



Report of the Chief Planning Officer

CITY PLANS PANEL

15th February 2018

Pre-application presentation of the proposed redevelopment of Hume House, Wade Lane, Merrion Way and Tower House Street, Leeds to form a 36 storey student accommodation building (PREAPP/17/00619)

Applicant – Olympian Homes

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 36 storey tower on land currently occupied by Hume House, Wade Lane. The vision is to provide a landmark building for Leeds intended to enhance the quality of the evolving Arena Quarter and to provide a significant addition to the skyline of the city.

1.2 The building, designed by O'Connell East Architects, would comprise student accommodation throughout. The public realm surrounding the building would also be enhanced and, given its impact on the wider area, the Council is seeking a contribution to improve the existing character of Merrion Way.

2.0 Site and surroundings

2.1 The existing building is a part 2, part 5 storey office building dating from the late 1960's sitting on top of a small basement car park. Ground floor levels are elevated

above street level such that the building does not interact positively with surrounding streets. Footways to the east and west side are narrow whilst the only positive feature of the hard-surfaced space to the south is a tree, whereas the ginnel between the building and the tower to the north is dark and unwelcoming.

- 2.2 The site is located close to the junction of Merrion Way and Wade Lane to the north-east of the Merrion Centre. Tower House Street is a short street running north from Merrion Way along the western flank of the site. Arena Point (originally known as Tower House), a 19-storey (77m) office building, is situated on the west side of the street. There is a footway on the northern side of Hume House beyond which is the clv Arena Village student accommodation building (formerly Opal 3) which is 26 storeys high (90m) at its maximum extent. The First Direct Arena is a large building to the north-west. Beyond the arena, Sky Plaza standing at the junction of Clay Pit Lane and the Inner Ring Road is the tallest building in the area (37 storeys / 106m). The scale of buildings generally reduces substantially with greater distance from the city centre although there are tower blocks beyond the Inner Ring Road in Little London to the north-east. Similarly, although to a lesser degree, the height of buildings beyond Wade Lane to the east reduces as natural ground levels fall.

3.0 Proposals

- 3.1 It is proposed to demolish the existing building and to construct a 36 storey building in its place. The axis of the building would rotate to align with Wade Lane to the south-east rather than Tower House Street as with the current structure. As such, the spine of the predominantly rectangular footprint of the building would run south-west to north east. The southern elevation of the building would project approximately 11m forward of the existing building towards Merrion Way albeit the lowest two levels above ground primarily around the frontage would be set some 3m further back. The upper body of the building also oversails areas of the lowest levels on the eastern and western elevations. At its closest point the northern elevation of the building would be 8.45m from the Arena Village tower.
- 3.2 The ground floor of the student accommodation building would comprise the reception and management offices, a common room including a double-height space around the southern entrance, and other supporting facilities such as laundrette and bin store. A plant room and bike store would be provided at Level -1. Level 1 would contain additional common room and study area facilities and the first level of student accommodation. Further study rooms are proposed at Level 24. Excluding the cluster space 563m² of student amenity space is proposed. The accommodation comprises a mix of studios (22m²) and 4, 5 and 6 bedroom clusters (study bedrooms typically 14m²) with associated kitchen / living areas. In total, 102 studios and 652 cluster bedrooms are proposed, 754 bedspaces overall.
- 3.3 Active spaces at the lowest two levels of the building would have double-height glazing with a cantilevered soffit height of 7m. The upper levels of the building would be ordered and disciplined, formed of smaller domestic elements of which it would be composed. The architectural style would loosely be termed 'stretched classicism'. It is intended that a high-quality artificial stone is used as the principal building material.
- 3.4 A new layby would be formed on Tower House Street to be used for deliveries and student drop-off at the beginning and end of years. It is intended to reduce kerb-levels and to enhance the surface to make Tower House Street more pedestrian-friendly. A new paved surface is proposed to the public realm immediately surrounding the development. Raised planters would be introduced towards the

north side of the building, including new street trees, together with totem structures to assist in wind mitigation. Similar totem structures are proposed to the front, southern end, of the building as wind mitigation but also intended to serve the dual purpose of public art. A specimen tree would be planted closer to Merrion Way to replace the existing tree that would need to be removed.

4.0 Relevant planning history

4.1 The existing building is little changed since its construction in the late 1960's. The clv Arena Village student building was constructed on the site of the Little Londoner public house in 2007. The arena was completed in summer 2013.

