

ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE PROTECTION

Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government 2004, Extract

Carefully-designed and well-constructed shopfronts are important features of many buildings and streetscapes. Because of the prominent role which shopfronts play in businesses, they are frequently subject to pressures for alteration or replacement to meet changing needs. A balance needs to be struck between the commercial requirements of the owners and the protection of shopfronts of special importance.

New lettering and signage shall be required to respect the character of a protected structure and its setting. The design of a new shopfront for installation into a protected structure requires careful consideration and should not detract from the character of the rest of the building. This does not mean that the design of the new shopfront should be an imitation of past styles. A sympathetic well-designed modern intervention will usually be preferable to an ill proportioned imitation of a traditional shopfront.

- Is the shopfront original to the building? If not, how does the shopfront integrate with the rest of the building?
- Does the shopfront stretch across two or more distinct buildings? Does it contribute or detract from the character of the building?
- What contribution does the shopfront make to the street?
- Are the materials and proportions of the shopfront appropriate to the scale and proportion of the building and street?
- Would the design and character of the shopfront be enhanced by a more appropriate paint scheme?
- Are there additions such as advertising, lighting or cabling which detract from the character of the shopfront and could easily be removed or relocated?

FURTHER INFORMATION



Offaly County Council

County Development Plan 2009-2015
Tullamore Town & Environs Development Plan 2010-2016
Birr Town & Environs Development Plan 2010-2016
Phone: 057 935 7414
E-mail: planning@offalycoco.ie

Fascias, Signs and Lighting

Hand painted signs are generally most appropriate. Colours should not be garish, discordant or clash with adjacent fascias. The use of acrylic, plastic or other shiny material should be avoided. In general projecting signs should be avoided to reduce clutter. Where permissible they should be traditional single hanging signs with well designed brackets. Signage at first floor level advertising a second business is often required to ensure a vibrant use throughout the building, this is normally best done with relatively modest lettering on the glass of the windows and discreet nameplates at entrances (refer to example overleaf).

Overhanging, extended lighting should be avoided along with internally illuminated fascias. Subtle illumination of individual letters is generally the most appropriate.

Windows and Entrances

Shops that combine two or more units should respect the rhythm of the buildings above. Any changes to the shop fronts should be carefully designed to preserve these vertical sub-divisions. Continuity can be incorporated by the use of colours, lettering and even fenestration.

Consideration should be given to disabled access to all shops. Window stickers should be kept to a minimum to allow the attractive display of goods. Too much advertising defeats the object and becomes an eyesore.

External roller shutters are generally not suitable. Alternatives include traditional timber shutters, toughened glass or open mesh type security grilles fitted internally.

Guide to Shopfronts and Signs



This leaflet offers advice on the design of shop fronts and signs for retail and non-retail premises.



Offaly County Council seeks to improve the attractiveness of the streetscape and the quality of the shopping environment, by encouraging retention of the best of the existing shop fronts and by requiring a high standard of design and materials for the installation of new shop fronts.

