



**Belfast**  
City Council

## Development Management Officer Report Committee Application

<b>Summary</b>	
<b>Committee Meeting Date:</b> Tuesday 14th December 2021	
<b>Application ID:</b> LA04/2021/1581/A	
<b>Proposal:</b> 7x coloured 'Linen Quarter' logos stencilled on the back of wooden planters, 1x 'FLAXX @ Linen Quarter' text cut out from/painted on side steel canopy. None of the described signage will project outwards.	<b>Location:</b> Land covering the road surface on Brunswick Street between the James Street South junction and Franklin Street Junction.
<b>Referral Route:</b> Referral to the Planning Committee under Section 3.8.5 (d) – BCC is funding	
<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>Approval</b>
<b>Applicant Name and Address:</b> Linen Quarter BID 7 Donegall Square South Belfast BT1 6JH	<b>Agent Name and Address:</b>  N/A
<b>Executive Summary:</b>  <p>The proposal is for 7x coloured 'Linen Quarter' logos stencilled on the back of wooden planters, 1x 'FLAXX @ Linen Quarter' text cut out from/painted on side steel canopy. None of the described signage will project outwards.</p> <p>The proposed site falls within Belfast City Centre and Linen Quarter Conservation Area as outlined in the BUAP &amp; dBMAP. The area provides both vehicular and pedestrian access to principle shopping and commercial areas in the City Centre.</p> <p>The key issues to be considered are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principle of signage of this type</li> <li>Design of the Proposal and Impact on amenity and public safety – Impact on the Surrounding Character including the Conservation Area and adjacent listed buildings</li> </ul> <p>The proposed signage is required in association with a temporary project, LA04/2020/2469/F resolved by Committee to approved in April 2021 to provide pedestrianised public space to include cafe/bar/storage container/canopy areas, performance stage, outdoor seating and associated works (temporary permission).</p> <p>DFI Roads, Historic Environment Division have been consulted on this application and have no objections subject to conditions and / or Informatives. BCC Conservation Officer advised they are unable to support part of the proposal insofar as it relates to the signage on the as the conservation team offered an objection to the approval of the shipping container in the full application (LA04/2020/2469/F) due to its impacts on the character and setting of the Linen Quarter</p>	

conservation area. Furthermore, it was the view of the conservation officer that the proposed signage on the shipping container is 'inappropriate given its overly large size resulting in visual dominance of the area and would draw the eye disproportionately to a non-historic structure/object', which is contrary to Policy BH13 of PPS 6. Officers generally agree with this view, but consider that on balance, given current issues presented by Covid19 and the Council's proposals to provide safe and vibrant external seating areas for users of the area that a temporary approval is acceptable.

DFI Roads and HED have been consulted and offer no objections. No third party representations have been received.

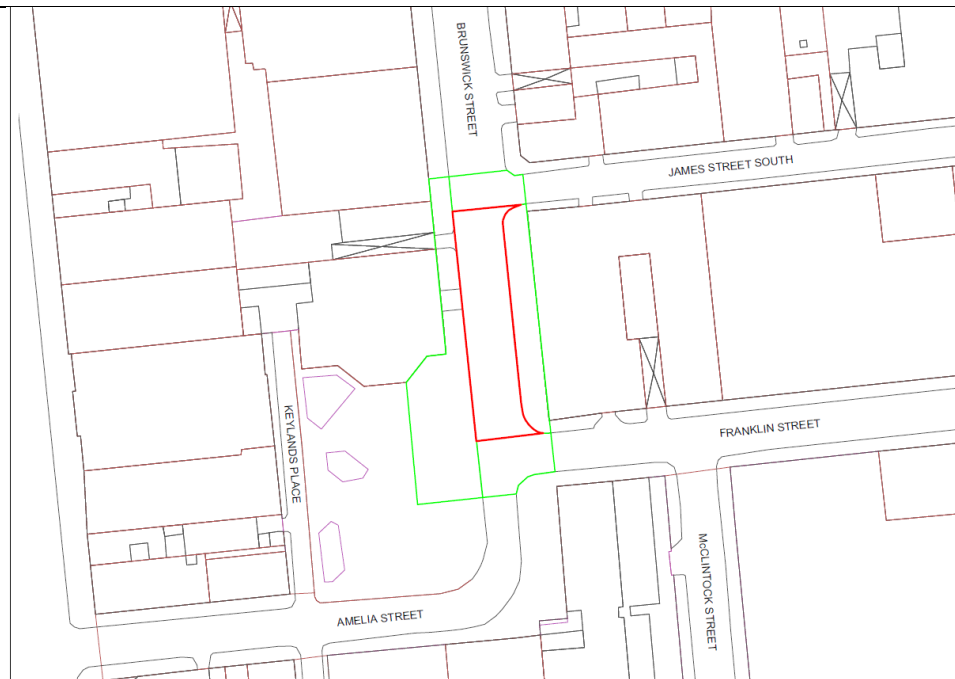
It is considered on balance that the project is designed to contribute to the vibrancy of the city and is temporary in nature and reversible therefore it will not have an unacceptable impact for a temporary period.

