



Report of the Chief Planning Officer

PLANS PANEL CENTRAL

Date: 16th September 2010

Subject: APPLICATION 10/02974/RM/C - 6/7 Storey office building with basement car park and landscaping at Wellington Place (Building 3) – Corner of Wellington St and Northern St

APPLICANT

Wellington Place General
Partner Ltd

DATE VALID

7th July 2010

TARGET DATE

6th October 2010

Electoral Wards Affected:
City and Hunslet

NO

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

RECOMMENDATION:

GRANT PERMISSION subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the commencement of development, details to include plans and cross-sections, of the new basement vehicular access and it's method of linking to the underground road system, approved as part of outline permission ref. no. 06/06824/OT, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include:

- (i) The line of the carriageway**
- (ii) The security barrier mechanism**
- (iii) All signing and lining**
- (iv) The lighting of the access route**
- (v) A plan indicating all visibility splays**
- (vi) A plan indicating all forward visibility dimensions.**
- (vii) Details of any kerbs and protective barriers if required**

The access point and linking road shall then be constructed in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the provision of a safe vehicular environment which has the capacity to accommodate the necessary volume of vehicle movements.

The site will be subject to compliance with the conditions attached to the outline consent

Reasons for approval: The application is considered to comply with policies BD2, BD5, N12, N13, LD1 GP5, of the UDPR, as well as guidance contained within Supplementary Planning Documents: Sustainable Design and Construction and Central Government advice set out in PPS1, PPS3, PPS4, and having regard to all other material considerations, as such the application is recommended for approval:

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

This application is being brought to Panel as it is a significant new building which is part of a much larger development site in the City Centre. The overall site has the benefit of outline planning permission and 2 previous reserved matters applications have already been approved by Members at Panel in 2009. In addition, the project architects have presented the temporary site works and landscaping proposals to Members to keep them informed of progress and many of these have now been introduced to the site. There is a parallel application for the neighbouring Building 10 (10/02973/RM/C) which is also before Members for determination and therefore reference to this will be made in this report.

2.0 PROPOSAL:

Background - Outline Approval

The outline consent for this site was for the layout of, and means of access to, the buildings and therefore the matters for consideration as part of this application are the scale of the building, its external appearance/design and landscaping. The outline also has attached to it a range of conditions which will have to be discharged and will therefore control the development of each individual building including the one under consideration here, Building 3.

The outline scheme set a maximum height of development using a design code statement and for this site the maximum height achievable was considered to be 15 storeys which related to the taller buildings along Wellington St (West Central – former Royal Mail building and 100 Wellington St, Brunswick Point). All of the buildings in the outline scheme have roofs which slope downward toward the centre of the site to allow greater penetration of natural light to both the open spaces and pedestrian routes at it's heart. The building will provide 13,565 Sqm of office space & 345sqm of A3/A4 use.

Building Footprint

This proposal is within the footprint approved as part of the outline scheme and follows the principles set by that scheme in respect of orientation of building lines, relationship to surrounding streets and the generation of pedestrian routes through the scheme which are focused on existing local landmarks (the listed lifting tower and viaduct) and the prominent corners where the site's primary pedestrian accesses are located. This particular site is located at one of those prominent corners and acts as one side of a funnel which will steer pedestrians in to the heart

of the scheme when approaching from both the north and the east. The fact that the building footprint is slightly smaller than that approved means that the area of public realm to be provided is increased and the funnel effect between the buildings is emphasised and both of these features are an improvement on the approved outline.

Scale

This reserved matters application is for a 5/6 storey office building plus single storey feature parapet which means that the total height is 6/7 storeys. This scheme results in a much reduced scale from the approved maximum but retains the feature roof slope. This scale now relates more to its immediate neighbour, Benson House to the west, than it does the taller buildings in the area. The sloping roof performs its required functions in the street scene, to tie the building in to the surrounding and existing street pattern but then act as a transition between this more regular street pattern and the angular forms of the Wellington Place scheme.

Elevational Treatment

The elevational treatment of the building has developed as a response to its context and the character of the buildings which form part of its immediate setting. This results in a well ordered fenestration pattern with a full height glazed base, a middle which consists of a masonry grid and a parapet which contains the diminishing parapet detail within a traditional attic storey. The masonry grid uses a dominant outer stone framework with a secondary grid of a darker complementary stone which produces the regular fenestration pattern.

