



Malahide Public Realm Strategy **Design Guide For Shopfronts**



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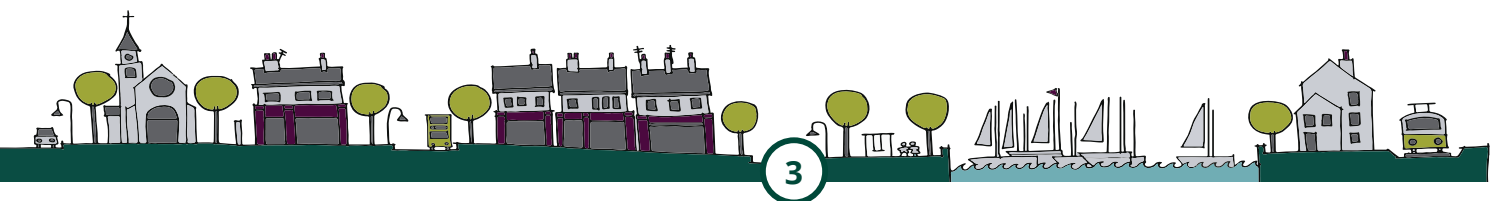
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The Design Guide for Shopfronts is the product of active community participation and consultation through the Malahide Public Realm Strategy. Its success to date and continued success through the implementation phase is a reflection of the extensive collaboration within the Council and between the Council and a wide spectrum of public and private community stakeholders.

Our sincere thanks is expressed to those who participated in the preparation of the Design Guide, in particular Malahide Chamber of Commerce, Tidy towns, and Colortrend.



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INTRODUCTION

The attractiveness of a town centre relates to the interaction of a combination of factors, from its retail/service offer, to features such as historic buildings, civic buildings, the spaces within it, as well as general amenity, appearance and safety. During the public consultation and participation process for the Malahide Public Realm Strategy (2014), streetscape was identified as one of the elements that is a priority for the improvement of the public realm within Malahide. Consequently this shopfront design guide is one of the key steps in the further implementation of the Malahide Public Realm Strategy.

Shopfront design has a significant influence on the character of the public realm and the attractiveness of an area as a retail destination. This document will look at what makes the shopfronts in Malahide unique and how traditional and contemporary shopfront design can continue to make Malahide attractive as a retail destination.

Purpose of the Design Guide

The purpose of the Shopfront Design Guide is to further enhance the public realm in Malahide through informing retailers, designers and related organisations how to identify and then implement the outlined principals of good shopfront design. The front of a shop, including its associated signage, is the public face of that premises. Poor quality shopfronts can seriously erode the character of a streetscape, be visually intrusive and affect the retail success of the shop. This document will examine the prevailing Malahide style, look at the key elements of an attractive shopfront, and include a checklist of items to consider if you as a shop owner are looking to improve your shopfront.

For the purpose of this guide, the term 'shopfront' includes all ground floor premises with a fascia and/or display window including non-retail uses such as cafés, restaurants, public houses, banks, building societies, estate agents, etc. Information is also included in relation to first floor premises.

Malahide town centre is within a designated Architectural Conservation Area (ACA). ACA's are areas of special architectural, historical, archaeology, artistic, cultural, scientific, social, technical value, or areas that are important to the enhancement of a Protected Structure. Shopfront design and how it impacts on the character of the street is a key consideration in the assessment of shopfront development.

