

Locations for Tall buildings

Guided by existing policies CC4, CC6 and CC7, the need to protect views and settings, the desire for gateways and landmark buildings, and the aim to create distinctive urban form, the importance of locating tall buildings is paramount in implementing the strategy.

- **General**
- **Gateway Buildings**
- **Recent Trends**
- **Transport Routes and Connections**
- **Clusters**

West Riding House > visually in conflict with the historic buildings in Albion Place which is within the conservation area

General

There is significant demand for tall buildings – both residential, hotel and office accommodation. Tall buildings can be beneficial in the right places provided they are of a high design standard. They can also raise densities and intensify uses on sites.

Tall buildings located in the wrong places can harm the quality of our environments and make different places the same and indistinguishable from each other. The location of tall buildings should not be at the expense of the historic areas and should prevent additional pressures on already congested and overcrowded transport services in an area. Pepperpotting the urban landscape with individual tall buildings has visibly damaged and blighted many towns and cities yet it is important to recognise

the importance of localising an iconic building or one that acts as a catalyst for wider regeneration, contributing positively to the urban and spatial framework.

The Transport, Local Government and The Regions Committee's Sixteenth report of Session (2001-2) made a number of recommendations. It recommended that Local Authorities identify areas which are not appropriate for tall buildings in their development plans.

No doubt market growth, land values and available development space will test and probably compromise a well detailed strategy, nevertheless, a strong policy regarding the location of tall buildings is paramount in protecting existing settings, views and skylines.



Location can be influenced by topography, microclimate, overshadowing, ground levels and gradients. On the other hand, tall buildings can create visual impact e.g. on an undulating landscape.

- **Normally near to city cores tall office buildings should be located close to and relate to other large business buildings particularly where growth around transport interchanges can begin or continue the process of sustainable patterns of urban development and transport.**
- **If Leeds is to attract investment particularly from large companies who want to locate corporate headquarters in tall buildings to convey prestige, appropriate sites are required and planning needed so those sites are not decided by pressure from developers and agents.**

- **There are 4 areas designated Prestigious Development Areas where tall buildings will be encouraged. These areas are on the fringe of the City Centre and adjacent to the main routes into the city. This should also result in cluster developments which is arguably where tall buildings in general look best and offer a good alternative to 'pepperpotting'. Such clusters can act as gateways into the City Centre, contribute to urban form and new public realm.**
- **Elsewhere outside the 4 areas referred to above tall buildings will be considered on their own merits.**
- **They should follow rules of scale, massing and alignment in order to integrate themselves into the local context and appropriate grain in the area, particularly at their connection with the ground.**

UDP Policy CC6:

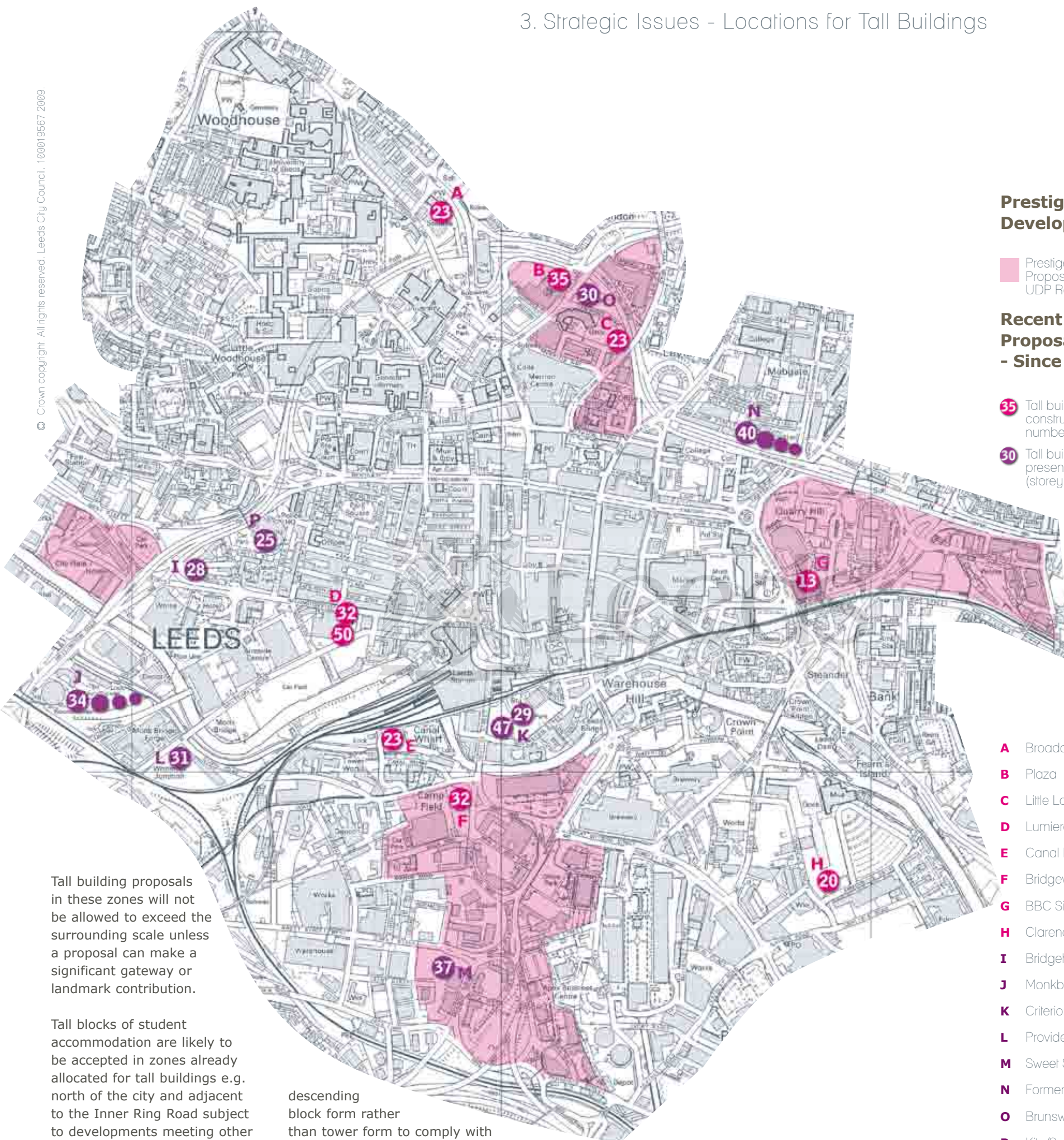
Outside Conservation Areas and their immediate settings and outside Gateway Locations, proposals for high buildings will be considered on their merits, taking account of:-

- *Quality of design*
- *Effect on skyline and impact on views across the city*
- *Effect on neighbouring buildings and general street scenes*
- *Their micro-climate effect on the immediate pedestrian environment*

Mill Hill Chapel > in City Square is dwarfed by the nearby tall buildings which show a complete lack of respect for this listed building

3. Strategic Issues - Locations for Tall Buildings

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Prestige Development Areas

Prestige Development Area
Proposal Areas as shown in
UDP Review 2006

Recent Tall Building Proposals for Leeds - Since 2003

- 35** Tall building constructed or in construction (storey height in numbers)
- 30** Tall buildings "in planning" at present or previously on hold (storey height in numbers)

- A** Broadcasting Place
- B** Plaza
- C** Little Londoner/Wade Lane
- D** Lumiere
- E** Canal Basin
- F** Bridgewater Place
- G** BBC Site
- H** Clarence Dock
- I** Bridgehouse
- J** Monkbridge Forge Towers
- K** Criterion Place
- L** Providence Tower, Greenbank
- M** Sweet Street City One
- N** Former Centrica
- O** Brunswick
- P** Kite/Spiracle

Tall building proposals in these zones will not be allowed to exceed the surrounding scale unless a proposal can make a significant gateway or landmark contribution.

