

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



**Belfast
City Council**

5th March, 2026

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in hybrid format, both in the Lavery Room, City Hall and remotely, via Microsoft Teams, on Tuesday, 10th March, 2026 at 5.00 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. **Routine Matters**
 - (a) Apologies
 - (b) Minutes
 - (c) Declarations of Interest
2. **Committee Site Visit (Pages 1 - 2)**
3. **Planning Appeals Notified (Pages 3 - 4)**
4. **Planning Decisions Issued (Pages 5 - 26)**
5. **Live Applications for Major Development (Pages 27 - 30)**
6. **Committee Decisions that have yet to issue (Pages 31 - 40)**
7. **Miscellaneous Reports**
 - (a) Planning Performance Framework (Pages 41 - 52)

- (b) Local Applications subject to NI Water Objections (Pages 53 - 58)
- (c) Planning Learning and Engagement Programme - Request for Nominations (Pages 59 - 60)

8. Planning Applications previously considered

- (a) **LA04/2024/0483/F** and **LA04/2024/0480/DCA** - Proposed change of use from Office (B1) and restaurant (Sui Generis) to Hotel comprising of 88 no. bedrooms, two storey rooftop extension, restaurant and bar offerings, gym facilities, including new dormer windows on roof, internal and external refurbishment and alterations, and all associated site works. Part demolition of existing buildings (stripping back of roof, shopfront and other external alterations to facilitate change of use and extension of buildings to hotel use. - 34-44 Bedford Street and 6 Clarence Street (Pages 61 - 92)
- (b) **LA04/2024/0015/F** - Erection of 53 residential units (including 43 dwellings and 10 apartments) including creation of access, internal roads, landscaping and associated works (revised information). - Lands at Cabin Hill, Upper Newtownards Road (Pages 93 - 142)
- (c) ~~**WITHDRAWN:** LA04/2025/0288/F - Retrospective change of use from ground floor taxi passenger terminal, cafe, office and newsagent to a Homeless Centre, Category D1(B). The centre will provide meals, washing and changing facilities and an internal social amenity area for users. The centre will operate Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week from 4:00 pm up until 10:00 pm (Amended Description) - Existing taxi passenger terminal and former retail unit located within 35a King Street~~

9. Planning Applications

- (a) **LA04/2024/0569/O** - Outline planning permission with all matter reserved for independent living (Use Class C1) units and up to 62no. assisted living units (Use Class C3), associated internal access roads, communal open space, revised access from Castleview Road, associated car parking, servicing, amenity space and landscaping and demolition of dwellings at Castleview Road (nos. 2, 4, 6, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28 & 30) and Summerhill Parade (nos. 18, 20 & 22) (amended description). - Stormont Hotel, 587 Upper Newtownards Road BT4 3LP and adjacent properties at Castleview Road (nos. 2, 4, 6, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28 & 30), Summerhill Parade (nos. 18, 20 & 22), and rear of 160 Barnetts Road, Belfast (amended address) (Pages 143 - 164)
- (b) **LA04/2024/0570/F** - Change of use of an 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 (amended plans and description to remove reference to demotion of number 39 Summerhill Park). - Stormont Hotel, 587 Upper Newtownards Road (Pages 165 - 188)

- (c) **LA04/2025/0574/F** - Erection of eight storey building comprising seven floors of grade A office accommodation, ground floor retail / business units together with car parking (15 no. spaces), cycle parking and plant areas: and public realm improvements including dedicated drop-off area to front of building - Surface level car park at lands to east of Lanyon Place Station Mays Meadow (Pages 189 - 208)
- (d) **LA04/2025/1272/F** - Erection of temporary mobile classroom village to facilitate future refurbishment and extension of existing Harberton North Special School, comprising 3 no. 2-storey blocks of temporary classroom accommodation, temporary hard play areas, temporary staff and visitor parking areas, tree removal and landscaping. (Amended Plans) - Harberton North Special School 29a Fortwilliam Park (Pages 209 - 222)
- (e) **LA04/2025/1003/F** - Proposed use of 300 No. Student Bedrooms/Studios as Short Term Let Accommodation outside of term time - 81-107 York Street (Pages 223 - 232)
- (f) **LA04/2025/0973/F** - Retrospective change of use from student accommodation to short term lets accommodation (limited to July & August only) - Bradbury Place 30-44 Bradbury Place (Pages 233 - 242)
- (g) **LA04/2025/0837/F** - Demolition of Mount Masonic Hall, erection of 35 no. social housing units in 2 no. blocks with associated private, shared, communal, and public space, 29 no. private car parking spaces, vehicle and pedestrian access from Park Avenue, improvements to pedestrian steps linking Strandburn Drive to Sydenham Park, and demolition of 1no. garage. - Land of the former Mount Masonic Hall, 45 Park Avenue (Pages 243 - 266)
- (h) **LA04/2025/0594/F** - Change of use from 4 bedroom residential property (C1) with to 5 bed HMO with occupancy of 5 (Sui Generis) - 163 Ballygomartin Road (Pages 267 - 280)
- (i) **LA04/2025/1002/F** - Change of use from 4 bed residential dwelling (C1) to 5 bedroom HMO (suis generis) with occupancy for 5 people - 24 Rutherglen Street (Pages 281 - 294)
- (j) **LA04/2025/1350/F** - Change of Use from 3 bed Dwelling (Class C1) to 5-bed, 5-person HMO (sui generis) - 29 Glencairn Street (Pages 295 - 308)
- (k) **LA04/2025/0463/F** - Proposed change of use of Vacant Warehouse to indoor Padel Court Facility to include, Cafe, Changing rooms, Gym, Picklecourts and ancillary site development works - Decco Ltd 1-5 Redcar Street (Pages 309 - 320)
- (l) **LA04/2025/0951/F** - Proposed 25m monopole with 6no. antennas, 4no. transmission dishes, 2no. equipment cabinets and ancillary development thereto. - Loughside playing fields, Shore Road (Pages 321 - 332)
- (m) **LA04/2025/1692/F** - Extension of existing ballstop fencing from 5m to 8m along three sides. This will total 220m in length. (Amended Proposal Description) - Existing soccer pitch at Marrowbone Millenium Park (approx. 25m north of No. 8 Ardoyne Court), Ardoyne Avenue (Pages 333 - 340)

Planning Committee

PLANNING COMMITTEE SITE VISITS – NOTE OF MEETING

Tuesday 3rd March, 2026

Pre-emptive Committee Site Visit

- **LA04/2025/0837/F** - Demolition of Mount Masonic Hall, erection of 35 no. social housing units in 2 no. blocks with associated private, shared, communal, and public space, 29 no. private car parking spaces, vehicle and pedestrian access from Park Avenue, improvements to pedestrian steps linking Strandburn Drive to Sydenham Park, and demolition of 1no. garage. - **Land of the former Mount Masonic Hall, 45 Park Avenue.**

Members Present: Alderman Rodgers, and
Councillors Anglin, D. Douglas, S. Douglas and
Groogan.

Officers in Attendance: Ms. L. Walshe, Principal Planning Officer; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Committee Services Officer.

The Members and the officers convened at Park Avenue (12.15 p.m.) the for the purpose of undertaking the site visit in respect of the above application and to allow the Members to acquaint themselves with the location and the proposal at first hand.

The Members viewed the site with the proposed plans.

The visit concluded at 12:35 p.m.

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Agenda Item 3

PLANNING COMMITTEE – 17 FEBRUARY 2026

APPEALS NOTIFIED

COUNCIL: BELFAST

ITEM NO 1 PAC REF: 2025/A0126
PLANNING REF: LA04/2025/0122/F
APPLICANT: Philip Tera Developments Ltd
LOCATION: Lands Between 14 and 16 Lancedean Road, Belfast, BT6 9QP
PROPOSAL: Demolition of 4 no. garages and erection of 2 no. semi-detached dwellings, part 2 storey part 3 storey

PROCEDURE:

ITEM NO 2 PAC REF: 2025/E0072
PLANNING REF: LA04/2022/0410/CA
APPLICANT: Peter Tobin
LOCATION: Land at 20 Brown Street, Town Parks, Belfast, BT13 2GN
PROPOSAL: Alleged unauthorised change of use of 20 Brown Street, Town Parks, Belfast, BT13 2GN, from a dwelling house to short term let accommodation without the benefit of planning permission

PROCEDURE:

ITEM NO 3 PAC REF: 2025/A0127
PLANNING REF: LA04/2025/0040/F
APPLICANT: Richard Gorman
LOCATION: 58 & 58A Belmont Church Road, Belfast, BT4 3FG
PROPOSAL: Retrospective outbuildings and boundary fences and demolition of existing outbuildings

PROCEDURE:

ITEM NO 4 PAC REF: 2025/A0131

PLANNING REF: LA04/2024/0624/F

APPLICANT: Ashley Hunter

LOCATION: 107 Orangefield Road, Belfast, BT5 6DD

PROPOSAL: Retrospective erection of timber fence, stone gabion walls, including proposed planting, level changes and all associated site works

PROCEDURE:

APPEAL DECISIONS NOTIFIED

No new decisions received

Planning decisions issued February 2026 - No. 128

<u>Application number</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Decision</u>
LA04/2025/0361/F	LOC	6-8 Greenwood Avenue Belfast, Belfast, BT4 3JJ	Change of use of existing warehouse storage to provide additional veterinary facilities to existing surgery and elevational changes.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1469/F	LOC	Lands approx 20m east of No. 30 Stockmans Way, Belfast, BT97ND	The installation of a 20m high Monopole accommodating 6No. Antennas, 3No. RRUs, and 1No. 0.3m Transmission Dish. Proposed ancillary development on in the form of the installation of 2No. equipment cabinets.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1506/F	LOC	4 Trassey Close, Belfast, BT6 0DY	Single storey extension to rear. Demolition of existing rear wall and lean to structure. Removal of rear window and door.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1694/F	LOC	Woodlands Playing Fields, Finaghy Road North, Belfast	The installation of 7 x Ballstop Systems @ 30m x 12m high.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1799/A	LOC	Lands directly south of Titanic Belfast and north-west of Hamilton Dock located off Queens Road, Belfast (Hamilton Dock hotel)	Erection of signage for hotel development approved under planning permission LA04/2023/3442/F, comprising 4 no. internally illuminated projecting signs to hotel elevations, 2 no. internally illuminated projecting signs to car park wall, and 1 no. totem wayfinding sign adjacent to the eastern elevation.	Consent Granted
LA04/2025/1932/F	LOC	7 Weavershill Mews, Belfast, BT14 8QN	Replacement roof and minor refurbishment works	Permission Granted

LA04/2025/1931/F	LOC	13 Mountainhill Walk, Belfast, BT14 8PD	Demolition of chimney stack, replacement roof and minor refurbishment works	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1823/DC	LOC	28 Malone Park, Belfast, BT9 6NJ	Discharge of condition 10 LA04/2019/1819/F- Construction Environmental Management Plan	Condition Discharged
LA04/2025/1907/F	LOC	1 Trostan Way, Belfast, BT11 8GT	Single storey rear extension	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/2193/NMC	LOC	Mountainview Centre Norglen Gardens, Belfast, BT11 8EL	NMC to LA04/2023/2324/F- fenestration and door alterations, internal layout reconfiguration and additional defensible space	Non Material Change Granted
LA04/2026/0002/F	LOC	6 The Green, Belfast, BT17 0EH	Replacement detached garage	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0050/CLOPUD	LOC	17 Orangefield Gardens, Belfast, BT5 6DP	Single storey side extension	Permitted Development
LA04/2022/2164/F	LOC	Lands between Unit 19 and Unit 31 Duncairn Gardens Belfast BT15 2GG	Renewal of Planning Permission LA04/2017/0875/F - Erection of a new 4 storey building, proposed use class B2 and B4 on the ground floor and use class B1 (b) and (c) on the upper floors with demolition of existing two storey building and existing 3.1 metre high metal railings and fence (Amended Description)	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/0768/F	LOC	106 Old Holywood Road , Ballymaghan, BT4 2HL	Single Storey rear extension.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/0891/F	LOC	10 Kings Square, Belfast, BT5 7EA	Change of use from hairdressers to veterinary practice	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1698/F	LOC	29a Hampton Park, Belfast, BT7 3JP	Proposed single storey rear extension and two storey side extension.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1987/F	LOC	97 Orchardville Crescent, Belfast, BT10 0JS	Single storey rear extension and demolition of stand alone garage.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/2045/F	LOC	180a Grosvenor Road, Belfast, BT12 5AU	Change of use: Residential to Short Term Let	Permission Granted

LA04/2025/2084/DCA	LOC	1 Hill Street, Belfast, BT1 2LA	Demolition of toilet units within the existing beer garden area of the premises. No change to external elements.	Consent Granted
LA04/2026/0006/NMC	LOC	8 Upton Avenue, Belfast, BT10 0LU	Side and rear elevational treatment change of proposed extension from white render to red clay facing brick finish. Non material change - LA04/2024/0888/F	Non Material Change Granted
LA04/2022/2036/F	LOC	935-937 Crumlin Road Belfast BT14 8AB.	Mixed use development comprising of retail space on ground floor (extension to existing retail unit) and 8 residential apartments on 1st and 2nd floor.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/0887/PAN	MAJ	Former Belfast Metropolitan College Campus Whiterock Road, Belfast, BT12 7PH	Proposed mixed use development comprising of social housing units (mix of dwellings and apartments) and a new children's centre, car parking, landscaping, open space and all associated site and access works (amendment to planning permission LA04/2024/0122/F).	Proposal of Application Notice is Acceptable
LA04/2025/0982/PRELI M	LOC	Ormeau Park, Belfast	Proposed temporary campsite at Ormeau Park	PAD Concluded
LA04/2025/1166/DC	LOC	Lands at Former Visteon Factory Blacks Road Belfast	Discharge Conditions 3,4,6,7 & 8 of Planning reference: LA04/2017/1489/F : Hydrogeological Risk Assessment and Validation Report	Condition Discharged

LA04/2025/1207/CLOPUD	LOC	55 Cedar Grove, Holywood, BT18 9QG	Single storey extension to the rear of the dwelling.	Permitted Development
LA04/2025/2032/F	LOC	Juice Jar 539 Lisburn Road, Malone Lower, Belfast, BT9 7GQ	Retrospective alterations to shop front	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/2129/WPT	LOC	39 Lancefield Road, Belfast BT9 6LL	1 x Pear tree (Situating in rear garden) Crown reduction in height by circa 2-2.5 meters back to a suitable growth point, reducing the trees canopy, size whilst still retaining the natural form of the tree.	Works to Trees in CA Agreed
LA04/2026/0016/DC	LOC	Former Visteon Factory Blacks Road, Belfast BT10	Noise Verification Reports prepared by Commercial Connections Ltd.	Condition Discharged
LA04/2024/1939/LBC	LOC	103-107 Royal Avenue, Belfast, BT1 1FF	Amendments to existing ground floor entrance doors, including amendments to shop frontage at 103-107 Royal Avenue	Consent Granted
LA04/2025/1043/PAD	LOC	Centre House 69-87 Chichester Street, Belfast, BT1 4JE	Proposed change of use from offices to hotel at 1st to 7th floor including elevational changes to the existing building (176no. bedrooms, breakfast room/ dining room, bar, kitchen, gym and business suite), proposed partial change of use of ground floor from café to retail unit and ancillary space for hotel and office entrance to hotel entrance, construction of a two-storey extension to the Chichester Street Elevation, relocation of plant rooms. Construction of additional plant room and construction of delivery entrance at ground floor.	PAD Concluded

LA04/2025/1339/PAD	LOC	Spórtlann , Coláiste Feirste, Falls Road, BT12 6DD	<p>The proposal is to develop a permanent base for research facilities, public access, and exhibition areas for the growing body of material in the Irish language archive in Belfast. The material is currently held in stewardship by the Trustees of Colaiste Feirste.</p> <p>ARdMackel Architects was commissioned to undertake a study to consider available sites in the weet of the city, and to then consider possible site optios within the grounds of Colaiste Feirste. The emerging, and preferred option, is to locate the archive facility on the roof of the recently constructed sports building. Such location is immediately adjacent to the 1750 former Riddel family home - now used as the administrative base for the school.</p>	PAD Concluded
LA04/2025/1576/F	LOC	43 Queensberry Park, Belfast, BT6 0HN	Single storey side extension.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1696/F	LOC	Existing soccer pitches at Clarendon Playing Fields (approx. 130m south- west of No. 5 Abbeydale Court), Abbeydale Gardens, Belfast.	Installation of 2 No. ballstop systems @ 30m x 6m (high).	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1789/F	LOC	8-10 Winetavern Street, Belfast, BT1 1JQ	Change of use from Betting Office/Bookmakers to Fitness Studio	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1838/F	LOC	21 Lagmore View Way, Belfast, BT17 0FP	Proposed dormer window at rear, velux window on front and window on gable elevation (Amended Description)	Permission Granted

LA04/2024/1208/F	LOC	279 Grosvenor Road, Belfast, BT12 4LL	Change of use from dental practice (D1) to retail (A1) at ground floor and to 2-bedroom apartment at first floor with additional works. (Amended Plans & Description).	Permission Granted
LA04/2024/1505/F	LOC	6 Onslow Parade, Belfast, BT6 0AR	Single storey side extension. Two storey side and rear extension. Dormer window to rear.	Permission Granted
LA04/2024/1594/PAD	LOC	38 - 44 Upper Arthur Street, Belfast, BT1 4GH	Demolition of the existing buildings on 13 Chichester Street and 38 - 42 Upper Arthur Street and the erection a 10/11-storey hotel building with ancillary hospitality uses.	PAD Concluded
LA04/2024/1836/F	MAJ	Lands between Ballygomartin Road and Upper Whiterock Road and to the west (rear) of Moyard Parade and New Barnsley Crescent, Belfast Co. Antrim BT13 3QZ	Proposed development of new walking trails linking Black Mountain Shared Space Project building (approved under LA04/2022/0853/F) on the Ballygomartin Road with the Upper Whiterock Road and Moyard Parade. Proposal to include gated accesses, stockproof fencing, seated areas, information signage, landscaping and associated site works.	Permission Granted
LA04/2024/1918/A	LOC	520a Shore Road, Belfast, BT15 4HF	Facade mounted high level sign, facade mounted signage board & new canopy mounted signage (Retrospective).	Consent Granted

LA04/2025/0004/F	LOC	Ground and 1st floor 3 Edward Street and 20 Talbot Street St Anne's Square Belfast, BT1 2LR	Extension of hotel (sui generis) comprising change of use from existing first floor gym (sui generis) to hotel accommodation and change-of use from existing ground floor gym (sui generis) to restaurant, with minor external alterations and ancillary plant. (Amended desc)	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/0624/F	LOC	Shorts Sports & Recreation Club, Hollywood Road, Belfast, BT4 1SL	Development of an indoor padel tennis facility comprising 8no. courts contained within a permanent marquee-building, with parking, landscaping and all associated works.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/0588/DC	LOC	1 Millennium Way, Belfast, BT12 7AL	Discharge of condition 5 of LA04/2023/2861/F -Soft landscaping scheme.	Condition Not Discharged
LA04/2025/0628/DC	LOC	Apartment 52 (5th floor), Citygate, 2 Sussex Place, Belfast, BT2 8LN	Discharging of conditions 1 & 2 LA04/2022/0451/F-Management Plan and Permanent residence	Condition Discharged
LA04/2025/0827/CLOPUD	LOC	277 Cavehill Road, Belfast, BT15 5EY	Erection of storage for adapted mobility scooter under permitted development rights pertaining to 277 Cavehill Road.	Application Required
LA04/2025/0722/F	LOC	171, 173 and 175 Albertbridge Road, Ballymacarret, Belfast, BT5 4PS	Proposed demolition of existing buildings and erection of 3no.(2.5 storey) dwellings along with associated development	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/0880/F	LOC	Ground floor, Lagan House, 19 Clarendon Road, Belfast	Change of use from office (Use Class B1(a) to police station (sui generis) with internal reconfiguration and erection of external storage building.	Permission Granted

LA04/2025/1109/F	LOC	Edwards & Co 28 Hill Street, Belfast, BT1 2LA	Change of Use of Ground Floor Office (B1) to facilitate an extension to adjoining Public House (The Duke of York) with elevational changes, upper floors remaining in office use.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1110/DCA	LOC	Edwards & Co 28 Hill Street, Belfast, BT1 2LA	Removal / demolition of external render and internal walls to accommodate change of use.	Consent Granted
LA04/2025/1144/F	LOC	53 Springfield Road, Belfast, BT12 7AD	Change of use from 4 bed dwelling to 5-bed/5-person HMO	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1251/F	LOC	Stormont Dental Care 502 Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3HB	Detached single storey building for ancillary staff facilities in the rear yard of an existing dental surgery and associated site works.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1288/F	LOC	114 Milltown Road, Belfast, BT8 7XP	Erection of a single-storey bungalow with a private garden and secure bicycle storage to support the autonomous living of a person with disabilities	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1334/F	LOC	142 My Ladys Road, Belfast, BT6 8FD	Alteration of Existing 4-Bed HMO to a 5-Bed, 5-Person HMO (amended description)	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1345/F	LOC	McDonalds 233 Shore Rd, Belfast, BT15 3PR	2 No. electric vehicle charging stations.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1387/DC	LOC	7 Laganview Court, Belfast, BT5 4AR	Discharge Condition 1 of application LA04/2021/0201/CA-Management Plan.	Condition Discharged
LA04/2025/1386/DC	LOC	7 Laganview Court, Belfast, BT5 4AR	Discharge of condition 2 of application LA04/2021/0201/CA- room for permanent residential use annotated on plan.	Condition Discharged

LA04/2025/1441/F	LOC	57 College Park Avenue, Belfast, BT7 1LR	Conversion of 3 no. apartments (7 No. Bedrooms) to 4 no. apartments (6 No. Bedrooms) with two storey rear and side extension including first floor terrace.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1489/F	LOC	34 Hawthornden Road, Belfast, BT4 3JW	Demolition of existing single storey rear return and sun room. Removal of 2 existing windows. Single storey extension to the rear and side. Creation of raised patio to the rear.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1569/F	LOC	32 Gibson Park Gardens, Belfast, BT6 9GN	Single Storey Rear/Side Extension. Garage Alterations.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1612/F	LOC	20 Tweskard Park, Belfast, BT4 2JZ	Roof alterations, replacing existing flat roof with pitched roof with velux windows. Removal of chimney. Single storey rear extension to dwelling and garage. Fenestration changes. Addition of Veranda to rear. Creation of new side entrance and steps. Patio extension with associated alterations.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1672/F	LOC	565 Oldpark Road, Belfast, BT14 6QW	Single storey rear extension. New steps to existing patio area.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1686/CLEUD	LOC	20 Whitehall Gardens, Belfast, BT7 3GW	Existing use as short term let	Permitted Development
LA04/2025/1693/F	LOC	Existing soccer pitch at Falls Park (approx. 50m east of No. 47 Norglen Drive), Falls Road, Belfast, BT11 8EL	Spectator fencing around pitch perimeter (1.2m high), 2 no. ballstop systems (20m x 6m high), and spectator hardstanding.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1743/F	LOC	33 Old Cavehill Road, Belfast, BT15 5GT	Single storey rear extension, fenestration changes. New garden shed.	Permission Granted

LA04/2025/1790/A	LOC	Loft Lines 13 Loftlines Way Belfast BT3 9FT	Erection of 2 no. internally illuminated aluminium main site ID signs, 3 no. internally illuminated acrylic, aluminium and stainless-steel site projecting signs, and 2 no. internally illuminated wall mounted aluminium car park signs.	Consent Granted
LA04/2025/1902/CLOPUD	LOC	14 Coolmoyne Park, Belfast, BT15 5HG	Demolition of existing semi-detached house.	Permitted Development
LA04/2025/1952/F	LOC	McClelland House 10 Heron Road, Belfast, BT39LE	Alterations to the 4 elevations of the buildings with new windows, brickworks and block/render. The existing tiled roof will also be replaced with a metal standing seam roof.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1980/DC	LOC	29-33 Bedford Street, Belfast, BT2 7EJ	Discharge conditions 18 & 19 of planning permission LA04/2020/0659/F - External materials and samples	Condition Discharged
LA04/2025/1981/DC	LOC	29-33 Bedford Street, Belfast, BT2 7EJ	Discharge condition 17 of planning permission LA04/2020/0659/F- Public realm landscaping plan	Condition Discharged
LA04/2025/1989/F	LOC	27 Glenshesk Park, Belfast, BT17 9BA	Demolition of existing conservatory to accommodate single storey rear extension with access ramp	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/2014/F	LOC	42 Gilnahirk Park, Belfast, BT5 7DY	Single storey extension to rear	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/2052/F	LOC	5 Clonlee Drive, Belfast, BT4 3DA	Retention of Existing Garden Room	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/2080/F	LOC	6 Earl Haig Gardens, Belfast, BT6 8NS	Demolition of single storey rear extension. New single storey rear extension. Replacement of garage door with window.	Permission Granted

LA04/2025/2120/F	LOC	312 Lagmore Meadows, Dunmurry, Belfast, BT17 0TJ	Proposed 2 Storey extension to side of dwelling. Proposed outdoor supervised enclosed area to rear.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/2236/DETEI A	MAJ	Land bounded by North Street, Union Street, Kent Street and Royal Avenue, Belfast	Please see a copy of the enclosed document titled Request for EIA Screening Determination.	Environmental Statement Not Required
LA04/2026/0003/CLEUD	LOC	33 Clonallon Park, Belfast, BT4 2BZ	Single Storey Rear Extension.	Permitted Development
LA04/2025/2242/WPT	LOC	26 Cleaver Park, Belfast, BT9 5HY	Tree 1 Rowen Diseased tree. cut as necessary. Tree 2 Oak Minor pruning number of dead branches and 1 m crown Reduction. Tree 3 Birch clump of trees. Leaning over at a dangerous angle and large attenuation in even mild wind. Tree 4 Bay Laurel Reduce to 4 m. Tree 5 Ash Sapling Fell Tree 6 Cyprus Coniferous tree. Crown need taken down 3 metre. Tree 7 Apple Reduce by 2 m Tree 8 Apple Reduce by 2m Other shrubs need tidied /pruned. Front Garden Tree 9 Cherry some signs of disease. May need felled. Tree 10 Magnolia reduce by approximately 2 m.	Works to Trees in CA Agreed
LA04/2026/0142/WPT	LOC	17 Cranmore Avenue, Belfast, BT9 6JH	3 x Lime trees - Re-pollard to old previous points. 1 x Copper beach tree - Crown reduction by circa 1-1.5 Meters	Works to Trees in CA Agreed

LA04/2026/0145/PAN	LOC	Lands to the east of Hamilton Road and west 80 Sydenham Road, Belfast	Proposed erection of postal distribution centre with associated staff, fleet and visitor parking; EV-charging points; servicing arrangements; landscaping; site works and access arrangements from Hamilton Road	Proposal of Application Notice is Acceptable
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LA04/2026/0174/WPT	LOC	16 Kings Road, Belfast, BT5 6JJ	<p>Complete prune with crown reductions of approximately 30% (3m), 2x <i>Tilia x europea</i> (Common Lime) at the front of the property to minimise the potential risk of failure, increase the light exposure and reduce the leaf fall/litter, as discussed during our site visit.</p> <p>Complete prune with a crown reduction of approximately 30% (3m), 1x <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> (Sycamore) at the front of the property to minimise the potential risk of failure, increase the light exposure and reduce the leaf fall/litter, as discussed during our site visit.</p> <p>Complete prune with a crown reduction of approximately 30% (3m), 2x <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> (Beech) at the rear of the property, to minimise the potential risk of failure, increase the light exposure and reduce the leaf fall/litter, as discussed during our site visit.</p> <p>Complete prune with a crown reduction of approximately 25%, 1x <i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i> (Tulip) at the rear of the property, to minimise the potential risk of failure, increase light exposure, and reduce leaf fall and litter, as discussed during our site visit.</p>	Works to Trees in CA Agreed
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LA04/2026/0250/WPT	LOC	88 A 88a Malone Road, Belfast, BT9 5HP	<p>One mature Lime (Tilia sp.) located at the front of the property adjacent to the road boundary.</p> <p>Proposed works: Undertake a crown reduction of approximately 2 metres in height and 2 metres in lateral spread, pruning back to suitable growth points in accordance with BS 3998:2010.</p> <p>The reduction will maintain the tree's natural shape and form and will not involve topping or pollarding.</p> <p>Additionally, undertake a light crown thinning (approximately 10–15%) to remove minor crossing, congested and weak growth to improve crown structure and reduce wind loading.</p> <p>All works to be carried out by a suitably qualified arborist in accordance with BS 3998:2010 Tree Work Recommendations</p>	Works to Trees in CA Agreed
LA04/2023/3600/DC	LOC	57-59 & 61-63 Dublin Road, Belfast, BT2 7HE	Request for discharge of condition No. 25 LA04/2020/0761/F - Materials	Condition Not Discharged
LA04/2023/3599/DC	LOC	57-59 & 61-63 Dublin Road, Belfast, BT2 7HE	Request for discharge of condition No. 26 LA04/2020/0761/F- Treatment of gable wall.	Condition Not Discharged
LA04/2023/3854/F	LOC	Land adjacent to no.15 Batley Street, Belfast, BT5 5BW	2 no. terraced in-fill dwellings.	Permission Granted

LA04/2024/1529/F	LOC	53 Castlereagh Place, Belfast, BT5 4NN	Change of use from Use Class C1 Dwelling House to Bed and Breakfast.	Permission Granted
LA04/2024/2077/F	MAJ	Adelaide Business Centre 2-6 Apollo Road, Belfast, BT12 6HP	Proposed change of use from office space (B1) and storage or distribution (B4) to Bowling Alley, Restaurant, Indoor Golf, Children's Soft Play, VR Zone & Amusements, Smoking Area, Car Parking and Associated Site Works. Proposal includes changes to elevations. (Amended Plans Received).	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/0238/F	LOC	Browns, 10 Lelia Street, Belfast, BT4 1GF	Refurbishment of existing Class B4 use at ground floor. conversion of 1st, 2nd and 3rd floor to ancillary offices. Elevational changes to include cladding, formation of additional windows and doors, fire escape staircase, canopies, external improvements and associated works.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/0413/PAD	LOC	Lands circa 55 metres south east of no.4: Lacefield, Upper Newtownards Road, and Lands circa 11 metres east of nos. 3, 4, 6 and 7 Campbell Chase, Hawthornden Way, Belfast	Proposed residential housing scheme along with associated development	PAD Concluded
LA04/2025/0450/F	LOC	19 Belmont Church Road, Belfast, BT4 3FF	Demolition to rear elevation and roof. Single storey rear extension and second floor roofspace extension with rear dormer. (Amended description with drawings remaining unchanged)	Permission Granted

LA04/2025/0495/F	LOC	Catholic Chaplaincy, 28-38 Elmwood Avenue, Belfast, BT9 6AY	Amendments to previously approved scheme Ref. LA04/2022/2040/F - Increase student bedrooms from 41 to 47. Amendments to windows to rear elevations, minor addition to height of stair towers, and the addition of an external fire escape staircase from first floor to ground level to the rear of the building.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/0499/F	LOC	Site at rear of 86 Hawthornden Way, Belfast, BT4 3LA	Renewal of planning permission LA04/2020/1816/F for new dwelling and double garage.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/0508/F	LOC	Footpath in front of 565-575 Antrim Road, Belfast, BT15 3BU	20m high M-Range Pole, along with 6no antennas, 1no dish, 1no GPS module, 4no cabinets, and ancillary development thereto.	Permission Refused
LA04/2025/1139/F	LOC	St Josephs Primary School, 42 Cullingtree Road, Belfast, BT12 4LD	New modular multipurpose accommodation and repositioning of existing mobile unit. (Amended application boundary)	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1245/F	LOC	337 Castlereagh Road, Belfast, BT5 6AB	Change of use from offices (B1) to community veterinary practice (D1). 7no. external wall mounted air-condition / ventilation units. External façade changes, new external shed, railings and additional site works.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1344/F	LOC	5 Cyprus Avenue, Belfast, BT5 5NT	New access on to Cyprus Avenue, with infill of existing rear access and pedestrian access on Sunbury Avenue.	Permission Granted

LA04/2025/1365/F	LOC	103 Old Westland Road, Belfast, BT14 6TE	Single storey side extension.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1559/DC	LOC	146 Parkgate Avenue, Belfast, BT41TJ	Discharge Condition 10 of LA04/2022/0118/F- Tree protection.	Condition Not Discharged
LA04/2025/1610/F	LOC	127 Castlehill Road, Belfast, BT4 3GQ	Single storey rear extension, new steps to rear.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1659/F	LOC	15 Ben Madigan Park, Newtownabbey, BT36 7PZ	Single-storey rear and side extension. Rear Canopy. Fenestration changes. Demolition and replacement of existing front veranda and detached garage. Conversion of garage into livable space. (Amended Description).	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1772/F	LOC	60 Balmoral Avenue, Belfast, BT9 6NY	Proposed loft conversion with front and rear dormer windows and associated site works.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1695/F	LOC	Existing soccer pitch at Dixon Playing Fields (approx. 50m north-east of No. 100 Orby Road), Grand Parade, Belfast	Extension to existing spectator fencing on site, new ball stop system along with pedestrian and vehicular access gates. New kerb line and drainage along car park boundary.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1756/F	LOC	56 Cavehill Road, Belfast, BT15 5BT	Single storey rear extension.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1812/DCA	LOC	60 Balmoral Avenue, Belfast, BT9 6NY	Partial demolition of roof, demolition for windows on rear gable wall including internal demolition	Consent Granted

LA04/2025/1797/F	LOC	33 Malone Park, Belfast, BT9 6NL	Demolition of existing two storey and single storey rear extensions and construction of a new single storey rear extension. Alterations to existing window openings, the introduction of new fenestration, and the construction of a detached garage/ garden room. Installation of solar panels on the roof of the new extension as well as on the flat roof of the garage/garden room.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1798/DCA	LOC	33 Malone Park, Belfast, BT9 6NL	Demolition of existing two storey and single storey rear extensions, to allow for new single storey rear extension, general internal reconfigurations, adjustments to fenestration sizes, and the addition of new windows.	Consent Granted
LA04/2025/1834/F	LOC	7 South Sperrin, Tullycarnet, Belfast, BT5 7HW.	First floor cantilevered side extension, alterations to widen driveway. Creation of hardstanding area to front and 1.8m Timber fence to front and side elevation. (Amended Scheme & Amended Proposal Description)	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1847/F	LOC	337-339 Woodstock Road, Belfast, BT6 8PT	Proposed change of use from offices (Class A2) to 2x 5 bed/ 5 person HMOs (sui Generis) with alterations to the front facade.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1873/F	LOC	64 Kings Road, Belfast, BT5 6JL	Single-storey rear extension. Removal of first floor window. Removal of first floor balcony, replacing with window. Creation of new patio area.	Permission Granted

LA04/2025/1874/DCA	LOC	64 Kings Road, Belfast, BT5 6JL	Removal of brickwork rear external and internal kitchen walls to accommodate new layout. Partial blocking up of 2 no. windows/ patio doors to the rear elevation to accommodate new flat roof.	Consent Granted
LA04/2025/1920/F	LOC	13 Beechgrove Park, Belfast, BT6 0NQ	Single storey rear extension, raised patio and steps to rear, garden store beneath patio and new side window.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1941/F	LOC	453 Ormeau Road, Ormeau, Belfast, BT7 3GQ	Retrospective - outdoor enclosed seating area to front of premises	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1957/DC	LOC	Royal Ulster Agricultural Society The Kings Hall 488-516 Lisburn Road, Malone Lower, Belfast, BT9 6GW	Discharge condition 26 of planning permission LA04/2020/0845/O- Odour abatement	Condition Not Discharged
LA04/2025/2003/F	LOC	Unit 4, 32 Boucher Crescent, Belfast, BT12 6HU	Proposed Change of Use from coffee shop to restaurant including external alterations	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/2002/A	LOC	Unit 4, 32 Boucher Crescent, Belfast, BT12 6HU	2 No. Internally illuminated shop signs, 1 sign on principal elevation and 1 stamp sign on side elevation	Consent Granted
LA04/2025/2089/F	LOC	Hilton Hotel, 4 Lanyon Place, Belfast, BT1 3LP	Works include the removal of existing roof plant. Installation of a new structural frame to carry 8nr new air source heat pumps. Alongside this the existing flat-roof covering will be renewed and insulation upgraded.	Permission Granted

LA04/2025/2047/DC	LOC	Lands West of Monagh By-Pass South of Upper Springfield Road & 30-34 Upper Springfield Road & West of Aitnamona Crescent & St Theresa's Primary School. North and East of 2-22 Old Brewery Lane, Glanaulin, 137-143a Glen Road & Airfield Heights & St Mary's CBG School, Belfast.	Discharge condition 8 of planning permission LA04/2020/0804/F (Verification report)	Condition Partially Discharged
LA04/2025/2067/F	LOC	14 Cicero Gardens, Belfast, BT6 9FZ	Two storey side and rear extension.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/2086/LBC	LOC	East Belfast Network Centre 55 Templemore Avenue, Belfast, BT5 4FG	Proposed installation of 68no. photovoltaic roof panels on 2no. existing inner courtyard facing pitched roofs.	Consent Granted
LA04/2025/2167/DC	LOC	Lands at the Gasworks Northern Fringe site; bounded to the north by McAuley Street Stewart Street and Raphael Street; Cromac Street to the west; the River Lagan and Belfast-Newry railway line to the east; and the Gasworks Business Park to the south.	Discharge of conditions 6 and 12 of LA04/2021/1672/O - verification report (blocks 1 and 3 of site A)	Condition Partially Discharged
LA04/2025/2221/F	LOC	80 Riverdale Park South, Belfast, BT11 9DD	Single storey rear extension.	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0035/LBC	LOC	Loaf Cafe, The Ewart, Bedford Street, Belfast BT2 7GP	Insertion of internal aluminium glazed bi-fold 4-leaf automatic doors with double glazed safety glass	Consent Granted
LA04/2026/0036/DC	LOC	Lands at Plot 4 of Kings Hall Healthcare Village, west of 25 Harberton Park and north of 27 Harberton Crescent	Discharge Condition 11 LA04/2022/0311/F- Window schedule and ventilation.	Condition Discharged

LA04/2026/0071/F	LOC	23 Delhi Parade, Belfast, BT7 3AU	Single storey side and rear extension	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0092/F	LOC	43 Stockmans Lane, Belfast, BT9 7JD	Demolition of existing single storey rear return and build full rear of site area single storey extension to provide bedroom and bathroom, also provide ramped access at front entrance, including widening of entrance door.	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0128/CLEUD	LOC	197 Dunluce Avenue, Belfast, BT9 7AX	Existing House of multiple occupation (HMO)	Permitted Development
LA04/2026/0295/MDPA	LOC	Lands at the Gasworks Northern Fringe site; bounded to the north by McAuley Street Stewart Street and Raphael Street; Cromac Street to the west; the River Lagan and Belfast-Newry railway line to the east; and the Gasworks Business Park to the south.	Clause 6.1 of the Section 76 Agreement associated with planning permission LA04/2021/1672/O- Open Space Management Plan.	Condition Discharged
LA04/2026/0322/WPT	LOC	51 Osborne Park, Belfast, BT9 6JP	Removal of co dominate stemmed tree with included bark. Planted too close to x 2 properties.	Works to Trees in CA Agreed
LA04/2026/0324/WPT	LOC	66 Upper Malone Road, Belfast, BT9 5PD	Tree is extremely large with significant overhang into garden and road, almost touching my home. Concern regarding size and possible damage to my house, risk of injury from branches	Works to TPO Granted
				<u>Total Decisions</u>

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Live Major Applications not previously considered by Committee @ 02.03.26

Number	Application No.	Category	Location	Proposal	Date Valid	Target Date	Status
1	LA04/2023/3799/F	Major	Vacant lands (partial site of the former Wolfhill Flax Spinning Mill) located to the south, of Wolfhill Manor, north of Wolfhill Grove and west of Mill Avenue, Ligoniel Road, Belfast, BT14 8NR	New single storey 10-class based primary school, separate nursery school accommodation and school meals accommodation to facilitate the relocation of St. Vincent De Paul Primary School and Nursery from existing site on Ligoniel Road, Belfast. Proposal includes new pedestrian and vehicular accesses onto Mill Avenue, car parking, covered cycle storage area and hard play areas. Hard and soft landscaping including wildlife walkway, fencing, retaining walls, underground drainage system to include the reinstatement of underground storm sewer and headwall into adjacent DFI River wayleave. Includes temporary contractors compound and all associated site works.	09-Oct-23	06-May-24	Under Consideration
2	LA04/2023/4181/F	Major	Lands comprising the existing Sydenham Wastewater Pumping Station west of Park Avenue, Connswater River and King George V Playing Fields, to the south of the Sydenham By-Pass, east of The Oval football stadium, north and east of Parkgate Gardens and north of Parkgate Crescent, Parkgate Parade and Mersey Street, Belfast	Demolition of existing Wastewater Pumping Station (WwPS) with reinstatement of site as a landscaped area. Construction of a replacement WwPS including associated control building and hardstanding, the raising of site levels, in-channel works, provision of new rising main, other ancillary buildings, the creation of an access road on lands within the King George V Playing Fields to serve the facility, landscaping and other ancillary works. Provision of a temporary working area on lands within the King George V Playing Fields, the creation of a temporary access road from Mersey Street to facilitate construction traffic on lands to the rear of 1-35 Parkgate Gardens, the creation of a temporary footway adjacent to 88 Park Avenue and other ancillary development and landscaping restoration works.	14-Nov-23	11-Jun-24	Under Consideration
Page 27	LA04/2024/0570/F	Major	Stormont Hotel, 587 Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4 3LP	Change of use of an 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 (amended plans and description to remove reference to demolition of number 39 Summerhill Park).	04-Apr-24	31-Oct-24	Under Consideration
4	LA04/2024/0569/O	Major	Stormont Hotel, 587 Upper Newtownards Road BT4 3LP and adjacent properties at Castleview Road (nos. 2, 4, 6, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28 & 30), Summerhill Parade (nos. 18, 20 & 22), and rear of 160 Barnett's Road, Belfast (amended address)	Outline planning permission with all matter reserved for independent living (Use Class C1) units and up to 62no. assisted living units (Use Class C3), associated internal access roads, communal open space, revised access from Castleview Road, associated car parking, servicing, amenity space and landscaping and demolition of dwellings at Castleview Road (nos. 2, 4, 6, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28 & 30) and Summerhill Parade (nos. 18, 20 & 22) (amended description).	04-Apr-24	31-Oct-24	Under Consideration
5	LA04/2024/0910/F	Major	70 Whitewell Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 7ES Site at Hazelwood Integrated College	Redevelopment of Hazelwood Integrated College to include demolition of existing building and development of new school campus, new sports pitch, outdoor play areas, car parking, hard and soft landscaping and retention and refurbishment of the Listed Building (Graymount House) and other associated site works including a temporary mobile village during the construction process.	23-May-24	19-Dec-24	Under Consideration
6	LA04/2024/2024/RM	Major	Royal Ulster Agricultural Society, the Kings Hall, 488-516 Lisburn Road, Belfast, BT9 6GW	41no. retirement living apartments at Plot 6, parking and landscaping in accordance with outline planning permission LA04/2020/0845/O, seeking approval of layout, scale, appearance and landscaping details	18-Dec-24	16-Jul-25	Under Consideration

7	LA04/2024/2145/F	Major	Lands at North Foreshore / Giant's Park Dargan Road, Belfast, BT3 9LZ	Creation of a new Adventure Park comprising a community / visitor hub building including café, creche, flexible exhibition / community space, ancillary office space and maintenance yard. Development includes community gardens, bmx track, crazy golf, dog park, walking/running/cycle paths, outdoor amphitheatre, bio diversity zones, and recreational facilities. Associated landscaping and infrastructure (drainage, lighting, car / coach parking, WC block etc).	15-Jan-25	13-Aug-25	Under Consideration
8	LA04/2025/0012/F	Major	Lands at the Waterworks Park, located off the Cavehill Road; and lands at Alexandra Park, located between Castleton Gardens and Deacon Street; extending along Castleton Gardens and Camberwell Terrace to the road junction approximately 30 metres to the north west of 347 Antrim Road, Belfast, BT15 2HF	<p>Refurbishment and safety work to the Waterworks upper and lower reservoirs, and Alexandra Park Lake reservoir, to be complemented with wider environmental, landscape and connectivity improvements.</p> <p>The reservoir works comprise of a new overflow structure with reinforcement and protection of the return embankment parallel to the by-wash channel at Waterworks Upper reservoir. Repairs to the upstream face of Waterworks Lower reservoir with the addition of wetland planting to reduce the overall capacity of the reservoir. Removal of an existing parapet wall and embankment reinforcement at the Alexandra Park Lake reservoir.</p> <p>Improvements at Waterworks Park comprise the demolition of the existing Waterworks Bothy and replacement with a new building to include public toilets, Changing facilities, multi-purpose community room and kitchenette. Extension to existing Cavehill Road gatehouse building. Entrance improvements, new events space including multipurpose decking; resurfacing of footways; new pedestrian lighting along key routes; a dog park; replacement platforms and viewing area. New 3-on-3 basketball court; replacement surface to existing small sided 3G pitch; and upgrades to existing Queen Mary's playground.</p> <p>Improvements at Alexandra Park include the resurfacing of footways; new pedestrian lighting along key routes; new reinforced grass event space; new lake viewing area; new public toilets and changing places; entrance improvements. 2no existing bridges replaced; new pedestrian entrance; reimagined peace wall; new multi-sport synthetic surface with cover; and upgrades to existing play parks.</p> <p>Streetscape improvements along Camberwell Terrace and Castleton Gardens include resurfacing of footways with new kerbs; resurfaced carriageways and new tactile paving at pedestrian crossings; and all associated works.</p>	20-Dec-24	18-Jul-25	Under Consideration
9	LA04/2024/2134/F	Major	Site of the former Dunmurry Cricket Club, Ashley Park, Dunmurry, Belfast BT17 0QQ, located north of 1-10 Ashley Park and south of 1-20 Areema Grove and Areema Drive, Dunmurry.	Mixed use scheme for new community recreational facilities, including basketball court, parkland and residential development comprising 37no social/affordable housing units with landscaping and associated works.	21-Dec-24	19-Jul-25	Under Consideration
10	LA04/2025/0088/F	Major	Lands adjacent and south west of Monagh By-pass, north west of Nos. 17, 19 and 22 Black Ridge Gardens and c.150 metres south east of Nos. 38 to 70 (evens) Black Ridge View (part of the wider Glenmona mixed-use development), Belfast	Proposed mixed use development (in lieu of the previously approved employment zone under LA04/2020/0804/F) comprising a three storey building of 36 no. Category 1 (over 55's) social housing apartments and 7 no. single storey Class B1/B2 Business/Light Industrial Units. Development includes 2 no. access points, car parking, landscaping and all associated site works	17-Feb-25	15-Sep-25	Under Consideration

11	LA04/2025/0184/O	Major	38-52 Lisburn Road, Malone Lower, Belfast, BT9 6AA	Seven storey building (39.3m AOD) mixed use development comprising of Use Class B1 (c): Business, Research & Development and Use Class, D1: Community and Cultural Uses, including landscaping, parking, and servicing (Amended Description).	10-Feb-25	08-Sep-25	Under Consideration
12	LA04/2025/0574/F	Major	Surface level car park at lands to east of Lanyon Place Station Mays Meadow, Belfast, BT1 3NR	Erection of eight storey building comprising seven floors of grade A office accommodation, ground floor retail / business units together with car parking (15 no. spaces), cycle parking and plant areas: and public realm improvements including dedicated drop-off area to front of building	17-Apr-25	13-Nov-25	Under Consideration
13	LA04/2025/0974/F	Major	Site to the south of the former Knockbreda High School. Lands bounded by the A55 Upper Knockbreda Road to the south and south-east, Wynchurch Road to the north-east, Knockbreda Primary School to the north and Knockbreda Park to the west.	Development of a new primary school building for Forge Integrated Primary School. including development of a nursery unit, hard and soft play areas, landscaping, car parking, internal drop-off areas and new access arrangements onto the A55 Knockbreda Road via a new signalised junction; demolition of no. 138a Knockbreda Park and associated site works	04-Jun-25	31-Dec-25	Under Consideration
14	LA04/2025/1272/F	Major	Harberton North Special School 29a Fortwilliam Park, Belfast, BT15 4AP	Erection of temporary mobile classroom village to facilitate future refurbishment and extension of existing Harberton North Special School, comprising 3 no. 2-storey blocks of temporary classroom accommodation, temporary hard play areas, temporary staff and visitor parking areas, tree removal and landscaping. (Amended Plans)	31-Jul-25	13-Nov-25	Under Consideration
Page 29	LA04/2025/2013/F	Major	Netherleigh House, 1 Massey Avenue, Belfast, BT4 2JP	Change of use of Netherleigh House and existing office block to provide residential and nursing care facilities. Extensions to existing office block including a fourth storey floor, eastern and western gable extension and two front projections from the northern elevation. Erection of 36 no. assisted living apartments over two four storey blocks. Site parking, landscaped amenity areas, woodland trails and all associated site works	18-Nov-25	16-Jun-26	Under Consideration
16	LA04/2025/2018/F	Major	Lands at Donegall Quay, Tomb St. to north of Albert Square, Gamble St. to south of Corporation Sq, Little Patrick St. to east of Nelson St. & under the M3 bridge at Donegall Quay and Corporation St., Belfast, BT1 1AA	Public realm and road improvements including development of urban recreation space below the M3 flyover at Corporation Street / Tomb Street and new public space below the M3 flyover at Donegall Quay.	19-Nov-25	17-Jun-26	Under Consideration
17	LA04/2025/1991/F	Major	Makro, 97 Kingsway, Belfast, BT17 9NS	Subdivision of the existing cash and carry building and the change of use of 4,750 sq,m gross floorspace for use as a Class A1 retail; erection of new loading bay in service yard; minor external alterations to building; reconfiguration of car park.	03-Dec-25	18-Mar-26	Under Consideration
18	LA04/2025/2033/F	Major	The Maynard Sinclair Pavilion Stormont Estate, Belfast, BT4 3TA	Variation of conditions, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 24, 25 and 27 of planning approval LA04/2023/2459/F to allow for phasing of the development.	12-Dec-25	27-Mar-26	Under Consideration
19	LA04/2025/2113/F	Major	St. Marys Christian Brothers Grammar School St Marys Christian Brothers Grammar School 147a Glen Road, Andersonstown, Belfast, BT11 8NR	The construction of a new Sports Hall, Gymnasium and P.E Facility and footbridge connecting to existing GAA playing field	09-Dec-25	07-Jul-26	Under Consideration

20	LA04/2026/0007/F	Major	Lands at Belfast YMCA, Knightsbridge Park, Stranmillis, Belfast. To the east of Nos. 15; 17; 19; 25; 27; 29; and 35 Knightsbridge Manor. South of Nos. 26 to 34 (evens) Knightsbridge Manor, Nos. 65; 66; and 68 Vauxhall Park, and Nos. 15 and 17 Marylebone Park. West of Nos. 35 and 38 Sharman Drive, and Nos. 39 and 42 Sharman Park, Belfast	Proposed mixed-use development comprising 3G playing pitch with floodlighting; Children's Play Area; Trim Trail; Car Parking; and 24 No. Dwelling Units including a mix of detached, semi-detached and apartment house types. The development also includes site access, internal roads, landscaping and pumping station and all other associated site and access works.	17-Dec-25	15-Jul-26	Under Consideration
21	LA04/2025/2215/F	Major	Halifax Building, 24 Cromac Place, Building, BT7 2JB	Proposed change of use from offices to nursing home comprising 156 no. bedrooms, ancillary scanning unit and all associated accommodation including dining/ café areas, day rooms and lounges, hairdressers, cinema rooms, treatment rooms and internal courtyard. The proposal also includes ancillary offices, landscaping, cycle parking, external alterations and all other site and associated works.	19-Dec-25	17-Jul-26	Under Consideration
Page 30	LA04/2025/2210/O	Major	Lands to the east of Corporation Street, north of Donegall Quay, west and south of Clarendon Dock, south, east and south west of Pilot Street, and south and south east of Corry Road, Belfast (amended address)	Hybrid planning permission is being sought for the following development: Outline Planning Application (no matters reserved) for Plots A & B to provide 456No. residential units (apartments) and 1,600sqm of ground floor commercial uses including retail (Class A1), Financial and Professional (Class A2), Community and Cultural Uses (Class D1), Assembly and Leisure (Class D2), and café, bar and restaurant uses, landscaping, open space, play equipment, public realm improvements and all associated site and access works including servicing from Corporation Street. Outline Planning Application (all matters reserved) for Plots C, D, E and F for a mixed-use development comprising residential (apartments and dwellings), a Hotel/Apart Hotel, ground floor commercial uses including retail (Class A1), Financial and Professional (Class A2), Community and Cultural Uses (Class D1), Assembly and Leisure (Class D2), and café, bar and restaurant uses, the change of use (principle only) to the listed Clarendon Building, Furnace House and Pump House (to include cafe and restaurant uses), re-purposing of Clarendon Dock for leisure uses and all associated site, access and infrastructure works.	27-Jan-26	25-Aug-26	Under Consideration
23	LA04/2026/0008/F	Major	468-472 Castlereagh Road, Belfast, BT5 6RG	Demolition of existing structures on site and erection of purpose built padel facility comprising 8no. padel courts and ancillary uses to include café, changing facilities and recovery studio and all other associated site and access works.	22-Dec-25	20-Jul-26	Under Consideration
24	LA04/2026/0282/F	Major	29-33 Bedford Street, Belfast, BT2 7EJ	Renewal of application reference LA04/2020/0659/F - Refurbishment of existing four storey terrace including alteration, extension to rear, partial demolition and reinstatement. Part change of use from art galleries to two cafes at ground floor. Retention of offices within existing building at second, third and fourth floor. Erection of new 13 storey aparthotel building to rear and associated works including public realm improvements	13-Feb-26	11-Sep-26	Under Consideration

Planning Applications Discussed at Committee Between 01 Apr 2019 and 02 Mar 2026

Decision Description	Totals
	23
Application Withdrawn	
Consent Granted	
Consent Refused	
Permission Granted	6
Permission Refused	
Total	29

Application No.	Location	Proposal	Category	Date Valid	Statutory Target Date	Statutory Target Weeks	Current number of Weeks	Committee Date	Weeks between Valid date and Comm date	Weeks Since Committee	Previous New Non-statutory Target Date	New Non-statutory Target Date	Reason decision not issued
LA04/2022/2059/F Page 31	Lands south of 56 Highcairn Drive Belfast BT13 3RU Site located at junction between Highcairn Drive and Dunboyne Park Belfast.	Social Housing Development comprising of 12 no. 3p/2b semi-detached dwelling houses with incurtilage parking and associated site works. (amended description and site location plan)	LOC	04-Nov-22	17-Feb-23	15	174	29/06/2023	33	139	28/02/2026	31/03/2026	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement - land ownership issues on the applicant's side
LA04/2024/0483/F	34-44 Bedford Street and 6 Clarence Street, Belfast	Proposed change of use from Office (B1) and restaurant (Sui Generis) to Hotel comprising of 88 no. bedrooms, two storey rooftop extension, restaurant and bar offerings, gym facilities, including new dormer windows on roof, internal and external refurbishment and alterations, and all associated site works.	MAJ	19-Mar-24	15-Oct-24	30	102	15/10/2024	30	71	Unknown	31/03/2026	Section 76 Agreement not completed on applicant's side - to be reported to March 2026 Committee with recommendation to secure Employability and Skills by condition instead

LA04/2024/0480/DCA	34-44 Bedford Street and 6 Clarence Street, Belfast	Part demolition of existing buildings (stripping back of roof, shopfront and other external alterations to facilitate change of use and extension of buildings to hotel use.	LOC	29-Mar-24	12-Jul-24	15	101	15/10/2024	28	71	Unknown	31/03/2026	See above
LA04/2024/0369/F	Lands at Former Monarch Laundry site, and Broadway Hall Site, No's 451 - 457 Donegall Road, Belfast, BT12 6HD.	Proposed Specialist Nursing and Residential Care Facility comprising approximately 158 no. beds, day/dining rooms, treatment rooms, staff rooms, office/store rooms, including car parking provision, cycle parking, refuse storage, landscaping, and associated site and access works.	MAJ	08-Feb-24	05-Sep-24	30	108	12/11/2024	39	67	Unknown	30/04/2026	Development commenced without planning permission - applicant required to submit revised contamination information. Contamination issues now resolved. S76 Agreement requires to be revisited due to delays on applicant's side
LA04/2023/2557/F	Lands East of Meadowhill, North of Glencolin Court, North and East of Glencolin Rise, East of Glencolin Grove, North and West of Glen Road Rise, and North of Glen Road Grove. Belfast.	260 no. dwellings, children's play area and other ancillary and associated works.	MAJ	24-Feb-23	22-Sep-23	30	158	10/12/2024	93	63	28/02/2026	31/03/2026	S76 Agreement nearly agreed following previous issues.

LA04/2024/1036/F	Lands to the east of the River Lagan located between Lagan Gateway Phase 1 and Belvoir Park Forest, running adjacent to the west of Belvoir Park Golf Club and approximately 120 metres to the east of Newtownbreda Water Treatment Plant, Galwally Ave, Belfast BT8 7YA.	Lagan Gateway Phase 2 – Proposed greenway connection extending between Lagan Gateway Phase 1 at Annadale Embankment to Belvoir Forest Park. Comprising compacted gravel paths; a new elevated (4-5 meter high) timber boardwalk (approximately 85m long); landscaping works, new cycle stands, bollards, seats and bins; and all associated works	LOC	10-May-24	23-Aug-24	15	95	17/06/2025	57	36	Unknown	Unknown	Further information requested from applicant following request from DAERA NIEA
Page 33 LA04/2023/4543/F	885 Shore Road, Belfast, BT36 7DH	Proposed new changing pavilion, enhancing grounds entrances including turnstiles, ancillary facilities and upgrade to existing car park. Proposed 3G surfacing to existing grass pitch with flood lighting.	LOC	01-Feb-24	16-May-24	15	109	17/06/2025	71	36	Unknown	Unknown	Information provided by agent and DAERA: NED reconsulted on 17.02.26

LA04/2025/0535/F	Lands West of Monagh By-Pass South of Upper Springfield Road & 30-34 Upper Springfield Road & West of Aitnamona Crescent & St Theresa's Primary School. North and East of 2-22 Old Brewery Lane, Glanaulin, 137-143a Glen Road & Airfield Heights & St Mary's CBG School Belfast	Variation of conditions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11, 14, 17, 18, 19, 36, 37 and 41 of approval LA04/2023/2390/F and LA04/2020/0804/F to facilitate removal of 31 previously approved dwellings and retaining structure along northern boundary of site adjacent to Upper Springfield Road. Retention of existing sloping ground levels and landscaping at this location.	MAJ	27-May-25	23-Dec-25	30	40	17/06/2025	3	36	31/01/2026	28/02/2026	Awaiting conclusion of S77 agreement (amendment to S76 agreement). Applicant to address issues raised by DfI Roads
Page 34 LA04/2024/1865/O	Land between No 22 Squires View and Nos 57 & 59 Squires Hill Road, Belfast.	3no. detached dwellings part 2 storey part 3 storey (amended plans)	LOC	28-Oct-24	10-Feb-25	15	70	12/08/2025	41	28	28/02/2026	30/04/2026	Late objections received. Additional information recently received from applicant regarding land stability issue. To be reported back to Committee
LA04/2024/1654/F	432 Falls Road, Belfast, BT12 6EN	Change of use from a 7-bedroom dwelling house (C1) to a 7 bed/ 9 person House of Multiple Occupancy (Sui Generis)	LOC	21-Oct-24	03-Feb-25	15	71	12/08/2025	42	28	28/02/2026	31/03/2026	Gathered additional information to support refusal reason. Decision to issue shortly

LA04/2024/0626/F	1 Havelock House Havelock Place, Ormeau, Belfast, BT7 1EB .	Erection of 104no. social rented residential units (comprising a mix of General Social Housing and Category 1 over 55's accommodation) across two detached blocks [ranging between 3 and 5 storeys], landscaping, communal and private amenity space, ancillary cycle and car parking provision, and other associated site works	MAJ	17-Apr-24	13-Nov-24	30	98	11/11/2025	81	15	28/02/2026	31/03/2026	S76 Agreement close to agreement following resolution of issues. Decision expected to be issued soon.
LA04/2025/1454/F	The Lockhouse 13 River Terrace Belfast BT7 2EN	New community wellbeing centre and cafe extension to existing lockhouse building	LOC	17-Sep-25	31-Dec-25	15	24	09/12/2025	11	11	28/02/2026	28/02/2026	Awaiting outstanding consultation responses
LA04/2025/1693/F	Existing soccer pitch at Falls Park (approx. 50m east of No. 47 Norglen Drive), Falls Road, Belfast, BT11 8EL	Spectator fencing around pitch perimeter (1.2m high), 2 no. ballstop systems (20m x 6m high), and spectator hardstanding.	LOC	21-Oct-25	03-Feb-26	15	19	20/01/2026	13	5			Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1694/F	Woodlands Playing Fields, Finaghy Road North, Belfast	The installation of 7 x Ballstop Systems @ 30m x 12m high.	LOC	07-Jan-26	22-Apr-26	15	8	20/01/2026	1	5			Permission Granted

LA04/2025/1695/F	Existing soccer pitch at Dixon Playing Fields (approx. 50m north-east of No. 100 Orby Road), Grand Parade, Belfast	Extension to existing spectator fencing on site, new ball stop system along with pedestrian and vehicular access gates. New kerb line and drainage along car park boundary.	LOC	22-Oct-25	04-Feb-26	15	19	20/01/2026	12	5			Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1696/F	Existing soccer pitches at Clarendon Playing Fields (approx. 130m south-west of No. 5 Abbeydale Court), Abbeydale Gardens, Belfast.	Installation of 2 No. ballstop systems @ 30m x 6m (high).	LOC	22-Oct-25	04-Feb-26	15	19	20/01/2026	12	5			Permission Granted
Page 36 LA04/2024/2077/F	Adelaide Business Centre 2-6 Apollo Road, Belfast, BT12 6HP	Proposed change of use from office space (B1) and storage or distribution (B4) to Bowling Alley, Restaurant, Indoor Golf, Children's Soft Play, VR Zone & Amusements, Smoking Area, Car Parking and Associated Site Works. Proposal includes changes to elevations. (Amended Plans Received).	MAJ	29-Jan-25	27-Aug-25	30	57	20/01/2026	50	5			Permission Granted

LA04/2024/1836/F	Lands between Ballygomartin Road and Upper Whiterock Road and to the west (rear) of Moyard Parade and New Barnsley Crescent, Belfast Co. Antrim BT13 3QZ	Proposed development of new walking trails linking Black Mountain Shared Space Project building (approved under LA04/2022/0853/F) on the Ballygomartin Road with the Upper Whiterock Road and Moyard Parade. Proposal to include gated accesses, stockproof fencing, seated areas, information signage, landscaping and associated site works.	MAJ	25-Nov-24	23-Jun-25	30	66	20/01/2026	60	5			Permission Granted
Page 37 LA04/2024/1389/F	Newhill Youth and Community Centre, 261 Whiterock Road, Belfast, BT12 7FX	Community garden and improvements to existing unused space, scheme to include multi-use play-court, allotment area, pizza and BBQ area and pathways.	LOC	07-Oct-24	20-Jan-25	15	73	17/02/2026	71	1	N/A	31/03/2026	Decision to be issued
LA04/2025/0605/F	341-345 Albertbridge Road, Ballymacarret, Belfast, BT5 4PY	Erection of a four storey building to create 29no. short-term let accommodation units with ancillary roof-mounted solar panels	LOC	09-Apr-25	23-Jul-25	15	47	17/02/2026	44	1	N/A	TBC	Application reconsidered at February 2026 Committee

LA04/2025/1716/F	Santander House, 1 Mays Meadow, Belfast, BT1 3PH	Proposed change of use from, Use class B1(a) office, to short term Transitional Care Unit, Use Class C3 b) comprising of 73 no. ensuite beds, associated ancillary facilities including café, rehabilitation suites and treatment rooms, laboratory, consulting rooms, 2 no. external terraces and all other ancillary, staff and storage rooms. Development includes ambulance drop off bay, replacement of existing windows, and all other associated site and access works.	MAJ	05-Nov-25	03-Jun-26	30	17	17/02/2026	14	1	N/A	31/03/2026	Decision to be issued
LA04/2025/1896/F	Former Belfast Metropolitan College Campus Whiterock Road, Belfast, BT12 7PH	Proposed mixed use development comprising of 77 No. social housing units (mix of 26 dwellings and 51 apartments) and a new children's centre, car parking, landscaping, open space, access and all associated site works including the installation of a new substation.(amendment to planning permission ref: LA04/2024/0122/F).	MAJ	06-Nov-25	04-Jun-26	30	17	17/02/2026	14	1	N/A	31/03/2026	Awaiting consultation response from Environmental Health

LA04/2025/2183/F	Units 2a and 2b 38 Boucher Road, Belfast, BT12 6HR	Removal of conditions 14 and 15 from the permission referenced LA04/2024/0714/F (Contamination)	MAJ	18-Dec-25	16-Jul-26	30	11	17/02/2026	8	1	N/A	31/03/2026	Decision to be issued
LA04/2025/2216/LBC	Ulster Hall, 30 Bedford Street, Belfast, BT2 7FF	Installation of Facade Lighting	LOC	19-Dec-25	03-Apr-26	15	11	17/02/2026	8	1	N/A	31/03/2026	Decision to be issued
LA04/2025/0288/F	Existing taxi passenger terminal and former retail unit located within 35a King Street, Belfast, BT1 1HU.	Retrospective change of use from ground floor taxi passenger terminal, cafe, office and newsagent to a Homeless Centre, Category D1(B). The centre will provide meals, washing and changing facilities and an internal social amenity area for users. The centre will operate Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week from 4:00 pm up until 10:00 pm (Amended Description)	LOC	11-Mar-25	24-Jun-25	15	51	17/02/2026	49	1	N/A	31/03/2026	Deferred for outstanding Environmental Health consultation response
LA04/2025/1135/F	57 Knock Eden Park, Belfast, BT6 0JG	Demolition of first floor rear return, first floor rear extension and additional site works	LOC	18-Jul-25	31-Oct-25	15	33	17/02/2026	30	1	N/A	31/03/2026	Decision to be issued

LA04/2024/0015/F	Lands at Cabin Hill, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4	Erection of 53 residential units (including 43 dwellings and 10 apartments) including creation of access, internal roads, landscaping and associated works (revised information).	MAJ	05-Dec-25	03-Jul-26	30	13	17/02/2026	10	1	N/A	31/03/2026	Deferred at February 2026 Committee for further information
LA04/2023/2633/F	St Teresa's GAC, 2 Glen Road Heights, Belfast BT11 8ER	Proposed extension to existing clubhouse to provide indoor sports hall, changing rooms, reception, and fitness suite. Proposed relocation of grass pitch and new 3G training pitch with integrated ball walls. Proposed annex building with club store and matchday shop. Site works including increased parking, fencing, catch nets, floodlighting, dugouts, paths, and other associated amenities.	MAJ	14-Mar-23	10-Oct-23	30	155	17/02/2026	153	1	N/A	31/03/2026	Consultation response from SES awaited. Conditions to be finalised
LA04/2022/0809/F	Lands to the south and west of Woodland Grange to the north of Blacks Gate and to the east of Moor Park Mews Belfast.	Amendments to approved schemes ref. Z/2008/0993/F (erection of 53 No. dwellings) & ref. Z/2013/0120/F (erection of 46 No. dwellings); to reduce overall density from 99 No. dwellings to 92 No. dwellings and associated and ancillary works.	MAJ	21-Apr-22	17-Nov-22	30	202	17/02/2026	199	1	N/A	31/03/2026	Awaiting execution of S76 Agreement



Subject:	Draft Planning Service Performance Framework
Date:	10th March 2026
Reporting Officer(s):	Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control
Contact Officer(s):	Ciara Reville, Principal Planning Officer (Development Management) Mark Whitaker, Acting Principal Planning Officer (Development Planning and Policy)

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	No
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
<p>After Committee Decision</p> <p>After Council Decision</p> <p>Some time in the future</p> <p>Never</p>	

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	This report sets out a new Planning Performance Framework that provides for the regular reporting of the performance and continuous improvement actions of Belfast's Planning Service.
1.2	It is intended that a performance report for the Planning Service will be produced on a yearly basis in line with the Performance Framework and that the Framework will bring a more formal structure to the performance management of the Service.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the contents of the Performance Framework (Appendix 1) and the intention to bring a Performance report to a subsequent Committee.

