



Leeds
CITY COUNCIL

Draft Tall Buildings Design Guide SPD

FOR CONSULTATION

**Leeds Local Plan
Supplementary Planning Document
July 2019**



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Tall Buildings Design Guide SPD

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1.0 Introduction

Planners. To establish clear principles and advice criteria against which proposals for tall buildings can be considered and assessed in an objective and consistent manner.

The guide can help provide clarity to:

- Good practice in the location and design of tall buildings.
- An appreciation of the context and local distinctiveness of the Leeds Metropolitan District.
- Provide a reference to national and local policy frameworks.

1.3 Status of the document

This document has the status of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This means that it is part of the Development Plan for Leeds and supports and reinforces the Adopted Leeds City Council Core Strategy and other Local Plans.

The Core Strategy sets out the vision for the future of Leeds over the next decade and provides broad policies to shape development and support its strategic vision. The spatial strategy of the Leeds Local Plan identifies that the City Centre and its fringe will play an important role in delivering significant levels of new development, including housing, throughout the plan period. In order to deliver the capacities envisaged, it is to be expected that this will also be in the form of Tall Buildings.

The SPD is a material consideration and will be used to help determine planning applications.

Section 4.0 of this SPD provides further details of the Planning Policy context for this Guide. The guide applies not only to the City Centre but to all tall buildings across the District.

1.4 Structure of the Guide

The SPD is in two parts. The first part is a general overview and guide to policy. The second part is the Background Information, which provides more detailed information on the application of the SPD. This includes mapping information in relation to, a City Centre: Preferred Areas Plan, Sensitivity Zones, Key Views and Heritage and Conservation Areas.

1.5 Scope of the SPD

This SPD is to help to determine Planning Applications and give a clear development management tool concerned with the aesthetics of tall buildings. It does not provide any technical advice relating to buildings nor should the

advice offered be deemed to influence any technical issues, such as Building Control. The Council wishes to support any safety recommendations that arise from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry and applicants are advised to contact Leeds City Council Building Control for advice on these matters.

The guide also applies to any tall building adjacent to and in the setting of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. Any impact on the views and settings of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas are deemed to be of a sensitive nature.

Climate Change Emergency

Climate change provides one of the greatest challenges to humanity today, having detrimental impacts on both society and the environment internationally, nationally and locally.

In reflecting this challenge and the need to take urgent action, a climate emergency was declared by the City Council on 27th March 2019, to support national and local climate change targets.

Within this overall context the planning system has a key role to play in providing a framework for the mitigation of and the adaptation to, the consequences of climate change. This not only reflects legal a legal duty but also the need to meet policy requirements to make the places people live, work and move around resilient for the future.

This SPD (together with Local Plan Policies – including the Core Strategy, Core Strategy Selective Review, the Site Allocations Plan, the Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan, Natural Resources and Waste Plan and related Supplementary Planning Documents), taken as whole, provide a planning strategy and framework to help future proof the District.

In relation to the Tall Buildings Design Guide SPD, a cross cutting approach is taken to addressing climate change issues in relation to proposals for Tall Buildings. Overall the guidance refers to the location and form of such buildings. In relation to the potential impacts of Tall Buildings, reference is made to Wind (para. 3.21), Landscape, Green Walls, Ecology, Sustainability and Climate (see Background Information Section 7, 8 and 10), together with the 'Wind and Micro Climate Tool Kit', which is Appended to the Guide.

1.6 Definition of Tall Buildings

This SPD is for use throughout the District which has a varied character and context.

As each scheme is an individual response to a particular site and context a tall building is one which is taller than its neighbours and/or which significantly changes the skyline, context or character of an area

1.7 Analysis

The Council sees sound and early urban design analysis as the core of generating sound design proposals. This applies both to the site analysis and the contextual analysis to inform a good architectural response on a specific site. It also enables the City Council to engage assessment of applications in an objective manner as the applicant's analysis should be at the core of informing their proposals. Further information is in the Background Information.

Principle 1 Investigation and Analysis

Applicants 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.

2.0 Strategic Design One. Locations

Where can Tall Buildings go?

Principle 2 General Design

Tall Buildings shall:

- Be located in suitable locations, 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 they have a good relationship with the street, movement patterns and transport facilities, creating high quality public space at the same time.
- Ensure that they assist in the legibility of the city and contribute strongly to a sense of place.
 - Be environmentally sustainable and operational.
 - Promote the highest design quality for tall buildings and their composition resulting in a balanced townscape skyline for Leeds.
- Be safe (in relation to any recommendations made from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry).

2.1 To have a vibrant and balanced townscape is at the heart of the Council's vision for the city. Consequently the Council would welcome early discussion on prospective development schemes throughout the Leeds Metropolitan District and this includes proposals for tall buildings. Tall buildings, though, can have a negative impact on the townscape and communities if they are ill-placed. Consequently the Council does have preferred locations and areas where it is thought Tall Buildings may be more readily supported subject to the proposals meeting set criteria. (See plan and further information in the Background Information Section).

2.2 A supportable solution for specific designs will depend on the location and the visual context and character of the surroundings. The Council is able to offer specific advice on a case by case basis. Some of the general strategic criteria for assessment of applications are as follows:

- The location and heights of proposed tall buildings will be assessed in relation to the prevailing general overall context. Analysing the site context should be done in a holistic manner and not just use selective examples of existing buildings.

- Following an analysis of the prevailing character and context of the area then proposed tall buildings should not exceed the general contextual heights unless there is evidence of strong mitigating circumstances or significant visual reasons and associated aesthetic townscape advantages. Complementing major infrastructure may be an appropriate reason for a taller building.
- Normally near to the City Centre tall buildings should be located close to and relate to other larger buildings particularly where growth around transport interchanges can begin or continue the process of sustainable patterns of urban development.
- Groups of tall buildings, 'clusters', are less obtrusive and are in principle to be preferred to a few dispersed or isolated solutions. Generally the Council would encourage groups of buildings which can be concentrated in a particular location relating to, perhaps, the character as a business or technology quarter.

- They should follow composed rules of scale, massing and alignment in order to appropriately respond to the local context and appropriate grain in the area, particularly at their connection with the ground and in relation to heights.
- Tall buildings affect the required space between them. Generally the taller the building the more space and open distance will be required around the building for spatial relief. The specific open distances required will vary depending on the location, context and built densities. Specific advice can be given on a case by case basis.
- Tall buildings regardless of their individual architectural merit, will not be supported if their relationship to the local context is regarded as having a negative impact on that context, such as affecting key views.

