

Development Management Report Committee Application

Summary	
Committee Meeting Date: 16 May 2017	
Application ID: LA04/2016/0688/F	
Proposal: Conversion of existing Scottish Mutual Building to Boutique Hotel comprising public bars, restaurants, function spaces and hotel bedrooms to include internal and external alterations and additions, including cone roofs to corner turrets, and enclosed external seating areas on Bedford Street.	Location: Scottish Mutual Building 15/16 Donegall Sq South and 2-14 Bedford Street and adjacent footpaths Belfast BT1 5JG
Referral Route: Committee – Proposal exceeds delegated floorspace threshold	
Recommendation:	Approval
Applicant Name and Address: Bedford Hotels Ltd C/O Galgorm Resort & Spa 136 Fenaghy Road Ballymena BT42 1E	Agent Name and Address: Douglas Wallace Architects 1 Grantham Street Dublin D8
Executive Summary: The proposal seeks conversion of existing Scottish Mutual Building to Boutique Hotel comprising public bars, restaurants, function spaces and hotel bedrooms to include internal and external alterations and additions, including cone roofs to corner turrets, and enclosed external seating areas on Bedford Street. The application is a revision to a previously approved scheme under ref: Z/2013/1300/F approved 28th February 2014. The main revisions include revised ground, and first floor layouts, and a formal external seating area along Bedford Street to a depth of approximately 3.2m. The key issues in the assessment of the proposal are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The principle of the proposal at this location; - Impact on amenity / character of the area and a listed building; - Impact on transport and other infrastructure. Given the site context which consists entirely of non-residential uses, and the previous approval which remains extant, the proposed hotel and uses are considered acceptable. The uses and broad layout arrangement replicate the previous approval and in that regard the proposal is acceptable. There are detailed demolition and alteration works necessary to facilitate the proposal. Historic Environment Division have been consulted in relation to these issues and have no objections to the application or associated Listed Building Consent. The Conservation Officer has indicated broad support for the design approach and that the proposal would not	

adversely impact on the Conservation Area.

In relation to traffic, access, servicing arrangement and parking issues, Transport NI is satisfied with the traffic, parking and access arrangements. This includes the layout arrangement for the public footpath and revised on street parking arrangement. This element will also require separate consents under Roads/Transport Legislation. Given the TNI response, 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. NIEA have no objections in terms of contamination or drainage. NI Water has no objection in relation to sewerage or flooding.

Two representations have been received, the right of way and boiler house issue raised is a civil matter between the respective parties as it relates to internal access within/through the building. The loading bay element of the proposal has been removed. The objections relating to PPS6 are outweighed by the positive responses from HED and the Conservation Officer.

