

ITEM D

Ulster University

**Lands within Ulster University
Coleraine Campus approximately
340m West of 1 University Park
and 27 University Gardens
Cromore Road Coleraine.**

C/2015/0137/F

Full Planning

23rd September 2015

<u>No:</u>	C/2015/0137/F	<u>Ward:</u>	University
<u>App Type:</u>	Full Planning		
<u>Address:</u>	Lands within Ulster University Coleraine Campus approximately 340m West of 1 University Park and 27 University Gardens Cromore Road Coleraine.		
<u>Proposal:</u>	Demolition of existing sports changing facilities and the construction of a sports centre incorporating a sports hall, fitness suite, changing rooms, office suite, athletes lounge, reception area, storage and plant with associated site works and landscaping.		
<u>Con Area:</u>	N/A	<u>Valid Date:</u>	26th March 2015
<u>Listed Building Grade:</u>	N/A		
Agent:	G M Design Associates Ltd, 22 Lodge Road Coleraine BT52 1NB		
Applicant:	Ulster University c/o Agent		
Objections: 0	Petitions of Objection: 0		
Support: 0	Petitions of Support: 0		

Drawings and additional information are available to view on the Planning Portal- www.planningni.gov.uk

1 RECOMENDATION

- 1.1 That the Committee has taken into consideration and agrees with the reasons for the recommendation set out in section 9 and the policies and guidance in section 7 and resolves to **GRANT** planning permission subject to the conditions and informatives set out in section 10.

2 SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 This subject site is wholly located within the university campus and is situated to the north of existing university buildings. The site comprises an existing single storey flat roof sport changing facilities (finished in smooth render), maintenance compound and associated carparking. It also includes an all-weather pitch

and a strip of land from another all-weather pitch in the eastern part of the site; part of a rugby pitch in the north west portion of the site; an existing access (northern entrance) to the Cromore Road, and associated ancillary open space and footpath network. The site is relatively flat.

- 2.2 There is landscaping near the site including an 18m deep belt of mature trees located between the all-weather pitches and the northern entrance. The south eastern and south western boundaries are defined by the existing internal road network; the north western boundary is undefined on the ground; whilst the north eastern boundary is partially defined by a post and rail fence and partially undefined. The site is abutted by a rugby pitch to the NW (with a wind turbine beyond); a football pitch and an all-weather pitch to the north; existing university buildings to the south-west and open space to the south east and west. There are no critical views, other than from within the university campus.
- 2.3 The site is located in the settlement limit of Coleraine as defined in the North East Area Plan 2002 and the draft Northern Area Plan 2016.

3 RELEVANT HISTORY

C/2010/0183/F. Demolition of existing sports changing and grounds keeping facilities and the construction of a sports centre incorporating a 3G pitch, sports hall, fitness suite, replacement outdoor changing rooms, indoor changing rooms, office suite, athletes' lounge, reception area with climbing wall storage and plant with associated siteworks, landscaping and car parking. Address: Lands within University of Ulster Coleraine Campus approximately 340m west of No. 1 ,University Park and 27 University Gardens, Cromore Road, Coleraine
Approved 12.08.2010

4 THE APPLICATION

- 4.1 Planning permission is sought for the construction of a sports centre incorporating a sports hall, fitness suite, changing rooms, office suite, athletes lounge, reception area, storage and plant with associated site works and landscaping. The proposal

comprises 12 No. cycle parking spaces, a delivery stopping space / bus stop, servicing / delivery route, with surface finishes of bitmac, planting / green space, block paving and concrete paving. The proposal includes the demolition of the existing sports changing facilities.

5 PUBLICITY & CONSULTATIONS

External

- 5.1 **Neighbours:** There have been no objections to the proposal.

Internal

- 5.2 **Transport NI:** Has no objection to the proposal subject to conditions.

Environmental Health: Has no objection to the proposal.

NI Water: Has no objection to the proposal

Rivers Agency: is satisfied with the Flood and Drainage Risk Assessment and has no objection to the proposal.

