

# Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan 2006-2021



Supplementary Planning  
Guidance Note No. 3

Shopfront Design

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# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) is intended to encourage a higher standard of shopfront design in the County Borough.

This adopted guidance will be used by the Town Planning Division of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council when considering proposals for retail premises.

This guidance clarifies the standard of design that the Town Planning Division will expect from applicants seeking planning permission for alterations to their commercial properties.

The design of shopfronts has a major role to play in creating a quality environment. It is important that changes to shopfronts and building facades complements the local character, scale and architectural quality of the individual buildings.

This SPG is required because the declining standards of shopfront design and maintenance is gradually eroding the overall quality of retail centres within the County Borough.

This SPG aims to secure improvements to the visual quality of shopfronts. As a way of improving town centres in the County Borough, the Council intends to use the planning system, alongside grant support in some areas, to promote good shopfront design that celebrates the character and architectural detailing of the original buildings.

The Town Planning Division is keen to encourage both the reinstatement of historic shopfronts and the provision of contemporary designs with fair. This SPG is intended to help building owners who are considering making alterations to ensure that improvements have a positive impact on the surrounding townscape.





## 1.2 Further requirements

Alterations to shopfronts are likely to trigger the requirement for one or more of the following types of consent :

Full planning permission is required for any changes to the form, design or materials of any shopfront, as well as the installation of new shopfronts.

Consent for display of advertisements is needed for illuminated signs or fascias, projecting signs and large signage at ground floor level and any signage at first floor level.

Listed Building Consent is required for any alterations to a listed building. This includes painting it, installing blinds, shutters, an alarm or extractor fan.

You may also need approval under Building Regulations. This is required for new shopfronts affecting means of escape, disabled access and requirements to meet safety and energy efficiency standards.

If you wish to carry out works of this kind, and have questions that are not answered in this document, contact the Town Planning Division before you start any work to :

- Check if you need planning permission. If you do, you are strongly advised not to undertake works or sign a contract until you receive a planning permission and/or advertisement consent. The same advice applies if Building Regulations approval is required.
- Obtain advice on what may be acceptable. This helps you avoid the delay and minimise the costs of revising plans.

Our contact details are as follows :

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## 2.0 Planning Policy Context

### 2.1 Introduction

Planning applications submitted for alterations to shopfronts will be considered in the context of the following national and local planning policies.

### 2.2 Planning Policy Wales (Edition 5:2012)

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) sets out the Welsh Government's planning policy framework for development management in Wales.

Section 4.11 'Promoting sustainability through good design' states that:

*"Good design can protect and enhance environmental quality... (and) help to attract business and investment.."*

This section comments on the importance of sustaining local character, promoting quality and innovative design. In particular, Chapter 4.11.9 establishes that :

*"The visual appearance of proposed development, its scale and its relationship to its surroundings and context are material planning considerations. Local planning authorities should reject poor building and contextual designs..."*

Section 6 'Conserving the Historic Environment' and Section 10 'Planning for Retailing and Town Centres' of PPW set out objectives which are significant.

Paragraph 6.1.1 states that development should, where appropriate:

- *"Preserve or enhance the historic environment, recognising its contribution to economic vitality and culture, civic pride and the quality of life, and its importance as a resource for future generations.*
- *Ensure that the character of historic buildings is safeguarded from alterations, extensions or demolition that would compromise a building's special architectural and historic interest; and to*
- \* *Ensure that conservation areas are protected or enhanced, while at the same time remaining alive and prosperous..."*

Furthermore, Paragraph 6.5.17 states that:

*"Should any proposed development conflict with the objective of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area, or its setting, there will be a strong presumption against the grant of planning permission..."*

Paragraph 6.5.19 further states that:

*"When considering planning applications for advertisements in conservation areas, local planning authorities should pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area."*

Section 10 iterates Welsh Government's objectives for retailing and town centres. Paragraph 10.1.1 emphasises the need to:

- *"...promote established town, district, local and village centres as the most appropriate locations for retailing, leisure and other complementary functions;"*
- *"enhance the vitality, attractiveness and viability of town, district, local and village centres..."*

### 2.3 Technical Advice Note (TAN):12 Design (2009)

PPW is supported by a series of TANs. One of these is specifically concerned with the design of buildings; TAN:12 at paragraph 2.5 states that:

*"Good design is not inevitable. It requires a collaborative, creative, inclusive process of problem solving and innovation - embracing sustainability, architecture, place making, public realm, landscape, and infrastructure."*

### 2.4 Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan (LDP) 2006-2021 (2011)

Planning policy at the more local level, via the adopted Merthyr Tydfil LDP, establishes several Strategic Objectives which the Council in its function as Local Planning Authority will seek to uphold via the planning process. Two of these are relevant to alterations to shopfronts:

- SO10: To ensure good quality design of new development and the creation of safer communities.
- SO11: To ensure the continued protection and enhancement of the natural, cultural, built and historic environment.

