

# Public Document Pack

**Democratic Services Section  
Legal and Civic Services Department  
Belfast City Council  
City Hall  
Belfast  
BT1 5GS**



**Belfast  
City Council**

8th November, 2024

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room - City Hall on Tuesday, 12th November, 2024 at 5.00 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

## **AGENDA:**

### **8. Planning Applications previously considered**

- (a) **LA04/2020/0568/F** and **LA04/2020/0569/LBC** - Change of use (including refurbishment of and 9 storey extension to rear) of former police station to 74 bedroom hotel with associated restaurant, bar and ancillary facilities. Demolition of building and structures at rear, part demolition to internal features, refurbishment and extension to listed building (amended description). - 21 Queen Street, Belfast BT1 6EA. (Pages 1 - 40)

### **9. Planning Applications**

- (b) **LA04/2024/0664/F** - Demolition of the existing buildings on the site and construction of a new Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation development across 4 blocks of 6 to 18 stories in height, comprising of 560 student rooms, including landscaped roof terraces, associated amenity, site and access works - Lands comprising existing Fanum House, Norwood House and adjacent lands, No's 96-110 Great Victoria Street. (Pages 41 - 74)

- (c) **LA04/2024/0393/F** - Proposed 5 storey extension to the East of the ECIT Building (Institute of Electronics, Communications and Information Technology), and 3 storey extension to the West, to provide additional research and development space with associated landscaping and site works - ECIT Building Queen's Road, Queen's Island (Pages 75 - 100)
  
- (i) **WITHDRAWN:** ~~LA04/2024/1591/F and LA04/2024/1593/DCA - Demolition of the existing dwelling and construction of a two-storey replacement dwelling with accommodation in the roof, new garden store, widened site access, new gates and pillars and associated site works. - 20 Deramore Park~~

<b>ADDENDUM REPORT</b>	
<b>Committee Meeting Date:</b> 12 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	
<b>Application ID:</b> LA04/2020/0568/F and LA04/2020/0569/LBC	
<p><b>Proposal:</b>            LA04/2020/0568/F – Change of use (including refurbishment of and 9 storey extension to rear) of former police station to 74 bedroom hotel with associated restaurant, bar &amp; ancillary facilities (amended description)</p> <p>LA04/2020/0569/LBC – Demolition of building and structures at rear, part demolition to internal features, refurbishment and extension to listed building (amended description).</p>	<p><b>Location:</b>            21 Queen Street            Belfast            BT1 6EA</p>
<p><b>Referral Route:</b> Paragraph 3.8.2 (a) (proposed hotel exceeding 30 bedrooms); and paragraph 3.8.2 (j) (partial demolition of a Listed Building) of the Scheme of Delegation for Planning.</p>	
<b>Recommendation:</b>	Approval with conditions
<p>Applicant Name and Address:            Big Top Productions            13 Union Street            Belfast            BT1 2JF</p>	<p>Agent Name and Address:            Barry Owens Consulting            38 Highfields Avenue            Dublin Road            Newry            BT35 8UG</p>
<p><b>Background</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. At its 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024 meeting, the Planning Committee resolved to grant planning permission and Listed Building Consent for these applications, subject to conditions. The Committee gave delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and to deal with any other matters that may arise, provided that they are not substantive.</li> <li>2. Following discussion with the applicant about the precise wording of the conditions, the Council issued the decisions on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2024.</li> <li>3. Solicitors acting on behalf of Ulster Architectural Heritage (UAH) then submitted a Pre-Action Protocol letter dated 19<sup>th</sup> June 2024 to the Council. The letter alleged that in determining the applications the Council had misapplied planning policy; carried out inadequate consultation; and made errors as to fact and/or law.</li> <li>4. It should be noted that UAH had not engaged with the original planning application process, nor had it objected to the applications.</li> <li>5. Officers examined the grounds of challenge set out in the UAH’s letter and accepted, on balance, that the Council’s decisions to grant planning permission and Listed Building Consent should be quashed. The reasoning was that it should have been clearer in the assessment of the applications in the original Committee report that the building and structures proposed to be demolished at the rear are part of the Listed Building and how relevant planning policy relating to demolition of Listed Buildings had been applied. The decisions have subsequently been quashed by the High Court.</li> </ol>	

6. This addendum report should be read in conjunction with the original Committee report, appended.

### Further advice from DfC Historic Environment Division

7. DfC Historic Environment Division (HED) provided its previous response to the Listed Building Consent application (LA04/2020/0569/LBC) on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024. The advice did not specifically refer to the Listed status of the buildings at the rear, nor provide an assessment of why HED considered the partial demolition of the Listed Building at the rear to be acceptable, having regard to the relevant planning policy tests.
8. HED has provided further advice by way of email of 30<sup>th</sup> August 2024, which is referenced in the updated assessment of the proposal below. A full copy of the further advice from HED is provided at **Appendix 1**.

### Demolition of the Listed Buildings at the rear

9. Nos. 21 to 27 Queen Street, referred to in the Historic Building Record as “RUC Barracks, Queen Street”, is a Grade B1 Listed Building. It was constructed between 1860 and 1879. A copy of the building’s database entry is provided at **Appendix 2**.
10. The Listed Building comprises three main elements:
  - A. The more formal multi-bay three storey with attic sandstone former hospital, dated 1878 at the front of the site on Queen Street;
  - B. A shallow three storey much less formal link structure along the north site boundary to the rear; and
  - C. A plain three storey building onto College Court at the rear, connected to the frontage building by the link structure.

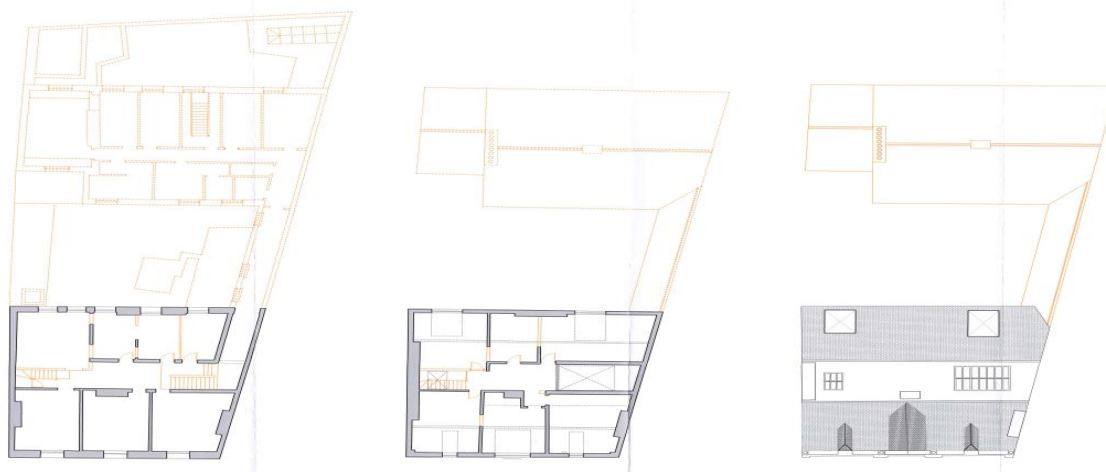
These three elements are shown in the aerial photographic image below:



11. The building was previously used as a police station and prior to that a hospital. It has been vacant for some time and is on the Buildings at Risk Register.
12. The proposal involves the retention and restoration of the Listed Building at the front of the site and demolition of the Listed link structure and three storey building at the rear onto College Court. The link structure and three storey building at the rear are contemporary to the main building at the front. The demolition would make way for a new 9 storey extension to form a 74-bedroom hotel, comprising the restored frontage building and new build.
13. The parts of the Listed Building at the rear which are proposed to be demolished are described in the database entry as follows:

*'The plot of the property stretches westwards into College Court. Here, beyond a courtyard and set back from the line of the neighbouring structures, is a large, generally plain, three-storey block (that is believed to have originally contained the wards) which is linked to the main Queen Street building by means of a very narrow three-storey link which traverses the northern boundary of the site. Both of these sections are contemporary with the main building. The block is of irregular plan, being basically rectangular, but with a large recess to the south-east corner, and has a plain rendered façade and a double-pitched roof covered in natural slate and two rendered chimneystacks (that to the south much larger). The College Court frontage has formal fenestration with the windows to the ground and first floors boarded, and (largely) one over one sash frames to those to the second floor. The central ground floor entrance has a plain sheeted door with boarded-up half-sidelights and a large canopy-like hood over with a sprocketed slated roof. The east façade is less formal with more varied openings, several of which have Georgian-paned sash frames. The exposed section of the south façade could not be seen on site, but appears to be rendered with at least one small second floor window. The narrow link to north has the same plain appearance as the western block, but with a mono-pitched slate roof and fenestration similar to the front of the western block, albeit with less (irregularly-spaced) openings. North side elevation abutted by two-storey infill building. Setting Located on the west side of Queen Street, set back slightly from the street with a double-height steel fence. Roof : Mansard natural slate & lead, two large lantern / rooflights to top of roof and two dormers to the rear, each with sloping roofs RWG: UPVC Walling: Rock-faced uncoursed sandstone ashlar Windows: Single-pane timber sash.'*

14. A copy of the proposed demolition plan is provided below (those elements proposed to be demolished are depicted in an amber colour).



*Buildings at Risk Register*

15. The building is on the Buildings at Risk Register as confirmed by DfC HED. The proposal would support the restoration and re-use of the main Listed Building at the front of the site, securing its future.
16. The applicant states that the building was last used as a police station and has been vacant since 2000. The applicant acquired the property in 2018. Following engagement with the Council and DfC HED about the condition of the building, the applicant states that they have carried out a number of remedial works including securing safe access from the rear of the building; erection of scaffolding at the rear; new rafters, felt and slates to elements of the building; unblocking gutters; re-decking of flat roofed section and covered with felt; and tree growth removal to the front and rear elevations.

*Assessment:*

17. Section 91(2) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 states that: *'In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, and in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works, a council... must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.'*
18. Policy BH1 of the Plan Strategy states that: *'There will be a presumption in favour of retaining listed buildings. Total demolition of listed buildings will only be permitted in highly exceptional circumstances. Where listed building consent is granted for demolition this will be conditional on prior agreement for the redevelopment of the site and appropriate arrangements for recording the building before its demolition. Partial demolition of parts of listed buildings will be wholly exceptional and only acceptable where an alteration or extension proposal has been agreed and that demolition is required to facilitate it.'*
19. Paragraph 6.12 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) for Northern Ireland states that: *'Listed Buildings of special architectural or historic interest are key elements of our built heritage and are often important for their intrinsic value and for their contribution to the character and quality of settlements and the countryside. It is important therefore that development proposals impacting upon such buildings and their settings are assessed, paying due regard to these considerations, as well as the rarity of the type of structure and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.'*
20. In relation to demolition, paragraph 6.15 of the SPPS goes onto advise: *'Proposals for the total demolition of a listed building or any significant part of it must not be permitted unless there are exceptional reasons why it cannot be retained in its original or a reasonably modified form. Where consent to demolish a listed building is granted, this should normally be conditional on prior agreement for the redevelopment of the site and appropriate arrangements for recording the building prior to its demolition.'*
21. The proposal involves partial demolition of the Listed Building, i.e. demolition of the Listed shallow three storey link structure in the rear courtyard and Listed three storey building at the rear onto College Court.

22. DfC advises that: *'In our assessment, HED acknowledged fully that both the front and rear/link buildings are listed; with the latter structures being connected to the main building. The main building has been in a ruinous state of repair for many years, and HED was mindful it is on our Heritage at Risk List. When the planning application was received, HED engaged with your planning colleagues and the owner. It soon became apparent that – because the main building required very extensive works to be saved/conserved and had a small footprint – this could only be enabled through the demolition of the rear buildings which are of lesser special interest. In addition, HED considered that if nothing was done, the front/main building could eventually be lost completely, and quickly.'*

*...Overall, HED considered that the demolition of the return/link buildings to the rear was necessary and appropriate as this would facilitate the construction of a new build behind the main building - the main focus of features of special architectural or historic interest – which would enable the preservation of the main building, which is required urgently.'*

23. Paragraph 7.4.13 of the Plan Strategy, which provides justification and amplification of Policy BH1 states that:

*'There will be a presumption in favour of retaining listed buildings. Very occasionally demolition of a listed building will be unavoidable although consent will not be given simply because redevelopment is economically more attractive than repair and re-use. Structural issues will not be given substantive weight when making a case for demolition where these have arisen due to neglect of a building through lack of maintenance or failure to secure by current or previous owners. Evidence will also be required that all efforts have been made to retain the building through finding an alternative use, which may not be the preferred use of the developer.'*

24. The building proposed to be demolished at the rear are described in the building's database entry as "plain" and, having regard to HED's advice, the rear and link buildings are considered to possess lesser special interest. The element of the Listed Building with the greater special architectural and historic interest is the more formal frontage building which the building's database entry describes as the "main Queen Street building" and is to be retained.

25. The proposed demolition must be viewed in the context of the architectural and historic merits of those parts of the Listed Building to be demolished, the previous planning applications, that the building has been vacant since 2000, its condition and presence on the Buildings at Risk Register, HED's advice and that the proposal would ensure the restoration and long-term future of this part of the Listed Building at the front.

26. Having regard to these factors, it is considered that there are exceptional reasons why the demolition of the Listed structures at the rear is acceptable with the demolition required to facilitate the important redevelopment proposals. Regard has also been had to the legislative requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. The proposal is considered compliant with Policy BH1 and relevant provisions of the SPPS.

## Conditions

27. DfC HED has recommends the following conditions:

- (1) No demolition shall take place before a contract for the carrying out of works of redevelopment of the site has been made, and planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment for which the contract provides.
- (2) Prior to commencement of structural alterations, a method statement shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Council in conjunction with HED demonstrating how the proposed structural works will be undertaken, and outlining how the listed building will be protected, during construction (including foundations and any piling) and demolition work. The work shall be carried out fully in accordance with the details approved.
- (3) The new-build hotel accommodation shall not be occupied until the **retained building has been fully conserved** and by written approval of the council in conjunction with HED.

## Recommendation

Having regard to the Development Plan, and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission and Listed Building Consent are granted subject to conditions.

Delegated authority is requested for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions and deal with any other matters that arise, provided that they are not substantive.

*Draft conditions:*

LA04/2020/0568/F

1. The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

2. Notwithstanding the submitted details, no development (other than site clearance, site preparation and demolition) shall commence on site unless a Phasing Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The development shall not be carried out or sequenced unless in accordance with the approved Phasing Plan.

Reason: In the interests of the orderly development of the site and to ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of the building under Section 80 of The Planning Act (NI) 2011.

3. The hotel use hereby permitted shall not be carried out or the building occupied until the works to the Listed Building have been fully implemented in accordance with Listed Building Consent LA04/2020/0569/LBC and written evidence of such has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The Council and DfC Historic Environment Division shall at all reasonable times be afforded access to the Listed Building to inspect the works as part of the authorisation process.

Reason: The Listed Building is at risk and the development has been permitted to enable the restoration of the Listed Building.



4. Notwithstanding the approved details, no development shall commence (other than site clearance, site preparation, demolition and the formation of foundations and trenches) unless details of climate change measures to manage and/or mitigate climate change have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The development shall not be occupied unless the approved climate change measures have been implemented. The climate change measures shall be retained in accordance with the approved details at all times.

Reason: To manage and mitigate climate change having regard to Policies ENV2 and ENV3 of the Belfast LPD Plan Strategy 2035.

5. No development shall commence on site (other than site clearance, site preparation, demolition and the formation of foundations and trenches) unless details of surface water drainage, including a programme for implementation of these works, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure appropriate surface water drainage of the site. Approval is required upfront because the design of the drainage is an integral part of the development and its acceptability.

6. No development or works shall commence on site (other than demolition and works required to fulfil this condition) unless a programme of archaeological work has been implemented in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Council.

Reason: To ensure that archaeological remains and features are preserved in situ. Approval is required upfront because archaeological remains and features could be damaged or permanently lost.

7. A programme of post-excavation analysis, preparation of an archaeological report, dissemination of results and preparation of the excavation archive shall be undertaken in accordance with the programme of archaeological work approved under condition 7.

These measures shall be implemented, and a final archaeological report shall be submitted to the Council within 6 months of the completion of archaeological programme of works.

Reason: To ensure that the archaeological remains and features are properly analysed and recorded.

8. No development shall commence on site (other than site clearance, site preparation, demolition and the formation of foundations and trenches) unless details of windows and external doors have been submitted and approved in writing by the Council. The details shall include cross sections, elevations, cill detail / material, the actual glazing material and panes and colour and finish, with a sample provided for each different window type. The windows and external doors shall not be installed unless in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

9. No new plumbing, pipes, soil-stacks, flues, vents, ductwork, lighting, security cameras or mechanical and electrical services of any description shall be fixed on the external faces of the building other than those shown on the approved drawings.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

10. No development shall commence on site (other than site clearance, site preparation, demolition and the formation of foundations and trenches) unless a detailed specification and samples of all new materials to be used in the elevations of the building, including samples of materials for the rain screen cladding and new window materials, have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Council. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

11. The hotel shall not be operated or occupied unless secure cycle parking facilities have been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The secure cycle parking shall be retained as such at all times.

Reason: To ensure acceptable cycle parking facilities on the site and encourage alternative modes of transport to the private car.

12. The development shall operate in accordance with the Service Management Plan.

Reason: In the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users.

13. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied or operated unless in accordance with the approved Travel Plan.

Reason: To promote sustainable travel patterns and off-set the demand for vehicular movements and/or parking.

14. No development shall commence on site (other than site clearance, site preparation, demolition, the formation of foundations and trenches and such other works to fulfil this condition), unless a Quantitative Risk Assessment has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.

A detailed site investigation shall be carried out in line with Business Support 10175:2011+A2:2017 (or any standard that reproduces or replaces this standard). Any ground gas investigations shall be conducted in line with BS 8576:2013 and BS 8485:2015+A1:2019 (or any standard that reproduces or replaces this standard).

A satisfactory assessment of the risks (including a Revised Conceptual Site Model), shall be conducted in line with current environment Agency guidance. In addition, risks associated with ground gases shall be assessed under the methodology outlined in BS8485:2015+A1:2019 and CIRIA C665 (or any standard that reproduces or replaces this standard).

Based on the outcome of this risk assessment, a Remediation Strategy may be required. If necessary, the Remediation Strategy must demonstrate how the identified contaminant linkages are to be demonstrably broken and no longer pose a potential risk to human health. It must also detail how the proposed remedial works are to be verified. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of human health

15. The plant and equipment associated with the development hereby permitted shall achieve a rating level (LAr) no greater than the Background Sound Level, LA90, during the daytime and during night-time when measured or determined at the nearest noise sensitive premises. All measurements and calculations must be conducted in line with the methodology outlined in BS4142:2014+A1 2019 Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity

16. Deliveries and collections to and from the hereby permitted development are not permitted outside the hours of 07:00 and 23:00hrs.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity

17. No kitchen or extraction and odour abatement system shall be installed unless it is capable of achieving a 'very high level' of odour control in accordance with the measures outlined in Section 2 of the AONA Environmental Consulting Ltd report titled: Updated Odour Impact Assessment. Date: April 2022.

Reason: Protection of amenity against adverse odour.

18. All gas boilers shall meet the technical specification as detailed within the letter Ref.: ENV-6045 Queen Street Hotel Air Emissions, dated 9th October 2020  
Reason: Protection of Human Health

19. During the construction phase, dust management measures shall be implemented in accordance with the IAQM Guidance on the Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction 2014.  
Reason: Protection of residential amenity

LA04/2020/0569/LBC

1. The works hereby permitted shall be begun not later than the expiration of 5 years beginning with the date on which this consent is granted.  
Reason: As required by Section 94 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

2. No demolition shall commence on site unless a contract has been executed for the construction of the site in accordance with planning permission LA04/2020/0568/F [dated] and evidence of that contract has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with planning permission LA04/2020/0568/F.

Reason: As required by Sections 91(6) and 105 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, to safeguard the setting of the remaining Listed Building. Approval is required upfront because if redevelopment of the site does not take place it could leave the vacant site unsightly and harmful to the setting of the Listed Building.

2. Prior to commencement of demolition or any structural alterations, a full survey, including analysis and photographic record of the historic fabric of the building to be demolished has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.

Reason: To provide a record of the building/s before demolition.

3. Prior to commencement of demolition or any structural alterations, a method statement that demonstrates how the approved structural works will be undertaken, and outlining how the frontage Listed Building at No. 21 Queen Street will be protected, during construction (including foundations and any piling) and demolition work, shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Council. The work shall be carried out fully in accordance with the details approved.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

4. No works (including demolition) shall be undertaken until details of an accredited conservation professional who will oversee and certify the hereby approved conservation works have been submitted to approved in writing by the Council. The works shall be overseen and certified by the accredited conservation profession approved by the Council.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

5. Internal or external historic surviving decorative or functional features, including plasterwork, ironwork, fitted cupboards, bookcases, ceramic tiling, shelving, fireplaces and grates, pelmets, fitted furniture, doors, windows, staircases, staircase balustrading, joinery and decorative ironwork shall not be removed or altered in respect of the frontage Listed Building at Nos. 21 Queen Street unless expressly specified by the approved drawings. Retained features shall be fully protected during the course of any works on site, in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. Any missing stairway joinery, skirtings,

cornices, architraves, window panelling and doors shall be copied, and subsequently replaced, to replicate exactly the existing in material and detailing.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

6. All new external finishes and works of making good to the retained fabric, shall match the existing original work adjacent in respect of methods, detailed execution and finished appearance unless otherwise approved in writing by the Council.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

7. No works shall commence on site unless in respect of the frontage Listed Building at No. 21 Queen Street unless details of windows and external doors have been submitted and approved in writing by the Council. The details shall include cross sections, elevations, cill detail / material, the actual glazing material and panes and colour and finish, with a sample provided for each different window type. The windows and external doors shall not be installed unless in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

8. No works in respect of the frontage Listed Building at No. 21 Queen Street shall be undertaken unless details of the connections and interface between the new build and the existing façades have been submitted and approved in writing by the Council. The details shall be drawn to a minimum scale of 1:20 and shall include dimensioned set-backs, structure, flashings and allowance for movement. The works shall be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

9. No new plumbing, pipes, soil-stacks, flues, vents, ductwork, lighting, security cameras or mechanical and electrical services of any description shall be fixed on the external faces of the building other than those shown on the approved drawings.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

10. No works in respect of the frontage Listed Building at Nos. 21 Queen Street shall be undertaken unless details of building services including mechanical, electrical, and audio installations routeways and installations impacting the architecture and detail of the listed building have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The works shall be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

11. No works in respect of the frontage Listed Building at No. 21 Queen Street shall commence on site unless a detailed specification and samples of all new materials to be used in the elevations of the building, including samples of materials for the rain screen cladding and new window materials, have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Council. The works shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

12. No works in respect of the frontage Listed Building at Nos. 21 Queen Street shall commence on site unless a detailed specification and samples of external paving to ramps, tactile paving, balustrading and external lighting have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The works shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

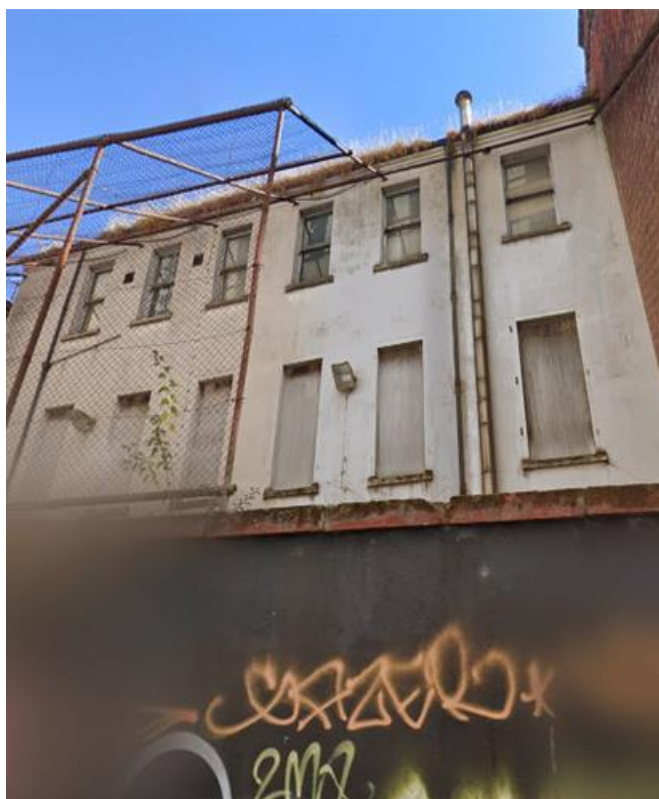
## Appendix 1 – Further advice from DfC HED, 30<sup>th</sup> August 2024

/Regarding LA04/2020/0568/F and the proposed 'demolition of the part of the Listed Building at the rear, namely the three-storey narrow link structure in the rear courtyard and three storey building onto College Court at the back, [HED] would highlight firstly the HED's assessment of the main/front building and the link structures.

