

Development Management Officer Report Committee Application

Summary	
Committee Meeting Date: 18 October 2016	
Application ID: LA04/2016/1762/F	
Proposal: Refurbishment and extension of existing building comprising replacement of building facades, internal alterations, change or use relating to Class A1 and B1, associated service areas and demolition of existing 4th and 5th floor and their replacement with new extended 4th and 5th floor to provide commercial accommodation.	Location: 35 to 47 Donegal Place Belfast BT1 5BB
Referral Route: Commercial Development Greater than 200 sq metres	
Recommendation:	Approval
Applicant Name and Address: Bywater Properties Investment Management LLP 46 James Street London W1U1EZ	Agent Name and Address: GM Design Associates Ltd 22 Lodge Road Coleraine BT52 1NB
<p>Executive Summary: Full planning permission is sought the refurbishment and extension of the existing building with the change of use and demolition of existing 4th and 5th floors and their replacement with new extended 4th and 5th floor to provide commercial accommodation.</p> <p>The main issues to be considered in this case are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principle of the office extension at this location; • Impact on the City Centre Conservation Area; • Impact on the setting of adjacent listed buildings; and • Traffic, movement and parking; <p>The site is located within the development limits of Belfast in the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) and is identified as being within the City Centre, Primary Retail Core and the City Centre Conservation Area. It is also located within the Old City Character Area (CC 009).</p> <p>The principle of development is considered acceptable as it consists of an extension to existing offices in a city centre location and is compatible with surrounding land uses. The height, scale and massing of the building with the proposed extension is considered acceptable given the site context within the Conservation Area and is comparable to other buildings in the area. The proposed design and treatment of the elevations contrasts successfully with the existing building. In terms of amenity, there are no existing residential uses immediately adjacent to the application site.</p> <p>Transport NI has verbally cleared the proposal and Belfast City Council is awaiting their formal written response. All other Consultees offered no objection subject to conditions.</p> <p>No objections from third parties have been received.</p> <p>Recommendation - Approval with conditions as set out in case officer report below.</p>	

Case Officer Report

Site Location Plan



Characteristics of the Site and Area

1.0	Description of Proposed Development Refurbishment and extension of existing building comprising replacement of building facades, internal alterations, change or use relating to Class A1 and B1, associated service areas and demolition of existing 4th and 5th floor and their replacement with new extended 4th and 5th floor to provide commercial accommodation.
2.0	Description of Site The site fronts on both Royal Avenue and Donegall Place and is located within the Primary Retail Core. Existing on the site is 4 storey rendered building currently in both retail and office use.

Planning Assessment of Policy and other Material Considerations

3.0	Planning History No relevant planning history.
4.0	Policy Framework
4.1	Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 Policy UE 1 - Urban design Policy OF 1 – Belfast City Centre, Lisburn City Centre and other Town Centres
4.2	Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland Planning Policy Statement 3: Access Movement and Parking Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Environment Planning Policy Statement 13: Transportation and Land Use
5.0	Statutory Consultee Responses
	Transport NI- Awaiting final comments; NIWater- No objections; Historic Environment Division- No Objections NIEA- No objections subject to conditions
6.0	Non Statutory Consultee Responses
	Belfast City Council EPU- No Objections subject to conditions

7.0	<p>Representations</p> <p>The application has been neighbour notified and advertised in the local press. No letters of objection have been received.</p>
8.0	<p>Other Material Considerations</p>
8.1	<p>Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy</p>
9.0	<p>Assessment</p>
9.1	<p>The key issues in the assessment of the proposed development include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principle of the office extension at this location; • Impact on the City Centre Conservation Area; • Impact on the setting of adjacent listed buildings; and • Traffic, movement and parking;
9.2	<p>The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) sets out five core planning principles of the planning system, including improving health and well being, supporting sustainable economic growth, creating and enhancing shared space, and supporting good design and place making. Paragraphs 4.11 and 4.12 require the safeguarding of residential and work environs and the protection of amenity. Paragraphs 4.13-8 highlight the importance of creating shared space, whilst paras 4.23-7 stress the importance of good design. Paragraphs 4.18-22 details that sustainable economic growth will be supported. The SPPS states PPS3 remains applicable under transitional arrangements.</p>
9.3	<p><u>Principle of Development</u></p> <p>Article 6 (4) of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Act states that in making any determination under the said act regard is to be had to the local development plan, and that the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material consideration indicate otherwise.</p>
9.4	<p>The site is located within the development limits of Belfast in the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) and is identified as being within the City Centre, Primary Retail Core and the City Centre Conservation Area. It is also located within the Old City Character Area (CC 009).</p>
9.5	<p>Policy OF 1 states that in Belfast City Centre, Lisburn City Centre and other Town Centres planning permission will be granted for Office development within Classes A2 and B1. Moreover the building is currently in office use. The proposal therefore complies with this policy.</p>
9.6	<p>Furthermore, given the city centre location the proposed uses are considered to comply with the policies contained within the Strategic Planning Statement as well as PED 1 of Planning Policy Statement 4.</p>
9.7	<p><u>Assessment against Urban Design Criteria in BMAP</u></p> <p>The general criteria of Old City Character Area states <i>that the part of any development which front onto Donegall Place, Royal Avenue, Castle Street, Castle Place or High Street shall be a minimum height of 5 storeys, or 17 metres to shoulder height and a maximum of 7 storeys with the use of setback articulated roof forms reinforcing traditional character.</i></p>
9.8	<p>35-47 Donegall Place is an existing 4 storey building with retail and office use. The proposal involves the extension to this building which is of limited architectural merit. The addition of 2 extra storeys to the existing 4 storey element with setback complies with the height criteria of the UDC and therefore BMAP.</p>
9.9	<p>The set back and articulated roof form, use of recessive materials against the more accentuated facade work successfully and will not detract from the area when seen from</p>

