



South Gloucestershire Council

Shopfronts and advertisements

Design guidance - supplementary planning document

Adopted April 2012

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1. Introduction

South Gloucestershire covers a diverse geographical area of outstanding historic and architectural and landscape interest. It contains a particularly wide variety of architectural styles and building materials with a wide range of shops from local village stores to modern out of town shopping centres.



The purpose of this leaflet is to provide guidance to owners and tenants on the most appropriate types of shopfront and signage, including free-standing and temporary advertisements, for use in the rural and urban settlements of South Gloucestershire.

Shopfronts and signage play a significant role in defining the character of our settlements. Free-standing advertisements can also have a major impact particularly within the rural area. These should be designed with particular care to ensure that they respect their surroundings.

Whilst remnants of shuttered 16th or 17th century shop fronts still survive in Chipping Sodbury, the majority of good surviving historic shop fronts are of 19th or early 20th century date. The preservation of historic shop fronts is important because of the contribution they make to the character of the area but also because they provide a link to the historic past. Within modern settings good quality detailing is as important in establishing the character of an area but within a modern way.

Where replacement or alteration of existing shopfronts or advertisements is proposed it is essential that their replacements are designed to a high standard and use good quality materials that respect the proportions and character of the building and its setting within the street scene. The architectural merit of buildings and their settings can be significantly enhanced by good shopfronts or significantly eroded by poor ones.

This guide is intended to ensure that new or replacement designs – whether traditional or modern, respect and enhance the character of the building and street scene, whilst at the same time meeting current requirements for security and access and visibility. It is not a substitute for the employment of professional architects or skilled designers with a track record of working on sensitive design solutions.

2. Shopfront design: a brief history

Until the 18th century, shopfronts tended to have small shuttered windows or larger small-paned windows with narrow glazing bars. The adoption of Georgian architecture during the 18th century saw the introduction of larger small-paned fixed windows glazed from the inside for greater security. Shopfronts have gradually become larger over time and modern shopfronts tend to occupy the entire ground floor elevation. These larger shopfronts combine the maximum opportunity to display goods with the shop entrance and often a separate entrance to upper floors all within the same façade.

The classical architectural style of the Georgian period survived, albeit in an increasingly debased form into the early 20th century, and shopfronts usually respected the scale and proportions of the building and street scene. The early 20th century saw the introduction of Art Nouveau and Art Deco influences on shopfront design, reflecting the growing ability of manufacturers to use metal framing and curved glass, although few examples survive within South Gloucestershire.

The second half of the 20th century saw the introduction of a wider range of materials, stone, marble, plastic, ceramic tiles and the gradual move toward full height glazing and window display areas. Simultaneously came the growth of chain stores within urban centres and the introduction of common signage and styles of shopfronts and a change from designing shopfronts for specific buildings to trying to impose a single corporate image. At the same time, the growing use of electric lighting saw the introduction of external and internal illumination of shop fronts and their associated signage.



A good mid-19th century butchers shopfront in a Grade II listed building. The original bow windows have been removed and replaced with sash widows but the cornice, pilasters and frieze survive.



A mid-late 18th century, Grade II listed building with later 19th century bay windows under a continuous roof. To the left is the entrance to the upper floors.



A good example of a late Victorian shopfront in Staple Hill.



20th century enhancements in shop design saw the introduction of curved glazing, tiling and the use of bronze in the construction of shopfronts.

3. General design guidance

Where an existing shopfront contributes to the character and visual amenity of the building or area, it should be kept rather than replaced. Important and traditional architectural features on buildings should not be destroyed or concealed by the installation of new shopfronts. Alterations to shopfronts on listed buildings will only be permitted where the alterations preserve the special architectural or historic character of the building and setting. Similarly proposals to alter shopfronts in Conservation Areas will need to demonstrate an appreciation of the significance of the Conservation Area and serve to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of that area.

New shopfronts should neither dominate the street scene nor detract from the character of historic buildings or other buildings in the immediate vicinity. Their proportions, materials and detailing should respect the character and the hierarchy of existing buildings along the street. This is particularly important where a number of different shopfronts are found within a single façade or in a particularly uniform street scene.