Within the Merthyr Tydfil LDP, several policies are relevant. Those are:

### 2.4.1 BW6 Townscape and built heritage

Policy BW6 states that:

*“The Council will protect and support the enhancement of the unique built heritage of the County Borough. Development proposals will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated they would preserve or enhance the architectural quality, character and setting of any of the following:-*

- *Listed Buildings;*
- *Scheduled Ancient Monuments;*
- *Conservation Areas;*
- *Registered Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest;*
- *Townscape character and the distinctiveness of settlements;*
- *Other historic, archaeological and cultural features of acknowledged importance.”*

Appendix 2 of the LDP provides details of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas in the County Borough.

There is a need for property owners and tenants to have special regard to the impact of development within Conservation Areas as well as works which affect Listed Buildings.

These planning mechanisms are in place to ensure that the special character of certain areas or specific buildings are enhanced by sensitive development and not negatively impacted by insensitive development.

There are currently seven Conservation Areas in Merthyr Tydfil County Borough, those are:

- Cyfarthfa Conservation Area
- Dowlais Conservation Area
- Cwmfelin Conservation Area

- Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Area
- Morgantown Conservation Area
- Thomastown Conservation Area
- Treharris Conservation Area

Conservation Areas in Treharris and Merthyr Tydfil are particularly relevant to this Supplementary Planning Guidance given that they are commercial areas with a large number of existing shopfronts.

In Pontmorlais (within the Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Area) there is an Article 4 designation which restricts alterations to buildings which include change of materials and form of:

- doors
- windows
- window frames
- rainwater goods
- chimneys
- painting
- boundaries

Owners would need to apply for planning permission in order to make alterations which affect these building elements in this Article 4 area.

### 2.4.2 BW7 Sustainable design and place-making

The LDP emphasises the importance of sustainability and place making. Policy BW7 recognises the need for development to relate to its wider area. The objective of the policy is to support good quality sustainable design and, specifically to shopfront design, requires new development to:

- *“...be appropriate to its local context in terms of scale, height, massing, elevational treatment, materials and detailing, layout, form, mix and density;*
- *Integrate effectively with adjacent spaces and the public realm to enhance the general street scene and create good quality townscape;...*
- *...Sensitively relate to existing settlement patterns and take account of natural heritage and the historic environment on site and in terms of potential impact on neighbouring areas of importance...”*

## 3.0 Development Control

### 3.1 Key Considerations

This section will help you to compile the correct information that will enable your enquiry or planning application to be processed as efficiently as possible.

#### Existing Streetscape

Has the relationship of the proposed development taken into account the rest of the building as well as those adjoining it and views of the building from the surrounding context?

#### Building Elevations

Is the scale of the shopfront in proportion to the façade of the building?

#### Shopfront Design

Is the design and the quality of materials employed in the scheme high?

#### Signage

Are the graphic design, advertisements and illumination appropriate to the scheme and the building above it?

#### Canopies and Blinds

Have they been considered within the overall design of the shopfront and the building above it?

#### Security

Do security devices obstruct any architectural features on the building or have an adverse environmental impact?

Have internal perforated roller shutters been considered?

#### Conservation of historic features

Are there any surviving historic elements of the existing shopfront that could be remediated and retained as part of the development?

#### Historic analysis

Have you reviewed historic photographs to determine if there are any features which could be reinstated?

#### Access

Do the proposals allow access for all, including having due regard for those with protected characteristics, in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010?

### 3.2 Drawings Required

- A site location plan at a scale of 1:1250 with the application site outlined in red;
- An existing drawing of the elevation of the shop front (at an appropriate scale) and the building in which it is located, together with the adjoining properties;
- A proposed elevation of the shop front at a scale sufficient to communicate the details;
- Cross sections of the building through detailing;
- Details (e.g. joinery profiles) at 1:5. In particular, applicants must submit drawings of proposed signs clearly showing construction, lettering and means of illumination;
- Information on materials, fittings and colours; and
- A Design & Access Statement setting out how the proposed changes will alter access to the property and how it will enhance the visual appearance of the building in which it is located. Guidance on how to prepare a Design & Access Statement is available from: [www.wales.gov.uk](http://www.wales.gov.uk) and within TAN12:Design.

If you are uncertain about what scale drawing is required, please contact the Town Planning Division.



## 4.0 Principles

### 4.1 Traditional Shopfront Design

The established principles of successful shopfront design have their foundations in Victorian and Edwardian architecture but can be applied successfully to any type of building. This is important in a County Borough that has a mixture of Victorian or Edwardian character buildings alongside additions from later in the Twentieth Century.

The following principles of good shopfront design were once common in the commercial properties of the County Borough. Therefore, any future amendments to shopfronts should broadly seek to reinstate these features and basic proportions.

