



## Report of the Chief Planning Officer

### CITY PLANS PANEL

Date: 23 August 2018

**Subject: PREAPP/18/00067 Partial demolition and rebuilding of the Leonardo Building, the conversion of Thoresby Building and 2 Great George Street for a change of use from offices to a mix of hotel, office, restaurant/café and bar uses and the extension of existing buildings, with a new build hotel on car park site at The Leonardo Building, Thoresby House and 2 Great George Street, Leeds, LS2 8HD**

### APPLICANT Ide Real Estate

#### Electoral Wards Affected:

Little London and Woodhouse

Yes

Ward Members consulted  
(Referred to in report)

#### Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

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

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Members will recall being provided with a preapplication presentation of the emerging scheme for this site at City Plans Panel on 10 May 2018. There has been significant positive engagement by the Developer's team with Officers to address Members comments and this current presentation is intended to inform Members of the evolving proposals. The proposals are brought back to City Plans Panel as the development involves major investment in important heritage assets which are located in a key location within the City Centre.

## 2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 The proposals involve the regeneration and extension of the Grade II Listed Thoresby and Leonardo Buildings and No. Great George Street and the creation of a new third building between the two historic buildings. All proposed works would facilitate a change of use from offices to a mix of hotel, office, restaurant/café and

bar uses across the site. Since the Plans Panel of 10 May 2018 the scheme has been revised such that all building heights have been reduced by one storey, the central new building has been remodelled allowing it to become more contextually relevant, the new corner building to the Leonardo building has been redesigned, the roof top extension to No.2 Great George Street has been amended from a curved to a rectilinear form and the depth of the public space between the new building and Thoresby House has increased to some 16.8 metres in width. The changes seek to enhance both the scheme and the setting of the existing and proposed buildings within their heritage rich location.

- 2.2 The changes Thoresby Building would require demolition of the attached 20<sup>th</sup> century Leonardo Building (but not the older part of the Leonardo Building) and the roof of the Listed Thoresby Building. A new extension would be built to replace the removed part of the Leonardo Building as well as a second extension across the top of the retained part of the Leonardo Building and the Thoresby Building. The regenerated set of buildings would be put into use as office space, with ground floor A1 retail, A3 (restaurant and café) and A4 (bar) uses. A large new entrance point would be created to the east face of the building, to sit between the two existing stone detailed doorways, which would link into the building's retained atrium.
- 2.3 The Listed No. 2 Great George Street would be altered internally with the addition of a mezzanine to add in an extra floor space for the creation of a new premium hotel. In addition, the existing 20<sup>th</sup> century entrance portal will be removed and a new entrance to the west face of the building will be created. In addition a new glass extension would be added to the roof top of the building. To the ground floor level a mix of A3 (restaurant and café) and A4 (bar) uses is proposed
- 2.4 On the car park in the middle of the site it is proposed to create a new third building to house a second hotel. This would be a contemporary building which would be scaled and detailed to take account of the site's historic context. At the ground floor level a mix of A3 (restaurant and café) and A4 (bar) uses are proposed with the aim being that users can access any and all of the ground floor uses across the three buildings.
- 2.5 Between the three buildings new publicly accessible open landscaped spaces are to be created. These would be accessed from north south routes through them or from east west routes running between the three buildings.

### **3.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:**

- 3.1 The site is the existing conjoined Thoresby Building and the two parts of the Leonardo Building and the stand alone No.2 Great George Street and the car park and open spaces between them. The buildings and spaces are set within Leeds City Centre and are within the boundary of the City Centre Conservation Area. To the east across Woodhouse Lane is the Merrion centre dating from the 1960s and providing a mixture of shopping, leisure, office and hotel uses. To the north across Rossington Street is the Grade II\* listed City Museum and the Grade II listed 43 Woodhouse Lane in use as a bar. To the west is the Grade II listed Electric Press site with a bar use facing the site. To the south across Great George Street is the Grade II\* St. Anne's Cathedral, the Grade II listed Cathedral Chambers (in office use) and the modern K2 tower complex housing a mixture of office, residential and leisure uses.
- 3.2 The Thoresby House and the railings and gates to the open spaces adjacent to it are Grade II Listed. Formerly known as: Thoresby High School the building has

been most recently in use as Council offices. Designed by Walter Samuel Braithwaite in a Classical style the 4 storey building is predominantly brick, with stone dressings and a slate roof. It dates from 1889.

