

Development Management Officer Report Committee Application

Summary	
Committee Meeting Date: 21 April 2026	
Application ID: LA04/2024/0852/F	
Proposal: Retention of change of use from warehouse and offices to public house (Linked to adjacent public house) and entertainment venue/events space including street food market for on premises consumption	Location: Common Market 16-20 Dunbar Street, Belfast, BT1 2LH
Referral Route: Application site includes right of way over BCC Land	
Recommendation: Approval subject to conditions	
Applicant Name and Address: Carlisle Inns Ltd Linenhall Exchange 1st Floor, 26 Linenhall Street Belfast BT2 8BQ	Agent Name and Address: Hadleigh Jess 1 Jordanstown Road Newtownabbey BT37 0QD
Date Valid: 03/06/24	
Target Date: 16/09/24	
Contact Officer: Lisa Walshe, Principal Planning Officer (Development Management)	
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>Full permission is sought for the retention of change of use from warehouse and offices to public house (Linked to adjacent public house) and entertainment venue/events space including street food market for on premises consumption.</p> <p>The key issues in assessment of the proposed development are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of public house and event space at this location • Impact on amenity • Impact on Conservation Area • Impact on Listed Building • Impact on traffic flow and parking • Impact existing wastewater infrastructure <p>The site is located within Belfast City Centre boundary and unzoned whiteland within both the BUAP and dBMAP.</p> <p>The proposal would constitute an appropriate city centre use which proposes minimal external changes and as such it would preserve the character and appearance of Cathedral Conservation Area. Subject to the proposed mitigation measures, it is not considered to adversely impact the amenity of neighbouring properties.</p>	

Historic Environment Division (HED), NI Water, DfI Roads and BCC Conservation Officer were consulted and have no objections, subject to conditions.

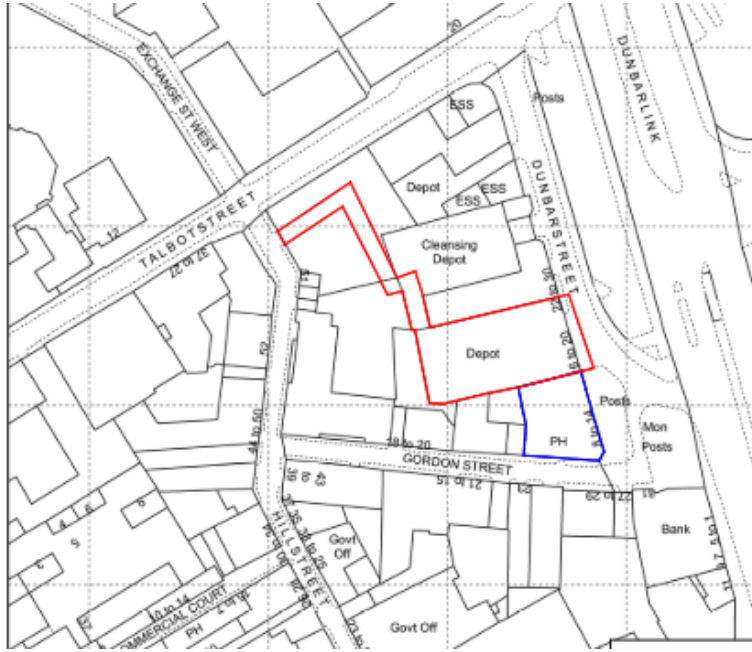
One representation has been received and is detailed in the appended report.

Having had regard to the development plan, relevant planning policies, and other material considerations, it is considered that the proposal should be approved subject to conditions. Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions.

Case Officer Report

1.0 Drawings

Site Location Plan



Proposed Elevations (retrospective)



