portland Stone plinth and red brick upper floors with stone dressings to windows as the North Street frontage but in a more basic form. The northern elevation, facing Back Brunswick Street, is very much plainer, finished entirely in red brick. Buildings at the extreme western end of the range are later additions with limited architectural merit. The southern elevation of the building historically fronted Hartley Hill, a road that was terminated by the construction of the Inner Ring Road. The triangular space between the building and the Inner Ring Road is now an unattractive hard-surfaced area used for car parking. Part of this area is owned by the City Council.

- 2.2 The Inner Ring Road is in a cutting at this point with buildings on the higher, western, side such as Brunswick Point and the Opal/CDV student tower very much larger in scale. The 4-5 storey vacant Caspar apartments are situated immediately north of Centenary House beyond Back Brunswick Street. Merchants House fronts the eastern side of North Street opposite Centenary House. The building incorporates a range of commercial uses at ground floor and 3 storeys of apartments above. Crispin House is situated south of Merchants House fronting New York Road. This listed building was converted into residential apartments during the last decade, involving a two storey extension at roof level. A bar has recently opened at ground floor of the building fronting North Street. Significant highway infrastructure, comprising the Inner Ring Road and the convergence of New Briggate, Vicar Lane and North Street, separates Centenary House from the heart of the city centre to the south.

3.0 PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The proposals involve the conversion of the existing building and demolition of later structures at its western end to enable a new extension to be constructed situated between the original building and the Inner Ring Road.
- 3.2 The original building would be converted into 36 residential apartments with a ground floor bar accessed directly from North Street. Removal of a previously inserted infill floor at first floor level would open up a double height communal space in the centre of the building. A new glazed roof would be constructed over a section of this space providing natural daylighting into the heart of the building. A new double height barrel roof structure either side of the glazed roof would accommodate 24 apartments.
- 3.3 A six storey lozenge-shaped extension is proposed at the west end of the building. The extension would be pivoted approximately 30 degrees away from the northern, rear, elevation of the building to reflect the form and position of the eastern end of the original building and also to respond to the alignment of the Inner Ring Road. A four-storey wedge-shaped extension is proposed in the gap between the lozenge extension and the original building.
- 3.4 The residential accommodation would comprise the following components:
- 37 studios ranging between 36sqm – 47sqm
 - 34 one bedroom apartments ranging between 47sqm – 70sqm
 - 8 two bedroom apartments ranging between 60sqm – 102sqm
- 3.5 The existing hard-surfaced space on the southern side of the building would be reconfigured and landscaped, whilst providing facilities for servicing and deliveries. However, no details of this were available at the time this report was drafted.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 The site has been the subject of several pre-application enquires over the last 4 years but none of these has progressed to the point of an application being submitted.
- 4.2 The current pre-application proposals initially identified a total of 97 apartments and involving a seven storey extension on the west end of the building.

5.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 5.1 City and Hunslet Ward Councillors were notified of the pre-application proposals, as originally submitted and following revision. Councillor Nash commented on the proposal as originally submitted. She stated that she had no objection to the principle of the proposed uses but commented that the extension should replicate or be in keeping with the existing building, and should not dominate it, which the seven storey extension did.
- 5.2 Highways have no objection in principle to the proposed uses. Further information is required regarding facilities provided for cycling; servicing arrangements; travel planning and how the provision of limited car parking provision would be managed.
- 5.3 Flood Risk Management recommend that as far as practicable rainwater harvesting and the reuse of some of the surface water runoff from the site should be incorporated into the overall drainage arrangements so that there will be no increase in the surface water runoff to the public sewers.
- 5.4 The Contaminated Land Team states that as the proposed end use is vulnerable and the site has been the subject of a past potentially contaminative land use, a minimum of a phase 1 desk study is required in support of the application. Depending on the outcome of the phase 1 a phase 2 site investigation and remediation statement may also be required.
- 5.5 The Bridges Team confirmed that a local reduction in the distance from the building to the Inner Ring Road retaining wall (minimum 1m) at a single pinch point would be acceptable, albeit other design criteria may govern the acceptable minimum clearance at this location.
- 5.6 Environmental Studies state that the site is located in an area known to have some of the poorest air quality in Leeds and is adjacent to an existing Air Quality Management Area. The residential element of the scheme makes it likely that an AQMA would need to be declared / extended to cover the development site should permission be granted. A detailed air quality assessment is required which should include mitigation measures to reduce exposure of residents to poor air quality wherever possible through, for example, locating commercial uses in the areas of poorest air quality and fitting mechanical ventilation.
- 5.7 SDU Landscape Team advise of the need for a full landscape scheme to achieve a coherent external space design for the development.

