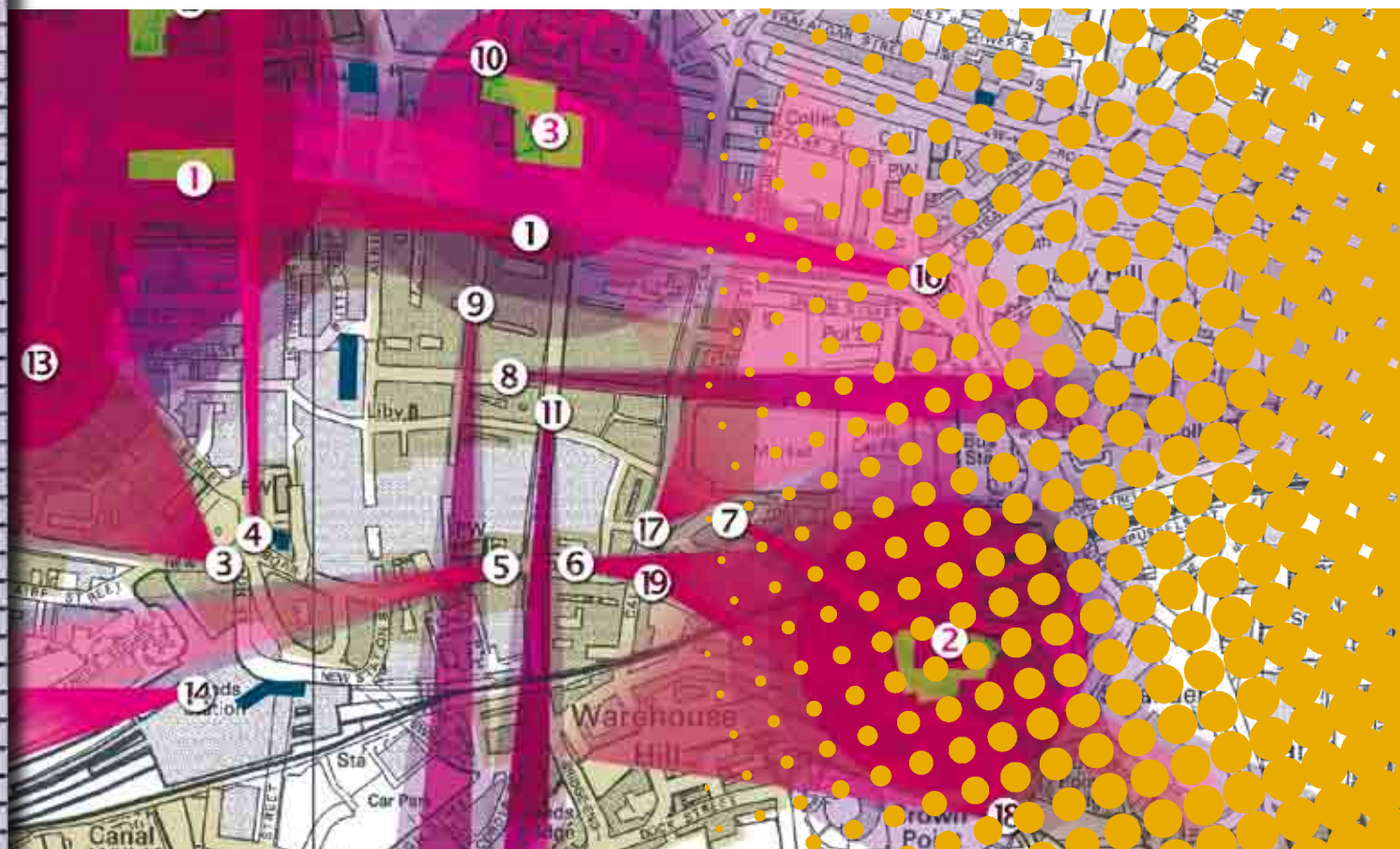


# Tall Buildings Design Guide

Leeds Local Development Framework



Supplementary Planning Document  
Spring 2010



# Useful Information

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# Contents

## Tall Buildings Design Guide

### Setting the Scene

Why has this guide been produced?	4
Who is the guide for?	4
How to use the guide?	4
Status of the guide	4

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>5</b>
-----------------	----------

<b>Summary</b>	<b>6</b>
----------------	----------

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>8</b>
---------------------	----------

▪ Purpose	8
▪ What is a Tall Building?	8
▪ Study Area	9

<b>1 Existing Situation</b>	<b>11</b>
-----------------------------	-----------

▪ Leeds Topography / Character	11
▪ Policy Context	13
- Vision for Leeds 2004–2020	15
- Renaissance Leeds	15
▪ Existing Views and Settings	16

<b>2 Existing Tall Building Usage</b>	<b>24</b>
---------------------------------------	-----------

- Offices	24
- New Apartments	25
- Student Housing	25
- Social Housing Towers	26
- Other Uses	26
- Recent Trends	27
- Future	27

### Design Considerations

<b>3 Strategic Issues</b>	<b>30</b>
---------------------------	-----------

▪ Constraints – Protecting Settings, Views and Vistas	30
- Conservation Areas	46
▪ Locations for tall buildings	50
- General	50
- Landmarks / Gateway Buildings	54
▪ Clusters	56
▪ Movement and Connections	60
▪ Sustainability and Climate Change	62
▪ Skylines	66
▪ Beyond the City centre	73

<b>4 Design Detail</b>	<b>74</b>
------------------------	-----------

▪ Design Aspirations	74
▪ Context	74
▪ Architectural Quality	76
▪ Tops	80
▪ Relationship to the Street	81
▪ Urban Blocks	83
▪ Uses	83
▪ Recladding and Demolition	84

### Bringing it all together

<b>5 Design Process and Planning Submission Requirements</b>	<b>88</b>
--	-----------

<b>6 Conclusion</b>	<b>91</b>
---------------------	-----------

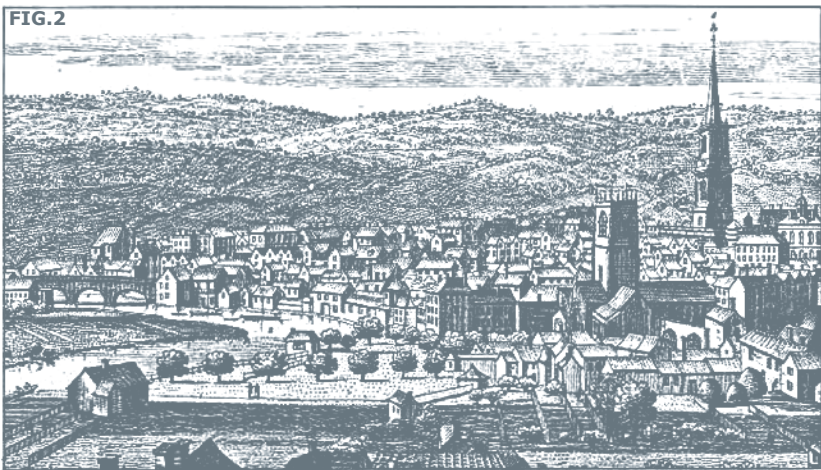
<b>Annexe</b>	<b>92</b>
---------------	-----------

▪ Leeds structures - existing and proposed	92
▪ Design Workshop Findings	93
Bibliography	96
Contacts	98

# Setting the Scene

Why has this guide been produced?	Who is the guide for?	How to use the guide	Status of the guide
<p>The city centre of Leeds has seen a huge amount of private sector investment in new development over the last decade. The economic growth and success of the city has resulted in a greater number of proposals for tall buildings in different parts of the city. The aim of this document is to provide clear design guidance on the location, form and appearance of tall buildings so that they can be successfully integrated into the environment and contribute to the changing skyline of the city. As a component of the Local Development Framework this document provides supplementary support to Development Plan Documents and identifies areas where there may be opportunities for tall buildings. It also develops from the work contained in the City Centre Urban Design Strategy and supports the Renaissance Leeds study on the theme of a central Leeds skyline.</p>	<p>It is expected that this guide will be of value to a variety of groups:-</p> <p><b>Developers</b> – to assist developers to take on board sustainable approaches to the planning and design of tall buildings whilst at the same time providing more certainty about the appropriateness and location of tall buildings.</p> <p><b>Design teams</b> – to provide a high standard of design of tall buildings and their connection with the ground so that they can be successfully integrated within the local and city context.</p> <p><b>Local amenity societies</b> – to provide a methodology to preserve the character and appearance of Conservation Areas and protect important buildings, views and settings.</p> <p><b>Planners</b> – to establish clear principles and advice criteria against which proposals for tall buildings will be considered and assessed in an objective and consistent manner.</p>	<p>It is anticipated that the guide will be used to provide:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Key principles required for good practice in the location and design of tall buildings.</li><li>▪ An appreciation of the context and local distinctiveness of Leeds.</li><li>▪ Examples of good and bad practice.</li><li>▪ Reference to national and local policy frameworks.</li><li>▪ A background of the emerging physical framework for tall buildings and the skyline of Leeds which applicants and their agents can contribute to.</li><li>▪ Clear checklist and submission requirements for planning applications.</li></ul>	<p>The guide holds the status of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), this means that it both supports and reinforces the “saved” planning policies as set out in the Leeds Unitary Development Plan (Review 2006) and it is also in accordance with policy SC8 – Design, Conservation and Landscape of the emerging draft Leeds Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy ‘Preferred Approach’.</p> <p>The emerging Core Strategy sets out the vision for the future of Leeds over the next two decades and provides broad policies to shape development and support its strategic vision.</p> <p>The SPD is a material consideration and will be used to help decide planning applications and defend decisions made at appeals.</p>

## Foreword



Tall buildings, being prominent and highly visible, can affect everyone. Apart from being places to live or work in, their presence can create a sense of place and give an impression, whether good or bad. Tall buildings break into the scale, rhythm and grain of the urban form of our towns and cities, with town halls, churches and cathedrals being notable earlier structures that have been joined by other tall buildings built for commerce and housing during the last 50 years. The former expressed the spiritual powers of their owners and acted as a focus for the community and civic life

with the church spire and town hall clock being focal points with functions well understood by the public. Unfortunately the latter has peppered tall buildings on the urban skyline, many creating visual harm that reflects the worst of the 60's and later. Rejected by the general public, many have blighted their environments. Consequently it is important that the lessons of history are understood to enable the new generation of tall buildings to be liked by all.

Tall buildings of architectural quality and located in the right places can enhance and contribute to the attractiveness of our towns and cities. They can have a positive role by acting as catalysts for regeneration and good development whilst at the same time celebrating growth and economic prosperity. As the space available for development in Leeds City Centre becomes scarcer and more expensive, the pressure to conceive high density schemes and taller buildings in the city centre and its immediate vicinity, has become increasingly important with tall buildings featuring in many development applications. It is therefore essential that we have a sensible but sensitive policy for short and long term development of tall buildings to promote solutions for the public good and the urban environment.

Claims that tall buildings are an essential part of the urban renaissance are unfounded but in recent years there has been a resurgence and a desire to build them. Proposals for tall buildings deserve the closest of scrutiny and policies to deal with them.

This tall building guide is also about the challenge of successfully introducing and controlling new development into an existing urban form and grain which in some parts is in need of further urban 'surgery, massage and sculpture' to express and reinforce its distinctiveness - particularly its skyline.

This document aims to assist developers, architects and the Leeds City Council City Development with comprehensive guidance for the location and design of tall buildings with respect to appearance, sustainability, micro-climate and quality of public realm around tall buildings. Its outcome is a result of collaboration between officers of the council, the Leeds Renaissance Study team, and with Civic Trust members, Councillors, property developers and their consultants who all attended a major workshop event held to develop the document. It also takes on previous guidance from the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and English Heritage in their joint consultation paper 'Guidance on Tall Buildings'.

< **FIG.1** This delightful wood cut from **Thomas Gent's History of Ripon** shows Leeds from the south, its major features being the towers of St John's Church, Holy Trinity, and the Parish Church. On the extreme left, the manor house still stands within its moated enclosure on the site now occupied by The Scarbrough public house in Bishopgate Street

< **FIG.2** This detail from **Samuel and Nathaniel Buck's South East Prospect of Leeds of 1745** shows the town from Cavalier Hill with Leeds Bridge to the left, and the parish church and Holy Trinity towards the right. Note the orchards on Kirk Ing, between the Parish Church and the river and the haystacks and tenter-frames in the foreground

# Strategic

## 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.

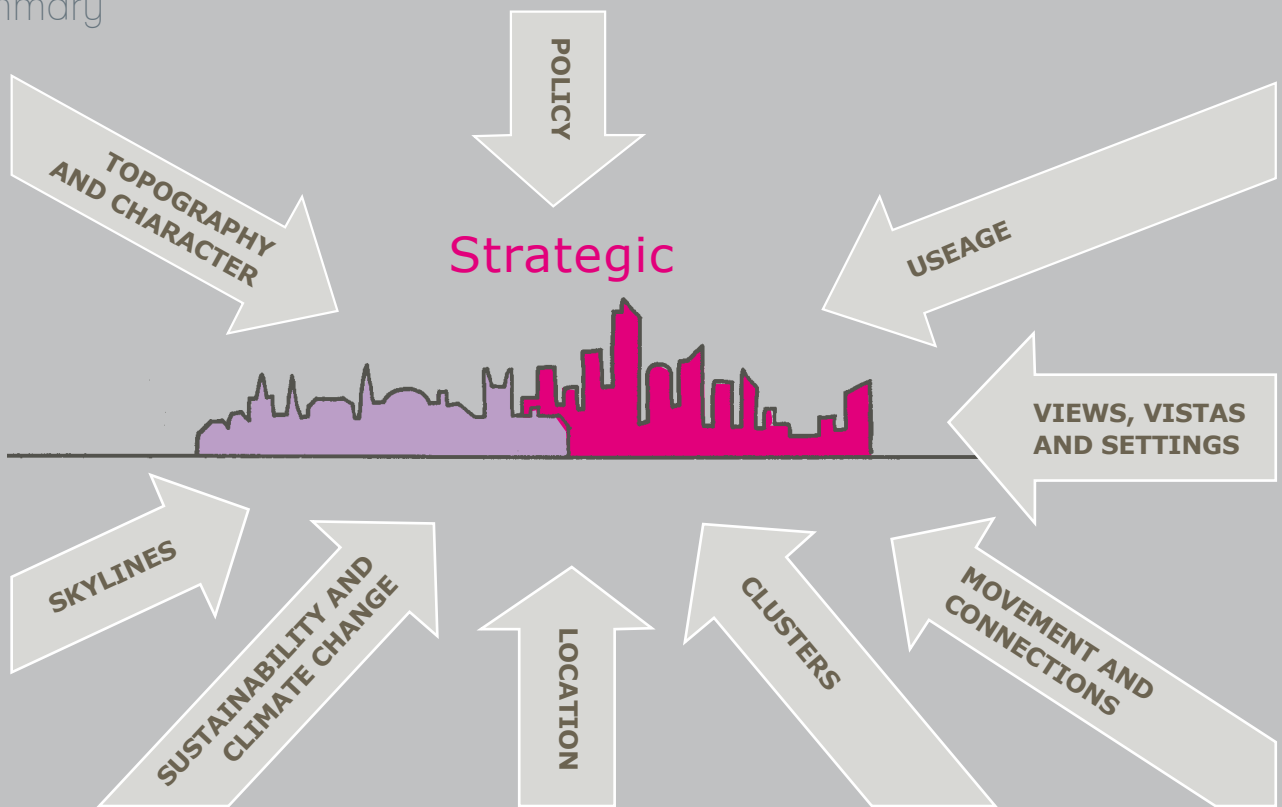
## Setting the Scene - Summary

## Summary

### What is it about?

The purpose of this Tall Building Guide for Leeds is to establish clear principles and advice to steer them to appropriate locations and ensure they are well designed. It will also be used to assess emerging proposals. It embraces key urban design issues for the city centre by addressing the importance of Form (buildings and morphology), Movement (transport, vehicles and pedestrians), Space (space/landscape around and in front of buildings) and Uses (activity and regeneration). It builds on Leeds’ inheritance of existing tall buildings and Council Policies and initiatives affecting the city centre. As a component of the Local Development Framework this document provides supplementary support to the Development Plan documents.

It is expected that the guide will be used in a variety of ways ranging from strategic to detailed guidance. Where relevant the appropriate UDP Policy is highlighted to reinforce the particular point.



### Existing Situation

This section explains how topography, urban morphology and urban form influence the existing context and shape of the city. Distant panoramic and local views of the city and its existing collection of tall buildings give a flavour of the built form and hint at the challenge ahead of developing tall buildings in Leeds. Reference is made to existing Policies (both national and local), and the aspirational documents - The Vision for Leeds 2004-2020 and Renaissance Leeds, the former strives to make Leeds an international competitive city, and the latter is about moving forward a diverse, dynamic and evolving city with a recognisable skyline, whilst preserving its character areas and strong sense of place.

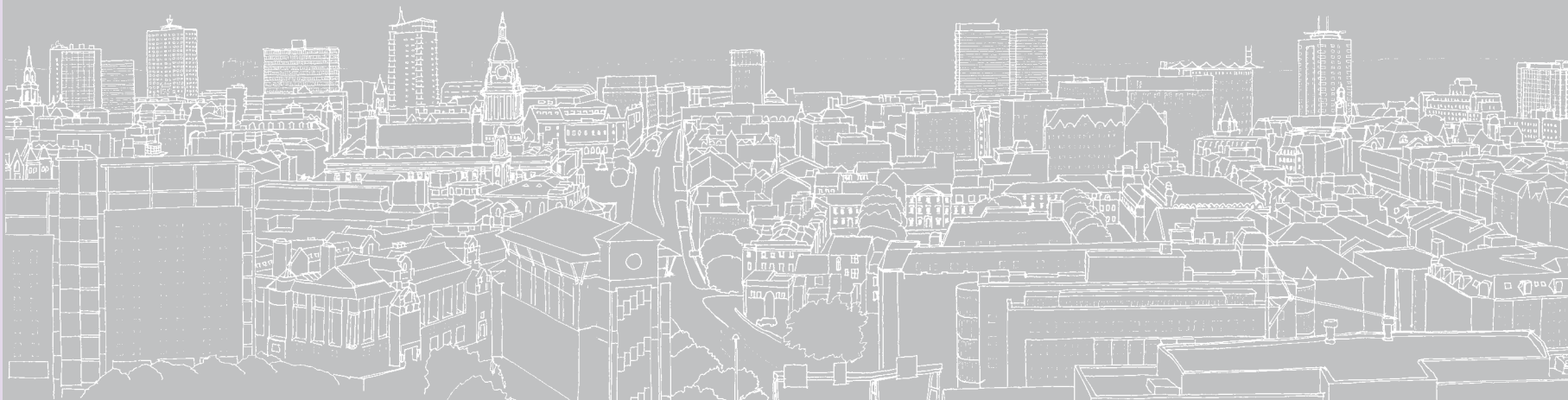
### Strategic Issues

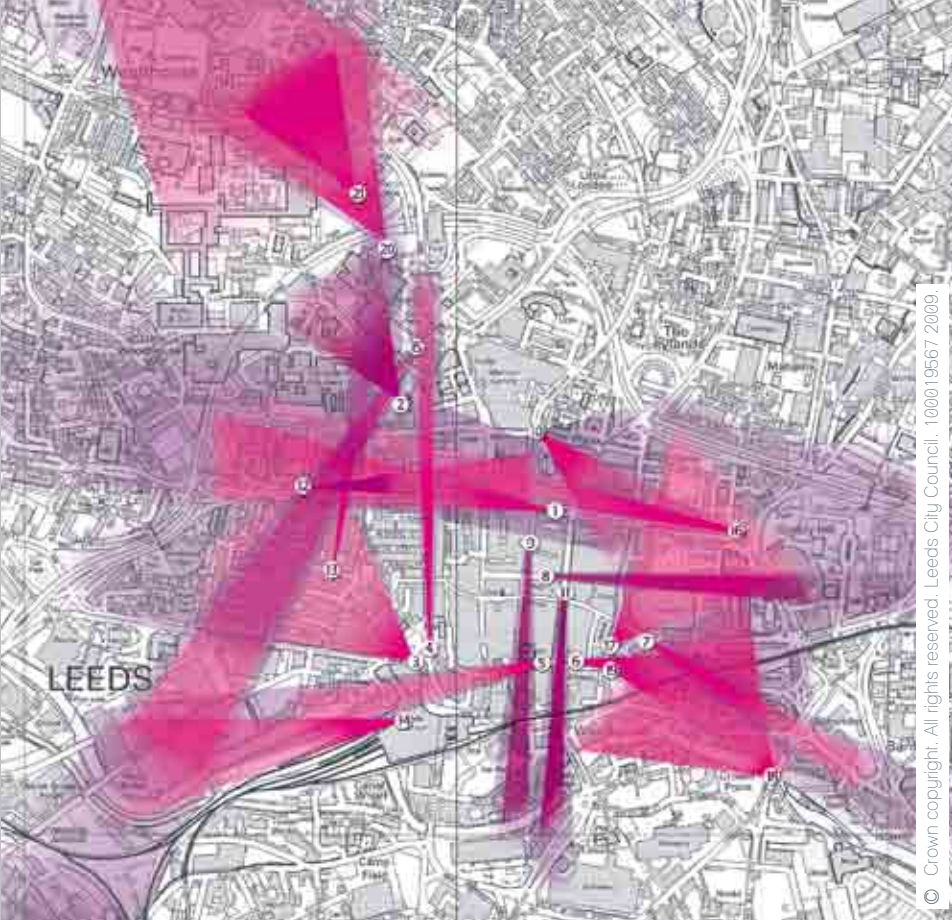
A variety of strategic issues reveal that the guide is not just about the form of tall buildings but is concerned with where they could go whilst protecting the best of the existing city fabric. A section - **Protecting Settings, Views and Vistas** - declares the intent to prohibit tall buildings where they are likely to cause visual damage.

The existing legacy of tall buildings provides the framework within which to recognise new opportunities and the potential to reshape the city into a more coherent urban form without harming the quality of the existing environment, particularly that of conservation areas.

The **Landmarks and Gateways** section shows how tall buildings can assist in making the city more legible, providing points for reference and orientation as well as forming important markers at entrances and exits to the city.

The potential to reinforce an existing **cluster** of tall buildings and create a new cluster on the south side of the River Aire is revealed. The way in which the issues of **movement and connections** relate to tall buildings is important. Their relevance to the location and sustainability of tall buildings is described, particularly the influence of the central railway station on the acceptability of super-tall towers.





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- << Example of map indicating protected views
- < Image of Bridgewater Place, Aedas Architects

## Design Detail

### Key Design Principles

- Ensure tall buildings are **imaginative high quality designs** with a cohesive quality for all features so that the design works as a whole.
- Ensure tall buildings respond appropriately to the **distinctive local character** and ensure there is no visual harm to historic buildings and views.
- Minimise energy use and waste** (both during construction and throughout the life of the building) including using renewable energy production where appropriate.
- Use **sustainable materials**.
- Tops of tall buildings should **add appropriate interest to the skyline**.
- Create active ground level frontages** to the adjacent streets.
- Consider recladding** existing tall buildings to provide a sustainable high quality solution before proposing demolition and new build.

**Sustainability and climate change** are critical issues in designing for appropriate development. Ways of implementing sustainable principles and practices through design, such as multiple skins that create high transparency with energy conservation and renewable energy devices, are suggested.

**Skyline** enhancement is considered with emphasis on shaping the emerging skyline into a meaningful composition giving Leeds its own identity.

### Design Detail

Design Detail focuses in on the various factors that make a tall building successful in design terms and compatible with its specific location. A key aim is to foster imaginative and high quality design. Architectural quality raises issues of height, scale, style, form and relationships with neighbouring buildings, as well as the influence of cladding, materials and patterns.

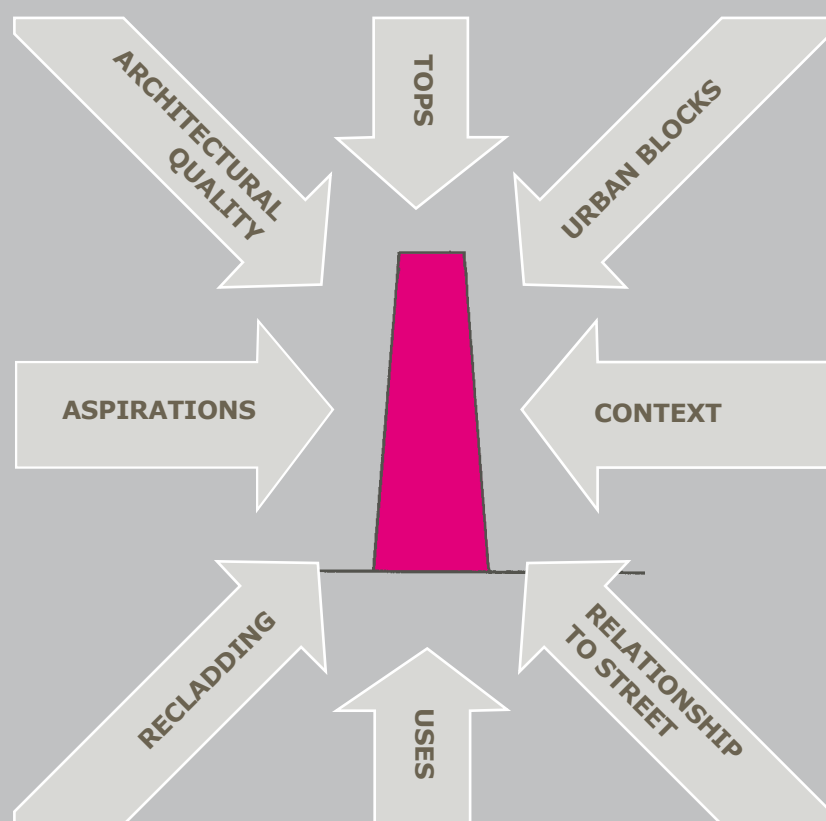
The tops of tall buildings receive special attention because of their impact on the skyline, as does their relationship with the street, particularly the interface with the ground and the public realm which is very important. The merits of urban blocks and the uses within, are highlighted again to signify how important that connection with the ground is and their contribution to good frontage. The validity of re-cladding old buildings is also covered.

### Design Process and Planning Submission Requirements

This section emphasises the design process based upon the importance of good site analysis, concept and detail. This engenders the right approach to an understanding of context and aids the production of the mandatory Design and Access Statements. This section also identifies the required standard of information and presentation needed for Planning Approval.

### Relevant UDP Policies

SA1, SA9  
BD2, BD4, BD5, BD5A, BD14  
CC3, CC4, CC5, CC6, CC7, CC8, CC9,  
CC11, CC12, CC13  
N12, N13



## Design Detail

# Introduction

The 'Blue' development by Granary Wharf - a 16+ storey block which rises up dramatically next to the railway station, currently delineates the canal basin



In the foreground the Leeds International Swimming Pool site where there has been a proposal for a tall building adjacent to the Inner Ring Road as part of the 'string'

Tall urban blocks of Infirmary Street with the 21 storey tower of the Park Plaza Hotel terminating the view

## Purpose

The purpose of this document is to establish clear principles and advice against which proposals for tall buildings will be considered and assessed. It will provide guidance regarding where tall buildings should and should not be built and provide the necessary degree of certainty for property developers. As well as providing supplementary support to Development Plan Documents as part of the Local Development Framework the document aims to demonstrate the importance of design and urban design in achieving distinctive quality buildings appropriate and compatible with their locations. By setting out strategic principles, visual damage, for example to the historic cores, can be avoided and high quality development will be able to enhance Leeds for the benefit of inhabitants, workers, visitors and businesses.



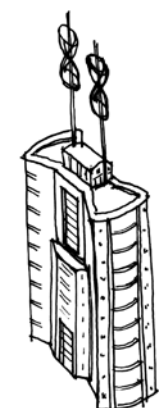
It seeks also to reinforce the existing but varied positive qualities of Leeds by securing the highest standard of design that itself will contribute to, rather than damage, local distinctiveness, whether it be by integration into the local context, or, on a wider city scale, by fitting into and enhancing the urban silhouette and skyline.



## What is a tall building?

At the turn of the century tall was defined as 'out of reach of a fireman's ladder' but the safest present day definition is one which the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment and English Heritage use in their guide:-

A tall building is one which is substantially taller than its neighbours and/or which significantly changes the skyline.

