



SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

A GUIDE TO GOOD  
SHOPFRONT DESIGN  
AND SIGNAGE

July 2014



**Bassetlaw**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL  
— North Nottinghamshire —

## Document Details

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**Title:** Bassetlaw District Council: A guide to good shopfront design and signage.

**Summary:** This document provides a design guide for new, replacement or for the alteration of traditional shopfronts and signage in Bassetlaw District.

**Approved:** The document was approved on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014 by Members of the Council Cabinet

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## Consultation summary:

The Council has undertaken consultation with stakeholders including English Heritage, Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottinghamshire Building Preservation Trust and other relevant consultees.

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## Document availability:

Copies of the document are available at Bassetlaw District Council Planning Services and on the Council's website.

[www.bassetlaw.gov.uk](http://www.bassetlaw.gov.uk)

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**PART A:**  
PLANNING POLICY AND THE HISTORIC  
DEVELOPMENT OF THE SHOPFRONT

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This supplementary planning document (SPD) is intended to provide guidance to anyone proposing new, repairing or replacing shopfronts. Policy DM4 of the Bassetlaw Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD requires development to be of high quality design, whilst policy DM8 is specific in its requirements for proposals for new shopfronts or alterations to shopfronts that affect heritage assets (see below).
- 1.2 The purpose of any shopfront is to attract shoppers. A shopfront that is well designed gives a favourable first impression of a business and collectively of the town or village in which it is located. Conserving or reinstating traditional shopfronts not only enhances an area but can have economic benefits by increasing tourism and footfall.
- 1.3 Bassetlaw has a wealth and variety of retailers, many of which are located in the District's two largest towns, Worksop and Retford. Unfortunately many of the original or traditionally designed shopfronts have been replaced over the years with frontages of unsympathetic designs for the building in which they are in and often of poor quality materials, or materials that are unsuitable in their appearance. In Bassetlaw it is therefore important to retain, repair or enhance existing traditional shopfronts and for many heritage assets reinstatement of traditionally styled shopfronts over poorly designed modern alternatives in many cases should be encouraged.
- 1.4 This SPD explains the historic development of shopfronts and draws attention to the many elements that make a traditional shopfront including the need to consider scale and proportion, colour schemes and signage.

For the purpose of this document a 'shop' is defined as any premises having a fascia sign and / or display window and includes non-retail premises for example betting offices, restaurants, estate agents and building societies.

## 2 Planning Policy

- 2.1 This document supplements the policies of Bassetlaw Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD, particularly policy DM4 (Design and Character) and part D of Policy DM8 (The Historic Environment). This document forms part of the Development Management Policy and shall be considered in the determination of planning permission, advertisement consent and listed building consent applications.

## **POLICY DM4: DESIGN AND CHARACTER**

### **A. Major Development Principles**

All major development proposals will need to demonstrate that they:

- i. make clear functional and physical links with the existing settlement and surrounding area and have not been designed as 'standalone' additions. Where physical links cannot be made (e.g. for reasons of third party land ownership) provision must be made such that they can be provided in future should the opportunity arise;
- ii. complement and enhance the character of the built, historic and natural environment;
- iii. are of a scale appropriate to the existing settlement and surrounding area and in line with the levels of proposed growth for that settlement as set out in policies CS1-CS9; and
- iv. provide a qualitative improvement to the existing range of houses, services, facilities, open space and economic development opportunities.

Where neighbouring or functionally linked sites will come forward together within the timeframe of this DPD, the Council will expect applicants to work together with the Council to ensure that any proposals are, or can be, properly integrated and will provide complementary development.

Proposals for major<sup>1</sup> residential or mixed-use development will be expected to demonstrate that they score well (allowing for site constraints where applicable) against the design principles established in the Building for Life guidance and any subsequent or complementary best practice guidance on design and placemaking by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) or comparable organisation.

### **B. General Design Principles**

Individual development proposals, including single buildings, changes of use or extensions to existing buildings, will only be accepted where they are of a high-quality design that addresses the relevant areas below:

#### ***i. Local character and distinctiveness***

New development, particularly backland and infill development, should respect its wider surroundings, in relation to historic development patterns or building/plot sizes and forms; density; and landscape character.

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<sup>1</sup> As defined by national guidance. See Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 and subsequent updates.

**ii. Architectural quality**

New development should respect its context, without resorting to negative pastiche<sup>2</sup> architecture, in terms of density, height, scale, mass, materials and detailing. Developments in prominent positions at 'gateways' to settlements or town centres will be of particularly high-quality design that will serve to reinforce a positive perception about the quality of place.

**iii. Public realm**

New development should support stimulating and safe streets and public spaces, with active frontages at ground level to public spaces; have appropriate landscaping and boundary treatments (retaining historic walls and hedgerows); integrate crime prevention measures where this will not compromise the other principles of good design; and provide useable and functional open space.

**iv. Accessibility**

New development should ensure that all people, including those with disabilities, can easily and comfortably move through and into it; prioritise safe, easy and direct pedestrian movement and the creation of a network of attractive, well-connected public spaces; establish both visual and functional relationships between the different parts of a development and between the development and its wider setting.

**i. Amenity**

New development should ensure that it does not have a detrimental effect on the residential amenity of nearby residents; provides a decent standard of private amenity space; allows adequate space for waste and recycling storage and collection; and is not to the detriment of highway safety.

**ii. Carbon reduction**

New development will need to demonstrate that careful consideration has been given to minimising CO2 emissions and measures that will allow all new buildings in Bassetlaw to adapt to climate change. Such measures include, but are not limited to: use of suitable construction materials; site layout and building orientation that makes best use of passive heating and cooling, natural light and natural ventilation; minimising water consumption and maximising water recycling; achieving the highest feasible level of energy efficiency; and maximising opportunities to integrate renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure.

Account will also be taken of any relevant Village Design Statement, Conservation Area Appraisal or character appraisal approved or adopted by the District Council and Bassetlaw's Landscape Character Assessment. Where there is obvious tension between the requirements listed above, due to the sensitivity of the location of certain sites, the Council

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<sup>2</sup> Imitation and amalgamation of earlier architectural styles that creates an incoherent and visually disharmonious whole.

will work with applicants and local residents to achieve a balanced solution. Some factors are likely to outweigh others in reaching a decision in such cases.

### **POLICY DM8: THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT**

Support will be given to development proposals or regeneration schemes (particularly in central Worksop, Retford and Tuxford) that protect and enhance the historic environment and secure its long-term future, especially the District's Heritage at Risk. Support will also be given to proposals from the Welbeck Estate for the re-use of heritage assets, where these will result in the enhancement of the assets. Such proposals must recognise the significance of heritage assets as a central part of the development. They will be expected to be in line with characterisation studies, village appraisals, conservation area appraisals (including any site specific development briefs that may be found within them), archaeological reports and other relevant studies.

#### **A. Definition of Heritage Assets**

Designated heritage assets in Bassetlaw include:

- i. Listed Buildings (including attached and curtilage structures)<sup>3</sup>;
- ii. Conservation Areas;
- iii. Scheduled Monuments; and
- iv. Registered Parks and Gardens.

Non-Designated assets in Bassetlaw include:

- v. Buildings of Local Interest<sup>4</sup>;
- vi. Areas of archaeological interest;
- vii. Unregistered Parks and Gardens<sup>5</sup>; and
- viii. Buildings, monuments, places, areas or landscapes positively identified as having significance in terms of the historic environment.

#### **B. Development Affecting Heritage Assets**

There will be a presumption against development, alteration, advertising or demolition that will be detrimental to the significance of a heritage asset.

Proposed development affecting heritage assets, including alterations and extensions that are of an inappropriate scale, design or material, or which lead to the loss of important spaces, including infilling, will not be supported.

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<sup>3</sup> Any object or structure fixed to the principal listed building or any object or structure within its curtilage that has formed part of the land since before 1 July 1948 may also be protected.

<sup>4</sup> As identified in the Nottinghamshire Historic Environment Record or by the District Council using the guidance publication Non-Designated Heritage Assets: Criteria.

<sup>5</sup> As identified in the Nottinghamshire Historic Environment Record.

The setting of an asset is an important aspect of its special architectural or historic interest and proposals that fail to preserve or enhance the setting of a heritage asset will not be supported. Where appropriate, regard shall be given to any approved characterisation study or appraisal of the heritage asset. Development proposals within the setting of heritage assets will be expected to consider:

- i. Scale;
- ii. Design;
- iii. Materials;
- iv. Siting; and
- v. Views away from and towards the heritage asset.

### **C. Change of Use Affecting Heritage Assets**

The change of use of heritage assets, including Listed Buildings and buildings in Conservation Areas, will only be permitted where the proposed use is considered to be the optimum viable use that is compatible with the fabric, interior and setting of the building<sup>6</sup>. Evidence supporting this will be submitted with proposals<sup>7</sup>. New uses that adversely affect the fabric, character, appearance or setting of such assets will not be permitted.

### **D. Shopfronts**

Proposals for replacement shopfronts, or alterations to shopfronts, affecting heritage assets will be expected to ensure that traditional shopfronts are retained wherever possible irrespective of the use of the property. New shopfronts will be expected to utilise traditional materials such as timber and be designed to respect the special interest of the building and its setting<sup>8</sup>.

2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England. The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment (see section 7 of the NPPF) and to conserving and enhancing the historic environment (see section 12 of the NPPF). Accompanying the NPPF is the Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide<sup>9</sup> which is material to individual planning and heritage consent decisions (i.e. listed building consent). Paragraph 190 of the Practice Guide sets out the Government's stance on historic shopfronts.

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<sup>6</sup> N.B. The most viable use that is compatible with the fabric and setting of the building may not always be the most profitable.

<sup>7</sup> Requirements to be detailed in forthcoming SPD.

<sup>8</sup> Requirements to be detailed in forthcoming SPD.

<sup>9</sup> This was written to support Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5) now revoked. The advice in the Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide is still considered a valid and Government endorsed document.

*190. Removal of, and change to, historic shopfronts may damage the significance of both the building and the wider conservation area, as may the introduction of new shopfronts to historic buildings where there are none at present. All elements of new shopfronts (stall-risers, glazing, doors, fascias etc.) may affect the significance of the building it is located in and the wider street setting. External steel roller shutters are unlikely to be suitable for historic shopfronts. Laminated glass and internal chain-link screens are likely to be more appropriate alternatives in most instances.*

- 2.3 The policies of the Bassetlaw Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD, NPPF and accompanying Practice Guide shall be considered in the determination of planning permission, advertisement consent and listed building consent applications that affect heritage assets in Bassetlaw District.

### 3 Building Regulations

- 3.1 Shopfront designs should incorporate the requirements of the Building Regulations current revisions (parts M and N) which cover means of access for public and disabled people and glazing requirements to meet safety standards. Whilst every effort should be made in new design to provide ramps and gradual inclines, it may be difficult in existing shopfronts and those which form part of listed buildings to accommodate all criteria. Liaison with Building Control and Conservation Officers should be sought at an early stage to assess the level of access that will be acceptable.

### 4 Historical Development of the Shopfront

#### Medieval period

- 4.1 For centuries market stalls were the principal places where goods were bought or sold, but in later medieval times shops began to appear. Initially they were little more than openings in trader's houses, and goods were spread out onto the street or displayed in a drop down shutter supported by a leg that served as a counter. Unlike modern shops the customer was often served from the counter outside. The lack of glazed windows meant that all shops had shutters; usually these were hung at the top and bottom rather than at the side.



Figure 1. Example of medieval shopfront, still retaining its shutters that act as counters.

