



Report of the Chief Planning Officer

CITY PLANS PANEL

Date: 14 December 2017

Subject: PREAPP/17/00288 - Preapplication presentation for a stepped block of up to 18 storeys providing student accommodation comprising some 99 units with ground floor communal spaces and a landscape scheme around the building at land to the north of Brunswick Point/Q One, Wade Lane, Leeds, LS2 8DS.

Developer- Q Property Ltd.

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 student housing scheme with ground floor communal facilities within the defined boundary of the designated City Centre. The proposal is brought to City Plans Panel as the development involves the creation of new student housing, the re-use of brownfield land and a major investment in a significant site within Leeds City Centre.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

2.1 The site is some 0.06 hectares in area and is currently in use as a car park for the adjacent Q One building. The adjacent to Q One building is a seven storey building is comprising 84 apartments that is also owned by the Developer and is managed on their behalf by YPP.

2.2 The site is located in the north of the city centre and is accessible from the main arterial route of Wade Lane / Lovell Park Road. The site sits above Leeds Inner Ring

Road (A64) in a prominent gateway location which is visible from the surrounding area when approaching the city centre. As well as hard standing for parking, the site also includes existing soft/green landscaping, including trees, along its perimeters, two of which are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. Further trees in the grounds of the adjacent Q One are also subject to Tree Preservation Orders. A Public Right of Way runs along the eastern edge of the site, outside its boundary.

- 2.3 The wider area is characterised by a wide variety of retail, entertainment, commercial and residential buildings that are characterised by a dense urban grain and vary in terms of scale and era.

3.0 PROPOSAL:

- 3.1 The proposed development seeks to construct a part 11, 15 and 18 storey (with roof top plant) building of student accommodation. The scheme would comprise 99 studio dwellings, for occupation by students, ranging in internal floorspace from 23 sq. metres to 25 sq. metres. The proposal would include a range of high quality communal facilities within the ground floor level of the proposed building, comprising a lounge, reception area with TV, a breakfast room and study rooms/pods. The Developer advises that occupiers would also be able to make use of the lower ground floor of the existing Q One building, which will provide a cinema room (c. 30 – 40sqm), a games room (c.80sqm), a storage area for students (c. 30-40sqm) and additional cycle stands. In addition the Developer also states that student occupiers would be given free annual membership of the nearby Pure Gym at the Merrion Centre.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

- 4.1 Consent was granted and implemented for a Prior Approval determination application for the conversion of B1 (offices) to C3 (dwellings) at the adjacent Q One, Brunswick Point on 18 July 2014, planning reference 14/03303/DPD.
- 4.2 Consent was granted and implemented for a Prior Approval determination application for the change of use from offices (B1) to form 65 flats (C3) at the nearby Zicon House on 17 March 2016, planning reference 16/00767/DPD.
- 4.3 Planning permission was granted for the erection of a part 7, part 11 and part 18 storey student accommodation building comprising 376 studios at St Albans Place to the south east of the application site on 21 April 2017, planning reference 16/07741/FU. Work has commenced on site.
- 4.4 A Planning Application has been submitted and will be presented to Plans Panel on 14 December 2017 for the demolition of an existing building and erection of a part 8, part 22 storey 349 bed space student accommodation building, with ancillary areas including reception and amenity spaces at the nearby Symons House site, planning reference 17/06605/FU.

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 April 2017. These discussions have focused on scale massing and design, existing and new trees, loss of surface car parking and room space size standards.
- 5.2 Ward Members were consulted on 21 November 2017.

6.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES:

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

6.2 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.

6.3 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.

6.4 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.

6.5 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.

6.6 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.

6.7 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. Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan (Adopted November 2017)
5. Any Neighbourhood Plan, once made.

6.8 Core Strategy

6.9 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. Relevant

6.10 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

6.11 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

6.12 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.

- 6.13 Policy EN2: Sustainable Design and Construction requires 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 Level 4. A post construction review certificate will be required prior to occupation.
- 6.14 Policy H4: 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.
- 6.15 Policy H6B refers to proposals for purpose built student accommodation. Development will be controlled to take the pressure off the need to use private housing; to avoid the loss of existing housing suitable for families; to avoid excessive concentrations of student accommodation; to avoid locations that would lead to detrimental impacts on residential amenity; and to provide satisfactory living accommodation for the students.
- 6.16 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.
- 6.17 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.
- 6.18 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.
- 6.19 Leeds Unitary Development Plan Review Retained Policies
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)
- 6.20 Leeds Natural Resources and Waste DPD 2013

The Natural Resources and Waste Local Plan was adopted by Leeds City Council on 16th January 2013. 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 as well as looking at tree loss and replacement via its specific Policy LAND2.

