



## Report of the Chief Planning Officer

### **CITY PLANS PANEL**

**Date: 14 March 2013**

**Subject: PRE-APPLICATION Reference PREAPP/13/00105 – Proposal for office development at Plot C, Sovereign Street, Leeds**

#### **Electoral Wards Affected:**

**City and Hunslet**

Yes

Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

#### **Specific Implications For:**

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

**RECOMMENDATION: This report is brought to Panel for information. The developer's representative will be asked to present the emerging scheme to allow Members to consider and comment on the proposals.**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION:**

1.1 This pre-application presentation relates to the proposed development of a new office building at Sovereign Street, Leeds. The initial proposals will be presented to Panel by the developer's architects, Sheppard Robson, to allow Members to comment on the evolving scheme and raise any issues, prior to the intended submission of a full planning application later in the year.

### **2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:**

2.1 The Sovereign Street site is located at the heart of Leeds City Centre, close to Leeds Railway Station and the River Aire. The whole development site comprises 1.16 hectares and is currently used as a surface car park. It sits directly to the south and west of the City Centre Conservation Area within the Riverside Area, and has remained undeveloped since the demolition of the former Queens Hall in 1989, despite gaining planning permission for a mixed use redevelopment in 1995, and being the subject of pre-application discussions for the Criterion Place 'Kissing Towers' scheme from 2003-2007.

- 2.2 The surrounding area is a mixture of uses including multi-storey car parking, residential, offices, hotel and supporting restaurant and retail uses.
- 2.3 The Sovereign Street Planning Statement identifies three indicative building plots A, B, and C, as well as an area of greenspace (see attached plan). Plot C is the subject of this pre-application presentation. The plot is located at the south west corner of the site, bounded by a service road for the multi-storey car park to the north, Sovereign Street to the south, Swinegate to the east, and where the plot edge meets the recently approved Sovereign Square greenspace to the west. Twelve semi-mature Norway Maple trees are present along the southern and eastern edges of the site.
- 2.5 The site is identified in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in flood risk zone 3, however, more detailed topographical surveys have indicated that the site lies within zone 2.

### **3.0 PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 The proposal is for a 6 storey office building with ground floor retail and food and drink uses. The building would present active glazed ground floor frontages to Swinegate, the new Swinegate Link, Sovereign Street, and the Sovereign Square greenspace. The elevational treatment to Sovereign Square and Swinegate would be a 'sawtooth' glazed façade, whilst the Sovereign Street and Swinegate Link elevations would feature brickwork and glazing.
- 3.2 Basement car parking and servicing would be accessed from Sovereign Street, with 40 car parking spaces proposed at basement level. The main office entrances to the building would be accessed from Sovereign Square.

### **4.0 HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS AND PLANNING HISTORY**

- 3.1 The Sovereign Street site has been identified as a development site since the early 1990s, and in 1995 Leeds Development Corporation granted planning permission for a large mixed use development, of which only the multi-storey car park was built. The adoption of the UDP in 2001, and its review in 2006, formalised the site's allocation in the statutory development plan. In 2002 an informal Planning and Development Brief was adopted for the site, which guided the pre-application discussions with Simons Estates and Ian Simpson Architects regarding the Criterion Place 'Kissing Towers' mixed use scheme. Following the cancellation of this scheme, the site was identified by the Council's Executive Board as a potential site for new buildings and a greenspace, and following public consultation in 2011, a revised Sovereign Street Planning Statement incorporating that vision was adopted. Plans Panel (City Centre) discussed the updated Sovereign Street Planning Statement in March and October 2011.
- 3.2 Planning application reference 12/04018/FU for a 4 storey office building at Plot A Sovereign Street was submitted in September 2012, approved in principle at City Plans Panel in November 2012, and subsequently granted planning permission in December 2013.
- 3.3 Planning application reference 12/04017/FU for a new greenspace at Sovereign Street was submitted in September 2012, approved in principle at City Plans Panel in November 2012, and subsequently granted planning permission in December 2012.

- 3.4 In January 2013, officer discussions with the preferred developer for Plot C commenced.
- 3.5 City and Hunslet Ward Members were consulted by email on 4 March 2013. No comments were received at time of writing.

## **4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES**

### **4.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

The NPPF advocates a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and a “centres first” approach to main town centre uses such as offices. The location of prime office development within the City Centre, close to the railway station meets this requirement to locate such uses in sustainable locations. The NPPF also promotes economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity. This new prestigious office building would help consolidate Leeds City Centre’s role as the economic driver of the Yorkshire region, and the focus for investment in highly skilled and competitive businesses, as advocated by the emerging Core Strategy.

### **4.2 Development Plan**

Leeds Unitary Development Plan Review 2006 (UDPR)

The site is allocated as a development site in the adopted Unitary Development Plan Review 2006 as Proposal Area 21, which forms part of the designated Riverside Area. This states that the site should be principally developed for office use, with scope for ancillary retail, food and drink and leisure uses. This policy highlights the need for north-south pedestrian routes through the site, with a central public space, and a prestige office frontage visible from Neville Street.

Other relevant policies include:

SA1: Secure the highest possible quality of environment.

