



Report of the Chief Planning Officer

CITY PLANS PANEL

Date: 15th October 2015

Subject: PRE-APPLICATION PRESENTATION FOR OUTLINE PROPOSAL – MIXED USE SCHEME COMPRISING PRIVATE SECTOR RESIDENTIAL, PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR (PRS) RESIDENTIAL AND STUDENT HOUSING WITH ANCILLARY GROUND FLOOR ‘ACTIVE’ USES, SMALL SCALE RETAILING, CAFÉ/RESTAURANTS, BARS (PREAPP/15/00587) AT SITE SOUTH OF KIRKSTALL RD FRONTING THE RIVER AIRE (FORMER YORKSHIRE CHEMICALS SITE).

Electoral Wards Affected:

City and Hunslet

Yes

Ward Members consulted

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

RECOMMENDATION: This report is brought to Panel for information. The Developer will be asked to present the emerging scheme to allow Members to consider and comment on the proposals.

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

1.1 This presentation is intended to inform Members of a new major mixed tenure residential scheme proposed on the vacant former Yorkshire Chemicals site on the south side of Kirkstall Rd. Members will be aware that the site has been vacant for some considerable time and all of the buildings have been demolished. The land has been sold and the current owner wishes to pursue a redevelopment of the land. Members will be asked to comment on the emerging scheme.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

2.1 The site is approximately 2.25 hectares and is located to the south of Kirkstall Rd with a frontage on to the River Aire which runs along the southern side of the site. The existing bridge, which is the only remaining part of the former chemical works, crosses the River Aire to the, currently under construction, Otter Island residential

scheme - approved by Members at panel in 2013. To the west is the vacant former First Bus depot which is also a cleared and vacant site. To the east is the City Gate development which has a large area of landscaped open space adjacent the application site closest to the river, with the service yard of the Staples retail unit to the north which runs along the common boundary. To the north of that is a free standing commercial unit accessed directly from Kirkstall Rd.

2.2 On the northern side of Kirkstall Rd is the Fire Station and to the west of this is the 9 storey Holiday Inn Express hotel. To the north of this are the student residential buildings of Opal 1 and 2, Concept Place and The Tannery which are all clearly visible from Kirkstall Rd. Kirkstall Rd itself was upgraded as part of a Quality Bus Initiative and now carries a dedicated bus lane on both outbound and inbound carriageways.

3.0 PROPOSAL

3.1 This scheme is for the provision of flat accommodation, comprising 3 types of residential tenure, private 'for sale' accommodation (approx. 220 units, Private Rented Sector (PRS – approx. 520 units) and student residences (approx. 240 bed spaces). There are also a small number of other supporting uses which will exist to service the main residential uses. The provision of affordable housing on the site is currently being discussed with the applicant.

3.2 The scheme splits the site in to 4 quarters, with a building in each, which creates a junction at the centre of the site. The taller buildings are located around the perimeter of the site, being 10-12 storeys fronting Kirkstall Road, rising to 14 storeys along the western and eastern boundaries and declining to 6 storeys fronting the river. The elements of the buildings located in the centre of the site are all lower in height (approx. 7 storeys) but this is punctuated by a single, centrally located building, which is proposed to be part 9 and part 11 storeys, with the tallest element acting as a focal point for both ground level views and those from the river.

3.3 Vehicular access is to be taken from a central point on the Kirkstall Rd frontage with a building sitting to either side. These are proposed to be a student accommodation block to the east (11 storeys) and a PRS building to the west (10 to 12 storeys). The elevations to Kirkstall Rd create a street frontage and have been set at this height as they equate to the 9 storey office buildings approved under the previous outline scheme. They would be set back from the public highway by a distance which would allow a landscaped strip to be provided along the Kirkstall Road frontage.

3.4 Both of these buildings are focused around their own central raised areas of private residential amenity space. These are located one storey height above main ground level and would accommodate commercial space, additional car parking and servicing areas beneath. For the PRS building, the U-shaped plan form is oriented to open the central space up to views from the access road. For the eastern building, the development encloses the courtyard but retains a gap between the student block and the adjacent PRS building to provide articulation to the built frontage.

