

SHOP FRONT & COMMERCIAL FRONTAGE DESIGN GUIDE

Draft 6 (April 2015)



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1. Introduction

1.1 This guide has been produced with the aim of improving the character and appearance of all shop fronts and commercial frontages within the City and County of Swansea. It would therefore be used to assess and negotiate the wide range of shops and commercial frontages present within the city and county area including surf shops in Gower, bars on Wind Street, department stores in Swansea city centre, banks in district centres and corner shops everywhere. It is important to note that the guide will be applicable to the entire frontage and not just to the ground floor areas of applicable buildings.

1.2 Through the application of a series of tried and tested principles of good design which also respect the specific character and context of the host building and locality; the quality of commercial frontages and areas can be increased. This design guide has a key role to play in raising standards of design in Swansea City Centre. Well designed frontages create much more attractive neighbourhoods for those shopping, visiting, working and living within these areas.

1.3 Whilst shop fronts are minor relative to the potential strategic regeneration of Swansea City Centre, they cumulatively make up much of the ground floor frontages in the city core. Given that these are located at eye level they provide the first and lasting impression of the city centre for many people and can influence whether they wish to return. Therefore day to day development control decisions in relation to these shop fronts and commercial frontages are a key part of the physical regeneration process.

1.4 This approach is supported at the national planning policy level with one of the key objectives for retail areas being to:

“Enhance the vitality, attractiveness and viability of town, district, local and village centres. . .”

(Planning Policy Wales (Edition 7) paragraph 10.1.1)

1.5 Planning Policy Wales then goes onto to explain:

“Vitality is reflected in how busy a centre is at different times and in different parts, and attractiveness in the facilities and character which draw in trade. Viability, on the other hand, refers to the ability of the centre to attract investment, not only to maintain the fabric but also to allow for improvement and adaptation to changing needs.”

(Planning Policy Wales (Edition 7) paragraph 10.1.3)

1.6 In addition to the goals of improving the vitality, attractiveness and viability of retail premises as set out in PPW, Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12: Design goes onto state:

“Design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to grasp opportunities to enhance the character, quality and function of an area, should not be accepted, as these have detrimental effects on existing communities.”

(TAN 12: Design (2014) paragraph 2.6)

1.7 In order to meet the aforementioned objectives of Planning Policy Wales in a contextually appropriate manner this document will set out clear guidance and certainty in the assessment planning applications for new commercial shop front development throughout the County.

1.8 At the local level the emerging Swansea City Centre Strategic Framework Review notes the low quality nature of the edges of the retail core at page 16. This is in part a reflection on the quality of the shop fronts and commercial frontages as well as a reflection on the nature of the businesses. Within the Priority and Complementary Areas identified in the emerging SCCSF Review there is a constant theme of raising standards both of new development and in changes to existing buildings, for example:

“Promote the use of high quality materials and workmanship and design which requires less maintenance without sacrificing quality. High Street priority area.” (page 65)

“Ground floor areas should have a positive relationship with the public realm. New buildings which address the street with active frontage at the ground floor and above, adopting a layout and scale that provide a good sense of continuity, enclosure and overlooking of the street, achieving high quality urban form; St David’s priority area.” (page 68)

1.9 The recent high quality shop fronts and carefully designed signage installed as part of the Urban Village scheme on Swansea High Street demonstrates how these elements can help raise the quality and character of the wider area.

1.10 This guidance will be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) linked to policies EV1, EV4, EV7, EV9, EV13, EV14, EC6, EC NR & CC2 of the Swansea Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

1.11 Underpinning this guidance document are a number of key aims which include:

- Encouraging the preservation of good quality period shop fronts which contribute to the history and/or aesthetic quality of the area.
- Ensuring proposals relate satisfactorily to the shop building and the wider street as a whole.
- Ensuring the provision of access for all.
- Retaining and improving access to upper floors.
- Ensuring that advertising is integrated with the shop front and that it respects the character of the building and the surroundings.
- Encouraging the unobtrusive integration of security features into the shop front.
- Discouraging the inappropriate imposition of national corporate image shop fronts in sensitive areas.

1.12 For advice on any aspect of this document please contact the Design and Conservation Team on 01792 637341.

1.13 This document is in draft form and has been circulated for internal consultation only at this stage.

2. Using this Design Guidance

2.1 This guide sets out the design considerations for the undertaking of shop front and commercial frontage works across the City and County of Swansea area. Depending on various aspects of the context of the development such as the location of the proposed shop and the character of the building a different approaches to the design of the shop front may be may be appropriate or not.

2.2 By following the flow chart to the right this will provide a guidance as to which approach(es) will be appropriate for each application. Each approach is colour coded and specific advice relevant to this is provided within the document.

2.3 The flow chart sets out the early questions that should be asked when assessing the site in order to choose the most appropriate response to its context. Design approaches to shop front and commercial frontage proposals will fall into 1 of 5 categories:

- Heritage Approach - Retain / Repair
- Traditional Approach
- Modern Interpretation Approach
- Modern with some Traditional References
- Modern Approach

2.4 In some cases more than one approach may be considered acceptable in principle, however the final proposals will be assessed on the merits of the design as well as through a justification of the proposals based on thorough site context analysis.

2.5 Once the correct overarching design approach has been selected then further detailed design issues can be addressed. The remainder of this document therefore sets out a rational approach to assessing the context of the site as well as providing more detailed guidance for the various design approaches set out in the flow diagram to the right.

How to use the guidance

Section 3—Various considerations for **Understanding the Street & Building Context**.

Section 4—Considerations for proposals in **Conservation Areas** of affecting the setting of **Listed Buildings**.

Section 5—Overarching guidance for each of the remaining **4 Design Approaches**.

Section 6—Detailed guidance for the various **Shop Front Features**.

Section 7—Guidance for ground and upper floor **Access**

Section 8—Guidance for **Signage & Lighting** to be incorporated into proposals.

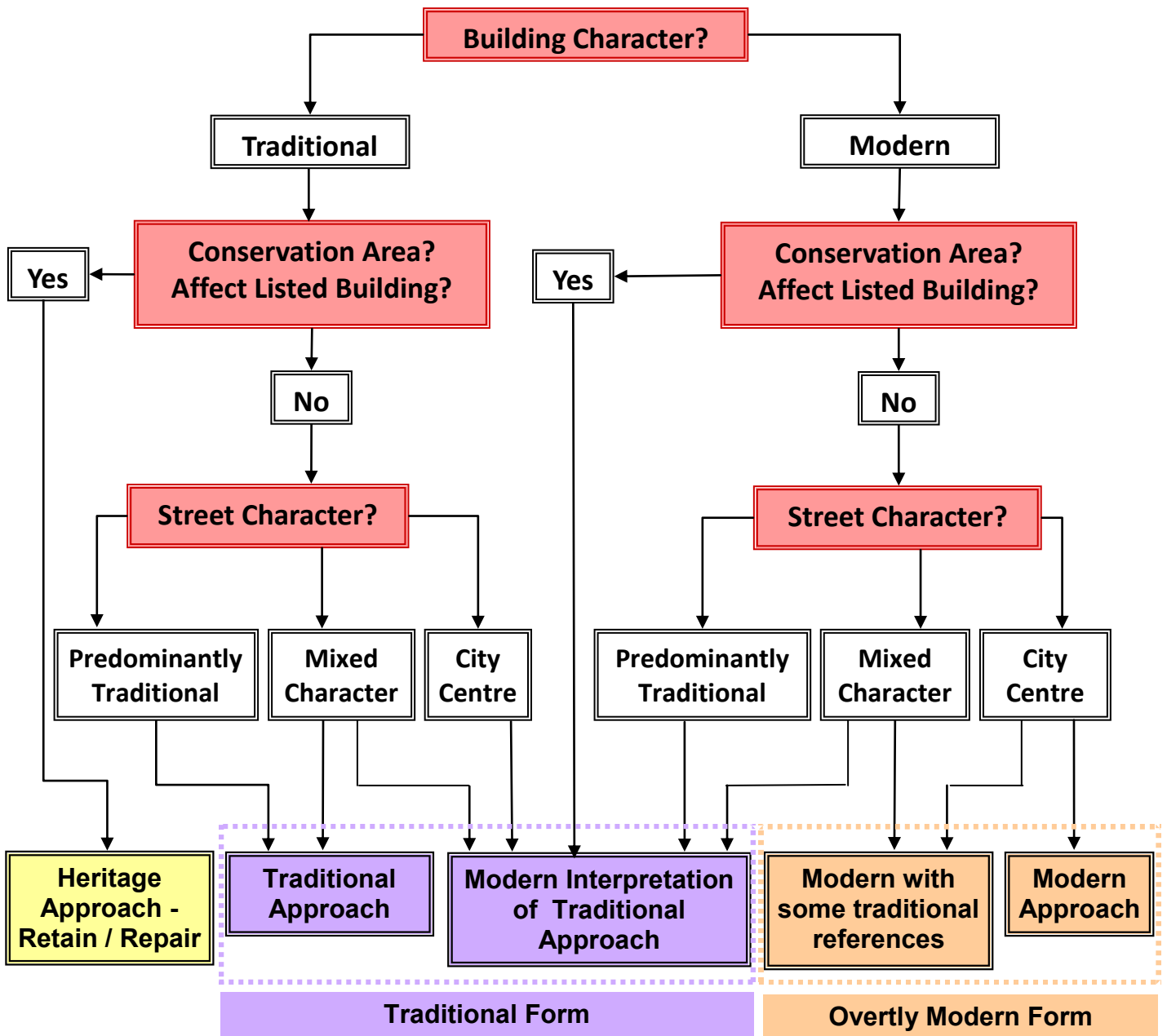
Section 9—Guidance for **Security** measures (such as roller shutters etc).

Section 10—Considerations for other **Other Features** such as canopies, outdoor seating areas, ATMs.

Sections 11—13—highlight **Grant Funding** and set out the **Planning Policy Context & Submission Requirements**.

2. Using this Design Guidance

Design Approach Assessment Chart



It should be noted that in the context of the above 'Modern' refers to the character of any buildings or developments built in the Post-War (1945 onwards) period rather than buildings built in any specific architectural style defined as part of the 'Modern' or 'Modernist' movement.

3. Understanding the Street & Building Context

3.1 In order to appreciate which approach to shop front design is appropriate will involve undertaking an analysis of the street and building context. Understanding the local context can help to highlight the underlying scale, proportions and features of the street and building and aid the provision of high quality shop fronts which help to enhance the character of retail areas. Well considered proposals typically benefits all businesses in the area through providing a higher quality environment with a greater sense of identity.

Street Context

3.2 The quality of a street has an impact on whether people choose to visit an area and affects how long they stay. Well designed streets also contribute to wider perceptions of neighbourhoods.

