



## Report of the Chief Planning Officer

### CITY PLANS PANEL

Date: 29th March 2018

**Subject: Pre-application reference PREAPP/16/00303 for the erection of 100 apartments in two buildings between 5 and 7 storeys with ground floor car parking located between Melbourne St and Lower Brunswick St, Leeds**

**Applicant – Mr Philip Symonds**

#### Electoral Wards Affected:

City & 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 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 of the progress made on the emerging proposals for a new residential scheme located between Melbourne St and Lower Brunswick St which are parallel streets that run eastwards, off North St. The proposal was originally considered at pre-application stage in April 2017 but the massing and form were not positively received by Members. The applicant has had further discussions with officers in an attempt to overcome the issues raised by Members. In these circumstances, it was considered appropriate to bring the revised proposal back to Panel for further consideration, prior to submission of a final application.

### 2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

2.1 The site is presently occupied by Manston Business Centre, a predominantly vacant terrace of two storey, red brick workshop and office units and associated car parking which it is believed were constructed in the early 1980's.

2.2 The application site extends to some 0.23ha with Melbourne St to the north and Lower Brunswick Street to the south. Brunswick Row runs along the western end of the site with Bridge Street to the east. To the west is a 6 storey, primarily residential, building (80 North Street) and to the east is a 2 storey office complex (Brunswick Court). To the south are further 2/3 storey commercial units and a building occupied by the Salvation Army. To the north is the large gable end elevation of a B1/B2/B8 (industrial and warehouse use) building which is set back from the road. This is of brick and metal cladding with external air-conditioning units. To the west of this is a motor repair workshop.

### **3.0 PROPOSAL:**

3.1 The original proposal was for the demolition of the existing buildings on the site and the erection of a single building split into three adjoining blocks of apartments, stepping down the site from 9 storeys fronting Brunswick Row to the west, to 5 storeys at the Bridge Street end to the east. Following Members comments the new proposal has been reduced in scale to between 6 and 7 storeys and has now been split in to 2 separate buildings with the break-point midway along the elevation, forming two even sized buildings. As previously the main body of the buildings are proposed to be of brick, glass and metal cladding. However, the lower two floors are now to have a colonnade treatment and the elevations treated in a light, potentially masonry, material interspersed by glazing panels and decorative metal screens to allow natural ventilation to parking and refuse storage areas. The top of the building is to be of both transparent and look-a-like glass, contained within grey terracotta framing.

3.2 The scheme contains 100 no. apartments comprising:

- 1 no. studio
- 58 no. 1 bed apartments
- 38 no. 2 bed apartments
- 3 no. 3 bed apartments

The apartments range in size: studio 33 sqm; 1 bed 37-52 sqm; 2 bed 61-68 sqm; 3 bed 74 sqm. It is intended that the scheme would be made available for occupation under the Private Rented Sector (PRS) model.

3.3 Vehicular access is proposed from the eastern end of Lower Brunswick Street with car parking provided in an under-croft parking area providing 3no. disabled parking spaces. Cycle parking spaces are provided in two stores, one in each building. Given the narrowness of the streets in this area, the route between the two buildings is to be used for servicing both blocks and will be a managed space, the concierge having an office overlooking this area.

3.4 The main resident accesses are provided from two entrances on either side of the central route between the buildings. Two end entrances are also included and are set within small landscaped garden areas.

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

4.1 There has been no relevant planning history for this site. However, the scheme as originally proposed was presented to Members on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2017. The minutes of the meeting state the following:

- The site was suitable in principle for residential development.
- There were concerns regarding the emerging scale and design of the development.
- Concern that there was no amenity provision on site and the proposals did not respect the amenity of occupiers or surrounding properties.
- There was some concern regarding the size of studio apartments.
- It was felt that the proposed building was too large and did not enhance the surrounding area.
- The mix of units was considered to be acceptable.
- Car parking provision – there was some concern as to whether 15% was acceptable in this location. The level of parking required more justification

## **5.0 HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS:**

5.1 The proposals have been the subject of further pre-application discussions since the original April 2017 presentation date. The revised scheme is a response to the original Members comments with discussions focusing initially on scale & massing, then moving on to architectural treatment and car parking provision.

## **6.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

Highways Services: No objection to the principle of residential development here subject to addressing detailed requirements for vehicular parking cycle parking, bin storage and servicing.

Sustainability - Contaminated Land: Phase I Desk Study required to be submitted. Depending on the outcome of the Phase I Desk Study, a Phase II (Site Investigation) Report and Remediation Statement may also be required.