The masonry character established by the Design Philosophy Document attached to the original outline permission & recent reserved matters applications is maintained. The design proposes a simple palette of materials, high quality natural stone and glazing which relates to the buildings already approved on the site.

The building addresses the Wellington St frontage and wraps around the prominent north-eastern corner. There is then a visual break at the point where the building folds around the corner before the parapet commences the slope down along its south-eastern elevation. This is an unusual and innovative architectural device and will create a distinctive feature at this important entrance point.

The main entrance to the building is within an angled set-back recess along the south-eastern elevation facing in to the main pedestrian access route and this will provide a focus to this elevation and animate the street. The large areas of glazing will support this move to add life and activity as will the inclusion of the 2 ground-floor commercial units. The entrances to these will produce additional focal points around the perimeter.

The sloping roof form also includes a green terrace at its southern end which will provide interest both from distant views and from the other buildings within the scheme and encloses the plant area which means that the sloping parapet will be the dominant element with none of the plant being visible. Windows will be cleaned from the ground by monopole and if necessary via a platform lift.

Vehicle Servicing and Access

The building proposes a basement car park located beneath its western side which would be accessed discreetly via the existing service road to the south of Benson House. The basement will contain 40 fully accessible spaces in line with the requirements of the approved Transport Assessment which is 65% of the UDPR maximum guideline figure for this core car parking location. There are also 84 cycle

spaces and 11 motorcycle spaces. Members attention is drawn to the fact that the required multi-storey car parking provision required by the UDPR has already been provided on the Wellington Place site and therefore any visitors will be able to utilise this existing facility.

This basement access point also acts as the northern end of the underground route which will run beneath the entire development once completed as approved by the outline permission. The basement access to Building 3 must therefore be extendable in order to allow this link to be created and also has to conform to full highways standards of junction design and forward visibility. Officers are advising the applicant on the design of this route to ensure compliance and a condition will be added to this permission to control the design of the linking road.

Public Realm and Landscaping

The area around the building consists of the new major pedestrian route into the Wellington Place site which runs along the south-eastern side of the building from the Northern St/Wellington St corner as well as the apron of hard surfacing and planting to the north and west of the building and a small area of space which sits above the basement car park access.

The new pedestrian route sits at the convergence of the existing Prime Office Quarter, the City Centre Conservation Area, and the emerging West End Commercial quarter and therefore, the public realm has to perform a unique function. It has to integrate the Wellington Street environment, the future re-development of the Northern St edge and provide an attractive pedestrian route into Wellington Place. It is important to note that the materials palette and design of the landscaping and paving will join into the track-line detail which has already been approved as part of the reserved matters approval for the main square around the lifting tower and this consistency and continuity is considered to be of prime importance in uniting the design and giving Wellington Place its own distinctive character.

The character will take its reference from the industrial heritage through interpretation of the old railway tracks within planting beds and the use of high quality materials including granite flooring and Corten steel. The planting breaks through the paving surface in large rectangular strips to frame views and create seating niches within and around the pedestrian spine. This is termed the 'Green Line Garden' and will create a primary pedestrian entrance between Wellington Place and the city. The scheme also includes for an entrance feature in Corten steel at the Wellington St/Northern St corner.

The Corten features and planting will be lit from the ground to provide an impressive entrance to the site at night. They will also carry visual displays of industrial and railway heritage information. Feature lighting columns will also be integrated to the design. The flooring is cambered to drain off into these planting areas which reduces surface water run off and will naturally sustain the planting in these beds.

Sustainability

The design has focussed on the following low carbon approaches:

- Minimum 50% glazing to maximise natural daylight (minimise overheating)
- Highly efficient building services systems
- Sustainable Urban Drainage System

The building will also be constructed with the ability to be linked to the site wide energy network when this is eventually constructed as part of a later phase. The submitted sustainability report provides a more detailed commentary on the

applicant's approach to the design which includes an element of green roof. As a result of the BREEAM assessment carried out it was determined that a rating of Excellent could be achieved.