## Georgian period

- 4.2 Only after 1750 do we begin to get detailed descriptions or pictorial representations of large retail establishments, primarily in London. London however provided much direction for the rest of country in terms of style and design and it is from London laws that general dates for this District can be applied.
- 4.3 Shopfronts of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century are hard to date precisely but it was this period that witnessed the use of glass gradually replacing open fronts for all but fresh food sellers. The window was framed by pilasters supporting a thin entablature. The entablature was not used as a fascia for signage until after 1762 when in London the use of hanging signage was banned. Fascia signage therefore became essential for a shop.
- 4.4 Shop fronts during the 18<sup>th</sup> century are varied but they share many common characteristics.
- Windows were divided into many panes by glazing bars – these become lighter in form as the century progressed.
  - Semi-circular fanlights decorated with radiating and curved glazing bars were common.
  - Mouldings of cornices and pilasters were classically influenced.
  - Pilasters were often thin, recessed, fluted or panelled. Earlier shop fronts were usually without caps, but later were capped with the classical orders i.e. Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian.
  - Entablature may be scooped out at ends giving profile like a scotia.
  - Butt and bead and bead flush doors.
- 4.5 The 18<sup>th</sup> century saw the development of the bow fronted shopfront. Through the use of projecting windows retailers could increase the amount of light into the shop and amount of display area. The projections onto the street however became problematic for pedestrians and vehicles and in 1774 in London they were restricted to 10” and 5” projections in wide and narrow streets respectively. This restriction gave rise to the development of the gently projecting bow window. A later variation in the Regency period saw flat-fronted bow windows with quadrant shaped sides becoming fashionable. As a way of compensating the restriction on projecting windows the doorways began to be recessed. This becomes a prominent feature of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century.
- 4.6 Glass in large dimensions was unavailable until the 1780s and 1790s and even then was vastly expensive. Shop windows were therefore mostly crown glass cut into smaller panes. The bull’s eye (pontil) was very rarely used. In order to make the panes look bigger than they were glazing bars were reduced in thickness and depth from the early fat ovolo profile bars. In order to protect the glass windows were protected by lift out wooden shutters

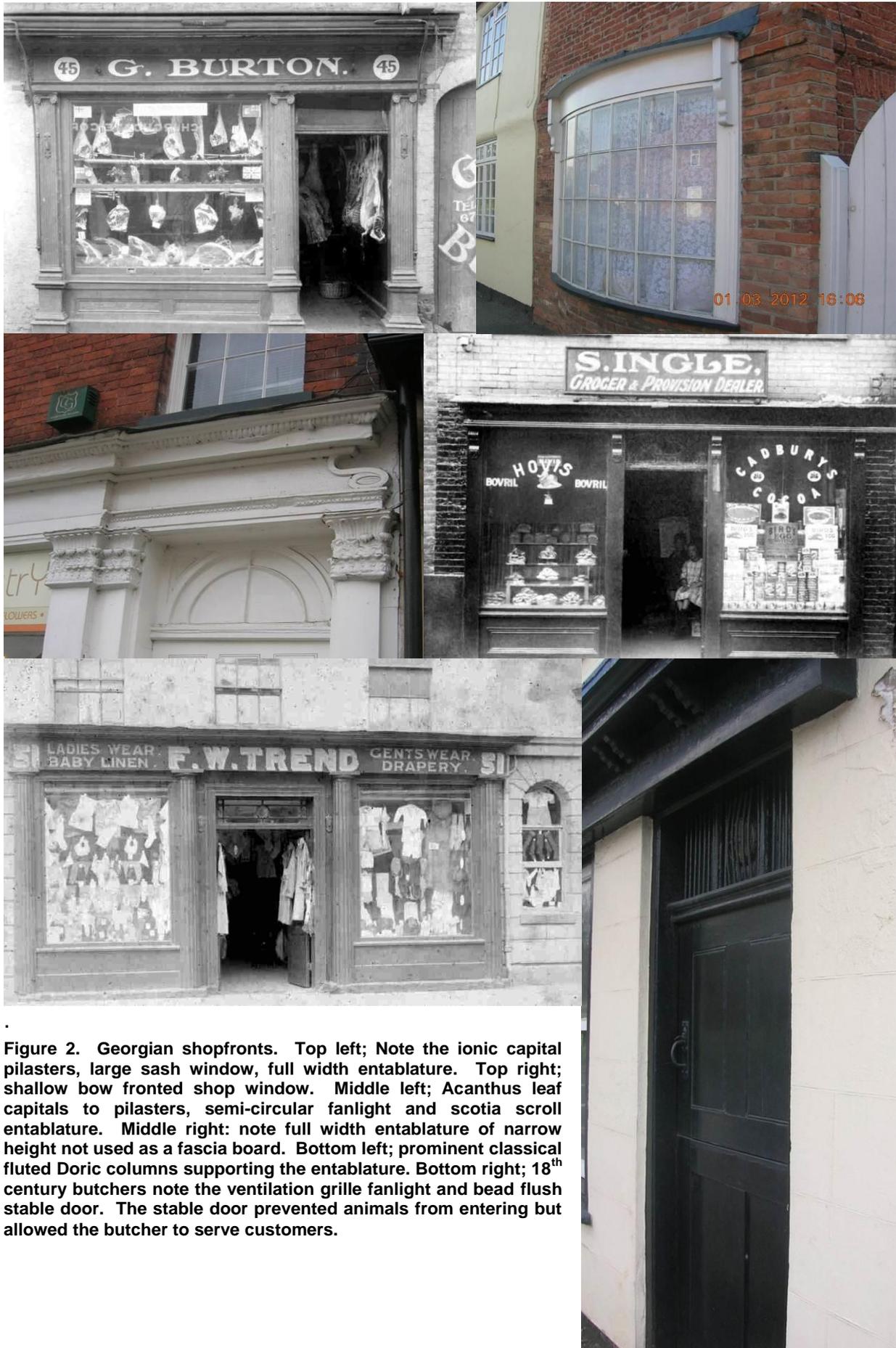


Figure 2. Georgian shopfronts. Top left; Note the ionic capital pilasters, large sash window, full width entablature. Top right; shallow bow fronted shop window. Middle left; Acanthus leaf capitals to pilasters, semi-circular fanlight and scotia entablature. Middle right: note full width entablature of narrow height not used as a fascia board. Bottom left; prominent classical fluted Doric columns supporting the entablature. Bottom right; 18<sup>th</sup> century butchers note the ventilation grille fanlight and bead flush stable door. The stable door prevented animals from entering but allowed the butcher to serve customers.

## Victorian period

- 4.7 Outside of London the bow front of the Georgian period continued to be used throughout the 1850s and 1860s but these would soon become an out-dated form of frontage.
- 4.8 Early Victorian shopfronts of the 1830s and 1840s continued with the classical designs of the earlier period but were bolder in their use of half or three-quarter columns and heavier entablatures. This gave way to a return to simpler pilasters and a most notable feature of Victorian shopfronts from the 1830s was the console/corbel terminating a fascia instead of a continual or scooped entablature. These consoles were usually carved wood with classical decoration such as acanthus and palmettes.
- 4.9 The Victorian period saw notable changes in shop front design, many of which were related to the ease in comparison to earlier times to obtain large panes of glass.
- 4.10 With the demise of crown glass, the introduction of cylinder glass, the removal of excise duty on glass in 1845 and the repeal of window tax in 1851 there was no longer a need for small panes divided by many glazing bars. By the 1850s/60s window panes were anything up to 8ft high by 4ft wide.
- 4.11 Characteristics of Victorian shopfronts.
- Large glass windows.
  - Curved glass windows.
  - Recessed shopfronts.
  - Sheet brass or copper cills.
  - Double height frontages often constructed from cast iron.
  - Italianate arcading across a frontage.
  - Consoles terminating fascia.
  - Fascias flat to tilted towards the street.
  - Fascias and stallrisers of incised marble, metal, glass set in wooden frames.
  - Mullions designed as colonettes with capitals and bases.
  - Roller blinds or awnings as part of the shopfront.
  - Transom lights and ventilation grilles.
  - Solid masonry shopfronts from 1870s/80s.
  - Recessed doorways.
  - White veined marbling giving way to coloured marble, stone or wood effect paint finished often with gilded capitals.
- 4.12 In order to keep goods cool and the sun off window displays retractable awnings were used throughout the period. These were housed behind the cornice and were pulled out by a pole.
- 4.13 Window displays also began to be lit internally by gas lamps. As a result transom windows, often with decorative glass to hide the lamps were introduced into the frontage from the 1870s. To ensure adequate ventilation

and counteract the heat of the lamps ventilation were grilles also began to appear in the frontage.

- 4.14 The large glass display windows were still often protected by lift out wooden shutters. This eventually gave way to using internal security screens and lighting the inside of the shops when not occupied.



Figure 3. Victorian shopfronts. Top right; large glass panes and 'brilliant' signage. Top right; dominant pilasters and corbels to terminate the fascia board with concealed awning box.. Middle left; prominent use of corbels and pilasters to break the frontage into bays. Middle right; typical small Victorian shop front. Bottom; recessed doorways, 'brilliant signage to fascia and cills, large plate glass and gas lamps.

## 1900-1939

- 4.15 The Edwardians continued with large sheets of glass and extended their display areas with either the entire shopfront set back with display cases occupying the space to the pavement or the doorway set in a deep lobby, curved glass, with tile, mosaic or marble floors, often with the name of the retailer set in them. The shopfront frame was often mahogany with slender colonettes forming the mullions coupled with carved spandrels.
- 4.16 The 1920s witnessed a return to the use of metal in frontages but not the iron of the Victorian period, instead bronze often coupled with granite or marble was used in neo-classical shopfronts.
- 4.17 By the 1930s shopfronts were incorporating art deco elements into their design, typical deco themes such as the sunburst motif and geometric glazing patterns became widespread. Materials became more shiny and smooth; Vitrolite and chrome were seen on shopfronts for the first time. The desire for smoothness extended across the whole design, fascias, pilasters and consoles were swept away in favour for flush surrounds.
- 4.18 Characteristics of 1900-1939 shopfronts.
- Large sheets of glass.
  - Leaded/ stained glass transom lights.
  - Mahogany frames.
  - Slender colonette mullions.
  - Carved spandrels.
  - Recessed shopfronts with display cases.
  - Tiled, mosaic, marbled entrance lobbies.
  - Flush shopfronts.
  - Smooth and shiny materials (terrazzo, faience, marble, Vitrolite).
  - Art deco motifs.
  - Geometric detailing.
  - Etched/sandblasted glass.
  - Integral blinds.
  - Decorative stall riser vents.

“...it is the art deco and modern shopfronts of the 1920s and 1930s, and the best ‘contemporary’ designs of the 1950s and 1960s, that seem to have disappeared, almost without trace.” (Morrison 2003; p. 41).



Figure 4. 1900-1939 shopfronts. Top left; Low eills, colonnade mullions with spandrels. Top right; the use of terrazzo in the stallrisers. Middle; Integral blinds, smooth frontage and leaded transom lights. Above left; Vitrolite frontage with Deco geometric transom. Above right; leaded transom lights and terrazzo. Bottom; Chrome and Vitrolite with integral blind.



## 1945-today

4.19 It is not until the 1950s that shopfronts can be considered to have moved on from their predecessors. The 50s shopfront often consisted of splayed, asymmetrical in plan windows. Large lobbies with glass push doors emphasised the transparency of the frontage along with the loss of glazing bars. Glass was now adjoined by clear cement

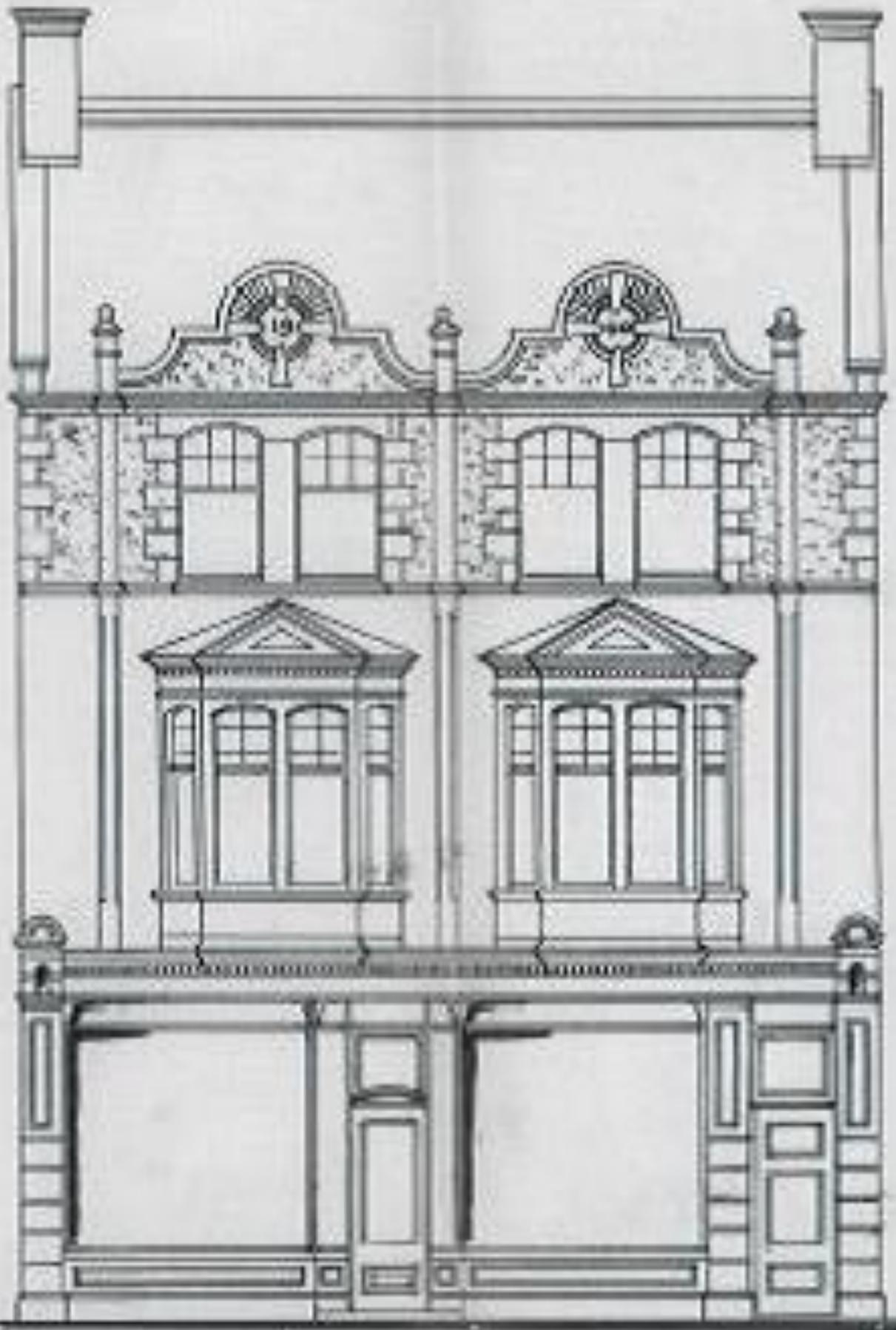
4.20 Facing materials were varied and included timber, glass, bricks, Vitrolite, mosaic tiles. By the end of the 1960s internally illuminated plastic box signs began to form the fascias of many shops and the frontages were simply flush aluminium.

