



Report of the Chief Planning Officer

CITY PLANS PANEL

Date: 11th APRIL 2013

Subject: PRE-APPLICATION PRESENTATION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF 79 RESIDENTIAL APARTMENTS, 1115 SQUARE METRES OF COMMERCIAL FLOORSPACE (A3/A4) AND NEW PUBLIC SPACE, 14-28 THE CALLS, LEEDS (PREAPP/13/00304).

Electoral Wards Affected:

City and Hunslet

No

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 scheme to allow Members to consider and comment on the proposals.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This presentation is intended to inform Members of the latest proposals on land at Warehouse Hill between The Calls and the River Aire. The site has been the subject of several planning permissions during recent years. The latest, involving offices, A3/A4 uses and public space, was agreed by City Centre Plans Panel in 2010. The current proposals involve a mixed use development comprising apartments, commercial space and a new public space laid out in a similar arrangement to that most recently approved. A planning application is expected later in the year.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2.1 The application site is located within the City Centre Conservation Area between The Calls and the River Aire. The site contains a number of buildings originally built to serve trade on the river. The existing buildings fronting The Calls are of traditional design, with the rear elevations onto the riverside being functional and plain in

appearance. The open wharf has been used for surface car parking for some time. There is no public access to the site at present.

- 2.2 A number of buildings have been neglected, appearing rundown and adversely affect the appearance of the area and the character and appearance of the City Centre Conservation Area. In particular, 18 The Calls has been derelict for a number of years, and is in a precarious state, supported by scaffolding. Although listed there is an extant consent for its demolition.
- 2.3 28 The Calls is a small warehouse building, possibly the earliest surviving building on The Calls. However, it was significantly altered in the 20th Century including rendering of the original brick skin both to the front and rear elevations and alterations of window openings. Internally the structure was drastically altered and only the original roof trusses and beams survive.
- 2.4 The Mission Hut is a stone built former chapel building used by the Leeds canal and waterfront workers in the 19th and early 20th Century. The building has fallen into disrepair and has no viable function at present. There is an extant consent for its demolition.
- 2.5 2 to 12 The Calls to the northwest of the site is occupied by offices. 32 The Calls is located on the eastern fringe of the site. The listed building comprises 6 storeys fronting The Calls and 7 storeys to the riverside. The building primarily contains apartments. The Aire Bar is situated at lower level within the building with an open terrace area extending towards the river. Buildings on the southern side of the river facing the application site are primarily in residential use, including Navigation Walk. However, in common with the wider riverside area there is a mix of leisure, office and residential use.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 Application 20/262/03/FU was approved in April 2007 for redevelopment of the site to provide 74 apartments, offices and A3 bar and restaurant uses. The scheme involved the demolition of 14-16 The Calls, 18 The Calls and The Mission Hut. This consent expired in April 2012.
- 3.2 Application 08/05307/FU was approved in July 2011. It involved demolition of 14-18 The Calls, 28 The Calls and The Mission Hut and the construction of two new blocks containing 5070 square metres of office accommodation and 1500 square metres of A3/A4 floorspace, with basement parking facilities. The proposed buildings framed a south-facing public space with terracing stepping down to the river.
- 3.3 Consent is in place for the demolition of 14-16 The Calls (10/04387/CA), 18 The Calls (10/04388/LI) and 28 The Calls (08/05309/CA). Each of those consents is subject to a condition that there should be no demolition before a contract for the carrying out of the works of redevelopment of the site has been agreed and planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment to which the contract relates.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The current proposals work closely with the principles of the approved scheme. As with earlier schemes 14-16 The Calls, 28 The Calls and The Mission Hut are proposed to be demolished allowing opportunities for opening up views of the river and public access into the site.

