Carnlough

Design Guide

Department of the
ENVIRONMENT
for Northern Ireland

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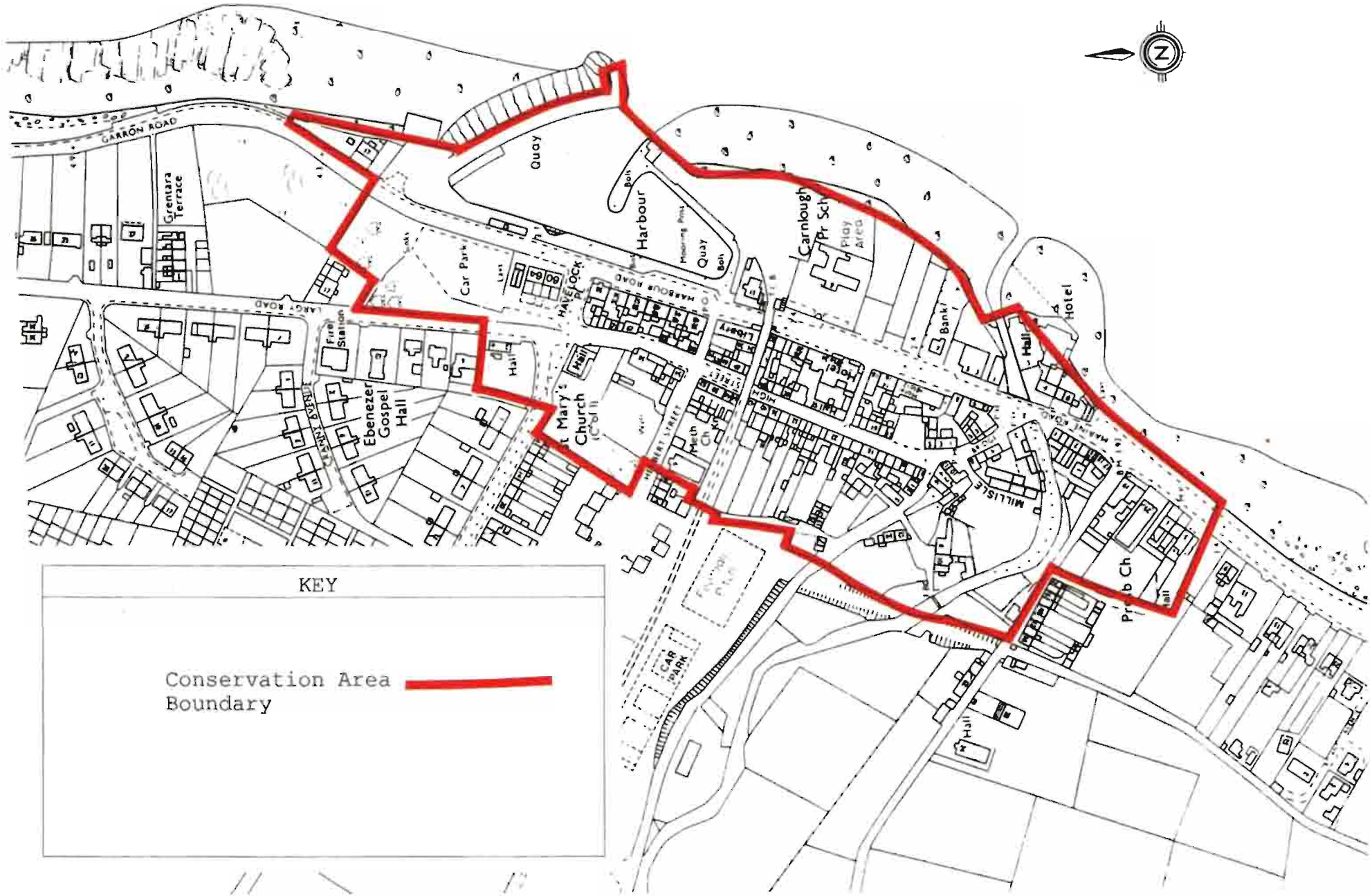
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A Design Guide for Development within Carnlough Conservation Area

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 As part of the Department's Carnlough Enhancement Strategy (endorsed by Larne Borough Council on 25.11.91), and in accordance with the Division's commitment to the preparation of Design Guidance for the Conservation Area (Designated on 30.1.81), the Department has now prepared the following advice to help ensure that the unique characteristics of the village are protected and enhanced by new development, and that all development complements the best of the existing built environment.

