

Development Management Officer Report

Committee Application

Summary	
Committee Meeting Date: 21 st April 2026	
Application Ref: LA04/2025/2138/F	
Proposal: A blitz memorial sculpture, made from glass fibre reinforced concrete, set on a concrete plinth within the grounds of Westbourne Presbyterian Church	Location: Westbourne Presbyterian Church 149a Newtownards Road Belfast BT4 1AB
Referral Route: Council is the agent	
Recommendation: Approval subject to conditions	
Applicant Name and Address: Mervyn Gibson Westbourne Presbyterian Church 149 Newtownards Road Belfast BT4 1AB	Agent Name and Address: Siobhan Daly Belfast City Council 9 Adelaide Adelaide Street Belfast BT2 8DJ
Date Valid: 03.02.2026	
Target Date: 19.05.26	
Contact Officer: Lisa Walshe, Principal Planner	
Executive Summary: <p>The application seeks full planning permission for a blitz memorial sculpture, made from glass fibre reinforced concrete, set on a concrete plinth within the grounds of Westbourne Presbyterian Church on Newtownards Road.</p> <p>The sculpture will be positioned on the hardstanding area to the front of Westbourne Presbyterian Church that's adjacent to the pedestrian footpath.</p> <p>The scale, design and materials of the proposal will not detract from the appearance and character of the surrounding area.</p> <p>The proposal is considered to comply with relevant planning policy and guidance.</p> <p>Following advertisement in the local press and neighbour notification, no representations have been received.</p> <p>DFI Roads and HED offers no objection.</p>	

Recommendation:

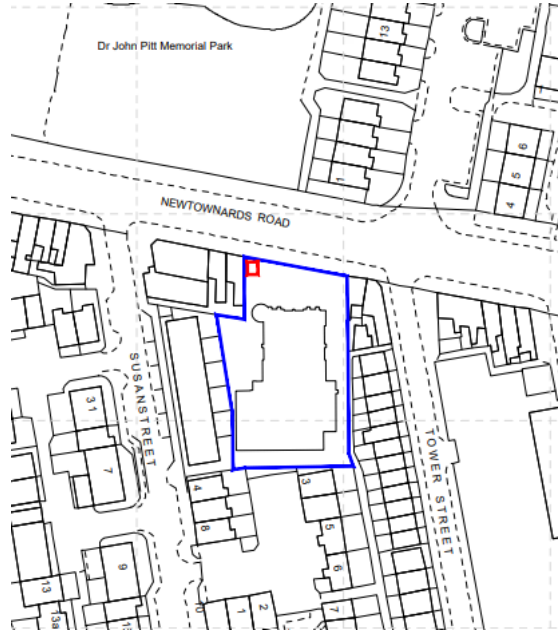
Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions. Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions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

