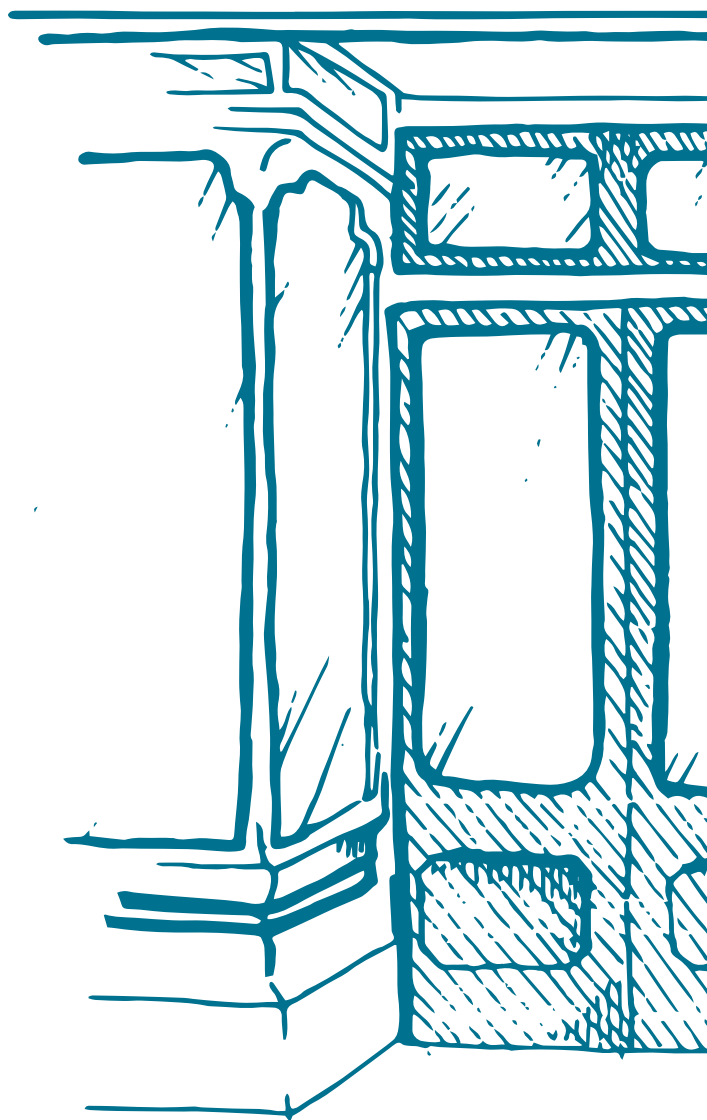


Shop front design guide

Supplementary Planning Document



February 2015

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1 Purpose of this document

- 1.1 This document has been prepared by Rushmoor Borough Council. Its purpose is to provide design guidance on the alteration or installation of shop fronts and shop signage in order to maintain or raise the design quality of these features of the townscape. It applies to all buildings in Use Classes A1 (shops), A2 (financial and professional services), A3 (restaurants and cafes), A4 (drinking establishments) and A5 (hot food take-aways). It will also apply to other town centre uses that require an active ground floor frontage.
- 1.2 This guidance will be used by Rushmoor Borough Council in assessing planning applications for shop fronts and shop signage and the Council will promote its use as a guide for shop owners, architects and planning agents.
- 1.3 From time to time the Council may offer a shop front improvement grant scheme. On such occasions, this document will form the basis for assessing applications.

2 Planning Policy Context

- 2.1 This Guidance will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and support the Council's Local Plan. SPDs provide detail on the interpretation and delivery of national and local policies. At the national level, this encompasses the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). At a local level, this includes policies within the Council's adopted Core Strategy (2011) and the Rushmoor Local Plan Review Saved Policies (2000).
- 2.2 This SPD relates specifically to policy CP2 (Design and Heritage) of the Core Strategy and policy S3 (Shop fronts) of the Rushmoor Local Plan Review Saved Policies (see Appendix 1).