The principles of good shopfront design seek to:

- Create the impression that the shopfront is the 'base' of the building above;
- Harmonise with the age and character of the building as a whole. Shopfronts in post war buildings apply similar characteristics as Victorian and Edwardian ones, without necessarily using the same details and materials;
- Maintain proportion with the rest of the building;
- Contribute to the character of the area;
- Retain and refurbish shopfronts rather than replace them. Any original features such as pilasters and fascias that have been concealed by later additions should be exposed and restored in order to enhance the appearance of the shopfront;
- Ensure that signage and security precautions do not exceed what is reasonably necessary to advertise the business and give protection against burglary and vandalism;
- Introduce appropriately designed external illumination fixtures or illumination from internal lighting rather than internally illuminated box signs;
- Incorporate the design of any canopies within the overall scheme;
- Where possible, make doorways and entrances accessible to people with disabilities;
- Announce the name of the business in a way which is in proportion to the building above (by corresponding with the width of the fascia);
- Incorporate high quality shopfronts with improvements to the total facade. This includes removing redundant fixtures and fittings,

including signs, cables etc., and cleaning or painting any brickwork or stonework above the shop window and the gutters and fall pipes;

- Create an obvious opening and doorway to the shop; and
- Maintain the rhythm of the building above, especially where adjacent shopfronts are to be operated as a single concern. In this case, each shopfront should be individually expressed by retaining or reintroducing pilasters between them.



Acceptable or encouraged



Unacceptable

Throughout the document, a red cross indicates the kind of development that is unlikely to achieve planning consent. Green ticks suggest examples that are of a design standard that MTCBC want to encourage.



Examples of traditional shopfronts from within the County Borough.

Shopfront proportions need to be broadly consistent with the building they form part of. Good shopfront design should conform to the following basic proportions:

- The stallrisers should not exceed 25% of the total shopfront.
- The fascias should not exceed 20% of the total shopfront.
- Capitals should not significantly exceed the proportion of fascia.
- The transom which frames the celestory should not be placed in the bottom half of the shopfront.

- The fascia should not impose upon the sills of the windows above. Where the shopfront and the sills do meet, this should be via the use of cornices.

These proportions should be used as a guide and applied in the context of the age, location, scale, detailing and overall character of the building within which the shopfront forms a part of.



Fig: 1: Typical shopfront elements and proportions

## 4.2 Contemporary Shopfront Design

The design of shopfronts in buildings from the mid twentieth century onwards should follow the same basic principles as for Victorian and Edwardian shopfronts. However, because of changing form and proportion of buildings after this period, it is important that the design of shopfronts on more recent buildings are carefully considered.

It is just as important that shopfronts on modern buildings reflect the context and the scale of the overall building that they are part of. The example on the bottom left demonstrates the impact of incorporating a Victorian proportioned shopfront without considering the relationship between it, the building and the surrounding shopfronts. The distorted proportions have an overall negative appearance of the block and create an overall disjointed building frontage.

The proportions and principles outlined on the previous pages are generally still applicable to contemporary buildings. However, there is likely to

be more latitude in the size of the fascia and stallriser. The type of detailing should also be carefully considered. Victorian or Edwardian detailing is not necessarily successful in the context of a more modern building. Firstly, there is likely to be less ornate detailing of the elements which compose the shopfront. Although we would not encourage traditional detailing on modern buildings, we will encourage applicants to consider the use of high quality contemporary detailing where appropriate. This may be in the form of :

- Lighting
- Door furniture
- Signage
- Hanging signs etc

There is often more scope for shopfront designs to exhibit individual flair on contemporary buildings and the Town Planning Division will consider innovative proposals provided that they are: properly considered and justified, use high quality materials, and are well detailed.

These shopfronts are of appropriate scale and the simple contemporary details are in keeping with the style of the 'host' building.

This shopfront is out of scale and the 'historic' detailing is out of character with the style of the 'host' building

This contemporary shopfront and building work well together because it is appropriately proportioned and detailed





## 5.0 Design Elements

### 5.1 Fascias

All fascias should be finished by a neat, well-defined cornice.

Fascias should be aligned throughout a terrace by keeping to a standard width, normally that of the capital. This promotes both a more attractive street scene and also ensures that each shopfront retains its original, balanced proportions. Fascias should be no deeper than 20% of the shopfront's overall height and they should not impinge on the original details of the shopfront.

Treating celestories in a way which makes the fascia look deeper (i.e. by placing additional signage within them) should be avoided. This can imbalance established proportions and harm the appearance of the shopfront and the street. When there is significant variation in apparent fascia width, from one store to another, the result is usually a chaotic and disjointed townscape.

Where a store occupies several units, each should have a separate fascia, linked visually by a common design. One continuous fascia would be visually over-dominant and cut across the pattern of the terrace.

Fascias should not obscure, damage or project in front of visually significant architectural details.

Applicants are encouraged to consider angled fascias.



Fascia is in proportion and ties in with the shopfront as a whole.



Fascia dominates shopfront and occupies more than 25% of the shopfront.



Lacks proportion and relationship with rest of building.



Consistent fascia across building and relates to building lines and features above.

## 5.2 Pilasters and Vertical Elements

Pilasters and capitals should always follow the same rhythm and style as the building above. By doing this, the pattern of the building above is consistent from its base, up to the eaves.

Pilasters and capitals are a component part of a successful shopfront and should always be present as they help to define one unit from another and create order and structure in the streetscape. Whatever the building, pilasters and capitals should be used to contain the fascia and shop sign.

Sometimes, additional vertical elements like mullions can be employed to avoid the uses of overly large areas of glazing across the pattern of the terrace.