1.2 The following guidelines will be applied to all new buildings and to the renovation and refurbishment of existing buildings within the Conservation Area. They emphasise the importance of adhering to consistently high standards of design which will enhance the environment of the Area. The more onerous standards in terms of material quality and durability now to be applied are a recognition of the continuing need for development to improve and enhance that environment , and thereby assist in the ongoing regeneration of the Conservation Area.

1.3 The characteristic building form of the village consists of two storey houses having plastered walls and dark slate roofs with chimneys in the gable ends. The dwellings are tightly packed behind the harbour overlooking narrow streets and their attraction is collective, deriving not so much from individual buildings, which do not always display any special architectural merit, but more from their compact grouping and their overall scale and proportion in relation to the street pattern. There are a number of individual buildings and structures of special architectural merit:-the features giving special character to the village such as the harbour piers, the railway bridges, former Town Hall and the former quarry office - all in local stone. The large house at 58 High Street (between Herbert Street and Croft Road) has strong character. The Londonderry Arms Hotel on Harbour Road is well proportioned and carefully decorated. The Waterfall Bar at the end of High Street is a well proportioned, attractive building in good repair. McAuley's Bar at the river bridge, presents a very interesting mixture of Irish pub architecture at its best with traditional painted stonework at ground floor level, and "Art Nouveau" lettering and ornamentation elsewhere over the facade.

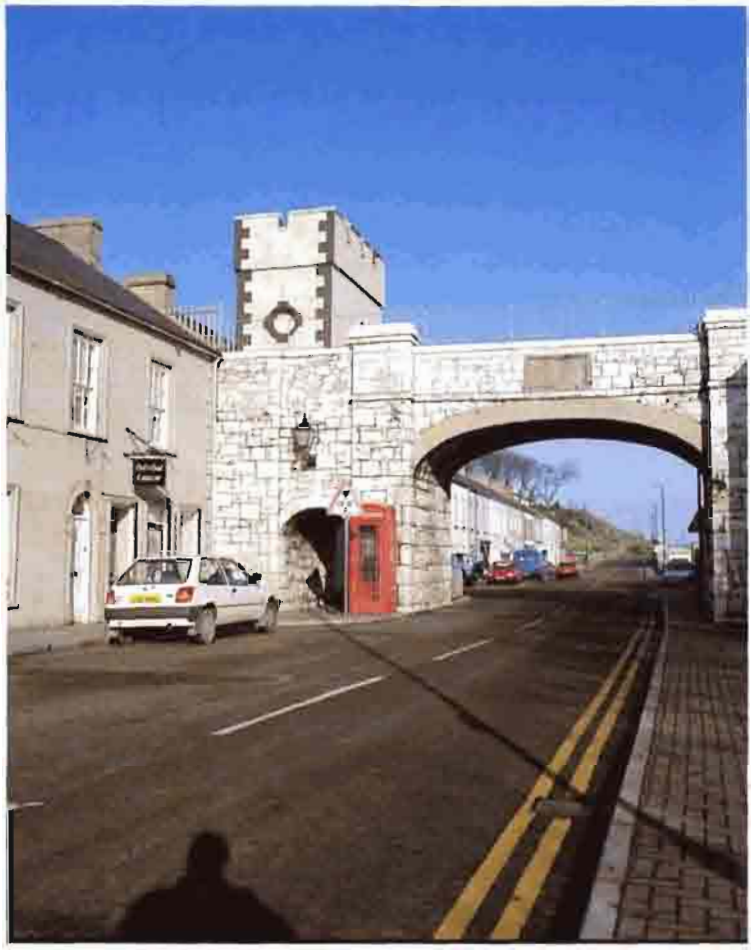
Characteristic Building form of the Village

1.4 Most of the buildings within the Conservation Area are domestic in scale and this should be respected by new development, including alterations and extensions. Elevational treatment should marry with the existing emphasis which is mainly vertical, and window-to-wall proportions should reflect traditional proportions.

1.5 New development (including alterations or extensions to existing properties) should complement existing good elevational treatment and make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area as a whole. This is likely to be best achieved by the use of traditional (vernacular) building forms and materials. although well designed and sympathetic modern design may be acceptable in locations where it does not detract from nearby Listed Buildings or the overall character of the locality.