### HED's Evaluation.

HED's evaluation of the main building refers to 'a symmetrical multi-bay three-storey with attic sandstone former hospital, dated 1878, to the designs of Thomas Jackson, latterly used as an RUC barracks. Much historic character and detailing survive, and its history represents both its changing use and the provision of healthcare in the city. It is a good example of a small civic building by an architect of note.' (Image of left below)

Regarding the rear/link buildings which are proposed to be demolished, HED's evaluation advises that '...the east façade is less formal with more varied openings, several of which have Georgian-paned sash frames. The exposed section of the south façade could not be seen on site but appears to be rendered with at least one small second floor window. The narrow link to north has the same plain appearance as the western block, but with a mono-pitched slate roof and fenestration similar to the front of the western block, albeit with less (irregularly spaced) openings. North side elevation abutted by two-storey infill building.' (Image on right below).



### HED's Assessment.

In our assessment, HED acknowledged fully that both the front and rear/link buildings are listed; with the latter structures being connected to the main building. The main building has been in a ruinous state of repair for many years, and HED was mindful it is on our Heritage at Risk List. When the planning application was received, HED engaged with your planning colleagues and the owner. It soon became apparent that – because the main building required very extensive works to

be saved/conserved and had a small footprint – this could only be enabled through the demolition of the rear buildings which are of lesser special interest. In addition, HED considered that if nothing was done, the front/main building could eventually be lost completely, and quickly.

Section 91 (2) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 is as follows: *In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, and in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works, a council or, as the case may be, the Department must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.*

Policy BH1 of LDP Plan Strategy refers as follows:

Demolition of a listed building.

*There will be a presumption in favour of retaining listed buildings.*

*Total demolition of listed buildings will only be permitted in highly exceptional circumstances.*

*Where listed building consent is granted for demolition, this will be conditional on prior agreement for the redevelopment of the site and appropriate arrangements for recording the building before its demolition*

*New development affecting the setting of listed buildings Planning permission will be granted for new development affecting the setting of listed buildings where the following criteria are met:*

- a. The development is sympathetic to the essential characteristic, scale, height, massing and alignment of the listed building by way of its scale, form, materials and detailing;*
- b. The development does not result in the significant loss of key views of the listed building;*
- c. The nature of the use proposed respects the character of the setting of the building;*
- d. The development does not have a detrimental impact on the setting of the listed building; and*
- e. The development has regard to relevant supplementary planning guidance*

Overall, HED considered that the demolition of the return/link buildings to the rear was necessary and appropriate as this would facilitate the construction of a new build behind the main building - the main focus of *features of special architectural or historic interest* – which would enable the preservation of the main building, which is required urgently.

HED also sought and obtained revisions to the proposed new build, to ensure it met the criteria above.

In addition, in its assessment/response to BCC for LA04/2020/0569/LBC, HED advised of conditions which included

- (4) No demolition shall take place before a contract for the carrying out of works of redevelopment of the site has been made, and planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment for which the contract provides.
- (5) Prior to commencement of structural alterations, a method statement shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Council in conjunction with HED demonstrating how the proposed structural works will be undertaken, and outlining how the listed building will be protected, during construction (including foundations and any piling) and demolition work. The work shall be carried out fully in accordance with the details approved.
- (6) The new-build hotel accommodation shall not be occupied until the **retained building has been fully conserved** and by written approval of the council in conjunction with HED.

## Appendix 2 – Extract from Buildings database entry

### Historic Building Details

**HB Ref No:**  
HB26/50/027

**Extent of Listing:**  
Former Barracks

**Date of Construction:**  
1860 – 1879

**Address :**  
RUC Barracks Queen Street Belfast Co Antrim BT1

**Townland:**  
Town Parks

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**Survey 2:**  
B1

**Date of Listing:**  
26/06/1979 00:00:00

**Date of De-listing:**

**Current Use:**  
Barracks

**Former Use**  
Hospital Building

**Conservation Area:**  
No

**Industrial Archaeology:**  
No

**Vernacular:**  
No

**Thatched:**  
No



**Monument:**

No

**Derelict:**

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**OS Map No:**

130-13 SE

**IG Ref:**J3360 7421

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***Owner Category*****Exterior Description And Setting**

Attached symmetrical multi-bay three-storey with attic sandstone former hospital, dated 1878, to the designs of Thomas Jackson, with a more utilitarian three-storey wing to the rear. The front portion is square on plan facing east onto Queen Street and set back slightly from the street. It is currently empty and boarded up. Natural slate mansard roof, lead-lined to the top with glazed lantern. Profiled sandstone ashlar chimneystacks rising from both gable ends and a further stack to the centre of plan. Central wall-head dormer with sandstone coping surmounted by cross and having a carved Belfast coat of arms to the gable supported on scrolled console brackets with a single square-headed window opening having replacement timber casement window. Diminutive hipped dormers to either side having billeted cornice, lead-lined roofs, single-pane timber sash windows and breaking through a sandstone ashlar blocking course over the crown cornice with ball finials. Plastic guttering to the south end. Uncoursed rock-faced sandstone ashlar walling with smooth pink sandstone pilasters, cornices and friezes framing the upper floors. Square-headed window openings with pink sandstone architrave surrounds and single-pane timber sash windows (boarded up to ground and first floors). East front elevation is three windows wide, paired to the ground floor with a central square-headed door opening. Each window is framed by a pair of sandstone pilasters to first and second floors rising to a stepped and dentilled crown cornice. Full-span sandstone frieze over each floor, punctuated by the pilasters to first and second floors with decorative carved motifs and raised lettering over the central second floor window stating; 'A.D.1878.'. Second floor windows have a diamond-faced keystone while the paired ground floor windows have deeply set bowtel surrounds, central mullions with stylised console brackets and a continuous moulded sill course. Central door opening also has a bowtel surround with decorative scrolled lateral brackets and replacement steel door opening onto a stone step to enclosed front area. South side elevation abutted by adjoining early twentieth-century building. The rear elevation is plain rendered with unevenly-spaced windows, four to the first floor and five to the second, the ground floor could not be observed clearly. Most of

these have two over two sash timber sash frames, with others boarded. To the far left-hand side the façade is abutted by a narrow link section (see below). The plot of the property stretches westwards into College Court. Here, beyond a courtyard and set back from the line of the neighbouring structures, is a large, generally plain, three-storey block (that is believed to have originally contained the wards) which is linked to the main Queen Street building by means of a very narrow three-storey link which traverses the northern boundary of the site. Both of these sections are contemporary with the main building. The block is of irregular plan, being basically rectangular, but with a large recess to the south-east corner, and has a plain rendered façade and a double-pitched roof covered in natural slate and two rendered chimneystacks (that to the south much larger). The College Court frontage has formal fenestration with the windows to the ground and first floors boarded, and (largely) one over one sash frames to those to the second floor. The central ground floor entrance has a plain sheeted door with boarded-up half-sidelights and a large canopy-like hood over with a sprocketed slated roof. The east façade is less formal with more varied openings, several of which have Georgian-paned sash frames. The exposed section of the south façade could not be seen on site, but appears to be rendered with at least one small second floor window. The narrow link to north has the same plain appearance as the western block, but with a mono-pitched slate roof and fenestration similar to the front of the western block, albeit with less (irregularly-spaced) openings. North side elevation abutted by two-storey infill building. Setting Located on the west side of Queen Street, set back slightly from the street with a double-height steel fence. Roof : Mansard natural slate & lead, two large lantern / rooflights to top of roof and two dormers to the rear, each with sloping roofs RWG: UPVC Walling: Rock-faced uncoursed sandstone ashlar Windows: Single-pane timber sash

### *Architects*

Jackson, Thomas and Son

### *Historical Information*

The former R.U.C. Barracks on Queen Street, a three-storey building in Scrabo sandstone, with a more utilitarian wing to the rear opening into College Court, was originally constructed as a children's hospital and was designed by Thomas Jackson & Son. Thomas Jackson (1807-1890) went into partnership with his son William Ridgeway Jackson in c. 1855; the pair continued in partnership until the early 1880s making the hospital on Queen Street one of the final commissions undertaken by the family firm. The Irish Builder notes that the hospital replaced the previous hospital located on King Street; the foundations of the new hospital were laid at the end of 1877 and a Mr. William McCammond was contracted as builder to realise Jackson's design. The cost of construction was estimated at approximately £3,840 (Irish Builder, pp 364-366; Dictionary of Irish Architects). When first completed the children's hospital, which was exempt from taxation, was valued at £132 in the Annual Revisions. According to a perspective sketch of 1877 the cornice running under the first, second and attic-storey windows was decorated with the following inscription: 'ERECTED A.D. 1878 BY VOLUNTARY / DONATIONS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS / BELFAST HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN.' This

original inscription has now been removed apart from the date which is still located below the attic-level dormer window. There was no change to the value of the children's hospital until the Belfast Revaluation in 1900 when the value of the building was increased to £240; the valuer noted that the hospital was leased by Belfast's City Council and was administered by the Trustees of Belfast Children's Hospital. The 1911 Census records that the Belfast Children's Hospital employed a large number of staff and cared for a similar number of afflicted children; the census notes that there were nine nurses, three administrators ('hospital sisters') and four domestic servants employed at the hospital; in that year these staff cared for 26 sick children which consisted of new-born babies to children 12 years of age (the maximum age for admission is not known). The census building return described the building as a 1st class hospital which consisted of 15 inhabited rooms and wards. The Belfast Children's Hospital continued to operate from Queen's Street until 1932 when the organisation was moved to its current premises at the Royal Hospital on the Falls Road. Immediately after vacating the site, the former hospital building was acquired by the Northern Ireland Ministry of Home Affairs who converted the site into a Police Station for the Royal Ulster Constabulary; the value of the building was subsequently increased to £355 under the First General Revaluation of property in Northern Ireland (1935) and it is likely that the original lettering was removed from the façade around that time. The former hospital survived the heavy bombardment of Belfast's City centre during the Blitz of April and May 1941 and in the aftermath of the Second World War the building was included in the second general revaluation which commenced in 1956. The police station continued to be occupied by the R.U.C. until the late-20th century and by the end of revaluation in 1972 the value of the three-storey building stood at £848. Queen Street was developed in the early-19th century and roughly follows the line of the original town defences of Belfast. The street was initially occupied by members of the merchant class and, prior to the erection of the hospital in 1877-78, the current plot was to the immediate north of the site of the Mechanics Institute which was established in c.1822 and demolished in the 1860s (Patton, pp 271-72). The first children's hospital in Belfast was established at No. 25 King Street on 4th August 1873; however within only a few years of opening it was determined that the building could not cope with the influx of patients that resulted from Belfast's huge expansion during the period prior to the granting of city status in 1888. In 1874 alone the original hospital treated 317 intern patients and 5,408 extern patients. The site on Queen Street was purchased in 1877 and Thomas Jackson & Son were commissioned to undertake the design of the new edifice. Brett states that the design was one of the family firm's most successful describing it as 'a distinguished building in a dignified Scottish renaissance style;' Larmour followed by noting 'the style is a form of Early Renaissance, chosen no doubt to recall, in a modest way, the great period of hospital building in Jacobean England' (Brett, p. 55; Larmour, p. 45). Harold Love states that although the cost of construction was estimated at £3,840, the actual cost was upwards of £5,000. The new Belfast Children's Hospital was completed in 1878 but was not officially opened for the admission of patients until 24th April 1879; when completed the hospital was praised for its quality of treatment, erected 'on lines which at that time were considered most modern and adequate,' and possessing a large extern department and 45 hospital beds located within its wards (which are believed to have been largely contained in the wing to the rear). The first Matron was a Miss Lennox who was a former pupil of Florence Nightingale's school in London; Loves stresses that it was 'largely due to her efforts that the difficulties encountered in the early years of the Hospital were successfully overcome.' In 1880, the first full year of opening, the hospital treated 294 intern and 6,831 extern patients; in the year prior to the hospital's closure the building was treating 799 interns and 13,251 externs. The history of the hospital notes that 'this great increase is indicative of the growth of the City of Belfast;' this

stretching of the capacity of the hospital could not be maintained and in the late 1920s a decision was made to relocate the hospital to a new site on the Falls Road. The foundation stone of the new hospital was laid on 5th June 1929; the hospital building on Queen Street was closed prior to the opening of the new facility on 24th November 1932 (Love, pp 2-3). The R.U.C. occupied the former children's hospital between c. 1935 and c. 1993; the building was listed in 1979 and was described by Patton in the following terms: 'three-storey building in slightly rusticated brown (originally pink and white) Scrabo sandstone, set back from the main building line to achieve a sense of airiness. Paired windows on either side of central door with brackets enclosing dentilled head; first floor windows in moulded surrounds with lugged bases' (Patton, pp 271-72). The former hospital and police station was vacated by the Police around 1993 and is still vacant.

References Primary Sources 1. PRONI OS/6/1/61/2 – Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1858 2. PRONI OS/6/1/61/3 – Third Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1901-02 3. PRONI OS/6/1/61/4 – Fourth Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1931 4. PRONI OS/6/1/61/5 – Fifth Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1938 5. PRONI VAL/12/B/43/E/3-9 – Annual Revisions 1863-1896 6. PRONI VAL/12/B/43/C/20-42 - Annual Revisions 1897-1930 7. PRONI VAL/7/B/9/45 – Belfast Revaluation 1900 8. PRONI VAL/3/B/3/14 – First General Revaluation of Northern Ireland 1935 9. PRONI VAL/4/B/7/42 – Second General Revaluation of Northern Ireland 1956-1972 10. Irish Builder, Vol. 19 (15 Dec 1877) 11. Census of Ireland (1901; 1911) 12. Belfast Street Directories (1901-1918) 13. First Survey Record – HB26/50/027 (1971) 14. First Survey Image – HB26/50/027 (1976) Secondary Sources 1. Brett, C. E. B., 'Buildings of Belfast: 1700-1914' Belfast: Friar's Bush Press, 1985. 2. Larmour, P., 'Belfast: An illustrated architectural guide' Belfast: Ulster Architectural Heritage Society, 1987. 3. Love, H., 'The Royal Belfast Hospital for sick children: A history – 1948-1998' Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1998. 4. Patton, M., 'Central Belfast: An historical gazetteer' Belfast: Ulster Architectural Heritage Society, 1993. Online Resources 1. Dictionary of Irish Architects - <http://www.dia.ie>

### *Criteria for Listing*

#### **Architectural Interest**

A. Style B. Proportion C. Ornamentation D. Plan Form I. Quality and survival of Interior

#### **Historic Interest**

X. Local Interest Y. Social, Cultural or Economic Importance V. Authorship

*Evaluation*

Attached symmetrical multi-bay three-storey with attic sandstone former hospital, dated 1878, to the designs of Thomas Jackson, latterly used as an RUC barracks. Much historic character and detailing survive and its history represents both its changing use and the provision of healthcare in the city. It is a good example of a small civic building by an architect of note.

*General Comments*

*Date of Survey*

07 January 2013

## Development Management Officer Report Committee Application

<b>Summary</b>	
<b>Committee Meeting Date:</b> 13 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	
<b>Application ID:</b> LA04/2020/0568/F and LA04/2020/0569/LBC	
<p><b>Proposal:</b> LA04/2020/0568/F – Change of use (including refurbishment of and 9 storey extension to rear) of former police station to 74 bedroom hotel with associated restaurant, bar &amp; ancillary facilities (amended description)</p> <p>LA04/2020/0569/LBC – Demolition of building and structures at rear, part demolition to internal features, refurbishment and extension to listed building (amended description).</p>	<p><b>Location:</b> 21 Queen Street Belfast BT1 6EA</p>
<b>Referral Route:</b> Paragraph 3.8.2(a) of the Scheme of Delegation for Planning (proposed hotel exceeding 30 bedrooms)	
<b>Recommendation:</b>	Approval
<p>Applicant Name and Address: Big Top Productions 13 Union Street Belfast BT1 2JF</p>	<p>Agent Name and Address: Barry Owens Consulting 38 Highfields Avenue Dublin Road Newry BT35 8UG</p>
<p><b>Executive Summary:</b></p> <p>These applications seek full planning permission and Listed Building Consent for change of use, refurbishment, 9 storey rear extension, part demolition and alterations of buildings at the former police station at No. 21 Queen Street to 74-bedroom hotel with associated restaurant, bar and ancillary facilities.</p> <p>The main issues to be considered are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The principle of a hotel at this location</li> <li>• Impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;</li> <li>• Impact on the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building</li> <li>• Archaeology</li> <li>• Ancillary open space</li> <li>• Climate change</li> <li>• Traffic, movement and parking</li> <li>• Environmental impacts</li> <li>• Drainage and flood risk</li> <li>• Natural heritage</li> </ul>	

The building is Grade B1 Listed and on the heritage risk register. The site is located within the City Centre Conservation Area. The building was previously used as a police station. The proposal seeks to convert and extend the existing building into a hotel. The buildings to the rear are to be demolished to create the space for the new 9 storey new build element.

The site is within the City Centre and the principle of hotel use in this location is considered acceptable. The proposal will help to secure the future of the Listed Building at risk. The alterations to the Listed Building are considered sympathetic. On balance, the scale, height, massing and design of the new build element at the rear are considered acceptable. The special qualities of the Listed Building and its setting would be safeguarded.

Consultees including DfI Roads, DfC Historic Environment Division, DfI Rivers, NI Water and BCC Environmental Health offer no objection. The Urban Design Officer and internal conservation advice express concerns about some aspects of the design.

No objections have been received from third parties.

Having regard to the Development Plan, and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission and Listed Building Consent are granted subject to conditions.

Delegated authority is requested for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions and deal with any other matters that arise, provided that they are not substantive.

## Case Officer Report

### Site location plan:



### Example floor plans:





Front and rear elevations:



CGIs:



<b>Characteristics of the Site and Area</b>	
<b>1.0</b>	<b><u>Description of Proposed Development</u></b>
1.1	<p>The application seeks full planning permission and Listed Building Consent for the conversion and extension of the former police station at No. 21 Queen Street to a 74 bedroom hotel. The description of each application is set out below:</p> <p>LA04/2020/0568/F – Change of use (including refurbishment of and 9 storey extension to rear) of former police station to 74 bedroom hotel with associated restaurant, bar &amp; ancillary facilities (amended description).</p> <p>LA04/2020/0569/LBC – Demolition of building and structures at rear, part demolition to internal features, refurbishment and extension to listed building (amended description).</p>
1.2	<p>Planning permission was previously granted for the conversion and extension of the building, including 7 storey new build element at the rear, to accommodate a 36-bedroom apartment/hotel, bar, restaurant and conference rooms. The new proposal retains the Listed Building at the front whilst incorporating a 9 storey new building element at the rear. Both schemes include demolition of the existing ancillary buildings to the rear.</p>
<b>2.0</b>	<b><u>Description of Site and Area</u></b>
2.1	<p>The site forms part of the continuous built frontage of the west side of Queen Street, which comprises an eclectic mix of buildings of various ages, height and design. The site comprises a four storey historic building (Grade B1 Listed) at the front with ancillary buildings at the rear. The building was formerly used as a police station.</p>
2.2	<p>To the immediate north on Queen Street is a two storey building used as amusement arcade. To the immediate south is a four storey building with shop at ground floor and faux floors above. The site backs onto the narrow College Court to the rear beyond which is student and residential accommodation to the west. To the opposite side of Queen Street to the east are further commercial buildings.</p>
2.3	<p>The building is Grade B1 Listed and on the heritage risk register. The site is located within the City Centre Conservation area the was previously used as a police station.</p>
<b>Planning Policy and other Material Considerations</b>	
<b>3.0</b>	<b><u>Planning History</u></b>
3.1	<p>Z/2006/1782/F – Refurbishment of existing front building. Demolition of rear building and construction of new apartment/hotel – 36 no. bedrooms, bars, restaurant, lounges, conference rooms and ancillary accommodation. Application approved April 2007.</p>
3.2	<p>Z/2006/1873/LBC – Refurbishment of existing B2 listed building and erection of bedroom/apartment at rear of site. Application approved April 2007.</p>
3.3	<p>Z/2006/0331 – Refurbishment of existing front building. Demolition of rear building and construction of new apartment/hotel – 36 bedrooms, bars, restaurant, lounges, conference rooms and ancillary accommodation. Application approved February 2006.</p>
3.4	<p>Z/2002/1935/F - Refurbishment of existing police station and change of use to retail outlet and restaurant. Application approved March 2003.</p>

3.5	Z/2002/1948/LB – Refurbishment of existing police station and change of use to retail outlet and restaurant. Application approved March 2003.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Policy Framework</b>
4.1	<b>Development Plan – Operational policies</b> Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035
4.2	<b>Development Plan – zoning, designations and proposals maps</b> Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) (BUAP) Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014)
4.3	<b>Regional Planning Policy</b> Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Consultations</b>
5.1	<b>Statutory Consultees</b>  <b>DfI Roads</b> – no objections in principle, subject to conditions <b>DfC Historic Environment Division</b> – no objection <b>DfI Rivers</b> – no objection <b>NI Water</b> – no objection
5.2	<b>Non-Statutory Consultees</b>  <b>Environmental Health</b> – no objection, subject to conditions <b>Urban Design Officer</b> – concerns remain regarding height (see main assessment) <b>Conservation Officer</b> – concerns about scale, height, architectural treatment and demolition of the buildings at the rear, which are considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area (see main assessment).
<b>6.0</b>	<b><u>Representations</u></b>
6.1	The application has been advertised and neighbour notified. No third-party representations have been received.
<b>7.0</b>	<b><u>ASSESSMENT</u></b>
	<b>Development Plan Context</b>
7.1	Section 6(4) of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 states that in making any determinations under the Act, regard is to be had to the local development plan, and the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
7.2	Section 45(1) of the Act states that in determining planning applications, the Council must have regard to the local development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations.
7.3	The Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP), when fully completed, will replace the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 as the statutory Development Plan for the city. The Belfast LDP will comprise two parts. Part 1 is the Plan Strategy, which contains strategic and operational

	<p>policies and was adopted on 02 May 2023. Part 2 is the Local Policies Plan, which will provide the zonings and proposals maps for Belfast and has not yet been published. The zonings and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 remain part of the statutory local development plan (“Departmental Development Plan”) until the Local Policies Plan is adopted.</p>
7.4	<p><b>Operational policies</b> – the Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application, which are set out in the following section of this report. The Plan Strategy replaces the operational policies previously provided by the Departmental Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). Those policies no longer have effect, irrespective of whether planning applications have been received before or after the adoption date (par. 1.11 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement).</p>
7.5	<p><b>Proposals Maps</b> – until such time as the Local Policies Plan is adopted, the Council must have regard to the land-use zonings, designations and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001, both versions of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (v2004 and v2014) (draft BMAP 2015) and other relevant area plans. The weight to be afforded to these proposals is a matter for the decision maker. It is considered that significant weight should be given to the proposals map in draft BMAP 2015 (v2014) given its advanced stage in the development process, save for retail policies that relate to Sprucefield which remain contentious.</p>
7.6	<p>The site is un-zoned “white land” and within the city development limits in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 and both versions of dBMAP 2015 (v2004 and v2014). The site is within the City Centre in both versions of dBMAP 2015. The site falls within the City Centre Conservation Area.</p> <p><b>Relevant Planning Policies and Supplementary Planning Guidance</b></p>
7.7	<p>The following policies in the Plan Strategy are relevant to consideration of the applications.</p> <p>Policy SP2 – Sustainable development  Policy DES1 – Principles of Urban design  Policy DES3 – Tall Buildings  Policy BH1 – Listed Buildings  Policy BH2 – Conservation Areas  Policy BH5 – Archaeology  Policy EC1 – Delivering inclusive economic growth  Policy TC1 – Supporting tourism leisure, and cultural development  Policy TLC3 – Overnight visitor accommodation  Policy TRAN1 – Active travel: walking and cycling  Policy TRAN 2 – Creating an accessible environment  Policy TRAN 3 – Transport assessment  Policy TRAN4 – Travel Plan  Policy ENV1 – Environmental Quality  Policy ENV2 – Mitigating Environmental Change  Policy ENV4 – Flood Risk  Policy ENV5 – Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems  Policy OS3 – Ancillary open space  Policy NH1 – Natural Heritage</p>
7.8	<p>The following Supplementary Planning Guidance is relevant.</p> <p>Supplementary Planning Guidance – Place making urban design  Supplementary Planning Guidance – Tall Buildings</p>

7.9	<p>The main issues to be considered are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The principle of a hotel at this location</li> <li>• Impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area</li> <li>• Impact on the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building</li> <li>• Archaeology</li> <li>• Ancillary open space</li> <li>• Climate change</li> <li>• Traffic, movement and parking</li> <li>• Environmental impacts</li> <li>• Drainage and flood risk</li> <li>• Natural heritage</li> </ul> <p><b>The principle of a hotel at this location</b></p>
7.10	<p>Policy EC1 of the Plan Strategy seeks to support development from business sectors with strong growth potential with hospitality and tourism being one of the key areas listed within the policy. The proposal is consistent with the aims of this policy.</p>
7.11	<p>Policy TLC1 relates to support for tourism, leisure and cultural development. It states that it will support such development that contributes to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Extending the offer across the daytime and night-time for a broad range of visitors; and</li> <li>b. Improving the quality, and accessibility of tourism, leisure, and culture facilities and assets to support Belfast's reputation as an attractive tourism destination.</li> </ol>
7.12	<p>It is considered that the proposal satisfies the above criteria.</p>
7.13	<p>The proposal satisfies Policy TLC3, which states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals for new overnight visitors' accommodation within the city centre boundary.</p>
7.14	<p>Regard is also had to the previous permission for a hotel on the site granted in 2007 (Z/2006/1782/F).</p>
7.15	<p>Having regard to these factors, the site is considered a suitable location in principle for a hotel.</p> <p><b>Impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area</b></p>
7.16	<p>Section 104(11) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 states that special regard must be had to the desirability of;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) preserving the character or appearance of that area in cases where an opportunity for enhancing its character or appearance does not arise;</li> <li>(b) enhancing the character or appearance of that area in cases where an opportunity to do so does arise</li> </ol>
7.17	<p>Policy BH2 of the Plan Strategy lists criteria for the consideration of proposals in a Conservation Area, including amongst others that development should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of a Conservation Area. Regarding demolition in a Conservation Area, demolition will only be acceptable where the building makes either a negative or no material contribution to the character of the area and the design quality is considered to enhance the overall character.</p>

<i>New build, extensions and alterations</i>	
7.18	The scheme has evolved with input from the Urban Design Officer and internal conservation advice. This has included requiring further CGIs, VU.CITY images and contextual information, and improvements to the design of the new build rear section including the elevation onto College Street and external cladding materials.
7.19	Notwithstanding, the conservation advice expresses concerns about the scale of the 9 storey new build extension at the rear and the lack of “architectural unity” with the base of the building on the College Court being different to the design of the rest of the rear extension. The conservation advice is that the proposal would result in “substantial harm” to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. However, the conservation advice also states that should an enabling case be made that the extension is necessary to fund the refurbishment of the Listed Building at risk, then one material is recommended for the middle section of the rear extension which is tonally in keeping with the brick proposed for the base of the building. The upper part of the building should be faced in a material reflective of traditional tones for attic floors within the Conservation Area to assist in visually breaking up the mass of the proposal.
7.20	The Urban Design Officer has a contrary view in terms of the architectural treatment of the rear of the building. They advise that the use of red brick across the lower three floors echoes that of adjacent buildings along College Court and a slight emphasis above 2F strengthens this lower ‘shoulder’ height which picks up on the eaves heights of buildings either side. Furthermore, the proposed arrangement and proportions of windows across the lower floors to the rear are also welcomed and reflect the hierarchy and rhythm of windows in adjacent buildings.
7.21	However, the Urban Design Officers agrees with the concerns of the conservation advice in relation to the scale and height of the 9-storey new build extension, albeit it is the top upper half floor which tips the balance. The Urban Design Officer advises that the impact of this upper half floor can be seen from views opposite the site along Queen Street where this element breaks the decorative roofscape of the listed asset. The impact of this upper floor is also notable in views from Castle Street south along College Court where again this element dominates the collective roofscape of what should be subservient rear additions. Removal of this top floor would allow the proposed extension to sit more comfortably in its context. They also have concerns in relation to any required rooftop equipment such as lift/stair overruns and air handling units. From experience these elements can often add additional massing at roof level which adds to the overall visual impact of the building in terms of scale, height and massing.
7.22	In terms of materials, the Urban Design Officer was critical of the original vertical column of grey cladding wrapped around from the rear elevation onto the two side elevations (north and south) of the rear extension. However, this has since been changed to a red tone to better complement the predominant red brick in the area.
7.23	The concerns of Urban Design Officer and conservation advice are acknowledged. However, in relation to the scale and height of the rear extension, it would be read against the backdrop of the larger and taller 11 storey buildings to the opposite side of the narrow College Court to the immediate west, and office development under construction on Queen Street to the south. In this context, and on balance, the 9-storey scale of the rear extension is considered acceptable. Whilst the proposed extension is not “subservient”, therefore, in conflict with criterion f. of Policy BH2, for the reasons stated its scale and height are considered acceptable.