3 Background

- 3.1 Outside of their residential and work environments, people are probably most influenced by the quality of the shopping environment. Within town centres, the street scene depends to a large extent on the design quality of shop fronts and type of advertisements displayed. This is particularly so in Conservation Areas where the quality of the buildings should be matched by the quality of shop front design and advertisements. Shop fronts play a key role in our perception of shopping streets because they are at eye level and are accessible to everyone. The shop front has an important function, that is, to identify the shop and to encourage customers to enter and buy. The shop front should not be seen however, as an isolated feature. It is an important part of the entire building to which it belongs and part of the overall street scene.
- 3.2 Whilst it serves a variety of functions, e.g. allowing light into the ground floor and providing an area for the display of goods, it also provides visual and physical support for the upper floors of the building. It is vital therefore that shop front design is contextual, reflecting the details, proportions, emphasis, scale and design of the whole building and should not be seen in isolation but in the wider context of the street and building in which it is located. It is not sufficient however to respect only the vertical dimension of a building. Each property sits within a wider street scene context in which individual buildings may be of varying height,

width or proportions. It is also important to take into account the upper floors of the building and surrounding properties when designing a new shop front. It contributes to the appearance of the street scene for better or for worse. The design and appearance of a shop front is therefore of importance to everyone who uses the street, as well as the shop owner.



Figure 1. Shop fronts in Union Street, Aldershot

- 3.3 Experience across the country has shown that poorly related shop fronts, excessive use of large fascias and brash, brightly coloured advertisements considerably reduces the appeal of a shopping street and is likely to deter rather than attract additional custom. It is in the shop owners' best interest to show restraint in the design of shop fronts and the amount of advertising material as the standard of goods and services on offer at a shop is often judged by its outside appearance and indeed the appearance of the street scene.
- 3.4 The Council is concerned at the impact of changes to shop fronts and advertisements generally, which includes a number of shopping streets set within Victorian and Edwardian buildings, some of which are designated Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings). Until relatively recently, the size, proportion and style of traditional shop fronts, although 'individual' in nature were designed to be an integral feature of the entire building and contributed to a more attractive and interesting street scene. With changes in retail patterns, particularly towards the creation of larger shop units, there are increasing instances of traditional style shop fronts being replaced with 'standard' frontages, often with large plate glass, plain aluminium surrounds, oversize fascias and excessive advertising. Some firms specialising in shop front replacement pay little attention to the design of individual buildings and introduce 'standard' frontages irrespective of local circumstances and the qualities of historic buildings. The shop front should, as far as possible, relate to the original framework set by structural columns and beams and should carry significant features through to ground floor level, rather than visually separating the ground and first floors.
- 3.5 The following design guidelines have been created to encourage better standards in the interests of improving the shopping environment. They are aimed at retailers and other

