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**Report of the Chief Planning Officer**

**CITY PLANS PANEL**

**Date: 27<sup>th</sup> February 2014**

**Subject: PRE-APPLICATION PRESENTATION OF PROPOSALS FOR THE INSTALLATION OF A DIGITAL MEDIA SCREEN TO THE PINNACLE BUILDING, BOND STREET / UPPER-BASINGHALL STREET, LS1 5AA (PREAPP/13/00789)**

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**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

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**RECOMMENDATION: This report is brought to Plans Panel for information. The Developer will present the details of the scheme to allow Members to consider and comment on the proposals at this stage.**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This presentation is intended to inform Members of the emerging proposals for the installation of a permanent digital media advertisement screen to the western elevation of the Pinnacle Building, Bond Street / Upper-Basinghall Street in Leeds City Centre.
- 1.2 The proposal is brought to City Plans Panel since it represents a new format of large scale digital advertising of which there are only limited examples in the City Centre.

## **2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

- 2.1 Pinnacle is a 20 storey office building projecting above lower level car park and retail units. The lower levels of Pinnacle were refurbished in 2005 to enhance the retail units at ground level, mid-level car park and introduce architectural 'light-box' features to break up the car park elevations. The application site is within the Prime Shopping Quarter (PSQ) and the ground floor retail units are designated as being within a Prime Shopping Frontage (PSF). Albion Street forms the boundary of the Central Area Conservation Area and the application site is located outside of, but adjacent to, the Conservation Area.
- 2.2. The proposed position for the screen is to the existing 'light-box' on the west elevation, which faces Park Row and the recently improved public realm to Bond Street. Lengthier views of the Pinnacle building are achieved from the recently improved Bond Court to the western side of Park Row. Within the setting of the screen are the Grade II listed buildings at 11-14 Bond Court and 33-35 Park Row.

## **3.0 PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 It is proposed to introduce a digital media screen onto the western elevation of the Pinnacle building. The screen would measure 6.4m x 3.7m and incorporate moving images but no sound and would be located to the existing 'light-box' (one of a number of these existing architectural features located to the western, southern and eastern facades which consist of grey fins, thin profile glazing and canopies with down-lighters). The screen would be in 'portrait' format, centrally located and framed within this feature.
- 3.2 The new screen is proposed to be integrated into the 'light-box' façade and the screen face positioned to be flush with the existing cladding line. In order to host the screen with a symmetrical appearance within the façade, the existing framing and glazing pattern is to be re-ordered.
- 3.3 Any associated operational equipment, wiring and fittings would be located behind the screen / within the building with the aim of giving a clean and uncluttered external appearance.

## **4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 12/03408/ADV - Digital media screen to shopping centre, Trinity West Shopping Centre, Albion Street, Leeds, LS1 5ER

An advertisement application for the introduction of a digital advertising screen 6.1m x 3.6m in to the splay corner at first and second floor levels of the Trinity Shopping Complex. The application was presented to City Centre Plans Panel in September 2012.

The application was recommended to members for approval due to the proposed location within a commercial centre of regional and even national significance, where advertising is clearly an accepted part of the urban fabric in the prime shopping area and where it would be set against a back drop of a newly created modern retail development in which there is a very large glazed area to a lively and active food offer.

The screen proposal was viewed as being well integrated in to the design of the corner of Trinity rather than simply being placed upon it as an after-thought and was therefore considered acceptable in terms of it's impact on visual amenities.

4.2 12/00511/FU - Replacement media screen, The Carriageworks, 3 Millennium Square Leeds, LS2 3AD

The media screen on The Carriageworks, facing Millennium Square was upgraded to a high definition screen of the dimensions 6.1m x 3.6m in 2012. The screen facing Millennium Square is used to show public events and public information and is not used for commercial advertising. This screen faces on to a large public space sufficient to accommodate the associated crowds.

4.3 12/03419/FU & 12/03420/ADV - Alterations to form digital media advertising display, West Riding House, 59 - 61 Albion Street, Leeds, LS1 5AA

This application was presented to City Centre Plans Panel in September 2012. It was a proposal for a screen to the eastern side of the Pinnacle site (formally known as West Riding House). Officers considered that West Riding house provided a backdrop to the long views along Albion Place, and is clearly visible from Kirkgate Market and that the proposed screen would have terminated this important view and would draw the eye to West Riding House and down to the level of the car park in particular, which would become the focus of views (and therefore take over the prominence afforded to the listed buildings and conservation area in general). It was considered this would be retrograde and harmful to the Conservation Area and the setting of listed buildings and members were minded to refuse the application on that basis.

4.4 Relevant Appeals

10/02426/ADV – Advertising display screen to side of office building, 9 Bond Court Leeds

In 2010 an appeal was lodged against the refusal of an application for a 12m x 6m digital advertising panel on the blank southern elevation of the 11 storey Bond Court office building facing out over City Sq. It would have been visually dominant as a backdrop to several listed buildings including the former post office building and would be seen in the context of the City Centre Conservation Area. The inspector upheld the decision on the grounds of the adverse impact of the proposal on the character of the Conservation Area and the setting of the nearby listed buildings.

