



Report of the Chief Planning Officer

CITY PLANS PANEL

25th November 2021

Pre-application presentation of proposed mixed-use scheme comprising two student residential accommodation buildings and a multi-use event building on the site of Yorkshire Bank, Merrion Way and land fronting Clay Pit Lane, Leeds LS2 8NZ (PREAPP/20/00478)

Applicant – Downing Property Services / Leeds City Council

Electoral Wards Affected:

Little London and Woodhouse

Yes

Ward Members consulted

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 proposed development to allow Members to consider and comment on the proposals at this stage.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The development of two parcels of land to the front of the arena has been a long-held aspiration of the Council since the land assembly to bring forward the arena. More recently, the Yorkshire Bank offices at the junction of Merrion Way and Clay Pit Lane and bordering the southern arena parcel has been acquired by Downing Property Services with a view to redeveloping the site for student housing. The relationship between the parcels of land has created the opportunity for a land exchange between the Council and Downing that would facilitate development of each of these areas, the details of which were agreed at Executive Board on 16th December 2020.

1.2 Members will recall the presentation of emerging proposals for the redevelopment of Yorkshire Bank offices and the parcels of land to the west of the arena to City Plans Panel on 2nd September 2021. Two student accommodation buildings would be developed by Downing and a multi-use event building would be brought forward at a

later date by the Council. A copy of the report is attached at Appendix 1 and a copy of the minutes is attached at Appendix 2.

- 1.3 Following the Panel meeting of 2nd September 2021 Downing reviewed and revised the proposals in light of Member's comments. Additional information in respect of the relationship between the proposed northern tower (Block A) and the arena; and revised proposals for the southern student building (Block B) and the multi-use event building, were discussed at a workshop attended by some members of City Plans Panel on 15th October 2021. Since that time the proposals have been refined further.

2.0 Revised proposals

- 2.1 Block A is retained as previously proposed, a 38 storey building comprising 720 student bedspaces with external surfaces finished in planar facets of clear glazing and polished anodised aluminium panels. Whereas some views of the arena from the north-west would be lost, uninterrupted lines of sight from the west side of Clay Pit Lane, aligned with the central axis of the arena, were established as early parameters to be preserved. The southern edges of the new building would not intrude into this cone of view but would help to frame the piazza space and reinforce views of the arena frontage. Due to its proportions the building would appear as a counterpoint to the large, but much lower arena building. The crystalline, planar form, utilising high levels of reflectivity in the external façade would catch light, create movement and reinforce its relationship with the arena. Further, whilst views of the arena when approaching from the north are limited due to the topography and alignment of Clay Pit Lane and the presence of Lloyds Bank offices, Block A would visually strengthen the northern gateway into the City Centre as views open up from that direction. From Queen Square Block A would appear as a point element, emerging behind, and stepping up in scale from lower buildings in the foreground such as the new events' venue and Hepworth Point whilst, from the south, looking up Brunswick Terrace, the tower would appear as a dramatic counterpoint and waymarker to the side of the arena.

2.1.1 Do Members support the proposed scale, position and form of Block A?

- 2.2 Block B was previously described as 'U shaped', with limbs fronting Clay Pit Lane, Merrion Way and Brunswick Terrace. The revised proposals remove the previously proposed limb facing Clay Pit Lane, a reduction in the length of the Merrion Way elevation, fragmentation of the limb fronting Brunswick Terrace and reconfiguring this part of its mass to form a part 20, part 16 storey element. As a consequence of these changes the number of student bedspaces in this building would reduce from 543 to 490. Further, the reduction in the floorplate enables the existing trees in the planter at the junction of Merrion Way and Clay Pit Lane to be retained.

- 2.3 The final key change to Block B relates to materiality. It was previously intended that the smaller, now deleted, element facing Queen Square would be clad in brown brick and the larger volumes in white terracotta. It is now intended to use large panels of terracotta to form the principal grid of each of the elements of Block B. To respond to the context there would be a tonal change in colour through the separate elements of Block B. As such, the western component would utilise a brown terracotta in response to the tones of Queen Square and Merrion House; the eastern components would utilise off-white terracotta whilst the central element would use a colour to transition between the two.

2.3.1 Do Members support the revised scale, position and appearance of Block B?

- 2.4 Whereas the multi-use building requires set, minimum, dimensions to enable its use for a variety of functions, its footprint has been modified. A projection towards Brunswick Terrace has been deleted such that the building would have a continuous, flush, eastern elevation on the same alignment as the northern element of Block B. This would reinforce the north-south route between the Merrion Centre and the arena whilst allowing the retention of the northern two trees which follow and help to define this route. The south-west end of the building would be extruded to form an acute south-west corner. The upper masses of the building would be stepped towards the north-east corner such that their impact upon Queen Square would be reduced. As the multi-use building would be brought forward at a later date, in common with the approach taken in developing the arena, this part of the application would be in outline with parameters for the building scale agreed, supported by a design code document establishing key principles of design and appearance.
- 2.5 The reconfigured footplates of Block B and the multi-use building would enable a clear line of sight into the intervening space that would be soft landscaped for use by students in Block B. All other soft landscaping proposals, other than those mentioned above, are consistent with those outlined in the 2nd September 2021 report. The developer has re-examined the potential for introducing additional tree planting and soft landscaping into the arena piazza but for a combination of interlinked reasons primarily relating to crime prevention, pedestrian movement and lighting, unfortunately there is no scope for such planting in this area.

2.5.1 **Do Members support the revised footprint of the multi-use building and the approach to landscaping?**

2.6 Conclusion

- 2.6.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the original and supplementary report and the developer's presentation, and are invited to provide feedback, in particular, on the issues outlined below:

Do Members support the proposed scale, position and form of Block A?

Do Members support the revised scale, position and appearance of Block B?

Do Members support the revised footprint of the multi-use building and the approach to landscaping?



Originator: Tim Hart

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Report of the Chief Planning Officer

CITY PLANS PANEL

2nd September 2021

Pre-application presentation of proposed mixed use scheme comprising two student residential accommodation buildings and a multi-use event building on the site of Yorkshire Bank, Merrion Way and land fronting Clay Pit Lane, Leeds LS2 8NZ (PREAPP/20/00478)

Applicant – Downing Property Services / Leeds City Council

Electoral Wards Affected:

Little London and Woodhouse

Yes Ward Members consulted

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 proposed development 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 redevelopment of Yorkshire Bank offices at 20 Merrion Way and two parcels of land to the north situated between Clay Pit Lane and Leeds Arena. The development would involve the demolition of the existing office building and the construction of a multi-storey student residential accommodation development fronting Clay Pit Lane, Merrion Way and Brunswick Terrace; a second student accommodation building located between Clay Pit Lane and Elmwood Close (the road running directly north of Leeds Arena); and a multi-use event building abutting Clay Pit Lane to the west of Leeds Arena.

- 1.2 The two student accommodation buildings would be developed by Downing, the developers of student accommodation at Broadcasting Tower and Cityside in the city, together with the new Creative Arts building on Portland Way for Leeds Beckett University. The multi-use event building is likely to be brought forward at a later date by Leeds City Council. As a result, following the conclusion of the pre-application process, it is intended to submit a hybrid planning application seeking detailed planning permission for the student buildings and outline permission for the multi-use event building.

2.0 Site and surroundings

- 2.1 The existing Yorkshire Bank office building is located at the junction of Clay Pit Lane and Merrion Way. The building, designed by Abbey Hanson Rowe in 1984, is faced in brown Finnish granite and steps up in large storey heights from north (single storey) to south (4 storey). Originally designed to include the bank's cash centre and internal manoeuvring facilities for vehicles, other than the more recent southern corner, the ground floor predominantly presents a largely blank façade at pedestrian level. A line of street trees flank the southern and eastern elevations, with trees in a planter situated at the junction of Merrion Way and Clay Pit Lane.
- 2.2 A footway runs along the northern edge of the Yorkshire Bank building linking Clay Pit Lane and Brunswick Terrace. A raised landscape bund abuts the northern edge of this footway. The hard-surfaced piazza to the front of Leeds Arena (opened 2013) separates this bund from an area of soft landscaping and semi-mature trees fronting Clay Pit Lane to the west of Leeds Arena. Elmwood Close terminates in a turning circle between these two areas. The Inner Ring Road is situated in a cutting immediately north of Elmwood Close.
- 2.3 Queen Square Conservation Area is located on the west side of Clay Pit Lane to the west of Yorkshire Bank. The square incorporates a range of two and three storey buildings, many of which are Grade II listed buildings, constructed around an area of public open space. The eastern side of the square was never completed and is marked by a stone boundary wall which flanks Clay Pit Lane.
- 2.4 The scale of buildings to the north of Queen Square on the west side of Clay Pit Lane rises noticeably beyond Providence Place, a narrow street running on the north side of Queen Square properties. The three-storey building (previously known as Hepworth House) currently occupied by Capita faces much of the arena piazza with a pedestrian crossing across Clay Pit Lane linking the two. The Premier Inn is located in a 10-storey building (previously known as Hepworth Point) dating from the 1960's. Sky Plaza, a 37-storey student accommodation building, the most northerly building on this frontage, is situated on a high point at the south-west corner of the junction of Clay Pit Lane with the Inner Ring Road.
- 2.5 To the north of the Inner Ring Road, the areas of Little London and Lovell Park contain significant areas of housing including accommodation ranging from single storey and low-density buildings to 17 storey tower blocks. The Lloyds Bank Lovell Park offices flank the northern side of the Inner Ring Road opposite the Leeds Arena.
- 2.6 Merrion Way contains a number of large-scale buildings which have been the subject of redevelopment and refurbishment during recent years. On the north side, to the east of Brunswick Terrace, Unite Students' White Rose View development comprises 17 storey and 27 storey buildings opened in September 2020. Arena Point is a 20 storey office building for which planning permission has recently been granted for its redevelopment as purpose built student accommodation (PBSA). Altus House, a 37-

