

**Development Management Officer Report
Committee Application**

Summary	
Committee Meeting Date: 12 th November 2024	
Application Ref: LA04/2024/0755/F	
Proposal: Retrospective application for extension to film studio for switch room/dimmer array building with associated external plant deck, installation of a new sliding access gate and reconfiguration of internal access arrangements on site.	Location: Lands immediately north and south of existing film studios, north of Dargan Road (within wider Belfast City Council lands known as North Foreshore/Giants Park), Belfast.
Referral Route: Paragraph 3.8.5 (d) of the Scheme of Delegation – Council owned land	
Recommendation: Approval subject to condition	
Applicant Name and Address: Belfast Harbour Harbour Office Corporation Square Belfast BT1 3AL	Agent Name and Address: Turley Hamilton House 3 Joy Street Belfast BT2 8LE
Date Valid: 11/06/2024	
Target Date: 24/09/2024	
Contact Officer: Lisa Walshe, Principal Planner	
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>This application seeks retrospective planning permission for a new switch/dimmer array building with plant deck and associated works in relation to planning permission LA04/2020/0474/F (as amended by LA04/2021/1358/F). The application site is part of Film Studios complex within the wider North Foreshore Giant's Park.</p> <p>The key issues for consideration of the application are set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic, Parking and Access • Contaminated Land • Design • Electricity and gas infrastructure <p>The proposal is required to house critical components associated with the safe distribution of electrical power to the wider film studios development. The scheme is compliant with Policy ITU 3 – Electricity and gas infrastructure and the proposal will ensure visual and environmental impact will be kept to a minimum. It is also considered that access, movement and parking will not be harmed.</p>	

Recommendation

Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions. Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive.

