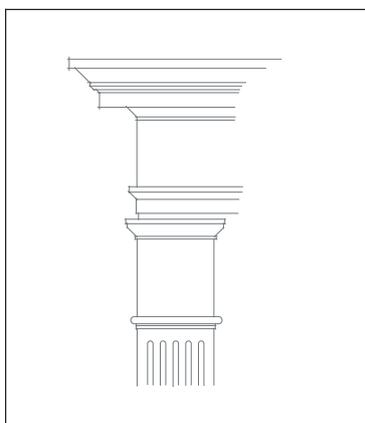


# Shopfront and Shopsign Design Guide



Document

Planning

Supplementary



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## Introduction

This guidance is intended to help retailers and commercial operators occupying ground floor shop units, and their designers, improve the standard of design when altering or replacing shopfronts and associated signage within the Borough. By following the guidelines and advice contained within the guide operators should be able to achieve shopfront solutions appropriate to various settings and budgets. It is not intended to replace the need for skilled design or architectural advice.

The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames has produced this 'Supplementary Planning Document' (SPD) support Policy BE16 - (Design of New Shopfronts) and Policy BE17 (Signs and Advertisements) of the Royal Borough Kingston upon Thames Unitary Development Plan (Proposed First Alteration). This document has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004. The document was adopted by the Council's Executive on 26th July 2005. It forms part of Kingston's Local Development Framework (LDF) and is therefore a material consideration in the determination of planning applications

## Structure of design guide

### Section 1- Permissions, Processes, Contacts

Outlines the permissions that are required in the installation or alteration of shopfronts and shop signs, the information that should accompany such applications, and the recommended design process. This section also provides relevant contact details.

### Section 2 - Principles for architectural elements

Details the elements of the architectural framework, and the shopfront, which need to be considered in the development of designs. It highlights current access requirements, and sets out council policies for specific elements.

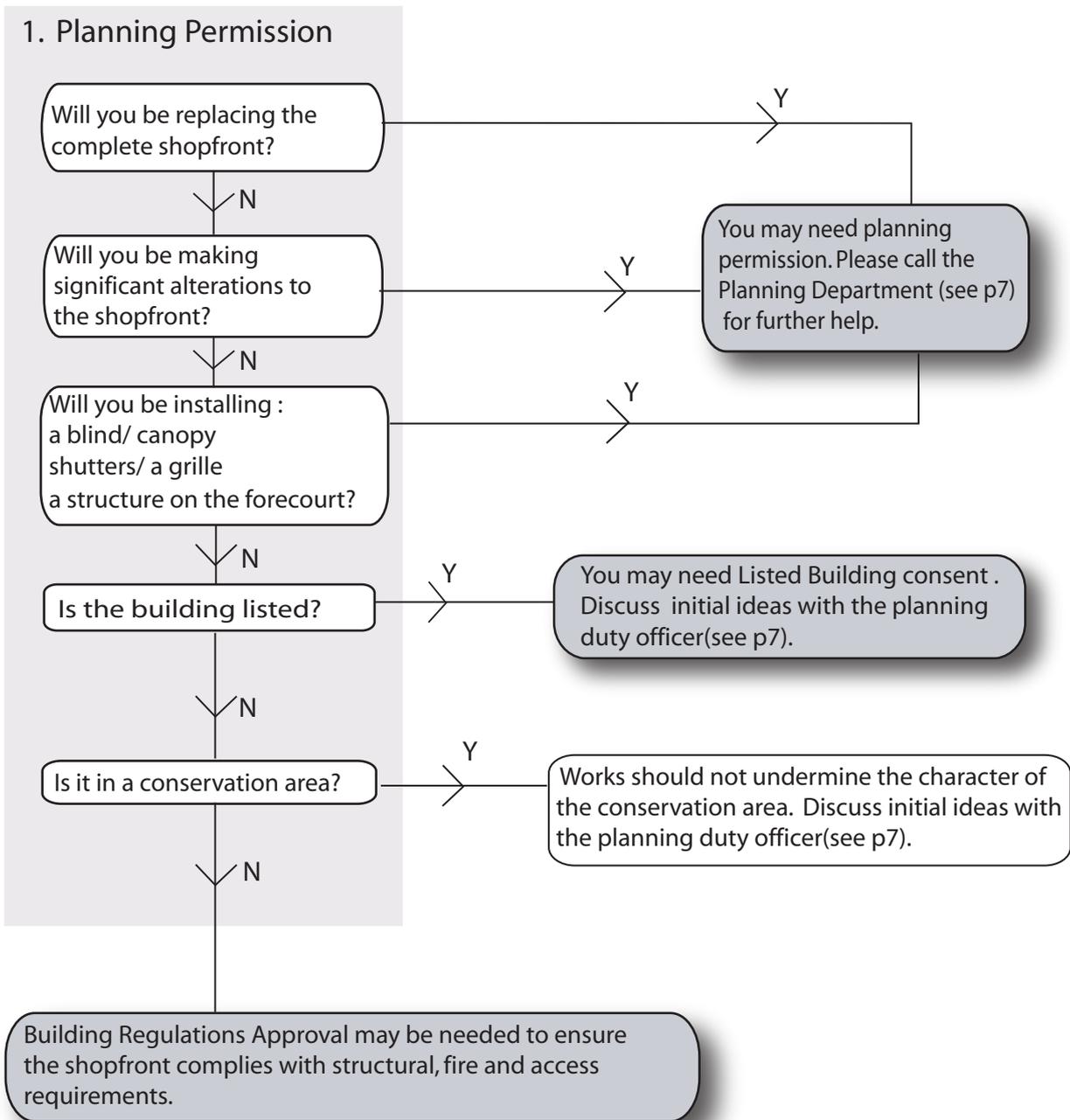
### Section 3 - Principles for other elements

Looks at a series of additional elements of the primary shopfront, as described in section two, such as blinds, projecting signs and security shutters. It also outlines the position taken by the Council in relation to A boards. It identifies the various legal requirements and highlights satisfactory means of incorporating these innovations in shopfronts.

