

Development Management Officer Report Committee Application

Summary	
Committee Meeting Date: 11 June 2019	
Application ID:	LA04/2018/1886/F
Proposal: Refurbishment and improvements to existing main school building, two adjacent pavilions and site to support a range of community-based heritage, culture, education, leisure, seminar and exhibition uses (as well as office, café, toilet accommodation).	Location: St Comgall's Primary School Divis Street Belfast BT12 4AQ
Referral Route: The applicant is in receipt of £3.5 million Belfast Investment Fund (BIF) funding from Belfast City Council and Belfast City Council is delivering the project.	
Recommendation:	Approval
Applicant Name and Address: Falls Community Council 277 Falls Road Belfast BT12 6FD	Agent Name and Address: Hall Black Douglas Architects 152 Albertbridge Road Belfast BT5 4GS
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>The proposal is for full planning permission for the refurbishment and improvements to existing main school building, two adjacent pavilions and site to support a range of community-based heritage, culture, education, leisure, seminar and exhibition uses (as well as office, café, toilet accommodation).</p> <p>The site is a vacant former primary school which is grade B1 listed building and is identified on the Built Heritage at Risk Northern Ireland Register</p> <p>The applicant is in receipt of £3.5 million Belfast Investment Fund (BIF) funding from Belfast City Council and a further £3.5million from the Northern Ireland Office Social Investment Fund. Belfast City Council is delivering the project.</p> <p>The key issues in the assessment of the proposed development include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of development and use; • Proposed design, layout, scale and massing; • Impact on the listed building; • Impact on the character of the area; • Impact on residential amenity; • Impact on traffic and parking provision; • Other environmental factors. <p>The principle of the proposed use is considered to be acceptable and is compatible with existing residential dwellings without resulting in detrimental impact to the residential amenity of adjacent properties.</p>	

Historic Environments Division, following the submission of amendments and subject to conditions have no objection to the proposal.

Environmental Health responded with no objection subject to conditions in relation to air quality, odour and noise.

No objections have been received.

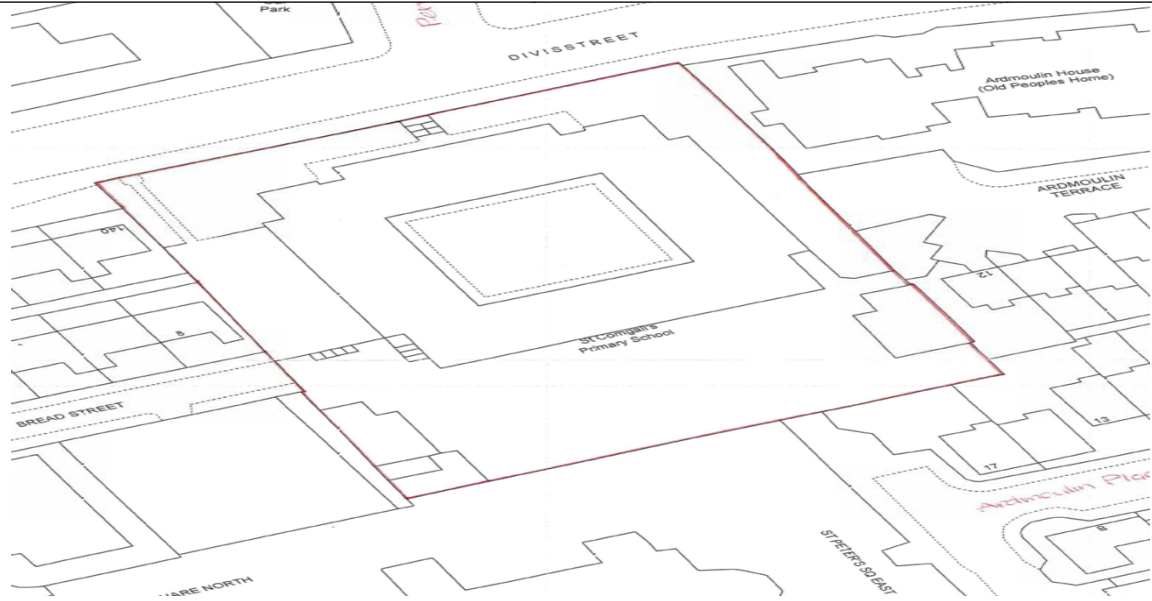
DFI Roads have no objection to the proposal.

