



## Report of the Chief Planning Officer

### CITY PLANS PANEL

Date: 29 June 2017

**Subject: Preapplication PREAPP/17/00138 for a major planning application relating to Build to Rent residential development of 8-14 storeys with approximately 300 apartments, a convenience shopping A1 Use Class retail unit, landscaping, parking and associated works at land off Flax Place and Richmond Street, Leeds, LS9 8HG**

**Applicant – Doone Silver Kerr Architects**

#### Electoral Wards Affected:

City & 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 will present the details of the emerging 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 at an early stage of the emerging proposals for a residential scheme on a site near the edge of the designated City Centre. The proposal is brought to City Plans Panel as the development involves the re-use of brownfield land and a major investment in a significant site on the East Street corridor.

### 2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

2.1 The site is located within the defined City Centre but is not allocated for a specific use on the Local Development Framework (LDF) Policies Map. The site lies within the boundary covered by the emerging Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan (AVLAAP) which is being prepared in accordance with Core Strategy Spatial Policy 5 and will form part of the LDF when adopted. The draft AVLAAP identifies the site for housing use under Policy AVL6. This allocation was not subject to a specific objection following consultation on the draft plan which was subject to Examination

in Public in January 2017 with main modifications consultation ending on 8th June 2017 and can therefore be afforded significant weight.

### **3.0 PROPOSAL:**

- 3.1 The proposed development seeks to provide a predominantly residential development across two stepped blocks of 8 to 14 storeys in height housing some 300 apartments. These are currently proposed to be the following mix;
- 11 studio apartments
  - 147 one bedroomed apartments
  - 130 two bedroomed apartments
  - 12 three bedroomed apartments.
- 3.2 In addition to the front of the site where it meets East Street and Richmond Street a convenience shopping A1 Use Class retail unit is also proposed. The landscape scheme features include public open spaces around the buildings and roof top terracing for more private resident's usage. Car and cycle parking is also proposed with the added opportunity to provide City Car Club space/s within the site.

### **4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:**

- 4.1 None

### **5.0 HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS:**

- 5.1 The proposals have been the subject of pre-application discussions between the Developers, their Architects, and Local Authority Officers since February 2017. These discussions have focused on scale, massing and design, flood risk, cycle and car parking levels and access, affordable housing and room size standards. The preapplication presentation is a response to these discussions.
- 5.2 Ward Members were consulted on 10 May 2017. Councillor Nash responding querying whether this was a location that could affect or contribute towards a new train station at site on Marsh Lane.  
Response: Highways Transport Policy Team has advised that at present there is no defined site for such a station, although the location of former facilities (which closed in 1958) would not be adversely affected by the proposed development. The Leeds Public Transport Investment Programme includes proposals for three new stations (Thorpe Park, White Rose and near Leeds Bradford Airport) however the Marsh Lane station is not yet programmed and as such there is no scheme for the developer to contribute towards.

### **6.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES:**

- 6.1 The Development Plan for Leeds currently comprises the following documents:
1. The Leeds Core Strategy (Adopted November 2014)
  2. Saved Leeds Unitary Development Plan Policies (Reviewed 2006), included as Appendix 1 of the Core Strategy
  3. The Natural Resources & Waste Local Plan (NRWLP, Adopted January 2013) including revised policies Minerals 13 and 14 (Adopted September 2015).
  4. Any Neighbourhood Plan, once Adopted
- 6.2 **Leeds Core Strategy**

- 6.3 The Core Strategy sets out strategic level policies and vision to guide the delivery of development investment decisions and the overall future of the district.
- 6.4 Spatial Policy 1: Location Of Development states that;  
(i) The majority of new development should be concentrated within urban areas taking advantage of existing services, high levels of accessibility and priorities for urban regeneration and an appropriate balance of brownfield and greenfield land
- 6.5 Spatial Policy 5: Aire Valley Leeds Urban Eco-settlement  
Aire Valley Leeds (Urban Eco–Settlement) is identified as a strategic location, providing a minimum of 6,500 new homes, at least 250 hectares of land for employment uses (including research and development, industrial, and warehouse development) and new retail services of an appropriate scale.
- 6.6 Policy CC1: City Centre Development  
The City Centre will be planned to accommodate at least the following:  
(iii) 10,200 dwellings.  
b) Encouraging residential development including new buildings and changes of use of existing providing that it does not prejudice the town centre.  
Addressing where and how much A1 retail is appropriate.
- 6.7 Policy EN1: Climate Change – Carbon Dioxide Reduction states that all developments of over 1,000 square metres of floorspace, (including conversion where feasible) whether new-build or conversion, will be required to:  
(i) Reduce total predicted carbon dioxide emissions to achieve 20% less than the Building Regulations Target Emission Rate until 2016 when all development should be zero carbon; and,  
(ii) Provide a minimum of 10% of the predicted energy needs of the development from low carbon energy.
- 6.8 Policy EN2: Sustainable Design and Construction states that to require developments of 1,000 or more square metres or 10 or more dwellings (including conversion) where feasible) to meet at least the standard set by BREEAM or Code for Sustainable Homes. In line with the Government’s recent amendments the standard is for Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 or equivalent.
- 6.9 Policy EN5: Managing Flood Risk states that the Council will manage and mitigate flood risk:  
(iii) Requiring flood risk to be considered for all development commensurate with the scale and impact of the proposed development and mitigated where appropriate.  
(iv) Reducing the speed and volume of surface water run-off as part of new build developments.  
(v) Making space for flood water in high flood risk areas.
- 6.10 Policy G5: Open Space Provision in the City Centre states that within the City Centre, open space provision will be sought for sites over 0.5 hectares.
- 6.11 Policy H4: to achieve an appropriate Housing Mix on residential sites, for setting targets for different dwelling sizes and types as detailed in the table below.  
Table H4: Preferred Housing Mix (2012 – 2028)

