

# Coatsworth Conservation Area

## Shopfront Design Guide

Appendix 1 : Detailed Design Guidance



Consultation Draft  
February 2018

## Introduction

- 1.1 This design guide updates the 2013 Coatsworth Conservation Area Shopfront Design Guide SPD and forms an appendix to this document.
- 1.2 This guide is formal planning guidance and must be adhered to by all applicants within the Coatsworth Conservation Area.
- 1.3 This detailed guidance supports the objectives and delivery of the Coatsworth Road Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI), a £2.2 million conservation-led regeneration project which benefits from Heritage Lottery funding which runs until the end of June 2018. The project focused on building repairs, shopfront improvements and the enhancement of the public realm. This guidance seeks to maintain that investment through informed planning decisions.



## What is a 'shopfront'?

2.1 Traditionally, retail outlets featured shopfronts with large glazed windows, which provided a dual function: to let light into the shop, and to prominently advertise the goods that were on sale inside. Shop window displays and shopfronts have always had a major influence on the vitality and image of historic streets and centres.

2.2 Externally, shopfronts often included evidence of the goods or services that were being traded, in the form of a sign or in the framework. Greengrocers, for example, often incorporated carded fruit into the timber framework, and barber shops featured the instantly recognisable red and white striped pole.

2.3 Today, 'shopfronts' have a range of purposes, and styles and may now house bars, restaurants and cafes as the retail use has changed.

2.4 Attractive, well-constructed and properly maintained shopfronts can enhance any street making them more attractive to shoppers and visitors alike. On the other hand, if poorly designed and maintained, or constructed from unsatisfactory materials they are capable of severely detracting from the character and appearance not only of an individual building but the street scene as a whole.

2.5 Most successful shopfronts and signs are visually stimulating, instantly recognisable and efficiently advertise the goods or services available for purchase. This is an important part of providing an 'active frontage' to the street. Good quality design will always be the best method of achieving this aim.



## What is the purpose of this design guide?

3.1 The Council has identified that a traditional approach to shop front design is appropriate for the conservation-led regeneration of Coatsworth Road. Coatsworth Road is flanked on both sides by late C19 early C20 Victorian terraces, in red brick, with slate roofs and a very steady, rhythmic arrangement of windows. Shop fronts which reflect traditional, Victorian proportions, composition and design will ensure that the new shop front is successfully integrated into the building as a whole. Victorian shop front frameworks provide a simple, unified framework within which shop owners can provide a shop window and entrance to suit their own tastes and purposes.

3.2 This design guide encourages you to look afresh at your own shop front and to consider whether it meets the high standards of design and workmanship which will directly contribute to the regeneration of, and enhancement of, Coatsworth Road.

3.3 It provides you (and your designer) with clear guidelines for improving your shop front in a manner which will positively enhance the street scene and Coatsworth Road in general.

3.4 It describes the procedures for obtaining the necessary approvals and the grant aid (if available) to help you make it happen.

3.5 The advice is designed to be flexible to suit your particular needs, and allows for minor adjustments but never to the extent as to sacrifice the overall design quality and aesthetics of the completed whole shop front.



