

Louth County Council

Planning Report

Planning Ref: 26/60468

Applicant's Name: Ahmad Haroon Chakari

Site Notice: Yes

Type of Application: Retention Permission

Site Location: 34 Market Street, Ardee, Co. Louth

Description: Retention permission of signage to shopfront of existing premises and all associated site development works.

Report Date: 26th August 2026

File Due Date: 8th September 2026

Part 1 – Overview

1. Introduction

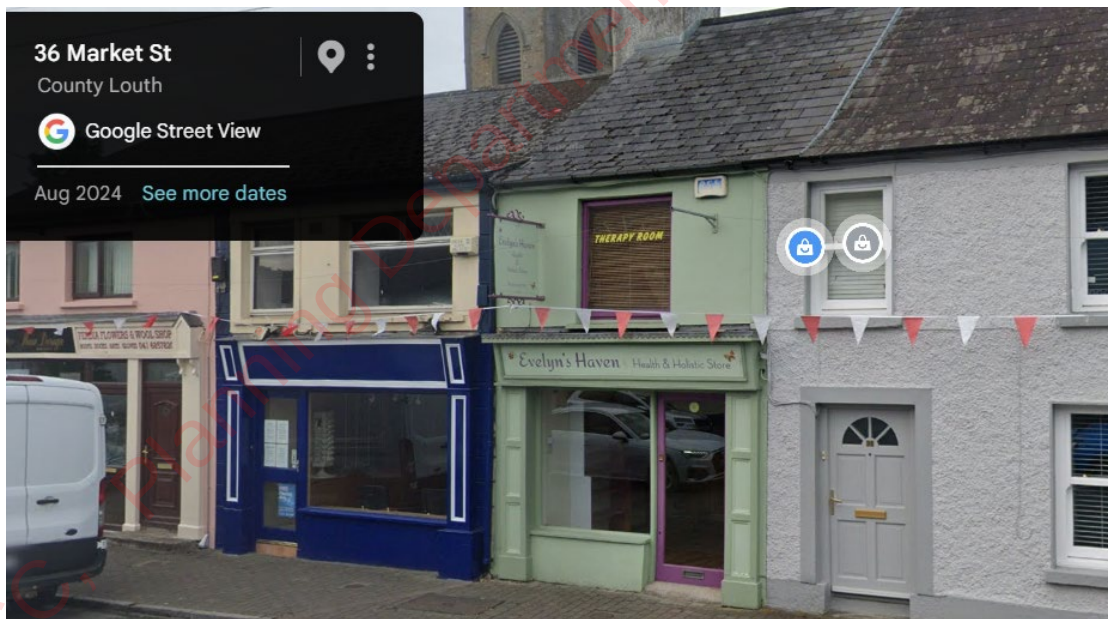
Permission is sought for the retention of signage erected to the premises at 34 Market Street in Ardee.

2. Site Location and Description

The premises consist of a vape/mobile phone accessory shop located along Market Street nestled between an existing residential dwelling and an optician.



Above: Property subject of application as of 14th August 2026



Above: proposed subject of application in August 2024.

3. Site history

Planning Authority reference no. 00/863 - Alterations to Front Elevation of existing building, demolition and replacement of existing rear extension to 34 Market Street – GRANTED

The premises prior to its current use appears (as per google streetview from 2009 to 2024) to have operated as a health shop and before this a mortgage business.

4. Pre-Planning consultations

None.

5. Relevant Planning Policies

National Policy Documents

- National Planning Framework (NPF) First Revision April 2025;
- National Development Plan 2021 - 2030
- The Planning System and Flood Risk Management (2009);
- Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment, August 2018;
- Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, 1999.

Town Centre First – A Policy Approach for Irish Towns (245022)

The Town Centre First Policy was published on 3rd February 2022. This policy approach acknowledges the need to reverse the pattern of stagnation and decline of towns, which may require the identification and establishment of new roles and functions, and a greater emphasis on services, hospitality and social interaction as a draw for town centres. 'Experience-led retailing' is explained in this document, referring to "a blend of retail services (including food and drink), leisure, entertainment and cultural uses". Traditional town centres are stated to be in an optimal position to take advantage of the shift towards blended, experience-led retailing.

Local Policy

Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027, as varied (hereinafter referred to as the LCDP) is the operative plan for the area. The site is located on land

zoned 'B1 Town or Village Centre' where it is an objective "To support the development, improvement and expansion of town or village centre activities".

LCDP Policy:

Carlingford is designated as a Self-Sustaining Growth Town in the LCDP.

