



Report of the Chief Planning Officer

CITY PLANS PANEL

24th March 2022

Pre-application presentation of proposed multi-storey residential development on land between Westgate and Cropper Gate, Leeds LS1 4ND (PREAPP/21/00338)

Applicant – Ridgeback Group

Electoral Wards Affected:

Little London & 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 construction of a 31 storey building at the western gateway into the City Centre adjacent to the Inner Ring Road and opposite the former site of the Yorkshire Post. The landmark building would contain 399 built to rent residential apartments within a new, high quality, landscaped setting designed to integrate with and reinforce the council's upcoming pedestrian and cycling improvements around the Westgate intersection.

2.0 Site and surroundings

2.1 The irregularly-shaped site is bounded by Westgate to the west, which incorporates an area of pay and display parking; Cropper Gate to the south and east; and Ebor Court, a three-storey office building and its car park abuts the eastern boundary north of Skinner Street. The site, covering approximately 0.2 hectares, is cleared and surrounded by site hoardings but is prominent in views from the west.

- 2.2 The site is located at the extreme western end of Wellington Street with major highway infrastructure, including the elevated A58M Inner Ring Road, situated to the west. Buildings directly to the east are an equivalent size to those at Ebor Court though beyond Lisbon Street buildings such as Castle House are much larger. The Headline, the first building to be constructed on the former Yorkshire Post site on the southern side of Wellington Street opposite the site, is an 18 storey apartment building. Nearby properties are primarily in office uses whilst the redevelopment of the former International Pool site will bring forward new residential accommodation, purpose-built student accommodation, offices and a hotel.

3.0 Proposals

- 3.1 The lowest third of the building (ground to ninth floor) would be split into two separate elements by a 6m wide cut incorporating a pedestrian ground level walkway linking Cropper Gate to Westgate. The southern element, closest to Wellington Street, would accommodate the primary entrance into a reception area and amenity space, together with the southern core, plant and bin storage. The northern leg would contain the northern core, bin storage, water tanks, a generator room and accessible cycle storage facilities. The first floor of the southern leg would contain further amenity space and cycle storage areas. The northern leg at this level would contain additional cycle storage and 4 apartments. All floors above this level would be contain apartments. The northern element of the 2nd – 9th floor would extrude out further north and west than the levels below.
- 3.2 The two elements would be joined at the 10th floor with the northern part stepping back to the configuration at the lowest levels of the building up to the 30th floor. The southern part of the 20th - 30th floors would step in from the levels below enabling a continuous curved form along the western elevation which would extend around the southern and northern elevations, creating a strong and attractive form that would respond positively to its context at the western extreme of Wellington Street and its relationship with the infrastructure to the west. Meanwhile, the more composed eastern elevation would be faceted in response to the alignment of Cropper Gate and Skinner Street.
- 3.3 The proposed building sits back from the line of buildings which previously occupied the site. The site is further fragmented by the introduction of the proposed pedestrian route extending east-west along the line of Skinner Street. Emerging proposals illustrate new soft landscaping around the site, with a mix of lawned areas and trees. The development also identifies aspirations to provide more extensive soft landscaping and improved pedestrian routes should rationalisation of the existing wide expanse of hard-surfacing and infrastructure be possible.

4.0 Relevant planning history

- 4.1 Planning permission was granted for a part 10, part 28 storey block containing 272 apartments, offices, and A3 and basement parking on 24th August 2005 (20/207/05/FU). The 2005 application (20/207/05/FU) was an amendment of a 2004 application (20/283/04/FU) which itself was an amendment of a 2002 application (20/460/02/FU). The planning permission was extended on 22nd July 2011 (10/03459/EXT).
- 4.2 Bridge House and Compton House, the former buildings occupying the site, were demolished during 2016 leaving a cleared site.

