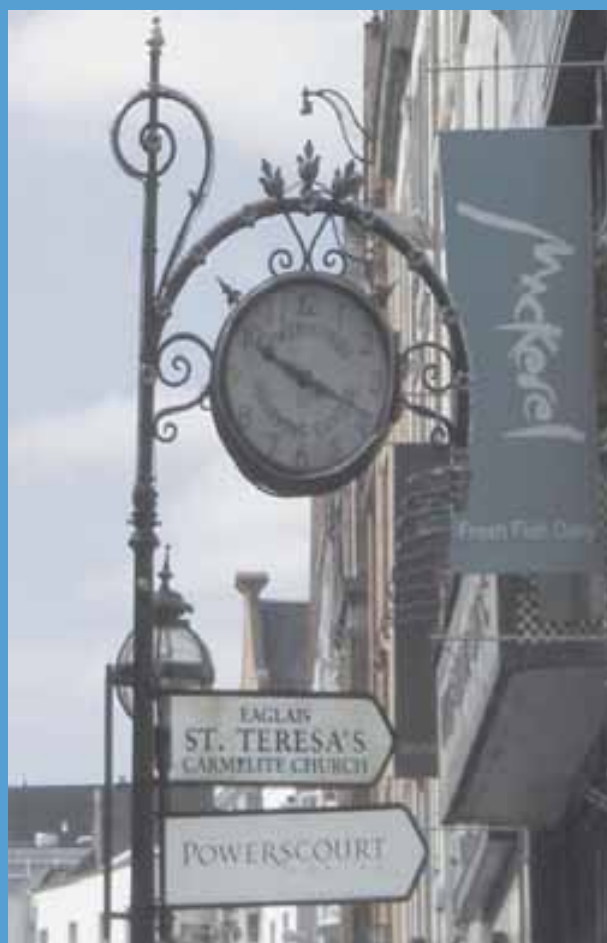


Grafton Street and Environs Architectural Conservation Area

Written Statement



Grafton Street & Environs Architectural Conservation Area

Fig 1 Map of Grafton Street & Environs

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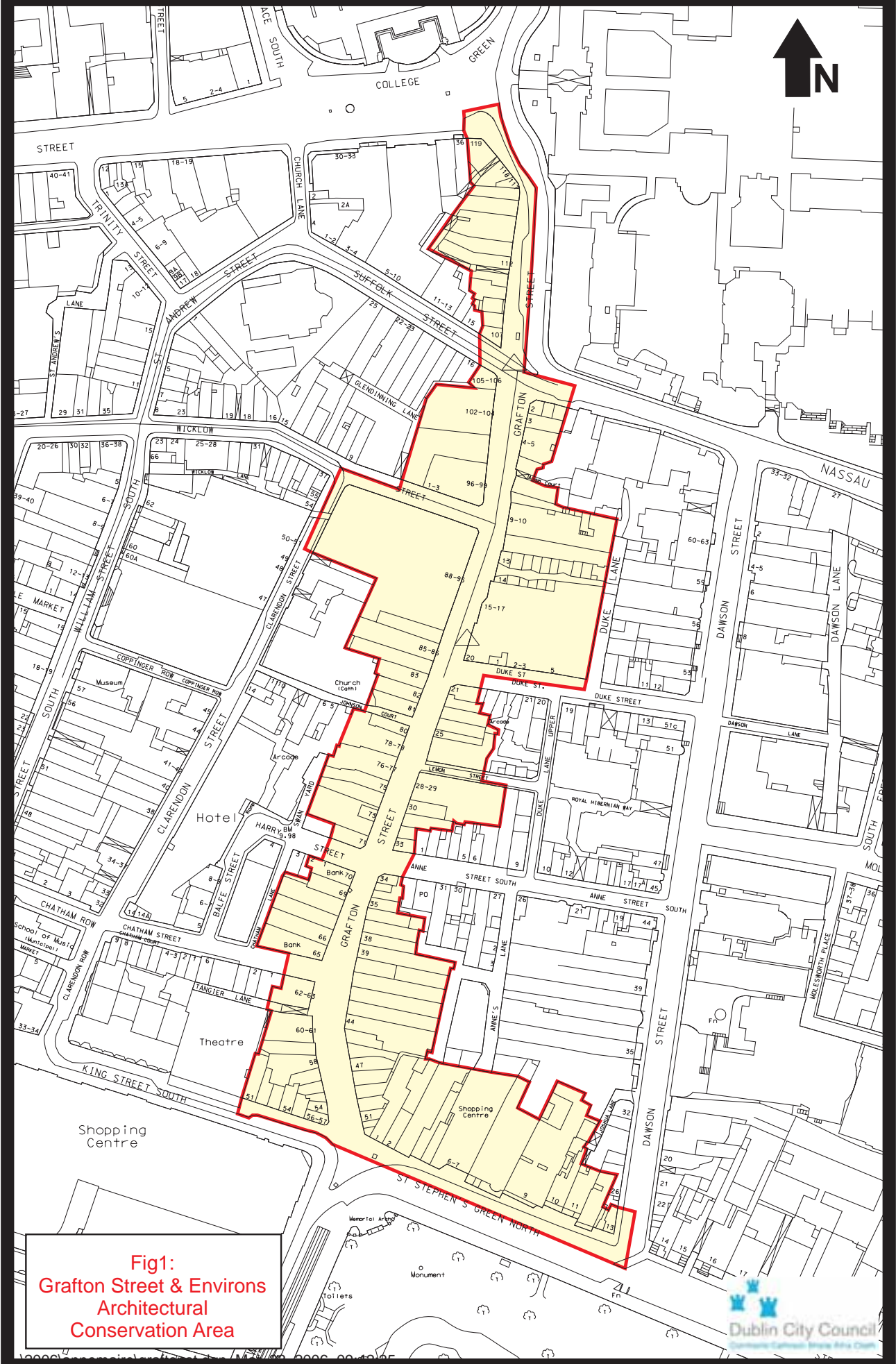


