



HEREFORDSHIRE
COUNCIL

SHOP FRONT DESIGN GUIDE

Draft June 2008



Foreword

The purpose of this booklet is to give guidance and advice to developers and retailers on the design of shop fronts and advertisements and although it is particularly aimed at the historic market towns, the good design principles are relevant throughout the County.

At a time when particular efforts are being made to encourage regeneration and to provide attractive shopping areas, the contents of this book will make clear the benefits of good design to both traders and shoppers alike.

Councillor John Jarvis
Cabinet Member for Environment

Attractive Shopping

Each historic town centre is different. Almost invariably it is made up of a variety of buildings that have developed in an apparent haphazard way over the years but in tune with the varying prosperity of the town during that time. This is particularly true in Herefordshire where each of the market towns embody a similar pattern of development and yet are subtly different in their appearance and detail.

The character of an historic town relies heavily on the quality and condition of its shop fronts. An attractively presented, well-designed shop front gives a favourable impression to the business and to the area itself. As our market towns continue to serve the needs of neighbouring communities, their individual characters are under constant pressure to adapt and change. New owners, new uses or just new images often require new frontages and different signage, which without care could stealthily change the individualism of our towns.



The purpose of this booklet is to promote good shop front design in Herefordshire and give guidance to designers and applicants submitting proposals to the Planning Department. Examples of both good and bad shop fronts in the County and elsewhere are used to illustrate many of the fundamental principles. The intention is to promote good architectural manners and not to dictate a particular style or stifle innovation. However in the market towns a more prescriptive approach is sometimes required. On listed or other historic buildings the period and style of the property needs to be respected, and so advice on traditional detailing is also included.

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Introduction

The main objective of the Herefordshire Shop Front Design Guide is to inform and improve design quality within the County. It supplements and aids the implementation of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan policies HBA 10 and HBA 11 by establishing clear design quality expectations to which developers must adhere. This Guidance will be used in the consideration of all planning and listed building applications for works to shop fronts.

What needs Permission?

A new shop front or substantial alterations to an existing one, including the provision of blinds and external security shutters, requires **Planning Permission**. Separate **Listed Building Consent** is also required for any alterations or additions to listed buildings, which will affect the character of the property. Most signs on listed buildings require **Listed Building Consent**. Some external signs and advertisements require **Advertisement Consent**. **All Planning and Listed Building applications will require a design and access statement**. The Planning Department can give advice to applicants on what needs permission.

What to do next?

Applicants are strongly recommended to consult the Planning Department for advice on the design approach to be taken and the drawings that will be required before commissioning design work or placing orders for installations. It is also advisable to appoint a qualified architect to undertake design work. Specialist knowledge is especially desirable where old or listed buildings are concerned. Even a good design can be marred by poor workmanship so it is also important that an experienced contractor is employed.

Shop Front Improvement Grants

Planning controls can prevent inappropriate new shop fronts and signs, but there is still a legacy of poor design from the past – mostly from the 1960s and 1970s. The Council may be able to offer financial assistance to encourage the replacement of inappropriate shop fronts through a discretionary grant scheme.

Planning Controls

This Design Guide, which has been subject of consultation process was adopted by the Council in 2008 will be taken into account when determining planning and advertisement applications. The relevant Plan Policies appear at the back of this document.



History of Shop Fronts

It is useful to understand a little about the history of shop fronts so that the appropriateness of designs for specific buildings can be more fully appreciated.

Medieval Period

The idea of shopping as it is known today is a relatively recent development. For centuries, goods were spread out onto the street or displayed on a drop-down shutter that served as a counter during the day.

C18

From the C18 onwards, the shop front became an integral part of the design of the building. Display windows often took the form of square bays or bow windows. Window panes were small and detailing was often in the classical style, which was the architectural fashion of the time.

Late C18 to mid C19

The classical style became more pronounced. The shop window was framed by pilasters, which provided visual support for the top, or entablature. Projecting bays were now outlawed in most places to avoid obstructing the pavement.

Victorian

More emphasis was now given to the name of the shop and the fascia was emphasised at the expense of the cornice. Sometimes the fascia was tilted to accommodate a blind box. Console brackets appeared at either end of the fascia. Decoration often became more exuberant and later on a variety of materials, such as bronze, cast iron and terra cotta were introduced. The invention of plate glass saw the appearance of larger window panes.

Early C20

Generally, the established principles of shop front design stayed the same but styles were often adapted to emphasise the type of shop. Easily cleaned glazed tiling, for instance, was fashionable for butchers or pubs.

Later C20

The 1960s and 70s saw a radical change in design philosophy and traditional design was no longer venerated. Over-large windows, dominant fascias, cheap materials and disregard for existing buildings obliterated the character of many shopping streets.



Sketch of old shop



Victorian shop front in Ross with console brackets and plate glass windows



Bridge Street Kingston. C18 bow window



Early C20 shop front which relates perfectly to the building frontage



A late C18/early C19 shop front in Ledbury with deep entablature.



Late C20 shop front imposed on an earlier building

Design Principles



Before



After, new shop front restores the architectural relationship between ground and upper floors

Early shop front design was based upon a set of principles, which was noticeably successful in achieving a satisfactory relationship between the shop front and the building as a whole. The influence of classical architecture during the early development of shops established those principles of shop front design, which are still relevant today. But although classical detailing is an important consideration, the scale, rhythm and the architecture of the existing building should always be respected too.

