

Development Management Committee Report

Summary	
Committee Date: 10 th December 2024	
Application ID: LA04/2023/3691/F	
Proposal: Public realm scheme: Reconfiguration of Little Patrick Street to single lane carriageway, including localised shared space, traffic calming and restricted access to enable servicing / emergency access. Traffic calming measures provided to Little York Street. Other works to include installation of planters with integrated seating, tree planting, rain gardens, bespoke lighting pillars, catenary lighting, and surface improvements.	Location: Little Patrick Street and Little York Street, Belfast, BT15 1BH
Referral Route: Section 3.8.5 (c) of the Scheme of Delegation. Belfast City Council is the applicant.	
Recommendation: Approval subject to conditions.	
Applicant Name and Address: Belfast City Council 9-21 Adelaide Street Belfast BT2 8DJ	Agent Name and Address: Resolve Planning Alice Murdock Pearl Assurance House 1 Donegall Square East Belfast BT1 5HB
Date Valid: 13.07.2023	
Target Date: 26.10.2023	
Contact Officer: Lisa Walshe, Principal Planning Officer, Development Management.	
Executive Summary: <p>The application seeks full planning permission for the public realm scheme on Little Patrick Street and Little York Street. The proposal seeks the reconfiguration of Little Patrick Street to single lane carriageway, including localised shared space, traffic calming and restricted access to enable servicing / emergency access. Traffic calming measures provided to Little York Street. Other works to include installation of planters with integrated seating, tree planting, rain gardens, bespoke lighting pillars, catenary lighting, and surface improvements.</p> <p>The key issues to be considered are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Principle of development• Design, character and appearance.• Community infrastructure	

- Health and wellbeing
- Access, movement, and transport
- Environmental considerations
- Landscaping, green infrastructure and trees
- Built heritage.
- Amenity

The site is within the settlement limits and zoned within the city centre as detailed in the BUAP and within the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) and dBMAP (2014v).

The proposed public realm scheme is considered acceptable within this sustainable city centre location and follows design, environmental, transportation, built and natural heritage and community infrastructure policies contained with the LDP Plan Strategy.

The proposal would reduce street parking and minimise through traffic in the area. It would enhance active travel measures and provide a foundation for better interaction within the space. This is considered acceptable given the highly sustainable location of the site.

The application is a placemaking led approach to deliver a purpose designed space to meet the needs of the growing population in this expanding part of the city.

The planning service has received 2 third party objections and 2 third party letters of support.

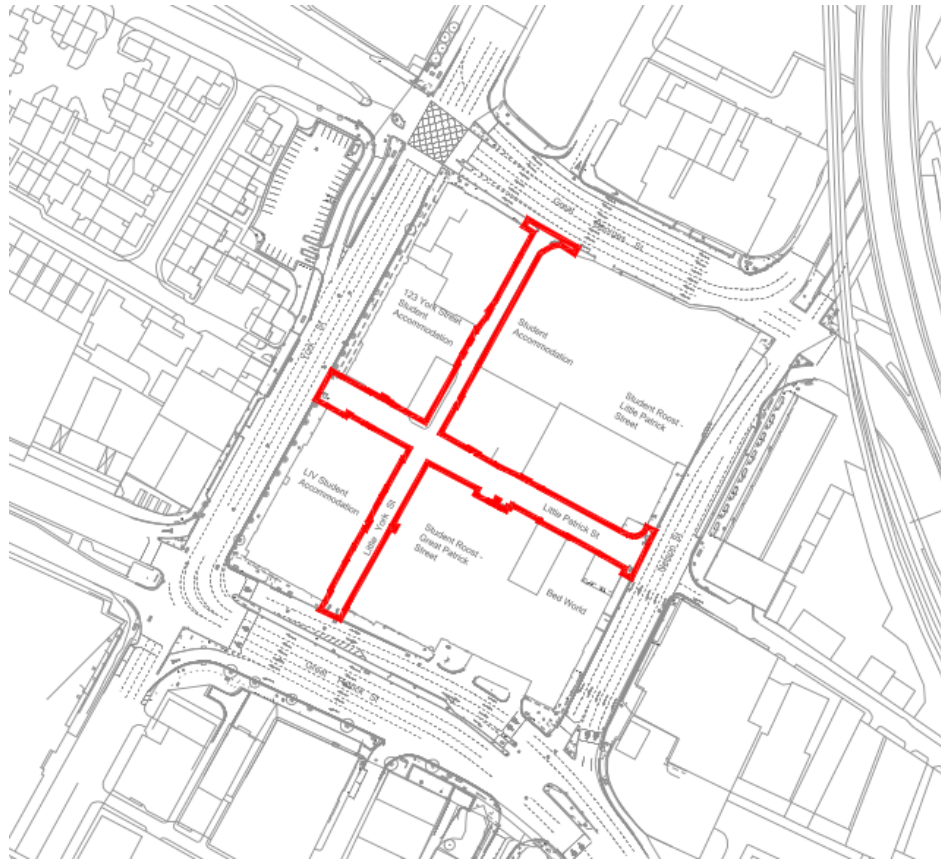
DFI Roads, DFI Rivers, BCC Environmental Health, BCC Landscape Planning and Development and Historic Environment Division have been consulted and provided feedback on the proposal. All consultees have returned no objections, subject to conditions and informatives.