Fig1:
Grafton Street & Environs
Architectural
Conservation Area

Part 1- Background and Case for the ACA

1. Introduction

Grafton Street is one of Dublin's best-known destinations, celebrated in song, verse, film and literature with a long and rich history dating back to the early 17th century. Today the street is one of the city's two main shopping streets, and forms the spine of the south city's retail core. It's long-established reputation for high quality shopping, combined with a rich mix of recreational, cultural and civic uses in the surrounding area, has determined it's prominence in the economic and social life of the city.

The unique form of the street combined with the architectural quality of many of its buildings creates a distinctive physical character, which enhances the commercial and social functions of the street. The street's attraction is reflected in the high number of weekly visitors, and in the rental values which are the highest for any retail property in the city.

Despite its strong physical character and economic performance, a number of recent trends is detracting from its attractiveness and threatening the long-term viability of the street. These trends relate largely to the increasing imbalance in the mix of uses in the street, the deteriorating quality in the design of shopfronts and the public domain, including the condition of street paving and street furniture. As part of an initiative to address these issues and to protect and enhance it's unique character, Dublin City Council is proposing to designate the street as an Architectural Conservation Area.

2. Extent of Area

The area of the proposed Architectural Conservation Area is shown in Fig.1. It covers the whole of Grafton Street, from its junction with College Green to the north, extending southwards to the junction with St. Stephens Green. The area extends to the east along St Stephens Green North as far as Dawson Street and to the west along South King Street as far as the Gaiety Theatre.

3. History of Street

While the Grafton Street of today was developed largely in the 19th century, it's origins can be traced back to the early 17th century when Speeds map indicates a route running southwards from Trinity College. The route, joining Trinity College with St. Stephens Green, is thought to have followed the line of part of the River Styne, which would explain the organic, winding form of the street.

It was later named after a Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Henry Fitzroy, illegitimate son of Charles 11, who was the first Duke of Grafton (1663-90). It was initially developed as a residential street but with the opening of the

Carlisle Bridge in 1794 the street developed a more mixed-use character, including shopping activity. According to urban historian Peter Pearson¹, during the latter half of the 18th century the street became renowned for its publishers and booksellers. The street was also home to the famous Whytes Academy, an English Grammar School established in 1758 at No. 75 by Samuel Whyte. A number of prominent citizens received their early education there, including Thomas Moore, Robert Emmet, George Petrie, the Duke of Wellington, and Brinsley Sheridan.

