



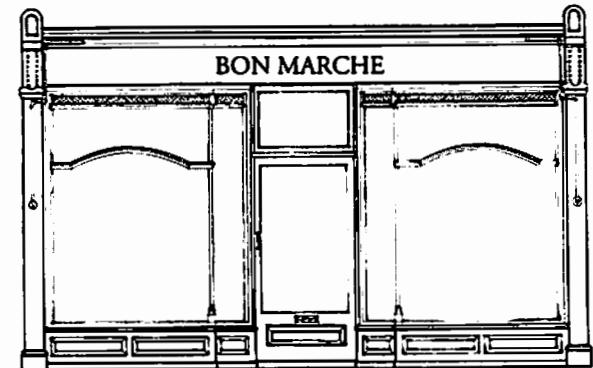
On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, East Suffolk Council was created by parliamentary order, covering the former districts of Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council. The Local Government (Boundary Changes) Regulations 2018 (part 7) state that any plans, schemes, statements or strategies prepared by the predecessor council should be treated as if it had been prepared and, if so required, published by the successor council. Therefore this document applies to the part of the East Suffolk Council area formerly covered by the Suffolk Coastal District until such time that it is replaced.

# The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan



This document was superseded on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021 with the adoption of the Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document by East Suffolk Council.

## Supplementary Planning Guidance



# 14

## Shopfronts, Signs and Advertisements



Following the reforms to the Planning system through the enactment of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 all Supplementary Planning Guidance's can only be kept for a maximum of three years. It is the District Council's intention to review each Supplementary Planning Guidance in this time and reproduce these publications as Supplementary Planning Documents which will support the policies to be found in the Local Development Framework which is to replace the existing Suffolk Coastal Local Plan First Alteration, February 2001.

Some Supplementary Planning Guidance dates back to the early 1990's and may no longer be appropriate as the site or issue may have been resolved so these documents will be phased out of the production and will not support the Local Development Framework. Those to be kept will be reviewed and republished in accordance with new guidelines for public consultation. A list of those to be kept can be found in the Suffolk Coastal Local Development Scheme December 2004.

Please be aware when reading this guidance that some of the Government organisations referred to no longer exist or do so under a different name. For example MAFF (Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food) is no longer in operation but all responsibilities and duties are now dealt with by DEFRA (Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs). Another example may be the DETR (Department of Environment, Transport and Regions) whose responsibilities are now dealt with in part by the DCLG (Department of Communities & Local Government).

If you have any questions or concerns about the status of this Supplementary Planning Guidance please contact a member of the Local Plan team who will be able to assist you in the first instance.

We thank you for your patience and understanding as we feel it inappropriate to reproduce each document with the up to date Government organisations name as they change.



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# SHOPFRONTS, SIGNS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

## SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE NO. 14

The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan policies covering the design of shopfronts, signs and advertisements includes specific references to the publication of Supplementary Planning Guidance. This document, which was adopted by the District Council's Planning Committee in June 2000, is aimed at amplifying how the District Council envisages the objectives of the Local Plan and its policies being interpreted and implemented in practice.

It accords with the Suffolk County Structure Plan and is complimentary to the Governments Planning Policy Guidance Notes and other advisory documents to which the District Council must have regard to in reaching decisions on planning applications etc.,.

Prior to its adoption and publication, the Supplementary Planning Guidance was the subject of consultation with the public and various local and national organisations who represent both public and private interests.

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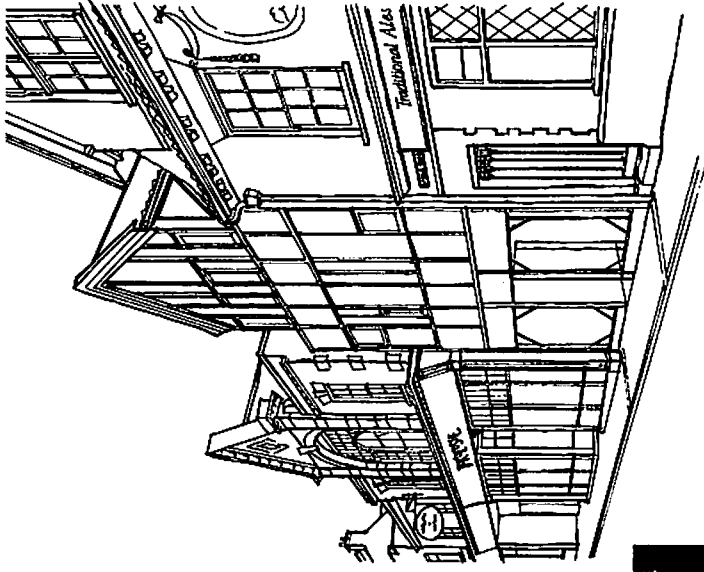
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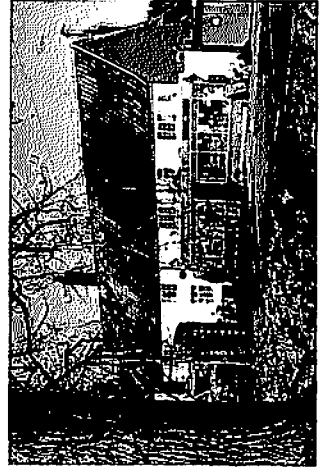
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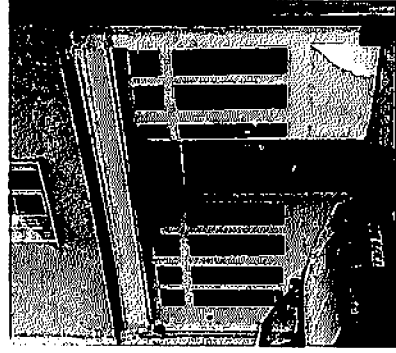


*Modern new infill  
in Norwich*

*Peasenball*

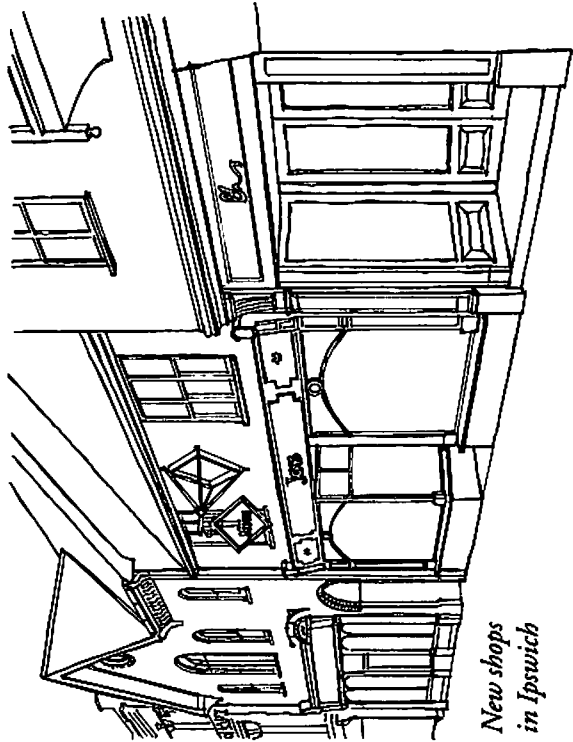
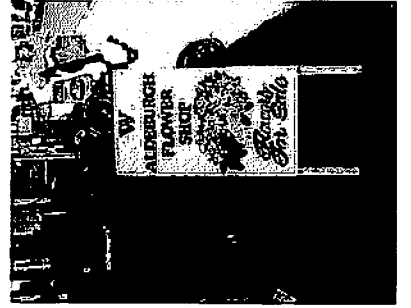


*Woodbridge*



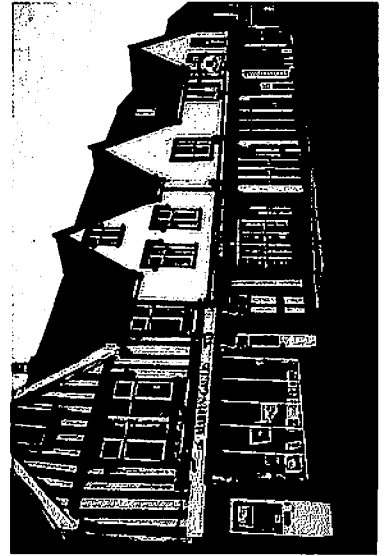
*Woodbridge*

*Aldeburgh*



*New shops  
in Ipswich*

*Framlingham*





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## SECTION 1 BACKGROUND

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### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Every town and village has its own unique character. Interesting buildings, local architectural styles and materials and the pattern of streets and spaces all contribute to the special qualities of each place. In virtually all cases, it is the main shopping street, along with a square or market place which forms the heart of each community. The appearance of these areas is therefore especially important.

In such locations, shopfronts, signs and advertisements invariably have a major impact. In many instances historic shopfronts, traditional signs and attractive advertising contribute much to the quality of the area. Good modern design can also provide interest. Conversely, those that are poorly designed and unsympathetic can have a particularly detrimental impact.

Suffolk Coastal District Council as Local Planning Authority has the responsibility of safeguarding the character and integrity of numerous attractive towns and villages as well as a wealth of traditional shopfronts and historic shopping areas. Well designed and maintained shopping streets and buildings are worth protecting for their amenity value alone, although, from a commercial point of view, they create a good image, which is reflected in the perceived quality of the individual shops and their produce. The more attractive a shop or a shopping area is the more it will encourage locals and tourists to visit thereby helping to ensure the economic well being of the area.

Although the District Council cannot control all the changes which take place, this Guide is aimed at promoting good practice in shopfront and advertisement design. It provides guidance on how

to conserve or enhance not only the character of individual buildings but also their contribution to the streetscape.



*The Thoroughfare, Woodbridge*

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## SECTION 1 BACKGROUND

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### 1.2 THE DISTRICT AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

The Suffolk Coastal area is renowned for being a particularly attractive part of the country. The County Structure Plan and the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan acknowledge the importance of safeguarding the attractive appearance and heritage of the area and its towns and villages. Design and conservation policies have been formulated and adopted in order to ensure that where development takes place it serves to preserve or enhance the important characteristics of the District.

In order to do that successfully, there needs to be an appreciation, and understanding, of what makes the area attractive in the first place. This Supplementary Planning Guidance, which is part of a series being produced by the Council, is seen as an important part of promoting this understanding. Of particular relevance in the context of this document is Supplementary Planning Guidance No 13: Historic Buildings: Repairs, Alterations and Extensions. This provides an outline of the development of the area's architectural tradition.

Woodbridge, Framlingham, Saxmundham, Aldeburgh, Leiston and Felixstowe are the six market towns in the District. Parts of all the town centres have been designated as conservation areas. All have, to a great extent, retained much of their unique historic character, despite the pressures for

change resulting from commercial activity and the growth in car usage.

Along with these towns there are some very pleasant villages which have a number of shops and other business premises. Again, many of these village centres are conservation areas. Over time, the District Council has resolved to adopt and publish, as Supplementary Planning Guidance, conservation area assessments for each one which will describe the special architectural or historic interest which justifies the designation.

The importance of tourism to the economy of the area has also to be recognised, as the attractiveness and historic interest of its countryside and its towns and villages acts as a magnet, drawing in visitors. The Local Planning Authority, therefore, has an important role to play in ensuring that the area continues to be perceived as a quality environment.

Traditional town and village shops also have to compete with out of town supermarkets and other types of retail outlets. The vitality and viability of established centres can be increased through the



*(Right and far right) Leiston*

## SECTION 1 BACKGROUND

maintenance or enhancement of their visual qualities and their overall character.

The appearance of shopfronts and signs contributes a great deal to the first impression one gets of a place. Obtrusive signs, poorly designed shopfronts and garish displays may grab the attention but do little for the perceived quality or image of a place.

The District Council recognises the fact that retailers need to be competitive and advertise their existence and their wares in order that the business

remains economically viable. However, the arbitrary use of materials and details in order to attract attention, or the use of standard corporate formats and colours, will be resisted where they undermine the local distinctiveness of the Suffolk Coastal area. It is considered that the combination of a flexible design approach, and an emphasis on quality and good contextual design, will be enough to promote a business. Furthermore, it should be perfectly possible to adapt a standard approach or corporate image to fit in with the local scene as long

as the principles of good design practice are followed.

**ADVICE : LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS -**  
In dealing with matters which relate to shopfronts, signs and advertisements, the District Council will seek to ensure that the appearance, architectural heritage and local distinctiveness of the area is preserved or enhanced.



## SECTION 2 SHOPFRONTS - GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

### 2.1 ADVICE RELATING TO SHOPFRONTS

When shops change hands or shopkeepers wish to alter or improve their premises it often means that the shopfront will be affected. Any work to the external appearance of the building will, in most cases, require permission from the District Council. If a building is Listed then internal work will often also require consent.

Shop owners or their agents should therefore seek advice from the Council if they are considering carrying out alterations so that suitable proposals can be developed. Submitting applications without any prior discussions can sometimes delay the decision making process. Much worse, if work is carried out before consent is granted, owners run the risk that they will be forced to make further changes or return the property back to its former state.

### 2.2 THE LOCAL PLAN POLICY RELATING TO SHOPFRONTS

The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan contains the following Policy;

#### POLICY LP22 - Shopfronts

New shopfronts, fascias, awnings, canopies, advertisements and alterations to shop and business premises must be of a high standard of design, utilise appropriate materials, colours and

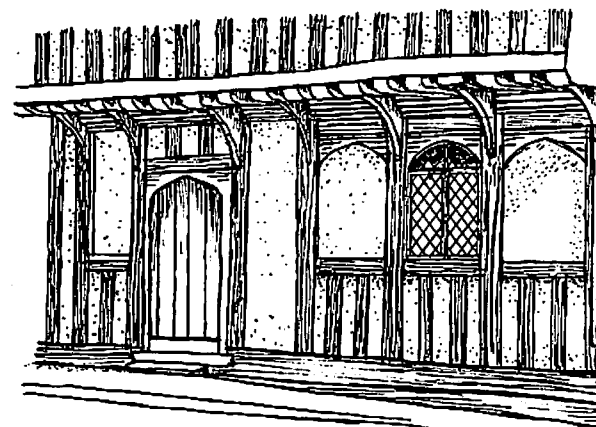
detailing, respect the area within which they are located, and satisfactorily relate architecturally to the building on to which they are fitted. Within conservation areas or on Listed buildings additions which are unsympathetic (and those most likely include standardised fascias, plastic awnings and canopies, projecting box signs and internally-illuminated box fascia signs) will not be granted consent. Where necessary or desirable, the District Council will consider the need to maintain a window display where a change of use is permitted from shopping.

### 2.3 THE HISTORY OF THE SHOPFRONT

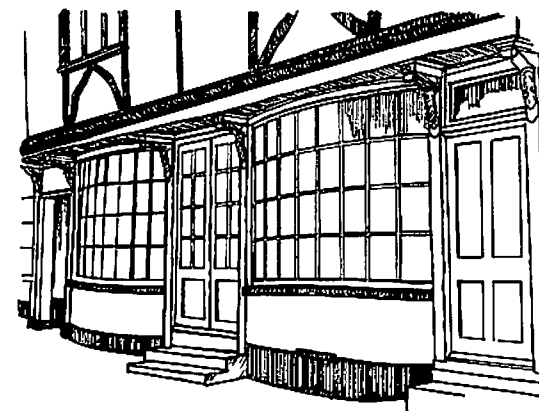
The shopfront as we know it today is actually a fairly recent development. Prior to the late 17th Century most trading took place from stalls and booths set up on the market place or from properties without the recognisable shopfronts as we know them today. The few Medieval shopfronts that existed were similar to the domestic windows of the time. These consisted of simple small, unglazed window openings with internal boarded shutters.

As towns and villages prospered, the need for an established shop in a permanent building grew. However, it was not until the 18th Century onwards that the purpose designed shopfront evolved. Buildings began to be designed or were adapted to accommodate shopfronts, and they

became an integral part of the character of the high street building. The shop unit often involved most of the ground floor frontage, creating a defined sale and display area.



*Remnants of an early Suffolk shopfront circa 1500.*



*An example of an 18th Century style shopfront on the Market Hill, Woodbridge.*

## SECTION 2 SHOPFRONTS - GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

From the early 18th Century shop and shopfront design guides and pattern books were published, and these were used by builders working even in the most rural parts of the country. As a result the principal design elements which make up the shopfront as we know it today became well established. These pattern books which continued to be published well into the 20th Century, provided illustrated examples and guidance on the design and construction of shopfronts. They demonstrated how individual components could be combined or adapted to create a shopfront to fit the shopkeepers' requirements. Virtually all the design advice contained in these guides were based on the classical orders. Despite being loosely interpreted, they stressed the rules of balance, proportion and harmony, advice which is still relevant today.

(Continued over page).

*Right: An extract from a pattern book, Modern Practical Joinery, by G. Ellis, published in 1908 showing a typical illustration of a design for a shopfront along with various joinery details.*

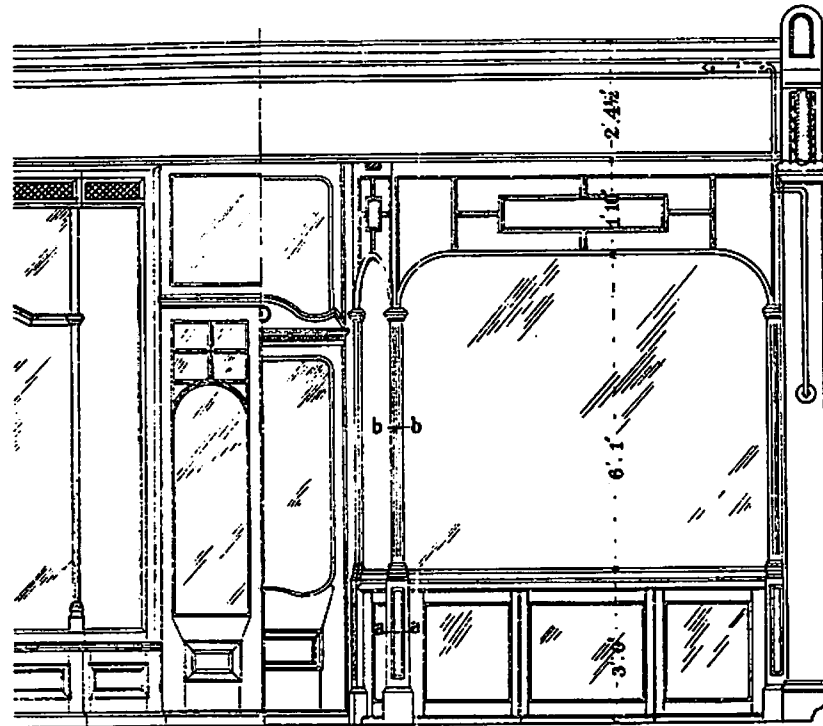


Fig. 3.

