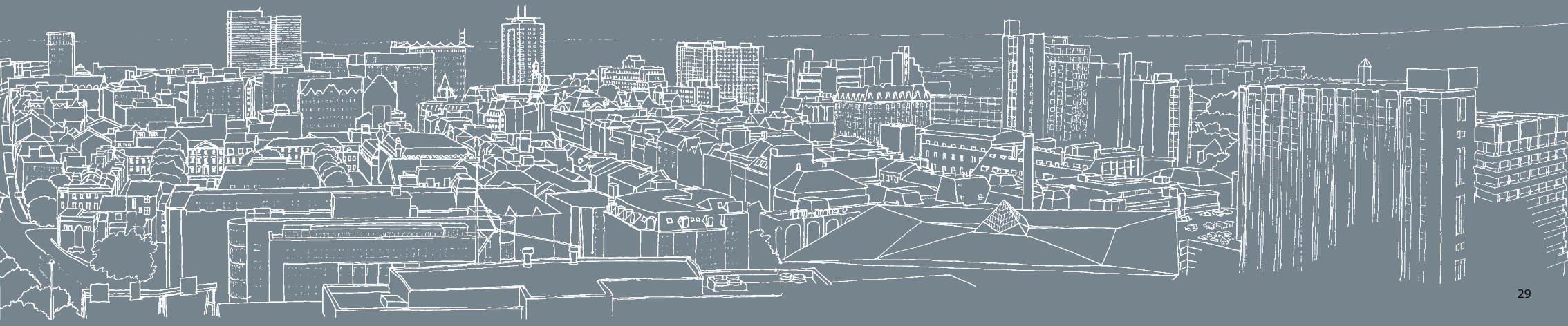


# Design Considerations

3 Strategic Issues

4 Design Detail

*"Can you justify a tall building for Leeds?"*



# 3. Strategic Issues

## Constraints – Protecting Settings, Views and Vistas



Leeds Metropolitan University forms poor backdrop to the view of Leeds Civic Hall spires looking along East Parade

New tall buildings can intrude into time honoured vistas and skylines, so it is important to ensure that they do not have a negative impact on historic and significant environments. Therefore existing views and settings of certain buildings and landmarks need protection.

London is establishing its London View Management Framework Draft SPG (refers to the management of 26 key views).

There is a need to preserve the prominence of the Town Hall, Civic Hall, Leeds Parish Church, the University's Parkinson Tower and adjacent church spires as defining structures of Leeds. Public spaces and squares such as Park Square and other important settings, river frontages, key views and street scenes, particularly in conservation areas, need guarding and protecting from visually intrusive forms. A view protection framework is referred to as follows.

**It is unlikely that applicants will receive support for tall buildings which cause visual harm and impact on the following:-**

- **Listed buildings and Conservation Areas.**
- **Historic building area roofscape and silhouette.**
- **Town Hall, Civic Hall, Corn Exchange and Leeds University Parkinson Tower.**
- **Leeds shopping arcades and historic street scenes.**
- **Important vistas e.g. The Headrow viewed east and west, vista up Park Row.**
- **Views from the main historic spaces of Park Square, Woodhouse Square, Hanover Square and urban parks.**
- **Historic riverside frontages**
- **Holbeck Urban Village.**

Any proposals need to be assessed against their impact on views of those features

### Key Strategic Principles

- Locate tall buildings in the **right place**, to integrate them into and make them compatible with their surroundings.
- Enhance **skylines, views and settings**.
- Protect and preserve areas of **special character** and interest, principal views across the city and historic **skyline**.
- Ensure that new tall buildings have a good relationship with the **street, movement patterns and transport** facilities, creating high quality public space at the same time.
- Ensure that tall buildings assist in the **legibility** of the city and contribute strongly to a **sense of place**.
- Make tall buildings **environmentally sustainable** and operational.
- Promote the **highest design quality** for tall buildings and their composition resulting in a distinctive, recognisable, "this could only be Leeds" skyline.

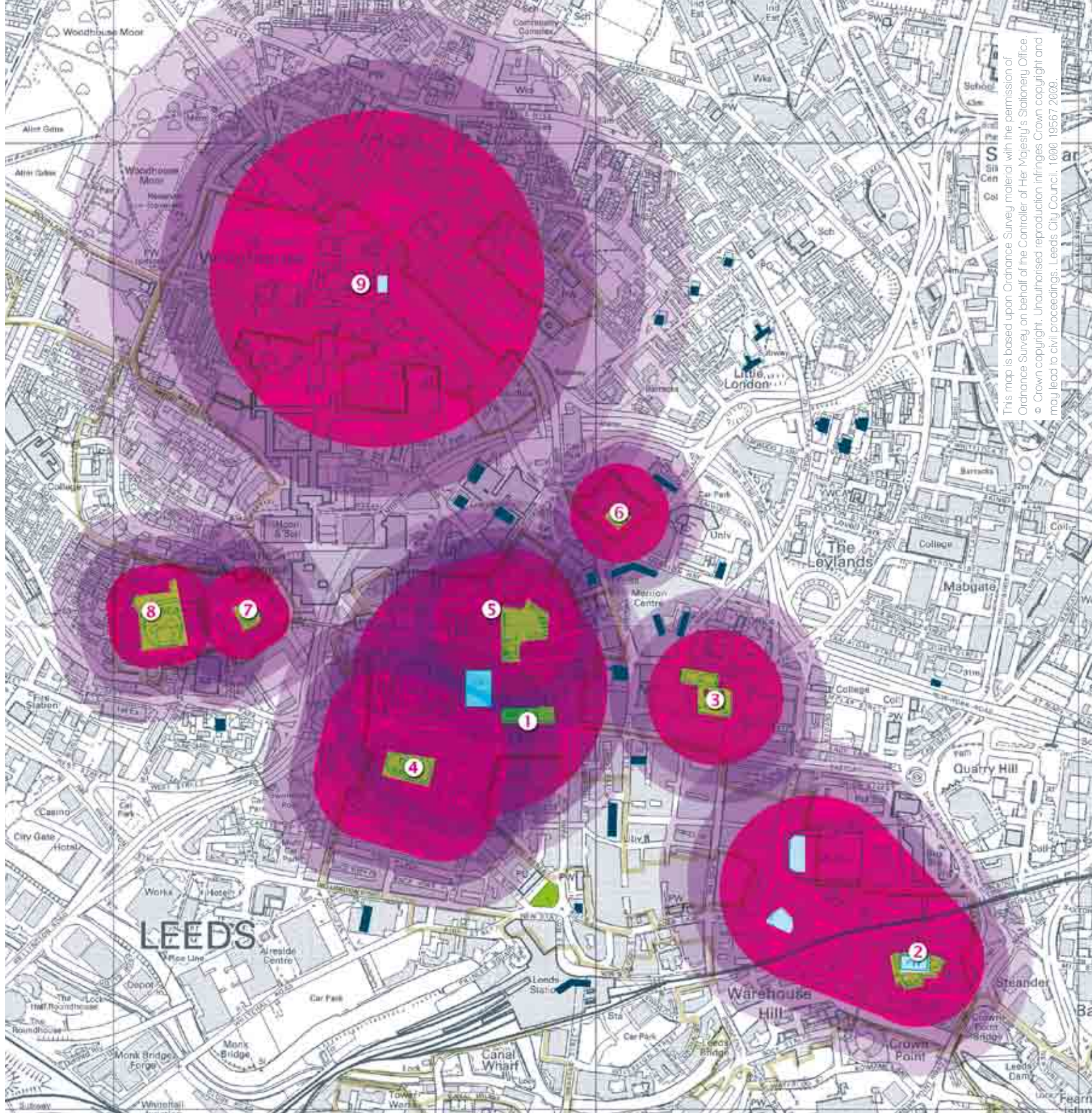
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### Constraint 1 – Zones of Sensitivity