SCHEDULE
Walls
White
Windows
Guttering

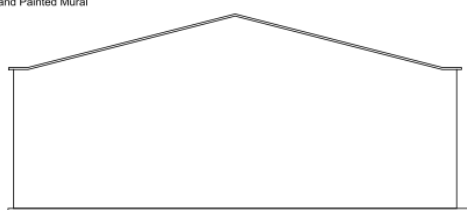
SIDE ELEVATION



SIDE ELEVATION

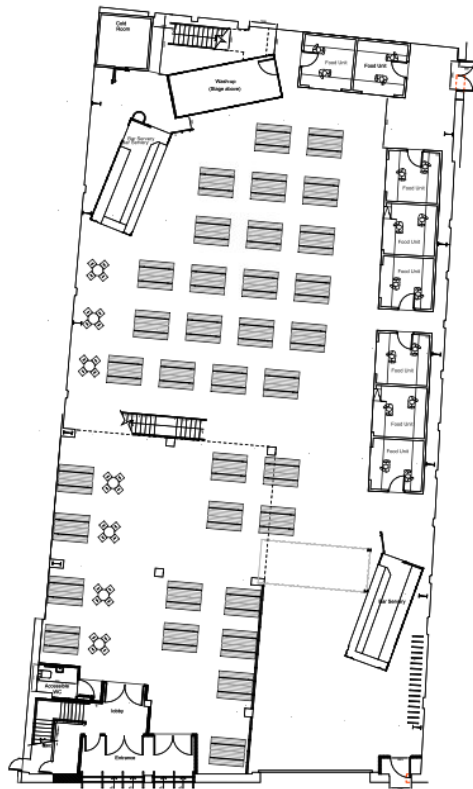


FRONT ELEVATION

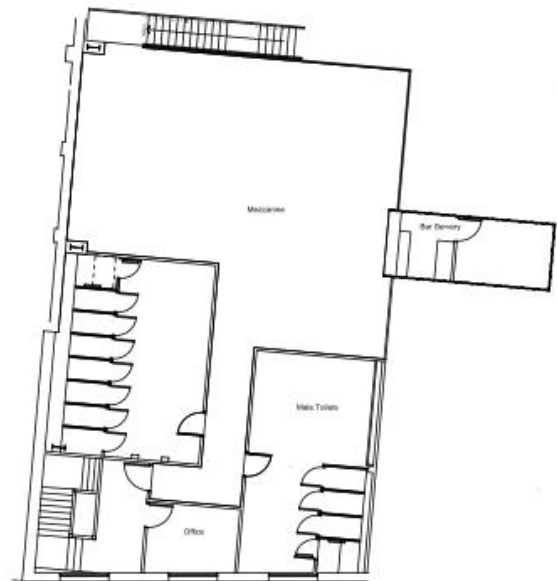


REAR ELEVATION

Floor Plans



Ground Floor Plan



First Floor Plan

2.0	Characteristics of Site and Area
2.1	The site is located at 16-20 Dunbar Street in Belfast City Centre. It consists of an 870sqm 2-storey warehouse building, currently occupied by the Common Market located in the old Arnott's fruit and veg wholesalers building. The area is mixed use with adjacent uses including a night club and a Belfast City Council cleansing depot.
2.2	There is a public parking area to the front of the building between Dunbar Street and Dunbar Link, beyond which lies Corporation Street. The site is within the Cathedral Conservation Area
3.0	Description of Proposed Development
3.1	Retention of change of use from warehouse and offices to public house (Linked to adjacent public house) and entertainment venue/events space including street food market for on premises consumption.
4.0	Planning History
4.1	LA04/2018/2903/F - 16-20 Dunbar Street, Belfast, BT1 2LH - Change of use of warehouse and offices to event space including internal and external alterations [amended site location plan to show fire escape route] – Granted temporary approval, 25 th February 2020. Expired.
4.2	LA04/2021/2095/F - 16-20 Dunbar Street, Belfast, BT1 2LH - Change of use of warehouse and offices to public house (linked to existing adjacent public house) and entertainment venue/events space including street food market for on premises consumption (part retrospective). Granted temporary approval 27 April 2022 for 2 years. Expired

