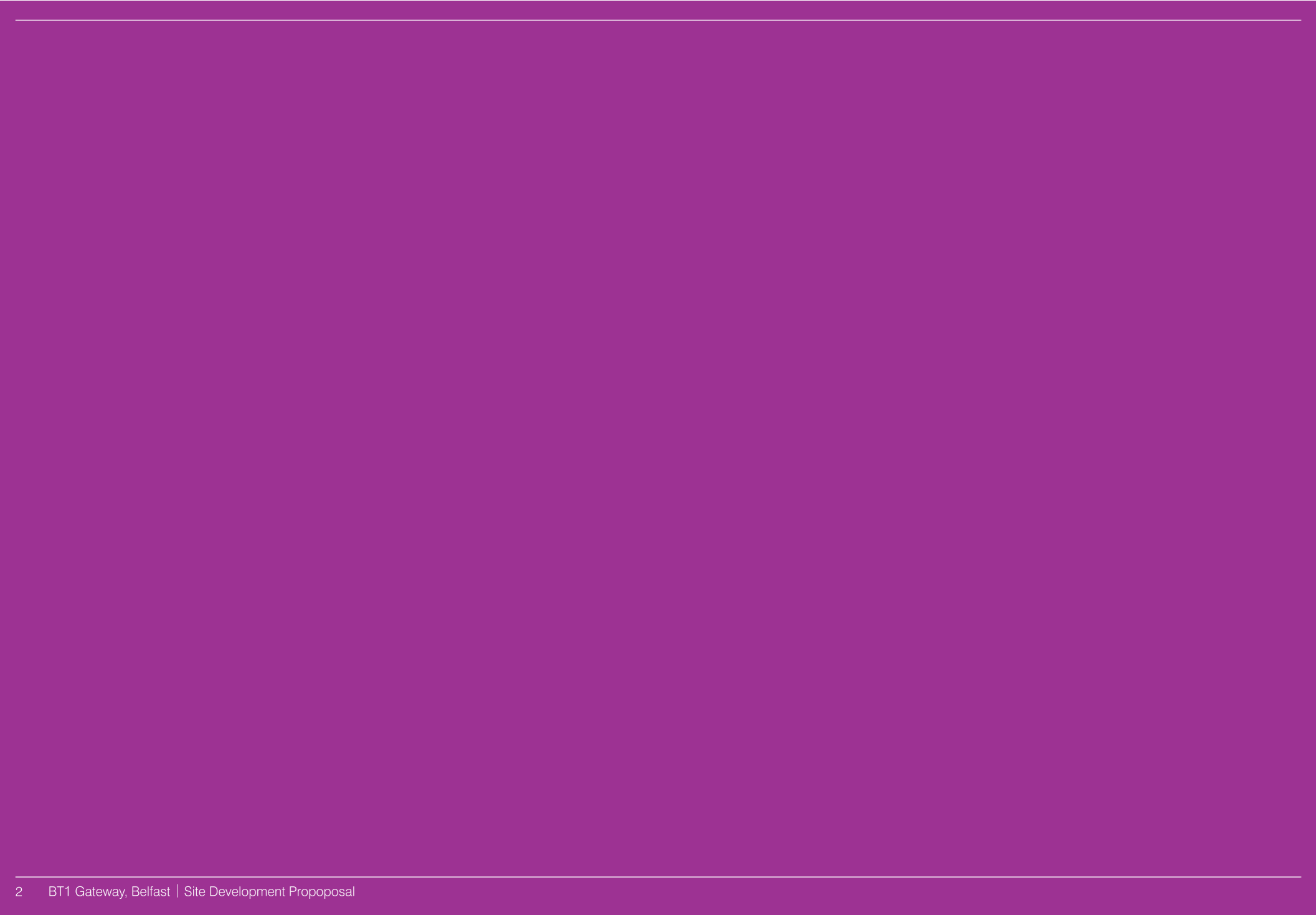

BT1 Gateway
Belfast
Site Development Proposal



Department for
**Social
Development**
www.dsdni.gov.uk





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Introduction

The Department for Social Development (DSD) is seeking public comment on its regeneration proposals for a key gateway site to Belfast city centre, referred to as “BT1 Gateway”. The BT1 Gateway site is located at the junction of Carrick Hill and North Street and is of strategic importance in linking the communities of North & West Belfast and the city centre. It also serves as a prominent gateway to the city centre’s Northside.

In 2010 DSD appointed a consultant team led by Drivers Jonas Deloitte and comprising Benoy Architects and Peter Brett Associates (transport consultants) to develop a regeneration proposal for the BT1 Gateway site, which could then be promoted to potential development partners.

This document provides an overview of the policy basis, design process and transport assessment which underpinned the option development exercise, as well as detailing DSD’s proposed next steps for implementing the scheme.



DSD’s Remit

DSD’s policy objective for regeneration, in pursuance of the Department’s statutory authority, is to promote and implement a comprehensive approach to tackling social, economic and physical regeneration and redressing disadvantage in cities and towns across Northern Ireland.

DSD’s statutory regeneration authority derives from: Part VII of the Planning (NI) Order 1991 (as amended by the Planning (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, Article 31), which provides the legislative basis for comprehensive development schemes, land acquisition and disposal of land, and the extinguishment of public rights of way; and the Social Need (NI) Order 1986, which provides the statutory basis for granting financial assistance to projects in areas of special social need and undertaking environmental improvement schemes.