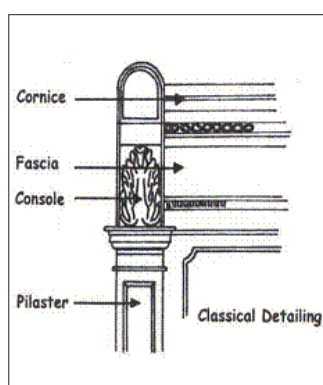
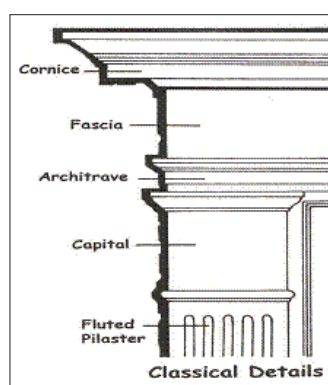
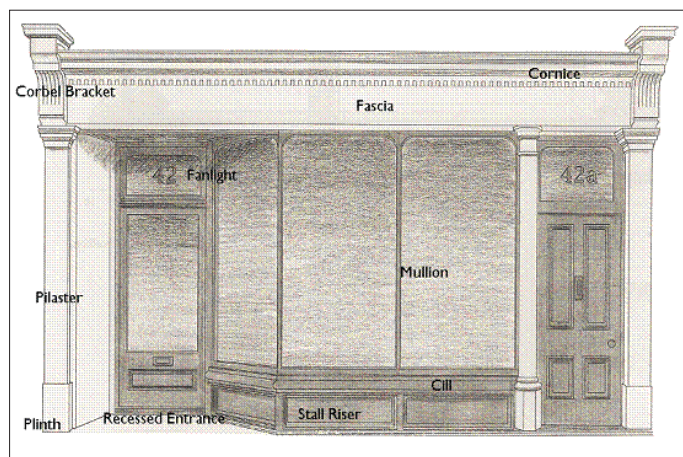
The design approach should start with an assessment of the significance of the building and its setting so that the effect of shopfront design can be considered in relation to significant elements of the building as a whole, as well as on adjoining shopfronts and the wider street scene. The architectural character and proportions of the upper floors and adjacent buildings needs to be understood to ensure the ground floor shopfront is not designed in isolation.

By their nature shopfronts are viewed from close range as well as from a distance. As a result, the design of each component as well as the overall appearance is important and the shopfront as a whole will be expected to exhibit a high standard in design and choice of materials, irrespective of whether the design is traditional or contemporary. Aluminium is a modern material that comes in a variety of powder-coated finishes which may be acceptable as a cheap alternative to steel where a contemporary design is appropriate. Natural or anodised aluminium weathers badly and is not acceptable for shopfront frames, doors or windows.



(Image: Brighton & Hove City Council)

Care should be taken in the design of shopfronts to ensure that new shopfronts and advertisements respect the building on which they are located, and any adjoining buildings.



Classical detailing found in traditional shopfronts and terminology of individual components. (Images: North Warwickshire Borough Council)

(Image: North Warwickshire Borough Council)

The shopfront should always relate in terms of scale and proportion to the building into which it is set. Where a building contains a number of different units or is divided clearly into bays, the shopfronts should relate to these divisions and the fascia should not continue across clear vertical divisions in the façade. Detailing of windows, signs, and their associated materials is important as is the palette of chosen colours.

Poorly designed and detailed pseudo - victorian shopfronts are never an acceptable alternative to high quality traditional detailing or good modern design solutions.

Modern open shopfronts are generally not acceptable, except in modern buildings designed for this purpose - e.g. Cribbs Causeway.

Fascias

Fascias separate the shopfront from the upper floors of a building and should not be extended below the head of the pilasters to conceal a suspended ceiling. Obscure glass should be used, or the ceiling sloped up as it reaches the window. Similarly, they should not be extended above the cornice level in an attempt to increase the area of advertisement. Where there are no pilasters, the fascia should be in proportion to the shopfront, the host building, and any adjacent buildings.



These shop units are all part of the original design of this Victorian terrace. The installation of modern box fascias to the centre and left hand shops now obscure the original architectural detailing of the shopfronts.



Left: An overly deep and projecting box fascia conceals the original glazing and architectural detailing of the shopfront.

Right: A similar box fascia hides the false ceiling within the shop. Introducing obscure glass in the uppermost sections of the shopfront could allow the introduction of a traditional fascia sign.

Doors on shopfronts

In traditional shopfronts, doors may be recessed or set flush within the elevation, and door furniture should be appropriate to the character of the building. Recessed doorways help to break up the shopfront and provide scope for additional decoration with mosaic or tile provide depth and relief to the shopfront. Where good quality decoration of this sort survives it should be retained wherever possible. Contrasting colours to doors and in tiled entrances can help emphasise entrances for visually impaired people.

