

Development Management Officer Report

Summary	
Committee Meeting Date: 10 th March 2026	
Application ID: LA04/2025/0463/F	
Proposal: Proposed change of use of Vacant Warehouse to indoor Padel Court Facility to include, Cafe, Changing rooms, Gym, Picklecourts and ancillary site development works	Location: Decco Ltd 1-5 Redcar Street, Belfast, BT6 9BP
Referral Route: Para 3.8.2 (a)(vi) of the Scheme of Delegation	
Recommendation:	Approval subject to conditions
Applicant Name and Address: House of Padel 5 Old Belgard Road Cookstown Industrial Estate Dublin	Agent Name and Address: Breen Planning 385 Springfield Road Forthriver Business Park Belfast
Executive Summary: This application seeks full permission for change of use of vacant warehouse to indoor Padel court facility to include cafe, changing rooms, gym, picklecourts and ancillary site development works. The application site comprises a large, rectilinear, 2-storey, vacant commercial building which covers a large proportion of the site, with the remainder used for parking and ancillary purposes. Adjacent to the site is Euston Street Primary School. The site is located within the development limits of Belfast and is unzoned, white land in the BUAP 2001 and Draft BMAP 2015 (dBMAP). There is an extant approval under LA04/2020/1158/F on the site for the demolition of the existing building and erection of 65 no apartments, including 20% social housing which was approved on 16 th February 2023. The key issues to be considered in the assessment of this application are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Principle of the proposed use - Design - Impact on amenity - Impact on Built Heritage - Climate change - Health Impacts - Access and transportation - Natural heritage - Environmental protection 	

- Wastewater infrastructure
- Landscaping

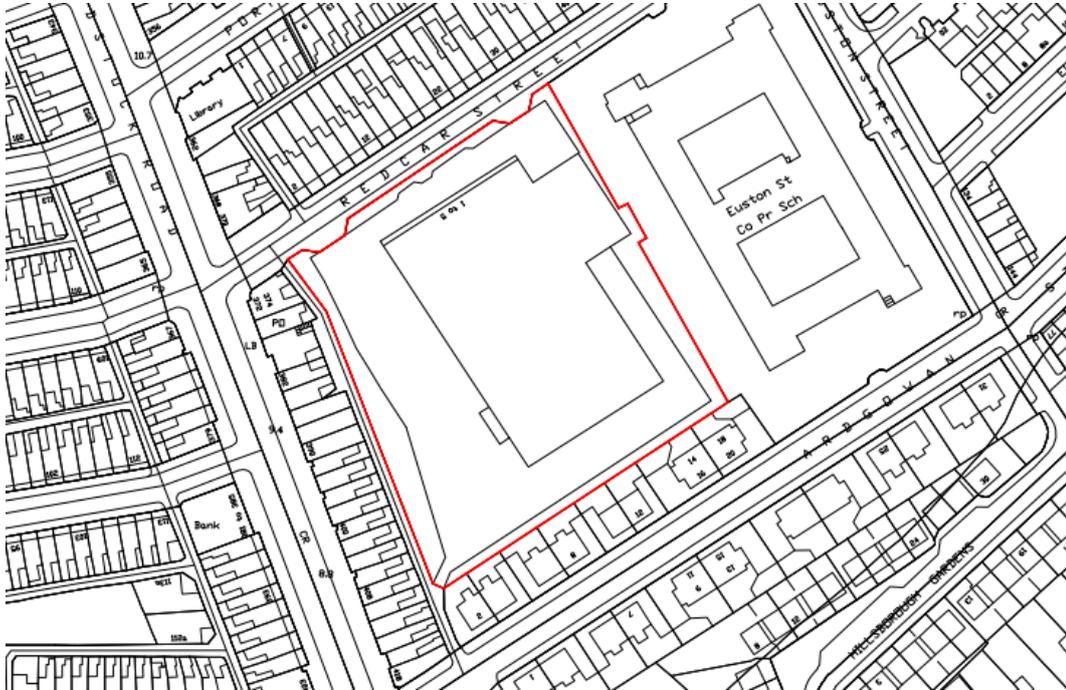
Statutory consultees have raised no objection, however at the time of writing, final comments from NI Water are outstanding. Following advertisement in the local press as well as neighbour notification, 4 letters of objection have been received from 2 nearby residents, raising issues which are detailed in the main report.

Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is approved. Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions, resolve a final consultation response from NI Water and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive.

Case Officer Report

1.0 Drawings

Site Location Plan



Aerial image



2.0	Characteristics of the Site and Area
2.1	The application site comprises a large rectilinear 2-storey vacant commercial/factory building that covers a large proportion of the site, with the remainder used for parking and ancillary purposes.
2.2	The opposite side of the site on Redcar Street is comprised of 2-storey residential dwellings, mostly render with some red-brick. Adjacent to the site is Euston Street Primary School. Most of the surrounding streets contain terraced residential housing with some apartments.
2.3	The nearby Woodstock Road is an arterial route and comprises mixed uses such as retail, hot food etc with some “above the shop” residential uses. The site is approximately 1 mile from Lanyon Place Train Station.
2.4	At present the site is enclosed by a 1.8m wall at the rear bounding Ardgowan Street as well as adjacent to the school. There is currently 2m security fencing onto Redcar Street.
3.0	Description of Proposed Development
3.1	Proposed change of use of vacant warehouse to indoor Padel court facility to include cafe, changing rooms, gym, Picklecourts and ancillary site development works.
3.2	The application when initially submitted included a spa also but this was removed during the assessment and amended plans submitted accordingly.
4.0	Planning Policy
4.1	<p>Development Plan – local development plan</p> <p><u>Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035</u></p> <p>Policy SP1A – Managing growth and supporting infrastructure delivery Policy SP2 – Sustainable development Policy SP3 – Improving health and wellbeing</p> <p>Policy CI1 – Community infrastructure</p> <p>Policy BH1 – Listed Buildings Policy BH5 – Archaeology</p> <p>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)</p> <p>Policy HC1 – Promoting healthy communities Policy GB1 – Green and blue infrastructure network Policy NH1 – Protection of natural heritage resources</p> <p>Policy TRAN1 – Active Travel – Walking and Cycling Policy TRAN2 – Creating an accessible environment Policy TRAN6 – Access to public roads Policy TRAN8 – Car parking and servicing arrangements</p>

4.2	<u>Supplementary Planning Guidance</u>
4.3	Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems Transportation Belfast Agenda (Community Plan) Promoting Healthy Communities Technical Advice Note 1
4.4	Planning Assessment of Policy and Other Material Considerations
4.5	Development Plan – operational policies Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035
5.0	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)
5.1	Regional Planning Policy Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)
5.2	Relevant planning history The most relevant planning history is summarised below. - LA04/2020/1158/F – Demolition of existing building and erection of 65 No Apartments, including 20% social housing – Approved 16 th February 2023
5.3	Consultations and Representations
5.4	Statutory Consultees DAERA: Natural Environment Division – No objection DAERA: Water Management Unit – No objection NI Water: – Awaiting final comments DfI Roads Service – No objection subject to conditions DfC: HED – No objections Non Statutory Consultees BCC: Environmental Health – No objection subject to conditions Representations The application has been neighbour notified and advertised in the local press. Four representations were received which will be considered in the assessment below.
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 until the Local Policies Plan is adopted.
6.5	Operational policies – the Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application. The main policies for consideration in this case are Policies
6.6	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 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. The relevant zonings/designations are set out below. The site is within the development limits of Belfast in the BUAP, and both versions of draft BMAP 2015. The site is zoned as white land in both versions of BMAP as well as BUAP
7.0	Key issues
7.1	The key issues to be considered in the assessment of this application are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Principle of the proposed use - Design - Impact on amenity - Impact on Built Heritage - Climate change - Health Impacts - Access and transportation - Natural heritage - Environmental protection - Wastewater infrastructure -Landscaping
8.0	Principle of development
8.1	The application site is on unzoned land within the development limits as designated in the BUAP and Draft BMAP. The immediate context is residential with a primary school immediately adjacent. The principle of a padel court facility at this location is therefore considered acceptable subject to the material considerations as set out below.
9.0	Design
9.1	The proposal involves internal reconfiguration of the existing building only. There are 7 padel courts; gym area and pickle ball courts proposed on the ground floor with a café area and ancillary pro shop. The proposed second floor contains offices and a staff room as well as a viewing area and changing rooms if needed. The proposal originally included a spa, however the applicant subsequently removed this element.
10.0	Impact on neighbouring amenity
10.1	Representations were received from two nearby residents. The residents detailed concerns with noise from the resultant development, increase in traffic and lack of parking,