The conversion to retail of the majority of the premises (at least at ground floor level) was completed by 1815 and by the end of the 19th century Grafton St was the pre-eminent commercial street in the city with a wide variety of shops catering for the quality end of the market. Clothing shops and women's fashion dominated although men were also well catered for, along with jewellers, watch and clock makers and a range of high-class food and wine merchants. Switzers, Brown Thomas, Manning's (ladies fashion) and Millar and Beatty (furnishers) were the largest of the stores. A number of the existing traders date from that time (although not necessarily from the same premises); West's Jewellers, Barnardos Furriers, and James Fox and Company, Tobacconists. The pharmacists Hamilton Long occupied No. 12 (now taken over by Boots).

Switzers department store occupied a large part of the present Brown Thomas department store, extending into Wicklow Street with a series of elegant ground floor shopfronts. Brown Thomas was located directly opposite Switzers and by 1850 comprised three converted houses at Nos.15-17. The three houses were unified behind an elaborate stucco façade, designed by the architect William Caldbeck, which included pilasters at first and second floor level, a generous cornice and an ornamental parapet with urns. The BT premises was bought by Marks and Spencer's in 1991 and the majority of the building, with the exception of the façade, was demolished.

As well as being a shopping street, Grafton St was also a place of resort and had a good collection of cafes and restaurants². They were dotted along the street, often in the upper storeys, with only limited frontage. Bewleys, Dublin's oldest and best-known café opened its doors at 97-98 Grafton Street in 1927. A. Miller designed the oriental-style façade. Harry Clarke was commissioned in 1928 to design a series of windows for the café, which light up the rear of the ground floor. The windows in Grafton Street were one of his last works as he died in 1931. The street also contained a cinema -The Grafton Picture House – which survived up until the 1970s.

A decline in the commercial fortunes and style of the street followed the first world war and by the late 1920s the retail mix had changed; while clothes retailing still dominated there was a sense of a loss of style with a

¹ Peter Pearson, "The Heart of Dublin".

² Joseph Brady and Anngret Simms in "Dublin Through Space and Time".

change in emphasis from bespoke tailoring to off-the-peg clothing. Nevertheless a great variety of goods were available, including florists, confectioners, chemists, tobacconists and fruiterers. Also, by this stage, retailing had become more international and mass market oriented. Woolworths established a large store on the street, replacing three smaller units.

The development of St Stephens Green Shopping Centre in the mid 1980s, providing c.15,000 sq.m. of retail floor space, in an internal mall arrangement, was a new departure to the established street-based form of shopping in the area. While the development provided a strong retail anchor at the southern end of the street, it could be argued that the internalised shopping environment diverted significant retail energy, and fashion retailing in particular, from the street.

The 1970's and 1980's saw the development of a number of fast food outlets in the street, replacing some of the more established restaurants and cafes. The closure of Switzer's Department Store in 1991 was another turning point for the street as for over a century, along with the Brown Thomas department store; it provided a substantial and quality retail anchor in the street. The loss of such a high quality store dented the strength of the quality fashion offer in the street.

4. Character of the Street

The character of Grafton Street is not rooted in any one dimension but is multi-faceted, with economic, physical and social aspects, all of which contribute in part to its unique quality. It is this unique character that Dublin City Council wishes to protect and enhance.

4.1 Land Use Character

First and foremost, the street has been the premier retail street on the south side of the city since the early 1700s and critical to the economic life of the city. Its draw for many years was the rich mix of retail outlets, including department stores, men and women's fashion shops and a range of complimentary upmarket fashion, furnishing, accessories, jewellery and specialist foods. This use mix has been changing slowly over the last ten years with a growing trend towards more high turnover goods, e.g. mobile phone shops, convenience stores. Despite this the street remains a popular shopping destination complemented by a range of pubs, cafes and restaurants in the immediately adjacent streets.

4.2 Social Character

From the accounts of the historical development of the street it can be seen that Grafton St has had a long established social function, which was both ancillary and complimentary to its retail function. The strength of the retail offer guaranteed substantial visitor numbers and the street thus became an important meeting place or social hub, generating the development of cafes, restaurants and bars along the street and on immediately adjacent streets. One of the marked differences between

Grafton Street and Henry Street, the main retail street in the north city, is that the complementary social/recreational uses are much more evident in the Grafton Street area while they are minimal north of the river.

Grafton Street is a lively social hub by day and night. By day it is a base for a days shopping, meeting friends for a coffee or a meal and taking in the local galleries, museums and parks. By night, extended evening shopping is complemented by a wide range of recreational activities provided by the areas pubs, restaurants, theatres and concert hall. There are also numerous late night music and dancing venues.

