

## **CITY PLANS PANEL**

**THURSDAY, 27TH FEBRUARY, 2014**

**PRESENT:** Councillor N Taggart in the Chair

Councillors P Gruen, R Procter,  
S Hamilton, G Latty, T Leadley, E Nash,  
N Walshaw, M Ingham, J Cummins,  
J Lewis and C Campbell

### **151 Chair's opening remarks**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting

### **152 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests

### **153 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Blackburn who was substituted for by Councillor Campbell. Members were also informed that Councillor M Hamilton had indicated that he might have to miss the meeting due to a work commitment which had unexpectedly arisen

### **154 Application 13/04852/FU - 10 storey hotel building, associated works and public realm works on land at Greek Street/Russell Street and Bond Court LS1**

Further to minute 47 of the City Plans Panel meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2013, where Panel received a pre-application presentation on proposals for a 10 storey hotel building with associated works, Members considered a further report of the Chief Planning Officer setting out the formal application

Plans, photographs, graphics, drawings and sample materials were displayed at the meeting. A Members site visit had taken place earlier in the day

Officers presented the report which related to the redevelopment of a former mechanical stacker car park and a restaurant between Russell Street and Greek Street to provide a 10 storey, 90 bedroom hotel, enhanced public realm and changes to the public highway on Russell Street and Greek Street

Details of the proposed materials were outlined, with stone and black granite forming the main cladding materials

Receipt of a further letter of objection was reported, with the contents of this being read out to the Panel and clarification being given on the issues raised in the representation relating to basement fire exits

Members considered the application and commented on the following matters:

- the basement fire exit route beneath the adjacent Minerva House and whether the wish to accommodate this would be an undertaking. Members were informed that Minerva House was in the same ownership as the subject site and that the fire exit requirements would be accommodated
- the terrace blinds shown facing Greek Street. It was confirmed that these would be retractable blinds
- wind around the site and the need for this issue to be thoroughly examined and for Members to be persuaded by good evidence that the proposals would not make the situation worse. The Deputy Area Planning Manager stated that although the existing wind conditions could lead to discomfort, they were not unsafe, with both the Developer's wind consultant and the Council's independent consultant confirming this. The existing wind conditions in Bond Court were as a result of taller buildings around the site and the application before Panel did not change these conditions. Concerns continued to be raised about this and the need for clarity that in the event of a serious incident around the site which was subsequently attributable to the wind conditions directly associated with the development, that the Council would not suffer financial or reputational loss as a result. The Chief Planning Officer highlighted the differences in approach to the issue of wind since the approval of Bridgewater Place and reiterated that Bond Court was not an area of danger in respect of wind; that the problems which occurred in this area arose from a different building and that this was not a reason for withholding planning permission. The possibility of appropriate conditions to address Members' concerns were discussed with the Panel's Legal Adviser stating that the important point was that the Council's independent wind consultant had reviewed the applicant's wind assessment – this was not a case of the Council simply accepting the applicant's assessment at face value - and suggesting an informative be included on the planning permission to this effect
- the need for Officers within City Development to assist Akhbar's to relocate within Leeds. The Chief Planning Officer advised that it would be for the landlords to deal with the lease but that Council Officers would offer positive assistance in this matter
- the weathering of black granite with concerns about the visual appearance of the building over time. The Chair allowed the applicant's agent who was in attendance, to address the Panel on this point, with Members being informed that the quality of the granite used was key to how the material weathered; that high quality black granite would be used on the building and an appropriate maintenance regime would be implemented to

ensure the finish of the building was appropriate for the 4 star plus hotel

- the lighting proposals, with concerns about the design of the lighting strip at the top of the building. Members were informed that further discussions would take place on this, with a condition covering external lighting being proposed
- works to the pavement in Greek Street. It was confirmed that tarmac would not be used and that under S278 works, Highways would control this and would be looking for a seamless finish
- that no signage was shown on the images before Panel. Members were informed that signage details would be dealt with as a separate application and brought before Panel if concerns existed about what was proposed
- the drop off point for visitors on Greek Street, with concerns being raised that some visitors could seek to use Bond Court instead and the need for clear details of the drop off arrangements to be provided to visitors, particularly on the hotel's web site
- the proposed landscaping; tree species and concerns about trees being planted in pots which would prevent adequate root space