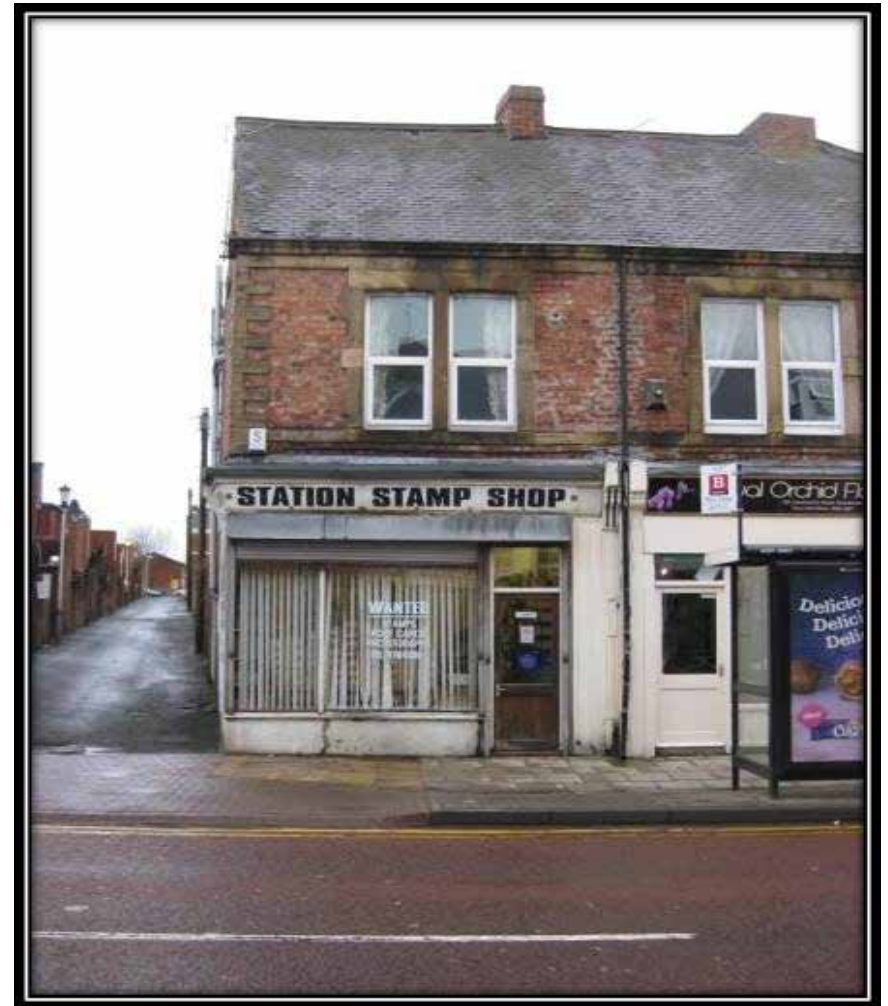
## Designing a shopfront: starting points

4.1 The starting point for any shop front design, whether tradition or contemporary, should be the character and appearance of the host building.

4.2 Where the existing shop front retains historic fabric of a Victorian shopfront, such as the framework itself, the retention of this fabric, and its repair, is encouraged. This fabric will then form the basis of the design for any missing elements. Likewise, where there is historic evidence, for example, early photos of the original Victorian shopfront, this is a good starting point/reference.

4.3 It is important that you think about the following when considering your design,

- What is the purpose of the shop front?
- What goods or services are you selling, and what is the most appropriate means of advertising them
- Was the host building built as a shop or has it had other uses, does it still have other uses i.e. domestic upper floors?
- How will signage sit against the building and where is it best placed?
- What materials would sit well with the materials used on the building?
- Are there existing elements of a historic shopfront you can re-use?
- Is there archive documentary evidence (such as old photographs) of the original shop front?
- What is the pattern of windows, upper and ground floor arrangements, shopfronts and fascias along the street?
- Is there a standard design or does it vary?
- What is the overall quality of the existing designs?



## Types of Shopfront

5.1 Historic shopfronts make a strong and positive contribution to the character of streets. Most are made up of a series of components, with fairly standard proportions. Where original, or historic, shopfronts remain intact they should always be retained and repaired or restored where possible. Where enough evidence remains to accurately reconstruct an historic shopfront which is mostly or totally lost, this is also firmly encouraged.

5.2 Sometimes only a very small section of the original shopfront will remain, but using the design principles and examples in this guide, and any documentary evidence of the original frontage, it is perfectly possible to design an appropriate, high quality shopfront, making use of the remnant historic features.

