

Introduction

This advice booklet has been produced to provide clear guidance to prospective developers, setting out and explaining the Council's requirements for the design of shop fronts in the interests of maintaining an aesthetically pleasing and secure shopping environment.

This booklet should be read carefully before submitting a planning application.

It is important to note that the guidance provided in this leaflet is not site specific and may not be wholly applicable in all situations. Each planning application is dealt with on its own individual merits and you are advised to contact the Development Control Section, Regulatory Services, Development and Enterprise for further pre-application advice.

What needs permission?

Although some very minor changes to shop fronts do not require planning permission, most do. Planning permission is required if the change of shop front will "materially" alter the appearance of the building. This is a matter of fact and degree. Each case must be examined on its own individual merits. Where the property is a listed building, Listed Building Consent will also be required for the vast majority of alterations.

You are advised to write to the Local Planning Authority at an early stage, prior to alterations being made to the shop front, with a sketch showing the proposed shop front so that the Council can determine whether a formal planning application is required. Where such works are carried out without approval, planning consent will still be required and works will remain unauthorised until a retrospective application has been submitted and approved. Any works that are deemed to be unacceptable could be subject to formal Enforcement action, which could result in the removal of the unauthorised works.

You should write to:

Development Control Manager
Regulatory Services
Development and Enterprise
Gateshead Council
Civic Centre
Regent Street
Gateshead NE8 1HH

General Advice

Pre-Application Advice

At the same time as establishing if planning permission is required you may wish to establish whether a proposal is likely to be granted planning permission. Time and cost can be avoided by establishing at an early stage, the likelihood of a particular proposal being successful. In many cases, even though a particular proposal may be unacceptable initially, the Council may suggest amendments to make it more acceptable. In this respect, the Council offers a free, informal pre-application advice service. It is also advisable to contact the local police Architectural Liaison Officer on 01661 868422 for advice on designing out crime or their website: www.securedbydesign.com

Shopping in Gateshead

The Borough contains many shopping areas each with its own particular character. A shop front that has been designed with skill and care gives the impression of quality and attractiveness. An emphasis on good quality design of shop fronts will in turn encourage investment and spending, increasing the vitality and viability of shopping areas, which will ultimately benefit all traders and shoppers in Gateshead therefore making a positive contribution to the character of the Borough.

The Function of the Shop Front

Shop fronts play a key role in our perception of shopping streets because they are at eye level and are accessible to everyone. They are an integral part of the façade of a building. Whilst they serve a variety of functions, eg allowing light into the ground floor and providing an area for the display of goods, they also provide 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.

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.

Designs should be imaginative within the constraints of the existing building and street scene, enhancing the character of the building and the area, rather than conflicting with it.

Design Components

If an already existing shop front is of such a high quality that it provides a positive contribution to the character of the building or the area, it should normally be refurbished rather than replaced. If the shop front needs to be replaced, emphasis should be on a design that respects the style of the building. If a traditional style shop front is required it should be appropriate to the style and age of the building or locality.

Careful attention should be given to detailed designs, which would provide the shop with a unique quality which will help promote its image and the goods inside. The fascia, stall riser, pilasters and cornice each have their own function in both visual and practical terms. The fascia provides the space for advertising. The stall riser protects the glass at ground floor level and provides a visual and structural base for the shop front. The pilasters are the vertical divisions between shop fronts and are important elements in relating the shop front to the building above. The cornice defines the top of the shop front.

This picture explains the terminology:



All these elements frame the shop front and integrate it with the host building. Where the location and style of the building allows, a large expanse of plate glass with the emphasis on the interior of the shop providing the display, may be acceptable. However, as a general rule, the size and dimensions of shop fronts should respect those of the original building.

In designing an appropriate shop front, it is likely that a number of traditional elements will be utilised, even in a frontage of a modern design. The components will need to be tailored and applied to the individual qualities of the building in order to achieve a satisfactory appearance.

The following points need to be considered:

Cornice

The horizontal moulding at the uppermost part of the shop front. If an original roller blind has been incorporated into the cornice its retention will be encouraged.

Pilaster

The vertical columns situated at each side of the shop front. Detailing and profile of a pilaster are vitally important to the character of the shop front.

Stall Riser

The vertical panel beneath the shop window extending downwards to the ground. Stallrisers can restore an architectural feature to a building and increase security.

The acceptability of this approach will depend upon:

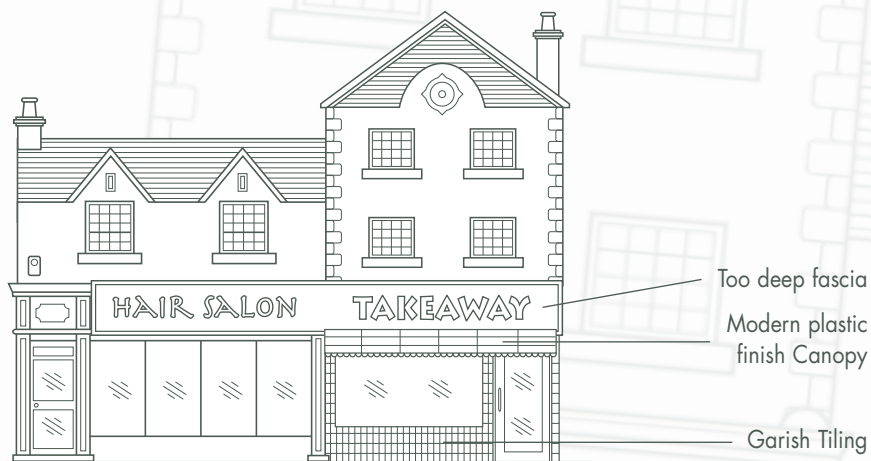
- the visual quality of the proposal
- the potential obstruction of the footpath
- the need for a co-ordinated approach amongst shopkeepers

Fascia

The flat or inwardly sloping section above the glazing and below the cornice. Fascias should not be overly deep, should not obscure architectural features including mouldings or first floor windowsills and should never run uninterrupted for excessive lengths, or across two or more individual buildings, especially when they are of differing design.

Burglar alarms of appropriate colour, size and number can be discreetly sited at one end of the fascia panel. From here they can be heard and seen but do not appear as a haphazard addition to the building frontage.

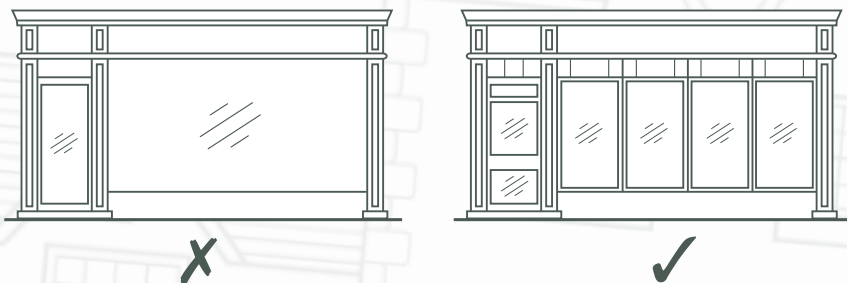
In this example, the character of two quite attractive, distinct buildings has been eroded by a fascia extending across both buildings. Each building merits its own shop front.



Windows

All town centre uses work best where there is a display of some sort. Blank frontages such as hot food takeaway windows or office windows do not add anything to the character of the street. Therefore, whatever the use, a window display is desired. Large expanses of glass can sometimes be out of scale on shop fronts and costly to replace if broken. Encouragement will be given to subdividing glazed areas with Mullions and Transom bars to facilitate a more appropriate design and provide increased strength and support for security purposes. Such measures in themselves reduce the attractiveness of large glazed panels to vandals.

However when used in conjunction with toughened glass or laminated glass, such approaches can improve shop front security as well as having a safety benefit. The method of sub-division of the shop front glass should suit the character of the shop front as well as the building above. Glazing bars can be used to subdivide large windows, so that they relate to the upper part of the building and give the shop front a more intimate scale. The use of doors and recesses can also break up the window area.



Window sub-divisions can provide increased strength and make costly damage less likely.

Doors

Within a frontage, two pedestrian access points may exist, one to a shop and one to an upper floor. The Local Planning Authority will safeguard the retention and encourage the reinstatement of independent access to upper floors. Where historically or visually important, the relocation of existing entrances will not be acceptable.

The design of the door and the proportion of glass used should relate to the shop front as a whole and use similar mouldings, materials and colours. Security can be enhanced by recessing the door back from the shop front so a car cannot be driven against it. This approach, by increasing the variety of depth variations across the frontage, can also enhance the visual quality of the frontage.

The glazed area above the door and below the fascia i.e. a fanlight can help reduce the expanse of glazing in a shop front. Street numbers or advertisements applied directly to the glass can be used to good effect in these areas.

Horizontal Shop Expansion

Where two or more shop units are to be made into a single unit, the different shop fronts should be maintained to reduce the visual impact on the street scene. A single large fascia that transgresses two distinct buildings will look unbalanced when considering the building as a whole.



Single Shop occupying two buildings

Variation in shop front design coupled with its change in fascia level emphasises the individuality of buildings.

Colours & Materials

The colours and materials chosen for the shop front should reflect the character and architectural detailing of the premises, and help to establish or maintain a street identity. Whilst the use of modern material such as anodised aluminium may be acceptable, the use of highly reflective plastics or Perspex especially, if combined with external lighting or in residential or Conservation Areas would be inappropriate. Modifications may be required to incorporate colourways, materials or designs, in order to protect the visual integrity of the street. Traditional materials such as wood, brick, glass and stone are normally acceptable if they complement the architectural detailing. Maintenance of such materials should be considered.

Timber shop fronts will be encouraged in Conservation Areas, as it is an especially appropriate material for shop front construction. It is versatile, durable and easily and cheaply maintained or altered. If aluminium is required it should be bronzed, anodised or colour finished rather than having a bare finish. Where feature tiles or terrazzo are present they should be repaired or reserved as part of a new proposal.

When considering the colour of a new or replacement shop front, it is important that the selected colour scheme compliments the character and style of the building, rather than conflicting with it.

Security & vandalism

It is increasingly common for the glazing element of shop windows and doors to be broken, not in order to gain access to goods for the purposes of theft, but as acts of vandalism. The replacement of such large areas of glazing can be costly and repeated attacks of vandalism can unfortunately be experienced on individual premises. Two physical mechanisms currently exist for the protection of frontages from such attacks; laminated glass and external shutters.

Laminated glass permanently bonds two or more sheets of glass together with a plastic interlayer. The product is supplied in a variety of thickness in order to protect the frontage from different degrees of impact. Strengthening of existing window/door frames will be required in order to accommodate the new glazing. The use of laminated glass is not always apparent to potential vandals, and this may result in a reduction in its effectiveness.

External shutters of the portcullis, punched or clear span styles (with the polycarbonate infill panels) create a physically solid form of protection to the window glass. Given the availability of this type of shutter its use will normally be encouraged as an appropriate alternative to the solid external shutter.

In addition the use of removable external grilles, which are secured by padlocks and are taken off during the hours of trading, may be appropriate. In such situations a decorative form of wrought iron grille may be considered acceptable, subject to its design/detailing and location.

The Council is aware that some shop keepers wish to install security measures on an existing frontage, the most common being a shutter or grille. Encouragement will always be given to the consideration of security grilles and proposed in isolation from alterations to the shop front as a whole, the use of open mesh or expanding grilles fitted unobtrusively behind the shop window will normally be supported.

To help prevent the appearance of an oppressive after hour's street environment, shop front security measures should preferably use internal lattice shutters. These are the preferred choice as they have the advantage of not masking the external appearance of the frontage and are not vulnerable to graffiti. They also have the benefit of not requiring planning permission.

The installation of a shutter on the outside face of the building requires very careful consideration. In particular the extent to which surveillance of the street will be reduced, the colour, design and materials of the shutter, the bulk of the shutter housing, its relationship to the scale of the frontage and the degree of masking of the original shop front will all be considered in assessing the merits of any such proposals.

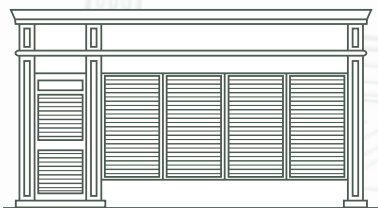
It may be that the actual shape or form of the shop front appears to change as a result of installing a security measure, for instance when a shutter is proposed across an existing recessed doorway. The impact of such an arrangement on the character, appearance and attractiveness of the frontage as a whole will be taken into account during the consideration of the application.

It is important to make the shuttering an integral part of the shop front, including the colour scheme. Unfinished steel shutters are the least attractive and are therefore unacceptable. Where coloured shutters are inappropriate (look garish), black shutters will be appropriate.

External Shutters

Planning permission is required for the installation of external security shutters. Because of the visual implications associated with external shuttering, external security should only be considered if internal shutters are not possible. The installation of shutters on the external face of the shop front raises the following :

- a) the visual impact of the "type" of shutter on the street scene
- b) the accommodation of the box housing within the shop front
- c) the extent and form of the shutter in relation to the proportion and scale of the frontage, the prominence and width of the unit within the street scene and;
- d) the colour and materials of the proposed shutters



Internal grilles maintain the appearance of the shop front



Projecting roller box and solid shutters create siege appearance and detract from the shop front

External solid roller shutters

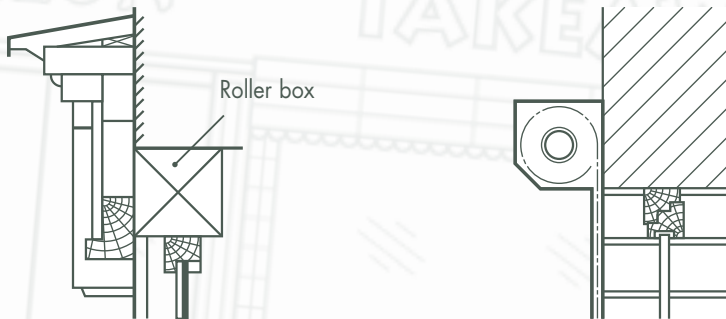
Solid shutters of an aluminium or steel construction present an entirely blank and featureless frontage to the street when closed creating an unattractive “dead” appearance. They display no visual interest or variation and consequently create a break in the variety and attractiveness of the street scene.

The scale and dominance of such large areas of solid shutters is exacerbated if the shutter housing is not successfully incorporated into the existing shop frontage. The resulting impression is of a poorly designed and inappropriate frontage, which, due to its impact on amenity, is very rarely considered to be acceptable.

With respect to the appropriateness of such a shutter, if access is gained into the unit from another entrance point (i.e. to the rear), any intruder within the premises will not be visible from the roadway or the shop frontage. Surveillance of the inside of the premises by passing pedestrians and road users will therefore be reduced.

The Local Authority’s concern about blank frontages is supported by the Department of the Environment in Circular 5/94 “Planning out Crime” which states that solid shutters

“...can have an adverse environmental effect, giving an area a “dead” appearance and contributing towards the creation of a hostile atmosphere. They are also vulnerable to graffiti. This not only gives out the signals about an area’s vulnerability to crime but can also deter public from using such locations...”.



Incorporating roller grille into fascia

Face fixed inside

Alternative external shutters

A variety of grilles/perforated shutters are likely to be considered more favourably than solid structures. All external grilles require planning permission. Shuttering should only cover doorways and glazed areas, allowing the rest of the shop to remain seen. This will greatly improve the appearance of the shop and will not damage the perception of the area as safe.

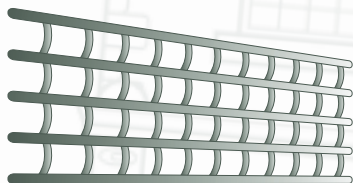
Removable or demountable grilles

No bulky box housing are required for demountable grilles and they are therefore more acceptable than shutters and they can be removed during opening hours and stored out of sight. In some circumstances these grilles may be acceptable where security glass or internal grilles are inappropriate. They should be of simple, open grille design with a gauge of 75mm or more, have concealed fixings or be painted to match the shop frame. The fixings must not damage architectural features or mouldings and when in place, the grilles should not cover pilasters, stall risers or other architectural features.

In order to be acceptable on Listed Buildings and in Conservation Areas, grills will have to be carefully designed. Demountable grilles must always be stored inside the shop or otherwise out of sight when not in use.

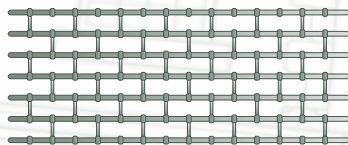
Portcullis

Portcullis or punched shutters are preferable to perforated shutters.



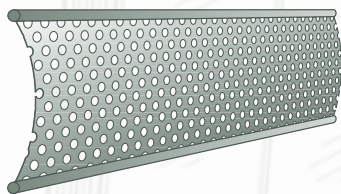
Punched shutters

Due to the design of these shutters they offer strength and good visibility through.



Perforated shutters

Perforated shutters will rarely be appropriate.



Combination of options

Shutters are often constructed of a combination of the previous options, with for example a solid shutter above and below a central punched or perforated panel. Whatever approach is adopted, the shutter should:

- a) only cover the glazed area/door and not the whole shop frontage
- b) be designed to sit comfortably within the framework of the fascia and pilasters
- c) be maintained or finished in such a way as to tone with the rest of the frontage and
- d) incorporate the box housing into the shop frontage as a whole

The aim should be to encourage surveillance of the premises by passers by, so maintaining the attractiveness of the area outside trading hours. Other measures including security lighting, especially where lighting is poor, and the introduction of residents "living over the shop" can all add to the liveliness and vitality of an area, so reducing the potential for criminal activity.

However it is important to emphasise that "security by design" is by far the most visually acceptable and effective solution in contrast to the apparently "tacked on" appearance that is often associated with piecemeal additions to the shop frontage.

The roller shutter should also be of a colour in keeping with the existing shop front. It should also be designed to stop at the stall riser and be divided between the pilasters or mullions with guide rails incorporated into the framing to maintain features and proportions of the shop front.

Access

When installing new shop fronts, appropriate provision should be made for the disabled, elderly and those with children in prams, to all principle public entrances and exits in accordance with the government's Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

New shop fronts should be designed with level access. Doors should be wide enough to allow wheelchair access and be either fitted with check action door closers to give people with reduced mobility time to move clear of the door. If doors are to be fully glazed, a logo or sticker should be placed on them to warn the partially sighted. Door handles should be at waist level. A doorbell for use by wheelchair users located at waist height would also be helpful. Mat wells should not impede wheelchair users.

For more information please consult the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's publication "Approved Document M, Access to the Use of Buildings" as well as the Council's "Disability Access Supplementary Planning Guidance".

Conservation Areas & Listed Buildings

The design of shop fronts is particularly important in conservation areas and on historic buildings. Original and traditional shop fronts, which are of architectural or historical value must be retained, preserved or enhanced.

The Council will strongly resist the installation of any feature which on a Listed Building, a locally listed building, or a building within a Conservation Area would adversely affect its character or appearance. Such features may relate to the addition or replacement of an item with one not appropriate in design, scale, mass, materials or proportion, or relate to the masking of an original feature.

Unsympathetic shop fronts should be removed, while signage should be in keeping with the style of the building street scene. Modern shop fronts are permissible, but they should be sensitive to their surroundings and make a positive contribution to the area. There should be careful consideration to the use of materials, finishes and colour schemes, as well as security shutters.

Externally illuminated or non-illuminated signs should be used rather than internally illuminated signs. Neon strip lighting will not be permitted.

Submitting a valid application

Once you are satisfied with your proposal you should formally apply for consent. A valid application must include completed application forms. Further information on what is required for a valid planning application is contained within the Council's validation checklist which is available on request and online at www.gateshead.gov.uk

To make a valid planning application you will need to submit:

- Four copies of the commercial application form
- Four copies of a site location plan

This should be an extract from the up-to-date Ordnance Survey plan at a scale of 1:1250. The north point should also be shown.

You should mark the application site boundary with a red line, this is usually the boundary of the site that you own or control.

Four copies of elevations of the existing and proposed shop front, and plan views of the existing and proposed shop front.

Should any part of the proposal project forward of the shop front, side elevations showing this should also be submitted. All submitted drawings should be in metric at a scale of no less than 1:100.

Sufficient detail must be given to show where the proposed work is located within the site.

Contacting Development Control

When contacting Development Control it would be appreciated if you would do so in writing or by making a prior appointment with a member of staff by contacting David Harrison on:

Tel: 0191 433 3426

Fax: 0191 479 3491

E-mail: EnquiriesDevcon@gateshead.gov.uk

All correspondence should be sent to:

**Development Control
Regulatory Services
Development & Enterprise
Gateshead Council
Regent Street
Gateshead NE8 1HH**

This information is also available in Bengali, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu. It is also available, on request, in large print, Braille or audio tape. Please call 0191 433 3426.

এই তথ্যাবলী বাংলা, হিন্দী, পাঞ্জাবী, উর্দু ভাষাতেও পাওয়া যাবে।
অনুরোধক্রমে বড় প্রিন্টে, ব্রেইলে এবং অডিও টেপেও এটি পাওয়া
যাবে। অনুগ্রহ করে **0191 433 3426** এই নম্বরে ফোন
করুন।

यह जानकारी बांग्ला, हिन्दी, पंजाबी, उर्दू में भी
उपलब्ध है। निवेदन करने पर, यह बड़े प्रिन्ट, ब्रेल
या ऑडियो टेप में भी उपलब्ध होगी। कृपया
0191 433 3426 पर कॉल करें

ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਬੰਗਾਲੀ, ਹਿੰਦੀ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ, ਉਰਦੂ ਵਿੱਚ
ਦੀ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ। ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕਰਨ 'ਤੇ, ਇਹ ਵੱਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਟ,
ਬ੍ਰੇਲ ਜਾਂ ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ।
ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ **0191 433 3426** 'ਤੇ ਕਾਲ ਕਰੋ।

یہ معلومات برکالی، ہندی، پنجابی، اردو میں بھی دستیاب ہے۔ درخواست
کرنے پر یہ بڑے پرنٹ، بریل یا آڈیو ٹیپ میں بھی دستیاب ہے۔ براہ کرم
0191 433 3426 پر فون کریں۔