

Conservation Section, Planning & Property Development Department  
Civic Offices, Wood Quay, Dublin 8

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To the Chairperson and Members of the South East Area Committee

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**Initiation of the Statutory Process for the Proposed Addition of 24 St. Stephen's Green (formerly the Lisney Building), Dublin 2 to the Record of Protected Structures in accordance with Section 54 and 55 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended)**

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**Photograph of Structure:**



**Introduction:**

It is proposed to initiate procedures under Section 55 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 as amended to add 24 St. Stephen's Green (formerly the Lisney Building), Dublin 2 to Dublin City Council's Record of Protected Structures.

**Name and Address of Owner:** New Ireland Assurance Company plc, 11-12 Dawson Street, Dublin 2, D02YX99 is a member of Bank of Ireland Group.

**Name of Applicants:**

- Shane O'Toole, on behalf of DoCoMoMo Ireland (March 2010).

**Summary of Applicant's Reasons for Seeking Addition:**

- *DoCoMoMo Ireland submission March 2010:* Shane O'Toole submitted an application to have the 24 St. Stephen's Green, formerly the Lisney Building added to the Record of Protected Structures, on behalf of DoCoMoMo Ireland in March 2010.
- In the application letter, O'Toole outlines the merits of Michael Scott & Partners' scheme, which was the work of Ronald Tallon, '*a leading Irish architect and a major figure in the history of Irish architecture*', whose works include the RTE complex; the Carroll's factory, Dundalk; the Bank of Ireland headquarters, Baggot Street; the Goulding House, Enniskerry; Dublin City Council Civic Offices; and master plans for UCD, UCG (now NUIG) and TCD.
- O'Toole describes the building as '*a small-scale exemplar of Miesian architecture*', and '*one of the earliest [Modern buildings] to demonstrate how cutting-edge modern architecture and the urban streetscape qualities of traditional cities can be reconciled.*' He celebrates its '*contextual success*' and claims that it is '*arguably the most successful integrated modern intervention in Dublin's Georgian core.*'
- *DoCoMoMo Ireland submission December 2015:* In December 2015, Dublin City Council received a detailed submission from Shane O'Toole on behalf of DoCoMoMo Ireland for a number of 20th century buildings, including the 24 St. Stephen's Green, formerly the Lisney Building submission, also written by Shane O'Toole. This submission was made under the Draft Development Plan process in 2015. The submission reference number is 3017.

**Addition of Significant 20<sup>th</sup> Century Structures:**

Policy CHC3 of the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022 provides as follows: *To identify and protect exceptional buildings of the late twentieth century; to categorise, prioritise and, where appropriate, add to the RPS. Dublin City Council will produce guidelines and offer advice for protection and appropriate refurbishment.*

**Site Location & Zoning Map:**

No. 24 St. Stephen's Green, formerly the Lisney Building, is located on the north side of the green, close to the junction with Kildare Street (see Figure 1). The building sits on a plot which extends to the boundary of 16 Kildare Street. The subject site is adjacent to a pair of eighteenth-century townhouses (nos. 22 & 23 St Stephen's Green, both listed as protected structures), and replaced an early nineteenth-century house which was demolished in the late 1960s.



Land use zoning

The subject site is located in a Conservation Area and is zoned Z5: *To consolidate and facilitate the development of the central area, and to identify, reinforce, strengthen and protect its civic design character and dignity.*

**Recent Planning History:**

Planning Ref	Description	Decision
2530/15	An extension & alteration to the 5th floor & signage to front elevation of existing five storey over basement office building, located within a Conservation Area.	GRANT PERMISSION 21-May-2015
4966/04	Planning permission for a new single sided illuminated sign to replace our existing single sided illuminated sign at number 24, St. Stephens Green, Dublin 2.	GRANT PERMISSION 03-Dec-2004

**Recent Enforcement History:**

There is no recent enforcement history for the site.

**Summary Description:**

No. 24 St. Stephen’s Green, formerly the Lisney Building, is an eight-bay six-storey over basement reinforced concrete building, with a recessed ground floor and four-storey curtain-wall façade.

A structural grid comprising four columns within the front and rear façades supports the upper floors, leaving the floor plates free of structure. The columnar structure is exposed to the ground floor elevation, framing three bays – a vehicular entrance, a display window and an entrance bay. The reinforced concrete columns to the ground floor façade are clad in steel, and all exposed steel elements to the façade are painted white. The upper floors are cantilevered over the outer bays from the central structural grid. The penthouse to the fifth floor is recessed, allowing the parapet

height to match that of its neighbouring Georgian façade. The projecting service core to the rear central bay accommodates a stairwell, lift, toilets and plant rooms.