In addition to the general principles applicants should be mindful of the Sensitive Zones and the Key Views within the City Centre and the Conservation Area constraints. The maps of these areas and further information are shown in the Background Information.

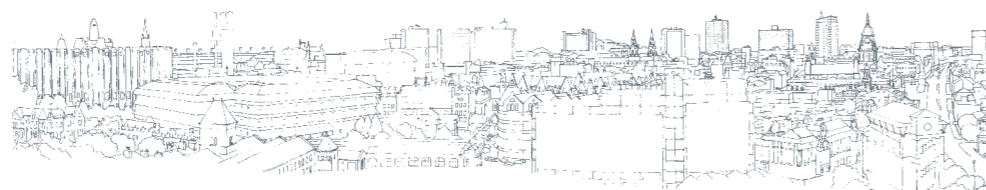
Heights of wind turbines and telecommunications masts shall not be included in any contextual height assessments.

Principle 3 Considering Visual Impact and Historic Context

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.

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



▼ Looking westwards above York Road (A64) - a group of tall buildings around the Arena



3.0 Strategic Design Two. Detail Design

What Design Criteria should Tall Buildings meet?

Principle 4 Context, Sustainability and Skylines

Ensure Tall Buildings:

- Are high quality designs with a cohesive visual design so that the design works as a whole.
- Respond appropriately to the distinctive local character and ensure there is no visual harm to historic buildings and views.
- Should minimise energy use and waste (both during construction and throughout the life of the building) including using renewable energy production where appropriate.
- Should use sustainable materials.
 - Termination of tall buildings at the roof should give an appropriate and balanced interest to the skyline.
- Should create active ground level frontages to the adjacent streets.
 - Should consider recladding of existing tall buildings to provide a sustainable high quality solution before proposing demolition and new build.

- 3.1 Leeds has its own distinctive townscape character. Tall buildings have contributed to that character, and can continue to do so, if they are of the right complement to Leeds unique built ambience.
- 3.2 The previous section identifies where the locations of tall buildings might be right for the Leeds Metropolitan District, but what of the buildings themselves? This section looks at what the City Council would be able to support in the design of proposed tall buildings. The Council will support the following approach to the design of Tall Buildings.

Analysis and Context

- 3.3 Similar to the location of tall buildings, at the Detail Design stage, the Local Planning Authority would first require evidence of a good analysis of architectural context to drive the concept of the design. Analysis is the key to generating a good poised architectural response to the specific site. Any analysis done, particularly in relation to existing heights, scale of surroundings and prevailing massing should be objective and in an all-inclusive manner. It should fully consider the context of the area as a whole and not selectively highlight specific heights and building scale.

- 3.4 It would be expected that the analysis would include matters such as topography, local urban design frameworks and character analysis in order to avoid repeating the unsuccessful approach of piecemeal tall building design of former years. Analysis will be an essential part of any future submission for planning permission.

Detail Design of Tall Buildings

- 3.5 Designers will be supported to offer tall buildings with integrity without just following architectural fashions. The appropriate use of form, materials and technology can produce good solutions which will work well and look good day and night. Active engagement at street level will be expected.
- 3.6 Designers should consider some of the primary design elements that go into forming a positive solution. These would include: Form/ Shape, Base of building, Scale, Massing, Architecture and sense of Visual Character and Style. Finally how the building is terminated, the top of the building is important to the finished townscape solution.



▲ Before and after photomontage ▼



- 3.7 Leeds City Council offers the following guidance as to how it would see a supportable solution developing. It should be noted that a supportable solution for specific designs will depend on the location and the visual context and character of the surroundings on a case by case basis.

Height, Scale and Massing

- 3.8 Height, scale and massing are interrelated, but height itself, taken individually, can be simply a number of storeys or a measured level. An acceptable proposed height for a tall building is important. A balanced height is usually dependent on the general existing prevailing (majority) context and scale. From this an acceptable height can be defined. Generally the initial

overall approach taken would be that a proposed building should not be much beyond the existing context. The proposal might be for a taller 'point element' in a townscape of lower buildings and this would be considered on an individual case basis and in relation to the location, context, views and other relevant factors.

- 3.9 The relationship of scale and massing is also symbiotic. Scale relates not only to height but the 'size' of the proposal which gives the buildings visual impact, the massing. For example, a tall block building with a large plan form can give a high visual impact in the resultant 'slab' form and is usually not supported by the Local Planning Authority. For tall elements in the townscape a more slender approach, with a vertical emphasis, is often more readily supported by the Local Planning Authority.

Form and Massing

- 3.10 Create a visual form that promotes a balanced aesthetic approach avoiding buildings that appear as 'slabs' or monolithic in the townscape. Tall buildings appear better as more slender point elements in the townscape rather than just big high buildings.

The Civic Hall has a strong form with slender elements and has positive space around it.



Principle 5 Character of Leeds

Designers are encouraged to create tall buildings that respond to the character of Leeds and are not generic designs that could be anywhere. Proposed tall buildings should contribute to the Leeds skyline.

The Council encourages well designed tall buildings which are inventive in the use of forms and materials to reinforce local distinctiveness.

The image and identity of Leeds can only be improved and maintained by good urban sculpture. Proposed tall buildings should contribute to this ambition.

Proposals should be compatible with the existing Conservation Area Policies, Urban Design frameworks and City Centre Urban Design Guides.

3.0 Strategic Design Two. Detail Design

What Design Criteria should Tall Buildings meet?

Principle 6 Height, Massing and Scale

Consider the height, scale and massing in relation to the context.

In addition to scale and massing, attention should be paid to the form of the building and how the form is moulded and manipulated.

Consideration should also be given to the slenderness of the building to avoid a slab like appearance.

Seek to create a moulded aesthetic form that visually manipulates the mass into readily appreciated visual elements.

Architectural Design

- 3.11 Designers should endeavour to design in a visual style that responds to the context and complements the Leeds townscape.
- 3.12 If a directly contrasting visual style, or aesthetic, is proposed; then the contrast should have demonstrable design generators that relate to the Leeds townscape and the local context. Buildings that are generic in style, or uncontrolled, erode the important and unique character of the Leeds townscape. Brash aesthetics are usually a short lived attempt to create interest and impact. This is usually not supported as this visual approach usually dates quickly and then erodes the gravitas of the prevailing Leeds character.
- 3.13 Developers need to look to create a visual order and architectural discipline that makes a building that is easily read in visual terms and without being overly complicated.
- 3.14 Developers should try to create an aesthetic that builds easily appreciated visual elements into a holistic cohesive and balanced piece of townscape architecture.
- 3.15 Developers should also consider the night-time aesthetic of proposed tall buildings.