- Zone of sensitivity - where a tall building is likely to have a negative impact on the setting/context
- Restricted tall building zone where proposed heights will be determined by the visual impact of a tall building proposal on the setting
- Outer restricted zone where higher tall buildings will be acceptable subject to no negative impact on the setting/context

This composite plan shows how the zones of sensitivity overlap and interact with each other. On the following pages the individual zones are considered separately providing added clarity.

The following zones and sectors have been identified for special control in order to protect important silhouettes, skylines, buildings, street scenes, vistas and public spaces from the visual impact and physical proximity of tall buildings:-



- 1 Leeds Town Hall and Victoria Square including The Garden of Rest
- 2 Leeds Parish Church of St. Peter, Corn Exchange and Leeds Market
- 3 St. John's Gardens and St. John's Church
- 4 Park Square

- 5 Millennium Square
- 6 Queens Square
- 7 Hanover Square
- 8 Woodhouse Square
- 9 Leeds University Parkinson Building 1936 (on page 38)

Tall buildings of architectural merit will not be accepted if their relationship to the local context is regarded to have a negative impact on that context.

See page 34 for relationship with tall buildings beyond zone.



(London Planning Advisory Committee/ Strategic Metropolitan and Local Views –size of impact areas was taken as a 300 metres radius from the centre of the square or garden. The extent of Leeds zones are as explained below)

- 1** Leeds Town Hall and Victoria Square including The Garden of Rest
- 2** Leeds Parish Church of St. Peter, Corn Exchange and Leeds Market
- 3** St. John's Gardens and St. John's Church

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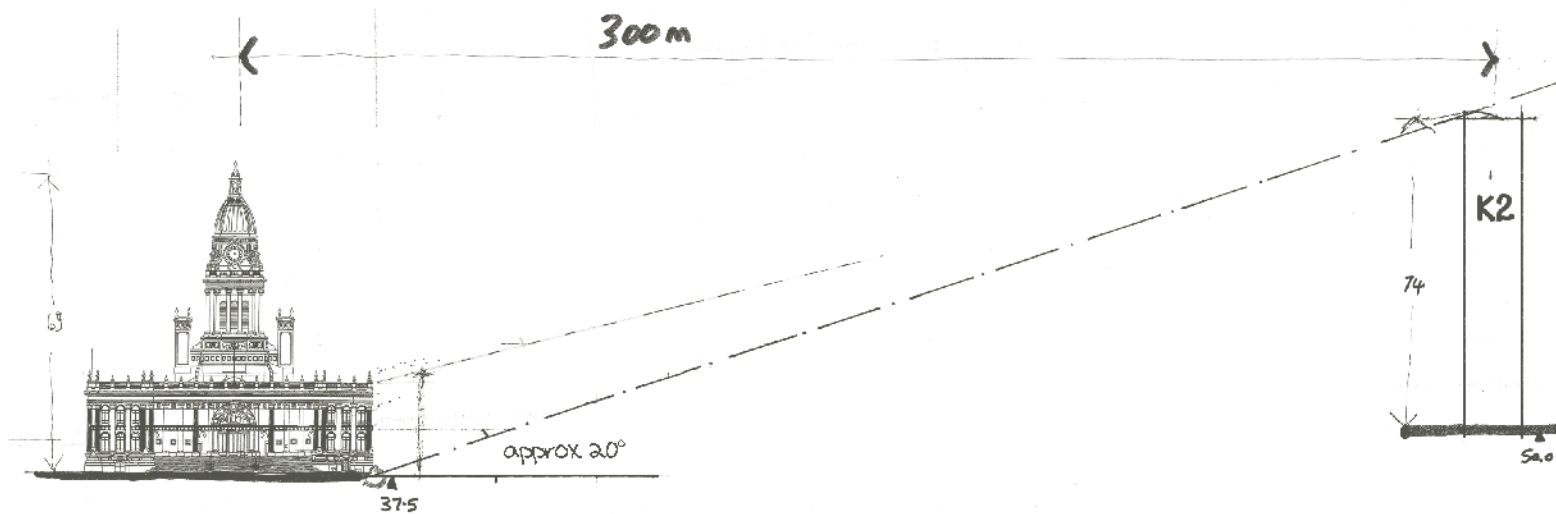
**1** >

**Leeds Town Hall and Victoria Square including The Garden of Rest**

Landmark Grade 1 structure of importance and key public space both exhibiting civic pride and the determination to improve the image of Leeds. Completed in 1858 the Town Hall consists of a colonnade of Corinthian columns raised well above ground level with a wide flight of steps and grandiose entrance. Extent of zone assessed to provide quality of viewing place which any tall structure would have an impact on. Note also that an assessment of the view from the top of the entrance steps will be a point for consideration for any tall building proposal beyond the zone



### 3. Strategic Issues - Protecting Views, Vistas and Settings



< **Example of sketch study to determine the zone of sensitivity around Leeds Town Hall**

Existing building K2 was assessed to be a logical boundary since its visual impact at a distance of 300m is considered to be minimal and acceptable



