



Report of the Chief Planning Officer

CITY PLANS PANEL

Date: 24th March 2022

Subject: PREAPP/21/00250 – Purpose built student accommodation and residential development

Developer: Urbanite (Leeds) Ltd c/o QUOD Capitol, Bond Court, Leeds LS1 5SP

Electoral Wards Affected:

Little London and Riverside

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 emerging scheme to allow Members to consider and comment on the proposals at this stage.

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

This presentation is intended to inform Members at an early stage of the emerging proposals for two Purpose Built Student Residential blocks, a new Build to Rent residential block and associated public realm. The scheme is brought to City Plans Panel at an early stage to allow Panel to make comments to inform progression of proposals. The development involves a significant level of residential development and tall buildings at a key site within the south western part of the City Centre.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

- 2.1 The subject site of this pre-application submission is the remainder of the former Yorkshire Post Site, excluding that part which has recently been redeveloped for a major Build to Rent (BtR) scheme (16/07088/RM). The site comprises the remaining, undeveloped parts of the former Yorkshire Post site, which has been vacant since 2013. It has recently been used for the construction compound for the recently constructed residential building known as 'The Headline'.
- 2.2 Following the demolition of the former Yorkshire Post building in 2014 the Site has been cleared for redevelopment (the only remaining structure on the site is the clock tower of the Yorkshire Post building which was retained and reclad and now accommodates a digital advertising screen). The site falls within the western part of Leeds City Centre and is within the designated City Centre Boundary. The site is located within the Little London and Woodhouse Ward. It is bound to the north by Wellington Street, and to the east by Wellington Bridge Street. Its southern boundary is consistent with the River Aire, and the western boundary with the recently constructed 'The Headline' building.
- 2.3 A range of works to serve the entire former Yorkshire Post site, including the Site have been undertaken as part of the first phase of the original outline consent. This includes temporary flood risk alleviation and drainage works, including underground water storage tank, the removal of contaminated materials; breaking up and grubbing of former slabs and foundations across the whole site; importing site materials and raising site levels generally; ducting for incoming services. Separate to these current pre application proposals, the applicant is proposing the delivery of some of the flood alleviation works in the Site's river frontage which will form part of the Flood Alleviation Scheme (No 2) being proposed by LCC along the River Aire, to the west (and east) of the site.
- 2.4 The first reserved matters were approved for Plot D (application reference 16/07088/RM, City Plans Panel 02.02.2017) and has now been constructed for 'The Headline' building, public realm and access to the site, as well as the highway works to serve the redevelopment of the entire site. No other phases of the original outline scheme have come forward as part of the original outline consent masterplan.
- 2.5 Within the SAP, the Site is identified as a Mixed-Use site, ref. MX1-24. In view of the previous consent, recognising the Site as being capable of delivering up to 37,000 sqm of office floorspace and 204 dwellings; it is however not specifically allocated for this specific quantum of development, nor these specific uses only.

3.0 PROPOSAL:

3.1 The enquiry proposes the formation of three buildings, on a generally east/west axis. The buildings would be constructed of precast concrete panels with folded detailing and integrating aluminum folded perforated panels within the window details, in the following arrangement:

3.2 Building A

This building would be closest to Wellington Street, and step via two 'shoulders' from 13 storeys to a maximum height of 40 storeys. This building is proposed for Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) and would provide approximately 1,065 student units (with a mix of cluster apartments and studio apartments). The ground and first floor of the building would contain 1,352m² flexible student ancillary spaces to service the future residential community on the site.

3.3 Building B

This building is to the south of Building A and runs largely parallel with it and set back 13 m from it at its closest point. The proposed height is 30 storeys and again is intended to host student accommodation in the form of 550 student units.

3.4 Building C

This building would sit at the southern part of the site, adjacent to the River Aire and steps via two 'shoulders' from 12 and 14 storeys to a maximum storey height of 25. It would provide approximately 320 apartments, including a roof top external amenity space.

3.5 Public Realm and routes

The buildings are proposed to be set in a landscaped public realm, which extends to almost 62% of the site's area (excluding the road which is approximately 5% of the site area), providing:

- Connections to the external public highway, including two-way access (in/out) of the Wellington Street (as provided for 'The Headline' building), one way entry (in only) from Wellington Bridge Street.
- Delivering the consented access route through the site.
- Focusing the ground level of the development around a major public square and creating new connections into and through the site.
- Creation of a riverside amenity space, which will connect the site in an east/west direction with other development taking place, including Wellington Place.
- The creation of substantial public realm, with almost 62% of the site put over to public open space, which will link into and complement the public open space that has been developed as part of the 'Headline' scheme, to create a significant public square.

