

Development Management Officer Report Committee Application

Summary	
Committee Meeting Date: 15 th February 2021	
Application ID: LA04/2021/0911/F	
Proposal: Demolition of existing building and construction of 9 no. apartments and associated site works	Location: 236 Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT43EU
Referral Route: Decision of the Director of Planning and Building Control given that a previous application for redevelopment of the site was also considered by the Committee.	
Recommendation:	Refusal
Applicant Name and Address: CYM properties Ltd 181 Templepatrick Road Ballyclare BT39 0RA	Agent Name and Address: Footprint Architectural Design 181 Templepatrick Road Ballyclare BT39 0RA
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>Full planning permission is sought for the demolition of the existing building and the erection of 9 apartments.</p> <p>The site is located within the development limits of Belfast in both the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (BUAP); and both versions of draft Belfast Metropolitan Plan 2015 (dBMAP). The site is within a draft Area of Townscape Character.</p> <p>The main issues to be considered are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principle of the proposal at this location • Demolition • Impact on the character and appearance of the area • Impact on Built Heritage • Impact on amenity • Access, parking and transport • Infrastructure capacity • Impact on Human Health <p>The principle of residential redevelopment is acceptable on the basis that the site is within the development limits in both the extant and draft plans and historically would have been used as a dwelling. The Development Plan does not preclude housing from this location.</p> <p>However, it is considered that the existing building makes a positive contribution to the character of the area and its demolition would normally present concerns. However, the difficult history of building is a material consideration and justifies removal of the building. Notwithstanding, it is still necessary for the applicant to demonstrate an acceptable redevelopment proposal and “put back”. It is considered that the design of the proposed apartments, in terms of their design, scale, massing and site coverage would be inappropriate for the site and locality and would harm the character and appearance of the area.</p>	

Sixteen letters of objection have been received. Issues raised are addressed in the main report and include:

- Parking and traffic issues;
- Failure to respect the built context/local character of the area
- Concerns regarding the design and layout of the proposal
- Overdevelopment of the site
- Impact on listed buildings
- Impact on residential amenity
- Inadequate amenity provision
- Noise pollution
- Further engagement with victims of abuse scandal required
- Security and health and safety concerns
- Inaccurate plans
- Unacceptable use
- Further engagement with victims of abuse scandal required
- Security and health and safety concerns
- Contrary to planning policy

Consultees

DfI Roads– No objection

NI Water – Further information required

Rivers Agency – Further information required

BCC Conservation Officer – Objection

Urban Design Officer – Objection

BCC Environmental Health – No objections

Recommendation

It is recommended that planning permission is refused on the grounds that the design of the proposed apartments is inappropriate and would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area. Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the refusal reasons.



WEST ELEVATION
SCALE 1:100



SOUTH ELEVATION
SCALE 1:100



EAST ELEVATION
SCALE 1:100



NORTH ELEVATION
SCALE 1:100



KEY	
FACADE LINE	-----
RIDGE LINE	-----



KEY	
OUTLINE OF No. 238 (Neighboring building)	-----
OUTLINE OF No. 234 (Existing building)	-----
OUTLINE OF No. 129 North Road	-----

