

## Development Management Officer Report Committee Application

<b>Summary</b>	
<b>Committee Meeting Date:</b> 20 October 2015	<b>Item Number:</b>
<b>Application ID:</b> LA04/2015/0545/F	
<b>Proposal:</b> Refurbishment, Part Demolition and Rebuild, Extension and Change of Use of Windsor House for hotel with associated restaurant and bar facilities (on ground to 15th floor) and serviced hotel apartments on 16/17th floor; creation of new retail offer on ground floor overlooking Franklin Street: retention, refurbishment and extension of office use on upper floors (18th to 22nd floor) together with all associated site works to facilitate and access servicing.	<b>Location:</b> Windsor House 9-15 Bedford Street Belfast BT2 7FF
<b>Referral Route:</b> Major Application	
<b>Recommendation:</b>	Approval
<b>Applicant Name and Address:</b> Hastings Hotel Group Corporate Head Officer 1066 House 587 Upper Newtownards Road Belfast BT4 3LP	<b>Agent Name and Address:</b> WDR and RT Taggart Laganwood House New Forge Lane Belfast BT9 5NX
<p><b>Executive Summary:</b> The application seeks full planning permission for the refurbishment, part demolition (A section of the Ground floor podium to front and side) and rebuild, Extension and change of use of Windsor House for hotel with associated restaurant and bar facilities (on ground to 15th floor) and serviced hotel apartments on 16/17th floor; creation of new retail offer on ground floor overlooking Franklin Street: retention, refurbishment and extension of office use on upper floors (18th to 22nd floor) together with all associated site works to facilitate and access servicing. The main issues to be considered in this case are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The principle of the change of use to hotel at this location;</li> <li>• The loss of existing office space;</li> <li>• The principle of the proposed retail unit at this location;</li> <li>• The impact on the character and appearance of the Linen Conservation Area;</li> <li>• The impact on the setting of adjacent listed buildings;</li> <li>• The impact on existing roads infrastructure; and</li> <li>• Flooding.</li> </ul> <p>The site is located within the Belfast City Centre as designated in the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan. It is also within the Linen Conservation Area and Commercial District Character Area (Designation CC0007). The principle of the retail unit, hotel use and offices are acceptable given the city centre location and the existing office use on site.</p> <p>The proposal has been assessed against the following Policies – Strategic Planning Policy for</p>	

Northern Ireland, Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning and Economic Development, Planning Policy Statement 3: Access Movement and Parking and Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning, Archaeology.

NIEA Historic Buildings Unit was consulted and did not raise any objection with regard to the impact on the setting of nearby listed buildings.

NIWater, Waste Management Unit, NIEA Historic Monuments Unit and Belfast City Council's Environmental Protection Unit have offered no objections to the proposal and standard conditions are to be applied.

Rivers Agency requested that a Drainage Assessment be carried out. This Drainage Assessment was subsequently submitted and is with Rivers Agency for comment.

Amended plans have been submitted to address Transport NI concerns.

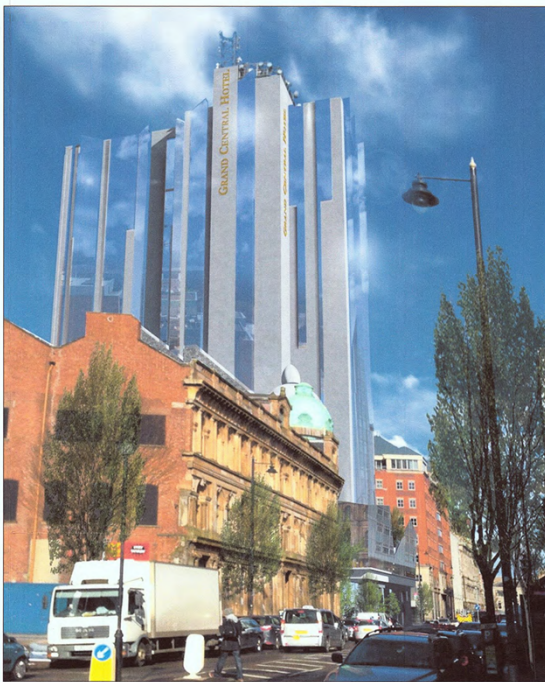
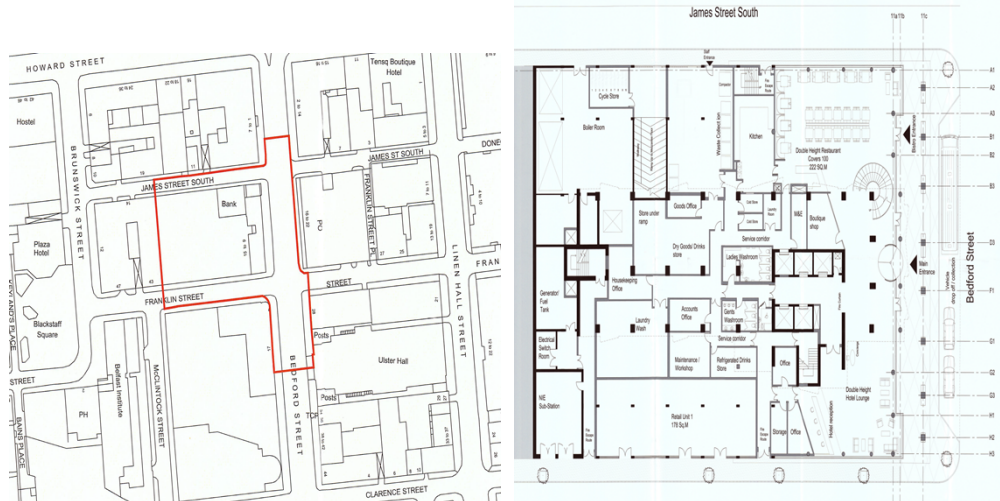
In light of an outstanding consultation responses from Rivers Agency and TransportNI the Director of Planning and Place is authorised to draft any necessary amendments to/ additional conditions in respect of the Planning Applications Schedule.

