

Development Management Report

| Summary | |
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| Committee Date: 17 th September 2024 | |
| Application ID: LA04/2024/0681/F | |
| <p>Proposal: Erection of Purpose-Built Managed Student Accommodation development with additional use of accommodation by further or higher education institutions outside term time, comprising 4 no. blocks of accommodation with building heights ranging from 5 to 9 storeys and up to 35,850sqm gross external floorspace, café, associated communal facilities including landscaped courtyards, internal bin stores and cycle stores, PV array, disabled parking, public realm provision, associated site works and extension of Titanic Boulevard to form new junction with Hamilton Road.</p> | <p>Location: Lands to the northeast of Olympic House, east of Queen’s Road and south of Belfast Metropolitan College, Belfast.</p> |
| Referral Route: Application for Major development | |
| Recommendation: Approval subject to conditions and Section 76 planning agreement | |
| <p>Applicant Name and Address: Watkin Jones Group PLC and Lacuna Developments 3 Llys Y Bont Parc Menai Bangor LL57 4BN</p> | <p>Agent Name and Address: Turley Hamilton House 3 Joy Street Belfast BT2 8LE</p> |
| Date Valid | 18 th April 2024 |
| Target Date | 14 th November 2024 |
| Contact Officer | Lisa Walshe, Principal Planning Officer |
| <p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>This application relates to lands to the northeast of Olympic House, east of Queen’s Road and south of Belfast Metropolitan College. The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a 5-9 storey Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) with additional use of accommodation outside term time comprising 4 blocks of accommodation with up to 35,850sqm of gross external floorspace. The proposed scheme would include 1,007 units with a mix of cluster rooms and studios. There will be an associated café, communal facilities including landscaped courtyards, internal bin stores and cycle stores, PV array, disabled parking, public realm provision, associated site works and extension of Titanic Boulevard to form new junction with Hamilton Road.</p> <p>The application follows a detailed Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) process.</p> | |

The key issues for consideration of the application are set out below.

- Principle of PBMSA in this location
- Design and placemaking
- Impact on heritage assets
- Impact on amenity
- Climate change
- Open space
- Access and transport
- Health impacts
- Environmental protection
- Flood risk and drainage
- Waste-water infrastructure
- Natural heritage
- Waste management
- Section 76 planning agreement
- Pre-Application Community Consultation

The site is a sustainable location, with ease of access to/from Belfast City Centre via established walking, cycling and public transport connections. The application is supported by satisfactory evidence of need for the proposal.

The proposed building is considered to be of a high-quality design, appropriate to its location that will regenerate the land and be delivered as part of Phase 3 of the Titanic Quarter Development Framework (TQDF).

No objections have been received from statutory or non-statutory consultees.

One letter of support has been received.

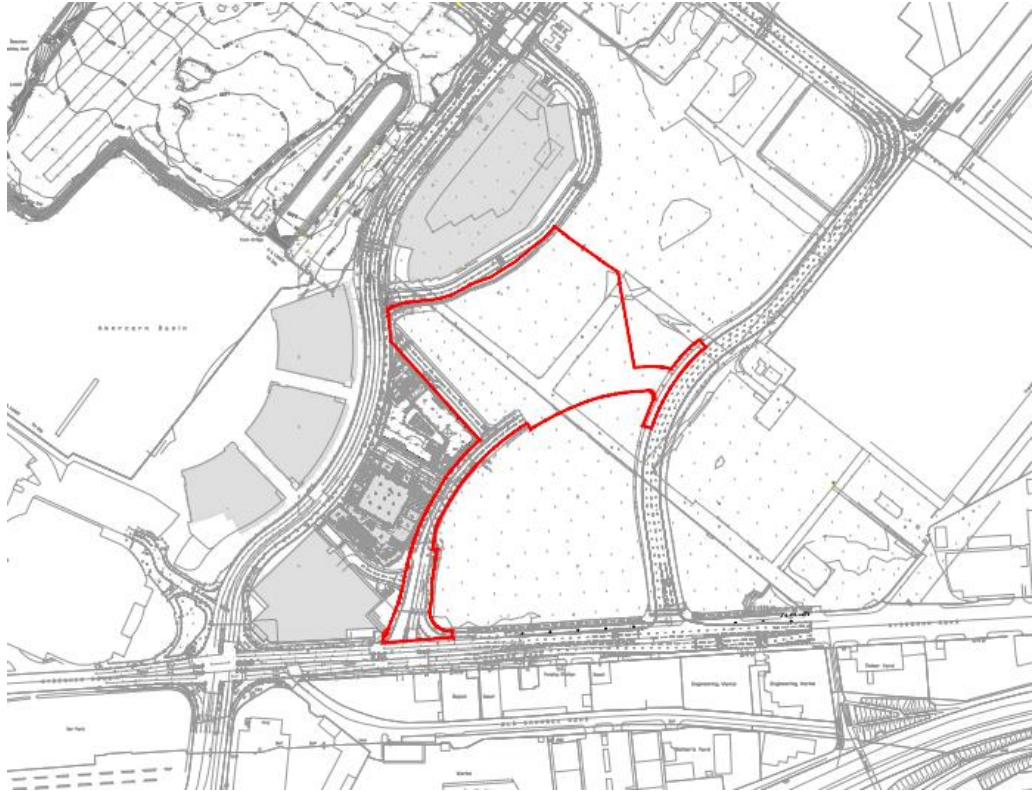
Recommendation

Having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.

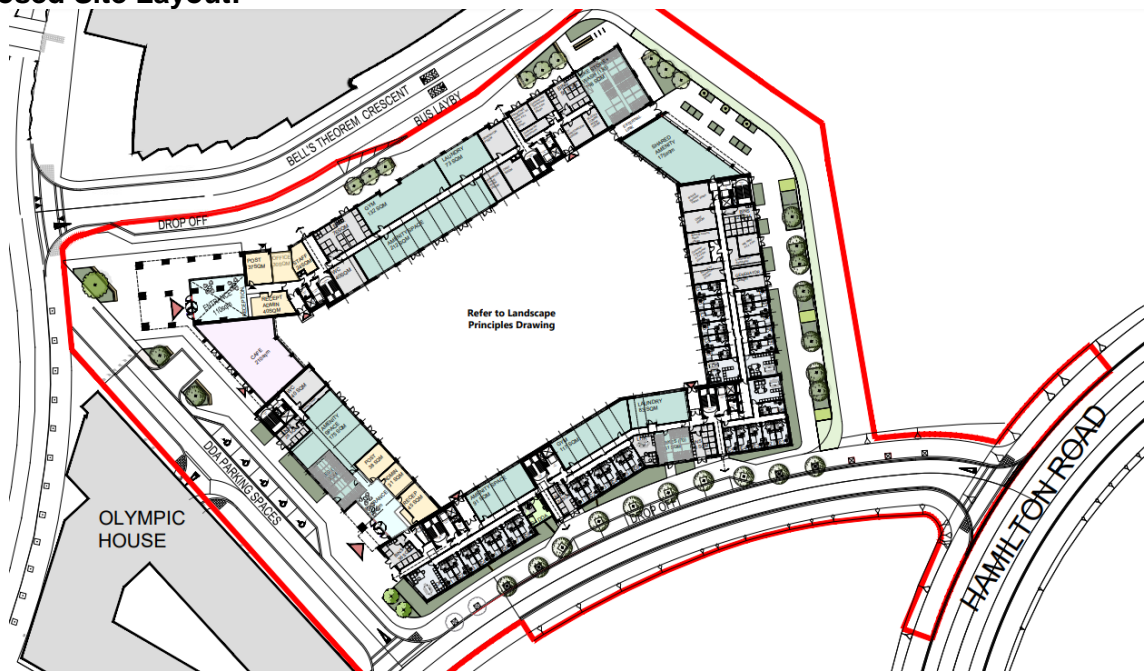
Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that the issues are not substantive.

DRAWINGS AND IMAGERY

Site Location Plan:



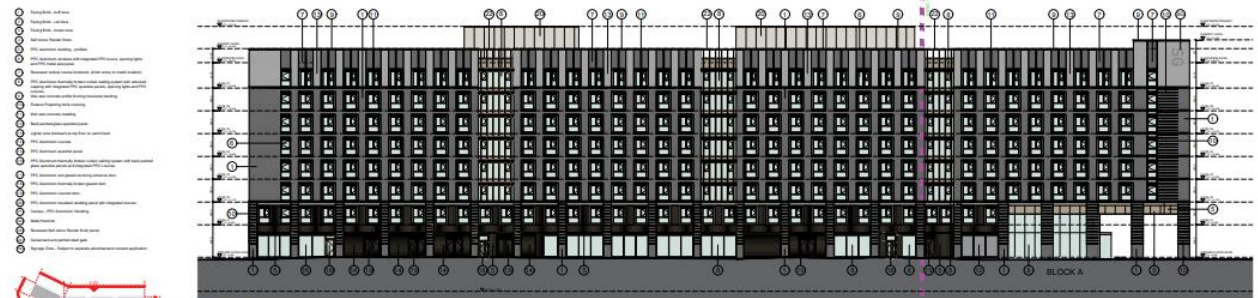
Proposed Site Layout:



Proposed Elevations:



ELEVATION E01



ELEVATION E02



ELEVATION E04



ELEVATION E03

CGIs:



1.0 Characteristics of the Site and Area

1.1 This application relates to lands between Belfast Metropolitan College (to the north), Olympic House (to the south-west) and to the east of Queen’s Road within Titanic Quarter.

