# **GRAND CITY Properties S.A.**

Luxembourg / Real Estate Frankfurt Bloomberg: GYC GR ISIN: LU0775917882

2017 Results

RATING	BUY
PRICE TARGET	€ 27.00
Return Potential	41.0%
Risk Rating	Medium

## **QUALITY OF OPERATIONS DRIVES YEAR END RESULTS**

Full year reporting confirms our view that Grand City Properties is well positioned to prosper in the late cycle residential market. Full year results showed solid top line and earnings growth. Net rent rose 15% Y/Y to €328m and FFO 1 increased 11% Y/Y to €178m. Growth was chiefly driven by operational improvements, while portfolio expansion included the first units acquired in London. Management guide for FFOPS 1 of €1.19 - €1.22 this year spurred by >3% like-for-like rental growth and opportunistic portfolio expansion. Our updated valuation model yields a price target of €27 (old: €26). We reiterate our Buy rating

Time to acknowledge operational strengths We framed the solid prospects for Grand City (GCP) in our note of 13 March and see no contrary evidence in the 2017 results. FFOPS 1 grew 7% on the prior year figure equal to a 5.8% yield while EPRA NAVPS (including perpetual notes) climbed 23% Y/Y. The company plans to pay a €0.73 (2016: €0.68; +7%) dividend to shareholders corresponding to a 3.8% yield. In our view, GCP is well built to weather the late stages of the residential cycle and will continue to deliver solid operational performance. The company boasts a robust financial structure with: (1) YE17 cash and liquid assets of €402m; (2) boosted by Q1/18 corporate bond issuances totalling some €840m; (3) a debt profile that features 70% in corporate bonds; and (4) healthy balance sheet metrics including a 36% LTV and 51% equity ratio. We see good growth prospects for the company this year (FBe: FFOPS +7%, NAVPS +14%), driven chiefly by operational upside combined with opportunistic external growth. Management hinted on the conference call following the results at a pipeline of some €1bn and is keeping more of pan-European view as evidenced by the recent inroads into London market (see overleaf). (p.t.o.)

### **COMPANY PROFILE**

Grand City Properties is a specialist real estate company focused on investing in and managing value-add opportunities in the German real estate market. The overarching strategy is to improve the portfolio through targeted modernisation and intensive tenant management and thus create value by subsequently raising occupancy and rental levels.

MARKET DAT	Α	As of 20 Mar 2018		
Closing Price	€ 19.15			
Shares outstand		164.79m		
Market Capitalisa	€ 3	155.73m		
52-week Range	€ 16.7	5 / 20.23		
Avg. Volume (12	300,214			
Multiples	2017	2018E	2019E	
P/FFO I	17.2	16.2	15.4	
P/EPRA NAV	0.8	0.7	0.7	
FFO I/Yield	5.8%	6.2%	6.5%	
Div. Yield	3.8%	4.0%	4.5%	

## **STOCK OVERVIEW**



### **FINANCIAL HISTORY & PROJECTIONS**

	2015	2016	2017	2018E	2019E	2020E
Rental income (€m)	333.50	435.67	494.89	545.53	580.86	605.70
Y/Y growth	53.8%	30.6%	13.6%	10.2%	6.5%	4.3%
Adj. EBITDA (€m)	177.27	224.73	247.98	279.31	297.40	309.51
Net income	393.6	653.1	639.1	585.4	548.5	479.2
EPS (diluted) (€)	2.35	3.25	3.06	2.85	2.67	2.33
EPRA NAV¹ (€m)	2402.09	3208.45	3993.06	4475.53	4904.35	5237.84
DPS (€)	0.25	0.68	0.73	0.77	0.86	0.88
FFO I (€m)	128.04	160.12	178.01	196.27	209.97	220.37
FFOPS I	1.01	1.05	1.12	1.19	1.24	1.27
Liquid assets (€m)	388.93	630.27	401.48	888.98	907.53	936.75

<sup>1</sup> including perpetual notes

### RISKS

Risks include, but are not limited to, unfavourable interest rate developments, unfavourable macroeconomic developments, and departure of key personnel.

