



WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL

*Sam
Hale*

SHOPFRONT DESIGN GUIDE



SUPPLEMENTARY
PLANNING
GUIDANCE
No. 5

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

NOTE NO 5

SHOPFRONT DESIGN GUIDE

This Supplementary Planning Guidance
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21 November 1996

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Foreword

The aim of this guide is to encourage and promote good shopfront design. It seeks to do this by setting out basic principles and practices which can lead to successful designs and by pointing out those practices which generally result in poor shopfronts and which should therefore be avoided.

Good shopfront design is important in creating attractive shopping environments of character and therefore helps to improve the vitality and viability of town and district shopping centres, particularly against increasing competition from out of town centres. It is also important for improving accessibility and the Council will seek to ensure that new shopfronts are designed to make shops accessible to all.

The guide does not aim to set down rigid rules which might stifle good creative design but instead seeks to provide a clear and flexible design framework within which the creative designer can work. Setting out the Council's design parameters in this way should help save time and avoid misunderstandings between applicants and Council representatives when applying for the necessary planning consents.

The guide builds on the policies and proposals

of the Council's Unitary Development Plan and therefore has Supplementary Planning Guidance status. It is hoped that it will prove useful to all those engaged in shopfront design, production, alteration and replacement including developers, retailers, designers and shopfitters.

While the guide is intended to set out a clear and explicit design framework, designers are encouraged to discuss their proposals with staff of the Planning and Environment Division of the Council at an early stage. The Division is located within the Department of Technical Services at the address given below.

Installing a shopfront will nearly always entail the display of advertisements. It is therefore advised that this booklet be read in conjunction with the Council's Advertisement Guidelines which will be available in leaflet form from the Department of Technical Services, at the following address:-

The Department of Technical Services
2nd Floor
Civic Centre
St Peter's Square
Wolverhampton
WV1 1RP

Publication History.

The original draft text for this guide, excluding shopfront security guidance, was approved for public consultation by the Planning and Environment Committee on 13 January 1994; amendments made as a result of public consultation were approved on 13 October 1994. Guidance on shopfront security was approved, following public consultation, on 24 February 1994. This was subsequently approved for incorporation within this guide, with revisions, by the Planning and Environment Committee on 12 October 1995. Additional guidance on shopfronts in indoor shopping malls was approved for public consultation by the Planning and Environment Committee on 22 February 1996, and approved for publication in this guide on 21 November 1996.

Introduction

This guide is intended to apply to new and old buildings of all types and styles which incorporate shopfronts throughout the Borough. It recognises that different buildings may to some extent require different design approaches - for example it would be inappropriate to advocate installing a 'traditional' style timber shopfront in a steel and glass building of 'modern' design. At the same time the guide acknowledges that there are general design issues and principles which are valid for all building types no matter what their age or style. Accordingly the guide has been divided into six separate parts. Part 1 deals with general design principles that are applicable to all building types containing shopfronts. Part 2 looks at the design approaches appropriate for older (generally pre 1939) buildings and Parts 3 and 4 consider design approaches suitable for modern buildings and new (unbuilt) developments respectively. Part 5 provides guidance on

shopfronts in fully enclosed shopping malls and Part 6 concludes the guide with advice on miscellaneous design matters which are common to all buildings.

The guide is designed to complement and supplement the policies and proposals contained in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP). Policies in the UDP of particular relevance to shopfront design are: S12 and S13 - these relate to the safeguarding of independent access to upper floors in shopfront designs, and to general standards of design and materials in shopping development respectively; ENV 16 - which should be considered if alterations are proposed for shopfronts to listed buildings; ENV 19 - which sets out design standards for shopfronts and advertisements within Conservation Areas; and TC 25 which deals with the display of advertisements and standards of shopfront design and security measures within Wolverhampton Town Centre.

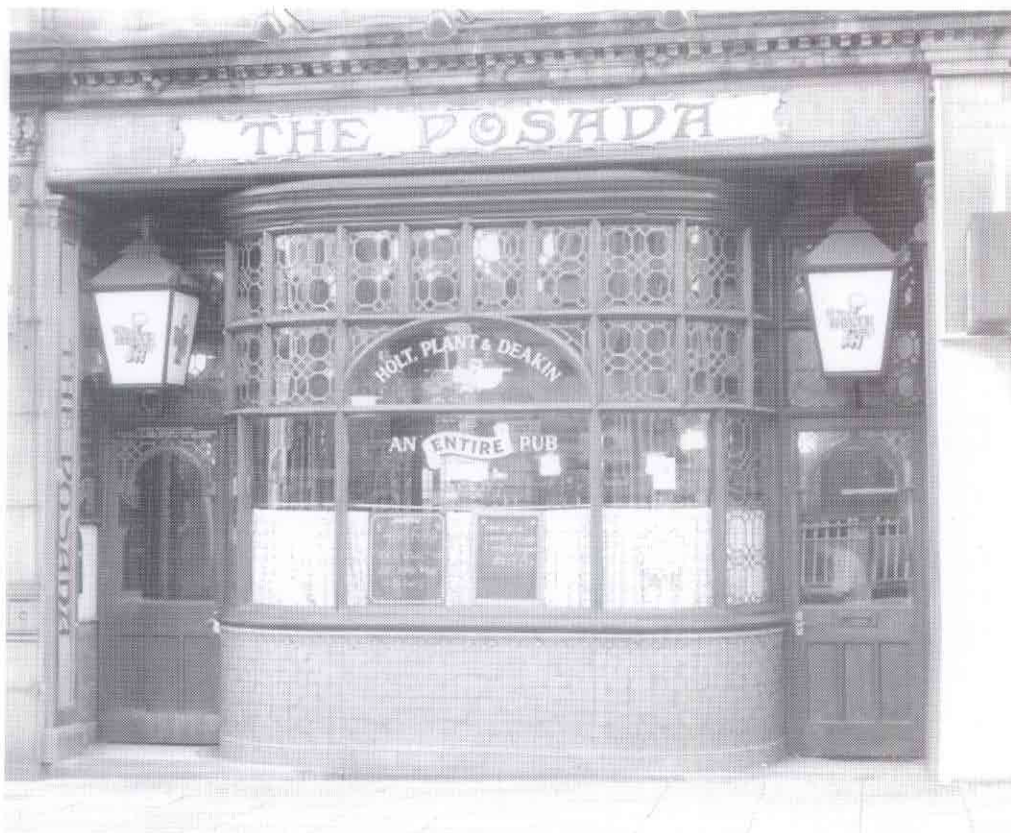


Figure 1.
THE POSADA, LICHFIELD STREET.

RELATING THE SHOPFRONT TO THE BUILDING.

The most important aspect of shopfront design to be borne in mind is that the shopfront should harmonise with the building of which it will form a part. To do this it will be necessary to study and take account of the design, scale, materials, colour and texture of the elevation above and its neighbours.

It follows from the above that a single shopfront should never be designed to cut across two or more separate buildings (See Figure 3). The architectural identity of individual buildings should always be respected.

It also follows that 'off the peg' and standard corporate designs, which have no regard for the individuality of the buildings or the locality for which they are intended, are generally not acceptable.

New shopfronts should always appear to provide some means of structural support for the upper floors. A building which appears to 'float' above a large window of glass is visually disturbing and care should be taken to avoid creating this effect.

MATERIALS.

Shopfront materials should generally complement the colour and texture of the building elevation above. High gloss plastic materials, bright shiny metal window and door frames and strident colour schemes are at odds with the character and appearance of all good quality buildings no matter what their age or style (See Figure 4). They should be avoided in favour of high quality finishes in appropriate materials and carefully chosen colour schemes.



Figure 2.
12 - 16 QUEEN SQUARE.

New shopfronts respect the character of the buildings above.



Figure 3.
27 - 28 QUEEN STREET.
This shopfront cuts across the
architecture of two distinct
buildings.

SCALE, HEIGHT AND PROPORTIONS.

Most buildings have a dominant vertical emphasis in their designs and this should be reflected in new shopfront designs.

To create visual interest every effort should be made to introduce 'modelling' or a three dimensional quality into the shopfront design. This can be achieved, for example, by recessing doorways and by setting back display windows behind the line of elements providing structural or apparent support for the upper floors.

The height and scale of the shopfront should respect the building and its neighbours.

The proportions of various elements which make up the shopfront should be carefully related to each other, to the building, and to the human scale.