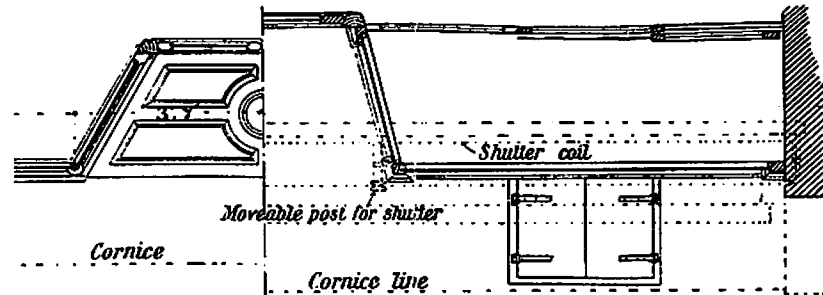


Fig. 4.

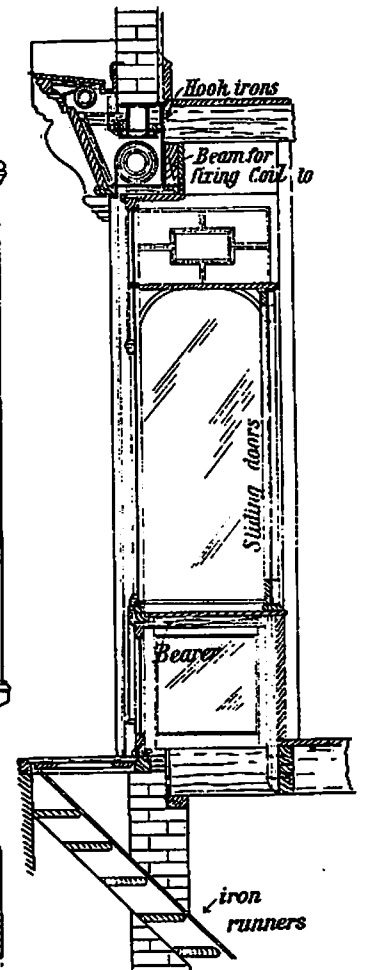
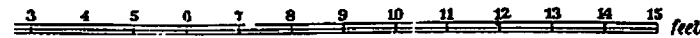


Fig. 5.

N OF A MODERN SHOP FRONT. 3, 4, 5. PART ELEVATION, PLAN, AND SECTION OF A SHOP FRONT, WITH LIGHTED BASEMENT. [To face page 275.]

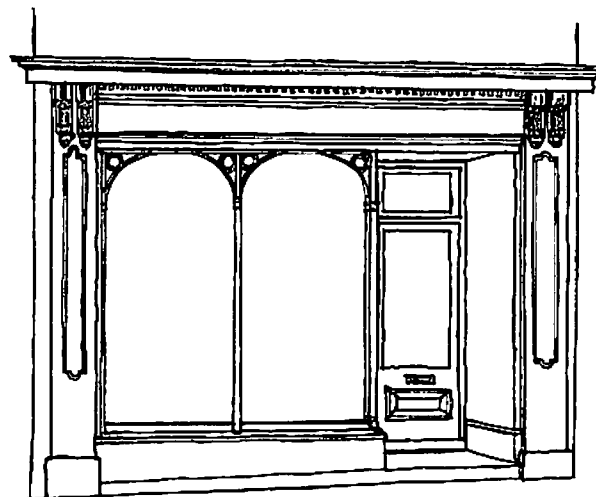
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## SECTION 2 SHOPFRONTS - GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

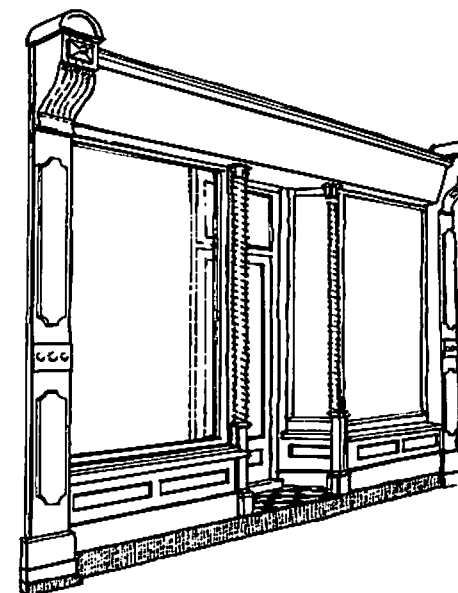
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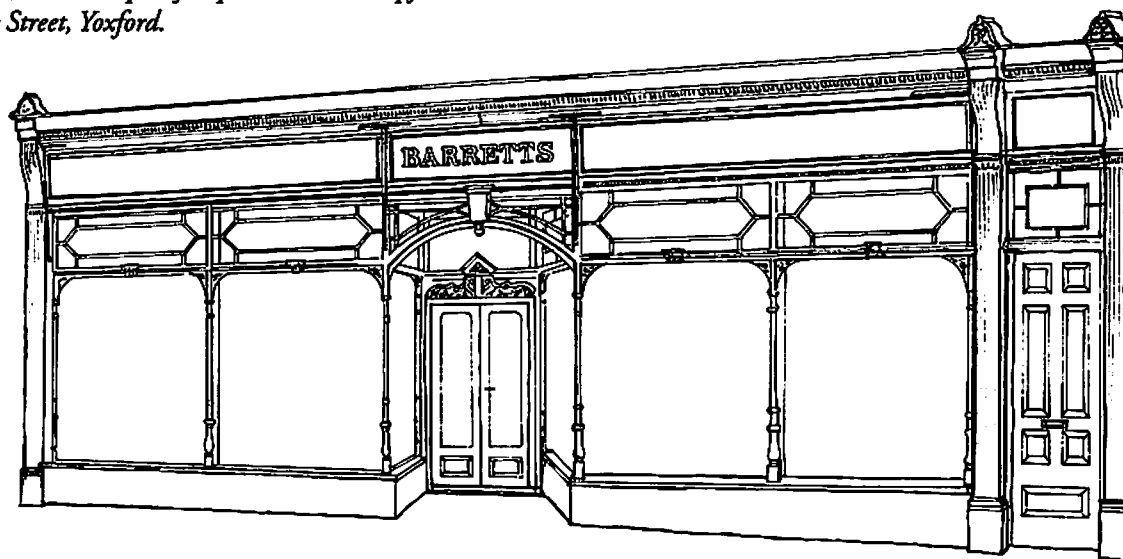
*An early 19th Century style shopfront, with small panes of glass, in New Street, Woodbridge.*



*(Above) A 19th Century shopfront with larger sheets of glass in High Street, Saxmundham.  
(Right) An example of a "pattern book" shopfront, High Street, Yoxford.*



From around 1840s the development of large sheets of plate glass brought about a change in the design of shopfronts. As a result shop windows became larger and it was no longer necessary for them to be divided up by glazing bars to hold small panes of glass. The availability of these large sheets of glass meant that the remaining framing members on the shopfront became visually more important. While these later shopfronts may have had more glass, they still incorporated decorative glazing bars, attractive mouldings and many other refinements. They also retained the essential classic elements of the earlier shopfronts.



*An impressive, highly decorative shopfront from around the turn of the Century, in the Thoroughfare, Woodbridge*

## SECTION 2 SHOPFRONTS - GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the 20th Century, advances in building techniques have meant that the size of buildings and the spaces within them have been able to be increased. This allowed shops to have larger showrooms and display areas.

It was not until the 1950s and 1960s that shopfront designers sought to cater for the driver as well as the pedestrian. A great increase in the volume of traffic

passing through the "High Street", meant that the shopfront had to attract the attention of people travelling through the street quickly and at a relatively low level.

This, together with the development of larger shops and increased competition between traders, had a major impact on the town centre. In this brash new post war period, large, brightly coloured fascias and advertisements were installed to reflect the latest fashions of the time. Everywhere, large glass frontages were installed into buildings in shopping

streets in the drive to reflect an uncompromising modern image, and catch the eye of passing motorists.

From the 1970s this trend gradually declined as town centre traffic started to be restricted. Towns and villages began to be by-passed, thereby reducing through traffic. Pedestrianisation schemes were implemented and this further restricted vehicular traffic in the shopping street. Once again, the design of the shopfront was aimed at the pedestrian, and a more human scale returned to new shop design.

This trend coincided with a greater environmental awareness and a more sympathetic approach to conservation. The value of a well-designed shopfront, in keeping with the building into which it was installed and the surrounding area, became much more appreciated.



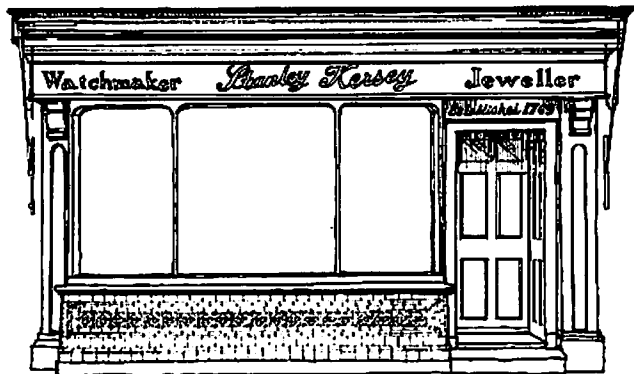
*(Left) Some buildings from the 1950's and 60's in Hamilton Road Felixstowe, illustrate the prevalent architectural style of the period. The shopfronts incorporated large glass frontages.*

## SECTION 2 SHOPFRONTS - GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

### 2.4 HISTORIC SHOPFRONTS

Throughout the District there are a great many attractive old shopfronts which are important not least because of their historic significance. As a result, the District Council, when considering applications, will generally resist proposals which either involve removal of important old shopfronts or detrimental changes to them.

When assessing proposals, the age of the shopfront will be a major consideration. As there are only a few examples from the 18th Century, it is important that these are retained. There are many more survivors from the 19th and early 20th Century, which are good designs still in their original form. These should also be retained because they contribute much to the overall character of the District.



*A splendid example of a decorative Victorian shopfront in High Street Saxmundham*



*An impressive Edwardian frontage to a bank at No 20 High Street Saxmundham*

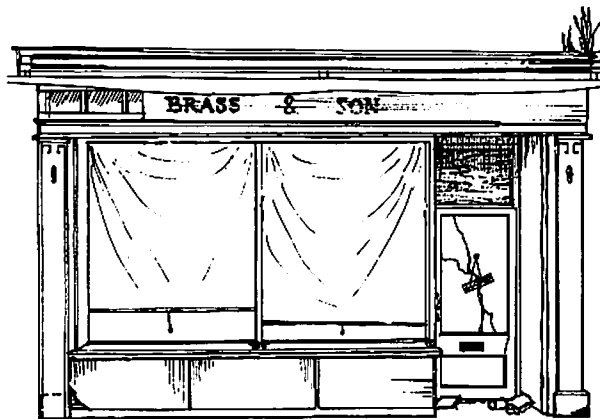
Other buildings have remnants of good period shopfronts, including fascias, consoles, columns and pilasters. Not only should these features be retained for their own sake as historical artefacts but their existence should also influence how changes are carried out to other parts of the shopfront.

Often the shopfront is a later addition to a building. However, successive alterations can form an important part of the character and history of the building and should therefore often be retained as part of the historic fabric. It would normally be unacceptable, therefore, to suggest removal of a good Victorian shopfront in a Georgian building solely on the grounds that it is a later addition.

### 2.5 SHOPFRONTS IN NEED OF REPAIR

If an important shopfront is in a poor state of repair the question arises as to whether, when undertaking work, any changes to it are going to prove acceptable. In the majority of cases the District Council will expect as much of the existing fabric of architecturally or historically important shopfronts to be repaired and retained, including such features as old or decorative glass, tiles, joinery and ironmongery. Where a feature is proved to be beyond repair then they should ideally be replaced with an exact replica.

There may, however, be situations where minor alterations to the design may prove acceptable as long as the change is fully justified and does not undermine the historic interest or the design of the shopfront.



*A neglected historic shopfront in need of repair.*



## SECTION 2 SHOPFRONTS - GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

**ADVICE : PROTECTING HISTORIC SHOPFRONTS** - The District Council, when considering applications or when unauthorised work has been undertaken, will normally resist developments which:

Involves the removal of historically important shopfronts or detrimental changes to them; or

Involves the removal of or detrimental changes to any important architectural features on existing buildings.

*(Below) Two views of High Street Saxmundham. Circa 1900 left, and the same view today, right. The design of the replacement single storey structure, unlike its predecessor, has a strong horizontal emphasis which disrupts the rhythm of the streetscape and fails to provide the same sense of enclosure.*



### 2.6 SHOPFRONTS AND THE STREET SCENE

Where an existing shopfront is to be replaced or altered, the design should relate to the existing characteristics of the street scene, and the town or the village as a whole. In some locations, Saxmundham and Woodbridge for example, where the majority of buildings and shopfronts are historic, new designs should follow traditional lines unless there are good reasons for not doing so. In Felixstowe, and to a great extent in Leiston, the town centres have a strong Victorian and Edwardian character, which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

Shopfronts should also take into account the rhythm and characteristics of the streetscape. Where

building plots are narrow or regularly spaced then the shopfront should reflect this. If buildings have a strong vertical emphasis with a regular pattern of tall windows, new shopfronts should not be over wide and should incorporate vertical divisions, such as mullions and pilasters, in appropriate positions.

Most historic shopping streets contain a great deal of variety, although the quality of design and detail was consistently high. Repetition is therefore generally not necessary but designs should still reflect the character of the street scene as a whole and ensure the overall effect is one of visual unity as opposed to visual chaos. The exception to this will be shops in a terrace or a group which were designed as a single composition. In these locations exact replicas of the original design will normally be required.



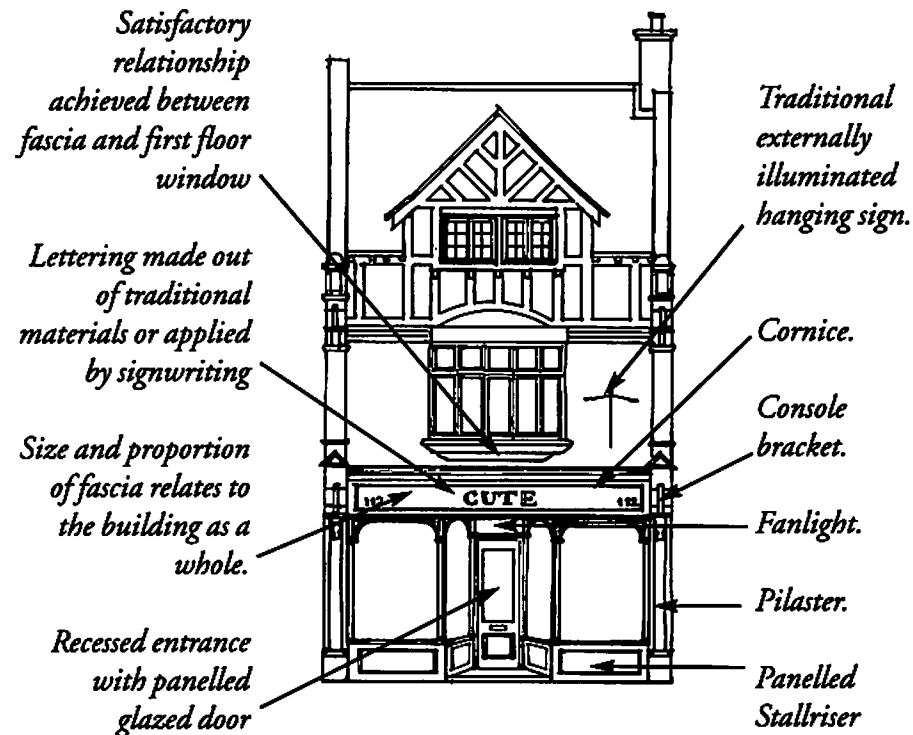
## SECTION 2 SHOPFRONTS - GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

### 2.7 SHOPFRONTS AS PART OF A BUILDING

The design of any shopfront should be sympathetic to the age and architectural design of the building into which it is fitted. The ground floor should not be seen as a separate entity but considered as part of the overall architectural composition. Account should be taken of the rhythm, scale and proportions of the upper floor windows and the other details which are common throughout the building. Certainly, a deep or wide fascia should not be used to visually divorce the design of ground floor from that of the rest of the building.

Contemporary shopfront designs are likely to be acceptable in many locations within the District, especially when installed in a modern building. However, it is important that these are more than just a good design in themselves. They will also need to visually relate to, and respect the character of the surrounding architecture and streetscape, in order not to appear out of place.

Sometimes when buildings are located on a corner plot, have a wide frontage, or their internal layout means that a window display is not required, intrusive areas of plain walling can be created at ground floor level. In such instances careful design solutions will be necessary in order to avoid blank, sterile frontages.