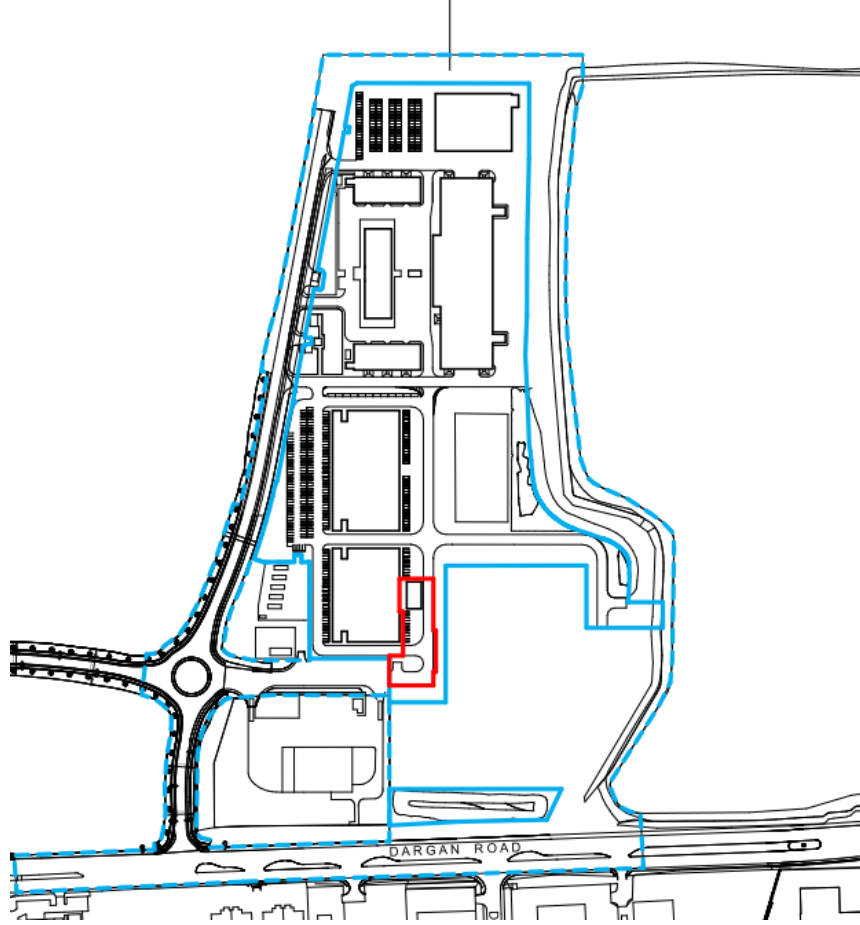
Officer Report

1.0

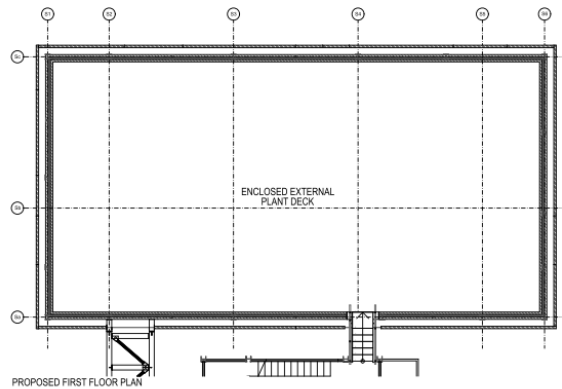
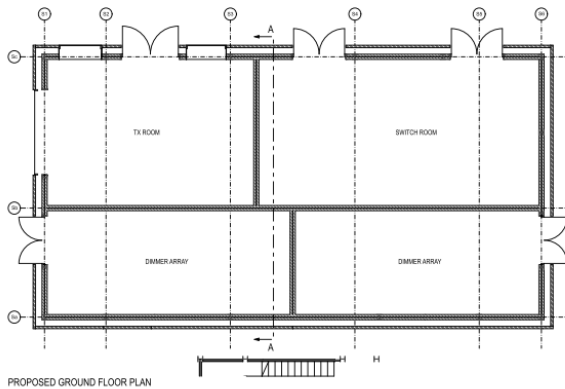
Drawings

1.1

Site Location



Floor Plans



	<p style="text-align: center;">Elevations</p>
2.0	Characteristics of the Site and Area
2.1	<p>The site is part of the wider North Foreshore Giant's Park. The wider site has been landscaped in the interim years with land directly south of the application site developed for a Belfast City Council Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) transfer station and a (landfill) gas powered electricity generating turbine complex.</p> <p>Access to the site is via the existing internal road infrastructure off Dargan Road which has been upgraded with a signalised junction.</p> <p>The application site is on low-lying ground and is located immediately adjacent to Belfast Lough. The area to the north of the site is described as the northern zone of the North Foreshore land and is the area of most recent cessation of landfill operations. This area of land slopes upwards to the north. The area to the south and east of the site consists of industrial and commercial buildings that contrast to the dominant residential use west of the M2 / Shore Road. There is an established woodland strip along the western North Foreshore boundaries which provides a landscape buffer and protection from the Motorway.</p>
3.0	Description of Proposal
3.1	<p>The application is seeking retrospective permission for an extension to the Film Studios for a switch room/dimmer array building with associated external plant deck, installation of a new sliding access gate and reconfiguration of internal access arrangements on site.</p>
4.0	Planning Policy and Other Material Considerations
4.1	<p>Development Plan – Plan Strategy Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035</p>

4.2	<p><i>Strategic Policies:</i></p> <p>Policy SP2 – sustainable development</p>
4.3	<p><i>Operational Policies:</i></p> <p>Policy ENV1 – Environmental quality Policy TRAN8 – Car parking and servicing arrangements Policy TRAN2 – Creating an Accessible Environment Policy ITU 3 – Electricity and gas infrastructure</p> <p><u>Supplementary Planning Guidance</u> Transportation</p>
4.4	<p>Development Plan – zoning, designations and proposals maps</p> <p>Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) BUAP Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014)</p>
4.5	<p>Regional Planning Policy</p> <p>Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)</p>
4.6	<p>Relevant Planning History</p> <p>LA04/2020/0474/F Proposal: Construction of film studios complex including ancillary offices, workshops, ancillary car parking, services and access from existing internal access road, landscaping and associated site works. Address: Lands immediately north and south of existing film studios north of Dargan Road Belfast (within wider Belfast City Council lands known as North Foreshore/Giants Park). Decision: Permission Granted Decision Date: 19.08.2020</p> <p>LA04/2021/1358/F Proposal: Section 54 application seeking amendments to condition Nos 2 (access), 7, 13, 20 (CEMP), 9, 10, 15, 16, 19 (ground conditions), 12 (noise/vibration), 17 (piling risk), 21 (drainage), 27 (landscaping) to enable a phased approach to the construction of the permitted film studios complex approved under planning permission LA04/2020/0474/F. Address: Lands immediately north and south of existing film studios north of Dargan Road Belfast (within wider Belfast City Council lands known as North Foreshore/Giants Park). Decision: Permission Granted Decision Date: 06.09.2021</p> <p>LA04/2024/0754/F Proposal: Retrospective application for the retention of a landscaped earth mound and reconfiguration of internal access arrangements and car parking associated with film studios granted under planning permission ref: LA04/2020/0474/F (as amended under LA04/2021/1358/F). Decision: Under Consideration</p>

