

# All systems go for 'spaceship' office building



FUTURISTIC LOOK: An artist's impression of the building on Queen Street

## Council debates 'innovative' design

BY DAVID MARSH

PLANS for an office extension described as "innovative" by planning officers and resembling a spaceship by a councillor have got the go ahead.

The scheme to add two storeys to vacant offices in Queen Street in Leeds city centre was said to be a "bold and innovative approach to extending upwards" when it was presented to the council's city centre plans panel.

And despite dividing opinion among councillors, the panel decided planning consent could be granted by officers.

While appreciating the brick arches of the current building,

Coun Elizabeth Nash (Lab, City and Hunslet) said the building was over-dominant when viewed from Park Place and added: "The thing on the top looks like a spaceship has landed."

"It is far too brutal for the area. The building should be sympathetic to its surroundings but it dominates."

Coun Graham Latty (Con, Guiseley and Rawdon) said: "We have some interesting things in this part of the world but this takes the biscuit."

"I don't understand the architectural and design thinking behind this at all."

"Stick it on the nearby former swimming pool site on its own and it might be all right but not in this location. I find it a ridiculous addition to the top."

The offices were built in 1983 and a report to the panel said: "The applicant's brief was to breathe new life into what is considered a strong but tired aesthetic."

It said the proposal was to add two floors with the fifth storey appearing to "float" over the fourth.

Coun Geoff Driver (Lab, Middleton Park) said the 1983 building was one you either liked or disliked.

But he felt it was more in-keeping with "the spirit of our age" and added: "It has a sense of dynamism and is something Leeds needs to be doing."

Coun Brian Selby (Lab, Killingbeck and Seacroft), panel chairman, said the proposed top floor resembled the media centre at Lord's cricket ground.

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