



3 Existing ornate building effectively turning the corner.



5 Part of the site with frontage to Main Street.



6 Existing derelict terrace houses at Kings Street.



4 Lower Main Street at the evening.



7 An evening aerial view of Quay Street.

# the planning context

## **THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2035**

The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) identifies Bangor as an important retail and commercial centre; it recognises that development within Bangor should be focused on creating a vibrant seafront which can evolve to meet changing needs and is economically and socially sustainable. The RDS aims to support towns like Bangor to maximise their potential.

## **BELFAST METROPOLITAN AREA PLAN 2015 (BMAP)**

The BMAP encourages development proposals that improve and regenerate the urban waterfront, enhance environmental quality and heighten its tourism potential. BMAP includes Queen's Parade within Bangor's retail core. Main Street is designated as a primary retail frontage. There is a general presumption in favour of mixed use development subject to meeting normal planning and environmental considerations.

Part of the site is within the Bangor Town Centre Area of Townscape Character (ATC), where development proposals are expected to maintain or enhance the overall character of the area.

A small part of the site including the McKee Clock and the promenade is within the Wilson's Point Local Landscape Policy Area and linked to the North Down Coastal Path. This part of the site is also identified as an area of existing open space.

Bangor town centre is identified as an area of parking constraint in BMAP where parking provision for any new development must be balanced alongside the objective of promoting alternative means of sustainable transportation.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT FOR NI 2015 (SPPS)**

The SPPS seeks to promote vibrant town centres across Northern Ireland. The policy objective is to promote high quality design which will help ensure town centres provide economically and socially sustainable, smart, accessible and safe environments. The SPPS promotes, where possible, improving accessibility within town centres. Developers are required to take these SPPS objectives into account when considering their scheme proposals.

## **LIVING PLACES: AN URBAN STEWARDSHIP AND DESIGN GUIDE**

Proposals must be consistent with the principles of good place making as set out by the Department of Infrastructure's Living Places guide. 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. It recognises the wider economic, cultural and community benefits of achieving excellence in the stewardship and design of the Region's urban places, be they existing or newly proposed.

## ARCHITECTURE & THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT FOR NI 2006

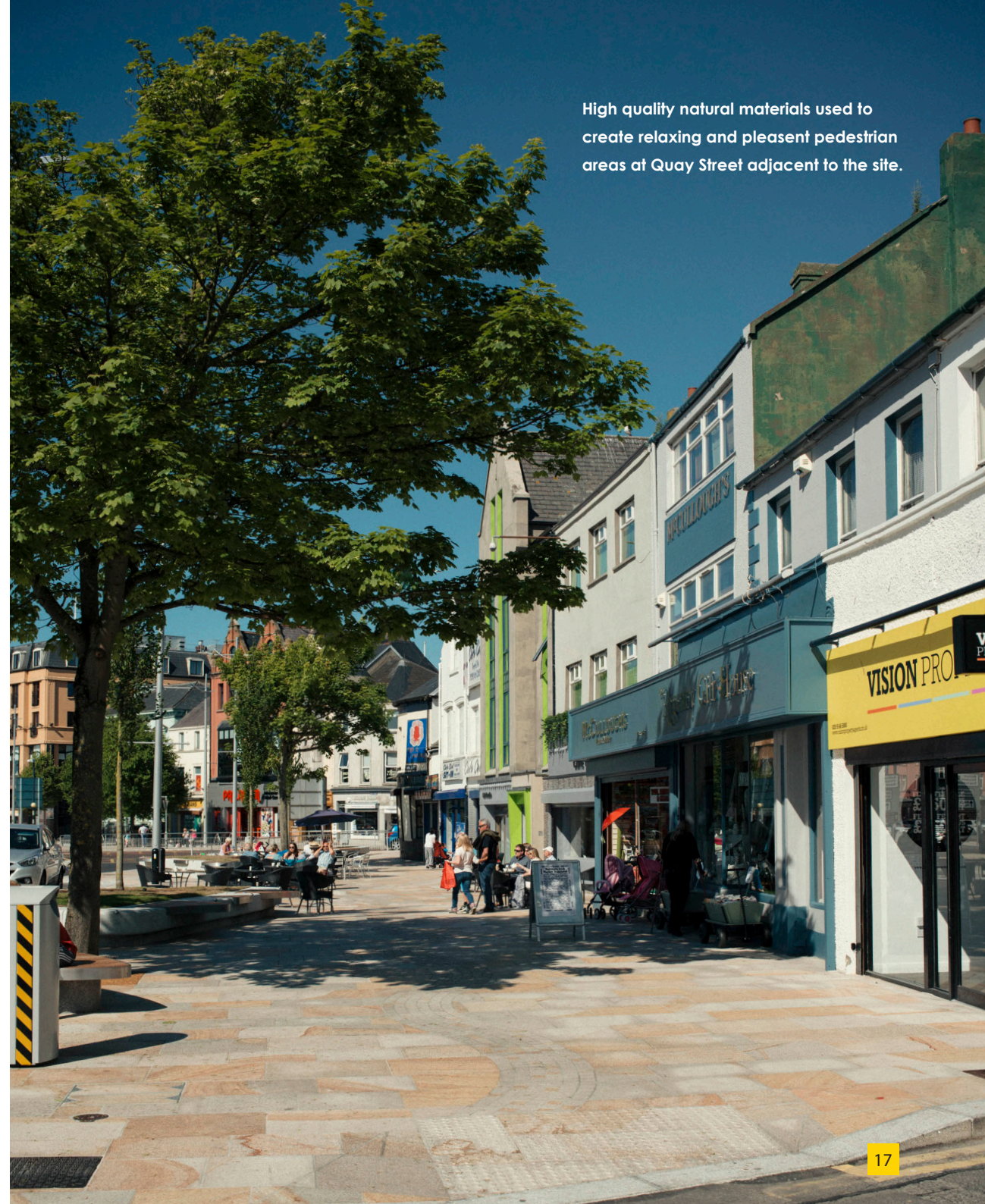
Proposals must be consistent with the principles set out by Government in the policies of Architecture and the Built Environment for NI (2006). This policy document demonstrates the Government's commitment to achieving a high standard of design in architecture and the built environment throughout the Region. There are three guiding principles that shape the document; Creativity & Innovation, Heritage and Sustainable Development. Government encourages the private sector to raise its standards in the delivery of good design and underlines the benefits of a good design process in achieving this.