GP5 all relevant planning considerations

GP7 planning obligations

GP11 sustainability

GP12 sustainability

BD2 new buildings

A1 improving access for all

A4 safety and security provision

N12 urban design

N13 design and new buildings

N25 boundary treatments

N29 archaeology

BD4 all mechanical plant

CC3 City Centre character

CC10 public space and level of provision

CC11 streets and pedestrian corridors

CC12 public space and connectivity

CC13 public spaces and design criteria

CC28 Riverside Area

Riverside Proposal Area Statement 21

E14 Office development

T2 Transport provision for development

T2C Travel plans

T2D public transport provision for development

T5 pedestrian and cycle provision

T6 provision for the disabled

T7A cycle parking

T7B motorcycle parking  
T24 Car parking provision  
LD1 landscaping  
R5 employment and training for local residents associated with the construction and subsequent use of developments  
N38A development and flood risk  
N38B planning applications and flood risk assessments  
N39A sustainable drainage systems  
N51 Nature conservation

#### **4.3 Relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance includes:**

SPD Street Design Guide  
SPD5 Public Transport Improvements and Developer Contributions  
SPD Travel Plans  
SPD Sustainable Design and Construction  
City Centre Urban Design Strategy

#### **Sovereign Street Planning Statement 2011**

The Council adopted the Sovereign Street Planning Statement in July 2011. Following on from the UDPR 2006 Proposal Area designation, it states that a mix of complementary City Centres uses such as office, hotel, residential and supporting active ground floor uses such as food and drink would be acceptable. It identifies three indicative buildings and an area of greenspace. The indicative building plots are sited in order to enhance key views from the Conservation Area in the east and from Neville Street in the west, to take account of existing and potential future pedestrian connections from east to west and north to south, to deliver a significant viable greenspace, and to start to improve pedestrian connections towards the South Bank.

#### **4.4 Leeds Natural Resources and Waste DPD 2013**

The Natural Resources and Waste Local Plan was adopted by Leeds City Council on 16th January 2013. The Natural Resources and Waste Development Plan Document (Local Plan) is part of the Local Development Framework. 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.

#### **4.5 Leeds Core Strategy Publication Draft 2012**

The Publication Draft of the Core Strategy was issued for public consultation on 28th February 2012 and the consultation period closed on 12th April 2012. The Core Strategy sets out strategic level policies and vision to guide the delivery of development investment decisions and the overall future of the district. On 14th November 2012 Full Council resolved to approve the Publication Draft Core Strategy and the sustainability report for the purpose of submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination pursuant to Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Full Council also resolved on 14th November 2012 that a further period for representation be provided on pre-submission changes and any further representations received be submitted to the Secretary of State at the time the Publication Draft Core Strategy is submitted for independent examination. As the Council have resolved to move the Publication Draft Core Strategy to the next stage of independent examination some weight can now be attached to the document and its contents recognising that the weight to be attached may be limited by outstanding representations which have been made which will be considered at the future examination. Of particular relevance to this application proposal is

Spatial Policy 3 Role of Leeds City Centre. This policy seeks to maintain and enhance the role of the City Centre as an economic driver for the District and City Region, by

- promoting the City Centre's role as the regional capital of major new office development,
- making the City Centre the main focus for office development in the District,
- comprehensively planning the redevelopment and re-use of vacant and under-used sites for mixed use development and areas of public space,
- enhancing streets and creating a network of open and green spaces to make the City Centre more attractive
- improving connections between the City Centre and adjoining neighbourhoods

Also of relevance is Core Strategy Policy CC1B which outlines the planned growth within the City Centre, including office growth.

