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Our Ref: MBA 020/08/A2
Date: 26th September 2008

B.C.C.R.D.
30 SEP 2008
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Belfast City Centre Regeneration Directorate
Department for Social development
Lesley House, 2nd Floor
25-27 Wellington Place
Belfast
BT1 6GD

For the Attention of Mr Ciaran Donnelly

RE: RESPONSE TO WEST SIDE REGENERATION DISTRICT DRAFT REGENERATION PLAN

Please find enclosed the following in respect of a formal response to the above.

1. *Response document*
2. *Proposed preliminary concept plan for 17-19 Queen Street, Belfast*

The Preliminary drawings indicate a preferred proposal for the future development of the site and should be regarded as a preliminary scheme proposal. We concepts conveyed in the drawing are explored further in the Response Document.

Kind Regards,

MICHAEL S P BRADY
For
MBArchitecture

[Redacted]

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*Jenny
To note / file
Ciaran
30/9/08*

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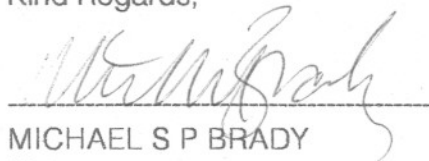
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Kind Regards,



MICHAEL S P BRADY
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Response to consultative document:

Belfast City Centre
West Side regeneration District
Draft regeneration plan

(Creating a new future for the Castle Street/Fountain Street Area).

On behalf of

The National Club
19 Queen Street
Belfast
Co. Antrim
BT1 6EA
Northern Ireland

Regarding

Site at 19 Queen Street Belfast – The National Social Club

Date:

26th September 2008

Specific points in response to DSD Proposals.

1. Primarily this submission in response to the Belfast City Centre West Side Regeneration District Draft Regeneration Plan, deals with any future proposed development recommendations and or future zoning in relation to the National Club at 19 Queen Street, Belfast.
2. While we support the concept of the master plan and the promotion of the area, that provides a key route into the city from West Belfast, we have concerns that some of the recommendations will be restrictive and cause potential problems with the progression of future planning applications which may be submitted by private developers which will contribute financially, socially and physically to the regeneration of the wider area.
3. In order to build on the recognised potential of the area as an eclectic and interesting shopping experience through coherent and defined urban environment, developers must be encouraged through the incentive of viable returns.
4. The Guiding Development Principles promotes a scale of development which responds to the traditional heights and rhythm of the quarter's historic built environment.
5. We would note that the western edge of the quarter is currently being substantially redeveloped with existing approvals in the area that are altering the scale of the western edge of the quarter and future development should reflect this. The master plan does not appear to recognise how this edge of the quarter has altered so significantly and how this in turn alters the context of the area. We appreciate that the entrance to the city has been framed with dominant building forms from the Falls Road to Castle Street however there are multiple buildings on College Court College Street & College Avenue that are either constructed, are being constructed or have approval to be constructed, all of which are 10-12 storeys in height. We also point out that under planning Service BMAP this area is currently within the same Conservation area as Queen Street and no different policies operate where these 10/12 Buildings are.
6. Visual impact of such development from within the quarter, more specifically at 19 Queen Street, will be minimal given the envelope of development which surrounds to the north- west to south west. Given the depth of the site it will not affect the streetscape and public realm of Queen Street.
7. We also feel that both market conditions and construction costs relative to potential floor spaces achieved should be considered with regard to recommendations or limiting sizes in relation to the achievable footprint of rentable space. This should be further considered with regards to realistic associated construction costs and rental rates over the coming years, when any proposal would be likely realised.
8. Consideration should also be given to the historical location of the area, within the walls of the Old City, manifesting in further development costs in relation to archaeological works, that will be necessary, as has been experienced recently on construction sites in the area.
9. It is considered unnecessary, given the current market and apartment developments in the area to state that 'new development should be residentially led' (section 5) as this is likely to result in the area losing vitality during normal working hours, more scope for office led development should be acceptable given the context of the quarter within the Main Office Area as designated in the Draft BMAP. We therefore welcome the preferred concept plan (Page 16) in the context that the site has been identified as offices above retail.

10. We support the concept that there should be a maximum building height in Queen's Street which reflects the existing buildings, both recent and historical to around 5/6 stories, however there is a danger that development fronting into College Court will be over looked and assessed under the same restrictions. College Court appears more as a service entry than an independent street.
11. Given the narrow street formation of College Court 5/6 stories will be dwarfed by the ongoing development between Castle Street, College Street and College Avenue, much of which is approved to 10/12 stories.
12. Give the level of approvals and buildings along College Avenue, College Court and College Street the visual impact of a higher form to the rear of 19 Queens Street than 5/6 storeys will be negligible with theses building forming a dominant visual barrier.
13. Sites between College Court and Queen Street are essentially double fronted and should be considered accordingly, the depth of the sites allows for development to College Court to project to a level which can compete rather than be dominated by the existing development to the west while respecting and not detracting from the scale and form of the Queen Street frontage.
14. Design of the frontage to Queens Street to be agreed through the submission of a planning application and to reflect the height of the adjoining properties. It is envisaged that the building use should consist of ground floor retail with street frontage to Queen Street that will enhance and interlink the relationship of the building use and the street with office provision above.
15. Adjacent the site is a listed Queen Street Police Station (with Planning Approval granted for conversion to a Hotel). The frontage of the police station is set approximately 5m back from the front of the Social Club. Consideration should be taken on board to fully glaze the corner of any building adjacent to the Police Station to enable a less dominant form of 5/6 storeys in replacement of the existing Social Clubs two storey solid structure.