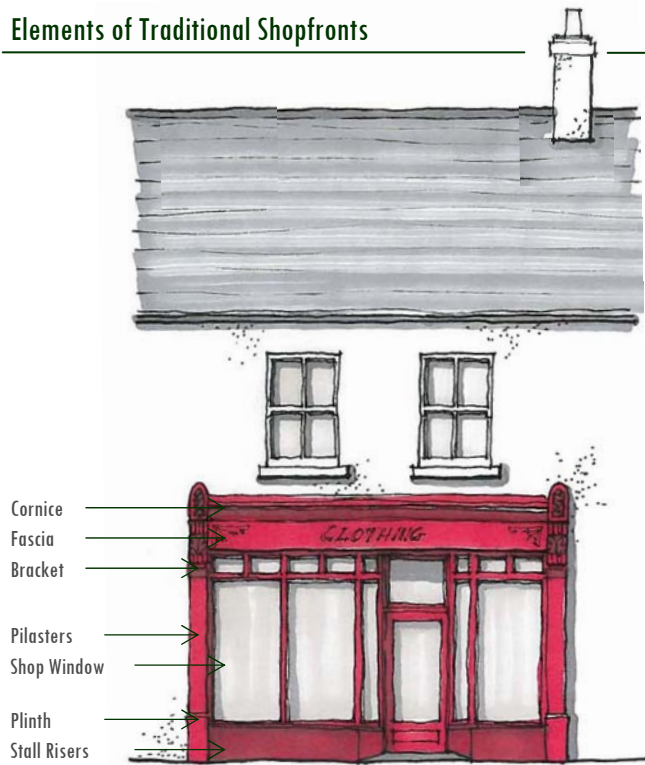
RAAC 11



Offaly County Council

Advice Leaflet No. 01

Elements of Traditional Shopfronts



1 Cornice: The cornice is a narrow projecting detail over the fascia. Its functions are to keep the rain off the fascia sign, to provide strong definition to the top of the shopfront and to separate it from upper floors.

2 Fascia: The function of the fascia panel is to carry the shop name, its depth should be appropriate to the size of the building and the proportion/length of the shopfront.

3 Pilasters are rectangular columns projecting slightly from the face of the building, resting on a plinth, providing vertical division between shops. Sometimes they stop under the fascia panel, but often they run up to the cornice acting as brackets to the fascia board.

4 Stallrisers are the horizontal element between the bottom of the window and the ground. They give a strong visual base to the shopfront and protect the shop window. Where omitted in contemporary designs, its visual success is dependant on high quality materials and detailing.

The towns and villages of Offaly contain a wide variety of shop fronts, contributing greatly to the distinctive character of the heart of each settlement. Shop fronts provide colour, diversity and interest to our main streets. Older shop fronts demonstrate the development of the town, while new shop fronts may either reflect a traditional design or be more contemporary in approach.

Principles of Good Design

Poor Shopfront design

Fascias are intended to indicate the shop name, proprietor or type of business, they should not be cluttered with general advertising thus losing their individual identity. Bulky fascias should be avoided. Fascias should not ignore or obscure upper floor windows. Plastic fascias can look particularly cheap and produce a "stuck-on" appearance. Large upper floor signage can disfigure a building. Internally illuminated projecting boxed signs will not generally be permitted.

Where the ground floor of two buildings is occupied by the one user, the individuality of the two should not be undermined by taking a fascia or the shop front, as a single design across both frontages. **The shop front should not be designed in isolation from the rest of the building or adjoining frontages.** Shopfronts with a strong horizontal emphasis are doing much to damage the harmony of the traditional street.

Too much advertising both defeats its purpose and creates an eyesore.

Modern shop fronts containing large, continuous areas of plate glass appear weak and incapable of supporting the solid structure above.

Stallrisers are a feature of traditional shop fronts and generally should not be omitted.

External roller shutters are generally not suitable.

Good Shopfront design

The individuality of two buildings can be retained whilst displaying a common occupancy by a consistency of detail design, colouring, lettering, etc. Traditional materials should be used whenever possible—stone, timber, brass, or at least materials with a matt finish.

Appropriate first floor signage is normally best done with relatively modest lettering on the glass of the windows and discreet nameplates at entrances.

Simple clear lettering is the most effective and pleasing. In some cases the application of lettering directly (and carefully) to the building frontage may be appropriate.

There should be a consistency of style between shop front, the floors above and its neighbours. A vertical emphasis should be demonstrated by making windows greater in height than in width and the use of vertical framing features.

Shop fronts with a definite period quality should be preserved.

While shopfronts can greatly enhance the public realm, the Council acknowledges that their primary role is to showcase the business occurring within. However, the most successful shopfronts tend also to be architecturally attractive: utilising quality materials and detailed design while having regard to the features and scale of the building that they front, particularly when they occur in protected structures.



This leaflet provides a guide to the constituent parts of traditional shopfronts, providing some insight into the maintenance of shopfronts and also outlines some basic principles around which successful new shopfronts should be designed. For further information and some site specific pre-planning advice do not hesitate to contact the Planning Department of **Offaly County Council**.