storey PBSA building, has recently been completed on the former site of Hume House. The Merrion Centre on the southern side of Merrion Way contains a wide mix of uses including a multi-storey car park. Merrion House, at the west end of Merrion Way to the south of Yorkshire Bank, was refurbished and extended in 2016-17. A strip of greenspace towards the centre of the street helps to soften the character of the street.

- 2.7 Leeds City Centre Conservation Area is located to the south and west of the Merrion Centre whilst the Grand Quarter Conservation Area is located to the south-east of the Merrion Centre.

3.0 Proposals

- 3.1 Two PBSA buildings are proposed. The first phase of the development would be located on land to the north-west of the arena currently occupied by a linear area of tree planting and grass. The building, Block A, would have a singular, symmetrical form comprising 11 angled facets. The building would rise to 38 storeys and contain 728 student bedrooms in a mix of 6-bedroom clusters (59%) and 296 studios (41%). The building would be serviced from Elmwood Close with the principal entrance point on Clay Pit Lane.
- 3.2 The external faces of Block A would be planar, faced in polished anodised aluminium with flush panels of clear glazing and ventilation panels. Typical samples of the intended materials are to be made available for Members to view at the Panel meeting. The lowest levels of the building would be inset from the plane of the mass above which would have a full-height crease midway along the Clay Pit Lane frontage. The roofline would dip in the centre along the crease to accentuate the wings.
- 3.3 Trees to the south of Block A would be retained and supplemented as part of a new, permeable and accessible, area of soft and hard landscaping on the northern side of the arena piazza.
- 3.4 The existing Yorkshire Bank office building would be demolished and the adjacent landscape bund to the north would be cleared. The second PBSA building, Block B, would comprise the second phase of development. The building would be U-shaped, rising incrementally from the western 3 storey limb adjacent to Clay Pit Lane, to 7, 12 and 18 storeys along Merrion Way. The building would return along Brunswick Terrace towards the arena, parallel to and the same height (52m) as the western White Rose View building.
- 3.5 Block B would contain 543 student bedrooms, in a mix of 5 and 6-bedroom clusters (60%) and 216 studios (40%). The external grid of the majority of this building is likely to utilise a white masonry finish, projecting forward and framing the secondary layer of glazing and panelling behind. The central, 12-storey, element would sit a little further back and is likely to employ tighter grid than neighbouring elements. The lowest limb of the building, facing Clay Pit Lane, is likely to utilise a similar expressed grid but finished in brickwork in response to its relationship with Queen Square.
- 3.6 Immediately north of Block B a secure and private external courtyard would provide amenity space for the occupiers of the building. The building would be serviced from Brunswick Terrace with drop off and deliveries taking place from a new layby located on Merrion Way in a similar location to the vehicular access to the existing bank.
- 3.7 The multi-purpose event building, located to the north of Block B, would be the third and final phase of construction. The longest elevation of the building would run 68.4m along the Clay Pit Lane frontage, aligned with the western limb of Block B. The

northern corner of the building would be a minimum distance of 56.9m from Block A. The building would return at a right angle 36m towards the arena fronting the main arena piazza. The principal eastern elevation would largely align with the eastern limb of Block B along Brunswick Terrace. Above the three/four-storey base, the upper levels of the building would step back and away from Clay Pit Lane and Block B, terminating with a much-reduced floorplate at level 04.

- 3.8 Public access to the building would be taken from the arena piazza and potentially points fronting Clay Pit Lane. Access for servicing is proposed from Brunswick Terrace into dedicated service areas at ground floor of the building with unloading onto the event space floor.
- 3.9 The multi-purpose events space would have a total floor area of approximately 9,900sqm incorporating a main exhibition area of approximately 3,000sqm; a conference space of circa 1,700sqm; an 800-900 capacity auditorium; pre-function circulation space and bar areas; and supporting ancillary spaces. The venue is anticipated to host corporate banqueting, awards ceremonies, live entertainment, conferences and exhibitions, together with gigs and shows which require a more intimate space than is offered by the First Direct Arena, but larger capacities than existing venues in Leeds. It is estimated that it would be likely to attract between 100,000-150,000 attendees a year when fully operational.

4.0 Relevant planning history

- 4.1 The existing Yorkshire Bank office building was constructed following the grant of outline planning permission in 1976 (76/20/00178) and reserved matters approval in 1977 (77/20/00084).
- 4.2 Leeds Arena and surrounding areas of hard and soft landscaping was constructed between 2009-2013 (09/04815/OT approved 26.3.10; 10/04022/RM approved 24.11.10; 11/01060/RM approved 19.4.11; and 11/01311/RM approved 15.2.13).
- 4.3 Hepworth Point fronting Clay Pit Lane, last used as university buildings, was converted to form the Premier Inn (11/01048/FU approved 4.7.11).
- 4.4 Planning permission for several tall buildings in the area containing PBSA has been granted during recent years:
- Symons House, Belgrave Street - part 9, part 23 storey (17/06605/FU approved 22.12.17)
 - St Alban's Place, Belgrave Street – part 7, part 11, part 18 storey (16/07741/FU approved 21.4.17)
 - Hume (Altus) House, Wade Lane - 37 storeys (18/01819/FU approved 7.8.18).
 - Vita 2, Woodhouse Lane and Portland Crescent - part 6 / part 16 storey student accommodation building with ground floor commercial unit (18/01711/FU approved 17.9.18)
 - White Rose View, Merrion Way - one 17 and one 27 storey building (18/05738/FU approved 10.1.19)
 - Arena Point – part 39, part 44 storey (20/08033/FU approved 2.7.21)

5.0 Consultation responses

- 5.1 LCC Highways – There is no parking proposed with the development, which is acceptable given the location of the site. A Transport Statement, Servicing and Management Plan and Travel Plan will be required.

The Council are constructing a cycle track on both sides of the full length of Clay Pit Lane, the development proposals must not rely on Clay Pit Lane for any operational activities that would interfere with the safe and free use of this facility.

All servicing to be undertaken from Brunswick Terrace including for the student block B and conference centre would need to be undertaken during the city centre management operation hours when the retractable bollards would be lowered. It should be noted that this section of road is a Pedestrian and Cycle zone with all vehicles restricted at all times except for access to off street premises. Any access to the area outside the operation hours needs approval. The developer would need to notify Leeds Watch and obtain approval.

There is concern with the swept path analysis presented as it is tight and in addition there is a proposal to relocate the Hostile Vehicle Mitigation (HVM) bollards belonging to the Arena to enable a 16.5m articulated turning manoeuvres at Brunswick Terrace and the access in to the site. It should be noted the HVM bollards cannot be relocated. It needs to be demonstrated the space available can accommodate the safe manoeuvres of all vehicles likely to visit the site. Whilst it can be anticipated that site management during operation can indicate which size vehicles can visit the site, enforcement of this sometimes is difficult and therefore the layout design should accommodate the turning manoeuvres supplemented with adopted highway. Vehicles must not stop and block the highway both at Brunswick Terrace and Merrion Way.

Materials for the highway works should match those for the completed works adjacent to the site. The Council has ambitious plans to improve Merrion Way as a public space. Considerable funding has been gained from other developments towards this project which will begin to emerge with the completion of these developments, so it will be an expectation that this development will provide an additional financial contributions and improvements within the site.

The Structures Team comment that for Block A we would be interested in the details of the foundation layout and basement layout in relation to the south abutment of the bridge and the nearby Inner Ring Road Retaining wall in order to understand if there would be any impact on them that may require further consultation or technical approval. There are no weight restrictions on Clay Pit Lane bridge but the West Yorkshire Abnormal Loads Officer should be consulted to determine if there are any abnormal load route restrictions. We would seek to limit any temporary or permanent surcharge loading within 5m of bridge and retaining wall on Elmwood Close. It would be useful to understand the likely vehicle routes for deliveries as Oatland Lane bridge on Lovell Park Road will be weight restricted. For all of the blocks, if they are to have basement walls which provide support to the adjacent adopted highway, those basement walls would need technical approval.

