

This design guide looks at both traditional and contemporary shopfront design, their constituent parts and provides advice on principles of good design and recommendations on detailing which make a positive impact on the streetscape and appearance of our commercial centres.



**Galway County Council**  
Galway County Council Regeneration Team

Shopfront Design Guide Galway County Council



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe  
Galway County Council

Galway County Council  
Phone: (0)91 509000  
[www.galway.ie](http://www.galway.ie)



# Shopfront Design Guide

# Shopfront Design Guide

## Galway County Council



**Chief Executive: Liam Conneally**

Galway County Council's first Shopfront Design Guide serves to highlight the significant contribution which the traditional shopfront makes to the architectural and cultural heritage in our County Galway towns and villages. Historically, the skills of local craftsmen articulated the unique character and identity of the villages and towns in which they worked. The individual style of the craftsmen made places and buildings memorable and celebrated the spirit of the community at a time when our Streets and marketplaces were the focal point of economic and social life.

This document recognises the value of the traditional shopfront and the ongoing role which it has to play in the conservation and regeneration our public spaces in our County Galway towns and villages.

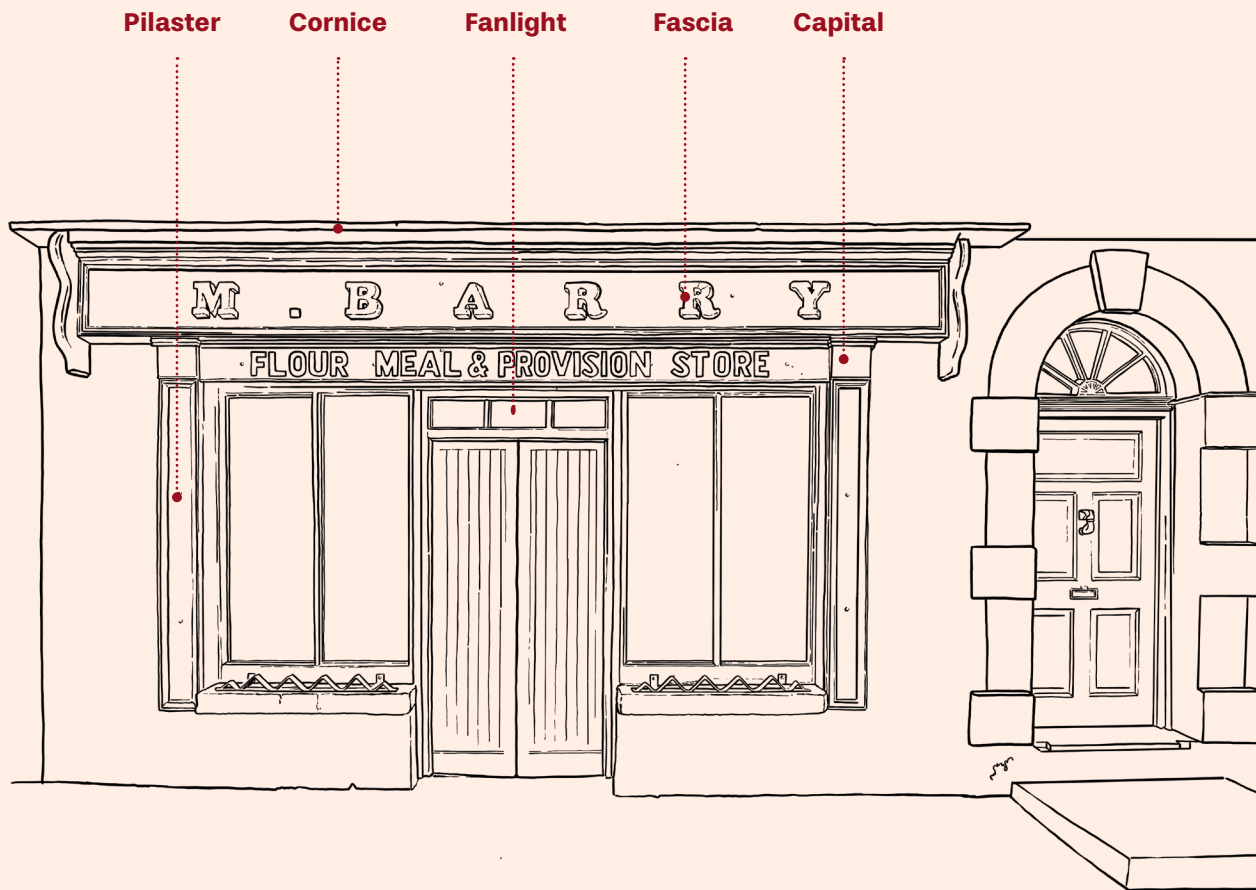
I want to thank the team that brought this Design Guide to fruition.



**Cathaoirleach: Liam Carroll**

I welcome the publication of this guidance document which upholds the principles of conservation and enhancement of our high streets. The presentation of our public places speaks of cultural and social prosperity and communities across the County will benefit from the advice contained within this guide.

This document serves to inform the restoration of our historic shopfronts in recognition of the important role which they play in animating the public places which are enjoyed by all of our communities.