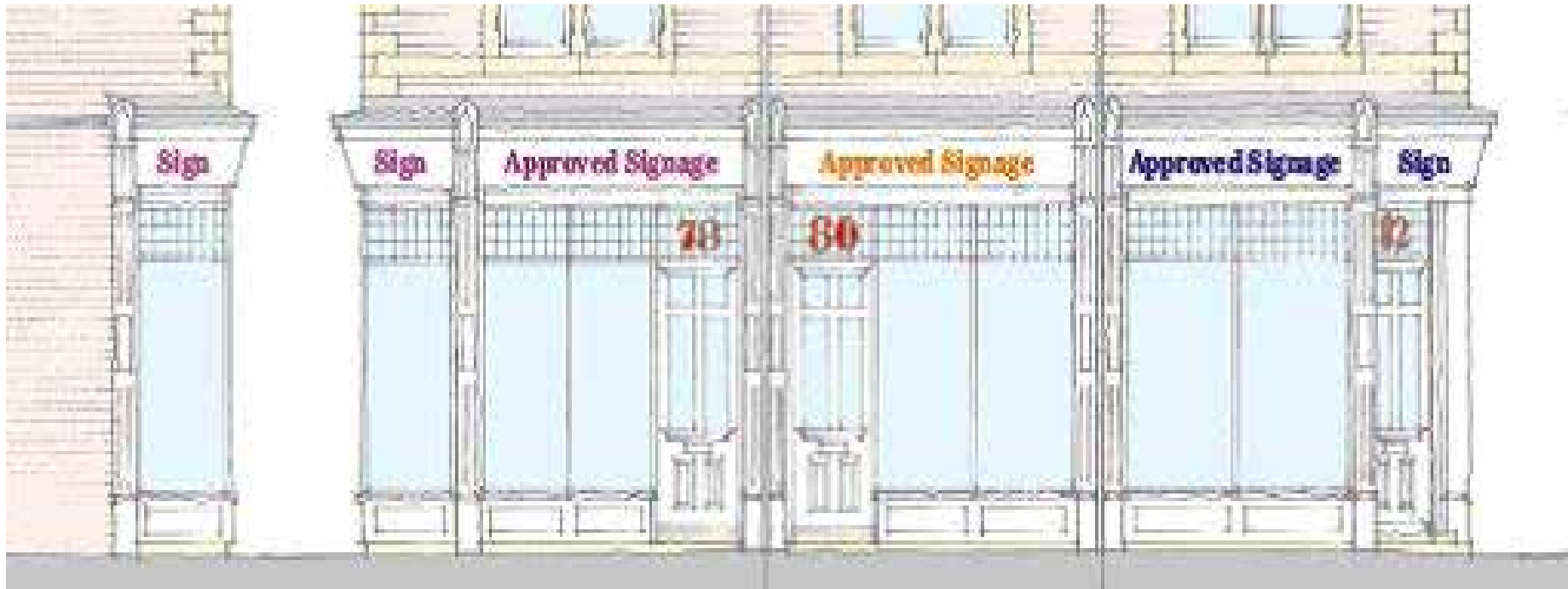
5.3 Where all evidence of the historic shopfront is lost, or where the building did not originally feature a shopfront and a modern one has been inserted subsequently, consideration is likely to be given to a wider range of designs.

5.4 New, high quality shopfronts that are appropriate to the host building and the street should reflect (but not necessarily replicate) the proportions and character of a historic shopfront, but might introduce alternative materials.



## General Principles of a Shop Front

- 6.1 The individual components of a traditional shopfront are shown on the next page. Whilst this may not look exactly like your shopfront, and probably won't be an exact template for your new design, the components are typical of most shopfronts, traditional and contemporary.
- 6.2 The proportions of the shopfront should, in the first instance, be dictated by the structure and appearance of the host building. The size, style and layout of the windows on the upper floors should be a strong influence on the layout of the shopfront.
- 6.3 If there are a series of shopfronts on the street it is important that the shopfront reflects the existing, traditional rhythms set by the patterns of pilasters, stallrisers and fascias.





1

H.O. WAYLADS.

