



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report

PL-500377-DN-25

Development	Retention of triangular two sided display board mounted on trailer carriage and all associated site works.
Location	The Bonnington Hotel, Swords Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9
Planning Authority	Dublin City Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	3378/25
Applicant(s)	Liffeyfield Ltd.
Type of Application	Retention Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse
Type of Appeal	First Party
Appellant(s)	Liffeyfield Ltd
Observer(s)	Tom Tansey Peter O'Kelly

Date of Site Inspection

15 January 2026

Inspector

Paul Christy

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Appendix A – Form 1: EIA Pre-Screening

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The subject site is located adjacent to Swords Road, one of the main road arteries into/out of the city. To the north and south of the subject site, the eastern side of Swords Road is generally characterised by perimeter walls in close proximity to the footpath. The subject site is located in an 'opening' between these walls. At the front of this opening is the green area in which the subject signage is situated. Immediately to the rear of the northern part of the green area is a small parade of commercial units. In turn, the Bonnington Hotel is located to the rear of the commercial units, and an apartment complex is then located to the rear of the hotel. Vehicular access to all of these uses is provided by a junction with Swords Road at the southern end of the green area. The junction also serves an additional residential area to the south of the subject green area.
- 1.2. The green area extends along almost the entire length of the opening and measures c.30m long x 10m wide. A footpath crosses the green area providing access from the footpath adjacent to Swords Road to the aforementioned commercial units. There is a tall, triangular totem advertising structure for the hotel also in the green area c.18m to the south of the subject structure and close to the junction serving the various developments behind the green. There are also 3 no. flag poles on the green area adjacent to the totem advertising structure.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposed development is for the retention of a triangular two-sided display board mounted on a trailer carriage. The two sides of the display board each measure 3.58m long x 2.38m high. The overall structure is 1.2m wide and is mounted on a trailer measuring 0.25m high. On the public notices and application form it is noted that the structure is for the purposes of advertising events in the hotel.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1 Decision: Refuse

3.1.1. The Local Authority refused the application for one reason:

'Having regard to the Z1 residential zoning objective and Appendix 17, Section 8.0 Advertising Development Management Standards, it is considered that the development to be retained represents a substandard form of development which has a detrimental impact on the character of the area and appears visually incongruous. The proposal adds to visual clutter in the area, is contrary to Policy CCUV45 of the Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028, would set an undesirable precedent for further substandard development in the vicinity and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.'

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. [Planning Report]: One unsigned and uncredited report on file dated 4th December 2025. The report addresses, inter alia, the following key issues:

- Notes the Zoning Objective Z1 'To protect, provide and improve residential amenities' and comments that advertisements/advertising structures '*are neither permitted in principle nor open for consideration under the Z1 zoning*'.
- Is generally critical of the proposed development in terms of: adding to the visual clutter in the area; the quality of design, materials and scale at this prominent location; and having a detrimental visual impact on the character of the area;
- Having regard to the criteria listed in Appendix 17, Section 8.0 'Advertising Development Management Standards' and their concerns as noted in my preceding bullet point above, concludes that the development is contrary to Policy CCUV45 of the Development Plan and should therefore be refused.

3.2.2. [Transportation Planning Division Report]: Notes that:

- Based on the information contained within the documentation, the Division *'raises no concern with the display board'*. However, there is a permitted (Swords to City Centre) Core Bus Corridor (CBC) along Swords Road. The location of the proposed signage is within a temporary land-take under the permitted scheme. The CBC includes the grass verge where the signage is located for the construction phase of the CBC. Accordingly, a suitable condition should be included to ensure the applicant does not impede the delivery of the CBC project.

3.2.3. [Engineering Department: Drainage Division]: No objection, subject to standard conditions.

3.3. **Prescribed Bodies**

3.3.1. [Transport Infrastructure Ireland]: Standard report requesting that the planning authority has regard to the provisions of official policy for development proposals as follows: proposals impacting national roads, to the DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities and relevant TII Publications and proposals impacting the existing light rail network, to TII's "Code of engineering practice for works on, near, or adjacent the Luas light rail system".

3.4. **Third Party Observations**

3.4.1. Three submissions were received from private individuals: Tom Tansey; Ronan Spain; and Peter O'Kelly. All express opposition to the proposed development. The reasons given are generally as per those raised in the two observations submitted to the Commission. These are addressed in Section 8.3.

