

Development Management Report

Committee Date: 10th March 2026

Application ID: LA04/2024/0570/F

Proposal: Change of use of from hotel, conference centre and offices (sui generis) to a 97-bed care home (Use Class C3(b) and 1,559sqm diagnostic medical facility (Use Class D1(a), associated access, car parking, landscaping and open space.

Location: Stormont Hotel, 587 Upper Newtownards Road BT4 3LP

Referral Route: Application for Major development

Recommendation: Approval subject to conditions and Section 76 planning agreement

Applicant Name and Address:
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Agent Name and Address:
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Belfast

Date Valid: 26/02/2026

Target Date: 25/09/2026

Contact Officer: Ed Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management)

Executive Summary:

The application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of the existing hotel, conference centre and offices (sui generis) to a 97-bed care home (Use Class C3(b) and 1,559sqm diagnostic medical facility (Use Class D1(a), associated access, car parking, landscaping and open space. There are no external changes to the elevations of the hotel building. The medical facility would be located on the ground floor and independent of the care home. The proposal previously involved the demolition of No. 39 Summerhill Park (semi-detached dwelling). However, this have now been omitted from the proposal.

The application site comprises the Stormont Hotel building. The site is proposed to be subdivided from the majority of the existing hotel car park to the west. This proposal is Phase 1 of a two-phase proposed redevelopment scheme for the entire hotel site. Phase 2 is for a retirement village to be built on the remainder of the hotel car park and is subject of a separate planning application (ref. LA04/2024/0569/O). That application will be considered by the Committee at its same meeting (also see Planning History).

The key issues for consideration of the application are set out below.

- Principle of development at this location
- Design, Placemaking and Impact on Amenity
- Access and Transport
- Healthy Communities
- Built Heritage
- Natural heritage
- Climate change
- Flood Risk and Drainage

- Waste-water infrastructure
- Environmental protection
- Waste management
- Section 76 planning agreement
- Pre-application Community Consultation

The Council has received 47 third-party representations, from 26 persons all of which are objections to the scheme. These are summarised in the main report. Some of the objections relate to the application for outline planning permission (LA04/2024/0569/O) on the adjacent land.

No objections have been received from consultees, subject to conditions.

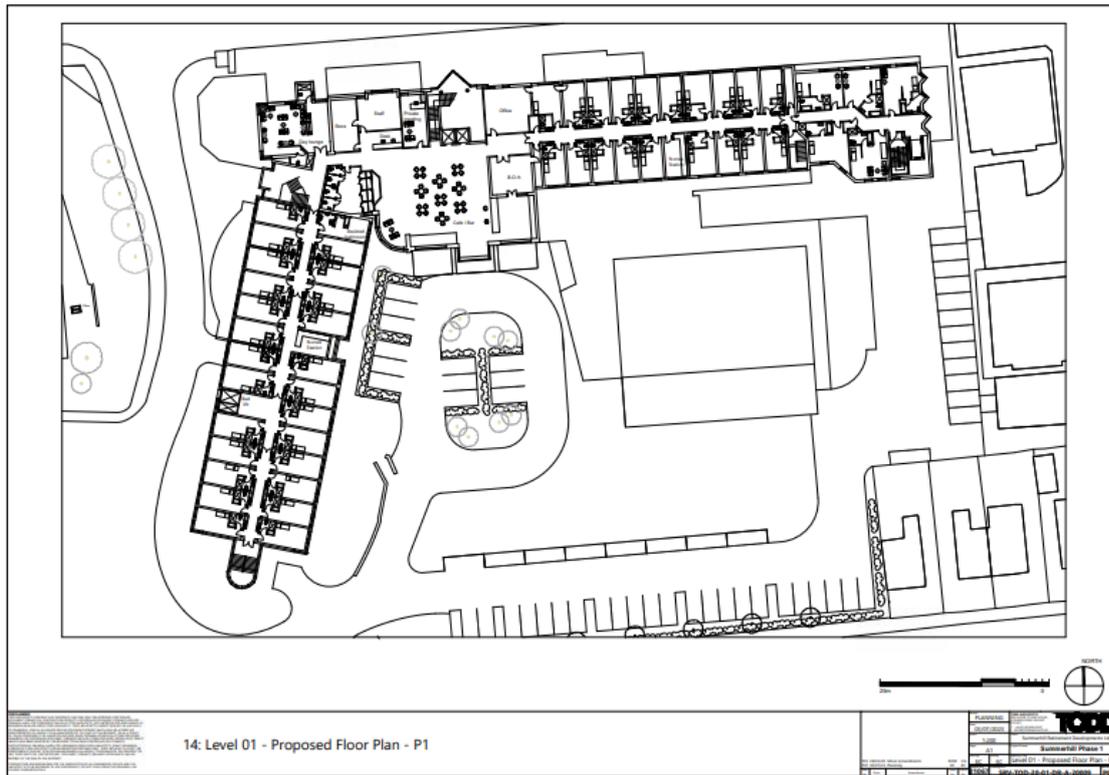
The proposal is considered acceptable in respect of principle, access and parking, impact on amenity and other relevant land-use planning considerations. The proposal is considered compliant with relevant policies.