1.2 The site is approximately 2 hectares (ha) in size and relatively flat. It is characterised by hardstanding and bounded by 2-metre-high palisade fencing to the north, south and east. The site is currently accessed from Sydenham Road/Titanic Boulevard and Bell’s Theorem Crescent using existing and operational road infrastructure. It has been cleared of ship building related activity to enable the formation of development parcels and infrastructure as part of Phase 3 of the Titanic Quarter Development Framework (TQDF).

1.3 Olympic House was recently constructed and intended for Class B1(c): Research and Development. There is a current application (LA04/2024/1385/F) to seek permission to also permit Class B1(a): Offices which remains under consideration. In addition to the adjacent Belfast Metropolitan College , there are wider uses in the area such as residential at the Arc and the upcoming ‘Loft Lines’ development as well as hotels, offices and the Odyssey complex. The lands to the immediate north are vacant beyond which is a car park.

1.4 See below for context of the site with adjacent buildings and uses.

Titanic Quarter provides a social, safe, sustainable, and vibrant home for its residents to live, work and play. The project is part of an ongoing regeneration project that goes beyond functionality; a place that enhances the wellbeing of the people who live, work, visit and stay here, and a sustainable and safe environment for future generations.

Site Context

- 1. Belfast Metro Titanic Campus
- 2. Olympic House
- 3. Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI)
- 4. Cais Gateway
- 5. Odyssey Pavilion (incl. WS Science and Discovery Centre) and SSE Arena
- 6. Premier Inn Hotel
- 7. ARC residential complex
- 8. Hamilton Dock and 55 Nornadic
- 9. Hamilton Dock Hotel/Apart Hotel (committed)
- 10. Loft Lines (under construction)
- 11. Block 12 mixed use scheme (committed)
- 12. Titanic Belfast
- 13. Titanic Shipways
- 14. Titanic House / Titanic Hotel
- 15. H&W Shipyard



Description of Proposed Development

1.5 The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a 5-9 storey Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) with additional use of accommodation outside term time comprising 4 blocks of accommodation with up to 35,850sqm of gross external floorspace. The proposal would include 1,007 units with a mix of cluster rooms and studios. There will be an associated café, communal facilities including landscaped courtyards, internal bin stores and cycle stores, PV array, disabled parking, public realm provision, associated site works and extension of Titanic Boulevard to form new junction with Hamilton Road. The proposed material treatments of the building include a palette of buff, brown and red brick and self-colour render.

1.6 The application follows a detailed Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) process.

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| <p>2.0</p> <p>2.1</p> <p>2.2</p> | <p>RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY</p> <p>Z/2009/1603/F – there is a previous planning permission on the site for the erection of a Financial Services Campus building comprising 55,740 sqm gross floorspace of Class B1(a) office and Class A2 financial, professional and other services, together with other mixed ground floor and mezzanine uses (comprising retail (Class A1), community and cultural uses (Class D1), restaurants, bars and cafes (sui generis) - totalling 5,937 sqm gross), basement and deck car parking (583no. spaces), access road, landscaping and ancillary infrastructural works. Permission granted on 17th November 2010.</p> <p>LA04/2024/0534/CLOPUD – application seeking to establish the lawfulness of the erection of the Financial Services Campus building comprising 55,740 sq m gross floorspace of Class B1(a) office and Class A2 financial, professional and other services, together with other mixed ground floor and mezzanine uses (comprising retail (Class A1), community and cultural uses (Class D1), restaurants, bars and cafes (sui generis) – totalling 5,937 sq m gross), basement and deck car parking (583no. spaces), access road, landscaping and ancillary infrastructural works. Currently under consideration.</p> |
| <p>3.0</p> <p>3.1</p> | <p>PLANNING POLICY</p> <p>Development Plan – Plan Strategy</p> <p><u>Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035</u></p> <p><i>Strategic Policies:</i></p> <p>Policy SP1A – managing growth and supporting infrastructure delivery Policy SP2 – sustainable development Policy SP3 – improving health and wellbeing Policy SP5 – positive placemaking Policy SP6 – environmental resilience Policy SP7 – connectivity Policy SD2 – Settlement Areas</p> <p><i>Operational Policies:</i></p> <p>Policy HOU12 – Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA)</p> <p>Policy DES1 – Principles of urban design Policy DES2 – Masterplanning approach for major development Policy DES3 – Tall buildings Policy RD1 – New residential developments Policy BH1 – Listed Buildings Policy BH5 – Archaeology</p> <p>Policy TRAN1 – Active travel – walking and cycling Policy TRAN2 – Creating an accessible environment Policy TRAN4 – Travel plan Policy TRAN6 – Access to public roads Policy TRAN8 – Car parking and servicing arrangements Policy TRAN9 – Parking standards within areas of parking restraint</p> <p>Policy ENV1 – Environmental quality Policy ENV2 – Mitigating environmental change</p> |

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| | <p>Policy ENV3 – Adapting to environmental change Policy ENV4 – Flood Risk Policy ENV5 – Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) Policy HC1 – Promoting healthy communities Policy GB1 – Green and blue infrastructure network Policy OS3 – Ancillary open space Policy TRE1 – Trees Policy NH1 – Protection of natural heritage resources</p> |
| 3.2 | <p><u>Supplementary Planning Guidance</u></p> <p>Placemaking and Urban Design Tall Buildings Masterplanning approach for Major developments Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems Transportation Planning and Flood Risk Residential Design</p> |
| 3.3 | <p>Development Plan – zoning, designations and proposals maps Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) BUAP Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014)</p> |
| 3.4 | <p>Regional Planning Policy Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)</p> |
| 3.5 | <p>Other Material Considerations Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation in Belfast (June 2016) Belfast: A Framework for student housing and purpose-built student accommodation Developer Contribution Framework (2020) Belfast Agenda (Community Plan)</p> |
| 4.0 | CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS |
| 4.1 | <p><u>Statutory Consultees</u></p> <p>DfI Roads – No objection subject to conditions. DfC HED – No objection subject to conditions. DfI Rivers – No objection. DAERA – No objection subject to conditions NI Water – No objection.</p> |
| 4.2 | <p><u>Non-Statutory Consultees</u></p> <p>Planning Service Urban Design Officer – No objection. Environmental Health – No objection subject to conditions. BCC Landscape and Development – No objection.</p> |

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| | <p>BCC Economic Development Unit – Recommends an employability and skills developer contribution for the construction phase.</p> <p>Shared Environmental Services (SES) – No objection.</p> <p>Belfast City Airport – No objection subject to conditions.</p> <p>Tree Officer, Belfast City Council – No objection subject to conditions.</p> <p>Waste Management, Belfast City Council – No objection.</p> <p>Development Plan Housing Team – Content</p> <p><u>Representations</u></p> <p>4.3 The application has been advertised in the newspaper and neighbours notified.</p> <p>4.4 One letter of support has been received and no objections. The letter refers to the planning permission for the Financial Campus (Z/2009/1603/F) and that there is a current application for a Certificate of Lawfulness a (LA04/2024/0534/CLOPUD) which provides details of commencement of the development and seeks confirmation that it would be lawful to build out the scheme. The application remains under consideration.</p> |
| <p>5.0</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p> | <p>PLANNING ASSESSMENT</p> <p>Main Issues</p> <p>The main issues relevant to consideration of the application are set out below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of PBMSA in this location • Design and placemaking • Impact on heritage assets • Impact on amenity • Climate change • Open space • Access and transport • Health impacts • Environmental protection • Flood risk and drainage • Waste-water infrastructure • Natural heritage • Waste management • Section 76 planning agreement • Pre-Application Community Consultation <p>Development Plan Context</p> <p>Section 6(4) of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 states that in making any determinations under the Act, regard is to be had to the local development plan, and the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.</p> |