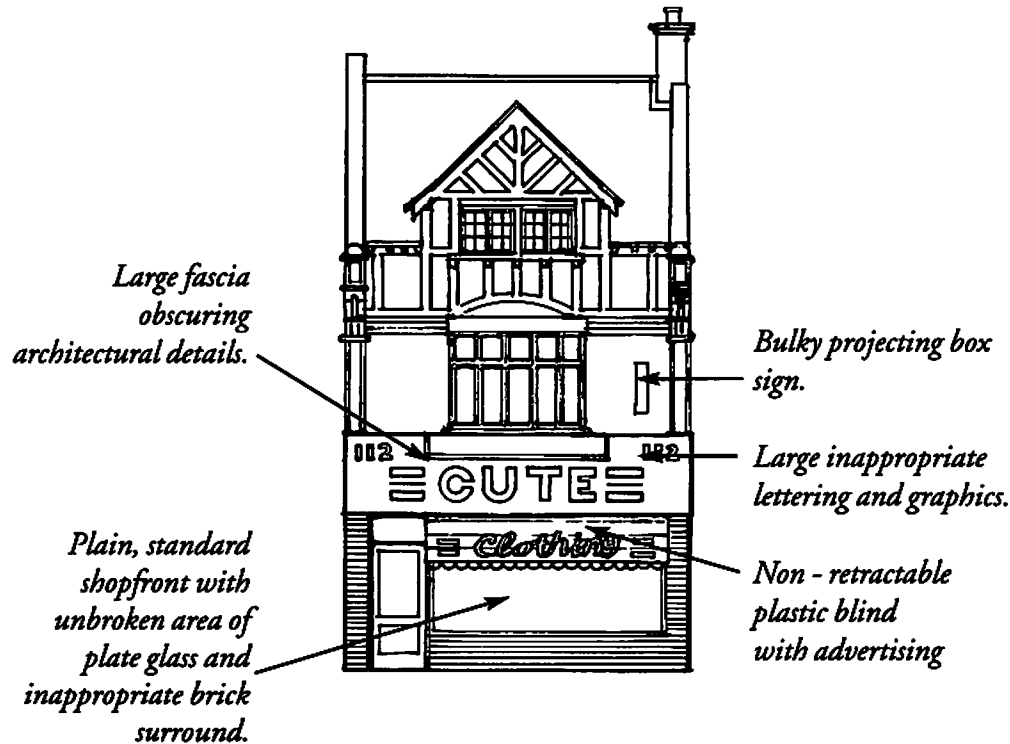


*An example of a shopfront which relates well to the building as a whole*

## SECTION 2 SHOPFRONTS - GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

### 2.8 POORLY DESIGNED EXISTING SHOPFRONTS

Many existing shopfronts are poor designs which do not follow the principles of good shopfront design. They often have large plate glass windows, with crude frames, deep, boxy fascias and badly positioned and proportioned doorways. Along with their materials and finishes, they can be obtrusive feature in the street scene and are detrimental to the building into which they are installed. In such cases the District Council will welcome proposals which improve the appearance of the shopfront and the way it relates to the building and the surrounding area.



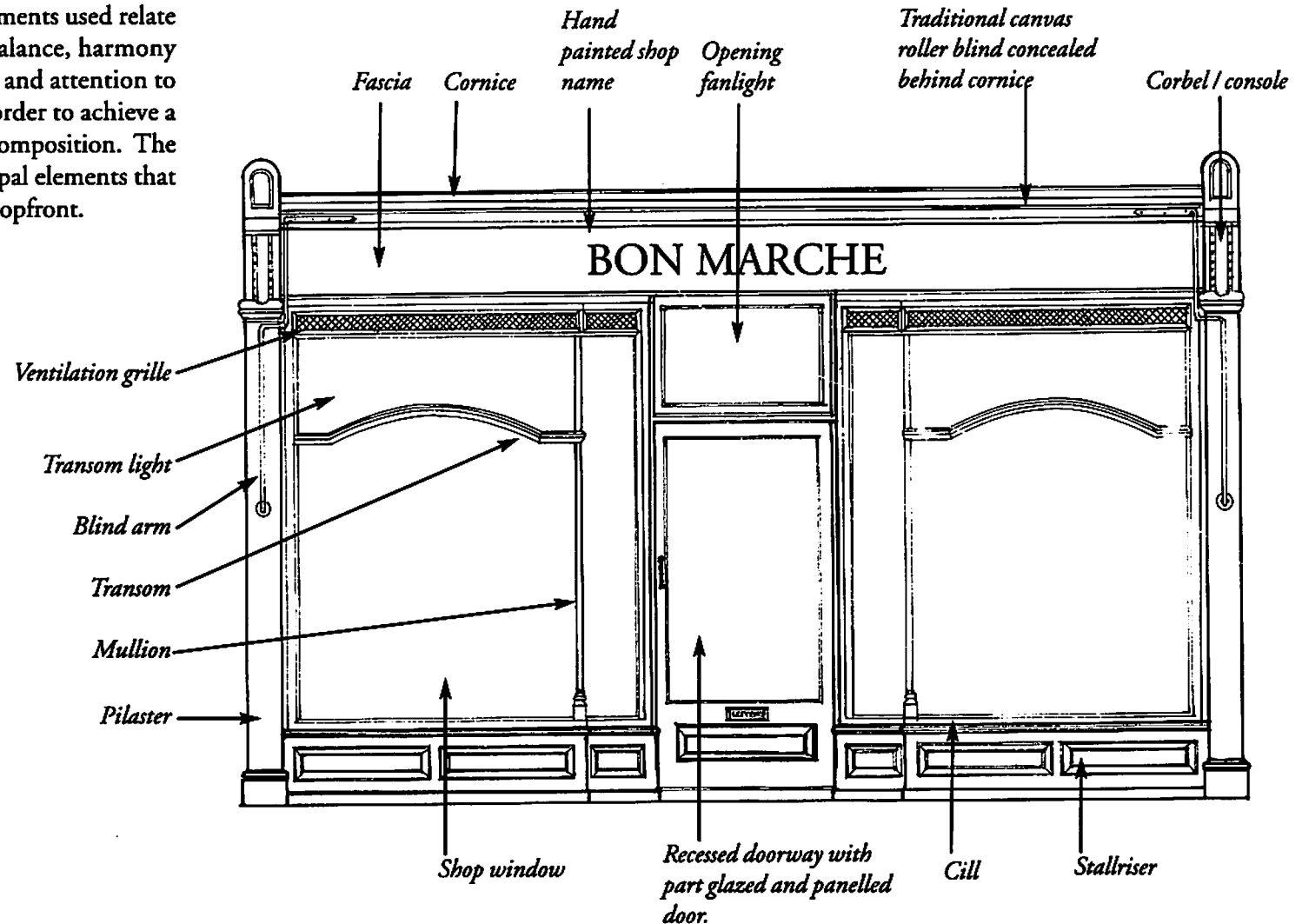
*An example of a poorly designed replacement shopfront*

**ADVICE : SHOPFRONTS - GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS** - The District Council will seek to ensure that new shopfronts, or alterations to existing ones, are a high standard of design which maintain or improve the character and appearance of the street scene. Both contemporary and traditional design approaches will be supported as long as they are sympathetic to the style of the building into which they are fitted. In areas of high townscape quality, designs should reinforce the existing character. In those where the townscape is poor, or of a varied quality, the design should make a positive contribution.

## SECTION 3 THE DETAILED DESIGN OF SHOPFRONTS

### 3.1 BASIC PRINCIPLES

The basic principles of good design for shopfronts are applicable to both modern and traditional styles. It is important that the elements used relate to each other in terms of scale, balance, harmony and proportion. Use of materials and attention to detail are also very important in order to achieve a successful, unified and attractive composition. The illustration right shows the principal elements that combine to form the traditional shopfront.



*Elements of  
a Traditional  
Shopfront*

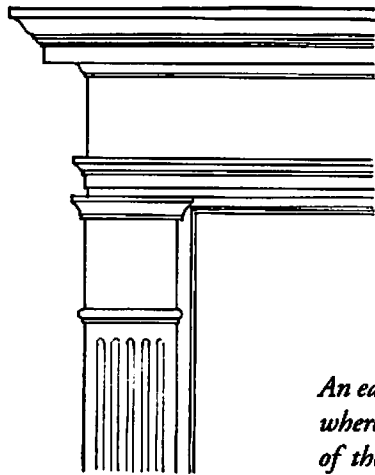
## SECTION 3 THE DETAILED DESIGN OF SHOPFRONTS

### 3.2 FASCIAS

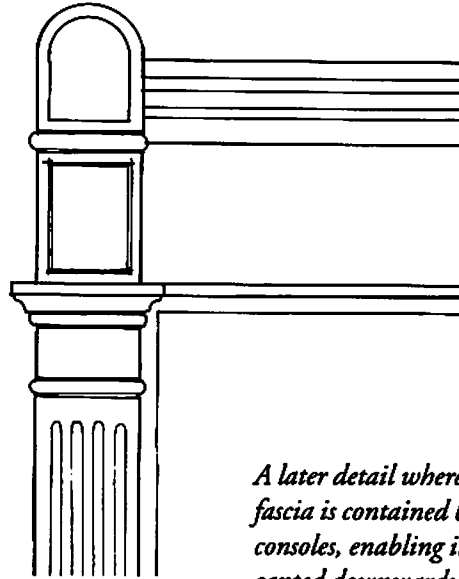
The transition between the shop on the ground floor with its relatively large areas of glass and the upper floors of a building is an important design consideration. Traditionally, the fascia with a bold cornice, like an entablature in classical architecture, formed a strong, definite line. Along with the pilasters, it visually supports the weight of the building above in a very satisfactory manner.

As a result, the fascia was and still is, an important and noticeable element of the shopfront. It was often designed to be located along the whole of the facade, above both shop windows and doorways. It was also the principal location for advertising the shop premises.

Georgian and early Victorian shopfronts tended to have upright fascias fixed directly to the wall below the cornice and above the pilasters.



*An early arrangement, where the fascia sat on top of the pilasters.*



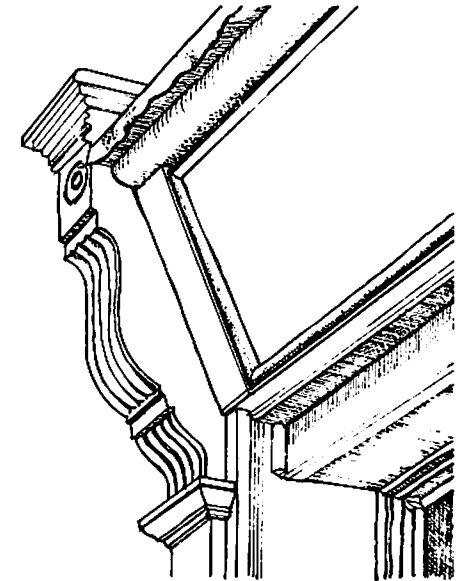
*A later detail where the fascia is contained between consoles, enabling it to be canted downwards.*

In later styles, the design was more decorative, with console brackets at each end. The consoles projected forward, forming a stop end to the fascia. This allowed the fascia to be sloped downward, so the inscription could be more easily read from street level.

The size and scale of the fascia should be in proportion to the shopfront, the building, and the street scene. It should be kept a reasonable distance away from the bottom of the first floor windows and should not be so deep that it adversely affects the proportions of the rest of the shopfront.

In most traditional examples, the depth of the fascia is no greater than 380mm (15"), and in most instances this depth should not be exceeded in the design of new shopfronts. When an excessively deep fascia is added to a traditional shopfront or building the effect is obtrusive and ruins the overall balance of the original design.

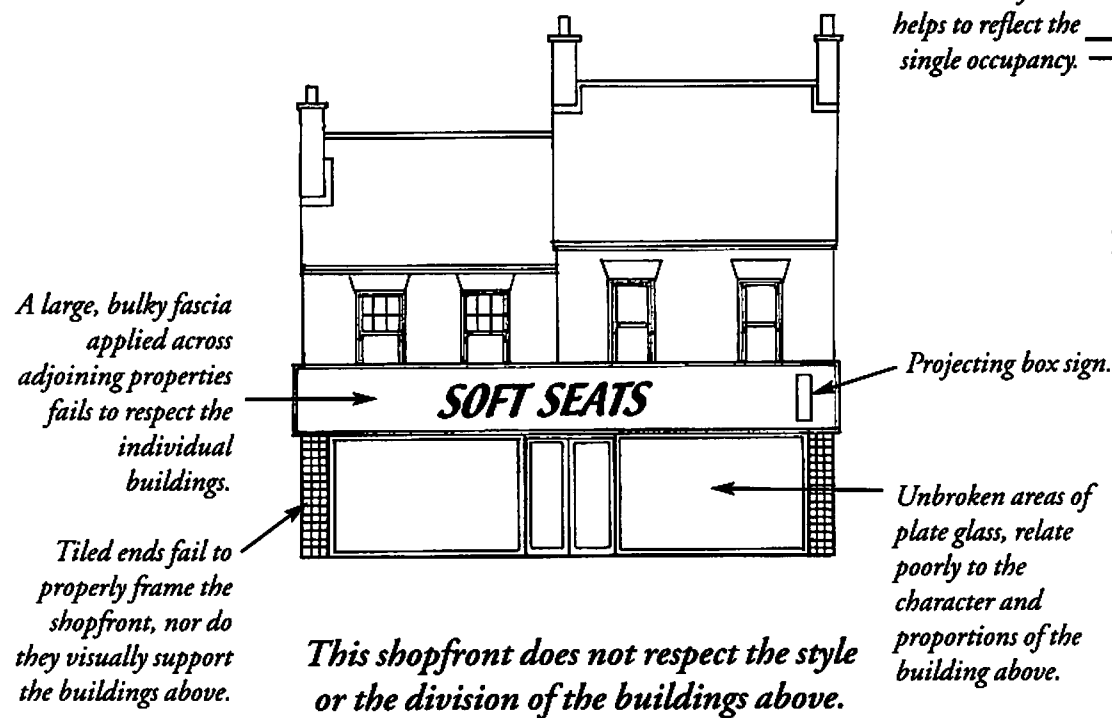
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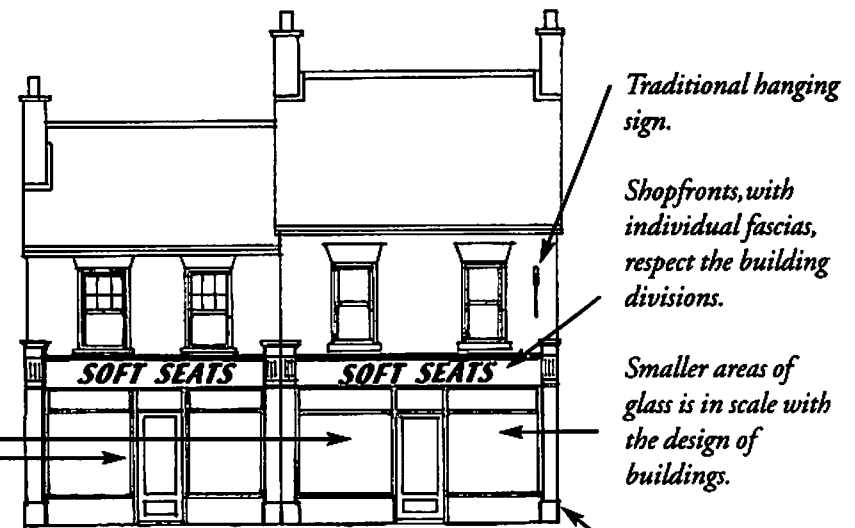
*A sloping fascia and console*

## SECTION 3 THE DETAILED DESIGN OF SHOPFRONTS

Where a shop occupies more than one building the fascia should not run uninterrupted across the adjoining property. Each building should retain an individual shopfront, with its own separate fascia. However, even with different styles of buildings above, it is often possible to create an appropriate design with a visual sense of unity so that a single occupancy is reflected.



*The matching shopfronts in the adjoining properties create a unity that helps to reflect the single occupancy.*

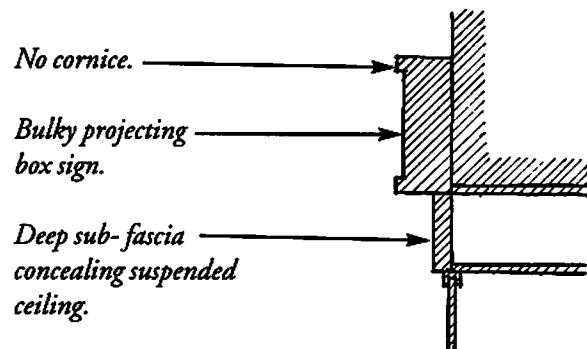


*These traditional shopfronts respect the divisions between the buildings and their overall character.*

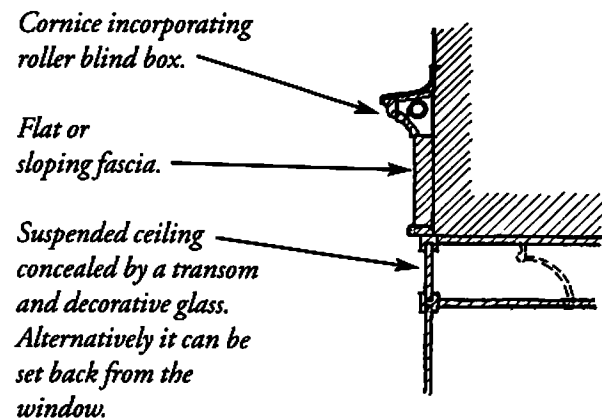
## SECTION 3 THE DETAILED DESIGN OF SHOPFRONTS

There may be technical or other reasons for wishing to install a fascia that is too deep. This could be to conceal a suspended ceiling, or trying to fit a standard size, or “corporate image” fascia.

### *Bad fascia section*



### *Good fascia section*



If a false ceiling has to be concealed, it can often be achieved by simply adding a transom at the line of the ceiling and using decorative or obscured glass. Alternatively, a carefully designed lowered ceiling could be set back from the window. These approaches could remove the need to alter an existing traditional fascia or to provide an extra deep fascia, or a sub-fascia, on a new shopfront. In almost all cases there is an appropriately sympathetic design solution to resolve these sorts of problems.

When attempting to apply a standard corporate fascia design to a shopfront, it needs to be considered in relation to the character and appearance of the building and the street scene, as well as the size and proportions of the shopfront. Arbitrary increases in the depth, especially of an existing traditional fascia, to incorporate an unrelated standard design, must be avoided.

Sometimes, in the past, replacement fascias were boxed out from the face of the building over an existing traditional one. They usually involved clumsy detailing with crude corners. In almost all cases these appear as heavy unbalanced designs which have an adverse impact on the shopfront, and the street scene generally.

Where such damaging alterations have been carried out, it is often possible for the shopfront to be restored to its former appearance, enabling the whole building to once again form a pleasing composition. Sometimes the original or a traditional fascia survives behind the later additions. In such cases, it is often possible to carefully remove the later work and repair the fascia beneath. Where there are no remains of the original fascia, details surviving on similar buildings nearby, or old photographs, can often be used as a guide. The existence of an unsuitable fascia should not be allowed to influence the design of any replacement.