Historical research, particularly from old photographs is encouraged to provide the opportunity to reinstate hidden or absent historic architectural pilaster features.



Oversized fascia prevents any chance of the shopfront relating to the rest of the building as a whole.



Well proportioned fascia, windows and stallriser, split by pilasters.



Elements of the shopfront, such as the door relate well to the upper storeys of the building.



Pilasters (and to a lesser degree mullions) perform an important role in framing the shopfront



## 5.3 Stallriser

Stallrisers represent the base to the shopfront. They help to make the shopfront more secure and traditionally enabled goods to be presented at eye level. Stallrisers should form a part of all successful shopfronts in the County Borough.

Their size will be dictated by the building they form part of and by the type of goods sold by that particular shop. For instance, shops selling goods which require close inspection (like a butcher or a jeweller) would require a stallriser to present their goods to eye level. Whereas other shops, like clothes shops, prefer to present a larger display so would be able to use a smaller stallriser to maximise window space.

Designs devoid of stallrisers, or where they comprise of more than 25% of the total shopfront, will be rejected. A cill detail should be included between the glazing and the stallriser.



A low stallriser shows off wears such as clothing which require a large display area.

## 5.4 Doors and Thresholds

It is extremely important that entrances to buildings are designed to allow ease and accessibility for all users.

Provisions for this are made through Part M of the Building Regulations (Access to and Use of Buildings), which sets out statutory provisions for minimum standards relating to door widths and ramped access to entrances of public and commercial properties. In some cases, it may not be possible to employ all the potential solutions to improve access without detriment to the design/character of the building.

The Regulations provide very specific guidance for level, ramped or stepped access. Dimensions, characteristics, and layout of doorways (including aspects of material finishes to be used) need to be determined; as should methods enabling access for people with limited physical dexterity and who are visually impaired.

These standards apply to all new-build, extensions, and alterations to existing entrances.

Doors to upper floors should harmonise with the shopfront. To improve public safety, access to upper floors should be provided from the front of the premises.

It is important that applicants demonstrate they can simultaneously satisfy Part M of the Building Regulations without having a negative impact on the character of the building, if it is of heritage value.



This traditional shopfront in Merthyr Tydfil adopted a low stallriser to enhance their display.



A higher stallriser can be used to display smaller goods at a more comfortable height.

Access can be improved by:-

- A level, ramped (no greater than 1:14), splayed or glazed recessed entrance with a minimum 1200mm front width, 800mm door width, using, wherever possible, fat thresholds with non-slip surfaces;
- A rail at the entrance and/or across the door, not more than 1000mm above the ground;
- Handles which are easy to grasp and offer support. Long tubular types and handles with returns are best;
- Doors that are lightweight or automatic. Doors should also be made easy to locate;
- Signage (“pull”, “push” and “automatic”) that is clearly posted;
- Substantially glazed entrance doorways that are clearly identified; and
- Ensuring that people with visual impairment are in no doubt as to the location of the entrance door.

## 5.5 Windows

Traditional style windows and glazing types should be encouraged on historic buildings. Treatments to glazing, such as panelling, etching, reflective or tinted glass, which is used to provide signage or restrict the view into a shop, should be kept to the very minimum necessary.

However, glazing types which include etched effect graphics can supplement the main signage of the unit and should be encouraged provided it is proportional to the windows, the shopfront and the building as a whole.



'On window' signage completely obscures views into the shop creating an oppressive and unwelcoming shopfront.



Frosted or etched glass can be used to partly obscure views into the building if appropriate, or to provide additional signage space



Transition space between the pavement and the shop entrance should be clearly defined, level or sloped and wide enough for full mobility access.



Sensitively applied, hand painted window advertising and signage can improve the appearance of a shopfront without making it look cluttered.



## 5.6 Lighting

Lighting should be considered as part of the overall design rather than a later addition. Subtle lighting can add vitality to the night-time street scene but poorly designed illuminated signs can look garish rather than stylish. Over-illumination must be avoided as it can upset the balance of light and conflict with street lighting.

### 5.6.1 External Lighting

Externally mounted lighting fixtures are preferred on more traditional shopfronts. The lighting units themselves should be subtle and not divert attention away from the fascia. However, on modern buildings, there may be greater scope to consider concealed light sources.

Light sources should be carefully directed at the sign, avoiding glare. Lamp types could include tungsten halogen floods, tungsten spotlights, low voltage LED spotlights, swan-necked metal arms and concealed fluorescent tubes. All wiring and trunking should be concealed behind the fascia.

### 5.6.2 Back-lit Lettering

Translucent plastic letters or graphics inset into an opaque panel which is illuminated from behind can be suitable for contemporary buildings. The light box must be fully recessed behind the fascia. The effect of this must be to highlight only the letters and not the overall fascia. Box illuminated signs which allow light to spill out from the whole fascia will not be permitted.



Well designed lighting highlighting a specific elements of a hand painted fascia is recommended.



