

in the former Wacky Shoes shop in the heart of O'Connell Street, which closed last year. Renovation work is currently

struggling to get a tenant. But its disappointing another food outlet is going in there. We have plenty." The silver lining, Ms O'Donnell

Wacky Shoes closed in early 2017 after 20 years trading. Its manager Peter Phelan said it represented a "sign of changing

becomes more businesses at the outskirts. The Shack



Kilcormack climber Ger McDonnell died 10 years ago, this August, on K2. He is pictured here after becoming the first Irish person to reach the summit of the deadly mountain. Now, a plaque has been erected at K2 base camp

# Plaque in honour of climber placed on K2

## K2: Man inspired by Ger McDonnell hopes to reach top

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A PLAQUE honouring the Limerick climber Ger McDonnell, who died on K2 a decade ago, has been erected at the mountain's base camp.

The memorial was placed by a Donegal man who hopes to become the second Irish man to reach the summit: Jason Black.

The Irish Red Cross ambassador has just reached K2 base camp in Pakistan ahead of his attempt to climb the world's second highest mountain.

Kilcormack man Ger McDonnell died in August 2008 on K2, which is regarded as the world's deadliest mountain, after becoming the first Irish person to reach the summit. He had previously climbed Everest.

And over the weekend, Jason placed a plaque on behalf of the Irish people at K2 base camp in honour of

the Limerick man.

Jason expects to reach the peak of K2 on August 2, which is the ten-year anniversary of Ger's death.

"I recently visited Ger McDonnell's family in Limerick and they are fully backing me in the climb," said Jason, before he departed for Pakistan.

"Ger's mum Gertie gave me some of his precious equipment to climb with and it means a lot to me, I'll mentally be climbing with Ger.

"I'll be spiritually connected to him through the equipment and to some people that doesn't make sense, but to me on a mountain where you're alone, and it's a big vast mountain, and you're away from civilisation, you cling on to any small support and positive energy, and anything that makes life a little bit easier on the mountain - it gives you strength," he added.

Jason is a global endurance

athlete who has previously summited Everest, and he holds the mountaineering world record for the double ascent of Kilimanjaro in 22.5 hours.

The climber has previously attempted to climb K2. He made it as far as camp two in 2015, but mother nature had other plans and he had to turn back.

"It makes the enormity of the climb a little bit easier to digest, knowing what it's going to take to climb the thing and the enormity of the exposure that's involved.

"You're reading all the statistics before you leave Ireland - the fact that just over 300 people in the world have ever gotten to the top, and of course the death rate, so my knowledge of K2 from the last attempt helps break it down in terms of knowing exactly what it is I have to tackle."