4.0 Planning History

4.1. Subject Site

- 4.1.1. P.A. Ref. 3226/25, Identical application to subject application. 2025 refusal for identical reason as the refusal reason for the subject application.

4.2. Also On Green Area

- 4.2.1. P.A. Ref. 6138/06, ACP Ref. 221925 Retention of two signs (5.4m high x 3.2m wide at 2.7m above ground) with supporting structure. 2007 Refusal for one reason as below:

'The advertising sign, when combined with other existing signage at this location is visually obtrusive, and creates visual clutter. As such, it is seriously injurious to the visual amenities of the area and would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.'

4.3. Other History in Locality

- 4.3.1. There is also extensive planning history in relation to both the commercial units located immediately to the north of the green area on which the subject structure is located, and the nearby Bonnington Hotel. This history is referenced in the Observations submitted to the Commission but I do not consider these cases to be relevant to this appeal. I address these matters in more detail in Section 9.4.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Development Plan: Dublin City Development Plan, 2022-2028

- 5.1.1. Zoning: The subject site is contained within an area zoned as Zone Z1 'Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods'. The relevant Zoning Objective is: *'To protect, provide and improve residential amenities.'*

- 5.1.2. Policy CCUV45 - Advertising Structures: *'To consider appropriately designed and located advertising structures primarily with reference to the zoning objectives and permitted advertising uses and of the outdoor advertising strategy (Appendix 17). In all such cases, the structures must be of high-quality design and materials, and must not obstruct or endanger road users or pedestrians, nor impede free pedestrian movement and accessibility of the footpath or roadway.'*
- 5.1.3. Advertising and Signage Strategy, Appendix 17: The Strategy includes the identification of Advertising and Signage Strategy zones. The site would be appear to be impacted by two such zones: Zone 3 'Radial/Orbital'; and Zone 6 'Predominantly Residential Use'.
- 5.1.4. Advertising and Signage Strategy, Appendix 17, Section 7.0 'Implementation of the Advertising and Signage Strategy'. Includes, inter alia, the following:
- *'Dublin City Council will evaluate all planning applications for signs in relation to the surroundings and features of the buildings on which they are to be displayed, to the number and size of signs (both existing and proposed) and the potential for the creation of undesirable visual clutter.'*
 - *'Permissions for outdoor advertising in certain instances, where appropriate as determined by the planning authority, may be limited to a maximum of three years in the first instance to enable the position to be reviewed by Dublin City Council in the light of changing circumstances at the end of that period.'*
 - *'Non-essential advertising structures, or any advertising structures which would impact injuriously on amenity, the built environment or road safety will be restricted.'*
- 5.1.5. Advertising and Signage Strategy, Appendix 17, Section 8.0 'Advertising Development Management Standards'. Provides that applications for new advertising structures will, in addition to the considerations set out in Section 7.0, be considered having regard to certain criteria. Criteria considered to be of possible relevant to the subject case include, inter alia, the following:

- The geographical zone in which the site is located, as set out in the figure showing zones of advertising control. The rationale for the proposed advertising structure, including proposals for the removal and/ or rationalisation of existing outdoor advertising structures.
- The concentration of existing advertising structures in the area.
- The design of the advertising panel and the use of high-quality materials.
- The scale of the panel relative to the buildings, structures and streets in which the advertising panel is to be located.
- Impact on the character of the street and the amenities of adjoining properties.

5.2. Natural Heritage Designations

- 5.2.1. The site is located: 1.98km to the north of the Royal Canal Proposed Natural Heritage Area (Site Code 002103); 2.82km to the north-west of the North Dublin Bay Proposed Natural Heritage Area (Site Code 000206); 2.82km to the north-west of the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Special Protection Area (Site Code 004024); and 2.31km to the south of the Santry Demesne Proposed Natural Heritage Area (Site Code 000178).

6.0 EIA Screening

- 6.1. The proposed development is not a class for the purposes of EIA as per the classes of development set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (As Amended). No mandatory requirement for EIA therefore arises and there is also no requirement for a screening determination. Refer to Form 1 in Appendix 1 of report.

