

Public Document Pack

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



**Belfast
City Council**

7th August, 2025

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in hybrid format, both in the Lavery Room, City Hall and remotely, via Microsoft Teams, on Tuesday, 12th August, 2025 at 5.00 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

12. Planning Applications previously considered

- (f) **LA04/2024/2044/F**- Erection of 895 room Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) across 9-20 storey building blocks with communal facilities, internal and external communal amenity space including landscaped courtyard and roof terraces and ancillary accommodation. With additional use outside term time (no more than 50% of the rooms) as short-term let accommodation and (no more than 50% of the rooms) accommodation for use by further or higher education institutions. Lands at 39 Corporation Street (Pages 1 - 32)

13. New Planning Applications

- (a) **LA04/2025/0242/F** - Erection of hotel (164 beds) including ground floor bar / restaurant; proposed heights of 8 storeys (c. 26.8m to parapet) at Donegall Pass, reducing to 5 storeys at Botanic Avenue and 4 storeys at Ratcliffe Street; and associated works including demolition of existing building - 2 - 10 Botanic Avenue (Pages 33 - 50)

Addendum Report	
Committee Date: 12 th August 2025	
Application ID: LA04/2024/2044/F	
Proposal: Erection of 895 room Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) across 9-20 storey building blocks with communal facilities, internal and external communal amenity space including landscaped courtyard and roof terraces and ancillary accommodation. With additional use outside term time (no more than 50% of the rooms) as short-term let accommodation and (no more than 50% of the rooms) accommodation for use by further or higher education institutions	Location: Lands at 39 Corporation Street, Belfast, BT1 3BA
Referral Route: Application for Major development	
Recommendation: Approval subject to conditions and Section 76 planning agreement	
Applicant Name and Address: Corporation Street Properties Limited 1 Linfield Road Belfast	Agent Name and Address: TSA Planning 20 May Street Belfast BT1 4NL
Date Valid: 05.12.2024	
Target Date: 03.07.2025	
Contact Officer: Lisa Walshe, Principal Planning Officer	
Background <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This application was approved by the Planning Committee at its 17th June meeting. The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement and to deal with any other issues that arise, including resolving final responses from Environmental Health, NIEA: NED and SES, provided that the issues were not substantive. 2. The principal reason for reporting the application back to the Committee is because officers are recommending a change to the heads of terms in the Section 76 planning agreement relating to the delivery of the public realm. 3. This report should be read in conjunction with the original report to the Committee, appended. 	

Section 76 planning agreement

4. Negotiations on the Section 76 planning agreement are at an advanced stage. The outstanding issue relates to the delivery of the public realm and the complexities around the Council exercising an option to deliver the public realm in lieu of the developer undertaking the works (the exercise of this option would also involve a Financial Developer Contribution from developer to the Council of £245,000 to cover the cost of the works).
5. The detailed drafting of these clauses has raised concerns including the timing of the payment where the Council exercises the option, suggested implications for the Council if it fails to complete the public realm works in time and whether the Financial Developer Contribution is sufficient to cover the Council's costs in undertaking the public realm works. There are also complexities around a scenario whereby the Council wished to undertake some but not all of the works.
6. In view of these issues, it is recommended that the developer delivers the public realm themselves, which was always one of the original options. This "in kind" form of Developer Contribution whereby the developer delivers the infrastructure is more straightforward and generally more favourable than a Financial Developer Contribution because of the complexities often associated with the latter. The Committee is asked to agree this revised approach and that the Section 76 planning agreement can be amended accordingly.

Environmental Health consultation

7. The Council's Environmental Health team has provided a draft response, advising no objection subject to conditions. The conditions relate to contaminated land, air quality and noise. Delegated authority is sought to finalise the conditions.

DAERA NIEA and SES consultations

8. The consultation response from NIEA remains outstanding. SES will be re-consulted once the NIEA consultation response is received.
9. Delegated authority is sought to deal with any issues that arise from this consultation responses once received, provided that they are not substantive.

Recommendation

10. 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.
11. 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 resolving the final responses from Environmental Health, DAERA NIEA and SES, provided that the issues are not substantive.

Development Management Report

Summary	
Committee Date: 17 th June 2025	
Application ID: LA04/2024/2044/F	
Proposal: Erection of 895 room Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) across 9-20 storey building blocks with communal facilities, internal and external communal amenity space including landscaped courtyard and roof terraces and ancillary accommodation. With additional use outside term time (no more than 50% of the rooms) as short-term let accommodation and (no more than 50% of the rooms) accommodation for use by further or higher education institutions	Location: Lands at 39 Corporation Street, Belfast, BT1 3BA
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Applicant Name and Address: Corporation Street Properties Limited 1 Linfield Road Belfast	Agent Name and Address: TSA Planning 20 May Street Belfast BT1 4NL
Date Valid: 05.12.2024	
Target Date: 03.07.2025	
Contact Officer: Lisa Walshe, Principal Planning Officer	
Executive Summary: <p>This application relates to lands at 39 Corporation Street, Belfast. Full planning permission is sought for the erection of 895 room Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) across 9-20 storey building blocks with communal facilities, internal and external communal amenity space including landscaped courtyard and roof terraces and ancillary accommodation. With additional use outside term time (no more than 50% of the rooms) as short-term let accommodation and (no more than 50% of the rooms) accommodation for use by further or higher education institutions.</p> <p>The application follows a detailed Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) process.</p> <p>The key issues for consideration of the application are set out below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of PBMSA in this location • Design and placemaking 	

- Impact on heritage assets
- Impact on amenity
- 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 located within the northern part of the City Centre and is a highly accessible location for new PBMSA development within walking distance of the new Ulster University campus. The application is supported by satisfactory evidence of need for the proposal.

The proposed building is considered to be of a high-quality design, appropriate to its location, which will regenerate a site which currently contains a vacant office building.

DfI Rivers, DfI Roads, Belfast City Airport, Historic Environment Division DAERA: Water Management Unit and DAERA: Regulation Unit were consulted and had no objections subject to conditions. NI Water object due to capacity issues which is addressed in the report. Final responses from NIEA: Natural Environment Division (NED) and Shared Environmental Services (SES) are awaited and delegated authority is sought to resolve same. Environmental Health (EH) responded and requested further points of clarification which have been provided. A final response is awaited and delegated authority is sought to resolve this.

Five letters of support have been received which are detailed in the main report.

Recommendation

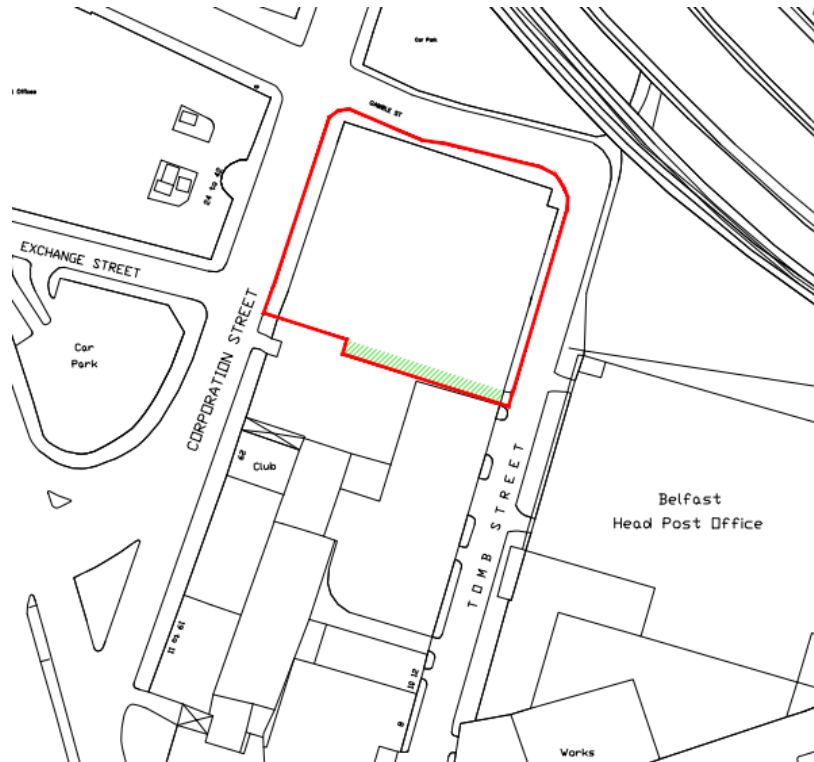
Having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.

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 resolving final responses from EH, NIEA: NED and SES provided that the issues are not substantive.

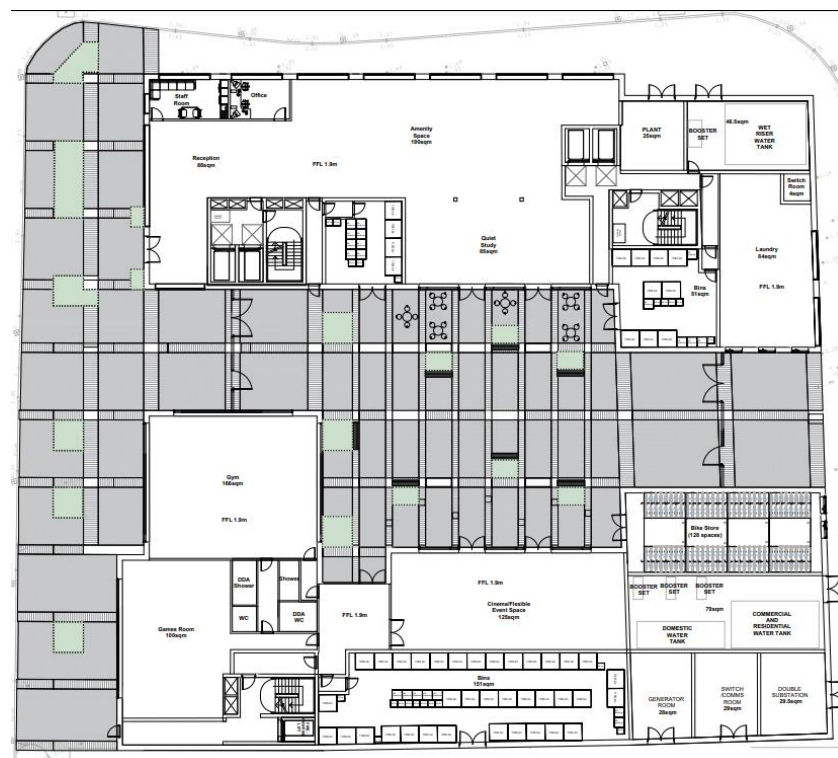
Case Officer Report

DRAWINGS AND IMAGERY

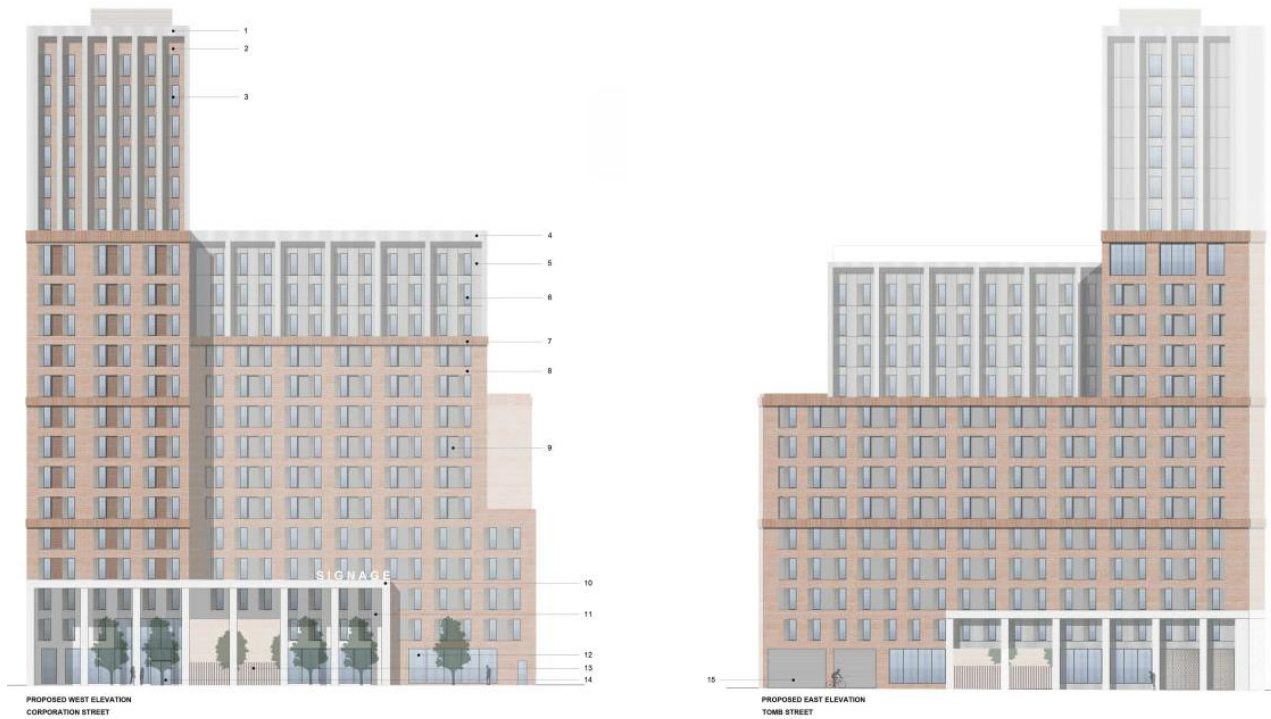
Site Location Plan:



Proposed Ground floor:



Proposed Corporation and Tomb Street Elevations:



Proposed Gamble Street Elevations



CGIs:





1.0	Characteristics of the Site and Area
1.1	This application site comprises 39 Corporation Street which is a vacant office development constructed c.1990. The site is one of the most recognisable buildings within the northern part of the city centre with critical views primarily from Corporation Street, Dunbar Link and the M3 Lagan Bridge.
1.2	The site is approximately 0.3 hectares (ha) in size and relatively flat. The subject lands also include a surface level car park (c.50 spaces) located to the north of the building towards Gamble Street. Immediately east of the site is the head office for Royal Mail including car parking for postal vans. South and west of the site is dominated by car parking (surface level and multi storey). The lands to the south and Tomb Street Car Park are to be demolished and consent has been given for the construction of 298 no. build to rent apartments in a 19-storey building (planning reference LA04/2021/2016/F). This was approved by Planning Committee in January 2024 however the Decision Notice is still to be issued.
1.3	The surrounding area has benefitted from significant regeneration over recent years, with Ulster University and Belfast Harbour being the main catalyst for this change. This includes the 'City Quays' developments (both constructed and approved) in addition to the main Ulster University Campus and other Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation. The collective of new buildings is transforming this part of the north city.

	Description of Proposed Development
1.4	The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of 895 room Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) across 9-20 storey building blocks with communal facilities, internal and external communal amenity space including landscaped courtyard and roof terraces and ancillary accommodation. With additional use outside term time (no more than 50% of the rooms) as short-term let accommodation and (no more than 50% of the rooms) accommodation for use by further or higher education institutions.
1.5	The proposed building would measure 64.8m at its highest point, not including roof plant. The building heights range from 9-20 storeys across three blocks of development. The stepped approach to the building breaks the built form and provides visual interest.
1.6	The application follows a detailed Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) process.
2.0	RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY
2.1	LA04/2024/0881/PAN – Erection of purpose-built manage student accommodation (comprising clusters and studios) including landscaped courtyard and roof terrace, communal facilities and all other associated site and access works. 39 Corporation Street, Belfast, BT1 3BA Acceptable (10th June 2024)
2.2	LA04/2021/2016/F - Demolition of existing multi-storey car park and the erection of 298no. build for rent apartments (19 storey) including ground floor commercial unit (A1/A2), car/cycle parking provision along with associated development. (Further information received) 21-29 Corporation Street & 18-24 Tomb Street Belfast Permission Granted at BCC Planning Committee January 2024
2.3	LA04/2016/2357/F - Change of use of part of ground floor from office to job centre. Replacement of ramp for DDA access, and new public entrance to front façade. 39 Corporation Street, Belfast, BT1 3BA Approved
3.0	PLANNING POLICY
3.1	Development Plan – Plan Strategy <u>Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035</u> <i>Strategic Policies:</i> 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><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 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) 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> <p><u>Supplementary Planning Guidance</u></p> <p>Placemaking and Urban Design Tall Buildings Masterplanning approach for Major developments Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems Transportation Planning and Flood Risk Residential Design</p> <p>Development Plan – zoning, designations and proposals maps Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) BUAP Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014) Regional Planning Policy Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)</p> <p>Other Material Considerations 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>
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4.0	CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS
4.1	<p><u>Statutory Consultees</u></p> <p>DfI Roads – no objection, recommends conditions.</p> <p>DfC HED – no objection.</p> <p>DfI Rivers – no objection, the proposal is not within a flood plain.</p> <p>DAERA: Water Management Unit – standing advice and informatives</p> <p>DAERA: NED – final response outstanding</p> <p>DAERA: Regulation Unit – no objection subject to conditions</p> <p>NI Water – objection</p> <p>Belfast City Airport – No objection</p>
4.2	<p><u>Non-Statutory Consultees</u></p> <p>Development Plan Housing Team – No objections, comments provided and set out in main report</p> <p>Planning Service Urban Design Officer – No objection.</p> <p>Environmental Health – Response outstanding</p> <p>BCC Landscape and Development – no objection, unlikely significant adverse impact on the quality, character, or features of interest of the existing townscape.</p> <p>BCC Economic Development Unit – advises that a Construction Employability and Skills Plan is required and this should be secured by a Section 76 Planning Agreement.</p> <p>Shared Environmental Services (SES) – final response outstanding</p>
4.3	<p><u>Representations</u></p> <p>The application has been advertised in the newspaper and neighbours notified.</p> <p>Five letters of support have been received which discuss the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing city centre footfall • Create investment opportunities and promote sustainable economic growth • Positive impact on local business community • Address demand for student accommodation • Revitalise the area

5.0	PLANNING ASSESSMENT
	Main Issues
5.1	<p>The main issues relevant to consideration of the application are set out below.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of PBMSA in this location • Design and placemaking • Principle of Short Term Let in this location • Impact on heritage assets • Impact on amenity • 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
5.2	Development Plan Context
	<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>
5.5	<u>Operational Policies</u>
	<p>The Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application. These are listed above.</p>
5.6	<u>Proposals Maps</u>
	<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, 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</p>

	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	Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 – the site is un-zoned “white land” within the Development Limit.
5.8	Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (2004) – The subject lands are located within the City Centre Limit as per the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 and BMAP 2015. Within the Belfast Urban Area Plan (BUAP) 2001 the site is identified as un-zoned land. As set out within the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) 2015, the site is located within the ‘Laganside North and The Docks’ Character Area (Ref: CC 015) and borders the Cathedral Area Conservation Area to the south. The subject site is identified as un-zoned land, with no specific policy designations.
5.9	<p><u>Principle of PBMSA in this location</u></p> <p>The site is located within the urban development limit in the BUAP 2001 and both versions of dBMAP 2015. It is within the City Centre in both versions of dBMAP 2015. Policy SD3 of the Plan Strategy states that the Council will support new economic and residential development to create a compact and vibrant city centre. The proposal is consistent with this strategic policy.</p>
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.
5.11	<p><i>Accessibility:</i></p> <p>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 and is readily accessible to various pedestrian and cycle linkways to the Ulster University Campus which is approx.400m to the northwest of the site. The site is also in close proximity to public transport links including; Great Patrick Street Metro services (90m walk), Laganside Buscentre Metro and Ulsterbus services (500m walk), York Street Station (1km walk) and Grand Central Station (1.8km walk). Due to the location and nature of the proposal, the scheme will be car-free as it benefits from high levels of accessibility to public transport. The majority of trips will be by sustainable modes of transport. Further rationale is set out within the Transport Assessment Form (Arup), and the application is also accompanied with a Travel Plan Framework.</p>
5.12	Having regard to these factors, the proposal is considered to satisfy the accessibility requirements of criterion a.
5.13	<p><i>Development not within an Established Residential Area:</i></p> <p>In terms of the second part of criterion a., 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.’ Taking account of the site’s location on Corporation Street and existing vacant office building on the site and uses in the</p>

	<p>surrounding area, it is therefore not considered to fall within an established residential area in the Plan Strategy. Criterion a. is therefore satisfied.</p>
5.14	<p><i>Scale of the development:</i></p> <p>Criterion b. specifies that PBMSA proposals should consist of a minimum of 200 occupants. The proposal comprises 895 bedrooms, therefore satisfying this criterion.</p>
5.14	<p><i>Need for additional PBMSA:</i></p> <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 “PBMSA Needs Assessment Report for Belfast”. The applicant’s statement details that in 2021/22 there were 34,660 full time students and that Belfast has the 13th largest full time student population in the UK outside of London. 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. 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. 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 previously projected 6,000 beds.</p>
5.15	<p>Lambert Smith Hampton commissioned a report into PBMSA, dated March 2024, and states that the ratio of students to PBMSA will reduce to 3.7:1 if all schemes in the pipeline were developed and that should the projected demand come to fruition, the current development pipeline would not be sufficient to meet demand. The report concluded that investor activity in the market will increase.</p>
5.16	<p>Both Queens University Belfast and Ulster University have previously stated publicly that they will require an extra 5,000 places for Northern Ireland undergraduates by 2030, due to the projected rise in the number of 18/19 year olds. We note that since this presentation by the universities in December 2022, that a further 1,508 rooms have been completed, 1,183 rooms are under construction and a further 1,903 PBMSA beds have planning consent which have not yet started construction. The Statement of Need confirm that based on our review of the development pipeline, the levels of unmet demand would still remain at over 4,329 in the event of schemes being developed. The statement of student need also confirms that there are 7,415 full-time students currently in Belfast who potentially require but are unable to access PBMSA in the current market. The following table is included in the statement of need which shows the potential unmet demand as below.</p>

5.17

Table 1: CBRE Unmet Demand for PBMSA

Table 15: Unmet Demand for PBSA

Demand Pool	Belfast	
Total Full-time Students (FTS)	34,660	
Less living with parent/guardian	13,530	39% of FTS
Less not in attendance	700	2% of FTS
Less living in own residence	4,080	12% of FTS
Total Potential Students in the Target Market (Demand Pool)	16,350	47% of FTS
Current PBSA Supply	8,935	
PBSA in the Immediate Pipeline (under construction or planning approved)	3,086	
Total PBSA Supply including pipeline	12,021	
Unmet Demand	Excluding Pipeline	Including Pipeline (See Table 8)
Demand less Supply	7,415	4,329

Source: HESA Student Record, CBRE Research, NI Planning Portal

5.18

The Council's Plans and Policy Team have been consulted on the issue of need. They provided a breakdown of Belfast City Council's annual PBMSA monitoring (as of November 2024), updated to take account of approvals in the intervening period, in comparison to CBRE's assessments. There are two additional schemes that have been granted planning permission since November 2024 that CBRE were unable to count as committed, with a combined total of 1,690 bed spaces. This raises the total combined pipeline of PBMSA developments, including those built, under construction and approved but not yet commenced to 13,771. Based on the figures in Table 15 of CBRE's report, the change in the total pipeline would reduce the total unmet demand to 2,579 bed spaces. The supply figures are summarised in table 2 below.