4.3 Physical Character

In physical terms the street has a warm and intimate character. This derives largely from its orientation, winding nature, relatively narrow width, moderate height, grain, and rich architectural detail of many of the streets buildings. These features, together with fact that the street is fully pedestrianised, create an attractive setting for walking with ease and enjoying the shops, street entertainment, cafes and bars.

The north-south orientation of the street means that the street enjoys available sunshine for a lot of the day. Apart from creating a natural warmth and brightness in the street, the sun enhances the warm orange/red tones of the brick facades of many of the buildings, adding to the visual animation and distinctiveness of the street.

On entering the street at its southernmost end, off St Stephens Green, one has the sense of being drawn in and carried along a gently sloping and winding carriageway to the middle section of the street where the main vista of the street is revealed. From this central section it is not possible to see the starting point at St Stephens Green or the terminating point at College Green, as both are obscured by gentle bends in the street. This feature of the street creates a strong sense of enclosure, which is enhanced by the relative narrowness of the street (i.e.11m at its narrowest point) and by the consistency in form of the streetscapes on both sides.

4.3.1 Buildings:

Owing to the extent of pedestrian activity and vitality on the street it can be difficult to get a clear view of the buildings above ground level and a full appreciation of the architectural variety, richness and beauty of many of the buildings in the street. However, the architectural inventory (2002) combined with a full photographic survey (2006) provides a comprehensive picture of the architectural character of the street.

The majority of the buildings are Victorian in style, dating from the late 19th /early 20th century. (There are a very small number of later buildings in the street.) The width of the individual plots is narrow by modern standards, being predominantly in the region of 6m. This creates a fine-grained development pattern, which combined with the varied architectural detail and regular entrances of the buildings and shopfronts, creates a high level of activity and visual animation in the street.

The height of the buildings is predominantly four storeys at the southern end, increasing to five storeys at the northern end. This consistency in building height creates a strong sense of visual coherence in the streetscape.

The building type varies from the relatively narrow two bay townhouse over ground floor shop, in either brick or stucco render, with little or relatively modest detailing, to the more ornate two, three and five bay facades in either render or stone.

Twenty-four buildings in the street are listed for protection on the Record of Protected Structures, including the old Brown Thomas building at Nos.15-17 (now M&S), the old Arnotts building at No.103-104 (now River Island) and the old Bank building at No. 65, Grafton St (now Monsoon). The majority of the buildings on the northern section of the street, facing the Provost's House, are included in the list. A significant number of additional buildings are of architectural interest by reason of their design detail and contribution to the character of the streetscape and would merit consideration for addition to the Record of Protected Structures. These include No 42, (currently occupied by Jigsaw) a four storey two-bay yellow brick building with prominent red brick quoin and stringcourse detailing. Its most distinctive detail is the tripartite gothic style window arches at first floor level, which are mounted on decorative carved sandstone piers.

Nos. 5 and 6 (occupied by Jack Jones and Bus Stop respectively) are a pair of richly detailed four storey three bay red brick buildings with distinctively detailed oriel windows to first and second floor level. No 5 retains an early 20th century timber shopfront surround, comprising a panelled frieze with carved foliage, and flat panelled pilasters.

4.3.2 Architectural Features:

Dutch style gables, associated with a Dutch revival period in the early 20th century, are a distinctive feature of a number of buildings in the street. The level of decorative detail varies but in each instance the extended gable enhances the slenderness of the building's façade.

Another distinctive architectural feature of many of the buildings is the use of expressed pilasters over the entire front façade and heavily detailed cornices, which in some instances are used to define the parapet but in others define the individual floor levels also.

The use of terracotta for decoration is also a noticeable feature on a number of the buildings, particularly in the case of the more ornately decorated facades e.g. No. 65 (former AIB Bank building, now Monsoon) and the prominent Mortgage Store building at No. 2, on the corner with Nassau St.

Ornately detailed projecting timber windows at first and second floor level, and in some cases extending to third floor level, are a prominent feature of

a number of buildings in the street. This feature is particularly striking when the frame is painted white, providing a sharp profile to the different elements of detail and a strong frame for the upper floor window displays.