Recommendation:

Having regard to the policy context and other material considerations above, the proposal is considered acceptable and planning permission is recommended and delegated authority is sought for the final wording of conditions from the Director of Planning and Building Control.

Case Officer Report

Site Location Plan



Characteristics of the Site and Area

1.0 Description of Proposed Development

1.1 The proposal is for full planning permission for the refurbishment and improvements to existing main school building, two adjacent pavilions and site to support a range of community-based heritage, culture, education, leisure, seminar and exhibition uses (as well as office, café, toilet accommodation). When the whole building is in use the applicant expects that it will accommodate 770 person. Peak occupancy will be determined by function room and central courtyard use alongside regular occupancy and exhibitions which aim to attract tourists.

2.0 Description of Site

2.1 The site is located at St Comgall's Primary School, Divis Street, Belfast. The site is vacant and in a state of disrepair and includes the main school building and two pavilions dating from 1922. The school building is grade B1 listed (HB26/33/004) and is identified on the Built Heritage at Risk Northern Ireland Register. The pavilions themselves are not listed, however they are located within the listed building curtilage. The buildings are characterised by Neo-Georgian facades in rustic Belfast clay brickwork and grey cast stone with large multi-paned windows and pitched slate roofs.

2.2 The main school building consists of four 2 storey height wings located around a central square courtyard. At ground floor level the corridor is an open arcade which provides access directly in to the courtyard with first floor level corridors being enclosed. The main entrance to the school building is located on the north western elevation of the northern wing. A double height assembly hall is located in the northern wing. The southern wing includes a lower ground level. To the south west is a playground with pavilions located in the south western and south eastern corner of the site. The site is accessed via the principal vehicular access and pedestrian access located on the Divis Street side and secondary access at Bread Street and Ardmoilin Place.

2.3	To the north opposite the site is an existing crèche/nursery. To the east and west of the site the area is characterised by existing residential dwelling in the form of two storey terrace dwellings and apartments. To the south of the site is St Peter's cathedral.
Planning Assessment of Policy and other Material Considerations	
3.0	Site History
3.1	LA04/2018/1773/LBC - Refurbishment and improvements to existing main school building, two adjacent pavilions and site to support a range of community-based heritage, culture, education, leisure, seminar and exhibition uses (as well as office, café, toilet accommodation) - Pending
3.2	LA04/2015/0390/F - Installation of new pedestrian gate (retrospective) – Granted
3.3	LA04/2015/0462/LBC - Installation of pedestrian gate (retrospective) - Granted
3.4	Z/2013/1030/F - Boundary wall and railings/gates to be relocated approximately 1m into the site to facilitate widening of the adjacent footway/carriageway as part of the Belfast Rapid Transit scheme - Granted
3.5	Z/2013/0970/LBC- Relocation of boundary wall to facilitate widening of footway / carriageway - Granted
4.0	Policy Framework
4.1	Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001
4.2	Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015
4.3	Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2004
4.4	4.4.1 Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) 4.4.2 Planning Policy Statement 3: Access, Movement and Parking 4.4.3 Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning, Archaeology and the built heritage 4.4.4 Planning Policy Statement 16: Tourism
5.0	Statutory Consultees Responses
5.1	DRD Transport NI – No objection subject to conditions
5.2	NI Water – Strategic Applications
5.3	Historic Environments Division - No objection subject to conditions
6.0	Non Statutory Consultees Responses
6.1	Environmental Health - No objection subject to conditions
7.0	Representations
7.1	The application has been neighbour notified and advertised in the local press. No representations from have been received.
8.0	Other Material Considerations
8.1	The adopted Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 designates the site as white land.