Chapter 5 – Economy and Employment - signage

Chapter 8 – Appropriate Assessment

Chapter 9 – Architectural Conservation Area, Protected Structures, Monuments

Chapter 13 – Development Management Guidelines

Volume 2 of LCDP

Ardee Policies

Volume 3, Appendix 11 – Louth Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs)

Appendix 12 – Ardee ACA

Louth Shopfront Design Guidelines (LSDG)

The shopfront has pilasters, stall riser, plinth, fascia and cornice all painted a light green to match the wall paint and over the fascia a white timber painted panel attached to the fascia with 3d/projecting plastic lettering and symbol referencing the shop name 'Multi Store' coloured blue and white. Above the upper floor window are 2 protruding lights and over the shop sign is a projecting sign with the store name.

Below: extract from the LSDG

- FASCIA - The function of the fascia panel is to carry the shop name and street number. Fascia panels should be of a depth appropriate to the size of the building and the proportion and length of the shopfront. (Normally, fascia depth should not exceed a quarter of the distance



between the fascia's lower edge and the pavement.) A single fascia should not be used to link buildings of different architectural identities. The lettering should always be in scale with the fascia panel.

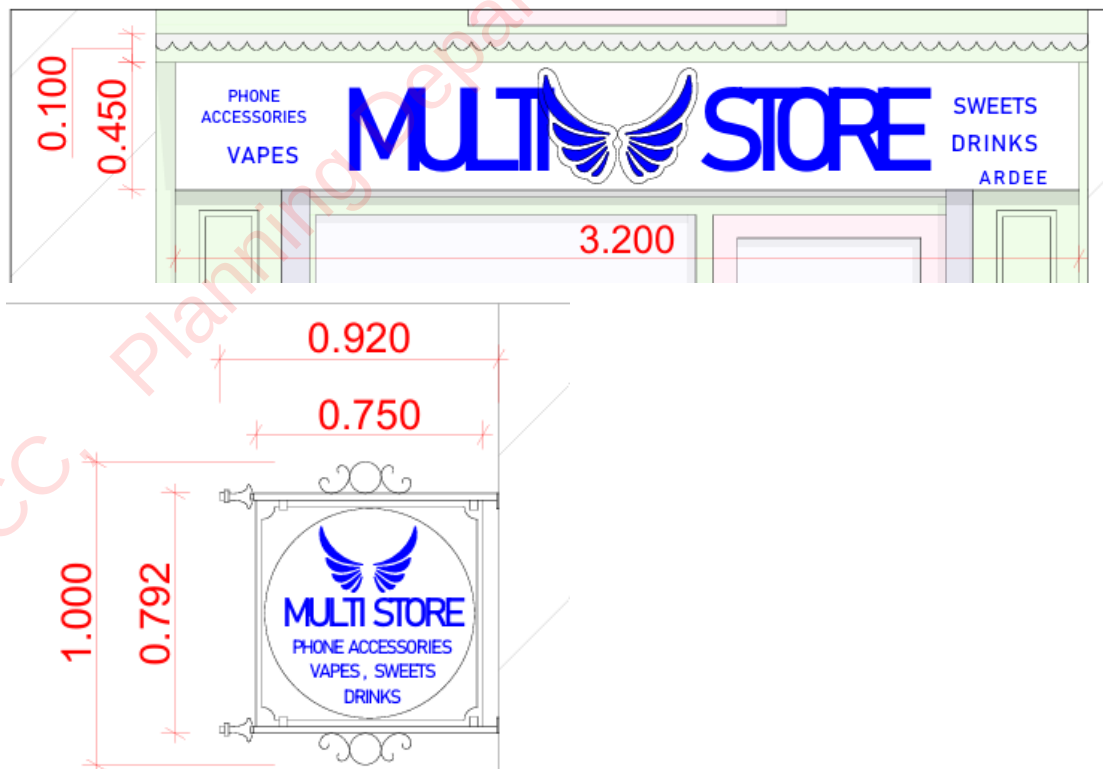
Letter design should be simple and legible. The dimensions of the fascia should dictate the size and height of the letters. Letters of more than 40cm will not normally be acceptable. The material for the letters should complement the materials in the shopfront. These may include:

- Incised, painted or gilded
- Back-painted or gilded onto a glass fascia
- Anodised-metal letters fixed individually and directly onto the facade proportionate to the depth of the fascia board.



6. Overview of Proposed Development

Permission is sought for the retention of signage attached to the shopfront fascia. The existing signage is a separate panel timber panel affixed to the original shopfront fascia with 3d style projecting lettering to spell out the business name with other detail printed on. A smaller projecting sign is located above the shopfront extending out over the street.



7. Submissions/Observations

No submissions received within the statutory timeframe.

8. Statutory Consultees

None undertaken

9. Internal Referrals

None undertaken

Part 2

Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment

10. EIA Screening and Determination

Having regard to the limited nature and scale of the development and the absence of any connectivity to any sensitive location, there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the development. The need for environmental impact assessment can, therefore, be excluded at preliminary examination and a screening determination is not required.

