

Development Management Officer Report Committee Application

Summary	
Committee Meeting Date: 15 th March 2022	
Application ID: LA04/2021/2825/A	
Proposal: Retention of mesh banner signage (19.1m x 9.84m) for a temporary period of 24 months	Location: Former Belfast Telegraph Printworks 124-132 Royal Avenue Belfast BT1 1DN
Referral Route: BCC joint venture with applicant	
Recommendation: Refusal	
Applicant Name and Address: BelTel LLP C/O McAleer & Rushe 17-19 Dungannon Road Cookstown BT80 8TL	Agent Name and Address: Todd Architects Ltd 2nd Floor Titanic House 6 Queens Road Belfast BT3 9DT
<p>Executive Summary: Retrospective advertisement consent is sought for a temporary mesh banner sign (19.1M X 9.84m) for a period of 24 months.</p> <p>The Belfast Telegraph Building itself, adjacent, is listed and the site is directly opposite the Cathedral Quarter Conservation Area.</p> <p>The key issues in assessment of the proposed development include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on local amenity • Impact on public safety • Impact on the setting of listed buildings • Commercial and regeneration considerations <p>The site is located within the city development limits for Belfast as designated within the Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2004.</p> <p>Historic Environment Division was consulted and considered that the proposal is contrary to the policy requirements of SPPS 6.12 & BH11 of PPS6. It stated that the material, size, scale, alignment and location of the banner signage, in proximity to the historic fabric of the listed building, adversely affects its setting. HED noted previous permissions 'LA04/2017/2802/A' and 'LA04/2020/0662/A' which granted consent for 2 years and 1 year respectively. HED are not supportive of longevity establishing</p>	

The proposed advertisement is considered contrary to Planning Policy (PPS17 Outdoor Advertisements) and is therefore considered unacceptable. There is history of previous applications on this site for the same proposal; LA04/2017/2802/A was approved for a temporary period of 2 years in 2018. In 2020, application LA04/2020/0662/A was given temporary approval for 1 year. However, the most recent application, LA04/2021/1586/A, went before the Planning Committee in October 2021; the Committee raised concerns with the fact that the proposal had already been granted an extension and there was no further advancement in the development of the site. Committee resolved to refuse in November 2021 on the following grounds:

1. The proposed advertising, is contrary to AD 1 of PPS 17, in that the advertising by virtue of its position on the host building, its size and scale would through its undue prominence and excessive visibility have an adverse impact on the amenity of the area, the character of the area and detract from the appearance of the building.
2. The proposed advertising shroud, is contrary to BH 11 of PPS 6, in that the advertisement would, if permitted, not respect the architectural form and detailing of the Listed Building by reason of its scale, height and alignment and does not respect the character of the setting of the heritage asset.

The supporting statement for the application outlines the difficulty in the commercial property market as a result of the covid pandemic. It outlines how the locality is going through a period of transition with the construction of the university campus etc and that the aim of this application is to secure a tenant and funding package to enable the commencement of development of the site.

Whilst the applicant's position is not unreasonable, it can equally be argued that if the advert being in place for such an extended period has failed to garner the required interest then the owners should consider deploying other means of advertising.

No representations have been received.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Advertising Consent is refused as the proposal is contrary to PPS 17 – Control of Outdoor Advertisements, Policy AD1 and paragraphs 6.12 of the SPPS and Para's 6.20, 6.59 & Para 6.60 of the SPPS in relation to the impact on the setting of the Listed Building and the Conservation Area.