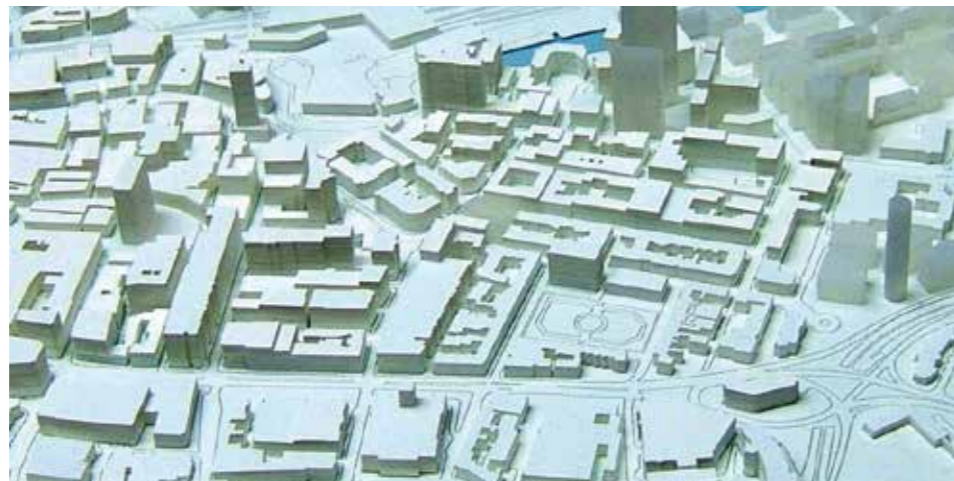
Materials and Details

- 3.16 The materials will be dependent on the design but the Council would prefer colours that are harmonious with the context and prevailing townscape colours. Muted tones common to the general townscape context are usually more successful. Garish colours should be avoided. Garish colours are usually incompatible with townscape colours and again date quickly.
- 3.17 Flat elevations should be avoided, that is, facades built on a single flat plane. Facades should be designed with deeper recessed windows and openings which add interest. Seek opportunities for using shadows and shade which can add a sculptural quality to the elevations. Detailing to the elevation, such as string lines, also add interest and would be supported. .

Relationship to the Street

- 3.18 Tall buildings should have a successful human scale interface at street level. It should be active and engaging but with a contextual visual strength to anchor the building to the street.

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



- 3.19 The City Council requires the provision of high quality public realm, and a good street level architecture. It is also expected that tall buildings will have 'user friendly' legible entrances and approaches, good street legibility and good links with transport and pedestrian routes.
- 3.20 Generally it would be expected that tall building will provide increased adequate open space around the building and especially in front of the building. Tall buildings should also provide good landscaping and amenity space linked, if possible, to the local green infrastructure network. Visual and spatial interaction with surrounding areas is encouraged.

Wind

- 3.21 In all applicable cases the applicant will be expected to provide a quantitative study report to fully ensure safe wind conditions in and around the building and the surrounding highway. The scope of the wind study should extend to the full zone of influence of the building including land within the public highway and cover the impacts on all users of that space (including pedestrians, cyclists and motorists). The wind study should ensure safe conditions all year round for all users. The wind study will be independently verified (at the applicants expense). This verification process will be managed and administered by the Council. Any wind mitigation measures should be wholly within the applicants site boundary and not on the public land or highway. Any wind mitigation measures should be permanent structures and maintained by the applicant at the applicants expense. Wind mitigation measures should not include trees or soft landscape. Full details of the relevant wind study and methods required can

be found in the Leeds City Council Wind and Microclimate Toolkit. Full details of the requirements can be obtained from the Local Planning Authority.

Building Termination

- 3.22 Tall buildings have a major impact on the city skyline. It is important that this impact is positive with appropriately designed roofs and termination with the skyline. This can also be designed to hide servicing plant and the like. Designers should look for a contextual and aesthetically balanced termination of the building.

4.0 Policy Context

- 4.1 There are a series of national and local policies which need to be considered when planning for and designing tall buildings.

National Policy

- 4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, with planning policies and decisions playing an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions. These solutions need to take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area. In terms of tall buildings, the most relevant aspects of the NPPF are those around the importance of 'achieving well-designed places' (Section 12) and 'conserving and enhancing the historic environment (Section 16). These are important issues in Leeds given the aspirations for high standards of design quality and the local character distinctiveness of the City Centre and the District as a whole.

Local Policy

- 4.3 The Core Strategy and Core Strategy Selective Review sets out the strategic policy framework for Leeds. Key policies include **P10: Design, P11: Conservation and P12: Landscape**. However, there are other policies which could be of significance. They include City Centre policies, Green Space policies and policies relating to transport. The most relevant are listed below;
- 4.4 Core Strategy Policies on Leeds City Centre:-
Spatial Policy 3: Role of Leeds City Centre
CC1: City Centre Development
CC2: City Centre South
CC3: Improving connectivity between the city centre and neighbouring communities
- 4.5 Core Strategy Policies on Housing:-
H9: Minimum Space Standards
H10: Accessible Housing Standards
- 4.6 Core Strategy Policies on Green Space:-
G3: Standards for open space, sport and recreation
G4: New Green Space provision
G5: Open space provision in the city centre
- 4.7 Core Strategy Policies on transport:-
T2: Accessibility Requirements and new development

- 4.8 Core Strategy policies on Sustainability include:
EN1, EN2, EN3, EN4 and EN8.

- 4.9 As well as Core Strategy policies, there are also several saved UDP policies relating to building design. They include;

BD2: Design and siting of new buildings
BD4: Plant equipment and service areas
BD5: Amenity and new buildings
BD14: Floodlighting

- 4.10 The focus of this SPD is therefore intended to help amplify these policies in relation to the design and delivery of tall buildings in Leeds.

