

**Development Management Officer Report  
Committee Application**

<b>Summary</b>	
<b>Committee Meeting Date: 15 November 2016</b>	
<b>Application ID:</b> LA04/2016/1277/F	
<b>Proposal:</b> Change of use from offices to 55 serviced short stay/visitor suites and associated alterations including landscaping.	<b>Location:</b> 42-48 Howard Street Belfast
<b>Referral Route:</b> Large Scale Change of Use.	
<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>Approval</b>
<b>Applicant Name and Address:</b> Nevin and Irene Ringland Hollandale Projects Ltd 52 Talbot Park Derry BT48 7TA	<b>Agent Name and Address:</b> MKA Planning Ltd 32 Clooney Terrace Waterside Derry BT47 6AR
<p><b>Executive Summary:</b> Full planning permission is sought for a change of use of upper floors from offices to 55 serviced short stay/visitor suites and associated alterations including landscaping.</p> <p>The proposed site is located at Howard Street within the city centre. The site is an unlisted building 7 storey in height with restaurant/food and retail uses at ground floor. There is a courtyard area to the rear of the building with vehicular access facilitated via a covered entranceway accessed from Howard Street. The site is located within the city centre Conservation Area. The area is commercial in character/use comprising office, retail, and food/restaurant uses.</p> <p>The key issues in the assessment of the proposal are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The principle of the proposal at this location;</li> <li>- Impact on amenity / character of the area and a listed building;</li> <li>- Design and layout of the proposed accommodation;</li> <li>- Impact on transport and other infrastructure.</li> </ul> <p>BMAP is the current development plan for the area. Within the plan the site is identified as falling within the City Centre Conservation Area. PPS6 is therefore relevant due to the Conservation Area designation and proximity to Listed Buildings. The site itself is not subject to any zoning. BMAP includes broad policy pertaining to tourism uses within the strategy pages 92-3, however no specific policies are included within the Belfast District proposals. The strategy identifies the city centre conservation area as 'sensitive to tourism potential' in terms of opportunities. The Plan incorporates a sustainable approach to tourism development that seeks to protect key assets to ensure that new development does not harm the environment, character or cultural heritage of the Plan Area.</p> <p>There is a previous approval on the site for 45 apartments under reference Z/2009/0640/F. This application was approved on 24/11/2009. Although expired, it is a material consideration in this case. Residential policy has not changed since this decision. BMAP and the SPPS have been introduced following this approval.</p>	

Given the site context which consists entirely of non-residential uses, the proposed use is considered acceptable in principle.

Listed Buildings and the Conservation Officer have no objections to the proposal and thus the proposal is deemed acceptable in terms of these aspects of PPS6.

In relation to traffic, access, and parking issues, Transport NI was consulted and is satisfied with the traffic, parking and access arrangements. Accordingly the proposal is considered compliant with requirements in PPS3 and associated guidance.

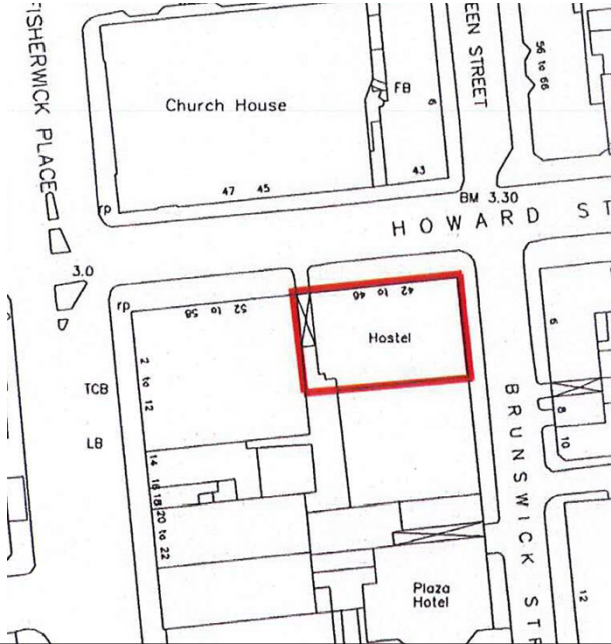
Environmental Health has no objection subject to conditions and/or informatives, and the proposal will not result in an unacceptable impact in terms of noise, air quality, or related issues.

No representations has been received.

Approval recommended subject to conditions.