5.19

Table 2: Supply figures for PBMSA accommodation in Belfast

Existing PBMSA Developments since 2015

Project Name	Address	Beds	Operational	CBRE (Nov 24)
John Bell House	1A College Square East	413	Sep-16	413
Botanic Studios	78-86 Dublin Rd, Belfast BT2 7HP	156	Sep-17	156
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	McClintock Street	490	Sep-18	
Swanston House	41-49 Queen Street	317	Sep-18	317
123 York Street	123-137 York Street	407	Sep-19	407
Little Patrick Street	26-44 Little Patrick Street	430	Sep-20	430
101 York Street	81-107 York Street	717	Sep-21	717
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
The Edge	48-52 York Street	307	Sep-24	307
Nelson Street	Little York Street & Nelson Place	774	Sep-24	774
Bradbury Place	30-44 Bradbury Place	156	Sep-24	156
Completed as at November 2024		6,306		5,069
University operated accommodation		2,629		3,866
Total PBMSA in November 2024 (university and private)		8,935		8,935

5.20

Pipeline – Schemes with Permission Granted

Project Name	Address	Beds	CBRE (Nov 24)
Under Construction			
	140 Little Donegall Street	724	724
QUB Dublin Road	14 Dublin Road	459	459
Catholic Chaplaincy	28-38 Elmwood Avenue	41	included below
Total Under construction		1,224	1,183
Approved (Not started) as at November 2024			
123 York Street Extension	Lands at the corner of Little York Street and Little Patrick Street	94	94
Catholic Chaplaincy	28-38 Elmwood Avenue	Included above	41
Ventry Street	41-49 Dublin Road and 3-5 Ventry Street	201	201
Olympic House	Lands to the northeast of Olympic House, east of Queen's Road and south of BMC	1,007	1,007
Fanum House	Lands comprising existing Fanum House, Norwood House and adjacent lands	560	560
Total Not started as at November 2024		1,862	1,903

5.21

Project Name	Address	Beds	CBRE (Nov 24)
Approved (Not started) since November 2024			
Library Street	Library Street and Little Donegall Street	795	-
Castle Street ¹	Lands including and to the rear of 24-54 Castle Street, 2-6 Queen Street, 1-7 & 21 Fountain Street	895	-
Total Not started since November 2024		1,690	
Total Under construction/Approved not started		4,776	3,086

5.22

The Plans and Policy Team go on to state that 'given that total student numbers are not known for future academic years, it is acknowledged that the ratio bedspaces to future student can only ever be a prediction at best. Given this context, it seems unlikely that the existing trend for growth in international student numbers, which has been a significant driver of demand for private-sector PBMSA developments, will continue at the same rate in the future. It is also unclear to what extent the existing pipeline of PBMSA developments will be delivered to meet the existing demand. However, should everything that has been approved, alongside this proposal at Corporation Street, all be delivered in full, the likely ratio of PBMSA bed spaces to full time students will remain broadly comparable with other similar university cities'.

5.23

Having regard to these factors, it is considered that a need for the proposal is established, and that criterion e. is satisfied.

Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation in Belfast SPG:

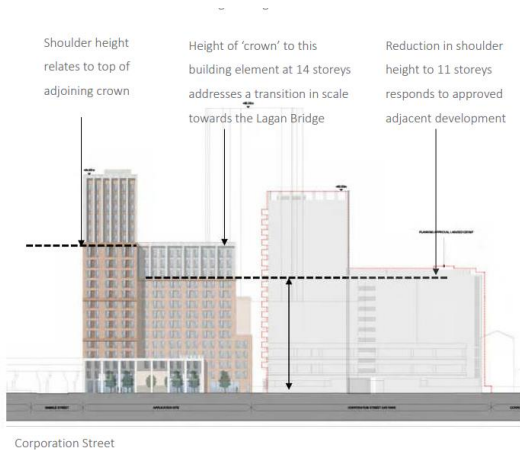
5.24

In the absence of specific planning policy at the 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

5.25

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.

5.26	<p><i>Economic development:</i></p> <p>The Council's Economic Development Unit notes that the estimated construction cost of the development is £65 million. It is expected that approx. 88 construction jobs will be created during construction with approximately 21.5 jobs on operation. The Economic Development Unit advises that a Construction Employability and Skills Plan is required and this should be secured by a Section 76 planning agreement.</p>
5.27	<p>Having regard to the factors discussed above, the principle of PBMSA development in this location is considered acceptable.</p>
5.28	<p>The application also seeks additional use of the accommodation by further or higher education institutions outside term time. This is consistent with other PBMSA permissions across the city and would ensure that effective use is made of the building outside term and is considered acceptable as set out below.</p>
5.29	<p><u>Principle of Short Term Let in this location</u></p> <p>The building (no more than 50% of the rooms) is to be used as short term let accommodation outside of term time (namely July and August). Policy HOU13 provides 6 criteria to be met. Criteria e and f do not apply as the proposal is not within an HMA and does not involve a change of use from permanent residential use.</p>
5.30	<p>The proposed short-term use would be considered to strengthen and diversify the range of short-term accommodation in the city. The proposed location is within the city centre where the surrounding tourist accommodation is in the main provided by hotels. The proposal would strengthen the short-term range of accommodation and provide a meanwhile use outside of term time.</p>
5.31	<p>The site is highly accessible by public transport including Great Patrick Street Metro services, Laganside Buscentre Metro, Ulsterbus services, York Street Station and Grand Central Station.</p>
5.32	<p>The proposal is within close proximity to visitor attractions such as Belfast City Hall, Linen Hall Library and the Grand Opera House.</p>
5.33	<p>Appropriate management arrangements will be secured through the Section 76.</p>
5.34	<p>The short-term use is welcomed to ensure the building is in use outside of term time, the proposal complies with criteria a through d of Policy HOU13 and is considered acceptable.</p>
5.35	<p><u>Design and Placemaking</u></p> <p>The proposal has been assessed against the SPPS, Creating Places and Policies SP5, DES1, DES2 and DES3 of the Plan Strategy. 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 of tall buildings including any impact on the setting, character and appearance of listed buildings, conservation areas, ATCs, and historic monuments/gardens.</p>

5.36	The application follows a Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) process when issues relating to scale, height, massing and architectural treatment were discussed in detail.
5.37	<i>Scale, height and massing:</i>
5.38	The building comprises three built forms, each with varied overall heights. Along Corporation Street, the height rises from 5 to 20 storeys, along Gamble street it rises from 14 to 20 storeys and along Tomb street it is 9 to 14 storeys. The building at its highest point would measure 64.8m. Breaking up of the building forms on the site into a series of connected 'buildings' which are proportionally better balanced, create a shift in the rhythm and scale of forms as one approaches the Lagan Bridge to the north from the south.
5.39	The principle of a tall building on this site has been established through the local context and character of the site and its surrounding environment. This includes the neighbouring development Obel residential tower which is 28-storeys in height, the Royal Mail Building, the M3 Cross Harbour Bridge, the collective buildings at City Quays and the Build to Rent (BTR) scheme to the south of the development site which extends to 19-storeys along its northern edge (this application was recently approved by Committee but is yet to issue). The approved BTR scheme immediately adjacent to the site was a key consideration in the overall design for the site. The upper levels of this proposal would ensure a 5m offset from the southern boundary along Corporation Street. This is to satisfy the requirement for adequate physical separation of 10m from external balconies which are permitted in the approved BTR scheme adjacent. There will also be no development within the existing service zone. Image 3 below shows the relationship between this scheme and the adjacent 19 storey BTR approval.
5.40	<p><i>Image 3: Scheme read alongside adjacent application on Corporation Street</i></p>  <p>Shoulder height relates to top of adjoining crown</p> <p>Height of 'crown' to this building element at 14 storeys addresses a transition in scale towards the Lagan Bridge</p> <p>Reduction in shoulder height to 11 storeys responds to approved adjacent development</p> <p>Corporation Street</p>
5.41	Accommodation on upper levels adjacent to the approved scheme on 21-19 Corporation Street is setback 0.6m from the lower façade to create a greater proportional balance to this wing and introduce a shoulder height which relates to the 11-storey parapet height of the adjacent approval (see coloured elevations below). Upper-level accommodation at the corner of Gamble/Corporation Street has also been setback by 0.6m. This setback is increased to 3.5m further east along Gamble Street thereby emphasising the weighting of built form at the corner location. At the Gamble Street/Tomb Street corner, upper-level accommodation steps back from the facade below by around 15m. A further 'crown' has been created along the east facing wing on Tomb Street, with upper-level accommodation stepping back from the facade below by 0.6m to create an articulated frontage.

5.42	The Council's Senior Urban Design Officer (SUDO) has no objection to the proposal, stating that <i>"the proposed scale, height and massing is considered to respond appropriately to the site's aspect and orientation. It also formally addresses its position as a bookend/termination to the existing urban block providing new frontages to the three streets which bound its perimeter"</i> .
5.43	It is considered that the scale and massing of the building are appropriate to the site and surrounding buildings. <i>Architectural treatment:</i>
5.44	The proposed materials have been designed to positively reflect the site and wider context of the area. A combination of multi-tone red brick and light grey aluminium cladding panels will be the dominant finishes on the proposal to ensure neutrality to existing built structures, and those of the wider surrounds. The intent to use brickwork for the main mass of the 'blocks' is to be contrasted with the precast concrete base and aluminium clad high level 'crown's which rest on top of each block. The light-coloured tone of the aluminium and precast concrete cladding draws on the stone and rainscreen cladding systems which exist in the wider context.
5.45	The proposed facades have been articulated in a way that the detail and treatment of windows will shift vertically where they appear flush on lower levels, in contrast to upper levels where their depth is revealed through the depth of recess achieved in the shared spandrel panel.
5.46	The proposed grouping of windows helps to create a hierarchy and appropriate scale to the facades. A subtle shift is proposed within each of the three 'blocks' that define the development. These include those main facades of each block where an aluminium spandrel panel is utilised between paired windows as compared to end/gable facades which utilise a recessed brick panel between paired windows. A condition is included to approve the materials ahead of construction. <i>Active frontage:</i>
5.47	The main entrance to the building is located along Corporation Street and is expressed through a formal colonnade and covered external space. This is three-storey in height and provides a civic response to the urban setting and services to increase the depth of public realm along Corporation Street. Active amenity spaces have been arranged to the main street frontages and to the central courtyard space (reception, social spaces, gym, study spaces, games space, cinema / event space and laundry) which provides well connected public realm and active amenity spaces. Access to the courtyard is provided from both Corporation Street and Tomb Street which will be managed / controlled access. The detailed design of access/gates will be conditioned to ensure a high quality of design and frontage. Accommodation has been planned to encircle the external landscape courtyard space.
5.48	Ancillary accommodation has been considered where this will in some instances result in non-active frontages. It is proposed that these areas will be restricted to the service alley, Tomb Street and the north-east corner of Gamble Street. Where non-active frontages will occur on Tomb Street and Gamble Street, decorative perforated panels are proposed over louvred vents to plant rooms.
5.49	Bin storage has been consolidated along the southern boundary of the site, utilising the right of way for service access and providing managed smaller satellite bin stores along the northern edge of the central courtyard space.