1.6 Attention to detail in both the overall design of new building (in terms of scale, mass, proportion, etc.) and the successful integration of appropriate detail of materials and finishes (fenestration, door detail, roof detail, chimneys, gutters, painting etc.) is essential for a successful design scheme.

1.7 The following pages give advice on good and poor elements of design and incorporates advice on new or replacement shop fronts and signage.



2.0 *DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS*

2.1 Scale

2.1.1 New development should seek to reflect the scale of existing buildings, if necessary by ensuring that the elevational mass of any new building is broken-up and modelled into units, similar in size to those of its neighbours, thereby reflecting the architectural rhythm of the particular street. Generally building heights should respect the height of adjoining buildings.

2.1.2 Extensions should take the form and character of the parent building and should not dominate or impair the appearance of that property.

2.2 Proportion

2.2.1 Typically, the buildings in Carnlough's Conservation Area are of simple Scottish-Georgian proportions, with narrow frontages, a vertical emphasis and window openings diminishing in height on successive storeys. Most buildings are either 2 or 3 storeys high and give a strong sense of rhythm and pattern along the street frontages. The design of new buildings should incorporate this vertical emphasis and the use of large blank surfaces and horizontal features should be avoided.

2.3 Building Line

2.3.1 The existing building line along the main streets is an important visual element in the Conservation Area.

2.3.2 Where this continuity is disrupted and rebuilding is proposed, the traditional building line and linear street pattern should be maintained.

2.4.1 Roofs

2.4.1 Generally roofs should pitch away and upwards from the street frontage at angles that are similar to roof pitches in the area. Roof tiles are considered inappropriate and should not be used. Man-made slate should also be avoided since it is important to retain the visual character and quality of a building or group of buildings from a public viewpoint. It will be expected that Bangor Blue slates will be used in most building or repair work. Traditional parapet or masonry eaves should be used in preference to deep fascias and bargeboards. Traditional 'clipped' eaves are also appropriate. Ridge tiles are important and should be dark blue V section with decoration as appropriate to the type of building. In an extension which is visible to the public, the provision of a pitched roof will generally be a requirement.

2.5 Chimneys

2.5.1 Chimney stacks and pots should be provided or retained even if non-functional, with any corbelled or moulded detail retained. Pots should be terracotta (with gas vents if required).

2.6 Eaves and Gables

2.6.1 The traditional eaves details indicate a minimum overhang sometimes adopting a brick corbel and avoiding the use of wood fascia or soffit. Parapet gable walls are also a traditional feature which are appropriate to modern requirements and can provide a strong pleasing 'frame' to a slated roof.

2.7 Rainwater Goods and External Drainage

2.7.1 Rainwater goods should be cast-iron or aluminium, painted to match or complement the background colour or be neutral such as black or deep bronze, and complete with matching fittings and fixtures. Eaves gutters should be of a type to suit the existing eaves design - ogee or moulded, if seated on corbel course; otherwise a half-round or beaded deep-run profile can be supported on rise and fall brackets in matching materials. Down-pipes should be either square or round in section with swan necks to provide adequate clearance from projecting eaves and string courses. Foul drainage should be confined to the rear elevation if appropriate or located inside the building; if the relevant Codes of Practice are observed complex and ugly patterns of drainage can be avoided and neat installations which are not detrimental to the appearance, and also function properly, can be obtained.

2.8 Windows

2.8.1 Windows where possible within the Conservation Area should be sliding sash. Casement windows will only be acceptable in the most exceptional circumstances and locations. It is of prime importance in retaining the unity and rhythm of the street scene that the size of the openings and the style and profile of the windows which predominate are replicated in new buildings or in extensions to buildings. On the occasion when wider windows are essential, heavy vertical mullions will help maintain the required vertical emphasis. Mouldings or other decorative plasterwork around openings should always be maintained.

2.8.2 Window sills should be substantial in depth and constructed in either precast concrete or stone, and have a traditional profile especially in respect of the leading edge, and normally be painted as features.

2.8.3 Dormer windows should normally be located on rear elevations and should be of traditional design, to help them integrate into the overall building design. Their spacing should reflect the window pattern on lower floors. Continuous or flat-roofed dormers will not be acceptable. Roof lights should respect the street scene, be well spaced and not over large. They also should be located on rear elevations and be of traditional design.

2.8.4 Where properties are to be altered, the existing fenestration should be retained and any window embellishments should be repaired or reinstated.

