



Leeds
CITY COUNCIL

Originator: C. Briggs

Tel: 0113 222 4409

Report of the Chief Planning Officer

CITY PLANS PANEL

Date: 22 November 2012

Subject: LAND OFF SOVEREIGN STREET, LEEDS LS1

12/04017/LA CHANGE OF USE FROM CAR PARK TO PUBLIC REALM AND AMENITY SPACE, TO INCLUDE PAVING, WATER FEATURE, DRAINAGE, EXTERIOR LIGHTING AND ASSOCIATED SOFT LANDSCAPING WORKS

APPLICANT

Leeds City Council

DATE VALID

20 September 2012

TARGET DATE

20 December 2012

Electoral Wards Affected:

City and Hunslet

Yes

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

RECOMMENDATION: Defer and Delegate approval to the Chief Planning Officer subject to the expiry of Notice No. 1 on 28 November 2012, and subject to the following specified conditions (and any others which may be considered appropriate):

Conditions

- 1) Time limit
- 2) Plans Schedule
- 3) Details of phasing
- 4) Details and samples of all surfacing materials
- 5) Details of hard and soft landscape works
- 6) Details of tree pits
- 7) Landscape management plan
- 8) All areas to be used by vehicles to be fully laid out, surfaced and drained prior to use
- 9) Provision of off-site highways works
- 10) Details of cycle parking
- 11) Details of seats
- 12) Details of surface water drainage
- 13) Separate systems of drainage for foul and surface water drainage

- 14) No piped discharge of surface water
- 15) Survey of culvert
- 16) Development in accordance with Flood Risk Assessment
- 17) Land contamination studies
- 18) Amended remediation strategy
- 19) Remediation Statement verification
- 20) Details of contractors' equipment
- 21) Details of mud and dirt prevention during works
- 22) Details of dust minimisation during works
- 23) Building operations hours 0730-1900 hours on weekdays, 0800-1900 Saturdays, no building operations on Sundays or Bank Holidays.
- 24) Any tree felling to be outside bird nesting season
- 25) Provision of nesting boxes
- 26) Details of litter bins
- 27) Archaeological recording
- 28) Details of lighting

Reason for approval 12/04017/LA:

The application is considered to comply with the policies SA1 GP5 GP11 GP12 A1 A4 N12 N29 CC3 CC10 CC11 CC12 CC13 CC28 Riverside Proposal Area Statement 21 T2 T6 T7A LD1 R5 N38A N38B N39 N51 of the Leeds Unitary Development Plan review 2006, the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Spatial Strategy 2008, as well as supplementary planning guidance, Leeds Waterfront Strategy, City Centre Urban Design Strategy and the Sovereign Street Planning Statement 2011, and national guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and its Practice Guides, and having regard to all other material considerations, as such the application is recommended for approval.

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

1.1 This application is brought to Plans Panel as it is a significant major application for new public greenspace in the City Centre, to be delivered alongside proposals for a new office building at the Sovereign Street site (see application reference 12/04018/FU Position Statement also on this City Plans Panel Agenda). If acceptable, the majority of the greenspace would be delivered in parallel with the office building to enable the first new prestige office building and the first new urban greenspace to be provided in Leeds City Centre in recent years.

1.2 City Plans Panel Members were presented with a Position Statement on both applications on 25 October 2012. Details of the Member comments made on this application are in the Appendix, with changes to the scheme set out in the Proposal section of the report, and the relevant main issues discussed in the Appraisal section. In summary, Members requested that the scheme be revised to take account of the following issues:

- Overall size of the greenspace.
- The balance of hard and soft landscaping.
- Size of plot C.
- Seating types available.
- Water feature management.
- Litter management.
- Raised edges to planters/grassed areas and their access/ health and safety/child friendliness characteristics.
- Detailed planting species choices.

2.0 PROPOSAL:

- 2.1.1 The proposal is for a new public greenspace. A number of documents have been submitted in support of this proposal:
- Scaled Plans including planting plans
 - Design and Access Statement including outline management schedules, water feature technical note and water feature maintenance checklist
 - Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan
 - Arboricultural Report
 - Lighting Study
 - Flood Risk Assessment
 - Sustainable Drainage Statement
 - Land Contamination Report
 - Archaeological Assessment
 - Statement of Community Involvement
- 2.1.2 The greenspace proposal is for the creation of over 0.5 hectares of new, high quality greenspace at the Council owned Sovereign Street site. This concept was developed following from the 2008 City Centre Vision Conference, which highlighted a lack of greenspace in the City Centre.
- 2.1.3 As a result, the Council gave consideration to how it could bring forward high quality greenspaces in the City Centre. The response was two-fold: firstly a long term proposal for the creation of a new City Centre Park in the Leeds South Bank area, which is now encapsulated in a Planning Statement for that area; **and** a proposal for the site at Sovereign Street to deliver an innovative and well designed environment in a prime area of the city, that would be a forerunner and complementary to the South Bank and City Centre Park proposals.
- 2.1.4 Following Executive Board's rejection of the Criterion Place development for Sovereign Street in July 2008, the Council produced an updated Planning Statement to guide the sites development proposals. This Statement was approved by Executive Board in July 2011. It promotes the site's potential to introduce the first new component of high quality greenspace as part of the greening of the City Centre southwards towards the River Aire. The indicative plan from the Planning Statement showing how the wider site could be developed is attached at the Appendix to this report (Plan 1 – Sovereign Street Site Development Framework).
- 2.1.5 In addition, stakeholder discussions on the greenspace design considered that the space should be:
- Extroverted i.e. the proposals are not restrained by the sites physical boundary;
 - A tranquil space, an escape from the noise and hustle of a busy City Centre;
 - A '21st Century Park Square'

2.2 The Scheme Design

When all of the development plots are included on the site, the area scheme would be divided into 5 character areas (see attached Plan 2 General Arrangement RF12-065L02 Revision B). The key changes to the proposal since the October Plans Panel are:

- Changes to the application boundary to take in the north western corner of the site near the BT building
- Removal of the building plots from the application boundary
- An increase to the proportions of the greenspace in the Main Square, The Raingarden, to the rear of Plot B, and around the BT building

- Reduction in the size of Plot C to reflect the Executive Board approval to progress with a preferred developer and occupier of Plot C at November Executive Board
- Realignment of the Rill
- Reduction in the width of pathways
- Overall increase in planting to give a 30% increase in green soft landscaping within the application boundary (excluding vehicle service routes to City House car park), to give a total of 67% site area of green soft landscaping.