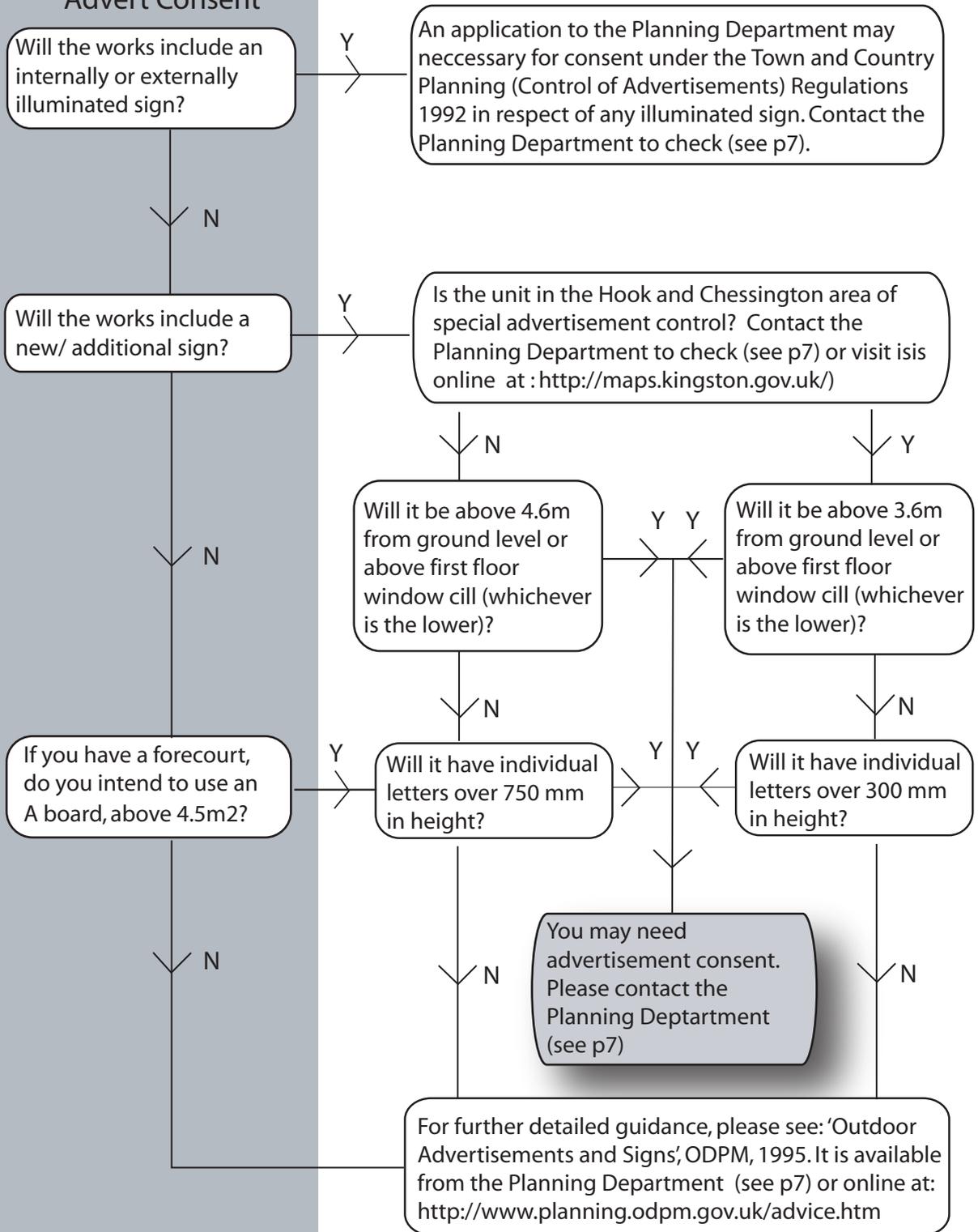
# I Permissions, Processes & Contacts

## I Permissions Required

Follow both of the flow diagrams below to determine if you will need to gain permission prior to any works being carried out. Please note that these diagrams are a quick reference guide and that they do not state the law.



## 2 Advert Consent



## 2 Drawings Required

It often pays to get a design professional to carry out this work as they are familiar with various design approaches, the materials available, and as a result can produce design solutions that resolve potentially time consuming and costly issues between the planning department and applicant.

A location map at a scale of 1:1250 should be included with all applications. Drawings should be at a scale of 1:50 (or 1:20 for details) and include the following where appropriate:

↓ An elevation of the proposed shopfront and signs showing part of the adjoining shop units and upper floor.

