

Marks and Spencer

# 'Protect the magic, modernise the rest'

**circa £10m**  
/ Partnership value

**September 2017**  
/ The partnership commenced

**Ongoing**  
/ Scheduled completion

From Crewe to Carrickfergus, and the Abbey Centre to Aldergrove, we are helping Marks and Spencer realise its “protect the magic, modernise the rest” vision. For over 135 years, M&S has been “renowned for bringing the latest trends to the high street”. But it is changing, and fast. And so are its stores. We are supporting the acceleration of this “transformation programme” by developing the store estate and “renewing its format”. Since 2016, we have successfully delivered over 150,000 sq ft of retail space. Validating our record, we were selected to implement M&S’s new “test and learn” concept at the Abbey Centre. The first store in Ireland, and only the third overall, to benefit from this “rethink”, our refurbishment programme has expanded floor space by almost 6,000 sq ft, and created a shop with the “mind of a supermarket and the soul of a fresh market”.

## The brief

Our Marks and Spencer brief ranges from new store fit-outs and minor refurbishment work, to major transformational projects all with the aim of creating a “fantastic shopping experience” for its customers.



“There is a real buzz locally around the new-look foodhall. The team has been working so hard to get ready for the unveiling of a bigger, better, fresher store.”

Colin McGreevy  
M&S Store Manager

“We have enjoyed an excellent relationship with Marks and Spencer over the years, and we were extremely proud to have been chosen to deliver the ‘test and learn’ concept store at the Abbey Centre. It really does provide a stunning shopping experience, and our team worked around the clock to make that a possibility.”

Mark Gibson  
GRAHAM Interior Fit-Out – Managing Director

### The challenges

Across our M&S portfolio, the central challenges have been working within live, often busy, retail environments. We implement after hours working patterns to ensure there are no disturbances to shoppers, or indeed neighbouring tenants. Compounding the difficulty, stores must be ready and in a pristine condition to welcome staff and customers the following morning. Balancing speed and accuracy is, therefore, critical over the course of the fast paced programmes, which can be as little as eight-weeks from commencement to conclusion.

### The solution

Playing an important part in the “modernisation” of M&S, our fit-out and refurbishment projects continue to create a “fantastic store experience” for the retail giant. At the Abbey Centre, one of the top trading foodhalls in the UK, we demonstrated our flexibility in delivering the “test and learn” concept, adapting to the evolving brief throughout the duration of the scheme. Not only does it now offer a “better, fresher store”, foodhall floor space has jumped considerably from 8,600 sq ft to 14,300 sq ft, accommodating an expansive grocery department, and a bakery area, which has doubled in size. Completed on programme in time for the Christmas 2019 run-in, key design components include neon and illuminated signage throughout, a decorative feature wall with locally sourced handmade bricks, and fun, interactive sections – notably an “oinking” Percy Pig and a “mooring” cow in the dairy aisle. Phase 2 of this scheme will see the complete refurbishment of the clothing department.

### Outputs & Benefits

- / **Programme certainty:** We have a proud record of handing over our M&S projects on time and within budget
- / **Expertise:** We are a preferred M&S contractor, and have delivered in excess of 150,000 sq ft
- / **Geographic footprint:** Our relationship with M&S extends throughout the UK and Ireland
- / **Trust:** M&S selected us to deliver its Abbey Centre “test and learn” concept store. This was the first in Ireland, and only the third overall in its UK/Ireland estate
- / **Sustainability:** Our work has supported M&S’s wider plastic reduction plan, facilitating a range of features to help its customers reduce, reuse and recycle plastics
- / **Local community:** We welcomed 30 pupils, aged between six and seven, to an action-packed day of learning during a behind the scenes tour of the new M&S food outlet in Carrickfergus



For more information on how we’re delivering lasting impact:

+44 (0) 28 9268 9500    info@graham.co.uk    graham.co.uk

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