# Development Management Officer Report Committee Application

Summary		
Committee Meeting Date: 17 May 2016		
Application ID: Z/2015/0118/F		
Proposal: Demolition of retail unit and construction of 11 storey mixed use development comprising 50 No. apartments, ground floor retail and parking, first floor retail and basement parking.	Location: 37-41 Little Patrick Street Belfast BT15 1BA	
Referral Route: Major Application (50 no. apartments)		

Recommendation:	Approval. Subject to Section 76
Applicant Name and Address:	Agent Name and Address:
Dominic And Fred Keating	Like Architects
	34 Bedford Street
	Belfast
	BT2 7FF

# **Executive Summary:**

The site is located within the city centre of Belfast as defined within the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan and within the Laganside North and Docks Character Area.

The main issues to be considered in this proposal are:

- The principle of redevelopment and proposed uses at this location;
- Height, scale, massing and design;
- Impact on amenity;
- The impact on existing traffic and parking; and
- The impact on the environment and amenity.

The site is located on unzoned (white) land close to the new University of Ulster campus. There are no restrictions on the land use providing it is a compatible land use and does not conflict with relevant policy and other material consideration.

There is a previous extant planning permission on the site for the same proposal of which this is a renewal which was approved on the 4<sup>th</sup> February 2010.

Following the submission of further reports Environmental Health, Transport NI and Northern Ireland Water now have no objection to the proposal subject to conditions. Rivers Agency have indicated no objection in principle however their final response is due prior to planning committee and will be presented as a late item.

#### Recommendation

Having regard to the development plan, and other material considerations it is recommended that the application is approved subject to conditions and subject to the completion of an Agreement under Section 76 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 in respect of developer contributions (see paragraph 9.8 below).



The proposed development is for an 11 Storey (37metre) building with two floors of retail at ground floor and first floor; and 50 one and two bedroom apartments over 9 floors above. The proposal would have windows and balconies on the facades fronting onto Nelson Street and Little Patrick Street with blank facades proposed towards the adjacent vacant site at Little Patrick Street and facing onto Great Patrick Street. Access to the apartments is from Nelson street with the 246sq metre proposed retail unit fronting onto Nelson Street and Little Patrick Street.

# 2.0 Description of Site

There is an existing two storey warehouse type building on the site with a small car park to the corner of Little Patrick Street and Nelson street; the building is currently used as a furniture showroom. The area generally is in a state of decline and is of poor environmental quality with many buildings unused.

#### Planning Assessment of Policy and other Material Considerations

# 3.0 Site History

3.1 Z/2007/2672/F - 37-41 Little Patrick Street, Belfast BT15 1BA - Demolition of existing retail unit and construction of 11-storey mixed use development comprising of 50no apartments, ground floor retail and parking, first floor retail and basement parking. - PERMISSION GRANTED - 04.02.2010.

# 4.0 Policy Framework

- 4.1 Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015
- 4.2 Regional Development Strategy

Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland

Planning Policy Statement 3 - Access, Movement and Parking

Planning Policy Statement 7 – Quality residential Environments

Planning Policy Statement 15 (Revised) - Planning and Flood Risk

# 5.0 Statutory Consultees

Transport NI – No Objections subject to conditions

Rivers Agency - No Objections

NIW – No objections

NIEA – Land, soil & Air – No objection subject to conditions. 14.4.2016

# 6.0 Non-Statutory Consultees

Environmental Health BCC – No Objection subject to conditions

#### 7.0 Representations

18 neighbours were notified and one anonymous objection was received following the advertisement / neighbour notification process. The objection related to the following issues:

- Impact on landmark building at St Anne's Square.
- If the apartments are marketed as affordable housing units, DSD should note that tower blocks of this nature are a failure as demonstrated in the new Lodge
- Letter from NIHE high unsuitability of tower blocks for families.

#### 8.0 Other Material Considerations

Creating Places – achieving quality in residential development – May 2000. Living Places – An Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland BCC - Belfast City Centre – Regeneration and Investment Strategy September 2015.