8.2	Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) 2015 plan the site is designated as white land.
8.3	Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) 2004 plan the site is designated as white land.
9.0	Assessment
9.1	<p>The key issues in the assessment of the proposed development include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of development and use; • Proposed design, layout, scale and massing; • Impact on the Listed Building; • Impact on the character of the area; • Impact on residential amenity; • Impact on traffic and parking provision; • Other environmental factors.
9.2	The adopted Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (BMAP) has been quashed as a result of a judgement in the Court of Appeal delivered on 18 May 2017. As a consequence of this, the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (BUAP) is now the statutory development plan for the area.
9.3	Section 45 (1) of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 requires regard to be had to the Development Plan, so far as material to the application and to any other material considerations. Section 6 (4) states that where regard is to be had to the Development Plan, the determination must be made in accordance with the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
9.4	As the decision to adopt BMAP has been quashed in its entirety, it is as though the draft BMAP has never been adopted, however, the version of draft BMAP which was purported to be adopted remains a material consideration.
9.5	The site is located within the settlement development limit for Belfast. However given that the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 version was adopted and subsequently quashed weight is afforded to it as it had reached the most advanced stage a draft plan could having been through public inquiry. The site was designated as white un-zoned land on an arterial route AR 01/06 Divis Street, Falls Road and Glen Road.
9.6	Draft BMAP 2004 version also designated the site as white land on an arterial route.
9.7	The adopted Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 designates the site as white land.
9.8	Under the SPPS, the guiding principle for planning authorities in determining planning applications is that sustainable development should be permitted, having regard to the development plan and all other material considerations, unless the proposed development will cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance. It is deemed that this proposal will not result in demonstrable harm to the residential amenity of neighbours, but will bring in to use an existing building and provide a venue and use that brings a wider community benefit.
9.9	The applicant has stated in the accompanying Design and Access statement that the proposal has been designed with the aim of achieving a BREEAM - Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method 'Good' rating. BREEAM is an assessment of the sustainability of built form. This is considered to be in line with the core principles of the Strategic Planning Policy for Northern Ireland (SPPS).

9.10	<p><u>Principle of development and use</u></p> <p>The principle of the proposed at this location is considered acceptable. The proposed use from a vacant school, use Class D1 as per the Planning (Use Classes) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 as a community facility also Class D1 is considered compatible alongside existing residential dwellings. The proposal will ensure the listed school building and the two pavilions are brought back into use, safeguarding their retention and maintenance in the future. The proposed community use will bring a wider community benefit to the area providing a community hub for a range of functions including the promotion of the local community through culture, heritage, education and leisure. The proposal will also serve tourists as an attraction to the area with exhibitions telling the history of the area.</p>
9.11	<p><u>Proposed design, layout, scale and massing</u></p> <p>The main school building consists of four 2 storey height wings located around a central square courtyard. At ground floor level the corridor is an open arcade which provides access directly in to the courtyard with first floor level corridors being enclosed. The main entrance to the school building is located on the north western elevation of the northern wing. A double height assembly hall is located in the northern wing. The southern wing includes a lower ground level. To the south west is a playground with pavilions located in the south western and south eastern corner of the site.</p>
9.12	<p>The site will utilise the existing vehicular and pedestrian accesses from Divis Street with a secondary vehicular access at Bread Street. A further pedestrian access to the southern end of the site from Ardmoulin Place will also be retained and utilised. Parking is located along the southern boundary of the site and on the southern side elevation of the main school building. Disabled parking spaces are located adjacent to the western wing of the school building.</p>
9.13	<p>Disabled access is provided to the main school building and the pavilions with level accesses and the inclusion of a lift in the main school building to provide access to the first floor level of the building.</p>
9.14	<p><u>Main school building</u></p> <p>The proposal includes the addition of a glazed pyramid roof to the central courtyard. The glazing of the courtyard will facilitate additional floor space whilst retaining the character of the courtyard. The proposed scale and massing of the glazed pyramid roof to the central courtyard and the addition of the lift is considered to be acceptable and subordinate to the existing building. Historic Environments Division have considered the proposal and considered it to be acceptable and in compliance with paragraph 6.13 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) and policy BH8 – Extension of Alteration of a Listed Building of Planning Policy Statement 6 – Planning Archaeology and the Built Heritage subject to the attachment of conditions.</p>
9.15	<p>The proposal includes the retention and conservation of many architectural details throughout the building. This also includes elements which reflect the buildings history and will form part of the show casing of the building including events resulting in shrapnel damage to the building as one example.</p>
9.16	<p>Disabled access is provided to the main school building with level accesses, provision of ramps and the inclusion of a lift on the northern elevation (internal court yard) of the southern wing of the main school building to provide access to the first floor level of the building.</p>
9.17	<p><u>Pavilion A</u></p> <p>The original fabric of pavilion A is be retained and restored, the additional later extensions to the pavilion are to be removed and a set of additional external doors are located on the</p>

