



Planning Department  
South Dublin County Council  
County Hall  
Town Centre  
Tallaght  
Dublin 24

Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2021  
[By Post]

Dear Sir / Madam

**RE: PLANNING APPLICATION IN RELATION TO PROPOSED SIGNAGE AT THE ARENA CENTRE, WHITESTOWN WAY, DUBLIN 24**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION AND DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

The Planning Partnership acting on behalf of Lidl Ireland GmbH, Lidl Regional Distribution Centre, Littleconnell, Newbridge, Co. Kildare hereby seeks planning permission for the provision of 2 no. double sided projecting signs to the existing mall entrance at the northern elevation of the Arena Centre.

We note also that a separate concurrent (and wholly independent) planning application for a new trolley bay in the car park of the Arena Centre is also being lodged by the Applicant, which should not affect the determination or outcome of the subject application.

The proposed signage is intended to be erected as part of an independent modernisation and upgrade of the existing store. The proposed signs are considered to be particularly restrained in size, at 1 x 1 metre in size, which relative to the scale of the overall façade is inconsequential.

The need for the signage arises due to the lack of animation to the street at the northern elevation of the development presently, which is lacking a pedestrian scale and would benefit from measures that could improve footfall through this entrance to the centre.

In relation to lighting, it is proposed to internally illuminate the signs, which would provide a more streamlined finish than external spot lights. The lighting would be intended to be linked to the building management system with the signs to be illuminated during opening hours only.

### **2.0 THE SUBJECT SITE & PLANNING HISTORY**

The subject premises forms part of The Arena Centre in Whitestown Way, Tallaght, a mixed use development comprising of an hotel & leisure centre, retail warehousing units, retail units, 3 office blocks and residential units on a site of 3.256 hectares (8.045 acres), designed in an L shape surrounding a large basement and surface car park with 882 car parking spaces.

Lidl occupy a retail unit, accessed via an internal mall (separate to the subject mall entrance), within the overall development. We note a number of planning applications / permissions relate to the subject premises and overall development.

Of particular relevance are planning ref's: *SD03A/0320*, being the parent permission for the overall Arena development including the Lidl Discount Foodstore, *SD06A/0471*, an ancillary off licence permission, and *SD08A/0837*, a revised signage permission (specifically an internal advertising banner).

We also note more recent planning history including planning refs: *SD18A/0133* and *SD18A/0232* relating to similar signage on the eastern elevation, where 2 no. similar signs were proposed with 1 no. ultimately being granted.

In addition we note planning ref: *SD18A/0267* relating to the provision of a Totem sign and all associated and ancillary works at the main vehicular entrance.

In relation to the projecting signs under planning refs: *SD18A/0133* and *SD18A/0232*, we note that the subject scenario relates to the same Lidl store however a fundamentally different context.

For instance, the subject location is a considerable distance from the signage permitted under planning ref: *SD18A/0232* and is part of a wholly separate character area.

Whitestown Way and the associated façade of the Arena Centre area is considerably more enclosed and animated than at the subject location. The location of the proposed signs is somewhat devoid of detailing and 'grain' to the façade.

In this regard the façade lacks interaction with the street, being rather sterile in character. It thus has significantly greater capacity for signage than the Whitestown Way façade which already had significantly greater expanse of signage and advertising than the northern façade.

The proposed sign would in our opinion contribute, albeit to a limited degree, to providing some level of visual interest and relief to the large expanse of relatively blank façade.

### 3.0 SIGNAGE / ADVERTISING POLICY

We note Section 11.2.8 of the *South Dublin County Development Plan 2016-2022*, which sets out general policies on signage, which *inter alia* include that:

- *"In general, signs on a building should only advertise goods or services that are associated with the premises and no more than 2 advertising signs should be erected on any elevation.*
- ***Signs should be simple in design and integrate with the architectural language of the building and not obscure any architectural features.***
- ***Signs should be proportionate to the scale of the building to which they are attached and sensitive to the surrounding environment.***
- ***Careful consideration should be given to the materials used in the construction of a sign and the methods used to light it."** [Our Emphasis]*

We also note that Table 11.19 of the Development Plan refers to *Projecting Signs* as being *Generally not appropriate and Must be positioned no lower than 2.4 m above pavement level (but not on upper floors). Maximum of one per unit. Should not be internally illuminated.*

In terms of lighting, we note that the policy preference is that they would not be internally illuminated.