Recommendation

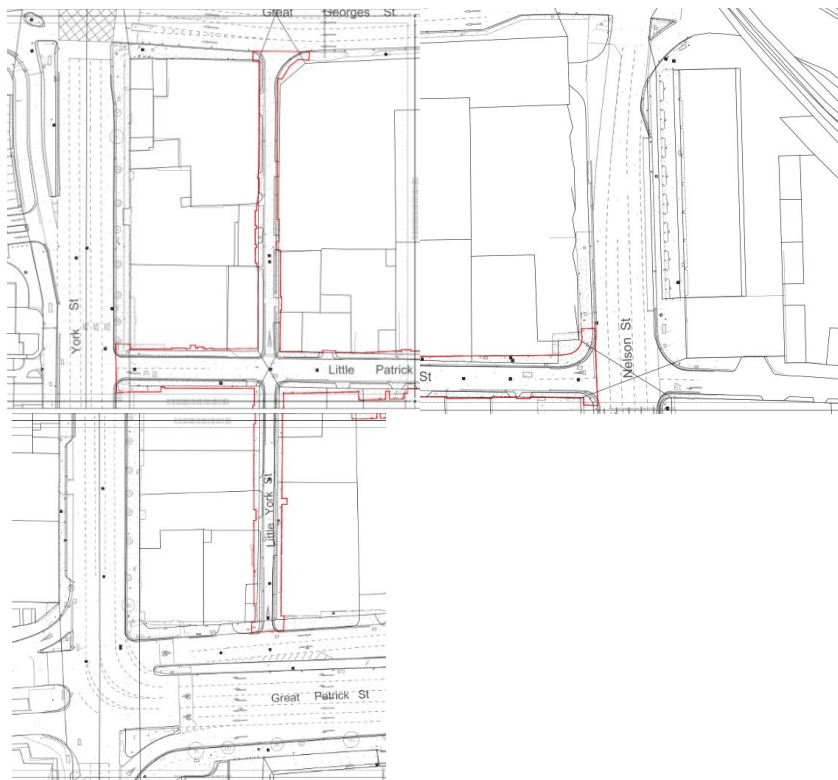
Having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.