3.5 The site access road leads to a junction at the centre of the scheme. Vehicles do not progress further south than this which means that the spaces will be pedestrian dominated. At this junction the north/south route intersects a secondary east/west spine route which runs parallel with Kirkstall Rd. This will eventually act as a route by which all of the sites along the southern side of Kirkstall Rd will access each other without the requirement to use the main Kirkstall Rd corridor itself. This route

also aligns with views to the east towards the recently approved taller buildings on the corner of the former Yorkshire Post building adjacent the Inner Ring Rd.

- 3.6 To the south of this spine road 2 further buildings sit either side of the 25-30m wide pedestrian route down to the River Aire. The south-western building is proposed to contain the 'for sale' residential units and has an angled eastern façade which means it is visible when entering the site from the north. Views of the river to the south are retained and enable the chimney of the listed Castleton Mill to the south to be seen (this is identified as a key focal point in the Leeds Waterfront Strategy).
- 3.7 A large riverside open space is proposed containing the riverside walkway. From this the river bridge can be accessed and it is proposed to either reuse the existing structure or provide a new bridge crossing over to the Otter Island site and Trans-Pennine canal side route beyond.
- 3.8 A gap of approximately 8m is retained from the western boundary to ensure that this scheme would not prejudice the erection of buildings on the neighbouring development site. On the neighbouring site to the east is the large open space area and 2 no. retail buildings with rear servicing. Therefore, the requirement for a similar distance separation from this boundary is reduced. The residential units are raised up to first floor level on this part of the scheme so will look out over the service area and retail unit rather than directly into it. This relationship is currently under discussion with the applicant.
- 3.9 Car parking for approximately 550 vehicles will be located in a single basement level which would sit beneath all of the buildings and be accessed from the 2 western buildings on either side of the east/west spine road. The allocation of the spaces is currently being discussed with the applicant. The construction of the basement car park enables the whole site to be raised above the existing ground level by 1.3m to ensure that it would be at the height required by the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme to reduce the risk of flooding. It is noted that the site level is currently below that of the neighbouring site to the east and therefore raising the site level will help to bring these two sites into closer alignment.
- 3.10 All of the buildings will have a mix of uses at ground floor level. These include small scale retail, leisure facilities (gym), bars and restaurants which the applicant has included to animate the pedestrian routes through the site and to provide support services for the residential occupiers.
- 3.11 The applicant will be responsible for providing a full set of supporting documents including a Transport Assessment, Travel Plan, Flood Risk Assessment, Wind Study, Sunlight/Daylight Analysis and a Statement of Community Involvement.

4.0 HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS AND RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 Officers have had two meetings with the developer team and phone calls with the project architects which commenced in June this year. These have dealt principally with planning and design issues in order to develop the layout, scale, massing and highways matters.
- 4.2 Outline planning consent (06/04610/OT) was approved on 16 February 2011 for a mixed use development over both the current proposal and the Otter Island sites, which was the subject of a S106 agreement. This consisted of 5 buildings on the part of the site currently under consideration consisting of 2 no. 9 storey office buildings fronting Kirkstall Rd, a 9 storey car park and 2 no. 10 storey residential

buildings all with ground floor commercial/leisure units to support and service the site occupiers. These buildings all sat above individual basement car parks. A further 6 buildings were proposed on the Otter Island site of between 3 - 8 storeys.