In this instance however, we consider that the alternative of external spotlighting or similar would result in a larger footprint to the façade and would accordingly be less preferable. As noted above, the duration of the lighting of the signs would be linked to the store opening hours.

Should the issue of illumination be of central importance however, the Applicant would be amenable to a condition clarifying the requirements of the Planning Authority.

In relation to the number of signs, whilst the policy preference is for a maximum of one sign, we note that the façade pattern effectively precludes having a single central projecting sign, hence an alternative arrangement of two signs is proposed, which would in our opinion 'read' or integrate much better than a single asymmetrical sign to one or other side of the façade.

In terms of these types of signs being *generally not appropriate* we submit that the subject scenario is not a *general* or typical scenario. The subject scenario relates to a substantial façade on main road, rather than a small shopfront on a main street for instance.

In this regard, we submit that the proposed signage is entirely *proportionate to the scale of the building*.

Accordingly, we request that the proposed development be assessed on the particular merits of the case, whilst having regard to relevant policies, which we submit should result in a positive determination of the proposal.

We submit that the above policies were not written with developments such as the Arena Centre in mind, which are of an urban block scale and have a considerably different context to a high street scenario.

In this regard we note the recent example of the Lidl development at the former Belgard Inn site. Under planning ref: SD21A/0110 the Planning Authority granted permission for two projecting signs for the pharmacy unit within the development. In recommending a grant of permission, the case officer noted:

*"... consideration has been given to the site context, surrounding area, the scale of the advertisements and ... based on the scale, design and siting of the two green crosses they are considered to be acceptable in this case."*

In another case at Liffey Valley Shopping Centre, where parallels exist in terms of the scale of the centre / complex being distinct from a main street / high street scenario, we note that the Planning Authority permitted multiple (3 no.) projecting signs under planning ref: SD16A/0281, all larger in scale than the subject proposal. The Case Officer notes as follows in assessing the proposal (which departed from the letter of the Development Plan standards):

*"Having regard to the large scale of the buildings and setting, it is considered that the proposed signs either side of the doorway are acceptable in this instance. The Planning Authority has no objection to the proposed signage. Having regard to the dimensions and scale of the proposed signs and their relationship to the subject unit, the civic area to the front and the streetscape, it is considered that the proposed signs would not create visual clutter and would not cause a nuisance; it is therefore considered that the proposed signs would be acceptable in terms of visual amenity of the area."*

A similar site specific assessment in this instance would in our opinion support the granting of permission for the signs as proposed.

We note the enclosed drawings, in particular the contiguous elevation and photomontage prepared by the scheme Architects, which in our opinion similarly demonstrate that *the proposed signs would not create visual clutter and would not cause a nuisance therefore the proposed signs would be acceptable in terms of the visual amenity of the area*.

#### 4.0 DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED AS PART OF THIS APPLICATION

Payment for the sum of €80 is supplied (by Electronic Bank Transfer) in accordance with Schedule 9 of the *Planning & Development Regulations, 2001-2021*. This is calculated as follows:

| Class of Development | Rate of Fee                  | Extent | Amount |
|----------------------|------------------------------|--------|--------|
| Class 9 – Signage    | €20 per sqm (minimum of €80) | 4 sqm  | €80    |

Completed South Dublin County Council Planning Application Form, signed and dated Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2021 (including landowner letter of consent).

A full page of The Herald, dated Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2021, in which the Notice has been published pursuant to Article 17(1)(a) of the *Planning & Development Regulations, 2001-2021*.

A copy of the Site Notice, which is to be erected on site pursuant to article 17(1) (b) of the *Planning & Development Regulations, 2001-2021* on Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2021.

We note for the avoidance of doubt that notwithstanding the concurrent application for a trolley bay, the site notice should not in our opinion be in yellow, as the two applications related to different areas.

Drawings submitted with the planning application include 6 no. copies of architectural drawings and an Ordnance Survey Site Location Map.

#### 5.0 CONCLUSION

We trust that you will find this planning application and its respective documentation in order and we look forward to receipt of an acknowledgement at your earliest convenience.

Based on the foregoing, we respectfully submit that the proposed development would not lead to material planning impacts, and as such we request that planning permission be granted accordingly.

Please revert to us should you require further clarification in relation to any aspect of this application and we look forward to an early and favourable decision on this application.

Yours faithfully



**Fintan Morrin**  
Associate  
The Planning Partnership

Encl.