4.21 Characteristics of post 1945 shopfronts:

- Large plate glass windows.
- Large recessed lobbies.
- Display windows splayed often asymmetrically.
- Lack of glazing bars.
- Variety of materials, including mosaic tiles and aluminium.
- Internally illuminated plastic box signs.
- Warm air curtains at doorways.



Figure 5. 1945- today shopfronts. Note the large plate glass windows and large lobbies.



**PART B:**  
DETAILS OF SHOPFRONT DESIGN

## 5 Understanding the parts of a shopfront

- 5.1 Despite the changing styles in shop front design most traditional shopfronts incorporate the same basic elements of design which are still relevant in designing new shopfronts.



Figure 6. Traditional shopfront elements.

### Console and pilasters

- 5.2 Consoles are a feature of Victorian and Edwardian shopfronts whereas pilasters can be a feature of all periods of shopfronts. Both define the width of the shopfront and may be highly decorated or relatively plain. Pilasters usually benefit from panelling or mouldings such as fluting to avoid a box like appearance. Pilasters should not be overly wide and should be in proportion to the overall shopfront. In most cases the pilaster should extend to the ground and be supported by a broader plinth at the base. This plinth is usually not as high as the stallriser. Where original consoles and pilasters exist every effort should be made to retain and repair them.



Figure 7. Examples of console brackets.



Figure 8. Examples of pilasters.

## Entablature, fascia and cornice

- 5.3 The cornice is usually moulded; lead topped and provided a cap to the upper limit of the shopfront that sits atop an entablature or fascia.
- 5.4 Entablatures were the forerunner of the modern fascia introduced during the Victorian period (see Part 1). In comparison to a fascia an entablature is relatively narrow. Entablatures are not coupled with consoles and therefore moulding should return the corner back to the building façade. Alternatively a scotia end is an appropriate finish to the entablature (see figure 2).
- 5.5 A fascia carries the name of the proprietor, is much deeper than an entablature but kept in proportion with the shopfront and may be set flat or angled forward. The fascia is usually set between consoles but where not then the fascia and cornice should return at each end back to the building façade.
- 5.6 The depth of the fascia should be restricted to the depth of the console. Where consoles do not exist a general rule is that the fascia depth does not exceed  $\frac{1}{5}$ <sup>th</sup> of the distance between the cornice and the pavement.

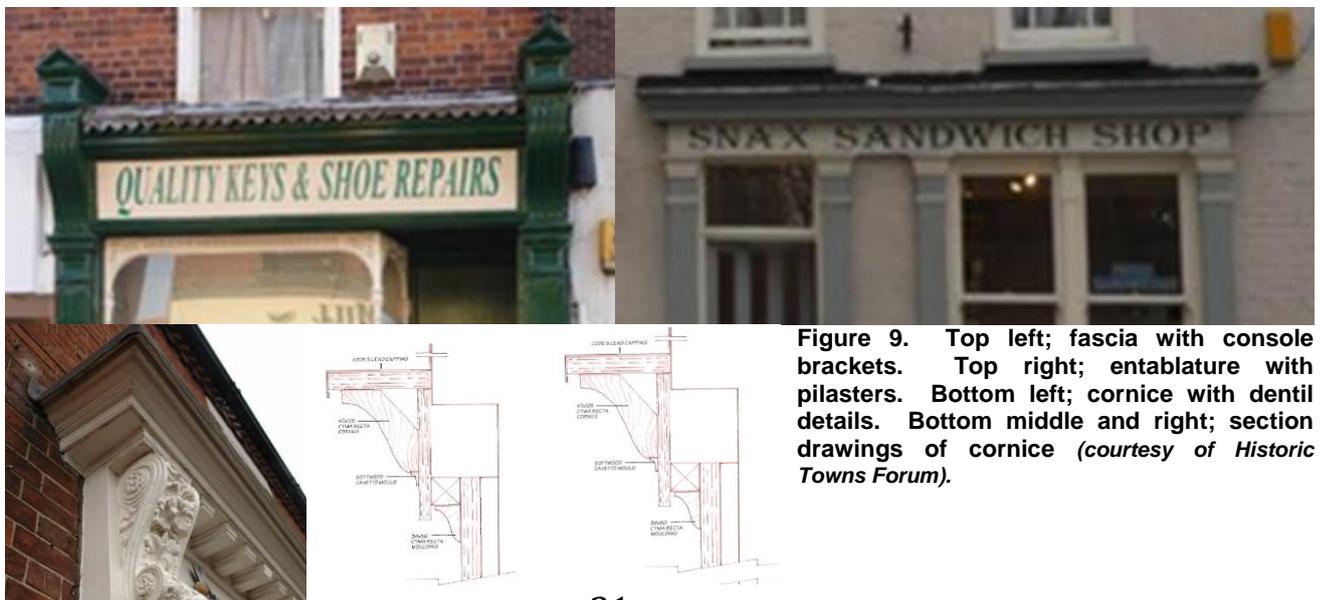


Figure 9. Top left; fascia with console brackets. Top right; entablature with pilasters. Bottom left; cornice with dentil details. Bottom middle and right; section drawings of cornice (courtesy of Historic Towns Forum).

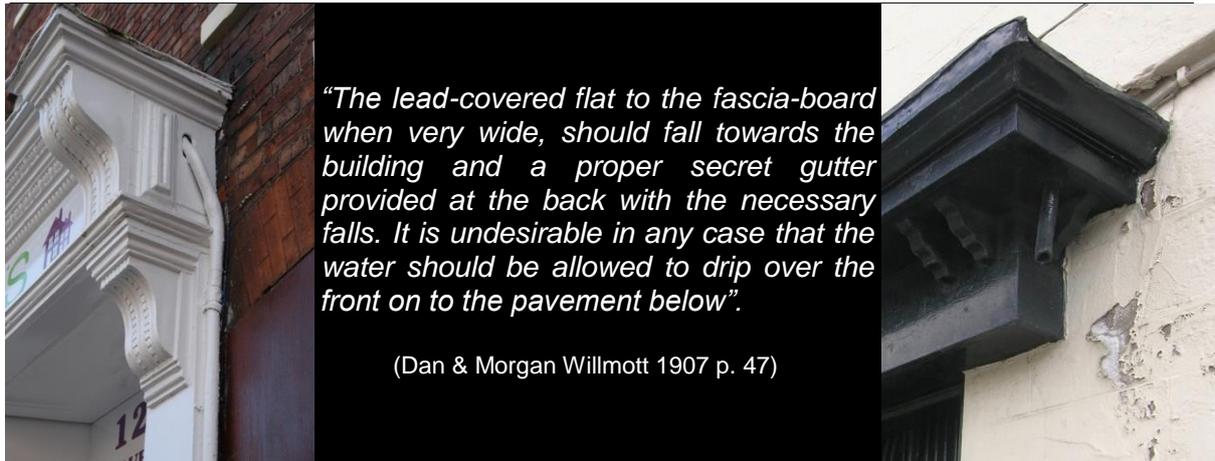


Figure 10. Lead drainage pipe positioned at end of cornices.

## Stallrisers

5.7 The stallriser below the glazed area is an integral part of the shopfront. The height of the stallriser generally became much lower from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>-centuries to the point where it became little more than a plinth or cill. Earlier stallrisers were deep, but again kept in proportion with the overall design of the shopfront. Stallrisers may be constructed from timber (quality hardwood) with panels and moulding, brick, render, tiles, stone or faience for example. Simple timber moulding applied to a plain sheet should be avoided due to its lack of authenticity in appearance. Stallrisers traditionally often sat on a plinth of stone or brick to elevate it from the ground and standing water.



## Mullions, transoms and glazing bars

5.8 Mullions and transoms form the principle vertical and horizontal members of the shop window. The window glass may be further subdivided by glazing bars, as was common with the multi-paned windows of the Georgian period.

5.9 Mullions, transoms and glazing bars were always profiled and not simply square or rectangular as seen often in modern shopfronts.

- 5.10 Georgian and Victorian shopfronts adopted profiles to the mullions and transoms and glazing bars that were common with the sash windows of the period such as ovolo and lamb's tongue. Late Georgian glazing bars were elegant and narrow, often little more than 15mm wide. The width of glazing bars is an important consideration, especially in a multi-paned shop window. Too wide and the shop front will appear heavy and clumsy and the ability to see the shop display shall be impaired. In profile, mullions, transoms and glazing bars should be narrow and deep rather than wide and shallow.
- 5.11 During the late Victorian and throughout the Edwardian period shopfront mullions took on a round profile with bases and capitals giving the appearance of columns. The top of the rounded mullion would frequently flare out to form a carved spandrel.

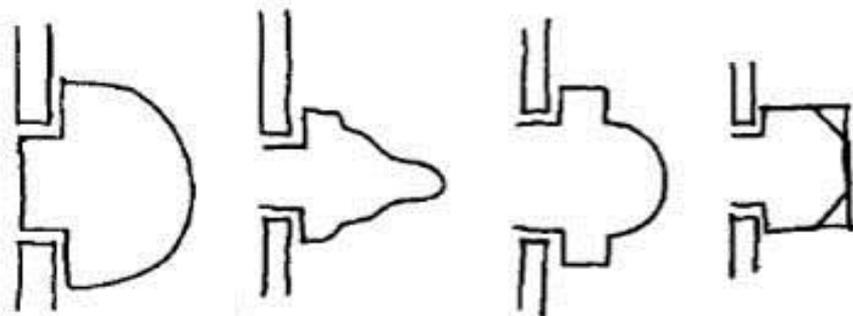


Figure 12. Mullion, transoms and glazing bar profiles. Top from left to right; colonnette style mullion with spandrels. Lamb's tongue mullion with rounded transom. Base of a colonnette mullion. Lamb's tongue mullions. Bottom from left to right; rounded; lamb's tongue, beaded.; chamfered.

## Transom lights

- 5.12 The transom light became a feature of the late Victorian and Edwardian period. A period when window displays were becoming internally lit as opposed to the large hanging external gas lamps. The transom light conveniently hid the lights from view when looking into the shop.
- 5.13 The transom light was usually leaded in simple diamond or square pattern, with plain, hammered or stained glass. The pattern of leading during the Art Deco

period was often changed to geometric patterns. The transom light in some cases provided an opportunity for additional advertising to signage as part of the glazing.



Figure 13. Examples of transom lights.