Flood Risk Management: The topography of the area together with the BGS soils data suggest that the site may not be suitable and or feasible for the use of soakaway drainage so that on-site balancing of flows would be necessary. The location of the necessary volume of attenuation should therefore be given appropriate consideration together with the proposed layout of the site. It would therefore be prudent for the developer to make a pre planning enquiry to YW to find out about the capacity of the nearby public surface water sewer as surface water discharge should be directed to this sewer rather than to any of the combined sewers in the area.

## **7.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES:**

### **7.1 Development Plan**

7.1.1 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.

### **7.2 Core Strategy (CS)**

### 7.2.1 Relevant Core Strategy policies include:

Spatial Policy 3 seeks to maintain and enhance the role of the City Centre as an economic driver for the District and City Region, by comprehensively planning the redevelopment and re-use of vacant and under-used sites for mixed use development and areas of public space; enhancing streets and creating a network of open and green spaces to make the City Centre more attractive; and improving connections between the City Centre and adjoining neighbourhoods.

Spatial Policy 11 includes a priority related to improved facilities for pedestrians to promote safety and accessibility, particularly connectivity between the edges of the City Centre and the City Centre itself.

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

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

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

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

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

Policy 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.

EC3 Controls the loss of previous employment land.

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 G5 requires residential developments over 0.5 hectares in the City Centre to provide a minimum of 0.41 hectares or open space per 1,000 population. In areas of adequate open space supply or where it can be demonstrated that not all the required on site delivery of open space can be achieved due to site specific issues, contributions towards the City Centre park and new pedestrianisation will take priority

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

Policies EN1 and EN2 set targets for CO<sup>2</sup> reduction and sustainable design and construction, and at least 10% low or zero carbon energy production on-site.

Policy EN5 identifies requirements to manage flood risk.

### 7.3 Saved Unitary Development Plan Review policies (UDPR)

#### 7.3.1 Relevant Saved Policies include:

Policy BD2 - New buildings should complement and enhance existing skylines, vistas and landmarks.

Policy BD5 states that a satisfactory level of amenity for occupants and surroundings should be provided.

LD1 - Sets out criteria for landscape schemes.

### 7.4 Natural Resources & Waste DPD 2013

7.4.1 The plan sets out where land is needed to enable the City to manage resources, such as minerals, energy, waste and water over the next 15 years, and identifies specific actions which will help use natural resources in a more efficient way. Policies regarding drainage, air quality, land contamination and flood risk are relevant to this proposal.

7.4.2 The site is within the Sand and Gravel and Coal Safe Guarding Areas as identified by policies Minerals 2 and 3 of the Natural Resources and Waste DPD. These policies seek to have the natural assets removed prior to development if viable.

### 7.5 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF identifies 12 core planning principles (para 17) which include that planning should:

- Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver homes
- Seek high quality design and a good standard of amenity for existing and future occupants.
- Actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling.

Planning should proactively support sustainable economic development and seek to secure high quality design. It encourages the effective use of land and achieves standards of amenity for all existing and future occupiers of land and buildings. A safe and suitable access to the site should be provided (para 32). One of the core principles is the reuse of land that has previously been developed. Paragraph 49 states that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF states that local authorities should deliver a wide choice of homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities (para 50).

### 7.6 Relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance includes:

SPD Parking  
SPD Street Design Guide

SPD Travel Plans  
SPD Building for Tomorrow Today: Sustainable Design and Construction  
SPG City Centre Urban Design Strategy  
SPG3 Affordable Housing and the interim affordable housing policy  
SPG Neighbourhoods for Living

#### 7.7 Site Allocations Plan (SAP)

The site is identified in the Publication Draft of the Site Allocations Plan as MX1-12. With the ability to deliver 609 residential units & 3,220 sqm of offices.

#### 7.8 Private Rented Sector Housing and Affordable Housing

With regard to Private Rented Sector (PRS) developments and Affordable Housing provision, on 22 March 2017 Leeds City Council's Executive Board endorsed an approach which recognises that the acceptance of commuted sums from PRS schemes may be appropriate and justified in accordance with Core Strategy Policy H5. Policy H5 is being considered as part of the Core Strategy Selective Review (Feb 2018) in which PRS schemes are proposed to be specifically targeted due to their inability to involve a 3<sup>rd</sup> party in the form of a Registered Provider (RP) of affordable housing. The review sets out that under H5, PRS developments shall make provision of affordable units in the following ways:

- i) on-site, according to national policy advice, currently 20% Affordable Private Rent dwellings at 80% of local market rents administered by a management company with appropriate arrangements for identifying households in need, including city council nomination rights, which apply in perpetuity, or
- ii) on-site, the percentage of affordable housing specified for zones 1-4 and mix of Intermediate and Social Rented types of affordable housing set out in the first paragraphs of this Policy (an increase to 7% of the total number of units is proposed), or
- iii) a commuted sum in lieu of on-site provision of affordable housing of option ii).

