

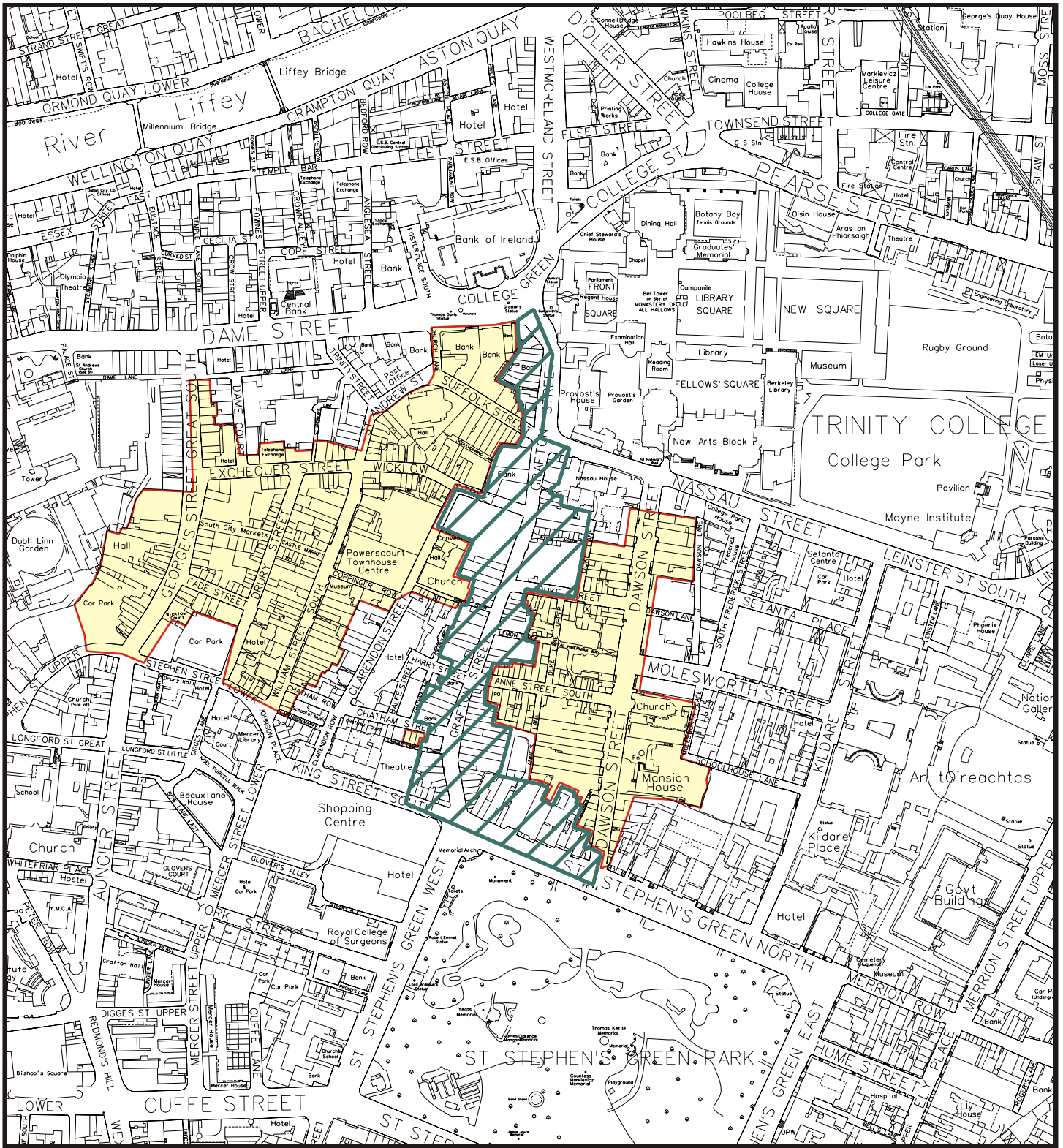
# The South City Retail Quarter

## Architectural Conservation Plan

### Written Statement







Existing Architectural Conservation Area



Proposed Architectural Conservation Area



## **Part I**

### **Introduction – Development of the South City Retail Quarter**

The area between South Great George's Street and Dawson Street was laid out and developed during the great classical era of urban planning and development in Dublin from the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century into the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. Developed from west to east in chronological sequence, the area today appears in map form as a simple grid plan with the main streets running north – south, and smaller connecting streets running east to west. In spite of some changes over the years including some significant Victorian interventions, this area still presents a remarkably coherent urban form – retaining much of its original street pattern, intact streetscapes and fine buildings (Map1).