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| 5.3 | Section 45(1) of the Act states that in determining planning applications, the Council must have regard to the local development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. |
| 5.4 | <p>The Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP) when fully completed will replace the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 as the statutory Development Plan for the city. The Belfast LDP will comprise two parts. Part 1 is the Plan Strategy, which contains strategic and operational policies and was adopted on 02 May 2023. Part 2 is the Local Policies Plan, which will provide the zonings and proposals maps for Belfast and has not yet been published. The zonings and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (“Departmental Development Plan”) remain part of the statutory local development plan until the Local Policies Plan is adopted.</p> <p><u>Operational Polices</u></p> |
| 5.5 | <p>The Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application. These have been listed at paragraph 3.1.</p> <p><u>Proposals Maps</u></p> |
| 5.6 | <p>Until such time as the Local Policies Plan is adopted, the Council must have regard to the land-use zonings, designations and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (“Departmental Development Plan”), both versions of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (v2004 and v2014) (draft BMAP 2015) and other relevant area plans. The weight to be afforded to these proposals maps is a matter for the decision maker. It is considered that significant weight should be given to the proposals map in draft BMAP 2015 (v2014) given its advanced stage in the development process, save for retail policies that relate to Sprucefield which remain contentious.</p> |
| 5.7 | <p>Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 – the site is un-zoned “white land” within the Development Limit.</p> |
| 5.8 | <p>Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (2004 & 2014) – the plan identifies Titanic Quarter for mixed use development (zoning BHA01) and attaches a series of Key Site requirements. Residential development is identified as a permissible use within both versions of dBMAP.</p> |
| 5.9 | <p>Titanic Quarter Development Framework (2008, 2010) (TQDF) – The site is located within Phase 3 of the TQDF. This framework was as one of the draft BMAP Key Site Requirements. Residential development is also identified as a permissible use.</p> <p><u>Principle of PBMSA in this location</u></p> |
| 5.10 | <p>The site is located within the urban development limit in the BUAP 2001 and both versions of dBMAP 2015. Policy SD2 of the Plan Strategy states that the regeneration of Titanic Quarter has helped establish the harbour estate as a major tourist destination and has introduced a more diverse range of uses, including office accommodation, apartments, retail, and education facilities. The proposal is consistent with this strategic policy.</p> |
| 5.11 | <p>Policy HOU12 of the Plan Strategy relates to proposals for PBMSA and lists a number of criteria that proposals should meet, as discussed below.</p> |

Accessibility:

5.12

In locational terms, criterion a. requires that PBMSA proposals are easily accessible to higher education institution campuses by sustainable transport modes and not within established residential areas. The site is located approximately 0.16km from the City Centre boundary and within walking and cycling distance of the Queens University and Ulster University campuses (see **Table 1**, below). The site is immediately adjacent to the Titanic Quarter campus of Belfast Metropolitan College.

| Campus | Method of Travel | | | | | |
|--------|--------------------|-------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------|-------------|
| | Walking (4.8km/hr) | | Cycling (16km/hr) | | Public Transport | |
| | Distance (m) | Time (mins) | Distance (m) | Time (mins) | Distance (m) | Time (mins) |
| BMC | 35 | >1 | 35 | >1 | / | 0 |
| UU | 1920 | 24 | 2080 | 7.8 | / | 19 |
| QUB | 3520 | 44 | 4320 | 12-16.2 ² | / | 22-24 |

Source: - RPS TAF – see TAF for full details

Table 1: Proximity of site to higher education institution campuses

5.13

The site benefits from good access to public transport services, including the Glider route into Queens Island and various bus services. The site is a 10 minutes walk from the nearest railway station. There are also good cycle links with the City Centre. Estimated travel times by public transport are provided in **Table 2** below.

| Campus | Method of Travel / Distance / Time - Public Transport | | |
|--------|--|-------------|--|
| | Public Transport (includes 5minute interchange penalty - DfI Guidance) | | |
| | Distance (m)* | Time (mins) | Notes |
| BMC | - | 0 | N/A |
| UU | - | 19 | Glider to May Street (7minutes) + 5 minute interchange penalty + Metro to York Street (7minutes) |
| QUB | - | 24 | Glider to May Street (7minutes) + 5 minute interchange penalty + Metro to QUB (12minutes) |
| | - | 24 | Walk to train halt (10minutes) + Train to Botanic (6minutes) + Walk to QUB (6minutes) |

Table 2: Proximity of site to public transport services

5.14

A Sustainable Transport Fund of £150,000 is proposed as part of this scheme. The applicant proposed that in the first instance the fund would be used in conjunction with Translink. Translink has written to the Council to state that ‘£150,000 to fund the enhancement/provision of public transport measures to serve the development. Enhancements could include additional bus stops and/or enhanced services. The allocation of funds will be agreed prior to occupation and shall be utilised as per agreed terms until expended in full’. However, the final allocation of the fund will need to be agreed by the Council in collaboration with DfI, prior to occupation, to ensure the fund is used to appropriately mitigate the impacts of the proposed development and the needs of the students.

5.15

In addition, there is a proposed Belfast Bikes fund of £25,175 which will be used to provide Belfast Bikes membership to residents of the scheme until the fund is exhausted. A green travel plan is proposed to further encourage sustainable modes of transport.

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| 5.16 | <p>Having regard to these factors, the proposal is considered to satisfy the accessibility requirements of criterion a.</p> <p><i>Development not within an Established Residential Area:</i></p> |
| 5.17 | <p>In addition, criterion a. of Policy HOU12 requires that new PBMSA development is not within an established residential area. Appendix B of the Plan Strategy states that an Established Residential Area is ‘...normally taken to mean residential neighbourhoods dominated by a recognisable form of housing styles with associated private amenity space or gardens. These areas may include buildings in commercial, retail or leisure services use, usually clustered together and proportionate in scale to the size of the neighbourhood being served.’</p> |
| 5.18 | <p>The site is located within Titanic Quarter which is a mixed-use regeneration area. At present, the only residential development in the area is the Arc Apartments. The “Loft Lines” residential scheme is currently under construction and will add an additional 778 homes to the area. Titanic Quarter is a destination for people to live, work, study and play and is not dominated by a recognisable form of housing styles and does not meet the definition of an Established Residential Area in the Plan Strategy. Criterion a. is therefore satisfied.</p> <p><i>Scale of the development:</i></p> |
| 5.19 | <p>Criterion b. specifies that PBMSA proposals should consist of a minimum of 200 occupants. The proposal is for 1,007 bedrooms with a mix of studios and clusters, therefore satisfying this criterion.</p> <p><i>Need for additional PBMSA:</i></p> |
| 5.20 | <p>Criteria e. requires that proposals meet an identified need for the type of accommodation proposed, demonstrated through a statement of student housing need. The application is supported by a “Statement of Student Need”. The statement states that in 2021/22 there were 46,165 full-time students enrolled in higher education institutions in Northern Ireland. In Belfast, the higher education institutions are Queens University (QUB), Ulster University, Stranmillis University College and St. Mary’s University College. In addition, Belfast Met is the largest Further and Higher Education College in Northern Ireland and its largest, flagship campus is immediately adjacent the application site.</p> |
| 5.21 | <p>QUB and Ulster University gave a joint presentation to the Council’s City Growth and Regeneration Committee (CGRC) in December 2022. The Committee was advised that the city required a further 6,000 rooms for students by 2028/30. In addition, there was a growing demand for PBMSA over private rental sector accommodation and insufficient rooms either in the planning process or being constructed to address the shortfall.</p> |
| 5.22 | <p>In reality, in light of the emerging trend of PBMSA accommodation being increasingly favoured over traditional house shares, the increase in the number of international students choosing to study in Belfast and the projected increase in NI school leavers seeking university places by 2030, the scale of need for student beds is likely to continue to grow beyond the presently projected 6,000 beds.</p> |

5.23 The Statement of Student Need confirms that since the most recent expression of need by the two main Belfast Universities, Queens University Belfast (QUB) and Ulster University (UU) for 6,000 more student beds by 2028-2030, only a total of 2,232 bed spaces have either become operational or construction has commenced on the respective scheme since this date.

5.24 The Council’s Plans and Policy Team have been consulted on the issue of need. It has confirmed that following the CGRC meeting in 2022, 917 additional bed spaces have become operational. A further 2,055 spaces are under construction across 5 schemes whilst there are a further 551 beds which have been approved but have not commenced. And there are currently live planning applications for 3,018 spaces which are under consideration.

The supply figures are summarised in **Table 3** below.

Future Supply of PBMSA Developments

| Under Construction | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|--------------|--------------------------|
| Project Name | Address | Beds | Turley April 2024 |
| Athena House | Little York St, Great George's St & Nelson St | 774 | 774 |
| Bradbury Place | 30-44 Bradbury Place | 156 | 156 |
| | 48-52 York Street | 307 | 307 |
| 123 York Street Extension | 8-12 Little Patrick Street | 94 | * Included above |
| | 140 Donegall Street | 724 | 724 |
| Total Under construction | | 2,055 | 1,961 |

| Approved (Not started) | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Sinclair House | 89-101 Royal Avenue | 30 | - |
| | 118-122 Royal Avenue | 21 | - |
| Catholic Chaplaincy | 28-38 Elmwood Avenue | 41 | 41 |
| QUB Dublin Road | 14 Dublin Road, Belfast, BT2 7HN | 459 | 459 |
| Total Not started | | 551 | 500 |

Pending PBMSA Planning Applications

| Reference | Address | Beds |
|----------------------|--|--------------|
| LA04/2022/1284/F | Library Street and Little Donegall Street | 862 |
| LA04/2023/2922/F | Site bounded by Glenalpin Street, Wellwood Street and Norwood Street, Belfast | 354 |
| LA04/2023/3030/F | 41-49 Dublin Road and 3-5 Ventry Street, Belfast, BT2 7HD | 201 |
| LA04/2024/0664/F | Lands comprising existing Fanum House, Norwood House and adjacent lands, No's 96-110 Great Victoria Street | 594 |
| LA04/2024/0681/F | Lands to the northeast of Olympic House, east of Queen's Road and south of Belfast Metropolitan College | 1,007 |
| Total pending | | 3,018 |

Table 3: Supply figures for PBMSA accommodation in Belfast

5.25 Since the tables above were provided by the Plans and Policy team, a further planning application has been received at Lands including and to the rear of 24-54 Castle Street, 2-6 Queen Street, 1-7 & 21 Fountain Street, Belfast under reference LA04/2024/1138/F for 895 rooms. This remains under consideration.