One letter of objection was received.

Having had regard to the development plan, relevant planning policies, and other material considerations, it is determined that the proposal should be approved subject to conditions.

## Case Officer Report

### Site Location Plan



### Characteristics of the Site and Area

#### Description of Proposed Development

Refurbishment, Part Demolition and Rebuild, Extension and Change of Use of Windsor House for hotel with associated restaurant and bar facilities (on ground to 15th floor) and serviced hotel apartments on 16/17th floor; creation of new retail unit (178 sq. metres) on

	ground floor overlooking Franklin Street: retention, refurbishment and extension of office use on upper floors (18th to 22nd floor) together with all associated site works to facilitate and access servicing.
2.0	<p><b>Description of Site</b> Established high rise structure (24 storeys high). Tower and podium structure with horizontal strip windows with white mosaic spandrel panels between floors. Strip of hard standing between front of building and footpath on Bedford Street.</p>
<b>Planning Assessment of Policy and other Material Considerations</b>	
3.0	<p><b>Planning History</b> No relevant planning history on the site</p>
4.0	<b>Policy Framework</b>
4.1	Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 Policy R1 Retailing in City and Town Centres Policy OF1 Belfast city Centre, Lisburn City Centre and other town centres
4.2	Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland Planning Policy Statement 3 - Access, Movement and Parking Planning Policy Statement 4 – Planning and Economic Development Planning Policy Statement 6 - Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage Planning Policy Statement 15 - Planning and Flood Risk
5.0	<p><b>Statutory Consultees</b> Transport NI – Further info requested Rivers Agency – Further info requested NIEA Historic Buildings Unit – No objection NIEA Historic Monuments Unit – No objection NIEA Water Management Unit – No objection</p>
6.0	<p><b>Non-Statutory Consultees</b> Environmental Health BCC – No objection</p>
7.0	<p><b>Representations</b> One letter of objection was received. Concerns were raised regarding the following: Summary of Issues - Noise and disturbance during construction. - Potential interruption to access to adjoining premises. - Potential structural damage to adjacent buildings due to construction works. - Potential danger to staff of adjoining buildings</p>
8.0	<p><b>Other Material Considerations</b> Linen Conservation Area guidance document</p>
9.0	<b>Assessment</b>
9.1	<p>The key issues in the assessment of the proposed development include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The acceptability of proposed hotel use at this location</li> <li>- The acceptability of the proposed ground floor retail unit</li> <li>- Loss of existing office space</li> <li>- Impact upon character and appearance of Linen Conservation Area</li> <li>- Impact upon setting of adjacent listed buildings</li> <li>- The impact on existing roads infrastructure</li> <li>- Flooding</li> </ul>
9.2	<p>The site is located within the development limits of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan. The presumption is therefore in favour of development subject to the planning considerations detailed below.</p> <p>The site is located within the commercial district (CC007) and within the Linen Conservation Area as designated in BMAP.</p>