7.0 Water Framework Directive Screening

- 7.1. The subject site is located 1.12km to the north of the Tolka_060 River. The site is

over the Dublin groundwater body also. The proposed development comprises the retention of a triangular two sided display board mounted on trailer carriage and all associated site works. No water deterioration concerns were raised in the planning appeal.

7.2. I have assessed the proposed retention of a triangular two sided display board mounted on trailer carriage and all associated site works. and have considered the objectives as set out in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive which seek to protect and, where necessary, restore surface & ground water waterbodies in order to reach good status (meaning both good chemical and good ecological status), and to prevent deterioration. Having considered the nature, scale and location of the project, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because there is no conceivable risk to any surface and/or groundwater water bodies either qualitatively or quantitatively. The reasons for this conclusion are as follows:

- Nature of works a small-scale advertising structure placed on the ground and with no ground works required.
- The location and distance from the River Tolka (1.12km) and the absence of hydrological connections.

7.3. Conclusion: I conclude that on the basis of objective information, the proposed development will not result in a risk of deterioration on any water body (rivers, lakes, groundwaters, transitional and coastal) either qualitatively or quantitatively or on a temporary or permanent basis or otherwise jeopardise any water body in reaching its WFD objectives and consequently can be excluded from further assessment.

8.0 The Appeal

8.1. Grounds of Appeal

8.1.1. The Appeal is comprised of the following:

- Various photographs of: the existing totem double-sided advertising structure located on the green area; an illuminated sign on the opposite side of the

road; signage in the 'college grounds opposite; signs on hoarding at a site on Swords Road; signs on the green area between 2009 and 2014.

- Basic information in relation to four planning cases for outdoor advertising elsewhere on the Swords Road;
- Various specific points in relation to the placing of the sign at the site from as far back as 2009;
- Various specific points in relation to other signage in the vicinity, including: at the entrance to the nearby college on the opposite side of Swords Road; and a development site further north along Swords Road;
- The proposal adds no greater visual clutter than that which is permitted in the entrance to the college grounds opposite the subject site.

8.2. Planning Authority Response

8.2.1. None received.

8.3. Observations

8.3.1. Two observations were received. They are from Tom Tansey, and Peter O'Kelly respectively. The issues raised in the observations can be summarised as follows:

- The junction with Swords Road used by the commercial units is also used by multiple residential properties. The proposed signage would seriously injure the visual amenities of the area. The growth of residential units using the junction, plus additional signage in the years since the Commission's refusal of Ref. 221925 reinforces a case for refusal in line with ACP's previous decision. The area is zoned residential, and it is incumbent upon the Commission to improve and protect (the area) for the substantial amount of residences using this site entrance.
- Challenges the statement contained in the appeal that the initial placement of the sign was as far back as 2009. It has only permanently appeared in 2025. It is untrue to state that it has been used at this location as far back as 2009 and

untrue to state or infer that it has been in continuous use at this location for over a decade to promote events at the hotel.

- Attaches a number of photographs with stated dates ranging from 2009-2014. States that the photographs show: (1.) non-compliance with ACP's decision on file ref. 221925; and (2.) no mobile signage in situ at the time, contrary to claims of the Applicant.
- Refutes the comparator sites put forward by the Applicant.
- Alleges that the site description contained in the appeal contains misleading information.
- Refers to matters of alleged matters unauthorised development in the wider vicinity.

9.0 Assessment

9.1. Overview

9.1.1. Having examined the application details, and all other documentation on file including the submissions received in relation to the appeal, the reports of the local authority, and having inspected the site, and having regard to the relevant local policies and guidance, I consider that the substantive issues in this appeal to be assessed are as follows:

- The compliance, or otherwise, of the proposed development with the relevant policy framework as contained in the Development Plan; and
- Issues Identified in Support of Proposal In Appeal (and Related Comments In Observations, Where Relevant)

9.2. Development Plan Policy Framework

9.2.1. Policy CCUV45, 'Advertising Structures' is the keynote policy against which the proposed development should be assessed. The Policy is reproduced at Section 5.1.2 above. Whilst the Policy as contained in the Development Plan is written as

one unstructured paragraph, it is helpful to consider it in terms of two sub-sections, in my opinion.