Nowadays, the area is a thriving commercial quarter, a major part of one of Dublin's principal shopping areas. It is home to a bustling mix of shops, cafes, bars, galleries as well as a variety of other businesses that trade off and support the main commercial spine of the quarter - Grafton Street, thus reflecting even in land use terms a strong continuity between the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the present time.

The western section of the study area between South Great Georges Street and Grafton Street and south of Dame Street forms a tight grid of narrow streets originally surrounded by medieval lanes and bisected by the River Steine (Steyne). The principal streets here are South Great George's Street, Drury St, William St and Clarendon St, Fade Street which links South Great George's Street to Drury Street and Wicklow/Exchequer Streets linking Grafton Street to South Great George's Street. Moving east, Grafton Street<sup>1</sup>, Dawson Street together with Duke Street and South Anne Street were laid out as a single urban ensemble in the early 1800's.

#### **South Great George's Street / Drury Street**

South Great George's Street forms the western boundary of the ACA and is a busy commercial thoroughfare linking the southern suburbs of Rathmines, Ranelagh and Rathgar with the city centre. It was an established route by 1610 linking the older and more important Dame Street and Stephen's Street. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it was

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<sup>1</sup> Grafton Street was designated an Architectural Conservation Area in 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2006, hence it does not form part of this study.

already established as a street of artisans including felt-makers, bookbinders and clock makers. Although widened in 1780 by the Wide Street Commissioners, in large part, the street's present character is derived from major rebuilding 'in a *modest brick Italianate idiom*<sup>2</sup> that took place between 1890 and 1930, creating a relatively consistent and pleasant streetscape.

The South City Markets take up a large city block bounded by Fade Street, Drury Street, Exchequer Street and South Great George's Street, physically dominating this part of the city. Originally opened in 1881 and incorporating a large glass covered market area, it was modified after a serious fire in 1892. The street was also widened in conjunction with the development of the market forming a wide and gentle curve running northwards to Dame Street. The building is a Victorian gothic extravaganza with deep pitched roofs, decorative turrets and a grand gothic entrance, all finished in red brick and terracotta. Shops were incorporated all around the outside of the building at ground floor level. Today, the Markets still manage to capture much of the essence and spirit of an earlier era, accommodating a wide range of small scale and specialist shops and stalls. It is also acts as an important landmark in this part of the city.

The construction of the South City Markets was one of the most remarkable interventions in Dublin in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, completely altering this part of the city – centred in and around South Great George's Street, Drury Street and South William Street. The development of the South City Markets (1880) also provided for the redevelopment of Castle Market as an important pedestrian link between Drury Street and South William Street. The resultant two storey gothic style forms a very harmonious composition and is a pleasant addition to the area.

South Great George's Street was always renown as a busy commercial thoroughfare reflected in the nature of the businesses that chose to locate there in the past, for instance Pim Brothers - one of Dublin finest department stores was established in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, eventually closing down in the late 1960's. Thomas Dockrell, a major hardware store occupied a large group of buildings bounded by Georges St., Drury St., Lower Stephen's St, and Fade Street. It was also home to other well known businesses such as Findlater's, Woolworth's and Bewleys. The first of the three oriental cafes established in the city by Bewleys was located at No. 13. One business that still thrives on the street is the Long Hall Public House which has a distinctive

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<sup>2</sup> Casey, Christine (2005) **The Buildings of Ireland – Dublin.**

Georgian front with Victorian stucco embellishments. It has '*a relatively plain two bay façade that conceals a partially preserved Edwardian interior of considerable charm*'<sup>3</sup>. The Street is also home to quirky reminders of a more recent past, in particular the - **Why go bald?** - flashing neon head and shoulders mounted on the gable of no. 5. This sign is now a city landmark and was erected by Taylor Signs in 1961 and restored in 1999.

Drury Street, originally known as 'Little Boater Street' is marked on the map of 1673, but is largely a creation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Victorian era - dominated as it is by the South City Markets and its relationship to Castle Market, developed in conjunction with the City Markets.

### **South William St.**

It is reasonable to state that South William Street is the most significant street lying between South Great Georges Street and Grafton Street. It is also one of the most important intact Georgian streets in the city. Two important 18th century buildings dominate it, the Powerscourt Townhouse, the city residence of the Wingfield Family, and the City Assembly House, more recently the Dublin Civic Museum. The street runs parallel to Clarendon St and George's St and looking west the vista is still terminated by what was once Mercer's Street Hospital. The original development of the street took place as early as 1685 when the land was leased to William Williams. It was originally built as a residential area, though unfortunately all of these early houses have disappeared. However, it is still one of the few remaining streets in Dublin that can fairly claim to be predominantly Georgian in character and is significant for that reason.

