

**da architects Ltd**

**Supporting statement for extension of existing amusement permit**

**Premises : 23 Shaftsbury Square Belfast BT2 7DB**

**Applicant : Play SS Ltd**

**Permit type : Amusement permit (extension application)**

**Council : Belfast City Council**

**Dated: 4<sup>th</sup> August 2025**

**Background:**

1. da architects provided an earlier supporting statement in respect of the Council Committee considering this application.
2. A representative of da architects was in attendance and listened carefully to comments and observations from the Committee Members. By letter dated 27<sup>th</sup> June 2025, the Council advised that:

**“...the Council's Licensing Committee, at its meeting on 18 June 2025, considered the application and agreed that it was minded to refuse to grant the Permit, on the basis that it did not comply with the criterion of the Council's Amusement Permit Policy in terms of the cumulative build-up of amusement arcades and increase in the number of gaming machines in a particular location.”**

3. This supporting statement supercedes the previous statement, and provides further information that is directly relevant to the issues raised by the Council.
4. Given the reasons contained in the “minded to refuse” letter of 27<sup>th</sup> June 2025, the report considers the context of the application for extension.

**Context:****The refurbishment of a related company premises in Belfast**

5. The applicant company has a related company with a business on Lisburn Road, Belfast.
6. At the sister company “Players” Lisburn Road, the premises were the subject of a substantial refurbishment at a cost of £200,000. The works involved:
  - New carpet fitted

- New suspended ceiling
  - New staff counter
  - Rewired, new electrical plugs and data points
  - New toilet facility
  - New chairs for machine terminals
  - New shop front / signage
  - New CCTV System
  - New sound system
  - New hand sanitizing equipment to ensure safety for customers
  - New USB charging points
  - New coffee facilities
7. As stated in the previous report, whilst the existing Shaftesbury Square premises are adequate in terms of providing safe access and egress for members of the public, they are not up to the modern high standards that customers expect of modern premises. In particular:
8. The total costs of the works is £200,000.
9. The applicant seeks to utilize an area of derelict and unused premises to the rear of the premises as part of the refurbished premises. That area will:
- Will include greater floor place / machine to square foot ratio for the benefit and safety of our customer base.
  - Provide easier access to all parts of the sites (i.e. coffee area, toilets etc.) due to extended space.

- See the amended plans at Appendix 2 that set out the number of machines which illustrates the use of this further space.

10. Mindful of the Council policy, the extension does not create additional frontage to the business.

11. Whilst one member raised a query as to the use of the front of the premises that is presently unoccupied, Member will of course be aware that any attempt to extend into that area would require the Council's approval. That is not sought.

12. A planning application was made to Planning Service for the Change of use of ground floor of no. 23 to amusement arcade including extension and frontage alterations to allow amalgamation with No. 22.

13. A key consideration within the proposal is that it complies with Planning Policy R1 of BMAP Plan Strategy as it retains the front retail unit and therefore the frontage is not affected by this proposal. This leaves this space available for future retail use or other use provided planning permission is granted.

A copy of the planning permission is at **Appendix 1**.

14. The proposed extension to the premises will allow Play SS Ltd to improve the services they are able to provide and offer more variety to their customer in a more comfortable environment.

15. In addition, it will allow the business to:

- (i) Provide an improved recreational space for their customers and staff.
- (ii) Maintain the employment of the local staff and contributing to the local economy.
- (iii) Enhance the current facilities in line with modern industry standards.

## **Health and safety and risk management**

16. The proposed extension will enhance health and safety with the business, these include

- (iv) The internal layout will be improved creating a more spacious environment with walkways and open space all of which will reduce congestion and improve access to the emergency exit routes in the case of an emergency.
- (v) The new interior will have new led low energy lighting throughout, enhanced natural lighting and a new mechanical ventilation system to create a safer and more comfortable interior environment.
- (vi) All flooring provided will be slip resistant providing a level of resistance that will help reduce the risks of trips, slips and falls.

## **The minded to refuse reasons:**

### **The cumulative build-up of amusement arcades and**

17. This issue will be a matter for further submissions from Counsel.

18. There is no addition to arcades.

### **Increase in the number of gaming machines in a particular location**

19. The amended plans at Appendix 2 detail the location of the additional 15 machines proposed at this location in the extended rear part of the premises.

