

## Development Management Officer Report Committee Application

<b>Summary</b>	
<b>Application ID:</b> LA04/2025/1651/F & LA04/2026/0855/DCA	<b>Committee Meeting Date:</b> 16th June 2026
<b>Proposal:</b> Retention, conversion, refurbishment and change of use of existing office building (Class A2) and 2 no. vacant retails units (Class A1) to hotel accommodation and associated facilities and café (sui generis) and extension of 5th floor (30no. hotel bedrooms in total).	<b>Location:</b> 20 Rosemary Street, Belfast, BT1 1QD
<b>Referral Route:</b> 3.8.2 (a) (vii) of Planning Scheme of Delegation: Hotel development.	
<b>Recommendation:</b> Approval	
<b>Applicant Name and Address:</b> Rosemary Street Limited 8 Demesne Park Holywood BT18 9NE	<b>Agent Name and Address:</b> John Bronte Turley Hamilton House 3 Joy Street Belfast BT2 8LE
<b>Date Valid:</b> 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2025	
<b>Target Date:</b> 13 <sup>th</sup> January 2026	
<b>Contact Officer:</b> Ciara Reville, Principal Planning Officer (Development Management)	
<p><b>Executive Summary:</b></p> <p>This application proposes the retention, conversion, refurbishment and change of use of existing office building (Class A2) and 2 no. vacant retails units (Class A1) to hotel accommodation and associated facilities and café (sui generis) and extension of 5th floor (30no. hotel bedrooms in total).</p> <p>The key issues are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The principle of a hotel at this location;</li> <li>• Scale, Massing and Design;</li> <li>• Impact on Built Heritage;</li> <li>• Traffic and Road Safety;</li> <li>• Human health/Environmental Considerations;</li> <li>• Flooding and Drainage;</li> <li>• Economic Considerations;</li> <li>• Environment &amp; Communit.</li> </ul> <p>The application has been advertised and neighbours notified. The Council has received no objections.</p> <p><b>Recommendation</b></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 conditions</p>	

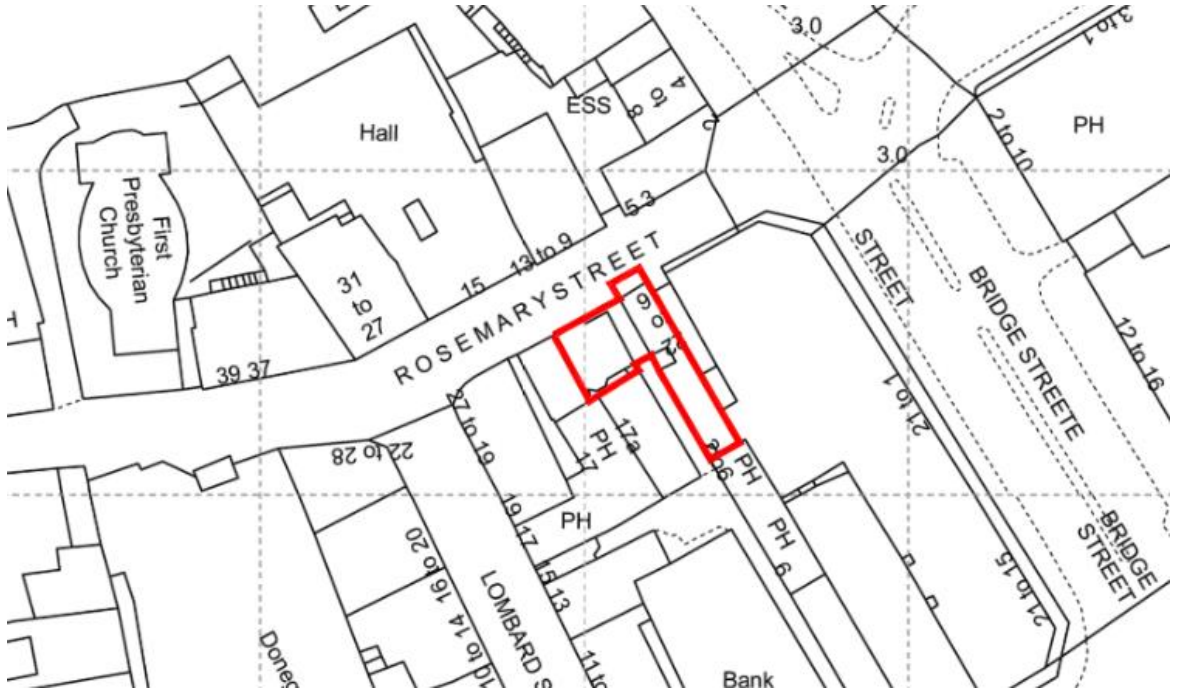
and deal with any issues arising from the outstanding information requested by NIW and SES by way of condition if necessary.