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| 5.26 | The Plans and Policy team advises that <i>'the need for 3,400 spaces expressed by the universities in 2022, will therefore have been largely met by the existing supply should all of the approved PBMSA developments be implemented, although this excludes the two additional sites that QUB have already acquired to meet their requirements directly. Should the need of 6,000 units also quoted by the universities at the same meeting be taken as the stated requirement, capacity for up to 2,900 additional bed spaces may remain.'</i> |
| 5.27 | The response goes on to state that even if all consented and pipeline student beds were built out, <i>'the likely ratio of PBMSA bed spaces to full time students is likely to remain broadly comparable with other similar university cities'</i> . |
| 5.28 | Having regard to these factors, it is considered that a need for the proposal is established and that criterion e. is satisfied. <i>Economic development:</i> |
| 5.29 | The Council's Economic Development Unit notes that the estimated construction cost of the development is £80 million. It is expected that approx. 142 construction jobs will be created during construction with approximately 30 jobs on operation. The Economic Development Unit advises that an Employability and Skills Developer Contribution is required for the construction period and this should be secured by a Section 76 planning agreement. <i>Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation in Belfast SPG:</i> |
| 5.30 | In the absence of specific planning policy at the time, in 2016 the Council published PBMSA Supplementary Planning Guidance to support the consideration of such planning applications. Updated SPG is currently the subject of public consultation and does not currently have determining weight. |
| 5.31 | The 2016 SPG is material and sets out similar requirements to Policy HOU12 and other relevant policies in the Plan Strategy, covering areas such as accessibility, controlling development in established residential areas, open space, space standards, parking, waste and recycling. The Plan Strategy is the statutory Development Plan and carries greater weight than the 2016 SPG. Nevertheless, for the reasons set out in this report, it is considered that the proposal is consistent with the objectives of the guidance. |
| 5.32 | Having regard to the factors discussed above, the principle of PBMSA development in this location is considered acceptable. |
| 5.33 | The application also seeks additional use of the accommodation by further or higher education institutions outside term time. This is consistent with other PBMSA permissions across the city and would ensure that effective use is made of the building outside term and is considered acceptable. |
| | <u>Design and placemaking</u> |
| 5.34 | The proposal has been assessed against the SPPS, Creating Places and Policies SP5, DES1, DES2 and DES3 of the Plan Strategy. Policies SP5 and DES1 promote good placemaking, high quality design and the importance of proposals responding positively to local context addressing matters such as scale height, massing, proportions, rhythm, and materials avoiding any negative impact at street level. Policy DES2 advocates adopting a holistic approach to site layout that is mindful of adjacent development, while Policy DES3 relates to the assessment and siting of tall buildings. |

- 5.35 The application follows a Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) process when issues relating to scale, height, massing and architectural treatment were discussed in detail.
- 5.36 The proposal generally accords with the parameters set out in the TQ Development Framework which was approved in 2008 and later amended in 2010. This framework covered the wider TQ area with the site being identified in the TQ Phase III Concept Masterplan in a perimeter block form with the southern edge labelled an ‘urban wall’ where height would be concentrated (see plan extract below alongside comparison with the proposed scheme).
- 5.37 The heights shown in the masterplan ranged from 38.0m on the northern side stepping up to around 51.0m mid-block and 56.0m along its southern edge. While the current proposal does not include the north-south public thoroughfare through the perimeter block as was originally envisaged (see comparison below), it is considered that the proposal generally accords with the concept set out in the TQ Development Framework through the retention of its perimeter block form, its central courtyard and general heights, with upper height concentrated along the southern edge.



Extract from masterplan alongside proposed layout

Scale, height and massing:

- 5.38 The proposed massing follows a number of key design principles established by the Financial Services Campus (FSC) planning permission (Z/2009/1603/F).
- 5.39 The proposal comprises a total of five blocks. Block A (8 storeys) aligns with the northern edge of the site fronting Bell’s Theorem Crescent and opposite the Belfast Met. Blocks B (5 storeys), C1 (7 storeys), C2 (9 storeys) and D (7 storeys) collectively make up the ‘U’ shaped form that align the western, southern and eastern edges of the site. Heights associated with the site ranged from 38.0m on the northern side stepping up to around 51m mid-block and 56m along its southern edge
- 5.40 Existing surrounding buildings vary from 3 to 7 storeys. The maximum height of the proposal is approximately 35m, whilst the lowest is approximately 27m. The proposed building heights range from 5 to 9 storeys with the taller 9 storey element at the southeast corner with wings stepping down either side to 7 and 5 storeys, maximising sunlight/daylight conditions for both future residents and to the central courtyard while helping to visually break up massing across the site.

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| 5.41 | <p>The Council's Senior Urban Design Officer (SUDO) notes that the: <i>'shifting built form further to the east has resulted in a wider internal courtyard (communal area) and improves the situation in relation to sunlight/daylight levels, which is welcomed. The redefined eastern building edge now aligns with the eastern edge of the Belfast Met to the north thereby representing a continuation of the same view corridor to Titanic House, which is also welcomed. It is considered that the distribution of height and massing across the site is contextually appropriate, maximises the sites orientation in relation to sunlight/daylight levels and helps to improve the legibility of the scheme by placing emphasis on key elevations and entrances'</i>.</p> |
| 5.42 | <p>The SUDO has no concerns about the scale, height and massing of the proposed building, stating that <i>'It is considered that the distribution of height and massing across the site is contextually appropriate, maximises the sites orientation in relation to sunlight/daylight levels and helps to improve the legibility of the scheme by placing emphasis on key elevations and entrances.'</i></p> |
| 5.43 | <p>It is considered that the scale and massing of the building are appropriate to the site and surrounding buildings.</p> <p><i>Architectural treatment:</i></p> |
| 5.44 | <p>The proposed material treatments include a palette of buff, brown, red brick and self-colour render. This approach to the materials was informed by a tonal study of the existing built fabric in the locality of the site with external street facing facades benefitting from punch hole window arrangements in a combination of buff, brown and red brick with each defined by meaningful vertical recesses.</p> |
| 5.45 | <p>Multiple façade types across both the external street facing and courtyard facing elevation are proposed which help define and emphasise particular blocks, introducing a degree of individuality and character. The SUDO advises that the <i>'establishment of multiple façade types across both the external street facing and courtyard facing elevations is welcomed. These types which include a mix of punch hole, vertical recess and grouped window variations, will help to strengthen the layout of the scheme by defining and emphasising particular blocks, introducing a degree of individuality and character to differing blocks while adding visual interest to avoid a common approach throughout... Due consideration has also been given to the visibility of internal courtyard elevations as perceived from surrounding streets in those views presented by gaps/breaks in blocks'</i>.</p> <p><i>Active frontage:</i></p> |
| 5.46 | <p>There is a range of both primary and secondary active frontages along the external street facing edges and along the internal courtyard facing edges, as illustrated in the drawing below. Primary uses include a student lounge, co-working study area and gym and fitness suite. These uses ensure animation and activity at different points along each of the elevations of the building whilst also ensuring natural/passive surveillance. Bin storage areas are internalised within the building and parking is limited to lay-by spaces only. The proposed building would be activated on both its west and south frontages with a large open plan amenity area at ground floor.</p> |



Plan showing primary and secondary active frontages

Public realm:

5.47 The proposed scheme is designed around a high-quality landscaped courtyard with shaded areas identified to the south-west of the courtyard for physical activity. There will be areas for rest and sitting, being able to take advantage of south facing orientation. A sense of arrival is achieved to the Queens Road elevation via a hard and soft landscaped entrance plaza and a second entrance to the building's southern elevation is framed by quality public realm. The landscape design responds to the heritage within the wider Titanic Quarter area with protected views maintained to the West towards Hamilton Dock and the East towards Titanic House. Paving, street lighting and tree planting is proposed which will provide a sense of community and place.

5.48 A Masterplanning Statement has been provided. It notes that the proposed development is part of the wider masterplan area of Titanic Quarter. The proposal has been designed to align with the design principles set out in the approved Development Framework (amended 2010) for Titanic Quarter. Public realm improvements are included within the application which will comprise an entrance plaza, landscaped public realm and boundaries, and extension of Titanic Boulevard creating new connections to Hamilton Road. These are in line with the wider design principles of the Development Framework and the Maritime Mile Toolkit. It is considered that the proposal is consistent with the masterplan for the broader TQ and that the proposal accords with Policy DES3.

5.49 In summary, the proposal is considered acceptable having regard to Policies DES1, DES2, DES3 and relevant provisions of the SPPS.

Impact on the heritage assets

5.50 The administration and drawing office block (Harland & Wolff), which is a Grade B2 Listed Building (marked as 4 on the image below, is located in close proximity to the development to the north. Scheduled monuments including Hamilton Graving Dock (marked as 2), Titanic and Olympic slipways (marked as 1) and "Samson" and "Goliath Cranes" (marked as 3) are located within 500m of the development site.



