



Shopfront Design and Security in Historic Areas

Introduction

This booklet provides guidance on shop front design in historic areas, including security grilles and alarms. It expands upon the policies contained in the Guildford Borough Local Plan, and is complemented by the Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 'Advertisements and Signs'. The Council aims to encourage high standards of design in the Borough's built environment, and has particular interest in the quality of its historic areas.

Shopfronts play a major role in the aesthetics and character of any street scene both individually and collectively. A well designed shop front is also a valuable asset with which to promote a business's image.

This Design Guide will be used as Supplementary Planning Guidance by the Borough Council and replaces Guildford Borough Council's previous SPGs 'Shop Front Design in Historic Areas' June 1994 and 'Shop Security Grilles and Alarms' June 1994.

Shopfronts will comprise, to varying degrees, of the main shopfront frames doorway, signage, blinds and security shutters, and all these things need to be considered together to create an integrated scheme. The design of the shopfront should complement the existing structure and design of the buildings elevation.

What Permission is Needed?

Alteration and replacement of shopfronts will generally require permission.

Planning permission is required for the replacement of a complete shopfront, a significant alteration to any shopfront, and the installation of a blind or canopy, shutters or grilles.

Listed Building Consent is required for any works to a statutory listed building. This includes internal and external alterations. Any demolition which includes the removal of historic fabric will generally be resisted.

Conservation Area Consent will be required for the demolition or partial demolition of an existing unlisted shopfront in a conservation area. Listed Building consent will be required where demolition affects listed buildings.

Where any unauthorised works have been carried out, the Council will seek to take enforcement action. Where necessary this will also involve the reinstatement of lost features. The implementation of unauthorised works may lead to prosecution.

Design Considerations

Historic shopfronts often add a unique quality and character to a shopping area, but it is important to recognise the needs of retailers, particularly the importance of corporate image and house style. The key to good new shopfront design is flexibility and an emphasis on traditional detailing. New designs and alterations to existing shopfronts should respect local

architectural traditions such as period height, proportions, materials, colours etc.

A strong preference will be given to retaining historic architectural details on existing shop frontages. Repairs to existing historic fabric will be preferred to replacement but when replacements are necessary, the design should incorporate replicas wherever possible.

Attention should be paid to materials, proportions, scale, rhythm and colour.



A corporate image can be adapted to fit into an historic environment without compromising an historic building or the principles of good shopfront design. It is therefore important to consider the following in the design process:

- Where necessary, retailers' house styles should be reconciled with the need to respect the unique character of individual buildings and their historic context.
- New shopfronts and alterations to existing shopfronts should have a strong design relationship with the architectural composition of the whole building and the surrounding street scene. The Shopfront design shall not be considered in isolation from the design of the upper levels of the building.



- Where an individual building contains more than one shopfront each design must respect the other as well as the existing building, this giving consistency and harmony of design.
- Where a single shop unit occupies more than one building, the design and proportion of the shopfronts must relate to each individual building. Single shopfronts spanning two or more buildings will not be acceptable.

Fascias, Pilasters & Corbels

A fascia provides the space for advertising the name of the business currently occupying a building.

Excessively deep fascias should be avoided. The scale and design should be in proportion to and appropriate for the individual shopfront and the building as a whole. Fascias should be kept well below first floor window cills, leaving a suitable margin. Modern box fascias which project from the face of the building should be avoided.



Where a false ceiling is being fitted within the shop, it will not be appropriate to increase the fascia depth of the shopfront to conceal it. Other means of concealment must be considered such as setting back of the bulkhead, or in the detail of the transom. The design of pilasters and corbels is extremely varied. On existing shopfronts, original pilasters and corbels should not be removed or covered up.

Windows and Doors

Large undivided areas of glass should be avoided. The method of subdivision of the glazing however should suit the character of the shopfront and the building as a whole. All glazing details must respect the character of the existing building and its context. Transoms should relate to the height of door heads, and both transoms and mullions should be detailed to respect the character of the existing building. Care should be taken to ensure that the door height respects the original character and proportions of the building and shopfront. The height of the bottom panel for example should match the height of the stallriser.



Stallrisers

Between the pavement and shop window is the stallriser. Heights of stallrisers will vary according to the type

of shop and period of frontage and generally provide a visual anchor to the ground.



Materials and Finishes

The appropriate choice of materials will largely depend on the existing building and its context.

Sombre colours such as maroon, dark green, black, dark blue and brown, were traditionally used on shopfronts. Highly glossed finishes, as well as harsh and bright colours, including brilliant white are considered unsympathetic to the historic buildings and the street scene and should therefore be avoided.



Canopies and Blinds

Blinds and canopies are unlikely to be approved in historic settings unless they are retractable and do not obscure architectural features of the shopfront or the building. They will usually be resisted in the cobbled part of the High Street in Guildford Town Centre.

Planning permission for canopies and blinds will be required and Listed Building Consent is always required for listed buildings.

Blinds and canopies should be appropriate to the period and character of the area. An appropriate canvas material or canvas like material will be required. Appropriate detailing that incorporates the blind into the shopfront design and traditional craftsmanship will also be required. Plastic and shiny materials will not be considered appropriate and are likely to be refused.



Fixed canopies, dutch blinds and balloon canopies are considered inappropriate since they permanently obscure the shopfront and introduce a dominant shape which is often out of character with the street scene. Fixed blinds and canopies are unlikely to be appropriate in historic settings.

Retractable blinds are more versatile and can be concealed within the fascia detailing when closed. Blinds should be positioned below the fascia, so as not to obscure.



The installation of blinds or canopies should not compromise the setting of an historic building or its context. If they carry any motif, device or lettering, advertisement consent will also be required. The Colour should either match the shopfront or be neutral.

If proposing to fix a blind to a shopfront, it is important to note that the Highway regulations require that there should be a minimum of 1m in width from the outer edge of the blind to the kerb line, and the height must not be less than 2.14m from the pavement level to the underside of the blind, see diagram.

Access for People with Disabilities

In new buildings, access for the disabled is required under 'Part M' of the 2004 Building Regulations. Provisions for people with disabilities should always be made. The great majority of disabled people can walk but encounter difficulties with distances, surfaces and steps. The following points should be considered:

A level access from the pavement must be provided whenever possible. If a ramp is necessary it should be 800mm for wheels, a minimum of 1 metre wide and at a maximum gradient of 1:20. It is important that the junction between the ramp and the pavement is treated sympathetically taking into account the quality of the existing surfaces.



Doorways should have a clear opening, with a minimum width of 850mm. Where revolving, heavy and all-glass doors are required further advice should be sought from Building Control, Planning Officers and the Council's Equalities and Access Officer.

Make door handles easy to grasp and visible about 1 metre above ground level.

The Council's Equalities and Access officer can offer assistance on accessibility issues. Any provision required for disabled access will also need to be submitted for planning approval and listed building consent.

PPG 15, Planning and the Historic Environment, covers issues relating to listed buildings, conservation areas and the historic environment. Access for people with disabilities to listed buildings is addressed in PPG 15 paragraph 3.28 which states that it is important in principle that people with disabilities should have dignified and easy access to and within listed buildings. It is important however, that this is incorporated in such a way that damage to original fabric and features are avoided whenever possible.

There will be some instances where the historic significance of a building is such that the careful consideration of sympathetic alternative solutions to give access improvements will be necessary.

Where alteration is proposed each case will be assessed on its individual merit. Where alterations are deemed acceptable, special care will be expected in the specification of materials and fittings so that they pay due regard to the character and quality of the original building.

Portable ramps.

Where it is not possible to provide permanent alterations for ramped or level access, portable ramps should be

provided and must always be stored inside the shop, out of sight, when not in use.

SECURITY

Guildford Borough Council aims to protect and enhance the character of the architectural heritage by requiring high standards of shopfront design. Some security measures, such as solid shutters when closed, have a deadening effect on the vitality of a street scene. The Council therefore aims to encourage design that minimises this effect in its streets.

The following are recognised approaches to improving shop security without compromising the qualities of an historic town centre.

Laminated Glass

Laminated glass provides security without affecting the appearance of windows or doors in a building, and is a solution that should be considered in advance of further interventions into a street scene.

However, where original glass exists in historic shopfront, its replacement would be resisted and other alternatives should be sought.

Small paned windows are less of a temptation to wilful damage than large sheets of plate glass, and are cheaper to replace. Proposals to alter shopfronts to include windows divided by mullions may be considered an enhancing and welcoming alteration.

Any alterations made to fenestration will require planning permission, and on a listed building, listed building consent will be required.

Internal Grilles

The use of internal grilles does not require planning permission; it will however require listed building consent

where the shop is part of a listed building.

Installation must not damage original features and must preserve a building's original fabric.



Removable and Demountable Grilles

All external grilles will require Planning Permission for their installation and, where a building is listed, will also require Listed Building Consent.

Removable grilles may be an acceptable option for shopfront security as no bulky box-housings are required to conceal the shutters when open.

Any such grilles should not obscure or damage existing architectural details. Fixings should be concealed or painted to match the shop frame and when placed, the grilles should not cover the pilasters.

In Conservation Areas and on Listed Buildings, such grilles should be colour finished to match the shopfront and must always be stored inside the shop, out of sight, when not in use.

External Roller Grilles

All external roller grilles will require Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent if a Listed Building. The installation of external roller grilles is unlikely to be acceptable in an original shopfront due to the potential damage to the fascia caused during installation.

In new shopfronts the box housings for roller shutters must be concealed behind the fascia or be incorporated flush beneath it.

The guidance channels should be concealed or should be designed to be removed during the day.

In Conservation Areas and on Listed Buildings, the grilles and all associated components should be colour finished to match the colour and materials of the shopfront concerned or bronze anodised.

Existing architectural features or the shopfront should not be obscured or interrupted by the box framing or guide channels.

Roller Shutters

Roller Shutters are generally unacceptable because they create an unattractive 'dead' appearance that detracts from both the building and shopping area in general. Exceptions may be made where the shopfront is of an open type with no window, such as a greengrocers, where no alternative solution is possible.

Existing Shutters

Where original or traditional wooden shutters survive they should be retained, properly maintained and painted.

Where modern roller shutters are installed without permission the Council will, where appropriate, take enforcement action to secure their removal.



Alarm Boxes

The positioning of an alarm box should be carefully considered during the design stages of a shopfront. Alarms should be sited so as not to obscure or damage architectural details. Alarm boxes should be sited out of reach on an inaccessible part of the building.

Ram Raiding

Unobtrusive protection against this is possible in conservation areas and on listed buildings. The use of a stallriser for example is appropriate, strengthened if necessary with concealed internal posts or beams.



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