

M&S

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02nd November 2022

Dear Sir / Madam

**MARKS AND SPENCER, ONE LIFFEY VALLEY, LIFFEY VALLEY SHOPPING CENTRE, FONTHILL ROAD, DUBLIN 22
PERMISSION FOR INSTALLATION OF 2NO. REPLACEMENT EXTERNAL SIGNS ON NORTHERN ELEVATION AND EASTERN ELEVATION AND REMOVAL OF THE EXTERNAL GLASS CANOPY ON THE NORTHERN ELEVATION OF THE M&S STORE**

Please find enclosed an application for permission for the installation of 2no. replacement external signs on the existing Marks and Spencer (M&S) store at Liffey Valley Shopping Centre together with the proposed removal of the external glass canopy located on the western corner of the northern elevation.

This application is in part a resubmission of an earlier application submitted in May 2022 for replacement external signage along the northern and eastern elevation of M&S, which was deemed invalid under Article 16-26 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended). The application fee for the previous submission was not refunded as it was intended to resubmit the application with the relevant information. The previous fee for application SD22A/0144 should therefore be transferred to this new application. We have also been advised by SDCC via email (25.10.22) that the application fee will remain the same for the replacement signage and proposed removal of the glass canopy.

In addition to this cover letter the following documentation, which has been submitted by post, forms part of the application: -

- Completed application form;
- Location Plan including Site Notice Location, drawing ref 3955-DUB176-A-00-1001 Rev 001;
- External Signage, Existing and Proposed Elevations, drawing ref 3955-DUB176-A-04-010 Rev 007;

- External Signage, Signage Details, drawing ref 3955-DUB176-A-04-010 Rev 007;
- External canopy removal, Existing and Proposed Elevations, drawing ref DUB176-A-04-050 Rev 001;
- Copy of newspaper notice dated 27.10.22;
- Copy of site notice dated 07.11.22.

Further details regarding the proposed signage and removal of the glass canopy are summarised below.

Background

As a company, Marks and Spencer (M&S) is continually reviewing its existing store estate, with the aim of improving or updating a number of its stores in order to meet and exceed customer expectations. In this context, the Liffey Valley store has been identified as one which will benefit from additional investment as part of the company's renewal programme. Part of this investment has been allocated for the provision of 2no. new replacement external signs together with the removal of the glass canopy located on the western corner of the northern elevation adjacent the customer entrance.

Application Site

Liffey Valley Shopping Centre is located approximately 8km to the west of Dublin City Centre at the interchange of the M50 motorway and the N4 National Primary Route. The M&S store which is located towards the eastern end of the shopping centre functions as an anchor tenant for the centre, which opened in 1998. Liffey Valley is identified as a "Major Retail Centre" in the recently made South Dublin County Development Plan (June 2022) and in this context, the overall planning objective is to protect, improve and provide for the future development of this major centre.

Application Proposals

This application seeks permission for: -

- Installation of replacement external signage above the customer entrance on the northern elevation;
- Installation of replacement external signage on the eastern elevation of the single level customer entrance;
- Removal of the external glass canopy located on the western corner of the northern elevation adjacent the customer entrance.

Replacement External Signage

The signage above the customer entrance on the northern elevation currently reads M&S in large black lettering. It is proposed to remove this lettering and replace metal backing panels with illuminated flex face sign with a black picture frame surround and new black (RAL 9005) non-illuminated lettering reading "M&S - FOOD - ". The sign will measure 5200mm (L) and 3710mm (H) and will be at a height from the ground of 2900mm. The new lettering will be centrally located on two levels within the sign and in this regard the size of lettering will be slightly smaller than existing. The largest letters on this sign will be "M&S" which will be 1350mm (H) compared to the existing M&S lettering which measures 1396mm (H). The illumination level for the sign is proposed at just 300 cd/m2.

The second sign which this application seeks permission for is the replacement of the M&S FOODHALL sign on the eastern elevation of the single level customer entrance on the northern elevation. It is proposed to remove M&S FOODHALL letters and replace metal backing panel with illuminated/back lit flex face sign including black picture frame surround and new non-illuminated black (RAL 9005) lettering to read "M&S FOOD". The sign will measure 8666mm (L) by 800mm (H) and will be at a height of 3355mm from ground level. The lettering will be positioned centrally within the sign and proposed illumination level is low at 300 cd/m².

Removal of External Glass Canopy

To the north-west corner of the northern elevation there is an external glass canopy, adjacent the customer entrance. It is proposed to remove this canopy as part of the current application with all surfaces being made good to match existing.

Exempted development works are set out in S.I. No 600/2001 Planning and Development Regulations 2001 Part 2, Exempted Development. Class 50 of Schedule 2, Part 1, Exempted Development, General, allows for the *"the demolition of a building or other structure" other than a "(i) habitable house; (ii) a building which forms part of a terrace of buildings, or (iii) a building which abuts another building in separate ownership...."*

The glass canopy abuts the main M&S building, however given M&S's 999-year lease, it is considered that the building is in the same ownership and is therefore exempt from permission. Having queried this with the Council and in the absence of a definitive answer, it was considered prudent to apply for permission to remove this structure.