7.24	<p>In conclusion, it is considered that the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would overall be preserved. The restoration of the Listed Building at risk will also represent an enhancement of the Conservation Area.</p>
	<p><i>Demolition</i></p>
7.25	<p>In terms of the demolition, the conservation advice is that the rear block proposed to be demolished makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area through age, style and materials, functional use and its narrative quality in that one can read the improvements in glass making technology of its date of construction (1880) with cheaper 6 over 6 sashes to the rear, more expensive full paned sashes restricted to the front elevation; and, reflecting the historic hierarchy of place with civic status of the building. The conservation advice is that the existing buildings make a better contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area than the proposed 9 storey hotel.</p>
7.26	<p>Officers disagree with the views of the conservation advice. The existing buildings at the rear are considered to be of a modest and ordinary design, which makes no material contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Moreover, the design quality of the proposed building is considered to enhance the overall character of the conservation area, allowing the retention and restoration of the Listed Building. It is also noteworthy that DfC HED offers no objection to the demolition of these buildings in terms of their value or impact on the setting of the Listed Building at the front. The proposal is considered compliant with Policies BH2, DES1 and DES3.</p>
	<p><b>Impact on the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building</b></p>
7.27	<p>The site comprises a Grade B1 listed building of special architectural and historic interest. The building is in poor condition and on the at risk register.</p>
7.28	<p>Following amendments to the proposal and site inspection, DfC HED offers no objection to the applications, recommending conditions in the event that permissions are granted.</p>
7.29	<p>The proposal will facilitate the restoration and re-use of the redundant Listed former police station, a building at risk, which is welcomed. In this regard, a condition is recommended to ensure that the works to the Listed Building are carried out prior to the use of the hotel. A further condition is recommended that requires a phasing plan for the works, again to ensure the appropriate timing of works to the Listed Building. The proposal is considered compliant with Policy BH1 and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>
	<p><b>Archaeology</b></p>
7.30	<p>DfC HED: Historic Monuments state in their response that the site is adjacent to a 17<sup>th</sup> century town ditch and recommends archaeology related conditions. These conditions are recommended and the proposal is considered compliant with Policy BH5 and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>
	<p><b>Ancillary open space</b></p>
7.31	<p>Policy OS3 requires the provision of ancillary open space for all new development to include both hard and soft landscaping areas to serve the needs of the development. It is normally to be expected that 10% of the site is given over to open space. The proposal provides circa 8% (45sq/m) of open space to the front of the listed building. The proposal also provides a first-floor terrace area circa 13% (80sq/m). Whilst the Queen Street frontage area is compromised in terms of its amenity value by reason of it being the main entrance to the hotel from Queen Street, regard is had to the much more significant</p>



	<p>benefits of bringing the Listed Building at risk back into use. The proposal is considered acceptable having regard to Policy OS3.</p> <p><b>Climate change</b></p>
7.32	<p>Policy ENV2 requires development to incorporate measure to mitigate environmental change and reduce Green House Gases by promoting of sustainable development. The policy requires, where feasible, to avoid demolition and seek structures reuse. In these regards, the demolition of the buildings at the rear is necessary to facilitate the overall hotel concept and bring the Listed Building at risk back into use.</p>
7.33	<p>Policy ENV3 requires the design to minimise the reliance on fossil fuels for heating and minimise building overheating and therefore reduce the need for air-conditioning. The proposal will include insulation measure to the walls, the windows will have low transmitting glazing to minimise air conditioning needs. The proposal will also incorporate solar control principles, low energy lighting and high efficiency heat pumps and so forth, all designed to reduce operating costs but having the additional benefit of reducing the need for energy to maintain comfortable conditions within the hotel. It is recommended that these climate control measures are secure by condition.</p>
7.34	<p>Policy ENV5 requires, where appropriate, sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to manage surface water runoff and flooding is not increased elsewhere. The site is confined within an existing built-up area limiting the scope to employ SuDS methods. The footprint of the proposed building utilises all available ground space, this space is already covered with existing buildings and hard-standing therefore there will be no increase in the level of hard-standing that would contribute to additional surface water run-off. Whilst no specific SuDS measures are proposed, regard is had to the much benefit of bringing the Listed Building at risk back into use.</p> <p><b>Traffic, Movement and Parking</b></p>
7.35	<p>No dedicated parking is provided but this is considered acceptable given the sustainable and highly accessible location of the site.</p>
7.36	<p>Dfl Roads advises no objections subject to conditions and the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of traffic, moving and parking. The proposal is considered to comply with Policies TRAN 1, TRAN 2, TRAN 3, TRAN 4 and TRAN 8 and relevant provisions of the SPPS, and in these regards is acceptable.</p> <p><b>Environmental impacts</b></p> <p><i>Contamination:</i></p>
7.37	<p>The application is supported by a Preliminary Risk Assessment, concluding low risk from contaminants. Following receipt of further information, Environmental Health advises no objection subject to conditions. This includes a Grampian condition to require submission and approval of the Generic Quantitative Risk Assessment (GQRA). Officers note that the existing buildings on the site will need to be removed to allow bore hole testing to take place for the completion of the GQRA.</p>
7.38	<p>The proposal is considered acceptable in respect of land contamination and compliant with Policy ENV1.</p>

<p>7.39</p> <p>7.40</p> <p>7.41</p> <p>7.42</p>	<p><i>Noise and odour:</i></p> <p>Environmental Health has advised conditions for the control of noise and odour associated with the proposed development. These conditions are recommended. In this regard, the proposal is considered compliant with Policy ENV1.</p> <p><i>Air Quality:</i></p> <p>Environmental Health has reviewed the Air Quality Assessment provided with the application and advises that it meets the relevant requirements. In this regard, the proposal is considered compliant with Policy ENV1.</p> <p><b>Drainage and flood risk</b></p> <p>Dfl Rivers has advised that the drainage proposals are acceptable providing the applicant receives discharge permission from NI Water (it is understood that the applicant has entered into a pre-development enquiry with NI Water). No unacceptable drainage or flood risk issues have been identified and the proposal is considered to accord with Policy ENV4.</p> <p><b>Natural heritage</b></p> <p>The applicant has completed a biodiversity checklist which confirms no impacts. It has been unnecessary consult DAERA in this case, however, the applicant will be reminded of their legal responsibilities under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) by way of an informative.</p>
<p><b>8.0</b></p> <p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p>	<p><b>Summary of Recommendation:</b></p> <p>Having regard to the Development Plan, and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission and Listed Building Consent are granted subject to conditions.</p> <p>Delegated authority is requested for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions and deal with any other matters that arise, provided that they are not substantive.</p>
	<p><b>DRAFT CONDITIONS</b></p> <p><b>Full planning permission (LA04/2020/0568/F)</b></p> <p>1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this permission.</p> <p>Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.</p> <p>2. Notwithstanding the submitted details, no development shall commence on site unless a Phasing Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The development shall not be carried out or sequenced unless in accordance with the approved Phasing Plan.</p> <p>Reason: The Listed Building is at risk and the development has been permitted to enable the restoration of the Listed Building.</p> <p>3. The hotel use hereby permitted shall not be carried out or the building occupied until the works to the Listed Building have been fully implemented in accordance with Listed Building Consent LA04/2020/0569/LBC and written evidence of such</p>

has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The Council and DfC Historic Environment Division shall at all reasonable times be afforded access to the Listed Building to inspect the works as part of the authorisation process.

Reason: The Listed Building is at risk and the development has been permitted to enable the restoration of the Listed Building.

4. No demolition shall commence on site unless a contract has been agreed for the redevelopment of the site in accordance with planning permission [LA04/2020/0568/F] and evidence of that contract has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council]. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with planning permission LA04/2020/0568/F.

Reason: As required by Sections 91(6) and 105 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Approval is required upfront because if redevelopment of the site does not take place it could leave the vacant site unsightly and harmful to the Conservation Area.

5. Notwithstanding the approved details, no development shall commence unless details of climate change measures to manage and/or mitigate climate change have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The development shall not be occupied unless the approved climate change measures have been implemented. The climate change measures shall be retained in accordance with the approved details at all times.

Reason: To manage and mitigate climate change having regard to Policies ENV2 and ENV3 of the Belfast LPD Plan Strategy 2035.

6. No development shall commence on site (other than site clearance, site preparation, demolition and the formation of foundations and trenches) unless details of surface water drainage, including a programme for implementation of these works, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure appropriate surface water drainage of the site. Approval is required upfront because the design of the drainage is an integral part of the development and its acceptability.

7. No development or works shall commence on site (other than that required to fulfil this condition) unless a programme of archaeological work has been implemented in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Council.

Reason: To ensure that archaeological remains and features are preserved in situ. Approval is required upfront because archaeological remains and features could be damaged or permanently lost.

8. A programme of post-excavation analysis, preparation of an archaeological report, dissemination of results and preparation of the excavation archive shall be undertaken in accordance with the programme of archaeological work approved under condition 7.

These measures shall be implemented, and a final archaeological report shall be submitted to the Council within 6 months of the completion of archaeological programme of works.

Reason: To ensure that the archaeological remains and features are properly analysed and recorded.

9. No development shall commence on site unless details of windows and external doors have been submitted and approved in writing by the Council. The details shall include cross sections, elevations, cill detail / material, the actual glazing material and panes and colour and finish, with a sample provided for each different window type. The windows and external doors shall not be installed unless in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

10. No new plumbing, pipes, soil-stacks, flues, vents, ductwork, lighting, security cameras or mechanical and electrical services of any description shall be fixed on the external faces of the building other than those shown on the approved drawings.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

11. No development shall commence on site unless a detailed specification and samples of all new materials to be used in the elevations of the building, including samples of materials for the rain screen cladding and new window materials, have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Council. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

12. The hotel shall not be operated or occupied unless secure cycle parking facilities have been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The secure cycle parking shall be retained as such at all times.

Reason: To ensure acceptable cycle parking facilities on the site and encourage alternative modes of transport to the private car.

13. The development shall operate in accordance with the Service Management Plan.

Reason: In the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users.

14. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied or operated unless in accordance with the approved Travel Plan **[dated stamped on X and uploaded to the Planning Portal on Y]**.

Reason: To promote sustainable travel patterns and off-set the demand for vehicular movements and/or parking.

15. No development shall commence on site (other than site clearance, enabling works or works to fulfil this condition) unless a Quantitative Risk Assessment has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.

A detailed site investigation shall be carried out in line with Business Support 10175:2011+A2:2017 (or any standard that reproduces or replaces this standard).

Any ground gas investigations shall be conducted in line with BS 8576:2013 and BS 8485:2015+A1:2019 (or any standard that reproduces or replaces this standard).

A satisfactory assessment of the risks (including a Revised Conceptual Site Model), shall be conducted in line with current Environment Agency guidance. In addition, risks associated with ground gases shall be assessed under the methodology outlined in BS8485:2015+A1:2019 and CIRIA C665 (or any standard that reproduces or replaces this standard).

Based on the outcome of this risk assessment, a Remediation Strategy may be required. If necessary, the Remediation Strategy must demonstrate how the identified contaminant linkages are to be demonstrably broken and no longer pose a potential risk to human health. It must also detail how the proposed remedial works are to be verified.

The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of human health

16. The plant and equipment associated with the development hereby permitted shall achieve a rating level (LAr) no greater than the Background Sound Level, LA90, during the daytime and during night-time when measured or determined at the nearest noise sensitive premises. All measurements and calculations must be conducted in line with the methodology outlined in BS4142:2014+A1 2019 Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity

17. Deliveries and collections to and from the hereby permitted development are not permitted outside the hours of 07:00 and 23:00hrs.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity

18. No kitchen or extraction and odour abatement system shall be installed unless it is capable of achieving a 'very high level' of odour control in accordance with the measures outlined in Section 2 of the AONA Environmental Consulting Ltd report titled: Updated Odour Impact Assessment. Date: April 2022.

Reason: Protection of amenity against adverse odour.

19. All gas boilers shall meet the technical specification as detailed within the letter Ref.: ENV-6045 Queen Street Hotel Air Emissions, dated 9th October 2020

Reason: Protection of Human Health

20. During the construction phase, dust management measures shall be implemented in accordance with the IAQM Guidance on the Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction 2014.

Reason: Protection of residential amenity

**Listed Building Consent (LA04/2020/0569/LBC)**

1. The works hereby permitted shall be begun not later than the expiration of 5 years beginning with the date on which this consent is granted.

Reason: As required by Section 94 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

2. Prior to commencement of any structural alterations, a method statement that demonstrates how the approved structural works will be undertaken, and outlining how the Listed Building will be protected, during construction (including foundations and any piling) and demolition work, shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Council. The work shall be carried out fully in accordance with the details approved.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

3. No works shall be undertaken until details of an accredited conservation professional who will oversee and certify the hereby approved conservation works have been submitted to approved in writing by the Council. The works shall be overseen and certified by the accredited conservation profession approved by the Council.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

4. Internal or external historic surviving decorative or functional features, including plasterwork, ironwork, fitted cupboards, bookcases, ceramic tiling, shelving, fireplaces and grates, pelmets, fitted furniture, doors, windows, staircases, staircase balustrading, joinery and decorative ironwork shall not be removed or altered unless expressly specified by the approved drawings. Retained features shall be fully protected during the course of any works on site, in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. Any missing stairway joinery, skirtings, cornices, architraves, window panelling and doors shall be copied, and subsequently replaced, to replicate exactly the existing in material and detailing.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

5. All new external finishes and works of making good to the retained fabric, shall match the existing original work adjacent in respect of methods, detailed execution and finished appearance unless otherwise approved in writing by the Council.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

6. No works shall commence on site unless details of windows and external doors have been submitted and approved in writing by the Council. The details shall include cross sections, elevations, cill detail / material, the actual glazing material and panes and colour and finish, with a sample provided for each different window type. The windows and external doors shall not be installed unless in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

7. No works shall be undertaken unless details of the connections and interface between the new build and the existing façades have been submitted and approved in writing by the Council. The details shall be drawn to a minimum scale of 1:20 and shall include dimensioned set-backs, structure, flashings and allowance for movement. The works shall be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

8. No new plumbing, pipes, soil-stacks, flues, vents, ductwork, lighting, security cameras or mechanical and electrical services of any description shall be fixed on the external faces of the building other than those shown on the approved drawings.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

9. No works shall be undertaken unless details of building services including mechanical, electrical, and audio installations routeways and installations impacting the architecture and detail of the listed building have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The works shall be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details..

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

10. No works shall commence on site unless a detailed specification and samples of all new materials to be used in the elevations of the building, including samples of materials for the rain screen cladding and new window materials, have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Council. The works shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

11. No works shall commence on site unless a detailed specification and samples of external paving to ramps, tactile paving, balustrading and external lighting have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The works shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

**Informatives**

**NOT03 Compliance with planning permission**

Please make sure that you carry out the development in accordance with the approved plans and any planning conditions listed above. Failure to do so will mean that the proposal is unauthorised and liable for investigation by the Council’s Planning Enforcement team. If you would like advice about how to comply with the planning permission, you are advised to the contact the Planning Service at Belfast City Council at [planning@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:planning@belfastcity.gov.uk).

**NOT04 Discharge of condition(s)**

This planning permission includes condition(s) which require further details to be submitted to and approved by the Council. Please read the condition(s) carefully so that you know

when this information needs to be provided and approved. It could take a minimum of 8 weeks for the Council to approve the details, assuming that they are satisfactory, and sometimes longer depending on the complexity of the condition. You should allow for this when planning the timeline of your project.

**NOT06 Non-planning requirements**

The grant of planning permission does not dispense with the need to obtain licenses, consents or permissions under other legislation or protocols. The requirement for other authorisations may have been identified by consultees in their response to the application and can be accessed on the Northern Ireland Planning Portal website. The responses from consultees may also include other general advice for the benefit of the applicant or developer.

**NOT07 Protected Species**

The applicant or developer's attention is drawn to The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended), under which it is an offence to:

- a) Deliberately capture, injure or kill a wild animal including a European protected species, which includes all species of bat;
- b) Deliberately disturb such an animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection;
- c) Deliberately disturb such an animal in such a way as to be likely to:
  - (i) affect the local distribution or abundance of the species to which it belongs;
  - (ii) Impair its ability to survive, breed or reproduce, or rear or care for its young; or
  - (iii) Impair its ability to hibernate or migrate;
- d) Deliberately obstruct access to a breeding site or resting place of such an animal;  
or
- e) To damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.

If there is evidence of bat activity / roosts on the site, all works should cease immediately and further advice sought from the Wildlife Inspector's Team, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Klondyke Building, Cromac Avenue, Gasworks Business Park, Belfast BT72JA. Tel. 028 9056 9605.



<b>ANNEX A</b>	
<b>Date Valid</b>	11th February 2022
<b>Date First Advertised</b>	20th March 2020
<b>Date Last Advertised</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2024
<b>Date of Neighbour Notification(s)</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2020 11 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2024
<b>Number of Neighbour Notifications</b>	25 letters issued – full details available on planning portal.
<b>Date of EIA Determination</b>	
<b>ES Requested</b>	No

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## Development Management Report

Summary	
<b>Committee Date:</b> 12 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	
<b>Application ID:</b> LA04/2024/0664/F	
<b>Proposal:</b> Demolition of the existing buildings on the site and construction of a new Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation development across 4 blocks of 6 to 18 stories in height, comprising of 560 student rooms, including landscaped roof terraces, associated amenity, site and access works (amended description)	<b>Location:</b> Lands comprising existing Fanum House, Norwood House and adjacent lands, No's 96-110 Great Victoria Street, Belfast, BT2 7BE
<b>Referral Route:</b> Application for Major development	
<b>Recommendation:</b> Approval subject to conditions and S76 planning agreement	
<b>Applicant Name and Address:</b> South Bank Square Ltd 6 Bank Square Maghera BT46 5AZ	<b>Agent Name and Address:</b> TSA Planning 20 May Street Belfast BT1 4NL
<b>Date Valid</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> April 2024
<b>Target Date</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> November 2024
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Ed Baker, Planning Manager
<p><b>Executive Summary:</b></p> <p>This application relates to lands comprising the existing Fanum House, Norwood House and adjacent lands at 96-110 Great Victoria Street.</p> <p>The application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of the existing buildings on the site and construction of a new Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) development across four blocks of 6 to 18 stories in height. The proposal includes 560 rooms made up of 205 studio rooms and 355 cluster rooms. There will be an associated café, communal facilities including a gym, cinema, meeting/study rooms, laundry rooms, and landscaped roof gardens. The proposed material treatments of the building include a mix of red/orange brick and white/grey brick which has been used to break up the building into four distinct blocks. There would be four accessible disabled parking spaces at the rear with access off Dublin Road and Great Victoria Street.</p> <p>The key issues for consideration of the application are set out below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principle of PBMSA in this location</li> <li>• Design and Placemaking</li> <li>• Impact on Heritage Assets</li> <li>• Impact on the Conservation Area</li> <li>• Impact on Amenity</li> </ul>	

- Climate Change
- Open Space
- Access and Transport
- Health Impacts
- Environmental Protection
- Flood risk and Drainage
- Waste-water Infrastructure
- Natural Heritage
- Waste Management
- Section 76 Planning Agreement
- Pre-Application Community Consultation

The site is a very sustainable location within the City Centre and close to transport links such as Grand Central Station and other public transport services. The application is supported by satisfactory evidence of need for the proposal.

Following negotiations and amendments to the scheme, the proposed building is considered to be of a design appropriate to its context that will introduce active frontages and support the regeneration of the surrounding area.

NI Water have recommended refusal and this is addressed within the report.

DfI Roads has requested a fully dimensioned drawing to demonstrate how vehicular access will be gained to the accessible disabled parking spaces. The drawing has been submitted and DfI Roads have been reconsulted. Delegated authority is sought to deal with this matter.

Two objections have been received as detailed within the main report.

The proposal was not subject to a Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) and the applicant has entered into a Planning Performance Agreement to work through the design issues.

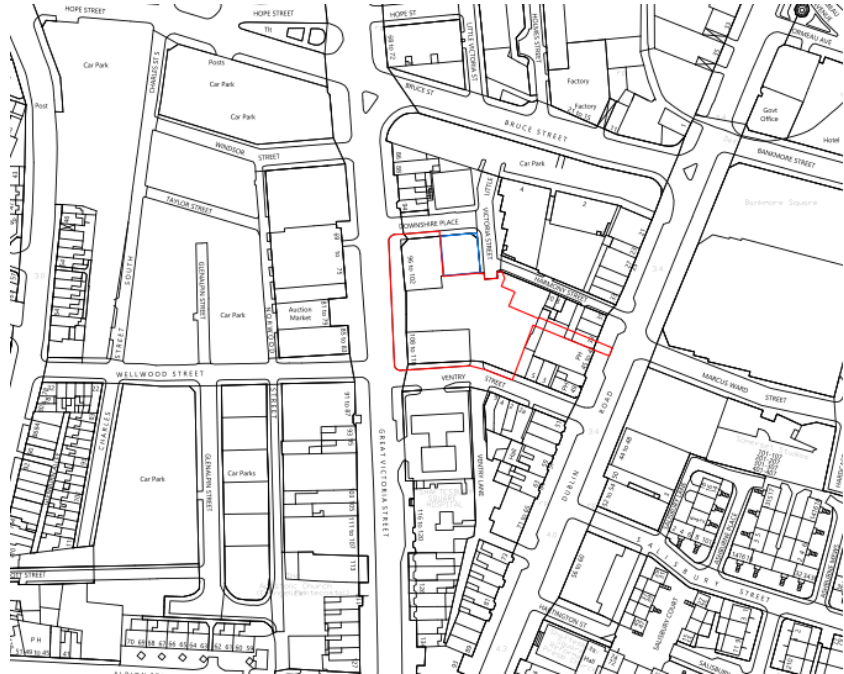
### **Recommendation**

Having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.