- 4.3 A new full planning application on the Otter Island part of the site was granted planning consent in June 2015 for the erection of 113 No dwellings and associated works with associated S106 Agreement. This site is now under construction.
- 4.4 The existing bridge over the river, linking the two sites, falls within the redline boundary and ownership of the site under consideration here. The Otter Island layout allows for the landing of a bridge and connection to the open space network and Leeds Liverpool Canal towpath to the south.
- 4.5 The developer team carried out a public consultation exercise at the Holiday Inn Express on Kirkstall Rd on 1st October. The public feedback from this will inform the Statement of Community Involvement which will be submitted as part of the application.
- 4.6 Planning permission has been granted for an 8 - 11 storey office/hotel/residential scheme fronting the north side of Kirkstall Rd on land between Abbey St and Bingley St app. ref. 11/01850/EXT
- 4.7 There is also an extant planning permission for a 6 – 9 storey student residential scheme on the former RSPCA site between Abbey St and Bingley St app. ref. 14/03023/EXT, again to the north side of Kirkstall Rd.

5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

5.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied, only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. It identifies 12 core planning principles (para 17) which include that planning should:

- Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver homes
- Seek high quality design and a good standard of amenity for existing and future occupants.

Paragraph 49 states that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 50 states that local authorities should deliver a wide choice of homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.

The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Section 7 (paras 56-66) states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. It is important that design is inclusive and of high quality. Key principles include:

- Establishing a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;
- Optimising the potential of the site to accommodate development;
- Respond to local character and history;

- Reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;
- Development to be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

Paragraph 64 states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions

Paragraph 66 states that applicants will be expected to work closely with those directly affected by development to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community.

5.2 Development Plan

5.2.1 The adopted Leeds Core Strategy 2014

This sets out strategic level policies and vision to guide the delivery of development investment decisions and the overall future of the district. The Core Strategy was adopted by the Council on 12th November 2014. This now forms the development plan for Leeds together with the Natural Resources & Waste Development Plan Document 2013 and the Saved Policies from the Leeds Unitary Development Plan Review 2006 (UDPR). Relevant Core Strategy policies include:

- Spatial Policy 1 sets out the broad spatial framework for the location and scale of development. This policy prioritises the redevelopment of previously developed land within Main Urban Areas, in a way that respects and enhances the local character and identity of places and neighbourhoods.
- 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 and enhancing existing landscapes and spaces.
- Policies EN1 and EN2 – sustainability policies which seek to reduce total predicted carbon dioxide emissions, provide low carbon energy sources.
- Policy CC1(b) Encourages residential development including new buildings providing that it does not prejudice the centre functions of the City Centre and that it provides a reasonable level of amenity for occupiers.

Housing policy H4 requires a mix of unit types and sizes within housing developments. H5 requires the provision of affordable housing across the site (excluding student accommodation) and H6 controls the provision of student accommodation.

H8 encourages the provision of residential accommodation designed to independent living standards for major schemes.

5.2.2 Leeds Unitary Development Plan Review 2006 (UDPR) – Saved Policies

Saved Policies GP5 - all relevant planning considerations, BD2 design and siting of new buildings and BD5 Residential amenity are all relevant to this proposal. The Council is keen to promote good standards of daylight and sunlight in the interests of both mental and physical wellbeing, and in order to avoid a wasteful use of energy in providing unnecessary artificial light.

5.2.3 Leeds Natural Resources and Waste DPD 2013

The Natural Resources and Waste Local Plan was adopted by Leeds City Council on 16th January 2013. The Natural Resources and Waste Development Plan Document (Local Plan) is part of the Local Development Framework. The plan sets out where land is needed to enable the City to manage resources, like minerals, energy, waste and water over the next 15 years, and identifies specific actions which will help use natural resources in a more efficient way.

5.3 Supplementary Planning Documents

5.3.1 Neighbourhoods for Living: A Guide for Residential Design in Leeds (December 2003) aims to provide further guidance on good design in residential schemes in Leeds. Neighbourhoods for Living is relevant to all residential development in Leeds and provides advice and principles for good residential design across the themes of use, movement, space and form. It promotes local character, analysis of landmarks, views and focal points, and quality buildings. It also states that the scale, massing and height of the proposed development should be considered in relation to its surroundings. It needs to respond well to that of adjoining buildings, the topography, the general pattern of heights in the area and views, vistas and landmarks. Buildings also need to be carefully positioned to relate to the spaces around them. The enclosure of the street, and the ratio of building height to the space, needs to be carefully considered in order to create the correct feel for that space and the people who will use it.'