^ **2 Leeds Parish Church of St. Peter, Corn Exchange and Leeds Market**

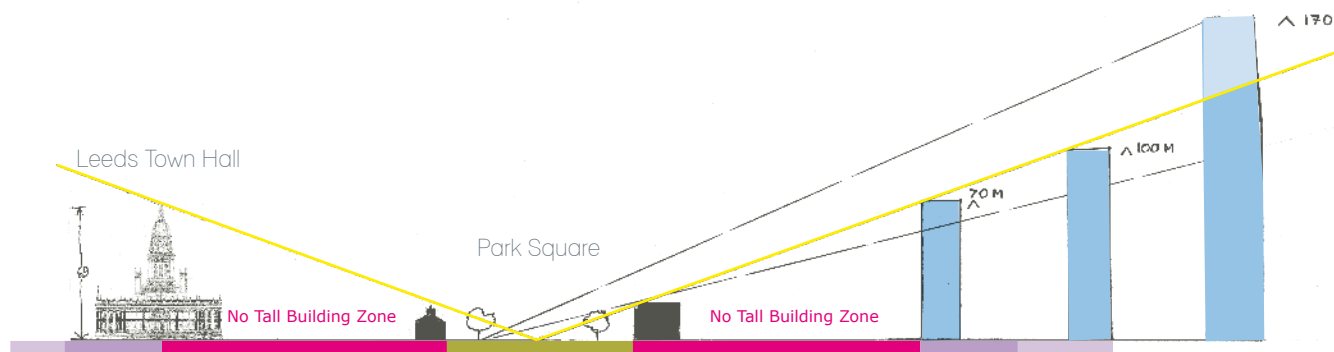
A collection of distinctive buildings and the streetscapes of Kirkgate and Cloth Hall Street where their settings and sky backgrounds could be visually harmed by the intrusion of new tall buildings

< **3 St. John's Gardens and St. John's Church**

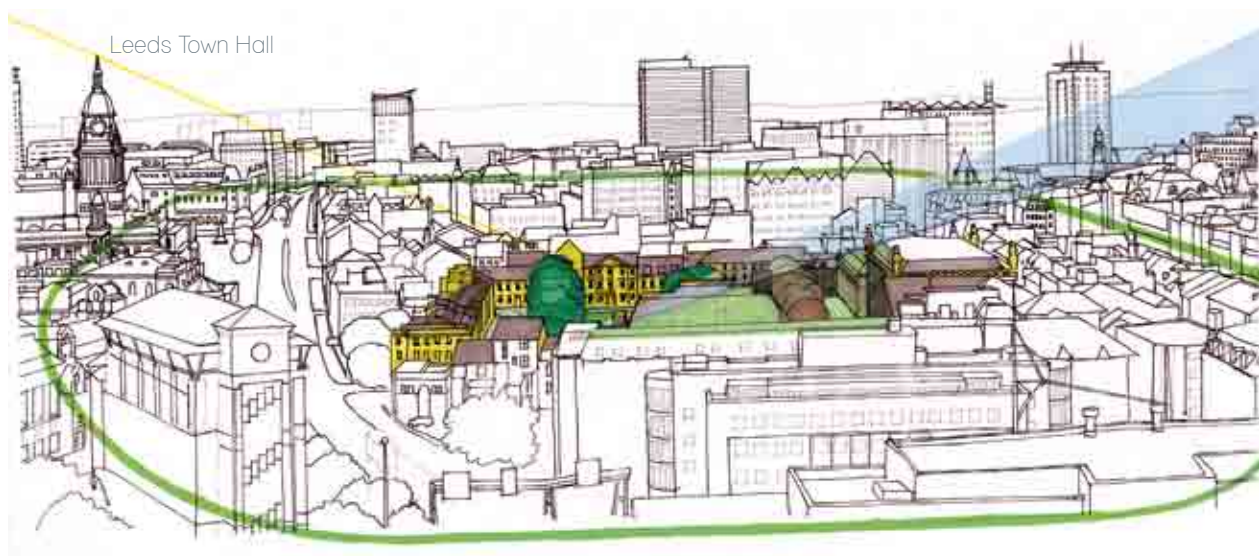
Built in 1632 and restored by Norman Shaw it is positioned with its graveyard within surrounding gardens

### 3. Strategic Issues - Protecting Views, Vistas and Settings

> Section indicates the role of Leeds Town Hall in setting the zone of sensitivity and the importance of graduation which in principle accepts tall buildings just beyond the zone. By setting maximum heights, which can increase further away from Park Square, tall buildings can be prevented from having a negative impact within the sky background



>> The zone of sensitivity will ensure that firstly, the setting and frontages will dominate the view and secondly, tall buildings beyond the zone of sensitivity will be subservient to the setting