Officer Report

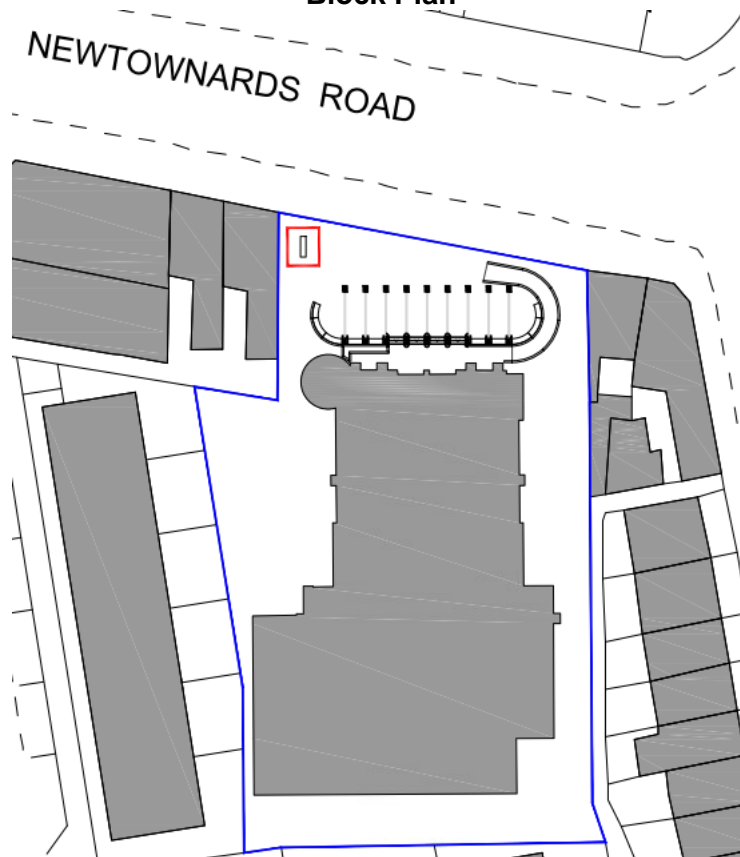
1.0

Drawings

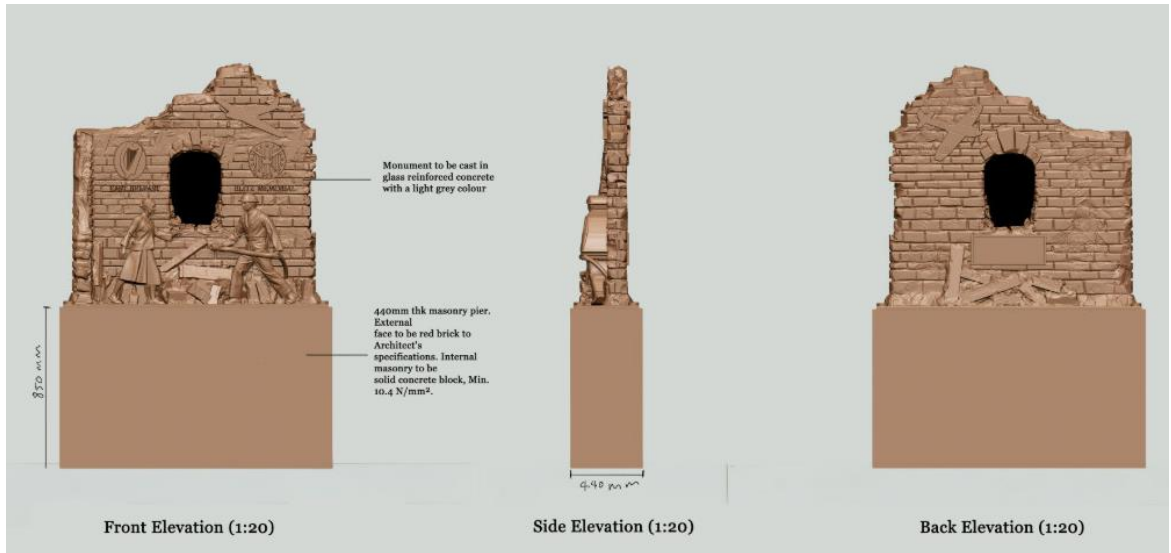
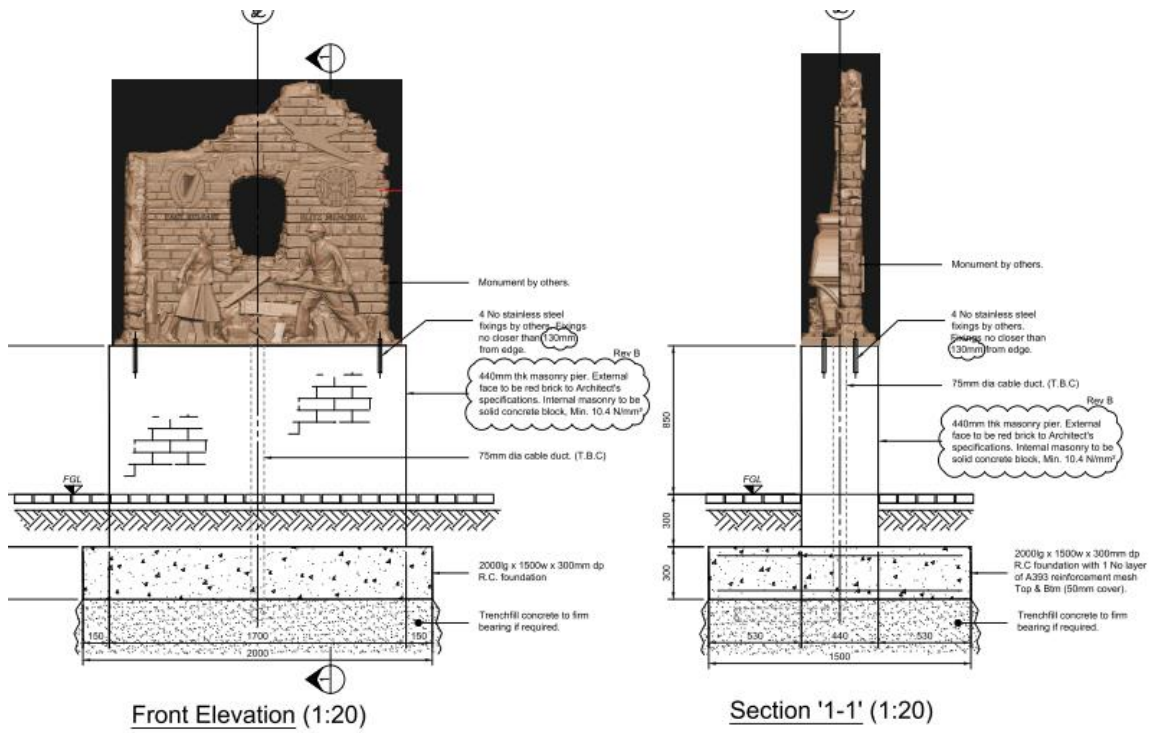
Site Location