	critical views along Royal Avenue and Donegall Place. The height scale and massing is therefore considered acceptable.
	<u>Impact on City Centre Conservation Area</u>
9.10	The site falls within Belfast City Centre Conservation Area (CCCA) and consequently the proposal has been assessed against BH 12 and BH 14 of PPS 6. The existing building on the site does not contribute to the character and appearance of the CCCA.
9.11	The proposal involves elevational changes to Donegall Place and Fountain Street. Policy BH 12 of PPS 6 sets out 7 criteria which must be met in for order new development to be acceptable in a Conservation Area.
9.12	A context appraisal of historic buildings in BCC Conservation Area would suggest the following ascribes the character of buildings in the area – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Order and unity denoted by a strong base (of varying heights), middle and attic treatment with minor and major cornice; - A rhythm of bays often expressed on the façade with pilasters; - vertical expression to bays and openings of a human scale; - A broken roof silhouette; and - A high solid to void ratio with load bearing walls faced in red brick / stucco, stone or render. Also in context there is generally a hierarchy of windows openings – these decreasing in size as one moves up the facade – away from the piano nobile (first floor).
9.13	The proposed elevational form is of increased importance in this case as the site frames a view of one of the important axial vistas within the Conservation Area containing numerous listed buildings and thus makes an important contribution in legibility terms. It provides part of the visual, architectural and contextual setting of several listed buildings.
9.14	The proposed changes sufficiently pick up on contextual cues provided by traditional architecture within the area; the elevational grids imposed on each elevation will ascribe a vertical emphasis to bays / openings, a hierarchy of window openings is provided – respecting the taller first floor concept of the traditional ‘piano nobile’ that in part ascribes the character of the area. .
9.15	Materials are acceptable – the difference between the two elevations respecting the hierarchy of place of context partly ascribed by materials of greater quality being used to primary frontages.
9.16	On balanced It is considered that the proposal will enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and is therefore considered to meet the policy test under BH 12 of PPS 6.
	<u>Impact on Listed Buildings</u>
9.17	The proposal has been assessed against Policy BH11 of Planning Policy Statement 6. Historic Environment Division(HED) has been consulted to consider whether the application for 35 to 47 Donegal Place, Belfast affects HB26/50/228A Queen's Arcade between Donegall Place and Fountain Street, Belfast a Grade B1 listed building of special architectural or historic interest as set out in Section 80 and protected under the Planning Act (NI) 2011. HED has considered the effects of the proposal on the listed building and on the basis of the information provided is content without conditions.
	<u>Access and Parking</u>
9.18	The proposal has been assessed against PPS3: Access, Movement and Parking. Given the sites location within the city centre (highly accessible location in close proximity to services and amenities) it is considered that the proposal is acceptable. The Transport Assessment form has stated that it will be primarily foot traffic generated to the site. Vehicular traffic to the site use existing city centre car parks and on-street car parking.

	Delivery and servicing will use the existing rear yard. Whilst comments are still outstanding from Transport NI regarding the Travel Plan and Service Management Plan it has been verbally cleared to proceed to Committee.
10.0	<p>Summary of Recommendation: Approval</p> <p>Having regard to the development plan, relevant planning policies, and other material considerations, it is determined that the development will not cause demonstrable harm to the interests of acknowledged importance. Approval is therefore recommended.</p>
11.0	<p>Conditions</p> <p>1. As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, the development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this permission.</p> <p>Reason: Time Limit.</p> <p>2. Prior to the commencement of development details of the external finishes, including samples of materials to be used shall be submitted to Belfast City Council for agreement in writing, the development shall be constructed in accordance with those exemplars agreed and noted on the approved drawings.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure a quality standard of finish in the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area.</p>
12.0	<p>Notification to Department (if relevant)</p> <p>N/A</p>
13.0	<p>Representations from Elected members:</p> <p>None</p>

ANNEX	
Date Valid	12th August 2016
Date First Advertised	2nd September 2016
Date Last Advertised	2 nd September 2016
Details of Neighbour Notification (all addresses) The Owner/Occupier, 10, 12, 18, 20-22, 24, 26, Queens Arcade, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT1 5FF, 3, Belfast Welcome Centre, 47 Donegall Place, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT1 5AG, 33, 35-37, Donegall Place, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT1 5AB, 4 Queens Arcade, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT1 5FF, 40 Fountain Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT1 5EE, The Owner/Occupier, 44-46 Brookmount Buildings, Fountain Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT1 5EE, 6 Queens Arcade, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT1 5F Brookmount Buildings, 42 Fountain Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT1 5EF,	
Date of Last Neighbour Notification	23 rd August 2016
Date of EIA Determination	N/A
ES Requested	No