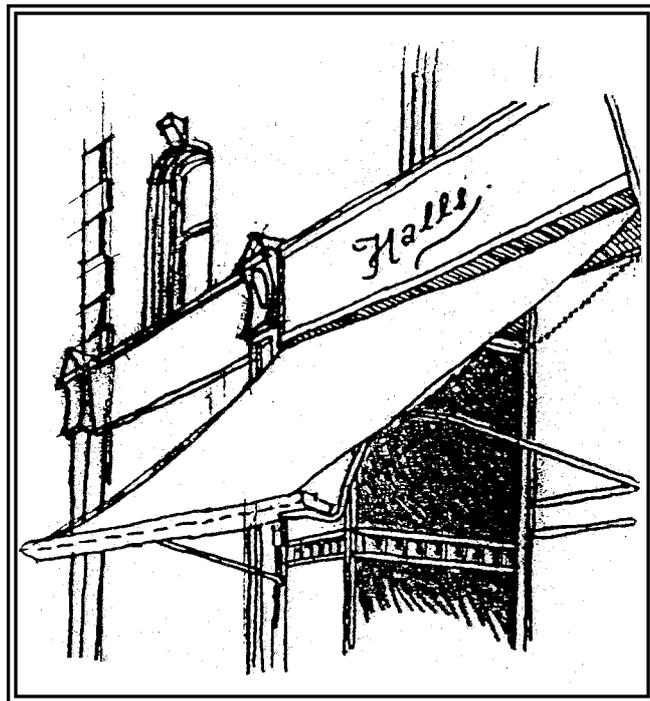




BLACKBURN
with
DARWEN
BOROUGH COUNCIL

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

Shopfront Design & Security



**BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN
BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN**

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

This is one of a series of supplementary planning guidance notes prepared by the Council to raise awareness of good design and to improve the quality of new development.

The following titles are available from the Council's Technical Services Department at Blackburn and Darwen Town Halls.

Residential and Other Related Uses

1. New Residential Development
2. Extensions for Detached and Semi-detached Houses
3. Extensions for Terraced Houses
4. Community and Other Uses within Residential Areas
5. Residential Institutions

Conservation and Design

6. Listed Buildings
7. Conservation Areas
8. Outdoor Advertisements and Signs
9. Shopfront Design and Security
10. Industrial and Warehousing Buildings

Rural Areas

11. Agricultural Buildings
12. The Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside
13. Village Appraisals

Natural Environment

14. Landscaping and Wildlife Habitat Creation
15. Species Protection

SHOPFRONT DESIGN AND SECURITY

Shopfronts are an important element of the Borough's town and neighbourhood centres. They can be a positive element, adding interest and vitality to the street scene, promoting enhanced retail activity as well as contributing to visual interest. However, poor ones have a negative effect, destroying local architectural quality and character and detracting from the overall shopping environment and experience.

In the past, shopping streets contained a lively mixture of shops, each with its own identity and trade style. Recent changes in merchandising have had a damaging effect on the street scene. Increasing standardisation and use of corporate identities can impose a uniformity and loss of identity, whilst cheap materials and garish advertising create a poor image. In order that new shopfronts are designed to a high standard and make a positive contribution to the individual building and the surrounding area, proposals should accord with Local Plan Policy R15.

Some shopping streets in the older historic parts of the Borough such as Blackburn and Darwen Town Centres and the villages are designated conservation areas. Here, the Council will require shopfronts to be in keeping with the historic nature of the buildings. Other areas can accommodate modern designs which are interesting in themselves.

This guide is not intended to stifle original design but aims to establish general principles which should result in an attractive well designed frontage.

The need for permission for a new shopfront or sign

Planning permission is required for any "material change" in the appearance of a shopfront. This can include the enlargement of fascias, the alteration of windows or doors, a change in facing materials, or the installation of external blinds or shutters.

Advertisement consent is required in most instances for external illuminated signs and for many non-illuminated signs, subject to certain conditions of size and location (please refer to Policy HD7 of the Local Plan).

Conservation Area Consent is required for the demolition or partial demolition of most buildings in conservation areas, including the removal of existing shopfronts (please refer to Policies HD12 and HD14 of the Local Plan).

Listed Building Consent is required for any changes which affect the character or appearance of a listed building (please refer to Policies HD13 and HD14 of the Local Plan).