- 3.6 Vehicular access is proposed from Wellington Bridge Street and this will serve both the Building C's basement car park, and the servicing of the remainder of the site. Access and egress are provided off Wellington Street, again for servicing (including emergency vehicles) and egress for the basement car park in Building 3.
- 3.7 The Developer proposes to make two full planning applications, for the comprehensive redevelopment of the site. The first application will be for Building A and B and the second application for Building C. This is to enable the scheme to proceed in a phased manner. The Developer has confirmed that a PBSA operator (Urbanite) will be delivering the PBSA buildings, and a BtR operator will deliver Building C.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

- 4.1 Outline consent (LPA Ref: 14/07956/OT) was approved in 2015 for a Mixed-Use development of residential/hotel, office and ancillary commercial use, controlled via a series of 'parameter plans' over four plots. The application description was as follows:

"a mixed use scheme comprising office (B1), residential and/or hotel (C3/C1) and a flexible range of supporting uses at ground floor (A1-A5, D1 and D2) with basement car parking; public open space and modifications to the site access junctions".

The application proposed four principal blocks (Blocks A-D), alongside two smaller commercial units. Outline permission was granted, with all matters reserved other than access, with the details of new site junctions into the site approved at outline stage. The outline permission was subject to several non-material amendments since, including adjustments to the approved access arrangements (ref. 19/9/00198/MOD).

The parameter plans established the layout for that scheme. The plans also set building heights as well as parameters for public open spaces, active frontages and connectivity through the site. The outline consent was subject to a s106 Agreement (the Legal Agreement) with legal obligations relating to financial contributions to public transport improvements and off-site highways works, travel planning for the development and submission of details for public access areas for each phase.

Condition 3 of the Outline Permission required the submission of all reserved matters applications for the remaining phases of development to be made by 27 October 2019 latest. No applications have subsequently been made, and the time period for submitting further reserved matters applications under this Outline Consent has now expired.

- 4.2 Reserved Matters application for appearance, layout, landscaping and scale for Phase 1 ('The Headline' building) were considered and approved under application 16/07088/RM having been considered by City Plans Panel on 2nd February 2017.
- 4.3 Pre-application discussions (PREAPP/18/00636) in relation to redevelopment of the site in 2019 from 2 no BtR buildings (419 units) of 17 and 23 storeys and a hotel of up to 19 storeys took place in 2018/2019. The scheme attracted the Council's support (the City Plans Panel and Officers), for a scheme of significant scale on the majority of the site, but ultimately did not come forward as a consequence of wind and microclimate conditions that could not be addressed through that scheme's design.

5.0 HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS:

- 5.1 The proposals have been the subject of pre-application discussions between the Developer, their Architects, and Local Authority Officers since June 2021. These discussions have focused on the design and massing of the new buildings, heritage matters including assessment of key views, highway safety and servicing, sustainability, opportunities for landscaping and maintaining pedestrian connectivity.

6.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES:

6.1 Statutory Context

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 at this site, the Development Plan for Leeds currently comprises the following documents:

- The Leeds Core Strategy (Adopted November 2014 and as amended by the Core Strategy Selective Review 2019)
- Saved Leeds Unitary Development Plan Policies (UDPR 2006)
- The Natural Resources & Waste Local Plan (NRWLP 2013) including revised policies Minerals 13 and 14 (2015).
- Leeds Site Allocations Plan (SAP 2019)

These development plan policies are supplemented by supplementary planning guidance and documents.

6.2 Development Plan

6.3 Leeds Core Strategy (CS)

Leeds Core Strategy sets out strategic level policies and vision to guide the delivery of development investment decisions and the overall future of the district. The site is located within the City Centre boundary. The most relevant policies are set out below:

- Spatial Policy 1 Location and scale of development.
- Spatial policy 2 hierarchy of centres and spatial approach to retailing, offices, intensive leisure and culture
- Spatial Policy 3 City Centre Development
- Spatial Policy 6 Housing requirement and allocation of housing land
- Spatial policy 7 distribution of housing land and allocations
- Spatial Policy 8 Economic development priorities
- Spatial Policy 9 Employment
- Spatial Policy 11 Transport infrastructure investment priorities such as pedestrian improvements
- Policy CC1 City Centre Development
- Policy CC3 Improving connectivity between the City Centre and Neighbouring Communities.
- Policy H3 Housing Density
- Policy H4 Housing Mix
- Policy H5 Affordable Housing
- Policy H6 purpose built student housing
- Policy EC2 Office development
- Policy EC3 Employment use land
- Policy P10 Design

- Policy P11 Heritage
- Policy P12 Landscape
- Policy T1 Transport management
- Policy T2 Accessibility requirements and new development
- Policy H9 Space Standards
- Policy H10 Accessible Dwellings
- Policy EN1 Carbon dioxide reduction
- Policy EN2 Sustainable design and construction
- Policy EN4 District heating
- Policy EN5 Managing flood risk
- Policy EN8 Electrical Vehicle Charging
- Policy G5 Open space provision
- Policy G8 Protection of important species and habitats
- Policy G9 Biodiversity Improvements

6.4 Leeds Unitary Development Plan Review 2006 (UDPR) Saved Policies

Relevant Saved Policies include:

- Policy GP5 all planning considerations
- Policy BD2 / BD5 design and siting of new buildings
- Policy LD1 landscaping

6.5 Leeds Natural Resources and Waste DPD

The plan sets out where land is needed to enable the City to manage resources, like minerals, energy, waste and water over the next 15 years, and identifies specific actions which will help use natural resources in a more efficient way.