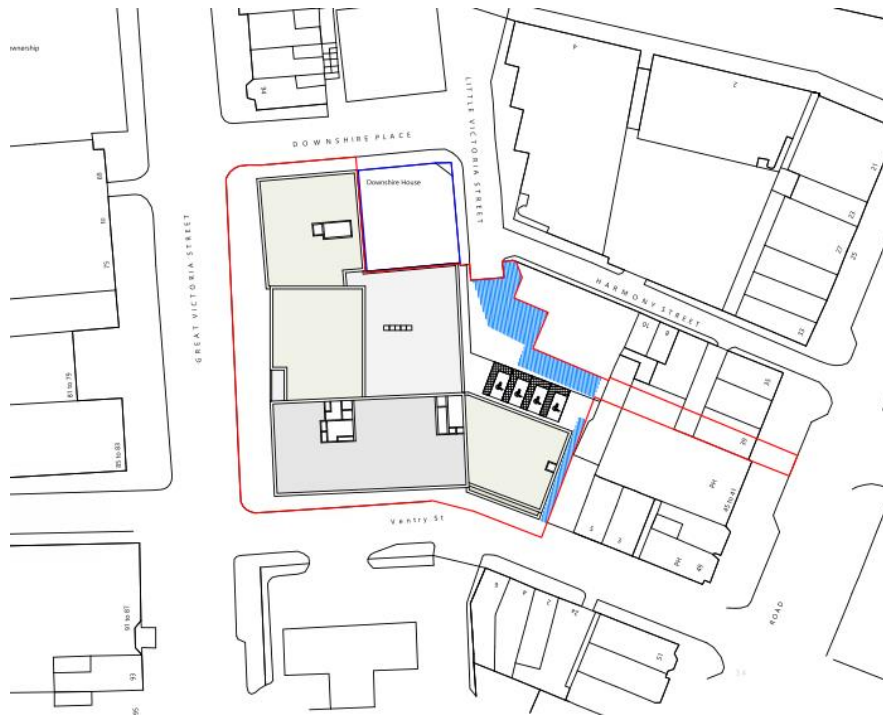
Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement, and resolve the outstanding issue raised by DfI Roads in relation to the details of the access to the development, and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that the issues are not substantive.

# DRAWINGS AND IMAGERY

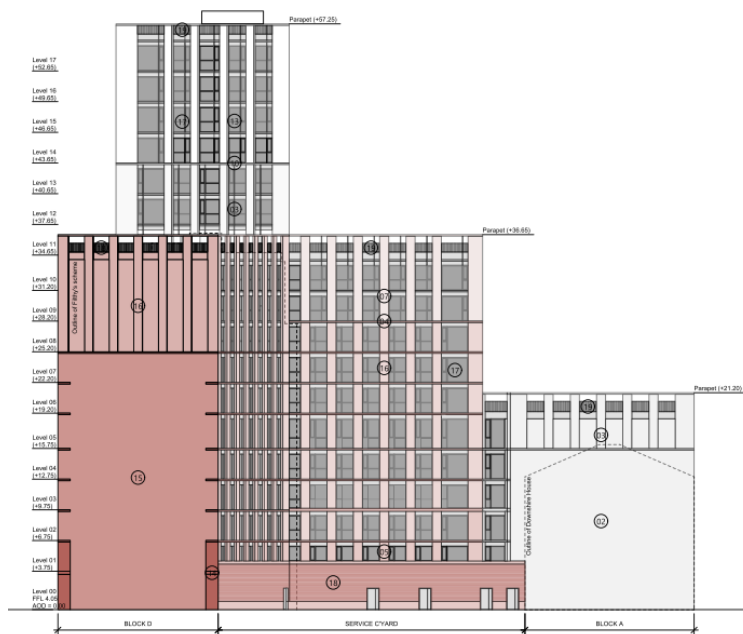
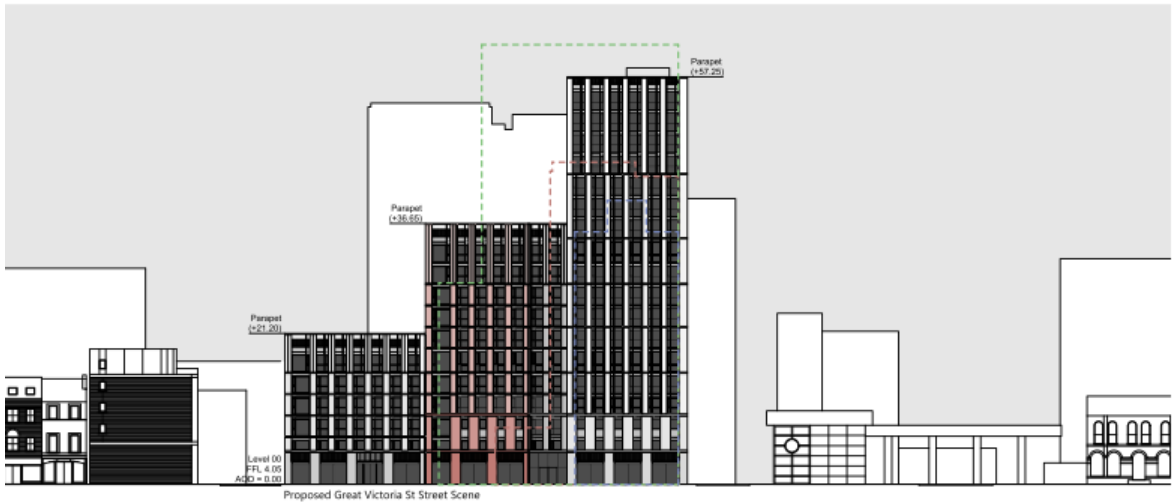
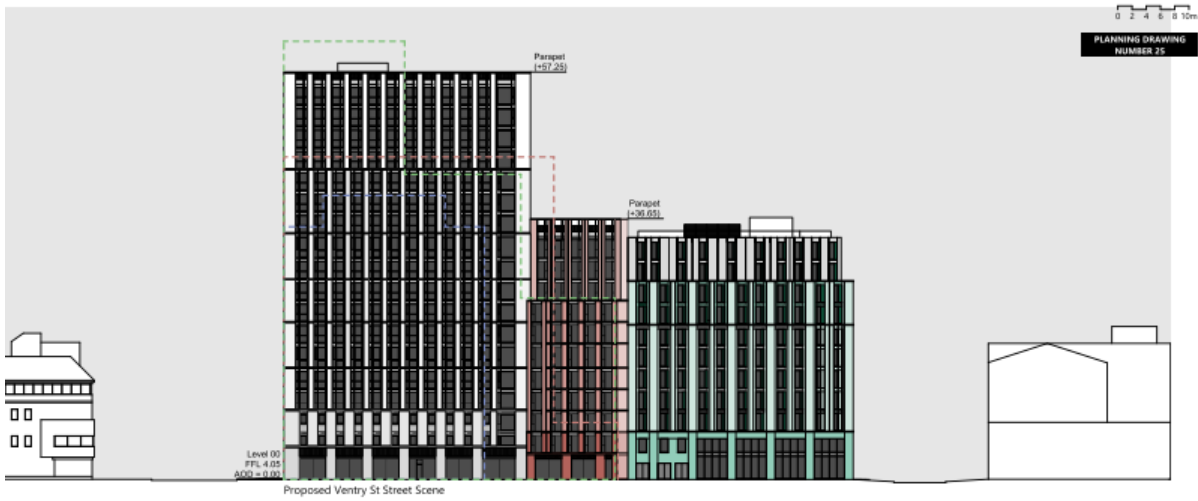
## Site Location Plan:

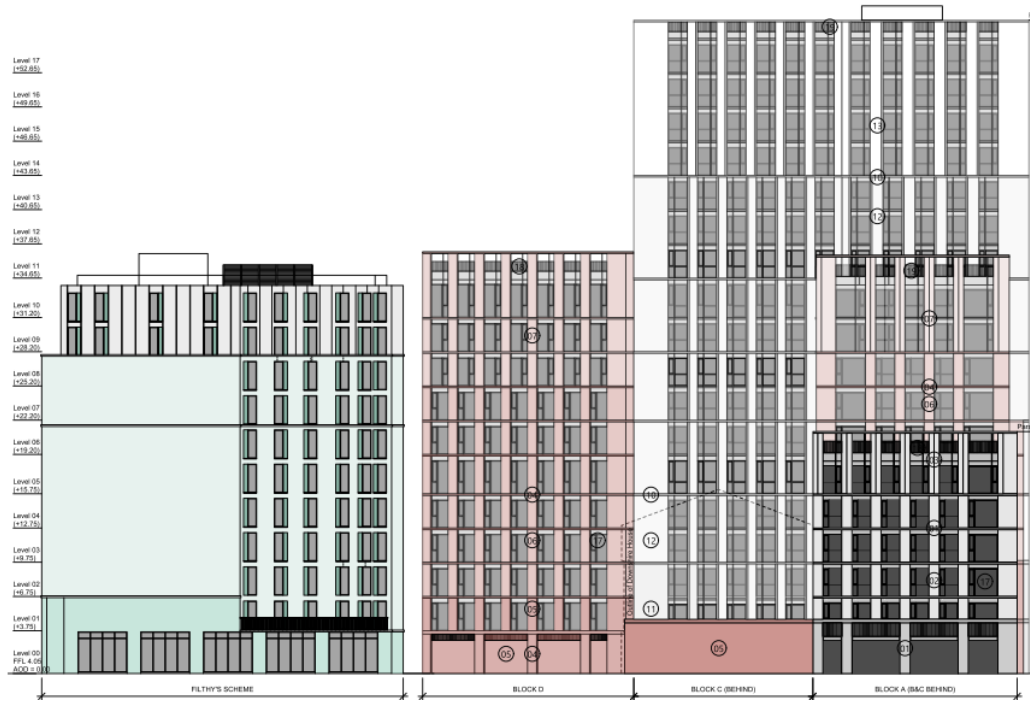


## Proposed Site Layout:

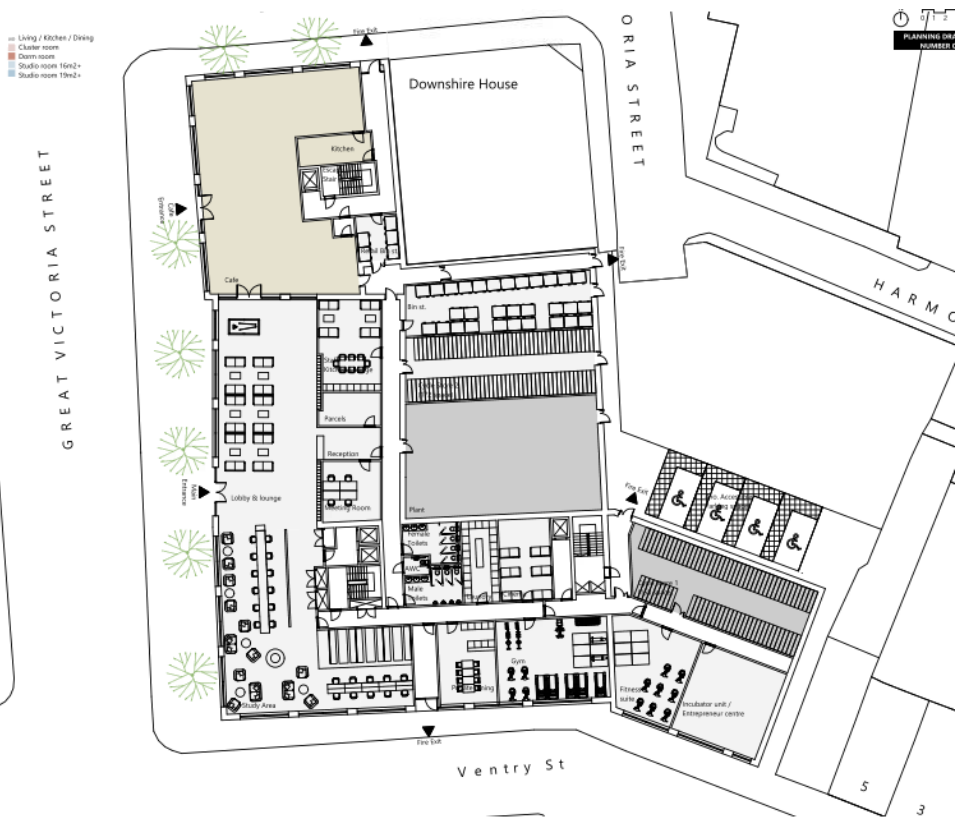


# Proposed Elevations:





**Ground floor plan:**



**Photomontages:**







<b>1.0</b>	<b>Characteristics of the Site and Area</b>
1.1	This application relates to lands comprising the existing Fanum House, Norwood House and adjacent lands at 96-110 Great Victoria Street.
1.2	The site is approximately 0.3 hectares (ha). It comprises the 11-storey building Fanum House, and a four-storey red brick office building (known as Norwood House) with retail and commercial uses on the ground floor. Fanum House which has been vacant for a number of years but was previously retail at ground floor and offices above. It occupies the corner at the junction of Great Victoria Street and Ventry Street while the Norwood House office building occupies the corner of Great Victoria Street and Downshire Place. Lands between the two buildings and to the rear of Fanum House are occupied by an area of hardstanding used as a car park.
1.3	The surrounding area is largely commercial in nature reflecting the City Centre location. However, there are residential apartments on Downshire Place to the immediate north with community use at ground floor. The site abuts an office building, Downshire House, which is to the rear of Norwood House to the east.
1.4	The immediate context of Great Victoria Street is comprised of lower height office buildings (with the exception of Fanum House itself) of two to five stories with ground floor retail units. To the east towards Dublin Road is generally comprised of taller buildings. To the east of the site is the 7-storey ETAP hotel, a pub/bar (Filthy McNasty's) and community use. The latter have approval for redevelopment for an 11-storey PBMSA building (LA04/2023/3030/F) on the neighbouring land on Ventry Street.
1.5	Further to the north, to the north of the junction of Great Victoria Street and Bruce Street are generally taller buildings. Buildings are generally a minimum of 5-storeys while an emerging higher context is established with a new 15-storey PBMSA on Bruce Street. Further to the north-east at 14 Dublin Road (former cinema site), a 17-storey PBMSA scheme and 14-storey office building are currently under construction.
1.6	To the immediate south of the site is a petrol filling station, beyond which is the Shaftesbury Square Hospital, an end terrace two storey multi bay polychromatic brick former hospital (Listed Building dated to 1867; HB26/30/072).
1.7	The materials on Great Victoria Street are primarily red brick buildings with the exception of Fanum House which is made of a grey render.

<p>1.8</p> <p>1.9</p> <p>1.10</p> <p>1.11</p> <p>1.12</p>	<p>The Linen Conservation Area is located to the north east of the site and runs along the northern side of Bruce Street at the junction of Holmes Street. Directly north beyond the junction of Great Victoria Street and Amelia Street is the City Centre Conservation Area.</p> <p><b>Description of Proposed Development</b></p> <p>The application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of the existing buildings on the site and construction of a new PBMSA development across four blocks of 6 to 18 stories. The proposal includes 560 rooms made up of 205 studio rooms and 355 cluster rooms. There will be an associated café, communal facilities including a gym, cinema, meeting/study rooms, laundry rooms, and landscaped roof gardens.</p> <p>The proposal includes four accessible disabled parking spaces at the rear with vehicular access from Dublin Road via Harmony Street and from Great Victoria Street via Downshire Place.</p> <p>The proposed material treatments of the building include a mix of red/orange brick and white/grey brick which has been used to break up the building into four distinct blocks.</p> <p>The proposal was not subject to a Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) and the applicant entered into a Planning Performance Agreement to seek to resolve the design issues.</p>
<p><b>2.0</b></p> <p>2.1</p>	<p><b>RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY</b></p> <p>Z/2011/1178/F – the application sought planning permission for the replacement of Fanum House with the erection of a 15-storey, 173 bedroom hotel with basement, including car parking. The application remains extant following the submission of evidence to demonstrate commencement had occurred. This is discussed further in the assessment of the application.</p>
<p><b>3.0</b></p> <p>3.1</p>	<p><b>PLANNING POLICY</b></p> <p><b>Development Plan – Plan Strategy</b></p> <p><u>Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035</u></p> <p><i>Strategic Policies:</i></p> <p>Policy SP1A – managing growth and supporting infrastructure delivery  Policy SP2 – sustainable development  Policy SP3 – improving health and wellbeing  Policy SP5 – positive placemaking  Policy SP6 – environmental resilience  Policy SP7 – connectivity  Policy SD2 – Settlement Areas</p> <p><i>Operational Policies:</i></p> <p>Policy HOU12 – Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA)</p> <p>Policy DES1 – Principles of urban design  Policy DES2 – Masterplanning approach for major development  Policy DES3 – Tall buildings  Policy RD1 – New residential developments  Policy BH1 – Listed Buildings</p>

	<p>Policy BH2 – Conservation Areas Policy BH5 – Archaeology</p> <p>Policy TRAN1 – Active travel – walking and cycling Policy TRAN2 – Creating an accessible environment Policy TRAN4 – Travel plan Policy TRAN6 – Access to public roads Policy TRAN8 – Car parking and servicing arrangements Policy TRAN9 – Parking standards within areas of parking restraint</p> <p>Policy ENV1 – Environmental quality Policy ENV2 – Mitigating environmental change Policy ENV3 – Adapting to environmental change Policy ENV4 – Flood Risk Policy ENV5 – Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)</p> <p>Policy HC1 – Promoting healthy communities Policy GB1 – Green and blue infrastructure network Policy OS3 – Ancillary open space Policy TRE1 – Trees Policy NH1 – Protection of natural heritage resources</p>
3.2	<p><u>Supplementary Planning Guidance</u></p> <p>Placemaking and Urban Design Tall Buildings Masterplanning approach for Major developments Residential Design Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems Transportation Planning and Flood Risk Development and Trees</p>
3.3	<p><b>Development Plan – zoning, designations and proposals maps</b> Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) BUAP Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014)</p>
3.4	<p><b>Regional Planning Policy</b> Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)</p>
3.5	<p><b>Other Material Considerations</b> Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation in Belfast (June 2016) Belfast: A Framework for student housing and purpose-built student accommodation Developer Contribution Framework (2020) Belfast Agenda (Community Plan)</p>
4.0	<p><b>CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS</b></p>
4.1	<p><u>Statutory Consultees</u></p> <p><b>DfI Roads</b> – Further details of the vehicular access were requested and have been submitted. Awaiting further response. (see main assessment).</p>

4.2	<p><b>DfC HED</b> – No objection.</p> <p><b>DfI Rivers</b> – No objection.</p> <p><b>DAERA</b> – No objection subject to conditions.</p> <p><b>NI Water</b> – Recommends refusal (see main assessment).</p> <p><u>Non-Statutory Consultees</u></p> <p><b>Planning Service Urban Design Officer</b> – Content</p> <p><b>Conservation Advice</b> – Comments provided and set out in main report.</p> <p><b>Environmental Health</b> – No objections and recommends conditions.</p> <p><b>BCC Landscape and Development</b> – No objection.</p> <p><b>BCC Economic Development Unit</b> – Recommends an employability and skills developer contribution for the construction phase.</p> <p><b>Shared Environmental Services (SES)</b> – No objection.</p> <p><b>Belfast City Airport</b> – No objection.</p> <p><b>Development Plan Housing Team</b> – Comments provided and set out in main report.</p> <p><u>Representations</u></p>
4.3	<p>The application has been advertised in the newspaper and neighbours notified.</p>
4.4	<p>Two letters of objection have been received and are summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There would be 500 students living within a mile radius of residents and that social housing is required in this area. <i>Officer Response: any impact on neighbouring residents is considered within the report, the site is un-zoned and the Council must consider the application before it on its merits in accordance with the Local Development Plan and relevant material considerations.</i></li> <li>• Overlooking from Rooftop Terraces. <i>Officer Response: the rooftop terraces contain a 1.7m parapet which will prevent harmful overlooking. This will be implemented by condition.</i></li> <li>• Noise Control on Downshire Place. <i>Officer Response: an Outline Student Management Plan has been submitted and will be subject to a S76 agreement to ensure sufficient measures are in place to manage amenity issues such as noise. There are no entrances onto Downshire Place which will minimise footfall on this street.</i></li> <li>• Representation advocates the removal of parking spaces on Downshire Place. <i>Officer's Response: this land is not within the applicant's control.</i></li> <li>• The proposal should include Green Spaces and Trees. <i>Officer Response: the proposal includes roof top landscaped terraces and a high quality public realm scheme with the inclusion of new tree planting.</i></li> </ul>

5.0	<p><b>PLANNING ASSESSMENT</b></p>
	<p><b>Main Issues</b></p>
5.1	<p>The main issues relevant to consideration of the application are set out below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principle of PBMSA in this location</li> <li>• Design and placemaking</li> <li>• Impact on heritage assets</li> <li>• Impact on Conservation Area</li> <li>• Impact on amenity</li> <li>• Climate change</li> <li>• Open space</li> <li>• Access and transport</li> <li>• Health impacts</li> <li>• Environmental protection</li> <li>• Flood risk and drainage</li> <li>• Waste-water infrastructure</li> <li>• Natural heritage</li> <li>• Waste management</li> <li>• Section 76 planning agreement</li> <li>• Pre-Application Community Consultation</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Development Plan Context</b></p>
5.2	<p>Section 6(4) of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 states that in making any determinations under the Act, regard is to be had to the local development plan, and the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.</p>
5.3	<p>Section 45(1) of the Act states that in determining planning applications, the Council must have regard to the local development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations.</p>
5.4	<p>The Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP) when fully completed will replace the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 as the statutory Development Plan for the city. The Belfast LDP will comprise two parts. Part 1 is the Plan Strategy, which contains strategic and operational policies and was adopted on 02 May 2023. Part 2 is the Local Policies Plan, which will provide the zonings and proposals maps for Belfast and has not yet been published. The zonings and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (“Departmental Development Plan”) remain part of the statutory local development plan until the Local Policies Plan is adopted.</p>
	<p><u>Operational Polices</u></p>
5.5	<p>The Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application. These have been listed at paragraph 3.1.</p>
	<p><u>Proposals Maps</u></p>
5.6	<p>Until such time as the Local Policies Plan is adopted, the Council must have regard to the land-use zonings, designations and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (“Departmental Development Plan”), both versions of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (v2004 and v2014) (draft BMAP 2015) and other relevant area</p>

	plans. The weight to be afforded to these proposals maps is a matter for the decision maker. It is considered that significant weight should be given to the proposals map in draft BMAP 2015 (v2014) given its advanced stage in the development process, save for retail policies that relate to Sprucefield which remain contentious.
5.7	<b>Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001</b> – the site is un-zoned “white land” within the Development Limit.
5.8	<b>Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (versions 2004 and 2014)</b> – the site is within the City Centre and an Area of Parking Restraint. Further to the north, to the north of Bruce Street and Bankmore Street are the Linen and City Centre Conservation Areas.  <b><u>Principle of PBMSA in this location</u></b>
5.9	The site is located within the urban development limit in the BUAP 2001 and both versions of dBMAP 2015.
5.10	Policy HOU12 of the Plan Strategy relates to proposals for PBMSA and lists a number of criteria that proposals should meet, as discussed below.  <i>Accessibility:</i>
5.11	In locational terms, criterion a. requires that PBMSA proposals are easily accessible to higher education institution campuses by sustainable transport modes and not within established residential areas. The site is located within the City Centre boundary. It is located approximately 1 km from Queen’s University and 1.8 km from Ulster University with walking times of 14 and 23 minutes and cycling times of 5 and 8 minutes.
5.12	The site benefits from excellent access to public transport services due to its City Centre location. There are nearby bus stops on Great Victoria Street and Dublin Road. The closest train station is Botanic, which is a 6-minute walk, while the new Grand Central Station is an 8-minute walk.
5.13	Having regard to these factors, the proposal satisfies the accessibility requirements of criterion a.  <i>Development not within an Established Residential Area:</i>
5.14	In addition, criterion a. of Policy HOU12 requires that new PBMSA development is not within an established residential area. Appendix B of the Plan Strategy states that an Established Residential Area is ‘...normally taken to mean residential neighbourhoods dominated by a recognisable form of housing styles with associated private amenity space or gardens. These areas may include buildings in commercial, retail or leisure services use, usually clustered together and proportionate in scale to the size of the neighbourhood being served.
5.15	The site is located on Great Victoria Street which is a mixed- use area comprising mainly offices and retail. There are a number of residential apartments at No. 97 Great Victoria Street and Downshire Place but these form part of a wider mixed use, commercial frontage. Further residential development is located to the west of the site with an apartment block facing onto Glenalpin Street and more traditional terrace housing on Charles St South. However, the area is not dominated by recognisable forms of housing.

