

Development Management Officer Report Committee Application

Summary	
Committee Meeting Date: 17 May 2016	
Application ID: LA04/2016/0268/F	
Proposal: Temporary retention of electronic Big Screen	Location: Belfast City Hall Grounds Belfast City Hall Belfast BT 1 5GS
Referral Route: BCC Application	
Recommendation:	Approval
Applicant Name and Address: Belfast City Council Development Dpt. Cecil Ward Building 4-10 Linenhall Street Belfast BT 2 8BP	Agent Name and Address:
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>The application seeks permission for the retention of the existing electronic screen within the grounds of Belfast City Hall</p> <p>The main issues to be considered in this case are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principle of the development at this location; • Impact on the character of the conservation area and setting of the Listed Building; and • Traffic and parking. <p>The site is located within the City Centre Conservation Area and is identified as Civic Precinct and a Local landscape policy area; and sits on a significant area of public open space. The principle of development at this location is acceptable providing the proposal complies with relevant planning policy.</p> <p>Statutory Consultees offered no objections to the proposed scheme subject to conditions. Historic Buildings Unit has requested any approval is limited to a period of 3 years.</p> <p>While the Planning Service conservation officer considered the proposal to have an unacceptable impact on the conservation area and the setting of a listed building, on balance, it is considered that the screen provides a service to the general public, by providing public service information and broadcasting news and sporting events and in this respect the screen will be acceptable for a temporary period to allow a permanent site to be chosen within the City.</p> <p>No objections have been received following neighbour notifications and press advertisements.</p>	

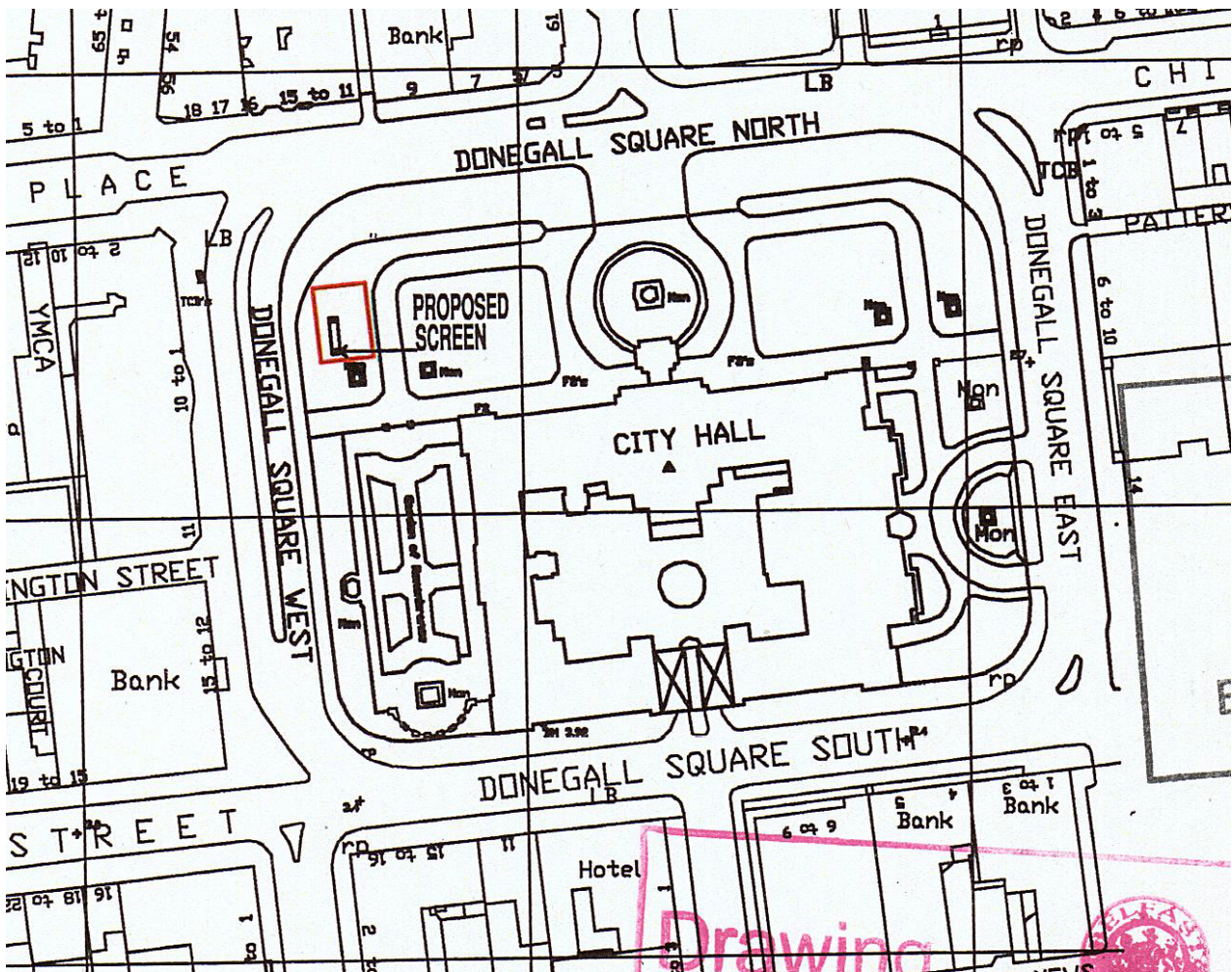
Having regard to the development plan, relevant planning policies, and other material considerations, it is determined that the development will not result in permanent demonstrable harm to the character of the area and setting of the listed building.