6.21 Supplementary Planning Guidance

Tall Buildings Design Guide (Spring 2010)

Parking (January 2016)

Supplementary Planning Document 'Travel Plans' (February 2015)

Street Design Guide (August 2009)

6.22 Other Material Considerations

6.23 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 to be incorporated as part of the Selective Review of the Core Strategy. 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.

7.0 KEY ISSUES

7.1 Principle of the Use

7.2 The proposal is for a part 11, 15 and 18 storey (with roof top plant) purpose built student housing block comprising 99 studio flats for occupation by students, with ground floor amenity spaces. The provision of student housing is specifically considered under Core Strategy Policy H6B.

7.3 Policy H6B was adopted following the Core Strategy Inspector's rejection of the Council's position that the policy should include a test for need when considering applications for new student housing. Core Strategy paragraph 5.2.26 states that growth in purpose built student accommodation is to be welcomed in order to meet need and to deflect pressure away from private rental houses in areas of over-concentration. Evidence submitted on the Symons House application indicates that there are 38,496 university students in the city presently without access to purpose-built student accommodation suggesting that additional provision is unlikely to result in an over-supply of purpose-built student accommodation in the near future. The proposal is therefore considered against the criteria set out within the adopted policy (identified below in italics):

(i) *To help extend the supply of student accommodation taking pressure off the need for private housing to be used.*

The provision of 99 student studios would help to take pressure off the need to use private housing for student accommodation.

(ii) *To avoid the loss of existing housing suitable for family accommodation.*

The site is currently a surface car park. The development would therefore not result in the loss of any existing housing that would be suitable for families to live in.

(iv) *To avoid locations which are not easily accessible to the universities.*

- 7.4 The site is located towards the northern edge of the city centre and is well placed with regard to access to Leeds Beckett University, Leeds Arts University and the University of Leeds.

Criteria (iii) and (v) of the policy are considered in the amenity section of this report below.

- 7.5 The ground floor of the development would be allocated for shared amenity space, including a communal lounge, a reception area, a breakfast room and study rooms/pods for the student residents. These uses would allow the ground floor to have active frontages.

- 7.6 The principle of the use is supported by planning policy, subject to the no adverse impacts on amenity.

7.7 Do Members support the principle of the use?

7.8 Amenity

- 7.9 Criteria (iii) of Core Strategy policy H6B aims to *avoid excessive concentrations of student accommodation which would undermine the balance and wellbeing of communities.*

- 7.10 The proposed student accommodation would provide 99 studio dwellings. The area comprises a broad mix of residential, commercial, leisure and retail uses. Part of this residential presence provides existing student accommodation and more is planned including the proposal. However it is considered that the existing amenity of the area would not be adversely affected by the proposed student accommodation given the mixed way in which the area is currently used. The area comprises dense accommodation generating significant leisure, office and retail activity. In many cases new student accommodation has replaced existing office space maintaining vitality and vibrancy in the area. As such the proposal would not undermine the wellbeing and successful functioning of the different types of use in the area, within the context of a busy city centre environment.

- 7.11 Criteria (v) of policy H6B requires *that the proposed accommodation provides satisfactory internal living accommodation in terms of daylight, outlook and juxtaposition of living rooms and bedrooms.*

- 7.12 The Leeds Standard and the Government's Technical Housing Standard both set a minimum target of 37sqm for a self-contained studio flat. Neither document draws any distinction between what are termed open market and student types of accommodation. 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 help inform decisions on the acceptability of development proposals.