Block Plan



Elevations



2.0	Characteristics of the Site and Area
2.1	The application site comprises the Westbourne Presbyterian Church in East Belfast, between Tower Street to the east and Susan Street to the west. The surrounding area is characterised by 2 storey terrace housing and mixed uses along the adjacent Newtownards Road.
2.2	Westbourne Presbyterian Church is a Grade B2 listed building.
3.0	Description of Proposal
3.1	The application seeks full planning permission for a blitz memorial sculpture, made from glass fibre reinforced concrete, set on a concrete plinth within the grounds of Westbourne Presbyterian Church on Newtownards Road.
4.0	Planning Policy and Other Material Considerations
4.1	Development Plan – Plan Strategy Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035 <i>Operational Policies:</i> BH1 – Listed Buildings DES1 - Principles of urban design SP5 - Positive Placemaking TRAN2 (Creating an accessible environment)
4.2	Development Plan – zoning, designations and proposals maps Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) BUAP Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014)
4.3	Regional Planning Policy Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)
4.4	Relevant Planning History LA04/2024/0397/F - Westbourne Presbyterian Church, 149 Newtownards Road, Belfast. BT4 1AB - Refurbishment of external elements and the installation of a plate steel fabricated external exhibition space with planters, lighting, ramped access, steps and canopy. – APPROVED 3 YEAR TEMP
5.0	Consultations and Representations
5.1	Statutory Consultations DFI Roads – No Objections HED – Content
5.2	Representations The application has been advertised in the local press (13.02.26) and neighbour notified (06.02.26). No representations were received.

6.0	PLANNING ASSESSMENT
6.1	Development Plan Context
	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.
6.2	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.
6.3	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.
6.4	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.).
6.5	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.
6.6	Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 - The site is located within the settlement development limit in the BUAP.
6.7	Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (2004 and 2014) The Key issues in the assessment of the proposed development include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scale, Design & Materials • Impact on the character and appearance of the Listed Building and the surrounding area • Impact on pedestrian and vehicular access and safety.
6.8	Scale, Design & Materials The sculpture will measure approx. 2.4m from FGL with a width of 0.5m, It is to be cast in glass reinforced concrete with a dark charcoal colour finish. It will be set on a masonry pier with external face to be red brick.

6.9	The sculpture is considered to be of a high quality and design and is considered to be in compliance with the SPPS and LDP, in that it will not adversely impact on the local character or integrity of the area.
6.10	<p>Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Listed Building and the Surrounding Area</p> <p>The application site impacts upon Westbourne Presbyterian Church (Grade B2) which is of special architectural or historic interest and is protected by Section 80 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011. HED were consulted and were content that the proposal will not affect the listed building or its setting. HED confirmed via email (13/04/26) that they were content with a minor colour change. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policy BH1 of the LDP, including criteria a) to e).</p>
6.11	<p>Impact on Pedestrian and Road Safety</p> <p>The sculpture is to be located on the hardstanding area and will not be on the public pavement therefore, it will not hinder pedestrian movement or cause an obstruction. DFI Roads were consulted and offered no objection.</p>
7.0	Recommendation
7.1	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.
7.2	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.
<p>DRAFT CONDITIONS:</p> <p>1. The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission.</p> <p>Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.</p>	