## BANGOR TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN 2011

The Masterplan identifies the Queen's Parade site as the most significant opportunity for redevelopment within the town of Bangor. It recognises that the Queen's Parade site can provide a footprint for large outlets as there is ample space. The Masterplan recognises that this site links retail, restaurants and housing together in the heart of the town as well as the opportunity for medium to large office units of which there is a current dearth. The Queen's Parade site is identified as a significant mixed use opportunity to increase footfall and visitor numbers to the waterfront during day and evening.

## PLANNING APPEAL COMMISSION REPORT (28/05/16)

The Planning Appeals Commission Report of 28th April 2016 on the Queens Parade redevelopment recommended that the vesting order be confirmed with a number of recommendations.



High quality natural materials used to create relaxing and pleasant pedestrian areas at Quay Street adjacent to the site.

# the planning context

## THE PLANNING HISTORY AND THE CURRENT APPROVAL

In 1999 North Down Borough Council (NDBC) received planning permission for a mixed use development on part of the site. Following this NDBC issued a Development Brief in 2002 which led to the selection of a preferred developer who then secured planning permission, in 2005, for a retail led scheme that included approx. 37,000 sq. m. of floor space. This permission has now expired. A later scheme for approx. 53,000 sq. m. of development was submitted in 2008. However, this was withdrawn by the developer in light of community objections and concerns by the then Planning Authority about the scale and massing of the proposed buildings.

The Department subsequently commissioned a revised development proposal which obtained planning permission for all of the site on the 20th July 2015. This approval is for a mixed-use regeneration scheme that aimed to revitalise the area and reconnect the town to the seafront. The permission includes more than 25,000 sq. m. of floorspace, a 40 bedroom hotel, a 64 bedroom hotel, culture and leisure facilities (class D), retail units, restaurants, offices (Class B1 (a)), 72 apartments and 8 terraced dwelling houses, multi-storey car park of 351 spaces with new accesses at King Street and Southwell Road, a courtyard plaza and a large public open space along Marine Gardens with play equipment, landscaping, a bandstand, covered walkways, relocation of temporary buildings (Project 24) and covered event spaces as well as other ancillary uses.

The existing approval for a mixed use scheme is meant to inform prospective developers in their response to this Development Brief. While developers may wish to implement this scheme "as approved" the Department/Council wishes to ensure that future development at this site can take full advantage of the experience and knowledge of the prospective developer and their team. Therefore alternative proposals which demonstrate added value to the site and the wider area in order to achieve a quality, innovative, appropriate, economically and socially sustainable proposal which can be implemented either in one phase or in a series of phases to an agreed timescale will be considered.

In preparing their scheme each respondent is advised of the need to ensure quality design of buildings and spaces, public realm and connectivity with the rest of the town centre and wider area. Marine Gardens may present a unique opportunity for extending the range of commercial sea front uses. It should be noted also that the existing approved scheme contains a "destination building" (the Vennel building). However this will require detailed assessment and resolution as to its end uses, management, sustainability and financing (see Appendix 2).

Overall proposals submitted must convincingly demonstrate the delivery of an attractive destination for residents and visitors throughout the day and evening that can be completed within an agreed timescale and is economically viable.