It is a relatively narrow street with a strong sense of enclosure derived from the consistent four-storey height of buildings on both sides of the street. It still retains a faded Georgian residential character, although it is now a commercial street. Two attractive pedestrian streets intersect it - Castle Market to the west and Coppinger's Row to the East.

In architectural terms, the main building type is early red brick, four-storey over basement dating from the 1760's. The buildings taken individually and as a

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<sup>3</sup> Casey, Christine (2005) **The Buildings of Ireland – Dublin.**

streetscape are of historic value, reflected in the significant number of buildings contained on the Record of Protected Structures.

South William Street is also important because it is home to one of the largest and most complete groups of 18<sup>th</sup> century merchant houses in Dublin with two outstanding individual buildings - Powerscourt and the City Assembly House.

Simon Vierpyl and Richard Cranfield erected the City Assembly House in 1765. It features an octagonal exhibition room originally used by the Society of Artists, however by 1809, the building had become known as the City Assembly House. The front part of house is 3 storeys over basement with a cut granite façade and a Doric entrance at ground floor level - interior – ornamented by a beautiful open well staircase and has a top floor gallery lit by an overhead octagonal lantern.

Powerscourt is one of Dublin's great Georgian mansions famed for its beautiful interiors and wonderful plasterwork ceilings. It has a strong granite façade interrupted by a curved flight of steps leading to a beautifully proportioned hall and staircase. Robert Mack, a stonemason and architect for the Wingfields of Powerscourt designed the building in 1771. In 1807, it was sold to the Government Commission for stamp duties for 15,000 pounds which then constructed a very substantial courtyard that now forms the Powerscourt Townhouse Centre. In 1832 the clothing wholesalers Ferrier and Pollock bought the house, remaining in business at this location until the 1970's.

### **Exchequer Street / Wicklow Street**

Originally known as Chequer Street after the Exchequer located on this site, it originally included the whole street as far as Grafton Street. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the name of the lower half was changed to Wicklow Street.

The pattern of development on Exchequer Street was similar to that of Grafton St. Ninety nine year leases were granted for buildings in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, these leases then reverted to the landlords in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century which presented an opportunity for rebuilding. As a result the street was largely rebuilt in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Again, in and about 1900, the leases expired and much of Wicklow and Exchequer Streets were rebuilt again, hence leaving us with today's predominantly Edwardian shops and office buildings



The rebuilding of Exchequer Street and Wicklow Street in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century /early 20<sup>th</sup> century involved an increase in height for most of the buildings with some of the 3 storey becoming tall 4 storey. They are mainly red brick fronted buildings, many of them ornamented with terracotta window mullions or even urns and gables at the roofline. A typical example is the premises at the corner of Andrew's Street and Exchequer Street - the International Bar. '*The result is one of Dublin's most intact – if not very ancient streetscapes*', <sup>4</sup>. It is interesting to note that some of these Edwardian facades conceal much earlier mid 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings.

### **St Andrew's Street**

The stretch of St. Andrew's Street leading to the junction with South William St. was originally called Hog Hill. Some of the land including that on which Mr. Jones built his houses in Exchequer St. was originally granted to Thomas Pemberton in 1643. Suffolk St, much of it built upon in the 1780's. The current St Andrew's Church, a fine example of gothic Victorian architecture, was opened in 1866.

### **Dawson Street**

In 1705, Joshua Dawson acquired half of the remaining land between Grafton St and the Fitzwilliam Holding from Henry Temple and laid out Dawson St., Grafton Street, Duke St and Anne St (leases 1718) as a single urban ensemble. Dawson St is a wide straight street, and was originally laid out as an aristocratic boulevard. Mr. Dawson laid out his own house on the upper-east side in 1710, which became the Mansion House in 1715. Following an Act of Parliament, St. Anne's Church (1720) was developed on the axis with Anne Street to serve the new residents. The small ensemble forms a very orderly and attractive network of streets and lanes.

### **Conclusion**

This compact and vibrant urban quarter was shaped during the great classical era of urban planning and building in 18<sup>th</sup> century Dublin. It was laid out as a simple grid of streets "forming careful junctions with existing streets and terminating classical axes where necessary"<sup>5</sup>. Despite later interventions into the essentially Georgian fabric, the area has survived intact – a testament to the inherent coherence and indeed to

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<sup>4</sup> Casey, Christine (2005) – **The Buildings of Ireland - Dublin**

<sup>5</sup> McCullough, Niall (1989) - **Dublin - An Urban History**

the practicality of the original layout and development. Indeed, even the significant Victorian interventions have contributed to the area's legibility and architectural character as well as its economic vibrancy.