- 5.2 LCC Flood Risk Management (FRM) – the site is located within Flood Risk Zone 1 and therefore at low risk of fluvial flooding. The site is also located in a low flood risk area from surface water runoff and sewer flooding. No previous flooding incidents of any sources have been recorded on the site. Records show that the risk of groundwater flooding is also negligible. However, considering the nature and scale of the proposed development, a Surface Water Drainage Strategy proposal incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), as a standalone document, will need to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority (LPA). The drainage of the

development should be based on the general guidance as set out within the Leeds City Council - Minimum Development Control Standards in relation to Flood Risk.

- 5.3 LCC Influencing Travel Behaviour - A full Travel Plan will be required at application stage, in accordance with the Travel Plans SPD. For assistance with the conference venue, recommend looking at the Leeds First Direct Arena Travel Plan. It will be important to influence travel to events at the conference facility through the booking / ticketing process. Students will also need to receive information on their sustainable travel options through the lettings information prior to occupation. Adequate cycle parking will be required for all site users.
- 5.4 LCC Contaminated Land Team - the proposed development includes uses that may be vulnerable to contamination. Therefore, the minimum of a Phase 1 Desk Study Report will be required in support of the application. Depending on the outcome of the Phase 1 Desk Study, a Phase 2 Report and Remediation Statement may also be required.
- 5.5 LCC Environmental Studies (Transport Strategy) – due to its proximity to major roads a noise assessment should be submitted with the full application to quantify environmental noise levels across the site to inform on the layout of dwellings and mitigation measures that may be required to ensure that occupants enjoy a good standard of residential amenity both inside and outside their dwellings. A noise report should include references to the ProPG Planning and Noise Guidance, BS8233:2014 and World Health Organisation Guidelines for Community Noise.
- 5.6 LCC Access – All shared areas and external area / approaches should be designed in line with BS8300-1:2018 to be inclusive as per Accessible Leeds SPD.
- 5.7 LCC Landscape - Green Infrastructure areas contribute greatly to the character of the space around the Arena. Much of these areas will be lost and a tree line will be under severe pressure as a result of demolition and a new building being in such close proximity. This will be another blow to the loss of trees in Leeds City Centre which is already one of the lowest in the UK. With these features come the green space, character and setting all of which go hand in hand and are interrelated.

Mitigation focuses on off-site tree planting but this must be evidenced as being feasible to implement, in particular the constraints posed by utilities. The National Design Guide re utilities states that utilities should not impede the planting of street trees.

- 5.8 LCC Nature Team - Although this is a city centre location there are several semi-natural green areas affected so an Ecological Impact Assessment should be submitted to specifically assess the delivery of Net Gain for Biodiversity as per Policy G9 and the NPPF para. 174 b - as there will not be any protected species issues this report could be called a Biodiversity Metric/Net Gain for Biodiversity report. The Defra Biodiversity Metric Version 2.0 should be used to assess the baseline value in Biodiversity Units and post-development value in Biodiversity Units. There will need to be demonstration of a net gain for biodiversity. The main types of habitat affected will be trees that can be calculated using the street tree calculator for canopy spread converted to woodland, and grassland/shrub beds. The EclA will need to include clear, scaled maps of locations where Baseline and Post-development Biodiversity Unit locations occur, together with full Metric calculations.
- 5.9 LCC Environmental Health – the scheme is located in a city centre location, on each side of the development there is the potential for noise to be a nuisance for future residents. Noise and dust during development of the site may have a negative impact

on residents on the west side of Clay Pit Lane. A noise impact assessment should be carried out in order to ensure that future residents are protected from any noise. It is also important to protect other nearby residents from noise during and after construction. It is important to meet the noise and vibration criteria to ensure a good standard of amenity. The design should minimise the need for fixed glazing. Any mitigation measures that require windows to be kept closed to meet internal noise level targets must include a ventilation strategy which provides for the control of room comfort during warm summer months.

- 5.10 LCC Conservation – The proposed development affects the setting of several listed buildings which comprise Queen Square which collectively and separately has been designated as a conservation area. The existing Yorkshire Bank Building is also considered to have sufficient significance to be considered as a non-designated heritage asset. Built in 1984 as the headquarters of the Yorkshire Bank to the designs of Abbey Hanson Rowe, it is clad in polished granite, embodying the traditional image of a bank (solidity and respectability) in a stripped back and streamlined classical style. Its distinctive serrated edge to Clay Pit Lane was an innovative way of bringing light into a deep plan as well as reducing its apparent mass to the Georgian Square and a dynamic sculptural form to the car borne traffic along Clay Pit Lane. It symbolises Leeds’ regional commercial pre-eminence along with other headquarters such as the regional outpost of the Bank of England.

The proposed development has two distinct parts: a single tall building (A) at the junction of Clay Pit Lane and the Inner Ring Road an additive group of buildings (B) which wraps around the corner of Clay Pit Lane and Merrion Way and effectively forms the eastern side of the Queen Square. The tall tower is sufficiently distant from listed buildings of Queen Square and the conservation area not to harm their settings: it may be considered to be beneficial in some views as a striking vertical counterpoint to the horizontal figure of the square. Block B will replace the existing Yorkshire Bank and will effectively form the fourth side of Queen Square, its massing stepping down to a “domestic” scale comparable to the adjacent Georgian houses as it fronts Clay Pit Lane and then stepping back up as it turns the corner to Merrion Way and addresses the cluster of student residential towers to the east. Compared to the existing condition, the proposal will have a better relationship to the listed buildings and conservation area in terms of its scale and massing presenting a combination of smaller variegated parts rather than a sculpted monolith.

These comments should be considered as provisional pending further development of the scheme and further information such as a heritage statement which includes an assessment of the Yorkshire Bank and “before and after” CGIs from key views.

6.0 Policy

6.1 Development Plan

- 6.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the application to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For the purposes of decision making for this proposal within the City Centre boundary, the Development Plan for Leeds currently comprises the following documents:

- The Leeds Core Strategy 2014 (as amended by the Core Strategy Selective Review 2019)
- Saved UDP Policies (2006), included as Appendix 1 of the Core Strategy

- The Natural Resources & Waste Local Plan (NRWLP, Adopted January 2013) including revised policies Minerals 13 and 14 (Adopted September 2015)
- Site Allocations Plan (Adopted July 2019)

6.2 Leeds Core Strategy (CS)

6.2.1 The Core Strategy sets out the strategic level policies and vision to guide the delivery of development and the overall future of the district. Relevant Core Strategy policies include:

- Spatial Policy 1 prioritises the redevelopment of previously developed land in a way that respects and enhances the local character and identity of places and neighbourhoods. (iv) Prioritises new office, retail, service, leisure and cultural facilities in Leeds City Centre.
- Spatial Policy 3 seeks to maintain and enhance the role of the City Centre as an economic driver for the District and City Region by (i) promoting the City Centre's role as the regional capital for major new retail, leisure, hotel, culture and office development.
- Spatial Policy 8 supports a competitive local economy through (ii) enterprise and innovation in...housing, leisure and tourism; and (vii) developing the City Centre as the core location for new retail, office and other town centre uses.
- Spatial Policy 11 includes a priority related to improved facilities for pedestrians to promote safety and accessibility and provision for people with impaired mobility.
- Policy CC1 outlines the planned growth within the City Centre. Part B encourages residential development, providing that it does not prejudice town centre functions and provides a reasonable level of amenity for occupiers. Part G supports town centre uses within the City Centre boundary.
- Policy CC3 states new development will need to provide and improve walking and cycling routes connecting the City Centre with adjoining neighbourhoods and improve connections within the City Centre.
- Policy H6B refers to proposals for purpose-built student accommodation. Development will be controlled to take the pressure off the need to use private housing; to avoid the loss of existing housing suitable for families; to avoid excessive concentrations of student accommodation; to avoid locations that would lead to detrimental impacts on residential amenity; and to provide satisfactory living accommodation for the students.
- Paragraph 5.2.46 of the supporting text to policy H9 states that "Provision of reasonable space standards is still important for student accommodation, and this will need to be judged on a case by case basis, and via the application of any national standards that might be created in the future".
- Policy EC3 safeguards existing employment land, stating that the loss of an existing Class B use in an area of employment shortfall will only be permitted where the loss of the premises can be offset sufficiently by the availability of existing general employment land and premises in the surrounding area.
- Policy P2 states intensive leisure and cultural uses including theatres, museums, concert halls, cinemas, leisure centres, gyms and hotels are acceptable in principle in town centres.
- 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 that development protects and enhance the district's historic assets in particular, historically and locally important buildings, skylines and views.
- Policy P11 states that the historic environment and its settings will be conserved, particularly those elements which help to give Leeds its distinct identity.

