



Report of the Chief Planning Officer

PLANS PANEL CITY CENTRE

Date: 30 August 2012

Subject: PRE-APPLICATION – Proposed Data Centre, Black Bull Street, South Bank, Leeds

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: This report is brought to Panel for information. The developer and his architect will be asked to present an emerging strategy for the site to allow Members to consider and comment on the proposals.

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

1.1 This pre-application presentation relates to the former Yorkshire Chemicals site, Black Bull Street, South Bank, Leeds. The proposals will be presented to Panel by Yorkshire Design Group and their architects to allow Members to comment on the evolving scheme, and raise any issues.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

2.1 The wider site is located to the east and west of Black Bull Street and comprises the former Yorkshire Chemicals site. It has a site area of approximately 3.14 hectares. The site consists primarily of two pieces of land, one between Chadwick Street and Black Bull Street and the other between Black Bull Street and Cudbear Street, bounded at the south by Hunslet Lane. There is also a small parcel of land to the west of Cudbear Street. Both Black Bull Street, which is three lanes southbound and Hunslet Lane, which is four lanes two way, form part of the strategic road network through the City Centre.

- 2.2 Yorkshire Design Group aim to bring forward the first phase of development on the northern part of the site to the west of Black Bull Street only, and this would form the boundary for their full planning application for a data centre.
- 2.2 The site lies unallocated within the designated City Centre in the Leeds Unitary Development Plan Review 2006. The surrounding area is a mixture of uses including residential, offices and retail, at Brewery Wharf, Indigo Blu, New Dock, Leeds City Office Park and Crown Point Retail Park. The conversion of the Grade II listed Alf Cooke Printworks to form a campus for Leeds City College is currently underway. The area was mainly commercial and industrial in nature, characterised by large impermeable single use sites, however recent developments from the 2000s such as Indigo Blu, New Dock and Brewery Wharf have increased the mix of uses and facilities in the area. Other nearby listed buildings are the Grade II* listed Chadwick Lodge, the Grade II listed 16-18 Crown Point Road/35-41 Hunslet Road former Tetley's buildings. Unlisted heritage assets in the area include the Crown Public House, former Tetley's malhousers, and Globe Iron Works on Crown Point Road, and The Malthouse on Chadwick Street.
- 2.3 The site lies adjacent to the area covered by the South Bank Planning Statement (see attached plan South Bank Urban Design Principles 1). It has a key role in contributing towards the economic growth of the City Centre on the south side of the River Aire. It also has potential to complement the Council and nearby landowner's aspirations for the City Centre Park, with new greened pedestrian and cycle routes linking across the area from Holbeck Urban Village to New Dock and beyond.
- 2.4 The site lies within the extension to the draft Aire Valley Area Action Plan. The role of the northern end of the Aire Valley, within the City Centre, will be geared towards the provision of some housing, but with significant provision of new workspaces and offices for growing digital and creative businesses. This will enable a clustering of similar industries on a number of nearby sites, such as the former Tetley Brewery, and reconfigured space at New Dock (see attached plan South Bank Development Progress June 2012).

3.0 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The proposal is for a purpose built data centre used to house computer systems and associated components such as telecommunications and storage systems. It will allow businesses to rent secure IT storage space which minimises the chance of disruption to their business. The proposal seeks to take advantage of the industrial scale energy generating capacity which used to support the former manufacturing uses in the area and remains and the sites close proximity to the core fibre optic network and internet exchange hub which provides a direct link to Europe and America.
- 3.2 Yorkshire Design Group have prepared an illustrative masterplan for the wider 3.14 ha site, and a full scheme design for the data centre to be located on the northern part of the land to the west of Black Bull Street. The proposed data centre plot is also one of the most contaminated parts of the site, and its development for this less sensitive use, as a first phase, allows the site to be cleaned up in advance of more sensitive end uses being developed.
- 3.3 The wider site has potential for new digital and creative office workspace, leisure, residential uses, public realm and new pedestrian connections on the rest of the site. The applicant states that the sites close to the data centre will be very attractive to businesses looking for increased data connectivity. They state that a

data centre will be a catalyst for the creation of a new hub for high technology digital and creative media on the South Bank, and be a positive step for the City Centre's future economic competitiveness and growth in a national and international context.