The statutory powers referred to above are exercised in the public interest by DSD to assist in the assembly and vesting of lands for the purpose of comprehensive development. DSD’s powers are exercised in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998. In exercising its powers, the Department also has a duty to promote equality of opportunity as required by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and to give regard to the Northern Ireland Executive’s New TSN objectives in relation to combating unemployment and increasing employability. The Department also gives regard to other Northern Ireland Executive policies that are relevant to the exercise of DSD’s statutory authority.

DSD therefore plays a major role in promoting regeneration within Belfast and in recent years has overseen the development of Victoria Square, Donegall Quay and Lanyon Place, as well as publishing masterplans for the Westside and Northside areas of the city centre. DSD is currently working with Leaside Investments Limited in promoting the retail led Royal Exchange development, as well as preparing plans for Library Square in Belfast’s Northside and Queens Quay.

DSD Policy Context

The BT1 Gateway is in a key location between the Shankill Cultural Quarter and the Press/Library Quarter, within Belfast city centre's emerging Northside Urban Village ("the Northside"). This area was initially identified within the North West Quarter (Part 2) consultation document, published in October 2006 and subsequently within the Northside Urban Village Regeneration Framework, which DSD adopted as supplementary guidance to its Regeneration Policy Statement (RPS) in May 2009.

DSD's published vision for the area is: *To build on the strong historic character and rich community life of the area by encouraging the development of a high-quality urban form which complements the richness and scale of existing buildings and brings vitality to the area. Urban blocks which front onto the main streets will be strengthened and historic buildings converted for higher value uses.*

Building facades will be improved and a network of safe, green and attractive pedestrian routes provided to encourage economic prosperity to the area.

The Northside Urban Village Regeneration Framework identifies a number of key principles which DSD would expect to be incorporated into regeneration proposals which are submitted. These principles include:

- *Improved connectivity* from the city centre to adjoining residential neighbourhoods;
- *Promotion of a mix of uses* which maximise the physical, social and sustainable economic regeneration of the area;
- *Respecting the historic character* of the area by reflecting the old street grid and the Victorian architecture;

- *Tackling social exclusion* through physical development addressing problems such as housing need, unemployment, ill-health, benefit dependency and educational under achievement; and

- *Environmental sustainability* should be given regard by development proposals.

In parallel with the Northside Urban Village Regeneration Framework, DSD published the Northside Urban Village Regeneration Implementation Plan 2009 to 2012. This document sets out DSD's approach to implementing the Framework, both initially in the immediate period up to 2012 and setting out the targets to be worked towards over a 10 year period to 2019.

DSD Policy Context

Key development targets identified in the document for the period up to 2012 are shown in the table.

In addition to DSD's adopted policy documents, the consultant team also had regard to the following core planning, transport and Government publications:

- A Shared Future: Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland (2005)
- Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) 2004
- Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (Draft BMAP)
- Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (BUAP)
- The Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2025 "Shaping our Future"

Target	Status
Engage with a range of prospective private sector developers on site specific or comprehensive mixed-use regeneration opportunities across the Northside area.	A market testing exercise was undertaken in 2011. DSD is currently preparing to issue developer briefs in January 2013.
Identify and acquire at least two key development sites within the Northside area and produce proposals to redevelop these with a private sector partner in order to provide mixed-use development in the area.	DSD has vested lands at 35 Carrick Hill (and adjacent land) and a site on North Street.
Develop to planning approval stage, urban regeneration proposals for a project located at the junction of Carrick Hill/ Millfield, Peter's Hill/ North Street, in order to create a 'gateway' to the city centre and associated development opportunities.	The subject of this document.
Develop to planning approval stage, proposals to create a new public space/square at the junction of Library Street/ Little Donegall Street.	A design has been developed and costed and will be displayed in a public exhibition in January 2013.

Site Description

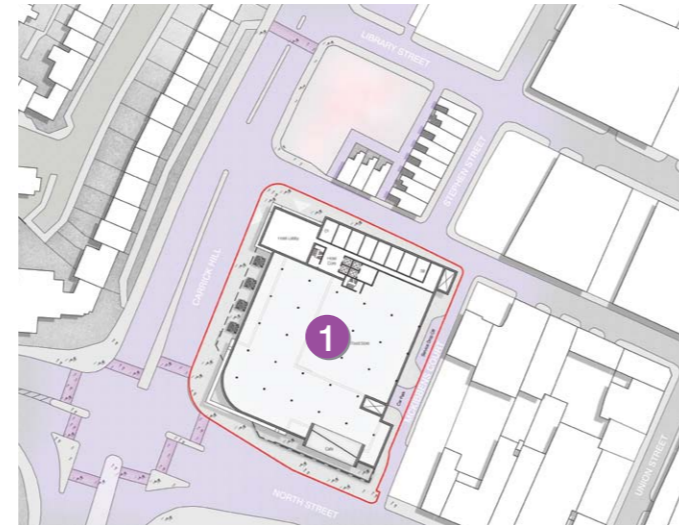
The **BT1 Gateway** site is at the fringe of this area and comprises a total area of approximately 0.47 hectare (1.2 acres). The site boundary is shown outlined in red on the adjacent plan.

The site is currently part cleared, with the remainder accommodating the Kent Street car park, and a bingo hall. The site is entirely within public ownership and DSD will be able to secure vacant possession prior to redevelopment taking place.