S106 matters agreed as part of outline permission

As part of the outline scheme the development has an associated S106 agreement which covers

- (i) Public access 24hr to squares, routes, riverside walkway and bridges
- (ii) Provision of low level river bridge
- (iii) Provision of connection to listed viaduct
- (iv) Maintenance of public space
- (v) Affordable housing provision
- (vi) Local employment opportunities
- (vii) Provision of a Travel Plan Co-ordinator and Travel Plan Monitoring Fee
- (viii) £200,000 funding for a metro card scheme
- (ix) Provision of real time bus information system within the development.
- (x) £150,000 Public Transport and Infrastructure contribution.
- (xi) £250,000 off site highways contribution
- (xii) £60,000 contribution towards a super bus shelter on Whitehall Rd.

For information, a Framework Travel Plan was approved as part of the outline permission and a condition attached to this requires that a further detailed Travel Plan be submitted prior to the occupation of whichever is the first phase of development. As set out above, the Section 106 already makes provision for a number of Travel Plan and public transport related measures which have already been considered acceptable and are not for consideration as part of this application.

3.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

The 0.55 Hectare site for Building 3 is located within the wider Wellington Place layout situated at the corner of Wellington St and Northern St on the main approach to the city centre from the west. The Southern Boundary is currently a vacant and cleared site and to the west is the neighbouring 'Benson House' office building (completed circa 1990) which is constructed of a mix of brick and masonry detailing with metal balconies.

The historic Primary Office Quarter and City Centre Conservation Area are adjacent to the northern edge of the application site and this area is clearly of high quality containing a number of listed buildings most notably No. 78 Wellington St (Apsley House) which sits diagonally opposite the proposed Building 3. Wellington Street itself comprises a rich and diverse collection of architectural styles. Predominantly masonry in character (terracotta, brick, Yorkshire Sandstone and Limestone) there are few modern interventions notably the 'West Central' Residential Building and Springfield House office building (former coach station site)

Wellington Place itself is occupied by a number of existing buildings comprising Hotel, Office and Multi Storey Car Park. The character is of mixed architectural styles, with the predominant materials being red brick and glass. The scale of the existing buildings vary from 4 to 7 office floors. Located in close proximity to the application site is the Grade II listed former railway lifting tower, constructed of natural grit-stone laid in a coursing pattern which reflects its industrial use. The lifting tower possesses a visual strength which is unique to Wellington Place and provides one of the few visible clues as to the site's previous railway heritage.

Much of the Wellington Place site is hard surfacing which remains after the demolition of the retail buildings although coloured gravel banks and a large area of grass have now been introduced to break this down. The owner/applicant has also introduced a number of temporary uses (both public and private) in order to encourage the use of the site and these include a 5-a-side football pitch and allotments. Pedestrian routes proposed within the outline plan have been introduced in a temporary state to encourage movement through the site. The application site itself is occupied by a combination of soft planting, some mature trees and simple paving. The site is practically level with minor changes in topography.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

The most recent and relevant permission relating to the application site is the outline planning permission ref. no. 06/06824/OT. This was approved in principle by Members at Panel on 1st March 2007 and was subsequently approved in March 2008. This comprised 15 individual buildings containing:

- Use Class B1 (offices) - 162,800m²
- Use Class C3 (residential) - 43,650m² (approx. 700 units)
- Use Class C1 (hotel) - 18,950m²
- Use Class D1 (cultural and community uses) - 4,900m²
- Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4 and A5 (shops, cafes, bars, restaurants etc. - 10,930m² [A1 floor space restricted to 1,000m² by condition]
- Basement Car Park - 48,599m² (1,700 spaces)
- Total - 241,230m²

In addition Members have also approved reserved matters applications for the building at the western end of Whitehall Rd fronting the river which also included the details of 'The Beach' open space area (app. ref. 08/01695/RM/C) and at a site mid-way along Whitehall Rd for a 5-10 storey office building (app. ref. 08/04314/RM). To date therefore 2 buildings have received such approvals.

In recognition of the phased approach to the development on the site, the applicant received approval from Members for a number of separate planning applications for temporary works designed to engage the community and announce the arrival of Wellington Place as a scheme whilst the development progresses. The Marketing Suite/City Room has been open for 3 years and the 5-a-side football pitch was completed last year. Landscaping has recently been improved in the area around the listed tower.