Restoring Shop Fronts

The detail, modelling and decoration of older shop fronts is particularly valuable in the street scene and their retention should always be considered. Where early shop fronts survive special care is needed to ensure that they are preserved and restored in a sensitive manner with careful attention to detail. Sometimes original features such as pilasters or fascias survive hidden under later work and can be revealed, greatly enhancing the appearance of the shop front and the character of the street. Many C19 and early C20 shop fronts are of high quality and are worthy of retention.



Before, modern window, missing console, missing pilaster detail, polygonal raised mortar stone work, introduces a horizontal emphasis

After, restored shop front and windows on same building

New Shop Fronts

Where a new shop front is required either on an older building, which has lost its original frontage or contains an inappropriate shop front, or on a completely new building, Herefordshire Council will encourage good design based on the principles contained in this design guide.

A new shop front might have a traditional form with, fascia, cornice, stallriser and pilasters. But the new design should not be a poor quality pastiche of an earlier shop front and neither should it debase historic details.



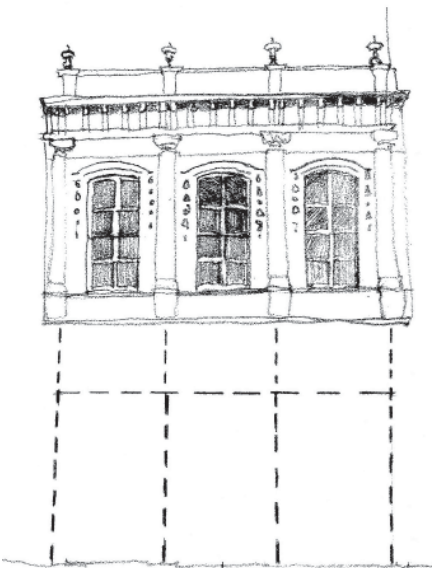
Very modern frontage. Innovative design but the principles of pilasters and fascia (flat) and cornice still apply



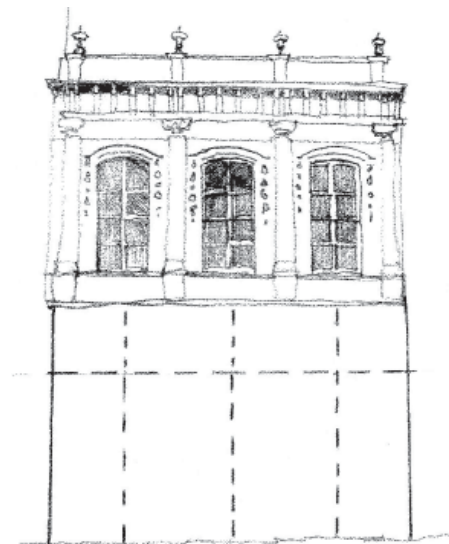
This shop front and fascia takes no account of scale or architectural style of host building



New shop fronts respect timber framed building



A good sense of balance



Columns in these positions do not give visual balance

Respecting the Building

A shop front should relate to the building it belongs to so that it forms an integral part of the elevation rather than an isolated element on the ground floor. This can be achieved by taking account of the scale and architectural style of the buildings and by echoing the arrangement of windows and areas of walling on the upper floors.

Symmetry

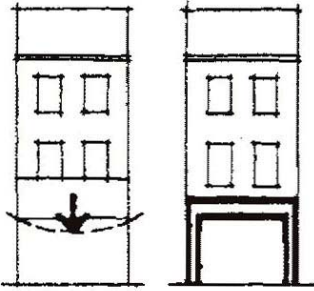
Many buildings in shopping areas are symmetrical and to keep a sense of balance, this symmetry should be extended to the shop front. Sometimes internal planning makes it difficult to achieve exact symmetry, but often a compromise is possible to enable a satisfactory outcome. Intermediate columns and window mullions can contribute some visual balance.

Street Rhythm

The main point to consider in the design or alteration of a shop front is how the building fits into the street. Most traditional shopping streets contain a great deal of variety. The width of the buildings and their height make the character of the street. There might be a vertical or horizontal emphasis to the architectural features. This is the rhythm of the street, and **where a shop front extends across several different buildings, the rhythm of the street can be spoiled.** If the buildings differ in size or architecture varied shop front designs are likely to be more appropriate.

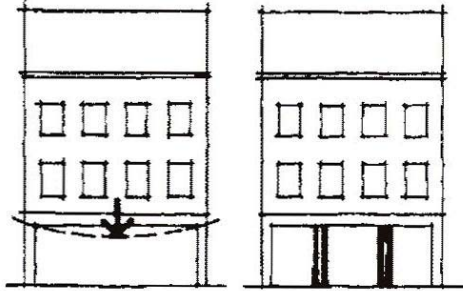
Visual Support

Many C20 shop fronts have large expanses of glass, which make the building above it appear unsupported. This can look particularly uncomfortable if the shop window straddles two or more buildings. Columns, pilasters or areas of walling can be used to give the building visual strength.

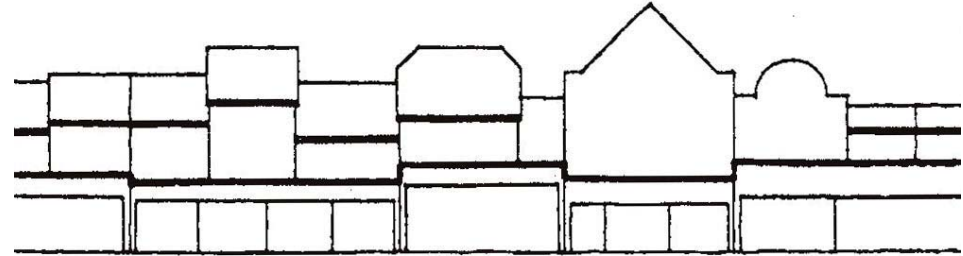


A shopfront with a lot of glass, thin window frames and no pilasters makes the building look weak, whereas a strong shop frame (right) provides support.