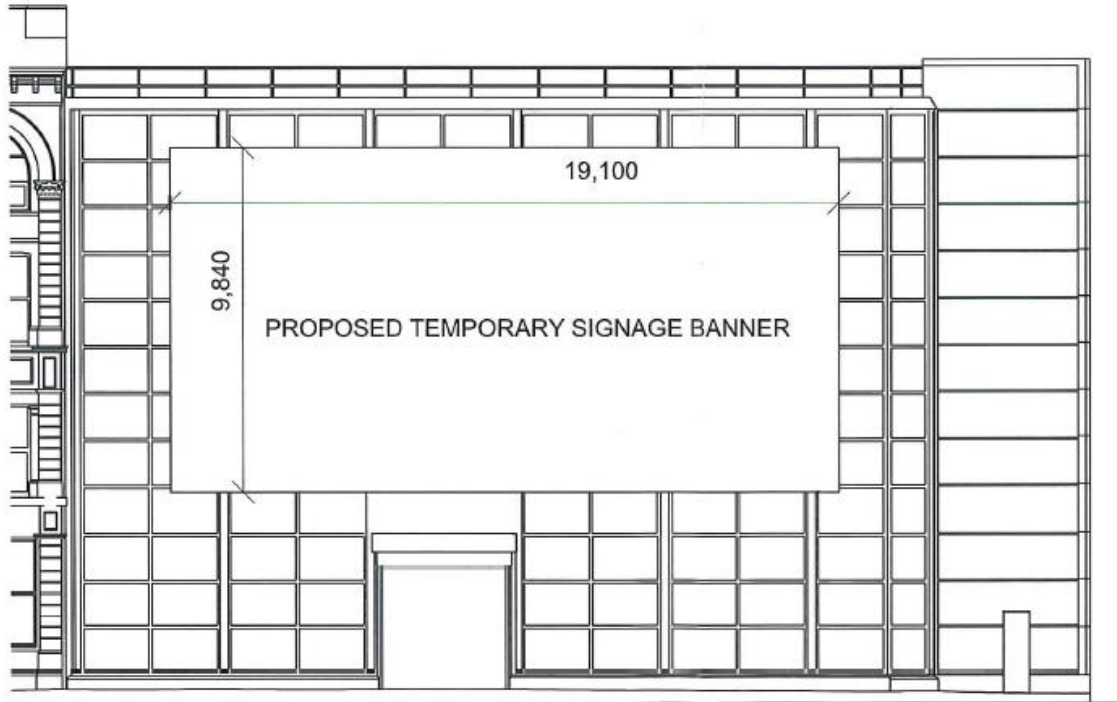
Case Officer Report

Site Location Plan



Characteristics of the Site and Area

1.0	Description of Proposed Development
1.1	The application seeks Advertisement Consent to retain mesh banner signage (19.1m x 9.84m) for a further temporary basis of 24months.
	The application seeks to extend temporary approvals previously granted under LA04/2017/2802/A and 'LA04/2020/0662/A.



Proposed South-East Elevation



2.0

Description of Site

2.1

The site is the former Belfast Telegraph Printworks, a listed building, located at 124-132 Royal Avenue and bounds the corner of Donegal Street. The building was granted a 2 year temporary permission for use as an event space in November 2017 and subsequently a 3 year extension to this use in October 2019. Planning permission was also granted in 2019 for the regeneration of the site comprising Grade A offices with ground floor active retail, cafes and restaurant uses.

2.2

The area is characterised by a variety of commercial uses including multi-storey office development with ground floor retail outlets. The University of Ulster Belfast Campus is located to the east of the site.

