

Development Management Officer Report Committee Application

Summary	
Application Ref: LA04/2024/1584/F	Committee Meeting Date: 13 May 2025
Proposal: Subdivision of 6No. bed shared dwelling to provide 3No. self contained flats, with demolition of single storey rear return and erection of two storey rear extension to provide 1no self contained flat.	Location: 21 Skegoneill Avenue, Belfast, BT15 3JP
Referral Route: Paragraph 3.8.1 of the Scheme of Delegation – request to be reported to Planning Committee by an Elected Member.	
Recommendation: Approval subject to conditions	
Applicant Name and Address: Chris Graham 37-41 May Street Belfast BT1 4DN	Agent Name and Address: Cathal McGuigan Surveyor House, 7 Balloo Court Balloo Drive Bangor BT19 7AT
Date valid: 14 th October 2024	
Target date: 27 th January 2025	
Contact officer: Ed Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management)	
Executive Summary: <p>This application seeks full planning permission for subdivision from a 6 bed dwelling to 3 self-contained flats, with a two storey rear extension to provide 1 more flat. The site is located at 21 Skegoneill Avenue. The 3 flats to be contained in the original house will each be one-bed / 1 person and the flat in the rear extension will be 1 bed / 2 person.</p> <p>The key issues are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principle of apartments at this location • Impact on the character and appearance of the Glandore Gardens draft ATC • Layout/Design • Private amenity/landscaping • Impact on residential amenity • Traffic, Parking and Access • Waste and refuse collection <p>4 objections have been received with the issues raised addressed within the main report.</p> <p>Councillor Brónach Anglin requested that the application is reported to the Planning Committee for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Significant public Interest. 2. Concerns relating to congestion and parking. <p>Officers consider that the scheme will not be harmful in terms of traffic, parking, impact on amenity of the surrounding area or the Glandore Gardens Draft Area of Townscape Character.</p>	

Recommendation

Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions. 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.