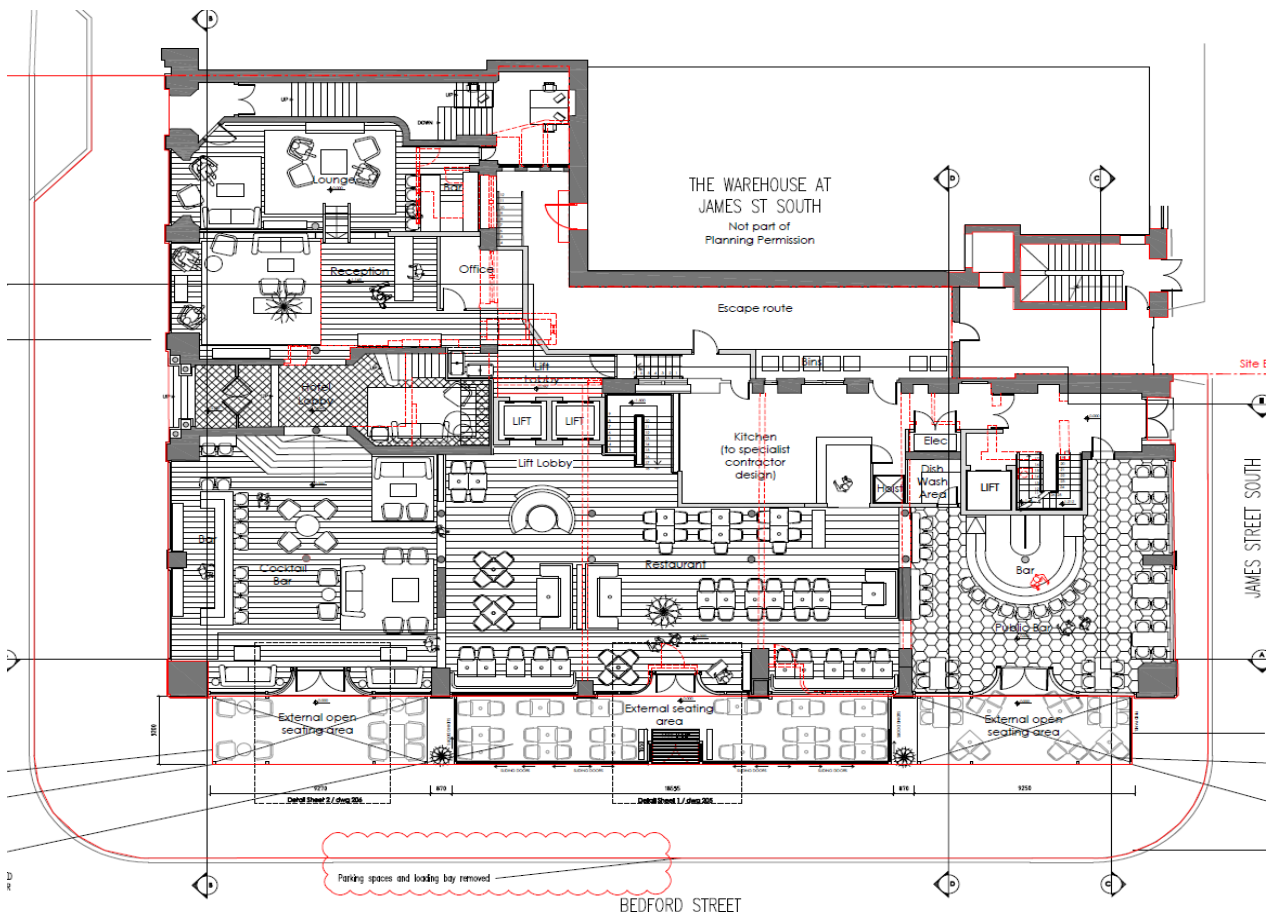
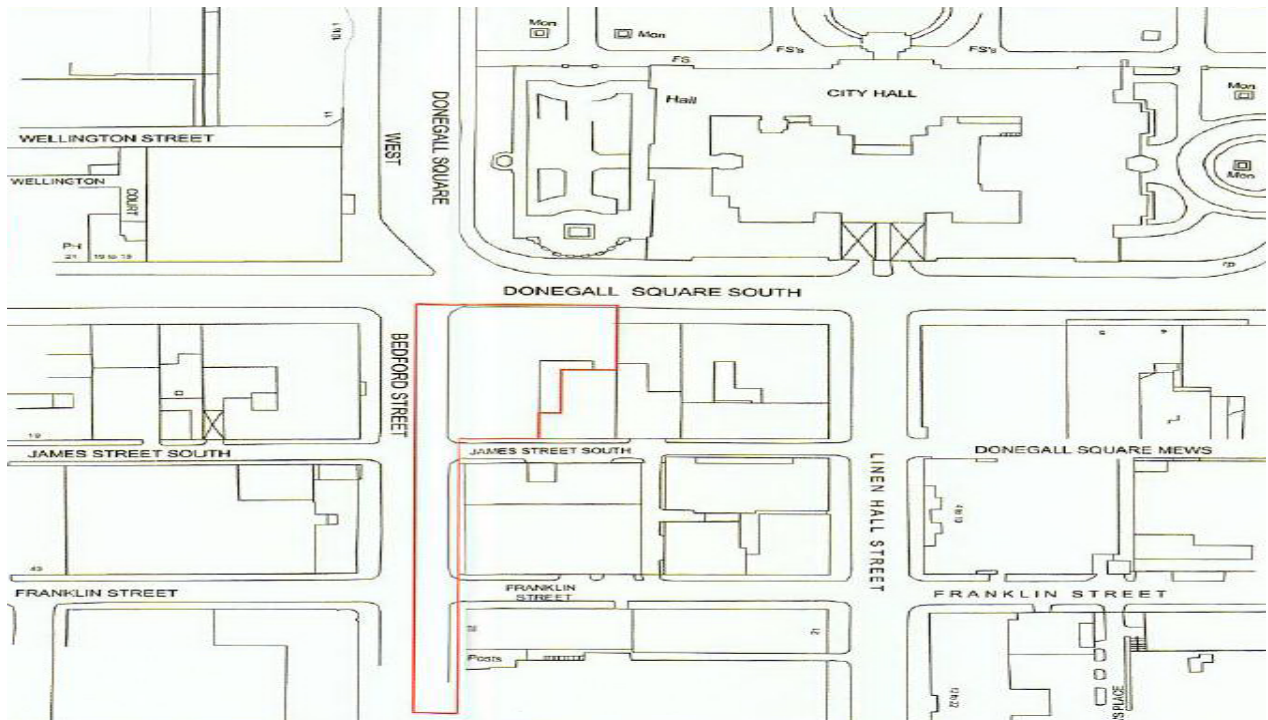
The proposal is considered compliant with the development plan, relevant policy considerations and all other material considerations.