2.9 Materials

2.9.1 The use of matching wall finishes and roofing materials are vital factors as these impart to a building its overall colour as seen from a distance, and the textures of its external surfaces close at hand. The materials chosen should therefore relate in character to those already in use in the vicinity and finishes to extensions should match the parent building.

2.9.2 Existing buildings in the village generally have plaster wall finishes including smooth ashlar cement lined to imitate stonework, smooth-painted cement and sea shore pebble dash. Stonework (limestone and basalt) in use to a lesser degree throughout the village, makes a pleasant and acceptable form of walling material.

2.9.3 Quoinstones and other decorative mouldings, especially in relation to opening surrounds, are an important feature and should be used in new buildings, where appropriate.

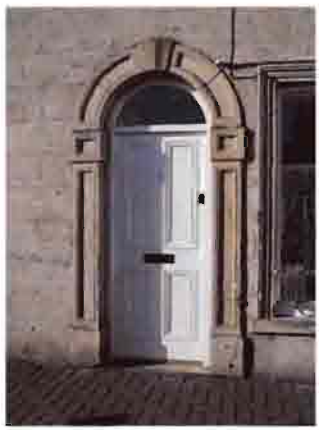
2.9.4 In alterations, all traditional decorative features whether they be formed in stone, plasterwork, brick or timber should be retained or replaced where necessary.

2.10 Doors and Door Openings

2.10.1 Where appropriate, painted timber, traditionally panelled or vertically boarded doors should be used, especially in front elevations. Mouldings around openings add character and refinement.

2.10.2 If no fanlight exists, plain glass panels may be substituted for solid ones in upper parts of panelled doors, but not half-round integral fanlights, see 2.10.4. Modern bubbled, frosted or coloured glazing is not appropriate for door sidelights.

2.10.3 Door accessories such as knockers, letterboxes, locks and handles should be made of brass, bronze or cast-iron and be of period design. Where doors are being replaced existing ironmongery should be reused. Where properties have been converted to flats, it is important to limit the amount of door accessories to the absolute minimum. Intercom systems, now commonly used in multi-occupancy properties, require careful attention as to design and siting in order to integrate successfully.



2.10.4 Replacement of traditional wide doors with narrower, modern doors and side-lights is inappropriate, as are doors with integral fanlights.

Traditional door design

2.11 Ancillary Development

2.11.1 Free-standing walls around buildings should be finished in a material compatible with the buildings to which they relate. Where fencing around new or existing buildings is required, cast-iron or steel railings with a simple vertical emphasis should be used. Concrete post and rail fencing or horizontal boarding will not be acceptable, and new fencing work must complement and not detract from the simple yet high standard of craftsmanship exhibited in existing work. Traditional compact hedges make a sturdy form of boundary and are particularly suitable.

2.11.2 Domestic garages and outbuilding will be acceptable within the Conservation Area where they relate to existing buildings in a way which achieves a unified grouping. Design should be carefully considered in order to reduce massing and visual impact and to minimise the effect of horizontality.

2.11.3 Fire escapes where required, must be contained within the existing building envelope and within a sympathetically designed extension or be a positively designed new element that can be seen to contribute to the quality of the area.

2.11.4 Satellite dishes will normally only be permitted on rear elevations and in circumstances where they are not generally obtrusive. Communal systems should be installed where possible.

2.11.5 Burglar and fire alarms should be discreetly sited and coloured to harmonise with buildings as far as practical. They should not be an advertising medium for the supplier.

Freestanding walls should be compatible with the building

2.12 Colour

2.12.1 Planning permission for external painting and decoration is not normally required but the use of colour is an important consideration in building elevations and streetscapes. Painting schemes should therefore be harmonious and add to the environment rather than detract from and be injurious to the streetscape.

2.12.2 On old buildings tradition is the governing criterion and the colour for walls, detailing and timber work, should be controlled by the period style of the architecture. On new buildings colour schemes should harmonise with the immediate surroundings.

2.12.3 As a general rule, window frames, glazing bars and door frames, are best painted white or a near white colour. Stronger colours could be used for doors and other details but considerable care should be taken with their choice. Experience has shown that pastel shades are normally most effective on walls.