Recommendation

Having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, 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 Section 76 planning agreement, and deal with and any other issues that arise, provided the issues are not substantive.

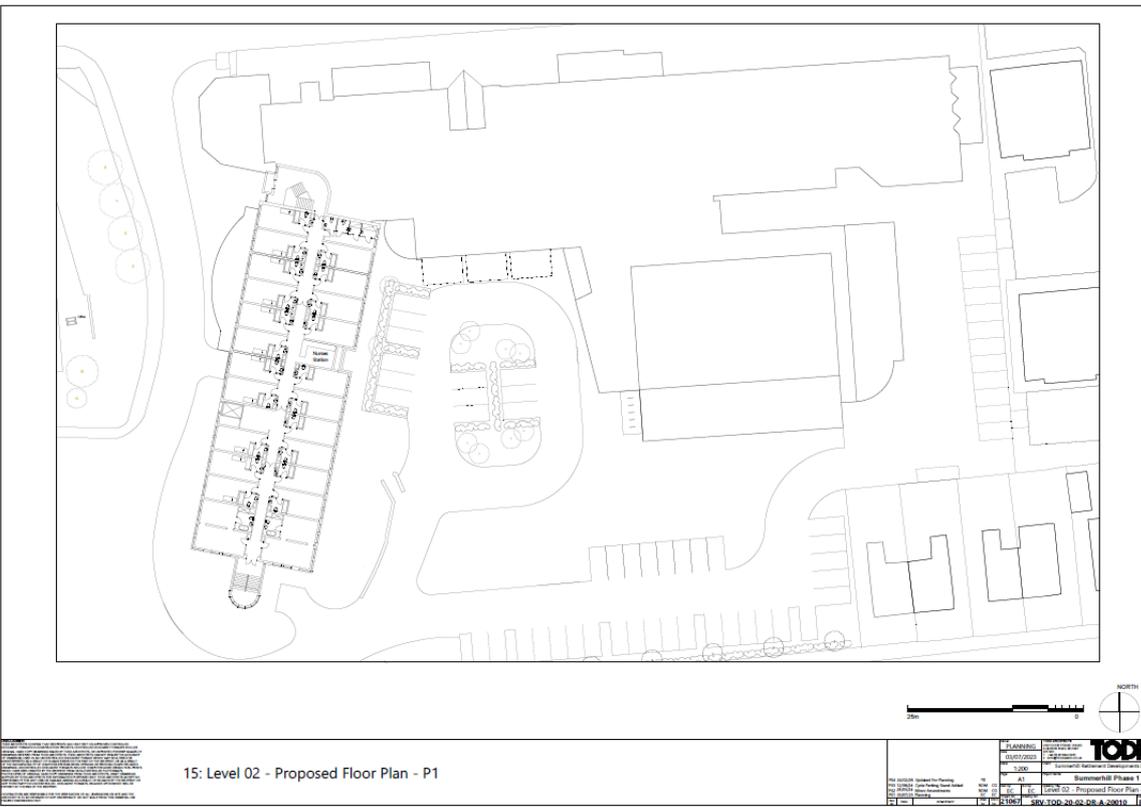
Level 01: Proposed Floor Plan:



14: Level 01 - Proposed Floor Plan - P1

Project Name	Summerhill Phase 1
Client	Summerhill Retirement Communities Ltd
Architect	TODD
Scale	1:100
Date	15/05/2018
Sheet No	P1
Sheet Title	Level 01 - Proposed Floor Plan
Project No	100-20-02-08-A-2018
Revision	1

Level 02: Proposed Floor Plan:



15: Level 02 - Proposed Floor Plan - P1

Project Name	Summerhill Phase 1
Client	Summerhill Retirement Communities Ltd
Architect	TODD
Scale	1:100
Date	15/05/2018
Sheet No	P1
Sheet Title	Level 02 - Proposed Floor Plan
Project No	100-20-02-08-A-2018
Revision	1