Building Regulations: construction works may also require the Council's approval under the Building Regulations.

Whatever the nature of the proposals, developers are advised to contact the Council on matters of procedure or design prior to carrying out any works.

Separate guidance notes have been published for Outdoor Advertisements and Signs, Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings.

GUIDANCE

When considering the design of a shopfront it is vital to recognise its context, in other words, the character and appearance of the individual building and the street as a whole. In order to be successful, schemes need to be sympathetic to their context and the local setting. Traders should take account of the following considerations in new or refurbished shopfronts:

- the character of the street and the building as a whole;
- if the building is in a conservation area, new and altered shopfronts must be designed in sympathy with the historic setting and the architectural character of the area;
- the type of trading image which is to be projected and the sort of display area required;
- whether the design is appropriate to the age, style and proportions of the building and any neighbouring buildings;
- if the building is listed, the shopfront must reflect the character of the building in its design, relationship to the elevations and the choice of materials used;
- how best to achieve a high standard of design and detailing, especially good sign writing, lettering and colour;
- if elements of an existing shopfront are original or traditional, whether it is practical to repair or restore them; and
- whether access for the disabled or people with prams can be improved.

Materials and finishes

Materials should be chosen for their durability and appropriateness to their location. Timber is the most suitable and versatile material for general use and can be used for door and window frames, fascias, surrounds and other decorative features. Subject to regular painting which is the correct finish for traditional shopfronts, timber is durable and attractive. Clear or stained finishes may be acceptable as an alternative. Unpainted softwood, galvanised steel, or untreated aluminium should be avoided.

Timber should be used for stall risers in traditional shopfronts. Stone, brick or stucco may also be acceptable depending on the context.

For contemporary or modern designs a range of clay and ceramic products may be considered, in addition to wrought iron, coated aluminium and mild steel. Plastic and acrylic should be avoided, apart from small areas of signage where a matt or textured finish should be used.

Colour should be selected to emphasise and enhance the proportions of a shopfront and to highlight important decorative features. Successful schemes will often incorporate dark tones and rich hues with fine detail picked out in light tones. Large areas of light tones should be avoided as should primary colours.

Elements of the shopfront

Traditional shopfronts are frequently based on architectural features adapted to the practical needs of shops and changing fashions. A typical shopfront would comprise a display window (often divided with decorative glazing bars or mullions and transoms) surrounded by a stallriser below, pilasters on each side and a fascia (for signage) above. The door was often recessed beside the window. Decorative corbels or consoles were used at either end of the fascia.

Fascias

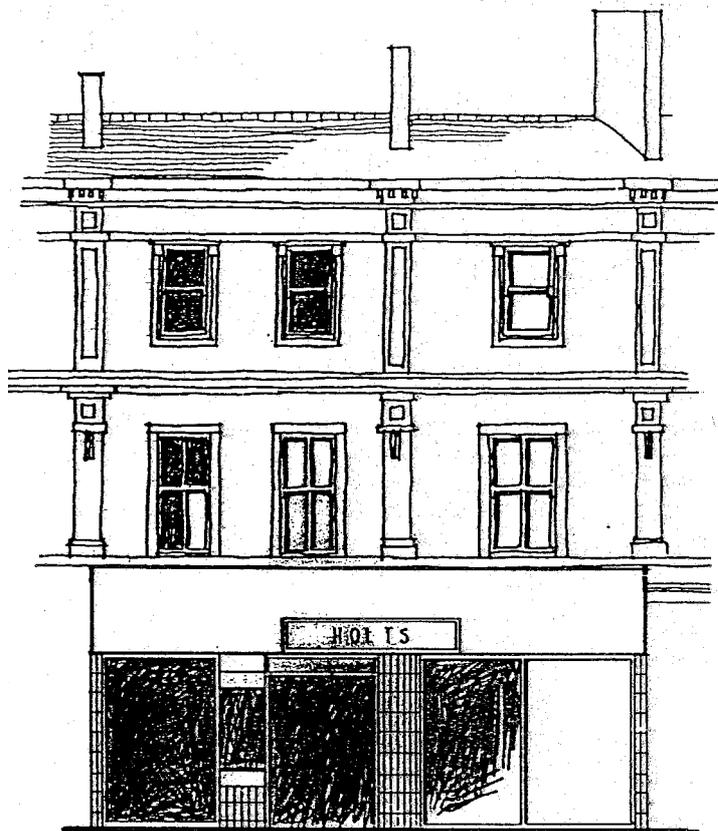
Fascias should be in keeping with the character and appearance of the building and not dominate the shopfront. They should respect the original division between properties and should be used to sub-divide the shopfront, especially on broad frontages or where a shop extends into a neighbouring property.