Approval of planning permission is recommended.

Delegation of final wording of conditions to the Director of Planning & Place is requested.

Case Officer Report

Site Location Plan



Representations:	
Letters of Support	None Received
Letters of Objection	2
Number of Support Petitions and signatures	No Petitions Received
Number of Petitions of Objection and signatures	No Petitions Received
Representations from Elected Members	Mr I Paisley (Junior) MP – status update meetings.
Neighbour Notification Checked	Yes

1.0	<p>Description of Proposed Development</p> <p>Conversion of existing Scottish Mutual Building to Boutique Hotel comprising public bars, restaurants, function spaces and hotel bedrooms to include internal and external alterations and additions, including cone roofs to corner turrets, and enclosed external seating areas on Bedford Street.</p> <p>The application is a revision to a previously approved scheme under ref: Z/2013/1300/F approved 28th February 2014. The main revisions include revised ground, and first floor layouts, and a formal external seating area along Bedford Street to a depth of approximately 3.2m.</p>
2.0	Description of Site
2.1	The site is irregular in shape and is located at the junction of Bedford Street, Donegall Square South and Donegall Square West in Belfast City Centre. The site is occupied by the existing Scottish Mutual Building which is a Grade B1 listed building which is finished with red sandstone. It is characterised by its projecting turrets, high level arcades and crow-stepped gables, curved glass shop fronts and ornate arched entrance on Donegall Square South.
2.2	The area is of mixed use and includes retail, banks, cafes, restaurants and offices on the ground floor of buildings with predominantly offices on the upper floors. City Hall is located opposite the site on Donegall Square South. The site is located within the Linen Conservation Area and is located within the city centre and main office area as defined in BMAP. It is also located with the Commercial District as defined by the BMAP.
Planning Assessment of Policy and other Material Considerations	
3.0	<p>Site History</p> <p>Ref ID: Z/2013/1296/LBC Proposal: Proposed conversion of existing Scottish Mutual Building to Boutique Hotel to include internal alterations; external repairs to stonework; repairs and replacement of windows; repairs and replacement of roof coverings and rooflights alterations to existing shopfronts including provision of a lightweight awning; extension to building in rear courtyard alterations to James Street South elevation to create service access Address: Scottish Mutual Building, 15-16 Donegal Square South and 2-14 Bedford Street, Belfast, BT1 5JG, Decision: Consent Granted Decision Date: 04.03.2014</p>

	<p>Ref ID: Z/2013/1300/F Proposal: Conversion of existing Scottish Mutual Building to Boutique Hotel comprising public bars, restaurants, function spaces, hotel bedrooms and loft apartments to include internal and external alterations Address: Scottish Mutual Building, 15-16 Donegall Square South and 2-14 Bedford Street, Belfast, BT1 5JG, Decision: Permission Granted Decision Date: 04.03.2014</p>
4.0	Policy Framework
4.1	Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015
4.2	<p>Regional Development Strategy (RDS); Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS); Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 6, Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage, PPS3: Roads Considerations; Development Control Advice Note 15 Vehicular Access Standards</p>
5.0	Statutory Consultee Responses
	<p>Transport NI – no objections; NI Water – no objections; Rivers Agency – no objections; Natural Heritage – no objections.</p>
6.0	Non Statutory Consultee Responses
	Environmental Health – no objections
7.0	Representations
7.1	<p>The application has been neighbour notified and advertised in the local press. Two representations have been received raising the following issues (summarised):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support for refurbishment of Listed Building; - Objection to detail design of glazed footpath area at Bedford Street – contrary to PPS6; - Loss of access via right of way; - Impact of loading bay; - Removal of boilerhouse structure/not indicated on plans;
8.0	Other Material Considerations
	<p>BCC City Centre and Investment Strategy Linen Quarter Vision and Guidance Document - BCC</p>
9.0	Assessment
9.1	<p>The key issues in the assessment of the proposal are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The principle of the proposal at this location; - Impact on amenity / character of the area and a listed building; - Impact on transport and other infrastructure. <p>Policy Considerations:</p>