5.16	<p>It is concluded that the site is within a mixed-use area and not within an Established Residential Area.</p> <p><i>Minimum of 200 occupants:</i></p>
5.17	<p>Criterion b. specifies that PBMSA proposals should consist of a minimum of 200 occupants. The proposal is for 560 bedrooms with a mix of studios and clusters, therefore satisfying this criterion.</p> <p><i>Need for additional PBMSA:</i></p>
5.18	<p>Criteria e. requires that proposals meet an identified need for the type of accommodation proposed, demonstrated through a statement of student housing need. The application is supported by a "Statement of Student Need". The statement details that in 2021/22 there were 42,660 students in total with 31,135 full time students enrolled in higher education institutions in Northern Ireland. In Belfast, the higher education institutions are Queens University (QUB), Ulster University, Stranmillis University College, St. Mary's University College and Belfast Met the largest Further and Higher Education College in Northern Ireland.</p>
5.19	<p>QUB and Ulster University gave a joint presentation to the Council's City Growth and Regeneration Committee (CGRC) in December 2022. The Committee was advised that the city required a further 6,000 rooms for students by 2028/30. In addition, there was a growing demand for PBMSA over private rental sector accommodation and insufficient rooms either in the planning process or being constructed to address the shortfall.</p>
5.20	<p>In reality, in light of the emerging trend of PBMSA accommodation being increasingly favoured over traditional house shares, the increase in the number of international students choosing to study in Belfast and the projected increase in NI school leavers seeking university places by 2030, the scale of need for student beds is likely to continue to grow beyond the presently projected 6,000 beds.</p>
5.21	<p>The Statement of Student Need confirms that since the most recent expression of need for 6,000 further student beds (by 2028-2030) by the two main Belfast Universities, Queens University Belfast (QUB) and Ulster University (UU), a total of 2,523 additional bed spaces have received planning consent and all but 551 are operational or under construction.</p>
5.22	<p>The Council's Plans and Policy Team have been consulted on the issue of need. It states that there is a current supply of 7,690 student bed spaces at present (Table 1). It has confirmed that following the CGRC meeting in 2022, a total of 2,523 additional bed spaces have received planning consent and all but 551 are operational or under construction (Table 2). There are also 3,018 beds currently pending from existing applications (Table 3).</p>

**Table 1: Existing operational PBMSA supply**

Project Name	Address	Beds	Operational	Savills (December 2023)
Mark Royal House	70-74 Donegal Street	-	-	45
John Bell House	1A College Square East	413	Sep-16	413
Botanic Studios	78-86 Dublin Rd, Belfast BT2 7HP	156	Sep-17	160
Great Patrick Street	28-30 Great Patrick Street	475	Sep-18	475
Elms BT1	78 College Avenue	747	Sep-18	Inc. as part of university operated accommodation below
Elms BT2	McClintlock Street	490	Sep-18	
Swanston House	41-49 Queen Street	317	Sep-18	317
123 York Street	123-137 York Street	407	Sep-19	501*2
Little Patrick Street	26-44 Little Patrick Street	430	Sep-20	430
101 York Street	81-107 York Street	717	Sep-21	717
<b>Completed as at December 2022</b>		<b>4,152</b>		<b>3,058</b>
University owned accommodation		<b>2,621</b>		<b>4,543</b>
<b>Total PBMSA in December 2022 (university and private)</b>		<b>6,773</b>		<b>7,601</b>
Bruce Street	Little Victoria St, Bruce St & Holmes St	271	Sep-23	271
Aster House	University Rd & Botanic Avenue	253	Sep-23	253
Alma Place	18-26 Library Street	393	Sep-23	393
<b>Additional PBMSA Operational from September 2023</b>		<b>917</b>		<b>917</b>
<b>Total existing PBMSA (university and private)</b>		<b>7,690</b>		<b>8,518</b>

**Table 2: Future Supply figures for PBMSA accommodation in Belfast**

Under Construction			
Project Name	Address	Beds	Savills (December 2023)
Athena House	Little York St, Great George's St & Nelson St	774	774
Bradbury Place	30-44 Bradbury Place	156	156
	48-52 York Street	307	307
123 York Street Extension	8-12 Little Patrick Street	94	* Included above
	140 Donegall Street	724	724
<b>Total Under construction</b>		<b>2,055</b>	<b>1,961</b>
Approved (Not started)			
Sinclair House	89-101 Royal Avenue	30	30
	118-122 Royal Avenue	21	-
Catholic Chaplaincy	28-38 Elmwood Avenue	41	41
QUB Dublin Road	14 Dublin Road, Belfast, BT2 7HN	459	463
<b>Total Not started</b>		<b>551</b>	<b>534</b>



**Table 3: Pending PBMSA Planning Applications**

Reference	Address	Beds
LA04/2022/1284/F	Library Street and Little Donegall Street	862
LA04/2023/2922/F	Site bounded by <u>Glenalpin Street</u> , Wellwood Street and Norwood <u>Street, Belfast</u>	354
LA04/2023/3030/F	41-49 Dublin Road and 3-5 <u>Ventry Street, Belfast</u> , BT2 7HD	201
LA04/2024/0664/F	Lands comprising existing Fanum House, Norwood House and adjacent lands, No's 96-110 Great Victoria Street	594
LA04/2024/0681/F	Lands to the northeast of Olympic House, east of Queen's Road and south of Belfast Metropolitan College	1,007
<b>Total pending</b>		<b>3,018</b>

- 5.23 The Plans and Policy team advises that *'the need for 3,400 spaces expressed by the universities in 2022, will therefore have been largely met by the existing supply should all of the approved PBMSA developments be implemented, although this excludes the two additional sites that QUB have already acquired to meet their requirements directly. Should the need of 6,000 units also quoted by the universities at the same meeting be taken as the stated requirement, capacity for up to 2,900 additional bed spaces may remain.'*
- 5.24 The response goes on to state that if the five pending applications were to be approved, they would deliver a combined total of 3,018 (since updated to 3,839) bed spaces, which would represent 6,362 beds in total, exceeding the 6,000 bed space requirement quoted by the universities.
- 5.25 However, the response acknowledges that if the additional 3,018 (since updated to 3,839) bed spaces were approved this would take the pipeline of development to 14,231 bed spaces *which would represent a bed ratio of 2.9, without taking into account any growth in student numbers in the intervening period. Such a ratio would still remain behind most of the comparator university cities such as Exeter, Brighton, Leicester and Cardiff.*
- 5.26 Since the tables above were provided by the Plans and Policy team, there have been a number of updates to PBMSA applications as shown below:
- Table 2:  
The referenced QUB Dublin Road scheme is now under construction.
- Table 3:  
LA04/2022/1284/F - Application has been Refused but there is a pending appeal.  
LA04/2023/3030/F - Application has been Approved.
- 5.27 A further planning application has been received at lands including and to the rear of 24-54 Castle Street, 2-6 Queen Street, 1-7 & 21 Fountain Street, Belfast (LA04/2024/1138/F) for 821 rooms which increases the pending number of beds within table 3 to 3,839 beds.
- 5.28 The pending applications combined with those approved gives a bed total of around 6,350 beds which exceeds the 6,000 bed space requirement quoted by universities. The statement of need demonstrates that with projected student growth and the current bed ratio in comparison to similar university cities that there remains a need for student accommodation. Due consideration must also be given to the fact that while there are a number of extant approvals not all of the schemes may be built.

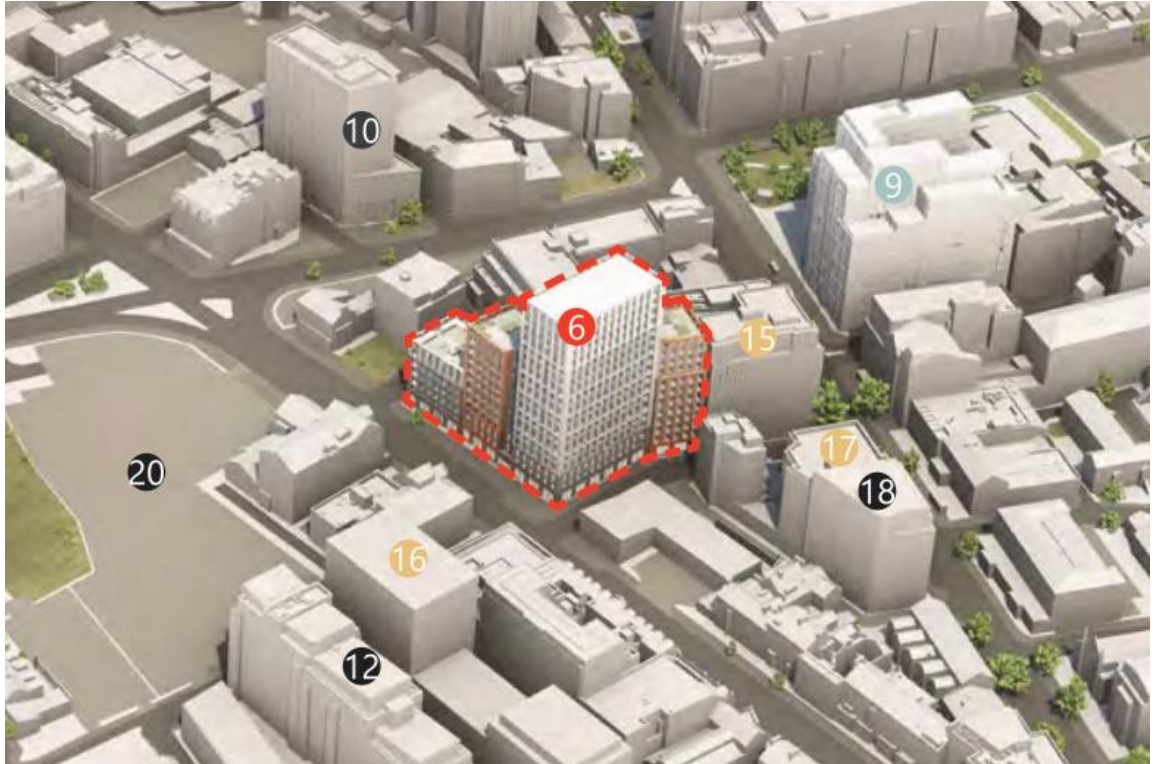
5.29	<p>Having regard to these factors, it is considered that a need for the proposal is established and that criterion e. is satisfied.</p> <p><i>Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation in Belfast SPG:</i></p>
5.30	<p>In the absence of specific planning policy at that time, in 2016 the Council published PBMSA Supplementary Planning Guidance to support the consideration of such planning applications. Updated SPG is currently the subject of public consultation and does not currently have determining weight.</p>
5.31	<p>The 2016 SPG is material and sets out similar requirements to Policy HOU12 and other relevant policies in the Plan Strategy, covering areas such as accessibility, controlling development in established residential areas, open space, space standards, parking, waste and recycling. The Plan Strategy is the statutory Development Plan and carries greater weight than the 2016 SPG. Nevertheless, for the reasons set out in this report, it is considered that the proposal is consistent with the objectives of the guidance.</p> <p><i>Economic development:</i></p>
5.32	<p>The Council's Economic Development Unit notes that the estimated construction cost of the development is £42 million. It is expected that approximately 280-300 jobs will be created during the design and construction stages. These are material considerations that support the case for the granting of planning permission.</p>
5.33	<p>The Economic Development Unit advises that an Employability and Skills Developer Contribution is required for the construction period and this should be secured by a Section 76 planning agreement.</p>
5.34	<p>Having regard to the factors discussed above, the principle of PBMSA development in this location is considered acceptable.</p>
	<p><b><u>Design and Placemaking</u></b></p>
5.35	<p>The proposal has been assessed against Policies SP5, DES1, DES2 and DES3 of the Plan Strategy, the SPPS and Creating Places. Policies SP5 and DES1 promote good placemaking, high quality design and the importance of proposals responding positively to local context addressing matters such as scale height, massing, proportions, rhythm, and materials avoiding any negative impact at street level. Policy DES2 advocates adopting a holistic approach to site layout that is mindful of adjacent development, while Policy DES3 relates to the assessment and siting of tall buildings.</p> <p><i>Status of previous planning approval for a hotel:</i></p>
5.36	<p>Planning permission was previously granted for a 15-storey hotel on part of the site on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2012 (Z/2011/1178/F). The applicant has submitted evidence that commencement had taken place and officers are satisfied that the planning permission remains extant. There was a sole pre-commencement condition (condition 7) requiring a Piling Risk Assessment to be submitted and agreed by the Department. That condition was discharged on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017. The applicant was therefore required to provide evidence that the commencement of development took place prior to the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017. The submitted evidence is as follows:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map showing a piling location;</li> <li>• Email dated the 6<sup>th</sup> September 2017 with photographs showing the piling works carried out on site;</li> <li>• An affidavit from Seamus Gillian declaring the work completed on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2017 comprised of the excavation of a foundation beam, driving of mini pile foundations, pouring of concrete into foundations and installation of rebar and pouring of concrete foundation beam.</li> </ul>
5.37	<p>The evidence submitted demonstrates that that mini pile foundations were carried out on the eastern side of the proposed building on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 2017. The works fall within the remit of <i>'any work of construction in the course of the erection of the building'</i> as set out in Section 63 (2) (a) of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011. The nature of the works is considered to be material and in accordance with the planning approval.</p>
5.38	<p>This establishes fallback position of the 15-storey hotel building (45.3m) on the site and sets a baseline when considering the scale, massing and height of the proposal.</p> <p><i>Demolition:</i></p>
5.39	<p>To facilitate the proposed redevelopment, the 11 storey existing Fanum House and 4 storey Norwood House will need to be demolished.</p>
5.40	<p>In placemaking terms, neither building has any architectural merit worthy of retention and their demolition allows for a coherent development of form, massing and architectural detail that makes more effective use of land.</p>
5.41	<p>A Demolition Justification Statement has been submitted and is assessed in the Climate Change section later in the report.</p> <p><i>Scale, height and massing:</i></p>
5.42	<p>The proposal comprises four blocks (Blocks A to D) that graduate in height to the tallest element on the corner of Great Victoria Street and Ventry Street where the existing Fanum House is currently located. The proposal then drops in height again along Ventry Street. The four blocks are shown in the image overleaf and described below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Block A is to be located on the northern edge of the site, replacing Norwood House, and is a six-storey building at 21.2m;</li> <li>• Block B is proposed at a height of 11-storeys and a height of 36.65m, which is just below the height of the existing Fanum House at 39.9m;</li> <li>• Block C – this is the tallest element of the scheme at the corner of Great Victoria Street and Ventry Street replacing Fanum House. Block C is proposed at a height of 18 storeys and 57.25m. For context, the existing height of Fanum House is 39.9m and the extant hotel permission is 45.3m; and</li> <li>• Block D is located on Ventry Street and contains a shoulder height of 25.2m and a total height of 11 stories at 36.65m.</li> </ul>

5.43

In comparison, the heights of other buildings in the vicinity include:

- The Gallery (34 metres) to the south;
- Victoria Place Apartments (42 metres) and the Holiday Inn (36m) to the west;
- Bruce Street Student Accommodation (47 metres), Centre Point (42 metres), Great Northern Tower (55 metres) and Europa Hotel (58 metres) to the north ;
- Under construction to the North East is a PBMSA scheme at 14 Dublin Road (57.25m) and an Office scheme (54.3m).



Aerial Image showing proposal within surrounding tall buildings

5.44

The surrounding area on Great Victoria Street largely comprises 2 to 5 storey buildings with the exception of Fanum House at 11 stories which is an anomaly in the street-scene. Ventry Street contains an existing 7-storey building and has an approval for an 11 storey PBMSA scheme on the corner with Dublin Road (LA04/2023/3030/F).

5.45

To the north of the site after the junction of Great Victoria Street and Bruce Street are generally taller buildings. Buildings are generally a minimum of 5 storeys with an emerging higher context established through the new 15 storey student accommodation block on Bruce Street. To the north east at No. 14 Dublin Road at the junction of Dublin Road with Bruce Street and Bankmore Square (former cinema site), a 17 storey PBMSA scheme and 14-storey office building are currently under construction.

5.46

In assessing the height of the proposed building, the existing context and planning history are important considerations. Fanum House itself is 11 stories in height and considered to be of limited architectural merit. The existing building has not been in use for a number of years. As previously indicated, there is an extant permission for a 15-storey hotel, which provides a baseline for considering height and scale. The site is larger than the previous hotel approval, extended to include Norwood House which aids in providing opportunity for a more coherent block and form.

5.47	Following negotiations and amendments to the scheme, it is considered that the proposal is contextually appropriate in terms of height, scale and massing. Block A has been reduced from eight to six stories and its height reflects that of the immediate area of Great Victoria Street and would sit comfortably within the existing context. The Senior Urban Design Officer (SUDO) advises that the reduction in the height of Block A is particularly welcomed and is more representative of the height of neighbouring buildings along GVS and Downshire Place providing a transition piece for the massing of the adjacent Blocks B and C.
5.48	Block B proposed at 11 stories provides a bridge between the lower height of Block A and the tallest element of Block C. The height is below that of the existing Fanum House and aids in ensuring the tallest Block C is a focal point for the development. Block B includes a 3m section setback in the building where it adjoins Block C; this aids in breaking up the massing of the building and maintaining Block C as the focal point. Block C itself is of 18 stories in height (57.25m) which is 7 stories taller than Fanum House (17.35m) and 3 storeys taller than the extant hotel permission (11.95m). The site of Block C will remain the tallest point in the locality. Whilst taller than the extant hotel, it is not as wide as the hotel approval onto Ventry Street. Furthermore, architecturally, Block C is considered to represent a significant improvement over the hotel approval. Having regard to these factors, the height of Block C is considered to be on balance acceptable.
5.49	The extant approval did not incorporate Norwood House. By acquiring this additional land, this provides greater opportunity for graduating the height of the scheme along Great Victoria Street, whilst remaining sympathetic to the surrounding context. Block D similarly steps down in an appropriate manner to 11-storeys and provides a visual break to the approved PBMSA scheme on Ventry Street and Dublin Road, which is taller again. The 3 upper storeys of Block D are set back from the building line and shoulder height below the adjacent PBMSA approval, providing visual relief to street-scene before rising to the upper shoulder height on the approved neighbouring building.
5.50	In summary, it is considered that the height, scale and massing of the proposal would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the area and are justified. The SUDO raises no concerns in relation to the height of the scale and massing.
	<i>Architectural treatment:</i>
5.51	The proposed architectural treatment of the building is modern but with reference to historic design cues in terms of fenestration and bay treatment. The façade treatment includes vertical emphasis through the ordering of windows to reflect that of Victorian buildings within the city. The proposal has been amended to provide subtle variations in detailing across the buildings and decrease the solid to void ratio which has aided in preventing the building from appearing heavy and monolithic in nature.
5.52	The SUDO states that the vertical design features to both Blocks B and D help break up the massing along both GVS and Ventry Street as well as placing emphasis on the taller Block C and are welcomed. It is also noted by the SUDO that the blocks present new street facing edges onto three routes helping to repair a significant section of the urban block and the widths reflect the surrounding grain.

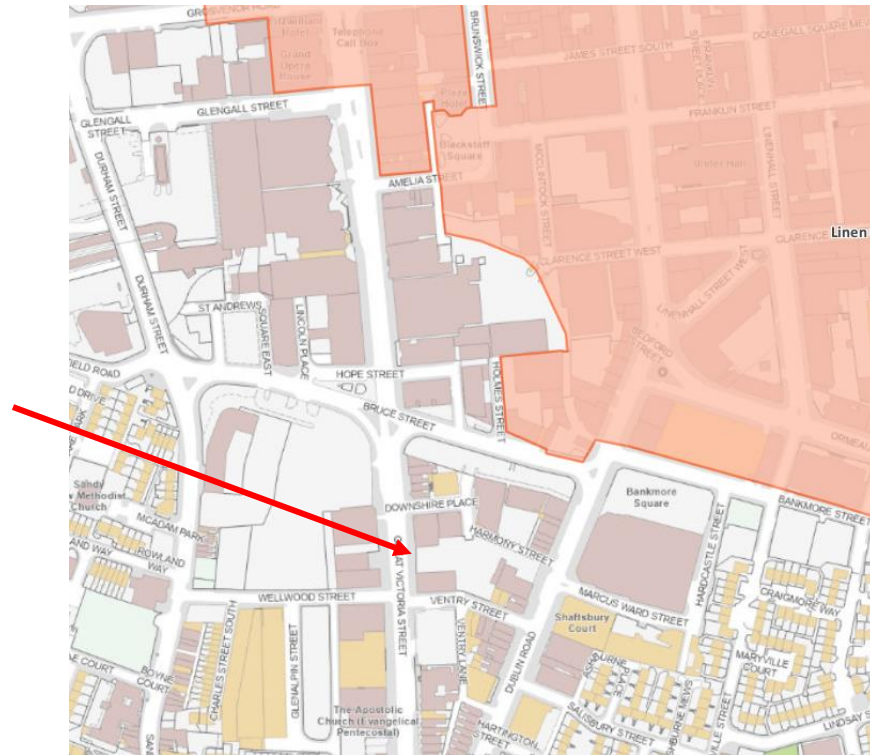
5.53	<p>The proposed material treatment includes a palette of different tones of grey brick to Blocks A and C and red/orange brick to Blocks B and D. Red/Orange reflects the predominant brick colour within the surrounding area. The use of lighter grey brick tones aids in breaking up the massing of the proposal and compliments the red brick. The initial proposal was for the tallest element Block C to be red brick, however, this was considered too overpowering and heavy within the streetscape, while the lighter grey brick provides a contrast to the red brick prevalent within the area and the buff brick of the Listed Shaftesbury Hospital in the foreground when viewed from the southern end of Great Victoria Street.</p>
5.54	<p>Blocks B and C use a variation in brick colour to the lower three storeys along with a defined lintel to reflect the existing shoulder height along Great Victoria Street and ensure the proposal is sympathetic to its surrounding context form.</p>
5.55	<p>A condition is recommended to require final approval of the external materials including a physical sample panel.</p> <p><i>Active frontage:</i></p>
5.56	<p>The proposal contains active ground floor frontages along both Great Victoria Street and Ventry Street. Block A to the northern end of the site is to contain a café with a separate entrance to the student accommodation; this is the only portion of the site which currently contains a level of active frontage from retail units and the office entrance to Norwood House. The remaining frontage along Great Victoria Street serves as a lobby, lounge and study area which turns the corner onto Ventry Street. Ventry Street itself contains a secondary entrance as well as a dining area and gym.</p> <p><i>Wind Microclimate</i></p>
5.57	<p>Policy DES3 states that proposals should avoid the effects of wind turbulence and other adverse microclimatic impacts. The application includes the submission of a Wind Microclimate Assessment Report. The Report concludes that there would be a suitable comfort level of existing off site thoroughfares, roadways, entrances, bus stops and café/restaurant/bar external seating areas. The café entrance when tested in existing conditions is a category windier than the target and there are some localised exceedances of the S15 (distress) criteria in the passageway to the east of the site and Ventry Street. It is considered these are short term impacts and these will be mitigated following the construction of future consented schemes in the surrounding area. Windier conditions would exist on the western and southern extremities of the terraces but additional screening would provide mitigation; it is noted there is a parapet proposed which is conditioned and should aid in this regard. It is not considered the proposal would cause any adverse microclimatic impacts.</p> <p><i>Public realm:</i></p>
5.58	<p>The proposal includes improvements to the public realm in accordance with the Developer Contribution Framework. The proposed scheme will replace the existing asphalt pavement with a high-quality natural stone paving surrounding the building on Downshire Place, Great Victoria Street and Ventry Street. In addition, existing street trees will be retained and supplemented with seven additional street trees retained in planters. The public realm and tree planting will be required to be implemented by planning condition. It is further acknowledged that DfC's Streets Ahead 5 project is intended to include Great Victoria Street and Ventry Street and the condition will ensure that the final public realm details are submitted for agreement to ensure tie in with the Streets Ahead 5 project where possible.</p>

	<i>Masterplanning:</i>
5.59	Policy DES2 contains a number of masterplanning principles for major development.
5.60	The proposal adopts a holistic approach, the incorporation of Norwood House into the site ensures a coherent block of form and scale. The proposal is mindful of the adjacent PBMSA approval along Ventry Street/Dublin Road by incorporating an appropriate shoulder height and avoiding prejudice by ensuring no windows are proposed on the facing elevation. The proposal seeks to achieve BREEAM Excellent rating and would contribute to the public realm with high quality materials and landscaping.
5.61	In summary, the proposal is considered acceptable having regard to Policies DES1, DES2, DES3 and relevant provisions of the SPPS.
	<b><u>Impact on the heritage assets</u></b>
5.62	There is one Listed Building within close proximity to the site, located to the south on Great Victoria Street: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>HB26 30 072</b> - Shaftsbury Square Hospital, 116 Great Victoria Street, Grade B1</li> </ul>
5.63	The former Shaftsbury Square Hospital forms part of a key view of the site from the south on the approach from the city centre. The building is a two-storey end of terrace in yellow brick with redbrick courses and detailing.
5.64	DfC HED (Historic Buildings and Monuments) were involved in the design negotiations which led to amendments to the scheme. It offers no objection to the proposal in terms of potential impact on historic buildings and archaeology. HED is in the round supportive of the scheme and considers that the proposal will not substantially harm the contribution the urban setting makes to the understanding or experience of the essential character to the listed building.
5.65	While HED does not object to the proposal, its response does state that there are missed opportunities to make the scheme a 'wholly integrated urban development underpinning the distinctive historic character'. It states that the applicant's Design and Access Statement does not include the Shaftsbury Square Hospital within the Taxonomy Studies which would have allowed the character, proportions etc of the listed building to be used to inform the character of the proposed development.
5.66	Officers advise that whilst there is a lack of commentary in the Design and Access Statement in terms of how the Listed Building was considered, a series of design workshops, which included representation from HED, were held to improve the design of the scheme, including its impact on the setting of the Listed Building.
5.67	The applicant has provided a response to HED's comments to confirm how the design has considered the Listed Building. Detailing such as the course band between the second and third stories and the darker brick within the lower three stories are used to acknowledge the scale and height of the Listed Building, as well as other buildings on Great Victoria Street. Block C was also amended from red to grey brick to provide a better and less overpowering contrast to the Listed Building which would not detract from views from the south of the site.