## **REVIEW OF FULL YEAR RESULTS**

### Table 1: Full year results vs forecasts

in €m	2017	2017E	delta	2016	delta	Q4/17	Q4/16	delta
Rental and other income	495	483	2.5%	436	13.5%	128	109	17.4%
Net rent	328	319	2.7%	285	15.1%	86	75	14.7%
Adjusted EBITDA	248	246	0.8%	225	10.2%	64	60	6.7%
Margin	50.1%	50.9%	-	51.6%	-	50.0%	55.0%	-
FFO I	178	176	1.1%	160	11.2%	48	43	11.4%
FFOPS I¹ (€)	1.12	1.11	1.1%	1.05	6.7%	0.29	0.28	3.6%

<sup>1</sup> after perpetual note attribution

Source: First Berlin Equity Research; Grand City Properties

GCP reported rental and operating income (RI) of €495m for the full year, which was 2.5% above our estimate (FBe: €483m). The top line grew 14% Y/Y. Net rental income rose 15% Y/Y to €328m. The increase can be traced to the larger portfolio and operational improvements in existing properties through rent and occupancy increases. LFL rental income rose 3.5% including 1.2% LFL occupancy and 2.3% LFL in-place rent. On a quarterly basis, RI climbed to €128m, whereas net rent reached €86m versus €75m in the prior year period. The portfolio contains 87k units as of December compared to 83k at the end of 2016. This includes initial exposure to London (2% of portfolio) after management was able to acquire 300 centrally located units in the Fulham and Islington districts from a cash-starved contractor. Although management continue to assess opportunities in other western cities, we expect GCP to remain focused on its home turf.

The capital gains, property revaluations and other income line item totalled  $\in$ 616m for the full year (2016:  $\in$ 598m) and  $\in$ 235m in the fourth quarter (Q4/16:  $\in$ 134m). The strong development relates to GCP's value-add business model: acquiring properties with strong value upside and repositioning the assets to unlock this potential.

Adjusted EBITDA, which reflects recurring operational profit excluding capital gains and revaluation effects, rose 10% in 2017 to €248m (2016: €225m; FBe: €246m). We note that growth in rental income was slightly offset by one-off expenses related to GCP's H1/17 uplisting into the Prime Standard of the Frankfurt Stock Exchange.

## Figure 1: Operating performance as of December 2017



Source: First Berlin Equity Research; Grand City Properties

Financial expenses increased to €40m compared to €36m in the prior year, due to the ongoing optimisation of the financial structure. Net income (NI) contracted some 2% Y/Y to €639m (2016: €653m) owing to non-recurring items, such as other financial results of €-43m (2016: €-11m). These included one-off costs related to the €371m repurchase of the higher coupon Series D bonds and other one-time financial charges. Fourth quarter net income totalled €234m vs €158m in 2016.







FFO 1, the key industry indicator for recurring cash flow, increased 11.2% during 2017 to €178m compared to €160m in the prior year, thanks b strong adjusted EBITDA growth and further optimisation of financing costs. FFOPS 1 grew 6.7% to €1.12 equal to a 5.8% yield. FFOPS 1 growth was achieved despite the dilutive effects of the June cap hike. On a quarterly basis, FFO I increased some 12% Y/Y to €48m (Q4/16: €43m) equal to €0.29 FFOPS 1. GCP's maintenance and value-add CapEx amounted to €67m for the year. Accounting for CapEx spend, adjusted FFO (AFFO) totalled €111m (2016: €104m).