5.0	Planning Policy and Other Material Considerations
5.1	<p>Development Plan – Plan Strategy Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy 2035</p> <p><i>Operational Policies</i> Policy RET1 – Establishing a centre hierachy Policy BH2 – Conservation areas Policy BH1 – Listed buildings Policy TRAN 1 - Active travel – walsking and cycling Policy TRAN 8 – Car parking and servicing arrangements</p> <p><i>Supplementry Planning Guidance</i> Evening Night-time Economy Sensitive uses</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)</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><u>Statutory Consultees</u></p> <p>DFI Roads – No objection, subject to conditions. NI Water – No objection . DFC Historic Environment Division (HED) – No objection.</p>
6.2	<p><u>Non-Statutory Consultees</u></p> <p>BCC Environmental Health – No objection, subject to conditions BCC Conservation Officer – no objection in principle.</p>
6.3	<p><u>Representations</u></p> <p>The application has been advertised in the press and neighbours notified. one third party representation has been received, objecting to the proposal. The points raised are summarised below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Noise in St Anne’s Square apartments <p>Consideration: Environmental Health have been consulted and have no concerns regarding noise. The apartments at St. Annes square are approximately 60 metres away from the side/rear of Common Market.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Re-consideration of licensing <p>Consideration : Licensing is a separate process dealt with by the Council’s Building Control department and is outside the remit of planning.</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). 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.
7.6	The site is within the development limit of Belfast as designated in both the BUAP 2001 and the draft BMAP 2015. The site falls within the Belfast City Centre boundary, Core Area of Parking Restraint, Cathedral Conservation Area and the Scotch and Cathedral Quarters Character Area in the draft BMAP.
8.0	Key Issues
8.1	The key issues for consideration of the application are set out below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principle of the proposal at this location • Impact on amenity • Impact on the character of the Cathedral Conservation Area • Impact on Listed Buildings • Traffic, Parking and Access • Impact existing wastewater infrastructure
8.2	<u>The principle of the proposal at this location</u> The proposed use generally falls within Class D1 Assembly and Leisure with respect to the entertainment / event space element whilst the public house / bar and hot food element is a sui generis use. As the site is not zoned for any specific use the proposal is not contrary to the development plan. These are considered as main town centre uses and therefore Policy RET1 is applicable which favours the city centre as the location for this use. The proposal is therefore compliant with this policy.

8.3	The application received temporary permission for 2 years via LA04/2018/2903/F, and again via LA04/2021/2095/F. The reasons given were to enable the Council to consider the development in light of the circumstances then prevailing. Temporary permissions were granted under previous policy context; the current application is assessed under the adopted Belfast Local Development Plan 2035.
8.4	The public house and hot food element of the proposal is classed as sui generis, whilst the entertainment venue/events space element would be classed as D2 Assembly and Leisure. The site is not zoned for a specific use and therefore, is not contrary to the development plan.
8.5	Paragraphs 4.11 – 4.12 of the SPPS consider the safeguarding of residential and work environments. It requires the planning system to consider all ways to minimise the potential adverse impacts such as noise/light pollution on sensitive receptors.
8.6	The surrounding land uses include a cleansing depot to the north and the associated public house immediately to the south and office developments. There is an apartment block approximately 40m to the west of the site on Hill Street, a Salvation Army Hostel approximately 70m south-east of the site on Victoria Street and the Encore Hotel and apartments at St. Anne’s approximately 80m north on Talbot Street. Given the mix of uses in the surrounding area, the proposed use of a public house, street food kitchen and entertainment/event space is considered to be acceptable subject to mitigating measures to protect the nearby residential uses.
8.7	The existing building does not exhibit any architectural features which warrant protection, the proposed external alterations are considered to be minor and acceptable.
8.8	<u>Impact on Amenity</u> The use has had temporary permissions since 2018 and 2021. The use was implemented in 2021.
8.9	The Council’s Environmental Health Team have been consulted regarding the proposal in terms of noise, air pollution, general amenity, ambient air quality, contaminated land and other considerations. Environmental Health has no objections to the proposal, subject to conditions.
8.10	An Odour Impact Assessment report was submitted with the application; the report notes that a high level of odour control is required at this site given the proximity to local sensitive receptors. Given the variety of food sold, it was not possible to group the premises into one food type so the worst-case scenario of ‘Very High’ was selected as a precaution. Environmental Health are satisfied that the Odour Impact Assessment resolves the issues relating to queries raised by their officers relating to the extract flues to the rear of the premises. The associated drawings showing both flues terminating 1m above the eaves of the main building permits an odour control strategy which may avail of a ‘high’ level of odour control.
8.11	A Noise Impact Assessment report was submitted with the proposal and concluded that the predicted noise levels of the venue were much lower than the existing levels recorded in the vicinity. The proposed noise impact assessment addressed the difference from the previous approval which was for ‘concerts and late-night dancing compared to the provision for background/mid-ground noise levels in the form of either recorded music/DJ or a small band/singer/performer for the current proposal. The report states that ‘entertainment will be at a level such that diners/patrons can maintain conversations whilst the music is playing.’