When refurbishing a property in which an original fascia exists behind a more recent deep, plain or insensitively positioned fascia, the original fascia should be reinstated if possible.

The overall height of a fascia is usually 450-600 mm from the top of the cornice to the window frame head. Excessively deep fascias which obscure original building details should be avoided. They should be kept below the first floor window cills, and the bottom of the fascia should not extend down to the extent that it is out of proportion to the rest of the shop front.

The end of each fascia should be defined by a console box or bracket.

It is usual for the fascia to have a projection above it which is normally in the form of a moulded cornice. The coping should be weathered with a lead flashing.



A modern shop front, alien to the original character of the building. Deep fascia and tiling and large windows contrast with the proportions of the upper 2 storeys.

Stall risers

The stallriser is a vital element of the traditional shopfront. It gives protection to the shop window from kicks, knocks and ram raiding and improves the proportions of a shopfront by providing a solid visual base. They vary in height but typically should be between 450 and 700 mm high.

Pilasters and corbels

These are used to define the width of shopfronts and visually support the fascia. In general and especially in conservation areas, original or traditional pilasters and corbels should be renovated in preference to being removed. They should where practical be sensitively restored and painted.

Doors and windows

These have a major impact on the scale and character of the street scene and the appearance of the individual shopfront and need to be designed carefully.

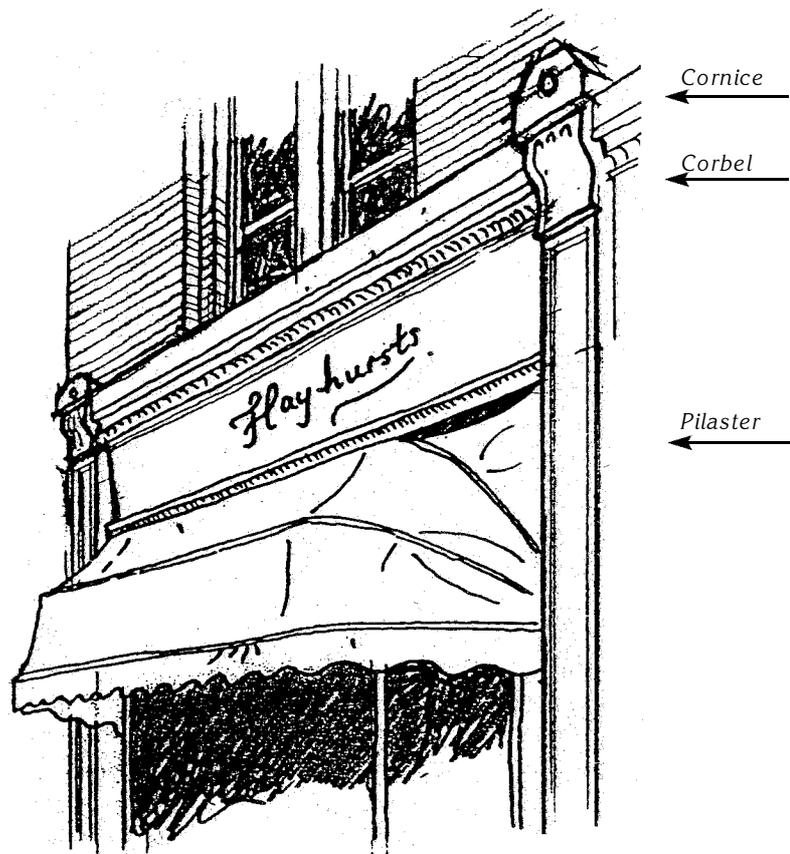
Large undivided areas of window glass should be avoided. The method of subdivision should suit the character of the building. A recessed doorway can be used to break up the window area, add interest to the street scene and increase the window display area.