- 4.3 Planning permission was granted on 1st September 2020 for the redevelopment of 116-120 Wellington Street, 3 office buildings on the east side of Cropper Gate south of Skinner Street, with a single building 17 storeys in height comprising office accommodation with ground floor ancillary and complementary retail and leisure floorspace (19/04905/FU).
- 4.4 City Plans Panel deferred and delegated approval of a hybrid application for redevelopment of the former International Pool site east of Lisbon Street on 25th November 2021 (21/05142/FU). The scheme includes residential buildings which would be 33 and 22 storeys; the student residential building would be 24 storeys; and the aparthotel 14 storeys in height.

5.0 Consultation responses

- 5.1 LCC Highways Transport Development Services – There are no objections to the principle of the development. A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan will need to be submitted with any application. Contributions may be required to support junction improvements at Wellington Street Gyratory and Armley Gyratory and local pedestrian/cycle improvements. S106 Agreement may be required to secure TRO amendments, car club spaces and travel plan implementation.
- 5.1.1 The proposed development sits predominantly within the red line boundary. However, there is a section on the western façade above first floor level which is proposed as wind mitigation that overhangs the adopted highway. This is not acceptable from a highways perspective. However, there is also a LCC scheme to improve pedestrian and cycle facilities along Westgate and around the proposed building to connect to Cropper Gate, removing the existing car parking along West Gate. This would allow the area to be utilised for improved public realm, which would complement the applicant's proposals. Internal discussions are ongoing in how this matter can be resolved and how the LCC pedestrian/cycling proposals can complement the proposals.
- 5.1.2 The site is located within the city centre. Improvements may be required to provide enhanced facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, tying into the Cycle Super Highway works along Wellington Street and the provision of appropriate way-finding. Additionally, the potential LCC pedestrian/cycling scheme on Westgate will also need to be considered.
- 5.1.3 There is currently no vehicular access shown to the site, with servicing proposed from a layby off Cropper Gate. Careful consideration will be required for servicing of the development and access for refuse collection. Any works within the highway will need to be constructed under a S278 Agreement, including the removal of existing access points where the footway may need to be returned to full height kerbs, along with public realm improvements, where these may be agreed.
- 5.1.4 Servicing and bin storage will need to be demonstrated as part of any application. The two areas shown as possible refuse collection points on West Gate will not be available, should the LCC pedestrian/cycle scheme go ahead. Consequently, should this arise, all servicing will have to take place from Cropper Gate.
- 5.1.5 The site is located within the Core Parking Control Area boundary. There is currently no car parking proposed at the development. The impact of a car park free development should be demonstrated in a Transport Assessment and particularly the requirement for disabled parking. Secure covered cycle and motorcycle parking provision should accord with the guidance and technical specifications provided in the

draft Transport SPD. However, the revised proposals suggest that cycle parking will be provided at 70%. Whilst this may be acceptable, it would be on the basis of enhanced quality of provision. It is noted that much of the cycle parking is to be provided at first floor level. Therefore, very careful consideration will be required for access to the cycle parking e.g. lifts/doors etc, will need to be of sufficient size and ease of use to accommodate bicycles easily, so that they don't become a deterrent to their use. Similarly, access to the doors/lifts (i.e. outside of the building) will need to be suitable for both pedestrians and cyclists (the current plans reference the gap through the proposed building as being for pedestrians only). Alterations to TRO's may be required to prevent overspill parking. This will be secured via a S106 Agreement. A Car Park and Service Management Plan would be required.