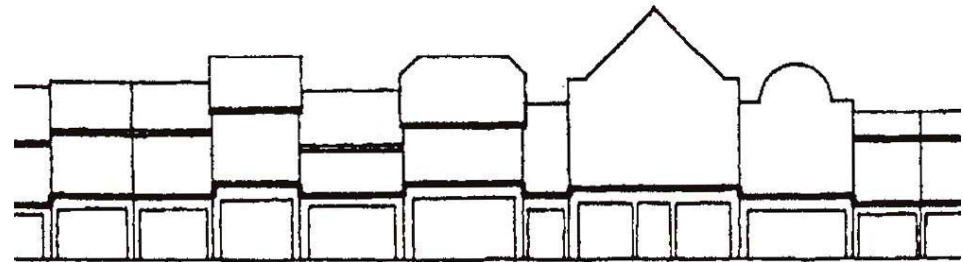
Lack of visual support in an individual building



In a wide building a shopfront can still look weak even if it has a frame, but introducing columns or mullions, (right) will provide visual support.

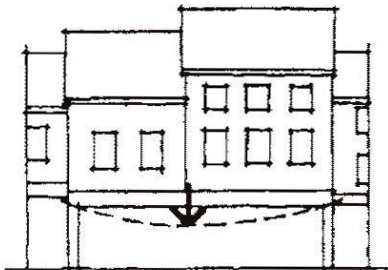


Loss of rhythm. Continuous fascias across several buildings impose horizontal emphasis on the streetscape.

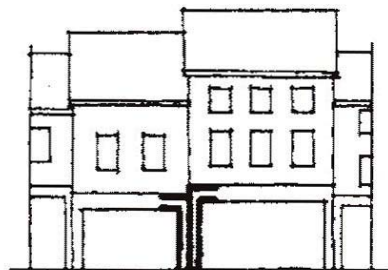


Restored rhythm. Subdividing the individual shopfronts, and varying their height and depth to suit the scale of the buildings, reinstates the vertical rhythm of the buildings and street.

Maintaining streetscape rhythm



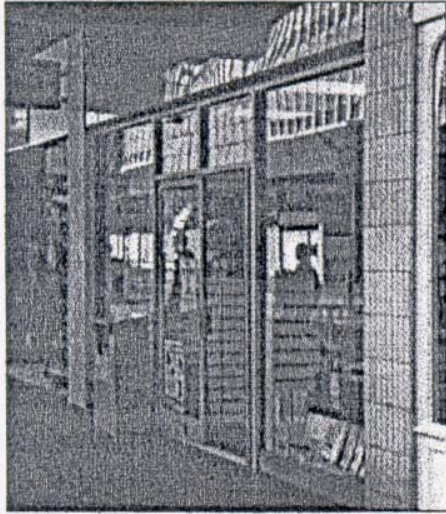
Lack of apparent support underneath the party wall makes these two buildings look unstable.



Two separate shopfronts overcome the problem and also reinstate the vertical rhythm of the buildings.

Lack of visual support across two or more buildings

These illustrations show that visual support and street rhythm must be considered during the design process. A shop front that does not follow these principles can damage the streetscape.



Lack of modelling. A flat shop front and dull frame provides little visual impact



Recess doorway and deep glazing bars project light and shadow over shop front



Projecting cornice and brackets give depth to the façade

Shop Front Modelling

Interest can be given to a shop front by recessing or projecting some of the details and elements that make up its design. Traditional shop fronts, for instance, had a projecting cornice that jutted out from the face of the main building. Console brackets, decorated pilasters and deep glazing bars give 'depth' to the façade. Similarly, recessed doorways provide a visual break to a flat window. This 'modelling' of the shop front allows a play of light and shadow that enlivens the building and the street. **Modern shop fronts, with stuck-on glazing bars, and with no projecting features can result in a flat, dull appearance.**

Scale

In small-scale buildings, the shop front should also be small. The size of the display windows, the depth and height of the fascia and the proportions of the details should all be modest. In larger buildings the shop front can be larger but still in proportion to the building. **Over-large fascias are the most common disfiguring element of existing shop fronts** and they often obscure important architectural details. Where excessively deep fascias have been introduced in the past, the overall height should be decreased in any replacement.

Materials

Timber was the traditional shop front material of previous centuries. It remains the most appropriate and versatile material. It can be worked to almost any profile, is durable and can be freshened up by repainting at a minimum cost. New timber, especially hardwoods, should be from legal and sustainable sources (see website <http://www.proforest.net/cpet> for more information). Generally speaking, glossy surfaces, acrylic or Perspex sheeting, aluminium or plastic shop fronts are not acceptable in historic areas. However, modern materials can be accepted where they are used with care and it can be shown that they will enhance an area.

Colour

The sensitive use of colour offers much scope for improving the street scene. **Harsh or gaudy colours draw undue attention to themselves and should be avoided.** Rich dark colours look very good as they leave the window display to provide the highlight. Off-white is also a traditional colour. The imposition of a corporate colour scheme regardless of the location may erode the character of an area, but minor variations of the corporate colour e.g. just a small proportion of the fascia in house colours might not alter the ambience of the street.

NB Please note that planning permission is required before the painting of any building within certain streets in Hereford City is carried out. See Appendix for details.