## Doors, fanlights and lobbies

- 5.14 Shopfront doors whether recessed or not regardless of period appear to have always been coupled with a fanlight above. Where transom lights are present the fanlight is often in line with the transom light, but not always necessary. Georgian fanlights were often traceried in styles seen with the houses of the period but by the later Victorian period simple plain glazed fanlights became more fashionable.
- 5.15 The fanlight provided an area within the shopfront to allow for ventilation. Fanlights were often hinged along the bottom and were internally tilted open often on a ratchet system to control degree of opening. Where ventilation was particularly important the fanlight may not be glazed at all, instead a simple grille or iron bars were more commonly seen, this was often the case with butchers.
- 5.16 It is hard to say with certainty what the style of early shopfront doors were, although it is likely that during the Georgian period they were solid panel doors. The need to glaze shop doors appears to have been recognised during the Victorian period where  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{3}{4}$  length glazed doors appear to have become the norm. The bottom panel was usually in line with the stallriser so that by the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the stallriser became little more than a plinth doors became near total glass. The top of the door would often reflect the shape of the shop front. Where spandrels existed in the shop front the door would be curved and carved to match for example.
- 5.17 Door furniture during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>-centuries followed that of domestic doors, that being simple door knobs of brass or iron and an escutcheon. Following the introduction of the Penny Post in 1840 letter plates together with property street numbers became common new additions to doors.
- 5.18 During the later Victorian and throughout the Edwardian period door handles became larger, often longer with elongated handles that acted as a door pull or push rather than a turning handle or knob. In some cases the long handle

would incorporate a latch. Often they were brass and highly decorated especially in art nouveau style or of stylised geometric shapes typical of the art deco period. At the bottom of the door the use of brass kick plates also became a more common feature.

- 5.19 Where the door is recessed in an entrance lobby the floor of the lobby was usually tiled, often in chequerboard pattern, or marble and frequently in mosaic. Mosaic provided an opportunity to further advertise the business in the patten of the mosaic.



Figure 14. Examples of doors, lobbies and pull handles.

## Cills

- 5.20 The cill forms the base of the shop window and is designed to throw water away from the stallriser which it sits atop. Georgian and early 19<sup>th</sup>-century cills tended to be flat more akin to typical window cills. From the mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century cills became bolder and rounder. Cills from this period could also be used as an advertising opportunity through the use of covering with repoussé sheet brass or copper or taking the cill deeper and adding an incised cut timber or incised cut brass and glass brilliant sign<sup>10</sup>.



Figure 15. Examples of timber cills.

<sup>10</sup> Pressed copper sheet with a v-shaped cross section so as to imitate the classic incised wooden fascia letter. These were then fixed to the rear of the painted glass by way of flanges with shellac, furthermore they were then covered with lead foil to then 'hermetically seal' them from the weather and condensation.

## Vents

- 5.21 Ensuring the shop was adequately ventilated was important, especially for fresh produce shops and to prevent excessive condensation on the shop window. Ventilation was achieved in a number of ways, which included opening fanlights or transom lights or lifting sash windows (sash windows were popular with fishmongers and butchers). Ventilation grilles would also be seen at the window head or below the stallriser.
- 5.22 Ventilation grilles were both decorative and plain, often being 'hit and miss' vents which could be easily closed.



Figure 16. Examples of ventilation grilles to shop window.

## Awnings and canopies

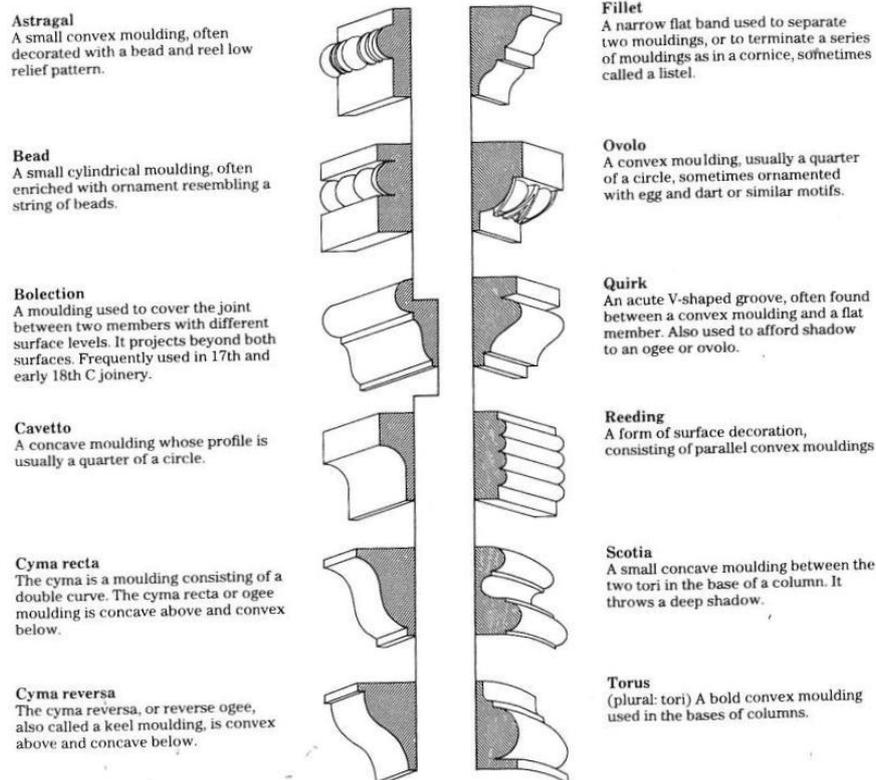
- 5.23 In order to protect goods on display in the shop window from sunlight and offer protection to window shoppers from inclement weather some shop fronts incorporated an awning or canopy. These usually consisted of a blind box with a sprung roller that housed a retractable canvas awning. Metal arms allow the blind to extend out and storm chains prevent excessive movement. At the front edge of the blind is a blind rail, this may form the front of the blind box when the awning is retracted. Along the blind rail are metal eyelets that enable the blind to be pulled out by a hook and pole.
- 5.24 Where blind boxes still exist it is usually possible to restore the blind to working use by renovating the mechanism and installing a new blind cloth.
- 5.25 Retractable awnings may be fitted either above or below the fascia. Where they are fitted retrospectively to a shopfront they often appear clumsy. During the later 19th century however they became an integral part of shopfront design giving them a much neater appearance.
- 5.26 The Dutch canopy is a type of awning commonly seen since the 1950s. It consists of a quadrant, semi-circular or triangular in profile frame covered with either canvas or vinyl. Unlike the traditional retractable awning these canopies are not fully hidden when not in use as they only fold back flat against the shop front with only a simple box to shield it from rain. Their use on a traditional design shopfront is rarely appropriate.



Figure 17. Left, traditional awning. Middle, blind rail. Right, Dutch canopy.

## Embellishments

- 5.27 A successfully designed shopfront depends not only on the assembly of the individual components but the smaller details of mouldings. The right mouldings can provide the finishing touch giving depth and visual solidity to a design.
- 5.28 Traditional joinery methods meant that mouldings were automatically needed to often join together the limited sizes of timber that were then available. This can be frequently seen with raised and fielded panels of pilasters and stallrisers. The use of modern sheet materials such as plywood and medium density fibreboard (MDF) has obviated the need for such moulding. The result however is large expanses of unrelieved panels which can look dull and uninteresting, simply applying moulding to a flat panel infrequently provides a satisfactory appearance.
- 5.29 Mouldings are based on a fairly small range of basic classical profiles or a combination of to form beadings, entablatures, fascias and cornices for example.
- 5.30 At timber junctions traditional joinery methods of mitred corners for example are still expected, however the use of routers to rout out patterns into the surface can be appropriate. This is most commonly seen with fluting of columns and pilasters and details on console brackets. It is still important to follow traditional dimensions and not rout too wide a pattern or profile in the timber.



**Figure 18. Traditional mouldings used to form all parts of a shopfront (courtesy of 'The Georgian House. Steven Parissien, 1995. Aurum Press, London).**

## 6 Designing a shopfront in context

- 6.1 In historic buildings, particularly in conservation areas and listed buildings the need for good detailing and embellishment to a shopfront is important. More fundamental however for any shop front in any building regardless of location is the need to respect the scale, rhythm and architecture of the existing streetscape.

### Replacement or repair

- 6.2 Examples of unaltered Georgian, Victorian or early 20<sup>th</sup> century shopfronts are few and far between in Bassetlaw District. It is therefore important that where they survive they are retained and if necessary repaired. In conservation areas or in listed buildings the Council shall resist their removal or unsympathetic alteration.
- 6.3 Many historic shopfronts have had later disfiguring alterations made to them. In these cases the later additions should be removed, and damage repaired and missing elements of the design reinstated. The District has a good historic photographic record of shopfronts, especially for Worksop and Retford, to help

with reinstatement of features.<sup>11</sup> The Council is unlikely to support any new work that conceals original detailing.

- 6.4 Where an entirely new shopfront is proposed consideration must be given to the style and period (see part 1). By settling on a specific period the correct elements of the shopfront can be included in the design rather than creating an unauthentic mix and match design.

### **Respect the building**

- 6.5 A shopfront should be designed to respect the building that it is in and not seen as an isolated element to the ground floor only. By looking at the pattern of fenestration and extent of brickwork to the upper floors the arrangement and the positioning of pilasters and width of shop windows may be designed to respect and reflect the upper floors.

### **Scale**

- 6.6 The shopfront should respect the overall scale of the building. Where the building is small in scale the shopfront should also be small, in terms of fascia size, pilaster widths and window size. The appearance of the size of windows can be effectively reduced by subdivision with the use of mullions and transoms. Equally in larger buildings the shopfront can be scaled up. Overly large fascias however are always damaging to the appearance of a shop front and must be kept within suitable limits to scale of the shopfront and building.

### **Visual support and rhythm**

- 6.7 A feature of the post war shopfronts was large expanses of glass, with no pilasters or brick piers. This creates the perception of the upper floors having no support. Where this extends across two or more buildings the effect is even more pronounced.
- 6.8 Where a shopfront is designed with no visual support to the upper floors this can spoil the vertical rhythm of a streetscape, especially where a shop extends across one or more buildings. This can be avoided by ensuring that the width of each building is respected by separating the shopfronts. Simply repeating the same design in each shopfront may suffice and with the use of a uniform colour across them all would enable the retailer to maintain their identity. Where the buildings are architecturally very different then using the same style may not be appropriate and an individual design may be required for each building.

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<sup>11</sup> See the Welchman Collection held at Bassetlaw Museum <http://www.bassetlawmuseum.org.uk/index.asp?page=welchman>



**Figure 20: Top; the harmful effect of large fascia boards that extend across the bays of the buildings with no visual support. Bottom; the same buildings with traditionally proportioned and designed shopfronts creating a more sympathetic frontage to the building above and streetscape (*drawings courtesy of Newark District Council and GMS Architecture*).**

## Materials for shopfronts

### a) Timber<sup>12</sup>

- 6.9 Until the 20<sup>th</sup> century shopfronts were predominantly constructed from timber (see part 1). Early pattern books referred to teak, oak and mahogany being used for shopfronts but most was constructed from softwoods that were then painted.
- 6.10 Many softwoods today are of poorer quality than those used in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries because they are grown relatively quickly, and are therefore less dense and contain more sapwood than heartwood. This is resulting in many hardwoods now being used instead<sup>13</sup>. The natural oils and larger pores of hardwoods can make them more difficult to paint.
- 6.11 Softwood should be selected on the basis of:
- Its suitability and durability for external use.
  - Its workability and whether it can meet the detailed specification.

<sup>12</sup> Advice in this section is taken from and based on “*Book of details & good practice in shopfront design*” by the English Historic Towns Forum, 1993.

<sup>13</sup> Advice on timber and their sources can be found in the Good Wood Guide at the Friends of the Earth.

- Its moisture content and likelihood of movement.
- Its ability to take a finish that will look good and last.

6.12 When specifying hardwood it is essential to ensure:

- It is suitable for external use
- Its ability to take a painted finish
- Its origins are environmentally acceptable.

6.13 Timber for joinery work is defined by classes; the nature of the work will determine which class of timber should be used. The class of timber will define its density, durability, moisture content and workability.<sup>14</sup>

6.14 Moisture content is particularly important to be aware of in order to understand the resultant movement or shrinkage of the timber. Where there is minimal movement tolerance it is advisable to use a timber with a low movement qualities, this is likely to be timber with moisture content between 13-20%.

#### **b) Other materials**

6.15 The use of stone, terracotta, faience, iron and render may also be seen in traditional shop front construction. The use of any traditional material shall be considered for new shopfronts by the Council. The use of PVC-U or aluminium is unlikely to be supported in buildings in the conservation areas or on listed buildings.



Figure 21. Above; Vitrolite, glass and chrome. Right; Terracotta and faience.