Recommendation:

Approve for a temporary period of 3 years with conditions (to include the time limiting condition)

Case Officer Report

Site Location Plan



Neighbour Notification Checked

Yes

Characteristics of the Site and Area	
1.0	<p>Description of Proposed Development</p> <p>Temporary permission is sought for the retention a large electronic screen within the grounds of Belfast City Hall.</p>
2.0	<p>Description of Site</p> <p>The site is located to the north western corner of the garden area fronting Belfast City Hall. The City Hall grounds are enclosed by low level railings ensuring that there is an open aspect which facilitates public views into the grounds/site.</p> <p>The site lies within the development limits of Belfast and is located within the City Centre Conservation Area. The area is predominately commercial and is characterised by offices, banks, retail units, bar/restaurants many of which are located within listed and period buildings.</p>
Planning Assessment of Policy and other Material Considerations	
3.0	<p>Site History</p> <p>Z/2010/0720/F - Installation of electronic screen to be used for the 2012 Olympic games from April 2011 to April 2014.</p> <p>Z/2013/1464/F - Retention of electronic Big Screen until April 2016</p>
4.0	<p>Policy Framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BMAP 2015 • Strategic Planning Policy Statement - SPPS • PPS6 - Planning, Archaeology and the Built Environment • PPS 8 Open space sport and outdoor recreation
5.0	<p>Statutory Consultees</p> <p>NIEA- Historic Building Unit - No Objections</p> <p>Transport NI- No Objections – condition re. illumination of screen</p>
6.0	<p>Non- Statutory Consultees</p> <p>Belfast City Council- EPU- No Objections</p>
7.0	<p>Representations</p> <p>No representations received.</p>
8.0	<p>Other Material Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast City Centre Conservation Area Guide