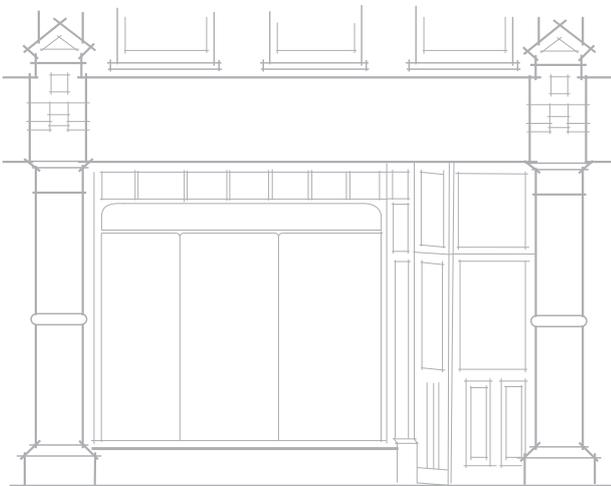


fig. 2 shopfront elevation

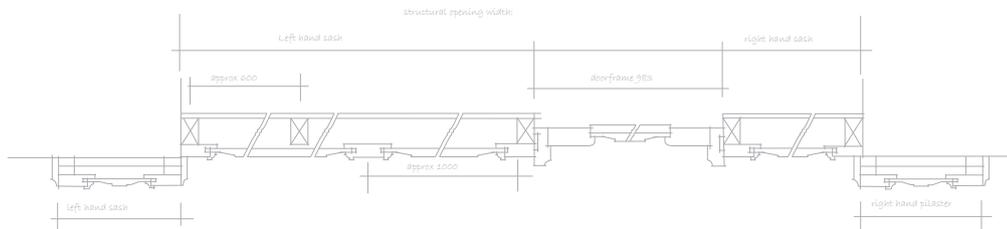


fig. 3 shopfront plan

↑ A plan of the shopfront showing the structural elements within which it fits, (ie the pilasters) and the dimensions of the opening width of doors.

→ At least one cross section from the first floor window sill to pavement level, including the fascia.

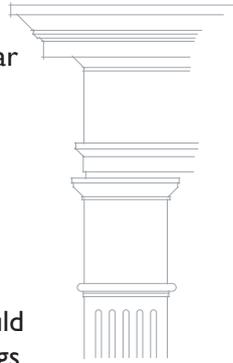


fig. 1 detail

↓ The detailed design, materials and dimensions of signs and details of light fittings and installation methods.

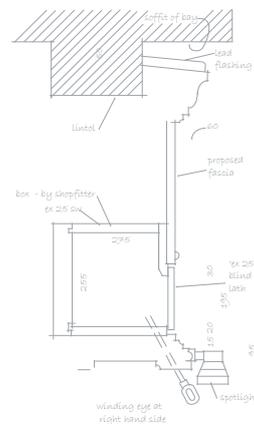


fig. 5 detail dimensions

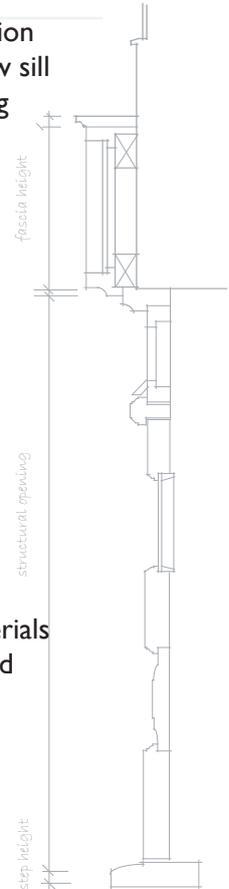


fig. 4 cross section

All materials and colours should be annotated.

### 3 Contacts, further advice and application forms

All applications should comprise

- The completed and signed forms;
- The appropriate fee
- Accurately scaled drawings as specified in the previous section
- A recent dated photograph of the shop and adjacent units (this will be helpful to make speedier decisions).

For clarification on any of these requirements, or to request application forms by post, please use the following contacts:

Mike Wheeler  
Planning Duty Officer  
Mon- Fri 020 8547 5330  
Jane Young  
Access Officer  
Mon, Tues, Thurs 020 8547 5314  
Astrid D'Souza  
Planning Administration  
Mon- Fri 020 8547 5364

Planning and Building Control application forms are available to download from our website at:  
[http://www.kingston.gov.uk/environment/leaflets\\_and\\_forms.htm](http://www.kingston.gov.uk/environment/leaflets_and_forms.htm)

The Planning Duty Officer is also available to discuss proposals in Environmental Services reception on the second floor of Guildhall 2 between 9am and 5pm Monday-Thursday and 9am and 4.45 on Fridays.

### 4 Design Approach

RBK Design, Access and Sustainability Statement guidance sets out the approach to design issues generally. A statement should be submitted that makes a logical case in support of your design, which may be taken on board by the planning authority. It can take the form of the process being described on a single A4 sheet with the complexity of the project dictating the length of the statement.

**Step I: Analysis: – Constraints and Opportunities**  
The constraints and opportunities of a site identify what might be acceptable in the established context; this forms a good basis from which to begin developing designs as set out in detail in section two.

#### Streetscene

Any alterations or new shopfronts should be considered in the context of the wider streetscene. Elements should relate to one another in terms of scale and location. The relationship between individual properties can contribute to an overall character, which creates an environment attractive to shoppers.

fig. 6 streetscene



## Building

↓ The period of a building or a group of buildings can provide a positive basis from which to begin developing designs. This is especially relevant on historic buildings.



fig. 7 building context

## Shopfront

↓ Where a shopfront is to be replaced, an evaluation of the quality of the existing shopfront and the viability of repairs should be the first consideration. Where part or all of a shopfront is to be replaced or altered, the design of the new elements should take into account the principles set out in section two.



fig. 8 shopfront

## Step 2: Design Principles

The design principles evolve from a response to site conditions and resolve some of the possible conflicts that might exist (for example between advertisement and clutter, access and a sloping site)

## Step 3: Create Design Solutions

↓ Having identified the relevant constraints and resolved any potential conflicts through the principles outlined in step 2, appropriate design solutions should be established. Distinctive, original designs of high quality in terms of design, detailing and materials will be encouraged.



fig. 9 new shopfront

## 2 Architectural Elements

This section sets out some fundamental principles. It lists and describes the elements of the architectural framework and the shopfront. It sets out the general design principles for each. It develops those principles in relation to each of the specific elements and in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and Building Regulation requirements. It also sets out council principles in specific areas.