## Table of Contents

<b>Chapter 1</b>	Introduction	5
	1.1 Historical Context	7
	1.2 Strategic Context	8
	Galway County Development Plan	9
	1.3 Architectural Context	14
	Immediate Architectural Context	15
	Broader Architectural Context	16
	Good Design / Poor Design	18
<b>Chapter 2</b>	Shopfront Components	20
<b>Chapter 3</b>	Key Design Principles	22
<b>Chapter 4</b>	Signage	24
<b>Chapter 5</b>	Lettering	28
<b>Chapter 6</b>	Use of Colour	30
<b>Chapter 7</b>	Lighting	32
<b>Chapter 8</b>	Canopies And Awnings	34
<b>Chapter 9</b>	Security	35
<b>Chapter 10</b>	Contemporary Shopfront Design	36
<b>Chapter 11</b>	Materials	39
<b>Chapter 12</b>	Consent Procedures	41
<b>Chapter 13</b>	Photographic Examples	42
<b>Chapter 14</b>	Acknowledgement & Contacts	48



## Introduction

This document has been prepared by Galway County Council as a guide to assist owners and others with an interest in the design of commercial shopfronts.

The guidance looks at both traditional and contemporary design, the composition of a shopfront's constituent parts, and describes specific design principles to be considered when undertaking works involving shopfronts.

The intention of this guide is to encourage good practice in the renovation of existing shopfronts, and the creation of new shopfronts, particularly those situated in architecturally sensitive areas. It illustrates the relationship between each of the constituent parts of the shopfront, it describes the relationship between the shopfront and its host building, and the positive role which this plays in defining the character of our streets.

Shopfronts are of importance to the prosperity, vitality, and quality of our town centres. Where the appearance and quality of the shopfronts has deteriorated, the social and economic vitality of the area is undermined.

This guidance document can be used to inform applicants on the appropriate design of shopfronts and can be referred to when submitting proposals for planning consent.



# 1. Context

The importance of context specific design...



↑ Gort Inse Guaire, Co. Galway, circa 1940. The architectural backdrop to our public spaces is characterised by the disciplined rhythm of regular fenestration openings ordered along the street. This order is counterposed by the decorative shopfront which adds individuality and expresses the streets unique character. (Image courtesy of Gort Library, Cardell Collection.)

## 1.1 Historical Context

The 18th century brought with it an appreciation for classical architecture. This aesthetic of simple forms, minimal detailing, and carefully considered proportion was expressed in the design of the Irish shopfront. In skilfully applying the principles of classical architecture to shopfront design, Artisans and designers were able to achieve balance and harmony between all of the constituent elements in the composition of the host buildings façade. Main streets were enlivened by engaging arrangements of illuminated windows, inviting doorways, distinctive signage, and complimentary colour.

The classical style attains a compositional balance between the ornate shopfront and the disciplined rhythm of the quiet, simple buildings which form the backdrop to our streetscapes. The building facades provide a coherent and uniform canvass on which the artisan can express the shopkeeper's individuality through the crafting of the well proportioned, classical shopfront.



↑ Gort Inse Guaire, Co. Galway, circa 2022. The architectural backdrop is largely intact along with the shopfronts. Contemporary signage is generally seen to conform to the original parameters set by the Classical order. (Image courtesy of Brent Mostert)



## 1.2 Strategic Context

### Galway County Development Plan

Guidance on appropriate shopfront design and the important role this plays in contributing to the vitality of our public realm is included in the Galway County Development Plan 2022 – 2028.

DM Standard 20 requires that new shopfront design is of a quality design standard that respects the character and architectural heritage of the existing streetscape.



## Galway County Development Plan - Chapter 3 Placemaking, Regeneration and Urban Living

The strategic aims and objectives of Chapter 3 should be taken into consideration when designing or renovating shopfronts to gain an understanding of the role that they play in successful placemaking.

### Placemaking Principles and Shopfront Design

Placemaking is a holistic approach to the planning and design of our shared spaces. This process is founded on the principles of inclusivity and collaboration which allows insights into how people live in and enjoy our public spaces.

Through good placemaking and urban regeneration, towns and villages enhance their attractiveness and boost their vibrancy and vitality to the benefit of individuals and businesses alike.

Understanding of the architectural and historic context is of fundamental importance. The character and appearance of each town should be considered as part of any works to shopfronts to ensure that they are specific to a particular context and that they compliment the preminent, unique characteristics of that place. The design of shopfronts in each region and town have evolved in accordance with a variety of influences, unique to each place, so that each has its own distinctive attributes and any works to a shopfront should acknowledge and reflect these.

The built form and landscape of towns and villages are characterized by distinctive materials which combine with colour, tones and textures to reinforce visual and tactile identity.'

#### Key Recommendation:

- The Council supports creative design solutions that achieve innovation whilst respecting the materials, colours, tones and textures that are positively associated with the identity of a particular place.

← Restored shopfronts in Kinvarra Co. Galway



## Galway County Development Plan: Chapter 12 Architectural, Archaeological and Cultural Heritage

The strategic aims and objectives of Chapter 12 should be taken into consideration when designing or renovating shopfronts in order that they continue to make a positive contribution to the cultural and architectural heritage of our towns and villages.

### Architectural and Cultural Heritage and Shopfront Design

Cultural heritage is recognized as a key component of the attractiveness and distinctiveness of our towns and villages. The built and cultural heritage of a particular place establishes a shared identity within a community and forges the inherent character and attractiveness of a town or village.

Architectural heritage is associated with the unique identity of a place and contributes toward the identity of the community. It speaks of the past, collective experience, pride of place, and when combined with contemporary placemaking objectives, an aspiration for greater prosperity alongside the celebration of our heritage.

#### Key Recommendation:

- Architectural heritage should be conserved and enhanced by integrating new and renovated shopfronts into the historic built environment through careful consideration of their cultural and architectural context.

### Architectural Conservation Areas: ACA's

The special character of **ACA's** is made up of its architectural features and can constitute an entire streetscape. Shopfronts and signage are important factors in enhancing and contributing positively to the character of a place. High-quality shopfronts, both contemporary and historic, are known to attract customers to do business in a place. Each individual premises will have specific requirements for signage and advertisement and the coordination of these, within architecturally sensitive places, is of importance so as not to detract from the attractiveness and character of a place.