<p>1.0</p> <p>1.1</p> <p>1.2</p> <p>1.3</p> <p>1.4</p> <p>1.5</p> <p>1.6</p>	<p>Characteristics of the Site and Area</p> <p>The application site is located on the Upper Newtownards Road opposite the Stormont estate. The site is currently occupied by a hotel and car park. The complex sits on 2.2 hectares (ha) of land, and comprises 105 bedrooms, together with two restaurants, wedding, meeting, and conference facilities. The hotel has been extended and renovated in different styles on a number of occasions. The hotel fronts onto the Upper Newtownards Road, with its vehicular access from the road dropping some eight metres to a main car park below, before rising up again to a drop off point outside its double height, frameless glazed, main entrance. Residential development abuts square shaped site on three sides.</p> <p>The surrounding area is suburban and predominantly residential, characterised by two-storey detached and semi-detached houses.</p> <p>Description of Proposed Development</p> <p>The application site comprises the Stormont Hotel building and a dwelling on the boundary of the site at number 37 Summerhill Park. The site is to be subdivided, separating the hotel from the majority of the existing hotel car park to the west.</p> <p>The application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of from hotel, conference centre and offices (sui generis) to a 97-bed care home (Use Class C3(b) and 1,559sqm diagnostic medical facility (Use Class D1(a), associated access, car parking, landscaping and open space. The medical facility will be on the ground floor and would operate independently of the care home. There would be no external changes to the existing hotel building.</p> <p>This proposal is Phase 1 of a two-phase proposed redevelopment scheme for the entire hotel site. Phase 2 is for a retirement village and is to be built on the remainder of the hotel car park to the west and is subject of a separate planning application (LA04/2024/0569/O – see Planning History). That application is to be considered at this same Planning Committee meeting.</p> <p>The proposal was subject of a Pre-Application Discussion (PAD), although not all the issues were resolved at the point at which the application was made.</p>
<p>2.0</p> <p>2.1</p> <p>2.2</p> <p>2.3</p>	<p>PLANNING HISTORY</p> <p>The site has no relevant planning history, however, there is a separate proposal for the hotel car park and lands to the west. Both this and the proposal were subject to Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) with officers and Proposal of Application Notice (PAN):</p> <p><i>Application site and car park site to west:</i></p> <p>LA04/2022/1211/PAN - Mixed-use development, comprising retirement living (Use Class C1), care home (Use Class C3) and medical facility (Use Class C3 or D1), associated access, amenity space, landscaping and car parking. PAD concluded.</p> <p><i>Car park site to west:</i></p> <p>LA04/2024/0569/O - Outline planning permission with all matter reserved for independent living (Use Class C3) units and up to 62no. assisted living units (Use Class C1), associated internal access roads, communal open space, revised access from</p>

	Castleview Road, associated car parking, servicing, amenity space and landscaping. Pending decision.
3.0	<p>PLANNING POLICY</p> <p>Development Plan – Plan Strategy</p> <p><u>Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy 2035</u></p> <p>Relevant Planning Policies:</p>
3.1	Policies in the Plan Strategy relevant to the application include the following:
3.2	<p><i>Strategic Policies:</i></p> <p>Policy SP1A – managing growth and supporting infrastructure delivery Policy SP2 – sustainable development Policy SP3 – improving health and wellbeing Policy SP5 – positive placemaking Policy SP6 – environmental resilience Policy SP7 – connectivity Policy SD2 – Settlement Areas</p>
3.3	<p><i>Operational Policies:</i></p> <p>Policy HOU8 – Specialised residential accommodation Policy CI1 – Community Infrastructure Policy DES1 – Principles of urban design Policy DES2 – Masterplanning approach for Major development Policy BH1 – Listed Buildings Policy TRAN 2 – Creating an Accessible Environment Policy TRAN 3 – Transport Assessment Policy ENV1 – Environmental Quality Policy ENV2 – Mitigating Environmental Change Policy ENV3 – Adopting to Environmental Change Policy ENV4 – Flood Risk Policy ENV5 – Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Policy NH1 – Protection of Natural Heritage Resources Policy LC1 – Landscape Policy HC1 – Promoting healthy communities</p>
3.4	<p><u>Supplementary Planning Guidance</u></p> <p>Placemaking and Urban Design Masterplanning approach for Major developments Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems Transportation Planning and Flood Risk Waste Infrastructure Trees and Development</p>
3.5	<p>Development Plan – zoning, designations and proposals maps</p> <p>Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) BUAP Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004)</p>

<p>3.6</p> <p>3.7</p>	<p>Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014)</p> <p>Regional Planning Policy Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) (Edition 2, 2025)</p> <p>Other Material Considerations Developer Contribution Framework (2020) <i>Belfast Agenda</i> (Community Plan)</p>
<p>4.0</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p> <p>4.4</p>	<p>CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS</p> <p><u>Statutory Consultees</u></p> <p>DFI Roads – No objection, subject to conditions DFI Rivers – No objection NI Water – No objection DAERA NIEA – No objection subject to conditions DFC Historic Environment Division (HED) – No objection, subject to conditions</p> <p><u>Non-Statutory Consultees</u></p> <p>BCC Environmental Health – No objection, subject to conditions BCC Landscape Planning and Development Unit – No objection BCC Trees and Landscape – No objection BCC Economic Development Unit – No objection Translink – No objection NIE – No objection Shared Environmental Services (SES) – No objection, subject to a conditions</p> <p><u>Representations</u></p> <p>The application has been advertised in the press and neighbours notified. 47 third party representations have been received to date from 26 persons all of which are objections to the scheme. The points raised are summarised below.</p> <p><i>Objections:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Living beside a large care home and sheltered housing will affect existing property values. 2. Antisocial behaviour within proposed communal areas. 3. Increased traffic and impact on parking and road safety in the area. The development will increase demand for on-street parking in the area. 4. The existing hotel car park acts as a parking hub for people venturing to Stormont Park, Dog Park, Park Run and Playground - in rare and worse cases the Starting point for the Marathon and Parades. Residents fear that the access to parking will overflow onto the surrounding streets, blocking residential access/ egress. 5. Parking Regulation Order (TRO) / Travel Plan to encourage sustainable modes of transport. 6. The height of the proposed buildings will over-shadow the existing road and surrounds. 7. Impact on privacy of existing homes from overlooking from proposed new houses. 8. Loss of light into neighbouring houses.

