



WHY IS GOOD SHOPFRONT DESIGN IMPORTANT?

A good shopfront can make a street more attractive to shoppers and visitors and can have a big impact on the feel of a street. There are many historic shopfronts which add to the distinctive character of market towns and villages and these should be preserved. Keeping the historic appearance of a shopfront can benefit users, owners and improve tourism. Shopfronts with a good design help to:

- Create a positive shopping experience;
- Increase property value, footfall and sales;
- Create a local shopping community;
- Improve public safety; and
- Promote new investment and long-term sustainability.

The guidance provided below, particularly the section on display and signage, is also relevant for other types of commercial unit, such as pubs and offices.

WHAT WORKS TO COMMERCIAL UNITS REQUIRE PLANNING PERMISSION?

Like-for-like changes (those which are carried out in the same materials and techniques as the existing) or painting a shopfront (unless for the purposes of advertisement) do not normally require permission. Like-for-like repairs to good historic shopfronts using traditional materials should be prioritised over altering or replacing a shopfront. **Replacing a shopfront will require Planning Permission.**

Advertising Consent will be required for some changes to signage. This includes where signage is more than 1.55m² in size. The application of vinyl stickers to shopfronts also requires advertisement consent and is unlikely to be supported.

Buildings within and outside Conservation Areas can also be 'Listed'. Listed Building Consent will be needed for most changes to the inside and outside of Listed Buildings, including shopfronts. It is possible for a shopfront to be both Listed and within a Conservation Area. If unsure, it is always best to check with East Suffolk Council.

WHAT ARE THE KEY FEATURES OF A GOOD SHOP FRONT?

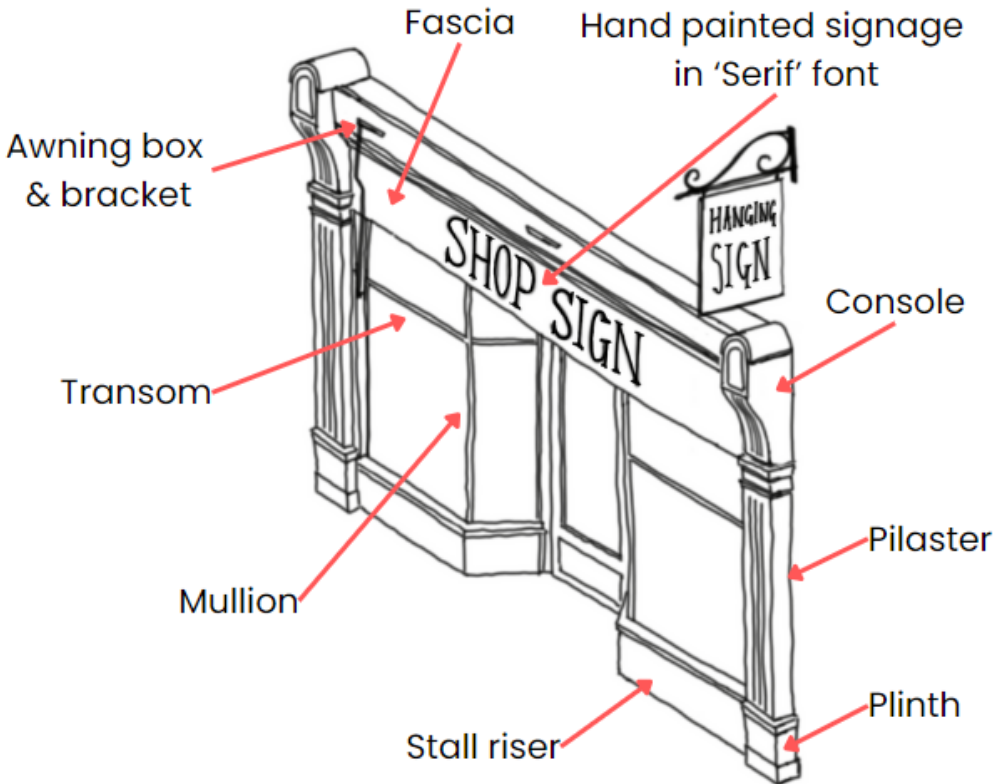
There are many historic market towns and villages in East Suffolk which have a large number of shops which still benefit from heritage features. Where original features survive, their retention is encouraged by the Council.

A common feature of the Victorian shop frontages for example is the use of short double brackets to consoles (at the top of the pilaster either side of the fascia). Shop entrances are often set back into the shop to increase window display area.

Materials

The materials used can influence the appearance of a shopfront. Painted timber is typically the traditional shopfront material, with a panelled or rendered stallriser. Tiled shopfronts may be appropriate. Historic glass and glazing bars contribute to the appearance of the shop and should be maintained. Modern materials such as varnished, natural or stained wood, rustic stonework, ceramic products, plastic sheets and plastic-coated metals should be avoided.

Modern aluminium designs are also not appropriate. These materials are too glossy and do not blend in with the natural materials and textures of a historic shopfront. The use of a plastic fascia and projecting box signs are also out of place on historic shopfronts.



Display and Signage

The window display also has a big impact on a shopfront and can attract customers inside. Vinyl stickers and laminated posters require advertisement consent and should be avoided as they prevent visibility inside.

Shopfront signs contribute to the appearance of the shop. Lettering on signs should be a serif font as they are easier to read. Free-standing metal or cut-out wooden letters can add depth to a sign. Hand painted lettering can also provide visual interest.

Plastic fascias, internally illuminated and projecting box shop signs are inappropriate and should not be used. Instead, externally attached lighting of subtle design may be acceptable. This could include a slim LED strip light above the fascia, soft halo lighting behind individual letters or a small number of appropriately located spotlights.

Colour

The chosen colour of a shopfront should fit in with the rest of the building and the street. Rich, traditional colours or pastel tones are generally appropriate, avoiding the use of overly bright colours.

Security

External shutters require planning permission and are generally not supported as they deaden the street scene and create an unwelcoming shopping environment. Internal security grilles are sometimes suitable as they are less obvious from the outside.

WHERE CAN I GET FURTHER ADVICE ON MY PROPOSALS?

If you are unsure whether works need permission, it is always best to ask the Council for advice before starting works. The Council offers pre-application advice which will give you guidance about whether permission is needed, if you are likely to get permission and if any changes should be made to the design to improve your chances of permission being granted.

WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION?

For planning advice or to enquire whether proposals need planning permission: www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning

Find out more about the Council's Heritage services, including information on Conservation Areas here: www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/heritage

For information about how East Suffolk Council can support your business, visit: www.eastsuffolkmeansbusiness.co.uk