The majority of the original shopfronts in the street have been removed over time and replaced with modern shopfronts. Only two of the original shopfronts remain intact although in many instances some elements of the originals remain. The two intact originals are; 1) Weirs, at No. 96-99 Grafton, which dates from 1869, and 2) Bewley's, at No.78-89, which dates from 1927.

5 Issues for Grafton Street

A recent analysis of retailing in the city centre carried out in preparation for the City Centre Retail Plan identified a number of issues, which are detracting from the attractiveness of Grafton Street as a retail street and as a destination. These are;

5.1 Decline in the Quality of Shopfronts

There are a number of well designed shopfronts in the street e.g. Brown Thomas, River Island, Richard Alan, which have well defined frameworks, good quality materials and a scale of components and range of colours which are complementary to the character of the building to which they relate. However, in general terms the design standard of shopfronts in the street is declining. The following are commonly recurring features;

5.2 Poorly Defined Frames

The well-defined shopfront comprises a small number of carefully scaled, functional and decorative elements, which provide a visually strong frame to the ground floor façade, clear identification for the retail occupant on a fascia panel and good display space for the retailer. In several shopfronts on Grafton Street, key elements of the frame are omitted or inappropriately scaled creating a slight or visually weak shopfront. This creates an insubstantial and poor quality image, which detracts from the character of the building and streetscape.

5.3 Excessive Advertising and Signage

Few shopfronts in the street confine identification signs to the fascia panel, which is designed to identify the retail occupant and number of the premises. There is a growing trend towards using a variety of additional signs, information panels and advertisements attached either directly to the window glazing or independently mounted as a window display. The resulting visual effect is a chaotic clutter of messages, which detracts from the appearance of the shopfront and from the overall appearance of the street.

5.4 Poor Quality Window Display

Contemporary shopfront design is more streamlined than the traditional model, with more simply detailed surrounds and slight glazing frames. Many of the more contemporary schemes in Grafton Street incorporate

good quality materials e.g. stone, stainless steel and systems glazing, which appear on plan to satisfy in relation to quality materials and composition. The downside of these pared down designs is that they are dependant on a very high quality interior treatment, window display and signage arrangement to complement the simplicity of the component elements. In the case of a number of premises on Grafton Street, the effect of otherwise stylish shopfronts, are destroyed by a number of different elements, including;

- Interior display stands and storage units located up against or close to the window glazing
- Poor quality and colour of interior finishes
- Cluttered window display
- Excessive signage in window display area

These elements need to be addressed as part of the design of the shopfront.

5.5 Poor Quality Reproduction Shopfronts

A number of modern shopfronts in the street have reproduction traditional style details. In all instances, the traditional detail is poorly imitated and the resulting pastiche is inappropriate to the character of the buildings and the streetscape. Good quality contemporary designed shopfronts are the appropriate design response in the instance where the original shopfront has been removed.

5.6 Inappropriate Materials

The materials in the buildings in Grafton Street are brick, a variety of stone and terracotta. The stone and terracotta tend to be used decoratively and the decoration is in many cases is highly worked. Many of the modern shopfronts in the street use materials, which are uncomplimentary to the quality of materials used in the building. The materials include plastic, acrylic, UPVC, mirrored panels, poor quality flat-faced timber panels, and reconstituted stone. These materials detract from the character of the buildings and the streetscape.

5.7 Overly Strident/Garish Colour Schemes

The use of overly strident colour schemes in shopfronts or in shopfront signage is a feature, which creates a jarring visual note in the streetscape. The shopfront colour should be dictated by the tones of the materials in the upper facade. The worst offenders in this regard are retailers who have a predetermined corporate image e.g. Vodaphone, Footlocker and Spar, who use a strident orange/red on their shopfronts, and in combination with white, on their name signs. The combination of colour is brash and uncomplimentary to the softer natural tones of traditional building materials.

5.8 Projecting and Other Externally Mounted Signs

Despite the use of the fascia panel for name signs a good number of outlets have additional projecting signs of various sizes and in a variety of

materials. Some of these are exempted development under the Planning Regulations. However, the cumulative effect, together with a range of other signage creates additional clutter.

In addition, a number have internally illuminated box signs mounted flat on the upper façades and a few have large material banner signs, which are temporary in character but permanent in fixture. The combination of signs detracts from the clarity of the main name signs and negates the identification function of signage. It also creates a poor quality image.