↑ Recently restored traditional shopfront M.Barry, Gort, Co. Galway

### Architectural Heritage Policy Objective 4:

#### Architectural Conservation Areas

'Works within the **ACA** shall ensure the conservation of traditional features and building elements that contribute to the character of the area. The special character of an area includes its traditional building stock and material finishes, spaces, streetscape, shop fronts, landscape, and setting.'

#### This will be achieved by:

- Seek the repair and reuse of traditional shopfronts and where appropriate, encourage new shopfronts of high quality architectural design.
- Ensure that all new signage, lighting, advertising and utilities to buildings within the ACA are designed, constructed, and located in such a manner that they do not detract from the character of the ACA.



## Vernacular Architecture

Vernacular architecture refers to the traditional building forms and types which were built using local materials, skills and building techniques and that form a vital component of the local character particular to a town or village. This vernacular encompasses architectural features such as shopfronts and signage and includes the details worked into these such as ornate or simple decoration and even colour.

### Architectural Heritage Policy Objective 6: Vernacular Architecture

'Recognise the importance of the contribution of vernacular architecture to the character of a place and ensure the protection, retention and appropriate revitalization and reuse of the vernacular built heritage..'

#### This will be achieved by:

- Local conditions, materials, and skills varied greatly from place to place and this allowed for a variety of shopfronts and handwritten signs to evolve which were distinct and unique to each location.
- When renovating, or replacing a historic or contemporary shopfront or sign, the distinctive features of the local vernacular should be recognized and implemented.



↑ Lowery's, Clifden, Co. Galway

## Galway County Development Plan: Chapter 15 Development Management Standards DM Standard 20: Shopfronts

Requires that new shopfront design is of a quality design standard that respects the character and architectural heritage of the existing streetscape

Historic shopfronts should be retained and refurbished, where feasible. Such features as existing arches, stringcourses, plaster detailing or existing fascias and brackets should be considered in the new design and new internal alterations or proposed advertising should generally not interfere with such details.

Wholesale removal of rendering along a streetscape is generally not encouraged. Contemporary shop front design will be encouraged, where appropriate. Design cues of modern shop fronts should include the basic shopfront elements of fascia, pilasters and stallriser/base and should employ high quality architectural detailing and quality materials appropriate to the size of window openings.

#### Proposals for new/amended shop fronts shall be required to comply with the following criteria:

- Generally restrict the use of film, adhesive stickers and any other screening that obscures the glazed area of a shopfront window where it negatively impacts upon the streetscape
- Require that security shutters on new shopfronts (where required) are transparent and placed behind the shopfront window glazing.
- Illumination of fascia signage, shopfronts or distinctive architectural features should be discreet and limited to spotlighting, uplighting or disguised minimalist strip lighting. In this regard, internally illuminated fascias and internally illuminated signs are generally not permitted.
- Ensure that corporate logos (or other similar logos), lighting designs and colours are not used where it would detract from the character and architectural heritage of the streetscape.



## 1.3 Architectural Context

The design of the shopfront relates to its *context*. To the immediate architectural context, being the individual building façade, and to the broader context where it is specific to the region, the town, and the streetscape.

↓ Keane's, Est. 1780. Portumna Co. Galway



This photograph illustrates the important relationship between the size and positioning of door and window openings in the host building and location of the shop sign and display window.

The arrangement of the upper floor window openings informs the size and shape of the shopfront glazing units such as fanlights, display window mullion spacings, and door position.

## Immediate Architectural Context

### The Host Building

The classical design principles establish balance and harmony in the composition of the shopfront design. This in turn contributes to the character of host building.

Shopfronts occupy the ground floor of the host building however their design acknowledges the defining features of the upper floors. The main features of the building provide a framework which determines the position of the key shopfront elements. For example, the available area between the shop window and the first floor window will prescribe the scale of the entablature and fascia as the cornice does not extend beyond the first floor window sills.



#### Key Recommendations:

- The length, breadth, and position of the shopfront on the host building's facade will be determined by the existing architectural elements.
- The size of the signage or fascia must be proportionate to the existing architectural elements.
- Overall composition, scale and proportion of both the shopfront and its context must be considered in shopfront design.



## Broader Architectural Context

### The region, the Town, and the Streetscape

Traditional Irish shopfronts speak of heritage and identity and help to define the unique character of our public spaces. Shopfronts enrich the public realm and play an important role in the attractiveness of a town.

The attractiveness of a town speaks of a strong and vibrant community and encourages growth and success. Shopfronts contribute to the quality of the street and communicate its historical and cultural value.



An example of a traditional sign which respects the proportion of the host building and adds to the character of the street

↑ J.J. Sherry (The Bridge Bar), Clarinbridge, Co. Galway



A carefully considered restoration of a historic shopfront with good use of colour which contributes to the streetscape.

