



Subject:	Proposed Listing of Buildings by Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) - Danske Bank and Belfast Telegraph
Date:	19 May 2015
Reporting Officer:	C E Mcllwaine
Contact Officer:	C E Mcllwaine

Is this report restricted?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
	<p>NIEA has asked Council for its views on the proposed listing and de-listing of buildings in Belfast. Remaining at issue is the proposed listing of the Danske Bank, Donegall Square West and Belfast Telegraph, Royal Avenue. NIEA will make the final decision following the Belfast City Council's response.</p> <p>Belfast Telegraph and Danske will address Town Planning Committee on 19 May outlining their opposition to the listing proposed. NIEA will clarify its rationale for listing.</p>
2.0	Recommendations
	<p>The Committee has agreed to hear the representatives of Danske Bank, Belfast Telegraph and NIEA. Following discussion the Committee should decide in each case whether or not to support listing. This matter has been referred to Planning Committee by Council and NIEA will be advised of Council's view in due course.</p>
3.0	Main report
	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>The Committee will be aware that the NIEA has been consulting with the Council to ascertain its views on proposals to list and de-list a number of buildings in the City. The former Shadow Planning Committee considered reports in this regard at its meetings in February and March.</p>

	<p>DANSKE BANK</p> <p>At the March meeting, a letter was tabled on behalf of Danske Bank requesting that the shadow Committee agrees not to support a proposal to list the bank's corporate headquarters in Donegall Square West. That letter had indicated that the building was the bank's corporate headquarters and the listing of it would impose unnecessary constraints on the ability of the bank to re-develop the building. The shadow Committee noted the receipt of the letter but agreed, given the building's unique architectural and contemporary style, to support the proposal to list the building.</p> <p>The representatives of Danske Bank addressed the Council on 1 April to request that the decision to support the listing be rejected. On the advice of the Town Solicitor, the Council agreed to refer the minute back to the new Planning Committee.</p> <p>Further correspondence has been received from Danske Bank (see Appendix 1).</p> <p>BELFAST TELEGRAPH</p> <p>A letter has since been received by the Chief Executive from representatives of the Belfast Telegraph outlining its concerns at the proposal to list the Telegraph's building in Royal Avenue. Again, it is suggested that such a proposal could affect plans which the Telegraph have drawn-up to re-develop that site. The former Shadow Planning Committee, at its meeting in February, had agreed to support the proposal to list the building.</p> <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications – None</u> <u>Equality or Good Relations Implications - None</u></p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
4.1	Appendix 1 - Letter from T Quinn and Andy Tough on behalf of Danske Bank
4.2	Previously circulated April Committee Appendices

APPENDIX 1

Objection to proposed listing of Danske Bank HQ, 12-15 Donegall Square West, Belfast (19 May 2015)

Thanks for the opportunity to appear before you today.

We are here to explain why Danske Bank objects to the proposed listing of its regional HQ in Donegall SW.

In so doing, we are appealing to the Council to assist us in asking the NIEA to reconsider its proposed listing for this particular building.

There are essentially 4 reasons why the bank considers that listing is inappropriate.

1.0 Firstly, there is no need to list it as sufficient safeguards are already in place. It is located in a Conservation Area, which means it can't be demolished, and within the setting of an adjacent listed building (Scottish Provident Building), which means that only sympathetic modifications to the exterior of Danske Bank can be made. **These safeguards offer adequate protection against inappropriate development.** Indeed, one only has to observe the harmonious appendage of the recently built sixth floor to appreciate that the bank is careful to respect its built heritage obligations in a Conservation Area.

2.0 Secondly, the NIEA report which explains the rationale for listing is factually incorrect in that it fails to notice that the original building has been significantly altered in recent years (2008) with the addition of a sixth floor and infilling of the central lightwell. **These alterations to its original form undermine its architectural merits for listing.**

3.0 Thirdly, there is little history associated with it to warrant listing. Its construction dates from the 1970s and it only ever operated as a bank. **It is simply not old enough to have historical merit,** let alone generate any tourist appeal.

4.0 Finally, but by no means least, Danske can ill afford to have unnecessary constraints imposed on its business operations. Danske is one of the largest employers in the City Centre. Some 740 people are employed in this building alone, the accommodation of which doubtlessly has spin-offs for neighbouring shops. Mindful of the drift of banks from the High St in the wake of online banking, every effort should be made to encourage them to remain in the City Centre as opposed to subjecting them to unnecessary regulations.

Taking these reasons into account the Council is respectfully requested to ask the NIEA to reappraise their proposed listing of this particular building.

Many thanks for your time

Tony Quinn (Planning Consultant) on behalf of Danske Bank
Andy Tough (Regional Portfolio Manager, Danske Bank)