3.3 The character of a street is derived from the scale and proportion of its component buildings, as well as from their individual style and detailing. Retail streets where shops have uniformity in their character (proportions, materials and details) tend to have a stronger sense identity and place which helps to attract people. It is therefore important to look for consistent patterns along the street such as the repeated arrangement of pilasters or windows, or the continuous line of cornices. The perceived quality of a shopping street can be down-graded by one poorly-designed shop front. The City and County of Swansea area incorporates a variety of both traditional and modern retail streets/areas.

3.4 The division of a terrace into narrower plots is important in establishing the character of many streets, and helps to give strong vertical proportions to individual units. This unifying sense of verticality typically defines the character of most traditional and many modern retail streets. Poorly considered proposals which disrupt the sense of verticality by providing continuous shop fronts which extend across the front of more than one property or providing wide, squat windows or not respecting original property divisions often appear poorly integrated into the host building as well as the wider streetscene and can weaken the character of the both.



Left: This shop extends across three units, but the fascia sign is broken into sections rather than extending across the whole shop front.

3.5 Where streets do not have uniform building heights and equal plot divisions, there is often a “hierarchy” to the component buildings - a variation in scale and proportion, with key buildings gaining prominence in the street. This hierarchy should be respected when altering shop fronts.



3. Understanding the Street & Building Context

Building Context

3.6 The perception of a building changes as it is approached. The eye first notices the outline and general character of the street. Then the individual property is picked out and its shape and proportions noted. Finally, the style and details of doors and windows, colours and textures are observed. With this in mind, shop front designers should consider the layering effect of the wider character of the street as well as the character and style of the building and its features. Good design provides interest and harmony at each level.

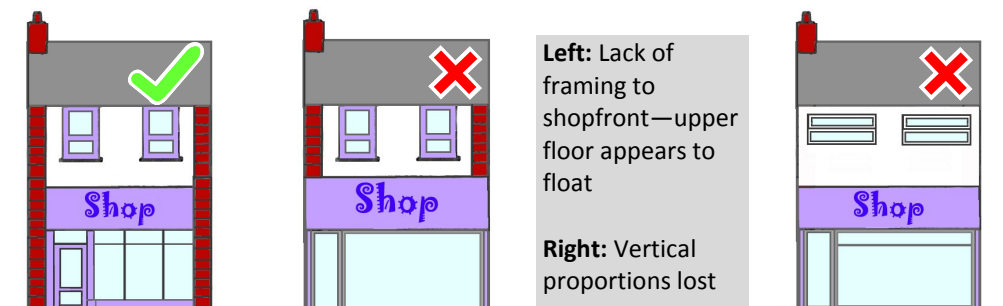


The perception of a shopfront changes as the building is approached

3.7 The shop front should be seen as an integral part of the building and the design of these should consider the building as a whole. The scale, proportions, character and materials of new elements (such as fascia signs) should therefore relate to those of the whole building as well as to each other. As a general rule, a restrained approach leads to a higher quality design.

3.8 Traditional shop fronts typically exhibit vertical proportions and a solid surround in order to provide a strong frame to the display window which complements the overall appearance of the building. In traditional buildings this is achieved through the use of pilasters, fascia and stall riser but the overall visual unity of the façade can easily be lost as a result of the unsympathetic introduction of modern shop fronts into these buildings which often use large, undivided windows and minimal framing features. Large areas of ground floor glazing on traditional buildings give an uncomfortable appearance where the floors above look unsupported.

3.9 However the introduction of a stall riser can help to give a firm base to a shop front and help to integrate it more successfully into the facade. The principle of a stall riser is appropriate for shop fronts in both historic and modern buildings. Similarly approaches to shop fronts in modern buildings should also consider utilising vertical emphasis and a shop front frame as the benefits of a well-balanced shop front with strong vertical elements are twofold. Firstly, the proportions better complement the upper floors of the facade, and secondly, marked vertical emphasis helps slow the eye and hold the potential customers attention.



3. Understanding the Street & Building Context

Importance of the group

3.10 As well as taking the design of the host building into account the design of shop fronts should also consider the character and appearance of adjoining buildings. To ensure that buildings retain their distinctiveness and detailing, individual shop windows should be separated by consoles and pilasters even if they serve a single shop. Unity of appearance can be achieved by ensuring the upper and lower levels of the fascias are the same height and doorways have a regular pattern. Distinction between shops can be achieved by the use of different colours, lettering etc.



Above: A row of shops before refurbishment. the shop fronts do not relate to each other or to the buildings. In addition, the solid shutters detract from the streetscene.



Above: The same shops have been refurbished as a block to ensure a unity of appearance. Individual shop fronts are separated by pilasters whilst signage allows individuality.



Shops with a common framework appear ordered



Shops with mixed framework can appear unbalanced

Sloping Streets

3.11 Where a row of shops is located on a sloping street, consideration should be given to how best to accommodate the topography of the street. Typically this will involve staggering the height of fascia signs between the 2 adjacent units in order to provide a transition from the lower level to the higher level.



Left: This row of shops shows how fascia signs can be staggered/stepped to provide a relatively uniform transition along a terrace of shops on a sloping street/hill.

In order to achieve a level of uniformity across the row it is important that the individual fascia signs are relatively uniform in height and width across individual building frontages.

3. Understanding the Street & Building Context

Shops on Corners

3.12 Shops on corners have a particular impact on the quality of the street as they are usually the most prominent due to their double frontage. As such It is particularly important that they are designed to a have a high quality frontage on both sides.

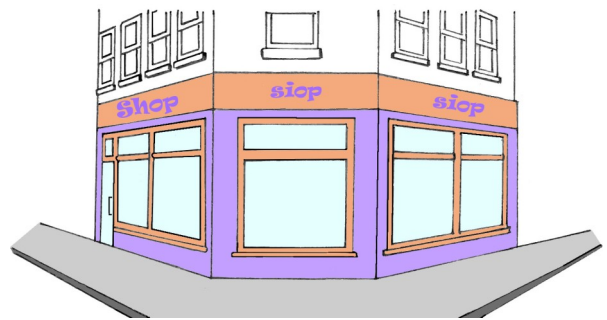
3.13 When designing the shop front, careful consideration needs to be given to providing access on the corner plot.

3.14 Where possible, shop fronts located on the corner of streets should look to provide pedestrian access to the unit on the corner of the site. If an entrance has been accommodated on the corner unit, it may also be acceptable to provide an additional entrance on either side of the unit.

3.15 To maximise advertisement opportunities on corner units whilst reducing clutter on shop fronts, hanging and projecting signs should be located at the end of the fascia, which is farthest away from the corner.



Providing the entrance on the corner can draw the attention of pedestrians on both streets.



Poorly placed entrances reduce the legibility of the building for users.

Checklist for Understanding—Street & Building Context

Consider the context within which the shop front exists. Respect age, style, proportions, and character of the building and those surrounding it. Consider the predominant design/ theme in the street.

The design should be sensitive to the specific context and character of the area. However where the existing context is poor new shop fronts should seek to enhance the character and appearance of the area.

Respect the character of neighbouring properties. Do not extend new shop fronts across two or more shop buildings without expressing the rhythm of the upper floors in the shop fronts.

The scale and proportion of window frames, doors, fascias and any other external features should respect the established character of the streetscape as well as the architectural and historical features of the upper floors. Horizontal features including stall risers and door panels should be aligned and not be clearly disproportionate to their neighbouring feature

Materials should be in harmony with the age and design features of the rest of the main building and neighbouring properties. Materials should be sympathetic in colour and texture to those of the shop building and street as a whole and the type and number of different materials should be kept to a minimum.

4. Conservation Areas & Listed Buildings

4.1 Areas or buildings of special architectural and historical value are typically protected via **Conservation Area** or **Listed Building** designations. Given the importance of these the planning system has a **statutory duty to protect the character and appearance of properties within these designations under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.**

Listed Buildings

4.2 Any alterations to shop fronts that are a part of a listed building will need to be consistent with the age or style of the building and will require listed building consent. In the case of the listed buildings, even minor alterations, which might otherwise be permitted development (such as alterations to the detailing of stucco or woodwork, small features or specially treated glass), would require Listed Building Consent. However repairs undertaken on a 'like-for-like' basis may not require Listed Building Consent. For further information on works to Listed Buildings please contact the Design & Conservation Team on 01792 635091.

Conservation Areas

4.3 The Local Authority is empowered to designate areas of special architectural or historic interest as conservation areas, in order to protect their character. In such areas, special attention is paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of the area including historic shop fronts. Conservation area consent is required for substantial demolition works in such areas and as such may be required for the demolition of an existing shop front depending on the scope of the works.

4.4 By understanding the style of the period, it is possible to ascertain the appropriate design for any proposed works. The influencing factors may include the age and the style of the existing building, the age of the existing shop front, the materials previously used, the historic purpose of the shop etc.

4.5 As part of the overall design, it is the little details that make the building individual and interesting. Many of these items, such as door handles, patterns in glass or sign writing on the side of a building, may be original and an important part of the historic value. These features should be retained and incorporated into the proposed design.

Corporate/National Brand shops in Conservation Areas

4.6 Most national chain/brand retail businesses adopt a standard house style to all of their stores. The purpose of house style is understandable; it is to make the company recognisable in all towns through the use of a standard image for its branches. However in Conservation Areas or where the proposals affect the setting of a Listed Building this house style approach can become an unsatisfactory intrusion into the streetscene and will also be incompatible with strengthening of the individuality of shopping areas. Therefore the corporate image should be interpreted with sensitivity towards the particular character of the host building and in Conservation areas, and it should be modified to accord with the local context/streetscene when appropriate in these circumstances, companies must be prepared to adapt their house styles to match the character of the building and the wider area.

4.7 The design of shop fronts should take account of the design of the building and adjoining buildings. To ensure that buildings retain their distinctiveness and detailing, individual shop windows should be separated by consoles and pilasters even if they serve a single shop. Unity of appearance can be achieved by ensuring the upper and lower levels of the fascias are the same height and doorways have a regular pattern.

4. Conservation Areas & Listed Buildings



Above: Examples of shop fronts where the standard house style of branding has been modified to better fit the host building and/or local area.

A more sensitive approach is especially important in special areas such as Conservation Areas and can also help to strengthen the individuality of different shopping areas/streets.

Checklist for Understanding — Heritage Approach (Retain / Repair)

Proposals in Conservation Areas should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area and the Local Planning Authority will normally approve schemes which achieve this aim.

Applications which seek to remove good quality original shop fronts or replace these with new/modern designs will generally be resisted. Works to original and relatively unaltered traditional shop fronts are likely to only be supported for repair and reinstatement works. Support for alterations to such shop fronts will only be given if enhancement of the building and streetscene can be fully justified.

Any original architectural features that have been concealed by later additions should be restored. Repairs should generally be undertaken on a 'like—for—like' basis, matching the design and materials of the original features to be repaired.

Buildings should be refurbished via an 'evidence based' approach where possible. This can be obtained by studying historic photographs and carefully understanding the history and era of the building.

Similarly new shop front design in conservation areas should look to respect and take design cues from existing features of architectural merit and/or historical records.