#### 9.0 Assessment

9.1 Article 6 (4) of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Act states that in making any determination under the said act regard is to be had to the local development plan, and that the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material consideration indicate otherwise.

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.

The site is located within the Laganside North and Docks (CC015) as designated in BMAP.

- 9.2 The key issues in the assessment of the proposed development include:
  - The principle of redevelopment and proposed uses at this location;
  - Height, scale, massing and design;
  - Impact on amenity;
  - The impact on existing traffic and parking; and
  - The impact on the environment and amenity.

# 9.3 The principle of redevelopment and proposed uses at this location

The proposal is for an 11 storey building, residential apartment block with ground floor and first floor retail where there is currently a 2 storey warehouse type building located. A significant material consideration in this instance is the planning history on the site, which includes construction of a 11-storey mixed use development comprising of 50no apartments, ground floor retail and parking, first floor retail and basement parking, approved on 04/03/10, which was extant when the application was submitted.

- 9.3.1 However, there have been changes in policy since this approval and these fall to be considered under this application namely the adoption of BMAP, amendments to PPS 15 and the publication of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS).
- 9.3.2 The Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (Sept 2015) states that Belfast has a low overall city centre residential population in comparison to other cities. This document recognises that a significant residential population is highly important for the successful functioning of a city centre. Within this context and considering the similar extant approval on the site; the principle of residential use at this location is acceptable.

# 9.4 Height Scale, Massing and Design

- 9.4.1 As previously stated the site is located within Character Area CC 015 Laganside and Docks. The general urban design criteria under Designation CC 015 states that 'the density of development in the area shall be maintained and increased where appropriate, including around the transport node, through high site coverage and high plot ratio and that development proposal shall take account of the height of adjoining buildings.'
- 9.4.2 In regards to the more specific street frontages heights criteria the Urban Design Criteria does not specifically refer to development which fronts onto Little Patrick Street or Nelson Street; however the PAC in their report into an appeal for Nelson Street recognised the greater scale set in the area, in the context of planning permissions, in 2008 and 2009 for 11-storey buildings.
- 9.4.3 This development proposal should also be considered in its immediate and local context

which includes extant planning permissions, some of which are under construction. The University of Ulster campus when complete will change the character of this location along Frederick Street and Great Patrick Street and will have when completed a ridge height of 55 metres (17 storeys). The site on the opposite corner at 26-44 Little Patrick Street has a live planning application for an 11 storey development for purpose built student accommodation. An 11 storey apartment development has been approved on on the corner of Nelson Street and Great George Street under planning appeal Z/2012/0352/O and approval Z/2008/0824/F. This development compliments the built form of the area, including the University of Ulster Campus, creating a strong sense of place. The underutilised site does have the potential to act as a driver for further regeneration of an area which has historically suffered from decline and dereliction. As such the proposal is considered to comply with urban design criteria contained within the development plan.

- Paragraphs 4.23 to 4.40 of the SPPS places increased emphasis on good design and positive place making and states that good design should identify and makes positive uses of the assets of a site and the characteristics of its surroundings. The planning system has a positive role to play in making successful places and the key to successful place-making is identifying the assets of a particular place as well as developing a vision for its future potential.
- 9.4.5 Para 4.36 of the SPPS states that planning authorities must also ensure where relevant that the planning process takes account of the 10 qualities of urban stewardship set out in the DoE's Living Places guidance. This area of Belfast, known as the North Centre and Inner North Special Action Area, is undergoing significant regeneration and change with the relocation of the Ulster University. The proposal includes a blank facade to front onto Great Patrick Street which is the main approach to this area of Belfast from Dunbar Link. This is not considered good urban design and would compound the issues of bad place making at this location which is referenced on pages 10 and 11 of the Living Places document.
- 9.4.6 However, when the agent was made aware of this issue a further letter was submitted highlighting that this area is going through a significant period of change. Given the significant increases in heights proposed in the surrounding area a multi storey proposal may well come forward to be considered for adjacent site at 44-46 Great Patrick Street and therefore obscuring the view of the blank facade. Furthermore the facade at this location has been designed with three different materials (brick, grey render and zinc seam roof cladding) to allow for some interest in the street scene.
- 9.4.7 While the SPPS is a material consideration, promoting good design and the protection of amenity it is PPS7 which sets the policy context for housing developments. PPS 7 places emphasis on achieving quality residential development not only in terms of respecting local character and amenity of established residential areas, but also the developments themselves should be attractive for prospective residents. It also states that in established residential areas proposals will not be permitted where unacceptable damage to local character would result. QD1 lists 9 criteria with which all proposals for residential development must conform. PPS12, DCAN 8 and Creating Places relate to housing developments and are also material considerations.
- 9.4.8 The proposal has been assessed against QD 1 of PPS 7 and while it fails to meet criteria (a) in that the bulk, scale and massing of the proposal fails to respect the character of the area at present, the planning history on the site and the approvals on adjacent sites on Little Patrick Street and Nelson Street and in the context of the surrounding area of the new university buildings as detailed under paragraph 9.4.3 it is considered to meet this policy on balance.

