

McDonald's – West Bridge Street

Minor Project – Development Statement

On January 17, 2019, the Dublin Planning Commission approved a Minor Project Review application to allow for an update of an existing McDonald's restaurant. The restaurant dates back to the 1980s and the applicant sought to modernize the building. During the hearing before the Commission, there was discussion of the brick materials to be used on the building. The previous application, as approved, included a proposal to retain the existing brick base on the building and remove an existing mansard roof, which would be replaced with new brick to match the existing brick (and would include a fiber cement parapet). Roughly, the lower one-half of each building façade would retain existing brick and the balance of each façade would include new matching brick.

Following approval of the Minor Project Review application, the applicant's general contractor went to order materials for the update of the building. When the brick was ordered, the contractor was informed that this particular brick was no longer manufactured. The manufacturer informed the contractor that production of the brick dated back some 45 years, and that somewhere between its original installation on this store and the date of the order, the brick was discontinued due to quality concerns. The general contractor recommended an alternative brick for the entire building so as not to create a situation where old brick and new brick would be clearly mismatched. This recommendation was accepted by McDonald's and it agreed to absorb an additional \$40,000 in costs to completely re-brick the building.

In error, McDonald's did not seek to amend the earlier application to obtain approval of a new brick specification. Instead, due to miscommunication (or a lack of communication) among members of the project team, the general contractor proceeded with the installation of the new brick. At some point after installation, Planning became aware of the discrepancy and brought it to the attention of the applicant. As a result, this application is being brought to the Planning Commission to obtain approval of the new brick.

While the applicant takes ownership of its error, it seeks approval of the new brick from the Commission. The new brick has an aesthetic that is a vast improvement over what has existed on the building for decades, and provides a more modern aesthetic for the structure. This fits not only with the current brand that is McDonald's, but more importantly it is much more compatible with recent development in the Bridge Street area.

The applicant concedes that the new brick does not match the existing shopping center as a whole. However, the brick on the shopping center is old in and of itself. Portions of that brick have been patched, repaired, and replaced over the years, and sooner or later its time will come and the market will demand an update to the center's facades. It is questionable as to whether or not that center's brick is even manufactured anymore. In the long-term, the brick that has been installed on the McDonald's building will be more consistent with the expected aesthetic of Bridge Street as it continues to evolve. Rather than matching an outdated shopping center building, the updated restaurant is now more likely to be compatible with surrounding development/redevelopment in the coming years.

This application is the result of an honest mistake. If the applicant would have known at the time of its previous application that it could not, in fact, match the existing brick specification, it would have proposed the brick that it did install. The applicant regrets the error in not bringing this back before Planning and the Commission before installation, but this mistake was not intentional. It was the result of decisions being made “in the field.” It was not intended to be an end-around of the City’s review process. The mistake cost the applicant some \$40,000 in increased cost, which obviously was not what was intended. Therefore, the applicant respectfully requests approval of this Minor Project Review application.