

## Development Management Officer Report Committee Application

<b>Summary</b>	
<b>Committee Meeting Date:</b> 11 <sup>th</sup> April, 2017	<b>Item Number:</b>
<b>Application ID:</b> LA04/2017/0283/F	<b>Target Date:</b>
<b>Proposal:</b> Refurbishment, extension and change of use of the former Windsor House to a 304 Bedroom hotel with associated restaurant and bar facilities (on ground and 22nd floor): conferencing facilities: creation of new retail unit at ground floor: own door office accommodation at first floor overlooking Franklin Street: and associated ancillary works.	<b>Location:</b> Former Windsor House 9-15 Bedford Street Belfast BT2 7FF
<b>Referral Route: Major Application</b>	
<b>Recommendation:</b>	Approval
<b>Applicant Name and Address:</b> Hastings Hotel Group Corporate Head Office 1066 House 587 Upper Newtownards Road BT4 3LP	<b>Agent Name and Address:</b> Turley Hamilton House 3 Joy Street Belfast BT2 8LE
<p><b>Executive Summary:</b> The application seeks full planning permission for the refurbishment, extension and change of use of the former Windsor House to a 304 Bedroom hotel with associated restaurant and bar facilities (on ground and 22nd floor): conferencing facilities: creation of new retail unit at ground floor: own door office accommodation at first floor overlooking Franklin Street: and associated ancillary works.</p> <p>The main issues to be considered in this case are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The acceptability of the proposed hotel at this location and the loss of existing office space;</li> <li>• The acceptability of the proposed ground floor retail unit</li> <li>• Impact upon character and appearance of Linen Conservation Area and setting of adjacent listed buildings</li> <li>• The impact on existing roads infrastructure</li> <li>• Flooding</li> <li>• Design</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</p>	

(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.

The proposal has been assessed against the following Policies – Strategic Planning Policy for 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 and the Built Heritage.

NIEA, Environmental Health, TNI and Rivers Agency were consulted and offered no objections to the proposal, standard conditions are to be applied.

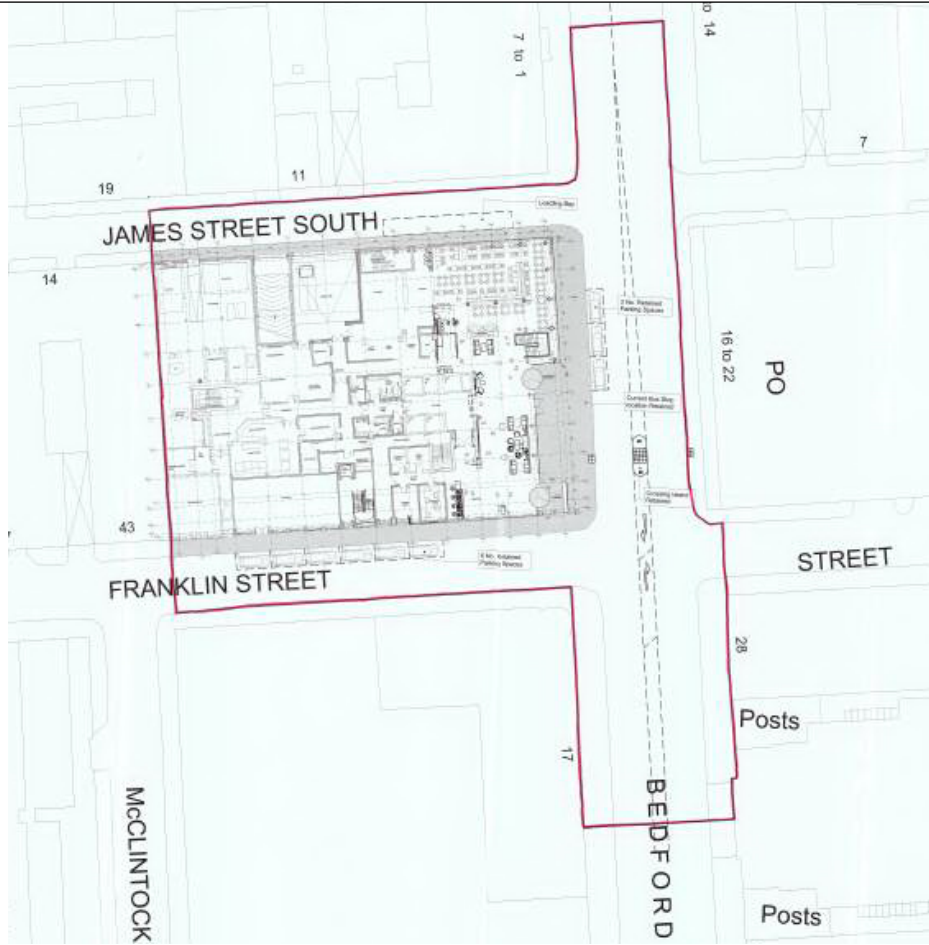
Six letters of objection were received and all issues considered

