

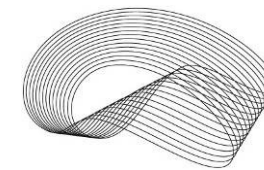
APPENDIX 1



final draft

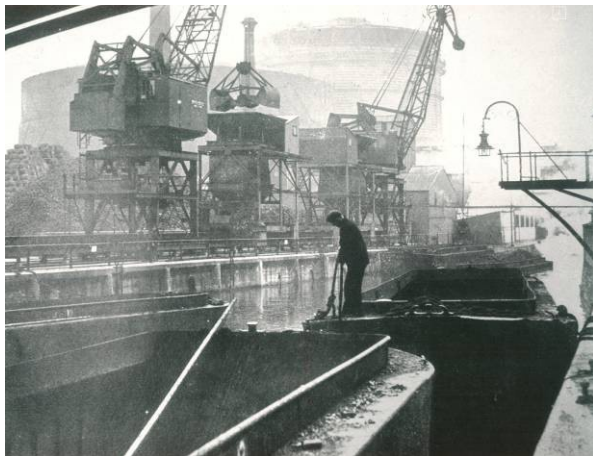
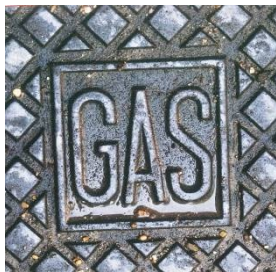
**GASWORKS NORTHERN FRINGE PROJECT**  
for  
**BELFAST CITY COUNCIL**  
**INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT**

**September 2008**



**CONSARC** DESIGN GROUP

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## 1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

In May 2007 Consarc Design Group presented a comprehensive report to Belfast City Council which addressed the development prospects for the residual strip of land adjacent to the Gasworks precinct know as the Northern Fringe Lands.

These lands which comprise upwards of 18,000m<sup>2</sup> (4.60 acres) in area were originally identified and reserved for roads development but are now released from that process and will eventually become development land. It has always been intended that these areas will be utilised as the final component in the completion of the Gasworks complex.

The process originally undertaken by Consarc Design Group in 2006 and 2007 carefully considered the potential of the lands for development, how the lands might be accessed, serviced and managed and examined the scale, scope and range of development opportunities that might be accommodated.

The original report considered and addressed a comprehensive range of influences and issues affecting the process and prepared and illustrated a range of options and solutions for the delivery of a viable development project.

The report concluded that the process of the development of these important city centre lands would be beneficial to the City and the Council and recommended that a team should be appointed to establish a clear direction and consider a planning methodology which would deliver a masterplan and planning approval for the development of the site.

## 2.0 THE TEAM

In April 2008 Belfast City Council appointed an integrated design team to undertake the next stage of the development process for the Northern Fringe. This team, led by Consarc Design Group, Architects and Lead Consultants, also includes the following consultant partners:

- RPS – Planning Consultants
- RPS – Environmental Consultants
- RPS - Civil, Traffic and Transportation Engineers
- BDP – Services Engineers
- BCC - Landscape department
- White Young Green - Quantity Surveying
- Scott Wilson - CDM

This team reports directly to Pamela Davison and Adrian Ferguson who manage and monitor the process for Belfast City Council.

### 3.0 PROGRAMME & PROGRESS



The design team and the City Council officer team commenced activity in May 2008 and have already established a methodology and a programme for project activity along with a programme of key tasks and activities.

The team has also arranged and carried out a series of initial consultations with Planning Service, Roads Service and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency to establish key factors, influences and confirm the aspirations and objectives of the process and to agree appropriate action with consultees.

A series of fundamental issues have already been discussed with personnel from the agencies mentioned and the results of the early consultations have revealed important information which has helped confirm the direction of the process.

Principally it has been confirmed that the only process which will deliver a satisfactory conclusion about the development process is a formal application for outline planning permission for the proposed development project.

