

DOUGLAS WALLACE ADDS THE SPARKLE FOR FRED J MALCOLM'S

(July 2008) Douglas Wallace, the leading Irish specialists in the creation and design of retail and leisure projects, has completed the extension and interior styling of diamond merchant Fred J Malcolm's Chichester St. store in Belfast.

The extension and refurbishment of the Fred J Malcolm listed Edwardian building was undertaken by Douglas Wallace in a two stage process. This allowed the store to remain open for business in a temporary first floor sales area whilst the ground floor extension was completed. The resulting sales space has provided Fred J Malcolm with a retail premises to reflect the quality of the product on offer.

Douglas Wallace has designed the new shop interior in a modern yet timeless style with quality materials such as a bespoke axminster carpet throughout. A mix of natural oak panelling and ebony stained furniture compliment the traditional detailing. One of the original features of the Fred J Malcolm store was that passers by were never able to see directly into the shop through the window. This feature has been retained when designing the new shop window, which displays "that one special piece" of jewellery in a large cut mirror display cabinet. This is flanked by luxurious full height sheer curtains obscuring a clear view of the store interior.

Visitors to the Fred J Malcolm's store are now greeted with a new entrance lobby, with full-height draped walls, before being lead through to the main store by a member of staff. Many of the original features have been retained and refurbished including the fireplace, walk-in safe, large chandeliers and existing display counters. The new shop space now presents clientele with a variety of different displays to peruse, in spacious surroundings. The restored fireplace is now a backdrop to a comfortable sitting area for customers.

Douglas Wallace has added new illuminated ceiling coffers which enhance the overall sense of space throughout the new interior. Two new private rooms were also created, providing the store with a more exclusive area to show engagement and wedding rings. These rooms feature classic pieces of furniture in a surrounding of silk drapes combined with painted panel work and traditional radiators, creating intimate and luxurious surroundings for shoppers' special occasion purchases. The store design also incorporates offices, storage and a wrapping area, discreetly hidden from customers view.

The Douglas Wallace design team included Kelly Blick, Caroline Crowe, Sharon Jenkins and John Caithness. Project co-ordinator for Douglas Wallace Susan Stewart commented: "It was very important to retain the heritage and atmosphere of the original store in the redevelopment of Fred J Malcolm's, while also creating a store interior which reflects the quality of the product inside. The project needed

to appeal to both new and well-established customers of the store, and the new retail space fuses the traditional with the contemporary resulting in a timeless design solution.”

Neil Watt of Fred J Malcolm’s adds: “Meeting the practical needs of a modern business while working within the constraints of a listed Edwardian building and maintaining our existing ambiance was always going to be challenging. Douglas Wallace exceeded all our expectations and produced an interior that was both exceptionally luxurious while meeting all our day to day requirements.”

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