Officer Report	
1.0	Drawings
1.1	Site Location



Existing Elevations

No. 21 Skegoneill Avenue, Belfast
6B/HMO

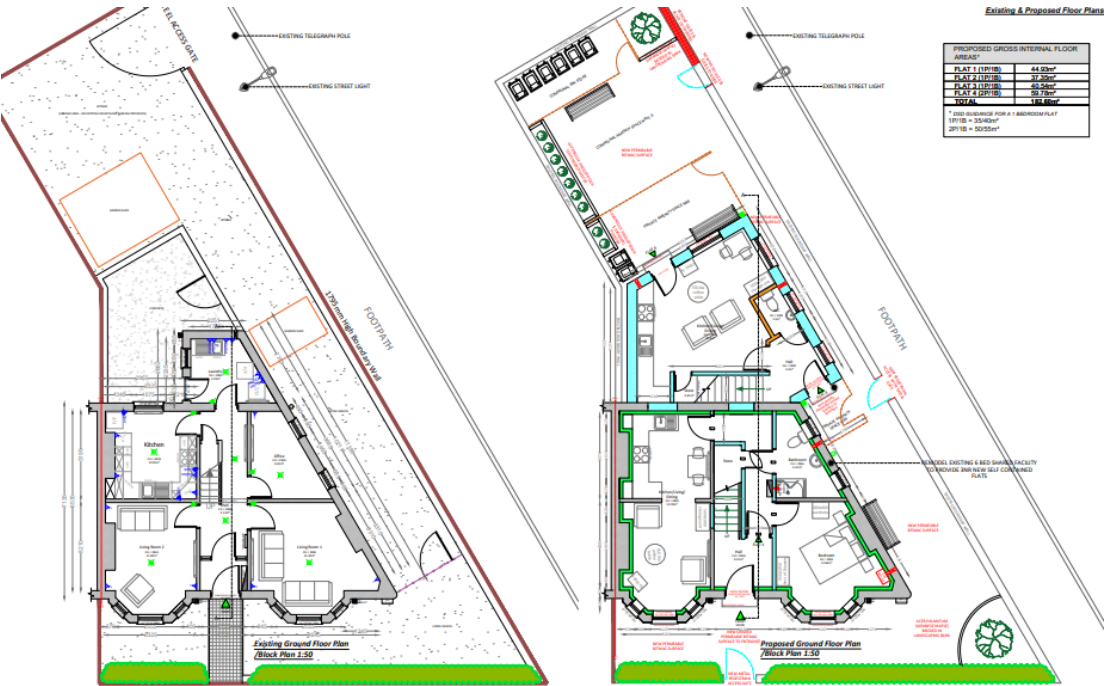


Proposed Elevations

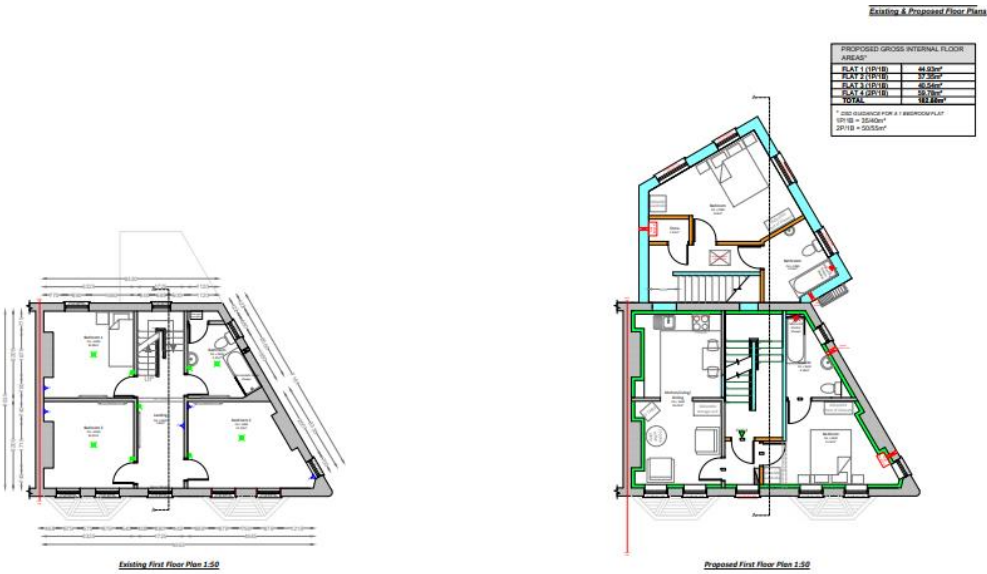
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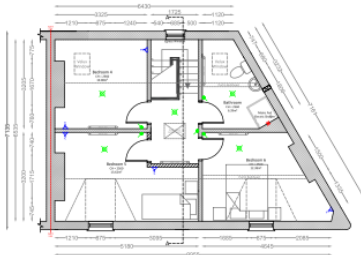
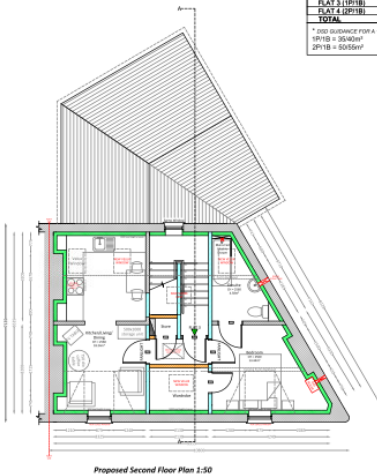