9.2.2. The first sub-section refers to the *'zoning objectives and permitted advertising uses'* of the 'Advertising and Signage Strategy' ('the Strategy') of the Development Plan (Appendix 17 refers) and states that the Authority *'will consider appropriately designed and located advertising structures primarily with reference to them'*.

9.2.3. Considering firstly the *'zoning objectives'* of the Strategy, the site is located within two zones, Zone 3 (Radial/Orbital Routes) and Zone 6 (Predominantly residential uses). The Strategy includes a brief commentary for each zone as follows:

- Zone 3 (Radial/Orbital routes): The area of the subject site may be considered to lie within such a radial/orbital route, in this case Swords Road. It is noted in the Strategy that the development of outdoor advertising in this zone will be open for consideration. Indeed, at the second para. of Section 1.0 of the Strategy, it is advised that: *'The preferred location for outdoor advertising panels in the city is on public thoroughfares, distributor roads and radial routes contained within Zones 2, 3 and 5...'*; and
- Zone 6, (Predominantly residential uses): It is provided in the Strategy that although this zone consists of areas predominantly residential in character where outdoor advertising would be visually inappropriate, there are also large-scale tracts of commercial land-use which have a separate robust character and may have the potential to accommodate outdoor advertising. The area of the subject site may be considered to lie within such a large tract of commercial land-use, predominantly made up of the Bonnington Hotel and adjacent smaller commercial units

9.2.4. Having regard to the aforementioned, I would conclude that the principle of the proposed development is not precluded by the Strategy zonings.

9.2.5. In terms of *permitted advertising uses* in the Strategy, it is reasonable to assume that this is a reference to both (a.) the specific guidance provided in Sections 2.0 to 6.0 of the Strategy inclusive for various types of signage ('Digital Signage'; 'Illuminated Signage'; 'High Level Corporate Branding/Signage'; 'Advertising on Bus

Shelters/Phone Boxes’; and ‘Temporary Advertising/Artwork’); and (b.) the additional general guidance contained in Section 1.0 ‘Advertising and Signage’, Section 7 ‘Implementation of the Advertising and Signage Strategy’ and Section 8 ‘Advertising Development Management Standards’ of the document. As the subject proposal does not come within any of the specific types of signage, this element of the policy is not relevant to any assessment of the subject proposal, in my opinion. Certain provisions of the aforementioned Sections 1, 7 and 8 are, however, relevant, in my opinion (refer paras. 9.2.8 – 9.2.12).

- 9.2.6. The second sub-section of Policy CCUV45 provides that in all cases, the structures must be of high-quality design and materials, and must not obstruct or endanger road users or pedestrians, nor impede free pedestrian movement and accessibility of the footpath or roadway. In terms of the latter pedestrian safety etc. point, the Local Authority’s Transportation Division advised of no objections, although noting that the land on which the subject structure is located would be required on a temporary basis for construction of the Swords to City Centre Bus Corridor.
- 9.2.7. The primary requirement of the second sub-section of the Policy, ie. that all structures must be of *high quality design and materials*, is effectively repeated in Section 8.0: ‘Advertising Development Management Standards’ wherein it is provided that ‘Applications for new advertising structures will be considered having regard to, inter alia, ‘*The design of the advertising panel and the use of high-quality materials*’. This requirement must be considered alongside support elsewhere in the Strategy for outdoor advertising panels on, inter alia, radial routes such as that on which the subject structure is located. Such outdoor advertising panels will inevitably be designed primarily with regards to functionality, rather than the incorporation of any aesthetic design features or high quality materials. In my opinion, having regard to the aforementioned policy inconsistency, it is reasonable to conclude that the general city-wide requirement of Policy CCUV45 for high quality design and materials is significantly diluted for outdoor advertising proposals within orbital routes such as Swords Road.
- 9.2.8. The Outdoor Advertising Strategy contains three further elements of relevance to the subject proposal and I set out each of these below.

9.2.9. Interface Between Advertising Zones: In Section 1.0 'Advertising and Signage', it is noted that '*Consideration will be also be given to the need for sensitive treatment and an appropriate transition at the interface between zones*'. The subject site is at such an interface, between a Zone 3 Orbital Route zone and a Zone 6 Predominantly Residential use zone. This issue is raised in the Observations submitted to the Commission, notwithstanding that the term 'interface' is not actually used.