*(Right) A later fascia has been added to the shopfronts on these historic buildings. It is possible that the original fascias and other traditional shopfront features survive underneath and that these could be repaired and restored.*



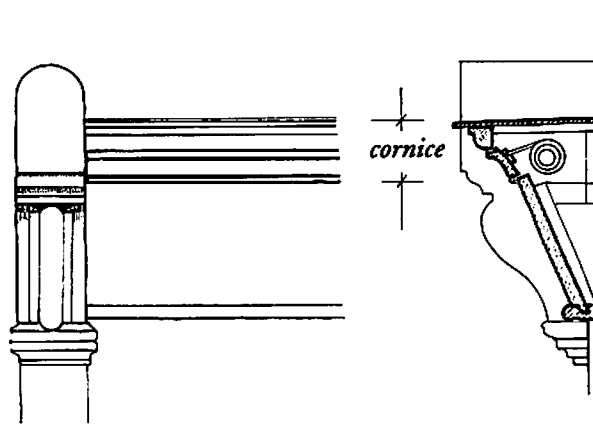
## SECTION 3 THE DETAILED DESIGN OF SHOPFRONTS

### 3.3 CORNICES

It is usual for a traditional fascia to have a moulded projection above it. In classical architecture such a projection was known as the cornice. In traditional shopfront designs it is both functional and decorative. A projecting cornice, usually covered in lead, formed a sound weatherproof joint between the building and the shopfront below. It throws off water from the face of the building helping to prevent the timber joinery from deteriorating. It also terminates the top of the shopfront in a visually strong and satisfactory manner.

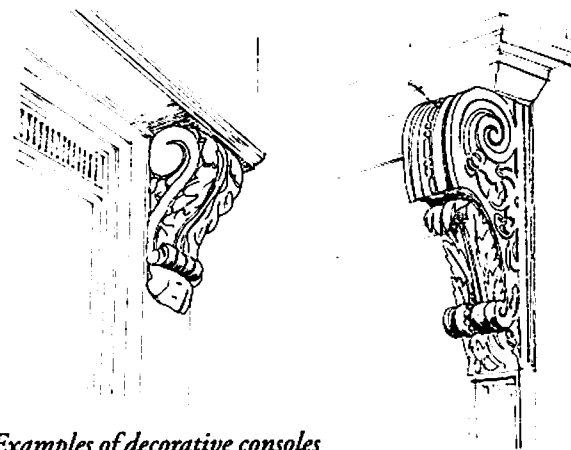
In many instances the cornice was designed to accommodate a traditional canvas roller blind which was once a practical and attractive feature of many shopping streets.

Quite often poorly designed modern shopfronts do not have a cornice. The fascia is just an applied sign which ends abruptly at the top, giving the shopfront an unfinished and visually weak appearance. It is important when designing a new shopfront that this aspect is properly considered so that the shopfront appears on an integral part of the overall design of the building which accommodates it.



*Elevation of cornice and fascia.*

*Section through the cornice and sloping fascia, showing how the roller blind is concealed.*



*Examples of decorative consoles*

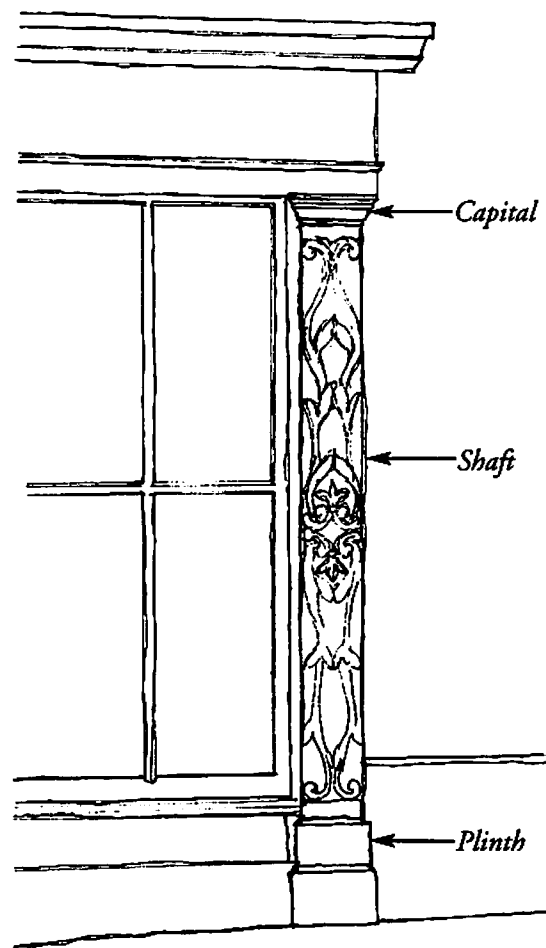
### 3.4 CONSOLES

The console, as an element of the traditional shopfront, was introduced as a feature that enabled a well-formed junction to be created between the pilasters and the fascia. They provided a visual stop to both the key horizontal and vertical elements of the shopfront and helped draw attention to the fascia and its message. Visually it provided a strong support for the fascia which spanned across the opening above the shop window. Consoles also provided depth, which enabled the fascia with its inscription to be tilted down towards the shoppers on the pavement and helped to screen blind boxes which were accommodated within the cornice. Late Victorian and Edwardian shopfronts tended to have large, elaborately designed and intricately detailed consoles.

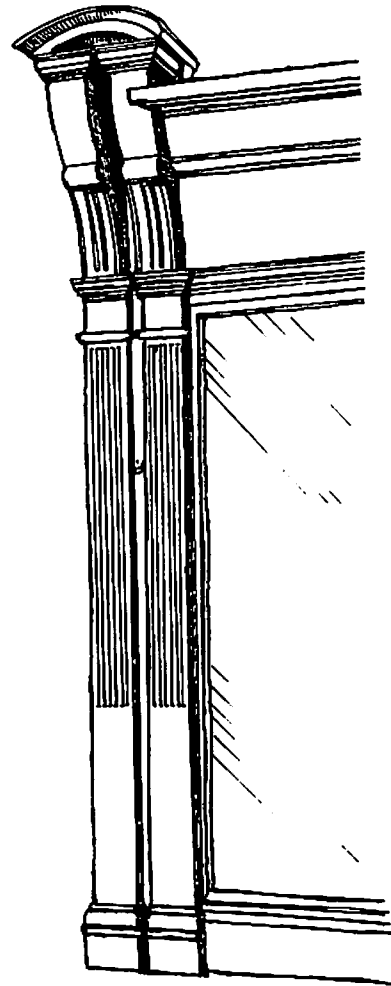
On older shopfronts where consoles exist they should preferably be conserved and where missing, replaced. When designing a new shopfront the incorporation of such a feature can provide extra emphasis to the junction of the fascia and the top of the shop window and visually help to hold the shopfront components together. However, in some designs it may be appropriate to omit this 'later' feature.



## SECTION 3 THE DETAILED DESIGN OF SHOPFRONTS



*An ornamental pilaster with a moulded capital, stepped plinth and decorative shaft formed with applied, shaped timber.*



*A "double" pilaster, this detail was sometimes adopted where similar shopfronts were repeated in a row. This example has fluting for two thirds of the shaft height.*

### 3.5 PILASTERS

Pilasters form the visual vertical supports for the fascia and the building above and help frame the shop window and stallriser. In a traditional street, where there is normally a strong vertical emphasis, excessive spans and large shop windows without intermediate pilasters (or columns) for support, appear visually weak and create a discordant horizontal emphasis. Where a wide frontage did exist, secondary pilasters were usually introduced in order to retain the correct proportions.

Often the shafts of pilasters were decorated with fluting or panels, and finished off at their base with a plinth, which was slightly wider than the column. This formed, visually, a solid base at the bottom. At the top they were sometimes finished off with a capital, or some other decorative feature. This terminated the top of the pilaster and visually supported the console and fascia.

Where pilasters formed part of the original design of a traditional shopfront they should be retained and if necessary repaired. In most cases the appearance of the shopfront will suffer if they are removed, boxed in, or as sometimes happened in the past, covered over in modern ceramic tiling. Where possible, missing pilasters should be reinstated and those previously boxed in, uncovered. When designing new shopfronts it will often be necessary to incorporate some type of pilaster in order to achieve a balanced composition which is in keeping with the building and the street scene.

## SECTION 3 THE DETAILED DESIGN OF SHOPFRONTS

### 3.6 STALLRISERS

The stallriser (or stall board) provided the traditional shopfront with a visual anchor to the ground and raised up the glass of the shop window away from potential physical damage and splashes of dirty water. This also allowed for the floor inside the shop window to be raised, so that the display was more visible.

An early form of stallriser consisted of a boarded shutter that hung on metal strap pin hinges below the shop window opening. During opening hours it was lifted up and supported on brackets to form an external display shelf.

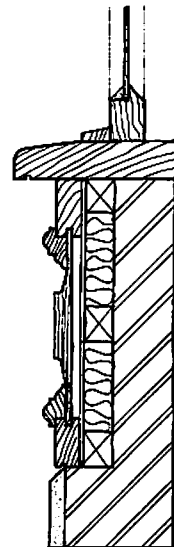


*An early example of stall boards. These were hinged and formed display shelves when the shop was open.*

Traditionally, stallrisers were often rendered, or they were of panelled timber, which sat on a stone or brick plinth. Later, some examples took the form of deep moulded skirting, whilst others were faced with elaborate glazed tiles or marble.

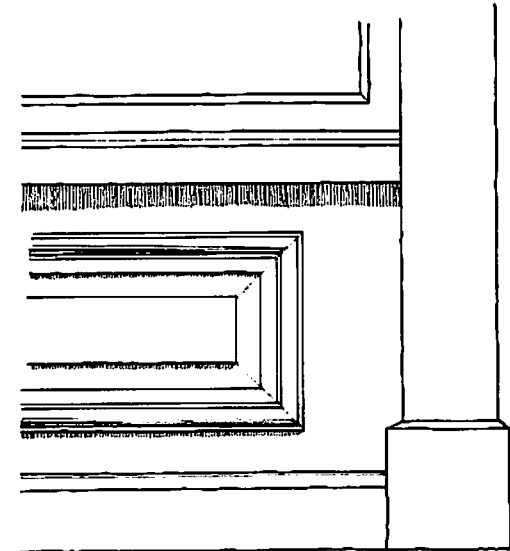
The height of the stallriser was often determined by the required height of the window display. The trader who intended to sell tall or bulky goods would have a lower stall board, so goods could be accommodated and viewed at ease. A trader in small articles would prefer goods to be closer to eye level and therefore a stallriser of a height of up to 1 m above the ground would be more likely.

*(Right and far right)  
A detailed section and  
elevation of a  
traditional panelled  
timber stallriser.*



When designing new shopfronts the height of a new stallriser will vary according to the overall proportions of the building and shopfront but generally with traditional designs they should be between 400mm and 900 mm high.

The material chosen must relate, and be appropriate to, the rest of the shopfront and the building. If a panelled stallriser in timber is proposed, it is better if it is constructed traditionally and not formed by applying "picture frame" mouldings, as this lacks depth and can have a 'tacked-on' appearance. If brick is chosen, stretcher bond can appear plain and crude. On older brick buildings it will be important to ensure the type of brick and the bond relates to that which exists on the rest of the building.



## SECTION 3 THE DETAILED DESIGN OF SHOPFRONTS

### 3.7 WINDOWS

While the principal role of a shop window was for the display of goods, it also served other important functions, such as to clearly display the use of the building as a shop, to provide protection from the weather and afford natural light and views into the premises.

Shop window frames were traditionally constructed in timber. A heavy sill provided a strong junction between stallriser and glass. The overhang and drip feature helping to protect the shop window and the stallriser from damage. Sills tended to be flat in Georgian or Regency shopfronts. Victorian shopfront sills tended to be bolder and rounder.

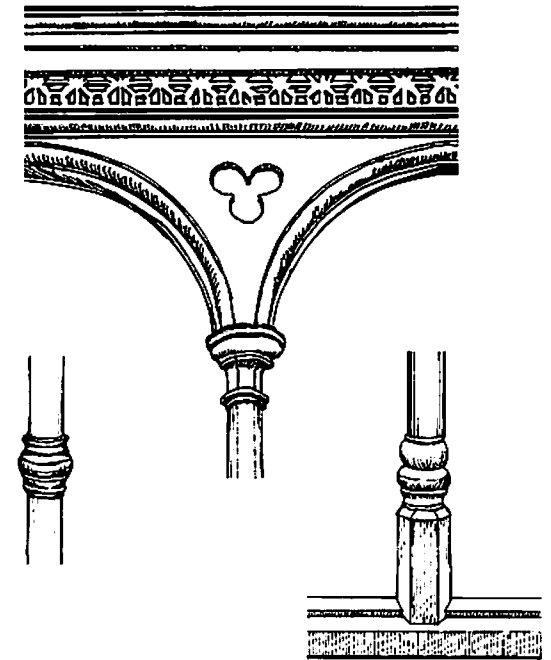
The shop window was sub-divided by mullions (vertical) and transoms (horizontal) members. These may have been further divided by secondary glazing bars. In older shopfronts the panes of glass were small and the dividing members were detailed to reflect the architectural style and proportions of the shopfront and the rest of the building. Gradually, as glass production methods improved, the shop window and the size of the panes increased. The evolution of plate glass allowed a large increase in the pane size and its use was encouraged by the lifting of excise duty on glass in 1845. Victorian shops were therefore able to incorporate comparatively large areas of uninterrupted glass.

From the mid 19th Century onwards and during the early part of the 20th Century, the framing members on shop windows were usually attractively moulded. Indeed some shopfront designs, although incorporating large panes of glass, were highly ornamental and exuberant. Often they were treated as examples of fine quality joinery, carried out with a high standard of craftsmanship.

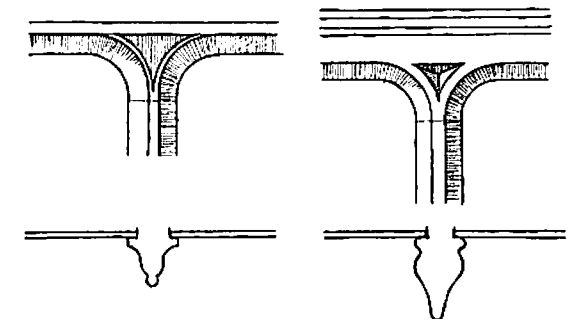
Where a trader did not require the upper part of the window for display, this section was often divided off by a transom and sometimes ornamented with intricate designs and delicate glazing bars. This area of glazing was referred to as the transom light. Visually, this would help to improve the appearance and proportions of the shopfront and concentrate the view into the area of the shop window that contained the display.

The addition of further glazing bars for decorative purposes only had the effect of breaking up the larger glass areas, increasing the complexity and interest of the shopfront design. The mullions, transoms and glazing bars were quite intricate with shaped, curved and moulded details. Leaded lights, etched and coloured glass were all used to help draw attention to the shopfront.

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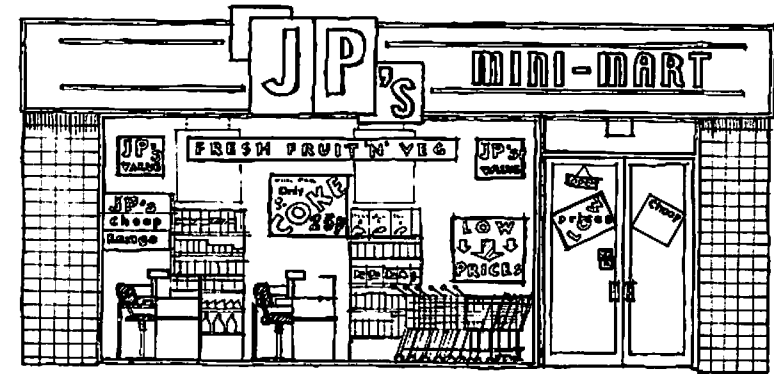
*19th Century window frame details.  
(Above) A shopfront with round mullions.  
(Below) Typical elevations and sections  
through moulded mullions.*



## SECTION 3 THE DETAILED DESIGN OF SHOPFRONTS

When designing new shopfronts, the size, proportions, and scale of the panes of glass should be carefully considered. Much can be learnt from historical examples. Large areas of uninterrupted glass in traditional location should be avoided.

Where a sizeable display area is located behind the windows, careful consideration should be given to the sides, back and floor of the display area because they can have a marked effect on the street scene. Similarly, where there is no display area, or checkouts are located close to the window, it is important that the shopfront design takes account of this. The addition of extra mullions, transoms and decorative glazing bars to the shopfront can not only reduce the impact of the lack of a display behind the windows but also help prevent the window being covered with posters, stickers and other obtrusive displays.

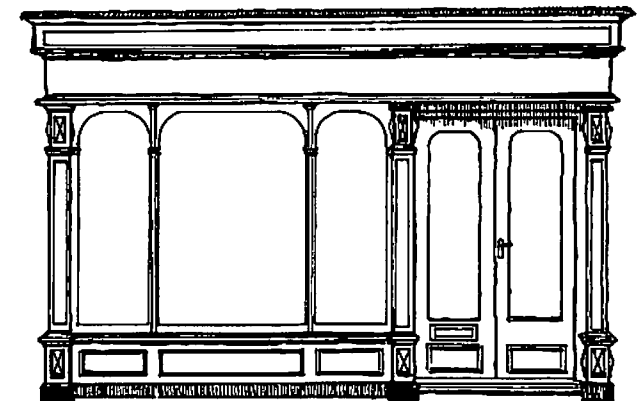


(Above) Shops designed without a proper window display area can sometimes provide unfortunate views of the interior.



(Above) A well designed replacement shopfront at the Co-operative supermarket in Wickham Market.

(Right) A new shopfront recently installed in a building in Yoxford.

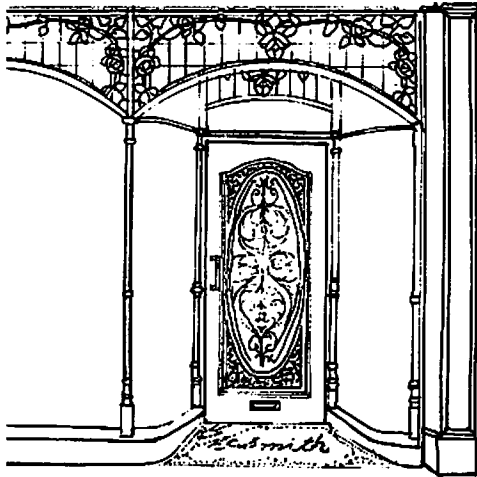


## SECTION 3 THE DETAILED DESIGN OF SHOPFRONTS

### 3.8 DOORS AND IRONMONGERY

The traditional shop door was designed to compliment the shopfront. From the Georgian period onwards it was invariably part glazed, with moulded timber panels which were sometimes designed to match height and detail of the stallriser.