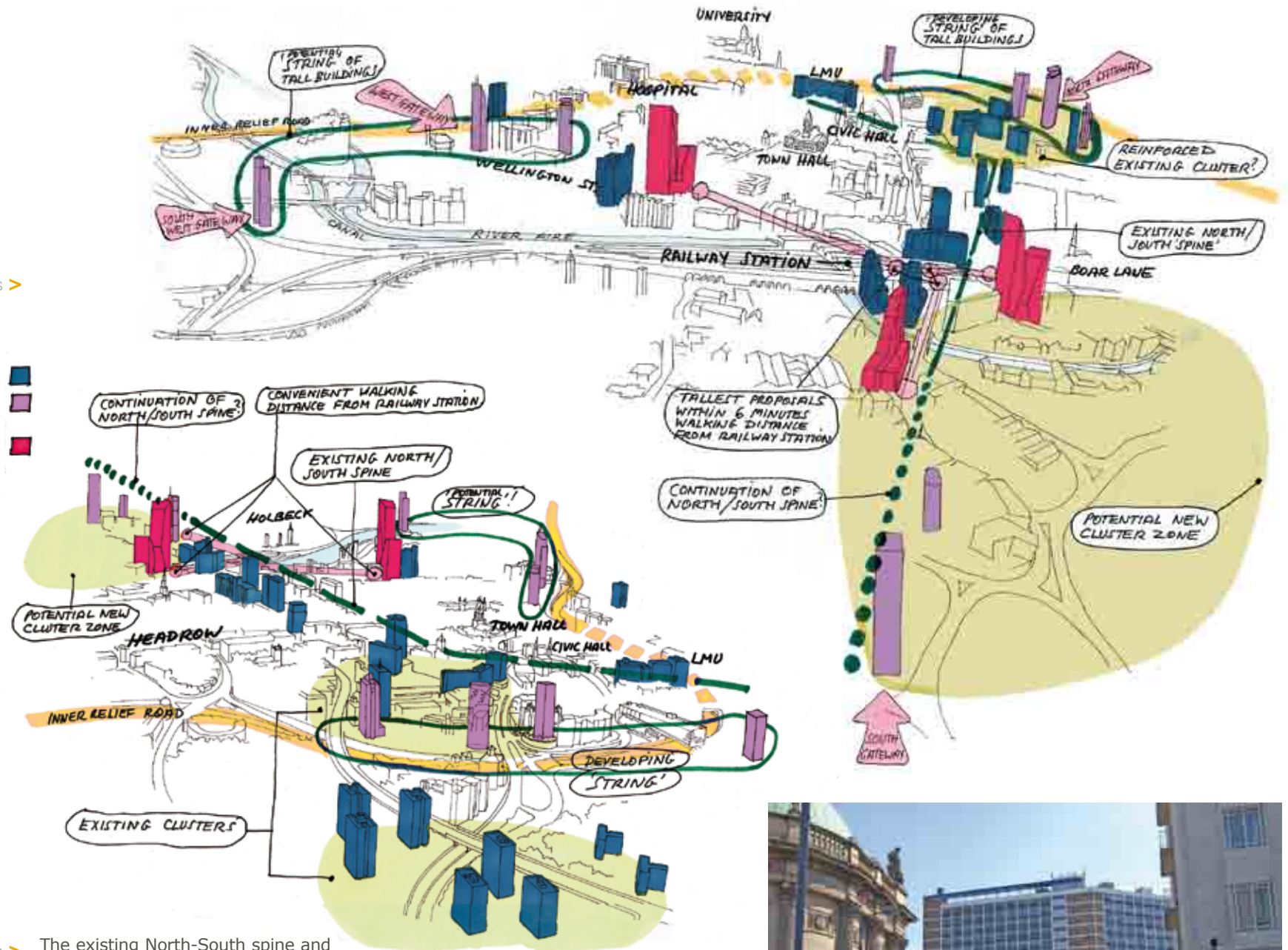
Tall blocks of student accommodation are likely to be accepted in zones already allocated for tall buildings e.g. north of the city and adjacent to the Inner Ring Road subject to developments meeting other planning criteria. Elsewhere, e.g. Burley Road area, tall buildings here are to be mainly in

descending block form rather than tower form to comply with present aspirations for the future design of the western urban edge of the city.

3. Strategic Issues - Locations for Tall Buildings

2005 sketch studies > of existing and proposed tall buildings indicating thoughts and ideas

Existing tall buildings ■
Proposed tall buildings (up to 2006) ■
Mega tall buildings ■



City House > over Neville Street and the mini interchange at the railway station in this view from City Square

The view north from the exit from the railway station up Park Row showing the ends of the tall urban blocks formed by No1 City Square and No1 Park Row that help delineate City Square

The existing North-South spine and concentration of tall buildings to the north of the city, all constructed in the 1960's and 1970's, together with previously approved tall buildings at gateways has provided a legacy of tall buildings that struggle to give the city a positive shape. Leeds' aspiration to become a European city with status, together with various tall buildings in the pipeline, has prompted a reappraisal in which new opportunities have arisen to redefine the city and its skyline.