1.0	<p>Description of Proposed Development</p> <p>The application seeks full planning permission for demolition of the existing building and construction of nine apartments and associated site works.</p> <p>The proposed apartments would have three storeys, stepping down to two storeys at the rear. Vehicular access would be from North Road to the west. This would lead to 12 off-street parking spaces underneath the building at ground level. There would also be pedestrian access from Upper Newtownards Road to the south. The building is proposed to be finished in red brick with profiled aluminium cladded roof.</p>
2.0	<p>Description of Site</p> <p>The site occupies a prominent corner plot at the junction of Upper Newtownards Road and North Road. The topography of the site is relatively flat and even. The site contains a large two storey detached double fronted dwelling. The dwelling is traditional designed and of late 19th century origin with canted bay windows either side of a centrally located front entrance doorway. It is finished in a painted render with decorative fenestration and mouldings to the front façade and decorative fret work barge-broads to the gables. The site has been in use as an office which has resulted in the front and rear gardens being hard surfaced for parking. The building is currently vacant and has fallen into disrepair.</p> <p>The character of the surrounding area is primarily residential but has other uses nearby with a primary school located to the rear of the site; terraced dwellings along North Road and large detached dwellings; with office use and a restaurant neighbouring the site along the Upper Newtownards Road.</p>
<p>Planning Assessment of Policy and other Material Considerations</p>	
3.0	<p>Site History</p> <p>LA04/2018/2283/O</p> <p>Proposal: Demolition of existing building and construction of 12 apartments.</p> <p>Address: 236 Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3EU.,</p> <p>Status: Withdrawn 07.10.2019</p>
4.0	<p>Policy Framework</p>
4.1	<p>Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (BUAP)</p> <p>Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2004 (dBMAP v2004)</p> <p>Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (dBMAP v2014)</p> <p>Following the Court of Appeal decision on dBMAP, the extant Development Plan is the BUAP. However, given the stage at which dBMAP had reached pre-adoption through a period of independent examination, the policies within dBMAP still carry weight and are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The weight to be afforded is a matter of judgement for the decision maker. It is considered that significant weight can be given to dBMAP given its advanced stage.</p>
4.2	<p>Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)</p> <p>Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)</p> <p>PPS 3: Access, Movement and Parking</p> <p>PPS 6: Addendum Areas of Townscape Character</p> <p>PPS 7: Quality Residential Developments</p> <p>PPS 15: Planning and Flood Risk</p> <p>Creating Places</p> <p>Development Control Advice Note 8 – Housing in Existing Urban Areas</p>

<p>5.0 5.1</p>	<p>Consultations: Statutory Consultee Responses DfI Roads – No objection NI Water – the application should enter into a Pre Development Enquiry (PDE) with NIW to establish waste-water capacity. Rivers Agency – requests the further information sought by NI Water in relation to surface water drainage capacity before they are able to complete their assessment. HED – No objection.</p>
<p>5.2</p>	<p>Non-Statutory Consultee Responses Environmental Health – No objection Conservation Officer – Objection. Urban Design Officer- Objection.</p>
<p>6.0 6.1 6.2</p>	<p>Representations The application has been neighbour notified and advertised in the local press.</p> <p>Sixteen objections have been received as summarised below.</p> <p><i>Design</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal is contrary to planning policy as it would fails to maintain or enhance the distinctive character of the Area of Townscape Character and does not respect the existing built form it is contrary to Policy QD 1 of PPS 7 and Policy ATC 2 of the Addendum to PPS6: Areas of Townscape Character. • The proposal would be out of character with the existing area. • Height, scale, massing, footprint and density would be inappropriate • The proposal would be contrary to Policy LC 1 of the Addendum to PPS 7 in that the massing and density is significantly higher than that found on the established residential area of the North Road where the proposal predominantly impacts. • Density/overdevelopment concerns • Inadequate landscaping • No reference to disabled accessibility considerations within the Design and Access Statement <p><i>Setting of the Listed Building</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal would have a detrimental impact on the setting of the Listed Strandtown Primary School and is contrary to Policy BH11 of PPS 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage <p><i>Transport</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about increased traffic and parking • Inadequate car parking within the North Road • Exacerbation of parking and traffic associated with the Cyprus Avenue restaurant • Health and safety concerns relating to traffic moving across a footpath used by the public, particularly by school children • Lack of car parking provision including visitor parking, service vehicles parking and space for construction vehicles • Access and parking dimensions are inadequate • Parking obstruction • Inadequate parking survey

- Disagreement with timeframes suggested for the parking survey
- Disagree with contents of applicant's transport assessment and parking survey
- The site would be suitable for a car park
- Proposal contrary to Policy AMP 2 of PPS3: Access, Movement and Parking.