- 2.2.1 Character area A – The Raingarden – a highly sustainable surface water management feature inspired by Leeds’ 2009 Chelsea Flower Show garden - would form a green pedestrian boulevard between Plot B and the BT building, leading from the Viaduct Plaza to the Grove, and then southwards onto Sovereign Square. This would aim to give a lush green environment with planting of varying textures, colour and movement, managed to give year round interest and biodiversity. Planting would include herbaceous perennials and grasses planted in linear swathes, with two rows of species such as River Birch, Sweet Gum, and Bird Cherry trees (19 new trees in total) to give vertical structure. This area would also form the landscaped setting for the ground floor active frontages to building plot B.
- 2.2.2 Character area B – The Grove would consist of a group of some 8 trees, with seating arranged to promote social interaction in a shaded, sheltered environment. This would form a transition from Viaduct Plaza and the Rain garden to the square, maintaining the strong tree line and pedestrian surface
- 2.2.3 Character area C – Sovereign Square would be a central focal square that would form the main area enclosed by Plots A, B and C. This area would be the central gathering/seating space within the greenspace. Opportunities to sit, work, relax and socialise would be provided through raised grass areas and seats. Planters containing a similar planting palate to the Raingarden of trimmed hedges, hardy grasses and herbaceous perennials, and 8 new trees would bring shade, provide a back drop to the area, and frame the buildings. The rill would divert into the square, providing a visual connection through the different character areas. Seating along the rill would also be provided. An entrance to the Plot A KPMG office building would form once edge to the square, with an active ground floor use forming the opposite edge to plot C. The north east façade of the KPMG building has been designed to complement the greenspace, and vice versa.
- 2.2.4 Character area D – Swinegate Link - the area between Plot C and the multi-storey car park/Bibi’s restaurant. It would provide a east-west pedestrian link which would be enhanced by a tree-lined route from and to the central focal area. This area will need to take account of Bibi’s aspirations for an external al fresco dining area and will need to take account of the servicing requirement of adjacent occupiers including Plot C.
- 2.2.5 Character area E – Viaduct Plaza and The Rill Water Feature - the area from Plot B up to the railway arches. This space allows for the re-use of the railway arches with active food and drink uses, with potential for external tables and chairs. Vehicular access would be maintained to the car parking in the arches below City house. The ‘source’ of the rill water feature, known as a water scrim, would begin at this point, and flow southwards along the edge of Sovereign Square. The scrim would feature a series of water jets set within a textured paved surface. The jets would create a number of different effects such as fountain projections, dancing sequences and mist. It would be interactive and designed to be useable for play. The rill will continue through the site towards Sovereign Street, connecting the character areas. The water feature would be a strong visual feature, especially when lit at night.

- 2.2.6 Paving materials would be similar to those used at City Square and through the pedestrian streets such as Briggate and Albion Street. This would be to ensure that the palette of materials used in the City Centre is consistent from space to space. This would include Yorkstone.
- 2.2.7 Lighting of the space is also proposed to provide a variety of lighting techniques to the main routes through the space. This would provide security to those walking to and through the greenspace at night. The rill water feature would also be lit by LEDs.
- 2.2.8 Details of the management and maintenance of the space generally and the water feature have been provided. This would be carried out by Leeds City Council Parks and Countryside and a specialist water feature management team.
- 2.2.9 There is an opportunity for public art within the greenspace. This could be in the form of a permanent sculpture or in the form of exhibitions within the area at certain times but would be subject to further discussions. This matter could be controlled by condition.
- 2.2.10 The temporary uses of plots B and C are no longer within the scope of this application. Interim proposals for the undeveloped plots will follow at a later date.

2.3 Phasing of the works

- 2.3.1 It is currently proposed that most of the works within the application boundary would be delivered alongside the construction of the KPMG building i.e. the footway to the Sovereign Street frontage of Plot A, the Main Square, part of Viaduct Plaza (including the water feature), The Raingarden and the City House car park access road. The opening up of the pedestrian route along Sovereign Place by removing the walled area that forms external seating space attached to the back of the BT building, the eastern end of the space between the Arches and the multi-storey car park, and the tree lined space between Bibi's and Plot C (Swinegate Link), would be delivered alongside plots B and C.

2.4 The wider masterplan

Connections to the surrounding area are considered to be important. It is understood that these could form a later phase of works in the area, but they are not included in this planning application:

- 2.4.1 The expansion of the central focal area across Sovereign Street towards Sovereign House, using a continuation of paving materials to create a 'raised platform' across the roadway to give increased pedestrian priority and an expanded public realm treatment.
- 2.4.2 The removal of the existing paving and roadway along Pitt Row and its replacement with the paving materials consistent with the new greenspace materials. This area has the potential to provide the strong sense of arrival. The opportunity to provide a shared vehicle/pedestrian space using the same paving materials as the greenspace is being explored. This route would also be defined by a strong tree line. The provision of a realigned south eastern pavement would be provided as part of the Plot A KPMG office scheme 12/04018/FU also on this agenda.
- 2.4.3 The potential re-opening up of the route underneath the railway arches to connect through to Bishopgate Street/Mill Hill, Boar Lane and the new Trinity Shopping Centre, in conjunction with Network Rail.