9.2	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 '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'.
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. The SPPS states at paragraph 1.13 (page 7) that a number of policy statements, including PPS3, remain applicable under 'transitional arrangements'.
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 hotel use with a restaurant at ground floor. There are no planning policy statements specific to hotels uses, whilst Development Control Advice Note 4 (DCAN4) relates to restaurant (and related) uses.
9.6	<p>BMAP is the current development plan for the area. Within the plan the site is identified as falling within a Conservation Area, Designation CC09 Character Area Old City, and also within the primary Retail Core. The plan sets out the Tourism strategy at page 92 and comprises the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting a sustainable approach to tourism development; • protecting a varied range of tourism development opportunities; • facilitating the development of tourism infrastructure; and • enhancing the urban environment generally and, in particular, "first impression" points at major gateways, and in city and town centres.
9.7	Of particular relevance to this case is the identification of Conservation Areas, including the Linen Conservation Area within which the site is located, as 'sensitive areas'. It states that tourism development should not be approved within the majority of their extent to protect the tourism assets. The strategy also states that 'A key challenge is to secure the benefits of tourism development, while conserving the assets of natural and built environment which provide the basis for visitor attraction. Excessive pressures on the natural and man-made heritage can place these assets at risk'.
9.8	<p>PPS6 is relevant due to the site being a Listed Building, and within a Conservation Area designation and proximity to Listed Buildings. The site itself is not subject to any zonings.</p> <p>Consideration</p>
9.9	The primary policy considerations are set out in Policy BH7 of PPS 6 which provides the policy on the change of use of listed buildings. It states that the Department will normally permit the change of use of a listed building where it secures the upkeep and survival of the building and the character and architectural or historic interest of the building would be preserved or enhanced. BH12 – new development in a Conservation Area, and BH11 – Development affecting the Setting of Listed Buildings are also relevant in this case. 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

	<p>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 with the guidance set out in conservation area documents.</p>
9.10	<p>Given the site context which consists entirely of non-residential uses, and the previous approval which remains extant, the proposed hotel and uses are considered acceptable in principle subject to satisfactory design and character issues.</p>
	<p>Design and character of the Area;</p>
9.11	<p>The previously approved works to the building include the removal of internal walls, particularly on the lower floors (ground- second floor). A new helical stair is to be located at the Bedford Street/ Donegall Square South corner and will provide access from the ground floor to the second floor. A new ventilation louvre is to be installed to the rear at mezzanine level, a new glazed service link at first and second floor levels. On the upper floors portions of internal walls are to be removed and additional walls constructed to provide the internal layout for the hotel bedrooms. A new stair and enclosure is to be installed to the north side of the building to extend the existing stairwell to provide access to the upper floors. A mezzanine floor is to be constructed above the fifth floor to provide the upper floor for the two duplex serviced apartments. An internal light shaft is also to be installed to the internal corridor. An escape stair is to be provided internally to the east of the building.</p> <p>The external alterations include the installation of new metal railings along the corner of Donegall Square South and Bedford Street, new flush rooflights to the corner of Donegall Square South and Bedford Street, acrylic canvas awnings to the ground floor windows (extend approximately 2.2m) with awning housing below the proposed fascias and new timber transom to the glazing to the ground floor windows which is to be in keeping with the existing windows. A rooflight above the stair/ liftwell will also be re-instated which had previously been replaced with a solid liftshaft in the 1960's. Four glass balustrades are to be installed to the exterior of the fourth floor.</p> <p>The existing leaded lights to the Brook Street (previously Abernthy's opticians) are to be retained and the leaded lights to the adjacent bay are to be retained if found behind the existing timber panel and re-instated if not present. The existing glazing and frames are to be retained where possible and where necessary new timber frames to match the existing will be used. The glazing on the first and second floor corner turret and the two windows in the bays on either side will be replaced with a fine mesh.</p> <p>On the Bedford Street elevation the existing stallrisers are to be retained while the centre portion of this elevation at ground floor is to be altered with the curved shop fronts being replaced with a flush finish with new black polished granite stallrisers to match the existing and new timber frames and glazing with new timber transom. The profile of the frame and transom are to match the existing. Two of the glazed units are to be sliding timber framed doors opening into the bar.</p> <p>The James Street South elevation is to be amended with the installation of a new metal clad door with top light and brick soldier course over. New timber frames and glazing are also to be installed to three of the four existing windows with the fourth being replaced with a new door and side panel. To the rear of the building the rooflight over the stairwell and lift shaft is to be repaired and re-instated and brickwork is to be repaired.</p>