Frontages dominate



Park Square looking South,



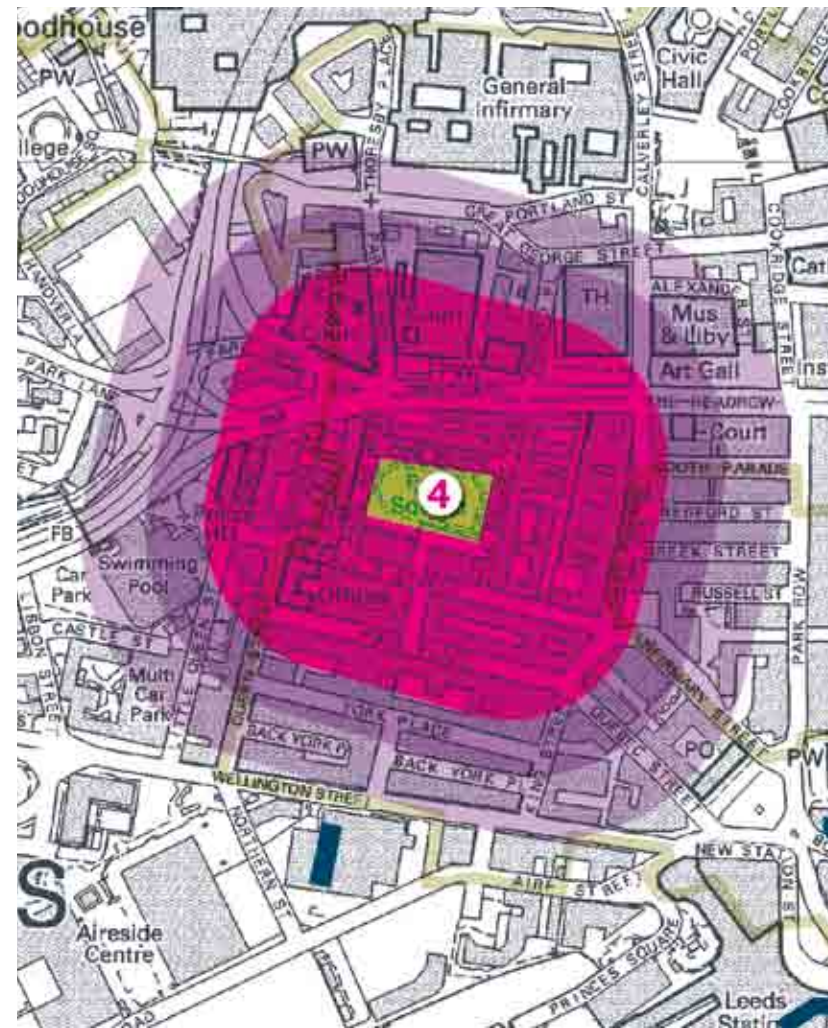
Park Square looking South East

#### 4 Park Square >

Extent of zone determined by distance from Town Hall and existing high buildings of the commercial quarter. This was considered to be reasonable guidance for the proximity of any tall building which is likely to visually harm the established character and setting of Park Square



Built between 1788 and 1810 as a new high class estate containing merchants' houses. It has retained the character of the 18th Century square with its mature parkland setting. Well mannered frontages of porticoes and pediments with its general 2 to 3 storey scale has created a strong character and sense of place  
Photograph taken before recent restoration



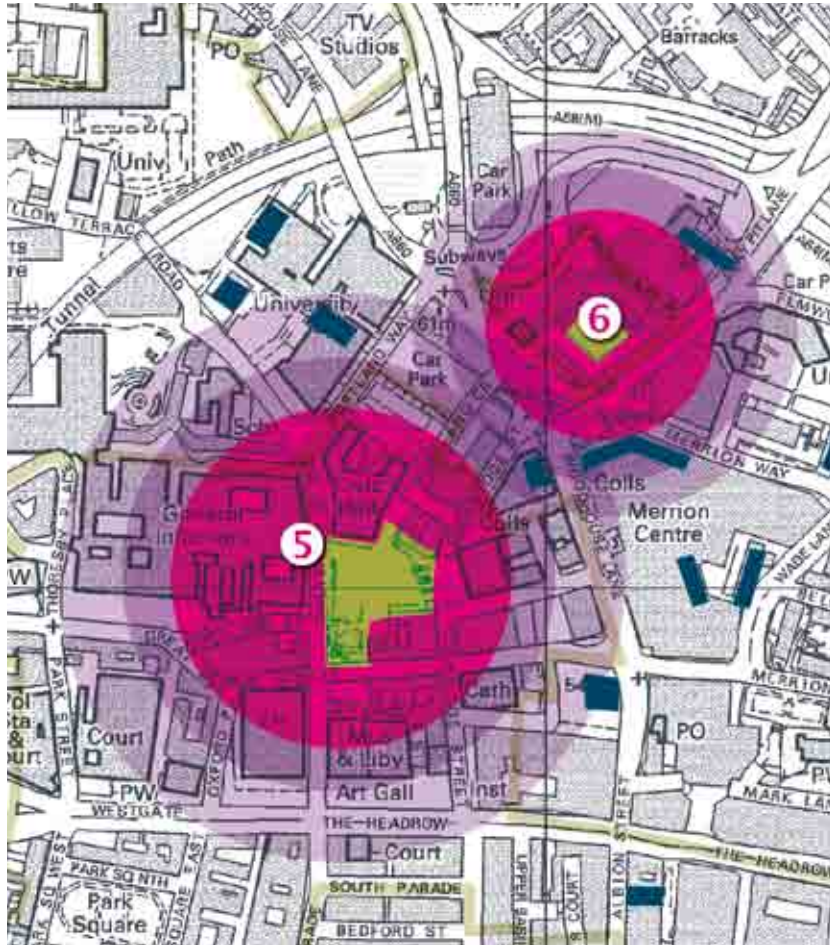
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### 3. Strategic Issues - Protecting Views, Vistas and Settings

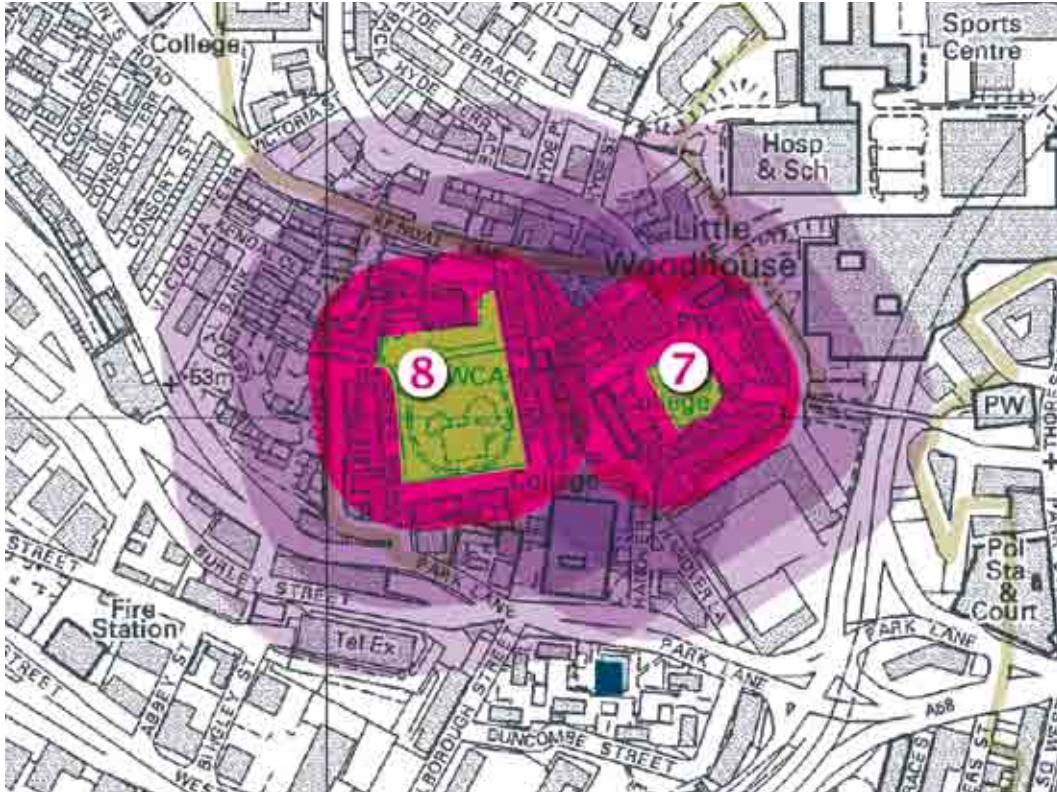


< **5 Millennium Square**  
 Recently created public realm offering a fine setting for important buildings of Leeds e.g. The Civic Hall (1933) with its 170 foot high twin spires and imposing frontage, and the Mechanics Institute, the Electric Press building. Extent of zone determined by nearest tall buildings of K2 and the College of Technology