Having had regard to the development plan, relevant planning policies, histories and other material considerations, it is determined that the proposal should be approved subject to conditions set out below and subject to the completion of an Agreement under Section 76 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 between the developer and Belfast City Council in respect of local environmental improvements.

**Signature(s):**

# Case Officer Report

## Site Location Plan



<b>Characteristics of the Site and Area</b>	
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Description of Proposed Development</b> Refurbishment, extension and change of use of the former Windsor House to a 304 Bedroom hotel with associated restaurant and bar facilities (on ground and 22nd floor): conferencing facilities: creation of new retail unit at ground floor: own door office accommodation at first floor overlooking Franklin Street: and associated ancillary works. The scheme proposes a three tone grey aluminium panel finish however this is subject to change dependent on the submission of sample panels.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Description of Site</b> The site contains a 24 storey high structure comprising of a tower with integrated podium. The tower comprises of horizontal strip windows with white mosaic spandrel panels between floors with the podium faced in black marble. Construction is currently underway to remove parts of the tower façade in line with previous approvals.
<b>Planning Assessment of Policy and other Material Considerations</b>	
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Site History</b>  LA04/2015/0545/F & LA04/2015/0546/DCA - 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>4.0</b>	<b>Policy Framework</b>
4.1	Regional Development Strategy (RDS); 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 Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) Planning Policy Statement 3 – Parking, Access and Movement 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
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Statutory Consultees Responses</b>
5.1	Transport NI – Further info requested Rivers Agency – no objection NIEA – No objection
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Non Statutory Consultees Responses</b>
6.1	Environmental Health – no objection with conditions
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Representations</b>
7.1	Six objections received

<b>8.0</b>	<b>Other Material Considerations</b>
8.1	Linen Conservation Area guidance document
<b>9.0</b>	<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 the proposed hotel at this location and the loss of existing office space;</li> <li>- The acceptability of the proposed ground floor retail unit</li> <li>- Impact upon character and appearance of Linen Conservation Area and setting of adjacent listed buildings</li> <li>- The impact on existing roads infrastructure</li> <li>- Flooding</li> <li>- Design</li> </ul> <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><b><u>The acceptability of proposed hotel use at this location and the loss of existing office space</u></b></p>
9.2	<p>The proposal is to amend the previously approved scheme to include bedrooms on all 22 floors, office space will be restricted to first floor and retail space on the ground floor slightly reduced. The principle of a hotel has already been established at this location, the site is within a prime city centre location and it would further enhance the vitality and viability of the city centre. The proposal will retain the form and massing of the existing structure and the alterations and refurbishment will enhance the quality of the building and thus will have no detrimental impact on visual amenity. The floor space at ground floor level is slightly increasing with part of the building projecting a further 4.5m towards the road, the overall floor space of the podium is increasing by approximately 1950 sqm. Given the overall scale of the development, this will not result in any detrimental impact on the character and will respect the established historic building lines along Bedford Street, James Street South and Franklin Street.</p>
9.3	<p>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 either side along the Bedford Street frontage.</p>
9.4	<p>The proposal has been assessed under Policy PED7 of PPS4. Given the previous underuse of the existing office units on the site and the significant remaining provision of office accommodation within the city centre, the loss of office space is not considered detrimental to the city centre as a whole. The proposed hotel will make an undoubted contribution to the local economy and bring a previously under-utilised building back into use.</p>
9.5	<p><b><u>The acceptability of the proposed ground floor retail unit</u></b></p> <p>In terms of the retail unit at the ground floor level the proposal sits comfortably with</p>

	<p>policy R1 of BMAP which states that planning permission will be granted for retail development in all town and city centres.</p>
	<p><b><u>Impact upon character and appearance of Linen Conservation Area and setting of listed buildings</u></b></p>
9.6	<p>The site is located within the Commercial Character Area (CC07) as designated in BMAP. This sets out a number of urban design criteria for the area.</p>
9.7	<p>Designation CC07 does not refer specifically to Windsor House however it does refer to new developments respecting the building line and shall reflect traditional plot widths. The increased floorspace on the ground floor will bring the building in line with the established building line along Bedford Street and James Street South and re-establish the historic building line. The scale and massing of the building is not significantly changing and the proposal is therefore considered to comply with CC09 of the development plan.</p>
9.8	<p>The site is identified as falling within the Linen Conservation Area. The primary policy considerations are set out in PPS 6, Policy BH12 – new development in a Conservation Area. BH12 sets out 7 general criteria for proposals. Given the existing built form, character and massing of the existing building and the quality of the proposed alterations and renovations, it will in no doubt improve the overall aesthetics of the existing building. From a conservation point of view the opportunity has been taken to enhance of the character and appearance of the area. It considered the proposal complies with these policy tests. The Linen Conservation Area document details objectives to encourage growth and development in sympathy with the Conservation Area. It identifies Windsor house as an important landmark and a reference point for the city. The tower will be retained with no increase in height, however it will be more aesthetically pleasing with the visual clutter on top of the building removed.</p>
9.9	<p>The Conservation Area officer was consulted on the application and had a number of concerns regarding the finishes of the building. It was stated that the proposed design is at odds with the historic built form and it would not maintain or enhance he character of the Conservation Area. However in its existing form the building makes little contribution to the character of Conservation Area. The proposed scheme would considerably improve the appearance whilst also bringing a vacant building into use, thus in turn increasing the vitality and viability of the area.</p>
10.0	<p>There are a number of listed buildings within the vicinity, the proposal has therefore been assessed against policy BH11 of PPS6. NIEA Historic Buildings Unit had no comments to make on the proposal. Given the existing content of the site and approvals in and around the listed buildings on Bedford Street it is considered that the proposal will not adversely affect the character or setting of the listed buildings.</p>
9.10	<p>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.</p>
	<p><b><u>The impact on existing roads infrastructure</u></b></p>
9.11	<p>The proposal has been assessed against PPS3. Transport NI initially considered the proposal unacceptable due to insufficient information. A Transport Assessment, Travel and Service Plan and Parking Schedule was submitted for consideration. The site is detailed as highly assessable by public transport (adjacent to Victoria Street Rail</p>

<p>9.12</p> <p>9.13</p> <p>9.14</p> <p>9.15</p>	<p>Station/Europa Bus Centre) and pedestrian walkways with adequate public car parks within the surrounding area. Transport NI have no objection to the proposal subject to conditions detailed below.</p> <p><b><u>Flooding</u></b></p> <p>The proposal has also been assessed against Policy FLD 3 of PPS15. A drainage assessment was submitted for Rivers Agency consideration, consequently they have no objection to the proposal.</p> <p><b><u>Design</u></b></p> <p>Previous approval involved the creation of a new glazed podium block and recladding of the tower with projecting fenestration and white composite cladding panels. The new scheme retains the same structures however the podium has been extended along Franklin Street with a new storey added above the existing mezzanine and it will contain a recessed front entry along Bedford Street. It is proposed the tower will be clad with grey three colour tone, aluminium panels balanced with an aluminium framed glazing system. The final finish is subject to change based on the submission or sample panels. On balance, it is considered that the amended design should be seen as a marked improvement to the original and this should be considered to enhance the character of the area with the introduction of a contemporary designed building.</p> <p><b><u>Objections</u></b></p> <p>Six objections were received, all raising similar issues in regards to the finishes. They consider the finishes to be out of character with the area. The materials are inappropriate, the poor design and lack of windows creates an overbearing structure which will have a detrimental impact on Conservation Area. The proposed scheme, whilst visually different from the previously approved application, is considered to be a marked improvement on the original building and will help improve the overall appearance of the area.</p> <p><b><u>Developer Contributions</u></b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p><b>10.0</b></p>	<p><b>Summary of Recommendation: Approval</b></p> <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> <p>The proposed alterations and refurbishment are considered acceptable and will enhance the existing structure and bring a landmark building back into use. Statutory and non-statutory consultees have offered no objections subject to the conditions outlined below.</p>

Approval is recommended subject to conditions set out below and subject to the completion of an Agreement under Section 76 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 between the developer and Belfast City Council in respect of local environmental improvements. All final wording of the conditions to be decided by the director of planning and place post committee.

<b>11.0</b>	<p><b>Conditions</b></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>2. Prior to operations commencing, a proprietary odour abatement system shall be installed to suppress and disperse odours created from cooking operations within the kitchen areas. The outlet from the extract ventilation ducting shall be suitably located and directed away from commercial premises.</p> <p>Reason: in the interests of amenity</p> <p>3. The extraction and ventilation system must be cleaned and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions to ensure compliance with the above condition.</p> <p>Reason: In the interests of amenity</p> <p>4. The development hereby approved shall not become occupied/operational until a Service Management Plan has been submitted and approved by the Council.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure the adequacy of the service facilities in the interests of road safety and traffic progression.</p> <p>5. The development hereby permitted shall operate in accordance with the approved Revised Framework Travel Plan, dated March 2017.</p> <p>Reason: To facilitate access to the site by means other than the private car and in the interests of road safety and traffic progression.</p> <p>6. Notwithstanding the details shown on the drawings hereby approved, full particulars of the following shall be submitted to and approved by the Council in writing prior to commencement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 1:1 mock up panels of the proposed cladding to the tower element</li> <li>b. Sample board for all external materials</li> </ol> <p>Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the building is satisfactory and does not detract from the character and visual amenity of the area.</p>
-------------	--

**Notification to Department (if relevant)**

**N/A**



**Representations from Elected members:**

**N/A**

<b>ANNEX</b>	
<b>Date Valid</b>	20th January 2017
<b>Date First Advertised</b>	17th February 2017
<b>Date Last Advertised</b>	
<b>Details of Neighbour Notification</b> (all addresses)	
<p>The Owner/Occupier, Arthur Boyd _ Co, 5th Floor Causeway Tower, 9 James Street South, Belfast, BT2 8DN</p> <p>The Owner/Occupier, 01,1-7 Causeway Exchange, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7EG,</p> <p>The Owner/Occupier, 02,1-7 Causeway Exchange, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7EG,</p> <p>The Owner/Occupier, 03,1-7 Causeway Exchange, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7EG,</p> <p>The Owner/Occupier, 04,1-7 Causeway Exchange, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7EG,</p> <p>The Owner/Occupier, 05,1-7 Causeway Exchange, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7EG,</p> <p>The Owner/Occupier, 06,1-7 Causeway Exchange, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7EG,</p> <p>The Owner/Occupier, 07,1-7 Causeway Exchange, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7EG,</p> <p>The Owner/Occupier, 08,1-7 Causeway Exchange, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7EG,</p> <p>The Owner/Occupier, 1-7 Causeway Exchange, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7EG,</p> <p>The Owner/Occupier, 10 Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7FB,</p> <p>The Owner/Occupier, 10 Brunswick Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7GE,</p> <p>The Owner/Occupier, 12-14, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7FB,</p> <p>The Owner/Occupier, 15 Donegall Square South, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT1 5JE,</p> <p>The Owner/Occupier, 16 Donegall Square South, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT1 5JF,</p> <p>The Owner/Occupier, 16 Donegall Square South, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT1 5JF,</p> <p>The Owner/Occupier, 16-22 Bedford House, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7DT,</p> <p>The Owner/Occupier, 2-6, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7PL,</p> <p>The Owner/Occupier, 24 Howard Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT1 6PA,</p> <p>The Owner/Occupier, 30 Howard Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT1 6PF,</p>	