#### 7.9 The Leeds Standard and the DCLG Technical Housing Standards

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. A selective review of the Leeds Core Strategy is presently being undertaken (CSSR). The review includes policies to introduce residential space standards. The CSSR publication draft was agreed at the Council's Executive Board meeting on 7th February 2018 for consultation purposes, and therefore some weight can be attached to this emerging policy.

### 8.0 **KEY ISSUES**

#### 8.1 Principle of the Proposed Development

The use of the site for residential purposes was previously supported by Members and is in accordance with Core Strategy Policies Spatial Policy 1 (SP1) and H2.

## 8.2 Site layout and design

The proposal is now for 2 buildings which follow the current street pattern, stepping down and acknowledging the slope from Brunswick Row along Melbourne Street/Lower Brunswick Street, terminating on Bridge Street.

- 8.3 The height and massing has been reduced by a maximum of 2 storey in comparison to the original proposal. This is considered to relate better to the scale of the existing buildings to the west and reduces the impact on the street. Images will be presented which show the way that this appears in the street scene and in relation to the existing buildings in the area. The plan reflects the tight urban grain in this area but all elevations now have a colonnade treatment which widens the space available for pedestrians adjacent the public footway which will be a minimum of 2m of public footway width widening to more than double this once the space beneath the colonnade is included. There is also a new publicly accessible space between the buildings and areas of enclosed garden at either end of the development. At roof level both buildings have a roof top terrace amenity area for use by the residents.
- 8.4 It is considered that the changes help to reduce the dominance of the new building within this tight urban grain and ensure the new buildings sit comfortably within the context of wider street views. They provide enhanced pedestrian areas at street level and provide external amenity areas for the future occupants.
- 8.5 The dominant material is brick on all elevations with partially recessed cladding panels and glass, running vertically between the larger brick elements, providing relief and definition to the elevation. The top floors are also recessed to sides and end to create a definite top to the composition. Officers consider that the elevations are well mannered and respectful of the context, which is largely of brick, and accommodate the stepping down given the fall across the length of the site.

### **1. Do Members support the emerging scale and design of the development?**

#### Residential amenity considerations

- 8.6 The 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom and 3-bedroom apartments still meet the minimum space standards set out in the Nationally Described Space Standards.
- 8.7 In respect of the proposed single studio of 31 sqm. The NDSS does not offer guidance on the size of studio flats. Officers are of the opinion that this size of unit can be made to work in terms of accommodating clearly defined bedspace, living, dining and kitchen areas and adequate internal circulation space. In this case it is a product of the location of the stair core and roof set back and is of a size similar to those approved in other city centre sites e.g. Dandara.
- 8.8 The scheme has been designed to maximize the number of units which have a western, southern and eastern aspect. Noise pollution would be considered low in this location as it is some distance from the main roads at North St and Regent St. The standard of amenity for proposed residents is considered acceptable. In view of the proposed distance of approximately 15m to the closest building across Brunswick Row (80 North Street), the relationship and impact on amenity of the occupiers of this building is also considered to be acceptable

### **2. Do Members consider that the levels of amenity within the flats are acceptable?**

### **3. Do Members consider that the proposal respects the amenity of the**

## **occupiers of surrounding properties?**

### 8.9 Affordable Housing and Housing Mix

The Council's policy H5 requires 5% of the total units on a development of this size to be provided as affordable housing, normally on site. The details of how this provision will be made will be discussed with officers as the application progresses. The mix of units is the same as that originally proposed and which Members considered to be acceptable.

### 8.10 Highways/Access matters

Due to its long narrow nature, the site is physically constrained in terms of potential on-site parking provision. However, the site is sustainably located within the city centre and the many amenities offered by the city centre are within easy walking distance. Also there are numerous amenities for proposed residents located along North Street. Therefore, the applicant is proposing 3 no. disabled car parking spaces whilst maximizing cycle storage (1 space per unit). Whilst car parking provision represents a 3% provision across the whole scheme, this site is located adjacent to bus routes and within walking distance of the city bus and railway stations, as well as all of the facilities offered by the city centre itself. Parking policy allows provision of a minimum of zero parking in this location, provided there are no problems identified on the local highway network. In this location there are wide spread on-street parking controls designed to prevent adverse impact and obstruction on the highway. In this location officers therefore consider that this level of provision could be supported and accords with wider sustainability objectives by reducing the reliance on the private motor vehicle, subject to submission of a detailed transport assessment showing no adverse impact on the local highway.