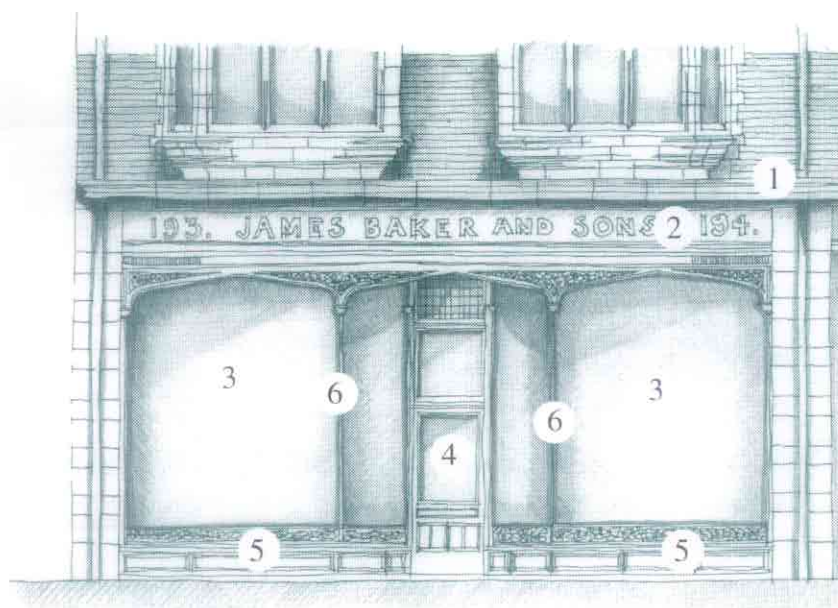
DETAILING.

Good detailing is the key to quality in shopfront design. The elaborateness and quality of detailing should be compatible with that of the upper elevation of the building.



Figure 4.
UNSYMPATHETIC
MATERIALS.
High gloss finishes detract from the
appearance of
buildings and the
street.

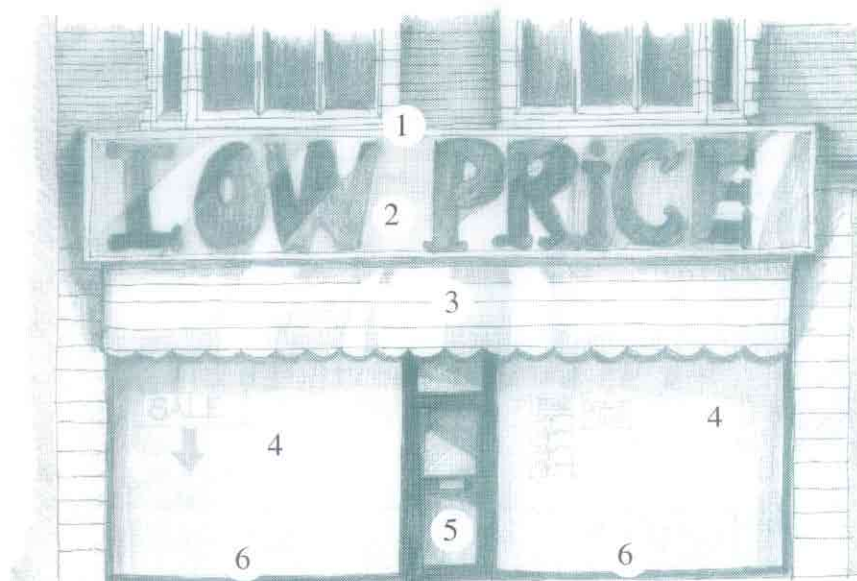
Figure 5.
A GOOD QUALITY TRADITIONAL SHOPFRONT.



KEY

- 1 Cornice provides a top to the shopfront and separates the ground floor from the upper floors.
- 2 Narrow fascia and lettering type and size respect the scale and character of the building.
- 3 Well proportioned display windows with a vertical emphasis.
- 4 Recessed doorway.
- 5 Stallriser provides a visual base to the shopfront.
- 6 Elegant timber mullions.

Figure 6.
A POOR QUALITY SHOPFRONT.



KEY

- 1 Deep box fascia sign extends too high and covers window details.
- 2 Glossy plastic fascia sign has overlarge letters of unsuitable style.
- 3 Unacceptable glossy plastic 'Dutch' blind.
- 4 Large individual plate glass windows.
- 5 Doorway not recessed.
- 6 No Stall riser (modern aluminium window frames).

Shopfronts in Older Buildings

This section is concerned with the design of shopfronts in older buildings. These are buildings which mostly date from before 1939 and generally are, or appear to be, of traditional load bearing masonry construction, adopt a human scale, use traditional materials (brick, stone and timber) and have pronounced vertical emphasis in their designs. There are exceptions, for example early 'Modern Movement' and 'Art Deco' buildings which have a horizontal emphasis and detailing which should be respected.

RETENTION OF OLDER SHOPFRONTS.

Good quality features of older shopfronts should be kept wherever possible especially if they form part of the original building design. These may survive under later coverings.

The reproduction of missing elements of good older shopfronts is encouraged where evidence exists of their original appearance (for example from old photographs or drawings). Grant aid may be available for this.



BEFORE



AFTER

Figures 7 & 8.

27 QUEEN STREET.

Reinstatement of a traditional shopfront.

DESIGN OF NEW SHOPFRONTS - TRADITIONAL OR CONTEMPORARY?

Where nothing remains of a good older shopfront and a new design is required the first consideration will be whether to adopt a traditional or contemporary design approach.

A traditional approach is one which uses a number of characteristic elements that together give the shopfront its form and style. The most important of these are the cornice, fascia, pilasters and stall risers. These elements are illustrated in Figure 9 along with other details typical of a Classical style shopfront. With a traditional approach it is generally less difficult for the designer to produce a shopfront which will fit in with the period and style of older buildings than it would be if a contemporary design approach were adopted.

However, if it is to be successful a traditional design based on past examples must use detailing and proportions which are historically accurate and appropriate to the age of the building, otherwise the result will appear clumsy and unsatisfactory. Advice on appropriate detailing can be provided by staff of the Planning and Environment Division.

Shopfronts of contemporary design can also be successfully incorporated into traditional building facades provided they too respect the period and style of the buildings into which they are fitted. Contemporary designs likely to be most successful will be those based on a reworking or reinterpretation of traditional forms and details (See Figure 10). These will demand a clear understanding on the part of the designer of the principles of older shopfront styles.

KEY

1. Cornice.
2. Fascia.
3. Architrave.
4. Pilaster heads or capitals.
5. Mullions.
6. Glazing bars.
7. Pilaster.
8. Pilaster Base.
9. Cill.
10. Stall Riser.
11. Recessed Doorway.
12. Door Fanlight.



Figure 9.
TRADITIONAL SHOPFRONT ELEMENTS.
(A modern Classical example)



Figure 10.
35 CHAPEL ASH.

A successful contemporary design based on a reworking of traditional forms and details.

Whichever design approach is selected it is important to observe a number of basic guidelines and principles. These are set out below.

THE FASCIA.

A deep fascia, one over 600mm (2 feet) high, will generally appear out of proportion with the rest of the shopfront giving it a top heavy appearance.

Where an excessively deep fascia has been introduced in the past, every effort should be made to reduce its height. This can be done by either reducing the overall height of the shopfront and exposing the wall surface above (See Figure 13a) - which is particularly important where a shopfront cuts into first floor windows, or by increasing the height of the shopfront window below (See Figure 13b).

The method chosen will depend on the overall scale and proportion of the resulting shopfront in relation to the building elevation as a whole, the aim being to avoid shopfronts which are either too tall or too low in relation to the building elevation (See also Figures 11 and 12).

Low ceiling heights within the shop need not be an obstacle to raising the height of the display window. A stepped ceiling which is set back can overcome this difficulty (See Figure 14) or, if necessary, obscure glazing could be used in small panes (top lights) at the top of the display window.

Internally illuminated box fascias cannot normally be satisfactorily accommodated in traditional shopfront designs because of their bulk and form (See Figure 15).



BEFORE

Figure 11.
12 - 14 QUEEN SQUARE.

Photograph taken in the 1970s showing a shopfront on the left which is too tall and its neighbour which is too squat for the buildings.

