



Guidelines on Shopfront Design for Bray



colum óbroin + partners

cób+p
architects

The Village, 100 Main Street, Bray, Co. Wicklow
t +353 1 286 8721
f +353 1 286 4961
e cob+p@cob+p.com

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of these guidelines is to create a recognisable 'Bray Town', not by dictating specific formats, but by ensuring well thought-out design of high quality.

By the very nature of this regeneration area, there exists an opportunity to dispense with traditional genres and thus create a truly unique town centre.

A new Bray Town style actively encourages innovation but insists upon quality craftsmanship in contemporary detailing, capable of withstanding fashion and time.

It recommends a diverse range of materials, each relevant to the maritime environment and recognising its location in Wicklow by using local materials eg Wicklow granite.

The new Bray Town style will be symbolised by its variety – a variety that is capable of embracing the history of the area, while celebrating new and future developments. This diversity aims to ensure the liveliness, vibrancy and longevity of the area – improving the streetscapes and ultimately the quality of life.

An essential aim of the regeneration policy is that the generic character of the area is preserved as a means of ensuring sustainability of the area for future generations.

Contextual considerations in new design are a means of documenting what is valuable and unique in the area, ultimately maintaining personality and a sense of place.

The guidelines strongly promote attention to context in detailing, believing that it can actively enhance contemporary designs by developing interesting schemes that are harmonious to the area.



Main Street is seen as the principal public space in Bray. It is also the major focus of commercial activity in the town and must provide an attractive environment if it is to continue to draw a high level of trade in the face of competition from existing and developing shopping centres in Wicklow and South County Dublin.

Bray has a rich and colourful history which has invariably left its legacy on the built environment and wider landscape.

The main street has a linear north / south axis and curves gently from east to west. There is a terminal space at either end – at the old Court House to the northern end and at the Town Hall to the south – and the street corridor is punctuated by the Church of the Holy Redeemer approximately mid way along its length. Land use on Main Street is almost completely commercial. Ground floors are either shops or consumer services and upper floors are generally used as office space.

Shopping is an important activity within Bray. Significant deterioration of buildings and shop fronts has taken place over the last few decades. The outward appearance of shops is often an indicator of the quality, prosperity or image of a town. The design of a shopfront is, therefore, an important element in the street scene, both individually and in terms of a collective impact. An emphasis on good quality design of shopfronts will in turn encourage investment and spending and will ultimately benefit all traders and shoppers in Bray.

Main street is dotted with protected structures such as F. Doyles Butchers, No. 4 & No. 5 and No. 108. It is proposed that these buildings be upgraded and refurbished. The open spaces at the Town Hall, the Church of the Holy Redeemer and the Court House should be repaved and upgraded with planting, lighting and soft landscaping to provide three public open spaces along Brays principle shopping street.

BRAY



The function of the shopfront is two-fold; to identify a retail premises within a street by way of name, signage and window display and to express the architectural character of a building at ground floor level.

The basic rule in good shopfront design is the requirement to [respect the architecture overhead and adjacent to, in terms of proportion, scale and materials.](#)

It is essential that any new shopfront is not designed in isolation. Designs should show the relationship of the shopfront to the upper floors and any adjoining buildings. The shopfront should sit within the original building framework set by structural columns and beams and should carry significant features through to ground floor level, rather than visually separating the ground and first floors.

The vertical and horizontal emphasis of the surrounding buildings is important when designing a new shopfront. If a unit occupies more than one building, the vertical division between the buildings must be retained – a new single shopfront should not be allowed to straddle originally distinct elevations.

Designs need to be imaginative within the constraints of the existing building, enhancing its character rather than conflicting with it.

SHOPFRONT DESIGN



SHOPFRONT STYLE

The shopfront is part of the building and the building is part of the street.

Where a shopfront is to be installed, it should normally be of materials or finishes appropriate to the age, style and character of the building and its surrounding area. If a 'traditional style' shopfront is required it should be [appropriate to the style and age of the building and the locality](#).

In Bray there is no precedent for any particular shopfront style. There will be some requirement for traditional designs, but nostalgia or pastiche designs are strongly discouraged. Where no original designs have survived, a modern solution is preferred over inaccurate representations. Good quality contemporary shopfront design that will serve as the basis for the new identity of the area is encouraged.



A recent replacement traditional shopfront.



A contemporary shopfront.

The primary function of the fascia is to advertise the name of the shop. The fascia also gives visual support to the upper floors and helps frame the shop window. Traditionally, the fascia was an integral part of the facade and never applied to the building as an afterthought. The shallow depth of a traditional fascia corresponded to that of a beam or lintel spanning the glazed opening, integrating the fascia into the facade.

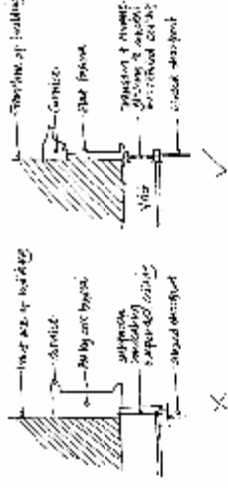
The fascia should be of an appropriate height, in scale with the overall height of the shopfront and other elements of the building. **Excessively deep fascias should be avoided.** A failing of many modern shopfronts is the application of overlarge and inappropriate fascias, superimposed on the front of originals and obscuring such detailed elements as consoles and cornices.

