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**Report of the Chief Planning Officer**

**PLANS PANEL CITY CENTRE**

**Date: 27<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2011**

**Subject: PRE-APPLICATION PRESENTATION OF PROPOSED HOTEL AT JUNCTION OF PORTLAND WAY AND CALVERLEY STREET, LEEDS (PREAPP/11/00613).**

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**Electoral Wards Affected:**

City and Hunslet

No

**Specific Implications For:**

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

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**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.**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This presentation is intended to inform Members of the emerging proposals for a new hotel building on vacant land to the north of the Civic Hall across Portland Way in advance of a planning application later in the year.

**2.0 PLANNING HISTORY**

2.1 The site forms the southern part of the former Leeds Met site which was acquired by Downing in 2010 although this part of the site has since been acquired from Downing. Plans Panel considered the application for the first phase of Downing's proposed development across the northern half of the former campus site in February 2011 (10/05541/FU). Those works are now underway. Subsequently, Downing's team presented pre-application proposals for a 21 storey tower on the northern edge of the former campus site to Plans Panel on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2011.

### **3.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

- 3.1 Leeds Metropolitan University city campus is a large rectangular area bounded by Calverley Street, Willow Terrace Road, Portland Way, Woodhouse Lane and the Inner Ring Road to the north of the city centre. It is currently characterised by denser built forms towards the eastern side and a more open setting with generous grassed spaces containing trees on the northern and western edges, including groups of trees along Calverley Street.
- 3.2 The site where the hotel is now proposed comprises land on the southern fringe of the campus at the junction of Portland Way and Calverley Street. There is a level change of more than 4 metres within this part of the site. The area was cleared of redundant educational buildings during 2007/8 and is currently vacant. Other than for the trees the site currently detracts from the appearance of the area.
- 3.3 The surrounding area is mainly characterised by institutional and civic uses. The University of Leeds campus is located to the north of the Inner Ring Road. Leeds General Infirmary is across Calverley Street to the west and beyond Portland Way to the south are the Civic Hall and the Rosebowl building.
- 3.4 The site is located directly north of the City Centre Conservation Area and in the setting of the grade II\* listed Civic Hall. Trees around the wider campus are protected by Tree Preservation Order (No.22) 2007.

### **4.0 POLICY**

- 4.1 The area forms part of the designated Education Quarter in the adopted Unitary Development Plan Review (UDPR). The main objective of the designation is to facilitate the University's main functional requirements on site, enhance its character and reinforce its distinct sense of place, improve linkages with the rest of the city centre, encourage the provision of extra student housing, and resolve vehicular access and circulation. An enhanced pedestrian route is sought on Calverley Street.

### **5.0 PROPOSAL**

- 5.1 The scheme comprises a 178 bedroom hotel over 7 storeys. The upper levels of the building are stepped in response to changing levels and buildings to the south. Pedestrian access would be from Portland Way practically opposite the route between the Civic Hall and the Rose Bowl. The building would have a curved end in response to the junction of Portland Way and Calverley Street and nearby precedents including the Occupational Health Centre at the LGI opposite the site. The principal building materials are Portland stone and glazing. The applicant has indicated that a variation in material could be sought on the northern elevation.
- 5.2 The lowest level of the building would accommodate a restaurant with access close to the junction of Portland Way and Calverley Street. Ground levels are such that the restaurant would only cover approximately half of the footprint of the building.
- 5.3 It is proposed to construct a layby in Portland Way that would accommodate taxis and cater for customer drop-off. Delivery vehicles would park on Calverley Street in the space vacated by the existing taxi rank. A covered service area would run parallel to the rear of the building.
- 5.4 Two trees would be lost on the Calverley Street frontage. It is proposed to plant a line of trees along the Portland Way frontage in mitigation. Additional planting has

also been sought on the rear boundary of the site. New steps would be introduced at the northern end of the site leading towards the forthcoming public square within the city campus. The footway around the junction of Calverley Street and Portland Way would be widened.

## **6.0 TIMESCALES**

6.1 It is intended to submit a planning application in November 2011.

## **7.0 ISSUES**

Members are asked to comment on:

- (i) The position of the building with respect to the indicative masterplan for the development of the City Campus site, enabling the provision of the initial phase of a pedestrian route from Portland Way to the new public square.
- (ii) The scale of the building and how it responds to existing buildings in the area, including the Civic Hall, and changing levels.
- (iii) The building would be visible alongside the Civic Hall when looking up Calverley Street from Millennium Square such that the corner of the building, in particular, needs to be designed to the highest architectural standards and constructed using high quality materials.
- (iv) The building proposals identify the use of different materials to the front and rear of the building. It is not known when development proposals may come forward for the remaining vacant land to the north west. It is important that the rear elevation of the building has a high quality appearance and the access to the service area is appropriately integrated into the landscape.
- (v) The need for appropriate and meaningful mitigation for the removal of trees protected by the Tree Preservation Order. This could include replacement planting along the Portland Way edge and within the site.

Background papers

PREAPP/11/00613