Further guidance

- 4.11 A guidance note, 'Tall Buildings: Historic England Advice Note 4' has been produced by Historic England to help people involved in planning for and designing tall buildings so that they may be delivered in a sustainable and successful way.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 The aim of this SPD is to provide some clear detailed advice around which the City Council could support proposals for tall buildings. Generally, tall buildings should preferably be compatible with their locality and not unbalance the settled heritage townscape of Leeds Metropolitan District. The Council is seeking, in principle, to support suitable tall buildings in Leeds in line with the Council's objectives for continued city growth. The situation and style of suitable tall buildings can, if done well, enhance the city streetscape and skyline. It is with this in mind that this document seeks to aid the design and development of tall buildings for the District.
- 5.2 Should you have any specific queries regarding particular sites or proposals then the Local Planning Authority would be pleased to offer advice. A Pre-Application advice service is available and Developers are requested to seek Pre-Application advice on all tall building proposals.

Contacts

Useful Contacts

Leeds City Council Planning and Sustainable Development

9E Merrion House
110 Merrion Centre
LEEDS LS2 8BB
tel - 0113 222 4409
www.leeds.gov.uk

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (formerly DCLG)

2 Marsham Street
LONDON SW1P 4DS
tel - 030 3444 0000
www.communities.gov.uk

Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE)

1 Great George Street
LONDON SW1P 3AA
tel - 020 7222 7722
www.ice.org.uk

Chartered Institute of Highways & Transportation (CIHT)

119 Britannia Walk
LONDON N1 7JE
tel - 020 7336 1555
www.ciht.org.uk

Landscape Institute (LI)

107 Grays Inn
LONDON WC1X 8TZ
tel - 020 7685 2640
www.landscapeinstitute.org

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)

12 Great George Street
Parliament Square
LONDON SW1P 3AD
tel - 024 7686 8555
www.rics.org

Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)

41 Botolph Lane,
LONDON EC3R 8DL
tel - 020 7929 9494
regional tel - 020 7929 9494
www.rtpi.org.uk

Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)

66 Portland Place
LONDON W1B 1AD
tel - 020 7580 5533
www.architecture.com

RIBA Yorkshire

1 Aire Street
LEEDS LS1 4PR
tel - 0113 389 9870

Urban Design Group (UDG)

70 Cowcross Street
LONDON EC1M 6EJ
tel - 020 7250 0892
www.udg.org.uk

National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC)

7th Floor
10 Victoria Street
Westminster
LONDON SW1H 0EX
tel - 020 3276 3803
www.npcc.police.uk

Secured by Design (SBD)

tel - 020 3862 3999
www.securedbydesign.com

Appendices Background Information



Background Information

1.0 Background Information

- 1.1 The following information is offered as background information supporting the Tall Buildings Guide 2019. It contains further information on what the City Council would consider as important to the successful delivery of tall buildings in Leeds.

2.0 Analysis

- 2.1 The sound analysis of context is traditionally the first step in the development of a sound contextual townscape response for new development. The Council will require that this process is properly demonstrated. This requires a critical objective assessment of the context by the applicant. This also gives the Council a meaningful approach by which it can objectively assess proposals in the planning balance. The design then is not subjective but based on objective criteria.

- 2.2 Applicants will need to show an iterative process common to architectural design, which is based around analysis and a subsequent design which typically follows a process that can be phrased;

'Analysis, Concept, Scheme & Detail'

- 2.3 Also used successfully in the Council's adopted 'Neighbourhoods for Living' SPG this method is a formula that, if followed, engenders a good design process and therefore irons out unclear processes and poor design solutions.

Analysis. Prepare a sound contextual urban and architectural analysis of the existing situation.

Concept. Develop a concept that responds sensitively and appropriately.

Scheme. Develop a scheme for the application which follows the earlier principles.

Detail. High quality detail development finalises the scheme.

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

3.0 Tall Building Locations

(see plan at back of document)

- 3.1 The A3 Plan at the end of the document shows the preferred areas in the city centre where Tall Buildings may be more readily supported subject to them meeting assessment criteria. The areas preferred are shown within the red line shaded areas. Within the Preferred Areas not all sites may be suitable for the location of Tall Buildings. On some sites it may not be possible to deliver Tall Buildings depending on site specific factors and the immediate context.

The Council will consider Tall Buildings outside of the suggested 'red line' zones but the assessment criteria will be more stringent.

4.0 Key Views

(see plan at back of document)

- 4.1 Approaching the city the Leeds City Centre skyline offers up a number of panoramas some of which appear quite dramatic for those living nearby and for visitors to the city. This is due to the local topography which generally rises up in most directions away from the city which is situated on a gentle incline that meets the River Aire. Land spurs within this topography occasionally 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. From various directions coming into the city, the views of buildings such as the University's Parkinson Building Tower and adjacent church spires remain important. Depending on the location and design of proposals the Local Planning Authority will expect applicants to demonstrate the possible impact on these distant views into the city. The particular views in relation to the specific application should be agreed with the Local Planning Authority on a case by case basis.

5.0 Sensitive Development Zones

(see plan at end of document)

- 5.1 In addition to specific key views within the city and longer distance views, the Council considers some areas of the city need special consideration when proposals are put forward. These are to protect sensitive settings to historic areas around the city. They are also to preserve the important context of key character areas and the unique townscape assets important to the character of Leeds.

- 5.2 New tall buildings can intrude into important street vistas and skylines viewed within the city. It is important then to ensure that they do not have a negative impact on historic buildings settings and other significant visual character areas. Therefore existing views and settings of certain buildings and landmarks are seen to warrant protection. Some examples are the need to preserve the prominence of the Town Hall, Civic Hall, Leeds Parish Church, the University's Parkinson Tower and adjacent church spires. Public spaces and squares such as Park Square and other important settings such as the river frontages are also seen as important assets. Conservation Area key views and street scenes also need protecting from visually intrusive forms.

- 5.3 These Sensitive Development zones are shown on the enclosed plan at end of the document. The Council expects the highest standards of design for proposals in these areas. In some cases the zones overlap and interact with each other. The zones have been identified to protect important silhouettes, skylines, buildings, street scenes, vistas and public spaces from the visual impact and physical proximity of ill proposed tall buildings.

6.0 Heritage

- 6.1 The preservation of the heritage townscape is of paramount importance to Leeds City Council and this will be expected to be considered in any application for a tall building proposal. In this context heritage assets encompass three areas; Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Non Designated Heritage Assets. The preservation including setting of these assets is important, and not just for the city core areas. Any proposals in the suburbs should meet the same criteria.

- 6.2 The protection of Listed Buildings and the setting to Listed Buildings is seen as a vital aspect of the Leeds Townscape. Any application for a tall building should consider associated Listed Buildings and the setting to listed buildings carefully. Demolition of listed buildings or proposals negatively affecting the setting of listed buildings will not normally be considered appropriate unless the significant public and aesthetic benefits would outweigh the harm.

