

Carlow County Council Shopfront Improvement Scheme 2015

The Development Plan requires a high quality of design for new shopfronts. Traditional shopfronts conserve the distinct character of the street scape. Shopfront advertisements should contribute to the appearance of the shopfront or the street. As a general rule, subtle and simple schemes that have regard to colours, size, design and lettering work best.

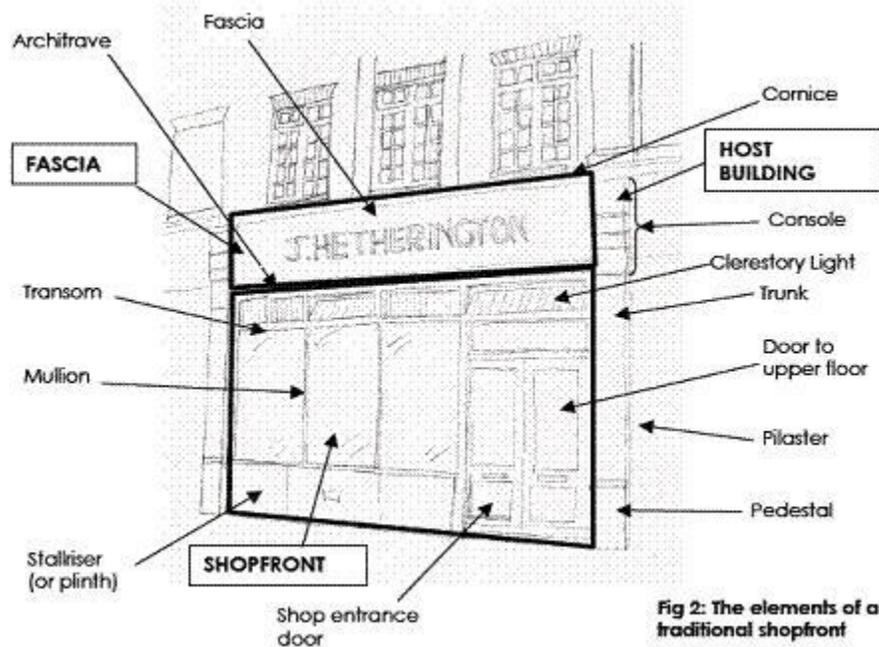
The Development Plans also supports the use of Irish language on shopfront advertisements.

Active Commercial and Retail Frontages

Streets with continuous frontages of continuous retail and commercial uses that open directly onto the footpath provide active, people-oriented streets. They enhance passive surveillance and improve the amenity to the public domain by encouraging pedestrian activity. Such streets assist in supporting the economic viability of the area.

Shopfronts

The design and quality of shopfronts play an important role in the experience of a town/village centre environment. It is important that they should not compromise the local character, scale and architectural quality of the host building. Traditional shopfronts in Ireland are often of painted softwood with decorative consoles or pilasters in timber and fascia advertisements consisting of applied plasterwork lettering in distinctive fonts. Many date to the early twentieth century, with either restrained or exuberant styles.



Traditional shopfronts are usually comprised of the following proportions: the stallriser at the base of the shopfront usually occupies approximately a third of the height of the shopfront, the fascia board usually occupies approximately a fifth of the height of the shopfront, with the shop window making up the remainder.

Generally, the Council will seek the retention of traditional shopfronts and encourage the reinstatement of these shopfronts, where they have fallen into disrepair. Contemporarily-designed bespoke shopfronts may be suitable to new commercial areas or to historic buildings if existing shopfronts are of poor quality. Though, the use of traditional materials, colours and signage can assist in integrating new shop fronts with older buildings. New shopfronts should respond in terms of scale and proportions to the host building regardless of style.