6.0 POLICY

- 6.1 **Development Plan**

6.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the application to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For the purposes of decision making, the Development Plan for Leeds currently comprises the following documents:

- The Leeds Core Strategy (Adopted November 2014)
- Saved UDP Policies (2006), included as Appendix 1 of the Core Strategy
- The Natural Resources & Waste Local Plan (NRWLP, Adopted January 2013) – with the exception of remitted Policy Minerals Policies 13 and 14, which are subject to further consultation, prior to submission and examination
- Any Neighbourhood Plan, once Adopted

6.2 **Core Strategy (CS)**

6.2.1 Relevant Core Strategy policies include:

Spatial and economic policies

Spatial Policy 1 prioritises the redevelopment of previously developed land within Main Urban Area, in a way that respects and enhances the local character and identity of places and neighbourhoods.

Spatial Policy 3 seeks to maintain and enhance the role of the City Centre as an economic driver for the District and City Region, including by expanding city living with a broader housing mix.

Spatial Policy 6 identifies the housing requirement and allocation of housing land.

Spatial Policy 7 sets out the spatial distribution of the district wide housing requirement between Housing Market Characteristic Areas. The site is in the City Centre with a requirement to provide 10,200 units (2012-28)

Spatial Policy 11 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.

City Centre policies

Policy CC1 outlines the planned growth within the City Centre for 10,200 new dwellings, supporting services and open spaces. Part (b) encourages residential development, providing that it does not prejudice town centre functions and provides a reasonable level of amenity for occupiers.

Policy CC3 states new development will need to provide and improve walking and cycling routes connecting the City Centre with adjoining neighbourhoods, and improve connections with the City Centre.

Housing policies

Policy H2 indicates new housing will be acceptable in principle on non-allocated sites providing the number of dwellings does not exceed the capacity of transport, educational or health infrastructure.

Policy H3 states that housing development should meet or exceed 65 dwellings per hectare in the City Centre.

Policy H4 states that developments should include an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes to address needs measured over the long term taking into account the nature of the development and character of the location.

Policy H5 identifies affordable housing requirements. According to the policy, the affordable housing requirement would be 5% of the total number of units, with 40% for households on lower quartile earnings and 60% for households on lower decile earnings.

Policy H8 states developments of more than 49 dwellings should include support for Independent Living.

Design, conservation and other policies

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 that development protects and enhance the district's historic assets in particular, historically and locally important buildings, skylines and views.

Policy P11 states that the historic environment will be conserved and their settings will be conserved, particularly those elements which help to give Leeds its distinct identity. Enabling development may be supported in the vicinity of historic assets where linked to the refurbishment or repair of heritage assets.

Policy P12 states that landscapes, including their historical and cultural significance, will be conserved and enhanced.

Policies T1 and T2 identify transport management and accessibility requirements to ensure new development is adequately served by highways and public transport, and with safe and secure access for pedestrians, cyclists and people with impaired mobility.

Policy G9 states that development will need to demonstrate biodiversity improvements.

Policies EN1 & EN2 set targets for CO² reduction and sustainable design and construction, including Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 and at least 10% low or zero carbon energy production on-site.

6.3 Saved Unitary Development Plan Review policies (UDPR)

6.3.1 Relevant Saved Policies include

- GP5 All relevant planning considerations to be resolved.
- N15 Change of use of Listed Buildings favourably considered providing the new use does not diminish the special qualities of the building.
- N16 Extensions to listed buildings only accepted where they relate sensitively to the original.
- N17 Features and the plan form which contribute to the character of a listed building should be preserved.
- BD2 New buildings should complement and enhance existing skylines, vistas and landmarks.
- BD5 Ensure a satisfactory level of amenity for occupants and surroundings.
- T24 Parking provision should reflect detailed UDP parking guidelines.