3.0	Main Report
3.1	Belfast City Council's Corporate Plan 2025–2028 sets out how the Council will deliver the priorities of the Belfast Agenda, with a focus on building a sustainable, inclusive economy and a fair society. It also outlines the Council's vision, values and priorities for the city.
3.2	<p>The Planning Service sits within the Department of Place and Economy, whose objective is to provide an effective and efficient planning service. The Departmental Plan includes the following performance measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver planning services including customer advice, pre-application discussions, planning application processing, Tree Preservation Orders, and enforcement. • Monitor delivery of the Local Development Plan Strategy and produce the Local Policies Plan (LPP). • Establish a Belfast Planning Partnership with agents, architects and developers to improve planning processes and support regional reform. • Progress preparation of the LPP, including local planning policies and land-use zonings aligned with the Eastern Transport Plan. • Key Performance Indicators (statutory): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Average processing time for major applications: 30 weeks ○ Average processing time for local applications: 15 weeks ○ % of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks
3.3	<p>Since planning powers transferred to councils in 2015, Belfast City Council's Planning Service has continually worked to improve performance. Members will recall several improvement actions over the past decade, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Service Improvement Plan • 10 Operating Principles and Guide to the Planning Application Process • Application Checklist and Validation Checklist • Improvements to the Pre-Application Discussion process • Lean systems redesign project
3.4	<p>It is hoped that renewed and regular performance reporting will help to ensure that the Planning Service remains transparent, accountable and focused on continuous improvement. It will provide clear evidence of how effectively public resources are being used, support informed decision-making, and help to identify areas where change may be needed. Performance information will also enable the Planning Service to plan ahead, meet statutory and regulatory obligations, and improve customer experience by better understanding demand, service quality and outcomes. It is considered that consistent reporting will help to strengthen public confidence and support the delivery of an efficient, high-quality service aligned with the Council's priorities.</p>
3.4	<p>Officers have produced a Performance Framework (Appendix 1). In drafting this, officers considered approaches used elsewhere in the UK and the Republic of Ireland, along with findings from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the NI Audit Office report on Planning, • the Public Accounts Committee report (2022), and • local audit reports.
3.5	<p>In the short-term, it is important to have proper measurement and reporting systems in place. In the longer-term, these performance measures will help drive improvements and support better-quality planning outcomes.</p>
3.6	<p>The draft Planning Performance Framework uses best practice from other regions and outlines how the Council's Planning Service can meet its objectives through continuous improvement and by contributing to wider planning improvement work across Northern Ireland.</p>

3.7	The draft Planning Performance Framework has four parts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parts 1 and 2 set out the key objectives that define success • Parts 3 and 4 outline how the Planning Service will work to achieve these objectives
3.8	Overall, this framework brings together all existing and ongoing improvement work and provides a single, strategic approach to performance management and customer service. It will allow the Council to track progress, show how planning contributes to city-wide outcomes, and monitor annual performance.
3.9	The framework will be implemented before the new performance year begins on 1 April 2026 and the first performance report will be brought to Committee alongside the annual monitoring reports for housing land, employment land and developer agreements in Autumn 2026.
6.0	Financial & Resource Implications
6.1	No financial or resource implications have been identified.
7.0	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
7.1	No Equality or Good Relations implications have been identified. There is no need for a Rural Needs Assessment.
8.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 –Belfast City Council Draft Planning Performance Framework

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Belfast Planning Service

Planning Performance Framework

March 2026

1. Introduction

1.1 This planning performance framework has been prepared by Belfast Planning Service to provide greater transparency and accountability in the council's delivery of its planning functions. It sets out how the council will report on delivery, making use of meaningful qualitative and quantitative indicators for planning activity during each annual reporting period.

Planning performance in Northern Ireland is measured by three statutory indicators that generally relate to the speed of decision-making for planning applications (major scale and local scale) and the resolution of enforcement complaints. There are no statutory targets relating to the preparation of Local Development Plans.

1.2 The statutory targets for processing planning applications can be impacted by matters that are outside the control of the City Council and the published statutory figures do not adequately reflect the planning application process, its purpose or outcomes. Similarly, the absence of statutory indicators for the development planning process means that this critical element of planning is largely unmeasured.

1.3 This framework sets out additional indicators that will provide greater meaning and transparency and accountability that assist in measuring the performance of the Belfast Planning Service across its key functions. It also better demonstrates and measure the value of the planning process through reporting outcomes that help to deliver corporate priorities and societal/environmental benefits for the city.

1.4 A **Planning Performance Report** (PPR) will be prepared on an annual basis (using the financial year) in line with this Framework and will be submitted to Planning Committee as soon as possible following financial year end. Following Members' approval, the report will be published on the council's planning webpage.

This framework identifies the following key aims of the annual PPR:

- To provide transparency and accountability in terms of performance of the planning system in Belfast and to help drive improvements in the system at both a local and regional level;
- To recognise and evidence the contribution that the Belfast Planning Service makes to the economy, society and the environment; and
- To build political and public understanding of the importance and achievements of the Council's planning functions.

1.5 As other NI planning authorities bring forward their own planning performance reports, this will facilitate comparison and benchmarking between authorities and help identify common challenges and opportunities for improvement. The PPR will set out how a planning authority is achieving a high-quality planning service and helps to identify where improvements can be made. In relation to Belfast City Council, this aligns with the council's priorities in service delivery, including the objectives of the Belfast Agenda, our Corporate Plan and our Council and Service Improvement Plans.

PART 1 – The services we provide

2.0 Service Overview

Belfast City Council's Planning Service sits within the Place and Economy Department which is responsible for driving the future growth and regeneration of the city, creating a sustainable, attractive, vibrant, unique and dynamic place to live, work, visit and invest.

The Planning Service sits within the Planning and Building Control directorate and includes the development of the statutory Local Development Plan and its implementation through the processing of planning applications and managing enforcement complaints.

[Additional narrative may be included in any annual report as appropriate.]

2.1 People and resources:

[Any significant resourcing constraints or impacts will be reported here annually.]

2.1.1 Skills and Training: Input structure in line with Training Plan

Through the Planning Performance Framework a training plan will be brought forward as a parallel process. This will be a management tool to support improvements to the service as a whole.

2.2 Development Planning and Policy Team Indicators.

The principal role of the Development Planning and Policy Team is to prepare and monitor the planning policy framework for Belfast. This includes the preparation of a new Local Development Plan for Belfast, ensuring all local planning policies, allocations and designations are based on sound evidence and satisfactorily reflect the city's needs and priorities. The Team is also responsible for the preparation of any Supplementary Planning Guidelines (SPG), technical advice notes (TANs) and other guidance.

In addition to the planning policy responsibilities, the Team also determines applications for works to protected trees and requests for new Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). The Team also provides advice, guidance and training on a wide range of policy implementation and detailed technical matters, including trees & landscaping, built heritage and urban design. It is also an internal consultee as part of the development management process.

There are no existing statutory performance indicators for development planning. Reporting of performance to date has generally referenced the progression of the new LDP and any supplementary documents through the preparation and adoption process.

This framework sets out the following new indicators and targets (where appropriate) to demonstrate performance in the Development Planning and Policy Team:

- Stage of Local Development Plan preparation, including date of PS adoption, current status of LPP preparation, key milestones passed and anticipated future timetable.*
- Status of statutory Timetable; e.g.: under review, consulting PAC/Dfl, adopted.
- Next milestone, e.g.: Members' agreement, public consultation, intention to submit, etc.
- Compliance with SCI and commentary of any engagement/consultation completed, ongoing or planned.

*Commentary will be added as appropriate to contextualise performance, highlight key learning points or areas for performance improvement

- Details on the production of any Supplementary Planning Guidance or other non-statutory guidance and monitoring information.
- Annual Housing Monitor – target publication autumn annually.
- Annual Employment Land Monitor – target publication autumn annually.
- Annual Monitoring Report (post-LDP adoption) – target autumn annually.
- S76 Monitoring Report – target autumn annually.*
- Tree works applications – number and average time (target <6 weeks).
- TPO Request decisions - number and average time (target <6 weeks).
- Statement on number of TPOs.
- Policy advice and other internal DM consultations – number and average time (target 21 calendar days). Reporting to be consistent with all other consultee reporting*.

2.3 Development Management - Application and Enforcement Indicators

2.3.1 Development Management Comprises the planning application process, including Pre-Application Discussions (PADs), determination of planning applications, handling of post planning permission matters such as discharges of conditions, planning appeals and enforcement of planning control. It is the mechanism by which objectives at city and local area plan level are implemented on the ground.

There are existing statutory performance indicators for development management that relate to the speed of decision-making for planning applications (major and local). These indicators are published quarterly and annually by DfI for all councils. Additional reporting of DM performance to date has generally referenced the implementation of the Service Improvement Plan, including the implementation of new processes and guidance for applicants.

This framework establishes the following new indicators and targets (where appropriate) to demonstrate performance of the Development Management process;

- Statutory KPI's – the current measures for local (15 weeks) and major (30 weeks) applications recorded by local authorities and reported to the DfI, alongside a commentary.*
- The number of applications received and decided (local, major and other) by BCC
The application approval rate (%) of all applications determined during the year.
- Number and percentage of Major applications determined within 30 weeks
- Number and percentage of Local applications determined within 15 weeks
- Number and percentage of Householder and advertisement applications determined within 12-weeks
- The number of pre-application discussions received and by category
- The delegation rate – the number and percentage of applications that have been determined under delegated authority.

*Commentary will be added as appropriate to contextualise performance, highlight key learning points or areas for performance improvement

- The number of elected member referral application requests to committee, and the percentage agreed. *
- The number of decisions made by the Planning Committee and the number of those decisions (as a percentage) that were contrary to the officer recommendation. *
- The number of applications which were subject to an appeal to the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC)
- % of appeal decisions that upheld the decision of the Council*

2.3.2 The Development Management Team is also responsible for the **enforcement** of planning, investigating alleged breaches of planning control and determining what action should be taken

KPI's – the current measure for enforcement is % of cases closed within 39 weeks.

- Details of any enforcement strategy / charter (date of publication and proposals for review) Published Quarterly/Yearly Updates
- Annual Figures on the number of complaints lodged and investigated.
- Percentage of Priority 1 complaints received.*
- The number of "live" enforcement cases at the start and end of the year.
- The number of enforcement cases closed.
- Number of enforcement notices serviced / and any direct action taken.
- The number of successful enforcement prosecutions
- Number of enforcement appeal cases & outcomes
- Report on court outcomes

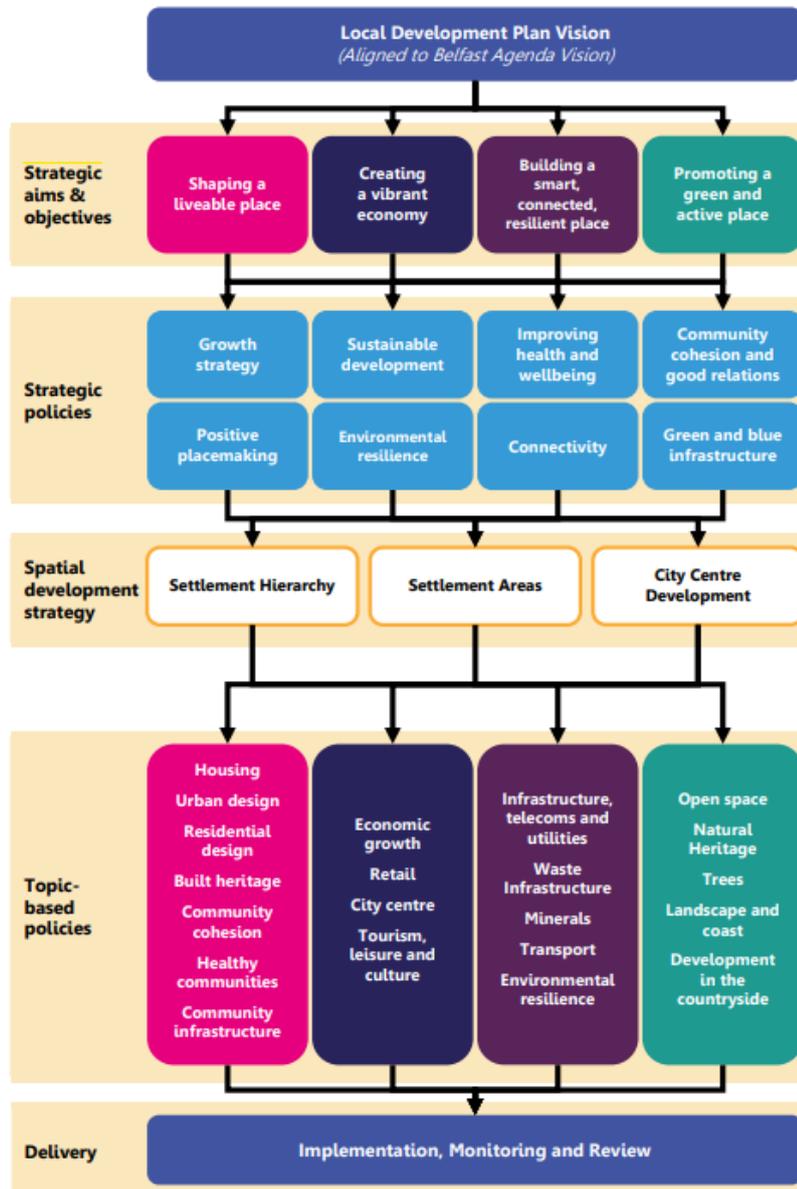
PART 2

3.0 Our Contribution to outcomes

3.1 In 2017 Belfast Published its first Community plan, the *Belfast Agenda*, updated in 2024 it sets out the joint vision and long-term ambitions for Belfast's future, as well as outlining Belfast City Council's priorities for action over the next four years. The five strategic themes of the Belfast Agenda:

- Our people and communities
- Our economy
- Our place
- Our planet
- Compassionate

3.2 The four strategic aims of the LDP below closely reflect these Belfast Agenda priorities. These aims are supported by a series of strategic objectives designed to help achieve the delivery of this vision.



*Commentary will be added as appropriate to contextualise performance, highlight key learning points or areas for performance improvement

3.3 Our Outcomes in performance year*

The below is a sample of potential annual outcomes we can report on. It is likely that only one or two from each theme will appear in the annual performance report, which can be agreed in advance and continuously reviewed throughout the reporting year. Whilst some can be measured quantitatively, other outcomes may be better reported through case studies and narrative.

1. Shaping a liveable Place

- No of housing units permitted
- No. affordable housing units (social and intermediate) permitted broken down by tenure
- Percentage of affordable homes granted permission as a proportion of all dwelling units approved [or just for schemes of 5 units or more where Policy HOU5 applies]
- No of householder applications permitted
- No of Listed building consent applications approved
- Sq metres of community facilities approved
- Urban Design impacts – improved schemes, no of consultations issued?
- No of PADs where scheme is improved – qualitative measure could form basis of case study?

2. Creating a Vibrant Economy

- Sqm New employment floorspace, split by use class
- Supporting tourism, hotel bed approved, STLs approved
- No of retail approvals
- Development Opportunity Areas, Sites approved within and if guidance produced on.
- Bar restaurant approvals

3. Building a Smart, connected Resilient Place

- No of telecoms permitted
- No of infrastructure related approvals
- Renewable energy approvals
- No of majors apps Section 76s on active travel/ green travel fund / cycle infrastructure measures
- Mitigating climate change, refusals on env2,
- No of applications permitted with suds

4. Promoting a green and active place.

- No of applications with new public open space
- No of applications for new sports facilities
- No of applications for works to protected trees approved
- Greenway/ Landscape approvals
- Countryside refusals
- Environmental improvement schemes

*Commentary will be added as appropriate to contextualise performance, highlight key learning points or areas for performance improvement

Planning in Motion

(Summary of up to 5 approvals in past year in line with strategic aims, and where value was added Eg significant housing or employment schemes, green roof schemes, listed/ heritage buildings back onto use, any refusals based on environmental impacts.

Planning in Action

(Summary of on the ground schemes completed or award winning in the last year in line with strategic aims, previous years planning in motion schemes) link to training plan for officer and committee site visits.

PART 3

4.0 Our Continuous Improvement

4.1 **The Council's Improvement Plan Objectives for Planning has one agreed action:**

That Management will:

Update of the Planning Service Improvement Plan to include actions relating to the service as a whole: the ongoing development of the additional performance measures (i.e. both qualitative and quantitative) that management would require in managing and monitoring the aspects of the planning process that are within the control of BCC; demonstrating the value of the planning process, for example customer satisfaction, large developments completed, social housing; and previously agreed audit actions regarding internal informal targets for major applications and monitoring and reporting on the timeliness of internal consultee responses.

4.2 To ensure we continuously improve and to assist in consistency in measuring performance across the Planning Service, the following steps will act as a guide in the first year of this framework, and will allow each area of the service to consider their own performance and how measured improvement can be made to enhance performance. These steps will also inform the updated Planning Service Improvement Plan. These 12 steps should be considered against the objectives of each work area and a local work plan put in place, for reporting on in line with audit requirements.

- a. Having the right information
- b. The right people having access to relevant up-to-date information
- c. Everyone understands their role and responsibility in their work area.
- d. Make dynamic changes but only when needed
- e. Praise good performance, challenge poor performance
- f. Monitor workloads
- g. Importance of the recording of decision making
- h. Communicate with the Customer
- i. Involve members in performance conversations
- j. Learn from Experience
- k. Learn from Others.

4.3 This should focus on improvements and changes for the incoming year.

- Demonstrating a culture of continuous improvement focusing on the last 12 months.
- Evidence ongoing training of staff, management and members in priority areas.
- Act as clear vision and programme as basis for service improvement.

*Commentary will be added as appropriate to contextualise performance, highlight key learning points or areas for performance improvement

- Keep the focus on improvement activity rather than carrying out core / routine work or tasks.
- Be clear about Service Improvement actions and their purpose – there should be a flow of information through the report from problem to solution.
- Aim to ensure that Service Improvement commitments are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-related).
- Take appropriate action in response to complaints and ombudsman cases to address any process or performance issues.

4.4 After the first year, there will be a review of the delivery of service improvement key actions committed in the previous year. This should report on the commitment made and the specific actions carried out in relation to each commitment, including any evidence of those actions and their impact.

PART 4

5.0 Accountability to Improve the System

5.1 Belfast City Council continues to collaborate and build relations with other councils and DfI and customers, including through attendance at the following levels.

- 5.1.1 SOLACE, HOP and PIP programme*
- 5.1.2 Officer cross authority working groups
- 5.1.3 Belfast Planning Partnership*

5.2 Strategic issues raised by Belfast in the above groups have directly inputted into the ongoing Regional Improvement work.*

- 5.2.1 Validation checklist
- 5.2.2 DCA pilot scheme

5.3 Review and highlight key factors which contribute to delays outside council's control and any steps taken to improve performance.

- 5.3.1 EG Performance of consultees



Subject:	Delegation of Local applications with NI Water objections
Date:	10 th March 2026
Reporting Officer(s):	Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control
Contact Officer(s):	Ed Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management) Ciara Reville, Principal Planning Officer (South and West) Lisa Walshe, Principal Planning Officer (North and East)

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	Since June 2022, the Planning Committee has periodically considered reports seeking delegated authority for the Director of Planning and Building Control to determine certain Local applications to which NI Water (NIW) has objected.
1.2	The Council continues to receive objections from NIW to some Local applications. The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee’s agreement to delegate to officers those Local planning applications to which NIW has objected as set out at Appendix 1 .
1.3	For the avoidance of doubt, it is only those applications which would have been delegated to officers under the Scheme of Delegation were it not for the objection from NIW (a statutory consultee) which are proposed to be delegated. Therefore, any of the Local applications listed at Appendix 1 which it may later transpire require to be referred to the Committee for other reason/s (other than the NIW objection) will be reported to the Committee to determine.

1.4	Elected Members can also still request that the applications at Appendix 1 are referred to the Committee under paragraph 3.8.1 of the Scheme of Delegation.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	That the Committee agrees to delegate to the Director of Planning and Building Control those Local planning applications to which NIW has objected set out at Appendix 1 .
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	As reported to the Committee Workshop in November 2021, NIW is objecting to a significant number of Local applications on grounds of insufficient waste-water infrastructure capacity.
3.2	As advised at the Committee Workshop, officers have been engaging with NIW to try to resolve those objections in a strategic context. Whilst progress is being made, and NI Water has been considering a threshold for the scale and nature of development above which they would like to be consulted on future planning application, the objections to these Local applications remain.
	<u>Scheme of Delegation</u>
3.3	The Committee will be aware that the Council operates a Scheme of Delegation for Planning which identifies which matters are to be determined by the Committee and which are delegated to officers.
3.4	Paragraph 3.8.5 (f) of the Scheme of Delegation (December 2025) states that planning applications are not delegated where <i>'There is an objection from a statutory consultee and the recommendation of the Planning Officer is to approve.'</i> This means that those applications are required to be determined by the Planning Committee.
3.5	The Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 identifies NIW as a statutory consultee <i>'...where a development proposal is likely to significantly impact upon the availability of suitable water and sewerage infrastructure to service development proposals.'</i>
3.6	This means that where NIW has lodged an objection to a Local application and the officer recommendation is to approve, the application is not delegated and must be determined by the Committee.
3.7	Therefore, the Committee has agreed to delegate Local applications with the NIW objections to the Director of Planning and Building Control, as set out in similar previous reports to the Committee. This has avoided the potential need to report to date 323 individual applications to the Committee. To have reported all those applications to the Committee would have been logistically extremely challenging, costly and would have resulted in further delays for applicants.
	<u>Nature of NI Water objections</u>
3.8	NI Water has lodged objections to Local applications for one or both of the following reasons. <p style="margin-left: 40px;">a) there is insufficient capacity at the local Waste Water Treatment Plant to support the proposed development, and/or</p>

	<p>b) there is insufficient network capacity within existing Combined Storm Overflows to support the development, and/ or</p> <p>c) there is insufficient network capacity within the foul sewerage system and a Wastewater Impact Assessment is required.</p>
3.9	In broad terms, NIW is concerned that a lack of infrastructure capacity would give rise to risk of environmental harm including pollution, flooding and adverse impact on existing property. In some cases, NIW is concerned that the application site may be hydrologically linked to Belfast Lough and may harm its water quality.
3.10	However, allowance must be made for existing significant committed development across the city including extant planning permissions. It is highly unlikely that all such development, which includes unimplemented permissions for around 20,000 houses and significant levels of commercial floor space across the city, will come forward at once, if at all. In practical terms it would be unreasonable for the Council to withhold planning permission given the fall-back of the need to connect those developments to existing waste water infrastructure.
3.11	In the case of Waste Water Treatment capacity, NI Water advises that there was an increased capacity from July 2023, albeit this will not be sufficient to address long term waste water treatment plant infrastructure requirements.
	<u>Habitats Regulations Assessment</u>
3.12	Officers have met with Shared Environmental Services (SES). Belfast City Council is the Competent Authority under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) for undertaking an Appropriate Assessment where a proposal is likely to have a significant environmental effect on Belfast Lough, an environmentally protected Special Protection Area (SPA), RAMSAR and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Water quality of the lough is a key consideration. The Habitats Regulations are framed in such a way that it is not only the impacts of individual development proposals that need to be considered, but also “in combination” impacts with other development.
3.13	A precautionary approach applies to Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). Competent Authority, the Council may take its own objective view on whether a proposal is likely to have a “significant effect” on water quality of the Lough. However, having regard to the precautionary approach, where NIW object to an application stating concerns about potential environmental pollution, the Planning Service will automatically consult SES and ask them to undertake a HRA Appropriate Assessment Screening to ascertain whether there would be a likely significant impact. This would also trigger statutory consultation with DAERA NIEA.
	<u>Local applications for which delegated authority is sought to determine</u>
3.14	The further Local applications to which NIW has objected and which delegated authority is sought to determine are listed at Appendix 1 .
3.15	It should be noted that only those applications which would have been delegated to officers under the Scheme of Delegation were it not for the objection from NIW are proposed to be delegated. Therefore, any of the Local applications listed at Appendix 1 which it transpires need to be referred to the Committee for other reason/s under the Scheme of Delegation will be reported to the Committee to determine. Individual Members can also still request

	that the applications at Appendix 1 are referred to the Committee under paragraph 3.8.1 of the Scheme of Delegation.
4.0	Financial & Resource Implications
4.1	The cost, time and resources involved in individually reporting all Local applications to which NI Water has objected to the Planning Committee would be considerable. It would also require several additional sittings of the Committee. The recommended approach set out in this report is considered to be a much more efficient use of resources.
5.0	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
5.1	No adverse impacts identified.
6.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – List of Local applications which are proposed to be delegated to officers to determine.

**Appendix 1 – Local applications with NIW objections
(March 2026)**

	DEA	REFERENCE	DATE RECEIVED	PROPOSAL	ADDRESS
1	Titanic	LA04/2025/0049/F	04/03/25	Amalgamation of ground floors of No's 74 and 76 and change of use to one 2-bed (Class C1) apartment. Change of use of first and second floors of No74 from office to one 2-bed apartment (Class C1). Change-of-use of first and second floors of No76 to create a 4-bed/4-person Home in Multiple Occupation (HMO). Associated site works.	74 & 76 Castlereagh Road, Belfast, BT5 5FP
2	Castle	LA04/2025/2163/F	15/12/2025	Change of use from existing office block (A2 & B1) to 25no. bedroom hotel / bar / restaurant (Sui Generis). Façade improvements, creation of new openings and PV panels on roof and additional site works.	27-31 Donegall Street & 3-5 Commercial Court, Belfast, BT1 2FG
3	Oldpark	LA04/2025/2145/F	15/12/2025	Change of use from dwelling (C1) to community and cultural use (D1). Alterations to building façade and roof to create projecting rooflight. Delineation of 11no. additional car parking spaces.	47 Frederick Street Belfast BT1 2LW
4	Titanic	LA04/2026/0078/F	19/01/2026	change of use from commercial to 2-bedroom dwelling	112 Beersbridge Road
5	Titanic	LA04/2026/0149/F	30/01/2026	Change of use of vacant premises (A1) to 3no. apartments at No.56 (C1) and 1no. 6-	56-58 Castlereagh Street, Belfast, BT5 4NH

				bedroom 10-person HMO (Sui Generis) at No.58. 2-storey rear extension, metal access stairs, front dormers, facade alterations and additional site works.	
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Sent by email only to:

Chair of Council Planning Committees

cc: Council Chief Executives
Council Heads of Planning

13 January 2026

Dear Chair,

Planning Learning and Engagement Programme – Request for Nominations

On behalf of the NILGA Executive, we are writing to you in your capacity as Chair of the Planning Committee to seek your Council's active involvement in a strategically important piece of work being jointly progressed by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) and the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA).

Planning is one of the most significant and high-profile functions exercised by local government, and the role of councillors in planning decision-making is critical to ensuring outcomes that are lawful, robust, transparent and reflective of local priorities. Against a backdrop of increasing complexity, public scrutiny and challenge within the planning system, there is a clear need for stronger, more consistent engagement with elected members across all councils.

DfI and NILGA are therefore developing an enhanced and coordinated approach to **planning learning, engagement and continuous improvement for councillors**, which places elected members at the centre of planning improvement activity. This work builds on ongoing engagement with councillors, the Department's Planning Improvement Programme, and the Minister's clear support for deeper, more structured engagement with elected members and closer partnership working with NILGA.

Proposed approach

The proposed approach is designed to support councillors across all councils to exercise their planning responsibilities with confidence and consistency, and will include:

- Ongoing, structured engagement between DfI, NILGA and elected members on planning improvement, reform and future challenges, including engagement with the Infrastructure Minister as appropriate.
- A blended programme of learning and engagement for councillors, combining:
 - Short, accessible written and digital learning materials;
 - Thematic online engagement sessions on emerging, specialist and high-risk planning issues;
 - In-person engagement with individual Planning Committees focused on development management, decision-making and good practice;

- Improved sharing of good practice between councils, recognising the value of learning from different committee structures, schemes of delegation and approaches to member–officer working; and
- Stronger alignment between councillor learning, officer development and the Department’s Planning Improvement Programme.

Task and Finish Advisory Group

Central to the success of this work is meaningful input from councillors who are directly involved in Planning Committee decision-making. To that end, DfI and NILGA propose to establish a **Task and Finish Advisory Group of councillors drawn from across all councils.**

This group will play a key advisory role in shaping the learning and engagement programme, ensuring it reflects the realities faced by Planning Committees, and helping to identify priority areas where councillor leadership and shared learning can make the greatest impact. Representation from across councils will be essential to ensure the work is informed by a broad range of local contexts, experiences and challenges.

We would therefore request that you to **nominate up to two councillors** from your Planning Committee to participate in this Advisory Group. Nominees should be a current Planning Committee member, have experience of Planning Committee work and a willingness to contribute constructively to regional planning improvement on behalf of local government.

The Advisory Group will operate on a time-limited basis and it is expected to meet a number of times during 2026. Given the regional nature of this work and pressures on councillors’ time, it is expected that online attendance can be facilitated if needed.

We would be grateful if nominations could be submitted by **28 February 2026** including the name, role and contact details of each nominee.

Your Council’s engagement in this work will be vital to ensuring that the resulting approach is credible, relevant and firmly rooted in elected member experience. We look forward to working closely with you and your nominated members as this important programme is taken forward.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Billy Webb, MBE JP
President (All)



Cllr Matt Garrett
Vice-President (Sinn Fein)



Cllr Alison Bennington
Vice-President (DUP)



Ald Hazel Legge
Vice-President (UUP)



Cllr Carl Whyte
Vice-President (SDLP)

ADDENDUM REPORT	
Committee Date: 10 th March 2026	
Application ID: LA04/2024/0483/F and LA04/2024/0480/DCA	
<p>Proposal: Proposed change of use from Office (B1) and restaurant (Sui Generis) to Hotel comprising of 88 no. bedrooms, two storey rooftop extension, restaurant and bar offerings, gym facilities, including new dormer windows on roof, internal and external refurbishment and alterations, and all associated site works.</p> <p>Part demolition of existing building, comprising stripping back of roof, shopfront and other external alterations to facilitate change of use and extension of buildings to hotel use.</p>	<p>Location: 34-44 Bedford Street and 6 Clarence Street, Belfast</p>
Referral Route: Application for Major development	
Recommendation: Approval subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement	
<p>Applicant Name and Address: Bedford Way Ltd 2-4 Clarence Street Belfast BT2 7GH</p>	<p>Agent Name and Address: Mr Ross Duncan TSA Planning Ltd 20 May Street Belfast BT1 4NL</p>
Date Valid: 19 th March 2024	
Target Date: 15 th October 2024	
Contact Officer: Ed Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management)	
<p>Background:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This application was originally approved by the Planning Committee at its 15th October 2024 meeting. The Committee granted planning permission and Conservation Area Consent, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement. The Committee delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement and to deal with any other issues that might arise, provided that they were not substantive. 2. This report should be read in conjunction with the original report to the 15th October 2024 Committee meeting, appended. <p>Section 76 planning agreement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The purpose of the Section 76 planning agreement was to require the submission and implementation of a Construction Employability and Skills Plan, following advice from the Council's Economic Development Unit. 4. However, despite repeated requests over an extremely long period, the applicant has still to complete and sign the planning agreement. It is necessary for the applicant to sign the planning agreement as they are an interested party. Unless the planning agreement is completed, the decision notice cannot be issued. The application is therefore reported back to the Committee for reconsideration. 	

5. The proposal is an important regeneration scheme that would see the renovation of the existing rundown buildings in the Conservation Area with a new vibrant hotel use. As set out in the original Committee report, it is considered that the proposal would enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, having regard to Policy BH2 of the Plan Strategy and Section 104(11) of the of Act.
6. It is considered in the public interest for the Council to issue the planning permission to increase the chances of the scheme being implemented so that its benefits can be realised. For this reason, it is recommended that the Construction Employability and Skills Plan is secured by condition rather than Section 76 planning agreement as originally intended.
7. It is considered that this is a proportionate approach and consistent with previous approvals of the Committee where a condition was used to secure an Employability and Skills Plan, including planning permissions LA04/2024/0714/F (private hospital at 38 Boucher Road, approved by the Committee in January 2025); and LA04/2025/1716/F (transitional care unit at Santander House, 1 Mays Meadow, approved by the Committee in February 2026). Moving forward, it is recommended that Employability and Skills Plans are secured by condition for other schemes of similar scale.
8. The issuing of the decision will also ensure that there is no further adverse impact on the Council's statutory performance indicators, which measure average processing time of applications for Major development, particularly in respect of the new performance year 2026/27.

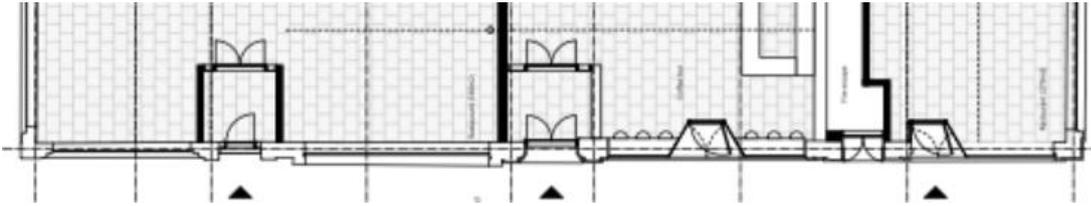
Internal Conservation advice:

9. Officers verbally reported the following internal conservation advice as a late item to the 15th October 2024 Committee meeting:
 - Objection to losing 'Harlem' shopfront remains.
 - New shopfront with sub fascia transom would be preferable.
 - Any mullions on Deanes frontage that have original capital detailing retained / re-used
10. However, officers considered that the proposal is on balance acceptable, with the scheme providing an overall enhancement of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposal avoids symmetry of the frontage of the building, reflective of the existing eclectic character of the ground floor. The existing shopfront recessed entrance to the right-hand side of the main doorway is retained, along with the tiled floor on the recess. It is proposed to introduce another recess on the same side to reinforce the existing ground floor character. Gates will be required to secure these recessed entrance features, which the conservation advisor offers no objection to in principle. These details were provided on 11th October 2024, four days before the Committee meeting, and are set out below.

Ground Floor Elevation (frontage):



Ground Floor Plan (frontage):



11. The Committee went onto approve the application at its 15th October 2024 meeting.

Recommendation:

12. Having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission and Conservation Area Consent are granted subject to conditions.
13. 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:

14. The conditions are as recommended in the original report to the 15th October 2024 Committee meeting, with the addition of the following condition:

‘No development shall commence on site (including demolition, site clearance and site preparation) unless a Construction Employability and Skills Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The Construction Employability and Skills Plan must be specific to the development, address the employability and skills requirements of the development during its construction and provide for:

- a) employment opportunities through the construction and operation of the development;
- b) employability and skills interventions to include:
 - description of interventions;
 - how the intervention will address employability and skills needs;
 - delivery mechanism; and
 - key performance indicators.
- c) resource plan, identifying how the activity incorporated within the plan will be resourced;
- d) the governance and management of delivery of the plan, incorporating performance, quality, risk management and mechanism for review by the Council.

The construction shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved Construction Employability and Skills Plan.

Reason: To promote inclusive growth in accordance with the objectives of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy 2035 and the Council’ Developer Contribution Framework.’

Planning Committee

Development Management Report

Summary	
Committee Date: 15 th October 2024	
Application ID: LA04/2024/0483/F and LA04/2024/0480/DCA	
Proposal: Proposed change of use from Office (B1) and restaurant (Sui Generis) to Hotel comprising of 88 no. bedrooms, two storey rooftop extension, restaurant and bar offerings, gym facilities, including new dormer windows on roof, internal and external refurbishment and alterations, and all associated site works. Part demolition of existing building, comprising stripping back of roof, shopfront and other external alterations to facilitate change of use and extension of buildings to hotel use.	Location: 34-44 Bedford Street and 6 Clarence Street, Belfast
Referral Route: Application for Major development	
Recommendation: Approval subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement	
Applicant Name and Address: Bedford Way Ltd 2-4 Clarence Street Belfast BT2 7GH	Agent Name and Address: Mr Ross Duncan TSA Planning Ltd 20 May Street Belfast BT1 4NL
Date Valid: 19 th March 2024	
Target Date: 15 th October 2024	
Contact Officer: Ed Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management)	
Executive Summary: These applications relates to land at 34-44 Bedford Street and 6 Clarence Street, the site of the current restaurant Deane's. The applications seek Conservation Area Consent for part demolition of existing buildings (stripping back of roof and shopfront) and planning permission for a change of use from office and restaurant to a Hotel which will comprise of 88 no. bedrooms, restaurant/ bar and gym. Structurally the proposal includes a two storey rooftop extension, new dormer windows on roof, internal and external refurbishment and alterations, and all associated site works. The key issues for consideration of the application are set out below. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of development • Impact on the character and appearance of the Linen Conservation Area • Impact on Built Heritage and Archaeology • Design and placemaking • Climate change 	

- Access and transport
- Health impacts
- Environmental protection
- Flood risk and drainage
- Waste-water infrastructure
- Waste management
- Natural heritage
- Employability and Skills
- Section 76 planning agreement
- Pre-application Community Consultation

The site is within un-zoned “white land” within the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 and draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (dBMAP). It is within the City Centre in dBMAP.

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

The height, scale, form and design of the proposed rooftop extension are considered to be in keeping with the building and the Conservation Area. The more traditional shopfront elements of the ground floor frontage are being retained, including a recessed doorway, whilst those elements considered to be less traditional and of less architectural merit are being replaced with a traditional shop front style façade, respecting the character of the building.

The setting of nearby Listed Buildings, notably the Ulster Hall, are safeguarded; DfC Historic Environment Division (HED) has offered no objection to the proposal. Overall, it is considered that the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would be enhanced.

The proposal would provide no additional dedicated parking; however, this is considered acceptable given the long-standing existing uses, limited intensification and highly sustainable city centre location. A Travel Plan has also been provided in support of the application, which promotes alternatives to the private car.

DfI Roads, DfC HED, Environmental Health, DAERA NIEA, SES and BCC Urban Design Officer have offered no objection. NI Water has objected on grounds of network capacity and this is addressed in the main report. Some concerns are raised by BCC internal conservation advice, and these issues are also addressed in the main report.

No third-party representations were received.

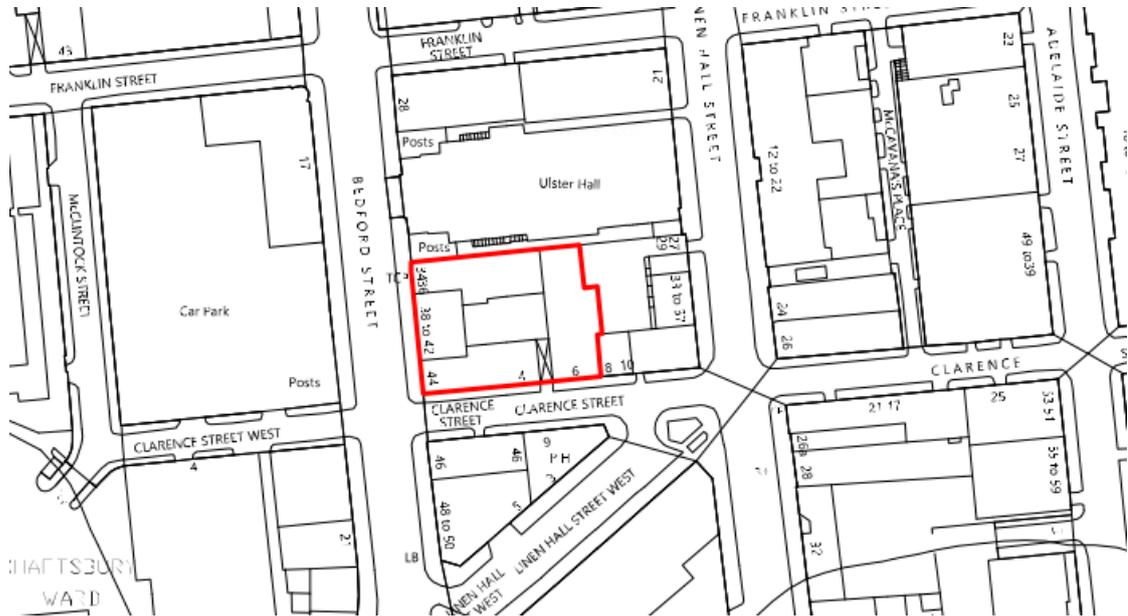
Recommendation

Having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission and Conservation Area Consent are granted subject to conditions and a Section 76 Planning Agreement.

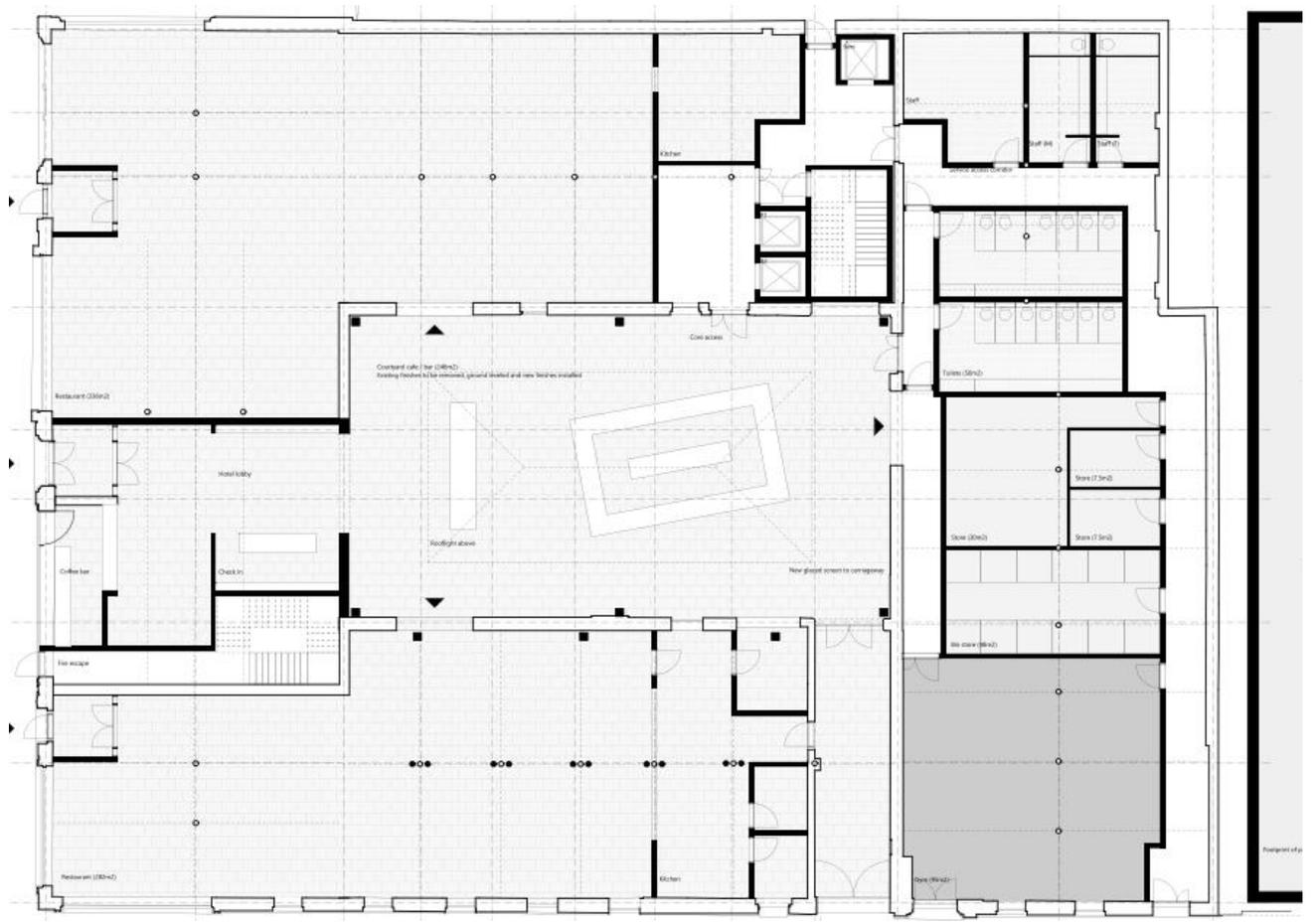
Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive, subject to the receipt of satisfactory amendments to the design of the ground floor elevation onto Bedford Street.

DRAWINGS AND IMAGERY

Site Location Plan:



Site Layout:



Demolition Plans:



Proposed elevations:

Bedford Street (subject to further amendments to the ground floor shopfronts)



Clarence Street



CGIs (subject to further amendments to the ground floor shopfronts on Bedford Street):



1.0	Characteristics of the Site and Area
1.1	The site is located in Belfast City Centre, and within the Linen Conservation Area.
1.2	<p>The site relates to properties comprising Nos. 34-44 Bedford Street and Nos. 4-6 Clarence Street which form an urban block. 34-36 Bedford Street is the site of the proposal positioned at the corner of Bedford Street and Clarence Street. It is an unlisted Victorian brick structure. It is a 3 storey warehouse style building in cream brick with channelled stone ground floor. The building wraps around a central courtyard. The existing building dates from 1865 and comprises a 3 storey warehouse building faced in cream brick; rendered to the front elevation with 3 doorcases to the front elevation. Originally containing a rusticated / lined base, the shops have been inserted into the ground floor – one Art Nouveau inspired (to the left hand side of the elevation).</p>
1.3	The building is rectilinear in form and includes a sizeable, open, internal courtyard enclosed on all four sides and comprises what appears to be sandstone ashlar across the ground floor elevations with red brick to upper floors and is typical of many across the Linen Quarter.
1.4	At ground floor level, the building is currently occupied by a cafe and a restaurant which appears to be under refurbishment. There is also a small shop and a physiotherapy clinic operating from the premises. The upper stories are currently vacant.
1.5	The site is located at the junction of Bedford Street and Clarence Street within the grid iron street layout of the Linen Quarter and is surrounded by a range of heritage buildings the most notable of which includes the Listed Ulster Hall immediately north.
	Description of Proposal
1.6	The Committee is considering two applications as set out below.
1.7	<p>LA04/2024/0483/F – seeking full planning permission for a change of use from Office (B1) and restaurant (Sui Generis) to Hotel comprising of 88 no. bedrooms, two storey rooftop extension, restaurant and bar offerings, gym facilities, including new dormer windows on roof, internal and external refurbishment and alterations. Externally the proposal comprises removal of the existing sloped roof to the courtyard and its replacement with a new squared-off roof form with new dormer windows inserted to those sloped roofs along the street facing elevations of Bedford Street and Clarence Street, as well as the northern elevation facing The Ulster Hall. A new two storey rooftop extension is also proposed towards the rear of the block along Clarence Street with terraces and an external pool at upper level.</p>
1.8	<p>LA04/2024/0480/DCA – seeking Conservation Area Consent for part demolition of existing building, comprising stripping back of roof, shopfront and other external alterations to facilitate change of use and extension of buildings to hotel use.</p>
1.9	<p>The proposed demolition consists of the following detailed elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of ‘lean-to’ brick elements to the courtyard • Removal of existing staircases / stair cores / Lift • Roof elements, including roof trusses • ‘Trimming down’ of brick walls on internal courtyard • Removal of internal cross walls • Removal of bricked up windows and lower of window levels in courtyard

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of 1 shopfront (Harlem Café) • Rainwater goods, extract ducts and air-con units within courtyard
2.0	PLANNING HISTORY (ON ADJACENT SITE)
2.1	LA04/2020/2200/F - Demolition of Nos. 27 to 37 Linenhall Street and Nos. 8-10 Clarence Street and erection of seven storey office building. 8-10 Clarence Street, 27-37 Linenhall Street. Allowed at Appeal 28 th April 2023.
3.0	PLANNING POLICY
3.1	<p>Development Plan – Plan Strategy</p> <p><u>Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035</u></p> <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> <p><i>Operational Policies:</i></p> <p>Policy DES1 – Principles of urban design Policy DES2 – Masterplanning approach for major development Policy BH1 – Listed Buildings Policy BH2 – Conservation Areas Policy BH4 – Works to grounds affecting built heritage assets Policy BH5 – Archaeology Policy CI1 – Community Infrastructure Policy EC1 – Delivering Inclusive Economic Growth Policy TLC3 – Overnight visitor accommodation Policy TLC4 – Evening and night-time economy Policy HC1 – Promoting healthy communities Policy TRAN1 – Active travel – walking and cycling Policy TRAN2 – Creating an accessible environment Policy TRAN4 – Travel plan Policy TRAN6 – Access to public roads Policy TRAN8 – Car parking and servicing arrangements Policy ENV1 – Environmental quality Policy ENV2 – Mitigating environmental change Policy ENV3 – Adapting to environmental change Policy ENV4 – Flood Risk Policy ENV5 - Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) Policy GB1 – Green and blue infrastructure network Policy OS3 - Ancillary open space Policy TRE1 – Trees Policy NH1 – Protection of natural heritage resources</p>

<p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p> <p>3.5</p>	<p><u>Supplementary Planning Guidance</u></p> <p>Placemaking and Urban Design Masterplanning approach for Major developments Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems Transportation Evening and Nighttime Economy</p> <p>Development Plan – zoning, designations and proposals maps Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) BUAP Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014)</p> <p>Regional Planning Policy Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)</p> <p>Other Material Considerations Developer Contribution Framework (2020) <i>Belfast Agenda</i> (Community Plan) Linen Conservation Area Design Guide Linen Quarter Vision and Guidance</p>
<p>4.0</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p>	<p>CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS</p> <p><u>Statutory Consultees</u> DfI Roads – No objection. DfC HED – No objection. DAERA – No objection. NI Water – Objection. DfI Rivers – No objection.</p> <p><u>Non-Statutory Consultees</u> Planning Service Urban Design Officer – refer to main assessment. Planning Service Conservation Advice – refer to main assessment. BCC Environmental Health – No objection subject to conditions. BCC Economic Development Unit – recommends that an Employability and Skills Developer Contribution is required. Shared Environmental Services (SES) – No objection subject to condition.</p> <p><u>Representations</u></p> <p>The application has been advertised in the newspaper and neighbours notified. No third-party representations were received.</p>

5.0	<p>PLANNING ASSESSMENT</p> <p><u>Main Issues</u></p>
5.1	<p>The main issues relevant to consideration of the application are set out below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of development • Impact on the character and appearance of the Linen Conservation Area • Impact on Built Heritage and Archaeology • Design and placemaking • Climate change • Access and transport • Health impacts • Environmental protection • Flood risk and drainage • Waste-water infrastructure • Waste management • Natural heritage • Employability and Skills • Section 76 planning agreement • Pre-application Community Consultation <p><u>Development Plan Context</u></p>
5.2	<p>Section 6(4) of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 states that in making any determinations under the Act, regard is to be had to the local development plan, and the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.</p>
5.3	<p>Section 45(1) of the Act states that in determining planning applications, the Council must have regard to the local development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations.</p>
5.4	<p>The Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP) when fully completed will replace the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 as the statutory Development Plan for the city. The Belfast LDP will comprise two parts. Part 1 is the Plan Strategy, which contains strategic and operational policies and was adopted on 02 May 2023. Part 2 is the Local Policies Plan, which will provide the zonings and proposals maps for Belfast and has not yet been published. The zonings and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 remain part of the statutory local development plan until the Local Policies Plan is adopted.</p> <p><u>Operational Polices</u></p>
5.5	<p>The Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application. These are listed at paragraph 3.1.</p> <p><u>Proposals Maps</u></p>
5.6	<p>Until such time as the Local Policies Plan is adopted, the Council must have regard to the land-use zonings, designations and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (“Departmental Development Plan”), 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</p>

	<p>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>
5.7	Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 – the site is un-zoned “white land”.
5.8	Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (2004) – the site is un-zoned “white land” within the City Centre.
5.9	Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014) – the site is un-zoned “white land” within the City Centre.
	<u>Background</u>
5.10	The proposal was subject to a detailed Pre-Application Discussion (PAD).
	<u>Principle of development</u>
5.11	Full planning permission is sought for a change of use from Office (B1) and restaurant (Sui Generis) to a Hotel, two storey rooftop extension and other alterations.
5.12	The proposal has been assessed against Policies TLC3 and TLC4 of the Plan Strategy.
5.13	The proposal accords with Policy TLC3, which states that planning permission will be granted for new overnight accommodation in the City Centre.
5.14	The proposal also accords with Policy TLC4 in that the proposal, which would include a restaurant and bar, would strengthen and enhance the evening and nighttime economy with the City Centre.
5.15	The principle of the proposed hotel use acceptable and the acceptability of the proposal should depend upon the other planning considerations discussed below.
	<u>Impact on the character and appearance of the Linen Conservation Area</u>
5.16	The site is located within the Linen Conservation Area.
5.17	Section 104(11) of the Act states: <i>‘Where any area is for the time being designated as a conservation area, special regard must be had, in the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in that area, of any powers under this Act, to the desirability of–</i> <i>(a) preserving the character or appearance of that area in cases where an opportunity for enhancing its character or appearance does not arise;</i> <i>(b) enhancing the character or appearance of that area in cases where an opportunity to do so does arise.</i>
5.18	Policy BH2 relates to development proposals within a Conservation Area.
	<u>Demolition</u>
5.19	Policy BH2 states that there will be a presumption in favour of retaining listed buildings and non-listed buildings in conservation areas. Total or partial demolition of a building will only be permitted where:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> j. It makes either a negative or no material contribution to the character and appearance of the area; and k. The design quality of the proposed building is considered to enhance the overall character of the conservation area paying due regard to viability of retention or restoration of the existing building.
5.20	<p>Internal conservation advice is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new shopfront installation should be restricted to restoration of that to the unit to the left of the main entrance; • loss of historic shopfronts including in-antis entrance with terrazzo / tiled flooring. The internal conservation advice is that the shopfront and sign at number 42, with Art Nouveau elements, should remain as an alteration that contributes to the narrative of the building and area. Conservation also recommends retention of historic doors to Clarence Street; • There may be a detrimental lack of historic internal fabric to the front / western block – addressing Bedford Street; to cross / load bearing walls with fireplaces, the stairwell etc. These support the firewalls. It is not clear the extent to which the cross walls are retained; • The third floor extension will result in loss of historic fabric in terms of roofing timbers. The narrow roof width may reflect the technology / timber spans available at the time of construction; this narrative quality is of historic interest – • The extension at fourth floor / roof level should not impact the roof-slope onto Clarence Street; the latter should be retained.
5.21	<p>There is no doubt that the buildings on the site, although not listed, make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. However, the concerns raised above in relation to demolition of elements of the building must be assessed in the round and considered in the context of the material contribution that those elements make, together with the suitability of the proposed redevelopment and whether it will enhance the character of the Conservation Area, as discussed below.</p>
5.22	<p>In response to the concerns raised by the internal conservation advice, the more traditional shopfronts to the right-hand side of the central entrance doorway are to be retained, including the doorway recess. It has been acknowledged by the conservation advisor that the modern shopfront to the left-hand side is generally not worthy of retention, although they advise that the 'Harlem' café frontage should be retained. This shop front and its unique design features are not original and the granite surrounds are probably the oldest feature of this particular part of the frontage, dating back to the 1930s. The legislative test in Conservation Areas is to enhance where the opportunity arises. It is considered that the retention of the two more traditional shopfronts to the right-hand side, combined with the more sympathetic replacement shopfronts to the left of the entrance, reflects the existing more eclectic character of the ground floor of the building. Overall, it is considered that these changes would represent an enhancement of the character of the frontage of the building and broader Conservation Area, thereby complying with the statutory and policy tests.</p>
5.23	<p>The applicant has also agreed that the existing shopfront recessed entrance to the right-hand side of the main doorway will be retained, along with the tiled floor on the recess. It is proposed to introduce another recess on the same side to further reinforce and respect the existing ground floor character. Gates will be required to secure these recessed entrance features, which the conservation advisor offers no objection to in principle. Details of the gates should be controlled by condition. Amended plans are awaited to show these updated design changes, including confirmation of shop front</p>

	retention. Delegated authority is sought to ensure that these appropriate design changes are submitted.
5.24	It is considered that the internal fabric does not make a material contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and that its removal would not be detrimental. The building is not listed.
5.25	Similarly, the roofing timbers and fourth floor roof level proposed to be demolished do not materially contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
5.26	When considered in the context of the proposed alterations (discussed below), it is considered that the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would be enhanced.
	<u>New build</u>
5.27	<p>Policy BH2 states that new build and alterations will only be granted where the following criteria are met:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The character and appearance of the area is preserved or enhanced; b. The development respects the built form of the area by way of height, scale, form, legibility, materials and detailing; c. Key views within, into or out of the area are not negatively impacted; d. Trees, archaeological or other landscape features contributing to the character or appearance of the area are protected and / or integrated in an appropriate manner; e. Regard is given to relevant supplementary planning guidance; f. Extensions shall be subservient to the existing building with regard to height, scale, massing, form and alignment; g. The proposal involves retention of and where possible reinstatement of traditional features; h. The proposal will not result in the detrimental loss of visual gaps between existing buildings and boundaries; and i. The proposal makes use of traditional and where appropriate reclaimed, recycled/or sympathetic building materials and techniques which match or are in keeping with those found on the building and surrounding area.
5.28	The internal conservation advice expresses concern about the proposed attic extension, advising that it would have a detrimental impact on the west-east vista along Clarence Street terminated by St Malachys, caused by the contrast effect due to its alien form, materials and horizontal emphasis: <i>'The proposed attic would represent the only overtly contemporary intrusion on one of the last remaining vistas visually framed by historic elements or buildings strongly following the precedent of these in terms of material / solid to void'</i> .
5.29	However, an important material consideration is the planning permission for a large 7-storey office building granted at appeal on the land to the immediate east of the site at the junction of Linenhall Street and Clarence Street. This would not only introduces a substantial built form on Clarence Street but forms a backdrop to the proposed attic extension when viewed from the western approach from Bedford Street as shown in the CGI overleaf.



- 5.30 Internal conservation advice also raises concern about the Miesian form of attic and advises that the historic roofslope should be retained in its entirety to Clarence Street.
- 5.31 However, officers advise that the location of the ‘attic extension’ is such that it would be discrete and as such will ensure that the established roof form will retain its primacy when viewing the two main streetscape elevations (as shown in the CGI above).
- 5.32 Elaborating on its concerns, the internal conservation advice states that:
‘The proposal would, through contrast set up visual competition with St Malachys drawing the eye disproportionately / negatively, especially as it is in the eyeline of the octagonal bell towers, with open / non louvred upper stage with crenellated parapet (complemented by that to the gable of the nave). It would detract from the role of St Malachys as a landmark buildings – its status in legibility terms, diminishing its perceptual significance and the historicity of the area in general. The view along Clarence Street from Bedford Street is a key vista within the Conservation currently without discordant, contrasting, intrusive elements’.
- 5.33 However, reference is again made to the transitional role of the 7 storey approval (LA04/2020/2200/F) directly abutting the site to the east, and the subsequent impact this built intervention will have on any future views west-east towards St. Malachys Church. It is also worth noting that there are other recent approvals that will affect this view, most notably the approval on the Clarence Gallery site, diagonally opposite the above approval at the junction of Linenhall Street and Clarence Street. Importantly, it should be noted that HED has raises no fundamental concerns with regard to the impact of the proposal on listed buildings in the vicinity, including the setting of St. Malachys Church. This vista, and indeed most of the main vistas within the Conservation Area displays a variety in built form, both traditional and modern interventions, and as such for reasons stated above, officers are of the opinion that the views west-east towards St. Malachys would not be harmed and in this regard the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would be preserved.
- 5.34 Overall, it is considered that the proposals would visually improve the existing building and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, compliant with the Act, Policy BH2 and relevant provisions of the SPPS.

<u>Impact on Built Heritage and Archaeology</u>	
5.35	<p>Section 91(2) of the Act states that: <i>'In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, and in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works, a council... must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.'</i></p> <p><u>Setting of Listed Buildings</u></p>
5.36	<p>Policy BH1 sets out criteria for considering proposals that affect the setting of a Listed Building.</p>
5.37	<p>There are a number of Listed Buildings within the vicinity of the site. DfC HED advises that the proposal has the potential to affect the setting of the following Listed Buildings in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HB26 30 023A St Malachy's Church, 24 Alfred Steet Grade A • HB26 30 025 Alfred House, 19-21 Alfred Street Grade B+ • HB26 30 055 17 Bedford Street, Belfast Grade B+ • HB26 30 057 Ulster Hall, 1-7 Bedford Street Grade A • HB26 30 058 Bryson House, 28 Bedford Street Grade B1
5.38	<p>HED advises that it is generally content with the proposal, however, suggests that the dormer windows along the Bedford Street frontage, including the corner of Bedford Street/Clarence Street, are not in keeping with the historic character (grain) and that the design should be reconsidered so as not to introduce a design feature which is not prominent in the area. It is important to note that HED has raised no objections in terms of the impact on the setting of any Listed Buildings in the area and for the reasons set out, it is not considered that the dormer windows would be of detriment to the character of the building. Instead, it is considered that these design features would add to the vertical emphasis on the fenestration, something which is apparent on the more traditional/ established buildings within the city centre.</p>
5.39	<p>The internal conservation advice acknowledges the historically busy / lively roofscape to the building and accepts the installation of dormers, advising that they are of a reasonable scale, albeit that they should be of a pitched form and with framed glazing.</p>
5.40	<p>The Urban Design Officer has also specifically addressed the design of the dormers in his response and raises no concerns in relation to their insertion within the two street facing elevations and northern elevation facing The Ulster Hall. The Urban Design Officers refers to the Design and Access Statement which states that their design is intended to be 'quietly modern', so that they are read as new elements but proportioned and detailed to ensure their contextual appropriateness, which is welcomed. It is noted that whilst they do not align with the vertical ordering of windows across first and second floor levels, a degree of symmetry has been applied to the siting of the dormers within their own groupings between the projecting fire partition walls. It is noted that an additional dormer has also been introduced along Clarence Street, however the Urban Design Officer acknowledges that it <i>'...does not disrupt the rhythm of dormers along this elevation.'</i></p>
5.41	<p>Ultimately, it is considered that preferences about the form of the dormer windows is somewhat subjective and that their design is appropriate.</p>

5.42	<p>Having regard to this assessment and the advice provided by HED, it is considered that the setting of nearby Listed Buildings would be preserved.</p> <p><u>Archaeology</u></p>
5.43	<p>The planning application was accompanied by an Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) which recommends that due to the limited amount of invasive ground works, development led archaeological monitoring should be carried out within those areas of the site to undergo ground works such as the within cobbled service yard. This will confirm whether any un-identified sub-surface archaeological remains survive within the boundaries of the proposed development.</p>
5.44	<p>HED has reviewed the submitted AIA and concurs with its conclusions regarding the negligible impact of the development on below-ground remains. Therefore, due to the scale and nature of the development, HED is content that the proposal accords with the SPPS and Belfast Local Development Plan Strategy (2023) Policy BH5.</p>
5.45	<p>In summary, the proposal is considered to comply with Policies BH1 and BH5 and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p> <p><u>Design and placemaking</u></p>
5.46	<p>The proposal has been assessed against the Policies DES1 and DES2 of the Plan Strategy and SPPS. DES1 promote good placemaking, high quality design and the importance of proposals responding positively to local context addressing matters such as scale height, massing, proportions, rhythm, and materials avoiding any negative impact at street level. Policy DES2 advocates adopting a holistic approach to site layout that is mindful of adjacent development.</p> <p><i>Design, Scale, height and massing:</i></p>
5.47	<p>Policy DES1 states that planning permission will be granted for new development that is of a high quality, sustainable design that makes a positive contribution to placemaking and goes onto list 11 criteria, a. to k.</p>
5.48	<p>In terms of the proposed form, the Urban Design Officer has stated the squared-off courtyard facing roof form will provide the necessary headroom at 2nd Floor level to allow for a series of courtyard facing bedrooms. They go on to point out that this will not be visible from surrounding streets and will not impact the traditional sloped roof profiles along any of the three visible street facing elevations.</p>
5.49	<p>The larger floor of the new rooftop extension (3rd Floor) spans most of the block to the rear. Its frontage occupies that section of the block immediately north of the fire partition wall, spanning around one third of the Clarence Street frontage. This element of the scheme would accommodate a Restaurant and open kitchen area amounting to around 400m².</p>
5.50	<p>Representing the most visually prominent element of the scheme, the proposed 3rd Floor extension to the rear would result in a new section of vertical massing to Clarence Street. While breaking the more traditional sloped roof form, attention has been given to the articulation of this elevation with consideration given to the depth, form and tone of its glass and aluminium construction and its restricted application.</p>

5.51	The Urban Design Officer has stated that, on balance, given the attention applied to the articulation/detailing of this new element, its restricted application, and the important role this component plays in the adaptive use of the building, no concerns are raised. It is also noted that this element will be largely screened by the taller, 7 storey building approved on the adjacent site, thereby softening views of these upper elements west along Clarence Street.
5.52	An additional smaller floor is proposed above at 4 th Floor level and setback off all three elevations to accommodate the 175m ² Bar with external access to a wraparound southern terrace (part covered), a pool/pool terrace and smaller terrace to the north.
5.53	A deep setback of around 6.0m has been applied to the upper 4 th Floor extension along Clarence Street (line of the covered terrace) with a further setback of around 5.0m to the bar itself, which assists greatly in helping this floor sit comfortably within its context, ensuring a smooth architectural transition between the higher approved building on the adjacent site and the main block on the application site.
5.54	The composition results in minimal visual impact with the massing reading as a background layer behind the profile of the new dormers, which can be clearly seen on the CGI above when viewed from Bedford Street. The setback areas will also provide valuable external terrace spaces, which together with the external pool and pool terrace, will provide a unique offer at rooftop level that complements the hotel use. It is noted that in addition to stair access, two guest lifts and a service lift also serve this upper floor, however, massing shown in sections, elevations and model extracts does not appear to account for any lift overruns which would generally extend above.
5.55	With regards to building form and façade articulation, the existing rhythm and proportions of the building are retained. The introduction of dormers enhances the overall vertical emphasis of the building and adds a contemporary slant on the roofscape whilst not being of a scale that dominant the appearance of the building. The retention of the existing shopfronts will also ensure that the existing rhythm of the ground floor frontage is respected.
5.56	The Urban Design Officer has suggested that conditions are included that require the Planning Service's prior approval of external materials including any replacement windows, replacement sloped roof, new dormers, infill sections to Ground Floor windows, new Ground Floor openings and glazed/aluminium profiled extension.
5.57	Criterion f. of Policy DES1 requires the provision of active frontages to ensure vibrancy throughout the day. This will also create a vibrant frontage onto the new public space within the internal courtyard, creating an attractive, enclosed space.
5.58	Active uses are proposed along the Bedford Street ground floor elevation either side of the hotel entrance and lobby comprising restaurant and coffee bar. Active uses are also proposed along Clarence Street, in the form of a restaurant and gym either side of the new access gate. The inclusion of a bike store (3 no. Sheffield type stands) and the installation of two bike stands to the pavement fronting the Bedford Street elevation, which are welcomed.
5.59	Servicing is provided to the rear north east corner of the building and accessed from Clarence Street via a new discreet service access. This service access serves bin stores, storage areas and staff facilities located deep within the planform. This arrangement maximises the potential for Ground Floor activity and animation along both elevations which is welcomed. It is noted that the internal bike store will also avail of this service access onto Clarence Street.