Members considered how to proceed

**RESOLVED** - That the application be granted approval subject to the conditions set out in the submitted report, subject to additional conditions to control the details of the drop off/pick up point, the proposed lighting to the top of the building and tree planting on the site and subject to any other conditions which the Chief Planning Officer considers to be necessary and subject to an informative on the decision relating to the independent review of the applicant's wind assessment

During consideration of this matter, Councillor R Procter joined the meeting

## **155 Site visits**

Prior to consideration of the pre-application presentations, the Chair referred to visits to Bradford to see an anaerobic digestion facility and to Derby to view a student housing development, ahead of the Panel's consideration of such schemes in Leeds. It was confirmed that 14<sup>th</sup> March was the most suitable date for both of these visits, with Officers being asked to make the necessary arrangements

## **156 Preapp/13/00789 - Installation of a digital media screen - Pinnacle Building - Bond Street/Upper Basinghall Street LS1 - Pre-application presentation**

Plans and graphics were displayed at the meeting. A Members site visit had been undertaken earlier in the day

Members considered a report of the Chief Planning Officer setting out proposals for a digital media screen on to the western elevation of the Pinnacle building to be located above the supermarket entrance. The Panel also received a presentation on the proposals on behalf of the applicant and was provided with the following information:

- that an application for a digital media screen on the eastern elevation of the building had not been supported by City Centre Plans Panel in September 2012
- that a smaller screen on the western elevation of the building was now being considered
- that the screen would form part of the light box, be framed and flush to the building and be centrally located
- that the orientation of the screen had been considered, with the portrait option being the most suitable
- that the screen would add vitality to a bland façade and would signpost the retail core
- the use of modern technology would mean that no cooling fans would be required for the screen
- full motion images would be displayed on screen but without any sound
- that the screen would be auto-dimmed at night to avoid glare
- that a percentage of air time could be made available for use by the Council
- a contribution towards public realm along Upper Basinghall Street would be made
- that the location was considered to be suitable and that the proposal accorded with national and local planning guidance and with CABI guidelines

It was noted that Members' questions about the proposals had been fully addressed on the site visit

The Deputy Area Planning Manager requested the possibility of determination of the application under delegated powers, if no third party issues arose. Whilst the Chair was supportive of this approach if the formal application mirrored what had been presented, concerns were raised by Councillor Leadley and Councillor Campbell about the principle of the proposals. The difficulty of refusing such an application was acknowledged in view of the screen which had been granted permission at the Trinity development

Members considered how to proceed and provided the following responses to the points raised in the report:

- that the majority of the Panel agreed that the visual impact from the proposal was acceptable and appropriate for this location
- that regarding adverse highway safety implications arising from the proposed screen, Members considered there would not be any

**RESOLVED** - To note the report, the presentation and the comments now made and that the majority view of the Panel was to defer and delegate determination of the application to the Chief Planning Officer so long as the formal application details were the same as had been presented to Panel

**157 Preapp/14/00015 - Pre-application presentation for the demolition of a number of existing buildings to allow for the temporary reconfiguration of and addition to the existing car parking (increase in spaces from 542 to 824) and associated hard landscaping - Victoria Gate - Phase 2 Car Park - Land bounded by Vicar Lane, Lady Lane, Templar Place and the Inner Ring Road LS2**

Plans, photographs and graphics were displayed at the meeting. A Members site visit had taken place earlier in the day

Members considered a report of the Chief Planning Officer outlining proposals for the temporary reconfiguration of existing off-street car parking and the addition of 281 additional off-street car parking spaces and landscaping on the phase 2 section of the Victoria Gate site. Members also received a presentation on the proposals on behalf of the applicant

The following information was provided:

- the proposals were for a temporary scheme for an estimated period of up to 5 years to maximise the use of existing off-street car parking; provide further parking for shoppers and visitors and to replace public parking from the Union Street car park which would be lost when building works for phase 1 of Victoria Gate commenced in April 2014
- there was a need for high quality car parking in Leeds and this had been identified as an issue which prevented people from visiting the city
- there was the opportunity to improve a part of the city which was in poor repair and although the works were temporary, they would be of high quality and would improve the feeling of safety in this area
- that several buildings would need to be demolished although approval for these demolitions had been granted as part of the outline approval for Victoria Gate
- a pedestrian spine, using resin bound gravel and bounded by trees and lighting columns would be created from the market to Templar Street. A green buffer, 4 metres wide, with nooks for seating would be provided at Vicar Lane. To create this effect semi-mature trees would be used. Gateway spaces (foyers) would also be provided around the site on key pedestrian desire lines to the surrounding area. Pay machines would be located at the foyers
- in terms of car parking surfacing treatments, various options were being considered including a cellular system