## **5.0 HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS**

- 5.1 The applicant has reduced the size of the proposed sign since initially proposed to officers in July 2013 and has followed advice relating to framing of the advertisement and the treatment of glazing around the sign.
- 5.2 Discussions have taken place regarding the giving over of a quantity of air time to the City Council for community information purposes. Discussions on these matters are still ongoing at the time of this report, however the provision of community airtime should not be viewed as necessary in order to make the scheme acceptable in planning terms and Members should not take this in to account as a material consideration in reaching their view on the scheme.
- 5.3 The applicant is willing to make a contribution to public realm improvement works along Upper-Basinghall Street. The screen would potentially have a dominating impact on the modest pavement widths of the adjacent Upper-Basinghall Street. It is considered that expansion of the pedestrianised area of Bond Street onto Upper-Basinghall Street would help to mitigate this impact by providing a larger public space to counter balance the size of the screen and would also provide opportunity for people to stop and view the screen without causing an obstruction.

## **6.0 POLICY**

### **6.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

- 6.2 Paragraph 67 of the NPPF states that poorly placed advertisements can have a negative impact on the appearance of the built and natural environment. Control over outdoor advertisements should be efficient, effective and simple in concept and operation. Only those advertisements which will clearly have an appreciable impact on a building or on their surroundings should be subject to the local planning authority's detailed assessment. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.

### **6.4 Leeds Unitary Development Plan Review**

- 6.5 The UDPR includes policies requiring that matters such as good urban design principles, sustainability, flood risk, highways and transportation issues, public realm, landscaping, and access for all are addressed through the planning application process. The application site lies within the designated City Centre. Relevant policies include:

- 6.6 BD6: Extensions and alterations should respect the scale, form and detailing of the original building.

BD8: All signs must be well designed and sensitively located within the street scene. They should be carefully related to the character, scale and architectural features of the building on which they are placed.

GP5: Proposals should resolve detailed planning considerations including design and safety.

N19: Development within or adjoining Conservation Areas should preserve/enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

6.7 Leeds City Council's supplementary planning document on advertising design guidance recognises digital screens as an emerging form of advertising and advises that they should not be located adjacent to highways for safety reasons. This guidance requires special attention be given to protecting the character and setting of conservation areas and listed buildings.

6.8 CABE and English Heritage 'Large Digital Screens In Public Spaces' (2009): This offers guidance to LPA's on the issues to consider when assessing the suitability of sites for both public event display screens and digital media/advertising screens.

The 3 overriding principles set out are that a screen should:

1. Be in an appropriate location
2. Be of excellent design quality in its own right and ensure that the building façade is suitable
3. Enhance the qualities of its immediate location and wider setting.

And that if it fails on one of these then it should be considered unacceptable. It then expands on the above general principles by offering the following advice:

**Location:** An appraisal of the immediate surroundings of the site should be considered, including: topography; urban grain; scale and height; streetscape and open spaces; listed buildings; conservation areas; landmark buildings including backdrops and important local views and vistas; large trees whose growth may in future obstruct views of the screen and therefore require pruning which would impact on the amenity of the area; the potential impact on local movement patterns. There should be a comprehensive assessment of the screen's impact on an area.

**Context:** Large screens are likely to be inappropriate in architecturally or historically important places particularly if they harm the character, appearance or setting of listed buildings or conservation areas. This is the case even if it is some distance away as it has moving elements and a high visual impact. It is important to consider: the impact on the heritage of a place; the relationship to landscaping, open space and street furniture; topography; strategic and local views; light pollution; conflict with existing users in the area.

**Areas to be avoided:** Those which have: listed buildings; conservation areas; places that are particularly environmentally and visually sensitive such as smaller spaces and those used for quiet repose; the centres of streets or where the screen back is exposed; where they would add to street clutter or be sited close to existing townscape features including trees. Careful consideration will be needed to ensure the building façade is suitable and that it is not adversely affected when the screen is switched off or removed in the future.

## 6.9 **Draft Core Strategy (DCS)**

- 6.10 The draft 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 26th April 2013 the Council submitted the Publication Draft Core Strategy to the Secretary of State. The Inspector examined the Strategy during October 2013. The weight to be attached is limited where representations have been made.
- 6.11 Policy P10 requires new development to be based on a thorough contextual analysis to provide good design appropriate to its scale and function, delivering high quality innovative design. Development should protect and enhance locally important buildings, skylines and views.
- 6.12 Policy P11: The historic environment, consisting of archaeological remains, historic buildings, townscapes and landscapes, including locally significant undesignated assets and their settings, will be conserved and enhanced, particularly those elements which help to give Leeds its distinct identity:

## 7.0 **ISSUES**

- 7.1 Digital media is clearly an emerging advertising form largely due to the advancements in digital technology and the improvement in screen resolution. When used in the correct locations they can add to a commercial environment although it is clear from the guidance set out above that some locations are not suitable due to their impact on more sensitive environments.
- 7.2 Members are asked to comment on the scheme and to consider the following matters:

### Visual Amenity

- 7.4 The screen has been designed and proposed so that it would appear to be integrated into the design of the building, proposed within an architectural 'light box' capable of framing the screen.
- 7.5 The screen has been proposed to be located so that it would be seen as a backdrop on a modern shopping complex, within an commercial centre rather than seen prominently within a more sensitive environment and not impacting upon the setting of listed buildings and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area
- 7.6 To mitigate for the screen's overall scale and presence, the space in front of the screen would be enhanced and provide a wide pedestrian area to balance the size of the screen.
- 7.7 The screen would be sufficiently detached from Park Row so that it is not read as part of the setting of listed buildings on Park Row and the important long north-south views between the Civic Quarter and City Square.