- T7A Cycle parking requirements.
- T7B Motorcycle parking requirements.
- LD1 Sets out criteria for landscape schemes.

6.4 **Natural Resources & Waste DPD 2013**

6.4.1 The plan sets out where land is needed to enable the City to manage resources, such as 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 drainage, air quality, coal recovery and land contamination are relevant to this proposal.

6.5 Other material considerations

6.5.1 **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

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.
- 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.

The NPPF states that LPA's should recognise that residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres (para 23). Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 49).

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. Paragraph 49 states that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF states that local authorities should deliver a wide choice of homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities (para 50).

Local planning authorities should identify and bring back into residential use empty housing and buildings. They should normally approve planning applications for change to residential use and any associated development from commercial buildings (currently in the B use classes) where there is an identified need for additional housing in that area, provided that there are not strong economic reasons why such development would be inappropriate (para 51).

Section 7 states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. It is important that design is inclusive and of high quality. Key principles include:

- Establishing a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;

- Optimising the potential of the site to accommodate development;
- Respond to local character and history;
- Reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;
- Create safe and accessible environments; and
- Development to be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

Paragraph 131 states that Local Planning Authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities, including their economic viability.

6.6 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
 SPG3 Affordable Housing and the interim affordable housing policy
 SPG Neighbourhoods for Living

6.7 The Leeds Standard and the DCLG Technical Housing Standards

The Leeds Standard sets out the importance of excellent quality housing in supporting the economic growth ambitions of the Council. The Leeds Standard sets a target of 37m² for a self-contained studio flat; 47m² for a one-bedroom flat and 60m² for a two-bedroom flat. This standard closely reflects the Government's Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard which seek to promote a good standard of internal amenity for all housing types and tenures. Whilst neither of these documents has been adopted as formal planning policy in Leeds given their evidence base in determining the minimum space requirements they are currently used to inform decisions on the acceptability of development proposals.

7.0 ISSUES

Members are asked to comment on the proposals and to consider the following matters:

7.1 Principle of the use

7.1.1 The proposal is for a predominantly residential development within the existing and extended building. The National Planning Policy Framework, Core Strategy, and Leeds Unitary Development Plan Review saved policies all support the principle of residential development within this area. A bar (A4) is proposed at lower ground level accessed directly from North Street. Such a use would complement other commercial activities in the area and help to activate the North Street frontage.

7.1.4 **Do Members consider that the proposed uses are acceptable in principle?**

7.2 Heritage and townscape considerations

- 7.2.1 The proposed development would ensure future use and subsequent maintenance of the listed building. Whereas the building as a whole is listed, the quality of the building, both externally and internally, reduces from its east (North Street) to west end. Accordingly, alterations are limited at the eastern end and more significant moving towards the west. The internal fabric and layout at the eastern end would be largely retained. Reflecting its original use as a public dispensary much of the remaining interior of the listed building is functional in appearance. New internal partitions would respect the position of existing windows. The removal of a previously inserted infill floor at first floor level would re-open and restore the former waiting area as a double height communal space in the centre of the building. A new glazed roof would be constructed over a section of this space providing natural daylighting into the heart of the building. The existing roof has limited impact when viewed from longer distance views from the south. It is barely visible closer to the building. It is intended to remove the roof (other than over the North Street element) and to replace it with a new double height barrel roof structure in a similar style to the one introduced at Crispin House. This larger roof would have a more significant presence than that existing but, subject to detailed design and use of sympathetic, high quality, materials would be a similar height as the apex of the roof over the North Street element and not appear overdominant or incongruous.
- 7.2.2 As noted, the existing buildings at the west end of Centenary House do not relate to the form or appearance of the main building and there is nothing of historic or architectural interest internally. Their loss would not be harmful to the listed building or to its setting. The replacement extension is designed to reflect the form and position of the eastern end of the original building and also to respond to the alignment of the Inner Ring Road. The extension would be around a storey taller than the new roof of the main building albeit with an eaves line at a similar level. The step up from east to west is an appropriate response to the changing levels across the site. Similarly, the scale of this part of the building would not appear out of place directly adjacent to the Inner Ring Road cutting, a significant piece of highway infrastructure, or when viewed against the back-drop of larger scaled buildings on the west side of the Inner Ring Road. The four-storey wedge-shaped extension proposed in the gap between the extension and the original building would, subject to detail, represent a suitable transition between the old and the new.
- 7.2.3 As noted, the building will benefit from a good-sized, double-height, communal space. However, the site itself is constrained by existing highways such that external amenity space is likely to be limited. Notwithstanding, it is considered that the existing space to the south of the building needs to be sensitively hard and soft landscaped to provide an appropriate setting to the building. Ideally, this space should include the piece of land within Council ownership. No details of landscaping proposals were available when this report was drafted.
- 7.2.3 Do Members consider that the proposed alterations and extensions, subject to detailed design and provision of an appropriate landscape scheme, have an acceptable impact upon the listed building and wider townscape?**