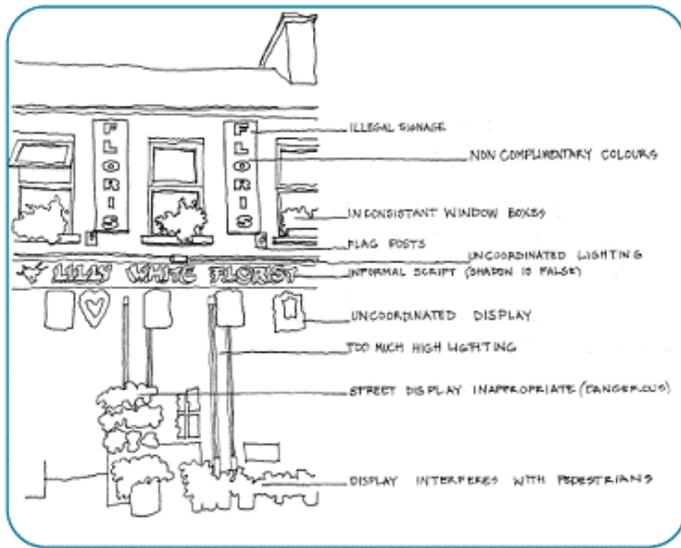
Shopfront Advertisement Policies

The Councils expects that shopfront advertisements should contribute to the appearance of the shopfront or the street. As a general rule, subtle and simple schemes that have regard to colours, size, design and lettering work best. Where a business occupies more than one building, the fascia advertisement should not extend uninterrupted across two or more shopfronts. The fascia advertisement should not extend beyond the pilasters or obstruct any other architectural detail, such as the cornices or first floor sills. The depth of fascia advertisements should be consistent with those of any adjoining shops.

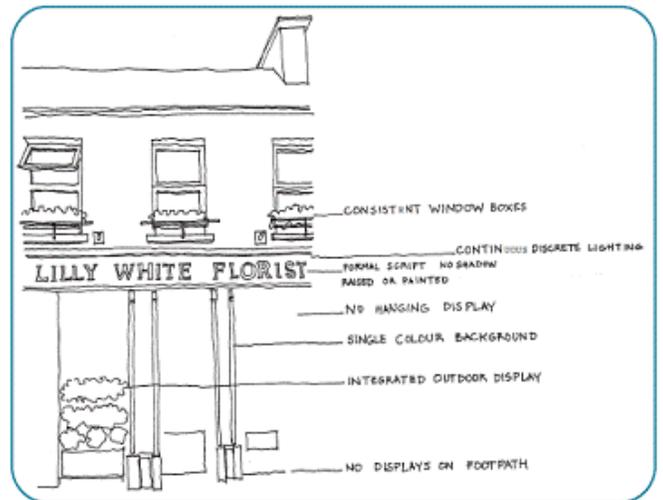
Shop advertisements generally do not require illumination other than street lighting or lighting of shop windows. Only late opening premises, such as public houses and restaurants, should require additional illumination. Where additional illumination is required, it should be discreetly positioned and kept to a minimum. Spot lighting, recessed trough lighting and halo lighting are generally acceptable. The fascia advertisement board should normally state only the name or trade of the business and the street number. Avoid oversized lettering and the application of too much additional information as this can create visual clutter. Letters should generally not exceed 60 percent of the height of the fascia. Painted wooden, matt finished advertisements or individually applied brass or chrome letters are preferred over large areas of highly-polished finishes, glossy plastic or perspex advertisements. Lettering or sign writing should usually be applied directly to the fascia.

The character and attractiveness of a shop front, building or street can be diminished by the insertion of insensitive advertisements and signs. The Councils will avoid the provision of multiple signs, whether large or small, which give rise to visual clutter on the buildings and streetscape. Flags should be used only on important and ceremonial occasions. No company or other commercial body or name should appear on any flag, bunting or other device. Fixings for flag poles should be neutral in colour and form. The use of clocks should be restricted to public or civic buildings.

Projecting hanging signs are a traditional form of additional advertising of commercial premises, they can complement the colour and design of the fascia, it can add interest and originality to a building and street scene. There should be no more than one hanging sign per shopfront and they should keep an adequate vertical clearance from the pavement



EXAMPLE OF "CLUTTERED" SHOPFRONT



EXAMPLE OF "IMPROVED" SHOPFRONT

Support the design of shopfront fascia advertisements and projecting signs that enhance the character of the streetscene

Favour the use of discreet and minimal lighting of advertisements, where commercial premises are in use at night time