	<p>southern elevation. Whilst the pavilion is not listed it is within the listed building curtilage of the main school building. Historic Environments Division raised no concern in respect of the pavilions and it is considered that the proposal is acceptable and will not detrimentally impact on the setting of the adjacent listed building.</p>
9.18	<p><u>Pavilion B</u> The original fabric of pavilion B is to be retained and restored with the addition of external doors on the southern elevation. Whilst the pavilion is not listed it is within the listed building curtilage of the main school building. Historic Environments Division raised no concern in respect of the pavilions and it is considered that the proposal is acceptable and will not detrimentally impact on the setting of the adjacent listed building.</p>
9.19	<p><u>Impact on the Listed Building</u> Historic Environments Division has considered the proposal and following the submission of amendments and additional information in relation to material finishes the proposal is considered to be acceptable, in that the essential character of the building and its setting is retained and various special features of interest remain intact. The applicant proposes to use sympathetic building materials and architectural details which will not detract from the character of the building whilst delivering to the applicants requirements. Therefore it is considered that the proposal satisfies paragraph 6.13 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) and policy BH8 – Extension of Alteration of a Listed Building of Planning Policy Statement 6 – Planning Archaeology and the Built Heritage subject to the attachment of conditions.</p>
9.20	<p><u>Impact on the character of the area</u> In terms of the impact of the proposal on the character of the area, it is considered that the restoration of the building will positively contribute to the character of the area. The building is located on a prominent site on Divis Street and is currently in a state of disrepair. The proposal will ensure the restoration of the listed building and is considered to be a planning gain. The use of the building will remain as Class D1 – Community and Cultural Uses. The proposal will ensure the restoration, maintenance and retention of the listed building on a prominent site as well as delivery a community hub providing regeneration and the creation of jobs for the community.</p>
9.21	<p><u>Impact on residential amenity</u> The use of the building will remain as Class D1 – Community and Cultural Uses. Environmental Health has considered the proposal and have no objection to the proposal subject to the attachment of conditions in relation to air quality, odour and noise. There is no change in the separation distances between the proposal buildings and existing adjacent residential properties. It is considered that the proposal will not detrimentally impact upon the residential amenity of neighbours.</p>
9.22	<p><u>Impact on traffic and parking provision</u> DFI Roads were consulted and have no objection to the proposal subject to the attachment of conditions. The proposal includes the provision of cycle parking and the Framework Travel Plan contained within the Transport Statement and Framework Travel Plan document which promotes the use of alternative modes of transport in accordance with sustainable transportation methods. It is considered that the proposal site is located at a sustainable location on an arterial route with convenient access to public transport, is located on the Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT) route, is within walking distance to the city and bicycle parking is provided.</p>
9.23	<p><u>Other environmental factors.</u> NI Water strategic applications responded with no objection. In respect of landscaping, existing trees along the northern boundary of the site are to be retained as is the sloped grass</p>