6 MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 Article 45 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 states that, “where an application is made for planning permission, the council or, as the case may be, the Department, in dealing with the application, must have regard to the local development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations.”

- 6.2 The development plans are:

- North East Area Plan
- draft Northern Area Plan 2016

- 6.3 The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) is a material consideration.

- 6.4 Due weight should be given to the relevant policies in the development plan.

- 6.5 All material considerations and any policy conflicts are identified in the “Considerations and Assessment” section of the report.

7 RELEVANT POLICIES & GUIDANCE

PPS 1 General Principles

PPS3 Access Movement and Parking / DCAN15

PPS8 Open Space Sport and Outdoor Recreation

PPS15 Planning and Flood Risk

8 CONSIDERATIONS & ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 The main considerations in the determination of this application relate to: designation as open space and PPS 8, design, PPS 15 – Drainage Assessment, and the University Local Landscape Policy Area (CEL 04).

Planning Policy

- 8.2 The site is located within the settlement limit of Coleraine in both the adopted and draft plans.
- 8.3 In the North East Area Plan the land is identified as white land with no land use designations or constraints. In the draft Northern Area Plan the land where the proposed block is located is designated as major area of existing open space and is located within Designation CEL04 University Local Landscape Policy Area.
- 8.4 The principle of this development proposed must be considered having regard to the PPS policy documents specified above and the supplementary guidance.

Designation as open space and PPS 8

- 8.5 This proposal includes an existing sports and changing facility. It also includes existing pitches and is designated as open space within the draft NAP, and as the land meets the definition

of open space, needs to be considered under PPS 8 Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation. The site area is 2.75 hectares and the proposed building is approx. 3,000 square metres.

- 8.6 A similar proposal was approved in August 2010 [C/2010/0183/F] and this approval was still 'live' when this application was submitted. Although the current application seeks a similar building and use, the proposal is significantly reduced from the previous approval which was approx. 8,000 square metres. This is material to the determination of this proposal as there has been no significant change in policy since that time. The relevant policies within PPS 8 are Policy OS1 and Policy OS4.
- 8.7 Policy OS 1 sets out a presumption against the loss of land designated for the provision of open space. There is however, policy exceptions which are when a proposal will bring substantial community benefits that outweigh the loss of open space; or in the case of playing fields and sports pitches within settlement limits, it is demonstrated that the retention and enhancement of the facility can only be achieved by the development of a small part of the existing space - limited to a maximum of 10% of the overall area. Giving weight to the previous approval, that there will be significant benefits to the community by having improved and upgraded facilities, and the proposal would remove much less than 10% of the overall open space provision, the proposal is acceptable when considered against this policy. It should also be noted that although some existing open space is lost, the development improves the sporting potential of the site by providing indoor and new changing facilities to complement the outdoor pitches. For example, the space within the main hall can function as any of the following: 8 badminton courts, 2 basketball courts, 2 five-a-side pitches, futsal pitch, an indoor hockey pitch, a netball court, or 2 volleyball courts and this must be balanced against the loss of one all-weather pitch.
- 8.8 Policy OS 4 relates to intensive sports facilities and permits the development of intensive sports facilities where these are located within settlements. This proposal meets this test. A proposal for this type of sports facilities is also required to meet the following criteria:

- *there is no unacceptable impact on the amenities of people living nearby by reason of the siting, scale, extent, frequency or timing of the sporting activities proposed, including any noise or light pollution likely to be generated;*

The proposal is confined to the university campus and will not result in any unacceptable impact on the amenities of people living nearby.

- *there is no adverse impact on features of importance to nature conservation, archaeology or built heritage;*

This proposal will have no impact on any such features.