	<p>9. The proposed development would take a considerable time to build - leading to substantial inconvenience to residents.</p> <p>10. Impact on existing utilities and infrastructure: proposal will exacerbate existing flooding and sewerage issues and affect water pressure. The car park is within a 'floodplain'.</p> <p>11. Impact of construction on the site will affect residents both in terms of site traffic, noise, and air quality from dirt and dust.</p> <p>12. Replacement of two storey red brick houses on Castlevue Road with high rise buildings would be out of character with the housing in the area.</p> <p>13. The use of the proposed houses on Castlevue Road as 'commercial multiple occupancy premises'</p> <p>14. Strongly oppose the demolition of perfectly good and affordable semidetached family homes. Almost all of these homes are occupied by families at present. Demolishing such homes only adds to an already existing housing crisis.</p> <p>15. The proposed demolition of number 39 Summerhill Road will impact the adjoining property at number 37 Summerhill Park, which is the other half of a pair of semi-detached dwellings.</p> <p>16. Conversion of a hotel into a care home is not investing in our future and not forward thinking. Tourism is significantly important for the N.I economy and converting a luxury hotel into a nursing home is tone deaf and lacks foresight.</p> <p>17. The hotel offers amenities for the local area and its change of use to a medical facility will have a negative impact on the neighbourhood. Living beside a 4-star hotel has more appeal than a nursing home.</p> <p>18. Not all residents living on Summerhill Parade received planning consultation letters.</p> <p>19. Concerns raised over the location of bin storage. These can be an eyesore and come with the potential for overflowing waste and pests.</p> <p>20. The intensity of a 24/7 care use and a diagnostic facility is materially different from hotel use and risks unacceptable harm to amenity through noise/disturbance, servicing activity and lighting.</p>
4.5	<p>Points 1 and 2 are not material planning considerations. It should also be pointed out that there are no communal areas proposed as part of this application.</p>
4.6	<p>It is clear some objectors are referring to the proposed retirement village scheme that has been applied for under planning application ref. LA04/2024/0569/O (see Planning History). For example, points 3 through to 14 all refer to the other application seeking outline planning permission for housing with the exception of point 11.</p>
4.7	<p>In relation to point 15, the proposed demolition of No. 39 Summerhill Park has been omitted from the scheme.</p>
4.8	<p>Regarding point 17, all neighbours were notified in accordance with the regulations.</p>
4.9	<p>All other points are material planning considerations and will be addressed below.</p>

5.0	<p>PLANNING ASSESSMENT</p> <p>Development Plan Context</p>
5.1	<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>
5.2	<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>
5.3	<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 Polices</u></p>
5.4	<p>The Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application. These have been listed above at para 3.1.</p>
	<p><u>Proposals Maps</u></p>
5.5	<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 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.</p>
5.6	<p>Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 – the site is unzoned “whiteland” within the settlement limits for Belfast.</p>
5.7	<p>Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) – the site is unzoned “whiteland” within the settlement limits for Belfast and on an arterial route and a protected route.</p>
5.8	<p>Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014) – the site is unzoned “whiteland” within the settlement limits for Belfast and on an arterial route and a protected route.</p>
	<p><u>Environmental Impact Assessment</u></p>
5.9	<p>The proposed development falls within Category 10(b) of Schedule 2 of the Planning (Environment Impact Assessment) Regulations (NI) 2017 and therefore the Council was required under Regulation 12(1) to make a determination as to whether the proposal is EIA development. The Planning Service has determined that the proposal is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects in the context of the regulations and is not EIA development. Therefore, the application does not require to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement.</p>