3.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

- 3.1 The surrounding area comprises a mixture of uses including multi-storey car parking, residential, offices, hotel and supporting restaurant and retail uses. The site is allocated as a development site in the adopted Unitary Development Plan Review (UDP) as Proposal Area 21, which forms part of the designated Riverside Area. The site extends to 1.16 hectares (2.86 acres) and is predominantly level except for a strip in front of the railway arches to the north, which is at a lower level. It is currently a surface car park, with some boundary tree planting to Sovereign Street and a low boundary fence. At the north east corner of the site is a metal clad multi-storey car park with ground floor restaurant use. At the north west corner is an early 2000s office building. To the west lies Granary Wharf and Holbeck Urban Village, with the proposed Station Southern Access located above the River Aire with connections from the east and west. To the south of Sovereign Street a number of Victorian mill buildings, including the Grade II listed 4 The Embankment, and more recent infill developments of a complementary scale, provide enclosure to the street and to the river behind. To the east lies the City Centre Conservation Area, where its boundary cuts across Swinegate. Further south lies the River Aire, with potential for a bridge connection to the South Bank and the future City Centre Park. The site is identified in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in flood risk zone 3, however, more detailed topographical surveys have indicated that the site lies within zone 2.
- 3.2 There are 34 semi-mature trees along the southern edge of the wider site. These consist of 33 Norway Maples and 1 Cherry tree. The arboricultural report states that whilst the trees are in generally good condition, the conditions of the roots are poor due to the compacted rubble around them on the hardstanding car park.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

- 4.1 The Sovereign Street site has been identified as a development site since the early 1990s, and in 1995 Leeds Development Corporation granted planning permission for a large mixed use development, of which only the multi-storey car park was built. The adoption of the UDP in 2001, and its review in 2006, formalised the site's allocation as a development site in the statutory development plan. In 2002 an informal Planning and Development Brief was adopted for the site, which led to the pre-application discussions with Simons Estates and Ian Simpson Architects regarding the 'Kissing Towers' mixed use scheme between 2003-2007, however no planning application was submitted for that scheme. Following the cancellation of that scheme, the site was identified by the Council's Executive Board as a potential site for new buildings and a greenspace, and following public consultation in 2011, a revised Sovereign Street Planning Statement incorporating that vision was adopted. Plans Panel (City Centre) discussed the updated Sovereign Street Planning Statement in March and October 2011, and Members were generally supportive of its aims.

5.0 HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS:

- 5.1 Leeds City Council Asset Management presented the scheme to Members as a pre-application presentation at Plans Panel (City Centre) on 5 July 2012. City Plans Panel discussed the progress of this application on 25 October 2012. Full details of both meetings are at Appendix 2 of this report.

6.0 PUBLIC/LOCAL RESPONSE:

- 6.1 Application publicity consisted of:
- 6.1.1 Site Notice: Notice of Proposed Major Development affecting the character of a conservation area and the setting of a listed building, posted 5 October 2012, expiry 26 October 2012.
- 6.1.2 Press Notice: Notice of Proposed Major Development affecting the character of a conservation area and the setting of a listed building published 4 October 2012, expiry 25 October 2012.
- 6.2 City and Hunslet Ward Members consulted 24 September 2012 and 25 September 2012: No comments received at time of writing.
- 6.2 Leeds Waterfront Association consulted 25 September 2012: No comments received at time of writing.
- 6.3 Leeds Civic Trust consulted 25 September 2012. Expression of strong support received 12 October 2012 setting out the following comments :
- 6.3.1 Leeds Civic Trust were pleased that the landscape architects have picked up so many of the points they raised at pre-application stage in July and resolved them in creating plans for an urban space of real distinction. If delivered and maintained on the lines envisaged in the planning application and supporting material, we will have a city centre greenspace worthy of our European aspirations.
- 6.3.2 They were pleased to see the higher proportion of grass and the fact that this is not to be 'cut up' by desire line paths.
- 6.3.3 They welcome the introduction of water and note that it is now a little more subtle and does not reduce the extent of the grass area – our only concern is still that safety concerns might 'water down' this aspect.
- 6.3.4 They felt this might be an opportunity to provide features which children would find attractive and so welcome the 'play pool' – some sculpture to climb over might be a further addition in this area.
- 6.3.5 They like the way the seating is incorporated into the lawn edging and rill but we did discuss the potential for some seats to be arranged in such a way as to encourage interaction – not all lined up around the edge looking away from others.
- 6.3.6 Management will obviously be an issue – if it is intended that it will become part of the city centre public realm maintained by the City Council, care will need to be taken that this area is not forgotten in the same way as parts of the waterfront are now.
- 6.3.7 Outside the area of the current planning application, we do have some further concerns:
- Pitt Row forms a significant part of the public realm and we feel that it should be paved over in the same way as Briggate or the retail area precincts – vehicles can pass over relevant areas giving way to pedestrians.
 - they feel that further consideration should be given to the role and route of the Loop as it affects the development site – there could be arguments for moving the Loop from Swinegate to Sovereign Street/Neville Street so as to enhance

links between the retail area and the site, and we understand that there are proposals regarding putting buses back on Sovereign Street.

- they note that the wider scheme suggests temporary uses for plots B (wildflower meadow) and C (car park) and we have no issues with the options suggested.
- plans suggest that all existing trees around the former Queens Hall site will be removed and new trees planted – in view of the fact that they could be damaged by building work, would it be more sensible to retain the existing trees around plot C until this element is complete, so maintaining the ‘green’ feel of this part of the site.
- they appreciate that funding will be an issue but it is essential to factor in the need to provide a bridge link to the South Bank somewhere in this area – is it intended that funding could be generated by the development of blocks B and C?