Traditional building practice, materials, and techniques should be used for the restoration of older properties, Modern uPVC framed double-glazed windows are not appropriate in older shop buildings.

Where shops are located in Conservation Areas and/or listed buildings it may be necessary to adapt the standard 'house style' of national chains and corporations in order to respect the character and identity of the area / building. In such circumstances the corporate branding of a shop front comes secondary to the quality of the shop front design and the need to preserve and enhance the street scene.

5. New Shop Fronts

5.1 Proposals to provide new shop fronts through either renewal or replacement of an existing one will typically require planning permission and building regulations approval. Applications to replace existing modern shop fronts of poor design quality and/or a dated appearance with a more appropriate design will generally be supported.

5.2 Broadly speaking there are 4 different types of approach for new shop fronts:

- **Traditional**
- **Modern Interpretation of Traditional Approach**
- **Modern with some Traditional References**
- **Modern**

5.3 Consideration of whether a traditional or more modern approach is most suitable will need to be explored through a thorough analysis of the physical context (existing building, the wider streetscene etc), the planning policy context (is the shop within a conservation area? Does it affect the setting of a listed building? etc) as well as any other site specific considerations which are relevant.

Traditional

Appropriate for:

- **Traditional host building in street with a predominantly traditional character**
- **Traditional host building in street with a mixed character**

5.4 Traditional shop fronts are designed like picture frames; to set out the goods on display and distinguish each shop from its neighbours. This principle is a valuable basis for designing shop fronts of all types.

5.5 Good quality traditional shop fronts are the supported approach for proposals:

In conservation areas.

Affecting the setting of listed buildings.

In streetscenes with a prevalence of traditional shop fronts.

Where the host building has a strong traditional character

5.6 In the City and County of Swansea area, traditional shop fronts are generally considered to be those which exhibit the character and appearance of Victorian premises due to the prevalence of this type within the county.

5.7 Proposals for new traditional shop fronts will therefore be assessed against the design principles of the typical Victorian shop front. In order to best replicate this style the shop front should include certain key components.

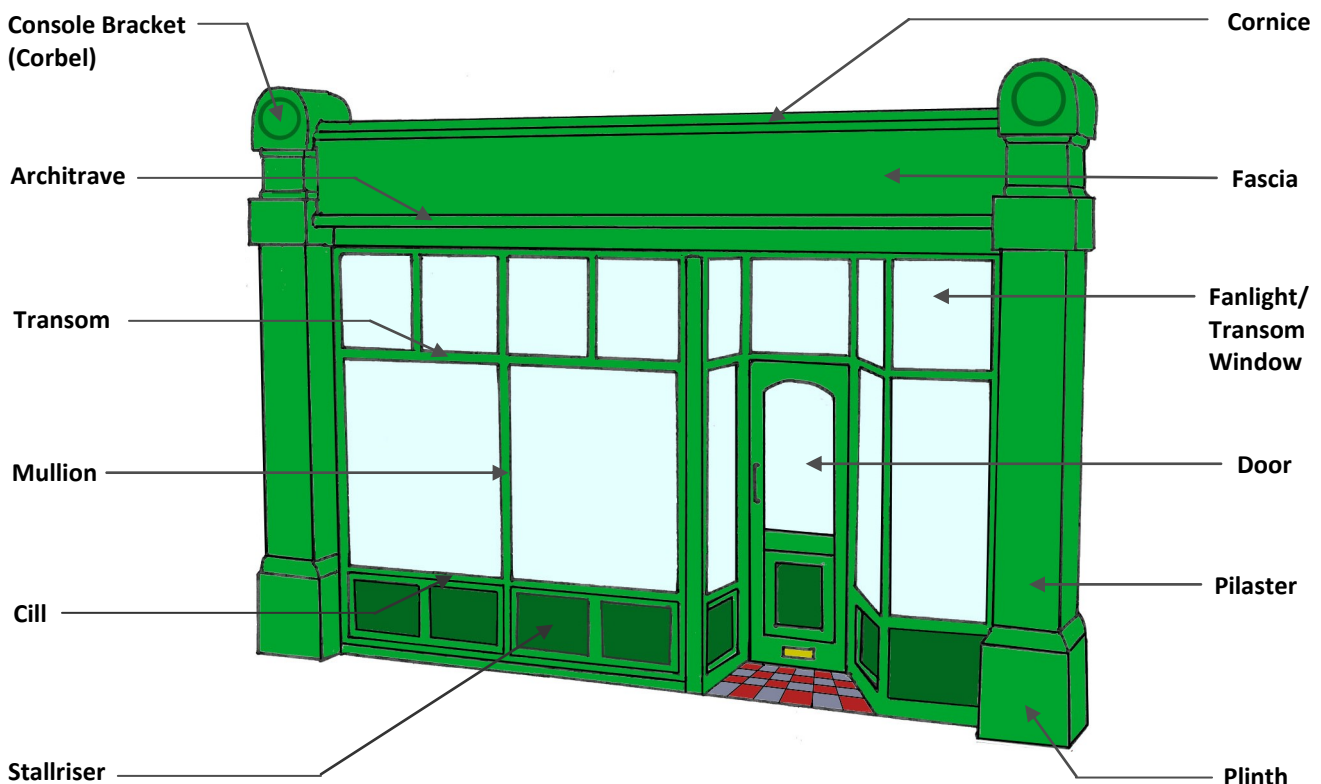
5. New Shop Fronts

5.8 There are several key components of well designed shop fronts which help to add richness and detail to the shop and wider streetscene and these should be incorporated into all new shop front proposals in an appropriate manner. Each part of the shop front has a specific role:

- The **cornice** provides a frame for the fascia and protects it from the weather.
- The **fascia** is the main location for the shop name and details about the business.
- The **consoles** also provide a frame for the fascia. In rows of shops, they separate fascias from those of adjoining shops.
- The **pilasters** have the same role as the consoles: to frame the shop front and separate it from its neighbours. Pilasters typically incorporate a **capital** at the top and a **plinth** on the bottom.
- **Transoms and mullions (glazing bars)** are not essential in modern windows but can reduce the cost of replacement if a window is broken.
- The **stall riser** helps protect the window from road dirt and damage and can be strengthened to guard against ram raiding.

5.9 These are the main elements of a traditional shop front and each has a practical purpose, as well as contributing to the character of the building. Shop fronts in more modern buildings may not need all of these elements.

Traditional Shop Front



5. New Shop Fronts

Modern Interpretation

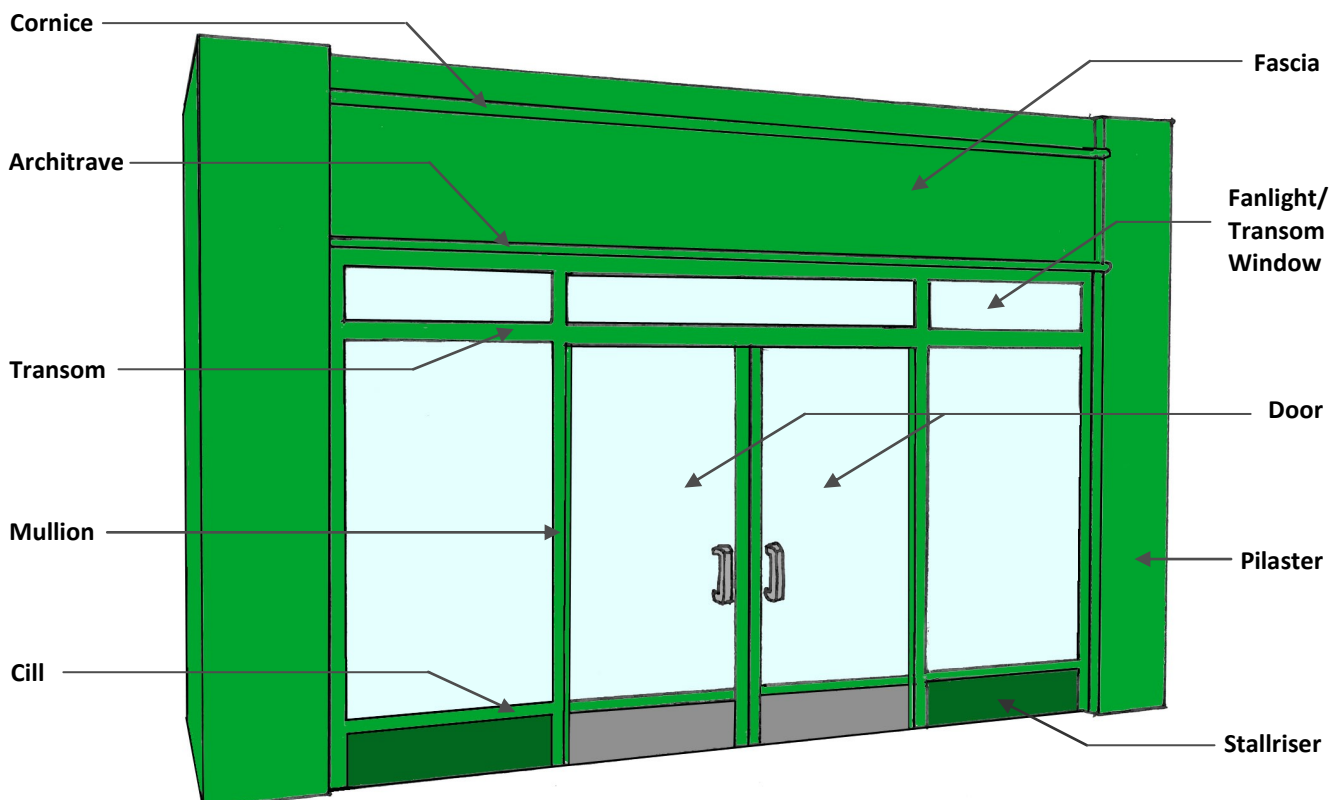
Appropriate for:

- Traditional host building in street with a mixed character
- Traditional host building in the city centre
- Modern building in a conservation area
- Modern building in a traditional street

5.10 In many instances the character of the host building or the street will provide opportunities to provide a more modern interpretation of the traditional shop front. This approach is typically appropriate where there is a difference between the character of the host building and the wider street (see above).

5.11 Modern interpretations of traditional shop fronts generally have less ornamental detailing than traditional shop fronts but they still create a 'frame' to the shop front. In order that these modern interpretations enhance the character and appearance of retail areas these should include well proportioned components which also exhibit a level of depth and detailing to these.

Modern Interpretation of Traditional Shop Front



5.12 Typically traditional shop fronts possess a three dimensional quality and level of enrichment generally lacking in modern shop fronts. Too many modern shop fronts are dull and unrewarding because they are overly flat, and have little differentiation from the plane of the wall. As they are mostly seen by pedestrians at close distances and from oblique angles a lack of projection and recession is a missed opportunity for enrichment. As such modern shop front designs should generally follow the approach of traditional shop fronts albeit interpreted in a modern manner.

5. New Shop Fronts



Left: Traditional shop front design incorporating elements such as transom windows, decorative pilasters and corbels. Features such as these give traditional shop fronts a strong sense of character as a result of these being more decorative and detailed than modern approaches.