5.0 HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS:

Officers have been involved in a series of meetings concerning the design of not only this proposal but the neighbouring building to the west, Building 10 Wellington Place. These two buildings are very much seen as related in scale and form and, along with Benson House, would constitute one city block if they were both to be completed. Principle points of discussion have addressed the treatment of the Wellington St/ Northern Street corner (both building form and extent of public realm), material palette, the profile and silhouette of the sloped parapet and the refinement of detailing.

6.0 PUBLIC/LOCAL RESPONSE:

The proposal was advertised as a major application affecting the setting of a listed building and the character of the conservation area, on site by notice dated 14 July

(expiring 4th August) 2010 and in the press by notice dated 22nd July (expiring 12th August) 2010.

A letter of representation has been received from the **Leeds Civic Trust (LCT)**. This states that while they welcome the potential restart of development they consider that the scheme “lacks ambition” and is now just “standard developer architecture”. Also believe that the landscaping has now been “dumbed down”. However, they go on to make the point that the final quality will depend largely on the finishes of the masonry panels and the fixing of the curtain glazing. They welcome the green features and the long term commitment to the integrated energy system. Conclude by saying that they hope these building go forward as soon as possible but would like to see a little more excitement in the design. Response: The design of this building has been amended considerably since the initial comments were received and officers now consider that the changes made and the detailing introduced means that the building is of the quality required and relates well to the design and quality of the other buildings already approved on Wellington Place. Materials will be natural stone and therefore the quality requested by LCT will be realised.

A further letter of representation has been received from the resident of a property in Dock St who states that the building is bland, block like and uninspiring, failing to ‘raise the architectural bar’ and is not as good as other developments in comparable cities. Response: As with the LCT response, the design has been amended since these comments were made and officers consider that the building is now of the required quality.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES:

Statutory:

Environment Agency: No further comments from those attached to the outline.

British Waterways: No comments to make

Non-statutory:

Highways: Note the re-location of the basement car park access and the way in which this interfaces with the remainder of the under-ground site access Rd. Car parking numbers are in line with 65% of UDPR maximum as set out in the approved Transport Assessment. The number of trips generated by this proposal does not bring in to force the requirement to carry out any of the off-site highway works agreed as part of the outline. Cycle and motor-cycle spaces are to be provided as part of the scheme. Travel Plan measures were approved as part of the outline approval.

Metro: Note that the outline permission included a £200,000 Metro-card scheme and a super-bus stop contribution and also provision for off site highway works. The site is well served by both bus and rail services.

Main Drainage: The site remains acceptable in respect of it’s ability to deal with surface water run off subject to conditions.

Access: The plans indicate that the parking is correctly provided and that the accesses are all flat and level.

Contaminated Land: No objection subject to original conditions.

Police Counter Terrorism Unit: Have advised the applicant directly in respect of this aspect of the proposal the points raised largely covering the use of materials and construction techniques to limit flying debris in the event of an explosion.

Street Cleansing: Advise that this aspect has been adequately dealt with.

8.0 PLANNING POLICIES:

UDP Proposal Area Statement 2 identifies the site as a major opportunity for the expansion of the Prime Office Quarter, principally through offices, but with other essential uses, such as major public space, pedestrian linkages, leisure, entertainment and catering uses. Catering and leisure uses are listed as other appropriate uses. The proposed use therefore remains consistent with the site-specific allocation in the adopted Development Plan.

The adopted UDPR sets out guidelines for the development and design of new buildings. Urban Design and Building Design are addressed by policies BD2, N12 and N13 and require that development respects certain fundamentals of urban design. Spaces between buildings are important as they create a series of linked and varied spaces. Movement on foot and on bicycle should be encouraged and new developments should respect the character and scale of buildings and the routes that connect them. Buildings should be of high quality and have regard to the character and appearance of their surroundings.

Landscape policy LD1 requires any scheme to respect the scale and form of the adjacent building, provide suitable access, visual interest from street level and surrounding buildings.

Government Planning Policy Guidance/Statements – PPS4 Planning for Sustainable Communities advocates the location of office use in defined centres where they enjoy the benefits of good transportation links and access.