### Table 2: FFOPS 1 adjusted for perpetual note attribution

€m	2017	2016	Delta
FF0 1	178	160	11%
Adjustment for accrued perpetual note attribution	-24	-21	-
FFO 1 after perpetual note attribution	154	140	10%
Weighted avg basic share count ('000)	159,605	152,836	
FFOPS 1 after perpetual note attribution	0.96	0.92	4%

Source: First Berlin Equity Research; Grand City Properties

**EPRA NAV +31% Y/Y; 2014–2017 44% CAGR** As of December, EPRA NAV totalled  $\in$  3.3bn ( $\in$ 20.2 / share, +23% Y/Y) compared to  $\in$ 2.5bn at year end 2016 ( $\in$ 16.4 /share). Including the perpetual notes, which are classified as equity under IFRS, this KPI stood at  $\in$ 4.0bn or  $\in$ 24.2 / share (+17% Y/Y). NAVPS corresponds to a 37% CAGR for the period 2014–2017. The good performance stems from the  $\in$ 636m NI result and the  $\in$ 198m equity raise last June.

### **Table 3: Financial highlights**

in €m	2017	2016	Delta
Cash & liquid assets	402	632	-36%
Investment property <sup>1</sup>	6,388	4,795	33%
Total equity	3,850	3,065	26%
EPRA NAV incl. hybrid notes	3,993	3,208	24%
EPRA NAV	3,327	2,541	31%
Interest bearing debt	941	937	0%
Straight bonds	1,423	1,050	36%
Convertible bond (series F)	432	427	1%
Loan-to-Value (LTV)	36%	35%	-
Equity ratio	51%	50%	-

<sup>1</sup> including inventories-trading property

Source: First Berlin Equity Research; Company

**Balance sheet metrics remain steady** GCP reported cash and liquid assets of  $\leq$ 402m for the period ended 31 December compared to  $\leq$ 632m at the end of 2016, while net debt stood at  $\leq$ 2.4bn vs  $\leq$ 1.8bn at the end of 2016. The debt structure featured an LTV of 36%, which is up slightly compared to end 2016 (35%), resulting from the net increase in straight bonds. This remains well below the 45% internal limit set by the Management Board. Coverage ratios were solid with a debt service coverage ratio (DSCR) and an interest coverage ratio (ICR) of 4.8x and 6.2x respectively at the end of 2017. In our view, ample cash and an attractive debt structure positions the company well for opportunistic growth. In 2017, the company extended its debt maturity curve by 2.5 years to 8.5. The debt structure now features a 1.6% average cost of debt.

**Latest capital market activity** Management have been very active in optimising the debt portfolio in recent years (Table 4), which is reflected in improving financing costs. The company also boasts BBB+ / Baa1 corporate ratings from S&P and Moody's respectively.

### Table 4: Capital market activity since January 2017

Feb-18	Tap issuance of Series H, 2032 straight bonds of €145m to an aggregate nominal amount of €255m
Feb-18	Issuance of Series K, 2026 straight bonds of CHF125m under the EMTN, currency hedge, coupon of 0.96% p.a.
Feb-18	Issuance of Series J, 2027 straight bonds of €500m under the EMTN, coupon of 1.5% p.a. and…
Feb-18	Repayment of €170m of Series F Convertible bonds and €41m of Series D (3.5 year maturity) extending the average maturity
Feb-18	Issuance of Series I, 2028 straight bondsHKD900m under EMTN, currency hedge, effective € coupon of 1% p.a. until 2023
Oct-17	Issuance of Series H, 2032 straight bonds of €110m under the EMTN, coupon of 2% p.a
Jul-17	Issuance of Series G 9 year straight bonds €600m under the EMTN programme, coupon of 1.375% p.a
Jul-17	Established €1.5bn Euro Medium Term Note (EMTN) Programme
Jul-17	Equity capital increase of €198m at €18 per share

Source: First Berlin Equity Research, Grand City Properties

**Plenty of operational upside to spur growth** We believe the residential portfolio contains further operational upside (30% net rent as of Q4/17) through rent and vacancy optimisation. We expect this to be the primary earnings and value driver over the near-term, given our assumption of modest external growth (9,000 units over the next two years). Management commented on the call that it will take 7-8 years to extract this potential of which up to 75% will translate into FFO 1.