< **6 Queens Square**  
 Built around 1806 as regularly planned residences around a leafy square



### 3. Strategic Issues - Protecting Views, Vistas and Settings



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#### 7 Woodhouse Square

Former private gardens known as Hanover Square Park completed in 1828 by Joshua Major, surrounded by late Georgian residential terraces

#### 8 Hanover Square ➤➤

Square consisting of landscaped gardens with residential terrace properties built in the 1840's

Tall buildings in close vicinity of these two squares would ruin and over shadow their settings



### 3. Strategic Issues - Protecting Views, Vistas and Settings

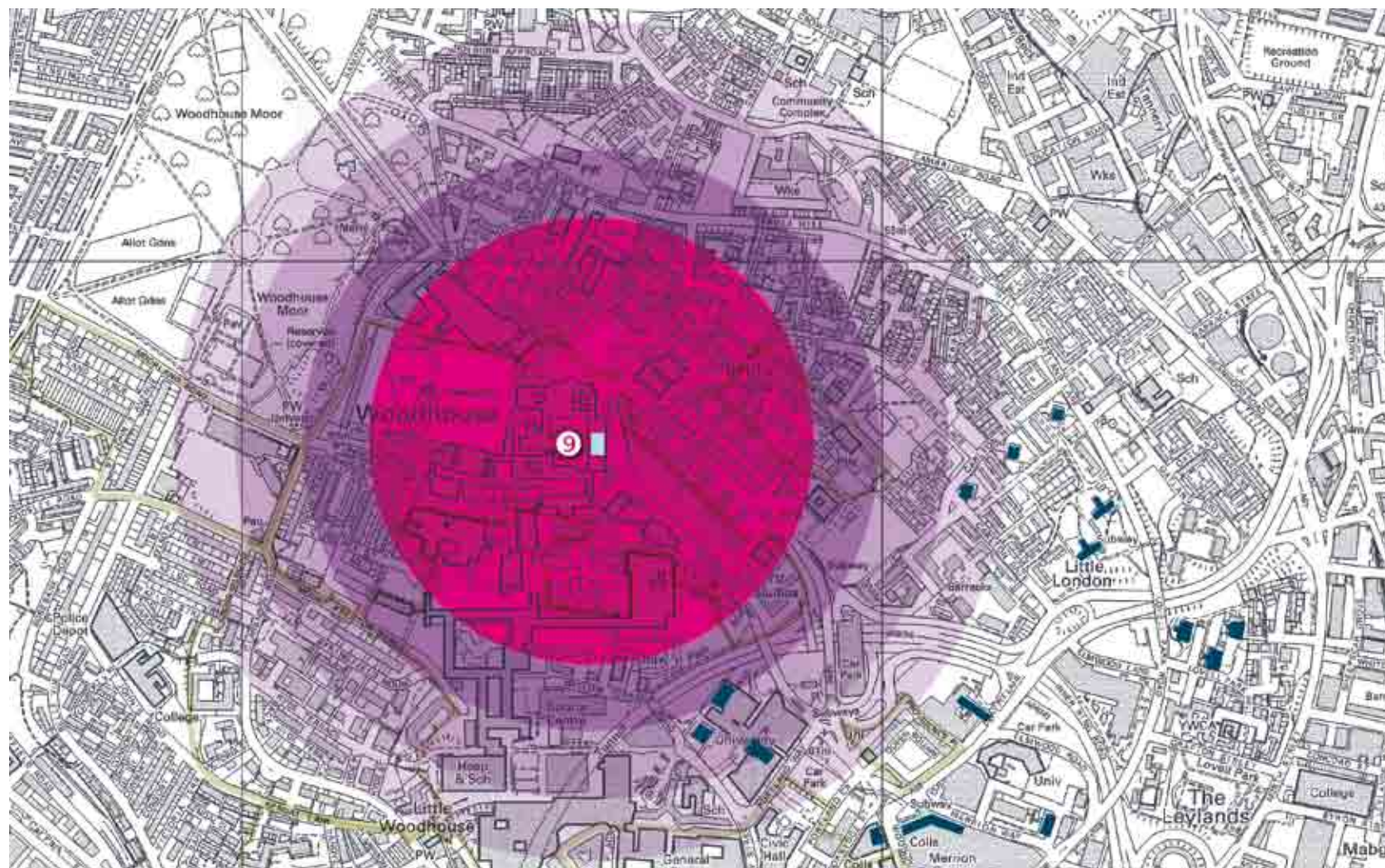


**9 Leeds University Parkinson Building 1936**

A landmark clock tower faced in Portland stone with low pitched pyramid roof



Any tall buildings of a height that exceeds the white line shown on the photograph (the angle of which is regarded to be a reasonable visual guide) will be regarded as competing with the Parkinson Building skyline

