

# Development Management Report

Summary	
<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.

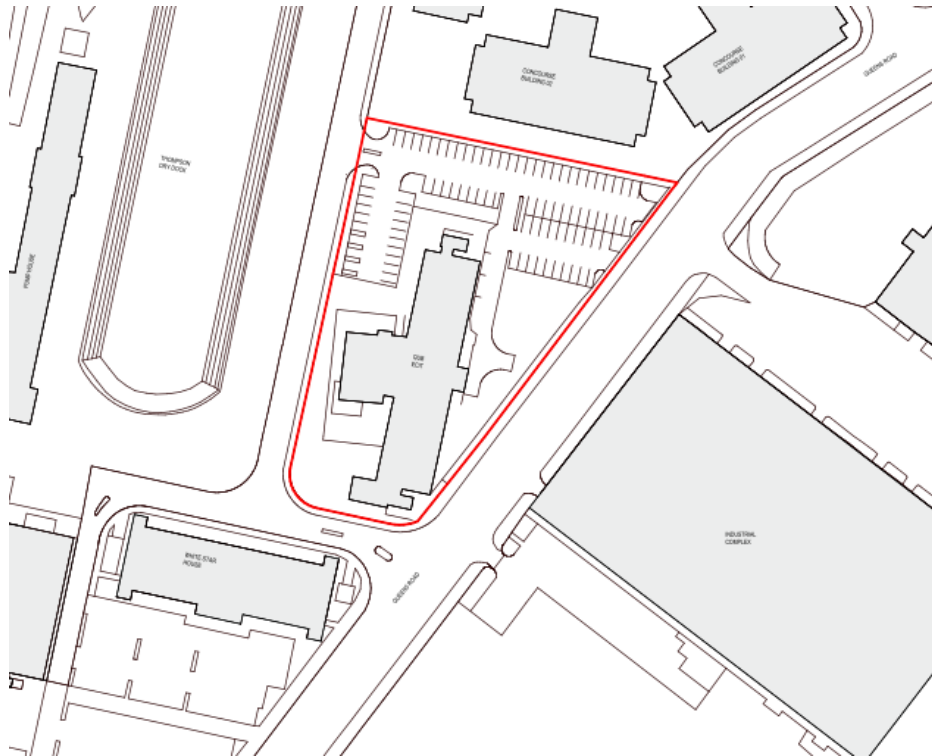
### **Recommendation**

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.

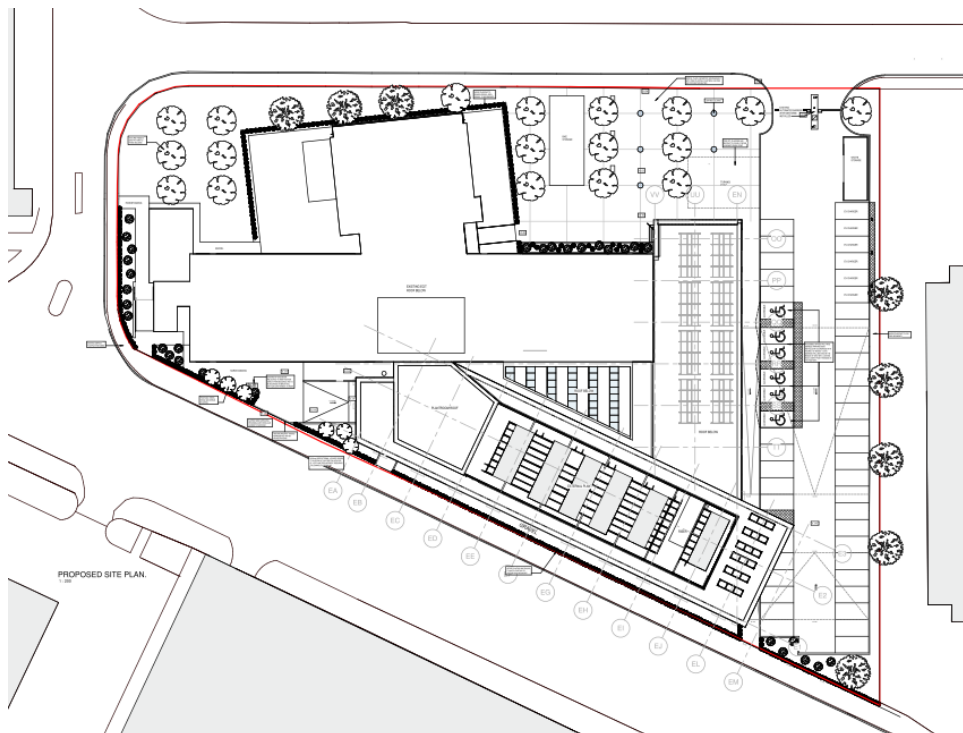
Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement and deal with any other issues that arise, including the further detailed consultation response from DfI Roads, provided that the issues are not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