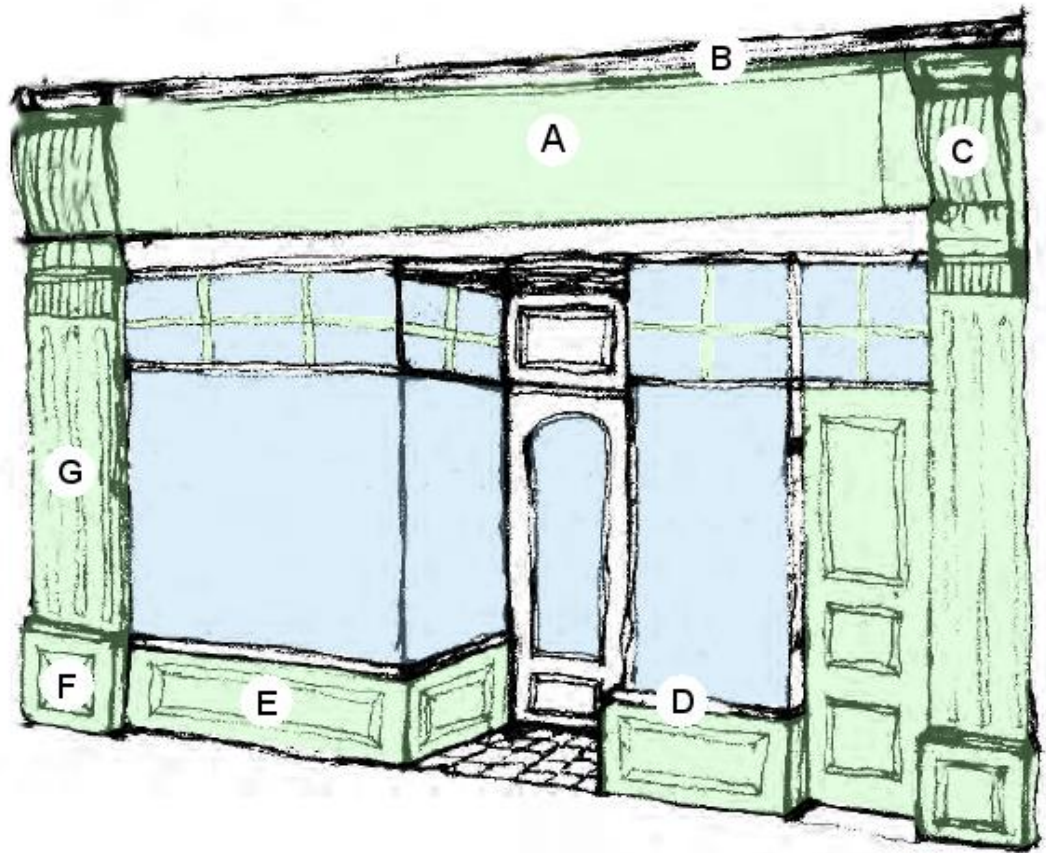
occupiers of “shop-type” units, architects, shop fitters and any other person contemplating making alterations to shop fronts and advertisements.

- 3.6 Most changes to shop fronts require planning permission and ‘express consent’ may be required for advertisements (there are some exceptions). Further advice can be obtained from the Council’s Planning Service (see section 6) and from the DCLG advisory booklet entitled ‘Outdoor advertisements and signs – a guide for advertisers’¹.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/outdoor-advertisements-and-signs-a-guide-for-advertisers>

4 Traditional Shop Front Elements

The Facade



- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| A – Fascia | E – Stall-Riser |
| B – Cornice | F – Plinth |
| C – Console/Corbel | G – Pilaster |
| D – Sill | |

Fascias

- 4.1 Fascias are often the predominant element of a shop front, utilised to promote the name of the shop.

Cornice

- 4.2 The cornice, which was often made elaborate and decorative in traditional shop fronts, projects out above the fascia to throw rainwater away from the shop. It also provides a horizontal divide between the shop front and the upper floors.

Console/Corbel

- 4.3 Located immediately above pilasters, corbels (curved brackets) support the cornice flashing and protect the end of the fascia. Corbels often contained and protected the ends of blinds and shutters, which were located above the shop front.

Sill

- 4.4 Traditional shop front sills were usually significantly deeper and more substantial than domestic ones, often incorporating decorative moulding and occasionally they were metal coated. They were designed to throw water away from the stall-riser which it sits atop.

Stall-Riser

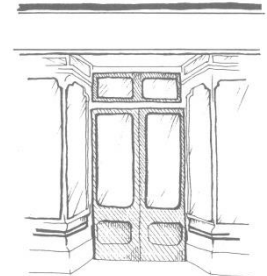
- 4.5 The stall-riser, below the shop 'stall', helps to protect against the damp and raises the goods display to eye level. It also forms a solid base to the shop front, providing it with balanced proportions. Often prone to being damaged or becoming dirty, it is generally constructed of durable materials.

Pilasters

- 4.6 Pilasters, or half-columns provide vertical framing to the shop front and provide visual support to the fascia and upper floors. Traditional pilasters were often ornately designed in order to enhance the elegance of the shop front and were designed with a base (plinth) and capital (corbel).

Recessed Doorways

- 4.7 The traditional recessed door is an important element of some historic buildings. They allow for an increased window area and a larger display.



Awnings and Canopies

- 4.8 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. The Dutch canopy was commonly seen since the 1950s. 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.



Signage

Fascia Signs

- 4.9 Traditionally, fascia signs comprised of a painted timber surface upon which lettering was applied. Lettering was frequently hand painted directly onto the fascia board. Individual wood, metal or porcelain letters were also used and applied to the fascia.

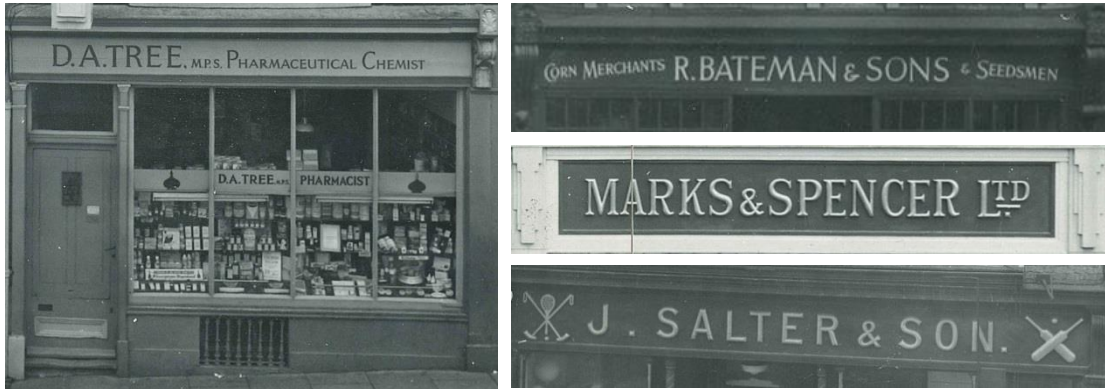
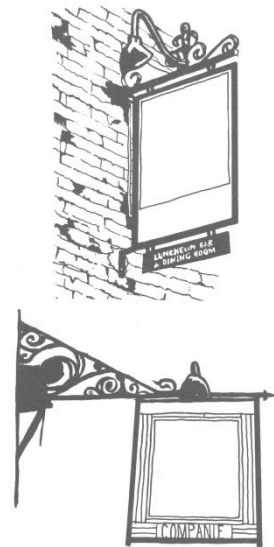


Figure 2 Examples of traditional fascia signs in Aldershot

Projecting and Hanging Signs

- 4.10 Until the mid to late 18th-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.



5 Shop Front Dos and Don'ts

- 5.1 Figure 3 shows the value of the shop fronts in scale with the size of the shop unit and fascia respecting the overall proportions of the buildings to which they belong. Renewal will of course be necessary over time but it is possible with thought and imagination to produce a design in materials that suit the quality of existing buildings and the street scene.

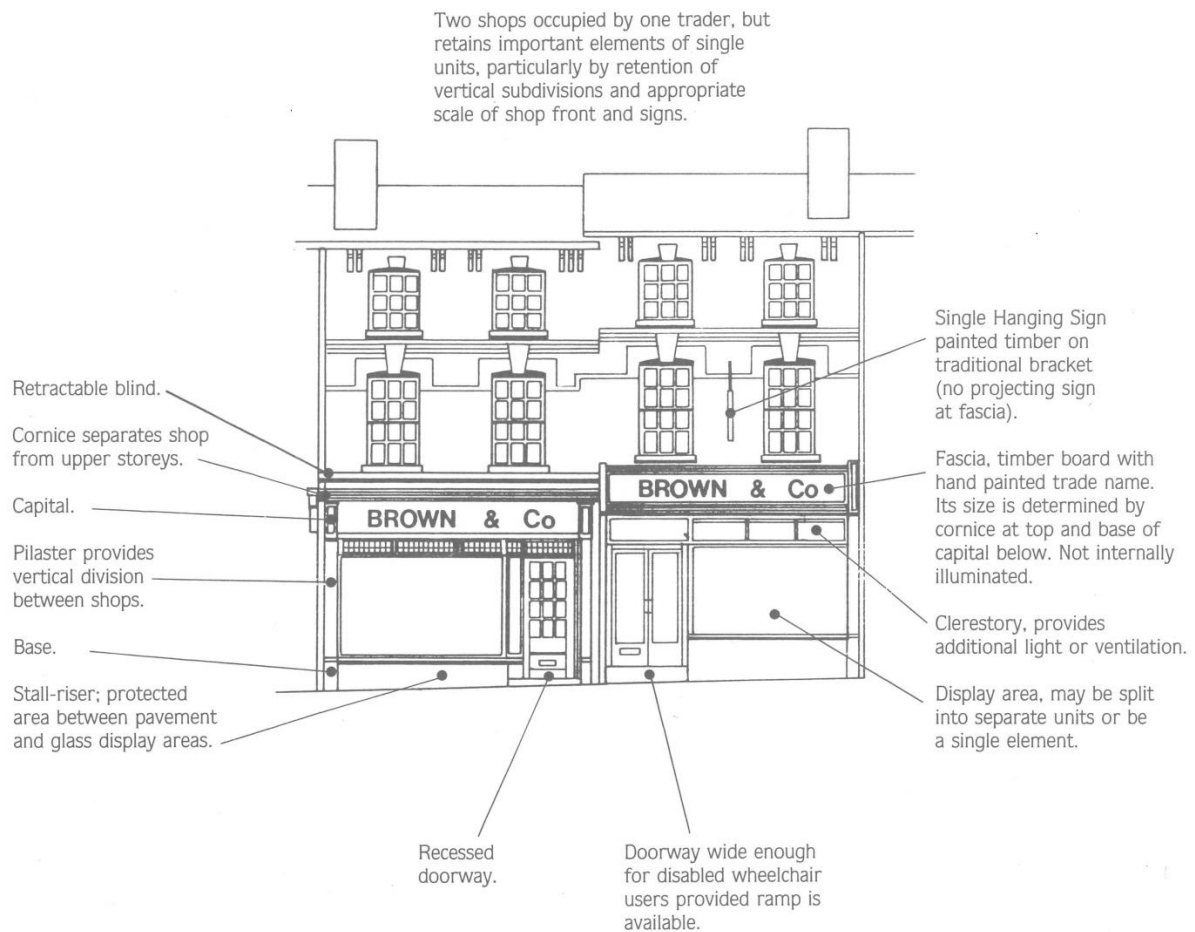


Figure 3. Example of a Good Shop Front

- 5.2 Figure 4 shows what too often happens. The street scene suffers. The following should therefore be avoided:

- Enlarging the original area of the shop front. This dominates the building(s) to which it belongs.
- The introduction of oversize and standard fascias and 'house types' which disregard local conditions.
- The introduction of large plate glass windows. Modern shop windows inserted within historic buildings is an inappropriate design solution and destroys the harmony of the street scene.
- Removing architectural details which are important to the character of the building and the area. Mouldings, pilasters, cornices, stall-risers all add interest to the shopping

environment. Such features can be repaired, and may involve considerably less expense than replacing with modern shop fronts.

- The introduction of materials which are alien to the character of the building and the area.

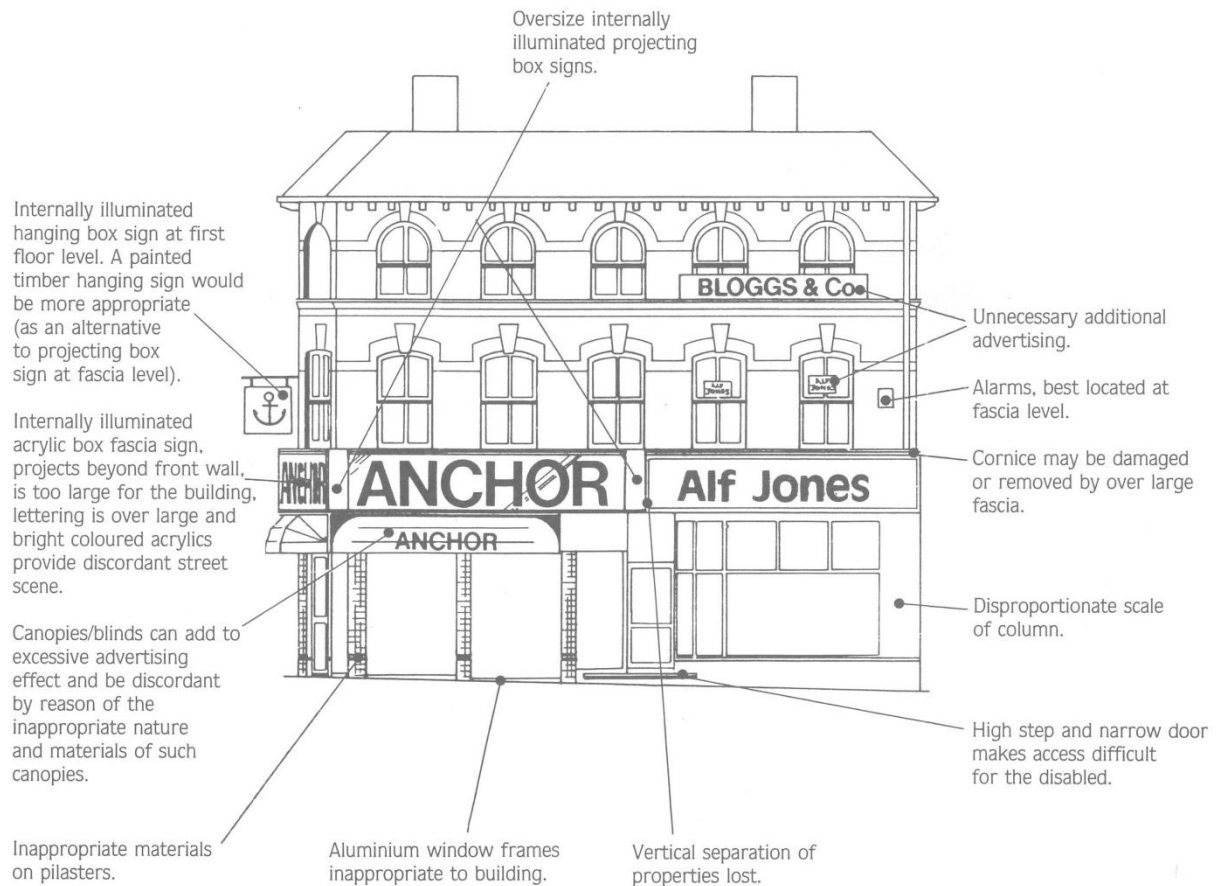


Figure 4. Example of a Poor Shop Front

- 5.3 Due to the changing requirements of retailers, shops often occupy more than one small unit. When an inappropriate fascia is extended to link together buildings of different style, the effect can be visually damaging. In Figure 5, the special qualities of the two buildings have been ignored in the illustration on the left. By contrast, the illustration on the right shows a successful solution. Although in one occupation the buildings retain shop fronts in keeping with the scale, colour, style and materials of the upper floors. It is also possible through careful design to preserve vertical sub-divisions, e.g. by retaining dividing piers and pilasters.



Unsuccessful use of the fascia linking buildings of different style.



Separate fascias visually more attractive.

Figure 5. Fascia linking different buildings

6 Shop Front Design Principles

- 6.1 The following principles of good shop front design and signage will form the basis of assessing proposals. Applications for shopfront additions or alterations affecting historic buildings should be considered on a case-by-case basis and informed by an understanding of the significance of the building and its setting, either as a heritage asset or through their contribution to the character of the area, potentially forming part of the character and appearance of a conservation area or other area of historic townscape. Whilst the traditional form of shopfront illustrated may be suitable for buildings constructed in the late 19th and early 20th century (or earlier buildings that had shop fronts inserted during this period), earlier and later buildings may have other forms of shop front that are representative of their age, whilst other commercial buildings such as historic public houses may have very specific architectural features that reveal their age and historic use. As such, a degree of caution will be expressed about over prescriptive use of a standardised design based on a single architectural period.

Design Principle 1 (DP1)

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

Design Principle 2 (DP2)

The style of new shop fronts 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 shop front design.

Design Principle 3 (DP3)

Shop front proposals of a modern design on an historic building/within a conservation area shall only be considered if they are of exceptional or innovative design and of high quality materials.

Design Principle 4 (DP4)

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

Design Principle 5 (DP5)

Fascia boards shall be in proportion to the scale of the building and shop front. Overly large fascia shall not be supported. The top of the fascia should relate to the ground floor and should under no circumstances reach the base of the first floor windows. For buildings within a Conservation Area, particularly listed buildings, fully illuminated box fascias are likely to be unacceptable. This will certainly be the case where the shop front retains/proposes traditional elements. On a historic building that retains/proposes traditional elements, a timber fascia is most appropriate, either with painted lettering or with individual letters of another suitable material.

Design Principle 6 (DP6)

Shop fronts shall be painted in a traditional palette colours within Conservation Areas or on Listed Buildings, even if this means changing a corporate identity or branding. Any proposed colour scheme should be in keeping with the existing colour scheme on the building and adjoining buildings. It should enhance the design of the shop front and highlight any important decorative features present.

The use of vivid colours, not in keeping with the character of the area will not be appropriate and will not be supported. Large areas of bright colour, particularly on shiny materials such as plastic should also be avoided.

Design Principle 7 (DP7)

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 shop front. Other types of 'bolt on' awnings including Dutch canopies will only be supported where they are not detrimental to the character or appearance of the conservation area/listed building.

Design Principle 8 (DP8)

Hanging signs should use traditional metal brackets, be above fascia level and limited to one per shop front and be of a size appropriate to the building and shop front. Within Conservation Areas, and particularly in relation to listed and historic buildings, slimline box signs with subtle (e.g. letters only) illumination may be acceptable where related to a contemporary shop front. Traditional hand painted signs are most suitable. Hanging signs should not be used as a means of additional advertising. As a general rule the bottom edge of the sign must be at least 2.6m above pavement level and the outer edge should not be within 1m of the kerb.

Design Principle 9 (DP9)

Where traditional elements of the shop front are retained/proposed in Conservation Areas or on Listed Buildings, signage 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.

Design Principle 10 (DP10)

Illumination must be carefully designed to reflect the character and appearance of the overall shopfront. Internal illumination can often be effective where the design allows only the characters of the signs to be illuminated, perhaps through individually mounted lettering, fret-cutting or halo lighting. On traditional shopfronts, particularly those within conservation areas or on listed buildings, external illumination is preferred e.g. spotlights/trough lighting as this is more appropriate to the design of the shopfront. In such cases, fittings should avoid an unsightly clutter of projecting lamps and wiring.

Design Principle 11 (DP11)

External roller shutters containing no perforation result in a dead frontage to the shop front and should be avoided. The following are recommended as acceptable alternatives:

- Security (laminated) Glass that has the capacity to remain intact even when broken. Toughened Glass or architectural Perspex are similar alternatives;
- Internal security grilles that can be fitted discreetly behind the shop window. These should be perforated and designed to be in keeping with the design of the shop front.

7 Applications and Advice

- 7.1 The quality of the shopping street scene can be greatly improved by following the design principles contained within these guidance notes. Early consultation within the Planning Department is strongly recommended if you are considering altering an existing shop front or providing new or additional signs.

Planning permission

- 7.2 Most alterations to a shop front will require planning permission. Owners are therefore advised to check with the Council before carrying out any work. For advice on whether you require planning permission you can contact our Development Management at plan@rushmoor.gov.uk or via 01252 398788.
- 7.3 It is advisable to appoint a qualified Architect to undertake design work. If the works involve the alteration of a listed building the Architect will need to have specialist knowledge and experience.
- 7.4 Generally, any application for changes to a shop front should include:
- an elevation of the shop front and the building in which it is located, together with the adjoining parts of neighbouring properties at least 2 metres on either side, at 1:50 scale
 - an elevation of the shop front itself at 1:20 scale
 - cross-sections (which also show the positions of floors and ceilings) at 1:20 scale
 - key details (such as joinery profiles, and signs etc.) at 1:5 scale
 - information on the materials, fittings and colours.
 - details of access into the premises, taking into account the requirements for compliance with the Equalities Act 2010