Type	Max %	Min %	Target %
Houses	90	50	75
Flats	50	10	25
Size	Max %	Min %	Target %
1 bed	50	0	10
2 bed	80	30	50
3 bed	70	20	30
4 bed+	50	0	10

- 6.12 Policy H5 incorporates Targets and Thresholds for affordable housing. In this case 5% of the total units to be provided on site must be affordable housing.
- 6.13 Policy P10: Design states that: New development for buildings and spaces, and alterations to existing, should be based on a thorough contextual analysis to provide good design appropriate to its scale and function.  
New development will be expected to deliver high quality innovative design that has evolved, where appropriate, through community consultation and which respects and enhances the variety of existing landscapes, streets, spaces and buildings according to the particular local distinctiveness and wider setting of the place, contributing positively towards place making and quality of life and be accessible to all.
- 6.14 Policy T1: Transport Management states that support will be given to the following management priorities:  
c) To support wider transport strategy objectives for sustainable travel and to minimise congestion during peak periods.
- 6.15 Policy T2: Accessibility Requirements and New Development states that new development should be located in accessible locations that are adequately served by existing or programmed highways, by public transport and with safe and secure access for pedestrians, cyclists and people with impaired mobility:  
(i) In locations where development is otherwise considered acceptable new infrastructure may be required on/off site to ensure that there is adequate provision for access from the highway network, by public transport and for cyclists, pedestrians and people with impaired mobility, which will not create or materially add to problems of safety, environment or efficiency on the highway network.
- 6.16 **Leeds Unitary Development Plan Review 2006 - Retained Policies**  
Policy ARC6 (Conditions required with regard to preservation of archaeological details by record)  
Policy BD2 (Design and siting of new buildings)  
Policy BD5 (All new buildings and amenity)  
Policy GP5 (All planning considerations)  
Policy LD1 (landscaping schemes)  
Policy N23 (Space around new buildings)
- 6.17 **Leeds Natural Resources and Waste DPD 2013 including revised policies Minerals 13 and 14 (Adopted September 2015).**
- 6.18 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 land use, energy, coal recovery, drainage, flood risk and waste will be relevant to this proposal.

6.19 **Draft Site Allocations Plan**

6.20 The draft Site Allocations Plan designates the site as suitable for housing.

6.21 **Draft Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan (AVLAAP)**

6.22 The draft AVLAAP identifies the site for housing use under Policy AVL6. This allocation is not subject to a specific objection following consultation on the draft plan and can therefore be afforded significant weight.

6.23 **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

6.24 Tall Buildings Design Guide (Spring 2010)

6.25 Parking (January 2016)

6.26 Street Design Guide (August 2009)

6.27 Supplementary Planning Document 'Travel Plans' (February 2015)

6.28 **Other Material Considerations**

6.29 DCLG – Technical Housing Standards 2015 – Sets out internal space standards within new dwellings and is suitable for applications across all tenures. The housing standards are a material consideration in dealing with planning applications. The government's Planning Practice Guidance advises that where a local planning authority wishes to require an internal space standard it should only do so by reference in the local plan to the nationally described space standard. With this in mind the city council is currently developing the Leeds Space Standard. However, as the Leeds Standard is at an early stage within the local plan process, and is in the process of moving towards adoption, only limited weight can be attached at this stage but this may change as the proposals are progressed through the planning system.

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

6.31 The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF) was adopted in March 2012 and sets out the Government's planning policies and how they expect them to be applied.

