

SOUTH AND WEST PLANS PANEL

THURSDAY, 6TH JULY, 2023

PRESENT: Councillor H Bithell in the Chair

Councillors E Taylor, J Garvani, L Buckley,
N Manaka, A Rontree, P Wray and
K Brooks

SITE VISIT

Councillors Bithell, Manaka, Brooks, Taylor, Rontree and L Buckley attended the site visit earlier in the day.

9 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals.

10 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no exempt items.

11 Late Items

There were no formal late items.

12 Declarations of Interests

Members did not declare any interests.

13 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors C Campbell, R Finnigan, E Bromley and T Smith. Councillor K Brooks attended as a substitute on behalf of Councillor E Bromley.

14 Minutes - 8 June 2023

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held Thursday, 8th June 2023 be approved as an accurate record.

15 20/02710/FU - Cartwright House, Springwell Road, Holbeck, Leeds, LS12 1AX

The report of the Chief Planning Officer presented an application regarding demolition of existing building and construction of a 36 storey residential development with ancillary commercial space, landscaping, and external amenity space at Cartwright House, Springwell Road, Holbeck, Leeds, LS12 1AX.

The proposed scheme is brought to South and West Plans Panel, following an earlier pre-application presentation of the proposals by the applicant at City Plans Panel, presented on 21st November 2019.

Photographs and slides were shown throughout the officer presentation, and Panel members were provided with the following information:

- The proposal relates to a major residential-led scheme of 402 apartments over 36 storeys with ancillary commercial to the ground floor in Holbeck on the fringe of Leeds city centre. It is proposed that the housing mix will be 194 x 1 bed apartments (48%), 169 x 2 bed apartments (42%) and 39 x 3 bed apartments (10%). The 3 bed units are proposed to be on the top 3 floors.
- The scheme presented at pre-application stage at City Plans Panel on 21st November 2019 differed substantively from the scheme presented being for a block of 24 storeys, with a 30 storey option with a different use of materials. Members on that Panel were supportive of a tall building in that location.
- The site lies close to the junction of Whitehall Road, Springwell Road and Springwell Street, which is located in an area of transition just outside the boundary of the designated City Centre, the boundary of which aligns with the railway line just to the north-east. The site is also located along the Whitehall Road corridor, which links traffic (including regular public transport) to and from Leeds Railway Station.
- The Holbeck Neighbourhood Plan encourages commercial use in that area but does not preclude residential development.
- The scheme presented is Phase 2 of the adjacent scheme for two tower blocks residential development. One Springwell Gardens known as Phase 1, has almost been built. The materials used for both phases are contrasting in design and Separation distances between primary windows come in at 35m which avoids potential issues of overlooking.
- The proposal site offers easy access into the city centre, by walking, cycling or public transport.
- Images referred to show the impact on the wider skyline of Leeds. The application site falls within a cluster of tall buildings.
- The impact on the Holbeck Conservation Area. The applicant has submitted a heritage assessment and the application offers significant benefits in terms of regeneration, cycling infrastructure and the provision of housing.
- Provision for Greenspace allows for offsite provision and therefore a commuted sum of £494,681.31 will be provided.
- The simple form of the building is elegant, with a crown element at the top and brick-plinth element to the ground floor.
- The applicants wind report has been peer reviewed and stacks up in terms of amenity and safety. Wind mitigations proposed include sculptures and screens.
- There is a shared outdoor communal area.
- There is a raised partition at podium level, for wind mitigation measures.

- The 1st floor provides access to the podium garden as well as the gym, and swimming pool. Living accommodation starts from level 2 and apartments meet the minimum space standards. It is proposed that there will be a sky garden and open terrace.
- The location is considered close enough to the city centre to allow for the low provision of car parking. Negotiations are on-going regarding a commuted sum in respect of the level of parking provided.
- Average improvement in the emissions rate is 36.14% and average energy provision from low carbon energy is 10.36%.

Representatives on behalf of the applicant attended the meeting and highlighted the following:

- Phase 1 is coming along well and nearing completion.
- The applicant has worked to ensure that the wind mitigation sits wholly within the application site and does not impact upon the public footpath.
- The partition between Phase 1 and 2 allows residents to still travel through the gaps of the partition and around the garden space.
- The applicant challenged the architect to create a slender attractive building which compliments the materials of the Phase 1 development.
- The orientation of the tall building allows for daylight to reach into the garden space. The orientation allows the building to be in line with Whitehall Road, encouraging other high quality development to be considered in Holbeck.