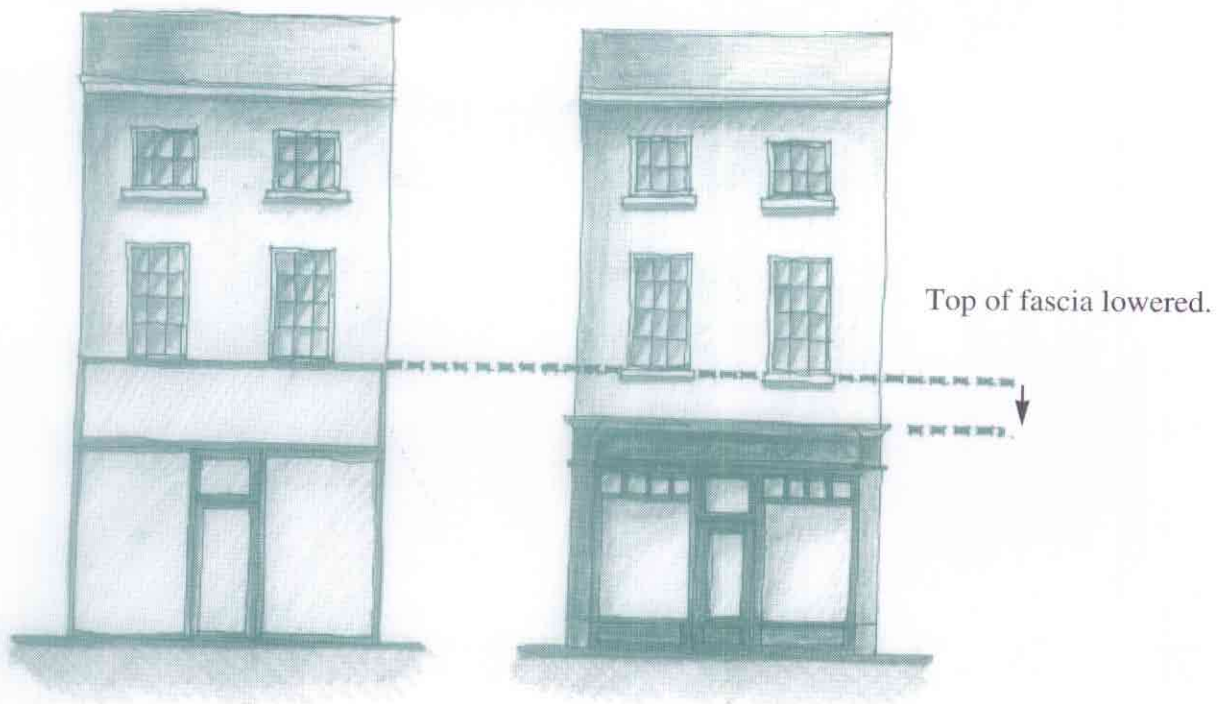


AFTER

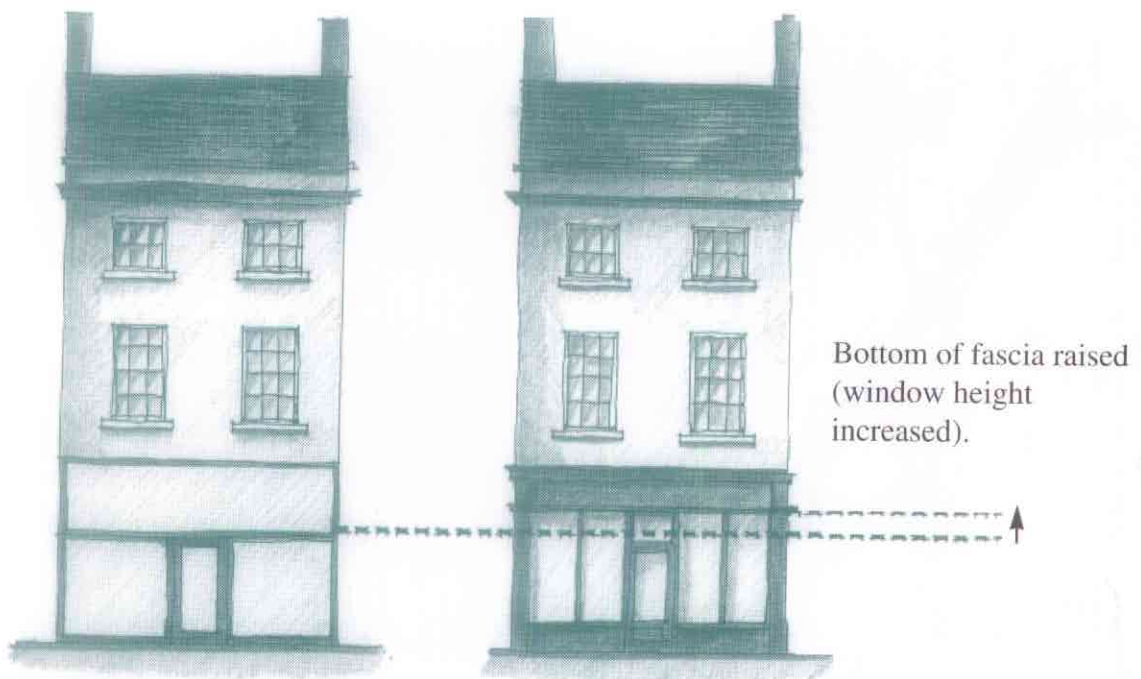
Figure 12.
12 - 14 QUEEN SQUARE.

A recent photograph showing shopfronts of the correct height and proportion for the same buildings.

Figure 13.
REDUCING FASCIA DEPTH.



- a) With an already tall shopfront, and particularly where the fascia cuts into the cills of first floor windows, the depth of the fascia should be reduced by lowering the overall height of the shopfront. Note that the top or cornice of the replacement shopfront is kept well below first floor window cills.



- b) With a low shopfront the fascia depth should be reduced by raising the height of the display window not by lowering it from the top. This would otherwise result in a shopfront of squat proportions.

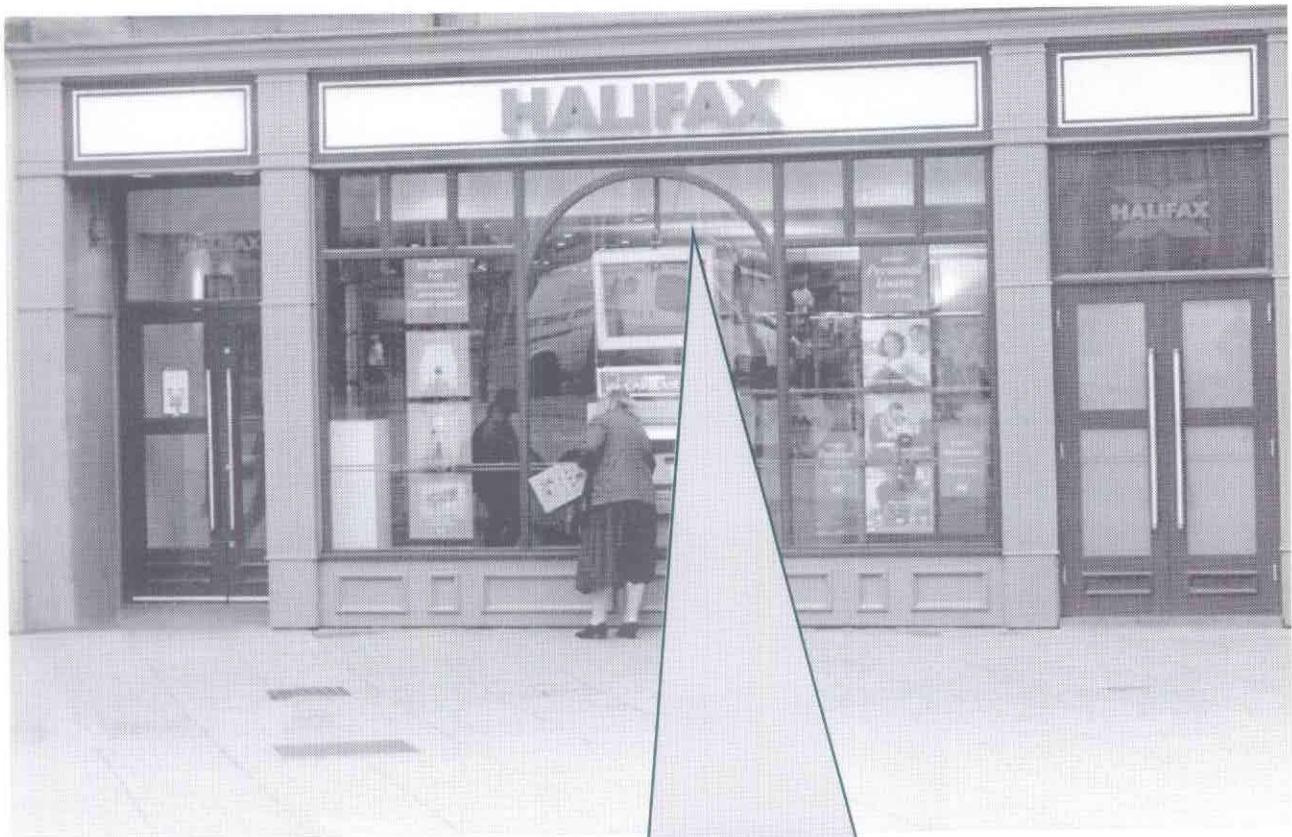


Figure 14.
15 - 16 QUEEN SQUARE.
Suspended ceiling set back from shopfront to allow a taller display window.

New fascia boards of any type should not be added on top of existing ones as these give the appearance of after-thought additions rather than integral parts of the shopfront.