6.4 Comment in support of the application proposal posted on Leeds City Council website on 8 October 2012 by Mr. W. Smith, Ilkley: The proposal is a fantastic use of space that will, along with the KPMG building, act as a catalyst to further development in the area, hopefully creating a high quality business district such as the Spinningfields area of Manchester, and that the space must be versatile and useable for various uses as well as improving the pedestrian access around the area. Mr. Smith is of the view that this application achieves that and accordingly should be approved by the planning committee.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES:

7.1 Statutory:

7.1.1 Highways Agency: No objection.

7.1.2 Network Rail: No objection in principle to the proposals, subject to the following provisions:

- Maintenance of Network Rails existing rights of vehicular access across a strip of land 5m wide adjoining the viaduct face.
- Maintenance of Network Rails and Bruntwood’s (City House) vehicular right of access from Pitt Row to the arches forming the basement car park to City House.
- Confirmation that access to Network Rails property will be retained during the construction phase.
- Confirmation that all surface water drainage from the landscaped area will be directed away from the face of the viaduct.
- Provision of cross-section drawings in due course of the proposed land levels in the area of land adjoining the face of the viaduct.
- Approval from Network Rails engineers being sought for any excavation works adjoining the viaduct piers.

7.1.3 Leeds City Council Transport Development Services: No objections subject to the provision of details of :

- short stay cycle parking
- the pedestrian route at the north-west corner of the site
- the vehicular access to the City House car park in the arches
- the phasing and delivery of improvements to Pitt Row

7.1.4 Environment Agency: no objection subject to specified conditions to ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the submitted flood risk assessment (FRA).

7.1.5 Canal and Rivers Trust: No objection

7.1.6 Yorkshire Water: No comments at time of writing

7.2 Non-statutory:

7.2.1 West Yorkshire Archaeology Advisory Service: No comments at time of writing

7.2.2 Leeds City Council Flood Risk Management: No objection subject to implementation of development in accordance with the submitted FRA. Conditions are recommended regarding surface water drainage details, and that the culvert that runs through the site should be investigated/surveyed and details submitted to the Local Planning Authority. The project design should incorporate measures to allow for maintenance of the culvert and details should be submitted showing how this will be protected during construction.

8.0 PLANNING POLICIES:

8.1 The development plan includes the Regional Spatial Strategy to 2026 (RSS) and the adopted Leeds Unitary Development Plan (Review 2006) (UDP) along with relevant supplementary planning guidance and documents. The Local Development Framework will eventually replace the UDP but at the moment this is still undergoing production with the Core Strategy still being at the draft stage. The RSS was issued in May 2008 and includes a broad development strategy for the region, setting out regional priorities in terms of location and scale of development.

8.2 Development Plan

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) (adopted May 2008) policies include:

YH1: Spatial pattern of development and core approach.

YH2: Sustainable development

YH4: focus development on regional cities.

YH5: Focus development on principal towns.

YH7: location of development.

LCR1: Leeds City Region sub area policy.

LCR2: regionally significant investment priorities, Leeds City Region.

Leeds Unitary Development Plan Review 2006

Relevant policies include:

GP5 all relevant planning considerations

GP11 sustainability

GP12 sustainability

A1 improving access for all

A4 safety and security provision

N12 urban design

N25 boundary treatments

N29 archaeology

CC3 City Centre character

CC11 streets and pedestrian corridors

CC12 public space and connectivity

CC13 public spaces and design criteria

Policy CC28 Riverside Quarter

Proposal Area 21 Statement

T2 transport provision for new development
T6 provision for the disabled
LD1 landscaping
N38A development and flood risk
N38B planning applications and flood risk assessments
N39A sustainable drainage systems

8.3 Relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance includes:

SPD Sustainable Drainage
SPD Sustainable Design and Construction
Leeds Waterfront Strategy
City Centre Urban Design Strategy
Sovereign Street Planning Statement 2011

8.4 Emerging Leeds Local Development Framework Core Strategy

8.4.1 The Core Strategy sets out strategic level policies and vision to guide the delivery of development investment decisions and the overall future of the district. On 7th November 2012 Executive Board approved the proposed pre-submission changes to the Publication Draft of the Leeds Development Framework Core Strategy. Executive Board also resolved to recommend that Council approve the Publication Draft Core Strategy and the sustainability report for the purposes of submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination pursuant to Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Details of the most relevant policies will be updated as part of a Supplementary Report prior to Plans Panel.

8.5 National Planning Policy Framework

8.5.1 The NPPF includes policy guidance on sustainable development, economic growth, transport, design, and climate change.

8.6 Relevant National Planning Policy Practice Guides

PPS25 Practice Guide

9.0 MAIN ISSUES

1. Principle of use
2. Landscape and urban design principles
3. Highways and Access
4. Flood risk
5. Sustainability

10.0 APPRAISAL

10.1 Principle of use

10.1.1 The application site lies within the designated City Centre, and is identified as a site for a major mixed use development under Policy CC28 of the UDPR, and the Riverside Quarter Proposal Area 21. This objective was carried forward through the Sovereign Street Planning Statement 2011, which identified an indicative layout including 3 new buildings with a central green public space.

10.1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework advocates a presumption in favour of sustainable development, including the development of a high quality built environment, including public spaces with clear and legible pedestrian routes, that should conserve or enhance biodiversity.

10.1.3 UDPR Policy CC13 states that new public spaces must be imaginatively designed to complement their location and to ensure that they are attractive, comfortable, safe to use and accessible for all.

10.1.4 Policy CC12 states that in new development, new public spaces must be related to and connect with the existing pattern of streets, corridors and spaces, including the river and canal walkways. Paragraph 13.4.18 of the UDPR's explanatory text states that within the City Centre *'the aim is to create a network of attractive and varied public spaces in which the public will feel safe, comfortable, and free from crime. These spaces will contribute greatly to the lively and commercially successful City Centre. They will need to be carefully designed with great attention to detail, including appropriate planting. Lack of character or over-elaborate design must be avoided, otherwise the public will not identify with and use these spaces. Design style should reflect the character of that part of the City Centre where the space lies'*. The explanatory text of UDPR Policy CC12 states that for the creation of attractive public spaces, a number of criteria should be borne in mind, including:

- the intended function of the space;
- materials, street furniture and soft landscaping elements;
- opportunities to introduce works of art;
- townscape setting;
- micro-climate;
- ease of management and maintenance;
- personal safety and mobility.