## **Paint**

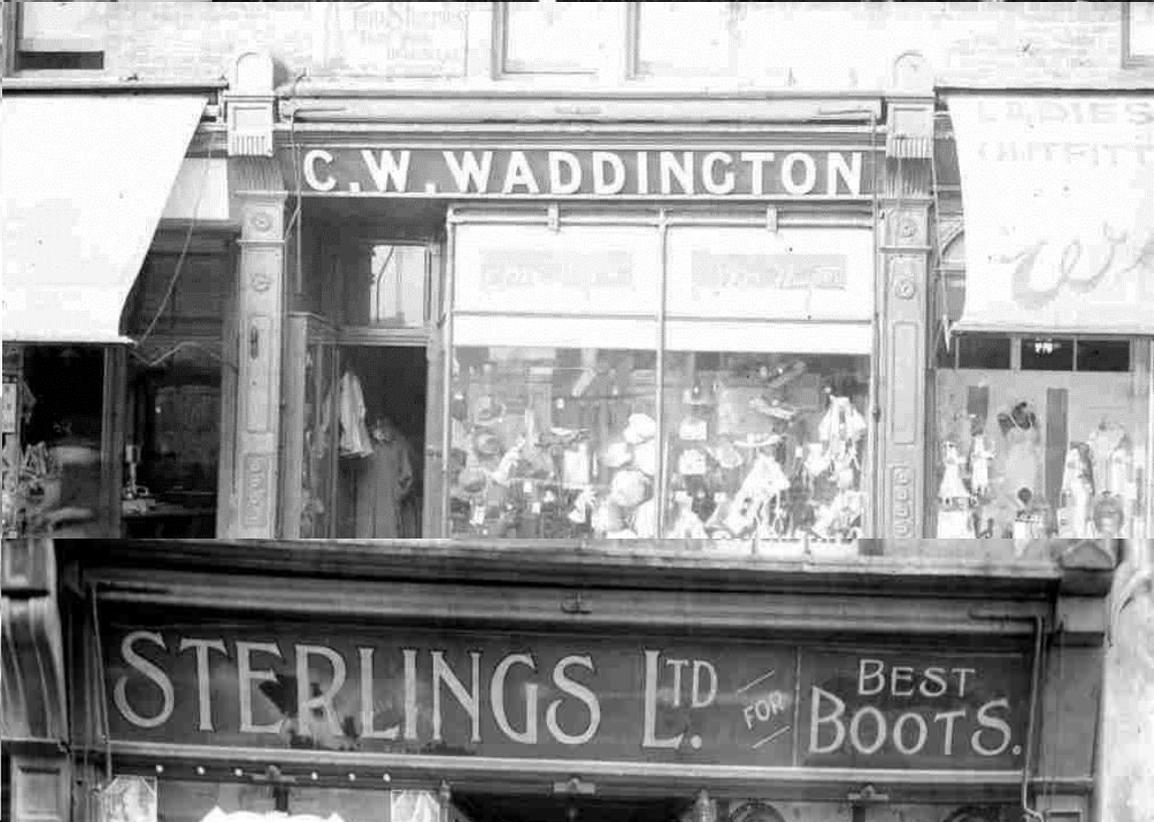
6.16 Generally traditionally constructed timber shopfronts should be painted. Garish colours should be avoided in conservation areas or on listed buildings. In some cases corporate colours for businesses will need to be amended to suit the area or building.

<sup>14</sup> The foremost authority on timber in the UK is TRADA (Timber Research and Development Association). TRADA has a number of technical pamphlets on timber classes and use. [www.trada.co.uk](http://www.trada.co.uk)

- 6.17 Dark colours consistent with Georgian and Victorian colour palettes best suit traditional style shop fronts. Picking out detail in a contrasting colour or with gilt on the console or pilasters for example can be effective.
- 6.18 By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century and into the Edwardian period the paint effect of woodgraining was immensely popular. Paint was effectively grained to give the appearance of natural wood, the most popular to imitate were oak, mahogany and walnut. Varnishes and woodstains started to be used during the 20<sup>th</sup> however these were only used with good quality hardwoods such as mahogany or teak, which have a good appearance when finished in this way.



Figure 22. Examples of painted shopfronts and a basic selection of dark paint colours. Darker colours provide greater depth and lustre and give more visual strength to the frame. Lighter colours can be used to provide effective contrast for smaller detailed elements.



**PART C:**  
**SIGNAGE, LIGHTING, AWNINGS, SECURITY AND PERMISSIONS**

## 7 Signage

### Corporate signage

7.1 Chain stores, coffee shops, banks, restaurants or any business that has a national or international corporate identity need to respect existing buildings and the streetscapes so that local distinctiveness is maintained. In sensitive locations, especially conservation areas or listed buildings, the corporate identity may need to be substantially modified. Compromises are often possible which enable a corporate image to be maintained without being at the expense local character. Many organisations have a 'heritage image' alongside their more usual image.

### Hanging signs, projecting signs and banner signs

7.2 Until the mid – late 18<sup>th</sup>-century, businesses and retailers advertised their service by using hanging signs. The use of a hanging sign predates fascia signs that extend across a door and shop window which is now an integral part of a traditional shopfront.

7.3 Hanging signs could be designed as a hanging object, such as the three balls of a pawnbroker for example. They could also be a painted board with the name of the proprietor and their business.



Figure 23. Hanging signs. Left, simple hand painted timber hanging sign on modern bracket used in place of a shopfront or large fascia board. Middle; traditional pawn shop sign. Right; a pair of spectacles to advertise an opticians (*courtesy of [www.pubandshopsigns.com](http://www.pubandshopsigns.com)*).

7.4 Hanging signs can add vitality to the streetscape. On traditional shopfronts and historic buildings timber or cast metal signs are particularly appropriate. As a general rule only one hanging sign per a shop will be allowed at a size not exceeding 0.75m<sup>2</sup> although signage should be appropriate to the size of the building and in some situations larger signs may be appropriate so that it is in proportion.

7.5 If a console allows this can sometimes be an appropriate place to locate a hanging sign if fascia level is suitable. Failing that, mounting below fascia level on the pilaster or above on an area of blank wall at first floor level are other alternatives. The location of the sign should not obscure important architectural details.

- 7.6 Whatever the position the bottom of the sign must be at least 2.6m above the pavement and the outer edge at least 1m from the kerb.
- 7.7 Projecting box signs, whether illuminated or not, are bulky and unattractive and will not be acceptable on listed buildings or in conservation areas. Their use elsewhere will be discouraged.
- 7.8 Banner signs (a banner stretched between two projecting poles) are very dominant and overbearing on the street scene. Their use will not be acceptable on listed buildings or in conservation areas. Their use elsewhere will be discouraged



Figure 24. Unsympathetic internally illuminated box sign sitting atop of a traditional fascia board with internally illuminated projecting sign on adjacent building.

### Fascia signs, sill signs and stallriser signs

- 7.9 The fascia sign is normally limited to the name of the shop and/or limited additional information such as the nature of the business and the telephone number. Too much information can create visual clutter. The fascia sign should not be used to advertise any product. The street number should also be clearly displayed, this could be on the fascia but fanlights, pilasters, and consoles are often also suitable.
- 7.10 The traditional fascia sign comprised of a painted timber surface upon which lettering was applied. Many types of lettering may be used including:
- Hand painted lettering.
  - Incised lettering.
  - Brilliant signage.
  - Raised lettering (also stone or terracotta lettering)

#### a) Hand painted

- 7.11 Lettering was frequently hand painted directly onto the fascia board. This will be the most appropriate form of fascia signage for Georgian styled shopfronts. Historically hand painted signage could also be applied to a stallriser. Where

appropriate this can still provide an opportunity for signage although an excessive amount is unlikely to be supported.

- 7.12 The use of applied matt vinyl lettering which imitates hand painted signage may be an acceptable alternative where painted lettering cannot be achieved; however on listed buildings traditional sign painting will be preferred.



Figure 25. Hand painted fascia signage.

**b) Incised lettering and 'Brilliant' signs**

- 7.13 Incised lettering is carved letters in V-section into a wooden fascia or shopfront sill. The Brilliant Sign Company further developed this form of sign from the 1880s by taking the V-section fascia or a pressed copper sheet and placing painted glass with only the lettering which it covers left unpainted, providing a 3D effect over the top. Original incised lettering fascias or Brilliant signs are rare in Bassetlaw District. Where they still exist the Council is likely to insist on their retention and alternative solutions to new signage shall have to be sought.

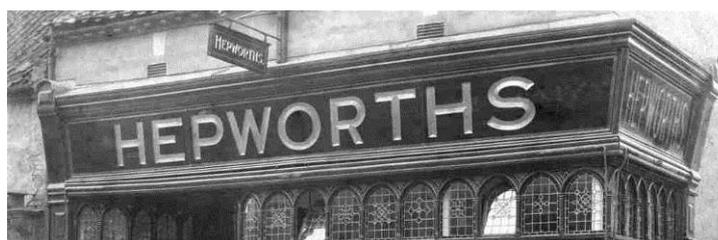


Figure 26. An incised letter 'Brilliant' fascia sign.

**c) Painted and etched glass**

7.14 With the abolition of the glass tax, and with advances in technology, a new form of signage became affordable from the mid- late 19<sup>th</sup>-century. Combinations of paint and acid etching produced lustrous looking signs. Glass signs are rare in Bassetlaw District. Where they still exist the Council is likely to insist on their retention and alternative solutions to new signage shall have to be sought.



Figure 27. Painted glass fascia signs.

**d) Raised lettering**

7.15 Individual wood, metal or porcelain letters were also used and applied to the fascia. The most common were half-round in section wooden letters that were gilded rather than painted. Where no fascia sign exists it may be appropriate to use individual lettering applied directly to the façade of the building.

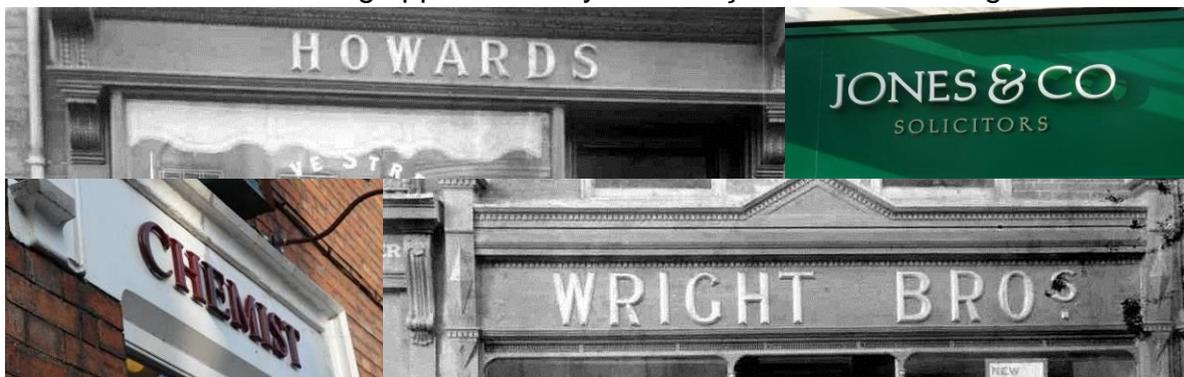


Figure 28. Example of historic and modern raised lettering.

7.16 Where a shopfront was constructed from stone, terracotta or faience the fascia was often formed from the same material. This was particularly common in the early 20th-century. Where these still exist the Council is likely to insist on their retention and alternative solutions to new signage shall have to be sought.



Figure 29. Stone and terracotta raised lettering.

- 7.17 The use of surface mounted box signs attached to the front of fascias tends to detract from the appearance of shop fronts. Their use in conservation areas or on listed buildings will not be acceptable, elsewhere they shall be discouraged.
- 7.18 Pre-formed signage boards of PVC-U or metal, such as aluminium fixed onto an existing fascia with studs are an obvious and incongruous addition. Their use in conservation areas and on listed buildings shall not be supported and shall be discouraged in other areas.



Figure 30. Pre-formed signage attached to fascia with screws and visible studs.

### Signage on window glass

- 7.19 Where a shop front lacks a fascia or little opportunity to accommodate signage the glass of the shopfront and/or door can provide additional space by painting or etching signage.
- 7.20 The technique of reverse painting directly onto the glass is very effective. The use of applied vinyl letters and graphics can be a suitable alternative, although for listed buildings traditional reverse painting shall be the preferred option.
- 7.21 Etching became popular from the late 1800s when it was discovered that sandblasting could effectively imitate traditional acid etching. Opportunities for interesting and artistic designs can be achieved dependent on the type of etching technique employed as well as simple lettering. For businesses where the window is not needed for display etching can provide privacy too. Again the use of vinyl applied graphics and film can be an effective alternative. Where historic etching exists the Council is likely to insist on its retention.



