



Report of the Chief Planning Officer

CITY PLANS PANEL

27th OCTOBER 2016

Pre-application presentation of the proposed new Centre for Creative Arts for Leeds Beckett University, Portland Way and Calverley Street, Leeds (PREAPP/16/00385)

Applicant – Leeds Beckett University

Electoral Wards Affected:

City and Hunslet

Yes

Ward Members consulted

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 a new creative arts building for Leeds Beckett University (LBU). The building would bring together university facilities for film, music, performing arts and fashion in order to improve the student experience, to diversify recruitment, enhance transferable skills and employability of the students and to accommodate the recent growth in creative arts courses.
- 1.2 The building would occupy land north of the junction of Portland Way and Calverley Street adjacent to the student accommodation buildings which have recently been completed by Downing and opposite the west wing of the Civic Hall. The development would be a joint venture between LBU and Downing. The project architect is responsible for the earlier phases developed by Downing.
- 1.3 A planning application is likely to be submitted later in the year with the intention that the new facility would open in Autumn 2019.

2.0 Site and surroundings

- 2.1 The site is currently vacant having been previously occupied by Leeds Metropolitan University buildings until demolition a decade ago. Most recently it has been used as the site compound for the new student accommodation buildings on land immediately to the north-west. A new pedestrian route has recently been opened along the north-eastern boundary linking Portland Way and the heart of the new student accommodation, whilst also providing opportunities for enhanced routes into the university's Portland and Calverley Buildings which flank the site.
- 2.2 The surrounding area is mainly characterised by institutional and civic uses. As noted, the LBU city centre campus is situated immediately to the north of the site. A new entrance to the campus via the Portland Building is nearing completion alongside Portland Way. Leeds General Infirmary is situated across Calverley Street to the west and the Civic Hall and the LBU Rosebowl building are located beyond Portland Way to the south east. The University of Leeds campus is located directly to the north of the Inner Ring Road.
- 2.3 The campus is located between the University Conservation Area, the City Centre Conservation Area and Queen Square Conservation Area. The Civic Hall is grade II* listed. Trees around the periphery of the site are protected by Tree Preservation Order (No.22) 2007.

3.0 Proposals

- 3.1 The feasibility designs were developed in line with the vision of LBU to deliver world-class teaching and academic facilities in a gateway location to the university campus. Briefs were prepared for each of the schools (film, music, performing arts and fashion) to assist the identification of accommodation requirements and key linkages. The complexity of the brief was further complicated by the need for more than a third of the building to be double or triple height volumes.
- 3.2 The building would be situated parallel to the recently completed student accommodation buildings and at a right angle to the LBU Portland Building. The northern end of the building would abut the recently opened footway linking Portland Way and the centre of the campus on the same alignment as the most recently constructed student accommodation buildings to the west. The southern face of the building would be set back approximately 5 metres from Calverley Street at its closest point whilst the most easterly elevation would follow the same building line established by the university's Woodhouse Building on Portland Way.
- 3.3 The building would comprise a series of interlocking volumes situated above a deep basement. The element of the building closest to Portland Way would be 5-6 storeys above ground, equivalent to the height of the glazed hub of the Rose Bowl to the east. Beyond this, the building would rise to 9 storeys, a similar height to the closest new student building to the west. The eastern side of this element would be aligned with the gable end of the Portland Building. The front quarter of this segment of the building would step down to equivalent to 6 storeys, the same height as the front portion of the new buildings facing Calverley Street. The Calverley Street facing elevations of both sections of buildings would be cantilevered above the lower and upper ground floors. The elevations fronting Calverley Street and Portland Way would have active frontages. The building would contain the following functions:
- TV studio
 - Acoustic testing lab

- Theatre
- Prop stores and workshops
- Black box studio, recording studios, fashion studios, performance studios and film studios
- Ensemble rooms and production offices
- Social learning and café
- Cinema
- Teaching space
- Academic and staff offices
- Computer labs

3.4 There would be two principal entrances to the building. A “city entrance” would be located close to the junction of Calverley Street and Portland Way leading into a large social learning and café space. The “student entrance” would be situated at the northern end of this area, close to the Portland Building. Vehicular access into a loading bay would be taken from Calverley Street.