Relevant policies include:

- Air 1 management of air quality through new development
- Water 1 water efficiency including sustainable drainage
- Water 7 surface water run-off
- Water 2 protection of water quality
- Water 4 development in flood risk areas
- Water 6 flood risk assessments
- Land 1 contaminated land
- Land 2 development and trees
- Minerals 3 coal safeguarding

6.6 Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance (SPD/SPG):

- SPD Tall Buildings Design Guide
- SPD Building for Tomorrow Today: Sustainable Design and Construction
- SPD Parking
- SPD Travel Plans
- SPD Accessible Leeds
- SPG City Centre Urban Design Strategy
- HMO, Purpose-Built Student accommodation and Co-Living Amenity Standards SPD (Draft)

6.7 Site Allocations Plan

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.

The SAP identifies the Former Yorkshire Post site as a mixed use allocation (ref. MX1-24) for c. 204 residential units and 37,000 sqm of office floorspace.

6.8 National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF)

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied (para 1) and is a material consideration in planning decisions (para 2). It states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development (para 7). So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paras 10-11). It states that decision makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible (para 38).

The Framework sets policies on the following issues which are relevant to this planning application proposal (including section numbers):

2 Achieving sustainable development (paras 7-14)

4 Decision making (paras 38 - 58)

5. delivering a sufficient supply of homes (60-80)

6 Building a strong competitive economy (81-83)

7 Ensuring the vitality of town centres (86-91)

8 Promoting healthy and safe communities (92-97)

9 Promoting sustainable transport (104-113)

11 Making effective use of land (119-125)

12 Achieving well designed places (126-135)

14 Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding (152-169)

15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (174-188)

16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (including paras 189-208)

6.8 Other Legislation

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the "Listed Building Act 1990") reads:

"In considering whether to grant planning permission... for a development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority...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"

6.9 Consultations Undertaken

The consultations set out below relate solely to the pre-application enquiry and full consultation with these consultees and others as required will take place at full application stage.

6.9.1 Sustainability - Design Team

The proposals have been assessed by the design team alongside the conservation and planning teams as part of a series of pre application meetings since June 2021. The proposals presented to members represent the latest and most settled design solution for the site and correspond to the advice provided by the design officer at various stages of the process with regard to architectural treatments, massing and scale and materiality.

6.9.2 Flood Risk Management

The application site is located within Flood Zone 3 as a result of fluvial flooding from the River Aire. However, it is noted that the site will be protected by the Leeds FAS 2 Step 1 works which are ongoing. The applicant will be required to submit a Flood Risk Assessment to support the planning application and should agree the scope and required flood mitigation measures with the Environment Agency. In addition, it will also be necessary to demonstrate that the Flood risk Sequential and Exception Test can be passed. Specific technical advice on the content and scope of documentation to support a future planning application has been provided to the applicant.

6.9.3 Highways

There are no objections to the proposed scheme as presented subject to two points of access being retained including a link between the two; an internal layout in accordance with the Street design Guide SPD; and contribution to highway improvements at the key junctions in the study area and improvements for pedestrians and cyclists. A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan are required with any planning application.

6.9.4 Contaminated Land

The proposed development includes vulnerable land uses. Should the development proposal be submitted as a full planning application the contaminated land team require a Phase 1 Desk Study Report in support of the application. Depending on the outcome of the Phase 1 Desk Study, a Phase 2 (Site Investigation) Report and Remediation Statement may also be required.

6.9.5 Conservation Team

The proposals have been assessed to ensure no adverse impact to the city's heritage assets in key views through the city. The proposals are not considered to introduce adverse visual or setting impacts to key heritage assets.

6.9.6 Landscape Team

The Landscape Officer has commented on the following matters:

- This is an area of very poor air quality due to multiple road systems and regular standing traffic.
- Green Infrastructure would improve the air quality for the benefit of the health and wellbeing of new residents.
- The formal proposals to be submitted as a planning application need to incorporate play elements in line with advice within the NPPF and to support the amenity of residents.
- The scheme brings an opportunity for a multi-functional 'wrap around' public space.

