

# LDF



October 2005

## WIGAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



# Shop Front Design Guide

Supplementary Planning Document



Planning and Regeneration Department

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To assist people with particular needs this SPD can be made available on request in larger print, braille and in a number of alternative languages.

### Arabic

"بالإمكان توفير هذه المعلومات في اللغة العربية."

### Cantonese

這些資料可提供中文譯本。

### Farsi

این اطلاعات به زبان فارسی هم میتواند در دسترس شما قرار گیرد.

### French

Disponible en francais sur  
demande

### Gujurati

આ માહિતી ગુજરાતીમાં મળી શકે છે.

### Urdu

یہ معلومات اُردو میں بھی دستیاب ہو سکتی ہیں۔



# Contents

|      |       |   |    |
|------|-------|---|----|
| PART | ONE   | The purpose of the guide and how to use it                          | I  |
|      |       | I.0 Why is the design of the shop front important?                  | I  |
|      |       | I.1 The purpose of the guide  | I  |
|      |       | I.2 The status of the guide   | I  |
|      |       | I.3 When do you need planning permission?                           | 2  |
|      |       | I.4 Planning policies   | 3  |
|      |       | I.5 Building Regulations  | 3  |
|      |       | I.6 Fire Safety requirements  | 4  |
|      |       | I.7 Planning application requirement checklist                      | 4  |
|      |       | I.8 Sustainable resources   | 4  |
| PART | TWO   | General design principles and considerations                        | 5  |
|      |       | 2.1 Designing a shop front as part of the whole building            | 5  |
|      |       | 2.2 Vertical and horizontal emphasis                                | 5  |
|      |       | 2.3 Scale, height and proportion                                    | 6  |
|      |       | 2.4 Three-dimensional detailing                                     | 6  |
|      |       | 2.5 Access for all  | 6  |
| PART | THREE | The principal architectural elements of the shop front              | 9  |
|      |       | 3.1 Details of the principal shop front elements                    | 9  |
|      |       | 3.2 Understanding the function of the principle shop front elements | 9  |
|      |       | A Fascia - Oversized fascia sign versus suspended ceilings          | 9  |
|      |       | B Cornice   | 10 |
|      |       | C Stallriser  | 11 |
|      |       | D Shop windows  | 11 |
|      |       | E Entrance door   | 12 |



|      |       |   |    |
|------|-------|---|----|
|      | F     | Pilaster  | 12 |
|      | G     | Corbels   | 13 |
|      | 3.3   | Different shop front styles                       | 13 |
|      | 3.3.1 | Traditional style                                 | 13 |
|      | 3.3.2 | Modern or contemporary style                      | 14 |
|      | 3.4   | Materials and colour                              | 15 |
|      | 3.5   | Repairs and maintenance to shop fronts            | 16 |
| PART | FOUR  | Other key shop front elements                     | 17 |
|      | 4.1   | Blinds and canopies                               | 17 |
|      | 4.2   | Ventilation                                       | 18 |
|      | 4.3   | External security and telecommunication equipment | 18 |
|      | 4.4   | Change of use                                     | 18 |
|      | 4.5   | Shops on corner sites                             | 19 |
|      | 4.6   | Provision of public art                           | 20 |
| PART | FIVE  | Shop security measures                            | 21 |
|      | 5.1   | Shatterproof, toughened laminated glass           | 21 |
|      | 5.2   | Internal security shutters and grilles            | 21 |
|      | 5.3   | Decorative external grilles                       | 22 |
|      | 5.4   | Reinforced stallrisers                            | 22 |
|      | 5.5   | External roller shutters and grilles              | 22 |
| PART | SIX   | Signs   | 25 |
|      | 6.1   | Number of signs                                   | 25 |
|      | 6.2   | Sign sizes  | 25 |
|      | 6.3   | Lettering and symbols                             | 25 |
|      | 6.4   | Corporate identities                              | 26 |



|      |       |                              |    |
|------|-------|------------------------------|----|
|      | 6.5   | Different types of signs     | 26 |
|      | 6.5.1 | Fascia signs                 | 26 |
|      | 6.5.2 | Hanging and projecting signs | 26 |
|      | 6.5.3 | Box signs                    | 27 |
|      | 6.5.4 | Business nameplates          | 28 |
| PART | SEVEN | Sign lighting                | 29 |
|      | 7.1   | General requirements         | 29 |
|      | 7.2   | External sign lighting       | 29 |
|      | 7.3   | Internal sign lighting       | 30 |
|      | 7.4   | Lighting shop front windows  | 30 |

## Appendices

|             |   |    |
|-------------|---|----|
| APPENDIX A  | Access to information and how to contact us | 31 |
| APPENDIX B1 | Planning policies                           | 33 |
| APPENDIX B2 | Planning applications requirement checklist | 35 |

## Adoption and Sustainability Appraisal

Wigan Council adopted the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Shop Front Design Guide on the 31st October 2005.

A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the SPD was conducted to discover how it might influence the sustainability assessment made in 2003 of the relevant Unitary Development Plan policies and proposals. The conclusion was that the SPD was found to have no negative sustainability impact. A copy of the SA is available on request, and the impact of the SPD will be monitored in the future.



## ONE

# The purpose of the guide and how to use it

## 1.0 Why is the design of a shop front important?

The design of any shop front and its associated advertisements has two significant roles to play. The main role is to attract our attention in order to ensure economic success and employment opportunities. The second, less apparent role is to help influence or improve the appearance and attractiveness of our shopping streets and centres within the borough.

The shop front, advertisements, signage, canopies, external lighting, shop security measures and access facilities are all elements, which if well designed can help to promote a confident image of the shop itself. They can make positive contributions to the character and trading success of the street or shopping centre in which it is located.

whether it is for an individual shop/building located on a street or a shop located within an indoor shopping centre with a street frontage.

The purpose of the guide is to:

- provide planning guidance;
- provide general and detailed design advice; and
- indicate the standards and quality of design we are looking for when we consider planning applications.

As buildings vary in height, scale and massing, this guide should be used as a practical tool rather than a long list of things to do and not to do. We encourage all applicants to discuss their proposals with planning staff before they make a formal application. Each planning application is always considered on its own merits.

We must state that this guide does not seek to replace the need for skilled qualified designers, or attempt to stifle design innovation and creativity.

## 1.1 The purpose of the guide

Whether you are planning to alter, replace or construct a new shop front and its related signage, planning permission will be required. See section 1.3 for further details. This guide has been written to help anyone who wants to submit a planning application,

## 1.2 The status of the guide

The guide holds the status of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), this means that it both supports and reinforces the planning policies as set out in the current UDP, adopted in 1996 and the emerging draft Replacement UDP, which is due to





replace the existing UDP. The SPD is a material consideration and will be used to help decide planning applications and defend decisions made at appeals.

This SPD will work in conjunction with the Council's **Advertisement Design Guide**, which is an informal guidance note. It is intended that a review of the Advertisement Design Guide will commence next year in order to update it formally. It will then be known as a Supplementary Planning Document. This will be programmed in the forth-coming review of the Local Development Scheme.

This guide has been subject to a 4-week public consultation exercise. From which the comments received were considered in full, and used to help inform and shape the document.

### 1.3 When do you need planning permission?

Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, planning permission will be required for any material changes in the external appearance of a shop. This includes the installation of a new shop front, alterations, extensions or replacement works, which, for example, could cover:

- The installation of external security measures such as grilles and shutters.
- Replacement of existing doors and

windows with those of a different design or materials.

- Removal or addition of glazing bars with modern aluminium or plastic equivalents.
- Removal or alteration of steps or a ramp.

**It is important to note that in addition to Planning Permission, you may need Listed Building Consent and Advertisement Consent.**

**Listed Building Consent** will be required for any works we consider would affect the character of a listed building. An example of possible works could include:

- the removal or replacement of any architectural features;
- fixing security shutters;
- installing blinds;
- advertisements; and
- repainting in a different colour.

General repair works and routine maintenance work that do not change the external appearance of a shop front do not require planning permission, but if a shop is a Listed Building then you may need Listed Building Consent.

**Advertisement Consent** is often required for the display of signs including most illuminated signs. The Advertisement Regulations are complex and we would advise you to consult us at the earliest



opportunity before formally submitting an application for Advertisement Consent.

Advertisement Consent is normally required for illuminated signs and it is normally required for any illuminated sign in a Conservation area. However there are a number of exceptions to the rule, for example medical signage.

Normally Advertisement Consent will be required for all signs:

- located above a first floor window cill;
- where the highest part of the sign is more than 4.6 metres above ground level; and
- where the sign is advertising goods or premises elsewhere.

Please refer to Part 7: Sign lighting on page 29 for further information.

Please be aware enforcement action may be taken against alterations or works carried out without planning permission where such permission is needed, and where works are detrimental to the visual amenities of an area or the character or appearance of a building. This may involve the removal of the new works undertaken and the reinstatement of the original fabric.

It is therefore essential to read this guide in conjunction with both sets of the UDP planning policies in mind, in particular:

The **Adopted** UDP policies are:

- EN7** Design
- EN7A** Design of New Development
- EN7B** Advertisement
- EN7C** Design of Frontages to Shops and Commercial Premises
- EN7F** Disabled Access
- EN8** Conservation
- EN8A** Development and Design in Conservation Areas
- EN8B** Listed Buildings

The emerging **draft Replacement** UDP policies:

- EV3** Design
- EV3A** Design of New Development
- EV3B** Advertisements
- EV3C** Design of Frontages to Shops and Commercial Premises
- EV3H** Public Art
- EV4** Conservation
- EV4A** Development and Design in Conservation Areas
- EV4B** Listed Buildings
- EV4C** Buildings and Structures of Local Architectural Interest and Historical Interest
- A1** Accessibility
- A1C** Access for All

Please refer to Appendix B1 on page 33 for a summary of these policies.

## 1.4 Planning policies

The advice provided in the document both supports and supplements the planning policies as set out in the adopted and emerging draft Replacement Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

## 1.5 Building Regulations

Building Regulations approval will be needed for any work requiring structural alterations or changes to a shop that would affect a means of escape or would make access more difficult for people with disabilities. Because the



requirements of Building Regulations are complex we recommend that you contact our Building Control Service to discuss your proposal before starting any works.

Please refer to page 32 for contact details.

## 1.6 Fire Safety requirements

Please take note of the following points of guidance,

- 1 The available clear width of entrance/exit doors for means of escape purposes is directly related to the potential occupant capacity of the premises.
- 2 Only approved type exit door furniture should be used on doors required for means of escape purposes.
- 3 Please be aware that as from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 under Article 14 (2) (e) of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 that sliding or revolving doors must not be used for exits intended as emergency exits.
- 4 Provision should be made for exit signage.

For further advice on fire safety matters please refer to page 32 for the contact details of the GM Fire and Rescue Service.

## 1.7 Planning application requirement checklist

To ensure high quality developments and avoid unnecessary delay in the processing of planning applications, the application

drawings must show sufficient information. Plans and drawings should be clearly and professionally presented and should illustrate how the proposal relates to its immediate context.

Application forms are available from the Planning and Regeneration Department and can also be downloaded from the department's web site at [www.wiganmbc.gov.uk](http://www.wiganmbc.gov.uk).

Please refer to **Appendix B** on page 35 for the requirement checklist.

## 1.8 Sustainable resources

We expect all shop front proposals to promote sustainability principles within their design, construction and performance. These principles must aim to reduce the impacts upon climate change, improve energy efficiency, reduce the use of primary minerals, and promote the reuse and recycling of materials and buildings where appropriate.

With 10% of the UK energy consumption being used in the production and transportation of construction materials, careful consideration needs to be given as to on how to deliver sustainable construction. This is particularly the case during the product purchasing process where consideration must be given to how the material is made, transported, used and disposed of.

## TWO

# General design principles and considerations

Whether you are designing a new shop front or planning to alter or replace an existing shop front, it is important to consider what visual impact the shop front will have upon the building it forms part of and the wider appearance of the street in which it will be viewed.

Indeed the function of any shop front is to inform the public of the nature of the business. And if it is to be successfully integrated into its surroundings, it will need to address and respond to a number of established design criteria.



In some cases, other properties and similar businesses adjoin these premises, further allowing for the horizontal and vertical emphasis to be carried along several shop frontages. It is these dimensions and the scale of these frontages that will provide the visual framework for any new shop front.

## 2.1 Designing a shop front as part of the whole building

The shop front and building have to be considered and designed as a whole unit within the street, to ensure that the upper floors and the shop front are seen together, rather than as separate elements of the building.

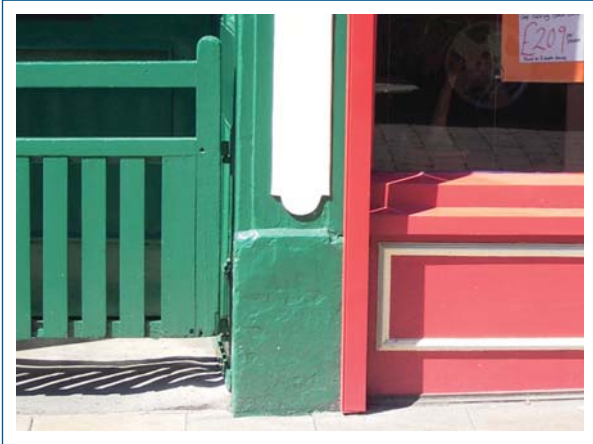
## 2.2 Vertical and horizontal emphasis

The majority of shops and commercial premises in the borough's towns are in narrow fronted properties that have a strong vertical emphasis.



## 2.3 Scale, height and proportion

The scale and height of the shop front must be in proportion with the rest of the building. For example, in a small-scale building the shop front must also be small. This will allow the design of the shop front to fit within the original structural framework of the building.



**Good example of a small scale shop**

## 2.5 Access for all

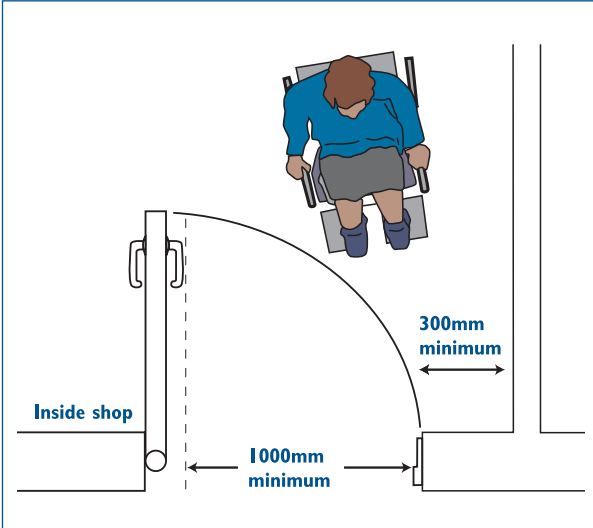
You must take every opportunity to make sure that access to and circulation within shops is made possible for all members of the public. This provision must take into account people who experience mobility and sight difficulties, which include disabled people, the elderly, young children and people with push chairs or trolleys.

## 2.4 Three-dimensional detailing

Introducing three-dimensional detailing helps to increase the visual interest of both the shop front and the street. By providing visual emphasis to the individual elements including stallrisers, pilasters and window mullions (please refer to Section 3.1 – Details of the principal shop front elements on page 9) the shop front design can add relief and texture to the whole building elevation and the wider street scene.

Three-dimensional detailing provides the essential finishing touch to the shop front.

All designs should conform to current standards BS 8300:2001 and Part M of the Building Regulations where applicable. Further details are available from our Building Control Section.





**Set out below are some of the key general principles that must be adhered to for any new shops, alterations and refurbishments:**

Changes in level at the main entrance and within shops should be avoided. If unavoidable a suitable ramp should be provided, where possible, which should be no more than a 1 in 12 gradient.

2 Where entrance steps are unavoidable people should be able to easily appreciate where to place their feet by highlighting the overhanging edges of steps and avoiding open rises.



3 Adequate space should be provided in lobbies to allow for manoeuvring of wheelchairs and pushchairs as per BS 8300:2001 of Part M of the Building Regulations.



4 The door must be easily distinguishable in the façade, a factor that could be achieved by recessing the door or using a detail colour. Recessing the doorways often reduces the need for a step.



5 Doors should be easy to open, or preferably be automatically opening. The door should have a preferred effective clear opening width of 1000mm and an unobstructed space of at least 300mm should be provided between the leading edge of a door, and a return wall unless the door is opened



by remote control. A level threshold should always be provided.

- 6 Doors will always need to open outwards (in the direction of exit travel) if the shop occupancy exceeds 60 people. It may need to be recessed.

- 10 The handle to the door should contrast in colour from the door and be easy to grasp. A lever handle is easier to use than a door knob.

- 11 The entrance doorway should be well lit.

- 12 It is unlawful to display goods or advertising boards outside on the public footway as these cause dangerous obstructions and may be removed.

**Good example of a recessed ramped entrance and level landing with powered entrance doors**



- 7 Revolving doors should be avoided but if essential should be supplemented by hinged or sliding doors, which are available at all times.

- 8 Glazing in the door should extend to a low level to give maximum visibility, but a 400mm push plate on the bottom rail of the door will assist people to enter the shop whilst protecting the door from damage.

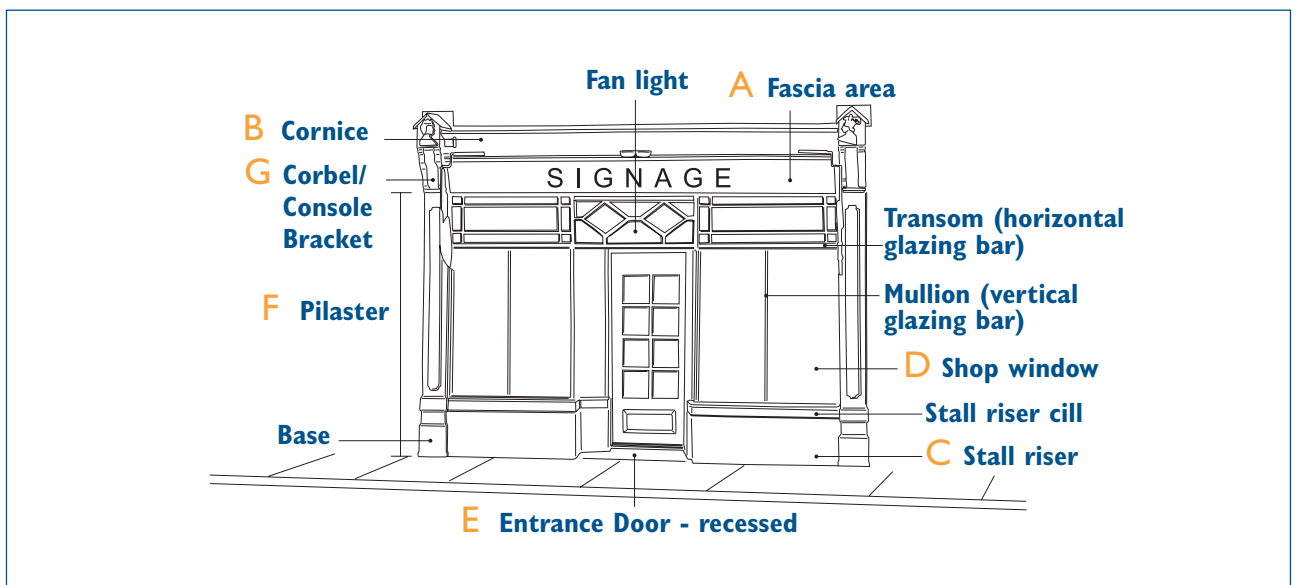
- 9 Glazed doors or large areas of glass should have visually contrasting areas in the form of a logo, sign or decorative feature at two levels, 850mm to 1000mm and 1400mm to 1600mm from the floor, in order to indicate their closed position to partially sighted people.

## THREE

# The principal architectural elements of the shop front

## 3.1 Details of the principal shop front elements

The design of a shop front is based on a number of key architectural features and elements, which link together to form a visual and functional framework. These key elements are:



## 3.2 Understanding the function and the principles of shop front elements

### A Fascia

The fascia is the area where the shop's name is located and in a traditional design is normally positioned between the console bracket and capital of the pilaster which are positioned at either end of the fascia.

The scale and design of the fascia should always be in proportion to the

design of the shop front and the height of the building as a whole.

Constructing new smaller fascias directly below the main fascia is not normally acceptable.

The main shop sign is located within the fascia area and any signs should not aim to cover up or damage any significant architectural features or any original shop front details, including consoles, decorative brick courses and window cills at first floor level.

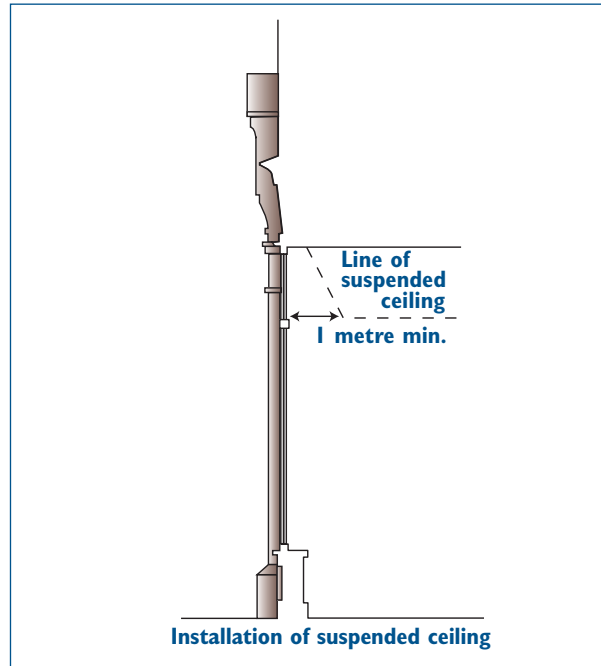




## Oversized fascia signs versus suspended ceilings

In the past oversized fascia signs have been used to help conceal from view a suspended ceiling inside the shop. Where a false or suspended ceiling exists or is being inserted within the shop it will not be appropriate to increase the depth of the fascia to conceal the edge of the ceiling. Other methods must be considered to hide a false ceiling, for example, setting the suspended ceiling back from the window or forming a splayed bulkhead, or linking it into a transom rail with obscured glazing above the rail.

Please refer to **page 25** for further information on sign details.



## B Cornice

A cornice is usually timber in construction and is an important part of a traditional shop front design in terms of both decoration and function. It provides a horizontal line between the shop front and the upper floors and gives weather protection to the shop. If the projection is sufficient the cornice may incorporate a trough light, however it should be sited well below any upper floor window cills.

These photographs show two acceptable cornice details.



## C Stallriser

The stallriser provides the solid base to the shop front and has a number of uses, for example, it:

- could allow the shop to display its goods at waist height;
- protects the bottom of the shop from knocks and kicks;
- screens unattractive floor areas from public view; and
- helps to create a horizontal link with the adjoining buildings.
- can be reinforced to provide protection against ram raiding. Please see the **Shop security section** on **page 21** for further details.

Materials used to construct the stallriser should always respect and enhance the materials of the whole building and the shop front.



**Example of a timber stallriser**



**Example of a brick stallriser**



**Example of glass blocks stallriser. This material has been used to help natural light filter through to the basement**

## D Shop windows

The size and style of the window(s) and the glazing bars, mullions and transoms, need to be in scale and proportion with the rest of the shop front and building. They should be designed to reflect the historic and architectural period of the whole building and the character of the street. The number, location and dividing up of any glazed areas must relate to the upper floor windows and any adjoining buildings.





## E Entrance door

The location, size and style of the door should always reflect the character of the building and street and relate in scale and proportion to the upper part of the building and any adjoining buildings.

The photograph shows a good example of a traditional door.



Recessed doorways are commonly used in traditional and older shops. They allow for an increased window area and a larger display area. They are also used to provide a level access for wheelchair users by bridging the change in levels between the shop floor and the street level. In the past many recessed doorways have been removed however our preferred option would be for shops, particularly those located within conservation areas and/or in listed buildings to be reinstated.

Please refer to **Section 2.5 – Access For All** for further details on page 6.



This photograph shows a good example of a recessed doorway with level access.

If additional door openings are needed to gain access to the upper floors their design and location should match the rest of the shop front design and style. They should normally be located immediately adjacent to the main door or at opposite ends of the shop front.

## F Pilaster

Pilasters provide vertical framing to the shop front and establish physical separations between adjoining shop fronts. They are a traditional building feature designed with a base and capital. Usually constructed of timber or brick they can be used at each side of the doorway.

The photograph shows a stone, timber and brick pilaster





It is important to note that particularly within Conservation Areas, on Listed Buildings and older buildings where the original shop front details still exist, for example cornices and pilasters, they should not be removed. Where they have been removed the opportunity should be taken to reinstate them.

Where there is an existing shop front of good quality then it should normally be refurbished or repaired as a first course of action. Full replacement will only be acceptable if it can be shown to be essential.

**The following photographs are good examples of traditional shop fronts**

## G

### Corbels

The corbel or console brackets support the cornice and are usually present at the top of the pilasters, which are located at each end of the shop front. The corbel or console brackets projection above the fascia should be between 15 - 30 centimetres high.



## 3.3 Different shop front styles

In essence, traditional and modern or contemporary are the two main design styles used for shop front design.

### 3.3.1 Traditional style

The traditional design approach is normally called for within Conservation Areas, on a Listed Building or a building of local interest. The style of the shop front should reflect and complement the character, age and materials of the building as a whole, and the area within which it is located.





### 3.3.2 Modern or contemporary style

Modern or contemporary design can be successfully incorporated into traditional building facades and contribute positively to neighbouring buildings and the street scene, provided careful consideration and respect is given to:

- the age and style of the building;
- the scale and proportion of the building;
- the choice of materials; and
- high quality craftsmanship, which should be used in order to achieve the best finish.

Experience has shown that the most successful modern or contemporary designed shop fronts are based upon the reworking and re-interpretation of traditional forms and details and the introduction of new elements and materials. The following section provides a brief description on the function and principles of the shop front elements.

Whichever design style is chosen it is important to recognise that the design of any shop front must aim to create activity and interest at pedestrian level and the chosen design should not visually cut itself off from the building above.

The following photographs are good examples of modern/contemporary designs.



### 3.4 Materials and colour

The character of the building, street and any adjoining buildings should be used to influence the choice of materials and colours.

The number of different materials and colours must be kept to a minimum in order to avoid a clash with the adjoining buildings and the character of the street.

Within Conservation Areas, on Listed Buildings and older buildings, the use of non-traditional materials, for example, fibreglass and plastics, whether shiny or reflective, will not be permitted as their appearance often conflicts with the character and historic period of the building and area.

Traditional materials, for example timber, brick and stone are considered to be more suitable because they can offer a variety of textures and colours, which add to the general appearance of the shop.



Timber is one of the most adaptable materials for shop front construction, mainly as a result of being low in cost and easy to work with. However in the interest of protecting our natural environment we recommend the use of timber from sustainable and properly managed sources.

Where brickwork is to be incorporated into new shop fronts it should always aim to match the colour and type of the upper part of the building.

For indoor shopping centres only, there are a number of special requirements relating to fire resistant materials. We would advise you to consult our Building Control Section to discuss the requirements. Please refer to **page 32** for the contact details.



Any colour scheme should enhance the design of the shop front and highlight important decorative features.





## 3.5 Repairs and maintenance to shop fronts

A degree of care must be taken in deciding whether to repair or replace an existing shop front. Often original shop front features are hidden by more recent additions to the building and in such cases the preferred option would be to retain and restore those features in any new scheme.

Most shopping streets have some empty shops and to avoid them detracting from the character of the street and depressing the attractiveness of the shopping area owners must ensure that maintenance and repair is continued.