Highly reflective acrylic or perspex fascia signs are visually incompatible with the matt finishes of traditional materials of the upper floors of older buildings. Matt or semi-matt finishes are most appropriate, painted timber being the preferred material.

THE CORNICE.

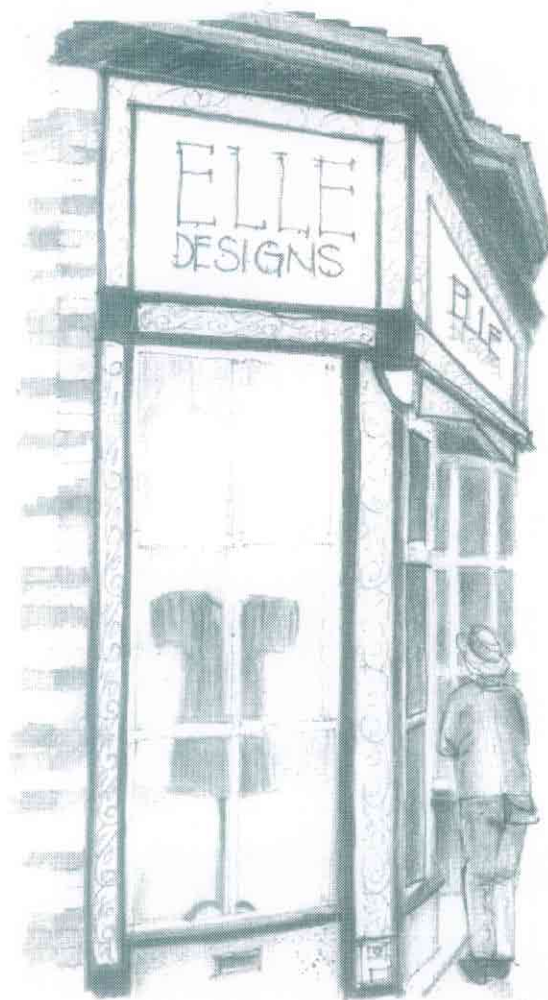
Fascias should normally be capped with a projecting cornice. This provides a visual top to the shopfront and affords valuable weather protection. A shopfront on an older building without a cornice appears incomplete and gives the impression of the shopfront trailing off as it rises up the building facade.

Cornices which cap a fascia should be kept below the cills of first floor windows (See Figure 13a).

Figure 15.
INAPPROPRIATE BOX SIGN.



Bulky box signs cover original fascia details and appear to be 'tacked on'.



Box signs replaced with letters applied directly to original fascias thereby revealing original detailing and making the fascias appear as integral parts of the shopfront.

PILASTERS.

Pilasters are the shallow piers or columns which project slightly from the wall to each side of the shopfront. On traditional shopfronts, the pilasters together with the fascia and cornice serve to frame the other shopfront elements. They also give the impression of supporting the upper floors. To reinforce this apparent structural role pilasters should generally stand forward of the building structure and all other

shopfront elements, except the cornice (though in some cases, particularly with later Victorian shopfronts, pilaster heads/consols sometimes stand proud of the cornice).

New pilasters should generally be constructed in a traditional material. Most often this will be painted timber but stone, render or brick will sometimes be more appropriate depending on the context.

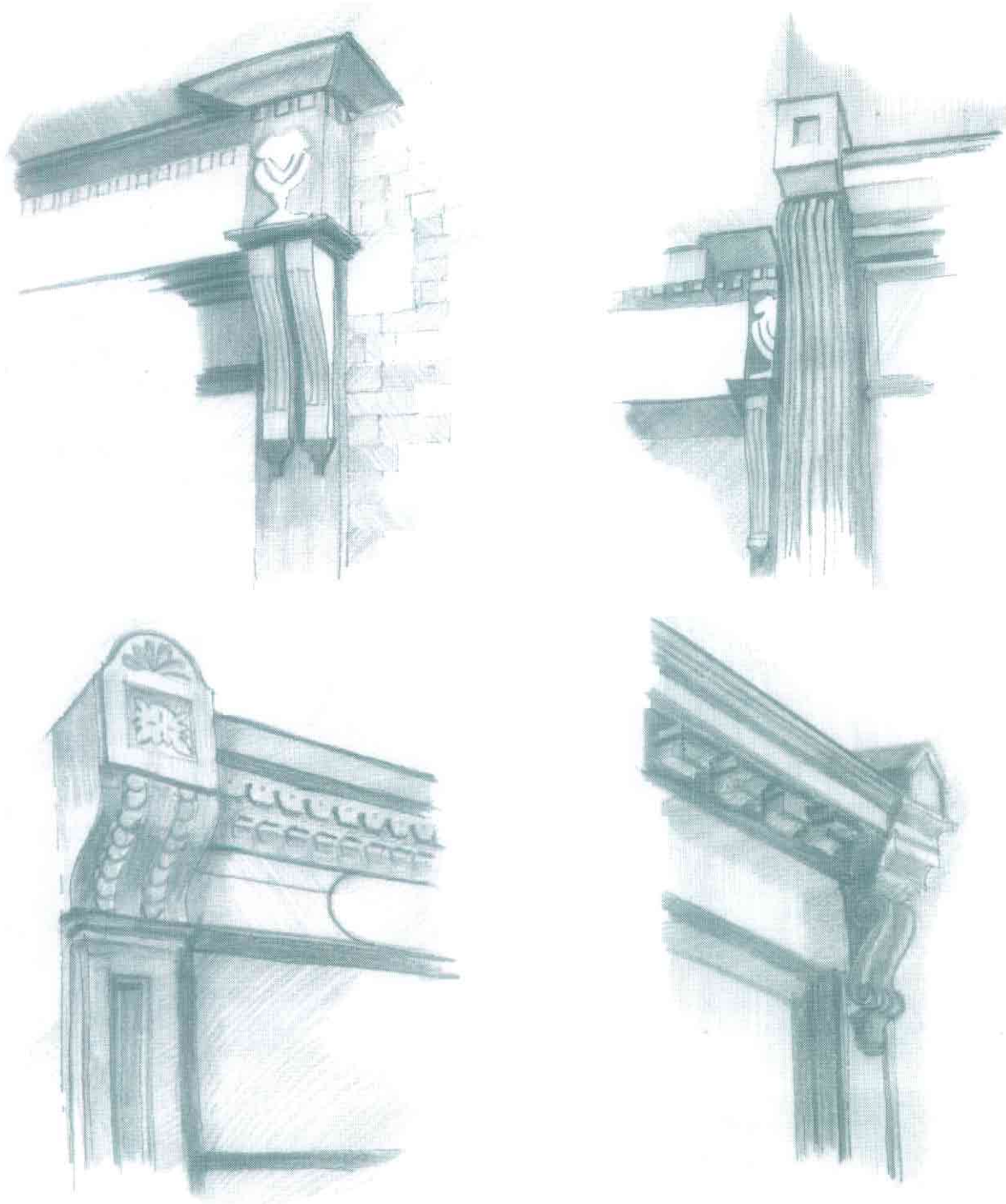


Figure 16.

PILASTERS & CORNICES.

Examples of the variety of traditional pilaster and cornice types.

STALLRISERS.

Just as the cornice provides a visual top to the shopfront, so the stallriser provides a solid base; it also protects the bottom of the shopfront from kicks and knocks.

Stallrisers vary in height according to the style adopted but are usually between 450mm (1 ft 6 ins) and 700mm (2 ft 4 ins) high. Generally the latter figure (700mm) should not be exceeded otherwise the result will tend to look stark and forbidding and can produce cramped or squat display window proportions.

Stallrisers should be capped with a deep, projecting cill to provide weather protection and a strong visual line beneath the display window.

Stallrisers should usually be of painted timber panelling, though render or other natural matt finishes may be appropriate in some cases. Brick does not generally work well as a facing material in small panels and for this reason should not be used for stallrisers unless pilasters are also of brick.

The application of lengths of moulded timber strips to plywood boards to give the impression of timber panelling for stallrisers and pilasters is an unconvincing practice which devalues the appearance of shopfronts on which it is used and is therefore best avoided.

DISPLAY WINDOWS.

New shop windows should respect the vertical emphasis of the building above. Large uninterrupted areas of plate glass are visually uninteresting and do not relate to the human scale. They should be avoided. Sub-division by means of timber mullions or glazing bars adds to the visual interest of the shopfront and creates vertically proportioned rather than horizontal areas of glazing which complements the character of older buildings (See Figure 17). Sub-division of glazed areas also provides less incentive to vandals to smash windows, and smaller panes are cheaper to replace. Care should be taken over joinery details. Generally heavy flat sectioned joinery should be avoided particularly if a traditional design approach is adopted.