Figure 32. Top; etched transfer to window glass. Bottom; reverse hand painted signage to back of window glass

## Hoardings, fascia boards and wall signage

- 7.22 Until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century many businesses advertised themselves and the products they sold with large hoardings. Greatest concentrations could be seen with businesses in the towns along the Great North Road, such as Tuxford and Retford, but they were not exclusive to these areas alone.
- 7.23 Signs were usually large timber boards with the proprietor or product signwritten onto it. The boards were usually placed high on the front of the building, often between first floor and second floor windows. Sometimes the hoarding was placed on the roof.
- 7.24 In some cases where a business does not have a shop front but signage is required, a fascia board above the entrance door and/or window is appropriate. This is a traditional form of signage and was usually a painted timber board set within a frame. Lettering was traditionally painted raised lettering applied to the sign. For listed buildings and conservation areas painted timber fascia boards will be preferred. The use of modern materials such as colour coated aluminium may be appropriate in other areas.
- 7.25 Where a more permanent form of advertising or a larger area of the building was desired to be used for advertising some businesses chose to sign paint directly onto the building itself. This was commonly seen on the apex of a gable wall, or down the corner of a building. Some businesses chose to paint their entire building with advertising.

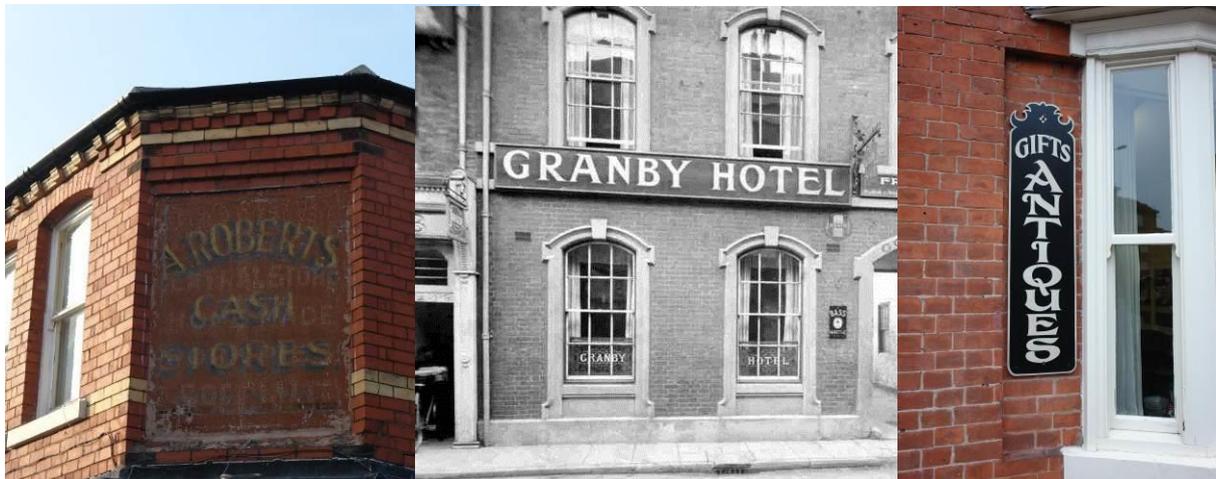


Figure 31. Left; signage painted direct onto brick above doorway of shop. Middle; hand painted fascia boards between floors to advertise premises that lack traditional entrance or shopfront. Right; hand painted wall signage hanging on a hook for easy removal.

- 7.26 Very few, if any historic hoardings exist. Where they do and dependant on their condition the Council may require them to be retained. Where traditional painted signage directly onto the building still exists the Council will often require this to be retained. It is not however necessary or always considered appropriate to repaint it; instead they are usually regarded as a historic record of previous uses that add interest to the streetscape.
- 7.27 The introduction of large scale hoardings is unlikely to be considered appropriate today in any location across the District. Where proposed, the

Council will expect historic evidence that they existed on that building and that they are constructed in the traditional method only being timber, sign written and non-illuminated. The impact on the character and amenity of the area shall be considered together with any highway concerns.

7.28 The introduction of large-scale sign painting directly onto the elevation of any building is unlikely to be considered appropriate today in any location across the District. However smaller scale sign painting directly onto a building may be supported in place of a advertising sign dependant on the impact on the character and amenity of the area, any highway concerns and the fabric of the building itself.

### Lettering and colour

7.29 Lettering should be proportionate to the size of the fascia or hanging sign. Typeface can depict an era, a modern typeface on a 18<sup>th</sup> century shopfront may not be as appropriate as an 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century typeface. Typeface however can also be used to reflect the type of shop, for example a 'script' typeface would be appropriate for a shop that sells pens and calligraphy equipment. It is advisable to seek the advice of a sign painter with regards to typeface.

7.30 A wide variety of typefaces can be appropriate for signage. Common typeface during the 19<sup>th</sup> century can be considered to fall under;

- Slab serif (block)
- San serif
- Script
- Decorative



Figure 32. Clarendon (a slab serif front from 1845)



Figure 33. A 'Grotesque' typeface (sans serif, introduced in 1832).



Figure 34. Script (based on letterforms of 18<sup>th</sup> century English engraver George Bickham)



Figure 35. A 'Decorative' typeface

7.31 The 19th century also saw the use of variegated letters and shadowing. The use of two or more colours to form the body of the text created variegated letters whilst the use of shadow and shading to the rear of the letters created a perception of depth to the sign.



Figure 36. Examples of sans serif typefaces.



Figure 37. Example of a script typeface.

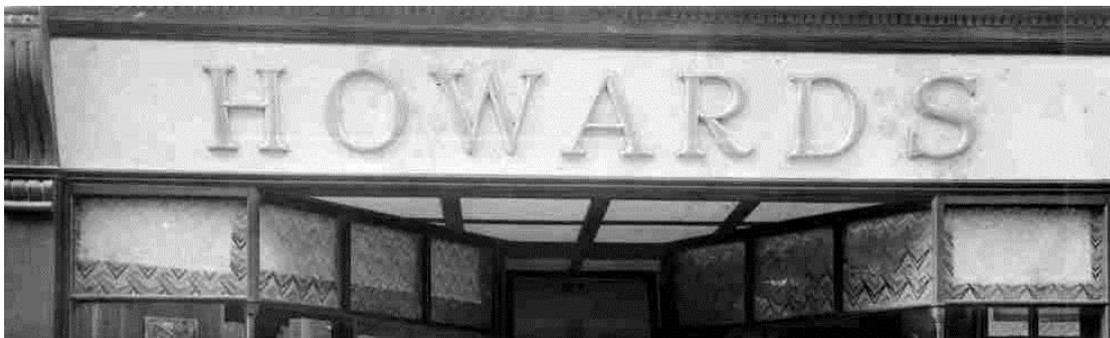


Figure 38. Example of Clarendon , a slab serif typeface.

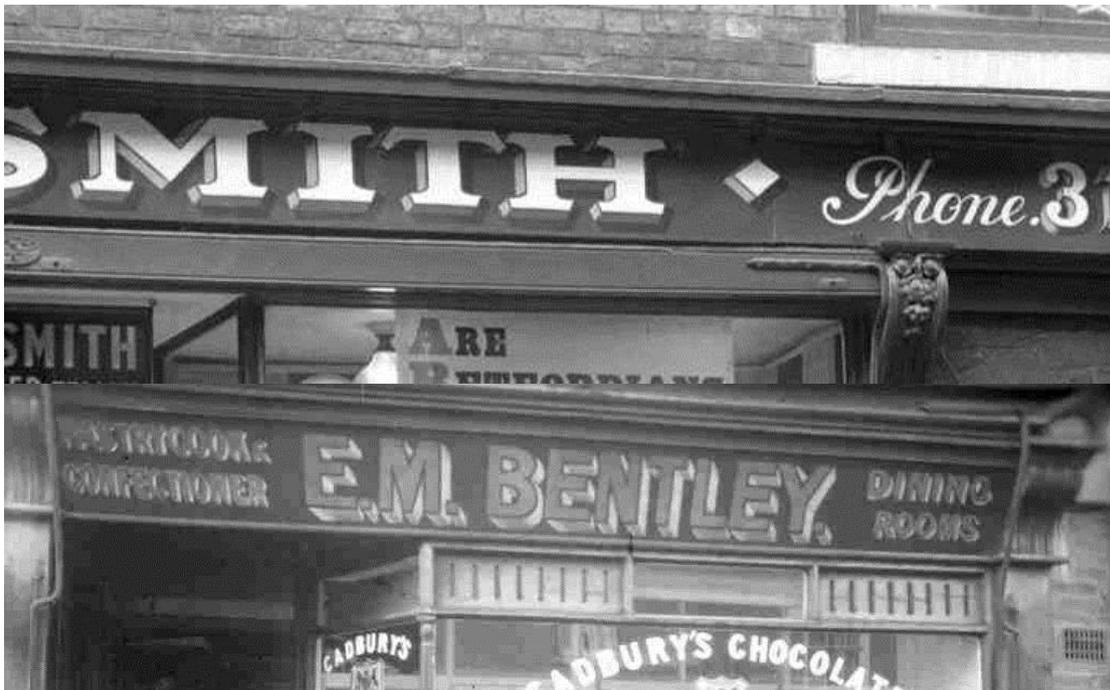


Figure 39. Shadowing applied to lettering.



Figure 40. Example of variegated lettering with shadow (image courtesy of Osborne Signs).

- 7.32 The 20th century also witnessed distinctive typefaces. Those of the Art Deco period and the script fonts of the 1950s were particularly iconic.
- 7.33 It was more common for lettering during the 20<sup>th</sup> century to be three dimensional often of wood or stainless steel. The use of illumination, with neon that followed the shape of the letters could be seen from the 1930s for some premises.



Figure 41. Typical typeface of the Art Deco period.

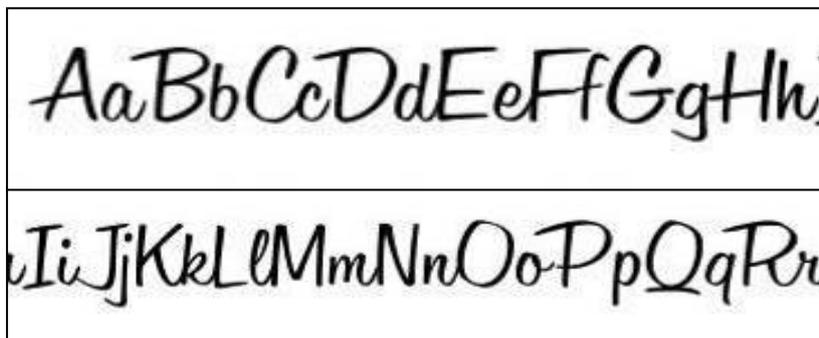


Figure 42. Typical typeface of the 1950s

7.34 For signage to be effective the colours of lettering need to both compliment and contrast against their background. The table below, while not an exhaustive list can be used as a good guide.

Ground colour	Lettering colour	Shading colour
Stone colour	Black	White & dark stone
Black	Any colour	Any colour
White	White or gold	Plain
Light blue	Dark blue & vermillion	Black and medium blue
Bronze green	Gold, yellow or red	Emerald green and vermillion
Marble	White incised lettering	
Mahogany graining	Any light colour and gold	Various
Walnut	Any light colour or gold	Various
Dark oak graining	Gold or red	Dark colour and black
Light oak graining	White	Black
Chocolate	Pink, salmon, rose	Letter colour and black
Dark blue	Gold, white outline	Plain
Medium blue	Gold	Orange and blue
Vermillion	Gold or yellow	Green, white, black
Sage green	White	Purple, brown, black.

Figure 43. Combination of signage and lettering colours considered to complement, taken from 1911.<sup>15</sup>

## 8 Lighting

8.1 Historically shop fronts were illuminated by internal lighting. Admittedly this would not have illuminated fascia signage but would sufficiently ensure shops provided a safe and attractive evening environment.

8.2 Externally mounted lighting started to be installed with the coming of gas into towns during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Lights would extend from the fascia on a swan neck and have reflectors to throw light onto the window or frequently just hang in front of the window. Many of these lights would later be replaced by electric bulbs. The size and quality of these light fittings were often impressive additions to the street scene.

8.3 During the 20<sup>th</sup> century external lamps hanging in front of the windows were replaced with lighting that focussed on illuminating signage and the fascia board, today there are many forms of shopfront illumination. Examples of original 19<sup>th</sup> century external lamps are rarely seen and where they exist should be preserved.



Figure 44. Late 19<sup>th</sup> century gas lamp hanging in front of shop window.