The glass and steel curtain wall spans four floors, with painted steel components and bronze-tinted glass. Slender vertical steel sections delineate the bays, while broad horizontal steel bands mark out the upper floor plates.

The interior spaces to the main block are predominantly open plan, the floor plate described by O'Toole as 'a *geometrically perfect, column-free square*'. There were cellular offices to the first and second floors, but these were removed during the 2016 works.

### **Summary of Historical Background:**

In the late 1960s, Auctioneers *Lisney & Son* were based in 23 St Stephen's Green, a Georgian house on the north side of the Green. The company acquired the adjacent site at no. 24 St Stephen's Green to accommodate new company premises. Ronald Tallon of Michael Scott & Partners was appointed as architect for a new building on the site, and the existing three-storey Regency house (refer to Figure 3) was demolished. G&T Crampton were appointed as contractors for the project. Construction of the new building commenced in April 1970 and the Lisney Building was completed in January 1973.



Figure 3: 'St. Stephen's Green, Dublin City, Co. Dublin' c.1865-1914, Robert French Photographer (excerpt showing 21-26 St Stephen's Green), The Lawrence Photograph Collection, NLI



Figure 4: Lisney Building, 24 St Stephen's Green, 1973, Scott Tallon Walker pamphlet

Lisney remained in this premises for 40 years until 2013, when the company relocated to Earlsfort Terrace. In 2015, Fitzgerald Associates were appointed as architects for alterations to the building. These works comprised an extension & alterations to the fifth floor, and new signage to the front elevation, and were completed in 2016.

The adjoining property at no. 25 St Stephen's Green dates from 1978, and was designed by Scott Tallon Walker in a similar style to the Lisney Building.

## References:

- Graby, John & O'Connor, Deirdre (Editors), *Dublin* (Dublin, 1993)
- O'Beirne, Tomás (Editor), *A Guide to Modern Architecture in Dublin, Dublin; Architecture in Ireland* (1978)
- Scott Tallon Walker, *Lisney Building, 24 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2* (1976)
- G. & T. Crampton Photograph Archive, UCD
- Mounted photographs relating to Lisney & Co (IAA Ref: 005-047/036)
- McDonald, Frank, 'Time to end the blandness', *Irish Times*, 10 July 1989
- Anon., 'Lisney bids farewell to offices at Stephen's Green after 40 years', *Irish Times*, 5 December 2013
- Anon., 'One of the greatest modern Irish architects', *Ronald Tallon Obituary*, 5 July 2014
- Fagan, Jack, 'Old Lisney offices on St Stephen's Green to get facelift', *Irish Times*, 1 June 2016
- <http://archiseek.com/2010/1972-lisneys-st-stephens-green-dublin/>

## Significance/NIAH Rating:

No. 24 St. Stephen's Green, formerly the Lisney Building has not been surveyed as part of architectural inventory of the area, undertaken by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, and therefore no recommendation has been given.

When evaluating the property using the NIAH criteria and rating system (International, National, Regional, Local and Record Only), it is found that the building is worthy of a Regional rating.

### Rationale for Regional rating:

No. 24 St. Stephen's Green, formerly the Lisney Building is an elegantly proportioned, urban infill project, which displays a clever structural system and finely-detailed curtain walling. Though modern in expression, the building responds to its historic context through the composition of the steel and glass façade which reflects the scale and proportions of the adjacent historic buildings.

## Assessment of Special Interest under the Planning and Development Act 2000:

The Categories of Special Interest are defined in the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, technical and social. When assessed under the above categories, it is found that 24 St. Stephen's Green, formerly the Lisney Building is of architectural, cultural and technical interest.

- ARCHITECTURAL:
  - *'A further example of infill within a city square, this building uses scale and proportion rather than materials to harmonize with the urban framework'* (Graby & O'Connor, 1993).
  - The building has been widely praised as a modern infill project within a historic city centre setting. The elegant composition of the façade reflects the scale and proportions of the adjoining Georgian terrace. O'Toole describes the scheme as *'a rare example of domestic plot-scaled modern architecture'* and goes on to state that it is *'correctly proportioned as a whole and in its parts.'* (DoCoMoMo Ireland application, 2010).
  - Over 45 years later, the curtain wall façade remains intact. The original bronze-tinted glass is still in place. The longevity of the façade is testament to the high-quality materials and considered detailing employed in its construction. The structure is cleverly devised to create three bays at street level, and uninterrupted open office space to the upper floors.