Right: Modern interpretation shop front design is typically less decorative than traditional designs but still incorporates the same elements albeit in a simpler, more contemporary manner.



Checklist for Understanding—Traditional & Modern Interpretation

New shop fronts should have three dimensional interest (projecting and recessive elements) to create a sense of solidity and robustness to the shop exterior.

Using pilasters, stall risers, mullions, transoms and fascias collectively can help to provide proportion to a shop front design.

New shop fronts should be sufficiently anchored to the ground through the use of stall risers to give visual support to the upper floors of the host building and provide robustness to the proposals. Schemes for modern all-glass shop fronts which give no sense of support to the host building and that jar against older, richer shop buildings will be resisted.

The design of new shop fronts should retain and incorporate rather than conceal any architectural features of the host building.

Materials should be selected to reflect and enhance the character of the building and wider area. These should be durable and easy to maintain.

The rhythm of the upper floors should be maintained or reinstated if necessary, especially where adjacent premises are to be operated as a single unit. In this case, each adjoining building should be individually expressed by retaining or reintroducing vertical elements (where they existed) such as pilasters between each shop front and masonry bands between upper floors

Modern interpretation shop front proposals typically have less detailing than traditional shop fronts. Where such a design is proposed ensure that this has enough richness of texture and detail to give interest to the shop front and wider streetscene.

Detailing and design of modern interpretation shop fronts can apply similar characteristics, proportions and principles as surrounding traditional shop fronts, without necessarily using the same decorative details and materials.

5. New Shop Fronts

5.13 In some specific locations there may be opportunities where a more imaginative approach will be acceptable. A more comprehensively unusual shop front will attract attention to itself and could become a focal feature. Appropriate locations for such an approach would be where the street and building character is mixed or within the city centre. However even within these areas there may be inappropriate locations for such an approach such as in the centre of an existing harmonious group of buildings, or where the new shop front would draw the eye to from an established landmark. A key test will be the quality of the imaginative proposals as this is not an excuse for mediocre design.

Modern with some Traditional References

Appropriate for:

- **Modern building in a mixed character street**
- **Modern building in the city centre**

5.14 In some instances there will be opportunities to provide shop fronts which have a more contemporary appearance and begin to break away from the traditional approaches as shown on the preceding pages. In specific contexts (see above) it may be appropriate to provide a shop front which utilises some but not all of the elements/features of a traditional approach and begins to introduce different materials or bold colour and lighting schemes.



Modern

Appropriate for:

- **Modern building in the city centre**

5.15 Where the host building has a post-war character and is located in the city centre there may be scope to provide a shop front which totally breaks away from the traditional approach to provide a more eye catching facade. This could be achieved by altering the form of shop front elements and providing cladding, different materials or bold painting schemes which break up the shop front or whole building façade.



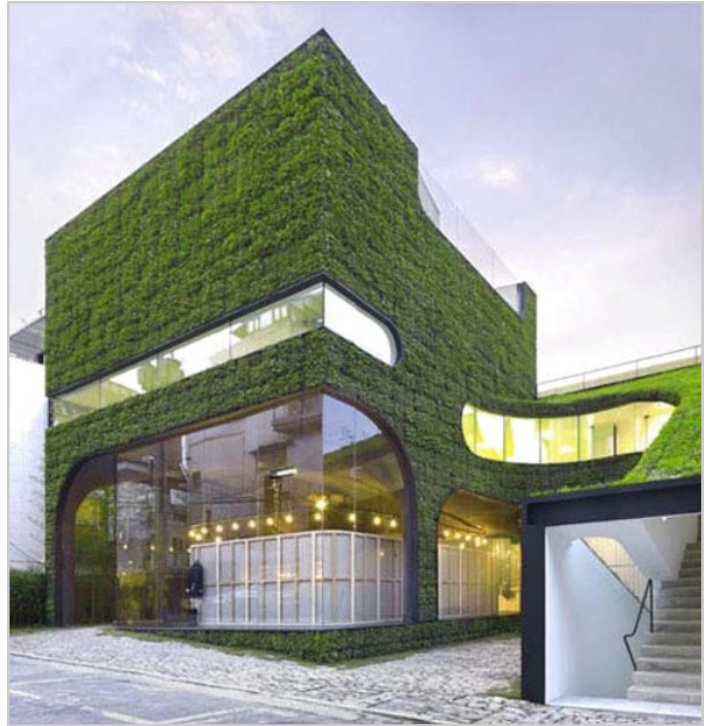
Left & Right: Modern approaches to shop fronts on modern buildings in the city centre are less restricted by historical context and a variety of forms can be provided to catch the eye and provide a memorable shop front.



5. New Shop Fronts

International examples of modern approaches to shop front design which play with form, colour and materials to create iconic and memorable shop front designs.

Design approaches such as these will only be considered acceptable on modern buildings in the city centre.



6. Shop Front Features

6.1 **The following shop front features are typically found on traditional shop fronts and modern interpretations of these.** Where such an approach is utilised the design of the shop front should follow the principles set out for each component. However these principles are not intended to stifle high quality innovative designs in appropriate locations such as on post-war buildings in the city centre. In appropriate circumstances there may be scope to approach these principles in a more flexible manner, provided this can be justified through a high quality shop front design.

Fascia, Cornice & Console

6.2 The fascia is the flat or outwardly sloping section at the top of the shop front below the cornice whereby the sign/name of the shop is located. Consoles are the brackets at each end of the fascia, and traditionally allow for the fascia to be inclined. In a more modern context they simply define the ends of the fascia and provide separation from adjoining fascias.

6.3 **Fascias form the dominant feature of the shop front.** The fascia is key to advertising the shop products and/or services and is usually the first feature a customer will take notice of. Therefore it is critical that acceptable materials for fascias are used and incorporated into the wider design of the shop front. This will ensure that it remains an attraction without harming the overall shop front.

6.4 **The cornice sits above the fascia and provides a visual cap to the top of shop fronts.** In traditional shop fronts the cornice is usually timber moulding and lead topped whereas modern shop fronts typically present less ornate styles. Whether traditional or modern, all cornices should be neat and provide a well—defined cap to the shop front.

6.5 Design approach:

The scale, design and angle of the fascia should be appropriate to the character, height and period of the building and in proportion with the shop front and wider streetscene. Excessively deep, wide or tall fascias should be avoided;

Fascia height and alignment should retain historic proportions. Fascias should typically be aligned throughout a group of shops by keeping to a standard width, normally that of the capital. This promotes both a more attractive street scene and also ensures that each shop front retains its original, balanced proportions;

Oversized fascia-boards, oversized writing and unsuitable materials such as plastic will not be permitted;



Oversized Fascia sign with overly large lettering detracts from the uniformity of the streetscene.

Plastic finishes in garish colours also detract from the quality of the fascia and can make a shop front look cheap.

6. Shop Front Features

the use of box fascias should be avoided as they are often unsympathetic to the surroundings in terms of bulk, size, materials and the lighting within the box fascia;

Where a shop occupies several units, each should have a separate fascia, linked visually by a common design. Continuous fascias are visually dominant and cut across the pattern of the terrace.



Lacks proportion and relationship with rest of the building.



A consistent fascia relates to the adjacent shopfront and the rest of the building.

In a traditional design the fascia is normally positioned between the consoles which form 'bookends' to the fascia. The fascia, therefore, should be the same height as the console. With more modern design approaches separation between adjacent fascias should be provided extending the pilasters up to the level of the cornice.

Where there is no historic information to reference, size should be in keeping with the proportions of the building, paying reference to surrounding buildings.

Any existing fascias of historic and/or architectural merit on shop fronts should be incorporated into design proposals and not be covered by a new fascia or sign;

non acrylic and matt finish materials should be used in fascia design on heritage assets;

The use of angled/canted fascias is encouraged for traditional shop fronts.



Traditional console



Angled fascia sign



Above: Raised lettering adds a sense of depth and robustness to fascia signage and can be utilised in a number of ways to suit the style of the shop.

Above: Traditional shop front designs can often be enhanced through the use of hand painted signs.

6. Shop Front Components

Windows, Transoms, Mullions & Bi-Folding Doors

6.6 Original windows and glazing are important features of historic buildings helping to set the proportions of the shop front whilst clearly display the goods on sale. Likewise, other elements such as glazing bars, mullions and transoms should also retain a scale and proportion which is consistent with the rest of the building. These elements in particular should be designed to reflect the architectural period of the shop front and building.

6.7 A **Transom** divides the window horizontally, often between the door and door light. These can allow high-level opening lights for ventilation. Transoms can be introduced to improve window proportions, or to define decorative glazing below the fascia.

6.8 **Mullions** provide vertical division of shop front windows. Reinforced mullions in a shop front can strengthen the glazed areas and limit the amount of glazing to be replaced following breakage.

6.9 **Bi-Folding Doors** are typically provided on commercial frontages such as bars, restaurants and cafes in order to provide an opportunity to open up the frontage during periods of good weather and to provide more of an connection between the inside and outside of the premises.

6.10 Design approach:

Traditional style windows and glazing types should be utilised on historic buildings.

The shop window should be kept as transparent as possible. Treatments to glazing, such as panelling, etching, reflective or tinted glass, which is used to provide signage or restrict the view into a shop, should be kept to the very minimum necessary.

Window etched effect graphics can supplement the main signage of the unit provided this is proportional to the windows, the shop front and the building as a whole.

The use of vertical elements such as mullions is generally encouraged to add a sense of verticality to the shop front and also break up large areas of glazing.

- e) Mullions should line up above and below transom level and may reflect vertical alignment of windows on upper floors.
- f) Where bi-folding doors form part of the proposals these should be designed to complement the design of the frontage in terms of materials and colour.
- g) Where bi-folding doors are proposed these must not impinge on highway or obstruct pedestrian movement. A separate access door should be provided also in order to allow for easy access for all into the premises when the bi-folding doors are closed.



Above: Bi-folding doors can create a more open connection between inside and outside and allow for social activities to spill out onto the street.



Above: Transoms and mullions add detailing and limit the amount of glass to be replaced if broken.

6. Shop Front Components

Pilasters

6.11 The pilaster is a vertical column which frames the shop front, provides visual support to the fascia and the upper floors of the building and visually separates shops. Pilasters usually project from the rest of the shop front and incorporate a capital at the top and a plinth on the bottom.

6.12 Design approach:

Pilasters are an integral part of shop front design and should always be incorporated into shop front design in some capacity in both modern and traditional designs. The design of a pilaster in terms of height, width, materials and make up will vary depending on the shop front style and the building itself.

Where a single shop front extends across two or more buildings, pilasters should be provided between adjacent buildings in order to provide vertical rhythm and to break up wide shop fronts.

- c) Pilasters and capitals should always follow the same rhythm and style as the floors above. By doing this, the pattern of the building is consistent from its base, up to the eaves.
- d) Existing pilasters that harmonise with the host building and nearby existing shop fronts should be retained.
- e) On heritage assets, mouldings on pilasters (and capitals) should take prompts from surrounding properties and historic records.