2

5

4

9

8

10

3

7

6



1. The cornice marks the division between the shop and the upper floors of the building, and projects out from the wall.

1-3 Wellington Street during restoration works



2. The fascia covers the structural lintel above the shop window frame and is the traditional location for the shop name. Fascias should never run through several distinct elevations, even where premises are occupied by the same business. Fascias generally should not occupy more than 20% of the total height of the shopfront and must never obscure first floor windows or other architectural features. The shop name should be displayed on the fascia or occasionally, a sub-fascia (see section on signage)

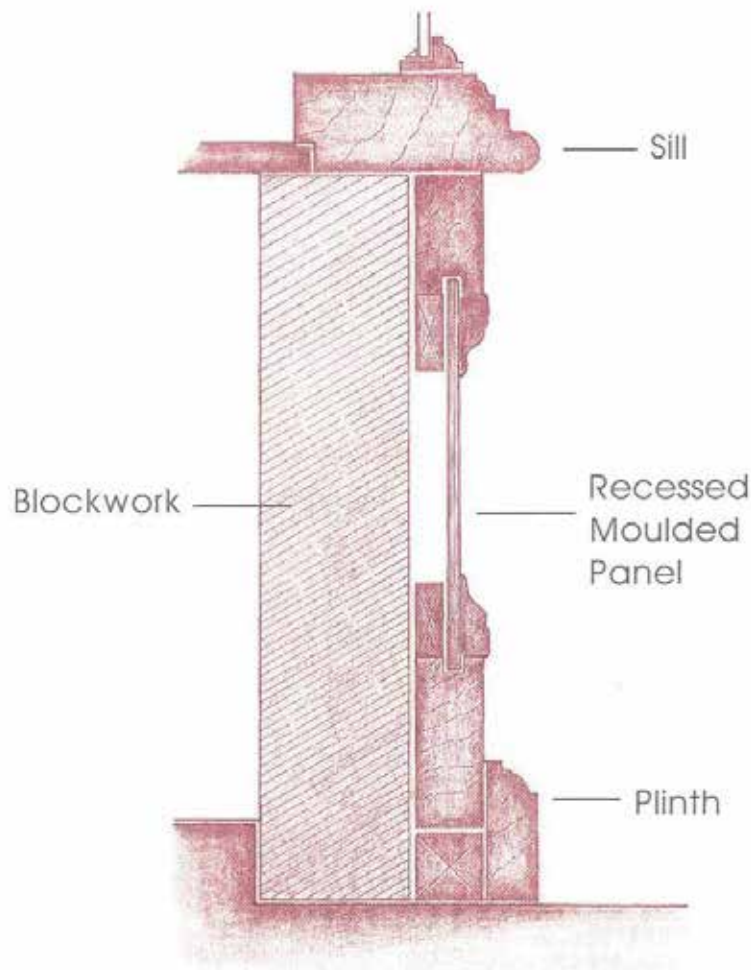


3. A pilaster is a tall straight column flanking each side of the shopfront, providing visual and structural support to the fascia and differentiation between shops. These vary significantly in size and decoration, but usually provide a common rhythm and unity within the street scene and reflect the character of the host building.
4. The corbel (sometimes referred to as the console or bracket) provides a visual stop to the length of the fascia. It typically appears as a bracket, holding up the capital, and therefore has both vertical and horizontal functions.
5. The capital literally caps the pilaster, forming a decorative stop to the vertical elements of the shopfront and sometimes reflects the original purpose of the property in its design and detail. The design of capitals varies greatly and can sometimes be very flamboyant.



Historic detailing found on the Stamp Shop and next door Florist.

6. Each pilaster has a plinth at its base, which is usually the same height as the stall riser below the shop window.
7. The stall riser is a long, horizontal plinth that forms the base of the shop window, supporting the cill. It also raises the glazing above street level, protecting it from damage. Stall risers are typically the same height as the plinth at the base of the pilasters. The stallriser should have a solid appearance. Slightly recessed timber panels may be introduced to add relief. A continuous plinth should be incorporated at pavement level. You could also include painted lattice (metal) grilles to light and/or ventilate internal spaces.