- 5.1.6 A series of off-site highway works were agreed as part of the earlier applications which included alterations to Cropper Gate and Skinner Street and public realm improvements around the building. A wind assessment will need to be provided and must consider the effect of the building on the surrounding highway network. It is likely that any increased trip generation resulting from the development would require the developer to contribute to improvements at the Wellington Street Gyratory and the Armley Gyratory. Once the Transport Development Services Section have confirmed that any off-site highway works are acceptable, a supplementary Independent Stage 1 Road Safety Audits (RSA1) will be required as a final check before the works can be formally accepted.
- 5.2 LCC Flood Risk Management (FRM) – The application site is located within part Flood Zone 3 and part Flood zone 2 and therefore the applicant should provide a NPPF compliant Flood Risk Assessment setting out the proposed flood risk mitigation measures proposed and that these have been accepted by the Environment Agency. It is recommended that early dialogue with the EA is undertaken to identify the scope of the FRA and any additional modelling that may be required.
- 5.2.1 In respect to the proposed drainage, then the foul drainage is assumed to discharge to the adjacent Yorkshire Water (YW) combined sewer within Skinner Street and agreement should be obtained from YW to confirm the point of connection of the foul drainage. In respect to surface water drainage, then it is anticipated that this will discharge to the existing 1220mm diameter surface water sewer located within Wellington Road and the discharge rate should be restricted to 3.5 l/s as the existing site has lain fallow for many years and therefore the use of brownfield rates will not be applicable.
- 5.2.2 The development should seek to maximise the use of SUDS although taking into account the urban location and likely footprint it is accepted that the use of SUDs may be restricted. However, the use of rain gardens, blue and green roofs and where possible the use of infiltration systems should all be considered.
- 5.2.3 To support the application a Drainage Assessment should be submitted demonstrating how the development can be drained to comply with the LCC Minimum Development Control Standards for Flood Risk
- 5.3 LCC Contaminated Land Team - the proposed development includes sensitive end uses. Therefore, 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.
- 5.4 LCC Landscape - The proposed development is of substantial scale and height and should be set within a strong landscape setting with large-species street trees. It is

important to develop the design at this stage with consideration for adequate space for the long-term health and amenity of trees. Trees are shown on design drawings in covered areas and with their canopies touching the building which is likely to create ongoing issues with management, maintenance and pressure for pruning and removal of trees.

- 5.4.1 The following principles are recommended: Large-species trees with natural canopies should be used for maximum amenity, carbon capture and biodiversity value. A variety of species which are suitable for the location adjacent to a transport corridor are recommended for resilience. Large trees should be located minimum 10m from building edge to avoid long-term conflicts with resident amenity and maintenance issues. A planted buffer to Wellington Street (as shown in the Landscape & Public Realm Concept) is supported.
- 5.4.2 Consideration should be given at this stage to the feasibility of providing adequate soil volumes for trees in hard landscape and planters. The public space around the building should include some playful features (can be natural, sculptural, abstract, multifunctional etc. as appropriate for the concept).

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.
- 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 (iv) Comprehensively planning the redevelopment and re-use of vacant and under-used sites and buildings for mixed use development and new areas of public space.
- Spatial Policy 8 supports a competitive local economy through (ii) enterprise and innovation in...housing, leisure and tourism; (iii) Job retention and creation, promoting the need for a skilled workforce, educational attainment and reducing barriers to employment opportunities.
- 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.
- 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 H3 states that housing development should meet or exceed 65 dwellings per hectare in the City Centre.
- Policy H4 states that developments should include an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes to address needs measured over the long term taking into account the nature of the development and character of the location.
- Policy H5 identifies affordable housing requirements.
- Policy H8 states developments of more than 49 dwellings should include support for Independent Living.
- Policy H9 refers to minimum space standards in new dwellings.
- Policy H10 identifies accessible housing standards.
- 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.
- 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 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 EN8 identifies electric vehicle charging infrastructure requirements.
- 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.

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

- 6.4.1 The NRWLP identifies 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 identifies the need to introduce new tree planting as part of creating high quality living and working environments and enhancing the public realm.

6.5 **Site Allocations Plan (SAP)**

- 6.5.1 The Site Allocations Plan was adopted in July 2019. Following a statutory challenge, Policy HG2, so far as it relates to sites which immediately before the adoption of the SAP were within the green belt, has been remitted to the Secretary of State and is to be treated as not adopted. All other policies within the SAP remain adopted and should be afforded full weight.
- 6.5.2 The site was allocated for mixed use development (MX1-7) identifying a site capacity of 272 residential units and 3,620sqm of office space (referencing planning permission 10/03459/EXT).

Other material considerations

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

- 6.6.1 The NPPF was updated in July 2021. Paragraph 11 states that decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the Framework provides a clear reason for refusing the development; or any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the Framework as a whole.
- 6.6.2 Chapter 5 identifies guidance for the delivery of a sufficient supply of homes.
- 6.6.3 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.
- 6.6.4 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).
- 6.6.5 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.