Above: Pilasters should be incorporated into all shop front design in some form and the design of these should take cues from the style of the shop front and host building.

Left: Example of a new shop front without pilasters. As can be seen the more solid upper floors appear to float above the glass ground floor resulting in a highly noticeable split between these and an odd, fragmented appearance to the overall building.

6. Shop Front Components

Stall Riser

6.13 Stall risers visually anchor to the ground and have both a visual and security function. Where appropriate materials and colours are used, stall risers will add positively to the appearance of the shop front whilst enhancing the display of goods on sale. They can also protect the shop fronts from accidental knocks, splashes and other potential damage as well as providing a robust hidden deterrent to ram-raiding therefore adding to the security of the shop front. Common materials for stall risers include timber, stone, brick and ceramics.

6.14 Design approach:

Proposals for traditional or modern interpretation shop fronts which are devoid of stall risers and are glazed right down to floor level are unlikely to be acceptable given that a stall riser has both a functional and visual role to play.

Similarly, such designs which employ stall risers which are too tall are also unlikely to be acceptable. As a general rule their height should not exceed 25% of the total shop front height. In order to ascertain the appropriate height of a stall riser an analysis of the host building and wider streetscene should be made.

The scale of the stall riser required should typically be in proportion with the plinth supporting the pilaster.

A cill detail should be included between the glazing and the stall riser.

Existing stall risers that harmonise with the host building and nearby existing shop fronts should be retained or incorporated into new shop front designs where appropriate.

- f) The stall riser should be finished in a quality hard wearing material which is easy to clean.



Above: Traditional or modern interpretation shop fronts which omit a stall riser lack a robust anchor point to the ground, appear fragile and exposed and are more susceptible to damage.



Above: Stall risers have several benefits including helping to protect from damage at ground level as well as framing the shop front. Where stall risers are of a matching height across a row of shops this helps to provide uniformity and character to the streetscene which can help to create a coherent sense of place.

6. Shop Front Components

Materials & Colours

6.15 Materials, in terms of types, colour, variations and quality; can either enhance or detract from the physical appearance of a shop front. Using appropriate type and quality of materials is essential to ensure the protection and enhancement of an individual building and the wider streetscape.

6.16 The imaginative use of materials can also positively aid access for people with visual impairment. Contrasting colours and textures, for instance, including those on doors and shop floor entrances, will make them recognisable therefore allowing ease of access.

6.17 Design approach:

All materials used should be high quality, durable and robust. The design of attractive and unique shop fronts through the creative use of materials and colour will be supported in appropriate locations.

Materials and colour contrasts should be carefully selected for to conform with the accessibility requirements of Building Regulations Part M. Considerations such as the appropriate use of colour contrast between the frame and door, and the door and handle and the use of tactile paving at the entrance to a shop to aid the visually impaired will be supported.

The materials used for individual shop fronts should typically be influenced by the host building. The use of traditional materials such as painted hardwood timber should be a common starting point for all traditional shop fronts.

For shop fronts on heritage assets or within conservation areas, materials and colours for all constituent parts of the shop front should complement the architectural style and period of the individual building and the surrounding streetscape.

There will be greater scope to use modern materials on newer buildings. However, designers must avoid the use of acrylic sheeting, Perspex, plastic, standard natural finish aluminium and unpainted softwoods.



Above: Utilising a range of non-complementary materials and colours gives a fragmented appearance to shop fronts.



Above: By considering the architectural style of the building and utilising more appropriate materials and colour palettes even more modern designs can often be successfully integrated into the overall building façade.

7. Access

Access—Entrances

7.1 Entrances must ensure access for all. Shop users include people with disabilities, and also people with pushchairs or prams. Access needs to relate to those who use wheelchairs, those with others with mobility issues such as rheumatism or arthritis, pregnant women and senior citizens as well as blind or partially sighted people.

7.2 Design approach:

The location of entrances should respect the rhythm of the street & the verticality of upper floors.

On traditional shops proposals for new entrances should respect and complement the design of the existing entrance, provided such entrances are themselves of aesthetic quality.

All access doors, steps and ramps should comply with the latest building regulations standards to allow access for all. The design of the shop front should incorporate safe, easy and convenient access to the premises for everyone, including disabled and elderly customers, and customers with buggies.

Where doors have two leaves it should be possible for a wheelchair, pushchair or pram to enter through one door without having to open both doors. Two-way swing doors are useful for those who find it difficult to pull a door towards them. Revolving doors should be avoided.

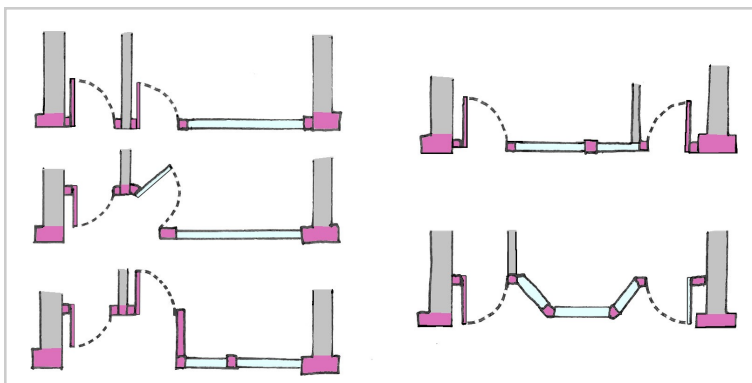
- e) Frameless glass doors, and doors with large areas of glass can be hazardous, as partially-sighted people and children may not see them. Give special consideration to thresholds, door widths and design, colour contrasts, and symbolic signage.
- f) Solid entrance doors do not allow visibility into the shop which discourages use and contributes to the problem of inactive/dead frontages. Glass visibility panels should be fitted to solid entrance doors, positioned so that children and people in wheelchairs as well as other adults can see into the shop.
- g) In some cases it may not be possible to employ all the potential solutions to improve access without detriment to the design/character of the building or a special designation (Conservation Area, Listed Building etc). If a building is of heritage value then it is important that applicants demonstrate they can simultaneously satisfy Part M of the Building Regulations without having a negative impact on the character of the building.

7. Access

Access—Upper floors

7.3 The City and County of Swansea encourages the use of upper floors above shops for uses which complement the ground floor retail use such as office or residential uses as these help to add vibrancy to the shopping areas and town centres.

7.4 Where fire doors for upper floor uses are required these must be designed in a manner which is both satisfactory to the design of the shop front and wider streetscene as well as Building Regulations.



Left: Examples of upper floor access doors incorporated into shop fronts.

Outward opening access doors and fire escapes must be recessed in order to avoid these from obstructing the public highway.

7.5 Design approach:

For reasons of security and safety entrance doors should provide for direct access to the street, in preference to the rear of a property, where there is less opportunity for surveillance.

Doors to upper floors should harmonise with the shop front. In particular new access doors to historic properties should be sensitively designed to ensure that they are in keeping with the existing features of the shop front.

Any existing access to the upper floors should be retained. However where new access is required a separate door should be provided for unrelated upper floors uses. Where a separate door to upper floors is required, these should be designed as an integral part of a shop front.

Outward opening fire doors must be carefully integrated into frontages so as not to impinge on the pavement/highway.



Left & Right: Examples of shop fronts with secondary access doors successfully integrated into these.

Doors can be accommodated in a number of ways as highlighted above.



8. Signage & Lighting

Advertisement consent

8.1 Signs and Advertisements typically form part of the design of new shop fronts and it is important that these are considered as a part of a holistic design approach to the whole shop frontage.

8.2 Advertisement proposals for shop fronts will typically require advertisement consent. This is a separate application process to the planning application for the shop front proposals but both planning and advertisement applications can be submitted in tandem.

Create a clear and simple shop front that attracts customers

8.3 The first impression of a shop is crucial and has the potential to attract passers by or turn them away. Shoppers may be reluctant to enter a shop when they cannot see into and so one of the most important things is not to confuse people with a crowded space.

8.4 De-cluttering the front of your shop can significantly improve its appearance and attractiveness to shoppers as uncluttered, clean and simple displays look more appealing than displays that are crowded with random items and signage. Too many posters and notices can make your shop look tatty and weaken the message you are trying to make.

8.5 Many shoppers are reluctant to enter shops they cannot see into and it is therefore good practice to keep posters and notices to a minimum, avoid the use of vinyls and avoid layouts where display units back onto windows. A shop is most clearly identified if it only has one or two clear signs, which can be located in the zone below the shop sign and above the main window.

8.6 It is also important to minimise signage above the shop as this can make your shop and the street look too busy and tatty. Therefore, as a general rule, signage above the shop fascia level should be avoided and this will often require submission of an application for advertisement consent.



Above: Too much signage can be confusing to shoppers and weaken your message.



Above: Avoid use of vinyls—These make a shop look cheap and also restrict views into the shop which can put off potential customers from entering.

Businesses and signage on upper floors

8.7 Primarily, retail and commercial uses occupy ground floor levels and as such signage should be displayed upon a shop front fascia. Repetition of signage should therefore be avoided and additional signs and banners on the storeys above the shop front will not be considered suitable.

8. Signage & Lighting

8.8 Where businesses occupy the upper floors, the display of advertisements should be limited to lettering applied to windows. A suitable size and style need not spoil the elevation. There is also the potential for further discrete signage above or next to (on a plaque for example) any entrance doorway serving this use.

8.9 Where no upper floor use exists and these areas are utilised for storage traders are encouraged to pay attention to the appearance of windows on these floors. In these instances consideration should be given obscuring windows so that these storage areas are not visible.



Left: Hand painted signage sensitively applied to the window can improve the appearance of a shop front whilst also maintaining views inside.



Left: The shop front window is completely obscured by signage creating an oppressive and unwelcoming shop front.

Signage in Conservation Areas

8.10 For traditional shop fronts in the most sensitive areas, hand written letters or individual lettering applied to the fascia may be the most appropriate solution. Raised metal or timber letters may be acceptable subject to the overall design of the signage but garish shiny plastics are not suitable. Clear well spaced letters are as easy to read as larger oversized letters.

8.11 The sign should be limited to the name of the shop with a simple graphic logo and maybe the street number. Signage with excessive information creates visual clutter and will not be acceptable. Whether directly attached to buildings or as part of a fascia sign, all lettering and graphics should be moderately sized and should be in proportion to the dimensions of the fascia area.

8.12 Adopting a standardised design approach of set letter sizes, logos and colours may not be appropriate for every building and street. Corporate signage and branding therefore should not dictate the style of the shop front, the signage and the appearance of the fascia. Corporate identity should be appropriate to the scale and character of the building as a whole. It should not overpower the aesthetic and needs to be carefully considered.

8.13 Using signs provided by advertisers will often erode the simplicity of the building and make groups of buildings appear cluttered and should be avoided. Free-standing illuminated signs hung within the window-display should also be avoided.