- 3.3 The Leonardo Building is a Grade II Listed former print works building dating from 1900. It was extended to the north west in the late 1990s, and most recently in use as Council offices. The former print works building was designed by Chorley and Pickersgill as a 4 storey red brick and ashlar corner building. An entrance sits to the corner under an arch with fluted pilasters. There is a wrought iron balcony to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor level windows at this corner and balustrade parapets to the 3<sup>rd</sup> storey and towers.
- 3.4 No.2 Great George Street and its attached wrought-iron railings is also a Grade II Listed Building. This was designed by Birchall and Kelly (with alterations by Landless) and having been a school, was converted to offices in 1994. The building is 3 storeys, red brick with stone dressings in a Classical style. There are giant Ionic pilasters to the ground and 1st floors supporting entablature with small windows and a heavy cornice and full-height windows to the storeys above. The former main entrance has paired Ionic columns with a balustrade above and a rusticated round arch to the doorway.

#### **4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:**

- 4.1 Approval was granted for a Listed Building application to demolish a chimney and a greenhouse and other alterations and 2 single storey extensions to form offices on 21 January 1994, planning reference 20/353/93/LI.
- 4.2 Approval was granted for a change of use, alterations and 2 single storey extensions to a school to create offices on 21 January 1994, planning reference 20/354/93/FU.
- 4.3 Approval was granted for a seven storey office building (The Leonardo Building) on 16 April 1997, planning reference 20/686/96/FU.

#### **5.0 HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS:**

- 5.1 The proposals have been the subject of discussions between the Developers, their Architects, and the Council since January 2018. These discussions have focused on the change of use, heritage matters, scale, massing and design, sustainable transport, access and connectivity and public realm.
- 5.2 Members received a preapplication presentation on the scheme at City Plans Panel on 10 May 2018 and raised the following points;
- There was no continuity between the existing and the new build elements
  - The proposed new elements were disrespectful to the existing
  - In terms of the new build hotel, a number of Members expressed the view that too much was being squeezed onto the site
  - The proposed glass roof extension to the Leonardo Building was too dominant and too modern
  - Members appeared supportive to the principle of a glazed roof extension to 2 Great George
  - One Member suggested the rib design for the glazed roof was too imposing
  - Members requested more detail about the infill design and colour of the new build elements

- Members expressed the view that the quality of the proposal should not be lowered

In drawing the discussion to a conclusion Members provided the following feedback;

- Mixed views were expressed about the emerging scale, massing and design of the development, a number of Members were partially supportive others were not

- Members were supportive of the emerging landscape scheme and approach to connectivity

- Members were supportive of the principle of the demolitions and accepted some alterations were required to the listed buildings.

The scheme is now returned to City Plans Panel following detailed positive discussions between the Developer and Officers, to respond to Members comments.

5.3 Little London and Woodhouse Members were consulted on 31 May 2018.

## **6.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES:**

6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework 2018 (NPPF) was revised and adopted in July 2018 and sets out Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.

6.2 Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

6.3 Paragraph 16 of the NPPF sets out the Core Planning Principles for plan making and decision taking. Part b) states that plans should be prepared positively, in a way that is aspirational but deliverable/

6.4 Paragraph 38 of the NPPF states that Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible

6.5 Paragraph 39 of the NPPF states that early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community

6.6 Paragraph 85 of the NPPF states that Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. Planning policies should:

d) allocate a range of suitable sites in town centres to meet the scale and type of development likely to be needed, looking at least ten years ahead. Meeting anticipated needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses over this period should not be compromised by limited site availability, so town centre boundaries should be kept under review where necessary;