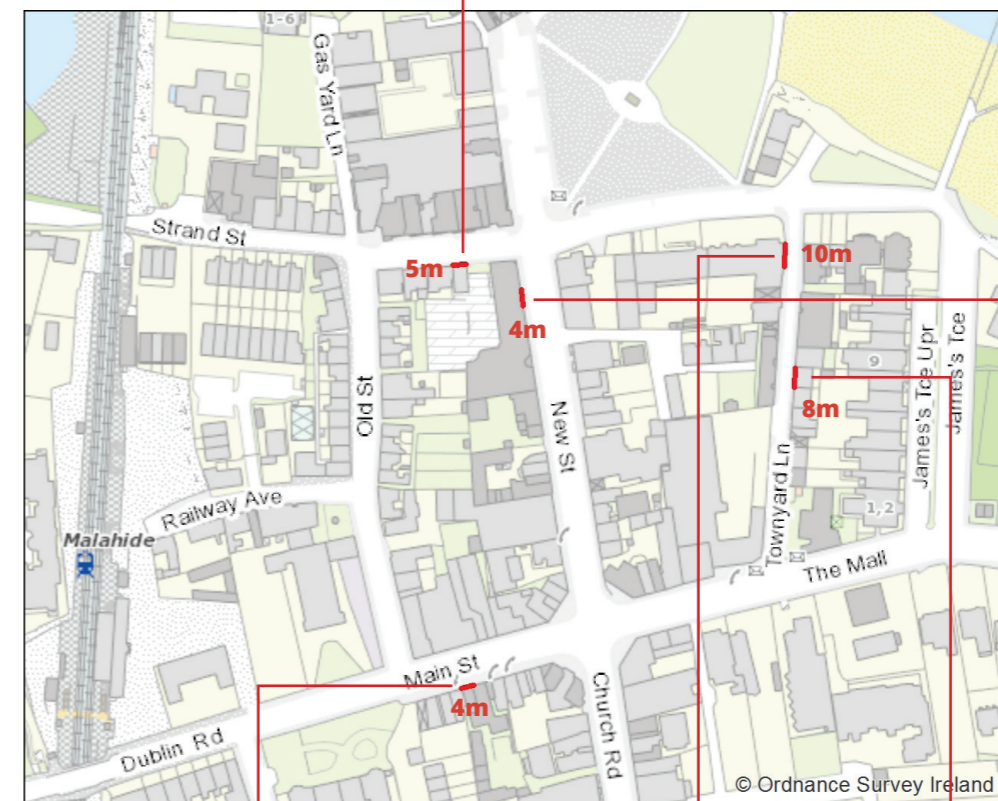
While this guide focuses on and illustrates shopfronts of Malahide, the outlined principles are equally applicable to shopfronts throughout Fingal.

MALAHIDE CHARACTER

Urban Grain/Building Widths

Malahide's town centre has evolved historically with a tight urban grain and small plot sizes / narrow building frontage. Traditional building widths throughout the town range on average from 3 - 8m. Some of the traditional plots have been amalgamated. Where shopfronts have been amalgamated, they have generally been undertaken in such a way as to reflect the traditional smaller plots in their design. New development within the town should continue to enhance and complement the traditional grain through renovation of existing façades/façade design, with variations in the façade composition / amalgamation echoing the historical pattern.

Urban Grain



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The survival of the historic urban grain in Malahide contributes to the traditional and coherent structure of the town. This is one of the reasons why Malahide has developed as a successful destination centre with a large number of independent quality boutiques, restaurants, cafe's and bars, alongside a busy marina and waterfront.



GUIDING DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

All shopfront design, whether it be modern or traditional, should consider the streetscape, the building itself and the design detail of the shop unit.



The Streetscape

It is important to be aware of the street's character and to consider the effect the design might have on the streetscape. Shopfronts should reflect the historic urban grain, building widths and contribute to good design and traditional character of the village.



The Building

It is important to consider the effect the shopfront might have on the building itself, as well as the adjoining buildings and shopfronts. Good shopfront design should be sensitive to the character of the building, particularly where it is within the ACA, and maintain its traditional frontage. It is important to maintain a vertical emphasis, and have a relationship with the first floor opes/window alignments and proportions. Sizing and colour of signage/fascia relative to the wall of the shop is also important



The Detail

The design details of the shopfront are of high importance. Ornaments, windows, door detail and associated colours provide a visual interest and should be maintained. The colour of the shopfront should be carefully considered and should enhance the building as well as the streetscape.



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ESSENTIAL SHOPFRONT ELEMENTS

The basic structure of a shopfront comprises the following elements:

Fascia/Nameboard

This is the area at the top of the shopfront which traditionally comprises the shop name and number. The proportion of the fascia relative to the shopfront is extremely important. Normally, fascia depth should not exceed one quarter of the distance between the fascia's lower edge and the pavement.