Canopies and blinds

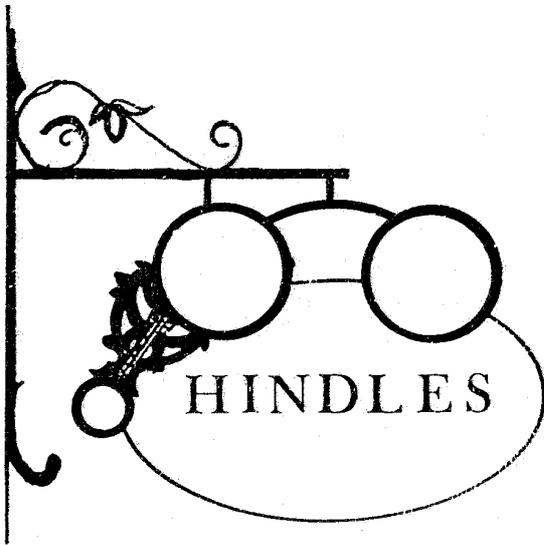
Where blinds are required for the practical purpose of shading goods from sunlight, they should be of the traditional retractable type, made from canvas or other non-reflective material, and properly integrated with the design and construction of the shopfront.

Where traditional canvas blinds and blind boxes have survived, particularly in conservation areas, these should be retained and restored.

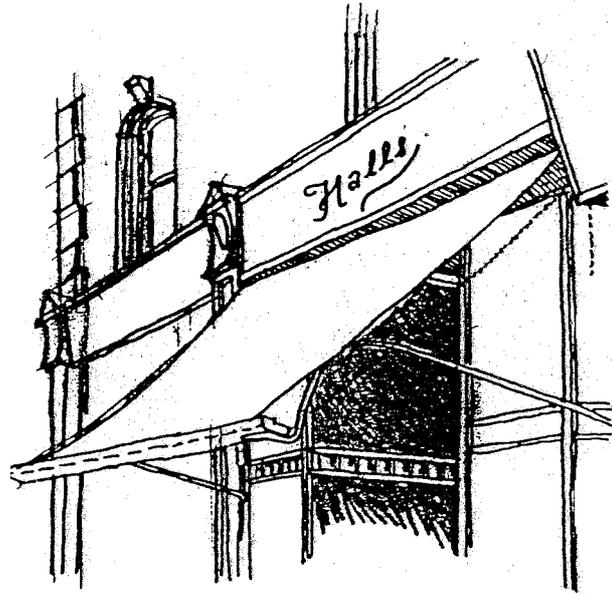
Modern “balloon”, “Dutch” or eyebrow canopies in shiny plastic are essentially a means of advertising a business and are not suitable for historic areas.



Dutch blinds can be visually obtrusive and garish in the street scene. They can relate poorly to traditional details such as pilasters and corbels. Their bright colours can soon fade and look poor.



Hanging signs can give character and individuality to a business premises. They are generally to be preferred to a standard illuminated projecting box sign.



An old window blind, which can be retracted when not needed.

Signs and advertisements

Fascia signs and name boards, projecting signs and lettering applied to windows, whether or not they are advertisements in the strict sense, are subject to the Advertisement Regulations. Some are exempted from control, others have “deemed consent” which means that the Council’s consent to display them is not required.

The obtrusive proliferation and visual clutter of signage should be avoided. In general, advertising should be kept to a minimum and where possible it should be located at ground floor level (where upper floors are used by separate businesses lettering should be painted on the lower part of the window). Signs should be well designed to add to the quality of the shopfront and building.

For more advice on signs and advertisements please refer to the guidance note on Outdoor Signs and Advertisements.

Combining properties

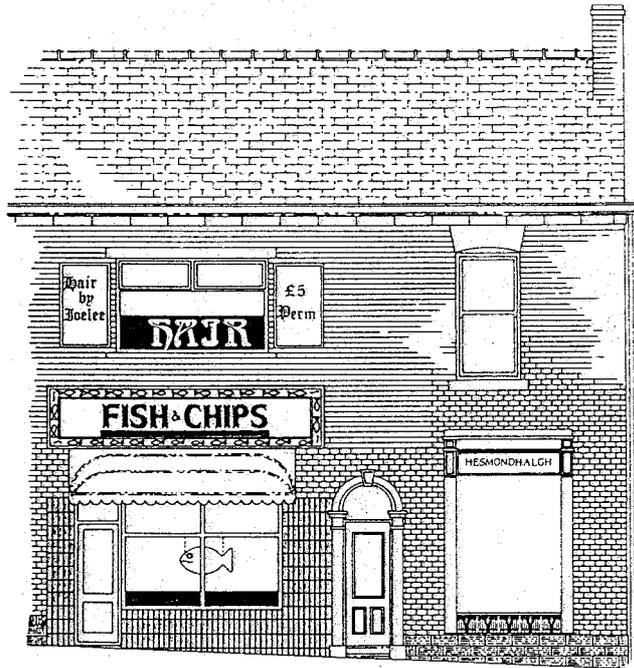
Where a long shop frontage is proposed which will link several individual shop premises, the design of the ground floor elevation and the fascia sign should be such to retain the appearance of a series of individual units. Conformity and linkage can be achieved by continuity of lettering style, design and colour.