Painted timber will usually be the most appropriate material for window frames in traditional shopfronts. In some traditional and contemporary designs metal frames may be considered provided the finish and detailing are compatible with the style and age of the building. This will normally mean that modern aluminium frame types will not be acceptable in traditional shopfronts.

Window frames should be set back behind the faces of the fascia/cornice, pilasters and stallriser in order to enhance the modelling or three dimensional quality of the shopfront.

DOORS AND DOORWAYS.

Doorways should generally be recessed behind the line of the stallrisers and display windows by a minimum of 400mm. The shop door should be at least partly glazed. Solid unglazed doors into the shop will appear unduly heavy and forbidding when seen against the large glazed areas of the display windows.

Solid doors may be acceptable for separate doorways leading to upper floors, but the design of such doorways must harmonise with the rest of the shopfront.



Figure 17.
62 DUDLEY STREET.

Subdivision by means of mullions adds visual interest and creates window proportions which complement the vertical emphasis of older buildings.

CANOPIES AND BLINDS.

Existing traditional canvas blinds and blind boxes should be retained and restored.

New external blinds may be acceptable where they are necessary to protect goods vulnerable to sun damage. If required, they should be retractable and made of canvas not plastic. Their box housings should be satisfactorily incorporated into shopfront designs without projecting beyond the face of the fascia to avoid them appearing as clumsy additions.

Fixed Dutch blinds or balloon canopies tend to obscure the shop fascia and introduce dominant shapes which are out of character with older buildings. Their use, particularly if constructed of plastics, is strongly discouraged.



Figure 18.
UNACCEPTABLE CANOPY.
An obtrusive plastic canopy.



Figure 19.
ACCEPTABLE ROLLER BLIND.
An acceptable traditional roller blind.

Shopfronts in 'Modern' and recent buildings

During the 1950s and 60s the International Modern Style of architecture had an increasing influence on the appearance of town centre buildings. The result was a move towards simple 'minimalist' unornamented forms which rely on the proportions of architectural elements and the colour and texture of materials to provide interest and attractiveness. Unfortunately this approach has often led to dull, poorly designed and detailed buildings which sit unhappily with their older traditional neighbours.

From the early 1970s efforts have been made to add greater interest and variety to new buildings and in particular, to make them more respectful of their surroundings. This has been attempted by the use of materials local to the area, adopting traditional building forms and reintroducing simple architectural decoration.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TRADITIONAL AND MODERN BUILDING DESIGNS.

The most important differences between older traditional buildings and modern buildings which may dictate a difference of shopfront design approach are:-

1. Modern buildings adopt a more varied approach to the relationship of the ground storey containing the shopfront to the upper storeys of the elevation.

Three basic types can be distinguished:-

a) The '*hole in the wall*' type (See Figure 20) whereby the shopfront comprises simply of a glazed opening or openings within the solid plane of the building front. With this approach there is often very little apparent architectural separation between the ground storey and upper parts of the elevation.

b) The '*trabeated*' type (See Figure 21). This

type basically adopts the same principle as the traditional shopfront form. It uses the column and beam (or post and lintel) principle to frame display windows and entrance but unlike timber shopfronts it uses elements of the actual building's structure to do this rather than using applied timber elements. With this type the visual separation between ground storey and the upper elevation is more emphatic than the '*hole in the wall*' type. Often the most satisfactory examples are capped by a projecting cornice. In some cases separation is accentuated by placing shopfronts beneath a projecting cantilevered canopy.



Figure 20.
37 PRINCESS STREET.

An example of a '*hole in the wall*' type shopfront.

c) The '*arcaded*' type. Here shopfronts are set back within the volume of the structure behind a line of structural piers which are a continuation of the front wall of the building down to ground level (See Figure 22).

Figure 21.

A 'TRABEATED' TYPE OF MODERN SHOPFRONT.



2. Modern buildings are generally very simply detailed. There is an emphasis on simple planar surfaces and 'clean' straight lines. Elaborate mouldings are absent.

employ metal frames rather than timber for display windows and doors. The simple sections of metal frames are suited to the character of modern buildings and require less maintenance.

3. Shopfronts in modern buildings commonly

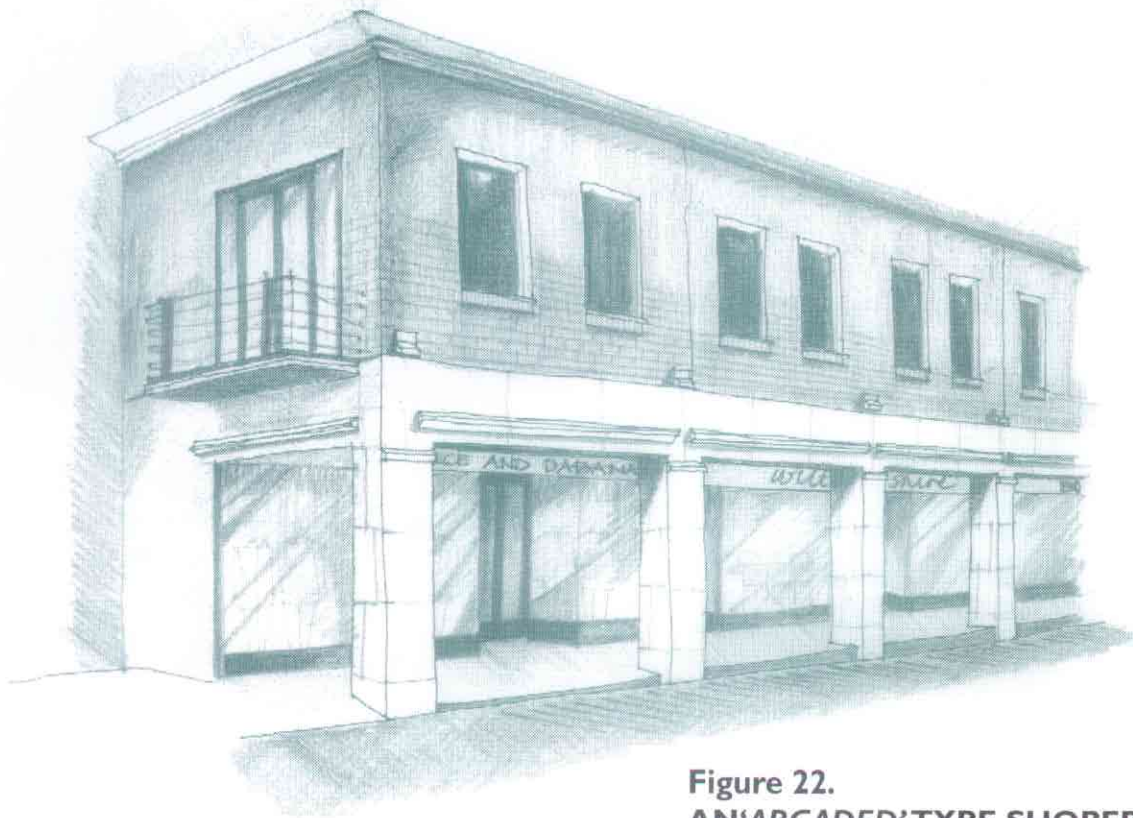


Figure 22.

AN 'ARCADED' TYPE SHOPFRONT.

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR REPLACEMENT SHOPFRONTS IN MODERN BUILDINGS.

Fascia Signs

A fascia sign on a modern building should appear as an integral part of the shopfront design and not as a 'tack on' addition.

For 'hole in the wall' and 'arcaded' types of shopfront, fascia signs should normally be contained within the same openings as the display windows, though in some cases it may be acceptable to omit fascias altogether in favour of individual letters applied directly to the front face of the building. For the trabeated type of shopfront, fascias set above display windows on the front face of the building will usually be most appropriate and these should normally be capped by a projecting cornice of simple profile to provide a visual top to the shopfront.

Internally illuminated box fascias may be acceptable outside Conservation Areas provided they can be incorporated as an integral part of the design. To do so the front face of the box sign should be recessed behind, or be flush with, the front face of the building and the letters only illuminated. The use of modern plastics for fascia signs will not be discouraged provided they are of high quality and provided highly reflective and translucent surfaces are not used.

Display Windows and Doors

Generally it will be appropriate to maintain a vertical emphasis for display windows by dividing these into vertically proportioned panes. Occasionally (for example where the structure of the building provides a strong visual frame for the display window) the lightness and simplicity of an undivided display window can create an effective contrast to its structural surround.

To enhance the modelling, or three dimensional quality of the shopfront, display windows can be recessed within their structural opening. Similarly setting back the shop doorway can often add to the visual interest and quality of a shopfront.

Because detailing is generally kept very simple in modern buildings, various types of metal frames can be used for windows and doors such as dark coloured anodised aluminium (eg dark bronze, brown or black) or colour powder-coated aluminium.