6.6.6 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.

6.6.7 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.

6.6.8 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).

6.6.9 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.

6.6.10 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.”

6.7 **Supplementary guidance**

- Accessible Leeds SPD
- Travel Plans SPD
- Building for Tomorrow Today: Sustainable Design and Construction SPD
- Neighbourhoods for Living SPG
- City Centre Urban Design Strategy SPD
- Tall Buildings Design Guide SPD
- Transport SPD (revised draft)
- Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy

6.8 **Other Relevant Legislation**

S66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 reads:

“In considering whether to grant planning permission [or permission in principle] for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”

7.0 **Issues**

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

7.1 Principle of the development

7.1.1 Prior to demolition the vacant and dilapidated buildings were an eyesore at this prominent gateway location into the City Centre. Whereas planning permission was granted in 2005 and 2011 for redevelopment with a tall residential building the permission was not implemented and the site has remained vacant for several years. The SAP allocated the site for mixed use development (MX1-7) identifying a site capacity of 272 residential units and 3,620sqm of office space (referencing planning permission 10/03459/EXT). However, the capacities identified in the SAP are indicative, either based on previous relevant planning history or a generic formula applied across the city, acknowledging that the density of uses identified in planning applications may be higher or lower depending on site circumstances and applications will be judged on their own merits against other material considerations.

7.1.2 The site is located within the designated City Centre. 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 (see paragraph 7.5 below). The development would deliver

399 residential apartments which would represent a meaningful contribution towards the Core Strategy's aim to provide 10,200 new homes within the City Centre over the plan period.

7.1.3 Consequently, the emerging proposals identify the regeneration of a vacant and under-utilised site at a key gateway into the City Centre which would make more effective use of this sustainably located brownfield site.

7.2 Townscape and heritage considerations

7.2.1 Whilst cleared, the existing site detracts from the wider townscape in a prominent location adjacent to the A58M and Wellington Street. The Tall Buildings Design Guide provides design guidance on the acceptable location, form and appearance of tall buildings. The site is not within a sensitive zone and is located at the extreme western edge of key view 3. The SPD identifies the site as a gateway location at the conjunction of areas where there is opportunity for a string of tall buildings. It also identifies the proposed tall building approved on the site. More recently, approval in principle has also been given for tall buildings 100m to the north east on the former International Pool site and permission was also granted for a large building on the site to the east of Cropper Gate. The redevelopment of the former Yorkshire Post site 75m to the south will also bring forward buildings of scale. As a result, the site's location presents an opportunity for a tall building at this gateway into the City Centre.

7.2.2 The site is located at the convergence of Wellington Street and Westgate which at this point, alongside the A58M, sweeps around from north-east towards the south west whereas the eastern edge is constrained by the position of Cropper Gate and Skinner Street. As a result, the irregular shape of the site, in association with its position at the entrance to Wellington Street, generates a distinctive and site-specific footplate to the building with curved edges to the north, south and west and straight edges to the east.

7.2.3 The lowest third of the building (ground to ninth floor) would be split into two separate elements by a 6m wide cut. The northern element of the 2nd – 9th floor would extrude out further north and west than the levels below. The two elements would be joined at the 10th floor with the northern section stepping back to the configuration at the lowest levels of the building up to the 30th floor. The southern part of the 20th - 30th floors would step in from the levels below enabling a continuous curved form along the western elevation which would extend around the southern and northern elevations. Meanwhile, the more composed eastern elevation would be faceted in response to the alignment of Cropper Gate and Skinner Street.

7.2.4 Massing studies have been undertaken to enable analysis of how the building would relate to its context and the wider cityscape. The proportions of the longest, north-west, elevation would be softened by its curved form which responds positively to the sweep of the A58M. Further, the rounded southern end positioned closer to the conjunction of Westgate and Wellington Street, would present an attractive profile on approaches from the south west. The break in scale of the top third of this part of the building would also help to refer back to lower scale buildings towards the east whilst the 10 storey cut would add interest to the composition. The faceted east elevations would refer back more directly to the more conventional building forms within the City Centre.