**Recommendation - Approve subject to conditions**

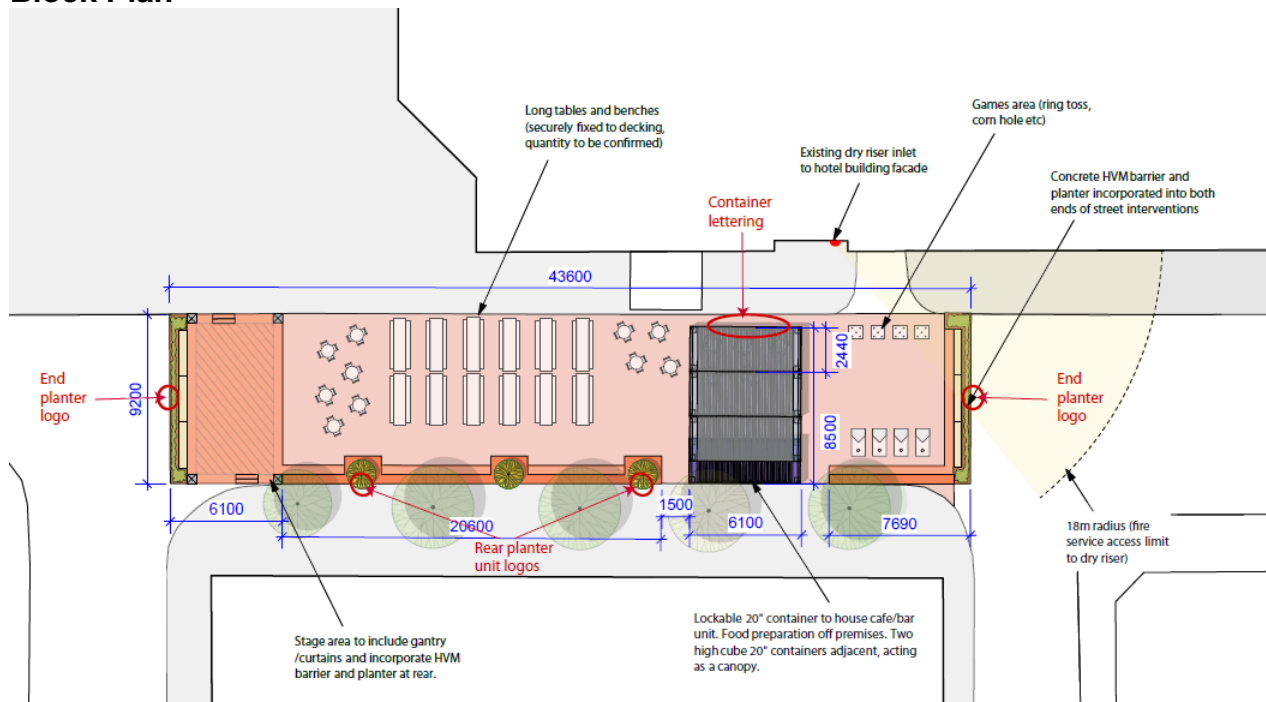
Having had regard to the development plan, relevant planning policies, and other material considerations, it is considered on balance that the proposal should be approved. Planning permission is therefore recommended for approval for a temporary period of 2 years ending with the date of the permission for the use (as previously approved) with delegated authority given to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions.