5.68 Having regard to the advice from HED and the further assessment by officers, it is considered that the setting of the Listed former Shaftesbury Square Hospital and other Listed Buildings in the vicinity of the site, would be safeguarded. The proposal accords with Policies BH1 and BH5, and relevant provisions of the SPPS.

**Impact on the Conservation Area**

5.69 The map overleaf below the proximity of the site to both the Linen Conservation Area and the City Centre Conservation Area.



5.70 Policy BH2 states that development proposals partly located or neighbouring a Conservation Area will not be permitted where they are considered to impact negatively on the character or appearance with regards to views into out of, within or across the area.

5.71 Given its height and scale, the proposal will impact on long distance views of the Linen and City Centre Conservation Area from the south, and out of the Conservation Areas from the north. Conservation advice states that perspective/horizon lines are reasonably uniform along Great Victoria Street and only interrupted by the existing Fanum House which may have been approved due to the existence of a larger building on site adjacent. The advice acknowledges that a taller building has occurred historically on the site but in terms of the objective of appreciation, enjoyment, understanding and perception of the Linen Conservation Area this would be best served by lower storey buildings that restored historic legibility; this equates to the building to the north of the site. The advice acknowledges the fallback positions of the existing Fanum House and extant approval and considers that the height of any acceptable approval should be guided by the minimum that would be facilitated in those scenarios.



5.72	<p>The proposed overall height is greater than the existing Fanum House and extant Hotel permission, however it remains the case that the height, scale, massing and architectural treatment are considered appropriate. The site is considered sufficiently separated from the Linen Conservation Area that the impact on views is considered to be no greater than that of the existing Fanum House or the extant hotel approval. It is considered that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the setting of the Conservation Areas. Their character and appearance would be safeguarded with no obvious opportunities for the proposal to provide their enhancement.</p>												
5.73	<p>Conservation Advice also raises concerns regarding the impact on Listed Buildings and that the proposal would perceptually diminish the remaining heritage assets and the wider perception of historicity of the setting of the Conservation Area. However, HED, as statutory consultee, does not consider the proposal to have a negative impact on the setting of the listed buildings.</p>												
5.74	<p>It is considered that the proposal complies with Policy BH2 and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p> <p><b><u>Impact on amenity</u></b></p> <p><i>Space standards:</i></p>												
5.75	<p>Criterion c. of Policy HOU12 requires PBMSA proposals to provide a quality residential environment for students in accordance with the space standards for HMOs set out in Appendix C of the Plan Strategy. The proposed bedrooms would exceed the relevant space standards as set out in the table below. Criterion c. is therefore satisfied.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="339 1099 1490 1249"> <thead> <tr> <th>Room type</th> <th>Appendix C standard</th> <th>Proposed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Standard bedroom</td> <td>6.5 sqm</td> <td>Min 10.5 sqm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Studio</td> <td>13 sqm</td> <td>16 sqm and 19 sqm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Accessible studio</td> <td>13 sqm</td> <td>25.5 sqm</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Space standards for the proposed bedrooms</b></p> <p><i>Open space and amenity space:</i></p>	Room type	Appendix C standard	Proposed	Standard bedroom	6.5 sqm	Min 10.5 sqm	Studio	13 sqm	16 sqm and 19 sqm	Accessible studio	13 sqm	25.5 sqm
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5.76	<p>Policy OS3 requires that all new development proposals make appropriate provision for open space, including hard and soft landscaped areas and outdoor amenity areas, to serve the needs of the development. The precise amount, location, type and design of such provision will be negotiated with applicants taking account of the specific characteristics of the development, the site and its context and having regard to a) the normal expectation will be at least 10% of the total site area; and b) complementary and ancillary equipment and facilities, including for active or passive enjoyment of residents or occupiers, should be incorporated into the design of the development.</p>												
5.77	<p>The proposal includes three landscaped rooftop amenity spaces measuring approximately 875sqm in size which will includes planting and seating areas. The amount of open space would be 28% of the site area, therefore, exceeding the 10% open space requirement. The requirements of Policy OS3 are met.</p>												

5.78	<p>The external amenity areas would equate to an average of 1.5sqm per bedroom. <i>Creating Places</i>, published in 2000, recommends that private communal open space should range from 10 sqm to around 30 sqm, however, this applies to apartment or flat developments, or 1 and 2-bedroom houses on small urban infill sites, and is not directly applicable to PBMSA development. In any event, Policy OS3 (open space) carries greater weight as part of the statutory Local Development Plan and is satisfied. In addition, the scheme would provide internal amenity areas such as lounges and a gym, which would support the residential living environment. The overall external and internal amenity space would be 3.1sqm per bedroom. This level of private amenity space provision is considered acceptable.</p> <p><i>Daylight and sunlight to bedrooms:</i></p>
5.79	<p>A Daylight/Sunlight Assessment was carried out to ascertain whether the proposed development would offer acceptable daylight/sunlight amenity for prospective residents. In terms of daylight 522 (93%) of rooms meet or exceed the BRE recommended 150lux for student bedrooms and 538 (96%) meet the criteria of 100lux. Nine bedrooms are below with values between 83 and 99lux. Thirteen rooms are significantly below the target due to being located on lower floors on the east wing or lightwell of the west wing with the lowest being 46lux. In terms of sunlight, 359 (64%) of student bedrooms meet or exceed the BRE recommendation of 1.5hrs. The majority of the remaining rooms which do not meet the recommendation are located on the north side of the building minimising their potential sunlight. Given the location of the building within the highly dense city centre and context of being surrounded by other buildings where a lesser standard is to be expected, the daylight/sunlight provided is considered acceptable and consistent with other recent PBMSA schemes.</p> <p><i>Impact on neighbouring amenity:</i></p>
5.80	<p>The closest residential building to the development is the apartment block located on Downshire Place. Officers have no concerns about overlooking as the site does not directly face the proposed development. An objection raises concerns about overlooking from the proposed rooftop gardens but given there is a proposed parapet this will prevent harmful direct views into apartments.</p>
5.81	<p>In relation to overshadowing, the proposal would not unacceptably overshadow the apartment block on Downshire Place. A VU.CITY model has been provided and demonstrates that the apartment block is considerably overshadowed by the existing built form. Block A is the closest to the apartment block and is of a similar height to the existing Norwood House. It is not considered that the proposed height of Blocks B, C or D would exacerbate the existing overshadowing to an unacceptable degree.</p>
5.82	<p>Taking these factors into account, it is considered that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact in terms of daylight and sunlight on neighbouring properties.</p> <p><i>Management plan:</i></p>
5.83	<p>A draft management plan has been provided with the application and a final student management plan will be secured through the Section 76 planning agreement. This will deal with, amongst other matters, anti-social behaviour, helping to mitigate potential impacts on neighbours, satisfying criterion d. of Policy HOU12.</p>
5.84	<p>In these regards, the proposal is considered to satisfy Policies DES1 and RD1, and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>

<b><u>Climate change</u></b>	
	<i>Proposed Demolition</i>
5.85	<p>The proposal involves demolition of the 12-storey Fanum House and 6-storey Norwood House. Policy ENV 2 states:</p> <p><i>‘Development proposals should, where feasible, seek to avoid demolition and should consider how existing buildings or their main structures could be reused. Development proposals that include the demolition of existing buildings should demonstrate that reuse is not appropriate or feasible. Where demolition is proposed, measures should be included to minimise any waste through the reuse of as much building material as possible.</i></p>
5.86	<p>A Demolition Justification Statement has been submitted and states that Fanum House has been semi-derelict for a number of years and both buildings being designed for office uses with deep floor plans that are very difficult to adapt for other uses. Fanum House has a concrete frame that is past its lifespan and the materials are inherently unusable to reuse. Likewise, Norwood House has masonry brick which is not ideal for reuse. Both buildings would be below current standards of building performance and this would make them difficult to retrofit. In addition, officers note that the proposal would make much more effective use of land, a finite resource. A condition is recommended that requires approval of a scheme for the recycling/re-use of existing materials from the site.</p>
5.87	<p>Having regard to these factors, the demolition of the existing buildings is considered acceptable.</p>
5.88	<p>Policy ENV2 states that planning permission will be granted for development that incorporates measures to mitigate environmental change and reduce greenhouse gases by promoting sustainable patterns of development. Policy ENV3 states that planning permission will be granted for development that incorporates measures to adapt to environmental change.</p>
5.89	<p>The proposed building is targeting BREEAM Excellent rating, which is considered to satisfy both policies. Specific measures include energy efficient solutions such as solar panels, ecology and landscaping through the proposed rooftop amenity areas and reduced reliance on the private car and therefore reducing emissions associated with private car travel. A condition is recommended that requires the building to be constructed to BREEAM Excellent rating as required by Policy DES3 and to satisfy Policy ENV2.</p>
5.90	<p>Policy ENV5 states that all built development shall include, where appropriate, SuDs measures to manage surface water effectively on site, to reduce surface water run-off and to ensure flooding is not increased elsewhere. The application proposes SuDS features such as the provision of the rooftop gardens, and additional tree planting within the public realm proposals. A condition is recommended to require implementation of the SuDS scheme and tree planting.</p>
5.91	<p>The proposal is considered to accord with Policy ENV5.</p>

	<p><b><u>Access and transport</u></b></p> <p><i>Accessibility and parking:</i></p>
5.92	The site is in a highly accessible location within the City Centre boundary. It is located approximately 1 km from Queen’s University and 1.8 km from Ulster University with walking times of 14 and 23 minutes and cycling times of 5 and 8 minutes.
5.93	The site benefits from excellent access to public transport services due to its City Centre location. There are nearby bus stops on Great Victoria Street and Dublin Road. The closest train station is Botanic, which is a 6 minute walk, while the new Grand Central Station is an 8 minute walk.
5.94	Four accessible disabled parking spaces are to be provided and this is considered acceptable given the sustainable location of the site, the proposed Travel Plan measures and the cycling storage facilities to be provided.
5.95	DFI Roads have requested a technical drawing showing the proposed vehicular access which has since been provided. DFI Roads has been reconsulted and delegated authority is sought to deal with this outstanding issue.
5.96	The proposal is considered acceptable having regard to Policies TRAN1, TRAN2, TRAN4, TRAN6, TRAN 8 and TRAN 9, and relevant provisions of the SPPS.
	<p><b><u>Health impacts</u></b></p>
5.97	Policy HC1 seeks to ensure that all new development maximise opportunities to promote healthy and active lifestyles. New developments should be designed, constructed and managed in ways that improve health and promote healthy lifestyles. This will include supporting active travel options, improving accessibility to local service centres, reducing the use of private car travel, adequate provision of public open space, leisure and recreation facilities, high quality design and promoting balanced communities and sustainable neighbourhoods.
5.98	The site is accessible and provides excellent opportunity for active travel, including walking and cycling, through strong linkages within the City Centre and its shops, services and amenities. Active travel will be further encouraged through the proposed green travel measures.
5.99	Acceptable levels of open/amenity space are provided in the form of the three rooftop terraces. The proposal includes a gym, which would support the physical and mental wellbeing of occupants of the development.
5.100	In terms of place making, the proposed building is considered to be of a high-quality design which would provide a pleasant living environment for students with good levels of amenity space, and well as enhancing the character and appearance of the area.
5.101	The proposal is considered to satisfy the requirements of Policy HC1.

	<p><b><u>Environmental protection</u></b></p>
5.102	<p>Policy ENV1 states that planning permission will be granted for development that will maintain and, where possible, enhance environmental quality, and protects communities from materially harmful development. The proposed development has been assessed by Environmental Health in terms of contaminated land, air quality, lighting, odour and noise.</p> <p><b><u>Contaminated land</u></b></p>
5.100	<p>The contaminated land reports provided with the application conclude that there are no risks to human health. Environmental Health advises conditions which are recommended. The proposal accords with Policy ENV1.</p> <p><b><u>Air quality</u></b></p>
5.101	<p>The application is accompanied by an Air Quality Impact Assessment which concludes that both nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter concentrations in the opening year are predicted to be below the relevant UK Air Quality Objectives at the proposal location. Environmental Health has no objections subject to a condition.</p> <p><b><u>Noise</u></b></p>
5.102	<p>In relation to noise, a Noise Impact Assessment was submitted and recommended glazing, ventilation and separating floor/ceiling construction specifications to ensure that future occupants of the development are not adversely impacted by noise from road traffic, nearby commercial development and entertainment premises. Environmental Health has no objections subject to conditions.</p> <p><b><u>Odour</u></b></p>
5.103	<p>A café is proposed as part of the proposal. An odour impact assessment has not been submitted and Environmental Health considers that the café may have an adverse odour impact on future and/or nearby sensitive receptors. A condition is therefore recommended for a scheme of kitchen extraction and odour abatement to be submitted, approved and implemented.</p>
5.104	<p>The proposal is considered to accord with Policy ENV1.</p> <p><b><u>Flood risk and drainage</u></b></p>
5.105	<p>Dfl Rivers advises that the site is not with a present day or climate change flood plain, nor are there any watercourses within the site. Dfl Rivers has reviewed the Drainage Assessment, accepts its logic and has no reason to disagree with its conclusions. Accordingly, it offers no objection to the proposal.</p>
5.106	<p>Having regard to the advice from Dfl Rivers and submitted SuDS scheme, the proposal is considered compliant with Policy ENV5.</p>

	<b><u>Waste-water infrastructure</u></b>
5.107	Policy SP1a requires that necessary infrastructure is in place to support new development. NI Water has been consulted objects to the proposal due to the downstream catchment being constrained by overloaded sewage infrastructure, however, no clear evidence has been provided to demonstrate specific harm resulting from the development. Moreover, NI Water has a duty to connect committed development across the city to its waste-water infrastructure. Such development, which includes significant levels of residential and commercial floor space across the city, will not all come forward at once and some may not come forward at all.
5.108	For these reasons, it would be unreasonable for the Council to refuse planning permission on these grounds and the proposal is acceptable having regard to Policy SP1A of the Plan Strategy.
	<b><u>Natural heritage</u></b>
5.109	Policy NH1 relates to the protection of natural heritage resources.
5.110	The site is not located within the boundary of any statutory or non-statutory designated sites or sites of national or local nature conservation. However, the site is immediately adjacent and hydrologically linked to designated sites within Belfast Lough.
5.111	Belfast City Council is the Competent Authority under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) for undertaking an Appropriate Assessment where a proposal is likely to have a significant environmental effect on Belfast Lough. Water quality of Belfast Lough is a key consideration. The Habitats Regulations are framed in such a way that it is not only the impacts of individual development proposals that need to be considered, but also “in combination” impacts with other development.
5.112	Following an Appropriate Assessment in accordance with the Regulations and having considered the nature, scale, timing, duration and location of the project, SES advises the project would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. In reaching this conclusion, SES has assessed the manner in which the project is to be carried out including any mitigation. This conclusion is subject to a condition requiring no development until the method of sewage disposal has been agreed in writing with NIW. The condition is recommended accordingly.
5.113	DAERA has provided advice from its Regulation Unit which have no objections subject to conditions.
5.114	The proposal is considered compliant with Policy NH1, Policy ENV1 and the relevant provisions of the SPPS.
	<b><u>Waste Management</u></b>
5.115	The application is supported by a Waste Management Plan. This sets out provision for accommodating total waste generated from the building, associated café, segregation of waste for recycling and how convenient and safe access for depositing waste and collecting waste will be facilitated. The Waste Management Plan is considered to comply with the SPG.

	<p><b><u>Employability and Skills</u></b></p>
5.116	The <i>Developer Contribution Framework</i> requires proposals for Major development to contribute towards Employability and Skills where necessary.
5.117	The Council’s Economic Development Unit notes that the estimated construction cost of the development is £42 million. It is expected that approximately 280-300 jobs will be created during the design and construction stages. The Economic Development Unit advises that an Employability and Skills Developer Contribution is required for the construction period and this should be secured by a Section 76 planning agreement. This is recommended accordingly.
	<p><b><u>Section 76 planning agreement</u></b></p>
5.118	Should the application be approved, the following planning obligations are necessary to make the proposed development acceptable. These should be secured through a Section 76 planning agreement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Student management plan</b> – requirement for the submission, approval and implementation of a final student management plan.</li> <li>• <b>Employability and Skills</b> – to secure the submission and implementation of a Construction Employability and Skills Plan for the construction phase of the development.</li> </ul>
5.119	A draft Section 76 planning agreement has been prepared without prejudice and will need to be finalised before planning permission is granted.
	<p><b><u>Pre-Application Community Consultation</u></b></p>
5.120	For applications for Major development, there is a legislative requirement for applicants to consult the community in advance of submitting the application.
5.121	Applicants are required to submit to the council a ‘Proposal of Application Notice’ (PAN) in advance of making the application, which sets out the proposals for the pre-community consultation. A PAN was submitted in November 2023 (LA04/2023/4377/PAN) and confirmed by the Council to be acceptable.
5.122	The applicant is further required to prepare a Pre-Application Community Consultation report (PACC) to accompany the planning application. A PACC Report was submitted with the application, which describes the engagement process and feedback received.
5.123	In summary, a public event was held in January 2024 and dedicated community consultation website established. A total of 20 responses were received with 80% of respondents saying they either agreed or strongly agreed with the proposals. Feedback was provided in relation to the need for investment and quality student accommodation.
5.124	The PACC report is considered compliant with the legislative requirements.

<p><b>6.0</b></p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.1</p>	<p><b>Recommendation</b></p> <p>Having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.</p> <p>Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement, and resolve the outstanding issue raised by DfI Roads in relation to the access to the development, and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that the issues are not substantive.</p>
<p><b>7.0</b></p>	<p><b>DRAFT CONDITIONS</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission. Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.</li> <li>2. No external brickwork or external cladding panels shall be constructed or applied unless in accordance with a written specification and a physical sample panel, details of which shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.  The sample panel shall be provided on site and made available for inspection by the Council for the duration of the construction works.  The sample panel shall show the make, type, size, colour, bond, pointing, coursing, jointing, profile and texture of the external brick materials and panelling. Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area.</li> <li>3. The proposed parapet as shown on drawing nos. 45 to 47 uploaded to the planning portal on the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2024 shall be implemented prior to occupation and retained permanently thereafter.  Reason: To protect the amenity of prospective and surrounding residents.</li> <li>4. Within one year of the occupation, evidence that the building has been constructed to at least Passivhaus “Classic” or BREEAM Excellent standard, or equivalent, shall be submitted in writing to the Council. Reason: To ensure that the development mitigates and adapts to climate change.</li> <li>5. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until the external terraces have been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The amenity areas shall be retained as such at all times. Reason: To ensure that a quality residential environment is provided for occupants of the approved development.</li> <li>6. The SuDS and other drainage measures shall be implemented as specified in the application and the building shall not be occupied until verification and evidence of such has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. Reason: In order that the development provides sustainable drainage</li> </ol>



7. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the waste storage areas have been provided in accordance with the approved plans and shall be permanently retained as such at all times.

Reason: To ensure that appropriate provision is made for storage and disposal of waste.

8. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied or operated unless in accordance with the approved Travel Plan authored by Dorran Consulting and uploaded to the portal on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2024.

Reason: To promote sustainable travel patterns and off-set the demand for vehicular movements and/or parking.

9. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied or operated unless in accordance with the approved Service Management Plan.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and free flow of traffic.

10. No development shall commence on site (other than that required to fulfil this condition) unless the access, including visibility splays and any forward sight lines, have been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The access and visibility splays shall be retained in accordance with the approved plans at all times.

Reason: To ensure safe and convenient access to the development.

11. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied or operated until the disabled parking spaces and turning areas have been provided in accordance with the approved plans. Such areas shall not be used for any purpose other than the parking and turning of vehicles and such areas shall remain free of obstruction for such use at all times.

Reason: To ensure adequate car parking within the site.

12. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied unless the secure cycle storage area has been provided in accordance with the approved plans and shall be permanently retained as such at all times.

Reason: To promote active travel and to mitigate the absence of dedicated parking within the development.

13. Notwithstanding the submitted details, no development shall commence on site (other than site clearance, site preparation, demolition and the formation of foundations and trenches) unless details of foul and surface water drainage, including a programme for implementation of these works, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details, which shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: To ensure appropriate foul and surface water drainage of the site in the interests of safeguarding the environmentally protected Belfast Lough. Approval is required upfront because the design of the drainage is an integral part of the development and its acceptability.

14. The development hereby approved shall not be commenced until a final Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The CEMP shall clearly demonstrate the mitigation measures to be put in place to minimise adverse impacts from vibration, noise and dust on nearby premises during the construction phases in line with BS 5228:2009 *Code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites*. All construction shall be carried out in accordance with the approved CEMP.

Reason: In the interests of neighbour amenity.

15. Prior to occupation of the development, the façade noise mitigation measures and alternative means of acoustically attenuated ventilation (in addition to that provided by open windows) specified within Table 12 (as updated in an Irwin Carr Consulting email dated 28/10/2024) and Section 10 of the submitted Noise Impact Assessment uploaded to the portal on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2024 shall be installed within habitable rooms of the development and retained at all times.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of occupants of the building hereby approved.

16. Prior to occupation of the development, the separating ceiling/floor between the habitable rooms and the development gym, plant rooms and laundry room shall be constructed in accordance with the recommendations contained within Section 10 of the submitted Noise Impact Assessment uploaded to the portal on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2024 to ensure that internal noise levels within the habitable rooms are in accordance with BS 8233:2014 Guidance on the Sound Insulation and Noise Reduction for Buildings.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of occupants of the building hereby approved.

17. The rating level (dBLAr,T) from the operation of all combined plant and equipment shall not exceed the existing daytime and night-time background sound levels at the nearest noise sensitive premises, when measured or determined in accordance with BS4142:2014+A1:2019 'Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound'.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of occupants of the building hereby approved and surrounding amenity.

18. No installation, fit-out, or operation of the cafe unit shall be permitted until a scheme of kitchen extraction and odour abatement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The scheme shall include:

- Identification of sensitive receptors in close proximity to the proposed development/within the proposed development;
- Risk assessment in line with the current EMAQ+ guidance document to determine a suitable fit for purpose system;
- Full specification details of proposed kitchen extraction and odour abatement system;
- Drawing showing the location of the proposed kitchen extract ducting and termination point of extract flue, including height, along with the identification and location of any external mechanical components e.g. fan, motor (including information on noise production and abatement).

- Location of any air intake/outlet points for the residential/commercial elements of the mixed-use proposal in relation to the kitchen extract termination point.

The approved kitchen extraction and odour abatement scheme shall be installed in accordance with the approved details prior to commencement of use of the hereby permitted café and shall be operated at all times thereafter.

Reason: Protection of surrounding amenity and amenity of proposed development.

19. In the event that any substantial centralised combustion sources (boilers, CHP, generator or biomass) are proposed and there is a risk of impact at relevant receptor locations, as per the criteria detailed within the Environmental Protection UK and Institute of Air Quality Management, Land-use Planning & Development Control: Planning For Air Quality (January 2017), an updated Air Quality Impact Assessment shall be submitted to the Planning Authority, for approval in writing, which includes details of the combustion plant to be installed, emission rates and flue termination heights of the proposed combustion systems. The assessment must demonstrate that there will be no exceedances of Air Quality Strategy objectives at relevant human receptor locations.

Reason: The protection of human health.

20. During the demolition/construction phases of the development, dust mitigation measures in accordance with a 'high-risk' site as prescribed within Guidance on the Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction (IAQM) v2.2 2024 shall be implemented at all times.

Reason: Protection of local air quality and human health

21. Should new contamination or risks be encountered during the construction phase which have not previously been identified, works shall cease and the Council shall be notified immediately in writing. This new contamination shall be fully investigated in accordance with the Land Contamination: Risk Management (LCRM) guidance. In the event of unacceptable risks being identified, a Remediation Strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council and subsequently implemented. After completing any required remediation works, and prior to occupation of the development, a Verification Report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The Verification Report shall present all the remediation and monitoring works undertaken and demonstrate the effectiveness of the works in managing all the development wastes and risks and achieving the remedial objectives.

Reason: To protect the groundwater environment.

22. Notwithstanding the submitted details, no development shall commence on site (other than site clearance, site preparation, demolition and the formation of foundations and trenches) unless full details of the public realm improvements to the footway bounding the site in the areas shown on drawing no. 51A have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The details shall consider and tie in with Belfast Street Ahead 5 as appropriate following discussion and agreement with the Council, and shall further include:

1. Surface materials;
2. The design and provision of underground ducting; and
3. Arrangements for long term management and maintenance.

The development hereby approved shall not be occupied or operated unless the public realm works have been completed in accordance with the approved details. The public realm shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area and to enhance connectivity to and from the development. Approval is required up front because appropriate realm is integral to design and layout of the scheme.

#### **DRAFT INFORMATIVES**

##### **NOT04 Section 76 planning agreement**

This planning permission is subject to a planning agreement under Section 76 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. This decision should be read in conjunction with the planning agreement, which requires the submission, approval and implementation of a Construction Employability and Skills Plan and Final Student Management Plan.

##### **NOT02 Compliance with planning permission**

Please make sure that you carry out the development in accordance with the approved plans and any planning conditions listed above. Failure to do so will mean that the proposal is unauthorised and liable for investigation by the Council's Planning Enforcement team. If you would like advice about how to comply with the planning permission, you are advised to contact the Planning Service at Belfast City Council at [planning@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:planning@belfastcity.gov.uk).