Designated and Non-Designated Heritage Assets

- 7.5 Works of alteration to a Building of Special Architectural or Historic Interest or within a designated Conservation Area must have regard to the requirement to preserve its fabric, character and any features of importance. Undertaking such an assessment requires specialist knowledge and any planning application for the insertion of a new shop front, alteration of an existing one or the erection of new signs will be expected to be supplemented by detailed information on the impact of these works on the fabric and character of the building.
- 7.6 The techniques required to convey this information will vary and may include an agreement to open up sample areas of fabric to confirm the existence (or otherwise) of historic timber framing or brickwork. No such works of investigation should be undertaken without the express, written consent of the council.
- 7.7 Listed buildings require listed building consent in addition to planning consent for alterations that would affect their character as buildings of special architectural or historic interest, including alterations to shop fronts. Failure to secure consent before making alterations to listed buildings is a criminal offence.

- 7.7 You can contact the Council's Conservation Officer to find out if your shop is a Designated/Local Heritage Asset or in a Conservation Area and obtain advice on appropriate alterations via plan@rushmoor.gov.uk or 01252 398788.

Advertisement consent

- 7.8 Advertisement consent relates to fascia and hanging signs, or any other features that advertise the shop such as canopies with advertising on them. The rules on whether you need to obtain consent are complicated, so if you are adding or altering any of these features it is advisable to contact the Development Management team.
- 7.9 The procedures for applying for Advertisement Consent are broadly similar to those for applying for planning permission.

Building Regulations consent

- 7.10 The Building Regulations aim to ensure that your shop satisfies its functional requirements and the building provides reasonable health and safety for shoppers and staff. This is different to Planning Permission but the application process is similar.
- 7.11 Not all works will require Building Regulations approval. However, they will apply if:
- The changes are structural (for example where a structural support such as a lintel is required)
 - The changes involve moving the entrance or altering its width.
- 7.12 If you would like further advice on the process, or help to decide whether you need approval or not, you can contact the Council's Building Control team via buildingcontrol@rushmoor.gov.uk or 01252 398715.

Highway projection license

- 7.13 Where your alterations involve putting in a structure that overhangs the public footpath (such as a canopy or awning), you will need to obtain a Highway Projection License from the Hampshire County Council. This is to ensure people will be able to safely pass beneath it.

Enforcement

- 7.14 It is important that you apply for any necessary permissions, as you may leave yourself at risk of enforcement action being taken against you by the Council.

Appendix 1

Relevant Policies of the Core Strategy and Rushmoor Local Plan Review:

Core Strategy

Policy CP2 - Design and Heritage

Development proposals will be permitted provided that they:

- a. Include high quality design that respects the character and appearance of the local area;
- b. Protect and enhance the Borough's heritage assets,(73) including its military and aviation history, with particular protection to be given to nationally designated sites;
- c. Provide safe and secure communities through, for example, compliance with Secured by Design;
- d. Do not result in any demonstrable harm to amenity;
- e. Provide accessible and attractive pedestrian and cycle routes to ensure permeability across the site and with surrounding areas;
- f. Are designed in an inclusive way to be accessible to all, and for residential development to meet the Government's targets for Lifetime Homes;
- g. Maximise the opportunities for a mix of uses;
- h. Respect the amenity and biodiversity value of urban greenspace;
- i. Provide high quality usable open spaces and public realm;
- j. Use design, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to reduce energy and water use and minimise the Urban Heat Island Effect;
- k. Provide opportunities for greening the environment;
- l. Meet the CABE Building for Life Assessment for residential developments;
- m. Have regard to the Rushmoor Landscape Assessment and are consistent with more detailed design guidance that may be developed as part of the Rushmoor Plan.

Rushmoor Local Plan Review

Policy S3 – Shop fronts

Applications for alterations to shop fronts will be approved only where:

- I. the proposed alterations have regard to the character, materials, style, scale and proportions of the whole building or group of buildings;
- II. important features of the building are not removed or concealed; and
- III. provision is made for access by people with disabilities.

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