- 6.3 In Conservation Areas any proposals should preserve or enhance the character and context of the Conservation Area. There are Conservation Areas within the city centre with significant views that need to be protected. The plan at the end of the document shows the Conservation Areas relating to the City Centre.

- 6.4 Non Designated Heritage Assets are buildings with significance but which are not designated. However, just because they are not listed does not mean that they can be ignored as relevant buildings to be protected. Particular advice can be given by the Local Planning Authority on a case by case basis.

- 6.5 The Council may require the applicant to provide a Heritage Statement as to how the applicant proposes to deal with Heritage issues and this will be expected to be submitted with the application prior. Advice can be given by the Local Planning Authority on a case by case basis as to the requirements for providing Heritage Statements.

- 6.6 The Local Planning Authority is able to offer advice to pre-application to applicants considering proposals. Early engagement with the Council is encouraged so that salient issues can be dealt with from the outset.

7.0 Landscape

Existing trees

- 7.1 Existing trees should be retained and incorporated into any layout in accordance with Council policy. Young and mature trees are generally decades ahead of any new trees in terms of size and functionality so they are irreplaceable except with a long period of time. Existing trees offer immediate impact, public amenity and place making. They give a sense of maturity to any development and help to assimilate development into its surroundings.

- 7.2 The national code of practice for trees is encompassed in the British Standard BS5837. These guidelines state that a tree survey is a minimum requirement even at pre-application stage.

Background Information

7.3 To safely retain an established tree the building line shall be set back 5m from the edge of the canopy or edge of the Root Protection Area (RPA) whichever is the greater. This allows for construction processes (including access, scaffolding etc.) and for drainage etc. This also allows for future growth of the tree with the avoidance of conflict with the building and provides for a maintenance gap.

Amenity

7.4 Roof gardens require good irrigation. Rather than using mains potable water, irrigation can be provided through rain water harvesting. This can count towards sustainability features. Roof gardens can contribute to bio-diversity.

7.5 Ground level amenity space must be positively located close to the building and fit for purpose, it must be usable for meaningful amenity. Residual areas of grass do not count towards amenity provision nor do areas in and around car parking. Air quality and proximity to traffic is a consideration for amenity space. Shadow effects from any surrounding blocks should also be considered at an early stage and not left as an afterthought because the correct orientation to catch the sun is critical. The opportunity “to go for a walk” around the place is also very important.

Connectivity

7.6 Outdoor space provision can be enhanced by ensuring good visitor/cycling connectivity to local features. Cycle parking must be positively located with good surveillance.

Landscape Treatments and the Public Realm.

7.7 Apart from the provision of amenity space the public realm must also be carefully considered. The streets surrounding tall buildings can be austere and uncomfortable for pedestrians due to the vast scales. The objective is to soften the experience on the ground level and make it more pleasant.

7.8 Active frontages can offer a positive way in which people can interact with the building. More intimate paving materials/ detailing and importantly street trees will also contribute to a human scale. The paving must be much wider than the standard 2.0m footway to have any affect especially when combined with active frontages. This is even more so if trees are to be incorporated. These are first principle considerations.

7.9 The Council provides guidance on Urban Tree Planting under Landscape Planning and Development. Trees perform best in natural ground with adequate soil and space dimensions. Trees in hard surfacing are more challenging. Underground load bearing soil cells must be used to provide the growing medium in such cases.

7.10 It is the policy of the Council to achieve the largest canopy trees possible in any given situation as they provide the best value in respect of Council policies for amenity, bio-diversity, air quality and climate change etc. Columnar type trees are therefore not supported unless there is some considerable overriding justification. Space must be given to provide for spreading canopy type trees.

7.11 Trees should be set back from the side of the highway in the region of 1.5m but every situation is different and this needs to be checked on a case by case basis. Services must be considered early in the project as this can be a major constraint. The standoff from the tree stem to the building line must be at least 6m to achieve the provision of medium sized trees whilst allowing a 2m gap between building and tree canopy for maintenance. These dimensions can vary according to the particular circumstances and the type of trees intended. The applicant will be required to enter into a section 38 agreement for the works as necessary to protect trees and landscape in adopted highways, such as verges.

Services

7.12 Conflicts between tree roots and services (such as drainage runs/tanks, water supply, electrical supply etc.) in a scheme often results in the elimination of trees and landscape features late in a scheme due to the lack of co-ordination between the design consultants. In order to avoid this then details of service routes (existing and proposed) must be provided in tandem with the details of landscape proposals for the application.

7.13 The Council is able to offer advice to applicants considering proposals. Early engagement is encouraged so that salient issues can be dealt with from the outset.

Green Walls

7.14 The Council welcomes the use of Green Walls where possible. Designers are encouraged to positively explore Green Walls and integrate them into the proposals at appropriate places if possible.

8.0 Ecology

8.1 Tall buildings adjacent to rivers and canals may cast shade which will have an adverse impact on aquatic plants and other aquatic organisms (such as freshwater algae and sponges). Through the centre of Leeds is the River Aire and the Leeds-Liverpool Canal, which is an important part of the Leeds Habitat Network and partly a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) designated mainly for its aquatic plant assemblage. Buildings should be assessed for their contribution to shading on water features and set back sufficiently from rivers and canals to avoid adverse impacts.

8.2 Features for urban nesting birds such as Peregrine Falcon, Swifts and House Martins will be encouraged.

8.3 Buildings must avoid creating a negative impact on local flora and fauna especially if adjacent to a wildlife corridor as these are used by many species as a habitat and movement resource.

8.4 The Council may also require separate ecological analysis and reports and the requirements should be discussed with the Local Planning Authority.

9.0 Transport and Highways

9.1 Applicants should refer to the Council's Transport SPD's for guidance.

9.2 Applicants may be required to submit a Transport Assessment and a Travel Plan to demonstrate mitigation of impact on the highway network and promote more sustainable modes of travel.

9.3 Any parking for tall buildings will be expected to be within the building, usually in the basement. Safe and controlled access to basement parking will be required and this should not lead to queuing traffic on the highway.

9.4 Applicants should ensure easy access by non-car modes of travel, such as walking, cycling and public transport.

9.5 Applicants and their contractors will also be expected to submit their proposals regarding construction traffic activity and limiting its impact on the local infrastructure. This should be submitted with the application. Applicants and developers will need to pay the full costs of relocating bus stops during construction and back to their original position.