5.3.2 Biodiversity and Waterfront Development: Objectives are to: identify and safeguard existing habitats; provide ecological design guidance on waterfront developments; provide guidance on the conservation of protected and important species; identify opportunities for habitat enhancement, creation and restoration; encourage appropriate long term habitat management. It requires development to be set back from river banks.

5.3.3 Sustainable Design and Construction: Advocates the use of a range of measures to ensure that the best possible practices are used to ensure a sustainable environment is created.

5.3.4 Waterfront Strategy: This advocates public access to the waterfront as well as its laying out with landscape treatment, which seeks to soften the bank edge. In addition, open space oriented towards the river, uses which take advantage of the amenity offered by the river and the protection of any wildlife habitats are also advocated.

5.4 Other Material Considerations

5.4.1 Site Allocations Plan: The site and adjacent sites have been identified as site MX2-9 which is allocated for mixed use development which is currently at public consultation stage. This allocation sets out the following:

- This site is suitable for a mixed use development, mainly housing and office, but other uses would be acceptable subject to policy.
- The site is suitable for older persons housing/independent living in accordance with Policy HG4
- The existing footbridge over the River Aire should be refurbished or replaced to provide a pedestrian and cycle link to the development to the south and the canal.

- A contribution towards highways mitigation measures at certain junctions will be required.
- The site is located within Flood Zone 3. Flood risk mitigation measures should be applied.
- An Ecological Assessment of the site is required and where appropriate, mitigation measures will need to be provided, including provision of a biodiversity buffer alongside the River Aire.
- Part of the site should be retained for the provision of a school. A detailed Master plan approach is required for the development of the site.

5.4.2 Kirkstall Rd Renaissance Area Planning Framework: (KRRAPF) is adopted as Informal Guidance for planning purposes. It aims to promote the regeneration of the area in a manner which will establish a real sense of place and guide developers in formulating proposals for the re-development of land using positive urban design principles. This is underpinned by a need to ensure that a consistent approach is taken to all development in the area.

The framework area is split in to a series of character areas. The area between the River and the Kirkstall Rd is allocated as the 'Kirkstall Road Riverside'. Within this area the framework advocates that the buildings are laid out in a 'flexible configuration on a grid based block pattern. Development sites/blocks and building envelopes will be determined by the requirement for public realm and safe and attractive pedestrian movement'. New buildings must contribute to the formation of these objectives by resolving:

- Appropriate height, scale and massing
- Siting and orientation
- Landscape settings
- Emphasis of corners
- Locating entrances on public access streets/paths
- Facilitating pedestrian access through the area and avoid potential conflict with traffic.

There is a requirement to create a boulevard along the A65 Kirkstall Rd corridor, to be achieved in conjunction with works already undertaken as part of the Quality Bus Initiative (QBI) and is considered to be a fundamental part of the future growth of this area.

Heights are set out on a plan but broadly envisage 8 storeys at the north-eastern corner of the current site reducing towards the river. A link across the river is also indicated as is public access to the river banks.

5.4.3 Residential Amenity Standards: The Council's aspirations for good standards of amenity and living conditions responds to guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework which states that a good standard of amenity for future occupants is one of the core planning principles. More recently the Council's Executive Board (September 2014) agreed to bring forward the Leeds Standard which sets out the importance of excellent quality housing in supporting the economic growth ambitions of the Council. This standard closely reflects the Government's Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard which seek to promote a good standard of internal amenity for all housing types and tenures. Whilst neither of these documents has yet been adopted as formal planning policy in Leeds, given their evidence base in determining the minimum space requirements, they are a material consideration in the determination of development proposals.