- 6.7 Paragraph 124 of the NPPF states that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process
- 6.8 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF 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, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents. Conversely, where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development. Local planning authorities should also seek to ensure that the quality of approved development is not materially diminished between permission and completion, as a result of changes being made to the permitted scheme (for example through changes to approved details such as the materials used).
- 6.9 Paragraph 193 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.
- 6.10 Paragraph 194 of the NPPF states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:
- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;
  - b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II\* listed buildings, grade I and II\* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional<sup>63</sup>.
- 6.11 Paragraph 195 of the NPPF states that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:
- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
  - b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
  - c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
  - d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.
- 6.12 Paragraph 196 of the NPPF states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
- 6.13 The Development Plan for Leeds currently comprises the following documents:

1. The Leeds Core Strategy (Adopted November 2014)
2. Saved Leeds Unitary Development Plan Policies (Reviewed 2006), included as Appendix 1 of the Core Strategy
3. The Natural Resources & Waste Local Plan (NRWLP, Adopted January 2013) including revised policies Minerals 13 and 14 (Adopted September 2015).
4. Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan (Adopted November 2017)
5. Any Neighbourhood Plan, once made.

**6.14 Leeds Core Strategy**

6.15 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. Relevant Policies include:

6.16 Spatial Policy 1: Location of Development states that;

- (iv) To prioritise new office, retail, service, leisure and cultural facilities in Leeds City Centre and the town centres across the district, maximising the opportunities that the existing services and high levels of accessibility and sustainability to new development
- (v) To promote economic prosperity, job retention and opportunities for growth:

6.17 Spatial Policy 3: Role of Leeds City Centre states that the importance of the City Centre as an economic driver for the District and City Region will be maintained and enhanced by:

- i) Promoting the City Centre's role as the regional capital for major new retail, leisure, hotel, and culture and office development.

6.18 Spatial Policy 8: Economic Development Priorities states that a competitive local economy will be supported through:

- (vii) Developing the city centre and the town/local centres as the core location for new retail and office employment and other main town centre uses.

6.19 Policy CC1: City Centre Development  
The City Centre will be planned to accommodate at least the following:

- (i) 655,000 sqm of office floorspace.
- (iv) Supporting services and open spaces and improvements to the public realm

6.20 Policy P10: Design states that:  
New development for buildings and spaces, and alterations to existing, should be based on a thorough contextual analysis to provide good design appropriate to its scale and function.  
New development will be expected to deliver high quality innovative design that has evolved, where appropriate, through community consultation and which respects and enhances the variety of existing landscapes, streets, spaces and buildings according to the particular local distinctiveness and wider setting of the place, contributing positively towards place making and quality of life and be accessible to all.

6.21 Policy P11: Conservation states that development proposals will be expected to demonstrate a full understanding of historic assets affected. Heritage statements assessing the significance of assets, the impact of proposals and mitigation measures will be required to be submitted by developers to accompany development proposals.

- 6.22 Policy P12: Landscape states that;  
The character, quality and biodiversity of Leeds' townscapes and landscapes, including their historical and cultural significance, will be conserved and enhanced to protect their distinctiveness through stewardship and the planning process
- 6.23 Policy T1: Transport Management states that support will be given to the following management priorities:  
(i) Develop and provide tailored, interactive, readily available information and support that encourages and incentivises more sustainable travel choices on a regular basis.  
(ii) Sustainable travel proposals including travel planning measures for employers
- 6.24 Policy T2: Accessibility Requirements and New Development states that new development should be located in accessible locations that are adequately served by existing or programmed highways, by public transport and with safe and secure access for pedestrians, cyclists and people with impaired mobility:

## 6.25 **Leeds Unitary Development Plan Review 2006 - Retained Policies**

- 6.26 Relevant Policies include:  
Policy BD2 (Design and siting of new buildings)  
Policy BD5 (All new buildings and amenity)  
Policy GP5 (All planning considerations)  
Policy LD1 (landscaping schemes)  
Policy N15 (Changes of use of listed buildings)  
Policy N16 (Extensions to listed buildings)  
Policy N17 (All listed buildings)  
Policy N18A (Level of contribution of building to be demolished in a conservation area)  
Policy N19 (New buildings and extensions within or adjacent to a conservation area)  
Policy N23 (Space around new buildings)

## 6.27 **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 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. Policies regarding land use, energy, coal recovery, drainage, and waste will be relevant to this proposal.