Doors to upper floors

Special care should be taken over the design of shop front entrances and entrances to upper floors, so that they fit together as a uniform whole below a single fascia. Where separate access to upper floors survives this is important and should be retained in any new shopfront design. If access has been lost, the opportunity should be taken to consider introduction of separate access where it can be achieved without compromising the historic character of the building.



Above: Mosaic tiling provides a decorative entrance to this shop and can offer a location for the shop name.

Top left: A good quality shopfront with a recessed doorway which divides the shopfront into traditionally proportioned bays and gives depth to the elevation.

Left: Although the original shopfront has been replaced with one constructed in modern aluminium, the separate access to the upper floor has been retained. The general layout of the shopfront also survives, as have the original pilasters, cornice, fascia and blind.



Pilasters

Pilasters form a visual frame to a shopfront and should always be incorporated into the design of shopfronts either in a traditional form or a contemporary alternative. The width of pilasters will vary between shopfronts, but will normally include a base, capital and/or console bracket. Where a new shopfront is proposed, existing pilasters should not be obscured. The opportunity should be taken to reinstate missing pilasters where possible.



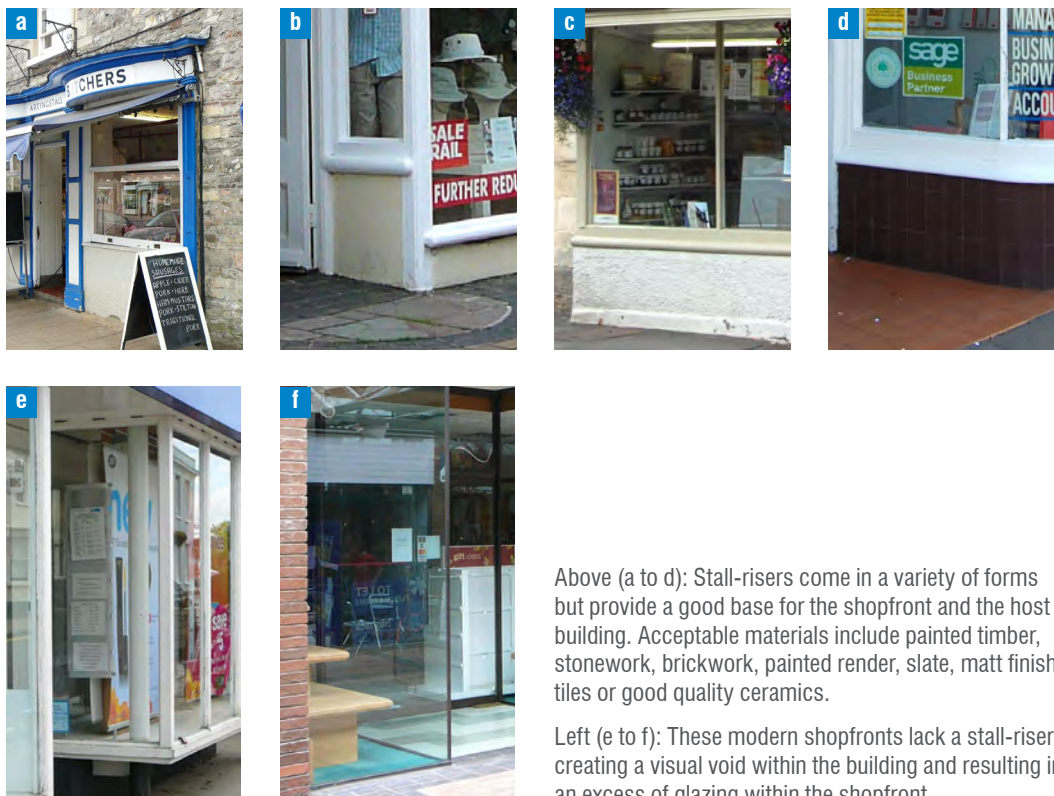
Pilasters visually frame a shopfront and come in a variety of designs and materials. They should be protected, repaired or reinstated where missing or damaged.

Stallrisers

The stallriser forms a plinth at ground level creating a solid visual base for a building. It completes the shopfront by providing balanced proportions, reducing the dominance of glazing and providing some protection against accidental knocks. Traditionally the stallriser was part of the display table when shopfronts were completely open. This layout still exists in some shops (e.g. greengrocers, fishmongers). Most traditional shopfronts had stallrisers made of render or wooden panelling on a rendered or stone plinth. The stallriser provides considerable emphasis to the base of the shopfront, presenting a robust structural element.