7.2.5 Given the scale of the proposed building special regard needs to be paid to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings and special attention needs to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of

the conservation area. Whereas the separation between the site, listed buildings and the nearest conservation areas is such that the impact upon these heritage assets is not considered to be substantial or harmful, the impact will be reviewed in further detail in the forthcoming application.

7.2.6 The base of the building mass would be clearly defined by extensive glazing on the southern section and an extruding canopy around the northern section. The top of the building would be marked by a suitably proportioned parapet above the top level of windows to clearly define this point. Full double height vertically proportioned windows in deep reveals would be utilised to ensure the balance of solid and void is appropriate for a building of such a scale.

7.2.7 The use of brick as the primary facing material would enable the curved forms to be realised. Visualisations show that a textured, red brick, helps to produce a strong and contextual form which relates appropriately to its location whereas lighter tones appear reticent and misplaced.

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

7.3 Landscape, public realm and biodiversity

7.3.1 The prominence of the site dictates the need for high quality landscaping around the development to produce a suitable setting for the building, an attractive entrance to this part of the City Centre, and improved connections around the site. Whereas the site is constrained, it sits within a wider expanse of hard-surfacing and infrastructure which could potentially be rationalised to help realise these aspirations.

7.3.2 Coincidentally, the Council also intends bringing forward a highway's scheme in the near future to improve pedestrian and cycling routes around the Westgate intersection extending as far as Cropper Gate. The integration of the developers' and the Council's initiatives has the potential to bring forward a significant improvement to existing conditions which would accord with CS policies SP11 and CC3

7.3.3 The proposed building forms themselves aid movement around their exterior whilst the east-west cut would enable improved permeability through the site. The emerging landscape and public realm proposals identify the intent to produce a suitably high-quality layout incorporating lawned areas and a mix of trees arranged around newly-defined pedestrian routes. If delivered in this way the development would help to enhance the quality of the landscape in accordance with CS policy P12 and accord with NRWLP policy Land 3. Such an approach, potentially in combination with blue and green roofs and integral bird nesting features in the new building, could help the development to deliver an overall net gain in biodiversity to accord with CS policy G9.

7.3.4 **Do Members consider that the emerging approach to landscape and public realm is acceptable?**

7.4 Transportation and connectivity

7.4.1 The proposed development is located on a constrained site in a sustainable City Centre location. It is proposed that no dedicated car parking will be provided for the residents. The Council's parking policies in this central location do not require a minimum level of car parking provided there would be no adverse impact on the highway network. In this case there are existing widespread on-street parking controls which should prevent inconsiderate and obstructive parking and easy walking access to public transport and other services residents will rely on. Notwithstanding, the

impact of a car park free development would need to be demonstrated in a Transport Assessment and particularly the absence of any disabled parking.

- 7.4.2 Improvements may be required to provide enhanced facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, tying into the Cycle Super Highway works along Wellington Street and the provision of appropriate way-finding. Further discussions are also required to confirm how the Council's proposals for pedestrians and cyclists on Westgate can complement the proposals.
- 7.4.3 Secure covered cycle and motorcycle parking provision should accord with the guidance and technical specifications provided in the draft Transport SPD. However, the proposals suggest that cycle parking would be provided at 70%. This may be acceptable subject to the quality of provision being enhanced to make it more usable for more people. Due to the limited footprint of the building much of the cycle parking is intended to be provided at first floor level. Therefore, very careful consideration will be required for access to the cycle parking e.g. lifts/doors etc. will need to be of sufficient size and ease of use to accommodate bicycles easily, so that they don't become a deterrent to their use. Similarly, access to the doors/lifts (i.e. outside of the building) will need to be suitable for both pedestrians and cyclists.
- 7.4.4 As there is no vehicular access onto the site, with servicing proposed from a lay-by on Cropper Gate, careful consideration will be required for servicing of the development and access for refuse.
- 7.4.5 **Do Members support the approach to a car free development subject to no adverse impacts on the highway being demonstrated?**

7.5 Housing and residential amenity

Density

- 7.5.1 CS Policy H3 requires housing developments in the City Centre to meet or exceed 65 dwellings per hectare. The proposals identify 399 residential apartments on a site area of 0.25ha thereby significantly exceeding the minimum policy requirement and making efficient use of brownfield land in a highly sustainable City Centre location.