# DRAWINGS AND IMAGERY

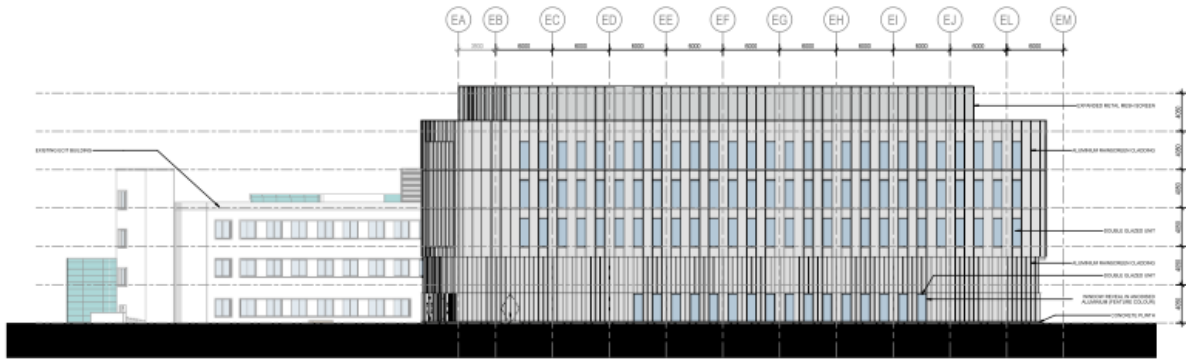
## Site Location Plan:



## Proposed Site Layout:



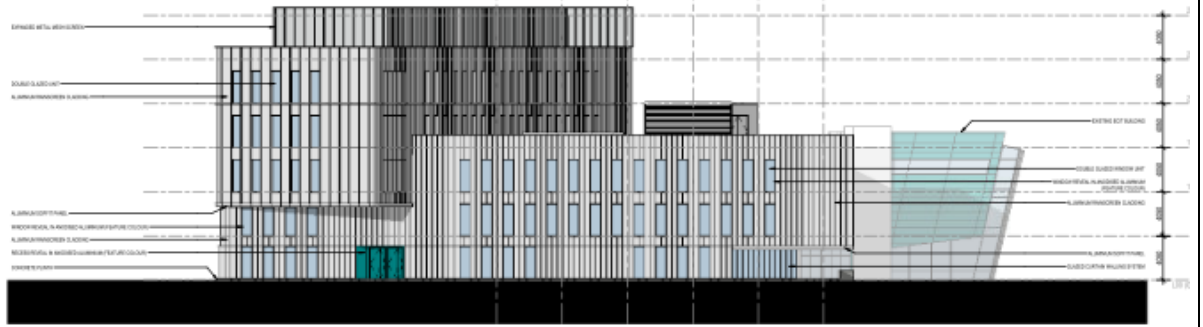
# Proposed Elevations:



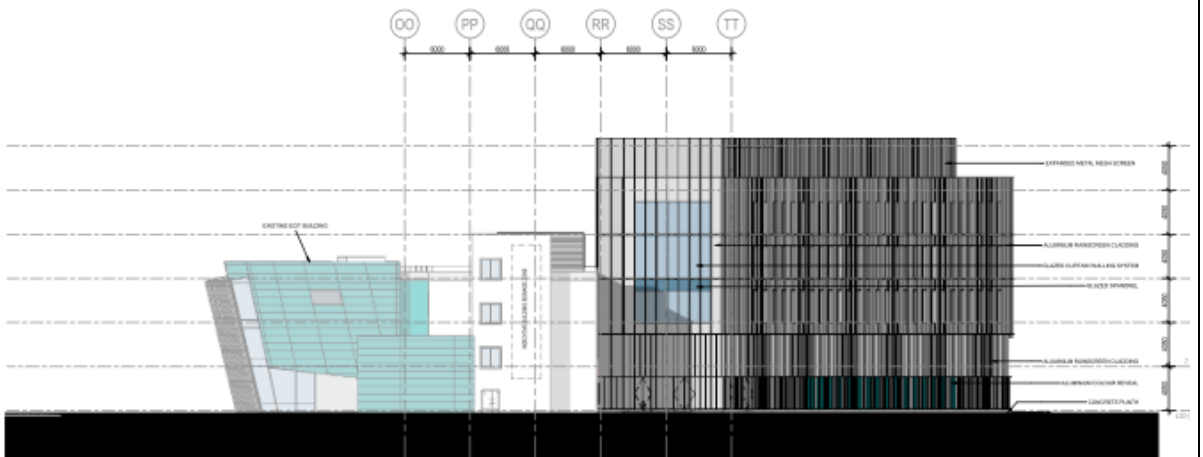
1 PROPOSED ELEVATION - EAST  
1:50



2 PROPOSED ELEVATION - WEST  
1:50



3 PROPOSED ELEVATION - NORTH  
1:200



4 PROPOSED ELEVATION - SOUTH  
1:200

**Proposed Landscaping:**





**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, ‘...<i>create shadow and light play to give the user a different experience of the building throughout the course of the day</i>’. 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>

	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).
5.25	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.
5.26	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.
5.27	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.
	<b><u>Impact on the heritage assets</u></b>
5.28	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.
5.29	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.
5.30	The proposal is considered compliant with Policies BH1 and BH5, and relevant provisions of the SPPS.
	<b><u>Climate change</u></b>
5.31	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.

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>6.1 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>6.2 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.