5.9 Painting of Exterior Brickwork

A large number of brick faced buildings have been painted over the years and this has resulted in a very rundown appearance to significant sections of the street, particularly in the southern section close to St Stephens Green. In addition to obscuring the natural colours of the brickwork a painted surface looks very down at heel if not maintained regularly. Ideally the paintwork should be removed to reveal the natural tone of the brickwork. This is a sensitive job and requires specialist conservation advice. Further painting of brickwork should be prohibited.

6.0 An imbalance in the mix of uses in the street

The history of Grafton Street demonstrates a long association with high quality retailing, covering a broad spectrum of outlets including men and women's fashion and specialist goods. In recent years, there has been decrease in the number of fashion outlets and an increase in the number of other outlets e.g. phone shops, newsagents, pharmacies, and convenience foods. In combination with existing non-retail outlets i.e. building societies, bank and take-aways, these changes are creating an imbalance in the mix of units in the streets, and threatening the role of Grafton St. as a destination for high quality comparison shopping. The changing use profile of the street has serious implications for the future of Grafton Street and for its role as part of the city centres retail core.

Since planning legislation does not differentiate between convenience and comparison retail outlets, a change of use from say a clothes shop to a newsagent or phone shop does not require planning permission. In addition, planning permission is not required for a change of use from retail to a number of different retail services, e.g. from a fashion boutique to a travel agents, hairdressers, post office or dry cleaners. The designation of the street as an Area of Special Planning Control is the only statutory mechanism available to the planning authority to control these changes of use.

6.1 A Decline in the Quality of the Public Domain

The existing landscaping scheme for the street, including paving and street furniture is over 10 years old and is dated in appearance. This, in combination with the mediocre standard of many of the shopfronts, creates a tired and poor quality public domain.

Architectural Conservation Area – Grafton Street

Part 2 – Objectives and Policies

1. Key Objectives

- The ACA status will require all works to the main facades of buildings in the street to be made subject to planning permission, including works currently exempt from planning permission. These are specified in the Development Management Policy for the Grafton Street ACA (detailed below). Any person proposing to carry out works to the exterior of a building on Grafton Street should refer to these.
- As the predominance of certain uses has been identified as an issue for Grafton Street it is intended to prepare an ASPC (Area of Special Planning Control) to give the planning authority greater control in maintaining a balance in the mix of uses in the street. This process will follow on from the making of the ACA.
- It is an objective to carry out a co-ordinated street improvement scheme for Grafton Street that will upgrade the existing paving and street furniture. Paving work will be to a high design standard and of high quality paving materials and complementary in slab size, colour and texture with the architectural character of the street. As yet there is no time scale proposed for this work.
- As part of the proposed street improvement scheme it is proposed to create a new public space at the top of Grafton St at its junction with St Stephens Green and to provide for a special treatment of the space at the junction with Nassau St/Suffolk St

2. Development Management Policy for the Grafton St ACA

The policy and guidelines for all development within the ACA is given below. This includes development in relation to Protected Structures, Non-Protected Structures, New Development, Shopfront Design, Advertisement Structures and Land Use.

General Note: Owners and occupiers of structures within the ACA are advised;

- Where works are proposed to buildings within the ACA, an architect with recognised expertise in architectural conservation should be employed to;
 - advise on all proposed works including repair and maintenance works,
 - prepare detailed drawings and specifications for all works proposed and to liaise with the Planning Authority,
 - supervise all works including repair and maintenance works.

That an Architectural and Photographic Inventory of buildings within the ACA has been prepared, providing a written and photographic analysis of the exterior of all protected and non-protected structures in the area. This inventory is available for inspection and reference at the offices of Dublin City Council. This information is intended for the benefit of property owners, Dublin City Council and other parties interested in the future of the building stock in this area. The building inventory will assist in carrying out the following functions:

- The appraisal of the special character of each building and the assessment of the scope of changes to building(s) that could be considered without affecting their special character.
 - The identification of certain external works that may be necessary for the restoration and physical upkeep of buildings.
 - The provision of guidance on the type of physical works that could be carried out without planning permission.
 - The making of recommendations on the suitability of adapting individual buildings for different uses.
- The Scheme of Special Planning Control (to follow the ACA) will identify uses, which will not be permitted in the area of the ACA and other uses, which will only be permitted in limited numbers.