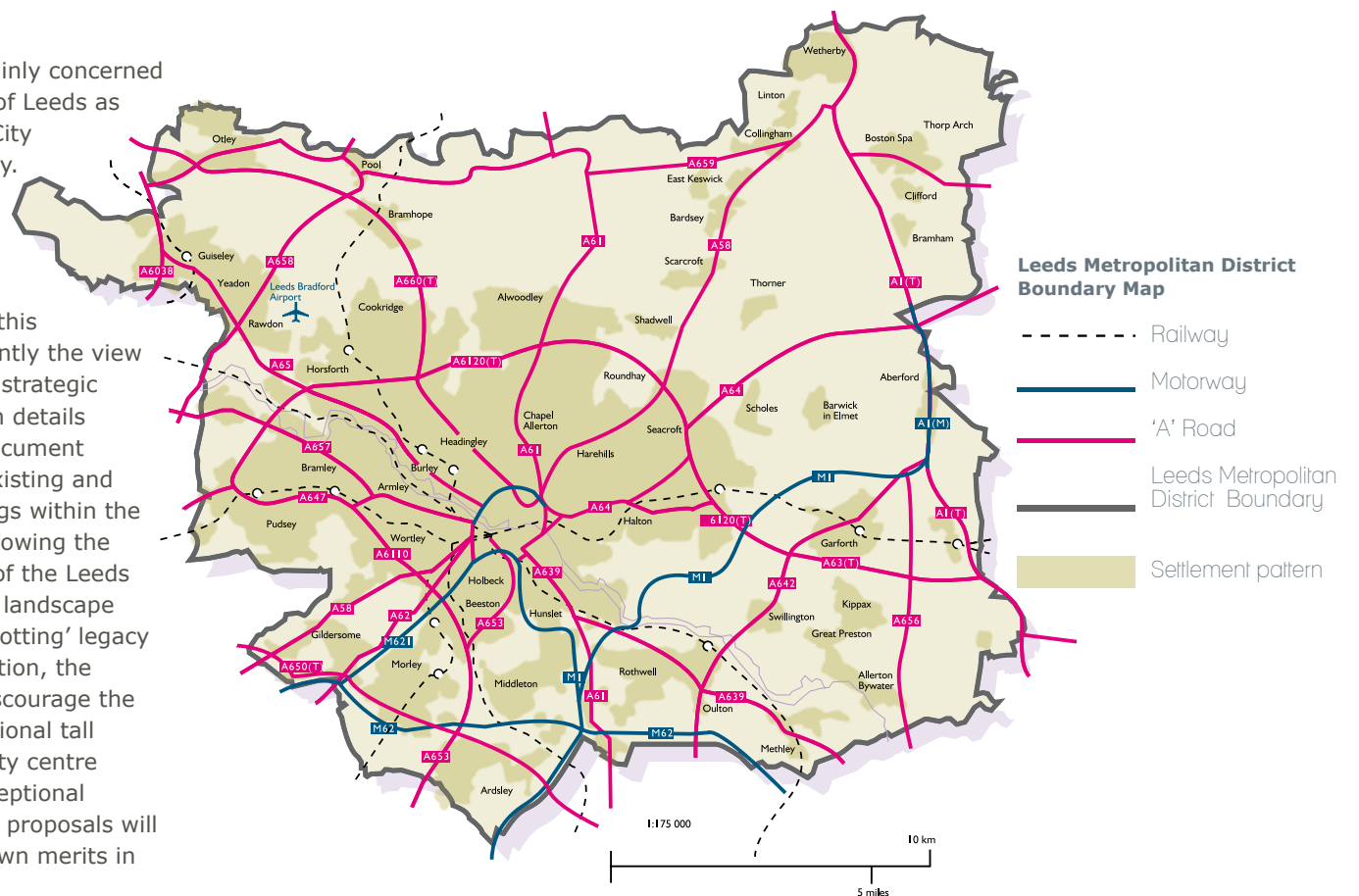


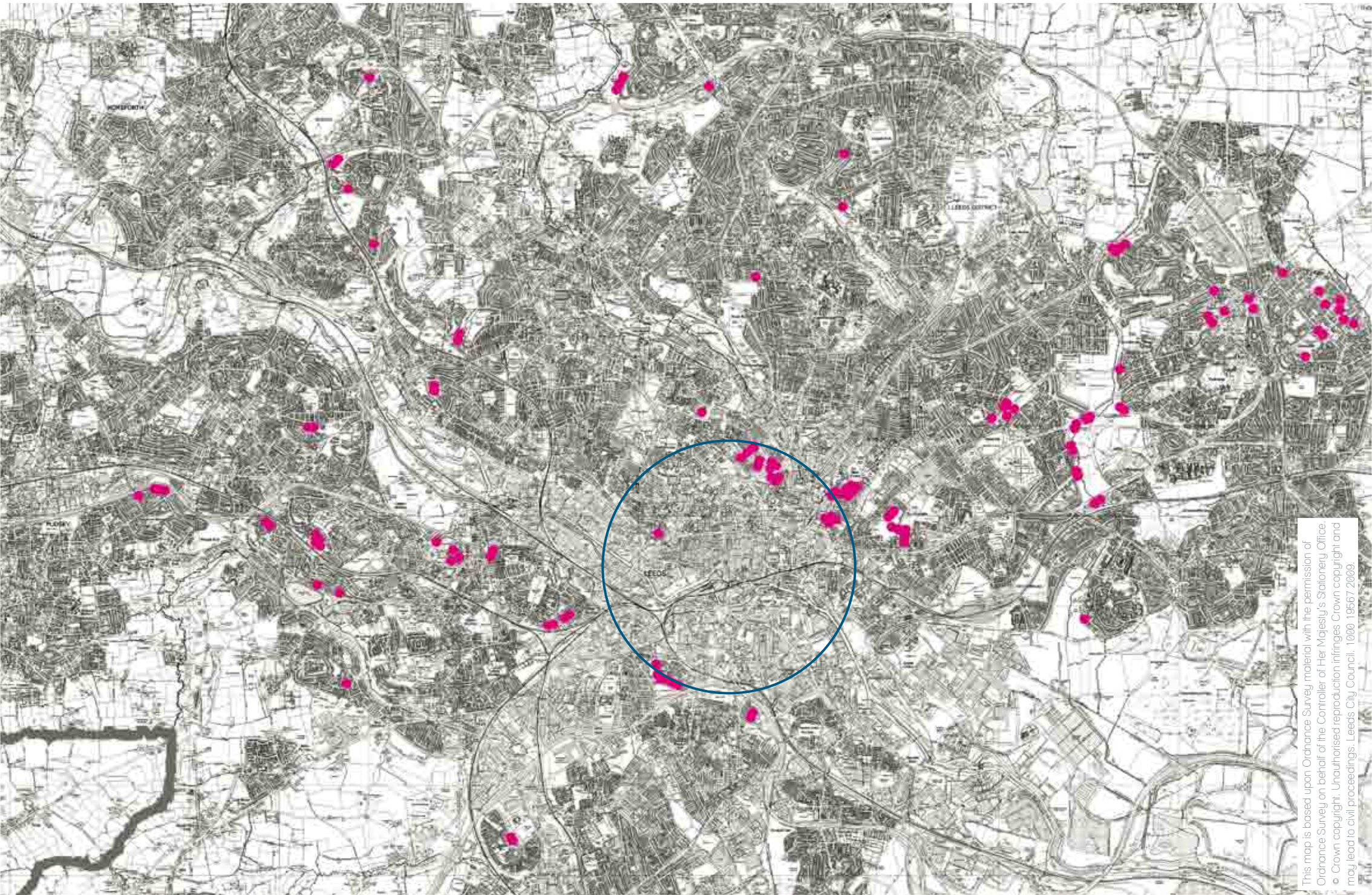
**Wind turbines erected on the ground and on top of existing structures will be considered as if they were tall buildings.**

- < Whilst 10-12 storeys would generally be regarded as tall, within the city centre there are areas where they have become the norm, as seen in these views along Park Row where they are regarded as part of tall urban blocks

## Study Area

This document is mainly concerned with the city centre of Leeds as was defined by the City Centre UDP Boundary. The post war building programme has resulted in over 120 tower blocks constructed outside this boundary. Consequently the view has been taken that strategic principles and design details referred to in this document will be relevant to existing and proposed tall buildings within the district of Leeds. Following the visual deterioration of the Leeds urban and suburban landscape due to the 'pepper-potting' legacy of post war construction, the Council wishes to discourage the construction of additional tall blocks outside the city centre unless there are exceptional circumstances. Such proposals will be judged on their own merits in line with guidance.





**Existing Tall  
Housing  
Blocks in the  
Leeds District**

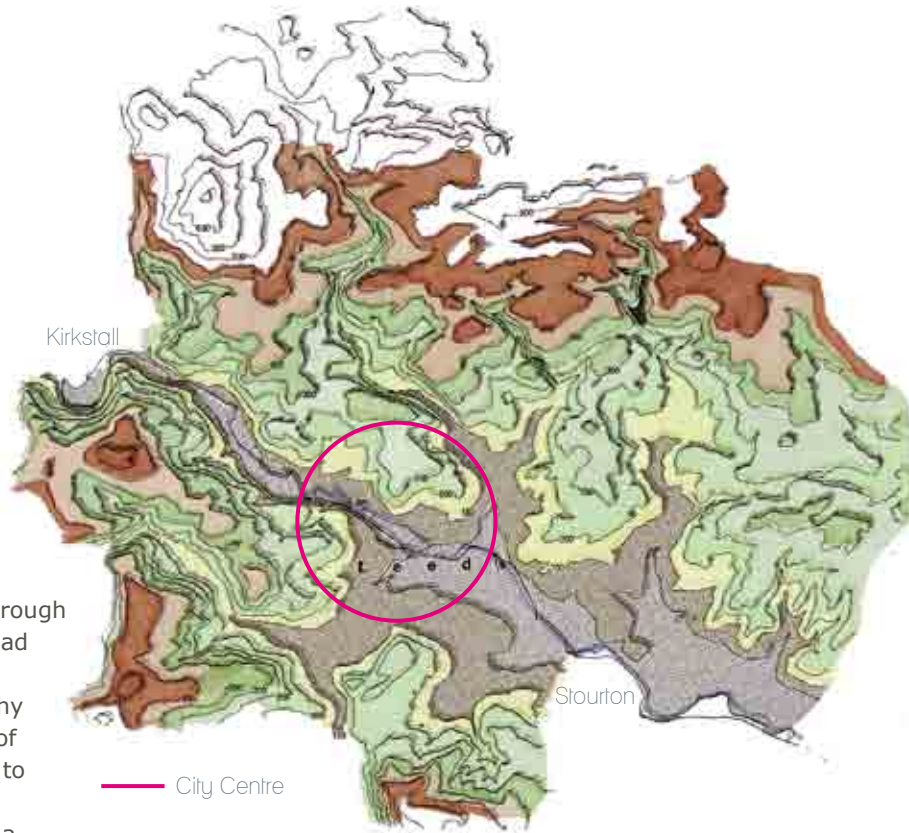
- City Centre
- Tall block

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# 1. Existing Situation

## Topography / Character

The existing scene reveals the River Aire meandering through the city, having formed a broad valley plain from Kirkstall to Stourton. The local topography consists of ridges and spurs of land, but in general it slopes to the river plain with the city centre being in the centre of a segmented horseshoe of land mass. Unless travel into the city is along the river plain, the general impression for most visitors is one of descending into the city centre where the concentration of tall buildings is as a north to south spine coinciding with Park Row and Albion Street (as referred to and illustrated in the City Centre Urban Design Strategy (CCUDS)).



Travelling towards the city centre one can experience many of the 131 individual social housing tall blocks, some of which are distinctive e.g. Cottingley Towers, and clusters at Seacroft, Burmantofts and Beeston. The more attractive landmarks are the existing churches at Armley, Headingley, Harehills and Richmond Hill which together with

the distinctive white tower of the University's Parkinson Building make the skyline significant and contribute to time honoured vistas not only into but also out of the city. Previously within the city the historic Leeds Town Hall, the Civic Hall spires, The Parish Church and Holy Trinity Church had a stronger impact than is now on the city centre urban silhouette.

The city core, containing its retail and commercial activities, has maintained a regular 4-7 storey height to most of its buildings mainly in the Conservation Area, and where additional storeys developed they flanked The Headrow. Post War construction has resulted in much taller buildings and blocks mainly along the north south spine referred to previously, and taller residential towers beyond the city core.

< Leeds district topography showing how it rises up to create a rim around the bowl of the city centre

✓ Leeds Town Hall tower and the Civic Hall spires provide a distinctive silhouette within the city centre

✓ This view northwards shows how the Parkinson Building tower at Leeds University dominates and together with the adjacent church spires creates a distinctive skyline



# 1. Existing Situation - Topography and Character



^ This 2008 view shows how the Cottingley Towers punctuate the landscape on the approach to Leeds down the M621 from the west

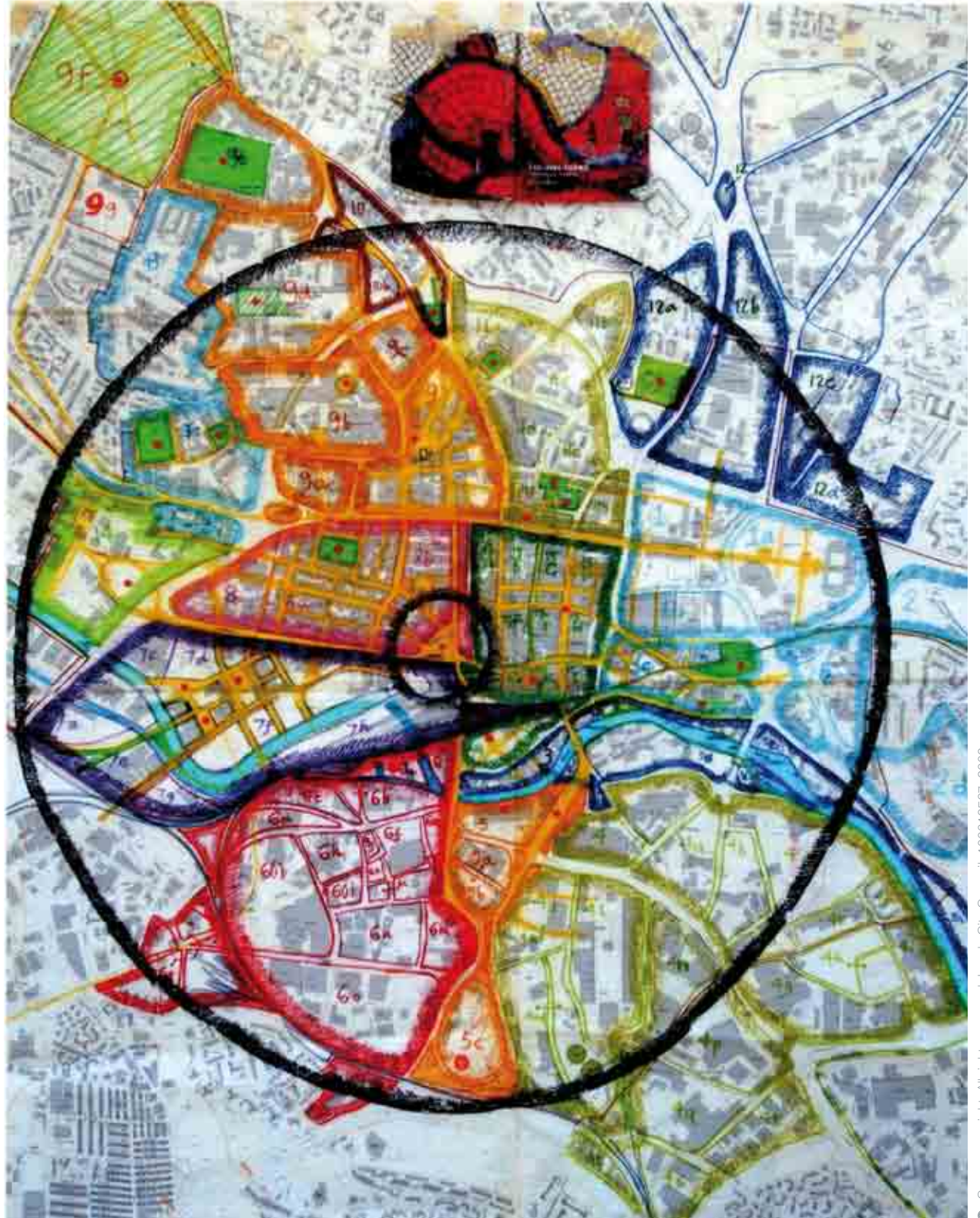
> The City Centre Urban Design Strategy (CCUDS) provides useful information on the city centre

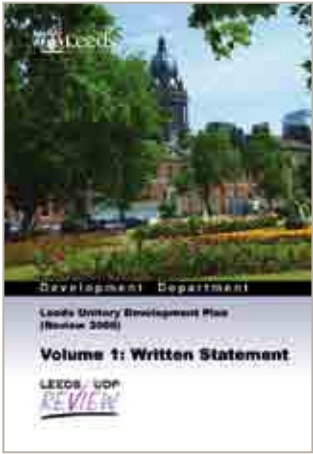
>> Various character areas of Leeds City Centre. Analysis by John Thorp Civic Architect in the Renaissance Leeds study



The City Centre Urban Design Strategy (CCUDS) and Renaissance Leeds (urban renaissance visioning exercise and study) both recognised that the city core contains a rich variety of places and neighbourhoods of different character, urban grain and scale. Past and present social and economic forces have moulded the city, its character and its infrastructure into what it is today – pieces of urban jigsaw or mosaic joined together to make a lively composition.

This document recognises the importance of the topography of Leeds, its urban form and grain in shaping its character, special identity and sense of place, not only within the regional scene but nationally and internationally.





All development will be expected to create excellent design that protects and enhances those elements which contribute to the distinct identity of the City and places within the District.

< The Leeds Unitary Development Plan (Review 2006) (UDP) provides the current policy framework for development in Leeds - work is currently taking place on its replacement - the Local Development Framework (LDF)

Policy Context

This guide should be read in conjunction with National Guidance:-

**PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development** – Describes Planning’s role in securing well designed sustainable development and its responsibility to reject poor design.

**PPS3: Housing** – Good design applied to sustainable residential development.

**PPS6: Planning for Town Centres**

**PPS8: Open Space Sport and Outdoor Recreation**

**PPS12: Local Spatial Planning** – Local development Frameworks

**PPG8** – Affect on telecommunications and telecommunication corridors.

**PPG13: Transport** – Sustainable and integrated transport systems

**PPG15: Planning for the Historic Environment** – Planning guidance relative to historic environments, conservation areas and listed buildings.

CABE and English Heritage.

**Guidance on Tall Buildings.**

City Council Policy and Guidance:-

**The Leeds Unitary Development Plan (Review 2006)** includes relevant policies to tall buildings however these policies do not seek to make site allocations. The relevant policies are:-

**UDP Policy SA1: Environment** – It is about safeguarding and enhancing the unique qualities and ‘sense of place’ of the Leeds district.

UDP Policies regarding building design:-

**Policies BD2: Design and siting of new buildings, BD4: Plant equipment and service areas BD5: Amenity and new buildings BD5A: Alterations and Extensions BD14: Floodlighting**

UDP Policies regarding the city centre, the skyline, prestige development areas and street scenes and spaces:-

**Policies CC3: City centre character**

**CC4: City centre gateway developments**

**CC5: City centre conservation area**

**CC6: High building development**

**CC7: Redevelopment of tower blocks**

**CC8: New development**

**CC9: Existing public space**

**CC11: Street and pedestrian corridors**

**CC12: Public space and connectivity**

**CC13: Public space and design criteria**

UDP Policies regarding urban design:-

**Policies N12: Priorities for urban design and Policy N13: Design and new buildings:** the design of all new buildings should be of high quality and have regard to the character and appearance of their surroundings.

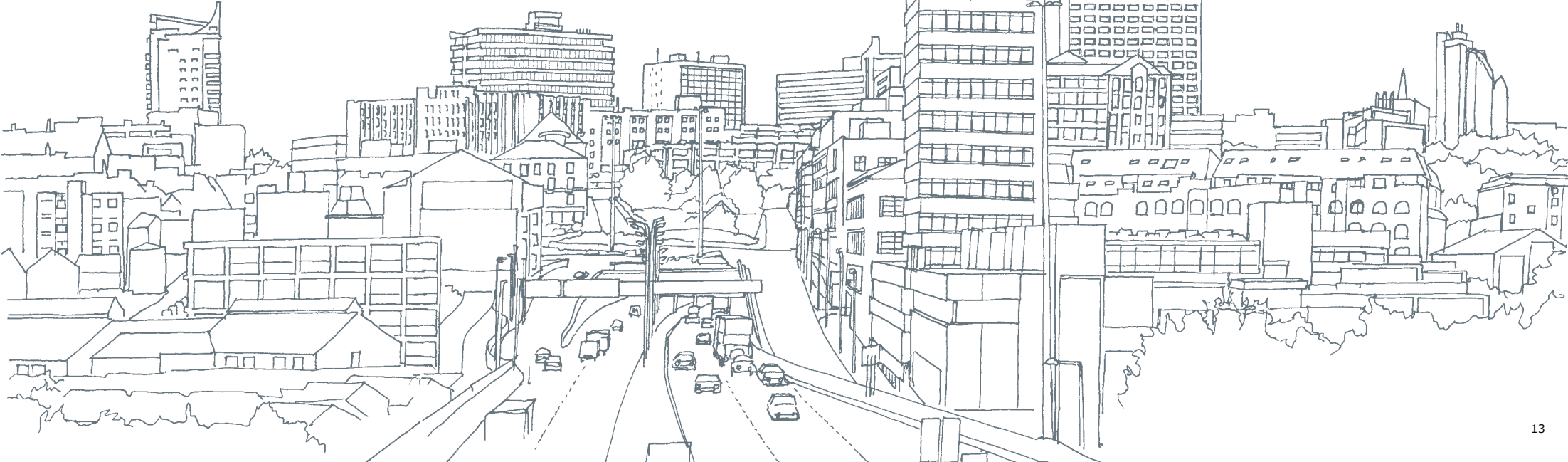
One of the UDP’s main strategic aims for the city is embodied in **SA9: Aspirations for the city centre** – To promote the development of a city centre which supports the aspirations of Leeds becoming one of the principal cities of Europe, maintaining and enhancing the distinctive character which the centre already possesses. Its other objectives are to secure a high quality city centre environment, to secure a more vibrant city centre, to provide a focus accessible to all the community and to identify and promote development opportunities.

Emerging Core Strategy – Preferred Approach:-

**SC8: Design, Conservation and Landscape** – All development will be expected to create excellent design that protects and enhances those elements which contribute to the distinct identity of the city and places within the district.

< Sketch of view west down New York Road (drawn 2006)

Good contemporary design which is sympathetic or complementary to its setting will be welcomed.



1. Existing Situation - Policy Context

The Ten Urban Design Principles provides principles for all involved in the development process in Leeds

Renaissance Leeds provides a framework to transform Leeds into a distinctive, diverse, dynamic and evolving city for the future without destroying its continuity with the past



Neighbourhoods for Living provides guidance for residential development that is appropriate for its context

**Transport Policy T2:** New development should normally i) be served adequately by existing or programmed highways or by improvements to the highways network which are funded by the developer via planning conditions on planning permissions or planning obligations, and will not create or materially add to problems of safety, environment or efficiency on the highway network; and ii) be capable of being adequately served by public

transport and taxi services and should ensure that necessary infrastructure for new services is included in the development; and iii) make adequate provision for easy, safe and secure cycle use and parking; and iv) additionally in the case of residential development, be within convenient walking distance of local facilities and not create problems of personable accessibility.

**Leeds City Centre Urban Design Strategy (CCUDS)**  
Leeds City Centre Urban Design Strategy explains and develops the urban design approach of the City Council and celebrates the many distinctive qualities of the city centre. It provides a working tool which can be used to encourage good, distinctive design proposals appropriate to Leeds City Centre. Using a cyclical process that involves audit, analysis and aspirations, it provides principles, examines strategic issues and explores character areas.

**Neighbourhoods For Living – Residential Design Guide**  
‘Neighbourhoods for living’ provides the Leeds dimension for national urban design guidance on residential development. The guide specifically provides further clarity for developers and designers regarding themes and principles of residential design, the character and essence of Leeds and the submission requirements and analysis based process.



Ten Urban Design Principles

For use by Leeds City Council in its day to day development activities.

1. INVESTING Effectively – Recognise that good design is good business
2. WORKING Together – Get the team right
3. INVOLVING The Community – Make places for (and by) people
4. REGENERATING Throughout Leeds – Close the gap and move forward
5. DELIVERING Sustainable Environmental Solutions – Provide for future generations
6. CREATING Excellent New Places – Talk a visionary approach
7. IMPROVING Existing Identity – Analyse and enhance the character
8. CONNECTING Places – Create visual and physical links
9. MANAGING The Investment – Look after the place
10. REVIEWING Our Work – Improve continuously

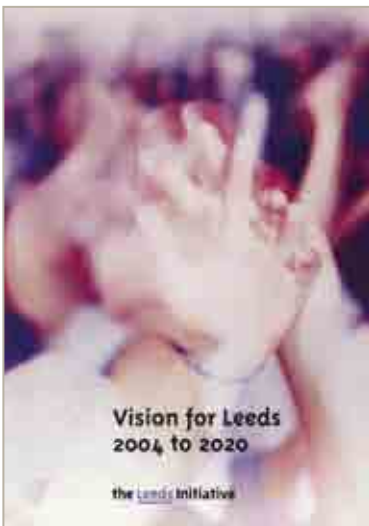
“Good design provides the background to everybody’s lives and can help bring communities together. It develops a sense of local pride and creates lasting confidence.” (Vision 2 – high quality design is a cross-cutting issue, and thriving places is one of the eight strategic themes.)



These principles respond directly to Vision 2, LCC mission statement, core values and the themes in the Council Plan (creating better neighbourhoods and confident communities, making the most of people, competing in a global economy, integrated transport, and, looking after the environment).

All these principles should be used together to support and steer the work of all LCC Departments and be part of our commissioning, design, procurement, negotiation and other processes. These should also be advocated beyond the work of the Council – for use by our partners and all those influencing urban design quality throughout Leeds (including investors, developers, designers etc.).

**In order to avoid any misinterpretation regarding applications for tall buildings, the City Council endorses the views of CABE and English Heritage which emphasise that each case must be judged on its merits, even if a tall building already exists nearby or on the site in question, and be assessed as if no previous consent had been given. Consequently, an existing tall building in an area or on the same site will not necessarily justify its replacement with a new tall building.**



## Vision for Leeds 2004 to 2020

Released in early 2004, the Vision for Leeds 2004 to 2020 is the second community strategy for Leeds. It is based on the principles of sustainable development and its purpose is to guide the work of all partners to make sure that long term aims are achieved.

Vision aim – Going up a league as a city – making Leeds an internationally competitive city, the best place in the country to live, work and learn with a high quality of life for everyone – with a reputation for environmental excellence. Developing Leeds' role as the regional capital.

## Renaissance Leeds

The Renaissance Leeds Study (unpublished but due to be adopted) is about continuity and transformation in a diverse, dynamic and evolving city. It has produced proposals for a well connected city and principles to guide the development of a sustainable city. It has recognised the increased demand for tall buildings. Two of its themes have particular relevance to, and have influenced, this document.

- Skyline Leeds – added together, gateway ideas, the existing distinctive ridge line definition and other key locations e.g large scale infrastructure, to produce an illustrative idea for a distinctively, recognisably, ‘this-could-be-Leeds’ skyline.
- Mosaic Leeds – an analysis of the inner city areas which has recognised the numerous various sized character areas all in close proximity which presented on plan reveal a rich array of pattern – similar to a mosaic.



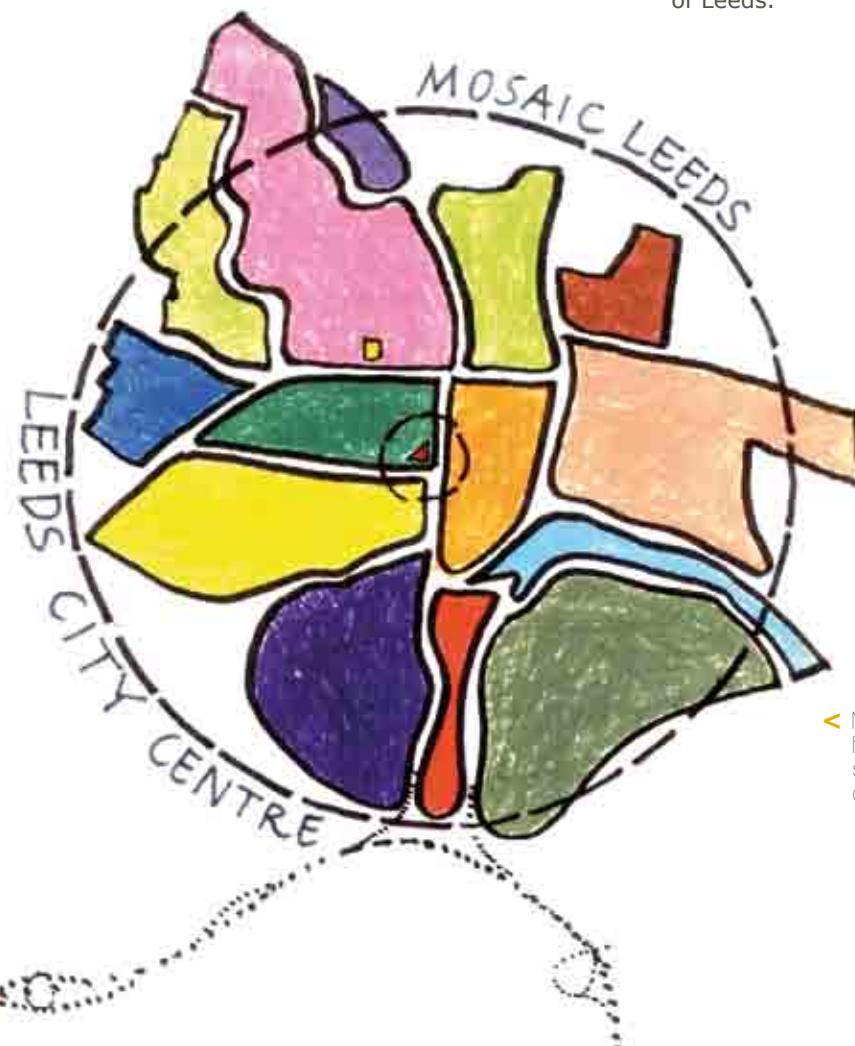
Cities such as Edinburgh, London, New York, and San Francisco have evolved in response to their own particular factors and forces at work, developing into

cities with dramatic but unique  
skylines recognised worldwide.

Leeds also has the opportunity to develop a distinctive identity reflecting its own particular circumstances – a fundamental point missed by many other town and city authorities which have allowed the ‘anywhere’ type of tall buildings with poor quality street spaces to creep into their environments with devastating results. This guide seeks to emphasise the importance of the need for tall buildings to become synonymous with their surroundings by bonding with and relating to the varied character areas of Leeds.

< Susie Kim and John Thorp's concept sketch of a new central structure in Renaissance Leeds into which other development will plug - Note the cluster of towers south of the river

< Vision for Leeds provides a coherent way forward to create an internationally competitive city that people will want to live, work and play in



< Mosaic Leeds City Centre from Renaissance Leeds showing some distinct character areas

## Existing Views and Settings



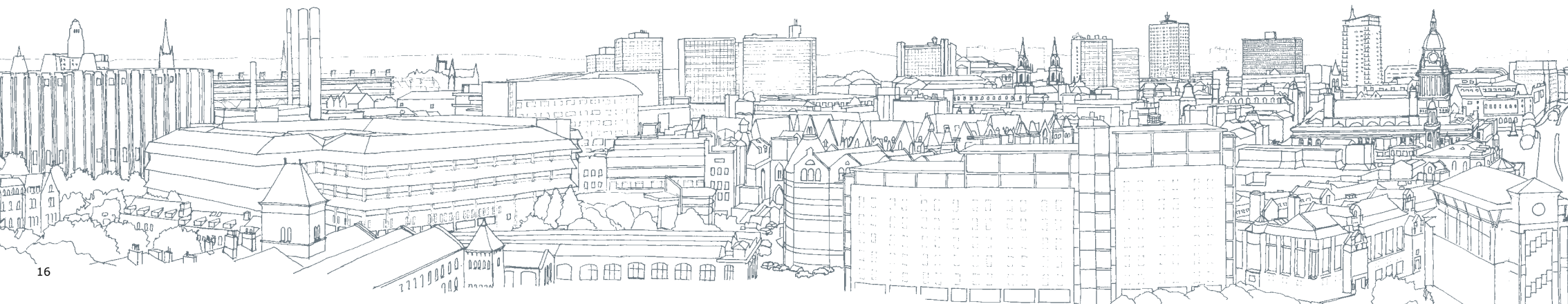
Leeds City Centre view > from Belle Isle on the southern rim showing the panoramic views over the city centre in 2008

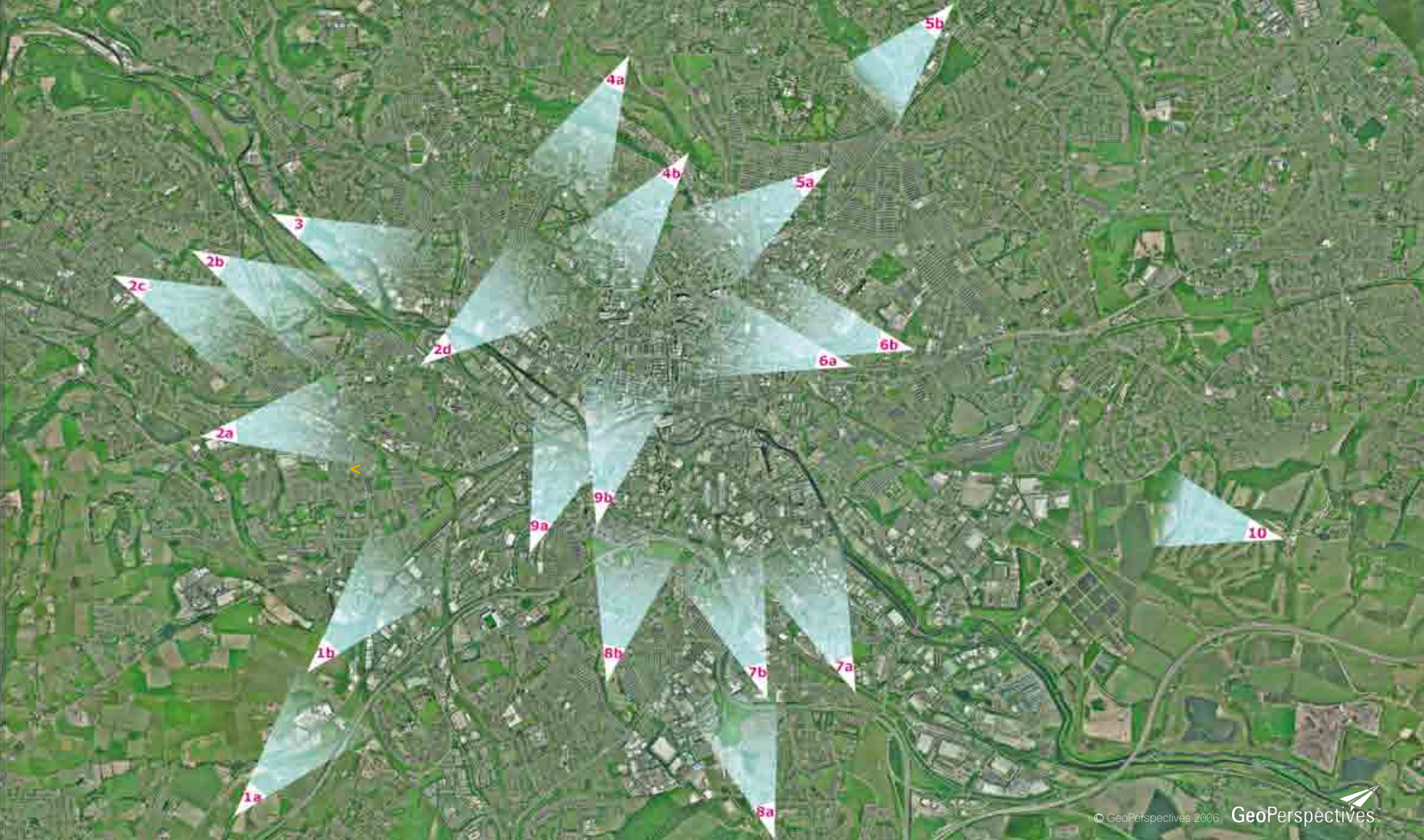
The Leeds city centre skyline and its immediate areas offer up a number of panoramas some of which appear dramatic for those living near by and for many visiting the city. This is due to the local topography which generally rises up in most directions away from the city which itself is situated on a gentle incline

that meets the River Aire. Land spurs within this topography also obstruct long distance views of the city but this helps to create visual drama for travellers as the city unfolds close to their city centre destinations. Unfortunately, for those experiencing the dramatic distant panoramas, expectations to many prove disappointing as they approach the city centre

amongst the 60's to 80's buildings, many of which, in terms of quality, look tired and struggle to create the same impact as their historic neighbours e.g. The Town Hall, Civic Hall and the University's Parkinson Building Tower.