## Officer Report

1.0

### Drawings

#### Site Location Plan



#### Proposed Elevation



PROPOSED NORTH ELEVATION 1:100

2.0

### Characteristics of the Site and Area

2.1	The site is situated on Rosemary Street, just off Royal Avenue and is within the city's commercial core. The site falls within the city centre conservation area.
2.2	The building is sited in a distinct 'L shape' arrangement presenting as four storeys at its northern elevation to Rosemary Street with a stepped back 5th floor which is of a reduced footprint and comprises plant and storage space. In terms of material treatment, the building is of masonry construction with a rendered base and redbrick finish to the upper floors.
2.3	The established built context is mixed-use in character, with buildings of various scale, form and material treatment; characteristic of the site's location within the Belfast City Centre Conservation Area. The site is bound to the south, west and east by a number of retail and sui generis land uses including public houses, a betting office, cafes and restaurants.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Description of Proposal</b>
3.1	This application proposes the retention, conversion, refurbishment and change of use of existing office building (Class A2) and 2 no. vacant retail units (Class A1) to hotel accommodation and associated facilities and café (sui generis) and extension of 5th floor (30no. hotel bedrooms in total).
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Planning Policy and Other Material Considerations</b>
4.1	<b>Development Plan – operational policies</b> Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035
4.2	<b>Development Plan – zoning, designations and proposals maps</b> Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) BUAP Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014)
4.3	<b>Regional Planning Policy</b> Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)
4.4	<b>Other Policies</b> Developer Contribution Framework (BCC) Belfast Agenda Creating Places (DfI)
4.5	<b>Relevant Planning History</b> - None
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Consultations and Representations</b>
5.1	<b>Statutory Consultations</b> DfI Roads – No objection subject to conditions DfI Rivers – Content NI Water – <i>Refusal</i> NIEA WMU – Content Historic Environment Division – Content Shared Environmental Services - <i>Further information requested</i>
5.2	<b>Non-Statutory Consultations</b> BCC Environmental Health – Content subject to conditions BCC Conservation Advice – No objection.
5.3	<b>Representations</b>

	The application has been advertised and neighbours notified. The Council has received no objections.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>PLANNING ASSESSMENT</b>
	<b>Development Plan Context</b>
6.1	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.
6.2	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.
6.3	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.
6.4	Operational policies – the Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application. These are listed in the report.
6.5	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 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.
	<b>Relevant Planning Policies</b>
6.6	The following policies in the Plan Strategy are relevant to consideration of the application. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy DES1 – Principles of urban design</li> <li>• Policy TRAN1 – Active Travel</li> <li>• Policy TRAN2 – Creating an accessible environment</li> <li>• Policy TRAN4 – Travel Plan</li> <li>• Policy TRAN8 – Car parking and servicing arrangements</li> <li>• Policy ENV1 – Environmental quality</li> <li>• Policy ENV2 – Mitigating environmental change</li> <li>• Policy ENV3 – Adapting to environmental change</li> <li>• Policy ENV4 - Flood Risk</li> <li>• Policy ENV5 – SuDS</li> <li>• Policy BH1 – Listed Buildings</li> <li>• Policy BH2 – Conservation Areas</li> <li>• Policy TLC1 - Supporting tourism, leisure and cultural development</li> <li>• Policy TLC3 – Overnight visitor accommodation</li> <li>• Policy TLC4 – Evening and night-time economy</li> </ul>