- 7.13 Members have visited several student housing schemes to review the level of amenity provided for occupiers. These include the Fresh Student Living at Darley

Bank in Derby (April 2014) where the studio was 22sqm; Downing's Cityside, Calverley Street, Leeds (May 2016) where the student showflat was also 22sqm; and Vita Student's Telephone House, Sheffield (September 2016) where the average studio size was 20sqm, supported by a large area of dedicated, internal, amenity space. Planning permission for Vita's Leeds scheme at St Alban's Place in which the smallest 78% of studios would be just over 20sqm was granted April 2017 (16/07741/FU). In approving the scheme it was recognised that the size of the majority of the studios would be restricted, providing little or no opportunity for socialising, but that each studio would benefit from a good outlook, natural daylighting and suitable noise environment. Critically, the additional "hub" facilities providing dedicated amenity spaces within the building, together with opportunities to use the neighbouring public space was on balance considered to provide acceptable levels of amenity for the occupiers of the development.

- 7.14 The current proposal has similarities with some of these other developments that Members have viewed and considered. In this current scheme the average studio size would range from 23 sq. metres to 25 sq. metres which is comparable with the Fresh Student Living at Darley Bank and the Downing's Cityside developments noted above in paragraph 7.12. In addition, the ground floor would be given over to areas of dedicated amenity space to provide the student residents with a range of communal facilities.
- 7.15 Generously sized windows would be provided to the principal north and eastwards elevations, giving the studio dwellings good levels of outlook and natural light. Where the scheme would be set closest to the adjacent Q One building no habitable room windows are proposed directly facing those already existing in the adjacent block to prevent any overlooking or loss of privacy for existing and future dwelling.
- 7.16 Do Members consider that internal amenity including communal space is acceptable for student accommodation?**
- 7.17 Design, Massing, Scale and Layout
- 7.18 The proposed building would be on a prominent site set above the Inner Ring Road and as such would be visible both at close quarters and from a number of distance views. In such views the building will be seen against a backdrop of other existing buildings of mixed height, massing and materiality. This has resulted in the proposed building responding to this massing and context by incorporating a series of stepped integrated towers across an L shaped footprint, that reflect the lower level of the adjacent Q One and St Albans Place buildings and rise to their maximum height where the proposal is positioned closer to taller blocks such as the nearby Opal development.
- 7.19 The proposal would further respond to the context of the area in the choice of materials and their ratios on the facades. A simple palette of red brick, possible warm toned inset panels and large glazed windows is proposed. The level of solid to glazing has been designed to reflect the character of the intended use and to give the building visual gravitas and solidity. At the base it is proposed to place communal spaces and as such this would have a much higher proportion of glazing to create active frontages at street level.
- 7.20 Do Members support the emerging scale, massing and design of the proposals?**
- 7.21 The Landscape Scheme

7.22 The proposal whilst largely sited upon the existing surface car park would result in the loss and replacement of some soft/green landscape areas. This will include the loss of some (possibly up to 6) but not all of the existing 9 trees on site. The Developer has stated that this will not affect the 2 trees that are covered by a Tree Preservation Order. However, the size of the site is a physical constraint that could affect how the proposal is constructed and this could result in construction requirements adversely affecting the retained trees. Therefore tree protection measures would need to be robust and the Developer has confirmed that they will comply with the requirements of Policy LAND2 of the Natural Resources and Waste Local Plan. As such there will be a requirement to provide a mixture of on-site and off-site replacement trees, the latter to be in the grounds of other nearby buildings in their ownership to achieve the required 3 for 1 replacement tree ratio. If the full 3 for 1 physical tree replacement cannot be provided on the Applicant's land, any short fall will require a financial contribution via a Section 106 legal agreement for off-site planting in the local area.

7.23 The Developer advises that the proposal also involves the creation of a more cohesive planting scheme including a more appropriate species and mix of plants. Hard surface areas would be laid out in high quality pavers.

7.24 Do Members support the approach to tree planting including off-site mitigation?

7.25 Transport and Access

7.26 The proposal site is within walking distance of the City's main University campuses and services of the City Centre including access to the train station, bus station and nearby bus stops. The proposal will require a Transport Assessment but aims to promote sustainable transport. As such the proposal is largely car free with only 5 car parking spaces proposed. The Developer suggests that these limited car parking spaces can also be used for drop off and pick up. Secure cycle parking and motorcycle parking of numbers to be agreed is also to be provided as part of the development