Other Design Considerations

As well as the basic principles of shop front design, there are other elements that need to be taken into account. Modern signage, for instance, and the style of lettering and lighting need to be particularly carefully designed especially in historic areas. As with most things, the secret is in the detail.

Fasçias

Most shop fronts incorporate a fascia to denote the name and/or type of shop. Excessive advertising on the fascia should be avoided, as should unnecessary duplication of the shop name. The most effective signage is generally modest in scale, often just restricted to the entrance doorway. It is noticeable that the better quality the shop the smaller the signage.

Oversize and garish fasçias can be one of the most unattractive features of shopping streets. This can spoil the appearance of buildings by obscuring stringcourses and first floor windowsills as well as hiding features of original shop fronts. The scale of the fascia should be appropriate to the character, height and period of the building and in proportion with the design of the shop front. Most traditional fasçias do not exceed 380mm (15") in depth. As a guideline, fasçias should generally be no deeper than 1/5 overall height of the shop front.

- Where excessively deep fasçias have been introduced in the past, their overall height should be reduced to expose, where practical, the wall surface below.
- A common fascia should not run through several distinct elevations, even where they are occupied by the same business. Conversely, where two users occupy the ground floor of a single building, the shop fronts and fasçias should be broadly co-ordinated.
- Surface mounted signs, which project from the historic fasçias and partially conceal historic details, are not acceptable. They will not be permitted in conservation areas or on listed buildings. A traditional fascia comprising a painted timber background with hand painted lettering or raised timber letters is particularly appropriate on older buildings. Shiny or brightly coloured materials are rarely acceptable.



Over large fascia obscures first floor window and does not relate to neighbouring fascia



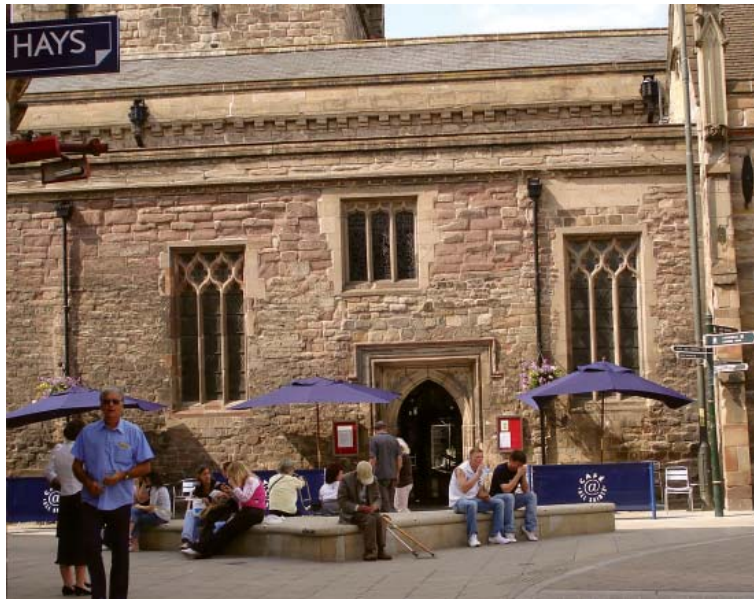
Surface mounted sign which partly conceals historic details



New overlarge fascia inserted in well detailed period shopfront. Fascia lettering, colour and advertising detract from the existing detailing



A charming traditionally painted fascia on timber background



All Saints Church, Hereford. No signs at all to show that this is a cafe. Removable chairs and umbrellas successfully advertise the business.



Traditional sign but flamboyant styling add interest to the street



No words needed for this forge.

Signs and Hanging Signs

Hanging signs are a traditional feature on shops in historic towns and, when well designed, they can add vibrancy and interest to the street. Timber hand-painted signs are particularly appropriate but sometimes metal can be acceptable. Simple brackets can look good, but depending upon location, a decorative wrought or cast iron bracket can be acceptable. Bracket design and fixings quality is important. Crudely constructed mild steel brackets, which debase historic details, will not be acceptable, conversely there is considerable scope for carefully crafted contemporary brackets. As a general rule, only one hanging sign per shop will be allowed. The traditional position for signs is at or above the fascia level. The latter suggestion is normally appropriate for public houses or restaurants where a pictorial sign is used, but it is often preferable that the sign is at fascia level. Care must always be taken to ensure that architectural features are not obscured by the signage, For example painted metal boxes fixed to fascias which project forward from cornice mouldings will not be acceptable. A proliferation of signs on all shops would create visual clutter therefore a balance needs to be reached and, in some cases, the architectural design of the building is so important that a projecting sign will be unacceptable.

The size of the sign will need to relate to the size and scale of the building façade and to the street as a whole. Generally, the area of the sign should be no more than 0.75m² and the bottom of the sign must be at least 2.6m above the pavement and the outer edge at least 1.0 m from the kerb.



Novel sign bracket in Ross

Large scale detail drawings of proposed signs at a scale of 1:5 will be required for advertisement applications. Construction, lettering and graphic design must be clearly shown, showing cross sections, and with clear references to materials and colours.

Some buildings are so sensitive to change that no signs at all will be appropriate.