STALLRISER CONSTRUCTION

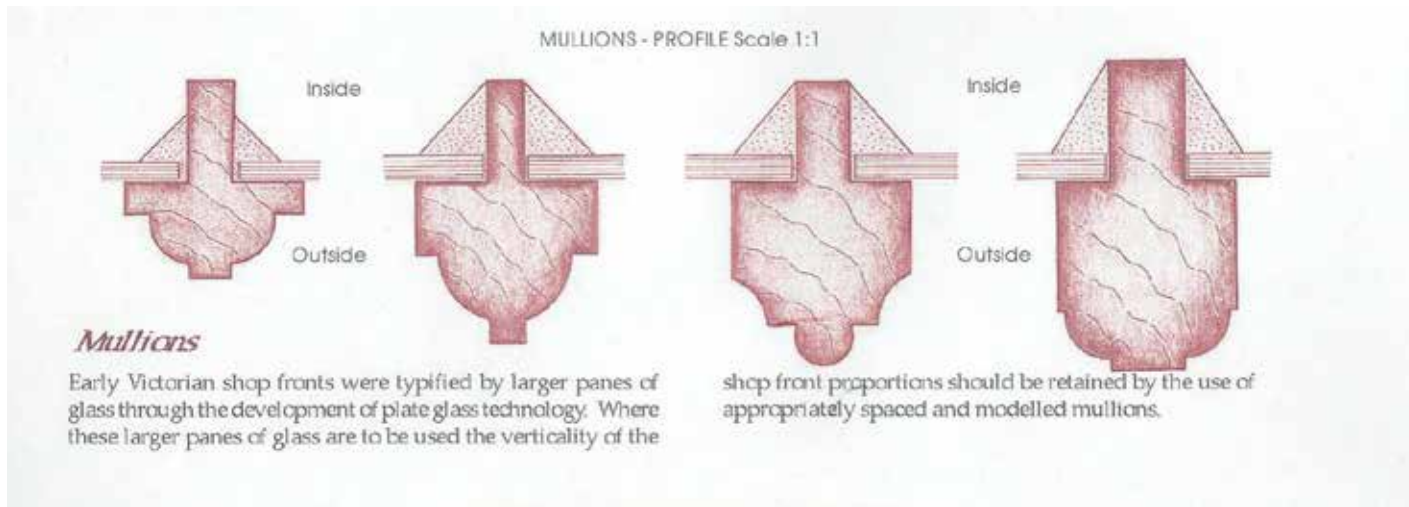
Detail showing how to construct a stallriser with a panelled timber appearance.

8. Shop windows vary greatly in size and design, but all are likely to feature glazing, cills, mullions and transoms. Glazing is crucial to provide activity and natural surveillance. It is also the traditional means of displaying goods. The infill shopfront – the shop window – should be recessed a minimum of 100mm behind the face of the pilaster.

Victorian shopfronts were typified by larger panes of glass than the earlier Georgian shop fronts. The verticality of the shopfront is retained by use of appropriately spaced and modelled mullions.

The shop window is fundamental to the advertising and display function. New shopfronts can usually accommodate a wider range of glazing types, including double glazing or toughened glass. If proposing to insert new glass into an historic frame care must be taken to choose a type of glass that can be accommodated into the existing glazing bars and mullions without strengthening or thickening them.

9. Some shopfronts feature transom lights above the main shop window, which may be leaded, stained, frosted or clear, and some open to provide ventilation. Many doorways also feature a fanlight over them, sometimes etched with the buildings number or name.



Details of Victorian mullion profiles

10. Doors were traditionally recessed to provide more window space. A doorway that is flush with the building line can give a flat, weak appearance. Doors should reflect the period and character of the shopfront and building. New shop entrances must address the needs of disabled customers. Steps should be avoided and doors should be of a width to accommodate wheelchairs.