	<i>Siting and Alignment:</i>
5.60	Policy DES2 (masterplanning) states that planning permission will be granted for Major development where it accords with the principles a. to j.
5.61	It is considered that the proposal adopts a holistic approach to site assembly, layout and design that is mindful of adjacent sites whilst promoting an opportunity for urban repair on an important city centre streetscape. The proposal will provide a high-quality redevelopment scheme on an important landmark junction within the City Centre and reinvigorate aging built form within the Linen Conservation Area.
	<u>Climate change</u>
5.62	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. There is a presumption in retaining existing buildings. Policy ENV3 states that planning permission will be granted for development that incorporates measures to adapt to environmental change.
5.63	Through the reuse of existing buildings, the development contributes towards a sustainable form of development. The application is accompanied by a Climate Change Statement which identifies in detail, the measures that have been implemented to reduce the energy demand associated with the proposed development. These measures should be required to be implemented by condition. The proposal is considered acceptable having regard to Policy ENV2 and ENV3.
5.64	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.
5.65	The alterations and extensions allow for the incorporation of green roofs, a form of SUDs, which will help slow the rate of surface water run-off from the site aiding in reducing flood risk and improving water quality. The proposal is considered acceptable having regard to Policy ENV5.
	<u>Access and transport</u>
5.66	The site is located within an Area of Parking Restraint. No dedicated in-curtilage parking is proposed. Cycle parking is proposed on site. Pedestrian access to the proposed development site will be via Bedford Street. Cycle access to the proposed development site will be via Bedford Street.
5.67	The site is a highly accessible location within the City Centre. It is within short walking and cycling distance of the city centre and its shops, services and leisure. It has very good public transport links through access to buses and rail, and is in close proximity to the new Grand Central Station.
5.68	The inclusion of a bike store (3 no. Sheffield type stands) and is welcomed.
5.69	A Travel Plan has been submitted to support the proposal, which will be required to be implemented by condition.
5.70	Having regard to the highly sustainable location of the site and proximity to city centre car parks, the proposed access arrangements are considered acceptable.

5.71	<p>The proposal is considered acceptable having regard to Policies TRAN1, TRAN4, TRAN6, TRAN 8 and TRAN 9, and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p> <p><u>Health impacts</u></p>
5.72	<p>Policy HC1 seeks to ensure that all new developments maximise opportunities to promote healthy and active lifestyles. New developments should be designed, constructed and managed in ways that improve health and promote healthy lifestyles. This will include supporting active travel options, improving accessibility to local service centres, reducing the use of private car travel, adequate provision of public open space, leisure and recreation facilities, high quality design and promoting balanced communities and sustainable neighbourhoods.</p>
5.73	<p>The city centre site is highly accessible and provides excellent opportunities for active travel, including walking and cycling, through good linkages with the city centre and beyond. The scheme is a car free development and is supported by a Travel Plan. The proposed building would provide an attractive environment for people to work and stay in. The proposal is considered to satisfy the requirements of Policy HC1.</p> <p><u>Environmental protection</u></p>
5.74	<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.</p> <p><i>Contamination</i></p>
5.75	<p>A Preliminary Risk Assessment (PRA) has been provided by RPS Group Plc. (RPS) in which potential risks to human health and the water environment have been identified. A Conceptual Site Model (CSM) identified onsite potential sources as; asbestos from the construction of the current building, reduced quality made ground and the historical use of the site as a Spinning Mill.</p>
5.76	<p>RPS recommend a Generic Quantitative Risk Assessment (GQRA) which has not been presented. Both NIEA Regulation Unit (Land and Ground water Team) and BCC Environmental Health Unit have requested that a GQRA is submitted at application stage. However, as the existing building on site is currently in use, this places obvious restrictions on the possibility of carrying out further intrusive investigatory works on site. Given this, and in the interests of ensuring the appropriate investigations take place and satisfactory mitigation is implemented, it is advised that Grampian negatively worded conditions are attached to the approval requiring the submission of Detailed Quantitative Risk Assessment prior to commencement of works. If necessary a remediation strategy will be required by condition to ensure the appropriate mitigation is implemented on site to protect end users and the sub level environment. These conditions are recommended.</p> <p><i>Noise</i></p>
5.77	<p>Environmental Health recommended in their initial response that a noise impact assessment be submitted in support of the proposal. It also advised that '<i>...the neighbouring Ulster Hall building regularly operates as an entertainment venue whereby noise from amplified sound, stage loading/unloading operations and patrons may be noticeable in the vicinity of the venue; and as the agent of change, the applicant is</i></p>

	<p><i>mind ed to ensure that an appropriate level of façade insulation and alternative means of acoustically attenuated ventilation to hotel bedrooms is provided to ensure that current operations at the Ulster Hall are not negatively impacted when the proposed development becomes operational. It is, therefore, advised that further ‘attended’ noise monitoring is conducted at an elevated location close to the northern elevation adjacent to the Ulster Hall during a forthcoming music event.’</i></p>
5.78	<p>The applicant states that they have actively engaging with Ulster Hall who have agreed to forward on future events that are planned to operate after 11pm and are supportive of additional noise monitoring. Environmental Health has stated that the Planning Service may wish to secure this additional noise monitoring and subsequent submission of an updated Noise Impact Assessment in order to protect existing evening and night-time uses in line with the Local Development Plan and associated Supplementary Planning Guidance – Evening and Night-time Economy. This condition is recommended.</p>
5.79	<p>It is considered that a condition is necessary that requires the applicant to submit further information in relation to attended noise monitoring undertaken at a future event at Ulster Hall, and proposed façade insulation and alternative means of ventilation.</p> <p><i>Odour</i></p>
5.80	<p>Environmental Health advises that if the developer wishes to avoid complaint from future guests and ensure a high end /luxury hotel offering then they should consider appropriateness of installing extraction and odour abatement measures to a very high level of odour control. Nevertheless a ‘high’ level’ of odour control has been proposed and it is deemed suitable to protect off-site receptors. The elevation drawings have been updated to show the location and termination point of the proposed kitchen. The kitchen extraction point is discharging 1m above eaves level.</p>
5.81	<p>Environmental Health advises a condition to ensure the installation and retention of an appropriate odour abatement system. The condition is recommended.</p> <p><i>Air Quality</i></p>
5.82	<p>Environmental Health commented that no information was provided regarding the likely means of hot water and heating to serve the development.</p>
5.83	<p>It has subsequently been confirmed that the proposed heating system and water heating system to be installed will be electric. An external plant area has been shown on the Level 04 floor plan.</p>
5.84	<p>A condition is recommended that requires an updated air quality impact assessment for plant shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The proposal is considered compliant with Policy ENV1.</p> <p><u>Flood risk and drainage</u></p>
5.85	<p>Policy ENV4 states that planning applications in flood risk areas must be accompanied by an assessment of the flood risk in the form of a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). The Council will have regard to guidance publications produced by other authorities and prospective developers/applicants are advised to liaise early in the formulation of their proposals with DfI Rivers to clarify flooding or flood plain issues that may affect particular sites. In all circumstances, the council will adopt a precautionary approach in assessing development proposals in areas that may be subject to flood risk presently or in the future as a result of environmental change predictions.</p>

5.86	Flood Maps (NI) indicate that the site does not lie within the 1 in 100 year climate change fluvial, 1 in 200 year climate change coastal flood plain or in an area of predicted pluvial flooding. There are no watercourses within this site. The site may be affected by watercourses of which DFI Rivers has no record.
5.87	DFI Rivers has reviewed the Drainage Assessment submitted in support of the application and accepts its logic and has no reason to disagree with its conclusions.
5.88	Having regard to the advice of DFI Rivers, the proposal is considered acceptable with regard to flood risk and drainage, and compliant with Policy ENV4.
	<u>Waste-water infrastructure</u>
5.89	Policy SP1a requires that necessary infrastructure is in place to support new development. NI Water has indicated there is available capacity at the receiving Waste Water Treatment Works.
5.90	However, an assessment has indicated network capacity issues. This establishes significant risks of detrimental effect to the environment and detrimental impact on existing properties. The downstream catchment is constrained by overloaded sewage infrastructure. For this reason, NI Water is recommending connections to the public sewerage system are curtailed.
5.91	NIEA Water Management Unit is also concerned that the sewage loading associated with the above proposal has the potential to cause an environmental impact if transferred to the Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW). Given this concern NIEA have asked that a condition is attached requiring the method of sewage disposal to be agreed in writing with the Council prior to commencement of development. Shared Environmental Services has not raised any objection to the proposal and has requested the same condition is attached to any forthcoming approval.
5.92	Discussions are under way between the developer and NI Water with regard to a potential solution. It is also worth noting that there is an established mixed use building on the site, including restaurant and office space.
5.93	Regard is had to the significant level of unimplemented and extant permissions across the city which will not all come forward at once.
5.94	In order to ensure there will be no significant impact on the receiving infrastructure and to safeguard the environment a condition is recommended that requires the method of sewage disposal to be approved by the Council prior to the commencement of any development on site.
5.95	The proposal is considered acceptable having regard to Policy SP1A of the Plan Strategy, subject to the condition detailed below.
	<u>Waste Management</u>
5.96	A Waste Management Plan accompanied the planning application. It shows a bin storage area of 48 sqm within the rear of the site away from any of the public facing elevations with access from an alleyway along the northern boundary of the site.
5.97	The proposed waste management arrangements are considered acceptable. A condition will be attached ensuring adherence to the waste management plan.

	<u>Natural heritage</u>
5.98	Policy NH1 relates to the protection of natural heritage resources.
5.99	DAERA Natural Environment Division (NED) acknowledges receipt of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and notes that the Ecologist has assessed the building within the site to have bat roosting potential and advised that further surveys were required.
5.100	A bat survey was submitted in response to NIEA comments which demonstrated the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evidence indicating the presence of roosting bats within the adjoining structures was recorded during the emergence survey. • No bats were observed or heard over the course of the emergence survey, which would suggest a that there are likely no roosts within proximity of the site. • No significant loss of foraging habitat is predicted due to the nature of the site with a lack of vegetation present.
5.101	This survey was sent to NIA for consideration. NED is content that the proposed development is unlikely to significantly impact protected or priority species or habitats. NED notes that the Bat Survey has indicated that no bats were recorded emerging or re-entering the building, therefore NED is content that the building is unlikely to currently support roosting bats.
	<u>Impact on Protected Sites</u>
5.102	Following an appropriate assessment in accordance with the Regulations and having considered the nature, scale, timing, duration and location of the project, SES advises the project would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.
5.103	In reaching this conclusion, SES has assessed the manner in which the project is to be carried out including any mitigation. This conclusion is subject to the method of sewage disposal being agreed via planning condition prior to commencement of development; this condition is recommended.
5.104	The proposal is considered compliant with Policy NH1, Policy ENV1 and the relevant provisions of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement.
	<u>Employability and Skills</u>
5.105	The Developer Contribution Framework requires proposals for Major development to make a contribution towards Employability and Skills where necessary.
5.106	The Economic Development Unit recommends that Section 76 Developer Contribution clauses should be applied for the construction phase of the development.
	<u>Section 76 planning agreement</u>
5.107	It is considered necessary that the applicant enter into a Section 76 planning agreement to secure a Construction Employability and Skills Plan.

	<u>Pre-application Community Consultation</u>
5.108	The application was preceded by a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) which set out the applicant's proposals for pre-application community consultation. The statutory Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) (LA04/2023/4099/PAN) was submitted to the Council on 6 th February 2023.
5.109	The application is accompanied by a mandatory Pre-application Community Consultation Report (PACC). The PACC report describes the pre-application consultation undertaken by the applicant.
5.110	A Press Notice inviting the public to engage in the online pre-application community consultation information event was placed in the Belfast Telegraph on Monday 14 th March. A press statement was also prepared and issued, which detailed the proposal for the new hotel, and the significant investment this would bring to this area of Belfast.
5.111	Notice was served to a number of elected representatives on 6 th March 2023, and a number were issued with copies of the PAN.
5.112	During the week commencing 13 th March 2023, around 330 packs containing information leaflets, comment cards and self-addressed envelopes were delivered to residents and businesses identified within a 200m radius of the edge of the proposed development site.
5.113	An in-person Pre-Application Community Consultation Event was held in 44 Bedford Street, Belfast, BT2 7FF on Thursday 23 rd March 2023 from 1:00pm – 7:00pm. This event attracted 12 visitors who came to view the plans and discuss with the design team was present.
5.114	Additionally, a virtual consultation website was hosted at www.TheDeanBelfast.com which allowed visitors to submit feedback via a submission form and to browse and download the boards containing the proposed plans. The webpage was open for submission from Thursday 23 rd March to Thursday 20 th April 2023.
5.115	During the course of the consultation there were 392 unique visits to the website for a period of time greater than 30 seconds. There were six responses to this Pre-Application Community Consultation; four received by comment card through the post; one comment card submitted at the in-person consultation event at 44 Bedford Street and one response via the virtual consultation website. Of the four sample comments within the PACC report, three were positive highlighting good design, increased footfall and pointing to another hotel/ bar in a good location. The one negative comment said there were 'enough buildings going on'.
5.116	The feedback was reviewed, and the matters were considered within the PACC report.
5.117	It is considered that the Pre-Community Consultation Report submitted has demonstrated that the applicant has carried out their duty under Section 27 of the Act.
6.0	Recommendation
6.1	Having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission and Conservation Area Consent are granted subject to conditions and a Section 76 Planning Agreement.

6.2	Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive, subject to the receipt of satisfactory amendments to the design of the ground floor elevation onto Bedford Street.
6.3	In view of the concerns from internal conservation advice, the Conservation Area Consent application will need to be notified to the Department before the decision can be issued.
7.0	<p>DRAFT CONDITIONS</p> <p>LA04/2024/0483/F –planning permission:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission. Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. 2. No external facing materials shall 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. Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and to safeguard the setting of the Listed Building. 3. No external brickwork or render shall be constructed or applied unless in accordance with a written specification and a physical sample panel, details of which shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The sample panel shall be provided on site and made available for inspection by the Council for the duration of the construction works. The sample panel shall show the make, type, size, colour, bond, pointing, coursing, jointing, profile and texture of the external brick materials. Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and to safeguard the setting of Listed Buildings. 4. Notwithstanding the submitted details, the following external features shall not be installed, implemented or carried out unless in accordance with further details and a physical sample which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • replacement windows, • replacement sloped roof, • new dormers, • infill sections to Ground Floor windows, • new Ground Floor openings and, • glazed/aluminium profiled extension 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 building.

5. All hard and 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. All hard surface treatment of open parts of the site shall be permeable or drained to a permeable area. All hard landscape works shall be permanently retained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area.

6. Notwithstanding the submitted details, no development shall commence on site (other than site clearance, site preparation, demolition and the formation of foundations and trenches) unless details of foul and surface water drainage, including a programme for implementation of these works, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details, which shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: To ensure appropriate foul and surface water drainage of the site. Approval is required upfront because the design of the drainage is an integral part of the development and its acceptability.

7. Prior to the installation of any combustion plant(s) where the single or combined NOX emission rate is greater than 5mg/s, an updated air quality impact assessment for that plant shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The assessment shall include specification details, including emission rates and flue termination heights, of the proposed combustion systems for heating and hot water. The updated assessment must also demonstrate that there will be no significant adverse air quality impacts associated with operation of the proposed combustion plant and with the overall development. The combustion plant(s) and associated flue(s) must thereafter be installed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of public health and environmental protection.

8. No development shall commence on site (other than site clearance, enabling works or works to fulfil this condition) until a Quantitative Risk Assessment has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The Quantitative Risk Assessment shall consider the RPS report entitled: 'The Dean – Bedford Street – Preliminary Risk Assessment (Desk Study) Report DRAFT' (report reference: 794-NI-HCT-00903, dated 25th January 2024, version status: Final). The Quantitative Risk Assessment shall follow current Environment Agency and CIRIA guidance and British Standards and include:

- A detailed site investigation in line with BS 10175:2011+A2:2017. Any ground gas investigations shall be conducted in line with BS 8576:2013 and BS 8485:2015+A1:2019.

- A satisfactory assessment of the risks (including an updated

Conceptual Site Model), conducted in line with current Environment Agency guidance. Risks associated with ground gases shall be assessed under the methodology outlined in BS 8485:2015+A1:2019. Should the Quantitative Risk Assessment demonstrate that human health contaminant linkages exist on the site, then a Remediation Strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The Remediation Strategy 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.

9. In the event that a Remediation Strategy is required, 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.

10. If during the carrying out of the development, new contamination is encountered that has not previously been identified, all related development works shall cease, and the Council shall be notified immediately in writing. No further related development works shall proceed until this new contamination has been fully investigated in accordance with current Environment Agency and CIRIA guidance and British Standards.

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.

11. After completing the remediation works under Conditions 8, 9 and 10; and prior to occupation of the development, a verification report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. This report should be completed by competent persons in accordance with the Land Contamination: Risk Management (LCRM) guidance available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/landcontamination-how-to-manage-the-risks>. The verification report should present all the remediation, waste management and monitoring works undertaken and demonstrate the effectiveness of the

works in managing all the risks and wastes in achieving the remedial objectives.

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

12. Prior to construction of the development, the applicant must submit to and have agreed in writing by the Council, a Noise Impact Assessment detailing the noise mitigation measures to be installed within the development to address noise impact on the development. The Noise Impact Assessment, to be produced by a competent acoustic consultant, must be based on a representative noise survey and demonstrate that the proposed sound reduction specifications of the façade/structural elements are sufficient to achieve the internal noise levels specified in Annex H of BS8233:2014 – ‘Guidance on sound insulation and noise reduction for buildings’, if required with the windows closed and alternative means of acoustic ventilation provided.

Reason: In the interests of amenity.

13. Prior to occupation of the development, the noise mitigation measures and alternative means of acoustic ventilation, if required, as approved under condition 12 shall be installed as agreed in writing with the Council and maintained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure adequate levels of mitigation have been implemented to protect the amenity of hotel patrons.

14. The rating level (dBL_{A,r,T}) from the operation of all combined plant and equipment must not exceed the existing daytime and night-time background sound levels at the nearest noise sensitive premises, when measured or determined in accordance with BS4142:2014+A1:2019 ‘Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound’.

Reason: Protection of nearby amenity.

15. Prior to the commencement of cooking of foods within the hereby permitted development a kitchen extraction and odour abatement system shall be installed to suppress and disperse odours created from operations on the premises which achieves a ‘high’ level of odour control in accordance with the current EMAQ+ ‘Guidance on the Control of Odour and Noise from Commercial Kitchen Exhaust Systems’ (updated in May 2022). The outlet from any extract ventilation ducting shall be located as per drawing from TODD Architects titled ‘Proposed elevations 02’, referenced drawing no: 012, Rev P02 and dated 24/11/2023, and shall terminate at a height not less than 1m above the main eaves.

Reason: Protection of nearby amenity.

16. The installed kitchen extraction and odour abatement system, as detailed above, must be retained and maintained thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council.

Reason: Protection of nearby amenity.

17. 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.

Reason: To ensure that appropriate provision is made for storage and disposal of waste.

18. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the secure cycle storage area has been provided in accordance with the approved plans and shall be permanently retained as such at all times.

Reason: To promote active travel and to mitigate the absence of dedicated parking within the development.

19. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied or operated unless in accordance with the approved Travel Plan.

Reason: To promote sustainable travel patterns and off-set the demand for vehicular movements and/or parking.

20. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied unless the proposed have been implemented in accordance with the approved details. The climate change measures shall be retained in accordance with the approved details at all times.

Reason: To mitigate and/or adapt to climate change.

LA/04/2024/0480/DCA – Conservation Area Consent:

1. The demolition hereby granted must be begun within five years from the date of this consent.

Reason: As required by Section 105 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

2. This consent only relates to the walls / structures highlighted in red on drawing nos. 11-19 received on 19/03/24 (published on planning portal 29/03/24) and to no other part of the building/s or structure/s within the site.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt as to the extent of this consent, to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

3. No demolition shall commence on site unless a contract has been executed for the construction of the site in accordance with planning permission **LA04/2024/0483/F** and evidence of that contract has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with planning permission LA04/2024/0483/F.

Reason: As required by Sections 91(6) and 105 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Approval is required upfront because if redevelopment of the site does not take place it could leave the vacant site unsightly and harmful to the Conservation Area.

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ADDENDUM REPORT	
Committee Date: 10 th March 2026	
Application ID: LA04/2024/0015/F	
Proposal: Erection of 53 residential units (including 43 dwellings and 10 apartments) including creation of access, internal roads, landscaping and associated works.	Location: Lands at Cabin Hill, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4
Referral Route: Application for Major development	
Recommendation: Approval subject to conditions and Section 76 planning agreement	
Applicant Name and Address: Fermac Properties and Tealstone Developments Limited 33 Ferryquay Street Derry / Londonderry BT18 9JQ	Agent Name and Address: Gravis Planning 1 Pavilions Office Park Kinnegar Drive Holywood BT18 9JQ
Date Valid: 05/12/2025	
Target Date: 03/07/2026	
Contact Officer: Ed Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management)	
<p>Background:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This application was deferred by the Planning Committee at its 17th February 2026 meeting so that it can review additional information following a fire at the application site, understood to have taken place on Sunday 15th February. 2. This report should be read in conjunction with the original report to the February 2026 meeting, appended. <p>Fire damage:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The applicant confirms that the “Auditorium” on the northern part of the application site was the subject of the fire. The location of the Auditorium is shown below (red arrow) with the Listed Building also shown (yellow arrow). 	
	

4. The applicant has provided external and internal photographs of the building following the fire (see **Appendix 1**). Officers visited the site on 27th February 2026; photographs from the site visit are provided at **Appendix 2**.

5. The applicant describes the extent of the fire damage as follows:

'Damage was limited to a small area to the rear of the auditorium approximately 7M x 7M square within the building – I have attached photographs of the damage caused to this area. The Fire was contained to the small area within the photograph and did not spread to the rest of the auditorium as shown. It resulted in the plasterboard ceiling sheeting coming down from the joists within this area. The fire vented through the broken windows within this area and the building suffered no other significant damage. The fire did not burn any roof timbers or steelwork and the roof itself is a metal deck roof which was not damaged. There was no damage to the external of the building and I have also enclosed an external photograph of the building.'

6. It would seem that the fire did not result in any structural damage to the building.

7. The applicant confirms that the Listed Building was unaffected by the fire.

8. Officers have since visited the site to view the fire damage. Photographs from the site visit are provided at **Appendix 2**.

9. Regarding whether the fire damage has impacted on viability of the scheme, the applicant comments as follows:

'As you will be aware, this building is due to be demolished to accommodate our scheme and does not physically impact on our plans. Other than indirectly increasing our costs in financing the site by delaying the consideration of the planning application by a further 3 weeks, the fire damage has not affected the financial viability of the scheme as previously submitted and the demolition and clearance costs remain unchanged.'

10. It is understood that in attending to the fire, NIFRS advised local residents to shut their doors and windows as a precautionary measure because of concerns about asbestos pollution. The applicant subsequently commissioned an environmental consultant to undertake an asbestos assessment. The applicant states that the reports confirmed no presence of asbestos, either airborne or on the ground. The asbestos assessment is in two parts and has been uploaded to the NI Planning Portal as background information.

11. Environmental Health has been invited to make any relevant comments.

Demolition of the fire damaged and other buildings:

12. The Committee is advised that other than the Listed Building, the buildings are not protected (the site is not located in a Conservation Area nor Area of Townscape Character). Therefore, demolition of the buildings is permitted development (i.e. an application for planning permission is not required to remove them).

13. Moreover, as set out in the Planning History section of the original Planning Committee report, there is extant planning permission for redevelopment of the site, including demolition of the same buildings.

14. This means that the buildings can be demolished at any time outside this planning application process.

Recommendation

15. The Committee is advised that the fire incident has had no material impact on the assessment of the application. There appears to be no structural damage to the fire damaged building, which is proposed to be demolished anyway. Its demolition is permitted development and there is an extant permission for redevelopment of the site and demolition of the buildings; the buildings can be demolished at any time outside this planning application process.

16. According to the consultant's report, there is no evidence of asbestos. In any event, this would be an issue regulated by other environmental regulations.

17. There is no evidence that the fire has impacted on the viability of the scheme.

18. Having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, and the assessment of the proposal in the original Committee report, on balance, it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.

19. Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement, and deal with any other issues that arise, provided the issues are not substantive.

Appendix 1 – photographs of the Auditorium damaged by the fire





Appendix 2 – photographs from officer site visit on 27.2.26





Development Management Report

Committee Date: 17th February 2026

Application ID: LA04/2024/0015/F

Proposal:

Erection of 53 residential units (including 43 dwellings and 10 apartments) including creation of access, internal roads, landscaping and associated works.

Location:

Lands at Cabin Hill, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4

Referral Route: Application for Major development

Recommendation: Approval subject to conditions and Section 76 planning agreement

Applicant Name and Address:

Fermac Properties and Tealstone
Developments Limited
33 Ferryquay Street
Derry / Londonderry
BT18 9JQ

Agent Name and Address:

Gravis Planning
1 Pavilions Office Park
Kinnegar Drive
Holywood
BT18 9JQ

Date Valid: 05/12/2025

Target Date: 03/07/2026

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

Executive Summary:

This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of 53 residential units (including 43no dwellings and 10no apartments), including ancillary works for the creation of an access from Upper Newtownards Road, internal roads, landscaping and associated works.

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

- Principle of housing in this location
- Housing density
- Affordable housing
- Housing mix
- Adaptable and accessible accommodation
- Design, placemaking and landscape impact
- New open space
- Impact on heritage assets
- Climate change
- Residential quality and impact on amenity
- Open space
- Access parking, and transport
- Health impacts
- Environmental protection
- Flood risk and drainage
- Waste-water infrastructure
- Natural heritage
- Section 76 planning agreement
- Pre-application Community Consultation

The site is located within the development limits of Belfast. In the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001, the site is un-zoned “white land”. The site is within a Local Landscape Policy Area (LLPA) in both the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) and (v2014), with the exception of the south east corner which is “white land”. The site also encroaches into the edge of a Site of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCI) in the draft BMAP 2015 (v2014). The north east corner of the site is identified as open space.

There is a listed building within the application site boundary (red line), but which is excluded from this proposal.

The proposal is within the development limits of the city and is a sustainable location for new housing. The proposal would result in a loss of a small area of open space, but additional open space is to be provided as part of the scheme. As such, the principle of housing at this location is acceptable.

The density of the proposal is less than the guidance band but taking account the low density of the surrounding area and the previous permission for conversion of the Listed Building to apartments this is on balance acceptable.

The overall design, height, scale, massing, layout, and road configuration is considered to be acceptable and complainant with planning policy.

There is a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on the site, but adequate mitigation measures would be in place to ensure no trees are lost or damaged from during the construction phase if planning permission is granted.

No affordable housing is proposed on the grounds of viability. The applicant’s viability assessment has been appraised by an independent Quantity Surveyor who concurs with the with the assessment.

There are no objections to the proposal from statutory or non-statutory consultees. A list and summary of consultees is contained within the main body of the report.

Two third-party representations have been received in opposition to the proposal. These are both from the same household and the issues are addressed in the main report.

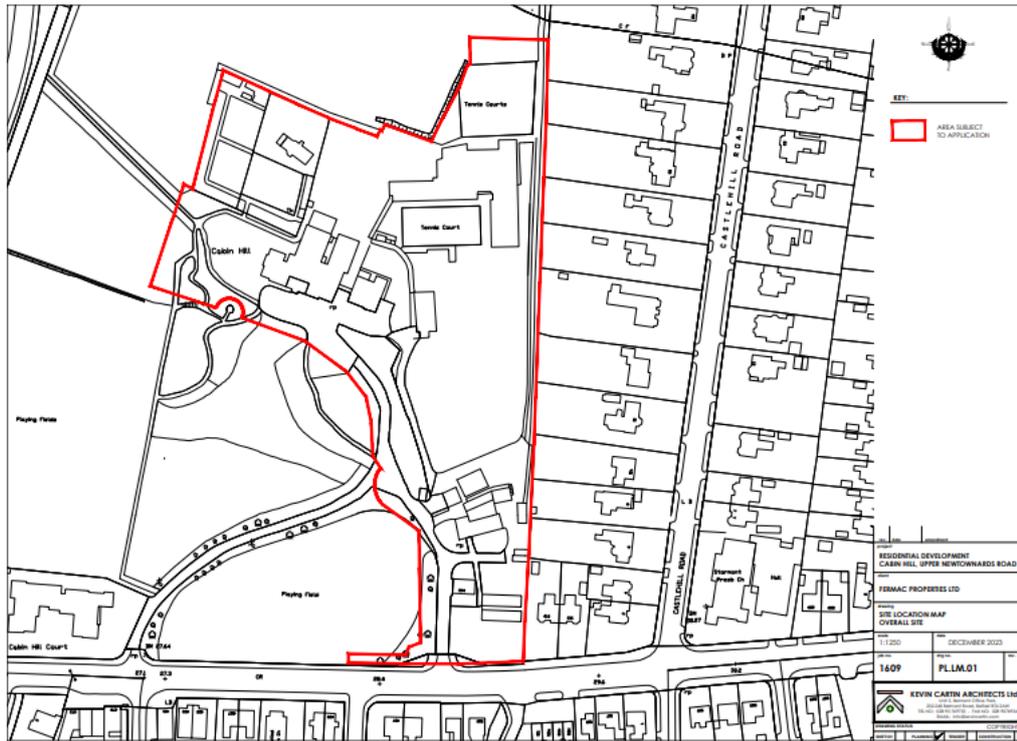
Recommendation

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

Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement, and deal with any other issues that arise, provided the issues are not substantive.

DRAWINGS AND IMAGERY

Site Location Plan:



Proposed site layout:



Sample Proposed Elevations (House Type A):



HOUSE TYPE A 5 BED DETACHED

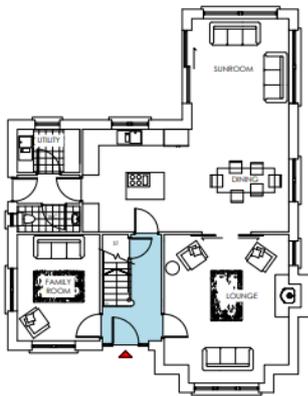
PLANNING
SEVIN CARIN ARCHITECTS LTD. 1609 NEWTOWNARDS ROAD, BELFAST
FERMAC PROPERTIES LTD
CABIN HILL UPPER NEWTOWNARDS ROAD, BELFAST
HOUSE TYPE A HANDED - DETACHED PRINCIPAL ELEVATION
1609_PLA.04



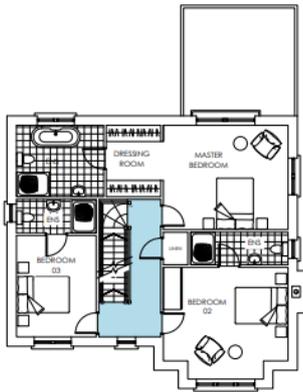
HOUSE TYPE A 5 BED DETACHED

PLANNING
SEVIN CARIN ARCHITECTS LTD. 1609 NEWTOWNARDS ROAD, BELFAST
FERMAC PROPERTIES LTD
CABIN HILL UPPER NEWTOWNARDS ROAD, BELFAST
HOUSE TYPE A - DETACHED - SUNROOM REAR & FLANK ELEVATIONS
1609_PLA.05

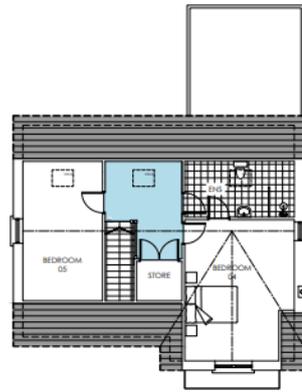
Sample Proposed Floor Plans (House Type A):



GROUND FLOOR PLAN
2610 SQ FT



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

PLANNING

KEVIN CARM ARCHITECTS LTD.
1609 UPPER NEWTOWNARDS ROAD, BELFAST

FERMAC PROPERTIES LTD.

CARM HILL
UPPER NEWTOWNARDS ROAD, BELFAST

HOUSE TYPE A - DETACHED - SUNROOM
FLOOR PLANS

1609 FL.A.01

HOUSE TYPE A 5 BED DETACHED

Sample Proposed Elevations (House Type B):



PRINCIPAL ELEVATION

PLANNING

KEVIN CARM ARCHITECTS LTD.
1609 UPPER NEWTOWNARDS ROAD, BELFAST

FERMAC PROPERTIES LTD.

CARM HILL
UPPER NEWTOWNARDS ROAD, BELFAST

HOUSE TYPE B - DETACHED
PRINCIPAL ELEVATION

1609 FL.B.04

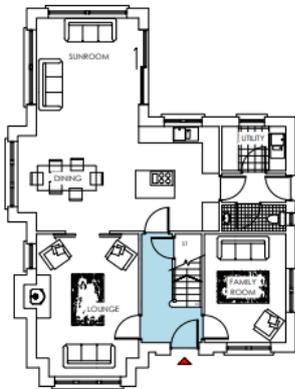
HOUSE TYPE B 5 BED DETACHED



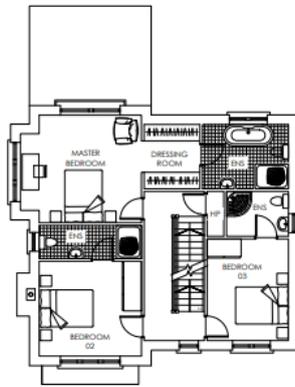
FLANK ELEVATION
HOUSE TYPE B 5 BED DETACHED

PLANNING
KEVIN CARMICHAEL ARCHITECTS LTD.
FERMAC PROPERTIES LTD
CABIN HILL
UPPER NEWTOWNARDS ROAD, BELFAST
HOUSE TYPE B - DETACHED
REAR & FLANK ELEVATIONS
1609 FL.B.05

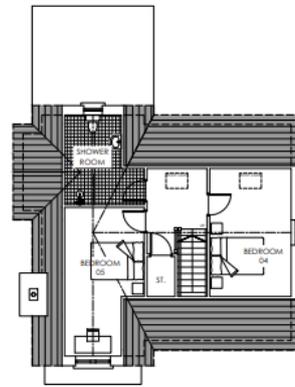
Sample Proposed Floor Plans (House Type B):



GROUND FLOOR PLAN
 2284 SQ FT



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

HOUSE TYPE B 5 BED DETACHED

PLANNING
KEVIN CARMICHAEL ARCHITECTS LTD.
FERMAC PROPERTIES LTD
CABIN HILL
UPPER NEWTOWNARDS ROAD, BELFAST
HOUSE TYPE B - DETACHED - SUNROOM
FLOOR PLANS
1609 FL.B.01

Sample Proposed elevations (House Type D):



PLANNING
KEVIN CARM ARCHITECTS LTD. 1609 PLD.04
FERRAC PROPERTIES LTD
CABIN HILL UPPER NEWTONWARDS ROAD, BEEFAST
HOUSE TYPE D - DETACHED PRINCIPAL ELEVATION
1609 PLD.04

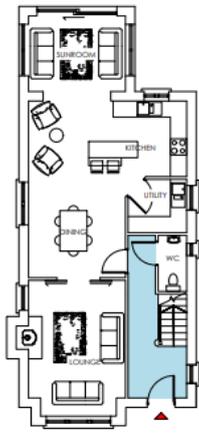
HOUSE TYPE D 4 BED DETACHED



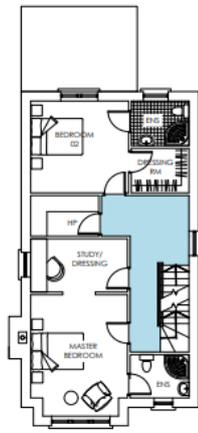
PLANNING
KEVIN CARM ARCHITECTS LTD. 1609 PLD.03
FERRAC PROPERTIES LTD
CABIN HILL UPPER NEWTONWARDS ROAD, BEEFAST
HOUSE TYPE D - DETACHED ELEVATIONS
1609 PLD.03 A

HOUSE TYPE D 4 BED DETACHED

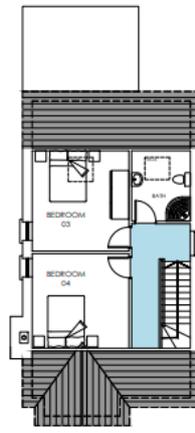
Sample Proposed Floor Plans (House Type D):



GROUND FLOOR PLAN
1990 SQ FT APPROX.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

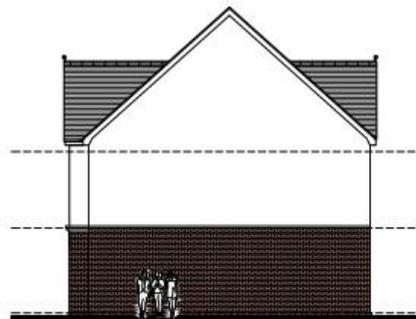
PLANNING
BRIN CARIN ARCHITECTS LTD.
1609 NEWTONWARDS ROAD, BELFAST
TEL: 028 2632 2222
WWW.BRINCARINARCHITECTS.COM
FERMAC PROPERTIES LTD
CABIN HILL
UPPER NEWTONWARDS ROAD, BELFAST
HOUSE TYPE D - DETACHED
FLOOR PLANS
1609_P.L.D.01

HOUSE TYPE D 4 BED DETACHED

Sample Proposed Elevations (House Type E):



PRINCIPAL ELEVATION



FLANK ELEVATION



REAR ELEVATION

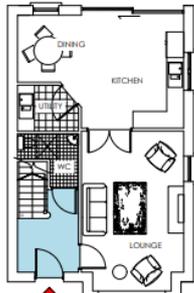


FLANK ELEVATION

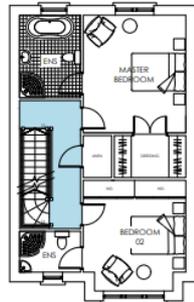
PLANNING
BRIN CARIN ARCHITECTS LTD.
1609 NEWTONWARDS ROAD, BELFAST
TEL: 028 2632 2222
WWW.BRINCARINARCHITECTS.COM
FERMAC PROPERTIES LTD
CABIN HILL
UPPER NEWTONWARDS ROAD, BELFAST
HOUSE TYPE E - 4 BED DETACHED
ELEVATIONS
1609_P.L.E.02

HOUSE TYPE E 4 BED DETACHED

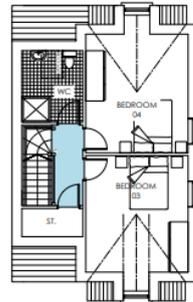
Sample Proposed Floor Plans (House Type E):



GROUND FLOOR PLAN
1710 SQ.FT



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

HOUSE TYPE E 4 BED DETACHED

PLANNING	
KEVIN CABIN ARCHITECTS LTD. 100, NEWCASTLE ROAD, BELFAST, BT18 7JG TEL: 028 2632 2222 FAX: 028 2632 2223 WWW.KCARCHITECTS.COM	
FERMAC PROPERTIES LTD. 100, NEWCASTLE ROAD, BELFAST, BT18 7JG TEL: 028 2632 2222 FAX: 028 2632 2223 WWW.FERMACPROPERTIES.COM	
CABIN HILL UPPER NEWCASTLE ROAD, BELFAST	
HOUSE TYPE E - DETACHED FLOOR PLANS	
1609 PLE.01	

Sample Proposed Elevations (House Type F-G):



HOUSE TYPE F-G 4 BED TOWNHOUSE - PLOTS 46-49

PLANNING	
KEVIN CABIN ARCHITECTS LTD. 100, NEWCASTLE ROAD, BELFAST, BT18 7JG TEL: 028 2632 2222 FAX: 028 2632 2223 WWW.KCARCHITECTS.COM	
FERMAC PROPERTIES LTD. 100, NEWCASTLE ROAD, BELFAST, BT18 7JG TEL: 028 2632 2222 FAX: 028 2632 2223 WWW.FERMACPROPERTIES.COM	
CABIN HILL UPPER NEWCASTLE ROAD, BELFAST	
HOUSE TYPE F-G - 4 BED TOWNHOUSE PRINCIPAL ELEVATION	
1609 PLF-G.04	



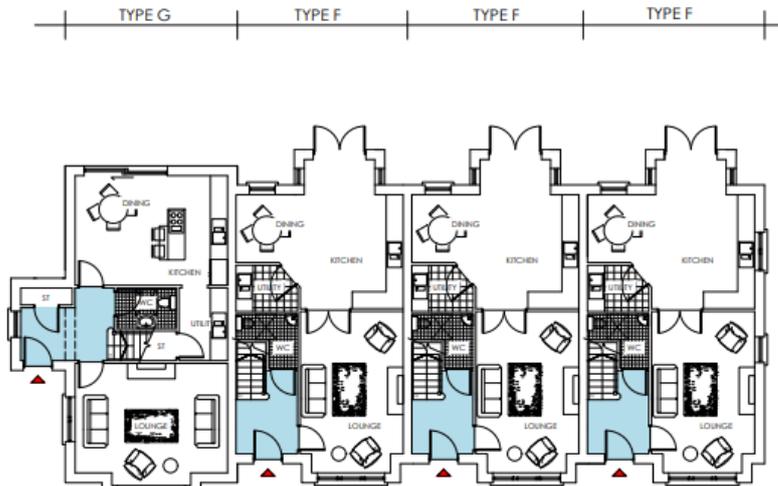
FLANK ELEVATION

FLANK ELEVATION

HOUSE TYPE F-G 4 BED TOWNHOUSE - PLOTS 46-49

PLANNING	
	KEVIN CAHILL ARCHITECTS LTD.
	FERMAC PROPERTIES LTD.
CABIN HILL UPPER NEWTOWNARDS ROAD, BELFAST	
HOUSE TYPE F-G - 4 BED TOWNHOUSE FLANK ELEVATIONS	
1609 PLF-G.06	8

Sample Proposed Floor Plans (House Type F - G):



GROUND FLOOR PLAN
G - 1910 SQ.FT
F - 1746 SQ.FT

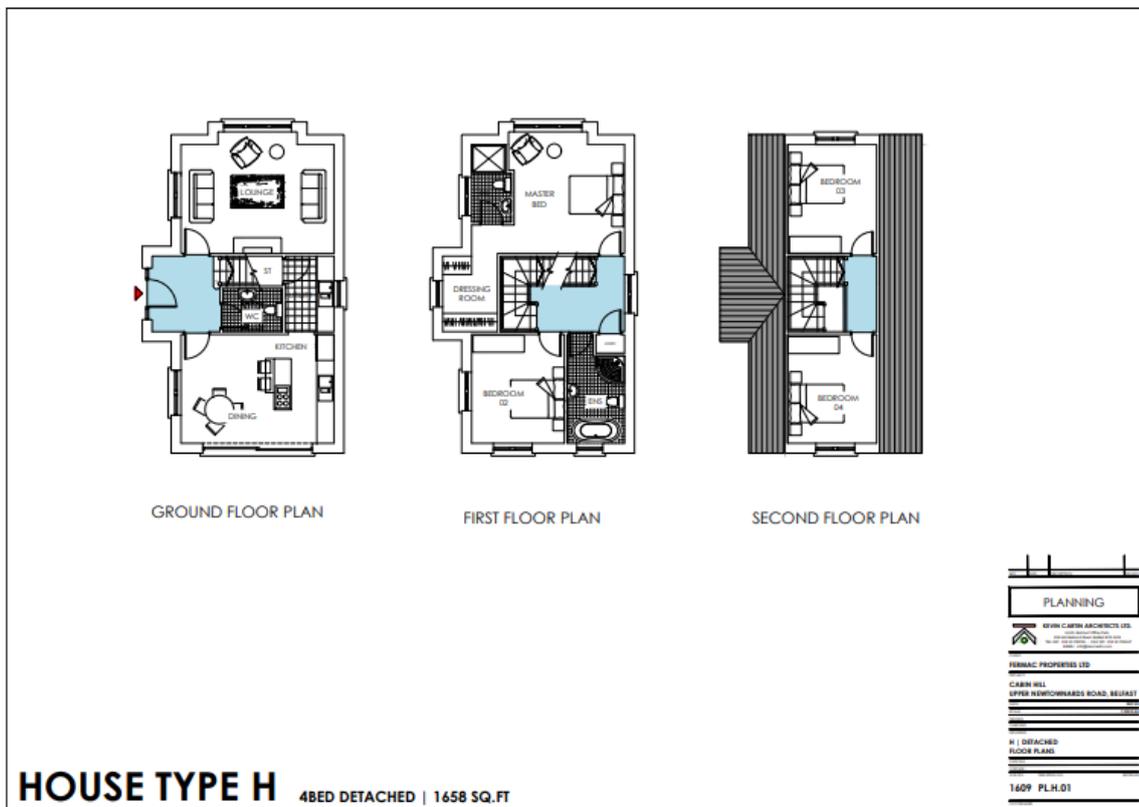
HOUSE TYPE F-G 4 BED TOWNHOUSE

PLANNING	
	KEVIN CAHILL ARCHITECTS LTD.
	FERMAC PROPERTIES LTD.
CABIN HILL UPPER NEWTOWNARDS ROAD, BELFAST	
HOUSE TYPE F-G - 4 BED TOWNHOUSE GROUND FLOOR PLAN	
1609 PLF-G.01	A

Sample Proposed Elevations (House Type H):



Sample Proposed Floor Plans (House Type H):



Proposed elevations (apartment block)



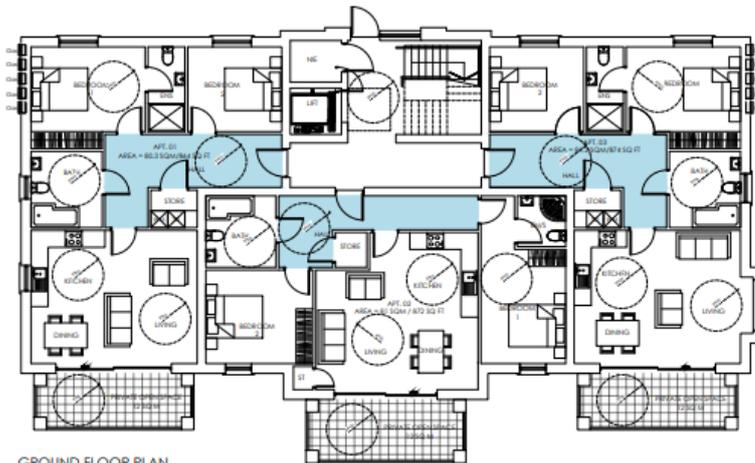
ZINC CLADDING
 RENDER FINISH
 (PAINTED TO SELECT
 COLOUR)
 FACING BRICK (RED)
 UPVC WINDOWS (WHITE)



FRONT ELEVATION

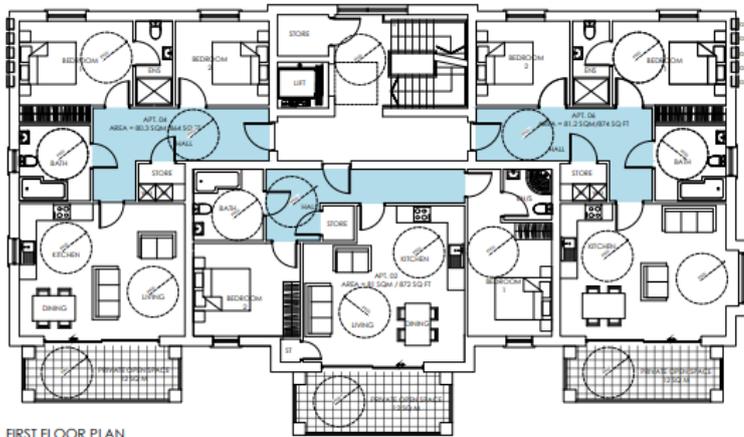
PLANNING	
KEVIN CARMICHAEL ARCHITECTS LTD <small>100-102, BELSHAM STREET, BELFAST, BT7 1JG</small>	
FERMAC PROPERTIES LTD	
CARMICHAEL <small>UPPER NEWTOWN ROAD, BELFAST</small>	
10 BLOCK APARTMENTS FRONT ELEVATION	
1609 PLAPT.05	B

Proposed Floor Plans (apartments):



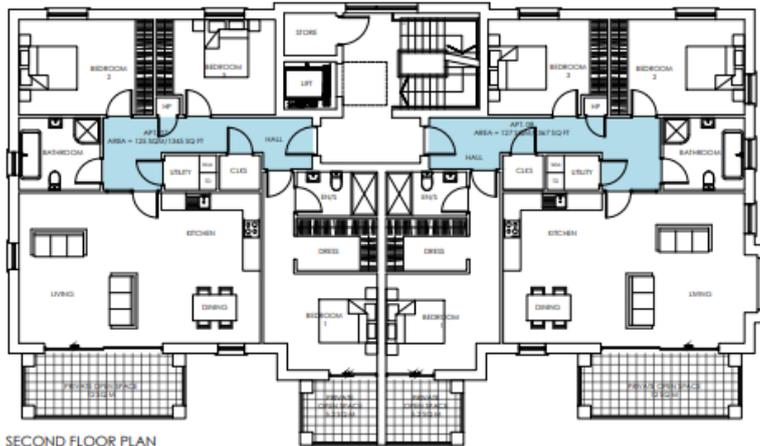
GROUND FLOOR PLAN

PLANNING	
KEVIN CARMICHAEL ARCHITECTS LTD <small>100-102, BELSHAM STREET, BELFAST, BT7 1JG</small>	
FERMAC PROPERTIES LTD	
CARMICHAEL <small>UPPER NEWTOWN ROAD, BELFAST</small>	
10 BLOCK APARTMENTS GROUND FLOOR PLANS	
1609 PLAPT.01	B



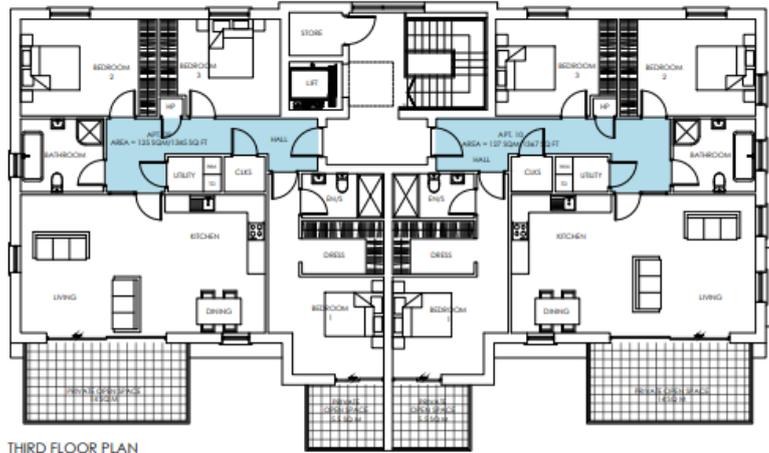
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

PLANNING	
EWING CARM ARCHITECTS LTD. <small>100 NEWTONPARADE ROAD, BELFAST, BT1 1JL</small>	
EWING CARM PROPERTIES LTD. <small>100 NEWTONPARADE ROAD, BELFAST, BT1 1JL</small>	
CABIN HILL <small>100 NEWTONPARADE ROAD, BELFAST</small>	
<hr/>	
10 BLOCK APARTMENTS FIRST FLOOR PLANS	
<hr/>	
1409_PLA.F1.02 8	



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

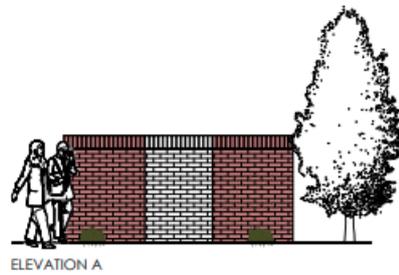
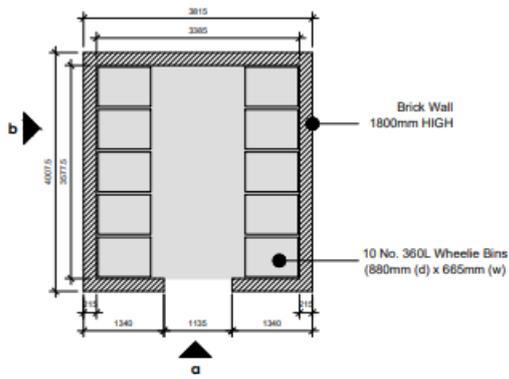
PLANNING	
EWING CARM ARCHITECTS LTD. <small>100 NEWTONPARADE ROAD, BELFAST, BT1 1JL</small>	
EWING CARM PROPERTIES LTD. <small>100 NEWTONPARADE ROAD, BELFAST, BT1 1JL</small>	
CABIN HILL <small>100 NEWTONPARADE ROAD, BELFAST</small>	
<hr/>	
10 BLOCK APARTMENTS SECOND FLOOR PLANS	
<hr/>	
1409_PLA.F1.03 A	



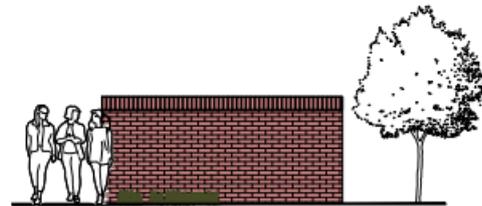
THIRD FLOOR PLAN

PLANNING	
KEVIN CAHILL ARCHITECTS LTD. <small>1609 NEWTOWNARDS ROAD, BELFAST</small>	
FERMAC PROPERTIES LTD. <small>1609 NEWTOWNARDS ROAD, BELFAST</small>	
CABIN HILL OFFER NEWTOWNARDS ROAD, BELFAST	
18 BLOCK APARTMENTS THIRD FLOOR PLAN	
1609 PLAP1.04	A

Bin Store (apartments)



ELEVATION A



ELEVATION B

PLANNING	
KEVIN CAHILL ARCHITECTS LTD. <small>1609 NEWTOWNARDS ROAD, BELFAST</small>	
FERMAC PROPERTIES LTD. <small>1609 NEWTOWNARDS ROAD, BELFAST</small>	
RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT CABIN HILL, OFFER NEWTOWNARDS RD	
BIN STORE	
1609 PLBS.01	

<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 the grounds of a former prep school. It is partly occupied by several derelict school buildings, including a listed building. Whilst the latter is included within the application site (red line), it does not form part of the proposals.</p> <p>The site contains mature trees that are subject of a Tree Preservation Order. The site includes areas of open space that has become overgrown.</p> <p>Levels decline towards the east boundary. The rear gardens of domestic properties at Castlehill Road back onto the site along its east boundary. The site is bounded by open space and trees on its southwest, west and north sides. The site is accessed from Upper Newtownards Road to the south of the site.</p> <p>The surrounding area is characterised by open space, commercial, community and residential uses in buildings of eclectic styles and sizes.</p> <p>Description of Proposed Development</p> <p>The application seeks full planning permission for residential development comprising the erection for 43 dwellings and 10 apartments (53 residential units in total), including improvement to the existing access, internal roads, landscaping and associated works.</p> <p>The application follows a Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) which was not concluded and with issues remaining outstanding at the point of submission of the planning application.</p>
<p>2.0</p> <p>2.1</p> <p>2.2</p> <p>2.3</p> <p>2.4</p> <p>2.5</p>	<p>PLANNING HISTORY</p> <p>Relevant planning history is summarised below.</p> <p>LA04/2023/3808/PAN – Lands at Cabin Hill, Campbell College, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast. Amendments to extant approval Z/2007/2609/RM to include reduced density and revisions to layout and house types.</p> <p>LA04/2023/2777/PAD – Lands at Cabin Hill, Campbell College, Upper Newtownards Road, Proposed amendment to Reserved Matters approval Z/2007/2069/RM to include reduced unit number (42 units), reconfiguration of internal road and associated ancillary works. The current planning application was submitted before the PAD process was completed.</p> <p>LA04/2022/0664/LDP – Lands at Cabin Hill, Campbell College, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast. Confirmation that proposed completion of Unit 9 of planning permission ref. Z/2007/2069/RM would be lawful. Approved 19/01/2023.</p> <p>LA04/2018/2863/F and LA04/2018/2862/LBC – Cabin Hill House, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast. Conversion and restoration of former preparatory school to 12No. private apartments including removal of inappropriate extensions. Approved on 19/06/2019</p> <p>LA04/2024/1085/CLOPUD – Lawful commencement of Planning Permission LA04/2018/2863/F and associated Listed Building Consent LA04/2018/2862/LBC by insertion of ground floor window in the southeast elevation. Approved 08/11/2024.</p>

2.6	Z/2007/2069/RM – Lands at Cabin Hill, Campbell College, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4. Residential development of 66 units. Approved. Historical.
2.7	Z/2003/2938/O – Lands at Cabin Hill, Campbell College, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4. Residential Development (Outline Permission). Approved. Historical
3.0	<p>PLANNING POLICY</p> <p>Development Plan – Plan Strategy</p> <p>3.1 <u>Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy 2035</u></p> <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> <p><i>Operational Policies:</i></p> <p>Policy HOU1 – Accommodating new homes Policy HOU2 – Windfall housing Policy HOU4 – Density of residential development Policy HOU5 – Affordable housing Policy HOU6 – Housing Mix Policy HOU7 – Adaptable and accessible accommodation</p> <p>Policy DES1 – Principles of urban design Policy DES2 – Masterplanning approach for major development Policy RD1 – New residential developments Policy CI1 – Community Infrastructure Policy BH1 – Listed Buildings Policy BH5 – Archaeology Policy HC1 – Promoting healthy communities Policy TRAN1 – Active travel – walking and cycling Policy TRAN 2 – Creating an accessible environment Policy TRAN4 – Travel plan Policy TRAN6 – Access to public roads Policy TRAN8 – Car parking and servicing arrangements Policy ENV1 – Environmental quality Policy ENV2 – Mitigating environmental change Policy ENV3 – Adapting to environmental change Policy ENV4 – Flood Risk Policy ENV5 – Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) Policy GB1 – Green and blue infrastructure network Policy OS3 – Ancillary open space Policy TRE1 – Trees Policy NH1 – Natural Heritage Policy LC1 – Landscape impact Policy LC1C – Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs)</p>

<p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p> <p>3.5</p>	<p><u>Supplementary Planning Guidance</u></p> <p>Affordable Housing and Housing Mix Residential Design Placemaking and Urban Design Masterplanning approach for Major developments Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems Transportation</p> <p>Development Plan – zoning, designations and proposals maps Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) BUAP Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014)</p> <p>Regional Planning Policy Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (Edition 2, 2025) (SPPS)</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 in principle. NI Water – No objection. NIHE – Supports the proposal for social housing.</p> <p><u>Non-Statutory Consultees</u></p> <p>Environmental Health – No objection. BCC LDP Housing – No objection. BCC LDP Environment – No objection. BCC Trees and Landscape – No objection.</p> <p><u>Representations</u></p> <p>The application has been advertised in the press and neighbours notified. 2No. third party representations have been received. One of these failed to provide any comments. The other forwarded a letter that they sent directly to the agent.</p> <p>The following concerns were raised within the third-party letter than was submitted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Claims that the information outlined in the Pre-Application Community Consultation Report (PACCR) is factually incorrect. The information brochure, that was distributed to households was not delivered to Castlehill Road residents until after the public event. 2. Also claims that the information brochure was incomplete as it excluded drawings and elevations of the ‘property type’. 3. No consultation was made with local residents when trees, protected by a TPO, were removed from the site prior to the submission of the application. 4. The proposal will impact on protected trees.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. The proposal 'does not mirror' the architecture of existing properties in close proximity to the application site. 6. Strongly object to the proposed road adjacent to the rear of properties at Castlehill Road due to potential for noise and light pollution from car headlights. 7. Heights of proposed apartment block is diametrically opposed to the existing housing on Castlehill Road and will result in loss of light and overlooking. 8. The proposed changes between the 2007 application and the proposal 'are radically different' and will be closer to the common boundary (Castlehill Road) than the previous permission. 9. The developer is attempting to disguise fundamental design changes as an amendment or revision to the previous planning permission (ref. LA04/2007/2069/RM) granted in 2009. The proposal is a completely different design proposal, with an increase in the scale and heights of buildings. 10. Despite the unit numbers decreasing, the density has increased in parts of the site in comparison to the 2009 planning permission. 11. No information has been submitted on how the developer plans to meet statutory obligations to protect bats. <p>4.5 Regarding points 1 and 2, in accordance with legislation, the applicant has submitted a Pre-Application Community Consultation report (PACCR) outlining how they carried out their statutory public consultation. They state in this report that they distributed leaflets to all properties within 200m of the site one week prior to holding the public event. A copy of the leaflet did not include the plans or drawings, nor is there a legal requirement to do so. However, the brochure did include a link to a website where these were viewable for a limited period.</p> <p>4.6 Not all of the trees on the site are protected by the TPO. However, consent was given for tree surgery in 2019 (see ref. LA04/2019/2603/CONTPO). There is no duty to publicise or notify neighbours on applications for works to trees.</p> <p>4.7 In respect of points 4-7 and 10, these are material planning considerations and are addressed in the assessment within the main body of this report.</p> <p>4.8 The concerns raised in points 8 and 9 have been noted and the Planning Service advised the applicant to revise the description of the proposal to remove reference to the proposal being a modification to the planning permission granted in 2009 under ref. LA04/2007/2069/RM. The amended description was readvertised in the press on 22nd November 2024. Neighbours were also re-notified.</p> <p>4.9 The original submission included an ecology report outlining how habitats of protected species, including bats, will be managed during and after the construction phase. DAERA NIEA has been consulted and after several rounds of further information, is content with the revised information submitted by the applicant.</p>
<p>5.0</p> <p>5.1</p>	<p>PLANNING ASSESSMENT</p> <p>Development Plan Context</p> <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	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.
5.3	<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 Policies</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 un-zoned “whiteland” within the development limit.</p>
5.7	<p>Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) – the site is within the development limit. It is within a Local Landscape Policy Area (LLPA) within the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan, with the exception of the southeast corner which is “whiteland”.</p>
5.8	<p>Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014) – the site is within the development limit. It is within a Local Landscape Policy Area (LLPA) within the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan, with the exception of the southeast corner which is whiteland. The site also encroaches into the edge of a Site of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCI).</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 is 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 housing in this location • Housing density • Affordable housing • Housing mix • Adaptable and accessible accommodation • Design, placemaking and landscape impact • New open space • Impact on heritage assets • Climate change • Residential quality and impact on amenity • Open space • Access and transport • Health impacts • Environmental protection • Flood risk and drainage • Waste-water infrastructure • Natural heritage • Section 76 planning agreement • Pre-application Community Consultation <p><u>Principle of housing in this location</u></p> <p><i>Protection of open space:</i></p> <p>5.11 Policy OS1 'Protection of Open Space' states a general presumption in favour of retaining open space, whether specifically identified in the LDP or not. This presumption against the loss of existing open space will apply irrespective of ownership, public access, physical condition or appearance.</p> <p>5.12 Policy OS1 states that development resulting in the loss of open space will only be considered in exceptional circumstances where it is clearly shown that redevelopment will bring substantial community benefits that decisively outweigh the loss of the open space. In all circumstances, the council must be satisfied that the loss of any open space would not result in detriment to the overall green infrastructure provision.</p> <p>5.13 The application site is shown in red in the extract from draft BMAP 2015 (v2014) at Figure 1, overleaf. This shows that the site is mostly "white-land" with the exception of the northeast corner which was previously used as ancillary tennis courts for Cabin Hill school but forms part of a wider parcel of land beyond the site boundary that is specifically identified as existing open space in the development plan.</p> <p>5.14 The tennis court is approximately 1,875 sqm in size. The proposed housing scheme would include areas of open space amounting to 3,242 sqm, resulting in a net increase of around 1,350 sqm. Having regard to the reprovision of open space elsewhere within the development, the proposal is considered acceptable having regard to Policy OS1.</p>
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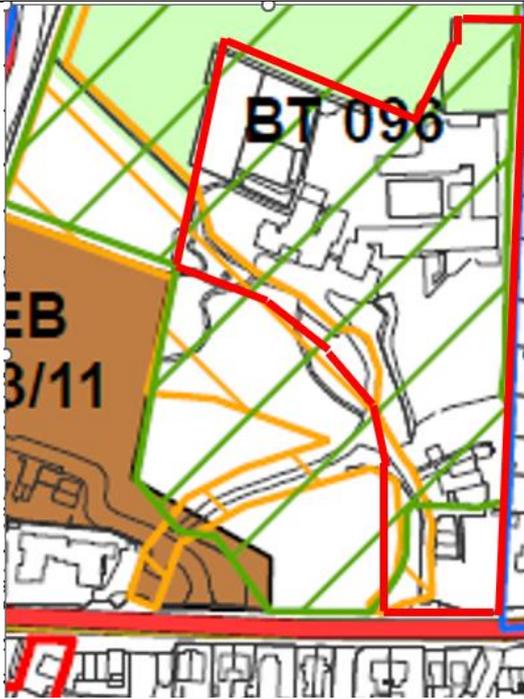


Figure 1: Extract from dBMAP 2015 (v2014)

Windfall housing:

- 5.15 The application site is located within a partly previously developed site (windfall) within 'rest of Belfast city'. 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.
- 5.16 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.
- **The site is suitable for housing** –the site is a sustainable location and for the reasons set out previously in relation to loss of open space, is considered suitable in principle for housing.
 - **The location is accessible and convenient to public transport and walking cycle infrastructure** – the site is on the Glider route and close to cycling / walking routes and is highly accessible to shops, services, amenities and public transport.
 - **Provision is made for any additional infrastructure required as a result of the development** – suitable infrastructure is in place to support the proposal.
- 5.17 The proposal will provide quality general needs housing that will add to the variety of housing stock offered in this location.
- 5.18 The site benefits from extant planning permission for housing as confirmed by an application for a Lawful Development Certificate (LA04/2022/0664/LDP). The previous permission is a material planning consideration.

5.19	<p>The proposal is considered compliant with Policies HOU1 and HOU2 and the principle of housing in location is considered acceptable.</p> <p><u>Housing density</u></p>
5.20	<p>Policy HOU4 seeks to promote appropriate housing densities to ensure effective use of land, a finite resource, in sustainable locations.</p>
5.21	<p>The proposal is for 53 residential units in a location where Policy HOU4 states a target density of 25 - 125 dwellings per hectare (ha). The site area is 2.8ha, therefore, the proposed development equates to a density of only 19 dwellings per ha (dpa), which is outside the density band. However, there is already an extant approval for the conversion of the listed school building into 12 residential units. This is within the application site redline boundary and shares the same access. As such it could reasonably be included in the overall density of dwellings on this site, which raises the dpa to 23. This is closer to the target density of 25-125 for this area.</p>
5.22	<p>Policy HOU4 states that these bands are for guidance only and development proposals outside these bands will be considered on their merits. The immediate area contains lower density residential development in the form of houses with gardens which is similar to that as proposed. On balance, the density is considered acceptable, having regard to Policy HOU4.</p> <p><u>Affordable housing</u></p>
5.23	<p>Policy HOU5 of the Plan Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for residential development on sites greater than 0.1 hectares and/or containing 5 or more dwelling units where a minimum of 20% of units are provided as affordable housing.</p>
5.24	<p>The proposal is for 53 residential units, therefore, Policy HOU5 requires a minimum of 11 of the residential units (rounded up) to be provided as affordable housing.</p>
5.25	<p>However, the applicant states that the provision of affordable housing would make the scheme unviable. The applicant originally submitted a viability assessment to the Council in June 2024. This was independently appraised on behalf of the Council by Brian Jennings Quantity Surveyor (BJQS). This concluded that the scheme was unviable as a fully market housing scheme without affordable housing.</p>
5.26	<p>Given the passage of time since the original viability assessment, the applicant submitted an updated assessment in November 2025. This has again been independently appraised by BJQS on behalf of the Council. The independent appraisal again concludes that the scheme is unviable as a fully market housing scheme without affordable housing. Developer profit would have to drop to around 5% for the scheme to be marginally viable, which would be well below the assumption of 15% developer profit advised by the Council's <i>Affordable Housing and Housing Mix</i> Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).</p>
5.27	<p>Policy HOU5 states that '<i>Where it can be demonstrated that it is not sustainable or viable for a proposed development to meet the requirements of this policy in full, the council will consider suitable alternatives on a case-by-case basis.</i>' The amplification text of Policy HOU5 set out in para 7.1.36 of the LDP provides further clarity on this matter and states that: '<i>It is recognised that there may be occasions where a particular housing site in Belfast might not be able to meet the affordable housing demands in full, so flexibility has been built into the policy to ensure that viability can be taken into account on a case-by-case basis. Where a developer is able to demonstrate, through</i></p>

evidence provided in accordance with agreed assessment approaches to viability testing, that the development is unviable if affordable housing obligations are met in full, alternative approaches will be considered. This could include varying the mix of affordable housing units, the provision of affordable housing on a suitable alternative site within the local area or, in exceptional circumstances, a reduction in the proportion of affordable housing in lieu of a financial contribution to an affordable housing development elsewhere in the district.'

5.28 Further guidance is contained in the Affordable Housing and Housing Mix SPG on the alternative approaches referred to above which are set out and considered below.