9.4.9 The proposal is considered to comply with the relevant criteria of QD1 in that adequate provision has been made for public and private open space (this is further considered at 9.5 below), adequate movement, traffic and parking has been provided (see paragraph 9.6) and there will be no adverse impact on adjacent land uses. The scheme proposes 17 one bedroom apartments, 31x Two bedroom apartments and 2 Three bedroom apartments;; all of the apartments main living space look onto the street and in some instances also onto the inner courtyard creating a quality and sustainable residential environment.

#### 9.5 Impact on Amenity

- 9.5.1 Guidance on the level of private open space provision for apartment developments states that provision should range from a minimum of 10 square metres per unit to around 30 square metres per unit. The level of private amenity space will not in all instances meet the guidance in Creating Places, especially in city centre locations. All 50 of the proposed apartments in this proposal benefit from a balcony ranging in size from 3.1 square metres to 10.5 square metres. PPS7 recognises that in apartment developments private open space may be provided in the form of communal gardens. A 250square metre central landscaped communal courtyard area is proposed accessible to all apartments. This outdoor space will include informal seating, grass area and planting areas. Given the urban context it is considered on balance the amenity of future occupiers would be acceptable.
- 9.5.2 All apartments have good sized windows and an appropriate level of outlook and privacy in the context of a City Centre urban environment. The residential accommodation proposed is a mixture of one-bed, two-bed and three-bed apartments. It is considered on balance that due to the shape of the apartments, the location of rooms, large windows, balcony provision and internal layout, that these units would provide adequate space for internal circulation and carrying out expected residential functions, and are considered acceptable. It is considered that the accommodation would have appropriate size, outlook and natural light.
- 9.5.3 The protection of neighbouring properties from unreasonable loss of amenity is a well established planning consideration. Those apartments fronting onto Nelson Street benefit from a separation distance of 22 metre from the nearest boundary. The apartments fronting onto Little Patrick Street will have a 9 metre separation distance from the proposed purpose built management student accommodation under application LA04/2015/0716/F. The main living space of these apartments is dual aspect with windows also onto the landscaped courtyard, this will help mitigated against the reduced separation distance at this point.
- 9.5.4 It is considered that in the more densely built character of a city centre location the proposal would give appropriate spaces between buildings and not have significant adverse effects on the amenities of neighbouring properties.

# 9.6 Traffic and Parking

In terms of parking and transport considerations Transport NI were re-consulted following the submission of further information and are now satisfied with the proposed parking arrangements offering no objections to the proposal subject to conditions.

# 9.7 Other Matters

Paragraphs 4.11 and 4.12 of the SPPS states that there are a wide range of environmental and amenity considerations, including noise and air quality, which should be taken into account by planning authorities when proposing policies or managing development. For example, the planning system has a role to play in minimising

potential adverse impacts, such as noise or light pollution on sensitive receptors by means of its influence on the location, layout and design of new development. The planning system can also positively contribute to improving air quality and minimising its harmful impacts. Additional strategic guidance on noise and air quality as material considerations in the planning process.