Planning Assessment of Policy and other Material Considerations	
3.0	<p>Site History</p> <p>LA04/2021/1586/A - Former Belfast Telegraph Printworks, 124-132 Royal Avenue, Belfast, BT1 1DN - Proposed mesh banner signage (19.1m x 9.84m) for a temporary basis of 24months – PERMISSION REFUSED, 10.11.21</p> <p>LA04/2020/0662/A - Former Belfast Telegraph Printworks, 124-132 Royal Avenue - Mesh banner signage (19.1m X 9.84m) (temporary for 1 year) - PERMISSION GRANTED 27.08.2020</p> <p>LA04/2019/0878/F - Ground floor print hall, 122-144 Royal Avenue - Extension of time for temporary change of use of and alterations of former printing hall to event space for a period of 3 years - PERMISSION GRANTED 30.10.2019</p> <p>LA04/2018/1991/F - Former Belfast Telegraph complex at, 124-144 Royal Avenue and, 1-29 Little Donegall Street - Demolition of existing non listed buildings and redevelopment of site to accommodate office led mixed use development comprising Class B1 (a) office, ancillary Class B2 industrial floorspace, active ground floor uses retail (A1), restaurants, cafes and bars (sui generis); basement parking and associated access and circulation. Proposals include the retention and restoration of the listed Seaver building comprising facade restoration, new roof and reintroduction of dormers, replacement windows and reinstatement of original entrance to southern facade [amended scheme] - PERMISSION GRANTED 22.02.2019</p> <p>LA04/2018/1968/LBC - Former Belfast Telegraph complex at, 124-144 Royal Avenue and, 1-29 Little Donegall Street - Demolition of attached structures, retention and restoration of the listed Seaver building comprising internal reconfiguration works, facade restoration of dormers, replacement windows and reinstatement of original entrance to southern façade - PERMISSION GRANTED 22.02.2019</p> <p>LA04/2017/2802/A - Former Belfast Telegraph Printworks - Proposed mesh banner signage (19.1M X 9.84m) - temporary for 2 years - PERMISSION GRANTED 15.03.2018</p> <p>LA014/2017/2209/F – Ground floor 122-144 Royal Avenue - Temporary change of use of former printing hall to event space for a period of 2 years including internal alterations and creation of two emergency exits onto Donegall Street - PERMISSION GRANTED 29.11.17</p>
4.0	Policy Framework
4.1	<p>Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001</p> <p>Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004)</p> <p>Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2014 (v2014)</p> <p>Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)</p> <p>Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage</p> <p>- Policy BH11</p> <p>Planning Policy Statement 17: Control of Outdoor Advertisements</p> <p>- Policy AD1</p>

5.0	Statutory Consultees Responses
5.1	Dfl Roads – No objection.
5.2	DfC Historic Environment Division (HED) were consulted and considered the impact of the application on the former Belfast Telegraph Offices, 124-144 Royal Avenue (Grade B2 Listed). HED advises that the proposal is contrary to the policy requirements of SPPS 6.12 and PPS 6, Policy BH11 in that the material, size, scale, alignment and location of the large sign impact the setting of the listed building.
6.0	Non Statutory Consultees Responses
6.1	None
7.0	Representations
7.1	The application has been advertised in the local press and neighbours notified. No representations have been received regarding the application.
8.0	Assessment
8.1	<u>Background</u>
8.2	<u>A previous application to retain the banner sign was refused by the Planning Committee with the decision notice issued on 10 November 2021 (LA04/2021/1586/A). The grounds for refusal of the previous application were:</u> 1. The proposed advertising on drawings 01, 02 & 04, date stamped 09 June 2021, is contrary to AD 1 of PPS 17, in that the advertising by virtue of its position on the host building, its size and scale would through its undue prominence and excessive visibility have an adverse impact on the amenity of the area, the character of the area and detract from the appearance of the building. 2. The proposed advertising shroud shown on drawings 01, 02 & 04, date stamped 09 June 2021, is contrary to BH 11 of PPS 6, in that the advertisement would, if permitted, not respect the architectural form and detailing of the Listed Building by reason of its scale, height and alignment and does not respect the character of the setting of the heritage asset.
8.3	<u>The key consideration is whether the proposal addresses the previous refusal reasons.</u>
8.3.1	<u>Policy AD1 – Amenity and Public Safety</u> Policy AD1 states:
8.3.2	<i>Consent will be given for the display of an advertisement where:</i> <i>(i) it respects amenity, when assessed in the context of the general characteristics of the locality; and</i> <i>(ii) it does not prejudice public safety.</i>