Amenity

- Impact on residential amenity due to overlooking as the building would overlook the opposite terraces, especially as balconies are included in the new development.
- Overlooking into Nos, 86, 88, 90, 92 and 92a North Road from proposed balconies. Nos 84-91 inclusive, Strandtown school and reference has been made to potential overlooking into an office at No. 84 North Road.
- Objection from Strandtown school-overlooking from apartment Nos 6 & 9.
- Inadequate separation distances between the proposal and neighbouring properties
- Loss of light
- Overshadowing
- Noise pollution, obstruction and disruption associated with traffic.
- Given the scale of the apartment block, the ratio of built form to open space and parking space is unsatisfactory. Creating Places requires 10 to 30sqm per unit. There is only a small garden area to the front and balconies and a roof terrace are to provide the remaining open space.
- Lack of amenity space

Use

- A memorial garden for victims of abuse would be more appropriate than this proposal for apartments
- Proposed residential use is not apt for such a sensitive site
- The proposal is incompatible with the adjacent school

Quality of application submission

- The applicant does not appear to include all of the information required by the Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.
- The plans are inaccurate
- The contextual drawings are deceiving
- Validity of the Design and Access Statement

Public Engagement

- Further engagement with victims is required

Other matters

- Unauthorised signage has been erected in respect of the development on the southern roadside elevation facing onto the Upper Newtownards Road.
- Security concerns in terms of doubts regarding boundary treatment between proposal and the school
- Proposal is not a not a mixed tenure development and there is no real mix of choice or affordability.
- Proposal should not be just decided by the Planning Authority

Some representations support demolition of the building.

Officer response to third party objections

Officers respond as follows to these objections (where those objections are not addressed in the main assessment later in the report).

- A number of concerns were raised regarding parking, traffic and safety. Issues were raised about the quality of the information provided by the applicant. Safety concerns are based on additional vehicle journeys associated with the proposal. Concerns regarding safety with the access and its proximity to a school were also raised. Objectors provided photographs depicting vehicles parked in the area and traffic along neighbouring roads. DFI Roads considered the objections and are of the opinion that the proposal is acceptable and complies with PPS 3. Further discussion on parking, access and transport is included within the assessment section of the report.
- Noise pollution concerns relate to the proposal for nine apartments increasing noise levels. Environmental Health Service has not indicated that there would be an issue regarding increase in noise pollution. Any undue noise created by occupants of future apartments is a matter of control for the Council's Environmental Health Service.
- The request for a memorial garden is not within the remit of the planning authority as the Council must determine the application before it.
- The Council carried out statutory neighbour notification and consultation requirements in accordance with the regulations.
- The Planning Act 2011 identifies the Council as Planning Authority with responsibility to determine the application.
- The density of the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of the number of units on the site, however, officers have concerns regarding the form and scale of the proposal, which would result in overdevelopment of the site. Part of the site fronts onto an arterial route which is an appropriate location for apartment living developments.
- Details of boundary treatments would be conditioned were planning permission to be granted.
- Regarding impact on listed buildings, HED has no objection to the proposal. It is considered that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the setting of the Listed Strandtown School.
- The proposal offers a range of apartment sizes. The applicant is a private developer and there is no mandatory policy requirement for the applicant to provide affordable units.
- The proposal would be subject to Building Control regulations in terms of access arrangements for disabled accessibility. The Design and Access statement makes reference to pedestrian access and internal lift features which would meet the requirements for wheelchair users and residents.
- The Design and Access Statement meets the requirements set out in The Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (NI) 2015.
- Unauthorised signage is a matter for planning enforcement.
- Adequate landscaping is proposed.
- The site is not zoned for car parking.
- The plans provided are to scale and appear to be accurate.

6.3

No further written representations have been made. Political inquiries have been made regarding the status of the application from Cllr Michelle Kelly, Alliance Party and from the Department of Justice office. There have also been enquiries from a BBC radio show to the Council's media team regarding the application.