The opportunity has presented itself to reinforce the existing cluster around the Merrion Centre at the northern end of the spine and to create a new cluster at the southern end. There have been recent applications for tall buildings to flank the inner relief motorway creating the potential for these to be developed as 'strings'.

Notwithstanding the existing spine and the emerging themes of 'strings' and 'clusters' it was also felt that the existing 'tired looking' skyline should be broken dramatically with a few super tall iconic towers to assist in creating a new recognizable skyline that would reinforce Leeds's identity and sense of place – an urban silhouette not to be confused with any other.

Hopefully the previous trend towards peppercotting the city with tall buildings can change course so that the future location of new tall buildings are sustainable and can contribute to a more positive structure of tall urban forms that will successfully integrate with the existing grain of the city, respecting the historic areas and important settings, to shape the city to make it more legible and attractive.



3. Strategic Issues - Locations for Tall Buildings



Student block on the former BBC Site building



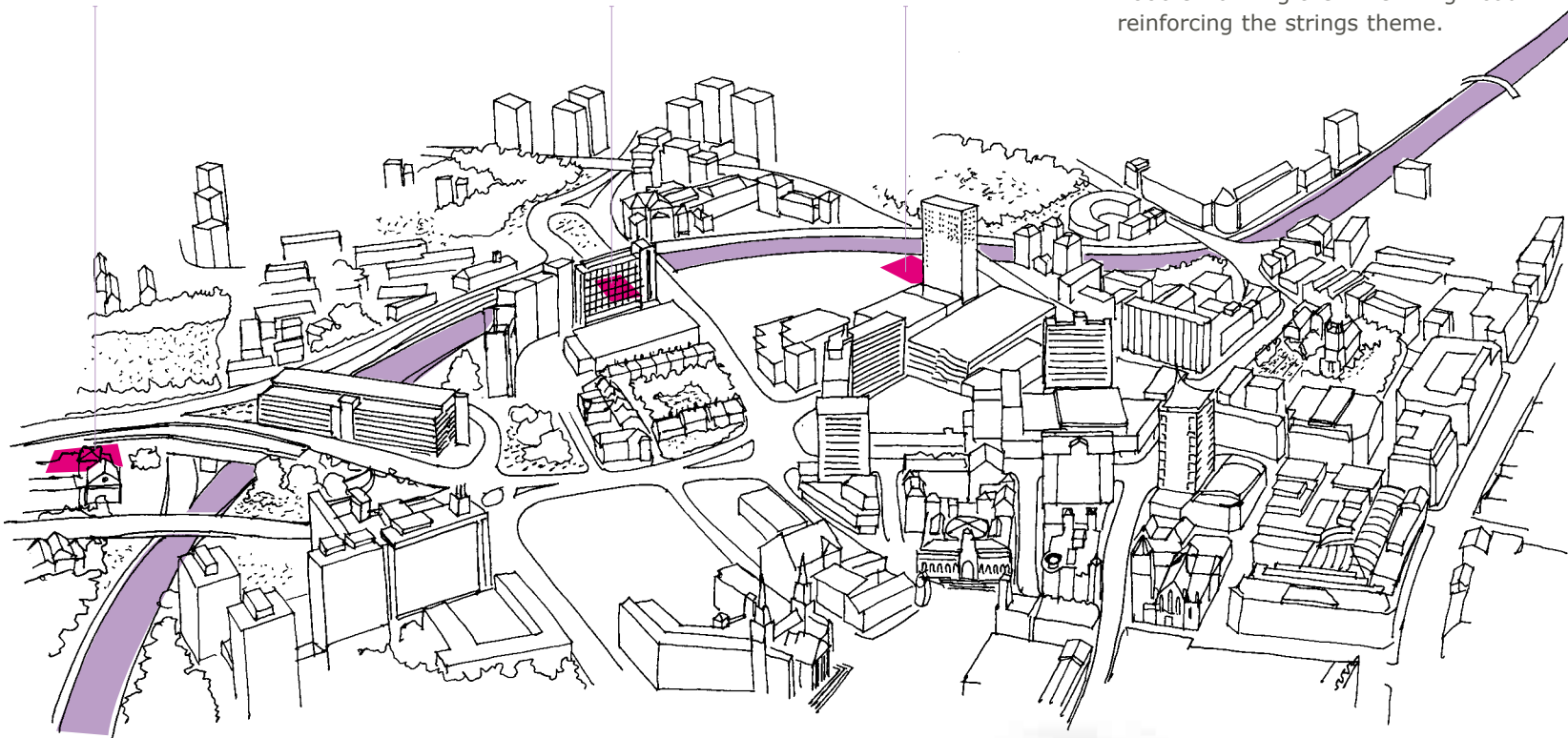
Student block on Clay Pit Lane



Student block on the former Little Londoner Site

String Theme Development

Recently constructed tall buildings 2006-9 flanking the Inner Ring Road reinforcing the strings theme.



< View from Eastern approach to the city

v View from Sheepscar

Existing Cluster Theme Development

Recently constructed tall buildings 2006-9 reinforcing the existing Merrion Centre cluster.



< View from north - top of Scott Hall Road

3. Strategic Issues - Locations for Tall Buildings

Landmarks / Gateway Buildings

Strategically positioned tall buildings can become landmarks and gateways to assist in the legibility of the city and to create points for orientation and reference.

UDP Policy CC4:

The City Council will encourage developments at City Gateway Locations to be of the appropriate scale and design quality to reflect the importance of these locations at the entrances to the city centre.

Bridgewater Place >

at the southern gateway approach into the city from the motorways seen in this view from the city (exit) side.
Architects - Aedas

Arche de La Defense, Paris >

is a striking gateway for the western approach to the city

Cottingley Towers V

punctuate the journey down the M621 from the west to provide a gateway even if only by accident



In accordance with UDP Policy CC4 'the City Council will encourage developments at city centre gateway locations to be of an appropriate scale and design quality to reflect the importance of the location at the entrances to the city centre'. City Centre Urban Design Strategy refers to and locates 3 categories of gateways because too many could make them less meaningful.

- A landmark or gateway building should be prominent, unique and distinctive, designed to perform its fundamental task properly.
- A landmark or gateway building should signal the arrival to the city – a main marker along a sequence of visual events coming into or exiting the city.
- A Landmark or gateway building should be able to perform as a beacon and give identity to a place in its own right.





< Former BBC site - Landmark tower forms end vista looking up Woodhouse Lane



< This existing western gateway into the central area. The Park Lane / Westgate junction with the Inner Ring Road acts as a focal point for the Headrow (see View 1 p39) and is within the setting of the Town Hall (see Zone 1 p32) and consequently is not an appropriate location for tall buildings. The adjacent gateway, to the south (right, out of picture), based on Wellington Street has been identified as the western gateway for tall buildings (taken circa 2005)

3. Strategic Issues - Clusters

A cluster of tall buildings > creates an interesting skyline at **Canary Wharf, London** in this view across the River Thames



The cluster of towers and blocks of **La Defense, Paris** contrast with a more famous landmark