**Do Members agree that the visual impact from the proposal is acceptable and appropriate for this location?**

Public Safety

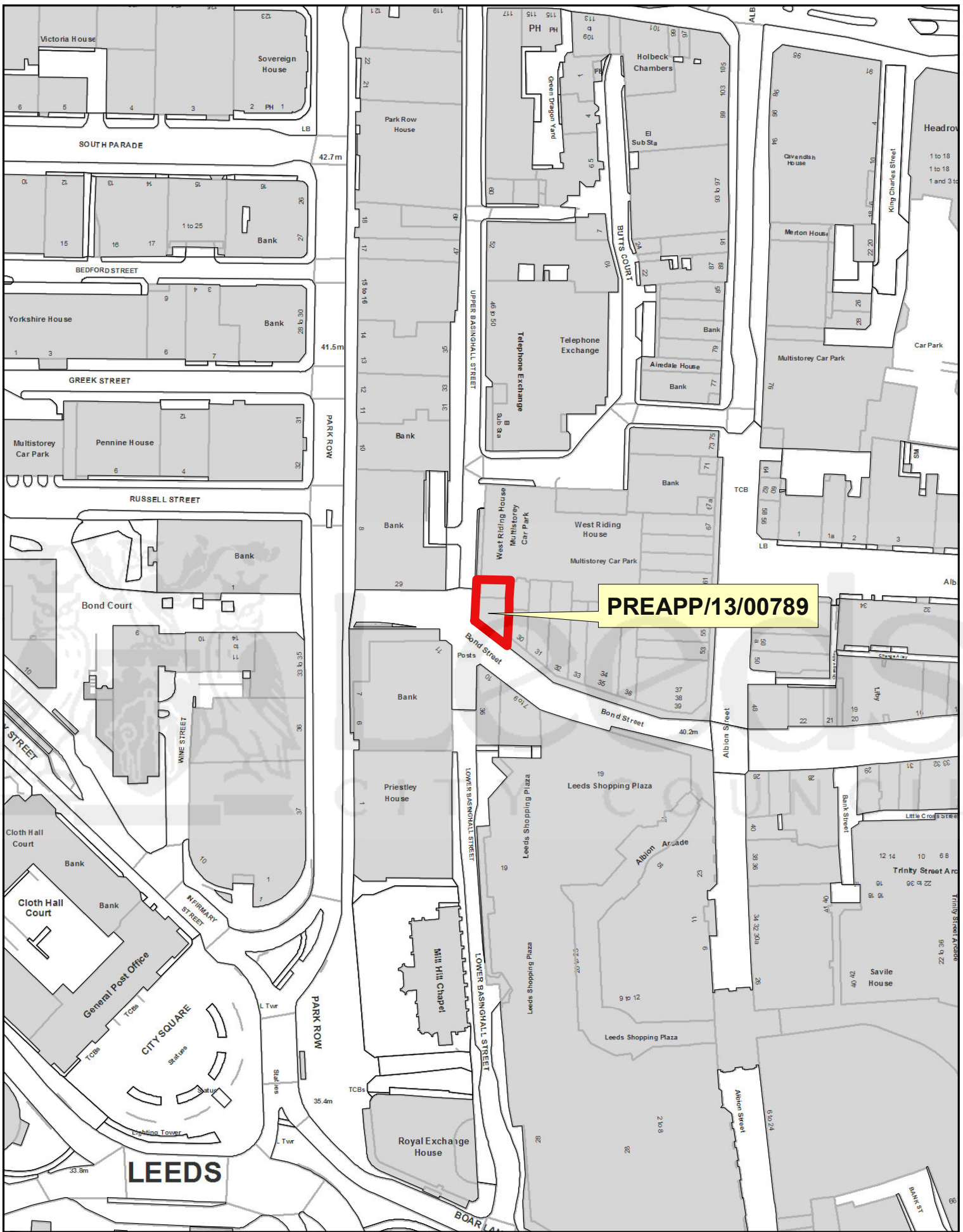
- 7.8 The siting of the screen would be read as part of a pedestrianised area with no 'head-on views of the screen from the road network, specifically from Park Row.
- 7.9 The enhanced public space would avoid potential obstruction for pedestrians if people are encouraged to stop to view the screen, creating a wider pedestrian setting allowing space to pause without impacting upon or impeding pedestrian flows.

**Do Members agree that there are unlikely to be any adverse highway safety implications arising from the proposed screen?**

**Background Papers:**

PREAPP/13/00789

CABE/English Heritage guidance 'Large Digital Screen in Public Spaces' (2009)



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SCALE : 1/1500