3.5 The university’s policy is for all applicable projects to reach a BREEAM Excellent rating to ensure energy efficiency, sustainable design and on-site renewable energy generation where practicable.

3.6 The areas between the building and the highway would be laid out as extended public space, potentially including street trees.

4.0 Relevant planning history

4.1 A seven storey hotel was approved at the junction of Portland Way and Calverley Street in June 2012 but not progressed (11/04582/FU).

4.2 Formal pre-application discussions regarding the current scheme began during the summer. During the course of the discussions the mass of the building has reduced by 20 per cent.

5.0 Consultation responses

5.1 LCC Highways - There is not enough information yet to enable a highways assessment and so further information on parking, access, servicing arrangements and proposed off-site highways works if necessary is awaited

5.2 LCC Flood Risk Management (Drainage) – the appropriate surface water drainage arrangements for the site should be determined by an analysis of the prevailing conditions in order to definitely discount the use of soakaways prior to the consideration of a positive drainage system to the public sewer as there are no nearby watercourses to which surface water may be discharged.

5.2.1 Where the use of soakaway has been discounted surface water discharges should be in accordance with the council’s Minimum Development Control Standards for Flood Risk with the allowable rate of discharge based on a 30% reduction of the existing rate of discharge from the site. . A surface water attenuation system would therefore be required to ensure that the allowable discharge rate is not exceeded for the 1 in 100 year event, including a 30% uplift for climate change.

5.3 LCC Contaminated Land Team – a review of previously submitted information is required as part of a desk study. Depending on the outcome of the Phase I Desk

Study, a Phase II (Site Investigation) Report and Remediation Statement may also be required.

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) including revised policies Minerals 13 and 14 (Adopted September 2015).
- Any Neighbourhood Plan, once Adopted

6.2 Core Strategy

6.2.1 Relevant Core Strategy policies include:

Spatial Policy 1 prioritises the redevelopment of previously developed land within the 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 (iii) valuing the contributions to the life, vitality and economy of the City Centre made by the universities.

Policy CC1(c) states that university facilities are to be retained in the City Centre.

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 and its settings will be conserved, particularly those elements which help to give Leeds its distinct identity.

Policies T1 and T2 identify transport management and accessibility requirements.

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

Policies EN1 and EN2 set targets for CO² reduction and sustainable design and construction, 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:

N19 states that all new buildings within or within the setting of Conservation Areas should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

BD2 states that new buildings should complement and enhance existing skylines, vistas and landmarks.

BD5 requires new buildings to consider both their own amenity and that of their surroundings including usable space, privacy and satisfactory daylight and sunlight.

6.4 **Natural Resources & Waste DPD 2013**

6.4.1 Development should conserve trees wherever possible. Where removal is agreed suitable tree replacement should be provided on a minimum three for one replacement to loss.

6.5 Other material considerations

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

National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF recognises the presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 14). The NPPF identifies 12 core planning principles (para 17) which include that planning should:

- Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development;
- Seek high quality design.

Section 7 states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. 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;
- 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.

7.0 **Issues**

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

7.1 Principle of the development

7.1.1 The university creative arts facilities are presently scattered across the city centre and beyond. The building would bring together university facilities for film, music, performing arts and fashion on a vacant, previously developed, site which forms part of the university's city centre campus. The building would abut the university's Portland Building and recent student accommodation constructed on the campus. The proposals accord with policies SP3 and CC1(c) of the Core Strategy which support the university's role within the city centre.

