

Planning Committee

Development Management Report

Summary	
Application ID: Full: LA04/2026/0659/F & LBC: LA04/2026/0505/LBC	Committee Date: 16 th June 2026
Proposal: Full: Fenestration changes to include insertion of new windows at first floor level on north facing elevation and creation of new access door and new windows at ground floor level on north elevation. LBC: Fenestration changes to include insertion of new windows at first floor level on north facing elevation, creation of new access door and new windows at ground floor level on north elevation and internal alterations.	Location: 2 Royal Avenue, Belfast, BT1 1DA
Applicant Name and Address: Siobhan Daly Belfast City Council 9-21 Adelaide Street Belfast BT2 8DJ	Agent Name and Address: Duncan Jamieson Taggarts 23 Bedford Street Belfast BT2 7EJ
Referral Route: The application is made on lands to which the Council has an estate (as per the Scheme of Delegation paragraph 3.8.5 (d))	
Recommendation: Approval subject to condition.	
Date Valid: Full: 15/04/2026, LBC: 15/04/2026	
Target Date: 29 th July 2026	
Contact Officer: Ciara Reville, Principal Planning Officer (Development Management)	
<p>Summary of Issues:</p> <p>These applications seek planning permission and Listed Building Consent for the insertion of new windows at first floor level, creation of new access door and new windows at ground floor level and internal alterations and reconfiguration to accommodate a new internal layout.</p> <p>The site is located at 2 Royal Avenue, Belfast, BT1 1DA. It is a Grade B+ listed building (Historic Buildings Reference: HB26/50/106) which is situated in the City Centre Conservation Area. The property currently operates as a mixed-use community,</p>	

recreational, cultural, retail and café space. The wider area comprises mixed use commercial, retail, banks, offices and restaurant uses.

The key issues relevant to consideration of the application are:

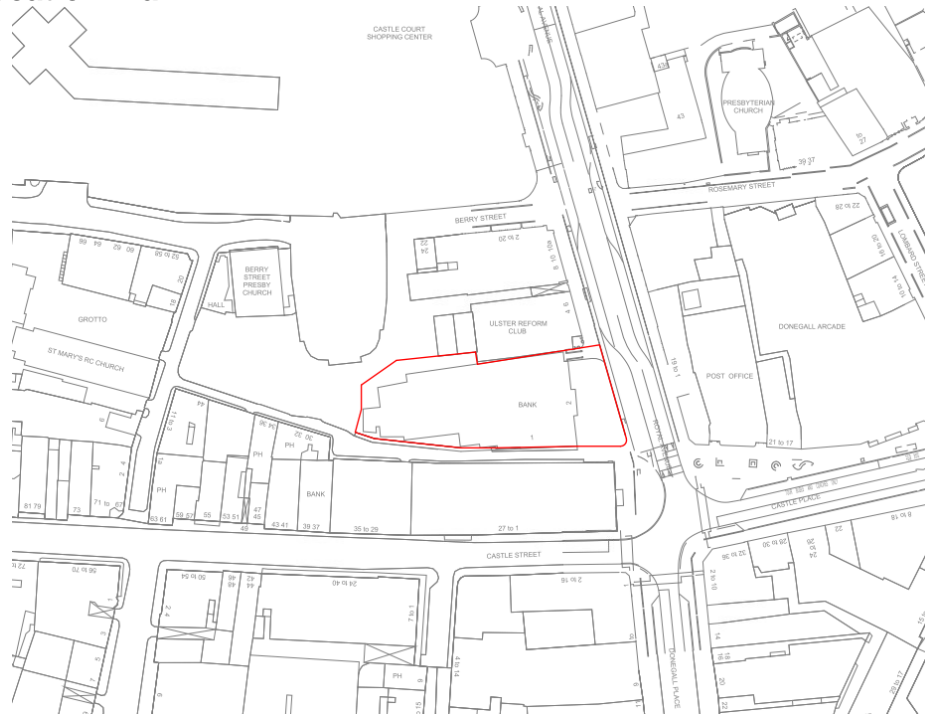
- Scale, massing & design
- Impact on amenity
- Impact on Listed Building
- Impact on conservation area
- Other considerations

Recommendation

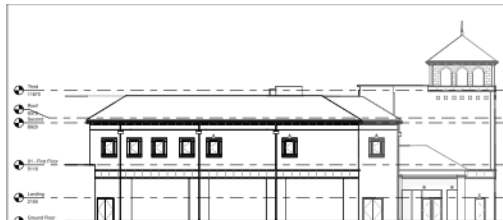
Having regard to the development plan, relevant planning policies, and other material considerations, it is considered that the proposed full planning application and listed building consent should be approved. Delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control is sought to finalise conditions, and deal with any other issues that arise, provided the issues are not substantive.