↑ Jordans Bar & Lounge, Clarinbridge, Co. Galway

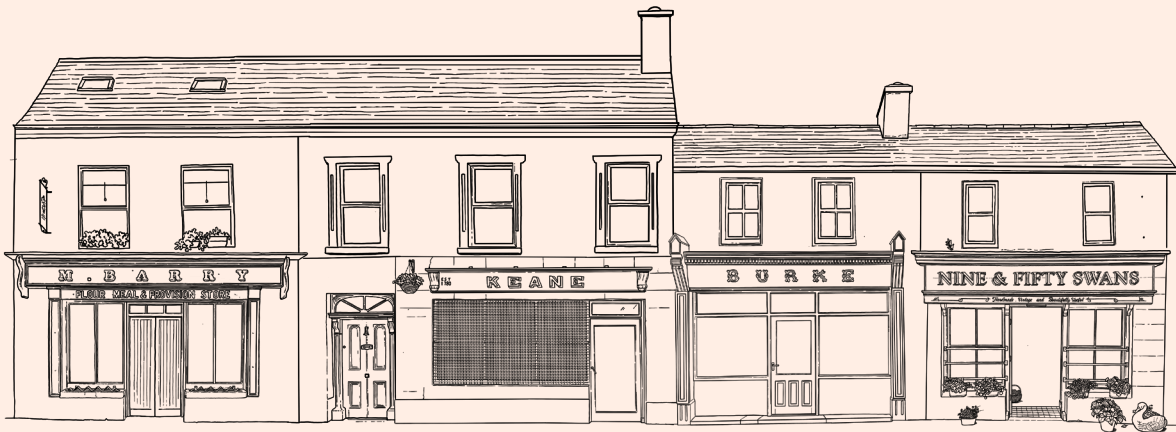
#### Key Recommendations:

- Historical precedent should be understood and respected. This will enable Shopfronts to reinforce the character of the streetscape.
- Traditional shopfronts should be restored and new or replacement shopfronts should respect the established ordering principles of existing frontages along the street.
- New shopfronts should not dominate or detract from the streetscape or surrounding buildings.



## Good Design

Example of a well designed streetscape



### Importance of scale and proportion

The above sketch represents a well designed group of shopfronts with traditional features contributing to the overall architectural composition. In determining a design, composition, scale and proportion are the fundamental tools that underpin the qualities of harmony and balance.

#### Key Recommendations

- Replacement or renovated shopfronts should retain the principles of classical design.
- A fascia should never stretch uninterrupted across distinct, individual buildings or architectural units.
- Replacement or renovated shopfronts should retain the principles of appropriate scale and proportion relative to the host building and the streetscape.

## Poor Design

Example of a badly designed streetscape



### Poor Design

The above sketch illustrates poorly designed individual signage with no coordination between neighbouring buildings and individual building features.

#### Key Recommendations:

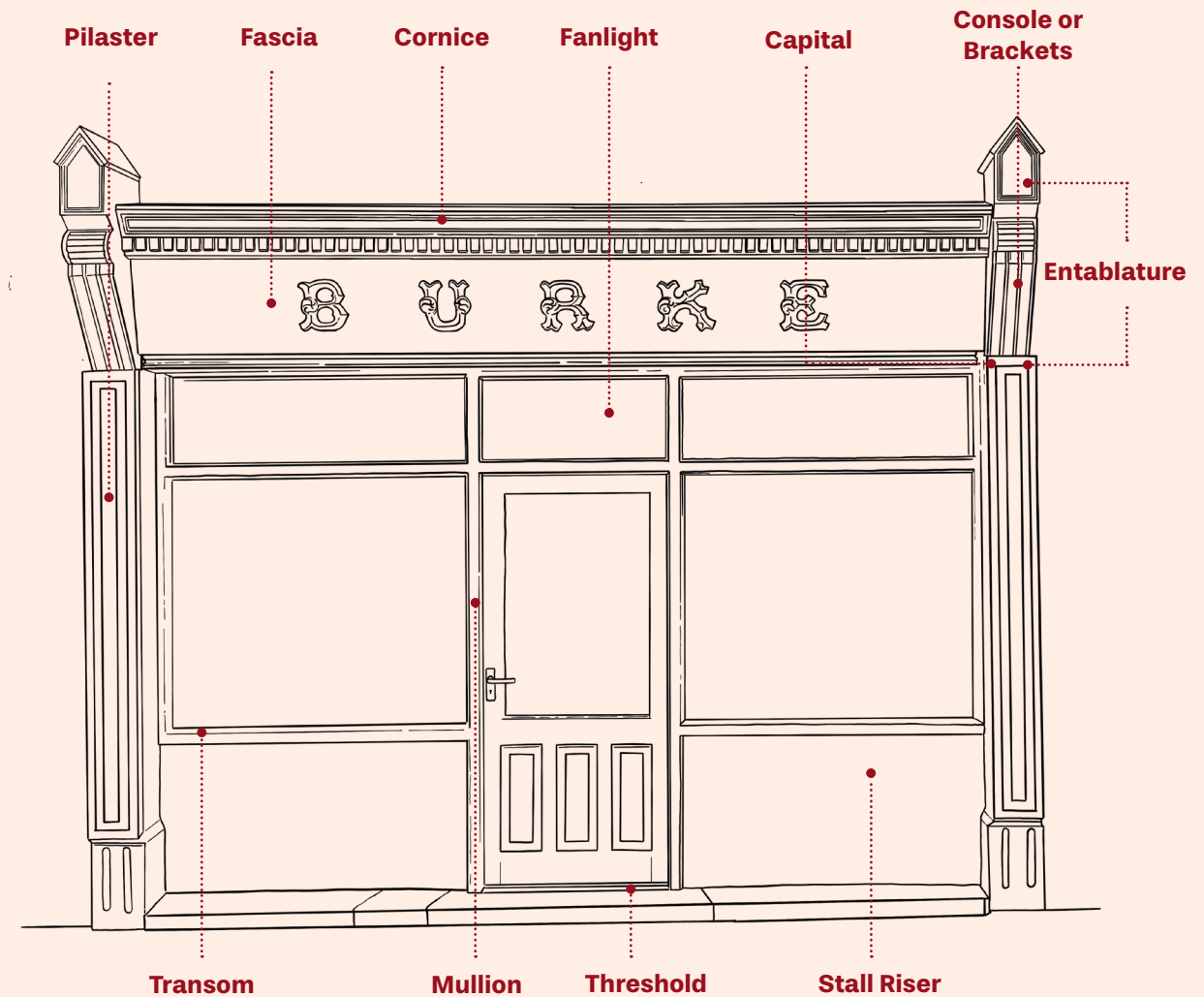
- Avoid excessively long signage or fascia. On larger shop frontages a single continuous shopfront sign should be avoided.
- Oversized replacement windows and doors should be avoided.
- Signs should not be larger than the fascia.
- Oversized signs relative to their architectural context, should be avoided.
- Hardwood should be the principle material for both traditional and modern shopfronts.
- PVC or plastic signs and windows should be avoided.