Existing / Proposed Site Layout and Ground Floor Plans



Existing / Proposed First Floor Plans



	<div><div>Existing / Proposed Second Floor Plans</div><div><div><div>21 SKEGONEILL AVENUE, BELFAST</div><div>Existing & Proposed Floor Plans</div><table><tr><th colspan="2">PROPOSED GROSS INTERNAL FLOOR AREA*</th></tr><tr><td>FLAT 1 (1P1B)</td><td>44.92sqm</td></tr><tr><td>FLAT 2 (1P1B)</td><td>37.28sqm</td></tr><tr><td>FLAT 3 (1P1B)</td><td>40.54sqm</td></tr><tr><td>FLAT 4 (2P1B)</td><td>58.73sqm</td></tr><tr><td>TOTAL</td><td>181.48sqm</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2">* GROSS DISTANCE FOR A 1 BEDROOM FLAT 1P1B = 30.50sqm 2P1B = 50.55sqm</td></tr></table><div><div><div>Existing Second Floor Plan 1:50</div></div><div><div>Proposed Second Floor Plan 1:50</div></div></div></div></div></div>	PROPOSED GROSS INTERNAL FLOOR AREA*		FLAT 1 (1P1B)	44.92sqm	FLAT 2 (1P1B)	37.28sqm	FLAT 3 (1P1B)	40.54sqm	FLAT 4 (2P1B)	58.73sqm	TOTAL	181.48sqm	* GROSS DISTANCE FOR A 1 BEDROOM FLAT 1P1B = 30.50sqm 2P1B = 50.55sqm	
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2.0	Characteristics of the Site and Area														
2.1	The application site is located at 21 Skegoneill Avenue. The property is a 3-storey residential Victorian end-of terrace . This is finished in red brick with a slate roof. There is an enclosed amenity space to the rear of the building. The immediate area is predominantly residential. The surrounding area is characterised by terraced streets lined with red brick 2 and 3 storey buildings, most of which are in residential use, on small to medium plots with gardens to front and rear. Parking is generally on-street.														
2.2	The site is ‘white land’ within the urban area in BUAP. The proposed development site is developed and in use as a single dwelling.														
3.0	Description of Proposal														
3.1	The application is seeking full planning permission for Subdivision of 6No. bed shared dwelling to provide 3No. self-contained flats, with a two-storey rear extension to provide 1 self-contained flat.														
4.0	Planning Policy and Other Material Considerations														
4.1	Development Plan – operational policies Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035														
4.2	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)														
4.3	Regional Planning Policy Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)														
4.4	Relevant Planning History There is no relevant planning history.														

5.0	Consultations and Representations
5.1	<p>Statutory Consultations</p> <p>DfI Roads – No objections</p> <p>Representations</p>
5.2	<p>The application has been advertised and neighbours notified. The Council has received 4 letters of objection. The issues raised in the objections are summarised as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parking, traffic, road safety. 2. Waste and refuse collection 3. Adverse impact on the sewage network 4. Anti-social behaviour/noise 5. Adverse visual impact/anti-social behaviour/noise pollution 6. Fly tipping 7. Issues with property to the rear 8. Overdevelopment 9. Loss of light to adjacent property <p>Issues 1-5 are addressed in the main body of the report.</p> <p>Additional points are considered as follows:</p> <p>6. Fly tipping in the rear alleyway – The proposal is not directly related to fly tipping in the rear alleyway and is a separate issue. Private bin space is provided on site for all residents.</p> <p>7. Issues with property to the rear – This is not a material consideration and is outside the remit of this application.</p> <p>8. Overdevelopment – The current property hosts 6 people. The proposal seeks to sub divide this into 4 flats, accommodating 5 people. Therefore, there is no intensification or overdevelopment occurring on the site.</p> <p>9. Loss of light to adjacent property – The rear gardens of the terraced row are south facing meaning they will enjoy sunlight for most of the day. The extension itself is angled away from the adjacent property meaning loss of sunlight will not be exacerbated unacceptably.</p>
6.0	PLANNING ASSESSMENT
6.1	Development Plan Context
6.2	Section 6(4) of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 states that in making any determinations under the Act, regard is to be had to the local development plan, and the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
6.3	Section 45(1) of the Act states that in determining planning applications, the Council must have regard to the local development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations.
6.4	The Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP), when fully completed, will replace the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 as the statutory Development Plan for the city. The Belfast LDP will comprise two parts. Part 1 is the Plan Strategy, which contains strategic and operational policies and was adopted on 02 May 2023. Part 2 is the Local Policies Plan, which will provide the zonings and proposals maps for Belfast and has not yet been published. The zonings and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 remain part of the