SHOPFRONT DESIGN AND SECURITY

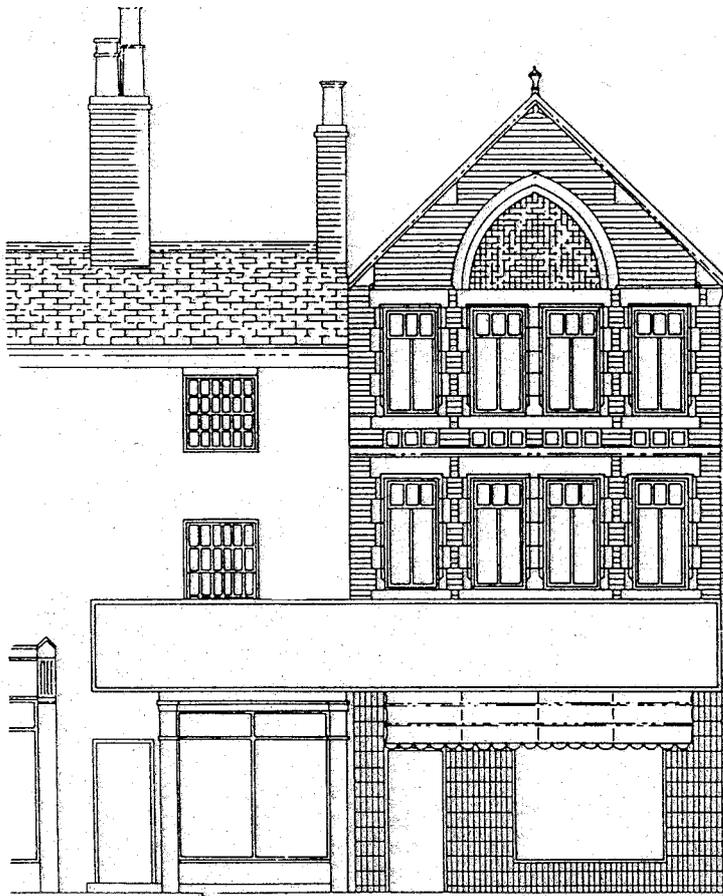
Garish, high level advertising →

Obtrusive modern canopy out of character with the building →

Modern tiling replaces original brickwork →



On the left, modern additions have totally destroyed the character of the original building. The more restrained treatment on the right is much more neighbourly in the street scene.



In this example, the character of two quite attractive, distinct buildings has been eroded by a fascia extending across both buildings. Each building merits its own shop front.