Pilasters

Vertical elements at either end of the shopfront which sit slightly forward of the shopfront and serve to separate adjoining shopfronts.

Stallriser

Solid horizontal section beneath the bottom of the window and the ground, approx. 30-60cm in height. Where timber stallrisers or pilasters are used, a small recessed stone plinth should be provided, to prevent windows being affected by splashing and road dirt.

Plinth

The support base for the shopfront. A stone plinth helps protect the shopfront from rain splashes, dirt etc.

Each of these elements forms the building blocks of a successful and attractive shopfront which contributes to the public realm and attracts/entices the shopper in. The omission of any of the above elements will only be considered where a strong design rationale is presented and exceptional quality in terms of materials and detailing is presented.

It is an objective of Fingal County Council, under Objective AH26 of the Fingal Development Plan 2011 - 2017 to

'Promote the sympathetic maintenance, adaption and re-use of the historic building stock and encourage the retention of the original fabric such as windows, doors, wall renders, roof coverings, shopfronts, pub fronts and other significant features of historic buildings, whether protected or not'.

When examining existing shopfronts, retailers will need to decide whether the existing shopfront should be maintained, particularly where the shopfront is located within the Malahide Historic Core Architectural Conservation Area (See Map 1 pg 21) and/or is part of a protected structure. It is the Council's preference that traditional shopfronts should be repaired rather than replaced, with materials matching the original. The removal of existing traditional shopfronts will only be considered in exceptional cases. A balance must be achieved between the commercial requirements of an owner/retailer and the protection of the shopfronts within the Architectural Conservation Area.

When considering contemporary shopfronts, the shop owner should consider the shop in the context of the street, the building overhead and the adjoining buildings/shopfronts. The framework of the contemporary shopfront should include the essential shopfront elements of fascia, pilasters and stallriser/base. Alternative materials such as stainless steel, stone and polished aluminium will be considered. The success of the framework to the shop in a contemporary design will depend on the detailing of the shopfront and quality of materials. The omission of a stallriser is sometimes proposed within contemporary shopfront designs – this will only be considered where the detail and quality of materials used, both internally and externally, is to a high standard.



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EXISTING STREETScape 2014



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Projecting signage is not encouraged for reasons of visual clutter



Signage, lighting & other elements to be kept to a minimum

Plinths to be included in contemporary shopfront design



Wiring should not be visible

Canopies at first floor are inappropriate

Traditional sash windows maintained

Maintenance of traditional fascia preferable

Vertical emphasis and design detail contribute to the building.

Avoid large scale signage at first floor level



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VARIOUS SHOPFRONT DETAILS

Materials

- The traditional shopfront generally comprises wood and plaster. Contemporary shopfront materials of, for example, stone, stainless steel and aluminium may be considered appropriate subject to their context and detailed design. Impact of contemporary designs on the Malahide ACA will be carefully considered.
- Use of plastic, acrylic, or other shiny material on a shopfront, particularly relating to the fascia, will not be permitted.
- The colour and texture of materials chosen, whether traditional or contemporary should consider the building overhead, adjoining buildings and streetscape.
- Replacement of traditional window materials with PVC is not considered appropriate.
- Downpipes and rainwater goods can affect the overall character of a shopfront. Where these are to be replaced within the Malahide ACA, they should be replaced with traditional cast iron types.



Colour

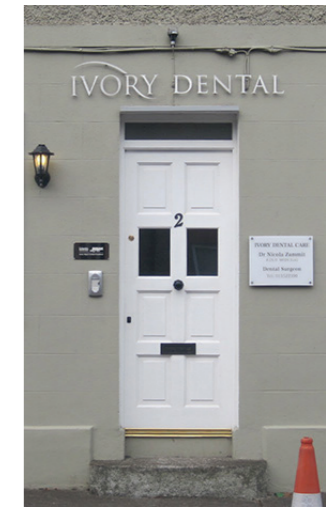
In general colours should respect the palette of the street and should not be garish or discordant with adjacent fascias. Malahide traditionally comprises buildings of muted colours. A study of the colours utilised in Malahide has been undertaken, resulting in the Malahide Colour Scheme, whereby the community in conjunction with the company Colortrend have committed to a suite of colours suitable for the Malahide Area. The Council encourages retailers to utilise this colour palette, or equivalent when undertaking any shopfront improvements.