- 7.1.2 **Do Members consider that the proposed development is acceptable in principle?**
- 7.2 Heritage and townscape considerations
- 7.2.1 The proposed building represents the final piece of the masterplan for the redevelopment of the site envisaged when Leeds Metropolitan University buildings at the junction of Portland Way and Calverley Street were demolished in 2007-2008. The site is located in close proximity to the City Centre conservation area and to listed buildings including the Civic Hall. The site is seen in the context of these buildings when looking north along Calverley Street. Special regard needs to be paid to the desirability of preserving the listed buildings and their setting. Additionally, special attention needs to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.
- 7.2.2 The position of the proposed building maintains the orthogonal order established by the original 1960's masterplan and continued by the more recent City Campus development by Downing. At the eastern edge, the building follows the building line of the Woodhouse Building to the north, critically set back from Portland Way so as to preserve the spatial character of the street present along Calverley Street and Portland Way. The set-back also helps to ease the relationship with the Civic Hall. In common with its neighbours the proposed building steps forward towards Calverley Street. However, the building would be 5 metres wider than the most recently constructed ones fronting Calverley Street and 5 metres closer to its neighbour than ideal to continue the rhythm of space and development produced by the new buildings. The northern edge of the building would be constructed on an identical alignment to the two newly constructed ones, 7.5 metres from the Portland Building, and thereby strengthening the newly created footpath link.
- 7.2.3 The massing of the proposed building utilises key principles established by neighbouring buildings. The building would, at its tallest point, be approximately 1 metre taller than the new building to the west, in itself, a difference that would not be readily discernible. The front piece of the building, 16.5 metres in depth, steps down 18 metres to an identical height to the front section of the two new buildings to the west. The width of this front section would be approximately 3 metres wider than its recently constructed neighbours. The easternmost element of the building would be the same height as the front piece helping to mediate the change in scale from the tallest element of the building and the Civic Hall and Rose Bowl located to the south and the east.
- 7.2.4 **Do Members consider that the scale and position of the proposed new building and its relationship with the surrounding context is acceptable?**
- 7.2.5 The proposed building is a combination of different volumes carefully assembled to function effectively and to present a cohesive form. Differing functions within the building also have a variety of requirements, from black acoustically sealed boxes such as the cinema, to areas such as the café and performance areas which could be more transparent and activate the streetscene. Detailed architecture has yet to emerge although the applicant is mindful of the need for the architecture, and materiality, to have a calmness that respects its juxtaposition with neighbouring buildings such as the Civic Hall. A combination of stone and glazing is likely albeit the architect is keen to utilise these materials in a more contemporary way rather than to simply replicate the detail on the two new neighbouring buildings to the west.

7.2.6 Do Members have any comments regarding the emerging architectural approach?

7.3 Landscape

7.3.1 Mature trees, primarily located around the junction of Calverley Street and Portland Way, presently enhance the appearance of the wider site and the streetscene. The trees are protected by TPO. However, it is likely that these trees would need to be removed to enable the development. Their loss would have a far greater impact than other previously removed trees further along the Calverley Street frontage given their prominent, corner, location. Consequently, notwithstanding other benefits of the scheme it is important that new street trees are planted to mitigate for any loss and also to help provide a suitable setting for the new development.

7.3.2 Indicative site plans suggest that the space between the new building and the highway would be laid out as an extension of the existing footway, in part, to provide a route to the new entrances to the building but also to create a new area of public realm. The proposed arrangement has the capacity to create a much improved pedestrian experience around the junction of Calverley Street and Portland Way.

7.3.3 Do Members consider that the layout of the new public realm needs to fully mitigate for any tree loss and to produce an attractive setting for the new development and the wider streetscene?