4.2 Pre-application proposals for redevelopment of the site by a different developer and architect were considered by City Plans Panel in October 2016 (PREAPP/16/00428). That proposal identified a 40 storey student accommodation building. Members provided the following feedback:

- Members were of the view that the proposed student use was acceptable in principle;
- Mixed views were expressed about the scale of the proposed new building and its relationship with the surrounding context;
- In respect of the emerging architectural approach, Members were of the view that a slim tall building was acceptable in this location but emphasised the need for a good design and the use of quality materials;
- Members required more information about the proposed development and its relationship with neighbouring properties (the Opal 3 student development in particular); and
- Members considered that the development should deliver public realm improvements beyond the immediate site boundary

5.0 Consultation responses

5.1 LCC Flood Risk Management - The proposed development is located in Flood Zone 1 with all other sources of flooding considered to be low risk. The developer should consider the use of a green roof or roof garden within their final design.

5.2 LCC Contaminated Land Team - The proposed end use of the development is sensitive. As such, a minimum of a Phase 1 Desk Study report will be required in support of an application.

5.3 LCC Highways - The development boundary includes an area of adopted highway which currently provides 2 disabled parking spaces; these would need to be either accommodated or relocated. There must be no projection of buildings and no wind mitigation measures over the existing adopted highway or any land to be adopted. Cycle parking would be required as per the Parking SPD, at 20% of bed numbers. 3 metre wide footways would be required around the development; this would require land to be dedicated as highway. Provision needs to be made for servicing, deliveries and student drop-off/pick up whilst the function of the surrounding streets would need to be maintained. A Transport Statement, Travel Plan, Wind Report and Construction Management Plan are required to support any full application.

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

6.2 Core Strategy (CS)

6.2.1 Relevant Core Strategy policies include:

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.

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 that development in appropriate locations is required to help and improve routes connecting the City Centre with adjoining neighbourhoods, and improve connections within the City Centre.

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.

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.

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 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:

Policy GP5 requires all relevant planning considerations to be resolved.

Policy 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.

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

Policy 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 **Site Allocations Plan Submission Draft (SAP)**

The site is not specifically identified in the SAP.

6.5 **National Planning Policy Framework**

6.5.1 The NPPF recognises the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Planning should proactively drive and support sustainable economic development; and seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings (paragraph 17). Local Planning Authorities (LPA's) should recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and support their vitality and viability; and recognise that residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres (paragraph 23). Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 49).

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.

6.6 **Supplementary guidance**

Tall Buildings Design Guide SPD
Travel Plans SPD

Street Design Guide SPD
Building for Tomorrow Today: Sustainable Design and Construction SPD
Parking SPD

Neighbourhoods for Living SPG provides advice and principles for good residential design. It promotes local character, analysis of landmarks, views and focal points, and quality buildings.

6.7 Other material considerations

6.7.1 The Leeds Standard was adopted by the Council's Executive Board on 17th September 2014 to ensure excellent quality in the delivery of new council homes. Through its actions the Council can also seek to influence quality in the private sector. Those aspects of the Standard concerned with design quality will be addressed through better and more consistent application of the Council's Neighbourhoods for Living guidance. The standard closely reflects the Government's Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS) 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 and only limited weight can be attached to them, given their evidence base in determining the minimum space requirements, during recent years they have been used to help inform decisions on the acceptability of development proposals.

6.7.2 A selective review of the Leeds Core Strategy is presently being undertaken (CSSR). The review includes policies to introduce residential space standards. New policy H9 in the CSSR expressly excludes purpose built student accommodation from the space standard stating:

Development of student accommodation and houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) will not be subject to the space standards as set out in the Table above. Instead such development should reflect the NDSS with appropriate adjustments to address the particular characteristics of these types of development. They should also meet reasonable standards of general amenity for occupiers to include adequate space, light and ventilation. Further guidance will be provided through a Supplementary Planning Document.

At the time of writing the report the CSSR publication draft was due to be considered at the Council's Executive Board meeting on 7th February 2018. If agreed, draft policy H9 can be afforded some weight.

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 site is located within the designated City Centre. Core Strategy Policy CC1(b) encourages residential development in city centre locations providing that the development does not prejudice the functions of the City Centre and that it provides a reasonable level of amenity for occupiers.