#### **4. Do Members support the approach to parking provision in this highly sustainable city centre location?**

### 8.11 Energy and sustainability

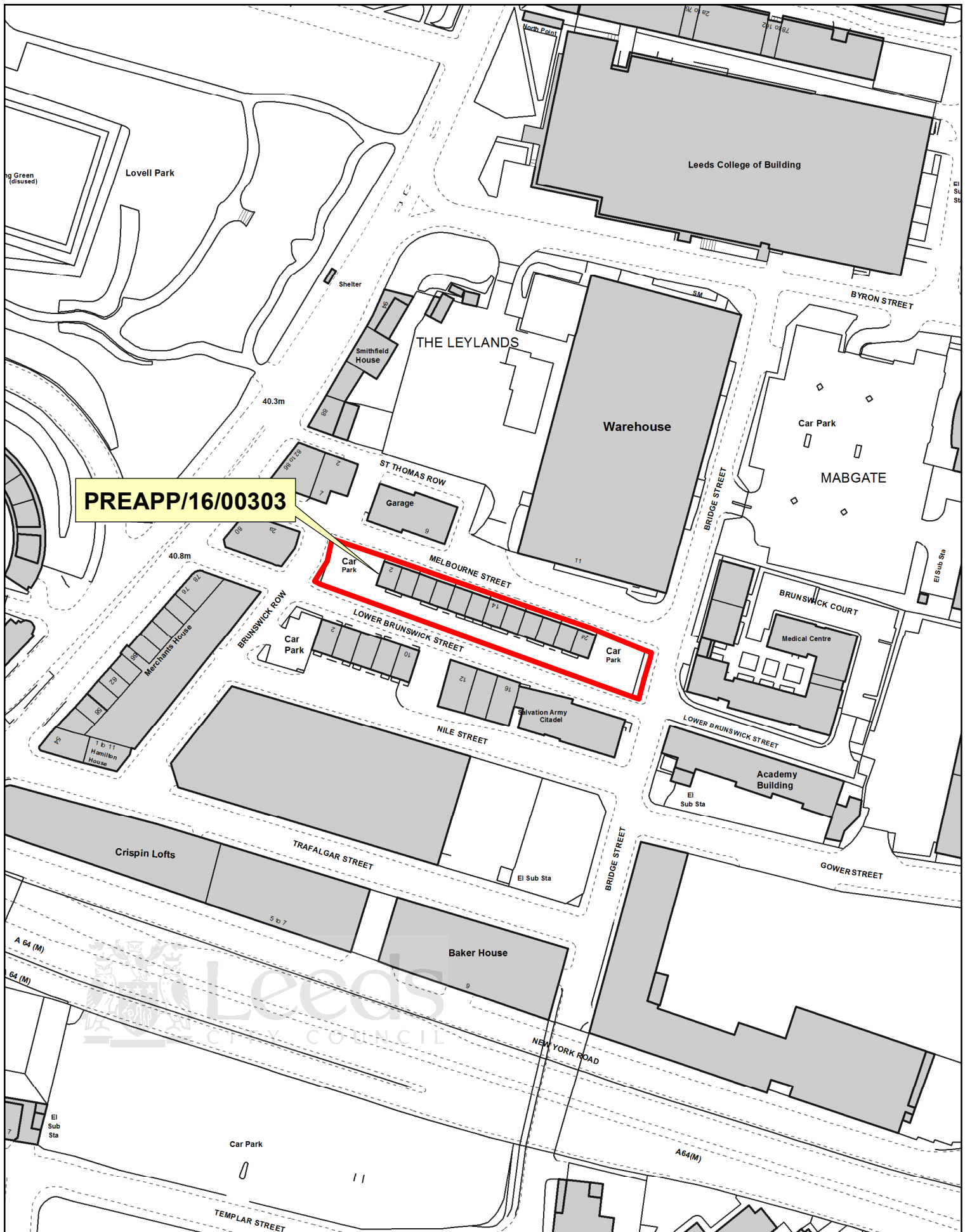
The scheme is proposed to achieve the required reduction in CO2 emissions and low carbon energy source in accordance with Core Strategy Policy EN1 and Policy EN2.

## **9.0 CONCLUSION**

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

- 1. Do Members support the emerging scale and design of the development?**
- 2. Do Members consider that the levels of amenity within the flats are acceptable?**
- 3. Do Members consider that the proposal respects the amenity of the occupiers of surrounding properties?**
- 4. Do Members support the approach to parking provision in this highly sustainable city centre location?**





# CITY PLANS PANEL