Back illuminated box signage appears crude and unbalanced because it dominates the shopfront. Furthermore it is not an integral part of the shopfront but an 'addition to' the shopfront



Externally mounted lighting fixtures are likely to work better on traditional shopfronts



Internal fascia lighting is discreet and effective without over-illuminating the whole fascia

### 5.6.3 Individual Halo Letters

Individual letters which stand proud of a surface and are lit from behind to produce a halo effect are suitable for fascias or wall mounting. Quality individual letters in a suitable font and size are preferred.

Halo lettering is not acceptable for traditional shopfronts, in Conservation Areas, or for Listed Buildings.



Halo letters can be appropriate provided they are used sensitively and on appropriate buildings.

### 5.6.5 Cool Cathode Tubes

Graphically elegant neon signs may be acceptable if they are of moderate size, single colour and limited palette. However, these will not be appropriate in any form in Conservation Areas or on or adjacent to Listed Buildings. Cool cathode tubes are likely to be more appropriate as part of a contemporary shopfront.



Internal illuminated projecting sign is not appropriate

### 5.6.4 Illumination of Hanging Signs

Box illuminated signs of any form are not acceptable. However, well crafted, elegant signs making use of thin fluorescent tubes, so only the lettering or graphic is illuminated, may be considered.

Illumination for hanging signs should be external, not internal, and should be subtle and well directed to avoid glare.



Subtle lighting located above a simple but traditional hanging sign helps to announce the business without being too garish.

## 5.7 Canopies and Blinds

Blinds serve to protect perishable goods from deterioration due to strong sunlight and help to keep the interior cool. Projecting roller blinds are the preferred option as they form an integral part of the shopfront and are retractable when not required.

Dutch canopies are made from canvas or plastic over a metal frame. They hide architectural details and interrupt the building elevation. They also have little reference to Merthyr Tydfl's heritage, where traditional blinds were the norm. Also, shops have a tendency to leave them open which results in deterioration of the fabric and a scruffy appearance. Dutch canopies are therefore not acceptable and will not be permitted.

Highway regulations require the outer edge of the blind to be set back at least 1m from the kerb, and the outer and inner ends of the supporting arms should not be less than 2m in height. Property owners should choose blinds and canopies to suit the style of the frontage. For example, a fully retractable blind, in "canvas look" material, best complements a traditional property. For areas or buildings of special character, it would usually be the only suitable type. The mechanism for retracting the blind should, wherever possible, use a 'blind lath' which retracts to form part of the cornice so that it is barely visible when not in use.

The number, shape and size of canopies used should relate to the structural form of the shop unit; separate canopies should be used above doors or windows, for example. They should sit within, not over, pilasters.

Blinds should be located beneath the fascia so that the shop sign is still visible. Large or long stretches of canopy which overwhelm a building or street scene should be avoided. A single canopy should not span across more than one structural bay.

When adding canopies or redesigning a shopfront, integrate them into the overall scheme. Individual designs, shapes and colours should blend in with the shop and not clash with others nearby. Choose materials that withstand weathering. The name of the shop may be included on the blind.



Dutch awnings or blinds will not be acceptable.



Traditional roller blinds which can be discreetly hidden away within a fascia can provide an attractive and usable transitional space in front of a cafe or bar.



## 5.8 Signage

A shop is most easily identified if it has only one or two clear signs. Primarily, signage should be displayed upon the shopfront fascia. However, signage may also be accommodated upon the glazing and through hanging signs. Avoid repetition or putting additional signs onto storeys above the shop. Using signs provided by advertisers will erode the simplicity of the shop and make groups of buildings appear cluttered and should be avoided. Free-standing illuminated signs hung within the window-display should also be avoided.

Lettering and graphics should be moderately sized and should be in proportion to the dimensions of the fascia. A traditional sign comprising of a painted timber background with hand painted lettering is particularly appropriate for traditional shop fronts. Raised metal or timber letters are acceptable but garish shiny plastics are best avoided. Clear, well spaced letters are just as easy to read as larger

oversized letters. The sign should be limited to the name of the shop with a simple graphic logo and the street number. Too much information which creates visual clutter will not be acceptable.

Hanging signs should be suspended from the fascia above using brackets which suit the style of the building. The height of these signs should not exceed the width of the fascia, should be at least 2.4m from pavement level and should not project more than 800mm from the building. Projecting box signs will not be acceptable.

Corporate signage and branding should not dictate the style of the shopfront, the signage and the appearance of the fascia. Corporate identity should be appropriate to the scale and character of the shopfront and building as a whole. It should not overpower the aesthetic, and should be carefully considered.



Relief lettering can help create a simple, clean and modern sign which sits



Good example of how corporate branding has been developed to fit into a traditional shopfront in a historic town centre (Narberth)



Signage shouldn't dominate a facade and should respect the rest of the building.

## 5.9 Security

Security can be enhanced by more than the physical fabric of buildings. Enhancing activity within shopping areas will help to create an environment where anti-social or criminal activity is less likely to go unnoticed.

Shopfronts should be designed using materials that make burglary and petty vandalism very difficult, and be implemented in a way that makes the town feel safe and attractive to people outside of trading hours.

Security measures should not compromise the quality of the environment. Solid roller shutters will be unacceptable in all circumstances.