## 6.28 **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

- 6.29 Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (August 2011).
- 6.30 Supplementary Planning Document 'Travel Plans' (February 2015)
- 6.31 Parking Supplementary Planning Document adopted January 2016.

## 7.0 **KEY ISSUES**

- 7.1 The mix of uses and the public routes, realm and landscaping were agreed, in principle, by Members at the City Plans Panel of 10 May 2018.

### 7.2 Principle of the mix of uses

- 7.3 The revised proposal remains to create two new separate hotels on the site, a premium hotel in No.2 Great George Street, and a second hotel as part of a new building on the current car park and open space between No. 2 Great George Street and the Thoresby Building. Within the Thoresby and Leonardo Building the principle use will be office accommodation with a focus on flexible spaces for innovative business start-ups. As such the developer is in discussions with the Council with regard to how their scheme can engage with the emerging Innovation Zone for this area of Leeds City Centre. At ground floor levels the proposal is to create a mix of A1 retail, A3 (restaurant and café) and A4 (bar) uses with further A3 (restaurant uses within the tops of the two new hotels as well as connected route through the site linking to the surround streets, both north-south and east-west.
- 7.4 The principle of the uses are supported by Council Planning Policy and are likely to be accommodated without loss of amenity in this mixed use city centre location. The mix of proposed uses would further add to the vibrancy and vitality of both the daytime and evening economies of this part of the City Centre.
- 7.5 Design, Massing, Scale and Layout
- 7.6 The scheme has progressed, taking account of Member's comments at Plans Panel on the 10 May 2018 in respect of its design, scale, massing and potential materiality of the new built elements.
- 7.7 With regard to the proposed changes to the Listed Leonardo and Thoresby Buildings and the 20<sup>th</sup> century section of the Leonardo Building, the scheme has been revised such that the roof extension to the Listed Thoresby and Leonardo Building is redesigned and reduced by one storey and a corner extension to replace the existing 20<sup>th</sup> century part of the Leonardo Building that is to be demolished has been redesigned. These have been redesigned to be contemporary yet historically sensitive interventions.
- 7.8 The revised roof extension is vertically aligned, is set back and stepped such that it is would be seen as a background feature behind the building lines of the Listed Leonardo and Thoresby Buildings. In respect of appearance the structure would be visually lightweight and glassy.
- 7.9 The new built element that is to replace the current 20<sup>th</sup> century part of the Leonardo Building has been redesigned to create an ordered façade with materials and tones (likely to be a reconstituted stone) to reflect the historic setting. Here the façade is expressed with a vertical emphasis and uses horizontal spandrels to allow it wrap around the corner and meet the different architectural detailing of the Listed retained Leonardo Building and the Listed Thoresby House. Officers consider that both of this element and the above mentioned roof extension have been remodelled in a positive direction such that they complement and reflect the rich detailing in the host and nearby historic buildings.
- 7.10 To the existing stepped courtyards between the Thoresby Building and No. 2 Great George Street the scheme has been revisited. The proposal remains for a contemporary building however the choice of materials and detailing of facades takes better account of the historic setting. As such the terracotta coloured concrete clad building would have a solid frame with depth created by the setting back of the vertically aligned windows. This would result in the building facades would have a strong vertical emphasis with a secondary, more subtle horizontal modular banding in the line of the set back glazing. The ground floor would be inset and would be



stepped across the site to take in the levels change that exists at the site. As a result the ground floor is in effect two levels with a generous floor to ceiling height. At the ground floor level the elevational treatment would be different to the upper levels. Here large areas of glazing are proposed to the sides and corners of the building to aid views into and out of new public realm spaces that are to be created to the east and west of the block. The new building has been pulled back from the Thoresby House side allow for a more generous public realm space of up to 16.8 metres in width for the majority of the building's length (14.2 metres at its minimum where the building steps out). To the east side of the new building the public realm would step from 6.5 metres (where the new building steps out) to 12.8 metres in width for the majority of the length between the new block and No.2 Great George Street. Officers consider that the proposal has been redesigned to be a more complimentary, heritage sensitive insertion into the wider historic context.