9.12	<p>The current proposal repeats many the works discussed above, however revisions are include revised ground, and first floor layouts, and a formal external seating area along Bedford Street to a depth of approximately 3.2m. The external area was previously approved to a depth of 1.5m. This area is therefore increased in depth by 1.7m</p>
9.13	<p>The uses and broad layout arrangement replicate the previous approval and in that regard the proposal is acceptable. There are detailed demolition and alteration works necessary to facilitate the proposal. Historic Environment Division have been consulted in relation to these issues and have no objections to the application or associated Listed Building Consent. The Conservation Officer has indicated broad support for the design approach and that the proposal would not adversely impact on the Conservation Area.</p> <p>Access, Parking and Transport:</p>
9.14	<p>In relation to traffic, access, servicing arrangement and parking issues, Transport NI was consulted and is satisfied with the traffic, parking and access arrangements. This includes the layout arrangement for the public footpath and revised on street parking arrangement. This element will also require separate consent under Roads/Transport Legislation.</p>
9.15	<p>Given the TNI response, the proposal is considered compliant with requirements in PPS3 and associated guidance.</p> <p>Other Considerations:</p>
9.16	<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. NIEA have no objections in terms of contamination or drainage. NI Water has no objection in relation to sewerage or flooding.</p>
9.17	<p>Two representations has been received, however following the above assessment the proposal is considered compliant with relevant policy considerations. The right of way and boiler house issue raised is a civil matter between the respective parties as it relates to internal access within/through the building. The loading bay element of the proposal has been removed. The objections relating to PPS6 are outweighed by the positive responses from HED and the Conservation Officer.</p>
9.18	<p>Section 76 - Developer Contributions This application would attract Sec 76 developer contributions, however in this case, the costs to be incurred in the restoration and re-use of the listed building would be significant. This development does not include an additional non listed element, where costs can be offset, therefore to ensure a viable scheme that is not prohibited from progressing forward, a developer contribution is not being sought in this case.</p>
10.0	<p>Having regard to the policy context, planning history, and other material considerations above, the proposal is considered acceptable and approval of planning permission is recommended due to compliance with policy and taking account of consultation responses.</p>
	<p>Conditions</p> <p>Delegation of final conditions to Director of Planning and Place Requested:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Time limit – 5 years

2. No development shall commence on site until full details (including details of noise attenuation) of ventilation and filtration equipment to suppress and disperse any fumes and/or smell created from the cooking operations on the premises have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not become operational until the approved equipment has been completed in accordance with the approved details and it shall be subsequently maintained in accordance with the approved details thereafter.

REASON: In order to safeguard the amenities of the area in which the development is located.

3. No development shall commence on site until a scheme of works for noise attenuation has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any works which form part of the approved scheme shall be completed prior to the premises becoming operational and shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details at all times thereafter.

REASON: To ensure the creation/retention of an environment free from intrusive levels of noise and activity in the interests of the amenity of the area.

4. The materials and construction method to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be submitted to the Planning Authority for written agreement prior to commencement of any development on the site. The materials shall match in material, colour and texture those used in the existing building except where indicated on the approved plans XX date received.

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area.

5. All new internal works and finishes, and any works of making good, shall match the existing original fabric in respect of using materials of a matching form, composition and consistency, detailed execution and finished appearance, except where indicated otherwise on the drawings hereby approved. Samples of all materials to be used are to be submitted to the Planning Authority for written agreement prior to commencement of works to that element of the development on the site.

Reason: In order that the architectural and historic interest of this Building is safeguarded and in the interest of visual amenity.

6. Glazing specification for the proposed canopy and external seating area to the Bedford Street Elevation shall be agreed with the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of works onsite.
7. Hard landscaping pavement finish specification to the external seating area shall be agreed with the Local Planning Authority and to the satisfaction of HED prior to commencement of works onsite.
8. Existing roof slates in diminishing courses shall be retained.

Reasons 6-8: To protect the essential character of the listed building.

9. If during the development works, new contamination or risks are encountered which have not previously been identified, works should cease and the Department shall

be notified immediately. This new contamination shall be fully investigated in accordance with the Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination (CLR11). In the event of unacceptable risks being identified, a remediation strategy shall be agreed with the Department in writing, and subsequently implemented and verified to its satisfaction.

Reason: Protection of environmental receptors to ensure the site is suitable for use.