Although developed as a series of small but piecemeal set pieces by different landlords/developers, the individual streets reveal a strong sense of visual and architectural unity. This unity is attributable to the use of the "single plot as the unit of development",<sup>6</sup> as well as to standard leasing arrangements and a willingness to observe certain common urban design principles. It is important to note that these streets, including the remaining building stock are as significant a record of the great classical era of planning and development in Dublin as the more renowned Georgian squares. The established pattern of development throughout the proposed architectural conservation area is typified by a number of recurring elements including:

- The simple but regular street pattern
- A fine urban grain – due to the consistent use of narrow plot widths.
- The closure of key axes
- A consistency in heights and building form within each street – ranging from two storey to 4/5 storey
- A high density of development - with frequently close to 100% site coverage.
- The emphasis on the use of a small range of durable building materials – predominantly brick with stone used for more important buildings
- A mixed land use pattern
- The careful arrangement of the important 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century landmark buildings.

The key objective of the Architectural Conservation Plan is to protect and enhance the special architectural character of these historic Georgian streetscapes and plan for the harmonious adaptation of this fabric to contemporary life.

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<sup>6</sup> McCullough, Niall (1989) - Dublin - An Urban History

**Part II**  
**Development Management**

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## **1. New Development**

Major redevelopment in the Architectural Conservation Area will generally be confined to the sites identified by the Framework Plan for the City Centre Retail Core i.e. close to the boundaries of the study area or along the line of the proposed pedestrian route.

### **Policy 1.0**

It is the policy of Dublin City Council that any applications for demolition of structures on these sites must be justified having regard to the special character of the Architectural Conservation Area and be accompanied by a viable proposal and a firm commitment to replacement with a well-designed structure appropriate to its context.

### **Policy 1.1**

It is the policy of Dublin City Council that any proposals for demolition of structures on other lands will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and only where they are supported by a rationale related to the overall enhancement of the urban structure including the creation of new pedestrian routes, public spaces and intensification of use.

Where new development is proposed, it will be necessary to find and establish a pattern of development that responds in a sensitive manner to the streetscape – a fine grain solution – that contributes to a harmonious whole and maintains the rhythm of the streets. To secure an appropriate solution, new development should comply with the following guidelines:

- New developments should have regard to the established scale of the existing built fabric - including height, massing, proportions and plot width. Amalgamation of one or more existing sites in a proposed development will require sensitive planning and design treatment to complement the fine grain.
- All new buildings should be designed to the highest standard in a modern architectural idiom. Pastiche will be discouraged and will only be allowed or required in exceptional circumstances.

- Materials used should be of a high quality and be durable to avoid long term maintenance problems. They should include stone, brick, render, steel, glass and timber.
- An appropriate and balanced mix of uses will be required in all new developments. Public oriented uses, in particular shops, will be required at ground floor level to create more lively, dynamic and successful places.
- The ground floor of all buildings should be clearly articulated to establish a clear identity for each building and use. In general, a higher floor to ceiling dimension should be provided at ground floor level.
- The incorporation of new pedestrian routes and public spaces into new developments will be required where appropriate to enhance and reinforce the existing urban framework, as indicated in the Framework Plan for the City Centre Retail Core.
- Access requirements for people with disabilities, the elderly and the very young should be incorporated into the design of shops, public buildings and other buildings that are accessed by the general public.
- Plant and tank rooms should be provided within the roof space or within the envelope of the building and should not break the plane of the roof.

## **2. Works to Buildings**

### **2 (i) Building Inventory**

An inventory of buildings has been prepared, providing a photographic analysis of the exterior of all protected and non-protected structures in the 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 monitoring of changes in buildings in the light of the inventories.

### **2 (ii) Works to Protected Structures**

Owners and occupiers shall take into account the following guidelines when preparing a planning application or proposal for any development including the carrying out of works to protected structures located in the South City Retail Quarter Architectural Conservation Area:

- Owners and occupiers are advised to consult the building inventory when considering proposals for the restoration, enhancement and necessary improvements to each building.
- Owners and occupiers are advised that planning permission is required for all works, which would materially affect the character of a protected structure, or any element of the structure, which contributes to its special 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 that contributes to its special interest.

- Owners and occupiers are advised to engage a suitably qualified person with recognised expertise in architectural conservation 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.
  