- Policy P12 states that landscapes, including their historical and cultural significance, will be conserved and enhanced.
- Policies T1 and T2 identify transport management and accessibility requirements to ensure new development is adequately served by highways and public transport, and with safe and secure access for pedestrians, cyclists and people with impaired mobility.
- Policy G5 seeks open space provision in the City Centre.
- Policy G6 protects existing open space and pedestrian corridors in the City Centre.
- Policy G9 states that development will need to demonstrate biodiversity improvements.
- Policies EN1 and EN2 set targets for CO² reduction and sustainable design and construction, and at least 10% low or zero carbon energy production on-site.
- Policy EN4 states that where technically viable major developments should connect to district heating networks.
- Policy EN5 identifies requirements to manage flood risk.
- Policy ID2 outlines the Council's approach to planning obligations and developer contributions.

6.3 **Saved Unitary Development Plan Review policies (UDPR)**

6.3.1 Relevant Saved Policies include:

- Policy GP5 states that all relevant planning considerations are to be resolved.
- Policy BD2 requires that new buildings complement and enhance existing skylines, vistas and landmarks.
- Policy BD4 relates to provision for all mechanical plant on and servicing of new developments.
- Policy BD5 requires new buildings to consider both amenity for their own occupants and that of their surroundings including usable space, privacy and satisfactory daylight and sunlight.
- Policy LD1 sets out criteria for landscape schemes.
- Policy N19 requires new buildings adjacent to conservation areas to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the relevant areas.
- Policy LT5 states that the city council, in partnership with public and private agencies, will pursue actively opportunities for the development of purpose-built facilities for exhibitions, concerts and conferences. In order to ensure that any such facility does not unacceptably affect the vitality and viability of Harrogate, Paragraph 10.3.7 states: Any proposals should be assessed in terms of their impact on the viability and vitality of Harrogate Town Centre as a whole.

6.4 **Natural Resources & Waste Local Plan (NRWLP)**

6.4.1 The NRWLP sets out where land is needed to enable the City to manage resources, like trees, minerals, waste and water and identifies specific actions which will help use the natural resources in a more efficient way.

6.4.2 Relevant policies include:

- Air 1 states that all applications for major development will be required to incorporate low emission measures to ensure that the overall impact of proposals on air quality is mitigated.
- Water 1 requires water efficiency, including incorporation of sustainable drainage
- Water 4 requires the consideration of flood risk issues
- Water 6 requires flood risk assessments.

- Water 7 requires development not to increase surface water run-off and to introduce SUDS where feasible.
- Land 1 requires consideration of land contamination issues.
- Land 2 requires that development conserves trees where possible.

6.5 **Site Allocations Plan (SAP)**

The site is not specifically identified in the SAP. However, land around the periphery of the Yorkshire Bank building is identified as Green Space.

Other material considerations

6.6 **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

- 6.6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) replaces previous planning policy guidance and statements in outlining the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. One of the key principles at the heart of the NPPF and identified in Paragraph 11 is a presumption in favour of Sustainable Development. Relevant paragraphs of the NPPF are as outlined below.
- 6.6.2 Chapter 5 identifies guidance for the delivery of a sufficient supply of homes including at paragraph 62, accommodation for students.
- 6.6.3 Chapter 6 references the benefits of a strong, competitive economy. Paragraph 81 states that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth.
- 6.6.4 Chapter 7 relates to measures to ensure the vitality of town centres to promote their long-term vitality and viability allowing them to grow and diversify, allowing a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflecting their distinctive characters.
- 6.6.5 Chapter 8 promotes healthy and safe communities aiming to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places. Decisions should promote public safety and take into account wider security requirements (paragraph 97).
- 6.6.6 Access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change (paragraph 98).
- 6.6.7 Chapter 9 identifies measures to promote sustainable transport. Paragraph 112 states that priority should be given to pedestrian and cycle movements; the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility addressed; creation of safe, secure and attractive spaces; allow for the efficient delivery of goods; and be designed to enable use by sustainable vehicles.
- 6.6.8 Chapter 11 states that decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.
- 6.6.9 Chapter 12 identifies the importance of well-designed places and the need for a consistent and high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places. Paragraph 126 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. Paragraph 130 states that planning decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Paragraph 131 recognises that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change.

- 6.6.10 Chapter 14 identifies the approach to meeting the climate change challenge. New development should avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change and should be planned so as to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design (paragraph 154).
- 6.6.11 Chapter 15 identifies guidelines for conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Paragraph 174 states that new and existing development should not be put at unacceptable risk or be adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions.
- 6.6.12 Chapter 16 refers to the historic environment. Paragraph 197 states that local planning authorities should take account of:
 - a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
 - c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 199 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).” Paragraph 202 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.”

Paragraph 203 says that “The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset”.

6.7 Supplementary planning guidance

- Accessible Leeds SPD
- Travel Plans SPD
- Tall Buildings SPD
- Building for Tomorrow Today: Sustainable Design and Construction SPD
- Neighbourhoods for Living SPG
- Parking SPD
- City Centre Urban Design Strategy SPD
- Transport SPD (draft)
- Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) and Co-Living Amenity Standards SPD (draft)

7.0 Issues

Members are asked to comment on the proposals and to consider the following matters:

7.1 Principle of the development

- 7.1.1 The existing Yorkshire Bank building comprises B1 office space. Core Strategy Policy EC3 seeks to retain such a use unless (i) the proposal will not result in the loss of a deliverable employment site; or (ii) existing buildings are considered to be non-viable in terms of market attractiveness, business operations, age, condition and/or compatibility with adjacent uses; or (iii) the proposal will deliver a mixed-use development which continues to provide a range of local employment opportunities and would not undermine the viability of the remaining site. In this case, the Yorkshire Bank is reorganising its banking operations and the property is surplus to its requirements. The site is not in an area of the city with a shortfall of employment land whilst the purpose-built building is considered to be non-viable in terms of market attractiveness and business operations such that part (ii) of the policy would apply. Further, the proposed mix of uses on the wider site are likely to provide for a range of local employment opportunities such that EC3 would be satisfied.
- 7.1.2 As part of the land assembly for development of the arena (09/04815/OT), two parcels of land fronting onto Clay Pit Lane were identified as potential development plots which, when developed, could frame the space and provide opportunities to introduce uses to help activate the arena piazza during times when the arena was not in use. However, as the sites were needed as part of the working space and operational area during construction of the arena, these areas could not be developed simultaneously. Accordingly, these areas were designed to serve a number of visual and security functions on a temporary basis and, over time, have taken on a more permanent appearance as part of the setting to the arena. However, they have no formal status or protection.
- 7.1.3 With regard to the proposed purpose built student accommodation (PBSA) CS Policy CC1(b) encourages residential development in City Centre locations providing that the development does not prejudice the functions of the City Centre and that it provides a

reasonable level of amenity for occupiers. Such a use would also support the Best City Priorities of Housing.

7.1.4 Policy H6B relates specifically to the provision of student housing. It has been established that there are approximately 38,000 university students in the city presently without access to purpose-built student accommodation suggesting that additional provision of such accommodation is unlikely to result in an over-supply of purpose-built student accommodation in the near future. CS paragraph 5.2.26 states that growth in new PBSA is to be welcomed in order to meet need and to deflect pressure away from private rented houses in areas of over-concentration.

7.1.5 Information provided with a recent planning application showed that in 2020 there were 66,687 students in full-time higher education studying at the city's universities. At the same point in time there were 21,869 bedspaces in purpose-built student accommodation (1 bedspace for every 3 students) in the city. If the schemes in the pipeline (5,848 additional bedspaces) were constructed 4 in 10 students would have access to bedspaces in purpose-built student accommodation. Given much higher provision in other cities this suggests that, notwithstanding the impact of Covid which has seen a large increase in student applications for 2021-2022 intake, the additional provision of purpose-built student accommodation is unlikely to result in an over-supply of in the near future.

7.1.6 The proposal is considered against the criteria set out below within the adopted policy H6B (identified in italics):

(i) *To help extend the supply of student accommodation taking pressure off the need for private housing to be used.*

The provision of approximately 1271 student bedspaces would help to reduce the need to use private housing for student accommodation.

(ii) *To avoid the loss of existing housing suitable for family accommodation.*

The existing building on the site remains in use as office accommodation and two of the three new buildings would be used for the provision of PBSA. The development would therefore not involve any loss of existing housing and would avoid the loss of residential family accommodation.

(iv) *To avoid locations which are not easily accessible to the universities.*

The site is within the City Centre and is well-placed with regard to access to Leeds Beckett University, the Leeds University of Arts and the University of Leeds across Clay Pit Lane and Woodhouse Lane. Ongoing improvements to Merrion Way brought forward by other developers of student accommodation in the area will help to improve accessibility to the universities further and would accord with Core Strategy policies SP11, CC3 and T2.

Criteria (iii) and (v) of policy H6B are considered in the amenity section, at paragraph 7.2 below.