Main Report

Site Location Plan:



Proposed Elevations:



Proposed North Elevation
1:100

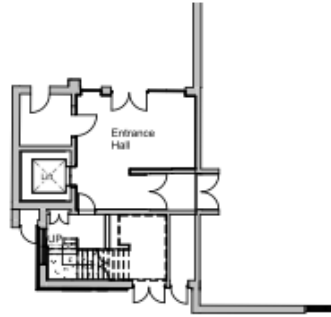


Proposed South Elevation
1:100



Proposed West Elevation
1:100

Proposed Floor Plans:



Proposed Ground Floor
1 : 150



Proposed First Floor
1 : 150

1.0 Characteristics of the site and area

1.1 The site is a Grade B+ Listed Building dating from 1864-69 and originally built for the Provincial Bank (Historic Buildings Reference HB26/50/106). The building is designed in an ornamented style with a painted sandstone façade. The building has a central bay that is set forward of the main body and contains arches, pillars and detailed mouldings. The building is set back from the established building line. It is also located in the City Centre Conservation Area, Primary Retail Core and Primary Retail Frontage.

1.2 The property currently operates as a mixed-use community, recreational cultural, retail and café space. The wider area comprises mixed use commercial, retail, banks, offices and restaurant uses.

2.0 PLANNING HISTORY

2.1 **Planning Reference:** LA04/2023/4101/F

	<p>Proposal: Change of use of the ground floor from A1 Retail to mixed-use community recreational and cultural space for multi-disciplinary uses, including small scale retail and café. Also change of use of the first floor from office use to a mix of office, community, recreational and cultural space to facilitate multi-disciplinary uses. Decision: Permission Granted 01/12/2023</p> <p>Planning Reference: LA04/2023/3787/LBC Proposal: Proposed demolition of lean-to external store. Decision: Permission Granted 06/09/2023</p> <p>Planning Reference: LA04/2022/2019/LBC Proposal: Proposed alterations to a listed building including provision of new structural opening with pedestrian entrance doors, roller shutters, improved boundary treatments and minor internal renovations. Decision: Permission Granted 08/03/2023</p> <p>Planning Reference: LA04/2022/2018/F Proposal: Proposed alterations to a listed building including provision of new structural opening with pedestrian entrance doors, roller shutters, improved boundary treatments and minor internal renovations. Decision: Permission Granted 08/03/2023</p> <p>Planning Reference: LA04/2021/2580/F Proposal: Temporary (2 years) change of use of the ground floor at the former Tesco Metro store on Royal Avenue Belfast from use class A1 to a community, recreational and cultural space to facilitate multi-disciplinary uses under use classes D1 (community and cultural uses) and D2 (assembly and leisure). Decision: Permission Granted 04/01/2022.</p>
<p>3.0</p> <p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p>	<p>PLANNING POLICY</p> <p>Development Plan – Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035</p> <p><i>Strategic Policies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy SP2 – Sustainable development • Policy SP3 – Improving health and wellbeing • Policy SP5 – Positive placemaking <p><i>Operational Policies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy BH1 – Listed buildings • Policy BH2 – Conservation areas • Policy DES1 – Principles of urban design • Policy RD2 – Residential extensions and alterations (<i>Policy BH2 Specifically references RD2</i>). <p>Supplementary Planning Guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Centre Conservation Area Design Guide <p>Development Plan – zoning, designations and proposals maps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) BUAP

3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) • Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014) <p>Regional Planning Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) • Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)
4.0	<p>CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS</p> <p><u>Consultations</u></p> <p>4.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DfC Historic Environment Division (HED) – No objection • DfI Roads – No objection • BCC Conservation advice – No objection <p><u>Representations</u></p> <p>4.2</p> <p>The Full application was advertised in the local press on 11/04/2026 and neighbour notified 21/04/2026. The LBC was advertised in the local press on 24/04/2026.</p> <p>4.3</p> <p>No representations were received on the application.</p>
5.0	<p>PLANNING ASSESSMENT</p> <p><u>Main issues</u></p> <p>5.1</p> <p>The main issues relevant to consideration of the application are set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scale, massing & design - Impact on amenity - Impact on Listed Building - Impact on conservation area - Other considerations <p><u>Development Plan Context</u></p> <p>5.2</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>5.3</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>5.4</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</p>

	<p>remain part of the statutory local development plan until the Local Policies Plan is adopted.</p>
	<p><u>Operational Policies</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 (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>
5.7	<p>The application site falls within the City Centre Conservation Area, Primary Retail Core and Primary Retail Frontage.</p>
6.0	<p><u>Assessment</u></p>
	<p><u>Scale, massing and design</u></p>
6.1	<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 by responding positively to local context and character and urban form that address matters such as height, scale massing, proportion and materials.</p>
6.2	<p>The windows proposed would take the same form as existing windows on the building at first floor level and would ensure a level of visual continuity to the building. The existing windows are aluminium powder coated casement style with raised profile cast stone surround, and the proposed windows would be of same material finish. The doors and windows to ground floor level, open into a service yard area and the proposed amended openings are consistent in height and scale with existing door openings to the building.</p>
6.3	<p>The proposal is considered to comply with Policies DES1 (design) and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>
	<p><u>Impact on amenity</u></p>
6.4	<p>Policy DES1 states that planning permission will be granted for new development that is of high-quality, sustainable design that makes a positive contribution to placemaking by ensuring no undue effect on the amenity of neighbouring properties or public spaces.</p>
6.5	<p>Paragraph 4.3.8 of the residential extensions and alterations SPG states that windows in side elevations all have potential to cause overlooking due to position and orientation. The windows to the elevation at first floor level would provide outlook onto an existing car park and are located on the same elevation that existing windows are located and face onto a car park.</p>