The fascia should not encroach on or above first floor level or extend uninterrupted across a number of buildings.

The use of extended or sub-fascias, incorporated to hide suspended ceilings will be discouraged. Any such ceilings should be concealed within the area of the shop window by either setting the ceiling well back from the shop front or by positioning it behind an obscure glazed transom light.



An example of a well proportioned fascia.



ELEMENTS

FASCIA



An example of one of many over-sized out-dated fascias on the Main Street.



Temporary looking fascias should never be used.



Extended fascias concealing shutters or suspended ceilings are discouraged.

The choice of lettering can evoke an image and provide decorative interest to both the architectural character of the building and to the wider landscape.

Minimum text should be used. Excessive signage can be counterproductive by creating clutter or a confused appearance. Shop lettering should convey the essential message of the retailer. The shop name alone will generally have most effect. Each shop should have its street number displayed. This could be included as part of the fascia, on glazing above the door, or on the door itself.

All lettering is to be legible and in character with the building.

Lettering is to be in proper proportion to the size of the fascia and to the scale of the building. As a general rule, the lettering should be restricted to half the fascia width, taking care to leave sufficient space at top, bottom and sides.

If additional signage is required, this could be applied to the stall riser or even the window itself.

Preferred Signage Locations

1. Directly to the glazing.
2. To the bulkhead behind the glazing.
3. To architectural features eg columns and doorways.
4. Behind the glass.

Generally, individually mounted lettering or handpainted lettering is required.

Hand-painted advertisements on walls, old enamelled signs and hanging signs representing trades are features which add to the decorative quality of buildings. They can provide interest and character to the surroundings, however they should be carefully controlled as they are not suitable for every building and overuse can destroy the visual harmony of the street.

ELEMENTS SIGNAGE



Minimal text is preferred. Excessive signage causes confusion.



Lettering should be in proper proportion to the size of the fascia.



Sandwich boards can give the appearance of clutter in the townscape, and can be a hazard to the disabled and visually impaired if not carefully designed and positioned.

The illumination of shopfronts and signage is generally considered unnecessary. In certain circumstances, for example where the business is open in the evening, modest levels of discreet lighting (the purpose of which is to light the lettering and not bathe the whole façade and pavement in a pool of light) may be permitted. **Light fittings should be discreetly located**, painted the same colour as the fascia and concealed under cornices or architectural profiling.

ELEMENTS SIGNAGE



Individually mounted lettering or handpainted lettering is required.



Sandwich boards are discouraged. Well designed signage incorporated into the design of the shopfront is preferred.

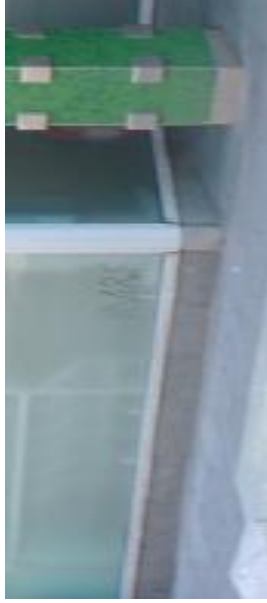


Light fittings should be discreetly located.

Stall risers not only improve the proportions of a shopfront but also provide a solid visual base anchoring the building to the ground. They also provide protection to the glass from dirt, kicks and knocks.

Hardwearing materials eg tiles, polished granite, stainless steel etc, should be used as they are easy to clean and maintain. Tiled stall risers are common in Bray, many of these have been painted over when they should have been replaced.

Often in contemporary shopfronts where the glazing runs down to the ground there is no need for stall risers.



A stall riser using the same material as the footpath.



Contemporary shopfronts may not require a stall riser.

ELEMENTS

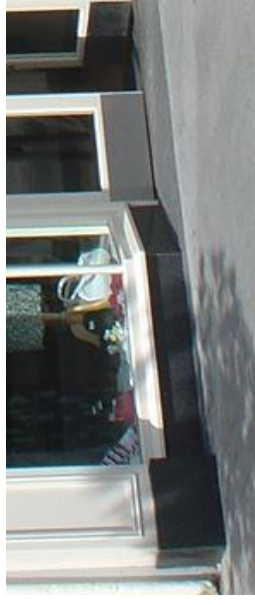
STALL RISER



An example of a traditional tiled stall riser at F. Doyle's butchers.



A newer tiled stall riser at Eddie Rockets.



Polished granite stall riser.

Shop windows often work best if set in the same plane as the building front with any deeply recessed areas being confined to the entrance door. Doorways can sometimes be successfully angled inwards to create an inviting lobby while also increasing the effective display area.

Frosted glazing rather than solid signage should be used where retail necessities need to be concealed.

Schemes for shop premises which provide separate access from the shop frontage to upper floor accommodation need careful consideration to ensure that adequate provision remains for satisfactory first floor access.