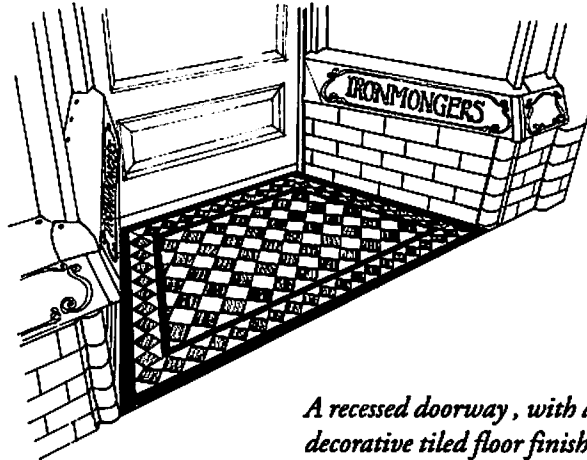
Often doorways were recessed back from the face of the shopfront. This had the effect of increasing the window area and inviting shoppers in. It also gave shelter for window shoppers, provided additional display area and encouraged the shopper to pause near the doorway.



*A highly decorative shop front in Woodbridge incorporating a recessed doorway*

Above the door, depending to the height of the shopfront, there was often a fanlight, which was usually detailed to reflect the main window design. This was, and still is, a convenient place to allow ventilation into the shop by means of an opening light.

The floor finish immediately in front of a recessed door was finished in small bricks, glazed tiles or decorative mosaic designs, which sometimes spelt out the proprietors' name.



*A recessed doorway, with a decorative tiled floor finish.*

Sometimes the glass panel in the shop door was delicately etched out with intricate designs, again often incorporating the name of the shop or owner. These floor details and engravings on the glass in doorways are important features which will need to be kept if the shopfront is of historic importance or the building is Listed.

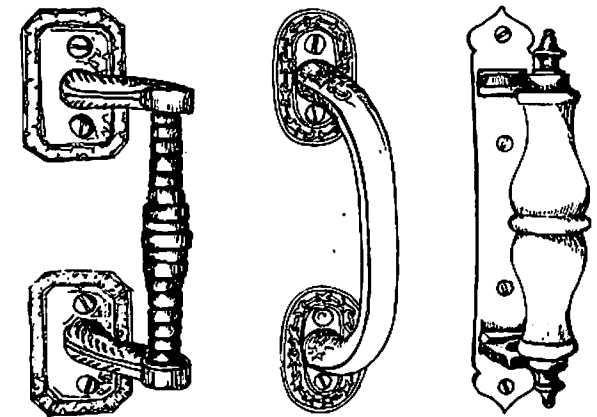
The shopfront frequently had to incorporate a second doorway for access to the rooms above, these doors were usually a solid panelled design.

When repairing a historic shopfront, the original doors should be kept wherever possible and if necessary repaired. If beyond repair a replica should be made. The recessed doorway is another feature

which should also be kept, as it is an important traditional design feature.

When designing a new shopfront, the shop door must be considered very carefully. In older buildings and areas with a traditional character and appearance, modern plate glass doors with flimsy frames or no frames at all will often not be appropriate.

On old doors, ironmongery was usually brass, with a heavy, solid feel, often of a decorative design. Door handles, hinges, letter plates and other features can be important historic and architectural details and should be kept, or transferred to a new door, if a replacement has to be made. When considering new ironmongery, it is important to choose a good quality product, in a design in keeping with the period and character of the shopfront design.



*A selection of brass door pull handles*

## SECTION 3 THE DETAILED DESIGN OF SHOPFRONTS

### 3.9 MATERIALS AND FINISHES

Historically, timber was the traditional material used for the construction of shopfronts, although others, such as stone and cast iron were occasionally used. Early pattern books often specified the type of wood to be used, although the vast majority were built in softwood and painted. Teak, oak, black walnut and mahogany were chosen in some rare instances and finished with a glossy varnish. From the 1950s onwards, other materials were introduced, such as plastics, aluminium, glazed tiles, stone cladding and concrete. These modern materials, especially when used on poorly designed shopfronts, have often appeared quite alien in the traditional shopping street.

The material of proposed new or replacement shopfronts should be carefully considered to complement the building and the surrounding area. In many cases it will be preferable for new shopfronts in historic areas to be constructed in timber using traditional details and profiles. This is because materials like aluminium or plastic, even when designed to appear traditional, can still have a synthetic "look-alike" character.

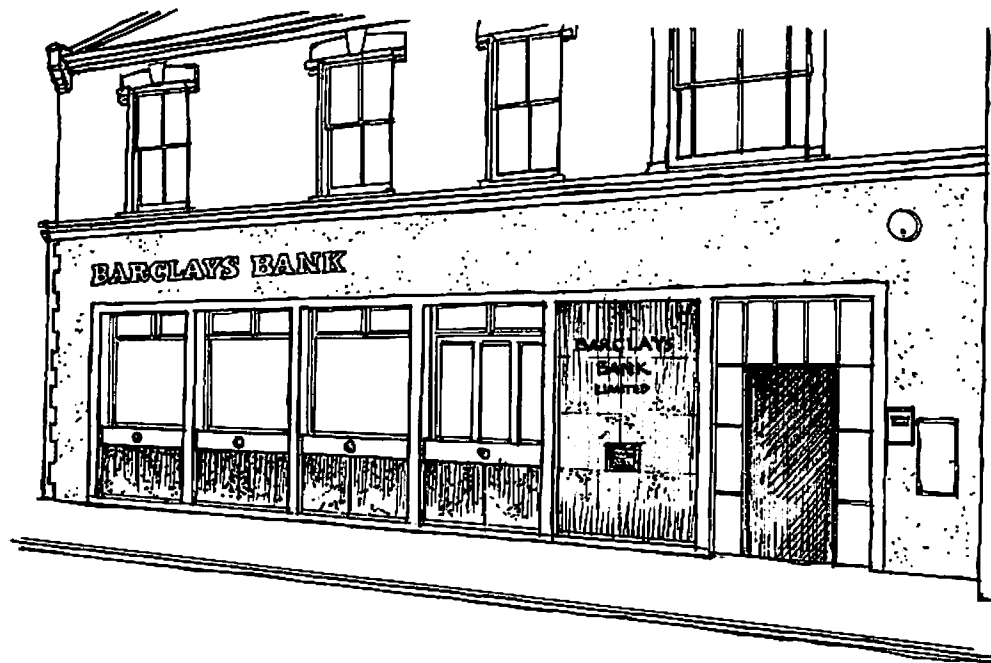
Timber is a most versatile material to use. It is easily machined and worked to any profile. Where they have survived, old examples have proven that if properly protected and maintained, a good quality softwood shopfront, built with proper craftsmanship, will last a very long time.

The use of tropical hardwoods should be avoided however, especially so if they are from a non-sustainable source. Not only is their use questionable from an environmental perspective, but if left unpainted, such hardwoods can appear intrusive in an historic street scene.

If the shopfront is a traditional timber one it should normally have a paint finish. In a sensitive area, the use of semi-gloss paint may be more appropriate as

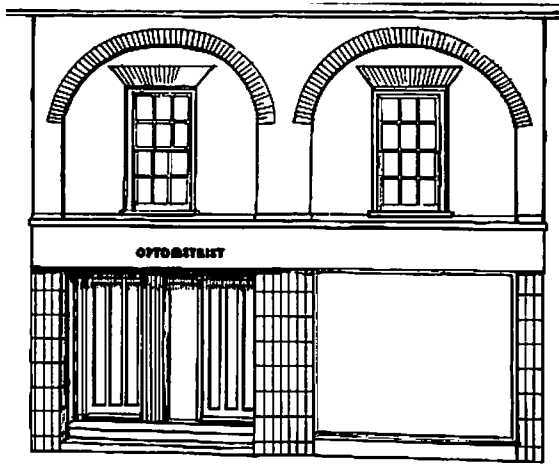
modern paints have a very high gloss finish compared to historical paint finishes.

Some Victorian and Edwardian shopfronts made use of metal, particularly cast iron for elegant, decorative columns. Metal is a popular material for new modern shopfronts and its use can be appropriate in many locations. However, in sensitive locations such as conservation areas, finishes such as anodised aluminium or plastic coated metals, will not normally be suitable.



*The way stone, concrete and metal are used on this bank premises in Saxmundham relates poorly to the traditional detailing and character of the original building with its Suffolk white brick early 19th Century frontage.*

## SECTION 3 THE DETAILED DESIGN OF SHOPFRONTS



*Two properties in The Thoroughfare, Woodbridge.  
(Above) The use of stone cladding and modern stained joinery appears rather intrusive.  
(Below) A painted timber shopfront close by is much more appropriate in the historic street scene.*



### 3.10 COLOUR

The colours used on shopfronts needs very careful consideration as it is an important part of the design process and can have a significant impact upon the success or otherwise of any scheme. Colour provides scope for preserving or enhancing the street scene.

Historic colours, such as rich greens, blues and reds, which were dark in tone, were used with a relatively matt finish. This was partly because they were architecturally appropriate but also because when a window is framed in such colours one is more likely to look through to the goods displayed.

Traditional dark colours are also likely to be more suitable for a large shopfront, especially if it spans the whole frontage of a building. These deep, matt colours help to provide the visual strength needed to support the upper floors.

Conversely, white, which was commonly used, appears more delicate, drawing attention to the detailing on the shopfront rather than what is displayed behind.

In some instances the use of a complimentary colour can be used to highlight decorative detailing on a shopfront but this should be very carefully considered. In most instances it is important that all the major elements should be a single colour in order to avoid a garish or over fussy appearance.

Colour schemes which are very vibrant should be avoided in many locations. Similarly, the arbitrary application of corporate colour schemes, regardless of the location, will often detract from the area's character. However, careful use of corporate colours, as well as minor variations of them, can make a considerable difference to ensuring that they relate satisfactorily to their surroundings.

**ADVICE : THE DETAILED DESIGN OF SHOPFRONTS** - When considering applications for new shopfronts or alterations to existing ones, the District Council will seek to ensure that the basic principles of good shopfront design have been satisfactorily considered. Each element that makes up the shopfront should be appropriate in terms of scale and proportions. Details such as fascias, cornices, consoles, pilasters, stallrisers, windows, doors and ironmongery should combine to achieve a balanced and harmonious composition. The materials, colours and finishes should compliment, and not detract from, the design of the shopfront, the building and the townscape generally.

## SECTION 4 SIGNS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

### 4.1 THE IMPACT OF SIGNS GENERALLY

Signs and advertisements can have a major impact upon the character and appearance of an area. Just one or two poorly designed, incongruous signs can have a marked effect upon the perceived quality of the whole of the surrounding townscape or countryside.

The advertisements and signs displayed on a building, likewise, can have a profound impact on its appearance, often being the most eye catching features on the whole premises. They should therefore be designed to compliment the character, appearance, age, and architectural style of both shopfronts and buildings.



*Signs and advertisements can often be a dominant feature in the street scene.*

### 4.2 LOCAL PLAN POLICIES RELATING TO SIGNS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan contains the following policy.

#### POLICY LP23A - Advertisements

The District Council will exercise strict control over all advertisements, but most particularly where:

- (a) standardised advertising styles are proposed in a location which requires a more individual approach;
- (b) illumination is proposed;
- (c) the advertisement, or the location in which it would be displayed, would create a hazard to, or endanger the safety of drivers, cyclists and pedestrians using the highway.

Applications for wall mounted advertisements will be judged against the following criteria:

- (i) consent will not be granted for any sign above the level of the existing shop fascia unless such a sign would make a positive contribution to the architectural character of the building or the street scene as a whole;
- (ii) all lettering is to be of good quality materials, simple in style and appropriate to the architectural character of the building involved;
- (iii) lettering applied direct to the wall or fascia is favoured;

(iv) fascias and signs consisting of non-traditional materials in strong colours, or with a shiny or reflective finish are not favoured and will certainly not be permitted in conservation areas or on Listed buildings;

(v) projecting box signs, house signs of a modern style or internally-illuminated signs will be discouraged and not permitted in conservation areas or on Listed buildings, where they would detract from the character of the area or the character, integrity and setting of the building concerned. In such cases traditional hanging signs of wood or metal will be encouraged;

(vi) the size of the advertisement in relation to the form and character of the particular building, its location and the street scene;

(vii) in conservation areas or on Listed buildings, illuminated signs and advertisements shall only be externally lit in a style and manner sympathetic to the building and area.

Applications for free standing advertisements will not be permitted where they are intrusive or inappropriate due to their location, form, size, colour, design, or illumination, or are potential hazards to people with disabilities.

Where unauthorised advertisements have an adverse impact on the environment or public safety, the District Council will take such action as may be necessary to remove them

Proposals will be considered in the context of the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on the subject.



## SECTION 4 SIGNS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

### 4.3 THE SIZE AND SCALE OF SIGNS



*Large and over-scaled signs can have a major impact.*

One of the most important factors which determines whether a traditional shopping street has retained its attractive character and appearance is the type and size of the signs and advertisements displayed on business premises. If they are all relatively modest and designed to complement the buildings, then there will be less incentive for businesses to erect large or obtrusive signs in order to compete with each other. The same is true for other commercial areas. The District Council will resist, therefore, wherever possible, signs out of scale and character with their surroundings.

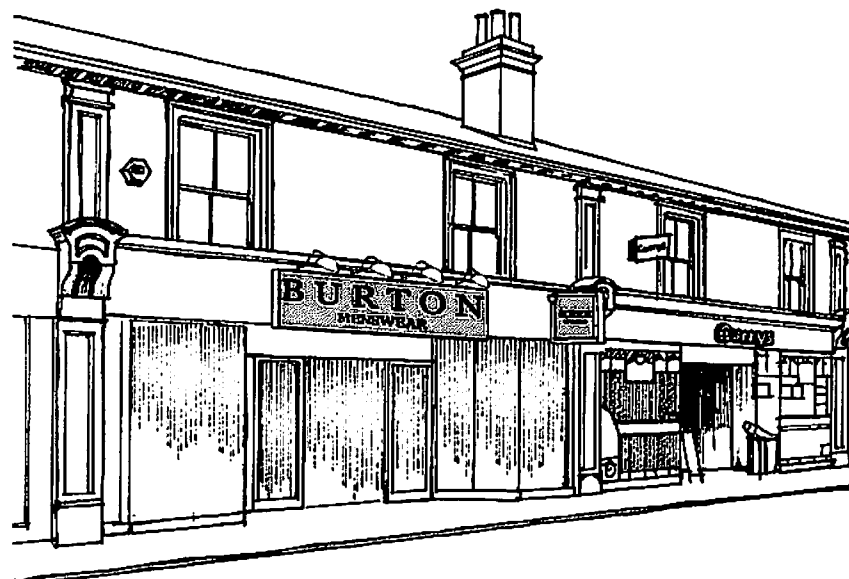
### 4.4 CORPORATE IMAGES

For some years now, a great many national and regional multiples have adopted corporate sales images which involve standard designs for shopfronts and signs. Up until fairly recently a number of these companies have been very reluctant to adapt these standard approaches in order to suit local circumstances and differences.

The imposition standard designs regardless of the context can severely erode local distinctiveness, the architectural integrity of buildings and townscape quality. The Local Planning Authority has therefore taken the view that in order to protect special character of the District it will require modifications to standard shopfronts and signs wherever the location justifies it.

#### ADVICE : SIGNS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

- When implementing its local plan policy the District Council will take into account the proposed location of signs, their size, colour, design and use of materials. The Council will assess whether they will make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the locality. Existing or adjacent poorly designed signs and advertisements will not be a justification for the display of similarly obtrusive new ones.



*In some instances the approach of national chains with their own "house style" does not sit entirely comfortably with older buildings or historic shopping streets. For example, modern corporate fascia and projecting signs can relate poorly to existing traditional detailing. Similarly, wide doorways and windows without stallrisers and glazing bars can appear out of scale in an historic street scene.*

## SECTION 4 SIGNS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

### 4.5 FASCIA SIGNS

The fascia is traditionally the place where the retailer conveyed the essential message of the shops' name and what it is selling.

This was usually signwritten, with the lettering hand painted onto the timber fascia. It still remains, in most instances, the best way of displaying the retailer's name in traditional shopping streets. Displaying the shop name and the number of the premises only on the fascia usually proves sufficient, as additional advertising here is often confusing and serves to detract from the design of the shopfront.

The shape of the fascia and the architectural detailing all need to be carefully taken into account when considering signage.

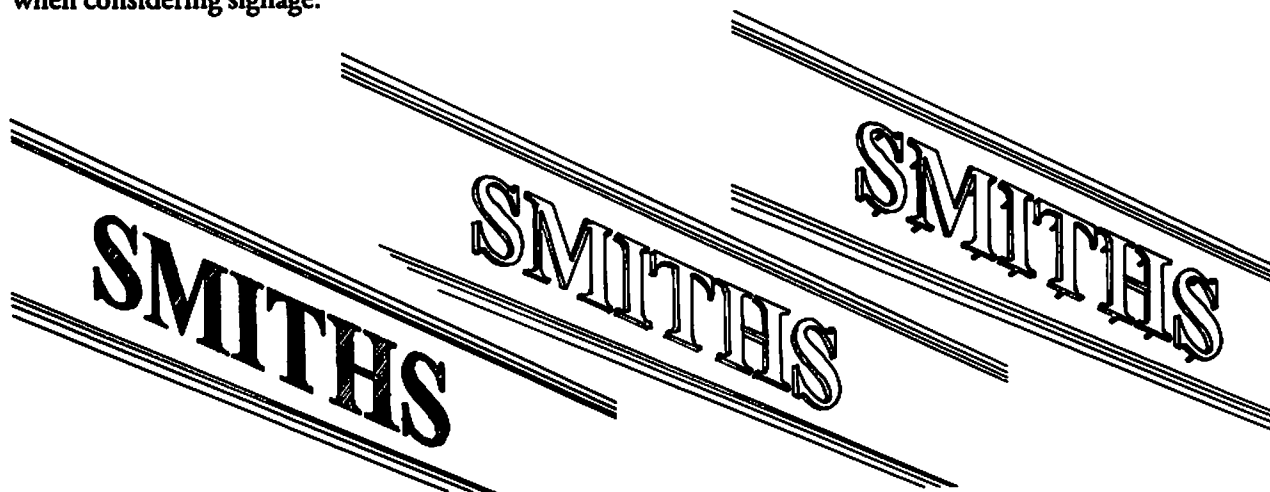
The size of lettering is naturally restricted by the depth of the fascia and should be kept in proportion with the rest of the shopfront. The choice of colours for the lettering and the fascia need careful consideration so that they relate to the building and the character of the area. The use of contrasting colours can avoid the need for external illumination, which can often be inappropriate.