9.2.10. Clutter/Concentration of Structures: In the second para. of Section 7.0 "Implementation of the Advertising and Signage Strategy", it is provided that: 'Dublin City Council will evaluate all planning applications for signs in relation to the surroundings and features of the buildings on which they are to be displayed, to the number and size of signs (both existing and proposed) and the potential for the creation of undesirable visual clutter.' (my emphasis). Similarly, the second bullet of Section 8 'Advertising Development Management Standards' states that: 'Applications for new advertising structures will ... '*be considered having regard to the concentration of existing advertising structures in the area*'. This issue is also raised in the Observations submitted to the Commission,

9.2.11. Non-Essential Advertising: In the fourth para. of Section 7 it is stipulated that: '*Non-essential advertising structures, or any advertising structures which would impact injuriously on amenity, the built environment or road safety will be restricted*'.

9.3. **Issues Identified in Support of Proposal In Appeal (and Related Comments In Observations, Where Relevant)**

9.3.1. In the Appeal submission, the Agent makes four core points in support of the proposal. I address each of these below.

9.3.2. Precedent Planning Permissions: The Agent identifies four planning permissions for illuminated advertising structures, three on Swords Road and one on Drumcondra Road, none of which were appealed to the Commission. In subsequent general commentary, a comment is made that: '*Planning permission has been granted for*

more obtrusive illuminated signage in the vicinity of the subject site.' Having reviewed these cases, I would advise as follows:

- Two of the Swords Road cases (Dublin City Council refs. 1122/07 and WEB1694/18) refer to the same site ie. a site on the opposite side of Swords Road and slightly to the south of the subject site. The second application was for a different structure to replace the original structure permitted under the 2007 application.
- The third Swords Road case, WEB1601/23 was for a site approximately 590m to the north of the subject site and was for the retention of a structure previously granted under Dublin City Council ref. 6801/06.
- The Drumcondra Road case, Dublin City Council ref. 3671/07 was granted in 2007.

9.3.3. It can be seen that the referenced sites were all first granted permission in either 2006 or 2007.

9.3.4. Poster Signage at Nearby College Grounds: The Agent states that: *'a proliferation of poster signage has been permitted to be maintained in the college grounds opposite the site'*. I have reviewed the planning history in the area and can find no record of planning applications for such signage either on the Local Authority's maps, or any reference to such applications in Planners' reports on other 'non-signage'-related applications. Neither is there any history of appeals to the Commission for such signage.

9.3.5. Hoarding Signage At Nearby Development Site: The Agent refers to hoarding advertisement on a development to the north of the subject site and states that: *'it has been permitted to be maintained since 2021'*.

9.3.6. Longevity of Sign: The Agent advises that: *'the sign has been intermittently used over the past decade to promote events in the hotel'*; *'the initial placement was as far back as 2009'*; *'the applicant has established an intermittent use of the structure to advertise events or packages in the hotel for a period in excess of 7 years'*; and that the sign *'has been located in various locations on the grass verge...'*

9.3.7. I also note that, in his Observation, Peter O’Kelly refutes this narrative. Mr O’Kelly states that: *‘this triangular mobile sign has only permanently appeared on the grass verge in 2025 in order to promote concerts in the hotel’s function rooms. It is untrue to state this has been used at this location as far back as 2009. It is untrue to state or infer that it has been in continuous use at this location for over a decade to promote events in the hotel. The sign, smaller in size, has been used occasionally at the Centra shop (in contravention of planning conditions) to promote its special offers’*. Mr O’Kelly also refers to the photographs submitted by the Appellants and claims that several of these photographs show that: *‘there is no mobile triangular signage shown’*.

9.4. **Site Description Contained in Appeal, and Other Matters of Alleged Unauthorised Development In The Vicinity**

9.4.1. In his observation on the appeal, Mr. O’Kelly refers to the description of the site in the appeal document and states that it *‘contains misleading information’* and notes that in addition to the units identified in the appeal (ie. the Bonnington Hotel, Bloomfield House and Centra Shopping Centre), the site is also occupied by units for the Whitehall Terrace Cafe, Launderette (now vacant) and McGettigans Sports Bar. Mr O’Kelly also notes that these units have had illuminated signage erected. In response, I note that the site description as contained in the statutory notices and planning application form (*‘located on grass verge fronting the retail units on the Swords Road at the Bonnington Hotel, Swords Road, Dublin’*) did, in my opinion, provide an adequate description of the site location etc. in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (As Amended). It is my further opinion, therefore, that no one was prejudiced from participating in the process due to the aforementioned issues.