3. Development Affecting Existing Structures

3.1 Protected Structures

- Owners and occupiers of protected structures within the ACA are advised that the requirements of Section 57 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 apply as normal. This requires that the carrying out of works to a protected structure, or a proposed protected structure, shall be exempted development only if those works would not materially affect the character of the structure, or any element of the structure, which contributes to its special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.
- Owners and occupiers proposing to carry out any works to a protected structure including essential repair and maintenance works, are advised to request the Local Authority for a declaration as to what works would or would not materially affect the character of the structure or any element of the structure, which contributes to its special interest.
- Routine works of maintenance that would not affect the character of the building, involving the repair or replacement of damaged or worn elements on the exterior of structures with the same materials and forms will remain exempted development.

3.2 Non-Protected Structures

- Owners and occupiers of non-protected structures located within the Grafton Street Architectural Conservation Area should note that the normal exemptions from seeking planning permission pertaining to certain type of developments under the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 to 2005 will no longer apply.
- In other words, development which would consist of or comprise the carrying out of works to the exterior of a structure located within the Architectural Conservation Area and that would materially affect the character of the area concerned will no longer be exempted development, unless otherwise specifically stated. This is in accordance with Section 82 of the Planning and Development Act 2000.
- Routine works of maintenance that would not affect the character of the architectural conservation area, involving the repair or replacement of damaged or worn elements on the exterior of structures with the same materials and forms will remain exempted development.

- However all works that constitute a material alteration to the exteriors of non-protected structures in the Architectural Conservation Area will require a specific grant of planning permission. This includes the following works;

Note: It should be noted, however, that the following list is not definitive. Owners/occupiers are advised to consult with the Planning Authority prior to undertaking any development including any physical works or change of use within the Architectural Conservation Area.

- The demolition of any structure or part thereof.
- Removal or alteration to original architectural features on the main facades of non-protected structures including:
 - painting of previously unpainted surfaces
 - rendering of any façade not previously rendered.
 - removal or changes to elements of the shopfront (pilasters, cornices, fascia, stall risers (plinths), windows and doors)
- New shopfronts and alterations to existing shopfronts (see 5 below for detailed policy)
- The erection of (or alterations to) externally mounted signs and advertisements, including banners (see 6 below for detailed policy)
- The provision of awnings, canopies, flags and flagpoles.
- The placing of storage containers, or the display of goods, in front of the building line.
- The provision of any security shutters or grilles and associated casings and fittings on the face of a building or in front of a window display area.
- The erection of communications antennae or support structures for same
- The attachment of any wires, cables or pipes to the front of any building.
- The provision of lighting on the exteriors of structures, or the illumination of signs or advertising structures.

4. New Development

- Proposals to demolish Protected Structures or proposed Protected Structures may only be considered in exceptional circumstances.
- Proposals to demolish structures of architectural merit within the ACA require planning permission and in general will not be encouraged.
- Proposals to demolish buildings in Grafton Street may be considered in exceptional circumstances only where they are supported by a rationale related to the overall enhancement of the urban structure i.e. linkage, public space and use
- New development in Grafton Street must respect the established physical character of the street, i.e. the form of buildings (height, massing and plot width, solid/void ratio), materials and colour.
- The amalgamation of one or more existing sites in a proposed development will require sensitive planning and design treatment, to complement the fine grain of the established streetscape.
- All new buildings should be designed to the highest standards of contemporary architectural design.
- Pastiche design proposals for infill buildings or replacement shopfronts will be discouraged.
- High quality durable materials should be used. They should include stone, brick, render, steel, glass and timber.

5. Shopfront Design

New shopfronts and alterations to existing shopfronts require planning permission. Any person proposing to install a new shopfront is advised to consult Dublin City Council's Shopfront Design Guide³ for general guidance on all matters relating to shopfront design. They are also advised to engage an architect with an expertise in the design of shopfronts to prepare any planning application.

The following design principles should be observed in the design of shopfronts;

- The shopfront should relate to the architectural character of the upper floors in respect of proportion, scale and alignment.
- Shopfronts should respect the scale and proportions of the streetscape and the established pattern of openings.
- A strong frame for the shopfront should be provided, incorporating a fascia panel, pilasters and a defined base/plinth.
- The materials used should be of a high durable quality. Materials such as stone, timber and glass will be favoured over materials such as plastics, reconstituted stone and aluminium.