	statutory local development plan ("Departmental Development Plan") until the Local Policies Plan is adopted.
6.5	<p>Operational policies – the Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application, which are set out in the following section of this report. The Plan Strategy replaces the operational policies previously provided by the Departmental Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). Those policies no longer have effect, irrespective of whether planning applications have been received before or after the adoption date (par. 1.11 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement).</p>
6.6	<p>Proposals Maps – until such time as the Local Policies Plan is adopted, the Council must have regard to the land-use zonings, designations and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001, both versions of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (v2004 and v2014) (draft BMAP 2015) and other relevant area plans. The weight to be afforded to these proposals is a matter for the decision maker. It is considered that significant weight should be given to the proposals map in draft BMAP 2015 (v2014) given its advanced stage in the development process, save for retail policies that relate to Sprucefield which remain contentious. The site is located within the settlement development limit in the BUAP and is not zoned for any use. The site is not located in a Housing Policy Area or a HMO Development Node in the Belfast HMO Subject Plan 2015.</p> <p>Relevant Planning Policies</p>
6.7	<p>The following policies in the Plan Strategy are relevant to consideration of the application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HOU2 – Windfall Housing • HOU4 – Density of Residential development • HOU7 – Adaptable and accessible accommodation • HOU11 – Intensive housing nodes • RD1 – New residential developments • RD3 – Conversion or sub-division of existing buildings for residential use • DES 1 – Principles of urban design • TRAN8 – Car parking and servicing arrangements • ENV1 – Environmental quality • BH3 – Area of townscape character <p><u>Supplementary Planning Guidance</u></p>
6.8	<p>Residential Design Placemaking and Urban Design Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Transportation Waste Infrastructure</p> <p>Key Issues</p>
6.9	<p>The key issues to be considered in this application are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principle of apartments at this location • Design • Impact on the character and appearance of the Glandore Gardens draft ATC • Impact on residential amenity • Private amenity/landscaping • Traffic, Parking and Access

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste and refuse collection
	<p>The principle of apartments in this location</p>
6.10	<p>Policy HOU1 of the Plan Strategy sets out the housing requirements for the plan period. This includes a total of 18,100 homes within the 'rest of Belfast city' and 2,000 windfall homes. The proposal is located within a previously developed site (windfall) within 'rest of Belfast city'.</p> <p>Policy HOU2 requires windfall housing to be delivered on previously developed land, such as the application site. Policy HOU2 goes onto require that such proposals also satisfy three criteria discussed below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site is suitable for housing – the site is a sustainable location and considered suitable in principle for housing. • The location is accessible and convenient to public transport and walking cycle infrastructure – the site accessible to public transport and close to cycling / walking routes and is highly accessible to shops, services, and amenities. • Provision is made for any additional infrastructure required as a result of the development – suitable infrastructure is in place to support the proposal.
6.11	<p>The proposal is for social housing in the form of apartments. The proposal will provide quality housing that will add to the variety of housing stock offered in this location.</p>
6.12	<p>The proposal is considered compliant with policies HOU1 and HOU2 and the principle of housing in location is considered acceptable.</p>
6.13	<p>The existing building is in excess of 150 sqm and therefore satisfies criterion c. RD3 of Policy RD3.</p> <p>Housing density</p>
6.14	<p>Policy HOU4 seeks to promote appropriate housing densities to ensure effective use of land, a finite resource, in sustainable locations.</p>
6.15	<p>The proposal is for 4 residential units in a location where the average density should be between 75-150 dwellings per hectare (ha). The site area is 0.02 ha therefore the proposed development equates to a density of 200 units per ha, which is not compliant with Policy HOU4. However, the policy refers to the average over the entire inner city area. The immediate area contains lower density residential development in the form of houses with gardens which is less than the average for the area and thus acts as a counterbalance to the higher density of the proposal. The acceptability of the proposal should depend on other planning considerations, set out below.</p> <p>Proposed demolition</p>
6.16	<p>The proposal includes demolition of a small single storey return to accommodate the proposed extension. This existing return is largely screened from public view by a 2m approx. high wall and as such there is no public views of it other than a glimpse of its roof. It is also likely that this is not part of the original house. Policy BH3 states that demolition will only be accepted where the original building makes no material contribution to the ATC and its replacement will enhance the area. The design of the replacement return is covered in the succeeding paragraph.</p>