The fixing of individual, raised letters on the fascia can prove satisfactory in some instances as long as they are of a suitable material, size and style. On historic buildings wood or brass can sometimes be appropriate but plastic lettering is often going to appear incongruous. Spacers to raise the letters proud of the fascia is a relatively modern technique which needs careful consideration. In most

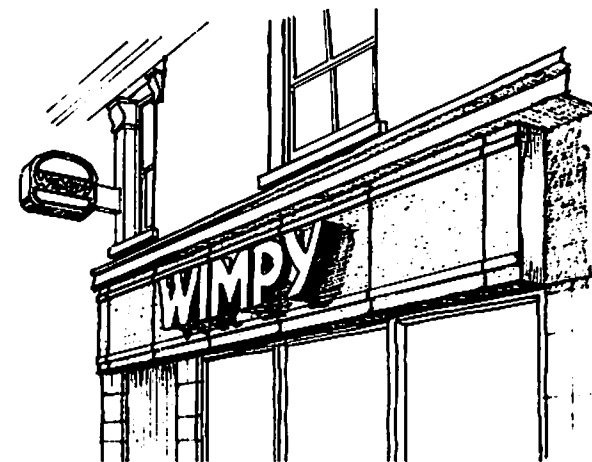
instances letters should only be raised a few millimetres.

Because of their over dominant and detrimental impact in many locations, certain types of glossy or reflective metal or plastic fascia signs and letters will often not be appropriate. In particular, modern prefabricated fascia panels and lettering will be unsuitable for older buildings and incompatible with the character of historic shopping streets.

Boxed out fascia signs, which are often internally illuminated, are not appropriate on historic shopfronts or on most older buildings, especially if they are in a conservation area or are Listed. Elsewhere, the erection of poorly designed and crudely detailed boxed out fascia signs will be resisted.



*Examples of fascia lettering. (Left) sign writing, (middle) raised letters, (right) and the use of spacers.*



*Boxed out fascia signs will appear out of place in many locations.*

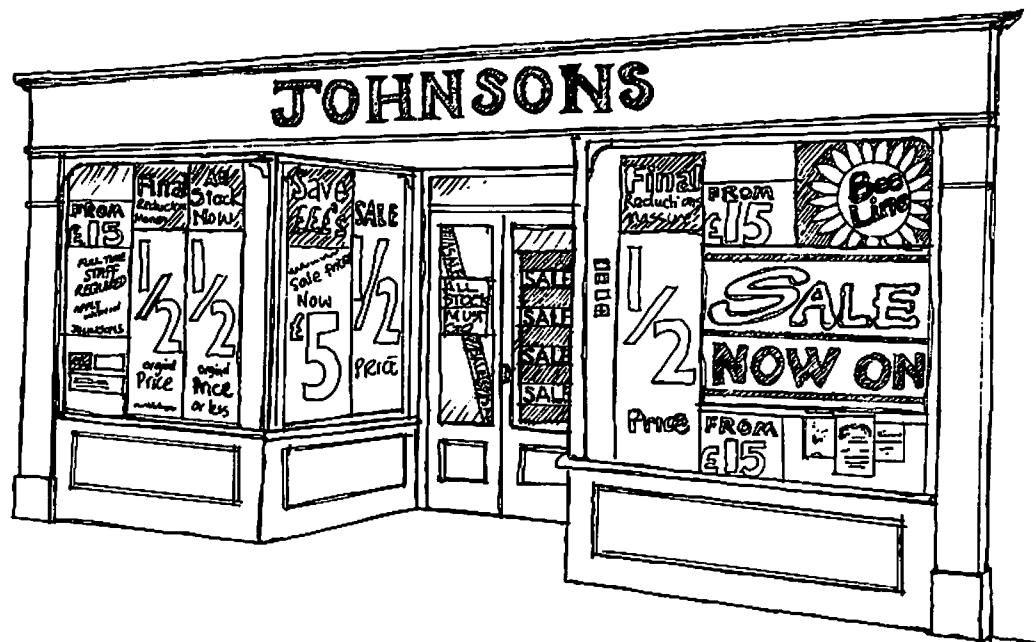
## SECTION 4 SIGNS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

### 4.6 SIGNS ON WINDOWS

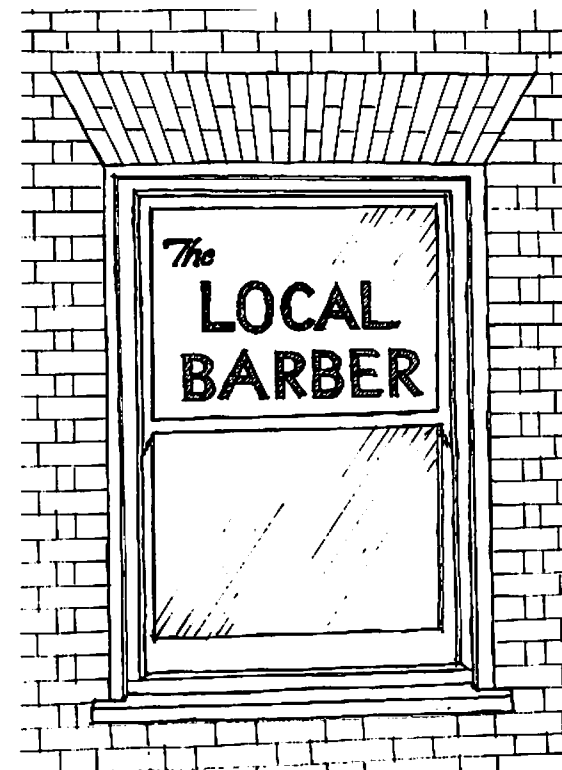
Sometimes additional signage over that displayed on the fascia can be provided at sub-fascia level by well designed window signs painted on the glass. However, blocking out large sections of a shop window with lettering and adverts is, in most cases, inappropriate. The shop window space should be for displaying items behind the glass. A proliferation of stickers, posters and temporary

painted signs can all have a major impact and detract from the quality of the street scene.

Where no shopfront exists it is often appropriate to advertise the name of a business by sign writing on the glass of the existing windows. This is particularly useful for businesses such as hairdressers, solicitors, dentists, architects etc which operate from the high street but may not have, or require, a window display.



*Applying stickers and posters to shop windows can be particularly intrusive, undermining the character and appearance of both the building and the surrounding townscape.*



*(Above) Well designed signs painted onto the glass can often prove appropriate.*

## SECTION 4 SIGNS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

### 4.7 HANGING AND PROJECTING SIGNS

In the past, signs or symbols which hung from a bracket attached to the face of the building or shopfront were associated with particular trades or businesses. This tradition of hanging signs and symbols is of historic significance. Over the past few decades the advent of projecting box signs fixed directly to the building has been seen to portray a more modern image. As a result, in many shopping streets, standardised designs made out of non-

traditional materials have replaced the traditional hanging sign, often to the detriment of the townscape quality.

The District Council, therefore, takes the view that in historic shopping areas the use of traditional hanging signs will be encouraged where they will enhance the appearance of the building and the character of the area as a whole. Conversely, the use of standard, non-traditional projecting box signs will not normally be permitted in an historic context.

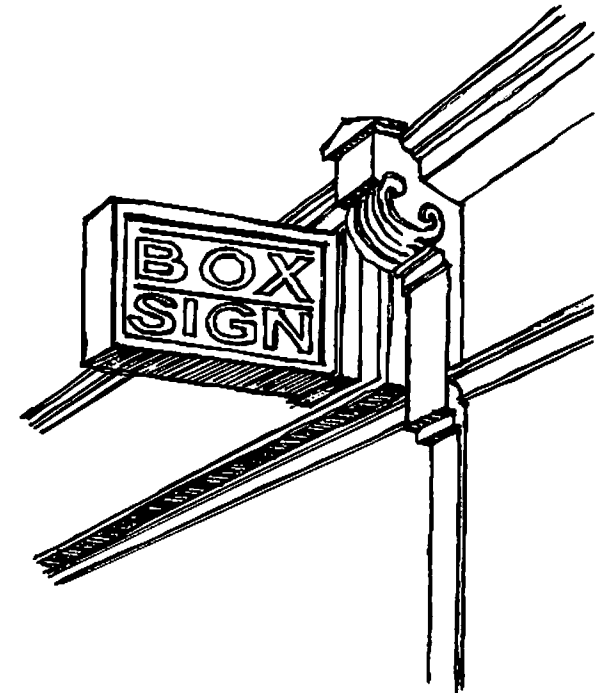
With both hanging and projecting signs, only one sign should normally be provided on each building. The size and design of the sign should relate well to the style of the building and shopfront and be located in a position where it does not detract from, obscure, or damage any architectural features. In many locations the use of glossy or reflectant materials will not be appropriate because they can be particularly intrusive. Signs should also not cause obstruction, annoyance or danger to passers by or to adjoining occupants.



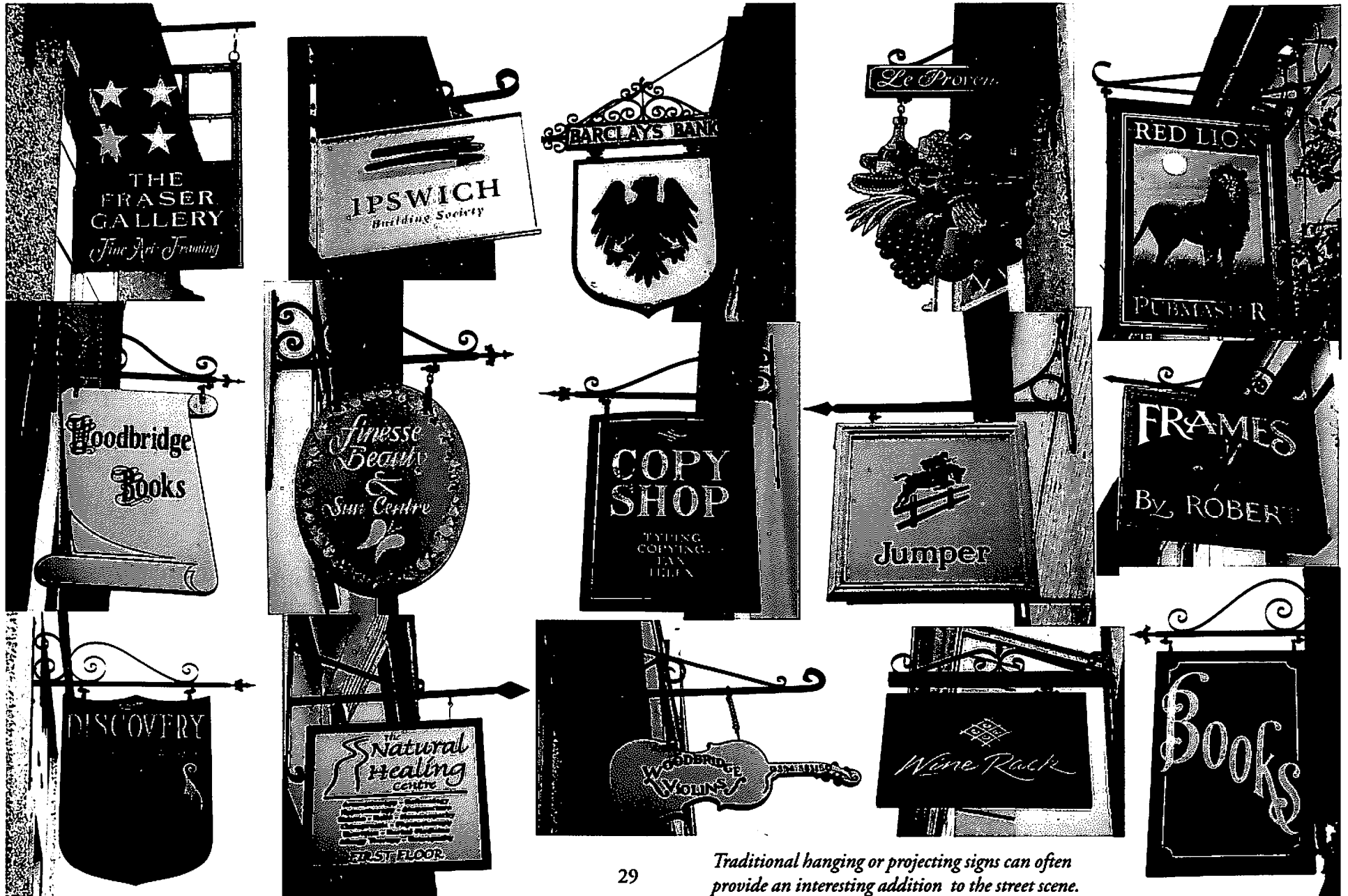
*(Left) A tradition hanging sign with a decorative bracket.*

*(Above) Symbols can be used to emphasise the nature of a business.*

*(Right) As with boxed out fascia signs, modern projecting box signs will not normally be permitted in an historic context.*



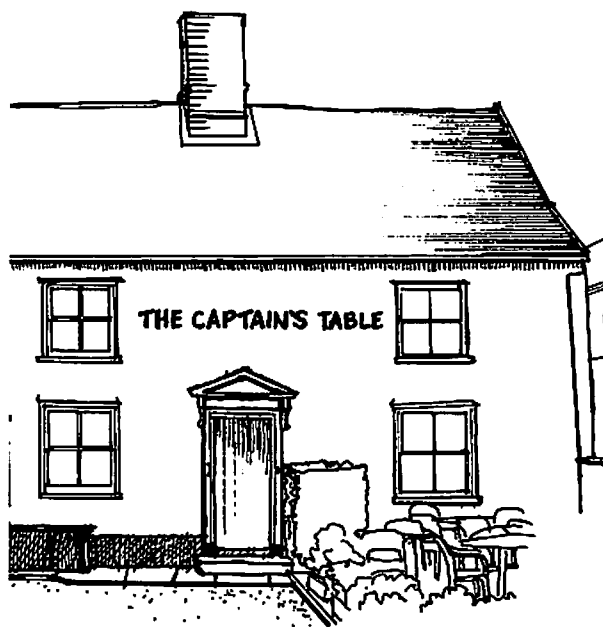
## SECTION 4 SIGNS AND ADVERTISEMENTS



## SECTION 4 SIGNS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

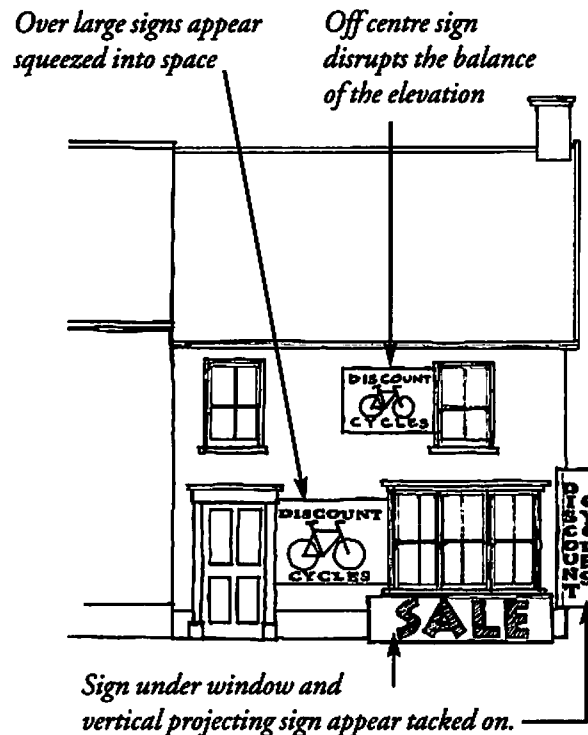
### 4.8 OTHER SIGNS ON BUILDINGS

In some instances a building may not have a shopfront or has a shopfront without a fascia. Careful consideration must then be given to the location and design of any signage so that it does not undermine the character and appearance of the building. As with fascia signs, the style, architectural detailing and proportions of the building all have to be taken into account.



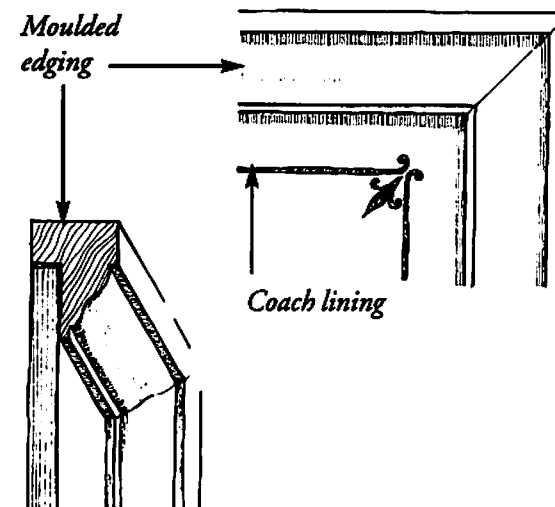
*Sign writing directly on a rendered or already painted wall can sometimes be appropriate.*

Because there is an historic precedent for it, in some instances signwriting directly onto a plastered or already painted wall may be acceptable. Painted timber boards also have a historic precedent but they should not be over large and should normally have a proper moulded edging. On most older, traditional buildings, the use of glossy or reflective materials for signs, such as acrylic, plastic or shiny metals will not be appropriate.



*The shape and location of applied board signs need careful consideration.*

Where individually applied lettering is proposed it is important that it is made out of the right sort of material and the design and method of fixing is appropriate. For example, certain types of metal or plastic letters on spacer bars can appear too thin. Even those with returns can often appear insubstantial. When finished with a reflective surface or a bright colour, they can also look gaudy or over dominant.



*Painted timber boards should normally have a proper moulded edging, coach lining will also be appropriate in many instances.*

## SECTION 4 SIGNS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

### 4.9 LETTERING

The style of lettering used can create a certain image and provide strong and decorative interest. It can also have a detrimental impact upon a building and the street scene by being out of scale or character, the wrong colour, or just plain garish.

Often businesses have standard typefaces and colours for lettering on stationery, carrier bags, company vehicles etc. They also make use of logos. Attempting to apply these graphics to a building or shopfront without adapting them can, in many instances, be visually quite disastrous. Whilst lettering can be chosen to reflect the use of the building and the particular business which occupies it, it should also respect the character of the building and the street scene generally.

Traditional sign painters know various ways of increasing the impact lettering regardless of size. Light lettering on a dark background helps it to stand out, particular typefaces are easier to read, and shadowing, or similar techniques, can create a three dimensional effect.



## SECTION 4 SIGNS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

### 4.10 BUSINESS NAMEPLATES

Where offices or business premises are above street level or in cases where a traditional shopfront type window does not exist, one means of signage is to have a nameplate next to the street entrance. Normally these would be small brass plates, or recently stainless steel or aluminium has been used.