9.6 Depending on location for tall buildings then suitable car parking needs will have to be provided for. The quantity required will be agreed with the Council prior to commencement of the works.

9.7 Suitable space should be provided around the building for the buildings servicing requirements. This will include short term parking for waste collection and short stay visitors.

9.8 The Council prefers that high density development is near to major transport routes and interchanges. Developers may be requested to fund new infrastructure and other local transport and parking objectives.

9.9 The Local Planning Authority can offer advice regarding specific proposals.

10.0 Sustainability and Climate

Wind

10.1 Appropriate mitigation in the form of wind diffusers, 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.

10.2 Any permanent structures and measures to mitigate wind issues should be located outside the highway boundary, wholly within the applicants land and maintained by the applicant.

Background Information

10.3 In nearly all cases the applicant will be expected to provide a quantitative wind study report to fully ensure safe wind conditions in and around the building. Wind conditions need to be suitable for the expected purpose all year round and safe for all users and passers-by (including elderly, infirm and cyclists / motorcyclists). The scope of the wind study should extend to the full zone of influence of the building including land within the public highway and cover the impacts on all users of that space (including pedestrians, cyclists and motorists). This will be independently verified (at the applicants' expense).

10.4 Wind mitigation measures should not include trees or soft landscape. Full details of the relevant wind study and methods required can be found in the Leeds City Council Wind and Microclimate Toolkit. Full details of the requirements can be obtained from the Local Planning Authority.

10.5 Energy conservation and sensitivity to environmental issues are primary concerns for the Council. Tall buildings present opportunities for implementing sustainable principles and practices. Well-designed tall buildings can be more sustainable than other buildings because of a more efficient use of limited land. Technological advances can also make tall buildings environmentally sustainable and operational.

10.6 The Council will always encourage a sustainable approach to design. Some of the factors that would be supported are:

Location

10.7 The Council would encourage the use of existing brownfield sites. Use of available land in prestigious locations and brownfield sites will assist in maintaining a compact city. It will also encourage efficient land use.

10.8 With sustainability the Council would expect that tall buildings are first located close to good public transport. Sustainable principles also encourage having groups of tall buildings sited around public transport nodes as this will improve the efficiency and sustainability of public transport as well as reducing car journeys and congestion.

Orientation of Proposals

10.9 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

10.10 Second and third towers in groups are always liable to be in the shadow of the each other. This can affect some sustainable issues and could have adverse effects if not considered at the outset.

11.0 Safety and Servicing

11.1 The applicant and the developer must ensure they have adequate measures in place in respect of safety and security. The Council offers advice only insofar as it wishes to encourage designers and developers to consider the safety issues at an early stage so that any design can incorporate security measures, such as cameras, at the outset. The Local Authority Police Architectural Liaison Officer, through the Local Planning Authority, should be contacted early in the design stage as they are able to offer advice to help mitigate any probable issues.

11.2 Controlled access to buildings and the safety of the users of all buildings is important. This is especially true for tall buildings be they commercial or residential buildings. There may be many users and the safety of knowing familiar people is not applicable due to the high numbers of transient users. The Council's Police Architectural Liaison Officer can help with advice on specific proposals. Some general advice is as follows:

11.3 The Police and Secured by Design require a robust security plan in place which is also constantly monitored to mitigate possible criminality in high rise living accommodation.

11.4 A tall building is exposed to all the normal security risks of a street-level structure including crime, vandalism, and disturbances. But, the uniqueness of its physical stature calls for a different protection approach. Tall buildings house a high population in a concentrated area. Movement is restricted to elevators and stairwells. Limited entrances and exits cause another safety concern. The amount of people and numerous corridors provide anonymity for criminals. From underground garages to the roof, a successful tall building security plan

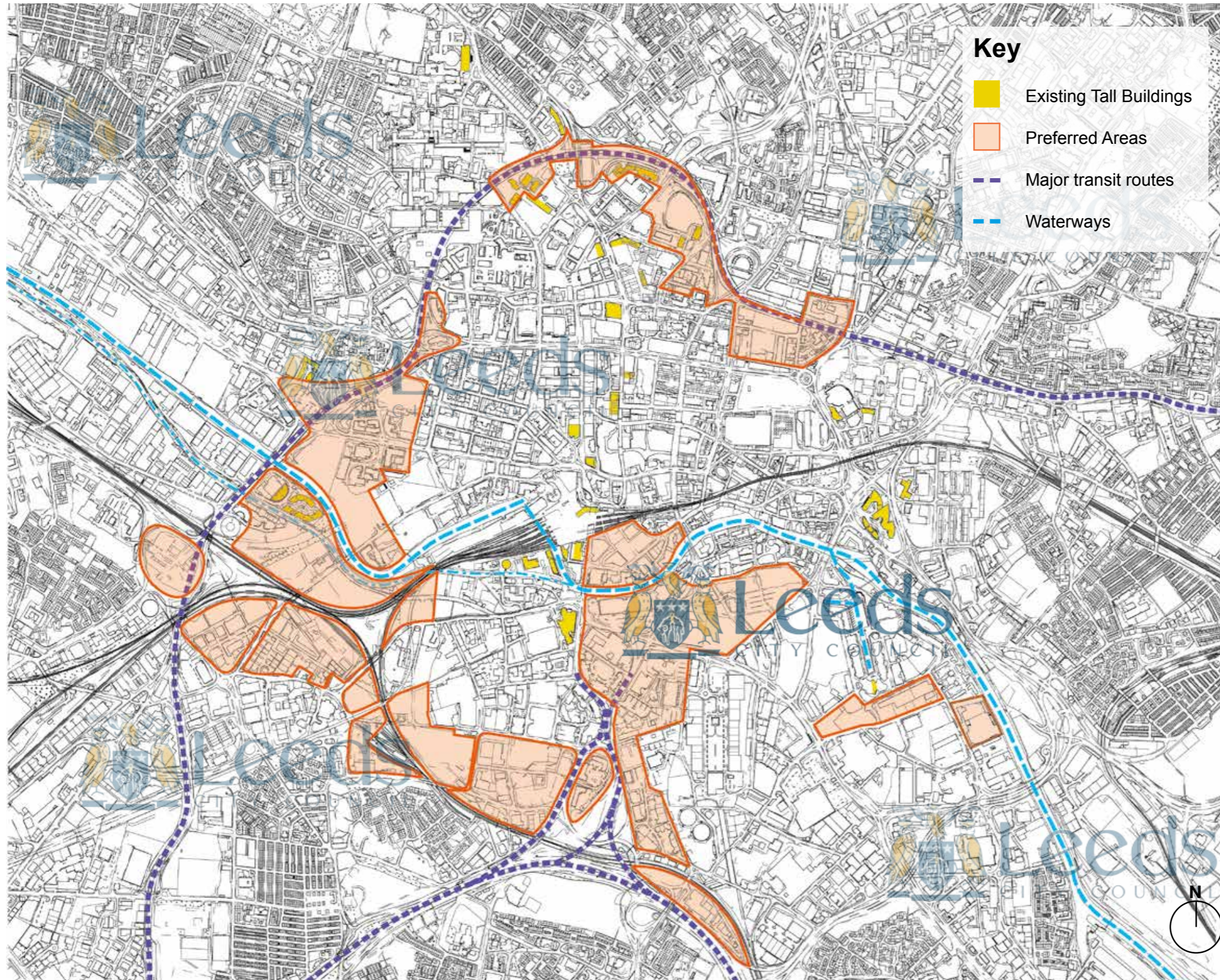
tackles challenges literally from the ground up.