- Owners and occupiers are advised to consult the Planning Authority prior to the lodgement of a planning application for any development proposed in the South City Retail Quarter Architectural Conservation Area.



## **2 (iii) Works to Non-Protected Structures**

**Owners and occupiers of non-protected structures located within the South City Retail Quarter Architectural Conservation Area should note that the normal exemptions from seeking planning permission for certain types of developments under the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2006 will no longer apply.**

### **Policy 2.0**

It is the policy of Dublin City Council that 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 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 (1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and Article 9 (1) (xii) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001.

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. 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 will also 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).

### **Policy 2.1**

It is the policy of Dublin City Council that 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. By way of illustration, an application for planning permission will be required for the following developments proposed within the Architectural Conservation Area.

(a) The demolition of any structure or part thereof.

- (b) Alterations to, the removal or replacement of any external features that are part of the fabric of a building, including -
- Roofing features and materials including the replacement of original roofing materials with different materials – e.g. the replacement of slates tiles with concrete or asbestos cement tiles, the removal or alterations to chimney stacks, chimney pots, parapet walls, balustrades and cupolas.
  - The profile of any part of the roof including the plane or pitch.
  - Cornices, string courses, bargeboards, friezes.
  - Windows and fanlights including alterations to, and/or the removal and replacement of window and fanlight casings, mullions and glazing bars with those of a different material or form.
  - Window or door surrounds including architraves or heads, pilasters/columns, balconies, stone cills and doors.
  - Original brackets, external light fittings, drain pipes, gutters, coal hole covers.
  - Entrance or boundary features that are part of the fabric of a building, such as steps, pillars, railings or plinth walls.
- (c) The painting of any previously unpainted façade, or the provision of colours that are not in keeping with the character of the area.
- (d) The rendering of any façade not previously rendered.
- (e) The provision of plant or tank rooms on the roofs of buildings or the storage of any functional elements at roof level or on/projecting from the facades of buildings, including containers for alarm systems, outlets or equipment for air conditioning or cooling or heating systems.
- (f) The insertion of rooflights which are visible from outside the structure
- (g) Alterations to the main elements of existing shopfronts, including cornices, fascias, brackets, stallrisers or pilasters.
- (h) The removal of a shopfront, door(s) or sections of glazing to enable the trading or display of goods directly onto the public street.

- (i) The placing of storage containers, or the display of goods, in front of the building line.
- (j) The installation of amplification equipment onto an external wall of a building or structure to enable the broadcast of sound from within any building into the public realm.
- (k) 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.
- (l) The provision of any advertising or other signage that is visible from public areas, other than those pertaining to Classes 3, 5, 9, 11, 12 and 15. This will include either by way of attachment of additional structures or fittings to buildings, or by affixing or painting any lettering, logos or devices to any part of a structure including the windows (but not including the repainting of the fascia board of a shopfront). It will also include the installation of projecting signs, internally illuminated signs, dot matrix signs, box signs and advertisements suspended from the front, rear or gable walls of any structure or from scaffolding on any structure.
- (m) The provision of any illuminated advertisements exhibited as part of any shop or other window display in a business premises and other advertisements affixed to the inside of the glass surface of a window of a business premises or otherwise exhibited through a window of such premises.
- (n) The covering or treatment of the glazing of a shopfront or window with any material that would blank out more than 20% of the shopfront glazing and conceal all or a significant part of the window display area.
- (o) The provision of any awnings, canopies, flags and flagpoles.
- (p) The hanging of scaffold drops, banners or similar advertisement structures of any dimensions for any period of time on any part of any building or structure or draped between buildings.
- (q) The erection of a dish type antenna for the receiving and transmitting of signals from satellites.

- (r) The erection of communications antennae or support structures for same, including -
- The erection of any antenna for the receiving or transmission of telecommunication or broadcast signals that would be visible from a public road, or the replacement of any existing antenna with one of greater height or width that would render it visible as such.
  - The installation of any satellite signal receiving antenna.
  - The erection of any support structure for mobile telephony antennae.
  - The replacement of any existing support structure for mobile telephony antennae with one of greater height or width.
  - The placing of additional mobile telephony antennae on any building or structure, save onto an existing antenna support structure.
- (s) The attachment of any wires, cables or pipes to the front of any building.
- (t) The provision of lighting including flood lighting on the exteriors of structures, or the illumination of signs or advertising structures.
- (u) the merging of two or more units or buildings into one unit or building at ground and/or upper floor level through the demolition of dividing walls or the provision of interconnecting doors or entrance ways.