On historic buildings, especially those that are Listed, there should normally be a maximum of one plate for each business. Where several businesses are involved it may be necessary to have one joint nameplate. Further information can often be provided within an entrance lobby. Shiny plastic nameplates will not be appropriate on Listed buildings.

*A discreet combination of small small business name plates and an interesting design on the window overcomes the problem of signage on this narrow fronted property in Aldeburgh.*



### 4.11 ILLUMINATION

In most instances the illumination of signs on buildings requires Advertisement Consent from the Local Planning Authority. Planning Permission is also often required for placing lights onto the exterior of a building if it materially affects its appearance and Listed Building Consent will usually be required because the lights will affect the character of a Listed building.

Lighting in town and village centres needs very careful consideration. On the one hand the highlighting of key buildings and spaces can be important for a safe and attractive night-time environment. On the other, light pollution, in both rural and urban areas, is a growing problem.

Generally, street lights, combined with light from shops, should be adequate for trading purposes and enough to make fascias and other signs readable, so separate illumination may not be necessary. In many cases, therefore, the illumination of a sign or advertisement which makes it stand out from its surroundings in an intrusive way will not be acceptable.

In some instances, however, the appropriate illumination of a sign can contribute to a particular street where it is satisfactorily integrated into the overall design of the building or shopfront. Where lighting is acceptable, the level of illumination will require careful consideration and the source of the light should be as discreet as possible, whether it be on the building itself or at ground level.

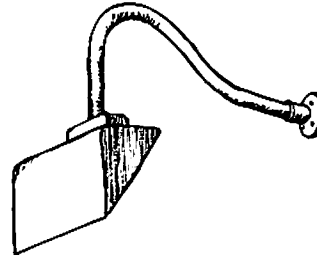


## SECTION 4 SIGNS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

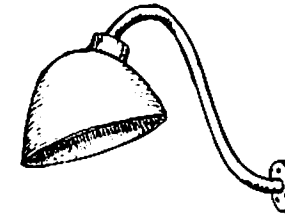
Where a business is open regularly in the evening, some illumination may be justified by, for example, small spotlights or a small striplight hidden by a metal trough. Halo lighting though, which involves the light source being concealed behind individual letters which stand proud of the fascia, is a modern device which can appear out of place in historic areas or on historic buildings. Similarly, in such locations, internally illuminated box fascia and projecting signs, fluorescent lighting and individually illuminated letters can appear very intrusive and are unlikely, therefore to be suitable.

The appearance of external light fittings themselves can often have more of an impact, visually, than the sign they are supposed to be illuminating. A number of large, shiny metal swan-neck lights on a building, for example, can be very obtrusive, not only undermining the appearance of the building itself but also the surrounding townscape.

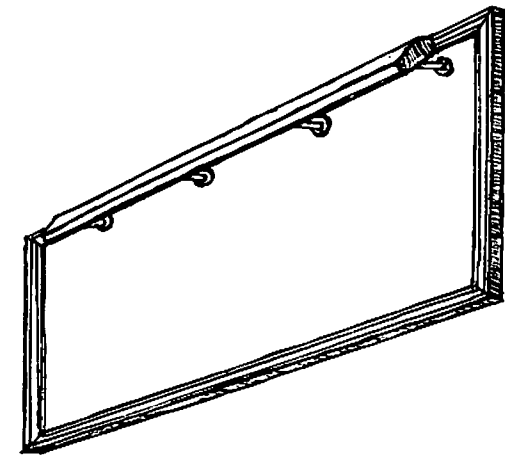
**ADVICE : ILLUMINATION** - The District Council will only grant consent for illuminated signs or advertisements where there is a functional need for the illumination and it is sympathetic to the character and appearance of the premises and the locality. Whilst special regard will be paid to illumination in conservation areas and on Listed buildings, the Council will also be seeking to strictly control illuminated signage elsewhere.



*Discreetly located uplighters or small spot lights (such as that show left and below) may prove acceptable in some instances. The colour and finish of the light fitting will, however, need to be carefully considered.*



*Trough lighting on hanging signs is a traditional feature on Pubs.*



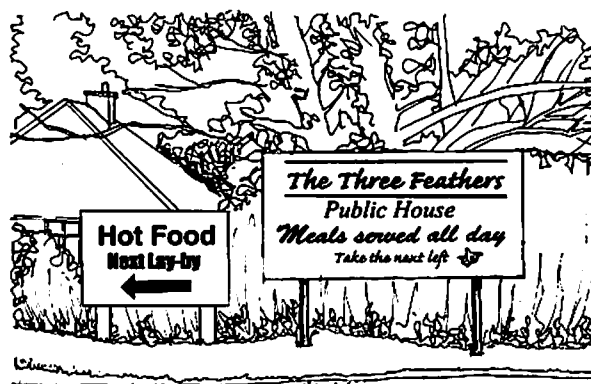
*Trough lighting for illuminating applied board signs may also be justified.*

## SECTION 4 SIGNS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

### 4.12 DIRECTIONAL SIGNS AND "A" BOARDS

The erection of advertising signs in locations away from the business concerned is in most instances unacceptable because it adds to visual clutter and would undermine the appearance of settlements and the countryside. If not properly controlled such advertising could get out of hand with businesses vying with each other to attract trade.

In certain instances major problems are caused by a businesses being located in a secondary street and customers not able to find the premises. An exception to the normal policy may then be made. In order for an advance warning sign to be



*A proliferation of advanced warning and directional signs can have a major impact on the character and appearance of an area*

acceptable however, there should be exceptional circumstances which justify the need. There must also be a suitable site, the sign should be of an appropriate size, and should be designed so as not to detract from the character and appearance of its surroundings.

Free standing "A" boards are often displayed outside businesses in order to attract custom. In some locations a well-designed board, especially those placed on a private forecourt, may be appropriate in townscape terms. However, the unauthorised positioning of such signs, particularly on the highway, can be dangerous as well as being visually intrusive. In some circumstances, therefore, the



*"A" boards not only add to visual clutter but can also create hazards for pedestrians.*

County Council as Highway Authority may take action to seek their removal on highway safety grounds.

**ADVICE : DIRECTIONAL SIGNS AND "A" BOARDS** - The District Council will, in order to protect the character and appearance of towns, villages and the countryside, strictly control free standing signs and advertisements, especially in locations unrelated to the premises concerned. Consent for advance warning and directional signs will only be given in exceptional circumstances and the Council will take steps to remove any unauthorised signs which are visually intrusive.

### 4.13 GARAGES AND OTHER DRIVE-IN FACILITIES

Petrol filling stations, garages, car sales sites, drive-in restaurants, retail warehouses, and other similar concerns, can be unduly intrusive in virtually any location. Whilst such businesses often need to forewarn approaching drivers of their existence, especially on busy or fast roads, this has often been used as an excuse for excessive, overlarge and highly illuminated advertising. Compounding this problem is the corporate design and advertising approach that has been adopted by the larger companies.

## SECTION 4 SIGNS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

Canopies over garage forecourts, for example, because of their form, size and scale can be a particularly unattractive feature in the street scene. This can be further exacerbated by colours, signs and lighting so that the canopy itself appears as one big advert.

Bright lighting under the canopy can draw attention not only to the canopy but also the forecourt and all the paraphernalia on it. The free-standing frontage signs for the petrol station, which are inevitably large and internally illuminated, always forms a dominant feature in the street scene.

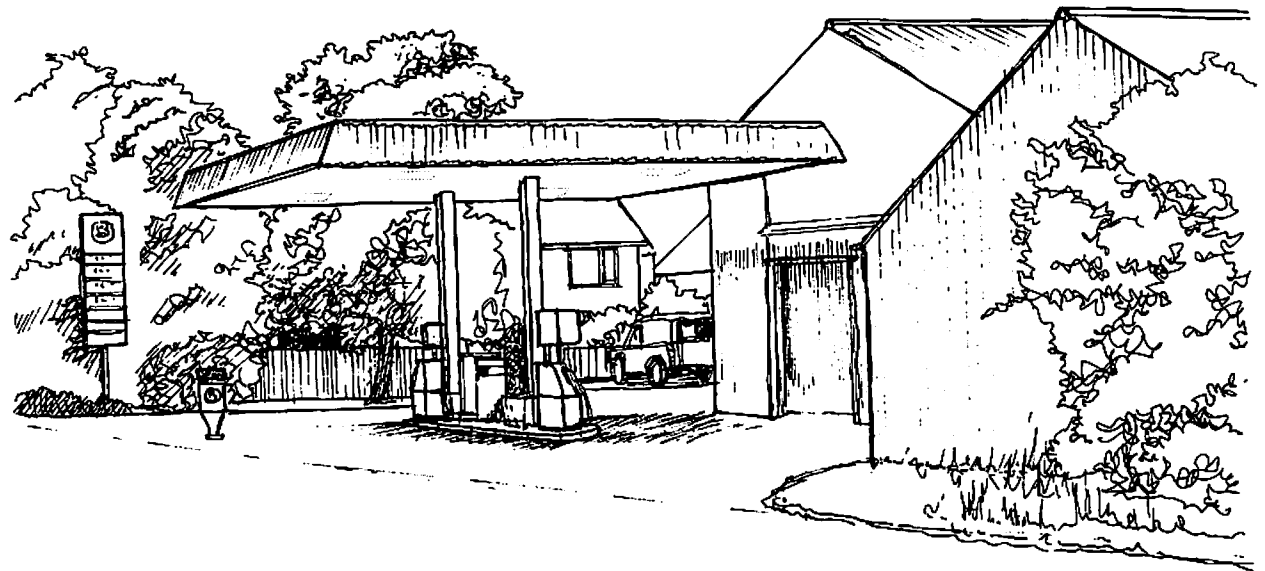
Although petrol filling stations are often the most intrusive, other uses, such as car sales sites, drive-in restaurants, and retail warehouses create similar problems in terms of their impact. Features such as kiosks, security lighting, flags, banners, large adverts, the use of synthetic materials, such as plastic, as well as standard corporate style signage, buildings and other structures, invariably combine to create developments which show scant regard for the character and appearance of the locality.

Given the high quality townscape and landscape of the area, the District Council is concerned about the impact of these facilities. Therefore, any new proposals or alterations to existing sites will be given very careful scrutiny.

Proposals will be expected to be integrated successfully into their surroundings in a way which does not have an adverse impact. In areas where the surrounding buildings are predominantly small

scale, such as residential streets or where traditional buildings predominate, designs will be required to be suitably low key. Similar solutions will be necessary in the open countryside and in specially designated areas such as the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or conservation areas. The affect of such developments on the setting of any Listed buildings will also have to be an important consideration. In all instances the size and type of signs and advertising and the level of illumination will be strictly controlled.

**ADVICE : DRIVE IN FACILITIES -** The District Council will expect garages, drive-in restaurants, car sales sites and similar facilities to be of a high standard of design, suitable to the architectural and landscape quality of the area. Whilst highway safety will be a consideration, the Council will exert strict control over signs, advertising and levels of illumination.



*A garage forecourt and canopy in Orford. This is a refreshingly restrained approach on a site on the edge of this picturesque village. All too often garages and other drive in facilities are unnecessarily obtrusive, their poor design being exacerbated by excessive signage, advertisements and high levels of illumination.*

## SECTION 5 SECURITY, SAFETY AND ACCESS

### 5.1 GENERAL

Today shops have to be able to display their goods openly as well as meeting the need for increased security, public safety and disabled access. These latter requirements can potentially have an adverse impact on the appearance of a shopfront and the street scene. Great care is therefore needed to produce sensitive and appropriate design solutions.

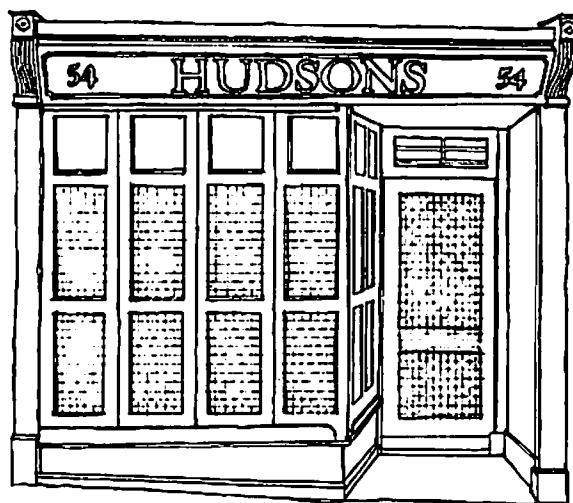
### 5.2 GLASS

Many old shopfronts still have their original glass. Some have decorative glass which has been etched or is coloured. Both decorative and historic glass should be retained wherever possible and in some instances, especially if the building is Listed, permission will be required for its removal or replacement.

Increasingly, the choice of the type of glass used on shopfronts is being dictated by the need for safety and security. Toughened and laminated glass, or in some instances, an even stronger glass, can now be specified. This, perhaps with the use of small paned windows, can avoid the need for the installation of the more intrusive types of security shutters or grilles.

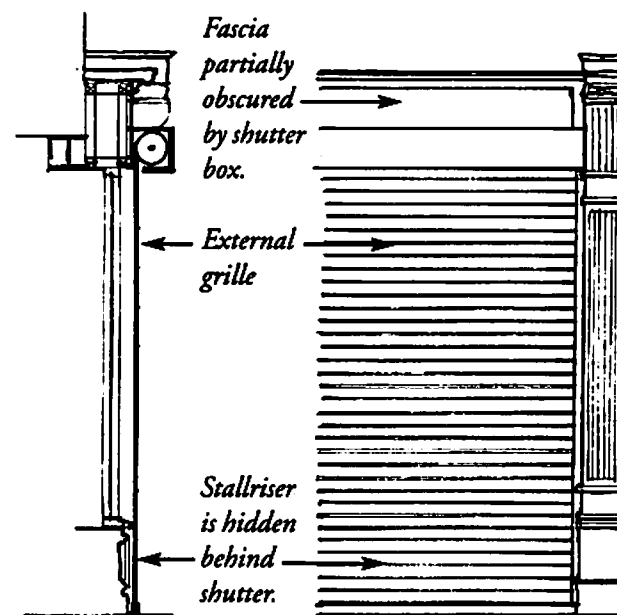
### 5.3 SECURITY SHUTTERS AND GRILLES

Traditionally, shops would have been secured at night with the use of external removable wooden shutters. In most cases the shop would have been designed to accommodate these and they formed an integral part of the character and appearance of the shopfront. Where these traditional shutters survive, especially if they are original, they form an important part of the history of the building and should therefore be retained.



*This attractive historic shopfront in the Thoroughfare, Woodbridge, incorporates removable wood and metal shutters.*

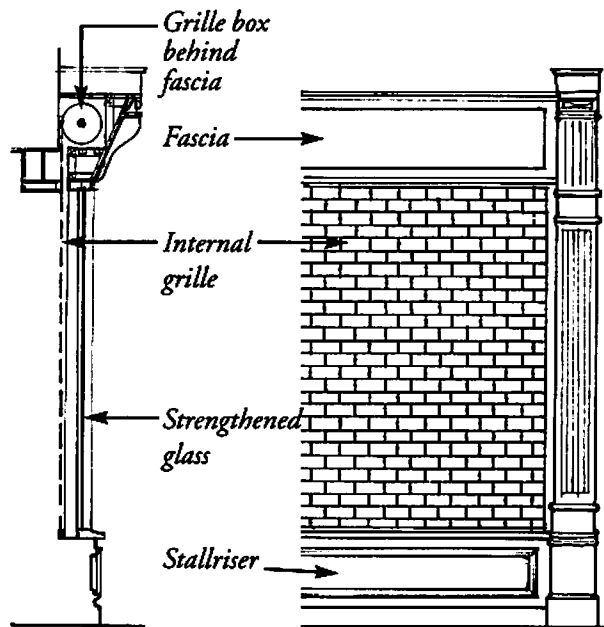
The appearance of an existing shopfront can, however, be a dramatically altered by the attachment of modern external security shutters. Even when raised or removed, roller shutter boxes, fixings and side rails are still clearly visible. When lowered or fixed the whole frontage may be obscured. This can have a blank, sterile effect on the street scene, giving the area the feeling of being "boarded up". The effect can be particularly noticeable at night or during the weekend when an unwelcoming atmosphere is created for those who still want to use the area's facilities.



*A modern externally mounted security shutter. Such features are often not particularly well designed and can be a very obtrusive feature in the street scene.*

## SECTION 5 SECURITY, SAFETY AND ACCESS

The use of solid metal shutters, as a result, is generally unacceptable, particularly in a conservation area. Traders will be expected, where security is a problem, to consider other methods or to incorporate grilles in a manner which does not detract from the appearance of the shopfront. Externally mounted housings, grille channels etc will only be acceptable if they can be concealed within the shopfront construction as an integral part of the design and not applied over existing details. In most instances though, grilles will have to be placed behind the glass.

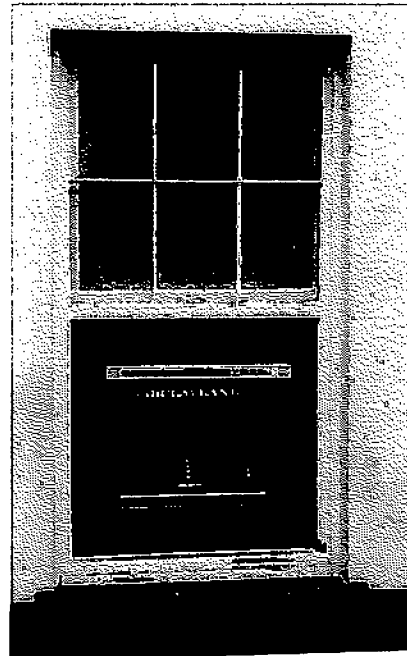


*Internal roller grilles located behind the glass are preferable to external devices. The example above shows the roller grille mechanism incorporated behind the fascia.*

### 5.4 BURGLAR ALARMS, SECURITY CAMERAS AND CASH DISPENSERS

Alarm boxes should be small, positioned carefully, and be sited so as not to obscure or damage the architectural details on the building. They should be painted to suit the colour scheme of the building as a whole.

External security cameras can be quite a prominent feature on the facade of a building and can appear



*The removal of existing architectural features, such as apart of a sash window (above) in order to accommodate a cash dispenser, will not normally be acceptable.*

an incongruous feature in a historic context. Planning Permission will often be required for them to be erected and Listed Building Consent will be required if the building is Listed. Consent will not be given for them if they detract from the character and appearance of the building or the street scene.