6.7	<p><b>Key Issues</b></p> <p>The key issues are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principle of development</li> <li>• Design</li> <li>• Impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area</li> <li>• Impact on the setting of listed assets</li> <li>• Noise, odour and other environmental impacts</li> <li>• Access and parking</li> <li>• Climate change</li> <li>• Drainage and Waste-Water Infrastructure</li> </ul>
6.8	<p><b><u>Principle of development</u></b></p> <p>The SPPS advises that planning permission ought to be granted for sustainable development that accords with the area plan and causes no harm to areas of acknowledged importance. The proposal relates to a change of use from offices to a hotel including an extension to the existing building. The SPPS refers to tourism infrastructure provision within paragraphs 6.251 - 6.266. The SPPS aims to facilitate sustainable tourism development in an environmentally sensitive manner, contribute to the growth of the regional economy by facilitating tourism growth and utilise and develop the tourism potential of settlements by facilitating tourism development of an appropriate nature, location and scale. It is noted that the tourism objectives of the SPPS also correlate with the Belfast Agenda which seeks to improve the provision of appropriate tourism infrastructure of various types to maximise the tourism potential of the city.</p>
6.9	<p>In consideration of the Plan Strategy the principle of hotel use within the city centre boundary is acceptable and in line with Policy TLC3 of the Plan Strategy which states planning permission will be granted for development proposals for new overnight visitor accommodation within the city centre boundary.</p>
	<p><b><u>The impact of the proposal on the City Centre Conservation Area and surrounding listed assets.</u></b></p>
6.10	<p>The application site is located within the City Centre Conservation area. The proposed development has been sensitively designed with a sympathetic palette of materials. The proposed development respects the built form of the area by way of height, scale, form, legibility and detailing, with the extension to the fifth floor limited to the infilling of space which does not exceed the height of the existing building.</p>
6.11	<p>The proposed development will respond positively to its local context and re-animate Rosemary Street through the retention and conversion of a vacant building in the city centre and the introduction of active ground floor frontage, ensuring vibrancy throughout the day in accordance with the requirements of Policy DES1.</p>
6.12	<p>The proposed demolition is considered to be acceptable. Minor elevational details with no historic value are to be demolished. Therefore, the demolition would comply with Policy BH2.</p>
6.13	<p>BCC conservation have been consulted and have offered no broad objection to the minor demolition or the proposed scheme. Conservation advice did indicate that it would be preferable if the middle portion of the elevation was limited to one facing material, rather than the three proposed and a more traditional façade was proposed, rather than the syncopated arrangement of openings within the central section. Notwithstanding these comments, consideration has been given to the existing building on site to which similar</p>

	<p>comments can be applied. The existing building includes a large plinth at ground floor level, with red brick and curtain walling in the central section.</p>
6.14	<p>HED have been consulted and have identified a number of nearby listed assets that are deemed to be impacted by the application. However, they have concluded that the proposal would have no impact on the setting of listed building/assets subject to a condition. Therefore, compliant with Policy BH1.</p> <p><b><u>The impact on the amenity of adjacent land users</u></b></p>
6.15	<p>The site is located within the commercial core bounded by a number of retail and sui generis land uses including public houses, a betting office, cafes and restaurants. It is not considered that the proposed use would have a negative impact on adjacent land uses.</p>
6.16	<p>A number of supporting documents have been submitted in support of the proposal, including a Noise Impact Assessment and Odour Impact Assessment. BCC Environmental Health (EHO) have provided comments and are content that the proposal will not have an unacceptable adverse impact in terms of odour or noise subject to appropriate conditions.</p>
6.17	<p>There are also no concerns in relation to overlooking, overshadowing or natural light. Therefore, compliant with Policy DES1 – Principles of Urban Design.</p>
6.18	<p>In accordance with Policies EC1, TLC1 and TLC4, the proposed development will support the growth of the tourism and hospitality sector in the city, help grow the evening/night-time economy and contribute to the supply of overnight visitor accommodation. Under Policy TLC3 planning permission will be granted for development proposals for new overnight visitor accommodation within the city centre.</p> <p><b><u>Climate change</u></b></p>
6.19	<p>The proposal is for the refurbishment of an existing building and therefore avoids full demolition in compliance with policy ENV2.</p>
6.20	<p>With regards to adapting to environmental change (ENV3) and incorporating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) (ENV5), the submitted plan strategy statement states that materials have been selected to reduce overheating and therefore reducing the reliance on air conditioning systems along with the inclusion of an indirect rainwater harvesting system in order to supply recycled water to the WC systems. Rainwater will be collected in an underground storage tank via a leaf filter. It will then be pumped to a break tank in order to supply WCs.</p>
6.21	<p>In relation to flood risk (ENV4), the application falls within the 1 in 200 year climate change coastal flood plain. Planning has considered this application an exception, as the proposal involves the re-use of an existing building. DFI Rivers have been consulted with a submitted flood risk assessment and are content with the proposal.</p>
6.22	<p>With regards to environmental policies, it is considered that the proposal is compliant with policy EN1, ENV2, ENV3 and ENV5.</p> <p><b><u>Access, movement, and parking</u></b></p>
6.23	<p>The Transport Assessment Form (TAF) submitted with the application indicates that there will be minimal parking demand with the proposal, resulting in limiting vehicle trips to the city. The proposal also promotes sustainable development through encouraging other active modes of transport. DFI Roads have been consulted and have provided no objection</p>