The Press / Library Quarter has a strong grid street structure, containing a mix of open spaces and surface car parks to the west arising from vacant plots and 19th Century Warehouse buildings of 3 to 5 storeys, mostly grounded at the back of the footpath. The cluster of buildings around the Central Library are of particular architectural merit. However, the site's immediate context is of low architectural significance with little to draw on for design vocabulary.

The **BT1 Gateway** site is a significant gateway to the city centre from the neighbouring residential communities of Carrick Hill, the Shankhill and Browns Square and has a prominent location on the junction of the busy roads of Peters Hill, Carrick Hill, North Street and Millfield.

1 BT1 Gateway Site



- Cathedral Quarter
- Retail Area
- Office
- Riverside
- Development
- North West Quarter
- North East Quarter

The adjacent plan shows the strong pedestrian links along Little Donegall Street, Library Street and North Street.

The strong links come to and from the residential area to the North West and the city centre to the South East.

Carrick Hill is a busy four lane road, this becomes a constraint to the site, as pedestrian access is limited.

The Carrick Hill junction joining onto North Street is a key City Centre gateway, therefore this corner site acts as a key site to construct a key landmark building acting as the vista point for all traffic heading towards the City Centre.

Adjacent and across North Street is a small corner plot that would be ideal for a gateway feature to complement this important corner. Suitable to this corner would be to site the Shankhill artwork.

Constraints & Opportunities

The artwork was created with contributions from various local groups and features a central panel which was created with the help of Malvern Primary School.



Transport

The site is approximately 800 metres, a 10 minute walk, from the centre of Belfast. There are wide footways along North Street and Carrick Hill and formal pedestrian crossing facilities in the area which make the site very accessible for pedestrians. There are a number of bus stops located near the site, the closest being on North Street.

The Carrick Hill / North Street junction is part of the Belfast Inner City Ring Road which has been planned and under construction in sections since the mid 1970's. The Carrick Hill Link was one of the first sections to be completed.

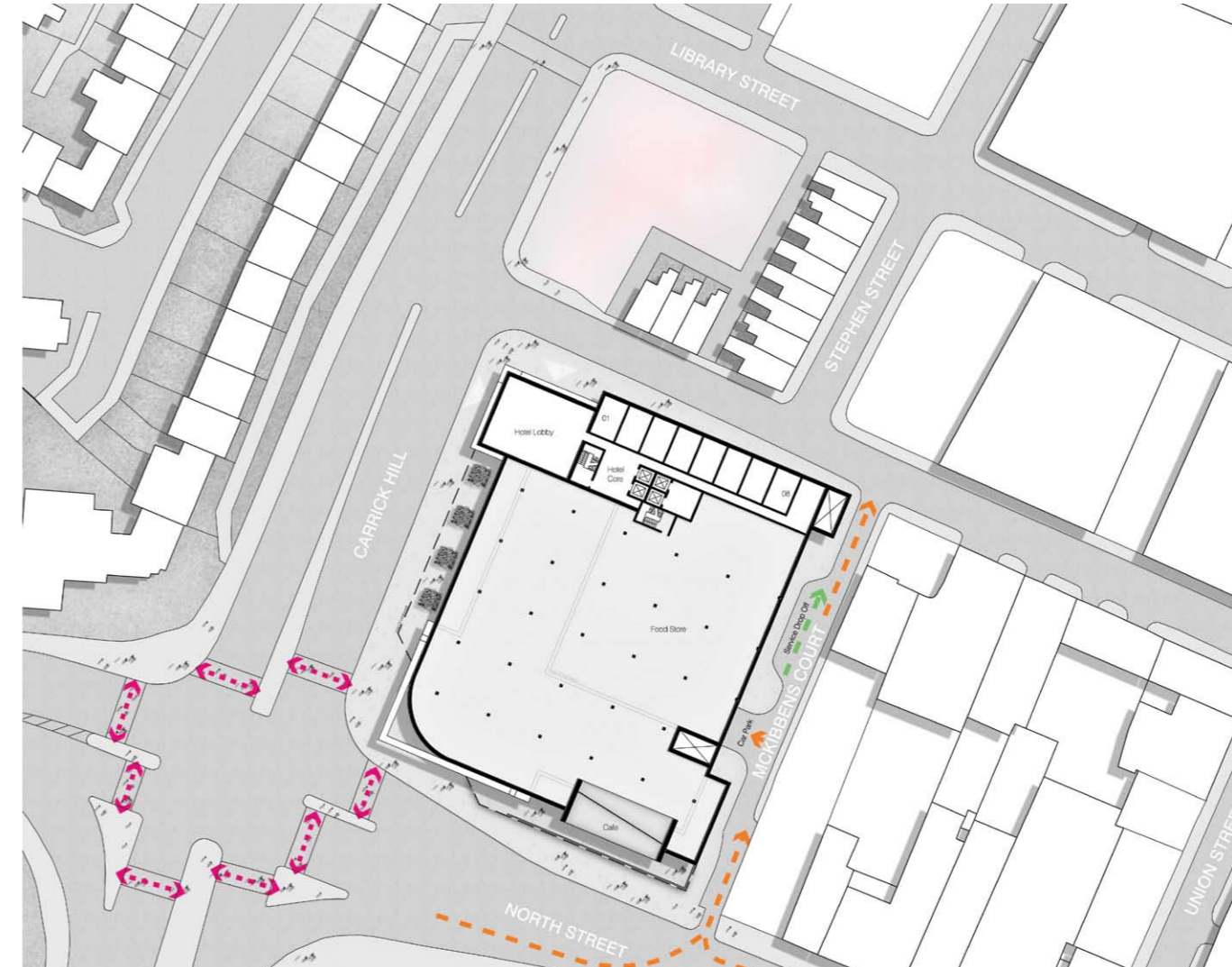
The junction has a number of slip lanes and pedestrians are required to cross the road in phases, using central medians. By creating wide roads with few formal pedestrian crossing facilities, the ring road development has, in places, created a barrier to movement between the City Centre and surrounding neighbourhoods,