## 2. Shopfront Components

Traditional shopfronts share common components such as:

<b>Cornice</b>	Projecting top edge of the entablature designed to throw water off and to give a definitive horizontal border.
<b>Fascia</b>	The wide board over the shopfront which accommodates the signage.
<b>Consoles or Brackets</b>	Decorative brackets at each end of the fascia which visually terminate the top of the pilasters.
<b>Entablature</b>	The horizontal element which frames the head of the composition and incorporates the cornice and fascia.
<b>Capital</b>	The head of the pilaster in keeping with the Classical order.
<b>Pilaster</b>	The form of a pillar, part projecting from the façade, used as the vertical element to frame and to separate the individual shopfronts.
<b>Stall Riser</b>	Forms a plinth rising from ground level and contributes to the proportion of the glazed openings.
<b>Glazing</b>	Divided into sections by mullions (vertical) and transoms (horizontal) with consideration to the proportion, spacing, and alignment of the upper floor features such as window openings.
<b>Threshold</b>	Typically the shop entrance would be recessed with the floor inlaid with coloured tiles in a unique arrangement contributing to the individuality of the shop.

### Elements of the traditional Irish Shopfront





## 3. Key Design Principles

The components of traditional shopfronts are arranged and composed in acknowledgment of the principles of classical architecture.

### Key Recommendations

- The components of the traditional shopfront should be retained and restored and should be acknowledged in the design of contemporary or replacement shopfronts in historic settings.
- Paint work to shopfronts should serve to accentuate the defining features and details of the components and compliment the composition of the building and the streetscape as a whole.

### The composition of the constituent parts.

#### 3.1 Fascia

The fascia bears the signage of the business. Its dimensions are proportionate to the other shopfront components and responds to the overall composition of the building façade. The cornice, capping off the fascia, constitutes a horizontal boundary which does not extend above the upper floor window sills.

#### 3.2 Pilasters

The pilasters are the vertical elements at either side of the shopfront. They are supported by bases, at a corresponding level to the stall riser, and are capped by projecting capitals and consoles at the level of the fascia, all in the classical tradition. Existing pilasters should be restored or reinstated.

Contemporary shopfronts should acknowledge this classical 'framing' principle in their design – where the vertical and horizontal

components of the shopfront constitute a 'frame' about the display windows and doorways. Paint work on the pilasters should accentuate their salient features.

#### 3.3 Stall Riser

The stall riser occupies the space between the window cill and the footpath and functions as a raised platform for the window display whilst providing protection against damage.

Its height and scale plays an important role in the composition of the shopfront. Existing stall risers should be retained, and contemporary shopfronts should acknowledge this feature in their design relative to their respective context.

#### 3.2 Pilasters

#### 3.1 Fascia

#### 3.4 consoles, corbels



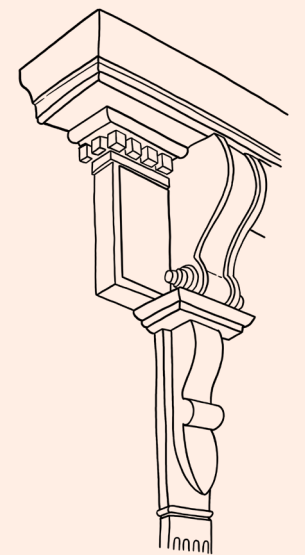
3.3 Stall Riser

◀ P Canning & Sons,  
Woodford, Co. Galway

#### 3.4 Consoles, corbels or brackets and capitals

These are the decorative features at the top of the pilasters which terminate the pilasters and fascia. The variety of design solutions applied to these contribute to the individuality of the shopfront and speak of its vintage.

Their preservation is of importance to the individual building and to the character of the streetscape. Contemporary shopfronts in architectural conservation areas should take these elements into consideration in the evolution of their own design.



↑ The Consoles feature at the top of the pilasters. Their preservation is of importance to the individual building and character of the streetscape.



## 4. Signage

Traditionally, signage in Irish towns and villages would simply bear the family name of the proprietor. This would present a sense of heritage, community ownership, and visual order.



↑ F O'Dea, Kinvarra. Co. Galway

Signage plays an important role in defining the character of the street. When there is uniformity in approach, it poses a sense of harmony, identity and place. In sensitive heritage environments, signage influences the quality of the streetscape. It bolsters the cultural and historic value and can convey a sense of prosperity.



↑ F O'Dea, Kinvarra. Co. Galway

The use of ceramic lettering on the F. O'Dea shop is unique to Ireland and can be found on only a handful of shopfronts today.