- 4.2 An “L” shaped building is proposed towards the west end of the site. The 4-7 storey building would step up in height from The Calls towards the river. The building would front The Calls close to the existing location of 14-16 The Calls, project directly towards the river, then run alongside the river behind 2-12 The Calls. The building would accommodate parking at lower ground floor level accessed from Riverside Court. The ground floor is identified as “retail” space fronting The Calls and residential facing the river. Above this level the use is entirely residential. Levels 4-7 have a reduced footprint, with the top level being solely located along the riverside.
- 4.3 The extant planning approval identifies the extension of 20-24 The Calls at two levels on the southern side. This extension is no longer proposed enabling the provision of a larger area of open space. The retained building would be converted to “retail” space at lower ground and ground floor, with access to apartments proposed at first floor level.
- 4.4 A building with a predominantly rectangular footprint is proposed at the eastern end of the site between 24 and 32 The Calls. The building would have a “retail” use at lower ground and ground floor with 3 levels of residential accommodation above. A public route into the site is now located on the west side of this building.
- 4.5 The proposed new building materials are identified as ashlar sandstone at plinth level, rustic variegated red-blue brick walling, with aluminium/timber composite windows. The residential element of the scheme incorporates large balconies constructed utilising mild steel balustrades and hardwood handrails overlooking the river.
- 4.6 A large public space is proposed at the heart of the site. The primary public access would be between 20-24 The Calls and the new “L” shaped building, with additional access from the walkway at the end of Riverside Court, and from the cut to the east of 20-24 The Calls. Whilst full details are not yet available it will be primarily hard-surfaced with levels falling in a series of stages towards the river. A lift would be provided to allow level access between the levels.

5.0 POLICY OVERVIEW

Unitary Development Plan Review (UDPR)

- 5.1 The policies in the development plan must now accord with the NPPF. Whilst the Core Strategy is at an advanced stage it is intended to carry forward a number of the UDPR policies which are in conformity with the NPPF.
- 5.1.1 The site is located in the City Centre Conservation Area and the Riverside Proposals Area. In the Riverside Area a range of generally complementary land uses are actively encouraged (CC28). The Warehouse Hill proposal area (27a) statement indicates that the site provides a major opportunity to combine new building and public space with conservation of adjoining buildings. A significant element of leisure and tourism uses is particularly suitable. Leisure uses are encouraged to spill out into the public space part of the area.
- 5.1.2 Other relevant UDPR policies include GP5 (detailed planning considerations to be resolved) and BD5 (ensure a satisfactory level of amenity for occupants and surroundings); GP11 and GP12 set out sustainable design requirements; N12, N13, CC3 and BD6 (priorities for urban design); T2 (development should not create or materially add to problems of safety or efficiency on the highway network); and A4 (design of safe and secure environments, including access arrangements, public

space, servicing and maintenance, materials and lighting). Policies T5 and T6 require satisfactory provision for disabled people, pedestrians and cyclists. Policies N14, N18A, N18B, N19 and CC5 identify requirements to preserve listed buildings and the character of the conservation area. As the site is in the city centre and exceeds 0.5 hectares a minimum of 20% of the area should be identified as public space (CC10).

5.2 Draft Core Strategy (DCS)

5.2.1 The Submission Draft of 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. The Core Strategy is likely to be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination in April 2013. In line with the NPPF the Council may attach some weight to the document and its contents.

5.2.2 Policy CC1 identifies the intent to provide 10,200 dwellings in the city centre with residential uses sited on upper floors and away from major roads. H3 and H4 identify density and housing mix requirements. Policy G5 sets out new open space requirements in city centre developments over 0.5 hectares. Policy T2 identifies accessibility requirements. 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 enhancing existing landscapes and spaces, and development protects and enhance the district's historic assets in particular existing natural site features, historically and locally important buildings, skylines and views. Conservation Policy P11 states that innovative and sustainable construction which integrates with and enhances the historic environment will be encouraged. Policies EN1 and EN2 identify sustainable development criteria including achieving a BREEAM standard of Excellent from 2013 onwards.

5.3 Natural Resources and Waste Local Plan 2013 (NRWLP)

5.3.1 The Natural Resources and Waste Local Plan was adopted by Leeds City Council on 16th January 2013. Policy Water 4 requires developments in flood risk areas to consider the effect of the proposed development on flood risk, both on-site and off-site including through submission of a flood risk assessment (Water 6).