9.0 MAIN ISSUES

Accordance with the outline permission
The scale of the proposal
The design quality of building
Access to the building for vehicles and pedestrians
Quality of the landscaping design
Ability to meet sustainability targets

10.0 APPRAISAL

Conformity with Outline Approval

The use of this site primarily as offices but with ancillary ground floor commercial uses has already been established by the outline permission and is acceptable. This building is part of a much larger overall scheme which will be developed over time on a phased basis. There is an overall quantum of floor space for each of the uses proposed and this is set out within this report. As each building attains an approval this 'running total' can be monitored to ensure that the maximum levels are not exceeded and therefore the overall principles of the Transport Statement, to which it is related, are not compromised. In this case, where the quantum of floor space is being reduced from that permitted as part of the outline, it means that the

upper limit is less likely to be reached which is a positive factor when considering the impact on the local highway network.

The building footprint conforms to the important aspects of the approved outline layout and the reduction in size explained above can be accommodated without any detriment to the buildings to be located on the neighbouring sites. It is considered that this application upholds the principles set out in the outline approval and is therefore acceptable.

Scale

This proposal sits well within its context and relates to the height of both Benson House to the west and the listed Apsley House to the north east. Behind the Wellington St façade the sloping roof line commences the architectural language of the remainder of the Wellington Place scheme and reduces the scale of the development as it approaches the central space area around the lifting tower. This relates well to Building 10 which has a roof line which continues the slope and goes on to respect and relate well to the scale of the listed lifting tower. This is considered to be an improved relationship to that approved at outline stage and is supported by officers.

Design

The way in which the building addresses the Wellington St/ Northern St corner and then 'folds' to commence its slope down to the main square is considered to be a well considered, simple and yet elegant elevational approach to the challenge offered by the approved footprint. It also allows the building to address the Wellington St frontage and relate to the grid of the historic street pattern to the north before taking the dramatic dive off down towards the square around the listed tower.

The layering of the elevations and the order this creates is a subtle but successful feature and the incorporation of the roof slope in to a double height attic storey is considered to be particularly successful. The fact that high quality materials are to be used will ensure that the appropriate character will result.

The roofscape will be clean and unfettered and the inclusion of an area of open terrace and green roof will add an element of life, visual interest and natural habitat to the building.

Pedestrian and Vehicular Access

The provision of a basement parking area is in line with the outline approval and the reduction in the number of spaces compared to the outline consent, due to the reduced size of the building, is welcomed, as is the provision of cycle and motorcycle spaces. The method of access to the car park is taken discreetly from the rear service road thus enabling the environment on the other sides of the building to be well landscaped and totally pedestrian dominated. As explained above, the original orientation of the basement route made the construction of Building 10 very difficult and therefore its realignment is positively encouraged. The additional condition attached above will ensure that the method of connection to the remainder of the underground route can be adequately controlled.

Landscaping and Open Space Area

The areas of landscaping described in detail above offer a significant contribution to public amenity space. These have been designed to interface with the areas which have already gained approval and will contribute to providing a real sense of place which is of high quality and totally pedestrian dominated. The references being

made to the railway heritage of the site are also welcomed and will further contribute to the creation of a distinctive character and offer a context to the listed features on the site.

The materials which are proposed to be used are high quality and will complement the use of natural materials on the building itself. The use of ground based lighting will add an exciting dimension at night and the incorporation of natural watering through the use of rainwater run-off is also supported.

Sustainability

The achievement of a BREEAM 'excellent' rating is very much welcomed by officers and this simply continues the high quality of development which the applicant is intending to roll out across the whole of this site. The inclusion of a partly green roof will also provide additional habitat at high level and this along with the new tree planting will contribute to the provision of diverse habitats.