6.0 ISSUES

6.1 Principle of Use

The site is unallocated in the Unitary Development Plan Review (2006) and is located in a mixed use area which in recent years has seen a gradual replacement of the traditional industrial uses with a wider mix of city centre type uses, including residential development. The existing consent on the site is for a mixture of uses, predominantly high density residential and office accommodation, with supporting commercial and community uses.

6.2 The Site Allocations Plan (SAP) is at public consultation stage and therefore the weight which can be attached to it is limited at this stage. However, the plan identifies this site along with adjacent sites to the west for major mixed use redevelopment, comprising housing and office uses. The SAP also indicates that a school is to be considered as part of the combined area. However, there is currently no master plan for this area and no specific school site allocation. The current proposal site represents less than a third of the entire MX2-9 site and there would therefore be a significant amount of space on the remainder of the SAP area to fulfil any future school requirement if this should be included as a policy requirement after the SAP adoption process is completed.

1. Do Members consider that this scheme can be developed without prejudicing the provision of a school on the wider SAP site?

6.3 The scheme is in a prominent location and is visible from distance on the southern side of Kirkstall Rd, which is the city's main western arterial route. It has potential to be the first phase of development on the MX2-9 SAP site and therefore it is considered important to ensure that it fits well within the city-scape of buildings which already exist in the area, whilst recognising those that may be developed in the future. The site is located on the edge of the city centre in an area with a mixture of building scales, density and uses. The scheme is clearly of a city centre type high-rise development and carries over some of the elements of the previously approved outline scheme. Officers consider that the approach is acceptable in this edge of city centre location and the proposal makes the most efficient use of the available land, as opposed to a more traditional residential estate type scheme.

2. Do Members consider that the city centre high rise approach to residential development is acceptable here?

6.4 Design and Massing

The Kirkstall Road Renaissance Area Planning Framework sets out a number of principles which have been used to inform the design development. The heights of the buildings which have approval under the extant permission are also a material consideration. The proposal would provide a strong building line fronting Kirkstall Road, which relates in height to the previously approved scheme, and then sculpts the form of the buildings to create interest in the roof lines, stepping up away from the road and then down towards the river and open space area.

6.5 The alignment of the buildings within the site has been carefully considered in order to provide focal points and create views through the scheme to assist in legibility and pedestrian permeability, whilst at the same time creating meaningful street frontages. The 11 storey block at the centre of the scheme is considered to be of the correct size to avoid competing with the perimeter buildings but is of sufficient scale to fulfil its function as a focal point. The alignment of the east-west spine route allows views through to the recently approved taller buildings on the corner of the

former Yorkshire Post building adjacent the Inner Ring Rd and the north-south route offers views of the listed Castleton Mill chimney.

6.6 Officers consider that the emerging approach to scale and massing is acceptable within the immediate context of Kirkstall Rd, the riverside setting and the larger residential and hotel buildings to the north. Subject to the applicant demonstrating that the internal spaces, particularly the courtyards and public routes through the site, will receive adequate daylight and sunlight, it is considered the emerging scale of development can be supported.

3. Do Members consider that the overall scale and articulation in the heights of the buildings, with the taller flanks and the lower centrally located buildings with central focal point, is an acceptable approach in the context of the existing area?

6.7 Public Realm and Connections

The main publicly accessible open space area is next to the river in the southern part of the site. This would be linked to the main site access road by a tree lined pedestrian open space between 25m-30m in width. From the open space area a river bridge would provide a link across to the Otter Island site and on to the Leeds/Liverpool canal towpath - the Trans-Pennine cycle route. The existing river bridge is within the site and a river crossing is indicated on the submitted plans.

4. Do Members consider that the amount and location of publicly accessible open space, and the pedestrian linkages to these spaces, are acceptable?

5. Do Members share the SAP requirement to retain, if not the existing then a replacement, river crossing to improve/enhance north-south connectivity?