	<u>Impact on Amenity</u>
8.4	The proposal comprises a fixed building mesh banner sign on the Royal Avenue elevation of the former Belfast Telegraph print works premises. The applicant proposes it to be on display for a further two year period.
8.5	The proposed banner is 19.1m in width and 9.84m in height. The building height is 17.9m and the glazed section of the front elevation is 24m wide. The bottom of the banner is to be fixed at 5.8m above ground level and 2.2m from the top of the building. Therefore, it will take up virtually the entire elevation above main entrance level. The banner is to display branding relating to the redevelopment of the site.
8.6	In relation to advertisements, the term amenity is usually understood to mean its effect upon the appearance of the building or structure or the immediate neighbourhood where it is displayed, or its impact over long distance views.
8.7	PPS17 provides guidance on Shroud Advertisement Displays which is relevant to the proposed mesh banner. It sets out that their scale and size can seriously conflict with the visual amenity of the host building and the surrounding area. Whilst it acknowledges that this type of advertisement may only be acceptable in commercial areas where it is attached to scaffolding surrounding the building and a contract for the building works/renovations has been drawn up, this is not the case for this proposal as the building is neither construction nor likely to be soon.
8.8	It also states that to prevent clutter, consideration will be given to similar proposals located within close proximity to the site and others that have the benefit of advertisement consent. There are no other shroud advertisements within close proximity to this site and so on this basis, the proposal would be considered acceptable.
8.9	In line with that noted above, the proposal is sited in a commercial area. However, the buildings in the area are not commercial warehouses such as those found in retail parks and the proposed banner is to be attached directly to the building itself rather than scaffolding. Whilst the building is not considered to be of any architectural interest, it forms part of a listed building and the buildings in the area are generally quite attractive and many are heritage assets.
8.10	The applicant's justification to extend the previous approvals by two years is as follows: <i>"Our client is in the process of trying to secure a suitable tenant and funding package which in turn will enable the commencement of development of the site. Our client considers Planning Permission for the mesh signage banner will assist with securing the potential tenant."</i>
8.11	The design of the proposed banner has not changed since the previous application, which was refused. In the line with the Council's previous decision, the proposed would have an unacceptable impact on amenity by reason of its prominence and visibility.
8.12	Whilst it is acknowledged that the area is going through a transitional period with the construction of the University campus adjacent and reconfiguration of Buoy's Park opposite combined with the slowing of the market as a result of the Covid pandemic, these factors had bearing on the Council's consideration of the previous application and are not considered to outweigh the impact of the proposal on the amenity and character of the area. Advertising consent at this site has received a total combined temporary period of 3 years with no contract drawn up for the building/renovation works. Further approvals may result in a perception of precedence for banners of a similar duration.

	<u>Impact on Public Safety</u>
8.13	The proposed signage has no illumination or projection and is not considered to create any hazard. It will therefore not prejudice the safety of public safety and is compliant with AD1 (ii). It should also be noted that this was not reason for refusing the previous application.
	<u>Impact on Setting of nearby Listed Buildings</u>
8.14	The site is adjacent to the listed Belfast Telegraph Offices and is in the site line of St Anne's Cathedral. It is also adjacent to Central Library which is listed.
8.15	Par. 6.20 of the SPPS relates to adverts in or close to a Conservation Area. Consent for the display of advertisements in or close to a Conservation Area should only be granted where they would not adversely affect the overall character, appearance or setting of the area.
8.16	Para 6.59 and Para 6.60 go on to say that 'Care must be taken to ensure that all proposals will not detract from the place where advertising is to be displayed or its surroundings. In particular, it is important to prevent clutter, to adequately control signs involving illumination and to protect features such as listed buildings, and conservation areas from the potential adverse effects of advertising. The subject matter of advertising is not normally a material planning consideration. Particular care is also necessary to ensure that advertisements do not detract from the unique qualities and amenity [of our countryside] nor diminish our archaeology and built heritage (Para 6.60)
8.17	HED were consulted and stated that the material, size, scale, alignment and location of the banner signage, in proximity to the historic fabric of the listed building, adversely affects its setting. HED noted previous permissions 'LA04/2017/2802/A' and 'LA04/2020/0662/A' which granted consent for 2 years and 1 year respectively. HED are not supportive of longevity establishing.
8.18	HED noted that it is a somewhat retrospective application as the banner is currently in place and considered any decision on approval of such a proposal is ultimately to be determined by Belfast City Council.
8.19	<u>Commercial and regeneration considerations</u> A supporting statement accompanied the application which sets out that the proposed redevelopment of this site ' <i>contributes to the need for transformational, heritage-led regeneration</i> ' in this part of the city. The statement notes the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Grade A office market in Belfast City and the need to mitigate against the impacts of the pandemic to allow businesses to grow.
8.20	It further sets out that the applicant is ' <i>actively pursuing investment and development opportunities in seeking a suitable tenant and funding package for The Sixth</i> '.
8.21	However, whilst it is acknowledged that the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the development sector, the proposal has not addressed the refusal reasons of the previous application in that, the size, scale and prominence of the signage has not changed and is still considered to have a significant adverse impact on the setting of the listed building and character of the area.