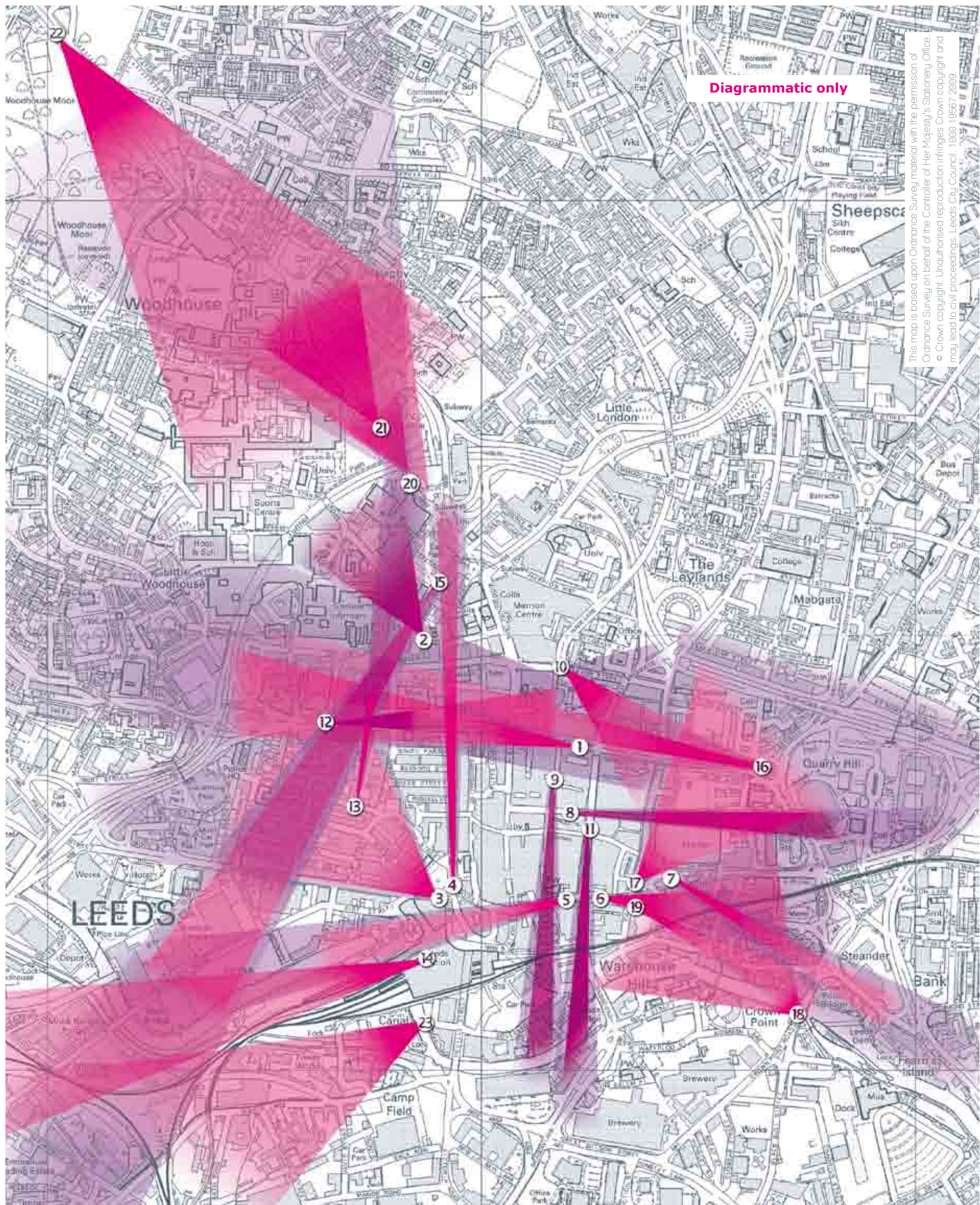


## Constraint 2 – Key Views Within The City

- Tall buildings key view ●
- Tall buildings periphery view ●

- 1** The Headrow - View West from Briggate
- 2** The Civic Hall – view from Millennium Square
- 3** City Square – view North East
- 4** Park Row – Looking North towards St. Anne’s Cathedral
- 5** Boar Lane – Looking West from Holy Trinity Church
- 6** Boar Lane – Looking East towards Corn Exchange
- 7** Kirkgate - Looking East towards Leeds Parish Church
- 8** Albion Place / Commercial Street – Looking East towards Leeds Market
- 9** Lane Ends – Looking South towards Holy Trinity Church
- 10** Merrion Street – Looking towards St John’s Church
- 11** Briggate – Looking South
- 12** Westgate – Looking east towards The Headrow
- 13** Park Cross Street
- 14** Leeds Station Concourse - Looking towards Tower Works
- 15** Town Hall – Looking down Portland Crescent
- 16** Eastgate – Looking West
- 17** Vicar Lane - Looking towards Leeds Market Buildings
- 18** Crown Point Bridge – River View West
- 19** View down Cloth Hall Street
- 20** Parkinson Tower
- 21** Woodhouse Lane - View of spires
- 22** Hyde Park Corner
- 23** Granary Wharf - View of Tower Works

Diagrammatic only



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The following key views will be considered when processing applications. The sky background will be critical to the visual quality of these views. Consequentially the introduction of tall buildings within the sky background is likely to have a negative impact. Applicants with proposals for tall buildings flanking these views will be required to agree verified camera views with planning officers.

**< 1 The Headrow - View West from Briggate**

View framed by imposing existing scale of buildings flanking The Headrow with Leeds Town Hall at the end of the vista



**<< 2 The Civic Hall - view from Millennium Square**

Imposing front elevation of the Civic Hall with its two spires forming a distinct piece of architecture and silhouette



**< 3 City Square - view North East**

View of one of the main public spaces in Leeds with imposing background of the former Post Office building



**< 4 Park Row - Looking North towards St. Anne's Cathedral**

View framed by larger frontage blocks of Park Row with the cathedral form at the end of the vista



**<< 5 Boar Lane - Looking West from Holy Trinity Church**

Distinctive streetscape and urbanity



**< 6 Boar Lane - Looking East towards Corn Exchange**

Sequence of viewing points which contain key corner and frontage buildings and the Corn Exchange

### 3. Strategic Issues - Protecting Views, Vistas and Settings

**7 Kirkgate** >  
- Looking East towards Leeds Parish Church

View containing the distinctive form of Leeds Parish Church



**8 Albion Place/ Commercial Street** >>  
- Looking East towards Leeds Market

Views containing important street scenes and Leeds Market building at end of vistas



**9 Lane Ends** >>>  
- Looking South towards Holy Trinity Church

View containing distinctive church spire of Holy Trinity Church



**10 Merrion Street** >  
- Looking towards St John's Church

View of historic building where a tall building within the sky background is likely to create a negative visual impact



**11 Briggate** >  
- Looking South

Distinctive street scale and view



<<< **12 Westgate – Looking east towards The Headrow**  
View containing Leeds Town Hall and public spaces



<< **13 Park Cross Street.**  
Dramatic narrows view of the Town Hall Clock Tower



< **14 Leeds Station Main Concourse - Looking West**  
Recent tall building approvals within this view corridor may influence future applications in order to preserve the view of distant greenery and topography



<< **15 Town Hall – Looking down Portland Crescent**  
Civic Hall assists in framing important gap view of the Town Hall



< **16 Eastgate – Looking West**  
View of main street formed and flanked by attractive and unique well proportioned buildings of distinction with Town Hall structure ending the street vista