Window Posters

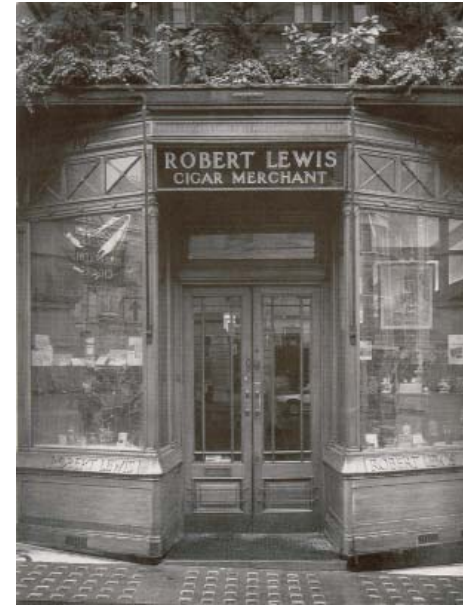
In some cases shop windows are filled with posters, stickers temporary banners and illuminated signs. This type of advertising can detract from the overall appearance of the shop front and can detract from the appearance of the street. On listed buildings this will normally require listed building consent and will generally be resisted.

Lettering and Colours

The use of effective lettering conveys an eye-catching and attractive image that can invite custom. But in considering the style of lettering, care must be taken to select an appropriate typeface, which not only reflects the character of the building but is also of the correct size and weight. In general terms, the use of a lettering height should be $\frac{3}{8}$ the depth of the fascia, with a maximum height of 300mm or less, subject to the scale of the building.

Lettering may be decorative and even flamboyant without challenging the visual integrity of a shop front. On traditional shop fronts it was common to use particular styles of lettering to reflect the actual use of the shop, which is an approach that the Council will continue to encourage.

The Council may accept the use of a 'house style' if it does not detract from the character of the shop front and its contribution to the street scene. As a general principle lettering should be painted directly onto the fascia in a colour that compliments that of the shop front.



A shop front of the late 1920s with lettering which matches the period



Posters, lettering and colour spoil the appearance of this shop front, and the wider street



Lettering is garish and its position on fascia does not relate to shop front or building above



An example of a sympathetically designed C20 shop front which replaced unsuitable plate glass windows



Corporate lettering fits perfectly over doorway



Simple statement



Too many lights give cluttered effect

Corporate Identities

Multiples, Banks and Building Societies tend to have their own corporate identity and standardised signage. In sensitive locations, standard shop fronts can have the effect of weakening the special local identity. **It is often possible to achieve a compromise so that the corporate image is maintained without eroding local character.**

Illumination

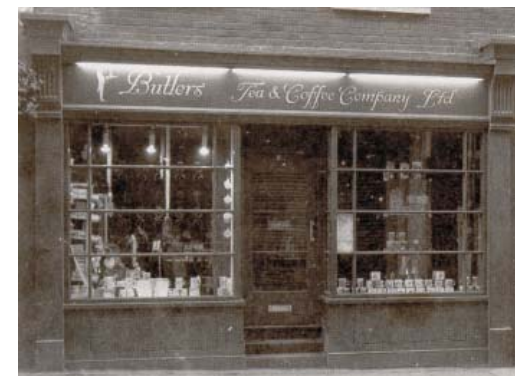
Modest and subtle lighting can add sparkle and vitality to the night-time scene. In all of the market towns though, restraint is required. Where there is a concentration of listed buildings and where street lighting provides a subtle ambience, over-illumination can be garish and invasive and illumination may not be applicable at all.

Fasçia Illumination

Fasçia illumination and hanging signs are not essential for all shops, especially for those that do not trade at night.

Internally illuminated fasçias and signs can create an unacceptable glare at night and are generally not acceptable. Individually illuminated box fasçias, illuminated box signs, and individually lit Perspex letters will not normally be permitted.

Subtle and concealed lighting can be acceptable, depending upon location. The light source should be unobtrusive and should be directed carefully at the sign or shop front to avoid glare and light leakage.



Blinds

Blinds protect display goods from sunlight and provide shelter for shoppers. They can also add interest to the street but they should be appropriate to the period of the building and the character of the locality. **Fixed blinds and blinds made from plastic** or which have fluorescent or metallic finishes can detract from the appearance of many shopping streets. **Dutch blinds and balloon canopies** can look out of place too, whatever material they are made of and, **will not normally be permitted**.

Traditional blinds made of canvas or similar non-reflective materials are to be preferred, especially on listed buildings and in conservation areas.

Displays on Highways

Displays placed upon the public highway can provide useful information to shoppers and enhance the character of the locality. Inappropriately placed displays can also hinder the passage of all highway users and in the worst cases present a serious hazard, particularly to the visually impaired or in narrow streets. The Highways Act treats all such displays as deposits upon the highway and the Council, as the Highway Authority, has the right to remove any such deposits. Recognising the value that displays can add to the character of the locality, this action is only taken if the display is assessed to be an immediate or imminent hazard. Typically, if A-boards and displays are limited to one per frontage and not allowed to protrude more than 1.8m from the shop frontage, and a minimum of 1.8m of clear footway remains, then the display will not cause a significant impediment. Please remember that the people passing your shop frontage are all potential customers and that they have the right to pass and re-pass upon the public highway.

Heights of Hanging Signs

There are no set limits though 2m clearance should allow for most pedestrians to pass beneath protrusions; see section 152 of the Highways Act for the Council's powers as the Highway Authority to remove protrusions from buildings. Greater clearance will be required if the protrusion extends into or across the carriageway. Care should also be taken not to hinder the passage of the Emergency services, who may have to drive through pedestrian areas; for detailed guidance traders can contact the Highways & Transportation Service, using our Streetcare line 01432 261800 or streets@herefordshire.gov.uk.

Tables and Chairs on the Footpath

These need street trading licenses, which are applied for and regulated by the Council's Street Trading Panel. Please contact The Highways Department for further details on the licensing process etc.