10.1.5 The Sovereign Street Planning Statement's aims for the delivery of a new greenspace for the City Centre as follows:

- the area of 0.5 - 0.6 Ha (around 40% - 50% site area) when phased over time in order to be a meaningful green public space;
- An accessible, safe and secure space which would improve connectivity within the City Centre for all users;
- Give a high quality environment which balances the passive and active recreational needs of day visitors, office workers and City Centre residents;
- Attract and facilitate the delivery of new commercial developments with a design character that helps to frame the new greenspace, and also support its financial viability;
- Enhance the reputation of Leeds and the City Centre as a liveable environment with high quality design standards;
- Add to the critical mass of the City Centre's attractions as a destination in its own right;
- Create opportunities for public art and cultural attractions;
- Create opportunities for biodiversity enhancement;
- Be designed with sustainability, climate change and flood alleviation in mind, e.g. incorporating surface run-off in greenspace design;
- Connect with the potential redevelopment of Leeds South Bank, thus improving connectivity, particularly between the north and south banks of the River Aire;
- Spur regeneration and enhance employment opportunities in the City Centre. The Leeds City Region Green Infrastructure Strategy 2010 highlights the positive relationships between the provision of green-space, health and well-being, climate change resilience, and economic growth and regeneration.

10.1.6 It is considered that in principle the proposal would achieve all the above aims.

10.2 **Landscape and urban design principles**

- 10.2.1 In response to Members' comments, a number of changes have been made to the proposed scheme. The overall size of the application site has increased from 6000 sqm to 7000 sqm through the reduction in the size of Plot C, and the addition of areas at the north western corner of the site. The balance of hard and soft landscaping has now increased by some 30% up to approximately 67% soft landscaping.
- 10.2.2 There has been an increase in size of greened areas within the scheme, as shown on the revised General Arrangement Plan revision B. The main grassed square is now some 35m x 42m with a 2m footway in between to allow pedestrian access through the site in all weathers. This has increased from approximately 22m x 28m.
- 10.2.3 The Raingarden is now some 54m x 14m of dense planting, interspersed with seating areas. A new 12m x 16m area of planting has also been added to the rear of Plot B, and new landscaped border to edge of BT building to complement the improvements to the City House car park access road and enhance the approach from Neville Street/Sovereign Place.
- 10.2.4 Members requested that a range of seating types should be available in the space. A variety of seating styles are now proposed, including timber materials, to take account of the needs of all ages, abilities, different sizes of groups of people, and the change in seasons. These include formal benches, informal edges, social groupings, with a variety of supports, back-rests and arm-rests. Exact details would be controlled by condition.
- 10.2.5 In response to Member's comments regarding water feature design and maintenance, a full water feature management strategy accompanies the application, and its implementation would be secured by condition. The water features would be managed by a specialist company. Water would be filtered and UV treated within the system proposed. Daily scheduled inspections would take place to monitor the filter systems, water quality, water levels, debris/litter. The submitted management plan also sets out more detailed weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual checks to ensure the smooth and safe running of the system.
- 10.2.6 In response to Members' comments regarding litter management, the application is supported by Landscape Management Plan. Daily litter collection would take place as part of the Council's maintenance strategy, and exact details would be controlled by condition.
- 10.2.7 Regarding comments made about the proposed raised edges to planters/grassed areas and their access, health and safety, and child friendliness characteristics. The raised areas have been reviewed by the landscape architect and accessible routes identified between the raised planted and grassed areas. Upstands would vary from 150mm to 450mm. The applicant states that contrasting materials would be used to mark the edges of steps, and that by using raised planters and steps, longevity of planting would be increased on the basis that it is considered necessary to protect the edges of planting and grass. They also help to assist with the level changes across the site, with use enabled by ramped accessed and low step heights. The lawns of the main square would now slope down towards Plot C to provide at level access to all grassed areas. Exact details of any raised areas would be controlled by condition.
- 10.2.8 Regarding the child friendliness of the proposal, it is considered that the soft landscaped areas within the scheme would provide potential for different types of interest or activity for example the Raingarden, and the grassed main square. The

water features would also be interactive and useable for play.

- 10.2.9 Members raised a number of comments regarding detailed planting species. It is considered that this would be controlled by condition, with details brought to Plans panel for comments on the planting species at the relevant time prior to the start of works on site.
- 10.2.10 The landscaping of the site would be designed in a positive manner appropriate to the character of the area, and the character of paving materials would accord with the character of the emerging context of three new buildings, one of which has been designed in parallel with this greenspace proposal. It is considered that in principle the scheme would provide distinctiveness, variety, quality and visual interest in terms of its planting species, form, rhythm, paving materials, appropriate modern detailing, and water features.
- 10.2.11 The hard and soft landscaped character areas and pedestrian routes within the development would be attractive and enhance the setting of the existing, proposed and future buildings, and support daytime activity in the area. The scheme would be lit at night, and the submitted lighting study states that there are opportunities to vary the style of lighting for each distinct zone of the scheme. It is considered that the proposed design would retain and reinforce the identity and distinctive character of this area, and would upgrade the physical environment to complement the proposed buildings uses. It is considered that the proposal would enhance the character and appearance of the nearby conservation area and the setting of the nearby listed building on The Embankment. The scheme would be complementary in scale and materials, and bring out the contemporary characteristics of the new emerging context for Sovereign Street, which would eventually continue over the river onto the South Bank with development surrounding the City Centre Park proposals.
- 10.2.12 It is considered that the proposed public greenspace, and in time, its three companion buildings will give the Sovereign Street part of the riverside its own local identity, distinctiveness and legibility. Opportunities for more active ground floor uses in Plots B and C would be required in order to make the most of the space. This is a requirement of the adopted Sovereign Street Planning Statement.
- 10.2.13 The 33 Norway Maples and 1 Cherry that would be removed as part of the scheme proposal are considered to be visually significant, and contribute positively to the character of the streetscene, however, in terms of the fundamental nature of the proposed scheme design for both the greenspace and the KPMG office building and the introduction of north-south pedestrian routes, the trees would no longer be well-located from a landscape and urban design perspective, and their root zones would remain constrained by hardstanding and building footprints. Therefore, the scheme proposes a significant number of over 50 new trees (consisting of a variety of species), with extensive and varied herbaceous and ornamental planting as part of a high quality comprehensively designed landscape provision for a new public greenspace in mitigation for their loss. If a high quality growing environment is provided, these will establish to provide a strong, long-term sustainable mitigation for the immediate loss of the existing trees. In contrast to the existing trees which are largely single species, new planting will also allow for a greater variety of species, with added visual amenity and biodiversity benefits as a result.