7.1.7 The provision of a multi-purpose events' space, able to accommodate conferencing facilities, has been a long-term aspiration of the Council. Indeed, saved UDPR Policy LT5 states that the City Council, in partnership with public and private agencies, will actively pursue opportunities for the development of purpose built facilities for exhibitions, concerts and conferences although noting that any such proposals should

be assessed in terms of their impact on the viability and vitality of Harrogate Town Centre which, historically, has been heavily-reliant on such activity. Core Strategy policies SP1, SP3, SP8, CC1 and P2 all support the provision of town centre and cultural uses, such as the events' space, in the City Centre as part of the promotion of the City Centre as the regional capital. Such development would contribute to the Best City Priorities of Culture and Inclusive Growth by enhancing the image of Leeds through the hosting of major events and attractions, as well as supporting growth and investment into the city.

7.1.8 Do Members consider that the loss of office accommodation and proposed use of the sites for a multi-use events' building and student accommodation is acceptable in principle?

7.2 Amenity considerations

7.2.1 Criteria (iii) of Core Strategy policy H6B aims *to avoid excessive concentrations of student accommodation which would undermine the balance and wellbeing of communities.*

7.2.2 As intended, the development of the arena has been a catalyst for substantial investment in the area. Therefore, what was for many years an office-focused area, around the mixed-use Merrion Centre, is presently undergoing a rapid change comprising a mix of private rental apartments and purpose-built student accommodation, alongside the introduction of leisure uses. Such changes include the redevelopment of Merrion House; refurbishment of the northern side of the Merrion Centre and the associated introduction of leisure uses along Merrion Way; as well as significant numbers of private rental and purpose-built student apartments. The resulting Arena Quarter, despite the recent concentration of student accommodation, is a mixed-use area supplementing the mix of uses in the Merrion Centre on the northern fringe of the City Centre.

7.2.3 It is not considered that existing local residents would be adversely affected by student accommodation in the proposed location given the area's use, levels of student accommodation already present in the area, and the manner in which purpose-built student accommodation is managed. Similarly, it is not considered that the number of students proposed would result in an excessive concentration of students that would undermine the wellbeing of the area within the context of a busy mixed use, City Centre environment. It is more likely that the students would help to support existing businesses within the City Centre. Further, the development's proximity to both the main university campuses is such that more established, residential communities around Little London and Lovell Park beyond the Inner Ring Road would not be adversely affected by the development.

7.2.4 Criteria (v) of policy H6B requires that *the proposed accommodation provides satisfactory internal living accommodation in terms of daylight, outlook and juxtaposition of living rooms and bedrooms.*

7.2.5 Although Policy H9 in the CS expressly excludes purpose built student accommodation from the space standard a footnote states that "Provision of reasonable space standards is still important for student accommodation, and this will need to be judged on a case by case basis, and via the application of any national standards that might be created in the future".

7.2.6 CS Policy P10 and Saved UDPR Policies BD5 and GP5 provide more general requirements that development should contribute positively towards quality of life and

provide a reasonable level of amenity and useable space. The assessment of amenity is also a wider consideration of qualitative factors including arrangement and separation of living functions (general living, sleeping, studying, eating, cooking, food preparation, storage and circulation), usable shape, daylighting, outlook, privacy and external amenity space. Members may also be aware of a draft SPD which includes minimum requirements for room sizes and supporting spaces although, due to its 'draft' status the SPD currently can only be afforded limited weight.

7.2.7 Officers and Members have visited several student housing schemes to review the level of amenity provided for occupiers. These include Fresh Student Living at Darley Bank in Derby (April 2014) where the studio was 22m²; Downing's Cityside, Calverley Street, Leeds (May 2016) where the student showflat was also 22m²; Vita Student's Telephone House, Sheffield (September 2016) where the average studio size was 20m²; and in March 2018 Unite's development at Angel Lane, Stratford where Members viewed a 10 bedroom cluster flat where the cluster bedrooms of 11m² were supported by 23m² kitchen/living spaces, together with other internal and external amenity space located around the building. Most recently, Members visited the Vita St Alban's Place development in October 2019. Members viewed the communal facilities located at the lower levels of the building and two student studios, the smallest of which had a floor area of 20m².

7.2.8 City Plans Panel has previously approved the following student accommodation developments in the wider area:

- Vita St Alban's Place, in which the smallest studios is 20m² (78% of the total provision), was granted April 2017 (16/07741/FU). In approving the scheme it was recognised that the size of the majority of the studios would be restricted, providing little or no opportunity for socialising. However, each studio was found to benefit from a good outlook, natural daylighting and a suitable noise environment.
- Symons House, Belgrave Street (17/06605/FU) where the smallest studio is 21.3m². 2 to 5 bedroom clusters in that development have 14m² bedrooms with kitchen/living spaces increasing in size from 21-43m².
- Hume (Altus) House, Wade Lane (18/01819/FU) comprises a mixture of studios (22m²) and 4, 5 and 6 bedroom clusters with 21-35m² kitchen/amenity space, the area depending upon the size of the cluster.
- Unite, Merrion Way (18/05738/FU) scheme comprises 4, 5 and 7 bedroom clusters with 23-40m² kitchen/amenity space, and 30m² studios.
- 44 Merrion Street (20/01965/FU) comprises 5 bedroom cluster flats, the smallest bedroom of which would be 12.8m² with a kitchen/diner (15.2m²) and have shared access with an adjacent cluster to a lounge (18.4m²); and studios the smallest of which would be 20m² albeit a range of sizes is proposed dependent upon location within the development.

In each of these purpose-built student schemes, the dedicated additional amenity spaces within the building were considered critical in providing overall acceptable levels of amenity for the occupiers of the development.

7.2.9 The format of the proposed student buildings in Block A and Block B is similar to the purpose-built student accommodation schemes referred to above. The smallest

studios would be 20m², each having a conventional layout with washing facilities closest to the door, a sleeping area in the centre and living facilities nearest to full height windows. The cluster bedrooms (minimum 13m²) would be arranged in a similar fashion. 5% of all bedrooms would be accessible bedrooms. 5 bedroom clusters would be supported by 25m² kitchen/dining rooms and 6 bedroom clusters would be supported by 30m² kitchen/dining rooms. These spaces would typically be located on the gable ends of the buildings providing dual aspects and improved daylighting and outlook.

- 7.2.10 Areas of dedicated amenity space for use by students would be provided primarily within the lower levels of the buildings. At the time of drafting this report the extent of dedicated internal amenity space for Block A (581sqm) was not considered sufficient to provide acceptable levels of amenity for the 728 bedrooms in the building. The level of provision within Block B, 920sqm for 543 bedrooms, is more reflective of other recent PBSA developments in the city and is considered acceptable.
- 7.2.11 Student bedrooms would be located throughout the upper floors of both Block A and Block B. The floorplan in Block A has been carefully arranged so as to avoid direct views towards the arena so as to mitigate the visual impact of the building, including from lighting displays. Consequently, those on the east side of the building would benefit from open views to the north across the Inner Ring Road or south across the arena piazza. The rooms facing west would look out across Clay Pit Lane and beyond.
- 7.2.12 The need for the multi-events venue to be a separate building to Block B introduces a number of potential constraints. However, the floorplan and building masses of the two have been manipulated such that the closest bedroom directly facing the events venue to the north would be at a distance of 12.8m. The stepped form of both buildings further mitigates the impact relationship of the structures to ensure that living conditions within bedrooms in terms of daylight, outlook and overlooking would be acceptable.
- 7.2.13 Due to the proximity of Block A and Block B to major roads, to the proposed multi-events venue and also the arena piazza a noise assessment will be needed to quantify environmental noise levels across the site to inform any mitigation measures (glazing/ventilation) that may be required to ensure that occupants enjoy a good standard of residential amenity inside the apartments.
- 7.2.14 **Subject to confirmation of detailed proposals do Members support the approach towards living conditions for the student accommodation?**

7.3 Townscape and heritage considerations

- 7.3.1 In accordance with paragraph 199 of the NPPF great weight should be given to the conservation of nearby heritage assets which include listed buildings and the Queen Square Conservation Area. Any new development must also provide good design that is appropriate to its location, scale and function (CS Policy P10). Part (i) of the policy states that the size, scale, design and layout should be appropriate to its context and that (Part ii) the development should protect and enhance skylines and views. These policies accord with guidance in the NPPF which requires that development establishes a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit; to respond to local character and history; and to reflect the identity of local surroundings.
- 7.3.2 Ground level views of the arena frontage are currently largely unrestricted across Clay Pit Lane from the west and north-west. However, as noted at 7.1.2 it has been

anticipated that development proposals would come forward on the “development plots” at some stage. At the same time, it is considered important to retain views of the front of the arena which has become an iconic symbol of the city since its construction. Accordingly, uninterrupted lines of sight from the west side of Clay Pit Lane, aligned with the central axis of the arena, were established as early parameters to be maintained. As a corollary, the edges of the new buildings either side of these constraints would help frame and reinforce views of the arena frontage.