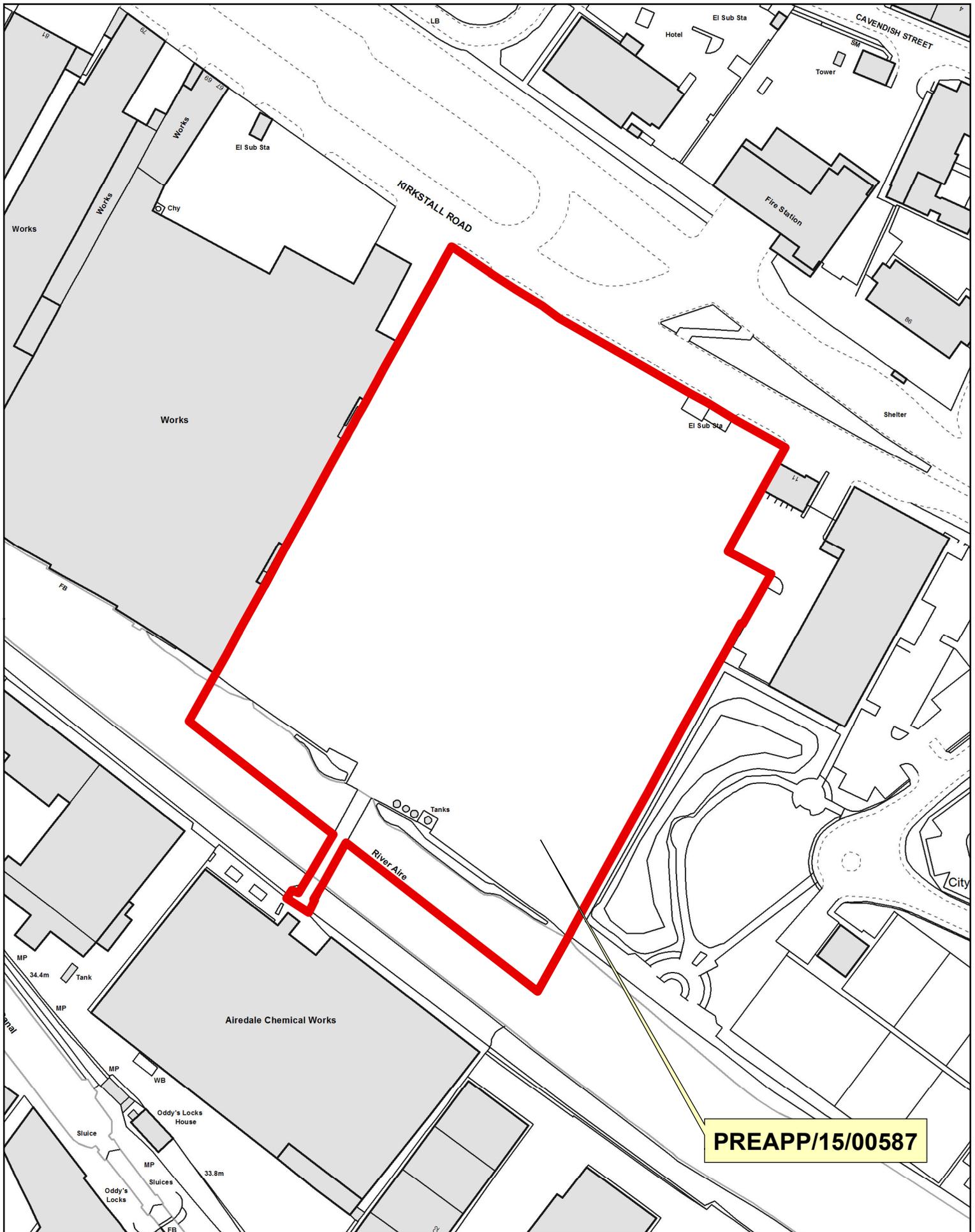
BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Pre-application file: PREAPP/15/00587

Application file: Original Outline approval 06/04610/OT

Application file: Otter Island approval 13/05566/FU

Application file: Sites between Abbey St and Bingley St 11/01850/EXT and 14/03023/EXT



CITY PLANS PANEL

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