7.0	Assessment
7.1	<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 • Demolition • Impact on the character and appearance of the area • Impact on Built Heritage • Impact on amenity • Access, parking and transport • Infrastructure capacity • Impact on Human Health
7.2	<p>The Principle of the Proposal at this Location</p> <p>The application seeks full planning permission for demolition of the existing building on site and the construction of 9 apartments. The site is located within the development limits for the city within both BUAP and both versions of dBMAP. As such the proposal accords with settlement policy and Policy SETT 2, Development within the Metropolitan Development Limits and Settlement Development Limits.</p>
7.3	<p>The site is within the draft Belmont Area of Townscape Character (ATC) in both versions of draft BMAP and in close proximity (15m) to Cyprus Avenue Conservation Area to the south.</p>
7.4	<p>At paragraph 6.137, the SPPS refers to the need to deliver increased housing without town cramming and espouses the importance of new development respecting local character and environmental quality, as well as safeguarding the amenity of existing residents. The SPPS also advises that sustainable development ought to be granted where it accords with the area plan and causes no harm to areas of acknowledged importance.</p>
7.5	<p>The building has characteristics of a dwelling house and has been used for residential purposes in the past. The site is located within the development limits and in a mixed-use area. This is an appropriate and sustainable location for housing with good access to public transport, shops and amenities. Redevelopment of the site for housing / apartments is considered acceptable in principle.</p>
	<p>Demolition</p>
	<p><i>Overview</i></p>
7.6	<p>Express planning permission is required for the demolition of an unlisted building in a draft or adopted Area of Townscape Character (ATC).</p>
7.7	<p>The site falls within the proposed (draft) Belmont ATC. The Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) considered objections to the proposed ATC designations in its report on the BMAP public inquiry. The Commission recommended no change to the Plan. It is therefore considered likely that the proposed ATC designation would remain, if BMAP were to be adopted. The proposed ATC designation is therefore a material consideration.</p>
7.8	<p>It is acknowledged that the PAC has established that there is nothing in the PPS6 Addendum, Areas of Townscape Character, which enables policy ATC 1 to be applied to draft Areas of Townscape Character designations. Notwithstanding, the PAC has</p>

	accepted that demolition of buildings within a draft ATC is a material consideration in the assessment of a proposal as they inform the local area's character.
7.9	<p>The impact of demolition in a draft or adopted ATC cannot be assessed in isolation and divorced from the merits of the redevelopment scheme. The test to be applied is whether the proposal would result in unacceptable damage to the local character, environmental quality or residential amenity of the area.</p> <p><i>Merits of the existing building</i></p>
7.10	The existing building occupies a prominent corner position on the busy junction of Upper Newtownards Road and North Road. The building has a traditional appearance with its double bayed frontage coupled with the material finishes contributes to its distinctiveness at this location. The building is considered to be of architectural merit, especially the front façade with later rear extensions being very unsympathetic. The building does exhibit signs of neglect with sections of the outer woodwork and render falling into disrepair, however, on the whole the building retains much of its period characteristics and appears structurally sound.
7.11	The building and site do have some detracting features notably a single storey flat roof extension and a 2.4m high palisade fence to the rear, and a significant amount of hard standing. The low-level palisade fence that forms part of the boundary treatment to the rear is also of little merit in the general locality. However, the remaining boundary treatment of a rendered front wall and mature vegetation defines this corner site and is very much in keeping with the properties to the east.
7.12	It is considered that the building, notwithstanding the detracting features, positively contributes to the character of the area and is generally worthy of protection, especially when consideration is given to its prime location at a busy road frontage and junction. The road frontage also forms a boundary with neighbouring Cyprus Avenue Conservation Area.
7.13	The views of the Council's Conservation Officer (CO) have been sought. The CO has also concluded that the building makes a positive contribution to the surrounding area and the demolition would therefore be contrary to policy. They refer to the site as an imposing corner building that presents strong examples of traditional architectural features which included canted bay windows and cornicing. The CO considers that the finishing and detailing set it apart from adjoining properties and in terms of layout and setting with the building forming the end of a clear building line. The CO concludes that No. 236 along with neighbouring properties up to No. 246 retained their historical layout and setting which in turn contribute to the character of the area.
7.14	Planning permission for demolition of such a building which makes a material contribution to the character and appearance of the area would normally be resisted. However, in this particular case, the building has a very difficult history. The site was formerly the Kincora Boys' Home and was subject to a Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry in 2017. This is a relevant material consideration which may be taken into account in the assessment of the application. Given the difficult history of the site, it is considered that the demolition of the building would be acceptable. However, the acceptability of the application is still dependent on a suitable redevelopment scheme, or "put back".
7.15	The CO also raises concerns about the redevelopment scheme, citing issues around overdevelopment, scale and massing. They comment that the extensive site coverage