- Tree retention and new buffer planting to Wellington Bridge Street should be encouraged.

7.0 KEY ISSUES

Members are asked to comment on the proposals and to consider/note the following matters.

7.1 Principle of development / Housing Mix / Affordable Housing

7.1.1 The site is allocated for mixed use in the SAP (MX1-24) and the proposal for the site is for a mixture of BtR and Student Residential accommodation, without an office/employment component in line with the extant allocation. In respect of CS Policy EC3 the Local Planning Authority has considered its employment supply position. The application site does not lie within an area of shortfall and therefore the proposed alternative land use for residential can be considered against policy EC3A(i). As of April 2021 the supply of Office across the District is 1227660 sqm. With this in mind it is felt that a loss of 37000 sqm from this allocation is likely to be acceptable since the proposals would not undermine the economic objectives of the city.

7.1.2 Residential development in the City Centre is encouraged by both CS policy CC1b and national policy. CS Policy H2 is supportive of residential development which is accessible to the necessary amenities and facilities to support housing which would be the case here. Therefore, this site is considered to be an appropriate location for residential development, being sustainably situated with excellent transport links to all the requisite amenities and facilities to support new residents. Paragraph 122 of the NPPF makes it clear that alternative uses of sites are supported where they meet unmet development need. These proposals would clearly go some way to meet Leeds' housing demand without compromising the development need for employment land as set out above.

7.1.3 Core Strategy Policy H6B relates specifically to the provision of student housing and is therefore relevant to this pre-application proposal. The proposals for Purpose Built Student Accommodation are therefore assessed as follows against the criteria within Policy H6B (represented in italics below):

i) states that development proposals should help extend the supply of student accommodation taking pressure off the need for private housing to be used.

This proposal would assist this objective by providing 1614 purpose-built student bedspaces which would help to take pressure off the need to use private housing for student accommodation.

ii) states that development proposals should avoid the loss of existing housing suitable for family occupation

This proposal would also meet this objective, because it does not propose the loss of any family housing.

(iii) aims to avoid excessive concentrations of student accommodation which would undermine the balance and wellbeing of communities.

It is recognised that there is a concentration of student housing to the west of the Inner Ring Road in Little Woodhouse and along Burley Street. However this site is separated from these areas by the Inner Ring Road. The immediate surrounding land uses around the site are mixed use, predominantly offices, with no traditional housing, albeit there is residential use at Gotts Island on the opposite side of the River Aire and there are planning proposals on nearby sites such as Lisbon Street for both student accommodation and BtR residential accommodation. It is considered that most pedestrian movements from the proposal site would generally be through a mixed use/predominantly commercial part of the City Centre towards the Universities, and therefore the impact on established residential communities and the character of the immediate area is likely to be acceptable.

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

The site is located close to the universities, within easy walking and cycling distance. The fourth test would be satisfied as the development is approximately a 0.5-1 mile walk to the Universities area through the City Centre via Westgate, The Headrow and Calverley Street.

(v) is assessed below at 7.1.7.

7.1.4 With reference to the proposed BtR residential component, the site is located within the City Centre, and within an area designated for significant regeneration and a focus for new housing. In general, the demographic need of City Centre locations has been, and would continue to be, the focus for younger professionals, where 1- and 2-bedroom homes are more appropriate for this demographic. Residents living in rented accommodation are typically younger households, due to the flexibility of renting and to save to purchase a property. The planning application would be supported by a Housing Needs Assessment in order to address Core Strategy Policy H4.

Policy H4:

‘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’

The supporting text to Table H4 sets out the preferred housing mix which reflects the SHMA (2011). The housing mix proposed by the pre application is compared below against Table H4:

Type	Max %	Min %	Target %	Proposed Scheme
Houses	90	50	75	0
Flats	50	10	25	(100%)
Size	Max %	Min %	Target %	Scheme
1 bed /st	50	0	10	136 (42%)
2 bed	80	30	50	163 (51%)
3 bed	70	20	30	23 (7%)
4 bed	50	0	10	0

The supporting text to this policy in Paragraph 5.2.11 states:

‘The form of development and character of area should be taken into account too. For example, a scheme of 100% flats may be appropriate in a particular urban context’