Housing mix

- 7.5.2 Policy H4 of the Leeds Core Strategy aims to ensure that new housing delivered in Leeds provides an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes to address needs measured over the long-term taking account of preferences and demand in different parts of the city. With this in mind the policy is worded to offer flexibility. Due to the denser character of the City Centre, the policy states that the requirement for houses is not applicable. Targets for the number of bedrooms in flats ranges from 10% for one and four bedroom apartments, 30% for three bedroom apartments, up to 50% with two bedrooms.
- 7.5.3 The current proposals show that there would be 137 (34%) one-bedroom apartments, according with the 0-50% range identified in H4; 223 (56%) two-bedroom apartments, according with the 30-80% range identified in H4; and 39 (10%) three-bedroom apartments, falling short of the 20-70% range suggested by H4. However, it is noted that 2 bedroom apartments can be designed to provide either bedspaces for 3 people (61sqm) or 4 people (70sqm). The forthcoming planning application would be supported by a detailed Housing Needs Assessment intended to justify the proposed

mix of unit sizes and demonstrate how the development would take into account location, preferences and changing demand.

Affordable housing

- 7.5.4 CS policy H5 sets a minimum target that 7% of new homes in major developments in this part of the city should be affordable housing with a mix of intermediate and social rents at benchmark rents. 399 apartments would generate the need for 28 affordable units based upon this policy. Alternatively, Build to Rent developments can provide either 20% (80) of the dwellings as “Affordable Private Rent” dwellings with rents 20% lower than market rents in the local area and agreement of eligibility criteria with secure arrangements that continue in perpetuity; or a commuted sum in lieu of on-site provision of affordable housing.
- 7.5.5 CS policy H5 does not outline a hierarchy or preferred approach, instead confirming that each of the three options are appropriate and accepted for developments of this nature as alternatives. This offers full flexibility for the applicant to choose in the case of Build to Rent schemes whether to provide the affordable housing requirement on site or to offer an off-site contribution in lieu of on-site provision. The rationale for this approach was set out in the report to Executive Board in March 2017
- 7.5.6 The developer has confirmed that the development will be compliant with CS Policy H5 with further details of affordable housing to be confirmed at the application stage.

Space standards and residential amenity

- 7.5.7 CS policy H9 requires all new dwellings to comply with the identified minimum space standards so as to create a healthy living environment. The developer has confirmed that all units will conform with these requirements. H9 standards reference not just the number of bedrooms but also the number of bedspaces to be provided. As an illustration, 2 bedroom apartments can be designed to provide either bedspaces for 3 people (61sqm) or 4 people (70sqm); whereas 3 bedroom apartments can be designed to provide for 4 people (74sqm), 5 people (86sqm) or 6 people (95sqm).
- 7.5.8 In common with other Build to Rent developments, additional communal amenity space would be provided within the building for residents’ use to supplement private spaces in apartments. 264sqm is proposed at ground floor and 298sqm is identified at first floor.
- 7.5.9 Apartments are located at first floor and above. All apartments facing south and north-west would enjoy open aspects and unrestricted views. Those apartments fronting Cropper Gate and Skinner Street would have more restricted outlooks due to their relationship with existing low level, or approved medium level, buildings to the east of Cropper Gate. However, in the context of the grain and density of the City Centre, the relationship is not considered unacceptable. The location of the northern core adjacent to the eastern elevation ensures that the neighbouring site to the east would not be sterilised.
- 7.5.10 Due to the proximity of busy highways to the development it is likely that a high level of acoustic attenuation, alongside whole house ventilation, will be required to ensure that road noise is suitably-mitigated and apartments do not overheat.