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

Site Location Plan: Little Patrick Street & Little York Street



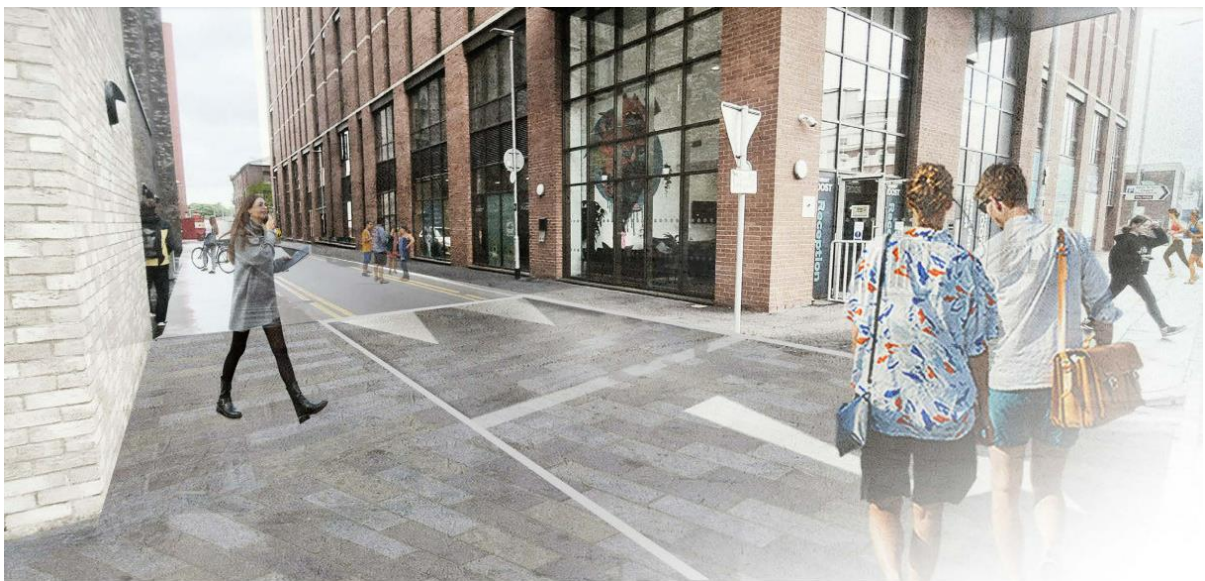
Existing Site Layout



Proposed Site Layout



CGI Impressions





<p>1.0</p>	<p>Characteristics of the Site and Area</p> <p>The site comprises the two interconnected streets of Little Patrick Street and Little York Street, located in the north of Belfast City Centre, opposite the new Ulster University Campus and neighbouring Lancaster Street. It is bounded to the north and south by the A2 (Great Patrick Street) and the A12 (Great George Street) respectively, and to the east and west by the wide, 5 carriageway roads of York Street and Nelson Street.</p> <p>Little Patrick Street is currently a two-lane, two-way street for vehicular traffic with little York Street comprising a single lane, one way street connecting Great George Street with Great Patrick Street. Both streets have pedestrian footpaths to both sides and contain no street trees or soft landscaping. The immediate context of the site is a mixture of high density, private student accommodation blocks, retail and warehousing, surface car parking, and derelict sites including the former Hendron Brothers Building.</p> <p>The wider context includes the Ulster University campus buildings as well as the MAC contemporary art gallery and St Annes Square, St Anne’s Cathedral, and the Cathedral Gardens Park.</p>
<p>2.0</p>	<p>PLANNING HISTORY</p> <p>LA04/2022/2063/PAD – Little Patrick Street and Little York Street – Public Realm Scheme – PAD Concluded: 31/08/2023.</p>
<p>3.0</p> <p>3.1</p>	<p>PLANNING POLICY</p> <p>Development Plan – operational policies: <u>Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035</u></p> <p>Policy SP3 – Improving health and wellbeing Policy SP5 – Positive Placemaking</p>