9.0	Assessment
9.1	<u>Principle of Development</u>
9.1.1	Paragraph 3.8 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement advises that planning permission should be granted for development that having regard for the area plan and other material considerations unless the development will cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance.
9.1.2	Article 6 (4) of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Act states that in making any determination under the said act regard is to be had to the local development plan, and that the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material consideration indicate otherwise.
	The proposal is for development within the existing development limits as designated within the current area plan BMAP 2015 other plan designations include city centre conservation area, Civic Precinct character area and local landscape policy area. The development therefore, adheres to the current area plan and satisfies the first part of paragraph 3.8.
9.2	Impact on the character of the conservation area and setting of the Listed Building.
9.2.1	<u>Planning Policy Statement 6 Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage</u> <u>Policy BH 12 – New Development in a Conservation Area</u>
	The above policy sets out seven grounds to be met for a development within the conservation area in order to be considered acceptable. The development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area; sympathetic to the built character of the area; scale and materials respect the character of adjoining buildings; the development does not result in environmental problems; important views are protected; landscape features are protected and development conforms to guidance.
9.2.2	Paragraph 7.3 of PPS 6 does state that that in exceptional cases the presumption against the grant of permission for development that conflicts with policy may be overridden in favour of development which is desirable on the grounds of some other public interest.
9.2.3	The Conservation Area Officer (CAO) was consulted in his response that he has a number of concerns regarding the development, including the impact the screen will have on the character of the area and on the setting of a Listed Building. The CAO reiterated his comments from previous applications stating that the screen is an alien form of development and will have an adverse impact on the reading of City Hall, the listed cenotaph and other listed monuments within the site. He went on to say that the retention of the screen should be resisted as it is not considered an acceptable form of development for reason it fails to respect or enhance the character of conservation area and its impact on the setting of the listed building.
9.2.4	The views of the screen are limited and intermittent when travelling within the conservation area. Furthermore the mature vegetation bounding the site does acts as a screening agent and reduces much of the negative impact the electronic screen may have on the surrounding area. However a permanent screen at this location would have the potential to impact on the Conservation area. This issue is further considered below.
9.3	PPS 6- Policy BH 11 Development affecting the setting of a listed building
9.3.1	Given the location of the proposal, within the grounds of City Hall (a Grade A listed building) and in the vicinity of a number of listed buildings, Historic Environment Division

	were consulted and have offered no objection to the proposal subject to a temporary condition being placed for the development for 3 years to allow for the long term position of the screen to be agreed.
9.3.2	In their planning statement the applicant has highlighted the fact that the “long term position of the screen will be resolved as part of the design development process for the Street Ahead Environmental Improvements... to determine an appropriate alternative location for the screen...”
9.3.3	The planning statement further highlights the primary reason for the screen as being for the use of the public. The screen has in the last 6 years shown the 2012 Olympic and Paralympics games exceeding its targeted attendance and in 2015 50 public events were held were the screen was used for the public benefit.
9.4	Impact on Traffic Transport NI was consulted on the proposal and has offered no objections to the proposal subject to conditions.
9.5	On balance, given the exception circumstances and community benefits of having the screen within the grounds of the City Hall and the fact that it is to be relocated to a different location in future as part of the streets ahead project, a time limited approval is recommended .
10.0	Summary of Recommendation: Approval
10.1	Having regard to the development plan, relevant planning policies, and other material considerations, it is considered that the development is acceptable. Approval is recommended with conditions.
11.0	Conditions 1. The development, hereby approved, shall be removed and the land returned to its former condition on or before the 30 th May 2019 Reason: The permanent retention of the proposed electronic screen would harm the character of Belfast City Centre Conservation Area. 2. The degree of illumination of the proposal must comply with the Institution of Lighting Engineers Technical Report No.5 “Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements” Reason: In the interests of visual amenity, road safety and convenience of road users. 3. The screen hereby approved will not be used for any form of commercial advertising Reason: Commercial advertising would not be acceptable at this location
12.0	Notification to Department (if relevant) - N/A