7.6 Accessibility and inclusion

- 7.6.1 Alongside the Accessibility SPD, CS policies P10(vi) and T2 require that developments are accessible to all users. The emerging proposals suggest that gradients within external spaces will be accessible and respond to the needs of all users. Detailed landscape design should meet the standards set out in Approved Document Part M and British Standard (BS) 8300.
- 7.6.2 The developer has confirmed the development would provide accessible accommodation in line with the Accessible Leeds SPD, BS8300 and Building Regulations standards.
- 7.6.3 CS policy H10 requires that 30% of the new homes should be accessible and adaptable dwellings (Building Regulations standard M4(2)) and 2% of homes should be adaptable to wheelchair user standards (M4(3)). The developer has confirmed that the detailed design will be compliant with these standards. Due to the limited site area and the intent to improve the public realm, pedestrian and cycling connections around the site no parking, including accessible parking, is proposed.

7.7 Sustainability and Climate Change

- 7.7.1 The CS sustainable development 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)).
- 7.7.2 It is intended that the development will accord with CS policies. This would be achieved through the implementation of a wide range of strategies and measures including further consideration of the following:
- Passive design measures to create a fabric first approach to energy efficiency through improved air permeability performance, improved thermal insulation, optimised solid to glass and optimising solar transmittance
 - Air source heat pumps for domestic hot water production
 - Photovoltaic cells for hot water generation
 - Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) with low specific fan power providing continuous operation
 - Waste water heat recovery using residual heat from waste water to preheat the incoming cold feed
 - Low flow sanitary-ware to ensure water usage is less than 110 litres per day per person
 - Efficient LED lighting
 - Electric panel heaters with integral thermostat and wi-fi controls

7.8 Wind environment

- 7.8.1 Due to the scale of the proposed building and its largely exposed location there is a significant potential for the generation of strong winds around the development. The applicant engaged wind consultants at the commencement of the design process to provide advice regarding the safety and comfort of the wind environment resulting from the development. This has resulted in modifications to the building form and a canopy

projecting from the west elevation above first floor level to ensure a safe and comfortable wind environment at ground level.

- 7.8.2 As the proposed canopy would overhang the current location of the adopted footway it would not be acceptable from a Highway's perspective. However, the Council scheme to improve pedestrian and cycle facilities along Westgate and around the proposed building provides the opportunity to review and revise the alignment of the footway. This could be designed so as to remove concerns regarding the projection of wind mitigation measures over the adopted highway. Ultimately, the forthcoming planning application will include a wind study that will be independently peer reviewed on behalf of the Council.

7.9 Safety and security

- 7.9.1 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.

- 7.9.2 The existing site is located at a key position at the west end of a pedestrian footway which follows the A58M. During a long period when the buildings were vacant the site attracted issues of vandalism and anti-social behaviour. The site was cleared 6 years ago but without any presence there is currently no passive or active surveillance.

- 7.9.3 The emerging proposals identify a car-free development that would result in a significant number of people walking and cycling to the site. The Council's proposals for Westgate should augment such movements. Further, works to improve the pedestrian corridor alongside the A58M on the former International Pool site will bring additional movement and activity. Cumulatively, all these proposals should reduce the fear of crime.

- 7.9.4 The southern section of the proposed building includes extensive active frontage with full height glazing that would increase passive surveillance around much of the site. Opportunities for a similar arrangement in the northern section are limited due to the extent of plant in this area. However, there would be entrances into the northern core and the cycle storage area which would ensure regular comings and goings. Apartments and amenity spaces at first floor would overlook much of the periphery of the site. It is likely that detailed design would illustrate the intended approach to external lighting and provision of CCTV so as to further deter crime and disorder.

7.10 Conclusion

- 7.10.1 The emerging proposals offer a significant potential to regenerate a prominently located brownfield City Centre site which has been vacant and underutilised for a number of years. The development would deliver a significant number of new homes in a high quality piece of contemporary architecture. The development also offers the opportunity to provide improved public realm and pedestrian routes that would complement the Councils' evolving proposals for Westgate.