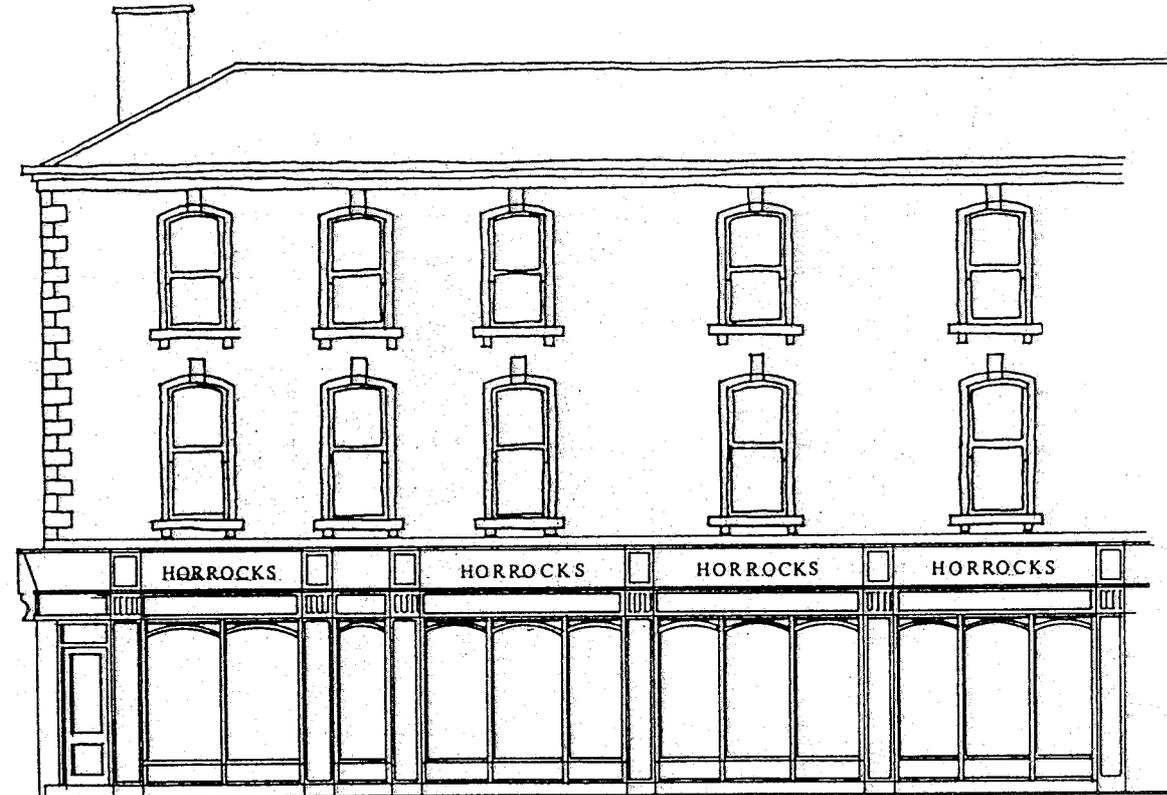
← *Too deep fascia*

← *Modern, plastic finish canopy*

← *garish tiling*

Sub-dividing properties

Where single buildings are divided at ground floor level into two or more separate shops, the treatment of the shopfronts should relate to one another and to the scale and design of the building as a whole. A regular height and type of fascia and matching materials are desirable to ensure unity of appearance.



A long shop front but with vertical divisions and character. The appearance of the building as a whole benefits from not having large expanses of glass at ground floor level.

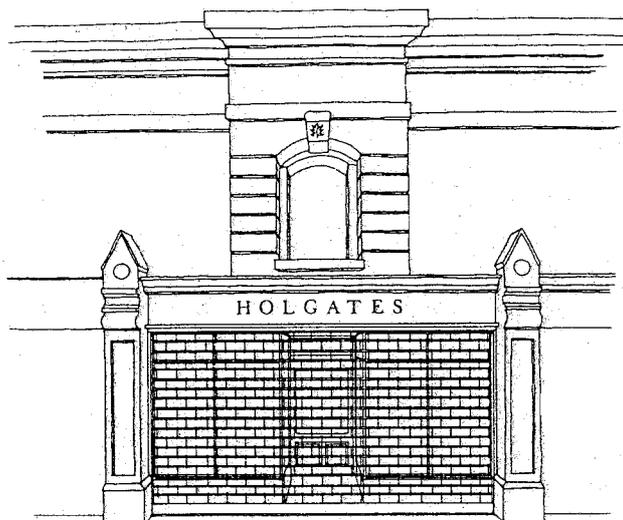
Access for the Disabled and families

When designing new shopfronts or altering existing entrances, the opportunity should be taken to improve access for disabled people and those with prams and small children. This should include consideration of the following measures - reducing stepped entrances and incorporating ramps and introducing wider doors which open easily. A handrail is also a helpful support.

SHOPFRONT SECURITY

The Council recognises the problems which some shopping areas experience with vandalism and burglary. Nevertheless, it is important that the Borough's shopping centres are attractive places to visit outside shopping hours.

The character of a shopfront can be dramatically altered by the attachment of security shutters. Solid roller shutters prevent window shopping and contribute to the sense of hostility because of their fortress-like appearance.



Open grilles allow views through to the window display, provide better security and look better in the street.

Planning permission

All externally mounted security shutters or screens require planning permission. Internally mounted screens and armour plated glass do not require planning permission.