Stallrisers

The need for a stallriser will depend on the design of the shopfront. Where a strong 'structural' frame is created for the shopfront by the architecture of the building it may not be necessary to provide a visual base to the display window by means of a stallriser.

Shopfronts Design for New Buildings

This section is concerned with the design of shopfronts in new (unbuilt) developments.

SHOPFRONTS AS PART OF THE BUILDING DESIGN.

The design of shopfronts for new developments should not be left by the developer as a matter entirely for subsequent shopkeepers, but instead should be considered from the outset as part of the overall design of the building. While some flexibility must be allowed for individual retailers to express their identity and character, the design of those elements of shopfronts needed to ensure harmony between individual units and between shops and the rest of the building above, must be incorporated into the building by its designer at an early stage. The three types of approaches to shopfront design identified in the previous section (hole in the wall, arcaded, and trabeated) are all considered to be appropriate for new developments within the Borough.

HEIGHT AND SCALE.

The relationship between the heights of the ground storey and upper storeys requires careful thought. Generally the ground storey height should be taller than the storeys above both to signify its public importance and to avoid the impression of the ground floor being squashed by the building above. However care needs to be taken to ensure that the height and scale of the ground storey is not excessively greater than, and is well related to, upper storeys and adjoining buildings.

CLEARLY DEFINED SIGNAGE AREAS.

Careful attention should be paid to the need for shopfront advertisements in new developments. A clearly defined area for fascia signs or other types of signage such as individually applied letters should be incorporated into the overall building design.

Shopfronts on new buildings should not appear to 'peter out' as the eye travels up the building elevation. Generally a cornice or string course to mark the top of the ground storey above the area reserved for the principal shopping sign should be provided to avoid confusion over where the ground storey ends and the upper floors begin.

All shopfront elements should be designed to the human scale. Deep fascias and large expanses of plate glass should generally be avoided.

DETAILING.

The detailing of shopfronts should be compatible with the style and detailing of the building as a whole.

MATERIALS.

The variety of materials used should be limited and should relate well to those used for the building elevation above.

Highly reflective 'brash' materials such as perspex and highly glazed ceramic tiles should generally be avoided as facing materials. Both timber and metal frames are acceptable for doors and window frames.

Shopfronts in fully enclosed shopping malls

GENERAL PRINCIPLES.

The protected indoor environment of fully enclosed shopping malls, and the fact that there are generally no upper floors to which shopfronts of individual units need to relate, gives the designer and retailer greater scope to produce novel shopfront designs using a wider choice of materials. Care must nevertheless be taken to ensure that such designs and materials harmonise with each other and can be seen to be part of the overall design concept of the shopping mall. Orderly variety, and not chaotic anarchy of shopfront designs and materials is the primary aim of this guidance.

FASCIAS.

Fascia signs, where provided, should generally not exceed 700mm (2ft 4ins) in depth.

Internally illuminated fascias, in which the letters only are lit and set against an opaque, matt or semi-matt background are preferred.

Wholly internally illuminated box fascias requiring translucent high gloss facing panels produce a low quality image and should be avoided.

DISPLAY WINDOWS, DOORS AND STALLRISERS.

Generally shopfronts seek to maximise glazed areas for display and have simple unfussy metal frames, or no frames at all, which reflect the modern or contemporary design character of indoor malls.

Traditional style shopfronts in timber are likely to look out of place in such surroundings and should therefore generally be avoided.

In keeping with a modern design approach, there is no need for stallrisers to be provided, but if they are, then these should generally not

exceed 400mm (1ft 4ins) in height and be clad in high quality facing materials such as marble, granite or smooth faced stone.

Similarly there is no requirement for shop doorways to be recessed though the more attractive and better quality shopfront designs tend to have these.

Acceptable materials for window and door frames include dark bronze finished aluminium, polyester powder coated aluminum, chrome plate, brass, or bronze. Natural or light coloured anodised frames should not be used.

SECURITY.

Security for units with conventional glazed shopfronts should follow the principles set out in the General Design Issues section of this guidance booklet - i.e. windows and doors should be glazed with laminated glass for protection against vandalism and if additional security against theft is required this should take the form of internal roller grilles (not shutters) set behind the glazing.

Planning permission for external roller shutters will, with the exception of those cases discussed in the following paragraph, normally be refused.

OPEN SHOPFRONTS AND SHOPFRONTS WITHOUT DOORS.

In cases where shop units have open frontages (i.e. they have no shopfront), or wide entrance openings without doors, the clear preference for security will be the use of sliding or folding doors of the trellis or concertina type (see Figure 23). These should be colour coated to match or harmonise with the shop.

Where the restricted space of open entrances does not permit the use of sliding or folding doors, then clear-glazed polycarbonate roller

shutters of the non-punched lath type (i.e. those made up of slim metal bars alternating with broad polycarbonate bands for maximum transparency) will be acceptable provided the bulky spindle-box cannot be seen from the main public walkways.

If on cost grounds it is decided not to use the non-lath type polycarbonate shutter recommended above, then open tube and link roller grilles should be considered as the second best option provided they are colour coated to harmonise with the shop and provided the spindle box is not visible from the malls.

Solid and perforated roller shutters are not acceptable due to the forbidding siege like image they portray and because they restrict views into the units when closed thereby creating 'dead' frontages.

Punched lath type polycarbonate roller shutters should generally be avoided for the same reasons and will normally be resisted by the Council. Consideration may be given to the use of high transparency examples (i.e. 60% minimum of the total shutter area being glazed in evenly distributed panels) to open entrances only.

The purpose of the foregoing guidance is to prevent the proliferation of many different types of shutter within the malls and to encourage those shutters which will protect and enhance the visual attractiveness, quality and interest of Wolverhampton's indoor shopping centres.

Figure 23.
Acceptable concertina 'doors'.



Figure 24.
An acceptable type of polycarbonate shutter.

ACCESS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.

In addition to being wide enough for wheelchairs, (800mm min - 2ft 4ins clear width) entrance doors should be easy to open for people with limited strength. If double doors are provided it should be possible for wheelchairs to pass through without having to open both doors. Self closers, if fitted, should not make it difficult for persons with limited strength to open doors.

Frameless glass doors can be dangerous for partially sighted people and children who may not see them. They are also prone to damage from wheelchairs. Where large areas of glass are used this should be indicated by the use of coloured panels or signs on the door and kicking plates should be provided. Framed and panelled doors should be glazed down to at least 900mm (3ft) above floor level to allow good visibility for children and wheelchair users on entering and leaving the shop.

Door handles should be set about 1.0m. (3ft 3ins) above ground level, and lever handles are preferred to knob handles for ease of use.

Ideally changes of level at shop entrances should be avoided but, where unavoidable, ramps no steeper than 1:12 should be used rather than steps, provided this can be accommodated within a recessed entrance.

Further information on minimum standards can be found in part 'M' of the Building Regulations 1992. The Council's Access Officer can provide further advice regarding the needs for persons with disabilities.

PROJECTING AND HANGING SIGNS.



Figure 25.
KING STREET .

A traditional type hanging sign.

Internally illuminated projecting box signs appear bulky and are not acceptable on listed buildings or in conservation areas. They are generally unwelcome on older buildings.

Hanging signs are preferred to projecting signs on older buildings particularly if a traditional design approach is adopted (See Figure 25). Non-illuminated thin sectioned projecting signs (at or just below fascia level) may be acceptable provided they project no more than 0.9m (3ft) beyond the building, do not exceed 0.19 sq m (2 sq ft) in area and are not positioned lower than 2.43m (8 ft) above the pavement.

A single projecting or hanging sign may be acceptable on each shop depending on the position of any existing signs on adjoining properties (see Figures 26 and 27) and provided it is sited so as not to obscure or damage architectural features.



Figure 26.
SPACING OF
HANGING SIGNS.

Hanging signs correctly spaced
on buildings.

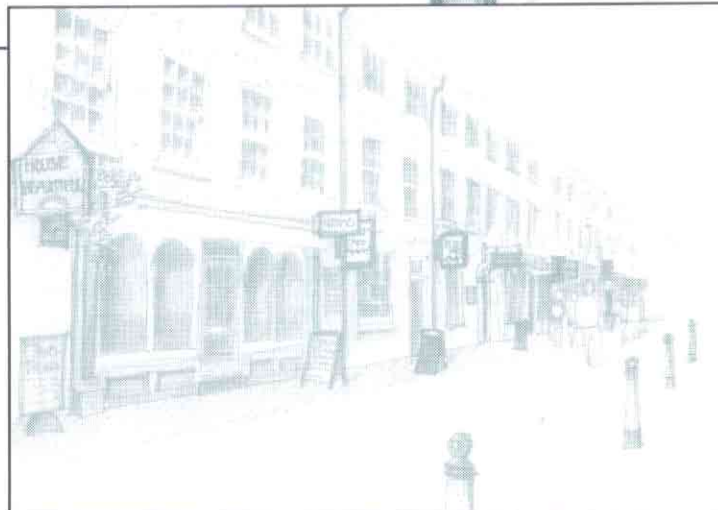


Figure 27.
SPACING OF PROJECTING AND HANGING SIGNS.