Clusters

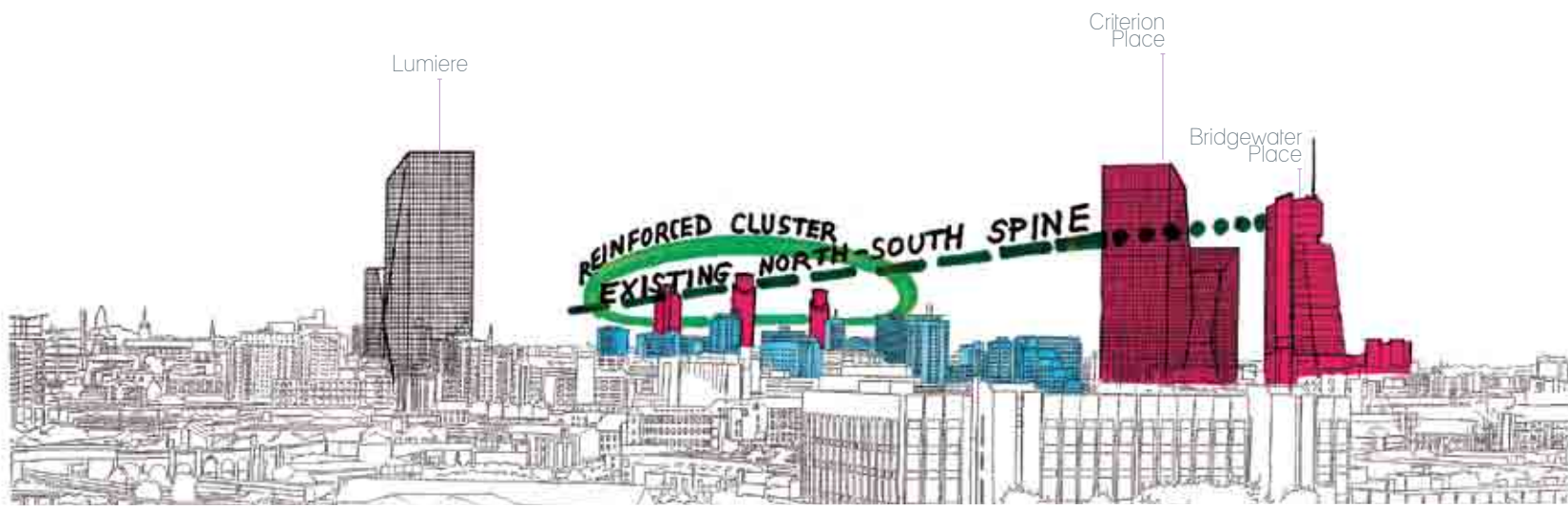
A more dense grouping > of tall buildings in **Central Toronto** create a different skyline

Groups of high buildings are less obtrusive and are in principle to be preferred to a few dispersed or lonely solutions. Clusters are desirable in the right places – away from neighbourhoods but linked to public transport interchanges. Revised PPG 12 on Development Plans sets out the importance of promoting the expansion of clusters which can be concentrated in a particular location, and drawing

attention as a business quarter or technology park. Clusters create an opportunity for businesses to work together and share resources as well as being a focus for regeneration. Tall buildings as a group can handle the environmental impact better than individual ones.