- 7.3.3 Following on from earlier designation as a Prestige Development Area, the Tall Buildings SPD identified that there could be the opportunity for a cluster of tall buildings in the area to the north of the Merrion Centre and this possibility has been reflected most recently by the construction of White Rose View and Altus House. As a proposed 38 storey building, Block A responds to the opportunity afforded by the SPD, directly abutting the Inner Ring Road and acting in tandem with Sky Plaza building on the west side of Clay Pit Lane as a gateway into the City Centre from the north. At the same time, whilst reducing and removing some views of the arena from the north-west, due to its proportions the building would appear as a counterpoint to the large, but much lower arena building. The crystalline, planar form, utilising high levels of reflectivity in the external façade would catch light, create movement and reinforce its relationship with the arena.
- 7.3.4 From Queen Square, and from the setting of more distant heritage assets, Block A development would appear as a point element, emerging behind, and stepping up in scale from lower buildings in the foreground such as the new events’ venue and Hepworth Point. Despite its scale, given the distance and the presence of intervening buildings which lead the eye towards a high point, the building would not have an adverse impact upon the heritage assets within Queen Square or the conservation area itself. Further, when viewed from greater distances the building would complement the cluster of tall buildings in this part of the city. Given its scale and prominence, the quality of the architecture and materiality will be critical in ensuring that the building appears as a positive addition in the townscape
- 7.3.5 The north-eastern frontage and entrance to the events’ venue would form the south-western edge to the arena piazza. Two corners of this part of the building would extend a small way onto the existing hard-surfaced arena piazza whilst, conversely, an area which currently forms the northern extent of the landscaped bund would be removed and laid out as additional piazza space. As a consequence, the open, piazza space to the front of the arena, which would also be utilised by the events’ venue, would not reduce noticeably albeit there would be a greater sense of enclosure.
- 7.3.6 The existing Yorkshire Bank building is a positive feature that responds well in both its massing and materiality to Queen Square Conservation Area. Whilst not listed it would be expected that any replacement building should be of at least an equivalent quality so as to maintain the positive relationship with Queen Square.
- 7.3.7 It is intended that the detailed design of the events’ venue is brought forward at a later stage as part of the hybrid planning application process. However, the massing of the building that has been developed responds acceptably to the character and appearance of the adjacent conservation area whilst helping to form a fourth edge to the square. The development of Block B has also been cognisant of the important relationship with Queen Square. The lowest element of the building, just three storeys, would be equivalent in height to existing buildings on the eastern edge of the square. Further, this part of Block B would be faced in brickwork in response to the materiality of the square. It is intended to utilise brown, wheaty, tones to help mediate between the redder brick tones of brickwork in Queen Square and the lighter materials to be

used in the remainder of Block B which respond to the materiality along the northern side of Merrion Way.

7.3.8 Block B would step up in height incrementally towards the taller buildings to the east. The tallest element, 18 storeys abutting Brunswick Terrace, would be the same height as the new White Rose View building on the east side of Brunswick Terrace and, in so doing, form entry posts either side of Brunswick Terrace in views north towards the arena and the new Block A beyond. The base of the building would be represented by an augmented ground level storey height with extensive glazing allowing views into the more active entrance and amenity spaces fronting Merrion Way. The projecting grid of the main body of the building would have a largely uniform appearance although the central element would utilise a tighter pattern and be set a small way back so as to help break up the scale of Block B. The tops of these larger buildings would be demarcated by extended parapets or storey heights to suitably terminate the mass. When drafting this report it was indicated that the grid would be surfaced in white terracotta cladding whilst secondary surfaces would be finished in polished pale blue/grey anodised framing and perforated vent panels. Whilst details of the materials would ultimately form the subject of a condition requiring full size mock-up panels to be erected it is considered that the general approach to the materiality and appearance of Block B would be complementary to the Queen Square Conservation Area and Merrion Way. Consequently, on the basis of information currently available, it is considered that the development would not have an adverse impact upon the heritage assets within Queen Square or the conservation area itself and would appear as positive additions to the townscape.

7.3.9 In applying Paragraph 203 of the NPPF, a balanced judgment requires the impact of the proposed redevelopment on the setting of designated heritage assets to be weighed against the demolition of a non-designated asset. In coming to a balanced judgment, the impact on designated heritage assets should be given more weight and although the magnitude of impact will be much greater in relation to the non-designated heritage “on balance” the potential enhancement of the setting of the listed buildings of Queen Square and the conservation area could outweigh the demolition of the Yorkshire Bank.

7.3.10 **Do Members support the proposed scale and form of development?**

7.4 Transportation and accessibility

7.4.1 The site is located in a highly sustainable location close to the many amenities offered by the City Centre and is readily accessible by a range of modes of transport, 815m from the central bus station and 900m from the railway station. The development itself would be car-free supporting the sustainable approach to parking provision advocated in the City Centre in the Parking SPD. Parking facilities for visitors to the events’ space are expected to utilise existing car parking facilities distributed around the City Centre in common with the established practice for the arena.

7.4.2 The juxtaposition of the events’ venue building to the existing pedestrian crossing is unfortunate given its impact upon desire lines but cannot be adjusted due to minimum requirements of the venue and the need to separate the building from Block B. However, the western edge of the new building would be set further back from the carriageway than the existing building providing more pedestrian space overall.

7.4.3 The development, accommodating up to 1271 students, would result in additional pedestrian and cycling movements to and from the universities, placing greater demands on existing and proposed highway crossings and footways along the route.

Recent and ongoing student developments in the area have contributed towards improvements to St Alban's Place, Belgrave Street, Wade Lane and Merrion Way in order to mitigate the impact of those schemes by developing a more pedestrian friendly environment. As a consequence, and in common with the recent purpose-built student developments in the locality, it is considered that these impacts should be mitigated by a developer contribution towards the improvement of pedestrian and cycling facilities in the area.

- 7.4.4 Each of the buildings would be serviced independently from Elmwood Close, Brunswick Terrace and / or Merrion Way. However, due to their relationship with the arena and the security measures that need to be maintained around it, a detailed servicing strategy, Transport Statement and also a Management Plan for student drop off and pick up at start and end of term time need to be developed and agreed.
- 7.4.5 Long-stay bike storage areas for Block B are proposed at the lowest level of the building. However, there appears to be no provision for Block A or the events' space. A full range of cycling facilities are required and would form a key element of the Travel Plan to be submitted with the planning application.
- 7.4.6 Level access would be provided into each of the proposed buildings from their principal access points on Clay Pit Lane, the arena piazza and Merrion Way. A level access point from Elmwood Close may also be required to provide an accessible entrance into the building for people with limited mobility arriving by taxi. Lifts running throughout the buildings would provide access to all floors from the reception areas ensuring level access to accord with Accessible Leeds SPD and CS policy T2.
- 7.4.7 **Do Members consider that the development's proposed provisions for transportation and accessibility are acceptable?**

7.5 Public realm

- 7.5.1 Whereas the soft landscaped areas on the edge of the arena piazza have no planning status the pedestrian routes around the periphery of the existing bank are identified as Green Space (CS policy G6 ref G2226). These include the short pedestrian route on the north side of the bank linking Clay Pit Lane and Brunswick Terrace and space at the west corner of the bank at the junction of Clay Pit Lane and Merrion Way which would be subsumed as part of the development of the events' venue and Block B. The policy protects such areas from development unless there is an adequate supply in the area; the space is replaced in the same locality; or where the delivery of wider planning benefits, as part of the redevelopment proposals, demonstrate improvements to green space quality in the same locality. NRWLP policy Land 2 requires that development conserves trees where possible and to also introduce new tree planting as part of creating high quality living and working environments and enhancing the public realm. Where removal of existing trees is agreed in order to facilitate approved development, suitable tree replacement should be provided on the basis of a minimum three for one replacement to loss.
- 7.5.2 The development would come forward in three distinct phases and it is expected that planting and landscaping would follow the same regime. Block A to the north of the arena piazza would be constructed first. 6 trees fronting Clay Pit Lane and 6 planted as part of the arena landscape scheme would be removed to enable the development. As part of the emerging wider landscape strategy for the development, a tree replacement strategy has been provided. 11 new trees would be provided within an enhanced area of public amenity space immediately to the south of Block A and 3 new trees would be provided adjacent to the steps down from Clay Pit Lane to the Elmwood

Close turning circle. Three trees are identified within the central island in Clay Pit Lane to the west of the new building to supplement those existing. A line of street trees along the east side of Clay Pit Lane is also proposed including 7 alongside the development site. The potential to plant trees within the arena piazza was also investigated but the need to retain clear lines of sight and lighting in this area for security purposes dictated that such an approach would not be supported.