20. It is material to note that, in determining this proposal the planning department assessed the application under several criteria including the acceptability of an extension to an existing amusement/gaming centre extension in this location, loss of

ground floor retail floor space, impact on the surrounding properties, impact on neighbouring amenity, cumulative impact and impact on traffic flow.

21. In addition to the criteria above a planning precedent was already in place as the Planning department had already approved a similar project lodged by Oasis Retail Services Ltd at 7 & 9 Wellington Place Belfast BT1 6GB ref LA04/2018/0095/F.

**4<sup>th</sup> August 2025**

**da architects Ltd**

## **APPENDIX 1 – PLANNING PERMISSION**



## PLANNING PERMISSION

### Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

Application No: **LA04/2021/2846/F**

Date of Application: **1 December 2021**

Site of Proposed  
Development:

**22/23 Shaftesbury Square  
Belfast  
BT2 7DB.**

Description of Proposal:

**Change of use of ground floor of No. 23 to amusement arcade including extension and frontage alterations to allow for amalgamation with No22.**

Applicant: KB Shaft Limited  
Address: 3 Forest Hills  
Newry  
BT34 2FI

Agent: Conor Byrne  
Address: 17 The Esplanade  
Holywood  
BT18 9JP

The Council in pursuance of its powers under the above-mentioned Act hereby

## GRANTS PLANNING PERMISSION

for the above mentioned development in accordance with your application subject to compliance with the following conditions which are imposed for the reasons stated:

1. The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

2. The extended amusement arcade hereby approved shall at all times remain part of the same planning unit as the amusement arcade at No. 22 Shaftesbury Square



and shall not be sub-divided or operated as a separate amusement arcade.

Reason: To prevent proliferation of amusement arcades in the locality, which would be detrimental to the amenities and character of the area.