1. A deference in the timing of affordable housing requirements pertaining to the site (i.e. a phasing option);
2. A variation in the required mix of tenure, size or type of affordable units on the site, in accordance with the hierarchy of products outlined above;
3. A reduction in affordable units on the site;
4. Provision of the affordable housing units on an alternative site within the same local housing area; or
5. Commuted sum, equivalent to cost of constructing affordable unit(s) on site.
6. The maximum viable financial contribution in lieu of affordable provision.

5.29 However, given the significant level of unviability of the scheme, it is not considered that the above options are realistic or reasonable. BJQS has advised that all the options listed above would, to varying degrees, reflect additional cost and render the scheme even more unviable than as currently appraised.

5.30 The applicant has agreed to a viability review mechanism which would require a fresh viability assessment to be undertaken within 12 months of the last independent appraisal to ascertain whether the economic conditions have sufficiently changed to allow the development to include an element of affordable housing or provide a Financial Developer Contribution in lieu of on-site provision. This would be secured through a Section 76 planning agreement.

5.31 In conclusion, the proposal does not provide affordable housing and is contrary to Policy HOU5. However, having regard the viability of the scheme and its benefits in terms of delivering new housing, and subject to the requirement for the viability review mechanism, this is considered acceptable.

Housing mix

5.32 The proposal comprises the following housing mix:

House Type	Beds	Floorspace sq/m	Number	Proportion
Detached	5	212 – 243	15	28.3%
Detached	4	165 - 196	20	37.7%
Townhouse	4	158 - 167	8	15.1%
Apartment	3	125-126	4	7.5%
Apartment	2	80-81	6	11.3%
Total			53	

5.33 Policy HOU6 and the Affordable housing and Housing Mix Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) note that the Plan Strategy sets out an overall housing mix requirement for Belfast over the plan period, which can be summarised as a 30:70 split

	of flats/apartments to houses and a split of 40:60 of properties with 2 bedrooms or less to those with at least 3 bedrooms.
5.34	The current mix proposed of 47no. 3+ bed units and 6no. 2 bed units provides a 11:89 split between 2 bedroom and larger properties. The mix of flats to houses is approximately 20:80 split. However, there is a Listed Building (Cabin Hill House) within the application site (red line) that has an extant planning approval for conversion to 12no residential apartments with 8no 2 bed units and 4no 3 bed units. This development shares the same access as the proposal and could form part of the same development when implemented. When taking into account these units, the ratio of 2 bedroom to larger properties changes to approximately 20:80; and apartments to houses to approximately 30:70. However, it is acknowledged that the conversion of the Listed Building to apartments is not certain and may not be delivered.
5.35	The applicant has also provided information from a local estate agent who argues that in their opinion the housing mix reflects the local housing needs and responds positively to the existing housing characteristics in the immediate vicinity. They also state that smaller homes in this area would be contextually inappropriate, in respect of market demand, and better suited to Ballyhackamore, Belmont, Barnets Road, Knock and the adjacent suburbs. However, this information of itself is not considered to justify the proposed housing mix.
5.36	Nevertheless, having regard to the other considerations set out above, whilst it would be preferable to have more smaller units within the development, on balance, the proposed housing mix is considered acceptable, having regard to Policy HOU6.
	<u>Adaptable and accessible accommodation</u>
5.37	Policy HOU7 requires that all new homes should be designed in a flexible way to ensure that housing is adaptable throughout all stages of life. Policy HOU7 sets six criteria (a. to f.) to be met in order to help deliver adaptable and accessible homes. The Policy also requires that at least 10% of units in residential developments, of 10 units or more, to be wheelchair accessible and provides an additional nine criteria (g. to o.) which these units must meet.
5.38	The proposed plans demonstrate how the development would be capable of meeting all of the criteria of Policy HOU7. All dwellings have generous space provision, downstairs WCs and accessible bathrooms on the same floor as main bedroom. It has been demonstrated that 6no (11%) of the 10no proposed apartments are wheelchair accessible, therefore meeting the minimum requirement. Each of those units is supported by a parking space for disabled users that are located directly to the front of the main entrance door to the apartment block, which also has a canopy to shelter from the weather. All surfaces to the entrance from the car parking spaces are level or gently sloping with a firm surface. The proposed private amenity areas for these units are balconies / terraces with hard surfaces with dimensions that would be able to accommodate wheelchairs. It is therefore considered that all relevant criteria of Policy HOU7 has been satisfied.

<u>Design, placemaking and landscape impact</u>	
5.40	The proposal has been assessed against the SPPS, <i>Creating Places</i> and Policies SP5, DES1, DES2, RD1, and RD3 of the LDP: Plan Strategy (PS). Policies SP5 and DES1 promote good placemaking, high quality design and the importance of proposals responding positively to local context addressing matters such as scale, height, massing, proportions, rhythm, and materials avoiding any negative impact at street level. Policy DES2 advocates adopting a holistic approach to site layout that is mindful of adjacent development.
5.41	Policy DES1 states that planning permission will be granted for new development that is of a high quality, sustainable design that makes a positive contribution to placemaking and goes onto list 11 criteria, (a) to (k). <i>Layout:</i>
5.42	The proposal comprises a residential cul-de-sac with ingress and egress via the same access, which is from the Upper Newtownards Road. The road layout is to be traditional and consist of two main roads through the site onto which most houses will face towards. Open space will be subdivided into 5 separate 'areas' throughout the development. Dwellings will be positioned mostly in linear form along the road and on their own plots. This form is not unlike the layout of the adjacent housing development at Lacefield. As such, it is considered to be in conformity with the general character of the surrounding residential area. Given the separation distances, a buffer zone of trees and the proposed orientation of the dwellings, it is considered that any conflict with existing neighbouring dwellings is unlikely.
5.43	In respect of visual impact, external views of the development from the existing public realm will be limited due to the depth and width of the site, and screening from existing housing at Castlehill Road to the east and Lacefield to the west. Trees on lands abutting the front of the site, many of which are protected, will also assist integration of the proposal and provided screening. Internally, parking for the apartment block is to the rear and mostly screened from public view from the main road through the development. Therefore, the proposal is considered to comply with Policy RD1 a. and b, and Policy DES1 a. and c. <i>House types:</i>
5.44	The proposal consists of a block of apartments containing 10no units over 4 storeys and 43 dwellinghouses. The houses come in a ranges of different house types of a standard two-storey design. Whilst most are detached, a number of townhouses are also provided. Each house will be gabled with chimneys. This will be in keeping with the eclectic character of the surrounding streets. This complies with Policy RD1 (a) and Policy DES1 a and b. <i>Finished Materials:</i>
5.45	Each house will be finished in either red brick, render or a mix of both, in keeping with the area. Roof tiles will be black / blue smooth tiles. Samples of these will be requested by condition if permission is granted.

5.46	<p><i>Boundary treatments:</i></p> <p>The front curtilages of all dwellings will be defined by low beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>) hedge rows with the exception of plots 46 to 53. The rear gardens will be defined by 1.8 metre timber fencing. Elsewhere, rendered brick walls and metal railings will be used where sides of gardens abut common areas or carriageways. This is compliant with Policies DES1 and RD1.</p>
5.47	<p><i>Existing trees and shrubs:</i></p> <p>Many of the existing trees on the site are protected by a confirmed Tree Preservation Order (TPO). These are to be retained where feasible and compensatory tree planting will be implemented where existing trees are to be felled either due to poor condition or to facilitate the development. A tree survey and report has been submitted in support of the proposal which includes tree protection measures in accordance with recognised industry standards outlined in BS 5837:2012 '<i>Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations</i>'.</p>
5.48	<p>The Council's Tree Officer has been consulted and is content with the proposal. This is considered to be in adherence with Policy TRE1.</p>
5.49	<p><i>Proposed Planting:</i></p> <p>The proposed planting consists of a mix of different species of trees including rowan, beech, apple, cherry, ornamental pear, lime 'greenspire' and acers planted between heights of 2.5m - 5m within the site at various locations including open spaces, site boundaries and garden trees in each individual plot. These will be supplemented with shrub planting within the site to help promote visual amenity offering.</p>
5.50	<p>The submitted landscape management and maintenance plan set out how the existing trees along with proposed landscaping features will be maintained to ensure they form landscaping features within the site for future years which will promote visual amenity and have future surgery to help mitigate future risks from arising. This is compliant with Policies TRE1, DES1 and RD1.</p>
5.51	<p><i>Levels:</i></p> <p>The topography of the site is undulated with gentle slopes rising from the south (front) to a central plateau in the middle of the site. Levels decline in the middle towards the east boundary and the rear of adjoining properties at Castlehill Road and towards the north (rear). The proposal responds to these levels with minimal requirement for cut-and-fill. Where cut-and-fill will occur, retaining walls of between 600mm and 1200mm max will be required to ensure levels are usable. The existing driveway that runs adjacent to the east boundary will be close to where part of the new road will meander through the site. This will require an increase in levels by between 1 and 1.5 metres approx. at this point. However, this will be screened from the rear of existing properties along Castlehill Road by buffer zone several metres wide of retained trees augmented with new planting. This is compliant with Policy RD1 a. and the associated Residential Design SPG (paragraph 3.1.6).</p>

	<i>Landscape character:</i>
5.52	The site is part of a wider Local Landscape Policy Area (LLPA). Policy LC1 is applicable to all new development within any designated landscape. This states that new development should seek to protect and, where appropriate, restore or improve the quality and amenity of the landscape.
5.53	In this case, the proposal includes the retention of existing mature trees and hedgerows which would limit the impact of the proposal on the wider landscape. It will also incorporate the wall of an historic walled garden and is sympathetic to a listed building on the site (see section on Impact on Heritage Assets).
5.54	Policy LC1C specially applies to proposals within LLPAs. Given the existing character of the site, which is overgrown and containing several derelict school buildings, its natural screening and location on the edge of the wider LLPA, the proposal would not have a significant impact on the amenity, character, environmental quality or natural or built and cultural heritage features within the LLPA.
5.55	The proposal is considered compliant with Policies LC1 and LC1C.
	<i>Amenity Space:</i>
5.56	Policy RD1 criterion (d) requires new residential development to make provision for appropriate open space. Each house is on a private plot with ample garden space whilst each apartment will have its own private terrace or balcony.
5.57	The Departmental design guide <i>Creating Places</i> advises that private open amenity space within new residential development schemes in suburban areas should have an average 70sq/m per unit, while no unit should have private open space under 40sqm. Each dwelling has private amenity space behind the building line. The minimum rear garden size is 50sq/m for any individual house and the largest is 220sq/m. This exceeds the minimum size of 40sq/m and the overall average for the development exceeds 70sqm per unit. This is compliant with Policy RD1 criterion a.
5.58	The justification and amplification of Policy RD1 outlines private open space for apartments may take the form of recessed balconies and roof terraces. <i>Creating Places</i> advocates external private amenity space of between 10 and 30 sqm per residential apartment unit. This is accepted in the form of private communal open space in the form of landscaped areas, courtyards or roof gardens. 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. Therefore, in this case, the figure should be towards the higher figure. Each apartment will have its own private balcony ranging from 12sq/m to 19.5sq/m. The average size of individual balconies will be 14.69sq/m. This is greater than the minimum standard of 10sq/m as per the guidance but is lower for a suburban area. However, the residents will be able to avail of the communal open space within the wider development as well as access to existing open space in the wider locality, which is deemed acceptable under the policy. The communal open space is assessed, below.
5.59	The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the paragraphs 4.23 to 4.36 of the SPPS, Policies DES1 and RD1 of the LDP PS, and <i>Creating Places</i> .

	<p><u>New open space</u></p>
5.60	<p>Policy OS3 ‘Ancillary open space’ states that all new residential developments of 25 units or more will only be granted where open public space is provided. A normal expectation is at least 10% of the total site area.</p>
5.61	<p>The application site has a total site area of 2.9ha. 10% of this is required for shared open space provision (29,046sqm / 10 = 2,904.6sqm). The applicant indicates total open space as 3,242sqm (11.16%). This is broken this down into four separate areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area A (1,451sqm) contains a significant number of protected trees (refer to Tree Retention Plan); • Area B (263sqm) marginally encroaches into the redline boundary of the planning permission for the change of use of the apartments, but this is not significant and does not impact on the approval; • Area C (663sqm) is unusable open space as it lined with protected trees (refer to Tree Retention Plan) and acts as a buffer between the site and rear gardens at Castlehill Gardens; • Area D (422sqm) appears to be useable, but it is adjacent to the access road and is only a narrow strip.
5.62	<p>The Justification and amplification of Policy OS3 (paragraph 10.1.18) states that open space must be of recreational or amenity value i.e. ‘useable’. However, proposed Areas A (1,451sqm) and C (663sqm) contain significant tree cover and therefore are not fully “useable”. Discounting these areas, it would reduce the useable open space to 1,128sqm, which is less than 5% of the overall site.</p>
5.63	<p>However, Policy OS3 states that provision at a rate of less than 10% may be acceptable where it would benefit from ease of access to areas of existing public open space. The applicant has demonstrated that the site is within walking distance from several existing public open spaces that have various amenity functions. These include Stormont Estate (500 metres from application site) which includes various public amenities such as an outdoor gym, woodland trails, BBQ area, and children’s playpark. In addition, Thornhill Parade public green (400m); and Comber Greenway (550m) are close by.</p>
5.64	<p>Having regard to the proximity of the site to existing open space, the proposal is considered acceptable having regard to Policy OS3.</p>
	<p><u>Impact on heritage assets</u></p>
5.65	<p>Cabin Hill Preparatory School building is within the curtilage of the site and is a Listed Building. DfC 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, and advised that it is content that the proposal would not have any negative impact on this building, subject to a condition regarding samples of brick materials for use in the adjacent walled garden being made available for inspection. This condition is recommended.</p>
5.66	<p>It is considered that the proposal would not adversely affect the setting of the listed building or other heritage assets, compliant with the relevant provisions of the SPPS and Policy BH1.</p>

	<u>Climate change</u>
5.67	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.
5.68	This policy also places an expectation for development proposals to seek to avoid demolition where feasible. The applicant has stated that it is not possible to avoid demolition in this case as existing buildings are in an extremely poor state of repair with collapsed roofs and walls and the buildings on site are both physically and functionally obsolete and many of them are structurally unsound. A site visit by officers confirms that the buildings are in a poor state due to years of dereliction.
5.69	<p>Policy ENV2 states that where demolition is proposed, measures should be included to minimise waste through reuse of building materials. The following measures are proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recovery of suitable brick, timber and steel from existing buildings for re-use on site; • All hardcore materials will be crushed on site and re-used throughout the site for construction purposes. • It is estimated that c.90% of materials from demolished buildings will be recycled and reused with all hardcore (c.75%+ of building makeup) being reused on site, with only a small proportion incapable of reuse (i.e. fixtures and fittings).
5.70	The above measures can be secured by condition should permission be granted.
5.71	<p>Policy ENV2 also promotes the incorporation of sustainable design features where feasible. The applicant has provided details on the various sustainable design features which will be incorporated into the development. These measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where possible, dwellings have been orientated to maximise solar gain; • all houses will be constructed to “A” rated EPC standards and the lifetime operational costs of the houses will be minimised to ‘Near Zero’ carbon buildings standards’ traditional block construction will mean that houses will last significantly longer than the typical 60-year design lifetime of a house, thereby making their real-world embodied carbon similar or lower to timber frame construction; and the houses will also be more easily recycled than timber frame at the end of their life cycle, as there are less hard-to-recycle plastics required in the wall make up of traditional construction, thereby improving their end-of-life sustainability.
5.72	Overall, the proposal incorporates appropriate and feasible measures to mitigate environmental change and incorporates sustainable design features. Again, these can be secured by condition if permission is granted.
5.73	<p>Policy ENV3 states that permission will be granted for proposals that incorporate measures to adapt to environmental change. The policy includes 9 criteria (a to i) of measures that may be included in development proposals. This proposal includes the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of traditional block construction to ensure resilience and safety of each house during extreme weather events, by providing a higher tolerance to prolonged damp and wet conditions (criteria c and g);

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to having high levels of thermal insulation, the use of traditional block construction techniques will provide important thermal mass within the buildings to store solar gain in sunny weather and to passively regulate the internal temperature of the houses during excessively warm periods, thereby reducing heating requirement of the houses in winter and avoiding the need for air conditioning within the houses during summer periods (criterion d); • The main storm drainage system throughout the site is designed to SuDS standards and the discharge of storm water from the site is below the green-field runoff rate for the site to avoid excessive discharge from the site into local watercourses. This will avoid any potential for localised flooding (criterion f and i); • The proposal also incorporates permeable paving around the patio and driveway areas of dwellings, which will further minimise the runoff of storm water from the site (criterion f and i); • The site is not located near an existing floodplain area. The site is quite elevated relative to the Upper Newtownards Road, and the houses are set on average 200mm above the surrounding ground level, meaning that they are resilient in a flash-flood event (criterion i); • The proposal retains the vast majority of the trees on the site, and the proposal will introduce bat boxes to the trees and houses to enhance biodiversity of the site (criterion b and e); and • Additional bio-diversity enhancement measures throughout the site include the planting of additional native trees, shrubs and flowers and the introduction of new green amenity space within the scheme, to help promote biodiversity and facilitate increased permeability of rainfall in storm events (criterion b).
5.74	<p>Overall, the proposal incorporates appropriate measures to adapt to environmental change and incorporates sustainable design features, which includes resilience to current and future climate conditions. These measures are considered to satisfy Policies ENV2 and ENV3.</p> <p><i>Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems:</i></p>
5.75	<p>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. As pointed out above, the site includes extensive communal green open space areas, trees and shrubs and grass lawns in gardens in addition to the proposed use permeable bitmac and paving in driveways and patios areas. The main storm drainage system throughout the site is designed to SuDS standards and the discharge of storm water from the site is below the green-field runoff rate for the site to avoid excessive discharge from the site into local watercourses. These measures are considered to help minimise flood risk and therefore the proposal is acceptable having regard to Policy ENV5.</p> <p><u>Residential quality and impact on amenity</u></p>
5.76	<p>Policies DES1, and RD1 highlight the need to minimise the impact of overshadowing and loss of daylight on both new and existing residents and the promotion of quality residential environments.</p>

Impact on neighbouring amenity:

- 5.77 The nearest existing residential properties to the application site are on its east boundary at Castlehill Road. However, potential for impact on existing residential amenity such as overlooking, dominance and overshadowing will be minimised by a buffer zone of existing trees and proposed planting along this boundary from the rear boundaries of numbers 12 to 22 Castlehill Road. The new access road through the site will run parallel to this buffer, further reducing impacts from the siting of new dwellings. Impacts on numbers 614 Upper Newtownards Road, numbers 6-10 and 24 Castlehill Road will be minimal due to orientation of dwellings and levels and new boundary screen planting.
- 5.78 The side gable of Plot 22 faces towards the rear of number 24 Castlehill Road. There are two upper floor windows in this gable wall; however, these are to be treated with obscure glass. The same occurs at site 3, which faces onto the rear of number 6 Castlehill Road. These windows will also be treated with obscure glass. This can be secured via a condition.
- 5.79 The orientation of the dwellings, at a 90-degree angle from rear of existing dwellings, will also minimise potential for overlooking whilst separation distances from any new dwelling to the rear of any existing dwelling is in excess of the 20 metres.
- 5.80 Internally, the separation distances between all dwellings adhere to the minimum standards as advocated by *Creating Places* where these are back-to-back. This is considered to adhere to the relevant provisions of the SPPS Policy RD1 and Policy DES1.

Waste Management

- 5.81 Criterion I of Policy RD1 states that planning permission will only be granted if provision is made for the disposal and storage of waste. Each house will have ample storage space for bins. The apartments will have a dedicated communal bin storage area with an area of 21sq/m approx. at a distance of 14.5m from the main entrance of the apartment block. This is sufficient to store the number of bins required for 12 units. The waste provision for the apartment blocks is broken down as follows:

Waste Type	Number	Area Required	Total Area Required
1100L Bins	2	3.1m x 3.2m	9.92
660L Bins	2	2.2m x 3.0m	6.60
140L Bins	3	2.0m x 1.8m	3.60
Total Area required			20.12
Total Area provided			21.00

- 5.82 This is compliant with standards outlined in the Planning and Waste Infrastructure SPG.
- 5.83 Policy DES1 states that any external bin storage areas should not have a negative impact at street level which would result in the creation of dead frontage or unnecessary clutter. There are no external bin storage areas which will have a negative impact at street level. Therefore, no negative impact is provided at street level that would result in the creation of dead frontage or unnecessary clutter. General waste will be collected kerbside on a fortnightly basis by the Council and will be collected by a medium size refuse vehicle.

5.84	<p>The proposed development is therefore considered to be in compliance with Policies RD1 and DES1.</p> <p><u>Access, transport and parking</u></p> <p><i>Accessibility:</i></p>
5.85	<p>The site is a highly accessible location within the city having direct access to the road network and public transport including the Glider. It is within short walking and cycling distance of local shops, services, leisure and employment opportunities. Provision is made for sheltered and secure cycle parking within the proposed apartment block. The proposal accords with Policy TRAN1.</p> <p><i>Travel Plan:</i></p>
5.86	<p>The applicant has provided a Travel Plan that demonstrates that the proposed development is currently easily accessible to 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 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 proposed apartment block.</p>
5.87	<p>The Travel Plan commits to a travel fund of £99,343.20 to fund green travel measures for promoting alternative to car use, including the option of travel cards, car club membership, bicycle vouchers and Belfast Bikes membership. The Travel Plan and travel fund would be secured by means of a Section 76 planning agreement.</p> <p><i>Parking provision:</i></p>
5.88	<p><i>Creating Places</i> design guide outlines parking requirements for residential developments.</p>
5.89	<p>The number of spaces required by the guidance is determined by the house type and the number of bedrooms per unit. The total number of spaces required for this development based on this guidance will be 144 spaces.</p>
5.90	<p>In respect of spaces for dwellinghouses, the guidance allows for parking provision that is divided between off-street and on-street parking.</p>
5.91	<p>In this case, each dwellinghouse would have 2no spaces in-curtilage, which equates to 86no spaces. An additional 42no spaces would be provided on-street within the proposed development, which gives a cumulative total of 128no spaces.</p>
5.92	<p>There is a requirement of 1.75 spaces per apartment unit for 3 bed apartments and 1.5 spaces for 2 bed apartments (there are 6no 2-bed; and 4no 2-bed units proposed), which equates to a requirement of 16.5 no spaces for the 10no apartments. A total of 20no spaces are proposed for the apartments.</p>
5.93	<p>The table below shows the breakdown of car park spaces required per house type juxtaposed to the number of spaces proposed.</p>

House Type	Beds	Number	Spaces Required	Spaces Proposed (incurtilage)	Spaces Proposed (communal)
Detached	5	15	48	30	18
Detached	4	20	60	40	20
Townhouse	4	8	20	16	4
Apartment	3	4	7	8	0
Apartment	2	6	9	12	0
	Total	53	144	106	42
				Total	148

5.94

The level of car parking spaces within the development is compliant with the Departmental *Creating Places* and *Parking Standards*.

5.95

DfI 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 the relevant provisions of the SPPS and Policies TRAN1, TRAN2, TRAN4, TRAN6 and TRAN8.

Health impacts

5.96

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.

5.97

The site is highly accessible and provides excellent opportunities for active travel, including walking and cycling, through good linkages with the city and public amenity. Active travel will be further encouraged through the travel plan and green measures proposed as part of the application. The site is within short walking distance of leisure amenities, playing pitches and public parks. The proposal would provide a suitable quality residential environment for people to live in including a natural environment with ample tree coverage. The proposal is considered to satisfy the requirements of Policy HC1.

Environmental protection

5.98

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.

5.99

Environmental Health has been consulted and advised that it is generally satisfied in respect of contaminated land, air quality, noise and odour, subject to conditions. These conditions are recommended as appropriate. The proposal is considered compliant with the relevant provisions of the SPPS and Policy ENV1.

	<u>Flood risk and drainage</u>
5.100	Flood Maps (NI) indicates that the development does not lie within 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.
5.101	The proposal meets the thresholds for the submission of a Drainage Assessment (DA) in that it proposes residential development comprising of 10 or more dwelling units and the site area is in excess of 1 hectare. The applicant submitted a DA as required and DfI Rivers has reviewed this and advised that it has no reason to disagree with its conclusions. The proposal is considered compliant with the relevant provisions of the SPPS Policy ENV4.
	<u>Waste-water infrastructure</u>
5.102	NI Water has been consulted and is content, advising that there is sufficient capacity at the nearest waste-water treatment works. This satisfies Policy SP1a which requires that necessary infrastructure is in place to support new development.
	<u>Natural heritage</u>
5.103	The application site contains bat species protected by The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended). The applicant submitted a Bat Survey which outlined measures to ensure bats would not be disturbed during the construction phase, which included the installation of bat boxes at various locations throughout the site. NIEA Natural Environment Division (NED) has considered this information and is content with these measures.
5.104	There are no other aspects of natural heritage that would be adversely affected by the proposal.
5.105	It is considered that the proposal is in compliance with the relevant provisions of the SPPS Policy NH1.
	<u>Section 76 planning agreement</u>
5.106	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viability Review Mechanism – to be required if development does not commence within 12 months of the latest independent viability appraisal. The viability review will assess whether economic market changes would allow an affordable housing contribution to be made. • Green travel measures – Travel Plan and Travel Fund of £99,343.20 to fund the option of travel cards; car club membership, bicycle vouchers and/or Belfast Bikes membership. • Management of Open Space.
5.107	The draft Section 76 planning agreement has been agreed in principle between the applicant and Planning Service.

	<u>Pre-application Community Consultation</u>
5.108	The application was preceded by a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) which set out the applicant's proposals for pre-application community consultation.
5.109	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.
5.110	<p>The applicant states that they 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"> • Published a notice in the press 11 days prior to the public event to highlight information about the proposals and provide notification of the public information event; • A leaflet containing details of the public consultation event (Appendix 6) was designed and distributed to all properties within a 200m radius of the site, over one week in advance of the public event; • Hosted a public exhibition event with members of the project team to assist in any questions and to allow for further feedback; • Online consultation was undertaken to provide an opportunity for the local community to view plans of the proposed development digitally and provide feedback. This consultation ran between Monday 18th September 2023 and Friday 8th December 2023, on a webpage within the Gravis Planning (planning agent) website.
5.111	Feedback from stakeholders was generally positive with no objections to the principle of the proposal.
5.112	The feedback was reviewed, and the matters were considered within the PACC report, detailing how the feedback was gathered, analysed, assessed and considered.
5.113	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.
6.0	Recommendation
6.1	Having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, on balance, it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.
6.2	Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement, and deal with any other issues that arise, provided the issues are not substantive.

<p>6.0</p>	<p>DRAFT CONDITIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission. Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. 2. The construction of the development hereby permitted shall not be sequenced unless in accordance with the Phase Plan, submitted on 3 February 2026 and uploaded to the Planning Portal. Reason: To allow the phased discharge of conditions. 3. No external facing or roofing materials shall be applied unless in accordance with the approved plans. Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area. 4. No works to the retained walled garden wall shall be constructed or applied unless in accordance with a written specification and a physical sample panel, details of which shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The sample panel shall be provided on site and made available for inspection by the Council for the duration of the construction works. Reason: In the interests of protecting the special architectural or historic qualities of the listed building and it's setting. 5. No phase of the development shall be occupied unless all communal and private open space and amenity areas for that phase, including public open space, gardens, roof terraces, balconies, have been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The amenity areas shall be retained as such at all times. Reason: To ensure that a quality residential environment is provided for occupants of the approved development. 6. The residential units hereby approved shall not be occupied until their respective boundary treatment has been implemented in accordance with the approved plans. The boundary treatment shall be retained in accordance with the approved details. Reason: In the interests of amenity. 7. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 (or any Order revoking and/or re-enacting that order), the upper floor windows in the east side gables of Plots 3 and 22, as shown on the approved plans, shall at all times be glazed with obscure glass to at least Privacy Level 3 (or equivalent) and non-opening unless the parts of the window which can be opened are more than 1.7 metres above floor level of the floor that the window serves. Reason: To safeguard the privacy of adjacent properties. 8. No dwelling or apartment shall be occupied until its respective waste storage area/s have been provided in accordance with the approved plans and shall be permanently retained as such at all times. Reason: To ensure that appropriate provision is made for storage and disposal of waste.
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	<p>9. No phase of the development shall be occupied unless the measures to mitigate climate change for that phase have been implemented in accordance with the Gravis Planning letter dated 24 September 2025 and written verification of such has been submitted to the Council. The climate change measures shall be retained in accordance with the approved details at all times. Reason: To mitigate and/or adapt to climate change.</p> <p>10. The materials from the existing buildings on the site to be demolished shall be recycled and re-used in accordance with the Gravis Planning letter dated 24 September 2025. Reason: To mitigate climate change.</p> <p>11. All hard and soft landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation of each phase 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. All hard surface treatment of open parts of the site shall be permeable or drained to a permeable area. All hard landscape works shall be permanently retained in accordance with the approved details. Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area.</p> <p>12. All existing trees and planting within the site shall be retained unless shown on the approved drawings as being removed. Any existing or new trees or planting indicated on the approved plans which, within a period of five years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged, diseased or dying, shall be replaced during the next planting season (October to March inclusive) with other trees or plants of a location, species and size to be first approved in writing by the Council. Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.</p> <p>13. No development shall be carried out unless in accordance with the approved Tree Impacts and Protection Plan, published to the Planning Portal on 29 August 2024. The measures set out in the Tree Impacts and Protection Plan shall be in place prior to the commencement of development and shall remain in place until the completion of the construction. Reason: To safeguard existing trees in the interests of visual amenity.</p> <p>14. Within twenty-four hours prior to demolition, all buildings shall be checked for bat presence by a competent ecologist, under license where necessary, and all demolition works shall be monitored by a competent ecologist. A report with any observations from the ecologist during demolition works shall be submitted to the Council within 2 weeks of completion of the demolition. Reason: To ensure protection to bats and their roosts.</p> <p>15. During the construction and occupation phase of the development, there shall be no lighting of greater than 1 lux impacting upon retained Building E, as shown in the Aspen Bat Survey. Reason: To minimise the impact of the proposal on bats.</p>
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16. 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.

Reason: To ensure adequate car parking within the site.

17. The apartment building 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.

Reason: To ensure adequate provision and availability of cycle parking and encourage sustainable travel.

18. No development shall commence on site (other than that required to fulfil this condition) unless the access, including visibility splays and any forward sight lines, have been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The access and visibility splays shall be retained in accordance with the approved plans at all times.

Reason: To ensure safe and convenient access to the development.

19. The area within the visibility splays and any forward sight line shall be cleared to provide a level surface no higher than 250 mm above the level of the adjoining carriageway before the development hereby permitted is occupied and such splays shall be retained and kept clear thereafter.

Reason: To ensure there is a satisfactory means of access in the interest of road safety and the convenience of road users.

20. The access gradients to the dwellings hereby permitted shall not exceed 8% (1 in 12.5) over the first 5 m outside the road boundary. Where the vehicular access crosses a footway or verge, the access gradient shall be between 4% (1 in 25) maximum and 2.5% (1 in 40) minimum and shall be formed so that there is no abrupt change of slope along the footway.

Reason: To ensure there is a satisfactory means of access in the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users.

21. The Private Streets (Northern Ireland) Order 1980 as amended by the Private Streets (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1992.

The Council hereby determines that the width, position and arrangement of the streets, and the land to be regarded as being comprised in the streets, shall be as indicated on Drawing No:1021 Rev E and 1022 Rev D bearing the Department for Infrastructure determination date stamp 20/5/25.

Reason: To ensure there is a safe and convenient road system to comply with the provisions of the Private Streets (Northern Ireland) Order 1980.

22. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Planning (General Development) (Northern Ireland) Order 1993, no buildings, walls or fences shall be erected, nor hedges nor formal rows of trees grown in (verges/service strips) determined for adoption.

Reason: To ensure adequate visibility in the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users and to prevent damage or obstruction to services.

23. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Planning (General Development) (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 no planting other than grass, flowers or shrubs with a shallow root system and a mature height of less than 500 mm shall be carried out in (verges/service strips) determined for adoption.

Reason: In order to avoid damage to and allow access to the services within the service strip.

24. No dwelling shall be occupied until that part of the service road which provides access to it has been constructed to base course; the final wearing course shall be applied on the completion of (each phase / the development.)

Reason: To ensure the orderly development of the site and the road works necessary to provide satisfactory access to each dwelling.

25. No construction of the drainage network shall commence on site unless an updated Drainage Assessment has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The Drainage Assessment shall demonstrate the safe management of any out of sewer flooding emanating from the surface water drainage network in a 1 in 100 year event, including an allowance for climate change (10%) and urban creep (10%), and a programme for implementation. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In order to safeguard against surface water flood risk.

26. 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.

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 an affordable housing viability review, travel plan, green travel fund and management of the public open space.
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. 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.
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.
5. The applicant or developer's attention is drawn to The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended), under which it is an offence to:
 - a) Deliberately capture, injure or kill a wild animal including a European protected species, which includes all species of bat;
 - b) Deliberately disturb such an animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection;
 - c) Deliberately disturb such an animal in such a way as to be likely to:
 - (i) affect the local distribution or abundance of the species to which it belongs;
 - (ii) Impair its ability to survive, breed or reproduce, or rear or care for its young;
 - or
 - (iii) Impair its ability to hibernate or migrate;
 - d) Deliberately obstruct access to a breeding site or resting place of such an animal; or
 - e) To damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.

If there is evidence of bat activity / roosts on the site, all works should cease immediately and further advice sought from the Wildlife Inspector's Team, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Klondyke Building, Cromac Avenue, Gasworks Business Park, Belfast BT72JA. Tel. 028 9056 9605.
6. The applicant is advised that no works shall be carried out on the building known to contain roosting pipistrelle bats (Building L in the Aspen Bat Survey) until a NIEA Wildlife Licence has been obtained.
7. The applicant is advised that the bat box positioned on tree 4 as shown in the Aspen Bat Survey must not be relocated until a NIEA Wildlife Licence has been obtained.

Development Management Report	
Committee Date: 10 th March 2026	
Application ID: LA04/2024/0569/O	
<p>Proposal: Outline planning permission with all matters reserved for independent living (Use Class C1) units and up to 62no. assisted living units (Use Class C3A), associated internal access roads, communal open space, revised access from Castleview Road, associated car parking, servicing, amenity space and landscaping. Demolition of dwellings at Castleview Road (nos. 2, 4, 6, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28 & 30) and Summerhill Parade (nos. 18, 20 & 22).</p>	<p>Location: Stormont Hotel, 587 Upper Newtownards Road BT4 3LP and adjacent properties at Castleview Road (nos. 2, 4, 6, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28 & 30), Summerhill Parade (nos. 18, 20 & 22) and rear of 160 Barnetts Road, Belfast</p>
Referral Route: Application for Major development	
Recommendation: Approval subject to conditions and Section 76 planning agreement	
<p>Applicant Name and Address: Summerhill Retirement Developments Ltd Victoria House Gloucester Street Belfast BT4 4LS</p>	<p>Agent Name and Address: Nick Salt Turley Hamilton House 3 Joy Street Belfast</p>
Date Valid: 04/04/2024	
Target Date: 31/10/2024	
Contact Officer: Ed Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management)	
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>This application seeks outline planning permission for the redevelopment of the western part of the car park of the Stormont Hotel and adjoining residential properties for a residential scheme consisting of up to 62 Class 3A assisted living units and an unspecified number of Class C1 independent living dwellings. The proposal includes demolition of 14 existing dwellings. All matters (including the number of Class 1 independent dwellings) are reserved for subsequent approval.</p> <p>The proposal is Phase 2 of a two-phase wider scheme to redevelop the hotel site into a retirement village. Phase 1 comprises the conversion of the hotel building into a 97-bed care home and medical facility and is subject to a separate application (LA04/2024/0570/F) to be considered at this same Planning Committee meeting (also see Planning History section).</p> <p>Phase 2 is the subject of this application and would see the subdivision of the Stormont Hotel property, separating the majority of the car park to the west from the hotel building.</p> <p>This outline application site comprises the Stormont Hotel western car park and 14 existing dwellings, which are proposed to be demolished.</p>	

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

- Principle of development
- Housing density
- Affordable housing
- Housing density
- Adaptable and accessible accommodation
- Design, Placemaking and Impact on Amenity
- 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 48 third-party representations, from 28 persons all of which are objections to the scheme. These are summarised in the main report.

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

The principle of the proposal is considered compliant with relevant policies. Subject to assessment of the detail at the reserved matters stage, it is considered that the site can accommodate the proposed development in a manner which is in keeping with the character and appearance of the area, not detrimental to local amenity, and served by appropriate access.

A Section 76 planning agreement is required to secure the following planning obligations:

- Balance of uses between Class C1 independent living and C3a assisted living.
- Affordable housing – minimum 20% of the Class C1 units as affordable housing.
- Identification of the Class 3a assist living units and requirement for these to be managed by a registered care provider.
- Implementation of the Travel Plan and associated Travel Fund.
- Construction Employability and Skills Plan.
- Open Space Management Plan.
- Linkage to planning application LA04/2024/0570/F – prevention of the continued use of the hotel building on implementation of the outline permission (as the scheme would result in a loss of significant parking for the hotel).

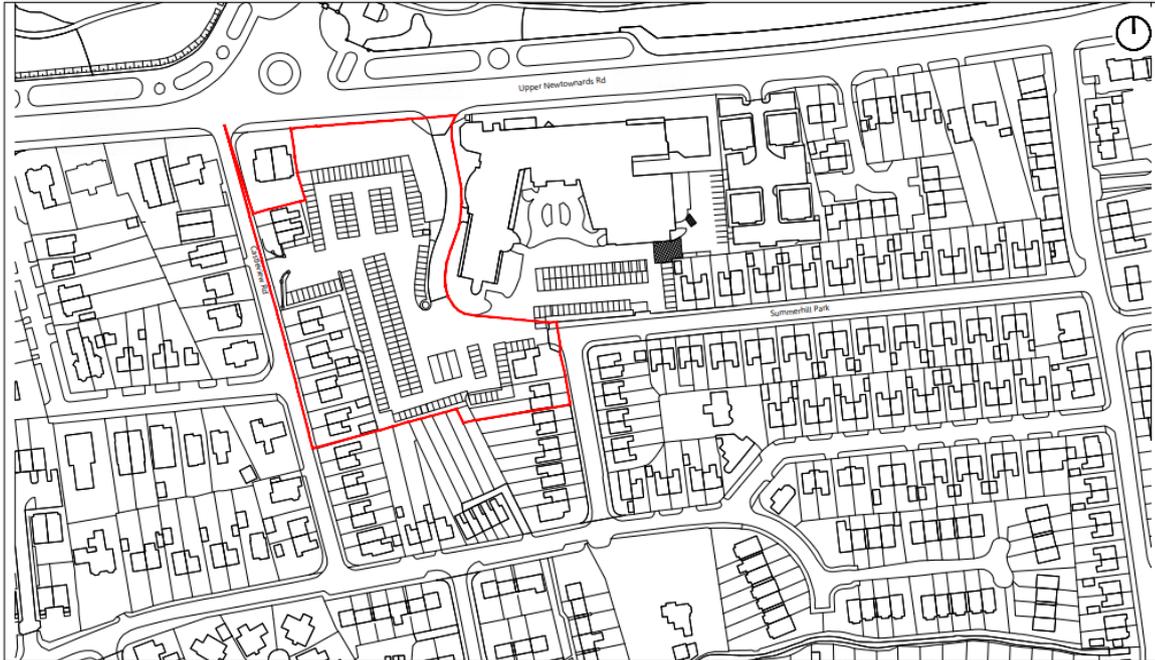
Recommendation

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.

DRAWINGS AND IMAGERY

Site Location Plan:

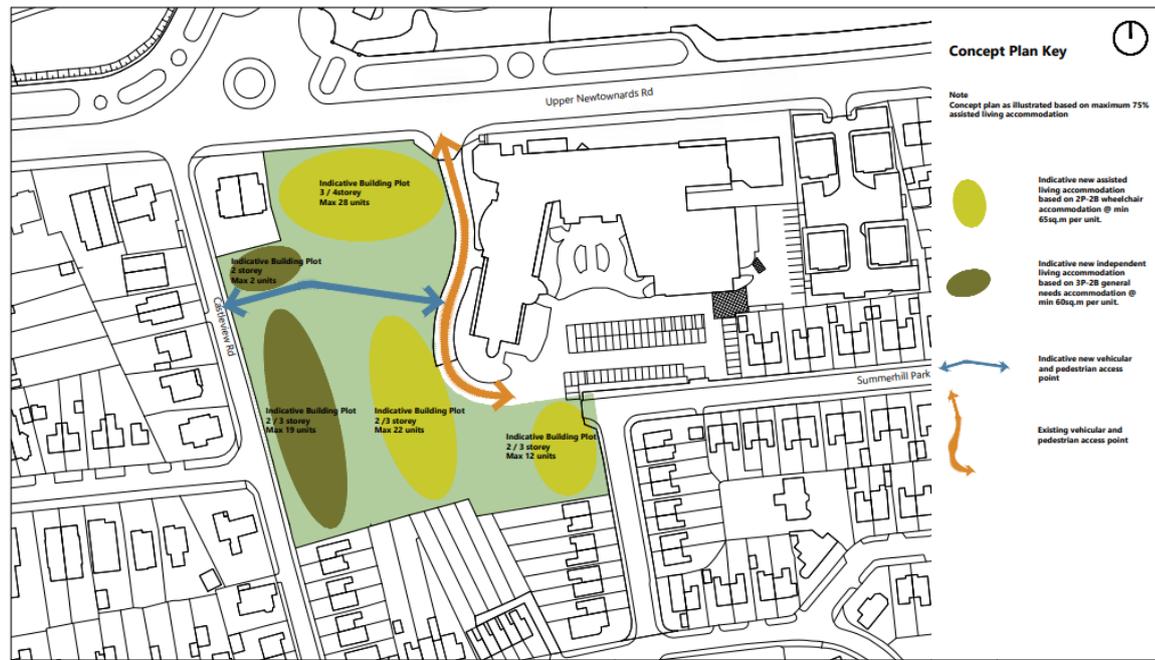


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01: Site Location Plan - P2

PLANNING	TODD ARCHITECTS 2ND FLOOR TRINITY HOUSE, 10 GARDEN ROAD, BELFAST BT1 7DT T: +44 (0) 28 9024 5367 F: +44(0)2890240000	TODD
25/03/2024	Project Name: Summerhill Retirement Developments Ltd.	
Scale: 1:1250	Project Title: Summerhill Phase 2	
Page: A3	Drawing Title: Site Location Plan - P2	
By: ROM	CG	
21067	SRV-TOD-10-ZZ-DR-A-10020	P03

Proposed Concept Plan:



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01: Site Concept Plan - P2

PLANNING	TODD ARCHITECTS 2ND FLOOR TRINITY HOUSE, 10 GARDEN ROAD, BELFAST BT1 7DT T: +44 (0) 28 9024 5367 F: +44(0)2890240000	TODD
25/04/2025	Project Name: Summerhill Retirement Developments Ltd.	
Scale: 1:1000	Project Title: Summerhill Phase 2	
Page: A3	Drawing Title: Site Concept Plan - P2	
By: cg	CG	
21067	SRV-TOD-10-ZZ-DR-A-10020	P01

1.0	<p>Characteristics of the Site and Area</p>
1.1	<p>The application site is located on the Upper Newtownards Road opposite the Stormont estate. The site is currently occupied by a hotel and extensive car park. The hotel complex sits on 2.2 ha of land, and comprises a 105-bedroom hotel, together with two restaurants, wedding, meeting, and conference facilities. The hotel has been extended and renovated in different styles on a number of occasions.</p>
1.2	<p>The hotel fronts onto the Upper Newtownards Road, with its main 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, entrance. Residential development abuts the rectangular shaped site on three sides. There are also additional accesses from Castlehill Road to the west and Summerhill Park to the east.</p>
1.3	<p>The application site comprises the western car park of the Stormont Hotel, and fourteen existing dwellings. These include a row of semi-detached dwellings that back onto the east boundary of the car park at Castleview Road (Nos. 2, 4, 6, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28 & 30); 3no dwellings Summerhill Parade (Nos. 18, 20 & 22); and part of the rear garden of 160 Barnetts Road, Belfast.</p>
1.4	<p>The surrounding area is an established residential area, characterised by two-storey detached and semi-detached houses. The Stormont estate and parliament buildings are opposite the application site.</p>
	<p>Description of Proposed Development</p>
1.5	<p>The application seeks outline planning permission for the redevelopment of the western part of the car park of the Stormont Hotel and adjoining residential properties for a residential scheme consisting of up to 62 x Class 3a assisted living units and an unspecified number of Class C1 independent living dwellings. The proposal includes demolition of fourteen existing dwellings.</p>
1.6	<p>All matters (including the final number of Class C1 independent living dwellings) are reserved for subsequent approval.</p>
1.7	<p>The indicative plans indicate a shared access with the hotel building (proposed as a care home and medical facility under application LA04/2024/0570/F) and access from Castleview Road.</p>
1.8	<p>The proposal is Phase 2 of a two-phase wider scheme to redevelop the hotel site into a retirement village. Phase 1 comprises the conversion of the hotel building into a 97-bed care home and medical facility and is subject to a separate application (LA04/2024/0570/F) to be considered at this same Planning Committee meeting (also see Planning History section).</p>
1.9	<p>Phase 2 is the subject of this application and would see the subdivision of the Stormont Hotel property, separating the majority of the car park to the west from the hotel building.</p>
1.10	<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>2.4</p>	<p>PLANNING HISTORY</p> <p>The proposal was subject to Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) with officers and Proposal of Application Notice (PAN):</p> <p><i>Application site and hotel building to the east:</i></p> <p>LA04/2022/1793/PAD - 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. Decided.</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>Hotel building to the east:</i></p> <p>LA04/2024/0570/F - Stormont Hotel, 587 Upper Newtownards Road BT4 3LP and adjacent property 37-39 Summerhill Park, Belfast. 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. Pending.</p>
<p>3.0</p> <p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p>	<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> <p>Policies in the Plan Strategy relevant to the application include the following:</p> <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> <p><i>Operational Policies:</i></p> <p>Policy HOU1 – Accommodating New Homes Policy HOU2 – Windfall Housing Policy HOU3 – Protection of existing residential accommodation Policy HOU4 – Density of residential development Policy HOU5 – Affordable Housing Policy HOU6 – Housing Mix Policy HOU7 – Adaptable and accessible accommodation Policy HOU8 – Specialised residential accommodation Policy CI1 – Community Infrastructure Policy DES2 – Masterplanning approach for Major development</p>

	<p>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 Residential Design Affordable Housing and Housing Mix Placemaking for Urban Design Masterplanning approach for Major developments Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems Transportation Planning and Flood Risk Waste Infrastructure Trees and Development Development Control Advice Note (DCAN) 15 – Vehicular Access Standards</p>
3.5	<p>Development Plan – zoning, designations and proposals maps Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) BUAP Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014)</p>
3.6	<p>Regional Planning Policy Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) (Edition 2, 2026)</p>
3.7	<p>Other Material Considerations Developer Contribution Framework (2020) <i>Belfast Agenda</i> (Community Plan)</p>
4.0	CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS
4.1	<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>
4.2	<p><u>Non-Statutory Consultees</u> BCC Environmental Health – No objection, subject to conditions BCC Landscape Planning and Development Unit – No objection BCC LDP Housing – No objection BCC LDP Urban Design – No objection in principle BCC Economic Development Unit – No objection</p>

<p>4.3</p> <p>4.4</p>	<p>Northern Ireland Housing Executive – No objection NIE – No objection Shared Environmental Services (SES) – No objection, subject to conditions.</p> <p><u>Representations</u></p> <p>The application has been advertised in the press and neighbours notified. 48 third party representations have been received from 28 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. The development will affect existing property values. 2. No need for the retirement village in this area. 3. Antisocial behaviour within proposed communal areas. 4. Increased traffic and impact on parking and road safety in the area. The development will increase demand for on-street parking in the area as the site will not be able to accommodate the parking requirements. 5. Castlevieview Road would need to become a one-way street to alleviate the increase in traffic using the access to the site from this street. 6. Vehicles parking at the hotel car park when events are on at the Stormont Estate and residents fear that the loss of access to parking will overflow onto the surrounding streets, blocking residential access/ egress. 7. Parking Regulation Order (TRO) / Travel Plan to encourage sustainable modes of transport. 8. The height of the proposed buildings will over-shadow the existing road and surrounds and result in loss of light into neighbouring houses. 9. Out of character with the surrounding area. 10. Loss of a substantial number of houses in the area will affect its character. 11. Over-development: the height/scale of the assisted living apartments on the Castlevieview Road side of the site is vague "comprising predominantly detached and semi-detached (with some terraced) two and three storey retirement housing" and assurances sought to confirm that they would not exceed the current height of the existing semi-detached houses (16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28 & 30 on Castlevieview Road). 12. Impact on privacy of existing homes from overlooking from proposed new houses. 13. The proposed development would take a considerable time to build – leading to substantial inconvenience to residents. 14. 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'. 15. Impact of construction on the site will affect residents both in terms of site traffic, noise, and air quality from dirt and dust. 16. Replacement of two storey red brick houses on Castlevieview Road with high rise buildings would be out of character with the housing in the area. 17. The use of the proposed houses on Castlevieview Road as 'commercial multiple occupancy premises'. 18. Pollution from noise, dust and dirt during the construction phase. 19. 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. 20. 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.
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	<p>21. Not all residents living on Summerhill Parade received planning consultation letters.</p> <p>22. 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>23. 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>24. 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>25. 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	Points 1 and 3 are not material planning considerations. It should also be pointed out that there are no public communal areas proposed as part of this application.
4.6	In respect of point 15, this would fall under the remit of Environmental Health's own statutory nuisance provisions such as noise abatement.
4.7	Points 19, 20 and 24 relate to a separate planning application (ref. LA04/2024/0570/F) for a change of use of the hotel building. That application has been amended to remove the proposal to demolish No. 39 Summerhill Park.
4.8	Regarding point 21, the case officer cross-checked neighbours' addresses on site to ensure all neighbours that were eligible were notified.
4.9	All other points are material planning considerations and will be addressed below.
5.0	PLANNING ASSESSMENT
	Development Plan Context
5.1	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.
5.2	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.
5.3	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.
	<u>Operational Policies</u>
5.4	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><u>Proposals Maps</u></p> <p>5.5 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> <p>5.6 Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 – the site is un-zoned “white-land” within the settlement limits for Belfast.</p> <p>5.7 Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) – the site is un-zoned “white-land” within the settlement limits for Belfast and on an arterial route and a protected route.</p> <p>5.8 Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014) – the site is un-zoned “white-land” within the settlement limits for Belfast and on an arterial route and a protected route.</p> <p><u>Environmental Impact Assessment</u></p> <p>5.9 The proposed development falls within Category 10(b) of Schedule 2 of the Planning (Environment Impact Assessment) Regulations (NI) 2017 and therefore the Council is 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 • Housing density • Affordable housing • Housing Mix • Adaptable and accessible accommodation • Design, Placemaking and Impact on Amenity • 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
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	Principle of development
5.11	<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><i>Independent living units:</i></p>
5.12	<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 in 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 is on the Glider route and close to cycling / walking routes and is highly accessible to shops, services, amenities and public transport. • Provision is made for any additional infrastructure required as a result of the development – suitable infrastructure is in place to support the proposal.
5.13	<p>The proposed independent living units are compliant with Policies HOU1 and HOU2 and the principle of this form of housing in location is considered acceptable.</p> <p><i>Assisted living units:</i></p>
5.14	<p>The proposal includes up to 62 Class C3a assisted living units. The Planning (Use Classes) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 defines Class 3a as: residential institutions ‘...for the provision of residential accommodation and care to people in need of care (other than a use within Class C1 (Dwellingshouses).’ The proposed Section 76 planning agreement builds upon this definition, referring to “care” as personal care as defined in the Registered Homes (Northern Ireland) Order 1992(3) and also includes the personal care of children and medical care and treatment.</p>
5.15	<p>Policy HOU8 is applicable to proposals for assisted living accommodation. This policy states that permission will be granted for specialist residential accommodation subject to two criteria: a. a 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>
5.16	<p>The applicant has submitted a statement of housing need which demonstrates the need for assisted living accommodation in this area. The statement outlines how Northern Ireland is experiencing demographic shifts in terms of an ageing society and uses statistics from the NIHE to back this up. The Council’s LDP Housing team has commented and this document and is supportive of the proposed assisted living accommodation. This satisfies criterion a. of Policy HOU8.</p>
5.17	<p>The application site is on an arterial route and in close proximity, 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 HOU8. More detail on travel is outlined under <i>Access and Transport</i>, below.</p>

5.18	<p>Policy HOU8 (Specialist residential accommodation) and Policy CI1 (Community Infrastructure) support the improvement of existing facilities subject to no unacceptable impact on residential amenity or natural/built heritage and satisfactory arrangements for / no impact on access, car parking, drainage and waste disposal. The proposal is considered acceptable in these respects for the reasons set out in detail later in the report. Therefore, there is in principle policy support for the provision of assisted living residential units here.</p> <p><i>Loss of existing housing stock:</i></p>
5.19	<p>Policy HOU3 seeks to protect existing residential accommodation. The proposal involves the demolition of fourteen existing dwellings. However, these would be expected to be replaced by a significant larger number of dwellings across the site. Policy HOU4 indicates a density band of 100-175 dwellings for this location; this 1.2 hectare (ha) site would therefore be expected to deliver 120 to 210 residential units. The density would be controlled at the reserved matters stage. It is considered that there would be no conflict with Policy HOU3.</p>
5.20	<p>The dwellings could not be demolished without the permission of the landowner/s and in this respect this is a land property issue.</p> <p>Housing density</p>
5.21	<p>Policy HOU4 seeks to promote appropriate housing densities to ensure effective use of land, a finite resource, in sustainable locations. The site is on the Upper Newtownards Road, a City Corridor. As stated above, the site would be expected to deliver between 120 to 210 residential units and overall numbers would be controlled at the reserved matters stage.</p> <p>Affordable housing</p>
5.22	<p>Policy HOU5 of the Plan Strategy requires housing schemes of 5 units or more, or sites of 0.1 hectares or greater, to deliver a minimum 20% affordable housing.</p> <p><i>Assisted Living Units:</i></p>
5.23	<p>HOU8 states that as specialist residential accommodation does not meet the needs of the general population, it is therefore exempt from affordable housing obligations. As such HOU5 is not applicable to the proposed up to 62no assisted living units. However, if planning permission were to be granted, the developer could benefit from permitted development rights to convert these units into Class C1 housing units once the permission has been implemented. Therefore, it is necessary to include a condition that removes such permitted development rights. This would mean that if there was a future proposal to use some or all of the assisting living units as standard housing (Class C1) then affordable housing would be expected to be provided under Policy HOU5.</p> <p><i>Independent Living Units:</i></p>
5.24	<p>The number of independent living units is to be determined at the reserved matters stage. Policy HOU5 requires at least 20% of the final number to be provided as affordable housing. This would be secured through a Section 76 planning agreement.</p>

	<p>Housing mix</p>
5.25	<p>Policy HOU6 states that planning permission will be granted for new residential developments on sites greater than 0.1ha and/or containing 5 or more dwelling units where the proposed development provides a suitable mix of house types and sizes to promote choice and assist in meeting community needs. Provision should particularly be made for smaller homes across all tenures to meet future household requirements.</p>
5.26	<p>The detailed design and housing mix of the scheme will be determined at reserved matters stage, having regard to Policy HOU6.</p>
	<p>Adaptable and accessible accommodation</p>
5.27	<p>Policy HOU7 requires that all new homes should be designed in a flexible way to ensure that housing is adaptable throughout all stages of life. Policy HOU7 sets six criteria (a. to f.) to be met in order to help deliver adaptable and accessible homes. The policy also requires that at least 10% of units in residential developments, of 10 units or more, to be wheelchair accessible and provides an additional nine criteria (g. to o.) which these units must meet. This would also be considered at reserved matters stage if outline permission is granted. A condition is recommended that requirements the development to incorporate adaptable and accessible design and layout features.</p>
	<p>Design, Placemaking and Impact on Amenity</p>
	<p><i>Proposed form, scale, massing and design:</i></p>
5.28	<p>As this is for outline permission, the number of units, layout and design of the proposal are reserved for subsequent approval. Therefore, there are no such details currently before the Council to assess. The proposal was originally submitted with parameter plans to illustrate indicative heights and locations of the proposed apartment blocks. However, these have been withdrawn to allow for greater flexible design approach at reserved matters stage.</p>
5.29	<p>The demolition of the fourteen existing dwellings, particularly the dwellings situated along the frontage of the east side of Castleview Road, would impact on the character of the area. As such, careful consideration will be needed at reserved matters stage to ensure that the replacement development would safeguard the character of this street and the surrounding area. A condition is recommended to ensure that a contract is in place for the redevelopment prior to demolition to avoid the dwellings being demolished and not being replaced.</p>
5.30	<p>The form, scale, massing and design will be assessed against the relevant design policies at the reserved matter stage. It is considered that the site can in principle accommodate the type of uses proposed in keeping with the site and surroundings.</p>
	<p><i>Topography and levels:</i></p>
5.31	<p>The site is relatively flat with exception of the front (north) of the site which rises up to meet road level. It is unlikely that there will be a requirement for retaining walls and any level changes can be addressed by design at reserved matters stage.</p>
	<p><i>Landscaping including planting and boundary treatments:</i></p>
5.32	<p>Landscaping is reserved for subsequent approval.</p>

5.33	<p>The Council's Landscape Planning and Development team has requested, where feasible, the retention of all existing vegetation within the red line application site, in addition to requested that the following information is provided as part of the reserved matters application/s:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed landscape proposals, showing hard landscaping, site furniture, entrance/boundary treatments and planting works, including specifications and schedules; and • A Landscape Management Plan, including design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for all landscape works.
5.34	<p>The detailed landscaping proposals will be considered at the reserved matters stage.</p>
5.35	<p>Management of the open space and common parts of the site is to be secured through a Section 76 planning agreement.</p>
	<p>Transport</p> <p><i>Access:</i></p>
5.36	<p>The Upper Newtownards Road is a protected route and as such Policy TRAN 7 and the SPPS are applicable for proposals that may result in the intensification of existing accesses onto a Protected Route. Regard is had to the existing intensive use of the Upper Newtownards Road by the current hotel. DfI Roads has confirmed that they are content that the proposed level of traffic onto the Upper Newtownards Road from the proposal is reasonable.</p>
5.37	<p>The detailed access arrangements are reserved. The applicant's Design and Access statement suggests that the access to the development will be facilitated by the existing vehicular access off the Upper Newtownards Road and a revised access of Castlevue Road. The existing access off Summerhill Parade is indicated to be permanently closed.</p>
5.38	<p>DfI Roads has been consulted and is content with the proposed arrangements.</p> <p><i>Parking:</i></p>
5.40	<p>The layout and parking arrangements are reserved for subsequent approval.</p> <p><i>Travel Plan:</i></p>
5.41	<p>The applicant has provided a Travel Plan that demonstrates that the proposed development is 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.</p>
5.42	<p>The proposed Class C1 independent residential units would benefit from a Travel Fund based on £1,927 per unit. Residents would be able to spend their allowance on green travel measures such as purchasing Travel Cards; car club membership and bicycle vouchers, to promote modal shift away from car use. The Travel Plan and Travel Fund would be secured by a Section 76 planning agreement.</p>

5.43	<p>DfI Roads offers no objection to the proposal subject to conditions. The proposal is considered acceptable having regard to Policies TRAN1, TRAN2, TRAN4, TRAN6 and TRAN8.</p> <p>Healthy Communities</p>
5.44	<p>The proposal is considered to comply with Policy HC1 with opportunities to promote healthy communities through active travel and good placemaking.</p> <p>Built Heritage</p>
5.45	<p>The site is located 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.</p>
5.46	<p>HED has assessed the proposal, advising that it considers the proposed development of the site is appropriate under policy and is satisfied with the principle of development, having regard to potential impact on the setting of nearby listed buildings. HED adds that it will require further information at reserved matters stage, including a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) and indicative contextual elevations.</p>
5.47	<p>It is considered that the site is capable of accommodating the proposed development whilst safeguarding the setting of nearby Listed Buildings. This would be ensured at the reserved matters stage.</p>
5.48	<p>HED has not raised any issues with regard to archaeology.</p>
5.49	<p>The proposal is considered in compliance with Policies BH1 and BH5 and relevant provision of the SPPS.</p> <p>Natural heritage</p>
5.50	<p>DAERA NIEA and Shared Environmental Services (SES) have considered the impacts of the proposal on designated sites and other natural heritage interests. On the basis of the information provided, they have no objection subject to conditions. These conditions are recommended.</p>
5.51	<p>It is considered that the proposal is in compliance with Policy NH1 and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p> <p>Climate change</p>
5.52	<p>Policy ENV2 and Policy ENV3 state that planning permission will be granted for development that incorporates, where feasible, measures to mitigate and adapt to environmental change and reduce greenhouse gases by promoting sustainable patterns of development. Policy ENV5 requires that new built development should include, where appropriate, SuDS measures to manage surface water effectively on site.</p>
5.53	<p>A condition is recommended that requires climate change measures to be incorporated into the design and layout of the proposal at reserved matters stage.</p>
5.54	<p>Subject to this condition, it is considered that the proposal complies with Policies ENV2, ENV3, ENV5 and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>

	<p>Flood Risk and Drainage</p>
5.55	<p>Flood Maps (NI) indicates that the site lies outside the 1 in a 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 and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>
	<p>Waste-water infrastructure</p>
5.56	<p>NI Water has advised that there is a public foul sewer within 20m of the proposed development boundary and that the proposed development can be adequately serviced in terms of waste-water infrastructure. NI Water offers no objection. The proposal is considered in compliance with Policy SP1a which requires that necessary infrastructure is in place to support new development.</p>
	<p>Environmental protection</p>
5.57	<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.</p>
5.58	<p>The proposal 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. These conditions are recommended.</p>
5.59	<p>It is considered that the proposal is in compliance with Policy ENV1 and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>
	<p>Waste Management</p>
5.60	<p>The location of bin storage and arrangements for collection of bins are to be considered at reserved matters stage. A waste management plan should be secured as part of the outline planning permission.</p>
	<p>Section 76 planning agreement</p>
5.61	<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"> • Balance of uses – to ensure an appropriate mix of assisted and independent living units, no less than 25% and no more than 75% of the final number of Residential Units shall be occupied as Class C1 independent housing units. Similarly, no less than 25% and no more than 75% of the final number of Residential Units shall be occupied as Class C3A assisted living units. • Affordable housing – minimum of 20% of the Class C1 independent housing units to be delivered as affordable housing. Details of the tenure and mix of the affordable housing to be submitted to the Council for approval on or before the submission of application/s for approval of the reserved matters. • Travel Plan – implementation of the Travel Plan and Travel Fund.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employability and Skills – the Council’s Economic Development Unit has advised that a Construction Employability and Skills Plan is required to promote inclusive growth, consistent with the Developer Contribution Framework. • Management of the open space – requirement for the owner to manage any public open space and common parts of the site in accordance with a management plan to be submitted to and agreed by the Council. • Link to planning application LA04/2024/0570/F – upon commencement of development, the hotel shall no longer be permitted to be used as a hotel or any other use within Class C2.
5.62	<p>Legal Services has confirmed that the Section 76 planning agreement has been agreed in principle.</p> <p><u>Pre-application Community Consultation</u></p>
5.63	<p>The application was preceded by a statutory Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) which set out the applicant’s proposals for pre-application community consultation.</p>
5.64	<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>
5.65	<p>The applicant states that they actively sought the views of the public and stakeholders by utilising the following methods of engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant published a notice in the press on 11 August 2022, seven days prior to holding a public event on 18 August 2022 (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. The 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 had 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.
5.66	<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. • Too many old people in the area already.

5.67	<p>In response to the feedback, the proposal was modified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A transport consultant was 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. • 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. • This proposal will additionally seek to support intergenerational communities in the area and ensuring that residents of all ages can continue to live in the area.
5.68	<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>
6.1	<p>Having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.</p>
6.2	<p>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> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development hereby permitted must be begun by the following, whichever is the later. <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Five years from the date of this permission; or</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">The expiration of two years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters</p> <p>Reason: As required by Section 62 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.</p> 2. Application/s for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the Council within three years from the date of this permission. <p>Reason: As required by Section 62 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.</p> 3. No development shall commence on site unless details of the siting, design, external appearance, means of access and landscaping (herein called "the reserved matters") have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. <p style="margin-left: 40px;">The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details.</p> <p>Reserved matters: To identify which matter(s) are reserved for subsequent approval.</p>

4. The reserved matters referred to in condition 3 shall include:

Siting – the two-dimensional location of buildings within the site;

Design – the two-dimensional internal arrangement of building/s and the floor space devoted to such uses, the three-dimensional form of the buildings including height, massing, number of storeys and general external appearance;

External appearance of the buildings – the architectural appearance and materials including the colour, texture and type of facing materials to be used for external walls and roofs;

Means of Access – the location and two-dimensional design of any vehicular and pedestrian accesses to the site from the surrounding area and also access circulation, car parking, facilities for the loading and unloading of vehicles and access to individual buildings within the site; and

Landscaping – treatment of the remaining parts of the site not covered by buildings including both soft and hard landscaping where proposed. Where applicable, including the laying out of gardens and the provision of amenity space. Soft landscaping to include planting such as trees, hedges, shrubs and grassed areas. Hard landscaping to include laying of hard surface areas, the formation of banks, terraces or other earthworks and erection of walls, fencing and other built means of enclosure.

Reason: This permission is in outline only and further details of the development are required under section 4(1) of The Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.

5. Application/s for reserved matters shall specify the proposed housing mix.

Reason: To ensure an appropriate housing mix, having regard to Policy HOU6 of the Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy 2035.

6. Application/s for reserved matters shall include measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS).

Reason: To address climate change, having regard to Policies ENV2, ENV3 and ENV5 of the Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy 2035.

7. There shall be no more than 62no. assisted living units (Class C3(a) of the Planning (Use Classes) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015).

Reason: The applicant has demonstrated a need of no more than 62 assisted living units, having regard to Policy HOU8 of the Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy 2035.

8. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 (or any order revoking and/or re-enacting that order with or without modification), the Class 3(a) units hereby approved shall not be used other than for that purpose and for no other use within Class 3 or other Class without express planning permission.

Reason: Alternative use requires further consideration by the Council, having regard to the Local Development Plan and relevant material considerations.

9. None of the fourteen existing dwellings hereby permitted to be demolished shall be demolished unless a contract has been let to redevelop the lands on which the dwellings are located in accordance with a valid planning permission, details of which shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.

Reason: To ensure appropriate redevelopment of the site in the interests of the character and appearance of the area and to safeguard against the loss of existing housing stock without a replacement.

10. No development shall be commenced 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 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. No part of the development shall be occupied unless a Verification Report has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The Verification Report shall be completed by competent persons and be in accordance with 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 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. No centralised combustion sources (generators, boilers, CHP or biomass) shall be installed unless in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of air quality.

14. If during the development works, new contamination or risks are encountered which have not previously been identified, works shall 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 prior to works re-commencing.

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. The development shall not be occupied or operated unless a Final Waste Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The development shall not be operated unless in accordance with the approved Final Waste Management Plan.

Reason: To ensure adequate provision of refuse and recycling storage in the interests of the amenities of the area.

