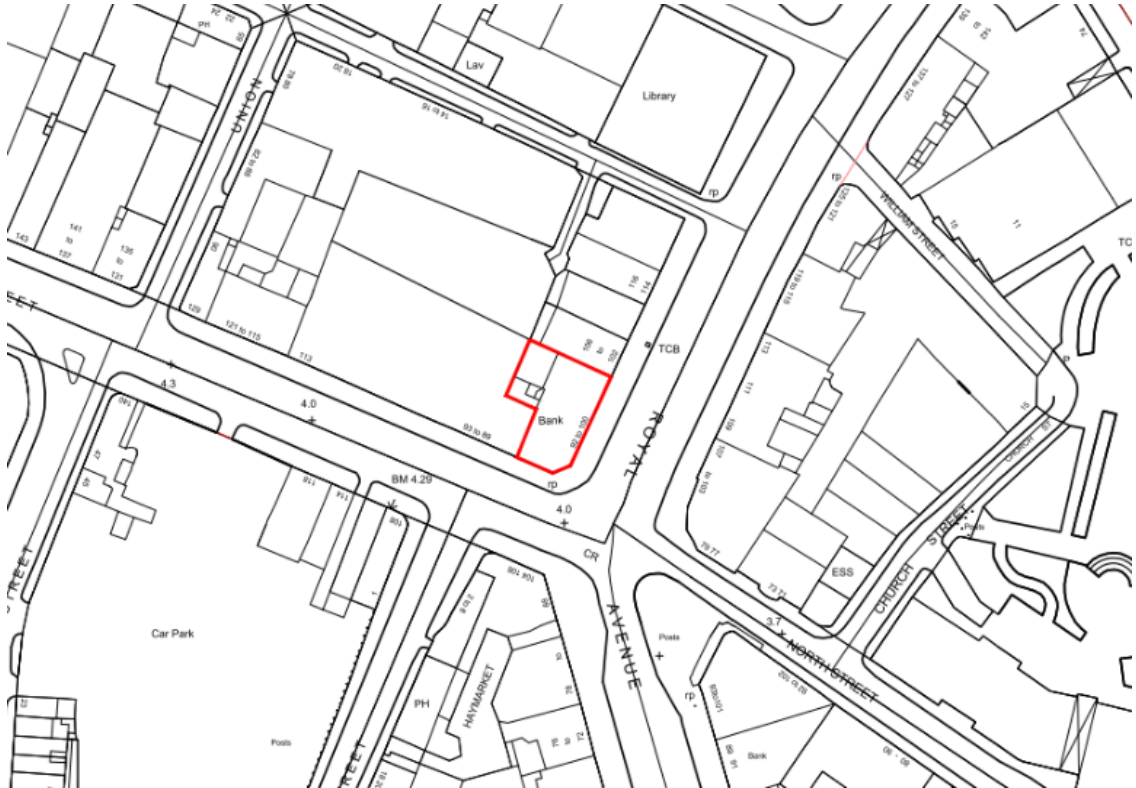


Committee Application

Development Management Officer Report	
Committee Date: 18 th August 2026	
Application ID: LA04/2026/0928/LBC	
Proposal: Building fabric investigation works prior to restoration	Location: Bank Of Ireland Buildings, 92-100 Royal Avenue, Belfast, BT1 1DL
Applicant Name and Address: Martin Doherty Belfast City Council 9 Adelaide Street Belfast BT2 8DJ	Agent Name and Address: Martin Doherty Belfast City Council 9 Adelaide Street Belfast BT2 8DJ
Referral Route: The application is made by Belfast City Council on lands to which the Council has an estate (paragraphs 3.8.5 (c) and (d) of the Scheme of Delegation)	
Recommendation	Approval
Date Valid:	20 th May 2026
Target Date:	2 nd September 2026
Contact Officer:	Niall Hasson
Summary of Issues: The application seeks Listed Building Consent for building fabric investigation works prior to proposed restoration. The building is part of the wider 'Belfast Stories' redevelopment project. The application building, known as Bank of Ireland Building, is Grade B+ listed (ref. HB26/50/187). The site is located within Belfast City Centre, on the corner of Royal Avenue and North Street. The key issues relevant to consideration of the application is the impact of the proposed works on the architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building. DFC Historic Environment Division (HED) is content that the investigative works are acceptable in order to provide a sustainable future for the building. The proposed works are considered compliant with Policy BH1 of the Plan Strategy. No third party representations have been made on the application. Recommendation Having regard to the development plan, relevant planning policies, and other material considerations, it is considered that 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 that they are not substantive.	