Aerial image showing the location of heritage assets close to the site

5.51 DfC HED (Historic Buildings and Monuments) offers no objection to the proposal in terms of potential impact on historic buildings and archaeology. Given the appropriateness of the scale, form and design of the building, it is considered that the setting of this and these Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and other heritage assets would not be harmed.

5.52 It is considered that the proposal accords with Policies BH1 and BH5, and relevant provisions of the SPPS.

Impact on amenity

Space standards:

5.53 Criterion c. of Policy HOU12 requires PBMSA proposals to provide a quality residential environment for students in accordance with the space standards for HMOs set out in Appendix C of the Plan Strategy. The proposed bedrooms would exceed the relevant space standards as set out in the table below. Criterion c. is therefore satisfied.

| Room type | Appendix C standard | Proposed |
|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Standard bedroom | 6.5 sqm | 13.5 sqm |
| Studio | 13 sqm | 16sqm and 18sqm |
| Accessible studio | 13 sqm | 24.5 sqm |

Space standards for the proposed bedrooms

Open space and amenity space:

5.54 The proposal includes a high-quality landscaped courtyard measuring approximately 4,092sqm in size which will include recreational spaces, seating areas and outdoor gym equipment. This amount of open space would exceed the 10% open space requirement of Policy OS3 as discussed later in the report.

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| 5.55 | In terms of amenity space provision, Block A provides a total of 5.22sqm per bed (1.22sqm internal and 4sqm external). Blocks B, C and D provide a total of 5.25sqm per bed (1.25sqm internal and 4sqm external). |
| 5.56 | <p>The external amenity areas would equate to an average of 4sqm per bedroom. <i>Creating Places</i>, published in 2000, recommends that private communal open space should range from 10 sqm to around 30 sqm, however, this applies to apartment or flat developments, or 1 and 2-bedroom houses on small urban infill sites, and is not directly applicable to PBMSA development. In any event, Policy OS3 (open space) carries greater weight as part of the statutory Local Development Plan and is satisfied. In addition, the scheme would provide internal amenity areas such as lounges, which would support the residential living environment. The overall external and internal amenity space would range between an average of 5.22 sqm and 5.25 sqm per bedroom. This level of private amenity space provision exceeds many other PBMSA schemes in Belfast and is acceptable.</p> <p><i>Daylight and sunlight to bedrooms:</i></p> |
| 5.57 | <p>A Daylight/Sunlight Assessment was carried out to ascertain whether the proposed development would offer acceptable daylight/sunlight amenity for prospective residents. The results for daylight conclude that daylight amenity provided within the student bedrooms is considered to be excellent. For sunlight, the sunlight amenity provided within the bedrooms is considered to be in line with expectation for a large-scale PBMSA scheme. The courtyard area offers residents excellent sunlit outdoor amenity, providing additional outdoor shared amenity space to be enjoyed by residents that extends beyond their rooms. The distribution of massing and stepped approach across the site which places the taller 9 storey element at the SE corner with wings stepping down either side to 7 and 5 storeys, maximises sunlight/daylight conditions for both future residents and to the central courtyard. Having regard to these factors sunlight and daylight to bedrooms are considered acceptable.</p> <p><i>Impact on neighbour amenity:</i></p> |
| 5.58 | The closest residential building to the development is the Arc Apartments, located approximately 40m to the west of the site. There would be no harmful overlooking from the student accommodation scheme due to a sufficient separate distance between the two. |
| 5.59 | In relation to loss of sunlight and daylight, the application is accompanied by a Daylight and Sunlight Impact on Neighbouring Properties Report. It considers the impact on neighbouring properties and specifically the Arc Apartments being the nearest residential receptor. The assessment concludes that in relation to sunlight, there to be 75 windows within Arc Apartments that face within 90° due south of the site relevant for sunlight assessment. It concludes that the Arc Apartments will demonstrate 100% BRE compliance and fully adhere with the daylight and sunlight assessments set out in the BRE guidelines. |
| 5.60 | Taking these factors into account, it is considered that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact in terms of daylight and sunlight on neighbouring properties. |

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| | <i>Management plan:</i> |
| 5.61 | A draft management plan has been provided with the application and a final student management plan will be secured through the Section 76 planning agreement. This will deal with, amongst other matters, anti-social behaviour, helping to mitigate potential impacts on neighbours, satisfying criterion d. of Policy HOU12. |
| 5.62 | In these regards, the proposal is considered to satisfy Policies DES1 and RD1, and relevant provisions of the SPPS. |
| | <u>Climate change</u> |
| 5.63 | Policy ENV2 states that planning permission will be granted for development that incorporates measures to mitigate environmental change and reduce greenhouse gases by promoting sustainable patterns of development. Policy ENV3 states that planning permission will be granted for development that incorporates measures to adapt to environmental change. The proposed building is targeting BREEAM Excellent rating, which is considered to satisfy both policies. Specific measures include specification of water efficient fittings and provision of leak detection device to reduce water consumption. The development is intended to be car-free (aside from disabled parking), helping to reduce reliance on the private car and therefore reducing emissions associated with private car travel. |
| 5.64 | Policy ENV5 states that all built development shall include, where appropriate, SuDs measures to manage surface water effectively on site, to reduce surface water run-off and to ensure flooding is not increased elsewhere. The application proposes SuDS features including underground storage and landscape features such as rain gardens between raised planters and biodiversity areas to provide enhanced amenity benefits and pollutant removal. There is also shallow cellular storage structure and oversized pipes to limit surface water. |
| 5.65 | Conditions are recommended that require the building to be constructed to BREEAM Excellent standard and incorporation of the proposed SuDS measures. |
| | <u>Open space</u> |
| 5.66 | Policy OS3 requires that all new development proposals make appropriate provision for open space, including hard and soft landscaped areas and outdoor amenity areas, to serve the needs of the development. The precise amount, location, type and design of such provision will be negotiated with applicants taking account of the specific characteristics of the development, the site and its context and having regard to a) the normal expectation will be at least 10% of the total site area; and b) complementary and ancillary equipment and facilities, including for active or passive enjoyment of residents or occupiers, should be incorporated into the design of the development. |
| 5.67 | The proposal includes an external high-quality landscaped courtyard (approximately 4,092sqm in size) which is approximately 20% of the site area, therefore exceeding the 10% minimum requirement. The scheme also includes internal amenity areas. The requirements of Policy OS3 are met. |

| <u>Access and transport</u> | |
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| | <i>Network Capacity:</i> |
| 5.68 | There is an existing Titanic Quarter Transport Masterplan (known as STMP) for Queens Island which was adopted 2008 and amended in 2010. A new Queen’s Island Transport Plan (QITP) for Queen’s Island (including Titanic Quarter) has been under development for the past 4 years by Belfast Harbour and Titanic Quarter Ltd in consultation with DfI Roads and Belfast Planning Service. It will update the area’s transport strategy with a renewed focus on sustainable transport measures. The new QITP will provide updated modelling of actual traffic movements into and out of Queens Island having regard to existing and committed developments and will propose a range of green transport measures to further promote sustainable travel in the interests of reducing the pressure on the road network as well as have positive benefits for the environment. The QITP will include new revised proposals for hard transport infrastructure to support the development of Queens Island. |
| 5.69 | The QITP has been subject to public consultation and its overall conclusions and status are the subject of current discussions with DfI. The QITP will be presented to the Committee in due course for notation. Work on the QITP has been presented to City Growth & Regeneration Committee (CGRC) in June 2023 for information. |
| 5.70 | The modelling associated with the QITP demonstrates that the predicted trips which formed the baseline of the original Transport Master Plan (prior to development coming forward) were significantly over-estimated when considered against actual trips associated with operational development. At the time of the “Loft Lines” application (LA04/2021/2280/F), significant up-to-date modelling for the area known as Phase 1 of the QITP within which the subject site sits, was submitted to DfI Roads and assessed with the assistance of their consultant, AMEY. The modelling and trip levels for “Loft Lines” were demonstrated to be of a level that could be accommodated by the existing road network, a position accepted by DfI Roads. |
| 5.71 | Since the approval and commencement of “Loft Lines”, a reduced scheme for the Hamilton Dock Hotel was submitted and approved under LA04/2023/3442/F, which is currently being implemented. Another application of note is an application to extend the ECIT building on Queen’s Road (LA04/2024/0393/F) which remains under consideration. |
| 5.72 | The proposal is calculated to generate 101 daily trips and the applicant states that the reduction in scale of the Hamilton Dock Hotel has resulted in 131 less trips than the previous approval, thereby creating capacity for the proposal aside from any wider assessment being undertaken as part of the QITP. This position has been considered by DfI Roads in conjunction with consideration of accessibility and parking, as well as proposed green travel measures which are set out below. DfI Roads have noted that the Council should ‘ <i>consider the timescales associated with, and the combined impact of future developments on the need for roads infrastructure under the current transport master plan and, subject to agreement, the proposed new transport master plan</i> ’. Officers advise that the emerging QITP will address these issues. |
| | <i>Accessibility and parking:</i> |
| 5.73 | As mentioned, the site is an accessible location within walking and cycling distance of the City Centre and its shops, services and leisure offerings. The site is also accessible to the Queens University, Ulster University and Met campuses by foot, bicycle or public |