	<p>represents significant overdevelopment of the site – certainly in comparison to both the existing and neighbouring plots. Such a level of site coverage does not reflect historical plot layouts and patterns within the area, which typically featured main massing to the front of the site, and subservient rear returns and private amenity space/garden ground to the rear.</p>
7.16	<p>As a result of the extensive plot coverage, the projection and mass of the rear section remains excessive, dominant, stark and out of keeping with the surrounding area. It would not respect the historical principles of main blocks to the front with subservient returns and open space to the rear, and in contrast would result with a singular block form extending across the majority of the site. The CO is of the view that the scheme does not maintain, reinforce or respect the particular qualities, identity or character of the distinct character of the area.</p>
7.17	<p>The site was subject to a previous planning application for 12 units under LA04/2018/2283/O. This was presented to the Planning committee in September 2019 with a recommendation to refuse. However, the application was deferred for a Committee site visit. The application was subsequently withdrawn and the application was therefore not returned to the Committee for a decision.</p>
7.18	<p>Where demolition of a building is acceptable in principle, in terms of good placemaking, it is important that there is also an acceptable redevelopment scheme. However, for the reasons cited by the CO above, and as set out in detail in the next section of this report, it is considered that the design of the redevelopment scheme is inappropriate and would have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the area.</p> <p>Impact on the character and appearance of the area</p> <p><u>Overview</u></p>
7.19	<p>The proposal has been assessed against Policy QD1 of PPS 7: Quality Residential Environments, which states that planning permission will only be granted for new residential development where it is demonstrated that the proposal will create a quality and sustainable residential environment, as well as guidance in the SPPS.</p>
7.20	<p>The application seeks full planning permission to redevelop the land with 9 apartments in a contemporary designed building. The layout of the proposal has frontages onto the Upper Newtownards Road and the North Road. The proposal has a 3-storey main corner block that steps down to two storeys plus a stepped back ‘roof’ to North Road and to the east along upper Newtownards Road. Pedestrian access would be off both the Upper Newtownards Road and the North Road. The existing vehicular access onto Upper Newtownards Roads would be reconfigured and retained. The existing tarmac parking area to the front of the building would be replaced with a green amenity space area which is welcomed as it offers amenity space for residents and provides visual amenity. Vehicular access would be provided via the North Road access where 12 ground floor car parking spaces are provided underneath the building at ground level.</p> <p><i>Form, Massing, Scale, Design and Density</i></p>
7.21	<p>The height of the proposed building is within the range of heights of the surrounding properties on Upper Newtownards Road and the three storey terrace buildings opposite the site on the North Road. There is a small setback between the corner block and the rear return block to North Road.</p>