8.12	The temporary use granted via LA04/2021/2095/F has provided the Council with an evidence base from which to assess the impacts (if any) of the proposal. The use has operated under temporary permissions since 2021. During this period no substantive planning harms have arisen that would justify the cessation of the use.
8.13	The proposal is therefore considered to comply with paragraphs 4.11 – 4.12 of the SPPS, the Evening Night-time Economy SPG, and the Sensitive uses SPG.
8.14	<p><u>Impact on the Conservation Area</u></p> <p>The site sits within the Cathedral Conservation Area and as such, the Council's Conservation officer was consulted and advised that the building is of limited architectural and historical merit / significance to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The external changes are minimal and would have a limited impact on the conservation area in terms of the character and amenity of the area. Although the changes are minor, the Conservation officer has noted that it may be beneficial to seek timber frames for windows and aluminium doors for architectural unity within the conservation area and that the 'Arnotts' sign would be worthwhile keeping, to retain the historical link. It is noted that the 'Arnotts' has already been removed and replaced. Furthermore, the elevational treatment of the building is the same as that which was considered acceptable and approved under temporary planning permissions refs LA04/2018/2903/F and LA04/2021/2095/F, therefore it would be unreasonable to request these changes. Overall, the proposal is considered to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and is compliant with Policy BH2 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy.</p>
8.15	<p><u>Impact on Listed Buildings</u></p> <p>HED was consulted due to the proximity of the proposal to nearby listed buildings, including the Albert Clock, Northern Bank (Former Corn Exchange) 1-9 Victoria Street, and Head Line Building 10-14 Victoria Street. HED considered the impacts of the proposal on these listed building, including their settings, and based on the information provided advised that it is content with the proposals. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) paragraph 6.12 and Policy BH1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy.</p>
8.16	<p><u>Traffic, Parking and Access</u></p> <p>DfI Roads was consulted and offered no objection to the proposal subject to conditions. The site is in the city centre and is highly accessible by foot. The proposal complies with Policy TRAN1 and Policy TRAN8.</p>
8.17	<p><u>Impact existing wastewater infrastructure</u></p> <p>NI Water has been consulted and has no objections.</p>
8.18	<p><u>Temporary Permission</u></p> <p>This is the third successive planning application for this use at this location, the previous two being temporary. Consideration is therefore given to the fact that use has not resulted in any detrimental impact to amenity and is now established. It is therefore recommended that full permission is given on a permanent basis.</p>
8.19	<p><u>Advertisement / Signage</u></p> <p>The proposed elevation drawing is illustrated with an advertisement. This is not part of this proposal and will require a separate consent.</p>

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	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.
10.0	Draft Conditions
10.1	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.
10.2	Within one month of the date of this decision a Noise Mitigation Strategy shall be submitted to for approval in writing by the Council. The Noise Mitigation Strategy shall include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Façade noise insulation specification including the noise reduction specification of glazing and alternative ventilation to be installed to the facades of all ground floor commercial premises and upper floors; 2. Noise reduction specification of any proposed entrance doors to bars/restaurants on the ground floor; 3. Measures to be incorporated to the ground floor units to minimise music noise breakout from access / egress points; 4. Confirmation of the location of any proposed ground floor external smoking areas and measures for managing noise in these external areas; and 5. Demonstration of how the design, layout and structural insulation of the proposed ground floor uses will mitigate against noise breakout from patrons and music. <p>The development shall not be operated or occupied unless the Noise Mitigation Strategy has been implemented in accordance with the approved details and shall thereafter be retained as such at all times.</p> <p>Reason: To safeguard the amenity of occupants of the development. Approval is required upfront because the mitigation scheme may be integral to the overall design of the development.</p>
10.3	Within one month from the date of this decision a kitchen extraction and odour abatement system shall be installed to suppress and disperse odours created from catering 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 kitchen extraction and odour abatement system shall also be in accordance with section 3.0 of the associated Layde Consulting updated odour impact assessment entitled Change of Use of Warehouse and Offices to Public House, Entertainment Venue / Events Space Including Street Food Market for on Premises Consumption [LA04/2021/2095/F], Common Market, 16-20 Dunbar Street, Belfast, dated and referenced February 2025, P542/1. The outlet from any extract ventilation ducting shall terminate at a height not less than 1m above the main eaves in accordance with drawing number No 05B, published on the Planning Portal 21st October 2025). The installed kitchen extraction and odour abatement system must be retained and maintained thereafter.

10.4	<p>Reason: To safeguard the amenity of adjoining properties and the general locality.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure that any contamination within the site is appropriately dealt with, in the interests of human health.</p>
10.5	<p>Within one month of the decision, an Event / Venue Management Plan will be submitted to Belfast City Council for agreement in writing. The development shall operate in accordance with the approved Event / Venue Management Plan thereafter.</p> <p>Reason: Protection of human health and residential amenity.</p>