- *buildings or structures are designed to a high standard, are of a scale appropriate to the local area or townscape and are sympathetic to the surrounding environment in terms of their siting, layout and landscape treatment;*

The building has 2 floors and comprises an entrance lobby and reception, a large sports hall, changing facilities and toilets, staff rooms/offices and ancillary facilities, a committee room, fitness/weight suite, sauna and steam room, and an athletes' lounge. The building is a flat roof structure to be located between the pavilion and the all-weather pitch. The proposed footprint of the building measures 38.5m x 58.3m. The overall height is 13.3m from finished floor level. The proposed finishes of the building include a combination of blue / black brick, green composite panels, aluminium doors and window frames and kalwall (a material with a translucent finish). The finished floor level is 21.55, slightly below the existing road level of 22.465. The visual impact of the proposal relates satisfactorily and is appropriate to the institutional buildings surrounding the site, in terms of scale, massing design and finishes. The visual impact of the building is restricted to within the campus. The belt of mature trees is to be retained except for the clearance of some trees to create an access/path to the building which will be used as for servicing/deliveries and is considered acceptable.

- *the proposed facility takes into account the needs of people with disabilities and is located so as to be accessible to the catchment population giving priority to walking, cycling and public transport; and*

The proposal utilises an existing car park which is close to the building. In addition to this, bicycle parking is included which provides space for 40 bikes and the layout of the building provides good pedestrian access. Internally the reception area is large and provides all the facilities that someone with impaired mobility would require – sufficient changing space/areas, disabled WC and lifts etc. The proposal will avail of the current public transport links to and from the university such as the train station on Cromore Road and bus stops on Portstewart Road. There is also a layby providing a drop off point/bus stop outside the main entrance.

- *the road network can safely handle the extra vehicular traffic the proposal will generate and satisfactory arrangements are provided for site access, car parking, drainage and waste disposal.*

Transport NI has been consulted and raises no objection to the proposal as access will be via the existing access into the university using its internal road network. Northern Ireland Water has no objection to the drainage and waste disposal advising that the sewers within the university complex are private. The applicant intends to use mains sewerage, as per section 15 of the submitted P1 form.

Design

- 8.9 Policy OS 4 requires this type of sports building and structures to be designed to a high standard and to be in keeping with the surrounding area. As the site is located within the university campus, the proposal reflects the scale and style of large buildings associated with a university. The proposed design is acceptable as set out in paragraph 8.8.

PPS 15 – Drainage Assessment

- 8.10 As the site is in excess of 1 hectare, a Drainage Assessment was requested on 02.04.2015 as required under Policy FLD3: Development and Surface Water (Pluvial) Flood Risk Outside Flood Plains. A Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment was then prepared by McCloy Consulting and submitted on 27.07.2015. Rivers Agency was consulted with the Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment as the competent authority and following an assessment has no objection to the proposal.

University Local Landscape Policy Area

- 8.11 The proposed building will be sited within a draft Local Landscape Policy Area which has been designated as the University and its grounds, with significant landscaping and trees makes a significant contribution to the northern fringe of Coleraine. That said, the policy allows for the continued development of institutional buildings within this area while having regard to the landscape framework of this designation. As this proposal will have no detrimental impact on this, the development of a new sports facility is compatible in this area.

9 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The proposed development is considered acceptable in this location having regard to the North East Area and draft Northern Area Plans, and other material considerations. The scheme includes replacing an existing changing facility with a large sports complex. The loss of small area of open space is acceptable and is balanced with an improved sports offering including substantial indoor sports uses. The proposal complies with planning policy and is acceptable in terms of its layout and appearance. In accordance with para 52 and para 59 of PPS 1, no significant harm would be caused to neighbouring amenity and there would be no demonstrable harm. Approval is recommended.

10 CONDITIONS

10.1 Regulatory Conditions:

1. As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, the development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: Time Limit.

2. All services within the development should be laid underground.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity

ANNEX

Date Valid	26th March 2015
Date First Advertised	11th April 2015
Date Last Advertised	
Details of Neighbour Notification (all addresses) The Owner/Occupier, 1 University Park Ballysally Coleraine The Owner/Occupier, 27 University Gardens, Cromore Road, Coleraine	
Date of Last Neighbour Notification	14th April 2015
Date of EIA Determination	24th April 2015
ES Requested	No