DRAFT INFORMATIVES

Section 76 planning agreement

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 the balance of uses; affordable housing; construction employability and skills plan; management of the open space; and prevents continued use of the hotel on commencement of development.
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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Development Management Report	
Committee Date: 10 th 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: Summerhill Retirement Developments Ltd Victoria House Gloucester Street Belfast BT4 4LS	Agent Name and Address: Nick Salt Turley Hamilton House 3 Joy Street Belfast
Date Valid: 26/02/2026	
Target Date: 25/09/2026	
Contact Officer: Ed Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management)	
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>The key issues for 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

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

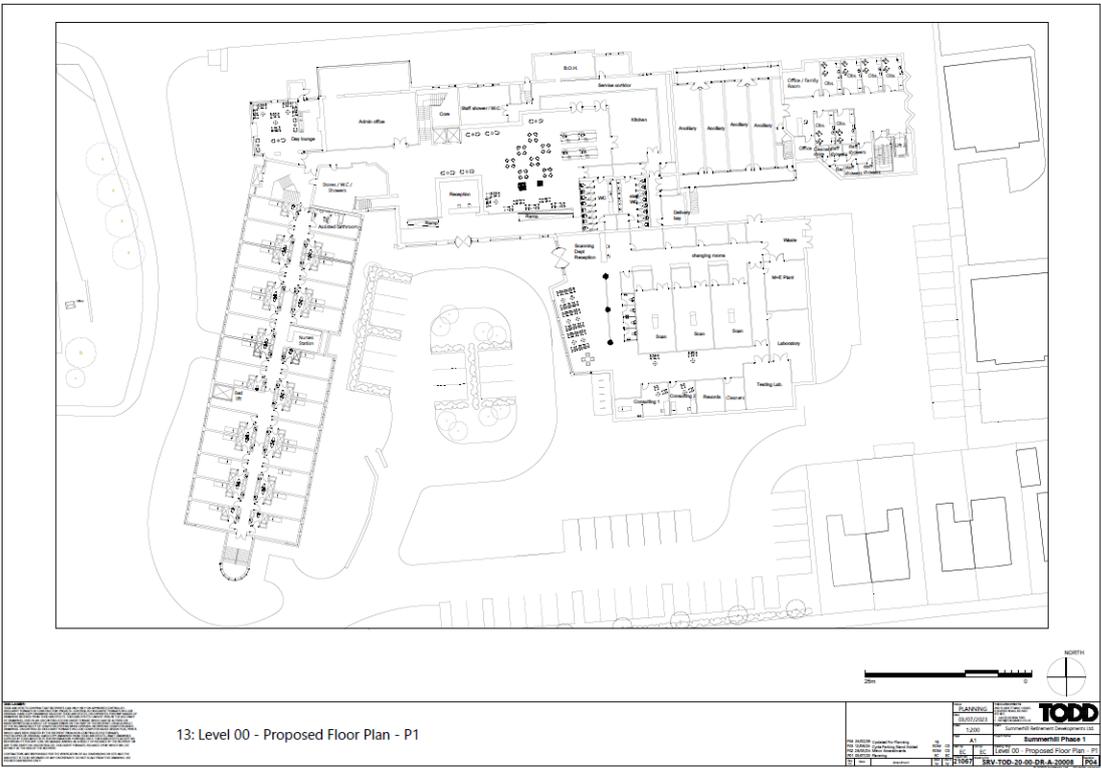
Having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.

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.

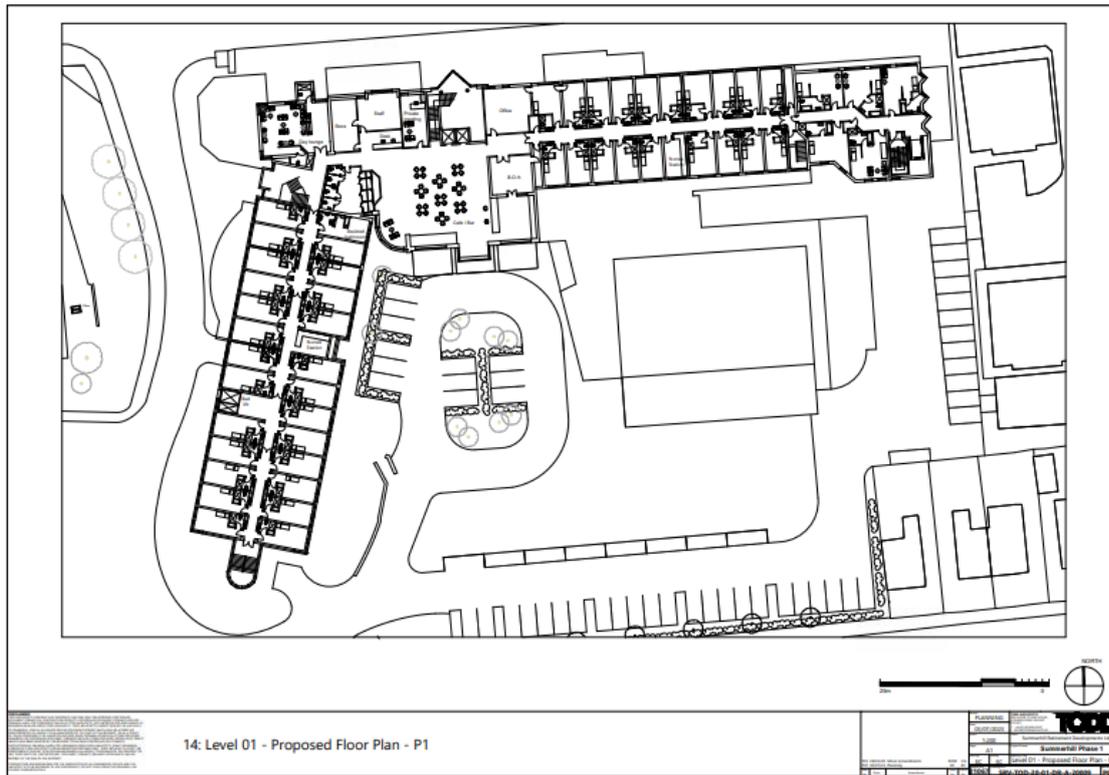
Proposed Landscaping Plan:



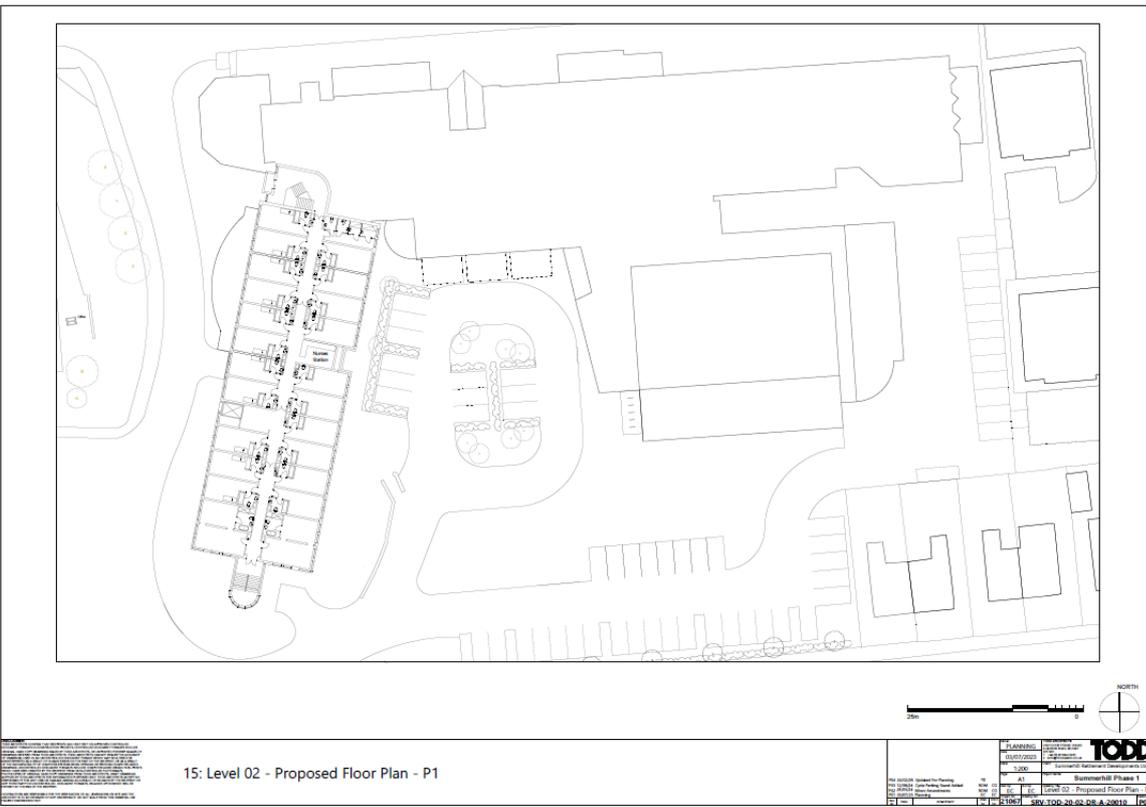
Level 00 Floor Plan (Medical Facility):



Level 01: Proposed Floor Plan:



Level 02: Proposed Floor Plan:



<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 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>

	Main Issues
5.10	<p>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>
5.11	<p>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>
5.12	<p>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>
5.13	<p>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>
5.14	<p>It is considered that the applicant has demonstrated a need for the care home in line criterion a. of Policy HOU8.</p>
5.15	<p>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>
5.16	<p>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>

	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.
5.17	<p>Policy CI1 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 CI1.</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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Development Management Committee Report	
Committee Date: 10 th March 2026	
Application ID: LA04/2025/0574/F	
Proposal: Erection of eight storey building comprising seven floors of grade A office accommodation, ground floor retail / business units together with car parking (15 no. spaces), cycle parking and plant areas: and public realm improvements including dedicated drop-off area to front of building	Location: Surface level car park at lands to east of Lanyon Place Station Mays Meadow, Belfast, BT1 3NR
Referral Route: Application for Major development	
Recommendation: Approval subject to conditions	
Applicant Name and Address: Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company 22 Great Victoria Street Belfast BT2 7LX	Agent Name and Address: Turley Hamilton House 3 Joy Street BELFAS
Date Valid: 17 th April 2025	
Target Date: 13 th November 2025	
Contact Officer: Ciara Reville Principal Planning Officer (Development Management)	
Executive Summary: This application relates to the car parking area east of Lanyon Station, May Meadows. Full planning permission is sought for the erection of a 8 storey building for Grade A Office premises with retail and business units at ground floor, together with car parking (15 no. spaces), cycle parking and plant areas: and public realm improvements including dedicated drop-off area to front of building. The application follows a detailed Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) process. The key issues for consideration of the application are set out below. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of the proposed uses • Design and placemaking • Impact on heritage assets • Impact on amenity • Climate change • Open space • Access and transport • Health impacts • Environmental protection • Flood risk and drainage • Waste-water infrastructure • Natural heritage • Waste management • Pre-Application Community Consultation 	

The site is within the City Centre and is a highly sustainable location for new office development. The proposal would provide office, retail and business accommodation which would have a positive impact in terms of investment and economic activity.

The proposed building is of a high-quality design appropriate to its location.

No third-party objections have been received following press advertisement and neighbour notification.

NI Water offered an objection to the proposal indicating network capacity issues. However, it is considered unreasonable to withhold planning permission on those grounds as an appropriate planning condition can be imposed restricting development until a satisfactory agreement is reached with NIW. The Council's Environmental Health service and Urban Design Officer raise no objections. There is an outstanding response from DfI Road Services, however it is considered that the remaining issues will be overcome. Shared Environmental Services and NIEA have offered no objection to the proposal subject to planning conditions.

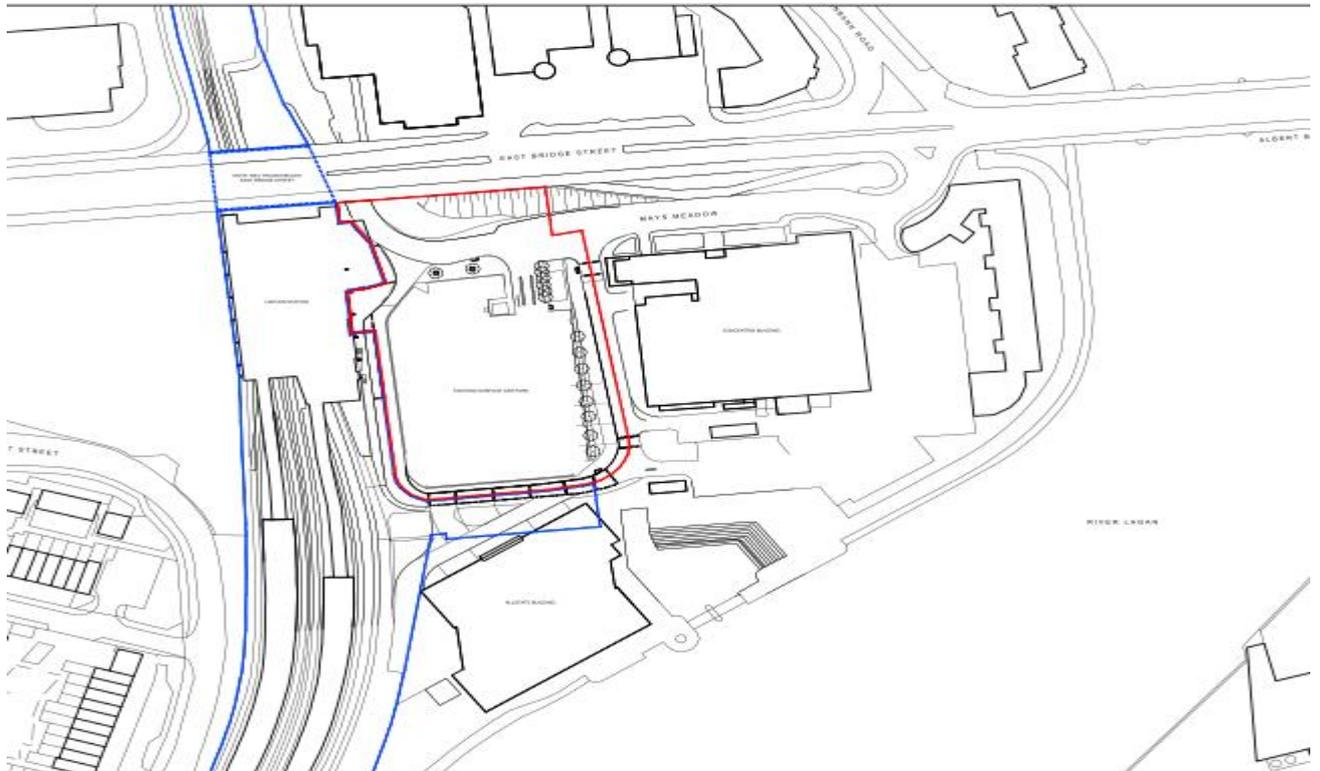
Recommendation

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

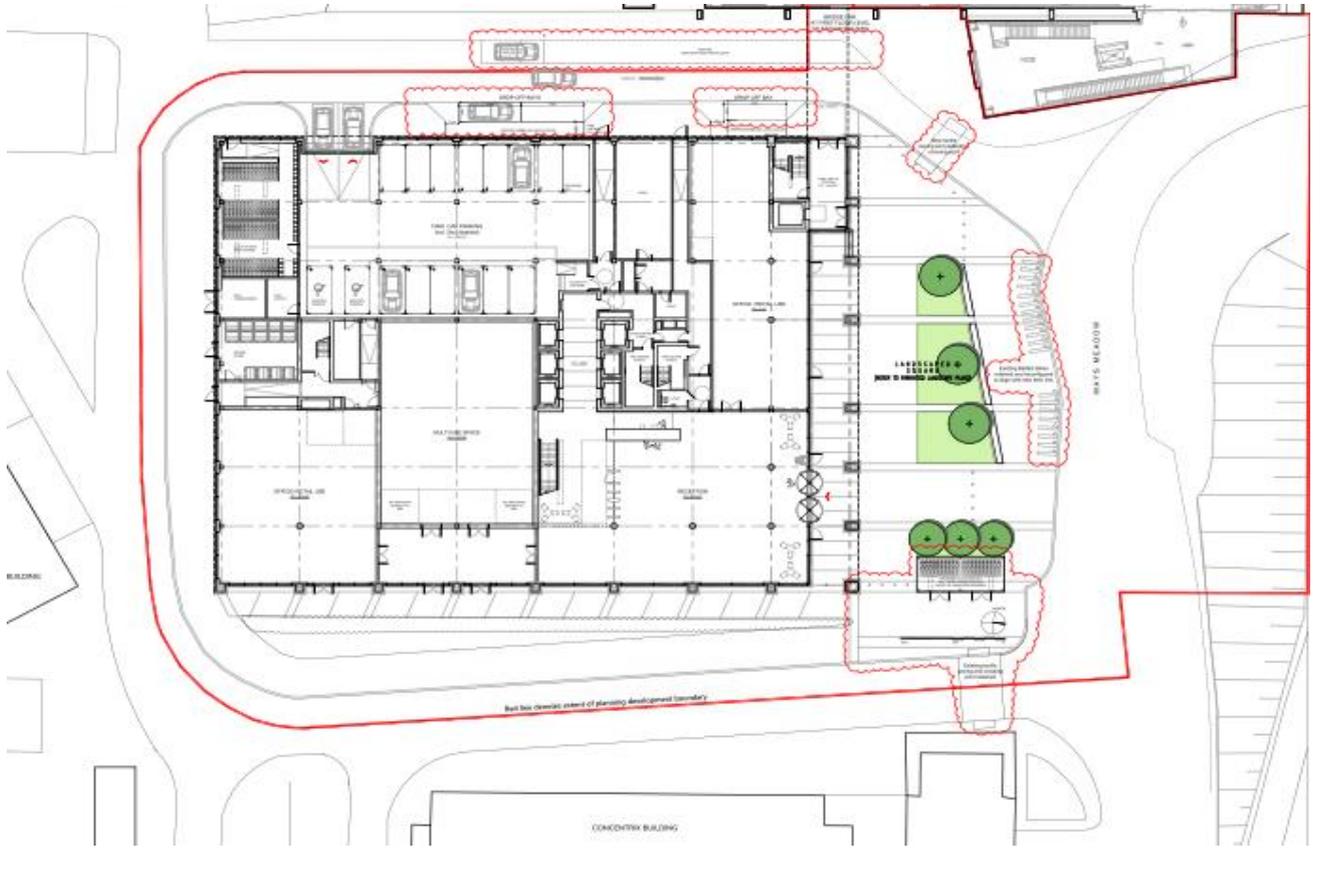
Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and deal with any other issues that arise, including those raised in the further consultation responses from DfI Road Services, provided that the issues are not substantive.

DRAWINGS AND IMAGERY

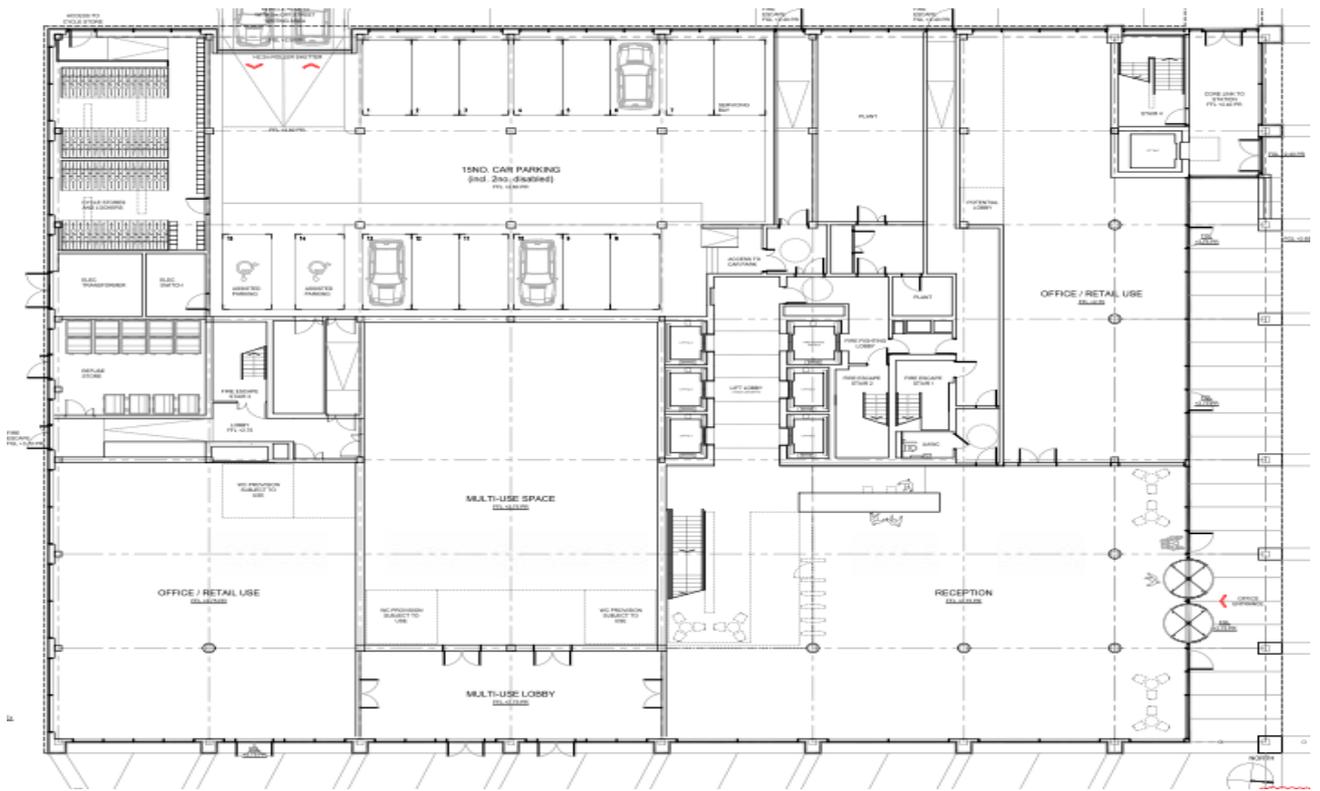
Site Location Plan:



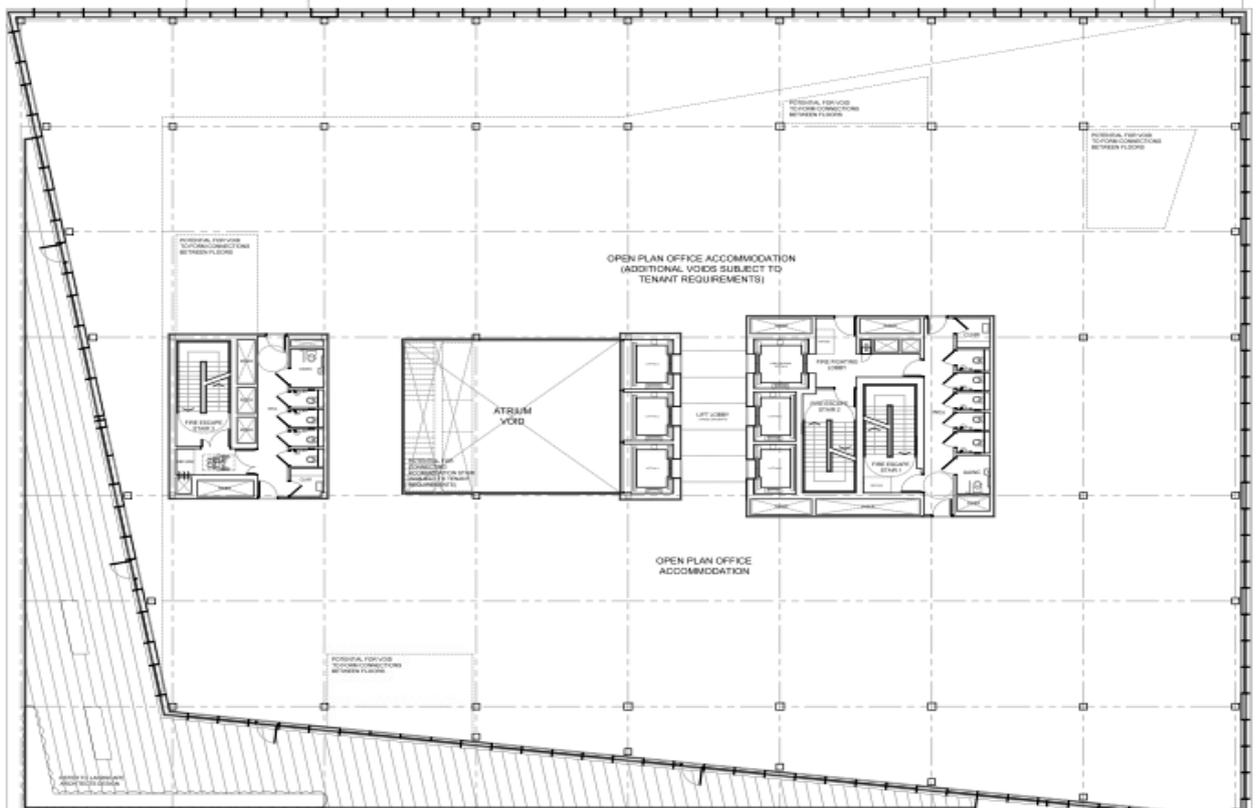
Block Plan



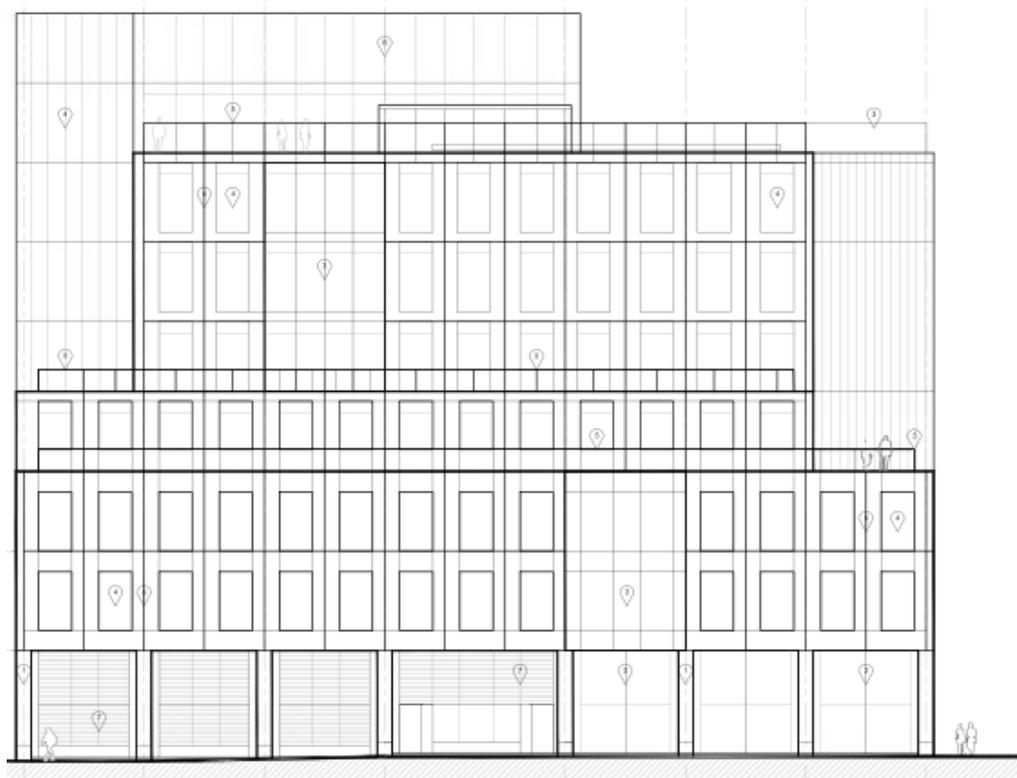
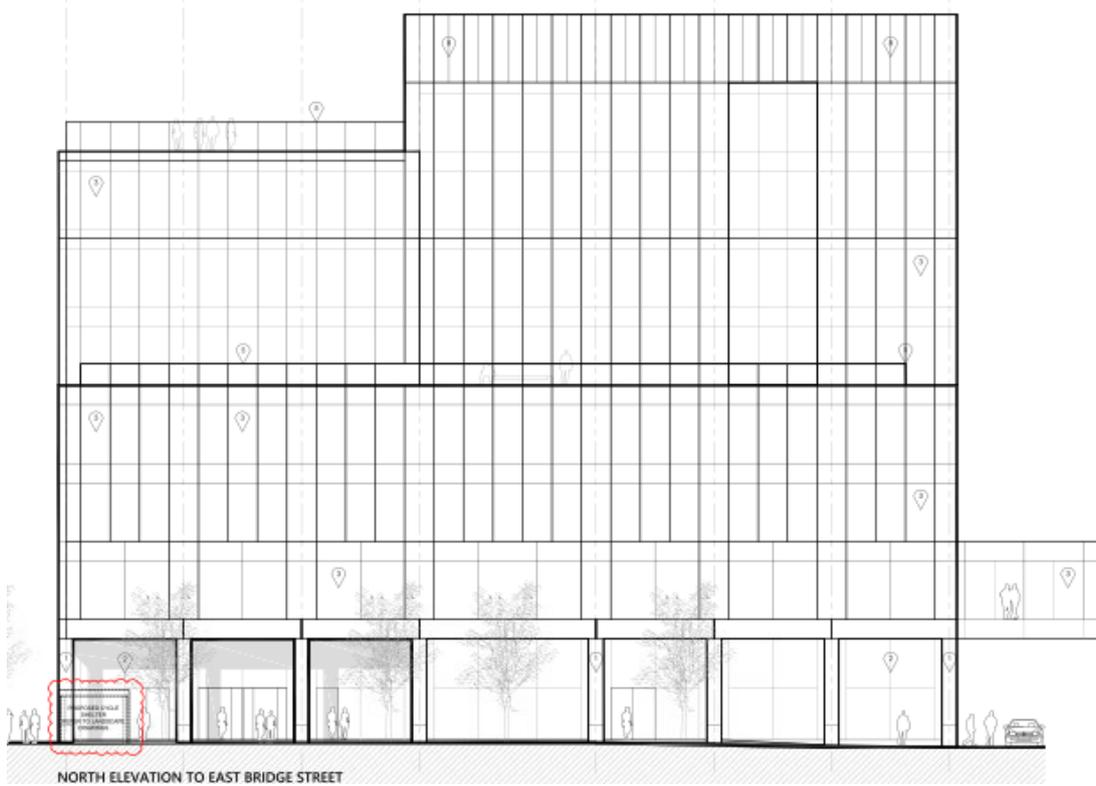
Ground floor plan:

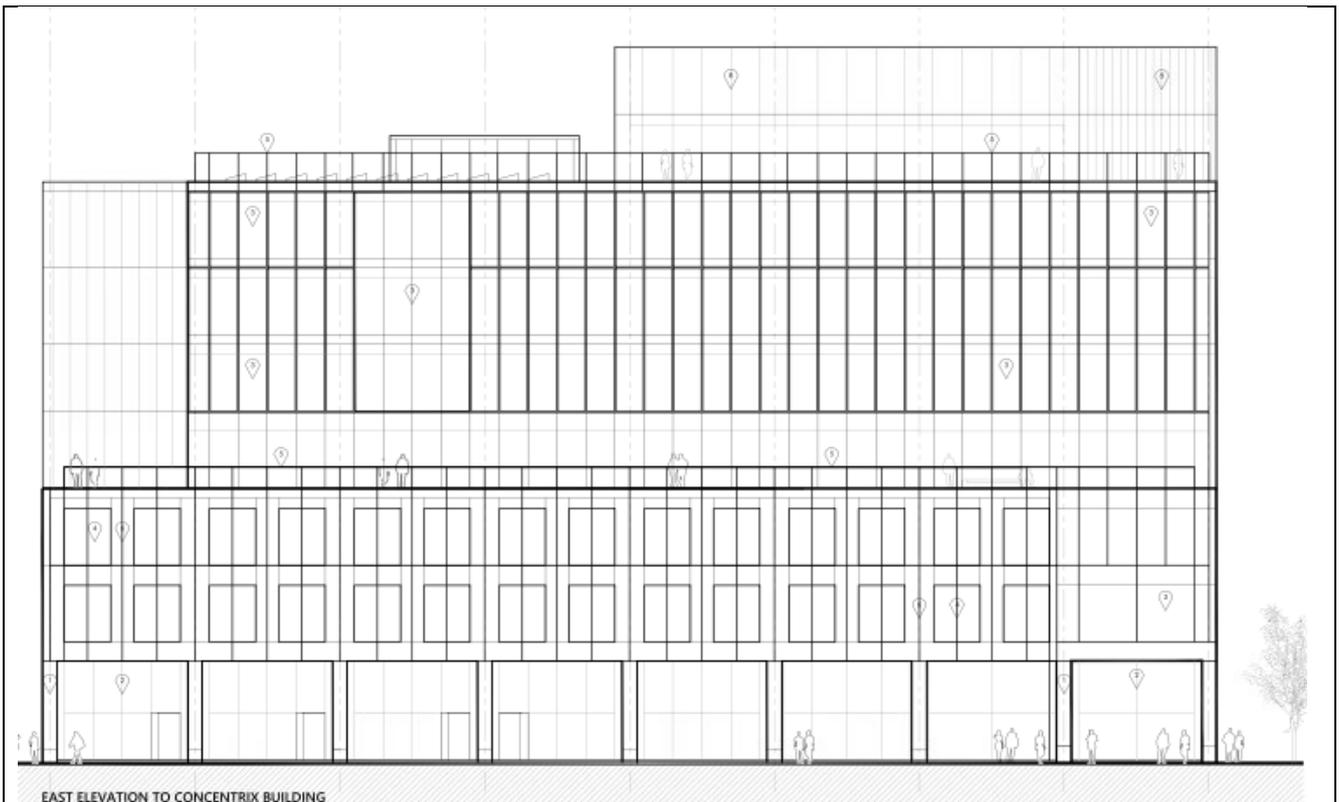


Typical Upper Floor Plan

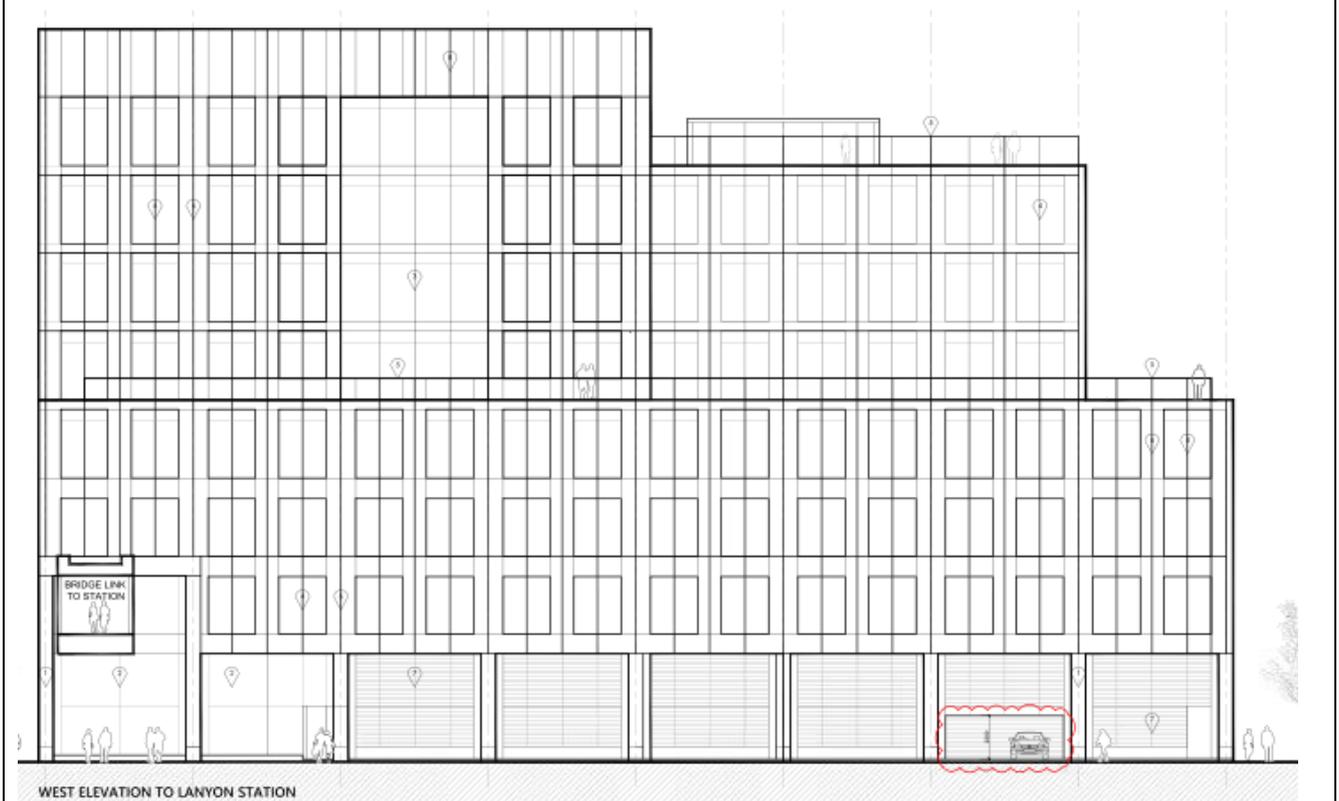


Proposed Elevations:



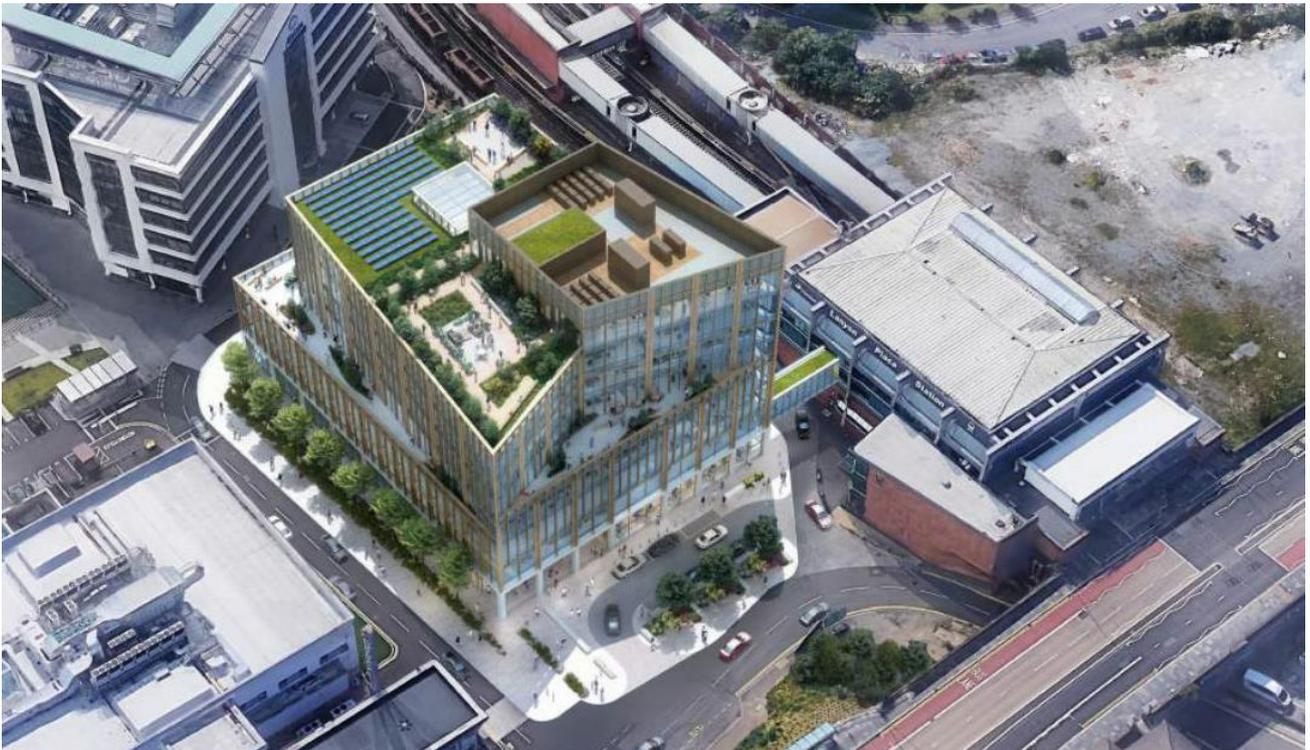


EAST ELEVATION TO CONCENTRIX BUILDING



WEST ELEVATION TO LANYON STATION

CGIs:



1.0 Characteristics of the Site and Area

1.1 The site is currently a tarmac covered surface level car park which is adjacent to two existing office blocks (Allstate and Concentrix) and Lanyon Place train station. The site is accessed from Mays Meadow which is linked to the main thoroughfare at East Bridge Street further to the east of the site. The application site is located on land sitting lower than East Bridge Street.

1.2	<p>Description of Proposed Development</p> <p>Erection of eight storey building comprising seven floors of grade A office accommodation, ground floor retail / business units together with car parking (15 no. spaces), cycle parking and plant areas: and public realm improvements including dedicated drop-off area to front of building</p>
<p>2.0</p> <p>2.1</p> <p>2.2</p> <p>2.3</p> <p>2.4</p>	<p>Relevant planning history</p> <p>LA04/2018/2074 – Permission Granted 5th April 2019 - The installation of a secured compound including the erection of a 2m high fence. Extension of existing wall, mono-pitch roof and gates around cycle storage facilities.</p> <p>There are also planning histories on surrounding lands that are relevant to the proposal:</p> <p>Z/2015/0090/F - Permission Granted 24 November 2015 - Conversion of existing building into new 3 storey office space with new 2 storey front block extension to include new data centre parking and bicycle parking at side and rear.</p> <p>Z/2015/0182/F - Permission Granted 08 December 2015 - New office development (6 storey with roof plant) with realignment of existing car parking, infilling of slipways, refurbishment of marina steps, creation of new cycleway, new area of open space and associated landscaping.</p> <p>LA04/2018/2913/F - Permission Granted 21 May 2019 - Amendments to previously approved site layout (REF Z/2015/0090/F) to include a two-storey extension, relocation of cycle parking, rationalisation of car parking and erection of bin compound</p>
<p>3.0</p> <p>3.1</p>	<p>Planning Policy</p> <p>Development Plan – Plan Strategy</p> <p><u>Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035</u></p> <p><i>Strategic Policies:</i></p> <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</p> <p>Policy SD2 – Settlement Areas Policy SD3 – City Centre</p> <p><i>Operational Policies:</i></p> <p>Policy DES1 – Principles of urban design Policy DES2 – Masterplanning approach for major development Policy DES3 – Tall buildings Policy BH1 – Listed Buildings Policy BH2 – Conservation Areas Policy BH5 – Archaeology</p>

	<p>Policy EC1 – Delivering inclusive economic growth Policy EC6 – Office development Policy RET1 – Establishing a centre hierarchy</p> <p>Policy TRAN1 – Active travel – walking and cycling Policy TRAN2 – Creating an accessible environment Policy TRAN4 – Travel plan Policy TRAN6 – Access to public roads Policy TRAN8 – Car parking and servicing arrangements Policy TRAN9 – Parking standards within areas of parking restraint</p> <p>Policy ENV1 – Environmental quality Policy ENV2 – Mitigating environmental change Policy ENV3 – Adapting to environmental change Policy ENV4 – Flood Risk Policy ENV5 – Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)</p> <p>Policy HC1 – Promoting healthy communities Policy GB1 – Green and blue infrastructure network Policy OS3 - Ancillary open space Policy TRE1 – Trees Policy NH1 – Protection of natural heritage resources</p> <p><u>Supplementary Planning Guidance</u></p> <p>Placemaking and Urban Design Tall Buildings Masterplanning approach for Major developments Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems Transportation</p> <p>Development Plan – zoning, designations and proposals maps Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) BUAP Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014)</p> <p>Regional Planning Policy Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)</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>Consultations and Representations</p> <p><u>Statutory Consultees</u></p> <p>DfI Roads – waiting final response. DfC HED – no objection. DfI Rivers – no objection. DAERA – no objection, recommends conditions. NI Water – objection due to network capacity</p>

<p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p>	<p><u>Non-Statutory Consultees</u></p> <p>Planning Service Urban Design Officer – no objection. Environmental Health – no objection, recommends conditions. BCC Landscape and Development – no objection, no significant adverse impact on the townscape and the proposal will likely assimilate within its surroundings. Shared Environmental Services (SES) – no objection with conditions. Belfast City Airport – no objection</p> <p><u>Representations</u></p> <p>The application has been advertised in the newspaper and neighbours notified. No objections have been received from third parties</p>
<p>5.0</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p> <p>5.3</p> <p>5.4</p>	<p>Main Issues</p> <p>The main issues relevant to consideration of the application are set out below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of the proposed uses • Design and placemaking • Impact on heritage assets • Impact on amenity • Climate change • Open space • Access and transport • Health impacts • Environmental protection • Flood risk and drainage • Waste-water infrastructure • Natural heritage • Waste management • Employability and Skills • Pre-Application Community Consultation <p>Development Plan Context</p> <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> <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> <p>The Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP) when fully completed will replace the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 as the statutory Development Plan for the city. The Belfast LDP will comprise two parts. Part 1 is the Plan Strategy, which contains strategic and operational policies and was adopted on 02 May 2023. Part 2 is the Local Policies Plan, which will provide the zonings and proposals maps for Belfast and has not yet been published. The zonings and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (“Departmental Development Plan”) remain part of the statutory local development plan until the Local Policies Plan is adopted.</p>

5.5	<p><u>Operational Polices</u> The Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application. These are listed above.</p>
5.6	<p><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, 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> <p>Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 – the site is un-zoned “white land” within the Development Limit.</p> <p>Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (2004) – the site is un-zoned “white land” within the Development Limit.</p> <p>Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014) – the site is un-zoned “white land” within the Development Limit.</p>
	<p><u>Principle of the proposed uses</u></p>
5.7	<p>The site is located within the urban development limit in the BUAP 2001 and both versions of dBMAP 2015. It is within the City Centre in both versions of dBMAP 2015.</p>
5.8	<p><i>Office use:</i> Policy EC6 states that planning permission will be granted for new office development within the City Centre. Policy EC1 supports business sectors with strong growth potential in Belfast including ICT. The proposal is consistent with these policies.</p>
5.9	<p>This is a sustainable location for office development with excellent access to public transport, shops and services, providing opportunity to reduce the need to travel by the private car. The proposal would make effective use of previously developed land and would regenerate the site currently used for surface level car parking</p>
5.10	<p><i>Retail/business uses:</i> In terms of the proposed ground floor retail/business units, Policy RET1 directs such town centre uses to the City Centre first. The site is located within the City Centre where retail uses, including food and drink, are acceptable in principle.</p>
5.11	<p><i>Economic development:</i> The proposed building is intended to provide grade A office space with additional retail and business uses at the ground floor. The proposal would have a Gross Value Added (GVA) to the economy of £36.4 million and is projected to support 1000 jobs during construction and operation. It would increase footfall and spend in the City Centre. In this regard, the proposal would have a very positive economic impact.</p>
5.12	<p>Having regard to the above factors, the proposed uses are welcomed in principle. The proposal accords with Policies EC1, EC6 and RET6 of the Plan Strategy, and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>

5.13	<p><u>Design and placemaking</u></p> <p>The proposal has been assessed against the SPPS, Creating Places and Policies SP5, DES1, DES2 and DES3 of the Plan Strategy. Policies SP5 and DES1 promote good placemaking, high quality design and the importance of proposals responding positively to local context addressing matters such as scale height, massing, proportions, rhythm, and materials avoiding any negative impact at street level. Policy DES2 advocates adopting a holistic approach to site layout that is mindful of adjacent development, while Policy DES3 relates to the assessment of tall buildings including any impact on the setting, character and appearance of listed buildings, conservation areas, ATCs, and historic monuments/gardens.</p>
5.14	<p>The application follows a Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) process when issues relating to scale, height, massing and architectural treatment were discussed in detail.</p>
5.15	<p><i>Scale, height and massing:</i></p> <p>The proposed building would occupy a prominent position on a main arterial route into the city. The height of the proposed building would be approximately 40 metres. The proposal was assessed by the Urban Design Officer and modelled against the surrounding buildings and was considered to be of a scale that is compatible to the surrounding character.</p>
5.16	<p><i>Architectural treatment:</i></p> <p>The proposed building would be clad at ground floor level by natural stone-faced panels and the upper floors with aluminium curtain walling. This is in contrast with the surrounding buildings that are constructed with more traditional building materials with a higher solid to void ratio. The contrast in the finish with the neighbouring building is acceptable offering a modern designed building on a main arterial route into the city.</p>
5.17	<p><i>Active frontage:</i></p> <p>The proposed building would be activated frontage to both its north and east frontages onto May Meadows which is welcomed enhancement to the previous open car park area. Due to servicing and internal car parking, part of the ground floor along the south and west elevations is not activated, however this is considered acceptable, due to the necessity for providing services to the building.</p>
5.18	<p><i>Public realm outdoor space:</i></p> <p>The proposal included public realm enhancements on May Meadows offering soft landscaping to the north and east elevations. There is also the provision, for the office space, of terracing and green roof space at the 7th floor.</p>
5.19	<p><u>Impact on the heritage assets</u></p> <p>DfC HED offers no objection to the proposal in terms of potential impact on historic buildings and archaeology. Historic Monuments also offered no objection to the proposal subject to the inclusion of planning conditions relating to developer funded programme of archaeology works. The proposal accords with Policies BH1 and BH5, and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>
5.20	<p><u>Impact on amenity</u></p> <p>The proposed building is located a sufficient distance from occupied neighbouring buildings and will not be harmful to neighbouring amenity. There would be no harmful overlooking, loss of outlook, daylight or sunlight to nearby properties. The nearest residential dwellings are located approximately 75 metres away from the application</p>

	<p>site, with Central Station located in between. In these regards, the proposal is considered to satisfy Policy DES1.</p> <p><u>Climate change</u></p>
5.21	<p>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 proposed building is targeting BREEAM Excellent rating as a minimum, which is considered to satisfy both policies. A condition to ensure that this standard or equivalent is met is recommended accordingly.</p>
5.22	<p>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 scheme proposes the use of permeable paving to the public realm fronting the site and areas of green roofing. The space constraints on the site limits soft SUDs solutions. The existing site is completely impermeable and this new proposal provides betterment. These measures will be required to be implemented by condition.</p> <p><u>Open space</u></p>
5.23	<p>Policy OS3 requires that all new development proposals make appropriate provision for open space, including hard and soft landscaped areas and outdoor amenity areas, to serve the needs of the development. The precise amount, location, type and design of such provision will be negotiated with applicants taking account of the specific characteristics of the development, the site and its context and having regard to a) the normal expectation will be at least 10% of the total site area; and b) complementary and ancillary equipment and facilities, including for active or passive enjoyment of residents or occupiers, should be incorporated into the design of the development.</p>
5.23	<p>The proposed building incorporates open space in the form of external terracing of approx. 1100sqm with the building having a footprint of 2600sqm sqm approx. 42%. This exceeds the 10% policy requirement; the proposal accords with Policy OS3.</p> <p><u>Access and transport</u></p>
5.24	<p><i>Accessibility and parking:</i></p> <p>The site is a highly accessible location in the City Centre, within short walking and cycling distance of the main shopping area. The site has very good public transport links, neighbouring Lanyon Station and is located on a main bus corridor to the city. On-site internal parking is provided with 15 spaces; there is also provision of secure sheltered bicycle parking within the building. DFI ROads final comments on the proposal are currently outstanding.</p>
5.25	<p>A breakdown of the parking shows the applicant has provided two disabled parking bays and 13 regular bays within the ground floor and covered cycle parking for up to 56 bikes in the vicinity of the site.</p> <p><u>Health impacts</u></p>
5.26	<p>Policy HC1 seeks to ensure that all new developments maximise opportunities to promote healthy and active lifestyles. New developments should be designed, constructed and managed in ways that improve health and promote healthy lifestyles.</p>

	<p>This will include supporting active travel options, improving accessibility to local service centres, reducing the use of private car travel, adequate provision of public open space, leisure and recreation facilities, high quality design and promoting balanced communities and sustainable neighbourhoods.</p>
5.27	<p>The site is highly accessible and provides excellent opportunities for active travel, including walking and cycling, through excellent linkages with the city centre. Good levels of open space/amenity space are proposed including outdoor terraces.</p>
5.28	<p>In terms of place making, the proposed building is considered to be of a high-quality design which would provide a pleasant working environment for employees and visitors, and well as enhancing the character and appearance of the area. The proposal is considered to satisfy the requirements of Policy HC1.</p> <p><u>Environmental protection</u></p>
5.29	<p>Policy ENV1 states that planning permission will be granted for development that will maintain and, where possible, enhance environmental quality, and protects communities from materially harmful development. The proposed development has been assessed by Environmental Health in terms of contaminated land, air quality, noise and odour impacts.</p> <p><u>Contaminated land</u></p>
5.30	<p>The contaminated land reports provided with the application conclude that no remediation is required. Environmental Health therefore advises that only precautionary conditions for new discovered contaminants are placed on the decision notice.</p> <p><u>Air quality</u></p>
5.31	<p>The application is accompanied by an Air Quality Assessment, which concludes that the relevant thresholds would not be exceeded. Environmental Health notes that a range of plant rooms and a generator are proposed as part of the scheme. It therefore advises a condition to require a further Air Quality Assessment should centralised combustion sources be proposed.</p> <p><u>Noise</u></p>
5.32	<p>In relation to noise, Environmental Health advises conditions in relation noise levels from plant and equipment.</p> <p><u>Odour</u></p>
5.33	<p>Environmental Health is concerned that the proposed ground floor restaurant could have an adverse odour impact on existing and future sensitive receptors. Further details of kitchen extraction and odour abatement are therefore required, and these can be secured by condition.</p>
5.34	<p>Subject to the suggested conditions, it is considered the proposal complies with Policy ENV1.</p> <p><u>Flood risk and drainage</u></p>
5.35	<p>Dfl Rivers advises that the site is within a 1 in 200 year climate change coastal flood plain. Planning Service has accepted that the proposal is an exception to policy being land previously developed, including replacement of buildings within the car park. DFI Rivers Agency has assessed the Flood Risk Assessment for the proposal and accepts the logic and has no reason to disagree with the conclusions. Accordingly, it offers no objection to the proposal. The proposal is considered to satisfy Policy ENV5.</p>

	<p><u>Natural heritage</u></p>
5.36	Policy NH1 relates to the protection of natural heritage resources.
5.37	NI Water has objected to the application on grounds of insufficient network capacity and has cited concerns about environmental pollution. Particular regard should be had to potential pollution of Belfast Lough – an environmentally protected Special Protection Area (SPA), RAMSAR and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) – should the site and lough be hydrologically linked.
5.38	Belfast City Council is the Competent Authority under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) for undertaking an Appropriate Assessment where a proposal is likely to have a significant environmental effect on Belfast Lough. Water quality of the lough is a key consideration. The Habitats Regulations are framed in such a way that it is not only the impacts of individual development proposals that need to be considered, but also “in combination” impacts with other development.
5.39	Whilst a precautionary approach applies to Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), SES confirms that the onus is on NI Water to provide evidence of likely actual impacts, rather than hypothetical impacts. As the Competent Authority, the Council may take its own objective view on whether a proposal is likely to have a significant effect on water quality of the Lough. However, having regard to the precautionary approach, where there is clear intensification, the Council may need to consult SES and ask them to undertake a HRA Appropriate Assessment Screening to ascertain whether there would be a likely significant impact. This also triggers statutory consultation with DAERA NI Environment Agency.
5.40	In this case, it is considered that there would be clear intensification of the existing use of the site. Accordingly, it has been necessary to consult DAERA and SES. DAERA Water Management Unit has advised that in view of the objection from NI Water, the proposal has the potential to adversely affect the surface water environment. However, it advises mitigation in the form of a condition restricting development until agreement with NIW is reached. SES has been reconsulted and has submitted two conditions for the proposal works to be carried out in accordance with the Construction Environmental Management Plan and like DAERA a restriction preventing development until agreement with NIW.
5.41	DAERA has advised that it has no further concerns about the proposal, advising conditions in relation to piling, decommissioning of boreholes and requirements should future contamination be found. These conditions are recommended as appropriate.
5.42	Subject to a satisfactory agreement with NIW, the proposal is considered compliant with Policy NH1, Policy ENV1 and the relevant provisions of the SPPS.
	<p><u>Pre-Application Community Consultation</u></p>
5.43	For applications for Major development, there is a legislative requirement for applicants to consult the community in advance of submitting the application.
5.44	Applicants are required to submit to the council a ‘Proposal of Application Notice’ (PAN) in advance of making the application, which sets out the proposals for the pre-community consultation. A PAN was submitted in September 2021 (LA04/2021/2228/PAN) and confirmed by the Council to be acceptable.

5.45	<p>The applicant is further required to prepare a Pre-Application Community Consultation report (PACC) to accompany the planning application. A PACC Report was submitted with the application, which describes the engagement process and feedback received. A public event Webinar was held and dedicated community consultation website setup. A total of seven feedback forms were completed. Feedback was provided in relation to design, regeneration, sustainability, need, active travel, public accessibility, relocating Grade A office development, potential employment the design, noise/disruption road safety. The PACC report is considered compliant with the legislative requirements.</p> <p><u>Employability and Skills</u></p>
5.47	<p>The applicant is a publicly owned corporation, part of Translink. Translink is mandated to promote social inclusion and equal opportunities to deliver social value. The agent has advised that Translink will explore delivery options which may include securing a Private Sector Development Partner (PSDP) to deliver this project (subject to planning and all requisite approvals). This potential delivery model has the ability to embrace social value initiatives that would benefit local communities, proportionate to the project's construction value and agreed upon with a PSDP. Translink has agreed a similar approach with their appointed PSDP at Weavers Cross in the city.</p>
6.0	Recommendation
6.1	<p>Having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.</p>
6.2	<p>Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement and deal with any other issues that arise, including those raised in the further consultation responses from Shared Environmental Services and Waste Management team, provided that the issues are not substantive.</p>
7.0	<p>DRAFT CONDITIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission. Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. 2. The rating level (dBLAr,T) from the operation of all combined plant and equipment must not exceed the existing daytime and night-time background sound levels at the nearest noise sensitive premises, when measured or determined in accordance with BS4142:2014+A1:2019 'Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound'. Reason: Protection of surrounding amenity from adverse noise impact. 3. All plant associated with the hereby permitted development shall be located within the designated plant area on the Mezzanine floor as presented in drawing from TODD titled 'Mezzanine Floor Plan', Drawing No: LPCP-TOD-02-MZ-DR-A-02010, Revision P01 and dated 14/03/2025. Reason: Protection of surrounding amenity from adverse noise impact.

4. If during the carrying out of the development, new contamination is encountered that has not previously been identified, all related development works shall cease, and the Council shall be notified immediately in writing. No further related development works shall proceed until this new contamination has been fully investigated in accordance with current Environment Agency and CIRIA guidance and British Standards.

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

5. 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 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.

6. Prior to the installation of any centralised combustion sources (boilers, CHP, biomass or generators) at the hereby approved development, where 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 document - Land-use Planning & Development Control: Planning For Air Belfast City Council - Environmental Health Service Planning Checklist 2008.doc Quality (January 2017), an Air Quality Impact Assessment shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority prior to installation of the plant.

Reason: Protection of human health

7. Any submitted assessment shall include details of the combustion plant to be installed, emission rates and flue termination heights of the proposed combustion systems and must demonstrate that there will be no exceedances of the Air Quality Strategy objectives at relevant human receptor locations associated with the operation of the proposed combustion plant and with the overall development.

Reason: Protection of human health

8. Construction dust management measures shall be developed in accordance with the provisions of the Institute of Air Quality Management Publication Guidance on the Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction (2024 V2.2). These dust management measures shall be implemented throughout the duration of the construction phase of the development.

Reason: To protect human health from adverse dust effects during the construction phase of the development.

9. Prior to and throughout construction, the appointed contractor must implement and adhere to all the mitigation measures set out in the

Construction Environmental Management Plan (Tetra Tech, Version 5, February 2025) to effectively prevent the egress of contaminated water from the construction site, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council.

Reason: To ensure the project will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site.

10. No development shall commence on site (other than site clearance, site preparation, demolition and the formation of foundations and trenches) unless details of foul and surface water drainage, including a programme for implementation of these works, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details, which shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: To ensure appropriate foul and surface water drainage of the site. Approval is required upfront because the design of the drainage is an integral part of the development and its acceptability.

11. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until the external terraces have been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The amenity areas shall be retained as such at all times.

Reason: To ensure that a quality residential environment is provided for occupants of the approved development.

12. The SuDS measured shall be implemented as specified in the application and the building shall not be occupied until verification and evidence of such has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.

Reason: In order that the development provides sustainable drainage

13. 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.

Reason: To ensure that appropriate provision is made for storage and disposal of waste.

14. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied or operated unless in accordance with the approved Travel Plan

Reason: To promote sustainable travel patterns and off-set the demand for vehicular movements and/or parking.

15. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the secure cycle storage area, lockers and shower facilities have been provided in accordance with the approved plans and shall be permanently retained as such at all times.

Reason: To promote active travel and to mitigate the absence of dedicated parking within the development.

DRAFT INFORMATIVES

NOT02 Compliance with planning permission

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.

NOT03 Discharge of condition(s)

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.

NOT05 Non-planning requirements

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.

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Committee Application

Development Management Report	
Committee Meeting Date: 10 th March 2026	
Application ID: LA04/2025/1272/F	
Proposal: Erection of temporary mobile classroom village to facilitate future refurbishment and extension of existing Harberton North Special School, comprising 3 no. 2-storey blocks of temporary classroom accommodation, temporary hard play areas, temporary staff and visitor parking areas, tree removal and landscaping.	Location: Harberton North Special School 29a Fortwilliam Park Belfast BT15 4AP
Referral Route: Major Application	
Recommendation: Approval subject to conditions	
Applicant Name and Address: Education Authority 40 Academy Street Belfast BT1 2NQ	Agent Name and Address: Damien McLoughlin Resolve Planning Pearl Assurance House 1 Donegall Square East Belfast
Date Valid: 31/07/2025	
Target Date: 26/02/2026	
Contact Officer: Lisa Walshe, Principal Planner (Development Management)	
Executive Summary: This application seeks the erection of temporary mobile classroom village to facilitate future refurbishment and extension of existing Harberton North Special School. The proposal comprises of 3 no. 2-storey blocks of temporary classroom accommodation, temporary hard play areas, temporary staff and visitor parking areas, tree removal and replacement and landscaping. The proposal seeks temporary permission until the refurbishment and extension works to the existing school buildings and campus, anticipated for completion in September 2030. The key issues are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of development • The impact of the proposal on the conservation area and setting of listed buildings • Trees and landscaping • The impact on the amenity of adjacent land users • Access, movement, and parking • Climate change • Drainage and sewage infrastructure • Noise, air quality and other environmental impacts including contamination • Ecological issues 	

The site is located within the settlement limit within Belfast Urban Area Plan (BUAP) and Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (versions 2004 and 2014) and within the Somerton Road / Chichester Park Conservation Area. The site is near a number of listed buildings.

The proposal includes the removal and replacement of a number of trees to facilitate the temporary buildings, parking and access. Temporary parking arrangements will also be provided to the rear of the site to offset the loss of spaces currently located where the temporary buildings are proposed.

There are no objections from any consultees, including the BCC Tree and Conservation Sections, DFI Roads, and Environmental Health.

Two representations have been received raising issues with trees being felled and impact to residential amenity namely loss of light, privacy and increased noise / traffic levels. All issues are considered in the report.

Recommendation

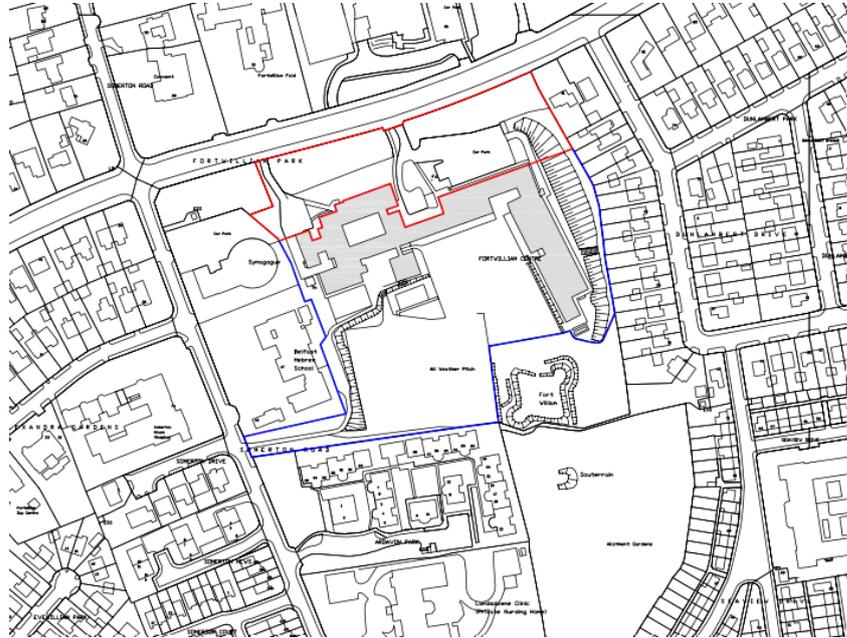
Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable for a temporary period. It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.

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

Officer Report

1.0 Drawings

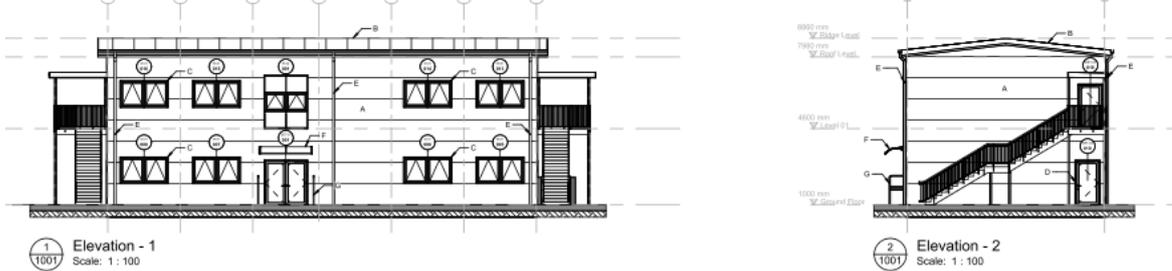
1.1 Fig 1. Site Location Plan

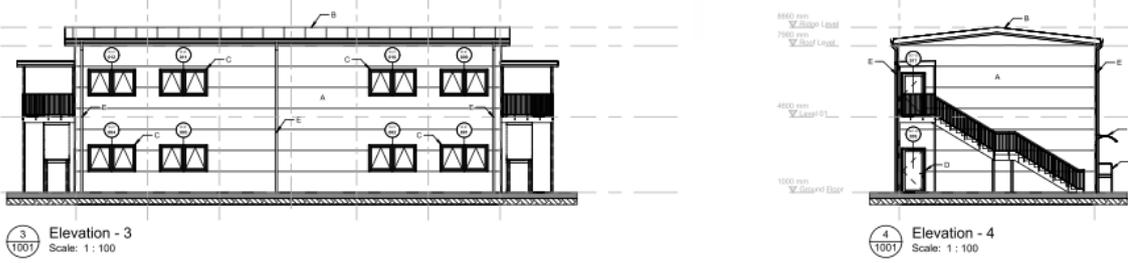


1.2 Fig 2. Proposed site Layout

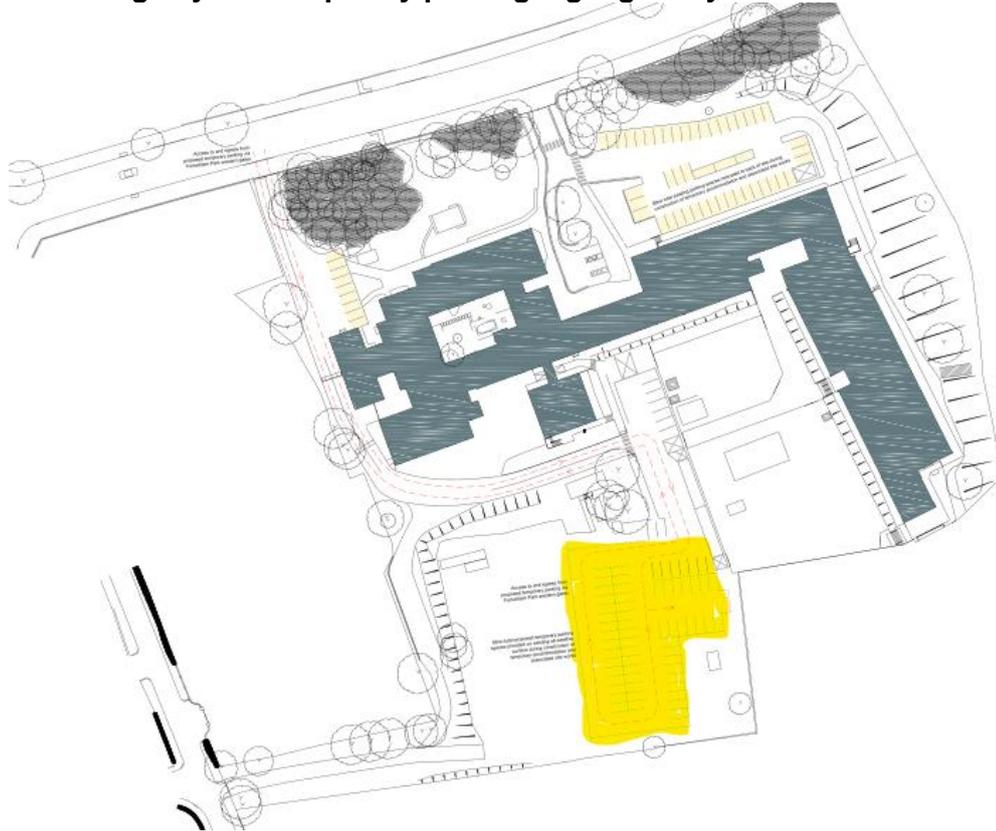


1.3 Elevations: Front/Side/Rear





1.4 Overall Existing Layout: temporary parking highlighted yellow



2.0 Characteristics of the Site and Area

2.1 The site is located in North Belfast at an existing school facility known as “Harberton Special School”. The wider campus is broadly rectangular in shape and approximately 3.1 hectares in size. It comprises a series of linked buildings in a broadly “L” shaped layout orientated west-to-east towards the front of the site and parallel to the northern and eastern site boundaries. The main section of the school comprises buildings largely two and three stories in height, stepping down to single storey along/adjacent to the eastern boundary. To the rear of the main building the site is largely hard surfaced comprising playground areas and former gravel sports/play area, vehicular access lanes and parking. Whilst the topography of the site is broadly level, the main central section of the site is slightly elevated above existing development adjacent to the west and south and falls towards the eastern boundary. There are a number of mature trees along the site frontage with Fortwilliam Park, with additional mature trees along/adjacent to the western, eastern, and southern site boundaries.