	<i>Masterplanning:</i>
5.55	As detailed above, the Planning Committee recently approved a 19 storey BTR scheme to the south of the development site in January 2024 (LA04/2021/2016/F) however the Decision Notice is still to be issued. The approved BTR scheme immediately adjacent to the site was a key consideration in the overall design evolution for this site. It was considered through the detailed PAD process the upper levels of this proposal would ensure a 5m offset from the southern site boundary along Corporation Street. This is to satisfy the requirement for adequate physical separation of 10m from external balconies which are permitted in the approved scheme on 21-29 Corporation Street. There will also be no development within the existing service zone.
5.56	In summary, the proposal is considered acceptable having regard to Policies DES1, DES2, DES3 and relevant provisions of the SPPS.
	<u>Impact on the Heritage Assets</u>
5.57	<p>The subject site is mainly surrounded by vacant plots and contemporary buildings, ranging in height from 3 storeys to 28 stories (Obel Tower). There are no adjacent heritage receptors, however several Listed Buildings are located in the vicinity, including:</p> <p>HB26/50/173 Northern Bank, 1-9 Victoria St. Belfast (Grade: B2) HB26/50/234 Transport House 102 High Street Belfast (Grade: B+) HB26/50/055 Albert Clock Queens Square Belfast (Grade: A) HB26/50/093 Sinclair Seamen's Church Corporation Square (Grade: B+) HB26/50/056 First Trust Bank 4 Queen's Square Belfast (Grade: B+) HB26/50/062 Custom House Custom House Square Belfast (Grade: B+) HB26/50/306 Direct Wine Shipments 5-7 Corporation Square (Grade: B2)</p>
5.59	HED, Historic Buildings has considered the impacts of the proposals on the setting of the listed buildings and are content.
5.60	HED Historic Monuments were also consulted and state that 'The application site is located in an area associated with the early ship-building in Belfast. The recorded archaeological sites and monuments nearby are indicators of a high archaeological potential for further, previously unrecorded archaeological remains which may be encountered within the application site'. They are content subject to conditions.
5.61	<p>It is considered that the proposal accords with Policies BH1 and BH5, and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p> <p><u>Impact on Amenity</u></p> <p><i>Space standards:</i></p>
5.62	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.

	Room type	Appendix C standard	Proposed
	Standard bedroom	6.5 sqm	13 sqm
	Studio	13 sqm	18
	Accessible studio	13 sqm	25 sqm

Open space and amenity space:

5.63 The proposed level of internal and external amenity space being proposed is comparative to other student accommodation developments of a similar scale. The internal amenity consists of approximately 838 sqm at Ground Floor Level including: Gym, Games Room, Cinema, Events Space, Study Area, reception and an amenity hub located on the 13th floor equating to 192sqm. A total internal amenity space of 1030sqm is being provided. The external amenity comprises a total of 668 sqm which is being delivered in the form of a ground floor landscaped courtyard and an amenity roof terrace on the thirteenth floor. Table 5 sets this out below:

Table 5 Schedule of Amenity Areas

Internal

Level	Type	Area (sqm)
Ground	Gym / Changing / Showers	166
Ground	Games Room	100
Ground	Cinema/Flexible Event Space	125
Ground	Reception Space	88
Ground	Main Amenity Space	190
Ground	Quiet Study Space	85
Ground	Laundry	84
Thirteenth	Amenity Hub	192
Total Area (sqm)		1030

External

Level	Type	Area (sqm)
Ground	Courtyard	296
Thirteenth	Amenity Terrace	372
Total Area (sqm)		668

Overall Total Amenity Space (sqm) 1698

5.64 *Daylight and sunlight to bedrooms:*

A Daylight/Sunlight Assessment was carried out to ascertain whether the proposed development would offer acceptable daylight/sunlight amenity for prospective residents. With regard to the scheme performance assessments for this report, they have quantified the level of daylight and sunlight within the proposed development in two different scenarios: with and without the granted neighbouring scheme (Ref. LA04/2021/2016/F) in the surrounding context. Inclusion of the neighbouring granted scheme was important to assess the proposed scheme in its most constrained state.

5.65 The compliance rates for the SDA (Spatial Daylight Autonomy) assessment are at 78% without the granted scheme in play. When the neighbouring scheme is included in the analytical model the compliance rate is reduced to 71%. This drop in compliance is to be expected considering the density and scale of the neighbouring scheme and scale of the neighbouring scheme. The SE (Sunlight Exposure) compliance rates range from 77% when assessed in the existing scenario and 60% when assessed in the cumulative scenario. Whilst a larger drop has been recorded, again it is to be expected. The Daylight/Sunlight Assessment concludes that the proposed development demonstrates satisfactory performance in relation to daylight and sunlight, particularly when considering the density and urban context of the proposal and the emerging trends in the immediate area. The impact and scheme performance assessments also reflect a worst-case scenario by incorporating the neighbouring granted building into the

	<p>analytical model. This has ensured a robust assessment of the proposed scheme in this more constrained scenario.</p> <p><i>Management plan:</i></p>
5.66	<p>A student management plan has been provided with the application and will be dealt with as part of the Section 76 planning agreement. This will deal with, amongst other matters, anti-social behaviour, noise and management to mitigate potential impacts on neighbours, and satisfying criterion d. of Policy HOU12. The proposal also seeks permission for the building to be used as Short Term Let Accommodation outside of term time (namely July and August). Prior to use as Short Term Let Accommodation, the owner shall submit a Short Term Let Management Plan which will provide details on how the Owner will manage and maintain the property during Non-Term Time Use as Short Term Let accommodation. This is dealt with as part of the Section 76 planning agreement.</p>
5.67	<p>In these regards, the proposal is considered to satisfy Policies DES1 and RD1, and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p> <p><u>Climate Change</u></p>
5.68	<p>Policy ENV2 requires that consideration is given to proposals that include demolition and it should demonstrate that reuse is not appropriate or feasible. As part of the supporting evidence LIKE have prepared a Demolition Justification Statement. This sets out a consideration of the existing building design in which the primary facades facing north, east and west are composted on glazed curtain walling and the building presents a number of performance related challenges which allow excessive thermal gain and loss. The design is not sustainable by modern standards, as it complicates temperature regulation and energy efficiency within the structure. Additionally, the building has remained unused, and its potential for future adaptation is limited. A combination of these factors makes the building less viable for contemporary use. Strictly adhering to the guidelines for reuse and retrofitting on buildings in this instance would conflict with other important policies related to sustainability, climate change efficiencies and ecological enhancement.</p>
5.69	<p>Policy ENV2 also requires new development proposal to maximise opportunities to incorporate sustainable design features where feasible. Policy GB1 Green and Blue Infrastructure also requires new development to incorporate these features as part of the design. This proposal incorporates a number of green roofs at Level 1, 5, 9 and 14 as identified on the Roof Plan. These elements of green space incorporated on the roof amounts to a total green area of 639sqm (for clarity this figure is exclusive of the hardstanding roof terrace which equates to 372sqm). The green roof terraces will comprise grassed areas, and, planting will be provided on both the courtyard and roof terrace at level 13 which have been incorporated for biodiversity gain in line with Policy ENV2 and ENV3. A blue roof is also provided at level 14 which equates to 400sqm. Both the Green roof and Blue roof are forms of SUDs which is a requirement of policy ENV2, ENV3 and policy ENV5.</p>
5.70	<p>Furthermore, the developer has incorporated a number of Sustainable Design Measures which includes an energy efficient development, ensuring that the design and construction is carried out to the highest ESG standards. Examples include installing electric panel heaters for space heating and a Central Air Source Heat Pump for hot water demand. Low energy LED lighting will be installed throughout.</p>

	<p><u>Open Space</u></p>
5.71	<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>
5.72	<p>The proposed level of internal and external amenity space being proposed is comparative to other student accommodation developments of a similar scale. The internal amenity consists of approximately 838 sqm at Ground Floor Level including: Gym, Games Room, Cinema, Events Space, Study Area, reception and an amenity hub located on the 13th floor equating to 192sqm. A total internal amenity space of 1030sqm is being provided. The external amenity comprises a total of 668 sqm which is being delivered in the form of a ground floor landscaped courtyard and an amenity roof terrace on the thirteenth floor.</p>
5.73	<p>The requirements of Policy OS3 are met.</p>
	<p><u>Access and Transport</u></p>
	<p><i>Accessibility and parking:</i></p>
5.74	<p>As previously mentioned, the site is located within the city centre and is readily accessible to various pedestrian and cycle linkways to the Ulster University Campus which is approx.400m to the northwest of the site. The site is also in close proximity to public transport links including; Great Patrick Street Metro services (90m walk), Laganside Buscentre Metro and Ulsterbus services (500m walk), York Street Station (1km walk) and Grand Central Station (1.8km walk). Due to the location and nature of the proposal, the scheme will be car-free as it benefits from high levels of accessibility to public transport. The majority of trips will be by sustainable modes of transport.</p>
5.75	<p>The proposal includes for secure and covered cycle stores on ground floor level of the building which will provide a total of 128 no. bicycle spaces. The bicycle store can be accessed directly from the central courtyard area. Furthermore, the site benefits from being within close proximity to the National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 93 which is 200m east of the site on Corporation Street and runs north-south along Donegall Quay which is part shared use path and part cycle track. NCN Route 93, which is approximately 12km in length, is a dedicated urban cycle route connecting Victoria Park, Titanic Quarter, and to other NCNs.</p>
5.76	<p>The development site is in an area of Parking restraint BCC – Core Zone 1 as designated in the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP). Within areas of parking restraint there is a presumption against additional car parking. The objective is to reduce the need for car borne commuting and promote a shift to other forms of transport. This development proposes a car-free environment and will encourage the use of sustainable forms of transport, with sustainable transport measures included within the Travel Plan. Due to the student nature of the proposal and the site benefitting from high levels of accessibility to public transport, no parking is being provided, which is consistent with other recently approved PBMSA schemes in Belfast.</p>

5.77	<p>The applicant has provided details of disabled parking in the vicinity of the site. Exchange Street (2 disabled spaces), Dunbar Street (2 disabled spaces), Little Donegal Street (2 disabled spaces), NCP Belfast City Quays (24 disabled spaces), St Anne's Square Car Park (21 spaces) and Q-Park Victoria Square (64 spaces). Satisfactory parking provision is therefore in place for disabled car users.</p> <p>DfI Roads offers no objection to the proposal, which is considered acceptable in terms of accessibility, parking and highway safety. DfI Roads advises conditions, which are recommended.</p>
5.78	<p>The proposal is considered acceptable having regard to Policies TRAN1, TRAN2, TRAN4, TRAN6, TRAN 8 and TRAN 9, and relevant provisions of the SPSS.</p> <p><u>Health Impacts</u></p>
5.79	<p>Policy HC1 seeks to ensure that all new developments 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>
5.80	<p>The site is highly accessible and provides excellent opportunities for active travel, including walking and cycling, through excellent linkages with the city centre and its shops, services and amenities.</p>
5.81	<p>Good levels of open space/amenity space are proposed in the form of a landscaped courtyard and amenity roof terrace.</p>
5.82	<p>The proposal includes a gym, which would support the physical and mental wellbeing of occupants of the development.</p>
5.83	<p>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, and well as enhancing the character and appearance of the area.</p>
5.84	<p>The proposal is considered to satisfy the requirements of Policy HC1.</p> <p><u>Environmental protection</u></p>
5.85	<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, noise and dust impacts.</p> <p><u>Contaminated land</u></p>
5.86	<p>Environmental Health's response is still outstanding on contamination however NIEA: Regulation Unit has reviewed and commented on the relevant reports. They have stated that no unacceptable risks to environmental receptors have been identified for the development and offer no objection to the development provided conditions and informatives are placed. The proposal accords with Policy ENV1.</p>