##### **NOT03 Discharge of condition(s)**

This planning permission includes condition(s) which require further details to be submitted to and approved by the Council. Please read the condition(s) carefully so that you know when this information needs to be provided and approved. It could take a minimum of 8 weeks for the Council to approve the details, assuming that they are satisfactory, and sometimes longer depending on the complexity of the condition. You should allow for this when planning the timeline of your project.

##### **NOT05 Non-planning requirements**

The grant of planning permission does not dispense with the need to obtain licenses, authorisations may have been identified by consultees in their response to the application and can be accessed on the Northern Ireland Planning Portal website. The responses from consultees may also include other general advice for the benefit of the applicant or developer, consents or permissions under other legislation or protocols.

## Development Management Report

<b>Summary</b>	
<b>Committee Date:</b> 12 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	
<b>Application ID:</b> LA04/2024/0393/F	
<b>Proposal:</b> Proposed 5 storey extension to the East of the ECIT Building (Institute of Electronics, Communications and Information Technology), and 3 storey extension to the West, to provide additional research and development space with associated landscaping and site works	<b>Location:</b> ECIT Building, Queen's Road, Queen's Island, Belfast BT3 9DT
<b>Referral Route:</b> Application for Major development	
<b>Recommendation:</b> Approval subject to conditions and Section 76 planning agreement	
<b>Applicant Name and Address:</b> Queen's University Belfast Belfast BT7 1NN	<b>Agent Name and Address:</b> Peter Fleming Fleming Mountstephen Planning
<b>Date Valid:</b> 21 <sup>st</sup> March 2024	
<b>Target Date:</b> 17 <sup>th</sup> October 2024	
<b>Contact Officer:</b> Ed Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management)	
<p><b>Executive Summary:</b></p> <p>This application relates to the existing ECIT (Institute of Electronics, Communications and Information Technology) Building, Queen's Road, Queen's Island, Belfast. The application seeks full planning permission for a 5-storey extension to the eastern part of the building, and 3 storey extension to the western part, to provide additional research and development space with associated landscaping and site works. The applicant states that the proposal will create co-innovation between researchers and industry in data security, connectivity and analytics. It is intended to be a place where local and global companies, entrepreneurs and researchers will come together in a multi-disciplinary innovation environment.</p> <p>The existing ECIT Building provides approximately 4,000m<sup>2</sup> floorspace over 3 storeys. The development proposal comprises an additional 6,400m<sup>2</sup> with a central atrium connected to the existing building, a 5-storey element to the east (onto Queen's Road) and a 3-storey element to the west (towards Thompson Dock and Pumphouse); redesigned car park; and landscaped areas.</p> <p>The application follows a detailed Pre-Application Discussion (PAD).</p> <p>The key issues for consideration of the application are set out below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principle of development</li> <li>• Design and Placemaking</li> <li>• Impact on heritage assets</li> <li>• Climate change</li> <li>• Open space</li> <li>• Access and transport</li> </ul>	

- Health impacts
- Environmental protection
- Flood risk and drainage
- Waste-water infrastructure
- Natural heritage
- Waste management
- Section 76 planning agreement
- Pre-Application Community Consultation

The site is a sustainable location, with access to and from Belfast City Centre via established walking, cycling and public transport connections. It is located with a grouping of similar science-based buildings within the Titanic Quarter business community including the Catalyst managed Innovation Centre, White Star House, Concourse 1,2 and 3 and the Legacy buildings. The project is being developed through the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD).

The proposed extensions and resulting building are considered to be of a high-quality design and appropriate to its location. The setting of the Listed pumphouse and Scheduled Thompson dock would be safeguarded.

DfI Roads has advised that it has no objection in principle to the proposal. Its further detailed consultation response is awaited and is expected to be reported to the Committee as a late item.

No objections have been received from other statutory or non-statutory consultees.

There are no representations from third parties.

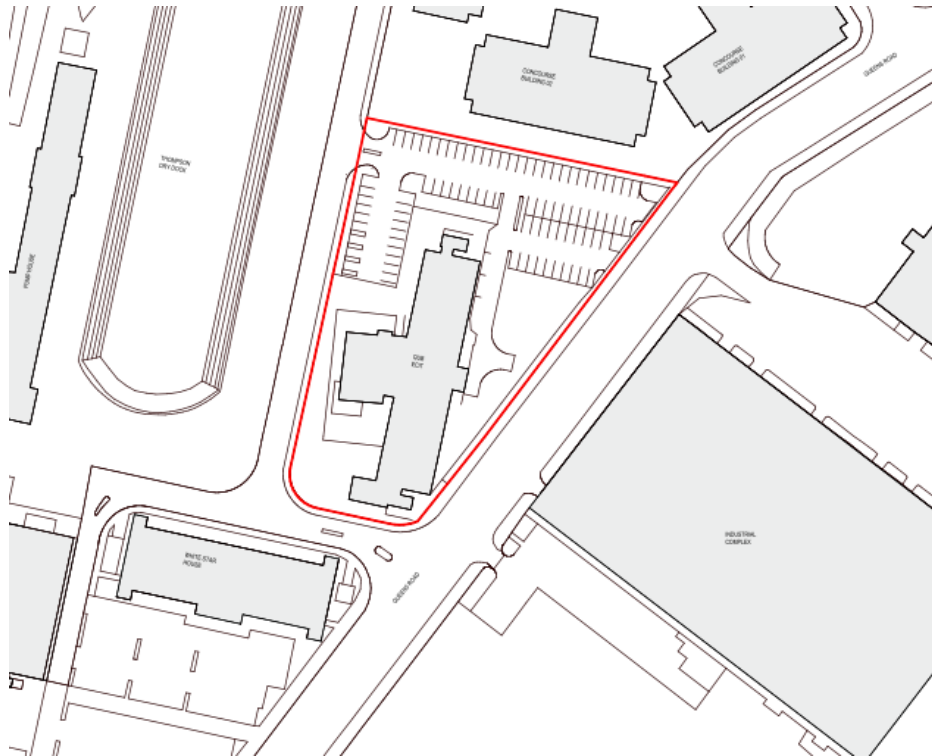
### **Recommendation**

Having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.

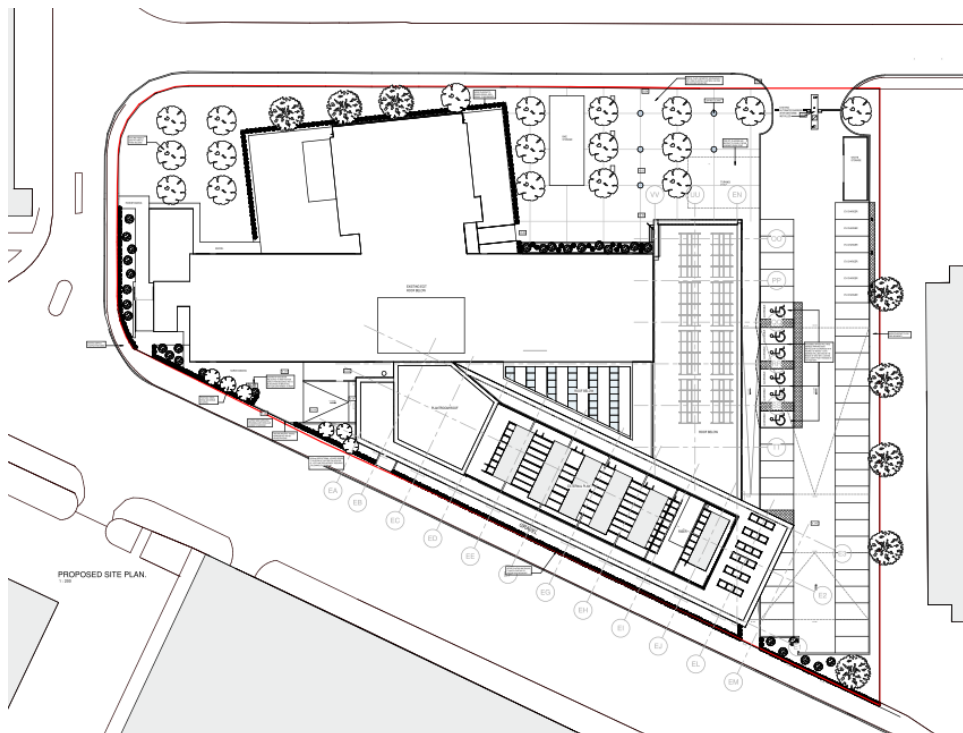
Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement and deal with any other issues that arise, including the further detailed consultation response from DfI Roads, provided that the issues are not substantive.

# DRAWINGS AND IMAGERY

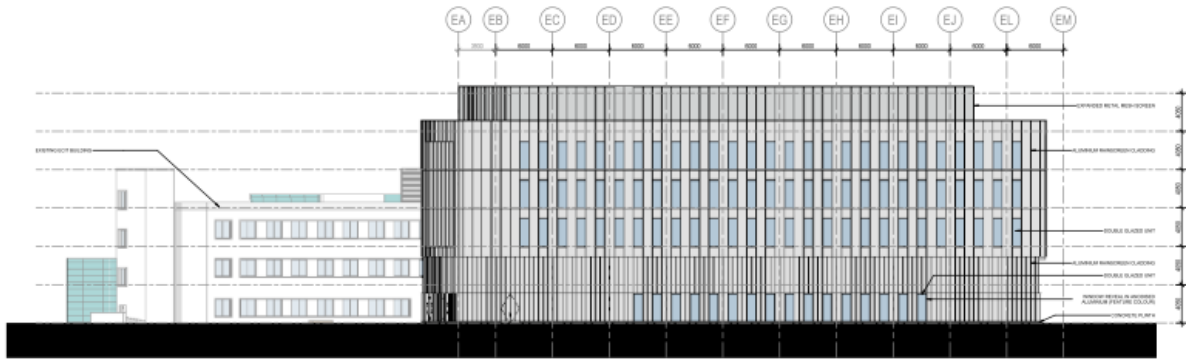
## Site Location Plan:



## Proposed Site Layout:



**Proposed Elevations:**



1 PROPOSED ELEVATION - EAST  
1:50



2 PROPOSED ELEVATION - WEST  
1:50





**CGIs:**

View from Queens Road (looking north):



View from Queens Road (looking south):



View from Thompson Dock (looking east):



<p><b>1.0</b></p> <p>1.1</p> <p>1.2</p> <p>1.3</p> <p>1.4</p> <p>1.5</p> <p>1.6</p>	<p><b>Characteristics of the Site and Area</b></p> <p>This application relates to the existing ECIT (Institute of Electronics, Communications and Information Technology) Building, Queen’s Road, Queen’s Island, Belfast.</p> <p>The site is approximately 0.68 hectares (ha) in size and relatively flat. It is characterised by hardstanding and bounded by low fencing and some planting to the front (adjacent to Queen’s Road). The site is accessed from Queen’s Road. It is located within the Titanic Quarter portion of the Belfast Harbour estate and is part of the Catalyst Incorporation innovation hub.</p> <p>The immediate area around the application site consists of the Concourse Buildings 1, 2 and 3, White Star House, the Legacy Building and The Innovation Centre. The Listed Pump House (Grade B1, ref. HB26 07 and 010) and the Thompson Dock – a Scheduled monument of regional importance (ref. DOW 004:502) – are located to the west of the site. The wider area has a number of archaeological sites and monuments relating to the industrial and ship-building heritage of Belfast.</p> <p><b>Description of Proposed Development</b></p> <p>The application seeks full planning permission for a 5-storey extension to the east part of the building, and 3 storey extension to the western part, to provide additional research and development space with associated landscaping and site works. The existing ECIT Building provides 4,000m<sup>2</sup> floorspace over 3 storeys. The development proposal comprises an additional 6,400m<sup>2</sup> with a central atrium connected to the existing building, a 5-storey element to the east (Queen’s Road) and a 3-storey element to the west (Thompson Dock and Pumphouse); redesigned car park; and landscaped areas. The proposed material treatments of the building include a palette of blue/green engineering brick, grey aluminium panels, and blue green for feature reveals.</p> <p>The applicant states that the proposal will create co-innovation between researchers and industry in data security, connectivity and analytics. It is intended to be a place where local and global companies, entrepreneurs and researchers will come together in a multi-disciplinary innovation environment.</p> <p>The application follows a detailed Pre-Application Discussion (PAD).</p>
<p><b>2.0</b></p> <p>2.1</p> <p>2.2</p> <p>2.3</p>	<p><b>Relevant Planning History</b></p> <p>The original building was approved in 2003 under planning permission Z/2002/0762/F.</p> <p>The most recent planning history on the site falls under application LA04/2018/1892/F, which was for a four-storey extension to the front of the existing ECIT building. This application was approved on in September 2020 but has not been implemented and remains extant.</p> <p>Since the proposal falls under the category of Major development, Pre-Application Community Consultation (PACC) was necessary and a Proposal of Application Notice (LA04/2023/4418/PAN) was submitted to set out the applicant’s proposals for the consultation. The resulting PACC report submitted with the planning application states that 7 people attended the public event, with five feedback forms completed indicating support for the project and complimenting the design.</p>

3.0	<b>PLANNING POLICY</b>
3.1	<p><b>Development Plan – Plan Strategy</b></p> <p><u>Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035</u></p> <p><i>Strategic Policies:</i></p> <p>Policy SP1 – Growth strategy  Policy SP1a – Managing growth and supporting infrastructure  Policy SP2 – Sustainable development  Policy SP3 – Improving health and wellbeing  Policy SP5 – Positive placemaking  Policy SP6 – Environmental resilience  Policy SP7 – Connectivity  Policy SP8 – Green and blue infrastructure network</p> <p><i>Operational Policies:</i></p> <p>Policy DES1 – Principles of urban design  Policy DES2 – Masterplanning approach for major development  Policy HC1 – Promoting Healthy Communities  Policy BH1 – Listed Buildings  Policy BH5 – Archaeology</p> <p>Policy EC1 – Delivering inclusive economic growth  Policy EC3 – Major employment and strategic employment locations  Policy EC7 – Higher education institutions</p> <p>Policy TRAN1 – Active Travel – Walking and Cycling  Policy TRAN2 – Creating an accessible environment  Policy TRAN3 – Transport Assessment  Policy TRAN4 – Travel Plan  Policy TRAN6 – Access to public roads  Policy TRAN8 – Car parking and servicing arrangements  Policy TRAN9 – Parking standards within areas of parking restraint</p> <p>Policy ENV1 – Environmental Quality  Policy ENV2 – Mitigating environmental change  Policy ENV3 – Adapting to environmental change  Policy ENV4 – Flood Risk  Policy ENV5 – Sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS)</p> <p>Policy OS3 – Ancillary open space  Policy TRE1 – Trees  Policy NH1 – Protection of natural heritage resources</p>
3.2	<p><u>Supplementary Planning Guidance</u></p> <p>Placemaking and Urban Design  Masterplanning approach for Major developments  Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems  Transportation  Planning and Flood Risk</p>

<p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p> <p>3.5</p>	<p><b>Development Plan – zoning, designations and proposals maps</b>  Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) (BUAP 2001)  Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) (dBMAP v2004)  Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014) (dBMAP v2014)</p> <p><b>Regional Planning Policy</b>  Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)  Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)</p> <p><b>Other Material Considerations</b>  Developer Contribution Framework (2020)  Belfast Agenda (Community Plan)</p>
<p>4.0</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p>	<p><b>CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS</b></p> <p><b>Statutory Consultees</b></p> <p>DFI Roads – No objection in principle, detailed comments awaited.  NI Water – No objection.  DfI Rivers – No objection.  DfC HED – No objection subject to conditions.  DAERA – No objection subject to conditions.</p> <p><b>Non-Statutory Consultees</b></p> <p>Environmental Health – No objection subject to conditions.  BCC Landscape and Development – No objection.  Shared Environmental Services (SES) – No objection.  Belfast City Airport – No objection subject to conditions.  Belfast Harbour Commissioner – No comment.  BCC Waste Management – No objection</p> <p><b>Representations</b></p> <p>The application has been advertised in the newspaper and neighbours notified. No representations were received.</p>
<p>5.0</p> <p>5.1</p>	<p><b>PLANNING ASSESSMENT</b></p> <p><b>Main Issues</b></p> <p>The main issues relevant to consideration of the application are set out below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principle of development</li> <li>• Design and placemaking</li> <li>• Impact on heritage assets</li> <li>• Climate change</li> <li>• Open space</li> <li>• Access and transport</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health impacts</li> <li>• Environmental protection</li> <li>• Flood risk and drainage</li> <li>• Waste-water infrastructure</li> <li>• Natural heritage</li> <li>• Section 76 planning agreement</li> <li>• Pre-Application Community Consultation</li> </ul> <p><b>Development Plan Context</b></p>
5.2	Section 6(4) of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 states that in making any determinations under the Act, regard is to be had to the local development plan, and the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
5.3	Section 45(1) of the Act states that in determining planning applications, the Council must have regard to the local development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations.
5.4	The Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP) when fully completed will replace the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 as the statutory Development Plan for the city. The Belfast LDP will comprise two parts. Part 1 is the Plan Strategy, which contains strategic and operational policies and was adopted on 02 May 2023. Part 2 is the Local Policies Plan, which will provide the zonings and proposals maps for Belfast and has not yet been published. The zonings and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (“Departmental Development Plan”) remain part of the statutory local development plan until the Local Policies Plan is adopted.
	<u>Operational Polices</u>
5.5	The Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application. These have been listed at paragraph 3.1.
	<u>Proposals Maps</u>
5.6	Until such time as the Local Policies Plan is adopted, the Council must have regard to the land-use zonings, designations and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (“Departmental Development Plan”), both versions of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (v2004 and v2014) (draft BMAP 2015) and other relevant area plans. The weight to be afforded to these proposals maps is a matter for the decision maker. It is considered that significant weight should be given to the proposals map in draft BMAP 2015 (v2014) given its advanced stage in the development process, save for retail policies that relate to Sprucefield which remain contentious.
5.7	<b>Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001</b> – the site is un-zoned “white land” within the development limit.
5.8	<b>Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (2004 &amp; 2014)</b> – in dBMAP 2015 (v2004), the site falls within Zone F of the mixed-use Titanic Quarter zoning (zoning BHA 01) with its light industrial and educational uses. In dBMAP 2015 (v2014), the site falls within the mixed-use zoning of Titanic Quarter (zoning BHA 01) with permitted uses including Business Uses (Class B1, (a), (b) or (c) and Light Industrial Use (Class B2). The proposed development falls under Class B1 Business Use (c) of the Planning (Use Classes) Order (NI) 2015.

	<b>Principle of Development</b>
5.9	The site is located within the development limit in the BUAP 2001 and both versions of dBMAP 2015. The proposal is to extend the existing established on the site.
5.10	The site is un-zoned “white land” in the BUAP. In dBMAP 2015 (v2004), the site falls within Zone F of the mixed-use Titanic Quarter zoning (zoning BHA 01) with its light industrial and educational uses. In dBMAP 2015 (v2014), the site falls within the mixed-use zoning of Titanic Quarter (zoning BHA 01) with permitted uses including Business Uses (Class B1, (a), (b) or (c) and Light Industrial Use (Class B2). The proposed development falls under Class B1 Business Use (c) of the Planning (Use Classes) Order (NI) 2015 and accords with dBMAP 2015 (v2014) and most recent land-use zonings for the site.
5.11	Policy SD2 of the Plan Strategy states that the regeneration of Titanic Quarter has helped establish the harbour estate as a major tourist destination and has introduced a more diverse range of uses, including office accommodation, apartments, retail, and education facilities.
5.12	Policy EC1 supports business sectors with strong growth potential in Belfast including ICT. Policy EC3 states that light industrial, general industrial, storage or distribution and other appropriate <i>sui generis</i> employment uses will be directed towards Major Employment Locations (MEL) and Strategic Employment Locations (SEL) such as Queens Island. Moreover, Use Class B1(b) call centres and B1(c) research and development will be supported in an existing employment area. The proposal is consistent with these policies.
5.13	Policy EC7 relates to higher education institutions. The applicant is Queens University and the proposal is in partnership with the university. The proposal accords with Policy EC7, which states that the Council will promote the growth and expansion of further and higher education institutions as drivers of improved skills by promoting these institutions as employment hubs for the innovation sector and the wider knowledge economy.
5.14	This is a sustainable location for office development with good access to public transport, shops and services, providing opportunity to reduce the need to travel by the private car. The proposal would make effective use of land, a finite resource.
5.15	The Council’s Economic Development Unit notes that the estimated construction cost of the development is £32 million. It is expected that approximately 174 construction jobs will be created during construction. The approved Outline Business Case estimated that Full Time Equivalent (FTE) permanent employment in the facility, in terms of both employees of the facility and 3rd party employees engaging with the facility, will stabilise at approximately 650 (steady state, 2051). Based on the estimated increase in GDP across the economy, through the indirect and induced impact, a further 545 permanent jobs would be generated. The proposal forms part of the City Deal and represents welcome investment in education, research and development. These are material considerations that support the case for the development.
5.16	The Council’s Economic Development Unit advises the contract associated with this development will be subject to Buy-Social considerations. It is recommended that Section 76 Developer Contribution clauses should not be applied for the construction phase of the development where Buy Social requirements are in place.

5.17	<p>Having regard to these factors, the proposals are acceptable in principle and welcomed.</p> <p><b><u>Design and placemaking</u></b></p>
5.18	<p>The proposal has been assessed against Policies SP5, DES1, and DES2 of the Plan Strategy, the SPPS and Creating Places. Policies SP5 and DES1 promote good placemaking, high quality design and the importance of proposals responding positively to local context addressing matters such as scale height, massing, proportions, rhythm, and materials avoiding any negative impact at street level. Policy DES2 advocates adopting a holistic approach to site layout that is mindful of adjacent development. The application follows a Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) process when issues relating to scale, height, massing and architectural treatment were discussed in detail.</p>
5.19	<p>The existing ECIT Building provides 4,000m<sup>2</sup> floorspace over three storeys. The proposed development takes the form of two interlocking elements, 5-storey extension to the eastern part of the building, and 3-storey to the western part, which then connects with the existing building. The resulting centre is a large atrium, and points of intersection between the volumes (at the north end of Queens Road and at the main entrance facing the Dry Dock) display cantilevers. The highest massing elements are located adjacent to Queens Road. The rooftop plant enclosure is set back from the facade line.</p>
5.20	<p>The development proposal provides an additional 6,400m<sup>2</sup> with a resultant total of 10,400m<sup>2</sup> floorspace. The resultant building is of modern design with horizontal layering displayed through a bass, middle and top. The extensions have been designed as a cohesive pair. Plans show a landscaped arrival plaza adjoining the building and facing the Thompson Dock and Pumhouse; as well as a “pocket plaza” along the Queen’s Road boundary of the site.</p>
5.21	<p>The proposal displays a rhythm of vertical fins with varying depths and spacings across the façade are intended to, as the DAS states, ‘...create shadow and light play to give the user a different experience of the building throughout the course of the day’. Fenestration is punched window openings which adds further to the rhythm and spacing with window reveals on the lower floors displaying an accent colour appropriately in keeping with both the palette of the ECIT and Pump house.</p>
5.22	<p>It is considered that the scale and massing of the building are appropriate to the site and surrounding buildings.</p>
5.23	<p>The proposed building would be predominantly grey engineering brick, giving a 'modern industrial' aesthetic with a modernised finish and detailing. Aluminium cladding is proposed in grey aluminium, then an accent colour is then utilised with the lower massing window reveals to reference the adjacent ECIT Building. This will be in grey/blue hues, successfully visually breaking the predominant colour up. Feature windows at the cantilever ends, as well as the southern Queens Road aspect are proposed to both extend and frame views of immediate and further surroundings including the Dry Dock, Harland and Wolf cranes, and the distant landscape for the prospective users. These also provide visual interest and relief.</p>
5.24	<p>The ECIT site is located at the end of the Maritime Mile. The proposed scheme shows a landscaped arrival plaza adjoining the building and facing the Thompson Dock and Pumhouse; as well as a “pocket plaza” along the Queen’s Road boundary of the site. Clipped hornbeam trees arranged on a grid pattern reinforce the geometric style of design and giving a sense of arrival to the main entrance. Street furniture located within the arrival plaza enables and encourages the space to be used as a breakout area and</p>



