

SoundYard Quick Facts Sheet

- In September 2019, the RSUA, JP Corry and Maritime Belfast Trust launched the CityPlay Design Competition, challenging Early Career Architects to generate ideas for the integration of play in Belfast city centre, specifically along the Maritime Mile.
- The winning team comprised Eunan Deeney, Matthew Kernan and Hannah Wilson. All former QUB graduates, the trio began working for TODD Architects.
- SoundYard will be a standalone interactive play experience, which has been inspired by the noise of striking metal emanating from the shipyards and by the brass, iron, and bronze foundries that served the busy shipyards.
- The structure will be 7 metres tall, 9.6 metres wide, weighs 7 tonnes and has 225 suspended chimes/sound tubes.
- The structure includes a roofed steel support frame that will hold aloft multiple rings of suspended metal tubes. The outer rings will form a visual veil around the structure and vary in length. The four inner rings will form an acoustic element with rotating spindles between. These will be set at a height and be fabricated with a mechanism that will enable the suspended sound tubes to be ‘struck’ in such a manner that replicates the sounds of the shipyard. The area will be landscaped and include an interpretation panel explaining the installation and stories from the shipyard.
- The location of SoundYard is where Queens Quay was constructed 1844-46 as Belfast Harbour began to expand, and the former Kelly’s Coal yards were established here in the 1840s overlooking the developing Harbour and Abercorn Basin. It was also once the site of a brass foundry.
- Shipbuilding would become one of the city’s largest industries in the 18th and 19th centuries, and the hammering and clanging noises from the yard would become as iconic as the yellow cranes that define Belfast’s skyline today.
- The innovative design will ensure that it is aligned with Covid-19 guidelines, and the installation will be activated by motion sensors.
- The project incorporates the circular economy for the built environment and elements have been designed with re-use, repurposing and recycling in mind.
- The installation will include bespoke lighting as part of the Maritime Mile evening experience.
- The SoundYard initiative would not have been possible without investment from Tourism NI’s Experience Development Programme, Maritime Belfast Trust, JP Corry & Belfast Harbour. Along with the guidance to Hannah, Eunan & Matthew from Todd Architects & in-kind support from the Odyssey Trust.
- Tourism NI’s Experience Development Programme aims to develop new and enhanced demand generating tourism experiences to support tourism recovery and growth. The programme will improve the range and quality of experiences throughout NI in line with the new experience brand Embrace a Giant Spirit.