8.14 Subtle finishes to glazing can add interest to the appearance of a shop front. For example, glass engraving may be used to create variety. This may provide a high quality advertising opportunity, or an opportunity to say something about the nature of the business.

8. Signage & Lighting

Checklist for Understanding—Signage

Proposals for shop front signage should be simple and not result in a proliferation of signs and/or posters.

All external signs must be of a high standard of design, relate architecturally to the host building, be in keeping with the surrounding scale and townscape and not detract from the streetscene.

New shop fronts in the city centre should generally incorporate raised fascia lettering to add an element of robustness and quality to signage in order to raise standards of design. Flat signage types such as flat sign painted fascias may be considered acceptable depending on the character of the building and the submission of a justification statement.

There should be a clear visual break between the ground floor and upper floor uses. Prominent signs above fascia level will not be considered acceptable. Simple window etchings are more appropriate for upper floor uses.

Fascia signs must not be oversized in relation to the shop front. These should therefore be located within the traditional fascia level with lettering and logos in scale with the size of the fascia and shop front.

Projecting signs should be at fascia level only and are restricted to one per commercial unit.

Corporate signage and branding should not dictate the style of the shop front, especially in areas of special consideration and/or where the host building is of heritage value.

Proposals for solid or blank frontages on non-retail commercial premises e.g. betting shops, offices, and restaurants will be resisted.

Lighting

8.23 The use of illumination for shop fronts should be carefully considered as good lighting can positively enhance the character and setting of a place or building; but excessive lighting can equally detract and also adversely affect neighbouring amenity as well as contribute to light pollution. Applicants are strongly advised to discuss proposals with a planning officer with a view to producing sensitive and energy efficient schemes.

8.24 Lighting should be considered as part of the overall design rather than a later addition. Subtle lighting can add vitality to the night time street scene. Poorly considered and designed illumination such as box illuminated signs can look garish rather than stylish - these will generally not be permitted. Over-illumination must be avoided as it can upset the balance of light by conflicting with street lighting.

8.25 Possible lighting solutions:

External Lighting: Ideally light sources should be concealed and carefully directed at the fascia, avoiding glare. The lighting units themselves should be as subtle as possible and not divert any attention away from the fascia.

Suitable lamp types could include tungsten halogen floods, tungsten spotlights, low voltage tungsten and LED spotlights, swan-necked metal arms and concealed fluorescent tubes. All wiring and trunking should be concealed behind the fascia.

8. Signage & Lighting

Backlit Lettering: Translucent plastic letters or graphics inset into an opaque panel and illuminated from behind may be an acceptable and discrete way of lighting the fascia given that the light box is fully recessed behind the fascia.

Individual Halo Lettering: Individual letters can stand proud of a surface and be lit from behind to produce a halo effect; a treatment which is suitable for fascias or wall mounting. Where this method is used it should be subtle and good quality individual letters should be used. Plastic lettering is not acceptable for listed buildings,

Cool Cathode Tubes: Neon signs will generally be resisted.

Building Illumination: Shop window display lighting contributes to a safe night-time environment. Discrete spotlighting to highlight the architectural features of building is welcomed.

Projecting Signs: Illumination for hanging signs should be external, subtle and well directed.

Lighting in Conservation Areas & on Listed Buildings

8.25 Not all of the possible lighting solutions highlighted above will be suitable in all instances. If the host building is located in a conservation area or is a listed building or lies in close proximity to one then there may be restrictions on what lighting can be utilised in these locations.

8.26 Shop front proposals in these areas should seek to provide lighting solutions which preserve or enhance the character and appearance of these special designations.

Checklist for Understanding—Lighting

In respect of sustainability and degree of available control the use of LED or low energy lighting is encouraged.

Generally, large spot lights or dominant lighting which creates pools of light and areas of shade will not be considered acceptable.

Intermittent, flashing lighting or moving displays will not generally considered to be acceptable.

Subtle internal window lighting is encouraged to promote vitality in the street and aid security, especially at night time.

Proposals for new box illuminated signs will generally not be considered acceptable unless justification can be provided for these.

Possible lighting solutions in conservation areas or affecting a listed building (or its setting) may be more restricted and the advice of the Planning Authority should be sought in these instances.

9. Security

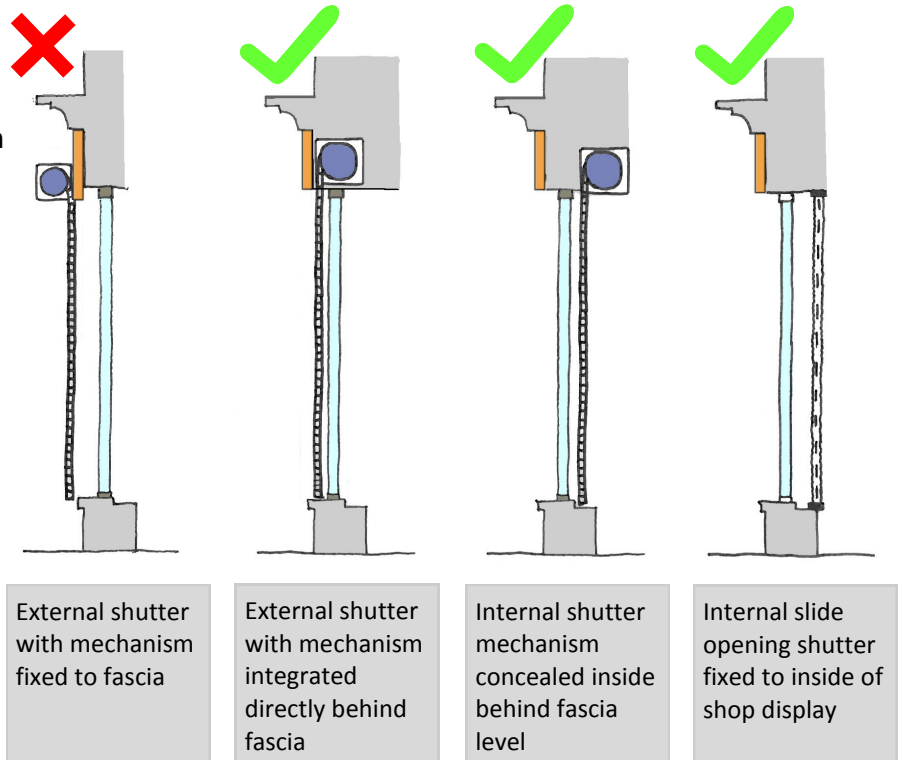
9.1 Security measures should be chosen both for their effectiveness as well as their image on the shop and the wider streetscene. Whilst there is sometimes a need for security to commercial premises, it is rarely necessary to resort to designs which present wholly solid exteriors to the street.

9.2 Consideration should be given to the impact of security measures on the street at night. It is generally best if shop windows are visible at night and internally illuminated with appropriate low level lighting. This enhances the look of shop fronts and enables out of hours window shopping. It also increases safety and security by acting as a deterrent to theft.

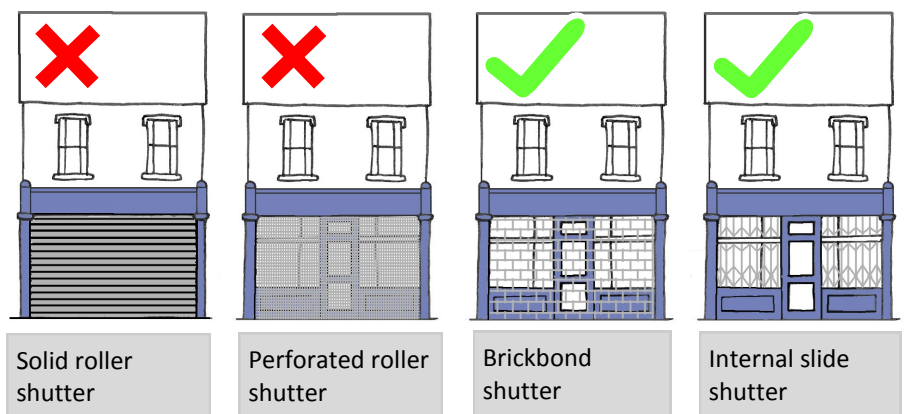
Roller shutters

9.3 Roller shutters and grilles can be mounted either internally or externally. Planning permission is typically required for external shutters.

9.4 Internal grilles are the least visually disruptive security measure when considering the external appearance of a shop front, as the box housing can be easily concealed within the building and the façade remains unaltered.



9.5 Streets with solid shutters can feel hostile and lifeless at night and often attract graffiti. As such external shutters are discouraged as they can create an unwelcoming, fortress type atmosphere that people avoid. They may even allow intruders to enter properties from the rear entrance undetected.



9.6 The Council will therefore not grant planning permission for solid or perforated shutters which are less than 75% open.

9.7 Acceptable shutter and grille types include the following:

- **Demountable Grilles**
- **Porticullis Roller Grilles**
- **Brickbond Roller Shutters**

9. Security

Demountable Grilles

Fixed to the outside of windows and doors and generally housed in runners or on hooks and padlocked to the shop front.

Porticullis Roller Grilles

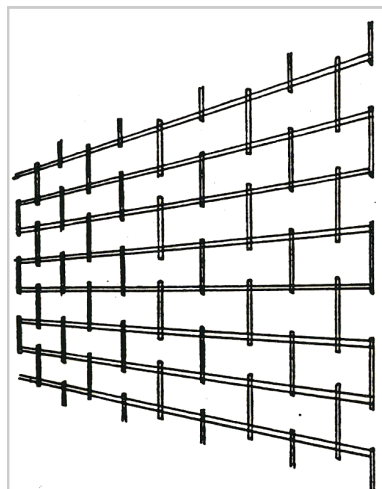
Allows for visibility through into shop premises as well as affording protection against theft and vandalism. Such a grille should be housed in a box to the rear of the fascia.

Brickbond Roller Shutters

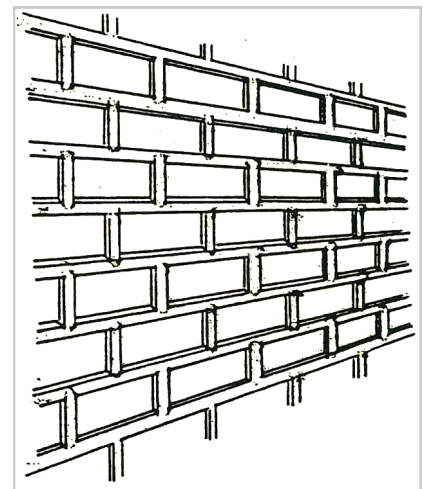
These will generally be acceptable if they give maximum views into the shop and are not an oppressive intrusion into the streetscene by virtue of the colour or size. The open area must comprise at least 75% of the total shutter area, and should be similar to a porticullis grille in appearance.



Demountable Grilles



Porticullis Roller Grilles



Brickbond Roller Shutters

9.8 The use of plain metal finishes should be avoided and anodised or powder coated matt finishes are preferred. Samples and/or product photos of the proposed finish should be submitted as a part of the planning application.