	<u>Air quality</u>
5.87	Further clarification was sought by Environmental Health (EH) with regards to air quality. This was provided and a final response from EH is expected imminently.
	<u>Noise and vibration</u>
5.88	Further clarification was sought by Environmental Health (EH) with regards to noise. This was provided and a final response from EH is expected imminently.
5.89	Subject to a final response from EH, it is considered that the proposal accords with Policy ENV1. Delegated authority is requested to resolve the final response from Environmental Health.
	<u>Flood Risk and Drainage</u>
5.90	Flood Maps (NI) indicates that a minor portion of the site does lie within an area of predicted pluvial flooding. DfI Rives has reviewed the Flood Risk Assessment, its logic and has no reason to disagree with its conclusions. A Drainage Assessment has been submitted and indicates that flood risk to and from a portion of the development will be managed by SuDS. Commenting on the efficacy of the proposed SuDS is outside Rivers Directorate area of knowledge and expertise. Consequently, Rivers Directorate cannot advise that the potential flood risk to the development, and from the development to elsewhere, has been satisfactorily addressed. The Planning Authority accept that sufficient SuDS measures are in place to manage this.
5.91	The proposal is considered to satisfy Policy ENV5.
	<u>Waste-Water Infrastructure</u>
5.92	Policy SP1a requires that necessary infrastructure is in place to support new development. NI Water has objected to the proposal on grounds of insufficient network capacity. It states that there are significant risks to the environment and detrimental impact on existing properties. NI Water advises that the applicant consults directly with NI Water on this issue.
5.93	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. Moreover, NI Water has not provided direct evidence of expected harm that would result from the development. For these reasons, it would be unreasonable to refuse planning permission on these grounds and the proposal is considered acceptable having regard to Policy SP1A of the Plan Strategy.
	<u>Natural heritage</u>
5.94	Policy NH1 relates to the protection of natural heritage resources.
5.95	DAERA has provided advice from its Natural Environment Division (NED) and indicated concern regarding the level of multiple survey reports. These reports were in fact submitted as part of the application and were provided via the Planning Portal consultee hub on 21 st January 2025. However, it appears that DAERA did not follow the correct procedure, obtaining the documentation from the Planning Portal rather than the consultee hub and therefore did not see the redacted reports regarding protected species when issuing their response on 13 th May 2025. This has been communicated to

	<p>NED and a fresh consultation was issued on 20th May 2025. The response remains outstanding however it is anticipated that the issues can be resolved. SES will also need to be reconsulted following a final response from NED. It is anticipated that SES will advise that mitigation is provided by means of a condition to require submission and approval of the details of the method of sewage disposal. Delegated authority is sought to resolve the final responses from DAERA and SES subject to no substantive issues being raised.</p>
5.91	<p>DAERA: Regulation Unit has advised that it has no concerns about the proposal, advising conditions in relation to contamination. These conditions are recommended as appropriate.</p>
5.92	<p>Subject to a satisfactory further response from DAERA: NED and SES, the proposal is considered compliant with Policy NH1, Policy ENV1 and the relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>
	<p><u>Waste Management</u></p>
5.93	<p>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 is satisfied.</p>
	<p><u>Employability and Skills</u></p>
5.94	<p>The <i>Developer Contribution Framework</i> requires proposals for Major development to contribute towards Employability and Skills where necessary.</p>
5.95	<p>The Council's Economic Development Unit notes that the estimated construction cost of the development is £65 million. It is expected that approx. 88 construction jobs will be created during construction with approximately 21.5 jobs on operation. The Economic Development Unit advises that a Construction Employability and Skills Plan is required.</p>
5.96	<p>Typical interventions in the Employability and Skills Plan may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - creating access to employment opportunities - delivering training to upskill people - creation and delivery of apprenticeship opportunities - ring-fencing opportunities for under-represented groups - delivery of employability interventions - addressing barriers to employment and skills development - delivery of youth interventions
5.97	<p>The Construction Employability and Skills Plan should be secured by way of a Section 76 planning agreement.</p>
	<p><u>Section 76 Planning Agreement</u></p>
5.98	<p>Should the application be approved, the following planning obligations should be secured by way of a Section 76 planning agreement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PBMSA Management Plan

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employability and Skills – to secure the submission and implementation of a Construction Employability and Skills Plan for the construction phase of the development. • Short term Let Management Plan • Public Realm – the public realm is divided into publicly adopted and privately maintained. The privately maintained public realm will be delivered by the applicant. The publicly adopted public realm can be delivered by either the Council (with a commuted sum of £245,000 from the applicant), or by the applicant. The agreed clause allows for either scenario.
5.99	These are considered necessary to make the proposed development acceptable.
5.100	A draft Section 76 planning agreement is at an advanced stage of negotiation and will need to be finalised before planning permission is granted.
	<u>Pre-Application Community Consultation</u>
5.101	For applications for Major development, there is a legislative requirement for applicants to consult the community in advance of submitting the application.
5.102	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 May 2024 (LA04/2024/0881PAN) and confirmed by the Council to be acceptable.
5.103	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. A public event was held in July 2024 and a dedicated community consultation website established. Five people attended the public consultation event and only one comment card was received during the consultation process which supported the proposal.
5.104	The PACC report is considered compliant with the legislative requirements.
6.0	Recommendation
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.
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 resolving final responses from EH, NIEA: NED and SES as well provided that the issues are not substantive.

7.0	<p>DRAFT CONDITIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. The development shall not be occupied until secure and covered cycle parking facilities have been provided on the site. These facilities shall be permanently retained on the site. Reason: To ensure acceptable cycle parking on the site and to encourage alternative modes of transport to the private car. 3. All redundant accesses from the site to the public road shall be permanently closed off and the footpath reinstated to the satisfaction of the Department for Infrastructure. Reason: In order to minimise the number of access points on to the public road in the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users. 4. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied or operated unless in accordance with the Service Management Plan uploaded to the Planning Portal on 26th November 2024. Reason: In the interests of road safety and convenience of road users. 5. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied or operated unless in accordance with the approved Travel Plan uploaded to the Planning Portal on 26th November 2024. Reason: To promote sustainable travel patterns and off-set the demand for vehicular movements and/or parking. 6. No development or works shall commence on site (other than that required to fulfil this condition) unless a programme of archaeological work has been prepared by a qualified archaeologist and implemented in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Council. The POW shall provide for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The identification and evaluation of archaeological remains within the site; • Mitigation of the impacts of development through licensed excavation recording or by preservation of remains in-situ; • Post-excavation analysis sufficient to prepare an archaeological report, to publication standard if necessary; and • Preparation of the digital, documentary and material archive for deposition. No site works of any nature or development shall take place other than in accordance with the programme of archaeological work. Reason: to ensure that archaeological remains within the application site are properly identified and protected or appropriately recorded. 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
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	<p>approved under condition 6. These measures shall be implemented, and a final archaeological report shall be submitted to the Council within 12 months of the completion of archaeological programme of works.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure that the archaeological remains and features are properly analysed and recorded.</p> <p>8. If during the carrying out of the development, new contamination is encountered that has not previously been identified, all related works shall cease immediately, and the Council shall be notified immediately in writing. No further development shall proceed until this new contamination has been fully investigated in accordance with current industry recognised best practice. In the event of unacceptable human health risks being identified, a Remediation Strategy and subsequent Verification Report shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Council, prior to the development being occupied or operated. The Verification Report shall be completed by competent persons in accordance with best practice and must demonstrate that the remediation measures have been implemented and that the site is now fit for end-use.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure that any contamination within the site is appropriately dealt with, in the interests of human health.</p> <p>9. All trees and planting within the site shall be retained unless shown on the approved drawings as being removed. Any existing or new trees or planting 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 (October to March inclusive) with other trees or plants of a location, species and size to be first approved in writing by the Council.</p> <p>Reason: In the interests of visual amenity</p> <p>10. All landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details on drawing no24a, dated 03/03/2025. 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.</p> <p>Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area.</p> <p>11. No access gates shall be installed unless in accordance with details that shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council before they are installed.</p> <p>Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area</p> <p>12. Notwithstanding the submitted details, no external brickwork, windows or doors shall be applied, installed, implemented or carried out unless in accordance with a written specification and physical sample which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the details so approved.</p>
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Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

DRAFT INFORMATIVES

1. This planning permission includes conditions which require further details to be submitted to and approved by the Council. Please read the conditions 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. The applicant's attention is drawn to the consultation responses received by the Council in respect of this application. The responses can be viewed at <https://planningregister.planningsystemni.gov.uk/>.

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Planning Committee

Development Management Report	
Committee Date: 17th June 2025	
Application ID: LA04/2025/0242/F	
Proposal: Erection of hotel (164 beds) including ground floor bar / restaurant; proposed heights of 8 storeys (c. 26.8m to parapet) at Donegall Pass, reducing to 5 storeys at Botanic Avenue and 4 storeys at Ratcliffe Street; and associated works including demolition of existing building	Location: 2 - 10 Botanic Avenue, Belfast, BT7 1JG
Referral Route: Major hotel development.	
Recommendation: Approve, subject to conditions	
Applicant Name and Address: Andras House Limited 60 Great Victoria Street Belfast BT2 7BB	Agent Name and Address: Clyde Shanks Ltd Second Floor 7 Exchange Place Belfast
Date Valid: 13 th February 2025	
Target Date: 11 th September 2025	
Contact Officer: Ciara Reville, Principal Planning Officer (Development Management)	
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>The application seeks full permission for the erection of hotel (164 beds) including ground floor bar / restaurant; proposed heights of 8 storeys (c. 26.8m to parapet) at Donegall Pass, reducing to 5 storeys at Botanic Avenue and 4 storeys at Ratcliffe Street; and associated works including demolition of existing building.</p> <p>The site is located at the junction of Botanic Avenue, Donegall Pass and Ratcliffe Street in Belfast City Centre.</p> <p>The site occupies a vacant plot, currently in use as a surface level car park and a three-storey retail and office unit (No.10 Botanic Avenue). The area is of mixed use and includes retail, cafes/restaurants, offices, places of entertainment and a train station.</p> <p>The key issues for consideration of the application are set out below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Principle of hotel development</i> • <i>Design & placemaking</i> • <i>Climate change</i> • <i>Access & transport</i> • <i>Health impacts</i> • <i>Environmental protection</i> • <i>Waste-water infrastructure</i> • <i>Waste management</i> • <i>Natural heritage</i> • <i>Section 76 legal agreement</i> • <i>Pre-application community consultation</i> 	

The site is within the City Centre as defined by both the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 and draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (dBMAP).

The principle of hotel use is considered acceptable given the accessible city centre location and creation of a tourist facility providing overnight accommodation to support the city centre economy.

The height, scale and form of the proposed building are in keeping with character and context of the surrounding area. The character and appearance of the surrounding area will be enhanced with the development of the vacant plot that occupies a prominent position on a main thoroughfare junction.

The proposal does not include dedicated parking for the hotel; this is considered to be acceptable having regard to the highly sustainable city centre location. A Travel Plan has also been provided in support of the application, which promotes alternatives to the private car.

DfI Roads Service, HED, NIEA have responded advising of no objection, subject to conditions. NIW have recommended refusal due to sewage network capacity issues. Comments from Shared Environmental Services remain outstanding. BCC Environmental Health offered no objection subject to conditions. BCC Urban Design Officer expressed views at discussions with Officers referred to below.

Third-party representations were received in support of the proposed development.

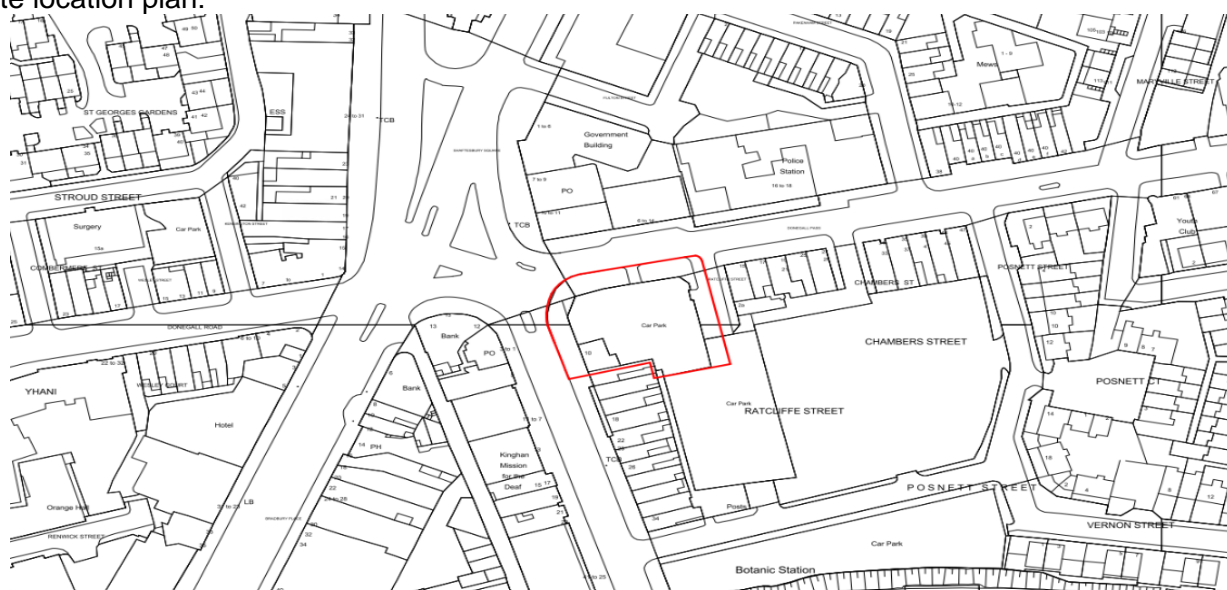
Recommendation

Having regard to the Development Plan and all relevant material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions and a Section 76 Legal Agreement to secure employability and skills developer contributions.