7.1.2 Policy H6B relates specifically to the provision of student housing. The policy 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. Leeds Core Strategy paragraph 5.2.26 states that growth in new purpose built student accommodation is to be welcomed in order to meet need and to deflect pressure away from private rented houses in areas of over-concentration.

7.1.3 Notwithstanding the adopted planning policy position, for information, applicants of recent applications have provided commentary with regards to existing provision and need for student living accommodation. It is stated that there are approximately 51,661 students in full time higher education in the city. Discounting those who live in existing purpose built student accommodation and new student bed-spaces in the pipeline, including those at pre-application stage, there is a residual demand of approximately 35,000 students albeit private sector housing, such as, HMOs will remain the choice of some students. Additional provision of purpose-built student accommodation is therefore unlikely to result in an over-supply in the near future.

7.1.4 The proposal is 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 development of 754 bed-spaces 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 occupied by a vacant office building. The development would therefore avoid the loss of residential family accommodation.

(iii) To avoid excessive concentrations of student accommodation which would undermine the balance and wellbeing of communities.

The area is a focus for additional new purpose-built student accommodation adding to that existing at Arena Village, located immediately to the north of the site, and Sky Plaza, on the west side of Clay Pit Lane. A planning application has now been submitted on the site of the Wetherspoon's Stick or Twist and former Grosvenor Casino to the west of the site for a development of 1020 student bedspaces (18/00458/FU). The St Alban's Place scheme presently being constructed on Belgrave Street to the east will deliver 376 studios (16/07741/FU). Planning permission for 349 bedspaces in a mix of studios and clusters has recently been granted at Symons House, Belgrave Street (17/06605/FU). There are also proposals for around 99 student studios on land north of Brunswick Point, Wade Lane, to the east of the site (PREAPP/17/00288).

There are pockets of residential accommodation located primarily to the east side of Wade Lane and more extensive established residential communities to the north east in Lovell Park. However, it is not considered that these and other existing residents in the city centre would be adversely affected by purpose-built student accommodation in the proposed location given the way in which the area is currently used. Routes from the development towards both the university campuses and the heart of the city centre would be through predominantly commercial areas such that residential communities would be unlikely to be adversely affected by the student use.

In addition to the arena the area supports a mix of uses, including significant retail floorspace within the Merrion Centre, offices at Arena Point, Lloyds Bank on Lovell

Park Road and within the Merrion Centre, and a wide range of other commercial and leisure uses. It is not considered that the number of students proposed would result in an excessive concentration of students that would undermine the wellbeing of the area within the context of a busy city centre environment. Similarly, it is not considered that the development would prejudice the functions of the city centre but would be more likely to support its economic vitality.

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

The site is located towards the north-eastern edge of the city centre and is well-placed with regard to access to both the University of Leeds and Leeds Beckett University via Wade Lane, Merrion Way and Woodhouse Lane. Improvements to the public realm around the site, including Merrion Way, would improve accessibility to the universities further.

7.1.5 The existing building, Hume House, provides 5 storeys of B1 office space. Core Strategy Policy EC3 seeks to retain such a use unless the development (i) would not result in the loss of a deliverable employment site; or (ii) existing buildings are considered to be non-viable in terms of market attractiveness, business operations, age, condition and or compatibility with adjacent uses; or (iii) the proposal will deliver a mixed use development which continues to provide for a range of local employment opportunities and would not undermine the viability of the remaining employment site.

7.1.6 The building has been vacant for some time and has been bought and sold by a series of developers with a view to redevelopment. This is largely a result of the scale and appearance of the building itself and also the surrounding area becoming less attractive for employment uses and more attractive to residential and leisure uses. The site is not in an area of the city with a shortfall of employment land whereas there has been a shift in the focus of new office accommodation towards the west side of the city centre to areas such as Wellington Place. There remains a significant amount of committed or newly completed office floorspace in more attractive locations within the city centre and consequently the development would accord with Core Strategy policy EC3.

7.1.7 The development would therefore accord with policy CC1b and parts i, ii, iii and iv of Core Strategy policy H6B. Criteria (v) of the policy is considered in the amenity section, paragraph 7.2.

7.1.8 **Do Members consider that the proposed student use is acceptable in principle?**

7.2 Amenity considerations

7.2.1 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.*

7.2.2 During recent years the Leeds Standard and the Government's Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS) have been used to help inform decisions on the acceptability of development proposals. As noted at 6.7.2 above, a selective review of the Leeds Core Strategy is presently being undertaken (CSSR). New policy H9 in the CSSR requires development of student accommodation to reflect the Nationally Described Space Standard with appropriate adjustments to address the particular characteristics of these types of development.