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| 5.74 | <p>transport. Public transport services are provided within 50m of the entrance to the site (Glider) and the rail halt is located approximately 8-10 minutes walk from the site. The proposed bicycle parking includes 310 secure cycle parking spaces within the building and 20 external cycle spaces. 5 car parking spaces for persons with a disability are provided on-street within a new layby. In addition to the 5no spaces, “Blue Badge” concessions are available for people with mobility issues. Satisfactory parking provision is therefore in place for disabled car users.</p> |
| 5.75 | <p>Regard is also had to the high level of parking control by the Harbour police, which was also material to the consideration of the planning application for the “Loft Lines” residential scheme.</p> |
| 5.76 | <p>Whilst no dedicated on-site parking is proposed (other than a small number of disabled parking spaces within a new layby), this is considered acceptable in view of the sustainable location of the site, the applicant’s commitment to green travel measures (discussed below), provision of secure sheltered bicycle parking, and local management of parking issues.</p> |
| 5.77 | <p>The proposed development has been designed in accordance with all current standards in relation to providing suitable access for all. Level access is provided throughout the development internally and externally with lift access to all upper floor residential units. The building will be constructed to meet all other regulatory and statutory requirements in terms of accessibility and will meet all DDA requirements.</p> |
| 5.78 | <p><i>Green travel measures:</i></p> <p>The nearby “Loft Lines” residential planning permission brings forward a raft of significant green travel measures including travel cards, bike vouchers, car club membership, Belfast Bikes membership and a contribution of £400k towards Translink to assist in developing the public transport available in the locality.</p> |
| 5.79 | <p>The applicant proposes the following green travel measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cycle Parking (highest ratio of bikes per student bed) of 310no. internally (including provision of accessible cycle parking spaces) and 20no. externally • Cycle repair facility on site; • Cycle wash down facility on site; • A Green Travel Fund of £25,175; • Membership of Belfast Bikes on the basis of a maximum of one free annual membership per student until the agreed Green Travel Fund has been expended; • Establishment of a Bicycle User Group; • A Sustainable Transport Fund of £150,000 (the detailed use of which is to be controlled through the Section 76 planning agreement in consultation with DfI Roads) • E-bike / Cycle Charging Points (internally within cycle storage area) • A robust travel plan which includes provision of a notice board, appointment of Travel Plan Coordinator, a welcome pack provided with each tenancy agreement and an undertaking to communicate to perspective residents from their initial enquiry, and continually re-enforce that the site is a Car Free Development |

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| 5.80 | <p>The applicant proposed that in the first instance the fund would be used in conjunction with Translink. Translink has written to the Council to state that ‘£150,000 to fund the enhancement/provision of public transport measures to serve the development. Enhancements could include additional bus stops and/or enhanced services. The allocation of funds will be agreed prior to occupation and shall be utilised as per agreed terms until expended in full’. However, the final allocation of the fund will need to be agreed by the Council in collaboration with DfI, prior to occupation, to ensure the fund is used to appropriately mitigate the impacts of the proposed development and the needs of the students.</p> |
| 5.81 | <p>All proposed green travel measures will need to be secured via a Section 76 Planning Agreement or planning condition.</p> |
| 5.82 | <p>DfI Roads has indicated that it is ‘satisfied that the development proposal is unlikely to generate significant additional private vehicle trips. Therefore, DfI are willing to accept the principle of development in this specific case’ subject to agreement on green travel measures, the Travel Plan and appropriate Section 76 provisions’. They have indicated that they are content in principle with the green travel measures as detailed above.</p> |
| 5.83 | <p>The proposal is considered acceptable having regard to Policies TRAN1, TRAN2, TRAN4, TRAN6, TRAN 8 and TRAN 9, and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p> |
| | <p><u>Health impacts</u></p> |
| 5.84 | <p>Policy HC1 seeks to ensure that all new development maximise opportunities to promote healthy and active lifestyles. New developments should be designed, constructed and managed in ways that improve health and promote healthy lifestyles. This will include supporting active travel options, improving accessibility to local service centres, reducing the use of private car travel, adequate provision of public open space, leisure and recreation facilities, high quality design and promoting balanced communities and sustainable neighbourhoods.</p> |
| 5.85 | <p>The site is very accessible and provides excellent opportunities for active travel, including walking and cycling, through excellent linkages with the City Centre and its shops, services and amenities. Active travel will be further encouraged through the proposed green travel measures.</p> |
| 5.86 | <p>Excellent levels of open space/amenity space are proposed in the form of an extensive landscaped central 4,092 sqm courtyard for residents. The site is located in close proximity to other high quality public open spaces including the Maritime Mile, Titanic Slipways, Hamilton Dock and Abercorn Basin.</p> |
| 5.87 | <p>The proposal includes a gym, which would support the physical and mental wellbeing of occupants of the development.</p> |
| 5.88 | <p>In terms of place making, the proposed building is considered to be of a high-quality design which would provide a pleasant living environment for students with good levels of amenity space, and well as enhancing the character and appearance of the area.</p> |
| 5.89 | <p>The proposal is considered to satisfy the requirements of Policy HC1.</p> |

| <u>Environmental protection</u> | |
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| 5.90 | <p>Policy ENV1 states that planning permission will be granted for development that will maintain and, where possible, enhance environmental quality, and protects communities from materially harmful development. The proposed development has been assessed by Environmental Health in terms of contaminated land, air quality, lighting, odour and noise.</p> <p><u>Contaminated land</u></p> |
| 5.91 | <p>The contaminated land reports provided with the application conclude that remediation is required. Environmental Health therefore requests that conditions are attached to the decision notice. The proposal accords with Policy ENV1.</p> <p><u>Air quality</u></p> |
| 5.92 | <p>The application is accompanied by an Air Quality Impact Assessment, Transport Assessment Form and a Climate Change Statement which concludes that estimated transport emissions, as a result of the proposed development, are likely to have a negligible impact on nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter concentrations in the local area. The Air Quality Impact Assessment states that '<i>full details are not known at this stage of the exact heating system</i>'; moreover, provided drawings indicate a range of plant rooms and two generators to be installed. Environmental Health therefore advises a condition that an updated Air Quality Assessment is to be submitted if any centralised combustion sources are proposed. Subject to this condition, it is considered that the proposal accords with Policy ENV1.</p> |
| 5.93 | <p>During construction phase, the potential effects of dust emissions have been considered and has been concluded as 'low-medium'. However, with the implementation of the mitigation measures proposed within the Air Quality Impact Assessment, there should be no significant adverse dust effects arising from the construction phase of the proposed development. Accordingly, to ensure that there will be no significant adverse dust effects arising from the construction phase of the proposed development, the dust management measures detailed within chapter 7 of the RPS Air Quality Assessment will be included and implemented as part of a final Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).</p> <p><u>Noise and vibration</u></p> |
| 5.94 | <p>In relation to noise, Environmental Health notes that the proposal is located in a mixed residential and commercial area, the robust management of student behaviour at large scale purpose-built student accommodation schemes is critical to the integration and success of these large schemes as well essential to protect the residential amenity of existing residents of the area. It advises conditions in relation to structural sound reduction mitigation, plant and equipment and deliveries and servicing.</p> |
| 5.95 | <p>Environmental Health also advises that a student management plan is required – a draft student management plan has been provided with the application and a final version will be required to be submitted, approved and implemented through a Section 76 planning agreement.</p> |

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| 5.91 | <p>To ensure that there will be no significant adverse noise impact arising from the construction phase of the proposed development, the noise control measures and proposals detailed within chapter 8.6 of the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) will be included and implemented as part of a final Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).</p> <p><u>Lighting</u></p> |
| 5.92 | <p>A Lighting Impact Assessment and technical addendum have been submitted, they conclude that vertical lux overspill from the lighting scheme will meet the pre and post curfew maximum limits recommended, this will be secured via condition.</p> <p><u>Odour</u></p> |
| 5.93 | <p>In relation to odour, an Odour Impact Assessment and technical addendum have been submitted which relate to the proposed café use and PBMSA. Environmental Health are content subject to recommended conditions.</p> |
| 5.94 | <p>The proposal is considered to accord with Policy ENV1.</p> <p><u>Flood risk and drainage</u></p> |
| 5.95 | <p>Flood Maps (NI) shows no fluvial flooding at the site. The tidal flood maps on Flood Map (NI) show that the site is partly affected by tidal flooding. DfI Rivers has reviewed the Drainage Assessment, accepts its logic and has no reason to disagree with its conclusions. Accordingly, it offers no objection to the proposal. The proposal satisfies Policy ENV5.</p> <p><u>Waste-water infrastructure</u></p> |
| 5.96 | <p>Policy SP1a requires that necessary infrastructure is in place to support new development. NI Water has been consulted and has no objections, stating that after discussions with the drainage consultant and senior Titanic Quarter management, it can recommend approval of this proposal on the grounds of like for like development. In these regards, the proposal is considered acceptable having regard to Policy SP1A of the Plan Strategy.</p> <p><u>Natural heritage</u></p> |
| 5.97 | <p>Policy NH1 relates to the protection of natural heritage resources.</p> |
| 5.98 | <p>The site is previously developed brownfield land and currently vacant of buildings and structures. The site is not located within the boundary of any statutory or non-statutory designated sites or sites of national or local nature conservation. However, the site is immediately adjacent and hydrologically linked to designated sites within Belfast Lough so it is as necessary to consult SES and DAERA.</p> |
| 5.99 | <p>Belfast City Council is the Competent Authority under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) for undertaking an Appropriate Assessment where a proposal is likely to have a significant environmental effect on Belfast Lough. Water quality of the lough is a key consideration. The Habitats Regulations are framed in such a way that it is not only the impacts of individual development proposals that need to be considered, but also “in combination” impacts with other development.</p> |