## Materials

6.4 The framework should be constructed from painted timber. Timber, which is both versatile and durable, is a traditional shopfront material and is always encouraged. Other traditional materials may include natural sandstone or granite. The choice of material should be appropriate to the host building and its context.

6.5 Modern, hard and glossy materials such as acrylic, perspex and uPVC are not appropriate as they typically have a poor quality appearance against the traditional materials of older buildings.

6.6 There can be slightly more flexibility in the choice of materials for modern/contemporary designed shopfronts; timber is still preferred but other natural materials such as stone can also be appropriate. Stallrisers would typically be constructed from natural stone or painted timber panels. Aluminium frames may occasionally be considered if they are appropriately detailed and powder coated.

## Colour schemes

6.7 Colour schemes for shopfronts, and where possible, signage should harmonise with the remainder of the building and street. Strident colours and garish colour combinations should be avoided. Colour can be used to advantage to emphasise important elements of the design, and to highlight or reinforce the structural elements of the design.

6.8 Traditional timber shopfronts should be painted in a good quality paint, using colours that are appropriate to the age of the building or shopfront, leaving the window display to provide the light. Victorian shopfronts, for example, were typically dark reds or blues. A matt, non-reflective finish or semi-gloss finish are the most appropriate.

6.9 Gilding or light colours may be used sparingly to highlight architectural features and mouldings.

6.10 A wider range of paint finishes beyond the normal 'heritage' range may be used on modern shopfronts but garish colours should still be avoided, as should colours that clash with, or detract from the materials of the host building.

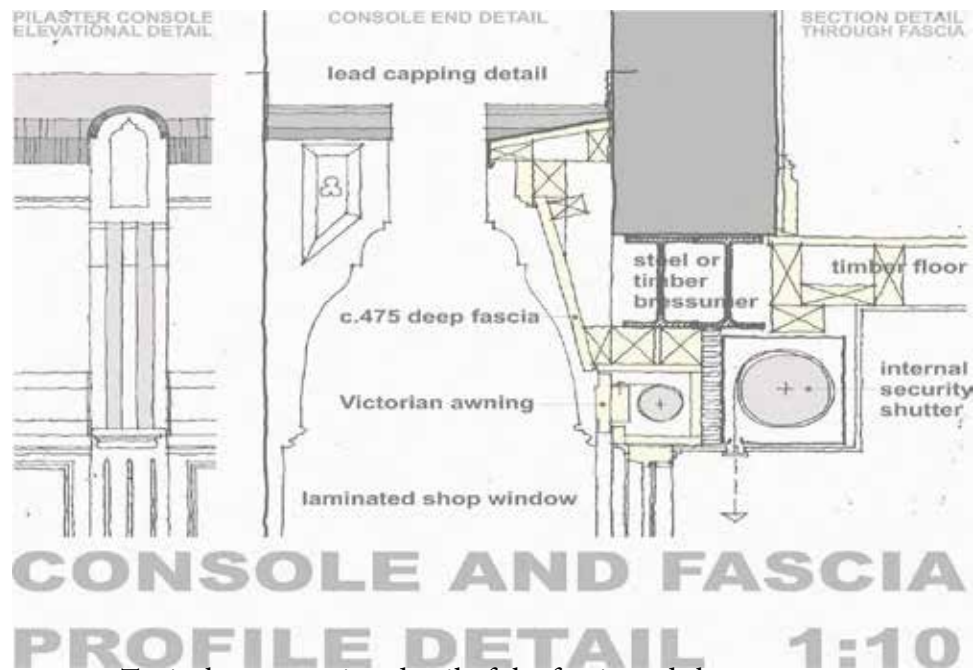
## Canopies and Awnings

7.1 Some historic shopfronts would have had retractable canopies and often, evidence of the mechanisms can be found in the remnants of a historic shopfront even if the canopy itself is lost.