7.22	<p>However, the proposal has an extensive footprint, one which is greater than the footprint of the existing building. The extensive site coverage is considered to represent significant overdevelopment of the site – certainly in comparison to both the existing and neighbouring plots. The building projects across the majority of the site which does not reflect historical plot layouts and patterns within the area, which typically featured main massing to the front of the site, and subservient rear returns and private amenity space/gardens around the building, to the front and to the rear.</p>
7.23	<p>As a result of the extensive plot coverage and relative uniformity in height, the projection and combination of mass of the front and rear section remains excessive, dominant and out of keeping with the surrounding area. It would not respect the historical principles of main blocks to the front with subservient returns and open space to the rear, and in contrast would result with a singular block form extending across the majority of the site.</p>
7.24	<p>The dominance of the building is evident in that the building extends almost the full depth of the site. This combined with a wider building footprint (than both the existing building and neighbouring buildings along Upper Newtownards Road), would result in a building which would be excessive in scale, overly dominant on this prominent corner plot and out of keeping with surrounding context. The general design architectural arrangement would be modern and fails to respond to the more traditional vernacular forms in the immediate locality. The proposal would result in a largely uniform approach being applied to the plot with little cognisance given to surrounding context, including established building lines, footprint depths and the subservient nature of existing rear returns.</p>
7.25	<p>The applicant's Design and Access Statement (DAS) suggests that direct comparisons are made to the arrangement of buildings directly opposite along North Road. However, buildings opposite are laid out in a more traditional manner in that their arrangement comprises two distinctive terraces; the first a terrace of six properties fronting Upper Newtownards Road and returning a short distance along North Road; and the second a terrace of four canted bay properties fronting North Road, with a clear break between both terraces.</p>
7.26	<p>The rationale presented in the DAS attempts to justify the design approach as replicating this arrangement in terms of setbacks and heights, when in fact this scheme proposes a consistent approach to a single building which turns the corner with long frontages along both the Upper Newtownards Road and North Road, a clear departure from the arrangement opposite. Key elements that are missing from the arrangement adopted on the opposite side of North Road include a physical break in form and identifiable gable ends, own door arrangements, the incorporation of subservient rear returns and the inclusion of features such as modest, enclosed front gardens, canted bays and elements such as eaves detailing, window head details, minor brick cornices and chimneys. This divergence does not follow the advice as quoted directly from PPS6 (Paragraph 7.7) and PPS7 (Paragraph 4.24) on pg. 18 of the DAS in relation to designing buildings '<i>...with respect for their context</i>' and '<i>...new development fitting in well with its surroundings</i>'.</p>
7.27	<p>The location along an arterial route is suitable for a medium density development which ultimately supports and sustains public transport options along arterial routes.</p>
7.28	<p>While the current proposal will contribute to the housing supply and increased density is encouraged on arterial routes, this should not be at the expense of eroding the character and amenity of the area. It is considered that the proposed design, scale, bulk and massing are inappropriate at this key site which would result in a dominant</p>

	<p>and out of keeping building which would adversely affect the local character and appearance of the area by creating a more intensive site coverage at this location. The proposal is considered to be contrary to Policy QD 1 of PPS 7 and the SPPS.</p>
7.29	<p>Amenity Space Paragraph 5.20 of Creating Places states that in the case of one or two bed units on small urban infill sites, private communal open space will be acceptable in the form of landscaped areas courtyards or roof gardens. There should be a minimum of 10 square metres per unit. Paragraph 5.20 also indicates that there can be a reduction where some private open space is provided in the form of patios or balconies.</p>
7.30	<p>The proposal involves a private communal terrace at second floor level with an area of 55 square metres while the majority of individual apartments have their own terraces/balconies, Apartment 2 has its own private garden however it will be largely over shadowed by the built form itself. The total area of the individual spaces is 42sqm, which results in 97sqm of amenity space for occupants of the apartments. The average provision is 10.7sqm per apartment, therefore in excess of the minimum suggested in Creating Places.</p>
7.31	<p>There would be two areas of 'private space' (as indicated on proposed site layout plan) totalling 97sqm of additional amenity space to the front of the development facing onto the Upper Newtownards Road. The proposal would also benefit from perimeter planting, hedging and side lawns. The communal terrace has been carefully designed to avoid any residential amenity issues. It is positioned away from proposed windows of apartments and set back from the building facades and bound by a 1.8 metre enclosure. The site also benefits of the close proximity to the Comber Greenway (380m), Orangefield Park (800m) and the Connswater Community Greenway (1km). It is concluded that the level of open space provision would be sufficient.</p>
7.32	<p>Impact on Built Heritage The site is next to Strandtown Primary School, which is a Grade B+ Listed Building. Historic Environment Division (HED) (Historic Buildings Unit) has considered the impacts of the proposal on the Listed Building and on the basis of the information provided, advises that it is largely content with the proposal under paragraph 6.12 of Strategic Policy Planning Statement for Northern Ireland and Policy BH 11 (Development affecting the Setting of a Listed Building) of Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage. HED has no fundamental concerns with the proposal but have requested further information regarding the detailing of materials to be used. In conclusion, the proposal would not have a harmful impact on the setting of the neighbouring Listed Building.</p>
7.33	<p>Impact on Residential Amenity The layout and aspect of the proposed apartments would mean that there would be no significant overlooking of neighbouring properties. Concerns were raised from objectors regarding the impact the proposal would have on the amenity of neighbouring properties including Nos 84-91, 86 ,88, 90, 92 and 92a North Road and Strandtown School.</p>
7.34	<p>The windows facing North Road would offer views onto a neighbouring commercial business (including No. 84) and a terrace of residential dwellings Nos. 86 to 92. The plans show three apartments on the first floor and two apartments on the second floor facing onto the North Road. All five apartments have private terraces. The separation distance is approximately 15-20 metres between the facades of the existing dwellings,</p>