They should also meet reasonable standards of general amenity for occupiers to include adequate space, light and ventilation. As the CSSR publication draft is now out for public consultation draft policy H9 can be afforded some weight.

- 7.2.3 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 22m²; Downing's Cityside, Calverley Street, Leeds (May 2016) where the student showflat was also 22m²; and Vita Student's Telephone House, Sheffield (September 2016) where the average studio size was 20m², 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 20m² 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 would provide acceptable levels of amenity for the occupiers of the development. More recently, in December 2017, City Plans Panel supported an application for the redevelopment of Symons House, Belgrave Street (17/06605/FU) where the proposed studio size ranged from 21.3m² - 44.2m², supported by areas of dedicated amenity space.
- 7.2.4 The proposed studios would all be 22m². Occupiers of these rooms would have access to the amenity spaces elsewhere within the building (563m²), in addition to the supporting spaces such as the laundrette and bike storage rooms. Occupants of cluster rooms, which would range in size from 14m² – 17m², would have access to these areas in addition to the kitchen / living areas attached to the clusters (varying in size from 23m² for 4 bedroom clusters to 36m² for 6 bedroom clusters.
- 7.2.5 All the east-facing rooms and all the rooms above Level 25 would enjoy long-distance open aspects. At lower levels on the west side of the building rooms would have an outlook towards the offices at Arena Point, 11m at the closest point which is not an uncommon relationship within the city centre.
- 7.2.6 **Do Members consider that the living conditions within the student accommodation would be acceptable?**

7.3 Townscape considerations

- 7.3.1 The existing building and its curtilage is not considered to positively contribute to the character of the area. Therefore, the demolition and redevelopment of the site is acceptable in principle. Any new development must provide good design that is appropriate to its location, scale and function (Core Strategy Policy P10). Part (i) of the policy states that the size, scale, design and layout should be appropriate to its context and (ii) the development should protect and enhance skylines and views. These policies accord with guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework which requires that development establishes a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit; to respond to local character and history; and to reflect the identity of local surroundings.
- 7.3.2 The Tall Buildings Design Guide, which pre-dated the construction of the arena but recognised the recent Sky Plaza and Arena Village towers, identified that there could be the opportunity for a cluster of tall buildings in the area to the north of the Merrion

Centre which includes the site. This “opportunity” overlaps with a potential string of tall buildings following the Inner Ring Road and also the potential for tall buildings to announce a northern gateway to the city centre.

7.3.3 The redevelopment proposals considered by City Plans Panel in October 2016 identified a 40 storey building. Whereas there were some mixed views regarding its height, subject to high quality, the principle of a tall building in this location was accepted. The current proposal identifies a 36 storey building, such that it would have a similar, transformative effect upon the site and the context.

7.3.4 Given the building’s scale and the topography of the city it would typically be seen in longer distance city views as the taller element of a cluster of tall buildings grouped around the arena. This would be apparent in views such as those from Scott Hall Road / Scott Hall playing fields and along York Road. Rotating the building’s axis to achieve an improved relationship with Arena Village is such that the south-eastern flank of the building would be more visible and hence have a greater visual impact when viewed north up Briggate.

7.3.5 In local views along Merrion Way from Queen Square Conservation Area and Clay Pit Lane past the arena the building would step up from the scale of the Yorkshire Bank, the arena, Arena Point, together with the buildings intended to redevelop the Stick or Twist site. However, from the conservation area, Merrion House would remain the dominant element. The lower scale of existing buildings along Lovell Park Road is such that the building would appear as a significant skyline feature although much of the mass would be situated behind the Arena Village tower when viewed from the north.

7.3.6 The building would be visible in views along Mark Lane immediately to the south of St John’s Church. The impact of the building upon the backdrop of the church would, however, be significantly reduced following the redevelopment of Symons House on Belgrave Street.

7.3.7 The southern elevation of the building would project forward of the existing building line on the north side of Merrion Way. The front elevation would be aligned to respond to the eastern end of Merrion Way and the Merrion Centre as it turns the corner into Wade Lane. The lowest two levels of the building would comprise extensive glazing so as to animate the pedestrian level and to form an appropriate base to the building.