6.6	<p>The doors and windows at ground floor level face into a service yard area. In consideration of the above, there would be no overlooking over and above the existing situation. No private amenity space or public spaces will be overlooked by the any of the proposed works.</p>
6.7	<p>The proposal is considered to comply with Policies DES1 (design) and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>
	<p><u>Impact on listed building</u></p>
6.8	<p>Policy BH1 states that planning permission will be granted for the alteration and extension of a listed building where all the following criteria are met:</p> <p><i>f) The works preserve, restore and complement the building's features of special architectural or historical importance to ensure the existing building remains intact and unimpaired,</i> <i>g) The design respects the essential character of the existing building and/or setting,</i> <i>h) The proposal makes use of quality materials and appropriate detailing sympathetic with the existing building and/or setting; and</i></p>
6.9	<p>The proposed windows and doors and internal alterations are to be inserted on a rear return, which is a modern extension to the main listed building. It is considered that the proposed works preserve the building's features of special architectural interest, respects the character of the building and setting and the materials used are sympathetic to the listed building. The windows are consistent with the existing window fenestration to the building, and the door alterations respect the scale of existing door and access to the rear of the building. The internal alterations take the form of the removal and reconfiguration of internal walls to create new spaces. It is considered the proposed alterations respect the essential character of the building and are consistent with the use of the building.</p>
6.10	<p>In terms of the proposed demolition, Policy BH1 states that partial demolition of parts of listed buildings will be exceptional and only acceptable where an alteration or extension proposal has been agreed. The demolition taking place is minor and relates only to the provision of the windows and doors.</p>
6.11	<p>HED were consulted on the proposal and consider that the fenestrations changes are minor and are in keeping with the existing building which is a modern extension to the above-mentioned Listed Building.</p>
6.12	<p>The proposal is considered to comply with Policy BH1 (listed building) and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>
6.13	<p>In accordance with Section 91(2) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, special regard has been had to the desirability of preserving the setting of Listed Buildings. For the reasons noted above, the proposal would not result in the significant loss of key views of the listed buildings or have a detrimental impact on the listed building or setting of listed buildings. Furthermore, the nature of the use would respect the character of the setting of the buildings.</p> <p><u>Impact on the conservation area</u></p>

6.14	<p>Policy BH2 states that planning permission will only be given for alterations and extensions within conservation areas where the criteria of Policy RD2 are met and particular regard is given to the following relevant criteria:</p> <p><i>g) The proposal involves retention of and where possible reinstatement of traditional features, and</i></p> <p><i>h) 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.</i></p>
6.15	<p>The main building is retained and remodelled internally at ground and part of first floor level. Existing features in the form of the window fenestration are replicated in the provision of the new windows which are to be made of the same materials as noted above. These materials are considered sympathetic and are already found on the building.</p>
6.16	<p>In terms of the proposed demolition in conservation area, 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:</p> <p><i>i) It makes either a negative or no material contribution to the character and appearance of the area; and</i></p> <p><i>j) 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.</i></p>
6.17	<p>The works involve limited removal of a section of the rear return to the main listed building to accommodate new windows. It is not considered that the minor demolition would result in demonstrable harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area.</p>
6.18	<p>Belfast City Council Conservation advice was provided and offered no objection. Conservation advice stated that the proposal affects a later addition to the listed building so involves fabric of lesser significance, considered that the windows will provide some relief to blank sections of wall, the windows are consistent with the rest of the elevation, and noted no concerns with the new doors/access.</p>
6.19	<p>The proposal will preserve the established character and appearance of the City Centre Conservation Area, ensuring the form, scale and materials are sympathetic to the surrounding area. It will not detract from the important views, vista or setting of neighbouring listed buildings and will maintain visual integrity of the streetscape within the conservation area.</p>
6.20	<p>The proposal is considered to comply with Policy BH2 (conservation areas) and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>
6.21	<p>In accordance with Section 104(11) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and Para 6.19 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement, special regard has been had to the desirability of (a) preserving the character or appearance of the conservation area in cases where an opportunity for enhancing its character or appearance does not arise and (b) enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area in cases where</p>

6.22	<p>an opportunity to do so does arise. In this case, the proposal does not lend itself to enhancement of the conservation area, however for the reasons above its character and appearance would be preserved.</p> <p>Conclusion The proposal is considered acceptable having regard to Policies BH1 (Listed Buildings), BH2 (Conservation Areas), DES1 (Principles of urban design) of the Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy 2035; Sections 91(2) and 104(11) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011; the City Centre Conservation Area Guidance; paragraphs 6.18 and 6.19 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland 2015; and taking account of all relevant material considerations.</p>
7.0	<p>Summary of Recommendation</p> <p>7.1 Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is approved and listed building consent is granted.</p> <p>7.2 Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise conditions and deal with any other matters which may arise, provided the issues are not substantive.</p>
8.0	<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>