	<p>Design</p>												
6.17	<p>The proposed two-storey extension will breach the building line along Glandore Drive. However, this is a corner site and the dwelling 18A Glandore Avenue at the corner of Glandore Drive and Glandore Avenue on the other end of this street also breaches the same building line. The two-storey height is in keeping with two-storey returns of the other dwellings within the adjoining terrace. The overall scale, form massing and finish materials is considered subordinate and not out-of-keeping with the character of the host building and the surrounding area. This is considered to be compliant with the relevant design criteria in policies DES1, RD1, RD3 and BH3.</p> <p>Impact on residential amenity</p> <p><i>Internal Layout:</i></p>												
6.18	<p>The proposal would provide a quality and sustainable residential environment in that all habitable rooms in the dwelling have access to natural light and an attractive outlook. No units are located wholly in the rear of the property without safe and secure access from the front door of the building. All units are self-contained.</p>												
6.19	<p>The proposed three 1-bed / 1-person flats would each have an internal living space exceeding the minimum requirement of 35 sqm as set out in Appendix C of the Plan Strategy. The 1-bed / 2-person flat would have an internal space exceeding the minimum 50 sqm space standards set out in Appendix C of the Plan Strategy. The internal space for each unit is illustrated in the table, below:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">PROPOSED GROSS INTERNAL FLOOR AREAS*</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>FLAT 1 (1P/1B)</td><td>44.93m²</td></tr> <tr> <td>FLAT 2 (1P/1B)</td><td>37.35m²</td></tr> <tr> <td>FLAT 3 (1P/1B)</td><td>40.54m²</td></tr> <tr> <td>FLAT 4 (2P/1B)</td><td>59.78m²</td></tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td><td>182.60m²</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	PROPOSED GROSS INTERNAL FLOOR AREAS*		FLAT 1 (1P/1B)	44.93m ²	FLAT 2 (1P/1B)	37.35m ²	FLAT 3 (1P/1B)	40.54m ²	FLAT 4 (2P/1B)	59.78m ²	TOTAL	182.60m²
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6.20	<p>This satisfies the relevant criteria in Policy RD1 and RD3</p> <p><i>Impact on Neighbours:</i></p>												
6.21	<p>There is ample separation distance between the proposal and neighbouring residential properties. The positioning of the extension, its scale and massing, its corner site position, existing boundary treatments and the orientation of the site in relation to neighbouring residential properties will also ensure that there will be minimal conflict with residential amenity in respect of overshadowing, loss of light, overlooking, and dominance. This satisfies Policy DES1 criterion j. and Policy RD1 criteria a. and b.</p> <p><i>Open space and outdoor amenity provision:</i></p>												
6.22	<p>Policy RD1 criterion (d) requires new residential development to make provision for appropriate open space. <i>Creating Places</i> advocates external private amenity space of between 10 and 30 sqm per residential apartment unit. The appropriate level of provision should be determined by having regard to the particular context of the development and the overall design concept. Generally, developments in inner urban locations and other high-density areas will tend towards the lower figure. Open space is to be provided as communal with a total of 50sqm, averaging 12.5sqm per unit. This is greater than the</p>												

	<p>minimum standard of 10sq/m as per the guidance. This is in keeping with the character of the ATC which is defined by dwellings with small enclosed rear yards for amenity space. This is compliant with the relevant criteria in Policy RD1 and DES1.</p> <p>Traffic, Parking and Access</p>
6.23	<p>No in-curtilage parking is proposed and as such the development will rely wholly on on-street parking. A Parking Survey has been submitted that demonstrates sufficient availability of on-street car parking. DfI Roads has been consulted and is content. This satisfies Policy TRAN 8.</p> <p>Adaptable and Accessible accommodation</p>
6.24	<p>HOU 7 advises that “All new homes should be designed in a flexible way to ensure that housing is adaptable throughout all stages of life, maximising the ability of occupants to remain in their homes and live independently for as long as possible”.</p>
6.25	<p>Criteria A – Parking surface “Parking provision should have a firm surface and provide level or gently sloping access to the main entrance of the property”. No on site parking is provided. DFI Roads are content that on street parking is sufficient.</p>
6.26	<p>Criteria B - Entrances “Main entrances should be sheltered from the weather”. All entrances will be provided with duo-pitched canopies supported by hardwood gallow brackets and finished with man-made slates to match main roof and new extension.</p>
6.27	<p>Criteria C – Living and Dining Space “Permanent living space or dining space should be provided within or in addition to a kitchen at entrance level”. Permanent living space or dining space is provided within or in addition to a kitchen at the entrance level of each flat.</p>
6.28	<p>Criteria D – Entrance Level W/C “Accommodation should provide entrance level WC with space to provide an accessible shower in the future is required.” Accommodation provides an entrance level WC to all flats.</p>
6.29	<p>Criteria E – Accessible Bathroom “An accessible bathroom should be provided on the same floor as the main bedroom”. An accessible bathroom is provided on the same level as the main bedroom in all flats.</p>
6.30	<p>Criteria F – Glazing “Glazing in the principal living space should be sited to enable outlook when seated”. Glazing in the principal living space is sited to enable outlook when seated.</p>
6.31	<p>The proposal is considered to be compliant with Policy HOU7.</p> <p>Waste and Refuse Collection</p>
6.32	<p>Adequate refuse storage space is provided within the curtilage of the site, large enough to allow for the separation of recyclable waste, and is designed to not be visible from the amenity space / public realm.</p>
6.33	<p>The rear amenity space will continue to host the bins as before and will provide a new communal bins store.</p>