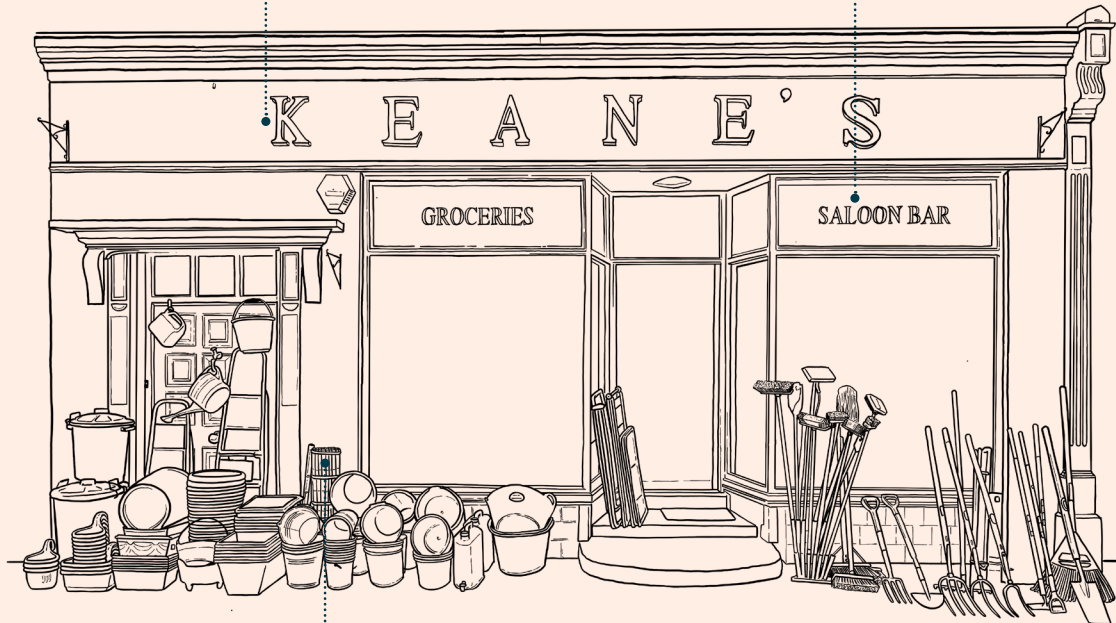
### Key Recommendations:

- Signage should contain only the most essential information and display this simply and clearly. This should be scaled and detailed such that it compliments both the overall shopfront design and the streetscape.
- Corporate designs should be adapted to suit sensitive environments where they are likely to have a negative impact. The historical architectural setting should be protected along with the brand image. The architectural context should take priority for the reason that an attractive environment will bring with it commercial benefit.
- For signs in architectural conservation areas and on protected structures the use of traditional materials is preferred. Plastic signs are to be avoided. Alternative materials must bear reference to the palette of materials used in the area.
- Signage should not extend beyond the boundaries of the fascia. Generally, all signs should be proportionate in size to their context and not detract from the character of the host building or the streetscape.
- The location, size, design, and use of materials for the sign are to relate to the architectural detailing, scale, and character of the host building.



Well proportioned serif lettering on ground floor level fascia.

Good example of vinyl application in windows without distracting from window display



The use of the four courts of the shop to display merchandise contributes to the liveliness of the town center



Keane's Grocer and DIY store, Gort, Co. Galway

#### Key Recommendations continued:

- Illuminated box signs, projecting box signs and banners, should not be placed in architectural conservation areas.
- Typically, signage should be located at ground floor level. Signage above fascia level should only be considered when there is no alternative location. Above fascia level, individual lettering fixed to the face of the building is preferred. These should be of a scale and position which does not detract from the character of the building.
- Where no fascia exists, individual letters fixed to the building façade is preferred. Alternatively, applying lettering directly to the fenestration should be considered.

#### Key Recommendations continued:

- Signage placed on glazing may be suitable to buildings which do not lend themselves to fascias or façade mounted lettering.
- Signage should not block shop windows. The application of vinyl advertising which completely obscures the windows detracts from the character of public spaces and nullifies the night-time economy.
- Signage clutter is to be avoided – a 'less is more' approach should be adopted as this will add to the harmony of the streetscape and foster an image of prosperity.



## 5. Lettering

Irish shopfronts make their most vital contribution to the vibrancy of the streetscape through the art of hand painted lettering.



The proportion and position of the lettering bears a direct relationship to the shopfront and the host building.

↑ M.Keaveny , Bar & Lounge  
Glenamaddy Co. Galway

Traditionally, signs denoted the family name of the shop owner or artisan. The lettering was painted by a local sign writer who would have had a distinctive style which added to the unique character of the town.

Lettering was usually with serifs which are the small vertical and horizontal strokes which embellish simple lettering. Shadowing was often applied to lettering to add emphasis.

Hanging or projecting signs were not a feature of the Irish townscape. Generally, in county towns and villages, signage was confined to the shopfront face only.



The style of the hand painted lettering on the shopfront adds to the character of the building and the streetscape.

↑ Jim Pete's Pub, Glenamaddy, Co. Galway

### Key Recommendations:

- Lettering should be part of the shopfront design and should respect the character of the building and the street.
- Lettering should be scaled and detailed to suit the fascia and the business type.
- Lettering fonts should correspond with their historical setting and be sympathetic to their architectural context.
- Where lettering in the Irish language is used, a Gaelic font should be considered, as may be appropriate to a particular context.
- Plastic, or similar materials, should be avoided in favour of natural, traditional materials such as painted timber particularly in architectural conservation areas.
- Discreet illumination of signage, by way of concealed troughs, is preferred. In exceptional cases, downlighters sympathetic to the architectural context, could be suitable.



## 6. Use of Colour

Colour has a profound impact on the character of our public spaces. It can be stimulating and harmonious or graceless and uncoordinated.

Historically, paint colours were more limited than those available today and therefore a simpler, limited colour palette was employed in Irish architecture. The character of the colours on traditional shopfronts forms an integral part of the distinctive character of Irish towns. A refined and composed colour palette will create an atmosphere of considered sophistication and prosperity.



