

Committee Application

Development Management Report	
Application ID: LA04/2017/0875/F	Date of Committee: 17 th April 2018
Proposal: Erection of a new 2/3/4 storey building proposed use class B2 and B4 on the ground floor and use class B1 (b) and (c) on the upper floors with demolition of existing two storey building (current use class B1 (c) and the existing 3.1metre high metal railings and fence.	Location: Lands between unit 19 and unit 31 North City Business Centre Duncairn Gardens Belfast BT15 2GG
Referral Route: BCC Planning Committee - increase in floor space exceeds delegated scheme	
Recommendation:	Approval
Applicant Name and Address: Peter Tomlinson North City Business Centre 2 Duncairn Gardens Belfast BT15 2GG	Agent Name and Address: Tate Stevenson Architects Ltd Unit 1 Rawdon Court Moira BT67 0LQ
Executive Summary: The application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of an existing office building and the construction of a replacement office building of a greater height and floor space. The main issues to be considered in this case are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principle of the development at this location; • Impact on the character of the area; • Impact on neighbouring amenity; and • Traffic and parking. <p>The site is located within the development limits of Belfast in the Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan as being mainly within the Duncairn Gardens area of existing employment and a section in a non-designated land zone (white-land). The principle of development is acceptable given the site is currently in use and developed for a commercial use.</p> <p>The proposal has been assessed against Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) and Planning Policy Statement 3 & 4 (PPS 3 & 4) regarding the car parking and access arrangement and compatibility of the commercial use at this site.</p> <p>Whilst a significant increase in height from two storeys (8.0m) to four storeys (18.0m) and floorspace</p>	

(additional 2500sqm) is proposed it is considered to be acceptable, the building will occupy a prominent corner plot at a busy road intersection that will offer a focal point at this junction. The neighbouring land use adjacent to the site is also commercial in character and although much of it is low level it is considered that the new building will not detract or jar with these buildings or the locality.

Consultees offered no objections in principle with the scheme, and standard conditions and informatives are to be applied.

One objection has been received following neighbour notifications and press advertisements, relating to the loss of some existing parking provision.

Having regard to the development plan, relevant planning policies, and other material considerations, it is considered that the development will not result in demonstrable harm to the character of the area or residential amenity.

Approval is recommended with conditions.

Characteristics of the Site and Area	
1.0	Description of Proposed Development Planning permission is sought for the demolition of the existing two storey commercial building and boundary treatment to be replaced with a commercial building consisting of two, three and four storey elements.
2.0	Description of Site The site occupies a prominent site at the road junction of North Queens Street and Duncairn Gardens. The site area forms part of a commercial business park consisting of two storey and single storey commercial stores and office buildings with significant levels of car parking space. Surrounding the site (opposite side of roads) is other commercial buildings. The complex does have residential properties neighbouring and these are located to the opposite side of the complex at Upper Canning Street and also at North Queens Street.
Planning Assessment of Policy and other Material Considerations	
3.0	Site History A planning history revealed that there are previous planning applications at this location, none of which have particular significant relevance to the proposal. Applications dating from the 1990s that relate to the construction of the commercial complex.
4.0	Policy Framework
4.1	Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015
	4.1.1 Policy Ref and Title
	4.1.2 Policy Ref and Title
4.2	Planning Policy Statements 1-24 specify SPPS PPS 3 PPS 4
5.0	Statutory Consultees Responses
5.1	DOE NIEA - N/A
5.2	Health and Safety Executive NI N/A
5.3	DRD Transport NI no objection with conditions
5.4	NI Water no objection
5.5	DARD Rivers Agency no objection with informatives
5.6	DETI N/A

5.7	NIHE N/A
6.0	Non Statutory Consultees Responses
6.1	BCC Environmental Health no objection with informatives
6.2	BCC Conservation Officer N/A
6.3	BCC Parks and Leisure N/A
6.4	Any of Statutory Consultees where issues consulted isn't specified at Schedule 3 of GDPO N/A
7.0	Representations
7.1	The application has been neighbour notified and advertised in the local press. One letter of objection has been received and five letters of support. Objection to reduction of onsite parking <i>Dfl Roads are satisfied with parking provision</i>
8.0	Other Material Considerations
8.1	Any other supplementary guidance
9.0	Assessment
9.1	The proposed use is considered to be in compliance with the development plan. The site is within the development limits for the city and is designated within the BUAP as a Housing Renewal Area further designated within the dBMAP as being mainly within the Duncairn Gardens area of existing employment and a section of the site within an area of non- designated land (white-land). The proposal being for the creation of additional economic development of B1b call centre & B1c research and development use, also B2 light industrial use and B4 storage & distribution is compatible with the current area plan designations.
9.2	SPPS The SPPS advises that planning permission ought to be granted for sustainable development that accords with the area plan and causes no harm to areas of acknowledged importance. It also states the regional strategies objectives of promoting sustainable economic development, to tackle disadvantage and facilitate job creation achieved through the provision of land suitable for economic development. It can be seen that the proposal, to create additional economic space within an existing employment area, is in agreement with the thrust of the SPPS in respect of economic development. Whilst the site is within a Housing Renewal Area within the BUAP, the site is developed and in use as employment land and therefore protected under PPS4 PED 7 Retention of Economic Development Uses. Paragraph 6.85 advises that B1 business uses should be

permitted if located within city or town centres and in other locations that may be specified in the LDP. The site is currently designated within the dBMAP for existing employment use, the proposed at this particular location is therefore compatible with the SPPS requirement, and it is also compatible with relevant regional planning policy as set out below.