5.4 Supplementary guidance

5.4.1 Public Transport Improvements and Developer Contributions SPD identifies where development will need to make a contribution towards public transport improvements or enhancements.

5.4.2 Building for Tomorrow Today – Sustainable Design and Construction SPD identifies sustainable development requirements.

5.4.3 City Centre Urban Design Strategy September 2000 seeks to reinforce the positive qualities of character areas, re-establish urban grain, provide enclosure to streets, create visual interest, encourage excellent design, improve pedestrian connections, develop a mixture of land uses, promote active frontages and promote sustainable development.

5.4.4 Leeds Waterfront Strategy 2002 (Review 2006) guides the regeneration of Leeds Waterfront through use, links and appropriate environmental enhancement.

5.5 National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.5.1 Planning should proactively drive and support sustainable economic development; and seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings (para. 17). Local Planning Authorities should recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and support their vitality and viability; and recognise that residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres (para. 23). Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development (para. 49). Design requirements are set out in section 7 noting that developments should establish a strong sense of place creating attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit (para. 58). Shared spaces should be promoted to help deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities communities require (para. 70). Section 12 refers to the historic environment. Para. 131 identifies the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

6.0 **ISSUES**

6.1 Principle of the Development

- 6.1.1 The site is located within the city centre and constitutes previously developed land and buildings which are largely vacant and inefficiently used. The principle of the uses and general scale of the development were established by the planning permission approved in 2007. The site benefits from a more recent, extant, 2011 permission upon which the current scheme is largely based.
- 6.1.2 The Unitary Development Plan (Review) Riverside proposals area (CC28) and the related Warehouse Hill statement seek a range of uses in this location to ensure vitality throughout the day; to create a significant publicly accessible riverside space; and to encourage leisure uses to spill out into the public space. Assuming the proposed “retail” elements are A3/A4 the proposed uses are entirely in accordance with these objectives. The large area of public space accords with UDPR policy CC10/DCS policy G5. The proposals are in accordance with the Unitary Development Plan (Review) and also the aims of the Waterfront Strategy which seeks to increase the vitality of the area and to introduce pedestrian access to and along the river corridor.

Do Members agree that the principle of the development is acceptable?

6.2 Scale and layout

- 6.2.1 The approved scheme was subject to a number of iterations before being agreed by Plans Panel. The proposed scheme is closely related to the mass and scale of that approval which itself represented a good response to its context. The major move is the removal of extensions to 20-24 Warehouse Hill which enables a larger area of public space to be delivered.
- 6.2.2 The footprint of the “L” shaped building has been adjusted from that previously approved. The ground and first floor were previously splayed relative to The Calls but now are intended to be built up to the back of the footpath in common with neighbouring buildings.