9.9 Shutter boxes must be concealed behind the main fascia, or if this is not practicable their projection should be minimised. They should never project forward of the pilasters. Where shutter boxes are too bulky they often detract from the features of the building and can harm the appearance of the shop and the street.

Security glass and glazing considerations

9.10 Laminated and toughened glass may be used instead of plate glass. This is the preferred alternative to external shutters or grilles, and can give high levels of security. It also enables goods to remain on display encouraging window shopping outside hours, and gives the shop front a high quality appearance.

9.11 Consideration should be given to subdividing glazed elements into smaller parts as single pane display windows are vulnerable to vandalism and theft. Using smaller panes by providing transoms and mullions allows for easier replacement of damaged parts which reduces the cost of damage. Any subdivision of windows should be undertaken as an integrated part of the overall shop front design.

9. Security

Bollards

9.12 Bollards are typically installed as a measure against ram raiding. However these are often unsightly and add to the visual clutter of the streetscene as well as potentially causing obstruction to pedestrians, especially those who are partially sighted or disabled and people with pushchairs. Bollards located close to shop fronts also detract from their appearance. As such this approach to security will generally be resisted unless exceptional circumstances justify their use.

9.13 Where bollards are accepted as part of the shop front proposals these should be of a removable or drop down nature. However such an approach will require careful consideration to ensure that such features are co-ordinated with the design of the shop front. They should also be secure so as not to encourage erection during shop opening hours.

9.14 Where new or reinstated shop fronts are proposed and there is a need to provide ram raid protection this should be incorporated as anti-ram raid reinforcement to the stall riser.



Left: Bollards will not typically be accepted as part of a shop front design as these can cause obstruction on the street. Drop down or retractable bollards may be considered acceptable where the use of these can be fully justified.

Electronic security devices—CCTV, alarms, security lighting etc

9.15 The use of security devices such as closed circuit TV (CCTV), alarm systems and security lighting can greatly reduce crime against shops. Such devices will generally be encouraged provided that these do not adversely affect the appearance of the shop front.

9.16 The positioning of alarm boxes should be considered as an integral part of the design of the shop front. They should therefore be sited in unobtrusive positions that avoid interference with any architectural details. They should also be painted to co-ordinate with the colour of the shop front.

9.17 Unsightly wiring and ill sited additions such as burglar alarms can detract from the quality of a shop front. Wherever possible, wiring should be internal, and if external should not be visible. Redundant systems should be removed to prevent clutter.

9.18 Consideration should also be given to the use of low energy lighting within the shop at night as this can contribute to street lighting and help deter crime. Where recessed doorways are present these should also be illuminated in lobbies to deter opportunities for crime.

9. Security

Checklist for Understanding—Signage

Incorporate security measures into designs at an early stage. Security features should unobtrusive and well integrated into the design of the shop front to avoid an unrelated, 'tacked on' appearance.

Security measures should not exceed what is reasonably necessary to give protection against burglary and vandalism.

Proposals for roller shutters must ensure that these at least 75% open.

Solid or perforated roller shutters will generally be resisted and will only be considered acceptable in exceptional circumstances where their use can be fully justified.

Shutter box housings should not stand proud of the fascia nor hide any architectural feature. They should be fully incorporated into the fascia and runners should be inside the pilasters.

It may be acceptable in certain circumstances to bring the fascia forward to hide the box housing. The housing however should be totally enclosed by the fascia and integrate with the shop front as a whole. This approach would not be acceptable on traditional buildings and in conservation areas.

- g) Grilles and roller shutters should not cover the whole shop front but protect only the glazed area.
- h) The use of plain metal finishes will not generally be considered acceptable and appropriately coloured anodised or powder coated matt finishes are preferred.
- i) Ram raid bollards will generally be resisted. Anti-ram raid stall risers should be used instead.
- j) Vacant shops should be left in good condition and temporarily boarded up if necessary. If likely to be vacant for a long period, illustrated boarding might be considered or, alternatively window display space can be let for gallery purposes or for advertising placed within the display area, which also discourages nuisance advertising such as fly posting.



Above: Solid Roller shutters can give the impression that an area is unwelcoming and unsafe which may drive shoppers away. Solid roller shutters can also attract graffiti which further increases negative perceptions of the area.



Above: Brick bond roller shutters provide security whilst allowing for more active views into the shop, improving the perception of the street and allowing for 24 hour viewing of shop window display items.

10. Other Features

A-boards

10.1 It is important to promote a safe and uncluttered pedestrian environment. To this end, the Council considers that the licensing of portable advertising boards on the pavement (public highway) should be carefully controlled. Pedestrians can be put at risk through poorly sited advertisements. Good design is particularly important for people with impaired vision, mobility difficulties and those pushing prams, who can be seriously disadvantaged.



10.2 Anyone proposing to place portable advertising boards on a highway that is maintained at public expense will require a licence. A licence for the erection of portable advertising boards issued under the Highways Act 1980 is valid for a maximum of 12 months or ending 31 March of each year (whichever is sooner). Where it is proposed to place a portable advertising board on a privately maintained forecourt, over which the public have limited access, a licence will not be required.

ATMs

10.3 Where Cash dispensers or ATMs are to be provided these should form an integral part of the shop front design so that their inclusion does not undermine the integrity of the shop front. This means ensuring that ATM's are centralised within the panel or window into which they are fitted and should also be located in highly active public environments with good natural surveillance. A facility for the deposit of unwanted receipts should be considered as part of the design. The location of other facilities such as cigarette bins, deposit boxes should also be considered as part of the overall design.

Blinds & Canopies

10.4 Blinds and canopies are primarily used to provide protection from the weather for shoppers and goods inside or outside a shop. They can be an attractive addition to a shop front and the wider street scene when considered as an integral part of the shop front design.

10.5 Canopies and blinds should be in keeping with the character of the building and not obscure architectural features.

10.6 The most suitable type of canopy is a straight canvas retractable type. This is a tilt of hard wearing canvas, fully retractable into a recessed box forming an integral part of the fascia. The blind/canopy should be the width of the fascia and the accompanying blind box should be fitted flush with or behind the fascia. The installation of such a blind does not normally require planning permission unless it is installed on a listed building.

10.7 Fixed, Dutch or folding canopies are less likely to be considered as appropriate additions to shop fronts as they are generally more visually obtrusive due to a lack of storage box or housing. As such these types tend to create clutter in the streetscene as well as obscuring architectural details of buildings on which they are situated.



Above: Shop front showing blinds retracted



Above: Shop front showing blinds open

10. Other Features

10.8 Highways regulations require that all blinds and canopies should clear the pavement by a minimum height of 2.65m, the distance between the far edge of the canopy/blind and the kerb should be at least 1m.

10.9 Proposals will be required to meet the following criteria:

It is important that the design of the blind/canopy respects the character of the building, and that its size, proportion, position, colour and shape complements that of the shop front building;

Retractable blinds should retract fully into the fascia. Blinds should be boxed discreetly, located and not obscure the shop front or other architectural features;

The use of non retractable canopies will not be permitted in conservation areas and on heritage assets;

In the city centre fixed glazed canopies may be appropriate to allow for protection against adverse weather conditions;

The outer edge of the blind/canopy needs to be a minimum of 1m away from the kerb line;

The height of the blind/canopy must be no less than 2.65m above pavement level to ensure that pedestrian movement is not impeded;

Outdoor seating & spill out displays

10.10 Many shops, particularly cafes, restaurants, greengrocers or hardware shops use an area in front of the shop for tables and chairs or to exhibit goods for sale. Outdoor areas may require planning permission and advice should be sought from the Planning Department. Care should be taken to avoid obstruction and to allow access for all users. This use may require a licence from the Highway Authority. Please contact the Highways department for further clarity on this.

10.11 Properties wishing to use the public realm for tables, chairs or to exhibit goods for sale must ensure that waste and recycling is managed to avoid it escaping and causing street litter. Businesses have a duty of care to dispose of their waste correctly. For further information please contact Waste Management.



Above: Outdoor seating can add activity and vitality to the street which helps to attract people to streets and businesses.



Above: A retractable canopy can also help to provide shelter from the weather and allow the space to be used for longer periods of time.

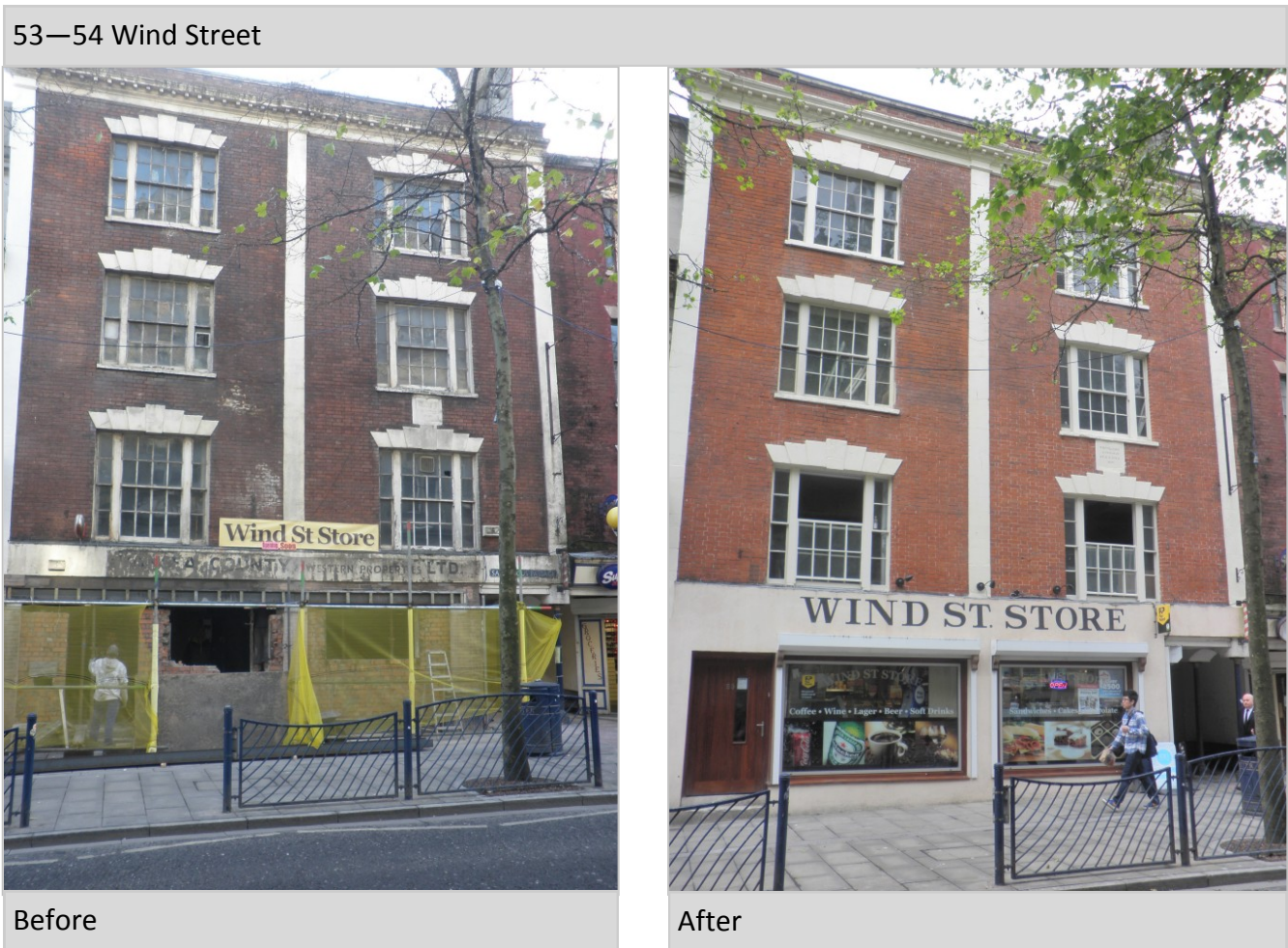


Above: Some shops can utilise the space in front of these as an additional display area for goods provided these are well conceived. This area should not be used for additional signage.