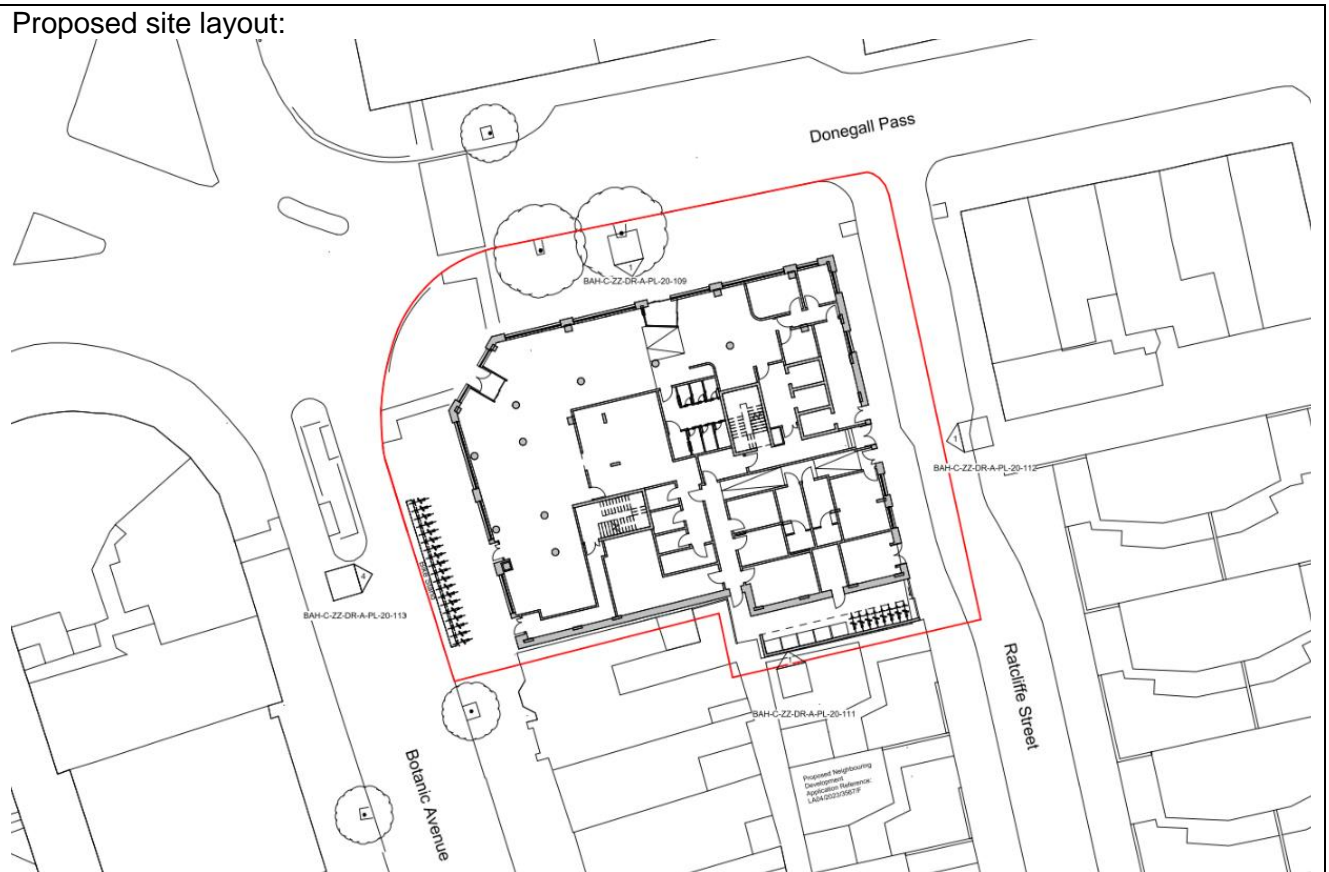
Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive.

Proposed Plans

Site location plan:



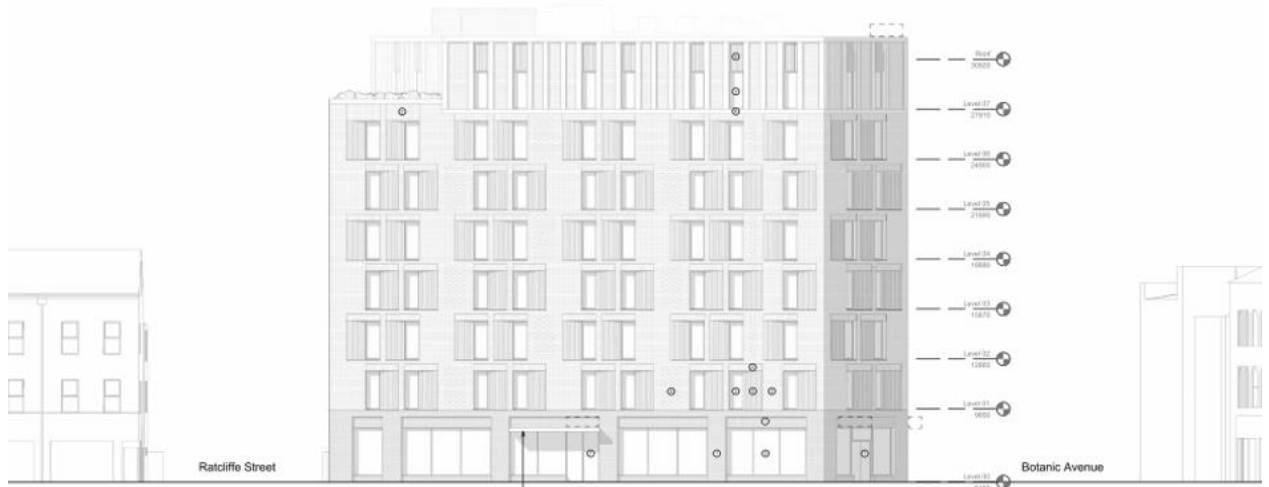
Proposed site layout:



Proposed west elevation (Botanic Avenue):



Proposed north elevation (Donegal Pass):



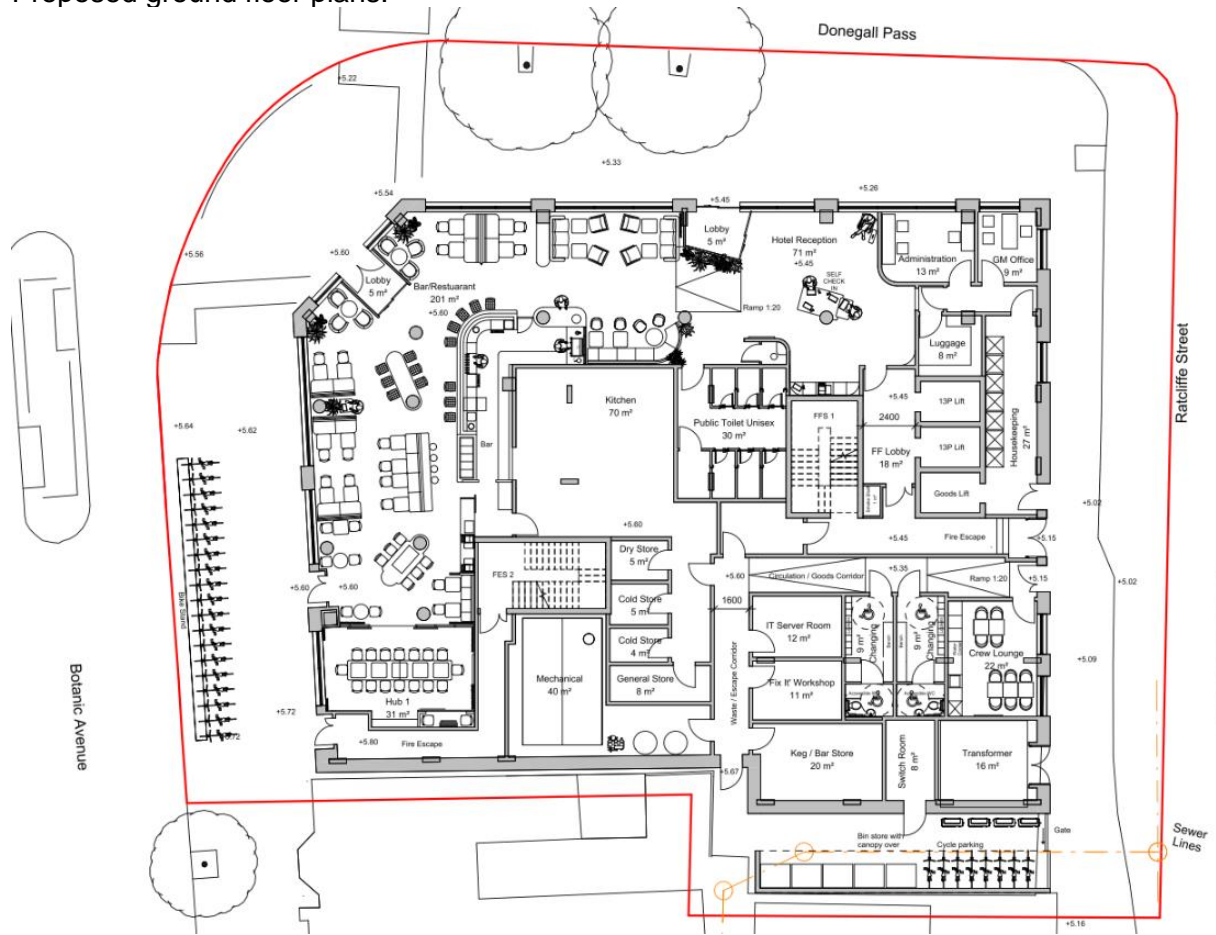
Proposed east elevations (Ratcliffe Street):



Proposed south elevation:



Proposed ground floor plans:



CGI view from Shaftesbury Square looking south east



<p>1.0</p> <p>1.1</p>	<p>Characteristics of the Site and Area</p> <p>The site is located at the junction of Botanic Avenue and Donegall Pass within the Belfast City Centre area. The site occupies a mainly vacant plot that is being used as a surface level car park and a three-storey building used for retail and office accommodation. The site is currently bounded by hoardings and poster panel advertisements. The area is of mixed use and includes retail, cafes/restaurants, places of entertainment and a train station.</p>
<p>2.0</p> <p>2.1</p>	<p>PLANNING HISTORY</p> <p>There is no relevant planning history.</p>
<p>3.0</p> <p>3.1</p>	<p>PLANNING POLICY</p> <p>Development Plan – Plan Strategy</p> <p><u>Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035</u></p> <p><i>Strategic Policies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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><i>Operational Policies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy DES1 – Principles of urban design • Policy BH4 – Works to grounds affecting built heritage assets • Policy CI1 – Community infrastructure • Policy EC1 – Delivering inclusive economic growth • Policy TLC1 – Supporting tourism, leisure and cultural development • Policy TLC3 – Overnight visitor accommodation • Policy TLC4 – Evening and night-time economy • Policy HC1 – Promoting healthy communities • 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 ENV1 – Environmental quality • Policy ENV2 – Mitigating environmental change • Policy ENV3 – Adapting to environmental change • Policy ENV5 – Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) • Policy NH1 – Protection of natural heritage resources