Traditional blind in Hereford



Dutch blinds are generally not acceptable

Security Measures



Untidy wiring and electrical boxes



Decorative security gates reflect quality of building



Decorative removable night-time grille

Burglar Alarms & Telephone wiring

Burglar alarms and telecom junction boxes and any other wiring should not conceal architectural features or be located in over-conspicuous positions. Any wiring should be neatly fixed or hidden. Non-ferrous fixings will avoid problems with rust. **Consent for these may be required on a listed building.**

Shutters, Screens and Grilles

Some types of shop need special security measures.

External shutters require planning permission, but they tend to create a hostile ambience when lowered at night so they will not generally be approved in historic areas. Solid shutters permanently housed in boxes at fascia level are particularly unacceptable. There are several preferred alternative security measures.

- * Security glass is preferred, perhaps coupled with a security alarm.
- * Reducing the size of windowpanes can provide less of a temptation to vandals and reduces the cost of replacing glass, but the suitability of this will depend on the design of the host building.
- * Internally fitted see-through grilles are another option especially as there are a number of attractive designs available.
- * Alternatively, removable security screens can be fixed to the window area of a shop front outside normal trading areas. There are several examples of such screens in the County, which have been designed attractively in materials and finishes that do not detract from their surroundings.



This grille is set behind pilasters and is removable

Accessibility

Shops should be accessible for all, including those that have a disability, are less agile citizens or parents with children in pushchairs.

The Government's advice should be followed as set out in their 2003 publication "**Planning and Access for Disabled People; a good practice guide.**"

Shop front alterations must comply with Part M of the Building Regulations, which sets out the statutory access requirements. You should discuss the scheme with the building control officer in conjunction with the planning and conservation officers.

Entrance doors should be clearly defined with a minimum clear opening of 800mm and 300mm clearance on the leading edge side. Revolving doors should be avoided or supplemented by accessible side hung doors. Handles should be easy to manipulate and clearly visible. Doors should be partly glazed and clearly distinguishable. Kicker plates should be fixed on the push side. Thresholds should be level and doors, preferably automatic should have minimum closing pressure..

Integrated steps and ramps, ideally with a 1 in 20 gradient can sometimes offer a solution where there are steps into a shop. Where the design complements the existing building this can be preferable to a secondary side access, as this can be considered discriminatory. Historic steps should be kept even if ramped over. Works within the footway usually require highway authority approval. As an alternative, with highway authority approval it might be possible to raise the height of the footway.

When dealing with historic buildings there is a duty to have special regard to their historic or architectural interest. In this respect the Government's advice contained in "**Planning Policy Guidance Note 15**" regarding access is relevant.

"It is important in principle that disabled people should have a dignified easy access to and within historic buildings. If it is treated as part of an integrated review of access requirements for all visitors or users and a flexible and pragmatic approach is taken it should normally be possible to plan suitable access for disabled people without compromising a building's special interest. Alternative routes or re-organising the use of spaces may achieve the desired result without the need for damaging alterations."

Principles for achieving a satisfactory standard in each case should be detailed as part of an access statement. This statement provides an audit of how the requirements have been considered and the standard adopted.

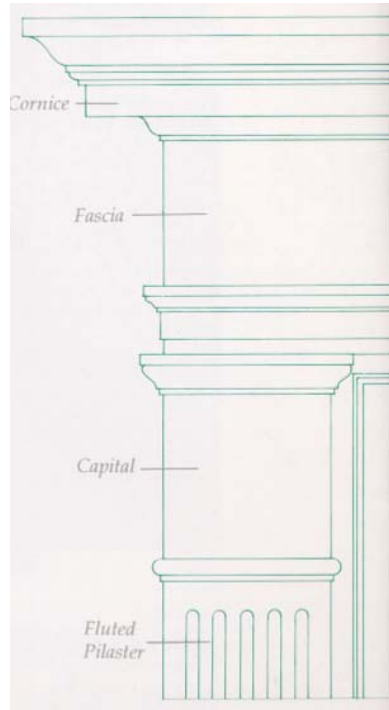


*Rounded stone steps - part of the character of listed buildings.
Difficult access for some customers*

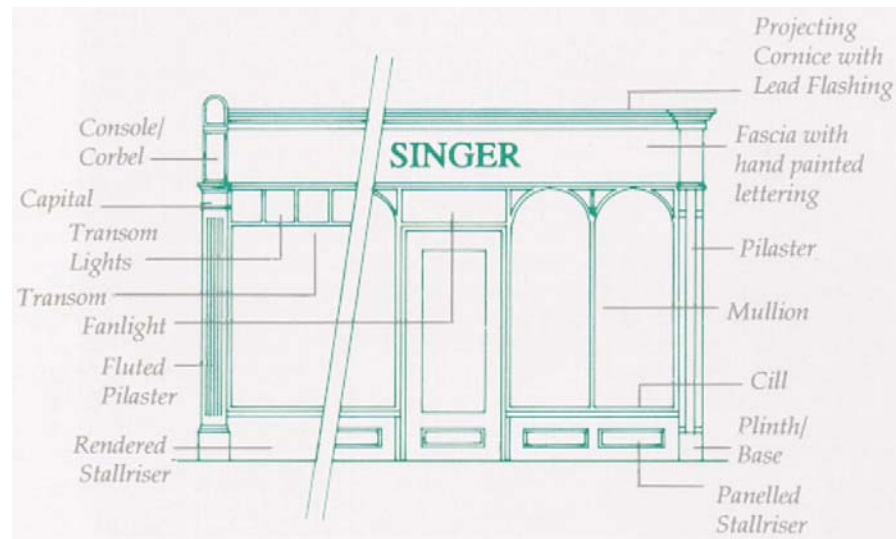


Pavement ramped slightly to ease access into the shop door

Detailing



Classical Details



Shop front terms

Sometimes, shop fronts that are otherwise well-designed, are let down by poor detailing. In traditionally designed shop fronts the classical details are sometimes incorrect or simply missing. Inadequate attention to traditional construction techniques and materials can ruin an otherwise attractive design.