New and replacement shopfronts in traditional buildings should incorporate a stallriser. Its depth should not exceed the base of the pilasters or the depth of the fascia, whichever is less (in order to provide balance to the shopfront). Existing stallrisers with decorative features of quality should be retained.

In modern buildings the absence of a stall riser presents a design challenge to ensure the deeper shopfront respects the proportions of the building as a whole.



Above (a to d): Stall-risers come in a variety of forms but provide a good base for the shopfront and the host building. Acceptable materials include painted timber, stonework, brickwork, painted render, slate, matt finish tiles or good quality ceramics.

Left (e to f): These modern shopfronts lack a stall-riser, creating a visual void within the building and resulting in an excess of glazing within the shopfront.

Glazing

Large sheets of plate glass have been used in shopfronts since the mid-Victorian period, however smaller divisions of glazing have remained in use for many traditional shop designs. Many early shopfronts incorporated small panes of glass divided by slender horizontal and vertical glazing bars, giving them a delicate appearance.

Where larger panes of glass are involved, the panes are often divided by mullions and transoms in a grid pattern, which reflects the rest of the proportions of the shop and building. Unless a large expanse of glass is a principal feature of the design, this traditional practice should be followed.

A transom should divide the window at the same level as the line between the door and the door light. Mullions should line up above and below the transom and may reflect vertical alignment of windows in the upper floors. Even in modern buildings or shopfronts extensive areas of unrelieved glazing should normally be avoided as they create the visual effect of a void at the base of a building.



Top left (a): glazing bars used to create a shopfront that respects the glazing in the sash windows

Above (b): a transom divides this window into individual panes of traditional proportions.

Left (c): the use of vertical mullions helps break up the expanse of glazing in these shopfronts.

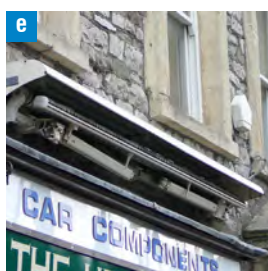
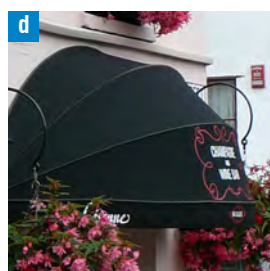
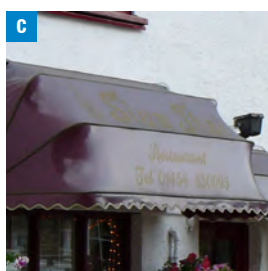
Bottom left (d): The introduction of a transom breaks up the glazing of this modern shopfront. The stall riser, central doorway and fascia also indicate an attempt at traditional shopfront design, which works more successfully than the void within the shopfront to the left.

Canopies/blinds

The purpose of canopies/blinds should be to provide weather protection to shoppers and to shade shop windows. On traditional detailed and proportioned buildings or in historic settings they should not be retained permanently open in order to provide additional advertising or signage.

The design of blinds should complement the elevation and shopfront and 'Dutch' or similar canopies with folding concertina supports are inappropriate and will be resisted. Well designed roller blinds, carefully positioned, with the blind box incorporated behind the fascia are acceptable if constructed from traditional materials, e.g. canvas with discrete logos or signage that should ideally relate to the design of the shopfront.

Blinds should always retract fully into the fascia and should provide a minimum clearance of 2.4 m and stop 0.5m behind the kerb. Blinds should usually cover the whole width of a shopfront, and should usually be the same width as the fascia. Blinds will not be permitted over doors alone or over other windows and glossy plastic materials are unacceptable, particularly on traditional buildings and in traditional street scenes. Canvas is the preferred material. Colours should match or tone with the fascia and garish colours should be avoided.



Above left (a): Traditional retractable blind with associated metal support.

Above (b): A full-width canopy housed within a moulded cornice.

Left (c to d): Modern Dutch blinds and plastic, wet-look or stretch fabrics are not traditional features and will be resisted.

Bottom left (e to f): Where roller blinds are introduced, care should be taken to integrate them into the shopfront to avoid unwelcome clutter.