<p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p>	<p><u>Supplementary Planning Guidance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placemaking and Urban Design • Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems • Transportation • Evening and Nighttime Economy <p>Development Plan – zoning, designations and proposals maps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) BUAP • Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) • Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014) <p>Regional Planning Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) • Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) <p>Other Material Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast Agenda (Community Plan)
<p>4.0</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p>	<p>CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS</p> <p><u>Statutory Consultees</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DfI Roads: No objection subject to conditions • DfC HED: No objection • DAERA (NIEA): No objection • NI Water: Recommend refusal <p><u>Non-Statutory Consultees</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCC Urban Design: discussed design principles with officers • BCC Environmental Health: no objection with conditions <p><u>Representations</u></p> <p>The application has been advertised in the newspaper and neighbours notified, following which seven letters of support were received from local representatives and community organisations.</p>
<p>5.0</p> <p>5.1</p>	<p>PLANNING ASSESSMENT</p> <p><u>Main Issues</u></p> <p>The main issues relevant to consideration of the application are set out below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Principle of hotel development</i> • <i>Design & placemaking</i> • <i>Climate change</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Access & transport</i> • <i>Health impacts</i> • <i>Environmental protection</i> • <i>Flood risk & drainage</i> • <i>Waste-water infrastructure</i> • <i>Section 76 legal agreement</i> • <i>Pre-application community consultation</i>
	<p><u>Development Plan Context</u></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 remain part of the statutory local development plan until the Local Policies Plan is adopted.</p>
	<p><u>Operational Policies</u></p>
5.5	<p>The Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application. These are 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 (BUAP), both versions of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (v2004 and v2014) (dBMAP) 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 dBMAP 2015 (v2014) given its advanced stage in the development process, save for retail policies that relate to Sprucefield which remain contentious.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001: The site is un-zoned “white land” within the city centre. • Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (2004): The site is un-zoned “white land” within the city centre. • Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014): The site is un-zoned “white land” within the city centre.

5.7	Due to the size and scale of the proposal and in line with Section 27 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) was submitted to the Council under LA04/2024/1602/PAN on 20 th August 2024. The Council confirmed on 3 rd October 2024 that the PAN was acceptable.
5.8	<p>Full details of the public consultation process and associated PAN information were provided in the Pre-Application Community Consultation Report, which is considered further in the report below.</p> <p><u>Principle of hotel use</u></p>
5.9	Policy TLC1 (Supporting tourism leisure and cultural development) recognises that tourism contributes to the prosperity of the local economy and the wider region. Proposals will be supported for new overnight accommodation in the city centre where it improves daytime and nighttime choices for visitors and improves the quality and accessibility of tourism facilities and assets. New tourism proposals should be of the highest standard and align with the council's integrated tourism strategy vision. Policy TLC3 (Overnight visitor accommodation) identifies that improving the supply of overnight accommodation is vital for encouraging visitors to stay in Belfast, whilst Policy TLC4 (Evening and nighttime economy) seeks to strengthen and enhance the evening and nighttime economy in the city centre.
5.10	The proposed development will contribute toward the aim to increase hotel bedroom numbers with an additional 164 no. beds. This will increase tourism footfall, helping strengthen the day and nighttime economy and supporting the hospitality sector through higher levels of overnight visitor expenditure. The proposed bar/restaurant will also strengthen the evening and nighttime economy. For the reasons stated the proposal complies with policies TLC1, TLC3 and TLC4.
5.11	Policy EC1 (Delivering inclusive economic growth) highlights the strong growth potential for the hospitality and tourism sectors. The erection of a 164-bed hotel with bar/restaurant facilities will be a positive addition to the hospitality and tourist sector in the city centre in line with Policy EC1.
5.12	Strategic Policy SP1 (Growth strategy) seeks to support additional jobs throughout the city over the plan period, whilst Policy SD3 (City centre) directs the council to support new development that will help create a compact and vibrant city centre.
5.13	The development of this site will provide a suitable and productive use of this vacant city centre site, providing a hotel within a city centre location on a prime thoroughfare. The construction phase will provide 220 direct jobs and 154 indirect jobs. Once operational, it is expected to create circa 36 no. jobs within the hospitality sector, and as such, the proposal accords with the strategic aims of the RDS, the SPPS, and policies SP1 and SD3 of the Plan Strategy.
5.14	<p>Having considered the above, the principle of the proposed hotel development is considered acceptable. The acceptability of the proposal in its entirety will depend upon the other planning considerations discussed below.</p> <p><u>Design & placemaking</u></p>
5.15	Policy DES1 (Principles of urban design) of the Plan Strategy promotes good placemaking, high quality design and the importance of proposals responding positively to local context. Policy SP5 (Positive Placemaking) states that development should

	<p>maximise the core principles of good design and positive placemaking in the creation of successful and sustainable places.</p>
5.16	<p>The merits of the design, scale, height and massing have been assessed as acceptable within this corner plot. In discussion with the Urban Design Officer (UDO), a concern relating to a section of the Donegall Pass façade was discussed. The UDO believed a step in the building design would reduce the bulky appearance of the building at its junction with Ratcliffe Street. Officers, having regard to the comments of the Urban Design Officer and to the overall design and use of the building take a balance approach and did not seek alterations to the design. Officers considered that a corner plot, as this location is, can accommodate a large building with a strong presence creating a key focal point for the street. In making this determination, it is noted that Equality House on the opposite side of Donegall Pass is slightly higher than the proposal and it extends further down Donegall Pass with no step in the height, unlike the proposed building. The two buildings taken together form a strong entrance into Donegall Pass and will project a strong façade onto Shaftsbury Square emphasising the commercial importance of the square within the wider city centre area. Officers are satisfied that the development represents a quality, sustainable design that will make a positive contribution to placemaking within the city centre. The proposal will revitalise a vacant plot in an important commercial area of the city that has seen a decline in recent years. The development will help enhance the sense of place and strengthen civic pride with materiality complementing the surrounding character. The inclusion of the ground floor bar/restaurants will reinstate active frontages at ground floor level to both Botanic Avenue and Donegall Pass, promoting a good design principle.</p>
5.17	<p>Consideration has been given to the Consil Report on Daylight and Sunlight and the potential for impacting on Ratcliffe Street. The property currently on Ratcliffe Street is a commercial retail/office; there is no requirement to protect daylight to a commercial building. The report has included housing units that are currently proposed for Ratcliffe Street under planning application, LA04/2023/3567/F. The assessment of impact on the proposed property shows there to be only minor deviations within the affected rooms at a level still within the guidelines. The affected windows are to the side gable; at ground floor it is a secondary window to the kitchen/diner, patio doors to front southern elevation being main light source. At first floor, an oriel window to bedroom 1, secondary window to front elevation is unaffected.</p>
5.18	<p>For these reasons the proposal complies with policies DES1 and SP5 of the Plan Strategy, the relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p> <p><u>Climate change</u></p>
5.19	<p>Policy SP6 (Environmental resilience) of the Plan Strategy reinforces the RDS policy on climate change which also aligns with the Belfast Agenda, by seeking to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a changing climate to build environmental resilience. Policy ENV1 (Environmental quality) allows for development that will maintain and, where possible, enhance environmental quality. Any proposal must protect communities from materially harmful development and must not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment. Policy ENV2 (Mitigating environmental change) 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. There is a presumption in favour of retaining existing buildings. Policy ENV3 (Adapting to environmental change) states that planning permission will be granted for development that incorporates measures to adapt to environmental change. Policy ENV5 (Sustainable Drainage Systems) SuDS states that all built development should include, where applicable,</p>

	SuDS measures to manage surface water effectively on site to reduce surface water runoff.
5.20	The application has been accompanied by several supporting reports including a Climate Change Statement (CCS). This identifies measures to reduce the energy demand associated with the proposed development. This is to be achieved by using insulated envelope, efficient services and Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) for domestic hot water (DHW), low energy ventilation and low energy lighting. In addition, an active cooling strategy design assists in preventing overheating now and in the future. The proposed demolition of no.10 Botanic Avenue is unavoidable, the design and layout could not be accommodated within the design of the proposed hotel. The foundation design could be compromised for the multi-storey building. The overall appearance and composition of the proposed hotel would be compromised in marrying a red brick building into the modern design of the proposal. Flood resilience measures and SuDS measures are employed via the use of green roof areas reducing the runoff rate from 12.6 l/s to 1.0 l/s. The additional of planting on roof terraces will be conditioned to further mitigate against climate change.
5.21	Subject to conditions to ensure implementation of these measures, there would be no conflict with policies SP3, SP6, ENV1, ENV2, ENV3, ENV5 and TRE1 of the Plan strategy, and the strategic aims of the RDS the SPPS, and the Belfast Agenda.
	<u>Access & transport</u>
5.22	Policy SP7 (Connectivity) supports connectivity to and within the city by sustainable transport modes, such as public transport, walking and cycling. Policy TRAN1 (Active travel, walking & cycling) supports development proposals which take account of the needs and safety of walkers and cyclists, their convenience to walking, cycle and public transport access and secure cycle parking facilities. Policy TRAN2 (Creating and accessible environment) promotes suitable access to buildings and their surroundings whilst taking account of the specific needs of people with disabilities or impaired mobility. Development which will generate significant travel uses require a Travel Plan under Policy TRAN4 (Travel plan), whilst Policy TRAN8 (Car parking & servicing arrangements) sets out the criteria under which reduced levels of car-parking will be assessed. The current parking standards for designated areas of parking restraint are set out in Policy TRAN9 (Parking standards within areas of parking restraint).
5.23	A Transport Assessment Form, Service Management Plan and Travel Plan have been submitted in support of the application which have been fully assessed by DfI Roads.
5.24	The site is located within a designated area of parking restraint. The proposal promotes a car-free, sustainable environment with no dedicated in-curtilage parking. Being in a highly accessible location in the city centre, the site is well served by sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling (Belfast bike docking station directly outside of site), and public transport (bus, train and taxi), which will reduce reliance on private car use and help tackle congestion. Internal secure cycle parking for eight bikes will be provided. The Transport Assessment form notes that the number of vehicle trips generated by the proposal will be minimal, with the majority of trips being via sustainable travel modes which will be promoted through the implementation of the Travel Plan via condition. The Service Management Plan, which clarifies that the hotel would be serviced via Ratcliffe Street, will also be controlled through condition.
5.26	The hotel will be available for use by overnight visitors with the bar/restaurants available to the public. The site is within short walking distance from bus and rail services, providing public transport links to the wider city and beyond. Pedestrian footpaths

	throughout the locality link the site to shops, bars, restaurants and leisure facilities within the city centre. Other tourism assets and conference facilities are also easily accessible from the site, including SSE Arena, Waterfront Hall and both the Ulster and Titanic Museums.
5.27	Whilst no disabled parking is provided, the highly accessible location of the site is acknowledged, together with the layout of the scheme which ensures there should be no prejudice to people with disabilities or impaired mobility accessing the hotel.
5.28	DfI Roads Service was consulted on the proposal and offered no objection subject to conditions for secure cycle parking and compliance with the Service Management Plan and Travel Plan. Having regard to the sustainable of the site location and proximity to parking facilities, access to public transport the proposal is considered to satisfy the relevant policies SP7, TRAN1, TRAN2, TRAN4, TRAN8 and TRAN9.
	<u>Health impacts</u>
5.29	Policy SP3 (Improving health & wellbeing) of the Plan Strategy requires new development to take health and wellbeing into account during early design stages. Policy HC1 (Promoting healthy communities) seeks to ensure that all new developments 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.
5.30	The city centre site is a highly accessible location and provides excellent opportunities for active travel, encouraging walking and cycling via good interconnection with the city centre and beyond. This is a car-free development and is supported by a Travel Plan seeking to reduce the reliance on the private car. The proposal is considered to satisfy the requirements of policies SP3 and HC1.
5.31	<u>Environmental protection</u>
	Policy SP6 (Environmental resilience) of the Plan Strategy reinforces the RDS policy on climate change which also aligns with the Belfast Agenda to build environmental resilience. Policy ENV1 (Environmental quality) requires new development to protect communities from materially harmful development and must not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment.
5.32	The proposal will utilise previous developed land which will contribute towards a sustainable form of development by using modern building materials that are designed to have a higher thermal efficiency that will contribute to environmental resilience. Through the reuse of vacant brown field land, the development contributes towards a sustainable pattern of development. The proposal also includes the demolition of an existing building on site, policy ENV2 seeks, where feasible, to avoid demolition and consider how the structure can be reused. It is considered, in this, proposal that it would not be feasible to retain the existing building, it would impact on the uniformity of the foundation system for the proposal. The exterior design of the proposed building would be compromised and the junction of the old to new would negatively impact on the overall energy efficiency of the proposal.