Classical Features

Various elements can be used to enclose the shop window and entrance. These include the fascia, pilasters, cornice and stallriser, all of which has its own visual and practical function. A design based on the traditional shop front incorporating these elements is always likely to be the most appropriate in an historical setting. However, it is the creative interpretation of traditions, which has led to a lively townscape, and Herefordshire Council recognises and encourages the individual solution.

The Entablature

Entablatures were the forerunners of modern shop fascias. Typically they have a relatively shallow fascia topped by a generously moulded cornice, which provides a positive cap to the shop front.

The Fascia

The fascia is usually the most prominent feature on a shop front as it normally carries the name of the shop and so will be designed to attract attention. However, a common fault is to make the fascia too deep in an attempt to maximise signage space or conceal a false ceiling. The scale and design should be in proportion to the design of the shop front and to the rest of the building as a whole. Excessively deep fascias should be avoided. The fascia, which is normally topped by a cornice, should terminate below first floor windowsills leaving a well-proportioned margin.

The Cornice

The Cornice is both a decorative and functional feature of the shop front. In terms of decoration it forms a conclusive termination to the top of the fascia and thus the shop front as a whole. Functionally, it projects forward of the shop front throwing water clear of the fascia preventing water ingress and reducing the incidence of rot. It is also common to find a roller blind incorporated within the cornice.

Pilasters and Consoles

Pilasters and consoles relate directly to the classical architectural orders and, in general, their roles are decorative rather than functional. They make a significant contribution to the visual appearance of the shop front by seeming to support either end of the fascia and so frame it.

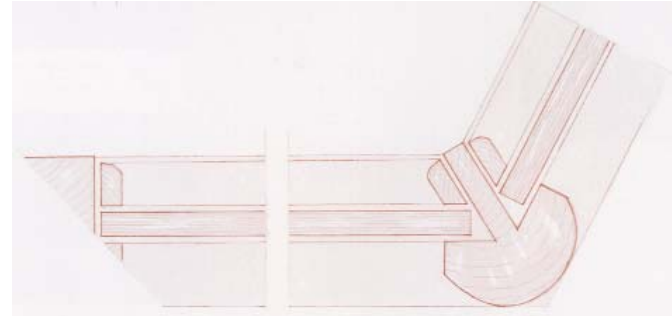
Mullions and Glazing Bars

Carefully observed traditional detailing of mullions and glazing bars can be used to highlight a shop front entrance, particularly if the entrance is recessed. These features also help to divide and proportion the shop front. Matching the profiles of these features are very important when a shop front is repaired or reconstructed.

Stallrisers

The stallriser or stallboard as it was formerly called, is a long established shop front feature originally housing boards or stalls, which hinged out over the pavement and carried goods for display. Stallrisers are now more commonly incorporated as a feature giving physical and visual support to the shop front. Visually it completes the frame enclosing the display space and it also helps give the impression that the shop front is anchored to the ground. Fine attention to detail in the design of the stallriser can contribute greatly to the overall design of the shop front and traditional styles vary across the County. Historically, the presence and height of a stallriser varied with the nature of the goods on sale; for instance, some traders such as tailors and boot-makers required their goods to be viewed from above so that the stallriser was kept low. The context, scale and design of the shop front will be an important consideration in the decision to incorporate or omit the stallriser in a new design.

Although the traditional details of fascia, pilasters, consoles, mullions, glazing bars and stallrisers are common to the market towns of Herefordshire, they vary slightly in individual detail. These details are noted in Appendix.



Detail of glazing bar



Unusual decorative console brackets in Leominster



Interesting entablature detail in Ross-on-Wye

Summary

Herefordshire has many fine traditional and modern shop fronts that contribute to the character and attractiveness of the County's market towns. However there are still opportunities to improve shops so they make a positive contribution to the appearance, vitality and viability of town centres and villages.

Planning Checklist

Need for Planning and other permissions

Planning Permission is required for all new shop fronts, or alterations to existing shop fronts, that materially affect the external appearance of a building.

Conservation Areas

All of the market towns and many of the villages are designated as **conservation areas** whose character and appearance it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Within these areas, the Council has additional planning powers, e.g. to control advertising and demolition. The quality and detailing of development proposals must meet the preservation and enhancement objectives.

Listed Buildings

Any alterations to a listed building will require **Listed Building Consent** if the works affect the character of the building. This can include relatively small changes to features such as window frames and decorative details, as well as interior details. Owners are therefore strongly advised to consult the Planning Department before embarking on any alterations to a listed building.

Signs and Advertisements

Some signs need advertisement consent from the Council so owners are strongly advised to check with the Planning Department before erecting any. Shops are normally limited to one fascia sign, and if required, one hanging sign.

Consent is always required for:

- *All posters.
- *Any Illuminated sign in a Conservation Area.
- *All signs above a first floor window.
- *All signs that have letters over 0.75m high.
- *All signs that have the highest part more than 4.6m above ground level.
- *All signs on listed buildings.
- *Repainting a shop front may require listed building consent.
- *Any signs, posters, banners on windows are likely to require listed building consent. *Please note that it is an offence to carry out unauthorised work to a listed building.

Painting

Some streets in Hereford City are subject to an Article 4 Direction, which requires owners to obtain Planning Permission before they paint the front of their property. It should be remembered that, where a building is listed, in these areas Planning Permission would be required in addition to Listed Building Consent.