PPS 3

The proposal will result in the reconfiguration of a section of the existing parking arrangement at the site. DfI Roads Service have been consulted and are content with the proposal, which will result in the loss of eight car parking spaces but with the developer encouraging an uptake in the use of public transport. The site is in a location that benefits from ease of access to public transport therefore I consider any loss of space not to be critical. The developer has also shown that the servicing within the complex by HGVs remains as the current situation and proposes future access via a second gate that would facilitate a one way vehicular system within the complex. Roads Service is satisfied that the proposal will not create additional traffic problems for the area.

PPS 4

Policy PED 1 advises that development for B1b (call centre) & B1c (research & development) uses will be permitted within an existing industrial/employment area. It also states that a B2 light industrial use and B4 storage and distribution will be permitted within an existing industrial/employment area with the caveat that the scale, nature and form is appropriate to the location. It is considered that the proposed building and uses are acceptable at this existing designated existing/employment location.

The proposal calls for the replacement of an existing two storey commercial building consisting of a gross floor space of 454sqm with a new build of 2997sqm of gross floor space over four storeys at highest point. Although this is a significant increase in height, from 8.0m to 18.0m and floorspace it is considered to be acceptable, the building will occupy a prominent corner plot at a busy road intersection that will offer a focal point at this junction. The neighbouring land use adjacent to the site is also commercial in character and although much of it is low level it is considered that the new building will not detract or jar with these buildings. The proposed stepped design of the building will have the lower level portions adjacent to the existing low level neighbouring buildings. The reading of the building will have a stepped appearance terminating at the focal four storey building on the corner plot. The proposal includes the removal of the existing boundary fence and vegetation behind, it is proposed to set the new building forward of the existing footprint and to the back edge of the footpath therefore removing the need for boundary fencing at this section of the site. The proposal therefore complies with the relevant planning policy and is an acceptable form of development.

Other considerations:

Historically, Duncairn Gardens was characterised by three storey terrace housing many examples of which can still be found in the area leading to the assumption that a building of two, three and four storeys will not create an overly alien build form in this area of the city.

The proposal to increase the commercial space available on the site is compatible with the Council's commitment to increase the number of employment opportunities within the city, expressed within the Belfast Agenda, which is compatible with adopted planning policy.

Conclusion:

The proposal complies with the development plan and policies and will provide additional commercial space in an economically disadvantage area of the city. All consultees have indicated that the proposal is acceptable and any objection is limited to parking provision at the site.

9.3	Having regard to the policy context and other material considerations above, the proposal is considered acceptable/unacceptable and planning permission is recommended subject to conditions/refused for the following reasons.
10.0	<p>Summary of Recommendation: Approval Proposal conforms to area plans and planning policies, consultees offer no objection and no third party comments received.</p>
11.0	<p>Conditions/Reasons for Refusal</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. The development hereby permitted shall not become operational until hard surfaced area have been constructed in accordance with the approved layout Drawing No. 03 'Proposed Block Plan & Floor Plan' bearing the Belfast City Council Planning Office date stamp 12 April 2017 to provide adequate facilities for parking, servicing and circulating within the site. No part of these hard surfaced areas shall be used for any purpose at any time than for the parking and movement of vehicles.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure that adequate provision has been made for parking and manoeuvring within the site.</p> <p>3. The development hereby permitted shall operate in accordance with the Travel Plan in accordance with the Travel Plan Addendum published by the Belfast City Council Planning Office on 13 November 2017. The Site Operator will provide access to the Translink iLink Initiative and the Bike2Work Initiative or equivalent measures agreed by DfI Roads.</p> <p>Reason: To encourage the use of alternative modes of transport to the private car in accordance with the Transportation Principles.</p> <p>4. A minimum of 10 No. cycle parking spaces shall be provided and permanently retained within the development for use by staff and visitors to the development.</p> <p>Reason: to encourage the use of alternative modes of transport for development users.</p> <p>5. The development hereby permitted shall operate in accordance with the approved Service Management Plan published by the Belfast City Council Planning Office on 13 November 2017.</p> <p>Reason: in the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users.</p>

Notification to Department (if relevant)

N/A

Representations from Elected members:

N/A