particularly for pedestrians and cyclists. This issue is particularly evident at Carrick Hill. The existing pedestrian crossings are staggered and have slip lanes into North Street and Peters Hill which make the pedestrian crossing distances and time required to cross the road long, discouraging pedestrians. There are few other formal crossing facilities in the area.

The consultant team has reviewed several potential options for improving connectivity across the Carrick Hill / North Street junction. A moderate intervention scheme would seek to improve the existing junction by widening and repaving footways on the northern side of the junction and also removing the slip lane from Carrick Hill to North Street to reduce the number of lanes pedestrians must cross. In addition, an informal crossing would be created near the junction with Library Street by extending the central median and creating a pedestrian refuge, reducing the distances between crossing points.

As well as the highway design changes there could be modifications to signal timings to reduce the amount of time pedestrians have to wait to cross from when they activate the crossing signals. This option would be the least costly intervention of the schemes reviewed, less than approximately £200,000, depending on pavement treatment types. This option is also one of the most feasible in terms of highway capacity as most traffic lanes remain unaltered.

- Pedestrian Route/Crossing
- Car Access
- Service Dropoff Zone



Access & Servicing

The adjacent plan shows a possible new crossing point across Carrick Hill. There is also a proposed pedestrian refuge point at the end of Library Street. This gives pedestrians a key place to cross.

The plan also indicates vehicle access on and off the site. Access will be gained by turning onto McKibben's Court from North Street, there will be undercroft parking provisions for cars and bikes.

Further along, McKibben's Court there will be a lay-by for service vehicles to park when making deliveries.

Design Concept Preferred Option

DSD's preferred option envisages a mixed use development, comprising a convenience foodstore, hotel and undercroft car parking.

These uses reflect the market analysis and the outcome of the stakeholder consultation process, with an emphasis upon promoting a scheme which is commercially attractive, offers local employment opportunities and that does not conflict with the wider regeneration aspirations for the Northside.

The preferred option is also intended to help re-connect the site with the retail and commercial heritage of North Street and the Shankill.

The design team spent over 6 months working with key stakeholders, in developing a proposal which is both deliverable and responsive to DSD's strategic vision for regeneration of the City.



Design Concept Preferred Option

The concept behind the BT1 Gateway Site is to create an iconic, well recognised structure which forms a positive relationship within the surrounding area.

The design of both the food store and the hotel entrance forms an interesting juxtaposition by taking the form and scale of a ship crane establishing a truly recognisable gateway structure.

The massing of the proposed food store and hotel responds to the existing surroundings by respecting the lower heights of the adjacent dwellings as well as creating a strong urban presence on the Carrick Hill North Street Corner.

Examples of facade treatments



The food store forms the base of the scheme and is constructed using a butt glazed system that has a slight recess to the above level detail.

Also at ground level, a cafe punches out onto North Street. This creates a point of interest when travelling from Union Street towards Carrick Hill.

The twin skin facade that wraps the hotel has a glass veil suspended from the third floor above. The inner skin is covered with solid unanalysed panels with integrated punched windows.

The outer glass veil has a ceramic frit with an interesting and varying pattern and density throughout.

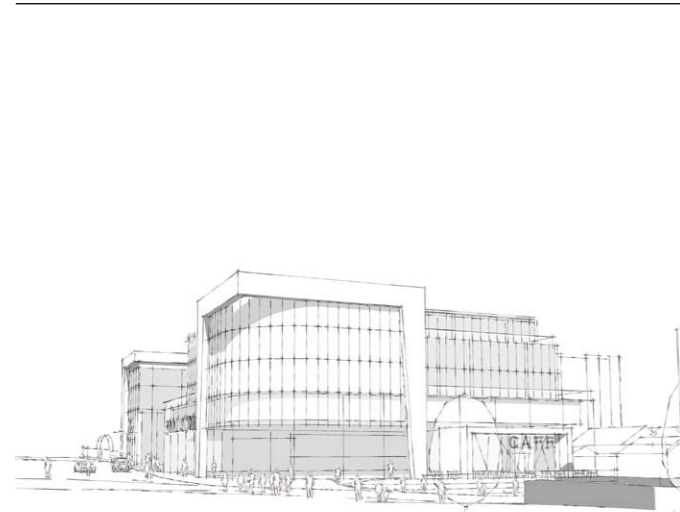
The facade incorporates a subtle yet interesting lighting arrangement which at night time would display a variety of colours and lighting sequences.

This would enliven the local area and act as a vibrant and attractive beacon.