## Figure 3: In place rent vs market levels; embedded net rental income upside

Source: First Berlin Equity Research; Company

The company is providing annual guidance for the first time in place of its traditional monthly run rates, due to the stability of external growth. Management guide for FFO 1 of  $\in$ 196m -  $\in$ 201m and FFOPS 1 of  $\in$ 1.19 -  $\in$ 1.22 based on FL rent growth north of 3% in 2018. This would correspond to a dividend of  $\in$ 0.77 -  $\in$ 0.79 based on the present 65% payout policy. We expect external growth to remain opportunistic and assume a rate similar to the prior year. Our new FFO 1 target rises more slowly, due to the issuance of the corporate bonds in February.

## Table 5: Changes to forecasts

		2018E			2019E	
in €m	Old	New	% change	Old	New	% change
Rental & operating income	526	544	3.5%	564	580	2.8%
Adjusted EBITDA	268	278	3.9%	286	296	3.7%
margin	51.0%	51.2%	-	50.7%	51.2%	-
FFO I	193	196	1.7%	208	212	1.8%
FFOPS I <sup>1</sup> (€)	1.16	1.19	1.7%	1.23	1.26	1.8%

<sup>1</sup> after perpetual note attribution

Source: First Berlin Equity Research

## **VALUATION MODEL**

Our discounted EPRA NAV valuation model yields a price target of €28. This figure is conservatively based on EPRA NAV excluding perpetual notes. Our PT corresponds to a total return of 41% including the dividend yield and incorporates updated forecasts and the higher than expected year end EPRA NAV. The Grand City share remains attractive. We attribute much of the lacklustre share price performance to overblown concerns about whether a cliff awaits at the end of the residential cycle. As we recently wrote, there is plenty of evidence that underlying fundamentals in the property market are better than investors think. We believe GCP will continue its current growth trajectory this year (FBe: FFOPS +7%, NAVPS +14%).

All figures in EUR '000	2018E	2019E	2020E
Shareholders' equity (excl. perpetual notes)	3,230,464	3,596,539	3,880,799
Derivative financial instruments	5,885	5,885	5,885
Deferred tax liabilities	573,307	636,056	685,281
EPRA NAV	3,809,657	4,238,481	4,571,966
EPRA NAV per share (€)	26.9	28.7	29.7
FFO I	196,274	209,967	220,371
Revaluation results	460,209	392,180	307,657
New Equity	-	-	-
Total return	656,483	602,147	528,028

EPRA NAV	3,809,657	4,238,481	4,571,966
Return on NAV	19.7%	15.8%	12.5%
Cost of equity	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Spread (percentage points)	14.8%	<b>10.9%</b>	7.5%
Value creation	563,025	460,037	343,169
NPV	550,014	436,103	315,687
Dividends paid	115,708	127,578	146,977
Present value of dividends paid	113,035	120,941	135,206

Fair value calculation		
PV of total value created	1,301,804	
NAV (excl. Perpetual notes) (YE: 2017)	3,183,791	
Equity value	4,485,595	
PV of dividends	369,182	
Fair value	4,854,777	
Number of shares (fully diluted)	176,815	
Fair value per share (€)	27.00	

Valuation metrics	2018E	2019E	2020E
Price target (€)	27.00	27.00	27.00
Share price (€)	19.15	19.15	19.15
Return potential	41.0%	41.0%	41.0%
Dividend yield	4.0%	4.5%	4.6%
Total return potential	45.0%	45.5%	45.6%
NAV discount / premium (share price)	-20.9%	-28.8%	-33.2%
FFOPS 1 yield	6.2%	6.5%	6.6%