	<p>helps provide animation to the space. The character of the space is further enhanced with feature lighting to ensure year-round interest and safety. A pocket plaza has been developed along the Queen's Road boundary of the site to provide a further breakout space while facilitating long term servicing requirements (NIE).</p>
5.25	<p>A Masterplanning Statement has been provided, noting how the site lies within an area of similar science-based buildings including the Catalyst managed Innovation Centre, White Star House, Concourse 1,2 and 3 and the Legacy buildings. The project provides a holistic approach to site assembly, layout and design that is mindful of adjacent sites. Its massing provides varying height, relating to its context and recognises the established massing/height of the adjacent Concourse Buildings along Queens Road. The proposed external materials provide a 'modern industrial' aesthetic, with a nod to the Pumphouse adjacent. An enhancement and expansion of the existing public realm is shown with reference made to the shipbuilding history of the site with detailing of prior tracks which allowed materials to be brought to/from the site and adjacent Dry Dock.</p>
5.26	<p>The proposed development is part of the wider masterplan area of Titanic Quarter. The proposal has been designed to align with the design principles set out in the approved Development Framework (amended 2010) for Titanic Quarter. Public realm improvements are included within the application which will comprise an entrance plaza, landscaped public realm and boundaries, and extension of Titanic Boulevard creating new connections to Hamilton Road. These are in line with the wider design principles of the Development Framework and the Maritime Mile Toolkit. It is considered that the proposal is consistent with the masterplan for the broader area and that the proposal accords with Policy DES3.</p>
5.27	<p>It is considered that the proposed resultant building of is a high quality design that would be appropriate to its setting. The proposal is considered compliant with Policies DES1 and DES2, and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>
	<p><b><u>Impact on the heritage assets</u></b></p>
5.28	<p>The Listed Thompson Dock Pump House (Grade B1, ref. HB26 07 and 010) and the Thompson Dock Scheduled Monument of regional importance (ref. DOW 004:502) are located to the west of the application site. DfC HED (Historic Buildings) is content that the alignment, scale, form and design of the building, and setting of the Listed Buildings and Dock would not be harmed, offering no objection to the proposal.</p>
5.29	<p>DfC HED (Historic Monuments) is content with the impact on archaeology, conditional on the agreement and implementation of programme of archaeological works subject to conditions. These conditions are recommended.</p>
5.30	<p>The proposal is considered compliant with Policies BH1 and BH5, and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>
	<p><b><u>Climate change</u></b></p>
5.31	<p>The Buildings Research Establishment (BRE) Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) is a widely used sustainability assessment method and rating system which sets the standard for best practice in sustainable design. The BREEAM assessment process evaluates projects against targets that are based on performance benchmarks and is independently certified. The proposed development has targeted a BREEAM Excellent rating. The BREEAM sustainability certification and benchmarking tool is required by and applied cross projects which are part of the Belfast Region City Deal.</p>

5.32	<p>Policy ENV2 states that planning permission will be granted for development that incorporates measures to mitigate environmental change and reduce greenhouse gases by promoting sustainable patterns of development. Development proposals should where feasible avoid demolition and reuse existing buildings and structures. The proposal would retain the existing building and meets this requirement. Policy ENV3 states that planning permission will be granted for development that incorporates measures to adapt to environmental change. The proposed building is targeting BREEAM Excellent rating, which is considered to satisfy both policies.</p>
5.33	<p>Specific measures include specification of hot water delivered through air source heat pumps, high efficiency LED lighting throughout, avoiding the need for any demolition on site, and sustainable transport measures, helping to reduce reliance on the private car and therefore reducing emissions associated with private car travel.</p>
5.34	<p>Policy ENV5 states that all built development shall include, where appropriate, SuDs measures to manage surface water effectively on site, to reduce surface water run-off and to ensure flooding is not increased elsewhere. The application proposes SuDS features including biodiversity areas to provide enhanced amenity benefits, and water saving techniques. A condition is recommended that requires full details of SuDS measures to be submitted and agreed in writing with the Council prior to any works commencing.</p>
	<p><b><u>Open space</u></b></p>
5.35	<p>Policy OS3 requires that all new development proposals make appropriate provision for open space, including hard and soft landscaped areas and outdoor amenity areas, to serve the needs of the development. The precise amount, location, type and design of such provision will be negotiated with applicants taking account of the specific characteristics of the development, the site and its context and having regard to a) the normal expectation will be at least 10% of the total site area; and b) complementary and ancillary equipment and facilities, including for active or passive enjoyment of residents or occupiers, should be incorporated into the design of the development.</p>
5.36	<p>The proposal includes an external high-quality landscaped plaza, which has been increased in scale (25% of the site area) since the PAD process to assist with accommodating secure covered cycle storage to meets BREEAM requirements while maintaining physical and visual links to the historically significant Thompson Dock and Pump House. Street furniture and landscaping enable the area to be used as a breakout area. The scheme also includes internal amenity areas in the form of 'village greens' on the south side of the building.</p>
5.37	<p>It is considered the requirements of Policy OS3 are met.</p>
	<p><b><u>Access and transport</u></b></p>
	<p><i>Network Capacity:</i></p>
5.38	<p>There is an existing Titanic Quarter Transport Masterplan (known as STMP) for Queens Island which was adopted in 2008 and amended in 2010. A new Queen's Island Transport Plan (QITP) for Queen's Island (including Titanic Quarter) has been under development for the past 4 years by Belfast Harbour and Titanic Quarter Ltd in consultation with DfI Roads and Belfast City Council Planning Service. It will update the area's transport strategy with a renewed focus on sustainable transport measures. The new QITP will provide updated modelling of actual traffic movements into and out of Queens Island having regard to existing and committed developments and will</p>

	<p>proposes a range of green transport measures to further promote sustainable travel in the interests of reducing the pressure on the road network as well as have positive benefits for the environment. The QITP will include new revised proposals for hard transport infrastructure to support the development of Queens Island.</p>
5.39	<p>The QITP has been subject to public consultation and its overall conclusions and status are the subject of current discussions with Dfl. The QITP will be presented to the Committee in due course for notation. Work on the QITP has been presented to City Growth &amp; Regeneration Committee (CGRC) in June 2023 for information.</p>
5.40	<p>The modelling associated with the QITP demonstrates that the predicted trips which formed the baseline of the original Transport Master Plan (prior to development coming forward) were significantly over-estimated when considered against actual trips associated with operational development. At the time of the “Loft Lines” Build to Rent application next to the Titanic Visitors Centre (LA04/2021/2280/F), significant up-to-date modelling for the area known as Phase 1 of the QITP within which the subject site sits, was submitted to Dfl Roads and assessed with the assistance of their consultant, AMEY. The modelling and trip levels for “Loft Lines” were demonstrated to be of a level that could be accommodated by the existing road network, a position accepted by Dfl Roads.</p>
5.41	<p>Since the approval and commencement of “Loft Lines”, a reduced scheme for the Hamilton Dock Hotel was submitted and approved under LA04/2023/3442/F, which is currently being implemented. Another application of note is LA04/2024/0681/F at lands to the northeast of Olympic House, east of Queen’s Road and south of Belfast Metropolitan College. This was approved by the Planning Committee at its September 2024 meeting, subject to conclusion of a Section 76 planning agreement. The prospective permission is for to the erection of circa 1,000 bed Purpose-Built Managed Student Accommodation.</p>
5.42	<p>Dfl Roads has advised that it has no objection in principle to the proposal. Its further detailed consultation response is awaited and is expected to be reported to the Committee as a late item.</p> <p><i>Accessibility and parking:</i></p>
5.43	<p>As mentioned, the site is an accessible location within cycling distance of the City Centre and its shops, services and leisure offerings. Public transport services are provided within 100m of the site (Glider) running at 15 minute intervals during peak time. Queens Road includes a cycle lane on either side of the road. There is also a segregated cycle lane along the Sydenham Road which is located approximately 1.7km or a five-minute cycle from the site. The Belfast Bike docking stations serve the ECIT building with four sites.</p>
5.44	<p>The proposal includes 52 cycle parking spaces, 49 standard car parking spaces, including 6 disabled space and 5 EV. Changing and shower facilities for the use of cyclists and pedestrians are provided at ground level of the proposed building. The current on-site car parking is approximately 99 spaces. However, due to Queen’s flexible working arrangement and the site’s accessibility by alternative sustainable travel modes, the applicant states that existing car park is typically only 31% (31 vehicles) utilised at any given time. The proposed 49 on-site car parking spaces are considered appropriate taking into account the likely number of people on-site at any given time, the sustainable location of the site with access to public transport including Glider, the implementation of the proposed travel plan and travel fund (described below), and Queen’s continuing to support flexible working arrangements.</p>

5.45	Regard is also had to the high level of parking control by the Harbour police, which was also material to the consideration of the planning application for the “Loft Lines” residential scheme and Titanic Quarter PBMSA scheme.
5.46	<p>The proposed development has been designed in accordance with all current standards in relation to providing suitable access for all. The building will be constructed to meet all other regulatory and statutory requirements in terms of accessibility and will meet all DDA requirements.</p> <p><i>Green travel measures:</i></p>
5.47	<p>The applicant proposes the following green travel measures to promote alternatives to car use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cycle Parking and shower/changing facilities;</li> <li>• £20K per annum travel fund to be made available for a maximum of 3 years from the date of operation of the proposed development to fund green travel measures at M1.0. The funds are to be held by QUB and evidence of expenditure incurred by QUB relating to the green travel measures are to be provided to the Council. Details of the fund and how it is to be used are proposed to be secured by a Section 76 planning agreement and would provide for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Subsidised Belfast Bus Travel Cards;</li> <li>- Subsidised Belfast Bike Membership;</li> <li>- Bicycle Vouchers; and</li> <li>- Other initiatives approved by the Council.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Controlled / managed (permits and online booking system) on-site car parking, including EV charging points, visitor spaces, allocated car sharing spaces and accessible spaces;</li> <li>• Flexible working; and</li> <li>• Personalised travel plans</li> </ul>
5.48	<p>Subject to the detailed consultation response from DfI Roads, the proposal is considered to comply with Policies TRAN1, TRAN2, TRAN3, TRAN4, TRAN6, TRAN8 and TRAN9 of the Plan Strategy, and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p> <p><b><u>Health impacts</u></b></p>
5.49	<p>Policy HC1 seeks to ensure that all new development maximise opportunities to promote healthy and active lifestyles. New developments should be designed, constructed and managed in ways that improve health and promote healthy lifestyles. This will include supporting active travel options, improving accessibility to local service centres, reducing the use of private car travel, adequate provision of public open space, leisure and recreation facilities, high quality design and promoting balanced communities and sustainable neighbourhoods.</p>
5.50	<p>The site is accessible and provides good opportunities for active travel, including walking and cycling, through excellent linkages with the City Centre and its shops, services and amenities. Active travel will be further encouraged through the proposed green travel measures already detailed.</p>

5.51	Open space is proposed and staff would have direct access to the Belfast waterfront which provides opportunities for exercise, supporting physical and mental health. The site is located in close proximity to other high quality public open spaces including the Maritime Mile, Titanic Slipways, Hamilton Dock and Abercorn Basin. The building itself is considered to be of a high quality design and would provide an attractive working environment for employees and visitors.
5.52	The proposal is considered to satisfy the requirements of Policy HC1.
	<b><u>Environmental protection</u></b>
5.53	Policy ENV1 states that planning permission will be granted for development that will maintain and, where possible, enhance environmental quality, and protects communities from materially harmful development. The proposed development has been assessed by Environmental Health in terms of contaminated land, air quality, lighting, odour and noise.  <i>Contaminated land</i>
5.54	The contaminated land reports provided with the application conclude that remediation is required. Environmental Health therefore advises conditions.  <i>Noise and vibration</i>
5.55	In relation to noise, Environmental Health notes that the proposal shows the inclusion of external plant and a plant room at roof level of the proposed extensions and advises a condition relating to the noise rating of any plant and equipment to be selected.
5.56	The conditions advised by Environmental Health are recommended. The proposal is considered to accord with Policy ENV1, and relevant provisions of the SPPS.  <b><u>Flood risk and drainage</u></b>
5.57	Flood Maps (NI) show that the site lies within the 1 in 200 year climate change coastal flood plain. Paragraph 6.107 of the SPPS states that built development must not be permitted within the flood plains of rivers or the sea unless one of the following three circumstances apply:
5.58	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the development proposal constitutes a valid exception to the general presumption against development in flood plains (exceptions for defended and undefended areas of the flood plain are set out at Figure 1);</li> <li>• the development proposal is of overriding regional or sub-regional economic importance; and</li> <li>• the development proposal is considered as minor development in the context of flood risk.</li> </ul>
5.59	The proposal is considered of overriding regional or sub-regional economic importance.
5.60	Paragraph 4.3 of the Planning and Flood Risk SPG provides two criteria that must be met to be deemed to be of overriding regional or sub regional economic importance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstration of exceptional benefit to the regional or sub-regional economy;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstration that the proposal requires a location within the flood plain and justification of why possible alternative sites outside the flood plain are unsuitable</li> </ul>
5.61	<p>In term of the exceptional benefit to the regional economy, the proposal is a regionally important research and development centre. The estimated construction cost of the development is £32 million. It is expected that approximately 174 construction jobs will be created during construction. The approved Outline Business Case estimated that Full Time Equivalent (FTE) permanent employment in the facility, in terms of both employees of the facility and third party employees engaging with the facility, will stabilise at approximately 650 (steady state, 2051). Based on the estimated increase in GDP across the economy, through the indirect and induced impact, a further 545 permanent jobs would be generated. The proposal has strong links with QUB, training and education which will benefit the region. The proposal forms part of the City Deal and represents welcome investment in education, research and development.</p>
5.62	<p>The current facility at the site is no longer fit for purpose due to limitations in the building's size and internal structure layout and this represents an intensification of an existing established use. Regard is also had to the fall-back of the previously permitted extension, albeit it was of a smaller scale.</p>
5.63	<p>DfI Rivers has reviewed the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Assessment, accepting their logic and has no reason to disagree with the conclusions. Accordingly, it offers no objection to the proposal.</p>
5.64	<p>The proposal complies with Policies SP1a, ENV3, ENV4 and ENV5, and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>
	<p><b><u>Waste-water infrastructure</u></b></p>
5.65	<p>Policy SP1a requires that necessary infrastructure is in place to support new development. NI Water has been consulted and has no objections. It is considered that satisfactory infrastructure would be in place to support the development.</p>
	<p><b><u>Natural heritage</u></b></p>
5.66	<p>Policy NH1 relates to the protection of natural heritage resources.</p>
5.67	<p>The site is hydrologically linked to Inner Belfast Lough Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI), Outer Belfast Lough ASSI, Belfast Lough RAMSAR site, Belfast Lough Special Protection Area (SPA) and Belfast Lough Open Water SPA and therefore necessary to consult DAERA, as well as SES.</p>
5.68	<p>Belfast City Council is the Competent Authority under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) for undertaking an Appropriate Assessment where a proposal is likely to have a significant environmental effect on Belfast Lough. Water quality of the lough is a key consideration. The Habitats Regulations are framed in such a way that it is not only the impacts of individual development proposals that need to be considered, but also "in combination" impacts with other development.</p>

5.69	Following an Appropriate Assessment in accordance with the Regulations and having considered the nature, scale, timing, duration and location of the project, SES advises the project would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. In reaching this conclusion, SES has assessed the manner in which the project is to be carried out including any mitigation. Its conclusion is subject to a condition requiring the submission of a final Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) as well as the method of sewage disposal being agreed in writing with NI Water prior to any works commencing. These conditions are recommended.
5.70	DAERA has provided advice from Water Management Unit, Regulation Unit and Natural Environment Division, all of which have no objections subject to conditions.
5.71	DAERA Marine and Fisheries Division has stated that is content that there should be no adverse impacts on marine protected areas, marine habitats and/or marine species, provided conditions and pollution standing advice are followed. They have however noted that Section 4.1.3 of the PEA states that no habitats are located on the proposed development site that are listed as NI priority habitats. They wish to make the applicant aware of relevant habitats located within 5km of the site.
5.72	The applicant's Marine Strategy notes that negotiations are ongoing with NI Water Regarding the facilitating of disposal of foul sewage and surface water. Appropriate means of disposal would need to be agreed to prevent any negative impact on the water quality at the priority catchment of Belfast Lough Shellfish Water Protected Area. DAERA also notes consideration should be given to how litter from the development will be managed to prevent this entering the marine environment. This will entail Litter Pollution Prevention for all stages of the development's lifecycle, from planning to clearance and construction. Throughout their response they have emphasised the need for a CEMP to be agreed in writing prior to works commencing.
5.73	DAERA Industrial Pollution & Radiochemical Inspectorate has considered the application and on the basis of the information provided is content with the proposal.
5.74	The proposal is considered compliant with Policy NH1, Policy ENV1 and the relevant provisions of the SPPS.
	<b><u>Waste Management</u></b>
5.75	The application is supported by a Waste Management Plan. This sets out provision for accommodating total waste generated from the building, segregation of waste for recycling and how convenient and safe access for depositing waste and collecting waste will be facilitated. The Council's Waste Management team has been consulted and has provided advisory information. It advises that the Waste Management Plan references the Local Government Waste Storage Guide for NI 2010 and BS 5905:(2005) but does not reference the BCC supplementary waste storage guidance for commercial developments.
5.76	The Council's Waste Management team raises no objection but notes that Building Control may require the Plan to be rewritten to demonstrate compliance with the aforementioned supplementary guidance for commercial developments. The approach taken to extrapolate the expected volume of waste from the existing volume of waste appears to be acceptable especially as commercial developments avail of more frequent collections. However, the applicant should satisfy themselves that this is the case before proceeding.

<p>5.77</p>	<p><b><u>Section 76 planning agreement</u></b></p> <p>Should the application be approved, the following planning obligation is necessary to make the proposed development acceptable. These should be secured through a Section 76 planning agreement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Green Travel Measures</b> – to include the provision of the travel plan and green measures fund.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Pre-Application Community Consultation</u></b></p> <p>5.78 For applications for Major development, there is a legislative requirement for applicants to consult the community in advance of submitting the application.</p> <p>5.79 Applicants are required to submit to the council a ‘Proposal of Application Notice’ (PAN) in advance of making the application, which sets out the proposals for the pre-community consultation. A PAN was submitted in November 2023 (LA04/2023/4418/PAN) and confirmed by the Council as acceptable.</p> <p>5.80 The applicant is further required to prepare a Pre-Application Community Consultation report (PACC) to accompany the planning application. A PACC Report was submitted with the application, which describes the engagement process and feedback received.</p> <p>5.81 A public event was held in November 2023 and dedicated community consultation website established. A total of 7 individuals engaged through attendance at the public exhibition event and 5 completed a feedback form. Feedback was positive.</p> <p>5.82 The PACC report is considered compliant with the legislative requirements.</p>
<p><b>6.0</b></p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p>	<p><b>Recommendation</b></p> <p>Having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.</p> <p>Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement and deal with any other issues that arise, including the further detailed consultation response from DfI Roads, provided that the issues are not substantive.</p>



7.0

**DRAFT CONDITIONS**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

*Contaminated Land*

2. No development shall commence on site (other than site clearance, enabling works or works to fulfil this condition) unless an updated Remediation Strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The updated Remediation Strategy shall consider the Pentland Macdonald Ltd report entitled 'Contamination Assessment & Remediation Strategy, Global Innovation Institute, Queens Road, Belfast, for AtkinsRealis/Queen's University Belfast' (dated February 2024 and referenced PM21-1130) and the letter from Pentland Macdonald regarding 'Contamination Assessment & Remediation Strategy Clarifications – Global Innovation Institute, Queens Road, Belfast (dated 19th June 2024 and referenced 'PM21-1130\_Let1 BCC Clarif-1'). The updated Remediation Strategy shall follow current Environment Agency and CIRIA guidance and British Standards and must demonstrate how the identified contaminant linkages are to be demonstrably broken and no longer pose a potential risk to human health. It must also detail how the proposed remedial works are to be verified.

The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved updated Remediation Strategy.

Reason: To ensure that any contamination within the site is appropriately dealt with, in the interests of human health.

3. Prior to operation of the development, a Verification Report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The Verification Report shall be completed by competent persons and be in accordance with current Environment Agency and CIRIA guidance and British Standards. It must demonstrate that the mitigation measures outlined in the agreed Remediation Strategy have been implemented, that they have broken the relevant contaminant linkages and that the site no longer poses a potential risk to human health.

Reason: To demonstrate that the required remedial measures have been incorporated into the development, in the interests of human health.

4. If during the carrying out of the development, new contamination is encountered that has not previously been identified, all related development works shall cease, and the Council shall be notified immediately in writing. No further related development works shall proceed until this new contamination has been fully investigated in accordance with current Environment Agency and CIRIA guidance and British Standards.

In the event of unacceptable human health risks being identified, a Remediation Strategy shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Council. The Remediation Strategy shall be implemented and subsequently a Verification Report shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Council prior to the development being operated. The Verification Report shall be

completed by competent persons and demonstrate the successful completion of the remediation works and that the site is now fit for end-use. The Verification Report shall be in accordance with current Environment Agency and CIRIA guidance and British standards.

Reason: To ensure that any contamination within the site is appropriately dealt with, in the interests of human health.

5. If during the development works, new contamination or risks are encountered which have not previously been identified, works should cease and the Planning Authority shall be notified immediately. This new contamination shall be fully investigated in accordance with the Land Contamination: Risk Management (LCRM) guidance available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/landcontamination-how-to-manage-the-risks>. In the event of unacceptable risks being identified, a remediation strategy shall be agreed with the Planning Authority in writing, and subsequently implemented and verified to its satisfaction.

Reason: Protection of environmental receptors to ensure the site is suitable for use.

6. After completing the remediation works under Condition 5; and prior to occupation of the development, a verification report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. This report should be completed by competent persons in accordance with the Land Contamination: Risk Management (LCRM) guidance available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/landcontamination-how-to-manage-the-risks>.

The verification report should present all the remediation, waste management and monitoring works undertaken and demonstrate the effectiveness of the works in managing all the risks and wastes in achieving the remedial objectives.

Reason: Protection of environmental receptors to ensure the site is suitable for use.

#### *CEMP*

7. No development, works or site clearance shall commence on site unless a Final Construction Environmental Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. This should reflect all the mitigation, and avoidance measures to be employed for pollution control and protection of water quality as detailed in the Outline Construction Environment Management Plan (Arup, 20/02/2024, Rev 002). No development, works or site clearance shall be carried out unless in accordance with the approved Final Construction Environmental Management Plan.

Reason: To ensure the project will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site

*Drainage*

8. Notwithstanding the submitted details, no development shall commence on site (other than site clearance, site preparation, demolition and the formation of foundations and trenches) unless details of foul and surface water drainage, including a programme for implementation of these works, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details, which shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: To ensure appropriate foul and surface water drainage of the site in the interests of safeguarding the environmentally protected Belfast Lough.

Approval is required upfront because the design of the drainage is an integral part of the development and its acceptability.

9. Notwithstanding the submitted details, no development shall commence on site (other than site clearance, site preparation, demolition and the formation of foundations and trenches) unless final details of a surface water drainage scheme, which shall incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) principles, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The scheme shall include a programme for implementation of the works and proposals for future maintenance and management. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved SUDS scheme, which shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: To ensure sustainable drainage of the development, having regard to Policy ENV4 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy 2035. Approval is required upfront because the design of the drainage is an integral part of the development and its acceptability.

*Noise*

10. The plant and equipment associated with the development hereby permitted, shall be designed so as to achieve a combined rating level (LAr) equal to or less than the typical background (LA90) level, when measured or determined at the nearest noise sensitive location. All measurements shall be in accordance with the methodology detailed within BS4142: 2014+A1:2019.

Reason: Protection of nearby amenity

*Archaeology*

11. No site works or development shall take place unless a Vibration Monitoring Method Statement for monitoring the structure of Hamilton Dock during construction works has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. This should set the acceptable threshold value at a peak component particle velocity (PCPV) between 2.5 and 5.0 mm/s. No site works or development shall take place unless in accordance with the approved Vibration Monitoring Method Statement.

Reason: To protect the structure of the Thompson Graving Dock from unacceptable levels of vibration during construction.

*Trees and landscaping*

12. All hard and soft landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation of any part of the development unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council. Any existing or proposed trees or plants indicated on the approved plans which, within a period of five years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged, diseased or dying shall be replaced during the next planting season with other trees or plants of a location, species and size, details of which shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. All hard and soft landscape areas and works shall be permanently retained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area, and to promote sustainable drainage. Approval is required upfront because the landscaping is critical to the acceptability of the proposal.

*Materials*

14. Notwithstanding the submitted details, no external brickwork or external cladding panels shall be constructed or applied unless in accordance with a written specification and a physical sample panel, details of which shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.

The sample panel shall be provided on site and made available for inspection by the Council for the duration of the construction works.

The sample panel shall show the make, type, size, colour, bond, pointing, coursing, jointing, profile and texture of the external brick materials and panelling.

Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area.

*Environmental Credentials*

15. Within one year of the occupation, evidence that the building has been constructed to at least Passivhaus "Classic" or BREEAM Excellent standard, or equivalent, shall be submitted in writing to the Council.

Reason: To ensure that the development mitigates and adapts to climate change.

**DRAFT INFORMATIVES**

**NOT04 Section 76 planning agreement**

This planning permission is subject to a planning agreement under Section 76 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, which secures the travel plan and green travel measures fund. This decision should be read in conjunction with the planning agreement.

**NOT02 Compliance with planning permission**

Please make sure that you carry out the development in accordance with the approved plans and any planning conditions listed above. Failure to do so will mean that the proposal is unauthorised and liable for investigation by the Council's Planning Enforcement team. If you would like advice about how to comply with the planning permission, you are advised to contact the Planning Service at Belfast City Council at [planning@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:planning@belfastcity.gov.uk).

**NOT03 Discharge of condition(s)**

This planning permission includes condition(s) which require further details to be submitted to and approved by the Council. Please read the condition(s) carefully so that you know when this information needs to be provided and approved. It could take a minimum of 8 weeks for the Council to approve the details, assuming that they are satisfactory, and sometimes longer depending on the complexity of the condition. You should allow for this when planning the timeline of your project.

**NOT05 Non-planning requirements**

The grant of planning permission does not dispense with the need to obtain licenses, authorisations may have been identified by consultees in their response to the application and can be accessed on the Northern Ireland Planning Portal website. The responses from consultees may also include other general advice for the benefit of the applicant or developer, consents or permissions under other legislation or protocols.

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