4.0 How to Approach Shopfront Design

4.1 Why do you need a new shopfront?

Before deciding to replace an existing shopfront it is worth considering carefully why a new shopfront replacement is necessary. The most likely reasons may be:

- The shopfront is in poor repair.
- A higher quality shopfront is required to improve the appearance of your business.
- A change of use that requires a different frontage – for example a change of use from a betting office to a flower shop where more display area is required, or from a butchers to a jewellery shop where more security is required.

If the existing shopfront is a distinctive and well designed one that has fallen into disrepair, then repair work should be all that is required. This is most always the case with timber shopfronts and repair work may be less expensive than replacement. If a completely new shopfront is required the following checklist will help focus you on the type of considerations that will help inform your shopfront design.

4.2 How to appraise your shopfront

The first step in designing a shopfront is to make a careful appraisal of the street, premises and existing shopfront.

- Streetscape
  - What is the rhythm of the street elevation in which the shopfront will be located?
  - Is there a consistent pattern to the shopfronts along the streetscape, within which the host building is located?
  - What are the materials and colours used in local buildings?
  - How would a shopfront fit into the surrounding streetscape?

- The Building as a whole
  - Is the host building a protected structure?
  - Is the host building located in an Architectural Conservation Area?
  - What are the qualities and proportions of the rest of the building?
  - Does the building have a distinctive architectural style or character e.g. Victorian, Georgian etc?
  - How would a shopfront fit into the host façade?

- The Existing Shopfront
  - Is the shopfront of special importance as a piece of architectural heritage? If so, consultation with the local authority will be required.
  - Is the shopfront original to the building? If so, does it still retain its original architectural details/features?
  - Define the state of repair and condition of the shopfront.
  - What is the proposed use of the shop, and is the shopfront appropriate to this usage?
Does the shopfront sit comfortably within the façade of the host building?

If the shopfront is of recent construction, in what manner does it contribute to the overall visual appreciation of the street, if at all?

Can any alteration to the shopfront be readily accommodated without having a negative impact on the character of the host historic structure?

What are the potential benefits of any proposed alteration/addition if any?


4.3 Planning Approvals

Applicants are advised to consult Chapter 19, Section 19.11 Shopfront Design and Advertising, of the Kildare County Development Plan 2011-2017 (or any amendment/review) which provides further direction for works to shopfronts.

Works requiring planning permission

- New shopfront.
- Any alterations to an existing façade including an existing shopfront.
- Change of use from shop to other use.
- Works to a protected structure.
- Any work which will materially affect the character of an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA).

Making an Application

It is advised that any application for a shopfront proposal should be accompanied by clear and concise information. Outlined below is a brief checklist of the type of information which your application should include:

- A site plan to a scale of 1:1000 with the site outlined.
- An existing elevation of the shopfront and the host building together with adjoining properties.
- Drawings of the shopfront – plans, sections and elevations at a scale of 1:50, showing its relationship to the host building.
- Joinery or stone details to 1:10 or 1:5
- Details of shutters, housings, materials and fittings
- Specifications for signs and materials
- Shopfront finish
- Illumination design
- Photographs of the existing shopfront and adjoining premises. Aspirational photographs to depict the 'look and feel' you would like to achieve with your shopfront will also help convey your ideas.

Pre-Planning Design Advice

Kildare County Council holds regular pre-planning information meetings for prospective applicants’ for small-scale development. This will give an opportunity for interested parties to meet a planner or senior official who can advise them in broad terms about their proposal. The dates of the
meetings are advertised in advance in local newspapers and on our website, and are by appointment only.

Kildare County Council will always encourage the retention, conservation or restoration of period shopfronts. However, where a new shopfront is deemed appropriate by the Local Authority, the new shopfront shall have regard to the design guidance set out in this booklet.

Useful Contacts:

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Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI)
www.riai.ie

The Heritage Council
www.heritagecouncil.ie