

The purpose of this Advice Note is to provide design guidelines for those wishing to alter or install new shopfronts within Gosport’s High Street and Stoke Road Conservation Areas and establish good design principles.

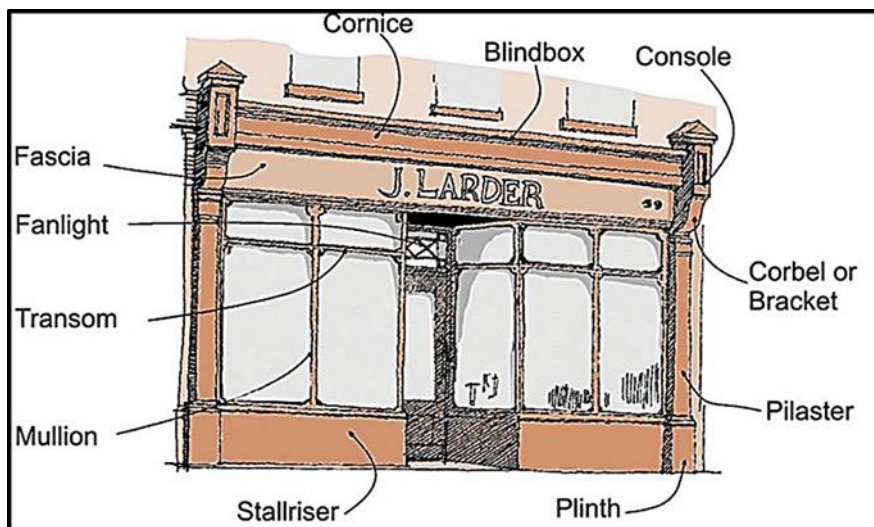


Fig 1: Basic components of a traditional shopfront

Shopfronts and Advertisements

Shopfronts and the facades of commercial properties play a vital role in establishing the character of an area. Because of their visual prominence, it is particularly important that proposals for the replacement, refurbishment or modernisation of shopfronts are appropriate to the character and appearance of the local area and the buildings to which they are attached.

Shopfronts should form part of the overall design of the building reflecting its scale, character and materials. Where possible, original or period shopfronts should be retained and appropriately restored where the opportunity arises. Therefore, any alterations should seek to maintain the original shopfront character by adhering to its original proportions, architectural emphasis, and materials and where appropriate decorative treatment.



Fig 2: Shopfronts spanning two or more buildings versus a visual link

Shopfronts spanning two or more buildings or continuous fascias across a number of shopfronts are generally not acceptable. Instead, the visual link should be achieved by the use of similar colours and common detailing.

Choice of materials

The type of material used in a shopfront is an important element in the overall design. Materials should reflect the character of the building, taking into account the whole facade, as well as the overall street scene.

The number of different materials used should be kept to a minimum. Traditional timber and stucco is preferred to aluminium. Large areas of acrylic or other synthetic material, glazed ceramic tiling, small imitation mosaic and cut-out plastic lettering should be avoided. The colour of materials again should be compatible with existing frontages, being sensitive without being too dull.

Fascias

Fascias should not dominate the shopfront, but should complement it by fitting within the scale and proportion of the shopfront as a whole. They should not obscure first floor windows or architectural features. Blinds should avoid obscuring features of the building or adjoining buildings.

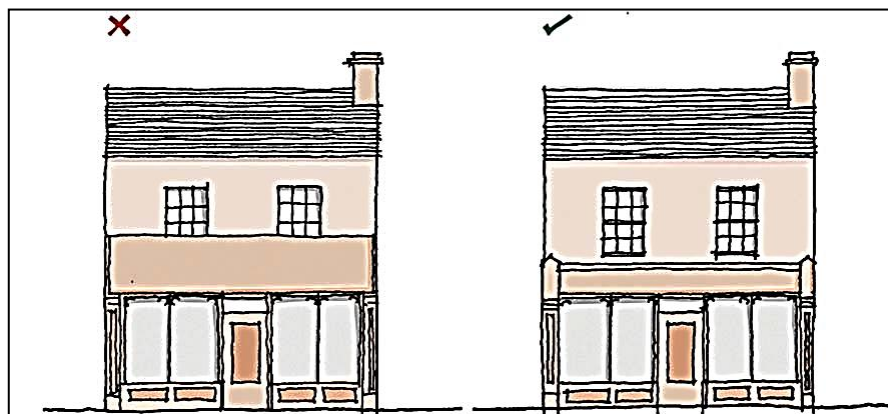


Fig 3: A proportionate fascia versus a fascia which dominates the building and obscures architectural features



Fig 4: Good example of well-proportioned modern shopfront

Windows

Show windows should avoid being a single sheet of glass between ground and fascia, except in circumstances where the design of the building dictates otherwise. The use of glazing bars (transoms and mullions) will reduce the cost of broken panes and can be used in conjunction with a suitable stallriser to reduce areas of glass at risk

Canopies

Canopies, where appropriate, should not obscure architectural features and should complement the general arrangement of shopfronts and buildings. Preference is given to tradition folding blinds of materials that have a natural appearance. Dutch blinds and non-retractable blinds, especially with shiny plastic covering, are in most cases, foreign to the English street scene and are unacceptable in Conservation Areas.