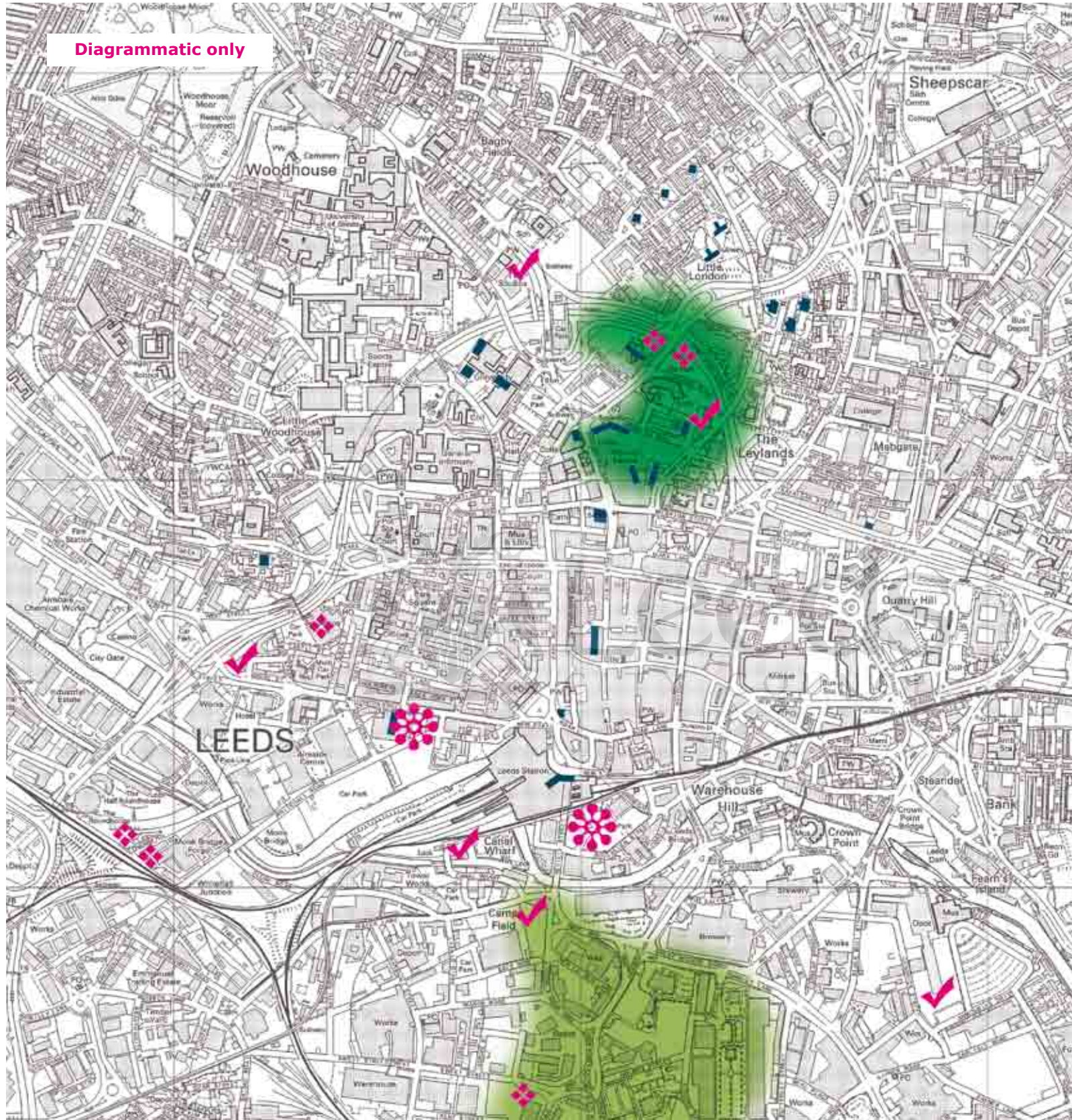
Cluster Blocks need to be transport effective since they will generate travel journeys and movement which also have an impact on peak commuting times. Linked with transport interchanges or systems they can enhance or relieve the existing transport infrastructure.

Traffic which clusters generate and attract can be taken off the network before it reaches the already congested city centre.



View north of existing tall building cluster and potential new cluster in Leeds City Centre

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Cluster Opportunities

- Existing Tall Buildings
- ✿ Proposed Super Tower (over 45 storeys)
- ✿ Proposed Super Tower (over 45 storeys) in construction
- ◆ Proposed Tall Buildings
- ✓ Tall Building constructed or in construction
- Reinforced Cluster
- Potential for new Cluster

3. Strategic Issues - Clusters

The tall towers and blocks of Little London, Tower House and Elmwood Road create an existing cluster >



Early studies of proposed new cluster by Keoiter Kim with John Thorp at Crown Point area >

Potential locations for cluster blocks:-

- 1** New locations (ruined landscapes/ brownfield sites):-
 - South of the River Aire near Crown Point Retail Park
- 2** Existing high rise areas:-
 - Elmwood Road / Claypit Lane – just north of the City Centre
- 3** Gateway Locations :-
 - Fringes of the City centre and adjacent to main routes into the city
 - Including 1) and 2) above
 - Bridgewater Place
 - West end of Wellington Street

As well as basic design criteria already established for individual tall buildings, designers of buildings forming part of a cluster need to consider the following factors and their interplay:-

- Contribution to grouping and visual composition
- Physical spatial and visual relationships with each-other
- Impact at ground level – architecture, quality of spaces and public realm, microclimate and effect of shadowing and cumulative shadowing
- The merits of establishing buildings at different heights
- The merits of a common or contrasting theme for materials, detailing and building forms



- The opportunity for improving and sustaining good transport and pedestrian links
- The townscape context
- The impression of tall buildings on people who are within a short distance away
- The balance between clusters and open space
- Attractive silhouette and form to enhance skyline
- Landmark status – will also assist people to orientate themselves
- Civilised, humane and attractive street level environments
- Critical mass and opportunities for good transport links and regeneration
- Contextual development compatible with the wider area, its edges and its grain.