2.2 There are two existing vehicle accesses off Fortwilliam Park at the front of the site facilitating “one way” entrance and exit, with a further two-way access lane in the

2.3	<p>southwestern corner of the site from Somerton Road, which runs parallel to the site to the west. There are a total of 56 marked parking spaces and associated access road along the site frontage, with a further 7 no car spaces and 2 no bus spaces centrally located to the rear of the existing buildings. A further access lane travers south and west adjacent to the western boundary onto Somerton Road.</p> <p>The application site is located in the northeast of the site and currently comprises the current main car park area. It also further extends along the frontage to the west and includes the current access lane and soft landscaping areas with associated mature trees adjacent to the front site boundary with Fortwilliam Park. The topography of this area is broadly level but falls towards the eastern site boundary at/from a point adjacent to the eastern gable of the main existing school building.</p>
2.4	<p>To the north/opposite the site is a Secondary School "Dominican College". Immediately adjacent to the east largely comprises detached two storey dwellings on Dunlambert Drive. The rear of these dwellings are orientated towards the eastern boundary of the school campus, save for 31 Fortwilliam Park which is orientated gable onto the eastern site boundary. To the west of the site there is a church and nursing home facility. Fortwilliam monument and grounds are located to the southeast/adjacent to the southern boundary of the campus and detached 2-storey housing.</p>
3.0	Description of Proposal
3.1	<p>Erection of temporary mobile classroom village to facilitate future refurbishment and extension of existing Harberton North Special School, comprising 3 no. 2-storey blocks of temporary classroom accommodation, temporary hard play areas, temporary staff and visitor parking areas, tree removal and landscaping.</p>
3.2	<p>The mobile blocks measure approx. 20.2m in length, 9.4m in width and 7.9m in height with a floorspace of approx. 190 sqm per floor. The temporary blocks span over two floors which equates to a floor space of 380 sqm per unit.</p>
3.3	<p>There are 3 no. of temporary mobile blocks totalling approx. 1,140 sqm of floor space.</p>
3.4	<p>Each floor will consist of two classrooms arranged either side of core accommodation including, a foyer, stairs, lift, accessible toilet and stores. The layout of the temporary accommodation, together with proposed fencing will define two temporary hard play areas with direct access from the units.</p>
4.0	Planning Policy and Other Material Considerations
4.1	<p>Development Plan – Plan Strategy</p> <p><u>Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy 2035</u></p>
	<p>Policy DES1 – Principles of urban design</p>
	<p>Policy CI1 - Community Infrastructure</p>
	<p>Policy TRAN1 – Active Travel</p>
	<p>Policy TRAN2 – Creating an accessible environment</p>
	<p>Policy TRAN6 – Access to public roads</p>
	<p>Policy TRAN8 – Car parking and servicing arrangements</p>
	<p>Policy ENV1 – Environmental quality</p>
	<p>Policy ENV2 – Mitigating environmental change</p>
	<p>Policy ENV3 – Adapting to environmental change</p>
	<p>Policy ENV4 - Flood Risk</p>
	<p>Policy ENV5 – Sustainable Drainage</p>

	<p>Policy BH1 – Listed Buildings Policy BH2 – Conservation Areas Policy OS1 – Protection of Open Space Policy TRE1 – Trees</p>
4.2	<p>Development Plan – zoning, designations and proposals maps Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) BUAP Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014)</p>
4.3	<p>Regional Planning Policy Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)</p>
4.4	<p>Other Material Considerations Developer Contribution Framework (BCC) Belfast Agenda (Community Plan) Creating Places (DfI)</p>
4.5	<p>Relevant Planning History</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LA04/2023/2654/F - 29a Fortwilliam Park, Belfast, BT15 4AP - Provision of lift and internal reconfiguration to include for new unisex toilets – PERMISSION GRANTED - LA04/2023/3099/DCA - 29a Fortwilliam Park, Belfast, BT15 4AP - Part demolition of Existing External Wall – CONSENT GRANTED
5.0	Consultations and Representations
5.1	<p>Statutory Consultations DfI Roads – No objections subject to conditions NI Water – Approval NIEA – Further info requested, dealt with via pre-commencement condition</p>
5.2	<p>Non-Statutory Consultations BCC Environmental Health – No objections subject to conditions BCC Conservation team – No Objection subject to BCC Trees – No objections subject to conditions</p>
5.3	<p>Representations The application has been advertised and neighbours notified. The Council has received two representations which raise the following concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear number of trees to be felled; • Impact on residential amenity i.e. loss of light, privacy; • Increased noise, activity and traffic levels.
5.4	<p>Amended plans were received which relocated the classroom blocks. The application was re-neighbour notified and advertised. Whilst no further comments were received, the issues raised have been fully assessed within the planning assessment section of the report below.</p>
6.0	PLANNING ASSESSMENT
6.1	<p>Key Issues The key issues relevant to consideration of this application are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of development

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact of the proposal on the Conservation Area and setting of Listed Buildings • Trees and landscaping • The impact on the amenity of adjacent land users • Access, movement, and parking • Climate change • Drainage and sewage infrastructure • Noise, air quality and other environmental impacts including contamination • Ecological issues
6.2	<p>Development Plan Context</p> <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>
6.3	<p>Section 45(1) of the Act states that in determining planning applications, the Council must have regard to the local development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations.</p>
6.4	<p>The Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP) when fully completed will replace the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 as the statutory Development Plan for the city. The Belfast LDP will comprise two parts. Part 1 is the Plan Strategy (PS), 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 ('Department Development Plan') remain part of the statutory local development plan until the Local Policies Plan is adopted.</p>
6.5	<p>Operational policies – the Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application. These are listed at para 6.1.</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 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>
6.7	<p><u>Existing School Facility</u></p> <p>The existing school comprises a current enrolment of 222 pupils with 30 full time teachers and 86 support staff. Pupils are typically present 08.45 – 15.00, with teaching staff on site from 8.30-16.00 (16.45pm on Mondays).</p>
6.8	<p><u>Principle of development</u></p> <p>The proposed development lies within the development limit for Belfast and within the Somerton Road / Chichester Park Conservation area.</p>
6.9	<p>Policy CI1 of the Plan Strategy highlights that planning permission will be granted for the provision of new and improved community infrastructure (which includes education facilities) at appropriate and accessible locations within the urban area, subject to the nature and</p>

	location of any proposals. The principle of development of this use in this location has already been established through its current use as an educational facility. The temporary mobile village is necessary to allow for the redevelopment of the existing school and maintain teaching functions. The principle of the proposal aligns with CI1 of the Plan Strategy.
6.10	<u>The impact of the proposal on the conservation area and setting of listed buildings</u>
	Regional policy aims to enhance the character or appearance of the area where an opportunity to do so exists, or to preserve its character or appearance where an opportunity to enhance does not arise. There is also a general presumption against demolition of unlisted buildings that should only be relaxed in exceptional circumstances. The proposal does not include any demolition of the existing school building under this application.
6.11	BCC Conservation Section advise that, given the substantially altered immediate context of this section of the Conservation Area, there would be no objection to the location of temporary classrooms in the grounds of the school for a time limited period, subject to assurances that the classrooms will not have a detrimental impact on boundary landscaping elements.
6.12	Policy BH2 of the LDP Plan Strategy is therefore relevant, stating that planning permission will only be granted for new or replacement buildings in conservation areas subject to 5 criteria A-E.
6.13	Criterion A requires the preservation or enhancement of the character and appearance of the area and criterion B requires proposals to respect the built form. The scale, height and massing of the proposed buildings are considered acceptable given the height of the adjacent existing school buildings. The location, design and materials of the buildings are acceptable given they are for a limited period and the community benefit of ensuring educational functions for vulnerable pupils continue at the site pending the ongoing redevelopment of the wider school campus. Taking account of the Conservation response, the proposed buildings would not satisfy the preserve or enhance policy test, however the associated harm/visual impacts are mitigated by the temporary period for which they are sought and screening provided by landscaping along the site frontage.
6.14	Criterion C relates to key views and their protection. The eastern site boundary also constitutes a boundary of the wider Conservation Area boundary. Views of the site from public locations are limited due to screening provided by existing matures trees along the frontage of the site from Fortwilliam Park. Limited views are possible from Dunlambert Park to the east, through gaps in buildings and associated built form. Views from the south and west of the application site and wider campus are obscured by existing built form, boundary treatments, and vegetation. On balance it is therefore concluded that views would not be adversely impacted.
6.15	Criterion D relates to the protection of Trees, archaeological or other landscape features. This criterion will be considered in conjunction with related policies BH1 and TRE1 below.
6.16	Criterion E requires proposal to have regard to relevant supplementary planning guidance. The Somerton Road/Chichester Park Conservation Area was designated in 2000. BMAP 2014 (legal challenge) states "The area is predominantly residential with some institutional, ecclesiastical and commercial uses. The principal townscape features are the detached, semi-detached and terraced buildings set in generous plots, with mature landscaping." (page 112). There are no specified requirements specifically for the application site.
6.17	Within draft BMAP 2004, the Conservation is designated under BT028 and includes 5 design criteria. Of these 3 are relevant, in summary requiring the relationship between buildings and boundaries are retained; trees and soft landscaping between the building line and

	road/footway boundary are not removed; and hedging and boundary treatments shall be in keeping with those traditionally in the area. This matter will be considered under Trees and Landscaping below. There are no specified requirements specifically for the application site.
6.18	There is no other supplementary guidance of material relevance to the proposal.
6.19	The proposed site is in close proximity to a number of listed buildings. Policy BH1 advises that planning permission will be granted for new development affecting the setting of listed buildings where criteria A-E are met. Historic Environment Division (HED)\ have been consulted and considers the proposal to be sufficiently removed from the nearby buildings and their settings as to have no impact, ensuring compliance with BH1 of the LDP: Plan Strategy.
6.20	Policy BH5 relates to the protection of archaeological assets. Whilst the wider campus site abuts an archeological asset to the south, the application site is a significant distance from this and not within or immediately adjacent to such assets. Accordingly, the proposal will not adversely impact on any archeological assets and is compliant with this policy.
6.21	<p>Trees and landscaping</p> <p>In line with Policy TRE1, the council will seek to protect existing trees from new development, particularly those that are of visual, biodiversity or amenity quality and significance, and there will be a presumption in favour of retaining and safeguarding trees that make a valuable contribution to the environment and amenity.</p>
6.23	BCC Tree and Landscape team advise that the majority of the trees to be removed (10 – 13 x trees) are considered to be poor in terms of specimen quality and crown shapes / structures. Furthermore, 14 x replacement trees are proposed, a net gain in trees of tree cover for the application site. Species include oak, birch, cherry, pine, ash, cherry and hazel which are acceptable. Planting locations are located at the front boundary of the site which would promote/maintain amenity value and screening to the front site. Works in close proximity to retained trees will utilise tree protection measures which the Tree section confirm are acceptable. Appropriate conditions are necessary to ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the submitted details.
6.24	In relation to the design criteria as set out in dBMAP 2004, as discussed above, limited weight can be afforded to these criteria give the draft status of the plan. Taking account of the health and condition of the existing trees and the assessment by the Tree section, this consideration also outweighs the dBMAP design criteria requirements. It is therefore concluded that the proposal satisfies LDP associated LDP policies in TRE1 and BH2 criteria D.
6.25	<p>Protection of Open Space</p> <p>The proposal would result in the loss of small, landscaped areas of open space within the school campus to facilitate car parking, access facilities, and hard surfaced playground areas. The majority of the area / location of the temporary buildings are located within an existing hard surface car park area. Given the small quantum of space that be removed, temporary nature of the proposal, and community benefit of securing ongoing delivery of educational facilities for vulnerable groups at this location, the loss of open space is considered acceptable on balance. Accordingly, the proposal is considered appropriate when considering Policy OS1.</p>

6.26	<p><u>The impact on the amenity of adjacent land users</u></p> <p>The proposed development is two storeys in height (max height – approx. 7.9m). The separation distance from the closest block to the residential property at No. 31 will range from approx. 21.5m to 22.9m in varying locations. Officers note the change in levels from the neighbouring property but consider the separation distances to be sufficient to ensure no adverse impact regarding loss of light or dominance. The original proposal layout has been revised relocating the siting of the temporary building perpendicular to adjacent properties to the east of the site. The application was re-neighbour notified, and no further comments were received.</p>
6.27	<p>The side elevation will face onto No. 31 but will have no window openings, only doors and as such will not cause any overlooking concerns. It is considered that the proposal would not result in any unacceptable overlooking, loss of light, overshadowing, loss of outlook or other harmful impacts on adjacent land users taking account of the separation distances provided and mature vegetation along this boundary.</p>
6.28	<p><u>Access, movement, and parking</u></p> <p>The proposal will make use of the existing vehicular access and exit from Fortwilliam Park. These accesses will be linked, providing 32 car parking spaces and a layby for bus and taxi drop-offs etc.</p>
6.29	<p>The temporary mobile village will be situated on land that is currently used as the main car park to serve the existing school. 47 existing spaces are located in this area. The proposal has incorporated parking spaces to the front of the site and demonstrated that the displaced parking from this area (56 spaces) can be accommodated to the rear of the site. The proposal will not therefore result in a net loss of parking for the current school requirements.</p>
6.30	<p>The application site has good links to existing cycling, walking and public transport infrastructure. DFI Roads have been consulted and have provided no objection to the proposal subject to recommended conditions.</p>
6.31	<p>It is considered the proposal complies with Policies TRAN1 (Active Travel), TRAN2 (Creating an Accessible environment), TRAN6 (Access to public roads) and TRAN8 (Car parking and Servicing Arrangements).</p>
6.32	<p><u>Climate change</u></p> <p>With regard to policies ENV3 (Adapting to environmental change) and ENV5 (Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)), planning permission will be granted for development that incorporates measures to adapt to environmental change and should include, where appropriate, SuDS measures to manage surface water effectively on site, to reduce surface water runoff and to ensure flooding is not increased elsewhere.</p>
6.33	<p>The supporting drainage assessment (DA) discounts the use of rainwater harvesting, green and blue roofs due to the temporary nature of the proposal and associated building design, pending the redevelopment of the wider school campus. The DA notes that there is scope for surface infiltration and that adequate attenuation to a combined sewer can be facilitated.</p>
6.34	<p>The existing area of the site is currently subject to hard surfacing, and the proposal would not significantly alter related drainage impacts. Notwithstanding this a planning condition can facilitate a requirement for use of permeable hard surfacing material which, in itself would provide a net reduction in surface water run-off. This is one of the listed measures in ENV5</p>

	<p>developers are asked to consider. Given the circumstances of this case, the proposal is considered acceptable in relation to policies ENV2, ENV3 and ENV5.</p>
6.35	<p><u>Drainage and sewage infrastructure</u></p> <p>A Drainage Assessment was submitted in accordance with policy ENV4.</p>
6.36	<p>NI Water (NIW) provided comment on the proposal in relation to wastewater capacity, advising of no objections. On this basis the proposal is considered compliant with ENV4.</p>
6.37	<p><u>Noise, air quality and other environmental impacts including contamination</u></p> <p>BCC Environmental Health (EHO) have been consulted and considered the proposed development and associated technical supporting information in terms of noise, air pollution, general amenity, ambient air quality, contaminated land and other considerations.</p>
6.38	<p>EHO are content with the findings contained within the Noise Impact Assessment. There will be no demolition work or a need for foundations it is not considered that construction works for the temporary mobile village will be significant or intrusive in terms of noise impact. Whilst the external play areas are closer to some residential premises, it is a temporary arrangement and the nature of the noise generated will be typical and ordinary in terms of the current extant use of the site as a school. Subject to a condition for plant, EHO provided no objection. On this basis the proposal is considered acceptable in relation to these issues and associated policy requirements of ENV1.</p>
6.39	<p><u>Ecological issues</u></p> <p>Policy NH1 relates to the protection of natural heritage resources. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has confirmed that no NI priority habitats were recorded on site, with habitats present largely consisting of bare ground and amenity/improved grassland.</p>
6.40	<p>Given the felling of trees, DEARA Natural Environment Division (NED) recommended a condition regarding the use of a “soft-felling technique” for the tree. The Tree and Landscape team were also consulted and had no objections.</p>
6.41	<p>Given that potential roosting features for bats will be lost to facilitate the development, NED requested the submission of amended plans to show compensation through the installation of bat box(es) on site. The agent requested that this be dealt with via a pre-commencement planning condition, rather than delaying the application, which is considered to be acceptable given the circumstances of this case and community benefits of ensuring continued provision of educational facilities. Therefore, should planning permission be granted a pre-commencement condition will be placed requesting this information.</p>
6.42	<p><u>Pre application community consultation</u></p> <p>For applications for major development there is a legislative requirement for applicants to consult the community in advance of submitting the application.</p>
6.43	<p>Applicants are required to submit to the council a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) in advance of making the application, which sets out the proposal for community consultation. LA04/2025/0859/PAN was received 27/05/2025. The application was supported by a PACC.</p>

6.44	<p>The applicant 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"> • Distribution of an information leaflet. A total of 61 no. leaflets were issued to properties neighbouring the proposal; • Hosted a public exhibition event at the site; • Issued a press notice; • Elected members of the Castle (DEA) within the Belfast City Council area, along with local Belfast MLAs were notified of the submission of the PAN via e-mail; • The North Belfast Community Partnership (Local Community Group) was notified of the submission of the PAN via e-mail.
6.45	<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>
6.46	<p><u>Planning History:</u></p> <p>There is no planning history of relevance to the current proposal. The Council has received a full application, reference LA04/2025/2140/F for the refurbishment and extension of the school campus. At the time of writing processing of this application has not commenced as supporting information to satisfy legislative requirements remains outstanding.</p>
6.47	<p><u>Representations:</u></p> <p>Issues raised in the 2 representations received have been fully considered in the assessment set out above.</p>
7.0	Recommendation
7.1	<p>Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable on a temporary basis. It is recommended that planning permission is granted until September 2030, subject to conditions.</p>
7.2	<p>Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise conditions and deal with any other matters that may arise, provided that they are not substantive.</p>
<p>DRAFT CONDITIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development hereby permitted shall be removed and the land restored to its former condition on or before 30 September 2030. Reason: The development is subject to temporary permission and to protect the character, amenity, and landscape features of the area. 2. No works shall commence on site, unless further information has been submitted to and agreed with the Council in writing demonstrating compensatory roosting opportunities, in suitable locations on site as determined by a suitably qualified ecologist. The agreed details shall be carried out prior to the occupation of any part of the development hereby permitted and retained thereafter. Reason: In the interests and protection of natural heritage assets. 	

3. The rating level (dBLAr,T) from the operation of all combined plant and equipment at the hereby approved development must not exceed the existing 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'.

Reason: Protection of residential amenity.

4. The development hereby permitted shall not become operational until hard surfaced areas have been constructed and permanently marked in accordance with Drawing Nos.02C (front of site) & 10 (rear of site) uploaded to the Planning Portal 25th February 2026 and 27th February 2026 respectively, to provide for parking within the site. No part of these hard surfaced areas shall be used for any purpose at any time other than for the parking and movement of vehicles in connection with the approved development.

REASON: To ensure adequate provision has been made for parking within the site.

5. All landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details on drawing no HSS-MLA-XX-XX-DR-L-0001. The works shall be carried out prior to the completion of the development unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council. Any trees or 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.

Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area

6. All trees and planting 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, 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

7. 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. No works shall be carried out on site unless written notification has been given to the Council at least 14 days prior to the commencement of works.

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.

8. No storage of materials, parking of vehicles or plant, temporary buildings, sheds, offices or fires within the Root Protection Areas (RPA) 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.

9. All hard 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. All hard surface treatment of open parts of the site shall be permeable or drained to a permeable area. All hard landscape works shall be permanently retained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area.

10. Any excavation within Tree Protection Areas shall be carried out using non mechanised hand tools only. All roots that are uncovered during excavation and which are in excess of 2.5cm in diameter shall be protected and treated in accordance with BS 3998: 2010 Recommendations for Tree Work (or any guidance revoking and/or re-enacting it) and foundations bridged around them.

Reason: To safeguard existing tree(s) in the interests of visual amenity.

Development Management Officer Report

Committee Application

Summary	
Committee Meeting Date: 10 th March 2026	
Application Ref: LA04/2025/1003/F	
Proposal: Proposed use of 300 No. Student Bedrooms/Studios as Short Term Let Accommodation outside of term time.	Location: 81-107 York Street, Belfast, BT15 1AT
Referral Route: Paragraph 3.8.2 (d) of the scheme of delegation – change of use application involving student accommodation	
Recommendation: Approval subject to conditions and Section 77 Planning Agreement	
Applicant Name and Address: LIV Belfast Partners Limited C/O Valeo Management Limited Wharton Park House Nat Lane, Winsford Cheshire CW7 3BS	Agent Name and Address: Turley Hamilton House 3 Joy Street Belfast
Date Valid: 16.06.2025	
Target Date: 29.09.2025	
Contact Officer: Lisa Walshe, Principal Planner	
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>The application site is situated at 81-107 York Street, Belfast, BT15 1AT.</p> <p>Permission was granted under Z/2015/0138/F for the demolition of existing buildings and erection of a building for managed student accommodation, comprising 590 No. ensuite double bedrooms and 92 studios; and 2 No. retail units at ground floor level. Permission was later granted under LA04/2016/2385/F in June 2017 for an amendment to planning permission Z/2015/0138/F to develop purpose built managed student accommodation comprising 717 beds with 2 No. retail units at ground floor level etc. The scheme as approved under LA04/2016/2385/F has been constructed and is fully operational.</p> <p>The key issues for consideration of the application are set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of the proposed change of use outside of term time • Access, movement and parking <p>One representation was received from the Northern Ireland Hotel Federation. Their concerns included the definition of term time and clarity of sue, monitoring and enforcement issues, neighbourhood amenity and enforcement issues, precedent and policy alignment. This is considered in the report.</p>	

DFI Roads were consulted and had no objections

A Section 77 to vary the Section 76 of the host approval is necessary and is agreed in principle with Legal Services.

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, resolve the relevant Section 77 to vary the host Section 76 Planning Agreement, and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive.

Officer Report

1.0

Drawings

1.1

Site Location



First Floor



Second - Fourth Floors



Fifth - Ninth Floors



Tenth Floor



Eleventh Floor



Twelfth - Thirteenth Floors



2.0	Characteristics of the Site and Area
2.1	The application site comprises a Purpose-Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) on York Street which received planning permission under reference LA04/2016/2385/F in June 2017. It contains 717 self-contained units spread across 14 floors with associated communal and amenity facilities as well as retail units at ground floor.
3.0	Description of Proposal
3.1	The application is seeking full planning permission for the proposed use of 300 No. Student Bedrooms/Studios as Short Term Let (STL) Accommodation outside of term time.
3.2	The reasoning for this is the high vacancy rates within the student accommodation – specifically during the summer months, resulting in a seasonal downturn in footfall and activity for business which rely on student customers.

3.3	LIV Belfast state that they are seeking to better utilise the accommodation during this time to provide quality accommodation for visiting academics, such as PhD candidates and researchers, as well as for other visitors to the city. As such, this application seeks planning permission for the use of 247 bedrooms and 53 studios (300 beds in total) during the summer months, comprising 42% of the total accommodation units within the building.
4.0	Planning Policy and Other Material Considerations
4.1	Development Plan – Plan Strategy Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035
4.2	<p><i>Strategic Policies:</i></p> <p>Policy SP2 – sustainable development</p> <p><i>Operational Policies:</i></p> <p>HOU13 – Short-term let accommodation</p> <p>TLC1 - Supporting tourism leisure and cultural development</p> <p>TLC3 - Overnight visitor accommodation</p> <p>TRAN 8 - Car parking and servicing arrangements</p> <p>Policy ENV1 – Environmental quality</p>
4.3	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)
4.4	Regional Planning Policy Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)
4.5	<p>Relevant Planning History</p> <p>Z/2015/0138/F - 81-107 York Street Belfast BT15 1AB - Demolition of existing buildings and erection of a building ranging in height from 11 to 14 No. storeys (37m X 43m) for managed student accommodation, comprising 590 No. ensuite double bedrooms with shared communal areas and kitchens and 92 studios; 2 No. retail units at ground floor level; two landscaped courtyards; other ancillary accommodation including a reception/management suite and communal areas; plant and storage areas, and car parking and cycle provision. – PERMISSION GRANTED</p> <p>LA04/2016/2385/F - 81-107 York Street Belfast - Amendment to planning permission Z/2015/0138/F to develop purpose built managed student accommodation comprising 717 beds with shared communal areas, 2 No. retail units at ground floor level; two landscaped courtyards; other ancillary accommodation including a reception/management suite and communal areas; plant and storage areas, and car parking and cycle provision. – PERMISSION GRANTED</p>

5.0	Consultations and Representations
5.1 5.2 5.3 5.3.1	<p>Statutory Consultations DFI Roads – No Objections subject to conditions</p> <p>Non-Statutory Consultations Northern Ireland Tourist Board – No Comment</p> <p>Representations</p> <p>The application has been advertised and neighbours notified. One representation has been received from the Northern Ireland Hotel Federation. Their concerns are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of ‘term time’ and clarity of use <i>The Section 77 has defined non term time as the calendar months of July and August in any particular year.</i> • Impact on local housing market and student accommodation stock <i>As demonstrated by the vacancy rates and nature of school term times, student accommodation is not overly required during these months, ensuring no adverse impact to the existing housing/student accommodation. The application is for 300 rooms, which leaves 417 as student accommodation during this time for those students who do require the accommodation during non-term time.</i> • Monitoring and enforcement issues with references to reporting, guest-registers and other non-planning legislation. <i>The application will be subject to a Section 77 legal agreement, with the Council being the enforcing agency. Any potential breach will be dealt with appropriately by Council’s Planning Enforcement team.</i> • Neighbourhood amenity and local infrastructure <i>The proposal would not result in an adverse impact to neighbourhood amenity or local infrastructure compared to that of a PBMSA at full capacity. The proposal is subject to a different Management Plan to be implemented during July and August.</i> • Precedent and policy alignment <i>Each application is assessed on its own merits, taking account of its location, impacts etc in line with Planning Policy.</i> <p>The application is assessed in full below.</p>
6.0	PLANNING ASSESSMENT
6.1 6.1.1 6.1.2	<p>Development Plan Context</p> <p>6.1.1 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> <p>6.1.2 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>

6.1.3	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.
6.1.4	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.).
6.1.5	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.
6.1.6	Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 - The site is located within the settlement development limit in the BUAP and is not zoned for any use.
6.1.7	Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (2004 and 2014) – The is located within the City centre.
6.1.8	Key Issues
6.1.9	The key issues to be considered in this application are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle • Access, movement and parking
6.2	Principle of the proposal
6.2.1	Policy HOU13 relating to short term lets set out a number of key criteria which must be satisfied.
6.2.2	Criterion a. requires that the proposal <i>strengthens and diversifies the range of short-stay visitor accommodation in the city</i> . As of June 2024, short-term lets comprise 21% of Belfast City Council's tourist accommodation. The proposal is for 300 rooms outside of term time therefore would strengthen and diversify the range of short-term visitor accommodation in the city.
6.2.3	Criterion b. requires that the proposal <i>is accessible by public transport</i> . The site is located in the city centre and is highly accessible by public transport.
6.2.4	Criterion c. requires that the proposal <i>is sited within an existing tourism cluster or in close proximity to a visitor attraction</i> . The site is within the city centre with several visitor attractions in close proximity. For example, Clifton House is 0.4km away, Crumlin Road Gaol is 1.1km and City hall is 1km away.

6.2.5	<p>Criterion d. requires that the proposal <i>has appropriate management arrangements in place to ensure a positive and safe living environment whilst minimising any potential negative impacts</i>. The applicant has provided an appropriate management plan to the council for consideration. The management plan covers, layout, room allocation and segregation of accommodation use which addresses the juxtaposition of the two uses ensuring a level of segregation between visitors and the students whilst also facilitating feedback opportunities for the students. The management plan also addresses the property security, management, booking and vetting and the key operational policies including noise / anti-social behaviour, waste disposal and transportation.</p>
6.2.6	<p>Criterion e. requires that <i>the site is not located within a designated HMA (see policy HOU10), unless it can be demonstrated that the development is needed to meet a specific demand in that location</i>. As the site is not located within a designated HMA, this criterion is satisfied.</p>
6.2.7	<p>Criterion f. requires that <i>in the case of a change from permanent residential use, part of the property must be retained as permanent residential housing</i>. The existing building is a PBMSA therefore this criterion is not applicable.</p>
6.2.8	<p>Policy TLC1 states that the Council will seek to support tourism, leisure and cultural development that contributes to extending the offer of these forms of development across daytime and nighttime for the visitor. It is also expected that the proposal will lead to improving the quality and accessibility of tourism, leisure and cultural assets to support the city's reputation as an attractive tourism destination.</p>
6.2.9	<p>Policy TLC3 states that planning permission will be granted for tourism development for new overnight accommodation within the city centre boundary. Although the policy advises that short-term lets are considered under policy HOU13, nonetheless it demonstrates that there is a thrust for tourism development to be located within the city centre.</p>
6.3	<p>Access, movement and parking</p>
6.3.1	<p>Policy TRAN8 seeks to ensure that there is sufficient car parking and servicing arrangement for all developments. The development is car free with cycle parking available for short-term guests. There will be a drop off and loading bay within the site for limited use for delivery and loading/unloading. Short-term guests will therefore be encouraged to use more sustainable means of transport, such as cycling, walking or take advantage of regular local transport facilities. For short-term guests who do need parking, they will be directed to Lancaster Street car park and St Anne's Square multi-storey car park, both car parks are located within 2-5min walk from the application site.</p>
6.3.2	<p>Whilst the approved scheme is not subject to a Travel Plan, a Travel Plan was submitted for this application. The Travel Plan supports the proposal and outlines all travel options available to staff, guests and visitors to the proposed short-term let units i.e. multiple forms of public transport such as Metro, Glider, Goldline and Ulsterbus bus services alongside Translink Train services at Grand Central Station and York Street Station, as well as the pedestrian and cycle infrastructure in the surrounding area. It also addresses private car usage in that it will still be a mode of travel to some, with street pay and display parking and other longer duration car parks.</p>
6.3.3	<p>DFI were consulted and offered no objection to the development, following the submission of the Travel Plan.</p>

<p>6.4</p> <p>6.4.1</p> <p>6.4.2</p> <p>6.5</p> <p>6.6</p>	<p>Section 76 Planning Agreement</p> <p>Application LA04/2016/2385/F was subject to a Section 76 agreement which restricted the use to student accommodation and shall not be rented out or sub-let for any other purpose. As such a Section 77 is required to modify the original S76 to ensure that the student use is compliant with its legal obligations.</p> <p>A Section 77 to vary the Section 76 of the host approval has been agreed in principle with Legal Services and delegated authority is sought to resolve the finalisation of same.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>The proposal is considered to be an appropriate form of development within the city centre, it will provide additional visitor accommodation within the city centre outside of term time, adding to the diversity of visitor accommodation on offer, during peak times. It will also assist with vacancy rates within the building. Approval is recommended.</p>
<p>7.0</p>	<p>Recommendation</p>
<p>7.1</p> <p>7.2</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions, resolve the Section 77 variation to the host Section 76 planning agreement and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive.</p>
<p>DRAFT CONDITIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission. Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. 2. The short-term let use hereby permitted, shall only operate between 1st July and 31st August each year. Accordingly, the short term let use will cease on the 31st of August and not recommence until the 1st July the following year. Reason: To ensure the premises are retained as permanent student accommodation during the academic year, 1st September to 30th June. 3. The weather protected cycle parking installed under approval LA04/2016/2385/F shall be permanently retained. Reason: To ensure acceptable cycle parking facilities on the site and to encourage alternative modes of transport to the private car. 4. The development shall operate in accordance with the Travel Plan. Reason: To encourage alternative modes of transport to the private car. 	

Development Management Report

Committee Application

Committee Meeting Date: 10th March 2026

Application Ref: LA04/2025/0973/F

Proposal:

Retrospective change of use from student accommodation to short term lets accommodation (limited to July & August only)

Location:

Bradbury Place
30-44 Bradbury Place,
Belfast,
BT7 1RS

Referral Route: Paragraph 3.8.2 (d) of the scheme of delegation – change of use application involving student accommodation

Recommendation: Approval subject to conditions

Applicant Name and Address:

Bradbury Student Properties Limited
1 Linfield Road
Belfast
BT12 5DR

Agent Name and Address:

Clyde Shanks Ltd
2nd Floor
7 Exchange Place
Belfast
BT1 2NA

Date Valid: 12.06.2025

Target Date: 25.09.2025

Contact Officer: Ciara Reville, Principal Planner (Development Management)

Executive Summary:

The application site is situated at 30-44 Bradbury Place, Belfast, BT7 1RS.

Permission was granted under LA04/2017/2753/F for the Demolition of buildings and erection of a mixed-use development to include purpose built managed student accommodation with 100 en-suite cluster bedrooms and 56 studios (156 total) and ancillary facilities with ground floor retail unit. 5 storeys addressing Bradbury Place and 6 storeys addressing Albion Lane to rear.

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

- Principle of the proposed change of use outside of term time
- Access, movement and parking

One representation was received from the Northern Ireland Hotel Federation. Their concerns are set out below with response.

DFI Roads were consulted and had no objections

A Section 77 to vary the Section 76 of the host approval is necessary and is agreed in principle with Legal Services.

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, resolve the relevant Section 77, and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive.

Officer Report

1.0

Drawings

1.1

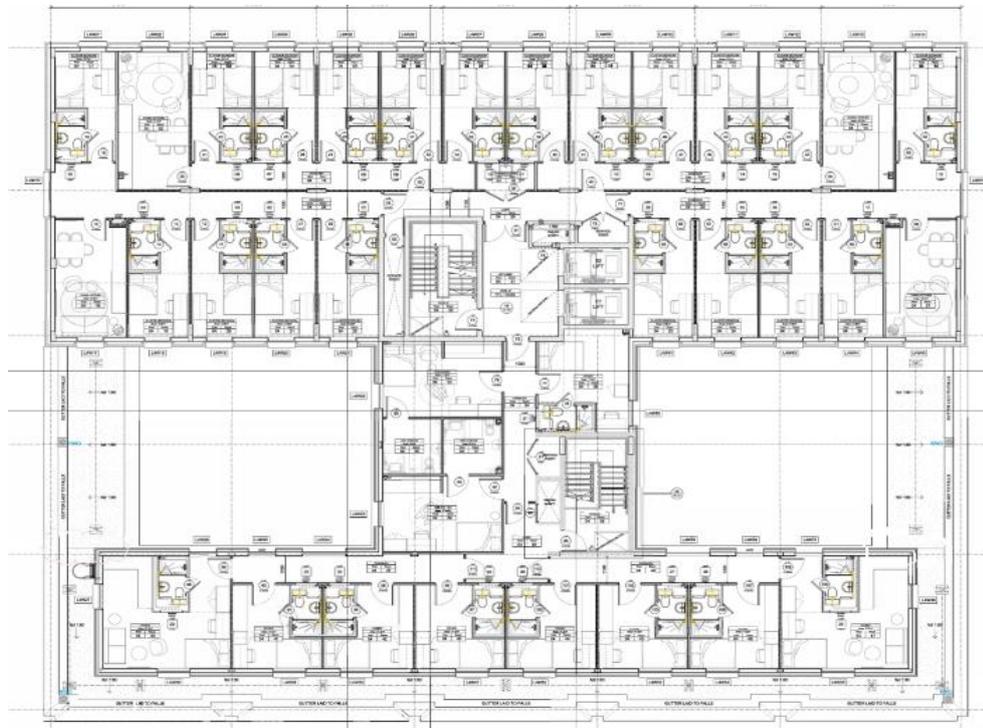
Site Location

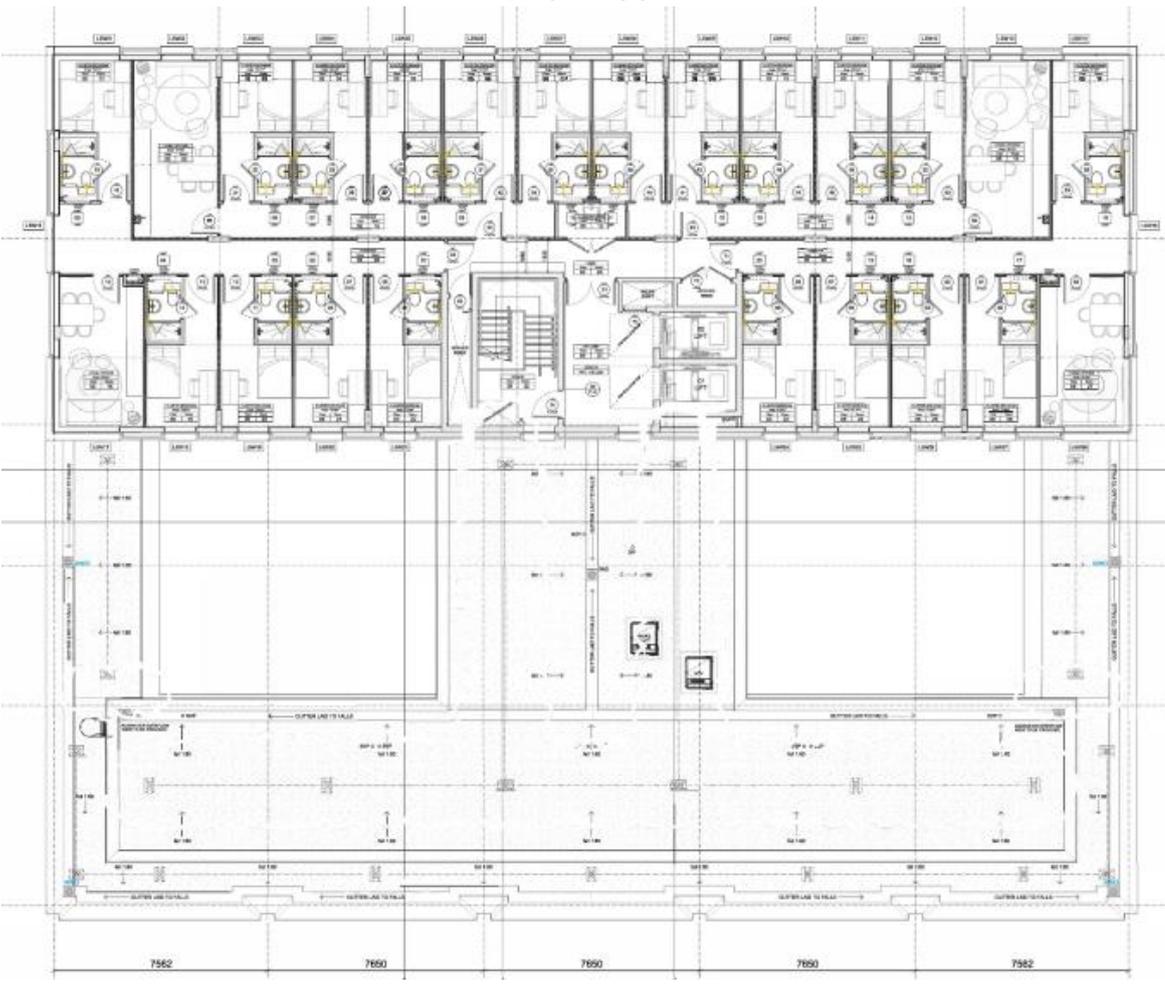


Typical First to Third Floor Layout



Fourth Floor



	<p style="text-align: center;">Fifth Floor</p> 
2.0	Characteristics of the Site and Area
2.1	The site is a multi-story purpose-built student accommodation on Bradbury Place. The surrounding area is commercial in character with retail hotel and bar/restaurant uses dominant.
3.0	Description of Proposal
3.1	Retrospective change of use from student accommodation to short term lets accommodation (limited to July & August only)
4.0	Planning Policy and Other Material Considerations
4.1	Development Plan – Plan Strategy Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035
4.2	<i>Strategic Policies:</i> Policy SP2 – sustainable development

	<p><i>Operational Policies:</i></p> <p>HOU13 – Short-term let accommodation</p> <p>TLC1 - Supporting tourism leisure and cultural development</p> <p>TLC3 - Overnight visitor accommodation</p> <p>TRAN 8 - Car parking and servicing arrangements</p> <p>Policy ENV1 – Environmental quality</p> <p>Development Plan – zoning, designations and proposals maps</p> <p>4.3 Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) BUAP Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014)</p> <p>Regional Planning Policy</p> <p>4.4 Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)</p> <p>Relevant Planning History</p> <p>4.5 LA04/2017/2753/F Decision: Permission Granted Decision Date: 01 August 2019 Proposal: Demolition of buildings and erection of a mixed-use development to include purpose built managed student accommodation with 100 en-suite cluster bedrooms and 56 studios (156 total) and ancillary facilities with ground floor retail unit. 5 storeys addressing Bradbury Place and 6 storeys addressing Albion Lane to rear. (amended scheme)</p> <p>LA04/2025/0245/CA on-going enforcement case relating to Unauthorised use of student accommodation for short-term let during non-term time.</p>
5.0	Consultations and Representations
5.1	<p>Statutory Consultations</p> <p>DFI Roads – No Objections subject to conditions</p>
5.2	<p>Non-Statutory Consultations</p> <p>Northern Ireland Tourist Board – Only comment on major applications.</p>
5.3	<p>Representations</p>
5.3.1	<p>The application has been advertised and neighbours notified. One representation has been received from the Northern Ireland Hotel Federation. Their concerns are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict with intended use and approved consent: The approved consent for this development was for purpose-built managed student accommodation (PBSA) to serve the needs of Queen’s University Belfast and Ulster University students. The proposed change to short-term lets, even if limited to July and August, represents a significant departure from

that approved use and creates a precedent for non-student occupancy in PBSA buildings. This undermines the clarity and purpose of the city's student accommodation strategy. *The proposal will be restricted to July & August months only, a period when the universities are in summer recess. Therefore, the proposal will not significantly impact approved PBSA use.*

- **Impact on the hotel and regulated accommodation sector:** Allowing PBSA stock to convert to short-term lets adds quasi-hotel capacity into an already competitive city-centre visitor market without equivalent regulatory burden, standards, or tax treatment. Hotels operate under strict regulation, incur higher operating costs, and contribute substantially to employment and tourism infrastructure. Introducing additional short-term let supply erodes this regulated framework and risks financial displacement during peak trading months. This accommodation will compete with other certified products including, hotels, hostels, guest accommodation and self-catering accommodation. *The tourism policies within the Plan Strategy 2035 seeks to extend the offer for day and nighttime tourism facilities within the city centre boundary. The proposal complies with policy, financial impacts on existing tourism provision is not a determining factor in assessment.*
- **Policy precedent, compliance concerns and the integrity of PBSA planning.** The conversion of student accommodation to short-term visitor use undermines the city's ability to ensure an adequate, predictable supply of student housing. With growing undergraduate numbers and pressure on the private rented sector, safeguarding PBSA for its original purpose is essential. *As stated previously the proposed use will be limited to July & August only when the PBSA will not be in use as student accommodation.*
- **Evidence of unauthorised use and regulatory loopholes.** This project was certified for tourism use by Tourism Northern Ireland in March 2025 and was actively advertising rooms on online platforms, including Booking.com, by May 2025. At that time, no change-of-use planning consent had been granted, and the property held permission only to operate as purpose-built student accommodation. The NIHF raised this matter and brought it to the attention of both Belfast City Council and Tourism NI. *Section 55 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 allows for the granting of permission for development already carried out.*
- **Amenity, management and neighbourhood impact** Short-term-lets operate with higher turnover, differing visitor behaviour, and reduced stability. This can lead to noise, disturbance and increased comings and goings, which are not consistent with the controlled management protocols typically required for PBSA. The applicant has not demonstrated how they will maintain equivalent standards of oversight during short-term visitor use. *The application includes a non-term time letting management plan which will be included within the s.77 legal agreement.*
- **Temporal restriction does not adequately mitigate concerns.** A July-August limitation does not eliminate concerns around enforcement,

	<p>management, or market precedent. Experience shows that once a dual-use pattern is established, operators may seek incremental extensions or may drift into additional months with limited oversight. This business traded in the tourism market in May last year. <i>The proposal will be required to operate within the specifics of the planning approval or be subject to legal/enforcement action.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic and economic implications. Belfast’s accommodation strategy emphasises balanced growth across regulated hotels and guest accommodation. The unmonitored conversion of PBSA into short-term visitor stock risks distorting market conditions, reducing investor confidence, and undermining the city’s long-term tourism planning. <i>This is a statement that cannot be given determining weight in assessment.</i> • Monitoring and Enforcement 1) Who will have responsibility for monitoring and verifying that this property operates solely during July and August? <i>It is the responsibility of the developer/operator to operate in accordance with planning permissioned, breaches of planning management are the responsibility of Planning Enforcement and s76 monitoring teams.</i> 2) How will the current loophole be addressed whereby premises can obtain Tourism Northern Ireland certification without having the necessary planning consent in place, and what steps will be taken to close it? <i>This is not a matter for Planning Service.</i> 3) Does the Council have the required resources and statutory powers to effectively monitor and enforce compliance with the two-month change-of-use restriction? <i>Yes, a planning enforcement and s.76 teams are in place.</i> 4) Which agency will be designated as the enforcement authority, and how will breaches of this planning condition be investigated and addressed? <i>The planning enforcement team are responsible for investigating any complaints relating to breaches of planning condition.</i>
6.0	PLANNING ASSESSMENT
6.1	Development Plan Context
6.1.1	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.
6.1.2	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.
6.1.3	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.

6.1.4	<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.).</p>
6.1.5	<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.</p>
6.1.6	<p>Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 - The site is located within the settlement development limit in the BUAP and is not zoned for any use.</p>
6.1.7	<p>Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (2004 and 2014) – The is located within the city centre.</p>
6.1.8	<p>Key Issues</p>
6.1.9	<p>The key issues to be considered in this application are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle • Access, movement and parking
6.2	<p>Principle of the proposal</p>
6.2.1	<p>Policy HOU13 relating to short term lets set out a number of key criteria which must be satisfied.</p> <p>Criterion a. requires that the proposal <i>strengthens and diversifies the range of short-stay visitor accommodation in the city</i>. As of June 2024, short-term lets comprise 21% of Belfast City Council’s tourist accommodation. The proposal is for additional rooms outside of term time which would strengthen and diversify the range of short-term visitor accommodation in the city.</p> <p>Criterion b. requires that the proposal <i>is accessible by public transport</i>. The site’s city centre location is highly accessible by public transport.</p> <p>Criterion c. requires that the proposal <i>is sited within an existing tourism cluster or in close proximity to a visitor attraction</i>. The site is within the city centre with several visitor attractions in proximity. City Hall, Queens University and Botanic Gardens are within a 20 min walk.</p> <p>Criterion d. requires that the proposal <i>has appropriate management arrangements in place to ensure a positive and safe living environment whilst minimising any potential negative impacts</i>. The applicant has provided an appropriate</p>

	<p>management plan to the council for consideration. The management plan also addresses the property security, management, booking and vetting and the key operational policies including noise / anti-social behaviour, waste disposal and transportation.</p> <p>Criterion e. requires that <i>the site is not located within a designated HMA (see policy HOU10), unless it can be demonstrated that the development is needed to meet a specific demand in that location.</i> As the site is not located within a designated HMA, this criterion is not applicable.</p> <p>Criterion f. requires that <i>in the case of a change from permanent residential use, part of the property must be retained as permanent residential housing.</i> The existing building is a PBSA therefore this criterion is not applicable.</p>
6.3	<p>Policy TLC1 states that the Council will seek to support tourism, leisure and cultural development that contributes to extending the offer of these forms of development across daytime and nighttime for the visitor. It is also expected that the proposal will lead to improving the quality and accessibility of tourism, leisure and cultural assets to support the city's reputation as an attractive tourism destination.</p>
6.4	<p>Policy TLC3 states that planning permission will be granted for tourism development for new overnight accommodation within the city centre boundary. Although the policy advises that short-term lets are considered under policy HOU13, nonetheless it demonstrates that there is a thrust for tourism development to be located within the city centre.</p>
6.5	<p>Car Parking</p> <p>Policy TRAN8 seeks to ensure that there is sufficient car parking and servicing arrangement for all developments. The development is car free with 42 cycle parking spaces available for short-term guests. Also, a Belfast bike docking station is located on Bradbury Place convenient to the site. Short-term guests will therefore be encouraged to use more sustainable means of transport, such as cycling, walking or take advantage of regular local transport facilities. For short-term guests who do need parking, there is on-street paid parking within the general area of the site.</p> <p>Whilst the approved scheme is not subject to a Travel Plan, a Travel Plan was submitted for this application. The Travel Plan supports the proposal and outlines all travel options available to staff, guests and visitors to the proposed short-term let units i.e. multiple forms of public transport such as Metro, Glider, Goldline and Ulsterbus bus services alongside Translink Train services at Botanic Station, as well as the pedestrian and cycle infrastructure in the surrounding area. It also addresses private car usage in that it will still be a mode of travel to some, with street pay and display parking and other longer duration car parks.</p> <p>DFI were consulted and offered no objection to the development's Travel Plan.</p>
6.6	<p>Section 76 Planning Agreement</p> <p>Application LA04/2017/2753/F was subject to a Section 76 agreement which restricted the use to student accommodation and shall not be rented out or sub-let</p>

6.7	<p>for any other purpose. As such a Section 77 is required to modify the original S76 to ensure that the student use is compliant with its legal obligations.</p> <p>A Section 77 to vary the Section 76 of the host approval has been agreed in principle with Legal Services and delegated authority is sought to resolve the finalisation of same.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>The proposal is, on balance, an appropriate form of development within the city centre, it will provide additional visitor accommodation within the city centre outside of term time, adding to the diversity of visitor accommodation on offer, during peak times. It will also assist with vacancy rates within the building. Approval is recommended.</p>
7.0	<p>Recommendation</p>
7.1	<p>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.</p>
7.2	<p>Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions, resolve the Section 77 variation to the host Section 76 planning agreement and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive.</p>
<p>DRAFT CONDITIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This planning permission has effect from the date which the development hereby approved was carried out. Reason: As required by Section 55 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. 2. The short-term let use hereby permitted, shall only operate between 1st July and 31st August each year. Accordingly, the short term let use will cease on the 31st of August and not recommence until the 1st July the following year. Reason: To ensure the premises are retained as permanent student accommodation during the academic year, 1st September to 30th June. 3. The development shall operate in accordance with the Travel Plan dated June 2025 and uploaded to the Planning Portal. Reason: To encourage alternative modes of transport to the private car. 4. The development hereby permitted shall operate in accordance with the Serving and Waste Management Plan bearing the Belfast City Council Planning Office date stamp 28 August 2018. Reason: In the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users. 	

Development Management Report

Summary	
Committee Date: 10 th March 2026	
Application ID: LA04/2025/0837/F	
Proposal: Demolition of Mount Masonic Hall, erection of 35 no. social housing units in 2 no. blocks with associated private, shared, communal, and public space, 29 no. private car parking spaces, vehicle and pedestrian access from Park Avenue, improvements to pedestrian steps linking Strandburn Drive to Sydenham Park, and demolition of 1 no. garage.	Location: Land of the former Mount Masonic Hall, 45 Park Avenue Belfast BT4 1SH
Referral Route: Scheme is for over 12 units and objections have been received which conflict with the officer recommendation to approve.	
Recommendation: Approval subject to conditions and Section 76 planning agreement.	
Applicant Name and Address: S. Johnston Newpark Homes (N.I.) Ltd 72-74 Omagh Road Dromore Omagh BT78 3AJ	Agent Name and Address: Jack Davidson Pragma Planning and Development Consultants Limited 7 Donegall Square W Belfast BT1 6JH
Date Valid: 13 th June 2025	
Target Date: 26 th September 2025	
Contact Officer: Lisa Walshe, Principal Planner (Development Management)	
Executive Summary: The application proposes the construction of 35no. residential units, comprising a mix of 22no. 3p/2b apartments and 13no. 2p/1b apartments within two separate blocks. The proposal is for 100% social housing and intended to provide Category 1 (over 55s) accommodation. The proposed development would comprise two detached blocks, Block A is 4 storeys and Block B is 3 storeys. The scheme includes 21 no. resident parking pays and 8 no. visitor parking bays amenity provision, landscaping, cycle parking and associated works. The key issues for consideration of the application are set out below. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of housing in this location • Housing density • Affordable housing 	

- Housing mix
- Adaptable and accessible accommodation
- Design and Placemaking
- Impact on amenity
- Flood risk and drainage
- Waste-water infrastructure
- Climate change
- Access and transport
- Health impacts
- Environmental protection
- Natural heritage
- Trees and landscaping
- Waste management
- Section 76 planning agreement

In the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (BUAP 2001), the site is un-zoned “white land”.

In the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (dBMAP) (versions 2004 and 2014), the site is also located within un-zoned “white land”.

The application has benefited from a detailed PAD under reference LA04/2023/3910/PAD.

The site is considered a suitable and sustainable location for housing; the proposal would make effective use of previously developed land for residential use in an accessible location.

The provision of 35 social housing units that respond to local housing need is welcomed by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE).

The proposed access and parking arrangements are acceptable.

NI Water objects to the proposal on grounds of insufficient network capacity. A final NIEA: NED response is still outstanding, and further information is to be sought to address Belfast City Council Tree Department most recent comments. No objections have been received from other consultees, subject to conditions, informatives and Section 76 planning agreement.

Following advertisement in the local press as well as neighbour notification, 3 no letters of objection have been received from local residents raising issues which are detailed in the main report and 3 no representations with general queries have been received.

The Section 76 planning agreement required to secure the development as 100% social housing, travel plan and green travel measures has been agreed in principle.

The Committee undertook a pre-emptive site visit on 3rd March 2026.

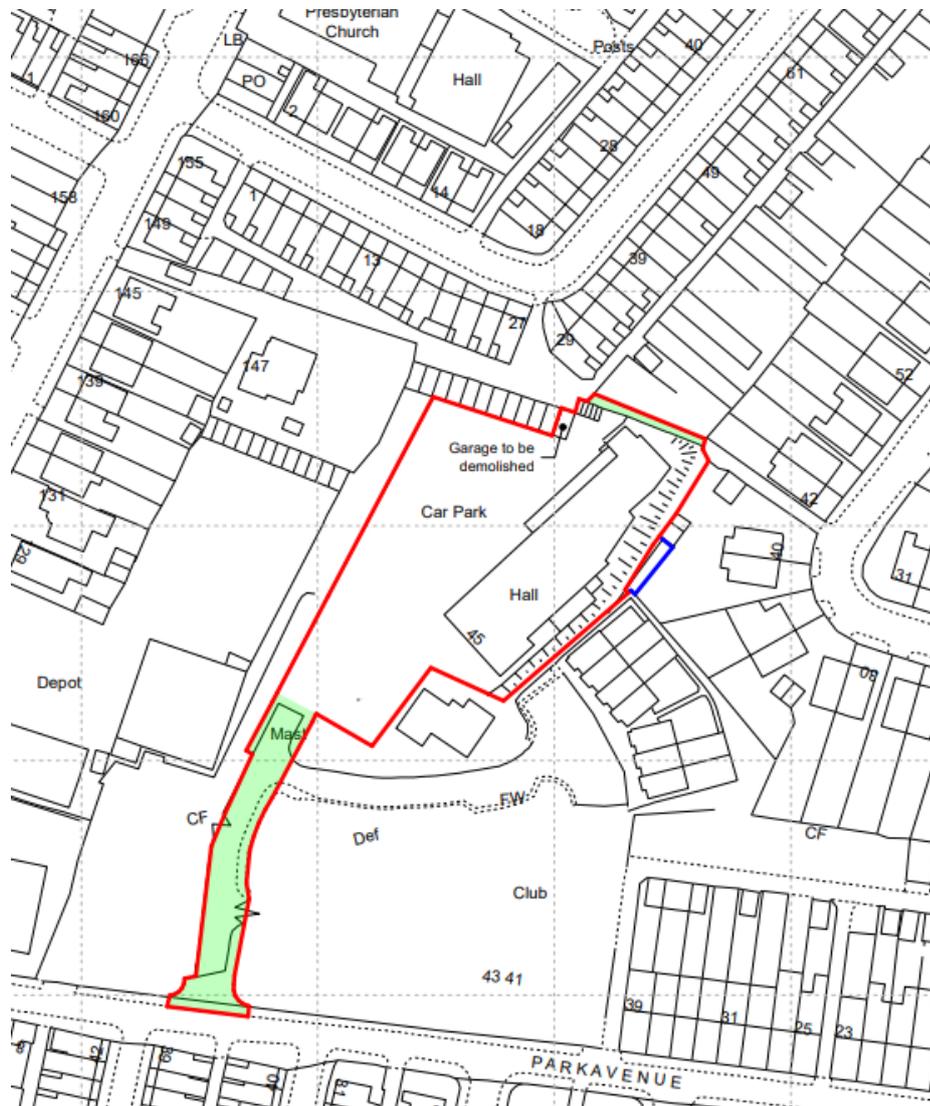
Recommendation

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

Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement, and deal with any other matters that arise including resolving final responses from NIEA: NED and Trees provided that they are not substantive.

DRAWINGS AND IMAGERY

Site Location Plan:



Proposed Site Plan:



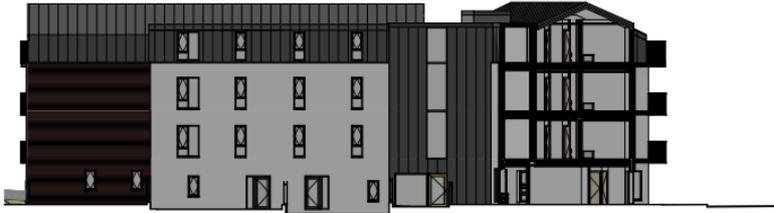
Block A:



Block A West Elevation 1:100



Block A South Elevation 1:100



Block A East Elevation 1:100



Whole Site - 3D Image



BUILDING FABRIC FINISHES:
 Walls - Red Brick, Render (White), Blue Brick slips
 Pitched Roof / Cladding - Aluminium Standing Seam, Dark Grey
 Windows - PVC, Dark grey
 Doors - Dark grey frame, coloured leaf
 Gutters/Roof's - PVC, Dark grey



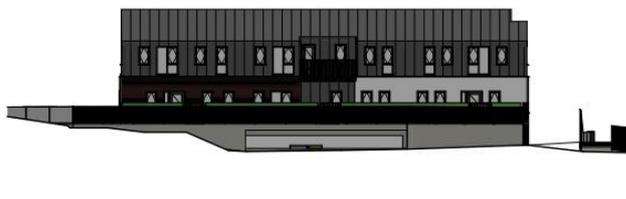
Block B:



Block B West Elevation 1:100



Block B North Elevation 1:100



Block B East Elevation 1:100



Block B South Elevation 1:100



Whole Site - 3D Image

BUILDING FABRIC FINISHES:
 Walls - Red Brick, Render (White), Blue Brick slips
 Pitched Roof / Cladding - Aluminium Standing Seam, Dark Grey
 Windows - PVC, Dark grey
 Doors - Dark grey frame, coloured leaf
 Gutters/Roof's - PVC, Dark grey



<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>Characteristics of the Site and Area</p> <p>The site is located at 45 Park Avenue and was previously occupied by the Mount Masonic Hall and associated surface level car park which has been vacant for a number of years. The site is approximately 0.42ha in size and the topography falls steeply towards the southern part of the site, falling by 4m over a 10m distance measured from the paved boundary of the carpark to the site boundary and retained through the use of a structural retaining wall. The west side of the site falls 4m over a 15m distance measured from the western boundary of the site to the centre of a HGV retail business located off Connsbrook avenue. Park Avenue Heights is the section of road that provides access to the proposed site. The site is defined by a mix of fencing and mature trees.</p> <p>The surrounding area comprises terraced houses to the north on Strandburn Drive, to the east is housing and apartments at Park Avenue Heights approved under reference LA04/2015/0052/F, to the west is a commercial HGV business and the south is vacant land.</p> <p>Description of Proposed Development</p> <p>The application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of Mount Masonic Hall, erection of 35 no. social housing units in 2 no. blocks with associated private, shared, communal, and public space, 29 no. private car parking spaces, vehicle and pedestrian access from Park Avenue, improvements to pedestrian steps linking Strandburn Drive to Sydenham Park, and demolition of 1no. garage.</p> <p>The proposal is for 100% social housing.</p> <p>The Committee undertook a pre-emptive site visit on 3rd March 2026.</p>
<p>2.0</p> <p>2.1</p> <p>2.2</p>	<p>Relevant Planning History</p> <p>LA04/2015/0052/F Lands to the north of 41-43 Park Avenue and to the South of 45 park avenue Belfast - Erection of 13no. social/affordable housing units (7no, 2 bed townhouses & 6no. 2 bed apartments) with associated parking, landscaping and road works, with access from Park Avenue via adjacent approval Z/2010/1434/F including provision for revised access/parking to masonic hall. Approved 22 September 2016.</p> <p>LA04/2021/1749/F Mount Masonic Hall, Park Avenue Heights, Belfast BT4 1PU - Demolition of existing hall buildings and ancillary facilities with the construction of 32no. social housing units in 5no. blocks (to include 2no. wheelchair accessible apartments, 8no. general needs apartments, and 22no. category 1 (elderly apartments) with associated car parking, site works and public (landscaped) open space. Application Withdrawn.</p>
<p>3.0</p> <p>3.1</p>	<p>PLANNING POLICY</p> <p>Development Plan – local development plan</p> <p><u>Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035</u></p> <p><i>Strategic Policies:</i></p> <p>Policy SP1A: Managing growth and supporting infrastructure delivery</p>

	<p>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> <p><i>Operational Policies:</i></p> <p>Policy HOU1: Accommodating new homes Policy HOU4: Density of residential development Policy HOU5: Affordable housing Policy HOU6: Housing Mix Policy HOU7: Adaptable and accessible accommodation</p> <p>Policy DES1: Principles of urban design Policy RD1: New residential developments Policy TRAN1: Active travel – walking and cycling Policy TRAN 2: Creating an accessible environment Policy TRAN4: Travel plan Policy TRAN6: Access to public roads Policy TRAN8: Car parking and servicing arrangements</p> <p>Policy ENV1: Environmental quality Policy ENV2: Mitigating environmental change Policy ENV3: Adapting to environmental change Policy ENV4: Flood Risk Policy ENV5: Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)</p> <p>Policy HC1: Promoting healthy communities Policy OS3: Ancillary open space Policy TRE1: Trees Policy NH1: Protection of natural heritage resources</p> <p><u>Supplementary Planning Guidance</u></p> <p>Affordable Housing & Housing Mix Residential Design Placemaking & Urban Design Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems Transportation</p>
3.2	<p>Development Plan – zoning, designations and proposals maps Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) BUAP Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014)</p>
3.3	<p>Regional Planning Policy Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)</p>
3.4	<p>Other Material Considerations Developer Contribution Framework (2020) Belfast Agenda (Community Plan)</p>

4.0	CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS
4.1	<p>Statutory Consultees</p> <p>DFI: Roads – No objection subject to conditions NI Water – Water objects to the application on grounds of network drainage capacity concerns. DfI: Rivers – No objection DAERA: NED – Response outstanding DAERA: Ground Regulation Unit – No objection subject to conditions Northern Ireland Housing Executive – No objection</p>
4.2	<p>Non-Statutory Consultees</p> <p>Environmental Health – No objection subject to conditions. BCC: Tree Officer – Amendments requested BCC: Waste Management – No objection BCC: Urban Design – Some concerns with proposal Shared Environmental Services – No objection subject to conditions</p>
	<p>Representations</p>
4.3	<p>The application has been advertised in the newspaper and neighbours notified. 3 letters of objection have been received from local residents and 3 representations with queries. The following issues have been raised (summarised):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Overbearing scale and loss of privacy b) Loss of daylight and overshadowing c) Inappropriate density and overdevelopment d) Noise, disruption and construction impact e) Lack of sufficient separation distances f) Height of fencing g) Parking pressure h) Trees i) Structural concerns j) Alleyway and access clarification k) Loss of existing views
4.4	<p>Issues a) to i) will be considered within the main assessment below.</p>
4.5	<p>Regarding issue j) the alleyway and access, the agent provided a letter addressing this query and is available on the public planning portal. It discusses how the improvement works are confined solely to the staircase connecting Strandburn Drive to Sydenham Park. The improvement works to the pedestrian steps along the alleyway will be discussed within the 'Trees and Landscaping' section of the report.</p>
4.6	<p>Issue k) is not a material planning consideration in that there is no legal right to a view.</p>

5.0	PLANNING ASSESSMENT
5.1	<p>Main Issues</p> <p>The main issues relevant to consideration of the application are summarised below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of housing in this location • Housing density • Affordable housing • Housing mix • Adaptable and accessible accommodation • Design and Placemaking • Impact on amenity • Flood risk and drainage • Waste-water infrastructure • Climate change • Access and transport • Health impacts • Environmental protection • Natural heritage • Trees and landscaping • Waste management • Section 76 planning agreement
5.2	<p>Development Plan Context</p> <p>Section 6(4) of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 states that in making any determinations under the Act, regard is to be had to the local development plan, and the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.</p>
5.3	<p>Section 45(1) of the Act states that in determining planning applications, the Council must have regard to the local development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations.</p>
5.4	<p>The Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP) when fully completed will replace the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 as the statutory Development Plan for the city. The Belfast LDP will comprise two parts. Part 1 is the Plan Strategy, which contains strategic and operational policies and was adopted on 02 May 2023. Part 2 is the Local Policies Plan, which will provide the zonings and proposals maps for Belfast and has not yet been published. The zonings and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 remain part of the statutory local development plan until the Local Policies Plan is adopted.</p>
5.5	<p><u>Operational Polices</u></p> <p>The Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application.</p>
5.6	<p><u>Proposals Maps</u></p> <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</p>

	<p>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>
5.7	<p>In the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (BUAP); and both version of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004 and v2024), the site is within the development limits of the city and is un-zoned “white land.</p>
5.8	<p><u>Principle of housing in this location</u></p> <p>The site is located within the development limit in the various relevant Development Plans. The site is surrounded by residential properties and would therefore be in keeping with the immediate character of the area.</p>
5.9	<p>The site is a sustainable location for new housing. It is located close to Hollywood Road which is an arterial route and Connsbrook Avenue which both have main bus routes providing the site with ten highly accessible (within 400m) public transport connection routes. The Sydenham halt is a 15-minute walk away and the Glider service is available a 17-minute walk away to the Upper Newtownards Road.</p>
5.10	<p>In respect of the above, the site is considered a suitable and sustainable location within the development limits and suitable in principle for housing. Suitable infrastructure is in place and no additional measures would be required.</p> <p>The principle of residential development of the site is considered acceptable and in accordance with Policies HOU1 and HOU2 of the Plan Strategy, and SPPS.</p>
5.11	<p><u>Housing density</u></p> <p>Policy HOU4 seeks to promote appropriate housing densities to ensure effective use of land, a finite resource, in sustainable locations. The application site is located within an inner-city Belfast band, with Policy HOU4 recommending an average density of 75-150 dph.</p>
5.12	<p>With a site area of approximately 0.42 hectares, the proposed density equates to 83.3 dwellings per hectare (dph) and falls within the recommended density band. The proposal is therefore compliant with Policy HOU4.</p>
5.13	<p><u>Affordable housing</u></p> <p>Policy HOU5 of the Plan Strategy requires housing schemes of 5 units or more, or sites of 0.1 hectares or greater, to deliver a minimum 20% affordable housing. The proposed scheme is for 100% social housing in the form of CAT 1 over 55s apartments with Alpha Housing acting as the partner Housing Association. NIHE has confirmed it is supportive of the mono tenure scheme in line with Policy HOU5, SPG and the SPPS. They state that ‘This proposed development is located within Middle East Housing Need Area which has an unmet need of 558 housing units for the 2024-29 period. At March 2025 there were 762 first preference applicants in Housing Stress’.</p>
5.14	<p>NIHE advises that the surrounding area is predominately owner occupied and market housing and there is a lack of existing social housing in the vicinity, which means the ability to address social housing is limited. Due to high need and a lack of available housing sites in this location we believe that this site could provide 100% social housing</p>

	units. This would help to address the current imbalance of housing tenures in the locality and would increase the ability to address the housing needs of all.
5.15	The provision of social housing will be secured by way of a Section 76 Planning Agreement however the subcategory of the housing is not secured, simply the delivery of social housing
5.16	The proposal accords with Policy HOU5.
5.17	<p><u>Housing mix</u></p> <p>Policy HOU6 requires that provision should be made for small homes across all tenures to meet future household requirements and that the exact mix of house types and sizes will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis. The requirement for a mix of house types will not apply to single apartment developments such as this proposal, and in such cases, the housing mix will be considered acceptable through greater variety in the size of units.</p>
5.18	The scheme proposes a range of apartments consisting of 20no. 3p/2b, 2no. 3p/2b WC, 11no. 2p/1b and 2no. 2p/1b WC. The proposed mix is considered to provide a satisfactory range of size and type and is targeted to meet social housing need, particularly for CAT 1 over 55s. The proposed housing mix is considered acceptable having regard to Policy HOU6.
5.19	<p><u>Adaptable & accessible accommodation</u></p> <p>Policy HOU7 requires that all new homes should be designed in a flexible way to ensure that housing is adaptable throughout all stages of life. Policy HOU7 sets six criteria (a.) to (f.) to be met in order to help deliver adaptable and accessible homes. The policy also requires that at least 10% of units in residential developments of 10 units or more to be wheelchair accessible and provides an additional nine criteria (g.) to (o.) which these units must meet. With the scheme proposing 35no. units, 10% would equate to 4 accessible units (rounded up), which the proposal provides.</p>
5.20	‘Lifetime homes’ standards are a nationally recognised set of criteria to make new dwellings adaptable enough to accommodate a household’s changing lifetime needs and enable them to be lived in and visited by a wide range of people. All units have been designed with flexibility in mind for various stages of life. Criteria (a) to (f) of Policy HOU7 has been met in that all parking spaces are on a firm hardstanding surface which is either level or gently sloping. All main entrances feature a recessed entrance and the communal entrance features a projected canopy for those waiting to enter the building. Each apartment is fully contained at the same entrance level with open plan kitchen / dining across a single storey. There is outlook from the main living spaces and an accessible bathroom is proposed on the same floor as the principle bedroom for each unit. Each wheelchair accessible unit is then designed to comply with criteria (g) to (o) of Policy HOU7 also.
5.21	<p><u>Design & placemaking</u></p> <p>The proposal has been assessed against Policies SP5, DES1, and RD1 of the Plan Strategy, the SPPS and Creating Places. Policies SP5 and DES1 promote good placemaking, high quality design and the importance of proposals responding positively to local context addressing matters such as scale height, massing, proportions, rhythm, and materials avoiding any negative impact at street level. Policy DES1 states that planning permission will be granted for new development that is of a high quality,</p>

	sustainable design that makes a positive contribution to placemaking and goes onto list 11 criteria, (a.) to (k.).
5.22	As proposed, the scheme consists of two individual blocks, Block A which is to the front of the site comprises 23 apartments in an L-shaped layout and is 4 storeys measuring approximately 13m in height. Block B is located to the rear of the site and comprises 12 apartments over a 3-storey block measuring approximately 10m in height. There is a significant change in levels across the site as shown on the sections provided.
5.23	Two retaining structures will be developed as a result, one retaining wall will be located at the north side of the site where the proposed green open space falls onto Strandburn Drive. The second retaining wall will be located on the east side of the site, alongside block A, which will replace the existing retaining wall already in place. A condition requiring details of all hard landscaping will be included to ensure an appropriate level of detail of the retaining structures.
5.24	Topographical changes across the site enable three and four storey development to be introduced without causing harm to adjoining properties. As shown on the sections, Block A shall only be slightly higher than the existing two-storey development at Park Avenue Heights and Block B sits substantially below nos.38 and 40 Sydenham Park by approximately 24m. The majority of the proposed parking is to the west side of the site which is covered by approximately 1230sqm of hard surfaced car parking and the remaining to the east of the site with undercroft parking to the rear of Block B. Plans show soft landscaping and open space throughout the site. Park Avenue Heights is the section of road that provides access to the site with a new private vehicular and pedestrian access created. A condition requiring SUDS will be included.
5.25	The orientation of fenestration and separation distances are acceptable and this is explored in more detail when assessing the impact on neighbouring amenity.
5.26	The proposed external materials include red brick and white render walls, aluminium dark grey cladding on the roof and dark grey windows, doors and rainwater goods which are acceptable for the site and surrounding area.
5.27	BCC Urban Design Officer was heavily involved with the PAD application and as a result, many of the initial design and layout concerns were resolved. The response to the current scheme raises no concerns in relation to Block B however does raise concerns with dominance and outlook over Block A. They state that ' <i>It is appreciated that the windows on the side elevation of Block A serve internal corridors and overlooking may not be a major concern. Nevertheless, the overall visual relationship presents a poor outlook for existing residents and risks creating a sense of over-dominance</i> '. It is acknowledged that in the previous layout there was potential for limited overlooking between upper floors, specifically from the kitchen/dining areas of the existing apartments towards the principal bedroom of Apartment 01 within the proposed Block A. However, it should be noted that this overlooking relationship originated from the existing apartments at Park Avenue Heights rather than the proposed development. The existing apartments have been constructed less than one metre from their boundary. Nonetheless amendments were sought and an amended layout has been submitted which relocates the primary bedroom windows from the eastern elevation (facing the existing apartments) to the southern elevation. This amendment effectively removes any potential for direct overlooking between the two blocks. In terms of dominance, as stated above, Block A sits below the adjacent apartment scheme due to the topography of the site and whilst it is acknowledged it is quite a large block, the site is of a sufficient size to accommodate this scale within a built-up urban context and is considered on balance acceptable.