7.3 Residential amenity

- 7.3.1 The current proposals identify 79 residential units comprising the following components:
- 37 studios ranging between 36sqm – 47sqm
 - 34 one bedroom apartments ranging between 47sqm – 70sqm
 - 8 two bedroom apartments ranging between 60sqm – 102sqm

7.3.2 Other than for one unit, all apartments would meet or exceed the targets identified in the Leeds Standard and National Standards. This studio unit would be situated at third floor level on the southern side of the building. The suggested layout appears acceptable in terms of available space and ability to easily move around the studio and occupiers would benefit from good levels of daylighting and also an extensive outlook towards the south. As with other units, occupiers of this studio would also be able to utilise the communal area located in the centre of the building.

7.3.3 Centenary House is located in close proximity to several major roads. Heavy vehicle use of the roads results in some of the poorest air quality in Leeds and significant road noise. However, given the period of time which the property has been on the market it is unlikely that a non-residential use will come forward in the near future. There are also several other residential properties in the immediate area with similar issues, including Crispin House, Merchants House, Caspar House (vacant) and 74 North Street. Given the need to find a viable use for the listed building, and recognising the wider need for housing in sustainable locations, the utilisation of mechanical ventilation, drawing air from elevated points on the building would in combination of high specification glazing provide acceptable air quality and internal noise environment.

7.3.4 Do Members consider that, subject to the provision of mechanical ventilation and suitable noise mitigation by way of acoustic glazing, the amenities offered to occupiers of the building would be acceptable?

7.4.1 Policy H4 of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure that new housing is of a range of types and sizes to meet the mix of households expected over the Plan period, taking account of preferences and demand in different parts of the city. With this in mind the Policy is worded to offer flexibility. 47% of the units would be studios; 43% of the units would be one-bedroom; and 10% of the units would be two-bedroom, many with the capacity to accommodate more than two people. However, the Core Strategy target of 30% three-bedroom and 10% four-bedroom appears unrealistic in this location.

7.4.2 What are Members' views on the mix of residential accommodation proposed?

7.5 Transport and Access

7.5.1 The site is located in a sustainable location close to the many amenities offered by the City Centre. Highways have no objection in principle to the proposed uses which are likely to generate fewer vehicular movements than the previous use of the building. Further information is needed with the planning application regarding facilities to be provided for cycling; servicing arrangements; travel planning and how the provision of limited car parking provision would be managed. However, space is available to the front of the building which, as part of a landscaping scheme, could be designed to incorporate suitable provisions for servicing the building.