<p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p>	<p>Policy DES1 – Principles of urban design Policy BH1 – Listed buildings Policy BH4 – Works to grounds affecting built heritage assets Policy HC1 – Promoting healthy communities Policy CI1 – Community Infrastructure Policy CC1 – Development opportunity sites Policy TRAN1 – Active travel – walking and cycling Policy TRAN2 – Creating an accessible environment Policy TRAN8 – Car parking and servicing arrangements Policy ENV1 – Environmental quality Policy ENV2 – Mitigating environmental change Policy ENV4 – Flood risk Policy ENV5 - Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) Policy OS2 – New open space within settlements Policy TRE1 - Trees</p> <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> <p>Regional Planning Policy: Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)</p> <p>Supplementary Planning Guidance: Creating Places Living Places - An Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland</p>
<p>4.0</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p> <p>4.4</p>	<p>CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS</p> <p><u>Statutory Consultees</u> DFI Roads – no objection with conditions & informatives. DFI Rivers – no objection (exception site).</p> <p><u>Non-Statutory Consultees</u> Historic Environment Division (HED) – no objection BCC Environmental Health – no objection</p> <p><u>Internal Advice</u> BCC Landscape Planning and Development – supportive of proposal</p> <p><u>Representations</u> The application has been advertised in the newspaper and neighbours notified.</p> <p>Two objection/comments have been received. The concerns are summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obstruction of warehouse retail store for deliveries and customer parking which need removed. - Issues with lighting to be attached to student building as it will restrain access / maintenance to the building windows etc. - No long-term plan presented for maintenance and upkeep. Will not be providing financial assistance to trees, planting, lighting etc as it's not their responsibility or desire to attain these elements.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Insufficient bin collection consideration. - Proposal will disrupt and obstruct parking and movement. <p>The Council has also received 2 letters of support for this proposal from the Ulster University and the Student Roost accommodation block whom welcome the proposals and deem that they would have a positive impact on the area.</p> <p>All issues highlighted by third parties will be considered within the relevant sections of the planning assessment / report below.</p>
<p>5.0</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p> <p>5.3</p> <p>5.4</p> <p>5.5</p> <p>5.6</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 development • Design, character and appearance. • Community infrastructure • Health and wellbeing • Access, movement, and transport • Environmental considerations • Landscaping, green infrastructure and trees • Built heritage. • Amenity <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> <p>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.</p> <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 remain part of the statutory local development plan until the Local Policies Plan is adopted.</p> <p><u>Operational Polices</u></p> <p>The Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application. These have been listed above at section 3.1.</p> <p><u>Proposals Maps</u></p> <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, both versions of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (v2004 and v2014) (draft BMAP</p>

5.7	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, except for retail policies that relate to Sprucefield which remain contentious.
5.8	Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 – identified as whiteland.
5.9	Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (2004) – identified as development opportunity site.
5.10	Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014) – identified as development opportunity site.
5.11	<p><u>Principle of development</u></p> <p>The SPPS advises that planning permission should be granted for sustainable development that accords with the area plan and causes no harm to areas of acknowledged importance.</p>
5.12	<p>The proposals seek to make alterations to the streetscape, public footpaths, and existing street network to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists over motorised vehicles. The overarching aims of the proposal are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a welcoming and permeable streetscape. - Create a human scale space to influence interaction. - Adaptable + multifunctional spaces. - Innovative approaches to soft landscaping. - Traffic calming measures which prioritise people over vehicles. - Useable, vibrant, and safe space.
5.13	The proposal is designated as whiteland within the BUAP and is zoned as a ‘development opportunity site’ (zoning CC 077) dBMAP v2004. The site is within the development limits of Belfast and the city centre boundary.
5.14	The concept focuses on Little Patrick Street as the main area for alterations by reducing the carriageway from a two-lane, two-way street to a single lane. This seeks to create space for seating at selected locations, tree planting, and rain gardens. Caithness slabs will be used for pedestrian footways along the length of Little Patrick Street with granite setts in areas which are to be stopped up / prioritised for pedestrians. Flush kerbs will also be used in these areas to create a continuous level surface, prioritising pedestrians whilst still enabling cycle access.
5.15	Little York Street focuses on discouraging the road to through-traffic between Great Patrick Street and Great George Street whilst retaining existing access to the accommodation blocks. This is sought to be achieved by changing the surface material from tarmac to natural stone paving by the Great Patrick Street end to encourage pedestrians to use it as a walking route.
5.16	The concept seeks to activate Little Patrick Street and Little York Street by introducing new high quality public realm and opportunities for activities within these streets. It also seeks to activate entrances from the surrounding major streets to entice people into these quieter streets and reduce the existing ‘island’ effect. This will be achieved through a combination of introducing planting and seating, restricting traffic, creating flexible spaces for new or changing activities, upgrading functional lighting, and layering historic