- 7.11 The proposal to the roof of No. 2 Great George Street has been amended to add a rectilinear three storey extension (which was formally a four storey curved form) that would sit in behind the roof parapet of this listed building. The design ethos for this extension is to allow it to crown the building and the façade would be predominantly glazed with feature Corten detailed areas. A new parapet is to be created adding height to the existing structure. This would be finely detailed pigmented precast concrete, which would pick up the existing cornices and string courses of the host historic building below. Officers consider that, provided the extension is designed to be of a light weight appearance, this extension would be an appropriate addition
- 7.12 The changes will include reuse of the original Woodhouse Lane entrance to 2 Great George Street and the original south-west corner entrance to the Leonardo Building and create roof top bars and restaurants.
- 7.13 The developer has prepared key views and cross-sections of the revised proposals for the extensions and the additional building to demonstrate that they would sit comfortably within the local context and not adversely affect the setting of nearby heritage assets or unduly dominate views along the adjoining streets.
- 7.14 **Do Members support the emerging scale, massing and design of the proposals?**
- 7.15 Heritage Impact
- 7.16 The proposals involve the change of use, part demolition, extension and alterations of listed buildings. Listed Building Consent would therefore also be required in addition to planning permission.
- 7.17 On the basis of the information provide thus far Officers consider that the level of demolitions and alterations will be likely to lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of these designated heritage assets and the character of the City Centre Conservation Area, and as such the proposals can be justified in accordance with the considerations of paragraph 134 rather than paragraph 133 of the NPPF. Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which states that decision makers should give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings. Case law has held that once harm to a heritage asset is established, considerable weight needs to be attached to that harm. The NPPF advises that there is a presumption against the granting of planning permissions for the schemes requiring the demolition of listed buildings unless it can be demonstrated that the public benefits outweigh the harm including securing its optimum viable use.

- 7.18 The developer has put forward the following public benefits of the scheme:
- To secure the long-term and viable re-use of the Grade II listed Great George Street, Leonardo and Thoresby buildings, and provide an opportunity to reveal and restore historic features within the buildings to the benefit of the public;
  - Create a vibrant city centre leisure and hospitality destination, which will enhance Leeds' visitor offer and encourage the high-spending, long-stay business and leisure visitors to the city;
  - Deliver 'best in class' flexible office accommodation, which can support start-up companies and growing Small and Medium Size Enterprises, particularly those in the technology and media sectors. This will help to attract investment to Leeds and retain talent;
  - Create new publicly accessible rooftop leisure spaces (food & beverage uses) that will enable the community to enjoy vistas across Leeds;
  - Provide high-quality publicly accessible public realm, which will integrate the site with the rest of the city, particularly Millennium Square;

The developer also states that a subsequent planning application would include an Economic Benefits Statement demonstrating:

1. The direct, indirect and induced employment generated via the operational 'lifetime' of the scheme.
2. The increased economic productivity in the form of GVA uplift annually during the operational 'lifetime' of the scheme
3. The additional visitor expenditure generated by the increase in hotel bed capacity provided by the hotels
4. The additional incomes (and associated spending power) generated by those employed by the hotels, food & beverage uses, and by the occupiers of the new office accommodation;
5. The scale of the direct employment during the construction phase, and the indirect benefits to local supply chain, related businesses, and onward expenditure within the City and across the wider regional economy;
6. The applicant is committed to enter a local employment and skills plan to ensure these economic benefits can be realised as locally as possible."

- 7.19 The developer has advised that for the proposals to be more adaptable for future use and viable there is a requirement for additional roof top floor space and a new extension replacing the 20<sup>th</sup> century Leonardo Building to provide more regular floorplates spanning across all three parts of the Leonardo and Thoresby buildings. It is considered that the emerging design of the proposed extensions would be of high quality and would be a positive addition to the streetscene, without unduly dominating the setting of nearby listed buildings. In addition, the proposals would allow important underused historic areas of the Listed Buildings to be brought back into use and to be viewable by the public, such as the atrium in the Thoresby Building, the corner entrance in the Leonardo Building and the tiled main entrance in No. 2 Great George Street. Therefore, whilst Officers acknowledge that there will be some (but not substantial) harm by virtue of the extent of demolition and alterations, this is likely to be of a tolerable level when balanced against the public benefits the regeneration of the buildings will realise.