Internal grilles, lattices, screens and meshes are the preferred approach. These should not compromise the attractiveness of the shop window and can be retracted out of sight during opening hours. These should be installed so that any mechanism cannot be seen from the outside, i.e., behind the fascia.

Where internal security devices cannot be installed, external systems are the next most appropriate solution.

These should be chain linked so they are not visually imposing, but prevent entry. However, applicants will need to recognise that obtrusive external security features on Listed Buildings and within Conservation Areas are likely to be resisted by the Town Planning Division. Again, the mechanism for retracting these should have a minimal impact on the appearance of the shopfront. Box roller shutters are the last resort and should be avoided at all costs.

### 5.9.1 Laminated Glass

Laminated glass should be used on all schemes in conjunction with other measures like internal meshes. Laminated glass resists penetration - the outer glass may break but the interlayer retains overall integrity and continues to act as a barrier. It therefore protects against break-ins by preventing or slowing down burglary attempts.

Laminated glass protects against vandalism and brief attacks using easily available objects. It is capable of withstanding repeated blows from heavy objects



Shop displays can remain highly visible behind internal security measures without feeling unwelcoming or oppressive.



Decorative latticework behind the glass becomes an attractive and permanent feature of the shopfront.



Internal perforated roller shutters behind the external glass provide adequate security and still allow for window shopping and encourage activity outside opening hours.



such as bricks, hammers, crowbars and similar hand held heavy objects.

Depending on the extent of the attack, the glass remains integral and protects the premises adequately, offering:

- Protection from secondary looting;
- Damage from the wind and weather;
- Safety while broken, reducing personal injury; and
- Often, no need for 'boarding up' whilst awaiting replacement.

The correct grade and thickness specified for the application depends on the value of goods on display, the degree of risk, and estimated time needed by thieves to break in and enter. Using this type of glass will negate the need for roller shutters.

### 5.9.2 Other security measures

Gating and grates are unobtrusive ways of strengthening the shop front frames and reducing the risk of vandalism. However, these will need to be balanced against the character of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas and used sensitively.

Burglar alarm boxes should not conceal architectural features or be positioned too conspicuously. Associated wiring should be hidden or at least neatly fixed. All fixings should be made of non-ferrous materials.

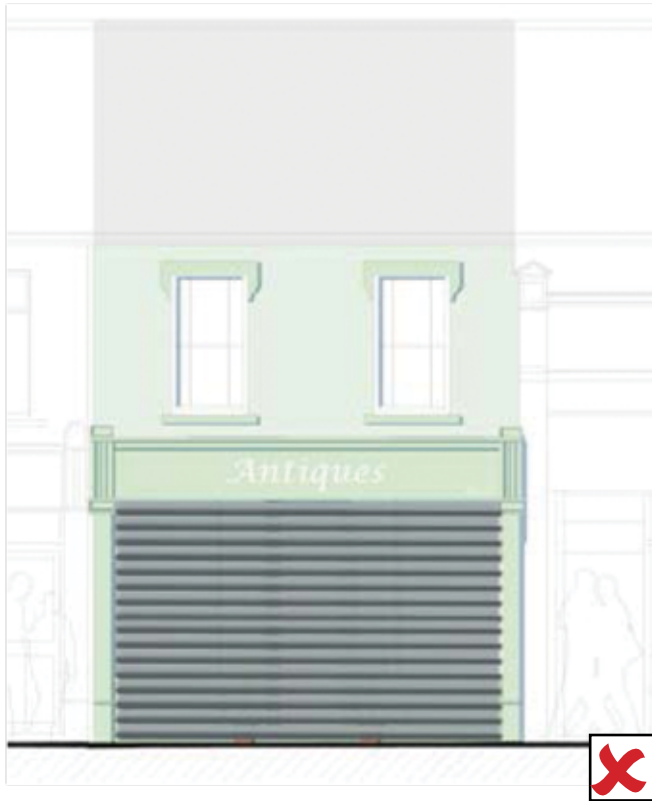


Box roller shutters enable a street to feel unsafe and unwelcoming out of opening hours. They also remove any relationship between the shopfront, building above and surrounding street scene.



Retractable internal grille allows for visibility and flexibility.

Fig: 2: Design solutions for shopfront security (elevations)



Solid box roller shutter, even when mounted behind the fascia, can have a negative impact on the street scene. Cumulatively, these types of security, can result in 'dead' and threatening night time environments



Sliding lattice security grills, whilst still preventing forced entry are much more permeable and result in night time environments which feel much safer. This is particularly enhanced when traders retain some low level lighting on shop window displays