3.0 SHOPFRONTS

3.1 Carnlough's Commercial Centre is based primarily on the Harbour Road/High Street area.

3.2 Within the village the appearance of shopfronts is a significant element in the impression made on visitors. Their design must be considered within the context of the character and style of the building into which it is to be fitted, and also within the context of the area within which it is located.

3.3 Shopfronts should strive to reflect their setting and immediate environment, with the traditional shopfront being the most appropriate. Where a traditional frontage remains any refurbishment work or alteration should be designed to retain the character of the original.

3.4 All too often a shopfront and its fascia is given dominance visually divorcing it from the remainder of the building, thus degrading the totality of the architecture of the building. The shopfront and ground floor design should complement the rest of the building and enhance the total street scene.

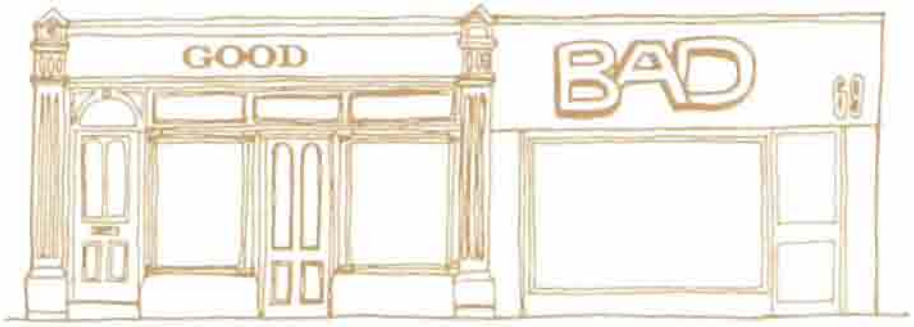
3.5 Common problems that can arise in shopfront design

3.5.1 The fascia may be too large or inappropriate. This may obscure or detract from first floor windows and pilasters. If too large, the fascia may appear to extend over the building and dominate it instead of being contained within it. Instead of a visual break being created between the ground and upper floors, ground floor treatment should complement and be contained within the architectural design of the total building and its surroundings.

3.5.2 The fascia depth should not exceed 15% of the shopfront height, and the top of the fascia should approximate to first floor level. An adequate gap should be retained between the top of the fascia and first floor window sills.

3.5.3 The fascia should give a unifying effect to the streetscape and blend with adjoining fascias. It should be in scale with the building of which it is part.

An excellent example of an Art Noveau facade



3.5.4 An important consideration for successful shopfront design and signage is how materials, surfaces and colours complement rather than detract from the rest of the building. The number and type of materials (and colours) used are best kept to a minimum. The use of plastics, polished aluminium and stainless steels are usually out of place in an historic environment and should be avoided and the use of ceramic tiles will rarely be appropriate. Where metal frames are required they should be coated in an appropriate dark colour. Timber (which is painted rather than stained or varnished) remains the most appropriate material for shopfront frames. As in the totality of the design, adequate detailing is particularly important if a shoddy or contrived appearance is to be avoided. Plaster mouldings, embossed pilasters, carved mullions, quoins and other details can give an impression of quality and authenticity. Stallrisers should be provided or retained.

3.5.5 Large expanses of undivided glass are normally inappropriate. This can be avoided by the use of mullions or glazing bars which help retain the vertical emphasis of the buildings.

3.5.6 A successful shopfront will not dominate the street scene but will be in scale with the parent building and its environment. Where a shop embraces two or more plot widths the identity of each building elevation should be respected. This can be achieved by a change in fascia detail or by using separate but interrelated shopfronts. The visual continuity of ownership can be achieved by the careful use of the same fascia and signage (including lettering). Ideally a new shopfront should not be carried uniformly across the frontage of two or more buildings as this leads to conflict between the horizontal emphasis of the ground floor with the vertical emphasis of upper floors.

3.6 Important considerations in successful shopfront design

3.6.1 Shopfronts and fascias should express, and not obscure, the structural elements of an existing good facade.

3.6.2 The new shopfront should complement and not ignore the existing elevation in terms of materials used and colour.

3.6.3 The shopfront and the building within which it is contained should be considered as a single composition. It should not be a dominating influence in the street scene but should look good in its own building and in relation to its neighbours.

3.6.4 The fascia should be contained within the elevational detail of the parent building.

3.6.5 The fascia should not obscure first floor windows, sills or string course detailing. It should be of suitable proportions and positioned to help create a visually balanced elevation.