	narratives through the scheme. In addition, space is created for a shared active travel route connection between York Street and Nelson Street.
5.17	The principle of this public realm scheme is aligned with overarching policy direction set out in the RDS 2035, SPPS, Belfast Agenda and the Belfast Local Development Plan – Plan Strategy 2035.
5.18	<p>Design, character and appearance.</p> <p>Little Patrick Street comprises a two-carriageway street with a pavement on both sides and a typical width of 11m between building lines. Little York Street is a single carriageway, one way street with a pavement on both sides and a typical width of 8m between building lines. Both streets currently have an enclosed feel dictated by a combination of their linear nature and flanking by 12+ storey buildings. This is exacerbated along Little York Street due to its narrow width. Active frontages are limited to the corner of Little Patrick Street and York Street although both streets are passively overlooked by upper floor windows of student accommodation blocks. There is no soft landscaping or trees on either street. Both streets currently act as a back of house to student accommodation with servicing entrances, plant rooms and bin stores at ground level. There are several vacant units for sale including the former Hendron Brothers Building. There is access for businesses at the eastern end of Little Patrick Street.</p>
5.19	The Design and Planning Statement submitted to the Council refers to the history of the area, and once known as ‘Little Italy’ with the concept seeking to re-imagine the former streetscapes of ‘Little Italy’ as a new public space.
5.20	Policy DES1 of the LDP states that planning permission will be granted for new development that is of a high quality, sustainable design that makes a positive contribution to placemaking. The below sections will detail the proposed design changes on each street.
5.21	<p><u>Little Patrick Street</u></p> <p>The carriageway will be reduced to a single lane and stopped up to traffic in the western half of the street. There will be recessed bays designated for bins which will remove them from public views along the street. The street will be broken up with public seating areas which include raingardens and planting. Street trees will be introduced to enhance the biodiversity and aesthetics of the area.</p>
5.22	Caithness slabs will be used for pedestrian footways along the length of Little Patrick Street with granite setts in areas which are to be stopped up / prioritised for pedestrians. Flush kerbs will also be used in these areas to create a continuous level surface, prioritising pedestrians whilst still enabling cycle access. The choice of materials has been guided by the Belfast City Centre Public Realm Materials Palette. Use of these materials ensures high quality materials and finishes will be implemented, responding positively to the local context and wider character and finishes within the city centre.,
5.23	<p><u>Little York Street</u></p> <p>Little York Street has been recently resurfaced and is in good condition. Design proposals for this street focus on discouraging vehicular through traffic between Great Patrick Street and Great George Street whilst retaining existing access to the accommodation blocks where required. This is achieved by changing the surface material from tarmac to natural stone paving by the Great Patrick Street end to encourage use as a pedestrians walking route.</p>