### 3. Strategic Issues - Protecting Views, Vistas and Settings

**17 Vicar Lane - Looking >>  
towards Leeds Market Buildings**  
View containing imposing frontage,  
form and silhouette of Leeds Market



**18 Crown Point Bridge - River View West >**  
View containing rich assortment of  
riverside buildings



**19 View down Cloth Hall Street >**  
View of distinct and attractive  
structure of the White Cloth Hall



### 3. Strategic Principles



▲ **20 Parkinson Tower**  
Woodhouse Lane vista dominated by the University Parkinson Tower and existing church spires

< **21 Woodhouse Lane - View of spires**  
A new tall building is likely to create a negative visual impact



< **22 Woodhouse Lane / Hyde Park Corner - View of Parkinson Building**  
The Parkinson Tower is a distinctive landmark which contributes to the attractiveness of the vista. A new tall building within the sky background would destroy the view

< **23 Granary Wharf - View of Tower Works**  
View of Lockkeeper Gatehouse, Canal Bridge and Italianate towers of Tower Works



Key distant panoramic views of the city

### Constraint 3 – Important Panoramic Views out of the City

The topography of Leeds together with the distribution of built form has created opportunities for good views out of the city centre – particularly for occupiers of tall buildings. Some of these views offer well established and attractive settings with distinctive landmarks and forms, some that could be visually compromised by the addition of new tall buildings whether adjacent, in the foreground or as a backcloth.

It is felt that these will need a measure of protection in order not to erode that distinction and sense of place that they provide beyond the city centre.

- 1 South West**  
– View towards Cottingley
- 2 & 3 West**  
– Views of Armley

- 4 North East**  
– Towards Harehills and Burmantofts
- 5 East**  
– Towards Swarcliffe and Seacroft

### 3. Strategic Issues - Protecting Views, Vistas and Settings



- < **1 South West – View towards Cottingley**  
View over relatively flat plain of land and buildings, including Holbeck Urban Village, towards Cottingley where the main stand of Leeds United A.F.C.'s Elland Road Stadium and the twin 25 storey social housing towers are distinct landmarks and are part of the vista which includes distant views of Morley Town Hall on the horizon



- < **2 West – Views of Armley**  
Rising urban form containing key landmark of Armley Prison
- < **3 West – Views of Armley**  
Key landmark of the church of St. Bartholomew which dominates the hillside



- < **4 North East - Towards Harehills and Burmantofts**  
Traditional terrace forms resulting in a sea of roofs that slope with the topography which also contains a pepperpotting of many social housing towers which obstruct the view
- < **5 East – Towards Swarcliffe and Seacroft**  
Distinct cluster effect of existing social housing towers on the horizon

## Conservation Areas

Extent of Conservation Area



Existing Tall Building

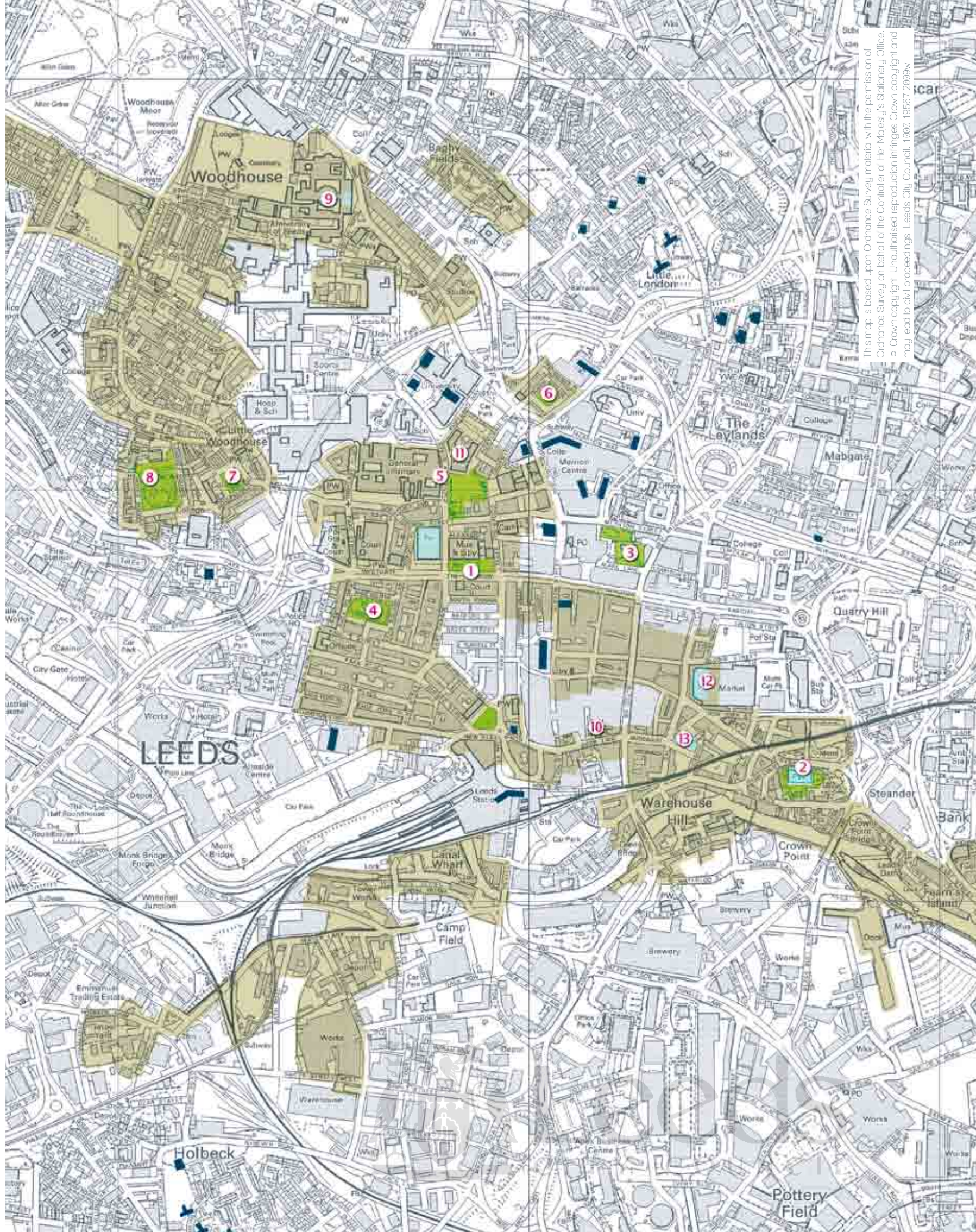


Existing Green Space



### Landmark buildings and important settings

- 1** Town Hall
- 2** Parish Church
- 3** St John's Gardens
- 4** Park Square
- 5** Millennium Square
- 6** Queen Square
- 7** Woodhouse Square
- 8** Hanover Square
- 9** Parkinson Tower
- 10** Holy Trinity Church
- 11** Civic Hall
- 12** Leeds Market
- 13** Corn Exchange