Stallrisers

Stallrisers are a common element of traditional shopfronts and should relate in scale, appearance and materials to the shopfront and building generally. Security is now a material consideration with regards to shops and the installation of a suitable stallriser of at least 450 mm in height can give a measure of protection in the case of 'ram raiding'.

Colour

Colour schemes should normally relate to the character of the existing and surrounding buildings. Generally, excessive use of primary colours is harmful to the streetscene.



Fig 5: Well-proportioned fascia with clear lettering



Fig 6: Fascia is disproportionate to building and shopfront design

Shutters

If shutters or security grilles are deemed essential and all other options have been explored (safety glazing, internal window grilles, external removal window security grilles etc.), they should be carefully designed so that they have as little impact on the appearance of the shopfront as possible. Preference is given to shutters fixed within shop windows of a lattice or punched steel design that are coloured to blend in with the surrounding decoration.

Solid slatted shutters are not considered appropriate for use within Conservation Areas and it should be noted that permanent external shutters require planning consent from the Local Authority where they project beyond the existing face of the building.

In considering such applications, preference will be given to schemes where the box containing the shutters is recessed into the shopfront (either soffit or fascia) and where the shutters do not extend below the top of the stallriser and are coloured to blend in with their surroundings. Favourable consideration will not normally be given to solid shutters of mill or galvanised finish.

Access

Access should allow for people with all physical abilities. In new shopfronts, thresholds should be flush with the shop floor and any difference in level to the pavement should be ramped at an angle not steeper than 1 in 20. Floor surfaces should be smooth and not slippery. If a doormat is required, it should be set in a mat well if the mat itself is more than 10 mm thick. Entrance doors should give a clear opening width of not less than 800 mm and preferably 830 mm.

When double doors are used, one of the leaves must provide a minimum of 800mm clear opening. Where possible, doors should be fitted with a kick plate and have door springs, which enable a reasonable operation by a person in a wheelchair. Letter boxes, bell pushes and door handles should be not more than 100 mm above floor level.

Lettering

Lettering should be of a clear and legible, should generally not be higher than one third of the fascia height and be appropriate to the style and proportions of the building on which they are located.

Illumination

Where illumination is considered necessary, internal illumination is almost invariably harmful to the streetscene. This is because internal illumination generally results in deep box signs. In almost all cases, external illumination is the only appropriate solution for historic buildings. As modern technology advances, there may be opportunities to consider the illumination of individual lettering on modern buildings as there are examples where this has been successfully achieved within a sufficiently slender fascia board.

Advertisements

The overall design of individual advertisements, their size, their materials, whether they are illuminated (internally or externally), the type and style of building they are on, their position on the building, the appearance of surrounding buildings and their cumulative effect are all important factors in the impact of a single advertisement on a street scene.

A particular design may be appropriate in one location, on a specific building, but the same design may appear out of character on a different building in a different place.

The design of signs (including colouring, lettering and materials) should form an integral part of the overall design of a building and reflect the scale and character of the whole building. Potential benefits of advertising include adding interest to the street scene, bringing colour to drab areas, making areas safer at night through better illumination and screening eyesores.

Where a number of advertisements are already present in a street scene or on a building, the Borough Council will have regard to the cumulative visual effect of further advertisements on the character of the area and on the general townscape. The number of advertisements should be kept to the minimum necessary to convey the essential information.

Where appropriate, projecting or hanging signs should be positioned at fascia board level and reflect the proportions and character of the building on which they are located. Advertisements should ideally be confined to ground floor level. If there are businesses operating at or above first floor level or advertisements cannot reasonably be fixed at a lower level, particular care will be required to ensure that signage or advertisements at a higher level work well with the design and proportions of the building.

Poster advertising should be of a form appropriate to the scale of neighbouring buildings and be located as to preserve the character and appearance of the local area. Attention will be paid to the potential impact of the advertisement upon pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular safety.

Advertisements on Listed Buildings will generally need Listed Building Consent, even where advertisement consent is not required.



Fig 7: Detail of an historic shopfront on Stoke Road



Fig – 8-11: Examples of what can be achieved