## Case Officer Report

### Site Location Plan



### Block Plan



### Elevations of Container



### Consultations:

Consultation Type	Consultee	Response
Statutory	DFI Roads – Hydebank	No objections
Statutory	Historic Environment Division	No objections
Non-Statutory	BCC Conservation Officer	Unable to support

### Representations:

Letters of Support	N/A
Letters of Objection	N/A
Number of Support Petitions and signatures	N/A
Number of Petitions of Objection and signatures	N/A

### Summary of Issues

The key issues to be considered are:

- Principle of signage of this type
- Design of the Proposal and Impact on amenity and public safety – Impact on the Surrounding Character including the Conservation Area and adjacent listed buildings

### Characteristics of the Site and Area

#### 1.0 Description of the Proposed Development

The proposal is for the following signage:

- 7x coloured 'Linen Quarter' logos stencilled on the back of wooden planters;
- 1 'FLAXX @ LINEN QUARTER' text cut out from / painted on the side of a steel canopy.

#### 2.0 Description of Site

#### Characteristics of the Site and Area

The site is the land covering the road surface on Brunswick Street between the James Street South and Franklin Street junction. The immediate area surrounding the site is mix use, comprising of but not limited to restaurants, bars, office space, hot-food bars and hotels. There is high pedestrian movement in the area between the town centre and the main travel hub at Great Northern, Great Victoria Street.

The site is located within the Linen Conservation Area.

## **Planning Assessment of Policy and Other Material Considerations**

### **3.0 Site History**

- LA04/2020/2469/F; Land covering the road surface on Brunswick Street between the James Street South junction and Franklin Street Junction: Pedestrianised public space to include cafe/bar/storage container/canopy areas, performance stage, outdoor seating and associated works (temporary permission) – PERMISSION GRANTED (30/06/2021)

### **4.0 Policy Framework**

- Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001
- Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2004 & 2015
- Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)
- Planning Policy Statement 3: Access, Movement and Parking
- Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning, Archaeology, and the Built Heritage
- PPS 17: The Control of Outdoor Advertisements
- Linen Quarter Conservation Area Design Guide

### **5.0 Statutory Consultations**

- Department for Infrastructure Roads Service (DFI) - No objections: subject to Informatives
- Historic Environment Division (HED) - No objections: subject to conditions

### **6.0 Non-Statutory Consultations**

- BCC Conservation Officer - Unable to support

### **7.0 Other Material Considerations**

#### **7.1 Any Other Supplementary Guidance**

Belfast Agenda

### **8.0 Assessment**

#### **8.1 The key issues to be considered are:**

- Principle of Development
- Design of the Proposal and Impact on the Surrounding Character including the Conservation Area and adjacent listed buildings

**8.2** Section 91 requires that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting a council must have special regard to the desirability of

preserving any listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

**8.3** The site is within the Linen Conservation Area. Section 104 of the Planning Act sets out that where an area is for the time being designated as a conservation area 'special regard must be had in the exercise with respect to any buildings or other land in that area of any powers under this act to the desirability to: -

- a. preserve the character or appearance of that area in cases where an opportunity for enhancing its character or appearance does not arise
- b. enhancing the character or appearance of that area in cases where an opportunity for enhancing its character or appearance does arise'.

**8.4** The SPPS (2015) acknowledges that all advertisements have an impact on the surrounding area they are situated and accepts there is a need to balance the requirements of the industry with the protection and enhancement of the character and amenity of the surrounding area. The SPPS also recognises that there is a need to ensure advertisements do not negatively impact public safety. The issues set out in the SPPS are controlled by regional policy which can be found in PPS 17.

**8.5 PPS 17: The Control of Outdoor Advertisements-**

Policy AD1 of PPS 17 states that consent will be granted for the display of advertisements where the proposal respects neighbouring amenity when assessed in the context of local characteristics; and where it does not prejudice public safety.