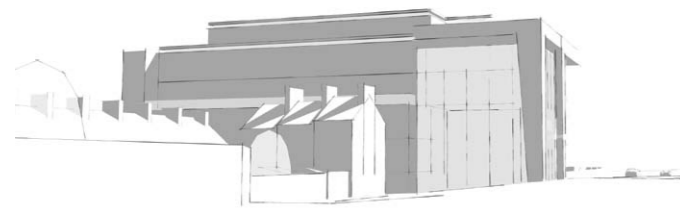
The scheme as a whole reflects and celebrates the gateway location. By utilising the above design principles it will allow the character of the building to change from day to night and season to season depending on cultural events or the time of year and the weather.

Design Concept
Undercroft Parking

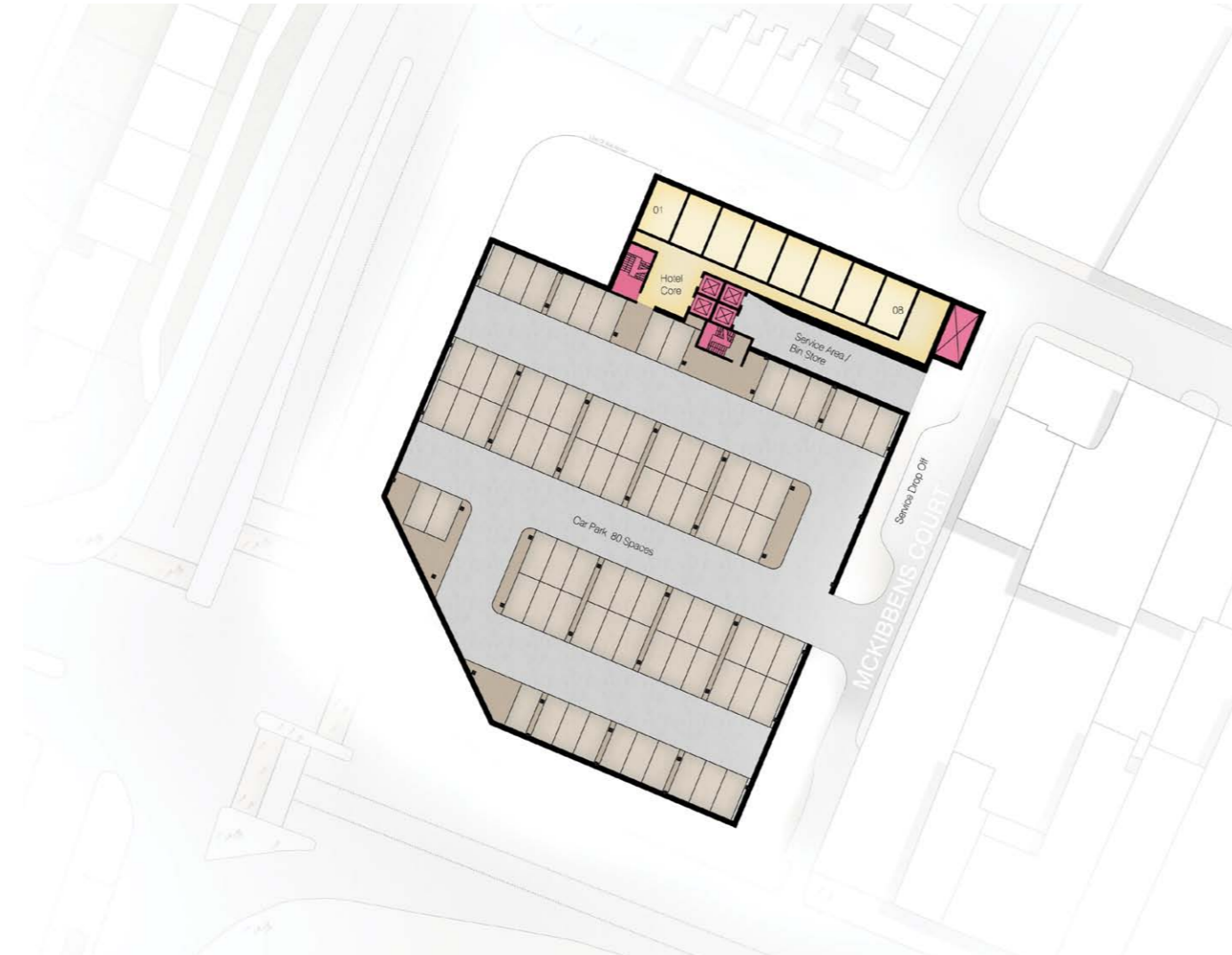
Undercroft Parking Level
With over 80 Parking Spaces, this level would be used by shoppers for the food store, as well as visitors from the hotel above.



View North of Carrick Hill



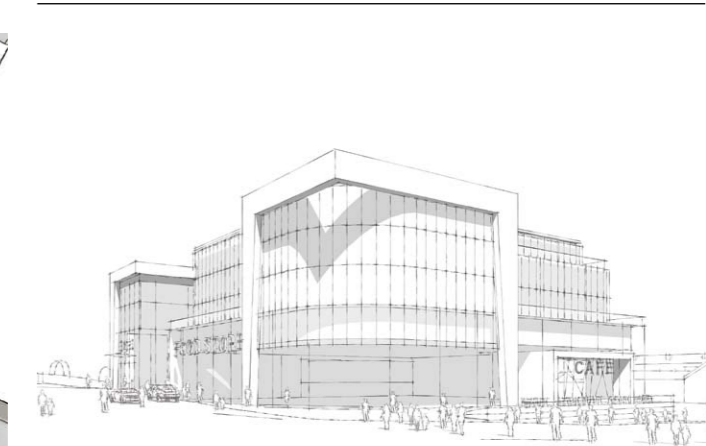
View South Down Carrick Hill



Ground Level
This level will include a food store with cafe facility as well as the hotel lobby.