Planning criteria

The following issues will be taken into account by the Borough Council when determining applications for planning permission:

- the character of the building and its surroundings; and
- the use of the building.

GUIDELINES FOR SHOPFRONT SECURITY

The Council's preferred security measures for shops are those which do not involve external shutters or grilles, such as laminated glass, stall risers and internal lattice shutters. These measures have the advantage of not usually requiring planning permission.

Glass

Armoured or laminated glass provides security without affecting the appearance of the property and does not require planning permission. Shop windows which are divided into several panes are less susceptible to wilful damage and are often a traditional feature of shop windows. The use of armoured glass is beneficial to sensitive design settings such as conservation areas or town centres, as it leaves the appearance of the property basically unaltered.

Stallrisers

Unobtrusive protection against ram raiding is possible. On traditional shopfronts the use of a stallriser is appropriate, strengthened if necessary in high risk situations with internal posts or beams. Depending on location, flower planters, bollards or a high kerb can keep vehicles away from shopfronts.

Shutters

External security shutters should have the shutter box recessed into the shop, normally behind the fascia panel, with the fascia panel itself flush with the building frontage. Projecting shutter boxes will be permitted provided they are hidden behind the fascia.

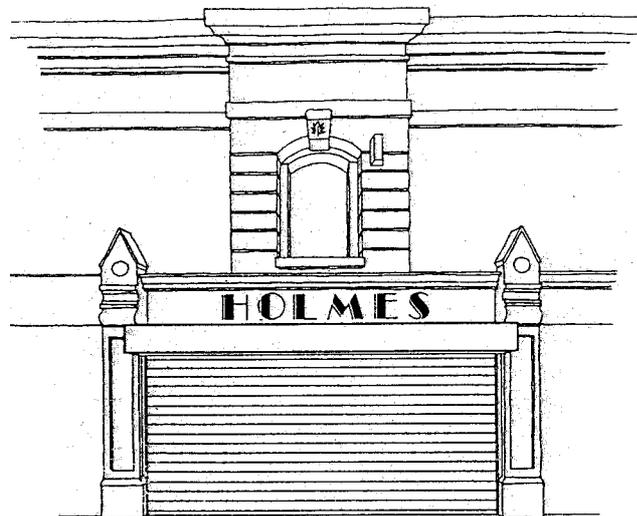
Consideration should also be given to the positioning of the channel guides in the shopfront framework and where they are visible they should be painted to match the shop frame or be removable during the day. External roller shutters should not extend below window level and should leave stall risers, pilasters, cornices, fascias and other features of the shopfront visible.

Open grille, perforated or brick bond shutters

Internal open grille shutters located behind the window do not require planning permission. They provide protection for goods on display and reasonable visibility of shop window displays.

External open grille shutters allow sight of window displays but do require planning permission.

Solid security shutters give a fortress like appearance and cumulatively can produce a hostile and threatening street scene.



All shutters must be stove enamelled, plastic coated or treated in a similar manner in a colour to blend with the overall shopfront design. Untreated shutters will not be permitted. Open grille shutters can be fitted with clear polycarbonate infill pieces to prevent objects being pushed through the shutters.

Removable grilles

For removable or demountable grilles where no box housing is required, these can be stored inside the building when not in use. Planning permission is required nevertheless.

Solid shutters

Solid metal lath shutters are rarely acceptable and will be discouraged. In particular they will not be acceptable within conservation areas. They are intrusive and even where the shutters are slotted or perforated, they can be conspicuous during daylight hours and need to be backlit during hours of darkness.

Shopfront security on listed buildings

If the building is listed then, as well as planning permission, listed building consent will be required for any security shutter or physical alteration to the building. The Council will apply higher standards when considering applications for security measures on listed buildings as modern methods of security may not be appropriate. Where shutters are allowed, shutter boxes will be required to be well hidden behind well designed fascia panels.

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

Further information is available from:
Development Control Group ☎ (01254) 585638
Forward Planning and Transportation Group ☎ (01254) 585356



BUILDING CONTROL

- Once you have received Planning Approval you will then need to consider obtaining Building Regulation Approval - Can we help?
- ◆ We are happy to give informal pre-submission advice.
 - ◆ We will deal with your plans quickly.
 - ◆ Our approach is flexible and can be tailored to meet your particular requirements
 - ◆ We will provide a same day inspection service.

For more information telephone (01254) 585747