5.33	A consultation on the proposed development has been sent to Environmental Health (EH) regarding noise impact, air pollution and ambient air quality, odour and general amenity, contaminated land and other considerations. The response from EH indicated no objection to proposal subject to relevant condition.
5.34	<u>Contaminated land:</u> Following assessment of GQRA it was revealed that the level of contaminants were all detected below the human health guidelines values for commercial development therefore no risk to human health.
5.35	<u>Noise:</u> Consideration was given to Plant noise, Entertainment noise, Deliveries noise & inward noise impacts. Following consideration of Noise Impact Assessment EH concluded no significant issues all matters can be controlled via planning conditions.
5.36	<u>Odour:</u> EH applied a cooking level type of “high” as a factor of safety the end use/cooking type is not within the planning phase. To prevent any impact on surrounding land uses a condition was recommended preventing cooking on site until the suggested odour abatement is installed as recommended within the published odour abatement assessment.
5.37	<u>Flood risk</u> Policy ENV4 (Flood risk) of the Plan Strategy states that planning applications in flood risk areas must be accompanied by an assessment of the flood risk in the form of a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). River Agency flood maps reveal that the site is not located within an area prone to flooding.
5.38	NI Water and NIEA Water Management Unit (SES comments are still outstanding) note that the proposal has the potential to adversely affect the surface water environment, due to insufficient capacity within the sewage system. A planning condition will therefore be attached to a decision notice to ensure that no development can be completed or become operational until an acceptable solution has been achieved with NIW regarding the disposal of sewage and surface water from the site. A satisfactory resolution to the sewage system ensures compliance with policies ENV4 and ENV5.
5.39	<u>Waste-water infrastructure</u> Policy SP1A (Managing growth and supporting infrastructure delivery) of the Plan Strategy require that necessary infrastructure is in place to support new development.
5.40	NI Water has confirmed there is available capacity at the receiving Wastewater Treatment Works, however, the public foul sewer within 20m of the boundary of the site has insufficient capacity to adequately service the proposed development. The applicant's engineers are currently working to resolve this issue to the satisfaction of NIW.
5.41	<u>Waste management</u> A Waste Management Plan and Service Management Plan accompanied the planning application. These have been considered and the arrangements are acceptable, the waste collection frequency stated as daily. A condition will be attached ensuring adherence to both the Service Management and Waste Management plans.
	<u>Natural heritage</u>

5.42	Policy NH1 (Protection of natural heritage resources) requires the council to adopt the precautionary principle when considering the impacts of a proposed development on local heritage resources.
5.43	As the existing land and building is currently vacant, a Bat Survey has been undertaken and the associated report was submitted in support of the application. This identifies that no evidence of bats was found during the survey.
5.44	NIEA Natural Environment Division have assessed all supporting information including the Bat Survey and confirmed the report is acceptable and have no objections to the development.
5.45	<p><u>Section 76 legal agreement</u></p> <p>As this is a major application, a Section 76 legal agreement is required to secure developer contributions towards Employability and Skills in line with the council's Developer Contribution Framework.</p> <p><u>Pre-application community consultation</u></p>
5.46	<p>The applicant undertook their statutory duty to submit a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) which set out the applicant's proposals for pre-application community consultation. LA04/2024/1602/PAN was submitted to the Council on 20th August 2024, the council confirmed on 3rd October 2024 that the PAN was acceptable in line with the requirements of Section 27 of the Planning Act 2011.</p> <p>The application is accompanied by a mandatory Pre-application Community Consultation Report (PACC). The PACC report describes the pre-application consultation undertaken by the applicant, which included:</p> <p><u>Pre-exhibition phase</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advertising: newspaper advert, Belfast Telegraph & Irish News 21st October 2024: 2. Neighbour notification: leaflet drop within 90m of site 21st October 2024: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Trifold leaflet including comment card,</i> • <i>Information on the in-person PACC process,</i> • <i>Information on the proposals,</i> • <i>Point of contact details of Technical Team for questions or feedback.</i> 3. Local stakeholder audit: audit carried out prior to the consultation process of all local businesses and organisations located within the immediate area of the site. 4. Press Coverage: press statement prepared and issued, widely covered by local newspapers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Proposal details,</i> • <i>Applicant information.</i>
5.47	<p><u>Exhibition phase</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community Exhibition Event: In-person PACC event, Holiday Inn Hotel, 6th November 2024 4:00pm-7:00pm.

	<p>The event attracted 5 no. visitors who viewed and discussed the plans with the design team, which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Planning consultant,</i> • <i>Communications consultant.</i> <p>2. Second Community Exhibition Event: In-person PACC event, St. Mary Magdalene Church, Donegall Pass. 7th November 2024 4.00pm – 7.00pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Event attracted 12 no. visitors
5.48	<p><u>Post-exhibition phase</u></p> <p>1. Analysis of Community Feedback: Those who visited the community consultation event had a chance to view eleven presentation boards outlining the proposals.</p>
5.49	<p>It is considered that the Pre-Community Consultation Report submitted has demonstrated that the applicant has carried out their duty under Section 27 of the Act.</p> <p><u>Conclusion</u></p>
5.50	<p>The principle of the proposed hotel development is considered acceptable under the strategic aims of the RDS, the SPPS and policies TLC1, TLC3 and TLC4, EC1, CC1, SP1 and SD3 of the Plan Strategy, in that it will increase hotel bedroom numbers and tourism footfall, strengthen the economy, support the hospitality sector through the creation of jobs opportunities and provide a productive and suitable redevelopment of a city centre vacant site.</p>
5.51	<p>By way of its quality design and positive response to its local context, it accords with policies DES1 and SP5, the relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>
5.52	<p>All aspects relating to environmental considerations would comply with policies SP3, SP6, ENV1, ENV2 and ENV3 and the strategic aims of the RDS, the SPPS and the Belfast Agenda. Subject to suitable public surface water drainage, the proposed measures to deal with flood risk, drainage and wastewater also comply with policies SP1A, ENV4 and ENV5.</p>
5.53	<p>Access and transport arrangements are considered acceptable under policies SP7, TRAN1, TRAN2, TRAN4, TRAN8 and TRAN9 of the Plan Strategy and relevant provisions of the SPPS. Through the delivery of the Travel Plan, the proposal also complies with policies SP3 and HC1.</p>
5.54	<p>Measures proposed for the protection of natural heritage resources comply with Policy NH1, and the applicant has carried out their statutory duty under Section 27 of the Planning Act 2011 with regard to pre-application community consultation.</p>
5.55	<p>All statutory and non-statutory consultees have indicated their support of the proposal with the exception of NIW and Environmental Health. Water engineers are currently working to resolve outstanding water/sewage issue, a condition preventing development until resolution is suggested. Environmental Health have not responded however it is considered any issues arising can be overcome. Notwithstanding the NIW and EH issues, it is considered the development is acceptable subject to conditions. There have been no objections from any third-party representations.</p>

<p>6.0</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p>	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>Having regard to the Local Development Plan and all material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission and listed building consent are 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 deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive.</p>
<p>7.0</p>	<p>CONDITIONS</p> <p>1. The development hereby permitted must be begun within five 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. The development hereby permitted shall not become operational until the weather protected cycle parking has been provided in accordance with the approved plans.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure acceptable cycle parking facilities on the site and to encourage alternative modes of transport to the private car.</p> <p>3. The development shall operate in accordance with the Service Management Plan.</p> <p>Reason: In the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users.</p> <p>4. The development shall operate in accordance with the Travel Plan.</p> <p>Reason: To encourage alternative modes of transport to the private car.</p> <p>5. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied unless the proposed climate change measures have been implemented in accordance with the approved details. The climate change measures to include SUDs and soft landscaping be retained in accordance with the approved details at all times.</p> <p>Reason: To mitigate and/or adapt to climate change</p> <p>6. If contamination is encountered during the carrying out of the development, 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.</p> <p>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 occupied or 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.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure that any contamination within the site is appropriately dealt with, in the interests of human health.</p>

	<p>7. After completing the remediation works under Condition 6; 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.</p> <p>Reason: Protection of environmental receptors to ensure the site is suitable for use</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure appropriate foul and 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.</p> <p>9. 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.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure that appropriate provision is made for storage and disposal of waste.</p> <p>10. The rating level (dBL_A,T) from the operation of all combined plant and equipment must not exceed the existing daytime and night-time background sound levels at the nearest noise sensitive residential premises as outlined in Section 6.2 BS4142:2014 – Commercial Noise Impact of the Noise Impact Assessment titled Layde Consulting. Noise and Odour Impact Assessment. 2-10 Botanic Avenue, Belfast. P841-1. Dated February 2025 when measured or determined in accordance with BS4142:2014+A1:2019 ‘Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound’.</p> <p>Reason: Protection of nearby residential amenity</p> <p>11. The external plant associated with the hereby permitted development shall be limited and location specified to that presented in Figure 10, “Level 08” and Appendix 2 of the Noise Impact Assessment titled Layde Consulting. Noise and Odour Impact Assessment. 2-10 Botanic Avenue, Belfast. P841- 1. Dated February 2025</p> <p>Reason: Protection of nearby residential amenity</p> <p>12. The internal sound pressure level from amplified sound/music/entertainment within the hereby permitted development must not exceed the octave band sound pressure levels, stated in Table 15: Recorded Noise Levels (unweighted)</p>
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for sample music 1m from speaker source, of the submitted Noise Impact Assessment titled Layde Consulting. Noise and Odour Impact Assessment. 2-10 Botanic Avenue, Belfast. P841- 1. Dated February 2025

Reason: Protection of nearby residential amenity

13. No fixed amplified sound system shall be installed within the external ground floor plan frontage to Botanic Avenue, as per the report named Section 5.0 Ground Floor Plan, Botanic Avenue design and access statement (3)

Reason: Protection of nearby residential amenity

14. Double lobbied doors shall be installed to the western/northern of frontage the ground floor plan of the herby permitted development, as presented in the report named Botanic Avenue design and access statement (3) Section 5.0 Ground Floor Plan and shall remain in the closed position, except when used for access or egress.

Reason: Protection of nearby residential amenity

15. HGV deliveries, servicing and light goods vehicles movement associated with the herby permitted development shall not occur at any time on Sunday and prior to 08.00 hours and after 18.00 Monday to Friday, and prior to 08.00 hours and after 13.00 hours Saturday.

Reason: Protection of nearby residential amenity

INFORMATIVES:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.