## **INCOME STATEMENT**

All figures in EURm	2015	2016	2017	2018E	2019E	2020E
Net rent	220	285	328	361	386	404
Rental and operating income	333	436	495	546	581	606
Revenue from sale of buildings	0	7	2	0	0	C
Revenue	333	443	497	546	581	606
Capital gains, property revaluations & other	311	598	616	460	392	308
Result from equity-accounted investees	0	1	6	8	9	(
Property expenses	-152	-204	-239	-256	-273	-284
Cost of buildings sold	0	-5	-1	0	0	C
Administration expenses	-7	-10	-11	-12	-13	-14
Operating income (EBIT)	486	823	868	745	697	615
Finance expenses	-26	-36	-40	-50	-52	-52
Other financial results	0	-11	-43	-5	0	0
Pre-tax income (EBT)	460	775	786	691	645	563
Tax and deferred tax expenses	-66	-122	-146	-105	-96	-84
Minority interests	-35	-88	-80	-59	-55	-48
Hybrid note investors	-15	-23	-24	-23	-22	-19
Net income	344	542	535	503	472	412
Basic EPS (€)	2.71	3.56	3.35	3.04	2.80	2.37
Diluted EPS (€)	2.35	3.25	3.06	2.85	2.67	2.33
Adjusted EBITDA	177	225	248	279	297	310
Ratios						
Adjusted EBITDA margin	53.2%	51.6%	50.1%	51.2%	51.2%	51.1%
Tax rate	12.8%	11.9%	-11.3%	11.3%	11.3%	11.3%
Expenses as % of revenues						
Property expenses	45.4%	46.8%	48.3%	47.0%	47.0%	47.0%
Administration expenses	2.1%	2.2%	2.2%	2.3%	2.3%	2.3%
Y-Y Growth						
Rental and operating income	53.8%	30.6%	13.6%	10.2%	6.5%	4.3%
Total revenues	44.1%	32.7%	12.2%	9.8%	6.5%	4.3%
Operating income	41.9%	69.3%	5.5%	-14.2%	-6.5%	-11.7%
Adjusted EBITDA	58.3%	26.8%	10.3%	12.6%	6.5%	4.1%
Net income/ loss	67.3%	57.7%	-1.5%	-5.8%	-6.3%	-12.6%
Funds from Operations (FFO)						
Operating profit	486	823	868	745	697	615
Depreciation and amortisation	2	2	2	2	2	2
EBITDA	488	825	871	747	699	617
Capital gains, property revaluations and other	-311	-598	-616	-460	-392	-308
Result from disposal of trading properties	0	-2	0	0	0	(
Others	1	0	-6	-8	-9	(
Adjusted EBITDA	177	225	248	279	297	310
Financial expense	-26	-36	-40	-50	-52	-52
Tax	-23	-27	-28	-32	-34	-35
Minorities FFO I	-1 <b>128</b>	-1 <b>160</b>	-2 178	-2 <b>196</b>	-2 <b>210</b>	-2 22(
CapEx	-34	-56	-67	-84	-91	-97
	-04	-00	-07	-04	-31	-97

## **BALANCE SHEET**

All figures in EURm	2015	2016	2017	2018E	2019E	2020E
Assets						
Current assets, total	627	1,028	796	1,330	1,369	1,412
Cash and cash equivalents	236	449	312	800	818	847
Traded securities at fair value though P&L	153	181	89	89	89	89
Trade and other receivables	226	220	260	299	318	332
Inventories - Trading property	12	27	12	14	15	16
Assets held for sale	0	150	123	128	128	128
Non-current assets, total	4,062	5,126	6,712	7,421	7,911	8,290
Equipment and intangible assets	9	16	20	22	24	26
Investment property	3,846	4,823	6,414	7,105	7,577	7,945
Equity accounted investees	0	118	37	45	54	54
Other LT assets	195	155	214	218	223	227
Deferred tax assets	11	15	28	31	34	37
Total assets	4,689	6,154	7,508	8,751	9,280	9,702
Shareholders' equity & debt						
Current liabilities, total	277	338	371	415	438	455
Short-term debt	55	29	62	62	62	62
Trade and other payables	190	252	267	309	329	343
Other current liabilities	32	58	42	44	47	50
Long-term liabilities, total	2,239	2,750	3,288	4,016	4,102	4,174
Long-term debt	792	897	919	925	925	925
Convertible and straight bonds	1,168	1,478	1,810	2,456	2,476	2,496
Deferred taxes	239	326	500	573	636	685
Other LT liabilities	40	50	59	62	65	68
Minority interests	142	197	364	423	478	526
Shareholders' equity	2,030	2,868	3,485	3,896	4,262	4,547
Total consolidated equity and debt	4,689	6,154	7,508	8,751	9,280	9,702
Ratios						
Current ratio (x)	2.26	3.04	2.15	3.20	3.12	3.10
Equity ratio	46.3%	49.8%	51.3%	49.4%	51.1%	52.3%
EPRA NAV¹ (€m)	2,402	3,208	3,993	4,476	4,904	5,238
Net debt (€m)	1,626	1,783	2,393	2,554	2,556	2,547
Financial leverage	80.1%	62.2%	68.7%	65.6%	60.0%	56.0%
Loan-to-value (LTV)	41.9%	34.9%	36.4%	35.1%	32.9%	31.3%
Return on equity (ROE)	18.1%	21.3%	16.6%	13.6%	11.6%	9.4%