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#### Constraint 4 – Conservation Areas

Much of the City Centre of Leeds is designated as a Conservation Area which contains well over seven hundred Listed Buildings and merits preservation and protection. Tall buildings where designed inappropriately without due regard to the surrounding scale make bad neighbours in the historic and traditional townscape. The acceptance of tall buildings in the City Centre would significantly increase land values and could increase the pressure to redevelop sites as opposed to a sustainable

approach of refurbishing existing buildings and protecting the historic grain. Tall buildings do not usually sit comfortably in areas with a fine urban grain and historic street pattern. As well as Leeds City Council, CABE and English Heritage will demand the highest standards, considerations and sensitivity to safeguarding these areas and encourage effective heritage management.

- Any new buildings in the Conservation Area should be within approximately a storey height of their neighbours. Proposals which are a storey height more than existing buildings will be treated on their merits providing that no detrimental affect on street scene and roof line/silhouette will occur and where key views cannot be undermined (this is in accordance with the 2006 UDP).

< Emerging tower behind St Anne's Church, St Anne's Square, Manchester will form a modern intrusion into the historic view

< The tall blocks and tower create an inappropriate modern intrusion onto the historic setting of Boar Lane and Trinity Church



- Any new development should respect the context in terms of scale, massing and choice of materials.
- Leeds City Council regards the historic skyline as an important visual asset exhibiting a special character and distinctiveness. Proposals for tall buildings should respect this skyline.
- Even when outside, but particularly for those situated on the edge of, a conservation area tall towers can still have a major impact. They will be treated on their own merits.
- Any such harm has to be balanced against the quality of the proposed building and any benefit it could bring.

#### UDP Policy CC5:

*All developments within the Conservation Area or immediate setting must be designed so as to preserve or enhance the existing character of the area. The heights of new buildings there should normally relate to those of surrounding buildings by being within one storey height of them.*

**Existing Conservation Area near Park Row**

Existing Tall Building



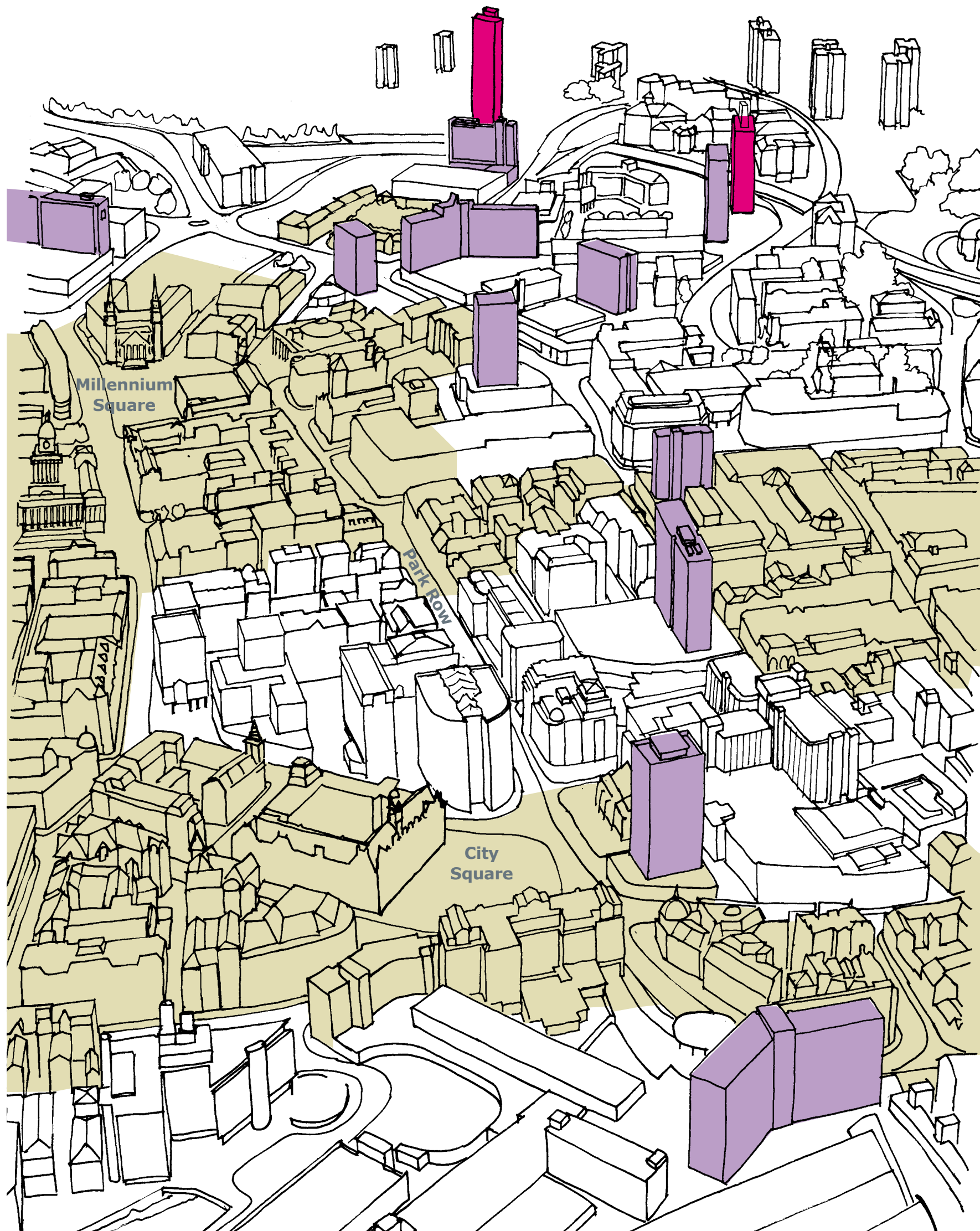
Conservation Area



Recently Constructed Tall Building



The legacy of tall building development during the 60's-80's has created a north/south spine where individual tall buildings are situated at the edges of the conservation areas



View of City Centre from  
Bridgewater Place 2007