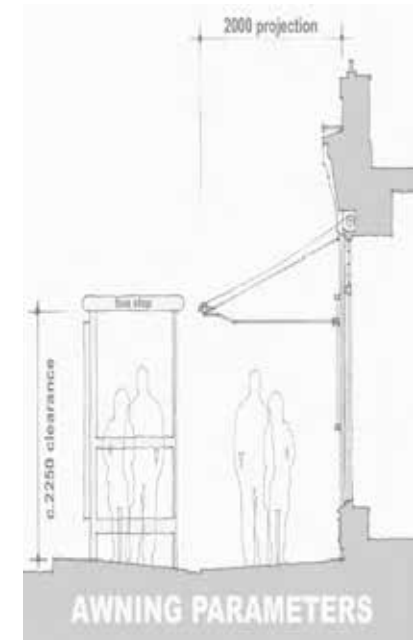
7.2 Where there is such physical evidence, or the scheme proposes to reinstate a shopfront based on photographic evidence, or where it would be appropriate to add or reinstate a canopy over a traditional shopfront, only traditional canvas awnings will be permitted.

7.3 Awnings should be designed as an integral part of the shopfront framework.

7.4 Canopies should not obstruct the highway. Highway guidance requires 2.25m clear headroom on adopted footways and a 500mm set back from pavement edge.



Typical construction detail of the fascia and shopfront detail including the positioning of internal roller shutters and awnings should they be historically appropriate.



## Signage

8.1 Signage is an vital and integral element of any shopfront. It is important, when specifying signage to ensure that it meets the needs of the business whilst also respecting the shopfront and host building and townscape.

8.2 Signage is only one part of the story – a good window display will often advertise the goods on display far more effectively than a name can.

8.3 The fascia (or, sub-fascia where there is one) is the traditional and most visible location for the main business name to be located. The fascia or sub-fascia are an integral part of the shopfront and should not be over-clad with a modern sign on a large backing board. Whole fascias of plastic, or internally illuminated boxes, are not appropriate or acceptable.

8.4 The signage should consist of the name only. Phone numbers, web addresses and opening hours should not be included on fascia signs.



Danskys on the left is a great example of signage - contrast this with the photo on the right - the materials, the size of the signage, the extent of signage within the window all lead to a poor quality finish and street scene.



8.5 Two types of name sign are considered appropriate, regardless of whether they are being applied to a traditional or contemporary shopfront. These are:

1. Painted lettering

Hand painted lettering is generally most appropriate for historic shopfronts. It should be a suitable, traditional typeface and suitably coloured to contrast with the colour of the fascia i.e. light against dark.

2. Cut out free standing letters fixed individually to the fascia

Freestanding letters should ideally be made from metal, as this is more durable than timber. They should not project more than 50mm from the fascia.

Options 1 and 2 – the lettering should no more than 2/3 the height of the fascia and should be positioned centrally on the fascia (both horizontally and vertically).



Projecting and First Floor Signage may also be considered. Hanging signs are traditionally hung from a metal bracket positioned at one end of the fascia. These signs would typically be a trade symbol or image, rather than text.

8.7 The principles for an acceptable hanging sign are:

1. Historic evidence of previous hanging signs
2. Signs should be painted timber or high quality, durable, contemporary materials
3. Only one hanging sign should be located on the principal Elevation of the building. Other elevations should not feature any signage.
4. The sign must be positioned at fascia level or ground floor level where there is no fascia.
5. The sign should not project more than 600mm from the face of the building.
6. The sign should be no more than 750mm in height.
7. The sign should have a vertical emphasis.
8. No part of the sign should be less than 2.25m above pavement level.
9. Brackets should be metal, simple, and solid, flat sectioned ironwork is unlikely to be acceptable.
10. The hanging sign must form part of the shopfront.

Banners and flags, and similar fixtures, are not appropriate for use on historic buildings or in historic areas and should be firmly discouraged. They are visually intrusive, difficult to maintain and can lead to a negative image.