10. After completing any remediation works required under Condition 1 and prior to occupation of the development, a verification report needs to be submitted in writing and agreed with Department. This report should be completed by competent persons in accordance with the Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination (CLR11). The verification report should present all the remediation and monitoring works undertaken and demonstrate the effectiveness of the works in managing all the risks and achieving the remedial objectives.

Reason: Protection of environmental receptors to ensure the site is suitable for use.

ANNEX	
Date Valid	14th March 2016
Date First Advertised	22nd April 2016
Date Last Advertised	21st April 2017
Details of Neighbour Notification (all addresses)	
<p>The Owner/Occupier, 01, 16-22 Bedford House, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7FD, The Owner/Occupier, 01, 1-7 Causeway Exchange, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7EG, The Owner/Occupier, 02, 16-22 Bedford House, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7FD, The Owner/Occupier, 02, 1-7 Causeway Exchange, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7EG, The Owner/Occupier, 03, 16-22 Bedford House, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7FD, The Owner/Occupier, 03, 1-7 Causeway Exchange, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7EG, The Owner/Occupier, 04, 16-22 Bedford House, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7FD, The Owner/Occupier, 04, 1-7 Causeway Exchange, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7EG, The Owner/Occupier, 05, 16-22 Bedford House, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7FD, The Owner/Occupier, 05, 1-7 Causeway Exchange, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7EG, The Owner/Occupier, 06, 16-22 Bedford House, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7FD, The Owner/Occupier, 06, 1-7 Causeway Exchange, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7EG, The Owner/Occupier, 07, 16-22 Bedford House, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7FD, The Owner/Occupier, 07, 1-7 Causeway Exchange, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7EG, The Owner/Occupier, 08, 16-22 Bedford House, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7FD, The Owner/Occupier, 08, 1-7 Causeway Exchange, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7EG, The Owner/Occupier, 09, 16-22 Bedford House, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7FL, The Owner/Occupier, 1, Pavilions Office Park, Hollywood, Down, Northern Ireland, BT18 9JQ The Owner/Occupier, 1-7 Causeway Exchange, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7EG, Scottish Amicable Building 11 Donegall Square South, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT1 5JA, The Owner/Occupier, 11 Donegall Square South, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT1 5JE, The Owner/Occupier,</p>	

The Owner/Occupier,
 16 Donegall Square South, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT1 5JH,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 16 Donegall Square South, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT1 5JH,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 16 Donegall Square South, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT1 5JJ,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 16 Donegall Square South, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT1 5JJ,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 2nd Floor, The Warehouse, 7 James Street South, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 8DN,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 4th Floor, The Warehouse, 7 James Street South, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 8DN,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 4th Floor, The Warehouse, 7 James Street South, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 8DN,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 5th Floor, The Warehouse, 7 James Street South, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 8DN,
 Philippa Martin
 66, Donegall Pass, Belfast, Antrim, Northern Ireland, BT7 1BU
 The Owner/Occupier,
 First Floor, The Warehouse, 7 James Street South, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 8DN,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 Mchetts Music, 16-22 Bedford House, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7DX,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 Second Floor, The Warehouse, 7 James Street South, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 8DN,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 Stensons Jeweller, 16-22 Bedford House, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7FD,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 Strategic Planning, 1 Pavillions Office Park, Kinnegar Drive, Holywood, BT18 9JQ
 The Owner/Occupier,
 The Mezzanine Floor, 16-22 Bedford House, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7FD,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 The Warehouse, 7 James Street South, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 8DN,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 Third Floor, The Warehouse, 7 James Street South, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 8DN,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 UNIT 6-7, 16-22 Bedford House, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7FD,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 Unit 2, 16-22 Bedford House, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7FD,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 Unit 3, 16-22 Bedford House, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7FD,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 Unit 8, 16-22 Bedford House, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7FD,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 Ventnors, 16-22 Bedford House, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7DT,
 The Owner/Occupier,

Date of Last Neighbour Notification	21.04.2016 20.09.2016 24.04.2017
Date of EIA Determination	N/A