7.3.8 The proposal is a tall building which employs basic architectural principles, based upon both modernism and classicism. The proposed façade is ordered and disciplined reflecting the use. It is based on using the visual elements of base, middle and top which control the large scale elements. A limited, high quality, material palette is proposed. The building is akin to many of the American models which could loosely be called ‘stretched classicism’.

7.3.9 Within the overall body of the building, the primary massing elements have manipulation which provide the building with visual interest and relief. The secondary elements also have detailing to form interest with reveals and shadow lines. The building presents a controlled, calm design, enabling the large scale of the building to have a visual gravitas and yet not be visually obtrusive.

7.4 Impact on neighbouring properties

- 7.4.1 Hume House is a part two and part five storey building constructed at a similar time to Arena Point. The Arena Village student accommodation tower was constructed 6.5m to the north, with student living room and bedroom windows located directly facing the gable end of Hume House, albeit given the relative heights only 3 levels in the south-west corner are affected. Proposals by a previous developer considered by City Plans Panel in October 2016 identified the northern elevation of the proposed building an almost identical distance from the Arena Village to the existing Hume House. Concerns were raised regarding the juxtaposition of the two buildings, the impact upon living conditions and the quality of the intervening space.
- 7.4.2 The building now proposed would be sited a minimum of 8.45m from the Arena Village student accommodation. Additionally, unlike the previous scheme, the proposed building is rotated such that the body of the building would be increasingly distant from the Arena Village building such that the north-east corner of the building would be 13m from Arena Village. In doing so, the impact of the new building upon that existing to the north is significantly reduced albeit it is recognised that the scale of the new building would result in overshadowing of rooms in the southern elevation of Arena Village.
- 7.4.3 Arena Point is situated on the west side of Tower House Street 11-17m from Hume House. The proposed building would be a metre closer to Arena Point at its closest dimension although, due to the rotation of the main mass of the proposed building, much of the west elevation would be further away. Arena Point is occupied as offices thereby reducing potential overlooking issues between the properties.
- 7.4.4 The Q One building across Wade Lane was converted to residential accommodation in 2016. The buildings would be a minimum of 25m apart at the closest point. Overlooking is not considered to be an issue at this distance although the new building to the north-west could potentially result in a small amount of overshadowing.
- 7.4.5 The Merrion Centre is located to the south-west of the building beyond Merrion Way. Given the use of the building, the distances involved and the orientation of the proposed tower to the Merrion Centre there is unlikely to be any adverse impact.
- 7.4.6 **Do Members consider that the emerging scale and design of the proposed new building and its relationship with the surrounding context is acceptable?**

7.5 Public realm and servicing

- 7.5.1 The site is heavily constrained by surrounding highways which serve uses including the arena, the Arena Village student tower, offices in Arena Point and the wide range of uses within the Merrion Centre. Existing footways to the west and north of the building are narrow and uninviting.
- 7.5.2 The southern end of the new building would project forward into the existing hard-surfaced area between Hume House and Merrion Way. The remaining space, circa 14m deep, would accommodate features to be used for wind mitigation, public art and a replacement tree. The alignment of the building would be such that it opens up space at the northern end of the site, offering significant opportunities for enhancement of the current, unwelcoming route and area around the access to the Arena Village accommodation.
- 7.5.3 A new layby would be formed on the east side of Tower House Street, providing a facility for servicing and deliveries and also the parking of vehicles at the start and

end of the academic year. It is also intended to improve the character of Tower House Street by enhancing surfacing, reducing kerb height and introducing raised planters to make it a more pedestrian friendly environment. The area immediately surrounding the building between Tower House Street and Wade Lane would be resurfaced.

7.5.4 The scale and position of the development is such that it would have a significant visual impact and influence upon the surrounding area. Secondly, the student accommodation use would result in additional, primarily pedestrian, journeys around the site, in particular along Merrion Way to and from the universities. It is considered that these impacts should be mitigated by a developer contribution towards the improvement of the pedestrian environment in the area beyond the site boundary to accord with Core Strategy policies P10, T2 and CC3.