7.27 Do Members support the approach to transport and access?

8.0 CONCLUSION

8.1 The key questions asked in the report above are as following:

7.7 Do Members support the principle of the use?

7.16 Do Members consider that internal amenity including communal space is acceptable for student accommodation?

7.20 Do Members support the emerging scale, massing and design of the proposals?

7.24 Do Members support the approach to tree planting including off-site mitigation?

7.27 Do Members support the approach to transport and access?



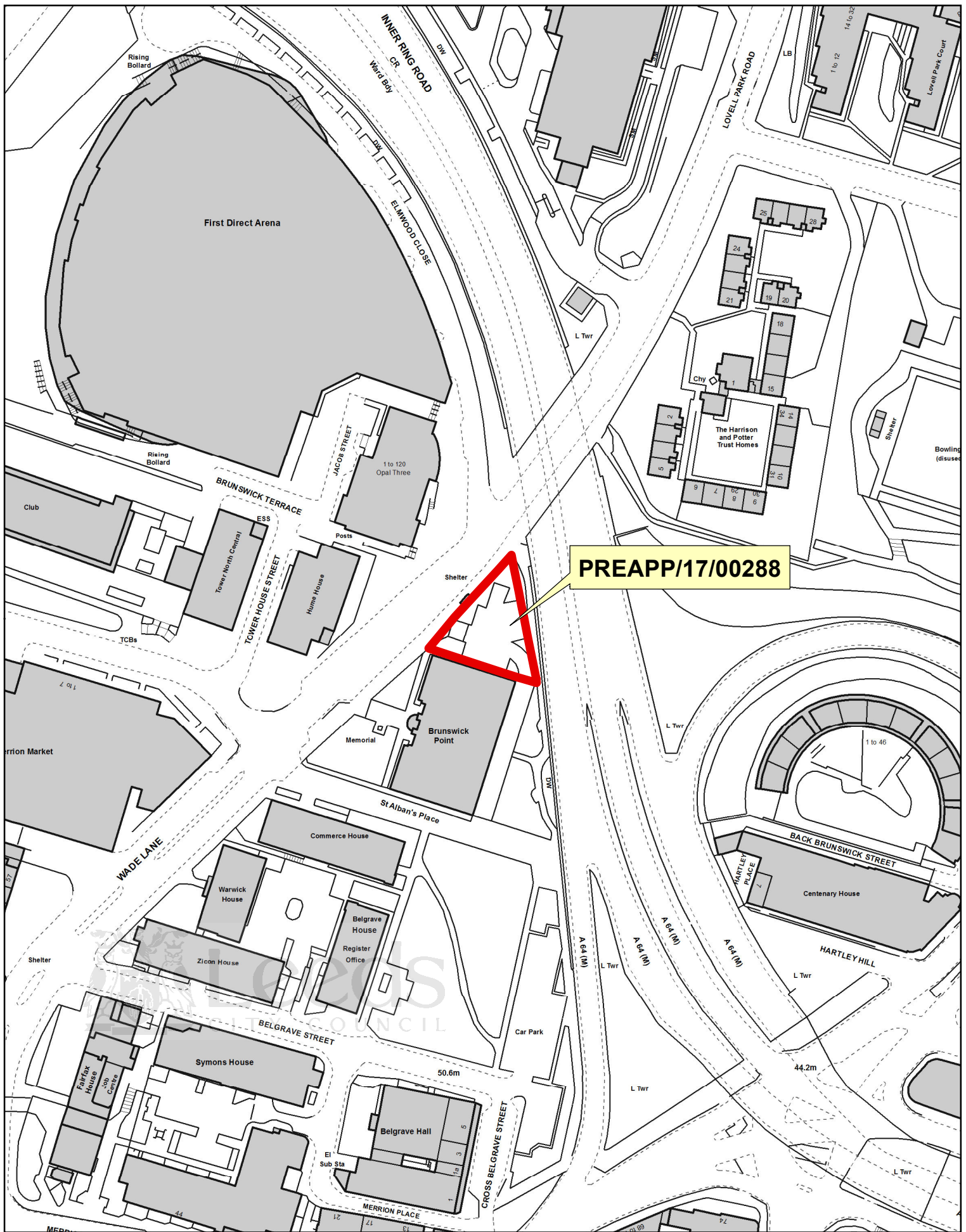
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LOVELL PARK ROAD



ONE RESIDENTS



CITY PLANS PANEL

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PRODUCED BY CITY DEVELOPMENT, GIS MAPPING & DATA TEAM, LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

SCALE : 1/1500