³ Shopfront Design Guidelines – Planning Department – Dublin Corporation

- Garish colours (i.e. those that clash with the colours and tones of the building and adjoining buildings) should be avoided. The colours used in the shopfront should be complementary to those of the building and adjoining buildings.
- Signage should form an integral part of the overall design for the shopfront and should generally be restricted to the fascia.
- The acceptability of corporate design packages, including colour and material palates and signage, will depend on their compatibility with the character of the building and adjoining buildings. The context for the proposal is considered more important than uniformity between branches of one company.
- The use of externally fitted roller shutters will not be permitted. Roller shutters, when proposed, should be located behind the window display area and comprise a fine density open mesh shutter. The colour of the shutter should match the colour of the shopfront.
- The design of the interior of retail units, including layout, furniture, display cabinets, materials and colour, should have regard to the visual impact on the exterior of the shopfront and the requirement to complement the design of the shopfront and building overhead.
- The obscuring of the main façade windows at any level will not be permitted
- Access for people with disabilities, the elderly and the very young, should be incorporated into the design of the shopfront.
- The removal of separate access to the upper floors will not be favourably considered.

Note

Dublin City Council will be taking a proactive approach to redress the decline in quality and presentation of buildings and shopfronts within the Grafton Street & Environs ACA. Building and Shopfront Design Guidelines will be prepared to ensure that the highest design standards are achieved throughout the Grafton Street Area.

6. Advertisement Structures

Planning permission is required for all signs (regardless of size and location) including projecting signs, erected externally within the area of the ACA. The following points should be considered when preparing planning applications for signs:

- Identification signage for the ground floor retail unit shall generally be contained within the fascia board of the shopfront. The lettering employed shall either be painted on the fascia, or comprise individual solid letters mounted on the fascia. The size of lettering used should be in proportion to the depth of the fascia board.
- Signs and advertising structures shall not be located in the window display areas.

- Advertisements and signs relating to uses above ground floor level shall generally be provided at the entrance to the upper floors, in a small plaque format.
- Banner type signs and advertising sheeting covering any part of the front façade of a building are not acceptable.
- The colours used on any advertising structures or signs will be required to respect the prevalence of tertiary colours established by the building materials in the area. Therefore substantial areas of bright or garish primary or secondary colours shall not be allowed as the background of any sign.
- Internally illuminated signs, illuminated scrolling signs or signs using exposed neon tubing shall not be permitted.
- No amplified announcements, music or other material shall be played from any premises to advertise goods or services, and no loudspeakers or other amplification apparatus shall be affixed on or about the front of any premises for such a purpose. Any such sounds within the premises shall be controlled so as to be inaudible from adjoining premises or at 2 metres from the frontage.
- Goods or advertising structures shall not be displayed on the public footpath or at the entrance to the shop.
- Projecting signs at ground or upper floor levels will not generally be permitted.

7. Land Use

- The existing exemption from planning permission for changes of use within the same use class (except where otherwise specified) as defined by the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 to 2005 will continue to apply in the proposed Architectural Conservation Area, as will the exemption for solely interior works (unless the structure appears on the Record of Protected Structures).
- As the predominance of certain uses has been identified as an issue for Grafton Street it is intended to prepare Special Planning Control Scheme (SPCS) to give the planning authority greater control in the change from one retail user to another. In the interim, the following policy will apply;
 - There will be a strong presumption in favour of granting planning permission for higher order retail outlets at ground floor level, including fashion outlets, 'lifestyle' stores, niche and specialist retailers. Complementary activities, such as restaurants and cafes, bars, cafes, art galleries, tailors, hairdressers, barbers

and beauticians, and other specialist services, will be encouraged at first floor level.

- The use of first floors predominantly for storage or office uses will not be favourably considered.
- Office uses will be permitted above first floor level and active encouragement will be given to the provision of residential units.
- It is policy not to grant planning permission for the following uses as they detract from the character of the street;
 - Outlet selling hot food for consumption off the premises
 - Fast food outlet⁴
 - Phone call centre/internet cafe (at ground or first floor level)
 - Bookmakers/Betting Shop
 - Amusement Arcade
 - Mortgage Store/Financial Institution

⁴ Fast Food Outlet: An outlet that sells hot and cold food and drinks, served packed and wrapped and without waiter service.