

Planning Committee

Development Management Report	
Committee Date: 13 th October 2026	
Application ID: LA04/2026/1160/F and LA04/2026/1161/LBC	
Proposal: Alterations and refurbishment, including construction of new lift to external courtyard	Location: Former City Of Belfast School Of Music 99 Donegall Pass, Belfast, BT7 1DR
Applicant Name and Address: Belfast City Council 9 Adelaide 9-21 Adelaide Street Belfast BT2 8DJ	Agent Name and Address: Edward Quinn 14 Princes Street Dromore BT25 1AY
Referral Route: The application is made by Belfast City Council and on lands to which the Council has an estate (3.8.5 (a) of the Scheme of Delegation)	
Recommendation	Approval
Date Valid:	24 th June 2026
Target Date:	7 th October 2026
Contact Officer:	Ciara Reville, Principal Planning Officer (Development Management)
Summary of Issues: The proposal is to refurbish the existing building and provide a lift to the external courtyard. A Listed Building Consent has been submitted alongside the full application under the reference LA04/2026/1161/LBC. The site is located at no. 99 Donegall Pass. The site is a red brick, three storey B1 listed building. The surrounding area is mixed use with residential, retail, offices and offices. The site is located within the development limit in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 and both versions of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004 and v2014). The site is located within the city centre and an area of Parking Restraint. The main issues relevant to consideration of the application are set out below: - Principle of Development - Design and Impact on Listed Building - Climate Change There are no objections from consultees. There are two letters of support. The proposal will refurbish the listed building which is welcomed and retain it as a community use. The proposed lift will improve accessibility to the building and is located in a position that will not impact the listed building and ensures no demolition is required. Recommendation Having had regard to the development plan, relevant planning policies, and other material considerations, it is considered that the proposal should be approved. Delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control is sought to finalise conditions.	

1.0	Characteristics of the Site and Area
1.1	The site is located at no. 99 Donegall Pass. The site is a red brick, three storey B1 listed building. The surrounding area is mixed use with residential, retail, offices and offices. The site is located within the development limit in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 and both versions of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004 and v2014). The site is located within the city centre and an area of Parking Restraint.
2.0	PLANNING HISTORY
2.1	There are historical applications for the site with the most recent being a 2008 full and listed building consent granted for disabled access.
3.0	PLANNING POLICY
3.1	Development Plan – Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035 <i>Strategic Policies:</i> • Policy SP2 – Sustainable development • Policy SP3 – Improving health and wellbeing • Policy SP5 – Positive placemaking • Policy SD2 – Settlement areas <i>Operational Policies</i> • Policy DES1- Principles of Urban Design • Policy BH1 – Listed Buildings • Policy ENV1- Environmental Quality • Policy ENV 2- Mitigating Environmental Change • Policy ENV 3-Adapting to Environmental Change • Policy ENV 5- SuDS
3.2	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)
3.3	Regional Planning Policy Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) 2nd Edition
4.0	CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS
4.1	Historic Environment Division- No objections with conditions.

4.2	<u>Representations</u> The application has been advertised and neighbour notified, two letters of support were received citing the benefits of bringing the building back into use and the improved accessibility from the proposed lift.
5.0	PLANNING ASSESSMENT
5.1	<u>Main Issues</u> The main issues relevant to consideration of the application are set out below: • Principle of Development • Design and Impact on the Listed Building • Climate Change
5.2	<u>Development Plan Context</u> Section 6(4) of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 states that in making any determinations under the Act, regard is to be had to the local development plan, and the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
5.3	Section 45(1) of the Act states that in determining planning applications, the Council must have regard to the local development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations.
5.4	The Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP) when fully completed will replace the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 as the statutory Development Plan for the city. The Belfast LDP will comprise two parts. Part 1 is the Plan Strategy, which contains strategic and operational policies and was adopted on 02 May 2023. Part 2 is the Local Policies Plan, which will provide the zonings and proposals maps for Belfast and has not yet been published. The zonings and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 remain part of the statutory local development plan until the Local Policies Plan is adopted.
5.5	<u>Operational Policies</u> The Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application. These are listed at paragraph 3.1.
5.6	<u>Proposals Maps</u> Until such time as the Local Policies Plan is adopted, the Council must have regard to the land-use zonings, designations and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (BUAP), both versions of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (v2004 and v2014) (dBMAP) and other relevant area plans. The weight to be afforded to these proposals maps is a matter for the decision maker. It is considered that significant weight should be given to the proposals map in dBMAP 2015 (v2014) given

