



Belfast Local Development Plan

Technical Supplement 6
Urban Design and Built heritage
August 2018

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Belfast
City Council

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1.0 Introduction

Purpose of this Document

- 1.1 This technical supplement has been prepared to draw together the evidence base that has been utilised to inform the preparation of the Local Development Plan (LDP). It is one of a suite of technical supplements that should be read alongside the Draft Plan Strategy (DPS) to understand the rationale and justification for the policies proposed within the draft plan strategy.
- 1.2 It builds upon the suite of 17 thematic Topic papers prepared and published alongside the Preferred Options Paper (POP), which established the baseline position as at April 2017 and identified the key issues that need to be addressed by the DPS. This urban design and built heritage Technical Supplement therefore updates this baseline position and sets out the evidence base that has informed each of the urban design and built heritage policies within the draft plan strategy.
- 1.3 Again, it forms part of a series of thematic reports to accompany the draft Plan Strategy. Whilst each of the Technical Supplements can be read separately, there are inevitably some important related matters and background evidence within other Technical Supplements also.
- 1.4 It should also be noted that the evidence base collected to inform the LDP also forms the basis on which a series of additional assessments and appraisals required as part of the plan preparation process, most notably the sustainability appraisal. By combining the evidence gathering stages for the sustainability appraisal, Countryside Assessment and the LDP, we aim to streamline the documentation produced and avoid duplication. It will also help ensure that sustainable development is embedded in the planning process and that the sustainability appraisal is one of the main drivers informing the preparation of the LDP.

Planning, urban design and built heritage

- 1.5 High quality urban design, that takes account of history and unique features of a place, is fundamental to sustainable development and positive placemaking. Design quality matters and planning should aim to drive design standards forward across all forms of development contributing to the future growth of the city and adding value to people's lives.
- 1.6 The Belfast metropolitan area is the largest urban area in Northern Ireland. The city has a complex mix of social and economic relationships, which have shaped its unique urban fabric. Despite significant levels of dereliction and gap sites particularly within the city centre and inner core, in more recent years the city's economy has been changing. New investment and confidence focus energy onto the form and image of the city presenting opportunities to capitalise on the city's unique natural setting. It is therefore important to create places, spaces and buildings that are well connected and adaptable.
- 1.7 In Belfast it is important that new development ensures the highest design quality achievable to help promote the city and create places where people want to live work and socialise. It is therefore imperative that the draft plan strategy contains robust urban design

policies that drive design standards forward across all development. This technical supplement updates and builds upon the issues and approaches highlighted within the POP and sets out the evidence base that has informed each of the urban design and built heritage policies within the draft plan strategy.

2.0 Policy Context

Regional Policy

- 2.1 The Regional policy context is provided by the Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS), the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) and Planning Policy Statements (PPS's). A summary of these documents and how they pertain to plan making and urban design and built heritage is provided in the following sections

Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)

- 2.2 The RDS prepared by the department for Regional Development is the spatial strategy for the Executive and provides an overarching strategic planning framework to facilitate and guide public and private sectors. The RDS acknowledges the importance of the unique qualities of the regions cities and these must be taken account of when preparing the local development plan.

- **Policy RG7 Support urban and rural renaissance** by recognising the unique qualities of our cities towns and villages to attract investment and activity ensuring quality urban areas are improved, maintained and enhanced with adequate provision of green infrastructure and the design and management of public realm.
- **Policy RG11: Conserve, protect and, where possible, enhance our built heritage and our natural environment** that make a positive contribution to regeneration and the development of a sense of place that can be respected by future generations.

- 2.3 The RDS notes that our local environment is of exceptional quality providing an important contribution to our sense of place, history and cultural identity, a rich and diverse archaeological and built heritage, as well as a distinctive and beautiful landscape. It also notes that it plays a critical role in supporting the local economy.
- 2.4 Management of built heritage assets requires conserving, protecting and enhancing the environment whilst ensuring it remains responsive and adaptive to the everyday needs of society, a wider objective of furthering sustainable development.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)

- 2.5 The Department of the Environment's Strategic Planning Policy for Northern Ireland –Planning for Sustainable Development (SPPS), was adopted in September 2015 and consolidates over twenty separate publications. The provisions of the SPPS must be taken into account in the preparation of the LDP.
- 2.6 The SPPS recognises that good design can change lives, communities and neighbourhoods for the better. It can create more successful places to live, bring communities together, and attract business investment. It can further sustain

development and encourage healthier living; promote accessibility and inclusivity; and contribute to how safe places are and feel.

- 2.7 It outlines that design involves shaping how all elements of the built and natural environment relate to each other through the construction of new buildings, restoration and redevelopment of historic buildings, creation of public spaces and environmental improvements.
- 2.8 The SPPS states that good design identifies and makes positive use of the assets of a site and the characteristics of its surroundings to determine the most appropriate form of development. Also that design is an important material consideration in the assessment of all proposals and good design should be the aim of all those involved in the planning process and must be encouraged across the region. Particular weight should be given to the impact of development on existing buildings, especially listed buildings, monuments in state care and scheduled monuments, likewise on the character of areas recognised for their landscape or townscape value, such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Conservation Areas, Areas of Townscape Character and Areas of Special Archaeological Interest.
- 2.9 It states that new buildings and their surroundings have a significant effect on the character and quality of a place, defining public spaces, streets and vistas and creating the context for future development. It also states that placemaking is a people-centred approach to the planning, design and stewardship of new developments and public spaces that seeks to enhance the unique qualities of a place, how these developed over time and what they will be like in the future; key to successful placemaking is identifying the assets of a particular place as well as developing a vision for its future potential, the relationship between different buildings; the relationship between buildings and streets, squares, parks, waterways and other spaces; the nature and quality of the public domain itself; the relationship of one part of a village, town or city with other parts; and the patterns of movement and activity that are thereby established.

Planning Policy Statements (PPSs)

- 2.10 PPSs set out the policies on particular aspects of land use planning that apply to the whole of Northern Ireland. Their contents will be taken into account in preparing development plans and are also a material consideration to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals.
- 2.11 With regards to urban design and built heritage, PPS 6 Planning Archaeology and The Built Heritage and the Addendum to PPS 6 Areas of Townscape Character set out planning policies for the protection and conservation of archaeological remains and features of built heritage and embody the commitment to sustainable development and environmental stewardship.

PPS6 – Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage

2.12 PPS 6 provides planning policy that seeks to preserve and enhance built heritage assets and contains policies related to:

- Archaeological Sites and Monuments;
- World Heritage Sites;
- Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes;
- Listed Buildings;
- Conservation Areas;
- Areas of Townscape and Village Character;
- Local Landscape Policy Areas;
- Industrial Heritage; and
- Non Listed Vernacular Buildings.

2.13 The policies cover all aspects of development that can impact built heritage assets and include;

- Change of use;
- Extensions and alterations;
- Control of advertising;
- Demolition; and
- Impact on the setting of the built heritage asset.

PPS6 (Addendum): Areas of Townscape Character

2.14 The addendum to PPS 6 provides additional policy for development within areas of townscape character which includes;

- New development;
- Alterations and extensions; and
- Control of advertising.

2.15 The policies are to be read in conjunction with all other relevant PPSs, regional policy and supplementary guidance.

Living Places - An Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland

2.16 This Urban Stewardship and Design Guide aims to clearly establish the key principles behind good placemaking. It seeks to inform and inspire all those involved in the process of managing (stewardship) and making (design) urban places, with a view to raising standards across Northern Ireland. The focus of the guide is urban areas, by which is meant all of our cities, towns, villages and neighbourhoods. It recognises the wider economic, cultural and community benefits of achieving excellence in the stewardship and design of these important places, be they existing or newly proposed.

- 2.17 The document provides strategic guidance and should be read alongside other policies and guides. Its contents are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and planning appeals. In submitting a planning application for a masterplan in an urban area, applicants will be required to demonstrate how the qualities set out by the document have informed the proposal.

Creating Places: Achieving Quality in Residential Environments

- 2.18 This guide describes the contributions to quality and sustainability that developers in Northern Ireland will be expected to make through the design of new residential developments. It seeks to ensure that what is designed and built today will be sustainable for both present and future generations.

Local Policy

Belfast Urban Area Plan (BUAP) 2001

- 2.19 The current development plan for the majority of the Belfast district is the Belfast Urban Area Plan (BUAP) 2001, which was adopted in December 1989. The area covered by the Plan included the whole of the administrative area of the former Belfast City Council area, together with the urban parts of the former District Council areas of Castlereagh, Lisburn and Newtownabbey as well as Greenisland and Holywood.
- 2.20 The purpose of the BUAP was to establish physical development policies for this broad urban area up to 2001, clarifying the extent and location of development and providing a framework for public and private agencies in their investment decisions relating to land use. Although alterations were made in 1996, the BUAP is now largely out-of-date and was formally superseded by the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) 2015 in September 2014. However, BMAP was quashed as a result of a judgement in the Court of Appeal delivered on 18 May 2017, meaning that the BUAP 2001 remains the statutory development plan for most of the Council's area.
- 2.21 The BUAP contains a number of urban environment policies;
- Policy C2 – Conservation Areas;
 - Policy C3 – Areas of Townscape Character;
 - Policy L1 – The City Centre (environmental improvements, open space, landscaping);
 - Policy CC4 – City Centre Heritage (CA Designations);
 - Policy CC6 – City Centre Renewal: refurbishment of buildings;
 - Policy CC8 – Environment;
 - Policy CC12 – High buildings;
 - Policy LS2 – Landscaping of the Laganside; and
 - Policy LS4 – Design of riverside development.

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (BMAP)

- 2.22 The BMAP 2015 was published by the Department for Environment (DOE) in September 2014. It is a joint plan covering the original City Council areas of Belfast and Lisburn and the Borough Council areas of Carrickfergus, Castlereagh, Newtownabbey and North Down. Although its boundaries no longer match the new 11 Council districts established as part of the reform of local government, the whole of the new Belfast City Council area falls within its remit.
- 2.23 While formally adopted in 2014, BMAP was quashed as a result of a judgement in the Court of Appeal delivered on 18 May 2017. Although this means the Belfast Urban Area Plan (BUAP) 2001 remains the statutory development plan for the area, the draft BMAP, in its most recent, pre-examination form, remains a significant material consideration in future planning decisions. Draft BMAP referred to throughout this document therefore refers to that which was purported to be adopted and not the pre-examination draft published in 2004.
- 2.24 A Technical Supplement to the plan contained an Urban Design Study and the key urban design concepts underlying policy were;
- High accessibility/high density development zones;
 - Character areas;
 - City centre ring;
 - Belfast cross; and
 - Arterial streets.
- 2.25 The objective of these designations was to reinforce character by providing guidance on urban design principles such as scale and massing, building heights and public realm enhancements.
- 2.26 The designations and associated guidance outlined within the technical supplement are subject to an undergoing appraisal that will influence the local policies for the next stage of the plan.

Conservation design guides

- 2.27 Design guidance for each of the 13 Conservation Areas provide information on the planning context, historical development, description or character appraisal of the area, the designation and guidelines for development proposals within the designated areas. Many of the guidance documents however are out of date and date back as far as 1987. An ongoing review of the guidance within the local policies stage and through the production of supplementary planning will aim to update the guidance for future use.