9.24	<p>bank in which they are located. New trees and grass areas are proposed in the southern portion of the site in the corners between the pavilions and the southern site boundary and edging along the proposed parking. The proposed retention and additional landscaping is considered to be acceptable and will assist with softening of the site which is currently dominated by built form and hard standing.</p> <p>Recommendation The proposal is considered to be acceptable and planning permission is recommended subject to conditions.</p>
9.25	<p>Having regard to the policy context and other material considerations above, the proposal is considered acceptable and planning permission is recommended and delegated authority is sought for the final wording of conditions from the Director of Planning and Building Control.</p>
10.0	Summary of Recommendation: Approval
11.0	<p>Conditions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this permission. Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. 2. The vehicular access shall be provided in accordance with Drawing No.15C bearing the date stamp 27th March 2019 prior to the operation of any other works or other development hereby permitted. Reason: To ensure there is a satisfactory means of access in the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users 3. The development hereby permitted shall not become operational until hard surfaced areas have been constructed and permanently marked in accordance with Drawing No.15C bearing the date stamp 27th March 2019, to provide for parking within the site. No part of these hard surfaced areas shall be used for any purpose at any time other than for the parking and movement of vehicles in connection with the approved development. Reason: To ensure adequate provision has been made for parking within the site. 4. The development hereby permitted shall not become operational until cycle parking facilities have been provided in accordance with Drawing No.15C bearing the date stamp 27th March 2019. Reason: To promote the use of alternative modes of transport in accordance with sustainable transportation principles. 5. The development hereby permitted shall not become operational until a Travel Plan has been prepared in general accordance with the Framework Travel Plan contained within the Transport Statement & Framework Travel Plan document bearing Planning Authority date stamp 26th July 2018. Reason: To promote the use of alternative modes of transport in accordance with sustainable transportation principles.

6. Combustion plant for the hereby permitted development shall meet the technical specification as detailed within WYG air quality assessment (Chapter 5, WYG: Air Quality Assessment, St Comgall's Primary School Refurbishment, Belfast, BT12 4AQ, March 2019)

Reason: Protection of human health.

7. Prior to the operation of the hereby permitted development a proprietary odour abatement system shall be installed to suppress and disperse odours created from cooking and/or reheating operations within the kitchens serving the café and the function room. The outlet from the extract ventilation shall terminate a minimum of 1m above the eaves height of the main building and shall be retained thereafter.

Reason: Protection of Residential Amenity

8. The extraction and ventilation system must be cleaned and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions to ensure compliance with the above condition.

Reason: Protection of Residential Amenity

9. Prior to the commencement of operation of the hereby approved development the acoustic mitigation/design measures as outlined in the FR Marks & Associates Noise Impact Assessment dated December 2018 planning reference: LA04/2018/1886/F shall be implemented.

Reason: Protection of residential amenity

10. The front windows to the function room and the glazing to the court yard shall remain fully closed during entertainment.

Reason: Protection of residential amenity

11. No service collections or deliveries shall take place between 11pm and 7am.

Reason: Protection of residential amenity.

12. The combined rating level of external plant and equipment shall not exceed 44 dBLAr, when determined at the façade of the nearest residential premises with all measurements/calculations carried out in line with BS4142:2014.

Reason: Protection of residential amenity.

13. An indicative ironmongery schedule shall be submitted and agreed in writing by Belfast City Council Planning in consultation with Historic Environment Division. The works shall thereafter be carried out solely in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the development is not detrimental to the character, appearance or interest of the listed building.

14. The glass blocks which make up the Pavement Lights in the courtyard shall be set into the refurbished existing cast iron frame before being set back into the new Courtyard floor.