2006 view from west showing v that the Parkinson Building, Civic Hall and Town Hall are still recognisable despite all the existing high rise development that has already taken place





## Key Distant Panoramic Views of the City



Key distant panoramic views of the city

**1a** South West Approach from M621

**1b** South West Approach from Geldard Road (A62)

**2a** View from Cabbage Hill Upper Wortley

**2b** View from Gotts Park Armley

**2c** View from Bramley / Town End

**2d** View from Armley

**3** North West approach from Kirkstall Valley

**4a** View from North - the top of Scott Hall Road / Buslingthorpe (A61)

**4b** View from Buslingthorpe / Sheepscar

**5a** Views from North East - Wetherby Road

**5b** View from Roundhay Park

**6a** Views from Eastern Approach - Edge of Mabgate (A64)

**6b** View from York Road / Richmond Hill (A64)

**7a** Views from South East / Stourton (A61)

**7b** Views from South - Bottom of Belle Isle (A6110)

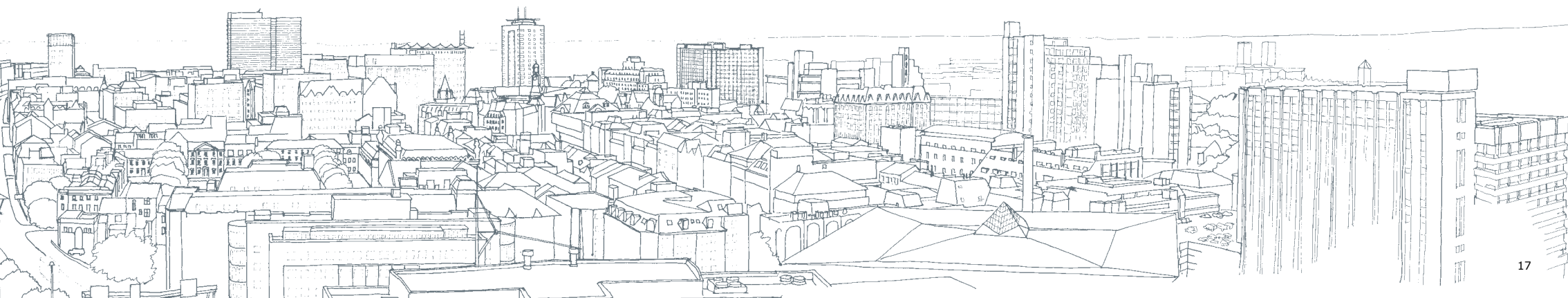
**8a** View from Belle Isle Estate

**8b** View from Beeston Hill

**9a** Views of City Centre from South

**9b** Views from South

**10** View form Temple Newsam



1. Existing Situation - Existing Views and Settings

**1a South West Approach >**  
**from M621**

Dramatic but distant panorama of whole city. The University Parkinson Building tower stands out as a most prominent form – occupying the highest position within the city centre.



**1b South West Approach >>**  
**from Geldard Road (A62)**

Distant panorama of the city Parkinson Building still dominant



**2b View from Gotts Park >>**  
**Armley**

Dramatic view framed by the landscape of Gotts Park which emphasises the slope within the city centre

**2c Views from Bramley >+**  
**/Town End >>**

Distant views of area to south of the city centre with the Bridgewater Tower structure prominent



# 1. Existing Situation - Existing Views and Settings



<< **2d View from Armley**  
View of city centre from residential area of Armley with Town Hall prominent despite being surrounded by other tall blocks



< **3 North West approach from Kirkstall Valley**  
Only part of city panorama revealed due to topography. View may benefit from visual stop/cluster



<< **4a View from North - the top of Scott Hall Road /Buslingthorpe (A61)**  
Dramatic silhouette with Parkinson Tower prominent



< **4b View from Buslingthorpe/Sheepscar**  
Dramatic view of North Eastern part of the city centre with grouping of existing towers prominent as a cluster



<< **5a Views from North East - Wetherby Road**  
Well beyond the city centre occasional views arise. In this case the Parkinson Tower



< **5b View from Roundhay Park 2009**  
Showing recently constructed student block

In considering planning applications for tall buildings, their effects on views from a Registered Park and Garden will be a material consideration.

**6a Views from Eastern Approach – Edge of Mabgate (A64)** >

Dramatic views of the existing and distinctive cluster of towers that occupy high ground to the North East side of the city centre



**6b View from York Road / Richmond Hill (A64)** >>

First impression of the city for travellers using the A64.



**7a Views from South East / Stourton (A61)** >

Distant flat valley view – not so dramatic but the Parkinson building remains distinctive



**7b Views from South – bottom of Belle Isle (A6110)** >>

Dramatic cityscape with most tall buildings visible but the north south spine not very apparent



**8a View from Belle Isle Estate** >

Dramatic view of the city centre for residents of Belle Isle

**8b View from Holbeck/ Beeston (2006)** >>

Views of city with all tall buildings prominent. A contrast with the existing forms in Holbeck



**9a & 9b Views of City Centre from South** >

Dramatic views of city centre and its skyline from Holbeck Moor 2005

**10 View from Temple Newsam** >>

Recent (2009) view of new city skyline



## Key Local Panoramas of the City

**1a, 1b, 1c, 1d & 1e**  
From Rail Routes into  
the City

**2a & 2b** From Sheepscar  
and Buslingthorpe Lane

**3** From Holbeck Urban  
Village

**4** From M621 Junction 3

**5** From Inner Ring Road  
(A58(M))

**6** From South East – East  
Street

**7** From footbridge over  
M58 near Quarry Hill

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1a >

**View from south west**

View of city centre from railway bridge with the west Inner Ring Road (A58(M)) evident in the foreground



1b >

1c >>

**Sequence of views from railway**

The impact of new developments evident from railway approach to Leeds Station



1d >

1e >>

**From Rail Routes into the City**

Previously approved schemes and those in construction may obstruct future views – particularly views of the Town Hall and Civic Hall



2a & 2b >>+

**From Sheepscar and Buslingthorpe lane**

Dramatic views due to local topography and landscape of residential towers/cluster of Little London



## 1. Existing Situation - Existing Views and Settings



**<< 3 From Holbeck Urban Village**  
Occasional part views of the city with view of Town Hall at end of Marshall Street

**< 4 From M621 Junction 3**  
View of city and skyline which reveals itself for M621 travellers



**<< 5 From West Inner Ring Road (A58(M))**  
Elevated stretch of road provides dramatic views of city centre and Town Hall

**< 6 From South East – East Street**  
Limited views of the city due to existing and proposed development



**< 7 From footbridge over A58(M) near Quarry Hill**  
View of existing cluster of tall buildings located near Merrion Centre (2008)

## 2. Existing Tall Building Usage

Many of the existing tall buildings along the north/south ridge date from the late sixties/early seventies and are very much of their time as shown with:

West Riding House  
Albion Street  
(top right, bottom right)

Merrion House  
Merrion Centre  
(middle centre)

Ventura House  
Clay Pit Lane  
(middle right)

Tower House  
Merrion Way  
(bottom centre)

There are a variety of uses for tall buildings, the main ones of which are considered separately.

### Offices

Existing tall office towers have mainly developed along the north/south ridge line topography as a result of city centre policy of the late 60's, 70's and 80's with City House, West Riding House, Merrion House, Tower House and Ventura (previously Hepworths) being notable examples. Their locations have proved successful to some extent due to their proximity with other city centre usages and transport facilities. Recladding,

refurbishment and change of use has led to the retention of all but one of those 60's to 80's towers.

In general they are not regarded as significant pieces of architecture, although Ventura could be regarded as an interesting essay in design for its time. Not many have contributed to the street scene with, for example, West Riding House's failure in closing the important vista down Albion Place. They have, however, assisted in creating a visual definition to the city centre when seen from a distance as a north to south spine.



Aerial photograph of north/south ridge of tall buildings (from CCUDS analysis)



## 2. Existing Tall Building Usage



< The apartments of the City Island development at Golts Island step up as they curve round to create an interesting sculptural form



### New Apartments

Certain inefficient patterns of development are not sustainable in the city centre. The need to optimise the use of land and reduce overall land take together with efficient and sustainable patterns of development has resulted in the growth of apartment blocks mainly on either side of the River Aire, with large developments at Aireside, Gotts Island, Sweet Street and The Calls being notable examples. These have resulted in localised built form of varied scales and heights, e.g. 6 to 8 storeys in Sweet Street and 14 to 16 storeys in Aireside.

< The apartment development along Whitehall Road front the river and railway station and delineate the edge of the city centre

<< This student block on Burley Road provides a focal point on the journey westward

### Student Housing

Recent growth of student accommodation has prompted many applications for large blocks of accommodation which have generally been 8 to 12 storeys in height and proposed mainly for the Burley Road area to the west of the city centre.

Student accommodation proposed for the Clay Pit Lane, former Little Londoner and BBC sites has resulted in the construction of three tall buildings in the highest part of the city. Notwithstanding any individual design quality these may have additional merit since they have been proposed in a zone where tall buildings will be acceptable and because they can complement other adjacent existing tall towers to form part of a cluster formation.

< Whilst opposite is OPAL, a new urban block of student accommodation



## 2. Existing Tall Building Usage



Examples of social housing towers (formerly Council flat blocks) are peppered around the former Leeds County Borough area beyond the city centre



### Social Housing Towers

In December 2003 there were 131 post-war tower blocks throughout the Leeds district. Many 'pepperpot' the outer areas of the city and some encroach into the city centre with others clearly affecting the skyline. Blocks tend to be 15, 18 and 20 storeys high with two at 25 storeys. They have been constructed using various system building techniques. The resultant spaces around and between tall residential towers have in many cases produced low quality environments leading to progressive neglect.

The flats at Marlborough Towers Burley Road provide an end stop to the view down. The Headrow and Westgate



These blocks which are part of Leeds Metropolitan University on Portland Way have now been reclad and updated



### Other uses

Educational and hotel buildings are the other main uses for tall buildings in Leeds City Centre. Leeds Metropolitan University and Leeds College of Technology have accommodation in the form of tall towers which form part of the north/south spine of tall buildings. Similarly placed along the spine and adjacent to City Square, Park Plaza was an office building but has been converted into a hotel circa 2003.

## 2. Existing Tall Building Usage



<<<

The concrete tower block on Albion Street that was formerly Dudley House offices has been reclad and refurbished to form K2 with its apartments to bring this outdated building back into beneficial use

<<+>

Park Plaza Hotel is a reclad and refurbished office block on the corner of City Square and Boar Lane which sits on a podium of restaurants and bars. It illustrates that tall buildings can be adapted to have uses other than residential or office, and can be rejuvenated

< Recent tall buildings and blocks that form a 'string' alongside the River Aire

Residential buildings have had a major impact on the city centre and its neighbourhoods and it is important not only to accept their key role but to acknowledge that they can make a valid contribution to a higher quality of life and environment.

### Future

Tall buildings can:-

- Offer viable solutions to city centre living
- Respond to the crisis of affordable housing
- Facilitate those who keep services running
- Alleviate strain on public transport
- Reinforce existing business areas
- Cater for significant population growth in a sustainable manner providing lessons have been learnt from the mistakes of the past
- Meet the needs of young professionals who wish to enjoy the metropolitan lifestyle
- Contribute towards the urban renaissance
- Could facilitate renewable energy eg. wind turbines

< Recently completely student accommodation OPAL on Burley Road is a 9/10 storey urban block with a 14/15 storey tower - a mixture of block and tower form



### Recent Trends

#### ■ Waterfront

Waterfront locations have in recent years offered opportunities, with development having occurred along Brewery Wharf with more being planned and progressed for the Aireside Site. Sites to the east of the city have the potential to offer new urban form and landmarks as did the former Hunslet Mill to this area.

Water can benefit from reflections of tall buildings by day and by night e.g. The Clarence Dock Basin, River Aire.

#### ■ West of the City / Burley Road

There has been recent activity of establishing tall buildings containing student residences along Burley Road. This has probably been due to developers taking advantage of cheaper sites to the west of the City Centre and their proximity to the University. Recent applications have been of up to a 12-15 storey scale which will result in tall blocks positioned close to each other rather than individual tall buildings.



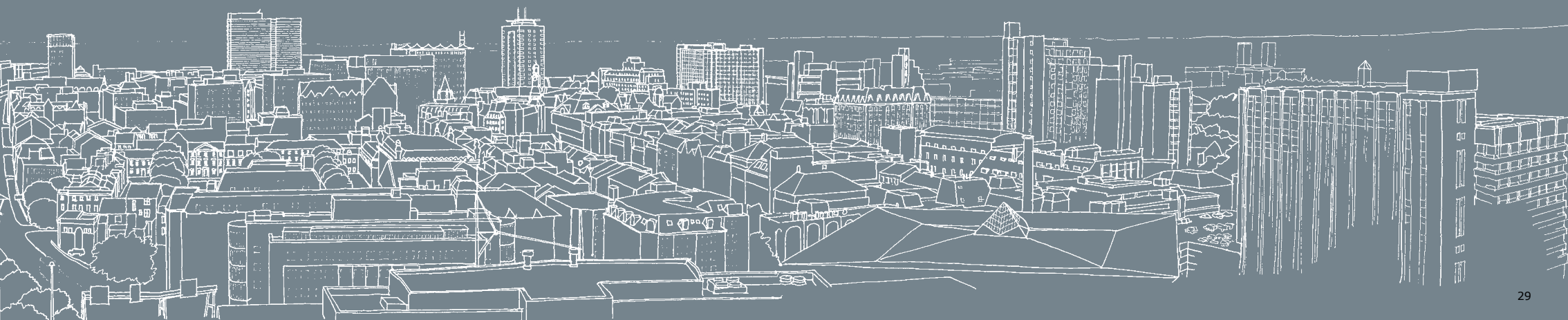


# Design Considerations

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

### UDP Policy SA1:

*To secure the highest possible quality of environment throughout the District, by protecting existing good environment, and conserving and enhancing where there is scope for improvement, including initiating the renewal and restoration of areas of poor environment - It is about safeguarding and enhancing the unique qualities and 'sense of place' of the Leeds district.*

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.

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

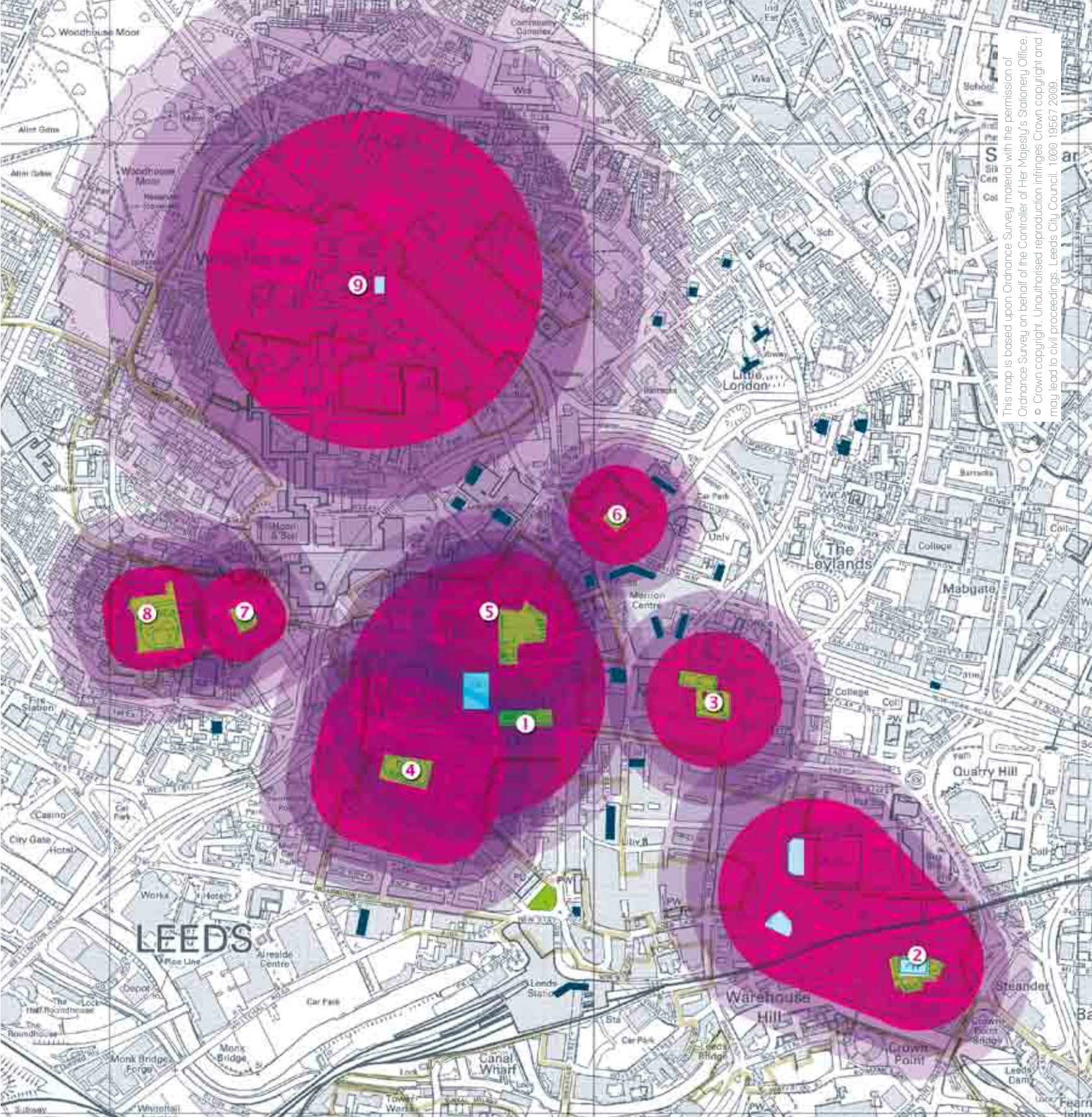
Hanover Square
- 8

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.





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(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)

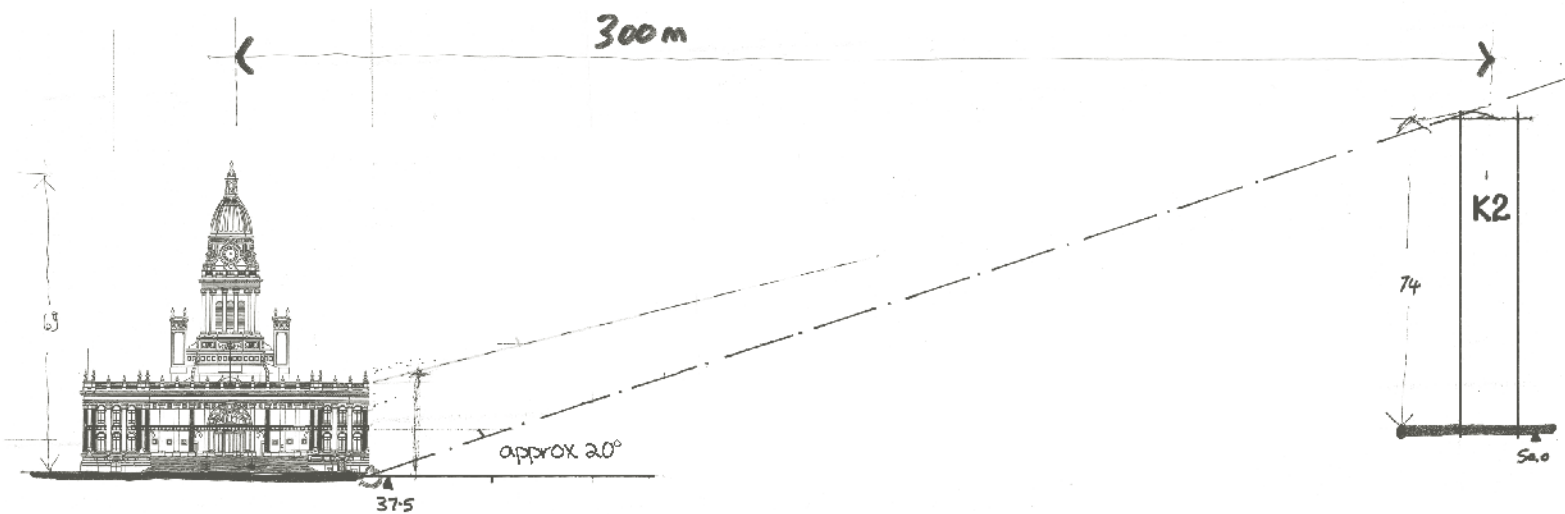
- 1** Leeds Town Hall and Victoria Square including The Garden of Rest
- 2** Leeds Parish Church of St. Peter, Corn Exchange and Leeds Market
- 3** St. John's Gardens and St. John's Church

**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

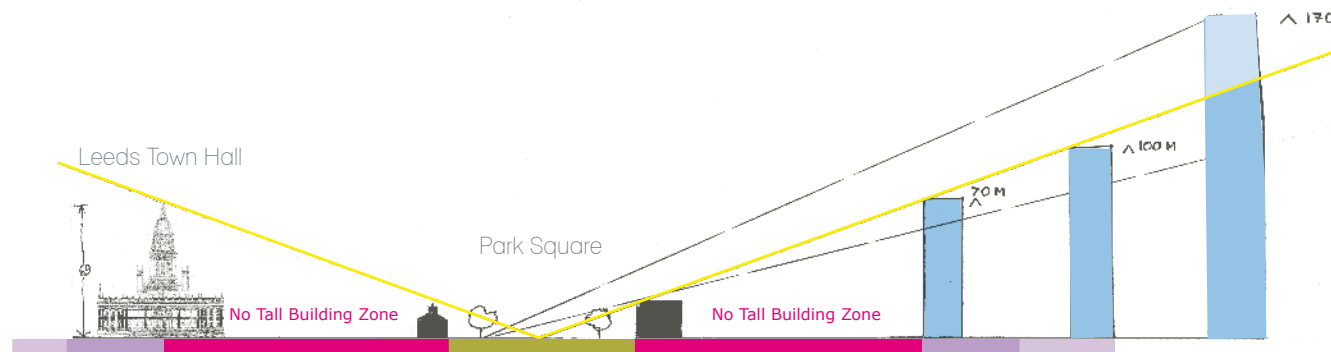


2 **Leeds Parish Church of St. Peter, Corn Exchange and Leeds Market**  
A collection of distinctive buildings and the streetscapes of Kirkgate and Cloth Hall Street where their settings and sky backgrounds could be visually harmed by the intrusion of new tall buildings

< 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

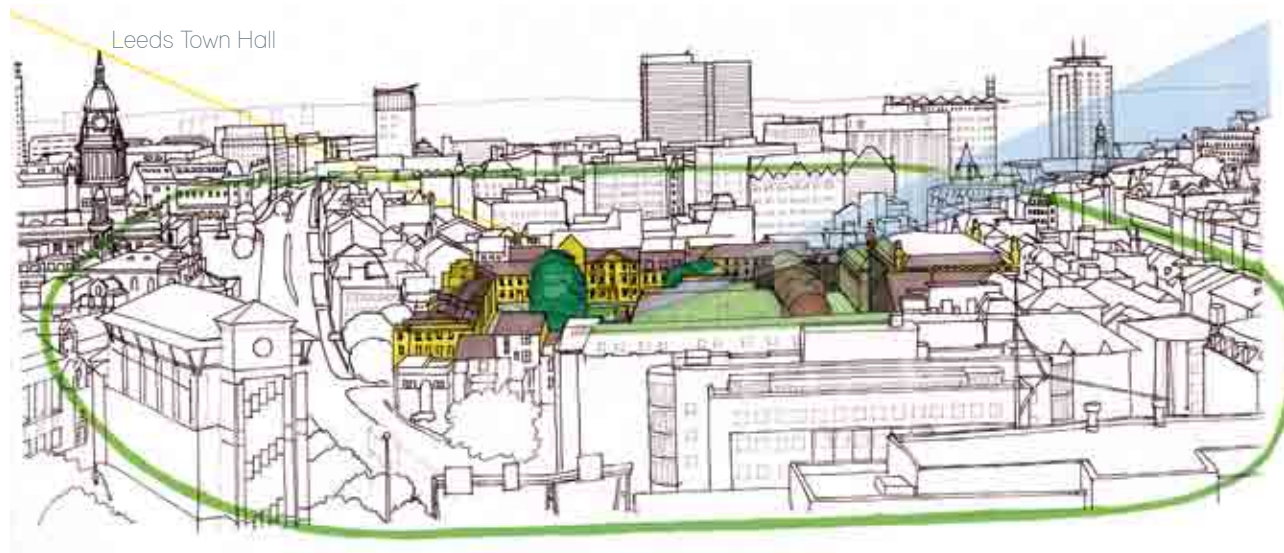
> Section indicates the role of Leeds Town Hall in setting the zone of sensitivity and the importance of graduation which in principle accepts tall buildings just beyond the zone. By setting maximum heights, which can increase further away from Park Square, tall buildings can be prevented from having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

#### 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



Frontages dominate



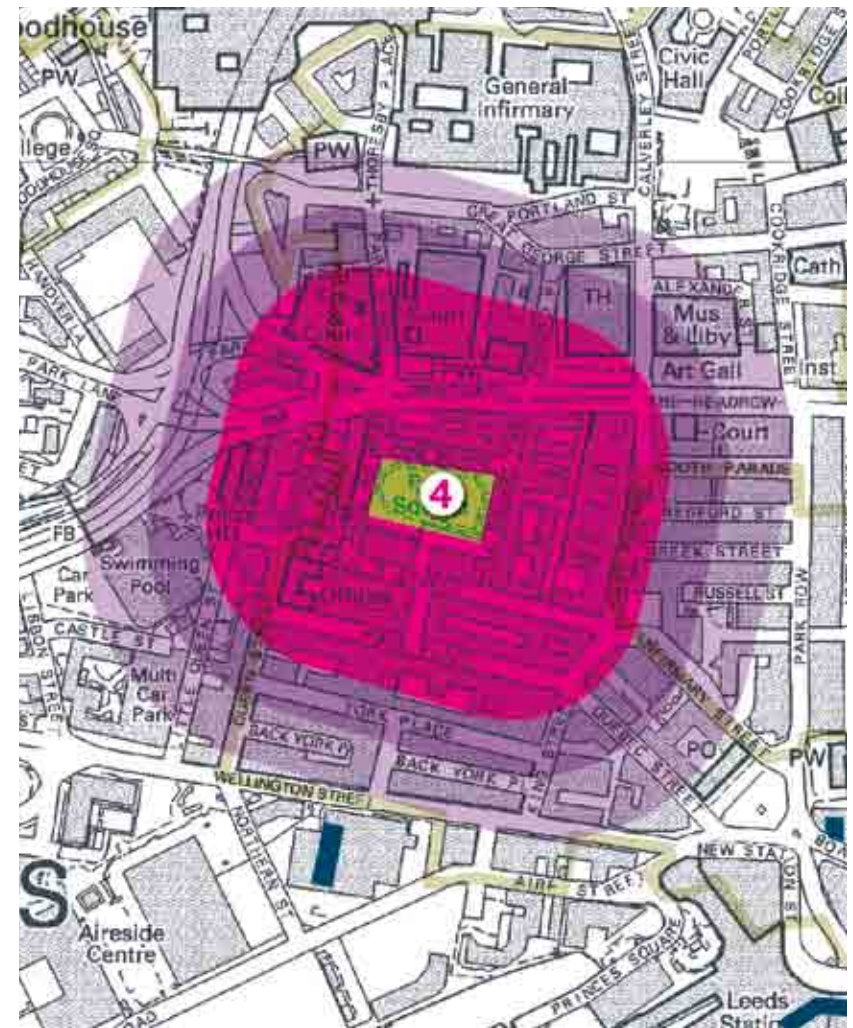
Park Square looking South,



Park Square looking South East

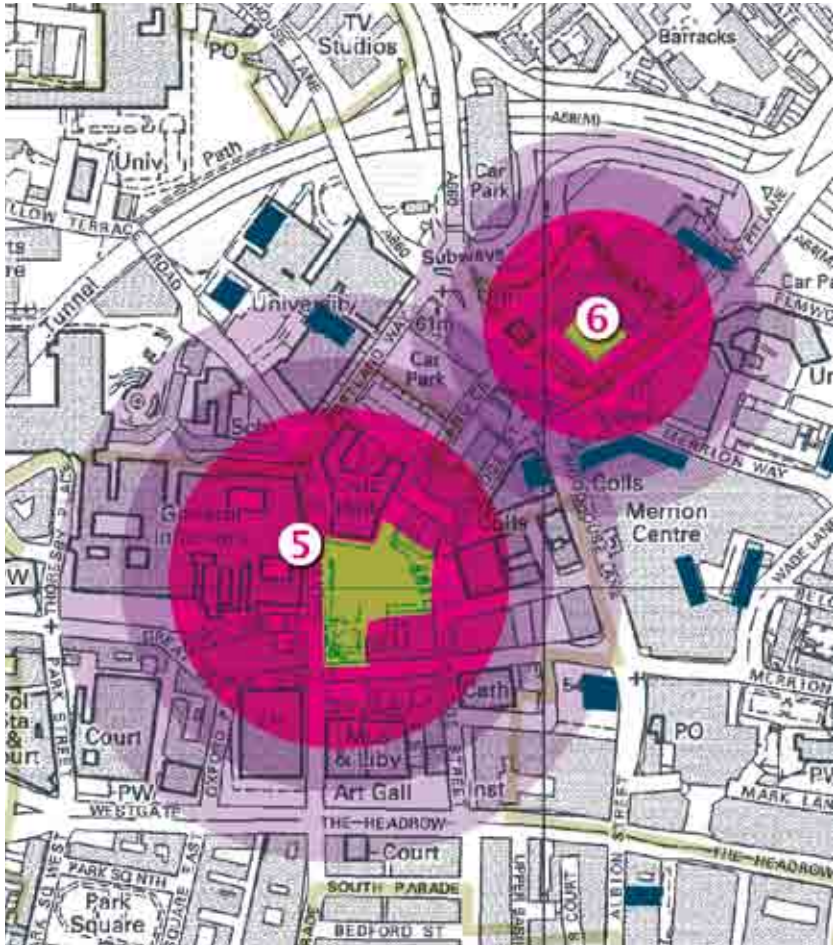


Built between 1788 and 1810 as a new high class estate containing merchants' houses. It has retained the character of the 18th Century square with its mature parkland setting. Well mannered frontages of porticoes and pediments with its general 2 to 3 storey scale has created a strong character and sense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



3. Strategic Issues - Protecting Views, Vistas and Settings

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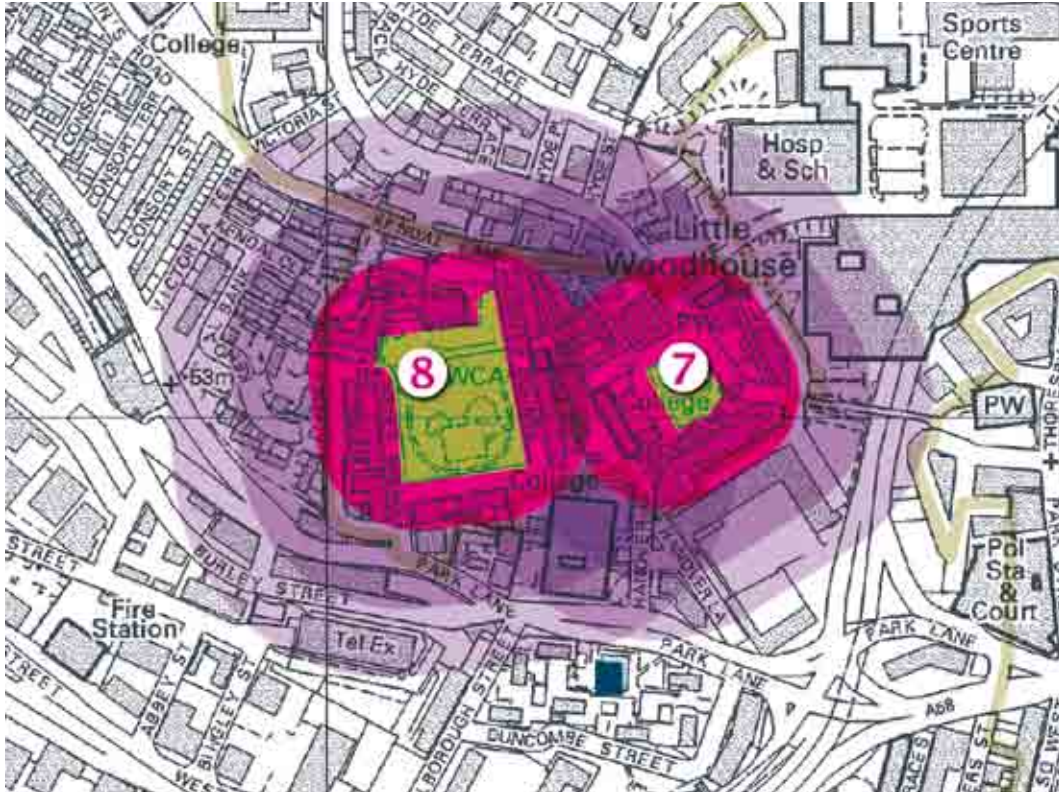


**< 5 Millennium Square**  
Recently created public realm offering a fine setting for important buildings of Leeds e.g. The Civic Hall (1933) with its 170 foot high twin spires and imposing frontage, and the Mechanics Institute, the Electric Press building. Extent of zone determined by nearest tall buildings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



## 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



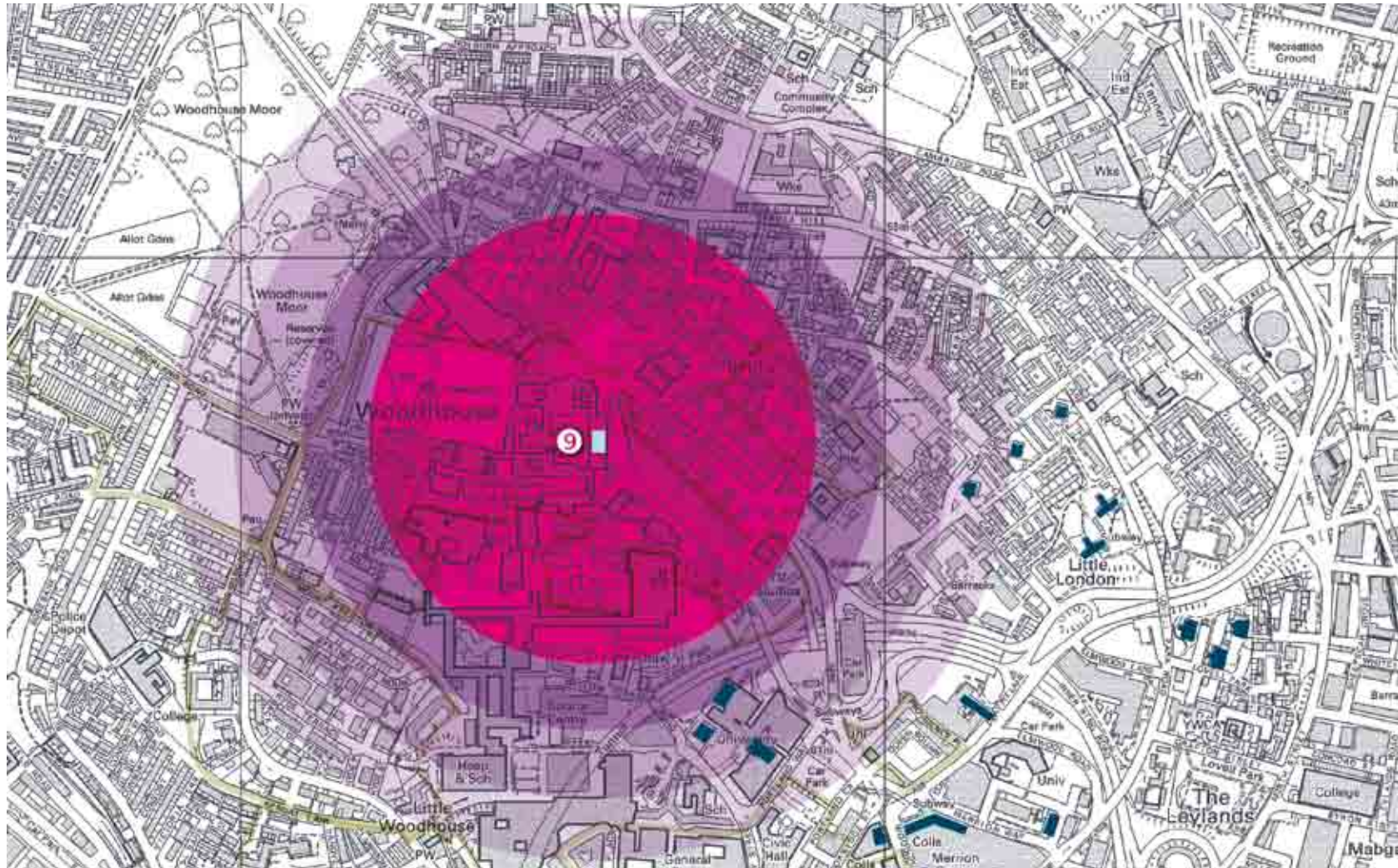
3. Strategic Issues - Protecting Views, Vistas and Settings



**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

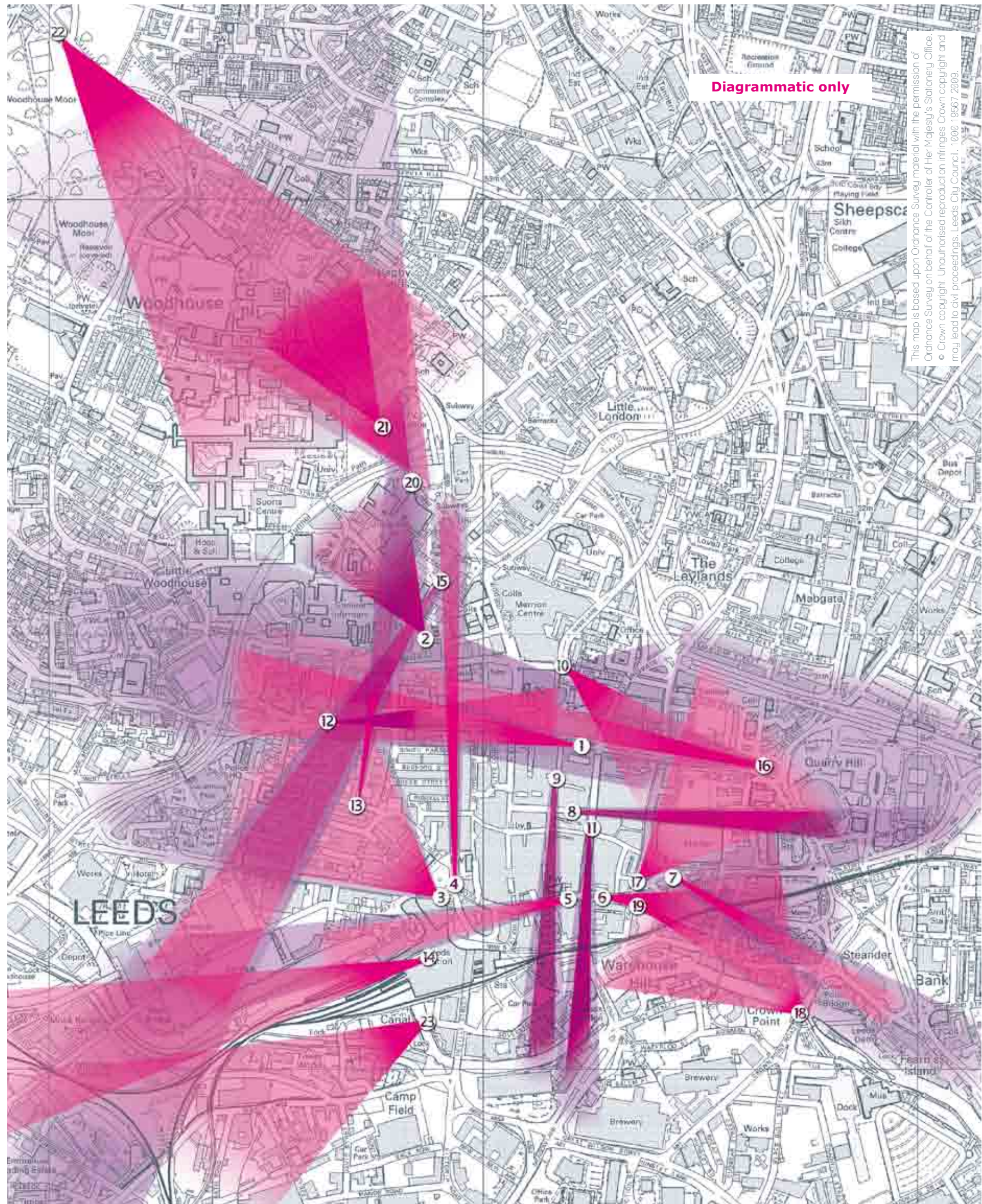


# **Constraint 2** **– Key Views** **Within The City**

- 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



- << **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 building at end of vistas**

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

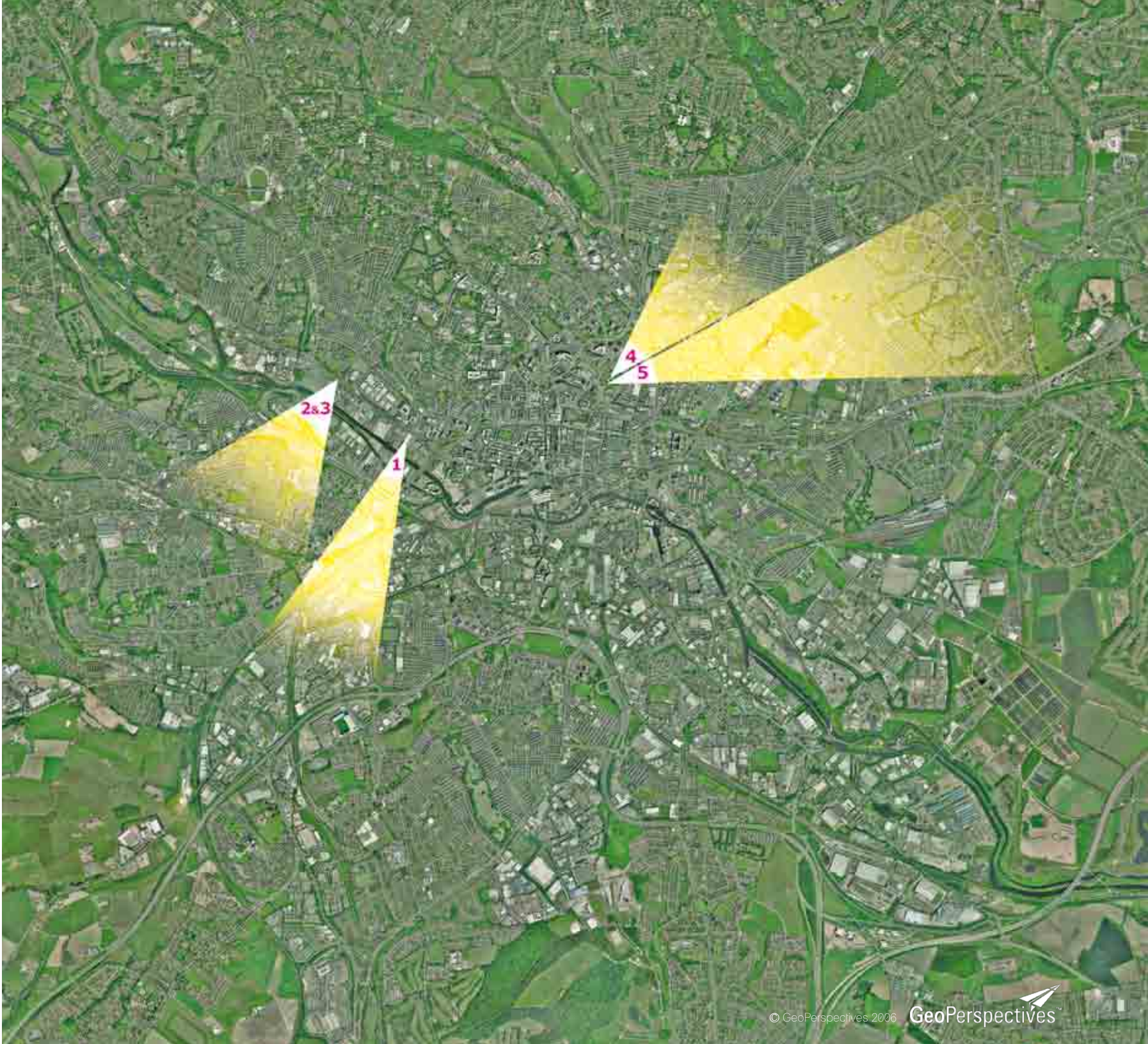


◀ **22 Woodhouse Lane / Hyde Park Corner - View of Parkinson Building**  
The Parkinson Tower is a distinctive landmark which contributes to the attractiveness of the vista. A new tall building within the sky background would destroy the view

◀ **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



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**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 Coltingley

**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 peppercorn 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

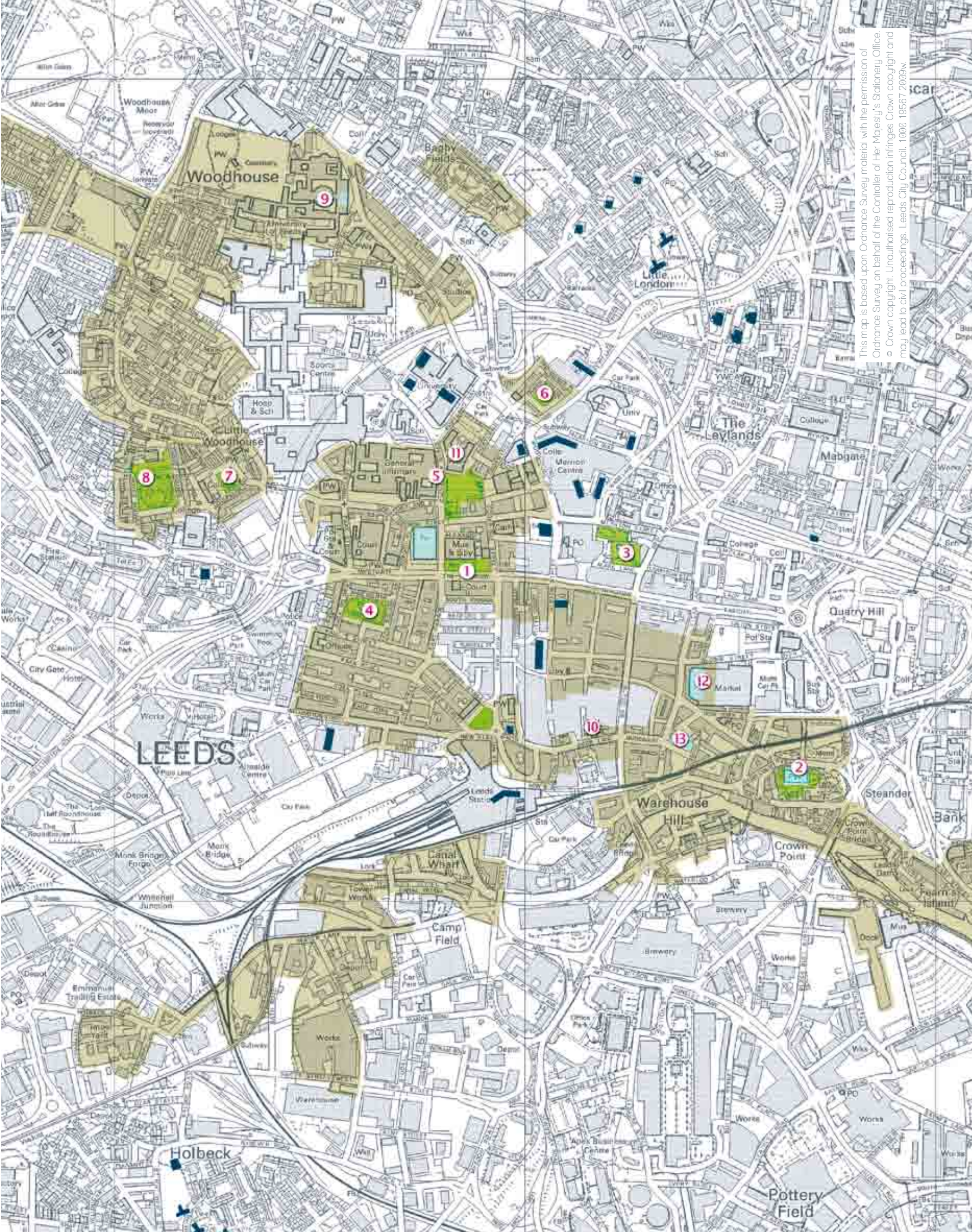
Extent of Conservation Area

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).
- 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.

- 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

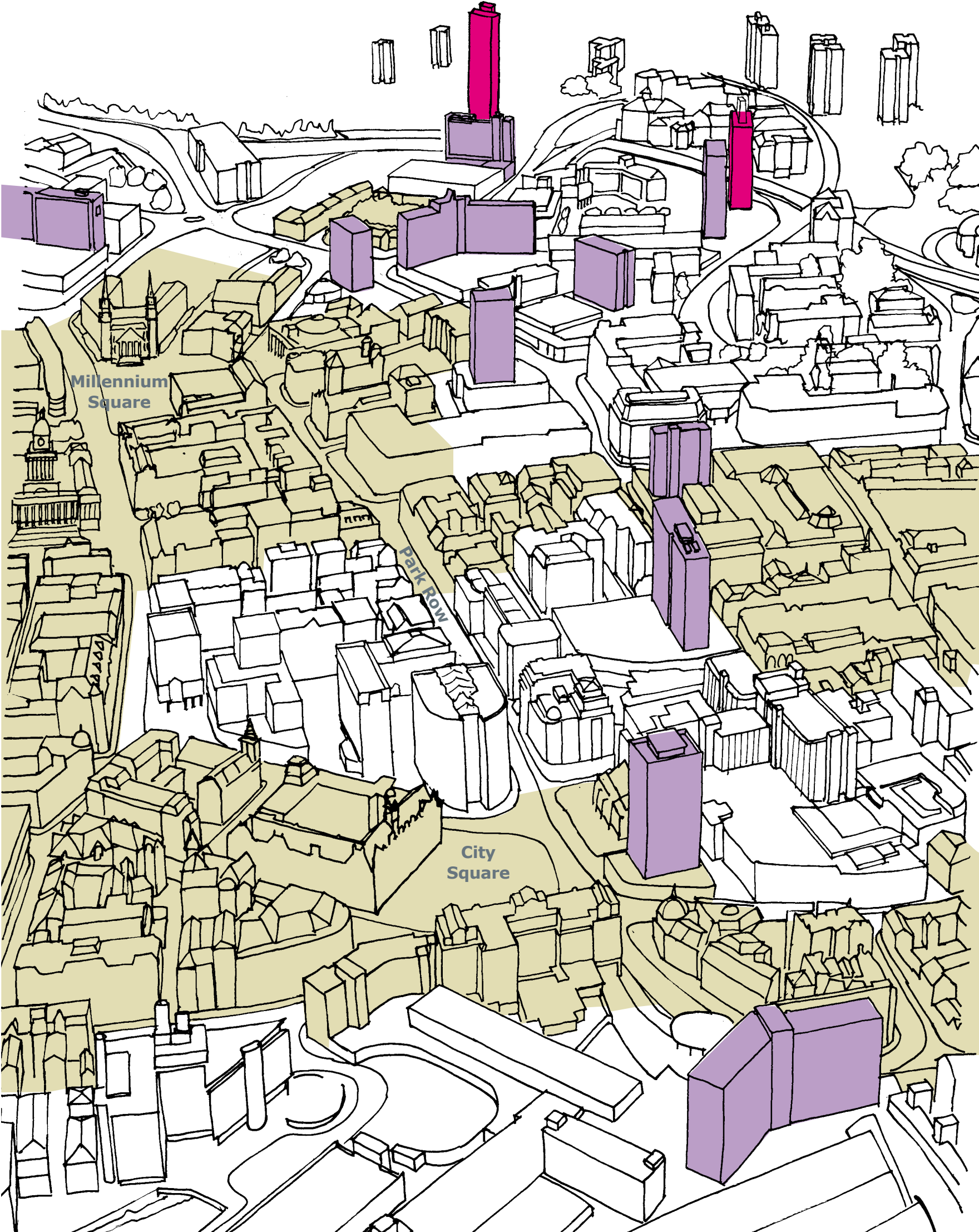
**UDP Policy CC5:**  
*All developments within the Conservation Area or immediate setting must be designed so as to preserve or enhance the existing character of the area. The heights of new buildings there should normally relate to those of surrounding buildings by being within one storey height of 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



## 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

### 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.**

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

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

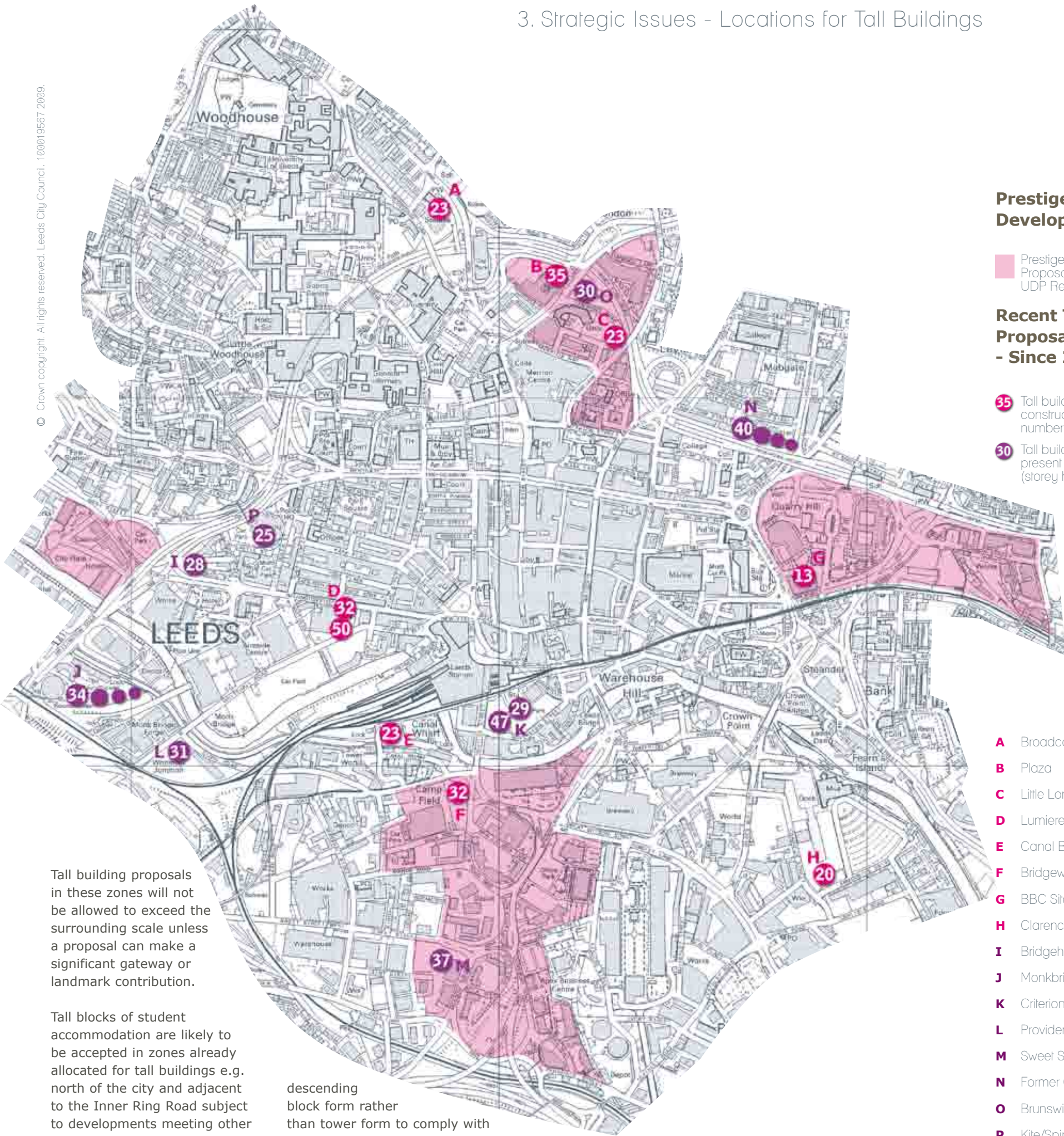
#### UDP Policy CC6:

*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*

### 3. Strategic Issues - Locations for Tall Buildings

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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.