11. Appropriate Assessment

Having regard to the nature and scale of the development and the nature of the receiving environment, no appropriate assessment issues arise and it is not considered that the development would be likely to have a significant effect individually or in combination with other plans or projects on a European site (Special Area of Conservation or Special Protected Area) and as such an Appropriate Assessment (Stage 2 AA) is not required.

Part 3 – Planning Assessment

12. Principle of Development

Permission relates to shopfront signage to advertise an existing business in retail use selling vapes, mobile phone accessories and snacks such as soft

drinks, crisps and sweets. Prior to the current use, the premises was in use as a health shop for a number of years and before that as a Permanent TSB mortgage hub/office. The site is located on land zoned 'B1 Town or Village Centre' where it is an objective *"to support the development, improvement and expansion of town or village centre activities"*. Retail is a use that is considered 'generally acceptable' within land zoned B1 Town Centre and in principle shop signage to advertise a retail premises would be acceptable.

13. Design and Material Finish

Shopfront signage

The Ardee ACA character appraisal at section 7.3.7 states that (new) *signage should of appropriate design to complement or enhance the structure and should not be overtly dominant on the streetscape.*

The signage that is in place and affixed to the existing shop fascia is not considered suitable, proportionate nor appropriate for this building, its character nor respectful of the building's location within an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA). As per the Shopfront Design Guidelines, lettering should always be in scale with the fascia. It is considered that affixed panel and the 3d projecting lettering is out of character. A more appropriate solution would have been the hand painting of the store name onto the original fascia which is underneath as done in the past. As presented, the fascia signage materially affects the character of this building and the ACA and is not acceptable.

Hanging/projecting Signage and extending lights from façade at 1st floor level

It is noted that the single projecting signage frame above the fascia has been in place for a considerable number of years and advertised the former business that occupied this property. Whilst not described on the proposal description, it is noted that there are 2 projecting lights extending from the 1st floor front façade of the building over the signs. These are new and were not present when the building was in use by the previous occupiers/retailers (Google Street View August 2024). Whilst this single projecting sign may be considered acceptable in an otherwise suitable proposal, when taken together with the inappropriate fascia signage and the 2 extending lights either side of the 1st floor front window,

it all causes visual clutter on the building and materially harms the character of the building and negatively impacts on the character of the ACA.



Above: Image (14th August 2026) showing the existing shop fascia, single projecting sign and 2 new projecting lights.

It is the policy of the LCDP BHC 31 *to require that all development proposals within or affecting an Architectural Conservation Area preserve or enhance the character and appearance of that area, protect architectural features of special interest and ensure that the design respects the character of the historic architecture in terms of height, scale, layout and materials. All development proposals shall have regard to the Architectural Conservation Area objectives in Appendix 11, Volume 3 and objectives contained in applicable Character Appraisals where applicable.* Having regard to the development carried out at 34 Market Street, Ardee, the works are considered contrary to the objective of BHC 31.

14. Residential Amenity

This is an application for signage which would not interfere with the residential amenities of surrounding properties.

15. Traffic and Transportation Considerations

The proposed signage would not create any concerns pertaining to road safety or pedestrian safety.

16. Environmental Considerations

None – application relates to signage only.

17. Development Contributions

Not applicable. This application is for signage only.

Part 4 Conclusion and Recommendation

18. Conclusion

The proposed signage including the fascia signage and single projecting signage is not considered acceptable in this ACA in terms of proportions, and materials and along with the projecting lights causes visual clutter in this ACA and streetscape and in its current form is not respectful of the character of the ACA, contrary to the policy objectives of BHC 31 and should be refused.

Recommendation

It is recommended that permission is **REFUSED** for the following reason:

Refusal Reason

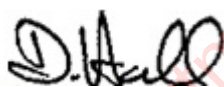
1. The subject shop front fascia signage including its proportions, design and material finish results in an overtly dominant advertising feature in this Architectural Conservation Area. The additional projecting signage and two projecting lights at the front façade of the premises results in visual clutter

and along with the fascia signage has an adverse impact on the visual amenities of this streetscape and the Ardee Architectural Conservation Area.

To grant permission for the retention of these works would be detrimental to the visual amenities of Market Street and would be contrary to policy objective BHC 31 of the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027, as varied, which seeks to require that all development proposals within or affecting an Architectural Conservation Area preserve or enhance the character and appearance of that area, protect architectural features of special interest and ensure that the design respects the character of the historic architecture in terms of height, scale, layout and materials, would set an undesirable precedent for further such development and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.



Lisa Grant
Assistant Planner
Date: 26/08/2026



David Hall
A/Senior Executive Planner
Date: 26/08/2026



Thomas McEvoy
Director of Services
Date: 28/08/2026