- 7.1.5 With this in mind officers consider the provision of 100% flats within Building C is deemed acceptable in principle due to the City Centre location, size of the site, density requirements and making best use of land to provide supporting infrastructure and public realm.
- 7.1.6 Whilst table H4 in the Core Strategy is only a preferred housing mix, the onus is with the applicant to demonstrate (with evidence of housing need) why the preferred housing mix cannot be met in the event of an application, which the applicant has stated their intention to provide. Members are advised this scheme overprovides on one and two bed units and underprovides on three and four bed units and justification for this approach will be required. Members views on this particular matter are requested at this early stage.
- 7.1.7 Criteria (v) of policy H6B relating to proposals for purpose-built student housing requires that the proposed accommodation provides satisfactory internal living accommodation in terms of daylight, outlook and juxtaposition of living rooms and bedrooms. Core Strategy Policies CC1(b) and P10, and Saved UDPR Policies BD5 and GP5 also 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, outlook, privacy and external amenity space. Whilst the Council’s emerging policy for student housing space requirement is draft only at the time of writing, paragraph 5.2.46 of the supporting text to Core Strategy 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”. Whilst the details of the scheme content are still being resolved by the Developer, it is anticipated that that the following PBSA provision is likely within buildings A and B:
- Building A – 65 studios and 1,000 cluster apartments.
 - Building B – 494 studios and 55 cluster apartments.
- 7.1.8 Whilst detailed floor plans have not yet been provided as a result of the ongoing design process with the applicant and officers, the developer team have advised that it is their intention that all units will be constructed to NDSS / Core Strategy Policy H9 standards in the case of the BtR units, and the student accommodation will meet LCC’s draft Planning Guidance on the size and amenity standards for student schemes.
- 7.1.9 The developer team have also advised that they will be providing affordable housing in line with Leeds City Council’s policy (Policy H5). The form of that (discount market rent, on-site affordable housing or off-site contribution) is still to be determined and will be confirmed at the time of making the planning application.
- 7.1.10 Section 106 obligations for a formal application will be required to make the development acceptable in planning terms and would include travel plan review fee, Sustainable Travel Plan Fund, TRO amendments, contribution to highway improvement scheme at the assessed junctions, contribution towards cycling and

pedestrian schemes, maintenance of the internal road, control of affordable housing, greenspace, control of student occupancy and retention of public accessibility through the site.

7.1.11 On this basis, the principle of residential/student residential uses is considered acceptable.

7.1.12 Do members support the emerging proposals in respect of the principle of student/residential development?

7.2 Design, Heritage and amenity considerations

7.2.1 The proposal would be visible in longer views around the City, and the applicant has prepared a townscape visual impact assessment to demonstrate key views in long, medium and near distance views from identified locations. In terms of the proposed building heights and massing, the site falls in an area identified in the Council's adopted Tall Buildings Strategy SPD as being suitable for taller buildings, and where subject to detailed design, heritage and other development management considerations tall buildings could be supported. Therefore, subject to layout considerations relating to outlook, privacy, daylight and sunlight, wind, skyline composition and heritage impacts, in principle the proposed range of building heights of 25-40 storeys are considered by officers to be acceptable in this location which is an emerging environment for tall buildings.

7.2.2 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that decision makers should give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings. The proposals as presented have been the subject of a number of detailed design meetings including input from the Conservation Team and a series of meetings and assessments around the impact of the proposed developments have taken place as part of the enquiry process to establish what visual impacts and potential harm to the setting of heritage assets could occur as a result of the proposed development.

7.2.3 The analysis has established the proposed development would not be visible from key views from Millennium Square, St Paul's Street, Park Place and York Place within the Conservation Area. 22 further views have been analysed, taking into account any visual impacts in both the existing scenario and scenario where consented development could manifest. Of the views assessed the key areas of potential impact are as follows:

7.2.4 Park Square

Building A would be visible from the eastern edge of Park Square, however the building would be set back a substantial distance from the roofline of the square in views westward and would have a kinetic relationship to the listed buildings in the square and would not dominate in terms of height. The proposed materiality and tone of Building A would tie in with the brick/terracotta vernacular of the group heritage asset of the square and its buildings and the relationship to Park Square is considered acceptable in this regard.

7.2.5 View from Cookridge Street

This view takes in the presence of building A beyond buildings along the southern edge of Westgate. Again, it is considered that as a result of the application site's generous distance from Westgate the tower would be seen as a building in the

backdrop rather than a prominent building that dominates the lower scale environment of Westgate and around the Town Hall.

7.2.6 View from City Square towards West Street / Wellington Street

Building A would be visible in long views from City Square. As part of the design evolution of the scheme, the taller element of Building A has been set back into the site to reduce massing levels close to the pedestrian environment to a more human scale and avoid over domination of the public environment. As a result of this design change, the taller 40 storey element of building A sits comfortably alongside surrounding buildings on Wellington Street and provides only a limited additional massing above the height of surrounding buildings when viewed from City Square in the setting of the Grade II Majestic. From Wellington Street Building B becomes visible from the area approximately outside Central Square on Wellington Street, however again this building would be of limited height above the surrounding buildings and would not dominate. Building A becomes more visually prominent however it provides a neat end stop to the vista along Wellington Street and a point of height, slender in form rather than slab like and over dominant.