Design Concept
Ground Level



View looking down Carrick Hill and North Street



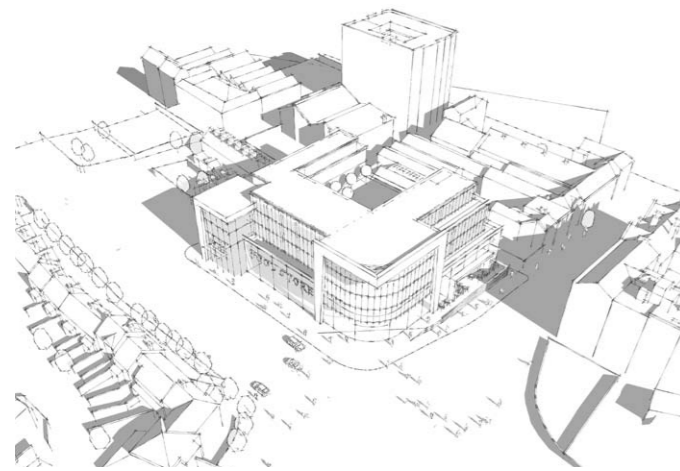
View looking West across North Street

Design Concept Level 01

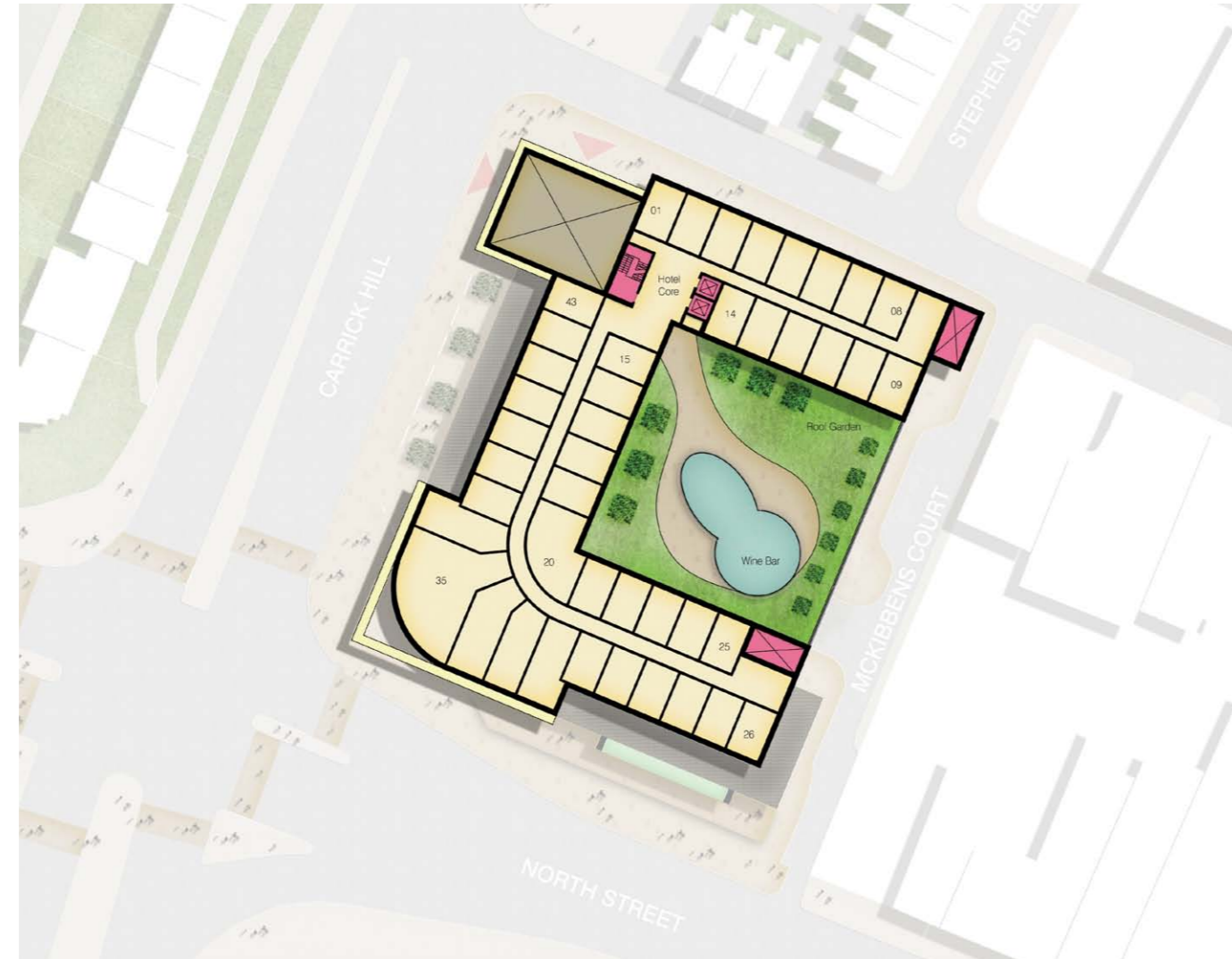
Level 01
Will incorporate hotel accommodation along with a roof garden, with an integrated hotel restaurant/bar