9.3	The proposal is retaining the form and massing of the existing structure and with the alterations and refurbishment will enhance the quality of the building and thus will have no detrimental impact on visual amenity. The increase in floor area at ground floor level will not result in any detrimental impact on the character and will respect the established building lines along Bedford Street, James Street South and Franklin Street. The main addition in terms of footprint occurs on Bedford Street with the building projecting a further 5.8m towards the road. This will read with the building at either corner on these two streets.
9.4	The site is located within the commercial district as designated in the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan. This sets out a number of urban design criteria for the area. Given the proposal does not involve any additional height and is a conversion of the existing structure many of these criteria do not apply. One of the criteria does however relate to new development respecting the established building line. This would apply to this proposal as there is an increase in the footprint of the building. Having said this, the proposed ground floor extension will not project any further forward than the buildings to either side along the Bedford Street frontage.
9.5	In terms of the retail unit at the ground floor level the proposal sits comfortably with policy R1 of BMAP which states that planning permission will be granted for retail development in all town and city centres.
9.6	In terms of the proposed hotel use, the site is within a prime city centre location. The proposed hotel use and associated serviced apartments on the upper floors will ensure the continued and intensified use of the existing building and will bring increased vitality and viability onto the City Centre.
9.7	Environmental Services Department has offered no objections to the proposal and has requested that consideration is given to conditions being attached to any approval, should approval be granted, to ensure the occupiers of nearby commercial premises are not affected by odours from cooking operations associated with the hotel development. These conditions are detailed below.
9.8	The proposal has been assessed against PPS3. Transport NI considers the Transport Assessment submitted in support of the application to be acceptable based on the provision of sustainable alternatives. They also found the Travel Plan and Service Management Plan to be fundamentally acceptable TransportNI initially considered the reduction in the width of the width of the footway from 5.0m to 2.0m to be unacceptable. TransportNI are of the opinion that Bedford Street provides a significant north south linkage for both pedestrians and public transport users accessing the city centre and that increased pedestrian activity generated by the proposal would make such a reduction unacceptable. TransportNI have asked that as an alternative to the proposed lay-by in front of the building, they will accept the removal of 3 existing car parking spaces and the introduction of a loading/ coach bay on the existing carriageway. Amended plans have been submitted to address Transport NI issues. Previously proposed Lay-by parking has been removed from the front of the building in order to provide a wider footpath.
9.9	The proposal has been assessed under Policy PED7 of PPS4. Given the underuse of the existing office units on the site over the last number of years and the undoubted contribution to the local economy that the proposed hotel would bring the proposal is deemed acceptable on what is a prime city centre site ideally situated for such a use.
9.10	The proposal has been assessed against policy BH11 of PPS6. NIEA Historic Buildings

	<p>Unit has viewed the proposal and is content with the principle of the proposal given the existing context of the site and approvals in and around the listed buildings on Bedford Street.</p>
9.11	<p>The proposal has been assessed against Policy BH12 of PPS6. The site is located within the Linen Conservation Area as designated in the Area Plan. Given the existing built form, character and massing of the existing building and the quality of the proposed alterations and renovations will in no doubt improve the overall aesthetics of the existing building, and from a conservation point of view the opportunity has been taken to enhance of the character and appearance of the area.</p>
9.12	<p>The proposal has been assessed against Policy BH4 of PPS6. NIEA Historic Monuments Unit has considered the impact of the proposal and is content, conditional on the agreement and implementation of a developer-funded programme of archaeological works to identify and record any archaeological remains in advance of construction or to provide for their preservation in situ. Conditions are detailed below.</p>
9.13	<p>The proposal has also been assessed against Policy FLD 3 of PPS15. Rivers Agency requested a Drainage Assessment in accordance with this policy. A Drainage assessment was submitted on 28th September 2015.</p>
9.14	<p>Consideration of issues: In terms of the issues raised in the objection letter the agent responded to the concerns with the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All environmental management during construction works to be delivered through the implementation of the appointed contractor's Construction Management Plan. This will outline mitigation measures which shall be put in place during construction period to protect the surrounding environment and minimise any potential impacts.</li> <li>- Construction Plan will include consultation with adjoining neighbours to identify access and working requirements and to plan construction activities so as to minimise impact on operations of adjacent businesses.</li> <li>- The Construction Management Plan should ensure that noise and vibration are mitigated in accordance with the appropriate standards.</li> <li>- The Construction Management Plan should also ensure that dust and air pollution are mitigated in accordance with the appropriate standards.</li> <li>- Construction specialists will be brought in to identify the best construction techniques which will ensure the security of the adjoining buildings. Monitoring should be carried out during construction.</li> </ul> <p>The onus will be on the developer to carry out any proposed works in a controlled manner that avoids any undue disturbance to neighbouring properties.</p>
10.0	<p><b>Summary of Recommendation: Approval</b></p>
10.1	<p>Having regard to the policy context and other material considerations above, the proposal is considered acceptable and planning permission is recommended subject to conditions for the following reasons.</p>
10.2	<p>The proposed alterations and refurbishment will enhance the appearance of the existing structure which offers little to the character of the Linen Conservation Area at present. The proposed alterations along Bedford Street shall be more in keeping with the established building line and create a stronger frontage.</p>
11.0	<p><b>Conditions</b></p>
11.1	<p>As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, the development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this permission.</p>