The site will be subject to compliance with the conditions attached to the outline consent

11.0 CONCLUSION

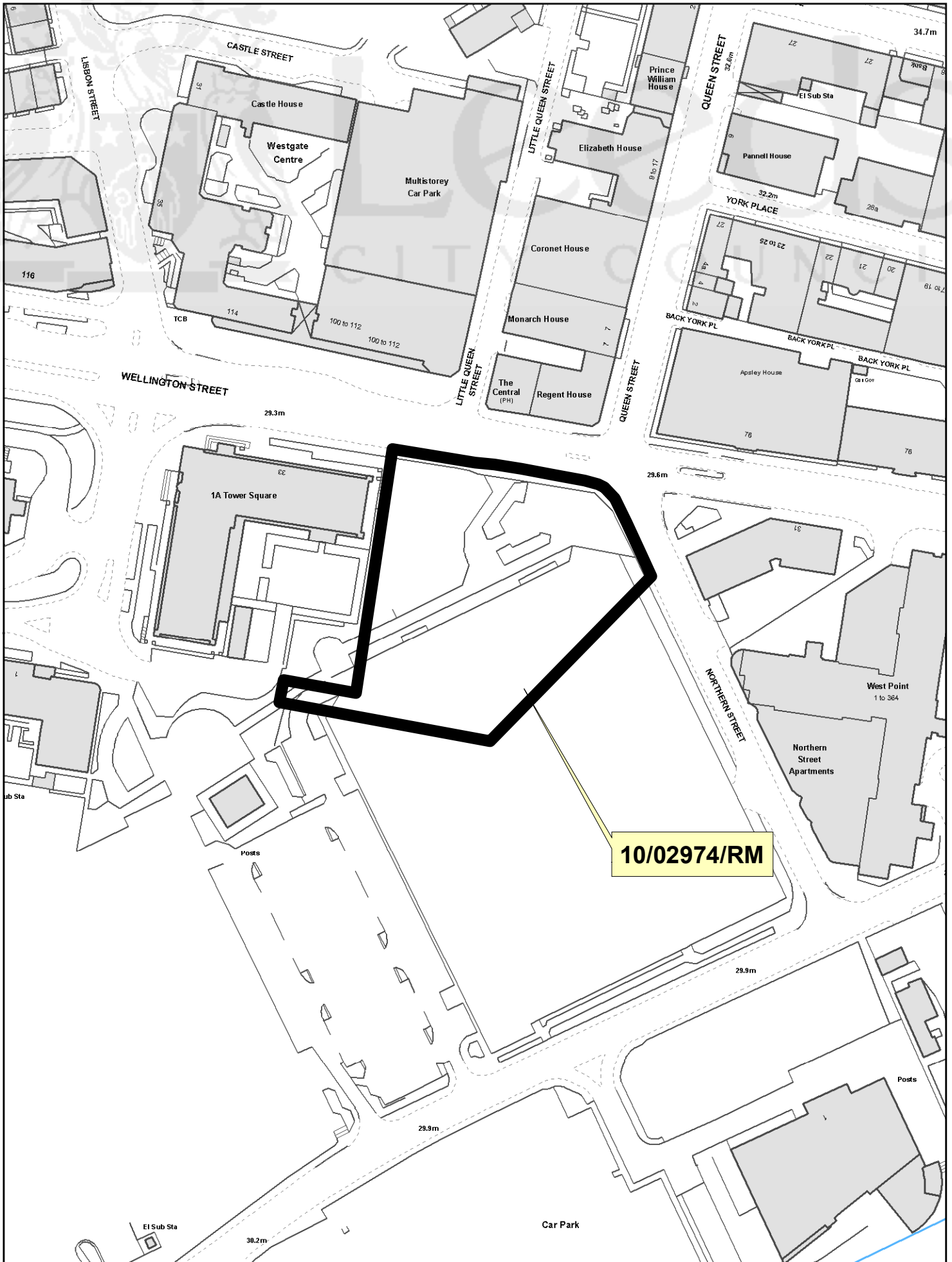
This building successfully ties the new character of Wellington Place to the existing character of the Conservation Area to the north. Both in terms of footprint and elevational treatment it successfully performs the function of creating the transition between the traditional street pattern and buildings to the north and the new pattern of Wellington Place to the south.

Officers consider that this will be a high quality building and an appropriate entrance point to the series of interlinked spaces which will flow through the scheme. It conforms to the objectives of the approved masterplan and will act as a catalyst for the redevelopment of this area of the city.

Background Papers:

Original Outline Planning Permission: P/06/06824/OT.
Reserve Matter Application Building 3: 08/ 01695/RM/C
LCT letter 21st July 2010

Correspondence from Dock St resident: 24th August 2010



CITY CENTRE PANEL