	its advanced stage in the development process, save for retail policies that relate to Sprucefield which remain contentious. • Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001: The site is located within whiteland. • Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (2004): The site is within the City Centre and an area of Parking Restraint. • Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014): The site is within the City Centre and an area of Parking Restraint.
5.7	It is considered that the proposal is in compliance with the 2nd edition of the SPPS in that the proposed development will not cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance which are considered below. Principle of Development
5.8	Policy CI1 seeks to protect and provide development opportunities for community, health, leisure, nurseries and educational facilities based on local need in line with the projected population growth over the plan period.
5.9	The proposal to refurbish the existing building and provide a lift will ensure the building continues in use as a community facility for music and arts. The continued use of the building is welcomed and in line with Policy CI1. Design and Impact on the Listed Building
5.10	In accordance with Section 91(2) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, the Council has to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the Listed Building and its features of special architectural or historic interest.
5.11	The proposal is to refurbish the existing building and provide a lift to the external courtyard. A Listed Building Consent has been submitted under the reference LA04/2026/1161/LBC.
5.12	The refurbishment works are welcomed and will preserve and restore the building's features of architectural and historical importance. The proposed lift is located on the western elevation and is not viewable from the public realm. The extension to the building to facilitate the lift is considered minor and will not impact the character or the setting of the listed building. There is no associated demolition to facilitate the lift, the proposal utilises the existing openings retaining existing walls.
5.13	DfC Historic Environment Division were consulted and had no objections with conditions.
5.14	The proposal is considered to comply with Policy BH1 and Section 91(2) of the Planning Act and will preserve the listed building and its features of special architectural or historic interest.

5.15	Climate Change Policy ENV 2 states planning permission will be granted for development that incorporates measures to mitigate environmental change and reduce GHG by promoting sustainable patterns of development. ENV 3 states planning permission will be granted for development proposals that incorporates measures to adapt to environmental change, in order to support sustainable and enduring development. ENV 5 states all built development should include, where appropriate, SuDS measures to manage water effectively on site.
5.16	While application does not include any climate change or SuDs measures, the proposal complies with ENV 2 by re-using the existing building and with no external demolition necessary to do so. The proposals do not contain measures to adapt to environmental change or SuDs measures but given the minor nature of the proposals and the restrictions of the listed building this is considered acceptable on balance.
5.17	The proposal complies with Policy ENV 2 and while contrary to Policies ENV 3 and ENV 5 is considered acceptable on balance.
	Neighbour Notification Checked Yes
	Summary of Recommendation Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is approved. Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the conditions and deal with any other matters which may arise.
	DRAFT CONDITIONS 1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this permission. Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. 2. Notwithstanding the submitted details, the following elements of the approved scheme shall not be installed, implemented or carried out unless in accordance with further details which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. i. Provide the colour and finish specification of the cladding to the proposed lift enclosure. ii. Sample of existing timber and metal windows with retrofitted slim profile double glazing. iii. Sample of new timber and metal windows to match existing window type, size, finish and profile with slim profile double glazing.

The works shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the details so approved.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

DRAFT INFORMATIVES

1. Please make sure that you carry out the development in accordance with the approved plans and any planning conditions listed above. Failure to do so will mean that the proposal is unauthorised and liable for investigation by the Council's Planning Enforcement team. If you would like advice about how to comply with the planning permission, you are advised to contact the Planning Service at Belfast City Council at planning@belfastcity.gov.uk.
2. This planning permission includes condition(s) which require further details to be submitted to and approved by the Council. Please read the condition(s) carefully so that you know when this information needs to be provided and approved. It could take a minimum of 8 weeks for the Council to approve the details, assuming that they are satisfactory, and sometimes longer depending on the complexity of the condition. You should allow for this when planning the timeline of your project.
3. The grant of planning permission does not dispense with the need to obtain licenses, authorisations may have been identified by consultees in their response to the application and can be accessed on the Northern Ireland Planning Portal website. The responses from consultees may also include other general advice for the benefit of the applicant or developer. consents or permissions under other legislation or protocols.