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| 5.100 | Following an appropriate assessment in accordance with the Regulations and having considered the nature, scale, timing, duration and location of the project, SES advises the project would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. In reaching this conclusion, SES has assessed the manner in which the project is to be carried out including any mitigation. This conclusion is subject to a condition requiring the submission of a final Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), which is recommended. |
| 5.101 | DAERA has provided advice from Water Management Unit, Regulation Unit and Natural Environment Division, all of which have no objections subject to conditions. |
| 5.102 | DAERA Marine and Fisheries Division has stated that is content that there should be no adverse impacts on marine protected areas, marine habitats and/or marine species, provided conditions and pollution standing advice are followed. However, they have concerns about the potential impact to the Belfast Harbour Regional Seascape Character Area and advise that paragraph 6.48 of the SPPS should be considered. Paragraph 6.48 states that: <i>'Where development is permitted in sensitive locations, particularly in the undeveloped coast, it will be incumbent upon the planning authority to mitigate any adverse impacts through the use of appropriate conditions. In particular, conditions should be used to minimise adverse visual impact through careful siting, design and landscaping of the proposal while ensuring that building design is of high quality and appropriate to the coastal setting. Conditions should also be employed to ensure that development proposals retain or enhance existing public access to the coast and significant public views of the coast.'</i> As set out previously, the proposal is considered to be of a highway quality design which will augment other surrounding development. The proposal is sufficiently far from the coastal edge and it is considered that there is no conflict with the SPPS. |
| 5.103 | The proposal is considered compliant with Policy NH1, Policy ENV1 and the relevant provisions of the SPPS. |
| | <u>Waste Management</u> |
| 5.104 | The application is supported by a Waste Management Plan. This sets out provision for accommodating total waste generated from the building, associated café, segregation of waste for recycling and how convenient and safe access for depositing waste and collecting waste will be facilitated. The Council's Waste Management team has been consulted and is satisfied. |
| | <u>Employability and Skills</u> |
| 5.105 | The <i>Developer Contribution Framework</i> requires proposals for Major development to contribute towards Employability and Skills where necessary. |
| 5.106 | The Council's Economic Development Unit notes that the estimated construction cost of the development is £80 million. It is expected that approx. 142 construction jobs will be created during construction with approximately 30 jobs on operation. The Economic Development Unit advises that a Construction Employability and Skills Plan is required. |
| 5.107 | Typical interventions in the Employability and Skills Plan may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating access to employment opportunities • delivering training to upskill people • creation and delivery of apprenticeship opportunities |

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| 5.108 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ring-fencing opportunities for under-represented groups • delivery of employability interventions • addressing barriers to employment and skills development • delivery of youth interventions <p>The Construction Employability and Skills Plan should be secured by way of a Section 76 planning agreement.</p> <p><u>Section 76 planning agreement</u></p> |
| 5.109 | <p>Should the application be approved, the following planning obligations are necessary to make the proposed development acceptable. These should be secured through a Section 76 planning agreement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student management plan – requirement for the submission, approval and implementation of a final student management plan. • Employability and Skills – to secure the submission and implementation of a Construction Employability and Skills Plan for the construction phase of the development. • Green Travel Measures – these include the provision of the travel plan, sustainable transport fund, green measures fund and other measures referenced in this report and the application. |
| 5.110 | <p>A draft Section 76 planning agreement has been prepared without prejudice and will need to be finalised before planning permission is granted.</p> <p><u>Pre-Application Community Consultation</u></p> |
| 5.111 | <p>For applications for Major development, there is a legislative requirement for applicants to consult the community in advance of submitting the application.</p> |
| 5.112 | <p>Applicants are required to submit to the council a 'Proposal of Application Notice' (PAN) in advance of making the application, which sets out the proposals for the pre-community consultation. A PAN was submitted in September 2023 (LA04/2023/4129/PAN) and confirmed by the Council to be acceptable. The applicant is further required to prepare a Pre-Application Community Consultation report (PACC) to accompany the planning application. A PACC Report was submitted with the application, which describes the engagement process and feedback received.</p> |
| 5.113 | <p>A public event was held in November 2023 and dedicated community consultation website established. A total of 53 individuals engaged through attendance at the public exhibition event (3 people), completing a feedback form (14 people), downloading an information pack (34 people) or by emailing the consultation email address (2 people). Feedback was provided in relation to need for the development, noise, design, location, views, student occupancy, regeneration, sustainability, active travel and public accessibility.</p> |
| 5.114 | <p>The PACC report is considered compliant with the legislative requirements.</p> |

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| <p>6.0</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p> | <p>Recommendation</p> <p>Having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.</p> <p>Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that the issues are not substantive.</p> |
| <p>7.0</p> | <p>DRAFT CONDITIONS</p> <p>1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this permission.</p> <p>Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.</p> <p><i>Contaminated Land</i></p> <p>2. Prior to the occupation of the proposed development, a Verification Report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. This report must demonstrate that the remediation measures outlined in the RSK Ireland Ltd report entitled 'Watkins Jones Plc / Lacuna Developments, Remediation Strategy, Titanic Quarter PBMSA Scheme, Belfast, 604896-R2(01), March 2024' and clarified within the letter from RSK (Ireland) Ltd dated 19th July 2024 (Planning Ref: LA04/2024/0681/F, RSK Ref: 604896-L01), have been implemented.</p> <p>The Verification Report shall be completed by competent persons and demonstrate the successful completion of the remediation works and that the site is now fit for end-use (residential without homegrown produce). It must demonstrate that the identified human health contaminant linkages are effectively broken. The Verification Report shall be in accordance with current Environment Agency and CIRIA guidance and British Standards. In particular, the Verification Report must demonstrate that:</p> <p>a) A minimum 500mm capping layer (underlain by a membrane), has been emplaced in all landscaped areas formed from material that is demonstrably suitable for use (residential without homegrown produce).</p> <p>b) Ground gas protection measures commensurate with the site's BS 8485:2015+A1:2019 Characteristic Situation 2 classification have been incorporated into the development, providing the required gas protection score of 3.5 points. Gas protection measures must be verified in line with the requirements of CIRIA C735.</p> <p>Reason: To demonstrate that the required remedial measures have been incorporated into the development, in the interests of human health.</p> <p>3. If during the carrying out of the development, new contamination is encountered that has not previously been identified, all related works shall cease immediately, and the Council shall be notified immediately in writing. No further development shall proceed until this new contamination has been fully investigated in accordance with current industry recognised best practice. In the event of unacceptable human health risks being identified, a Remediation Strategy and subsequent Verification Report shall be submitted to and agreed in</p> |

writing by the Council, prior to the development being occupied or operated. The Verification Report shall be completed by competent persons in accordance with best practice and must demonstrate that the remediation measures have been implemented and that the site is now fit for end-use.

Reason: To ensure that any contamination within the site is appropriately dealt with, in the interests of human health.

4. If during the development works, new contamination or risks are encountered which have not previously been identified, works should cease and the Planning Authority shall be notified immediately. This new contamination shall be fully investigated in accordance with the Land Contamination: Risk Management (LCRM) guidance available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/landcontamination-how-to-manage-the-risks>. In the event of unacceptable risks being identified, a remediation strategy shall be agreed with the Planning Authority in writing, and subsequently implemented and verified to its satisfaction.
5. Reason: Protection of environmental receptors to ensure the site is suitable for use.
6. After completing the remediation works under Condition XX; and prior to occupation of the development, a verification report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. This report should be completed by competent persons in accordance with the Land Contamination: Risk Management (LCRM) guidance available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/landcontamination-how-to-manage-the-risks>.

The verification report should present all the remediation, waste management and monitoring works undertaken and demonstrate the effectiveness of the works in managing all the risks and wastes in achieving the remedial objectives.

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

CEMP

7. Prior to commencement of development, a final Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The final CEMP shall reflect the measures noted within the Outline CEMP dated March 2024, and shall include the finalised Continuous Flight Auger (CFA) piling design. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure effective avoidance and mitigation measures have been planned for the protection of the water environment.

Air Quality

8. In the event that any centralised combustion sources (boilers, CHP, generator or biomass) are proposed and there is a risk of impact at relevant receptor locations as per the criteria detailed within the Environmental Protection UK and Institute of Air Quality Management, Land-use Planning & Development Control: Planning For Air Quality (January 2017), an updated Air Quality Impact Assessment to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The

development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: Protection of human health.