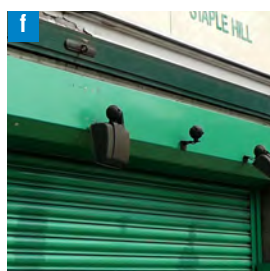
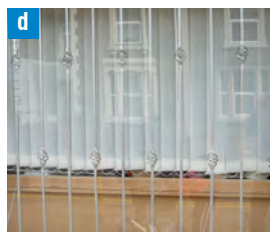
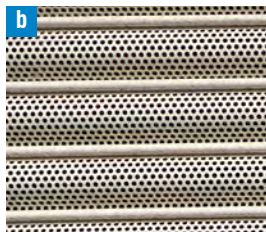
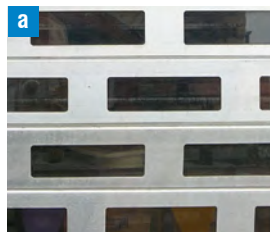
Security

Security shutters, particularly solid shutters can give an inhospitable feel to buildings, particularly at night and detract from the historic character of the building and street scene. Their use may be avoided where laminated security glass can be used. Where shutters are essential then internal stretcher bond open link security shutters combined with internal lighting at night to provide a feeling of security in a shopping area are an appropriate solution provided the shutter box can be discretely located.

In some instances, internal or external traditional folding timber shutters that can be dismantled or folded away during the day may be acceptable, particularly if they are a traditional feature in the area, if well detailed.

Solid external shutters are not normally acceptable, unless they are of an open design allowing the shopfront to be seen through the closed shutter, and they can be mounted within (behind) the existing fascia without projecting below it. Shutter guides should either be removable or integrated into the shopfront design and painted down to match.

Burglar Alarms should be sited as unobtrusively as possible. They should never be located on architectural features such as consoles or pilasters. Where mounted on traditional joinery they should be painted out in a matching colour.



Above (a to c): Predominantly solid security shutters result in an unattractive environment, attract graffiti and give an area a run-down appearance.

Left (d to e): Internal security grilles or open link shutters allow the shopfront and display to remain visible and minimise the deadening effect on the streetscene.

Bottom left (f to g): Poorly positioned roller shutters can have a harmful effect on a shopfront.

In 'f', the shutter box has been installed below the functioning roller blind. By contrast, in 'g', the box has been attached over the blind, necessitating the addition of an unattractive bolt-on awning.

Lettering

Lettering and signage should be an integral part of the shopfront design and should respect the character of the building and the street scene. It should always be proportionate in terms of scale, quantity and spacing to the elevation in which it is set.



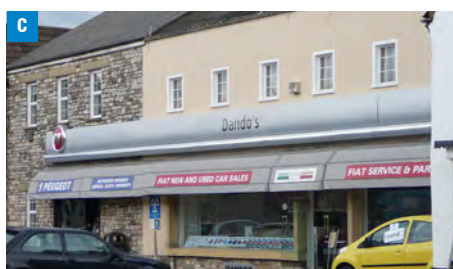
Well designed and appropriately scaled lettering can positively enhance the character and appearance of shops and businesses. Lettering can be traditionally sign-written, or applied as individual lettering to painted timber fascias. Painted lettering applied to the elevation of a building should respect the architecture of the building, and the position of window and door openings.

Signs and advertisements

Shop signs can either 'clutter' or add richness and variety to the streetscene depending on their position, design and quantity. They should be designed to complement the building elevation to which they are attached and the wider street scene.

The content of traditional signs should generally be kept to a minimum. Fascia signs rarely need to contain more than the name of the business and a telephone number and street number. If necessary the nature of the business could be included where this would not otherwise be clear. Excessive signage, both in scale and number that dominates the elevation or street scene and results in a cluttered appearance, would not be acceptable.

The proportions and architectural detailing of traditional shop fronts including string courses, cornices and pilasters, and decorative ventilation grilles should not be obscured, or altered to accommodate new, deeper fascias, or otherwise broken up or concealed by projecting signs or other planted signage. Traditionally painted timber fascias had painted or applied lettering. Fascias with acrylic or similarly shiny finishes are not appropriate, nor are projecting box fascias.



Left (a and b): Two shopfronts on adjoining buildings. The modern, oversized box fascia in the left hand image dominates the shopfront and does not complement the host building. The individually applied lettering in the right hand image, by contrast, is a more sympathetic approach and in scale with the shopfront.

Left and above (c and d): Both signs in these images are oversized and have little regard to the architecture, divisions and proportions of the host buildings.