	<p>Main Issues</p> <p>5.10 The main issues relevant to consideration of the application are set out below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of development at this location • Design, Placemaking and Impact on Amenity • Access and Transport • Healthy Communities • Built Heritage • Natural heritage • Climate change • Flood Risk and Drainage • Waste-water infrastructure • Environmental protection • Waste management • Section 76 planning agreement • Pre-application Community Consultation <p>Principle of development at this location</p> <p>5.11 Policy HOU8 (Specialist residential accommodation) and Policy CI1 (Community Infrastructure). The existing hotel use is not protected by planning policy.</p> <p><i>Proposed care Home:</i></p> <p>5.12 The proposed care home element will take up most of the building. Policy HOU8 states that permission will be granted for specialist residential accommodation, including care-related facilities, subject to two criteria: a) a community need is demonstrated via the submission of a statement of specialist housing need; and b) the proposal delivers convenient access to relevant local services and facilities, including local shops, public transport routes and health facilities.</p> <p>5.13 The applicant has submitted a statement of housing need which addresses the need for a care home in this area. This states that Northern Ireland is experiencing demographic shifts in terms of an ageing society and uses statistics from the NIHE to back this up. The justification and amplification of Policy HOU8 also supports the need for more care home bed spaces. This states that 820 additional bed spaces in residential care homes will be required during the plan period.</p> <p>5.14 It is considered that the applicant has demonstrated a need for the care home in line criterion a. of Policy HOU8.</p> <p>5.15 The application site is on an arterial route and in close proximity to shops, the Ulster hospital and Gilder and Metro bus links to Belfast City Centre, as well as outbound bus services to Newtownards, Comber, Holywood and Bangor. This is considered to comply with criterion b of Policy HOU5. More detail on travel and accessibility is outlined under <i>Access and Transport</i>, later in the report.</p> <p><i>Proposed Medical Facility:</i></p> <p>5.16 The diagnostic medical facility would use up to 60% of the ground floor only. This will be independent from the care home but would be available for use by residents of the care home. Policy CI1 - Community Infrastructure is applicable. The Plan defines community infrastructure as including surgeries and health facilities. Policy CI1 supports the</p>
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	<p>provision of new community infrastructure at appropriate and accessible locations within the urban area. As with the care home, the proposed diagnostic medical centre is in a sustainable location in terms of accessibility.</p>
5.17	<p>Policy C11 also states that all such proposals for community infrastructure shall ensure that there are no unacceptable impacts on residential amenity or natural/built heritage and are provided for access for all, including for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. There are residential properties to the east and south of the site. Environmental Health is the appropriate consultee for noise, nuisance and disturbance and raises no objection. There is no operational development proposed other than minor ground works and these will not have any impact on these neighbouring properties. It is considered that the proposed use would not adversely impact on residential amenity. Car parking and cycle stands are proposed and the site is accessible by pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. These issues are explored in more detail under the assessment, below.</p>
5.18	<p>The proposal is considered to adhere to Policy C11.</p> <p>Design, Placemaking and Impact on Amenity</p> <p><i>Proposed form, scale, massing and finished materials:</i></p>
5.19	<p>The existing hotel building would be retained in its current form with no external alterations. It is considered that the proposed use would not impact on the character and appearance of the area. Minor ground works and cycle stands are proposed; these would have a minimal visual impact. The proposal is considered acceptable, having regard to Policy DES1 of the Plan Strategy.</p> <p><i>Proposed Layout, Landscaping and Boundary Treatments:</i></p>
5.20	<p>The facility would utilise the existing access from the Upper Newtownards Road. Car parking would be in-curtilage. The existing turning head at the entrance of the hotel would be retained. Proposed landscaping will consist of retaining existing trees and hedges along the front of the site and planting new trees and hedges to the rear. Tree species will be mixed and include oak, birch, lime, pine, cherry. All would be semi-mature at the time of planting.</p>
5.21	<p>The Tree Officer and Landscape Planning and Development Unit are content with the proposed layout and landscaping scheme, although the Council's Landscape and Development team advises the submission of a final submission landscape plan is submitted and this will be secured by condition.</p>
5.22	<p>The proposal complies with Policy DES1 and Policy TRE1.</p> <p><i>Masterplanning approach:</i></p>
5.23	<p>Policy DES2 states that planning permission will be granted for Major development where it accords with the principles a. to j.</p>
5.24	<p>The proposal is designed as Phase 1 of a two-phase development for a 'retirement village' and is an integral part of the overall scheme.</p>
5.25	<p>It is considered that the scheme adopts a holistic approach which allows it to blend into the existing fabric of the area in a sympathetic and complementary way which is mindful of the historic built environment, adjacent residential development and the Stormont</p>

	estate, with regards to its site assembly, layout and design. The proposal also promotes opportunities for urban repair.
5.26	It is considered that the proposal accords with Policies DES2. <u>Access and Transport</u>
5.27	The existing hotel has two access points: the main entrance from Upper Newtownards Road on the north boundary; and another from Castleview Road on the west side. As the proposal will be subdividing the site, the access for the care home and medical facility will retain the access from Upper Newtownards Road only. This would be for both ingress and egress. However, the vehicle numbers using the facility would be less than then the current number using the hotel.
5.28	Based on Dfl's Parking Standards and some worst-case assumptions regarding staffing levels, the associated Transport Assessment concludes that the Parking Standard requirements for the care home and medical facility is 64 spaces. The number of car parking spaces proposed on-site is 57, which is 7 spaces short of what is required in the worst-case scenario. These spaces are to be provided within the curtilage of the site.
5.29	The applicant has provided a Travel Plan that demonstrates that the proposed development is currently easily accessible to staff, residents and visitors by alternative and sustainable modes of transport. The site is a highly accessible location within the city having direct access to the road network and public transport. The Upper Newtownards Road is serviced by the Glider. The supporting Travel Plan also identifies several cycle routes linking the site to the wider cycle path network whilst 10No. cycle stands are to be provided within the grounds of the care home.
5.30	The changes made at the site as part of the development provide an enhancement for those travelling by foot, by cycle and on public transport. A "Travel Pack" will be supplied to all new staff and residents that will contain various available sustainable travel options which offer alternatives to the use of the private car. If planning permission is granted, this will be conditional that the development will operate in accordance with the Travel Plan. Having regard to these considerations, together with the aim of reducing car usage, the level of parking is considered appropriate.
5.31	Dfl Roads have no objection to the parking and travel arrangements for the proposed development, subject to conditions. The proposal is considered acceptable having regard to Policies TRAN1, TRAN2, TRAN4, TRAN6 and TRAN8. <u>Healthy Communities</u>
5.32	The proposal is considered to comply with Policy HC1 in that would promotes healthy communities through active travel and good placemaking. <u>Built Heritage</u>
5.33	The application site is location in close proximity to several listing buildings, including the Gate Lodge, Gates and Screens, Stormont Estate, Parliament Buildings, walls and lamp standards, Lord Carson Memorial Statue, Stormont Estate. St. Molua's Church of Ireland Church, 645 Upper Newtownards Road.
5.34	HED (Historic Buildings) has assessed the proposal against policies within the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) para(s) 6.12 (setting) and Policy BH1 (Listed Buildings) of the Plan Strategy, advising that it is content that the proposal