Other amenity considerations arising from development, that may have potential health and well-being implications, include design considerations, impacts relating to visual intrusion, general nuisance, loss of light and overshadowing. Adverse environmental impacts associated with development can also include sewerage, drainage, waste management and water quality. However, the above mentioned considerations are not exhaustive and planning authorities will be best placed to identify and consider, in consultation with stakeholders, all relevant environment and amenity considerations for their areas.

#### 9.7.1 Air Quality, Contaminated Land and Noise

Environmental Health have been consulted and on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2015 requested further information in relation to ground contamination, noise and air quality. This information was provided by the agent and following further consultation EPU have offered no objections subject to conditions. Following the recent submission of the Contaminated Land reposts NIEA were also consulted and have also offered no objections subject to conditions.

# 9.7.2 | Site Drainage

The proposal has also been considered against FLD 1 PPS 15 and Rivers Agency have advised they have no objection in principle to the proposal their final response is due prior to planning committee and will be presented as a late item.

#### **Developer Contributions**

9.8 In this case it is considered appropriate that any planning approval should be subject to the developer entering a legal agreement with Belfast City Council to provide contributions to local environmental improvements.

In this case it is considered that this should primarily take the form of public realm improvements to the streetscape around the building. The sum of monies / works to be undertaken are to be agreed with the developer / landowner and the developer has expressed a willingness and commitment to provide satisfactory contributions.

## 10.0 Summary of Recommendation:

Having regard to the policy context and other material considerations above, the proposal is considered on balance to comply with relevant planning policy and would constitute an acceptable sustainable development at this location. This proposal would lead to the delivery of new homes and deliver the regeneration of a brownfield site in the City Centre close to public transport links, in a sustainable location.

As such the application is recommended for approval with conditions as set out below.

If Committee is minded to agree with that recommendation, it is also recommended that delegated authority is granted to the Director of Planning Place, in consultation with the Town Solicitor to negotiate and enter into a Section 76 planning agreement.

# 11.0 Conditions:

11.1 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.

Reason: Time Limit

The development hereby permitted shall not become operational until hard surfaced area have been constructed in accordance with the approved layout Drawing 'JPC 001 Revision <u>B?</u>, Proposed Site Plan' bearing the Belfast City Council Planning Office date stamp <u>XX May 2016</u> to provide adequate facilities for access and servicing the site.

REASON: To ensure that adequate provision has been made for access and servicing.

The width, position and arrangement of the street, and the land to be registered as being comprised in the streets, shall be as indicated on Drawing No. JPC 002 Revision <u>B</u>, 'Proposed Private Streets Determination Plan' bearing the DRD date stamp <u>XX May</u> 2016 and Transport NI determination stamp of <u>XX May</u> 2016.

REASON: To ensure there is a safe and convenient road system within the development and to comply with the provisions of the Private Streets (Northern Ireland) Order 1980.

A minimum of xx No. cycle parking spaces shall be provided and permanently retained close to the accesses to the proposed development for use by residents, staff and visitors to the development.

REASON: to encourage the use of alternative modes of transport for development users...

In the event that unexpected contamination is encountered during the approved development of this site, the development shall cease and a written report detailing the nature of this contamination and its management must be submitted to Belfast City Council for approval. The investigation, risk assessment and if necessary remediation work, must be undertaken and verified in accordance with current best practice.

Reason: Protection of human health

Prior to occupation of the proposed development, the applicant must submit, to the Planning Authority for approval, a Noise Verification Report (VR) which demonstrates that the mitigation measures as outlined in the Lester Acoustic report titled "Proposed Retail and residential at 37-41 little Patrick Street, Belfast; Noise Impact Assessment" dated 9th March 2016 Report Ref MRL/1048/L01have been implemented and in particular the following:

- (a) Glazing and ventilation systems to be installed in the outward facing facades and the courtyard facade of the proposed building have been installed as per figures B, C and D and table 1 of the submitted LA Noise Impact Assessment, referenced MRL/1048/L01
- (b) The entire window system (including frames, seals etc) and acoustic ventilation have been so installed so as to ensure that internal noise levels within any proposed residential unit shall:
  - Not exceed 40 dB LAeq,16hrs at any time between 07:00hrs and 23:00hrs within any habitable room, with the windows closed and alternative means of ventilation provided in accordance with current building control requirements;
  - Not exceed 35 dB LAeq,8hr at any time between the hours of 23:00hrs and 07:00hrs within any proposed bedrooms, with the windows closed and alternative means of ventilation provided in accordance with current building control requirements;
  - Not exceed 45 dB LAmax for any single sound event between 23:00hrs

and 07:00hrs within any proposed bedrooms with the windows closed and alternative means of ventilation provided in accordance with current building control requirements.

- (c) The rating level of all combined building plant services does not exceed the background sound level (for both day time and night time) at the proposed development. All sound measurements made in accordance with BS4142:2014-Methods for rating sound and assessing industrial and commercial sound.
- (d) The proposed floor / ceiling construction between the retail units/ car parking and residential accommodation have been constructed as per recommended section 3.4 of the LA Noise Impact Assessment, referenced MRL/10481/L01 and are capable of providing a sound reduction of at least 55 dB Dw so that suitable internal noise levels within residential accommodation can be achieved as per recognised guidance.
- All hard and soft landscape works shall be completed in accordance with the approved drawing 14 date stamped received 29th January 2016, the appropriate British Standard, the relevant sections of the National Building Specification NBS [Landscape] and plant material with the National Plant Specification NPS before the expiration of the first available planting season following erection of all of the buildings hereby approved.
- All plant stock supplied shall comply with the requirements of British Standard 3936, 'Specification for Nursery Stock'. All pre-planting site preparation, planting and postplanting maintenance works shall be carried out in accordance with the requirements of British Standard 4428 'Code of Practice for General Landscape Operations [excluding hard surfaces]'.

Reason: To ensure the provision, establishment and maintenance of a high standard of landscape.

11.9 No development including site clearance works, lopping, topping or felling of trees, shall take place until a landscape management plan covering a minimum of 20 years including long term design objectives, performance indicators over time, management responsibilities and establishment maintenance and maintenance schedules for all landscaped areas, shall be submitted to and approved by the Belfast City Local Planning Authority. The landscape management plan shall be carried out as approved and reviewed at years 5, 10 and 15 and no changes to the management plan shall be implemented without the prior consent of the Council.

Reason: To ensure the provision of amenity afforded by an appropriate landscape design.

# 12.0 Informatives

- The approval does not dispense with the necessity of obtaining the permission of the owners of adjacent dwellings for the removal of or building on the party wall or boundary whether or not defined.
- This permission does not confer title. It is the responsibility of the developer to ensure that he controls all the land necessary to carry out the proposed development.

## WASTE AND CONTAMINATED LAND (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1997

12.3 The applicant is advised that the proposed commencement of Part III of the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997 may introduce retrospective environmental

	liabilities to the applicant following the development of this site. The comments provided by Belfast City Council are without prejudice to any future statutory control which may be required under Part III or any other future environmental legislation. It remains the responsibility of the developer to undertake and demonstrate that the works have been effective in managing all risks. Failure to provide a satisfactory Verification Report may lead to the assumption that the site still poses a risk to human health and it may be subject to further action under forthcoming legislation.
	CLEAN NEIGHBOURHOODS AND ENVIRONMENT ACT(NORTHERN IRELAND)
12.4	The applicant is advised to ensure that all plant and equipment used in connection with the proposal is so situated, operated and maintained as to prevent the transmission of noise and odour to nearby commercial and residential premises.
12.5	CLEAN AIR (NI) ORDER 1981  Dependant on the method of heating to be used on the premises it may be necessary to provide a chimney for a boiler, the height of which should be approved by Belfast City Council. Guidance on chimney height calculation is given in the third edition of the 1956 Clean Air Act Memorandum on Chimney Heights. Further advice may be sought from the Environmental Protection, Public Health & Housing Unit, Belfast City Council, 4-10 Linenhall Street, Belfast, BT2 8BP.
12.0	Notification to Department (if relevant) - N/A
13.0	Representation from elected member - None