Artificial Lighting

9. The lighting scheme at the hereby approved development shall be installed in accordance with the luminaire schedule and specification presented in the Chroma Lighting Report within the RPS Technical Addendum report, dated July 2024. Vertical lux overspill associated with the approved lighting scheme shall not exceed the pre and post curfew limits for an E3 Lighting Zone.

Reason: Protection of amenity.

Odour

10. The café shall not be operated unless the kitchen extraction and odour abatement system, as presented in the RPS report titled "Titanic Quarter Student Village, Belfast. Odour Impact Assessment", dated July 2024 and referenced 794-NI-HCT-00905, capable of achieving a high level of odour control as per the EMAQ+ 'Guidance on the Control of Odour and Noise from Commercial Kitchen Exhaust Systems' (updated in May 2022) has been installed by a competent ventilation engineer. The approved extraction and odour abatement system must be retained thereafter.

Reason: Protection of surrounding amenity.

Noise and ventilation

11. Prior to occupation glazing shall be installed to all habitable rooms of the hereby permitted development which is capable of achieving the sound reduction values (Rw + Ctr) as presented in Section 1.13 Façade Design Appraisal - Figures 3, 4, 5, and 6 of the RPS report titled "Technical Addendum – Noise. Titanic Quarter Student Village", dated July 24, referenced 794-NIHCT-00905 and with review date of 31 July 2024, as a minimum, and shall be retained at all times.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of occupants of the building hereby approved.

12. The roof structures to the hereby permitted development shall be capable of achieving a minimum sound reduction of 64dB Rw, as presented in Section 1.15 of the RPS report titled "Technical Addendum – Noise. Titanic Quarter Student Village", dated July 24, referenced 794-NI-HCT-00905 and with review date of 31 July 2024.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of occupants of the building hereby approved.

13. Prior to commencement of development, the final details of the ventilation strategy to habitable rooms (in addition to that provided by open windows) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The final details shall confirm that any passive vents (when open) have a sound reduction equivalent to or greater to the sound reduction achieved by the glazing, as presented in Section 1.13 Façade Design Appraisal - Figures 3, 4, 5, and 6 of the RPS report titled "Technical Addendum – Noise. Titanic Quarter Student Village", dated July

24, referenced 794-NI-HCT-00905 and with review date of 31 July 2024. Where any element of mechanical or active means of ventilation is proposed, the final details shall include a Noise Impact Assessment that confirms that the noise associated with its operation will not exceed internal target levels for habitable rooms in line with BS 8233:2014 Guidance on sound insulation and noise for buildings. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of occupants of the building hereby approved. Approval is required upfront because the ventilation strategy may be integral to the overall design of the development.

14. Prior to the occupation of the development the approved ventilation strategy to habitable rooms (in addition to that provided by open windows) shall be installed as approved and retained at all times.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of occupants of the building hereby approved.

15. All external plant associated with the hereby permitted development shall be located within the designated roof top plant areas, as presented in Section 4.8 – External Plant, Figures 17 and 18 of the RPS report titled “Titanic Quarter Student Village. Noise Impact Assessment”, dated April 24 and referenced 794-NI-HCT-00905.

Reason: Protection of nearby amenity.

16. The rating level (dBLAr,T) from the operation of all combined plant and equipment must not exceed the existing daytime and night-time background sound levels at the nearest noise sensitive premises, when measured or determined in accordance with BS4142:2014+A1:2019 ‘Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound’.

Reason: Protection of nearby amenity.

17. Deliveries and servicing associated with the hereby permitted development shall not occur outside the hours of 07:00 to 23:00.

Reason: Protection of residential amenity.

Archaeology

18. No development or works shall commence on site until the expiration of 14 calendar days following written notice being given to the Council of the intention to commence development or works. During the construction phase, the developer shall afford access at all reasonable times to an archaeologist nominated by the Council and the nominated archaeologist shall be allowed to observe the development and excavation and record items of interest and finds.

Reason: To ensure that the archaeological remains and features are preserved in situ.

19. No development or works shall commence on site (other than that required to fulfil this condition) unless a programme of archaeological work has been implemented in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Council.

Reason: To ensure that archaeological remains and features are preserved in situ. Approval is required upfront because archaeological remains and features could be damaged or permanently lost.

20. A programme of post-excavation analysis, preparation of an archaeological report, dissemination of results and preparation of the excavation archive shall be undertaken in accordance with the programme of archaeological work approved under **condition 19**.

These measures shall be implemented, and a final archaeological report shall be submitted to the Council within 12 months of the completion of archaeological programme of works.

Reason: To ensure that the archaeological remains and features are properly analysed and recorded.

Trees and landscaping

21. No development (other than site clearance, site preparation, demolition and the formation of foundations and trenches) shall commence on site unless a hard and soft landscaping scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The scheme shall include details of all walls, fences, trees, hedgerows and other planting which are to be retained; details of all new walls, fences, other boundary treatment and finished ground levels; details of the hard surface treatment of open parts of the site which shall be permeable or drained to a permeable area; a planting specification and a programme of implementation.

All hard and/or soft landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation of any part of the development unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council. Any existing or proposed trees or plants indicated on the approved plans which, within a period of five years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged, diseased or dying shall be replaced during the next planting season with other trees or plants of a location, species and size, details of which shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. All hard and soft landscape areas and works shall be permanently retained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area, and to promote sustainable drainage. Approval is required upfront because the landscaping is critical to the acceptability of the proposal.

22. Notwithstanding the submitted details, no development shall commence on site (other than site clearance, site preparation, demolition and the formation of foundations and trenches) unless details of a surface water drainage scheme, which shall incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) principles, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The scheme shall include a programme for implementation of the works and proposals for future maintenance and management. The development shall not be carried out unless

in accordance with the approved SUDS scheme, which shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: To ensure sustainable drainage of the development, having regard to Policy ENV4 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy 2035. Approval is required upfront because the design of the drainage is an integral part of the development and its acceptability.

Drainage

23. Notwithstanding the submitted details, no development shall commence on site (other than site clearance, site preparation, demolition and the formation of foundations and trenches) unless details of foul and surface water drainage, including a programme for implementation of these works, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details, which shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: To ensure appropriate foul and surface water drainage of the site. Approval is required upfront because the design of the drainage is an integral part of the development and its acceptability.

Materials

24. No external brickwork or external cladding panels shall be constructed or applied unless in accordance with a written specification and a physical sample panel, details of which shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.

The sample panel shall be provided on site and made available for inspection by the Council for the duration of the construction works.

The sample panel shall show the make, type, size, colour, bond, pointing, coursing, jointing, profile and texture of the external brick materials and panelling.

Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area.

Environmental Credentials

25. Within one year of the occupation, evidence that the building has been constructed to at least Passivhaus "Classic" or BREEAM Excellent standard, or equivalent, shall be submitted in writing to the Council.

Reason: To ensure that the development mitigates and adapts to climate change.

Waste / Service Management

26. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the waste storage areas have been provided in accordance with the approved plans and shall be permanently retained as such at all times.

Reason: To ensure that appropriate provision is made for storage and disposal of waste.

27. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied or operated unless in accordance with the approved Service Management Plan.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and free flow of traffic.

Access and parking

28. No development shall commence on site (other than that required to fulfil this condition) unless the accesses, including visibility splays and any forward sight lines, have been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The accesses and visibility splays shall be retained in accordance with the approved plans at all times.

Reason: To ensure safe and convenient access to the development.

29. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied or operated unless covered bicycle storage has been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The covered bicycle storage shall be retained in accordance with the approved plans at all times.

Reason: To ensure adequate provision and availability of cycle parking and encourage sustainable travel.

30. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied or operated unless the parking bay and disabled parking spaces have been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The said areas shall be retained at all times for such purpose and in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: To ensure adequate provision for disabled parking.

DRAFT INFORMATIVES

NOT04 Section 76 planning agreement

This planning permission is subject to a planning agreement under Section 76 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. This decision should be read in conjunction with the planning agreement.

NOT02 Compliance with planning permission

Please make sure that you carry out the development in accordance with the approved plans and any planning conditions listed above. Failure to do so will mean that the proposal is unauthorised and liable for investigation by the Council's Planning Enforcement team. If you would like advice about how to comply with the planning permission, you are advised to contact the Planning Service at Belfast City Council at planning@belfastcity.gov.uk.

NOT03 Discharge of condition(s)

This planning permission includes condition(s) which require further details to be submitted to and approved by the Council. Please read the condition(s) carefully so that you know when this information needs to be provided and approved. It could take a minimum of 8 weeks for the Council to approve the details, assuming that they are satisfactory, and sometimes longer depending on the complexity of the condition. You should allow for this when planning the timeline of your project.

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| | <p>NOT05 Non-planning requirements</p> <p>The grant of planning permission does not dispense with the need to obtain licenses, authorisations may have been identified by consultees in their response to the application and can be accessed on the Northern Ireland Planning Portal website. The responses from consultees may also include other general advice for the benefit of the applicant or developer, consents or permissions under other legislation or protocols.</p> |
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