	proposed lighting, as well as concerns regarding the operating hours of the proposal and inclusion of a 'sports bar'. A Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) was submitted as part of the application and forwarded to BCC Environmental Health for comments.
10.2	The submitted NIA indicates that operating hours are still to be confirmed, but anticipated to be from approximately 07:00 to 23:00, seven days per week. The noise arising from the padel and pickleball courts was assessed using measurement data from an existing indoor padel facility of a similar size and type. Having considered the assessment of the source noise and the potential for noise breakout, BCC Environmental Health are content that no adverse impact should arise from these activities.
10.3	They note the proposed gym facility may involve the playing of background music, in gyms this often contains a heavy bass beat element. In order to prevent noise breakout therefore, a condition is recommended that the reverberant music noise level in the gym should not exceed 70dB LAeq, 5 min in order to prevent adverse impact to nearby noise sensitive receptors.
10.4	In order to prevent adverse noise impact from the development site as a whole at night, (including parking) a condition has been recommended to restrict operational hours to daytime only 0700-2300 hours.
10.5	Noise from parking was raised as a concern in the representations submitted. Parking has been assessed in the submitted NIA, this activity has been assessed as not presenting any significant impacts due to noise, as such BCC EHO does not have concerns in relation to the onsite parking in association with the development. The additional comments in relation to a 'sports bar' appear to be erroneous as the proposal includes a gym, and cafe but not a public/private bar.
10.6	The supporting information submitted with the application has indicated that the café shall not be provided with a kitchen extract. A condition has been suggested by EHO to limit the café to providing only cuisine which generally does not require extract ventilation to protect nearby residential amenity.
10.7	The proposal is therefore acceptable in terms of Policy ENV1, in that it protects communities from materially harmful development.
11.0	Impact on Built Heritage
11.1	The site is located on the site of the former Castlereagh Laundry (IHR 10532). Comments were invited from HED (Historic Monuments) and they responded with no objections to the proposal. Therefore, the proposal complies with Policy BH5 of the Plan Strategy.
11.2	Similarly, HED (Historic Buildings) confirmed the proposal complies with Policy BH1 of the Plan Strategy in that the nature of the development respects the setting of the Grade B1 listed building adjacent, Euston Primary School.
12.0	Climate change
12.1	Policy ENV2 states that planning permission will be granted for development that incorporates measures to mitigate environmental change and reduce greenhouse gases by promoting sustainable patterns of development. Policy ENV3 states that planning permission will be granted for development that incorporates measures to adapt to environmental change. The proposal consists solely of internal reconfiguration, therefore opportunities to introduce more sustainable external materials for example are limited.
12.2	Various measures are proposed to comply with ENV2 and ENV3 however, for example low water usage fittings will be used throughout the building, as well as low energy LED lighting.

	Most notably the existing structure is to be reused, not demolished and redeveloped. The proposal is considered to comply with policies ENV2 and 3.
12.3	Policy ENV5 states that all built development shall include, where appropriate, SuDs measures to manage surface water effectively on site, to reduce surface water run-off and to ensure flooding is not increased elsewhere. The submission states that the potential for soft SuDS measures are limited since the site is covered by the existing building or hard surfacing already. There are existing strips of landscaping adjacent to Redcar Street and Euston Street PS within the site boundaries. Whilst this is not ideal, it is acknowledged this is a change of use of an existing building and there are constraints due to access and parking, it is considered that on balance the proposal meets the requirements of ENV5 and a condition will be included with regards to the submission of further SUDS measures to be agreed in writing prior to the commencement of operation should approval be granted.
13.0	Health impacts
13.1	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. The site is highly accessible and will provide an addition to community infrastructure that will help contribute to the health and wellbeing of the community over a long-term basis. The proposal is considered to satisfy the requirements of Policy HC1.
14.0	Access and transportation
14.1	The main concern raised within representations is with regards to an increase in traffic and exacerbation of existing parking issues. A Transport Assessment Form was submitted as part of the application initially, and following initial queries from DfI Roads, additional information was provided. The two existing vehicular entrances from Redcar Street are to be used for access and egress. Car parking for 30 cars is proposed within the site. DfI Roads has considered the proposed development and raise no objection subject to conditions. The scale of development and transport implications of the proposal were assessed by DFI Roads and considered to be acceptable.
14.2	The proposal is considered acceptable having regard to Policies TRAN1, TRAN2, TRAN6, and TRAN 8. Transportation considerations in the SPPS are set out at pages 106-110. Policy requirements essentially repeat the provisions of the Plan Strategy and accordingly no conflict arises.
15.0	Natural Heritage
15.1	Policy NH1 relates to the protection of natural heritage resources. Whilst acknowledging receipt of the Biodiversity Checklist DAERA: Natural Environment Division (NED) stated they had no concerns regarding the proposed development having a significant impact on natural heritage interests, and made reference to the Wild Bird Standing Advice.
16.0	Environmental Protection
16.1	As stated previously the site is on the grounds of a former laundry. Whilst supporting information has not been presented with regard to the potential for contaminated land, no breaking of the floor slab is envisaged for the development, and as such there is not an obvious source pathway for any potential contamination. BCC EHO have recommended a condition to be included however should unforeseen contamination is discovered as part of the development works.