## **Principle of Development**

### **Amenity-**

**8.6** PPS 17 states that amenity is often understood to refer to the effect upon the appearance of a building, structure, the immediate area where it is situated or its impacts on long distance views. All proposed signage is considered to have minimal impact on the amenity of buildings surrounding the site as none of the proposed signs are located on buildings in the area, rather the proposed signage will be incorporated onto wooden planters and a steel container within the site, resulting in little impact on the amenity of neighbouring buildings. However, it is the view of the Council that due to the amount of signage originally being proposed, the proposal would have affected the amenity of the Conservation Area in that the proposal would detract from the amenity and character of the Linen Conservation Area through proliferation of the site. To overcome this concern, the Linen Quarter BID Team agreed to remove the proposed signage on the stage from the application. Whilst this type of signage is untypical and particularly in the Conservation Area, it is considered on balance to be acceptable for a temporary period.

### **Impact on Linen Quarter Conservation Area / Conservation Team Response-**

**8.7** The conservation officer stated that the conservation team were of the opinion that the 7x coloured 'Linen Quarter' logo stencilled on the wooden planters and stage area will have no demonstrable harm on the character or amenity of the conservation area. However, greater regard was given to the potential impact of signage on the metal shipping container. The conservation officer noted that the conservation team offered objection to the approval of the shipping container in the full application (LA04/2020/2469/F) due to its impacts on the character and setting of the Linen Quarter conservation area. Furthermore, it was of the view of the conservation officer that the proposed signage on the shipping container is 'inappropriate given its overly large size resulting in visual dominance of the area and would draw the eye disproportionately to a non-historic structure/object', which is contrary to Policy BH13 of PPS 6.

**8.8** Officers accept this analysis that this signage is untypical and would not normally be acceptable. However, it is considered that on balance, given current issues presented by Covid19 and the Council's proposals to provide safe and vibrant external seating areas for users of the area that a temporary approval is acceptable, which will correlate with the temporary approval for the seating areas and stage previously granted temporary approval.

**8.9** The proposal has been considered against Section 104 of the Planning Act. The Conservation Officer has considered the application against PPS6 & the Linen Quarter Conservation Area notwithstanding the comments from the conservation officer it is considered that the development is for a time limited duration and is part of a pilot project with community and environmental benefits. It is considered by officers that the proposal, not being of a permanent nature, will not cause unacceptable impact and on balance is considered acceptable for a time limited period and as such the character of the Conservation Area will be preserved.

**8.10** Having regard to the policy context and the considerations above, the proposal is deemed acceptable. However, as shipping containers would not be deemed an appropriate permanent structure, therefore temporary permission for a period of 2 years has been recommended.

#### **Other Considerations**

**8.11** DFI Roads and HED have offered no objection subject to conditions and / or Informatives.

#### **9.0 Conclusion**

Given that the full application (LA04/2020/2469/F) for the incorporation of the wooden planters, stage area and metal shipping container will promote vitality, quirkiness and increase footfall in an underused area of the Linen Quarter Conservation Area, and that the full application was given temporary permission that will expire on the 19th April 2023, Officers are of the view that if the signage is given the same temporary permission no unacceptable and long lasting harm will be caused to the character and setting of the conservation area. With regards to the concerns brought by the conservation team, it is considered that increased footfall in the area will enhance the character and setting of the area and implementing a condition stipulating a time-limit to which the signage can remain, will assist in preserving the existing character and appearance of the conservation area in the long-term future.

**Neighbour Notification Checked: N/A**

#### **Summary of Recommendation:**

Consent subject to Conditions

#### **Conditions:**

1. The Consent hereby granted shall be for a limited period of 1 year and 5 months only and shall expire on **19th April 2023**.

Reason: This type of temporary structure is such that their permanent retention may harm the surrounding character and amenity if retained as a permanent structure ( to correlate with the temporary permission granted for the full application (LA04/2020/2469/F)

2. The signage hereby consented and all associated host structures shall be removed on or before the end date of this consent as set out in condition 1.



Reason: in the interests of the Conservation Area

3. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until the procedures necessary for the closure of the road have been completed and appropriate traffic signage has been erected.

Reason: In the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users.

**Representations from Elected members:**

None