**Note: The above list is not definitive and there will almost certainly be other types of development that will require planning permission. It should also be noted that some of the following works described already constitute development and would under certain circumstances require planning permission. 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:**

### **3. Land Use**

#### **3 (i) Change of Use**

The close knit grid of streets and the fine grain of the building blocks in the Grafton Street area has “*encouraged the development of a rich mix of uses complementary to the dominant shopping focus, including cafes, bars, restaurants, galleries, hotels as well as a range of educational institutions, offices, and other services. It is this mix that ensures that the area works so successfully as an attractive destination for workers, residents and visitors.*”<sup>7</sup>

#### **Policy 3.0**

It is the policy of Dublin City Council to strengthen and consolidate the Grafton Street area as a major shopping destination, while still maintaining a good balance between shopping, leisure and cultural uses. To achieve this, there will be a strong presumption in favour of higher order retail outlets at basement, ground and first floor levels. Given the fine grain of buildings, the emphasis will be on attracting small to medium scale independent and specialist retailers including those focused on fashion, footwear, jewellery, beauty products, fashion accessories and specialist clothing.

**In order to protect this fine grain - the merging of two or more units or buildings into one unit or building at ground and/or upper floor level through the demolition of dividing walls or the provision of interconnecting doors or entrance ways will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.**

#### **Policy 3.1**

It is the policy of Dublin City Council to promote other retail activity and complementary activities such as restaurants and cafes, art galleries and craft showrooms, tailors, hairdressers, barbers and beauticians and other specialist services to visiting members of the public at basement and first floor levels. The use

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<sup>7</sup> Dublin City Centre Retail Core Framework Plan - 2006

of first floors predominantly for storage or office uses will not be favourably considered (other than incidental to approved uses). Office uses will be permitted above first floor level and active encouragement will be given to the provision of residential units. Planning permission will be refused for uses that detract from the essential character of the street.

Proposals for changes of use that meet the above objective will be dealt with on their individual merits and having regard to the local circumstances pertaining at the time of the making of the application. The positive consideration of a proposal will be dependent on satisfying the following requirements:

- the use should be consistent with conservation policies and with the proper planning and development of the area,
- the physical works should be carried out to the highest standards of design and finishes should be of the highest quality,
- the development should provide for the proper restoration and enhancement of buildings of architectural and historic merit

### **3 (ii) Change of Use to Complementary Non-Retail Uses**

- In recent years, there has been a growing concentration of certain non-retail uses such as cafes, bars and restaurants on a number of streets such as South Great George's Street. There has also been pressure for a change of use of existing retail outlets to non-retail use on established retail streets e.g. Wicklow Street.

#### **Policy 3.2**

- It is the policy of Dublin City Council to apply strict controls to all proposals for change of use from retail to non-retail in order to ensure that the right balance is struck between shopping, leisure and cultural, and that non-retail uses do not dominate key shopping streets.
- The following factors will be taken into account in the assessment of development proposals for these uses and uses that do not satisfy these factors will not be permitted:

- The effect of the introduction or extension of one of these uses on the character of the street frontage and the level of shopping provision, taking into account both the current levels of non-retail use and the current levels of the specified use already established within each individual street block. In this matter, the Planning Authority will seek to ensure that any proposed development would not result in;
  - two adjacent non retail uses
  - the non retail use being over dominant by virtue of its size, location or relationship to other uses
  
- The effect of the proposed development on the amenities of the area and in particular whether it would have a positive or negative impact on the architectural conservation area or the protected structure.
  
- The effect of the proposed development on overhead/adjacent residential accommodation, with particular regard to the cumulative level of noise, disturbance and smells caused by the specified uses that would be detrimental to the residential amenity of those properties.
  
- The effect of the proposed use on the interior of the structure, including the potential damage to or loss of internal features or fittings considered worthy of retention.

### **3 (iii) Change of Use to Non-Permissible Uses**

A number of specific uses have also been identified that would undermine or be out of character with the distinctive architectural and historic quality of the area.

#### **Policy 3.3**

It is the policy of Dublin City Council to refuse planning permission for a change of use to any of the following uses or for an extension to an existing use:

- outlets selling hot food for consumption off the premises
- fast food outlets
- night clubs
- phone call centres/internet cafes (at ground or first floor level)

- Automated Teller Machines and Automatic Teller Machine Lobbies
- uses defined by Class 2 and 3 of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Regulations 1994.
- Amusement arcades / electronic games venues



#### **4. Shop Front Design and Advertisement Structures**

This section of the plan sets out broad design guidelines for alterations and proposals for shop fronts and advertisement structures in the South City Retail Quarter Architectural Conservation Area. For the purposes of these guidelines, the term 'shop front' includes all ground floor premises with a fascia and/or display window including non-retail uses such as banks, building societies, estate agents, restaurants, cafes and public houses.