ANNEX		
Date Valid	3rd February 2015	
Date Neighbour Notified	5 <sup>th</sup> March 2015	
Date First Advertised	6th March 2015	
Date Last Advertised	6 <sup>th</sup> March 2015	

# **Details of Neighbour Notification** (all addresses)

The Owner/Occupier,

23-29 Little Patrick Street Town Parks

The Owner/Occupier.

2A Nelson Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT15 1BH,

The Owner/Occupier,

32-34, Great Patrick Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT1 2LT,

The Owner/Occupier.

36-38 Great Patrick Street Town Parks

The Owner/Occupier,

37-41, Little Patrick Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT15 1BA,

The Owner/Occupier,

40-42 Great Patrick Street Town Parks

The Owner/Occupier,

42-44 Little Patrick Street Town Parks

The Owner/Occupier,

44-46 Great Patrick Street Town Parks

The Owner/Occupier,

60-82 Great Patrick Street Town Parks

The Owner/Occupier,

Nelson Trade Centre, Nelson Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT15 1BH,

The Owner/Occupier,

UNIT 2, Nelson Trade Centre, Nelson Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT15 1BH, The Owner/Occupier,

Unit 1,Nelson Trade Centre,Nelson Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT15 1BH, The Owner/Occupier.

Unit 3, Nelson Trade Centre, Nelson Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT15 1BH, The Owner/Occupier.

Unit 4, Nelson Trade Centre, Nelson Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT15 1BH, The Owner/Occupier,

Unit 5, Nelson Trade Centre, Nelson Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT15 1BH, The Owner/Occupier,

Unit 6, Nelson Trade Centre, Nelson Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT15 1BH, The Owner/Occupier.

Unit 7a,Nelson Trade Centre,Nelson Street,Town Parks,Belfast,Antrim,BT15 1BH, The Owner/Occupier.

Unit 8, Nelson Trade Centre, Nelson Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT15 1BH, The Owner/Occupier,

Date of EIA Determination	N/A

# **Planning History**

Ref ID: Z/2003/2371/F

Proposal: Change of use from existing warehouse to furniture showroom, ancillary storage area, office and

in-curtilage car parking (AMENDED DRAWINGS).

Address: 37-41 Little Patrick Street, Belfast

Decision: Permission Granted Decision Date: 12.01.2004

Ref ID: Z/2004/0580/F

Proposal: Construction of mezzanine cafe area over part of new showroom.

Address: 37-41 Little Patrick Street, Belfast

Decision: Permission Granted Decision Date: 23.04.2004

Ref ID: Z/2004/2277/A

Proposal: 4 no. illuminated wall mounted signs.

Address: 37 - 41, Little Patrick St, Town Parks, Belfast, Northern Ireland, BT15 1BA

Decision: Permission Granted Decision Date: 01.12.2004

Ref ID: Z/2007/2672/F

Proposal: Demolition of existing retail unit and construction of 11-storey mixed use development comprising of 50no apartments, ground floor retail and parking, first floor retail and basement parking.

Address: 37-41 Little Patrick Street, Belfast BT15 1BA

Decision: Permission Granted Decision Date: 04.02.2010

#### **Drawing Numbers and Title**

01A Site Location Plan A4

02A Block Plan A3

03A Existing Site Survey

04A Proposed Site Plan A2

05 Proposed Ground Floor Plan and Section A1

06A Proposed Ground Floor Plan A1

07A Proposed Ground Floor Plan Rivers Floor Barrier

08B Proposed Basement, Ground, First and Second Floor Plans A0

09A Proposed Third to Tenth Floor Plans

10A Proposed Plan and Section through Ramp

11A Proposed Nelson Street and Little Patrick Street Elevations

12a Proposed SW and NW Elevations A1

13A Proposed Internal Elevations A1

14 Landscape Proposals A1