- 7.5.3 The construction of Block B would necessitate the removal of 3 trees located in a planter at the junction of Clay Pit Lane and Merrion Way. In part, the loss of these trees and the associated green space is mitigated by the benefits of forming a fourth side to Queen Square. In addition, the land between the planter and the existing building has been used for parking by the bank and pedestrian usage further restricted by a security fence such that the amenity provided by this area of green space has previously been limited.
- 7.5.4 The condition of existing trees flanking Brunswick Terrace has been a concern since the road was re-laid during the construction of the arena. Two of the remaining trees flanking Brunswick Terrace would be removed to enable servicing such that just 3 of the original line would remain. Given their proximity to the building and condition it is intended to remove the remaining trees. 4 new trees would be planted to re-establish the line which follows the pedestrian route from Merrion Way towards the arena and, in future, the events' venue. 4 new large canopied trees would be planted to the south of Block B to extend the existing line of trees fronting Merrion Way. One tree would be planted at the junction of Clay Pit Lane and Merrion Way and 3 street trees along Clay Pit Lane to the west of the building. Small and multi-stem trees would be planted in the private amenity space to the north of the building. The potential for 8 trees on the southern side of Merrion Way opposite the site is also identified so as to soften existing expanses of paving and to create an avenue of trees and an enhanced setting to Block B.
- 7.5.5 Prior to construction of the events' venue, cleared land not forming part of Block B would be soft landscaped with mounded grass as an extension to the existing landscape bund on the southern side of the arena piazza so as to provide an acceptable appearance and secure arrangement during this interim period.
- 7.5.6 The construction of the events' venue would involve the removal of the landscape bund and temporary landscaping, in addition to two trees on the east side of the proposed building. 7 street trees are proposed on Clay Pit Lane, providing a visual link with those provided alongside Blocks A and B and, in doing so, providing a significant improvement to the character and appearance of the street. Subject to planting conditions, the tree planting along Clay Pit Lane is proposed to be *Sorbus incana* (silver whitebeam). *Tilia tomentosa* 'Silver Globe' (silver lime) are proposed along Merrion Way, whilst *Acer Platanoides* (Norway maple) are proposed on Brunswick Terrace.
- 7.5.7 The scope for provision of several of the replacement trees is identified as being subject to further utilities assessment. However, such conditions are not unusual in the City Centre and the trees would offer a number of benefits including helping to strengthen green infrastructure in the area; helping to mitigate for the loss of trees and green space around the site; moderating the scale of the proposed development, and providing wider environmental and sustainability benefits.
- 7.5.8 **Subject to confirmation of details do Members support the approach to green space and landscaping around the development?**

7.6 Sustainability and Climate Change

- 7.6.1 The CS environmental policies are designed so that new development contributes to carbon reduction targets and incorporates measures to address climate change concerns following the Council's declaration of a climate emergency in 2019. Policy EN1 is flexible, allowing developers to choose the most appropriate and cost-effective carbon reduction solution for their site. Major developments also need to meet the BREEAM Excellent standard if feasible (EN2). Where technically viable, appropriate for the development, and in areas with sufficient existing or potential heat density, major developments should propose heating systems, potentially connecting to the emerging district heating network (EN4(i)).
- 7.6.2 Due to the security requirements when designed as a bank the building has a deep plan and reinforced construction with limited openings and, consequently, the existing building is not readily adaptable, including for student accommodation use. Conversely, it is intended that the new PBSA buildings would minimise the use of materials with high embodied energy impacts whilst being designed to allow for future disassembly and re-use elsewhere. Materials would be ethically and responsibly sourced, where possible from local suppliers to minimise emissions from transport. The development would target zero construction waste.
- 7.6.3 Block A would utilise 100sqm of photovoltaic panels that would provide nearly 10% of the building's annual lighting requirements whereas Block B would have space to install approximately 400 sqm of photovoltaic panels that would run over 40% of that building's annual lighting load. Air source heat pumps would be installed at roof level to provide the heating for domestic hot water serving the PBSA blocks. A full electric space heating strategy combined with the low and zero carbon technology would enable a reduction in emissions of at least 20% beyond Building Regulation requirements. There would be provision for 100% recycling in these buildings and all student units would be fitted with water efficient devices and A rated appliances to minimise water use. Meanwhile the development would be designed to reduce surface water run-off to 60% of the existing rate through the use of sustainable drainage systems. Green/brown roof areas extending over 785sqm would be introduced on Block B providing biodiverse green infrastructure, supplementing new drought tolerant and flood resistant planting elsewhere around the development. Whilst the development is close to the amenities provided within the City Centre, and the universities are also located within walking distance of the student accommodation, the development would also be supported by a Travel Plan which will provide measures to reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicle trips and encourage sustainable travel options.
- 7.6.4 **Subject to confirmation of details do Members support the approach to sustainable development?**

7.7 Wind

- 7.7.1 Due to the height of the buildings the applicant is mindful of the potential impact of the development on the local wind environment and is developing the building massing and architecture in conjunction with input from a wind consultant. Once the form of the development is fixed the wind impact will be fully tested as the next stage in the design process. The findings of the assessment will be contained within a wind impact assessment which will be submitted with the planning application. As is the usual approach on receipt of any planning application where there is potential for the development to impact on the local wind environment, upon receipt of a wind study the Council will appoint their own experts to peer review the report's findings.

Mitigation measures will be considered and incorporated as necessary and required in light of the outcome of the assessment.

7.8 Safety and security

- 7.8.1 CS policy P10(v) identifies that developments should create safe and secure environments that reduce the opportunities for crime and the NPPF states that developments should be safe and accessible so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life. The new development is being designed with consideration to Secured by Design principles and in liaison with the counter-terrorism security advisor.
- 7.8.2 The lower levels of Block A would introduce a new active frontage onto this section of Clay Pit Lane thereby helping to create a safer environment for pedestrians using this route. There would also overlooking of the space to the east, providing improved passive surveillance down Elmwood Close and the footpath that runs to the north of the arena. Similarly, rooms within the building would overlook the arena piazza thereby reducing the opportunities for crime.
- 7.8.3 The existing Yorkshire Bank building was purposely designed with a very limited active frontage due to its function. Block B would replace much of the southern extent of this footprint with new active frontages creating interaction with neighbouring streets. The addition of street trees would further improve the character of the environment from a vehicle-dominated one to one which is more pedestrian-friendly.
- 7.8.4 The detailed design of the events' venue will follow at a later stage in the planning process. However, there are likely to be active frontages along Clay Pit Lane with the main entrance positioned on the arena piazza resulting in far more use of this open space. It is anticipated that existing security measures relating to the arena will be maintained and enhanced in delivery of the events' venue.

7.9 Conclusion

- 7.9.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the report and the presentation, and are invited to provide feedback, in particular, on the issues outlined below:

Do Members consider that the loss of office accommodation and proposed use of the sites for a multi-use events' building and student accommodation is acceptable in principle? (7.1.8)

Subject to confirmation of detailed proposals do Members support the approach towards living conditions for the student accommodation? (7.2.14)

Do Members support the proposed scale and form of development? (7.3.10)

Do Members consider that the development's proposed provisions for transportation and accessibility are acceptable? (7.4.7)

Subject to confirmation of details do Members support the approach to green space and landscaping around the development? (7.5.8)

Subject to confirmation of details do Members support the approach to sustainable development? (7.6.4)

Appendix 2 – Minutes of City Plans Panel 2nd September 2021

The Chief Planning Officer submitted a report which set out detail of a pre-application presentation for a proposed mixed-use scheme comprising two student residential accommodation buildings and a multi-use event building on the site of Yorkshire Bank, Merrion Way and land fronting Clay Pit Lane, Leeds LS2 8NZ.

Site photographs, plans, a model and materials were displayed and referred to throughout the discussion of the application.

