

CITY PLANS PANEL

THURSDAY, 16TH JUNE, 2022

PRESENT: Councillor J McKenna in the Chair

Councillors K Brooks, C Campbell, P Carlill,
P Wadsworth, A Khan, A Maloney,
B Anderson, S Hamilton and N Walshaw

SITE VISITS

The following Members attended the site visits earlier in the day:

- A Maloney
- J McKenna
- C Campbell
- B Anderson
- A Khan
- S Hamilton

CHAIRS OPENING COMMENTS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. He welcomed Cllr Maloney to her first Plans Panel as a new Member of Council, saying that she was the youngest Member of Council, having only recently finished university.

The Chair also welcomed substitute Members Councillors Walshaw, Hamilton and Anderson.

The Chair also welcomed back Cllr Khan after his year as Lord Mayor.

1 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against refusal of inspection of documents.

2 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of Press and Public

There were no exempt items.

3 Late Items

There were no late items.

4 Declaration of Interests

No declarations in interests were made at the meeting.

5 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors A Garthwaite, C Gruen D Cohen and D Blackburn.

Attending the meeting as substitutes were:

- Cllr N Walshaw for Cllr Garthwaite

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Thursday, 14th July, 2022

- Cllr S Hamilton for Cllr Gruen
- Cllr B Anderson for Cllr Cohen

6 Minutes - Thursday, 19 May 2022

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 19th May 2022 be approved as a correct record.

7 Application 22-00774-FU - 140-142 Briggate, Leeds, LS1 6LS

The Chief Planning Officer submitted a report for the demolition of existing building and erection of a ten storey building, comprising Class E(a) retail floorspace at ground floor, commercial floorspace falling under Class E (a) retail, (b) food and drink, or (d) indoor sport and recreation on the basement floor, purpose built student accommodation (sui generis) on floors one to nine, with associated communal facilities in the basement and ground floor, outdoor amenity space, plant and cycle parking, at 140-142 Briggate, Leeds LS1 6LS.

Members had visited the site earlier in the day and were shown photographs, and CGI's at the meeting.

The Panel were informed of the following points:

- The application related to the redevelopment of the House of Fraser store on Briggate, involving the demolition of the existing 1950's building.
- Pre-application proposals were presented to a Consultative Meeting of City Plans Panel on 21st December 2021. At the meeting Members confirmed the principle of the use as acceptable and that the scale and form of the development was generally acceptable, subject to details regarding materials.
- The primary entrance and reception to the purpose-built student accommodation would be onto Central Road with student social and amenity space extending along most of the frontage.
- A greater part of the basement would be used for commercial uses such as retail, food and drink or leisure uses, with the primary access for this area from a ground floor access from Central Road. Part of the basement would be used to support the student accommodation, containing bike and bin storage, plant, laundry, gym and cinema room.
- The massing of the building would reduce progressively with increased height above ground floor level.
- The purpose-built student accommodation would contain 238 bedspaces in a mix of 3-8 bedroom clusters, each cluster served by its own dedicated kitchen /living space. Also proposed are 131 self-contained studio rooms which would be distributed around the building. Communal facilities would be focused at, basement level, ground floor level and first floor level. Areas of external amenity space would be provided at first floor level as well as level 8.
- The proposed Briggate elevation would reference elements of the attached listed building.
- Members were shown samples of the proposed materials.

- It was noted that any issues raised by the HSE would need to be addressed before the application is determined.

The applicant's agents and consultants were present at the meeting to respond to Members questions.

In response to questions the Panel were provided with the following information:

- The tree on Central Road would be saved and a survey would be undertaken to ensure that the tree was not damaged during construction. It was the proposal for seating to be provided round the tree as part of the proposed external amenity space with additional benches towards Kirkgate.
- It was noted this area would remain a parking free zone, with only blue badge parking available. There would be a management plan for drop off and pick up at the beginning and end of the academic year. Services access would be maintained as they are currently for House of Fraser.
- Specialists had been engaged with in relation to heritage and conservation of the surrounding area and buildings. Lighter materials would be used at the highest parts of the building, to limit the impact of the scale and massing of the building. The scale and mass of the building was as presented at the meeting in December 2021. The Council's design consultant was in agreement with the developers, saying they had engaged with officers working hard to reduce the mass of the building by using stepped levels, so the building was not towering over the street. It was noted that the developers had engaged with the Civic Trust and comments were included as part of the submitted report.
- Central Road would have extensive improvements made to ensure that students and visitors to the area felt safe and secure.
- Members acknowledged that a condition would be placed on the developers to ensure that the area surrounding the new building would be left in a good condition.