10.3 **Highways and access**

10.3.1 It is considered that the Sovereign Square proposal would be accessible, safe and secure, and improve connectivity in the City Centre for all users. The following detailed matters would be controlled by condition:

- provision of short stay cycle parking
- the pedestrian route at the north-west corner of the site
- the vehicular access to the City House car park in the arches
- access arrangements from all pedestrian routes around the site, through the character areas including the grassed areas of the central square.

Subject to the above, it is considered that the proposal would not give rise to adverse road safety issues.

10.3.2 In terms of the impact of the scheme on Network Rail's property, there would continue to be direct dialogue between the applicant and Network Rail to ensure that there would be no adverse impact on rail infrastructure or property. Network Rail would be kept informed of an relevant discharge of condition approvals sought.

10.4 **Flood Risk**

10.4.1 The measures identified in the submitted flood risk assessment have been agreed with the Environment Agency. There is currently no formal drainage to serve the hardstanding car park. It holds standing water, and flows into the public sewer network. The proposed drainage strategy uses a combination of water features and below-ground storage to collect and attenuate surface run-off. This could also incorporate the run-off from the three development plots. Whilst a new connection to the public sewer would be made, it would be a reduction to the existing flows. Further coordination of reducing volume and rate of run-off would be explored as the greenspace and building schemes evolve.

10.5 **Sustainability**

10.5.1 In terms of sustainable drainage characteristics, the soft landscaped elements of the greenspace would provide capacity for sustainable drainage. The formal water features and below ground storage would also collect and attenuate run-off. The attenuated water discharge would be a reduction in the existing rate of flow into the surrounding public sewer, as the amount of impermeable surface area would be significantly reduced.

10.5.2 The provision of new green infrastructure would improve the quality of city centre life, enhance biodiversity, and help to counteract the heat island effect of a dense urban centre. The provision of green infrastructure at Sovereign Street would enhance the City Centre's commercial offer and improve its credentials as a liveable place, by supporting local employment, community development, environmental resilience and social gain. There would be significant economic, environmental and social advantages for the City Centre as a whole in ensuring the delivery of new City Centre greenspace. It would act as a catalyst for attracting and sustaining regeneration and connectivity.

11.0 **CONCLUSION**

11.1 It is considered that the proposed greenspace would meet the City's aspirations for a useable, significant green amenity space within the City Centre. It would significantly enhance the setting of the area, and promote the regeneration of the wider site with high quality new development. It would also provide a 'stepping stone' to the future City Centre Park across the River Aire on the South Bank, by

providing a 21st Century urban greenspace, accessible for users of all ages and abilities, residents, visitors and workers alike.

- 11.2 It is considered that the proposed greenspace meets the aspirations set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, the Regional Spatial Strategy, the Leeds UDP Review 2006, the emerging draft Leeds Core Strategy, and the Sovereign Street Planning Statement 2011. The application is therefore recommended for approval in principle.

Background Papers:

Application file 12/04017/LA

Certificate of Ownership A signed by on behalf of applicant by agent

Appendix - Councillor comments at Plans Panels 30 August 2012 and 25 October 2012

City Plans Panel 25 October 2012

Plans and graphics were displayed at the meeting. A Members site visit had taken place earlier in the day. The Panel discussed the proposals and commented on the following matters:

- the design of the scheme; that it contained raised areas with concerns that this was not child-friendly and also created areas where rubbish could accumulate
- the emphasis on Yorkstone for the seating; the need to consider other materials, possibly timber and to include actual seating in the scheme, rather than the raised areas which were proposed, with consideration being given to including alcoves, to allow for greater use of the space, i.e. through outdoor meetings
- disappointment that the views expressed by Members at the meeting in August had not seemed to have been taken into account and that the opportunity to design an all-encompassing inviting public space had not been taken
- the retention of raised beds in the scheme when Members had indicated they did not wish these to be included and the difficulty in properly maintaining raised grassed areas
- the success of Park Square, particularly in the summer and the need to consider the elements of that scheme which led to its popularity, when considering the design of this space
- that the site seemed smaller than when the proposal was first muted; that there was too much paving; the buildings encroached on the greenspace; that what was being proposed was not good enough and did not complement the quality of the proposed KPMG building
- that improved planting needed to be provided; that more grass should be included in the overall scheme and thought should be given to structural planting, e.g grouped box balls and pleached hornbeams
- the importance of the water feature in the overall scheme; the need for it to be properly maintained and some concerns about safety, especially for young children and people walking through the area late at night
- that the new urban greenspace had to live up to the Council's ambitions for it and that the proposals as presented did not do that
- the Council's commitment to creating a child-friendly city and the feeling that this space fell short of that
- the possibility of reorienting plot C and the creation of temporary landscaping on plots B and C, with mixed views on the effectiveness of these suggestions and concerns that any temporary scheme which was created could be in place for

- some time, depending on how soon the other building plots came forward for development
- the area of planting around plot C which was considered unnecessary and that a large, single area was more effective
 - that the intended uses of the different character areas were supported subject to reconsideration of the balance between hard and soft landscaping and the proposed palette of materials and tree species which were appropriate and that consideration should be given to the provision of benches and the use of a wider palette of materials. In terms of uses, Sovereign Square should have a sense of repose; be child-friendly and include an active water feature
 - that the temporary uses of plots B and C were supported although further consideration should be given to the proposed tree species and planting details to ensure they are appropriate and not litter traps
 - the comprehensive approach to tree replacement within the proposed greenspace planting design be noted, particularly the comments relating to suitable architectural species for the site
 - that whilst the proposals sought to enable all users to pass through the scheme proposal via all main pedestrian connections and be able to use all the aspects of the space, concerns existed about the use of raised areas, particularly safety issues for young children and that disabled access had to be considered fully
 - that the proposals should include works to enhance Pitt Row.