↑ The restoration of a Georgian style shopfront in Gort Co. Galway is an excellent example of both well selected colour scheme and hand painted signage.



↑ Colourful hand painted signage by local signpainter Mike Kenny.



The colour scheme has been carefully considered such that the colour of each architectural element compliments the colour of the other elements and the colours used in the shopfront lettering.

↑ Nine & Fifty Swans Gort Co. Galway.

### Key Recommendations:

- The success of a particular colour scheme hinges on the careful coordination of complimentary or contrasting colours. The colour scheme for the individual building and shopfront should compliment the range of tones used in the streetscape.
- Colour can be used to accentuate important elements or details of the shopfront such as mouldings in corbels and fluting on pilasters.
- Colour should be relevant to the use of the building which in certain instances could encourage the application of vibrant colours.
- Strict adherence to a corporate colour scheme may have a negative impact on the streetscape. Balance should be achieved between corporate branding and the requirement to harmonise with the streetscape.



## 7. Lighting

Historically, shop window displays were lit from within the shops. This light would have spilled out onto the streets adding to the character of the public spaces at night. A well designed and carefully lit window display is a positive contribution to the streetscape at night and a very effective method of advertising.

### Key Recommendations:

- Illumination should be given due consideration at the initial stages of shopfront design. It is a fundamental aspect and not simply a means to highlight signage.
- Illumination should be appropriate to the context and character of the street and be discreetly situated on the host building.
- Discreet illumination of signage, by way of purpose made concealed troughs, is preferred. In exceptional cases, downlighters sympathetic to the architectural context, could be suitable.
- Large, external lights tend to clutter the façade of a building and detract from the uniformity of the streetscape. Lights should be concealed within the cornice or behind individual letters.
- Illuminated box fascias and projecting box signs are not appropriate in sensitive architectural environments.



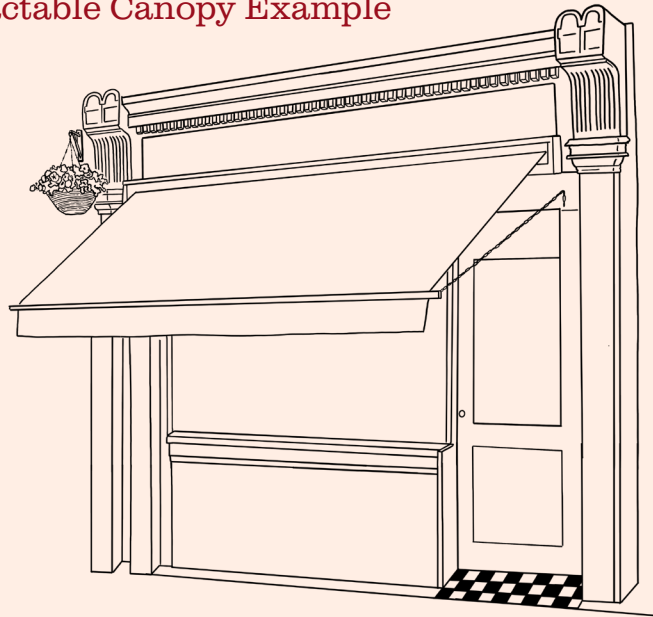


## 8. Canopies And Awnings

Retractable, straight fabric, canvas awnings, are generally the only type deemed acceptable in architectural conservation areas. These awnings should retract into recessed housings when not in use.

Canopies and awnings with drop-down sides should be avoided. The colour of awnings should compliment the shopfront and not detract from the streetscape. Advertising on canopies may require Planning consent.

### Retractable Canopy Example



↑ An example of a retractable canopy over shopfront

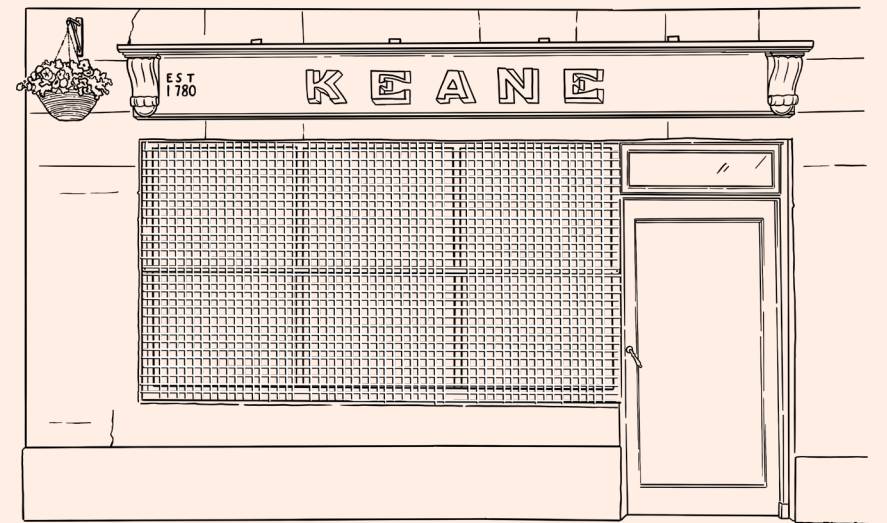
## 9. Security

Installing external security shutters detracts from the vibrancy of a street while external shutter boxes can diminish the composition of the shopfront.

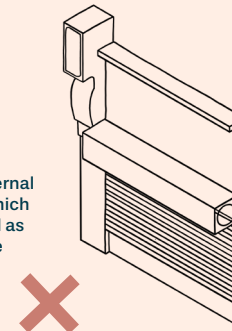
Shutters should be of the open-mesh type and be located internally, preferably beyond the display area, to benefit the night-time economy. For renovation, replacement, or contemporary shopfront designs within architectural conservation areas, the design of security fixtures should be considered at the outset.