Projecting and hanging signs incorrectly placed on buildings
creating a cluttered appearance.

SHOPFRONT SECURITY.

The Need for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent

Planning permission is required for any changes that materially affect the external appearance of a building. The installation of external or internal (behind the glass) roller shutters or grilles* would have a material effect on the external appearance of the building and would thus require Planning Permission.

Listed Building Consent will also be required in the case of Listed Buildings in addition to Planning Permission.

*(NOTE: *The term shutter is restricted here to those constructed from flat or curved slats/laths of aluminium, steel or plastic, and is distinct from the grille which is of tube and link construction only. The term shutter is often used elsewhere to cover both tube and link grilles and shutter - See Figure 28).*

Laminated Glass

Laminated glass derives its strength from two or more layers of glass being bonded together with a special plastic interlayer. The more sheets of glass used and the thicker the glass and interlayer specified, the stronger the laminated glass will become; laminated glass in excess of 25mm, for example, is sufficiently strong to withstand bullet penetration. Although when attacked the glass will eventually crack and craze around the point of impact it will nevertheless remain in place thereby preventing vandals getting into the shop and hindering thieves in making a quick theft. It thus provides security and, in the majority of shopfront applications (where thicknesses are usually in the range of 7.5 - 11.5mm), will have little or no effect on external appearance. Planning permission or listed building consent is not required for installation provided that the window frames are not changed. Retailers, specifiers and designers are therefore strongly recommended to use laminated glass as a primary means of security in preference to security grilles or shutters.

Plastic glazing

While there are various types of plastic or polycarbonate glazing on the market, they scratch easily, attract dust and quickly become unsightly. Laminated glass is therefore the only acceptable security glazing material currently available.

Internal Roller Grilles

If it is decided not to use laminated glass, or where particularly valuable stock requires additional security measures against entry by thieves, then internal roller grilles of the tube and link type will normally be acceptable provided any box housing for roller grilles is not visible externally. The most common type is the brick bond open pattern grille made of aluminium, steel or plastic horizontal rods and tubes connected by vertical links (See Figure 28).

Because it is installed behind the display windows, locks and fastenings cannot be tampered with and its open appearance allows view of the shop display outside opening hours. Grilles should be colour coated or anodised in a dark colour to minimise as far as possible their visual presence behind shop windows when viewed from outside.

Internal Roller Shutters

These are rarely used internally because their function is often to protect glass from breakage in addition to providing security from theft. Roller shutters of any type (as opposed to grilles) used internally are considered to have a material effect on the appearance of the building and will therefore require planning permission. They will generally be resisted by the Council.

External Roller Grilles and Shutters

In most circumstances sufficient shopfront window security can be achieved by the use of laminated glass, or internal tube and link roller grilles, or a combination of the two.

Within Conservation Areas, Wolverhampton Town Centre as defined in the UDP inset map, and on listed buildings, these will normally be the only acceptable means of security.

It follows that external roller grilles and roller shutters will not normally be permitted in these locations.

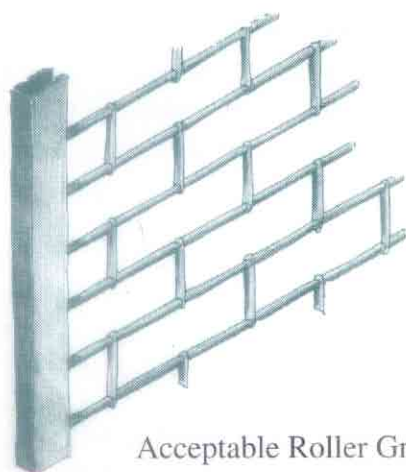
In all other areas within the Borough external roller grilles or shutters will normally be discouraged. However in these other areas there may be special circumstances, for example where there is a proven severe and persistent security or vandalism problem, where external tube and link roller grilles might be permitted. Where a case can be made for the use of these, every effort should be made to hide from view the bulky box which houses the roller grille. In the majority of instances this will be extremely difficult to achieve satisfactorily due to the deep size of the box. Wherever possible it should be recessed behind the existing fascia (See Figure 29). Where the structure of the building or the form of shopfront does not allow this, it may be possible to fix it below the fascia and within the existing shopfront opening and deepen or lower the existing fascia to cover it from view. However this will not be acceptable where it would result in a low shopfront of squat proportions or in a disproportionately deep fascia.

In circumstances where external security measures are agreed to be necessary, demountable external grilles of a visually appropriate design should be considered as a preferable alternative to external roller grilles, provided they are of a size which allows for easy fixing and removal, and provided they can be stored away within the shop during opening hours, and are appropriately coloured (See Figure 30). Any external grilles permitted must be painted or coated in a colour which harmonises with the colour of the shopfront.

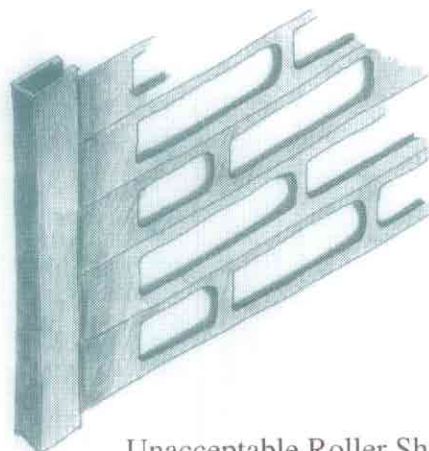
External solid or part solid roller shutters have a visually deadening and intimidating effect on shopfronts and the street scene. In addition they can themselves be a security problem by preventing surveillance from outside. This view is supported by Department of the Environment Circular 5/94 which says "The creation of a fortress-like atmosphere can be self-defeating. Solid roller shutters can have an adverse environmental effect, giving an area a "dead" appearance and contributing towards the creation of a hostile atmosphere. They are also vulnerable to graffiti. This not only gives out signals about an area's vulnerability to crime, but can also deter the public from using such locations, thus losing the benefit of passive surveillance. Areas which lack activity, or appear deserted, can be attractive to criminals who perceive that they are less likely to be detected".

Punched hole shutters (also known as perforated lath shutters) which are perforated with hundreds of small holes, also have a deadening effect on the street scene in daylight hours. For these reasons external solid, part solid or punched hole and other similar external shutters (other than tube and link grilles) will not normally be permitted anywhere within the Borough.

Any other visually acceptable security measures will be considered on their merits by the Local Authority, including newly developed products.



Acceptable Roller Grille



Unacceptable Roller Shutter

Figure 28.
ROLLER GRILLES AND ROLLER-SHUTTERS.

Figure 29.

EXTERNAL ROLLER GRILLES.

External roller grille with roller grille box hidden behind the fascia.