	with regards to access and transport details. A Travel Plan and Service Management Plan were provided to the satisfaction of DFI Roads.
6.24	<p><b><u>Sewage Infrastructure</u></b></p> <p>NI Water (NIW) were consulted and have recommended refusal of the proposal due to insufficient capacity at Belfast WWTW and associated sewer network. NIW have advised there are network capacity issues, resulting in risks to the environment and existing properties. NIW have outlined that the applicant will need to submit an application to NIW for a Wastewater Impact Assessment (WWIA). NIW will assess the proposal to see if an alternative drainage or treatment solution can be agreed.</p>
6.25	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.
6.26	As the proposal would result in clear intensification of the use of the land, the Council has consulted Shared Environmental Services (SES) to assist its consideration of the Habitats Regulations (HRA). SES advises that further information is required to inform the HRA and requires confirmation that a Wastewater Impact Assessment (WWIA) has been agreed by NI Water (in order that the HRA can ascertain the absence of adverse effects on any European site arising during the operational phase of the project). Should the WWIA require an engineering solution to overcome the constraint, SES advise that full details of the agreed solution including the design drawings are required to progress the HRA. This is required in order to assess any significant effects on European designated sites arising during the works required to implement the engineering solution.
6.27	It is recognised that a HRA cannot be completed at this time and therefore delegated authority is requested for officers to deal with the outstanding information and to re-consult with SES to ensure there will be no impact on any designated European site.
6.28	DAERA has been consulted and is concerned that the sewage loading associated with the proposal has the potential to cause adverse environmental impact.
6.29	Given NIW have advised a potential solution exists, it is considered the proposal has the potential to comply with policy NH1 and paras 6.176 and 6.177 of the SPPS. However, the Council is unable to make a definitive assessment until completion of the WWIA, and by extension, completion of the HRA by SES.
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
7.1	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.
7.2	Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise conditions, deal with any issues arising from the outstanding information requested by NIW and SES and deal with any other matters which may arise.
<b>DRAFT CONDITIONS for LA04/2025/1651/F:</b>	

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. Prior to the commencement of operation of the restaurant kitchen serving the hereby approved hotel a kitchen extraction and odour abatement system shall be installed to suppress and disperse odours created from operations on the premises which achieves a 'very 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) and as deemed necessary in the AONA November 2025 Odour Impact Assessment, report ref:ENV9228. The outlet from any extract ventilation ducting shall terminate at a height not less than 1m above the main eaves of the 5th floor roof at a minimum discharge velocity of 15m/sec.

Reason: Protection of nearby amenity.

3. The installed kitchen extraction and odour abatement system must be retained and maintained thereafter.

Reason: Protection of nearby amenity.

4. 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 (dBLA90,T) 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 against adverse noise impact.

5. 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.

6. Notwithstanding the submitted details, the following external features shall not be installed, implemented or carried out unless in accordance with further details which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.

Gable Wall (West) and Proposed Fifth Floor

The details of these external features shall include the following:

- Proposed finishes (Material and colour)

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

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

7. The development shall operate in accordance with the Service Management Plan.

Reason: In the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users.

8. The development shall operate in accordance with the Travel Plan.

Reason: To encourage alternative modes of transport to the private car.

**DRAFT INFORMATIVES:**

1. This Full Application is linked to DCA, reference LA04/2026/0855/DCA
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](mailto:planning@belfastcity.gov.uk).
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, consents or permissions under other legislation or protocols. The requirement for other 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.

**DRAFT CONDITIONS for LA04/2026/0855/DCA:**

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 relates only to the walls / structures highlighted in blue on approved drawing numbers 08 and 09 uploaded to the Planning Register on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2026 and to no other part of the building or buildings on site.

Reason: In the interests of the preservation of the City Centre Conservation Area.

**DRAFT INFORMATIVES:**

This Demolition Consent Application is linked to the Full Application: LA04/2025/1651/F

<b>ANNEX 1 – LA04/2025/1651/F</b>	
<b>Date Valid</b>	30/09/2025
<b>Date First Advertised</b>	21/11/2025
<b>Date Last Advertised</b>	21/11/2025

<b>ANNEX 1 – LA04/2026/0855/DCA</b>	
<b>Date Valid</b>	08/05/2026
<b>Date First Advertised</b>	22/05/2026
<b>Date Last Advertised</b>	22/05/2026