Further to questions for officers, the following information was confirmed:

- There is a requirement for wind mitigation measures on developments above 8 storeys. Natural trees cannot be used as safety measures. In terms of pedestrian safety regarding the structures, there is an in-house access officer involved with the scheme who will be involved with assessing the scheme. Further to concerns raised by members, officers agreed to provide further detail on mitigation.
- The orientation of the building has been considered by the applicant and they believe it's proposed location is best suited in terms of safety measures and sunlight etc.
- 280 car parking spaces is the maximum the local authority can ask for. Members believed that this would cause an impact by restricting the number of car parking spaces and may impact upon the wider local economy in terms of the social demographic and long term sustainability of the site. Concerns were also raised that residents of towers are hiring out their spaces to third parties, and it was queried whether this can be controlled, as well as ensuring sufficient TROs are in place to avoid displacement of existing on street parking in Holbeck.
- The development meets the density policy.
- The 3-bed units are placed on levels 30 and above, it was confirmed there are no proposed balconies. Further to the concerns raised by members regarding parking provision, members suggested that for the 3-bed apartments, they are all provided with a car parking space.

- Further information will be provided on the relationship between the 2 Phases in terms of sunlight.

Further to questions for the applicants representative, the following information was confirmed:

- The orientation of the building reduces the impact of strong winds throughout the scheme. The wind hits the western façade and is brought down towards garden level, however, the wind mitigation measures proposed respond to concerns of safety factors.
- The shared garden space provides future residents of the development with sufficient space to sit and walk, and to enjoy the space.
- Further to comments from members regarding amenity space for young children and additional options for residents of the development, it was confirmed that the applicant will consider internal play spaces for children such as a soft play area and other spaces on-site suitable for families. Further provision internally and externally will be provided for storage and can be used by the community for things such as football equipment.
- The top floor building is covered by a 3m high glazed wall and therefore poses no risk of people looking over and is not impacted by wind speeds.
- The design life of the cladding is 60 years. Members raised concern in relation to long term weathering of glass and Aluminium panels proposed in construction.
- The sculptures proposed as part of wind mitigation measures will be 5-6m apart and between them, is a wide open space for people to safely walk by, as well as providing another space for people to sit and read.
- An exercise has been undertaken to ensure that the orientation and proposed risk of glare from the development, poses no risk to drivers of trains and will not obstruct views.
- The location of affordable housing has been considered in such a way to ensure that they're close enough together so that the housing association can manage the apartments, minimising the journey to and from apartments. It is considered that this approach will be more attractive to housing associations.
- The applicant will re-consider parking provision. However, the applicant believes that there is a general approach of not owning a car if you live in the city centre and the proposed development is in a sustainable location and close to the city centre. Examples can be provided of other schemes who have limited their parking provision.

Members comments in relation to the officers questions in the submitted report were relayed as follows:

Question 1. Do Members continue to support the principle of a residential tower in this location? Members supported the location of the residential tower.

Question 2. If so, do Members support the height of the tower at 36 storeys? Members felt that the proposal is overbearing in that location and overshadows Phase 1. Members were mixed in opinion on the height of the tower, but generally a 31 tower building would be supported if its benefits outweighed other material considerations.

Question 3. Do Members support the design of tower including use of materials? Members were content with the proposed materials.

Question 4. Do Members support the proposed Housing Mix? It is acknowledged that the proposed mix is policy compliant.

Question 5. Do members support the provision of Affordable Housing across floors 2,3,4 and 30? Members raised concern regarding the distance between the 3-bed units to the 1 and 2-bed units.

Question 6: Do Members consider the levels of amenity provided for residents to be sufficient? Members felt that amenity spaces could be better utilised for residential use and the proposals do not currently include options for families and assurances were sought that flexible areas and spaces are included for young children and families.

Question 7: Do Members consider the relationship between Phases 1 and 2 to be acceptable? Members considered the relationship to be unacceptable due to the height of the proposed development and the impact this has on Phase 1. A suggestion was also made that outdoor spaces need 'softening' to promote child safety.

Question 8: Do Members consider the provision of funding towards local greenspace projects an acceptable alternative to on-site provision? Members asked officers to provide details on greenspace projects in the pipeline for the immediate locality. It is considered that the current greenspace provision is not adequate for the density of the development, and further options needs to be looked at to provide reassurances to members. A further comment suggested that the applicant needs to re-consider more 'out of the box' approaches to the greenspace provided on-site and more options for children. Overall, members would like to see alternative options in terms of design and greenspace areas and the development of a City Centre Greenspace Strategy.

Question 9: Are Members happy with the low level of parking being off-set by the requirement of a contribution towards cycling infrastructure? Members acknowledged that the development does not need to meet the maximum but agreed that 18 spaces is too low for a development of this scale.

Question 10: Do Members consider the amount of wind mitigation required and the emerging design solutions acceptable in principle? Members generally supported the design element of the sculptures as proposed.

Members commented that the height of the building should be reduced but uncertain by how much. Members would be comfortable with the development being reduced but, a decision on the acceptable height could not be made until responses are received to other questions raised by Panel.

RESOLVED – To note the contents of the report on the proposals and to provide views in relation to the questions posed in the submitted report to aid the progression of the application.

16 Date and time of the next meeting

RESOLVED – To note the date and time of the next meeting as Thursday, 3rd August 2023 at 1.30 pm.

The meeting concluded at 15:30.