**Case Officer Report**

**Site Location Plan**



<b>1.0</b>	<p><b>Description of Proposed Development</b></p> <p>Full planning permission is sought for a change of use of upper floors from offices to 55no serviced short stay/visitor suites and associated alterations including landscaping.</p>
<b>2.0</b>	<p><b>Description of Site</b></p> <p>2.1 The proposed site is located at Howard Street within the city centre. The site is an unlisted building 7 storey in height with restaurant/food and retail uses at ground floor. There is a courtyard area to the rear of the building with vehicular access facilitated via a covered entranceway accessed via Howard Street. Topography of the site is level. The site is located within the city centre Conservation Area.</p> <p>2.2 The area is commercial in character/use comprising office, retail, and food/restaurant uses.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<p><b>Site History</b></p> <p>Z/2009/0640/F – Change of use of upper floors to 45 apartments. Approved.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<p><b>Policy Framework</b></p>
4.1	Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015
4.2	<p>Regional Development Strategy (RDS);                  Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS);                  Planning Policy Statement 6: Archaeology and Built Heritage (PPS6);                  Planning Policy Statement 7: Residential Development (PPS7);                  PPS3: Roads Considerations;                  Supplementary Planning Guidance including Development Control Advice Note 15                  Vehicular Access Standards</p>

5.0	<b>Statutory Consultee Responses</b>
	Transport NI – no objections DfC - HED – no objections subject to revised design and condition and/or informatives; NI Water – no objections;
6.0	<b>Non Statutory Consultee Responses</b>
	Environmental Health - no objections subject to conditions and/or informatives. Conservation Officer – no objections.
7.0	<b>Representations</b>
	The application has been neighbour notified and advertised in the local press.  No representations received from the public or elected representatives.
8.0	<b>Other Material Considerations</b>
	None
9.0	<b>Assessment</b>
9.1	The key issues in the assessment of the proposal are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The principle of the proposal at this location;</li> <li>- Impact on amenity / character of the area and a listed building;</li> <li>- Design and layout of the proposed accommodation;</li> <li>- Impact on transport and other infrastructure.</li> </ul>
9.2	<b>Principle of the Proposal at this Location</b> Policy SFG3 of the RDS seeks to enhance the role of Belfast City Centre as the regional capital and focus of administration, commerce, specialised services and cultural amenities. This policy states <i>'Belfast City Centre has developed its regional shopping offer. A precautionary approach needs to be continued in relation to future major retail development proposals based on the likely risk of out of centre shopping developments having an adverse impact on the city centre shopping area'</i> .
9.3	The 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.
9.4	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 paragraph 4.23-7 stress the importance of good design. Paragraphs 4.18-22 details that sustainable economic growth will be supported.
9.5	The proposal involves a change of use of upper floors from offices to 55no serviced short stay/visitor suites and associated alterations including landscaping. There are no planning policy statements specific to short stay suites. The use is considered a tourist use rather than 'traditional' residential, and such uses are deemed 'sui generous' i.e. within no use class within the Use Classes Order. Notwithstanding this, the principles of QD1 are deemed relevant given the gap in policy.
9.6	BMAP is the current development plan for the area. Within the plan the site is identified as

	falling within the City Centre Conservation Area. PPS6 is therefore relevant due to the Conservation Area designation and proximity to Listed Buildings. The site itself is not subject to any zoning. BMAP includes broad policy pertaining to tourism uses within the strategy page 92-3, however no specific policies are included within the Belfast District proposals. The strategy identifies the city centre conservation area as 'sensitive to tourism potential' in terms of opportunities. The Plan incorporates a sustainable approach to tourism development that seeks to protect key assets to ensure that new development does not harm the environment, character or cultural heritage of the Plan Area.
9.7	The SPPS includes tourism regional policy at pages 97-100. Considerations for determining applications are set out at 6.265 and 6.266. 6.265 states that important considerations will include whether the nature, scale and design of the specific proposal is appropriate to the site context. Design is a particularly important consideration within Conservation Areas. 6.266 states that applications for tourism development will also be assessed in accordance with normal planning criteria such as access arrangements, design, environmental and amenity impacts so as to ensure high quality, safe and otherwise satisfactory forms of development.
9.8	<u>Planning History:</u> There is a previous approval on the site for 45 apartments under reference Z/2009/0640/F. This application was approved on 24/11/2009. Although expired, it is a material consideration in this case. Residential policy has not changed since this decision. BMAP and the SPPS have been introduced following this approval.
9.9	The primary policy considerations are set out in BH12 – new development in a Conservation Area, and BH11 – Development affecting the Setting of Listed Buildings. BH12 sets out 7 general criteria for proposals. Section 104 of the 2011 Act and the related policy direction of the SPPS take precedence over criterion (a) of PPS6 Policy BH12 New Development in a Conservation Area, which requires the development to preserve or enhance the character of the area. The remaining criteria of this policy however remain. (b) and (c) broadly seek development that is in sympathy with the characteristic built form, scale material and detailing of the area; (d) that proposal will not result in environmental problems such as noise, nuisance and disturbance; (e) that important views within, into and out of the area are protected, and (f) that trees and other landscape features are protected. Criterion (g) seeks redevelopment that conforms to the guidance set out in conservation area documents. These considerations are essentially repeated within the SPPS and PPS7.
9.10	Given the site context which consists entirely of non-residential uses, the proposed tourist accommodation use is considered acceptable in principle subject to satisfactory design and character issues.
9.11	<b>Design, layout and Amenity</b> The proposal is for a change of use of the existing 6 floors to tourist apartments and largely comprises internal alterations of the existing building fabric with alterations to the roof to facilitate a communal amenity area. A further amenity area is included at first floor level. The layout largely repeats that previous approved, save for 2 additional units at level one, one additional unit on level 3, 4, 5, and two additional units on level 6. The aspect of each apartment is generally to the public street or towards the courtyard/rear of the building and would therefore provide acceptable amenity. Several units at first floor have aspect to the internal courtyard. This layout repeats the previous approval and given the tourist use is considered acceptable on balance. The amenity of neighbouring properties would not be compromised to a greater degree than the previous approval.
9.12	The flats vary in size from 24.5m <sup>2</sup> to 31m <sup>2</sup> , with an average of approximately 30m <sup>2</sup> .