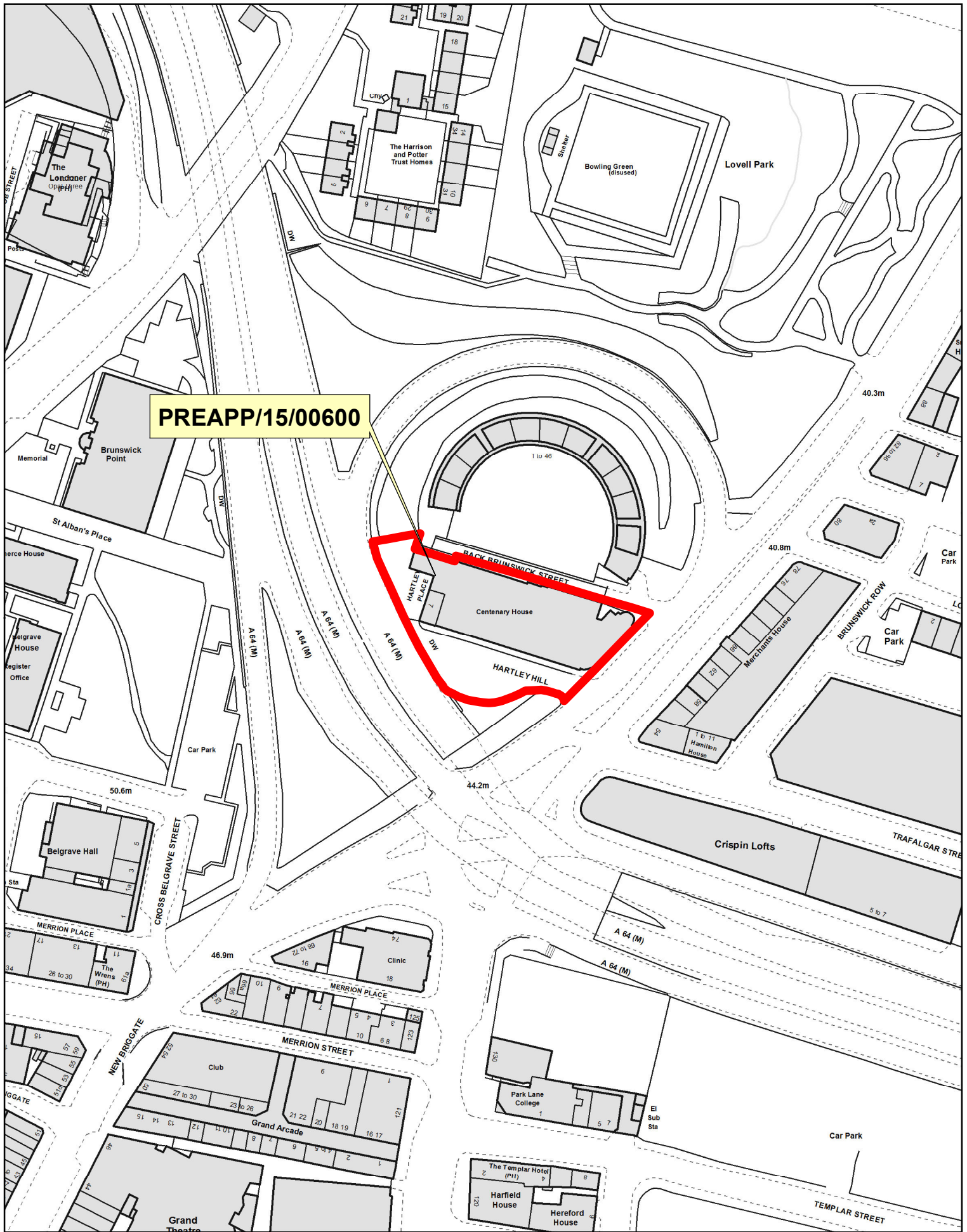
7.5.2 Do Members agree that, subject to the provision of suitable details of measures to service the building and how sustainable transport facilities will be provided that limited car parking provision is acceptable at the site?

7.6 Other matters

7.6.1 The building has been on the market for several years and largely vacant for much of that time. Accordingly, the owners of the building are hoping to sell the building as

soon as possible so as to release funds to provide permanent replacement facilities for those lost at Centenary House.

7.6.2 Subject to the issues above being resolved and no other significant issues arising do Members agree that, when submitted, the planning and listed building applications can be determined on a delegated basis?



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