- 3.4 This site is particularly important in forming east-west connections between the City Centre Park and New Dock, and officers have stressed to the new landowner the importance of an indicative masterplan for the rest of the site to give assurance that new green enhancements and connections will be made, on an interim and long term phased basis to achieve this synergy with adjoining sites.
- 3.5 The data centre site would be some 6570 square metres. The proposed building would be 32m in height, giving some 11664 square metres of floor area. The building would be accessed from Cudbear Street through a 34 space car park, with 4 disabled bays, 10 long stay cycle spaces, and short stay cycle parking. This would be enclosed on all sides. The building would be set back some 7m from the back edge of the footway to Black Bull Street, which would give a landscaped setting to the street. Meeting rooms and support staff office accommodation would be located around the edges of the floorplates, and the ground floor reception would be visible from Black Bull Street through a clear glazed link.
- 3.6 To the north and south of the building would be 7.5m landscaped pedestrian and cycle routes, which would form the first contributions towards a green network of routes between the future City Centre Park and New Dock. Similar routes are indicated on the illustrative masterplan for the eastern side of Black Bull Street.
- 3.7 There is potential for waste heat from the data centre to deliver a sustainable district energy system to serve nearby buildings, including any potential future housing scheme that may be delivered to the east of Black Bull Street.

4.0 HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS

- 4.1 Detailed discussions with the Council regarding this site have taken place since mid-2005 following the closure and subsequent demolition of Yorkshire Chemicals. This led to the submission of an outline planning application in 2006 (ref. 06/04601/OT), which was approved at Plans Panel in 2008, and subsequently granted permission in 2009 for a multi-level mixed use development comprising predominantly residential (678 flats and 43 townhouses), with office, hotel, leisure, retail, car showroom, community uses, public space and car parking. This permission expired in July 2012.
- 4.2 Previous site owners Gladedale and their professional team presented a pre-application residential scheme to Plans Panel on 22 December 2012, and subsequently submitted a new outline application for 252 residential units, including 150 townhouses, in February 2012 (application ref. 12/00653/OT). This application was withdrawn by Gladedale in June 2012.
- 4.3 Yorkshire Design Group have been engaged in discussions with planning, design and highways officers since June 2012 regarding an illustrative approach for the wider site, and a detailed proposal for a data centre.