Shop fronts are designed to attract the passer-by's attention and project a positive image of a business. They are essential components of a street scene, and when taken together can help shape public perception of the street, contributing to the general ambience, character and quality of the street. A good quality shop front is the most effective advertisement for a business, providing potential customers with their first glimpse of the merchandise. For these reasons every shop front matters to the quality of the street, as a concentration of poor quality shop fronts can discourage visitors and potential customers and lead to the downgrading of a street, particularly in an historic context.

The purpose of this section of the plan is to assist in the implementation of successful and appropriate shop front and advertisement projects.

##### **Policy 4.0**

It is the policy of Dublin City Council to promote new and innovative shopfront design and to ensure that new works are to a high standard and are imaginative and modern.

##### **Policy 4.1**

It is the policy of Dublin City Council to discourage the use of reproduction or pastiche style unless dictated by a specific conservation context i.e. in instances where it is proposed to restore or repair an original or historic shop front. In that instance, traditional design and detailing and a high degree of craftsmanship will be required to match existing.

## **Policy 4.2**

It is the policy of Dublin City Council to discourage the insertion of regular shop fronts into structures that have retained their original Georgian front door and window arrangements in particular on South William Street, Dawson Street and Andrew Street (Map ?).

### **4 (i) Design Guidelines for New Shop fronts**

The following design guidelines should be followed in the design of any proposed shop front and the preparation of a planning application.

- The relationship of the shop front to the building

A shop front is an integral part of the building of which it forms part and therefore the shop front should relate to the architectural character of the upper floors in respect of proportion, scale and alignment.

- The relationship of the shop front to the adjoining buildings

Buildings and shop fronts relate to adjoining buildings and therefore the starting point for the design of a shop front must be its architectural context. Shop fronts should respect the scale and proportions of the streetscape and the established pattern of openings.

- The Shop front Framework

A strong framework for the shop front should be provided, including an appropriately scaled and detailed fascia panel, pilasters and a well defined base.

- Materials

The materials used in the shop front should be of a high quality and durable to avoid long term maintenance problems. Materials such as stone, timber and glass will be favoured over materials such as plastics, reconstituted stone and aluminium. Commercial interests should note that the use of specific materials or colours / colour schemes to project a corporate image will not be favourably

considered - and that the streetscape scene will in all instances take precedence over uniformity between branches of a company.

- Signage

Signage for the proposed shop front should form an integral part of the overall design for the shop front and should be restricted to the fascia. Commercial interests should note that the use of a corporate image including advertising and signage will not be favourably considered - and that the streetscape scene will in all instances take precedence over uniformity between branches of a company.

The signage relating to any commercial ground floor use should be contained within the fascia board of the shop front. The lettering employed should either be painted on the fascia, or consist of individually mounted solid letters mounted on the fascia. The size of lettering used should be in proportion to the depth of the fascia board.

- Security Systems

The use of roller shutters or grilles will be severely restricted and will not generally be permitted. In choosing a security system retailers should consider the use of alternative options including the use of laminated and toughened glass.

When they are permitted (only in proven exceptional circumstances), they should be located behind the window display area. In any instance, the shutter should be positioned in such a way that no part of the shutter or the casing extends beyond the face of the building. The colour of the shutter should match the colour of the shop front.

- Access for the Disabled

In accordance with the City Council's policy of providing a fully accessible environment for everybody, access for people with disabilities, the elderly and the very young should be incorporated into the design of the shopfront.

- Retention of Access to Upper Floors

In order to ensure a diversity of land uses on our streets and ensure an intensity of use at upper floors level, the removal of separate access to the upper floors will not be acceptable.

**NOTE: Any person proposing to install a new shopfront is advised to consult the Shopfront Design Guidelines<sup>8</sup> 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.**

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<sup>8</sup> Shopfront Design Guidelines – Planning Department – Dublin City Council

#### **4 (ii) Advertisement Structures**

Throughout the South City Retail Quarter Architectural Conservation Area, advertisement structures have been mounted or erected on buildings to advertise either the ground floor or upper floor uses or to advertise a separate business or product. In many instances, these advertisement structures are out of keeping with the architectural character of the area and detract from the buildings. The unsuitability of these structures is generally related to the inappropriate location, scale and proportions of the advertisement structures together with the extensive use of unsympathetic materials and illumination. In order to encourage the use of an appropriate range of signs and advertisement structures, the following guidelines will be used to assess future proposals for advertisement structures:

- (a) Lettering or logos should not be affixed directly to the glazing of any shop or business windows. All sign displays inside the shop should be kept back a minimum distance of 500 mm from the glazing. Any signs, posters, lettering, logos or other devices placed so as to be for the purpose of advertisement through such windows should be mounted and should not exceed 25% of the total area of the window through which they are displayed, or 25% of the glazed area between 1 metres and 2.5 metres above ground level.
- (b) Advertisements and signs relating to uses above ground floor level should generally be provided at the entrance to the upper floors, in a form and design which does not detract from or impinge upon the integrity of the ground floor shop fronts, or other original elevational features of the building. The provision of lettering on upper floor windows for the upper floor uses should not exceed 25 % of the glazed area (measured as a rectangle enclosing all letters), and shall not, in any event, predominate over the appearance of the aperture as a window when viewed from the street. No other advertising signs or structures will be permitted above ground floor level in the Architectural Conservation Area.
- (c) The colours used on any advertising structures or signs will be required to respect the prevalence of tertiary colours established by the building materials on the buildings in the area. Therefore substantial areas of bright or garish primary or secondary colours will not be allowed as the background of any sign. More prominent colours may be used in individual lettering on signage.

- (d) The typeface used for lettering on any signage should take account of the dominant architectural style of each street. Acceptable types would allow for varying degrees of ornamentation and detailing within a generally refined and regular context. Therefore the use of either freeform script inspired type, or oversize and purely functional block types will not normally be permitted.
- (e) Internally illuminated signs, illuminated scrolling signs or signs using exposed neon tubing will not be permitted. Externally illuminated or backlit opaque lettering will be preferred.
- (f) No amplified announcements, music or other material should be played from any premises to advertise goods or services, and no loudspeakers or other amplification apparatus should be affixed on or about the front of any premises for such a purpose. Any such sounds within the premises should be controlled so as to be inaudible from adjoining premises or at 2 metres from the frontage.
- (g) Goods or advertising structures should not be displayed on the public footpath or at the entrance to the shop.
- (h) Projecting signs will not generally be permitted, as a profusion of such signs in a confined area can lead to visual clutter in the streetscape. Positive consideration may be given to the use of a new projecting sign if a building is in multiple use and occupancy, and the proposed sign would lead to a significant overall reduction in the number and scale of advertisement structures on or projecting from the face of the building. Where positive consideration is being given, the following guidelines should be observed:
- Not more than one projecting sign should be displayed on a building.
  - Signs should not be fixed directly to the face of a building but should be fixed by means of a bracket.
  - Signs should depict a pictorial feature or symbol illustrating the trade or business being undertaken and should be as transparent as possible
  - Signs should be individually designed to complement the scale and design of the building.
  - Signs should not obscure important features of a building or adjacent buildings.

It should be noted that not every frontage may be suitable for such signs, even if present on nearby facades. The merits of each case will be considered individually.

## **5. Public Authority Works**

### **Footpaths/Pedestrian Linkages/Incidental Spaces**

- It is an objective to carry out a programme of street improvement schemes that will upgrade in an co-ordinated manner the existing network of streets, footpaths, pedestrian linkages and incidental spaces throughout and leading into the ACA.

### **Public Spaces**

- It is an objective to define and develop a network of small to medium scale public spaces throughout the Architectural Conservation Area.

### **Pedestrian Linkages**

- It is an objective to develop new pedestrian linkages within the ACA and with adjacent areas in order to increase levels of pedestrian movement. It is a specific objective to create a new pedestrian link that will connect George's Street to Grafton Street via Fade Street, South William Street and Clarendon Street and Harry Street.

## **6. Street Furniture**

- It is an objective to take an integrated approach to the provision of street furniture. A range of high quality street furniture modern in design and simple in form and materials, compatible with the overall character of the area and the proposed street improvement works, will be provided to enliven both the pavements and the median.
- It is an objective to ensure that the provision/erection of all outdoor furniture by private operators and in particular for pavement cafes will be of a high quality. The location and quality of such furniture will be regulated under Licensing under Section 254 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 – 2006.

(Note: Sandwich Boards will not be permitted under any circumstances anywhere within the South City Retail Quarter Architectural Conservation Area).



## **7. Commercial Signage**

- It is an objective that commercial street signage (including finger post signs) in the Architectural Conservation Area be restricted to a limited number of locations where it is either associated with public information signage or is designed into elements of street furniture strictly controlled by the local Authority.