5.24	Street lighting is also proposed. The proposals state that lighting will be designed in accordance with the “Luminous City: A Lighting Strategy for Belfast” and seek to minimise light spillage. The lighting aims to achieve a balance in the street feeling safe and attractive but seeking to limit instances of antisocial or noisy behaviour within a largely residential setting.
5.25	BCC Landscape Planning and Development team have no objections stating that the proposal will create an accessible, high quality public realm, valuable pockets of urban green space that will improve the amenity value of the proposed public realm.
5.26	The proposed development aligns with the key principles of Policy SP5 of the LDP and design criteria (a-k) of Policy DES1. The proposal is deemed acceptable with regards to design, character, and appearance.
5.27	<p>Health and wellbeing</p> <p>Policy SP3 – Improving health and wellbeing and Policy HC1 – Promoting healthy communities. require proposals to promote healthy and active lifestyles. The public realm scheme enhancements will assist active travel i.e. walking and cycling are easily achieved and that the surface area caters for people with mobility issues. The proposal will improve accessibility to/within the locality and city centre, reducing the use of private car travel, and improve provision of public open space The proposal is acceptable in relation to these policies.</p>
5.28	<p>Access, movement, and transport</p> <p>The applicant has provided a Traffic Statement, Road Safety Audit, Bin Collection Plan and a DFI Roads consultation report to demonstrate a safe and usable streetscape for all members of the public.</p>
5.29	A local business had initially made a representation regarding proposed planters blocking access to their delivery warehouse entrance and car parking area. Revisions have been received to the satisfaction of DFI Roads which adequately address the representation received. The neighbours and objector were notified of the amendments and no further representations were received.
5.30	DFI Roads have no objections to the proposal, subject to conditions. The proposal is situated in a highly accessible location with public transport links. The proposal will create an accessible environment for residents and members of the public, enhancing active travel via walking and cycling. The proposal is compliant with Policy TRAN 1 of the LDP.
5.31	The proposal also seeks to reduce on-street parking and includes provision for cycle parking. Appropriate servicing arrangements have been demonstrated to the satisfaction of DFI Roads and therefore the proposal is in compliance with Policies TRAN 1, TRAN 2, and TRAN 8 of the LDP.
5.32	<p>Environmental considerations</p> <p>The application site is situated within the 1 in 100-year climate change floodplain. The Council confirmed the site as being an exception as there is currently hard standing and the proposed scheme will introduce drainage, planting and SuDs.</p>
5.33	The existing landscape and topography of the site does not include any soft landscaping or street trees. The surfacing is not permeable and largely consists of asphalt with concrete kerbs. The proposal seeks to enhance the permeability of the site by introducing

	<p>sustainable urban drainage systems, methods, and materials. The drainage strategy directs surface runoff from impermeable surfaces including roads and footpaths to proposed rain gardens. reducing pressure on the existing drainage system capacity by attenuating and slowing water flows.</p>
5.34	<p>DFI Rivers have appraised the flood risk and drainage assessment provided by the applicant and have no objections based on the supporting information.</p>
5.35	<p>Belfast City Council Environmental Health Service have considered the proposed development in terms of noise, air pollution, general amenity, ambient air quality, contaminated land, and other considerations. They have no objections to the proposal based on the plans and information provided, subject to conditions and informatives.</p>
5.36	<p>The proposal is considered acceptable in relation to Policies ENV1, ENV2, ENV4 and ENV5 of the LDP.</p>
5.37	<p>Landscaping, green infrastructure and trees</p> <p>As mentioned above in this report, both Little Patrick Street and Little York Street currently have no landscaping or street trees within the application site. Large-scale purpose-built student accommodation blocks being erected adjacent to the site. Currently the public realm is poor quality and is dominated by hard landscaping.</p>
5.38	<p>The proposal seeks to introduce visual breaks in the street scene along Little Patrick Street introducing green spaces and pockets of new public open space which will improve visual amenity and public realm in the area.</p>
5.39	<p>The proposal seeks to introduce pockets of new public open space within the urban context of Little Patrick Street and Little York Street. These proposals reflect criteria as set out within of the LDP. The introduction of rain gardens support biodiversity within the area. Rain gardens including tree planting using species which have a light canopy are proposed. Tree planting plans have been provided to the council and are deemed acceptable. The proposal is compliant with Policy OS2 and TRE1 of the LDP as it will result in net gain of open space trees within Policy and. The proposal is also acceptable regarding landscaping, green infrastructure, and trees in that the materials and landscaping proposed are compliant with Supplementary Guidance as set out in Creating Places and Living Places.</p>
5.40	<p>Built Heritage</p> <p>Little Patrick Street and Little York Street are located within an Area of Archaeological Potential and Investigations. The streets are also on the boundary of adjacent listed buildings. Historic Environment Division have no objections to the proposal and are satisfied listed buildings, their settings and archaeological assets will not be adversely affected. The proposal is considered compliant with Policies BH1 and BH4 of the LDP, taking account of the response from HED.</p>
5.41	<p>Amenity</p> <p>The site is surrounded by student accommodation blocks and established residential areas such as Lancaster Street, Thomas Street, Great Georges Street. There are also businesses in close proximity to the site.</p> <p>The Council have received an objection from the head of operations of one of the student blocks adjacent the site. The main concerns include issues with the lighting that is to be attached to the student building. The objection states that the proposal will restrict access</p>