5.28	Overall, it is considered that on balance, the scale, massing and design of the building are appropriate to the site and surrounding buildings and the proposal accords with RD1 and DES1 of the Plan Strategy.
5.29	<p><u>Impact on amenity</u></p> <p><i>Open space and amenity space:</i></p> <p>Policy OS3 requires that all new development proposals make appropriate provision for open space, including hard and soft landscaped areas and outdoor amenity areas, to serve the needs of the development. The precise amount, location, type and design of such provision will be negotiated with applicants taking account of the specific characteristics of the development, the site and its context and having regard to a) the normal expectation will be at least 10% of the total site area; and b) complementary and ancillary equipment and facilities, including for active or passive enjoyment of residents or occupiers, should be incorporated into the design of the development.</p>
5.30	<p>The site measures approximately 0.42ha, meaning 420sqm is required. The proposal provides 345sqm of open space falling short of the requirement. However, para 10.1.18 of the Plan Strategy states that '<i>in cases where private communal gardens are proposed as an integral part of the development, separate provision of public open space may not be required</i>'. In this proposal, additional private amenity areas including a 250sqm courtyard and 105sqm terrace is included which allows for the slight shortfall of 10% open space. It is also acknowledged that the site is located within a tight urban grain and is in close proximity to Victoria Park Belfast. BCC Landscape team were consulted and are content with the overall provision. <i>Creating Places</i>, published in 2000, recommends that private communal open space should range from 10 sqm to around 30 sqm. There are also balconies and private gardens for some apartments included within the proposal. It is therefore considered that on balance, the requirement of Policy OS3 are met.</p>
5.31	<p><i>Impact on neighbouring amenity:</i></p> <p>The Council's SPG 'Residential Design' states that suitable separation is required between properties to ensure all residents benefit from adequate daylight and sunlight, and to achieve sufficient outlook and privacy.</p>
5.32	<p>It is noted a number of concerns have been received regarding neighbouring amenity. The separation distance between existing Park Avenue Heights apartment block and the rear of the proposed Block A is between 18.8 and 20.4 metres however the building does not interfere with the 45-degree angles from inhabited rear room windows on the existing building. While the proposal is located immediately adjacent to the side of the existing apartment block, with the buildings approximately 5.3m apart at their closest point, the windows on the first to third floor will be from internal corridors which are not considered habitable. At ground floor a single instance of reciprocal overlooking remains between the secondary bedroom window on the upper floor of the existing apartment building and the secondary bedroom of Apartment 02 within the proposed scheme at ground floor level; however, this is considered acceptable within the context of a compact inner-city brownfield site, where a degree of close relationship between buildings is both expected and typical. Timber fencing will also help screen any potential overlooking at ground floor level.</p>
5.33	<p>Block B sits substantially below Sydenham Park by approximately 24m and will be separated by a planted embankment, the level changes also mean there will be no direct overlooking to the rear of those dwellings. Between Block A and Block B there is</p>

	a separation distance of approximately 10.2m which is considered acceptable within the development. It is considered that on balance, there will not be any unacceptable overlooking to existing neighbouring amenity or between both the new apartment blocks.
5.34	In support of the planning application, a comprehensive Sunlight and Shadow Study was submitted to the Council. This assessment specifically considered potential effects on neighbouring properties, including the three-storey apartment block at Park Avenue Heights. The study confirms that the proposed Block A will not result in any additional overshadowing or reduction in daylight beyond what already occurs under existing conditions. The study concludes that the majority of additional shadowing resulting from the proposed development will fall within the development site itself and the adjacent industrial yard to the west. Importantly, the proposal will cast minimal additional shadows over nearby residential properties that would negatively affect their amenity.
5.35	The floorspaces of each of the apartments meet the minimum space standards set out the Belfast Local Development Plan 2035.
5.36	The proposal would not cause an unacceptable degree of overshadowing to neighbouring dwellings, unacceptable loss of outlook, overbearing or other harmful impacts on amenity.
5.37	In these regards, the proposal is considered to satisfy Policies DES1 and RD1, and relevant provisions of the SPPS.
5.38	<u>Flood risk and drainage</u> The location is not within an area subject to flood risk and is not at risk of flooding under Climate Change as assessed using Flood Maps NI
5.39	DfI Rivers has reviewed the Drainage Assessment, and states that they require confirmation of consent to discharge storm water to an approved discharge location. This will be conditioned.
5.40	As such, the proposal complies with Policy ENV4 and relevant provisions of the SPPS.
5.41	<u>Waste-water infrastructure</u> Policy SP1A requires that necessary infrastructure is in place to support new development. NI Water objects to the application on grounds of network drainage capacity concerns. It advises that the downstream catchment is constrained by overloaded sewage infrastructure including one or more downstream “Unsatisfactory Intermittent Discharges “(UID's) which are causing a negative impact on the environment. These are located at (1) Sydenham Park Avenue TPS. (1) Discharge to Belfast Harbour. This part of Belfast catchment is constrained by lengths of downstream sewer operating above capacity. NI Water suggested the applicant should liaise directly with them on this issue.
5.42	Importantly, officers advise that allowance must be made for existing significant committed development across the city including extant planning permissions. It is highly unlikely that all such development, which includes unimplemented permissions for over 20,000 houses and significant levels of commercial floor space across the city, will come forward at once, if at all. In practical terms it would be unreasonable for the Council to withhold planning permission given the fall-back of the need to connect those developments to existing waste water infrastructure.

5.43	Having regard to the above, it is considered unreasonable to refuse planning permission on grounds of insufficient network drainage capacity and condition is recommended.
5.44	Shared Environmental Services were consulted in order to ensure the proposal would not impact negatively on protected sites. They prepared a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA). Belfast City Council in its role as the competent Authority under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended), and in accordance with its duty under Regulation 43, has adopted the HRA report, and conclusions therein, prepared by Shared Environmental Service, dated 17/07/2025. This found that the project would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site.
5.45	<p><u>Climate change</u></p> <p>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.</p>
5.46	The location is not within an area subject to flood risk and is not at risk of flooding under Climate Change as assessed using Flood Maps NI. Since a large area of the site was used as a car park, the proposal increases active amenity space as well as grassed areas reducing the amount of hard landscaped that there was previously, therefore reducing the amount of the surface water run-off.
5.47	Existing Trees within the site will be removed and replaced where adequate, as well as the addition of planting to areas that will increase the physical & non-physical qualities of amenity spaces i.e. sight, sound, atmosphere etc, as well as increasing biodiversity in the area. The new apartments will have high energy performance standards in compliance with the latest building regulations.
5.48	The existing Mount Masonic Hall has already been demolished. The building is not protected therefore demolition of it does not require permission. The Climate Change statement states that the retention and adaptation of the existing hall would involve more carbon expenditure than it would to construct new accommodation for the area. In line with Policy ENV2, the existing masonry materials from the demolished building will be reused as backfill behind new retaining walls and as hardcore to make up levels under the new roads and floor slabs. Additionally, the natural slate roof and decorative terracotta ridge tiles will be carefully removed prior to demolition, stored, and reused as architectural salvage to repair other buildings. As a result, the proposal is considered to be policy compliant in respect to policy ENV2.
5.49	The proposal is considered to accord with Policies ENV2 and ENV3.
5.50	<p><i>SuDS:</i></p> <p>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 application proposes suitable landscaped and open space and the soft and hard landscaping including SuDS will be conditioned. The proposals are considered to satisfy Policies ENV5.</p>

5.51	<p><u>Access and transport</u></p> <p><i>Accessibility and parking:</i></p> <p>The site benefits from a highly accessible location by public transport and is close to a range of amenities given its location along the Holywood Road, a key arterial route. Secure cycle parking is provided in 2 no. storage areas. The site is accessible and provides good opportunities for active travel, including walking and cycling, through excellent linkages with the City Centre and its shops, services and amenities. Policy TRAN 8 states that development proposals will be required to provide adequate provision for car parking and appropriate servicing arrangements. The proposal contains 29 parking spaces including 4 disabled spaces, and the application is supported by a parking survey which demonstrates sufficient on street parking within the vicinity to accommodate the requirements of the development during its peak periods of parking demand.</p>
5.52	<p>Parking and traffic are concerns raised by an objector. DfI Roads Service are the authoritative body to advise on road safety and traffic and they responded to consultation with no objection subject to conditions should approval be granted.</p>
5.53	<p>The access to public roads would not prejudice road safety or significantly inconvenience the flow of road users in accordance with Policy TRAN 6.</p>
5.54	<p>A Travel Plan and Parking Survey has been submitted and found to be acceptable by DfI Roads; it will further promote alternatives to the private car (car club, travel cards and Belfast Bikes to be secured by Section 76 Planning Agreement).</p>
5.55	<p>The scale of development and transport implications of the proposal were assessed by DFI Roads and considered to be acceptable. The proposal is considered acceptable having regard to Policies TRAN1, TRAN2, TRAN6, and TRAN 8, and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>
5.56	<p><u>Health impacts</u></p> <p>Policy SP3 requires new development to maximise opportunities to improve health and wellbeing. Policy HC1 seeks to ensure that all new development maximise opportunities to promote healthy and active lifestyles. New developments should be designed, constructed and managed in ways that improve health and promote healthy lifestyles. This will include supporting active travel options, improving accessibility to local service centres, reducing the use of private car travel, adequate provision of public open space, leisure and recreation facilities, high quality design and promoting balanced communities and sustainable neighbourhoods.</p>
5.57	<p>The site is a sustainable location with good access to public transport. The proposed buildings are considered to be of a high-quality design with good quality hard and soft landscaping. This will provide a pleasant and attractive environment for prospective occupants of the building and people in housing need. The proposal would promote green travel. It is considered compliant with Policy HC1 and SP3.</p>
5.58	<p><u>Environmental protection</u></p> <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</p>

5.59	<p>been assessed by Environmental Health in terms of contaminated land, construction, and noise.</p> <p><i>Contaminated land</i></p>
5.60	<p>BCC EHO has reviewed the submitted contamination reports and has determined that there are no potential contaminant linkages. They offer no objection and recommend a condition.</p>
5.61	<p>NIEA Regulation Unit have reviewed the GQRA which states that no unacceptable risks to environmental receptors have been identified for the development. Regulation Unit Land and Groundwater Team have no objections subject to conditions.</p>
5.62	<p><i>Construction</i></p> <p>BCC EHO states that they note the objections which include concerns regarding impact from the construction of the proposed development including noise, dust and vibration concerns. They advise that Belfast City Council have powers under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (NI) 2011 or the Pollution Control and Local Government (NI) Order 1978 to investigate problematic impact from construction and in their initial response the applicant was directed to the BCC Construction Advice Note for guidance.</p>
5.63	<p><i>Noise</i></p> <p>A Noise Impact Assessment was submitted and BCC EHO have no concerns regarding the impact of noise, subject to the inclusion of a condition stating that alternative means of acoustically attenuated ventilation shall be installed within habitable rooms of the development and retained at all times.</p>
5.64	<p>Having regard to the advice from Environmental Health, the proposal is considered to accord with Policy ENV1, and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>
5.65	<p><u>Natural heritage</u></p> <p>A Bat Survey and Biodiversity Checklist were submitted as part of the application. NIEA NED response is still outstanding and delegated authority is sought to deal with this.</p>
5.66	<p>Shared Environmental Services were consulted in order to ensure the proposal would not impact negatively on protected sites. They prepared a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA). Belfast City Council in its role as the competent Authority under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended), and in accordance with its duty under Regulation 43, has adopted the HRA report, and conclusions therein, prepared by Shared Environmental Service, dated 17/07/2025. This found that the project would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site.</p>
5.67	<p><u>Trees and landscaping</u></p> <p>Hard and soft landscaping is proposed to enhance the overall quality and character of the space around the buildings and boundaries of the site. A proposed fencing and boundaries plan has been submitted which shows the fencing type and height around the site. One representation was received stating why the timber fencing is only 1.8m rather than 2m or higher for privacy purposes. 1.8m fencing is a standard, typical height for privacy fencing and is considered adequate for the western boundary of the site.</p>

5.68	Structural planting is proposed throughout the site and towards the boundaries to integrate the development into its context.
5.69	A landscape management and maintenance plan has also been submitted which sets out the landscape approach to show how proposed landscaping features will be monitored to promote landscaping within the site which offers amenity value and promote opportunities for local biodiversity and wildlife to thrive within the site.
5.70	To the north of the site is a public right of way connecting Strandburn Drive and Sydenham Park. The pedestrian steps are significantly dilapidated and are proposed to be refurbished as part of this application along with new galvanised steel handrails. A public steps method statement has been submitted which discuss the improvement works. There is no direct pedestrian link between the alleyway and the proposed development, all resident and visitor access to the development will be via Park Avenue exclusively. The improvement works to the steps are intended solely to benefit existing users of this route and will not generate any additional footfall associated with the proposed development.
5.71	An objection which has since been formally withdrawn, raised concerns relating to the loss of trees on the eastern boundary of the site. Three trees which were to be removed are now being retained. Existing trees on the northern boundary are required to be removed to enable the improvement works to the pedestrian steps.
5.72	The Council's Tree Officer was consulted and provided feedback throughout the assessment. They state that the eastern boundary should be replenished with additional proposed tree cover of suitable species, at present there are 8 x proposed trees to be planted of various species, this should be increased to help promote aspects of future screen and privacy concerns whilst also helping contribute to future visual amenity offering as the trees establish over time. They also state that additional planting should also be proposed to the northern boundary.
5.73	The agent has indicated willingness to address the comments positively and so delegated authority is requested for this matter to be dealt with following Committee so that the proposal can fully comply with Policy TR1 of the Plan Strategy.
5.74	<p><u>Waste management</u></p> <p>In accordance with Policy RD1, new residential development should be provided with adequate space for daily segregation of recyclable materials and waste before it is moved to the communal waste storage area. The application is supported by a Waste Management Plan (WMP) which outlines the operational waste management measures, and the council has consulted with BCC's City & Neighbour Services Department, which has confirmed that they offer no objection.</p>
5.75	On balance therefore, it is considered that as proposed, the waste management plan and arrangements are acceptable, and in accordance with Policy RD1.
5.76	<p><u>Section 76 Planning Agreement</u></p> <p>If the application is approved, it should be subject to 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"> • Social rented housing – all 100% of the residential units constructed at the property shall be occupied as Social Housing Units;

<p>5.78</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green travel measure – secure implementation of Travel Plan and green travel measures (car club, travel cards and Belfast Bikes). • Open Space Management Plan – The housing association will appoint a management company for the management and maintenance of the open space and any unadopted roads or streets. <p>The Section 76 planning agreement has been agreed in principle.</p>
<p>6.0</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p>	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>Having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.</p> <p>Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement, and deal with any other matters that arise including resolving final responses from NIEA:NED and Trees provided that they are not substantive.</p>
<p>7.0</p>	<p>DRAFT CONDITIONS</p> <p>Time:</p> <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> <p>External materials:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. No external materials shall be constructed or applied unless in accordance with a written specification and a physical sample panel, details of which shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The sample panel shall be provided on site and made available for inspection by the Council for the duration of the construction works. The sample panel shall show the make, type, size, colour, bond, pointing, coursing, jointing, profile and texture of the external facing materials. The bricks shall be constructed from clay. <p>Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area.</p> <p>Climate change:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied unless the climate change measures described in the application have been implemented. 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>

Waste management:

4. The development shall not be occupied until the refuse and recycling storage area have been provided in accordance with the approved plans and shall be retained as such at all times.

Reason: To ensure adequate provision of refuse and recycling storage in the interests of the amenities of the area.

Trees, landscaping and SuDS:

5. 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, having regard to Policy ENV4 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy 2035. Approval is required upfront because the design of the drainage is an integral part of the development and its acceptability.

6. No development (other than site clearance, site preparation, demolition and the formation of foundations and trenches) shall commence on site unless a hard landscape scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The scheme shall include details of existing and proposed walls, fences and other boundary treatment, ground levels and hard surface treatment of open parts of the site which shall be permeable or drained to a permeable area; and a programme of implementation.

All hard landscaping works shall be carried out and retained 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.

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

7. 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.

8. All trees and planting within the site shall be retained unless shown on the approved drawings as being removed. Any retained trees or planting indicated

on the approved drawings which 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.

9. Prior to any work commencing, protective barriers (fencing) and ground protection shall be erected and installed as specified in British Standard 5837: 2012 (section 6.2) on any trees / hedging 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. The 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.

10. 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 safeguard trees of amenity and biodiversity value.

Noise:

11. Prior to occupation of the development, the alternative means of acoustically attenuated ventilation (in addition to that provided by open windows) specified within the RPS clarification letter titled 'Park Avenue Noise Impact Assessment', reference: 794-NI-HCT-00942, dated: 20th January 2026 shall be installed within habitable rooms of the development and retained at all times.

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

Contamination

12. If during the carrying out of the development, new contamination is encountered that has not previously been identified, all related development works shall cease, and the Council shall be notified immediately in writing. No further related development works shall proceed until this new contamination has been fully investigated in accordance with current Environment Agency and CIRIA guidance and British Standards. 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.

Transport:

13. The vehicular access shall be provided in accordance with Drawing No.14A uploaded to the Planning Portal 3rd February 2026, prior to the occupation of any other works or other development hereby permitted.

Reason: To ensure there is a satisfactory means of access in the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users.

14. The vehicular access hereby permitted shall be formed by lowered kerbs at the carriageway edge and associated re-grading of the footway to the satisfaction of the Department for Infrastructure.

Reason: To ensure there is a satisfactory means of access in the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users.

15. The access gradient shall not exceed 4% (1 in 25) over the first 10m outside the road boundary. Where the vehicular access crosses a footway or verge, the access gradient shall be between 4% (1 in 25) maximum and 2.5% (1 in 40) minimum and shall be formed so that there is no abrupt change of slope along the footway.

Reason: To ensure there is a satisfactory means of access in the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users.

16. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until hard surfaced areas have been constructed and permanently marked in accordance with Drawing No.14A uploaded to the Planning Portal 3rd February 2026 to provide for parking within the site. No part of these hard surfaced areas shall be used for any purpose at any time other than for the parking and movement of vehicles in connection with the approved development.

Reason: To ensure adequate provision has been made for parking within the site.

17. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until sheltered cycle parking facilities have been provided in accordance with Drawing No.14A uploaded to the Planning Portal 3rd February 2026.

Reason: To promote the use of alternative modes of transport in accordance with sustainable transportation principles.

Drainage:

18. Notwithstanding the submitted details, no development shall commence on site (other than site clearance, site preparation, demolition and the formation of foundations and trenches) unless details of foul and surface water drainage, including a programme for implementation of these works, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details, which shall be retained as such thereafter.

	<p>Reason: To ensure appropriate foul and surface water drainage of the site, in the interests of safeguarding the environment integrity of Belfast Lough. Approval is required upfront because the design of the drainage is an integral part of the development and its acceptability.</p>
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Development Management Officer Report Committee Application

Summary	
Committee Meeting Date: 10 th March 2026	
Application Ref: LA04/2025/0594/F	
Proposal: Change of use from 4 bedroom residential property (C1) with to 5 bed HMO with occupancy of 5 (Sui Generis)	Location: 163 Ballygomartin Road, Belfast, BT13 3NA
Referral Route: Section 3.8.1 of the scheme of Delegation - request for the application to be reported to the Planning Committee by an Elected Member (Cllr. Verner)	
Recommendation: Approval subject to conditions.	
Applicant Name and Address: Marius Blake c/o 40 Mount Merrion Park Belfast BT6 0GB	Agent Name and Address: Paul Jenkins Techniplan Design 40 Mount Merrion Park Belfast Bt6 0gb
Date Valid: 30 th April 2025	
Target Date: 13 th August 2025	
Contact Officer: Lisa Walshe, Principal Planning Officer (Development Management)	
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>This application seeks full planning permission for the change of use from an existing 4 bedroom dwelling to a 5-bed house in multiple occupation (HMO).</p> <p>The key issues for consideration of the application are set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principle of an HMO at this location • Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. • Impact on residential amenity • Traffic, Parking and Access • Waste and refuse collection <p>41 objections have been received raised the following issues which are addressed in the main report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns regarding parking • Erosion of community/ Loss of the Character Area. • Over occupancy/ Area is over subscribed • Noise, Anti-social behaviour and Security Concerns • Loss of family homes • Increase in demand for water/sewage and waste services • High tenant turnover 	

- Impact on quality of life
- Conflicts with HMO Subject Plan
- Bin provision
- Health services facing higher demand
- Decrease in property value
- Potential licensing issues
- Question raised on compliance with HMO Act (NI) 2016, checks being carried out, antisocial behaviour, management arrangements, code of practices and effective management procedures.
- Infringement of the neighbour's privacy.

The application has been called in for the following reasons:

1. Vehicle access for bin collections.
2. Parking obstructions and residents dumping in entries.
3. Over-crowding of properties
4. Risk of anti-social behaviour/nuisance.

The scheme is compliant with Policy HOU10 in that the 10% threshold for HMOs on Ballygomartin Road has not yet been reached. Officers consider that the proposal will not be harmful in terms of traffic, parking, impact on residential amenity or the amenity of the surrounding area. DFI Roads has no objections to the proposal.

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 conditions and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive.

Case Officer Report

1.0

Drawings

1.1

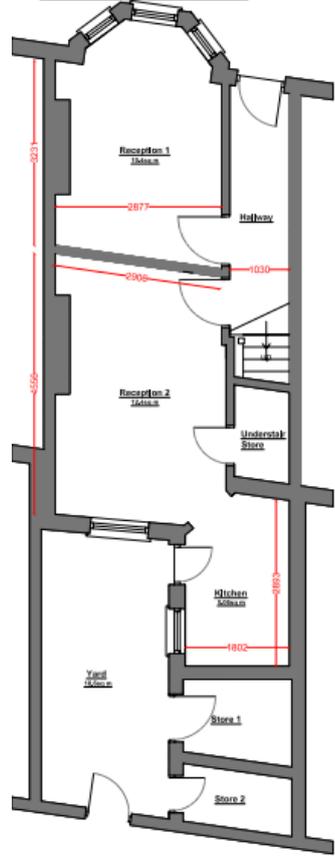
Site location Plan

Site Location Map - Scale 1:1250

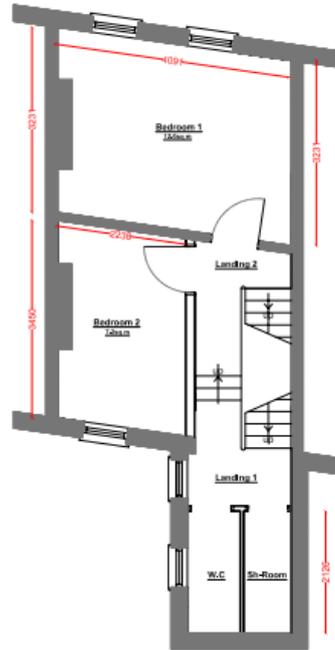


Existing Floorplans

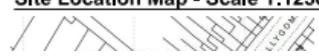
Existing Ground floor



Existing First floor

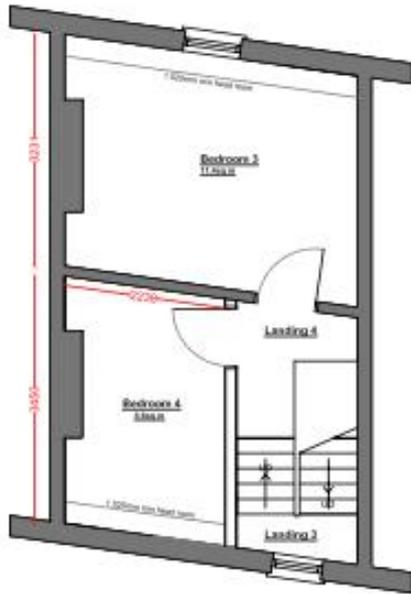


Site Location Map - Scale 1:1250

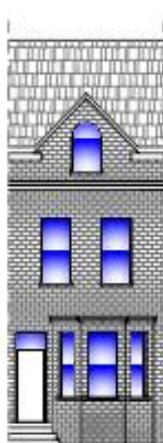
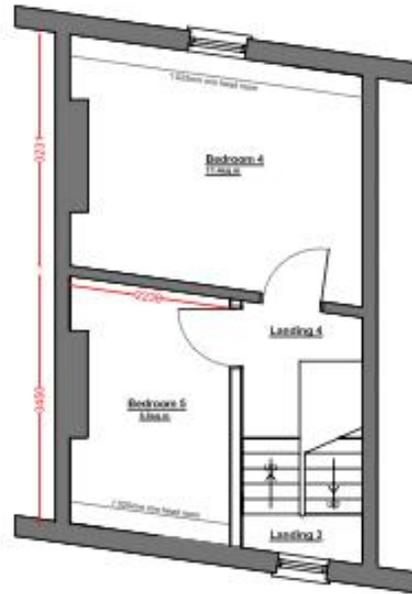


Existing & Proposed Second Floor Plan & Elevations

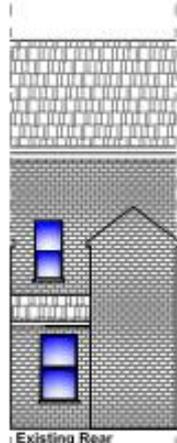
Existing Second floor



Proposed Second floor



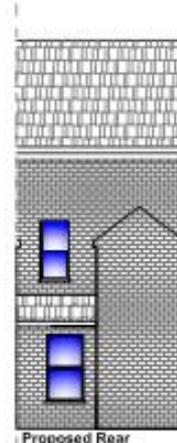
Existing Front Elevation



Existing Rear Elevation



Proposed Front Elevation



Proposed Rear Elevation

Elevations Scale 1:100

163 Ballygomartin Rd, Belfast	
Conversion to H.M.O.	
Maria Blake	Existing Second floor and cross section
	1:50 1 (MARK 25)
3 of 2	

Proposed Floor Plans & Section



2.0 Characteristics of Site and Area

2.1 The application site is located at 163 Ballygomartin Road, North Belfast. The site consists of a two and a half storey, mid terraced property with a two storey rear extension. The dwelling has an amenity area to both the front and rear. An alleyway runs along the rear of the dwelling which leads to Westway Drive. On-street parking is available along Ballygomartin Road. Ballygomartin Road is predominantly residential in nature, and the surrounding area is predominantly residential with the exception of a small number of commercial units and community buildings.

2.2	The site falls within the development limit of Belfast. The site does not fall within any site-specific zonings in the BUAP or either version of BMAP. The site does not fall within any of the existing HMO Policy Areas or Development Nodes as designated in the Belfast HMO Subject Plan 2015.
3.0	Description of Proposal
3.1	The application is seeking planning permission for change of use from 4 bedroom residential property (C1) with to a 5 bed HMO with occupancy of 5 (Sui Generis) with no external alterations.
4.0	Planning History
4.1	There is no relevant planning history for the site or in the area which would be relevant to the site or the proposal.
5.0	Planning Policy and Other Material Considerations
5.1	<p>Development Plan – Plan Strategy Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy 2035</p> <p>Strategic Policies Policy SP2 – Sustainable development</p> <p>Operational Policies Policy ENV1 – Environmental quality Policy HOU10 – Housing management areas (HMAs) Policy RD1 – New residential developments Policy TRAN8 – Car parking and servicing arrangements Policy OS3 – Ancillary open space</p> <p><i>Supplementary Planning Guidance</i> Residential Design Transportation Waste Infrastructure</p> <p><u>Development Plan – zoning, designation and proposal maps</u> Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) BUAP Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014) Belfast Houses in Multiple Occupation Subject Plan for Belfast City Council Area 2015</p> <p>Regional Planning Policy Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)</p>
6.0	Consultations and Representations
6.1	Non-Statutory Consultees N/A
6.2	Statutory Consultees DFI Roads – no objection
6.3	<p>Representations The application was neighbour notified and advertised in the local press. A total of 41 objections were received including representations from elected members: Cllr Verner and Cllr McDowell. The main issues raised are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parking 2. Erosion of community/ Loss of the Character Area. 3. Over occupancy/ Area is over subscribed

- 4.Noise, Anti-social behaviour and Security Concerns
- 5.Loss of family homes
- 6.Increase in demand for water/sewage and waste services
- 7.High Tenant turnover
- 8.Impact on quality of life
- 9.Conflicts with HMO Subject Plan
- 10.Bin provision
- 11.Health services facing higher demand
- 12.Decrease in property value
- 13.Potential licensing issues
- 14.Question raised on compliance with HMO Act (NI) 2016, checks being carried out, antisocial behaviour, management arrangements, code of practices and effective management procedures.
- 15.Infringement of the neighbour's privacy.

Points 1, 3, 6, 10 are considered in the assessment below. Additional comments raised are addressed as follows;

Point 2 & 5 - Erosion of community/ Loss of the Character Area & Loss of family homes – The local development plan, plan strategy seeks to facilitate sustainable housing growth in response to changing housing needs and states that carefully managing the variety of housing types, sizes and tenures will help to meet the diverse needs of all the community. HMOs contribute to providing choice and assisting and meeting community needs. Controls on the number of HMOs allowed in any one street will ensure that the residential character of areas is protected.

Point 4 – Officers consider that the scheme complies with space standards and provides a suitable number of bedrooms. The HMO licensing scheme is in place to regulate HMOs. An anti-social management plan will be required as part of the HMO licensing process, and it is the landlord's responsibility to ensure compliance with licensing requirements.

Point 6 - The proposal will not intensify the use of the existing dwelling. The existing dwelling could accommodate 5 persons and it is considered that there would be no intensification on the existing water/sewerage network from the proposed development. The proposed dwelling is currently connected to the main sewerage network and this would remain unchanged.

Point 7 – High tenant turnover – This is not material planning consideration. Landlords should have robust procedures in place to assess the suitability of prospective tenants.

Point 8 - Impact on quality of life – No persuasive evidence has been provided to support this position or to show a HMO would have greater impact than the existing residents of a family occupied dwelling.

Point 9 - Conflicts with HMO Subject Plan – The proposal has been assessed against the relevant sections of the HMO Subject Plan which still apply and is found to be compliant.

Point 11- Health services facing higher demand - no evidence has been provided to demonstrate that local services would face higher demand from this development. The existing dwelling could accommodate 5 persons and it is considered that the demand on services would be no greater than currently exists.

Point 12 – Decrease in property value - This is not a material consideration and is outside the remit of the planning service.

	<p>Point 13 & 14 – Potential licensing issues and Questions raised on HMO compliance- HMO licensing is a separate regulatory control regime outside the planning remit, as are concerns regarding the applicant’s suitability to manage and operate a HMO.</p> <p>Point 15 – The proposal has been assessed against relevant policy and it is concluded that there would be no greater impact on the privacy of neighbours than currently exists.</p>
7.0	Planning Assessment
7.1	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.
7.2	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.
7.3	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.
7.4	Operational policies – the Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application which are set out in section 5.0 above.
7.5	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), HMO Subject Plan 2015 and other relevant area plans. The weight to be afforded to these proposals maps is a matter for the decision maker. Whilst the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 remains the statutory plan insofar as the proposals maps (“Departmental Development Plan), 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.
8.0	Key Issues
8.1	<p>The key issues for consideration of the application are set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principle of an HMO at this location • Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. • Impact on residential amenity • Traffic, Parking and Access • Waste and refuse collection <p><u>The principle of an HMO at the location</u></p>
8.2	The application site falls outside a Housing Management Area. Housing Management Areas (HMAs) will be designated within the local policies plan, based on evidence available relating to concentrations for HMOs and flat conversions. In advance of the local policies

	<p>plan, this will be applied to the HMO policy areas under designation HMO2 of the 'Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) Subject Plan for Belfast City Council Area 2015'.</p> <p>The site is not located within a Housing Policy Area or development node as designated in the Belfast HMO Subject Plan 2015. Policy HOU10 of the Plan Strategy is applicable and states that: <i>'Outside of designated HMAs planning permission will only be granted for HMOs where the number of HMOs would not as a result exceed 10% of all dwelling units on that road or street. Where such a street is in excess of 600 metres in length, the 10% threshold will be calculated on the basis of existing residential units within 300 metres of either side of the proposal on that street'.</i></p> <p>8.3 The justification and amplification text to Policy HOU10 confirms at paragraph 7.1.66 that the level of HMOs outside a HMA will be measured by adding together:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The number of HMOs recorded under the HMO Licensing scheme; and 2. The number of planning approvals for HMOs not yet licensed, with the total then divided by the total number of dwelling units within the street. If a street is longer than 600m, the total number of dwellings in the street will relate to the total properties within 300m either side of the property on the street. <p>8.4 As a result of the Ballygomartin Road exceeding 600 metres calculations have been completed 300 metres either side of the road. According to the LPS Pointer Address database there are 119 domestic properties calculated within the relevant section along Ballygomartin Road. According to the Planning Service records (calculating intensive forms of house SSA online viewer and relevant planning history) there is currently 1 HMO within the area. Therefore, this proposal would be acceptable under the 10% threshold and complies with Policy HOU10 of the Belfast LDP.</p> <p>8.5 Each application is considered on its own merits and officers consider that this proposal is compliant with policy HOU10 for the reasons stated above and any further applications for HMOs will be assessed in accordance with the relevant planning policy.</p> <p>8.6 Paragraph 7.1.69. of HOU10 states that in all cases, intensive forms of housing whether within or outside HMAs will still be carefully assessed against the relevant criteria set out in Policies RD1, RD2 and RD3. The assessment of the proposal against these policies is set out below.</p> <p><u>Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area</u></p> <p>8.7 The proposed development will not result in any external alterations to the property, ensuring that its appearance remains unchanged. As a result, it is expected that the proposal will have no adverse impact on the appearance or character of the surrounding area.</p> <p><u>Impact on residential amenity</u></p> <p>8.8 Policy RD1 applies as set out above and states that <i>'planning permission will be granted for new residential development where it is in accordance with general urban design policies and where it is demonstrated that the proposal:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>Will not create conflict with adjacent land uses, remaining in conformity with the character of any established residential areas</i> - Officers consider that the use does not conflict with adjacent land uses. The scheme meets the policy requirements set out in
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<p>8.9</p>	<p>HOU10 and RD1 & RD3. The HMO licensing scheme also seeks to ensure that landlords are compliant with regulations, such as the number of occupants and provision of sufficient bin storage.</p> <p><i>b) Does not unduly affect the privacy or amenity of neighbouring residents, including overlooking, loss of light, overshadowing, dominance, noise or other disturbance</i> - Officers consider that the scheme will not give rise to any of the issues listed in criterion b. There will be no further overlooking, loss of light, overshadowing and dominance than that which already exists. Noise or other disturbance will be addressed by the anti-social behaviour plan which is a licensing requirement.</p> <p><i>c) Makes provision for, or is, accessible and convenient to public transport and walking and cycling infrastructure</i> - The site is a convenient walking and cycling distance of major centres of health care, employment, education, churches, community facilities and the city centre. The site is well served by public transport - bus services provide links between the area and the city centre. The nearest bus stop along Ballygomartin Road is approximately 45m from the front of the dwelling.</p> <p><i>d) Provides appropriate open space</i> - The existing rear amenity space is to be retained which is considered sufficient to serve the proposal. The site has good access to existing open space infrastructure with Woodvale Park located further along Ballygomartin Road.</p> <p><i>e) Keeps hard surfacing to a minimum</i> - No hard standing is proposed as part of this application.</p> <p><i>f) Creates a quality and sustainable residential environment in accordance with the space standards set out in appendix C</i> - Each of the bedrooms in the proposed HMO meet the space standards set out in Appendix C for 1 person occupancy. The proposed HMO is also in compliance with the space standards set out for kitchens and living rooms for a total occupancy of 5 persons. Accordingly, the proposal is in full compliance with the relevant HMO space standards.</p> <p><i>g) Does not contain any units which are wholly in the rear of the property without direct, safe and secure access from the public street</i> - All bedrooms have safe and secure access from the front door of the dwelling.</p> <p><i>h) Ensures that living rooms, kitchens and bedrooms have access to natural light</i> - All habitable rooms in the dwelling have access to natural light.</p> <p>The LDP Plan Strategy seeks to facilitate sustainable housing growth in response to changing housing needs. Carefully managing the variety of house types, sizes and tenures will help to meet the diverse needs of all the community. This supports wider LDP aims of shaping quality and sustainable residential development, providing a mix of housing that create more balanced communities, increasing density without town cramming. HMOs are regulated by the relevant Policy set out in the LDP plan Strategy and the proposal has been found to comply with the relevant policies. This HMO proposal comprises 5 bedrooms for the intended use of 5 persons and will also be subject to the licensing process which will determine how many persons the home can accommodate. HMOs can meet high demand for housing and the application site is in an accessible location close to services and public transport. It is considered that the proposal would not undermine the availability of family housing in the area.</p>
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8.10	As indicated above, the HMO will further require to be licensed with BCC which requires the implementation of an anti-social behaviour plan, ensuring the HMO operator runs the property effectively.
8.11	The proposal is considered compatible with adjacent land uses. It would not harm the amenity of adjacent and nearby properties or result in unacceptable overlooking, overshadowing, overbearing, loss of outlook or daylight. The proposal is considered to comply with Policy RD 1.
8.12	<p>Policy RD3 is applicable and states that planning permission will be granted for conversion or change of use of existing buildings for residential use where all the criteria in policy RD1 and all the additional criteria below are met:</p> <p>a) <i>Any units are self-contained</i> - This criterion is not applicable.</p> <p>b) <i>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</i> - Officers consider that this criterion is met (refer to section 8.17 – 8.24 below).</p> <p>c) <i>The original property is greater than 150 square metres gross internal floorspace in the case of sub-division of an existing dwelling</i> – This criterion is not applicable to this proposal as a HMO is not considered to be a sub-division.</p> <p>d) <i>Conversions above commercial premises do not prejudice the commercial functions of the business</i> - This criterion is not applicable to this proposal.</p>
8.13	<p>Taking account the nature of the proposal and the criteria set out above the proposal is considered to comply with Policy RD3.</p> <p><u>Traffic, Parking and Access</u></p>
8.14	Officers acknowledge the objections to parking and whilst the various policy requirements of HOU10 seek to address need and protect residential amenity, the provision of car parking is not a requirement of this policy. Policy TRAN8 – Car parking and servicing arrangements states that, ' <i>Development proposals will be required to provide adequate provision for car parking and appropriate servicing arrangements</i> '. Existing Regional Planning Policy and supplementary planning guidance, including the published 'Parking Standards', do not incorporate car parking as a requirement for HMO development.
8.15	A parking survey was provided demonstrating that adequate parking is available within walking distance of the site on Ballygomartin Road and Westway Drive to serve the proposal. It is considered that the scheme will not be detrimental to on-street parking in the prevailing area. It was noted during the case officer's site visit that on-street parking was available in the immediate area.
8.16	The parking survey demonstrates that adequate parking is available to serve the proposal which is considered to meet Policy TRAN8. DfI Roads has considered the Parking Survey submitted under this application and has confirmed there is sufficient parking within the vicinity of the proposal. Furthermore, the site is in a sustainable location with regular bus services operating in proximity and accessible to services and amenities in the local and wider area.

	<u>Waste and refuse collection</u>
8.17	Policy RD3 criterion B applies, it states that adequate refuse storage space must be 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.
8.18	The adopted Waste Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) and Local Government Waste Storage Guide for NI set out typical weekly waste arisings for different types of development including HMOs. For an HMO, the typical weekly waste arising is 100L per bedroom plus 60L per dwelling. For the proposed 5 bed HMO this would equate to the typical production of 560L of waste per week. The total waste production is broken down into the following types of waste: 1. 35% general waste (collected fortnightly), 2. 55% recycling and 3. 10% food waste (both 2. and 3. collected weekly).
8.19	The following bins would be required to serve the proposed HMO in line with the SPG and the Local Government Waste Storage Guide for NI. 1. Black bins – 3 x black bins (3 x 180L) – sufficient for 2 weeks of general waste. 2. Recycling – 2 x recycling packs (3 x 55L) – collected weekly. 3. Food waste – 3 x food bins (4 x 23L) – collected weekly.
8.20	The SPG advises that applicants must provide a layout of the waste storage area demonstrating that all of the required bins can be accommodated in a way that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • users can easily deposit any type of waste into the corresponding bins without moving them around; and • bins can be easily removed for collection.
8.21	Taking account of the guidance set out in the Waste SPG 8 bins would be required to serve the proposed HMO which according to the SPG would equate to an area of 2.0 x 2.4 (4.86sqm) for 4 bins and an overall total area of 9.6 sqm for 8 bins.
8.22	The applicant has provided a plan which demonstrates that there is adequate provision for bin storage and that the bins can be easily accessed, whilst retaining an adequate amount of residential amenity space. A condition is recommended to ensure bin storage is provided within the curtilage of the property.
8.23	The rear amenity space measures 10.6 sqm. The provision of the minimum storage area for the bins required would leave approximately 1 sqm remaining for amenity provision. The rear yard space is similar to other terraced properties along this stretch of Ballygomartin Road. In the recent appeal decision under reference 2024/A0045 (Ponsonby Avenue), the commissioner found that the amenity space for the terraced dwelling (similar to the application site) provided ' <i>restricted private amenity space, which is of limited 'socialising and gardening' value</i> ' and considered that the increase in bin provision for the HMO would not alter that. Furthermore, the Commissioner gave weight to the proximity of open space facilities to the site. In this case, Woodvale Park is within 7 minutes walking distance to the site and officers consider that its proximity would offset the level of private amenity space.
8.24	The provision of amenity space is considered acceptable taking account of the local context and the proximity to open space facilities.

9.0	Recommendation
9.1	Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is granted.
9.2	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.
10.0	Draft Conditions
1.	The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission. Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.
2.	The development shall not be occupied until the refuse and recycling storage area have been provided within the rear curtilage of the property in accordance with the approved plans. This area must be sufficient to meet the requirements of the development and must be retained and managed at all times. Reason: To ensure adequate provision of refuse and recycling storage in the interests of the amenities of the area.
3.	The HMO hereby permitted may not be occupied by more than 5 persons. The owners will supply to the Council (within 14 days of the Council's written request to do so) such information as the Council may reasonably require in order to determine whether this condition is being complied with. Reason: In the interest of residential amenity.

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Development Management Officer Report Committee Application

Summary	
Committee Meeting Date: 10 th March 2026	
Application ID: LA04/2025/1002/F	
Proposal: Change of use from 4-bed residential dwelling (C1) to 5-bedroom HMO (suis generis) with occupancy for 5 people.	Location: 24 Rutherglen Street, Belfast, BT13 3LS
Referral Route: Section 3.8.1 of the scheme of Delegation. request for the application to be reported to the Planning Committee by an Elected Member (Cllr. Verner).	
Recommendation: Approval subject to condition	
Applicant Name and Address: Honor McCall 67 Drumahean Road Middletown Armagh BT60 3QG	Agent Name and Address: Paul Jenkins 40 Mount Merrion Park Belfast BT6 0GB
Date Valid: 17 th July 2025	
Target Date: 30 th October 2025	
Contact Officer: Lisa Walshe, Principal Planning Officer (Development Management)	
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>This application seeks full planning permission for the change of use from an existing 4-bedroom dwelling to a 5-bed house in multiple occupation (HMO).</p> <p>The key issues for consideration of the application are set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principle of an HMO at this location • Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. • Impact on residential amenity • Traffic, Parking and Access • Waste and refuse collection <p>50 objections have been received raised the following issues which are addressed in the main report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too many HMOs in the area • Application does not demonstrate compliance with 10% threshold • Family homes needed • Reduced house values • HMOs are not wanted in the area • The property is already listed online • Complaints around the ethics of HMOS and pricing 	

- Higher rental prices
- Overlooking and loss of privacy
- Will lead to further HMOs
- Parking issues
- Strain on local services
- Increased noise
- Increased waste generation
- The house is not large enough to accommodate a HMO
- Sloping roof for top floor rooms would be cramped
- Increased risk of anti-social behaviour
- Sets precedent for more HMOs
- Neighbours were not appropriately notified preventing a full response
- Water supply and sewage overrun
- Reduced emergency vehicle access

The application has been called in for the following reasons:

1. Overconcentration of HMOs
2. Parking and traffic issues
3. Impact on Residential Amenity
4. Property Maintenance and Waste Management
5. Contrary to Planning Policy

The scheme is compliant with Policy HOU10 in that the 10% threshold for HMOs on Rutherglen Street has not yet been reached. Officers consider that the proposal will not be harmful in terms of traffic, parking, impact on residential amenity or the amenity of the surrounding area. DFI Roads has no objections to the proposal.

Recommendation

Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable.

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

Case Officer Report

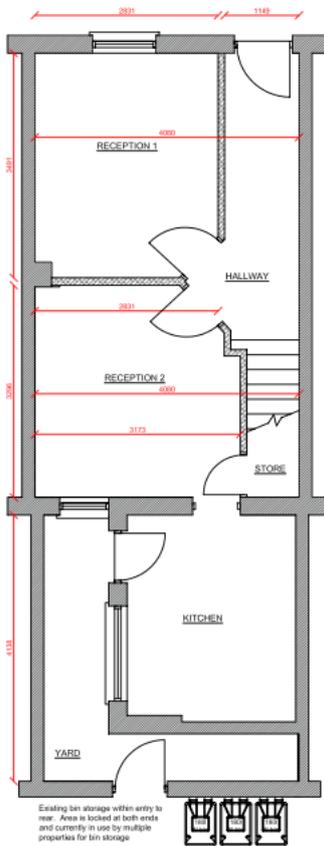
1.0 Drawings

Site Location Plan

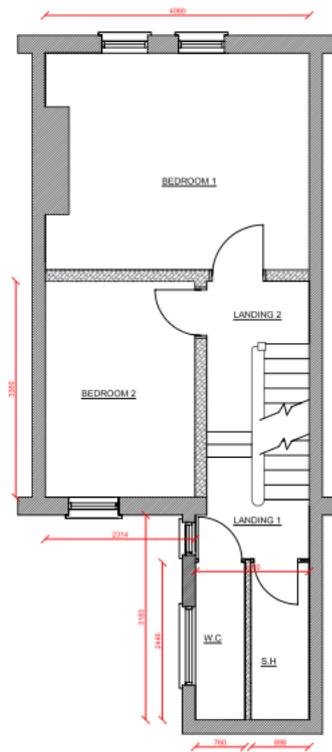


Existing Floor Plans

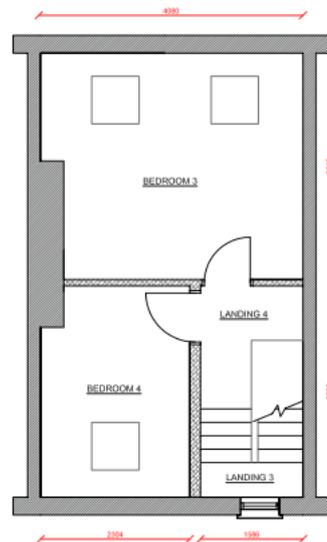
EXISTING GROUND FLOOR



EXISTING FIRST FLOOR



EXISTING SECOND FLOOR



Proposed Floor Plans/Section	
PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR	PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR
PROPOSED SECOND FLOOR	
<p>Waste Calculation 153 per bedroom = 603 per dwelling = 563 Black Bin - 240 Capacity (NB collected bi-weekly) 35% of 563 = 196 x 2 = 392 (fortnightly) / 240 = 1.6 Proposed development therefore has 1 x 240 & 1 x 190 black bins Recycling Bins stackable 2 high with 550 capacity to each container 25% of 563 = 140 / 55 = 2.5 Proposed development therefore has 2 x recycling packs (each with 3 x 55 recycling bins) 23 Food Caddies 10% of 563 = 56 / 23 = 2.4 Proposed development therefore has 3 x 23 food caddies</p> <p>Property total area = 98sq m 10% = 9.8sq m Proposed rear amenity space = 6.3sq m</p> <p>The property benefits from access to access to amenity Woodgrove Park (situated with front dwelling) on 6.3sq m rear amenity space is being proposed instead of 9.8sq m</p> <p>All properties currently use the rear entry for storage of bins. The entry is locked at both ends.</p>	
2.0	Characteristics of Site and Area
2.1	The application site is located at 24 Rutherglen Road. The site consists of three storey mid-terraced dwelling with an existing two storey rear return. The dwelling has an enclosed yard to the rear leading to an alley. The applicant advises that existing properties currently use the rear alley/entry for storage of bins and the entry is locked at both ends. On-street parking is available along the street. Rutherglen Street is residential in nature, and the surrounding area is predominantly residential.
2.2	The site falls within the development limit of Belfast. The site does not fall within any site-specific zonings in the BUAP or either version of BMAP.
3.0	Description of Proposal
3.1	The application is seeking planning permission for change of use from 4 bed residential dwelling (C1) to 5-bedroom HMO (suis generis) with occupancy for 5 people.
4.0	Planning History
4.1	There is no relevant planning history for the site or in the immediate area relevant to the site or the proposal.
5.0	Planning Policy and Other Material Considerations
5.1	Development Plan – Plan Strategy Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy 2035

	<p>Strategic Policies Policy SP2 – Sustainable development</p> <p>Operational Policies Policy ENV1 – Environmental quality Policy HOU10 – Housing management areas (HMAs) Policy RD1 – New residential developments Policy TRAN8 – Car parking and servicing arrangements Policy OS3 – Ancillary open space</p> <p><i>Supplementary Planning Guidance</i> Residential Design Transportation Waste Infrastructure</p> <p><u>Development Plan – zoning, designation and proposal maps</u> Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) BUAP Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014) Belfast Houses in Multiple Occupation Subject Plan for Belfast City Council Area 2015</p> <p>Regional Planning Policy Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)</p>
6.0	Consultations and Representations
6.1	<p>Non-Statutory Consultees N/A</p>
6.2	<p>Statutory Consultees DFI Roads – No objection</p>
6.3	<p>Representations The application was neighbour notified and advertised in the local press. A total of 50 objections were received including representations from elected members: Cllr Verner and Cllr McDowell. The main issues raised are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too many HMOs in the area • Application does not demonstrate compliance with 10% threshold. • Family homes needed. • Reduced house values. • HMOs are not wanted in the area • The property is already listed online • Complaints around the ethics of HMOS, pricing • Higher rental prices • Overlooking and loss of privacy • Will lead to further HMOs • Parking issues. • Strain on local services. • Increased noise. • Increased waste generation. • The house is not large enough to accommodate a HMO. • Sloping roof for top floor rooms would be cramped. • Increased risk of anti-social behaviour.

- Sets precedent for more HMOs.
- Neighbours were not appropriately notified preventing a full response.
- Water supply and sewage overrun.
- Reduced emergency vehicle access.

Officers response to the issues raised are set out below:-

1. Too many HMOs in the area

During the Council's calculation of the HMO threshold in the area, no existing HMOs were identified on Rutherglen Street within the database, there are no live enforcement cases with the Council for unlawful HMO properties on this street and no HMO licences have been granted for dwellings on this street. A full assessment of the applications compliance with HOU10 is set out below.

2. Application does not demonstrate compliance with 10% threshold.

A full assessment of the proposal against Policy HOU 10 is set out within the main body of the report. The proposal has been found to comply with Policy HOU10.

3. Family homes needed.

The proposal meets the criteria for HMO development as set out in Policy HOU 10. The LDP permits a range of housing needs across the city of Belfast. The local development plan seeks to facilitate sustainable housing growth in response to changing housing needs and states that carefully managing the variety of housing types, sizes and tenures will help to meet the diverse needs of all the community. HMOs contribute to providing choice and assisting and meeting community needs. Controls on the number of HMOs allowed in any one street will ensure that the residential character of areas is protected. It is considered that the proposal would not undermine the availability of family housing in the area and the proposed area will remain predominantly family housing.

4. Reduced house values.

This is not a material planning consideration.

5. HMOs are not wanted in the area

This is not a material planning consideration. Policy HOU10 makes provision for HMOs subject to meeting the requirements set out within.

6. The property is already listed online

The Agent has confirmed that 2 rooms are being leased. The renting of the property to two persons would not constitute a HMO.

7. Complaints around the ethics of HMOs, pricing

This is outside the remit of planning.

8. Higher Rental prices

This is outside the remit of planning.

9. Overlooking and loss of privacy

Overlooking and privacy will not be exacerbated beyond what already exists.

10. Will lead to further HMOs

There is no substantive evidence that the current proposal will lead to further HMOs in the street. Notwithstanding, any further application for a HMO in this street will be subject to assessment under Policy HOU10 and considered on its own merits.

11. Parking issues.

DFI Roads was consulted in relation to the proposal and are content with the findings of the Parking Survey and have offered no objection to the proposal.

12. Strain on local services.

The HMO is located within an area which has not exceeded the 10% threshold within the street. It is considered there are appropriate services within the area to serve the proposed HMO and that the proposal would have no greater impact than the existing residents of a family occupied dwelling at this location.

13. Increased noise.

The HMO licensing scheme is in place to regulate HMOs. An anti-social management plan will be required as part of the HMO licensing process which will appropriately deal with issues relating to noise and tenant behaviour should they arise.

14. Increased waste generation leads to risk of overflowing and vermin

The waste storage requirements are considered below. A condition is proposed to ensure that waste is stored in the curtilage of the property and does not overspill into the adjoining alley.

15. The house is not large enough to accommodate a HMO.

Each of the proposed rooms within the HMO meet the required space standards. This is discussed within the main body of the assessment.

16. Sloping roof for top floor rooms would be cramped.

The second floor bedrooms have been appropriately assessed and meet the space standards required. A Plan was also submitted to verify this (01C). This is discussed within the main body of the assessment.

17. Increased risk of anti-social behaviour.

An anti-social management plan will be required as part of the HMO licensing process which will appropriately deal with issues relating to anti-social behaviour should they arise.

18. Water supply and sewage overrun.

The existing dwelling could accommodate 5 persons, and it is considered that there would be no intensification on the existing water/sewerage network from the proposed development. The proposed dwelling is currently connected to the main sewerage network, and this would remain unchanged.

19. Reduced emergency vehicle access.

DFI Roads was consulted in relation to the proposal and have raised no concerns regarding access to the site by emergency vehicles.

7.0	Policy Context
7.1	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.
7.2	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.
7.3	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.
7.4	Operational policies – the Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application which are set out in section 5.0 above.
7.5	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), HMO Subject Plan 2015 and other relevant area plans. The weight to be afforded to these proposals maps is a matter for the decision maker. Whilst the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 remains the statutory plan insofar as the proposals maps (“Departmental Development Plan”), 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.
8.0	Key Issues
8.1	The key issues for the assessment of the application are set out below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principle of an HMO at this location • Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. • Impact on residential amenity • Traffic, Parking and Access • Waste and refuse collection
8.2	<u>The principle of an HMO at the location</u> The application site falls outside a Housing Management Area. Housing Management Areas (HMAs) will be designated within the local policies plan, based on evidence available relating to concentrations for HMOs and flat conversions. In advance of the local policies plan, this will be applied to the HMO policy areas under designation HMO2 of the ‘Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) Subject Plan for Belfast City Council Area 2015’. The site is not located within a Housing Policy Area or development node as designated in the Belfast HMO Subject Plan 2015. Policy HOU10 of the Plan Strategy is applicable and states that:
8.3	

	<p><i>'Outside of designated HMAs planning permission will only be granted for HMOs where the number of HMOs would not as a result exceed 10% of all dwelling units on that road or street. Where such a street is in excess of 600 metres in length, the 10% threshold will be calculated on the basis of existing residential units within 300 metres of either side of the proposal on that street'.</i></p>
8.4	<p>The justification and amplification text to Policy HOU10 confirms at paragraph 7.1.66 that the level of HMOs outside a HMA will be measured by adding together:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The number of HMOs recorded under the HMO Licensing scheme; and 2. The number of planning approvals for HMOs not yet licensed, with the total then divided by the total number of dwelling units within the street. If a street is longer than 600m, the total number of dwellings in the street will relate to the total properties within 300m either side of the property on the street.
8.5	<p>According to the LPS Pointer Address database there are a total number of 106 houses which fall within Rutherglen Street, allowing for 10 HMOs. At the time of assessment there were 0 properties with existing HMO licenses and/or planning approval. The proposal is therefore within the 10% threshold and is acceptable in principle.</p>
8.6	<p>Each application is considered on its own merits and officers consider that this proposal is compliant with policy HOU10 for the reasons stated above and any further applications for HMOs will be assessed in accordance with the relevant planning policy.</p>
8.7	<p>Paragraph 7.1.69. of HOU10 states that in all cases, intensive forms of housing whether within or outside HMAs will still be carefully assessed against the relevant criteria set out in Policies RD1, RD2 and RD3. The assessment of the proposal against these policies is set out below.</p>
8.8	<p><u>Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area</u></p> <p>The proposed development will not result in any external alterations to the property, ensuring that its appearance remains unchanged. As a result, it is expected that the proposal will have no adverse impact on the appearance or character of the surrounding area.</p>
8.9	<p><u>Impact on residential amenity</u></p> <p>Policy RD1 applies as set out above and states that <i>'planning permission will be granted for new residential development where it is in accordance with general urban design policies and where it is demonstrated that the proposal:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>Will not create conflict with adjacent land uses, remaining in conformity with the character of any established residential areas</i> - Officers consider that the use does not conflict with adjacent land uses. The scheme meets the policy requirements set out in HOU10 and RD1 & RD3. The HMO licensing scheme also seeks to ensure that landlords are compliant with regulations, such as the number of occupants and provision of sufficient bin storage. b) <i>Does not unduly affect the privacy or amenity of neighbouring residents, including overlooking, loss of light, overshadowing, dominance, noise or other disturbance</i> - Officers consider that the scheme will not give rise to any of the issues listed in criterion b. There will be no further overlooking, loss of light, overshadowing and dominance than that which already exists. Noise or other disturbance will be addressed by the anti-social behaviour plan which is a licensing requirement.

<p>8.10</p> <p>8.11</p> <p>8.12</p>	<p><i>c) Makes provision for, or is, accessible and convenient to public transport and walking and cycling infrastructure</i> - The site is a convenient walking and cycling distance of major centres of health care, employment, education, churches, community facilities and the city centre. The site is well served by public transport - bus services provide links between the area and the city centre. The nearest bus stop along Ballygomartin Road is approximately 185m (3 minute walk) from the front of the dwelling.</p> <p><i>d) Provides appropriate open space</i> - The existing rear amenity space is to be retained which is considered sufficient to serve the proposal. The site has good access to existing open space infrastructure with Woodvale Park located c. 250m (4 minute walk).</p> <p><i>e) Keeps hard surfacing to a minimum</i> - No hard standing is proposed as part of this application.</p> <p><i>f) Creates a quality and sustainable residential environment in accordance with the space standards set out in appendix C</i> - Each of the bedrooms in the proposed HMO meet the space standards set out in Appendix C for 1 person occupancy. A 1-person bedroom should measure a minimum of 6.5m². All bedrooms proposed meet this standard. Bedrooms 4 and 5 which are located on the 2nd floor meet the recommended floorspace standards when measured from the height of the sloping roof at 1.5m. The proposed kitchen/living area measures a combined 18.2m² which exceeds the recommended standard of 11.5m². The proposed HMO is also in compliance with the space standards set out for kitchens and living rooms for a total occupancy of 5 persons. Accordingly, the proposal is in full compliance with the relevant HMO space standards.</p> <p><i>g) Does not contain any units which are wholly in the rear of the property without direct, safe and secure access from the public street</i> - All bedrooms have safe and secure access from the front door of the dwelling.</p> <p><i>h) Ensures that living rooms, kitchens and bedrooms have access to natural light</i> - All habitable rooms in the dwelling have access to natural light.</p> <p>The LDP Plan Strategy seeks to facilitate sustainable housing growth in response to changing housing needs. Carefully managing the variety of house types, sizes and tenures will help to meet the diverse needs of all the community. This supports wider LDP aims of shaping quality and sustainable residential development, providing a mix of housing that create more balanced communities, increasing density without town cramming. HMOs are regulated by the relevant Policy set out in the LDP plan Strategy and the proposal has been found to comply with the relevant policies. This HMO proposal comprises 5 bedrooms for the intended use of 5 persons and will also be subject to the licensing process which will determine how many persons the home can accommodate. HMOs can meet high demand for housing and the application site is in an accessible location close to services and public transport. It is considered that the proposal would not undermine the availability of family housing in the area.</p> <p>As indicated above, the HMO will further require to be licensed with BCC which requires the implementation of an anti-social behaviour plan, ensuring the HMO operator runs the property effectively.</p> <p>The proposal is considered compatible with adjacent land uses. It would not harm the amenity of adjacent and nearby properties or result in unacceptable overlooking, overshadowing, overbearing, loss of outlook or daylight. The proposal is considered to comply with Policy RD 1.</p>
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	<p>Policy RD3 is applicable and states that planning permission will be granted for conversion or change of use of existing buildings for residential use where all the criteria in policy RD1 and all the additional criteria below are met:</p> <p>a) <i>Any units are self-contained</i> - This criterion is not applicable.</p> <p>b) <i>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</i> - Officers consider that this criterion is met (refer to section 8.16-8.22 below).</p> <p>c) <i>The original property is greater than 150 square metres gross internal floorspace in the case of sub-division of an existing dwelling</i> – This criterion is not applicable to this proposal as a HMO is not considered to be a sub-division.</p> <p>d) <i>Conversions above commercial premises do not prejudice the commercial functions of the business</i> - This criterion is not applicable to this proposal.</p>
8.13	<p>Taking account the nature of the proposal and the criteria set out above the proposal is considered to comply with Policy RD3.</p>
8.14	<p><u>Traffic, Parking and Access</u></p>
	<p>Officers acknowledge the objections to parking and whilst the various policy requirements of HOU10 seek to address need and protect residential amenity, the provision of car parking is not a requirement of this policy. Policy TRAN8 – Car parking and servicing arrangements states that, ‘<i>Development proposals will be required to provide adequate provision for car parking and appropriate servicing arrangements</i>’. Existing Regional Planning Policy and supplementary planning guidance, including the published ‘Parking Standards’, do not incorporate car parking as a requirement for HMO development.</p>
8.15	<p>A parking survey was provided demonstrating that adequate parking is available within walking distance of the site on Rutherglen Street to serve the proposal. It is considered that the scheme will not be detrimental to on-street parking in the prevailing area.</p>
8.16	<p>The parking survey demonstrates that adequate parking is available to serve the proposal which is considered to meet Policy TRAN8. DfI Roads has considered the Parking Survey submitted under this application and has confirmed there is sufficient parking within the vicinity of the proposal. Furthermore, the site is in a sustainable location with regular bus services operating in proximity and accessible to services and amenities in the local and wider area.</p>
8.17	<p><u>Waste and refuse collection</u></p> <p>Policy RD3 criterion B applies, it states that adequate refuse storage space must be 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. The adopted Waste Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) and Local Government Waste Storage Guide for NI set out typical weekly waste arisings for different types of development including HMOs. For an HMO, the typical weekly waste arising is 100L per bedroom plus 60L per dwelling. For the proposed 5 bed HMO this would equate to the typical production of 560L of waste per week. The total waste production is broken down into the following types of waste:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 35% general waste (collected fortnightly), 2. 55% recycling and 3. 10% food waste (both 2. and 3. collected weekly).