6.32 Paragraph 6 of the NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and paragraph 14 goes on to state that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

6.33 Paragraph 17 of the NPPF sets out the Core Planning Principles for plan making and decision taking. The 4th principle listed states that planning should always seek high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

6.34 The 6th principle listed states that planning should support the transition to a low carbon future and encourage the use of renewable resources, including the development of renewable energy.

- 6.35 The 8th principle listed states that planning should encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value.
- 6.36 The Government statement on Energy Efficiency in Buildings of 25 March 2015 states that the energy performance requirements in Building Regulations will be set at a level equivalent to the (outgoing) Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4.

## **7.0 KEY ISSUES**

### **7.1 Principle of the Use**

7.2 The proposal is for a predominantly residential scheme with a small scale convenience retailing unit (use Class A1) to the street level fronting the East Street, Richmond Street corner. The surrounding area has had a significant change in character with a high number of conversions and new built residential schemes replacing former industrial and commercial uses. The emerging Leeds Aire Valley Area Action Plan identifies the site as appropriate for housing use. The retail unit would be convenience shopping only and would be relatively small in scale and ancillary to the main use of the site as residential. As such Officers consider this mix of use to be appropriate for this site.

7.3 The developer, Neighbour, is proposing to operate the scheme as a Build to Rent (BTR) development and as such could provide a significant number of new residences within the proposed development. The BTR business model differs from a conventional housebuilding model. The main feature of the financial model is that it is intended to produce a regular return to an investor (often institutions such as pension fund holders). It facilitates institutional investment into rental developments by creating large single investment blocks of “blue chip” quality, introduces economies of scale and transfers an element of investment risk to a third party “operator” or managing organisation who takes on the role of landlord to individual occupier tenants.

7.4 There are a number of variants to BTR, however each is underpinned by a commercial approach aimed at providing a long-term return to the investor financing the development whilst giving the managing organisation the flexibility to determine their lettings policy and exposure to risk. Unlike the traditional build for sale product, BTR avoids costs associated with sales and marketing focusing instead on longer term investment return associated with holding the investment rather than initial development profit. Build to Rent tends towards high density development such as apartment blocks (typically 150 plus units) to reduce management costs. There is a requirement for a 5% provision of affordable housing within the development. The Developer has stated that it is their intention to provide the affordable housing on-site in the first instance.

### **7.5 Do Members consider the principles of development to be appropriate?**

### **7.6 Design, Massing, Scale and Layout**

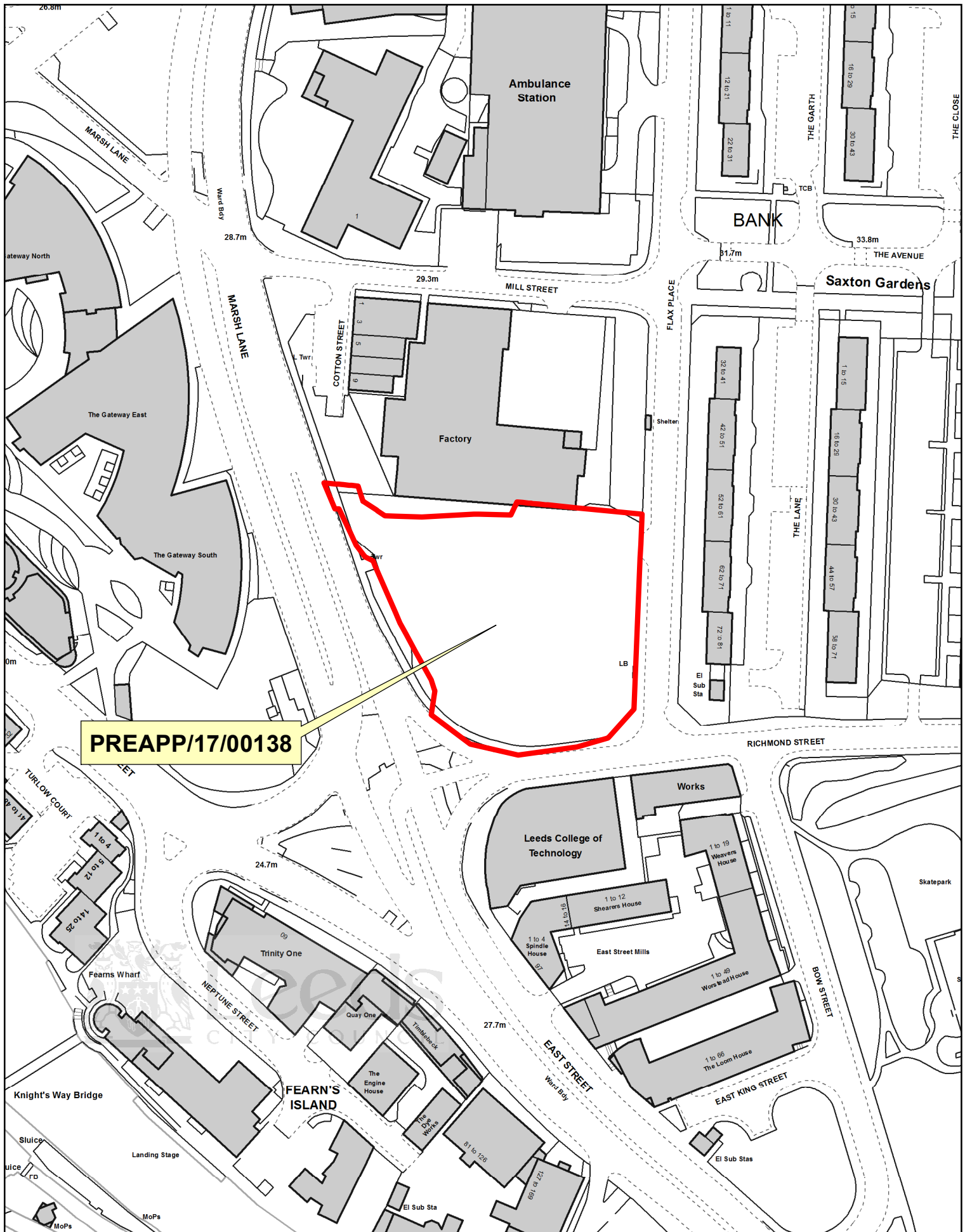
7.7 The proposal is divided into two stepped blocks which visually slide away from each other to allow more windows to be introduced for natural light and views out. The orientation of the blocks reflects the strong rhythm established in the blocks within Saxton Gardens to the rear of the site, as well as responding positively to the alignment of East Street.