- The building was highly commended in the RIAI European Architectural Heritage Year (1975) Awards. Tallon's building is referred to in the Pevsner architectural guide to Dublin architecture by Christine Casey as '*an elegant essay in contextual minimalism*'.
  - Frank McDonald describes the building in his 1985 *Destruction of Dublin* book as '*a Miesian gem in white-painted steel*' and '*one of the finest examples of modern infill in Dublin.*'
  - The attribution to Ronnie Tallon, one of Ireland's leading architects in the twentieth century, lends additional significance to the building. In 1958, Tallon (1927-2014) became a partner in Michael Scott and Partners, subsequently Scott Tallon Walker Architects. He was uncompromisingly modern in his outlook, and greatly inspired by the work of Mies van der Rohe. Scott Tallon Walker went on to become one of the largest architectural firms in Ireland. Other significant works include the RTE campus, the Carroll's Factory in Dundalk (1967-69), and the Bank of Ireland Headquarters on Baggot Street (1968-1978). Tallon's television building in RTE was awarded the RIAI Triennial Gold Medal for 1959-61, his General Electric Company plant at Dundalk was awarded the RIAI Triennial Gold Medal for 1962-64 and his house at Foxrock was awarded the RIAI Triennial Silver Medal for 1971-73 ([www.riai.ie](http://www.riai.ie)).
- CULTURAL:
    - The building represented a new office building typology that had emerged in Ireland in the 1960s, taking influence from US precedents. There was a proliferation of office blocks across Dublin, many of them high-rise, transforming the city skyline and urban context. Michael Scott & Partners (later Scott Tallon Walker Architects), were prominent designers in this genre, as were Stephenson & Gibney and Robinson Keefe & Devane.
    - '*All three firms looked towards America, then at the height of its power and influence, for inspiration. Ireland had finally entered the modern age and architecture promised to remake her in America's image ... Furthermore, the advent of the Jet Age meant that for the first time Irish architects could, and did, regularly visit and learn from the latest buildings going up in America.*' (O'Toole, More than Concrete Blocks Vol.2, 2018).
  - TECHNICAL:
    - The reinforced concrete structural system, which comprises a columnar grid to the central bay and cantilevered overhangs to the outer bays, was innovative in its design and practical in its application. The reinforced-concrete columns are integrated into the façade to the front, and form part of the service core to the rear. This allows the interior spaces to be free of columns, and thus flexible in terms of layout. The cantilevered floor plates ensure that the outer bays are also free of structure at ground level, and maximise the clear width of the ground floor ramp providing vehicular access.
    - The curtain walling is composed of steel flat plates and profiled steel sections, and is fixed to the reinforced concrete structural frame. Bronze-tinted glass serves to reduce solar glare in the office spaces and the original glass remains intact.

**Conclusion:**

The Conservation Section has considered the applicants' reasons for seeking addition and concludes that having reviewed the site it is recommended that 24 St. Stephen's Green, formerly the Lisney Building, Dublin 2 be proposed for addition to the City Council's Record of Protected Structures.

The purpose of this report is to attain the approval of the South East Area Committee of Dublin City Council for the initiation of the statutory process for the proposed addition of this structure to the Record of Protected Structures. This includes undertaking a statutory public consultation process



in accordance with Section 55 of the Act. Following the statutory consultation process, a further report will be prepared taking any submissions and observations received into consideration, with a recommendation to the City Council to proceed or not with the proposed addition, or with a recommendation including amendments to the proposed addition.