17.0	Wastewater infrastructure
17.1	Policy SP1A requires that necessary infrastructure is in place to support new development. NI Water initially recommended the proposal be refused due to network capacity issues and suggested the applicant to engage directly with them and they may be able reconsider their recommendation. The response did however state there is available capacity at the Wastewater Treatment Works (WWTW).
17.2	Following the Applicant's direct engagement NI Water, the proposed spa was removed from the submission. A Solution Engineer Report was completed by NI Water which detailed a solution for the applicant to consider. The Agent for the application has indicated that the drainage consultant has been engaging with NI water. At the time of writing NI Water's final response is outstanding and delegated authority is sought to resolve same, subject to no substantive matters being raised.
17.3	DAERA: Water Management Unit (WMU) also highlighted concerns with respect to sewage disposal and suggested this should be agreed in writing with NI Water or a Consent to Discharge granted prior to commencement of development. At the time of their response no comments had been received from NI Water but they confirmed if NI Water confirms that the WWTW, and associated sewer network can accept the sewage loading with no adverse effect on the WWTW or sewer network's ability to comply with their Water Order Consents, then Water Management Unit would have no objection to this aspect of the proposal.
18	Landscaping
18.1	The Applicant's Biodiversity Checklist indicates that there will be no removal of trees/mature shrubbery. A condition will be included ensure no trees are removed and to require the submission of a final soft and hard landscaping plan.
10.0	Recommendation:
10.1	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. Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions, resolve a final response from NI Water and deal with any other matters that arise prior to issuing the decision, provided that they are not substantive.
11.0	Draft Conditions:
11.1	<p>1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this permission.</p> <p>Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.</p> <p>2. The rating level (dBLAr,T) from the combined operation of any external plant and equipment associated with the hereby permitted development, must not exceed 44 dBLAr,T during the day time period (07:00 to 23:00) at 1m from the façade of any nearby noise sensitive receptor, when measured and determined in accordance with BS4142:2014+A1:2019 'Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound'.</p> <p>Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the area.</p>

3. The hereby approved development, including any arrangements for servicing and delivery shall not operate/occur outside the hours of 0700-2300 hours daily.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the area.

4. The internal reverberant sound pressure level from amplified music within the gym area of the hereby permitted development must not exceed 70dB LAeq, 5min as per the associated Noise Impact Assessment authored by MCL Consulting referenced P3809 and dated 27th November 2025

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the area.

5. Unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Council, no cooking, other than the preparation of hot beverages or the cooking/reheating of food in a panini machine, toaster, oven or microwave oven may be undertaken on the premises.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the area.

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 contamination has been fully investigated in accordance with current Environment Agency and CIRIA guidance and British Standards.

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

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

7. The use hereby approved shall not become operational until hard surfaced parking areas have been provided and permanently marked in accordance with the approved plan. These facilities shall be permanently retained.

Reason: To ensure acceptable parking facilities on the site.

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 a surface water drainage scheme, which shall incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) principles, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The scheme shall include a programme for implementation of the works and proposals for future maintenance and management. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved SUDS scheme, which shall be retained as such thereafter.

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

9. No development shall commence on site unless a soft landscaping scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The scheme shall include all trees, hedgerows and other planting which are to be retained; a planting specification to include [species, size, position and method of planting of all new trees and shrubs]; and a programme of implementation.

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

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

11. All trees and planting within the site shall be retained unless shown on the approved drawings or subsequent landscape details as being removed following agreement in writing with the Council. 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.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.