Plans Required

The following drawings will be required for planning and/or Listed Building Consent applications:

Site location plan

- To a scale not less than 1:2500

Block plans

- To a scale not less than 1:500

Building plans

- To a scale not less than 1:50
- To show elevations as existing and as proposed

Detail plans

- To a scale not less than 1:5
- To show all new doors, shop fronts, mouldings and joinery details and other decorative detail.

Planning Policies

The following policies, which relate to shop fronts and advertisements, are contained in the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan

Policy HBA 10 Shop Fronts

The repair or retention of historic shop fronts within conservation areas and on listed buildings, which contribute to the character of the area or building respectively, will be sought. Proposals for the alteration to existing or installation of new shop fronts will only be permitted where:

1. Both the overall design and individual elements including fascia boards, security shutters, blinds or canopies, signs, lettering and lighting respect the character and appearance of the host building and its setting, particularly in terms of proportions, scale, materials and colour.
2. The design respects the character of the frontage, in particular existing architectural features and divisions between buildings; and
3. Access arrangements for those with special access needs are provided where this can be accommodated without compromising any important architectural features or the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Policy HBA 11 Advertising

Consent for the display of advertisements will only be granted where they do not adversely affect public safety or amenity, having regard to the architectural, historic and visual character and appearance of the area and to both individual and cumulative effects.

Town and Country Planning Act 1971 General Development Order 1973-1976 (Article 4 Direction)

In 1977 Hereford City Council made a Direction under Article 4 of the above-mentioned orders relating to the Hereford Central Conservation Area. The effect of the Direction is that, the painting of the exterior of any building should not be carried out on the land coloured on the plan annexed unless permission is granted on application made under the Town and Planning General Development Order 1973.



The following supplementary advice augments that given in the Unitary Development Plan, and will be used during the determination process for applications for Planning Permission, Listed Building Consent, Conservation Area and Advertisement Consent.

To retain and enhance the character of Herefordshire's shopping areas the council will:

- Seek the retention and restoration of appropriate traditional shop fronts
- Require a high quality of design in all applications for shopping development
- Encourage the improvement of shop fronts, particularly when alterations are proposed.

Herefordshire Council will normally not permit:

- Any forms of advertisement which detract from the appearance of the host building or the special architectural interest of the County's conservation areas.
- Internally illuminated box fascias, individually illuminated letters, halo-lit perspective letters, fluorescent lighting on channels and illuminated projecting box signs.
- Materials such as Perspex, acrylic sheeting, uncoated aluminium and glossy plastics.
- Further use of swan neck lights and spotlights in conservation areas.
- The use of shiny or garish materials for fascias, box signs or hanging signs.
- The introduction of Dutch blinds.
- To minimise visual damage within a conservation area the council will encourage the use of internal grilles mounted behind windows.

- Where internal grilles are not possible, some types of external grille, such as removable grilles, may be acceptable. In some instances, a lightweight see-through mesh grille might be considered if it is incorporated behind the fascia and painted to match the shop front.
- Security systems which incorporate external box housings or solid shutters.



Appendix 1

The advice given in this design guide applies to all of the market towns. All of them experience pressure for change and the need to accommodate multiple stores with their individual corporate styles. Lighting too is an issue throughout the County as the ambience of the market towns can easily be disturbed by over-illumination. However, in Hereford City the needs are slightly different.

Hereford City, Character

Hereford's townscape reflects its rich historical and architectural heritage. The street pattern within the line of the city wall has remained virtually unchanged for over 800 years. As a result many of the shopping streets are narrow and gently curving creating a sense of intimacy. Even the open space of High Town manages to retain a townscape quality that is on a human scale.

The City is the major centre for the County and its vibrancy and attractive appearance is one of the keys to its continued commercial success. Some of the City's streets, such as Church Street and Broad Street retain their own special character with many traditional shop fronts and parts of Bridge Street, King Street and St Owen Street also have much charm, while their shops, pubs, restaurants and financial institutions add variety and vitality.

Pressure for change

More than any of the market towns, the pressure for change in Hereford is heavy. Naturally, new businesses require new signage, new lighting and new shop fronts. Chain stores, multiples and banks are needed in Hereford but it is important that their corporate image which includes signage, fascias and colouring, fits with the special character of the town. It is likely that multiples will need to relax their standard identity so that the special character and interest of the town is maintained.



Church Street, Hereford. Narrow Street with traditional shop fronts giving a sense of intimacy

Nightlife and Lighting

Nightlife in Hereford City should be vibrant and exciting. Pursuits such as window-shopping, entertainment and eating and drinking are made more enjoyable with suitable and attractive lighting. In the City the effective street lighting often makes the external illumination of shops unnecessary. However, if it is treated as an integral part of the overall design of a building, some external illumination can positively enhance an area's character. Discreetly positioned lights can be used to highlight the pertinent features of a shop front and late opening premises such as pubs, restaurants and clubs need to indicate that they are open. Spot lights which are intrusive and swan-neck lights which clutter a building's façade will not normally be permitted but it may be possible to install low –intensity down lighting, concealed within a cornice, for instance.

Policy

In 1977 Hereford City Council made a Direction under Article 4 of the above-mentioned orders relating to the Hereford Central Conservation Area. The effect of the Direction is that, the painting of the exterior of any building should not be carried out on the land coloured on the plan opposite without Planning Permission.

Throughout the County and in Hereford

- **Multiple Stores will be expected to relax their corporate images.**
- **Spotlights and swan-neck lights will not be permitted.**