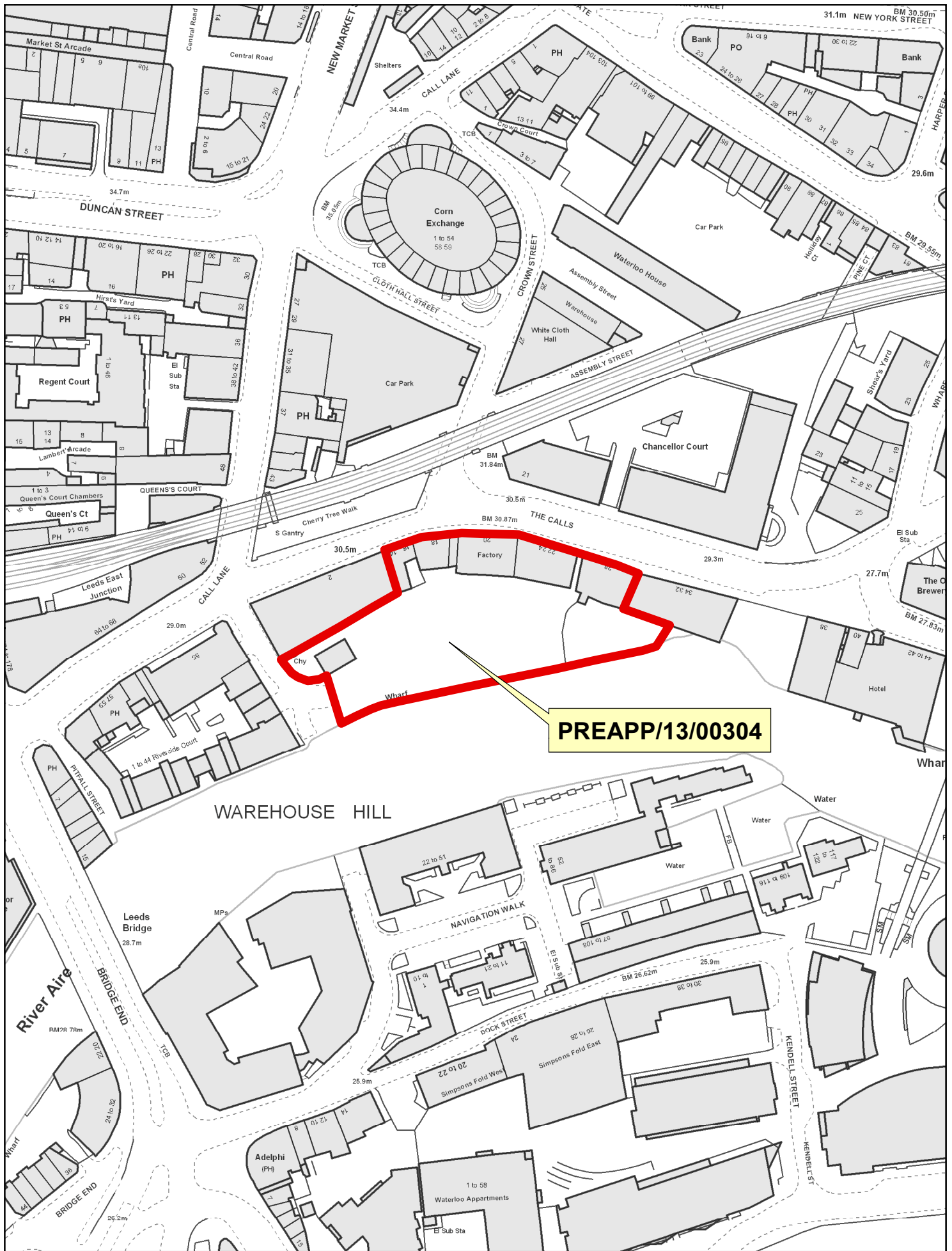
- 6.2.3 The depth of the riverside wing of the building is significantly reduced from that previously approved. This provides a greater separation to be achieved between the new building and offices in 2-12 The Calls. At the same time the western gable end of the building has an improved relationship with the proportions of 32 The Calls to the east.
- 6.2.4 The proposed layout involves an eastward extension of the riverside wing of the “L” shaped building towards the public space. The projection is reduced at ground floor level enabling access down to the river beneath upper floor levels of the building. However, the proposed arrangement is such that views from The Calls towards the river, opened up as a result of demolition of listed buildings fronting The Calls, would be reduced relative to the approved scheme.

Do Members agree that the larger public space is beneficial to the scheme but that as part of the justification for the demolition of 14-16 and 18 The Calls that more open views towards the river need to be achieved?

6.3 Design

- 6.3.1 The proposed new build elements of the scheme have adopted a more conventional approach than those previously approved. Consequently, the buildings are more closely related to the form and context of nearby riverside buildings. The proposed brick, natural stone and timber materials are appropriate in this setting. The buildings have been designed with large balconies to take advantage of the south-facing riverside location. The applicant advises that the scale of the balconies, which are double the depth of those generally seen within the city, are required to make them usable and are fundamental to the scheme.

Do Members agree that the overall architectural approach is acceptable and that, subject to sensitive design, the proposed balconies are appropriate?



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