7.5.5 **Do Members consider that the development should deliver improvements to the public realm in the area beyond the immediate periphery of the site?**

7.6 Wind

7.6.1 The proposed height of the building is such that the applicant is mindful that wind issues need to be considered in detail in conjunction with the design of the development. The applicant has appointed wind engineers and wind tunnel tests have been undertaken. The tests have factored in the potential impacts of the proposed redevelopment of the Stick or Twist site to the west. It is suggested that the introduction of 5, 2.4m high x 0.8m wide perforated totems close to the southern and northern flanks of the building, and the introduction of a chamfer at the southern corner of the building would ensure that appropriate wind conditions would be achieved. The totem structures could potentially be designed as a public art feature. Ultimately, the wind study will need to be independently reviewed and agreed on behalf of the Council.

7.7 Conclusion

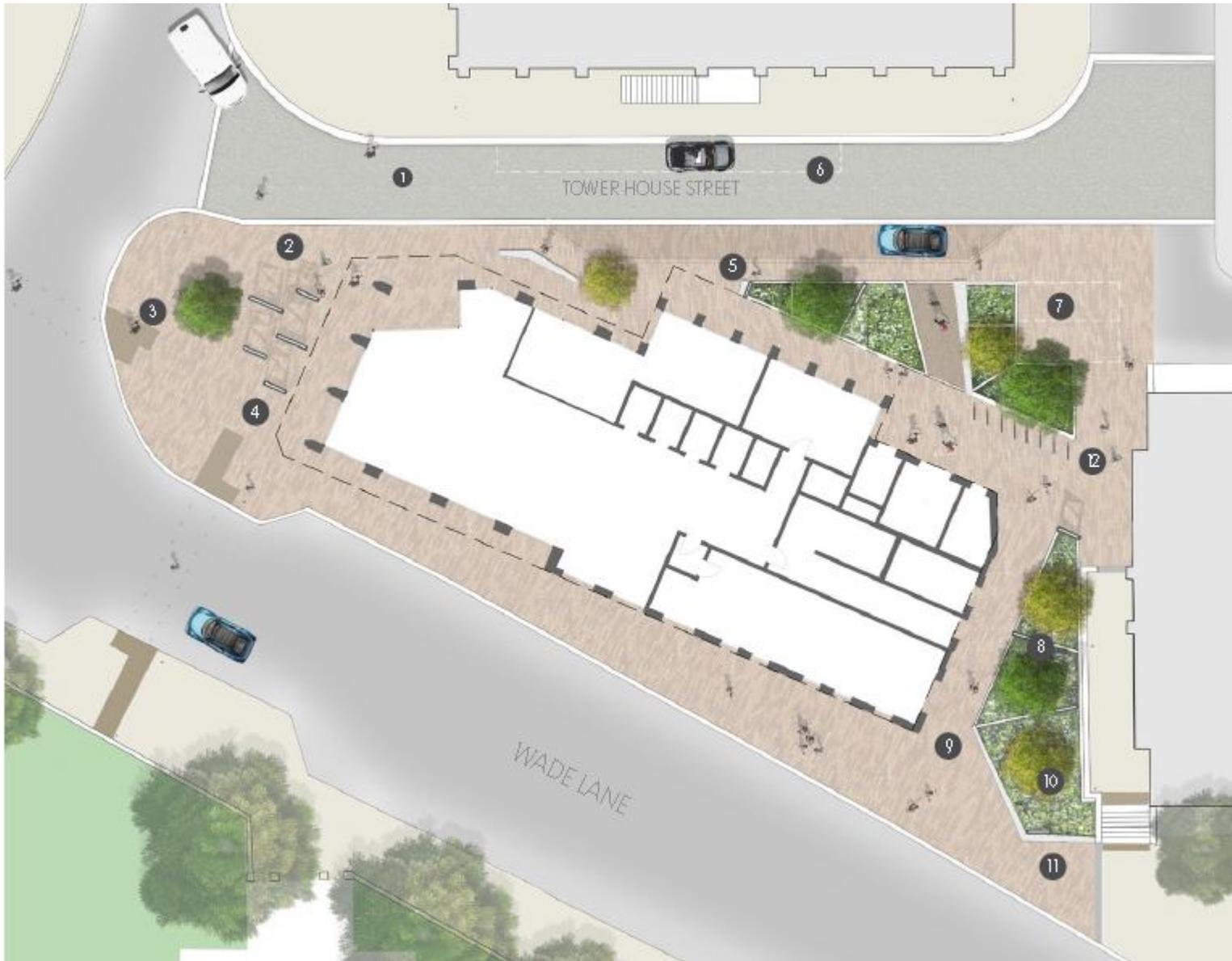
7.7.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the report and the presentation, and are invited to provide feedback, in particular, on the issues outlined below:

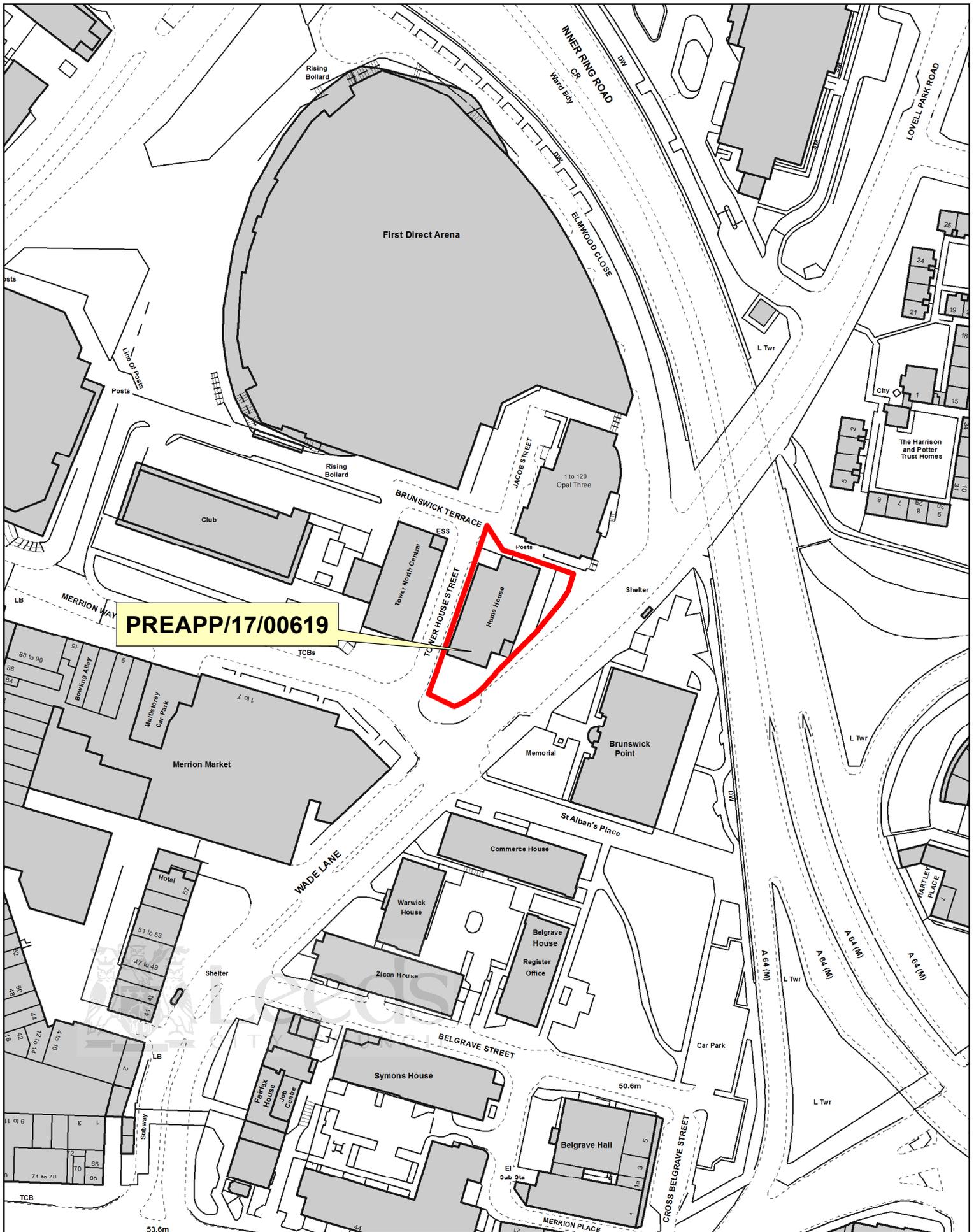
Do Members consider that the proposed student use is acceptable in principle? (7.1.8)

Do Members consider that the living conditions within the student accommodation would be acceptable? (7.2.6)

Do Members consider that the emerging scale and design of the proposed new building and its relationship with the surrounding context is acceptable? (7.4.6)

Do Members consider that the development should deliver improvements to the public realm in the area beyond the immediate periphery of the site? (7.5.5)





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