	<p>Reason: In line with BH8 in order that the essential character of the building is retained, its features of special interest remain intact and unimpaired and that the works proposed make use of traditional and/or sympathetic building materials and techniques which match and are in keeping with those found on the building.</p> <p>15. All new suspended ceilings/acoustic ceiling tiles shall be 'Troldekt' cement-bonded wood wool panels.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure that the development is not detrimental to the character, appearance or interest of the listed building.</p> <p>16. Prior to the commencement of any works details of the proposed external feature lighting, external signage, retaining wall, cycle store and street furniture shall be submitted and agreed in writing by Belfast City Council Planning in consultation with Historic Environment Division. The works shall thereafter be carried out solely in accordance with the approved details.</p> <p>Reason: In line with BH8 in order that the essential character of the building is retained, its features of special interest remain intact and unimpaired and that the works proposed make use of traditional and/or sympathetic building materials and techniques which match and are in keeping with those found on the building.</p> <p>Informatives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The developer should consider all consultees comments prior to commencing this proposal. All comments can be viewed on the planning portal quoting the application reference number. 2. This planning permission is linked to listed building consent LA04/2018/1773/LBC.
<p>Notification to Department (if relevant) N/A</p>	
<p>Representations from Elected members: None</p>	

ANNEX	
Date Valid	14th August 2018
Date First Advertised	24th August 2018
Date Last Advertised	24th August 2018
Details of Neighbour Notification (all addresses)	
<p>The Owner/Occupier, 1 Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4JP, The Owner/Occupier, 112 Percy Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT13 2HT, The Owner/Occupier, 114 Percy Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT13 2HT, The Owner/Occupier, 116 Percy Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT13 2HT, The Owner/Occupier, 12 Ardmoulin Terrace,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4SE, The Owner/Occupier, 13 Ardmoulin Place,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4RT, The Owner/Occupier, 140 Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4AQ, The Owner/Occupier, 15 Ardmoulin Place,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4RT, The Owner/Occupier, 17 Ardmoulin Place,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4RT, The Owner/Occupier, 1a ,Falls Road,Belfast,Antrim,, The Owner/Occupier, 37 Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4AP, The Owner/Occupier, 66 St Peters Square North,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4DH, The Owner/Occupier, 8 Bread Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4DB, The Owner/Occupier, A1,Ardmoulin House,Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4JP, The Owner/Occupier, A2,Ardmoulin House,Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4JP, The Owner/Occupier, A3,Ardmoulin House,Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4JP, The Owner/Occupier, A4,Ardmoulin House,Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4JP, The Owner/Occupier, A5,Ardmoulin House,Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4JP, The Owner/Occupier, B1,Ardmoulin House,Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4JP, The Owner/Occupier, B10,Ardmoulin House,Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4JP,</p>	

The Owner/Occupier,
 B2,Armdoulin House,Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4JP,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 B3,Armdoulin House,Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4JP,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 B4,Armdoulin House,Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4JP,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 B5,Armdoulin House,Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4JP,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 B6,Armdoulin House,Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4JP,
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 B7,Armdoulin House,Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4JP,
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 B8,Armdoulin House,Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4JP,
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 B9,Armdoulin House,Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4JP,
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 C1,Armdoulin House,Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4JP,
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 C10,Armdoulin House,Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4JP,
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 C11,Armdoulin House,Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4JP,
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 C4,Armdoulin House,Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4JP,
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 C5,Armdoulin House,Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4JP,
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 C6,Armdoulin House,Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4JP,
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 C7,Armdoulin House,Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4JP,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 C8,Armdoulin House,Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4JP,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 C9,Armdoulin House,Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4JP,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 Careers N Kids Incorporated Ltd,81 Percy Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT13 2HT,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 Cathedral Community Services,1 Bread Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4DB,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 North & West Belfast Hss Trust,2a Common Area,Divis Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4AD,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 The Vistors Centre,66 St Peters Square North,Belfast,Antrim,BT12 4DH,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 Tower Cabs,124 Percy Street,Belfast,Antrim,BT13 2HT,
 The Owner/Occupier,
 Water Executive,1,1a ,Falls Road,Belfast,Antrim,,

The Owner/Occupier, Wee Bank Social Club, Divis Street, Belfast, Antrim, BT12 4JP,	
Date of Last Neighbour Notification	24th August 2018
Date of EIA Determination	N/A
ES Requested	No
Drawing Numbers and Title	
Drawing No. 01-66 Type: Site location plan, existing and proposed block plan, existing and proposed elevations and floor plans, materials schedules.	