Malahide Colour Scheme



Fascia/Nameboard

- The depth/overall height of the fascia panel is important to the successful design of a shopfront. Overly deep fascias seriously detract from a shopfront and affect the character of a streetscape. Fascia depth should generally not exceed one quarter of the distance between the fascia's lower edge and the pavement.
- The fascia panel should generally only contain the name of the shop and number. Plastic fascias or projecting box signs attached to a traditional fascia will generally not be permitted.
- The shop name should be hand painted onto the fascia or comprise individually mounted lettering. Letter design should be simple and legible and in proportion to the fascia. Lettering should generally be no more than 40cm high. The material for the lettering should take its guidance from the shopfront design.
- Retailers are encouraged to include their shop number on the fascia panel.
- A single fascia should not be used to link 2 adjoining visually distinct buildings.
- Signage for businesses located within the upper floor units should be modest. Discrete nameplates at entrances are considered acceptable and/or modest lettering on the inside of windows at the upper floor level.
- Large upper floor signage related to a ground floor unit will not be permitted.
- Where a traditional shopfront to a business is not appropriate, discrete individually marked letters onto the façade of the building will be considered.



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Canopies & Awnings

- Modern style awnings to the front of commercial premises will not normally be considered to be in keeping with the retention of character within the Malahide Historic Core ACA.
- Where a canopy is required for protection from the weather, a traditional open ended retractable blind may be considered acceptable, where the blind box is recessed.



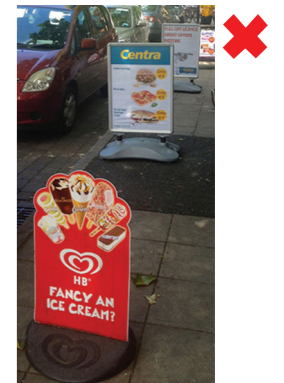
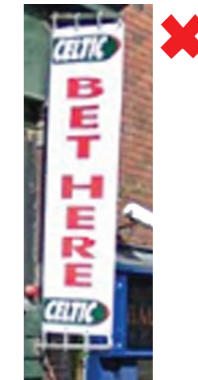
Window and Entrances

- Window shape, proportions & glazing bars should take reference from the building overhead. A vertical emphasis should be maintained in window design. Shopfronts with a strong horizontal emphasis can disrupt the harmony of a street.
- Where an expansion of a shop is considered, it is important that clear vertical distinction between distinct buildings is maintained.
- New shops or a combination of adjoining shopfronts should never obscure architectural details of the original building such as sills, stringcourses, or windows
- The use of film/advertisements/screens or digital screens that obscure the glazed area of a shopfront window will be discouraged. Where stickers are used these should be kept to a minimum in favour of creating an attractive display of goods and avoidance of a sense of dead frontage on a streetscape.
- Access to the upper floors of a building is generally via a separate entrance door adjoining the shopfront. In order to support the diversity of uses in the long term within a building, the removal of these independent accesses will normally not be permitted.



Projecting Signs & Free Standing Signs

- Projecting signs from shopfronts generally contribute to visual clutter along the street and will not normally be permitted.
- Free standing signs also contribute to clutter along the street and will not normally be permitted.



Murals

Addition of murals to a building requires planning permission. Such proposals will be considered carefully within the context of the Malahide ACA. Any impact of such a proposal on the character of the streetscape is paramount.

Corporate Signs & Generic Branding

- Corporate logos, lighting, designs and colours may not be appropriate in all locations. Corporate proposals must be compatible with the character of the building, the shopfront and colour scheme relating to the street (see Malahide Colour Scheme).
- The use of window areas for corporate branding/logos, advertisements or placement of digital screens is not considered appropriate.