Main Report

Site location plan:



Existing street view:



1.0	Description of the Site and Proposal <i>Characteristics of the Site and Area:</i> 1.1 The application building, known as Bank of Ireland Building, is Grade B+ listed (ref. HB26/50/187). The building is a five-storey Art Deco structure featuring a steel frame and Portland limestone cladding with a tiered clock tower, originally built in 1930. 1.2 The site is located within Belfast city centre, on the corner of Royal Avenue and North Street. 1.3 The surrounding area is characterised primarily by commercial uses. The site is bounded on the northern side by an existing building, with the land to the west of the site vacant. The lands to the east and south are defined by the existing street and footpath network. <i>Description of the proposal:</i> 1.4 The application seeks Listed Building Consent for building fabric investigation works prior to proposed restoration. The building is part of the wider 'Belfast Stories' redevelopment project, which has been subject to a Proposal of Application Notice (LA04/2025/1881/PAN) and currently subject to a Pre-Application Discussion (PAD).
2.0	RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY 2.1 LA04/2025/1881/PAN - Erection of a new building to house the Belfast Stories visitor attraction and creative hub, including new internal and external public spaces – PAN acceptable. 2.2 LA04/2025/1616/LBC - Temporary protective netting to existing building – Consent granted 2.3 LA04/2017/0983/LBC - Holding repairs and temporary works – Consent granted 2.4 LA04/2017/0984/F - Repairs and alterations to the elevations and erection of hoarding – Permission granted 2.5 Z/2004/2064/F & Z/2004/2063/LB - Refurbishment of existing building including extension to rear. Reduction of ground floor level, removal of steps at entrance and reduction of cill heights to front elevation – Permission & Consent granted
3.0	PLANNING POLICY 3.1 Development Plan – Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035 <i>Operational Policies:</i> • Policy BH1 – Listed Buildings

	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) Regional Planning Policy Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)
4.0	CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS
4.1	Department for Communities Historic Environment Division (HED) was consulted on the proposal. HED offer no objection to the works.
4.2	The application has been advertised in local press (5/6/2026) and no representations have been received.
5.0	PLANNING ASSESSMENT <u>Development Plan Context</u> 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 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> 5.3 The Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application. These are listed at paragraph 3.1. <u>Proposals Maps</u> 5.4 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. The application site is undesignated white land within all relevant plans.

	Impact on the architectural and historic qualities of the listed building
5.5	Section 91 (2) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 states: <i>'the Department 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>
5.6	Policy BH1 of the Plan Strategy provides policy for the extension or alteration of a listed building and four criteria are to be met which are: 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; g. The design respects the essential character of the existing building and/or setting; h. The proposal makes use of quality materials and appropriate detailing sympathetic with the existing building and/or setting; and i. In the case of extensions, they shall be subservient to the existing building with regard to height, scale, massing, form and alignment;
5.7	Policy BH1 goes on to state that there will be a presumption in favour of retaining listed buildings. Partial demolition of parts of listed buildings will be wholly exceptional and only acceptable where an alteration or extension proposal has been agreed and that demolition is required to facilitate it. The Strategic Planning Policy Statement essentially repeats this policy approach.
5.8	The application does not involve demolition of the building, with the proposal including the following building fabric investigation works prior to restoration of the building: - Inspection of rainwater drainage system. - Monitoring / investigation of building cracks. - Survey of facades and features - Inspection to determine cause of water ingress - Investigation of roof slab thickening - Investigation to confirm support of north masonry wall - Investigation of existing shaft - Investigation of party wall for condition - Inspection of walls and beam
5.9	HED is content that the investigative works are acceptable to provide a sustainable future for the building, subject to a condition relating to any new external and internal works matching the existing building.
5.10	The proposed investigative works preserve, restore and complement the Listed Building's features of special architectural or historical importance to ensure the existing building remains intact and unimpaired. The design respects the essential character of the Listed Building and its setting
5.11	In accordance with Section 91(2) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, the Council has had special regard to the desirability of preserving the Listed Building and its features of special architectural or historic interest.
5.12	It is considered that the proposal accords with Policy BH1 and the SPPS.

6.0	Recommendation
6.1	Having regard to the development plan, relevant planning policies, and other material considerations, it is considered that consent should be approved.
6.2	Delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control is sought to finalise conditions and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive.
	DRAFT CONDITIONS 1. The works hereby permitted shall be begun not later than the expiration of 5 years beginning with the date on which this consent is granted. Reason: As required by Section 94 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. 2. Unless otherwise specified on the approved drawings, all new external and internal works and any works of making good shall match the existing original fabric in respect of matching materials, form, composition and finish. Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.