- 7.8 Detailed preapplication discussions by the Developers team with Officers have resulted in an overall reduction in height of the blocks, such that they now relate well to the topography of the surrounding area and the existing built form upon it.
- 7.9 Officers consider that the site is a transition, rather than a gateway location which is in an area with a wide variety of building styles and eras. As such the design reflects the need for the scheme to sit alongside a broad mix of buildings from differing architectural periods. Therefore the facades are proposed to have a calm modernist architecture incorporating cool toned lime brick panels, with large glazed windows and side vents in a bronze finish, set into deep reveals. The horizontal levels of the blocks are emphasised by light toned pre-cast concrete spandrels. Variety in the building elevations is explored through the deep modelling of the facades that provide interest and gravitas. Officers consider the proposed design, scale and massing to be appropriate for this site and that it makes a positive contribution to the context of the wider area.
- 7.10 In addition the developer has advised that they will be aiming to meet the DCLG – Technical Housing Standards within all of the apartments.
- 7.11 Do Members support the emerging scale, massing and design of the proposals?**
- 7.12 The Landscape Scheme
- 7.13 The scheme proposes to layout publicly open areas at ground floor level, with a mix of hard and soft landscape features. The soft landscaping at this level would focus on grassed areas, foliage/shrub planting with carefully positioned trees. In addition, more private roof terrace areas are proposed for use by the residents of the development. A green roof is proposed to sit above the ground floor level retail unit which fronts the site.
- 7.14 What are Members views on the emerging landscape scheme?**
- 7.15 Transport and Access
- 7.16 The proposal site is within walking distance of the City Centre and transport links within it. As such the proposal will aim to promote sustainable transport and therefore provides only 90 residents and 5 visitor basement/undercroft car parking spaces as well as 4 spaces for the retail unit. These would be accessed from Flax Place. The spaces would be at basement/undercroft level due to the need to the site being elevated from the street level of East Street. In addition electric vehicle charge points will be provided at a ratio of 1:10 car parking spaces. Some 30 motorcycle parking spaces are also to be provided as well cycle parking spaces which will be provided at a ratio of 1 space per apartment (300).
- 7.17 Do Members consider the approach to car and cycle parking provision and arrangement to be acceptable?**
- 7.18 Do Members have any other comments at this stage on the proposals?**
- 8.0 CONCLUSION**
- 8.1 The key questions asked in the report above are as following:
- 7.5 Do Members consider the principles of development to be appropriate?**

- 7.11 Do Members support the emerging scale, massing and design of the proposals?**
- 7.14 What are Members views on the emerging landscape scheme?**
- 7.17 Do Members consider the approach to car and cycle parking provision and arrangement to be acceptable?**
- 7.18 Do Members have any other comments at this stage on the proposals?**

**Background Papers:**  
PREAPP/17/00138





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# CITY PLANS PANEL

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SCALE : 1/1500



REVISED MASSING - Site Plan