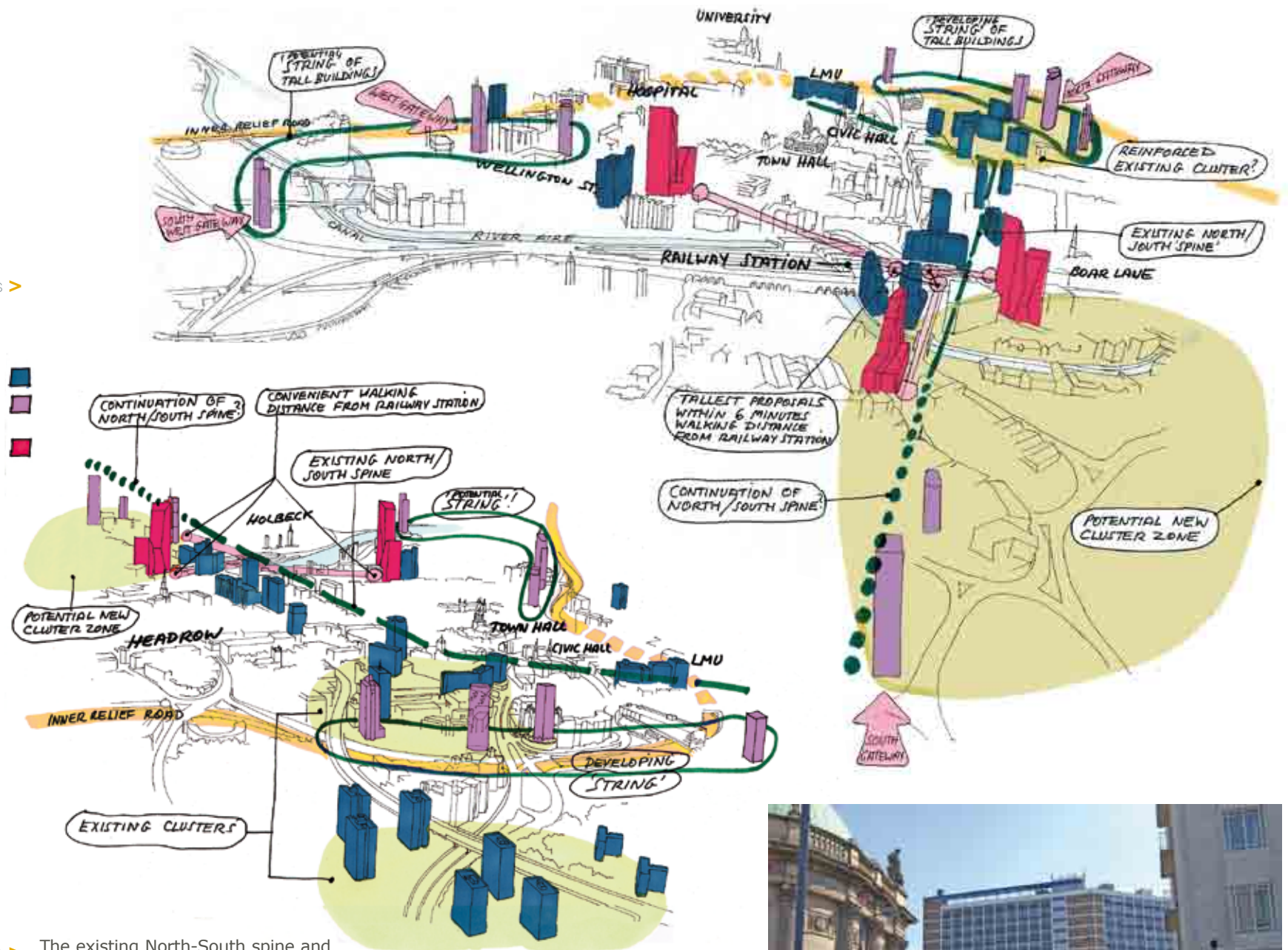
Tall blocks of student accommodation are likely to be accepted in zones already allocated for tall buildings e.g. north of the city and adjacent to the Inner Ring Road subject to developments meeting other planning criteria. Elsewhere, e.g. Burley Road area, tall buildings here are to be mainly in

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 peppercorping 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



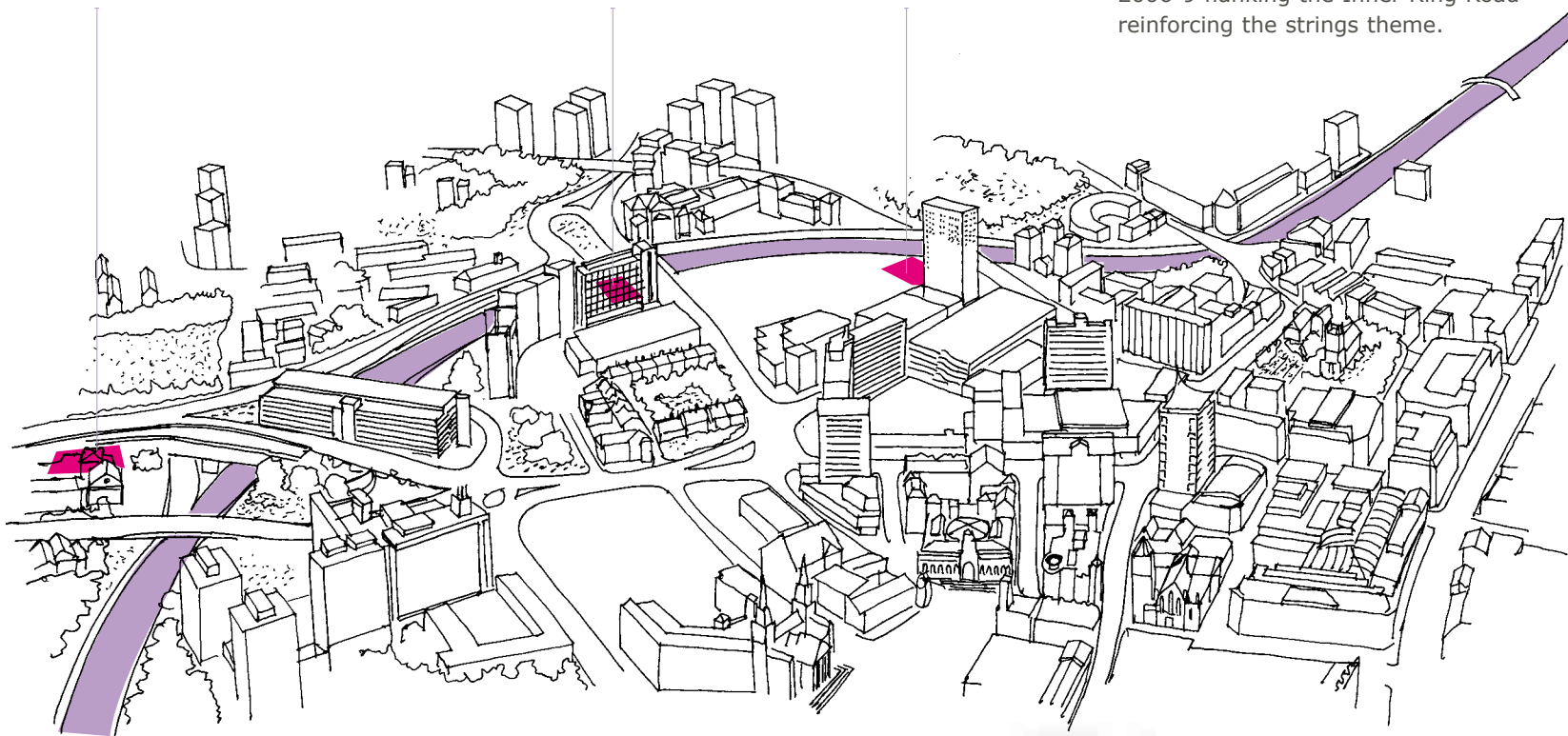
Student block on Clay Pit Lane



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.



#### Existing Cluster Theme Development

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



< View from Eastern approach to the city

> View from Sheepscar



< 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

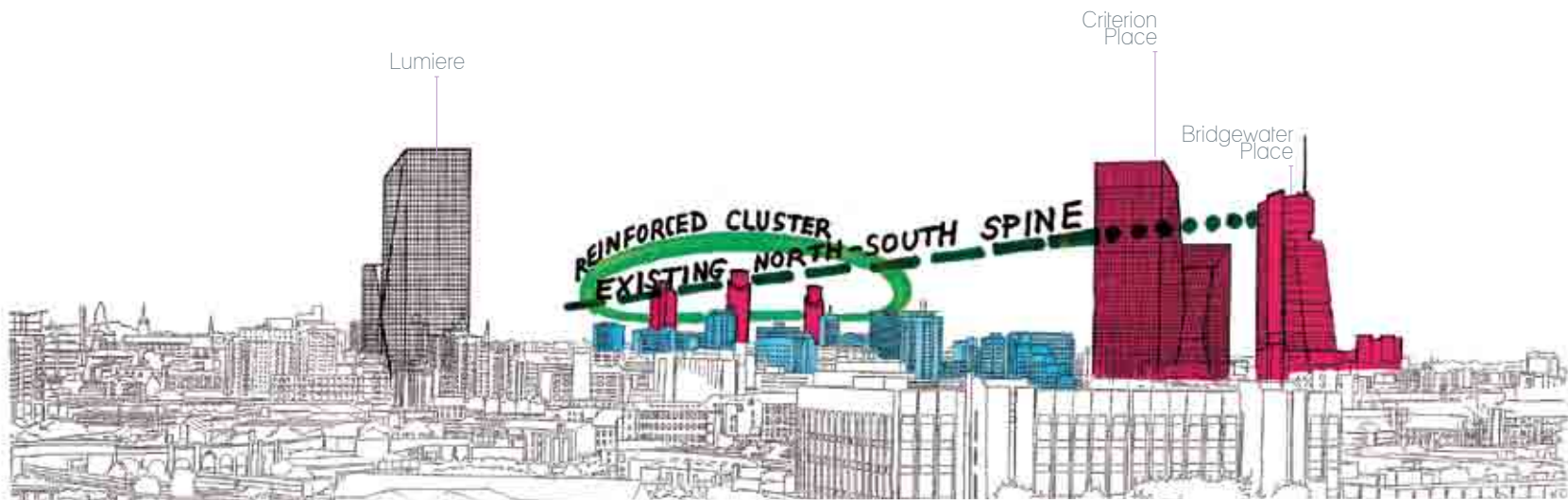
A more dense grouping > of tall buildings in **Central Toronto** create a different skyline

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.

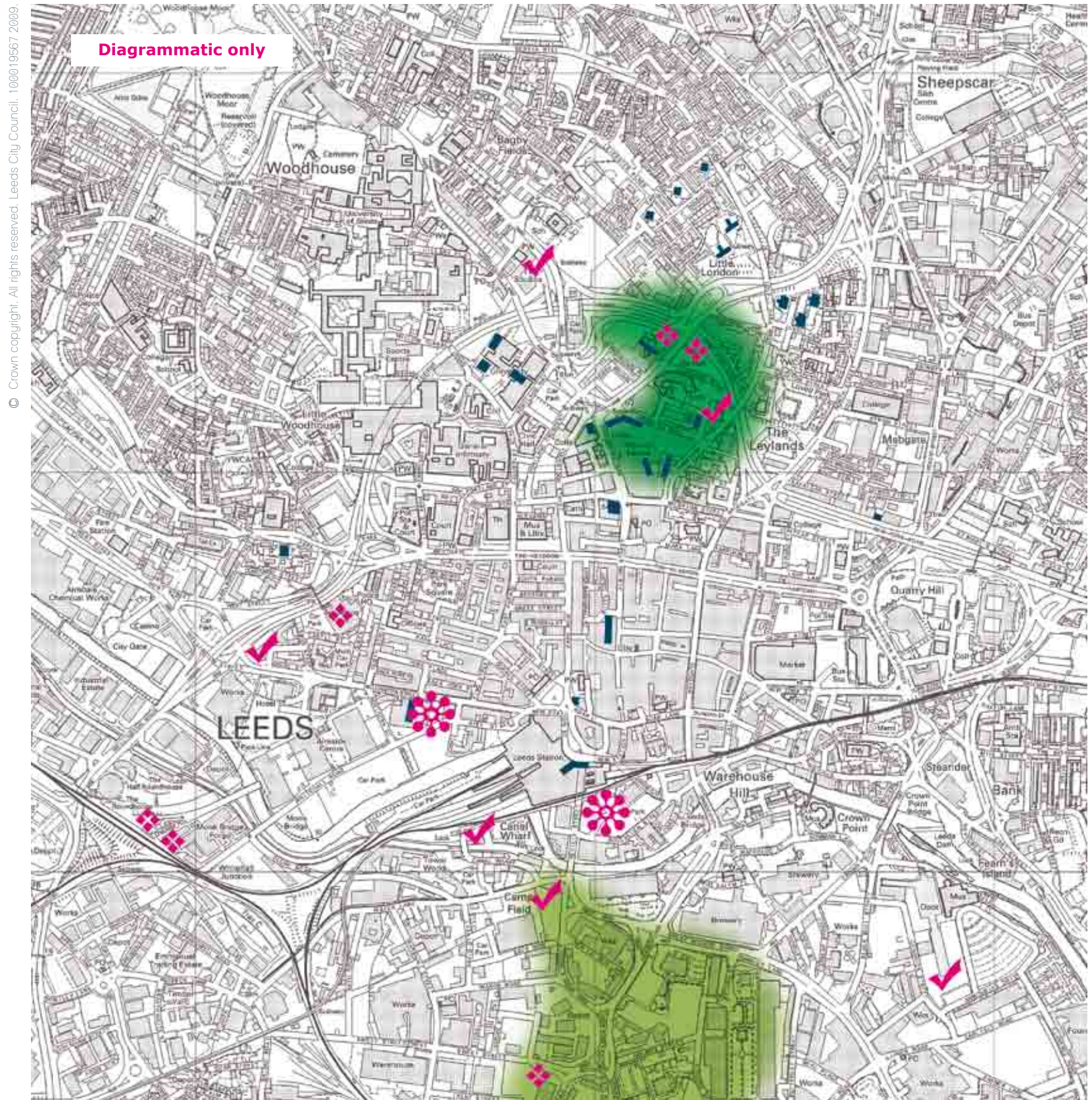
Traffic which clusters generate and attract can be taken off the network before it reaches the already congested city centre.



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

## 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 Keotter 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



#### 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

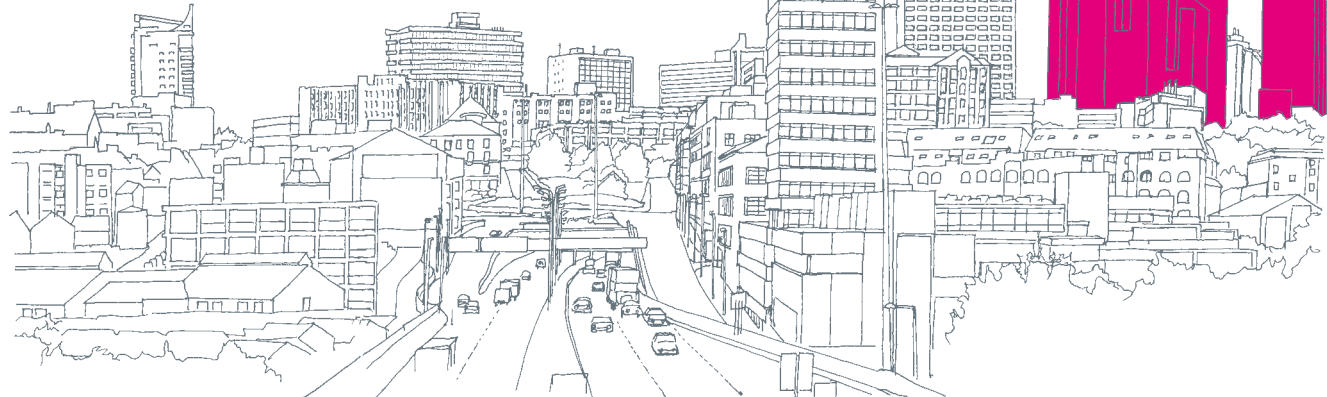
##### Clay Pit Lane / Elmwood Road

- 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 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



▲ 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

### 3. Strategic Issues - Movement and Connections

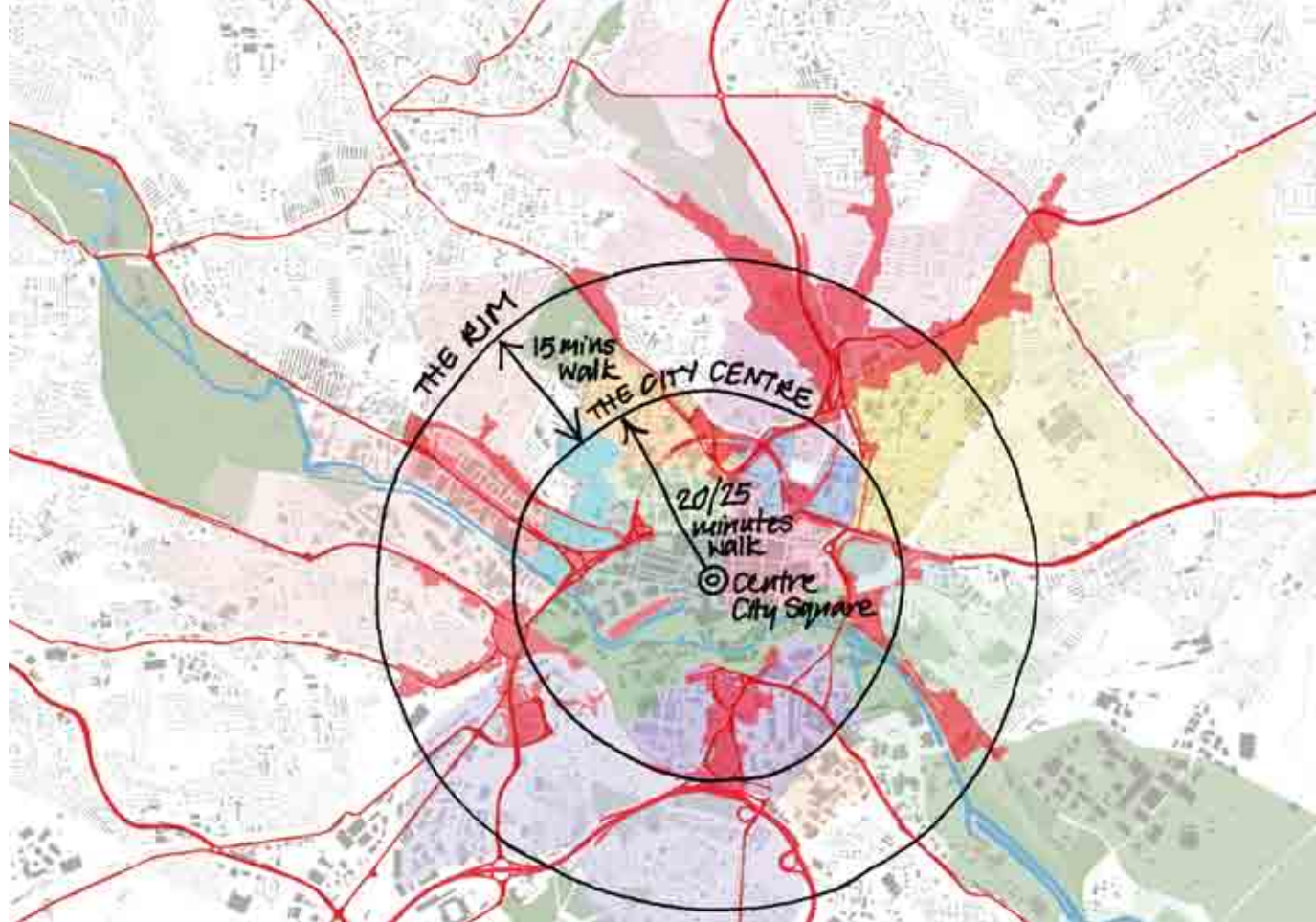
Map show walking times  
from City Square and the  
relationship to the 'rim'

## Movement and Connections

The occupation and activities associated with tall buildings – particularly office towers, generate a number of trips in a focused area which could create new pressures on an already congested and overcrowded road and transport system and parking facilities.

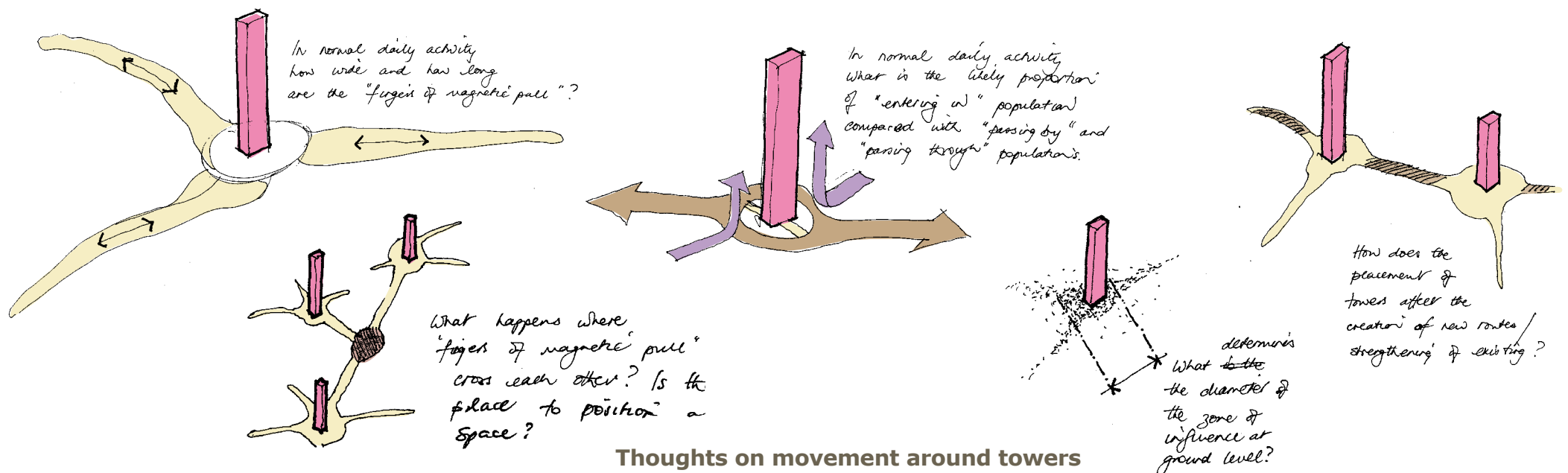
Tall buildings can act as catalysts for activity around them, generating new uses for adjacent spaces and buildings. They are strong drivers of infrastructure capacity and can also become part of the local spatial framework and help identify, reinforce and enrich it.

Applicants will need to investigate the likely travel behaviour of users and assess whether their application would result in the existing transport system being heavily loaded or overloaded.



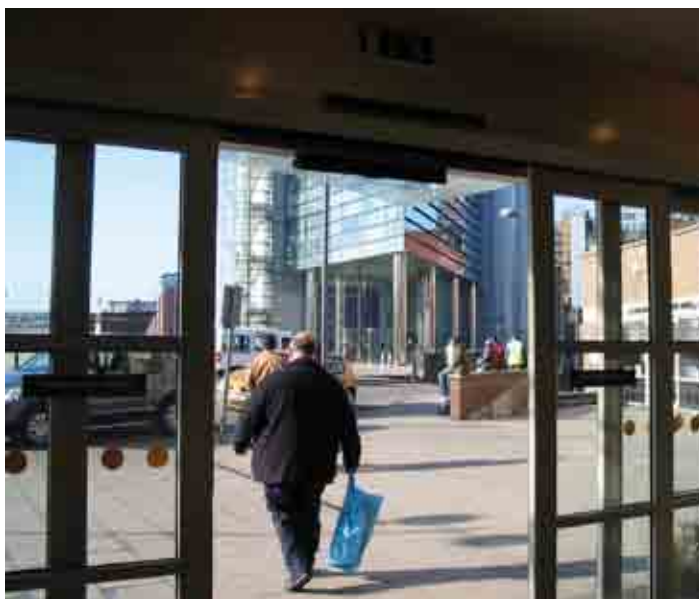
- Applicants will be expected to submit a travel plan accompanied by a transport assessment – particularly travel behaviour to and from a building during peak hours. It is advised to refer also to the UDP and liaise with the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority.
- Applicants and designers should ensure easy access by non car modes of travel – walking, cycling, public transport.
- Applicants and their Contractors will also be expected to submit their proposals regarding construction traffic activity and limiting its impact on the local infrastructure.
- Applicants/developers will need to pay the full costs of relocating bus stops during construction and back to their original position.
- Applicants will need to refer to Leeds City Council Public Transport Improvements and Developer Contributions SPD and Travel Plan SPD.

The Council desires high density development near to major transport routes and interchanges. Developers may be requested to fund new infrastructure and other local transport and parking objectives (see Public Transport Improvements and Developer Contributions - Supplementary Planning Document August 2008).



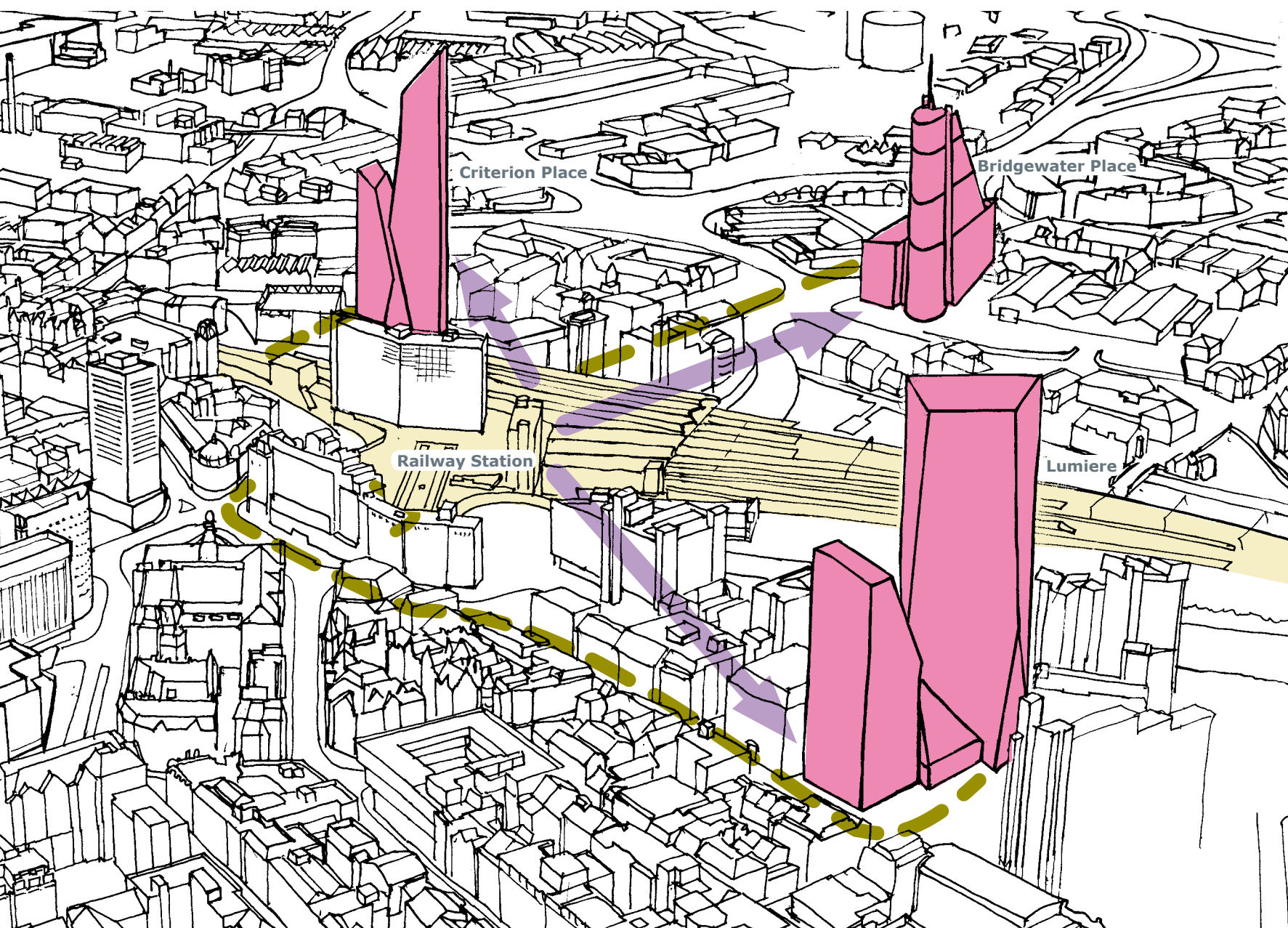
### Thoughts on movement around towers

### 3. Strategic Issues - Movement and Connections



<+ The **Leeds Railway Station**  
 <+ and **Princes Exchange**  
 buildings point their entrances/  
 exits at each other emphasising  
 the important link between tall  
 buildings/blocks and transport

< Existing and proposed Leeds  
 towers (between 32 and 50  
 storeys) positioned within 6-10  
 minutes walk of Leeds Railway  
 Station (Criterion Place was  
 shelved July 2008)



**UDP Policy T2:**  
*New development should normally  
 i) be served adequately by existing  
 or programmed highways or by  
 improvements to the highways network  
 which are funded by the developer  
 via planning conditions on planning  
 permissions or planning obligations,  
 and will not create or materially add  
 to problems of safety, environment or  
 efficiency on the highway network; and  
 ii) be capable of being adequately served  
 by public transport and taxi services  
 and should ensure that necessary  
 infrastructure for new services is  
 included in the development; and  
 iii) make adequate provision for easy,  
 safe and secure cycle use and parking;  
 and iv) additionally in the case of  
 residential development, be within  
 convenient walking distance of local  
 facilities and does not create problems  
 of personable accessibility.*

**UDP Policy CC11:**  
*The city council will assess the role of  
 city centre streets and implement further  
 schemes to create more and enhance  
 existing pedestrianised corridors and  
 to upgrade the street environment  
 generally. These schemes will respect  
 the historic character of the city centre,  
 its traditional paving material and  
 historic street settings where dominant.*

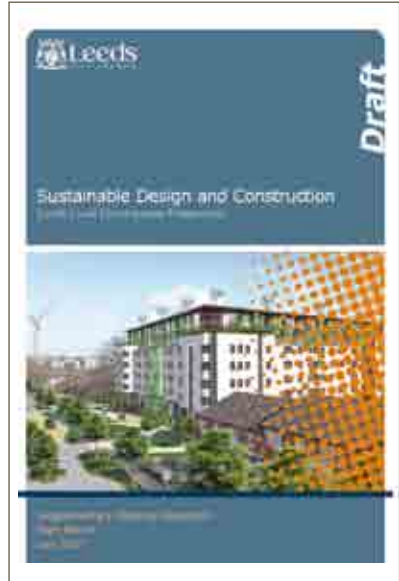
## Sustainability and Climate Change

Tall Buildings should aim to be carbon neutral if not zero carbon (without offsetting)

Cartwright & Pickard Architects project for the living in the city competition design and orientation is used to capture solar heat and light

**UDP Policy BD5A:**  
The design of all development should maximise opportunities to conserve energy and water resources and use materials appropriate to these aims.

Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (revised version to be published shortly) to be read in conjunction with this guide



Energy conservation and sensitivity to environmental issues are now primary concerns. Tall buildings present opportunities for implementing sustainable principles and practices. Well designed tall buildings can be more sustainable than other buildings because more efficient use of limited land together with recent technological advances can make tall buildings environmentally sustainable and operational.

### Location

Available land in prestigious locations and brownfield sites will attract tall buildings and assist in maintaining a compact city, efficient land take and sparing other sites from development. It is also important that tall buildings are located close to good public transport. Clusters of tall buildings sited around public transport nodes (known as the plugs and sockets principle) will improve the efficiency and sustainability of public transport as well as reducing car journeys and congestion.

### Orientation on plan

Individual tall buildings can be ideally suited to capturing wind, heat and light energy from the sun and the aim should be to create low energy footprints.

### Relationship with other tall buildings

Second and third towers are always in the shadow of the original towers and this could have adverse affects if not considered at the outset.



### Building shape / wind effect

In principle buildings with sharp corners are not as aerodynamically efficient as those with rounded corners or round footprints. Shallow floor plans are easier to sustain.

Good design can avoid adverse wind conditions for pedestrians but it can also exploit vortex wind forces to facilitate the use of helical wind turbines which can generate electricity. Stack effects can exhaust stale air.

Appropriate mitigation in the form of wind diffusers, resilient trees, podium buildings, large canopies and appropriate building massing should be considered to prevent excessive wind speeds. Design for

wind mitigation is a specialist area and advice should be sought from experienced practitioners.