Aim should be to create:-

- Distinctiveness in architecture and form
- Sculptural composition

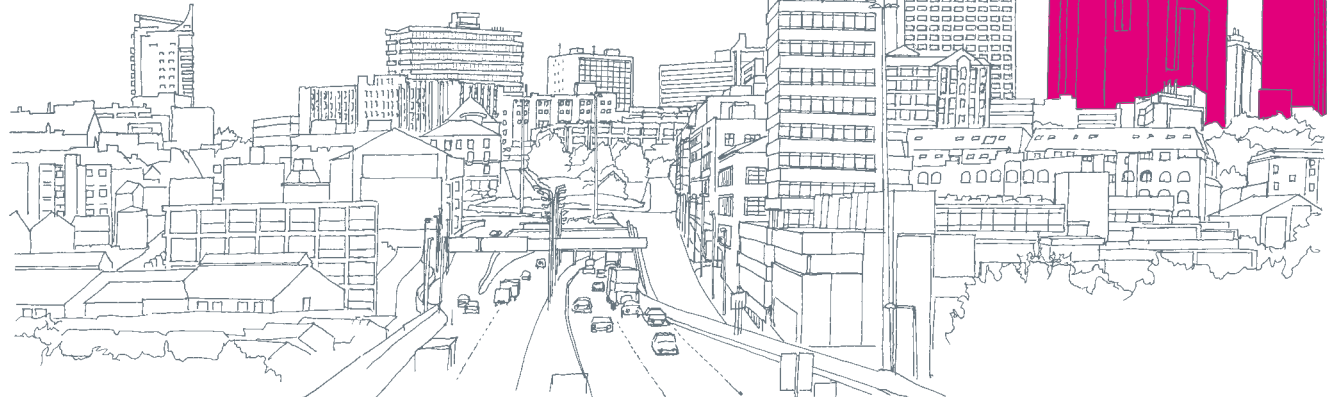
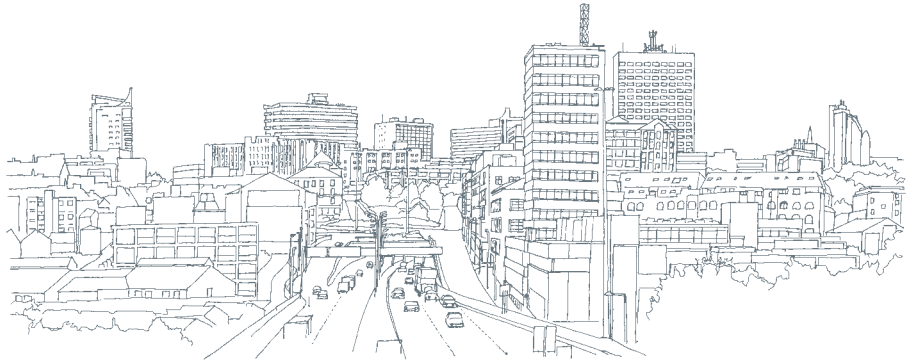
Examples of Opportunities

Crown Point Area/ Bridgewater Place

- Potential for new pedestrian link into the city.
- Walking distance from city centre and railway station.
- Potential to take traffic off the network (M1, M62 & A1) before it reaches the city centre.
- Sculptural composition in flat urban landscape.
- Visual potential of closing the vista looking down from the Kirkstall Valley
- Potential growth area
- Links with Public Transport
- Visual triangulation link with other tall buildings

Clay Pit Lane / Elmwood Road

- Potential to reinforce and visually improve existing 'widespread' cluster.
- Gateway opportunities for north side of City Centre and Inner Ring Road
- Walking distance from City Centre
- Regeneration opportunity
- Outside areas of strong conservation and architectural character
- One of the highest and prominent sites in the city.



▲ The existing cluster 2008 formed by the towers and blocks of Elmwood Road, Tower House and the Merrion Centre

◀ The existing cluster at the Merrion Centre viewed from New York Road / Quarry Hill

◀ Sketch of proposals to reinforce this existing cluster at the Merrion Centre (circa 2006)

◀ **Opportunities to reinforce the existing cluster** shown in this view of City Centre from south

- Existing cluster at Merrion Centre
- Tall buildings submitted for planning approval or pre application discussions

* In construction 2008

Opportunities to reinforce existing clusters