Awear building gets new look for & Other Stories

Another building on Grafton Street in Dublin is to get a facelift. The former Awear store opposite Brown Thomas at number 26/27 is to be upgraded and fitted with a modern facade in advance of its reopening later this year with new tenants & Other Stories.

Owner Aviva Investor is spending €5 million on the refurbishment and reconfiguration of the block which has 990 sqm (10,656sq ft) of retail space at basement, ground and first floor levels and 836sq m (9,000sq ft) of office accommodation on three upper floors.

Max Reilly of JLL says Aviva has identified the opportunity to separate the 1960s building into separate retail and office functions to enhance the returns to their unit holders.

BKD Architects was given the challenge of creating a contemporary, elegant facade of the highest material quality, which will signal the arrival of a dynamic new retail and office offer, yet also sit comfortably within the varied and much-loved streetscape of Grafton Street. The architects’ design concept defines the new facade using a rhythm of slender vertical elements set up in a cascading pattern.

The vertical elements are formed in anodised bronze with curved bull-nose edge profiles which will project forward from the face of the building to reflect the changing light conditions in the street and give depth and variety to the facade. Mervyn Ellis of letting agents BNP Paribas Real Estate said the remedial work would greatly enhance the profile of the building with resultant benefits for the street as well.

There was intense competition from other leading international traders for the store, which is to be rented at €925,000 per year. & Other Stories is expected to carry a full range of women’s clothes, shoes and accessories, all noted for their distinctive design at affordable prices.

The high-end brand is part of the Swedish-based H&M group, which opened two other stores in Dublin last year, Cos in the old Tower Records shop on Wicklow Street and a H&M outlet in the former National Irish Bank on College Green.

The former Awear building is divided by Lemon Street from BT2 which is also to undergo substantial improvements later this year before it is taken over by the famous American lingerie chain, Victoria’s Secret.

The two adjoining shops have the largest floor space on the street apart from the department stores.