SHOPFRONT DESIGN GUIDE - CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

Purpose of the Guide

This is the consultation document for the Shopfront Design Guide.

This Design Guide establishes the concept of good design principles within the historic environment and best conservation design practice. It specifically focuses on shopfronts, forecourts and upper façades to capitalise on the rich and diverse history of Bruce Grove, using this as a catalyst for wider economic and social regeneration. This will make a more attractive, engaging and vibrant place for people to live, work and spend time.

Scope of the Guide

This Design Guide deals specifically with shopfronts, forecourts and upper facades. For other elements such as extensions and roof conversions refer to the Bruce Grove Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

Where Does the Guide Apply?

This Design Guide is a product of the High Streets Heritage Action Zone (HS HAZ) programme. The programme aims to improve the look and feel of the Bruce Grove Conservation Area through investment in historic buildings. The design principles contained in the guide are also relevant to adjoining areas, since the historic environment is continuous and not necessarily defined by the conservation area boundary.

Who Should Use the Guide?

- Owners & tenants of properties with the Bruce Grove Conservation Area (BGCA) who are considering:
  - Alterations / replacement of a shopfront or signage
  - Alterations to building façades
  - Alterations to forecourts or boundary treatments (walls / railings / fences)
- Owners / tenants of premises who may be outside of the BGCA but are interested in making alterations according to good design principles within the historic environment and best conservation design practice.



103 Bruce Grove, 1910



103 Bruce Grove, today

SHOPFRONT DESIGN GUIDE

Features of a Good Shopfront



Upper storey of host building remains visible

Hand-painted sign occupying a compact area of the fascia

Shop number visible

Awning contained within box flush to shop window

No shutters or grille-type shutters fixed internally to remove clutter externally and maintain views within shop when closed - enlivens street scene and improves security through natural surveillance

Level access into shop unit

Concealed lighting within cornice/ architrave

Fascia framed by console brackets with cornice to top/ architrave to bottom

Retained/ restored architectural features e.g. console brackets/ pilasters/ plinth

Services installations concealed

Transom lights to upper part of window

Shop window divided into individual sections with mullions and transoms; timber framing to glazing

Stallriser at bottom of window

A well-designed shopfront will enhance existing features and make the shop more inviting and serve as an advertisement for the quality of goods and services that are provided inside, as well as enriching the wider streetscape and environment.

SHOPFRONT DESIGN GUIDE

Features of a Bad Shopfront



Upper windows obscured by sign

Oversized sign writing dominating the street scene and with product logos

Solid shutters giving an impression of abandonment and providing a blank canvas for graffiti

Step up into shop

Architectural features concealed or removed

Oversized internally illuminated sign box projecting from shopfront and obscuring architectural features

Surface-mounted awning box

Surface-mounted security shutters with runners concealing architectural features

Large pane glazing at odds with host building and creating impression of a 'gap' at the bottom storey of the building

Signage occupying a high percentage of shop window and obscuring views inside

No stallriser; glazing down to ground level

Poorly-designed shopfronts obscure original features and confuse the goods and services on offer, adding to visual clutter and impacting negatively on the local area.

HOW TO DESIGN A SHOPFRONT

Design Principles

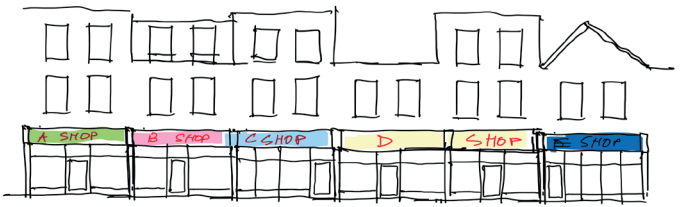
This section of the design guide sets out the general principles that should be applied to the design of new shopfronts. If you follow those basic guidelines you will find getting consent for your shopfront much easier.

Shopfront in Context with the Streetscape

It is important to consider the effect of the design on the rest of the street and local area. Proportions, materials and details should maintain and reflect the local variations as appropriate. The shopfront should not seek attention or dominate its surroundings unnecessarily.

Shopfront designs should include reference proportions, materials and details of the area. The width of the street and height of the buildings generate an appropriate scale for shop fronts.

The rhythm of the street should be considered to ensure that any new or altered shopfront fits into the existing pattern, or where this has been subverted or lost, recreates or responds to the original.



✓ *Shopfronts should not dominate the street. The rhythm of the street should be considered with the natural breaks between buildings maintained. Fascia signs should not encroach on the buildings above. Colours can be bright but employ standard tones. Dividing shop windows into smaller panes maintains the relationship with the building above and the rhythm of the street. By working together shop owners can create a strong common theme with a simple clear design. As well as working well individually, this establishes a character for an area providing identity and generating interest and commercial activity through increased footfall.*



✗ *The street pattern is interrupted by oversized signs that encroach on the buildings above and extend across several units. Garish colours seek to dominate the street and large expanses of glass create 'voids' that unbalance the relationship between the shop and the building above and the wider street. Overall the individual identity of the shops and cohesion of the street is lost in visual clutter which can have a negative impact on the area and put off customers.*

HOW TO DESIGN A SHOPFRONT

Enhancing Historical & Architectural Character; Retaining/Restoring and Exposing Surviving Historic Features

Where historic features survive they should not be removed or covered by any new proposal. Wherever possible they should be revealed and restored, and where lost they are encouraged to be reinstated.