7.4 Conclusion

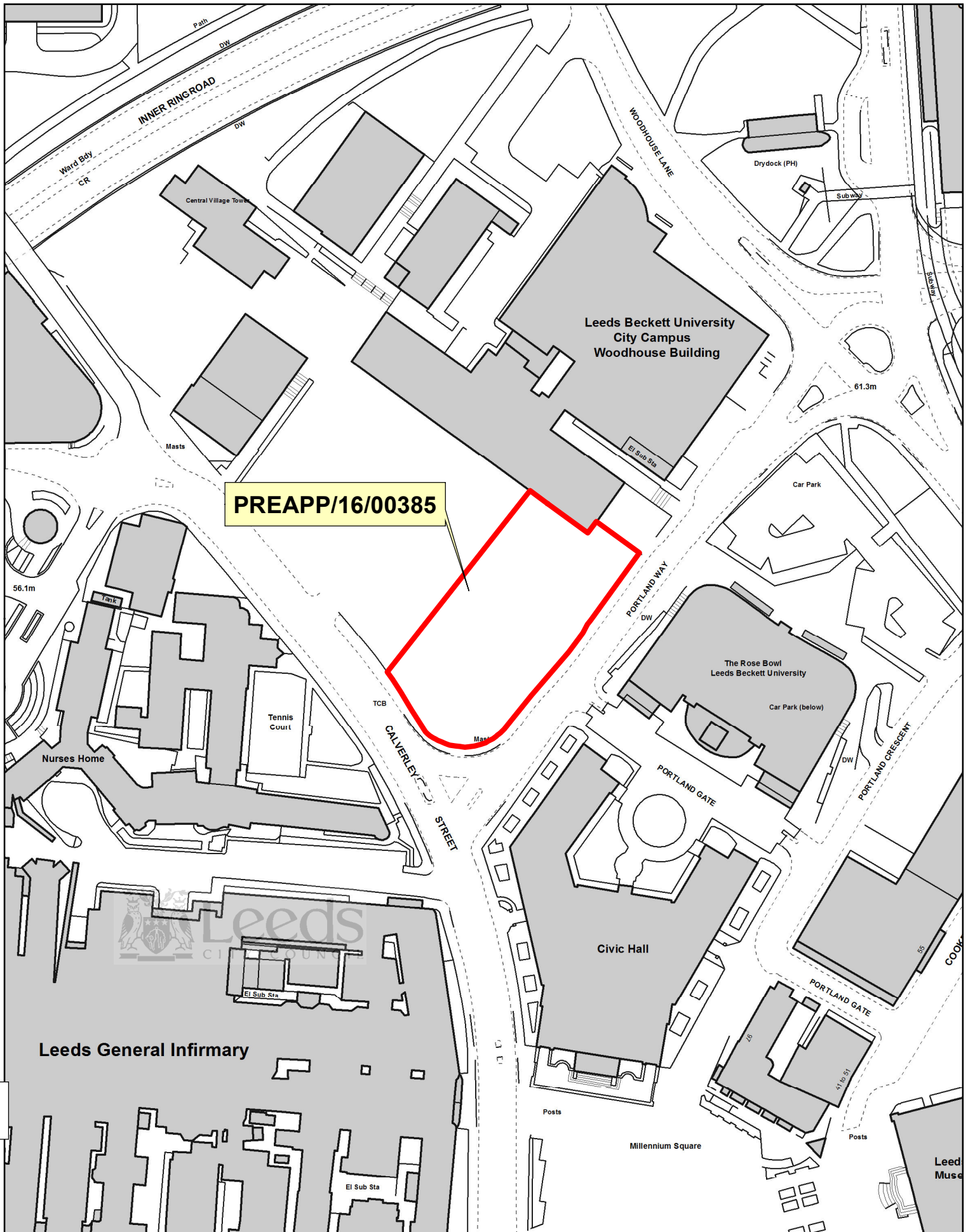
7.4.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the report and the presentation, and are invited to provide feedback, in particular, on the issues outlined below:

Do Members consider that the proposed development is acceptable in principle? (7.1.2)

Do Members consider that the scale and position of the proposed new building and its relationship with the surrounding context is acceptable? (7.2.4)

Do Members have any comments regarding the emerging architectural approach? (7.2.6)

Do Members consider that a hard and soft landscaping scheme needs to fully mitigate for any tree loss and to produce an attractive setting for the new development and wider streetscene? (7.3.3)



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Rev	Description	Date
P02	Update to include trees along Portland Way	12.10.2016

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Project
New Performing Arts Leeds
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Drawing
Site Positioning GA

Scale	Date
1 : 500 @ A3	23/09/2016

Drawn By	Checked By
SB	SH

Job Number	Status	Purpose of Issue
1659	S2	End of Stage

Drawing No.	Rev
LBU-HBA-00-XX-DR-A-00_0001	P02