Lighting

- Illumination should be discrete and restricted, where allowed, to backlighting of the individual letters or by concealed neon tubing. Spotlights will only be considered where they are discreet, the arm length short and hoods treated to match the background colour.



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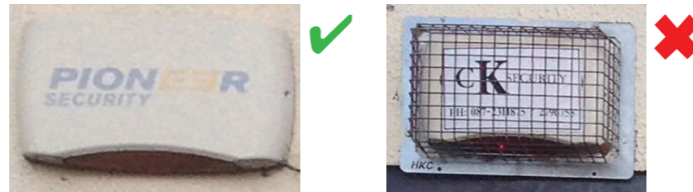
Security and Grilles

- The night time appearance of the street is important. Careful management of security shutters is required. The provision of external roller shutters is not acceptable to either new or existing shopfronts. Mesh type security shutters should be positioned behind the window glazing in the interest of visual amenity. Planning Permission is required for external security shutters.
- The shutter box associated with a security grille should be concealed behind the fascia of a shopfront.



Alarms

- Alarm boxes and wiring should be located carefully on the façade of a building so as not to detract from a shopfront.
- Redundant cabling, security boxes and electronic equipment should be removed from shopfronts and buildings.



Street Furniture

- Provision of street furniture of tables and chairs on public footpaths must be licensed by the Planning Authority under Section 254 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).
- Such seating areas should not obstruct ease of movement by pedestrians, specifically the disabled and those using prams.
- Barriers around such seating areas should be lightweight and easily demountable and should not exceed 1m in height. Canvas is considered a suitable material, while plastic or glass is considered inappropriate.
- Use of fixed enclosed barriers with canopies can result in an overly enclosed feeling within a streetscape and should be avoided.



Access for the Disabled

Shopfronts should be designed to cater for the mobility impaired and those with prams/pushchairs. Shopfronts must comply with part M of the Building Regulations. Level access should be provided where possible. Shop entrances should be legible for the visually impaired, through measures such as use of colour contrasting.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

If you are looking to alter/upgrade the design of your shopfront you are advised to consult with the Fingal County Council Area Planner.

In general, permission is required for the following works:

- New shopfront or significant alteration of an existing shopfront
- Works to a shopfront that is within the Malahide Historic Core ACA (Architectural Conservation Area) and/or forms part of a protected structure.
- Erection of banners, flags and most advertisements - see Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), Schedule 2, Part 2 for exemptions in relation to signage
- New signage.
- Hanging signs.
- External security shutters.
- Installation of canopies.
- Lighting fixtures.
- Murals
- Some changes of use.
- A licence under Section 254 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) is required in relation to free standing street furniture erected on the footpaths outside of a premises.

Shopfront Checklist

Where formal clarification is required as to whether certain works require permission, a Section 5 Exemption Certificate under the Planning & Development Acts can be sought or, in the case of a Protected Structure, a Section 57 Declaration.