<p>5.42</p> <p>5.43</p> <p>5.44</p>	<p>and maintenance to the building windows above ground floor levels. The objection states that no long-term plan has been presented for maintenance. This representation also states that financial assistance will not be provided for maintenance of trees, planting, lighting, and other features associated with the proposal. In addition, it states that the proposal will impact on bin collection arrangements, and that the proposal would disrupt and obstruct parking and movement within the area.</p> <p>These points have been considered by the applicant. The applicant has provided supporting information relating to the traffic and bin collection which has been considered by DfI Roads. DfI Roads have no objections to the proposal and on this basis the proposal will not adversely impact on access, traffic, road safety, servicing of adjacent properties including and that bin storage and collection arrangements. They have also confirmed that no lighting is proposed to nearby buildings.</p> <p>The Council has also received 2 letters of support for this proposal from the Ulster University and the Student Roost accommodation block whom welcome the proposals and deem that they would have a positive impact on the area.</p> <p>Developer Contributions Para 5.69 of the SPPS states that 'Planning authorities can require developers to bear the costs of work required to facilitate their development proposals'. No developer contributions are required however, due to the nature of the development, which is providing public realm improvements in the public interest.</p>
<p>6.0</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p>	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>It is considered that the proposal will have no significant impact on residential amenity or the character of the surrounding area and will provide community benefits through enhanced public realm and open space improvements. The proposal is compliant with relevant policy provisions in the LDP, and approval is recommended.</p> <p>Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and deal with any other issues that arise provided that they are not substantive.</p>
<p>7.0</p>	<p>DRAFT CONDITIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission. Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. 2. Prior to commencement, the Applicant is required to provide DfI Roads with an additional 5% of each of the public realm surfacing materials used in the Public Realm works to the public road network to cover future maintenance interventions, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Council. Reason: To ensure adequate future maintenance. 3. The materials used on footways, on pedestrianised road surfaces and pedestrianised public realm, shall be carried out in accordance with the Streets Ahead 3 Palette of Materials or such other materials as first agreed in writing with the Council in consultation with the DfI Section Engineer. All materials must satisfy DMRB regarding materials performance and confirm PSV value in

accordance with CS 228 Skidding Resistance. All materials must be installed, retained and maintained thereafter in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of road and pedestrian safety.

4. Prior to completion and operation, pedestrian crossing points including tactile paving must be provided at all road junctions in accordance with the DETR / Scottish Office publication "Guidance on the use of Tactile Paving Surfaces". All pedestrian crossing points must be retained and maintained in accordance with the above guidance.

Reason: In the interests of pedestrian safety.

5. The area within the visibility splays and any forward sight line shall be cleared to provide a level surface no higher than 250 mm above the level of the adjoining carriageway before the development hereby permitted becomes operational and such splays shall be retained and kept clear thereafter.

Reason: To ensure there is a satisfactory means of access in the interest of road safety and the convenience of road users.

6. 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 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 use.

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

7. All hard and 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 surface treatment of open parts of the site shall be permeable or drained to a permeable area. All hard landscape works shall be permanently retained in accordance with the approved details.

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