The Planning Case Officer and applicant's representatives addressed the Panel, speaking in detail about the proposal and highlighted the following:

- Site / location / context
- The site is located within an area which was designated as a Prestige Development Area in the 2001 Unitary Development Plan where large scale, landmark, buildings were encouraged at a gateway into the City Centre. The Tall Buildings SPD, adopted in 2010, identified the area in which the site is located as having an opportunity for a cluster of tall buildings.
- Adjacent to Conservation Area (Grade II Listed Buildings located in Queen Square)
- The Yorkshire Bank Building dating from the early 1980's is clad in granite and embodies the solidity of a bank, symbolising Leeds' regional commercial position and is considered a non-designated heritage asset.
- The proposal - Redevelopment of Yorkshire Bank offices at 20 Merrion Way and two parcels of land to the north situated between Clay Pit Lane and Leeds Arena. The development would involve the demolition of the existing office building and the construction of a multistorey student residential accommodation development fronting Clay Pit Lane, Merrion Way and Brunswick Terrace; a second student accommodation building located between Clay Pit Lane and Elmwood Close and a multi-use event building abutting Clay Pit Lane to the west of Leeds Arena.
- Block A, would have a singular, symmetrical form comprising 11 angled facets. The building would rise to 38 storeys and contain 728 student bedrooms in a mix of 6-bedroom clusters (59%) and 296 studios (41%). The building would be serviced from Elmwood Close with the principal entrance point on Clay Pit Lane
- Block B, would be U-shaped, rising incrementally from the western 3 storey limb adjacent to Clay Pit Lane, to 7, 12 and 18 storeys along Merrion Way. The building would contain 543 student bedrooms, in a mix of 5 and 6-bedroom clusters (60%) and 216 studios (40%).
- The multi-purpose event building, located to the north of Block B, would have a total floor area of approximately 9,900sqm incorporating a main exhibition area of approximately 3,000sqm; a conference space of circa 1,700sqm; an 800-900 capacity auditorium; pre-function circulation space and bar areas; and supporting ancillary spaces.
- Form of the buildings and its relationship with the Leeds Arena (Views of the main frontage to be retained)
- Landscaping / public realm/ retain public access areas/ increased tree count
- All student accommodation meets emerging space standards
- The development would address climate change proposals and would include air source heat pumps and photovoltaic cells
- Materials - Block A would be planar, faced in polished anodised aluminium with flush panels of clear glazing and ventilation panels. Block B, the external grid of the majority of this building would utilise a white masonry finish, projecting forward and framing the secondary layer of glazing and panelling behind. The central, 12-storey, element would sit a little further back and would employ a tighter grid than neighbouring elements. The lowest limb of the building, facing Clay Pit Lane, would utilise a similar expressed grid but finished in brickwork in response to its relationship with Queen Square.

Members raised the following questions to the developer's representatives:

- Could more details be provided about the low/zero carbon emission proposals.
- Could the area of greenspace at the northern end of the Yorkshire Bank building be retained
- A number of Members expressed concern about Block A's relationship to the Arena building, it was too tall, blocked views, over-shadowed and detracted from the Arena building
- The shimmering effect of the building had the potential to create dazzle

In responding to the issues raised the developer's representatives said:

- The design, construction and operation of the buildings would seek to achieve low/ zero carbon emissions and would include a full electric system, incorporating; air source heat pumps, photovoltaic cells, the inclusion of specific mitigation design features and the procurement of locally-sourced sustainable materials
- The architect confirmed that the area of greenspace at the end of the Yorkshire Bank building would be looked at again
- The architect said that although the footprint of Building A was small, the tall, elegant crystal tower (130m in height) and unique in design would create an important counter point to the Arena whilst also retaining the view of the entrance
- Members were informed that a report on the potential of dazzle would be provided

In offering comments, Members noted the following:

- Members were generally impressed with the design of the crystal tower but expressed concern that the tower was too tall, it would create over-shadow and would detract from the Arena building. This was not the right location for the crystal tower
- One Member suggested that any proposals for the northern development plot that entailed development above 7 storeys would block the views of the arena
- There was a need to see further design details about the multi-use event building
- The quantum of purpose-built student development in this area was a concern, particularly in light of changes to studying plans and arrangements resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic and Leeds is not just to be regarded as a student city. There was a need for strategic consideration of the levels of student accommodation being provided to avoid creating problems for the future
- The loss of greenspace/ trees was a concern, as well as open space for the public congregating in advance of visiting the Arena

In offering comments on the questions poised in the Officer Report:

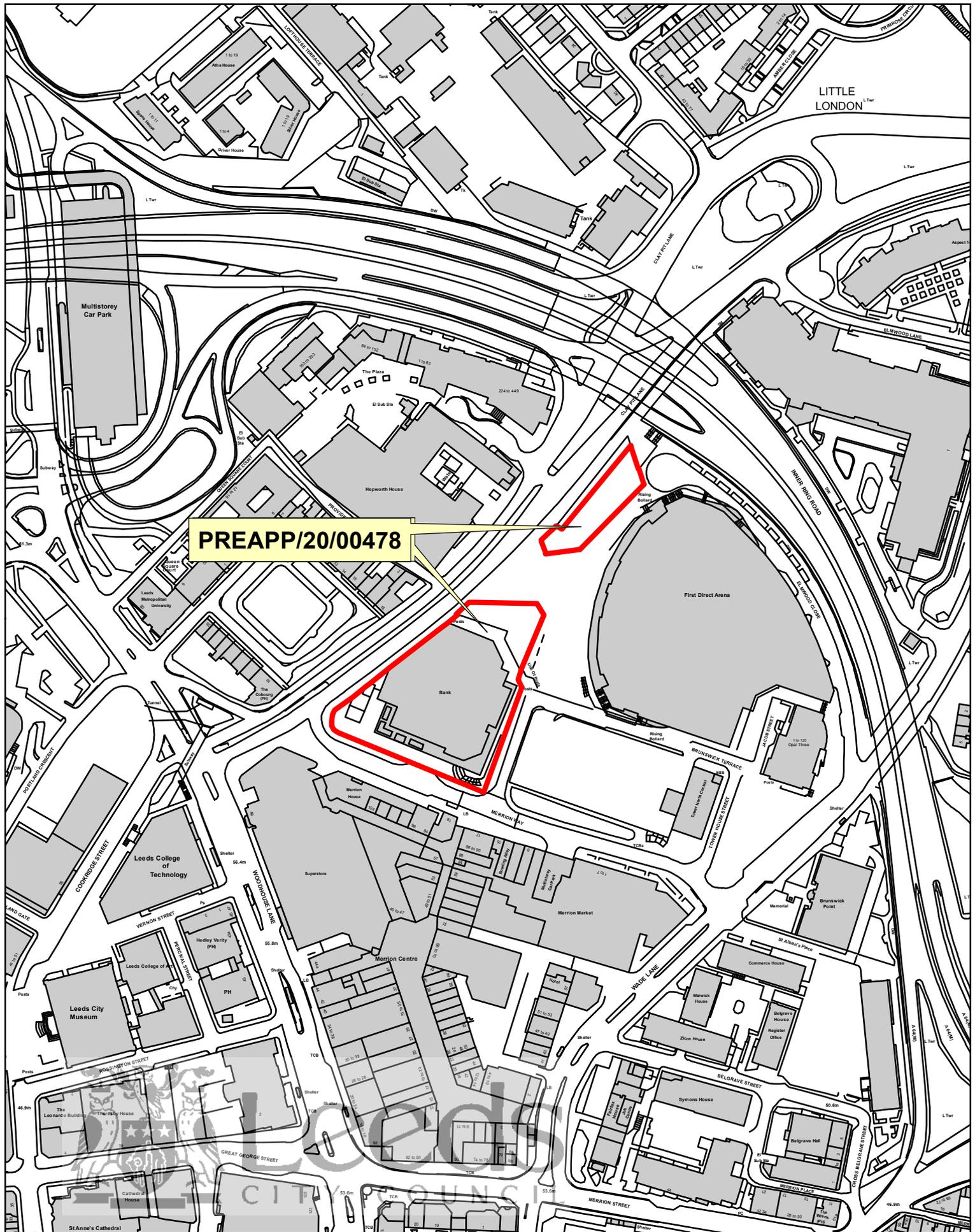
- Members considered the loss of office accommodation and proposed use of the sites for a multi-use events' building and student accommodation was acceptable in principle. The amount and density of student accommodation in the area was highlighted as a concern.
- Members were supportive of the approach towards living conditions for the student accommodation
- Members did not support the proposed scale and form of Block A and had concerns about the appearance of Block B. Further design details about the multi-use event building were required
- Members considered the development's proposed provisions for transportation and accessibility were acceptable
- Members did not support the approach to green space and landscaping around the development, particularly the loss of trees

- Members were supportive to the approach to sustainable development

The Chair thanked the developers for their attendance and presentation suggesting that Members welcomed iconic designs, but on this occasion the location was not right

RESOLVED –

- (i) To note the details contained in the pre-application presentation
- (ii) That the developers be thanked for their attendance and presentation



CITY PLANS PANEL

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PRODUCED BY CITY DEVELOPMENT, GIS MAPPING & DATA TEAM, LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

SCALE : 1/2500

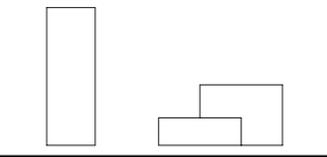
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Rev	Date	Description
P01	2021-05-06	FIRST ISSUE
P02	2021-06-14	Design Development
P03	2021-07-06	Design Development
P04	2021-08-03	Design Development
P05	2021-09-25	Design Development
P06	2021-10-18	Design Development
P07	2021-10-25	Design Development
P08	2021-10-26	Design Development
P09	2021-11-03	Design Development
P10	2021-11-09	Design Development

KEY
Levels refer to student accommodation only

Project Title
**Merrion Way
Merrion Way, Leeds**

Status
FOR INFORMATION

Drawing Title
**Level 00
Site Reference Plan**

Project No
10331

Scale
1:1000 @ A3

SHP Drawing Code
10331-SHP-Z0-A-G100-PL-00-001

Revision
P10

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