7.2.7 Hanover Square

The location of Building A in reference to the roofline of buildings around the southern edge of Hanover Square results in the building appearing over the top of more modern building such as Park Lane College and Marlborough Towers as opposed to clearly breaking the roofline of residential scale buildings around the southern edge of the square. In the event that surrounding consented development comes forward, the form of Building A would be read as part of a conglomerate of taller buildings. In this regard and in both scenarios officers are satisfied that the proposals would not adversely impact the setting of the square as an important group heritage asset.

7.2.8 Woodhouse Square

From within woodhouse Square, the key view analysis has demonstrated that towers A and B would be emergent in the south western corner of the square but would read as buildings in the backdrop alongside Marlborough Towers which, by way of perspective would appear to be of a similar height to the new buildings. In this regard, the two visible towers are not considered to adversely break the roofline of buildings around the southern periphery of the square and the impact is considered acceptable.

7.2.9 In architectural terms, the three buildings would use a combination of verticality, unifying language and elements of depth and texture to create forms which although tall appear ordered with proportionate quantities of solid and void, regularity and consistency of vertical and horizontal proportions. The materials palette and use of profiled toned panels as secondary and tertiary elements would not compete with the primary visual strength of the vertical piers providing that colour and tone are given due consideration in the final design and carefully controlled through conditions at a formal application stage. The tonality of the three buildings is still under discussion however it is agreed that the middle of the three buildings (Building B) should act as a visual mediator between buildings A and C to give all three buildings clear definition from one another, whilst maintaining the use of a tonal palette that pays homage to the tonality of buildings in the city centre and most notably the Conservation Area.

7.2.10 Window to window distances within the proposed layout range from 18-26 metres approximately, which would provide adequate levels of distance such that a

reasonable level of privacy is maintained. The closest point between buildings A and B is shown as approximately 11 metres, however this direct distance measurement would be from communal space within building A onto a stairwell / lift enclosure within Building B and would not therefore produce a harmful impact in terms of overlooking of resident dwelling spaces.

7.2.10 Do Members support the emerging design, scale and form?

7.2 Landscaping proposals

7.2.1 The enquiry is supported by indicative landscape proposals which seek to provide a high-quality area of public realm equating to approximately 1400 sqm. Major landscaping is proposed on the western boundary of the site, where the site adjoins Wellington Bridge Street, and this will include a range of wind mitigation measures, some of which are proposed to form part of the public arts strategy on the site. It is proposed that the existing clock tower on the site, which is a legacy of the former Yorkshire Post use of the site, will be demolished and “reinvented” as a major piece of public art which will also act as wind mitigation.

7.2.2 The hard and soft landscape arrangements are subdivided into 4 ‘character areas’ comprising the introduction of a ‘Micro Urban Forest’ at approximately 830sqm (area 1) leading onto a riverside walkway area (area 2) intended to link up to the public realm adjacent to the riverside aspect of ‘The Headline’ and allow for onward connections into the adjacent MEPC Wellington Place Phase 2 site. The third area (The Thread and River Park) would link Wellington Bridge Street to the centre of the site and provides an east-west axis route from buildings A and B to the riverside walkway. The final of the four areas is ‘The Square’ and is essentially a public square arrangement to the west of building A providing an area of communal outdoor space for residents and spill out space for pop up events. The two key open spaces within the layout are considered to be generously proportioned, with the area on the Riverside extending to circa 120 m in length x 12 m at its widest (and 10 m at its narrowest) with the public realm within the heart of the site extending to 44 m x 65 m.

7.2.3 The landscaping proposals are evolving at the time of this report and are provided as information only at this stage. Notwithstanding, the applicant is proposing a layout which is intended to serve a number of functions including informal play, functional lawn spaces, the introduction of biophilic structures and sculptures and a Micro Forest at the site’s northern edge adjacent to the riverside, with the intention of promoting biodiversity, insect and animal species, promote carbon sequestering and reduce noise and pollutants from the adjacent highway. The layout as provided with the enquiry and to be presented to members would provide new pedestrian routes and accessible spaces and complete a safe pedestrian route starting at Whitehall Road via the MEPC site up to Wellington Bridge Street/Wellington Street which is considered positive in terms of the wider placemaking objectives in this part of the city centre.

7.2.4 Do members support the proposed emerging approach to landscaping and pedestrian connectivity?

7.3 Transportation Considerations

7.3.1 The Site is situated in a highly sustainable location. Leeds Rail Station is only 10 minutes’ walk, and the heart of the City Centre is similarly within easy walking distance. Wellington Street and Wellington Bridge Street are main arterial routes into the City Centre and benefit from excellent public transport links. The nearest bus stops

are located approximately 160m east along Wellington Street and at the Wellington Bridge Street site frontage. There is also easy walking access to leisure and retail services and widespread on street parking controls which are likely to mitigate against adverse impacts on the highway from displaced parking. As such the proposals provide minimal levels of on site car parking (16 spaces) - Instead the applicant has stated their intention in principle to provide high levels of cycle parking provision which reflect the sustainable location of the site and the move towards transportation provision that more neatly fits with the Climate Emergency. Full details of sustainable transportation measures will be required for consideration at the full application stage.