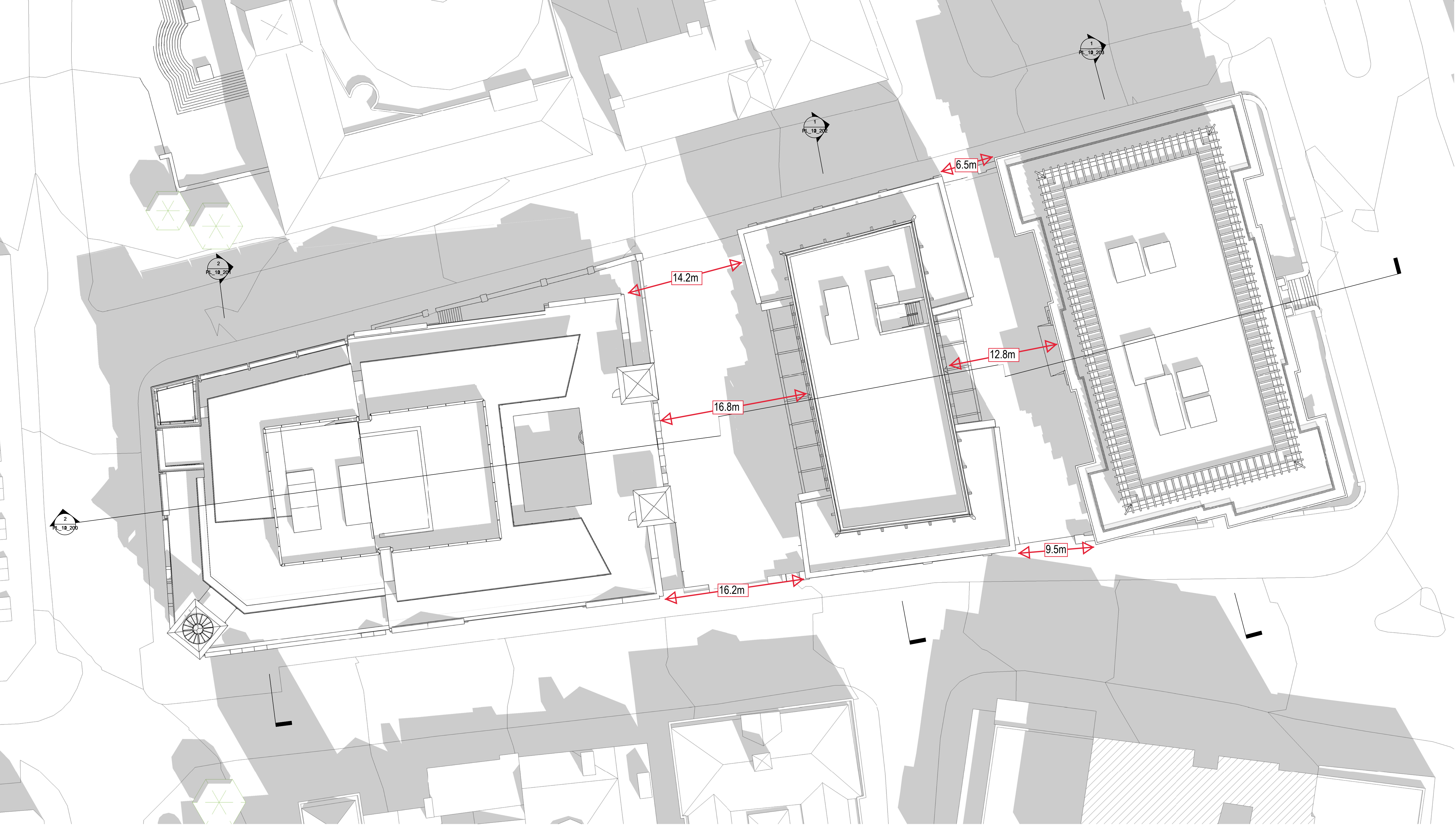
## 8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The key questions asked in the report above are as following:

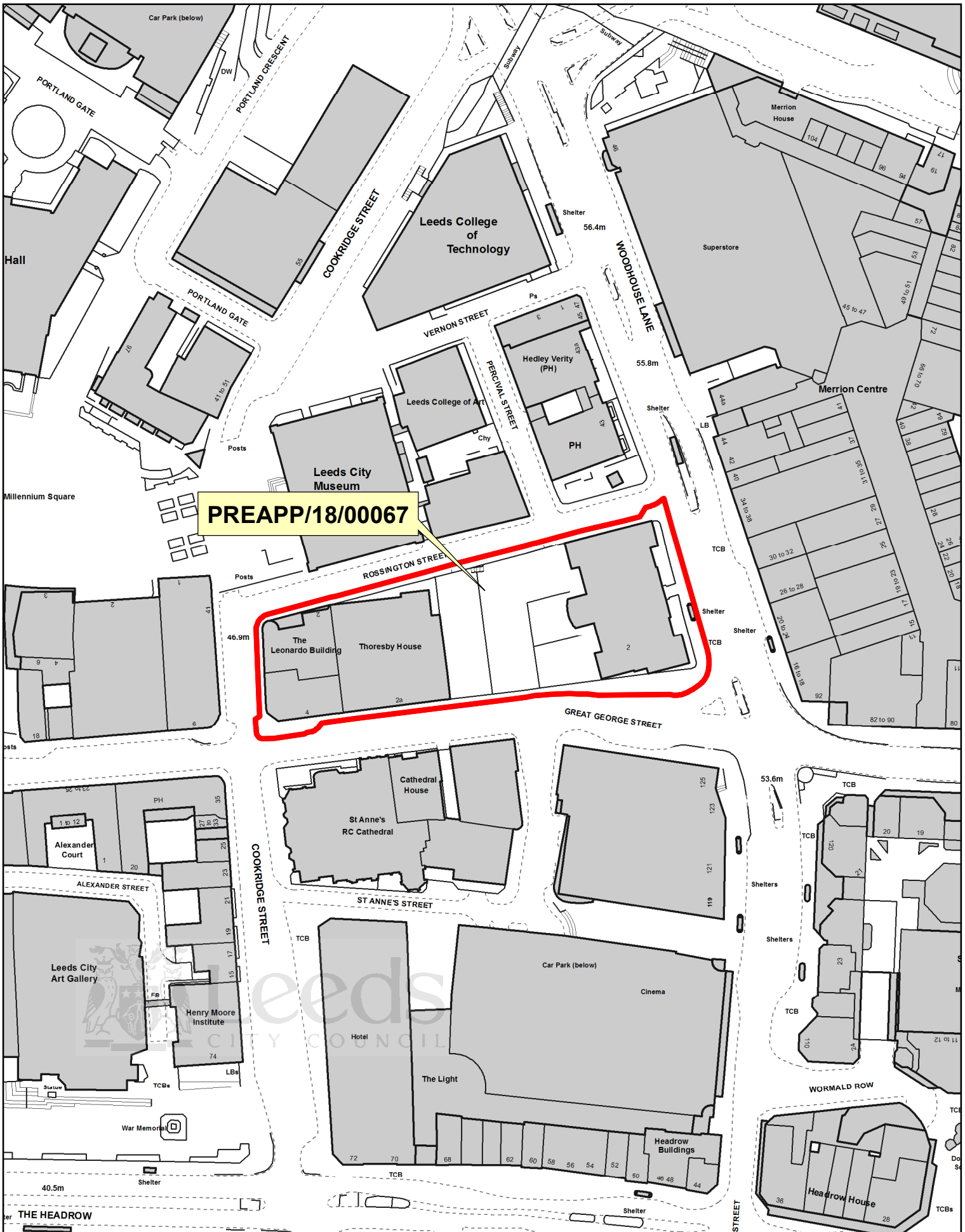
- 7.14 **Do Members support the progressing scale, massing and design of the proposals?**

**Background Papers:**  
PREAPP/18/00067









**PREAPP/18/00067**

# CITY PLANS PANEL