<sup>15</sup> Kelly, A Ashum. 1911. *The expert sign painter*. Pennsylvania: Malvern

- 8.4 The use of external lighting to illuminate shop fronts or signage needs a careful and co-ordinated approach with consideration of any cumulative impact on the street scene. In conservation areas and on listed buildings the use of external lighting will often be resisted.
- 8.5 Illuminated signage is often bulky or poorly designed adding unwelcome clutter to a shopfront. When designing a new shopfront consideration should be given at the earliest stage whether illumination is required to allow an opportunity for lighting to form an integral part of the design.

### Fascia lighting

- 8.6 Fascia lighting is not essential for many businesses and the Council may query its use especially if the building is listed or in a conservation area. There are many types of fascia lighting and variety in a streetscape can add interest. In conservation areas or on listed buildings there will be a presumption against lighting although it may be considered appropriate in certain circumstances e.g. businesses that have an evening or night-time use.

#### a) Internally illuminated box signs

- 8.7 These are internally illuminated boxes with a translucent plastic face on which there is lettering or graphic designs. They create excessive glare which draws undue attention to them and are bulky and crudely detailed. They are not generally acceptable.



Figure 45. Unsympathetic large internally illuminated box sign with internally illuminated projecting sign adjacent.

### b) Spotlights and swan neck lamps

- 8.8 Spotlights produce a white light and due to their small size can be discretely mounted onto architectural features, on top of ledges, on the end of slim projecting rods or concealed within the cornice of a shopfront. Two or three spotlights is usually adequate for most fascia signs, their use should be limited to illuminating just the name of the shop. It is advisable to seek advice from lighting contractors on the types of spotlights, beam angles and light outputs.
- 8.9 Swan necks are large lamps often brass, angled to illuminate the fascia. Although reminiscent of Victorian and early 20<sup>th</sup> century lamps they often lack the quality of traditional lighting and obscure the fascia signage itself. Swan necks are generally unacceptable.



Figure 46. Left; swan neck lights. Middle; spotlights discretely set in a modern cornice. Right; unsightly oversized spotlights to illuminate fascia.

### c) Fluorescent tube lights

- 8.10 Concealed fluorescent tube lighting that is fitted in a projecting cowl directed towards the sign produces a flat wash of light, often across the length of the fascia. They can often result in too much light especially where the fascia is a pale colour, or can create an unwanted reflection on dark fasciae. Slender designed cowls are preferred and they should be angled to ensure that the tube is not seen from pedestrian level. Tube lights can sometimes be incorporated into the design of new shopfronts if the cornice is designed with a purpose built recess. Without a suitable diffuser or grill however the light may be unsightly again from pedestrian level.



Figure 47. Fluorescent tube lights coloured to match the fascia.



Figure 48. Left; cross section of cornice containing exterior strip lighting for fascia below (image courtesy of Dover District Council). Right; unsightly trough light under fascia board.

#### d) Backlit lettering

8.11 This technique is a more acceptable version of internally illuminated box signage. In this technique translucent plastic letters or graphics are inset into an opaque background which is illuminated from behind. This technique ensures that only the lettering is illuminated and not the entire sign box. The light box must be recessed behind the fascia; proposals for a surface mounted light box are unlikely to be supported by the Council. The lettering ideally should be flush with, or project very slightly from the background panel and the panel should be finished to look as little like plastic as possible, matt finishes are often appropriate. Where deemed suitable in conservation areas or on listed buildings the background panel could be a timber painted panel so that it looks like a traditional sign during the day.



Figure 49. Backlit lettering. Only the white 'Burton' letters are illuminated.

#### e) Halo lettering

8.12 These consist of individual letters which stand proud of the surface which they are mounted and are lit from behind to produce a halo effect. Whilst they can be affixed to a traditional shopfront fascia they are particularly useful for premises that do not have a shopfront as they can be wall mounted. The letters should not be too bulky and plastic will not generally be acceptable on listed buildings or in conservation areas.



Figure 50. Example of halo lettering.

**f) Neon (cold cathode)**

8.13 Neon lighting was popular from the 1920s to the 1950s and is often used to make dramatic multi-coloured signage. Neon lighting is not usually associated with the towns or villages of Bassetlaw but if sensitively designed with restraint they can be elegant and sophisticated and add vitality to the streetscape. The signs should be moderately sized and be in a single colour or a limited palette of colours, flashing versions will not be acceptable. The cumulative impact of using neon in a street scape will also be considered by the Council.



Figure 51. Neon used on a modern cinema

**g) Other fascia lighting techniques**

8.14 Other techniques may be acceptable providing they are modest and subtle and providing the fittings are not unduly obtrusive, particularly in sensitive locations. The acceptability of signs will be judged on these criteria.

**Illumination of hanging signs and projecting signs**

8.15 In conservation areas or on listed buildings there will be a presumption that hanging or projecting signs should not be illuminated.

**a) Internally illuminated**

8.16 These are frequently bulky and poorly detailed and have the same glare effect as internally illuminated box fascia signs. They are generally not acceptable.

8.17 With the development of smaller fluorescent shaped tubes there is scope for more interestingly shaped and slender signs, although their use in conservation areas or on listed buildings may still be limited.

8.18 Where internally illuminated projecting signs are to be considered the background panel should be predominantly opaque or semi-opaque so that it is the lettering or graphic that is illuminated rather than the background and that glare is avoided.

**b) Externally illuminated**

8.19 The use of external spot lights or strip lights in a cowl focused on the sign can also be acceptable. The use of bulky swan neck lamps will rarely be acceptable.



Figure 52. Top; internally illuminated projecting sign. Bottom; hanging sign illuminated by trough lights.

## 9 Security

9.1 The importance of security for business premises is recognised by the Council but the need for security should not detract from the attractiveness of a streetscape. Security measures are introduced to a shopfront to combat theft, vandalism and ram raiding. The need for and level of security measures will also depend on many different factors including type of business and location. A shopping area that is well lit and lively in the evening with a mix of businesses is more likely to deter crime than streets that are deserted.

### a) Small-paned glass

9.2 When designing a new shopfront or altering an existing shopfront, security measures should be considered. The use of smaller paned glass set in mullions and transoms make premises more difficult to break into and enter than large areas of glass. The cost of replacing smaller paned glass can be considerably less also.



Figure 53. Small panes of glass are easier and more cost effective to replace if smashed.

### b) Glass type

9.3 Building Regulations shall often stipulate the use of safety glass in shopfronts especially where large panes are used. Whilst 'toughened' glass is much stronger than ordinary glass it can still shatter allowing access into a building. 'Laminated' glass on the other hand will crack, but will still stay intact ensuring that the window remains as a barrier to access<sup>16</sup>. The use of polycarbonate materials is not usually considered an appropriate alternative to glass.

### c) Reinforced stallriser

9.4 The stallriser provides protection from ram raiding. If constructed from stone, brick, brick and render or brick with a timber panelled front the stallriser shall be reinforced considerably. The use of recessed doorways provides further protection against ram raiding.

### d) Internal layout

9.5 The internal layout of a business can also assist in preventing crime. Ensuring that the area behind the window allows for views into the premises from outside, coupled with sensor controlled lighting, will mean that any activity inside will be on clear display to passers-by.

### e) External roller shutters and grilles

9.6 External roller shutters are often proposed to provide security by preventing access to the shopfront itself, thereby protecting the glass. These are usually a

<sup>16</sup> Advice on type and suitability of glass for compliance with Building Regulations should be sought from the Building Control Department.

pull down shutter that are housed in a surface mounted box that forms part of the fascia or set above or below it. To ensure that the shutter cannot be pulled away from the shopfront the shutter is set into runners that are affixed to the sides of the shopfront. Roller shutters create a blank, unappealing appearance to a shopfront and streetscape. They often invite graffiti or flyposting which gives an area a run down, uncared for appearance. This can invite more crime. Solid roller shutters prevent views into the business thus hiding any undesirable activity inside from passers-by. Their use shall only be acceptable in exceptional circumstances or very high risk areas.

- 9.7 Some external roller shutters are perforated or appear as a lattice grille (sometimes combined with clear polycarbonate panels). These allow for views into the premises and are less likely to be subject to graffiti or fly posters. They are preferable over solid roller shutters but can still appear cumbersome with their large shutter boxes and side rails. Where deemed acceptable, in a high risk area, the shutter box shall need to be internal or be incorporated entirely behind the fascia of the shopfront.
- 9.8 The use of external roller shutters or grilles on listed buildings or within conservation areas will usually not be acceptable.

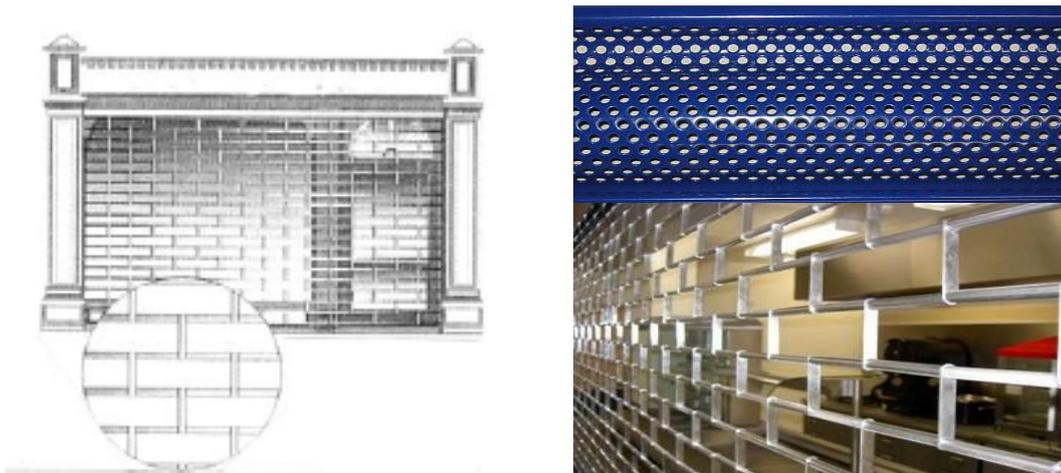


Figure 54. Right; external roller grilles. Left top; perforated grille. Left bottom; lattice grille (drawing courtesy of Rutland County Council).



Figure 55; Externally mounted roller shutters (drawing courtesy of Rutland County Council).

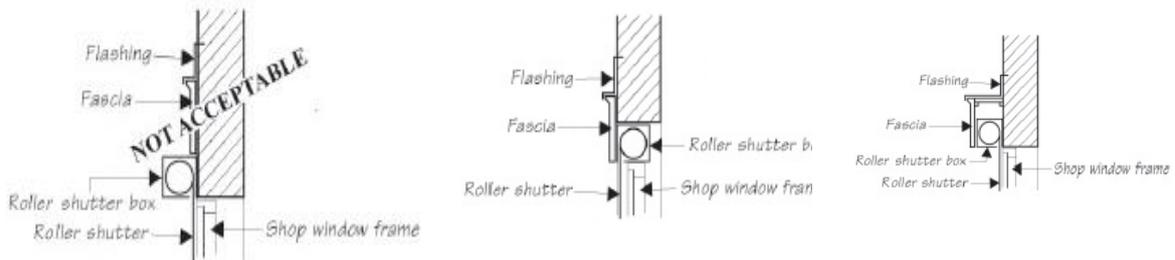


Figure 56. Left; externally mounted roller shutter box. Middle; roller shutter box set behind fascia. Right; roller shutter box set behind fascia with grille behind glass (drawings courtesy of Barnsley MBC).

### f) Externally mounted removable grilles or shutters

9.9 Removable grilles or shutters are more akin to traditional security measures seen during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. They have the advantage of not needing bulky box housings or side runners but can be heavy and difficult to install. As with roller shutters or grilles they still can create an unappealing appearance to a shopfront and streetscape. Their use is unlikely to be acceptable on listed buildings or within conservation areas in most cases. Where deemed acceptable permission is likely to be subject to:

- Grilles covering the glass and door only and not covering other architectural elements such as pilasters and stallrisers.
- Unobtrusive fixings.
- Grilles stored out of sight when not in use.
- Grilles must not protrude into the pavement or highway.

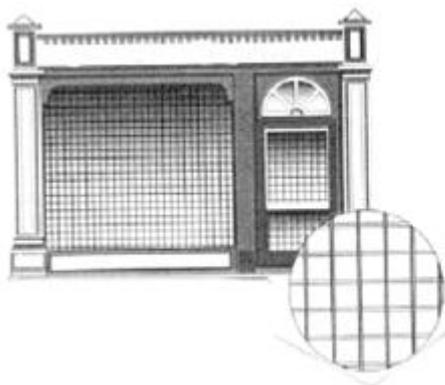


Figure 57. Left; external removable grilles (drawing courtesy of Rutland County Council).. Right; solid timber removable panels.