ES Requested	No
<p>Planning History</p> <p>Ref ID: LA04/2015/1110/PAN Proposal: Demolition of 11 Donegall Square South and redevelopment to provide new office accommodation to include provision over Ten square Hotel and 3-5 Linenhall Street. Address: Ten Square Hotel, 10 Donegall Square South, Belfast, BT1 5JD, Decision: PANACC Decision Date:</p> <p>Ref ID: LA04/2016/0569/LBC Proposal: Conversion of existing Scottish Mutual Building to Boutique Hotel comprising public bars, restaurants, function spaces. Internal and external alterations and additions proposed. Address: Scottish Mutual Building, 15-16 Donegall Square South and 2-14 Bedford Street, Belfast, BT1 5JG, Decision: Decision Date:</p> <p>Ref ID: Z/2004/0818/F Proposal: Change of use from Class 1 retail to Class 2 recruitment consultant. Address: Room 15, Scottish Mutual Building, Donegall Square South, Belfast BT1 5JE. Decision: Decision Date: 28.05.2004</p> <p>Ref ID: Z/2005/0598/LB Proposal: Internal alterations to a Listed Building. Address: Nationwide Building Society, 2 - 6 Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Northern Ireland, BT02 7FB Decision: Decision Date: 03.08.2005</p> <p>Ref ID: Z/2005/1135/F Proposal: Change of use from offices to coffee shop at ground floor only. Address: Scottish Mutual Building, 8 Bedford Street, Belfast BT2 Decision: Decision Date: 19.10.2005</p> <p>Ref ID: Z/2005/1286/LB Proposal: Change of use from offices to coffee shop. Address: 8 Bedford Street, Scottish Mutual Building, Belfast, BT2 Decision: Decision Date: 17.10.2005</p> <p>Ref ID: Z/2009/0785/LB Proposal: Alterations at ground floor lobby and internal alterations of listed building. Address: Scottish Mutual Building, 16 Donegall Square South, Belfast, BT1 5JG Decision:</p>	

Decision Date: 26.08.2009

Ref ID: Z/2010/0244/LB

Proposal: Alterations to ground floor lobby, including disabled entrance, and to 1st floor walls. Amendment to previous listed building consent.

Address: Scottish Mutual Building, 16 Donegall Square South, Belfast, BT1 5JG

Decision:

Decision Date: 01.06.2010

Ref ID: Z/2014/0497/F

Proposal: Realignment of junction to Donegall Square South and Bedford Street, repositioning of traffic lights and lamp posts and resurfacing.

Address: Scottish Mutual Building, 15-16 Donegall Square South and 2-14 Bedford Street, Belfast, BT1 5JG,

Decision: PG

Decision Date: 12.06.2014

Drawing Numbers and Title

Notification to Department (if relevant)

Date of Notification to Department:

Response of Department:

The proposal is assessed against the following planning policy and guidance:

Belfast Urban Area Plan (BUAP) 2001,
 Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (dBMAP) 2015,
 Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1, General Principles,
 Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 3, Access, Movement and Parking,
 Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 5, Retailing and Town Centres,

The main issues to be considered in the assessment of this application are: the acceptability of the proposed uses, the acceptability of the proposed works to the listed building and the works to the building in the Conservation Area.

Proposed uses

The proposed plans indicate the extension of the basement to accommodate additional plant areas and ancillary spaces including staff changing facilities, keg and dry stores, walk in fridge and freezers and a preparation area. The ground floor shows a bar onto Bedford Street and a piano/sports bar onto Donegall Square South with a kitchen area to the centre of the floor. The Mezzanine level shows a lounge and 'floating' cocktail bar and ancillary spaces with voids over the bar on the Bedford Street side. The first floor uses include a restaurant and bar with ancillary spaces with a number of voids to the ground floor. The second floor provides two function rooms and a bar. The third and fourth floors are to provide hotel bedroom accommodation with 18no. bedrooms on each floor. The fifth floor is to accommodate 5 apartments with two of the apartments being duplex with the upper floor located a mezzanine above.

The site is located within the main office area as defined by BUAP and dBMAP. However, this does not preclude other uses.

PPS 5 outlines the Department's policy for retail development. It notes that town centres will be promoted as the principal location for a mix of uses including leisure and entertainment. The policy encourages proposals for such development where they contribute to the diversity and vitality of the centre without encroaching on the primary retail core at the ground floor. The proposal is not located within the primary retail core. The majority of the existing ground floor of the building is in use for sui generis use (consumption of food and drink), office and financial (building society) with less than 150sqm of gross floor space being currently in use as retail. The proposal involves the loss of approximately 150sqm of office space with less than 8.5m of frontage onto Donegall Square South.

The proposed ground floor uses are considered as acceptable given the location of the site within the City Centre but outside of the primary retail core. The proposed hotel use and associated serviced apartments on the upper floors will ensure the continued and intensified use of the existing listed building and will bring increased vitality and viability onto the City Centre. Environmental Health was consulted and recommended conditions in relation to noise and odours to ensure that existing and future occupants will not be adversely affected by the proposed and existing uses in the area. It is considered these conditions will mitigate impacts and ensure they are not unacceptable.