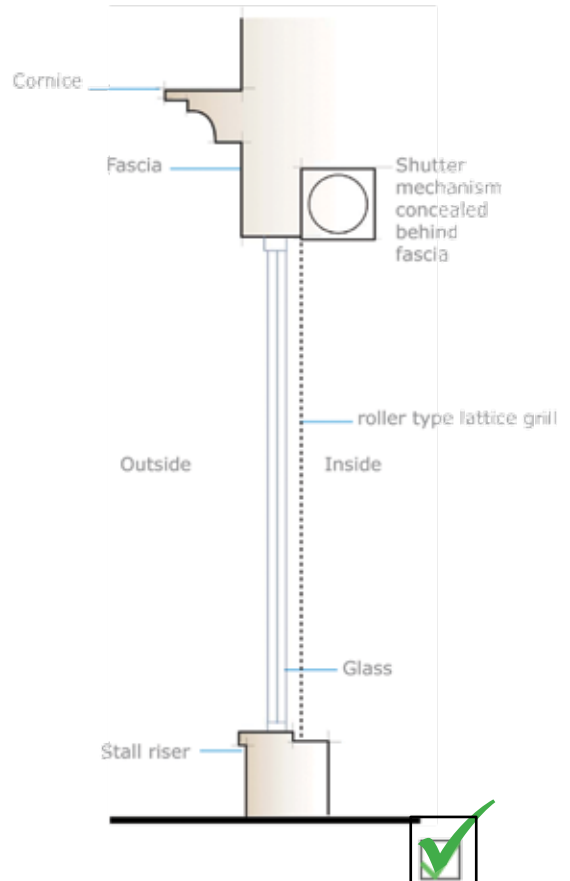
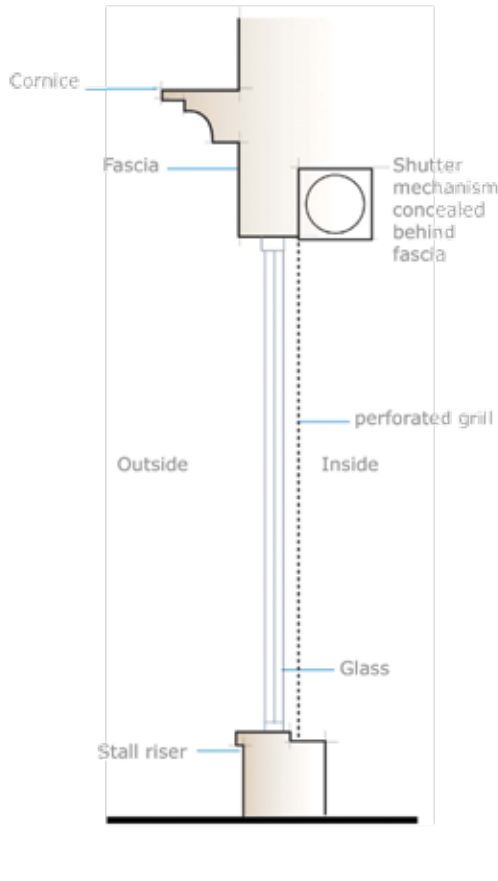
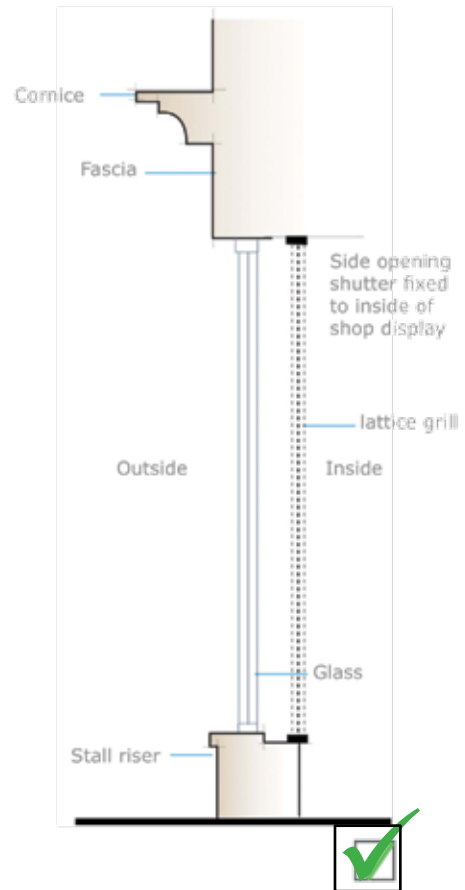
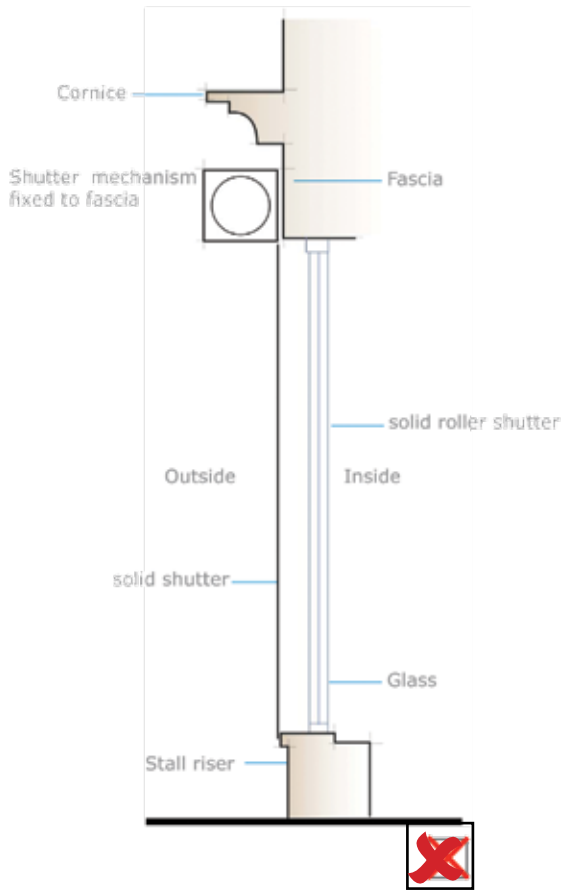