Cash dispensers, because of their size and form, can be particularly difficult to successfully integrate into the design of a shopfront. It is even more of a problem when they are added to an existing facade. A preferred solution in design terms is for them to be located within a lobby or entrance. Where they have to be located externally, great care should be taken to ensure that they form an integral part of the design of the frontage. Proposals for poorly located cash machines which detract from the appearance of the building and the character of the street will not be acceptable.

**ADVICE : SECURITY MEASURES -** Whilst taking into account problems associated with security, the District Council will only give permission for external security shutters in exceptional circumstances. Security grilles should normally be placed behind the windows. In all cases, security measures should be incorporated in such a way that they form an appropriate and integral part of the design of a shopfront and/or building.

## SECTION 5 SECURITY, SAFETY AND ACCESS

### 5.5 CANOPIES AND BLINDS

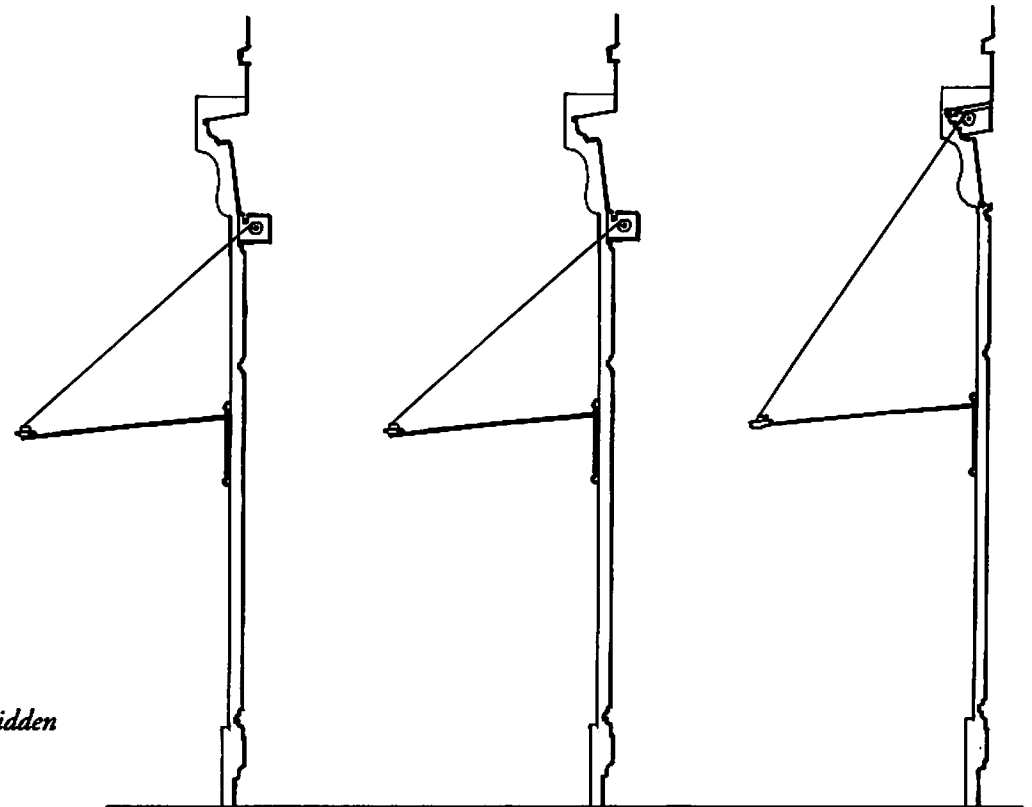
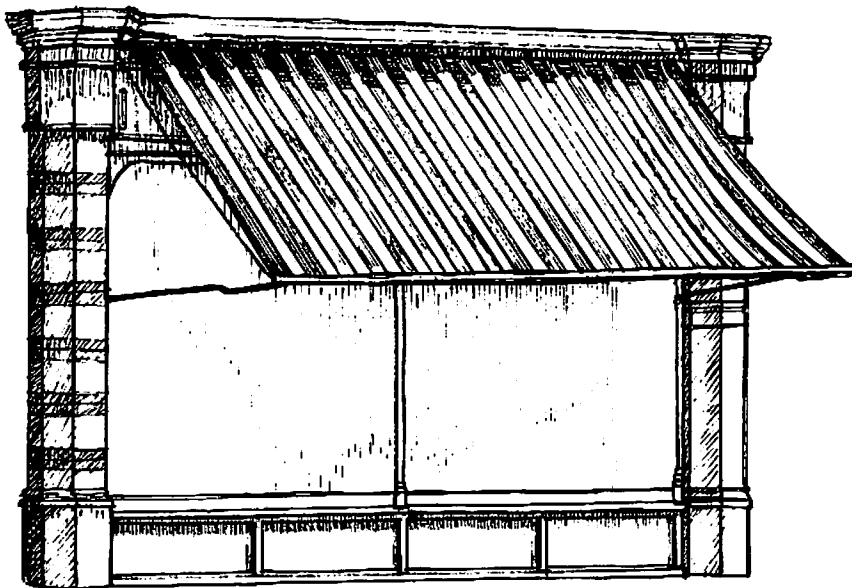
Traditionally, blinds were used to protect goods from being damaged from sunlight and to provide shelter for external displays and shoppers. Normally, there is not the same need for blinds on north facing elevations or in narrow streets. Locally, the most common form of blind was a canvas roller blind that could be retracted fully into a blind box. This was usually concealed as part of the cornice above the fascia.

Canvas roller blinds, with their colourful stripes, formed an attractive feature of the traditional street scene. When pulled down they still allowed a clear view down the street, as the ends were usually open.

Being retractable meant they were only pulled down when required and the fascia, with its signage, and other important parts of the shopfront, were not permanently obscured.

If a historic shopfront still has its original or traditional canvas blind and blind box it should be retained and refurbished. If a new blind needs to be installed, a retractable roller blind of traditional canvas is likely to be the most suitable solution. Careful consideration needs to be given to the location and design of the blind box however.

Fan blinds can be found on some buildings in the District, however they can have quite an impact on



*(Above) An Edwardian shopfront design in Felixstowe. The roller blind box was hidden behind the fascia and cornice.*

*(Right) Alternative locations for blind boxes on traditional shopfronts.*

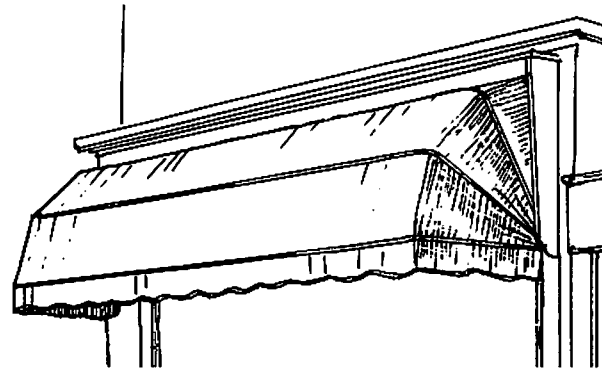
## SECTION 5 SECURITY, SAFETY AND ACCESS

the appearance of the shopfront. Not only do they have covered ends but also when retracted, the folded fabric is not hidden away. The blind arms also remain prominent features. Retractable Dutch blinds are even more problematic.

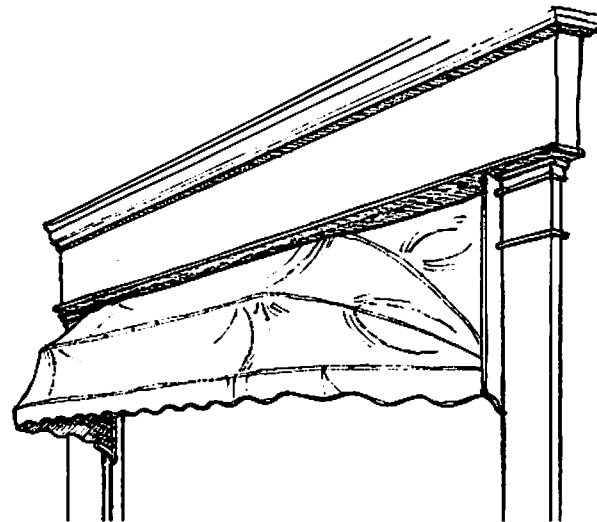
Whilst modern types of canopies may be appropriate in some locations in the District, non-retractable permanently fixed canopies, especially those made of a shiny plastic material will not be suitable for most in historic areas or most traditional shopping streets, especially if they incorporate advertisements. These structures not only often obscure the fascia on shopfronts but also introduce a dominant shape which is out of character with older buildings and the historic street scene.

Some 20th Century buildings may be capable of accommodating modern rigid or retractable blinds. However, as explained above, such features on a building should not be considered in isolation. Account should also be taken of the impact on the street scene and the overall character of the area.

**ADVICE : BLINDS, CANOPIES AND RIGID STRUCTURES** - Blinds, canopies and similar structures which detract from the character and appearance of the shopfront, building or street scene will not be permitted. In traditional locations, or where there is an historic precedent, retractable canvas roller or fan blinds may be acceptable as long as the blind and its housing form an integral part of the shopfront design.



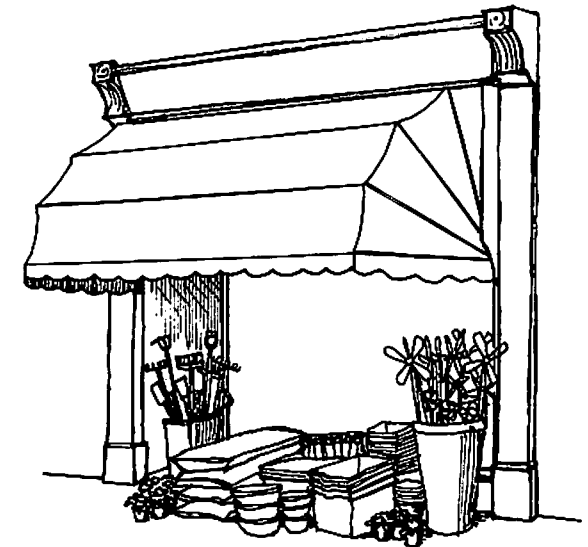
*A fan blind*



*A dutch blind*

### 5.6 FORECOURTS

The display of goods or signs on the forecourt of premises can give a street a cluttered appearance and obstruct the pavement causing problems to people with disabilities, especially the blind and partially sighted. However, there may be exceptions, for example, where there has been a long tradition of external displays on a private forecourt or where a forecourt is suitable for use as a pavement cafe. Where they do not inconvenience adjoining users, are not dangerous, or cause disturbance, such uses can add life and vitality to an area.

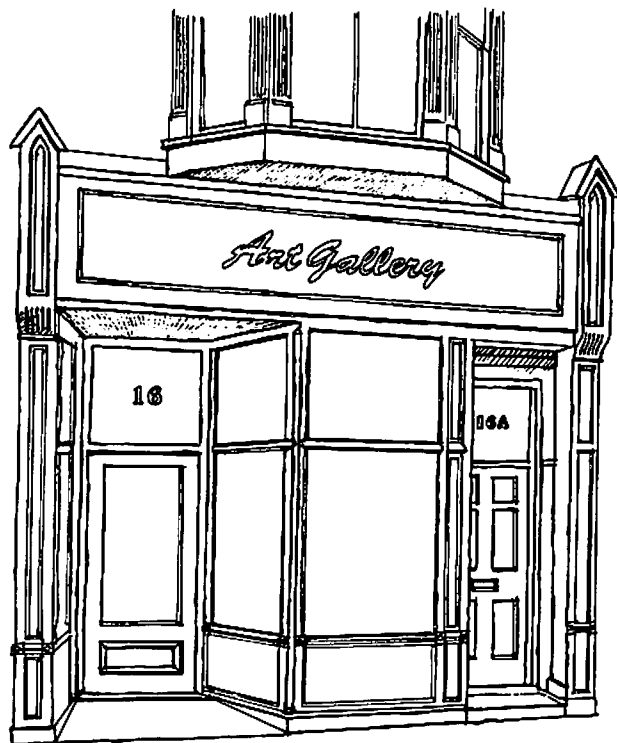


*Displays of goods in front of business premises may be appropriate in some circumstances. They will, however, be discouraged where they adversely affect the character and appearance of the area. Action may be taken by the Highway Authority if displays cause an obstruction.*

## SECTION 5 SECURITY, SAFETY AND ACCESS

### 5.7 UPPER FLOORS

Traditionally, the accommodation over shops in town centres was occupied by the shopkeepers but now this is rare. In fact much of this space is either under-used or not used at all. In many instances where the upper floors are left empty this is combined with a lack of maintenance and neglect. The consequence is deterioration of the building leading to the need for extensive repairs.



*This well designed replacement shopfront retains a separate access to the floors above.*

Original shopfronts often incorporated a second doorway giving access to upper floors. This layout should be retained whenever possible even though the desire to increase floorspace in the shop makes it tempting to remove. This sort of change leads to the removal of the door and the staircase leaving the upper floors with no means of independent access or creates the need to erect an unattractive external stairway.

The District Council wishes to promote the use of upper floors in shops and business premises, especially for residential use. Making use of existing floor space will help to increase the area's housing stock. The existence of living accommodation will also mean that town centres will retain their vitality when shops are closed and the street as a whole will have increased surveillance thereby improving security and safety.

### 5.8 ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

New shopfronts must meet current Building Regulations and other legislation covering the needs of people with disabilities. Proposals for both new shopfronts and alterations to existing ones should be such that they meet the requirements, whilst still achieving a high standard of design.

On Listed buildings and buildings with historic shopfronts, the needs of the people with disabilities

have to be taken into account. However, proposals need to be considered against the requirement to preserve the special architectural and historic character of the building.

As a general principle changes in level should be avoided. Sometimes ramps may have to be provided but they will need very careful consideration as they can be particularly intrusive in terms of their impact upon the appearance of the building and the street.

Doors, need to be of adequate width and capable of being open by people in wheelchairs as well as those who have limited strength or are unsteady on their feet. Often two-way swing doors are useful, as some people find it easier to push a door rather than pull it towards them. Where pairs of doors are proposed, one of the leaves ought to be wide enough for wheelchair user to obtain access without having to open both doors.

Frameless glass doors may prove dangerous to the partially sighted, conversely solid doors should have a glass panel included so people can see and be seen. Revolving doors should not be used as the only means of access.



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## SECTION 6 LEGISLATION

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### 6.1 GENERAL

Most alterations to shopfronts will require consent of some form, either one or more of the following: Planning Permission, Conservation Area Consent, Listed Building Consent, Advertisement Consent or Approval under the Building Regulations. When applications are submitted to the Planning Authority, for either building works or for the display of signage, drawings showing the whole of the front of the building (and in some cases other elevations if relevant), should be included. They should illustrate the building as existing and as proposed, as well as the detailing, materials and colours.

### 6.2 PLANNING PERMISSION

This will be necessary to carry out any works which involve a material change in the external appearance of a building.

Planning Permission is likely be required for the following examples:

- \* The replacement of a shop door with another of a different design and/or different material,
- \* Changing the size of the shop doorway and/or its position
- \* Altering the window area size
- \* Increasing the size or projection of the fascia,

- \* The addition or removal of glazing bars
- \* Replacement of window frames or bars with a different design and/or material
- \* Installation of security shutters, blinds or reflective/obscure glass
- \* Covering up existing pilasters, stallrisers etc
- \* Any change to the line of the frontage, for example, the removal of a recessed doorway

Therefore, apart from straightforward repairs or replacement with a replica design made with the same materials, Planning Permission will be required for most external alterations.

### 6.3 CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT

This is needed to carry out substantial demolition of an unlisted property or structure in a conservation area.

### 6.4 LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

Any alteration to a Listed building which affects its character as a building of special or historic interest needs consent.

The following would normally require consent:

- \* The removal of, or alterations to, an existing shopfront

- \* The removal of, or alterations to architectural features such as the fascia, pilasters, stallrisers, windows, brickwork, blinds or decorative tiles
- \* The installation of a new shopfront
- \* The display of advertisements or signs on the building
- \* Installing external meter boxes, extractor fans or pipework
- \* Installing a security shutter or grille or an external security camera
- \* Painting a previously unpainted facade or repainting in a colour which affects the character of the building.
- \* Alterations to the interior

It is strongly advised that contact be made with the Development Control Section of the Planning and Leisure Department before carrying out any alterations to a Listed Building. Undertaking unauthorised works is a criminal offence.

### 6.5 ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT

Consent under the Regulations controlling advertisements is required for the display of many signs. Virtually all advertisements which are illuminated will need permission whether lit internally or externally. The Advertisement

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## SECTION 6 LEGISLATION

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Regulations are complex and it is not possible to fully explain the legislation within the scope of this document. Advice should be sought from the Development Control Section of the Planning and Leisure Department

### 6.6 BUILDING REGULATIONS APPROVAL

This may be required whether or not any of the above Consents are needed for the work you propose, so check with the Building Control Group within the Planning and Leisure Department before commencing any work.

### 6.7 MAKING APPLICATIONS TO THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY

In order that the Local Planning Authority can process applications without unnecessary delay it is important that sufficient information is submitted right from the start. What is required is for applications to provide clear and accurate details of what exists on the site at the moment, what changes are proposed and what the finished scheme will look like.

The information will need to be understood by Planning Officers, Councillors and any interested third parties, such as adjacent owners and

occupiers, town and parish councils and local amenity societies.

Applications for Planning Permission, Conservation Area Consent or Listed Building Consent involving works to alter, extend or replace a shopfront or any other part of the exterior of a building, should be accompanied by;

(i) Detailed plans and elevational drawings of the existing building, usually at a scale no smaller than 1:50. The drawings should show all the existing architectural features and fenestration of the building, as well as the relevant details of the adjoining properties.

(ii) Similarly detailed drawings of the building as proposed clearly showing all the changes that are to take place.

(iii) Sectional drawings through the relevant parts of the building showing position of walls, shopfronts, windows, doors etc. as existing and proposed, to the same scale as above.

(iv) Plans, elevations and sections at larger scales showing the detailing of windows, doors, stallrisers, fascias, pilasters, cornices etc..

(v) A full schedule of all the existing and proposed materials, finishes and colours (including British Standard numbers).

(vi) An annotated set of photographs showing the building in context and all the areas where changes are proposed.

Applications for Advertisement Consent should include drawings of the whole shopfront with the design, size and colour of all letters, signs and symbols accurately shown. Detailed sections of the proposed signs will often be necessary, as will samples of materials. If signs are to be illuminated, information regarding the type and level of illumination, will be required. Photographs showing the shopfront and building in the street scene should also be submitted.

For further information please contact the District Council's Development Control Section.