<p>9.13</p> <p>9.14</p> <p>9.15</p> <p>9.16</p>	<p>These sizes accord with minimum space standards set out in addendum to PPS7, however it must be noted that these requirements relate to normal residential proposals. The size of the units are therefore acceptable. Communal amenity space is provided at first floor (87m<sup>2</sup>) and the roof (295m<sup>2</sup>), giving 382m<sup>2</sup> in total equating to 7m<sup>2</sup> per unit. This falls short of the 10-30sqm required for residential apartments stipulated in Creating Places. 300m<sup>2</sup> was provided in the previous approval. Taking account of this, the tourist use proposed, and the city centre location, the level of provision is considered acceptable.</p> <p><b>Impact on Conservation Area and Listed Buildings</b></p> <p>Listed Buildings and the Conservation Officer have no objections to the proposal and thus the proposal is deemed acceptable in terms of these aspects of PPS6. Some internal demolition works are proposed, however given the positive response from HED and the Conservation Officer the extent and nature of demolition is considered acceptable. A method statement detailing the methodology and 'making good' of all demolition works is required by condition to ensure protection of historic features.</p> <p><b>Access, Parking and Transport.</b></p> <p>In relation to traffic, access, and parking issues, Transport NI was consulted and is satisfied with the traffic, parking and access arrangements. Accordingly the proposal is considered compliant with requirements in PPS3 and associated guidance.</p> <p><b>Other Considerations.</b></p> <p>Environmental Health has no objection subject to conditions and/or informatives, and the proposal will not result in an unacceptable impact in terms of noise, air quality, or related issues.</p> <p>No representations has been received.</p>
<p>10.0</p> <p>10.1.</p>	<p><b>Summary of Recommendation: Approval</b></p> <p>Having regard to the policy context and other material considerations above, the proposal is considered acceptable and compliant with relevant policies. Approval is recommended.</p>
<p><b>Neighbour Notification Checked</b> <span style="float: right;">Yes</span></p>	
<p><b>Conditions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.  Reason: Time Limit.</li> <li>2. All services (including those for water supply, drainage, heating, and gas supplies) shall be laid underground or housed internally within the development hereby approved.  Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to maintain the character of the Conservation Area.</li> <li>3. No development hereby permitted shall commence until a methodology statement detailing all procedures for any demolition works hereby permitted and subsequent repair has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The methodology statement shall include details of all means of temporary structural support and construction</li> </ol>	

techniques used in the repair and restoration works used to facilitate the development hereby permitted. The methodology statement shall be implemented in accordance with these details to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority. No variation to the agreed methodology report without the prior consent of the Local Planning Authority in writing.

Reason: to maintain the historic assets of the building and the character of the Conservation Area.

<b>ANNEX</b>	
<b>Date Valid</b>	23rd June 2016
<b>Date First Advertised</b>	8th July 2016
<b>Date Last Advertised</b>	14th October 2016
<b>Details of Neighbour Notification</b> (all addresses) The Owner/Occupier, 1-3 Howard House, Brunswick Street, Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7GE, 10 Great Victoria Street, Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7BA, 12 Great Victoria Street, Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7BA, 15-21,Howard Street, Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT1 6PJ, 2-4 Grand Opera House, Great Victoria Street, Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7BA, 42 – 48 Howard Street, Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT1 6PG, 52 – 66 Howard Street, Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT1 6PG, 6-8,Great Victoria Street, Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7BA, 7 -8 Brunswick Street, Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7GE, 9 Upper Queen Street, Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT1 6FB, Merrion Business Centre,58 Howard Street, Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT1 6PG,	
<b>Date of Last Neighbour Notification</b>	7th October 2016
<b>Date of EIA Determination</b>	n/a
<b>ES Requested</b>	No
<b>Drawing Numbers and Title:</b> 01, 05A, 06A, 07, 08, 09, 10	