Access should be made easy for everybody including those in wheelchairs or with other aids to mobility; the visually impaired; parents with pushchairs and young children; the elderly and those carrying heavy bags. Shopfronts should be designed with level access at pavement level. Where this is impossible, a ramp rather than steps must be provided.

ELEMENTS

DOORS + WINDOWS



Contrasting doorways can define the entrance.



Frosted glazing rather than signage should be used to conceal suspended ceilings, storage, seating etc.

Canopies and awnings can be invaluable for protecting goods from sunlight and providing shelter for pedestrians. Modern materials coupled with advances in engineering allow finer profiles and restrained detailing, giving canopies and awnings a renewed relevance in contemporary design.

New awnings are most effectively positioned below the fascia and between the pilasters as this means the shop name will not be hidden.

Awnings should always be retractable and ideally made of canvas or similar materials. Generally the colour chosen should be subdued as bright or gaudy colours will often jar with neighbouring shops and undermine the quality of the street scene.

The use of awnings will be considered provided these are not installed principally as a means of increasing advertisement space.



Canopies should be functional.



Canopies should be positioned below the fascia so the shop name will not be hidden.

ELEMENTS

CANOPIES



Materials used in shopfront construction should be of **good quality, durable, and should respect the age and character of the building** and adjoining street.

The decision to build a traditional shopfront or a modern one will, to a large extent, dictate the type of materials used.

Materials traditionally used in Bray are wood, glass, brick, tiles and stone. Timber is an appropriate material for shopfront construction, it is versatile, durable, easily and cheaply maintained or altered.

Modern materials such as aluminium, plastic, acrylic or Perspex can work well when both the building and shopfront is contemporary in style. Other high quality materials such as marble, terrazzo, bronze or chrome might also be suitable for use in such locations.

It is often best to **limit the number of different materials used**, as too wide a range can result in a confused or chaotic appearance.

The integration of existing materials with modern materials is recommended, creating a balance of finish and texture and establishing a sense of permanence in contemporary design. Historic robust materials such as granite, limestone, brick, timber, cast iron, brass and copper can be integrated with lightweight contemporary materials such as stainless steel and glass.

Note: The use of glass is strongly recommended for its reflective properties, aiding a sense of playfulness and liveliness across facades.

ELEMENTS MATERIALS



When considering the colour of new or replacement shopfronts it is important that the selected colour scheme complements the character and style of the building, rather than conflicting with it.

Shopfronts are traditionally painted in strong colours which are slow to fade. The use of rich colours, such as dark shades of green, blue, red and black is recommended, as these are traditional. [With such 'recessive' colours it leaves the window display to provide the highlight.](#)

Corporate colours should be restricted to the main signage of the shopfront and not the entire shopfront.

ELEMENTS

COLOUR



Solid external shutters which completely cover the shopfront when closed have a major impact on the street scene and should never be used. This affects street character and visual amenity, giving a dead appearance to the frontage and contributes to the creation of an unwelcoming and hostile environment. They are vulnerable to graffiti which gives out signals about the areas vulnerability to crime and can deter shoppers from using such locations, thus losing the benefit of passive surveillance. When they are down they obscure details of the shopfront, the window display is not visible and additional illumination for the street is lost.

Where there is an obvious need for enhanced security, the use of alternative methods of protection should be considered, including, where appropriate, the use of toughened glass, additional glazing bars or internal grilles:

- Toughened / laminated glass is the most favoured solution. It incorporates a plastic interlayer and can remain intact even when broken.
- Additional glazing bars reduce glazing size, thus strengthening glass area and reducing opportunities for theft.
- Internal open-mesh window grilles, fixed inside shop windows behind glass, allow views into the shop even after hours and give a less fortified appearance than external grilles.

Although alarm boxes have to be visible to work as a deterrent, they should be as unobtrusive as possible. If the box is to be positioned on the shopfront, then aesthetically the best position is usually at a corner of the fascia. The box must be painted to suit the shop colour scheme. Wiring should be integrated and redundant wiring removed. Wiring ducts should not be planted onto the face of the building.

ELEMENTS

SECURITY



Internal security grilles would be preferred to these examples of external grilles as they would have the joint benefit of allowing the shop surround and any architectural details to remain unobstructed.



Internal lighting can be used as a means to deter criminals. During closing hours good lighting, which illuminates the whole shop interior and is visible from the street, can encourage people to window shop and also reduces the likelihood of a break in. The lighting should generally not be so strong as to illuminate the area outside the shop, as this might affect the character of the area.

Residential use of floors above the shop can provide numerous benefits to the shop owner. As well as an additional source of income 'living over the shop' is a cheap and effective way of improving security. Having a constant presence over the premises is one of the most efficient ways of reducing crime and vandalism and often involves little alteration which might affect the character of the building.

1. Open mesh transparent shutters should be used.
2. All shutters are to be fixed internally.
3. Retractable shutters must have their housing box concealed behind the internal bulkhead or suspended ceiling.



AIB Dun Laoghaire have replaced solid infill panels with glazed and timber panels creating a more attractive streetscape.

ELEMENTS SECURITY



An internal shutter behind the shop window display allows passers by to window shop and gives a less fortified appearance than external grilles.