3.6.6 The structural elements and proportions of the elevation should be carried through to the ground floor to minimise potential conflict between the ground and upper floor elevation.

3.6.7 The colour, pattern, profile and texture of the materials used should be carefully considered. The use of modern plastics which are brightly coloured or highly reflective or have strong moulded profiles out of character with traditional materials are unsuitable and as such should be avoided. The use of tiles and mosaics as cladding do not generally fit with traditional material and as such should also be avoided.

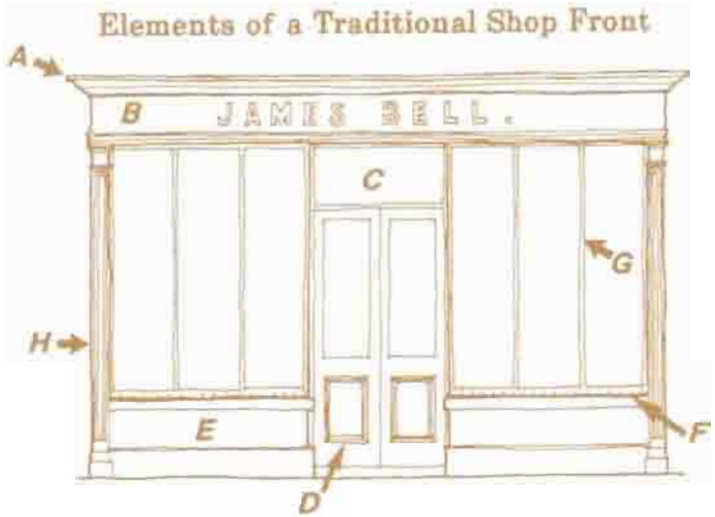
3.6.8 If security shutters are considered necessary they should be lattice type or colander perforated to allow light to pass through. Security shutters should be coloured to blend in or form a harmonious contrast to the shop facade by using an appropriate matt, semi-matt, or glossy metallic based paint. Shutter boxes should be concealed within the building facade and guide rails recessed into the reveals of the shop window and pilasters.

3.6.9 Dutch canopies and awnings as permanent features detract from the street scene and will not generally be allowed in the Conservation Area. Retractable sunshades which are an integral part of the fascia when closed will be allowed. When used they should fit between and not over the pilasters and preferably "spring" from the lower edge of the fascia.

3.6.10 Rendered facades will often be enhanced if distinctive architectural features (quoins, plaster mouldings etc) are highlighted in a contrasting colour, or a deeper shade of the main elevation colour. While adjoining buildings may have various or changing colours, it is important to ensure that the colours used blend together to form one composition rather than using colours which clash. Experience has shown that pastel shades are frequently most effective in this context.

3.6.11 Burglar and fire alarms, although necessary, should be discreetly sited and coloured to harmonise with the shopfront. They should not be an advertising medium for the supplier.

3.6.12 Provision should be made in the design to provide access for the disabled. The removal of steps at the entrance is the most obvious point in this regard. Ideally new level changes should be accommodated within buildings but if external access ramps are needed these should be carefully designed to respect the character of the building.



A *Cornice*
B *Fascia*
C *Fanlight*
D *Panelled Door*
E *Stallriser*
F *Sill*
G *Mullion*
H *Pilaster and Corbel*

3.7 Shop and Fascia Signs

3.7.1 The proportion of a sign must relate to the elevation on which it is mounted. If a sign is too large its visual dominance will disturb and conflict with the elevation of the building and the relationship of that building and its neighbours. Projecting box signs disrupt this relationship between sign and elevation, and as such are unacceptable.

3.7.2 The amount of information contained on a sign, and the number of advertisements on a building should be carefully considered so that visual clutter and confusion is avoided. (Generally only the name, trade and street number should be on the fascia sign.)

3.7.3 The amount and type of illumination is increasingly being recognised as a major factor in successful sign design. Internally illuminated, or halo lit signs are unacceptable, while wash lighting is welcomed. Backlighting of free standing letters can be effective in certain circumstances, see 3.7.6. Illumination by individual small spotlights (which are shielded and correctly directed) is acceptable provided the level of illumination is not excessive. Large swan neck coloured projecting lamps or other lamps on long projecting arms tend to be unacceptable.

3.7.4 The use of projecting hand painted hanging signs below first floor window level will be encouraged. The dimensions of such signs (and indeed projecting signs) should be appropriate to the total elevation and the details on the shop frontage and as such read as one composition.