These principles apply to existing buildings where shopfronts may be replaced or altered and to new developments containing ground floor commercial units.

Certain principles apply specifically to historic buildings, and their setting, which are defined as statutorily listed buildings, Buildings of Townscape Merit (identified in the UDP, and updated Annual Monitoring Reports) and buildings in conservation areas, or affecting the setting of the conservation area.

### I Elements

Traditionally there are two groups of elements in a shopfront; these are described here to enable the development of some guiding principles in the next section:

It is a fundamental principle for historic buildings that, original or traditional architectural frameworks, shopfronts, or elements should be repaired or re-established, where photographic evidence or nearby original fabric exists. The removal of good quality original or early fabric will be resisted.

(i) ← The architectural framework establishes the basic design principles for the ground floor of a shopping street (vertical, horizontal rhythms, scale and proportions). It normally comprises pilasters, with architectural details such as capital and plinth, a corbel or a console bracket, and an entablature with a frieze or fascia, and is terminated by a cornice (see fig 11). In new build developments an architectural framework should be developed to establish the ground floor rhythm and proportions.

(ii) ← The shopfront is the screen or panel that fills the space defined by the architectural framework. The term refers to the door, window and stallriser as well as any glazing bars (transoms, mullions) that might be present (see fig 12). They provide the greatest opportunity for interpretation and adaptation.

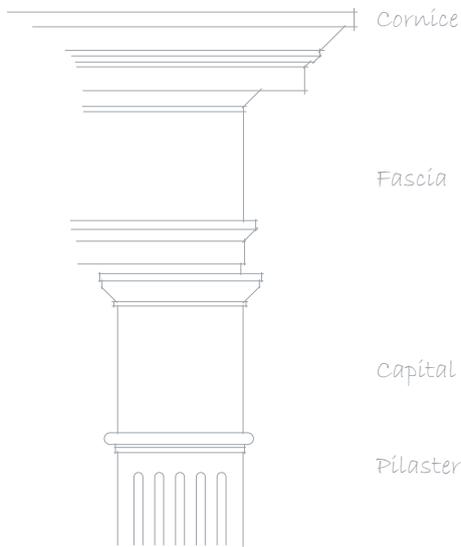


fig. 10 architectural detail

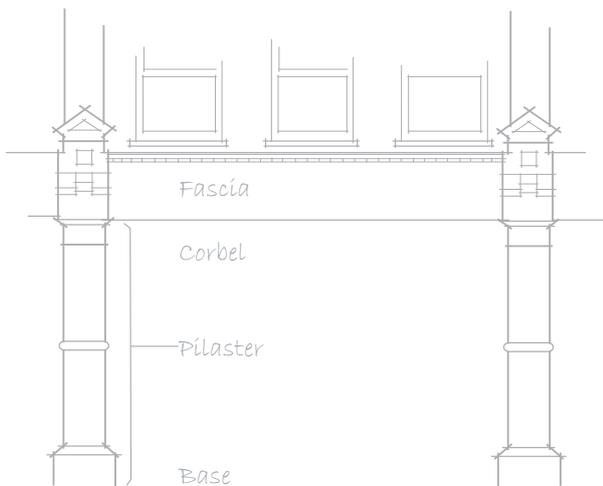


fig. 11 architectural framework

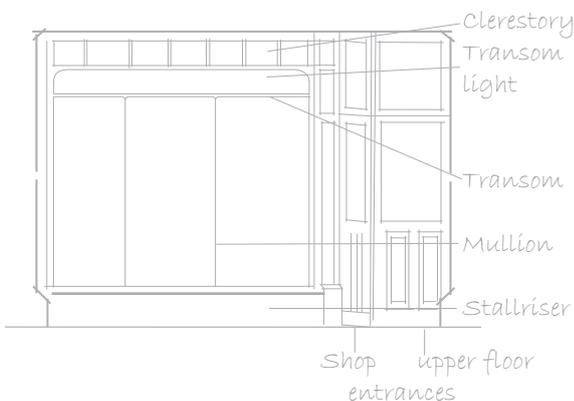


fig. 12 shopfront

## 2 General architectural framework principles

The architectural framework should:

- i Relate to the building or group of buildings on which it is fitted (see fig 7);
- ii Frame the shopfront and give visual support to the upper floors;
- iii Separate shop units visually within the streetscene, creating a strong vertical rhythm;
- iv Respect the proportions of adjacent units and upper floors;



fig. 13 architectural framework converted building



fig. 14 architectural framework

## 2.1 Specific architectural framework principles

### A Pilaster Principles

Pilasters contribute to the vertical emphasis of a building and providing support for the shop and upper floors. The pilaster projects only slightly from the wall, and has a base, a shaft, and a capital.

(1) Pilasters should be modelled and project beyond the plane of the shopfront and the upper floors.

(2) They should not be clad, treated separately on each side of the party line, or cluttered with fixtures such as signs, alarm boxes or blind fittings.

(3) In historic buildings pilasters should be treated in a manner sympathetic to the architectural style of the building.

(4) In historic buildings decorative mouldings should be copied from an original nearby shop or a historical pattern book.



fig. 15 & 16 pilasters

## B Fascia Principles

The fascia was traditionally an angled board containing the trade name or other signs sited between the corbels at the top of the pilasters. The fascia is an area where there is opportunity to create a distinctive and individual style. By applying the following principles a high quality commercial streetscene can also result.



fig. 17 contemporary fascia



fig. 18 traditional fascia



fig. 19 halo lighting



fig. 20 concealed lighting

(5) Cornices should be retained or reinstated as the terminating element of the fascia; they should be weatherproofed using lead flashing or a similar material.

(6) The width of the fascia should be restricted within the pilasters and corbels, or line up with the window frame below where the corbels are missing.

(7) The depth of the fascia should be restricted to the depth of the console. If consoles do not exist the general rule is that the fascia depth should not exceed one-fifth of the distance between the cornice and pavement.

(8) The fascias of adjacent properties should be used as a guide for alignment but not necessarily as a standard.

(9) Overdeep fascias should be reduced when a shopfront is replaced.

(10) The fascia (and other signage) should contain the name and/or trade of the premises together with the street number of the premises and a telephone number if necessary. The lettering should be well spaced and cover a maximum of 3/4 the depth of the fascia. The colour scheme should complement the shop window frames. The lettering style should be simple and bold.

(11) Intermittent, flashing or moving displays will normally be unacceptable.

(12) Wholly backlit fascias will normally be unacceptable. If illumination of the fascia is required this should be done by external means e.g. concealed top light tubes, halo lighting (fig 19 & 20) or carefully positioned spot or backlights concealing the light source. Large spots or swan necks will normally be unacceptable.

(13) Shiny, glossy, highly reflective and luminous colours and materials will normally be unacceptable.

(14) On historic buildings effective and acceptable forms of signage include signwriting on the fasciaboard or the installation of individual letters in metal or wood. Silver or light-coloured lettering on a dark background reflects light at night and used with interior lighting of window displays is successful. This provides the required colour contrast to assist people who are visually impaired.

(15) Alternatively, any illuminated fascia sign on historic buildings should preserve the character and appearance of the building and area. Effective and acceptable forms of illumination are those where the light fitting is concealed. These include:- tubes in trough housings, uplighters or downlighters which should be carefully located so that the spread of light is controlled and not overbright; or internally illuminated individual letters or characters in the form of tubes encased with a translucent face and solid/opaque sides or vice versa, or solid characters raised with tubes beneath to create a halo effect.



fig. 21 halo letters



fig. 22 concealed trough light



fig. 23 concealed spot lights

### 3 General shopfront Principles

i Wholesale removal of shopfronts will be resisted.

ii The design of the shopfront should incorporate easy and convenient access to the premises for everyone, including disabled customers.

iii Materials should be selected with the character of the rest of the building in mind.

iv The type and number of materials should be kept to a minimum; they should be durable and easily maintained.

v The scale and proportion and profile of window frames, glazing bars and door locations should be derived from the characteristics of the street and the architectural style of the upper floors.

vi Generally the horizontal elements such as stallriser sills to door panels, clerestories to fanlights etc should line up with one another (see figs 7-9).

vii In historic buildings the small scale and vertical emphasis should be emphasised by using glazing bars to divide windows into vertically proportioned sections.

viii Entrance doors are normally best located centrally or adjacent to either pilaster. The location of entrance doors needs to respect the established rhythm within the street scene.

ix A separate door to the upper floors should be provided when the opportunity arises. The door should be designed as part of the shopfront. New shopfronts should respect the materials and design of an existing secondary entrance (fig 12).



fig. 24 contemporary stallriser



fig. 25 modeled upstand



fig. 26 traditional stallriser

### 3.1 Specific shopfront Principles

#### A Stallriser Principles

Stallrisers are the solid panels below the shop window they can introduce a horizontal unity in the streetscene. They can also provide a visual base to the shopfront, bring displays of goods closer to the shopper and to protect the glazing from damage.

(16) The materials for stallrisers and upstands should respect the main building and shopfront. Acceptable materials include:- timber, stonework, brickwork to match the upper facades, painted smooth render, slate, quarry, matt finish tiles, or good quality terracotta, faience or ceramics.

(17) In historic buildings traditional stallrisers will normally required in all shop premises. The base of the pilasters or existing traditional stallrisers in adjacent units should determine the height.

(18) The general design and details of mouldings and cills should respect the architectural period of the property.

(19) A solid upstand of at least 150mm will be required.

## B Window frame and door Principles

Windows and doors, through the use of colour, interesting shapes and proportions, quality materials and lively window displays can add visual interest to the streetscene and produce a distinctive individual shop unit.

The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) requires that all buildings containing shops or providing public services are accessible to disabled people. Easy access to and circulation within shops is important to everyone, including people who use wheelchairs; those who cannot walk easily, people who are deaf, people who are blind or visually impaired and to the elderly, children, and people with pushchairs, prams or trolleys. Inclusive design enables this to be achieved to the greatest effect and should be employed in the installation of new doors and access arrangements in shop units.

(21) The detailed design of the size, shape and profile of window frames, glazing bars and doors should respect the architectural style and period of the premises.

(22) The plane of shop windows should be slightly recessed from the pilasters.

(23) A variation in the plane, by recessing doors or curving windows, can add to visual interest. Deeply recessed windows or completely open frontages are unacceptable in visual and functional terms.

(24) Concertina or folding shopfronts need a strong architectural framework to provide support for the upper storeys when 'open' and the integration of the front within the streetscene. Elements such as an upstand to each door should be incorporated. These provide a visual base to the shopfront, and helps to integrate it with surrounding shopfronts when 'closed'.

(25) In historic buildings a traditional height stallriser should be part of the design with windows opening above this height only.

(26) Large areas of glazing should incorporate visual manifestation, (alerting people who are visually impaired to the presence of the glass see fig 32) at least 150mm high, across the width of the glazed area, at two heights: 850-1000mm and 1400-1600mm above ground level, to ensure visibility against the background seen through the glass.

(27) Glazing should always be transparent, even in non-retail units. Opaque, frosted, reflective, mirrored or tinted glass is normally unacceptable, unless it has a functional use in small, selective areas. Shatterproof safety glass (laminated glass) should be used to ensure public safety and as a security measure.



fig. 27 opening shopfront fixed stallriser



fig. 28 opening shopfront

(28) Mechanised ventilation units create clutter and should be sensitively accommodated to the rear of the property. Alternative acceptable methods of ventilation include opening fanlights above the door or transom bar and decorative grilles in the stallriser or clerestory.

(29) A shop window display should be maintained at all times in order to maintain the continuity and interest of the shopping frontage. The internal illumination of window displays at night is encouraged, to increase safety and security and reduce the need for illuminated advertisements.



fig. 29 simple display



fig. 30 entrance ramp

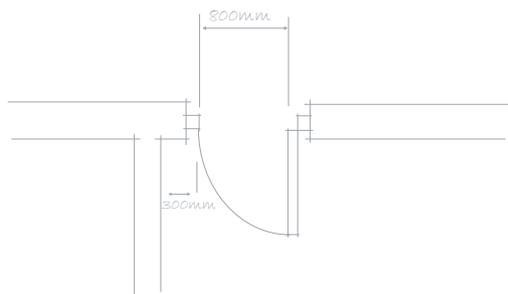


fig. 31 entrance dimensions

(30) Solid or partly infilled frontages will always be unacceptable even on non-retail uses such as restaurants, banks and office uses. An internal screen should be provided in the form of a permanent display behind the glass, curtains or blinds. However, autoteller machines may be acceptable where they can be satisfactorily integrated into the shopfront as a whole and incorporate a substantial litter bin/receipt collector.

(31) Doors to shopfronts are not permitted to open outwards over the Public Highway as this would contravene Section 153 of the Highways Act 1980.

(32) In historic buildings the materials for window frames, glazing bars and doors should be selected with the architectural style and period of the premises and area in mind. Painted timber is the recognised quality material for a shopfront, as it can be easily modelled, adapted, and repaired, correctly sourced timber is also a sustainable material.

(33) Basic milled silver aluminium produces a shoddy appearance, which is unacceptable in all circumstances.

(34) Entrance doors should provide a minimum clear opening width of 830mm for wheelchair access on a flat fronted shop. There may, however, be circumstances that would allow a narrower opening of not less than 800mm but advice should be sought from the Council's Access Officer prior to any work taking place on site. A 900mm door is the optimum width for providing adequate clear opening. Where doors are recessed or frontages splayed the pavement entrance should be a minimum of 1200mm wide.

(35) In the case of manually operated double entrance doors, the minimum clear width provided by one leaf of the entrance doors should be 800mm. This may necessitate the use of a door and a half arrangement, where one, larger leaf measures provides least 800mm clear opening width and the smaller, narrower leaf is shut unless the full width is needed for transporting large loads (fig 32).

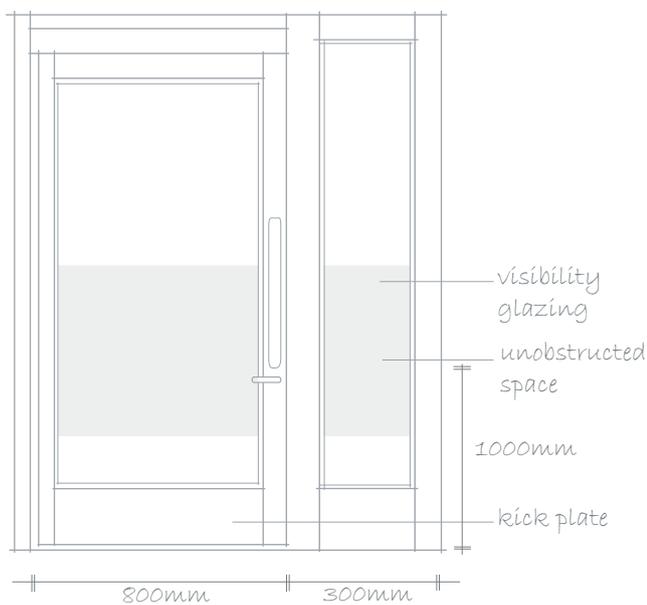


fig. 32 entrance elevation

(36) Ramps outside the premises on the forecourt or footway will be resisted. Any ramp on the highway will require a license under the Highways Act 1980.

(37) Thresholds at entrances should be level. Changes in level should be accommodated within the shop unit by ramps no steeper than 1:14 and a minimum of 1200mm wide. Thresholds should have non-slip surfaces, with flush weathermatting. Coir matting should never be used.

(38) Entrance doors should include a kicking plate; door handles should be easy to operate, positioned 1000mm above ground level and be of a lever or tubular design (not continuous pole types or knobs), and clearly signed if necessary (ie "automatic", "push").

(39) If automatic doors are not incorporated door closers should be of a minimum opening pressure (not spring closers) allowing the door/doors to open easily and remain open to facilitate convenient access for wheelchairs, prams and pushchairs. In this scenario a ring for assistance sign should also be displayed.

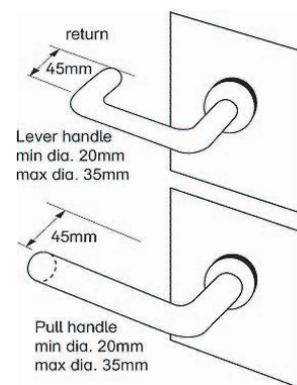


fig. 33 door handles



fig. 34 street with hanging signs



fig 35 projecting sign

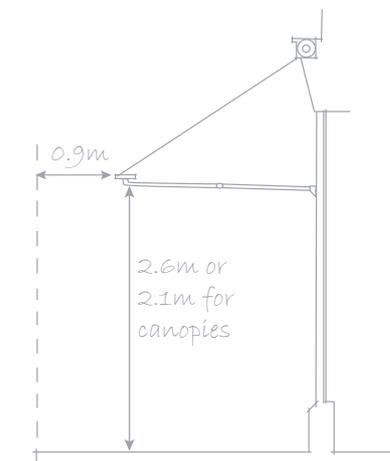


fig 36 canopies and signs

### 3 Other elements

This section looks at a series of other elements that form part of the standard shopfront, as described in section two, such as blinds, projecting signs and security shutters. They should be considered as part of the main design process.

#### A Projecting Signs

Projecting signs can provide a useful form of advertising where identity is necessary from a longer distance, and if illuminated on premises that are open after dark. However, the proliferation of such signage can create visual clutter in the townscape thus undermining their advertising purpose.

(40) Only one projecting sign for each shop unit or structural bay will be permitted.

(41) Where a unit is located on a corner site the projecting signs should be located at that end of the fascia, which is farthest from the corner. This enables the trader to maximise presences while minimising the visual clutter.

(42) Projecting signs should normally be installed at fascia level, at either end of the fascia panel. Signs should not be fixed to the pilasters or decorative capitals.

(43) The size of a projecting sign and any frame or support should be modest. Generally maximum dimensions of 600x600x100mm will be appropriate.

(44) The content of all signs should be restricted to the shop name or service and not relate to specific commercial products or services.

(45) A sign projecting over the Public Highway will need a minimum vertical clearance of 2.6 meters to the underside of the sign, and a minimum horizontal clearance between the sign and the carriageway of 0.9 metres (see fig. 36).

(46) If illumination of the sign is required this should be done by external means e.g. concealed top light tubes, halo lighting or spot or backlights of an appropriate design and positioned to conceal the light source. Large spots or swan necks will normally be unacceptable.

(47) On historic buildings projecting signs should be non-illuminated and of a traditional hanging or bracketed design. A slim signwritten panel will avoid visual clutter and ensure visual separation from the main fascia and building

(48) On historic buildings brackets for hanging signs should be reused and designed so that the panel can be replaced.

(49) Hanging signs at first floor level are acceptable on pubs and where they replace an existing sign at that level.

## B Blinds and canopies

There is a good historical precedent for the installation of blinds or canopies on shop units. However, the style, colour, material, location, and number of blinds or canopies installed can affect the character of a streetscene.

(50) Existing original or traditional canvas blinds and blind boxes should be retained and refurbished.

(51) The mechanism for the blind should ideally be located at the base of the fascia, behind a blind lath. If the shopfront is not being altered, it may be appropriate to position the blind mechanism above the cornice (see fig 37).

(52) A canopy or blind projecting over the Public Highway will need a maximum vertical clearance, measured from the surface of the Highway to the underside of the canopy of 2.6 metres. A folding canopy or blind will require a minimum vertical clearance of 2.1 metres. A minimum horizontal clearance of 0.9 metres will be required from the edge of the carriageway to the canopy (see fig38).

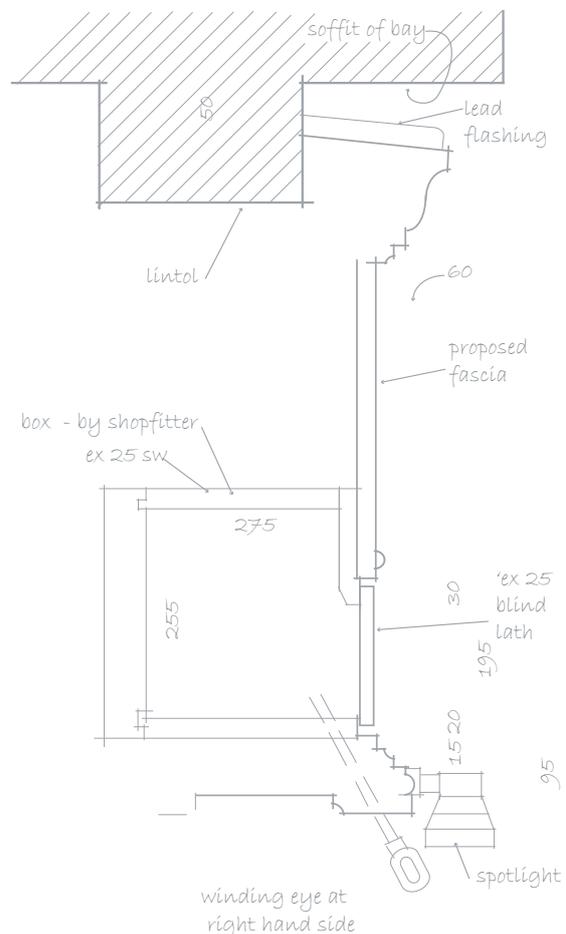


fig 37 fixing mechanisms

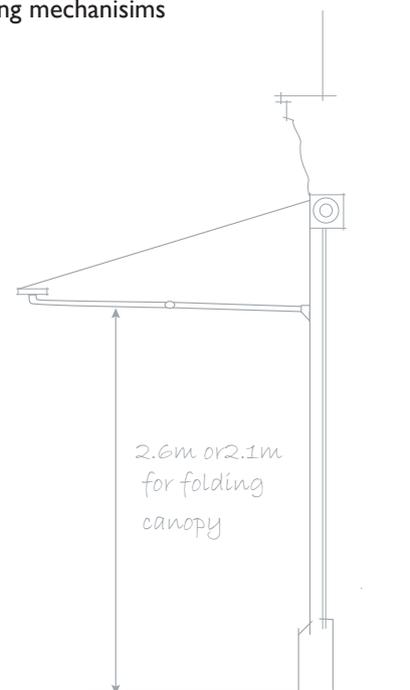


fig 38 canopy dimensions



fig 39- 41 apron canopys

(53) On historic buildings the design of any blind installed should relate to the architectural character of the building or area generally. The historical precedent for Victorian and Edwardian buildings constructed between 1830 and 1911 is for a blind of a straight roller or apron type.

(54) Modern buildings in conservation areas should use a blind of a design comparable with the historic and architectural character of the area, normally a straight roller blind.

(55) The design and method of installation of all blinds should relate satisfactorily to the features of a building and the general streetscene in both the open and retracted state. 'Dutch' or fixed canopies obscure parts of the shopfront in both states and introduce discordant forms into the streetscene and are therefore unacceptable.

(56) Blinds should be made of canvas or a similar non-reflective material.

(58) The display of advertising material should be avoided unless other opportunities for advertisement are limited.

### C Additional signage

When business premises have a forecourt there is consent to display additional signage, indicating any commercial services, goods for sale or other services available at the premises. Typically these notices take the form of A board signs. The notices must:

- be at ground floor
- not exceed 4.5 square meters on each forecourt
- not be illuminated
- consider issues relevant to the Disability and Discrimination Act

The pavement in front of a premises which forms part of the highway is not a forecourt. Where there is a desire to provide additional signage for a business an application must be made under highway legislation. These applications will be considered on the grounds of safety and access. The council will normally resist them on these grounds.

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### Wall mounted signs

Notices or signs may be displayed on any premises to advertise the fact that a person, partnership or company is carrying on a profession, business or trade at those premises. These should not be over .3 of a square metre in area.

Signs need to be mounted so they are in colour contrast with their background wall. The colours of the sign background and of the lettering on the sign need to contrast with one another.

### D Security shutters

Solid metal shutters result in an unattractive environment out of shopping hours, attract graffiti and reduce safety and security for the public. They deaden the streetscene and discourage pedestrians from using streets out of shopping hours. Night lighting of the interior of shop window displays encourages pedestrian use of the street out of hours providing passive surveillance that deters vandals and thieves.

(59) The use of external solid metal roller shutters is unacceptable.

(60) Any security device should have a minimum effect on the architectural features and appearance of a building or the character of the streetscene.

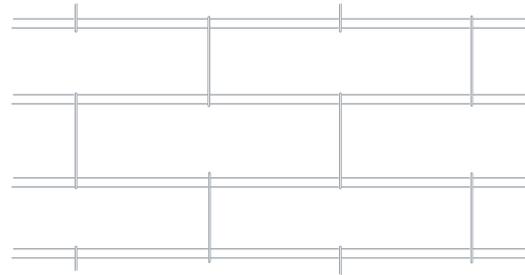


fig 42 brick bond lattice

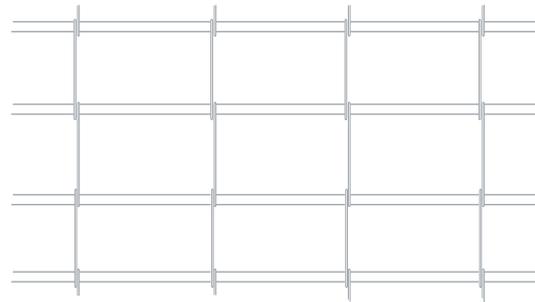


fig 43 in line lattice



fig 44 internal lattice



fig 45 internal lattice & illumination



fig 46 canopy beneath cornice & shutter behind fascia

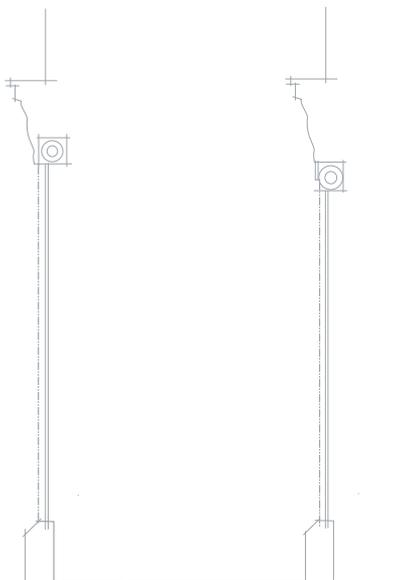


fig 47 installation of external shutters

(60) Acceptable security options are:

Laminated or toughened glass, which is shatterproof, and unobtrusively positioned burglar alarms.

Lattice shutters placed inside the shop window providing they do not affect the external appearance of the property (see fig 44-46).

External lattice (with open grilles) shutters provided that they are installed in one of the solutions illustrated in fig 47.

(61) The mechanism for the shutter should ideally be located, and concealed behind the fascia. Suitable methods of installation are illustrated in fig 47 below.

(62) On historic buildings external metal shutters of any design will normally be unacceptable.

### E Suspended ceilings

Modern retailing methods often result in the installation of a false or suspended ceiling within a shop. This can result in unbalanced proportions to the shopfront and a loss of the horizontal lines in the streetscene.

(63) The installation of suspended ceilings should not result in an extension of the fascia or any other detrimental effect on the frontage. One of the design solutions illustrated below should be used.

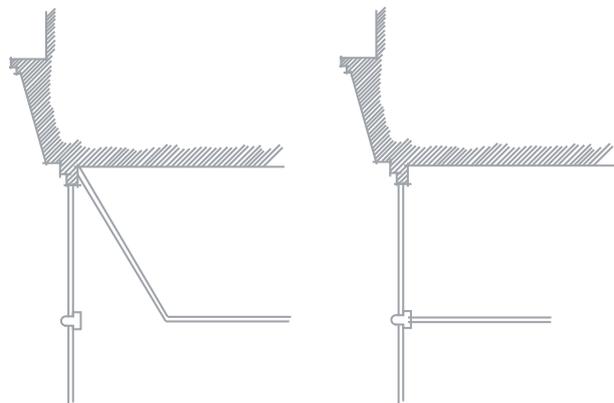


fig 48 suspended ceilings