- 7.10.2 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 support the proposed scale and form of development? (7.2.6)

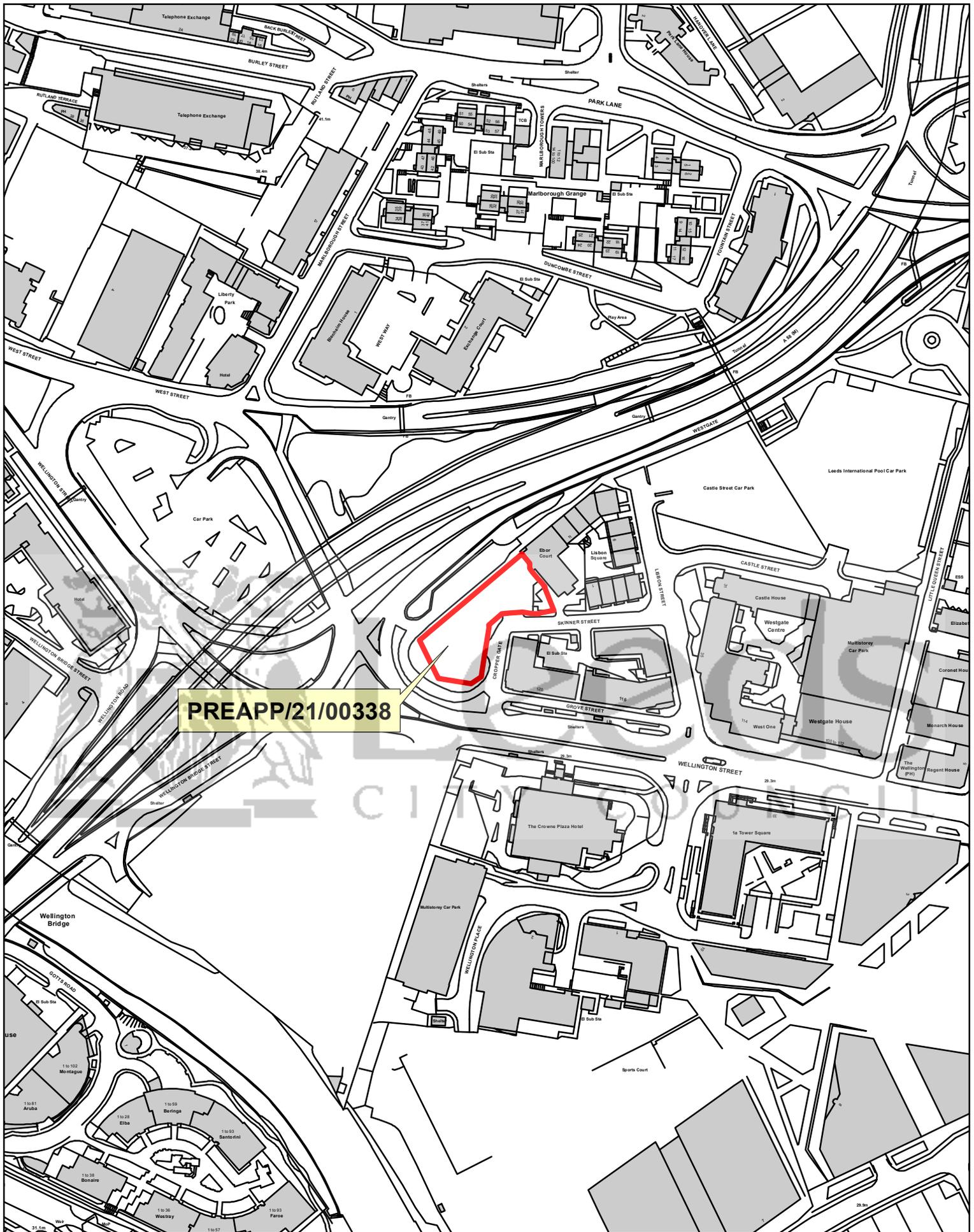
Do Members consider that the emerging approach to landscape and public realm is acceptable? (7.3.4)

Do Members support the approach to a car free development subject to no adverse impacts on the highway being demonstrated? (7.4.5)

APPEARANCE

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN





PREAPP/21/00338

CITY PLANS PANEL

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PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN

PROPOSED PLANS