## **CASH FLOW STATEMENT**

All figures in EURm	2015	2016	2017E	2018E	2019E	2020E
Net income	394	653	639	585	549	479
Depreciation and amortisation	2	2	2	2	2	2
Profit from equity accounted investees	0	-1	-6	-8	-9	0
Change in fair value of investment properties	-311	-598	-616	-460	-392	-308
Net finance expenses	26	47	83	55	52	52
Tax result	66	122	146	105	96	84
Others	1	1	1	0	0	0
Operating cash flow	177	227	248	279	297	310
Inventories - trading properties	-1	2	-6	-7	-1	-1
Trade & other receivables	-25	-6	-39	-39	-19	-14
Trade & other payables	20	3	19	42	20	14
Provisions for other liabilities	5	-6	3	2	2	2
Tax paid	-19	-19	-23	-32	-34	-35
Net cash flow from operating activities	157	201	202	246	266	277
Investment in fixed/intangible assets	-4	-3	-6	-4	-4	-4
Investments & acquisitions of investment property	-406	-476	-374	-231	-80	-60
Acquisition of subsidiaries	-446	-111	-324	0	0	0
Proceeds from investments in financial assets	-359	33	95	-4	-4	-4
Cash flow from investing	-1,215	-557	-608	-240	-88	-69
Debt financing, net	440	487	597	652	20	20
Equity financing, net	640	171	176	0	0	0
Other financing activities	-24	-44	-457	-121	-128	-147
Net paid financing expenses	-33	-46	-47	-50	-52	-52
Cash flow from financing	1,023	569	269	481	-159	-178
Net cash flows	-34	213	-137	487	19	29
Cash, start of the year	270	236	449	312	800	818
Cash, end of the year	236	449	312	800	818	847
Adjusted EBITDA / share (€)	1.27	1.46	1.50	1.68	1.74	1.76
FFOI	128	160	178	196	210	220
FFOPS I (€)	1.01	1.05	1.12	1.19	1.24	1.27
Y-Y Growth						
Operating cash flow	38.3%	27.8%	0.5%	21.5%	8.1%	4.1%
Adjusted EBITDA / share	34.5%	15.0%	3.0%	11.5%	3.7%	1.0%
FFO I	68.2%	25.1%	11.2%	10.3%	7.0%	5.0%
FFOPSI	52.8%	3.9%	6.5%	6.3%	5.0%	2.0%

Report No.:	Date of publication	Previous day closing price	Recommendation	Price target
Initial Report	21 January 2013	€4.37	Buy	€14.30
222	$\downarrow$	$\downarrow$	$\downarrow$	Ļ
23	7 September 2017	€18.27	Buy	€26.00
24	20 November 2017	€18.74	Buy	€26.00
25	13 March 2018	€18.95	Buy	€26.00
26	Today	€19.15	Buy	€27.00

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BUY: An expected favourable price trend of more than 25% percent.

ADD: An expected favourable price trend of between 0% and 25%.

REDUCE: An expected negative price trend of between 0% and -15%.

SELL: An expected negative price trend of more than -15%.

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- key sources of information in the preparation of this research report
- valuation methods and principles
- sensitivity of valuation parameters

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