Plans Panel (City Centre) 5 July 2012 Pre-application presentation:

Members raised the following comments (*with the applicant's response at Panel in brackets*):

- Clarification as to why water fountains had been omitted from the proposals (*The applicant confirmed that the concept of water would be explored, including water jets*)
- The need for the applicant to look at introducing a water feature that worked (*The applicant confirmed that they would look at a fairly simple quality water feature within the scheme which would be reliable and would be sustainable within the budget*)
- The importance of employing people with the relevant qualifications to maintain water features within the city. Clarification if discussions had been undertaken with Parks and Countryside with regards to the park and whether those staff who achieved gold status at the Chelsea Flower show had been consulted on the proposals (*The applicant confirmed that discussions had taken place with Parks and Countryside and that officers with the relevant Chelsea experience were on the Project Board*)
- The view expressed that Park Square was an excellent and desirable area for public seating, but that in some thoroughfare areas i.e. Trevelyn Square there was no public seating and of the fact that Leeds should be adopting a 'café culture' in all future city planning applications (*The applicant stated that the use of more kiosks in thoroughfare areas was not ruled out and that they would also allow a range of other uses in such public areas*)
- The view expressed that there should be enough greenspace for people to enjoy and that sustainability was the key
- Clarification if wind modelling had been undertaken for recreational spaces (*The applicant stated that wind modelling was more applicable around buildings, but tree planting would help to mitigate any potential adverse impact*)
- The need for more greenspace to be evident with less hard standing connectivity and servicing requirements
- The possibility of opening up the route of the goit
- Clarification of how deep the goit would be on a rainy day

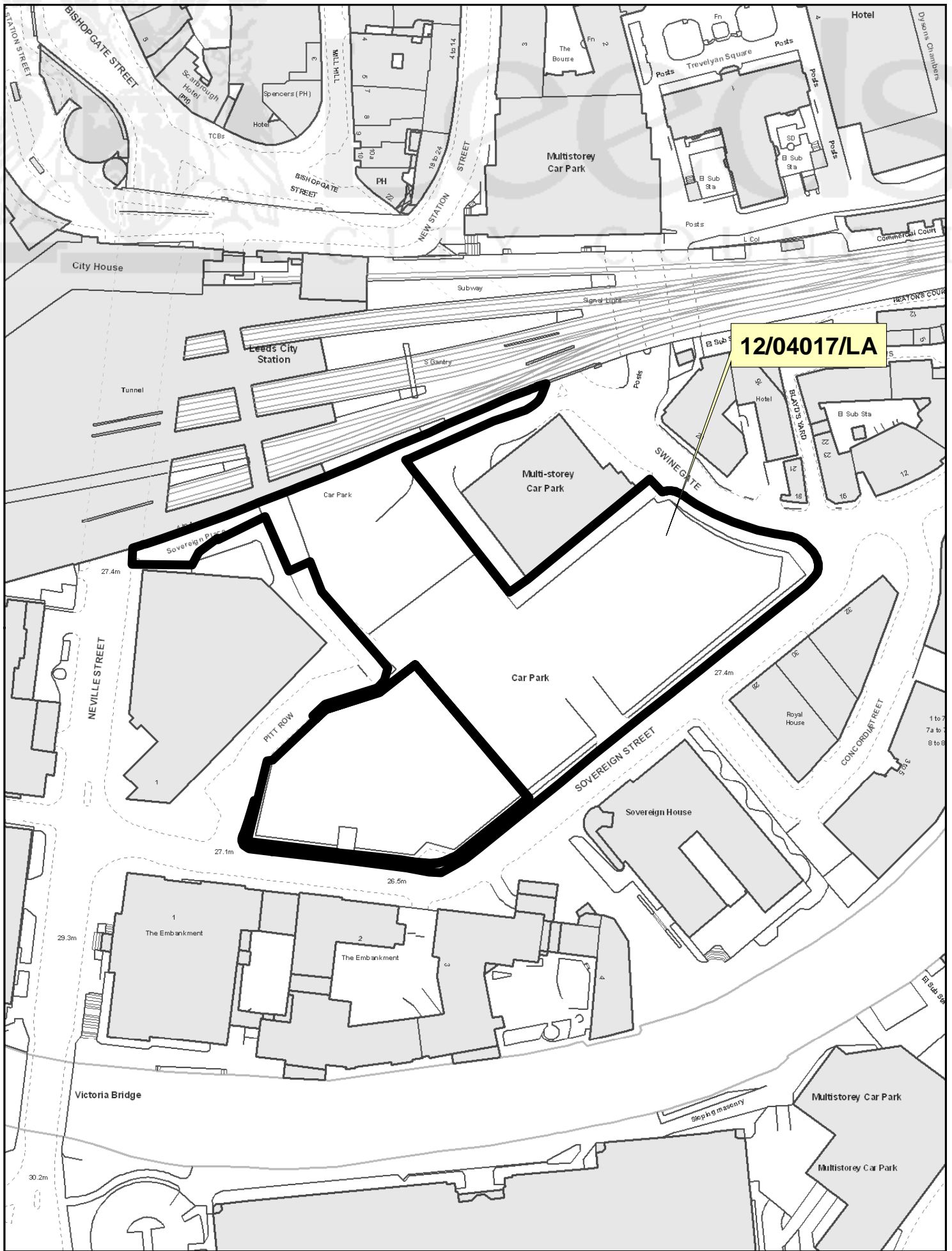
- Clarification if the goit was a cut off the River Aire and for this element to be addressed when the application comes back for determination
- A desire for the scheme to be a new greenspace and not a concrete space
- Clarification if Leeds City Council would be taking on the management of the greenspace and the need for a clear accountability procedure to be in place (*The applicant confirmed that Leeds City Council would be responsible for the management of the greenspace and would put in appropriate measures to manage the process effectively*)
- Clarification of the timing of the proposals in relation to plot C and that this should be kept as a greenspace and the paths connecting to plot C should not be put in until it was developed
- Clarification of what consultations had been undertaken to date and the need for more people and business users to be provided with a place of tranquility in the city (*The applicant confirmed that consultation was undertaken in relation to a planning brief for the site which was adopted last summer and that all the respondents to this would be replied to as part of the comprehensive consultation programme*)
- The need for more work to be undertaken to address the deficiency of greenspace provision in the city centre, particularly in view of the growing residential population
- Clarification of the landscaping design and the need to compliment the structure of the scheme with appropriate planting i.e. pleached trees etc
- The need to re-examine the goit that comes off the River Aire as opposed to an artificial route
- The need to look at architectural planting to mirror the image of the city and not to plant 'lollipop' trees
- The need to encourage more of a café culture in Leeds and to think more like a European culture
- The need to explore the extent of all service routes in order to reduce the impact on the greenspace
- The need for Elected Members to be kept informed throughout the process
- The need to acknowledge that greenspace in relation to surrounding areas was a very important issue
- The need to ensure that there was a proper functioning relationship in place around future equipment maintenance for those bringing forward the formal planning application
- The need for the scheme to be more strategic and to address the future challenges
- The need to plant the appropriate species of tree i.e. hornbeam etc, but not yew trees
- The need to complement the plans for building plot A and to engage into a dialogue with the people who had been responsible for the design of plot A.