	the commercial properties and the proposed scheme fronting onto North Road. The separation distances are adequate to ensure they do not suffer any loss of amenity.
7.35	To the north of the site is a landscaped area and Strandtown School. The main school building and playground areas are at least 45m from the site boundary. Essentially, any upper windows and the terrace area will be looking into the car park area which is tucked into the corner of the school site. Importantly, the schools play areas are well separated from the site. It is considered that the proposal will not have any adverse amenity impact on the Strandtown School.
7.36	The building to the east is an office use and so is not a sensitive neighbour. It also has only one window on its western gable, which is at ground floor level. Nevertheless, the only windows on the eastern elevation of the proposed building at first and second floor level are either to provide light to the internal circulation space and are set well back from the boundary or are located towards the front of the building. The proposed amenity space on the second floor is set back from the building elevations and has a 1.8-metre-high enclosure. The proposal will therefore not have an unacceptable adverse effect on the privacy of surrounding properties.
7.37	In addition, there is sufficient separation distances and boundary treatments onto existing neighbouring properties to ensure that dominance/ loss of light, overlooking and overshadowing will not occur to an unacceptable degree. In terms of prospective residents, each unit would have adequate outlook to the public street and external amenity areas.
	Access, Parking and Transport
7.38	The site is located on the Upper Newtownards Road, which benefits of direct access to the Glider routes and is only 60m from a bus halt. The Glider routes doubles up as a shared space for buses and bicycles. The area is approximately 400 metres from the Comber Greenway and 1km from the Connswater Greenway. The closest Belfast Bikes docking station is 1km to the west at CS Lewis Square. The site offers direct access onto a public footpath providing pedestrian access to the wider area. Shops, restaurants, schools and parks are within easy reach by walking, highlighting the sustainable location of the site.
7.39	In terms of car parking, the proposal offers 12 on-site car parking spaces. Creating Places requires 14 spaces at a 9 2-bed apartment development prior to factoring in the location of the site or the characteristics of the development. As highlighted above the site is within an urban area located along an arterial route which benefits from easily accessible and frequent public transport.
7.40	DFI Roads requested a parking survey and concluded that the proposal is acceptable. They indicated that the parking survey submitted in support of the development application demonstrates sufficient spare capacity/availability of on-street parking within the vicinity of the site to accommodate the requirements of the development during its peak periods of parking demand. DFI Roads have also considered the objections associated with the proposal, the Transport Assessment Form and the Parking Statement. As such DFI Roads offers no objections to the application. Factoring in the location of the proposal and the DFI Roads response it is considered that the proposal complies with PPS 3.
	Wastewater Infrastructure and Drainage
7.41	NI Water has sought further information from the applicant to demonstrate foul and surface water drainage capacity through its PDE process.