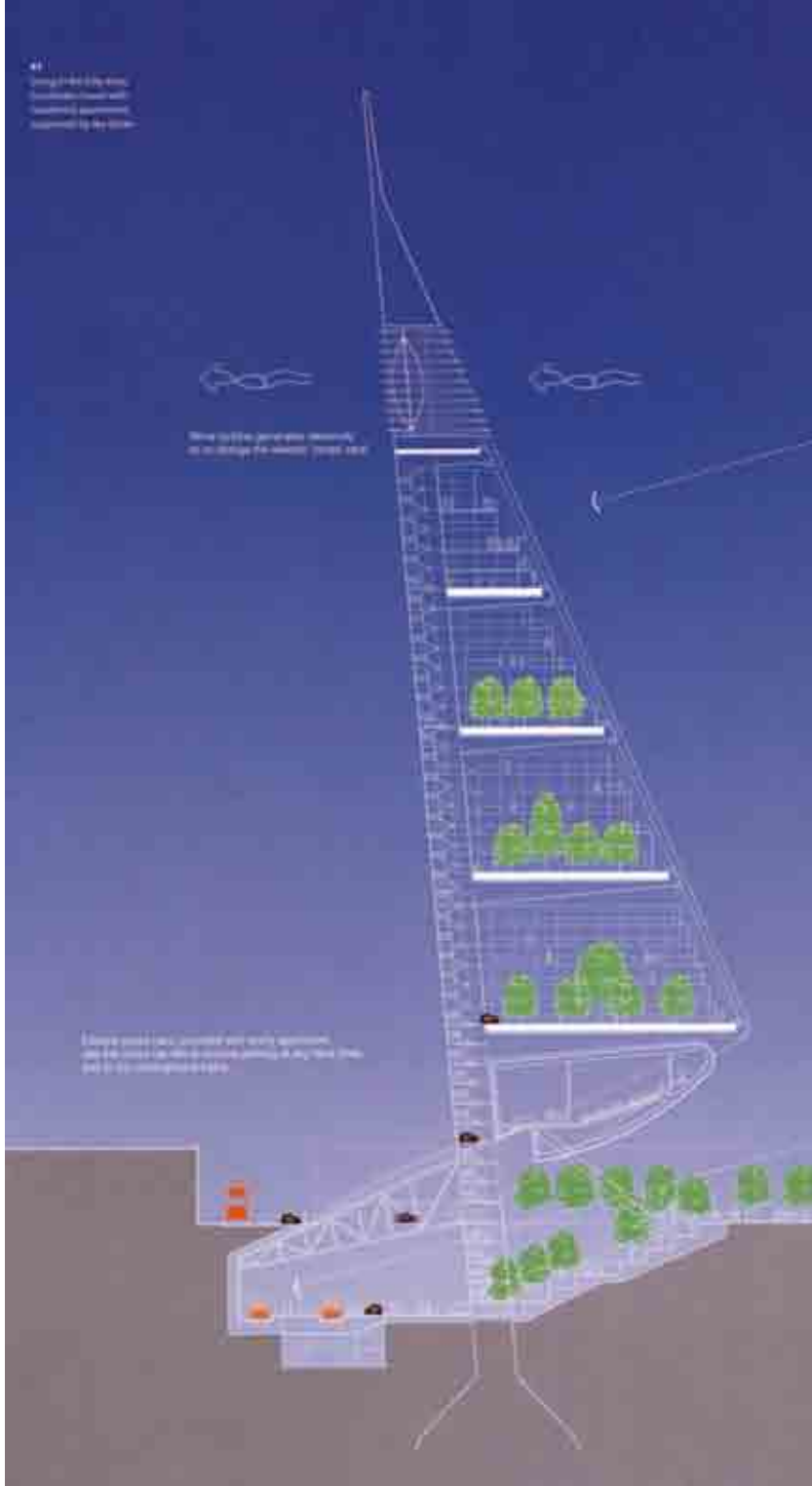
### Construction and materials

New high rise construction techniques offer economies of scale and efficient use of land thus presenting opportunities for implementing sustainable construction practices. The aim should be to make maximum use of sunshine, daylight and natural forces to reduce the use of non-renewable energy and conserve our natural resources.

- Façade engineering – use of photovoltaic panels can generate electricity from solar power and influence architectural design.

Relationship of all building plan forms with the resistance to wind forces





- Multiple skin facades provide high transparency with energy conservation. They have many benefits in reducing direct solar radiation and subsequent heat gain as well as increasing thermal and sound insulation. They increase the practical possibilities for natural ventilation and improve daylight whilst reducing artificial light requirements. Individual occupant comfort and control become a reality.
- Some designers argue that in view of recent changes to the building regulations e.g. Part L, there is no justification for 100% glass skins to

buildings without resorting to triple glazing systems. Alternatives to glass can offer good thermal insulation and a different aesthetic. These should be pursued with regard to policies on sustainable development and local and national legislation (Agenda 21 and Local Government Act 2000). Inefficient materials and those from an unsustainable source should be avoided notwithstanding their attractiveness.

### Existing and Future Climate Risks

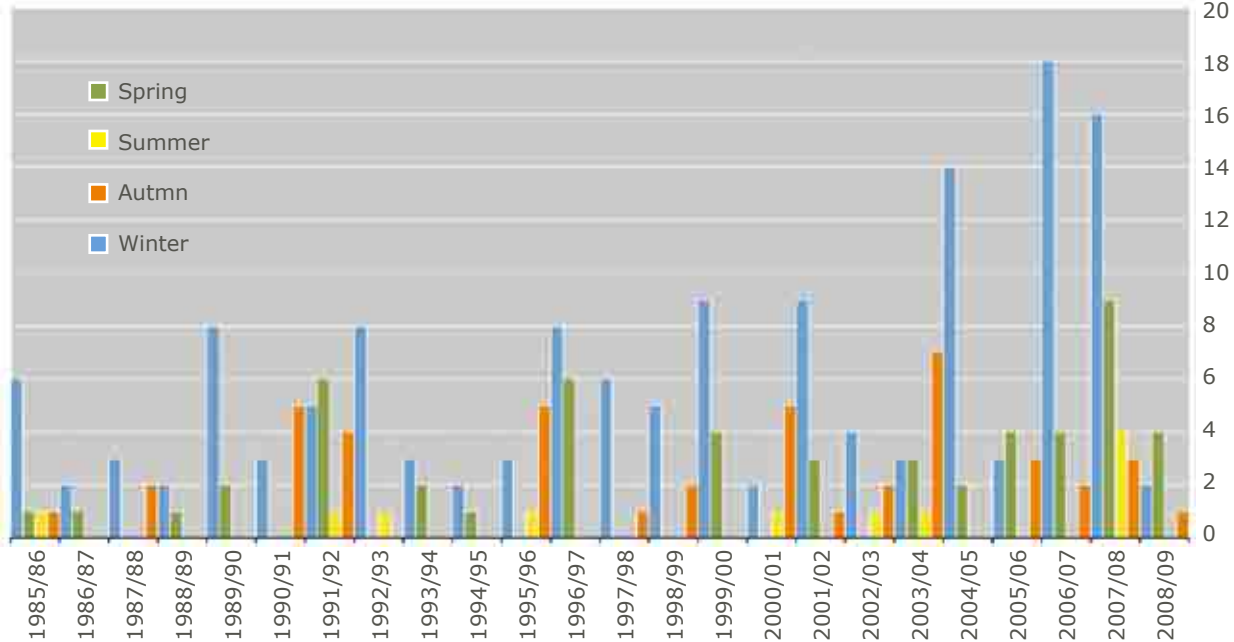
A Local Climate Impacts Profile (LCIP) has recent been conducted for Leeds. This report has identified a significant weather related hazards experienced in Leeds district between 2002-2008.

This seven year period has shown Leeds to be vulnerable to wind damage. Since 1985 Leeds has recorded a general increase in frequency of gales (definition of a gale, is mean wind speed >39mph for 10 minutes, typical gusts >60mph) The Graph indicates the number of seasonal gales recorded by LCC Met Station located in Central Leeds. Gales are most frequent during the winter, but can be experienced during all seasons.

The risk of gales in Leeds is likely to be accentuated by:

- Turbulent flow caused by the Pennines in a generally westerly airflow
- Funneling of West/West North West winds blowing through the Aire and Wharfe Valley
- Severe turbulence caused by tall buildings within an urban topography

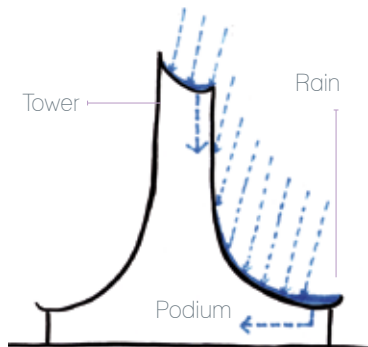
Number of Gales by Season



Bioclimatic Tower with residential apartments supported by sky decks - Cartwright Pickard Architects

### 3. Strategic Issues - Sustainability and Climate Change

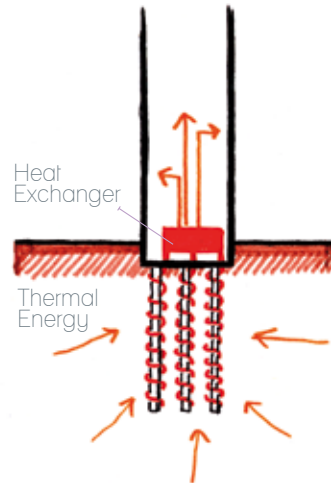
Future form for tall buildings to collect rainwater run-off based on an idea from Make Architects



Tall building pile foundations can facilitate geothermal pipework

#### Design for flexible use

A demand on a building changes throughout its life with occupiers possibly changing 6 to 7 times over a 50 year period. It is important that internal design does not compromise future use and does not lead to an increase in energy use and consumption when changes in occupancy occur.



#### New concepts

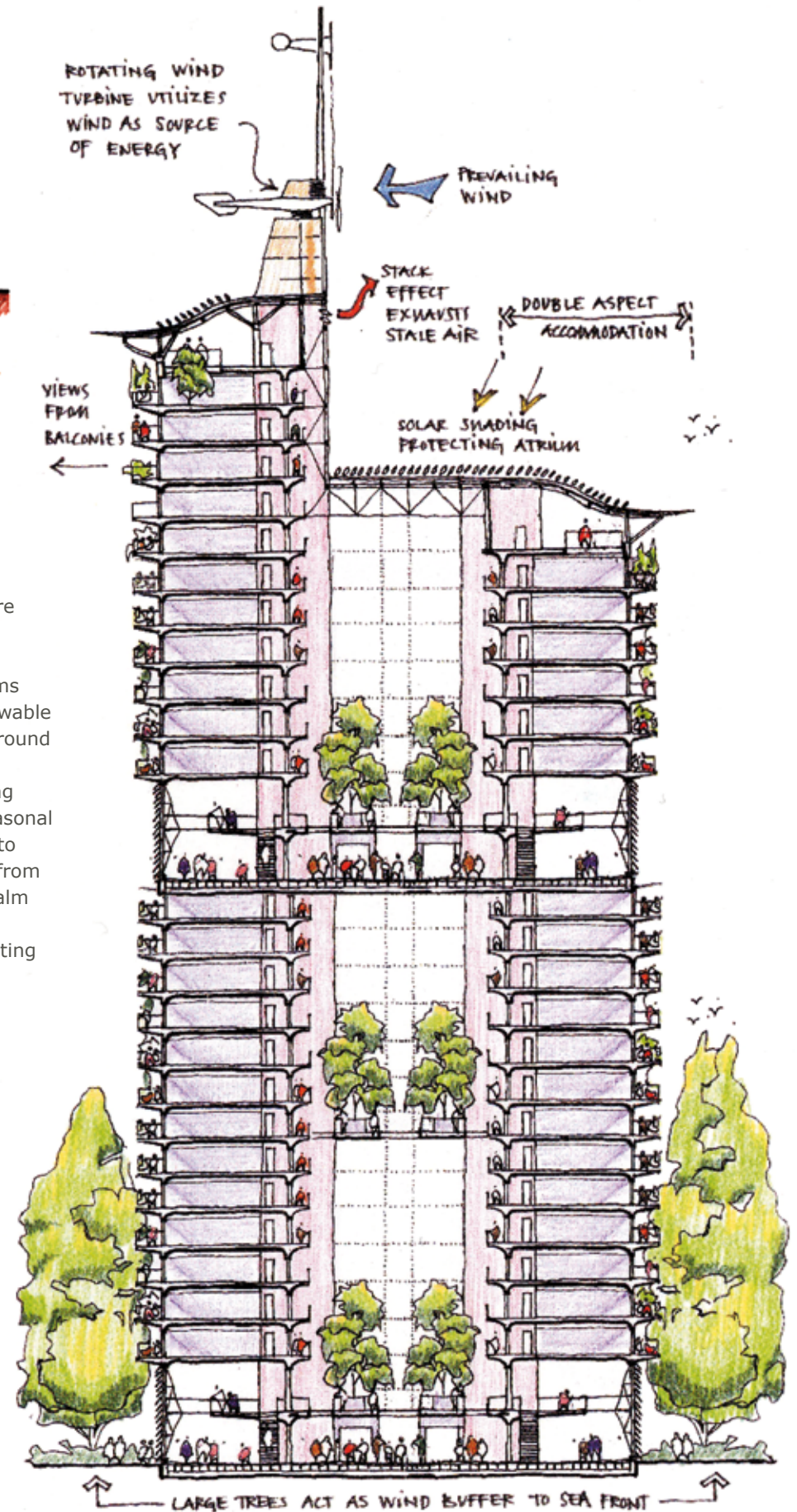
Tall buildings becoming more 'intelligent buildings' with increased use of integrated energy management systems combined with 'green' renewable energy devices and underground thermal energy storage for heating and cooling. Building facades becoming more seasonal and directional responding to changing climate. Benefits from 'sky gardens' and public realm at high levels, ground floor functions and uses contributing to city life.

Bioclimatic Tower - Cartwright Pickard Architects

#### Conservation and Waste

Water conservation and waste management should be employed. Chamfered tops and creating widening 'skirts' to buildings could catch rainwater for use.

Photovoltaic panels at Park Lane College, Leeds - Allen Todd Architects



### 3. Strategic Issues - Sustainability and Climate Change



Wind turbines will be considered as tall buildings even if erected on low rise structures

< Roof windmill, Manchester.  
Terry Farrell Architects



#### Interference

Tall buildings and wind turbines can cause severe interference and downgrade the quality of reception to televisions, radios and mobiles. Applicants will need to consult with 'Arqiva' (delivering the governments's Digital Switch Over project) for:

- Wind turbines with blade tip heights that exceed 15 metres
- Where an Environmental Statement is required for any structure exceeding 15 metres in height to ensure that scoping of the EIA includes consideration of any potential impact on the broadcast networks.

< Wind turbine, Haworth,  
West Yorkshire



< Roof turbines erected  
on Civic Centre,  
Huddersfield

CCUDS map indentifying the north/south spine that provides much of the Leeds skyline

Skylines

UDP Policy SA1:  
The design and siting of new buildings should complement and, where possible, enhance existing vistas, skylines and landmarks.

The intention is to develop a distinctive silhouette for Leeds. It is felt that the present skyline could be broken dramatically with a restricted number of taller iconic buildings which will create a new positive image and 'sculpture' a new skyline. They will distract the viewer away from the existing collection of tall buildings which themselves will become 'background' buildings.

Redirection and restraint is required with tall buildings so that the city can develop as part of a meaningful composition and skyline especially when seen from a distance. Built form as a manifestation of land values is not enough and has potential dangers. This document aims to provide that direction and control as a coherent strategy.



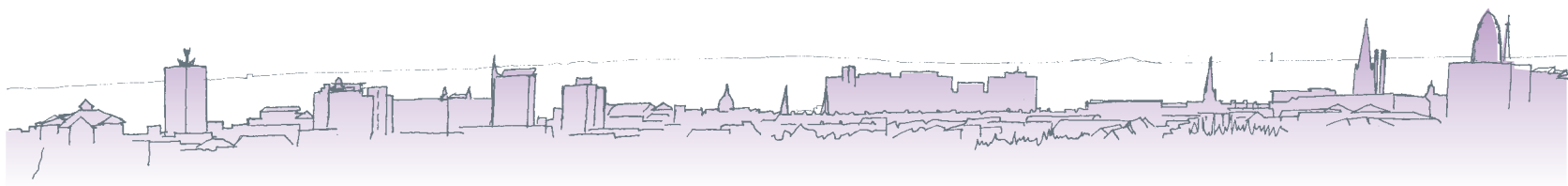
Existing skyline from Woodhouse Lane car park looking northwest showing the prominence of the Parkinson Tower



Existing skyline from top of Leeds General Infirmary, Jubilee Wing looking southwest showing the current prominence of the Town Hall tower



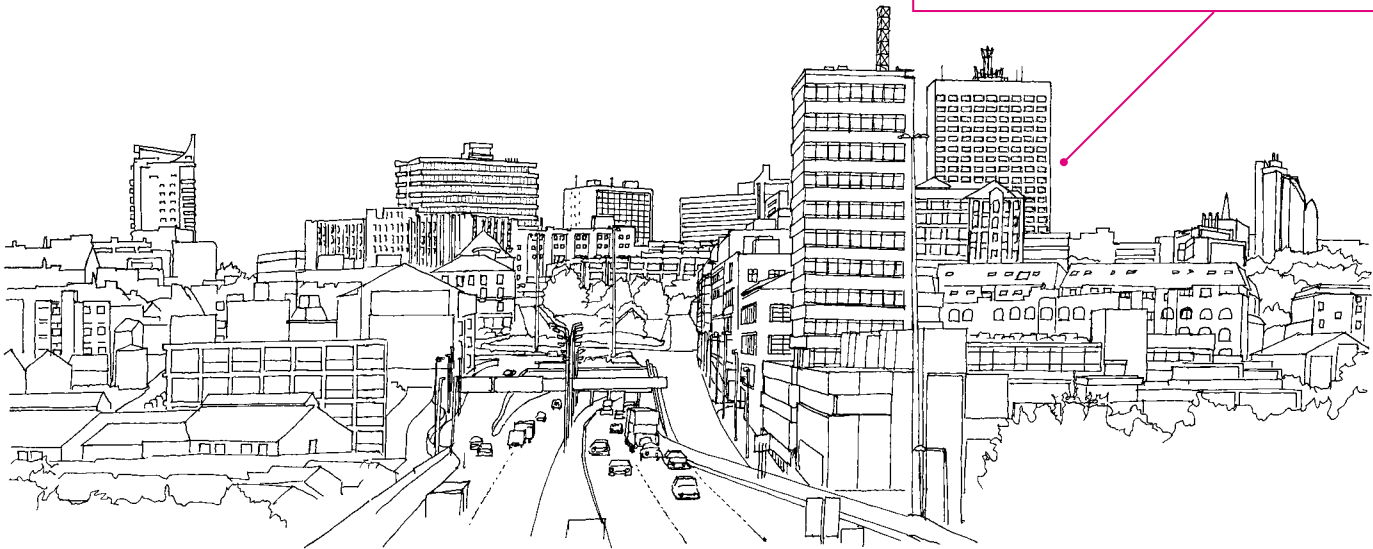
3. Strategic Issues - Skylines



< City skyline / silhouette from Scott Hall Road area to the north of the city. Historic structures appear more clear than modern buildings because of their more elaborate form, 2004



< City skyline / silhouette from York Road, East of the city. Indicating existing cluster of tall buildings near the Merriion Centre, 2004



< Photograph of city skyline / silhouette from York Road 2008

New tall buldings are visually reinforcing the existing Merriion cluster

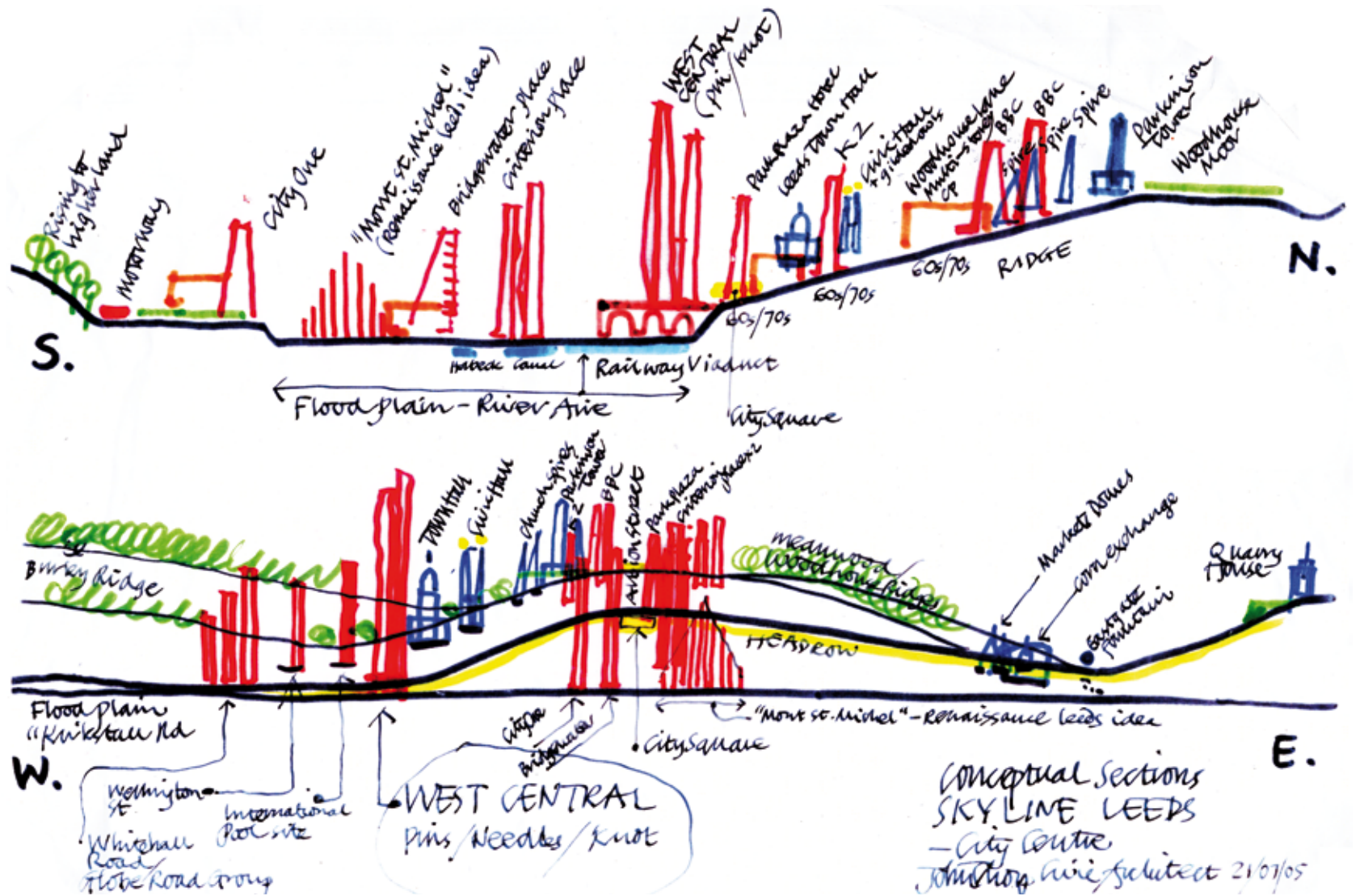
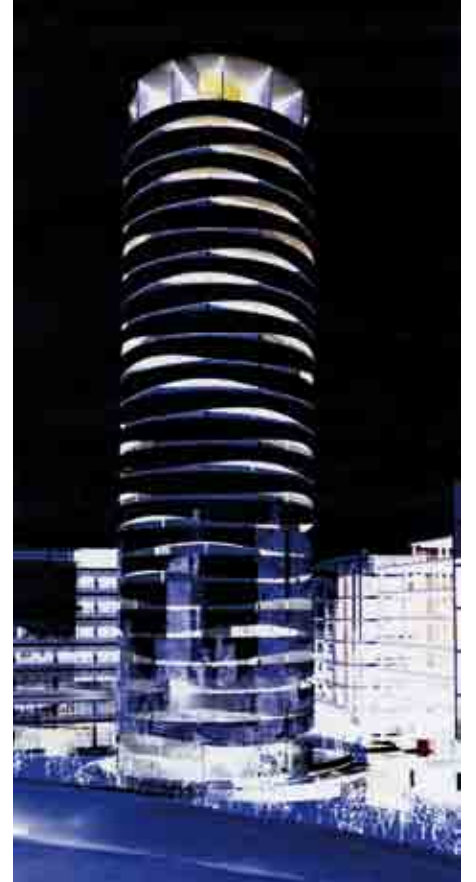
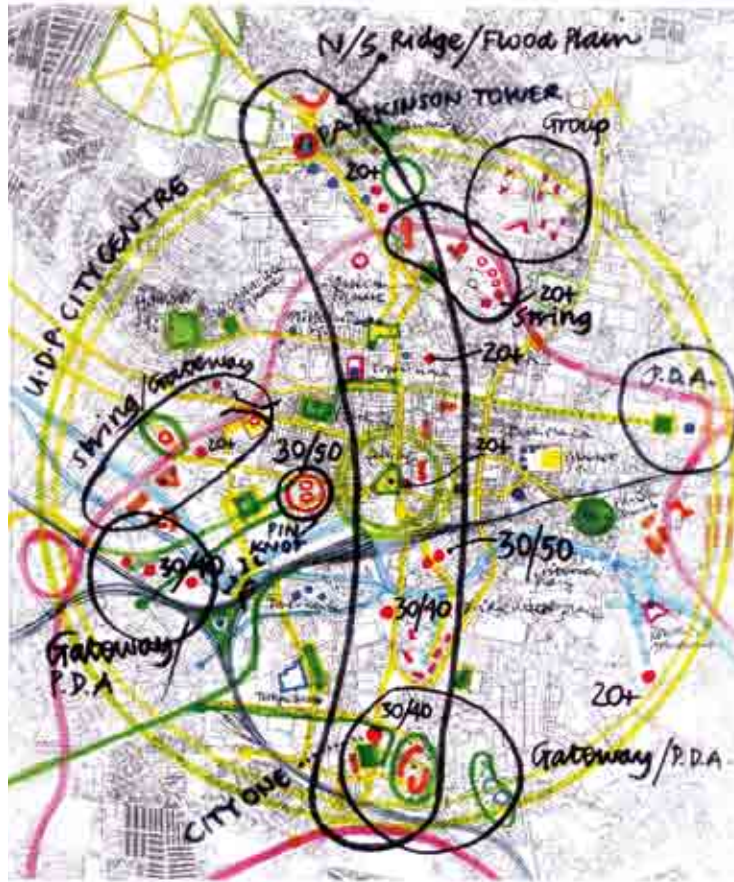
> Sketch of the existing skyline (2006) from the south focused on the north/south spine in the city centre



### 3. Strategic Issues - Skylines

Current analysis >  
- Skyline Leeds  
Renaissance Study  
by John Thorp,  
Civic Architect

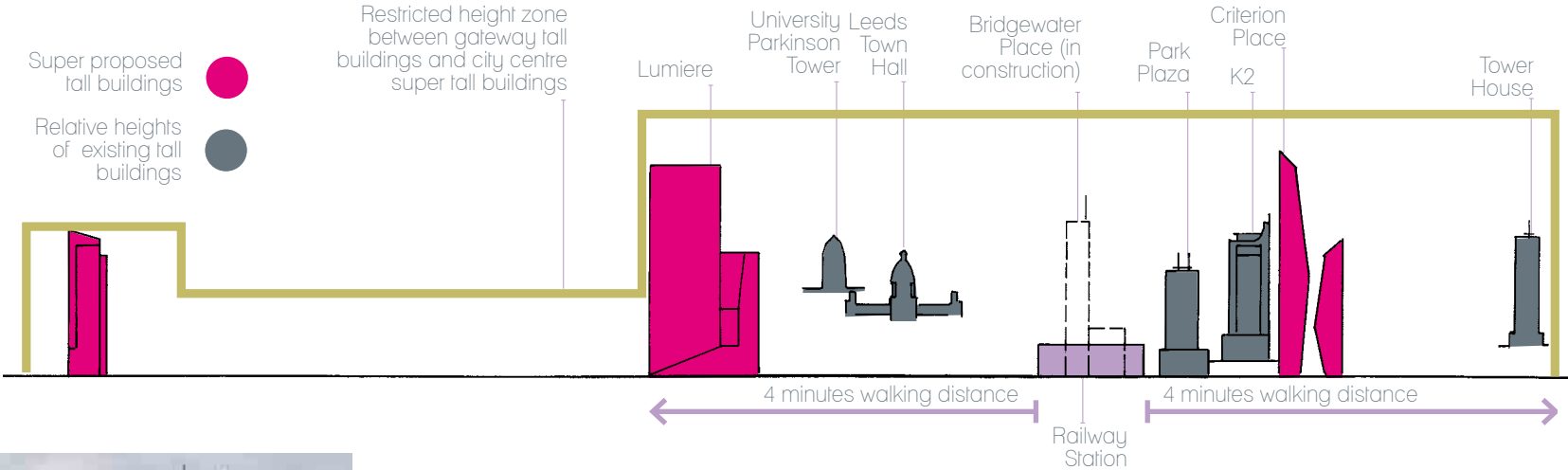
Example of quality design >>  
which deserves to be part of  
the Leeds skyline. Proposal for  
Leeds International Pool site  
by MAKE Architects  
recently abandoned



3. Strategic Issues - Skylines



< Image of Leeds City Centre looking south indicating the aspiration of breaking the existing skyline with iconic structures



< **Shaping the City Centre skyline**  
Simplistic diagram revealing principle to contain tall buildings within zones, with lower block height areas inbetween. This will assist in preventing peppercotting of tall buildings within the City Centre



It is important that skylines are not ruined with unsightly roof plant

3. Strategic Issues - Skylines

The contribution of existing tall buildings that can be re-clad and remodelled to create visual improvement by the use of new form, colour and pattern as already demonstrated by K2 >

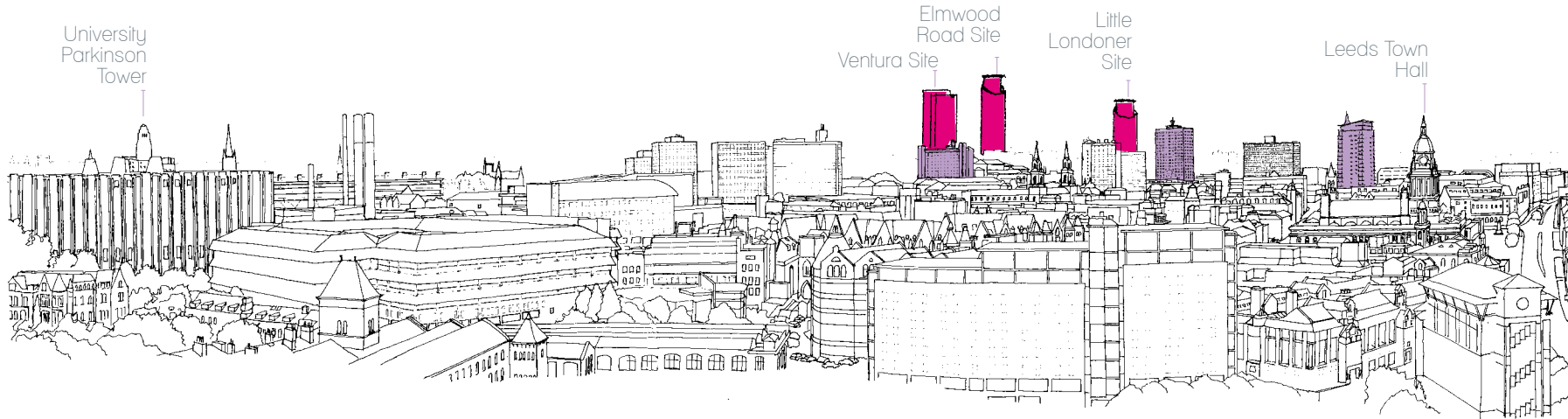


Present Leeds skyline >  
- Tall buildings re-clad after 1995



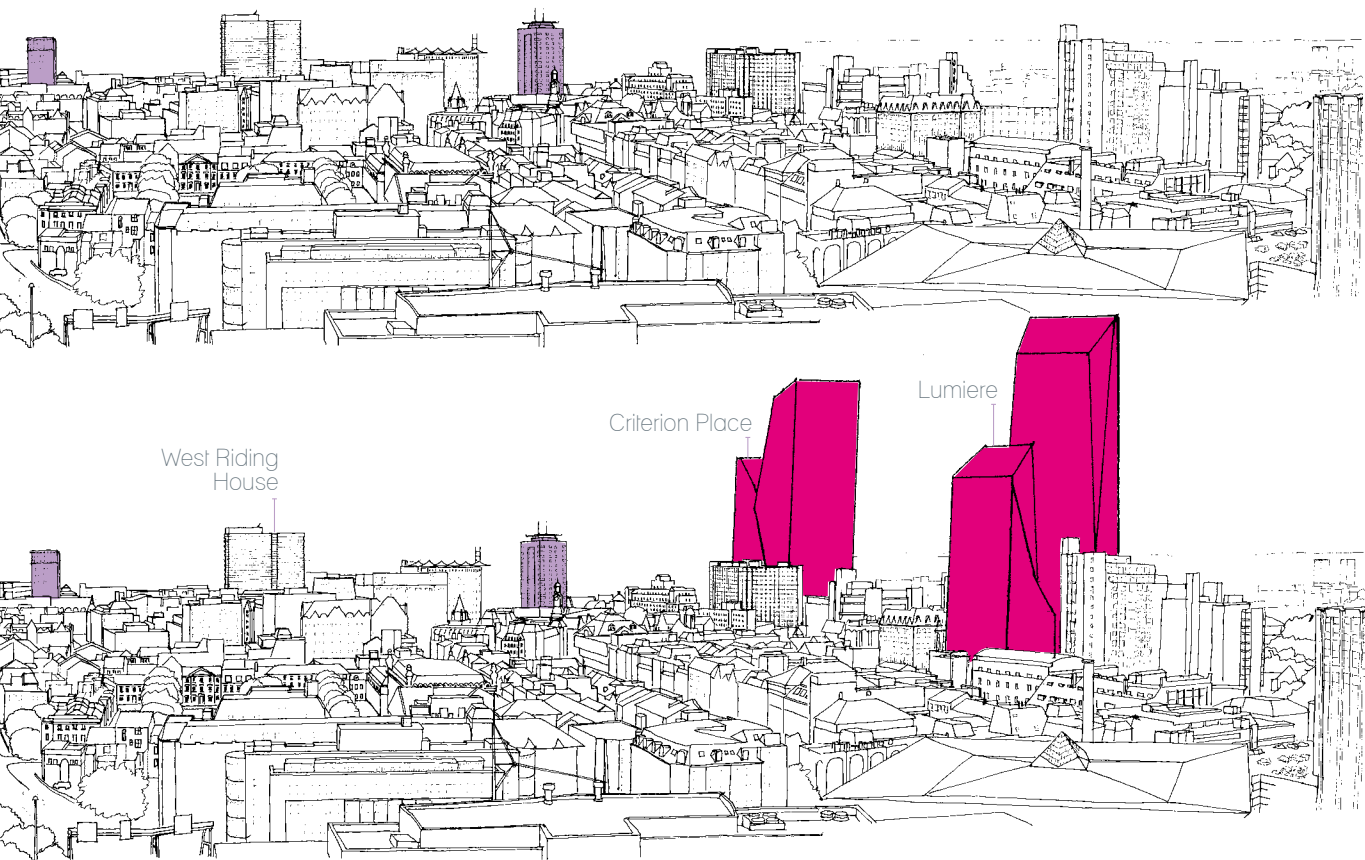
Future Leeds skyline >  
- View from West

- Proposed tall buildings ●
- Existing tall buildings re-clad ●



Key Opportunities

- Proposals for tall buildings between 40 and 60 storeys, within 6-10 minutes walking distance from the railway station, embracing modern architecture of the highest standard to give an instantly recognisable skyline image of Leeds both regionally and internationally but also as seen from long distance from e.g. M621 (SW), Scott Hall Road (NE) and Belle Isle (S) and the M1.
- The potential of a new cluster of tall buildings to the south of the city which can provide a visual stop to the SE view down the Kirkstall Valley or the NW from Stourton as well as creating a distinctive landmark or southern gateway into the city.
- The potential for reinforcing an existing cluster block to the north of the city containing the tall building forms of The Merrion Centre, Technology College, Tower House and the Little London locality.
- The potential of local gateway sites e.g. Either side of Clay Pit Lane at its junction with the Inner Ring Road A64(M).
- Sites adjacent to the Inner Ring Road A64(M) where tall buildings can reinforce and visually enhance a line up of proposed tall buildings already approved for such locations.