With the existing glass and steel canopy in a state of disrepair, it is proposed to carefully remove this along with the gutter attached to the wall and to make good all surfaces to match existing. It is also proposed to relay the paving slabs which are required to be removed at the columns, again to match existing.

Planning Considerations

The operative plan for the area is the South Dublin County Development Plan (SDCDP) 2022-2028 which was made on 22nd June 2022 and came into effect on 3rd August 2022.

The retail hierarchy for the South Dublin area defines Liffey Valley Shopping Centre as Level 2 - Major Town Centre and County (Principal) Town Centre, reflecting its established shopping centre role. In this regard, Policy EDE10 of the SDCDP confirms that the Council will support the retail function of Level 2 Major Retail Centres (MRC). Objective 4 of the policy seeks to promote a high standard of design that contributes to creating safe and attractive spaces and creates desirable places in which to work and visit.

Chapter 12 entitled "Implementation and Monitoring" sets out the objectives relevant to each land use with Table 12.1 setting out the objective for MRCs which is to promote, improve and provide for their future development.

The land use zoning table sets out guidance to the general appropriateness of particular development types in each land use zone. Table 12.8 relating to MRCs, such as Liffey Valley, identifies advertisements and advertising structures as a use which is permitted in principle (i.e. considered to be generally acceptable subject to further assessment against the relevant policies, objectives and standards set out in the plan.)

Para 12.5.7 sets out the Council's policy relating to advertising. It lists a number of criteria which advertising should have regard to including: -

- ensuring that the signs on a building only advertise goods or services that are associated with the premises and no more than two advertising signs should be erected on any elevation;
- signs should generally be limited to the ground floor of a building unless located directly over the entrance to a major commercial or retail building;
- signs should be simple in design and integrate with the architectural language of the building and not obscure any architectural feature;
- signs should be proportionate to the scale of the building to which they are attached and sensitive to the surrounding environment;
- any sign should not create an obstruction to pedestrian or cyclist movement or create a traffic hazard; and
- careful consideration should be given to the materials used in the construction of a sign and the methods used to light it.

The replacement signage accords with the above criteria and indeed has been considered acceptable by the Council in the past, evidenced by the existing signage which was approved in 2016 (ref SD16A/0054).

As part of the current proposals, it is proposed that the replacement signs will comprise an illuminated/back lit flex face sign. The criteria above refers to lighting and advises that careful consideration should be given to the methods used to light a sign.

The application proposals relate to replacement signage as opposed to new signage, the main difference being a change in the wording of the existing sign above the customer entrance on the northern elevation from M&S to M&S - FOOD - and a change from the existing M&S FOODHALL sign on the eastern elevation to M&S FOOD. In this regard, the siting, size and materials of the signage has previously been considered acceptable relative to the SDCC policy guidance on advertising.

Whilst illuminated signage has become an integral part of the retail scene in many shopping centres, it needs to be considered in terms of visual amenity. In this context, the M&S store at Liffey Valley forms part of a large commercial area where there is already a variety of external signage identifying the presence of retailers. Moreover, the shopping centre itself is not located within an area with any environmental or heritage sensitivities but rather is a commercial destination where signage is expected to assist legibility for shoppers. The proposed illumination, which will be static with luminance at just 300cd/m², will assist with announcing the presence of M&S as an anchor tenant within the shopping centre and specifically the in-store food offering, without adversely impacting on the visual amenity of the area.

With regard to the external glass canopy, it is considered that this is exempt from planning permission, however, should SDCC take a different view, then the accompanying drawings indicate how the removal of the glass canopy will not adversely impact on the appearance of the building and how all surfaces will be made to good to match existing.

Conclusion

Signage is an essential component of any commercial area and also contributes to promoting the formation of a legible urban environment. The M&S store forms part of the Liffey Valley Shopping Centre, an established retail area where the display of signage and advertising is appropriate to identify the retail occupant. The application proposals seek to replace 2no. existing external signs and

in this regard are of a similar design and scale to the existing signs, albeit with alternative wording/lettering. The replacement signs are of a classic simple design of black lettering/wording on a white background and will therefore continue to provide a modern style of advertising of an appropriate scale to promote the food offer of the M&S store which acts as an anchor tenant within the centre.

It is not considered that the 2no. external replacement signs would be out of character given the commercial context of Liffey Valley Shopping Centre and is therefore considered to comply with the relevant policy guidance.

In addition, it is considered that the removal of the glass canopy close to one of the customer entrances will enhance the external appearance of the building, providing more symmetry to the entrance of the food area of the M&S store.

I trust that the enclosed provides you with all the information that you require to determine this application. If you require anything further, then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

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