The Owner/Occupier,  
 32 Howard Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT1 6PF,  
 The Owner/Occupier,  
 34-36, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7FF,  
 The Owner/Occupier,  
 38-40, Howard Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT1 6PF,  
 The Owner/Occupier,  
 40 Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7FF,  
 The Owner/Occupier,  
 42 Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7FF,  
 The Owner/Occupier,  
 43 Franklin Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7GG,  
 The Owner/Occupier,  
 44 Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7FF,  
 The Owner/Occupier,  
 4th Floor, The Warehouse, 7 James Street South, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 8DN,  
 The Owner/Occupier,  
 5th Floor, The Warehouse, 7 James Street South, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 8DN,  
 The Owner/Occupier,  
 8 Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7FB,  
 The Owner/Occupier,  
 Apple Recruitment Services, Causeway Tower, 9 James Street South, Belfast, BT2 8DN  
 The Owner/Occupier,  
 Bryson House, 28 Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7FE,  
 The Owner/Occupier,  
 DRST Support Services, 3rd Floor Causeway Tower, 9 James Street South, Belfast,  
 BT2 8DN  
 The Owner/Occupier,  
 Dax House, 22 Howard Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT1 6PA,  
 The Owner/Occupier,  
 Diamond Recruitment, 8th Floor Causeway Tower, 9 James Street South, Belfast, BT2  
 8DN  
 The Owner/Occupier,  
 Ferguson \_ Co Solicitors, 7th Floor Causeway Tower, 9 James Street South, Belfast,  
 BT2 8DN  
 The Owner/Occupier,  
 Franklin House, 10 Brunswick Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7GE,  
 The Owner/Occupier,  
 Hart \_ Co Services, 4th Floor Causeway Tower, 9 James Street South, Belfast, BT2  
 8DN  
 The Owner/Occupier,  
 Hewitt \_ Gilpin, Thomas House, 14-16 James Street South, Town  
 Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7GA,  
 The Owner/Occupier,  
 Howard Buildings, 26 Howard Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT1 6PB,  
 The Owner/Occupier,  
 Independent Occupationa Health, 6th Floor Causeway Tower, 9 James Street South,  
 Belfast, BT2 8DN  
 The Owner/Occupier,  
 James Street South Restaurant, 19 James Street South, Belfast, BT2 7GA

The Owner/Occupier,  
Lismore Group, 1st Floor Causeway Tower, 9 James Street South, Belfast, BT2 8DN  
The Owner/Occupier,  
McAlear \_ Rushe, Bedford Square, 1-7 Fountain Street, Belfast, BT15EA  
The Owner/Occupier,  
Richard Barbour \_ Co Solicitors, 1st Floor Causeway Tower, 9 James Street South,  
Belfast, BT2 8DN  
The Owner/Occupier,  
Rose Building, 16 Howard Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT1 6PA,  
The Owner/Occupier,  
Ross Boyd Limited, Thomas House, 14-16 James Street South, Town  
Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7GA,  
The Owner/Occupier,  
Shields House, 21 James Street South, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7GA,  
The Owner/Occupier,  
The Owner, Causeway Tower, 9 James Street South, Belfast, BT2 8DN  
The Owner/Occupier,  
The Warehouse, 7 James Street South, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 8DN,  
The Owner/Occupier,  
Ulster Hall, Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, Antrim, BT2 7FF,

**Date of Last Neighbour Notification****Date of EIA Determination**

N/A

**ES Requested**

No

**Planning History**

Ref ID: LA04/2015/0545/F

Proposal: 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.

Address: Windsor House, 9-15 Bedford Street, Belfast, BT2 7FF,

Decision: PG

Decision Date: 23.11.2015

Ref ID: LA04/2015/0546/DCA

Proposal: Part demolition of existing podium frontage at ground and first floor to facilitate refurbishment and extension to Windsor House

Address: Windsor House, 9-15 Bedford House, Belfast, BT2 7FF,

Decision: CG

Decision Date: 23.11.2015

**Drawing Numbers and Title**

- 01 – Site plan
- 14 – proposed basement plan
- 15 – proposed ground floor plan
- 16 – Proposed mezzanine plan
- 17 – Proposed level 1 plan
- 18 – Proposed level 2 plan
- 19 – Proposed level 03-04 plan
- 20 – Proposed level 05-14 plan
- 21 – Proposed level 15-16 plan
- 22 – Proposed level 17 plan
- 23 – Proposed level 18-21 plan
- 24 – Proposed level 22 plan
- 25 – Proposed sections
- 26 – Proposed sections
- 27 – Proposed east and north elevations
- 28 – Proposed west and south elevations
- 29 – Proposed contextual elevations

**Notification to Department (if relevant)**

Date of Notification to Department:  
Response of Department: