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Department  
for Communities  
[www.communities-ni.gov.uk](http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk)



# 83-87 Castle Street / 7-7A Marquis Street, Belfast Development Brief

The Department for Communities invites proposals for the redevelopment of a combined site at 83-87 Castle Street / 7-7a Marquis Street, Belfast.

July 2019



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# 1. Introduction and Strategic Context

- 1.1 The Department for Communities (the Department) invites proposals for the redevelopment of a vacant site located across 83-87 Castle St / 7-7a Marquis St, Belfast. Proposals should be submitted no later than **12 noon on 24 September 2019**.
- 1.2 The Department's statutory regeneration authority derives from:
  - The Planning (NI) Order 1991 which provides the legislative basis for comprehensive development schemes, land acquisition and disposal of land and the extinguishment of public rights of way; and
  - The Social Need (NI) Order 1986 which provides the statutory basis for granting financial assistance to projects in areas of special social need and undertaking environmental improvement schemes.

The Department plays the lead role in promoting and co ordinating the implementation of urban regeneration programmes and

schemes in towns and city centres throughout Northern Ireland. Belfast Regeneration Directorate (BRD) carries out this role across Belfast.

The overall objective of this invitation is to attract high quality development proposals that meet the Department's objectives for sustainable urban regeneration. In seeking to work in partnership with the private sector, the Department recognises the contribution that this sector can make to urban regeneration in terms of innovative high quality design, professional expertise and financing.

- 1.3 The Department works closely with Belfast City Council which plays a major role in the regeneration of the city. This close working relationship has led to the Department adopting the Council's City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy (CCRIS) which was published in 2015. The CCRIS has identified five Special Action Areas (SAAs) for which more intensive local plans should be prepared, either to maximise the beneficial effects

of major new institutional and transport developments or to initiate the comprehensive regeneration of declining retail areas. The five SAA's are:

- Inner North (relevant to the relocation of the Ulster University)
- Inner West (relevant to the Castle Street/Castlecourt/Smithfield Market area - the Castle Street/Marquis Street site sits within this SAA)
- North East Quarter (relevant to North Street and immediate vicinity which lacks key retail)
- Transport Hub and South Centre (relevant to the development of a new transport hub around Great Victoria Street Station)
- Oxford Street and the Eastern Bank (relevant to the reunification of the city centre and the River Lagan and reimagining of Oxford Street)

1.4 In November 2018 the Council, in consultation with the Department,

published the Inner North West Masterplan which covers a wide area to the north west of the city centre including Castle Street and Marquis Street. The Masterplan provides that development in the Inner North West will be driven by a combination of the public sector master-planning and investment as well as private sector investment. The Inner North West Masterplan is intended to encourage and facilitate that investment, thereby creating an inclusive high quality mixed-use neighbourhood.

1.5 Any proposed development should also contribute to the aims of the (draft) NI Programme for Government 2016–2021 [www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/topics/making-government-work/programme-government-and-budget](http://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/topics/making-government-work/programme-government-and-budget) and the Belfast Agenda [www.belfastcity.gov.uk/council/Communityplanning/BelfastAgenda.aspx](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/council/Communityplanning/BelfastAgenda.aspx).

## 2. The Site

2.1 The site which incorporates the plots of 83 Castle St, 85 Castle St, 87 Castle St, 7 Marquis St and 7a Marquis St, Belfast consists of 0.111 acres (Approx. dimensions available at Appendix A). The site has active businesses on either side of the Castle Street frontage and a private enclosed car park is located behind the site. Castle Street is considered as one of the main arterial routes for the city centre and whilst the reparatory measures around the Bank Buildings/Primark site have partially closed Castle Street this is a temporary measure. It is expected that

the partial closure of Castle Street will last until approximately early 2022.

Prospective developers will be aware of the immediate impact the Bank Buildings fire had on the city centre. Both Belfast City Council and central government Departments responded quickly to the economic issues precipitated by the fire by establishing the Belfast City Centre Regeneration Task Force. The Task Force will work with a number of other bodies to ensure that the city centre is returned to normality as quickly as possible.



2.2 Most recently, one half of the frontage onto Castle Street operated as a furniture shop with the rest of the site either vacant or derelict. Prior to this the whole site was occupied by a butchery business with the shop front on Castle Street and an adjoining delivery and cold storage access on Marquis Street. All of the buildings from the butchery operation remain on site, however, they are in a poor state.

2.3 The Inner North West Masterplan provides that the site should house retail or hospitality on the ground floor with residential use above. There is also an extant planning consent on the site for a mix of retail and office. For more detail see 2.4 below.

Section 4 sets out more information on Specific Design Considerations. Interested developers may visit the site during the period when development proposals are being prepared. Access to the site, can be made by prior arrangement with the BRD office by telephoning (028) 9082 9266 or emailing [belfaststreetsahead@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:belfaststreetsahead@communities-ni.gov.uk).

2.4 The site carries active planning permission for the demolition and clearance of existing buildings and construction of a 6 storey retail and office use building, details of which are available at [epicpublic.planningni.gov.uk/publicaccess/](http://epicpublic.planningni.gov.uk/publicaccess/) (ref: Z/2010/0691/F & Z/2010/0642/DCA). These applications were approved in November 2015 and all of the permissions and conditions within will remain in place until November 2020. If work under these approvals has not commenced on site by then, the planning permission will expire. Further information is available from [www.belfastcity.gov.uk/buildingcontrol-environment/Planning/belfastplanningservice.aspx](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/buildingcontrol-environment/Planning/belfastplanningservice.aspx).

2.5 The conditions set out in the existing planning permissions have prevented the demolition of the two buildings which are on the site. The site is also heavily overgrown. The Department commissioned a pre-demolition survey which revealed the presence of asbestos within the buildings. A copy of the report can be requested from the BRD office by telephoning (028) 9082 9266 or emailing [belfaststreetsahead@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:belfaststreetsahead@communities-ni.gov.uk). Potential developers should undertake independent research to establish the position.

**NOTE: It is recognised that the presence of asbestos within the building will provide significant challenge to potential developers and the Department is willing to assist with this aspect, if necessary. Potential developers are therefore requested to clearly highlight whether the Department's assistance will be required to deal with the asbestos problem and if so, the extent of support/assistance required from the Department.**

2.6 The site is located within the Belfast City Centre Conservation Area, further information on this is available at:  
[www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/supplementary\\_guidance/conservation/conservation\\_map/conservation-belfast-city-centre.pdf](http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/supplementary_guidance/conservation/conservation_map/conservation-belfast-city-centre.pdf)

2.7 The site is also located in the Belfast One Business Improvement District (BID) which has the aim of improving all the businesses in the BID area by driving footfall into the city; working to improve the environment by making it cleaner, more accessible and safer; and helping to drive down costs for businesses through group purchasing etc. Further information on the Belfast One BID can be found at [belfastone.co.uk/](http://belfastone.co.uk/).



## 3. Vision Statement

- 3.1 The Department is seeking a development proposal for this site which, as well as providing active frontage onto Castle Street, will contribute to the wider regeneration of the area. The optimum proposal will be a sustainable development of high quality design and finish, which enhances the existing streetscape for the benefit of those working, visiting, and shopping in the immediate area and those travelling through it. As far as possible, it will also seek to contribute to the social, community and economic renewal of the local area.
- 3.2 A permanent redevelopment of the site is the Department's preferred option. The extant planning conditions restrict demolition access and as such the Department is not in a position to consider proposals for temporary use of the site.
- 3.3 Proposals should consider the existing fire egress requirements for adjacent premises.
- 3.4 Priority may be given to a development proposal that can incorporate adjacent properties/businesses and provide a more comprehensive redevelopment in the vicinity. Prospective developers are therefore encouraged to enter into discussions with the neighbouring land-owners to determine whether or not a more comprehensive redevelopment is possible.
- 3.5 When the preferred developer is selected, it is advisable that any proposal is discussed with the Planning Service of Belfast City Council prior to the submission of a planning application. The Council's Planning Service offers a Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) service for developers to discuss proposals with a planning officer before submitting a planning application. Further information on what is required regarding a planning application can be obtained at [www.belfastcity.gov.uk/buildingcontrol-environment/planning/application-checklist.aspx#appchecklist](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/buildingcontrol-environment/planning/application-checklist.aspx#appchecklist).
- 3.6 Relevant planning documentation including the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and Regional Development Strategy 2035 is available at [www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy.htm](http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy.htm)
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## 4. Design Brief

4.1 Following consultation with relevant statutory bodies, the Department has identified the following objectives for the development.

| PLANNING AND DESIGN  | Objective 1: To secure a development that provides active frontage onto Castle Street and complements the existing streetscape in terms of both design and use.   |
|--|---|
| <p>Further information on planning policy statements and guidance is available from:</p> <p>Belfast Planning Service<br/>Belfast City Council<br/>Cecil Ward Building<br/>4-10 Linenhall Street<br/>Belfast<br/>BT2 8BP</p> <p>Further information is also available on the Planning NI website.</p> <p><a href="http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy.htm">www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy.htm</a></p> | <p>General Design Considerations</p> <p>In general, the proposed development should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be designed to comply with the Northern Ireland Building Regulations (NI) 1994</li> <li>• provide active frontage onto Castle Street</li> <li>• as far as possible, be in scale with other buildings in the area</li> <li>• be compatible with buildings in the vicinity, in terms of design and choice of materials</li> <li>• Be designed to deter crime</li> <li>• Advice and guidance is available on the Planning Portal <a href="http://www.planningni.gov.uk">www.planningni.gov.uk</a></li> <li>• Applicants should have regard to the content of ‘Living Places: an Urban Design Guide for Northern Ireland’ (September 2014). In particular applicants should be asked to indicate how each of the ‘10 Qualities’ identified have been considered and addressed</li> <li>• Advice on Design and Access Statements, can be found at <a href="http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/advice/practicenotes/dm_practice_note_12_das_complete-3.pdf">www.planningni.gov.uk/index/advice/practicenotes/dm_practice_note_12_das_complete-3.pdf</a>.</li> </ul> |

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <p><b>PLANNING AND DESIGN</b></p> | <p><b>Objective 1: To secure a development that provides active frontage onto Castle Street and complements the existing streetscape in terms of both design and use.</b></p>   |
|                                   | <p>General Design Considerations</p>  |
|                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on consideration of “Environmental Sustainability” is also contained within the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and the Design &amp; Access Statements</li> <li>• In this case a Design and Access Statement is not required for a development proposal on this site</li> </ul> <p><b>Layout, Design and Amenity Matters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The layout and design of any new development along with consideration for the resulting amenity impacts are a fundamental part of the development management process. Therefore, the layout, siting, design and external appearance of the buildings are material considerations. The external site characteristics including the established character and nature of the surrounding area, existing land uses, and environmental quality are also material in this respect</li> <li>• Within this general area there are a number of material considerations that are relevant and are largely dealt in current published planning policy such as:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Established character, any designations</li> <li>- Density, plot sizes, private amenity space</li> <li>- Loss of amenity, overlooking, loss of privacy, overshadowing, loss of light, over dominance</li> <li>- Design, materials, finishes</li> <li>- Built form, size, scale and massing</li> <li>- Prejudice to comprehensive development</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
|                                   | <p>Please note in the design of any future development at this site – active ground floor frontage will be a key consideration.</p>   |

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>PLANNING AND DESIGN</b> | <b>Objective 1: To secure a development that provides active frontage onto Castle Street and complements the existing streetscape in terms of both design and use.</b>   |
|                            | <b>Specific Design Consideration</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The design should be imaginative, high quality and seen as an opportunity to enhance the area</li><li>• The design should also be organic and flexible with the ability to be cognisant of current and future market demands</li><li>• Due regard should be given to the fact that the site lies within the Belfast City Centre Conservation Area and the Old City Character Area as defined in Draft BMAP 2015</li><li>• Proposals should consider the existing fire exit egress requirements of adjacent businesses</li></ul> |
|                            | <p>Please note that, where required, the preferred developer will be responsible for obtaining planning permission and other necessary approvals and for liaising with the Statutory Authorities in the design and build process where appropriate. It is the responsibility of the preferred developer to ensure that all necessary approvals are obtained.</p>   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>REGENERATION IMPACTS AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY</b></p>  | <p><b>Objective 2: To secure a development that will have positive regeneration impacts on the local community.</b></p>   |
| <p>The Bank Buildings fire has had a detrimental impact on the Castle Street area and the redevelopment of this site (and other planned developments in the vicinity) will contribute significantly to the recovery process.</p>  | <p>Submissions should identify potential positive regeneration impacts of the proposed development. These could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improvement to quality of local environment</li> <li>• contribution to local economy</li> <li>• job creation</li> <li>• provision of services/facilities to local community, etc</li> </ul> <p>Priority may be given to a development that can incorporate adjacent properties.</p>   |
| <p><b>ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY</b></p>   | <p><b>Objective 3: To secure a development that promotes economic sustainability.</b></p>   |
|   | <p>Submissions should demonstrate that proposals are sustainable (e.g. proposals for a retail led scheme should submit evidence regarding retail capacity and any likely displacement).</p>   |
| <p><b>SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT</b></p>   | <p><b>Objective 4: To secure a development that promotes sustainability.</b></p>  |
| <p>Further information on sustainable development is available from The Executive Office.</p> <p><a href="http://www.nienvironmentlink.org/cmsfiles/policy-hub/files/documentation/Waste-Sustainable-Development-Strategy.pdf">www.nienvironmentlink.org/cmsfiles/policy-hub/files/documentation/Waste-Sustainable-Development-Strategy.pdf</a></p> | <p>The Department is keen to promote sustainable development through, for example, the use of sustainable materials, energy efficiency measures and renewable energy products. Consideration should also be given to the Belfast City Centre Conservation Area etc. and the Department welcomes proposals which support this agenda.</p> <p>Within this general area there are a number of material considerations that are relevant and are largely dealt with in current published planning policy.</p> |

| <b>ACCESSIBILITY &amp; EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY</b>  | <b>Objective 5: To secure a development that is easily accessible to all members of the community and that, where possible, promotes equality of opportunity.</b>   |
|---|---|
| <p>Further information on equality issues is available from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.</p> <p><a href="http://www.equalityni.org/site/default.asp?secid=home">www.equalityni.org/site/default.asp?secid=home</a></p> | <p>Submissions should consider ease of access to and within the building for people with disabilities, in compliance with all regulations with regard to disability. The Department is also keen to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between and within the groups identified under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and welcomes proposals which support this agenda. This could include commitments to equal opportunity employment; to creating neutral/shared space; etc.</p> <p>The Department is keen to promote social clauses regarding employment opportunities for the long term unemployed, and the Department would encourage potential developers to take this approach on a voluntary basis.</p> |

## 5. Submission of Proposals

5.1 Prospective developers should submit **4 copies** of their proposal document (including supporting drawings) to the Department at the address below by not later than **12 noon on 24 September 2019**.

5.2 Proposals should be submitted in a sealed envelope marked “Development Site at 83-87 Castle Street/7-7A Marquis Street, Belfast - Commercial in Confidence” and sent to:

Belfast Regeneration Directorate  
4th Floor,  
9 Lanyon Place,  
Belfast,  
BT1 3LP

Please note that proposals received after the closing date will not be considered and proof of postage will not be accepted as proof of delivery.

5.3 The proposal document should include the following:

- A clear statement of proposed uses for the site including the design philosophy, the rationale behind

the uses of internal and external spaces and the relationship with the surrounding streetscape

- A clear statement of how the proposal meets the Design Brief in terms of planning and design, regeneration impacts, sustainability and accessibility and equality of opportunity
- Diagrammatical drawings illustrating the broad scope of the proposal including:
  - a sketch layout of the site at 1:200 scale on an adequately surveyed base plan showing the position of any proposed build, the type and means of access, proposed boundary treatment with consideration of adequate access/ egress requirements for adjoining premises as mentioned at 3.3
  - sketch layout plans for the building on a 1:100 scale indicating the disposition of uses within the development
  - sketch elevations and sections at 1:100 scale in sufficient detail to indicate the conceptual architectural form including use of materials and standard of finishes

- at least one perspective showing the relationship of the proposed development to surrounding buildings and features
  - The premium offered for the site and the deposit offered (10% required)
  - The estimated development costs (at current rates), including an allowance for the site acquisition costs, building costs, professional fees, financial costs and developer's profit
  - The estimated rental and capital value of the building or each unit (as appropriate) on completion
  - The estimated start and completion dates for the development
  - Any special considerations within the proposal regarding the Belfast City Centre Conservation Area
  - Confirmation of available funding facilities
  - Précis of the developer's relevant past experience and/or capability to undertake work and manage the development (to include up to 4 of the most relevant pieces of experience of working in similar projects in the past 10 years)
  - A copy of the company's latest accounts
  - Any other supporting information which the developer feels may commend them for further consideration
- 5.4 Please note that costly design work should not be undertaken at the initial stage
- 5.5 The submitted proposal documents will be treated as private and confidential between the developer and the Department, however, those submitting proposals should be aware that the Department is fully compliant with the Freedom of Information Act. Unless an exemption provided for under the Act is applicable, a public authority will be obliged to disclose requested information. Bidders are asked to consider if information supplied in the course of this competition should be withheld from disclosure because of commercial sensitivity and to note documents accordingly.



## 6. Conditions of Development

- 6.1 As a result of conditions set out in the existing planning permissions the Department is only able to consider proposals for a permanent redevelopment of the site.
- 6.2 Where an acceptable and permanent development proposal is provided, the development will be carried out under the terms of a Development Agreement and Licence. The Development Agreement will include a requirement that the developer will:
- Submit and have received approval for their planning application within 9 months of the agreement being signed
  - Commence construction of works within 6 months from the date of planning permission
  - Complete the works within 24 months from the date of the planning permission

The above timescales will be revised should the existing planning approval be utilised as the preferred development approach.

The Department will reserve the right to terminate the agreement if the developer fails to meet these timescales. The Department will allow the preferred developer onto the site, under the Development Agreement and the Licence, to clear the site and construct the permitted development. On completion of the development the Department's freehold interest in the site will be transferred to the developer in consideration of the premium.

- 6.3 Prospective developers should make their own enquiries as to the existence of any physical or legal encumbrances and to the suitability of the site for any particular purpose.
- 6.4 The developer will be required to produce all necessary plans and construction documents, obtain all necessary permissions and consents, erect and maintain all buildings, control building operations, abide by all by-laws and regulations, pay taxes, rates, fees and other outgoings including insurance.

6.5 The transfer will be executed only on completion of the terms of the Development Agreement and all the works. The receipt of a Practical Completion Certificate will be sufficient to confirm completion of the development works.

6.6 The Department may, at any time before a legally binding contract is entered into, withdraw from the disposal process and will not be responsible to bidders for any expense or loss incurred.

6.7 Prospective developers should contact the Department for further details.

## 7. Selection of a Developer

- 7.1 Development proposals will be considered by an assessment panel comprising members appointed by the Department of appropriate standing and professional expertise. The assessment criteria for this development, including the relevant weighting, are included at Appendix B for information.
- 7.2 After the initial assessment, it may be necessary to shortlist proposals for further consideration, which may include a request for a formal presentation by the developer.
- 7.3 Following the selection of a development proposal, a formal response will be made to all applicants and work will then proceed on the legal formalities with the Department's preferred developer.
- 7.4 The Department is not bound to accept any proposal submitted and will only consider proposals which fully meet the objectives outlined within this document.
- 7.5 Furthermore, the Department is obliged under key accountability and financial guidance (Managing Public Money (NI)) to ensure that the consideration received for development land is the best that can reasonably be obtained. Therefore, the Department reserves the right not to proceed with the disposal of the site, where any financial offer is considered to be unsatisfactory.

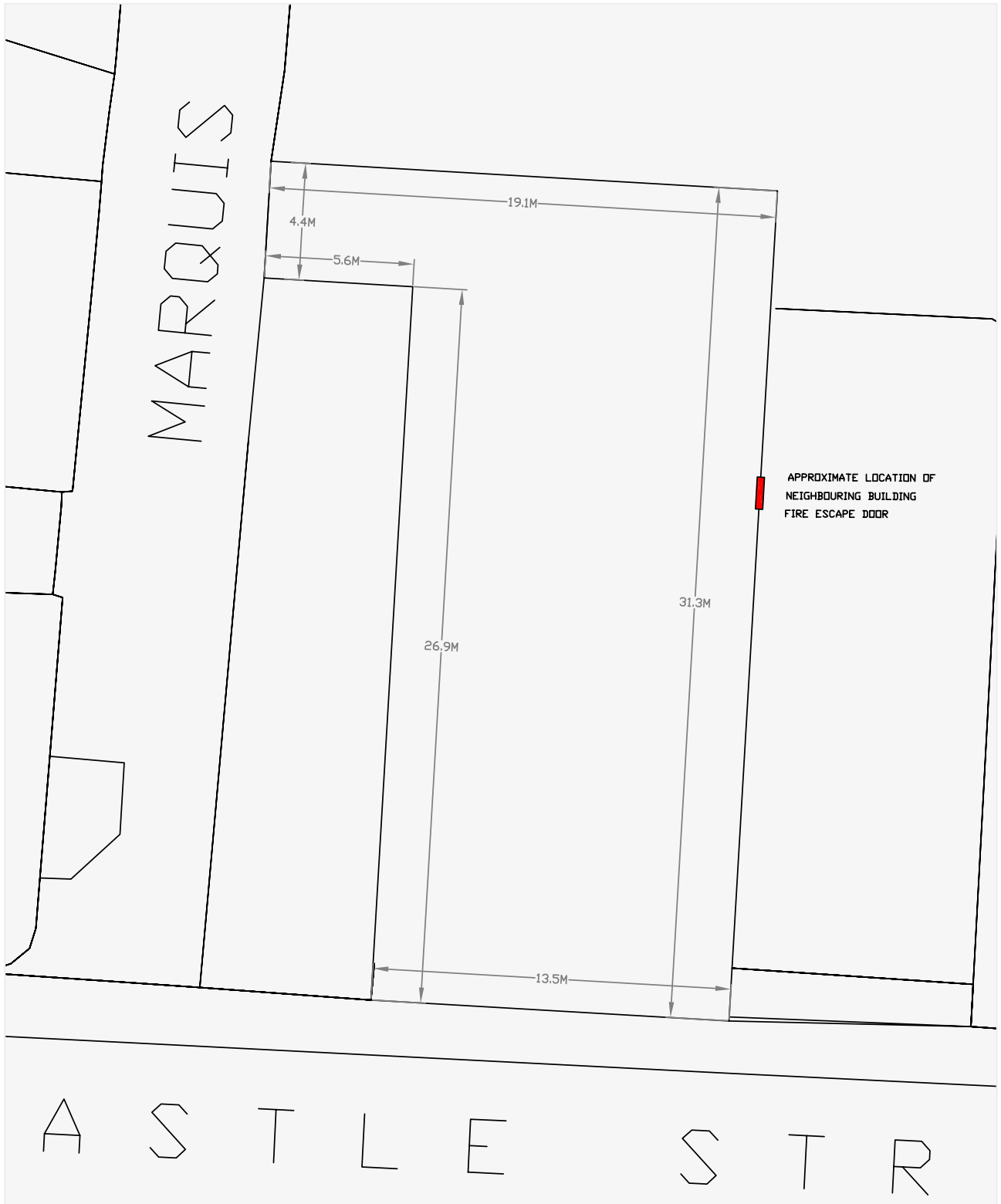
## 8. Disclaimer

- 8.1 While every care has been taken in compiling the information contained in this document, the Department can give no guarantee as to the accuracy thereof. All information is given on the understanding that it will not be construed as part of a contract, conveyance or lease.
- 8.2 The site should be taken as found and no warranty or guarantee is given by the Department as to the suitability of the site for any particular purpose. Enquirers must satisfy themselves as to the descriptions, measurements and site conditions. The identification and, if necessary, relocation of any services such as water, electricity, telephone, gas and sewage or any other encumbrances which may be located in, on, or over the sites will be the sole responsibility of the developer and at the developer's own expense.

## 9. Further Queries

- 9.1 If you require any further clarification on this Development Brief, please contact the BRD office, by telephone: (028) 9082 9266.

## Appendix A: Dimensions Map



## Appendix B: Assessment Criteria

| CRITERIA  | CONSIDERATIONS  | WEIGHTING |
|---|---|-----------|
| PLANNING AND DESIGN                             | Considerations will include but may not be limited to: site layout, visual impact and enhancement to the area, compliance with general and specific design considerations identified in this brief.   | 15        |
| REGENERATION IMPACTS AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY  | Considerations will include but may not be limited to evidence of positive regeneration impacts (e.g. improvement to quality of local environment, contribution to local economy, job creation, inclusion of adjacent properties, etc).<br><br>The Bank Buildings fire has had a detrimental impact on the Castle Street area and the redevelopment of this site will contribute significantly to the recovery process and complement the ongoing city centre revitalisation programme. | 15        |
| VIABILITY OF SCHEME/<br>ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY | The viability of the entire scheme, taking into account the purchase price offered*, development costs identified, reliance on Public Sector funding (including the requirement for financial assistance to remove asbestos from the site), projected rental and capital value.   | 10        |
| TIMESCALE FOR DEVELOPMENT                       | Potential developers should demonstrate that development will be carried out in line with the time-frame detailed at 6.2 of this brief.   | 5         |

\* The Department is obliged under key accountability and financial guidance, Managing Public Money (NI), to ensure that the consideration received for development land is the best that can reasonably be obtained. Therefore, the Department reserves the right not to proceed with the disposal of the site, where any financial offer is considered to be unsatisfactory.

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| <b>CRITERIA</b>                         | <b>CONSIDERATIONS</b>   | <b>WEIGHTING</b> |
|---|---|------------------|
| DEVELOPER EXPERIENCE/<br>CAPACITY       | Potential developers should provide evidence of previous projects completed satisfactorily and should demonstrate their capacity to deliver the scheme proposed.  | 5                |
| SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT                 | Considerations will include but may not be limited to evidence of sustainable development in development proposals.   | 5                |
| ACCESSIBILITY & EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY | Considerations will include but may not be limited to accessibility by all users, promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations between and within groups identified under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. | 5                |

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Available in alternative formats.

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