Within the Conservation Area proposals for shop fronts and advertisements require planning applications. A consideration for these is that proposals should preserve or enhance their surrounding environment and historic and architectural features. Where proposals are not considered to achieve this, for instance by obscuring historic features or by a design solution that is at odds with the historic surroundings, they may need to be adapted to protect or enhance its character.



Retained and restored original features provide clarity to individual components and cohesion to the shopfront design, adding to the character of the shopfront and wider area



Missing features should be reinstated to restore, preserve and enhance the wider environment.



The original awning box and fascia sign have been neglected in favour of a new sign and blind which obscure original fabric and adds a bulky profile to the shopfront.



The original cornice, fascia and architrave have been obscured by the modern bulky sign

HOW TO DESIGN A SHOPFRONT

Materials

Materials should be selected with the character of the rest of the building in mind.

As a general principle, the type and number of materials use be kept to a minimum, and they should be durable and easily maintained. Shiny reflective material such as acrylic or plastic, or lurid colours, should be avoided.



Traditional shopfronts are normally painted softwood. These can be easily repaired if decayed, and with proper maintenance can last indefinitely. In conservation areas and listed buildings, timber and other traditional materials are most appropriate.

Windows with timber frames should be broken down into individual panes. This maintains the historic character and can also improve security.



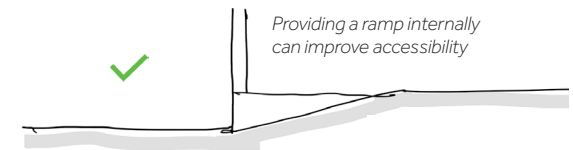
The type and number of materials should be kept to a minimum. Aluminium shopfronts have square-edged profiles that are often unsuitable for use on historic buildings. Aluminium frames are difficult to redecorate and repair, in contrast with timber, which can be easily repaired and maintained and will last indefinitely.

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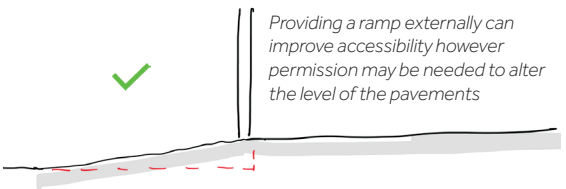
Accessibility

Level access should be provided if possible to accommodate the needs of people with limited mobility, as well as people with pushchairs.

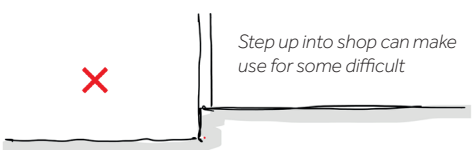
Doors should be wide enough for wheelchair access (typically a clear opening width of 900mm). Some historic shopfronts may not be able to accommodate this without detriment to their character and appearance, so innovative solutions need to be sought.



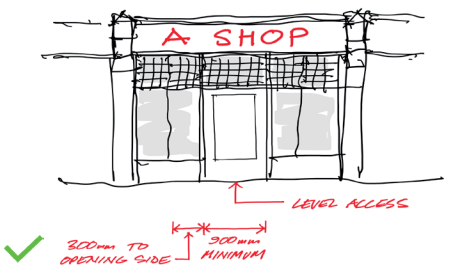
Providing a ramp internally can improve accessibility

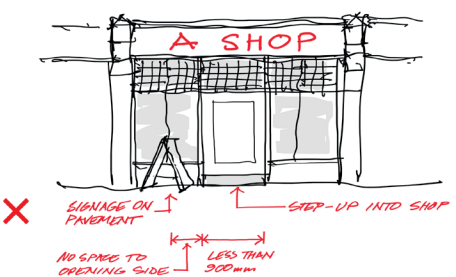


Providing a ramp externally can improve accessibility however permission may be needed to alter the level of the pavements



Step up into shop can make use for some difficult





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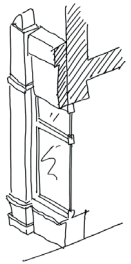
Security

We understand that security is an important priority for shopkeepers. However, there are different ways of providing this.

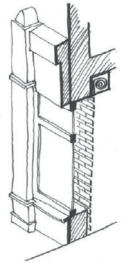
Solid roller shutters, when closed, can make shops appear very unattractive creating a hostile environment, increasing the fear of crime and encouraging anti-social behaviour.

Solid roller shutters are not acceptable in the conservation area.

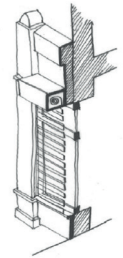
Open and transparent grilles allow views into the shop, providing natural surveillance with intruders easily seen from the outside. They also provide advertising for the shop by displaying goods even whilst the shop is closed.



✓✓ *Where possible, security shutters should be avoided. Laminated and toughened security glazing can be unobtrusive and effective, used in smaller panes and in conjunction with a security alarm.*



✓ *Where security shutters are deemed necessary, open roller grilles placed internally should be used, allowing the shop display to still be seen, contributing to an attractive environment outside opening hours. Shutters should be positioned as far inside the shop as possible to allow views of the window display, and boxes should not obscure glazing.*



✗ *Shutter boxes fitted to the outside of the shopfront are detrimental to the appearance of the building and the shopfront, obscuring original detail.*

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Legislation and Policy Compliance

The flow chart opposite gives an overview of the process of installing a new shopfront from design concept through permissions to installation on site