**Recommendation:**

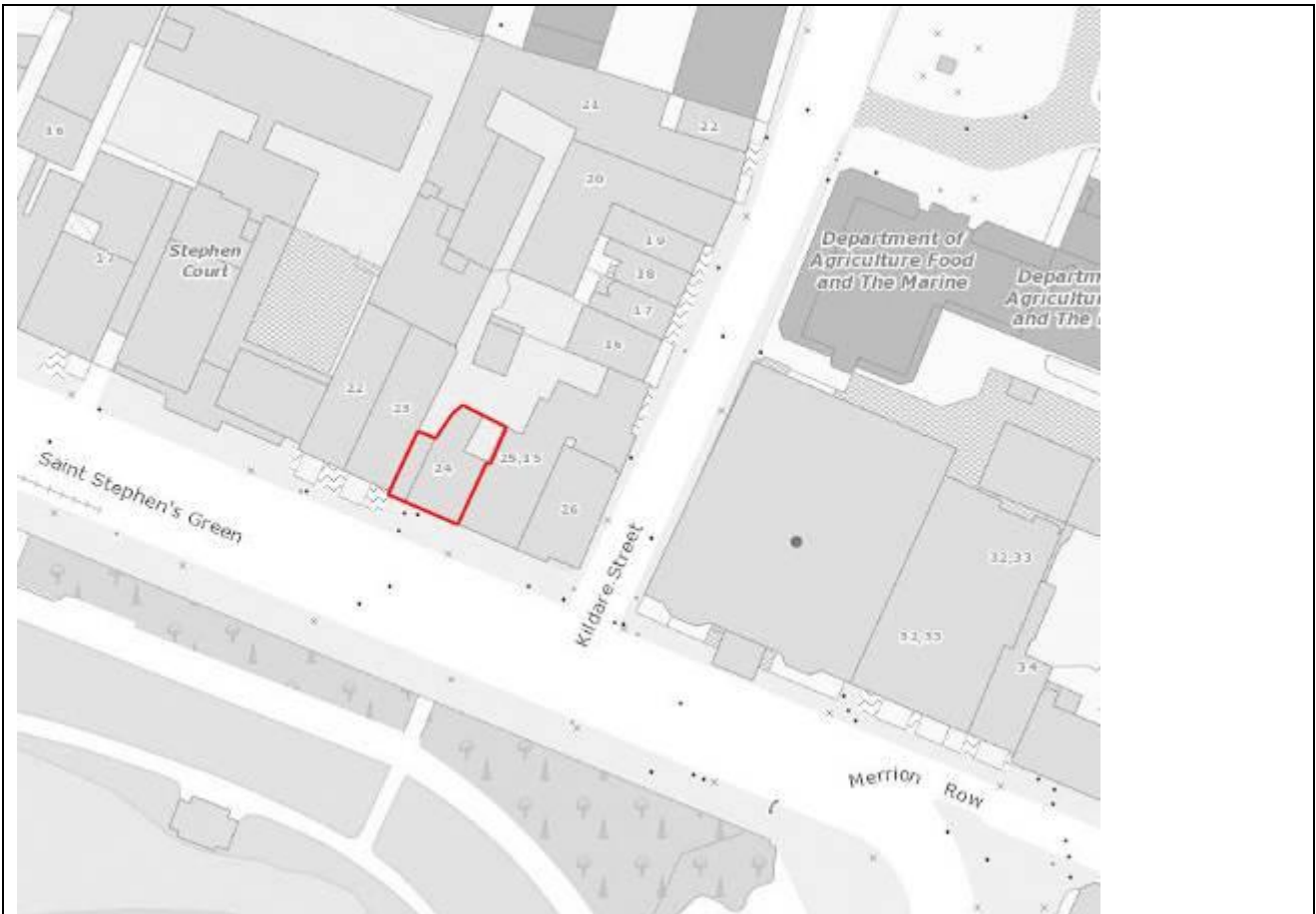
It is recommended that 24 St. Stephen's Green, formerly the Lisney Building, be added to the Record of Protected Structures, in accordance with Section 54 and 55 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).

<b>Recommendation</b>	
<b>Address</b>	<b>Description (to appear on RPS)</b>
24 St. Stephen's Green, formerly the Lisney Building, Dublin 2	Business premises

**Paraic Fallon**  
Senior Planner

Date: 29/10/2019

## Extent of Protected Structure Status & Curtilage



Lisney Building, 24 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2 - Curtilage outlined in red (Note: Curtilage outline taken from DCC planning permission ref: 2530/15)



**Photographic Record**



Front elevation



Main entrance and shopfront



Service block and west bay to rear elevation



Service block and east bay to rear



View of entrance lobby



View of entrance lobby



Open plan office, first floor





Façade, detail, second floor



Meeting area / canteen, fifth floor

Archival Material



'Lisney and Co. Head Office, St Stephen's Green', G. & T. Crampton Photograph Archive, UCD

STW office

Public buildings

Educational

Industrial

**Commercial**

Other building types

Domestic

Miscellaneous



Street view