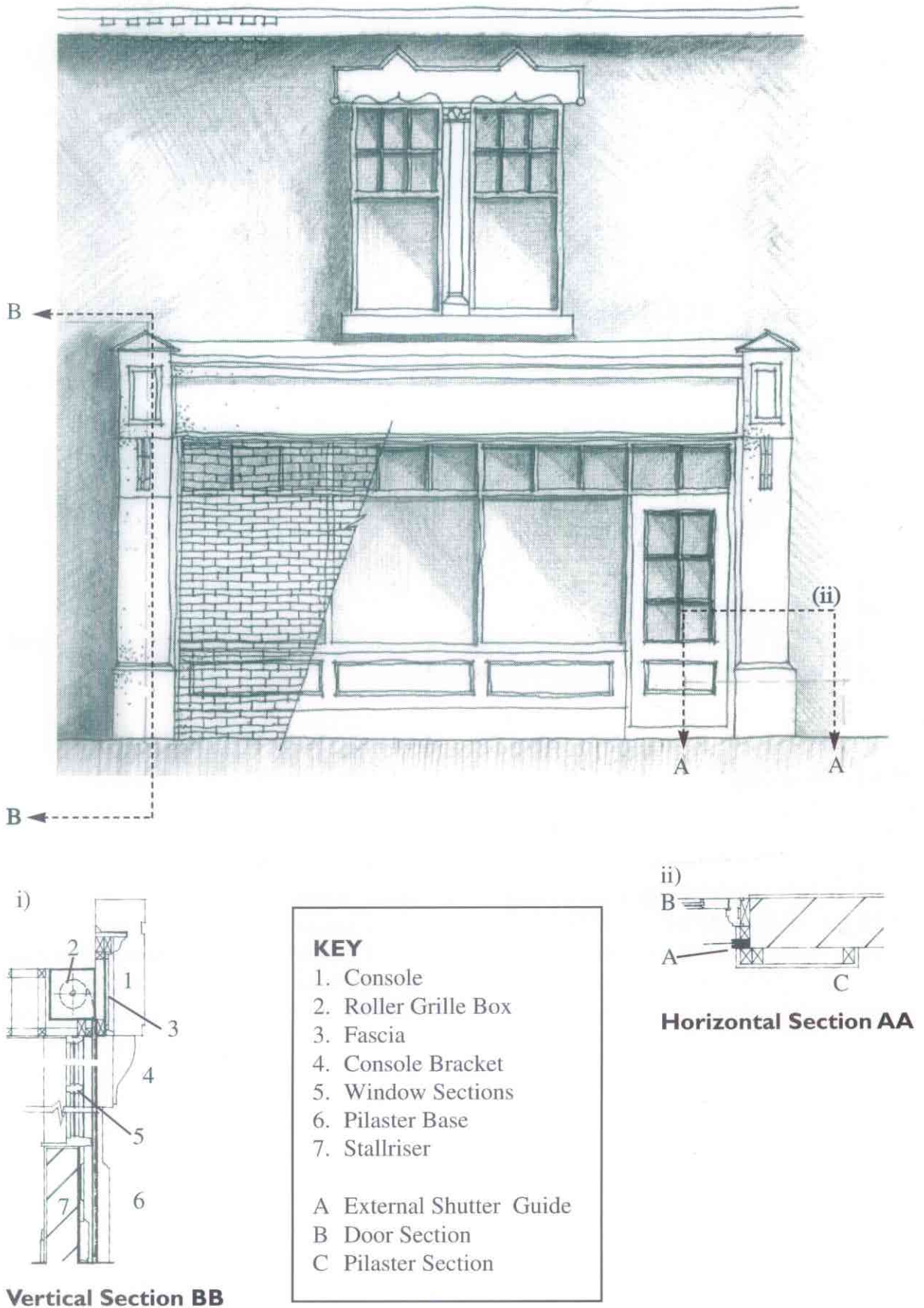




Figure 30.
DEMOUNTABLE GRILLES.

An example of a shopfront fitted with external demountable grilles on which decorative metal artwork has been applied. (*Example from Hereford City*)

Other Measures

Various elements of the traditional shopfront such as stall risers, recessed shop doors and glazing bars or mullions can also add significantly to shopfront security. Timber stallrisers, structurally reinforced behind, together with recessed doors can help deter ram raids. The subdivision of glazed areas of the shop front by mullions and transoms into smaller panes can hinder a thief's access to goods on display, and smaller panes are cheaper and easier to replace if broken.

Non-Physical Security Measures

Physical security measures on specific shopfronts can in many cases be augmented by non-physical security measures for the overall areas. Within the town centre, for example, initiatives such as Closed Circuit T.V., the Retail Radio Link and improved street lighting have all helped significantly to reduce instances of crime and vandalism. By making the street feel safer, and by expanding night time activities and attractions so that more people are about, the opportunities for crime and vandalism are further reduced.

LETTERING.

The choice of lettering should be influenced by the architecture of the building, the design of the shopfront and the nature of the business. For traditional shopfronts signwritten letters painted directly onto the fascia can produce high quality results particularly if light coloured or gilded letters are painted against a dark coloured background. Individual, well designed letters in high quality materials such as bronze can also be very effective particularly where there is no fascia and the lettering is attached to the natural materials of the building (suitable on both older and modern buildings).

The size of lettering should be in proportion to the size of the fascia or other location on which it is applied though normally it should not exceed 350mm (14 ins) in height.

Over-large letters in garish colours and materials should be avoided.

COLOUR.

The choice of colour is important for both signs and shopfronts. In general bright colours are best used as an accent to pick out architectural features or lettering. Large areas of bright colour are rarely in keeping with older buildings and traditional shopping streets.

ILLUMINATION.

Illumination of fascias can be very difficult to accommodate satisfactorily on traditional shopfronts. Internally illuminated fascias,

individually illuminated letters, halo lit perspex letters, swan neck and projecting spotlights, and fluorescent lighting in channels will generally not be appropriate on listed buildings and older buildings which retain good period shopfronts within conservation areas.

Where illumination is acceptable, lighting from external sources discreetly hidden from view will be preferred.

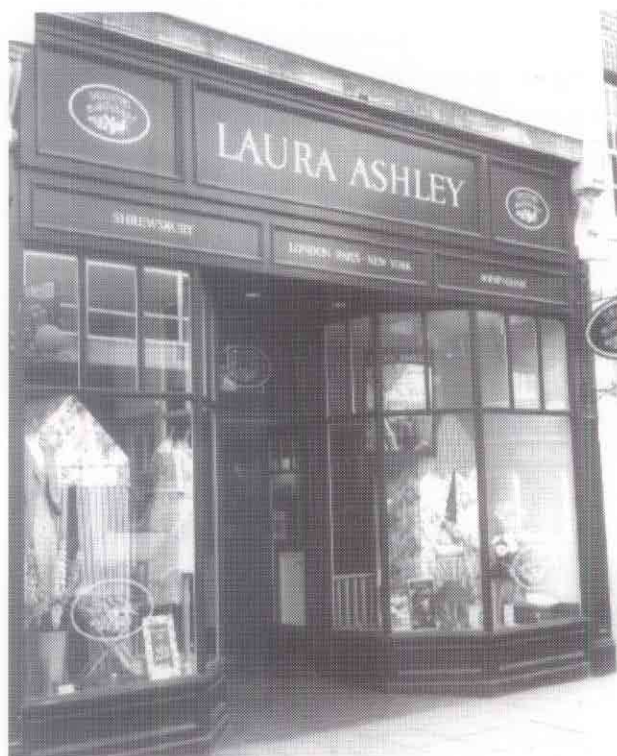


Figure 31.
ATTRACTIVE SIGNWRITTEN
LETTERING.



Figure 32.
APPLIED INDIVIDUAL LETTERING.
George Interiors, 35 Chapel Ash.

In recent years, large highly polished natural finish brass swan neck lamps have become popular. These can be very prominent visually and give a cluttered appearance to building elevations. In some instances, swan neck lamps may be acceptable but only where they are small, are painted the same colour as the background against which they are to be seen, are appropriate to the design of the buildings, and do not result in a cluttered appearance.

On modern buildings internal illumination, including box fascias, may be acceptable, where it can be incorporated as an integral part of the shopfront design and provided the letters only are illuminated. Generally swan neck light fittings are not suited to the character of modern buildings and should not be used.

DRAWINGS.

It is important that applications for shopfront alterations and advertisements are accompanied by clear, professionally presented drawings which show how new work relates to the building elevation as a whole and to its neighbours. Accordingly elevational drawings should be produced of the entire building elevation both as existing and proposed at a minimum scale of 1:50 with the heights of adjacent shopfronts indicated.

Close attention to the form, proportion and details of shopfronts is crucial to the success of a new design. Consequently, in addition to 1:50 elevational drawings, the following additional information should be considered as the minimum necessary to accompany an application:-

- Existing and proposed shopfront elevations, plans and sections at a minimum scale of 1:20;
- Details of shopfront elements (eg pilasters, stallriser, cornice, window frame section) at a minimum scale of 1:5;
- Larger scale drawings may be requested where appropriate if they are necessary to demonstrate the nature and quality of the proposed design.

PROFESSIONAL DESIGN ADVICE.

Good design requires skill and sensitivity. It is therefore advisable to employ a qualified chartered architect practising in the locality who has a real understanding and experience of shopfront design. The RIBA's Client Advisory Service based at the RIBA West Midlands Regional Office at the Birmingham and Midland Institute, Margaret Street, Birmingham B3 3SP (Tel. 0121 233 2321) is always willing to give advice on the appointment of a suitable architect. Advice and guidance on individual shopfront design can also be obtained from the Council although this should be used to complement rather than replace the services of the skilled and experienced design professional.

PLANNING CONSENTS.

Alterations to shopfronts will usually require consent under the Planning Acts or Advertisement Regulations or both. Planning permission is needed for any material change in the external appearance of a shop. This could include altering display windows or doors, changing facing materials, installing blinds or shutters or enlarging the size of the fascia. Advertisement consent is required for the display of most types of sign though there are exceptions. The Advertisement Regulations are complex and advice should always be sought from the Planning Office.

Any alterations affecting the character of a listed building require Listed Building Consent. This can include such details as the repainting of a shopfront in a different colour, installing a security alarm or extractor fan, altering the shop interior, or installing shutter blinds or advertisements.

In all cases it is worth seeking preliminary advice on any necessary consents from the Planning and Environment Division of the Council's Technical Services Department.

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