Members discussed the proposals and commented on the following matters:

- the timescale for the temporary scheme, with the hope that within 5 years phase 2 of the permanent Victoria Gate development scheme would be progressing
- there were no guarantees that if approved, the applicant would not then sell the site

- the extent of the demolition works to be undertaken
- whether the proposals could lead to flooding of the nearby beck
- whether parent and child parking spaces would be provided
- the price rates for parking
- the maintenance of the landscaping
- the width of the car parking bays and the need to ensure these could accommodate larger vehicles and 4x4s
- security issues, particularly on an evening; that people currently loitered in the car park and the need for this to be addressed so as not to deter its use
- how long stay parking would be discouraged
- Templar House; the need for a vision to be provided for this Grade 2 Listed Building; that the condition of the building had been left to deteriorate and that the building should be repaired
- the need for the North Bar Stone on the site to be practically protected, carefully removed and safely stored
- the future of Lyons Works; that a finely balanced decision had been reached regarding its loss on the original outline approval in view of the greater good which would be achieved from that scheme, with concerns being raised that the demolition of the building to make way for a City Centre car park for possibly up to 5 years was not acceptable
- the loss of the Bus Station, with mixed views on the worthiness of retaining this example of post-war architecture
- that the buildings attached to the Templar Pub should be demolished
- the size of the car park, with concerns that due to its scale and the possible length of time it would be in operation that Vicar Lane would cease to exist as an area of character within the City Centre
- the positive signs for the first phase with work close to commencing and the need for a period of up to 5 years for additional parking when the multi-storey car park for John Lewis would be completed in Autumn 2016
- the need for Members to understand the timescales for phase 2 of Victoria Gate and that from the information provided, there was no sense that phase 2 would move along quicker if these proposals were agreed to

The Chief Planning Officer stressed the importance of achieving a successful regeneration of this part of the City Centre. In terms of context, Members were informed that more retail development was taking place in Leeds than in any other city, yet despite the gradual regeneration of The Grand Arcade, this part of the City Centre was vulnerable. It was important for the theatres to thrive and for phase 1 of Victoria Gate to take off and it was not unreasonable for there to be some uncertainty

In terms of Lyons Works, the building was exempt from listing and could be demolished immediately, however the Chief Planning Officer was of the view that the comments made by Members would be taken back to the

applicant for consideration. The need for assurances on the future of Templar House was stressed

In response to the specific points raised in the report, the following comments were provided:

- regarding the justification for the demolition of Lyons Works, the former West Yorkshire Bus Station and the other named buildings, there was majority support for the demolition of the Bus Station and complete support for the demolition of the other named buildings on Vicar Lane. Regarding Lyons Works, it was noted that permission to demolish this building had been granted as part of a different scheme and that in the circumstances where the original permission was not proceeding, that consideration be given to requesting the retention and re-use of Lyons Works without the modern extension
- on the issue of the use of the space as a car park, this could be accepted if the period of time for this use did not exceed 5 years, with the provision of a temporary car park to a higher standard being welcomed
- on the reconfigured and additional short stay car parking numbers and the required Stopping Up, these matters were acceptable as were the associated loss of on-street short stay car parking and the proposal for there to be financial compensation
- that the landscaping proposals were progressing positively; that a high quality scheme was expected and for the landscape treatment to the Vicar Lane edges, in particular, to adequately maintain the sense of enclosure of the street, preserve the character of nearby designated and on-designated heritage assets and add positively to views along Vicar Lane on a temporary basis

Members also highlighted the need for the safe removal and retention of the North Bar stone to be tied down and for urgent repair works to be undertaken to Templar House. On this matter, the Chief Planning Officer proposed a site visit with Officers and the applicant to also view the interior of Templar House

**RESOLVED** - To note the report, the presentation and the comments now made

## 158 Date and Time of Next Meetings

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2014 at 1.30pm

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2014 at 1.30pm