9.4.2. In a section headed ‘Planning History Pertinent’, Mr O’Kelly also states that in the two recently submitted applications to the Local Authority¹, the applicant has not listed (save for 4375/23) planning files and failed appeals *‘which are central to use of*

¹ I assume this is a reference to the subject application, and the recent identical application on the same site ref. 3226/25.

signage on the site', and that the applicant has not listed enforcement notices of 2009 and 2024 on the same subject. Mr O'Kelly comments that: '*There is an overall pattern of flouting proper planning process and procedures.*'

9.4.3. I have reviewed these cases and note that: one refers to the subject site (DCC Ref. 6138/06 and ACP Ref. 221925); one refers to the Bonnington Hotel (DCC Ref. 1130/08); and two are in respect of the commercial units between the hotel and Swords Road (3780/10; and 2038/16). I noted at my site inspection that the Bonnington Hotel is so far removed from the green area that there is no physical interaction between any signage at the hotel itself and the green area. Whilst the western end of the commercial units is closer to the green area, it is also my opinion that signage on/attached to the units is more reasonably considered as being generally unrelated to any demountable signage on the green area. For these reasons, I do not share these concerns and would otherwise comment that any related alleged unauthorised development procedures are a matter for the Local Authority. Similarly, whilst it would have been useful to list the 2006 application on the subject site, that application was made some 20 years ago. Given the length of this period of time, I do not consider that its omission from the listing of previous applications can be considered to be prejudicial to participation in the process, or otherwise should be given any significant weight in the assessment process.

9.5. **Conclusion**

9.5.1. In my opinion, the proposed development gives rise to overlapping concerns in terms of all three provisions of the Development Plan's Outdoor Advertising Strategy as set out at paras. 9.2.9 – 9.2.11 above. As referenced in the Observations submitted to the Commission, the subject site is at a sensitive interface between an orbital route and a predominantly residential area, which area is zoned as Zone Z1 'Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods with a Zoning Objective: '*To protect, provide and improve residential amenities*'. In this context, the subject sign would give rise to undesirable clutter, in my opinion, having regard to the existing two-sided totem signage and 3 no. flagpoles located to the south of, and in close proximity to the subject structure within the same green area, and could set an undesirable

precedent for further similar signage, the results of which can be seen in the photographs from previous years submitted with the appeal. This clutter effect would, in my opinion, be exacerbated by the demountable, temporary and ad hoc character and appearance of the subject structure. Finally, it is also difficult to make a case that the proposed structure would meet any reasonable test of proving its essentiality, particularly having regard to the advertising already provided for the hotel on the aforementioned nearby totem signage.

9.5.2. With regards to the points made by the Agent in the appeal, I would comment as follows.

Precedent planning permissions: Having regard to the time that has elapsed since these decisions were made, and to the different policy regime now in place in the form of the Dublin City Development Plan, 2022-2028, little weight can be given to these decisions in the assessment of the subject case, in my opinion.

Poster Signage at Nearby College Grounds: Having regard to the absence of any planning history for these signs, I can only conclude that the referenced signage has not been 'validated' by any planning permission from either the Local Authority or the Commission and thus, again, little weight can be given to this point, in my opinion.

Hoarding Signage At Nearby Development Site: Whilst I was unable to readily obtain any records in relation to this matter, such hoarding on a temporary basis for the duration of construction of the development may be considered to be exempted development in accordance with Class 16, Part 1, Schedule 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations, in my opinion.

Longevity of Sign: The claims of the Agent are refuted in the Observations. It is not my role, nor is it possible, to adjudicate on the authenticity of either set of claims. The Agent's reference to the structure being established for a period in excess of 7 years is, presumably, a reference to Section 157(4) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (As Amended). This Section prohibits the prosecution of alleged unauthorised development offences in certain circumstances. These include cases where a period of 7 years has expired in respect of a development where no permission has been granted. However, it does not follow that applications for

retention permission should be permitted automatically where immunity from prosecution is established. Such applications are to be assessed in the normal way. In my opinion, the historic photographs submitted by the Agent (for the years 2009 to 2014) only serve to underline the visual impact of signage clutter at this location.