	<p>will not have any negative impact on these buildings. The proposal involves minimal physical works and would have little impact on the setting of Listed Buildings, in compliance with these policies.</p> <p><u>Natural heritage</u></p>
5.35	<p>DAERA NIEA, Natural Environment Division (NED) and Shared Environmental Services have considered the impacts of the proposal on designated sites and other natural heritage interests and, on the basis of the information provided, has no concerns subject to conditions.</p>
5.36	<p>It is considered that the proposal is in compliance with Policy NH1.</p> <p><u>Climate change</u></p>
5.37	<p>The Planning Service require a Climate Change Statement in support of the planning applications. Plan Strategy Strategic Policy SP6 states that the council will support development where it helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and is adaptable in a changing climate to build environmental resilience.</p>
5.38	<p>Policy ENV2 and Policy ENV3 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.</p>
5.40	<p>Policy ENV2 states that proposals should, where feasible, seek to avoid demolition and should consider how existing buildings or their main structures could be reused. The proposal will see the 're-use' of an existing building with only internal alterations and reconfiguration of the existing hotel building into a care home and diagnostic medical facility is feasible and appropriate, taking cognisance of promoting sustainable development and reducing the carbon footprint of the development. This is in line with Policy ENV2.</p>
5.41	<p>A number of passive sustainability measures will be embedded into the proposals to ensure a flexible, usable design that minimises the reliance on mechanical ventilation and heat. This includes the building orientation, positioned to take advantage of natural sunlight and shading to reduce reliance on artificial lighting and cooling systems; 3m floor to floor heights and full height openings to make the most of solar gain to reduce reliance on mechanical heating; a 'fabric first' approach which places the emphasis energy-efficiency by optimising insulation, airtightness, ventilation, and other key aspects of the building's envelope; choice of materials too offer effective thermal mass which soaks up heat on a hot day and storing and slowly radiating warmth when needed; and the removal of extensive areas of hardstanding with the inclusion of green open space to provide a range of benefits, such as improving air quality, reducing urban heat island effect, mitigating storm water runoff and promoting biodiversity.</p>
5.42	<p>The design of the proposal includes the retention and re-use of the existing hotel building, re-purposing it into a care home and medical facility, with minimal internal reconfiguration required, taking cognisance of promoting sustainable development and reducing the carbon footprint of the development. This is in compliance with Policies ENV2, ENV3 and DES2.</p>
5.43	<p>Retention of existing soft landscaping to the front of the site and proposed new soft landscaping such as grass lawns and tree and shrub planting to the rear of the site will</p>

	<p>contribute to sustainable methods of drainage, acting as a natural soakaway (SuDS) and minimising flood risk. This is considered to be in compliance with Policy ENV5.</p> <p><u>Flood Risk and Drainage</u></p>
5.44	<p>Flood Maps (NI) indicates that the site lies outside the 1 in 100 year climate change fluvial or 1 in 200 year climate change coastal flood plain. As such a Flood Risk Assessment is not required. A Drainage Assessment has been submitted and DfI Rivers upon consultation has advised that they have no reason to disagree with its conclusions. The proposal is considered compliant with Policy ENV4 of the PS.</p> <p><u>Waste-water infrastructure</u></p>
5.45	<p>NI Water advises that there is a public foul sewer within 20m of the proposed development boundary which can adequately service the proposal and offers no objection. The proposal is therefore considered compliant with Policy SP1a which requires that necessary infrastructure is in place to support new development.</p> <p><u>Environmental protection</u></p>
5.46	<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 noise, air pollution, general amenity, ambient air quality, contaminated land, and other considerations including light pollution. Environmental Health has confirmed that it has no objections, subject to conditions, which are recommended.</p>
5.47	<p>The proposal is considered compliant with Policy ENV1.</p> <p><u>Waste Management</u></p>
5.48	<p>A Waste Management Plan has been submitted in support of the proposal. This advises that the existing building has a designated bin storage and collection point to the rear of the building. It is intended to retain this arrangement. Egress and ingress for bin lorries will be via the main site entrance at Upper Newtownards Road.</p> <p><u>Section 76 planning agreement</u></p>
5.49	<p>If the application is approved, it should be subject to the finalisation of a Section 76 planning agreement to secure the following planning obligations. These are considered necessary to make the proposed development acceptable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employability and Skills – the Council’s Economic Development Unit has advised that both Construction and Operational Employability and Skills Plans are required to promote inclusive growth, consistent with the Developer Contribution Framework. • Linkage to outline application – a clause linking this proposal to the development of the proposed retirement village (LA04/2024/0569/O) to require that on commencement of development of the outline permission, the hotel shall no longer be used as such (in recognition of the loss of parking spaces).