11.5 The security plan for these tall buildings should include the following:

- Onsite security and encourage resident guardianship
- 'Air lock' type security door access to stop/reduce tailgating. Provision of video and intercom facilities to control access.
- External secure bin storage areas that are locked and secure covered by CCTV and well illuminated.
- Internal cycle storage area with SR 2 rated door with the equivalent locking system-CCTV covered and secure anchor points.
- Removal of all areas that would encourage anti-social gathering.
- CCTV covering all entrances. This would include all lifts and all lift exits on all floors. There should be extensive coverage to external areas and around parking bays.
- Higher artificial lighting levels where required and consistency of coverage to ensure no dark shadowed areas. Higher levels of lighting should always be used over access footpaths.
- Provide active ground floor frontages and a good defensible space around the perimeter of the site.
- Signage should be clear and concise around the whole site both externally and internally.

11.6 For commercial tall buildings then many of the same issues of security arise. Controlling access and protecting users' also needs a robust security plan and constant monitoring of the plan. Tall commercial buildings may contain multiple commercial tenants and each with different unrelated staffing requirements. Each building may well have its own particular requirements depending on numbers and usage. The security plan for each building should consider the same issues as indicated above for residential buildings. It is recommended that the applicants contact the Council's Police Architectural Liaison Officer who can help with advice on specific proposals. This should be done initially through the Local Planning Authority. During the course of the application the Local Planning Authority may well consult the Police Architectural Liaison Officer for their comments.

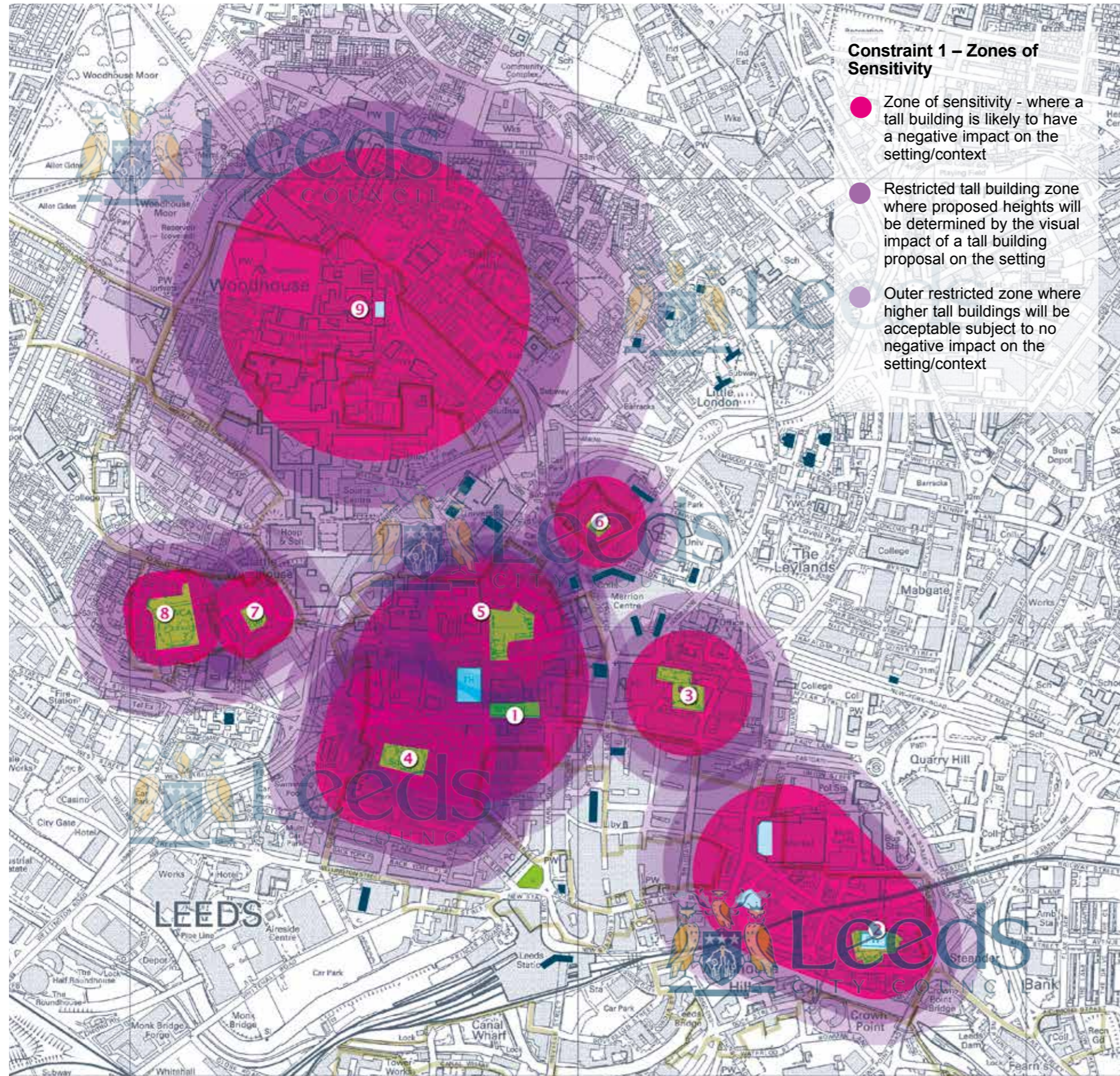
City Centre Preferred Areas Plan



Notes

Within the Preferred Areas not all sites may be suitable for the location of Tall Buildings. On some sites it may not be possible to deliver Tall Buildings depending on site specific factors and the immediate context.