PLANS

Plan 1 - Sovereign Street Site Development Framework (from Sovereign Street Planning Statement 2011)

Plan 2 – Superseded Site Layout General Arrangement RF12-0650L02

Plan 3 – Revised Site Layout General Arrangement RF12-065L02 Revision B



12/04017/LA

CITY PLANS PANEL



KEY

- SITE BOUNDARY
- 5-6 DEVELOPMENT SITES
- A POSSIBLE STOREY HEIGHTS
- ← ACTIVE FRONTAGE
- URBAN GREEN SPACE (HARD + SOFT LANDSCAPE)
- OFF SITE CONNECTION FOOTWAY EDGE
- KEY PEDESTRIAN ROUTE
- KEY FUTURE PEDESTRIAN LINK (OPTIONS/POSSIBILITIES SHOWN)
- TREES ALONG STREET EDGE
- KEY VIEWS
- VEHICLE/DELIVERY ACCESS (GENERALLY TO BASEMENT PARKING)
- POSSIBLE VEHICLE LINK
- POSSIBLE DROP OFF
- POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITY FOR BUT MULTI-STOREY + PROVIDE ARCADE
- POSSIBLE ARCADE/SHELTERED ROUTE
- RAILWAY ARCHES TO BE RE-DEVELOPED (FUTURE OPTION)
- RAILWAY ARCHES REGENERATED IN USE

NB POSSIBLE NEW HIGHWAYS ALIGNMENT & IMPROVEMENTS FOR PEDESTRIANS ESPECIALLY AROUND SWINEGATE

NB ENCOURAGE POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BUILDINGS & PUBLIC REALM/CITY PARK ~ INTEGRATED USES SUSTAINABLE CHARACTERISTICS & FEATURES

OPTION 1A SOVEREIGN STREET DEVELOPMENT SITE FRAMEWORK

INDICATIVE ONLY



50M approx.

INDICATIVE DRAWING ONLY

MB. SDU NOV 2010
REV. APR. 2011

KEY:

- A The Raingarden
- B The Grove
- C Sovereign Square
- D Swinegate Link
- E Water feature/rill



DATE	DRAWN	DESCRIPTION OF REVISION	REVISION LETTER	CHECKED BY

re-form
 landscape architecture
 Tower Works, Globe Road, Leeds LS11 5QG
 t: +44 (0)113 2454695 E: info@re-formlandscape.com

DRAWING STATUS -
FOR PLANNING
 CLIENT -
LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

PROJECT -
SOVEREIGN SQUARE, LEEDS

DRAWING TITLE -

GENERAL ARRANGEMENT

DRAWING SCALE - 1:200	DRAWN BY - JS	DRAWN DATE - 29.08.2012
PAPER SIZE - A0	CHECKED BY - AP	CHECKED DATE - 04.09.2012
DRAWING NUMBER - RF12-065L02	REVISION -	REVISION -

© re-form landscape architecture 2012

KEY:

- A The Raingarden
- B The Grove
- C Sovereign Square
- D Swinegate Link
- E Water feature/rill



DATE	DRAWN	DESCRIPTION OF REVISION	REVISION LETTER	CHECKED BY
06.11.12	JS	ADDITIONAL TREES ADDED, SITE BOUNDARY CHANGED	B	AP
01.11.12	AF	AMENDMENTS TO RAINGARDEN & SOVEREIGN SQUARE; NEW TREES ADDED	A	AP

re-form
 landscape architecture
 Tower Works, Globe Road, Leeds LS11 5QG
 t: +44 (0)113 2454895 E: info@re-formlandscape.com

DRAWING STATUS -
FOR PLANNING
 CLIENT -
LEEDS CITY COUNCIL
 PROJECT -

SOVEREIGN SQUARE, LEEDS
 DRAWING TITLE -

GENERAL ARRANGEMENT

DRAWING SCALE -	DRAWN BY -	DRAWN DATE -
1:200	JS	29.08.2012
PAPER SIZE -	CHECKED BY -	CHECKED DATE -
A0	AP	04.09.2012
DRAWING NUMBER -	REVISION -	
RF12-065L02	B	