5.50	<p>Legal Services has confirmed that the draft section 76 planning agreement has been agreed in principle with the applicant, on a without prejudice basis.</p> <p><u>Pre-application Community Consultation</u></p>
5.51	<p>The application was preceded by a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) which set out the applicant's proposals for pre-application community consultation.</p>
5.52	<p>The application is accompanied by a mandatory Pre-application Community Consultation Report (PACC). The PACC report describes the comprehensive pre-application consultation undertaken by the applicant.</p>
5.53	<p>The applicant actively sought the views of the public and stakeholders with regards to this development by utilising the following methods of engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To allow the public to engage in the project, the applicant published a notice in the press on 11 August 2022, 7 days prior to holding a public event on 18 August 2022 from 3pm to 7pm at the Stormont Hotel. • Distribution of information leaflets with free-post feedback form and free consultation phone-line to 1,100 properties within 500m of the proposed site. • A dedicated website was set up and launched on 10 August 2022 which included all details and documents of the project submitted with the PAN and outlined all the consultation methods available including comments through the website. This website was live from 10th August until 1 September 2022; • A Live Chat function was made available on the project website and was operational between 9am and 5pm, Monday-Friday; • Printed physical packs containing proposal information were available on request to be posted out. Two hard copy packs were distributed via post on request, 26 digital packs were emailed to residents; • The PAN was provided to a list of community interests in the area via email on 17 June 2022; • All elected members within the Electoral Area received a copy of the PAN on 17 June 2022. • In addition, the PAN was also issued to other elected representatives including Ormiston DEA Councillors, East Belfast MLAs, the East Belfast MP.
5.54	<p>The PACC report states that the majority of feedback to the public consultation was either supportive, neutral or negative. A few specific issues were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to improve on-site parking and reduce the amount of on street car parking; • The hotel is an asset to the local community and should not be closed to make way for a care home; • It is not clear what is meant by these facilities - are they to be NHS or private healthcare facilities? Are they for the public or just the residents? More info needed.
5.53	<p>The applicant responded to the feedback as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A transport consultant has been instructed to ensure that the proposal provides suitable safe access for pedestrians, cycles and cars. The proposal will encourage the use of the nearby public transport network to reduce car-dependency, and demand for parking.

5.54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial matters relating to the hotel are not within the remit of the applicant. The current outline proposal by Summerhill Retirement Developments seeks to establish if the principle of redevelopment on the site is acceptable; • The exact nature of future occupancy of the medical facility is unknown at this stage. <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 Planning Act (NI) 2011 to consult the community in advance of submitting an application.</p>
6.0	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>6.1 Having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.</p> <p>6.2 Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement, and deal with and any other issues that arise, provided the issues are not substantive.</p>
7.0	<p>DRAFT 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 approved shall not be occupied unless covered bicycle storage has been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The covered bicycle storage shall be retained in accordance with the approved plans at all times.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure adequate provision and availability of cycle parking and encourage sustainable modes of transport.</p> <p>3. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied or operated until the parking and turning areas have been provided in accordance with the approved plans. Such areas shall not be used for any purpose other than the parking and turning of vehicles and such areas shall remain free of obstruction for such use at all times.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure adequate car parking within the site.</p> <p>4. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied or operated unless in accordance with the approved Travel Plan, published to the public Planning Portal on 24 April 2024.</p> <p>Reason: To promote sustainable travel patterns and off-set the demand for vehicular movements and/or parking.</p> <p>5. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied or operated unless in accordance with the Service Management Plan uploaded to the Planning Portal on 24 April 2024.</p> <p>Reason: In the interests of road safety and convenience of road users.</p>

6. Prior to installation of windows within the development hereby permitted, the final proposed window schedule (including configurations of frames and air gaps, details of the frames, seals etc) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The schedule shall be presented within a Noise Impact Assessment confirming how the new windows will meet the necessary sound reduction performance at all facades and floor levels at the hereby permitted development. The window specification shall be in line with recommendations in the AONA Consulting Noise Impact Assessment dated: June 2023, referenced ENV-8096 and published on the Planning Portal on 24 April 2024. The windows shall not be installed unless in accordance with the approved details.

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

7. Prior to installation of any alternative means of ventilation to be incorporated within the development hereby permitted, a Noise Impact Assessment confirming the specification of the alternative means of ventilation to serve habitable rooms shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The noise assessment shall demonstrate how the alternative means of ventilation will be acoustically attenuated and capable of achieving the internal noise levels for habitable rooms outlined in British Standard BS8233:2014 with the windows shut and the alternative means of ventilation operating (if including a mechanical component) or in the open position. The alternative means of ventilation shall be installed unless in accordance with the approved details and retained as such.