7.42	DFI Rivers has considered the applicant's Drainage Assessment and have sought the same information as NIW in order to complete its consideration of surface water drainage impacts under Policy FLD 3 of PPS 15.
7.43	The Committee will be aware that NI Water has objected to a series of applications across the City on grounds of lack of waste-water infrastructure. In the case of this application, NI Water has asked the applicant to enter into NI Water's PDE process to demonstrate capacity. NI Water has subsequently produced a 'Solutions Engineer Report', which recommends that further investigation is carried out downstream to determine whether storm offsetting outside of the site is viable and how much flow can be removed and therefore offset.
7.44	Importantly, NI Water makes allowance for existing significant committed development across the city including extant planning permissions. Such development, which includes un-implemented permissions for over 20,000 houses and significant levels of commercial floor space across the city, will not all come forward at once. Notwithstanding the information provided by NI Water, in practical terms it would be unreasonable for the Council to refuse permission on this issue given NI Water's pre-existing commitments to connect to significant levels of un-implemented development. For these reasons, officers are of the view that it would be unreasonable to refuse this application based on NI Water objection.
7.45	Similarly, it would be unreasonable to refuse permission on drainage grounds, particularly when DFI Rivers has verbally indicated that it would not be objecting to this application but simply awaiting the further information requested by NI Water through their PDE process. It is considered that surface water provision can be dealt with by means of condition were permission to be granted.
7.46	<p>Impact on Human Health-Air Quality and Noise</p> <p>Environmental Health has considered the proposal in terms of noise, air pollution, general amenity, ambient air quality, contaminated land and other considerations and have no objections to the proposal subject to conditions It is of the opinion that the proposed development will not cause a potential impact on the health of the future occupants.</p>
8.0	Conclusion
8.1	It is recommended that planning permission is refused on the grounds that the design of the proposed apartments is inappropriate and would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area. Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the refusal reasons.
9.0	<p>Recommended Refusal Reason:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed demolition and redevelopment, by reason of its proposed design, form, scale, bulk, mass and layout would represent excessive overdevelopment of the site which would result in an over-dominant and incongruous built form within the plot, architecturally out of keeping with immediately surrounding properties. The proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area and would be contrary to the SPPS, Policy QD1(a) of PPS 7 and Policy LC1 (b) of the addendum to PPS 7.

ANNEX

Date Valid	2nd April 2021
Date First Advertised	30th April 2021
Date Last Advertised	30th April 2021

Details of Neighbour Notification (all addresses)

The Owner/Occupier,
100 North Road,Belfast,Down,BT4 3DJ
The Owner/Occupier,
102 North Road,Belfast,Down,BT4 3DJ
The Owner/Occupier,
104 North Road,Belfast,Down,BT4 3DJ
The Owner/Occupier,
106 North Road,Belfast,Down,BT4 3DJ
The Owner/Occupier,
177 North Road,Belfast,Down,BT4 3DJ
The Owner/Occupier,
232 Upper Newtownards Road,Belfast,Down,BT4 3ET
The Owner/Occupier,
238 Upper Newtownards Road,Belfast,Down,BT4 3EU
The Owner/Occupier,
84 North Road,Belfast,Down,BT4 3DJ
The Owner/Occupier,
86 North Road,Belfast,Down,BT4 3DJ
86, North Road, Belfast, Down, Northern Ireland, BT4 3DJ
The Owner/Occupier,
88 North Road,Belfast,Down,BT4 3DJ
The Owner/Occupier,
90 North Road,Belfast,Down,BT4 3DJ
90, North Road, Belfast, Down, Northern Ireland, BT4 3DJ
90, North Road, Belfast, Down, Northern Ireland, BT4 3DJ
92, Flat A, North Road, Belfast, Down, Northern Ireland, BT4 3DJ
The Owner/Occupier,
96 North Road,Belfast,Down,BT4 3DJ
The Owner/Occupier,
98 North Road,Belfast,Down,BT4 3DJ
The Owner/Occupier,
Flat 1,129 North Road,Belfast,Down,BT5 5NG
The Owner/Occupier,
Flat 2,129 North Road,Belfast,Down,BT5 5NG
The Owner/Occupier,
Flat 3,129 North Road,Belfast,Down,BT5 5NG
The Owner/Occupier,
Flat 4,129 North Road,Belfast,Down,BT5 5NG
The Owner/Occupier,
Flat A,92 North Road,Belfast,Down,BT4 3DJ
The Owner/Occupier,
Flat B,92 North Road,Belfast,Down,BT4 3DJ
The Owner/Occupier,
Ground Floor Office,236 Upper Newtownards Road,Belfast,Down,BT4 3EU

Principal and Secretary to the Board of Governors, Strandtown Primary School, North Road, Belfast, BT4 3DJ	
Date of Last Neighbour Notification	11 th November 2021
Date of EIA Determination	N/A
Drawing Numbers and Title	
Notification to Department (if relevant)	
Date of Notification to Department: Response of Department:	