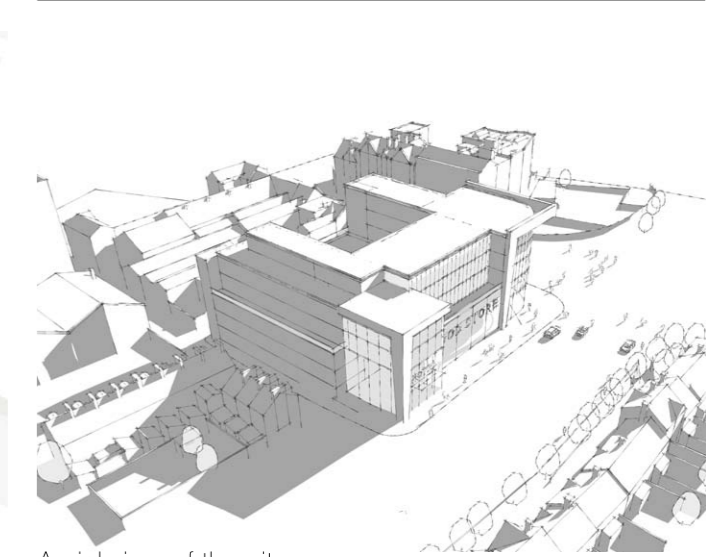
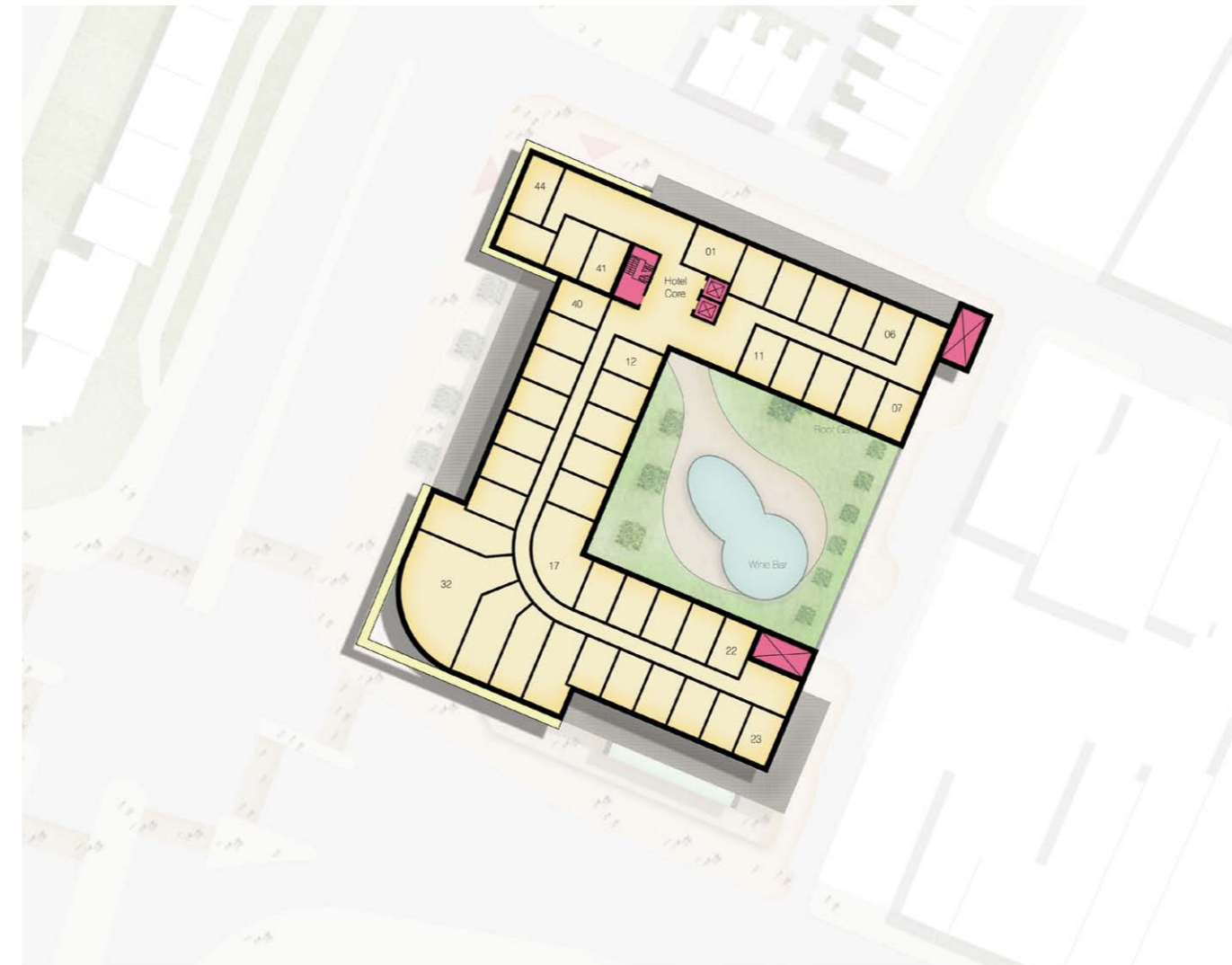
View looking across Carrick Hill