9.5.3. On balance, therefore, whilst I note the points made in support of the application in the Appeal, these do not outweigh the policy contraventions as set out at paras. 9.2.9 – 9.2.11 and 9.4.1 above, in my opinion.

9.5.4. I would finally refer to the previous refusal of the Commission for signage on the green area (ref. 221925) in 2007. The refusal reason was in relation to visual obtrusiveness and visual clutter. The location of that signage was generally in the same location as the subject site. The dimensions of the previously refused signage were greater than those of the subject application (5.4m high x 3.2m wide at 2.7m above ground v 2.38m high x 3.58m long at 0.25m above ground). Notwithstanding these differences, the previous decision of the Commission does establish a precedent for decisions on this type of development at this location. The lesser dimensions of the subject structure do not overcome this precedent, in my opinion.

10.0 AA Screening

10.1. I have considered the proposed triangular two sided display board mounted on trailer carriage and all associated site works at Swords Road, Drumcondra, Dublin in light of the requirements S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. The subject site is located 2.82km to the north-west of the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Special Protection Area (Site Code 004024). Having considered the nature, scale and location of the project, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because there is no conceivable risk to any European Site. The reasons for this conclusion are as follows:

- the nature of the works: the proposed development comprises a mobile advertising structure and does not involve any ground works.
- the distance of the site from the nearest European site and the absence of any connections between the two.

10.2. I conclude that on the basis of objective information, the proposed development would not have a likely significant effect on any European Site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. Likely significant effects are excluded and therefore Appropriate Assessment (stage 2) (under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000) is not required.

11.0 Recommendation

11.1. I recommend that retention permission for the development be refused for the reasons and considerations as set out below.

12.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. It is considered that the subject site is located at an interface between a Zone 3 (Orbital Route) zone and a Zone 6 (Predominantly Residential use) zone as identified in Figure 1: 'Zones of Advertising Control' of the Advertising Strategy of the Dublin City Development Plan, 2022-2028 and that the proposed development, in conjunction with the existing signage and flagpoles already erected on the subject green area, would create undesirable visual clutter, particularly having regard to the demountable, temporary and ad hoc character and appearance of the subject structure. Accordingly, to permit the proposed development would be contrary to the Advertising Strategy and Policy CCUV45 of the Dublin City Development Plan, 2022-2028, and would thereby be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

I confirm that this report represents my professional planning assessment, judgement and opinion on the matter assigned to me and that no person has influenced or sought to influence me, directly or indirectly, following my professional assessment and recommendation set out in my report in an improper or inappropriate way.

Paul

Paul Christy

Planning Inspector

12th February 2026

Appendix A: Form 1 EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	PL-500377-DN-25
Proposed Development Summary	Retention of triangular two sided display board mounted on trailer carriage and all associated site works.
Development Address	The Bonnington Hotel, Swords Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9
IN ALL CASES CHECK BOX /OR LEAVE BLANK	
1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'Project' for the purposes of EIA? <hr/> (For the purposes of the Directive, "Project" means: - The execution of construction works or of other installations or schemes, - Other interventions in the natural surroundings and landscape including those involving the extraction of mineral resources)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes it is a 'Project'. Proceed to Q2.
	<input type="checkbox"/> No, No further action required.
2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in <u>Part 1</u>, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is a Class specified in Part 1. EIA is mandatory. No Screening required. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP.	State the Class here
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Class specified in Part 1. Proceed to Q3	
3. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in <u>Part 2</u>, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) OR a prescribed type of	

proposed road development under Article 8 of Roads Regulations 1994, AND does it meet/exceed the thresholds?	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, the development is not of a Class Specified in Part 2, Schedule 5 or a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994. No Screening required.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold. EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required	State the Class and state the relevant threshold
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold. Preliminary examination required. (Form 2) OR If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)	State the Class and state the relevant threshold
4. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted AND is the development a Class of Development for the purposes of the EIA Directive (as identified in Q3)?	
No	Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3)

Inspector: Paul Christy

Date: 12th February 2026