Sensitive Zones



The following composite plan shows the zones and sectors which have been identified for special consideration in order to protect important silhouettes, skylines, buildings, street scenes, vistas and public spaces from the visual impact and physical proximity of tall buildings. These zones are:

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

Sensitivity Zones

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.
- Promote the highest design quality for tall buildings and their composition resulting in a distinctive, recognisable, "this could only be Leeds" skyline.

Key Views

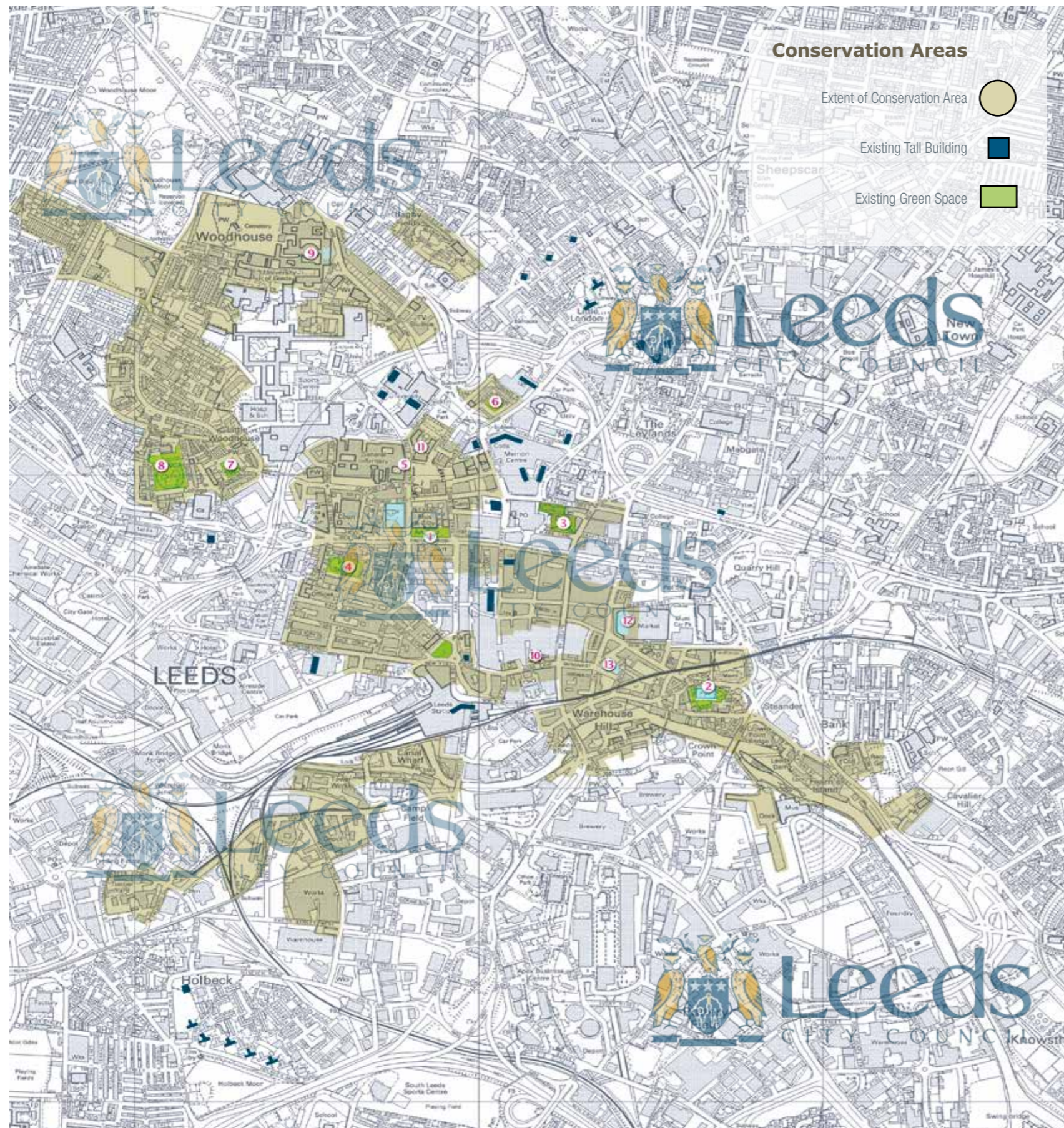


Key Views Criteria

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 of these views is likely to have a negative townscape impact. Applicants with proposals for tall buildings within these views will be required to produce visuals of the proposals from verified camera views agreed with the Planning Service.

- 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 Lands Lane – Looking South towards Holy Trinity Church
- 10 Merion Street – Looking towards St John’s Church
- 11 Briggate – Looking South
- 12 Westgate – Looking east towards The Headrow
- 13 Park Cross Street - Looking north towards Town Hall
- 14 Leeds Station Concourse - Looking towards Tower Works
- 15 View of 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 - View north along Woodhouse Lane
- 21 Woodhouse Lane - View of spires
- 22 Hyde Park Corner - View of Parkinson Tower_

Heritage and Conservation Areas



Heritage Criteria

Much of Leeds City Centre has designated Listed Buildings of significant historical value. The preservation of these buildings and their respective settings is paramount to the Authorities townscape objectives. Leeds has also many designated Conservation Areas and these too are of importance. The Authority will always seek to preserve and enhance these Conservation Areas. Tall buildings designed inappropriately without due regard to the surrounding context make bad neighbours in the historic and traditional townscape. Tall buildings, for example, do not usually sit comfortably in areas with a fine urban grain and historic street pattern. Leeds City Council will demand the highest design standards, considerations and sensitivity to safeguarding the Listed Buildings, settings to Listed Buildings and the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas where any proposal is put forward. This is especially the case when Tall Buildings are proposed.

Any new buildings in the Conservation Area should be within approximately a storey height of their neighbours. Proposals which are higher than existing buildings will be treated on their merits. Proposals should ensure that no detrimental effect occurs on the street scene and roof line/silhouette and key views are not undermined. Any new development should respect the Listed Buildings and Conservation Area 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.

The relevant Conservation Areas are shown on the enclosed map.

For more information, please contact:

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Draft Tall Buildings Design Guide SPD

Leeds Local Plan
Supplementary Planning Document
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