Projecting or hanging signs

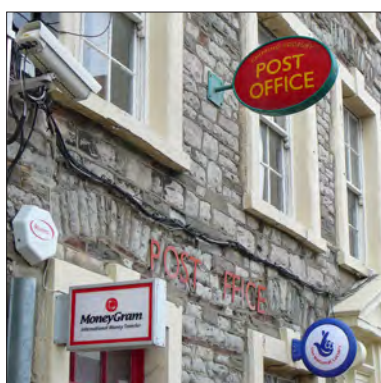
Projecting or hanging signs should be simple and limited to the relevant information relating to the shop and the services provided. In Conservation Areas or on Listed Buildings, projecting box signs are unsuitable and will be resisted. Traditionally detailed and proportioned un-illuminated hanging signs are likely to be acceptable if well detailed and do not add unacceptable clutter to the elevation of street scene.

Ideally there should be no more than one projecting sign per shopfront and hanging signs should be fixed below the level of the first floor window sills where they will not obscure or conflict with existing architectural details.

Hanging signs should be no larger than 600 x 400mm (24 x 16 ins), and should provide a minimum of 2.4m headroom.



Traditional hanging signs add interest and character to the streetscene. Historic signs and brackets should be protected and repaired.



Modern box signs and internally illuminated signs are not appropriate in historic areas and tend to weather poorly and look out of date very quickly.

Illuminated signs

A well designed and carefully lit window display in a well lit street should not need additional illumination. Illuminated fascias and projecting signs would not be appropriate on traditional shopfronts and will not normally be acceptable in historic areas or on historic buildings.

In areas where lighting levels are insufficient, modern shopfronts and buildings may incorporate well detailed illuminated shopfronts and fascias, provided that this can be achieved without unsightly wiring switchgear or projecting lights. Illumination should be appropriate to the context and general character of the street as well as being discreetly sited on the building itself. The intensity of illumination should allow the sign to be easily read but not cause a distracting glare.

The Council will not permit the illumination of signs that cannot be achieved in a manner which is generally in accordance with the design principles set out this document. Illumination should not be designed or located to result in confusion with traffic signals.

Many retail areas are also residential and in these areas a less intrusive approach to illumination is essential.

Signage on glazing

Large areas of glazing can be a useful location for shop signs, which can be painted or etched onto the internal surface of the windows. Signage might also be placed behind the glass. These techniques may be particularly suited to frontages that have an architectural form that do not lend themselves to the attachment of large external signs or fascias. However excessive signage on windows can make them look cluttered, especially when combined with additional advertisements and posters.



Above left: Rows of swan-neck lamps should be avoided.

Left: Small areas of glass etching can provide subtle advertising and a degree of privacy.

Corporate sign styles

Company logos, signs and standard shopfront designs are not often suitable installations for traditional shopfronts, particularly those within Listed Buildings and within buildings in Conservation Areas. The overall character and qualities of buildings within historic areas are more important than achieving uniformity of design or establishing a 'corporate house style'. Such stores need to co-operate in modifying their standard 'corporate' lettering or signage, or adapt their standard shopfront designs to ensure the integrity of the shopfront, building and streetscene are maintained and enhanced.

Shopfronts in modern buildings

Shopfronts on new or late 20th century buildings should normally be of contemporary design. It is rarely appropriate to impose a traditional or period shopfront design on a modern building unless it is traditionally designed and detailed.

Working above the shop

Where upper floors above shops are in office or commercial use, additional signage may be required at the ground floor entrance. This should take the form of an appropriately designed plaque providing details of the business and contact information. Discrete signage on the upper floor windows may be acceptable, but multiple posters, banners or advertisements spanning windows should be avoided.

Change of use

Having a wide range of local shops and services within our High Streets adds to our quality of life, promotes a sense of community and reduces our need to travel. The Council will always consider very carefully any application for the change of use of a shop within town and village centres in order to maintain the economic vitality and viability of these areas. Where conversion is considered acceptable, the Council will seek to protect shopfronts that make a positive contribution to the character or significance of the building or area.



Above: Individually applied lettering and logo can often be incorporated sympathetically.

Below: Discrete signage in the bay windows advertise the business in the upper floors of this building.



Signage on barriers/outdoor seating

Many public houses, restaurants and cafes are starting to introduce outside seating areas at the front of the buildings. This has led to an increase in the use of advertisement banners to divide the seating areas from the pavement. This tends to add clutter to the streetscene and the use of cheap plastic materials can detract from the character and appearance of our conservation areas and the setting of listed buildings.

Free-standing advertisements and temporary advertising.

Most free-standing advertisements including temporary ones will need consent. This includes signs mounted on vehicles parked for the purpose of advertising. Some small signs advertising local non-commercial events can be erected without consent for limited periods (up to 28 days before the event and no more than 14 days afterwards) however you should check with the Council prior to erecting the signs whether they need permission.

In addition, any signs erected on highway verges will need the council's permission and unauthorised signs will be removed without notice.



Top left: Unnecessary, overlarge and unauthorised signage. Signage like this is rarely appropriate, particularly within rural locations.

Examples of brash, poorly designed and insensitively mounted unauthorised temporary signs.

'A' boards, shop displays, and other items displayed on the highway.

Section 115 of the Highways Act 1980 (as amended) gives Local Authorities' powers to licence and regulate items displayed on the highway. South Gloucestershire has an adopted policy which, in summary, allows the display of a single advertisement board directly outside the relevant premises provided a minimum of 1.8m is left for pedestrians with more in busy areas. It should be set to the rear of the footway against the premises and should be no larger than 600mm x 450mm and should not be placed within 10m of a traffic sign, or occupy parking or cycle spaces.

The Council will remove any unauthorised items including 'A' boards, shop displays or pavement cafes where it is satisfied that they are causing an immediate danger on the highway, without notice being issued to the owner. They will be retained for seven days before being disposed of. In other circumstances the owner will be formally advised to remove the items within a specified period. Businesses that persistently obstruct the highway may also be prosecuted through the Courts.

In addition to complying with this policy, advertisement consent may also be required and businesses should always contact the Council once they have detailed of their proposed sign to check whether advertisement consent will be required ideally before manufacture of the proposed sign. It would also be prudent for businesses to ensure that their insurance covers them for public liability arising from the placing of such signage on footways or highway verges and, in addition to complying with this general policy advertisement consent may also be required depending on the size and number of the proposed sign boards.



Above: Poorly located advertisement boards placed without regard to pedestrian safety, resulting in an unacceptable pedestrian hazard.

Left: Carefully positioned advertisement boards allowing safe pedestrian movement.

Access

Access is an issue which can affect everybody at some stage. While it may not be possible to make every shopfront accessible and usable by every person, every effort should be made to allow as many people as possible to participate in our urban environment.

When designing new shopfronts they should comply with current disability requirements and guidance on these can be provided by the Council's building control service. The following points should normally apply, however they should be implemented as part of a well detailed and considered design approach. Standard solutions may not be appropriate in historic buildings and will not be acceptable where they have an adverse impact upon the character of a building or conservation area or on its setting.

- A new shop front should have level or ramped access. The door width for a new shop front should be a minimum of 1 m, with flush, thresholds or sloping no higher than 15mm.
- Automatic or semi-automatic doors should be considered since they are the most convenient form of access for all people.
- Fully glazed doors should have permanent and visible contrasting marking at 900mm and 1500mm above floor level so that they can be seen clearly by visually impaired people.
- Door handles should contrast from the door and should be easy to grasp.
- Doorways should be well lit and new shopfronts should have clear signage

Where level access is impossible alternative measures including the provision of handrails and highlighting the edges of steps should be considered.

Where existing shopfronts do not comply with current access requirements, improvements would be encouraged where these do not compromise the special character of the building or its setting. New shopfronts should always comply with current disability requirements where practicable, in order to provide direct and straightforward access to their premises.

Existing independent access should be retained and the Council will require the reinstatement of independent access in new and replacement shopfronts.



This entrance has been relaid to remove the step. Care should be taken with architectural features to avoid harming the shopfront design.



A typical level access to a shopfront where footpath width permits. Re-grading the footpath can sometimes avoid the need for a ramps.

4. Design & access statements

A design and access statement should accompany all planning applications relating to shopfront alterations, removals and installation. This should include an explanation of the design approach and show how the design has addressed access issues as well as describing what other designs or material options were explored and/or rejected during the design process. The following questions will help you decide what you are trying to achieve with your new shopfront and should help inform the final design. They also provide a good starting point for discussions with Council Officers.

The following assessments should form the basis of your design and access statement.

Streetscene and local context

1. What is the rhythm of the street elevation in which the shopfront is located?
2. Is there a consistent pattern to the shopfronts of adjoining buildings?
3. What are the materials and colours used in the local buildings?
4. How would a new shopfront fit in with the streetscene?

The building as a whole

1. What are the qualities and proportions of the rest of the building?
2. Is there a particular architectural style?
3. What materials are used?
4. How well does the existing shopfront fit with the rest of the building?

The existing shopfront

1. What is the style or character of the existing shopfront?
2. What are the strongest features of the existing shopfront?
3. Does the current shopfront belong to a listed building or is it in a conservation area?
4. Can the existing shopfront be repaired?
5. Do the elements of the architectural surround, i.e. pilasters, corbels, cornice, frieze, stallriser survive?
6. What is the proposed use of the shop and is the existing shopfront appropriate?
7. Does the shopfront allow access for all users in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005?

Statements of significance for proposals affecting historic assets.

Proposals affecting listed buildings, unlisted buildings in conservation areas, registered parks and gardens or other heritage assets will need an description of the significance of the heritage asset and proposals should avoid harm to what has been identified as significant.

5. Planning approvals

Most shopfront alterations will require planning approval, and it may be helpful to seek pre-application advice on proposed designs from the Council, prior to submitting your application. The following section explains which approvals will apply to your application, and all planning applications will be considered in light of relevant planning policy.

Planning permission

Most alterations to the exterior of a building and demolition of parts of buildings will require planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This will include the construction of a new shopfront, the erection of an awning or a security screen, and other similar proposals.

The removal of an existing shopfront is also deemed to be an alteration which requires an application for planning permission.

Listed building consent

Where a shop forms part of a listed building, Listed Building consent is required under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 for almost all alterations to any part of the building, including its interior and the shopfront, even if these are later alterations.

Conservation area consent

Where a building lies within a Conservation Area, Conservation Area consent is required under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 for its substantial demolition. The removal of a shopfront is not normally considered as substantial demolition and Conservation Area consent is unlikely to be required.

Consent to display an advertisement

Fascia signs, awnings and other external features of a shop often require consent under the control of advertisement regulations where they display the name of the shop or other advertising, particularly where they are illuminated. Free-standing advertisements normally require consent. The regulations covering the display of advertisements are extensive and further information can be obtained from the Council's Planning Department, or from www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/outdooradvertisements

Note: Where alterations to shopfronts occur prior to, or without obtaining the necessary approvals, reinstatement of the original design or approved alterations will be rigorously enforced.

Building regulations

A Building Regulations application is required for the installation alteration or modification of a shopfront. Together with access considerations, issues of structural support, means of escape and the choice of glazing will need to be determined.

6. Planning policy: The National Planning Policy Framework provides the following guidance:

Section 7 requiring good design:

Para 60 'Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is however proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness'.

Para 61 'Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment'.

Para 63 'In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help to raise the standard of design generally in the area'.

Para 64 'Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions'.

Para 67 Poorly placed advertisements can have a negative impact on the appearance of the built environment. Only those advertisements which will clearly have an appreciable impact on a building or their surroundings should be subject to the local authorities detailed assessment. Advertisements should be the subject of control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.

Section 12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment:

Para 128 requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage asset affected including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

Para 131 In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- The positive contribution that heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic viability; and
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

This Design Guide should also be read in conjunction with the following local plan policies of the Adopted South Gloucestershire Local plan:

- D1** Achieving Good Quality Design in New Development
- L12** Conservation Areas
- L13** Listed Buildings
- L15** Buildings and Structures Which Make a Significant Contribution to the Character and Distinctiveness of the Locality
- L19** Display of Advertisements
- RT8** Small Scale Retail Uses Within the Urban Areas and the Boundaries of Small Settlements
- RT9 & RT10** Changes of Use of Retail Premises Within Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages in Town Centres
- RT11** Retention of Local Shops, Parades, Village Shops and Public Houses
- RT12** Use of Upper Floors in Town, Local and Village Centres

In addition, the Design Guide should also be read in conjunction with the following policies within the draft South Gloucestershire Core Strategy

- POLICY CS9** ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND BUILT HERITAGE
- POLICY CS14** TOWN CENTRES AND RETAIL

7. Further information

Outdoor advertisements and signs: a guide for advertisers. Department of Communities and Local Government, & The Environment Agency, 2nd ed. May 2009. Available online at www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/outdooradvertisements

8. How to contact us

Service numbers

Planning and Community Services - 01454 868004

Streetcare (for signs on highways) - 01454 868000

All other enquiries and to speak to a specific person - **01454 868009**

Minicom service for the hard of hearing **01454 868010**

SMS text service **07950 080 111**

Normal office hours

8.45 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Thursday

8.45 am to 4.30 pm Fridays.

At other times your call will be diverted to a service which deals only with emergencies.

If you need this information in another format or language please contact 01454 868004

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www.southglos.gov.uk (access is free from your local library)