### g) Gates

9.10 To protect recessed doorways the traditional idea of a removable, concertinaed or hinged well designed gate can be both practical and be of reasonable appearance. If security of the door is not of concern but of people loitering in the doorway the use of a lobby light can help reduce undesirable activity.

### h) Internal open lattice grilles

9.11 Where there is no alternative to a security screen an open lattice grille fixed internally is preferred. These allow the shopfront in its entirety to be seen as well as views into the premises. Allowing vision into the shop allows for window shopping after closing and offers some security in itself by encouraging people into an area. Planning permission is not required for internal grilles. Listed Building Consent is likely to be required where proposed inside a listed building.

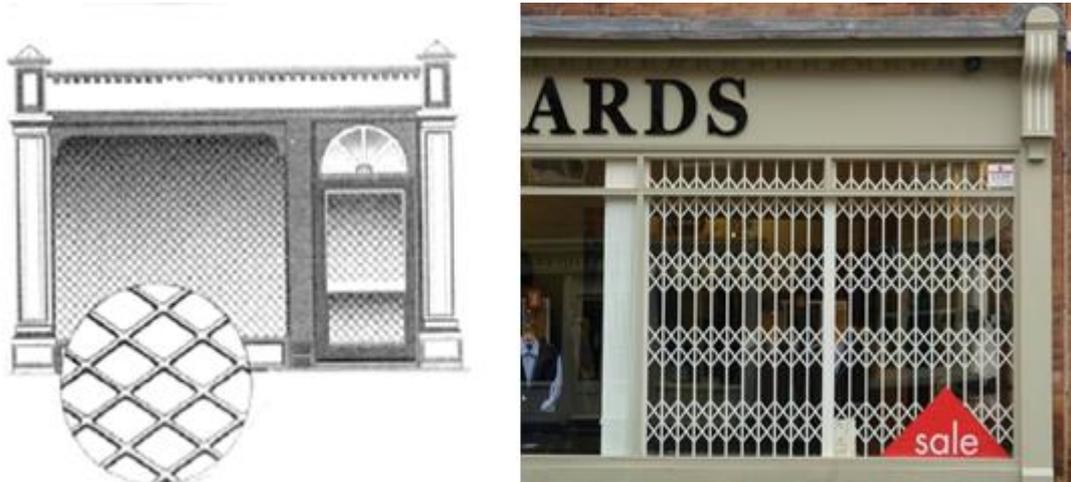


Figure 58. Examples of internal grilles (drawing courtesy of Rutland County Council).

### i) Alarms and cameras

9.12 Alarm boxes can act as a deterrent but are often unsightly and bulky items and become an undesirable feature of a streetscape. They need to be positioned as carefully as possible, be small and where possible coloured to match the shopfront or fascia when affixed to the shopfront itself. Where an alarm box is positioned on the face of the building it should be positioned as discretely as possible.

9.13 Many parts of the town centres are covered by CCTV cameras avoiding the need for additional CCTV. Where it is essential for a business to have a CCTV camera on its shopfront they should be positioned as discretely as possible. Cameras come in a variety of shapes and sizes. The smallest practicable camera should be chosen, it is however advisable to seek further advice from a CCTV specialist.



Figure 59. Left; discrete dome camera on underside of modern cornice. Right; unsightly overly large camera focused on entrance doors.

**j) Street bollards**

- 9.14 The Council will not normally consider the use of bollards for security reasons in the highway or on pavements. This is necessary to avoid pedestrian flows and visual clutter. Siting on private land could be considered where this does not significantly detract from the visual appearance of the property or the area.

## 10 Permissions

- 10.1 The installation of a new shopfront always requires planning permission as does any significant alteration to an existing shopfront. This supplementary planning document provides much advice with regards to designing new traditionally styled shopfronts. Further detailed advice can be obtained through the Planning Department's pre-application service.
- 10.2 Where a building is listed the installation of a new shopfront or any alterations shall require listed building consent. Listed building consent is also required for internal works. Where repairs are needed it is advisable to discuss these with the Council's Conservation Officer who can offer further advice if needed.
- 10.3 The regulations regarding the display of advertisements (including signage) are complex and you should always contact the Planning Department to discuss whether consent is needed at the earliest stage. Generally any illuminated sign and any sign on an elevation that does not have a display window will need advertisement consent. Where the building is listed advertisements and signage will always require listed building consent.
- 10.4 If works involve structural alterations building regulations consent shall be required. Advice should be sought from the Building Control Department.
- 10.5 Any works in the highway or shall affect the highway shall also require permission. Advice should be sought from Nottinghamshire County Council Highways Department at the earliest stage.



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**PART D:**  
THE PRINCIPLES OF GOOD SHOPFRONT  
DESIGN AND SIGNAGE

## 11 The principles of good shopfront design and signage

1 There will be a presumption in favour of retaining good quality traditional shopfronts that are capable of repair. Replacing existing traditional shopfronts will be the exception rather than the norm.

2 The style of new shopfronts should be derived from, reflect and harmonise with the scale, character, age and materials of the building as a whole. They should be good representations of the historic periods of shopfront design.

3 Shopfronts of a modern design shall only be considered if they are of exceptional or innovative design and of high quality materials.

4 Where a shopfront involves what were historically two or more buildings, then the vertical division between them should be maintained visually.

5 Fascia boards or entablatures shall be in proportion to the scale of the building and shopfront. Overly large fascia or entablatures shall not be supported.

6 Shopfronts shall be painted in non-garish colours in the conservation areas or on listed buildings, even if this means changing a corporate identity or branding.

7 The restoration of traditional existing awnings shall be supported. New traditional awnings shall only be supported in conservation areas and on listed buildings if they form an integral part of the shopfront. Other types of 'bolt on' awnings including Dutch canopies will only be supported where suitably justified.

8 Where considered appropriate hanging signs should use traditional metal brackets, be limited to one per shopfront and be of a size appropriate to the building and shopfront.

9 Signage in conservation areas or on listed buildings should use traditional styled hand painted lettering or raised lettering in wood or metal, other types of lettering shall only be supported if of suitable appearance. Glass signage and glass painting shall also be considered.

10 Fully internally illuminated box fascia or projecting signs of translucent material is not acceptable.

11 Illumination of shopfronts in conservation areas or on listed buildings will only be permitted where suitably justified and proposed in a discrete manner.

12 External roller shutters shall not be acceptable on listed buildings or in conservation areas.

13 Where external roller shutters are considered acceptable the shutter box shall be set behind the fascia and not externally mounted.

The principles are expounded in preceding Parts 1, 2 and 3.

## 12 Bibliography

### Books:

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- Morrison, K.A. 2003. *English shops and shopping. An architectural history*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Parrisien, S. 1995. *The Georgian Group book of the Georgian House*. London: Aurum Press.

### Guidance and Supplementary Planning Documents:

- Anon. 1993. Book of details and good practice in shopfront design. English Historic Towns Forum.
- Anon. 2001. *Shopfront design guide*. New Forest District Council.
- Anon. 2002. *Supplementary Planning Guidance shopfronts, including signs and shop security*. Rutland County Council.
- Anon. 2003. *Shopfront designs. Supplementary Planning Guidance 22*. Barnsley Metropolitan Council.
- Anon. 2009. *Shopfronts and advertisements. Design Guide*. Supplementary Planning Document. Newark and Sherwood District Council.
- Anon. 2011. *Shopfronts and signage within conservation areas*. Draft Supplementary Planning Document. Dover District Council.
- Dan, H and Morgan Willmott, E.C. 1907. *English shop-fronts old and new*. London: B.T.Batsford.
- Peter Phillips Design and Town and Country Strategies. 1999. *Shopfront design. A guide to good practice*. Mole Valley District Council.

### Websites:

- Bassetlaw Museum Welchman Archive. [www.bassetlawmuseum.org.uk](http://www.bassetlawmuseum.org.uk)
- The Brilliant Sign Company. [www.brilliantsigns.co.uk](http://www.brilliantsigns.co.uk)
- Osborne Signs Traditional Signwriting. [www.osbornesigns.co.uk](http://www.osbornesigns.co.uk)
- Picture the Past. [www.picturethepast.org.uk](http://www.picturethepast.org.uk)
- Pub and Shop Signs Image Library. [www.pubandshopsigns.com](http://www.pubandshopsigns.com)
- TRADA. Timber Research and Development Association. [www.trada.co.uk](http://www.trada.co.uk)

## 13 Useful Links

### Historic England

- 2nd floor, Windsor House, Cliftonville, Northampton, NN1 5BE
- Telephone: 01604 735460
- Email: [eastmidlands@historicengland.org.uk](mailto:eastmidlands@historicengland.org.uk)
- Website: <http://www.historicengland.org.uk/>

### The Georgian Group

- 6 Fitzroy Square, London, W1T 5DX
- Telephone: 087 1750 2936
- Email: [info@georgiangroup.org.uk](mailto:info@georgiangroup.org.uk)
- Website: [www.georgiangroup.org.uk/docs/home/](http://www.georgiangroup.org.uk/docs/home/)

### The Victorian Society

- 1 Priory Gardens, London, W4 1TT
- Telephone: 0208 994 1019
- Email: [admin@victoriansociety.org.uk](mailto:admin@victoriansociety.org.uk)
- Website: [www.victoriansociety.org.uk](http://www.victoriansociety.org.uk)

### The Twentieth Century Society

- 70 Cowcross Street, London, EC1M 6EJ
- Telephone: 020 7250 3857
- Email: [coordinator@c20society.org.uk](mailto:coordinator@c20society.org.uk)
- Website: <http://www.c20society.org.uk/>

### AABC Register (Architects Accredited in Building Conservation)

- No.5 The Parsonage, Manchester, M3 2HS
- Telephone: 0161 832 0666
- Email: [registrar@aabc-register.co.uk](mailto:registrar@aabc-register.co.uk)
- Website: [www.aabc-register.co.uk](http://www.aabc-register.co.uk)

### Nottinghamshire Archives, Nottinghamshire County Council

- County House, Castle Meadow Road, Nottingham, NG2 1AG
- Telephone: 08449 808080
- Email: [archives@nottscc.gov.uk](mailto:archives@nottscc.gov.uk)
- Website: <http://www3.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/learning/history/archives/>

### Bassetlaw Museum (Local historic photographs)

- Amcott House, 40 Grove St, Retford, Nottinghamshire DN22 6LD
- Telephone: 01777 713749
- Email: [Bassetlaw.Museum@Bassetlaw.gov.uk](mailto:Bassetlaw.Museum@Bassetlaw.gov.uk)
- Website: [www.bassetlawmuseum.org.uk/](http://www.bassetlawmuseum.org.uk/)

### Picture the Past (Local historic photographs)

- Website: [www.picturethepast.org.uk/](http://www.picturethepast.org.uk/)

### Worksop Library

- Memorial Avenue, Worksop, Nottinghamshire, S80 2PB
- Telephone: 01909 535353
- Email: [Worksop.library@nottscc.gov.uk](mailto:Worksop.library@nottscc.gov.uk)

### Retford (Denman) Library

- 17 Churchgate, Retford, Nottinghamshire, DN22 6PE
- Telephone: 01777 708724
- Email: [retford.library@nottscc.gov.uk](mailto:retford.library@nottscc.gov.uk)

## Contact us

For further advice on issues relating to shopfronts and signage, or any other aspect of conservation and heritage, please contact one of the Council's Conservation Officers:

- Michael Tagg: [Michael.Tagg@bassetlaw.gov.uk](mailto:Michael.Tagg@bassetlaw.gov.uk), 01909 533484;
- Aimee Dobb: [Aimee.Dobb@bassetlaw.gov.uk](mailto:Aimee.Dobb@bassetlaw.gov.uk); 01909 533191; or
- Simon Britt: [Simon.Britt@bassetlaw.gov.uk](mailto:Simon.Britt@bassetlaw.gov.uk), 01909 533427.

Alternatively, please write to:

Conservation Team, Planning Policy and Conservation, Bassetlaw District Council, Queen's Buildings, Potter Street, Worksop, Nottinghamshire, S80 2AH

For help and advice on submitting applications for Planning Permission or Listed Building Consent, please contact:

Planning Administration  
Tel: 01909 533264, 01909 534430 or 01909 533220

If you need any help communicating with us or understanding any of our documents, we can arrange for a copy of this document in large print or arrange for a Language Line interpreter or translator to help you. Please contact us on 01909 533533.