▲ Clay Pit Lane, Opal Tower forms a gateway from the north of the city

## Diagrammatic only

### Opportunities

Opportunity for Cluster around Merion Centre



Opportunity for Cluster South of the River Aire - this zone is diagrammatic and applicants will need to understand that any tall building proposals will be carefully considered against the context of cluster development. Consequently, applications for tall buildings within this zone need to be handled in a comprehensive manner: it is unlikely that individual/remote buildings will be accepted



Super Tower Zone - subject to restrictions



Gateway



String



Existing Tall Buildings



Proposed Super Tower (over 45 storeys)



Proposed Tall Buildings



Approved Tall Buildings



Important structures of Leeds:

1. Parkinson building
2. Civic Hall
3. Town Hall
4. Holy Trinity Church
5. Corn Exchange
6. Leeds Market
7. Parish Church
8. Tower Works

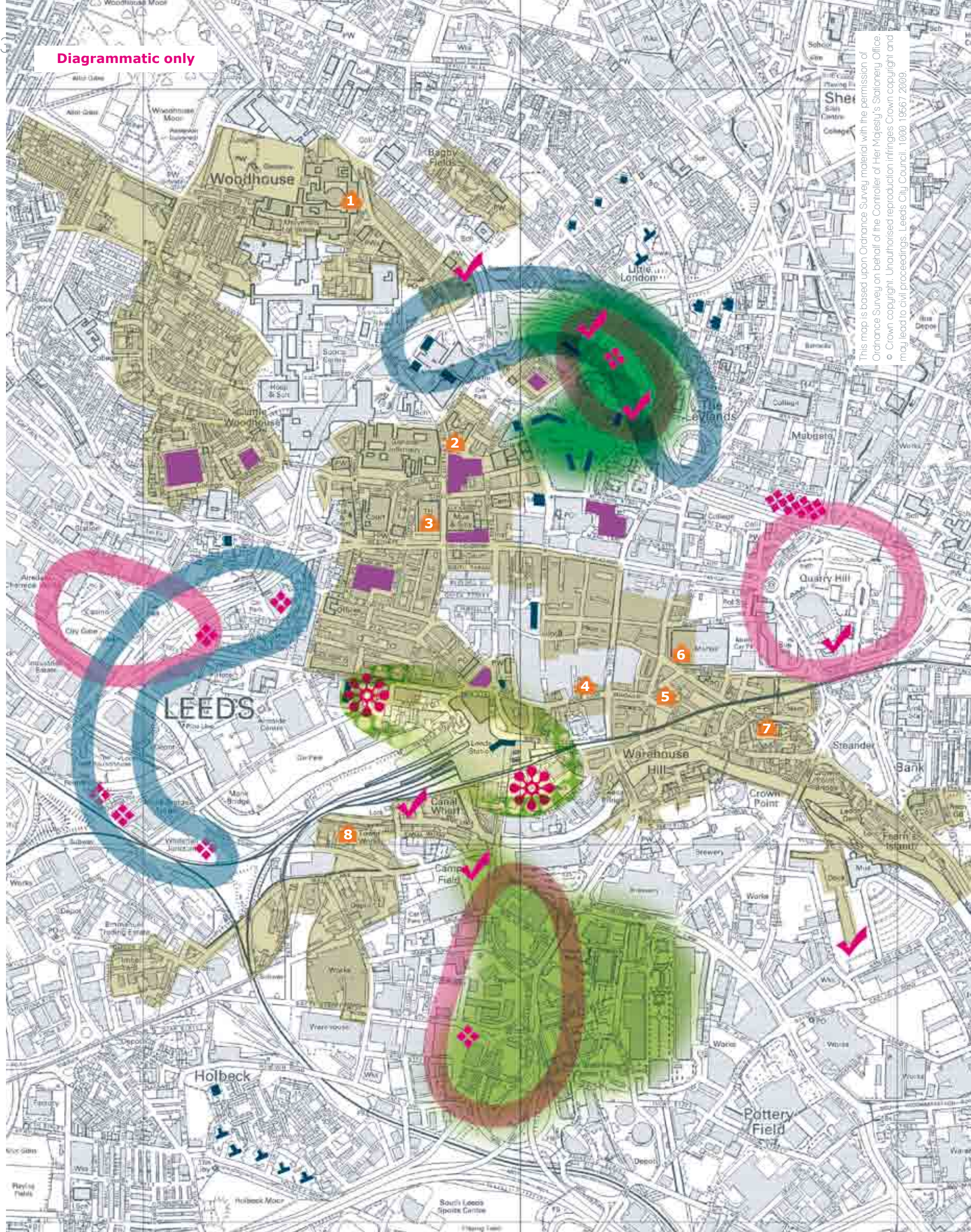


Important squares of Leeds:

Park Square, Millennium Square, City Square, Queens Square, Hanover Square, Woodhouse Square, St John's Church Gardens and Victoria Square



Conservation Area



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## Beyond the City Centre

A legacy of the post war rebuilding programme – the poorly designed blocks of the 1960's and 70's – have been associated with vandalism and social problems – far from the ideal homes in the sky. On the other hand the social reality has meant that many have preferred to remain in their high rise flats. The tower block however, has experienced a renaissance and new developments in Manchester, Liverpool, London and Birmingham are forcing people to reconsider. High rise may not be appropriate for many especially families but with adequate security it can be ideal for certain groups such as single people, young and old.

It is acknowledged that there is potential for all these blocks with their contribution to the visual environment as well as sparing other sites from the pressure of new development. It follows that it will be important to consider the following:-

- To retain or sell off rather than demolition or abandonment
- Demolition if tower blocks are not cost effective, structurally unsound, unfit, beyond salvaging and if tenants are themselves not settled or attached to their blocks
- No tower blocks of satisfactory construction to be demolished without a refurbishment option and cost benefit analysis particularly if they can link in with local regeneration projects
- No tower block should be demolished if the local community is to be broken up. Special communities should be sustained with improved living conditions and better maintenance
- Existing towers should be considered for imaginative schemes of technical refurbishment such as physical improvements, re-enveloping and re-topping to create positive visual impact and contribution to the local landscape
- Existing towers to be more distinctive through their external treatment to strengthen local identity and community development
- Existing clusters of tall buildings to be re-styled to exhibit membership of the same family e.g. through use of external treatments, colours and distinctive forms
- To acknowledge the strategic importance of the two Cottingley towers as gateways / landmarks. Marlboro Towers as an end to the vista west from the Headrow
- Any improvement scheme should not be divorced from improvements to the space around or between buildings.



- << A tower block in Manchester before improvements
- < The same tower block in Manchester after improvements by H P Living

V Location of housing towers beyond Leeds City Centre



# 4. Design Detail



Tall towers, blocks and sailing boat masts combine in this view of Vancouver from the harbour

## UDP Policy CC3:

*The identity and distinctive character of the city centre will be maintained by : Protecting the building fabric and style which make Leeds a unique and attractive city; Encourage good innovative designs for new buildings and spaces; Upgrading the environment where necessary to complement the needs of activities which are essential to the identity, vitality and function of the city centre.*

## UDP Policy CC8:

*Outside the prestige development areas new developments should respect the spatial character and fine grain of the city centre's traditional building blocks and streets. Where new street pattern is to be created, this should generally reflect the traditional street pattern of the city centre.*

Different character areas of Leeds should prompt different tall buildings - particularly their connection with the ground

## Aspirations

Leeds has developed its own character, ambience and physical appearance mainly through the uses and regeneration of its historic and existing collection of buildings, arcades and spaces. Attempting to mimic other cities would erode this unique quality.

Designers are encouraged to create distinctive tall buildings that are not 'anywhere' buildings but can contribute to the Leeds' family' thus creating local distinctiveness.

Iconic or 'trophy' buildings will help to create that distinctiveness but lesser designed tall buildings will need to be inventive with the use of forms and materials to reinforce that local distinctiveness. The image and identity of Leeds can only be improved and maintained by good urban sculpture.

Proposals should be compatible with the existing Conservation Area Policies and Urban Design frameworks e.g. UDP, LDF and CCUDS.

## Context

It is important to integrate any tall building into its surroundings particularly where the nearby streetscape is tightly knit and distinctive. Tall buildings can reinforce any local distinctiveness but a given context could determine height and form. Previously modernist architects did not show much respect for context with devastating results - eroding distinctive urban character and quality of space.

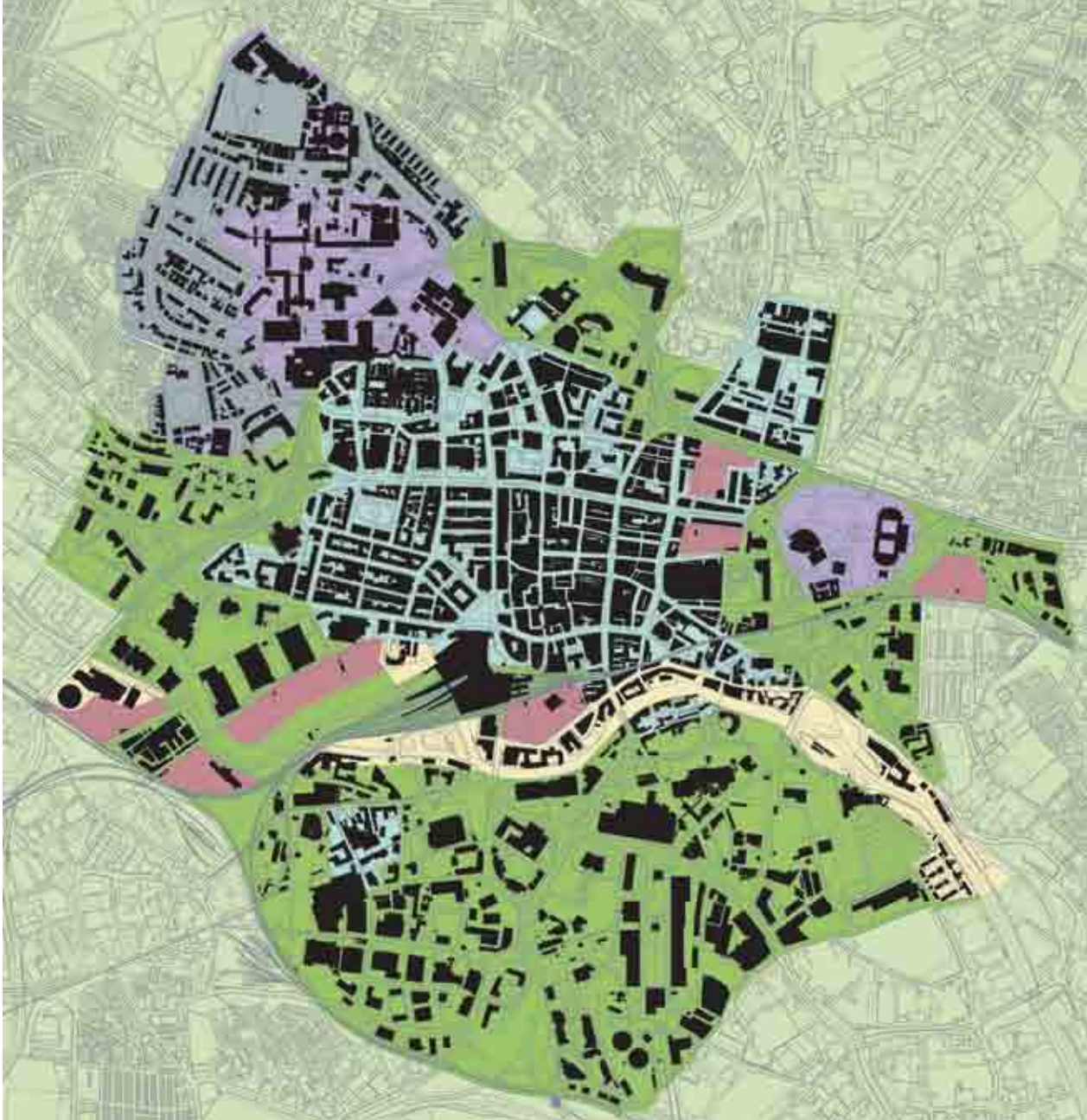


## Key Design Principles

- Ensure tall buildings are **imaginative high quality designs** with a cohesive quality for all features so that the design works as a whole.
- Ensure tall buildings respond appropriately to the **distinctive local character** and ensure there is no visual harm to historic buildings and views.
- Minimise energy use and waste** (both during construction and throughout the life of the building) including using renewable energy production where appropriate.
- Use **sustainable materials**.
- Tops of tall buildings should **add appropriate interest to the skyline**.
- Create active ground level frontages** to the adjacent streets.
- Consider recladding** existing tall buildings to provide a sustainable high quality solution before proposing demolition and new build.

4. Design Detail  
- Context

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Designers should consequently aim to make tall buildings compatible with the local context by analysing the topography, local urban design framework and character in order to avoid repeating the unsuccessful approach of piecemeal ad hoc tall building design of former years. **This type of analysis will be an essential part of any future submission for planning permission.**

- < Urban morphology map of Leeds, taken from CCUDS
- > Large dark form of the new building is inappropriate and out of scale with its context in the historic fabric of Rochdale town centre



- << West Riding House, Albion Place, Leeds. Ignores local context so appears completely alien to its historic surroundings
- < This southwards view down Scott Hall Road over to the Elmwood Road / Tower House area of Leeds shows how the various individual towers combine to create a greater mass - a cluster
- < Elmwood Road / Tower House area, the highest point in Leeds City Centre could reinforce its existing context of tall buildings

4. Design Detail - Architectural Quality

**Height** >  
Proposed buildings which rise taller than the University Parkinson Building

**Scale** >>  
Natwest Tower, London, towers over the historic building but is in scale with the more recent adjacent tall developments

**Massing** >  
Interesting massing and relationship between the building forms of student housing and on Marlborough Street, Ibis hotel, Leeds

Architectural Quality

Hopefully designers will design tall buildings with integrity without blindly following architectural fashions. The appropriate use of form, materials and available technology should produce good solutions which will work well and look good day and night.

A successful impact on the urban silhouette and street level will be devalued if the architectural design fails to impress. It is important that developers and designers take into consideration the following factors that determine architectural design in order to achieve a successful outcome and prevent a negative effect on the urban environment:-

- Height
- Scale
- Massing
- Form/ shape
- Style/ fashion?



**UDP Policy N13:**  
*The design of all new buildings should be of high quality and have regard to the character and appearance of their surroundings. Good contemporary design which is sympathetic or complementary to its setting will be welcomed.*

**UDP Policy BD4:**  
*All mechanical plant and associated pipework, lifts and other mechanical equipment and fire escape stairs should be normally be contained within the envelope of the building. All service and delivery areas should be screened from view as far as possible.*

- Plain / simple / articulated forms
- Visual lightness / heaviness
- Image / Iconic?
- Relationship with other neighbouring buildings
- Expression or concealment of structure
- Innovation in structural design
- Reflections - light catching facets at different angles and times of the day
- Materials
- Cladding and varied façade treatments
- Patterns – striking or subdued / vertical or horizontal emphasis
- Glass / relationship with solid areas
- Applied technology e.g. photo-voltaic panels
- Lighting at night
- Applied technology e.g. wind energy
- Features within structures e.g. apertures
- Distinctiveness
- Successful interface at street level

**Height** >  
A comparison of heights between existing and proposed tall buildings of Leeds and London



## 4. Design Detail - Architectural Quality



- < **Visual Lightness**  
The interesting played forms of the buildings and choice of materials for Criterion Place create a visual lightness (Ian Simpson Architects)



- > **Iconic**  
Some tall buildings are very image conscious and if built may well become icons
- << **Style / Fashion**  
All sorts of forms can be used for tall buildings - prosod by Brewster Bye Architects
- <<< **Simple Form**  
Tower House Leeds
- << **Visual Heaviness**  
White concrete elevation to Premier Travel Inn Manchester creates visual heaviness
- < **Relationship with other neighbouring buildings**  
needs to be born in mind regardless of their size as this view of Canary Wharf London shows unrelated scale and relationship within adjacent buildings

Beware of 'fashionable architecture' as it can quickly date

4. Design Detail - Architectural Quality

Expression or Concealment of Structure >

This view of the Swiss Re Tower during construction illustrates an interesting contrast between the completed curved glass covered building with the uncompleted part with the structure more clearly expressed



Innovation in Structural Design >>

Expressing the structure can be a way of creating interest in a building as done on the - John Hancock Building, Chicago



Reflections >

The Bourse on Boar Lane illustrates an interesting effect created with multifaceted reflections especially when there is something worth reflecting



Materials / Claddings >>

Use of different coloured panels can create unusual effects as shown by these two examples:

Music College, Quarry Hill >>

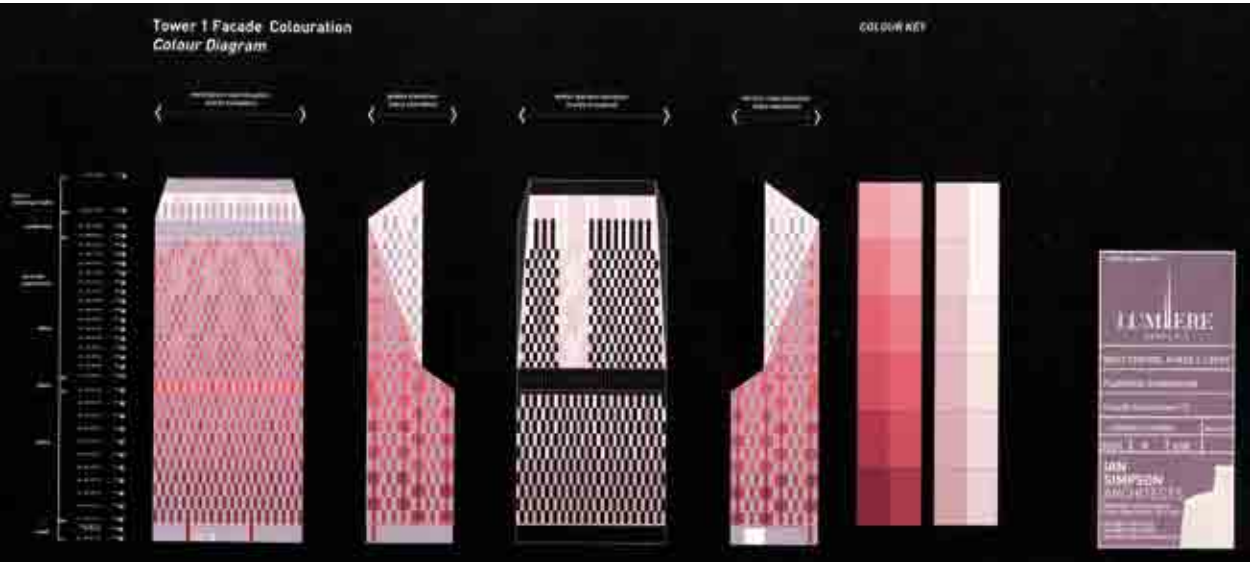
and

Student flats at Marsh Lane >>>



Patterns V

Façades studies for Lumiere create interesting patterns



Distictiveness >

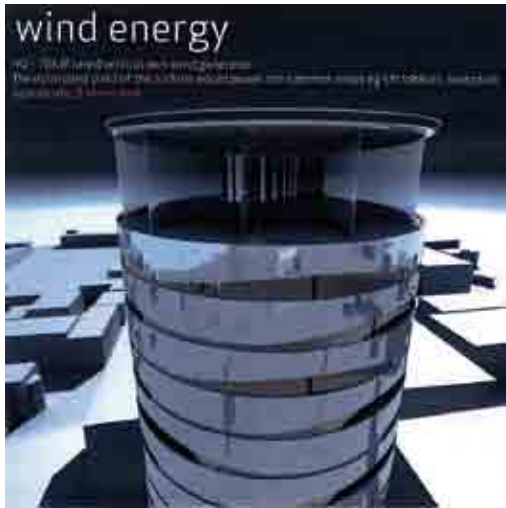
Proposed Lumiere Leeds, Ian Simpson Architects



4. Design Detail - Architectural Quality



- << **Glass Treatment**  
The finished Swiss Re Tower, commonly known as the gherkin, illustrates the different treatments beneath the glass surface to good effect
- < **Applied Technology**  
Park Lane College has used photo-voltaic panels to interesting effect



**UDP Policy BD14:**  
*Carefully designed floodlighting schemes will be encouraged, particularly for distinctive or important buildings.*

- <<< **Lighting at Night**  
It is also important to consider what the building will look like night and take the opportunities presented by appropriate lighting as seen in these illustrations of the 'Kissing Towers' (left) on Criterion Place and the Spiracle Tower (right)
- < **Applied Technology**  
Wind energy is to be utilised in the proposed Spiracle Tower, Leeds

**Form / Shape / Distinctiveness**  
Two contrasting buildings:

- << Proposed Spiracle Tower, Leeds by MAKE / Carey Jones
- < New York Skyscraper



## 4. Design Detail - Tops

The distinctive top of the Chrysler Building in New York has become an instantly recognisable form - in effect an icon >

The form of the top of the NLA Tower in East Croydon is lost at night but the lighting scheme creates an interesting coloured pattern which in itself creates the interest >>

Photo courtesy of Simon Stacey



**UDP Policy BD13:**  
*Telecommunications development will be permitted when all practical steps have been taken to locate and design such equipment that:*  
*i) sensitive locations are avoided,*  
*ii) visual intrusion is minimised,*  
*iii) mast sharing or existing tall structures are utilised wherever possible.*

### Tops

Tall buildings can enhance skylines and panoramas if their tops are well designed and visually striking. Tall buildings have a major impact on the city skyline. It is important that this impact is positive with distinctive designed tops or roofs.

Tops of buildings can provide:

- Identity and image
- Reference and orientation
- Visual incident
- Urban sculpture
- Landmark status



The following indicate a wide range of innovative forms that contribute to their local skylines.

There are many ways to create distinctive tops for tall buildings which include :-

- Sloping roofs
- Curved roofs
- Stepped forms
- Top storey setbacks
- Conical shapes
- Communication masts
- Observation galleries
- Open balconies
- Flagpoles
- Penthouses
- Special lighting
- Selective lighting
- Laser beams
- Slenderness
- Bulk
- Bulbous form
- Panoramic restaurants

Wind turbines and solar panels on top of a housing block in Bradford create an interesting and distinctive top which is emphasised at night by a carefully designed lighting scheme >

Distinctive tops of housing blocks, a different approach to existing plant rooms. Motherwell, Scotland >>

Example of roof top clutter – which should be recovered >

Worldwide examples of interesting tops for tall buildings v



4. Design Detail - Relationship to the Street



- < Desolate junction with ground, negative, inactive space around tower level with solid wall around at Tower House
- << Winter garden / Atrium transition from outside to inside for the proposed Lumiere development on Wellington Street by Ian Simpson
- < Wasted opportunity of providing a good interface with the street in Stockport - the whole of the ground floor comprising of car parking between the V shaped columns, the main entrance is in the insignificant extension on the right



**UDP Policy BD5:**  
*All new buildings should be designed with consideration given to both their own amenity and that of their surroundings. This should include usable space, privacy and satisfactory penetration of daylight and sunlight.*

**UDP Policy CC12:**  
*In new development, new public open spaces and pedestrian ways must be related to and connect with the existing pattern of streets, routes and spaces, including the river and canal walkways.*

**UDP Policy CC13:**  
*New public spaces must be imaginatively designed to complement their location and to ensure that they are attractive, comfortable, safe to use and accessible for all.*

- < West Riding House entrance which is lost between well used shops.
- < People enjoying proximity with main entrance at the Louvre, Paris

Developers and designers should aim to PROVIDE:-

- High quality public realm and human scale
- Good street level architecture and manners
- Good active frontages
- User friendly and legible entrances and approaches
- Sunshine zones
- Good sized open space in front of tall buildings
- Legible and good links with transport and pedestrian routes
- Settings for existing nearby buildings of visual prominence
- A good affect on a place by enhancing and regenerating it
- Good microclimate and comfort zone
- Spatial interaction with surrounding area
- Positive space and urban vitality
- Counteraction to downdraughts
- Good landscaping and amenity space which should link, if possible, to the local green infrastructure network

Developers and designers need to AVOID:-

- Dead space
- Urban barrenness
- Windswept environments
- Permanent shadow areas
- Erosion of the distinctiveness of nearby buildings of visual prominence
- Visually damaging an existing place/ strong sense of place
- Negative space – a feeling of isolation
- Damaging existing important and strategic views within the streetscene
- Negative impact on local flora and fauna especially if adjacent to a wildlife corridor



Relationship to the Street

Tall buildings rarely possess a successful join at street level. There are many examples of blighted areas such as those in London and New York when tall buildings fail to create a positive junction with the street. It is interesting to note that many books on the design of tall buildings and skyscrapers contain very few examples of good interface at street level.

## 4. Design Detail - Relationship to the Street

Unfriendly main entrance  
in back street for Park Plaza  
off Boar Lane >

Activity and good public realm  
at La Defense, Paris >>

Whilst the Lloyds Building  
in London has interest it is inactive  
at street level resulting in a poor  
relationship with the public realm >

Good interface with street  
and provision of public realm at the  
Swiss Re, London >>

Good public realm and activity >>  
for the tall building in St Helen's  
Square, London

Use of public art and  
good interface with street at  
Lloyds TSB Bank on Park Row v



A grand entrance approach with  
public realm leads one into the  
heart of the complex at Bridgewater  
Place on Victoria Road >>



4. Design Detail - Urban Blocks - Uses



< Mixed uses have created different forms for each of the blocks that form Bridgewater Place, Victoria Road  
Aedas Architects

< The podium of K2 includes different uses which have created an active frontage at street level



Uses

Tall buildings should have active ground floors. Public access is particularly important and useful for introducing new uses at ground floor levels and selected higher levels e.g. shops, bars, restaurants etc. Many American examples rely on a café/restaurant at the top to create a public vantage point and viewing area. Space underground tall buildings can be used for car parking, facilities for residents or connections to transport.

Recent trends and different life expectancies of uses reveal that the tower block dedicated to a single use is becoming rarer. The introduction of mixed uses is recognised as a key to the sustainability of tall buildings with recent applications containing residential, hotel, offices, service levels to those uses, leisure and retail in the same tower. It is anticipated that surgeries, crèches and other communal activities will be included in future – a move towards mixed use vertical communities. Apart from assisting in the creation of good frontage and interface with the street, mixed uses give the opportunity for varied façade treatment and articulation of form.

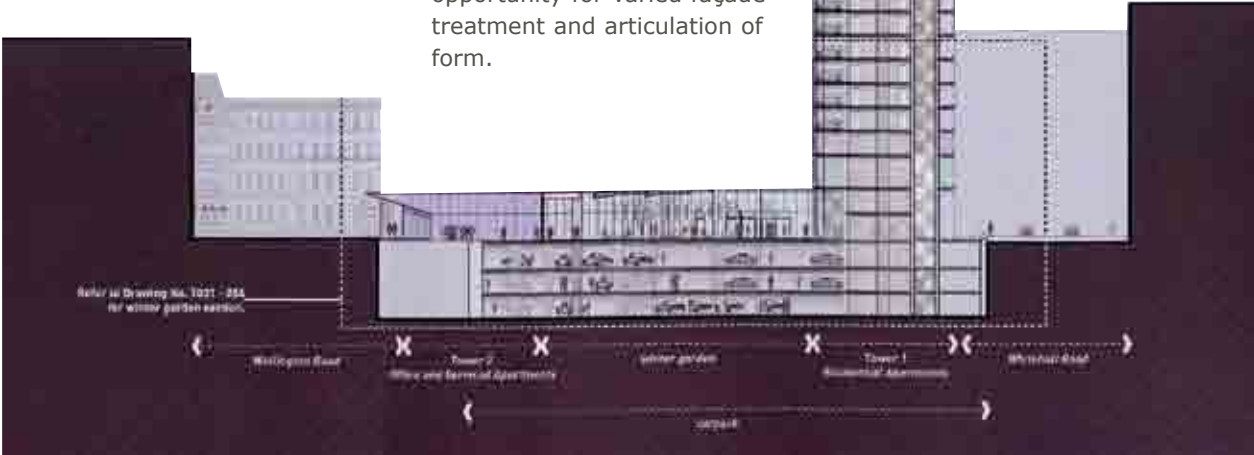
<< The atrium runs through Bridgewater Place off which there are mixed uses to create an active street within the building away from the traffic  
Aedas Architects

< Offices, apartments, health facilities and hotel at the proposed Lumiere on Wellington Street  
Ian Simpson Architects

<< Mixed uses in the podium of Park Plaza on the corner of City Square and Boar Lane create an active ground floor

Urban Blocks

High rise point blocks can also rise out of urban blocks. The use of a well designed podium of a number of storeys can reduce the scale of the high buildings as experienced at ground level as well as reducing the adverse effect that a tall building can have on street-scene and microclimate.



## 4. Design Detail - Recladding and Demolition

Examples of existing buildings along north/south spine of central Leeds which have mostly been reclad to create a modern up-to-date image from the tired old towers



Former Ventura Building



Tower House



K2



Albion Street



**UDP Policy CC7:**  
Redevelopment of the city centre tower blocks will be encouraged where their appearance is unattractive and buildings are functionally obsolete.

## Recladding and Demolition

There is the opportunity to refurbish and reclad the two towers on the left (Merrion House and Technology College) as has been done with K2 (right) which has been transformed from a dated concrete office block into a modern apartment tower

When buildings come to the end of their lives it is important to consider the following:-

- Should they be retained and given a facelift in view of their contribution to the skyline?
- Should they be used as a precedent to introduce more tall buildings e.g. north/ south spine?
- Should they make way to allow the joining up of the historic zones that interface on either side of the north / south spine?

Due to the limited available development space, developers need to consider if the refurbishment and re-cladding of an existing tall building could be advantageous.

### 1) Re-enveloping?

- Materials
  - Colours
  - Jointing
  - Pattern of cladding
- A new coat! A high tech look? The Leeds Look?!

### 2) Re-silhouetting?

- Distinctive form to top of building
- New identity and 'personality'

### 3) How to do it well

Example – K2; Distinctive, sculptural, visually neat and modern image

### 4) Opportunities

Commercial - Merrion House

Social Housing Blocks - Marlborough Flats and Lovell Court Blocks



COMMENT -

Developers and their architects have recently used hi tech grey cladding panels and terracotta coloured large tiled panels which have contributed to developing a new Leeds image.

It is true that such examples will be seen as the new face of Leeds but there is a danger that this will be interpreted as the latest fashion which could become outdated.

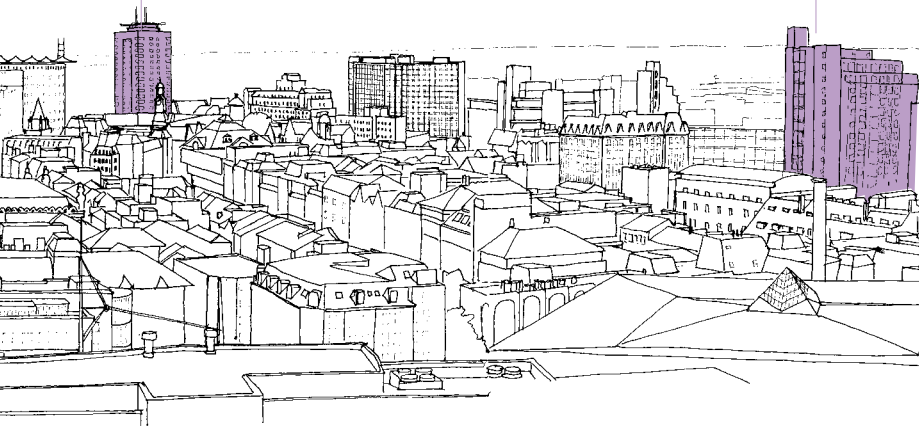
4. Design Detail - Recladding and Demolition



Park Plaza



Former Post office Building



< The recladding of Marlborough Towers offers the opportunity to provide a new positive end of view along the Headrow, Leeds

v There is an opportunity to reclad Lovell Towers to improve the view along Vicar Lane



< A different approach where photo-voltaic panels have been applied to an office building, CIS Building, Manchester



# Bringing it all together

5 Design Process and Planning Submission Requirements

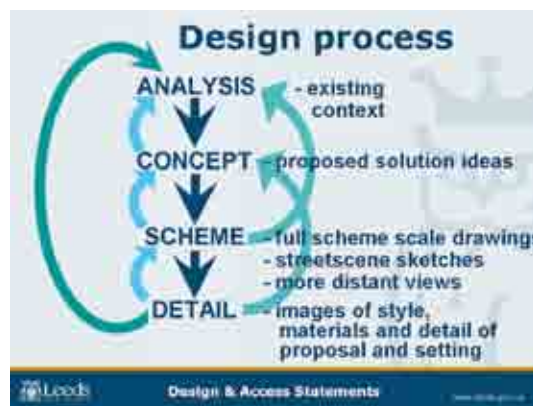
6 Conclusion

Annexe



# 5. Design Process and Planning Submission Requirements

Beetham Tower  
Manchester in  
construction



Applicants will need to explain **design process – analysis – concept – scheme – detail**

Applicants will need to make reference to:- **National and Regional Policy Guidance**

- **Yorkshire & Humber Plan May 2008 – Regional Spatial Strategy to 2026**
- **PPS1** Describes Planning's role in securing well designed sustainable Development and its responsibility to reject poor design.
- **PPS3** Good design applied to sustainable residential development.
- **PPS6** Planning for Town Centres.
- **PPG8** Affect on telecommunications and telecommunication corridors.
- **PPG12** Local Spatial Planning.
- **PPG13** Sustainable and integrated transport systems.
- **PPG15** Planning guidance relative to historic environments, Conservation Areas and listed buildings.

**Tall building proposals will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated through a fully justified and worked up proposal that they are of excellent architectural quality and in the appropriate location.**

## Analysis/ Urban Design Assessment

Designers will need to carry out an investigation and analysis of the site, topography, locality, area context and character, urban form, local street pattern and grain, key views – long and short, public realm and space, transport facilities, pedestrian footfall, social/ economic profile, densities, sustainability issues, exploring materials, and construction techniques, relationship with historic environments, trends and opportunities.

## Transport Assessment Study

In accordance with best practice. DFT Guidance 'Transport Assessments: A Good Practice Guide'

## Environmental Impact Assessment

Prior to a town planning submission, applicants and their design teams may submit a request for a formal scoping opinion to establish if an Environmental Impact assessment is required. Where Leeds City Council has indicated that a tall

building application must be supported by an Environmental Statement this should preferably be from an independent source, not edited or censored. Guidance is provided in Government Circular 02/99 and ODPM Guidance 2000 on EIA's. Applicants should enter early pre-application consultation with the Council and seek to agree specific technical and visual studies before the material is submitted. The following is a minimum requirement to demonstrate best practice:-

- **Affect of shadowing / shadow paths**
- **Overlooking**
- **Existing built form – visual quality, key views, vistas etc.**
- **Character appraisal of locality**
- **Affect on neighbouring buildings, streets and open spaces**
- **Existing transport, traffic and pedestrian flows**
- **Impact on conservation areas, greenspaces and agreed key views**
- **Evacuation and safety procedures**
- **Visual impact during construction stages**
- **Night-time appearance**
- **Reflections / obtrusive daytime glare**
- **Construction Activities and Noise**

## Wind Studies

Unavoidable climate change is likely to increase the risk and severity of gales. It is essential that those involved with proposed tall buildings should conduct appropriate risk assessment and Wind quantitative analysis (appropriate wind tunnel and/ or CFD modelling) – especially the effects of downdraughts and wind at the base of a tall building or group of tall buildings. Assessments will also be required for areas beyond red line boundaries so that developers and designers can demonstrate that their designs and measures will not produce harmful affects on pedestrians, vehicles and cyclists next to and away from the proposed tall building. In addition to standard assessments of likely comfort levels for persons sitting or walking in the vicinity of new tall buildings, it is important that extreme turbulence or high wind events can be modelled to assess the likely impacts on users at ground level, including high sided vehicles. **These measures will need to preempt wind problems during the life of the building which are likely to increase due to climate change.** The Lawson criteria for comfort and safety should be applied, without relaxation, to determine the environmental impact of strong winds and any significant impacts should be highlighted as part of the EIA. Safety considerations should include the effects on frail people and cyclists. The required

## 5. Design Process and Planning Submission Requirements



< Use of models (both physical and computer) can indicate the relationship with context, investigate the impact of scale and offer skyline studies



conditions are dependent on activity, with entrances and seating areas requiring greater shelter and roads and car parks. The study also needs to demonstrate the appropriate mitigation measures have been applied to improve conditions in areas where the comfort and/or safety criteria have not been met. Further detailed guidance is available via the UK Wind Engineering Society.

### Anti-terrorism

In recent years events indicate that terrorists target buildings to create maximum damage to organisations and people. 9/11 was a result of aeroplane attack on tall buildings but terrorist attack at ground level is more likely. Developers and their design teams – particularly those involved with vehicular access and the design of the external spaces around tall buildings will be required to consult the Council's Police/Architectural Liaison Officer who will also arrange contact with the North East Counter Terrorist Unit. Shatterproof glass and advanced bomb-resistant glazing systems have recently entered the market. The Council expects the use of such products on tall buildings in the future.

**The Council needs to be assured that manageable risk planning and assessment has been carried out to influence the exact location and design of tall buildings on particular sites.**

## Planning Submission Requirements

### Full Planning Application

Outline planning applications will be discouraged to enable design issues to be considered early. Applicants should retain their architects through the design process. Outline planning applications for tall buildings will be accepted in only exceptional case where the applicant is seeking to establish the principle of a tall building as an important element of a robust and creditable masterplan for an area to be developed over a long period of time. Even then, CABE and English Heritage must be satisfied that the parameters for a tall building will result in excellent urban design and architecture.

### Presentation of Proposals

Applicants will be required to submit accurate and contextual illustrations, and quote proposed and neighbouring building heights in metres in addition to the number of storeys proposed so that City Development can determine if the proposal is a tall building.

Applicants and designers will be expected to present their proposals with clear detailed drawings consisting of site plans, plans, elevations and sections together with photomontages and possibly virtual models, 360° views, significant views, height studies and options, urban design assessment, visual impact on urban silhouette, city skyline, streetscenes and 3D modelling. These should provide a clear picture of the visual impact of the building and its relationship to pedestrian routes, transport infrastructure, neighbouring buildings and the public realm, as well as far and near vistas. This may involve participation in workshops and design reviews, presentations to planning staff and Council Members.



< Before and  
< after photomontage

Public exhibition  
of Lumiere Tower  
proposals held  
in the Victoria  
Arcade, Leeds



Photos taken at  
Tall Building Workshop  
held in March 2005



Design and Access  
Statement

This should be a pictorial  
presentation covering **analysis-  
concept-scheme-detail** not just  
A4 sheets of words.

Applications are required to have a  
design statement. For tall buildings  
this should include an analysis of  
the urban design context including  
an appraisal of:

- the history of the site and its  
area
- urban silhouette
- character and grain of the area
- transport and movements
- existing public realm
- connections and linkages
- opportunities in urban form
- public realm
- connections

The concept for their design, built  
form, materials and public realm  
– supported by environmental  
appraisals and other influences.  
How do they relate to other  
tall buildings both concurrent  
proposals and those approved in  
order to assess the cumulative  
impact which the structure  
will have on the city? How and  
where tall buildings will have  
an effect on the wider historic  
environment as well as the local  
context particularly where they  
are likely to have an impact on  
the historical assets of the city  
of Leeds? Designers will need  
to demonstrate the results of  
their analysis with an urban  
design study, character appraisal  
and a clear concept for the  
design of their tall building and  
surrounding space accompanied  
by high quality visualisations.

Design Review

Tall building proposals will  
initially be assessed by the  
Council’s Design Review Panel  
who may seek assistance  
from representatives of CABE,  
environmental and climatic  
experts.

Risk Assessment

To consider collapse, future  
demolition, fire and smoke  
Pollution (downward toxic smoke)  
to guide the location of a tall  
building within a site.

Consultations

Applicants and their designers are  
recommended to engage in:-

- As part of pre-application  
discussions (including Planning  
Services, SDU Urban Design and  
the Civic Architect) it is likely  
that applicants will be expected  
to enter a Planning Performance  
Agreement with Leeds City  
Council’s City Development
- Consultation with English  
Heritage
- Consultation with the local  
community and interested parties
- Civil Aviation Authority  
(Leeds city centre is below the  
main flight path approach to  
Leeds Bradford Airport)\*
- Consultation with C.A.B.E.  
Cabe and the English Heritage  
Guidance on Tall Buildings July  
2007 sets out how they evaluate  
proposals and offer advice on good  
practice in relation to tall buildings  
in the planning process. The  
government endorses the guidance  
which is capable of being a material  
consideration in the determination  
of planning applications
- Consultation with Leeds City  
Council Cleansing Services  
regarding waste management  
arrangements.

\* Leeds Bradford Airport is  
the highest in the U.K. and  
is also subject to low cloud  
conditions. The CAA have  
set a limit of 1000 ft for  
buildings in Central London

The fundamental aim of this guide is to provide clear advice for the design of tall buildings, encouraging the highest quality design so that tall buildings will successfully integrate into the local environment and positively contribute to the Leeds skyline.

In response to the broad ranging issues and aspirations a wide set of topics have been examined with principles established. This guide is not just about the design of tall buildings but is also about protecting the city - particularly its historic settings from the impact of tall buildings. Chapters on existing and protected views and settings together with references to the existing urban morphology, emphasise the value of the existing scene and the need to make tall buildings compatible with their locality.

It is expected that this guide will provide clarity for developers, designers and the public. The cyclical approach to the design process of analysis – concept – scheme – detail should prompt appropriate solutions that respond to the local context.

At the strategic level, the combination of protected zones, protected views and conservation areas will certainly limit where tall buildings can be put. On the other hand, the guide has recognised opportunities for reinforcing an existing cluster and the creation of a new one. Similarly the question of the right location is addressed with new opportunities for landmark/gateway sites and for new relationships between tall buildings and transport facilities.

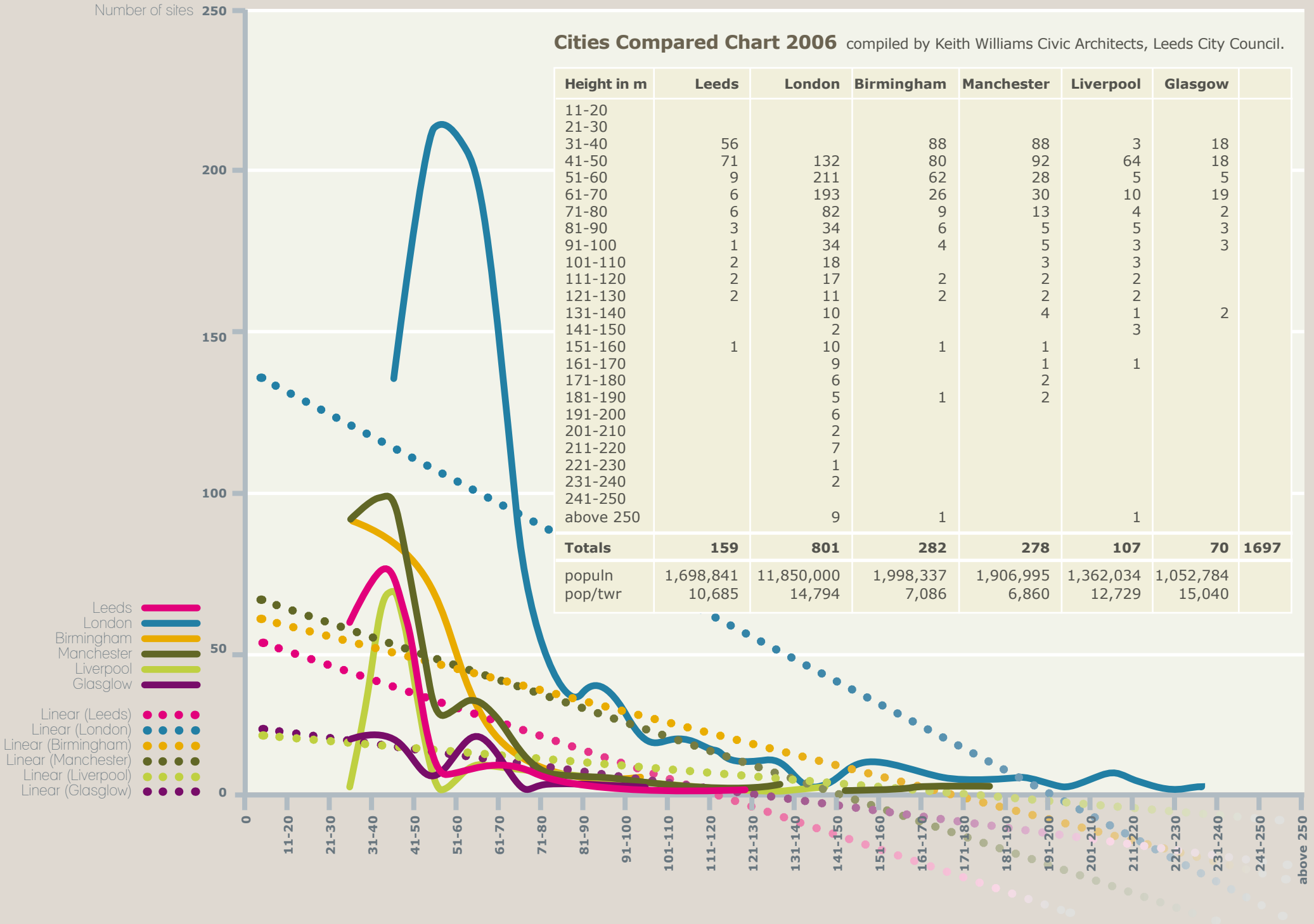
This all can be devalued if the architectural quality fails to deliver. Consequently, the guide also focuses in on a range of different factors that inspire quality in design. At a detailed level, making tall buildings fit into the different character zones produces an interesting challenge. The need for a tall building to have a successful interface with the ground cannot be understated. The merits of re-cladding buildings has been highlighted, showing recent successful examples. The issues of sustainability and climate change are revealed and indicate a variety of influences ranging from the importance of location and orientation to façade engineering and energy conservation.

High quality tall buildings in the right place should benefit the city. This guide enables designers, developers and planners in Leeds to consider them in a holistic way – both strategically and in detail so that when history looks back at the recent rapid growth of tall buildings it is hoped that this guide will have enabled tall buildings to make a positive contribution to the existing urban form and created a 'Leeds only' skyline appropriate for a prosperous major European City.



<< **2008 model indicating proposed tall buildings**  
(blue buildings in construction 2008)

Leeds Structures - Existing and Proposed



# Design Workshop Findings

Notes of the one-day Workshop exploring the issues for Leeds City Council’s Design Guide for Tall Buildings held at the School of the Built Environment, The Brunswick Building Leeds Metropolitan University on Tuesday 1 March 2005.

## Workshop Approach

Following the main introductory presentations those attending were invited to form 7 workshop groups each asked to deal with a particular tall buildings theme. Participants were allocated groups to ensure a suitable mix and balance of disciplines and interests. The range of disciplines included –

- architects, Civic Trust representatives, Councillors, conservation planner, developers, fire consultant, landscape architects, lighting designer, planners and planning consultants, public art designer, quantity surveyors, structural engineer, transportation engineer, urban designers, and students.

- The groups considered:–
- Strategic Principles (2 groups)
  - Why high?
  - Footprints
  - Style, language and form
  - Tall-Sustainable
  - Leeds Academy for Sustainable Communities.

Following which each gave a short presentation on their deliberations are summarised in the text boxes.

There was also a general discussion which touched on the definition of ‘tall’ and the scope of the guide, and the importance of ‘mega tall’ i.e. 30 plus storeys – super towers in the city core?

In this discussion it was felt that:–

- quality control is vital
- clusters may not be achievable
- the importance of environmental impact was recognised
- tall buildings should create a sense of place and good public realm
- night-time views are important.

During the day everyone was asked for their ‘DO’s and DON’Ts’.

## DO’s & DON’Ts

### What To Do

- ✓ A ‘good haircut on top.
- ✓ Visual interest in the middle.
- ✓ Light display – night time interest!
- ✓ Build tall where revenues justify additional build cost
- ✓ Provide large public spaces
- ✓ Thro space at ground level
- ✓ More public spaces inside the buildings.
- ✓ Mixed uses.

### What Not To Do

- ✗ (Don’t) Forget the public at ground level.
- ✗ Don’t restrict tall buildings to gateways.
- ✗ No cut and paste materials – be brave and bold!

## GROUP 1A – Strategic Principles

Group composed of architects, Councillors, planning consultant, planner and quantity surveyor.

Referred to the Leeds topography and the key interventions of the River Aire, canal, railway, road system, ring road, conservation area, proposed 45/29 tower proposal, cluster in west, built form pushing out towards Kirkstall Valley, Headrow / Eastgate Redevelopment. The understanding of these will lead to ability to identify features, existing patterns and future trends.

### Locations where tall buildings acceptable:-

In concentrations e.g. grouping in south.

- Gateways
- Also opportunity locations.
- Must conform to strategy accounting for historic context, views of key buildings and existing amenity of occupants.
- Corridor route – not a line but a cluster – not a ‘picket fence’!
- Headrow – to provide containment at either end e.g. DHSS /Quarry Hill
- and at moments along its length to create nodes along the Headrow.

Tall buildings could mark western entrance to the city by extending height of built form down Kirkstall / River Aire valley.

Take advantage of the Yorks Chemicals Site closure – a Hunslet cluster at a gateway.

### Beware:-

- Failure to complete the strategy.
- 70’s lessons.
- Do not miss the boat! Take advantage of demand (present), the economic climate (funding) and of available large sites.

It was important to have quality and not tall for ‘tall’s sake’.

The group stated that LCC must still exercise a flexible approach to strategy. Tall buildings should be considered if they ‘are good enough’ and can be justified.

GROUP 1B – Strategic Principles

Group composed of architects, planning consultant, Civic Trust representative, consultant, Councillor, planner, student, transportation engineer.

Commented on the need to have quality at street level, recognising that there were world-wide structures that are good, bad and ugly in cities that are emerging and changing. They all have compact city cores or historic cores which help to identify a city. Usually they go tallest towards its core (with visual impact?).

Location

Within 15 minutes walk of the city centre (Leeds city centre considered to be City Square and Railway Station). Location influenced by available circulation – pedestrian, railway, bus, supertram, cyclists, cars, and continuity of circulation and connectivity.

Cluster / Skyline:-

- Tallest should mark city centre e.g. Criterion Place /River Aire – note flood plain.
- Position influenced by investment values.
- Mixed uses desirable.
- Offices less than 15/20 storeys with hotel/ residential higher.
- Deliver identity to areas of change.
- Should not be afraid to break skyline – sculptural forms possible but aim should be to create exciting skyline- already have Victorian towers/ market roofscape.
- Space between to have live and mix of uses.

Need to do:-

- 3D/ Virtual reality model of the city.
- Agree strategic views and opportunities.
- Protect existing views and create better views for future generations.
- Physical model of the city.
- Permanent public display.
- Involve!
- Public consultation at each stage – including developers!
- Future workshops.
- Explore guidance.

Design:-

- CABE Design Guide.
- How tall buildings should relate to the ground.
- Importance of environmental impact assessments from the outset.
- Public enjoyment / access to tallest.

GROUP 2 Why high?

Group composed of cost consultant, fire consultant, conservation planner, Civic Trust representative and planner.

- Illustrated a car (faster), a muscle man (stronger) and a skyscraper (bigger) – God like!
- Technology now offers innovation, sustainability and quality.....and also constraint – can only go so high.
- Big can be beautiful but can also offer small footprint and efficient use of land.
- Big can be elegant – infinite, sublime and good silhouette.
- Tall can offer variety of form.
- Tall is sustainable – small footprint, high density and community.
- Tall is efficient.
- Tall is good business – re land costs , demand, competition and political pressure.

Made comparisons between Leeds and Manchester – recognising the different scales – both adverts to commercialism.

Potential problems – limited knowledge, skills and technology can restrict height, cost constraints, fear of terrorism – can tall buildings be safe?, Use and location? Social disruption, poor design, and prejudice. Clusters not intermingling – should be balanced by open space.

However high can –

- improve image and city status – regional and international
- provide landmark buildings e.g. international design competitions
- create second tier of also ran buildings (by local architects!)
- provide a catalyst for regeneration

GROUP 3 – Footprints

Group composed of architect, planner, landscape architect, structural engineer, and urban design student.

Contribution was based on the assumption that tall buildings are going to happen in cities that are young and evolving. They will provide more of what could be an interconnected resource with far more connections and ‘arteries’ being in the right place. Proposed an idea of a green mezzanine approx. 5 metres above ground and approx 3 hectares – to create the environment and microclimate using urban greenery to create social interaction e.g. could attract school groups.

The group presented under the following key headings..

Living in the City:-

Tall buildings have an impact on cities due to increase in density and infrastructure. They affect the existing urban grain and integration with the historic environment. They can encourage social interaction (who is the community? there is a wide range)They also can dehumanise society and environments.

Best Practice:-

- Mixed uses desirable – they create activity.
- Good micro climate is critical.
- Scale should be in context.
- Human interaction is about experience. Cumulative effect!
- Public space – internal / external/ green space?
- Community response to create facilities for social interaction.
- Provide good life cycle.
- Better interface and attitudes between inter-disciplinary groups.
- Need to resolve the lack of ‘release space’.

Bad Practice:-

- Tower block developments
- have a lack of interaction,
  - create isolation,
  - spaces between become havens for crime,
  - lack of dialogue with site/ context.

GROUP 4 – Style, language and form

Group composed of architects, developer, engineer, planner and Civic Trust representative.

Commented on present Leeds with its forms that were a result of bulk massing compared to slender and elegant expectations for tall buildings. There was a need to -

- have an icon,
- be a landmark,
- have a hierarchy of form,
- provide good vistas,
- produce urban density - marketing Leeds,
- have courage in design,
- be in context,
- provide mixed uses.
- have quality – Canary Wharf?
- have style – Centre Pompidou?

Bottoms:-

- Good pedestrian environment
- Permeability and interaction between blocks – if not physical then visual.
- Footprint related to sun energy patterns/ paths.
- Reference made to St Johns Shopping Centre versus Victorian Quarter.
- No 1 City Square – allows people to get through!

Middle - Core use:-

- hotel,
- leisure,
- office
- residential,

Also could include –

- cinema,
- theatre,
- gym,
- Casino,
- g.p.surgery,
- crèche.

Tops:-

Should provide a feature – observation deck, viewing, eating, exercise, public and relaxation space.

The group requested developers to be socially responsible. 24 hour / 7 day use of space desirable with good connectivity – for transport and pedestrians. Good public space should also be available at different levels.



### GROUP 5 – Tall-Sustainable

*Composed of 2 architects, 2 planners, developer, planning consultant, Councillor, Civic Trust representative, lighting designer.*

#### Global Perception:-

- Sustainability – lacks credibility – needs ‘teeth’ and a push.
- Iconography - imagery, Bilbao!
- Sustainable economy
- Cultural perceptions – how to get families in.
- Infrastructure.

#### The Big City:-

- Make sustainability credible - needs background ‘mesh’ to support e.g. families
- Sustainable city
- Achieve balance of uses – community space, schools etc

#### Infrastructure at its capacity (Leeds):-

- PPS22 – with respect to tall buildings – renewable?
- Big! needs to plug in?
- Cultural perception
- Clustering or dispersed ?
- IT infrastructure – helps people work from home
- Exceptional building design (tourism)
- Leeds is a carbon neutral city – tall buildings not for families

#### The City Centre:-

- Not enough green spaces, tall buildings and space around them.
- Need to achieve balance between amenity space and uses –
- commercial, residential and green space.
- Clearer definition e.g. vertical public space.
- Leeds City centre infrastructure at capacity
- Heritage management – heritage should be respected.
- Site specific design for city centre – cultural management.

#### The Site:-

- Site suitability – location – needs infrastructure and responsible disposal.
- Exceptional architecture required.
- Good microclimate (buffer for wind and acoustics)
- Vertical space usage – response to city needs.
- Design flexibility (Residential to Offices?) future life?
- Footprint related to sun energy path
- Net impact of building needs to be defined (output based)-
- Carbon footprint – no of windmills, ecological footprint, solar footprint, code for sustainable design, g.l.a.
- Shallow floor plan – easier to be sustainable.
- Consider whole life design – raw materials- recycling not ‘downcycling’.
- IT / communications
- Where is Leeds going?

Sustainable by date 2100 - need path to get there.

### GROUP 6 – Leeds Academy for Sustainable Communities

*Composed of 2 architects, developer, planner, landscape and public art designer.*

This facility should be easily accessible for communities, therefore good transport links essential. There should also be good access between communities and support organisations. It should offer employment, teaching and education- a research centre – an exemplar – where people could learn good practice- a place to visit and stay.

Focus on the brief emphasised the need for viability with residential and health uses playing a key part. Additional uses considered were hotel, conference, exhibition space, educational, small scale office space, crèche, pool, police (reduction in crime), support uses e.g. food and drink, together with a transport link. The following key points were displayed -

- Education - universities - regeneration professional
- Health - investment by Health Authority
- Social – inclusive – positive engagement
- Economics – diversity – self-sustainability – viable
- Physical – connective
- Environmental – long term investment

#### Flexibility and Expansion:-

Do planners have any influence? – only if viable – can say yes or no – they can offer encouragement but it all goes down to money : probably will result in a mixed use development.

#### Site:-

- Should be adjacent to railway – say entry car park – linked with Dark Arches
- Must be viable – sustainable academy only post
- Sustainable – offer sun energy – solar panels, pvs- wind turbines, water turbines, green space and water.
- Flexible – as policy grows so does accommodation, as technology changes
- Provide a Test Bed – offering research into sustainable issues, recycled energy, waste grey water.
- All engaging e.g. communities- people- health- police.

Reference made to the **government definition** – sustainable communities are active, inclusive, safe, well designed, well run, fair to everyone, well connected, environmentally sensitive, thriving and well served.

#### General tall building comments:-

- North of River Aire – high density development with one-off special buildings
- South of River Aire – high rise.
- Tall buildings to be located within east-west zone coinciding with railway station – not north-south axis.

Some aspirations – iconic, landmark, memorable, quality design and space, good vistas, colour, public spaces and permeability, mixed uses, mall and plaza, good footfall.



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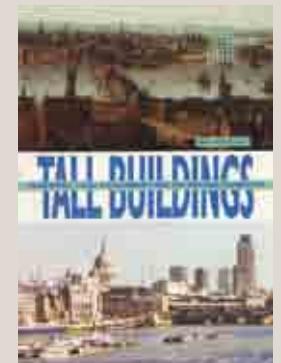
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# Tall Buildings

Leeds Local Development Framework

Supplementary Planning Document  
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