Members comments included:

- The proposed development would be an improvement on what is currently on this site.
- The Central Road public realm proposals need to be reconsidered to provide a more attractive and legible pedestrian area and more comprehensive surface treatment.
- It was the view of most Members that the proposed development although taller than surrounding building was not too impacting due to the in stepped levels and light-coloured materials.
- The proposal blends nicely with the existing listed building.
- As people exit the Trinity Centre this proposed building would be nice to look at.

The Chair recognised that some members had concerns with the mass of this proposed building but gave praise to the developers and the architect for the design.

RESOLVED – To defer and delegate to the Chief Planning Officer as set out in the submitted report.

8 Cllr Wadsworth left the meeting at 3pm at the end of this item.
PREAPP-21-00423 - 100 Merrion Centre and Wade House, Merrion Centre, Merrion Way, Leeds, LS2 8NG

The Chief Planning Officer submitted a pre-application presentation for the conversion and extension of Wade House to form student accommodation and the construction of a new 35 storey tower building for student accommodation use.

Members had visited the site earlier in the day. At the meeting Members were shown slides, photographs and CGI's.

Members were informed of the following points:

- Wade House is part of the Merrion Centre estate which was built in the 1960's.
- In 2019 the applicant had attended Plans Panel with a proposal for offices and retail units which was approved at the Panel. However, there was no market for office accommodation and it was now thought to be more sustainable as student accommodation.
- The proposal would retain and re-use as much of the site as possible. Wade House would up to 3 storeys in height with the new building at 100 Merrion Centre being up to 35 storeys. The use of the buildings would be split into student accommodation but with the retail element retained with access from the Merrion Centre. It was noted that the applicants had used the Leeds Tall Buildings SPD as guidance for the layout.
- It was intended that this site would be a walkable accessible site with new pedestrian and cycle routes.
- Wade Lane access would be made safe and secure for new residents.
- The proposal was for a contemporary design with emerging public realm and roof terraces.
- The site was thought to be sustainable as they plan to retain and re-use Wade House and the future use of the 35 storey building could be easily adapted to be used for residential or hotel use if student accommodation was no longer required, with proximity to amenities.

Member's discussions included:

- The applicant needed to ensure that they worked with a student accommodation provider and ensure that the accommodation was suitable for all students not just wealthy students. It was noted that a provider had not been found yet.

- Members noted that the previous planning permission had not gone ahead as the deal had fallen away.
- The area is a traditional Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) area but would still require a survey to be undertaken to ensure that there was a demand for this type of accommodation in this location.
- Although an emerging design, the conceptual appearance was welcomed compared to the appearance of the current building.
- Some Members were of the view that the accommodation could be aimed at students who were in the later years of university. Student mix and affordability were important factors for this scheme.
- The Scheme needed to ensure that it addresses the climate emergency issues.
- Some Members raised concerns in relation to the proposed access on Wade Lane which was currently used for service vehicles. It was noted that services would use the basement for access and storage instead of Wade Lane. Concerns were also raised in relation to the courtyard proposed as amenity space which would be overshadowed by tall buildings and too small for the proposed 1,000 students who may wish to use it.
- Although the buildings potentially formed part of a cluster of tall buildings around the Merrion Centre, there was some general concern that the proposed new building would be clearly visible from Millennium Square and adversely affected the setting of Leeds City Museum. The proposal needed to compliment the surrounding heritage buildings. Member's suggestions included roof terraces and stepped in terraces to create a more interesting design.
- They were of the view that the amenity space and access off Wade Lane needed to be a bright, vibrant and safe area for the residents.
- Concerns were also raised in relation to the impact on amenities such as GP provision.

Member's provided feedback on questions set out at page 71 of the submitted report:

- *Do Members consider that the proposed use of the site for student accommodation to the upper floors and use class E commercial use to one unit at ground floor, with the resulting loss of potential retail space, is acceptable in principle?*

Members were of the view that there was an excess of vacant retail premises in the city centre so to lose some would be acceptable in this case. The use of the building for students was acceptable, but there were concerns with regard to amenity space.

- *Subject to confirmation of detailed proposals do Members consider that the living conditions within the student accommodation would be acceptable?*

Members were of the view that they were unable to comment on the living conditions as this was a pre application and wait for further details of the accommodation. However, Members wished to see proposals coming forward which would address the accessibility of pedestrians along Wade Lane to ensure that it was safe and secure.

- *Do Members support the emerging design, scale and massing?*

Members were of the view that the design and scale required more work and needed to consider how it was viewed from points in the city centre to work with the surrounding buildings.

RESOLVED – To note the content of the report and presentation.

9 Date and Time of Next Meeting

To note that the next meeting of City Plans Panel will be on Thursday 14th July 2022 at 1:30pm in Civic Hall.

Meeting concluded at 15:45