5.0	Consultations and Representations
5.1	Statutory Consultations DfI Roads – No objections
5.2	Non-Statutory Consultations BCC Environmental Health – No Objections
5.3	Representations
5.3.1	The application has been advertised and neighbours notified. No representations have been received.
6.0	PLANNING ASSESSMENT
6.1	Development Plan Context
6.1.1	Section 6(4) of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 states that in making any determinations under the Act, regard is to be had to the local development plan, and the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
6.1.2	Section 45(1) of the Act states that in determining planning applications, the Council must have regard to the local development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations.
6.1.3	The Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP), when fully completed, will replace the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 as the statutory Development Plan for the city. The Belfast LDP will comprise two parts. Part 1 is the Plan Strategy, which contains strategic and operational policies and was adopted on 02 May 2023. Part 2 is the Local Policies Plan, which will provide the zonings and proposals maps for Belfast and has not yet been published. The zonings and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 remain part of the statutory local development plan (“Departmental Development Plan”) until the Local Policies Plan is adopted.
6.1.4	Operational policies – the Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application, which are set out in the following section of this report.).
6.1.5	Proposals Maps – until such time as the Local Policies Plan is adopted, the Council must have regard to the land-use zonings, designations and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001, both versions of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (v2004 and v2014) (draft BMAP 2015) and other relevant area plans. The weight to be afforded to these proposals is a matter for the decision maker. It is considered that significant weight should be given to the proposals map in draft BMAP 2015 (v2014) given its advanced stage in the development process, save for retail policies that relate to Sprucefield which remain contentious.
6.1.6	Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 - The site is located within the settlement development limit in the BUAP and is not zoned for any use.
6.1.7	Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (2004 and 2014) - Within BHA 07 Employment and Industry North Foreshore and within an Area of Mineral Constraint.

6.1.8	<p>Key Issues</p> <p>The key issues to be considered in this application are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electricity and gas infrastructure • Design • Traffic, Parking and Access • Contaminated Land
6.2	<p>Electricity and gas infrastructure</p>
6.2.1	<p>Policy ITU 3 states that planning permission will be granted for proposals to develop new or upgrade existing electricity and gas infrastructure by utility providers in an efficient and effective manner, where visual and environmental impact is kept to a minimum. The policy goes on to state that in assessing proposals consideration will be given to the incorporation of appropriate measures to mitigate against the visual and environmental impacts, in addition to other planning and environment considerations.</p>
6.2.2	<p>The switch room will measure approximately 498sqm and have a height of approximately 8m. The ground floor comprises a switch room, TX room and dimmer array with the first floor have an enclosed external plant deck. The proposal is required to house critical components associated with the safe distribution of electrical power to the development. Policy ITU3 also states that sustainable and balanced energy infrastructure networks are essential for economic growth which is a key factor within the entire film studios development. The switch room is situated within the built form of the wider film studios development, minimising any visual impact.</p>
6.3	<p>Design</p>
6.3.1	<p>The height and scale of the building is considered to appear subservient when read alongside the other buildings within the development. The design of the building will read in context with the approved adjacent SU/SMIL building using material including aluminium coping and cladding, louvred steel doors and grey rainwater goods. The plant deck will be below roof level and therefore not visible.</p>
6.4	<p>Traffic, Parking and Access</p>
6.4.1	<p>Policy TRAN 2 states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals which ensure that access to existing buildings, and their surroundings, is improved as opportunities arise through alterations, extensions and changes of use. Minor changes are required to the internal road arrangement to improve the overall operational efficiency of the development, they will not significantly alter how vehicles or people move throughout the site. The changes are considered to meet TRAN2 as they improve the overall accessibility of the development.</p>
6.4.2	<p>In addition, there will be a small loss of car parking on the site in order to facilitate the installation of the switch/dimmer array building. The loss of the spaces is considered acceptable in the context of the overall number of spaces within the development and the need for the proposed development to serve the film studios development. DFI Roads have been consulted on the application and offers no objections.</p>

6.5	Contaminated Land
6.5.1	A Verification Report has been submitted and considered by Belfast City Council Environmental Health Department and they offer no objections.
8.0	Recommendation
8.1	Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.
8.2	Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive.
DRAFT CONDITIONS:	
<p>1. This planning permission has effect from the date which the development hereby approved was carried out.</p> <p>Reason: As required by Section 55 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.</p> <p>2. The vehicular accesses shall be provided in accordance with Drawing No.03 uploaded to the Planning Portal 4th July 2024.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure there is a satisfactory means of access in the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users.</p> <p>3. Hard surfaced areas shall be constructed and permanently marked in accordance with Drawing No.03 uploaded to the Planning Portal 4th July 2024, to provide for parking, servicing and traffic circulation within the site. No part of these hard surfaced areas shall be used for any purpose at any time other than for the parking and movement of vehicles.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure adequate provision has been made for parking, servicing and traffic circulation within the site.</p>	