- 7.3.2 The strategic aim of the masterplan is to improve the public realm linking A65 Kirkstall Road to the riverside and beyond to sites due south of the enquiry site to enhance the wider connectivity. The submitted details for this enquiry indicate pedestrian routes through the new site arrangement to allow access from public transport routes to the River Aire and Wellington Place to the south east which is considered positive.
- 7.3.3 It has been previously agreed for the first phase of development, the internal road network need not be adopted unless the developer decides otherwise. Sufficient assurance will be required through the S106 Agreement that the developer and its successors will retain liability for maintenance in perpetuity. The applicant has confirmed that maintenance would be through a management company. A contribution is required towards the Council's proposed improvements to the cycle route along the Wellington Bridge Street linking into the section that has been delivered at the site frontage. In addition, an extension of the cycle route across the access into the site at Wellington Bridge Street is required, to be delivered through a future s278 agreement.
- 7.3.4 Two internal laybys are proposed one east of plot A near the Wellington Street access, which has already been implemented and the other is proposed south of plot B; these will be used for the servicing, delivery and pick up/drop off associated with the development. Suitable bin storage provision should be provided on the site and ensure that the maximum carry distances are not exceeded and given the emerging status of the proposed design and layout of the site, these are matters which will be more fully considered at the formal application stage.
- 7.3.5 The previous consent was supported by a Transport Assessment (TA) and whilst it may be the case that the revised proposals generate reduced traffic numbers, the scale of development requires that a TA is provided. Traffic impact assessments at the West Street gyratory and Armley Gyratory will be required for consideration as part of a formal application. The previous outline consent provided a modest contribution towards capacity improvements to the adjacent junction, a contribution to highway improvements is still expected to be required as a result of any increased trip generation resulting from the development. Improvements to local Traffic Regulation Orders will be necessary to manage on-street parking and prevent parking overspill in the local area.
- 7.3.6 A Travel Plan will also be required to support a planning application and associated measures controlled via a section 106 agreement. A Construction Management Plan will be controlled through any planning application. Full details of cycle provision and sustainable transport measures will be required for consideration as part of a full application once the detailed design of buildings is finalised.
- 7.3.7 With the exception of drop-off areas for taxis and servicing, and the provision of car club bays, there is proposed to be no surface-level car parking. There would be no car parking associated with the student use, whilst the Build to Rent building will

contain in the order of 16 car parking spaces at basement. All spaces are intended to be provided with electric vehicle charging points in line with Core Strategy Policy EN8.

7.3.8 **Do Members support the emerging approach to car parking provision?**

7.4 **Sustainability and Climate Change**

7.4.1 Members will be aware that the Council has declared a Climate Emergency. Existing planning policies seek to address the issue of climate change by ensuring that development proposals incorporate measures to reduce the impact of non-renewable resources.

7.4.2 Although at an early and emerging stage the proposals aim to meet the requirements of planning policies EN1 and EN2 to reduce total predicted carbon dioxide emissions (to achieve 20% less than the Building Regulations Target Emission Rate and provide a minimum of 10% of the predicted energy needs of the development from low carbon energy). Full details of the measures that will be employed to address sustainability will come forward as part of any subsequent planning application, such that sustainability measures will be integrated into the detailed design.

The applicant has advised that the buildings are proposed to be constructed of the highest environmental standards, and to minimise carbon consumption wherever possible. The following construction and operational measures are proposed to be incorporated into the buildings:

- In line with Leeds Core Strategy EN1 total predicted carbon dioxide emissions will be reduced to exceed the minimum of 20% less than the Building Regulations Target Emission Rate and the minimum of 10% of the predicted energy needs of the development will be provided from low carbon energy.
- In line with Leeds Core Strategy EN4 the viability of a connection to the Leeds PIPES district heating network will be explored. Initial dialogue has been made with Peter Midgley, LCC Project Officer for Sustainable Energy and Air Quality. If a connection is not possible or viable a centralised communal air source heat pumps providing a low carbon source for part of the heating demand and 100% of the hot water demand will be addressed.
- The building is currently being energy modelled using the computer modelling package EDSL TAS Part L 2013 which is based on BRE's standard calculation tool and uses a dynamic simulation method for checking compliance in order to determine the target and predicted carbon emissions.

7.5 **Biodiversity (for further information)**

Policy designations within and close to the site include Leeds Habitat Network, Green Space, Strategic Green Infrastructure and sites of ecological/geological importance. In this location, there is a need to achieve a Biodiversity Net Gain which will require addressing in the subsequent Ecological Impact Assessment with full Biodiversity Metric calculations to be provided at full application stage.