	Reason: Time Limit
11.2	No site works of any nature or development shall take place until a programme of archaeological work has been implemented, in accordance with a written scheme and programme prepared by a qualified archaeologist, submitted by the applicant and approved by the Department. The programme should provide for the identification and evaluation of archaeological remains within the site, for mitigation of the impacts of development, through excavation recording or by preservation of remains, and for preparation of an archaeological report.  Reason: to ensure that archaeological remains within the application site are properly identified, and protected or appropriately recorded.
11.3	Access shall be afforded to the site at all reasonable times to any archaeologist nominated by the Department to observe the operations and to monitor the implementation of archaeological requirements.  Reason: to monitor programmed works in order to ensure that identification, evaluation and appropriate recording of any archaeological remains, or any other specific work required by condition, or agreement is satisfactorily completed.
11.4	Prior to operations commencing, a proprietary odour abatement system shall be installed to suppress and disperse odours created from cooking operations within the kitchen. The outlet from the extract ventilation ducting shall be suitably located and directed away from commercial premises.  Reason: In the interests of public amenity.
12.0	Notification to Department (if relevant) N/A
13.0	Representation from elected member

Neighbour Notification Checked	Yes
<b>ANNEX</b>	
<b>Date Valid</b>	23rd June 2015
<b>Date First Advertised</b>	10th July 2015
<b>Date Last Advertised</b>	10th July 2015
<b>Details of Neighbour Notification</b> (all addresses)	
<p>01,1-7 Causeway Exchange,Bedford Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7EG,  02,1-7 Causeway Exchange,Bedford Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7EG,  03,1-7 Causeway Exchange,Bedford Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7EG,  04,1-7 Causeway Exchange,Bedford Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7EG,  05,1-7 Causeway Exchange,Bedford Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7EG,  06,1-7 Causeway Exchange,Bedford Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7EG,  07,1-7 Causeway Exchange,Bedford Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7EG,  08,1-7 Causeway Exchange,Bedford Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7EG,  1-7 Causeway Exchange,Bedford Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7EG,  10 Bedford Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7FB,  12-14,Bedford Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7FB,  Owner/Occupier Hewitt/Gilpin  14-16 Thomas House, James Street South, Belfast, Antrim, Northern Ireland, BT2 7GA  Owner/Occupier Hewitt/Gilpin  14-16 Thomas House, James Street South, Belfast, Antrim, Northern Ireland, BT2 7GA  15 Donegall Square South,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT1 5JE,  16 Donegall Square South,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT1 5JF,  16-22 Bedford House,Bedford Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7DT,  18-20,Howard Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT1 6PA,  2-6,Bedford Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7PL,  34-36,Bedford Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7FF,  43 Franklin Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7GG,  4th Floor,The Warehouse,7 James Street South,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 8DN, ,  5th Floor,The Warehouse,7 James Street South,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 8DN,  8 Bedford Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7FB,  9 James Street South,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7GA,  9-15 Windsor House,Bedford Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7AN,  Bryson House,28 Bedford Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7FE,  Dax House,22 Howard Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT1 6FQ,  Franklin House,10 Brunswick Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7GE,  Franklin House,12 Brunswick Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7GE,  James Street South,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7GA,  WDR &amp; RT Taggart  Laganwood House 44 Newforge Lane Malone Upper  Rose Building,16 Howard Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT1 6PA,  Scottish Mutual Assurance Building,Donegall Square South,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT1 5JH,  Shields House,21 James Street South,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7GA,  The Warehouse,7 James Street South,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 8DN,  UNIT 6-7,16-22 Bedford House,Bedford Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7FD,  Unit 2,16-22 Bedford House,Bedford Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7FD,  Unit 3,16-22 Bedford House,Bedford Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT2 7FD,</p>	



Unit 8,16-22 Bedford House, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7FD,	
<b>Date of Last Neighbour Notification</b>	17th July 2015
<b>Date of EIA Determination</b>	
<b>ES Requested</b>	N/A
<b>Drawing Numbers and Title</b>	
<b>Notification to Department (if relevant)</b>	
Date of Notification to Department: Response of Department:	