#### **Informatives**

1. This decision relates to the following approved drawing numbers: 01 02



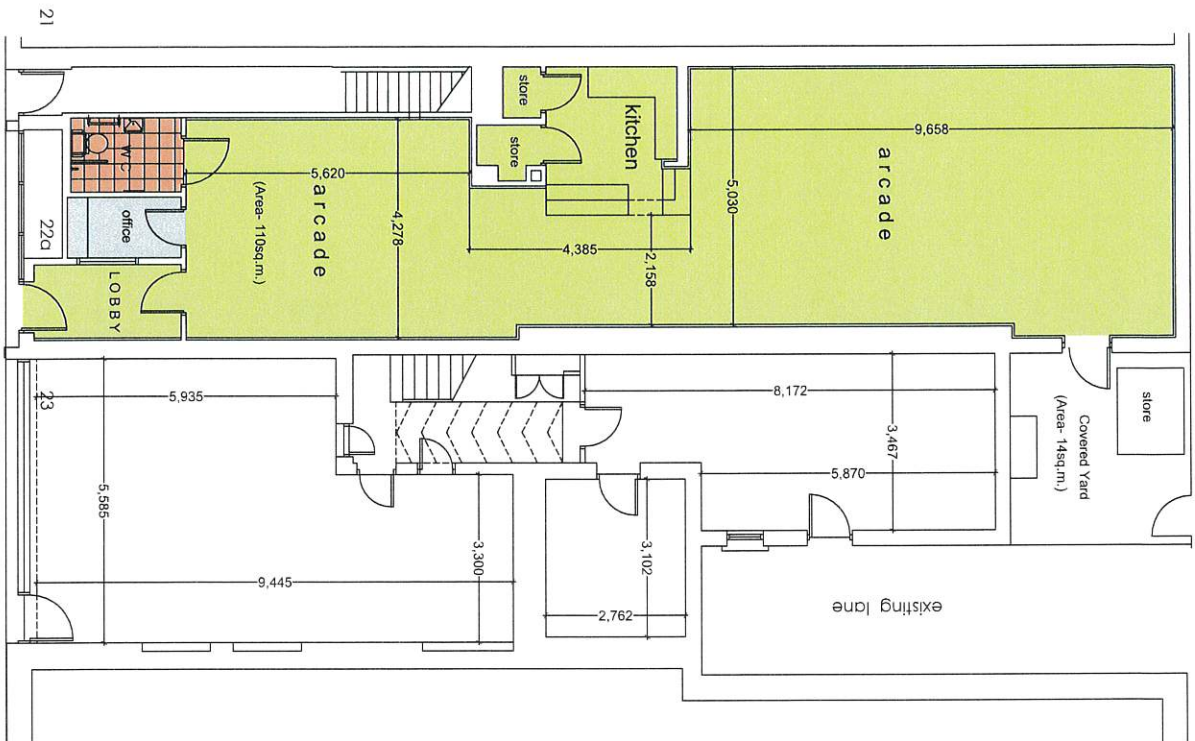
**Authorised Officer**

**Dated: 20<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

Belfast City Council

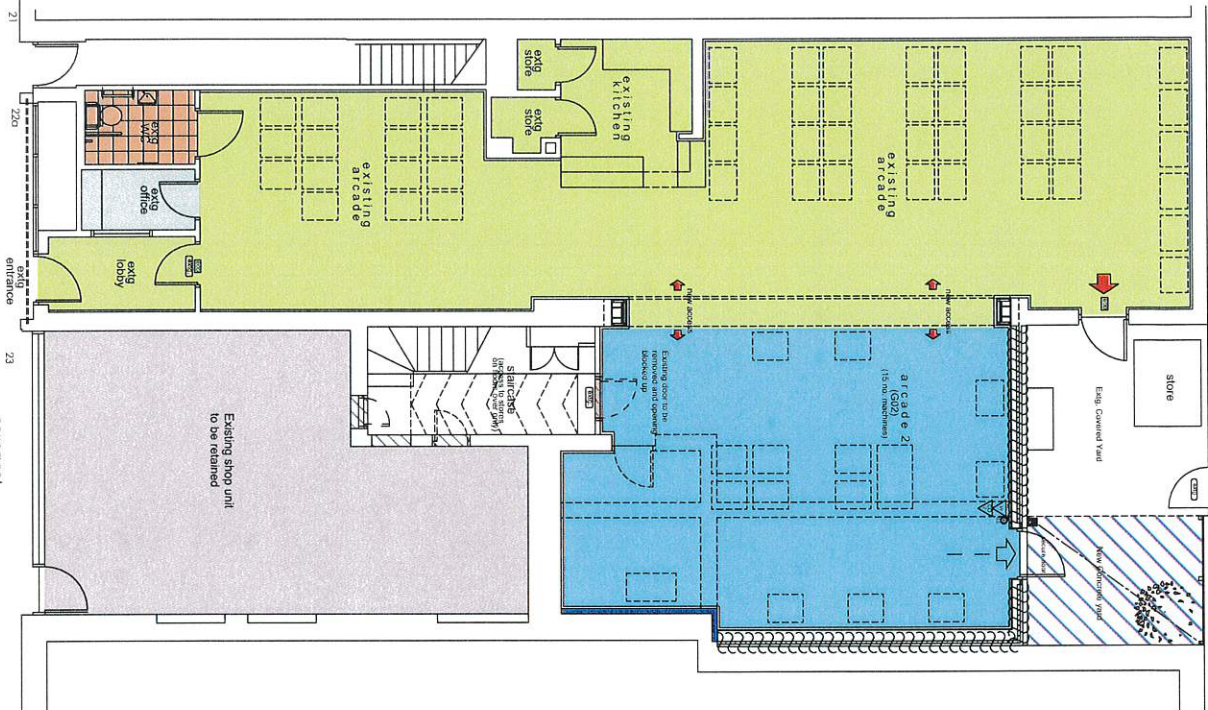
## **APPENDIX 2 - PLANS**

communal access lane



Existing ground floor plan 1 : 50

communal access lane



Proposed ground floor plan 1 : 50

KEY :



Means of Escape route leading to external places of safety

Arcade Area

Arcade area extension

Existing shop unit

WC (existing)

Office (existing)

1	15/07/2025
2	15/07/2025
3	15/07/2025
4	15/07/2025
5	15/07/2025
6	15/07/2025
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