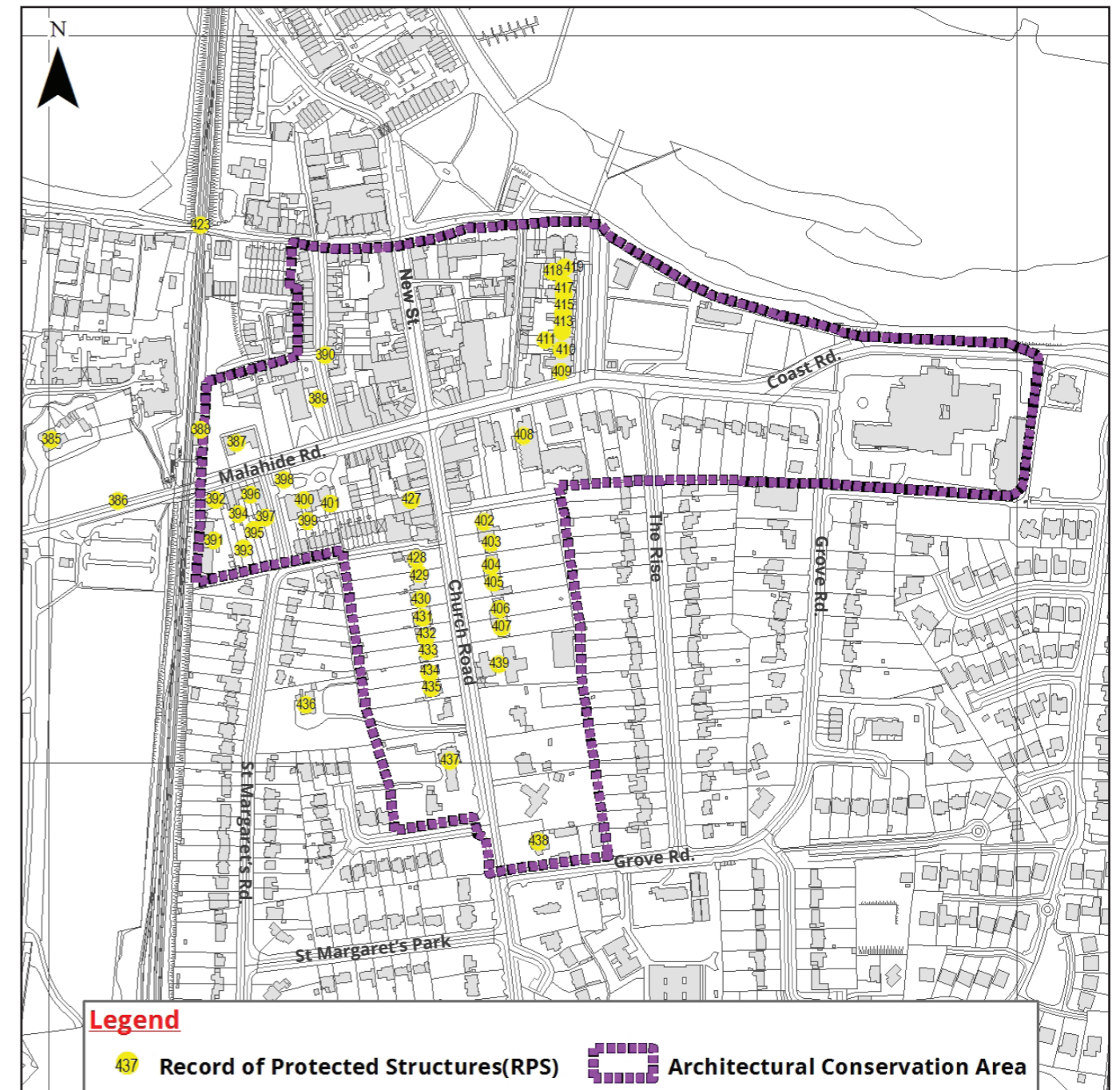
- Check if the building is located within Malahide ACA and/or is a Protected Structure. If this is the case, conservation and enhancement of shopfronts instead of replacement is generally recommended.



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- Retain traditional elements of the shopfront where possible, such as fascia, pilaster, stall riser, windows, doors, wall renders and other significant features of historic buildings, whether protected or not.
- Refer to the 'Malahide Colour Scheme'.
- Shop entrances should be accessible to all, including people with disabilities and those with prams/pushchairs. Proposals should be in compliance with the relevant Building Regulations.
- Ensure that corporate logos, lighting, designs and colours are not used at the expense of the streetscape.
- Consider shopfront proportions and materials relative to the building overhead and the rest of the street.
- Consider fascia proportion and fascia signage – hand painted signage or individually mounted lettering is preferable.
- Projecting signs, banners and sandwich boards clutter a streetscape and should be avoided.
- Canopies should be incorporated within the design of the shopfront with the blind box recessed.
- Security shutters if required should be located behind the shopfront display and should be see through in all cases. External security shutters should be avoided.
- Prevent the use of film or screening that obscures the glazed area of a shopfront window.
- No amplified music or other sound should be broadcast from any premises. Any such sounds within a premises should be controlled so as to be inaudible from adjoining premises or at 2 metres from the frontage.

MAP 1 : Malahide Historic Core Architectural Conservation Area and Protected Structures



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