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APPENDIX 14 **SHOPFRONT DESIGN** **GUIDELINES**

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Shopfront Design Standards

a) Shop front design should be sympathetic to the appearance of the building as a whole and adjoining properties should provide a harmonious and appropriate addition into the streetscape. The appearance of individual buildings should not be adversely affected by unsuitable shop front designs.

b) Traditional shopfronts were based on classical proportions using slender pilasters or engaged columns, narrow fascias and, where used, moderately proportioned console brackets. Stall risers were always used and should be retained to support large expanses of display glass and as a security measure.

Where no element of a traditional shopfront remains, and where appropriate for the streetscape, it is possible to design modern shopfronts with older buildings using good quality materials (see item (d) below). In order for a shopfront to be successful, it must follow the proportions of historic shopfronts and be proportionate to the building itself.

The use of standardised corporate shopfronts will be resisted in established streetscapes. Innovative methods of reinforcing brand identity will be promoted where these add to the character and identity of the streetscape as a whole. This could include the use of brand-inspired colour palettes on suitably designed shopfronts - this reinforces brand

identity yet allows for flexibility and conversion in the reuse of the property.



A Typical Street where the left and right-hand shopfronts have been replaced with unsympathetic designs.

c) Shop Front Surrounds

Traditionally shop fronts are contained within a permanent surround consisting of pilasters, mouldings and cornices (See image above right). These features establish the pattern of a street, the framework of a unit and are decorative elements in their own right. They should, whenever possible, not be removed, damaged or clad. Shops and terraces can be improved by repairing, replacing or reinstating these features. Modern shopfronts are acceptable as long as they retain similar basic proportions and can be successfully integrated into or enhance the streetscape. Care should be taken in the choice of colour scheme, with specific reference to the colour scheme of adjacent/adjoining buildings and the streetscape as a whole.



Examples of good and bad shop front design – shop front should relate to the upper floors, particularly with respect to glazing. Separate access to upper floors should be maintained.

(d) Materials

In the selection of materials for a shopfront, it is important that materials are selected which suit the character of the building concerned. Plain aluminium, galvanised metal, laminates and plastics will be resisted in favour of timber, quality brick, coloured/coated aluminium and natural stone. The selection of materials is highly dependant on the existing character of the building and the streetscape of which it forms part. Unsubstantial materials and harsh finishes detract from the appearance of individual buildings and the shopping area as a whole.

Many shopfronts dating from the mid 20th Century were clad in a glass-like material known as “Vitrolite”

and had polished chrome display-window frames and other details such as vent covers and “bakelite” or signage made from other early plastics that are no longer produced. These materials represent a specific period in Irish commercial history and should be retained where present.

(e) Fascia Display

Overlarge or overbright shop fascias should be avoided, particularly in a terrace of shops. Fascias will generally be restricted to one metre maximum in height and restricted in width to the width of the shopfront and/or subdivided over large frontages. Fascias should not obscure or damage existing architectural features nor rise above the cills of the first floor windows. Where a business occupies several adjoining units, each should have a separate fascia and all should be limited to a common design. Continuous fascias stretching across several units are unacceptable.

(f) Projecting Signs

Projecting signage of various sizes located at random over shop fronts is a major contributor to streetscape clutter. Each shop should be limited to a maximum of one projecting sign. This sign should be situated at fascia level and have a minimum of 2.4 metres ground clearance.

The sign should be in keeping with the style of the shop front and building character and not obscure or damage architectural details. Projecting plastic illuminated signage will not generally be permitted.



An example of how one poorly designed advertisement can overshadow the whole street (A). Also, note how the advertising becomes one meaningless clutter when allowed to proliferate (B).

(g) Canopies and Blinds

Canopies and blinds should enhance both the shop itself and the street as a whole and should be of a size and style in keeping with the building on which it is located. Plastic Dutch or perambulator canopies will be resisted in favour of fully retractable blinds in canvas type material. Generally, there will be a presumption against shiny plastic or other undesirable materials.

(h) Double Shop Units

Double shop units should provide or retain an intervening pilaster and break the fascia, as for two separate units. Shops were traditionally designed as single units.

Double shop units or wide shopfronts need special consideration because most streets have a strong vertical emphasis. A large shopfront where two units have been combined will therefore emphasise the horizontal and appear out of proportion. It is

generally necessary to retain the intervening pilaster and break the fascia as for two separate units.

(i) Shop Forecourts

The obstruction of the public footway with signage and merchandise will not be permitted. These obstructions can be dangerous to pedestrians, particularly elderly persons and those with disabilities.

(k) Roller Grilles and Shutters

Generally speaking, roller grilles should be used in favour of solid shutters and should be colour finished as opposed to raw metal.

Grille boxes are ideally located internally and should be sympathetically integrated into the new shopfront design. If this is not practical, they should be colour finished or clad and should not project forward of the shopfront pilasters. Guide channels should be concealed or painted to match the shop front frame.

A solid base section to a roller grille may be installed for extra security, provided the solid base does not exceed 0.5 metres in height and the slats are colour finished.

Solid shutters are not favoured in a town centre situation as collectively, they have a detrimental effect on the quality of the environment. Repeated use of shutters along a street creates a particularly hostile and impersonal appearance and by

obscuring the shop window display, they remove the light and interest which shops provide to the commercial centre outside shopping hours. A brightly lit and inviting atmosphere is required if people are to use central areas outside of shopping hours.