3.7.5 Good quality hand painted signs are preferred as these reflect the historic environment within the Conservation Area. Individual lettering, appropriately coloured, applied directly to the fascia, against a complementing coloured background, will be acceptable in most locations. The letter form and style should be in character with the period of the building and the shop use.

3.7.6 Signs on brickwork or stonework are most satisfactory when individual wall mounted letters of appropriate height, colour and type face are used. These signs can be most effective if backlit or wash-lit.

3.7.7 Advertising signs will not normally be permitted above the level of the bottom of first floor window sills.

3.7.8 On upper floors, black, white or gold lettering (of appropriate size) applied directly to the inside of window panes is particularly effective on an advertisement, while box signs and plastic modern signs are particularly inappropriate on upper floors.

3.7.9 A standard size and shape of nameplate at the entrance door of premises advertising upper floor uses will be encouraged.

3.7.10 Standard House Styles and Corporate Image Signage: Banks, Building Societies, etc are likely to be required to modify or adapt their standard "house-style" to ensure that their signage respects their location within a Conservation Area.

3.7.11 Corporate image signs or standard house styles are likely to be particularly inappropriate on Listed Buildings.

3.7.12 Hand painted signs on front walls or gables may be permitted in appropriate locations but the advertisement should relate to the premises on which they are applied and not be standard printed signs.

3.7.13 Hoardings have a particularly detrimental effect on the visual character of a Conservation Area and therefore will not normally be acceptable.

3.7.14 The Department's policy in relation to advertisements and signage is designed to ensure that they are considered as an integral element of the elevation, and not an afterthought, and that signage design, proportion and materials used are appropriate and complement their immediate surroundings and enhance the totality of the Conservation Area.

4.0 GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS

Architrave:

Refers to the lintel, jambs and mouldings around a doorway or window. Also used in classical architecture to describe the beam or lowest division of an entablature.

Bargeboard:

Also verge or gable board. A sloping board often decorated, covering the ends of roof timbers.

Conservation:

The means of protecting the intrinsic quality of a building, groups of buildings or specific areas.

Conservation Area:

These are areas, designated by the Department of the Environment (NI), which are considered to be of particular architectural or historic importance and thus worthy of retention and enhancement. In order to ensure that the character of such areas is not eroded, future development proposals are normally expected to conform with a series of policies and controls prepared by the Department.

Corbelling:

Rows of stone or brick carrying a wall proportionately farther outwards the higher it rises.

Cornice:

A projecting moulding, often of ornate designs, along the top of a building or above doors and windows.

Eaves:

The overhanging lower part of a roof.

Edwardian:

The association of architectural style and ideas to the reign of King Edward VII (1901-1910).

Facade:

The exterior face or elevation of a building.

Fascia:

A broad flat band or board often used in the context of shopfronts where the name of the shop or its owners is to be found.

Fenestration:

The arrangements of windows in a building.

Georgian:

A term loosely used to describe English late renaissance classical architecture during the reigns of the Four Georges (1714-1830).

Mullion:

Vertical bars which divide a window into a number of parts.

Ogee:

A moulding, arch, roof or other feature showing in section a double continuous curve, concave below passing into convex above, as in the shape of an onion.

Pilaster:

A rectangular feature in the shape of a pillar projecting from the face of a building, but having no structural function.

Proportion:

Refers to relationship in terms of size and arrangement of the various elements in a facade.

Quoin:

A term generally applied to the raised stonework to be found at the corners and angles of a building.

Scale:

The size of a particular building or its components when considered in relation to its surroundings, or in reference to the human form.

String Course:

A projecting horizontal course or line of mouldings running across a facade of a building.

Vernacular:

A style of building or architecture peculiar to a particular locality.

Victorian:

The association of architectural style and ideas to the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901).

ADDENDUM

In the past the standard of drawings presented to the Department has been poor. The Department will now therefore insist on detailed drawings which show clearly what is proposed. In proposals which affect the front elevation of a building the drawings should show how the proposals will relate to neighbouring properties. This is essential in the context of new shop fronts or signage. All drawings should clearly indicate the materials, colour and finishes proposed. Failure to supply such drawings will lead to delay in the processing of planning applications or may lead to the refusal of planning permission. It is desirable therefore that applicants should consult informally with the planning office prior to the preparation of detailed plans.

For further information contact:-
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