Other relevant studies/plans

Belfast City Corporation's High Buildings Policy, 1968

- 2.28 This study was carried out following concerns that high buildings would destroy the character of areas, streets and spaces, within Belfast or would block historic views. The criteria established is still significant today and will help inform the policy approach for the DPS.

The Belfast City Centre - Urban Design & Development Strategy (LDR International - 1993)

- 2.29 DOE urban design report commissioned for the city centre, highlighted a number of problems and then aimed to address these through a framework of environmental improvements which outlined a number of area proposals within the city centre.
- 2.30 The policy context described above will form the basis of the Draft Plan Strategy design and heritage policies, in particular PPS6 and the Addendum to PPS6 for built heritage policies, whereas regional design guides will help influence the urban design policies.

3.0 Recent Studies

- 3.1 To inform the preparation of the LDP, a number of studies were undertaken to provide background data and information relating to urban design and built heritage. These studies are presented in the sections below.

Urban Design

- 3.2 As established within the initial topic paper, good quality design is an integral part of sustainable development. The SPPS acknowledges that high quality urban design is a powerful tool for achieving a higher quality of life, greater economic vitality and efficient use of resources. Therefore creating clear and transparent design principles for all development will contribute to achieving the aspirations of regional policies. Further studies of urban design policies from across the UK have also contributed to the structure and form of the draft policies contained within the DPS.

Tall Buildings

- 3.3 Highlighted through the consultation process as one of the more popular issues within the POP that required policy formation, further tall buildings analysis and research has been undertaken to support operational policy approach adopted within the DPS. The study aims to analyse existing heights within the city to determine a baseline that would trigger a tall buildings policy and associated supplementary guidance. This will also help define what is considered a 'tall building' within the context of Belfast.

Defining a tall Building

- 3.4 Tall buildings are generally easily recognisable and act as key landmarks within a city's skyline either individually or as a cluster. They can mark strategic points within the city such as gateway sites and transport nodes and when designed and sited appropriately can make a positive contribution to the legibility and overall character of an area. By their very nature, tall buildings can provide the scale and mass for higher densities within the city for employment and residential uses. They are often seen as being an economically viable option especially within city centres, intensifying the use of land and potentially acting as a catalyst for regeneration.
- 3.5 As a result of their dominant scale and massing tall buildings can have a greater environmental impact and therefore require a greater degree of scrutiny and consideration. The historic environment, including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape Character, provide a unique and distinctive character to the city and are likely to be more vulnerable to the impacts of tall buildings. Most notably, tall buildings overshadowing and overlooking built heritage assets, impacting key public views within the context of the city.
- 3.6 Tall buildings can also have an effect on microclimates such as impacts on wind, noise and loss of daylight for example which can have negative effects on both

public and private amenity. Careful analysis is required to avoid creating unpleasant environments.

- 3.7 Given the modifications and advancements in construction methods that have enhanced the quality of buildings, tall buildings can benefit from greater sustainability and energy efficiencies and as a result help cities combat the growing impacts of climate change.

Policy context (tall buildings)

Belfast City Corporation – High buildings policy – 1968

- 3.8 The concern at that time, expressed within the document, was that that high buildings would destroy character of areas, streets and spaces or block historic views. It stated that high buildings should –
- not mar views of hills / views into city (from Lough, motorway, to Cathedral from Shankill), views from the city (city centre streets), views within the city (between Cathedral and Shankill / Castle Place to Quay);
 - not dominate public open space;
 - relate to other high buildings (Harbour, City Centre, University) / buildings of historic safeguard amenities (daylight, sunlight) of adjoining sites; and,
 - Relate to transportation system.

Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (BUAP)

- 3.9 As the previous plan to draft BMAP, the BUAP contained a number of urban environment related policies. The City Centre Strategy policies identified a specific tall buildings policy CC12 – high buildings that identified a specific plot ratio of 3 to 1 to discourage excessively high developments. The policy also outlines similar criteria to that of the above policy;
- do not mar or dominate the surrounding hills or the scale of attractive Belfast views;
 - relate sympathetically in design to the urban structure of the City;
 - relate sympathetically to their immediate surroundings;
 - relate sympathetically to buildings or groups of buildings of architectural and historic interest

- 3.10 The policy was later superseded by BMAP which identified character areas which identified building height guidelines.

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (BMAP)

- 3.11 The technical supplement to the plan an urban design study focused on Belfast City centre, the River Lagan and town centres. This document analysed the areas by outlining and covering an array of issues ranging from local character to patterns of movement. The document established urban design guidance and strategies within these identified character areas. Within Belfast City Centre a total of nine character areas were identified and allocated specific guidance and guidelines to reinforce character. Minimum and maximum height thresholds were established. It also recognised taller buildings at key sites and gateway locations. The guidance is still a material consideration in the assessment of new development proposals, however

weight given to established height guidelines has been weakened by previous approvals which exceeded the heights identified by the study. There is a difficulty operationally in resisting tall buildings in cases where a tall building exists on the site adjacent or where planning history for a taller building exists. The lack of specific policy is evident, as although PPSs identify the need to enhance and protect the built and natural environment with regards to scale, height and massing, in particular PPS6, the criteria for tall buildings is still not clear.

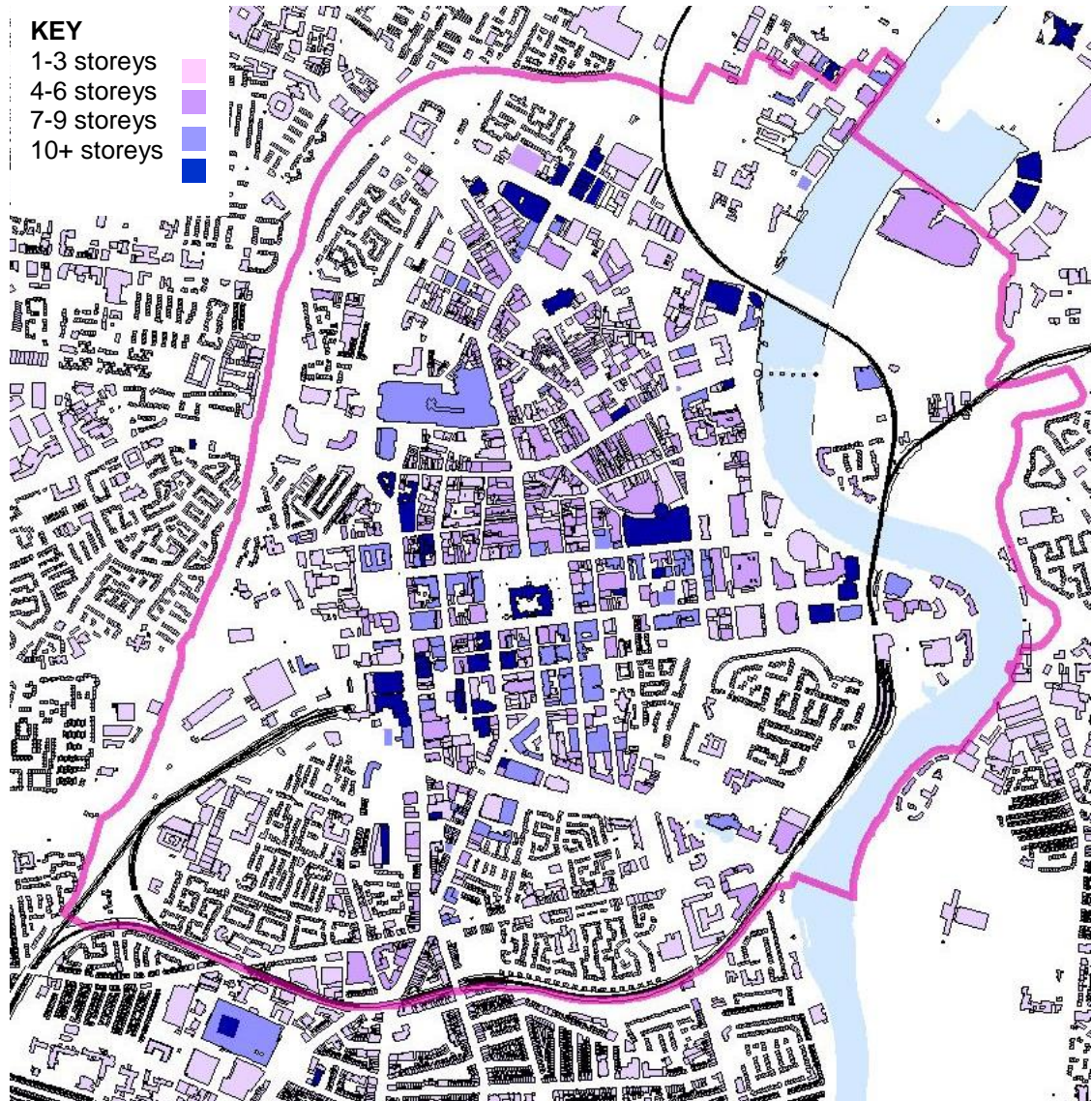
Tall buildings the Belfast context

- 3.12 Before a definition or baseline height for tall buildings can be established for Belfast, an analysis of the existing building stock needs to be carried out. This will help establish the existing tall building heights and the pattern of development that is occurring throughout the city.
- 3.13 Belfast is predominantly a low lying city that is relatively sensitive to the impact of tall buildings. The traditional legible structure of Belfast witnessed a level of erosion during the post-war period, with taller buildings occurring sporadically throughout the city. The culmination of this form of development has led to a somewhat random pattern of tall buildings throughout the city, many of which are referenced as justification for similar scaled development elsewhere.
- 3.14 Tall buildings are therefore in principle not considered to be in keeping with the established scale and character of much of Belfast. While there is a case for tall buildings as a mechanism which could act as a catalyst for further investment in the city and deliver additional resources into the provision of public infrastructure, the council recognises the need to ensure that the city's built heritage is afforded due protection. It also recognises that there needs to be quality thresholds for tall buildings to ensure that they are of high architectural quality that enhance the character and appearance of the city and that they are clustered, primarily within the city centre in order to promote economic growth.
- 3.15 Tall buildings may therefore be considered acceptable within the appropriate context where it can be demonstrated that they will not have an unacceptably harmful impact on their surroundings. In these instances, they should be of the highest design quality in their own right, while enhancing their immediate location and wider setting. They should also be generally limited to areas where existing clusters of taller buildings have already been established, as well as being sited in key locations within the street pattern that terminate or accentuate key vistas and where they place emphasis on the civic and commercial heart of the city.

Analysis

- 3.16 The analysis of building heights was focused within the city centre and its immediate surroundings due to the pressures of development within this area. Figure 1 below outline the spatial analysis findings.

Figure 1 city centre building heights



- 3.17 The plan above shows in dark blue those taller buildings within the city centre (10 storeys and above), highlighting the sporadic nature of taller elements within the city. The plan also highlights that the majority of buildings are of a relatively lower scale, generally reflecting traditional heights and massing consistent with how the city has evolved.
- 3.18 The tallest building within Belfast, the Obel, stands at 85m in height, (28 storeys), and is located to the north of the city fronting the River Lagan. Due to its siting and height the building has established its dominance within the city's skyline and has set a precedent for taller buildings within the waterfront area to the north of the city. New developments under construction at City Quays will also have an impact on the overall height and density of buildings within that area of the city.

- 3.19 This is closely followed by Grand Central Hotel (former Windsor House) located on Bedford Street which measures 80m. This property is centrally located within the city's office district where taller buildings are more common. This 23 storey hotel building has a prominent bearing on the city's skyline however it is acknowledged that this building which replaced a similarly scaled building, is of its time and well exceeds the general height threshold in this area. Nevertheless new taller buildings have recently emerged nearby including the 13 storey Maldron hotel at Brunswick Street and the adjoining 16 storey student accommodation at McClintock Street. This area will see further change with the proposed development of Bedford Square Phase Two, a 17 storey building, which proposes to incorporate the adaptive reuse of the listed Ewatts warehouse building. The dominance of tall buildings alter the skyline of the city and public views to the natural landscape, in particular views of Cavehill, Castlereagh and historic views of City Hall.
- 3.20 Elsewhere churches, religious buildings and public infrastructure such as health and educational facilities with taller elements are dominant throughout the city and provide visual markers within the skyline. Most prominent are St Anne's Cathedral with the addition of the spire at a height of 72m (without 32m) and St Patricks Church at 63m, the equivalent of the 16 storey Belfast International Hilton hotel.
- 3.21 Development in recent years has seen a steady increase in the number of tall buildings proposed within Belfast. The relocation of the University of Ulster campus to the north of the city centre has brought with it a rise in the number of student accommodation buildings. Many of the proposed schemes have been approved at a height which is above that of previous dBMAP technical supplement guidelines.
- 3.22 A study of city centre applications from 2011 to present in relation to taller buildings has therefore been conducted. This study analysed applications and their use and compliancy with the urban design criteria set out in dBMAP technical supplement and urban design study which establishes minimum and maximum building heights within character areas. Within the character areas in some cases heights are differentiated by streets. The study concluded that the majority of applications approved exceeded the limit set within the guidance. One consideration that justified the increase in building height within a number of outcomes was recent or extant planning permissions within the immediate surroundings of the proposal.
- 3.23 The use of set guideline heights was therefore not considered appropriate for the new tall buildings policy. By putting in place tall buildings policy that triggered specific requirements for new buildings exceeding a particular threshold height, as opposed to setting a range of prescribed heights, would allow each application to be assessed on its merits.

Established height threshold

- 3.24 There is no formal or official definition of a tall building within the DPS. The impact of a buildings scale, height and mass is subjective to its surrounding context. A five storey building within a city centre context may not be considered tall, however have

a significant impact on its surroundings and could therefore be considered 'tall' within its context.

- 3.25 The average height of buildings within Belfast City Centre is between 6-8 storeys. Taller buildings of above 9 or 10 storeys (approx. 35m) then become more apparent within the city's skyline and feature within long range public views across the city. It was therefore concluded that 35m would be an appropriate threshold height in determining a tall building within Belfast city centre context and therefore assessed under DES3 and all relevant policies. The threshold would trigger greater policy requirements for buildings of this height as they will ultimately have a greater impact on the city centre as a whole. Anything below this threshold within the city centre would then be assessed by all other relevant policies within the DPS. Areas outside of the city centre where proposals are considered significantly taller, would also trigger DES3. This policy will aim to strengthen the quality of applications submitted and ultimately the quality of decisions made for the future growth of the city by clearly setting out the design and placemaking requirements the council will expect from such proposals.
- 3.26 Additional analysis to test the threshold has been conducted through the utilisation of VU.CITY (Appendix 2). VU.CITY Belfast is an accurate 3D model of the city. it provides an interactive view of Belfast and is used by the council's planning service to help assess planning applications, inform pre-application discussions and develop future planning policies. This allowed for greater accuracy of existing building heights above ordinance data (AOD).
- 3.27 When identifying buildings of 35m and above within the city centre, and in some cases those buildings that border the city centre as they impact the wider setting, it was evident that clusters and emerging clusters could be identified, as illustrated in the screenshots within Appendix 2. Within these broad clusters further detailed analysis will be carried out during the local policies stage of the LDP.

Energy efficient design

- 3.28 The planning system has a key role to play in delivering sustainable development and addressing the challenge of climate change. The SPSS states that 'when placemaking, planning authorities should make efficient use of existing capacities of land, buildings and infrastructure, including support for town centre and regeneration priorities in order to achieve sustainable communities where people want to live, work and play now and into the future'. Implementing energy efficient design measures that avoid, minimise and remedy negative impacts of development on the environment is essential to achieving sustainable communities.
- 3.29 There are a wide range of environmental and amenity considerations, including noise and air quality, water management, renewables that need to be considered within the planning process. The location, design and layout of new developments are key when creating energy efficient sustainable environments.

- 3.30 The Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) recognises within its eight aims the importance of Northern Ireland's environment and the need to protect and enhance it. It also recognises the need to reduce our carbon footprint and adapt to climate change.
- 3.31 As outlined within the SPPS, the planning system should therefore help mitigate and adapt to climate change by;
- Shaping new and existing developments in ways that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and positively build community resilience to problems such as extreme heat or flood risk;
 - promoting sustainable patterns of development, including the sustainable re-use of historic buildings where appropriate, which reduces the need for motorised transport, encourages active travel and facilitates travel by public transport in preference to the private car;
 - requiring the siting, design and layout of all new development to limit likely greenhouse gas emissions and minimise resource and energy requirements;
 - avoiding development in areas with increased vulnerability to the effects of climate change, particularly areas at significant risk from flooding, landslip and coastal erosion and highly exposed sites at significant risk from impacts of storms;
 - considering the energy and heat requirements of new developments when designating land for new residential, commercial and industrial development and making use of opportunities for energy and power sharing, or for decentralised or low carbon sources of heat and power wherever possible;
 - promoting the use of energy efficient, micro-generating and decentralised renewable energy systems; and
 - working with natural environmental processes, for example through promoting the development of green infrastructure and also the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) to reduce flood risk and improve water quality'.
- 3.32 As identified within Topic Paper 17, the plan should encourage sustainable development in order to mitigate and decrease levels of pollution and the predicted impacts of climate change.
- 3.33 This Technical Supplement will focus on identifying policy requirements to achieve energy efficient design as a requirement of the LDP.
- 3.34 Energy efficient design encompasses all areas associated with sustainability and should be considered from the earliest stages from location of new developments to their site layout and through to construction and daily energy consumption. A holistic assessment of an entire proposal from start to finish and beyond completion is therefore required. As highlighted within the POP as a possible policy requirement, further analysis of BREEAM has been conducted.
- 3.35 BREEAM (the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) is the world's leading sustainability assessment method for masterplanning

projects, infrastructure and buildings. It assesses new construction, in use and refurbishment through third party certification of the assessment of an assets environmental, social and economic sustainability performance, using standards developed by BRE.

- 3.36 BREEAM assessments can be conducted at any stage of development, from the initial design stage and construction through to operation and refurbishment. With performance ratings enabling buildings to be recognised according to their environmental benefits and therefore allows comparability between projects. This has helped stimulate the demand for sustainable buildings.
- 3.37 One of the main drivers ensuring BREEAM standards, or equivalent assessments, are adhered to and utilised is through planning requirements. The LDP is required to support the goals and objectives of the RDS and SPPS and standards such as BREEAM, help ensure these requirements are met through a widely recognised and established assessment tool.
- 3.38 BREEAM standards and certificates are becoming widely used within NI, with many departments requiring the standards for major schemes. Since 2008, a total of 68 certificates have been issued under BREEAM in Belfast and its surrounding area. From these the majority have been awarded 'Pass' and 'Good' status with 'Very Good' and 'Excellent' standards mostly achieved by higher education and health care facilities. It is evident that the drivers of funding and authority requirements for BREEAM standards have influenced the targeted BREEAM standards for these developments. Details of these 68 certificates are included within the Appendix 4.
- 3.39 One area of concern when creating criteria for all major developments to adhere to will be its impacts on cost and viability. The aim of achieving a sustainable development is recognising that initial additional costs incurred to reach the standards required by BREEAM need to be evaluated over the lifetime of the project. In many cases, initial investment will generate savings within the lifetime of the project. It is believed that market trends, modern construction methods and technological advances are driving development towards highly sustainable projects. The requirement to meet the BREEAM assessment, or comparable standard, will validate and accredit projects. It is noted that the earlier BREEAM standards are implemented within a project, such as design stage, the better the chance of keeping costs down are.
- 3.40 By encouraging BREEAM standards within the planning process, it will increase the number of developments seeking to achieve the accreditation. This has been seen in many local authorities in the UK where local planning authorities have required and conditioned BREEAM standards as part of their development management process. However market demands have also driven developments to strive for 'Excellent' and 'Outstanding' certificates to highlight their green credentials which benefits their industry standing.

- 3.41 Currently the Northern Ireland Executive requires all new or refurbished buildings occupied by their departments to meet at least BREEAM 'Very Good' rating.
- 3.42 All health authorities in the UK require BREEAM 'Excellent' for new buildings and 'Very Good' for refurbishment, subject to certain capital cost thresholds.
- 3.43 The use of BREEAM in higher and further education buildings is also linked to funding. The Department of Education requiring 'Excellent' rating for new buildings and 'Very Good' for refurbishment projects.
- 3.44 There can be restrictions depending on the type of development with refurbishment projects in many cases limited to the certificate they can strive towards. This will be taken into consideration within the overall planning process and the material consideration of retaining an existing building will in many cases contribute to the appropriateness of a proposal.

4.0 Draft Plan Strategy approaches

- 4.1 The DPS is required to support the goals and objectives of the RDS and SPPS and provide operational policies that contribute to positive placemaking. The overarching strategic approach to the urban design and built heritage policies have been informed by current policy requirements and drafted to encourage high quality design that will fulfil the requirements of regional policy and design guides.

Urban design

- 4.2 The DPS is required to support development by providing clear policies and/or supplementary design guidance that seeks to address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development. Within the councils Preferred Options Paper (POP) draft policy LP11 set out the general approach and criteria to be used when considering the level of design required to support the creation of attractive environments. The POP also identified a range of specific policies relating to urban design that included;
- LP12 Arterial routes and Gateways;
 - LP13 Promoting greater spatial connectivity;
 - LP14 Tall Buildings;
 - LP16 Local distinctiveness; and
 - LP 17 Energy efficient design
- 4.3 In the DPS the overarching urban design policy DES1 has been drafted to capture the above policies with the exception of LP14 Tall buildings which will remain a standalone policy (DES3), this has been retained as a full policy as a result of the feedback received from working group members and ongoing review of urban design policies within the UK. This overarching approach has allowed for comprehensive policy criteria with regards to design that is considered appropriate for all levels of development and should therefore establish a high level of design standard throughout the city as required by regional policy.
- 4.4 Areas identified within the POP, such as city centre character areas, tall buildings zones and areas of poor connectivity, require further analysis and will be the main focus of the Local Policies stage of the LDP the main element of which will be to deal with plan designations and where appropriate zonings.

Masterplanning approach

- 4.5 Major applications can have a significant impact on their immediate and surrounding context. As a result DES2 builds upon the overarching criteria set out within DES1. DES2 also addresses a number of overarching themes set out in the POP topic paper such as poor connectivity, public realm, energy efficiency and local distinctiveness as key areas to be addressed by all major applications. This will also support a variety of policy areas within the DPS. The ten qualities of urban design highlighted within Living Places: An Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland has also influenced the design criteria set out in DES2, as it is a

requirement of all major applications to demonstrate how they have utilised the guidance.

- 4.6 More specifically DES 2 introduces the assessment tool BREEAM to help promote and encourage high quality sustainable developments. From the research undertaken it is apparent that the global assessment tool is being utilised, specifically within health and educational facilities throughout Northern Ireland. The requirement of the standard by health, housing and educational authorities has been the main driver for the use of BREEAM within Northern Ireland. However there is currently no requirement for private sector developments to utilise the tool. In many cases the level of design and implementation required are most likely being achieved. Therefore encouraging the use BREEAM within the LDP is appropriate to promote its use within all areas of development, both public and private sector and contribute to the overarching regional aim to create sustainable environments.

Tall buildings

- 4.7 An issue highlighted from the initial POP stage and carried through to DPS relates to tall buildings and their potential impact on the city. The policy approach adopted within the DPS introduces criteria for tall buildings. From the research carried out a tall buildings threshold of 35m was considered appropriate for the context of Belfast city centre, for proposals outside the city centre anything significantly taller than its surrounding context would also trigger the policy. By steering away from minimum and maximum heights it is believed that each application can be assessed on its own merits as the previous guidance has been surpassed. Further analysis in this regard can be found in Appendix 3.
- 4.8 The map below highlights the existing buildings within the city centre which meet the outlined threshold.

Figure 2 city centre building heights over 35m



Advertising and signage

- 4.9 One area not included as a preferred policy option within the POP was advertising and signage. However it was later considered necessary to include policies that expanded on the regional policy within the SPPS and sought to bring forward the policy criteria of PPS6, Addendum to PPS6 and PPS17. The council recognises the impact advertising can have on the overall character and appearance of an area. The policy contained within the DPS has broadened the focus of the criteria to not only include the impact on amenity and road safety, but to seek high quality design of advertising and signage that is sympathetic to its context and protects, and where possible enhances, the city's unique built heritage assets. Also increased emphasis has also been placed on the potential cumulative effect of advertising in relation to clutter within the public realm. The policy will be supported by the overarching

design policy and built heritage policies for applications affecting such areas. This will also benefit from the production of supplementary planning guidance.

Built heritage

- 4.10 The SPPS states that the planning system plays an important role in conserving, protecting and enhancing the environment whilst ensuring it remains responsive and adaptive of everyday needs of society. It is therefore important for the natural and built heritage to be taken into account in the preparation of the draft plan strategy for the LDP.
- 4.11 Policies BH1–6 have been drafted to transfer the policy context of PPS 6 and Addendum to PPS 6 for the Draft Plan Strategy and is in line with the objectives of the SPPS. Supplementary planning guidance and further analysis of the city's built heritage assets is ongoing to inform the local policies that will address specific issues and demand pressures. This will include the ongoing monitoring of Areas of Townscape Character.

Listed buildings

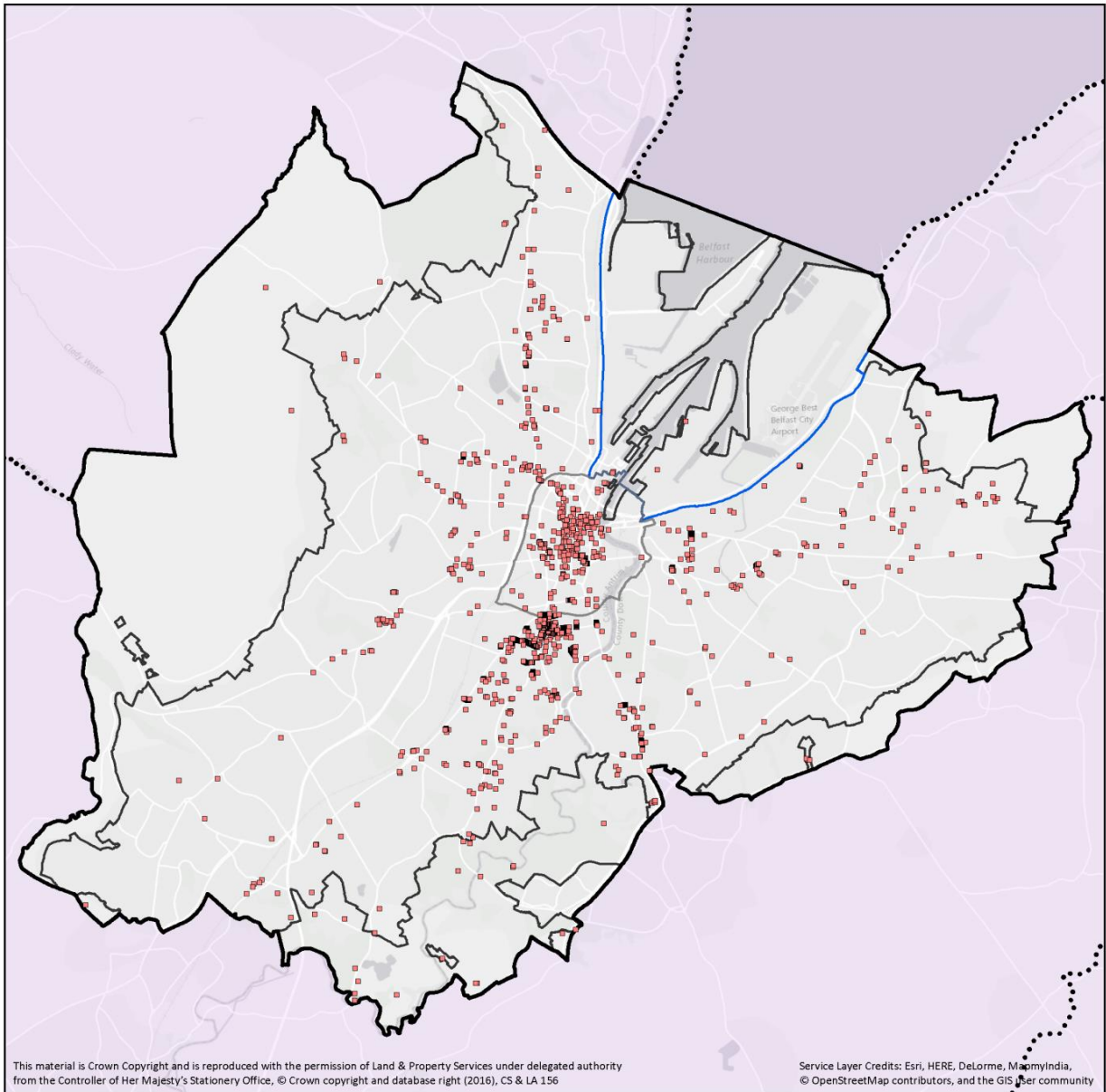
- 4.12 The SPPS recognises that listed Buildings of special architectural or historic interest are key elements of our built heritage and are often important for their intrinsic value and for their contribution to the character and quality of settlements and the countryside. It stresses that development may be permitted where this will secure the ongoing viability and upkeep of the building, providing it respects its essential character and setting. The DPS policy approach seeks to reinforce the policy context of PPS6 to support the aims of the SPPS. The ongoing review of character areas within the city may also provide an opportunity to for additional criteria at Local Policies stage.
- 4.13 The spatial extent of listed buildings within the council area are shown in figure 1 below.

Figure 3 listed buildings



Belfast City Council

BUILT HERITAGE



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Listed Buildings

■ Listed Building

□ Council Area

□ Metropolitan/Settlement Development Limit

□ Belfast City Centre

□ Belfast Harbour Area

Source: Historic Environment Digital Datasets, NIEA (April, 2016)



Conservation Areas

- 4.14 There are 13 conservation areas within the council area. The SPPS notes that in managing development within a designated conservation area the guiding principle is to afford special regard to the desirability of enhancing its character or appearance where an opportunity to do so exists, or to preserve its character or appearance where an opportunity to enhance does not arise. Accordingly, there will be a general presumption against the grant of planning permission for development or conservation area consent for demolition of unlisted buildings, where proposals would conflict with this principle.
- 4.15 In the interests of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the city's conservation areas, the draft plan strategy has adopted the policies set out in PPS6. SPG will reflect and update the guidance available for each conservation area.

Areas of Townscape Character (ATC)

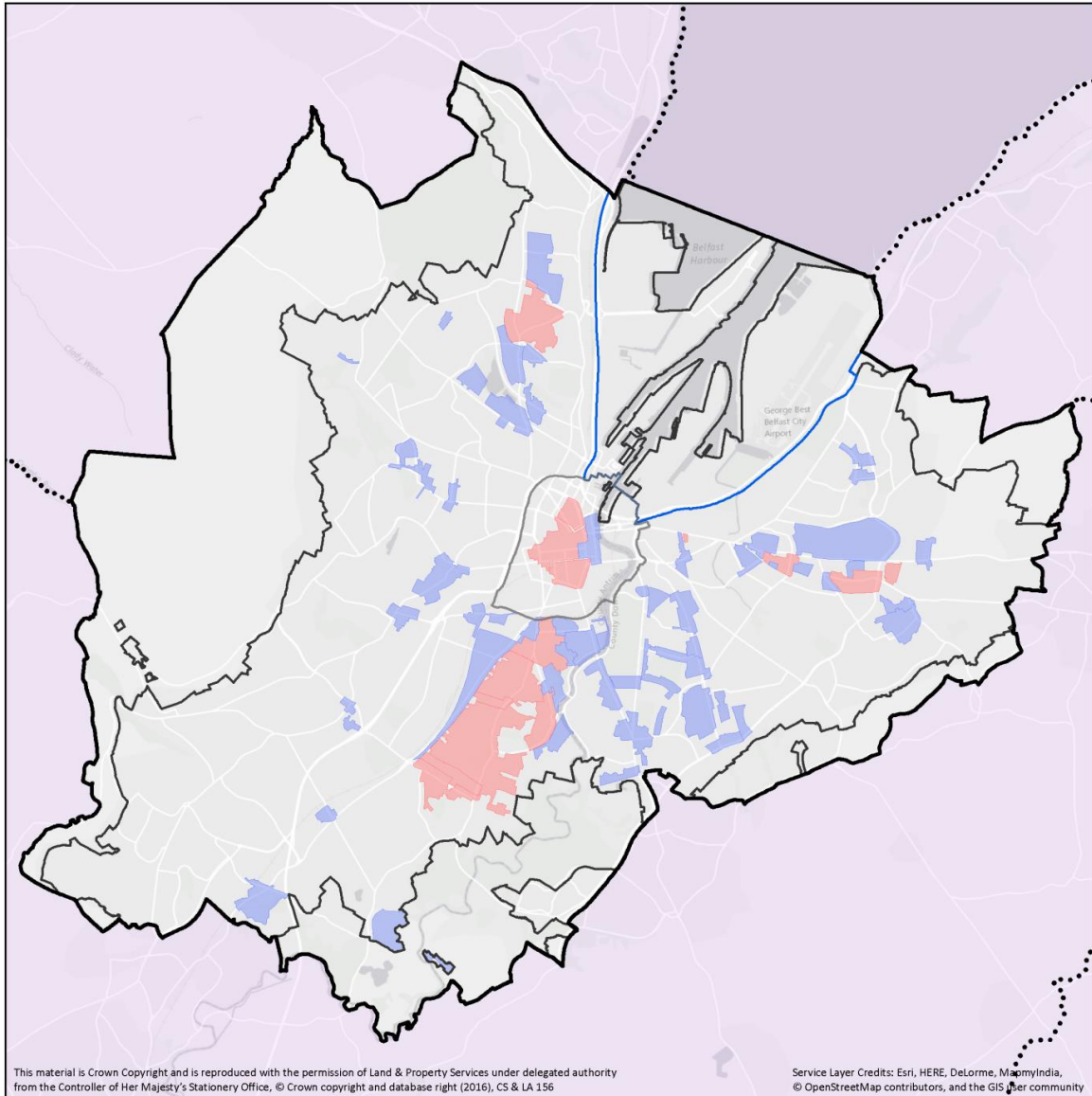
- 4.16 There are 56 Areas of Townscape Character within the Council Area and one Area of Village Character (AVC). The SPPS notes that in managing development within ATCs designated through the LDPs process, the council should only permit new development where this will maintain or enhance the overall character of the area and respect its built form. It states that local policies or proposals and guidance for such areas should also be included in the plan or, where appropriate, in supplementary planning guidance. The draft plan strategy has adopted the policy criteria as set out in the Addendum to PPS6. An assessment of the city's ATCs is ongoing and will contribute towards SPG.
- 4.17 The spatial extent of conservation areas and ATCs within the council area are shown in figure 2 below.

Figure 4 conservation areas and ATC's



Belfast
City Council







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Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape Character

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Conservation Area |  Council Area |
|  Area of Townscape Character/
Area of Village Character |  Metropolitan/Settlement Development Limit |
| |  Belfast City Centre |
| |  Belfast Harbour Area |

Source: Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (Adopted September 2014)



Works to grounds affecting built heritage assets

- 4.18 The character of the city's built heritage assets, particularly those of a residential nature, is in part ascribed by landscaping elements. Boundaries, garages and plot sub divisions have become a feature within built heritage designations that when altered unsympathetically can result in a detrimental impact to the overall character of an area. BH4 seeks to provide additional criteria that safeguards the unique qualities of the city's built heritage areas.

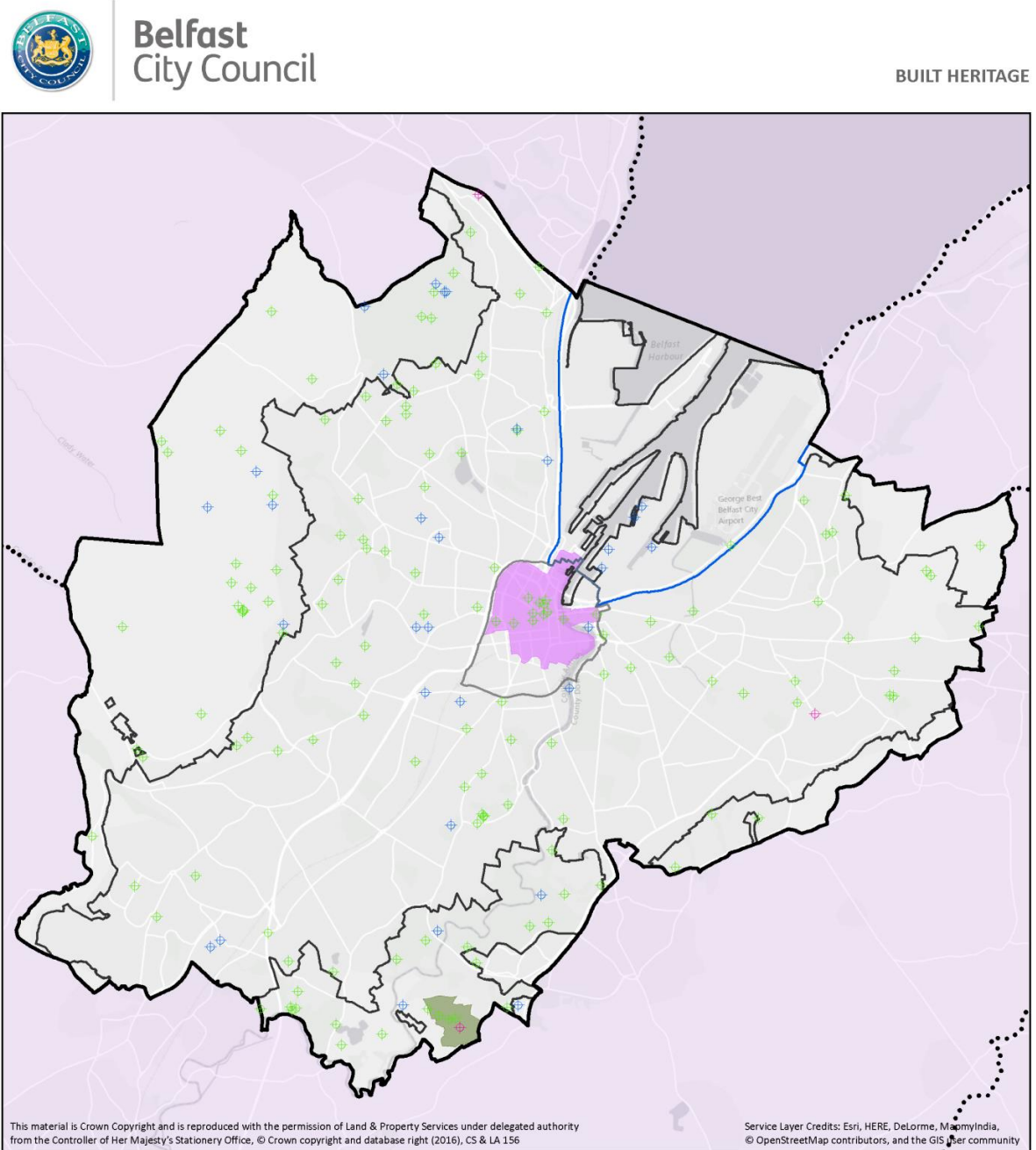
Archaeology

- 4.19 Belfast has one Area of Special Archaeological Interest (ASAI) and one potential ASAI. Archaeological remains are a limited, finite and non-renewable resource, in many cases highly fragile and vulnerable to damage and destruction. The approach taken by policy BH5 within the DPS will operate a presumption against proposals which would damage or destroy such remains. There will also be potential to provide best practice guidance for archaeological mitigation through interpretive design that promotes local distinctiveness and embeds the history of an area for future generations.

Parks, gardens and demesnes of special historic interest

- 4.20 Belfast has 19 registered historic parks and gardens which have shaped the form of the city today. Policy BH6 seeks to protect these important features of the city for the enjoyment of present and future generations to come. They also contribute to the city's green and blue infrastructure as valuable open space that have the potential to positively impact health and wellbeing.
- 4.21 The spatial extent of archaeological designations within the council area are shown in figure 3 below.

Figure 5 archaeological designations



Archaeology

- Area of Significant Archaeological Interest
- Area of Archaeological Potential
- Archaeological Sites & Monuments:
- State Care
- Scheduled
- Unscheduled
- Council Area
- Metropolitan/Settlement Development Limit
- Belfast City Centre
- Belfast Harbour Area

Source: Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (Adopted September 2014) and Historic Environment Digital Datasets, NIEA



APPENDICES

1. Draft BMAP character areas - Urban design criteria
2. Analysis of applications from 2011 to present of tall buildings within the dBMAP designated character areas, areas outlined in green are in compliance with the guidance, areas outlined in red are non-compliant and areas left white are pending decisions.
3. VU.CITY analysis, height threshold comparisons of 30m, 35m and 40m to determine that appropriateness of the threshold chosen and clarify previous studies.
4. BREAAAM accreditations from 2008 to present within and surrounding Belfast.

Appendix 1	
Character area	Guidance
<p>1 Commercial district</p>	<p><i>General</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The density of development in the area shall be maintained and increased, where appropriate, through high site coverage and high plot ratios; • Development proposals shall take account of the height of adjoining buildings; <p><i>Street Frontages</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That part of any development which fronts onto Great Victoria Street, Bruce Street or Bankmore Street Link shall be a minimum building height of 6 storeys metres to building shoulder height, and a maximum height of 7 storeys; • That part of any development which fronts onto Cromac Street shall be a minimum height of 4 storeys and a maximum height of 6 storeys; • That part of any development which fronts onto Bedford Street shall be a minimum building height of 5 storeys and a maximum height of 7 storeys; <p><i>Intersections</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the key gateway site at the intersection of Ormeau Road, Ormeau Avenue and Cromac Street, as identified on Map No. 2/001 - Belfast City Centre, building height shall be a minimum height of 6 storeys and a maximum of 9 storeys; • On the key gateway site at the intersection of Cromac Street, Hamilton Street and East Bridge Street, as identified on Map No. 2/001 - Belfast City Centre, building height shall be a minimum of 5 storeys and a maximum of 7 storeys. Proposals shall take account of the adjoining residential properties; <p><i>Elsewhere</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New development shall respect the established building line. Exceptions may only be permitted where development creates significant public open space; • Building heights shall be a minimum of 6 storeys and a maximum of 9 storeys; and • Development shall be fine grain in nature, and aim to reflect traditional plot widths. The façade of larger development proposals shall be broken up visually to reflect the scale of traditional units, e.g the sub division of block into 4 buildings.
<p>2 Civic Precinct</p>	<p><i>General</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development proposals shall take account of the height of adjoining buildings; <p><i>Street Frontages</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That part of any development which fronts onto Wellington Place, Donegall Square North and Chichester Street shall be a minimum building height of 5 storeys and a maximum height of 7 storeys, with use of setback or sloping roof forms or a combination of both. Consistent cornice lines should be respected; • That part of any development which fronts onto Victoria Street shall be a minimum building height of 6 storeys, or 18 metres to building shoulder height, and a maximum height of 7 storeys; <p><i>Elsewhere</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New development shall respect the established building line;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building heights shall be a minimum of 5 storeys and a maximum of 7 storeys. In order to maintain the dominance of the City Hall, taller buildings will not be acceptable; and • Development shall reflect traditional plot widths. The façade of larger development proposals shall be broken up visually to reflect the scale of traditional units.
<p>3 Old City</p>	<p><i>General</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The density of development in the area shall be maintained and increased where appropriate, through high site coverage and high plot ratio; • Development proposals shall take account of the height of adjoining buildings; <p><i>Street Frontages</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That part of any development which fronts onto Millfield shall be a minimum building height of 4 storeys, or 12 metres to building shoulder height, and a maximum height of 6 storeys; • Development which fronts onto Millfield shall be set back 1.5 metres from the footway to allow for a privacy zone for residential development; <p>That part of any development which fronts onto College Avenue shall be a minimum building height of 6 storeys, or 18 metres to building shoulder height, and a maximum height of 7 storeys;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That part of any development which fronts Donegall Place, Royal Avenue, Castle Street, Castle Place, or High Street shall be a minimum building height of 5 storeys, or 17 metres to building shoulder height, and a maximum height of 7 storeys with use of setback, articulated roof forms reinforcing traditional character. Consistent cornice lines should be respected; • In order to reinforce character the height of any development which fronts onto Donegall Place or Royal Avenue shall respect existing plinth, cornice and string course lines; • That part of any development which fronts onto Victoria Street shall be a minimum building height of 6 storeys, or 18 metres to building shoulder height, and a maximum height of 7 storeys; <p><i>Intersections</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the key gateway sites at the intersection of North Street and Millfield, as identified on Map No. 2/001 - Belfast City Centre, building height shall be minimum of 4 storeys and a maximum of 7 storeys; • On the key gateway site at the intersection of Castle Street and Millfield / College Avenue, as identified on Map No. 2/001 - Belfast City Centre, building height shall be a minimum of 5 storeys and a maximum of 7 storeys; <p><i>Elsewhere</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New development shall respect the established building line; • Building heights shall be a minimum of 3 storeys and a maximum of 5 storeys with use of articulated roof forms reinforcing traditional character. Consistent cornice lines should be respected; • Development shall be fine grain in nature, and aim to reflect traditional plot widths. The façade of larger development proposals shall be broken up visually to reflect the scale of traditional units; and • Within the area bounded by North Street, Millfield, Berry Street and Royal Avenue, comprehensive development proposals will be acceptable subject to an enhanced public realm and the creation of streets which reinstate the historic urban grain and secure east/west and north/south linkages, including links through Castlecourt.

<p>4 Scotch and Cathedral Quarters</p>	<p><i>General</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The density of development in the area shall be maintained and increased, where appropriate, through high site coverage and high plot ratio (including residential); • Development proposals shall take account of the height of adjoining buildings; <p><i>Street Frontages</i></p> <p>That part of any development which fronts onto Carrick Hill, Frederick Street, Great Patrick Street or Dunbar Link shall be a minimum building height of 4 storeys, or 12 metres to building shoulder height, and a maximum height of 6 storeys;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development which fronts onto Carrick Hill, Frederick Street, Great Patrick Street or Dunbar Link shall be set back 1.5 metres from the footway to allow for a privacy zone for residential development; • That part of any development which fronts Royal Avenue or York Street shall be a minimum building height of 5 storeys, or 17 metres to building shoulder height, and a maximum height of 7 storeys; • In order to reinforce character the height of any development which fronts onto Royal Avenue shall respect existing plinth, cornice and string course lines; • Shopfronts shall be of high quality materials consistent with Conservation Area policy (where applicable); <p><i>Intersections</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the key gateway sites at the intersection of Donegall Street and Carrick Hill / North Queen Street, as identified on Map No. 2/001 - Belfast City Centre, building height shall be minimum of 4 storeys and a maximum of 6 storeys; • On the key gateway sites at the intersection of North Street and Carrick Hill, as identified on Map No. 2/001 - Belfast City Centre, building height shall be minimum of 4 storeys and a maximum of 7 storeys; <p><i>Elsewhere</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New development shall respect the established building line. Exceptions may only be permitted where development creates significant public open space; Building heights shall be a minimum of 3 storeys and a maximum of 4 storeys, or 5 storeys with use of setback, articulated roof forms reinforcing traditional character. Consistent cornice lines should be respected; and • Development shall be fine grain in nature, and aim to reflect traditional plot widths. The façade of larger development proposals shall be broken up visually to reflect the scale of traditional units – subdivision of block into 4 to 2 buildings.
<p>5 West City Fringe</p>	<p><i>General</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development proposals shall take account of the height of adjoining buildings; <p><i>Street Frontages</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That part of any development which fronts onto Millfield or Carrick Hill, shall be a minimum building height of 4 storeys, or 12 metres to building shoulder height, and a maximum height of 6 storeys; • Development which fronts onto Millfield or Carrick Hill shall be set back 1.5 metres from the footway to allow for a privacy zone for residential development; • That part of any development which fronts onto College Avenue shall be a minimum building height of 6 storeys, or 18 metres to building shoulder height, and a maximum height of 7 storeys; <p><i>Elsewhere</i></p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building heights shall be a minimum of 3 storeys (with the exception of lands zoned for housing) and a maximum of 4 storeys; and • Development shall reflect traditional plot widths.
6 Great Victoria Street	<p><i>General</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The density of development in the area shall be increased through high site coverage and high plot ratio; • Development proposals shall take account of the height of adjoining buildings; <p><i>Street Frontages</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That part of any development which fronts onto Sandy Row, Grosvenor Road or Durham Street (to the northern boundary of the police station on its west side and Athol Street on its east side) shall be a minimum building height of 5 storeys and a maximum of 10 storeys; <p><i>Intersections</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the key gateway sites at the intersection of Grosvenor Road and Westlink, as identified on Map No. 2/001- Belfast City Centre, building height shall be a minimum of 5 storeys and a maximum of 10 storeys; • Development proposals shall provide for a landmark building on the site of the BT Telephone Exchange at the Grosvenor Road junction with a minimum building height of 5 storeys and a maximum height of 15 storeys; <p><i>Elsewhere</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New development shall respect the established building line; and • Building heights shall be a minimum of 3 storeys and a maximum of 5 storeys.
7 Shaftesbury Square	<p><i>General</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development proposals shall take account of the height of adjoining buildings; <p><i>Street Frontages</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That part of any development which fronts Dublin Road or Bradbury Place shall be a minimum building height of 5 storeys, or 17 metres to building shoulder height, and a maximum height of 7 storeys; • Shopfronts shall be of high quality materials consistent with Conservation Area policy (where applicable); <p><i>Intersections</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the key gateway sites at Shaftesbury Square, as identified on Map No. 2/001- Belfast City Centre, building height shall be a minimum of 4 storeys and a maximum of 8 storeys; <p><i>Elsewhere</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New development shall respect the established building line; • Building heights shall be a minimum of 2 storeys and a maximum of 3 storeys; and • Development shall be fine grain in nature, and aim to reflect traditional plot widths. The façade of larger development proposals shall be broken up visually to reflect the scale of traditional units.

<p>8 Laganside South and Markets</p>	<p><i>General</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development proposals shall take account of the height of adjoining buildings; <p><i>Street Frontages</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That part of any development which fronts onto Cromac Street shall be a minimum building height of 4 storeys and a maximum height of 7 storeys; • Development which fronts onto Cromac Street shall be set back 1.5 metres from the footway to allow for a privacy zone for residential development; <p><i>Intersections</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the key gateway site at the intersection of Cromac Street and Ormeau Road, as identified on Map No. 2/001- Belfast City Centre, building height shall be a minimum of 6 storeys and a maximum of 9 storeys; • On the key gateway site at the intersection of Albertbridge Road / Albert Bridge with Ravenhill Road, as identified on Map No.2/001 - Belfast City Centre, building height shall be a minimum of 4 storeys and a maximum of 5 storeys; and <p><i>Elsewhere</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development shall aim to reflect traditional plot widths.
<p>9 Laganside North and Docks</p>	<p><i>General</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The density of development in the area shall be maintained and increased where appropriate, including around the transport nodes, through high site coverage and high plot ratio; and • Development proposals shall take account of the height of adjoining buildings; <p><i>Street Frontages</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That part of any development which fronts onto York Street shall be a minimum building height of 5 storeys, or 17 metres to building shoulder height, and a maximum height of 7 storeys; • That part of any development which fronts onto Frederick Street, Great Patrick Street or Dunbar Link shall be a minimum building height of 4 storeys, or 12 metres to building shoulder height, and a maximum height of 6 storeys; • Development which fronts onto Frederick Street, Great Patrick Street or Dunbar Link shall be set back 1.5 metres from the footway to allow for a privacy zone for residential development; • That part of any development which fronts onto Victoria Street shall be a minimum building height of 6 storeys, or 18 metres to building shoulder height, and a maximum height of 7 storeys; <p><i>Intersections</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the key gateway site at the intersection of Corporation Street and Dunbar Link, as identified on Map No. 2/001- Belfast City Centre, building height shall be a minimum of 6 storeys and a maximum of 8 storeys; • On the key gateway site at the intersection of Albertbridge Road / Albert Bridge with Short Strand, as identified on Map No. 2/001- Belfast City Centre, building height shall be a minimum of 4 storeys and a maximum of 5 storeys; • On the key gateway site at the intersection of Newtownards Road / Bridge End and Short Strand, as identified on Map No. 2/001 - Belfast City Centre, building height shall be a minimum of 4 storeys and a maximum of 6 storeys;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• On the key gateway site at the intersection of Queen’s Bridge / Ann Street and Oxford Street, as identified on Map No. 2/001 - Belfast City Centre, building height shall be a minimum of 6 storeys and a maximum of 8 storeys; <p><i>Elsewhere</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New development shall respect the established building line. Exceptions may only be permitted where development creates significant public open space;• In the area bounded by York Street, M3 Bridge, Queen’s Square and Dunbar Link, building heights shall be a minimum of 3 storeys and a maximum of 5 or 6 storeys with a setback upper floor. Development proposals shall provide for a landmark building up to 10 storeys in height on the north of Great Patrick Street, east of Nelson Street. New development shall be positioned with development of quarter to half block scale;• In the area east of the River Lagan (including the Sirocco Works / Bridge End / Short Strand Development Opportunity Ref. CC 020) building height shall be a minimum of 3 storeys and a maximum of 5 storeys or 6 storeys with setback upper floors. Development proposals shall provide for a landmark building, up to 12 storeys in height, between Queen Elizabeth and Queen’s Bridges. New development shall be positioned with development of quarter to half block scale; and• Large block coarse grain shall be permitted along the river. In other locations, development shall be fine grain in nature, and aim to reflect traditional plot widths.
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Appendix 2							
Reference	address	use	status	metres	Storeys	BMAP CA	Reason for approval
Z/2011/0471/F	40 Linenhall Street	Office	Approved	37.4	9	1	The proposal complies with the urban design guidance set out in BMAP
Z/2011/0472/F	35 - 41 Queens Square, Belfast	Residential	Approved	46.75	16	9	Mixed use development at this location was considered to not be contrary to Draft BMAP
Z/2011/0891/F	35 - 39 Dublin Road - ETAP	Hotel	Completed	N/A	7 + 1 floor plant	7	The proposal complies with the urban design guidance set out in BMAP
Z/2011/1178/F	108 - 110 Great Victoria Street	Hotel	Approved	49.5	15	7	Height considered acceptable due to the established height of Fanum house
Z/2012/0361/F	Ulster University Campus	Education	Under construction	Approx. 52	12	4	The height of the building although one material consideration was balanced on the overall application for an educational facility within the city centre
Z/2012/0606/F Z/2010/0641/F	14 Montgomery Street	Residential	Under construction	43.2	14	2	BMAP in draft form and subject to objections. Approvals for comparable tall buildings within the vicinity taken into consideration.
Z/2013/1518/F	65 - 67 Dublin Road	Residential	Completed	36.2 reduced to 31	9	7	Proposal contrary to guidance. However planning history within the area was a material consideration a reduced scheme with an overall height of 31m was submitted. Weight was also given to the economic/regeneration factors.

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Z/2014/1398/F	9 Adelaide	Office	Completed		9	1	The proposal is of a similar height to the existing structure on the site and will not represent a significant increase in overall floor area. Previous approval for a 10 storey building was also a material consideration.
Z/2014/1627/F	7 - 13 Hope Street, Hampton by Hilton	Hotel	Completed		9	1	Proposal complies with BMAP building heights guidance
Z/2014/1657/F	28 - 30 Great Patrick Street	Student accommodation	Under construction	34.5	11	9	Although the height is contrary to the guidance, considerable material consideration was given to previous approvals and extant permissions within the immediate locality. It was not considered that the proposed height would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area.
LA04/2015/0092/O	22-36 Clifton street	Student accommodation	Refused	32.5 ridge height	10	5	Proposal would adversely impact the character and appearance of the area and does not comply with guidance
LA04/2015/0141/O	8 - 12 Little Patrick Street	Office	Approved	37	9	9	The proposal is contrary to guidance. The wider context of the area in particular recent applications a main consideration including PBSA. This along with the regenerative impact of the proposal was considered to be acceptable.

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Z/2015/0176/F	21 - 29 Corporation Street	Hotel	Pending decision		12	9	Issues regarding the design of the scheme.
Z/2015/0177/F	123 - 127 York Street	Student accommodation	Approval	36.6	12	9	Case officer report not available
LA04/2015/0418/F	14 Brunswick Street - Maldron Hotel	Hotel	Completed	45.15	13	1	Case officer report not available Building heights within the area of are a greater scale, most notably Windsor house (Grand Central hotel).
LA04/2015/0419/F	78 College Avenue	Student accommodation	Approval	34.4	12	3	It was considered that there were other factors that needed to be weighted in order to arrive at a balanced judgement. Factoring into account the planning history, immediate context and the willingness of the applicant to revise the proposal.
LA04/2015/0609/F	140 Donegal Street	Student accommodation	Refusal		9	4	Having regard to the development plan, relevant planning policies, and other material considerations, it is determined that the development will cause demonstrable harm to the interests of acknowledged importance. Decision appealed – appeal allowed and full planning permission granted.
LA04/2015/0674/F	13- 23 Clarence Street, 26 and 28 Linenhall Street – Clarence Gallery	Office	Pending decision		9	1	N/A
LA04/2015/0676/F	18 - 26 Library Street	Student accommodation	Completed	34 – ridge height	11	4	Refused Appealed and subsequently approved

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LA04/2015/1175/F	78 - 86 Dublin Road - botanic studios	Student accommodation	Completed	23.1	8	7	Although a storey higher than the height recommended in BMAP's Urban Design Criteria the fact the top two floors are set back and the building drops towards the two storey terraced dwellings to the rear should ensure the building will be in keeping with the site and wider context and will not have a detrimental impact on the character of the area.
LA04/2015/1423/RM	Donegall Quay, City Quays,	Hotel	Completed	32	9	9	Given the site context fronting onto the River Lagan, taking account of the heights of nearby buildings and spaces between them and the proposal, it is considered that the height of the building proposed was acceptable and would not harm the character or appearance of the immediate area.
LA04/2016/0548/F	19-27 Chichester Street	Office	Approved	28.8	8	2	The proposal, at 8 storeys, is a storey higher than the maximum 7 storey criteria. However there is a previous approval for a 10 storey building on the site (Z/2006/1653/F). Given this reduction in scale from the previous approval, it is only one storey higher than the recommended 7 storey maximum height set out in BMAP, and the fact the shoulder height of the proposal respects the height of the adjoining building, the scale and massing are found to be acceptable in what is a high-rise city centre streetscape.

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LA04/2016/0559/F	45 East Bridge Street	Office	Refusal	54.6	14	8	Approved by council JR – subsequently refused
LA04/2016/0581/F	69 - 87 Chichester Street	Office	Approved	40.38	9	2	does not comply with dBMAP guidance
LA04/2016/0967/F	55 - 71 Ormeau Road	Residential	Under construction	23.5 – ridge height	8	7	Complies with guidance
LA04/2016/1213/RM	48 - 52 York Street	Student accommodation	Approved		11	9	The principle of an 11 storey building was accepted through the granting of outline permission (Z/2014/0479/0). The vertical emphasis on the fenestration reflects the character of the larger commercial/ office buildings in the area and indeed the recent planning approvals including the new University of Ulster complex a short distance south of the site.
LA04/2016/1252/F	22 - 46 Nelson Street	Student accommodation	Approved		11	9	Although the proposal fails to meet the guidance, given the site history, the surrounding context, and somewhat isolated nature of the site, bounded on three sides by roads, the scale proposed was deemed acceptable.
LA04/2016/1789/F	20-32 Chichester Street	Mixed use	Under construction	32.8	8	2	The proposal, at 8 storeys, is a storey higher than the maximum 7 storey criteria. However there is a previous approval for a 7 storey building on the site (Z/2008/1978/F – approved 21st February 2011). This approval, although lapsed in February 2016, remains a

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							material consideration in the assessment of the current proposal. Given the scale of adjacent buildings and others approved in the locality and the proportions of the previous approval, the scale and massing are considered to be acceptable in what is a high-rise city centre streetscape.
LA04/2016/2385/F	81 - 101 York Street	Student accommodation	Under construction	43.2	14	9	As concluded under the previous application, the proposed height of the building exceeds the guidance as set out in BMAP however, at this location given the scale of infrastructure surrounding the site including the width of York Street and the large junction of Great George Street and York Street, the scale of the new university complex and; a number of planning approvals in the immediate locality it is considered that the proposed height, scale and mass would not result in harm to the character and appearance of the area.
LA04/2017/0461/F	Merchant Square, 12-30 Wellington Place	Office	Approved	N/A	9	2	The proposal would represent an overall enhancement to the existing building and surrounding area with the creation of Grade A office space and associated benefits to the local economy in line with the SPPS.
LA04/2017/0288/F	5 Donegall Square South	Office	Pending decision	43.3	9	2	N/A

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LA04/2017/1695/F	4 - 12 High Street, Middleton Building	Office	Referred to committee for approval		6	3	Decision not issued
LA04/2017/1707/F	1-5 Albert Square, Graham House	Office	Pending decision		11		N/A
LA04/2017/2268/F	43-63 Chichester St	Office	Pending decision		11	2	N/A
LA04/2017/2306/F	26 - 44 Little Patrick Street	Student accommodation	Approved	36	12	9	PAC in their report into Nelson Street appeal recognised the greater scale set in the area, in the context of planning permissions, in 2008 and 2009 for 11-storey buildings. Council concluded that from a scale and massing point of view, the proposal was considered appropriate to the immediate and surrounding context and would result in a building that complements the scale and massing of the emerging built form in the area.

Appendix 3: VUCITY analysis

Figure 1: city centre - baseline

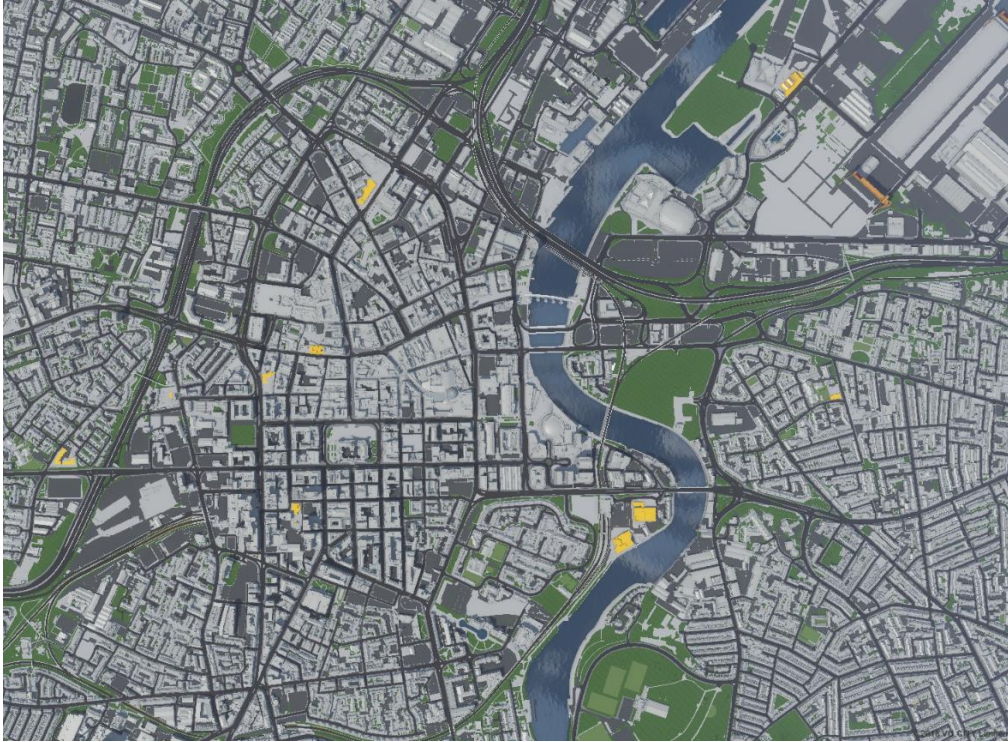


Figure 2: buildings that exceed 30m AOD

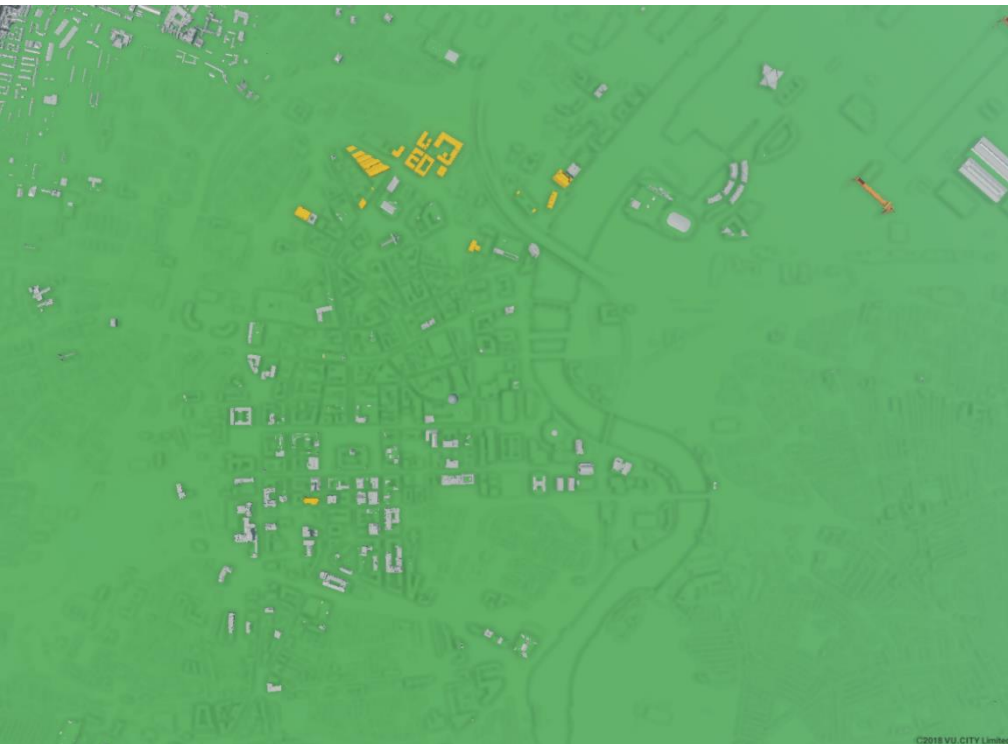


Figure 3: buildings that exceed 35m AOD

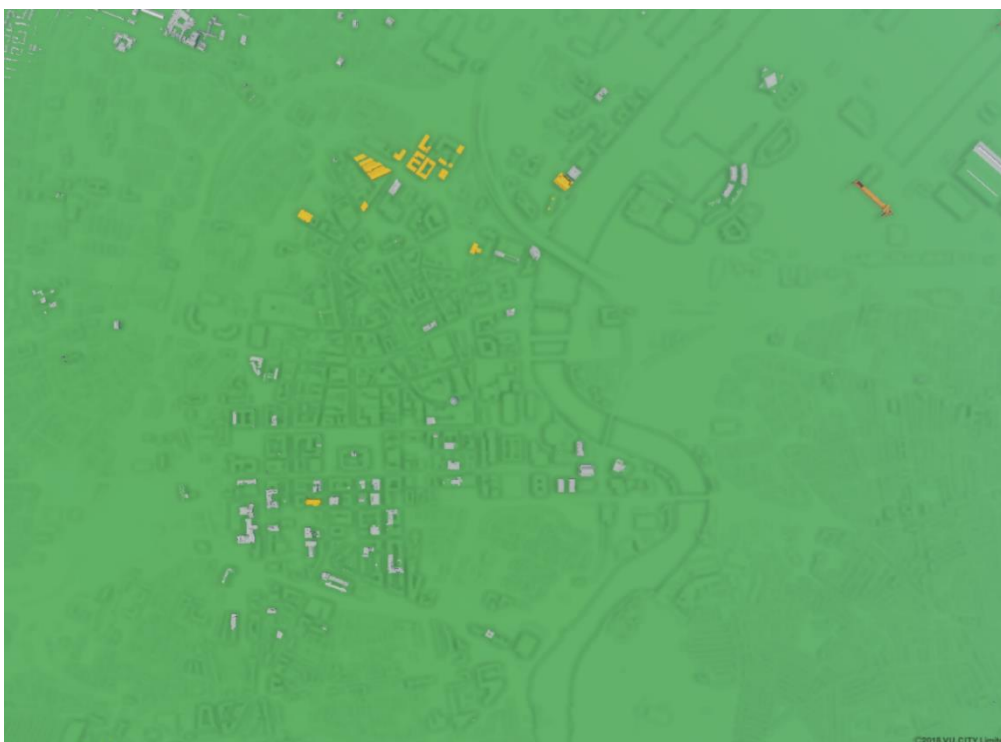
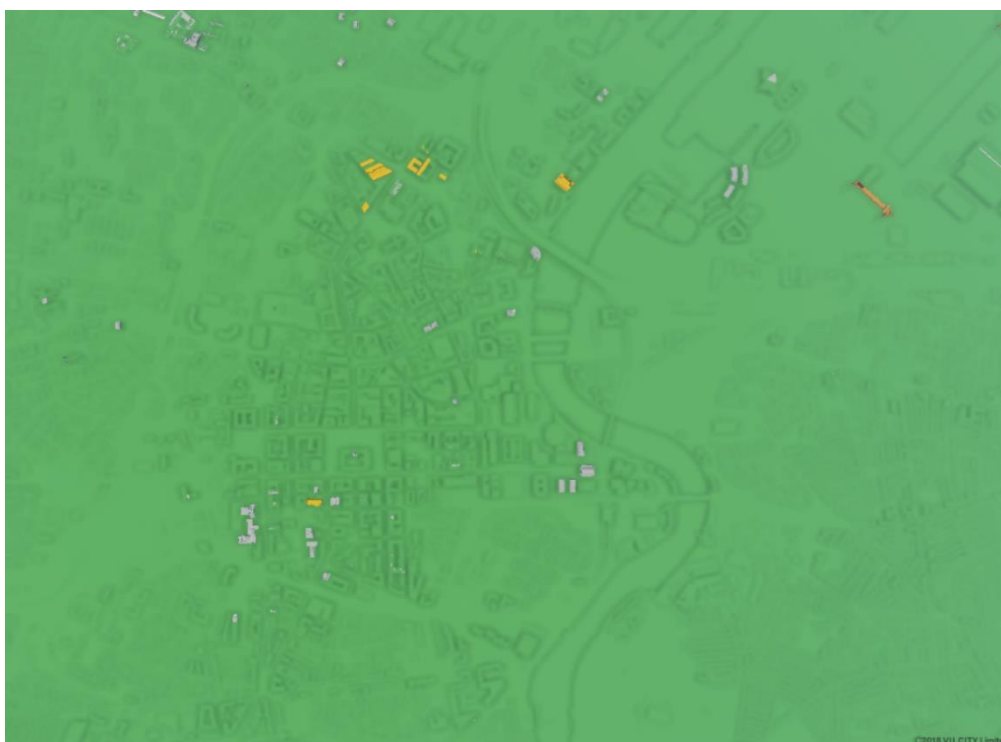


Figure 4: buildings that exceed 40m AOD



Appendix 4: BREEAM certificates for Belfast and surrounding area, 2008 – present. 'Excellent' projects highlighted in green.

Scheme	Project type	Interim	Final	Date
Lisburn Road Library	Other buildings/Mixed use		56.40% - Very Good	06/04/2018
The Maldron Hotel (Bespoke)	Other buildings/Mixed use	59.29% - Very good		08/03/2018
Block BB - UU	Higher education	72.44% - Excellent	73% - Excellent	27/02/2018
City Quays 2	Other buildings/Mixed use	73.59% - Excellent	76.59% - Excellent	09/02/2018
Linen Loft	Other buildings/Mixed use		60.79% - Very Good	09/01/2018
New Physics Building (QUB)	Higher education	59% - Very Good	58.09% - Very Good	30/11/2017
Cleaver House, 2nd to 5th floor (Refurbishment)	Other buildings/Mixed use	62.29% - Very Good		05/10/2017
Botanic Studios	Residential (PBSA)	56.40% - Very Good		21/09/2017
Parkhall Integrated College	Education	45.29% Good		24/07/2017
9 Adelaide	Office		72.80% - Excellent	20/07/2017
Mathematics and Physics Teaching Centre	Higher education		61.29% - Very Good	19/05/2017
School of Law (QUB)	Higher education		71.09% - Excellent	18/05/2017
One City Quays	Other buildings/Mixed use	72.48% - Excellent	70.09% - Excellent	17/05/2017
Belfast acute mental health hospital	Healthcare	63.40% - Very Good		21/04/2017
NCS Building	Other buildings/Mixed use	59.5% - Very Good		19/04/2017
Colaiste Feirste	Education	62.20% - Very Good		08/12/2016
Adelaide Street	Other buildings/Mixed use	73.40% - Excellent		24/11/2016
Scoil Na Fuiseoige	Education	41.29% - Pass	32% - Pass	08/11/2016

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The Maternity Hospital	Healthcare	62.5% - Very good		13/10/2016
Adelaide House	Other buildings/Mixed use	63.40% - Very Good	71.4% - Excellent	19/09/2016
Block BC - UU	Higher education	72.5% - Excellent		07/07/2016
Block BD - UU	Higher education	72.5% - Excellent		05/07/2016
Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain	Education		46.79% - Good	10/06/2016
Hosford House	Residential	55.70% - Very Good	59% - Very Good	05/05/2016
Girdwood Community Hub (Bespoke)	Other buildings/Mixed use	55.70% - Very Good		08/04/2016
Lagan College	Education	57.27% Very Good	57.5% - Very Good	15/10/2015
Ashby tower refurbishment	Higher education	58.36% - Very Good		07/10/2015
Antrim Integrated Bus & Rail Station	Other buildings/Mixed use	70% Excellent		07/10/2015
Titanic Belfast (Bespoke)	Other buildings/Mixed use	76.95% - Excellent	74% - Excellent	31/07/2015
Ulster Hospital General Ward Block	Healthcare	74.19% Excellent		17/06/2015
New Trains Two Maintenance Facility	Industrial		56.79% - Very good	12/05/2015
Old See House	Healthcare	75.94% - Excellent	71% - Excellent	09/03/2015
Queens University Belfast	Higher education		58.36% - Very good	21/06/2013
DARD Office Development	Other buildings/Mixed use	56.34% Very good		11/03/2013
Thompson House	Residential	45.22% - Good		19/02/2013
Carrickfergus Library Refurbishment	Other buildings/Mixed use	48.02% Good	45.95% Good	21/01/2013
Tor Bank School	Education	64.09% - Very good		09/01/2013
Riddel Hall	Other buildings/Mixed use	60.07% - Very good	55.45% - Very good	16/11/2012

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34 College Street	Other buildings/Mixed use		35.36% - Pass	07/11/2012
Strathearn Secondary School	Education	41.95% - Pass		12/07/2012
St. Colmans Primary School	Education	37.66% - Pass		23/05/2012
QUB Anatomy Wing Extension	Other buildings/Mixed use	73.40% - Excellent	74.25% - Excellent	31/01/2012
NIACE - Northern Ireland Advanced Composites and Engineering Centre	Industrial	72.12% - Excellent		07/10/2011
Shankill Road Library Refurbishment 266292	Other buildings/Mixed use	57.04% - Very good		20/09/2011
Whiterock Road Library Refurbishment Proposal Number 266728 (Bespoke)	Other buildings/Mixed use	55.41% Very good		20/09/2011
Falls Road Library (New Build/Refurb)	Other buildings/Mixed use	58.00% - Very Good		20/09/2011
Adelaide Depot-New Trains Two	Industrial	57.99% - Very Good		14/09/2011
Conway Mill (Bespoke)	Other buildings/Mixed use	46.91% - Good	42.43% - Pass	11/07/2011
Law Society House	Other buildings/Mixed use		56.98% - Very Good	22/03/2011



Belfast Planning Service

Belfast City Council
Cecil Ward Building
4-10 Linenhall Street
Belfast BT2 8BP

 www.belfastcity.gov.uk/LDP

 planning@belfastcity.gov.uk

 028 9050 0510

 @belfastcc

 @belfastcitycouncil

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