The shop window i.e. the glazing, can sometimes be a useful location for signage. Window signs could be supplementary to, or instead of traditional fascia signage. These type of signs fall within the Advert Regulations and may require planning permission.

8.10 The success of such signage is generally determined by the final design and the use of the shop.

8.11 Potential ways to advertise in windows include painting or etching business names or opening hours into the internal surface of the glass (\*unless the glass is original and has historic value, in which case it should not be painted or etched.); hanging non-illuminated signs behind the window or hanging blinds with adverts. The use of vinyls should be avoided.

8.12 Care must be taken to avoid clutter and to ensure that the overall finished appearance of the shopfront does not detract from the appearance of the building. Signage within windows should be no more than 10% of the whole glazed area.

8.13 Free standing signage such as A-board advertisements should not be used in front of businesses unless they are within the private grounds or forecourt of that building. They should not be located on the pavement or within any part of the adopted highway. Such signs are generally discouraged as they have an adverse and negative impact on the appearance of the street and create obstructions for pedestrians and particularly people with limited sight.



The Stamp Shop features a side hung A-board advert which forms part of the restored shop-front.

## Illumination

9.1 Illumination should only be used where absolutely necessary. It should be low key and carefully integrated into the design of the shopfront. It should complement any existing architectural lighting scheme featured on the host building. It should avoid conflict with any lighting within the shop window and display.

9.2 Internal illumination of signage will not be permitted. Illumination which may be considered appropriate includes:

1. White halo illumination behind freestanding letters provided that it does not result in an increased projection for the signage from the fascia
2. Miniature spotlights of no more than 75mm diameter set in the underside of the entablature with the fitment concealed.
3. Hanging signs – discreet matt black light fittings attached to the bracket or sign itself with a maximum projection of 100mm.

9.3 Cable runs across the surface of a building should always be avoided as they can have a negative effect upon its appearance.

9.4 Swan neck, projecting lights stalk lights, trough and neon lighting will be discouraged as they are not appropriate for use on historic buildings.

9.5 An attractively lit window display can have an extremely positive impact on the appearance, vitality and security of streets during the evening and should be considered. Shop owners are encouraged to consider appropriately illuminating their shop windows well into the evening, avoiding the use of harsh fluorescent lighting.

## Security

10.1 Solid external roller shutters, in particular, detract significantly from the appearance of any host building, and can fully obscure a shopfront. They also have a deadening appearance in the street scene when lowered.

10.2 Security measures should not cause harm to the appearance and character of a building or streetscape.

10.3 Security glass i.e. laminated or toughened, can be appropriate except where the glazing is original, in which case it should be retained. These do not disrupt the exterior appearance of the building.

10.4 Internal lattice grilles positioned behind the shop window are a good alternative to roller shutters. When closed they still enable passers-by to view the shop display and allow light to spill out onto the street, avoiding the deadening effect of roller shutters.

10.5 Externally, removable mesh grilles or railings fitted over the windows and doors are preferred to roller shutters. These should relate to window and door arrangements and should not obscure details such as sub-fascias, pilasters or stallrisers.

10.6 If a completely new shopfront is being designed then security measures should be considered from the outset and fully integrated into the design.

10.7 Alarm boxes can be a successful deterrent, but only one should be fixed to each property and should be of a discreet size and material, located above the ground floor in an unobtrusive position.



## Access

- 11.1 Easy access to shops and circulation within them is important to everyone, including people who use wheelchairs, those who cannot walk easily, people who are deaf, blind or visually impaired and to the elderly, children, those people with pushchairs or prams.
- 11.2 New shop entrances should accommodate the needs of all shoppers and business users without detriment to the character and appearance of the host building and street.
- 11.3 Level access should be provided if possible to accommodate the needs of people with limited mobility, or with pushchairs, prams etc. and doors should be wide enough for wheelchair access (typically a cleared opening width of 900mm).
- 11.4 Some historic shopfronts will not be able to accommodate this without detriment to their character or appearance, so innovative solutions need to be sought.