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

8. Prior to installation within the development hereby permitted, a Noise Impact Assessment of final plant and equipment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The Noise Impact Assessment shall include a list of all proposed plant, their location, number, operating modes (in terms of times, on/off conditions etc) and noise specifications. The noise assessment shall determine the combined rating level (dBLAr,T) from the operation of all plant and equipment and confirm if any other assessment criteria such as noise rating curves of low frequency curve criterion are applicable. The assessment shall identify any necessary noise mitigation measures to ensure that its operation will not exceed the existing representative daytime and night-time background sound levels at the nearest noise sensitive premises, when measured or determined in accordance with BS4142:2014+A1:2019 'Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound'. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details.

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

9. The development shall not be operated or occupied unless details of a means of ventilation and extraction for the dispersal of cooking smells/fumes, including details of its method of construction, odour control measures and noise levels, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The details cannot include new external chimneys or flues unless already shown on the approved plans. The approved scheme shall be installed before the use hereby permitted commences on site and shall be retained as such at all times.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of adjoining properties and the general locality.

10. No development shall commence on site (other than site clearance, enabling works or works to fulfil this condition) unless a Remediation Strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The Remediation Strategy shall consider the RPS Ireland Ltd report entitled 'Project Carson – Stormont Hotel, Generic Quantitative Risk Assessment Report, RWM-01491, Project Carson, Stormont Hotel, GQRA, Rev 04, February 2025'. The Remediation Strategy shall follow current Environment Agency and CIRIA guidance and British Standards and must demonstrate how the identified contaminant linkages are to be demonstrably broken and no longer pose a potential risk to human health. It must also detail how the proposed remedial works are to be verified. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved Remediation Strategy.

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

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

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

12. 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.

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

13. In the event that any substantial centralised combustion sources (generators, boilers, CHP or biomass) are proposed as part of this development and there is a risk of impact at relevant receptor locations as per the criteria detailed within the Environmental Protection UK and Institute of Air Quality Management, Land-use Planning & Development Control: Planning For Air Quality (January 2017), an updated Air Quality Impact Assessment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council prior to the installation of the plant. The assessment shall include details of the combustion plant to be installed, to include emission rates and flue termination heights of the proposed combustion systems and it must demonstrate that there will be no exceedances of Air Quality Strategy objectives at relevant human receptor locations. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: Protection against adverse impact on local air quality.

14. If during the development works, new contamination or risks are encountered which have not previously been identified, works should cease and the Council shall be notified immediately in writing. This new contamination shall be fully investigated in accordance with the Land Contamination: Risk Management (LCRM) guidance available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/land-contamination-how-to-manage-the-risks> In the event of unacceptable risks being identified, a Remediation Strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.

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

15. After completing any remediation works under condition 14 and prior to operation 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/land-contamination-how-to-manage-the-risks> The verification report should present all the remediation, waste management and monitoring works undertaken and demonstrate the effectiveness of the works in managing all the risks and wastes in achieving the remedial objectives.

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

16. Within 48 hours prior to the commencement of construction works, the existing buildings on the site shall be checked for bat presence by a competent ecologist and all demolition works shall be monitored by a Natural Heritage & Conservation Areas competent ecologist, details of which shall have first been submitted to the Council in writing. A report of the demolition shall be submitted to the Council within 2 weeks of the check carried out by the competent ecologist.

Reason: To ensure protection to bats and their roosts.

17. Notwithstanding the submitted details, no development (other than site clearance, site preparation, demolition and the formation of foundations and trenches) shall commence on site unless a final hard and soft landscaping scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The scheme shall include details of all walls, fences, trees, hedgerows and other planting which are to be retained; details of all new walls, fences, other boundary treatment and finished ground levels; details of the hard surface treatment of open parts of the site which shall be permeable or drained to a permeable area; a planting specification to include species, size, position and method of planting of all new trees and shrubs; and a programme of implementation.

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

18. All trees within the site shall be retained unless shown on the approved drawings as being removed. Any trees or planting indicated on the approved drawings which, within a period of five years from the date of planting, die, or 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.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

19. Prior to any work commencing all tree protective measures, protective barriers (fencing) and ground protection is to be erected or installed as specified and in accordance with the British Standard 5837: 2012 (section 6.2) on any trees to be retained within the site and must be in place before any materials or machinery are brought onto site for demolition, development, or soil stripping. Protective fencing must remain in place until all work is completed, and all associated materials and equipment are removed from site.

Reason: To ensure the protection of, and to ensure the continuity of amenity afforded by any existing trees to be retained within the site and on adjacent lands.

20. No storage of materials, parking of vehicles or plant, temporary buildings, sheds, offices, or fires within the Root Protection Area of trees within the site and adjacent lands during the construction period.

Reason: To avoid compaction within the RPA of existing trees to be retained.

DRAFT INFORMATIVES

1. This planning permission is subject to a planning agreement under Section 76 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. This decision should be read in conjunction with the planning agreement, which secures both Construction and Operational Employability and Skills Plans, and prevents the operation of the existing hotel use on commencement of development of outline planning permission LA04/2024/0569/O.
2. Please make sure that you carry out the development in accordance with the approved plans and any planning conditions listed above. Failure to do so will mean that the proposal is unauthorised and liable for investigation by the Council's Planning Enforcement team. If you would like advice about how to comply with the planning permission, you are advised to contact the Planning Service at Belfast City Council at planning@belfastcity.gov.uk.
3. 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.

	<p>4. 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.</p>
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