5.0 ISSUES

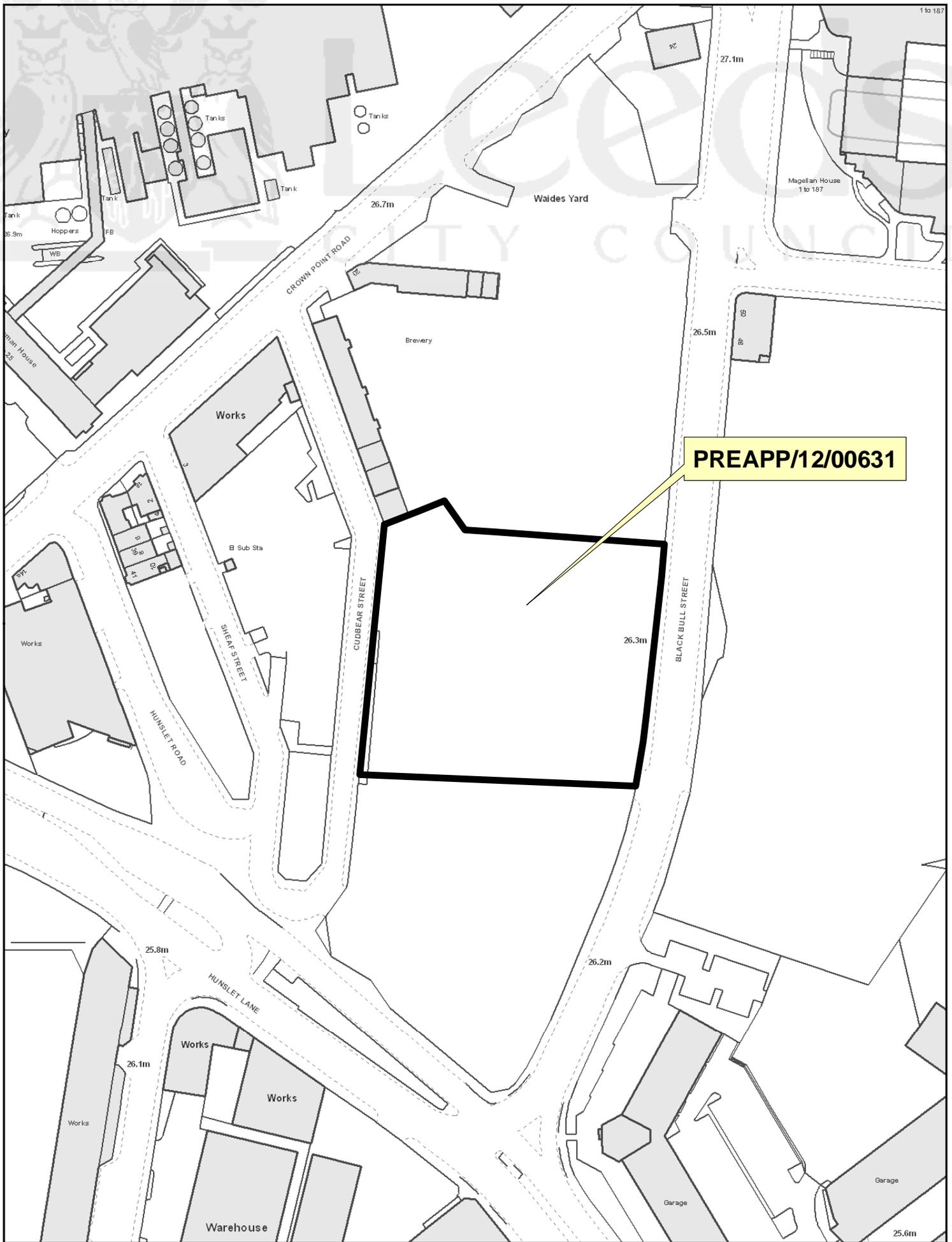
Members are asked to consider the following matters in particular:

- 5.1 Is the principle of locating a data centre building on part of this site appropriate, given the potential importance of such a facility to the City Centre economy, and as a catalyst for the regeneration of the South Bank?
- 5.2 Is the general approach to the illustrative masterplan right for the area and does it complement the City's vision for the South Bank and the City Centre Park by creating appropriate links and physical relationships to surrounding sites such as New Dock ?
- 5.3 Is the form and massing of the building appropriate given the existing context of Indigo Blu, Brewery Wharf and New Dock developments, and evolving indicative context of the South Bank?
- 5.4 Are the architectural detailing and materials proposed appropriate for the building and do they project a modern and forward-looking image of this part of the City?

Background Papers:

South Bank Planning Statement October 2011

Planning Application files 06/04601/OT & 12/00653/OT

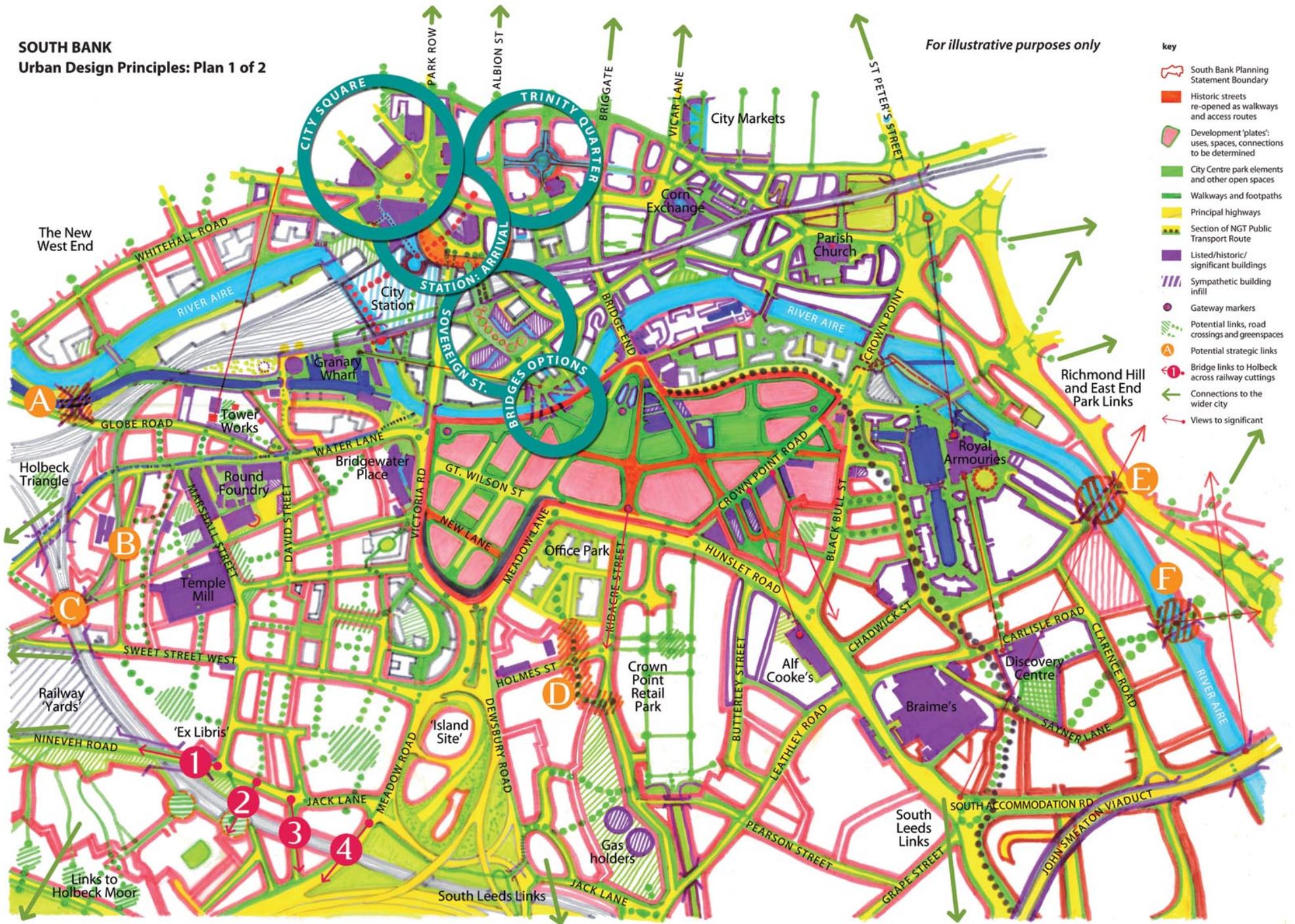


CITY CENTRE PLANS PANEL

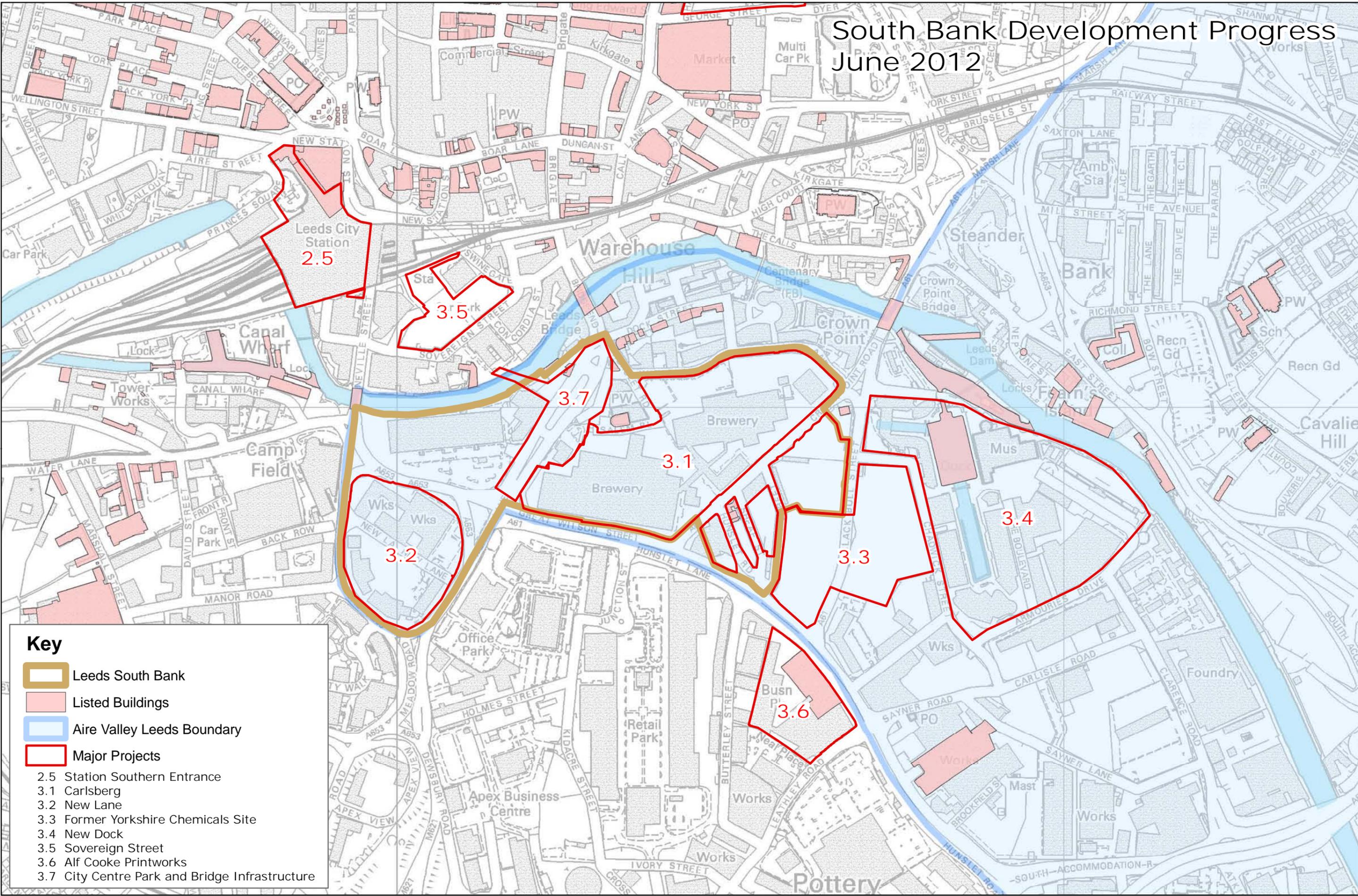


SOUTH BANK
Urban Design Principles: Plan 1 of 2

For illustrative purposes only



South Bank Development Progress June 2012



Key

- Leeds South Bank
- Listed Buildings
- Aire Valley Leeds Boundary
- Major Projects

- 2.5 Station Southern Entrance
- 3.1 Carlsberg
- 3.2 New Lane
- 3.3 Former Yorkshire Chemicals Site
- 3.4 New Dock
- 3.5 Sovereign Street
- 3.6 Alf Cooke Printworks
- 3.7 City Centre Park and Bridge Infrastructure