13.0	Representations from Elected Members –
	None

ANNEX	
Date Valid	27.01.2016
Date First Advertised	26.02.2016
Date Last Advertised	26.02.2016
Details of Neighbour Notification (all addresses)	
<p>Apartment 2-3 Donegall Square West Belfast BT16JA Clements Coffee 4 Donegall Square West Belfast BT1 6JA Centra Quick Stop 5-6 Donegall Square West Belfast BT1 6JA The Press Association Northern Ireland Scottish Provident Building 7 Donegall Square West Belfast BT1 6JH Charm Creative Ltd Scottish Provident Buildings 7Donegall Square West Belfast BT1 6JH Culbert Martin Solicitors Scottish Provident Building 7 Donegall Square West BT1 6JH Ferryhill Travel Scottish Provident Buildings 7Donegall Square West Belfast BT1 6JH Fine Co Ltd Scottish Provident Buildings 7Donegall Square West Belfast BT1 6JH Fleming Steele Ltd Scottish Provident Buildings 7 Donegall Square West BT1 6JH Harrison Barber Solicitors Scottish Provident Buildings 7 Donegall Square West Belfast BT16JH Harrison Hardstaff Scottish Provident Buildings 7 Donegall Square West Belfast BT1 6JH Horwood Neil Homes Scottish Provident Buildings 7 Donegall Square West BT1 6JH Kwik Travel Scottish Provident Buildings 7 Donegall Square West Belfast BT1 6JH Lightsource Renewable Energy Scottish Provident Buildings 7 Donegall Square West Belfast BT16JH Murphy O'Rawe Scottish Provident Buildings 7 Donegall Square West Belfast BT1 6JH Pragma Planning Development Consultants Scottish Provident Buildings 7 Donegall Square West Belfast BT1 6JH S P B Belfast Ltd Scottish Provident Buildings 7 Donegall Square West Belfast BT1 6JH Cafe Nero 10 Donegall Square West Belfast BT16JH Linen Hall Library 17 Donegall Square North Belfast BT1 5GB Co-Operative Bank Plc 18 Donegall Square North Belfast BT1 5GB The Spinning Wheel 9 Donegall Square West Belfast BT1 6JH The Cotton Mill 9 Donegall Square West Belfast BT1 6JH Appeals Service Cleaver House 1-3 Donegall Square North Belfast BT1 5GA</p>	

Robinson Cleaver Cafe Cleaver House Donegall Square North Belfast BT1 5GA
 Space N K 5-6 Donegall Square North Belfast BT15GB
 Barclays Bank Plc Donegall House 7 Donegall Square North Belfast BT1 5GB
 Davy Donegall House 7 Donegall Square North Belfast BT1 5GB
 Graham Corry Cheevers Ltd Donegall House 7 Donegall Square North Belfast BT1 5GB
 Moore Chartered Accountants Donegall House 7 Donegall Square North Belfast
 BT1 5GB
 Visit Belfast Donegall House 8-9 Donegall Square North Belfast BT1 5GB
 Bank Of Scotland 11-15 Donegall Square North Belfast BT1 5GB
 First Trust Bank 11-15 Donegall Square North Belfast BT1 5GB
 Halifax Plc 11-15 Donegall Square North Belfast BT1 5GB
 Molton Brown 16 Donegall Square North Belfast BT1 5GB

Date of Last Neighbour Notification

02.03.2016

Date of EIA Determination

N/A

ES Requested

No

Planning History

Ref ID: Z/2010/0720/F

Proposal: Installation of electronic screen to be used for the 2012 Olympic games from April 2011 to April 2014.

Address: Belfast City Hall, Belfast,

Decision: Approval

Decision Date: 05/11/2010

Ref ID: Z/2013/1464/F

Proposal: Retention of electronic Big Screen until April 2016

Address: Belfast City Hall, Belfast,

Decision: Approval

Decision Date: 14.04.2014

Drawing Numbers and Title

Drawing No. 01

Title: site location map

Drawing No. 02

Title: block plan

Drawing No. 03

Title: elevation plans

Notification to Department (if relevant) – Not Relevant.

Date of Notification to Department:

Response of Department:

