

8 SHOPFRONTS AND SIGNAGE

SHOPFRONT DESIGN

GOAL: To make sure that shopfronts are in keeping with the character of the building and street scene, reflect the scale and proportion of the building in which it is set and preserve and restore surviving historic shopfronts in a sensitive manner

The design details of traditional shopfronts have their roots in the display of goods in medieval market stalls, although the shopfront as we now recognise it emerged only with the expansion of commercial activity in the 18th century. Today we have a rich heritage of traditional shopfront design, particularly from the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Traditional shopfronts in our district are increasingly threatened by the decline of the small individual retail outlet and the rise of larger stores with standard corporate images. However, it is possible to integrate the needs of retail units and pay regard to the character of the building or surrounding streetscape.



Example of a traditional shopfront (Thame, Oxfordshire)



To inform your design:

Conservation appraisals and contextual analysis



To communicate your design:

The evolution of your proposal from initial concept to final design



Additional useful and interesting resources:

- Traditional shopfront guide strikethrough version of the 1995 guide (2016)
- Building Regulations Part M: Access to and use of buildings



Basic elements of a traditional shopfront



3 Bell Street, Henley before refurbishment



3 Bell Street, Henley after refurbishment

TEST YOUR DESIGN:

Elements of good design:

Ensure your proposal:

8.1 recognises the need to advertise the goods and services offered but also respects the character of the building and street scene;

8.2 understands that a shopfront should reflect the scale and proportion of the building in which it is set;

8.3 preserves and restores surviving historic shopfronts in a sensitive manner;

8.4 recognises the opportunity that new shopfronts can bring by learning from past mistakes and that good modern design can be an effective advertisement for the quality of the establishment;

8.5 draws particular attention to the component parts of good traditional shopfronts when new or replacement shopfronts are built;

8.6 considers all end users (e.g. accessibility requirements).

Meets criteria If not, reason for not meeting

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Shopfronts in Thame, Oxfordshire



Hanging sign in Thame and shutters in Wallingford (Oxfordshire)

TEST YOUR DESIGN:

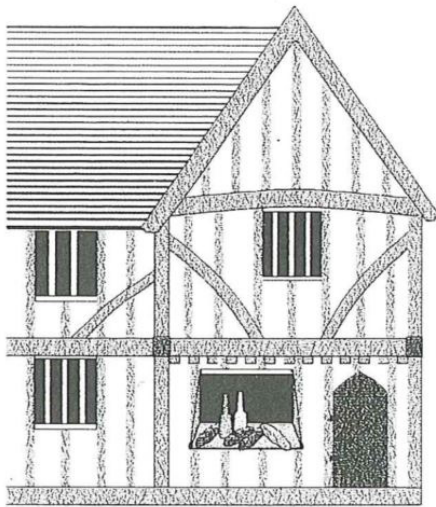
Traditional shopfront features

Ensure your proposal considers the following:

- 8.7 the fascia, where the name of the establishment is displayed, should respect the proportions of the rest of the shopfront and the building in which it is set. It should not be too deep, wide or project forward from the face of the building;
- 8.8 pilasters and consoles should be used to support the fascia. They are sometimes decorated and often form an important part of the overall shopfront design;
- 8.9 stallrisers provide a strong visual base to the shop window and can serve as additional security and protection;
- 8.10 shop windows should generally be subdivided to achieve well-proportioned frontages. In some cases glazing bars help to create visual relief, rhythm and an attractive design;
- 8.11 doors are often recessed and have a solid lower panel which at least matches the height of the stallriser;
- 8.12 materials should be in keeping with the character and appearance of the building;
- 8.13 modern 'Dutch' blinds and canopies in plastic or similar materials which do not retract are often obtrusive to the appearance of the building and street scene and unlikely to be acceptable on listed buildings or in conservation areas.
- 8.14 projecting and hanging signs, if they are necessary, should be small and traditional in design of hand-painted hanging signs from wrought iron brackets and carefully positioned so as not to obscure details of the shopfront or other parts of the building.
- 8.15 when considering hanging signs over pavements, make sure they do not cause issues for people with visual impairments.

Meets criteria If not, reason for not meeting

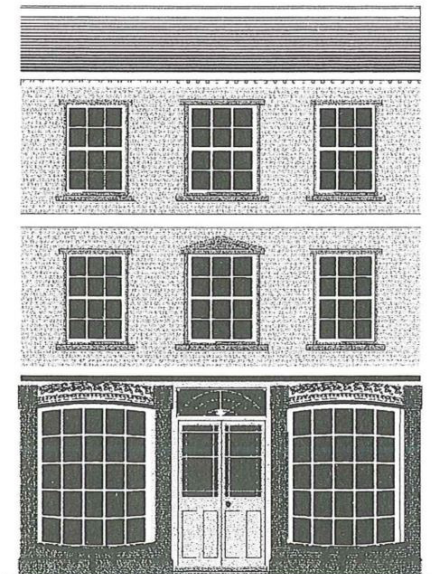
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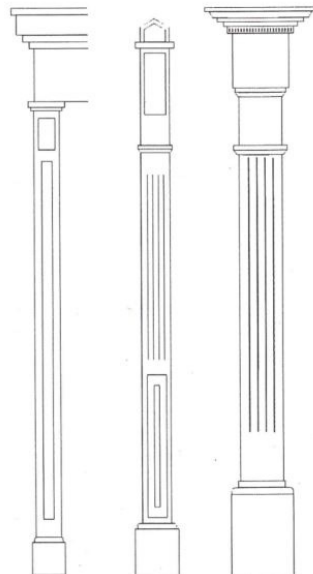
A medieval shopfront



A victorian shopfront



A georgian shopfront



Traditional wooden pilaster designs

☑ TEST YOUR DESIGN:

Traditional shopfront features

Ensure your proposal considers the following:

- 8.16 illumination of fascias and hanging signs is not encouraged in historic town centres. Where exceptions may be made in the cases of public houses, restaurants or similar late-opening premises absolutely necessary, then it should be low key and discreetly positioned.
- 8.17 alterations to historic shopfronts must balance the requirement to preserve historic character with the needs of adequate access;
- 8.18 shopfront security can be very damaging to the character of the building and street. Sympathetic solutions, such as toughened glass, better internal lighting, internal video cameras and alarm systems can often be just as effective without the deadening effect of shutters and grilles.
- 8.19 repair of traditional shopfronts should always be the first option, rather than their wholesale replacement;
- 8.20 the design of shopfronts in modern buildings, although allowing for innovation, should still reflect the basic principles of traditional shopfront design which have stood the test of time. New design should reflect both the character of the building and the street in which it is set.

Meets
criteria

If not, reason
for not meeting

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