6.34	Bin storage requirements are set out in the SPG which is calculated as follows: The weekly waste calculation for residential is 70L+30L per bedroom. Therefore, the weekly requirement for a 1 bed apartment is 70L+30L. So, for 4x1 bed units this will be 4 x (70+30) = 400L. Collection is biweekly so this will be 400 x 2 = 800L.
6.35	This is further broken down into categories: 10% organic waste; 55% dry waste; and 35% general waste.
6.36	The proposal has adequate amenity space to accommodate bin storage requirements. This complies with Policy RD3 (b) and DES1 (k).
	Wastewater infrastructure
6.37	NI Water as the statutory authority has no objection to the proposal.
	Climate Change
6.38	Policy ENV2 states that planning permission will be granted for development that incorporates, where feasible, measures to mitigate environmental change and reduce greenhouse gases by promoting sustainable patterns of development.
6.39	The proposal retains the existing building consistent with the aim of Policy ENV2 which seeks to avoid demolition where feasible.
6.40	The applicant has provided details on the various sustainable design features which will be incorporated into the development.
6.41	The policy also sets out measures to maximise opportunities to incorporate sustainable design features. A further opportunity includes improvements to energy efficiency and this proposal will involve improvements to the building fabric to enhance its energy efficiency with the provision of new building insulation throughout. These sustainable measures shall be secured by condition. This is compliant with Policies ENV2 and ENV3.
6.42	Policy ENV5 states that all built development shall include, where appropriate, SuDs measures to manage surface water effectively on site, to reduce surface water run-off and to ensure flooding is not increased elsewhere. Permeable asphalt hard standings to be installed to provide full or partial infiltration (suitable solution to be confirmed following ground tests on site). Full infiltration allows all water entering the surface to infiltrate into the existing underlying ground. Where low permeability ground conditions are confirmed by testing a partial infiltration system will be adopted allowing excess run off to be attenuated or discharged into a suitable drainage system. Trees and planters to be included to assist drainage. These SuDS measures are considered acceptable. The proposal is considered acceptable having regard to Policy ENV5.
	Landscaping
6.43	The rear garden will be laid in permeable bitmac surface with a raised planter bed along the common boundary between the site and the adjoining adjacent property. A tree is also to be planted at the rear boundary. There is a street tree in close proximity to the location of the extension, but this is considered to be far enough distance away to prevent root damage. An existing boundary wall that is to be retained will act as both a root barrier and protective fence to this tree.

7.0	Recommendation
7.1	Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.
7.2	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.
DRAFT CONDITIONS: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission. <p>Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. No external facing or roofing materials be applied unless in accordance with a written specification of the materials, which shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. <p>Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. All soft landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with details on the approved ground floor plan / block plan, drawing no. 07A, published to the Planning Portal on 25 March 2025. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation of the development unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council. Any plants indicated on the approved scheme 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>Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and to assist with mitigating climate change.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. 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>Reason: To ensure that appropriate provision is made for storage and disposal of waste.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied unless the measures to mitigate climate change have been implemented in accordance with Climate Change Statement, dated April 2024. The climate change measures shall be retained in accordance with the approved details at all times. <p>Reason: To mitigate and/or adapt to climate change.</p>	