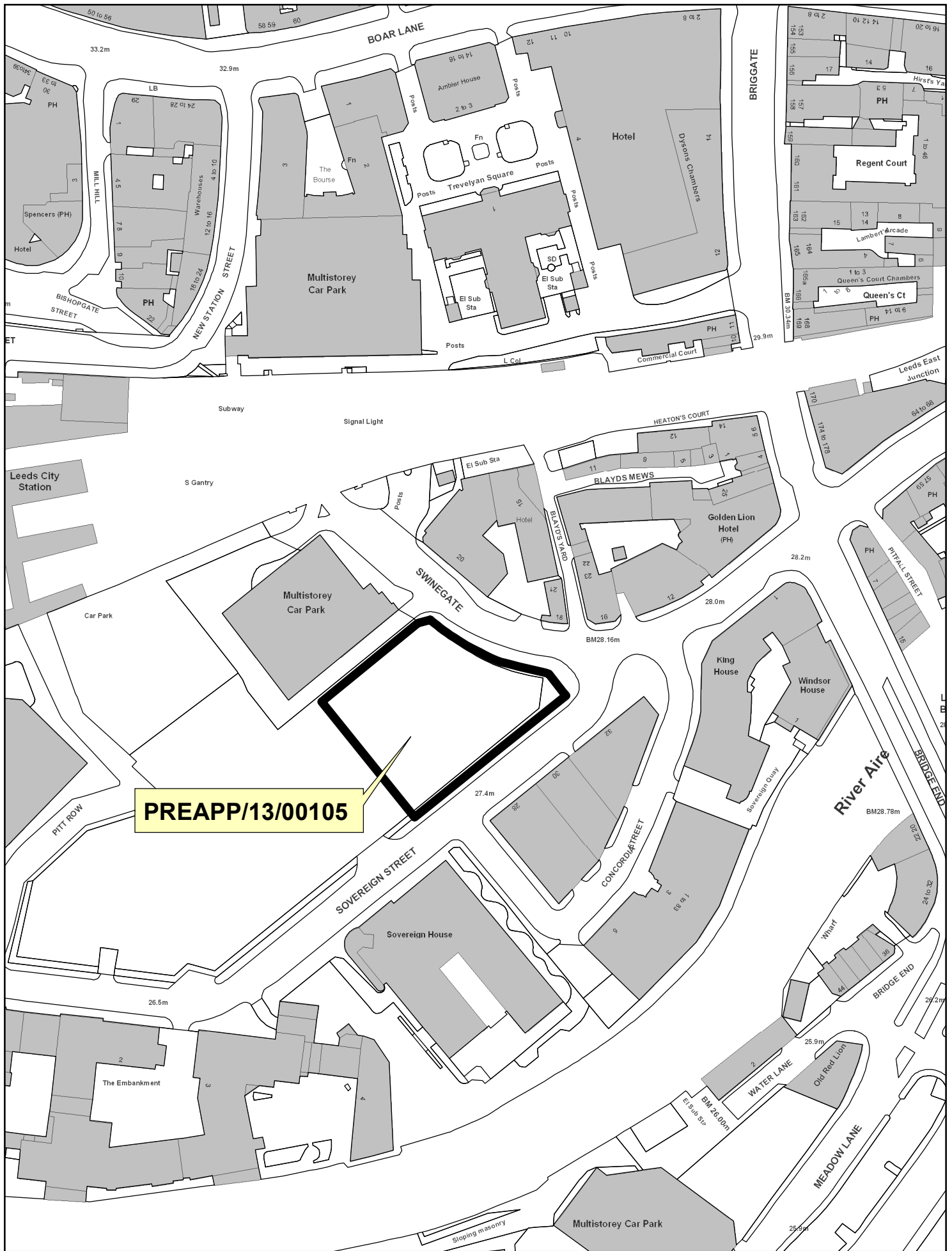
## **5.0 ISSUES**

Members are asked to consider the following matters in particular:

- 5.1 Is the general form and siting of the building acceptable?
- 5.2 Does the building successfully address Sovereign Street, Swinegate and the new greenspace?
- 5.3 Are the proposed elevational treatment and materials appropriate to the character of the surrounding area?
- 5.4 Is it appropriate to take vehicular access from Sovereign Street?
- 5.5 Will the glazed ground floor treatment indicated on the proposals remain open and active around the building once it is occupied, and is there adequate provision for bins, kitchens, chiller cabinets, store-rooms, and other back-of-house functions away from the window frontages, to avoid the need for tenants to use window vinyls to conceal them?
- 5.6 Does the proposal include an appropriately screened rooftop plant enclosure to meet the requirements of the offices and the ground floor units, and does its treatment minimise any potential for visual impact from the surrounding streets, taller buildings and the railway platforms ?

### **Background Papers:**

Sovereign Street Planning Statement July 2011



**PREAPP/13/00105**

# CITY PLANS PANEL







# KEY

- SITE BOUNDARY
- 5-6 DEVELOPMENT SITES
- A POSSIBLE STOREY HEIGHTS
- ← ACTIVE FRONTAGE
- URBAN GREEN SPACE (HARD + SOFT LANDSCAPE)
- A OFF SITE CONNECTION FOOTWAY EDGE
- ← KEY PEDESTRIAN ROUTE
- KEY FUTURE PEDESTRIAN LINK (OPTIONS/POSSIBILITIES SHOWN)
- TREES ALONG STREET EDGE
- ← KEY VIEWS
- ← VEHICLE/DELIVERY ACCESS (GENERALLY TO BASEMENT PARKING)
- POSSIBLE VEHICLE LINK
- POSSIBLE DROP-OFF
- POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITY FOR BUT MULTI-STOREY + PROVIDE ARCADE
- POSSIBLE ARCADE/SHELTERED ROUTE
- RAILWAY ARCHES TO BE RE-DEVELOPED (FUTURE OPTION)
- RAILWAY ARCHES REGENERATED/IN USE

NB POSSIBLE NEW HIGHWAYS ALIGNMENT & IMPROVEMENTS FOR PEDESTRIANS ESPECIALLY AROUND SWINEGATE

NB ENCOURAGE POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BUILDINGS & PUBLIC REALM/CITY PARK ~ INTEGRATED USES SUSTAINABLE CHARACTERISTICS & FEATURES

**OPTION 1A**

**SOVEREIGN STREET DEVELOPMENT SITE FRAMEWORK**

INDICATIVE ONLY

building enclosure  
inside railing

SCALE COMPARISON  
approximate scale of Park Square, Leeds

50M approx.

INDICATIVE DRAWING ONLY

MB. SDU NOV 2010  
 REV. APR. 2011