Aerial view of the site



Design Concept Level 02



Aerial view of the site

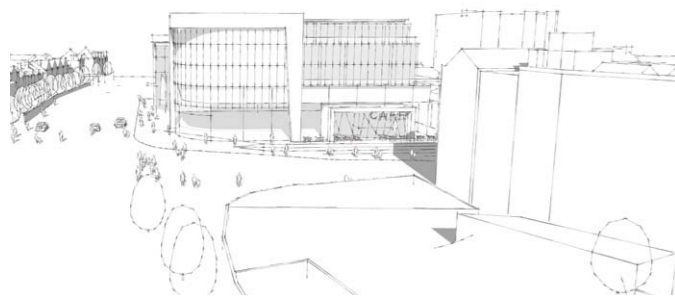


View across North Street

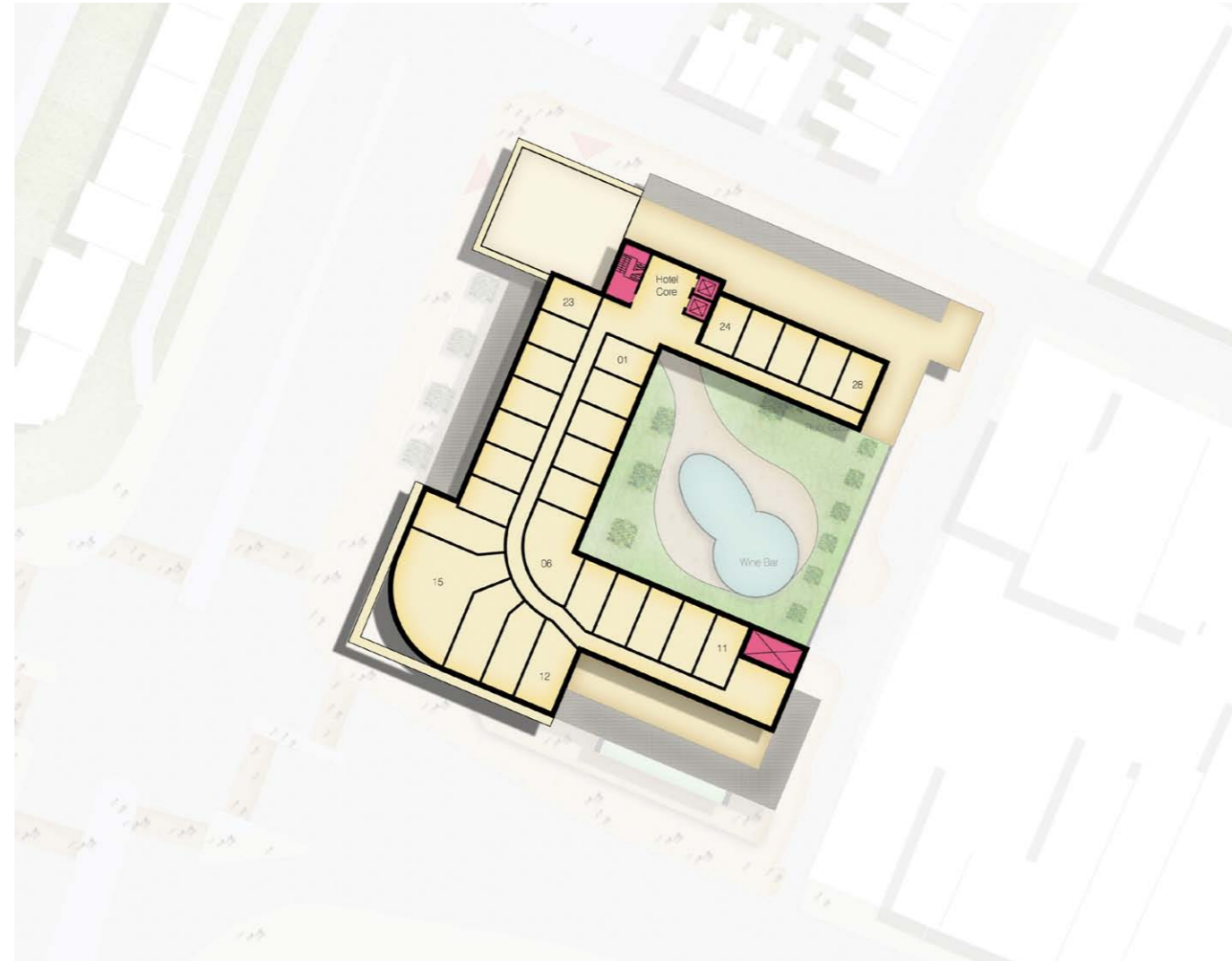
Design Concept Level 03



View from new crossing over North Street



View looking towards Carrick Hill



Design Concept Design Concept

The scheme reflects the gateway location. The proposed scale and design respects the surrounding urban elements.

The new structure will form an exciting gateway beacon/vista with a unique interactive nighttime facade.



Next Steps

DSD is inviting feedback on the [BT1 Gateway](#) proposals and written comments should be submitted to:

Belfast City Centre Regeneration
Directorate
Department for Social Development
Oxford House - 4th Floor
49-55 Chichester Street
Belfast
BT1 4HL

Email: BT1@dsdni.gov.uk

The closing date for comments is
22.02.13

DSD will also conduct an Equality Screening Exercise on these proposals to determine if it has an impact or is likely to have a significant impact on equality of opportunity for any of the nine categories under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Following the completion of the public consultation and equality screening process, DSD intends to issue a Development Brief to the market.

For further details please contact
Jenny McGuigan via email at
Jenny.McGuigan@dsdni.gov.uk



