

For Immediate Release

Phase one of Ireland's largest film studio campus receives planning approval in principle from Westmeath County Council

- **Hammerlake Studios a 'purpose-built campus' to attract large-scale blockbuster film, television and content productions from the U.S. and around the world**
- **Phase one of the studio to generate €50 million annually for Mullingar economy**
- **First phase to commence operations in Q1 2024, generating 350 production jobs and 300 construction jobs**
- **Second phase to bring job creation to over 1,000 by 2025 with 11 stage campus totalling 460,000 square-feet**
- **Proposal backed by creative arts, business, and political leaders**
- **Council recommends change of land use to finalise approval**

A planning application to build what will become Ireland's largest film studio campus has taken a significant step forward with confirmation of approval by Westmeath County Council on July 12th.

In accordance with Section 34(6) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the application has been approved by officials. Subject to a material contravention of the County Development Plan, the final decision to grant permission will rest with the elected members of the Council in September.

The application, submitted by Hammerlake Studios in May, will see a purpose-built film, television and content production campus constructed on a 25-acre site at Lough Sheever Corporate Park, Mullingar, Co Westmeath. Located 55-minutes from Dublin Airport and adjacent to the M4 motorway, the Hammerlake Studios campus aims to attract the world's biggest film and content productions from Hollywood and across the globe.

Hammerlake Studios' executives have signalled significant benefits for local and national businesses, services, education and creative arts professionals. An estimated €50 million will be generated annually for the local Mullingar economy from phase one of the studio, with hospitality and other local services and businesses set to benefit.

Construction will take place over two phases.

Phase one, totalling 236,000 square-feet, will comprise four studios or 'sound stages' suitable for large-scale film and television production, an administrative building, workshops, data technology centres, editing rooms, food, fitness and other amenities. Construction is estimated to take 12-months with film production operations to commence from the first quarter of 2024. 350 production jobs and 300 construction jobs will be created in phase one.

Phase two, which will be submitted for planning approval in Summer 2023, will see an additional seven studios added to the campus, bringing the total footprint to 460,000 square-feet. Hammerlake estimates a minimum of 1,000 production jobs upon full commencement of phase two operations in 2025.

Hammerlake Studios' leadership team are film industry experts with over 60-years' experience developed at Universal Pictures, Disney and Troy Studios.

Local residents, community, officials and film industry leaders were consulted. The planning application was developed by a team of local, national, and international experts with planning, design, project management, sustainability, film, and content production experience. Executive

film producers from North America with international and domestic credentials informed the campus' layout and design.

Welcoming the announcement, Paul Chesney, Chief Executive Officer, Hammerlake Studios said:

“We are excited by the decision by Westmeath County Council to grant us planning in principle. It represents a significant step forward in our plans to build a world class film and content production facility in Mullingar, one capable of accommodating the biggest and best film productions.

“The Hammerlake Studios campus will showcase the beauty and welcome of Ireland and its local community, along with the scale and landscape of a vibrant working studio, where content makers will want to work time and time again. Ours will not just be a functional service oriented working studio, but a destination that delivers everything a production entity will ever need, from creative support, technology and equipment, secure data capabilities, along with first class catering and off-stage filming capability all in one campus.

“As new broadcast platforms continue to announce international expansion plans, it's an exciting time to be part of this industry and our chosen destination is primed to be a lead player and preferred option for content makers everywhere.”

The design of the new studio places a high emphasis on creative technologies, including virtual capabilities, to accommodate large-scale and high-end digital productions.

On sustainability, Hammerlake Studios' design provides for insulated building fabric to decrease heat loss, mechanical and smart technology systems to ensure minimal operational energy consumption, water saving and harvesting equipment, low power density lighting and electric vehicle charging. Solar panels on site will reduce grid dependency, while any required electricity will be from green sources.

Outlining its approach, Tom Dowling, Director of Development and Studio Operations at Hammerlake Studios said:

“We sincerely thank our design team and everyone who has assisted us in making the planning application. Our plans have received tremendous support from the local Chamber of Commerce, political leaders and the Westmeath County Council.

“While Ireland has three relatively large studio facilities in the Republic of Ireland, the global demand for studio space has been exceptionally high in recent years. Mullingar's close proximity to Dublin, its excellent road and rail network, the young workforce and the range of quality hotels matched our criteria for the location of our new sustainable and green film campus.

“While Ireland's audio-visual sector industry has enormous growth potential, skills and talent development are crucial to its continued success. In tandem with developing our new studio, we will facilitate a series of information evenings from September to identify people in the region with a transferable skillset and arrange training in conjunction with training agencies. Hammerlake Studios presents an incredible opportunity for Mullingar and we can't wait to start.”

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

Recently published reports of relevance include:

1) PWC REPORT (Spring 2020). “Section 481 & The Film/TV Industry: Insights on the Sector’s Contribution to the Irish Economy”. Report identified the shortage of studio space as one of the key challenges facing the film and television industry in Ireland.

Excerpt on Page 29:

“For Ireland to truly develop this sector, it was indicated that Ireland needs to have the ability to scale production activity and the industry; having advanced infrastructure with scale (e.g. sound stages, production stages) is essential to this. Screen producers are concerned that the present level of studio space is limiting the size and number of productions that can currently be facilitated, and as a result is harming the growth of the industry. Productions need to know that they have the option to extend a studio lease for the long term should they produce a successful pilot or first season. While Studios are willing to provide a production extension option, and are adequately compensated for doing so, the opportunity cost of these arrangements is that studio space is unavailable for other productions for potentially significant periods of time. Ireland was identified as currently losing out on production opportunities due to capacity constraints.”

[Read Full Report](#)

2) PWC REPORT (Spring 2021). “The Film/TV Industry & Ireland’s Economy: Insights report on the contribution of Section 481 Film Tax Credit supported production activity to the Irish economy.”

Excerpt on Page 13:

“If Ireland is to increase its share of global investment and develop the indigenous sector, Ireland must continue its infrastructure investment in both small and large scale facilities. Many of Ireland’s key competitors (e.g. UK / Hungary) are actively expanding their studio capacity.”

[Read Full Report](#)

3) SCREEN IRELAND’S 2021 REPORT

Reveals a record-breaking spend of €500 million in the Irish economy across film, television drama, documentary and animation production in Ireland in 2021.

[Read summary of report](#)

4) SCREEN IRELAND VIDEO 2022

Clip reel and creative talent talking about the benefits of working in Ireland.

[Watch Screen Ireland Video](#)