Window mullion spacings, the inclusion of safety glass, and recessed shutter housings should all be considered at the outset of the design process to ensure that the character of the building, and that of the streetscape, is preserved.

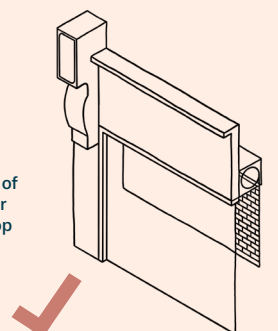
### External Shutter Examples



An example of external security shutter which should not be used as it detracts from the shopfront.



Good example of internal shutter behind the shop window.



## 10. Contemporary Shopfront Design

A degree of flexibility is acceptable in the design of contemporary shopfronts in historic settings. However, this flexibility must be exercised under the auspices of a high level of skill and expertise.



↑ Aplomb Clothing, Co. Galway

In order to compliment their setting, contemporary shopfronts should be exceptional in their design. Fundamental to achieving this high standard is the careful consideration of the architectural and historical context.

To illustrate this point, minimalist, modern design, is most successful when it displays clean, simple detailing, and an appreciation of scale, proportion, and historic precedent.



Minimalist contemporary design should be inspired by the principles of the traditional shopfront.

### Key Recommendations:

- Contemporary designs should enhance and compliment the character of both the host building and the broader context.
- Illumination should be appropriate to the context and character of the street and be discreetly situated on the host building.
- The design for a contemporary shopfront should be inspired by the design principles of the traditional shopfront.
- The established ordering principles of classical shopfronts should be interpreted to inform contemporary designs. The ensuing design should display an appreciation of form, scale, proportion and architectural context.
- Simple designs are typically more successful than overly elaborate designs which tend to compete with their context.



**Key Recommendations continued:**

- The alignment and scale of contemporary shopfront components should be informed by similar elements in adjacent buildings. For instance, the fascia should align with the fascia of neighbouring buildings.
- In similar fashion to traditional shopfronts, contemporary shopfronts should be influenced by the composition and detail of the upper floors of the host building.
- Materials and colours should be respectful of the historic character of the environment. Corporate colours should be muted and discreet such that they compliment their setting.
- If no fascia existed on the host building, lettering of an appropriate font and scale could be mounted directly on to the façade to avoid visual clutter. The lettering should be mounted in such a way as to not cause damage to the historic fabric

- Hand painted minimal sans serif font gives a clean contemporary look to a modern shopfront with retractable straight fabric awning,



## 11. Materials

The unique character of towns and villages is largely derived from the use of traditional materials. Historically, shopfronts were made of painted timber, an ideal material for replicating the intricate classical detailing. Timber offers a combination of strength, durability and flexibility while conveying a warmth of spirit.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, moulded plaster was used to form cornices, architraves and pediments and these details could be continued around the upper floor windows.

• M. Green traditional bar, Kinvarra, Co. Galway





**Key Recommendations:**

- Modern sheet materials with smooth, shiny surfaces can sit uneasily on historic buildings. Synthetic materials such as plastic or acrylic are not suitable in architectural conservation areas or historic settings.
- Materials should compliment the character of the building and streetscape. The number of materials used should be kept to a minimum. Highly reflective surfaces should be avoided.
- Replacement PVC windows and doors are not suitable in architectural conservation areas and historic settings.
- Replacement windows and doors should respect the configuration of the horizontal and vertical dividing elements used in the original windows and doors. This is essential in maintaining the character of the street and the host building.
- The colour of doors and windows, be they replacement units or renovated originals, is of crucial importance in the contribution that this makes to the character of the street.

## 12. Consent Procedures

**Works Requiring Planning Permission:**

- Installation of new shopfront
- Alterations to existing building facades including the shopfront
- Installation of new signage, external lighting and shutters - confirm with the Planning Department
- Works to a protected structure
- Works in an Architectural Conservation Area confirm with the Planning Department
- Murals

**Making an application:**

It is advised that any application for a shopfront proposal should be accompanied by clear and concise drawings as indicated below:

- Drawings- plans, sections and elevations at a scale of 1:20
- Joinery and stone details to 1:10 or 1:5
- All details of shutters, housings, materials and fittings
- Drawing of illumination or projecting signage
- Drawing of final shopfront proposal to include lettering and signage

**Pre-Planning Design Advise**

Galway County Council will be happy to advise you on your shopfront, and whether or not planning permission is required for your proposed works.

Galway County Council will always encourage the retention, conservation or restoration of period shopfronts. However, where a new shopfront is considered by local authority to be appropriate, the new design shall have regards to the design guidance and principles set out in this booklet.

← An example of PVC replacement windows detracting from the character of a well preserved shopfront. The new mullion and transom positions do not respect the original configuration used for the windows and as such damage the architectural composition of the host building.

Burke's Hardware, Gort, Co. Galway







F. O'Dea, Kinvarra, Co. Galway



Keary's, Woodford, Co. Galway



Jim Petes Pub, Glenamaddy, Co. Galway



K. Keaveny, Glenamaddy, Co. Galway





K. Keaveny, Glenamaddy, Co. Galway



The Village Inn, Kilkerrin, Co. Galway



Pigot's, Gort, Co. Galway



O'Connor's, Ballinderreen, Co. Galway





Old Chemist, Woodford, Co. Galway



T.&M. Horan Portumna, Co. Galway



Tully's, Kinvarra, Co. Galway



A. Moran, Woodford, Co. Galway