11. Grant Funding

11.1 Please contact the City & County of Swansea Strategy Development (Regeneration) team on (01792) 637266 for information on current local grant funding schemes which may be applicable to cover some of the costs of improvement works. Grant funding is subject to certain conditions and may need to be secured prior to the submission of any planning application and you are therefore advised to contact the team prior to this stage.

Grant Funded Shop Front Improvement Examples



11. Grant Funding

53—54 Wind Street



Before



After



11. Grant Funding

68 High Street



Before



After

71 High Street



Before



After

11. Grant Funding



Other Useful Contacts:

- Welsh Government:
 - Business information — business.wales.gov.uk
 - Business Grants — gov.wales/funding/grants/business
- Business in Focus — www.businessinfocus.co.uk
- Centre for Business — www.centreforbusiness.co.uk
- Landsker Business Solutions — landsker.co.uk

12.Planning Policy Context

12.1 This section outlines the national and local policy framework relevant to shop front applications.

National Policy

Planning Policy Wales (2014)

12.2 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) states that the appearance and scale of development proposals as well as their relationship to the local context are material planning considerations and that Local Planning Authorities should reject poor and non-contextual designs. (Paragraph 4.11.9)

12.3 The guidance goes on to state that In areas recognised for their landscape, townscape or historic value such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (e.g. Gower AONB) and conservation areas, as well as in areas with established and distinctive character, it can be appropriate to promote or reinforce traditional and local distinctiveness. In such areas the impact of development on the existing character, the scale and siting of new development, and the use of appropriate building materials will be particularly important. (Paragraph 4.11.10)

12.4 The issues of accessibility for all should be considered early in the process. (Paragraph 4.11.11)

12.5 Local authorities are under a legal obligation to consider the need to prevent and reduce crime and disorder in all decisions that they take. (Paragraph 4.11.12)

12.6 In existing centres, the restoration of redundant buildings which are worthy of retention can make them suitable for re-use for a variety of retailing, commercial, entertainment, cultural or residential purposes. (Paragraph 10.2.5)

12.7 Policies and supplementary planning guidance should support management of town centres and, where appropriate, of smaller centres. Such management, involving enhancement and promotion, can be an important factor in achieving vitality, attractiveness and viability of town, district, local and village centres. (Paragraph 10.2.8)

Technical Advice Note 7: Outdoor Advertisement Control (1996)

12.8 Designers should be prepared to compromise on matters of corporate design where it is unsuitable in a particular area, but corporate designs should not be refused simply because a local planning authority dislikes the design. (Paragraph 5)

12.9 Where an area is designated as a conservation area '... special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area' in the exercise of any of the provisions of the Planning Acts. This includes the control of outdoor advertisements. (Paragraph 16)

Technical Advice Note 12: Design (2014)

12.10 In many cases an appraisal of the local context will highlight distinctive patterns of development or landscape where the intention will be to sustain character. Appraisal is equally important in areas where patterns of development have failed to respond to context in the past. In these areas appraisal should point towards solutions which reverse the trend. (Paragraph 4.5)

12.11 A key area in which individuality can be expressed is in the design of signs and advertisements. The degree to which signs are appropriate to their context is a critical consideration. Through skilful design it is possible to modify standard company signs to respect sensitive context without loss of

12.Planning Policy Context

corporate image and this practice should be encouraged. Whereas a sensitive or traditional approach to the design of signs may be needed in historic areas, elsewhere, imaginative signs, appropriately illuminated, can contribute to the vibrancy and visual interest of town centres. . . Care should always be taken however, to avoid a proliferation of signs that could lead to clutter and confusion in the street scene. (Paragraph 5.16.1)

12.12 In many cases an appraisal of the local context will highlight distinctive patterns of development or landscape where the intention will be to sustain character. Appraisal is equally important in areas where patterns of development have failed to respond to context in the past. In these areas appraisal should point towards solutions which reverse the trend. (Paragraph 4.5)

Local Policy

12.13 The City and County of Swansea Unitary Development Plan (UDP) sets out the policy context which informs all planning application decisions.

12.14 The following policies are those relevant to shop front proposals. These form the policy context for developments of this type and are significant in the determination of these proposals. Below is a brief summary of the most relevant policies. For full wording of the these policies see the UDP.

EV1 sets out the objectives of good design.

EV3 sets the requirements for accessible developments.

EV4 sets out the design requirements for developments which impact upon the public realm.

EV9 sets out the standard of design in Conservation Areas and the requirements for the preservation or enhancement of these areas.

EV13 sets out the design requirements for shop fronts.

EV14 sets out the design requirements for signage.

EC4 sets out the criteria for new retail development proposals.

EC5 sets out the requirements for proposals in District Shopping Centres.

CC2 sets out the criteria for new retail development proposals in the City Centre retail core.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

12.15 This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) document sets out specific information relating to commercial and shop front proposals. It should also be read in conjunction with other adopted SPG documents for the county such as:

- Planning for Community Safety
- District Centres, Local Centres and Community Facilities
- Emerging Conservation Area Review SPGs— Mumbles, Morriston, Uplands

12.16 There is also an extant shop front SPG dated which is now nearly 20 years out of date. It is intended that this new Shop front SPG document will eventually replace this.

13. Planning Submission

Design Checklist

Existing Streetscape:

Has the relationship of the proposed design taken into account the rest of the building as well as those adjoining it? Has the design considered the overall character of the immediate environment?

Building Elevations:

Is the scale and design of any shop front in proportion to the facade of the building? Do the upper floors and shop front complement one another to create one harmonious building frontage?

Shop front Design:

Are there any historic shop front elements that are capable of being retained and remediated? Are there any historical photos which give clues about the original design of the shop front? Are the design materials and features employed in the scheme high quality? Do they respond to the historical context of the shop front?

Signage:

Is the graphic design style, advertisement and illumination appropriate to the rest of the shop front, building and streetscape? Does it contain Welsh language?

Canopies and Blinds:

Have they been considered within the overall design of the shop front and the building as a whole? Are they appropriate to the use of the premises?

Security:

Do security devices obstruct any architectural features on the building or have a negative visual impact? Have internal sliding security grilles been considered?

Access:

Does the design allow access to all, including people with disabilities, in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010?

Submission Requirements

- **Planning Application Form**
- **The correct fee**
- **Design & Access Statement:**
 - A statement to describe in simple terms how design and access issues relevant to the application, have been considered and addressed.
- **Plans, Elevations and other illustrated materials:**
 - Site Location Plan at a scale of 1:1250. This should show at least two named roads in the area and two numbered/named surrounding buildings. The application building should be edged clearly with a red line.
 - Block Plan at a scale of 1:200. This should show the application building in relation to boundaries with adjoining buildings, roads, footpaths and adjoining land. The plan should include some written dimensions.
 - Existing and Proposed Elevations at a scale of 1:50. Elevation(s) should clearly show the

13. Planning Submission

building as exists. Proposed elevations should include proposed materials and styles, colours, fittings and the proposed material and finish of windows and doors. The elevations should show the applicant buildings relationship with adjoining properties.

- Existing and Proposed floor plans at a scale of 1:50. Where relevant, fully detailed existing and proposed plans will be required. These must show details of any changes to access.
 - Detailed plans and cross sectional elevations at scale of 1:20. It is anticipated that detailed drawings will be required due to the intricate nature of the proposals; this is particularly true where the application building is listed. Details plans and cross sections should show new doors, windows and shop front details such as mouldings, fittings, joinery details, lettering, signage and the integration of any security features.
 - Photographs showing the context of the existing building and wider streetscene.
- **A Heritage Statement:**

This is required with all applications for listed buildings. A written statement should include a schedule of works, an analysis of the significance of the architecture, history and character of the building, and a justification for the proposed works. The justification should include the impact of the proposed works on the special character of the building, adjacent buildings and wider setting.

Appendices

1. Hierarchy of Shop Front Works—Summary Checklist

De-clutter

This can be a cheap and effective way of improving your shop without the need for planning permission or building regulations approval.

Remember to:

- **Minimise signage** and keep window displays simple
- Avoid unsightly wiring and **sensitively locate features such as burglar alarms**

Repair & Reinstatement

Repair and reinstatement often involves changes to the exterior of the shop front and will likely require planning permission or building regulations approval. Reusing existing features is also a cheap and sustainable way of improving your shop.

Always repair, or replace on a like-for-like basis, any remaining original shop front details. This is especially important where shop fronts contribute to the character of conservation areas. Use photographic records or old drawings to help restore original details where these have been lost from those buildings that either do or can contribute to the character of the conservation area. Where original records are not available, use designs (e.g. for fenestration, shop fronts, and materials) that reflect the character, detail and interest of similar buildings of the same period as the shop building.

Remember to:

- **Reuse existing features**
- Repair with appropriate **materials** and in matching **colours**
- Consider **access**
- Relocate suitable roller **shutters or grilles** internally

Renewal

Renewal of shop fronts often involves significant changes to shop fronts and will require planning permission and building regulations approval.

Remember to:

- Design the **window** area to bring balance and proportion to the shop
- Use appropriate **materials and colours**
- Provide appropriately sized **fascias and lettering**
- Ensure **projecting and hanging signs** are located in the right place and are not too large
- Avoid bulky **illuminated box signs**
- Design the **doorway and internal areas** to allow access for all including wheelchair users
- **Subdividing a shop** will require Planning permission and Building Regulations approval. In most cases a new shop front is likely to be required
- Incorporate **stallrisers** for a traditional look
- Allow the shop window to be seen at night, preferably through the use of **security glass** windows. Where **security shutters and grilles** are to be installed these should be of an open design
- Ensure **canopies and awnings** suit the character of the building
- Ensure **wiring and other features** such as burglar alarms are appropriately sited

Appendices

2. Consultation Statement

..... **TO FOLLOW PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS**