7.6 **Wind and Microclimate Considerations**

The Developer's Design Team have engaged at an early stage with a wind engineer to determine the design, massing and mitigation necessary to ensure acceptable wind conditions. At the time of this report, initial scoping information has been provided

which will go on to form the basis of a wind impact assessment to be submitted with a full planning application.

8.0 CONCLUSION

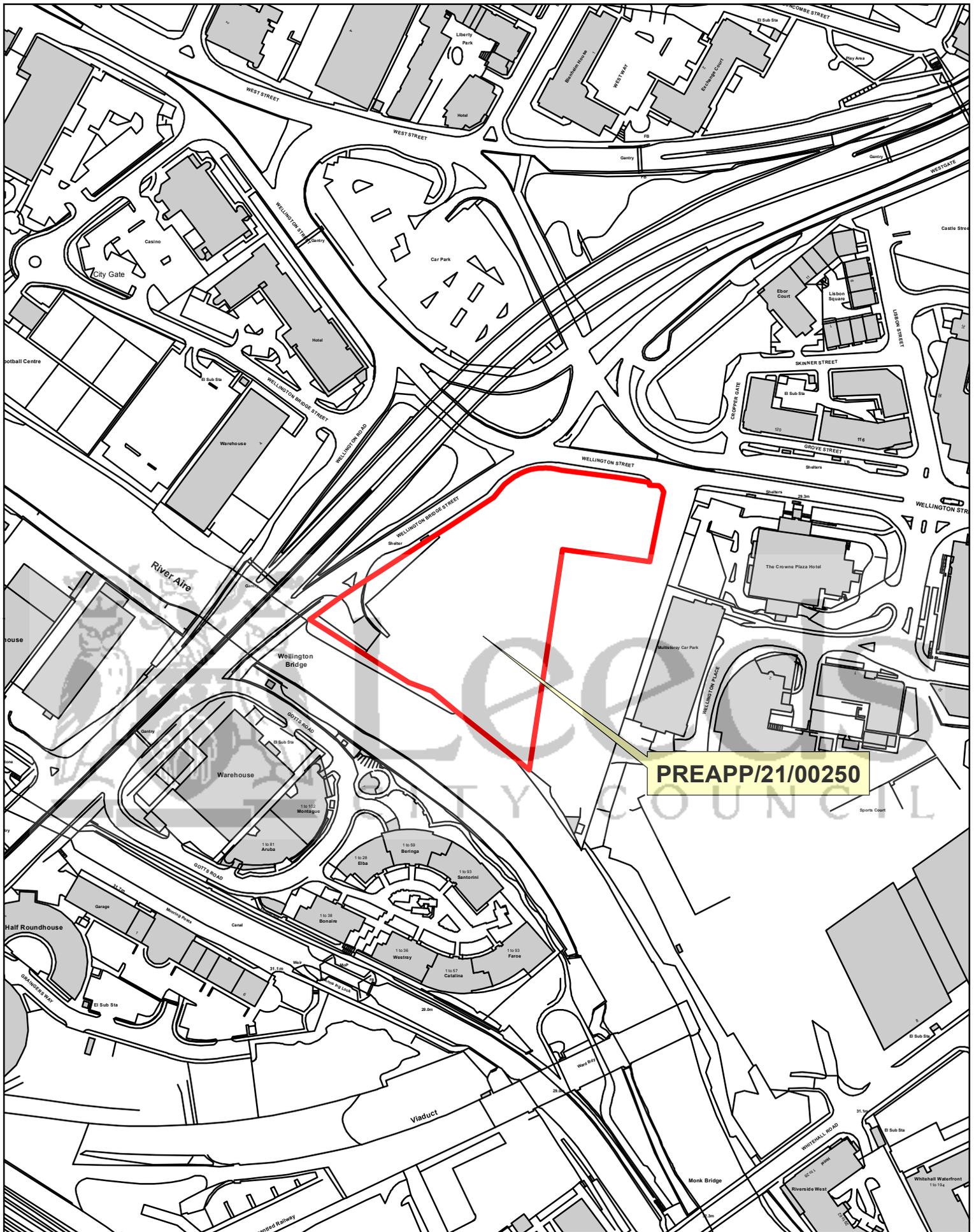
8.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the report and the presentation. In addition, Members are invited to provide feedback in response to the following key questions asked in the report above and as follows:

Do members support the emerging proposals in respect of the principle of student/residential development?

Do members support the proposed emerging approach to landscaping and pedestrian connectivity?

Do Members support the emerging approach to car parking provision?

Background Papers: PREAPP/21/00250



PREAPP/21/00250

CITY PLANS PANEL

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