8.18	<p>The following bins would be required to serve the proposed HMO in line with the SPG and the Local Government Waste Storage Guide for NI.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Black bins – 3 x black bins (3 x 180L) – sufficient for 2 weeks of general waste. 2. Recycling – 2 x recycling packs (3 x 55L) – collected weekly. 3. Food waste – 3 x food bins (4 x 23L) – collected weekly.
8.19	<p>The SPG advises that applicants must provide a layout of the waste storage area demonstrating that all of the required bins can be accommodated in a way that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • users can easily deposit any type of waste into the corresponding bins without moving them around; and • bins can be easily removed for collection.
8.20	<p>Taking account of the guidance set out in the Waste SPG 8 bins would be required to serve the proposed HMO which according to the SPG would equate to an area of 2.0 x 2.4 (4.86sqm) for 4 bins and an overall total area of 9.6sqm for 8 bins would be required.</p>
8.21	<p>Policy RD3 requires that adequate provision is made within the curtilage of the site for the storage of refuse and recyclable materials, in order to safeguard residential amenity, visual appearance and public health. The rear amenity space measures 6.3 sqm and would fail to accommodate the minimum storage requirements for bin storage. The nature of the immediate area is characterised by terraced dwellings of a similar size to the application site with limited rear amenity space.</p>
8.22	<p>In the recent appeal decision under reference 2024/A0045 (Ponsonby Avenue), a similar situation arose in that the amenity area was not large enough to accommodate the required minimum storage requirements for the proposed HMO and the Council put forward a refusal reason relating to <i>‘insufficient space within the site for accommodating the increased waste storage requirements for a 6-bedroom HMO whilst maintaining sufficient amenity space for occupants of the development’</i>.</p>
8.23	<p>The Commissioner having considered the context of the site concluded that they were satisfied that <i>‘the required bin storage could be accommodated within the rear enclosed yard and not overspill into the rear alleyway or require bins to be located at the front of the property’</i>. Furthermore, the Commissioner stated that the level of amenity space provided for that particular terraced dwelling (similar to the application site) was <i>‘restricted private amenity space, which is of limited ‘socialising and gardening’ value’</i> and considered that the increase in bin provision for the HMO would not alter that. The Commissioner gave significant weight to the proximity of open space facilities to the site. In this case, Woodvale Park is within 4 minutes walking distance to the site and officers consider that its proximity would offset the level of private amenity space.</p>
8.24	<p>Taking account of the PAC decision which is a material consideration in the assessment of this application officers consider that additional bins required to serve the HMO could be physically accommodated in the rear yard and would not overspill into the rear alleyway and that the proximity to Woodvale Park would offset the level of amenity provision which is not significantly lower than that available for other terraced dwellings in the street/area. The waste storage arrangements and level of private amenity space are on balance considered acceptable. It is recommended that the provision of bin storage within the curtilage of the property be controlled by condition.</p>
9.0	Recommendation
9.1	<p>Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is granted.</p>

9.2	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.
10.0	Draft Conditions
10.1	The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission. Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.
10.2	The development shall not be occupied until the refuse and recycling storage area have been provided within the rear curtilage of the property. This area must be sufficient to meet the requirements of the development and must be retained and managed at all times. Reason: To ensure adequate provision of refuse and recycling storage in the interests of the amenities of the area.
10.3	The HMO hereby permitted may not be occupied by more than 5 persons. The owners will supply to the Council (within 14 days of the Council's written request to do so) such information as the Council may reasonably require in order to determine whether this condition is being complied with. Reason: In the interest of residential amenity.

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Development Management Officer Report Committee Application

Summary	
Committee Meeting Date: 10 th March 2026	
Application ID: LA04/2025/1350/F	
Proposal: Change of Use from 3 bed Dwelling to 5-bed, 5-person HMO	Location: 29 Glencairn Street, Belfast, BT13 3LT
Referral Route: Section 3.8.1 of the scheme of Delegation. request for the application to be reported to the Planning Committee by an Elected Member (Cllr. Verner).	
Recommendation: Approval subject to conditions	
Applicant Name and Address: Phillip Swain 4-6 My Lady's Road Belfast BT6 8FB	Agent Name and Address: Ian Crockard 24 Ballyalghan Road Crossgar Downpatrick BT30 9DR
Date Valid: 24 th July 2025	
Target Date: 6 th November 2025	
Contact Officer: Lisa Walshe, Principal Planning Officer (Development Management)	
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>This application seeks full planning permission for the change of use from an existing dwelling to a 5-bed house in multiple occupation (HMO).</p> <p>The key issues for consideration of the application are set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principle of an HMO at this location • Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. • Impact on residential amenity • Traffic, Parking and Access • Waste and refuse collection <p>69 objections have been received with the issues addressed within the main report raised. The main concerns raised within these objections are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too many HMOs in the area • Already multiple existing HMOs on Glencairn Street. • Application does not demonstrate compliance with 10% threshold. • Family homes needed. • Reduce house values. • Parking issues. • Strain on local services. • Increased noise. 	

- Increased waste generation.
- Loss of residential amenity.
- Limitations should be places on occupancy and tenant numbers.
- The house is not large enough to accommodate a HMO.
- Sloping roof for top floor rooms would be cramped.
- Increased risk of anti-social behaviour.
- Sets precedent for more HMOs.
- Neighbours were not appropriately notified preventing a full response.
- Water supply and sewage overrun.
- Reduced emergency vehicle access.

The application has been called in for the following reasons:

1. Overconcentration of HMOs
2. Parking and Traffic Issues
3. Impact on residential amenity
4. Property maintenance and waste management
5. Contrary to planning policy

The proposal is compliant with Policy HOU10 in that the 10% threshold for HMOs on Glencairn Street has not yet been reached. Officers consider that the proposal will not be harmful in terms of traffic, parking, impact on residential amenity or the amenity of the surrounding area.

DFI Roads, NIEA and SES have no objections to the proposal. NI Water have recommended refusal based on network capacity. This issue is addressed in the report.

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.

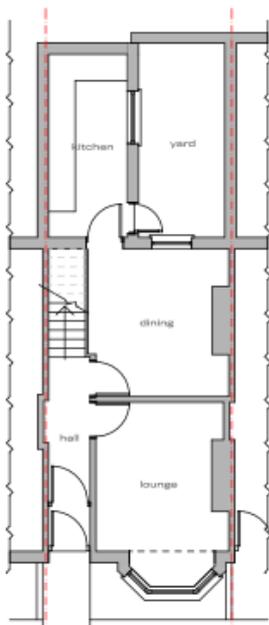
Case Officer Report

1.0 Drawings

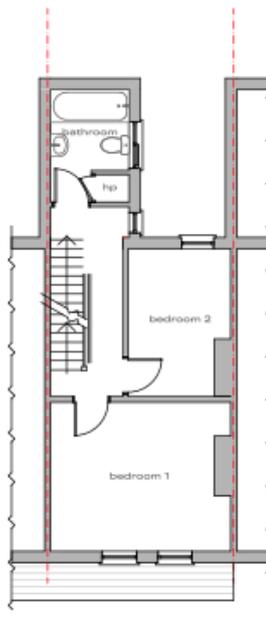
Site Location Plan



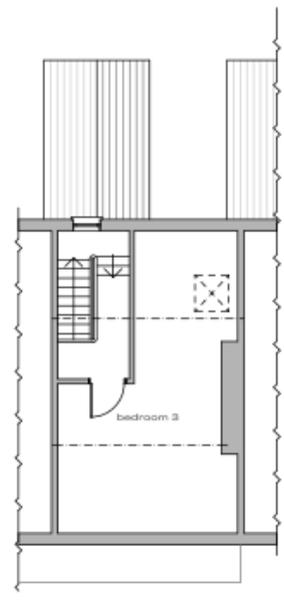
Existing Floor Plans



Ground Floor as Existing 1:50

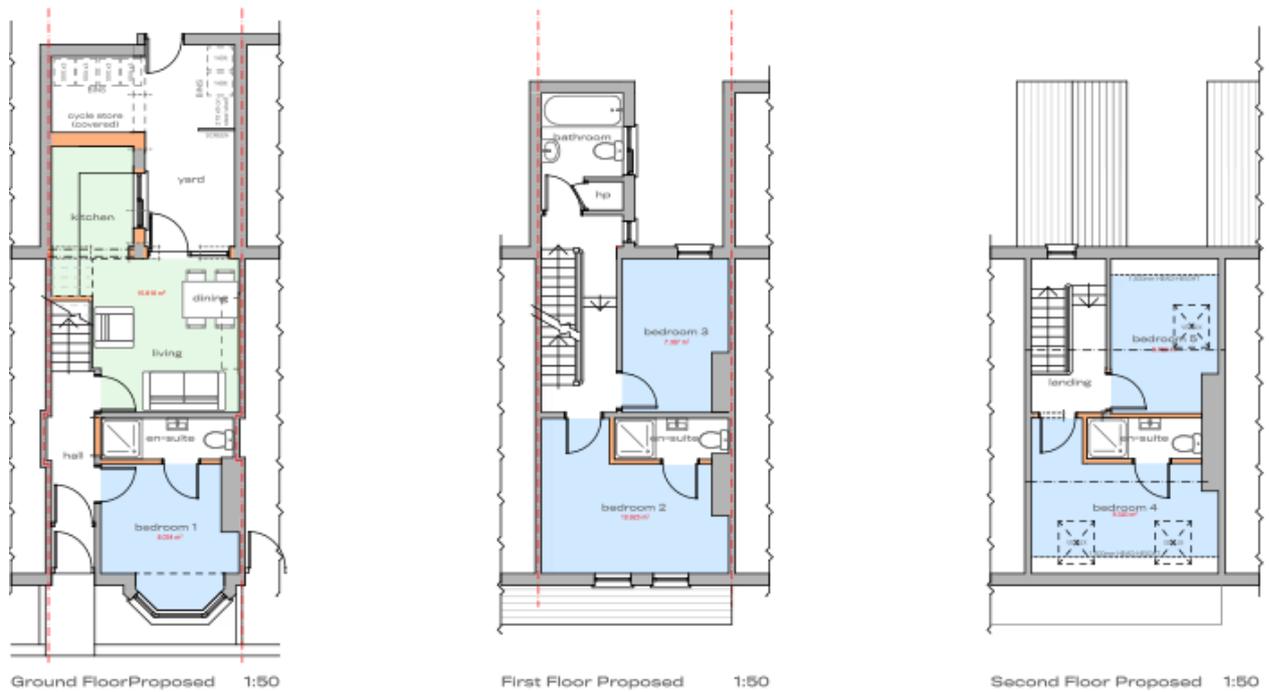


First Floor as Existing 1:50



Second Floor as Existing 1:50

Proposed Floor Plans



2.0	Characteristics of Site and Area
2.1	The application site is located at 29 Glencairn Street which is a residential street located off the Ballygomartin Road. The dwelling on the application site comprises a 2 storey mid-terrace property. The property features an amenity area to the front and an enclosed rear amenity space which leads to an alley. On-street parking is available along Glencairn Street. Glencairn Street and the surrounding area are predominantly residential in nature.
2.2	The site does not fall within any site-specific zonings in the BUAP or either version of BMAP. The site does not fall within any of the existing HMO Policy Areas or Development Nodes as designated in the Belfast HMO Subject Plan 2015.
3.0	Description of Proposed Development
3.1	The application is seeking planning permission for change of use from a 3 bed dwelling (Class C1) to a 5-bed, 5-person HMO (sui generis).
4.0	Planning History
4.1	There is no relevant planning history for the site or in the area which would be relevant to the site or the proposal.
5.0	Planning Policy and Other Material Considerations
5.1	<p>Development Plan – Plan Strategy Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy 2035</p> <p>Strategic Policies Policy SP2 – Sustainable development</p> <p>Operational Policies Policy ENV1 – Environmental quality Policy HOU10 – Housing management areas (HMAs) Policy RD1 – New residential developments Policy TRAN8 – Car parking and servicing arrangements Policy OS3 – Ancillary open space</p>

	<p><i>Supplementary Planning Guidance</i> Residential Design Transportation Waste Infrastructure</p> <p><u><i>Development Plan – zoning, designation and proposal maps</i></u> Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) BUAP Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014) Belfast Houses in Multiple Occupation Subject Plan for Belfast City Council Area 2015</p> <p><i>Regional Planning Policy</i> Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)</p>
6.0	Consultations and Representations
6.1	<p>Non-Statutory Consultees N/A</p>
6.2	<p>Statutory Consultees DFI Roads – no objection NIEA – standing advice – conditions and informatives. Shared Environmental Services – no objection subject to conditions NI Water – recommend refusal due to network capacity issues and recommend connections to the public sewerage system are curtailed.</p>
6.3	<p>Representations The application was neighbour notified and advertised in the local press. A total of 69 objections were received including representations from elected members Cllr Verner and Cllr McDowell. The main issues raised are set out below along with officers response.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Too many HMOs in the area</u> <u>Already multiple existing HMOs on Glencairn Street.</u> <p>During the Council’s calculation of the HMO threshold in the area, no existing HMOs were identified on Glencairn Street within the database, there are no live enforcement cases with the Council for unlawful HMO properties on this street and no HMO licences have been granted for dwellings on this street. A full assessment of the applications compliance with HOU10 is within the main body of the assessment.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Application does not demonstrate compliance with 10% threshold.</u> <p>A full assessment of the proposal against Policy HOU 10 is set out within the main body of the report.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Family homes needed.</u> <p>The proposal meets the criteria for HMO development as set out in Policy HOU 10. The LDP permits a range of housing needs across the city of Belfast. The local development plan, plan strategy seeks to facilitate sustainable housing growth in response to changing housing needs and states that carefully managing the variety of housing types, sizes and tenures will help to meet the diverse needs of al the community. HMOs contribute to providing choice and assisting and meeting community needs. Controls on the number of</p>

HMOs allowed in any one street will ensure that the residential character of areas is protected.

5. Reduce house values.

This is not a material planning consideration.

6. Parking issues.

DFI Roads was consulted in relation to the proposal and are content with the findings of the Parking Survey and have offered no objection to the proposal.

7. Strain on local services.

No persuasive evidence has been provided to support the position that a HMO at this location would strain local services. Notwithstanding, the HMO is located within an area which has not exceeded the 10% threshold within the street. It is considered there are appropriate services within the area to serve the proposed HMO and that the proposal would have no greater impact than the existing residents of a family occupied dwelling at this location.

8. Increased noise.

The HMO licensing scheme is in place to regulate HMOs. An anti-social management plan will be required as part of the HMO licensing process which will appropriately deal with issues relating to noise and tenant behaviour should they arise.

9. Increased waste generation leads to risk of overflowing and vermin

The proposal would meet the necessary bin storage and waste management requirements for a 5 bedroom HMO as set out below.

10. Loss of residential amenity.

The proposal has been assessed against relevant residential policies which are discussed in the main body of the assessment.

11. Limitations should be places on occupancy and tenant numbers.

The description of the proposal includes tenant numbers which will be capped at 5 residents. A condition is proposed restrict maximum occupancy.

12. The house is not large enough to accommodate a HMO.

Each of the proposed rooms within the HMO meet the required space standards. This is discussed within the main body of the assessment.

13. Sloping roof for top floor rooms would be cramped.

These bedrooms have been appropriately assessed and meet the space standards required. This is discussed within the main body of the assessment.

14. Increased risk of anti-social behaviour.

An anti-social management plan will be required as part of the HMO licensing process which will appropriately deal with issues relating to anti-social behaviour should they arise.

	<p>15. <u>Sets precedent for more HMOs.</u></p> <p>Each application is considered on its own merits and any subsequent application will be subject to assessment under relevant planning policy including Policy HMO 10.</p> <p>16. <u>Neighbours were not appropriately notified preventing a full response.</u></p> <p>Six Neighbour notification letters were issued to the appropriate properties (Nos. 20, 22, 27, 31, Glencairn Street and 32 and 34 Rutherglen Street). Officers are satisfied that the neighbour notification process was carried out in accordance with the requirements of Article 8 (1(b)) of the Planning (General Development Procedure) Order Northern Ireland) 2015. The application was also advertised in the local press on 12th September 2025.</p> <p>17. <u>Water supply and sewage overrun.</u></p> <p>NI Water, NIEA: Water management unit and Shared Environmental Services have been consulted in relation to this proposal and their responses are set out within the main body of the report and a conditions is proposed requiring details of foul and surface water drainage to be submitted for approval.</p> <p>18. <u>Reduced emergency vehicle access.</u></p> <p>DFI Roads was consulted in relation to the proposal and have raised no concerns regarding access to the site by emergency vehicles.</p>
7.0	Planning Assessment
7.1	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.
7.2	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.
7.3	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.
7.4	Operational policies – the Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application which are set out in section 5.0 above.
7.5	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), HMO Subject Plan 2015 and other relevant area plans. The weight to be afforded to these proposals maps is a matter for the decision maker. Whilst the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 remains the statutory plan insofar as the proposals maps (“Departmental Development Plan), 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.

8.0	Key Issues
8.1	<p>The key issues for consideration of the application are set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principle of an HMO at this location • Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. • Impact on residential amenity • Traffic, Parking and Access • Waste and refuse collection
	<p><u>The principle of an HMO at the location</u></p>
8.2	<p>The application site falls outside a Housing Management Area. Housing Management Areas (HMAs) will be designated within the local policies plan, based on evidence available relating to concentrations for HMOs and flat conversions. In advance of the local policies plan, this will be applied to the HMO policy areas under designation HMO2 of the 'Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) Subject Plan for Belfast City Council Area 2015'. The site is not located within a Housing Policy Area or development node as designated in the Belfast HMO Subject Plan 2015.</p>
8.3	<p>Policy HOU10 of the Plan Strategy is applicable and states that: <i>'Outside of designated HMAs planning permission will only be granted for HMOs where the number of HMOs would not as a result exceed 10% of all dwelling units on that road or street. Where such a street is in excess of 600 metres in length, the 10% threshold will be calculated on the basis of existing residential units within 300 metres of either side of the proposal on that street'.</i></p>
8.4	<p>The justification and amplification text to Policy HOU10 confirms at paragraph 7.1.66 that the level of HMOs outside a HMA will be measured by adding together:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The number of HMOs recorded under the HMO Licensing scheme; and 2. The number of planning approvals for HMOs not yet licensed, with the total then divided by the total number of dwelling units within the street. If a street is longer than 600m, the total number of dwellings in the street will relate to the total properties within 300m either side of the property on the street.
8.5	<p>According to the LPS Pointer Address database there are a total number of 92 houses which fall within Glencairn Street, allowing for 9 HMOs. At the time of assessment there were 0 properties with existing HMO licenses and/or planning approval. The proposal is therefore within the 10% threshold and is acceptable in principle.</p>
8.6	<p>Each application is considered on its own merits and officers consider that this proposal is compliant with policy HOU10 for the reasons stated above and any further applications for HMOs will be assessed in accordance with the relevant planning policy.</p>
8.7	<p>Paragraph 7.1.69. of HOU10 states that in all cases, intensive forms of housing whether within or outside HMAs will still be carefully assessed against the relevant criteria set out in Policies RD1, RD2 and RD3. The assessment of the proposal against these policies is set out below.</p>

8.8

Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area

The proposed development includes partial demolition of the 2-storey rear return to increase the availability of yard space at the property. The proposed alterations will not result in any adverse impact to the character and appearance of the area.

Impact on residential amenity

8.9

Policy RD1 applies as set out above and states that '*planning permission will be granted for new residential development where it is in accordance with general urban design policies and where it is demonstrated that the proposal:*

a) Will not create conflict with adjacent land uses, remaining in conformity with the character of any established residential areas - Officers consider that the use does not conflict with adjacent land uses. The scheme meets the policy requirements set out in HOU10 and RD1 & RD3. The HMO licensing scheme also seeks to ensure that landlords are compliant with regulations, such as the number of occupants and provision of sufficient bin storage.

b) Does not unduly affect the privacy or amenity of neighbouring residents, including overlooking, loss of light, overshadowing, dominance, noise or other disturbance - Officers consider that the scheme will not give rise to any of the issues listed in criterion b. There will be no further overlooking, loss of light, overshadowing and dominance than that which already exists. Noise or other disturbance will be addressed by the anti-social behaviour plan which is a licensing requirement.

c) Makes provision for, or is, accessible and convenient to public transport and walking and cycling infrastructure - There is sufficient space for cycle parking in the rear yard. The site is a convenient walking and cycling distance of major centres of health care, employment, education, churches, community facilities and the city centre. The site is well served by public transport - bus services provide links between the area and the city centre. The nearest bus stop along Ballygomartin Road is approximately 150m from the front of the dwelling.

d) Provides appropriate open space - The existing rear amenity space is to be retained which is considered sufficient to serve the proposal. The site has good access to existing open space infrastructure with Woodvale Park located only 0.2 miles (4 minute walk) from the site to its entrance on the Ballygomartin Road.

e) Keeps hard surfacing to a minimum - No hard standing is proposed as part of this application.

f) Creates a quality and sustainable residential environment in accordance with the space standards set out in appendix C - The HMO complies with the space standards for HMOs as set out in Appendix C: Table C3 of the Local Development Plan. A 1-person bedroom should measure a minimum of 6.5m². All bedrooms proposed meet this standard and range from 6.7m² to 10.9m². Bedrooms 4 and 5 which are located on the 2nd floor meet the recommended floorspace standards when measured from the height of the sloping roof at 1.5m. The proposed kitchen/ living area measures 15.8m² which exceeds the recommended standard of 11.5m².

	<p><i>g) Does not contain any units which are wholly in the rear of the property without direct, safe and secure access from the public street - All bedrooms have safe and secure access from the front door of the dwelling.</i></p>
	<p><i>h) Ensures that living rooms, kitchens and bedrooms have access to natural light - All habitable rooms in the dwelling have access to natural light.</i></p>
8.10	<p>The LDP Plan Strategy seeks to facilitate sustainable housing growth in response to changing housing needs. Carefully managing the variety of house types, sizes and tenures will help to meet the diverse needs of all the community. This supports wider LDP aims of shaping quality and sustainable residential development, providing a mix of housing that create more balanced communities, increasing density without town cramming. HMOs are regulated by the relevant Policy set out in the LDP plan Strategy and the proposal has been found to comply with the relevant policies. This HMO proposal comprises 5 bedrooms for the intended use of 5 persons and will also be subject to the licensing process which will determine how many persons the home can accommodate. HMOs can meet high demand for housing and the application site is in an accessible location close to services and public transport. It is considered that the proposal would not undermine the availability of family housing in the area nor the availability to services to support the existing community.</p>
8.11	<p>As indicated above, the HMO will further require to be licensed with BCC which requires the implementation of an anti-social behaviour plan, ensuring the HMO operator runs the property effectively.</p>
8.12	<p>The proposal is considered compatible with adjacent land uses. It would not harm the amenity of adjacent and nearby properties or result in unacceptable overlooking, overshadowing, overbearing, loss of outlook or daylight. The proposal is considered to comply with Policy RD 1.</p>
8.13	<p>Policy RD3 is applicable and states that planning permission will be granted for conversion or change of use of existing buildings for residential use where all the criteria in policy RD1 and all the additional criteria below are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>Any units are self-contained</i> - This criterion is not applicable. b) <i>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</i> - Officers consider that this criterion is met (refer to section 8.18 – 8.25 below). c) <i>The original property is greater than 150 square metres gross internal floorspace in the case of sub-division of an existing dwelling</i> – This criterion is not applicable to this proposal as a HMO is not considered to be a sub-division. d) <i>Conversions above commercial premises do not prejudice the commercial functions of the business</i> - This criterion is not applicable to this proposal.
8.14	<p>Taking account the nature of the proposal and the criteria set out above the proposal is considered to comply with Policy RD3.</p>
	<p><u>Traffic, Parking and Access</u></p>
8.15	<p>Officers acknowledge the objections to parking and whilst the various policy requirements of HOU10 seek to address need and protect residential amenity, the provision of car parking is not a requirement of this policy. Policy TRAN8 – Car parking and servicing arrangements states that, <i>'Development proposals will be required to provide adequate</i></p>

	<p><i>provision for car parking and appropriate servicing arrangements</i>'. Existing Regional Planning Policy and supplementary planning guidance, including the published 'Parking Standards', do not incorporate car parking as a requirement for HMO development.</p>
8.16	<p>A parking survey was provided demonstrating that adequate parking is available within walking distance of the site on Glencairn Street, Glencairn Crescent and Rutherglen Street to serve the proposal and concludes that the scheme will not be detrimental to on-street parking in the prevailing area.</p>
8.17	<p>The parking survey demonstrates that adequate parking is available to serve the proposal which is considered to meet Policy TRAN8. DfI Roads has considered the Parking Survey submitted under this application and has confirmed there is sufficient parking within the vicinity of the proposal. Furthermore, the site is in a sustainable location with regular bus services operating in proximity and accessible to services and amenities in the local and wider area.</p>
	<p><u>Waste and refuse collection</u></p>
8.18	<p>Policy RD3 criterion B applies, it states that adequate refuse storage space must be 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>
8.19	<p>The adopted Waste Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) and Local Government Waste Storage Guide for NI set out typical weekly waste arisings for different types of development including HMOs. For an HMO, the typical weekly waste arising is 100L per bedroom plus 60L per dwelling. For the proposed 5 bed HMO this would equate to the typical production of 560L of waste per week. The total waste production is broken down into the following types of waste:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 35% general waste (collected fortnightly), 2. 55% recycling and 3. 10% food waste (both 2. and 3. collected weekly).
8.20	<p>The following bins would be required to serve the proposed HMO in line with the SPG and the Local Government Waste Storage Guide for NI.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Black bins – 3 x black bins (3 x 180L) – sufficient for 2 weeks of general waste. 2. Recycling – 2 x recycling packs (3 x 55L) – collected weekly. 3. Food waste – 3 x food bins (4 x 23L) – collected weekly.
8.21	<p>The SPG advises that applicants must provide a layout of the waste storage area demonstrating that all of the required bins can be accommodated in a way that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • users can easily deposit any type of waste into the corresponding bins without moving them around; and • bins can be easily removed for collection.
8.22	<p>Taking account of the guidance set out in the Waste SPG a total of 8 of bins would be required to serve the proposed HMO which according to the SPG would equate to an area of 2.0 x 2.4 (4.86sqm) for 4 bins and an overall total area of 9.6 for 8 bins.</p>
8.23	<p>The applicant has provided a plan which demonstrates that there is adequate provision for bin storage and that the bins can be easily accessed, whilst retaining an adequate amount of residential amenity space. A condition is recommended to ensure bin storage is provided within the curtilage of the property.</p>

8.24	<p>The rear amenity space will measure 11.4sqm after the alterations to the existing rear return. The provision of the minimum storage area for the bins required would leave approximately 1.8 sqm remaining for amenity provision. The rear yard space is similar to other terraced properties along Glencairn Street. In the recent appeal decision under reference 2024/A0045 (Ponsonby Avenue), the Commissioner found that the amenity space for the terraced dwelling (similar to the application site) provided '<i>restricted private amenity space, which is of limited 'socialising and gardening' value</i>' and considered that the increase in bin provision for the HMO would not alter that. Furthermore, the Commissioner gave weight to the proximity of open space facilities to the site. In this case there are a number of areas of open space in close proximity including Woodvale Park (8 minutes walking distance) and open space at Forthriver Road. It is considered that the proximity of open space facilities would offset the level of private amenity space.</p>
8.25	<p>Taking account of the above material considerations the provision of amenity space is considered acceptable given the local context and the proximity to open space facilities.</p> <p><u>Other issues</u></p>
8.26	<p><u>Drainage</u></p> <p>NI Water has advised it has network capacity concerns within this area and recommended refusal of the application at this time. However, no clear evidence has been provided to demonstrate specific harm resulting from the development. Moreover, NI Water has a duty to connect committed development across the city to its waste-water infrastructure. Such development, which includes significant levels of residential and commercial floor space across the city, will not all come forward at once and some may not come forward at all. For these reasons, it would be unreasonable for the Council to refuse planning permission on these grounds and the proposal is acceptable having regard to Policy SP1A of the Plan Strategy.</p>
8.27	<p>Shared Environmental Services was consulted and have carried out an Appropriate Assessment in accordance with the Regulations. Belfast City Council in its role as the competent Authority under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended), and in accordance with its duty under Regulation 43, has adopted the HRA report, and conclusions therein, prepared by Shared Environmental Service, dated 05/01/2026. This found that the project would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site. In accordance with the recommendations from SES a condition is proposed to ensure that details of foul and surface water drainage, including a programme for implementation of these works, are submitted to and approved by the Council prior to commencement of the use as a HMO.</p>
9.0	<p>Recommendation</p>
9.1	<p>Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is granted.</p>
9.2	<p>It is requested that delegated authority be given to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive.</p>
10.0	<p>Draft Conditions</p>
10.1	<p>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>

10.2	<p>Prior to commencement of the use hereby approved details of foul and surface water drainage, including a programme for implementation of these works, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details, which shall be retained as such thereafter. Reason: To ensure appropriate foul and surface water drainage of the site. Approval is required upfront because the design of the drainage is an integral part of the development and its acceptability.</p>
10.3	<p>The development shall not be occupied until the refuse and recycling storage area have been provided within the rear yard of the property in accordance with the approved plans and shall be retained and managed at all times.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure adequate provision of refuse and recycling storage in the interests of the amenities of the area.</p>
10.4	<p>The HMO hereby permitted may not be occupied by more than 5 persons. The owners will supply to the Council (within 14 days of the Council's written request to do so) such information as the Council may reasonably require in order to determine whether this condition is being complied with.</p> <p>Reason: In the interest of residential amenity.</p>

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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.

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Development Management Officer Report Committee Application

Summary	
Date of Committee: 10 th March 2026	
Application ID: LA04/2025/0951/F	
Proposal: Proposed 25m monopole with 6no. antennas, 4no. transmission dishes, 2no. equipment cabinets and ancillary development thereto.	Location: Loughside playing fields, Shore Road, Belfast, BT15 3PZ
Referral Route: The application is made by Belfast City Council and on lands to which the Council has an estate (as per the Scheme of Delegation paragraph 3.8.5 (a)).	
Recommendation: Refusal	
Applicant Name and Address: EE (UK) Ltd & Hutchison 3G UK Ltd Sixth Floor Thames Tower Station Road Reading RG1 1LX	Agent Name and Address: Guy de Rose WHP 1a Station Court Station Road Guiseley Leeds LS20 8EY
Date Valid: 30/06/2025	
Target Date: 13/10/2025	
Contact Officer: Lisa Walshe, Principal Planning Officer	
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>The application seeks planning permission for a 25m monopole lattice tower with 6 no antennae and 4 no dishes as well as associated cabinets and equipment.</p> <p>The site is located within Loughside playing fields, adjacent to the Shore Road. The playing fields are a Council operated site which offers sport pitches and a recreation centre. The topography of the site is broadly level with areas of trees outside the site boundary. An area of hardstanding to the front of the recreation centre serves as the entrance and car park.</p> <p>The monopole will be situated to the rear of the recreation centre and in close proximity to the two playing fields.</p> <p>The site is situated within the development limit as designated under both versions of dBMAP (2004 & 2014). The site is designated open space and has been identified as existing open/recreation space under dBMAP.</p> <p>The Key Issues relevant to consideration of the application are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of Development • Impact on Character and Appearance of Area • Mast sharing and the potential to share existing structures • Impact on Amenity 	

- Health Considerations.
- Road Safety

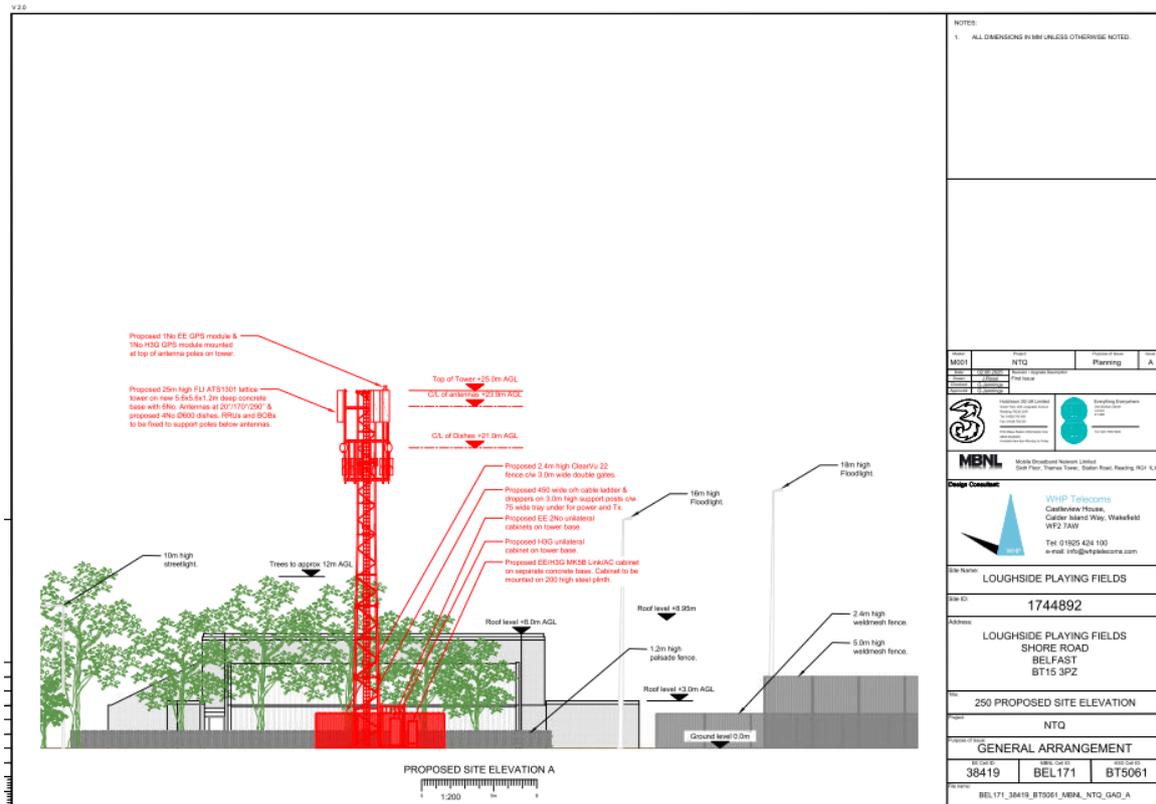
Recommendation

Having regard to the development plan and other considerations, the proposal is unacceptable.

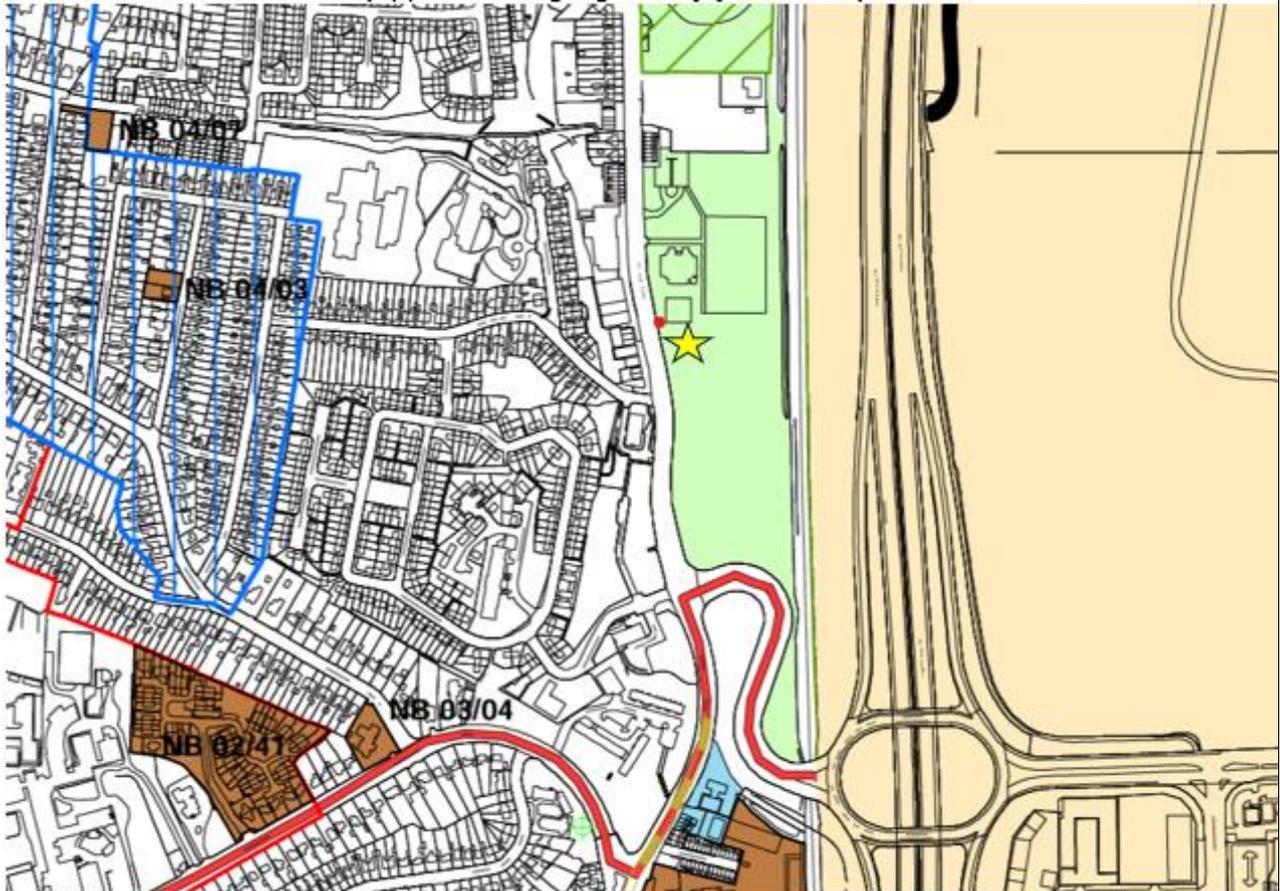
The proposal is contrary to Policies ITU1 and OS1 of the Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy 2035 as the siting, height, scale and design of the proposal would negatively impact on the area of protected open space and it has not been demonstrated that community benefits would decisively outweigh the loss of the open space.

It is recommended that planning permission is refused and delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the refusal reasons and deal with any other issues that arise, provided they are not substantive.

Proposed Elevation



Extract from Draft BMAP – see key below (Application highlighted by yellow star)



Key

For Information Only:

-  Conservation Area
-  Area of Existing Open Space
-  Protected Route
-  Archaeological Site & Monument (State Care)
-  Archaeological Site & Monument (Scheduled)
-  Archaeological Site & Monument (Unscheduled)

Characteristics of the Site and Area

1.0 Description of Proposed Development

- 1.1 The proposal is seeking planning permission for a 25m monopole with 6no. antennas, 4no. transmission dishes, 2no. equipment cabinets and ancillary development.

2.0 Description of Site

- 2.1 The proposal is situated to the south of and adjacent to the vacant Loughside Recreation Centre and within the western side of the area of open space adjacent to Shore Road. The centre has been closed to the public since 2020 however the adjoining playing fields remain operational.
- 2.2 There is a band of mature trees along the Shore Road boundary which are the subject of a Tree Preservation Order. Playing facilities including football and hockey pitches are situated immediately to the south and east of the application site. The immediate area on the eastern side of the Shore Road is characterised by open space and recreational uses. The western side of the Shore Road is characterised by commercial uses with residential uses beyond.

Planning Assessment of Policy and other Material Considerations

3.0 Site History

LA04/2023/2665/F – Loughside Recreation Centre, Shore Road, Belfast BT15 4HP. Replacement of existing all weather playing pitch with 3G pitch, new fencing, floodlights and dugouts. Permission granted 03/05/2023.

4.0 Policy Framework

4.1 Development Plan Context

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.

- 4.2 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.

- 4.3 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.
4.4	<p><u>Operational Policies</u></p> <p>The Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application. These are listed at paragraph 3.1.</p>
4.5	<p><u>Proposals Maps</u></p> <p>Until such time as the Local Policies Plan is adopted, the Council must have regard to the land-use zonings, designations and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (BUAP), both versions of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (v2004 and v2014) (dBMAP) and other relevant area plans. The weight to be afforded to these proposals maps is a matter for the decision maker. It is considered that significant weight should be given to the proposals map in dBMAP 2015 (v2014) given its advanced stage in the development process, save for retail policies that relate to Sprucefield which remain contentious.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001: The site is located within Lands reserved for Landscape, Amenity or Recreation Use. • Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (2004): The site is within an Area of Existing Recreation and Open Space • Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014): The site is within an Area of Existing Recreation and Open Space
4.6	<p>Development Plan – Local Development Plan</p> <p><u>Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy ITU1 • Policy OS1
4.7	Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (2025)
4.8	<p>Other Considerations</p> <p>DCAN 14 – Sitting and Design of Radio Telecommunications Equipment.</p>
5.0	<p>Statutory Consultees Responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast City Airport – No objections
6.0	<p>Non Statutory Consultees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast International Airport – No objections
7.0	Representations
7.1	The application has been neighbour notified and advertised in the local press. No third party representations have been received.
8.0	Assessment
8.1	<p>Principle of development</p> <p>This proposal seeks to enhance connectivity and maximise service provision and supply in this area. The applicant cites the proposal as a replacement mast for existing</p>

	<p>infrastructure on the roof of Ross House which will prevent a coverage gap in the area. The proposal relates to network users of EE.</p>
8.2	<p>The proposal is required to comply with policies ITU1 and OS1 of the Belfast Local Development Plan 2023. ITU1 sets out 8 criteria for telecommunications infrastructure/development. The policy aims are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To facilitate appropriate provision of infrastructure to meet current and featured needs and, • To minimise visual and environmental impacts of infrastructure, telecoms and utilities in order to support sustainable economic growth.
8.3	<p>Policy ITU1 as it pertains to Impact on Character and Appearance of the Area Criterion (c) - Not result in unacceptable damage to visual amenity or harm to environmentally sensitive features or locations, or heritage features. Criterion (g) requires details of the consideration given to measures to mitigate the visual and environmental impact of the proposal.</p>
8.4	<p>From the site inspection, the average height of the surrounding buildings on this part of Shore Road was noted. The commercial and residential buildings do not exceed more than 3 storeys for this part of the road. Within the surrounding context, Ross House (Mount Vernon), located to the south west of the site is the only apartment block which does not conform with surrounding character in terms of height. Ross House is proposed to be demolished under the Housing Executive's Action Plan.</p>
8.5	<p>The proposal does not satisfactorily sit within this existing character and will create an overly prominent feature. The height of the proposal far exceeds that of the mature planting and trees, limiting the screening they can provide especially over medium and long distances thus failing criterion (c) of ITU1.</p>
8.6	<p>The proposed 25m lattice tower is directly adjacent to the Shore Road. The western boundary which faces onto the road is screened by mature trees along this route. The Trees are subject to a Tree Protection Order under TPO/2012/0067. Policy ITU1 advises in paragraph 9.1.7 that telecommunication development should avoid any sensitive areas that include any other environmental designations. The site is within a TPO site. Policy TRE1 has a precautionary approach when considering the impacts of a proposed development on trees of visual, biodiversity or amenity quality and significance. Whilst the development is situated away from the tree line, the visual impact is considered significant and will detract from the established tree line which characterises this part of Shore Road.</p>
8.7	<p>The proposal will create a gross area of 75 sqm. The proposal includes ancillary works such as a 2.4m high fence and gates along with 4 transmission dishes and 2 equipment cabinets.</p>
8.8	<p>The mast will be located in an area of open space to the immediate south of the currently vacant recreation centre. The surrounding area is mixed use with commercial and residential uses. The mast will be significantly taller than any other structures in the immediate area. The proposal is 9m taller than existing street lighting. The proposal will be 17m taller than the recreation centre and 14m taller than the tree line. Public views will be open to the mast throughout the park and will be highly visible from the surrounding area.</p>
8.9	<p>The mast will be a dominant feature in the immediate context of the site due to the height and bulkiness of the structure, creating a prominent feature in the surrounding area. The setting of this proposal does not provide a sufficient backdrop to allow the 25m lattice tower to satisfactorily integrate into the streetscape. The proposal will be highly visible</p>

	from various public viewpoints e.g. along the adjacent Shore Road and a significant distance away.
8.10	The proposal has not fully considered potential mitigation measures. The proposal will sit above the existing street lighting by 7-15metres. The proposal is a large and bulky lattice tower which is top heavy with a range of antennae and dishes which are fixed to the tower at its highest point.
8.11	The statement provided by the agent does not adequately demonstrate the proposal will not be an overly dominant feature from public viewpoints. Officers have identified the key public viewpoints which fall along the Shore Road, within the park and the residential street of Loughside Chase and Loughwood Park.
8.12	If permitted the proposal would significantly change the established skyline and would create an unacceptable level of visual clutter which does not integrate with the surrounding.
8.13	The SSRI has provided limited information in regard to mitigation measures to overcome this policy conflict. For the reasons set out above the proposal is contrary to Policy ITU1 criteria (c) & (g).
8.14	Policy ITU1 – other considerations Criterion (a) – Improve connectivity. The agent has made a statement that the proposal will help improve connectivity, as it serves as a replacement for Ross House to prevent a gap in coverage. Officers have undertaken a desktop assessment and are satisfied criterion (a) will be complied with.
8.15	Criterion (b) – Encourage investment and support the competitiveness of the city. The statement provided by the agent quotes the planning policy framework for England in which “ <i>Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being</i> ”. Officers would not dispute this position; however, the proposal should also comply with the following criteria.
8.16	Criteria (d) & (e) relate to new masts being proposed and will only be acceptable where both requirements are meet,
8.17	Criterion (d) relates to the sharing of an existing mast or other structure has been fully investigated and not feasible.
8.18	ITU 1 requires demonstration of mast sharing and that a new mast represents a “better environmental solution than other options”, under criteria (d) and (e). The SSRI demonstrates the discounted site options.
8.19	The applicant has presented supporting information that alternative sites (25no.) were considered. They were dismissed for various reasons, including, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to residential housing • Ross house re-development scheme • Railway fall distances • Giant’s Park site is up for re-development • Site shares as structures not shareable. Insufficient height available to achieve the required line of sight/ edge of search area. • Structures located in conservation area and issues with Trees • Significant distance away from NTQ site. • Unsuitable for extending the required height.

8.20	The SSRI concludes that the applicant has taken into account the factors of technical constraints, available sites and planning constraints and consider that the site and design clearly represents the optimum environmental solution.
8.21	The discounted site options have disregarded sites in other locations due to close proximity to residential dwellings. This is not considered appropriate justification as there are many instances of telecoms infrastructure being located within residential areas throughout Belfast. ITU 1 also does not preclude such development from residential areas within the criteria. The council does note there is a weak signal for 5G network coverage in the area.
8.22	The requirement for the 5G Coverage does not outweigh the visual impacts outlined in this report. The lack of clarity and detail regarding the assessment of other sites means the Council cannot be satisfied that the need for a telecoms structure at this location outweighs the visual impact of the proposal.
8.23	Officers are aware of a recent live planning permission under LA04/2023/4526/F which was granted planning permission as an alternative site to the existing Ross House site which can be implemented until 27/04/2010. The applicant has advised the works did not go ahead due to budgeting constraints. Had the proposal been otherwise acceptable, officers could have explored revocation of the extant approval at Ross House, or a Section 76 Planning Agreement to ensure only one of the permissions was enacted. As it stands however, the proposal is not considered to meet key policy tests, and a replacement mast has already been approved.
8.24	<p>Criterion (e) requires a new mast to represent a better environmental solution than other options.</p> <p>Little information has been provided by the agent in terms of criterion (e). Officers consider that the best environmental solution would be to implement the permission the applicant has under LA04/2023/4526/F. This would prevent the proliferation of masts within the immediate area.</p>
8.25	<p>Criterion (f) requires that the applicant provides information about the purpose and need of the proposal and how it fits into the wider network.</p> <p>The supporting statement details the site selection process and alternative sites for the proposal that have been explored and discounted for various reasons. These elements of the supporting statement aim to satisfy criteria a., b. and f. of Policy ITU 1 of the LDP, in that the proposal would enhance connectivity, encourage investment and competitiveness of the city. The applicant has provided a limited level of information about the purpose and need for this mast.</p>
8.26	The agent has advised mobile phone stations are required as more people are using their network at home, which requires the service to be placed in close proximity to residential properties.
8.27	The agent further contends that proposals are limited as they are required to fit within the existing network. Sites can have a degree of overlapping, however if the overlap is too great unacceptable interference can occur. The proposed development at this site will provide the required service for EE whilst accommodating future users. This feeds back into providing a wider benefit to the economy.
8.28	Criterion (h) has two parts which the proposal must comply with where a base station is proposed a statement:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Indicating its location, the height of the antenna, the frequency and modulation characteristics and details of power output. 2. Confirmation that the base station when operational will meet the Internal Commission on Non-ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) Guidelines for public exposure to electromagnetic fields.
8.29	The agent has met the above requirements within the SSRI and the ICNIRP certificate has been submitted as part of this application.
8.30	In relation to air / public safety, Belfast City Airport and Belfast International Airport have been consulted in relation to the height of the structure. Belfast City Airport requested that if 5G was to be enabled, that the applicant should provide clarification of compliance with the Ofcom coordination process.
8.31	The applicant has provided an ICNIRP declaration of compliance. This declaration states that the mast, if erected, would comply with the requirements of radio frequency guidelines of the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) for public exposure. Criteria (h) of policy ITU1 has been complied with, therefore the council offer no objection on this basis.
8.32	<p>Loss of Open Space</p> <p>The proposal falls within and established area of open space and therefore OS1 is applied. While the proposal pertains to a relatively small area, the general presumption of the policy is for retention of open space unless the lands have been identified in the LDP for alternative uses. The presumption against the loss of open space will apply irrespective of ownership, public access, physical condition or appearance.</p>
8.33	The proposal incorporates the loss of open space to facilitate this development/infrastructure works. Development will only be permitted where exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated. No information to date has been provided to demonstrate that the upgrade in network coverage will bring substantial community benefits that outweigh the loss of open space. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to policy OS1.
8.34	<p>Road and Pedestrian Safety</p> <p>The proposed monopole and associated ancillary works would be positioned approx. 15 metres from Shore Road ensuring the public footpath remains unobstructed. Given the distance to the footpath and the mature trees acting as a barrier, DFI Roads were not consulted on the application. The installation is not expected to impede pedestrian or vehicular movement.</p>
9.0	Summary of Recommendation:
9.1	The proposal is contrary to Policies ITU 1 and OS 1 of the Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy 2035. It is recommended to refuse planning permission and delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of refusal reasons.
10.0	Draft Refusal Reasons:
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposal fails to satisfy criterion c. of Policy ITU1: Telecommunications Development of the Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy 2035 in that siting, scale, design and massing of the proposal would result in unacceptable damage to visual amenity and cause harm to the area.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. The proposal fails to satisfy criteria e. and g. of Policy ITU1: Telecommunications Development of the Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy as it has not been demonstrated that a new mast represents a better environmental solution than other options, and that adequate details have been considered to mitigate the visual and environmental impact of the proposal at this location.<li>3. The proposal fails to satisfy Policy OS1 of the Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy 2035 in that it has not been demonstrated that the loss of open space will be decisively outweighed by delivering substantial community benefits.<li>4. The proposal fails to satisfy Policy OS1 of the Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy 2035 in that it has not been demonstrated that the proposal will protect the character and amenity value of the protected area of open space and no alternative provision has been proposed nor has it been demonstrated that retention/enhancement of the existing open space/recreational facilities can only be achieved by the development of part of a small part of the existing space.
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Development Management Officer Report Committee Application

Summary	
Committee Meeting Date: 10 th March 2026	
Application Ref: LA04/2025/1692/F	
Proposal: Extension of existing ball stop fencing from 5m to 8m along three sides. This will total 220m in length.	Location: Existing soccer pitch at Marrowbone Millenium Park (approx. 25m north of No. 8 Ardoyne Court), Ardoyne Avenue, Belfast.
Referral Route: The application is made by Belfast City Council and on lands to which the Council has an estate (as per the Scheme of Delegation paragraph 3.8.5 (a) and (b))	
Recommendation: Approval subject to condition	
Applicant Name and Address: Michael Small Cecil Ward Building 4-10 Linenhall Street Belfast BT2 8BP	Agent Name and Address: Michael Small Cecil Ward Building 4-10 Linenhall Street Belfast BT2 8BP
Recommendation	Approval
Date Valid: 21/10/2025	
Target Date: 03/02/2026	
Contact Officer: Lisa Walshe (Principal Planning Officer)	
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>The application seeks planning permission for the installation of 1 no Ball stop fence along three sides with a total length of 220m x 8m (height). This will increase the height of the existing fencing from 5m to 8m.</p> <p>The site is located within Marrowbone Millennium Park, off the Old Park Road.</p> <p>The playing fields are a Council operated site which offers sport pitches and open space for nearby residents. The site comprises of one soccer pitch and playground. Within the pitch there is an existing changing room. The topography of the site is broadly level with areas of trees outside the site boundary. An area of hardstanding to the front of the park serves as the entrance.</p> <p>The proposed works are due to take place to the east of the existing soccer playing field. The areas to the northern and southern sides of the site are predominantly residential.</p> <p>The site is partly located within the Oldpark Local Landscape Policy Area. The site is situated within the development limit as designated under both versions of dBMAP (2004 & 2014).</p>	

The key Issues relevant to consideration of the application are:

- Principle of Development
- Impact on amenity
- Impact on the character and appearance of the area
- Other considerations

There is no objection from Environmental Health, and no representations have been received.

Recommendation

Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is acceptable.

Having regard to the development plan and all other material considerations, 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 and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive

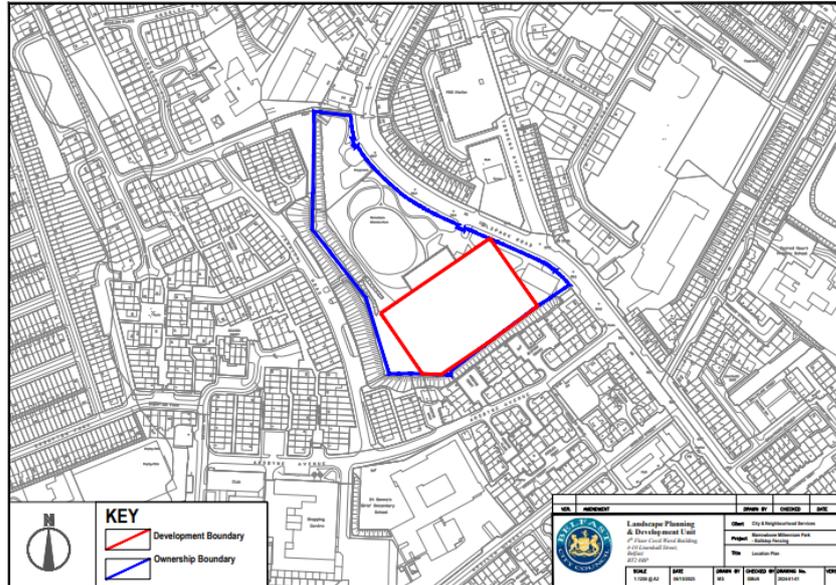
Officer Report

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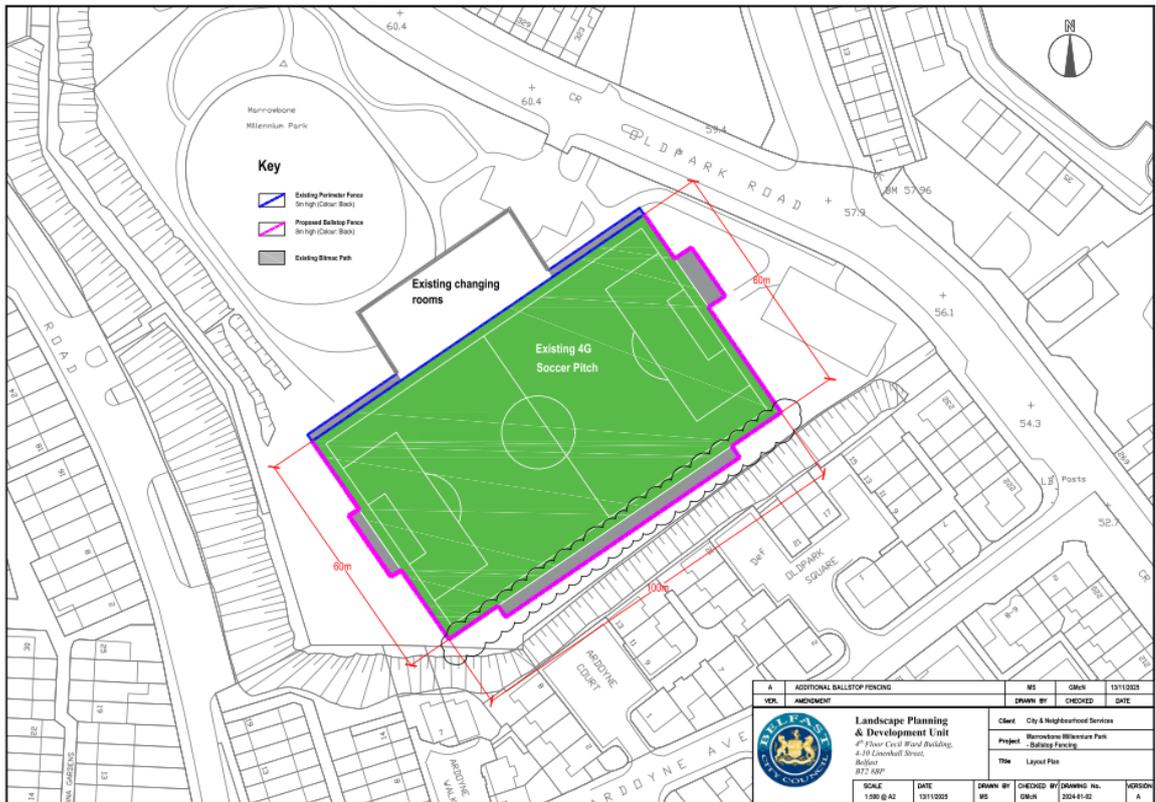
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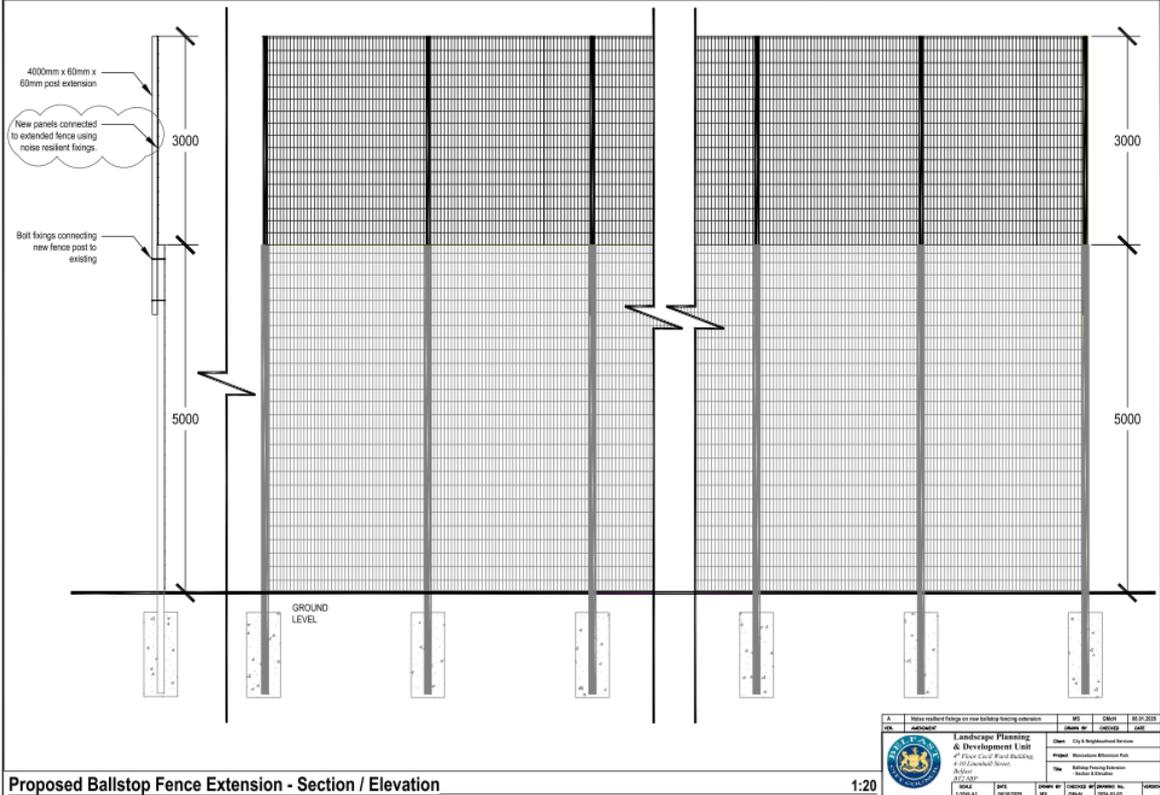
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Site Location



Block Plan



	<p>Proposed Elevations</p>  <p>Proposed Ballstop Fence Extension - Section / Elevation 1:20</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>A</td> <td>Missed noise flange on new ballstop fence extension</td> <td>MS</td> <td>CRUS</td> <td>16.10.2025</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UK</td> <td>LA04/2025</td> <td>Sheet No.</td> <td>001/025</td> <td>2/25</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="5"> Landscape Planning & Development Unit of Essex Council Rural Buildings, 4th Floor, Essex Council, Essex & Essex Essex Planning Department Essex, Essex </td> </tr> <tr> <td>DATE</td> <td>DATE</td> <td>DATE</td> <td>DATE</td> <td>DATE</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1/2025</td> <td>10/10/2025</td> <td>MS</td> <td>09/11/2025</td> <td>2025.10.01</td> </tr> </table>	A	Missed noise flange on new ballstop fence extension	MS	CRUS	16.10.2025	UK	LA04/2025	Sheet No.	001/025	2/25	Landscape Planning & Development Unit of Essex Council Rural Buildings, 4th Floor, Essex Council, Essex & Essex Essex Planning Department Essex, Essex					DATE	DATE	DATE	DATE	DATE	1/2025	10/10/2025	MS	09/11/2025	2025.10.01
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<p>2.0</p>	<p>Characteristics of the Site and Area</p>																									
<p>2.1</p> <p>2.2</p>	<p>The site is located within Marrowbone Millennium Park, off the Old Park Road. The playing fields are a council operated site which offer a 4G sport pitch and a multi-use games area. The site has been recently redeveloped under planning permission LA04/2020/1593/F. The site benefits from a wide range of community infrastructure, which includes a playground and outdoor gym facilities.</p> <p>The sports pitch is in close proximity to the pedestrian entrance. Changing rooms and outdoor seating area has been provided and backs onto the event space of Marrowbone Millennium Park.</p>																									
<p>3.0</p>	<p>Description of Proposal</p>																									
<p>3.1</p>	<p>The planning application is seeking permission for a new ball stop net system which faces onto three sides of the 4G pitch. The northern elevation has an existing 5m high Ball Stop fence</p>																									

4.0	Planning Policy and Other Material Considerations
4.1	Development Plan – Plan Strategy Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035
4.2	Policies in the Plan Strategy relevant to the application include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy GB1 - Green and Blue Infrastructure network. - Policy HC1 – Promoting Healthy Communities - Policy CI1 – Community Infrastructure - Policy TRE1 – Trees - Policy OS5- Intensive Sports Facilities
4.4	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)
4.5	Regional Planning Policy Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) Edition 2
4.6	Relevant Planning History LA04/2020/1593/F - Marrowbone Millennium Park Oldpark Road Belfast BT14 6QS. Refurbishment works to existing park, comprising: revised accesses from Jamaica Road and Old Park Road; extension of existing 3G pitch; refurbishment of existing flood lighting; a replacement 405m2 GFA changing pavilion incorporating community facilities and a shelter for up to 101 spectators; new MUGA; new multi-use community event space; new street furniture, outdoor gym equipment and park lighting; new inclusive/multi-age playground; new 2.4m boundary fencing; rationalisation of existing path network including resurfacing; new SUDS pond/wetland wildlife area; landscape interventions including planting, woodland management, entrance improvements and all associated works. Decision Approval Date: 09/08/2021.
5.0	Consultations and Representations
5.1	Non-Statutory Consultations Environmental Health – No objections subject to conditions.
5.2	No representations were received.
6.0	PLANNING ASSESSMENT
6.1	Development Plan Context
6.1.1	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.
6.1.2	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.
6.1.3	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.
6.1.4	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.).
6.1.5	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.
6.1.6	Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 - The site is located within the settlement development limit in the BUAP and is not zoned for any use.
6.1.7	Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (2004) - The site is located within the settlement development limit in the BUAP and is not zoned for any use.
6.1.8	Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014) - The site is located within the settlement development limit in the BUAP and is not zoned for any use.
6.2	<p>Key Issues</p> <p>The key issues to be considered as part of this assessment are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of Development • Impact on amenity • Impact on the character and appearance of the area • Other considerations
6.3	<p>Principle of Development</p> <p>The principle of open space / recreational development has already been established and is deemed acceptable at this location. The proposal retains the use as existing open space and supports the continued use as a pitch as per Policy OS1. The proposed ball stop system supports the continued use of the site as an intensive sports facility under Policy OS5. The principle of the development is acceptable subject to further considerations below.</p>
6.4	<p>Impact on Amenity</p> <p>The proposed ball stop net fencing is to the south, east and west sides of the pitch, which is closest in proximity to Old Park Square. These structures are 8m in height and 220m in length. It is considered that the separation distances to existing residential properties will assist in mitigating noise impacts. Officers consider that noise levels will not increase from the existing situation.</p>
6.5	Allowances under permitted development are also a significant consideration in relation to the pitch-side fencing. In summary, the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area, or landscape.

6.6	<p>Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area</p> <p>The proposal is incidental to an existing use within an area of open space. The proposed ball stop net fencing is considered appropriate for the operation this pitch. The design of these structures will result in limited visual impacts. Public views of the ball stop net fencing would largely be limited to near distance views from Marrowbone Millennium Park and the junction from old park road which splits into Torrens Avenue. It is also considered that the existing trees around the site periphery will filter views of structures and on balance, the proposal would not result in detrimental visual impacts.</p>
6.7	<p>Other Considerations</p> <p>The proposal would not cause any loss of existing trees and therefore complies with Policy TRE1.</p>
8.0	<p>Recommendation</p>
8.1	<p>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.</p>
8.2	<p>Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive.</p>
<p>DRAFT CONDITIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. The panels of the ball stop fencing hereby permitted must be securely fixed using noise resilient fittings, as shown in drawing from Landscape Planning & Development Unit, titled 'Ballstop Fencing Extension - Section & Elevation', drawing number 2024-01-03 Drawing no. 03A and dated 06/10/2025, with the noise resilient fittings to be maintained and retained thereafter. Reason: Protection of residential amenity 	

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