Perforated security shutters are not normally considered acceptable on the exterior of a building. The suitability of these depends on the extent to which the shutters are perforated, whether the glazing alone is obscured and whether the proposal pertains to a Listed Building or building within a Conservation Area.



Roller type lattice security grills, whilst still preventing forced entry are much more permeable and result in night time environments which feel much safer. This is particularly enhanced when traders retain some low level lighting on shop window displays

Fig. 3: Design solutions for shopfront security (sections)





## 5.10 Materials, Decorations and Colour

### 5.10.1 Painting & Colour

The materials used for individual shopfronts should be influenced by the building to which they form a part. The use of traditional materials such as painted hardwood timber should be a common starting point for all shopfronts in the County Borough.

There will be greater scope to use modern materials on newer buildings. However, designers must avoid the use of acrylic sheeting, perspex, plastic, standard natural finish aluminium and unpainted softwoods.

Garish or lurid colour schemes will not be encouraged. Monotone, muted, matt finish paint combinations can result in a stylish high quality scheme. The use of the BS4800 colour range is generally considered appropriate, especially for use on Victorian and Edwardian properties. These types of colours will promote a positive image consistent with the County Borough's heritage. Gloss finish paints should be avoided as they can appear brash. Painted timber is preferable to stained or varnished hardwoods.

Solvent free, organic based paints and pigments should be considered for all buildings. Refer to paint manufacturer's specialist historic colour charts for properties of a specific period.

If all shopfronts are painted in conservation tones, the buildings will have a common sense of character whilst still allowing for personal or corporate style.

Colour should be deployed throughout the whole building and not just the shopfront. It is important that the whole elevation has a colour scheme. In general, the depth of colour of the shopfront should be richer with more pale tones in the same shade used for upper floors.



A more pale tone in the same shade of the shopfront is used for upper floors



Muted conservation colours still allow for corporate branding and commercial differentiation but contribute to a harmonious townscape

Some ideas for the kinds of colours that would be encouraged by the Town Planning Division are outlined below. Some RAL codes for colours that are consistent with this palette are as follows :

- RAL 9007 - Grey aluminium
- RAL 7032 - Pebble Grey
- RAL 5014 - Pigeon Blue
- RAL 3016 - Coral Red
- RAL 6013 - Reed Green
- RAL 5023 - Distant Blue
- RAL 6034 - Pastel Turquoise

The BS 4800 range of conservation colours is particularly relevant for Victorian and Edwardian shopfronts. These are displayed below:

### Shopfront Colours



### Upper Floor Colours



## 5.10.2 Ironmongery

Ironmongery, such as brackets for hanging signs or baskets, door handles and decorative security features is a practical part of shopfront design. The Town Planning Division encourages applicants to consider the use of ornate and decorative finishes which can add richness to the overall shopfront.

Ironmongery must be an integral part of shopfront design and not a later addition. Features such as well maintained hanging baskets can have a considerable impact upon a town or village centre.

## 5.10.3 Other materials

The materials which comprise the stallrisers should be carefully considered. Applicants are encouraged to consider the use of painted hardwood timber, painted render or a high quality glazed tile finish.



Vibrant colours are complimented by muted shades on the upper floors.

## 5.10.4 Decorations

The Town Planning Division encourages applicants to consider the use of decorative features in shopfronts. Typical features have traditionally included: terrazzo tiled thresholds, tiled fascias and stallrisers.

Property owners are encouraged to consider the maintenance of decorative features at the design stage of a project.



Hanging baskets can bring further colour and vibrancy to a shopfront



Window sill decoration using plants and window boxes adds richness and visual interest to the streetscene



Use of terrazzo flooring and other tilework can be a way of reinstating original features or adding new unique elements



## 6.0 Conclusion

This Supplementary Planning Guidance has been prepared to raise the general standard of shopfront design in commercial properties across the County Borough.

The quality of the design of shopfronts and attention to maintenance can have a considerable impact upon the visual amenity and identity of town and village centres.

Given the County Borough's historic Georgian and Victorian character, it is important that traditional shopfronts are designed appropriately. This is particularly relevant given the special provisions made for the protection of Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings.

Even the design of shopfronts on relatively modern buildings can have an important role in creating a high quality townscape. Attention to proportions, materials and detailing, and the relationship between the individual property and the block which it forms a part, are equally important considerations in both contemporary and historic shopfronts.

Planning applications for improvements, reinstatements and maintenance to shopfronts that demonstrate compatibility with these guidelines are more likely to be viewed positively by the Town Planning Division.