	Based on the assessment the proposed signage is not considered to be compliant with relevant advertising guidance. Given the history of this site and HED's concerns regarding PPS6 are noted, this application is recommended for refusal.
9.0	<p>Summary of Recommendation:</p> <p>It is considered that this application does not satisfactorily address the reasons for refusal of the previous application. The proposal is considered contrary to the SPPS and relevant policies set out in PPS 6 and PPS 17, therefore, it is recommended for refusal.</p>
10.0	<p>Refusal Reasons</p> <p>1. The proposed advertising on drawings 01, 02, 03 & 04, date stamped 20 December is contrary to AD 1 of PPS 17, in that the advertising by virtue of its position on the host building, its size and scale would through its undue prominence and excessive visibility have an adverse impact on the amenity of the area, the character of the area and detract from the appearance of the building.</p> <p>2. The proposed advertising shroud shown on drawings 01, 02, 03 & 04, date stamped 20 December 2021, is contrary to the SPPS Para 6.20, Para 6.59 & 6.60, in that the advertisement would, if permitted, diminish and fail to respect the architectural form and detailing of the Listed Building and does not respect the character of the setting of the heritage asset and also impacts on the views out of the Cathedral Quarter Conservation Area by reason of its scale, height and alignment</p>

ANNEX	
Date Valid	15 th December 2021
<p>Planning History</p> <p>Ref ID: LA04/2021/1586/A Proposal: Proposed mesh banner signage (19.1m x 9.84m) for a temporary basis of 24months Address: Former Belfast Telegraph Printworks, 124-132 Royal Avenue, Belfast, BT1 1DN Decision: Refused Decision Date: 10 November 2021</p> <p>Ref ID: LA04/2020/0662/A Proposal: Mesh banner signage (19.1m X 9.84m) (temporary for 1 year) Address: Former Belfast Telegraph Printworks, 124-132 Royal Avenue Decision: Permission Granted Decision Date: 27 August 2020</p> <p>Ref ID: LA04/2017/2802/A Proposal: Proposed mesh banner signage (19.1M X 9.84m) - temporary for 2 years Address: Former Belfast Telegraph Printworks Decision: Permission Granted Decision Date: 15 March 2018</p>	
<p>Summary of Consultee Responses</p> <p>Dfl Roads – no objection</p> <p>HED – do not support</p>	
Drawing Numbers and Title	
<p>Drawing No. 01 Type: Site Location Map Status: Submitted</p> <p>Drawing No. 02 Type: Site Plan Status: Submitted</p> <p>Drawing No. 03 Type: Existing Elevation Status: Submitted</p> <p>Drawing No. 04 Type: Proposed Signage Elevation Status: Submitted</p>	
<p>Notification to Department (if relevant)</p> <p>Date of Notification to Department: N/A Response of Department: N/A</p>	

Elected Member Interest: none