This will deal with all of the major issues including land use, scale, scope and range of development components, access matters including traffic and transportation and car parking, permeability, environmental matters, landscape and streetscape. A successful application and outcome will provide certainty to the process for Belfast City Council and allow a conventional and flexible development procurement process to proceed following planning approval.

Informal discussions with Planning Service have already revealed that the principles of land use and the developments idea identified in the early stages of the project and reinforced during recent meetings are unlikely to be challenged. However during the same meetings it was clarified again that vehicle access and permeability issues specifically relating to secondary access from Raphael Street will be critical.

It has also been indicated by Planning Service representatives and confirmed by Roads Service personnel that proposals for car parking provision on site will be carefully scrutinised in accordance with current guidelines and policy.

Consultations have also been undertaken with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency in order to establish their requirements and to agree a process for the preparation of desk studies and subsequent subsoil environmental investigation.

In addition the team has commenced communication with services and utilities suppliers collecting and recording comprehensive information on the network and details of utilities and services infrastructure within the Gasworks precinct.



Since the commencement of the project four monthly team meetings have been held in June, July, August and September and the following key tasks have been commenced or completed:

- Consultations with Planning Service, Roads Service and the NIEA.
- Traffic surveys and the preparation of a draft Traffic and Transportation Strategy for the Gasworks precinct.
- The preparation of a desk study for environmental contamination of the Gasworks precinct with estimates for additional sub-soils investigation of the site requested by the NIEA under current legislation.
- The collection and recording of information relating to the services and utility network on the site.
- The design and development of a strategic access routes to and from the site and within the complex.
- The review of development content, options and layouts.
- The initiation of landscape and streetscape studies.

To date the process is proceeding in accordance with expectations and programme, although there is now some evidence that the consultation process and the requirements of Planning Service and in particular their consultees, may slow the process down in the second half of the programme. This is specifically due to their information requested by Roads Service and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and the project periods requested by them to review draft submissions and advise the project team thereafter.

However the team will continue with key tasks and move all other aspects of the project forward as far as possible to maintain progress in accordance with objectives.

#### **4.0 THE NEXT STEPS**

The key tasks to be undertaken over the final months of the process are as follows:

- Consultations and negotiations with Planning Service.
- Consultations and negotiations with Roads Service.
- Completion of contamination surveys and investigations.
- Preparation of environmental contamination final report.
- Consultations and negotiations with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.
- Appraisal and design development for built environment to be undertaken.



- Appraisal and design development for landscape and environment.
- Preparation of the Planning report.
- Preparation of the Roads, Traffic and Transportation report.
- Preparation of the Environmental report.
- Preparation of Landscape report.
- Preparation of Utilities and Services report.
- Energy, Environment and Sustainability review.
- Preparation of the design report.
- Preparation of drawings and 3D visualisations.
- Preparation of the Planning application.
- Preparation of cost reports.
- Consultations.
- Preparation of implementation review.

## 5.0 OBJECTIVES & ASPIRATIONS

The direction of the process has been clarified during the first period of the project programme and the team has now established clear objectives along with a specific series of tasks to be undertaken, which will ultimately lead towards a comprehensively assembled planning application at the conclusion of the project.

Much of the early work has been essentially technical in nature dealing with access issues and planning and engineering tasks, dealing with legislative guidelines, and accessibility issues and aspects of roads, traffic, transportation, car parking and environmental engineering matters.

These issues now will be negotiated to a conclusion and the design team will endeavour to establish the most beneficial circumstances for the development of the Gasworks precinct for the City Council.

Layered upon this work will be the creative architectural and landscape design process which will build on the technical framework established for the lands to provide for a dynamic, flexible and sustainable solution which will form the completed development plan for the Gasworks lands.

The design team will continue in close liaison with the Council officers to the concluding stages of the project and final presentations to the Council and interested parties prior to the submission of planning applications.





**GASWORKS PRECINCT- INTERMEDIATE**



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