The proposed change of use of the building is considered to be acceptable, in this context. Policy BH12 of PPS 6 notes that a change of use in a Conservation Area will normally be acceptable where external alterations are sympathetic to their setting and relate to the remainder of the building and the local street scene. The proposed alterations are considered in detail below.

Proposed Works

Policy BH8 of PPS6 refers to the extension or alteration of a listed building. It requires proposals to meet a number of criteria including that the essential character of the building and its setting are retained and its features of special interest remain intact and unimpaired; the proposed works make use of traditional and/ or sympathetic building materials and techniques which match or are in keeping with those found on the building; and the architectural detail match or are in keeping with the building.

The proposed works to the building are considered acceptable with the character and setting of the building being retained with external works to the principal elevations being minimal. The proposals note the retention of existing fabric where possible including woodwork, windows, surrounds and internal plaster being replaced unless investigations deem replacement is required. Any alterations will be agreed with NIEA. Repairs to external brickwork is to be done with lime mortar, all walls are to be finished in lime plaster. Any removed historic features are to be tagged, recorded and stored safely for re-use. The submitted conservation and design strategy notes that the lower floors in particular will be affected by the removal of historic material given the level of re-modelling. As a result it recommends that this material is re-used in the upper floors.

NIEA:HBU was consulted with the proposal and offered no objections noting it considers the proposal complies with BH8.

The proposal includes the extension of the existing basement. While NIEA:HBU raised issue with the proposal the structural integrity of the building was raised as an issue in an internal discussion. As such the agent submitted information noting that structural and geotechnical investigations will be required and building control approval will be obtained prior to any works to form the new basement.

Conservation Area

Policy BH12 of PPS 6 refers to new development in a Conservation Area. It notes that proposals for the change of use of a building in the Conservation Area will normally only be acceptable where the associated external alterations are sympathetic to the building and the street scene. With regard to alterations and extensions it notes that they will be acceptable where they are sensitive to the existing building, in keeping with the character and appearance of the particular area and will not prejudice the amenities of adjacent properties. The proposed internal alterations to the building include the removal of a significant number of internal walls, particularly in the lower floors. The external alterations to the principal elevations primarily involve changes to the ground floor shopfronts including fascias, installation of awnings and associated housing to the ground floor windows, glass balustrades to the fourth floor and the replacement of glazing to the corner first and second floors with wire mesh.

The Conservation Officer offered no objection to the proposal. In his initial response he noted that the external alterations were minimal and sought confirmation on a number of items including details on the fascias, awnings, stall risers and clarification on the retention of existing frames. He noted that the leaded lights of the former Murray and Abernthy's should be retained and that the timber panel on the adjacent unit may conceal similar leaded lights. The agents subsequently confirmed these are to be retained and re-instated if necessary. He also suggested breaking up the glazing with a horizontal transom as per the Abernthy's unit. The agent has since confirmed the installation of a transom. The Conservation Officer offered no objections to the proposal in his final response but noted it may be useful to have an example of the proposed fine mesh. The agent has not confirmed the material or supplier at this stage. Given this it is considered that the detail of the proposed material could be agreed by way of condition.

The policy also notes that very careful consideration will be required for alterations affecting the roof of a property. The proposal involves the installation of flush roof lights. These are considered to be sympathetic to the character of the existing building and are therefore considered to be acceptable.

The Linen Conservation Area booklet notes that while offices are the predominant use in the Conservation Area ancillary uses are increasing in number with the level of business activity in Bedford Street echoing the 19th Century past. It notes that the refurbishment and conversion of existing property can increase the range and variety of land uses in the Conservation Area. It states that the Department will seek to ensure that the design of commercial fronts and fascias will express and not obscure the structural elements of the existing facade. The proposed alterations to the ground floor including the fascias, with the awning housing located behind, are considered to be in compliance. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with the guidance provided in the Conservation booklet.

Representations

No objections were received by the Department.

Consultations

Roads Service was consulted with the application and offered no objections subject to informatives.

NIW was consulted and offered a statutory response.

Environmental Health was consulted and offered no objections subject to conditions and informatives.

NIEA:PHB was consulted and offered no objections.

The Conservation Officer was consulted and offered no objections.

NIEA:HMU was consulted and offered no objections subject to conditions and informatives.